

EPITAFF

BY ERIC BENT CLIFFE



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The Story Of Eric Bentcliffe's 1961
Taff Journey To Pittsburgh and Beyond.

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By ERIC BENTCLIFFE

Who is indebted to...

EDDIE JONES who did the fine COVER and Interior illustrations.

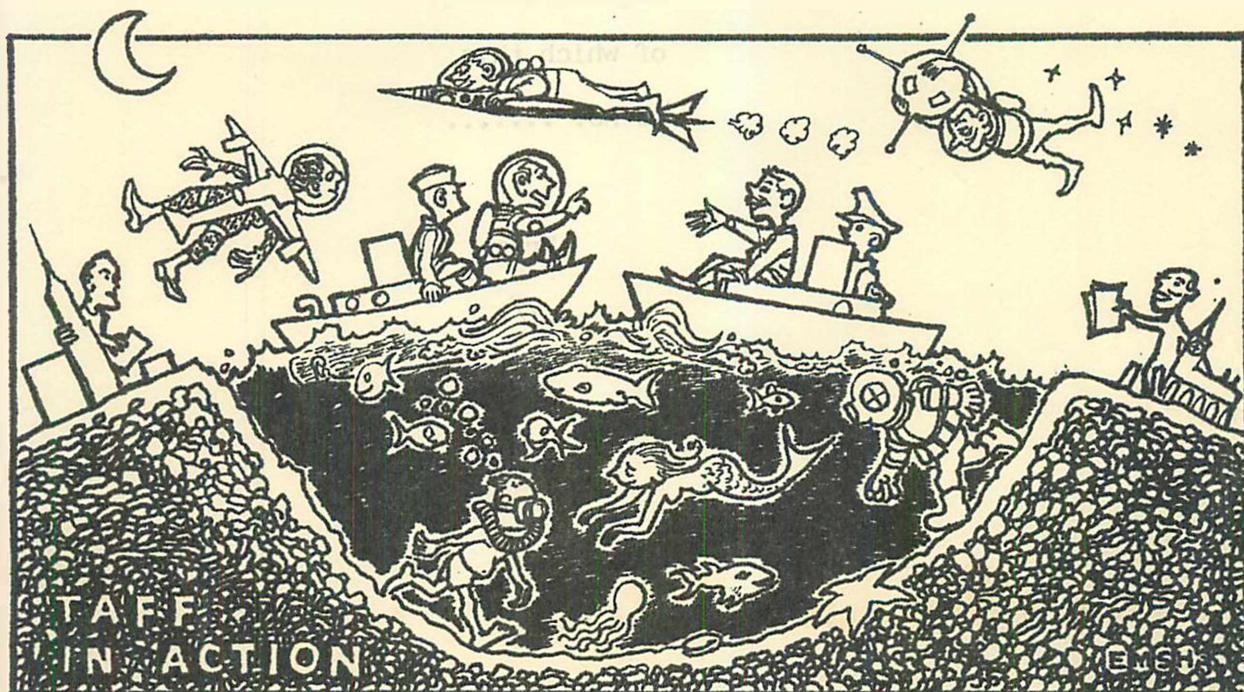
NORMAN SHORROCK who did the Duplicating.

ED' EMMSH who drew the illustration on this page.

KEITH FREEMAN who stencilled the PROLOGUE.

and the EB memory, which held up reasonably
well under mind-boggling immensities.

COLLATING and BINDING by Ina and Norman Shorrock, Eddie Jones
and John Roles.



' EPITAFF'

is dedicated to

F a n d o m

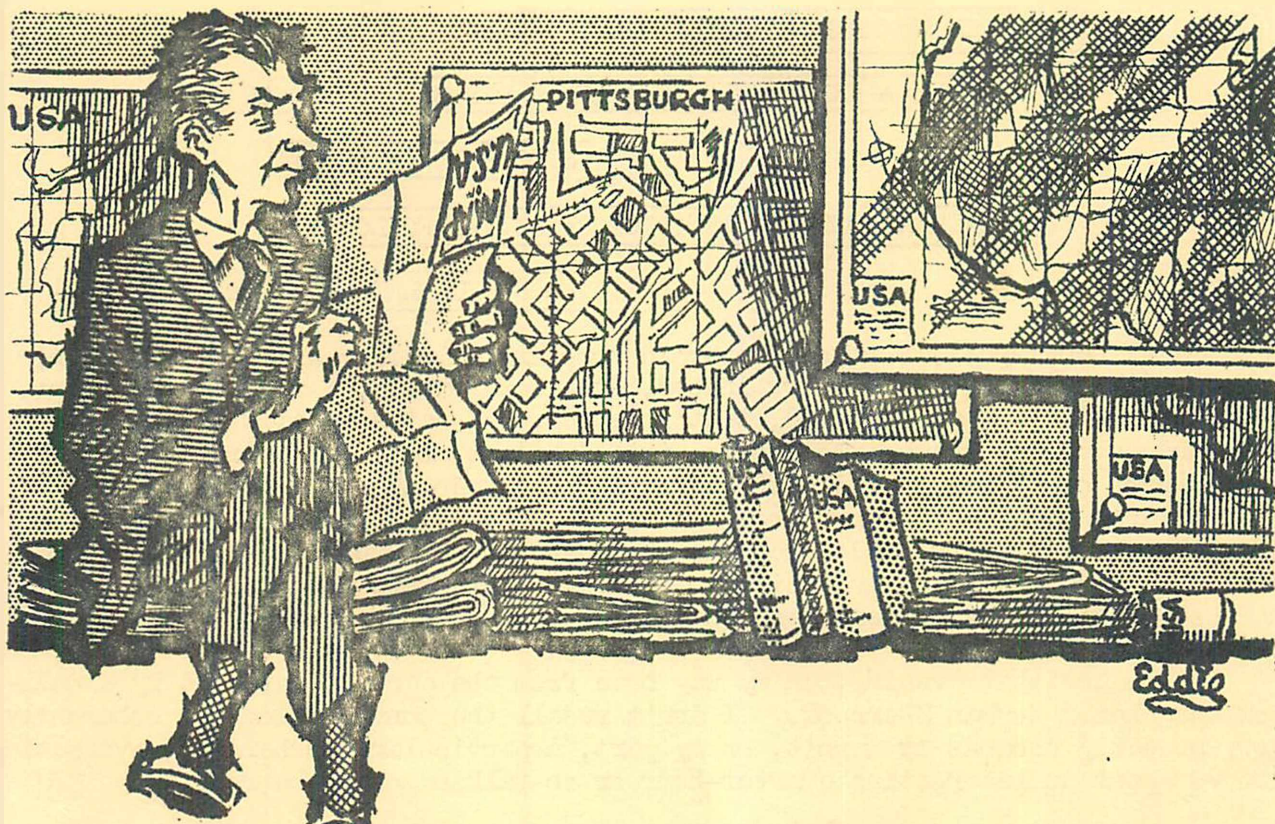
AND ITS MEMBERS.

Published in a
limited edition
of 150 copies ;
of which this
is No.

Price

7/-

THIS PROLOGUE is something in the nature of an experiment. It is being written before I leave for America and Pittsburgh. I found myself so full of thoughts and thanks that I wanted to get down on paper that I decided to write this part of my TAFF TALE before I went - knowing that I'll be so full of the journey when I come back that I might miss out one or two of the things I want to say now. It'll be interesting, too, to see if things go according to plan



I'd had some slight idea that I might win TAFF, of course, all along, but being something of a pessimistic optimist by nature I refused to accept this as anything other than a very pleasant day-dream - to be indulged on dull, wet, miserable mornings en route to the firm - until the actual result became known. Kind friends said "of course you'll win, you're the biggest drunken bum of the lot!", or "Yes, I think you'll make it, but then I haven't backed a TAFF winner yet!". Mal Ashworth and I became involved in a more-frequent-than-ever correspondence, evaluating our own and Sanderson's chances, but not taking any of it too seriously. Protective psychology perhaps?

Certainly, it was a very pleasant campaign, with no dirt being dug anywhere and an air of pleasant cordiality between us three contestants all the way through. I was prejudiced, of course, I wanted to win, but I think (in all honesty) I would have been almost as pleased if Mal had won.

The Easter Convention was one of the high spots for me. To enter the con-hall and find my name featuring on several posters upon the walls was very pleasant, particularly so as I wasn't expecting it. I'm grateful to the noble fens who did it. And then there were the people who, voluntarily, gave their time to attempting to persuade other fans to vote for me none of this was 'organised', which was why I appreciated it so. I don't think I'll ever forget

Dave Kyle trying to talk Brian Burgess into voting ! All the electioneering was done in a pleasant manner "Mine's a Coffee Drinker !" "Mine has drunken 150 % proof Polish White Spirit !" "Mine's stretched out on the floor over there !" Er ... I'd better make it clear that these are made-up quotes used merely to illustrate the tone of the whole affair.

The first intimation I had that I'd won was a telegram from Bob Pavlat and Liz Humbery.

{ B 43 CH WU RR PO 6 BRIOI HYATTSVILLE }

{ LT = ERIC BENFOLDFEE 47 ALWDIS ST GREAT MOOR }

{ STOCKPORT CHESHIRE }

{ CONGRATULATIONS ON TAFF VICTORY LETTER FOLLOWS }

{ = BOB PAVLAT LIZ HUMBEX }

I received this when I returned home from the firm at about 6.30 p.m. on the 16th of June. Fast work indeed, Bob. Naturally, I was elated ... no, that's too mild a word, excited, that's better. I sat down at the typewriter to pound out a few letters to people, in a jubilant mood, but found I couldn't concentrate on typing. I did the thing I usually do when I'm feeling particularly happy about anything. I went dancing ! This may sound a horribly mundane thing to do when one has just won TAFF, but I felt I just had to get out and sublimate my desire to dash down into town and knock up the nearest travel-agent to demand an immediate passage to the States.

Later that evening, on my way home from the dance, I stopped by a call-box and phoned Norman Shorrocks. I don't recall the conversation too coherently now, probably because it wasn't, on my part, a particularly coherent conversation, but we spent an interesting quarter-hour or so talking over the result.

Next morning, confirmation of the result came from Ron Bennett; followed the next day by a looong letter full of information on how the voting had gone, what I had to do in the way of preparation for the trip, what were the best clothes to take along, and pleasant congratulation-type words. A very pleasant letter indeed, and (from my position) one of the most exciting I've ever received. I'd like to go on record here and thank Ron for his stirring service to TAFF these past couple of years, and, particularly his help to me in arranging matters subsequent to the trip. He even managed to make being 'scratched' for smallpox sound quite pleasant !

A whole shoal of letters and cards of congratulations came in those next few days, as the word got around - and just over a week later, when SKYRACK came out with the news, the flow intensified. I was kept very pleasantly busy for quite a time acknowledging the kind letters. Like someone said, "there isn't, unfortunately, a card especially for congratulations on winning TAFF, but I hope this will do." And there were some rather fine alterations of mundane greetings cards received. They are being preserved for posterity along with all the letters and other relevant matter - one of these days, when I'm old and tired (quiet Jeeves), I'll settle down to compiling myself a TAFF Scrapbook.

The various mundane preparations for the trip were fairly easily

accomplished, they took time, but didn't cause any great toil or trouble. I was rather disappointed, actually, that I found it so easy to get an American Visa. I'd been told by several people that these were quite difficult to obtain, and that I'd have to answer a thousand-and-one questions before having the necessary stamp put in my passport, and this was backed by the long list of requirements to be met before a visa would be granted which were listed in a form supplied by the American Consul in Manchester. However, I spent a couple of weeks gathering 'evidence' of one kind or another - a letter from Ron, a couple of the invites I'd received from kind folk in America, a letter signed by my family doctor stressing that I would be returning home, etc. The Consulate is about three minutes walk from the firm I work for, and I presented myself there together with quite a pile of bums one Friday afternoon. Slightly under half an hour later I was ushered cordially out of the vice-consul's office with the requisite visa (inscribed 'to attend a science-fiction conference - and vacation') and signature. I rather think that particular vice-consul was somewhat dismayed at the amount of paperwork I'd brought with me !

My smallpox vaccination was easily achieved too. I'd recalled having one in the RAF and having quite a lot of discomfort from it in my drinking arm, so it was with some trepidation that I went along to the local butcher - particularly as he is an ex-RAF m.o. A week later I had to call in to see if the 'scratch' had taken ... "A very mild take," said the Doc, "you won't have any trouble at all from that ..." in a very disappointed tone !

The travel arrangements were the most difficult. Due to the fact that I'm the sole prop of my rather elderly mother these days I couldn't afford to spend as much time as I would have liked to have done either in the States, or en route there. Flying there and back was imperative. So was flying there and back cheaply. With the assistance of a pal who worked for an airline, Ron, and a Harrogate Travel Agent this was finally arranged - not quite as easily as that, but it was arranged. (I'd previously arranged with Ron to pay the extra cash incurred by flying both ways instead of travelling by boat.) Manchester/Montreal Return ... by B.O.A.C. Britannia.

Now that the air-reservation had been obtained I was able to go ahead with making arrangements for my stay in America other than at Pittsburgh. I was to have three full weeks in the States - I'd loved to have stayed three full months, but, in conscience, couldn't - and I intended to pack as much visiting and sightseeing into those three weeks as I possibly could without returning a complete nervous and physical wreck (I said quiet, Jeeves !)

Dave & Ruth Kyle had kindly offered to meet me at Montreal if I flew in that way, this was both damned convenient, kind, and would give me the opportunity of inspecting Radio Station WEDM - to which I'd been sending letters and tapes for quite some time. There are a couple of other reasons why I wanted to accept that invite, too, Dave and Ruth Kyle. "Right Dave," went off a letter, "I'm due in Montreal Airport at 5.40 am on Monday 29th of August. If you can't make it out to the airport, I'll meet you at the corner of Dorchester and University in downtown Montreal, about an hour later. Er ... if you have difficulty finding this, it's just past the Queen Elizabeth Hotel near Central Station." My collection of travel brochures and street-maps was finally paying off !!

Realising that pretty well anything could happen once I got to the

States I deliberately didn't make a hard and fast schedule. "That's one thing you mustn't do," advised a couple of previous TAFT Delegates, and I could envision a great reluctance to leave any fans in the States, even with the thought that I was going to meet others in mind. I'd bought myself a pretty large-scale map of the USA and spent some very pleasurable hours brooding over it, clutching a sheaf of invitations.

Obviously, I must visit New York City. I hadn't had a great deal of contact with fans there, but there were quite a number I wanted to meet, and I had to fill my eyes with skyscrapers at least once. I was only going to have two or three days there, at the most, but I could at least see some of the local fans and sights (no correlation there !) in that time.

I received a letter from Larry and Noreen Shaw inviting me to stay with them on Staten Island - to attend a Futurian Party at Dick and Pat Lupoff's on the Wednesday night - and mentioning that Ted White would be pleased to provide alternative accomodation if I wanted to stay closer to the centre of things. Also, that Ted would have a seat for me in his car (to Pittsburgh) along with Walter Breen, Andy Reiss and Sylvia. They also said....

"As for sightseeing, we'll try to arrange for you to see a good Subway Fire, a gang rumble, a hatchet murder, and all the usual. Before the party, we Shaws will take you to dinner, and please let us know if there is any restaurant in NYC you've ever heard of and would like to try."

I hope Larry and Noreen won't mind my quoting that brief extract from their letter - I found it heartwarming, and exciting, and it helps to get over the warmth of hospitality offered to a visiting Fan by the Stateside Fans. Naturally, I wrote back immediately accepting the invite, most gratefully ... Er, I also requested that they leave the hatchet-murder for after dinner !

Round about here came one of those rather awkward moments. The day after receiving Larry and Noreen's letter I got one from Belle and Frank Dietz inviting me to a Lunarian Meeting and gettogether also on the Wednesday night ! There was nothing I could do except gracefully refuse the invitation, and mention that I hope I'd see any of the Lunarians not at the Futurian Party, at Pittsburgh. I offered up a silent prayer that I hadn't started a fan war !

I later heard that the Lunarians and Futurians were combining forces for the Wednesday evening, and received a copy of the invitation which had been sent out to the fans in and around New York.

" For Eric Dentcliffe

—
On Wednesday August 31st 1960

—
At 8 p.m. A party given jointly

—
by the Futurians and Lunarians at

the Dietz apartment. 1750 Walton

Ave, Bronx. N.Y. "

Pittsburgh, and the Convention, obviously, was going to be the high

spot of the trip, with its unbounded possibilities for getting to know all the fans I'd had contact with - and meeting those I hadn't. Letters from Dirce

Archer and Lynn Hickman made me launch after the convention with great gusto. Dirce wrote and informed me very pleasantly that my convention expenses would be taken care of by the Committee, that I was to share a room with P. Schuyler Miller, and "did I want Beef A La Mode Jardiniere, or Half Broiled Chicken, Maitre D'Hotel at Banquet Time." I said I'd half the chicken-head-waiter mixture, and that I hoped he'd be especially chosen for being tender, like some of these boys are pretty hard-boiled !

Lynn, despite the fact that he was working on the JD-A annish and Don Ford's TAFF Report, found time to write me quite a few very interesting letters. I was to appear on the Fanzine Editors Panel which he would moderate, along with Bob Tucker, Bob Madle, Dan McPhail, Ron Ellik and Buck Coulson. The three former fans were to represent the oldtime-fan-publishers, whilst Ellik, Coulson and myself were to state the case for current Publishing Giants. The theme of the panel to be the changes that have taken place over the years on the fan publishing scene. An interesting topic.

There was a rather intriguing letter from Steve Scultheis around this time, too, which made me eager to get to the Pittcon and find out what it was all about. Quote... "I'm ashamed to admit it, but I have no clear recollection of you from the London Worldcon. To get to the point without beating around it, could you please supply 'further information ... in a plain sealed envelope' - a brief description of yourself, that is; features, usual mode of dress, etc. A picture, if handy, would help. As evidence of my good faith, I'll send you one of myself, so we can blackmail each other. The reason I ask this ... Oh no, you'll find that out in due time. Heh, heh, secrets, deep and devious."

I wondered whether I should er, play safe, by sending a photo of someone else ... but acceded to the request and hoped that Steve hadn't heard that wild rumour that I was Antigoon and was planning an assassination ! I'd once mentioned to the Coon that I was fond of Antigone I put my trust in Harrison, and sent off the desired information.

After the Worldcon in Pittsburgh I was faced with too equally pleasant alternatives. I could go back to the West Coast with the Bjo, Ellik, Caravan and visit Terry and Miriam and the other folk out there; or I could tour around the mid-West with Bob Pavlat. After a considerable amount of thought and pouring over maps, timetables, and such, I decided (reluctantly) that as I only had three weeks in the States the trip out to Berkeley, San Francisco, and Los Angeles was both financially and physically a bit too much. I'd be dashing around somewhat madly before the Convention, it was doubtful that I would get any sleep at the Convention, and a four-day non-stop car ride on top of this would probably be a little more than I could take. Time, was a factor, too, for I wanted to be in Minneapolis on the 13th or 14th of September - but more on that later if I'd visited the West Coast I'd have had only a couple of days there to look around.

Bob Pavlat had kindly offered to 'drive me around for awhile' after Pittsburgh, visiting fans and seeing places This was fine, and would fit nicely in with a couple more invitations I very much wanted to take up.

One was from Betty Kujawa with whom I'd been in correspondence by letter and tape for quite some time, in fact Betty had been my most frequent

tape-correspondent for several months - we 'jelled'. Betty, came up with a very exciting offer.

" Have a message for you from mine good husband. Gene sez that if you can stop by here he will be delighted to fly you to your next port-of-call. Mayhaps up to Minneapolis ??? Or Montreal ??? He sez any spot this side of the Rocky Mountains and this side of the Atlantic Ocean but not Cuba, Buddy, not Cuba !! "

This was very exciting ! I'd done a fair amount of flying by commercial-airliner, and a little in more interesting aircraft - when I was in the RAF. The thought of flying by small aircraft in the States, at a relatively low altitude where the configurations of the countryside wouldn't be hidden by cloud was very intriguing indeed. Naturally, I wrote and said how pleased I was by the generous offer and that I hoped very much to be able to take advantage of it.

It fitted in very nicely, too, with my proposed (probable !) route .. which would get me in several easy stages to Minneapolis, through fan-dwelt country.

Since entering fandom I'd been corresponding, and trading s-f with Dale R. Smith. Dale, I think, is probably better known to British fandom than to the Stateside fans - he, and friend LeRoy Haugsrud have been sort of honorary British fans for quite a number of years. Naturally, I didn't want to visit America without visiting Minneapolis, Dale, Vicki, Marge, Sammy and LeRoy, whom I'd met on tape so many times. Dale and LeRoy helped the trip schedule along by sending all sorts of informative travel brochures, and helpful advice - they were both going to take time off work for whenever I could get there. If things went to plan I'd be in Minneapolis either the 13th or 14th of September, and would stay until the Sunday morning, when I'd fly to Montreal to catch my transatlantic return (sob !) flight.

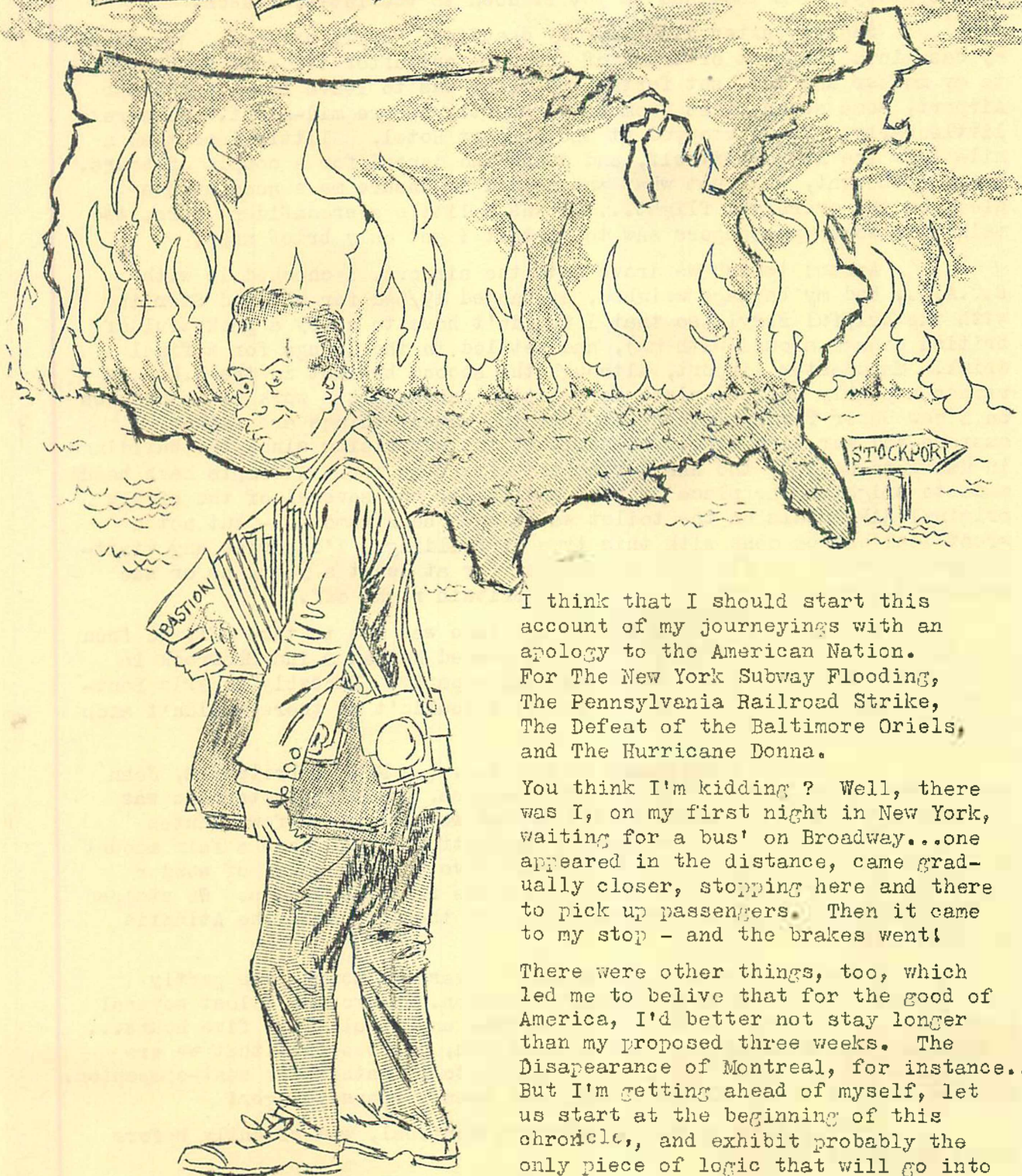
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Whether my plans do go according to the rough schedule I've set you'll be able to read in the subsequent pages. This PROLOGUE though, wouldn't be complete without a few words which I haven't been able to fit in 'in continuity'.

Apart from the people I've already mentioned, I received very helpful (and highly assorted !) letters of advice and information from: Emile Greenleaf, Dick Schultz, Marijane Johnstone, Boyd Raeburn, Terry & Miriam Carr, Bjo & John Trimble and Bruce Pelz ... to mention just a few. And, of course, DON FORD, who helped in numerous ways to make the trip as exciting as it looks right now.

And then there were the people 'Over Here' ... Norman & Ina Shorrocks, Terry Jeeves, Eddie Jones (who designed and manufactured two rather fine badges I'll be wearing at Pittsburgh !!), Keith Freeman (who has loaned me a whole stack of colour-transparencies to show to American fans as I travel along), Arthur Thompson, John Berry heck, I'm indebted to you all.

EPITAF



I think that I should start this account of my journeyings with an apology to the American Nation. For The New York Subway Flooding, The Pennsylvania Railroad Strike, The Defeat of the Baltimore Oriels, and The Hurricane Donna.

You think I'm kidding ? Well, there was I, on my first night in New York, waiting for a bus' on Broadway...one appeared in the distance, came gradually closer, stopping here and there to pick up passengers. Then it came to my stop - and the brakes went!

There were other things, too, which led me to believe that for the good of America, I'd better not stay longer than my proposed three weeks. The Disappearance of Montreal, for instance.. But I'm getting ahead of myself, let us start at the beginning of this chronicle, and exhibit probably the only piece of logic that will go into these pages.

August 28th

BRITANNIA WAVES THE RULES

By early evening on the Sunday of my departure I was packed, and faunching to be off. I recall that I read 'The Climacticon', during the latter part of the day, but whether it is the fault of the book or because my mind was on other things I can recollect nothing of the story. I'm inclined to put it down to the latter reason.

Shortly after 7.30p.m., my chauffer, Beryl, arrived. We packed my case into the boot or trunk of the car, and, after I'd said a farewell to my mother and dog, set forth. My plane was to leave from Manchester Airport, some seven miles from home, shortly before mid-night. We were a little early. So we stopped at the Airport Hotel, little less than a mile from the Airport itself, and drank and danced for a couple of hours. This, I thought, was just what was needed to ensure me a good nights sleep on the overnight flight.....I was a little overconfident here, two talkative women passengers saw to it that I got only brief naps.

Around tenish we drove onto the airport, I checked in with B.O.A.C., had my baggage weighed, exchanged 19/5¹/₂d for a Pound Sterling with the helpful Beryl (so that I wouldn't have to carry a pocketful of British change around with me), and settled in the lounge for a final drink. Manchester Airport, although the second busiest in the U.K., is rather a poorly equiped place for waiting passengers - work is in process on a new Super Terminal there, but at the moment things are rather austere and war-time-like...which isn't too surprising since the buildings in use were used by the RAF during and after the war. Attempts have been made to brighten the place up here and there, and several of the highly original RAF murals on the toilet walls have been removed - but not a great deal can be done with this type of building. I'd advise any visiting American not to fly into Manchester for at least a year, he or she would get a pretty poor impression of Britain right off.

Beryl had to leave before my plane was due to take off, to feed her Budgerigar, but before she went we phoned Norman & Ina Shorrocks in Liverpool. They were, as usual, holding a party. Probably an Eric Bentcliffe Going Away Party - the fact that I couldn't be there wouldn't stop them!

The plane, a Britannia of B.O.A.C. (a Mk.312 Britannia, John Berry, with four Proteus 755 jet-prop engines, and the pilots name was Jones!), arrived from London at 11.30, and we embarked a few minutes later. The flight over was pretty uneventful. I've done a fair amount of flying in big aircraft and I'm afraid I've lost my sense of wonder regarding them - it's all so much like a bus ride these days. We stopped at Prestwick (Glasgow) for re-fuelling, and then off over the Atlantic for Montreal.

Actual flight time was a little over ten hours, due partly to a strong wind going in the wrong direction. En route, I lost several hours sleep due to my talkative neighbours, and we all lost five hours... "It's all due to the Fitzgerald Contraction, and the fact that we are travelling faster than light," I explained to my rather dim seat-companion. And she thanked me....if she'd only been twenty years younger!

Arrival time at Dorval Airport, Montreal, was slightly before 6a.m. (Montreal time).

August 29th

I checked through Customs and Immigration with a minimum of trouble once beyond the airport reception area - I found it difficult to believe that I was actually on the American Continent, but I was quite prepared to go along with the highly pleasant day-dream, if that was what it was.

I walked out of the clearing area into the arms of Ruth Kyle, and I can hardly think of a nicer way to be welcomed to the Continent! Dave and Ruth had driven up from Potsdam the day before and had stayed overnight in a motel near the airport so they could be on hand when my plane arrived. It says much for their dedication that they'd got up at 5 a.m. that morning to get to the airport on time. Dave and Ruth have always been two of my favourite people and knowing them so well made my reception more like coming home than landing in a strange 'new world'.

I checked my return flight-booking with BOAC, to save myself a long distance phone call from Podunk or a hunt for one of their agencies - it seems incongruous that the first thing I did was check my return booking, however the main reason was that I wanted to be able to forget all about it until I had to go back. Dave, Ruth and I wandered out of the airport buildings arm in arm, I freed myself briefly to take a few snaps, and then we got on board the king-size Pontiac which was to take me through quite a bit of American countryside. You'll excuse the 'on board' in reference to the Pontiac, to merely 'get in' a car of this size seems not quite to do justice to it!

Intention was to drive into Montreal for some breakfast and a brief look around - unfortunately, Montreal had 'disappeared'. We had no trouble finding our way around it, but not to the centre of town... This was probably the first of my extrasensory croggling feats whilst in Americ, you must admit that I set my sights high, a whole city gone at one fell swoop! Eventually we found ourselves on the road which led past the Raphael Motel, the one Dave & Ruth had stayed at overnight. There we stopped, whilst I cleaned up a little, and had breakfast. I'd already had breakfast actually, somewhere over Newfoundland, but I had it worked out that it was Tiffin Time in England and I was quite prepared to eat a second breakfast. I suppose that my first meal in the new world should really have been something exotically native, like corn-on-the-cob on rye....however, egg and bacon went down very nicely.

Breakfast over, a few reminiscences exchanged, and we set out for Potsdam, New York State. The route took us roughly parallel with the St. Lawrence Seaway, and although we didn't see any really big ships we were constantly sighting this vast canal. I sat back and enjoyed the scenery, and savoured the thought that I was actually here. A punning session developed between Dave and myself which was highly enjoyable, and which almost resulted in Ruth getting a new coat, however I shall not attempt to assail your tender sensibilities with the finely ghastly puns that came out during the drive.

Our first stop was at Cornwall, a smallish town in Quebec. Ruth wanted to pick up some provisions so we stopped at a convenient supermarket. Whilst Ruth and I shopped for the solids, Dave took the car and went in search of some Canadian Beer - which he said was superior to the American brew, a statement whith which I'm now inclined to agree. Whilst we do have quite a number of self-service stores in the U.K. now, I've yet to come across one the size of the American (and Canadian) Supermarkets.

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Immense places, and air-conditioned - it was by now pretty warm outside and it felt wonderful to wander round this cool emporium. Pretty well everything, I noted, was either canned or fresh-frozen. I'm not quite sure whether I approve of this particular facet of American Living..... it's highly hygienic, no doubt, but I don't think that the food generally has quite as much taste as that bought un-canned or un-frozen. I wonder if Americans, eventually, will be born with a heating device in the stomach to save having to thaw the stuff out at all en route to the intestines! Maybe all those stomach ulcers are just a mutation tentatively developing itself along these lines....excuse the gory thoughts. Write an 'Inside America' report, they said!

Ruth and I had a Root Beer, and I was quite favourably impressed with the stuff - a taste rather like Dandelion & Burdock, a herbal concoction sold in England. I bought a couple of postcards, by which time Dave had arrived back with the Beer, and we climbed back on board the Pontiac.

A few miles past Cornwall, several bridges, and we crossed over into America. We pulled up at a wooden-shack affair by the roadside which was the frontier post. The local police officials, or customs men. I'm not quite sure in which category they fell, seemed very much like the American Movie Cop to me. I was invited inside to give an account of why I should be allowed into the States etcetra...and whilst they were all quite polite and pleasant every question was asked at least three times over in true (?) third-degree manner. I met with no difficulties and wasn't even asked to open up my baggage. Then came Dave's turn, and he had to pay duty on the beer bought in Canada!

We set off again through the increasingly pleasant countryside, it was flat but very green and quite 'english' in nature. I've often heard travellers remark that nowhere on earth is there grass the same colour as in England, to me this is a load of bull, if you put the respective grass on New York State and that of Cheshire under a suitable lens a slight difference might be noticeable, but it would be pretty slight.

Potsdam is around a hundred and ten miles from Montreal and we reached Dave & Ruth's home in the early afternoon, I'd figure the actual driving time at around three hours...not taking into account the stops to allow myself to take in some view or other.

Dave and Ruth live in a forty-odd foot long trailer behind Radio Station WPDH, the station which Dave operates with the aid of a small staff. Must admit that the thought of living in a Trailer (or Caravan) had never previously appealed to me, but this was something different. Whilst in Potsdam, Dave took me over to a trailer-lot where there were some real monsters of the ilk, even larger than the Kyles', and I must admit I wouldn't mind one myself - particularly in Florida, California, or the Adirondacks.

Ruth fed us food, and we drank Canadian Beer and talked for an hour or two. It was still very hot, and someone suggested visiting the local swimming pool (actually a bend in the river), this idea met with universal approval so we piled back in the car and drove the three or four miles to the river. In typical Benteliffe manner, however, I had successfully crogged the sun - and by the time we were in the water, "

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the sun was behind some clouds. It was still hot, though, very hot and on the way back to WPDM we stopped in Potsdam and I acquired a pair of lightweight slacks and a jacket. The weather, pretty well all the time I was in the States was wonderful, clear blue skies and blazing sun and I loved it....apart from New York City where the humidity was a little too much for comfort. I managed to foul up the weather again later that evening tho'. Ruth had planned a cookout, she was going to cook Shish Kebab over an out-door charcoal brazier, but just as she got things nicely going my old enemy Zeus decided to take things in his own hands and down came the rain. Our indoor-outdoor meal was still very enjoyable.

After the meal we phoned Larry & Norcen Shaw on Staten Island to acquaint them with the fact that I had arrived, and that I would be in New York some time late on the morrow. It says much for their savoir fayre that they took the news without a noticable quiver! We had a pleasant four-way natter (Dave has several coupled extension phones about the place), and I told Larry and Noreen I'd phone them again as soon as I reached the Big City. Next, Dave showed me over Radio Station WPDM, and I was fascinated by it - this would be a wonderful set up for the Liverpool Group to take-over, Norman Shorrock as Recording-engineer and chief gremlin hunter, John Owen and Stan Nuttall as script-writers....my ghod, it could be fabulous, even if it were the death-blow to American Radio!

I'd brought a couple of tapes with me to play to various folk, one from Liverpool and the other from the Cheltenham Group. Dave got a taper from the radio station, brought it back to the Trailer and we settled down to listening to them. Since Dave and Ruth know most members of both groups they got quite a kick out of the tapes, and afterwards we made a pleasantly alcoholic tape to Norman & Ina, which, I think, reached them just before they left for Yugoslavia. A highly enjoyable evening, but I was a little bushed from loss of sleep on the flight over so I retired around mid-night and left Dave & Ruth listening to "Last and First Fm" which I had also brought over and which Ruth hadn't heard before.

BENTCLIFFE HEXES NEW YORK

I awoke about 7.30 the next morning to the sound of several thousand crickets playing a Test Match in the surrounding countryside. The sky was blue and clear again, and life was wonderful. We breakfasted on sausage, eggs and "The March of Slime", and talked of the impending convention. I still found it difficult to believe that I was actually there, but....

I sat in the sun and read for a couple of hours whilst Ruth attended to chores around the house, and Dave to the Radio Station correspondence. Not feeling particularly like a bi meal for lunch, Ruth suggested I have a Special Sundae - this was quite a thing and nicely assuaged my appetite.

Dave had to see to various business matters that day much to his dismay, but Ruth was going to drive me down to New York City. We left WPDM at 12.45 - myself with some very pleasant memories. Potsdam Fandom had upheld its status as a Chapter of the Liverpool Group in -

August 30th

true Mad fashion...such as when, en route to the swimming-hole, Dave had driven through the local College Campus (it was a girls college) yelling 'BENTCLIFFE'S HERE!!!' at the top of his voice! Too bad the girls were still on holiday... Potsdam spelt backwards reads Madstop. I didn't want to leave, but I did want to see New York.

The drive down state to New York City took us through some very fine countryside and, looking back, I think this particular leg of my journey was the most interesting of any as regards scenery. We passed through the Adirondack Mountains and I was greatly impressed with the pleasantly wooded slopes and clear blue lakes. Much of it reminded me of the Lake Geneva area of Switzerland, and I can't give it higher praise than that. I could have hardly had a nicer companion, too..... Ruth was certainly one of the most attractive women I met in America, and I was considerably impressed by her knowledge of fandom - and intelligent attitude on pretty well every topic we touched on.

For the benefit of map-readers, and my own memories, the route we took from Potsdam was route 56 to Tupper Lake, 30 to Long Lake (on which there was a large number of sea-planes moored), and on down past Blue Mountain Lake, Indian Lake, to Speculator (notable for a Drive-in eatery named 'Custards Last Stand') where we stopped for a Coke. Then onto Amsterdam - as I'd first met Ruth in Amsterdam, Holland, this was highly appropriate - and onto the New York Thruway. I think if I ever lived in America, the Adirondack area would be one of the places I'd like to live. We passed through many very pleasant and colourful small towns between Potsdam and Amsterdam....one thing puzzled me though, and Ruth said that Dave and herself had often cogitated on it too, none of these small towns had any obvious industry to account for their being there - could be that they are the sort of places people retire to, or where the idle-rich live? I suppose.

A few miles along the Thruway we stopped at a Howard Johnson's for some food. American readers should skip this sentence or two, whilst I mention that every so far along the Thruway's and Turnpikes are rest-areas just off the road where gas-stations and restaurants are found. And this is as good a place as any to say that I was highly impressed by the American roadways, tailored for highspeed travel, excellently 'designed' and surfaced. They make the MI look like a country lane.

I haven't exactly worked out the distance we covered that day, but it was over 300miles and we covered it very comfortably. The weather had been wonderful all the time - New York, however, was being warned on my impending arrival. They were having thunderstorms and torrential rain. We listened to several of the radio stations as we travelled along, and it was obvious that my rainmaking powers were in full operation...even the subways were flooded! New York, I'm sorry.

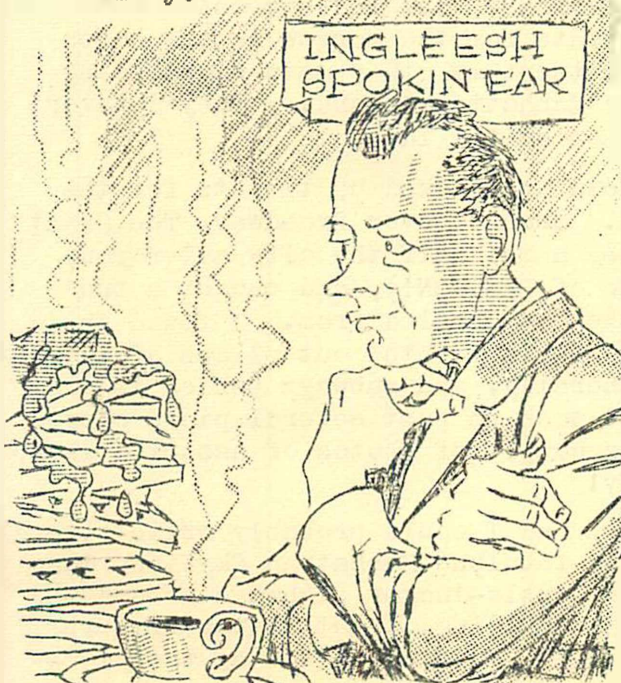
Around 10p.m. we began to get into the New York metropolitan area, it was dark by now but the many coloured lights of the city made a very impressive sight as we drew closer. We crossed onto Manhattan Island by the George Washington Bridge, and took the Henry Hudson Parkway to Riverside Drive - where Ruth stopped briefly outside the old Riverside Dive. Ruth was to stay overnight with Marty & Marion Fass, friends who lived on 102nd Street so that was to be our first -

port of call. Marion and Marty aren't technically fans but they are very nice people and made me extremely welcome. Marty is a writer for the currently extremely popular Men's Magazines. Scotch on the Rocks and Sandwiches were put before us and after a snack and some highly enjoyable conversation I phoned Larry & Noreen again. By now it was getting pretty latish, and as the Subway was still rather fouled up with the flooding it was decided that it would probably be better if I stayed down in Manhattan that night rather than attempt to get out to Staten Island. I was quite agreeable to this for I was beginning to feel sleepy again.

Ruth and Dave usually stayed at the Hotel Chesterfield on 49th Street when they were in New York, so Marty phoned the hotel for me and got me a room for the night there. We talked for awhile and Marty gave me a sampling of the TV programmes being broadcast in New York that night. I'm afraid I remained unimpressed with these.

Around midnight Marty and I got my gear out of the Pontiac and headed for the Chesterfield. I decided to impress Marty with my extra-sensory croggling powers so I bollixed the brakes on the first bus' to pull up, and it had to be taken out of service! If any employee of the Transit Company gets to read this, I accept no responsibility - you should have your buses shielded. We got the next bus' that came along and travelled down Broadway with Marty giving me an informed and interesting commentary on the area - I'm afraid I didn't give it as much attention as it warranted for I was fascinated by the street-scene of my first big American City. It was West-Side Story come to life.

The Chesterfield was just a short distance from Times Square, and I was torn between the thought of walking through Times Square and going to bed right away - unromantic soul that I am, I chose bed, after bidding Marty goodnight, and expressing the wish that one-day we'd meet again. There should be an organization for bringing into fandom people like Marty.



AROUND MADHATTAN

I woke the next morning at around 8.30, showered, shaved, and went in search of breakfast. I spotted a Coffee Shop just across the street from the hotel and, dodging the rain drops (my hex was still working, but the rain soon stopped although the day remained cloudy) and traffic made a bee-line for it. I breakfasted on black coffee and waffles, and this helped me to come fully awake. I usually take a full hour to come awake in a morning, but the thrill of being in America reduced this to half-an-hour most mornings.

Larry had said on the phone that he'd be at the Chesterfield by ten.

He'd also mentioned that Ted and Sylvia White would probably be there a little before that time, so after my brief breakfast I went back to the hotel. Passing through the hotel lounge I spotted two people who I thought might be Ted and Sylvia - I had seen a photo of Ted some time ago but this bod looked taller than I imagined Ted to be - but they showed no sign of recognition. I suddenly bethought myself that I was wearing my American clothes and that I probably didn't stand out as an English fan, so I went up to my room and exchanged the jacket for my Blazer rampant with St. Fanthony emblem. Then I went down to the lounge again. The people I'd thought were Ted and Sylvie, were! A light of recognition shone in their eyes at my 'S/F' emblem, and we met. We went up to my room to talk until Larry arrived - talk mainly about Ted's activities as a jazz-writer, and why I didn't review VOID! (The reason being that I hadn't reviewed many fmz in TRIODE at all, for quite some time - I always seem to run out of space, somehow.)

For the benefit of British Fans, Ted is around 5'9" (I think), bearded, and highly interesting to talk to. Sylvia is about 5'6", unbearded, blonde and attractive.

Just before ten, we went back down to the lounge to await Larry's arrival, and he arrived just as we stepped out of the elevator. I'd met Larry at Kettering in '55, and apart from the fact that he wasn't wearing a T-Shirt any longer he hadn't changed much! It was nice to meet him again. Larry was on vacation, but had to go into the office for a few hours, so Ted and Sylvia kindly offered to escort me round New York. We went and had another breakfast first tho', I was quite prepared to eat again and I don't think the others had had time to eat before leaving their respective homes. This time I had some eggs and bacon, and came oven more fully awake....particularly when, after I had asked for Tomayto-juice, the waitress said 'Tomahto-juice' ! Ah, well...

The weather though fine, was overcast, and Ted suggested that it would be best to leave the Empire State for the morrow in the hopes of a clearer day, meanwhile we could attempt my other main sightseeing trip in New York, the boat trip around Manhattan Island. They'd never taken the trip either so were quite keen on the idea.

We went back to the Chesterfield and picked up tickets for the White Circle cruise around the island. Crossed over Broadway, The Great White Way (allright, Ted White, so they named half the city after you, and I'll review VOID in the next issue of BASTION!), and caught a bus' down 42nd Street...to Pier 83 where the boat sailed from. I found the bus' ride quite fascinating and Ted & Sylvia pointed out places of interest en route as we talked of buses generally, and subways (which is another of Ted's interests). The bus' took us past several piers where large liners were moored, and I took a couple of photos of assorted sharp-end's which I'm now unable to identify!

The cruise was quite something, and I could probably write several pages on the sights seen en route, The fabulous Manhattan Skyline, The Statue of Liberty, Castle Village, The double-decker highways around the island, Cornell Medical Center, The U.N. Building....but better writers than I have already written reams about it, suffice it to say that I -

August 31st

was impressed. New York has a sense of wonder all its own, and whilst I wouldn't care to live in the city, I'd dearly like to spend a few months really exploring it. The trip around the island really wetted my appetite. Ted and Sylvia were ideal companions on the voyage, and I think they enjoyed it almost as much as I did. One lasting impression of the trip is that there are a deal more green-spots on Manhattan than one imagines - I had the impression, before the trip, of a vast 'concrete-jungle' which is true only in part. And then there's intriguing things like the 'upside-down building' which, until a couple of years ago could only be entered from the top floor! It's quite a city.

Some three hours after boarding the sightseeing yacht we arrived back at Pier 83. From there we caught a bus' back up to the Times Square area, ducked down a Subway and had a hot-dog and coke. After this brief but enjoyable repast, we caught the subway uptown to Macy's Department Store - Sylvia wanted to shop for a dress, and I was quite interested to compare an American Department Store with the British counterparts. There's very little difference. Macy's is one of the biggest in the world I understand, but the standard of display is not very high and the store itself is much less modern than many in England - and many in America, I imagine.

By the time we got out of Macy's we were all feeling a little footsore so it was decided to go to the White Pad in Greenwich Village, buy some beer en route and have a gab-fest for the couple of hours remaining before I was due back at the Chesterfield to meet Larry, Noreen, Dave and Ruth for dinner. We did just that, and it was a very interesting session. If I may mention focal-points for a moment without being clobbered, Ted & Sylvia seem to be just that for the younger NY fans, Walter Breen, Andy Reiss, and someone else (I think) phoned whilst I was there. I'd like to have spent more time investigating Greenwich Village - which seemed very reminiscent of Soho, to me - and in gabbing with the White's.

Around 5.30 p.m., I drained my third or fourth glass of beer, left several fascinating topics in the air, and caught the Subway back up to 49th Street and the Chesterfield. My sense of direction was working well that night, I didn't have the slightest trouble in finding my way back, but then New York is a pretty logical place to find your way around in - whilst I think I prefer street-names to numbers, the latter certainly help to make navigating easier.

I reached the Chesterfield just after the Shaw's, and Dave and Ruth had also got in (from Monticello, where they had been visiting Dave's folks), so we had a pre-aperitif aperitif to celebrate the fact that everyone was on time, or something...and I got introduced to Noreen. This, I think, is as good a place as any to mention that Larry and Noreen are two of the nicest people I've met in a long time - Dave and Ruth are, too, but I already knew them whereas the Shaw's as an entity (including Michael Edward - who I later baptised a member of British Fandom) I knew only from recent letters. But then, there are so many darn nice people in American fandom.

I dumped my bags in the Kyle suite, to be collected after the Lunarian/Futurian Party en route to Staten Island, and we sallied forth to the Rockefeller Centre. A fine group of buildings.



Cocktails in the Rainbow Room was the schedule, followed by dinner at the Hickory House. We entered the impressive RCA Building and took an elevator up to the 65th floor. Put that way, it all sounds very prosaic and matter of fact - I describe it that way for lack of suitable prose rather than from lack of Wonder. This was the first time I'd been up a skyscraper, and it was quite an experience. Although there was a slight mist hanging over the city the view was fabulous, and I think I got a bigger charge from this than from the excellent Champagne Cocktails we indulged. The Rainbow Room itself is quite impressive, too, a plush cocktail lounge where the fortunate meet for their aperitifs, to the soothing music of a string-ensemble, and organ (!).... alright, I know it's a weird combination, but it sounds good. Rather like the MJQ!!

Eventually hunger began to drag at the entrails of the mere mortals with me and I was persuaded away from the view so that they could satiate their mundane desires! Actually, I was hungry too, but I think I'd still be there, nose to the window, if it hadn't been for my companions. But for the Kyles and Shaw's I'd be but a skeleton of my former self... We strolled the short distance to the Hickory House on 52nd Street (or did we take a cab?), and entered this excellently appointed hostelry. They catered to us excellently, even to supplying postcards we could send to friends - we sent one to Norman and Ina Shorrock and the Gang, care of their hotel in Opatija (Yugoslavia). The Hickory House is famous for its steaks, but I had a Breaded Veal Cutlet which was quite fine. Harrison would have awarded the joint (!) at least Three-Stars, I think.

BRONX CHEER

The conversation around the dinner-table was excellent, and the company fine, but all too soon we realised that time was passing and that I was due at the Combined Futurian/Lunarian Party being given in my honour 'any moment now'. Larry, Noreen, and I grabbed a cab and left the kindly Kyles to settle up the bill for us.

The cab ride down to the Bronx was most interesting, and perhaps a little intimidating too, for just as we passed into Harlem the cabby wound-up the windows and locked them, mentioning casually that the natives were a little hostile. We passed through Central Park, which I would have liked to explore - if I'd had Bill Donaho along! And after about a twenty-minute ride came to the region of the Dietz Apartment on Walton Av. When I say the region, I mean the region, for we didn't know where it was, exactly, and neither did the cabby.

Larry had directions for getting there from a subway station, and, after a deal of searching the cabby dropped us near the subway and wished us (sub-vocally) the best of Luck. Larry, I think, has a sense of direction which works better when on foot than when taxiing - once out of the cab he tested the wind-direction briefly, consulted his slide-rule, pointed, and said that must be it! And it was.

Prior to my trip over I'd had little contact with New York fandom, and knew little about them, but I must say they gave me a very warm welcome and that I met many nice and interesting people at the Dietz apartment that night. Let's see if I can list them all...Frank & Belle Dietz (who I had met before) & George Nims Raybin (Fandom's Legal Fleagle), Dick & Pat Lupoff (two very fine people), Les Gerber, Andy Reiss, Tom Condit, Alma Hill, Avram Davidson (one of the most quietly witty people I met in America), Lynn Carter, Walter Breen, Hans Stefan Santesson, Chris Moskowitz, Harriet Kolchek, Randy Garrett, Jimmy Taurasi, Sidney Porcelain, Noreen and Larry, of course, and Ted and Sylvia. And...

HARLAN ELLISON THE GREATEST THING SINCE TV!

I'd heard quite a lot about Harlan in the past, none of it particularly good, I'm afraid, but Harlan turned out to be the surprise of the evening for me. A really fabulous character straight out of Damon Runyon...well, a Runyon character brought up to date. Harlan is not particularly tall, but he makes up for this with one of the most exuberant personalities I've ever come across - and he has a fine flair for telling stories. I like Harlan.

This wasn't a whooping-it-up-last-man-on-the-ceiling-is-a-louse-party, more of a talking, beer-drinking, moving around session and it was ideal for moving from group to group getting to meet people. I think I talked with pretty well everyone there at one time or another and generally enjoyed myself. I recall discussing with Les Gerber the respective merits of The Coon and Sir William Makepeace Harrison, without coming to any real conclusion other than that it would be a Good Idea to have a story featuring both characters....and Andy Reiss offering to cartoon for BASTION...and Harriet Kolchek telling me about her protege who was currently doing some rather fine art on the Dietz apartment wall just about where the fireplace would be if they had one. My impressions of the evening are a little chaotic due to the fact that I was meeting so many people present for the first time - it was fun, tho'. And two people I haven't mentioned who were there, Joy and Sandy Sanderson, who had arrived on the Queen Mary the day before. They looked, naturally enough, rather exhausted. Neither of them had jobs to go to, but were hoping to get fixed up within a few days.

Larry and Noreen had to relieve a baby-sitter at not to late an hour, so around 11 p.m. we started to make reluctant farewells...and about half an hour later, finally left. Thanks Belle & Frank for hosting a very pleasant evening.

We caught a cab back up to the Chesterfield, and once again I found myself fascinated by the passing sidewalk scenery en route. I like to wander through strange cities, and I'd have liked to just stop the cab and go for a walk then and there...I'd have done it but for the fact that my feet hurt, and I felt too lazy!

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE FRONT

We got back to the Chesterfield around midnight, to find that Dave & Ruth had realised it was their Wedding Anniversary - and let's have a party! So we did. Dave & Ruth had a four-room suite and the session that developed therein was quite reminiscent of some of the Kettering Parties. Quite a few people came on over after the Dietz Party closed down, and a most convivial crowd they were. I'm not sure if I can recall everyone who was there, but I recall..Avram Davidson, The Lupoff's, The White's, Harlan, Tom Condit, Lynn Carter, Larry & Noreen (of course, who phoned their baby-sitter and got an 'extension')...and, Dick Wilson.

I'd met Dick previously at Kettering a few years back and I was highly pleased to meet him again. Apart from the fact that I like the man - he's one of my favourite authors, when writing stuff like "The Girls From Planet Five", and "When the Town Took Off". He wasn't going to be able to get to Pittsburgh, alas, but we managed to have a few words together. I also recall a pleasant discussion with Ruth and Lynn Carter on Tolkien. Lynn, shared my view that someone should do a 'Tolkien' using (particularly) Norse Mythology. To digress for a moment, I've always been fascinated by tales of Odin, Thor, Loki et al and regret that there haven't been more fictional treatments using the theme in modern fantasy - offhand I can only recall Ed Hamilton, Lester del Rey, and de Camp & Pratt using the background for works of novel length.

Dick & Pat Lupoff were two very nice people who I'd only vaguely heard of before visiting New York. They had a few copies of the first issue of their fanzine XERO along and presented me with a copy - and a very creditable first issue it is. I, in return, passed around a copy of BASTION - I only had a couple of copies"with me so had to ask for it back, but people seemed reasonably impressed, particularly with the fine artwork Eddie Jones had done. BASTION had been mailed out only a couple of weeks before I left for the States and was only just beginning to thud through American letter-boxes - I think Ted White was the only NY fan who'd got his copy so far.

The party went on until around three in the morning, by which time I was pretty beat so I accepted with alacrity Dave & Ruth's suggestion that I make use of one the the rooms of their suite to save using up any more energy that night...alternatively, I could have gone out to Staten Island, or to Ted and Sylvia's place in Greenwich Village, but I was ready for some sleep. I eventually dozed off with thoughts of the kindness of the various NY fan in my mind, the two fine parties, and an excellent 'schlick' Harlan did on a 'meeting' he'd had with John Kennedy!

AS NOON BROKE OVER THE HUDSON

I slept untill late in the morning, and woke with a pleasantly clear head - I'd kept to Vodka and Beer (in separate glasses, of course) a combination which, with me, seems to obviate hangovers. Dave and Ruth were going up to Monticello for the day, and I was to phone Larry, and Ted, and make arrangements for the day ahead. Larry, it seemed, had to go into the office again as there was some minor crisis with CARS MAGAZINE (which Larry edits), so we arranged to meet later.

September 1st

Ted, had had a call from one of his editor's with a fairly urgent summons so I arranged with Ted also, to meet at the Chesterfield in the early evening - meanwhile, I could find more than enough to interest myself in around New York. Hell, I could have spent a whole three weeks exploring NYC, and whilst both Ted & Larry seemed concerned at having to leave me to my own devices, I was quite pleased at the idea of finding my own way around.

I bid a temporary farewell to Dave and Ruth, deposited my bags in the Chesterfield's luggage-office and set out to see what I could see. I wandered up to Times Square, got myself a map of the city from the Information Center, and proceeded to study it. It was a much pleasanter day than the day before had been, the sun was shining brightly and visibility looked like being excellent, so I decided to visit the top of the Empire State Building. I was in no hurry, so decided I might as well walk the few blocks and do a little sight-seeing along the way - and get some food.

The Times Square area of New York can perhaps best be compared to the West End of London, particularly the Leicester Square district. It's the entertainment centre and all around are theatres and cinemas showing the latest releases. 42nd Street, is a fascinating sight with cinema after cinema right next door to one another, neon-signs vying for prominence. Around here, too, as in most similar areas in other big cities I've visited are the Tourist-Traps, the shops, windows packed with goods and glaring poster-cards offering fabulous bargains - the type of shop which has a Everything-Must-Go-Lease-Up-Sale one week, followed by a Grand-Reopening-Sale the next. Being in the retail trade I found it interesting to compare them with the British 'product'. There's very little difference. Apart from more neon!

I sauntered slowly along Broadway, assimilating the New York scene, window-shopping here and there, until the pangs of hunger got me into a cafeteria (self-service) eatery. Which seems as good as any a lead in for a few comments, comparisons, between American Restaurants and British. Boyd Raeburn, had kindly listed me a number of the cheaper but reliable chains of eateries to be found around New York, and this list now came in rather useful. The particular one I chose was a Whelan Drug Store, where I had quite a pleasant meal at the Lunch Counter. There's little difference in the standard of cooking between this, and similar places I visited in the States, and the British equivalent. The menu though, is generally much more comprehensive in America, and the food is frequently more attractively presented. The price - is more than twice as much.

American eating habits in general, don't differ so very much from British - there are certain dishes native to America which aren't found in the U.K. (Corn on the Cob, for instance), but generally it's more of a variation in presentation than in diet. In America you eat from your side-dishes, whereas in Britain you empty your side-dishes onto one large plate. The knife-and-fork routine is well enough known for comment to be superfluous. Cooking in the various fan's homes I had the pleasure of visiting was superior to all but the best restaurant's visited, the same applies in England. One difference is that American's mix their food while eating more than the British.

September 1st

For instance, at breakfast times...with scrambled eggs, bacon, toast and marmalade on the table. The British habit is to eat the eggs and bacon and then tackle the toast and marmalade - the American will put butter and marmalade on his toast and eat it with the egg and bacon. I suppose it all stems from when, surrounded by Indian's, the hardy pioneer's ate everything as quickly as possible!!

Having satisfied my stomach, I continued my amble along Broadway in the direction of 34th Street. Noticing along the way such things as the large number of hand-trucks being used for deliveries (generally by negroes), and the surprisingly high number of beggars around. I was particularly croggled to see several Nuns begging - just why this should have croggled me I'm not too sure, it's a common enough sight in Italy, and other Continental countries if not in Britain - but for some reason it surprised me. Probably, I think, because most people who haven't visited America tend to think of all American's as rich!

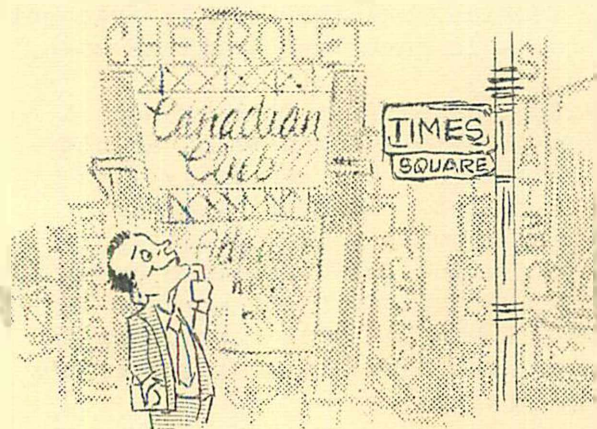
At 34th Street I turned off Broadway and walked the couple of blocks to the Empire State. I spent several minutes gazing up at the skyscraper - a crowd didn't form around me so I guess it's a fairly common sight to see people standing around looking up around there, and I'm not surprised - then entered the Observatory entrance.

As most people will know, there are two observatories, one at the 86th floor level, the other at the 102nd. I went straight up to the 102nd, pausing only to change elevators and let my stomach catch up with me at the 86th. Visibility, according to the downstairs ticket-seller was between fifteen and twenty miles - it was excellent. It was more...

I'm a relatively blase person, not given to enthuse - overenthuse - I'm old enough to have (alas) lost my sense of wonder about a great many things. I've seen some rather spectacular sights here and there - the Acropolis in Greece, the Pyramids and Sphinx, the Swiss Alps, Ron Bennett after an all-night party... The view from the Empire State is Magnificent. I felt a tentative "Coshwowoboyoboy" forming round my tonsils as I looked out on the vista before me. Really fabulous.

I spent about two-hours up there, I think, wandering slowly round and round the gallery, taking photos, and sating my eyes. I'd have liked to stay there until night descended on the city, but thoughts of a forlorn Larry and Ted waiting disconsolately at the Chesterfield finally drove me in the direction of the down elevator.

It had taken me roughly an hour, elapsed time, to get to the Empire State, so I allowed myself a similar amount of time to saunter gradually back to the Chesterfield. I walked fairly quickly back to the Times Square area, and having a half hour to spare, dived into a bar for a couple of beers. It was still very hot and humid, and although the humidity wasn't noticable 'up top' it was down in the canyons. Those beers went down very nicely indeed.



September 1st

I reached the Chesterfield again just before 6p.m., and a few minutes later Larry arrived. I was to stay out at Larry & Noreen's Staten Island home that night, and Dave & Ruth were to collect us in the morning and we were to drive out to Pittsburgh en masse. Ted White had also offered to drive me out to Pittsburgh, but he was departing New York at about 3 a.m., and I felt that the extra hours sleep gained by travelling later, with the Shaw's and Kyle's would come in very useful at the con. It did! Larry and I retrieved my bags, and were stood in the hotel lounge talking when I was paged to the phone - it was Ted, he was just leaving Christopher Street and suggested that we rendezvous at the nearest Subway to save time.

Larry, reminds me very much of Harry Turner...not so much as to appearance but as to personality. He's a quiet, unassuming type with a fine turn of conversation and wit. We walked slowly towards the subway entrance talking the while of fandom and New York - and the regrettable demise of INFINITY. Science Fiction Editors are pretty dedicated people, I think, I met several who, like Larry, had put out excellent magazines only to have them jerked from under them by impeccable publishers - despite this traumatic experience they all seemed to be willing to give up lucrative (in some cases, much more lucrative) positions to get back to s-f editing.

Ted arrived at the Subway only a few moments after us, and we descended into the bowels of the earth en route to the Staten Island Ferry. Ted White is a subway fan, Subway Fan, and talked interestingly on the subject as we stood, right at the front of the train, and watched the tunnel flash by. The NY subway is not as clean, nor as roomy as the London Tube, and it also suffers from the handicap of being operated by three different companies (using two different guages of track), but it is probably the easiest way to travel in NYC, and certainly the coolest in weather like it was at the moment. I think we travelled by the IRT Line on this occasion, and our destination was South Ferry at the 'sharp end' of Manhattan Island where we'd catch the Staten Island Ferry.

After a twenty-minute ride, we were at South Ferry, and the excellently planned ferry terminal - which copes daily with an amorphous mass of comuters, several thousand in number. We boarded the ferry and, all to soon, the Manhattan Skyline was fading into the dusk. I watched it with a faint feeling of regret, my time in NYC had been all too short. I hope I can get back there, one year, and really explore the place.

I suppose that it was sometime whilst I was in New York that I managed, unwittingly, to start the Pennsylvania Railroad Strike. I've been unable to track this down to a particular incident, and must put it down to the sort of blanket Finangle's Constant effect I seemed to have upon America - ie, if anything can go wrong, it's more likely to do so whilst Bentcliffe's here! Possibly I managed to step, literally, on some Union Leader's toes whilst travelling on the subway...and in a fit of pique he...I'm sorry if it inconvenienced any fans, anyway.

We docked at Staten Island, and caught a local train to Grant City Station. Crossed over the tracks, and pausing only to collect Ted White's black car - which was being overhauled in preperation for the Pittsburgh trip - arrived at Grant Place, the pleasant Shaw domicile.

...AND STATEN ISLAND TOO

In SALVO, a two-page publication of mine distributed with FANAC just after I heard the news that I'd won TAFF, I gave one chapter the heading "I'll See Manhattan, The Bronx, and Staten Island and Too..". The line came from one of my favourite songs, but at the time of writing I didn't know that I'd be visiting The Bronx and Staten Island. Noreen reminded me of this shortly after I got to Grant Place, and we marvelled for a moment at the cosmic mind of fan!!

Larry & Noreen, have a very pleasant home out on Staten Island, and I can well understand Larry suffering the perils of commuting in preference to living in the city. Staten Island, proved to be far less built-up than I'd imagined, and seems like rather a pleasant place to live.

... I got introduced to Mike, the latest edition published by the Shaw's (later I baptised him a hon. member of British Fandom!), and thought it was rather a pity they hadn't named him after a certain well known sage - after all, we could do with a George Bernard Shaw in fandom! By the time we'd got our breath back, from the journey, Noreen had a meal on the table and we all sat down to a very pleasant repast. This was my first contact with Corn on the Cob, and I must say that I found it rather delectable.

During the meal we talked of many things. Ted for awhile held forth on art, and I must admit he rather croggled me by saying that he didn't consider George Barr to be an artist. His contention being that George had a style which was derivative rather than original. It's a logical enough reasoning, but more a matter of semantics than art, I feel - I still consider George to be a very fine artist, but my definition of the word is probably not quite the same as Ted's. Ted, unfortunately, had to leave about the time we finished eating - and I never did get to have the lengthy gab-session with him I'd been hoping to have - we bade him au revoir with cries of 'See you in Pittsburgh'.

The rest of the evening was spent with beer at hand, talking of fandom, and life, and it was all very relaxed and pleasant. I dug out a batch of slides taken at the 1960 British Convention (and kindly loaned to me for the trip by B4B Keith Freeman), and identified the folk who have come on the scene since Larry was over. Larry took me downstairs and showed me the basement, which promises to develop into a Grennell-type fan den before too long has passed. And....round about midnight, we decided we'd better get a reasonably early night in preparation for Pittsburgh. That evening passed very quickly.

ON THE ROAD - OR I'M ALL RIGHT, KERUAC...

Friday morning dawned bright and clear, but I didn't see it do so! I got out of bed around 8ish, had myself a shave, and sat down to breakfast with Larry, Noreen and Mike. We'd just about finished our repast when, with excellent timing, the Kyle Pontiac stopped in front of the house - to be frank it stopped in front of the Shaw house and the one next door, that car is long. Dave and Ruth came in for a coffee. Baggage was loaded into the car trunk. (Where, incidentally, Ruth keeps her collection of magazine first issues, believe it or not!) And we set off...time of departure 8.45 a.m. Pittsburgh bound.

September 2nd

The drive from Staten Island to Pittsburgh was highly pleasant, and without undue incident. I was once more greatly impressed with the distances which can be covered so rapidly on the American road system. We drove down to the southern tip of Staten Island, crossed into New Jersey at Perth Amboy and then joined the New Jersey Turnpike, which by-passes Philadelphia and brought us onto the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Six or eight-lane highways all the way, and we made rapid progress.

We stopped three times en route, once to eat, and a couple of times for liquid refreshment - and to service Mike, who was exceptionally good throughout the whole journey. He slept, or gurgled, pleasantly the whole journey and only burped when he thought a phrase needed emphasis.

I wish now that I'd hired a tape-recorder for my stay in the States, both during this and other car-rides highly entertaining conversation took place but my memory isn't good enough to recall it verbatim. I probably should have taken more notes, but I was too darn busy talking myself, and generally taking in the scenery, male, female, and landscape. Suffice it that I couldn't have driven to Pittsburgh with more congenial and kindly people.

The countryside through which we passed was quite pleasant - flat at first, and then more rolling as we passed through the Kittatinny Mountains et al...the Kittatinny Mountain Tunnel struck a response in my mind and after some head-scratching I recalled that I'd had a postcard depicting it only a few months back from Dick & Pat Ellington 'en route to the Land Of The Publishing Giants'. We didn't stop in that area or I could have sent them a postcard. Pity.

We turned off the Pennsylvania Turnpike at about five in the afternoon, onto route 22 for Pittsburgh. It was at this time that Dave and Ruth made the only error of the journey - they let me navigate into Pittsburgh! I was the only one with a street map of Pittsburgh, and in a weak moment Dave asked me for directions. "All right," I said, "you continue on this road until you come to Grant Street, turn right on Sixth, first left and You Are There." Dave followed my instructions and we arrived at the entrance to the Penn-Sheraton, the only trouble was we were on the wrong side of the street and had to go about five miles out the other side of town before we could turn round, and come back on the right side! I think I must have been holding the map upside down.

There was no trouble at all in identifying the convention hotel when we did get back into town, it had a legend on the marquee proclaiming "Welcome to Pittcon - Fandom Is Just A Hobby". We drew up outside, unloaded ourselves and baggage and (with the help of a couple of porters) staggered into the lobby. The first fan in sight I recognised immediately, Forry Ackerman; I turned to greet him and bumped into Boyd Raeburn and Bob Silverberg - for a moment it seemed like the Loncon all over again. There were one or two (!) people I hadn't met there though, and I recall particularly being introduced to Joni Cornell. That is a thing one doesn't forget in a hurry...definitely a Harrison Three-Star, Joni.

I joined the melee around the registration desk and tried to find whether Schuy Miller (with whom I was sharing room 762) was anywhere around. He wasn't visible at the moment, and my main need was a wash and brush up so I took my bags up to the Kyle/Shaw suite and cleaned up there.

September 2nd

Throughout my journeyings, and particularly at the convention, I had difficulty believing that I was actually there, in America, and at an American Convention. Pinching myself didn't help at all, but if it was all just a day-dream I was determined to take full advantage of it. The fact that there were quite a number of people I'd already met (in England) around favoured the illusion that it was just a day-dream - later, after the convention, Bob Pavlat and I made out a list of thirty fans who were at the convention who I'd previously met. But I'm digressing....

There I was in the suite Dave, Ruth, Larry, Norcen, and Mike were sharing, I'd washed, put on a clean shirt and felt ready for almost anything. "You go ahead," they said, "we're going to unpack and rest for an hour....but if you're free later on join us for dinner in the Riverboat Room".

I wandered down the corridor, and took an elevator to the 17th Floor, the whole of which was the temporary property of the Pitcon. I don't know how this compares with previous American hotel arrangements, but I was very impressed by it - plenty of room, rooms, and all of them well appointed. I wandered up to the Convention Registration desk, as there was now one immediately in view who I recognised and got my Badge, Programme Book and sundry other bums. I had put on my St. Antony blazer so that people wouldn't have too much difficulty in recognising me (fortunately the hotel was air-conditioned), and I figured that by the time I'd registered there'd be someone noticing it. There was.

I'm not too sure who the first person I met for the first time at Pittsburgh was but I think it was Dick Schultz...by the time I'd turned round from the registration desk I was enmeshed with a group of goodly fen. Phyllis Economou, Bruce Pelz, Bjo, Ted Johnstone, The Busbies, Emile Greenleaf - hell, it was wonderful. I think I must have stood in the same place, just outside the Sky Room, for around an hour while people I'd been wanting to meet for years wandered up and said hallo.

And, after a time, Schuy Miller hove into sight and introduced himself. A very likeable person, Schuy, who was as busy as anything sorting out convention accounts and such and yet found time to be polite and pleasant with everyone. I borrowed his key temporarily, took the elevator down to the 8th-floor, got my bags out of the Kyle/Shaw Suite and took them down to 762. And this, I think, is as good a time as any to express my gratitude to the Pittsburgh Committee for the hospitality tendered to this TAFF Delegate. The room was a fine one, with TV, Air-conditioner, radio, bath, shower, and Schuyler Miller. Every modern convenience, in fact....and all the Committee's liquor was stored there, too!

I did a little unpacking, but my heart wasn't really in it, so I went back up to the 17th. Matter of fact I never did get round to unpacking completely at the convention, but this did save time when it came round to leaving time - but let's not talk of that yet.

About half-way up to the 17th I suddenly noticed that it was 8.30 p.m., and realised that I should have gone to dinner with Dave, Larry, and their respective wives about half an hour ago. I stepped out of the elevator, had a quick look round to make sure they weren't -

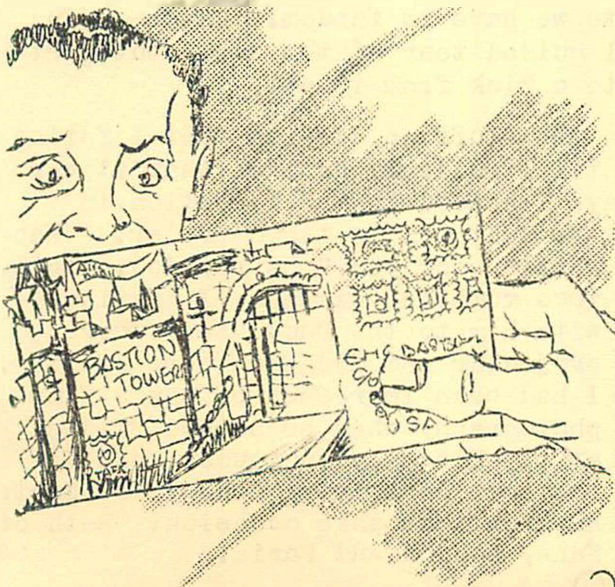
still waiting, then dived back into a down-elevator in the hopes of catching them in the Riverboat Room. I didn't find them (found out afterwards that they'd been unable to get a table and had gone outside the hotel to eat), but got interested in the music which was emanating from the restaurant - it was Mugsy Spanier playing some rather pleasant dixie. So...I went to the bar, ordered a Scotch on the Rocks and sat quietly listening to the group until the pangs of hunger decided me to make a move. The Riverboat Room was pretty crowded, and I didn't want to spend too much time eating, so I decided to go outside the hotel and seek a less pretentious place.

There were no fans evident in the lobby so I strolled out of the Penn-Sheraton, across Mellon Square, down sixth street, then right on Wm. Penn Place...following my nose. It hardly ever fails me when I'm hungry, and sure enough I found a suitable eatery, the B/C Restaurant, quickly. I ordered scrambled-eggs-and-bacon, and sat leafing through the Program Booklet awaiting its arrival. A pretty creditable publication, the booklet, and there was rather a lot of ego-boo for me therein; Ron Bennett's 'Introduction of Britain's TAFF Delegate'...a Welcome ad' from the Potsdam Chapter of the Liverpool Group.

I was so immersed in the booklet, and my meal, that I failed to notice that I had near-neighbours at the luncheon counter until I got up to pay my check. One of the two characters sat nearby got off his stool at the same time to peer at my St. Antony badge. "You must be Eric Bentcliffe?" he said. And that was how I met Lynn Hickman for the first time. His companion was George Willick.

Lynn, reminds me of Hoagy Carmichael, both in his bearing and mannerisms. He was one of the people I'd been most looking forward to meeting and I wasn't in the least disappointed - with some people you can meet for the first time and feel you've known them years, I felt like that with Lynn....even if he did refuse to sing 'Stardust' for me!

We sat and talked, of the new fmz George was editing, and of the hectic publishing Lynn had been indulging in prior to the convention - he'd had Don Ford's TAFF Report to do, and the JD-A ANNISH, he'd run off the first issue of George's mag... The very thought of all this made me perspire.



As George and Lynn had only just started their meal, and as I was faunching to find out what was going on back at the Penn-Sheraton, I bade them a 'see you later', and strolled back from the B/C to the hotel and caught the elevator back up to the 17th. On my way in I enquired at the desk if there was any mail for me, and there was..

An item that calls out for a paragraph all to itself - an 'illuminated' letter from The Liverpool Group. This was (and is) a quite fabulous thing. -

Into which a great deal of loving-care and drunken-inspiration had been put. The envelope alone was quite awe inspiring. It was addressed to "ERIC BASTION-BENTCLIFFE c/o P. Schuyler Miller, Penn-Sheraton Hotel. Pittsburgh, Penn." in gothic script - the front of the envelope illustrated BASTION HALL, an exceptionally well drawn Fortification, and also bore a stamp proclaiming "Taft For President" (which was rather appropriate). The back of the envelope was also illustrated - all the illos having been drawn by Eddie Jones, of course - and inside the envelope was a greeting card.... A G*R*E*E*T*I*N*G C*A*R*D, which bothers description. At the time of writing, I don't know whether it's going to be possible, but I'm hoping to try and get a photo-stencil done for this. It's such a fine-fannish effort that it deserves it.

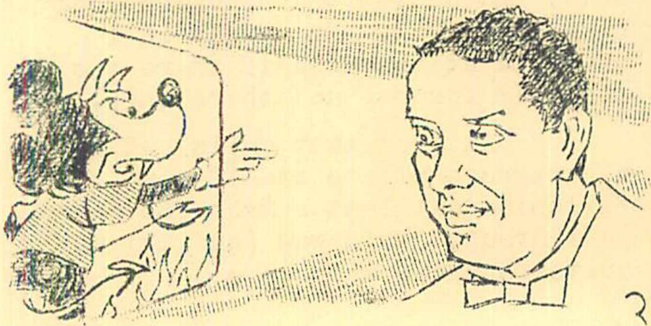
I showed it round at the convention, and most everyone was stunned by it - Bjo for instance wanted to display it in the FAN-ART show, but I'm afraid I was too jealous of it being damaged. It put me in a fine frame of mind for the rest of the convention, and I'd like to thank Eddie, Norman, and the Gang for putting in so damn much work on it. (This weekend, October 22nd, I'm going over to find out what they were drinking that night!)

FORDORAMA

Before going out for a meal I'd phoned Don Ford, he'd mentioned in a letter prior to my leaving for the States that he was hoping to show some of the slides of the photos he'd taken at the Eastercon in London, and I wanted to find out if the show was going on. I also wanted to find out if he was as tall as I remembered! (He wasn't really on top of a high building when he took those rooftop shots of London, you know...) " I'm showing them in the Fort Duquesne Room, around ten," he'd said, " and I'd like you to help me identify anyone I can't."

It was getting close to ten by this time, so I got out my program book and checked the location of the Duquesne, and headed in that direction. I got side-tracked though, tookna wrong turning and ended up in the Monongahela Room where the ART SHOW was displayed - and it certainly deserved the title, there was some exceptionally fine art on show and I don't think that hardly anyone in fandom had realised before this just how many fine artists we have in fandom. Later on in the convention Bjo gave me a personal guided tour of the show, but just wandering around by myself I got quite a kick from it all.

I was so derved interested in the stuff on display that I failed to note that the time was passing, until I suddenly noticed that it was past ten o'clock. Tearing myself away, I headed in the direction in which I hoped the Duquesne was - only to meet Don in the corridor. "Has it started?" I asked. " We've been waiting for you," he replied. Sotto voce mumbling excuses, I hurried with him to the Duquesne...where projector and audience were waiting. I had been impressed by Don's fine photography when he showed slides at the Kingsley in London, and I was even more intrigued by the shots he showed on this occasion. Both of fans, London and Paris.



September 2nd

Don, obviously, goes to a great deal of time and trouble when preparing his slide-shows, both in selecting the slides and arranging them to provide maximum appeal. Many of the scenic shots of London were minor masterpieces, and even the ones of fans indicated that, in most cases, fans are human! I'd like to have Don's talent with a camera - and possess his equipment, too. I'm afraid that I wasn't a great deal of help during the slide-show for the few people Don couldn't recall, I couldn't either. I knew the faces, but couldn't fit names.

Apart from affirming my intention, one day, to take up photography, the slide session had the effect of arousing my thirst - I think it must have been the subliminal message in the Eastercon shots which were the cause of this... So, as the show ended, I congratulated Don, and headed for the Sky Room, the bar-room. Dick Schultz and Emile Greenleaf had a similar thought in mind, and we got beer, a table and sat talking for awhile. Dick, was very much as I'd expected him to be, an interesting character with a good sense of fun, and, I think, probably one of the best-hearted characters in fandom. Emile, too, I very much enjoyed meeting - he was nowhere near as tall as I'd imagined (I'd had a head and shoulders photo from him), but the rest of him matched my previous mental image of him quite closely. He did a brave and noble thing later, too, introduced me to Marion Mallinger, his girl friend!

Emile had sent me an article on "Lest Darkness Fall", prior to the convention and we were talking about what an excellent film this would make when Emile noted that Sprague de Camp was sat a couple of tables away. We went over, I got introduced, and we talked for a few minutes - Sprague is one of the few people I've met who 'suits' a beard, he has an imperial, neatly trimmed, and it fits his personality. Dressed in doublet and hose, he would look completely at home at the court of Elizabeth I. His speech, mannerisms, and bearing too, are rather those of a former sea-dog returned to court favours for the Navy from the monarch....and he'll probably shoot me if he reads this!

I was getting interested in the conversation revolving around his table, when someone nudged me and said the parties have started... I was intending to get a reasonably early night, but not yet to bed... and I was eager to compare the American brand of convention party with the British. (Allright! I know I don't have to make excuses..)

I'm not quite sure which rooms I visited that night, and if anyone can give me an account of my meanderings I'd be greatly pleased! I was carrying a notebook in my pocket in which, from time to time, I'd jot down the room numbers of people who invited me to parties, however I was in no mood to take notes at length during the convention and, as far as the Friday and Saturday nights go I'm unsure just which rooms I did visit. I think I started the night off by a visit to the Seattle suite, room 522, where I got wedged, very pleasantly, in a corner with Jean Young, Phyllis Economou and Elinor Busby - this was a very fine start to convention partying. Er, Buz and Andy were there too. Some kind person put a glass in my hand and I was happy. Sandy Cutrell was playing the guitar and singing 'workers' songs, and there was a delightful smoke-filled room atmosphere - Phyllis was adding to this with cigarettes which did not contain any tobacco, which rather seemed like cheating! Phyllis, is nice, she'd been one of my TAFF proposers, and we'd corresponded, -

albeit irregularly, for lo-these-many-years (she also wrote one of my favourite pieces of fan-prose, for the first issue of TRIODE - which I intend to reprint one of these days). These alone are reasons why I should like her, her friendly personality and charm are two more. To use the vernacular, she's a red-headed doll'...

F. M. BUSBY THIS IS YOUR WIFE!

Elinor Busby was one of the three people I met at Pittsburgh who seemed more 'English' than 'American' (the other two were Norm Metcalfe and W. Weber..). I'm not sure just what gave me this impression about Elinor, but she seemed to have little or no accent, and her style of dress...the way she wore her hair... I took an immediate like to both her and Buz - people, like Lynn Hickman, with whom I felt myself immediately at home. Jean and Andy Young fell in this category, too, I'd spoken to Andy on the phone in England just before leaving for the States and he'd sounded like someone I'd like to meet - he was in Liverpool at the time and it says much for his stamina that he'd been at the Shorrocks almost two hours and his voice was not yet slurred!

If this chronicle contains, for anyone, too many brief reactions of mine to meeting people, like up above...well, I'm sorry, but my main reason for wanting to win TAFF was to meet people, and I feel that I should give this facet of the journeying coverage here. Besides, I feel like writing about them.

After spending some time at this party, I decided I'd better spread myself around a little and it's round about here that my memory gets hazy - I do recall being in a corner in another room-party with Elinor, Phyllis, and Jean, tho' and talking with Ed Wood about science-fiction, and hearing Randy Garret sing for the first time, and hoo-bay it was quite a night!

Sprague shaved with toothpaste this morning.....Avram Davidson.....

Which seems a rather suitable interlineation to use at this time, for I almost did the same thing. I awoke around 9.30a.m., and didn't exactly leap out of bed, however I had brought a supply of alka-seltzers with me, and by the time these had done their job and I'd had some scrambled eggs and bacon I felt more like a Harrison Approved Taff Representative again...

Don't think I've mentioned as yet the two badges which Eddie Jones had designed and drawn for me to wear at Pittsburgh. One of these proclaimed that Harrison Approved Me, and was mounted on a red, white and blue ribbon - the other bore the legend "MAD PRODUCTIONS TALENT SCOUT". Both brought some intriguing comment...and let me say that if, by wearing the former, I have furthered the Cause of Harrison, I am Proud!

I spent what was left of the morning investigating the various displays, and, of course, meeting people. I wandered over to the HELP stand where copies of Forry's professional fanzine were being given out, and Forry (kind soul that he is) entrusted to my arms the delectable morsel of femininity who was handing out free copies, whilst he took a photo. I have it here...Cor, Mate! Other fanzines, please copy...

HELP, is rather good, too...and I don't say this just because Forry has offered to let me have her phone number next time I get to the States. I'd rate it, definitely, as superior to MAD at the moment, and there are some examples of offbeat humour in the three issues I have.

I think it was during the morning session that I first met Buck and Juanita Coulson, and re-met Ellis Mills. Ellis spent so much time in Europe that the last few British cons had not seemed quite the same without his happy smiling face around, and brews of kool-aid (which nowone but Ellis would drink!). I tried to talk him into talking the air-force (or anyone) into sending him back over, and I think that he was pleased at the idea. Buck, and Juanita were much as I'd expected them, and didn't seem to show the strain of putting out monthly YANDRO's at all. Such energy.

Since I'd had a late breakfast (I never did miss breakfast at the convention, but I did eat it during the afternoon on more than one occasion!) I didn't particularly feel like eating lunch before the program started, so I stayed in the Allegheny Room talking to folk such as Boyd Raeburn, The Silverbergs, Hal Shapiro, Lee Ann Tremper, and Dick Eney. I congratulated Dick on his fine job of work on the second FANCYCLOPEDIA, and wondered if his beard had grown whilst he was working on it! A Goodly Fan.

In the midst of an argument with Boyd as to whether he had a British accent....I suddenly recalled that I had a poster with me, which had been sent by Tony Walsh of the Cheltenham Group and which advertised the coming 1961 British Convention. I excused myself, and got this from my room and went in search of a suitable piece of wall on which to display it. There was a sizable amount of blank space at the bottom of the poster so I thought it would be nice to have people autograph it, and then make it available to the convention committee on my return so that they could display it at Kettering (or Gloucester).

Bjo kindly offered to write, in suitable gothic lettering 'please autograph for British Fandom', and she and Ron Ellick helped me stick the thing on the wall at the entrance to the FAN-ART exhibition. A large number of fen did append their signatures and the poster will be shown at Easter.

I stayed for awhile in the fabulous FAN-ART room, and chatted with Ron, Bjo, Bruce Pelz, Ted Johnstone and Jack Harness. Bruce brought out the stills of the film " The Musquite Kid" to show me, and I was greatly impressed. The film itself was to be shown that night, and after seeing the stills I was eagerly looking forward to seeing it. Bjo, meanwhile, gave me a tour of the art-show. -



I've already mentioned my reaction to this fine assembly of art - there was some very fine stuff on display, and I only wish I could include a full colour reproduction section in this book; for that would give it the justification I'm unable to provide in prose. I was impressed. I was impressed with Bjo, too. One of the most talented fans, widely talented that is, I've met, and a nice friendly personality to go with it.

In fact, all the West Coast crowd were very likable and I only wish it had been possible for me to see them in their natural habitat. I never got to see Ron Ellick do his famous Squirrel Impersonation, but what I did see of him I very much liked - the whole West Coast crowd seem very close to the Liverpool Group in their outlook, and I can't give higher praise than that.

During the morning I'd been handed a whole sheaf of fanzines from various kindly fan-ed's, and I went down to my room shortly before 1p.m. to briefly unburden myself. This was definitely a fanzine convention, I was amazed at the number being distributed at the convention, and I gather that there were an exceptionally large number even for an American-con - elsewhere in this publication you'll find a list of the ones I was handed, I doubt that I'll find time to comment on them all in the near future and I hope everyone will accept the listing as a temporary acknowledgement. They were enjoyed.

DAIN IT, THEY STARTED ON TIME

It's become almost a tradition in British Fandom that convention programs should start late, in fact I recall one con when everything was ready to begin and the start was deliberately delayed to avoid shocking anyone too much - at least, that was the committees story! You must forgive me then if I re-iterate that the program started on time. Or else my watch was slow.... I found myself a seat in the Urban Room, with Jean and Andy Young, and listened with interest as the convention was declared officially open. Dirce Archer, and Bob Hyde made fast work of this, and then passed the mike to Sam Moskowitz, one could almost see the mike shudder (Sam Doesn't really need a mike).

Sam started off by introducing Guest Of Honour, James Blish... and then proceeded to say a few words about, and introduce the audience to; Sprague de Camp, Fred Pohl, Hal Clement, Randy Garrett, Bob Silverberg, Isaac Asimov, Hans Stephan Santesson, myself, The Sanderson's, and (as bidders for the 161 Convention) Buz and Elinor Busby, and Bjo Trimble. Sam has a nice loud, clear voice, but he hasn't the humour of a Ted Tubb, a Pete Daniels, or a Harlan Ellison, I'm afraid. All the introductions were greeted with applause, as each of the persons named rose (or staggered, depending on how many parties they'd been to the previous night!) to their feet.

First item on the program proper, was the TAFF AUCTION BLOCH, for which Ike Asimov and Sam shared the duties of auctioneer. They did an excellent job for TAFF, and Ike's wit counterbalanced Sam's getting-on-with-the-job. Together they raised a very handsome sum, and as I'm now a TAFF administrator I'd like to thank them most sincerely for giving the present campaign a fine send-off. Sprague de Camp was first under the hammer, and he went for 25dollars. -

Randall Garrett brought \$7.29 (!). E.E. Smith, \$8.00. Hal Clement went for \$12.00. Willy Ley for \$15.00. And Judith Merrill - "The first time was last year," said Ike, "But she's healed up since!" - \$15.00. Ike, himself was then sold, and brought \$16.50. I'm not quite sure who I would have 'bought' if I'd had the money to lash out wildly, but I rather think it would have been Doc' Smith, and that I'd have put him to work on writing a 'Harrison Meets The Lensman' story for BASTION...

UP ON CREEK WITHOUT A BERGENHOLM

Which is a highly irreverent heading to introduce one of the most fascinating talks I've heard on the authors approach to scien-fiction. Hal Clement was the speaker, and in 'Matter of Gravity' style he proceeded to create a logical and interesting solar system. A booklet was handed out just prior to the talk, entitled "Some Notes on Xi Bootis", not being a science buff I found this of great help. Indeed, I don't think I would have got everything from the talk without it - at times I floundered, but the intriguing concepts put forward, and the fascination of planets being created in imagery on the stage held my attention closely....Hal made fine use of blackboard and models, and must have put a great deal of work into preparing for the talk. Creek, was the sun of the system.

As the next program item didn't seem quite ready to commence, and as I was feeling extremely thirsty, I decided to duck out for a quick beer. I was accompanied on this noble safari by Bob Pavlat, Ruth Kyle, Norm Metcalfe, and Marion Mallinger. We caught the elevator down to the lobby, and visited the Harp and Crown Room. This was tastfully decorated in Olde American, and the waiters wore the garb of the early settlers - not the very early settlers. It was quiet, pleasant, and a fine atmosphere in which to drink beer. This was the first time I'd had chance to sit down and have a chat with Bob Pavlat, he was one of the people I'd most wanted to meet, but as I'd (probably) be seeing him after the con I did rather neglect him during the convention. The 'probably' being due to the fact that I was still teetering on the tenterhooks of whether or not I should/could make the trip to the West Coast. Bob, fine person that he is, said that he'd be pleased to drive me around the mid-West, but if I wanted to head out to the Coast, well, that would be 'all-righty' with him. I decided to wait until closer to the end of the convention before deciding on this, to see how my stamina bore up - it was no use going out to the West Coast with the gang if I was to be exhausted when I got there, like.

Earlier in the day, Hal Shapiro had made me a honorary member of the Misfit's ("Michigan Instigators of Science-Fantasy for Intellectual Thinkers Society"), and presented me with a copy of the "STF & FSY SONGBOOK" the group had prepared and published for the convention. "Rehearsal," he'd said, "is in 757 at 4PM." Inbetween beer and conversation I glanced at my watch, and noticed the hour was fast approaching. It was difficult to decide whether it might not be better if I stayed away from the rehearsal, better for the evening's Misfit Glee Club stage-show, that is. My voice isn't exactly a good one. However, I decided I could just mouth the words when on stage, and leave the singing to those who could. I went to the rehearsal, and it was a lot of fun, and I sang softly and busied myself taking shots with my camera whenever anyone began to look for the source of the sour notes!



I've got a couple of the shots I took, here before me, and prominent on them are Hal, Lee Ann Tremper, Doc' Smith, Juanita Coulson, Dick Schultz, Dave Kyle, Sandy Cuttrell, and Bob Madle. There were quite a few others, too, to swell the sound. The SONGBOOK itself, by the way, is a pleasant adjunct to general fanning, I took it over to Liverpool with me a short while ago and it's possible that the voices of LiG, combined with The Cheltenham Choir may be heard in a selection from it at the next convention over here. We must sing "The Bradbury Hate Song" for Ron Bennett if nothing else!

After a time gurgling noises from my stomach began to compete with the gurgling noises from my vocal chords, and I suddenly remembered I hadn't eaten for several hours. I edged out of 757, not wanting to have anyone think I was leaving because of the quality of the singing, and caught the elevator up to the 17th to see if anyone else also felt in need of sustenance. Stepping out of the elevator I almost knocked over Don Ford (there's a phrase for mental imagery!), who said he and the Cincy Gang were going out to an Italian restaurant 'any moment now' and would I care to join them. I talked to Don for a few moments while the group assembled and then we all headed out to the Naples Restaurant, just a short walk from the Penn-Sheraton. Passing through the lobby, we bumped into Emile Greenleaf and Marion Mallinger, and they were added to the group....which now consisted of Don & Margeret Ford, Doc' Barrett, Ben Jason, Lou Tabakou, Mary Martin, Jean Carroll, Alderson Fry, and a couple of other people who's names, damn it, I can't recall.

It was a fine and pleasant meal, the food and service weren't anything to rave about, but the conversation more than made up for this. Lou sparked things off with a few of his 'cab-driver' stories (which some fan-ed should try and aquire for publication one of these days), and pretty well everyone at the table contributed one or more amusing story.

By the time we'd finished eating, and talking, and got back to the convention hotel it was around 7.30p.m. The Costume Cabaret was to begin in the Ballroom at 8 o'clock, the Fancy Dress judging to be followed by a Floor Show, and dancing. Having been out in the rather humid atmosphere outside the Penn-Sheraton, I decided to have myself a shower and don a clean shirt before the festivities commenced. I'd been preparing for the dancing since arriving at the convention - I had dances booked with Ruth, Jean, Phyllis, Elinor, Joni, Sandra, all the best looking femmes, I wanted to be sharp for the occasion. Thanking the gang for a fine meal, I headed up to 762 and performed my ablutions. This, I think, was one of the rare occasions when my visit to 762 coincided with Schuy being there too, he was living a pretty hectic existence, -

as convention Treasurer (and it seemed, the person everyone came to when they wanted anything out of the ordinary), in fact the previous night he hadn't got to bed at all, having been too busy balancing his books to get any sleep. I'd liked to have seen more of Schuy, the conversations we did have together were interesting and I found, as expected, that our tastes in s-f were compatible.

HAVE A BALL

At a few minutes to eight, I made my way back up to the 17th floor. Lynn Hickman was just finishing a collating session there, he'd gathered a group of volunteers to help put together copies of the JD-ANNISH, and the first half of Don Ford's TAFF REPORT. We chatted for a while and he presented me with a copy of the Annish, - an extremely fine issue - then Bob Pavlat chanced by and we went to see whether the ballroom was filling up whilst Lynn went down to his room to dump the collated mags.

For the next half hour or so I busied myself photographing, and being impressed, by the various fine costumes as their wearers entered the hall. Not all the photos I took have come out, alas, probably due to a certain amount of over-exposure when I snapped Sylvia White, but I have one or two reasonably good shots. Bjo, had on a quite fabulous outfit, "I'm just an ordinary Green Unicorn", she said....Ha! Dick and Pat Lupoff in scarlet Superman (and superwoman?) costumes looked very attractive, and that's one costume which should come in useful this winter, when the weather gets cold! George Heap looked suitably horrific as an Orc from Mordor, and Stu Hoffman matched him for ugliness by wearing a ghastly beast-head - I'm just glad I didn't bump into either of them late at night, in costume that is. Dick Schultz wore a false beard, a uniform, and carried a placard proclaiming "Tucker For Vice"...he looked something like a Cuban revolutionary who had lost his way, and I said to him "There's a telegram from Cuba for you at the desk, it says 'Come home, all is forgotten' and someone named Fidel has signed it!" He laughed. I said that Dick was a Good Man.

STEVE SCULTHEIS WEARS UNPRESSED LOIN-CLOTH

One of the most amusing sights to be seen was Steve in a leopard-skin breech clout, Steve is normally such an immaculate person that to see him semi-nude and slightly dishevelled got a bigger reaction than it would with anyone else. He and Virginia reversed last years order of things; this year Virginia 'covered up' (attractively as a gay 20's flapper) and Steve bared his bosom. I may be old fashioned, but I preferred them the way the photos showed them last year!

Earl Kemp wore one of the most breathtaking costumes, he was garbed from head to foot in close-fitting silver, and I wasn't in the least surprised when he won the award for the Most Beautiful Costume. Doc Barrett did the MCing for this event (Bob Tucker not having made it to the convention), and he got the contestants parading whilst judges, Dick Eney, Phyllis Economou, and Ray Smith selected their choices. I'm glad I wasn't one of the judges for there were many excellent costumes and the choice must have been difficult to make. Apart from Earl Kemp, who I've already mentioned, the awards went to; Bjo Trimble for the Most Original Costume, George Heap the Most Bizarre, -

Stu Hoffman won The Most Monstrous, Steve & Virginia got the award for the Most Humorous, and the Curties Family (garbed as the Five Senses, including 35to50cents) were the Best Group. Everyone kindly paraded around the hall for the benefit of photographers, and the winners went up on stage to collect their trophies, these being Ceramics designed and produced by the West Coast fans.

..And behind that mask of congenital idiocy there's a sub-moronic mind!

Around this time I got introduced to Ellis Mill's family, and talked with them for awhile being careful to play down Ellis's exploits in England...this must have touched Ellis, for rather than offering me a glass of Kool-Aid he bought Bob Pavlat and myself a beer! He, Bob, and I sat talking - for the most part of British Fandom, and the changes that had taken place since Ellis was last over.."and Burgess, and NCW ?" he'd enquire.

FLATTENED FIFTH FANDOM

I was about half-way through my second glass of beer, when the Misfit Glee Club took the stage, and leaving the glass to be guarded by Bob Pavlat (see how much I trusted you, Bob..) I went to join them. The songfest went off pretty well, I think, in spite of my singing, as the group rendered such tearjerkers as " PLEISTOCENIC CLEMENTINE" (Don't know how they expected me to sing this one, I couldn't even pronounce it!). The song I liked best was " The Caves of Steel" which Randy Garrett had composed to the tune of "She'll be coming Round The Mountain" (a song which surely must have had more different sets of words than any other written to it), although the plaintive melody of "THE BRADBURY HATE SONG" (to the tune of "John Brown's Body" went with rather a swing.....like.

" Tell me, Ray, just what is it makes you write of strife ?
Is it a peptic ulcer, or perhaps a nagging wife ?
Take a tip from E. Frank Russell and write on love and life,
You morbid little punk. "

It was all rather fun, and Hal Shapiro (who Organised) and Sandy Cuttrell (who played the piano), deserve a clap on the back or two....as do Juanita Coulson, Bob Madle and Les Gerber, my nearest companions on stage, who managed to drown out my bum notes.

Singing makes me thirsty so, the show over, I headed back to the table where I'd left Bob and my beer...pausing only briefly en route to ogle Sylvia White's costume in case she decided to change in the near future. It was quite a costume, all twelve square inches of it! Filled out admirably. Seeing it made me even more thirsty... I drained my glass in one gulp. Bob and I consulted the program and saw that there was a magic act on next - Clayton Rawson, The Great Merlini. We got ourselves another beer, seats nearer the stage, and watched. He was good, too, and gave an excellent performance. However, it was the next item on the program in which I was most interested, I'd gathered from subtle hints that it concerned me in some way, and before the start of the evening's festivities Bob Pavlat had asked if he may borrow my St. Antony blazer.

I'd acceded to this request, and as I did so certain other inexplicable events began to form a pattern...Steve Scultheis' request for a photo, just before I'd left...Dave Kyle practising an English accent on the drive from New York to Pittsburgh.... It was Obvious Something Was Browning (as Harrison would say), whatever it was I was intrigued.

IS HICKMAN NEW OLIVIER ?

Is Wally Weber second Elvis Presley ?..... Galactic Gaieties was a grand combination of fannish fun and wit, and it did feature a character named Eric Bentcliffe. I'm not going to go into detail as to plot, for Steve Scultheis is to publish this in GUMBIE, but I would like to say that I thoroughly enjoyed it all...and that Lynn Hickman, Steve, Hal Lynch (who was responsible for the script) Carole Hickman, Dave Kyle, Ted & Mabel Sims, Wally Weber, Sandy Cutt-rell, Joe Christoff, and Les Gerber, presented a fine half hour or so of fannish frolic. Lynn Hickman, wearing my blazer, played me, and it was a somewhat eerie experience to sit and watch him...from where I was sitting he looked like me! Wally Weber and Les Gerber surprised me by singing both tunefully and well. And, Dave, your English accent as narrator was pretty good...

The Galactic Gaieties over, I went into the Fort Duquesns room where the Shaggy types were showing films. I just caught the last few minutes of the excellent "THE MUSQUITE KID" (I saw it in entirety on the Monday night), which Bjo (revealing yet another of her talents) had produced - the film ranks with the productions of the Liverpool Group, being greatly superior (in my opinion) to most of the mundane amateur films which I've seen, both in concept, and acting. If Los Angeles and Liverpool continue to make these excellent films it should not be too long before a fannish film festival can be held, and that's an event I'd like to be present at. Bjo revealed (slurp!) even more of her talents in the next film, " The Genie", and then we saw Bill Rotslers imaginative " The Rock Fight".

I'm hoping that the day will soon come when the taping of film will be as relatively inexpensive as that of sound is right now, I've a fair collection of fan produced stuff on tapes which I play back for my own and other peoples enjoyment, and I'd like to be able to do the same with 'tapes of films'. This can be done, of course, at the moment, but the equipment is so fabulously expensive that only the large broadcasting services can afford it...perhaps in another ten years, inexpensive portable machines will be available. I hope so.

LET THE BOOZING COMMENCE

Once again, parties were being held all over the place, and I got to talk and drink with some very pleasant people. I started the night off by going down to the Curties room with Buck and Juanita Coulson, where I had my first taste of 'Home Brew', and this was much superior to most of the American beer I sampled. Smooth, and almost (dare I use the word) 'warm'...rather like British 'mild' beer. Randy Garrett was there singing Gilbert & Sullivan, and Sandy Cuttrell and Juanita replied with folk songs. After a while it got a little crowded in there, though, so I decided to investigate the rest of the hotel. Went up to the Cincinnati Room, 1266, and found there a little more space - momentarily. -

American convention parties follow the same pattern as the British, a sort of lemming like movement will start at any given moment from one room to another, you'll arrive at a half empty room, and five minutes later at least half the people you just left will be back with you. I wonder if fans are developing a special sense enabling them to 'smell' a party from several floors away!

I think it was during the session in 1266 that Avram Davidson and I got to talking again, and he quoted to the group around Mickey Spillane as saying, "If I could make money writing like Thomas Wolfe, I'd write like Thomas Wolfe." And then gave his interpretation of what Mickey Spillane writing like Thomas Wolfe would come out like:-

"I kicked the bastard in the balls, and it was like sunrise in the Great Smoky Mountains, and all the long, long dreams of boyhood..."

A very entertaining character Avram, and possessed of a quiet wit and charm I found fascinating. I've no doubt that I'll get more out of his stories having met him, and this is probably true of most of the authors I met.

I CAN'T REMEMBER WHO'S BIRTHDAY IT WAS BUT

The cake was fine... Sometime later in the night, or earlier in the morning, whichever way you look at it...I found myself again in the Seattle Suite (522). I was talking in a corner with Dick Eney and Lynn Hickman when someone went past with a monstrous slice of one of the most gooey cakes I've ever seen. Someone, or something, was having a birthday...I've a sneaky feeling it was in honour of the Umpteenth Meeting of the Nameless Ones, but I'm not sure. Anyway, the cake was excellent. I'm a bug for sweetstuff and this was, as I said, a highly gooey cake. And whoever, or whatever, you are, Congratulations!

Somewhere about here, I went to bed....

It's difficult to choose, but I think that Sunday was the most enjoyable day of the convention. Everyone had settled down to enjoying themselves, and I knew enough people by now that wherever I went I was sure to find someone I'd met, and with whom I wanted to talk some more. I got up around 10a.m., having been awakened by Schuy taking a shower, he'd actually managed to get to bed for a couple of hours. We talked, while I came awake, and shaved, and then I left him working on his

books whilst I went in search of breakfast. I wanted to be up on the 17th in time for the 'Fellowship Of The Ring' meeting, so I made haste in the direction of the B/G restaurant and there had a quick repast of scrambled eggs, bacon and the trimmings. The black coffee, as usual, did a great deal towards making me feel human again.

Heading back for the Penn-Sheraton, I met Buz and Elinor, who told me of Buz' mortifying experience -



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the previous evening. It seems that they were walking past a Barber Shop, and Buz recognized a type having his haircut as Walter Breen - Walter had had rather a shaggy look about him the past few days - so Buz waved, and shook both his hands over his head in congratulatory vein...and then realized it wasn't Walter Breen, at all!! Buz, I feel for you.

I got back to the Penn-Sheraton, and the 17th, only a few minutes after the start of the meeting of Tolkien fans. I sat down next to Bjo, and listened with interest to the ensuing discussion. Bruce Pelz and Ted Johnstone were chairing the meeting, and to anyone like myself, who finds Tolkien fascinating, the next half hour or so's talk and debate was intriguing. Main point of discussion was the Fellowship Of The Ring, the Tolkien society sparked by Ted, and the form and shape this should take. Everyone present was agreed that a society based on the works of Tolkien was entirely justified, and that it was important that everything connected with it should be handled in as adult manner as possible. I suggested that J.R.R. Tolkien should be invited to become patron of the society, and also (in a slightly facetious mood) that some allowance for the lazy people (like myself) who wanted to join the Fellowship (and who didn't have the time to write a paper on the saga) should be made..."You could have a sort of 'membership' as distinguished from the 'fellowship' and call it The Fellow Travellers Of The Ring!"

It was agreed that the continued development of the society couldn't be in better hands than those of Bruce and Ted, and the meeting broke up with everyone present confident in the future of the Fellowship. (Since the convention I've received the first issue of the journal, I PALANTIR, and if the standard of the first issue can be maintained the society should rapidly gain members. Write to Ted Johnstone, "Bag End", 1503 Rollin St, South Pasadena, Calif. for details.)

Next major program item was the panel "Who Killed Science Fiction", but as this wasn't until 1 o'clock I circulated for a while and talked to people. And had myself a coffee. Apart from the people I'd been looking forward to meeting at the convention, there were a large number of people that I (infidel that I am) had never heard of before, and that I was almost equally taken with....Sarge Smith, for instance, or to give him his full title, Arthur George Smith, curator for archeology at the Firelands Museum, Ohio. Sarge, is one of these larger than life characters who you come across only rarely these days, he reminded me immediately of John Robertson Justice - physically he isn't all that much like him, but in personality.... He's Big in every way, and has a flaming red-beard. It seemed that in the past he used to correspond with Dave Gardner (one time member of the Liverpool Group) and he asked me to give Dave his regards, I promised to convey these and we went on to talk of other things... Possibly the best way to get over the impression of personality and been-everywhere-and-done everything emanating from this man, is to mention that on several occasions John W. Campbell was seen to be listening to him with rapt attention! And I don't intend that as an unkindness to John.

Another person who I hadn't expected to see at the convention was Pete Ogden, a background figure at pretty well every British convention -

for the past seven or eight years. Pete's main interest in s-f is in Edgar Rice Burroughs, and for quite some time he put out a fmz devoted to ERB. He'd recently emigrated to Canada, and intended to move down into the States to live fairly soon.

WHO KILLED THE S-F PANEL

A few minutes before 1p.m. I joined Larry and Noreen in the hall to listen to this panel show - I'd been reading Larry's copy of "Who Killed S-F" in the car en route to Pittsburgh and was looking forward quite eagerly to the continuation of the debate. Earl Kemp and Ted Cogswell were to moderate, with Bruce Pelz putting the fan's viewpoint, Avram Davidson the authors, and John W. Campbell the editors. Marty Greenberg, represented the publishers. It was a highly interesting and lively panel, but it did, I'm afraid wander completely away from the intended subject and get bogged down on the Dean Space Drive...and ASF's change of title...and Dianetics.. and...you get the trend of things? You know I think one of the principle reasons why John W. Campbell is now coming in for so much criticism is because he is a sort of living legend, the man who pioneered adult s-f. If H.L. Gold were to change the name of Galaxy, I doubt if anyone would care two hoots, I'm quite sure that there wouldn't be all the vociferous criticism that ASF's title change has caused.

The panel members started the thing rolling by stating their cases...Bruce Pelz constantly referred to ASF as ASTALOG, which annoyed one of the other panel members. Bruce is a pretty good speaker, and he more than held his own in the ensuing debacle. The best opening speech though, in my opinion, was that of Avram Davidson. I must admit that he did rather boget the subject - he spoke on the nature of the 'Gothic Novel', at least that's what he said he was going to do - but his speech was witty and extremely well delivered. I slipped out of my seat towards the end of it, and handed him a hastily written note requesting permission to publish it. (He kindly acceded to this request, and later typed and mailed me the speech. This will appear in the next issue of BASTION.)

It was after the opening speeches that the fun really began, a duel developed between Bruce and John W.C., the subject got around to the Dean Drive and JWC was attacked on this, and his other 'mistakes' (Scientology, Dianetics, etc) by members of the audience. I'm not sure who won, and I doubt if anyone is, but it made for a fascinating hour of fireworks. I was mildly surprised when it all ended without anyone being lynched! Oh yes, the conclusion reached by the panel was that S-F Was Not Dead, but merely wounded.

SCHTICK TO YOUR GUNS HARLAN

Next program item was Harlan Ellison speaking on "Mainstream Science Fiction in the Sophisticated Magazines". Harlan, as I've mentioned in this report before, is a very good speaker - if anything, I'd hazard a guess that his speed of delivery is occasionally too fast for American audiences - and he knows his subject. He talked of the s-f appearing in PLAYBOY and similar magazines, and made several intriguing points. One was that these 'sophisticated' magazines are actually aimed at a non-existent audience, at the type of playboy most men would like to be, but aren't.

This I think is a very valid assumption....nowone could be quite the epitome of In-ness that the 'average' PLAYBOY reader is, except, possibly, Harlan Ellison!

Harlan and the S-F Panel had combined to work up a thirst for me, and, as having not had any lunch, I also felt somewhat peckish, I decided to take advantage of the brief break in the program to seek refreshment. Just as I was heading for the door, Don Ford hailed me; earlier in the day I'd asked him to introduce me to Ed Emsh if the occasion presented itself, and it seemed that he'd just found Ed. Ed, proved to be a very pleasant person, and acceded to the request I made of him to draw me an illustration for the cover of this report. Ordinarily I wouldn't boondoggle an artist who lives by using 'his' talents, but I felt that this was a special 'thing', and certainly Emsh was most decent about it. The drawing speaks for itself. Thanks, Ed.

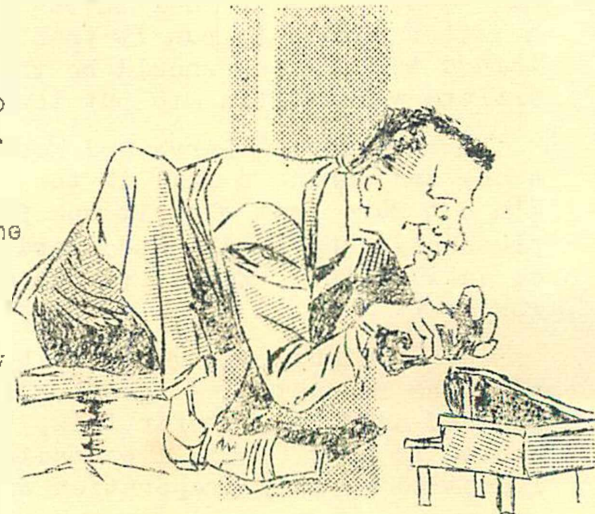
LES NIRENBERG ON TOAST

After chatting with Ed Emsh for a few pleasant moments, I went out for a snack with Phyllis Economou, Elinor and Buz. I don't recall the name of the place we ate at, but it was a lunch-counter affair, where the service was good, and the food quite edible. Les Nirenberg, Ted & Sylvia White and one or two other folk were also eating there, so the waiting time was enlivened with fannish conversation. And, in case any further testimony is required, Les Nirenberg is Les Nirenberg, and not Boyd Raeburn or anyone else. A lively personality whose vitality gives Boyd cause to worry, mayhap!! At last, a Toronto fan who is not blase... But I'm not belittling Boyd, here, let it be understood...he isn't in the least bit blase when you get to know him, as I've had the pleasure of doing.

The meal, and conversation stretched out a little longer than intended, and I missed a little of the program, but getting to know Phyllis and the Busbies better was worth it. We eventually wandered back to the Penn-Sheraton, taking a few photos along the way - only one of mine came out, alas, and that appears to have been taken with a shaky hand. It's of Phyllis and I, so who did I have the nerveshattering effect on Buz, or Elinor?

NOTES FROM THE VOOVURK OUT

Next item on the program was the fannish play to be presented jointly by LASFS & CHIA. However, they weren't quite ready to start when I got back into the hall, and a sort of irresistable urge made me wonder over to the grand piano at the front of the hall. Something comes over me when I find a decent piano in tune, and this was both. I don't know how many people realise it, but when you play the piano only by 'ear' the fact of the piano being in tune can make a fantastic difference to your playing - to mine, anyway.



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I played a selection of the Top Ten Tunes, such as "I'm Dreaming Of A Ted White Christmas", and "The Teddy Bear Sims Picnic", and generally enjoyed myself whilst the actors readied themselves. Quite a crowd gathered round the piano, and at one time Harlan Ellison was giving an impersonation of Frank Sinatra...all I need now is to see Frank Sinatra do an impersonation of Harlan Ellison - and the day may yet dawn!

AND ON THE 7TH DAY PELZ CREATED EARTH

In the play, that is! And it was a quite excellent fannish piece, with Bruce and Ruth Berman particularly outstanding. The title was "THE PURPLE PASTURES", and it had been adapted by Terry Carr from the story of the same name by Carl Brandon. Bruce, played the part of the Great Ghod Ghu, with juicy abandon, and had many excellent lines.... GHU: "Ghu demands respect!" ZEBA: "Who does he think he is, Randy Garrett?" Ruth, played ZEBA, and at rather short notice I understand (owing to Bjo having talked herself into loss of voice), but there was no indication of hesitancy as one might have expected. Earl Kemp as RUCKER, Ted Johnstone as GABRIEL, Ron Ellik as DESHEE, Jack Harness as 3rd Fangel....Bruce Henstell, Les Gerber, and Mark Irwin as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd NEO's - heck the whole cast did a good job, and within the limits of stage and hall, the play went over very well. I'd like to import the whole cast to give it again in England, at Easter.

Willy Loy, was next on the bill, in the Urban Room. He gave an excellent talk on "The Natural History of some Unknowns". The type of talk which makes me want to wade right in on the subject matter of the talk, and do some research of my own....but with the hobbies I have already aquired, and the lack of time to indulge them...it's perhaps as well that I'm too lazy to do so!

From the Urban Room I wandered into the FAN-ART EXHIBITION again, and sat talking for a while to Bjo, Larry and Norcen. You were talking about the Artwork Bureau which Bjo is going to try and set up. And this, I think, is an excellent idea - I've always been fortunate enough in my fanzine-editing to have people like Eddie Jones and Arthur Thomson and Terry Jeeves willing to illustrate, but variety of art, as well as material is something to be strived for, and this could be made a much easier goal if the idea becomes fact. And I can't think of a better person to run it than Bjo. I suggested that one of the first things to be done, should be the distribution of information on which artists were willing to put their work on stencil, or master.

It seemed Larry and Norcen had been out shopping that afternoon, and during a lull in the conversation they made me an award.... I'm not sure just what it was for, but it was very touching, and pleasant...and I have the award, a Furry Bat Named Eric, here before me as I write. Was it to remind me of someone at the Convention, I wonder? ..

Tonight, was going to be another Big Night, starting at 6.30p.m. with the Banquet, and speeches....and I was to make one of them. I hadn't roughed anything out for this, but had a vague mental idea of what I wanted to say. I dislike reading a set speech and prefer to ad lib, so I decided my only preperation would be a shower, and a change of shirt.

Providing my morale is high I can usually ad lib quite well. In fact, over the past couple of years I've noticed a tendency in myself to actually enjoy speech-making (before a fan-audience, anyway). A few years ago, the thought of going up on stage and addressing a throng was somewhat terrifying to me, but I seem to have developed a sudden disregard for the consequences.... I'm not sure that this is a good thing....

I was at rather a disadvantage over my predecessors when it came to speechmaking at a convention, too. Walt Willis, for instance, merely got up on stage and recited the alphabet backwards when he made a speech in the States - such was his accent that nowone understood a word, and everyone applauded wildly! Bulmer, Berry, and Bennett all had sufficient face-fungus to mumble into when a convenient phrase wouldn't come to mind! And here was I - bare-faced, and stuck with it! I put my faith in Harrison, and took an elevator up to the 17th...

ASIMOV FOR HORS D'OEUVRE - BLISH FOR DESSERT

The Ball Room looked very impressive, set out as it was with tables groaning with cutlery. It wasn't quite time for dinner to be served when I got to the hall, so I stood and talked with Dick Eney and Wally Weber for a while. There was a balcony round one side of the hall, and up there were the folk who couldn't afford, or didn't want to sit down to the banquet. I saw Dick Schultz, hanging over the rail with a hungry look, so I purloined a bagel off one of the tables and threw it to him. (I trust that you kept this as a souvenir, Dick, and didn't actually eat it!?!)

Along the greater part of one-side of the hall was a long table set on a dais, and with a speakers-mound in the middle. This was for the Committee, Guests of Honour, Speakers, etc...and I was sat between Schuy and Burroughs fan Bob Hyde (Convention Secretary). Poor Schuy got called away from the table by various people in dilemma at about five-minute intervals, at the start of the meal, but eventually he managed to get set down. I talked with him, and with Bob, alternately during the excellent meal - and it was an excellent meal, hardy convention-goers acknowledged that this was one of the best meals they'd had at a banquet. 'Why,' even the peas are soft!'

I enjoyed the meal, and the conversation, and felt pleasantly relaxed. When the sound of knives clashing, and jaws grinding had finished, Ike Asimov stood up to introduce the first speaker. I've already mentioned that Ike is a very good, and very witty, speaker, and during the Banquet and after he excelled himself. After getting the audience nicely warmed up, he introduced Don Ford. Don, spoke of his TAFF TRIP to England, and his attendance at the Easter Convention, and said many kind things about British Fandom - he also libelled U.K. fandom by saying that we never used ash-trays...which just isn't true, Don, we do use them, for keeping pins, and buttons in!

And then he introduced me.... I stood beside him near the mike, and cracked, " I'm the new pocket-sized Taff Delegate!" People laughed, and Don went hurriedly back to his seat... I thanked American Fandom for having me, "...we British, as you know, are noted for understatement and, believe me, when I say that I'm pleased to be here, that is an -

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unaccustomed as I am to public speaking



- understatement!" And believe me, I mean't it. " I'd liked to have brought a few things over with me," I continued, " for various fans this side of the Pond. A new bicycle for Andy Young.....A set of Bar-Bells for Steve Scultheis....A Tennis-raquet for Harlan Ellison (who had been wandering around all day in a white shirt and slacks)....and, a new Tommy Steele Record for Boyd Raeburn!" I then proceeded to tell of the time Boyd was in Liverpool, when he made a request to hear Tommy Steele (the top British rock and roller of the time), and how afterwards the record was boiled into an ash-tray, and The Tommy Steele Record Boiling Club was formed. It was an anecdote that went down quite well, I think. In fact, the audience was very kind to me all the way through, and laughed in the right places - hope I didn't bore anyone, and thanks for clapping.

I finished my speechmaking off by re-introducing Ike Asimov. " And now, " I said, I'd like to hand you back to that well-known member of the A.A.A. - you've heard, of course, of the A.A.A., The Alcoholics Automobile Association...for people who want to Drive themselves to drink! " However, before Ike could get on his feet to answer this foul calumny, Don Ford came up to the mike and presented me with the results of a raffle he'd organised, and which helped out a lot with my expenses. I wish he'd delayed a couple of moments longer, though, I was eager to hear Ike's reaction to my introduction of him. (It was all in fun, of course, and afterwards he said he'd got an answer ready when Don came up to the mike.) The Good Doctor is a Good Doctor.

The next speech was by James Blish, " A Question of Content", and it was exceptionally good. A well reasoned exposition on the trials and tribulations s-f is presently undergoing. (Norman Metcalfe is to publish this in NEW FRONTIER, in the near future - P.O.Box 336, Berkeley 1, California, is the address to write to.) The content of the speech was exceptionally fine, but it was marred slightly by the fact that Blish hasn't a very good delivery, and he seemed extremely nervous. However, he received a standing ovationnon concluding the speech and certainly deserved this for the work he had obviously put in on it.

It was time now for the HUGO AWARDS to be made, but first of all Ike Asimov had an apology to make, he said he'd earlier mentioned Willy Ley as the 'second best writer of science articles in the field'. And someone had complained at this. " Willy," he apologised, " I'm sorry that you're the second-best science writer in the field!"

IN WHICH I SMOKE HEINLEIN'S CIGARETTE

Then came the HUGO's. The award for the BEST FANZINE went to CRY, and a blushing Wally Weber accepted the trophy for the CRY team to deserved applause. Ed Emsch, took the award for BEST ARTIST. Daniel Keyes received the award for the BEST SHORT STORY of the year, with "Flowers For Algernon" (F&SF). And, The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION again received the accolade of BEST PROZINE. All to the accompaniment of witty words from Ike.

The award for BEST DRAMA went to Rod Sterling, for his TV series "Twilight Zone". Sterling wasn't present, but had sent a letter of thanks, and the HUGO was received by Bjo Trimble for onward conveyance - Asimov said that he'd promised Sterling the award would be delivered by a 'sexy-redhead'...

The BEST NOVEL award went to Robert Heinlein for "STARSHIP TROOPER", and as Ike continued with a few words about the book there was a stir at the back of the hall, and Heinlein himself walked onto the rostrum. He'd travelled all day from Colorado Springs, and had made it with only minutes to spare. He walked along the speakers table, and handed me his cigarette to look after, whilst he said a few words. As there wasn't an ash-tray convenient, I smoked it! If sympathetic magic really works, maybe one day I'll write a novel and receive a HUGO....maybe.

Heinlein, is svelte, sophisticated, kindly, and a gentleman. It was obvious that even the people who were against the theme of this his latest novel, were fond of the man himself, and he received loud applause. As a personality, certainly, Heinlein epitomises his label of 'The Dean of S-F'.

Two further awards were yet to be presented. Hugo Gernsback, was presented with the award to which he had given his name. And then, Ike introduced Forry Ackerman, who awarded the E.E.Evans 'Big Heart' award to Sam Moskowitz for his services to the field.

The business meeting which followed the banquet was lively and well attended, although it did (as convention business meetings usually do!) get it self a little fowled up. Sprague de Camp was in the chair, and he did a pretty good job on the whole, but with amendments to amendments of amendments being made on the subject of Convention Registration Fees, even he got a little confused at times. So did I! A Proposal had been made to raise the registration fee to three dollars - Buz Busby said that Seattle had figured on two dollars - Dick Lupoff proposed that attendee's pay \$.3.00, non-attendee's \$.2.00. - Al Lewis put a counter-proposal to reduce the registration fee - and round about here, when James Taurasi was putting an amendment to Dick Lupoff's amendment of his first amendment, I ducked out for a quick beer.

It was eventually decided that the registration fee should be raised to \$.3.00 for attendees - initial registration fee's being two dollars in North America, \$.1.00 for folk outside the area - the balance to be paid at the convention. Other decisions reached at the Business Meeting were that the HUGO AWARDS should be standardised to the extent that each should feature the rocket-ship designed by Ben Jason, the base of the award being left to the discretion of the awarding body.

September 4th

And, that next years World Convention should be held in SEATTLE. Since nowone else bid for the convention, this was a foregone conclusion, but everyone seemed to be in high favour of SEATTLE being the site so the lack of opposition caused no concern. I registered for Seattle the next morning, but I haven't, alas, much hope of making it! It should be a particularly fine convention, I think, judging from the talents of the host group...and the nice folk I met from Seattle at Pittsburgh.

The Business Meeting was followed by an Auction (at which the indefatigable, and excellent Harlan again did good work), and this should have been followed by the Fanzine Editors Panel. This latter, however, didn't go on....due to various involved circumstances. As I stood listening to Harlan, Lynn Hickman tapped me on the shoulder, and said that, reluctantly, he was going to have to leave soon, and wouldn't be able to chair the Fan-Ed's Panel...and would I like to take over? Lynn, faced an all-night drive, he had to be back in Dixon the next morning, and he had to stop by en route and pick up the Hickman children. "And if I don't leave soon, I'll fall asleep somewhere along the way!"

I bade Lynn a reluctant farewell, with the hope that I'd see him in Dixon, possibly in a couple of days or so, and set about finding the other panel-members to acquaint them with the situation. This was made rather difficult by the fact that several of them weren't at the convention! Dan McPhail, and Bob Tucker hadn't been able to make it. And, Bob Madle said that he'd prefer not to get involved (understandably) for he had a First Fandom Meeting scheduled for about the same time as the Panel was due to go on.

I checked with Dirce, to see if it was okay if I changed things around a little - since four of the original panel wouldn't be available there wasn't much choice in this - and she kindly said that I would make an excellent chairman, and left everything to me. I had a few words with the other survivors of the panel, Buck Coulson and Ron Ellik, and they said they'd be willing to go along with whatever I worked out. I decided to change the theme of the panel to 'Those In Favour of Fmz Vs Those Against' and recruited Dave Kyle, Larry Shaw, and Harlan Ellison to speak against (It should be emphasised that they aren't against fmz, and were merely speaking for purposes of debate) - Ron, Buck, and Bjo to state the case 'For'.

I sat back to await the end of the auction, and an interesting (I hoped) panel session. However, Dirce called me over and told me that the play due to be put on by the pro's had had to be cancelled for the morrow....and that as the auction looked like running for quite a while yet, anyway, 'why not put the Panel on at two o'clock in place of it?'

I got up on stage and made a brief announcement to this effect, and then headed for a party. All this planning had made me thirsty!

I'M COLLECTING EDITORS OF SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES

And that night I met the third one! I spent the earlier part of the early morning in 837, the Kyle/Shaw suite where a most agreeable gathering were gathered. And that was where I met Lester del Rey for the first time (Ted Carnell, and Larry Shaw being the other two SFA Editors).

Lester, like pretty well all the authors I met, proved to be a very interesting talker and very approachable. He, Larry, Bob Silverberg, Daniel Keyes, and Dave were talking about the s-f field generally and I listened in interest and put in the odd word from time to time.

The Suite gradually filled up, and another fine smoke-filled room atmosphere developed. Phyllis Economou was there, Forry, Ingrid, Roger & Mabel Sims, amongst others....and so was Sandra Caton. I don't think I've mentioned Sandra before in this report, she was a Washington fan who Bob Pavlat kindly (and trustingly) introduced me to. Sandra was...er, stacked! She had a very pleasant personality, too. Cor....

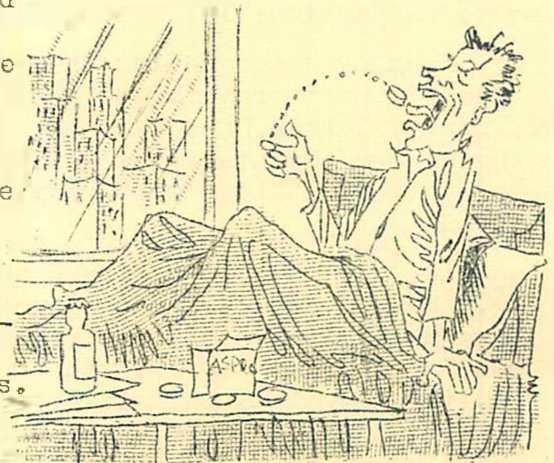
Think I stayed in 837 until about 1:30 a.m., and then with Phyllis went up to 1402...evading en route a mob of Aardvarks (who also seemed to be having a convention in the hotel) who were gate-crashing some of the parties, and who were led by Harriet Kolchek's double. We ducked safely into 1402, but a few minutes later they tried to do a Jim Harmon on the door...however, we all kept quiet and, eventually, they went away.

Roll call in 1402 was Boyd Raeburn, Ger Steward, Ron Kidder, Les Nirenberg, Harlan Ellison, Ted & Sylvia White, Bob & Barbara Silverberg, Buz and Elinor, Phyllis and myself. It was a quiet and wholly enjoyable session, I only wish I hadn't been almost falling asleep on my feet and been able to appreciate the exchanges better. Harlan did a couple more Schtick's, " Well, there was this babe, see, and she was really zonky and 'rooty, and she went down to this square's pad to dig the scene, and....." I wish I'd had a portable taper with me!

UGH IT'S MONDAY

I woke the next morning with the sort of head one can expect to have after several days (and nights) of conventionneering. And I'd run out of aspirin! Schuy, however, still had some left and kind man that he is donated a couple to alleviate my suffering. When they'd had a few minutes to take effect, I took a shower and began to realise I was still alive.....for a moment I thought I'd sunk into one of those black, bottomless pits, so beloved of Raymond Chandler!

On my way down to the Ground for breakfast, I met Joe Christoff and Jerry Paige, who invited me to break my fast with them. We went into the Penn-Sheraton coffee shop, and had : : bacon and eggs and things, and talked. Joe, is built something on the lines of a Mr. Atlas ad', but he isn't in the least muscle-bound in the head. Both he and Jerry have fine Southern accents, and if they are representative of Southern fandom...well, I wish I'd been able to visit Georgia et al, as well. Joe had some of the Pittsburgh newspapers, which featured the convention 'in song and story' - treating, as usual, s-f fans with some facetiousness. Maybe if they ever take us seriously we should start to worry!



September 5th

What was left of Monday morning, followed much the pattern of the previous days as far as I was concerned. I went up to the 17th, and drifted there from one room to another, and from one bunch of fans to another. Occasionally, I sat down for awhile, but I was conscious that the convention was, alas, drawing to a close and I wanted to talk to as many people as possible while I still could. There's always a slight air of sadness about the last day of a convention, I think, as first one person and then another, comes up to you and says goodbye - when you've only just met (it seems) the people, and you don't even know if you'll ever see them again, this is intensified. Damn it.

At 2p.m. the fanzine-editors panel at last went on. Frank Belknap Long had been talking on 'My Friend H.P. Lovecraft', but as I have never had any great fondness for this particular author I'm afraid I skipped the session - catching only the end of it, whilst looking for the other members of the panel. It's probably my loss that I've never been able to get into Lovecraft, certainly the last ten minutes or so of Long's talk was quite interesting. When it was over, the panel assembled gradually on stage, Ed Wood adjusted mike's for us, and we started.

There was one change in the line-up from that most recently intended, Ron Ellick couldn't be found, so to make up the team 'For' fanzines I asked Norm Metcalfe if he'd care to take part. Since four of the panel didn't know, they'd be on it a mere twelve hours or so before (and Norm, new only five minutes before we started) it was obvious things would have to be 'played by ear'... All things considered, I think it went over rather well. Dave, Larry, and Harlan spoke in turn against fanzines, and were replied to by Bjo, Buck, and Norm. However, towards three o'clock I had a series of notes handed to me saying that we were running out of time (there was another auction due), and just as the panel was beginning to get their teeth into things, we had to wind things up. One or two interesting points came up, and I was particularly interested in the 'ethic' as to whether or not professional writers should be approached for fanzine material. I think we resolved this to the effect that if you are editing a good zine, which features discussion on s-f, the pro is going to be quite pleased to receive a copy and request to contribute - but if you want him to write faan fiction for a zine that never mentions s-f he isn't going to be particularly cooperative.

I enjoyed moderating the panel, which didn't need much moderating, and I'm most grateful to the folk I press-ganged into appearing, Dave, Larry, Norman, and Harlan. We didn't reach any earth-shaking conclusions or anything, but I think it was a reasonably interesting hour of natter. Nobody threw anything, anyway!

Harlan took the stage again, when we'd finished, for the close-out auction, and he interspersed quick-fire schticks with fast auctioneering. Some fine artwork was auctioned, including several covers from the Nova mags kindly donated by Ted Carnoll, and I'd have liked to bid for some of this myself...if there hadn't been the thought of the difficulties involved in getting it back home. Mailin' would have been rather awkward, and, well, just think of good old british customs... Picture a scene in a drafty customs hall...

September 5th

" Anything to declare ?"

" Er, nothing really...apart from a painting I got in an auction.."

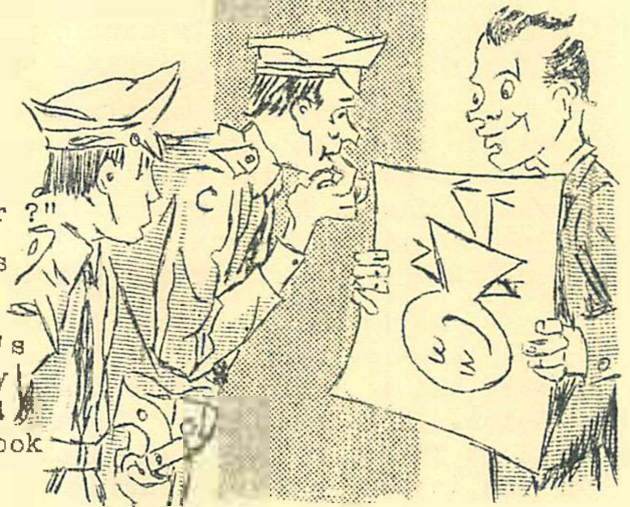
" Got an import license ?"

" Er...no."

" I see. Whose it by, Goya, Constable, Whistlers Mother ?"

" Oh no, it's nothing like as valuable as all that...."

" Never mind the alibi's, let's have a look at it.. (Deadly pregnant silence) My Gawd!! Hey, Fred, look at this. Look like Picasso to you ?.."



I decided not to bid for any of the artwork.

The final item of the program was "The Science Fiction Club - Form and Function". A rather imposing title for what turned out to be one of the most entertaining and amusing program items, as one after another of the panel related amusing anecdotes regarding the various weirdies who had tried to join their clubs. Bob Pavlat was Moderator. Elinor Busby, Howard Devore, Al Lewis, Hal Lynch were the panel. But fans in the audience also contributed - I think it's time some of these stories were anthologized. As I listened, an image came to mind of a certain fan (who, fortunately is no longer with us) who, at every opportunity, would insert into the conversation "And then there were The Chariots Of Fire!"...whether the phrase was relevant or not! And then there was the bod who kept getting messages, and thought he was an embryo medium...but I'm digressing.

The parties started earlier that night, there was no program item to compete with the boozing so everyone got down to saying goodbye to everyone else in the best possible way - over the rim of a glass. Around 7p.m. Les Nirenberg invited me up to his room for a drink, and he, Ted & Sylvia White, Phyllis Economou, Dick and Pat Lupoff, and myself had a pleasant hour talking and drinking Vodka. We talked mainly of the events of the last few days...reminiscing already! I was keeping a close eye on my watch though, for the LSFS movies were to be shown again this evening, and I wanted to see them all again. Around eight, some kind person phoned down from the 17th to tell Sylvia (who also wanted to see them) that the show was about to commence, so I thanked Les for the drink, and headed for the elevator bank. The majority of fans seemed to be staying over the Monday night, and there was quite a large audience assembled. Phyllis, and I found seats, and the show started. It was good...nay, excellent, and I'd have loved to have been 'on location' with "The Musquite Kid" team when it was filmed. To take over an old ghost town, and have it all to yourself. Hooboy!

A showing of slides taken at the Detention followed the films, and Bruce Pelz and Ted Johnstone (and the audience) provided a witty -

commentary on these. I was reminded by this session of some of the camp film-shows we used to have in the RAF, where everyone used to cheer when the hero appeared and hiss at the villain - now one hissed at any of the films, or characters, but there was a similar atmosphere, with the audience really participating. It all made a very fine wind-up for the convention program - which had hit some pretty high spots.

Bob Pavlat had mentioned earlier that he was going to have a party in 1536 that night - the suite he and Bob Madle had shared during the con - so when the film show ended, I headed in that direction. Avram Davidson, had been sat just behind me during the show, and he joined me in the search for 1536. We didn't have much trouble finding it as the party had already started!

As is usual, by the last night of a convention, everyone had got to know everyone else and the barriers were down...in addition now one had to worry about conserving their stamina for the next-nights session...as a result the Monday night parties were some of the best held at the convention. I think most everyone still at the Penn-Sheraton was in 1536 sometime during the night, and those who weren't could be found in the Cincy Suite - I sort of wandered between the two.

Bob, had a dressing-table groaning with liquor, and a mix-it-yourself mode of hospitality which got things going early. I helped myself to a Vodka and Something, and chatted to Elinor and Buz about TAFF and sundry other matters. We didn't reach any mind-shattering conclusions but it was pleasant, and I said I wished I could get to Seattle one day, too.....the only thing I don't like about West Coast Fandom is that they live so darn far away!

ACKERMAN HAS NO SENSE OF WINDOW

Round about here, Forry was displaying a certain somnambulistic tendency by trying to sleep on one of the beds. Several fans had gone over to investigate this phenomena, and Dick Schultz (I think it was) spotted a rather attractive young female preparing for bed in a building across the street. Naturally, this caused a certain stir in the room, an eddy you might say, and I was sorry to have to tread on several people to get to the window. Since the window, the only suitably placed one in the room, was over the bed on which Forry was sleeping, I'm afraid that he experienced a certain difficulty in resuming his slumbers after I had sat on his stomach. It would have been all right if only Dick, Les Gerber, and myself had been interested in bird-watching, but Ingrid Fritsch, Les Nirenberg, and half a dozen other people wanted to watch, too. Let it be to my credit though that I, interested as I was, helped Forry get back to sleep. He had raised himself momentarily to a sitting position (possibly because of the weight on his stomach), and wanted to know what was happening....I made the remark at the top of this paragraph, and he closed his eyes again, and sank back motionless!

Sometime around mid-night, I left 1536 - I'd been hanging out of a window with Virginia Scultheis (it was the only way we could get away from Steve!) and admiring the fine view of Mellon Square; I'd decided to go up to my room, grab my camera, and take a shot whilst I was sober enough to take a time-exposure.

September 5th

I navigated to my room successfully, got my camera, and headed back up in the elevator. On arriving at the 15th, however, I met Steve & Ginny and Dave & Ruth who were en route to see how things were going in the Cincy Suite. "You can take a photo from there," someone said, so I went and I did.

I was glad I'd been sidetracked at that time, too, for there were quite a number of people in 1266 I'd been wanting to talk to. Author Gordon Dickson, for instance. I'd been introduced to him briefly earlier on in the convention, but hadn't had the opportunity of telling the theme I wanted the next Hoka yarn to feature - The Three Musketeers. (And wouldn't it be fine to have the Hokas discover Fandom, Gordy!?) We got to talking, and I rather astonished Gordon by spotting him for a Canadian by his accent - I don't know how many people have noticed this but Gordon Dickson talks just like Boyd Raeburn, this meant that he must be either a) A Torontonian, or b) another Hired assassin from Puerto Rico; the former proved to be the correct assumption. And, as far as I'm concerned solves the enigma of Boyd's accent...it's not a British accent, it's a Toronto one. I found Gordon a most interesting talker, and we chatted for awhile about accents with me trying to give him an idea of what some of the U.K. ones sounded like. (Cheltenham please note that the Gloucester 'Yo' for 'yes' is also found in parts of the USA.)

I got to talk to Doc' Smith, that very pleasant Living Legend, too. And to Robert Heinlein. Heinlein, as I mentioned before is a very gentlemanly person - in mien diplomatic. He has travelled widely on the Continent of Europe and we talked of several of the places he had visited, and which I also had been to. His favourite country is Finland, which he visits as often as possible - he mentioned that several of the characters in "Citizen of the Galaxy" were based on people he'd met in Finland.

This spate of serious discussion wasn't to continue for long tho', Don Ford had been busily snapping shots of the people in the Cincy Suite, and he asked me to pose for him - since he offered such tempting bait as Ruth Kyle and Marion Mallinger, I wasn't in the least bit averse to doing so. Anytime anyone wants me to kiss a girl so that they can take a photo I'll be willing...I don't even charge a fee!

Gradually, as the night turned into morning, and the ice in your glass turned to water, the merry throng thinned out - or passed out. I recall getting involved in a discussion of s-f with Judy Merrill, Avram, Gordon, (who enlivens any conversation greatly, for he talks with his hands as well as with his voice) and someone named Danny. And talking with Doc' Barrett on the possibility of Bob and I visiting Indian Lake - rescuing Mary Martin from a certain bore - oh, it was a full night. It had to come to an end, however, and round about threeish I felt myself beginning to catnap between sentences. I bade everyone Good Night and headed for 762...Going along the corridor I met Randy Garrett, who was one character I'd not really had chance to talk to properly. We decided to rectify this, and off we went to Randy's room.



September 8th

Randy, in public, is somewhat extroverted with a rather over-bearing personality...however, when talking quietly away from the madding crowd he's a much nicer person. We talked of sundry things for about an hour, and Randy displayed a fine talent for impersonation, and mastery of numerous accents. Despite the fact that I was just about flat out, I really enjoyed that session.

THE LAST BREAKFAST

In Pittsburgh, that is, was spent with Sam Moskowitz and Bob Pavlat in the hotel coffee-shop. With various people wandering in and out to say goodbye. It was a rather sad session, and I felt rather low at having to say goodbye to Larry & Noreen, and au revoir to Dave & Ruth (who I hoped to see again briefly in Montreal before I left for home). These two couples had done a great deal to make my first week in the States highly enjoyable, I felt grateful and sorry that we had to part....but then, I had the thought of further adventures ahead to console me.

I'd decided that the trip to the West Coast would be physically a little too much for me, much as I wanted to go, and had taken up Bob Pavlat on his kind offer to drive me around the mid-West - there was an equal number of people there I wanted to visit with.

After breakfast, Bob and I went up to our respective rooms to pack. Schuy was 'at home', finalising the paper work, and we talked while I attempted to get all my gear - plus the large number of fanzines I'd been given at the con - into my two bags. The convention, he mentioned had been a financial success, and I said that I considered it had most certainly been a social one, too. It had as far as I was concerned. And the kindness of Schuy, and Dirce, in particular, had touched me.

I finished packing, said farewell to Schuy and Dirce (who was still having to work on things, due to a certain pro-author being down at the bus-station without cash), and called for a porter to take my bags down to the lobby. Bob, and I took a last look at the Penn-Sheraton, and headed for the garage a block away where he'd left his car.

Our immediate destination was to be Indian Lake, Ohio, where Doc' Barrett had kindly invited us - "stay as long as you want, and do anything you like". Since we both felt a little beat, Indian Lake for a couple of days sounded wonderful, and it was.

We left Pittsburgh around 1p.m., took Route 22 to Zanesville, then Route 40 to Columbus and Springfield (Where we called up the Scultheis's in the hope that they hadn't yet left for the West Coast, but they had.), and then onto Route 33 to Bellfontaine, and Indian Lake. We took things pretty easily, stopping several times for food and drink, and picked up a case or two of beer, and a basket of peaches to provide sustenance when required. We also had to stop once whilst I took a photo or two of a sign proclaiming that we were now in HARRISON County, Ohio. Bob, made an excellent travelling companion, and we just relaxed, talking when we felt like it, listening to the radio when we didn't.... whilst I constantly found interest in the country we were passing through. And Burma Shave, and trying to work out the Horse Power of Bob's Ford in British Terms.

We stopped in Bellefontaine at about 8p.m., had ourselves some refreshment, and I bought some colour film for my camera - I'd never taken colour photos with it before, but I was emboldened by the wonderful weather to make the experiment, which was a fairish success. At 8.55 we arrived at Doc's lakeside home, to a fine welcome from Evelyn and Doc'.

Doc' Barrett, owns several cabins along the lakeside, and he gave Bob and I the keys of the one next to his home. The word 'cabin' is rather misleading by British standards, for these holiday, ideal-gafia spots. They are quite luxurious, and have every modern convenience. As previous British visitors to Indian Lake, Ted Carnell and Ken & Pam Bulmer can also testify. We carried our bags in from the car, and then went over to Doc's to talk and, briefly inspect his collection of books, records and alcohol before retiring. 'Doc' has a most interesting home, which has sort of grown gracefully over the years - a room or two having been built on whenever necessary without spoiling the harmonious whole. Bob, and I were highly intrigued with all the stuff Doc' had to show us, but lack of sleep was catching up on us, and we mumbled sleepy goodnights around mid-night and settled down for a good looong sleep.

There's one exchange I must record for posterity though, before drawing a veil over the recumbent, snoring, forms of Bob and myself. Doc's son was unpacking some gear from the trunk of Doc's car....

" Where do you want the surgical-instrument case, Dad ?"

" Oh," came the reply from Doc', " That's the Whisky, put it in the ice-box."

OHIO'S MILLION DOLLAR PLAYGROUND

Is the tag given to Indian Lake, and it's warranted, I think, there's an idyllis peacefullness about the place which makes it an ideal vacation spot. It was certainly an ideal place to rest up after a s-f convention, the sun shone brightly all the time we were there and we had the equally pleasant alternatives of just lying in the sun, or inspecting one of Doc's collections. It was very fine.

On the Wednesday morning we arose about 11a.m., showered, had a pre-breakfast peach, and then headed into Indian Lake (the town, that is) for breakfast. It was the off-season for tourists so everywhere was fairly quiet, which suited us fine. After eating we headed back to Doc's, and just lazed the afternoon away, reading and drinking beer in the relaxed setting of the Barrett garden - which runs down to the Lake itself. The temperature was around the high nineties, so we'd decided against Ghoddminton on the lawn!

Doc' returned from his office in Bellefontaine in the early evening, and after a pleasant meal, gave us a guided tour of the first third (!) of his collection.

THE COMPLEAT COLLECTOR

Doc', not content with merely collecting s-f (and he has one of the largest collections of science-fiction in the States) also has a fine assemblage of records, art, and phonographs. And alcohol, a collection of esoteric beverages which would have -

warmed the cockles of Norman Shorrock's heart! Doc's collection of s-f is so large that he has it split into three parts, and housed in three houses. A fairly large segment is at Indian Lake, an even larger one at his office and surgery in Bellefontaine (Does he use Galaxy as an anesthetic, I wonder?), and the balance at a farm he owns outside town. We spent a highly interesting evening browsing through the s-f, and the art, whilst listening to some of Doc's collection of Jazz.

It was also intriguing to listen to Doc's collection of phonographs, which dated from early roll-models to the present day stereo. He has seven or eight of these, all working...is this a record!

Both Bob and I were slightly bewildered by the sheer amount of stuff in Doc's collection, and this was even more accentuated the next day when, after another peaceful, restful, twelve-hour sleep, we drove into Bellefontaine - to Doc's office on Madriver Street (Can there really be a River called Mad?). This is a large house containing a Surgery and more science-fiction...much more science-fiction. We found ourselves overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the stuff and, like bee's collecting pollen, found ourselves fleeting from one shelf to another, unable to settle because there was so much stuff to see. Items like the rare, "The Ship That Sailed To Mars", complete sets (and in many cases complete duplicate sets, as well) of BLUE BOOK, ARGOSY, BLACK MASK, STRANGE TALES, and, of course, all the more recent magazines, and pocket-books, and hard-cover books. All of them.

We found a few more gramophones here, too, and a collection of Pin-Ball machines!! I tell you, there's everything to keep a fan happy for months on end...if we ever do get an atomic blow-up, Madriver Street would be a good place to home on.

I think we adjourned briefly for a meal in mid-afternoon, and then returned to the upstairs, downstairs, and basement (the PLAYBOY file is in the bathroom) fascination. Doc', saw his last patient off in the late afternoon (after giving her some s-f to read!), and after some 'medical alcohol' all round we drove back out to Indian Lake. I joined Doc' in his car, and Bob followed along behind in the Ford. En route, we visited the Smallest Street In The World (it was just long enough for the car to get in), and The Highest Point In The County (where radar screens swivelled their silent eyes), and...the local Shriner Headquarters.

Doc' Barrett obviously lives a pretty full and interesting life, apart from his duties as a medical practioner, his collecting and fan interests, he's also on of the chief's of the local Shriner Group. The Shriners are a society rather similar to the British Masonic groups, only they let their hair down and enjoy themselves more, while doing good. They hold conventions, have parades...and they do both pretty thoroughly. There's a great deal of rivalry between the various Shriner Locals, as to who can put on the best parade, convention, etc. I wouldn't profess to pass a considered opinion on the Shriners, but from what little I saw, and what Doc' told me, it's obvious they have a lot of fun, and do a lot of good. The Shriner Headquarters we visited was a sort of community centre where all the local members get together to enjoy themselves. It was quite impressive.

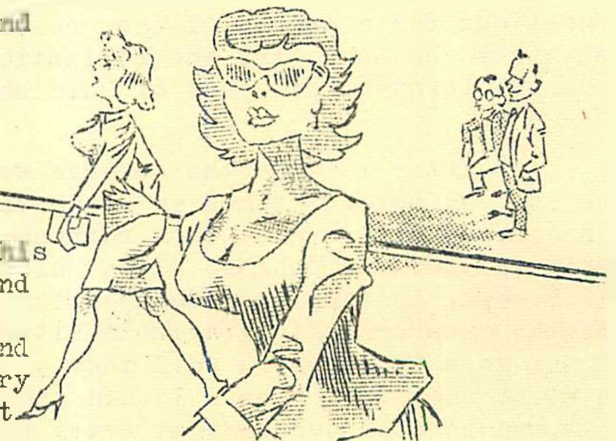
Back at Indian Lake, we ate another pleasant meal with Doc', his wife and family, in the Garden House. And then, as Doc' was due at a Shriner meeting, Bob and I settled down to another pleasant evening of just drinking beer, playing records, and generally relaxing. I investigated Doc's collection of 3-D slides, and also amused myself on his Hammond Electric Organ. I'd always wanted to try out one of these, and I was relatively surprised how easy this was to play...as one would play a piano, anyway, I left the many foot pedals strictly alone after making Bob's hair stand on end when I accidentally pressed one which evoked a sound like wild bagpipes skirling!

Around tenish, we decided to go for a drive around the lake, to blow the cobwebs away and like. Indian Lake at night is almost as attractive as during the day, with many coloured lights causing reflections on the water. We drove for awhile, windows down in the pleasantly cool atmosphere (it had been up in the nineties again during the day), and passed a sign advertising 'Beastley's On The Lake', the scene of several Midwescons - it was probably the subliminal thought of all the alcohol that had been drunk there that decided us to stop for a beer. We found a pleasant little bar called the Bulkhead, and stayed there for about an hour talking and drinking beer, and I took on Bon at a smaller version of the American pastime of bowling, and didn't lose by too many. We probably wouldn't have stayed so long, but there were one or two rather fetching damsels present...

OHIO, THE LONE STAR STATE

Driving from Pittsburgh to Indian Lake, Bob and I had evolved a system of evaluating the standard of femininity in each town and county we passed through, although we were greatly impressed by the girls in the Bulkhead we decided that they were probably tourists, and that we couldn't, on aggregate award Ohio more than One Star. (This excludes femme fans, of course!) We got a lot of fun out of our brief survey of American pulchritudininity, even, if, on several occasions I had to speak harshly to Bob to prevent him carrying on the survey in a more personal manner! Er, he had to speak to me, too. Generally speaking, the average was pretty high, and I wouldn't mind coming back one year and taking a proper census, or even an improper census, if it comes to that!

We returned to Doc's home in time for a night-cap of ice-cream, and another interesting natter with Doc' and Evelyn, before once more hitting the sack. I think those pleasantly looong nights of sleep at Doc's just about put me on my feet again...and as Doc' said "Whenever I get a TAFF visitor, he Sleeps!". We did, and this together with the fine hospitality and pleasant company, was just 'what the Doctor ordered'...if I may be corny and sincere at the same time. I was sorry we were leaving the next morning, but I was looking forward to Cincy, too.





Before we departed the next morning, Doc' took us out on the lake in his motorized canoe. This made a very fitting ending to our too brief sojourn at Indian Lake. The sun was shining brightly, the lake was blue and sufficiently restless to make the boat trip stimulating as well as interesting. One of the tributaries of the lake we investigated seemed very like my mental image of the Everglades - it was coated with green, which gave the effect that nowone had preceeded us along it for decades, and every surface-floating log lurked alligator like. Doc' killed the motor, and we were in a still, timeless world. It was quite eerie, and all one really needed was for a Slime Covered Brian Burgess to rise out of the depths!

At 12.30 we took a last llok at Indian Lake, said farewell to the Good Doctor, and Evelyn, and drove off in the general direction of Cincinnati.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH

Bob, kind host that he was, had been scouring maps for easy take-inable sights along our proposed route, and he'd come up with the sugrestion that we take in the Ohio Caverns. This was 'on our way' from Indian Lake to Cincy, and I eagerly agreed. I'm glad that I did for it was a wholly fascinating excursion. We delved into the earth together with guide and a half dozen other sightseers, and spent forty-five minutes in one of natures fairylands.

Apart from the scenic beauty, I found interest in the guide's fine technique of walking backwards without once hitting his head on the often-low, rock-carved ceiling. And I rather wished Bill Rotsler was along...in Ohio Cavern's 'Crystal King' he would have seen the biggest Underground Phallic Symbol in The World! But, ceasing to be facetious for a moment, I was greatly impressed by the fascinating sights to be seen, and the fantastic otherwordly 'landscapes'. Anyone passing through this part of Ohio should make a point of visiting the caverns.

After leaving the caverns we drove leisurly towards Cincinnati. We stopped several times en route to stretch our legs, and to imbibe Chocolate Malteds and other refreshment, and to search any photographic shop spotted for Capless Flash Bulbs. These are very widely available in Europe, and are much cheaper than the capped-variety - I'd run out of the ones brought with me in Pittsburgh, but Marion Mallinger had found me a store which sold them - however, in Ohio we couldn't find a store that sold them. It did though, provide a good excuse to get out and stretch our legs at every town we came to. -

September 9th

And since we had allowed plenty of time for the journey this made it all the more pleasant.

We took Route 68 from the caverns and passed through Urbana, Springfield, and Xenie. Bob knew that Don Ford didn't get home until Gish, and he nicely timed our arrival in the small town of Lebanon, junction for Loveland, so that he could phone for further instructions as to route. He got these while I investigated a nearby newstand - and arrived at the conclusion that s-f gets even worse display in the States than it does in England, on average.

We arrived at Don Ford's shortly before 7 o'clock that evening, and it was nice to be greeted once again by this towering example of fannish goodwill, and by his wife Margaret. Naturally, I wanted to talk about TAFF with Don...and I was eager to see his fantastic collection of colour-slides. And I was looking forward to meeting the Cincy Group again.

TABAKOU ROAD

A start was made on this latter early...Bob and I cleaned up and met Don's three children, and then Margeret, Don, and the two of us set off to Lou Tabakou's in Don's car. I'd met Lou at Pittsburgh of course, and I was eager to see him again, and hear some more of his cab-driver tales...and exchange some more friendly insults. We had a pleasant relaxed evening at Lou's, with plenty of alcohol to hand and entertaining conversation. Also present were Gerry (Lou's wife), Dave (their son), Dale Tarr, and Mary Martin.

The Cincy Group were probably the closest group in outlook to the general British fan group. I found them very easy to get on with, and pleasant to relax with. Heck, I felt at home there, I could insult anyone and have it taken the right (!) way....they even laughed at my puns. And I thoroughly enjoyed the story of how Lou came to have a Hugo Award on top of his TV set...for the benefit of anyone who hasn't heard it - it seems that when Ben Jason made the original batch of Hugo's for the Cleveland Convention in '55 he had a 'spare'. Around this time Lou had had a s-f story called SVEN gathering rejection slips. Ben and the gang got together and presented Lou with the award 'FOR THE BEST UNSOLD S-F STORY'. Maybe, with some of the stuff seeing print these days, this should be made an annual award!

I think we got back to Don's around midnight, and after some further natter, a brief inspection of Don's Apple-Box Collection, and a nightcap, we got our collective heads down.

SUDDENLY LOST SUMMER

We awoke next morning to a grey-sky, and a cold wind - it must have been my jinx catching up with me. It wasn't really cold, I suppose, but after the exceptionally fine days we'd been having a drop to the fifties seemed cold. Don, had to work during the early part of the day so Bob and I had decided to investigate downtown Cincinnati. Margeret fed us nobly, and we set off in Bob's Ford to investigate the bookstores - and to continue my search for capless-flashbulbs. Don had said the night before that he considered that Cincinnati would hold its own with most European cities, pictorially, so I was looking forward -

to taking some photographs. Unfortunately, the weather had gone from bad to worse, and the sky was now weeping something shocking, so I had to take a rain-check on this...

Cincinnati was interesting though, and it was the first American city outside New York which I'd had the opportunity of exploring - I was much too short of time in Pittsburgh to go strolling around town. I imagine it is much more typical of American cities than New York, too. We started off the day by a visit to the post office, so that I could mail a letter home and various varied postcards to British Fans. Don, had given us details of the bookshops worth visiting so we spent the next couple of hours touring these, with a break for beer...we didn't want to tire ourselves out! I picked up a copy of Vogt's "War Against The Rull" for 87cents, and Bob acquired a copy of a bound edition of the rare 'Oriental Stories'. I was rather amused by the manner in which this was acquired...we were going through the used-s-f when a shifty looking character sidled up to Bob, and asked him if he'd like to see 'some real rare items', when Bob acquiesced he was taken up a tottering staircase and I had visions of him being either a) Shown the pornography section, or b) coming back with a first issue of The Vargo Statten Magazine! However, he got the 'Oriental Stories'.....it's possible though, that if he was going from the illos therein alone, the bookshop bod might have thought it was a rare pornographic item.

After exhausting the second-hand boostores of Cincy we visited the haberdashery department of a nearby store. I wanted to buy an American shirt. Ron Bennett had come back with one like the Biblical coat of many colours...I had to get one to match up to him at the next British convention, something a little more inconspicuous, you understand, I had no desire to have traffic mistake me for a traffic-light! I settled for one in a discreet colour, a sort of dull brown with a design of chess-men, red-hands, and other weird configurations thereon. It had the additional virtue of being darkish, and not liable to show the marks of travel...

We also tried the photographic department of the store for flash-bulbs, but they didn't have 'my type' either...nor did any of the Cincy shops we tried. Tch. We wanted to get back to Don's fairly early in the afternoon, in particular we wanted to talk about TAPF before the evenings festivities began....before we headed back to Wards Corner Road, though, Bob drove me over the river into Covington, Kentucky, so that I could add another State to my list. And am I really a Kentucky Colonel now, Bob?

I'd have liked to go a little further into Kentucky, to see these peculiar pointy hills, with guntotin' moonshiners with peculiar pointy hats -



September 10th

a' feudin' away, but Bob said we didn't have time, alas!

Driving out from the city, back to Don's pleasant home I noted the profusion of Water Towers - I had noticed these before in the States - and they reminded me of WOTW Martians - but I hadn't realised that they were Water Towers, and that American's had to buy their water. Buying water...I can't understand why more wine isn't drunk in the States!

We got back to Don's just as he was about to visit the local supermarket for supplies for the evening's parties, naturally we went along to help choose the beer. And we also got me some flash-bulbs... not the capless ones, but ones which would fit in my flash if I took my special adaptor out. It took Don to think of removing this! Don, buys much of his photographic supplies from this particular supermarket as their prices are somewhat lower than the regular photographic stores, so I took the opportunity of loading up on film, too. This type of cut-price conglomeration of shops is just beginning to appear in England, but so far they are few and far between.

Back at the Ford home, Don and I descended to his basement den, and discussed TAFF. We found we were in agreement as to preserving the status quo - TAFF is working well as it is now, and it seemed there was little point in changing for the sake of change...when you have a workable system, and method there's little point in changing to one which may, or may not, be workable. We were agreed that the actual voting period should be kept as short as possible, but that the length of this must be left up to the current administrators so that it can be equated with the amount of cash to be raised. Past experience has shown that it is easiest to raise the funds during the voting period, when interest in TAFF is at its greatest. Mine, and Don's, intentions are to get the money for the next TAFF TRIP in as soon as possible, we hope that everyone will help with this, for it should always be kept in mind that one of the principle functions of a TAFF administrator is to raise funds. Don, and I, have both been honoured by being chosen for TAFF, we are just as eager as anyone to know the result of the next TAFF race, and whoever he (or she) is, we'll do our utmost to ensure a pleasant trip. So...let's have your votes, and your subscriptions in, eh?

One minor change we were decided upon, by the by, is that the future TAFF Ballot Forms shall be equated with the number of people standing for TAFF - ie, if there are four or more candidates standing, there'll be three choices; three candidates, two choices; two candidates, one choice. This will make vote counting easier, and should make it possible to get the result known sooner after deadline.

The TAFF session over, Bob rejoined us for a tour of the Ford apple boxes. And then, Margeret fed us again....and it says much for the standard of American hospitality that I, who ordinarily never change weight year in or year out, gained quite a few pounds whilst I was in the States.

There was a party planned at Don's that night, and most of the Cincy group were expected. While awaiting their arrival, Bob and I spent a pleasant hour going through Don's stereo slides of his trip to the United Kingdom and France. Like all photographs I've seen taken by Don, these were excellent.

September 10th

We broke off our viewing for awhile, to phone Betty Kujawa and Dean Grennell, then returned to the slides until the guests arrived. It seemed strange to talk to Betty on the phone, as it had when I'd phoned Dale Smith in Minneapolis from Pittsburgh - with both these people I'd done a lot of tape-recording, and it seemed really weird to hear their voices and not have to wait several weeks before having to reply! Not, that they had weir voices, you understand.

I'd written to Betty just before leaving England and said that I hoped to make it to South Bend, and that I'd give her fair warning to notify the local vigilantes...we talked pleasantly for a few minutes, and I hung up with the word that I'd phone her again as soon as we got into the South Bend vicinity, whenever. Earlier in the day, Bob and I had been pouring over maps, and working out a rough itinerary from Cincy on, and Bob suggested that we could probably make Fond du Lac without too much trouble. So, we phoned Dean, and warned him, and he (gentleman that he is) said he'd be very pleased to see us.

The party that night was another very pleasant, relaxed session. Present were Lou and Dave Tabakou, Mary Martin, Stan Skirvin, Oscar and Mary Ellen Mueller, Dale Tarr, and, of course, Bob, Don, Margaret, and myself. After everyone had a potent drink in their hand, Don fixed up his projector and screen and gave another excellent slide show - he showed more of the shots he'd taken in Europe and, shots of the Pittsburgh convention. There'd been some fast work involved in getting these processed in time for the showing, and I greatly appreciated Don's effort in this respect. That E for Effort, and E for Excellence, for they were as well composed, and as interesting as his other slides. There were some fine shots taken from Penn-Sheraton windows of the city, and some equally fine ones of fen taken at fan-parties to balance them out. As a souvenir, Don presented me with a slide of myself snogging with Marion Mallinger...to show that he hadn't played favourite, and neither had Marion, he also showed slides of her kissing Robert Heinlein, Randy Garrett, and Lou. Good Old Emile!

The evening continued with more booze, interesting talk and, even a little singing. Don had an lp (And darn it I've forgotten the artist) on which some excellent guitar provided a basis for singing, he had all the words to the songs, too. We just couldn't get out of it, we had to sing...if only to drown out the weird noises Don was making!! There was even some dancing as Mary Ellen and myself attempted a sort of Anglo-American jive.

I'm not too sure what time the party broke up, but it did, unfortunately, and after the guests had gone Don, Bob, and myself sat talking quietly for half an hour - with the Cincy FM Radio Station providing a background with, thank ghu, a minimum of commercials. Bob and I were to hit the road again the next mornin', we had a lot to talk of but sleep was catching up on us (particularly on me) so we went to bed.... with some very pleasant memories of the Cincy Group in our minds, and of the Ford Hospitality.

..Let's organise an expedition to climb Don Ford.....

September 11th

We breakfasted pleasantly the next morning, and left the Ford house at 11.15a.m. Destination, Lynn Hickman's place in Dement, Illinois. We never got there though...that night, anyway. We, or rather, Bob had a pretty heavy day's drive ahead, we had to cross the State of Indiana and branch north up into Illinois. We'd gone over the map with Don, and worked out what looked to be the best route - it probably was, but for once we were stymied by not terribly good roads, and by slow-moving traffic.

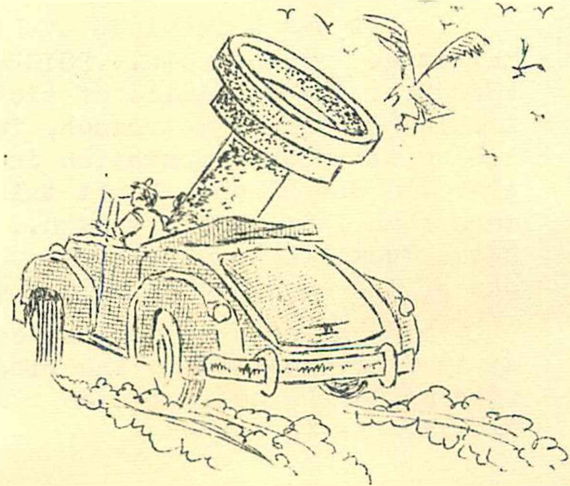
We took route 27 out of Cincinnati for Richmond, Indiana. (And I've only just noticed that if we'd taken route 52 we'd have passed through the town of HARRISON.) There we picked up 40 to Indianapolis - which gave the impression of being a particular modern and clean city - then onto route 136 to the State line at Covington, and on into Illinois on 150.

And that, in probably as bald and uninteresting manner of describing an interesting day's drive as anyone could manage. Blame it please, on my relatively meagre talent as a writer, and on the fact that there was little to remark on during the drive. Driving in America can get a little tedious after a time, one small town is very much like another, and the countryside changes its features only very slowly. Unlike England, and most of Europe, where you are apt to run into startling changes of scenery in only a short day's drive, America, like the big country it is, changes its configurations only gradually. I wasn't bored - who could be with Bob Pavlat to talk to - but I find that I've little to write on the countryside we passed through.

We had stopped only once during the drive so far, for a quick hot dog and malted, and by 7p.m. we were feeling like a break. One of the reasons we'd kept going non-stop (almost) was that Bloomington was not too far off the route, and we might just manage to get to see Bob and Fern Tucker, if only for a brief stay. ("Can we spare Bob Tucker half an hour!") So, we stopped at the next town we came to, which turned out to be Urbana, stretched our legs, had some light refreshment and made a couple of phone calls. The first was to Lynn Hickman's. Lynn himself, wasn't home from the daily grind but we spoke to Carole, told her we had reached Illinois and that she'd very probably see us before the night was out....she didn't seem in the least daunted.

The second call was to Bob Tucker, and it seems oddly significant that just across from the phone booth was a store displaying a multitude of Birdbath's! (I wanted to buy one to take along for Bob, but I don't think we could have got it in the car.) Bob said he'd be highly delighted to have us drop by, and that he'd dash off and dust his collection of Wilson Tucker Originals as soon as we hung up!

We got back in the car, onto route 150 and pressed the accelerator as low as was lawful. Having been thwarted in my desire to buy A Birdbath For Tucker, I scanned the roadside as we speeded along in search for a brick...I felt that I needed some sort of a fannish symbol along!



September 11th

If I'd been at home in England it would have been fairly easy to acquire one - the roadsides simply bloom with bricks dropped by itinerant hod-carriers - but since most American homes are of wood, this doesn't apply in the States. Couldn't find a brick anywhere....sorry, Bob.

We found the Tucker Homestead without any great difficulty. "You turn right, and it's the greenish-house," Bob had said on the phone. We turned right, but it was dark and we couldn't see what colour the houses were! Not until we'd driven out of the side-road again, and turned the headlights full on, anyway. Bob said afterwards that he preferred to keep his address dark, but I think this is carrying things too far!!

The Tucker's, as American fans already know are very nice people. I took immediately to Bob, and to his attractive wife, Fern. We came through the door and were at once greeted with hospitality, kindness, and Jim Beam. Bob had been doing a spot of star-gazing whilst waiting our arrival and had his telescope set up on the back-porch, fortified with Tucker wit and charm we spent an interesting half hour gazing at Saturn's Rings and Jupiter's Moons. The Night Sky in Illinois, and indeed, in most of the States I visited was quite fabulous most nights. Living close to a big city like Manchester, as I do, you get used to the stars being occluded by smog and clouds, here and at Indian Lake the sky really seemed to be that 'inverse bowl of wonder' the writers are so fond of waxing poetic over.

...He wept on my shoulder using the most foul language!... Fern Tucker

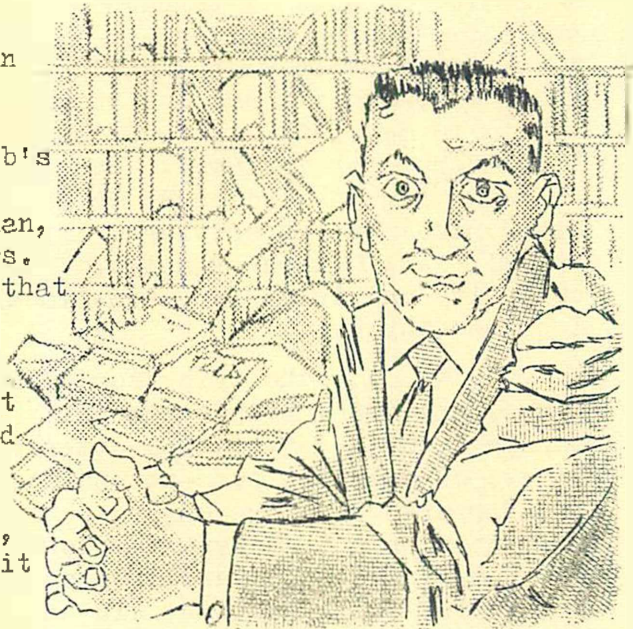
It was about nine o' clock when we'd arrived at Bob and Fern's, about an hour later we were enjoying ourselves thoroughly, but casting reluctant glances at our watches - it was still a longish drive to Lynn Hicman's. However, at mention of our leaving, Bob and Fern invited us to stay overnight...we gratefully accepted. And then phoned Lynn to let him know we wouldn't be seeing him tonight, but around lunch-time the next day, instead. He was very decent about this change of plan...I blamed our stopover at the Tucker's on Bob Pavlat being tired, and BobP blamed it on my having been commissioned to put out a Tucker Appreciation Issue of BASTION and having to stay to do some leg-work, BobT blamed it on the Jim Beam!

It was a fabulous evening, The Bob's, Fern, and I talked on a multitude of subjects...PSYCHO...other films...PSYCHO...Bob Bloch.... PSYCHO...the facsimile of Bloch used as a pin-cushion....PSYCHO... I'd loved to have met Bloch, Tucker is the witty, fine personality that his writings and reputation indicate, he says Bloch is fabulous, so I wish I'd met Bloch. Don't think I could have enjoyed meeting him much more than I did BobT, though....I can understand now why Ron Bennett put out a Tucker Appreciation Issue of PLOY after meeting him. This was one of the evenings when I so wished I had hired a portable taper.

BobP brought out the copy of "The Lincoln Hunters" he'd picked up in Cincy for Bob to inscribe. I hadn't got anything written by Bob with me, so he got out a copy of "The Man From Tomorrow", inscribed that and gave it to me. -

Thence we ajourned to the Tucker den, an intriguing place lined with bookshelves bearing the writings of Wilson Tucker, and Bob Tucker. And other notable authors...and I'm not being facetious now, I've always enjoyed Bob's writings in fanzine or novel, it was quite something to be here with the man, in his den, surrounded by his writings. I expect to enjoy them even more now that I've met him.

I aquired some issues of 'The Science Fiction WORLD', that excellent 'profesional fanzine' which Tucker and Bloch put out for Gnome Press a couple or so years ago, and which I'd never been able to get before. Technically, it was a news-zine, but some of the wit therein can well stand reprinting.



Bob told us the story of his most recent request for a foreign edition of "Wild Talents". Seems his publisher wrote him asking if the fee offered for a Japanese edition was ok....at which Bob replied that he'd have to turn the offer down as the book had been reprinted in Japan two years back! That book has probably seen more foreign editions than any other s-f book, going from the file Bob has. He mentioned that whilst it was his best selling novel, he didn't consider that it came up to several of his others in plot, or in literary merit - Bob and I agreed with him on this, and we all drank our Jim Beam sadly for a moment and reflected on the crass commercialism of the world.

Eventually, we went to bed. It was a pity to end such an enjoyable evening on such a mundane note, but nowone could think of any more fannish way of sleeping!

BOB TUCKER BOY SADIST

We'd told Bob and Fern that we wanted to start out fairly early the next day - Somewhere around seven o'clock ack emma there came a thunderous knocking to penetrate our sonorous snores. Enter BubT to announce to us that we can sleep later if we wish.... Ha. We lay back for a few moments and thought about the wisdom of this, but the smell of Fern frying bacon in the kitchen wafted to our nostrils and decided things for us. We arose to another fine, sunny morning, and the pleasant company of Bob, Fern, and family.

After breakfast and black coffee, I enticed Bob and Fern outside and took a couple of photos...unfortunately these haven't come out too well, either my hand was a little shaky or else it was too early in the day for colour film. With or without souvenir snaps tho', I'm unlikely to forget the Tucker's.

We left the region of Bloomington around ninish, headed for Dement, and hence to Fond du Lac. The roads were pleasantly free of traffic and we made much better time than the previous day (as it had been Sunday, heavy traffic was usual, I suppose).

We followed route 51 through such places as El Paso (Illinois, of course, and there was no Cantina named Rosa's!), Minonk, Wenona, La Salle, and Peru. At Mendota we branched onto 52 for Dixon. I found American place names a constant source of interest on my journey, many of them seemed exotic to me...and, quite often completely incongruous to their location. Take Peru, for instance. Was it named by some stalwart American explorer back from the Indies? Or La Salle - obviously (?) settled by early disgruntled French settlers. Minonk, sounds rather Russian. Mendota and El Paso, Mexican-spanish. One of these days I must satisfy my curiosity and delve into some local American history books of the regions I passed through.

We made the trip from Bloomington to Dixon in just under three hours, and found Lynn's home with little trouble. We took one wrong turning, but a gas-station attendant soon put us right...and a word of praise on American pump-attendants, unlike the majority of their British counterparts they are eager to give service whether you are buying gas from them or not. Lynn was downtown shopping when we pulled up outside 224 Dement Avenue. Carole welcomed us in, and we sat talking of the convention while awaiting his arrival - which was only a few minutes after our own.

DEMENT-ED

(Sorry, Lynn, couldn't resist it!) First thing Lynn did, was to put opened cans of beer into our hands. Second was to show us the George Barr original hung over the mantelpiece (At last! A fireplace in America!), this was the original of the fine drawing used on the cover of Lynn's recent JD-ANNISH, and it's quite a drawing. Then we went down to the cellar to see Lynn's collection of Multilith Machines, and up to the den where he does his typing...I was rather pleased to see that it was even untidier than mine! Allthrough the house are the earmarks of an active-fan, and I could have spent many happy days there just browsing, and fiddling with the multilith's. A certain element of fake-fannishness crept in here tho', for Carole yelled that lunch was ready... and we were but mortals!

I spent the greater part of the meal wishing we could spend more time at Lynn's, there was so dern much I wanted to talk with him about, and so much around that I was interested in. However, we had to get to Dean's that night if we were to keep to our sort-of-a-schedule.

Talk over the table was on a dozen or so topics, and I recall that we got around to alcohol at least once. Lynn had some interesting stories on moonshiners and sech, and I particularly liked his tale of the small town in which he lived and its reaction to the arrest of a local moonshiner. "It seems they caught these fellers red-handed, and they brought 'em into town and put 'em in the local jail, and they brought the Still into town too, as evidence, and couldn't get it into the jail-house and had to leave it in the yard at the back...and there were half the menfolk of the town makin sketches so they could build one just like it!"

This one reminded Bob of a certain part of Maryland, where a dry-county and a wet-county were divided by a river. On the dry-side there was a pier built out halfway into the river, and a saloon thereon!

September 12th

Lynn, reminded me still of Hoagy Carmichael, laconic and likeable, with a pleasantly offbeat sense of humour. And, Carole, she just bubbles with life. I met the family too, of course, but the dog, Sputnik, made a sizable impression on me...I suppose they call it Sputnik because it keeps going around in circles, it's one of those ferocious-looking friendly beasts who like to kill you with kindness. It was trying to get in through a closed window when I left - a rather painful process, I should imagine!

We reluctantly hit the road again about 2.30 in the afternoon. Looking backward as the friendly Hickman Home sunk slowly below the horizon...

Picking up Alternate Route 30 outside of Dixon, we followed this to Rochelle, got onto 51 again to Rockford then took 90, The Northwest Tollway (still in process of being completed) to it's present terminus, Janesville. Back on the older route 51 again, briefly to Edgerton, and then via 73 to join route 151 just outside Columbus. 151 took us right to Lake Oshkosh (a lovely name), and Fond du Lac.

A certain sense of lassitude came over me during the drive, and I cat-napped inbetween towns, when I'd usually come fully awake and gaze with interest at the local flora (female). The weather, as we headed north got progressively colder - it was still fine and bright but grey clouds occasionally scudded across the sky, and there was a rather cold wind blowing. For the first time in the States, I donned the heavy sweater I'd brought along for such an eventuality.

I remarked to Bob on the number of antique shops in the towns we passed through; this was something I'd noticed previously as we'd been driving through the various States. Even the smallest hamlet seemed to have at least one such shop. I wondered if this equated with the apparent American pastime of collecting-things, it seemed that every American I met collected something, and several were not content with just one field but loved to acquire all sorts of weird and wonderful things. Could this, I wonder, tie in with the relative youngness of the American civilisation....a desire to have old things about? Whatever, I'm in favour of it.

We stopped at a small town just short of Fond du Lac (Lamartine, I think) around 5.30. Had coffee and bought some cigarettes. By this time there was no doubt about it, it was cold. I don't suppose it's noticable to Americans, but coming into an American small town is often rather like coming into a ghost town...the reason for this being the absence of people from the sidewalks. The American pedestrian is rapidly becoming extinct, almost everyone has a car and uses it to the full extent - this particularly contrasts with the towns and cities of Europe (particularly the towns, even American's walk in the cities, they can't find anywhere to park!) where the pavements are usually pretty busy during the daytime.

We pressed on again, refreshed, reached Fond du Lac, enquired of the ubiquitous gas-station attendant for Maple Avenue, and found it with a minimum of difficulty. The block system of American towns and cities make finding places relatively easy.

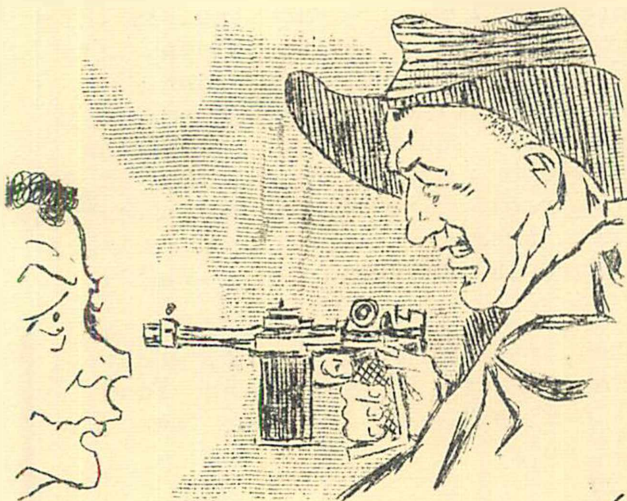
September 12th

By 6.30p.m. we were at 402 Maple Avenue. Dean and Jean and the kids welcomed us, and it was fine to be there. Being kindly folk, the Grennell's saw to it that we sat down to eat as soon as we'd had time to gather our breath and drink a glass of beer. Dean proved to be the intelligent well-informed character I'd expected, and looked very much like the photos which he'd sent me a couple of years back.. He'd also once sent me a large photo of his den, and I was eager to compare the original with the photo. When we'd finished eating we descended the stairs to his basement-charivari, and my god....a fascinating place!

There are shelves all around the place with books, magazines, fanzines, typewriters, cameras, and guns beladen. Dean, it seemed, collected almost everything....er, including children, of which he and Jean have rather a fine set. To use a Grennellism, I was crogged. As at Indian Lake there was so much to investigate, that you didn't know quite where to start. I counted five typewriters, there were seven cameras (working), and the guns would have gladdened the heart of such gun-bugs as Eddie Jones - who was seen to drool slightly when I showed him a couple of the photos taken at Dean's.

Dean was very cooperative in posing for photos, and I have several rather fine ones of him dressed as THE SHADOW, he got out his camera and we had a sort of duel for the rest of the evening, each trying to snap the other unawares. I went out to the car, and got the tapes I'd brought over from England to playback, and while we listened to these Dean unearthed a king-size carton containing fan photos. I think we must have spent all of two hours going through this, and they evoked many pleasant memories (Dean had many of British Fandom), and amusing stories from Bob and Dean. Jean, also joined in with some anecdotes and I was pleasantly suprised (and I gather I'm not the first to be so) by her knowledge of fans and fandom.

Dean provided some excellent whisky to titillate our tonsils, the conversation was fine, and it was a highly enjoyable and frabjous evening. I only wish I had the memory and ability to do it justice. I can well understand why Boyd Raeburn and the Toronto fans make pilgrimage to Fond du Lac as often as possible, and I only wish I could, too.



We finished off the evening with a pactsarced sending session, I recall, and I only hope the recipients have now recovered. It was very fine whisky we were drinking and I don't remember what time we went to bed, but I know we did because I woke the next morning in one. I'm not sure which of the Grennell children we should be grateful to for letting us have their beds, but Thanks Kids. Incidentally, I noticed a License To Shoot Dinosaur (in season, of course) framed on the wall of this room. A typical Grennell touch.

September 13th

I mean, there aren't any Dinosaur's still alive in Wisconsin are there ? Surely if there were Dean would have at least one stuffed Stegosauras in his collection...

Dean had already been downtown to his office when we arose, and was loading his car in preparation for a trip North along the shores of Lake Oshkosh. As most fans will know, Dean is a representative of a firm specializing in heating equipment and sheetmetal supplies. His territory extends over a pretty big area, and this is one of the reasons GRUE doesn't come out more often - like he's away from home quite a lot. I asked him, of course, when the next issue would be appearing, but all I have to report is that there are some stencils cut for it. I suggest that everyone bombards Dean with postcards proclaiming that fandom isn't the same without an occasional GRUE.

Bob and I bid Dean farewell, and watched his car recede rapidly into the distance, it was easy to distinguish from the other vehicles on the road because of the Stovepipe sticking out of the roof! Then Jean fed us, and we talked of other fan visitors to the Grennells, and Jean showed me the plate which John Berry had dried for her, and her collection of buttons. Like her husband, Jean is an interesting personality, and I was sorry when it was time for us to leave - you know, I don't think there was any place I visited in America that I didn't leave with a feeling of real regret, and of slight impotence at the fact that I might never get back.

The weather was still cold when we left Fond du Lac, but it warmed as the day went on, and we headed South. Destination, South Bend, Indiana. This was a drive of super-highways, enabling excellent time to be made and despite a stop around noon for a meal, we covered the distance of between 250 and 260 miles (I guesstimate) in under six hours. We left Fond du Lac on route 41 for Milwaukee, the road carried little traffic and was excellently wide. The parts of Wisconsin visible from the car gave an impression of fertile greenness, and although it was fairly flat it was very pleasant.

I sat back and enjoyed the scenery, and occasionally leafed through one or more of the stack of comic-books Dean had asked us to convey to Betty Kujawa for the Coulsons. Up (!) here in Wisconsin, I got the impression of being very high...the sky seemed unusually large, the horizon very distant. It was rather like the mental image I have of the Top Of The World.

We swiftly reached Milwaukee, passed through the outer suburbs, and then picked up route 94 for Chicago where it changed to 294 for some reason I was unable to fathom. In Chicago too, we by-passed the city - the skyline could be seen on the horizon whenever we topped a rise - staying on the excellent Illinois Tollway paralleling the city right to the Illinois-Indiana state line. There we joined the equally fine Indiana East-West Tollroad.

We stopped just over the border in Indiana, and had a second breakfast. Here, there were restaurants over the highway itself, built as a bridge over the road at the frequent inlets and outlets. However, Bob said that these were oft expensive so we pulled off the main highway and soon found a suitable eatery.

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We ate, and then phoned Betty to let her know we were approaching South Bend. She suggested we phoned again when we reached the town and she and Gene would come out and guide us to 2819 Caroline, the Kujawa home.

Bob drove back onto the Indiana Tollroad and we rapidly covered the remaining miles to South Bend - which, for the travel-bugs among us is the home of Notre Dame, a fact I hadn't previously realised. The countryside along the Tollroad was now quite heavily wooded, green and pleasant, and the temperature had risen considerably. It was pleasant once more to drive with the windows down. And to watch for the cut-off to South Bend....

When we were on the phone, Betty had put Gene on to give directions, and I'd put Bob on so he couldn't blame me for misdirections! He found the suggested route easily and we passed through the centre of town, and pulled up by a convenient phone-booth. I got through to Betty, and she said she and Gene would be out to pick us up in five minutes. They were too...and it should be recorded here that I first met Betty and Gene outside the South Bend Revival Tabernacle, the time was 3.30 in the afternoon.

I was highly delighted to meet Betty at long last, we'd had a lot of tape exchanges and I felt I knew her as well as anyone could without actually meeting. On tape she bubbles with pleasant gaiety, and she's like that in person too. A wholly delightful personality. I took an immediate liking to Gene, as well...although he's not technically a fan he's the sort of personality that would fit in extremely well in any fan-group, or in any group of intelligent, interesting people. They were both very easy to get to know and pleasant to be with.

Betty joined Bob and I in the Ford, to guide us to the Kujawa home, and Gene followed behind in the Buick. We talked in wonderment that I was actually there, as we drove the few blocks to Caroline.... and the fine home Betty & Gene have there. There I met the other member of the Kujawa household, Beauregard the dog. I'm fond of dogs and this was a most pleasant animal which showed suitable appreciation when I scratched its ears! The more voiciferous animal-lovers in fandom seem to be cat-lovers, I like cats but I prefer dogs...I suppose that it could be because I admittedly like a certain amount of ero-boo and dogs are more willing to supply this than the feline species?

We settled down in the Kujawa living room - a room with a very pleasant view, comfortable chairs, hi-fi equipment, and every fannish convenience - and Gene said there was beer in the ice-box and would we kindly refill the glasses he'd already given us whenever we felt like it. Bob and I agreed that this was a very fine arrangement. Betty dug out her photo-album and I managed to identify some of the people in group photo's of British Fandom which she'd acquired for her. I got my bag out of the car and showed Betty the colour-slides I had with me to show her what the rest of the monsters looked like.

And we talked....and Gene got out his polaroid camera and took a couple of excellent photos which I later mailed to my mother to assure her that I was in good hands. An excellent camera this, most of the polaroid camera's I'd previously experienced produced a brownish print -

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which swiftly aged, but this produced a nice clear black&white print which shows no indication of deterioration. Bob looks positively handsome on it, and I don't look too hideous.

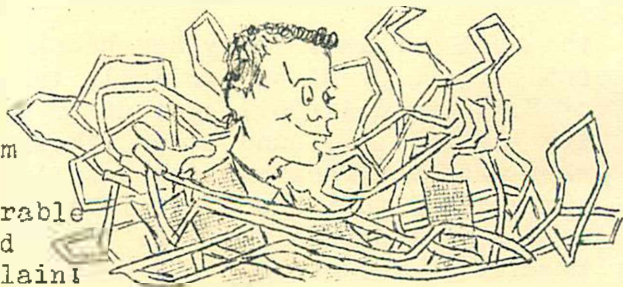
Betty threw her record collection open to us while she went and prepared a meal, and Bob and I played disks and talked with Gene while she slaved over a hot stove... Betty and I had been topping each other with old 78's on tape, we'd found that we both shared the same enthusiasm for the good big-bands, Goodman, Basie, early-Kenton and so on. Betty would mention on tape that a certain record used to be one of her favourites and I'd put it on the next tape to her, and she'd reply with one that I found reminiscent of my misspent (before I discovered fandom, of course!) youth. There was a lot of stuff in her collection which Bob and I would have liked to sneak out with us when we left! And with the pleasant music for a background, Gene talked interestingly of his experiences in the Navy, and we swapped experiences of service life. Bob had been in the Army, I in the RAF so we pretty well covered all aspects between us.

Betty had laboured mightily in the kitchen, and we soon sat down to a fine repast. It was another fine and pleasant meal and I just wish I could gather up Bob Pavlat, and arrive at the Kujawa's for a meal whenever the wind was in the right direction. Bob, like myself, took quickly to this couple, and they to him.

And may I digress here for a moment....I know it isn't the done thing normally for a TAFF Administrator to comment on the suitability of candidates, or non-candidates for TAFF - BUT, I would like to say that I consider that, some year soon, someone should twist Bob Pavlat's arm and make him stand for TAFF. I can hardly think of a more suitable delegate from American fandom, and one who could be better received by the British Fans. And, in saying this, I don't mean to detract in the least from the excellent candidates in the current campaign. They too are very fine people, and if Bob Pavlat were also standing this time it would be incredibly difficult to decide which way to vote.

Gene got out a bottle of Drambuie to round off the meal, and filling glasses retired to the couch with his. Gene, was an olympic swimmer at one time and is now one of the top skeet-shooting competitors in the States, and he has an approach to life which I find very commendable. He has a comfortably large settee in the living room and a similar one in the dining room, at every opportunity he will relax on one or the other. Gene, you are a man after my own heart! He had to leave us in the early evening to lead a bowling-team, but promised to return with a Pizza Pie for supper. (Incidentally, Eddie Jones, he has a fine collection of guns, too.)

The meal over, Betty, Bob and I returned to the living room for a very pleasant and relaxed evening. I got out the Liverpool and Cheltenham tapes, and Betty listened with great appreciation to them, and got considerable merriment from them. Bob had now heard them several times but he didn't complain!



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Betty, had quite a few tapes on hand to which she was in process of replying, and I got to say a few words to Wrai Ballard on one of these, and Alan Dodd on another. We talked of music, fandom, people, inspected Betty's collection of esoterica....and made made swift inroads on the Kujawa beer-stock.

Betty, told of the time when a certain fan had announced his/her intent of visiting South Bend and the Kujawa's, and had said in letter; " I know I'll love to visit you because I'm passionately fond of Japanese Cooking..". Anything less like a Japanese couple than Betty & Gene would be hard to imagine..

Round about here I got presented with a most unusual souvenir of my visit to South Bend, A Can Of Genuine Air From Hawaii. I think Betty must have been hoarding this for me for some time, and I was suitably cowed with it and still am...I'm only disappointed that the Customs officer, on my return, lifted no more than the minimum of eyebrow at it. No sense of wonder these people, but they have given me a good idea for anytime I may want to smuggle anything into the country! And if anyone ever wants to send me a breath of Pittsburgh or New York air, all they have to do is buy a can of Hawaiian air, empty it, refill and seal....

Ho, it was a very pleasant fannish evening indeed, and Gene returned fairly early from his bowling complete with Pizza Pie which went down very well for supper. However, even the fact that we were eating didn't stop the flow of pleasant conversation, and once more I began to feel that all too familiar feeling of regret that I would soon have to leave these pleasant, hospitable people. Generous people, too...as I mentioned in the Prologue to this story, The Kujawa's had kindly offered to fly me to Minneapolis from South Bend. (In fact they'd offered to fly me almost anywhere but Cuba - Fidel being reluctant to allow anyone who is as good a marksman as Gene into the country!)

Originally, Gene was to fly me to Minneapolis in his Beechcraft Bonanza, but this was being overhauled in readiness for a fishing trip a few days later....so, they presented me with an airline ticket to the Twin Cities! I felt a little embarrassed about accepting this at first, but they talked me into it with a great deal of charm and kind-words. I'm grateful.

I think we went to bed around 1 a.m., that night...wish now we'd stayed up all night for I keep thinking of things I intended to talk about with Betty - and with Bob, for I was to say farewell to him too, the next morning. Alas....

BUT WHAT DOES IT PUSH AGAINST, GENE ?

By the time Bob and I had surfaced the next morning, Betty had bacon & eggs and other suitable eatables ready for us, and we ate well, talking the while. I was due to fly out of South Bend Airport just after noon, so the meal over, I started to try and pack....found I was likely to be more than a little overweight what with the fanzines and s-f I'd picked up en route, cunningly I suggested to Betty that she might like to read the latest fanzines and mail them to me. Kind person that she is, she agreed. And Bob said he'd be pleased to mail me the other stuff when he got back to Hyattsville.

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Just after eleven o'clock, I bade farewell to Bob, that very fine travelling companion who'd been a most excellent host to me for so many enjoyable miles - thanked Betty for her most hospitable hospitality - and joined Gene in the Buick, to be driven out to the airport.

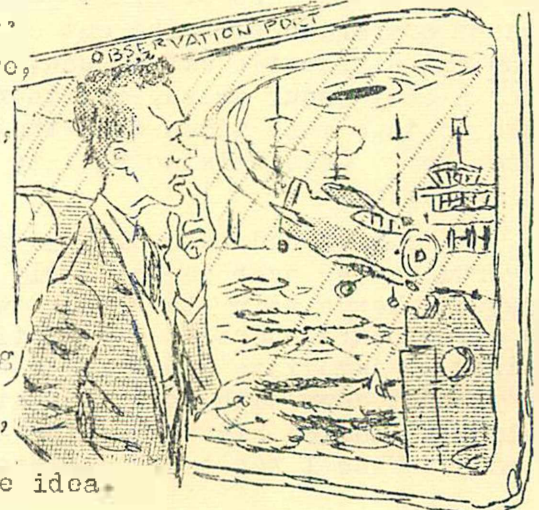
We passed through the downtown area of South Bend, and Gene pointed out the curve in the river which gave the town its name. The sun was shining brightly, the buildings around were modern and clean with an air of lightness architecturally, there was a pleasant atmosphere of bustle, and I felt I'd like to re-visit South Bend one day...especially so if I could stay with Betty & Gene once more.

The airport was reached well in time for my flight, and after checking my baggage Gene took me over to the private hangars and showed me his plane. At one time (in my teens) I found the study of aircraft absorbing, and if I could recall all the semi-technical gobbledegook I once knew I could really describe Gene's plane, but as I can't...the fact that it's a single-engined low-wing monoplane will have to do. A nice looking aircraft, and Gene said he hardly ever had any trouble with it except when he ran out of gas in mid-air...and anyway he never flew higher than 10,000 feet!!

Back in the terminal building I put a call through to Dale Smith in Minneapolis, to let him know that I was almost on my way, and he promised to be out at the airport to meet me. Then Gene took me up in the 'Sky Room' of the airport to await my United Airlines plane and have a coffee. We cogitated on what sort of aircraft would turn up, and talked of the respective cost of living in the U.K. and U.S.A.....there's little doubt that relatively speaking (taking into account wages and such) the cost of living is higher in the States, but there's a great levelling off in process between the two countries.

Soon, Flight 635 for Chicago (O'Hare Airport) was announced, and I left Gene to board a D.C.6 championing at the bit on the tarmac. It was a finely equipped aircraft, much more luxurious than the average British internal-airliner, I got myself a window-seat and sat back in comfort to await take-off. The flight to O'Hare took only forty minutes, and as the aircraft flew at a relatively low altitude, about 10,000 I think, I had an excellent view of the verdant countryside and of the city of Chicago as we made our landing approach.

The terminal at O'Hare was large, modern, and efficient in layout. I was decamped from the United Airlines D.C.6, shuttled along to the Northwest Orient Airline desk, checked in for my onward flight (429) to Minneapolis, and was sat in the lounge with a cup of coffee within fifteen minutes of the aircraft touching down. British airlines please copy! I'd had the intention of looking up some unwitting Chicago fan whilst en route from South Bend...on the phone, that is...but I only had a half-hour stopover, so I reluctantly abandoned the idea.



September 14th

Consoling myself with the thought that I'd be passing through Chicago again in four days time, and then I might have more time between planes.

Flight 429 was announced at about 1.45, and I picked up my hand baggage and wandered down to the Gate. The plane was another D.C. 6 (D.C. 6B, to be precise), and again most comfortably equipped. We took off at 2p.m. and made the flight non-stop to Minneapolis in 1½ hours, landing at 2.30p.m. Minneapolis Time. Like John Berry, I was unfortunate in not getting a glamorous seat-companion on any of my flights, so I occupied myself in taking in the country over which we were flying - and taking a few optimistic photo's out of the plane window, some of which came out - and just plain day-dreaming. I was quite happy, although Marilyn Monroe in the seat next to me would have been nice...I'd even have settled for Kim Novak!

I was one of the first people out of the aircraft when we touched down at Minneapolis, in fact I gave the hostess an almost indecently swift 'Goodday' (a pity, really, for she was rather nice), for I was eager to meet my long-time correspondent and friend Dale R. Smith at last. I was quick to spot him, up top of the terminal building, waving a cigar and a Union Jack....at first I thought he was the control-tower (he's rather tall) but then I realised that control-towers don't smoke cigars so it must be Dale! Seriously though, it was wonderful to meet him at last, and we clasped hands warmly as I came out of the reception-room into the concourse.

Dale suggested a beer whilst they unloaded the baggage from the aircraft, and we dived into a pleasant little bar to indulge in mutual toasts and pleasant lies to the effect that neither of us looked the least bit older than when we first exchanged photos! It was grand to be here, and Dale was to make my stay in Minneapolis a very pleasant one - he'd saved several days of his vacation for my arrival and was free for the whole of my stay.

We picked up my luggage, and headed out of the terminal building to Dale's white '59 Ford, talking as we went. The drive to 3001 Kyle Avenue was a very pleasant one, and Minneapolis seemed to be a very pleasant city - from the air it had been obvious that the area abounded with a multitude of small lakes, and these together with well laid out parks and green-belts made the city and suburbs a very pleasant place to drive through. I saw more of Minneapolis than any other city in the States so perhaps comparisons may be out of order, but certainly it was the most green and attractive city I saw. We reached Dale's home in Golden Valley after a easy ½ hour drive, and there I met Vicki, Dale's wife, whom I'd heard on tape many times when the Minneapolis Branch of The Stockport Intake Dog & Cake Walking Society had been foregathered. She was charming, and welcoming.

A dinner had been planned for that evening, with LeRoy and Marge Haugsrud coming over in the early evening to join us for a festive session. LeRoy and Marge being the other two members of the Local S&IDCWS. As it was a few hours short of dinner-time Vicki suggested a few sandwiches to satisfy my immediate needs and these went down very well, particularly when washed down with beer. I ate in Dale's rather fabulous den, and enviously studied his collection as I did so, and we talked of the evening to come. Then I was taken downstairs to 'quarters'.

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Dale has a very nice home, modern and pleasant with a very fine view of Golden Valley through his lounge window. The house is set in to the side of a hill so that both the main floor, and the basement, are 'above ground'. His 'upstairs' den is a well laid out room, walls covered by bookshelves and books, and with two tape-recorders, electric-typewriter, and every possible adjunct for a science-fiction fans activities to hand. In the basement is the overflow of his collection, mainly the pulp magazines, and he had very thoughtfully placed my bed between the Astounding file and the Startling file. And here also, he'd put several items for my attention....

Several cans of specially-warmed beer - Teabags - The commission on my sale of the Smith/Haugsrud epic "THE DEITIES" to Science Fantasy - a letter from home - and several other letters which had been mailed to me care of Dale. It was quite a collection, and Dale left me to unpack and sort it all out while he went and warmed some more beer! A couple of the missives were subscriptions to BASTION, and these were well and wisely spent (on alcohol) during my stay in Minneapolis....another was from Redd Boggs (to whom I'd written before leaving England, to say that I'd like to meet him whilst in Minneapolis), and this expressed regret that Redd 'wouldn't be able to meet me'. I've since gathered that Redd is something of a recluse, but I must admit to a little disappointment at his letter. However, this was most ably dissipated by the other fans and folk in Minneapolis....Dale, Vicki, LeRoy, Marge, and Gordon Dickson.

LEROY BJARNI HAUGSRUD SECONDSTAGE LENSMAN

At 5.30, LeRoy and Marge arrived, LeRoy staggering under the burden of enough camera equipment to make even Don Ford wilt. LeRoy, some time ago, had published a rather fine book of cat-photos, and he was also responsible for cooking up a batch of flying-saucer photographs which I once used to perpetrate a hoax in TRIODE....I got my camera handy and managed to take a photo of him before he could take one of me! It took him some minutes to get his tripod erected...

The arrival of the Haugsrud's was a signal for Dale to mix a series of super-strength Martini's which went immediately to the right place. We sat talking, and sipping our drinks for a half hour or so before dinner, I gave a rough outline of my adventures so far...and LeRoy and myself had some mutually horrible puns to make.

We sat down to a well-laden table and had an excellent meal cooked by Vicki. The outstanding thing about the meal though, was the cake which Vicki carried in with due ceremony after the main course had been decimated - this was a Large Cake, and on it were several Union Jack's. Dale & Vicki had contacted the local British Consul and obtained these from him especially for the occasion. I was touched....and pleased that Harrison's minions had been cooperative. It was a nice gesture, and I was only sorry that I'd already eaten too much to do the cake full justice.



September 14th



Dinner over, it was my turn to mix the drinks. On the last tape I'd sent to Dale and the gang, Norman Shorrock had been persuaded to divulge the recipe for the wondrously-strong BASTION (A Drink To Fortify One), and Dale had undergone a great search and several hangovers in the search for the necessary ingredients. Rum, Ice Cream, Coca-Cola, and a coffee-flavoured Italian Wine- Cafe Creme Marsala.



I'm not too sure that I got the mix exactly right, but I had a great deal of fun trying, and I know at least four people in Minneapolis willing to testify to the strength of the concoction!

Round about here someone suggested we play cards. We started with a game I'd never heard of before called Hell, and since I didn't win at it, I suggested I teach them to play Nap, and Brag... at which I was much more succesful, the beauty of it being that nowone else knew the rules so that I was able to change them whenever I had the wrong cards.. "Yes, Dale, I know you have the Ace, King and Queen of trumps, but after eight o'clock on the night after a full moon, seven, eight and nine are always the high cards....". It was a most enjoyable session, and I mixed a second batch of Bastion's to help things along.

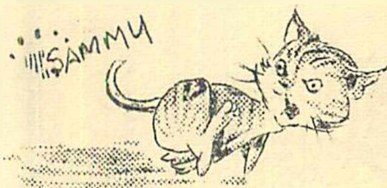


During the evening I'd phoned Gordon Dickson up...he was out when I first rang but later he phoned back, and it was arranged that he should join us the next day....which looked like being another full and enjoyable one.



Round about eleven, LeRoy and Marge left us to head home for some sleep after a thoroughly fascinating evening, and after arranging a return engagement at their house for the Saturday night. Dale, Vicki, and I had a nightcap, and retired.

Dale, is a representative for a firm dealing in scientific equipment, and he'd used his contracts to arrange a tour for me of the General Mills Laboratories. We arose relatively early the next morning since we were due at the GM Labs at not too late an hour of the day. Vicki provided us with some sustenance and black coffee, and then Dale and I drove downtown to pick up LeRoy (who had the day off) who was to join us.



LeRoy and Marge live in the older part of the city, and have a comfortable two-story house there to which I was made welcome. I was introduced to Sammy C.A.T. Haugsrud, and Marge topped us up with more black coffee. By this time I was beginning to waken up....

September 15th

We arrived at the General Mills Laboratories, and where there made welcome by the gentleman in charge, Mr. Mattiason. Now, let it be quite clearly understood that I'm no scientist, and the greater part of what scientific knowledge I have has been picked up through reading s-f. Nonetheless, I thoroughly enjoyed the tour of the technical labs, even if I didn't understand what all of it was about! I rather imagine that any s-f fan would have enjoyed seeing the various and varied technical monstrosities used in present day research. I was vaguely disappointed that none of the labs had a mad-scientist chained to the wall, but otherwise it was a very interesting session.

The tour over it was time to eat, and the three of us were joined by Mr. Mattiason for lunch at the Criterion Restaurant in St. Paul. This was an excellent place to eat and we had a fine meal with interesting conversation - helped along by Martini's and Scotch on the Rocks. The Criterion is a top class restaurant and the steaks and accessories were excellent. Like many of the better restaurants I visited in the States it was only dimly lit, presumably to encourage romance? It certainly encourages a more intimate atmosphere, and whilst the company wasn't conducive to romance it does help to give the impression that you are dining alone with friends rather than in a large restaurant.

About halfway through the meal I was paged, and there was a phone call for me...it was Gordon Dickson who had phoned Vicki for our whereabouts. I suggested that this was a good a rendezvous as any, so he said he'd come downtown and join us at the Criterion within the next half hour.

THE HOKA THAT WALKS LIKE A MAN

Although Gordon is totally unlike a furry teddy-bear there is something about him that reminds one of a volatile Hoka, and about the face there is a resemblance to my mental-image of these most amusing characters. I gather that I'm not the first to spot this likeness either... Whatever, Gordon is a most amusing person to be with and I thoroughly enjoyed his company.

Dale had promised to run Mr. Mattiason back to the General Mills plant and as time was passing they had to leave before Gordon arrived. We agreed to rendezvous at the firm LeRoy works for, Leigh Inc. where I was to pick up a new camera, and LeRoy and I said farewell and sat back with our drinks to await Gordon's arrival. It's nice to be a gentleman of leisure and see other people have to dash back to the firm after lunch!

Gordon arrived and agreed to drive us downtown to LeRoy's firm in his car, so we went out of the air-conditioned Criterion into the blast-furnace atmosphere of downtown St. Paul - Minneapolis again. I'm surprised that so far air-conditioning in America hasn't spread to the automobiles - you can shop, eat, carouse, or sleep in comfort, but so far you have to put up with a certain amount of discomfort when driving. Once you get on the move the windows can be wound down and whatever breeze there is helps to cool the innards of the car - it's almost inevitable though that a car has to be parked in the sun, and it's like getting into a turkish bath when you first enter it. No doubt the air-conditioner car will be a reality before long.

September 15th

Minneapolis possesses a Writers Club, of which Gordon, Dale, (and Clifford Simak, who is on the staff of the local paper) and sundry other people are members. LeRoy and Dale usually collaborate when they write, and Gordon often collaborates with other writers. These were two of the topics of conversation as we drove out of St. Paul into Minneapolis. It would seem that the usual method of collaborating on a story is for one author to provide the basic idea and write the rough, and for the other to fill-out and polish. It sounds like a fairly ideal way of writing, and if I can ever find someone prepared to polish whatever I write I might even try and write professionally myself one of these days!

We arrived at a convenient parking-lot near Leigh Inc., without untoward incident, and LeRoy led the way into this modern camera store. LeRoy is one of the senior men in the store and he had forewarned the owner of my arrival, and of my intention to pick out a camera whilst I was there. I found Mr. Leigh and the staff most kind and cooperative, and my shopping was done with expedition...and Mr. Leigh was kind enough to allow me a discount on the camera I purchased. He (Mr. Leigh) had originally come from the North of England, some forty years back, and we talked briefly of the many changes he would see if he went back now.

LeRoy introduced us all around, and Gordon was being quizzed on writing when Dale put in an appearance - after dropping off our host of the morning he'd driven out to the airport to secure my ticket for Montreal, kind person that he is. We bid the store a farewell, and leaving Gordon's car parked in town, all climbed into Dale's Ford. LeRoy was feeling a little bushed - he blamed it on the potency of the Bastion's! - so we drove first to 110 West 33rd Street as he didn't quite feel up to the hectic evening which had been planned.

I hadn't as yet had the chance to investigate LeRoy's collection so we all trooped up the stairs to his interesting den, and LeRoy followed with several cans of beer. Here again, were walls lined with s-f and fantasy and a fine atmosphere for talk about s-f and writing. Gordon entertained us with tales of his experiences with s-f editors; of Horace Gold and his dislike of leaving his hotel room...of JWCjr, and the time he spent a rather uncomfortable night at the Campbells fine home due to being allergic to cats. We talked of stories we'd particularly enjoyed, and ones we hadn't, and had ourselves a really pleasant hour.

I deliberately ignored Time whilst I was in the States, and I didn't make notes of what time which things happened...which makes expanding my notes rather difficult. I think it was around five o'clock though that we left LeRoy's home and drove out again to Golden Valley. There Vicki made us welcome again, and I retired to change my shirt and freshen up while the beer-cans were being opened... I think I probably drank more beer in America than I'd done previously throughout my life, but the strange thing was it seemed to have no effect on me - when you are already feeling on top of the world, and thoroughly enjoying yourself, it doesn't I think, but merely helps to keep your tonsils moist for conversation. I'll be pleased to repeat the experiment anytime if someone would like to observe this possible truism as an experiment, and providing they are willing to pay for the beer, of course!

September 15th

We talked of s-f for awhile in Dale's pleasant den, and whilst I don't recall the specific subjects we talked on, I do recall that it was a very pleasant session.....and got us nicely in the mood for the evening to come which had no connection whatsoever with s-f. Other than that portions of it held a certain element of the fantastic....

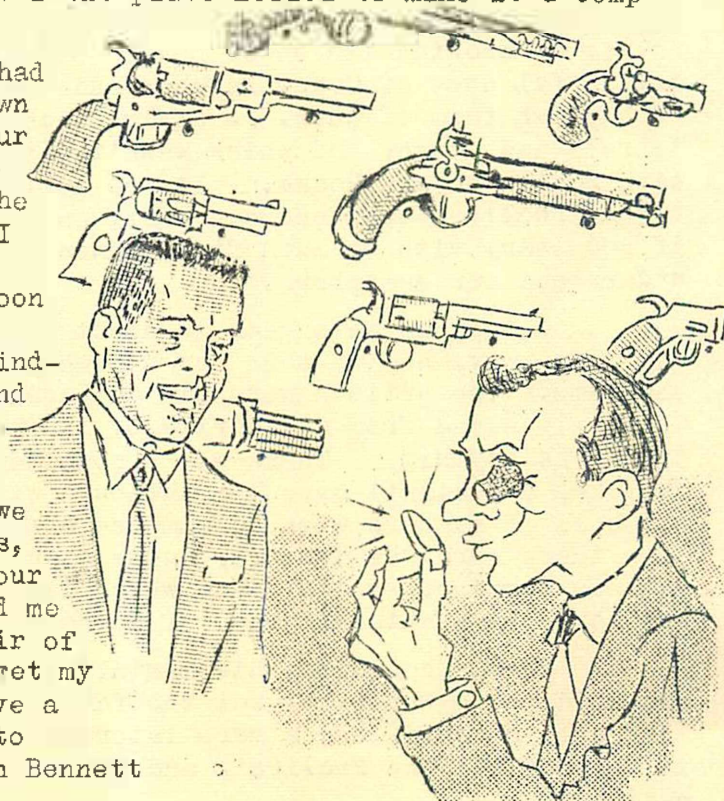
Gordon suggested the Lilac Bar for our first stop, and this was a highly pleasant place to start of an evening 'on the town'. There were hardly any lights in the bar, so I imagine it was a fairly expensive place (one can equate the exclusiveness of a particular bar or restaurant in America almost in direct ratio to its degree of lighting - in most cases). We found ourselves a suitable niche and sat drinking Moscow Mules for a half hour or so, and excellent beverage on which to start an evening, I think, and it helps to cleanse the palate!

From the Lilac Bar we drove out of town to the Stagecoach, a place which, as far as I am concerned, deserves the adjective 'fabulous'. I suppose there are other places like it in the States, but... As its name suggests, the Stagecoach is fashioned after the days of the wild-west. The building is a facsimile of a 'Deadwood-Gulch' type Saloon, and is complete with hitching-rail and similar appurtenances. Inside, it's equally fascinating...the walls are covered with between two and three thousand guns and weapons....the bar is topped with Silver Dollars...and the manager dresses, and looks like, Wild Bill Himself! Oh yes, and down at one end of the saloon are a collection of Steam Calliopes.

After seeing the "Musquito Kid" at Pittsburgh I almost expected gun-totin' Ron Ellik to swagger through the swing doors at any moment. A Hired Squirrel was just about all the place needed to make it a complete fan paradise.

Gordon, Dale and myself had excellent steaks, washed them down with beer, and then went on a tour of the walls. I've never really been a gun-bug (I didn't like the way they kicked back at me when I was in the RAF), but a series of visits to the Stagecoach could soon turn me into one. The fantastic diversity of weapons was quite mind-boggling, and I can now understand the fascination that many people have for the subject.

Whilst I was gazing in awe at some of the more unusual items, Dale had wandered off to settle our bill...on his return he presented me with a Silver Dollar as a souvenir of my visit. I'm not likely to forget my visit there, but it's nice to have a genuine Silver Dollar...if only to drop onto the Brass Table when Ron Bennett ups the bidding with his...



September 15th

Dale had suggested the 'Key Club' as our next port of call, and after draggin' me away from the walls, we all got back in the car and drove back downtown to Washington Square where the club is located. The Key Club, Dale had said, would give me a good idea of the typical entertainment offered in the less expensive clubs in America...you sit and you drink, there's a floorshow, there's tourists, and girls. All of which sounded quite intriguing, but we were a little too early, and the joint wasn't open yet.

So... Gordon said he knew of another convenient bar, Mike's, and we drove the couple of blocks there to while away the time until the Key Club opened its doors. We fluctuated between Scotch on the Rocks and Beer, and s-f and women, for half an hour or so and observed native American's in their natural habitat. The crowd in this bar were less inhibited than I'd observed in my previous excursions into an analysis of American Drinking Habits. Gordon said it was a bar frequented by the 'locals' rather than visiting firemen from Podunk, and I hope that he was right and that most of the people had been introduced! There were two elderly 'girls' who were dancing together in between drinks, and providing an impromptu floorshow...if they'd been forty years younger it might have been interesting.

Gordon talked of a visit he'd made to Mexico, and we discussed the relative merits of Tequila, and Rum Anisette, and Pimm's 99, and I said that the latter was probably the more dangerous of the three. Being disguised, as it is, as an innocuous soft-drink.

Around nine-thirty we adjourned to the Key Club, and found ourselves a table near the band - in retrospect I think it was a little too close to the band, but it wasn't playing as we walked in and we had no way of knowing its sheer BLAST potential. The band had the rather delightful name of Count Belcher and his Combo, and they played a sort of burpish form of jazz. A style which was about half-way between rock 'n roll and dixie, and which wasn't altogether unpleasing when taken with Scotch on the Rocks. It was a little loud tho', and I'd never before realised that one can carry on a conversation without words if necessary with so much fine innuendo...I only hope the band couldn't understand our semaphore.

I suppose we'd been in about half an hour when the Floorshow got under way, and we were now somewhat compensated for our shattered eardrums. The artists were all coloured people (as was the band), but were only saved from mediocrity by the negro races inherent sense of timing and rythim. There was a comedian and vocalist who was passable in joke, and didn't have the audience with him at all until he put over a couple of numbers with an immense abundance of verve and energy. And then there were the dancers, quite attractive coloured girls who did various forms of erotic dance which largely failed to be erotic, but was saved by a natural grace of movement from being 'poor'.

Gordon consulted his mental guide to Minneapolis night-life, and said there was a bar not too far away which I might find interesting. This one, he said, had a more interesting floorshow. So we went there, it was called 'The Frolics', and inspires the paragraph heading on the next page...

September 15th

COMIC STRIP

The Frolics was a bar which also featured a frequent strip show, and it was all most amusing. I'm not in the least oblivious to the female form in all its 'nude splendour' like...but this was the first time I'd ever seen a genuinley funny striptease. The girls were somewhat long in the tooth, but went through their acts with such good humour - amidst friendly cries of advice and encouragement from the audience - that one couldn't help but be entertained. The general atmosphere reminded me of a hollywood-type western saloon where the chorus girls pause in their dance to kick an impecunious cowpoke in the teeth...except that they didn't wear as many clothes as the girls in the films!

Inbetween acts we discussed the relative merits of the white-strippers at Frolics and the coloured ones at the Key. Gordon preferred the Frolicsome ones, who, he maintained, were obviously enjoying themselves as much as the audience...I preferred the Key Club girls for their lithness of movement, and 'naturalness'. Dale...he just sat there and slurped!!

After we'd seen the show at the Frolics we decided to move on, and find a quieter bar where we could talk without so many distractions. I'm afraid that I don't recall the name of this one (and neither could Dale, when I asked him the next day!) but we spent a pleasant hour there, talking with the fluidity of alcohol loosened tongues - and friendship inspired interest. And Gordon gave both Dale and myself very lucid argument as to why we should both become full-time writers, very excellent reasons he gave...and it is only my natural born laziness which stops me following his advice.

It was a very enjoyable evening, not all the entertainment had been of the highest calibre, but the quality of the company had more than made up for this. Somewhere about 2 a.m. Dale and I dropped Gordon off at the parking-lot where he'd left his car earlier in the day, bid him a reluctant goodnight, and drove back to Golden Valley - and bed.

THE MY GOD IT'S FRIDAY CLUE

Friday was a relatively quiet day when compared with the previous few...and a general air of lethargy hung over one Eric Bentcliffe partly as a result of the 'night before'. Neither Dale nor myself were up very early this morning, and I readily agreed to Dale's suggestion that we 'take things fairly easily today'. He only just got it out before I did!

We had breakfast about lunch-time, and the afternoon was spent playing tapes, and just talking. Towards early evening Vicki, Dale and myself got into the Ford and headed back downtown to eat. It was quite a fabulous meal, too. After calling in at one or two of the local stores for me to pick up some souvenirs and gifts for people at home, we went to the Waikiki Room of the Pick-Nicollet Hotel. This, as the name intimates, is a Polynesian restaurant and since I'd never before sampled Polynesian food I was eager for the experiment. The restaurant was, again, dimly lit, and had plenty of atmosphere - and I think it might give a better idea of the place, than my descriptive powers can, if I quoted a little here. -

" Here in the Waikiki Room you will find bamboo from Formosa, chairs from Hong Kong, the decorations from Tahiti, Samoa, the Gilbert Islands, the man eating clam shells from the Great Barrier Reef, the coral from the Philippines, the beautiful table tops, the bar top, from Hawaii, the tapa from British Samoa, the fern trunks from the forests of Hawaii...."

Etcetra... I almost wished I'd brought along my can of Air From Hawaii so that I could have liberated it here.

The food and drinks were fine, too. For the benefit of people who've never sampled Polynesian food...there is an affinity between it and Chinese cooking, although different sauces are used. The drinks were rum-based and inspired, we had a couple to cleanse our palate and then some Egg Rolls, followed by Mandarin Pressed Duck. My only regret was that my stomach wasn't large enough to do the meal full justice.... and that I couldn't stick around long enough to observe whether, due to the low-lighting, the rather succulent looking table-mats ever got eaten by mistake!

Since coming to the States I hadn't been able to really satisfy an ever-present urge to dive into some magazine store and buy up loads of science-fiction. In New York I'd wandered around several, in Cincy I'd actually bought a couple of items, but the thought of having to lug the stuff around with me had prevented me from indulging myself. However, Dale would mail anything I bought for me (as he's been so kindly mailing me magazines on our exchange-deal for so long), so now was the time to indulge myself.

From the Waikiki Room we set forth on a magazine-store crawl, and it says much for Dale and Vicki's fortitude that they expressed no boredom at my diving into every newstand and book-store we came to and immersing myself amongst the s-f... Dale, of course was in there with me most of the time. And I suppose Vicki has been on shopping sprees with Dale before, which accounted for her forbearance. I really had myself a most enjoyable time, and picked up twenty-plus pocket-books from three different stores. And I recomend Shinder's to any fan visiting Minneapolis...the two branches provided the greater part of my aquisitions that evening.

I think I could have spent the whole evening poking around the magazine stores, but after a while I began to feel thirsty and Dale made mention of a rather pleasant bar in the general direction of Golden Valley, and so we went. This was 'Michaels' (no connection with 'Mike's Bar of the previous evening), a roadhouse type restaurant and bar with a pleasant decor, and a swordfish rampant over the bar. For once I managed to twist Dale's arm and pay for the drinks, and we sat at the bar and talked for a pleasant half-hour. This place was also dimly lit, and I wondered to myself whether there was any connection between soft-light flattery and the American desire to stay-young...I'm quite in favour, it made me look younger, too!

We got back to Kyle Avenue just in time to catch the closing scenes of the weeks episode of 'Twilight Zone', the Hugo Winning TV program. Whilst ten-minutes isn't enough to base a judgement on, it did seem to be a very well produced show and adultly treated.

September 10th

Many American TV series eventually are aired by either the BBC or one of the Independent (Commercial) Television companies in the U.K., and I rather hope that one of them will decide to purchase 'Twilight Zone'. I'd like to see more of Rod Serling's series - and I must apologise for having consistently referred to him as Rod Sterling earlier in this story. Only sheer laziness prevents me from going back over all the stencils and correcting them, plus the thought that Mr. Serling is unlikely to ever read this epic!

Dale and Vicki had mentioned the game of 'Marbles' earlier in the evening and they now suggested that we play the game. This was a board-game, and each player had a team of five marbles, and dice was thrown to decide the moves - which were either made with the intention of reaching a certain goal on the board, or putting your opponents back to the starting line. It sounds rather silly explained like this, but in fact it was very enjoyable and I thoroughly enjoyed playing it. I like most indoor-sports.

We played three games. I won the first two and was only narrowly beaten in the third. (And this would seem as good a point as any to thank Eddie Jones for the loan of his dice...)

Naturally (!) we had something to drink while we played, and after we'd finished playing Vicki fixed a late-night snack, and we decided to call it a day. It was a very pleasant, relaxed evening.

The Saturday morning dawned bright and clear, and sunny again, and whilst I only know this because I was told it had been so, it was still bright, clear, and sunny when I awoke. We breakfasted well, with the very pleasant view of Golden Valley to peer at during lulls in the conversation - I kept a beady eye on the railway line that ran through it into the distance. Believe it or not, but I hadn't seen one single train since arriving in the States, on the move anyway. I wouldn't go so far as to say that the American Railroad Companies were deliberately re-routing their trains so that I wouldn't see them (although this is only reasonable if I did, inadvertently cause the Pennsylvania RR strike...), but it certainly seemed that way. I began to feel that I must see an American Train before I left Minneapolis, but I didn't confide this to Dale or Vicki for I'm sure if I had done they would have arranged a special-train to run past the window. I didn't see one that morning, or the rest of the day, either.

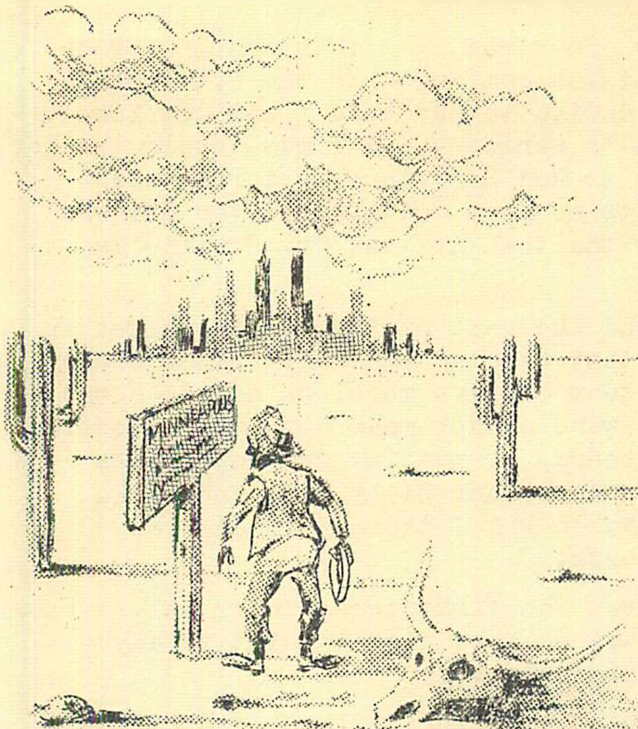
So far I hadn't had the chance to try out my new camera, and since the weather was so obviously good that even a clot like myself couldn't take any really bad pictures, I asked Dale to drive me around Minneapolis so that I could take some shots. Noble Knight of Saint Fantasy that he is, he readily agreed.

We drove pleasantly along, with me taking the occasional snap of a typical (I thought) scene. Once a huge fire engine crossed over an intersection just ahead of us, and we gave chase in the hope of getting some shots of a really good fire, but we lost the fire-engine... Dale, drove into town however and more than made up for the lack of fire by taking me up the Foshay Building. This is the tallest building in the Northwest, thirty-two stories high, and is rather interesting in that it is patterned after the Washington Monument.

September 17th

It presents a most unusual sight by virtue of being considerably wider at the base than at the top, and tapering gradually from base to apex.

Of more interest to me than this unusual architectural feature though, was the very fine view of the surrounding countryside one got from the Observation Balcony. The immediate impression I got was how fantastically flat the country around here was...the horizon was a dead straight line in every direction unbroken by even the smallest hillock. Minneapolis, spread out below us seemed almost non-existent by reason of the prolific greenery. Apart from the cities center, signs of civilisation could only be glimpsed infrequently through the tree tops. Which is how every city should be, I think.



I took quite a number of other photos that morning, too. Of the fine new Library Building arising, and its eye-pleasing 'monument' which looked to me something like a giant replica of the Dead-Sea scrolls. Pat and Dick Nixon were due in town later in the day - part of their warm up campaign for the coming presidential election - and the main streets were garlanded with bunting, and signs proclaiming "Welcome Pat And Dick"...I took a couple of shots of these making a mental note to send copies to the Ellington's and Lupoff's. I won't bore you with a catalogue of the shots I took, but the camera functioned finely, and I have some very excellent pictorial reminders of my stay in Minneapolis.

We returned to Dale's home around one o' clock, to find Vicki preparing a cook-out. We were due for a big-meal at the Haugsrud house later in the day, so Vicki suggested Hamburgers grilled over charcoal as an excellent hunger assuager. They were too.

After eating, I went down to the basement and did the rather unpleasant job of packing in preparation for my next mornings departure. 'Unpleasant' because I was having so much fun that I didn't want to go.It wouldn't have been so bad if I could have found room for some of the rare items in Dale's collection in my bags, as it was I barely got my own stuff in. The task completed, I banished the thought of returning home from my mind, and continued to enjoy myself whilst I could. And this wasn't difficult in the company of the Smith's and Haugsrud's.

Around four o' clock we left for LeRoy's and Marge's house, there to spend a very pleasant evening. Sammy was out front to greet us when we drew up at 118 West 33rd Street, and LeRoy and Marge weren't very far behind. Sammy, of course, is the Cat who lives with the Haugsrud's and a very pleasant and likable feline I found it. As I said previously, I'm primarily a dog-lover, but I took to Sammy.

September 17th

Thence started another very enjoyable evening. We sat, and LeRoy brought forth suitable alcoholic beverages - Martini's for the others, Scotch on the Rocks for me. I got rather fond of this drink whilst in the States, but it does have one fault...at the first sip it seems most potent, but by the time you are down to the bottom of the glass and the ice has melted it's rather 'impotent'. A pity that someone hasn't evolved scotch-impregnated ice-cubes.

When we'd all got drinks in our hands, LeRoy came forth with a surprise for me...he'd bought me a flash-attachment to go with the Camera I'd bought a couple of days before. I was most pleasantly crogged, and since I'd brought the camera along this started off another camera duel between LeRoy and myself. With quite good results, too.

We sat and talked for awhile, and LeRoy brought out his tape-recorder and inveigled me into giving an account of my journeyings...and, unwittingly, asked me to play his grand-piano so that he could tape that. It was a fine piano. Dale took over the taper, and LeRoy brought out his Mammoth Wurlitzer Piano-Accordian and we played a duet...at which the ladies hurriedly left to 'get dinner ready'... It was quite a piano-accordion, and LeRoy is quite good on it...and I'd have played it too, if I could have lifted the darned thing!

We were just getting nicely set for a musical evening (Dale had comb and tissue paper, and we'd talked him into playing it in the hall 'to get a better musical balance'), when Dinner was announced. It was a fine meal, and Marge had outdone herself in the kitchen. Like I said before, I put on weight while I was in the States - a few more meals like that one and I really might have looked like a Hobbit.

After dinner, Dale and myself went upstairs to LeRoy's den. This gave me the opportunity to further investigate LeRoy's collection, whilst he and Dale listened to the Liverpool and Cheltenham Tapes I'd brought along....out of which they got a great deal of enjoyment. I recall that we made a tape to Liverpool afterwards, and had a great deal of fun doing it. It all seemed very strange being on that end of the tape exchange, instead of making a tape with Norman, or Terry Jeeves to send to Minneapolis. Very pleasant, though.

In fact it was a very pleasant evening altogether, and the only thing that marred it in the slightest was the fact that I had to catch an early plane out of Minneapolis the next morning, and because of that the festivities couldn't go on all night. I think Dale, Vicki and myself eventually departed just before midnight - with regret.

Back at Kyle Avenue we worked out that we'd have to get up at about 6 a.m. if I were to catch my plane in plenty of time, so after a nightcap and natter we went to bed.

AMERICAN RAILROADS RELENT

The rather unearthly feeling at arising early in the morning after being able to lie in bed 'till almost any hour, was finally dispersed when, at long last, I saw an American Train. We'd had breakfast, I'd finished packing, and at 6.51 a.m. a train passed through Golden Valley. It only just made it, too...another couple of minutes and we'd have been out of the house. On the right track at last...

September 18th

The hour was early, it was Sunday, and there was little traffic on the roads. The drive out to the airport was easy, and we stopped only once en route - for me to take a photo of a sign I'd spotted the previous night, this bore the legend "MUMS FOR SALE" and I couldn't resist it. Vicki said she thought it referred to Chrysanthemums, but I much preferred the mental image the words evoked and ignored this.

As we drove I tried to convey to Dale and Vicki how much I'd enjoyed my stay in Minneapolis, and that I only wished I could take them back home with me to meet all their other correspondents and friends in the U.K...Eric Jones, Terry Jeeves, Bob Richardson, Eddie Jones, etcetra, etcetra. It would have been nice.

We reached Minneapolis Airport about half an hour after leaving Golden Valley, and I immediately checked in for my flight and had my bags weighed. This was all done with a minimum of formality, and maximum of efficiency, and then I had time for a few last words with the kindly Smith's until my flight was announced.

All too soon, 'Flight 702, For Chicago Midway' was announced over the p.a. and saying a reluctant farewell to Dale and Vicki, I walked to the boarding point. The aircraft, again, was a Douglas D.C.6b...it could have been the same one I'd flown in on such a short time before, for I hadn't taken note of the registration number. By judicious manoeuvring I managed to insert myself into a window seat, and waved goodbye to Minneapolis as the plane took off.

The flight was uneventful. We had breakfast shortly after take-off, and by the time I'd eaten and read a few chapters of Eric Frank Russell's "WASP" (which I'd picked up at Shinder's on the Friday) we were making our approach at Midway. Arrival time, 10.30 a.m. (Chicago Time).

Here I had a stop-over of a couple of hours or so before picking up my onward flight - Trans-Canada Airlines Flight 306 for Toronto and Montreal. I went straight over to TCA and checked in for my flight, and got rid of my baggage so that I would be free to wander un-encumbered. It was a case tho' of not enough time to do anything....

There were coaches outside the Terminal Building which offered trips to downtown Chicago, but when I enquired I found that the time incurred in doing this "If traffic's as bad as it wuz coming out", would leave me perilously close to take-off time. I reluctantly shelved the idea...then I thought I'd phone some Chicago fan, but realised that it was Sunday morning (and I don't like being hauled out of bed on a Sunday), and even if I managed to contact anyone it would most likely be a case of them only getting out to Midway in time to wave me goodbye.

So...I went for a walk. I'm not sure where I went, I stayed on the main highway running past the airport so that I wouldn't get lost, and just walked. This was the first time in the States I really had the chance to stretch my legs, and I really enjoyed it. The walk was enlivened by people stopping their cars to offer me a lift, and looking most bemused when I said "No, I prefer to walk"...and by the planes which frequently shot over overhead. There was a sign near the Airport entrance which claimed Midway as the World's busiest airport. -

September 18th

And from the amount of traffic I saw, I wasn't inclined to dispute the statement.

I walked away from the airport for about 1/2 of an hour, and then retraced my steps. I spent the rest of the time until 306 was due in exploring the airport buildings, and ogling (well...) several rather fetchin' damsels who, I hoped, were also travelling on 306 - they were not, of course! And I brought my notes up to date over a coffee.

TCA Flight 306 turned up on time, and turned out to be my favourite aircraft, too. A Vicker's Viscount (A 700, I think, John). If I had a couple of Oil Well's in Texas, and a block of real-estate on Fifth Avenue I think I'd buy me a Viscount...there's something about the plane which appeals to me, it has 'personality'. We took off, with this aircraft's seemingly extremely short run, at 1.25.

We flew at not too great a height out over the Great Lakes with Toronto as our first destination. I alternated between looking down on Lake Erie, and "Wasp". They fed us later in the afternoon, and I entertained thoughts of phoning Boyd Raeburn or Les Nirenberg when we landed. This wasn't to be, either, alas...we touched down at Toronto, cleared customs, and (those of us who were continuing on the plane to Montreal) were rushed back onto the plane. It seems we were a couple of minutes behind schedule.

Up into the blue sky again, seat belts unfastened, and I returned to my routine of one chapter "Wasp", five-minutes staring out the window. The St. Lawrence Seaway provided some interest down-below, and it proved to be too strong for "Wasp", which I stuck away in my pocket until I felt more like reading. Hell, it isn't over day I fly over Canada!

We reached Montreal at six in the evening, dead on time, and I went down the aircraft-steps with my eyes peeled. Dave & Ruth Kyle had said they'd come up to Montreal (to make sure I left the country!) for my last hours on the American Continent, when I'd bid them adieu at Pittsburgh. I'd written them from Minneapolis with my E.T.A.

At first I didn't see them. I walked into the airport-lounge, and there was Ruth! They hadn't received my letter from Minneapolis - despite the fact that it had been sent air-mail three days before - but had come up from Potsdam in the hope that we'd meet. Thanks, Dave and Ruth...I'd been feeling a certain amount of let-down along the line from Minneapolis, a certain amount of cheesed-offedness, but the sight of your two friendly faces (and the hug that Ruth gave me) more than revived my flagging spirits.

We collected my bag from TCA, and piled into Dave's Pontiac to drive over to the B.O.A.C. area to check in for my night-flight. You know, I'm British and proud of it...but I dam well wish that BOAC and other 'Carriers of the flag' would make some attempt to enhance British prestige abroad, instead of exhibiting the all-too-well-known British facility for 'muddling-through'. Montreal is a big-airport, BOAC are one of its best customers...but the facilities they offer aren't even comparable with the local lake-hopper airlines. Their terminal is pre-fabricated and dingy, too small and the catering facilities are -

September 18th

roughly equivalent to the Platform Three British Railway's Buffet at Crewe! Pshaw, and like that.

I found that my name was on the list for Flight 648, due to take off for Manchester and London at 23.59, and I eagerly bid the terminal farewell until such time as I should have to be back there. I put my bag back in the Pontiac, and we drove off to Montreal.

And I think it's time that Cochon should be mentioned in this report... Cochon, is Dave and Ruth's sheepdogish dog. When I'd visited Potsdam he'd been away at the Vet's due to having developed an allergy towards something (Fleas ???!) and loosing most of his coat. However, he was now fit again, and licking the back of my kneck with great abandon. A friendly animal. When we'd been en route from New York to Pittsburgh, Dave had written a letter to Cochon in care of the vet...I don't know what Cochon thought of this, but I'd have loved to see the Vet's face! I think there's an element of shaggy-doggishness in Dave Kyle, too...

Back-tracking again - when I'd first landed at Montreal we'd had some trouble finding the city and had been thwarted in our desire to drive me along the main streets before heading South. Once again, Montreal proved somewhat elusive as we drove downtown to have a meal at one of Dave and Ruth's favourite restaurants. However, I wasn't worried...Dave and I started another punning session, and we talked of what they'd been doing, and what I'd been doing since Pittsburgh. And, eventually, we came to St. Catherine Quest and 'Le Paris'.

It was worth the time we'd spent looking for it, too. An Excellent restaurant, with, naturally, French cuisine of the finest. I had a 'Kidney Saute du Chef' whilst Dave and Ruth tackled equally fine dishes. A pleasant wine washed the food down, and Ruth was tempted by several delectable pastries - I was tempted too, but I was full. A Harrison Three Star, I think. It was very pleasant to sit back after eating and talk with Dave and Ruth on the many topics which came to mind. And Dave brought out some stereo-slides he'd taken whilst I was in Potsdam and New York, and said that if I liked to take them back with me to show the gang, he and Ruth would come over next year and collect them...which was a very fine arrangement by me.

After our meal, Dave suggested we round off events by taking in a Night Club before I left for home...and then we suddenly realised that it was Sunday, which was why we hadn't seen any bars open, and there wouldn't be any night-clubs open, either...alas. So we decided to drive around Montreal for an hour before going back to the airport. I was glad we did, for Montreal is a fascinating city - a fine blend of the old and the new, hilly, with sudden breathtaking views of tinselled-streets below as you sweep down from a rise....Imposing ivy-covered buildings contrasting with the white of new skyscraper, and none of them allowed to clash. Dave and Ruth said Montreal was one of their favourite cities, and I can well understand why. I'd like to see more of it one day myself. It seemed a succesful blend of the old world, and the new.

That drive around Montreal with Dave and Ruth somehow seemed a very fitting climax to my TAFF Trip.

September 18th.

All too soon we had to turn away from the city and head back out of town to Dorval Airport. As we drove I found conflicting loyalties within me...I half wished that we would have a puncture or something, or that when we got to the airport we would find that my plane had been cancelled, and that I would have to (!) travel once more down to Potsdam with Dave and Ruth, and once there, I would find an excuse to go on down to New York and see Larry and Noreen again, and... You get the drift?

However, we arrived back at the airport without incident, and with time to spare. I fished out some flash-bulbs and took a few shots in the terminal-building...of Dave and Ruth stood under the announcement of Flight 648...of Dave bringing three cups of coffee over to the table we'd found in the cafeteria. We strolled out to the car for me to say farewell to Cochon and pick up my accout ements....and as we strolled back in they announced my flight, on time, no trouble, please proceed to Gate.....

It was hard to say goodbye to Dave and Ruth, even though I had the hope that I would see them again before too long...it was hard to say goodbye to the American Continent who's inhabitants had shown me so many kindnesses during my all too brief visit. A squeeze of hand, a last kiss (Ruth, not Dave!), a final wave, and I went, somewhat forlornly, out on the tarmac to board the BOAC Britannia.

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And here ends my chronicle. I only hope that in it I've managed to convey the pleasure, the wonder, the friendship, the hospitality, the sheer enjoyment I got from my TAFF TRIP.

I've used an awful large number of "I's" in these pages, the grammar is oft not of the best....and I hope nowone will take offence at my frequent facetiousness - I find it hard to treat anything with complete seriousness, particularly when I'm enjoying myself.

It seems slightly unnecessary to say that I had a wonderful time, after some eighty pages describing my adventures, but that is the most suitable phrase I can think of. THANK YOU, Fandom, for making it possible.



EPILOGUE

Whilst this bit rejoices in the title of EPILOGUE, it will largely consist of a Fanzine Listing - of the mags which Kindly Editors handed to me during my journeyings. I feel that this account wouldn't be complete without their acknowledgement, and particularly so, because I haven't had the time to acknowledge them by letter since my return. I got a lot of pleasure from reading them all, and if you don't normally subscribe to fanzines, well, you could do far worse than start with the ones I'm now going to list.

XERO No.1 I aquired in New York at the hotel Chesterfield from Dick and Pat Lupoff (215 E. 73rd St, New York 21, N.Y.). It was read, as were most of these zines, in snatches, in cars, in planes, and it stood up to this wild reading method pretty well. Good interesting material slanted towards s-f and The Comics. At least one other issue has appeared since I got this one, and this looks like becoming a very good zine. No sub rate listed, so write Dick & Pat.

CRY Of The Nameless No. 142

CRY got, and deserved, the Fanzine 'HUGO' at Pittsburgh for the Best Fanzine. Little

more needs to be said. It's regular, meaty, and Good - number 145 came in a couple of days ago, and 146 will be here within a month take or leave a couple of days. 145 is the Convention issue and amongst other things it has a page of photos taken at Pittsburgh - including one of myself. I only hope this will not disrupt CRY! (5 for One Dollar from Box 92, 920 3rd Ave, Seattle 4, Washington. UK 5 for 7/- from John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Ave, Belmont, Belfast, N.I.)

THE MUSFR ALUMNI MAGAZINE Pittcon Edition

This one is put out by a group of fans (Joe Martino, Jake Early, Bruce Ronald, etc) who used to be at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio (!). It's amusing, and entertaining, and a pity it doesn't come out more often. On the off chance there are one or two copies left, you could write to MUSFA, 9 Hiram Lane, Connecticut. Incidentally, Bob Pavlat and I passed through Oxford Ohio en route from Don Ford's to Bob Tucker's. Whilst Ohio as a State didn't get many points on our female rating system, Oxford was awarded Three-Stars. In fact, Bob was so unnerved by the sudden onslaught of femininity that he took at least three wrong turnings before we got out of town! As to why Miami University is in Ohio...I seek elucidation too...write to Connecticut and ask, eh?

YANDRO NO.92

(Robert & Juanita Coulson, Rt 3, Wabash, Indiana. 20cents an issue, or 1/3 to Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd, Hoddesdon, Herts)
YANDRO is remarkable for its regularity - and its always interesting.

FANFARONADE No.1 Put out by Jeff Wanshol, 6 Beverley Pl, Larchmont, N.Y. This, like XERO, is a pretty promising first issue. It doesn't aspire to any great heights but is pretty entertaining all the same.

WRR No.6 (Vol.2) This is a sort of junior-CRY, but junior is size only, the material is crazily pleasant and written mainly by Seattle Fans. Wallace W. Weber is the Pursuivant Publisher, Blotto Otto Pfeifer the Erudite Editor. This issue largely has to do with the Marriage of Blotto Otto to Patricia, and all I can say is that they should get married more often! 2911 E. 60th St, Seattle 5, Wash.

MAELSTROM From Billy Plott, P.O. Box 654, Opelika, Alabama. 15cents a time. A slim but interesting zine, plenty of characters but lacks Plott! Sorry, Bill...I enjoyed it tho'.

JD-A No.55 Lynn Hickman's 10th Anniversary Issue, and a very fine magazine. Exceptionally fine artwork and reproduction, and a well balanced content. By far and away the Finest Fanzine I picked up during my travels. JD-A is usually 12 for One Dollar, this is a special issue at 50cents per copy and well worth it. 224, Dement Ave, Dixon, Illinois. Exceptional.

STF AND FANTASY SONGBOOK No.1 This was published especially for the Pittcon by Hal Shapiro and The Misfits (The Michigan Group), 52 pages of highly amusing Words Without Music, to be sung to well known tunes. It provided the material for the Glee Club Session at Pittsburgh and is well worth having. No price listed, but write to Hal Shapiro, 6044 West Fort St, Apt.85, Detroit 9, Michigan. THE BOSSES' SONGBOOK Another one-shot which provided words for those with voices at Pittsburgh. Offbeat Social Songs. 50cents a copy from Dick Ellington, Box 310, Canyon, Contra Costa County, Calif.

A FANZINE FOR BJORN Put out by Los Angeles Fandom to commemorate the marriage of Bjo to John Trimble. And probably the most fannish wedding gift anyone ever got. Bjo and John should get married more often, too.

DAFOE No.3 John Koning, 318 So. Belle Vista, Youngstown 9, Ohio. A good general zine put out by John at 20cents per issue. This issue largely taken up by reviews and letters, the best of which are by Harry Warner. BISMILLAH No.5 From Andy Main, 5668 Gate Ave, Coleta, California. In which there's a good description of Andy's journey to the BOYCON, by Andy. And some quite good art. 15cents per issue.

INSURRECTION No.2 Robert Lambeck, Bldg E, Room 215, N.F.Dorm, Burdett Ave, R.P.I., Troy, N.Y. And SPACE CAGE No.7 from Lee Ann Tremper, 3858 Forest Grove Dr, Indianapolis 5, are two more interesting general zines which I haven't space to do justice here, but in which I found plenty of interest, Both cost 10cents.

TAFF BAEDER Section One. The first part of Don's account of his TAFF trip to the United Kingdom and France in 1960. I thoroughly enjoyed it and am eagerly awaiting part two. \$1.25 the copy...and profits go to TAFF (That's \$1.25 for both parts, of course). Orders to Don at Box 19T, RR2, Wards Corner Rd, Loveland, Ohio. Or from me. I'd also like to say thanks for the FAPA and SAPS mags I received, I haven't listed them for obvious reasons, but I thoroughly enjoyed them.eb.

Produced as an aid to the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund by Norman Shorrocks

March 1961