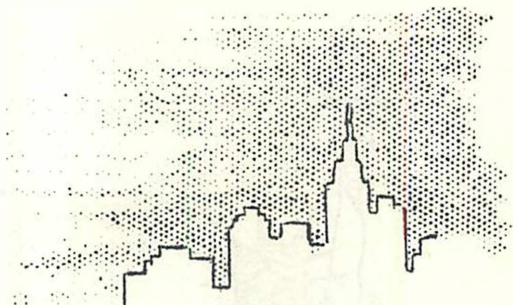
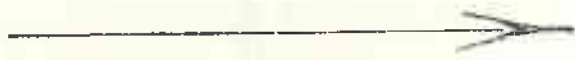


**THE
LINDSAY REPORT**



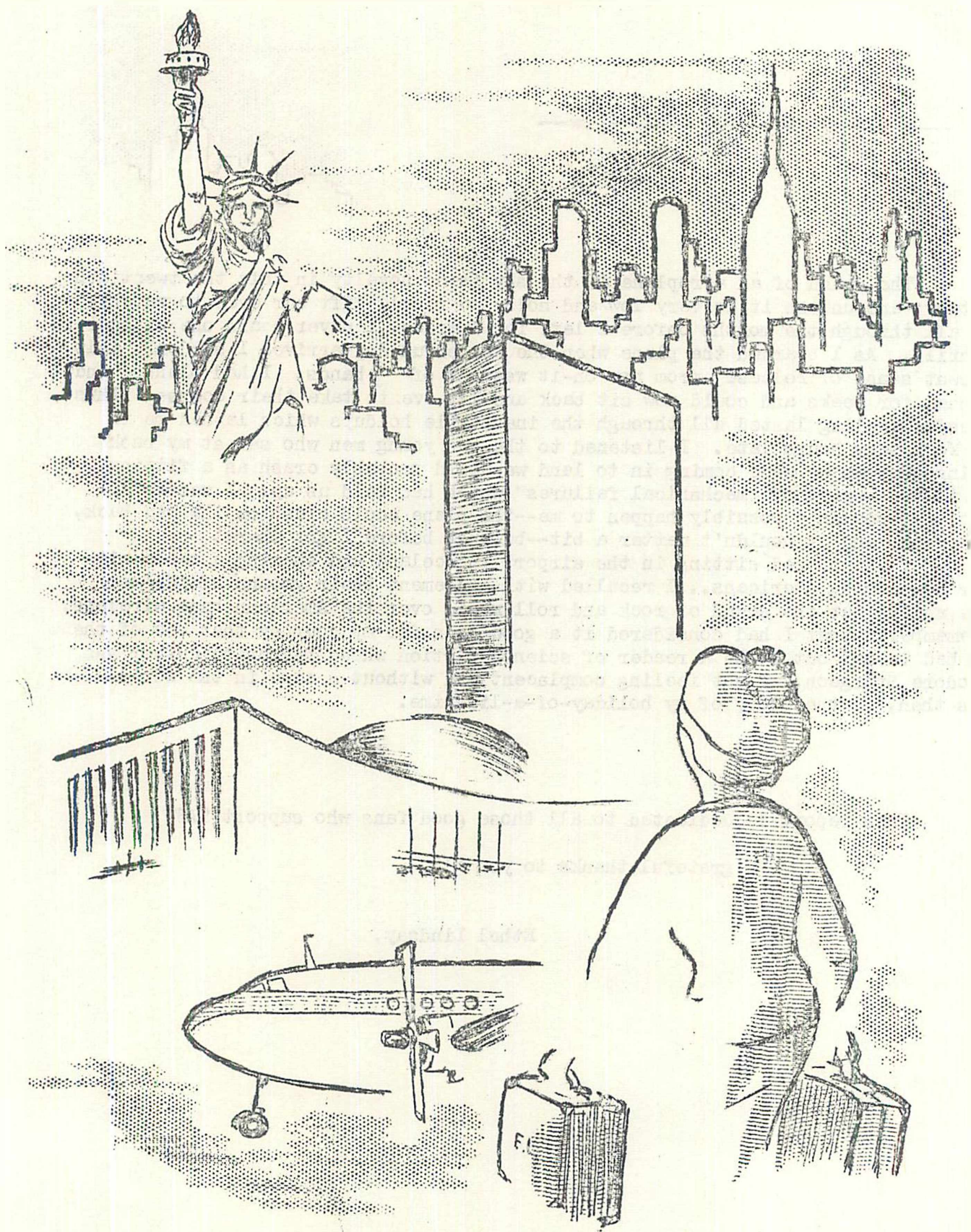
The sound of an aeroplane in the sky is no novelty in this the twentieth century; and unless it is very low and noisy we rarely lift our eyes to watch, yet all through the months before I left for America, I never heard one without a thrill. As I boarded the plane when the wonderful day arrived I suddenly felt a great sense of release, from now on-it was out of my hands. I had planned and planned for weeks and could now sit back and let events take their course. This blissful feeling lasted all through the inevitable holdups which landed me in New York many hours late. I listened to the two young men who sat at my back joking that as we were coming in to land we would probably crash as a fitting end to the series of "mechanical failures" which had held us up. I reflected that this couldn't possibly happen to me--the plane could crash on the way back, I thought, and it wouldn't matter a bit--but not before I got there!

I remembered sitting in the airport at Iceland and sharing a table with four homecoming Americans...I recalled with amusement their groans of "We're home again!" at the sound of rock and roll music over the American base wireless. I remembered that I had considered it a good omen for my journey that one of the men had turned out to be a reader of science fiction whose favourite author was Theodore Sturgeon. I sat feeling complacent and without a care in the world. This then, is the story of my holiday-of-a-lifetime.

This report is dedicated to all those good fans who support TAF

My grateful thanks to you all.

Ethel Lindsay.



Tuesday August 21st. 1st Day

As we flew over America I could see little because of the clouds; but as we started to descend I got a glimpse of a typical American road. There they were - a riot of cloverleaves, underpasses, overhead roads, winding in and out in a fascinating pattern. They looked for all the world like an SF illustration; as I gaped down I was gripped by a real thrill of excitement. The airport was huge, and I found myself in a long queue before a Doctor who peered at our Smallpox certificates. From there I went to the Immigration department. I handed over my passport and was asked for the address of the Lupoffs. I could remember it all except the street number! My address book was ticked away in my suitcase....

"Surely," said the official reasonably, with only a slight degree of testiness, "you must know where you are going to stay?" "Yes," I wailed, "but I have forgotten the number!" So - I was given a special escort and pass to allow me into the baggage hall where I quickly took a note of the number. Then I returned to give the correct answer which was checked in a large book; now I was allowed into the customs hall.

There were long lines at each customs officer so I quickly got in place and then had time to survey the scene before me. I saw a long observation floor in front of me, and to my delight, recognised Don Wollheim right away. The woman waving an identifying rose at me must be his wife Elsie; I waved back my tartan scarf of identity enthusiastically.

Don is much like I had expected from his letters; he has a dry sense of humour, and is the ideal person to have around when any debunking is necessary. Elsie is as small as myself, and she greeted me with a hospitable spate of talk that put me at my ease at once. From the word go - Elsie and I got on like a house on fire! They drove me to their home in Queens and as I walked in I saw...books, books, books,...lining the walls and arousing in me my first (but not last) feeling of envy for the space American fans have for collecting. On my return home my own room seemed to have positively shrunk.

Although this whole house was delightful, I envied them most the large basement where more of Don's book and fanzine collection was kept. Don also showed me his other collection - of miniature figures, both historical and military. He paints many of them himself and I was impressed by the minute brushes he had to use. Elsie produced a welcome pot of tea, and then asked if I would like to have a bath; when I approved of both ideas she seemed delighted. So I made my first discovery - that Americans really love to give and nothing pleases them more than a guest who lets them put themselves to all sorts of effort.

It was soon time for us to set off for the Lupoffs. We passed through the centre of New York and, in what seemed no time at all, we arrived at 210 East 73rd St. How often had I written that address (only excitement could have made me forget it) and now here I was. I saw a large apartment building with a pleasant entrance hall. I was feeling rather nervous; for I was still rather overawed at the thought of Don Wollheim, and now - Pat and Dick Lupoff! I looked at Elsie with gratitude...she hadn't awed me a bit.

Dick Lupoff is big and I quickly found he had a wicked sense of humour; right from those first minutes he tried to kid the life out of me. He strongly reminded me of Brian Varley, and of course this made me feel at home. Pat is

young and slim and very attractive. I quickly found that she had a restful personality that never fusses, which is a great help when you are feeling shy. Their child Kenneth was just at the crawling stage, but he began to stagger a few steps during my stay. He was an unusually good-natured child; I never heard him cry, and he always greeted everyone with a big smile.

Dick presented me with a nice surprise - mail! Among this was a letter from Bjo Trimble containing an invitation to travel with them from Chicago to Los Angeles with a sidetrip to see an Indian celebration; it was to be a camping trip and sounded wonderful to me. Elsie discovered that as yet I had few plans and offered to take me out twice. Then Dick sailed in with the BIGGEST portion of steak I've ever seen; into this he carved enthusiastically for us all. I was also confronted with a whole corn-on-the-cob. I looked at this with some anxiety, once only had I tasted this before and I hadn't enjoyed it. Nothing daunted however I tackled it and found the taste was entirely different and much nicer. Emboldened by this first step I thereafter during my American stay ate everything that was proposed to me from Chinese and Japanese to Mexican food. To say nothing of things like French and Italian cooking and odd things like Barbecued beef. I'm proud to tell you I ate them all without turning a hair.

And what do you think we did after dinner? That's right! - Collated Xero.. As I marched round the table with Elsie, Don, and Pat, whilst Dick stapled the bundles together, I reflected upon the sheer aptness of it all. Though surely, of all the things I might have imagined - to watch Don collate a fanzine was the furthest removed! He swung into it like an old hand; but it was Elsie's first attempt and she kept hoping she "was doing it properly."

Steve Stiles came in and was promptly set to work also and soon the piles of XERO grew. Steve was young and chubby-faced and entered gaily into his task. As with all group collating the time passed quickly with lots of gay chatter; but eventually we came to a halt and the visitors departed. For a little Dick sat to gloat over his fanzine, then I was shown to my couch and sank into it gratefully. Dimly I heard the traffic noise and tried to believe that this was New York, but even as I grappled with the days impressions - I sank to sleep.

Wednesday August 23rd. 2nd Day.

I awoke at nine and heard the sound of Kenneth singing to himself in the nursery. I opened one eye in time to see Pat swoosh by into the kitchen; then swoosh - she was out again with a feeding bottle. I got up and hid me to the kitchen and she showed me where the teabags were kept which I fixed whilst she cooked eggs. Dick went off to work with only a cup of coffee inside him - a terrible habit among fans! Pat and I had a leisurely walk around the block with Kenneth. I eagerly gazed at the strange sights - the fire hydrants, the gaily coloured taxis, and the towering skyscrapers.

Then we took a bus downtown and I watched the driver with admiration. He accepts the fares and gives out the change, and in fact does the lot! The place we headed for was Fifth Avenue and the first American shop I entered was - naturally - a bookshop, Doubledays. I was fascinated by the lovely large stores and imposing buildings. We went to lunch there and I found that an American ham sandwich is a meal! Not two thin slices of bread with a microscopic piece of ham between; but a large helping of ham almost hiding the bread, and requiring a fork and knife to eat it. Salad is served "on the side" automatically. The teapot was a china one too, and I collected my first souvenir - bookmatches. I do approve of the way they are liberally bestrewn around and all free; it does my Scottish heart good. The sugar is always in neat little packets, these I collected also!

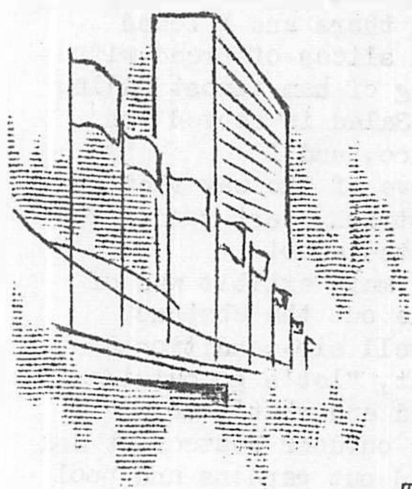
From there we went to the Museum of Modern Art, the main exhibit was of the work of Picasso but I also enjoyed trying to puzzle out the abstract paintings of many American artists. This Museum was well air-conditioned and I soon complained of feeling cold. "Yes," said Pat, "let's go outside and get warm." A more absurd statement I'd never heard and what's more absurd is that - it was warmer outside! We sat at the outdoor restaurant and I had a cup of tea. As I looked round at the well-laid out gardens and pool I sighed with delight..sunshine at last. Whenever I felt apart from my generous hosts throughout my stay, it was in this thing of taking sunshine for granted. They shared none of my feeling..there's the sun..let's get out quick!

Shortly after our return home, the baby-sitter arrived. This was Sandy who was studying at the New York Hospital to be a graduate nurse. It was Pat and Dick's wedding anniversary and they were going out to celebrate. I was quite horrified at Sandy's tale: she was not paid whilst working full-time at the hospital, and she had to buy her own books, and she had to pay for her own meals! Shades of the poor NHS! No wonder baby-sitting jobs were a godsend to her. I looked at her with real respect.

Elsie and Don called for me and we set off for Central Park to the open-air Delacorte Theatre. The stage was large, and behind it was a lake, making a very effective background. The stage was composed of large pillars and slabs of stone which could be moved about smoothly to set the various scenes. The play was KING LEAR, and the outdoor setting gave a strong feeling of reality; the production moved smoothly, there were few halts, and I was quickly immersed. The lighting and sound effects were good; as the storm scene began the wind rose a little and I felt the atmosphere become almost unbearable..at the eye-gauging scene I could not bear to watch. At the interval I looked around: to see every seat filled. Elsie was very proud of

this grand support, and pointed out with pleasure the number of young people present. Don meanwhile, kept teasing me along the lines of - "If anything rattles at you on the camping trip, just you rattle right back!" He kept thinking up new ones in this vein, so that the tragic ending of the play was lightened as we drove back to the Lupoffs. However when I phoned Bjo it was to have her tell me sadly and very huskily that the trip was off as she had been ill. Still: it was grand to hear her (and Ron Ellik who kept butting in with jokes) and I assured her that I would get to California. It was blissfully warm that night and the only bedclothes I required was a sheet. I had meant to lie awake a little and reflect upon the day gone past but once again I fell asleep immediately, far faster than I ever did at home. This was to continue throughout nearly all my visit, and certainly so in the beginning.

This never having time to 'think through' the day helped to give the feeling of events crowding upon me too fast; and when thought upon briefly at the start of another day, they had an almost dream-like quality.



Thursday August 23rd. 3rd Day

Elsie called for me and we drove to the United Nations Building. Imposing 33 as it seems from a distance, and particularly so at night, as we approached my first delight was with the row of colourful flags of the member nations. The entrance lobby of the Conference Building is quite stunning, and I looked up to the 75 feet high ceiling with pleasure at the spacious feeling it gave. We went for lunch to the Delegate's Dining Room, (possible because Elsie is a member of the League of Women Voters), and this had a magnificent view of the East River. We then joined one of the guided tours. Our guide was a Swiss girl, with a lovely speaking voice, who sounded warmly enthusiastic about the aims of the UN. The various Chambers all had a quiet dignity and beauty and she explained to us that much of this beauty had been gifted by member nations. I kept watching this girl's pretty and engaging young face and wondering if one day this truly would be the home of all the nations united. I think she believed this would happen - she made us feel hopeful too.

After the tour we went down to the shops where I bought postcards and souvenirs. I would loved to have lingered but we still had our Around Manhattan Island Cruise before us. This left from Pier 13 on the Hudson River. Elsie had to drive hurriedly across town so giving me a chance to admire her driving skill. There are so many one way streets in New York

that I was often bewildered by the twists and turns this required. The boat was very comfortable and Elsie settled down with her knitting whilst I gazed all around. Our cruise started and over the loudspeaker our "spieler", as he called himself, started to describe the many famous sights. This is the very best way to see New York. From it you carry away a picture of a city of tall and noble buildings with many islands upon the rivers; you pass under the bridges such as the Brooklyn, you see the Statue of Liberty at its best; you grasp some idea of the complexity of the city, and you end up very proud of the building ability of man. It was a lovely sunny day; the spieler gave forth information, cracked jokes, waxed sentimental, and occasionally he boasted a proud boast. I sat and watched New York pass before me - grandly!

I guess I fell a little in love with it.. Seen from the boat this way, New York settled into my mind's eye as a place diverse, yet all of one piece, with the same drawing quality of London. Many people would not feel that way I know, but I love the dramatic sensation of a big city. I found Elsie a delightful companion; she is interested in so many things, and active in so many ways outside her home - such as being on the Committee of the Parent Teacher Association of her daughter's school. All too soon she had me back at the Lupoff's. Poor Don had a late dinner that night on my behalf, so I hope he realises I appreciated it!

I found Dick Eney had arrived, a little thinner than his photograph - but he is tall and his beard is the neatest I've ever seen. I sat down babbling of my exciting day, and Eney plopped on my lap a 400 page fanzine. I read the title A SENSE OF FAPA, and looked up at him in awe, struck by all this industry. I was in time to see Dick Lupoff gaze from this to his 100 page XERO, and hear him say with comic seriousness - "Dick Eney, I hate you!", at which Eney laughed heartily. I found Dickini shy, but trying to overcome this.

The Lupoffs treated us that evening to a show in their neighbourhood theatre called OH DAD, POOR DAD, MAMA'S HUNG YOU IN THE CLOSET AND I'M FEELING SO SAD! As the title will indicate this was an offbeat production. This play had everything, including a flesh-eating fish and a Venus fly-trap! The basically tragic story of a widow and her devoured son was told with richly comic gusto - and it was symbolic as all get out! The closing scenes, where the son kept trying to stuff his Dad's mummified figure back in the closet, and fend off a seduction-bent girl at the same time, made me ache with laughter. His final act of strangling her and then hiding her head under piles of cushions with her leg stuck out at a grotesque angle, brought tears to my eyes. Though by then I was by no means sure if they were tears of laughter or not; it was indeed a wickedly funny play on a sad theme.

We wandered happily through the streets to an Italian restaurant, one of Pat and Dick's favourites, where we were greeted by a friendly waitress who did us proud. I felt so full of enjoyment as we walked back to the flat that I pinched myself slightly to see if it all was real - it was! Dick then produced some brandy they had bought on their Mexican holiday. This had a delicious chocolate flavour and was drunk with cream floating on top.

After that - I floated - to sleep.

Friday August 24th

4th Day

I wanted to see a five and ten cent store, so in the morning Pat took me to one nearby. I wandered up and down the counters mentally changing the prices into sterling, and was agreeably surprised! Many items are much cheaper than in Britain. There are persistent stories in this country of how expensive everything is in the USA; this amazes me in the light of what I saw there. The variety offered in each range of goods is also much greater and I am all in favour of having six or seven to choose from - rather than two or three. I love to shop, and at the sight of all these bargains, had to remind myself sternly that I was at the beginning, not the end, of my trip.

Later Dickini, Pat, and I, went to the Planetarium. It was again a sunny day, and to be suddenly plunged from that to the darkness of the Planetarium was too much for me - I have never felt so sleepy in all my life! Good as the show was, I had to fight to keep my eyes open. I was very glad that the darkness hid from my companions the fact that I was snoozing my way through the show. A coffee in the cafeteria helped to revive me, but I gave away my tourist status on leaving. I had been smoking a cigarette and forgot to extinguish it. One step out of the cafeteria - and a guard was shouting at me. Neither Pat, Dick, or Dickini smoked (nor had the Wollheims) and I had begun to despair of ever finding a fan who shared my vice.

We entered the underground: and I found it was just as horrible as had been reported to me. Uncushioned seats, dingy and dirty, and the smell was horrible! About its only virtue was a much more efficient method of payment. Tokens were used which could be bought in bulk; I noticed that everyone carried around little gadgets in which they kept their supply of tokens. However the underground took us swiftly across town to the Empire State Building. Pat had arranged for us to meet Chris Steinbrunner, he was, she explained, a member of the Fantasy Film Society. Following his instructions we headed up to his work-place; the home of WOR TV, which was half-way up this tremendous building.

Chris, I saw, was of stocky build and had lately lost an enormous amount of weight, so that his clothes seemed to hang limply upon him. He was a quick, laconic, speaker; seemingly filled with nervous energy, and-at last-a definite chain smoker. He was what I had expected a New Yorker to be, I felt he was always thinking of at least three things at once. He seemed to take it quite for granted that he should down tools and show us round. He showed us round the various departments- a room of control panels, another filled by men busily cutting and splicing film. He explained that almost the whole programme consisted of films; and indeed we saw cans and cans of them.

We went to an express elevator and shot to the top. There were masses of people, but still plenty room to gaze down on New York. Due to my previous day's sightseeing, I was able to excitedly pick out some of the buildings-the spire-pointed Chrysler, the United Nations - and trace out the margins of Central Park. As it was a lovely clear day I could see for miles. Dickini was toting around an enormous pair of binoculars which he kindly lent me; it took me all my time to lift it! After darting from one vantage spot to another; I then headed for the postcard display, whilst the

others lined up at a snack counter. When I joined them I found Chris had ordered tea for me..somehow it seemed quite weird to be drinking tea at the top of the Empire State Building.

Pat had to leave for home now, but Dickini and I decided to walk for a little. I looked for a Woolworths, as I wanted to buy a bathing cap and compare prices at the same time. We wandered around the streets for a while almost getting lost, when we suddenly bumped into Chris again who was leaving for home. On being told our quest he took us there quickly. On the way he told me that it had been a combination of ruthless dieting and turkish baths that had acheived his loss of weight..by Dickini's expression..he figured it wasn't worth it!

In Woolworths I again found a much larger range of goods than was available at home. Dickini was a patient companion and listened with amused interest to my exclamations. From there we walked to Times Square where I admired the brilliant neon light display. It is larger than Piccadilly Circus but lacks the latter's picturesque shape. We ventured into my first Automat. Dick guided me up to the tea dispenser and gave me the correct coin; but when I turned to him for guidance, he had moved on. I wrestled unsuccessfully with the mechanism till a resigned New Yorker took over and did it for me. He had all the expression of a Londoner in the tube confronted by 'another dashed tourist!'. .

When we returned to the flat we found Charlie Brown and his fiancée, Marsha had dropped in, and with them we all went to the Lupoff's favourite resturant for dinner. This was a French one called - La Cave. Duckling was ordered, and when the waiter brought mine, he asked me to "Sit back please, Madam." I did so, thinking.."but I want to eat it!" He then proceeded to pour brandy over the duckling, and this he set alight with a loud 'whoomph.' Wow! what a dinner..

On our return to the flat, full of good food, drinks, and merriment, Dick suggested that we write an airletter to Eddie Jones; I just hope that it read coherently! We all sat down in turn to write something, and I told Marsha that she had forgotten to sign her name. "What's the use," asked she, "he won't know who I am." So I typed for her..Marsha-almost-Brown. She was tickled pink with this, and has used it ever since. Marsha was endearingly young, and just bubbling over with good spirits. Charlie had a beamingly good-natured smile, and a large sf collection; I felt Marsha had a good head start..

This had been another full day; I was beginning to feel slightly overwhelmed by it all. I began to have a feeling of grasping at events that just whizzed by. I fell asleep too quickly to grasp any of them fully that night.

Saturday August 25th 5th Day

Today we were to visit Noreen and Larry Shaw, and so we set off early. We went by bus to the Staten Island Ferry to give me more glimpses of New York. It seemed quite a long drive, we passed through Harlem where I saw men playing on handball courts. We also passed the tenement which had held the famous Nunnery, but on the whole this part of New York looked much like any other big city.

As the ferryboat made its way over to Staten Island, I had another close view of the Statue of Liberty. I falter when it comes to trying to describe this magnificent figure - it would use up all my adjectives before this report was barely started! I wondered if the daily commuter became so blasé as to rarely lift their eyes up to watch. However; everyone else was looking, perhaps they were all tourists. On this ferryboat I was again confronted with a NO SMOKING sign. I had seen these signs in buses, in the underground, in stores, museums, and galleries. No wonder cigarettes are so cheap over there - they hardly ever get a chance to smoke them!

Dickini met us with his car, and we drove through a pleasant residential district to Grant Place. At the beginning of this road stood a house with a magnificent garden of flowers; on looking back I realise it was one of the few I noticed. There seemed to be a lot of work put into the lawns, but flower displays were in the minority. It is an odd sensation to see houses with the American mail-box; no hedges, just like I had seen in so many movies. Little things like this would often give me a strong sense of unreality; as if I were sitting watching, and was not a participant in the scene.

We reached No 16, and out darted Noreen to greet us. She was small, lithe, and she has a quick, incisive way of talking that shows a lively mind. Larry was as I remembered him; puffing his pipe and talking in his slow drawl with its slight undercurrent of nervous tension. We went into the garden where we found baby Steve who gurgled contentedly at us, and young Mike who showed great delight in the red bus of London which I had brought. Not that he lacked for toys..the garden held two swings, a seesaw and a rubber paddling pool!

It was another lovely day so we stayed outside and got each other excited talking about the coming convention and the Willises' arrival. Naturally the fan talk was great to me, and we all discussed A TRIP TO HELL which had struck the New York area that week. Larry showed me round his basement, it was so roomy and ideal for fanactivity, that I felt envious once more. For my benefit Noreen had planned a cook-out meal. There was a brazier and I watched with interest as Larry got the fire going in this and then placed the meat on top for cooking. Food always tastes extra good outdoors, but all the same, after I had worked my way to the end of a large helping of strawberry icecream, I wondered what had happened to my usual small appetite.

When we moved into the house I paused to admire Noreen's large kitchen, she told me she loved to cook. Inquisitively I browsed through their piles of paperbacks, and vowed to soon visit a paperback store as I saw their fine selection. Later the Good Humour Man came round selling his icecream, and though I blush to tell it..I ate one. I forget how many different flavours they told me there were, but whenever the subject of icecream came up someone would rattle off at me an inexhaustible list.

This was a quiet, lazy day, spent among people who were good friends and who welcomed me into their circle. I felt myself unwind a little; as I did so I realised just how tensed up I had been. We talked of nothing profound; just fannish gossip with much good-natured banter. Noreen phoned Earl Kemp and I exchanged greetings with him. We all laughed as Noreen described how she had got a neighbour's child to teach her the Twist.."you stamp out a cigarette as you towel yourself.."so that she could join in the proposed Twist contest at the convention.

Dickini drove us to the ferry. On the way Dick said pensively that he rather fancied some Italian food..particularly a pizza pie. I looked to see if he was joking..but no. After a short pause, Dickini said, "I think I'll join you." I reflected that of course they were big men. We drove onto the ferry, where we were able to leave the car and walk forward to the prow. In this way I had the wonderful view of the New York skyline at night. I had asked Larry if he felt the long journey to and from work in Manhattan was worth having a home in Staten Island. He had answered fervently "Yes!" I could now see that, apart from the home that awaited him, he had a journey unrivalled in magnificence.

We returned to the Italian restaurant with the friendly waitress, and Dick ordered a large pizza pie. I had been thinking that I could not join them in eating; but when the waitress sailed out with this large open pie - fresh made and delicious in smell - I could not resist having a portion. It was getting late; but Dickini said the ferry would still be running for him to get back. When we did get up to go - alas..Dickini's car had a flat tyre! I felt this was a poor reward for his kind chauffeuring of us this day. He went off to an all-night garage, and we, sighing sadly on his behalf- took ourselves to bed.



Sunday August 26th6th Day

I had been invited out for the day by Joy and Sandy Sanderson and Belle Dietz; they called for me early and whisked me off in Belle's Volkswagen. I could have sworn that Sandy was thinner, but he said "No, it's just that everyone forgets how thin I am!" Getting away early like this we had a clear run out to Long Island. We were heading for a country club owned by IBM for the use of their employees. This was the firm where Sandy was now working. On the way we got onto the subject of the price of things American, by my exclamation - "that it wasn't at all like I had been told back home!" They agreed with this heartily; they cited how two months gas had cost three dollars, that electricity billed for two summer months (with the air conditioner going full blast) had come to only three dollars. Joy pointed out that, because of mass production methods and the full use of automation, articles could be produced more cheaply than at home. Sandy added - it was man-power that was expensive; whenever you needed something done by workmen, then the cost soared.

We passed through many a typical small town. I saw lots of people walking their way to church; they were all dressed in their best, and mostly in small family groups. I remembered that I had read somewhere that church attendance was rising in America. I spotted a man seated on a motor-driven lawn-mower, he looked very contented as he motored up and down. Sandy told me that the course he took for admission to IBM had been very stiff; but he had passed and was now working happily among computers. Belle was very proud of her new small car, and praised it highly in comparison to many of the long, long monsters we met upon the way.

This was their first visit to the country club; we all exclaimed with delight at the lovely tree-lined drive. We passed a golf course and many sports areas as we headed for the beach. We were now at Long Island Sound which is a part of the Atlantic Ocean. As we got out of the car Joy and Belle tied on large sun-bonnets, and I surveyed a large wooded space laid out in many picnic sites. There were wooden tables with forms, a place for charcoal cookery, and drinking water was laid on! Joy unpacked cold chicken, rolls, and tablets which, added to water, produced a refreshing fruit drink. I fell to with a will.

We then descended to the beach-and more amenities..cubicles, lockers, beach umbrellas, and playpens. Settled on the sand, we gazed out in content at the Sound where a yacht race and some water skiers were making a lazy pattern. The sun shone, and I concentrated on getting a tan; they watched over me carefully to see I did not overdo it in my enthusiasm. A family sat down nearby and erected a playpen into which they popped two young children. How safe and handy, I thought, till one almost knocked his head off against the bars. Later I went in bathing and found the water deliciously warm. When I returned to the cubicles I enjoyed another amenity - a lovely hot shower. Adjoining this was a coffee shop where we lingered being loathe to go.

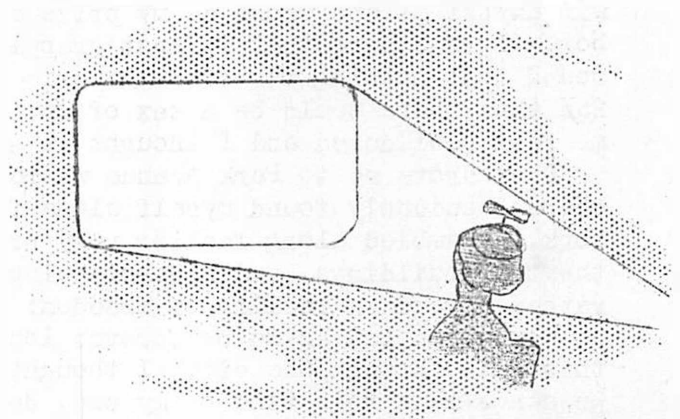
However, they were to take me to a Howard Johns on restaurant, so we set off. These Howard Johns ons are to be found all over America on the express ways; they provide large car parks, and meals of every kind. I was to have one of their large sundaes, and after much consultation, chose a large Banana Royal. Watched by the Sandersons, who have twitted me on my small appetite

since I've known them, I consumed the lot to minor cheers. We had to get going then, as I had to be back at the Lupoffs for 6pm. At that time a film show by the Fantasy Film Society was being held in my honour. Long before I had left home Belle had arranged to take me out on the Monday night, and she was most upset because she suddenly had to work late and would be unable to do so. It was arranged that Joy would take me instead. I waved them a grateful farewell as they drove off and turned to meet another new experience.

I entered the flat to find that the Society had already started to gather. Chris was at the projector which he ran, and he also obtained the films. I was given a big surprise by Dickini who introduced Lee Hoffman! I just did not recognise her, for she is now very slim, and this seemed to make her taller than I recollected. Another new fan to meet was Lin Carter who was so extremely handsome that the word 'quicksilver' immediately flashed into my mind.

Chairs had been ranged across the room and I sank into my front row chair quickly. We saw first THE PERILS OF PAULINE-what a woman! She escaped from more perils than I ever knew there were! The main feature was THE MASK OF FU MANCHU. This starred Boris Karloff in the title role, Lewis Stone looking young again, Myrna Loy in heavy oriental makeup, and Karen Morley, - an actress whom I had forgotten - so long had it been since I had seen her in the typical role of a worried-looking heroine. Everyone was rapturously pleased with this - Fu Manchu directing electricity from his fingernails, Stone scrambling among crocodiles and dungeons and everyone escaping by a hairsbreadth to a happy ending. The Society is devoted to an interest in fantasy films, and the majority of them were unknown to me. American SF fans however, have a very strong interest in fantasy; so there were quite a few of them present. Dick Lupoff has, of course, not only studied old comic strips, but also the works of Burroughs and allied authors. He explains this by saying he was prevented from reading "such stuff" at the normal age to do so.

For a while they all seethed around enthusiastically discussing the films. There was a very young boy among them with the deepest of booming voices I've ever heard who I listened to in amazement till the flat gradually cleared of the chattering crowd. I sat down to bring my notes up to date; and had great difficulty jotting down the kaleidoscope of new scenes that the day had brought - into anything like coherent order!



Monday August 27th 7th Day

In the forenoon Pat and I went downtown to a paperback book store (managed by Charlie, a member of the Fantasy F. Society) where I disappeared from view among the stacks. Such richness! There was a wonderful selection, and I had to restrain myself from buying too much. We had arranged to meet Dick and Dickini and all to lunch in Chinatown. Dick arrived - but no Dickini! As this was Dick's lunch hour, we could not wait too long, so we three went to a nearby restaurant leaving instructions for Dickini.

By this time I was very much at home with the Lupoffs: they were both keenly interested in books, fandom, and publishing - my favourite subjects. Dick had a gay teasing style; yet I felt that, for all his good humour, he would not be a man to shirk an argument. I liked his forthright style. Pat was so young, unspoiled, and natural that she was easy company, and she watched over me like a mother. They are reputed in fandom to be "very wealthy"; but I think, like most things in fandom, this may be exaggerated. More wealthy than the majority perhaps - but it isn't unlimited I'm sure, and they are extremely generous and completely unostentatious.

Suddenly Dickini loomed over our table and exclaimed at Dick for having given him wrong directions. It seems that the street had been renamed and poor Dickini had been cruising up and down looking for a non-existent number! Dick held his head and groaned! After lunch Dickini and I drove off to visit Chinatown. I reported Dickini as shy; I am that way inclined myself, (I think the majority of fans are) but he is also thoughtful and kind and he made sure I saw all I wanted.

Chinatown was gay with lanterns and flags strung across the streets, and embroidered panels fluttering from the buildings. We visited the Chinese Museum where we found a potted history of China, many products on show, some lovely ivory work, and I lingered long over the beautiful embroidery of a set of Mandarin robes. There was a push-button exhibit where we could see and hear the various Chinese musical instruments - and a weird sound they made to our ears! Lastly we saw the Lair of the Dragon..this was a very well produced scena of a dragon bellowing out clouds of fire and smoke, with grisly bones lying all around him..and his roar almost shook the room.

We went into the adjoining shop where we found a ballgame at which we could gamble with five cent pieces. To my surprise I won (for I hardly ever win anything) and chose as my prize a small model of the distinctive US post box. It was here that I first grappled with the idea of the sales tax. I found that nothing was ever the price on the ticket..if it were priced at 25¢ then there would be a tax of 1¢. This part of US shopping always made me feel bewildered and I thought it a daft idea.

Dick drove me to Park Avenue where I was to meet Joy; and when he left me there I suddenly found myself alone for the first time since I'd come to New York. I ambled along feeling very brave; blessing the sunshine, gazing up at the tall buildings, and side-stepping into stores for a curious look round. I rather hugged a feeling of freedom; and thought that never to be alone could be almost as bad as to be forever lonely. How little I could have enjoyed this walk through the city, I thought, were there no friends, whose reassuring presence made this time on my own, doubly enjoyable. That, I felt with satisfaction, was having your cake, and eating it too!

I easily recognised the Lever Building where Joy worked, as it had a very distinctive green stone. Joy took me to a restaurant called 'The Choc o' Nuts' which was famous for its strict hygienic conditions. Nothing, absolutely nothing was touched by hand, everything was lifted by tongs. We then went to a store called Korvettes; this was a discount house, and the cheapest way to shop in NY. We went a brisk round of the departments to give me a general view. I reckoned that nearly everything I saw, from linen to clothes, would have cost nearly double at home. We also visited Macey's, another famous department store. Over and over again I would exclaim at the prices, and I left with a last lingering look at a dress of gold lame which cost only £3! No wonder the girls in NY are so smartly turned out!

From there we went by underground to Joy's home in the Bronx. This was another large building of flats; at the end of the street I could glimpse the greenery that surrounded the University. Once in, the first thing I saw was large bookshelves from the ceiling to the floor. This cut off one corner of the room, with space for a doorway, thus giving Sandy a small 'den' inside the livingroom. Sandy certainly had a large collection of books before he left England, but he must have been on a real spree since coming to the States. Joy, meanwhile, had concentrated upon electrical kitchen gadgets, she proudly showed me an electrical spit, and mixers of every kind.

Whilst Joy fixed dinner Sandy told me about IHI-how they were pretty strict in how their employees would be dressed to work. He chuckled that he drew the line at wearing a hat - and got away with that as being an "eccentric Englishman". The evening passed quickly as I examined all their new books, and listened to their tales of the amount of free gifts given away by the book and record clubs. In fact, the giveaway elements in American business life is quite fantastic - and it takes a hard head to remember that you probably pay for it somewhere.

Sandy escorted me to the subway when I left, and made sure I went the right way; he told me to get off at 77th Street. As I came out it was quite late, but I felt pretty sure of my ability to find 73rd St. However, I saw the streets looked very deserted, and I thought of Pat - who would probably have a fit at the thought of my wandering around on my own. So, when I saw a taxi standing at the corner, I took this. The cost was only 25¢, and Pat nodded approvingly when I told her what I had done.



Tuesday 28th August8th Day

Pat and I spent a lazy morning, during which Noreen phoned to say that the Willises had arrived safely the night before and had been met by Elsie, Dickini, Ted White, and Terry Carr. I had meant to be one of the welcoming committee, but unfortunately I had made my 'date' with Belle before knowing that this was the date of the Willis arrival. I did not like to cancel the date, feeling that invitations sent out before I left home took first priority.

That evening the Lupoffs and I had been invited to dinner by the Wollheims. Travelling there by subway I amused myself by studying the amount of advice and exhortation in advertising that New Yorkers are subjected to - charity funds of all kinds.. "Keep the streets clean".. "Encourage physical exercises through your PTA."

Arriving at Don's we were introduced to the other guest, Helen, who was an Assnt. Editress at ACE books. Betsy, the daughter of Elsie and Don was also there; she was newly home from summer camp. We got onto the subject of hayfever - I had heard so much about this in the short time I had been in NY. Belle had reeled off a list of her allergies, Dick blew mightily whilst he cursed "the pollen season"; and Marsha had amazed me with a list of her allergies which had included trees and shrubs! Now, both Don and Elsie were red-eyed and afflicted, and I wondered why? Why so much more talk of hayfever here, than at home...was all this talk of allergies a sign of a too health-conscious people? The latter thought I did not mention; but Don must have got a whiff of it, for he looked at me over his glasses-very daunting this - and gave me a short lecture. He pointed out that "behind them" lay miles upon miles of agricultural country, a fact I tended to forget. I sat and gave my imagination a wrench; and tried to visualise that this was not the homeland that I knew, but a small part of a continent.

Don and Dick immediately got on well - they became immersed in the subject of old fanzines. This led naturally to and discussion of the current fan scene. Having listened to some of the 'latest', Don threw back his head with a roar of laughter and said.."Fandom! It hasn't changed a bit!"

Whilst we were enjoying Elsie's good cooking, the phone rang for me - this was Walt Willis to say "hello", "how are you..we'll see you soon." He hardly had time to say more before Madeleine came on breathlessly telling me it was lovely to hear a Scots voice. She sounded so excited and happy. They were at a party as guests of honour; but how typical it was of them both to take the time to ring me up. I left the phone with a flush of confidence; two of my 'ain folk' were here! This was quickly followed by a sense of shame as I looked round at my generous hosts.....sure! They were my 'ain folk' too!

For me that night ended in real hilarity. On our return to the flat, Dick tossed me a magazine with the remark.."I thought of you whenever I saw this so bought you a copy." It was called -REAL NURSE STORIES. The stories inside had headlines such as...THE WARD OF WOMEN-STARVED MEN and...HE WAS A SPECIALIST ALRIGHT BUT HIS SPECIALTY WAS SEX!

I think I laughed myself to sleep.

Wednesday August 29th 9th Day

In the morning I visited the hairdresser, where a shampoo and set cost 5 dollars! I heard the manager say that the humidity was 100-it certainly felt like it-not that I was complaining! On my return I found Ron Ellick had arrived with Peggy Rae McKnight. Ron was full of his usual gay humour, and Peggy was young and very happy-looking. Ron has a wonderful ability to make you feel as if you had just left him the day before. We all set off to the French restaurant where we were to meet the Willises for lunch, the Lupoffs again being generous hosts.

There was a happy outburst of talk as we all met. I had not seen Madeleine for quite some time, but she seemed unchanged and still with a complexion that I envied. She and Walt make a wonderful pair. Madeleine appears more warmly extrovert than Walt. Yet this is only the external appearance, they are both very much alike. Walt has a deep warmth of feeling and a sensitive approach - I have never known him to say the wrong thing. Madeleine is a great deal more nervous than one might think at first; and her gay exterior hid a bout of illness induced by the excitement. She confided that this had started before she had left home, and she had been unable to settle to sleep the night before.

Peggy, Ron, and I had to eat and run, for we were going to the theatre to see the afternoon performance of CAMELOT. This was Ron's treat..it is only because I kept the tickets as souvenirs that I have now realised that both my theatre visits cost 5 dollars! Thanks fellas! Our seats were in the front row and this gave us a magnificent view of the lovely costumes. The story is based on T.H.White's book THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING. This, you will recall is written with a good deal of ironic humour; though the underlying tragic story remains. In this stage production, the emphasis was all on the humour. There were many patter songs, Merlin's part was cut to the bone, and the tragic ending was glossed over briefly. I enjoyed it tremendously; I have been humming the songs ever since, I thought the acting was superb, and that it was dressed even more colourfully than MY FAIR LADY. At the end I clapped heartily and cheerfully. I then turned to the others and found, to my amazement that Peggy was crying...I don't know what she would have done if they had played it straight! However she soon cheered up and we strolled along Times Square joshing each other back and forth.

We headed back to the Lupoffs as this was the night of the party given by the FANOCLASTS in honour of the Willises and myself. We found Walt and Madeleine there, looking much more rested. Madeleine especially, for she had caught up on her lost sleep by an afternoon snooze on the couch. Whenever Walt and I met and exchanged a glance, it seemed to me we should see in each other's eyes the same thought. Walt: "If I hadn't written an article in NEBULA about fandom, she wouldn't be here." Myself: "If he hadn't written that article - I wouldn't be here!" In a crowded group on the floor at the Lupoffs; across the reception room in Chicago, in a Chinese restaurant in San Francisco,...I felt we marvelled silently at the power of the written word. It is a sign of the goodness that is inherent in Walt that his reaction to having completely changed another's life is - marvel.

I was both looking forward to this party and nervously trying to avoid a feeling of inadequacy; but before I had time to really pull myself together - the fans began to flock in. Ruth and Dave Kyle were the first arrivals which was a help as I had met them before. Dave presented Madeleine and I with a

bouquet of flowers each, which charming gesture we much appreciated. And then they came thick and fast! Noreen and Larry - I remember hearing Noreen say gayly "I may live out in Staten Island but I hear everything that goes on in fandom!" Don and Elsie, Don in good form; and Elsie's presence helped my nervousness at the sudden crowd. Bob and Joyce Shea. Hal Lynch - whose face seems to have disappeared into a sea of them in my memory. Chris Steinbrunner; in three short meetings I felt as if we were friends already. Lin Carter who seemed to smile softly like the Cheshire cat and then disappear. Dave von Armen. Mary Churchill. Dick Eney with Lee Hoffman. Bob Pavlat looking just like his photograph and asking for Ella, with him Toni McKnight. Will Jenkins who seemed very pale. Les Gerber of the loud voice and good nature. Larry Ivie, shy when I took his photograph. Pete Graham and Steve Stiles both looking young and tending to get me mixed up between them. The Silverbergs whom I had met in London. Ted White, Ted has a long thin face and he wears glasses. Behind these glasses his eyes were, to me, unfathomable. I wished I knew what he was thinking of me, and reflected perhaps I should read it in a convention report. Walter Breen - who gave me FANAC. He looked quite downcast when I told him. "Archie Mercer's beard is much wilder and woolier than yours." His own beard was an untrimmed and jolly affair which, combined with his height, made his soft and gentle voice a surprise to me.

By now the room was crowded. I settled at the window first with Elsie and Barbara Silverberg. Elsie told me of Barbara's huge house, newly bought, in which they were still finding rooms. Barbara laughed softly when taxed with this. I was introduced to James Blish and mentally berated myself at feeling nervous to meet a man with such a kindly face. I was handed a fanzine by Mike McNery who had just arrived, so I sat down beside Lee Hoffman on the floor and she amiably drew a cartoon on this for me.

They told me that Terry Carr had arrived and that he was in the kitchen, so I went in. I found him backed up against the wall surrounded by a group of fans. We exchanged "hellos" and then looked rather helplessly at each other. I felt as if I had rather stopped him in full spate - so smiling vaguely I came away again. As he stayed there all the evening I never saw him again; for I never got up the nerve to go back in. I retained the memory however, of a handsome face with a shy smile.

I returned to the group on the floor which now consisted of Lee, Walt, Ted and Walter Breen, with various other fans now and then joining in and breaking away. I had a grand time there as the talk ranged from fandom to fanzines to SF and back again. I kept thinking that with my poor memory I should be taking notes of their talk, but I was too busy listening to pull out my notebook. I had a notebook which I waved at Walt whilst he patted the one in his pocket.. let's hope he has a better memory for verbatim conversation than I have!

Noreen and Larry could not stay too late and when they rose to go, the Willises went with them. This was the first break-up, and after that fans began to go and the groups grew smaller. Eventually this became two groups. In the bedroom, taking advantage of the air conditioning, were Pat and Dick, Peggy and Toni, Bob Pavlat and Ron Ellik. Outside in the living-room was a group around James Blish who was discussing ULYSSES with Bob Shea. I wandered from one group to the other. When I went back a second time to the bedroom however, I found them all busily rubbing each other's back. They welcomed me with much laughter and said they were having a "scratching party!" I left rather hastily for the sight of all that rubbing was beginning to make me feel itchy!

Back at the other group I settled to listen; and the more I did the more I thought how nice James Blish was, and how knowledgeable. Later they asked me "What's going on in the bedroom?" So I described the 'scratching party'. "Yes" said Blish, with mock sadness, "this is always happening to me at parties. I'm sitting discussing Joyce whilst there are women with bare feet in the bedroom!" We all laughed and advised him to be off there quick, but alas, his arrival broke the whole thing up. He came out laughing at this and said it was time he went home. This was a little after 2am and with him went the rest.

Now we were down to those fans who were staying overnight - Peggy and Toni, Bob Pavlat, Ron Ellik, and Dickini. Dick informed them all that they might dispose of themselves as they wished - but the couch was mine! We each took turns in tiptoeing through the nursery to the bathroom. Kenneth had slept through all the party, (Dick had labelled the door -DANGER! KEEP OUT! WILD BABY); but when my turn came I found he was awake. Always when I found him awake like this, he would favour me with a beaming smile. He never cried for attention, and played happily with his toys. This sudden stream of people through his nursery merely produced a happy gurgle from him; as if we were doing it to please him. I whispered to him: "You are the best-natured baby in the whole world!" At this he enthusiastically shook the bars of his cot causing me to glance apprehensively towards Dickini; he had chosen the floor beside the air conditioner to try and sleep. I beat a quick retreat.

As I moved towards my couch it dawned upon me that something was happening among the other four. Ron leaned forward and said, "Peggy and I are engaged" Both Toni and Bob were surprised and delighted and everybody kissed everybody else all round. From my couch I surveyed this happy family scene with pleasure and wished them well. Then, with much muffled laughter they all tried to find soft spots on the carpeted floor.

For once I did not go straight to sleep, but lay and thought of the party and hoped I had made a good impression. Lucky Willises..I suddenly thought, they can discuss the day with each other. I remembered my own club back home and wished I had one of them there to whom I could chatter. That might put my chaotic impressions into some order. Round and round the fan faces I had seen that night went in my mind, till I fell asleep.

Thursday August 30th

10th Day

I felt fine as I awoke, but there were quite a few groans from the floor sleepers! Dickini was driving me to Chicago, and fellow-passengers were to be Lee Hoffman and John Boardman. John arrived looking keen and eager for our early start. I tried to tell Pat and Dick my gratitude for their hospitality; but the words I had were quite inadequate to my feelings. Dickini's car shot off, and we were on our way - first to pick up Lee. It was a day of glorious sunshine as I turned to watch the passing scene.

We moved out of New York fairly slowly due to the traffic, and then we were on to the New Jersey Turnpike. From then on, it was a clear run on express highways right to Chicago. Our route was-New Jersey Turnpike, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the Ohio Turnpike, the Northern Indiana Turnpike, to the Chicago Skyway. These roads ran clear; they did not go through towns. Each had four lines of traffic in either direction. There were no traffic lights, no cross traffic, no steep grades, no sharp curves, no traffic congestion..it was drive straight ahead - and Dick drove at a steady 75 miles per hour.

There was a chain of Howard Johnsons at which one could pull in; we did so at 10am when we reached the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Dick told me to put away my purse: this journey was "on him"..and he waved away my thanks with a keyring souvenir of the Turnpike. I was then introduced to my first taste of hot clams in toasted bread and found this scrumptious. The shop at the entrance sold all you could wish for and I added to my growing postcard collection.

Dick had a special route map which he said I could keep, and when I studied this I learned that it was 837 miles from New York to Chicago! The amount of work involved in the building of these roads is best described by the fact that I noted at least six long tunnels passed through by 6pm. At first we were passing through rolling pastureland where I could glimpse many white farmhouses. I saw many delightful picnic spots furnished with the wooden tables and chairs. There was an enormous amount of huge trucks on the road, the biggest I've seen, and I did not envy the drivers of these giants. I also saw that many cars had small trailers attached. Dick explained that those could be hired when moving house; and left at the city of arrival. The number of them confirmed my belief that Americans change house more often than any other people on earth.

John was the brightest of us, probably because he had not been at the party; and he was able to answer my many questions. He had been a student at the University of Chicago and was visiting friends in addition to attending the convention. Lee gave me a copy of her Papazine and I made the welcome discovery that she seemed to be getting interested in fandom again. She told us something of 'ol' Eric, the other interest that had lured her away. As the day wore on it became hot - well into the nineties - but the others assured me that "this wasn't very hot!" By 7pm the sun was still blazing and I was the hottest I'd been for years. I felt that even if I melted I wouldn't complain! We had two other halts, otherwise Dick kept driving on and I wondered how he could keep it up. It had ~~got~~ dark before he suggested that Lee (the only other who could drive) might take over the wheel. Although she had not driven for quite some time, she gamely took over the wheel. All went well, Dick settled back for a well-earned rest, and then suddenly we were flagged down by a police car! Lee and Dick got

got out and went behind to the police car, whilst John and I were left to wonder what was happening. They were quite some time as first Dick, and then Lee got into the car to talk with the officers. When they came back Dick told us that the rear light had not been working, and that he had been given a ticket to allow him to travel to the next garage so that it could be fixed. Much relieved that it was nothing worse we all relaxed again, but Dick took back the wheel, and Lee sank thankfully behind me.

The night marched on and I slept; waking occasionally as Dick stopped the car. He would then walk around it a few times, this was to help him keep awake. On these occasions I would try to make sensible conversation with him and as we moved off again, tried to keep him company on the way. I felt guiltily that it must be rather hard to have to drive whilst his passengers slumbered peacefully! Before long however I would find it impossible to keep my eyes open, and I would be off again. I did manage to struggle awake as we came onto the Chicago Skyway and so was able to see the lights of Chicago, and admire the efficient layout of the road with all turnoffs clearly marked. It was 5am as we drew up at a garage near the hotel; and Dick had been driving since 10am the previous day. Although he is big and strong, he looked very tired, as well he might, I thought. He had been a wonderful host, I reflected this second Dick was every bit as kindly and generous as the first!

Friday August 31st

11th Day

So at last I was at the Pick Congress Hotel in Chicago and the beginning of the largest SF convention I had ever attended. I saw a large lounge with a very deserted look; and Dick steaming forward to the Reception Desk with the grim air of a man bent on sleep - and quickly at that! Whilst Dick spoke with the receptionist, John was fidgeting about not sure what to do - he had figured that 5am was hardly the time to be looking up friends! Dick got his room, said "See you later" and marched off. John hesitated, then grabbed his suitcase and took off after Dick who was disappearing rapidly round the corner. Lee and I grinned at each other. "He'll be wanting a chair in Dick's room" said Lee, with a nod.

Lee was shown to her room, and I was taken up another flight to mine. I let out a low whistle as I surveyed it. Large, with twin beds, air conditioner at the window, a built-in wardrobe, and along one side of the room, a combined dressing-table and writing desk. There was a bathroom complete with bath, shower, toilet, washbasin, and even I saw, a Kleenex dispenser set in the wall! I surveyed four bath towels, four hand towels, two facecloths-and with a sigh of content-plunged into hot water. I slid beneath the sheets and knew no more till I awoke at half past nine.

I decided to try out the room service and telephoned for tea, which came quickly and cost only 25cents. Drinking this and becoming more awake I then explored the writing desk and found there a packet of notepaper, envelopes, and a ballpoint pen. Looking around I saw books of matches on every piece of furniture. Dressed and ready - now to venture forth! With a muttered.. "Please don't let me say or do the wrong thing.." I went down to the hall.

It was no longer deserted, there were crowds of people everywhere, and some I knew - must be fans! Among one group I spotted a familiar face, and I took the plunge and said.."Hello, Steve." As he turned he replied.."No it's Frank Dietz". Damn! thought I, of course it's Frank, though in my defense I said he had got much thinner since I had met him in London. When he heard I was breakfast bent he said he would join me, and off we went to the coffeshop. He talked of his scheme to publish all the convention speeches, he has them all on tape. This was an idea of which I heartily approved. He told me he would be at the tape machine again all through this convention; and indeed at every programme item I would see Frank busy beside the machine.

When we came out I met the Trimbles; and was delighted that I recognised them from their photographs. Bjo has got a lot of freckles, but on her they look good, and I found her one of the most fascinating personalities I've ever met. She bubbled so with vitality it was hard to think of her sick. She told me that the Dr had given permission for her to attend the con providing she flew down. He felt she would fret herself more, and rest less if she stayed at home. John had a calm air of competence-there was a likeness in the faces of this husband and wife..though not till I got to LA did I figure out what it was. With them were Ernie Wheatley and Ed Maskys; they were all going out for lunch. I was not hungry of course, but loathe to leave them; so I tagged on and drank a cup of tea whilst they ate. I quickly felt myself at home amongst them. Bjo said: "Now Ethel, we shall be busy with the Art Show, and also we ought not to monopolise you this weekend as you are coming out to LA afterwards..but any time you want us-just come to the Art Room where we will always be." This made me admire her even more. I do like sensible people.

Back at the hotel I met Bill Donaho...yes well..how to describe this mountain of a man! That's exactly what he is, as you can see from the page of pictures. I did feel wee! In contrast to his size, his voice is soft; and the words come out quickly with a sighing sound. His face split in a beaming smile.."Right!" he said.."I must buy you a drink,"and he firmly led me off to the bar. There we sat happily talking over OMPA till John Trimble joined us. The next arrival was Ellis Mills, he had also got much thinner since his days in London, were all American fans dicting, I wondered?

They told me then that Betty Kujawa had arrived and I flew to meet her- this was a long awaited moment; I found her in the hall lounge, and we gleefully hugged each other. "My goodness but you're small!".."My goodness but you're tall!" Indeed, Betty was much taller than I had expected; but I was delighted to discover that she talks in exactly the same enthusiastic way as she writes. This is by no means true of the majority of fans! Betty has a most endearingly frank and fearless personality. She would go smack up to a fan she recognised with outstretched hand and say -"I'm Betty Kujawa". She never hesitated (as so many of us do) and so was never 'lost' but enjoyed her first convention to the full.

We heard that the registration desk was now open on the first floor, so we joined the long queue there. We stood beside Don Studebaker, lean faced and

pleasant to talk with; though he took my breath away by casually mentioning his Mother had been married five times. Once at the Registration desk I found a long line of committee members efficiently working away. I was soon dispatched clutching a large envelope. Betty invited me to join her and her husband Gene for dinner in the Scots Room at the hotel; so I went to my room to change for this - and to investigate my envelope.

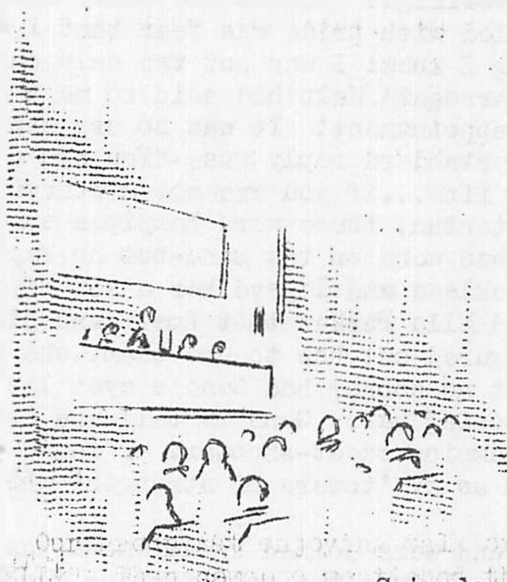
I found it contained a Program Booklet with a wonderful Emsh cover, a folder about Chicago, a leaflet describing the N3F Room (open day & night with free coffee), the membership roster of 592 a nice writeup of Walt and Madeleine, and a packet of Triffid seeds! The last was to advertise the coming film; I heard they were really sunflower seeds-but I haven't had the nerve (or time) to plant them yet and see. As I loafed through the Program Booklet I found that, as TAFF delegate, I had a page to myself. I looked at this with the weirdest assortment of feelings. It was the first time in my life I had been so honoured; and mingled with pride was fear that I would be a disappointment in person. One thing I knew: I was not the only one who was feeling like that. Way back at Harrogate Walt had said to me that he was worried in case he would be a disappointment! It was no use expressing such feelings to anyone else; for the standard reply was - "You are a guest and there to enjoy yourself!" That's fine...if you are not a worrybird.

The Scots Room was decorated with tartan; there were bagpipes and swords upon the walls; and typical Scots dishes were on the menu-but no baggis! Betty gave me a lovely Indian-made necklace and I gave her a set of eggcups. It having been a joke between us and Ella Parker that Americans did not use them. I hear she still hasn't figured out how to use them..she says. I also had a Scottish plume for her, but no sooner had Gene's eyes lit upon it ..than he wanted it for his skeet-shooting hat. Gene is tall and 'big made', genial yet shrewd of eye, and is a champion skeet-shooter. I found them both grand company and was apt to eye them as my 'towers of strength' when overcome by feelings of inadequacy.

After dinner we sat in the lounge and were joined by Avram Davidson. He is small and round and has a --dear me, I fear the only fitting word is -- sweet personality. He is gallant too and kissed our hands; his eyes just beamed with kindliness. Later he came to me, solemnly took my face in his hands, kissed me on the brow and handed me a packet of Butterscotch. "There now," he said, "you'll feel less homesick!"

This was a day for getting to know each other; I met lots of fans - some like Forry Akerman that I knew from their visits to London, others like the Busbys that I knew through correspondence. Too many appeared too quickly .. and were gone for me to grasp it all- but the hotel seemed to be packed with fans. Soon I was sitting in the bar with Betty and Gene and with us were the Busbys. Elinor, I quickly decided, was a darling, and I loved the way they were both so thrilled to be at the convention and ready to enjoy every minute. We were joined by Dick Schultz who looked rather like Ellis Mills at first glance, and who was excited at being there too..here was another OMPA member to greet me! Then Juanita and Buck Coulson came; and I was so pleased to find I could also recognise them from photographs. They did not stay long; I had the impression that both would be rather quiet on a first meeting. As this reaction immediately tied my tongue; I could sadly see it would take longer than the fleeting meetings of a Con weekend for us to get together. I knew that each meeting would make things easier..but time was so short. All that weekend I was conscious of time running fast and occasionally I would sit helplessly watching it.

Our group sat enjoying talk of fannish things..."Have you seen A TRIP TO HELL?" Then someone mentioned that the Willises had gone to bed tired out at 10.30pm. This reminded me that I had intended not to make the first evening too late. As it was then 1.30am I went off to bed. There I lay at first too excited to sleep; after having read about all these people for so long I had found it a bit shattering to meet so many of them all at once. I remembered having asked Ron Bennett what it felt like to be a TAFF delegate. He had answered that -"you just sit there whilst it all passes before you; then six weeks later you come to with a yell-'I've been to America!'" My goodness, I thought, well now I know what he means!



Saturday September 1st 12th Day

I went to the Coffeeshop for breakfast; and was hailed by the Shaws who bade me join them. You will notice that I have been in Chicago for 24hrs now; and still not been allowed to buy myself a meal. This was to continue throughout the whole weekend! When I met someone like the Shaws, it was with a sudden feeling of security. I had begun to feel just how enormous this convention was compared to the ones back home; where almost every face was familiar to me. I had to fight a tendency to stick with a fan I knew, as I felt this was no way to make new friends or absorb the whole convention.

The convention hall was packed to about three times the size of a British convention. Up on the platform I could see Earl Kemp and Rosemary Hickey. Rosemary gave a very good speech of welcome, and then Earl told us that Howard de Vore and Dean McLaughlin would introduce the notables. "If we miss anyone out", said Dean, "then come up afterwards and tell me how important you are and you buy me a drink!" To my confusion my name was called first as TAFF delegate, but as I sat down I thought I could now relax and enjoy the show! It seemed to me that they did very well although there were the inevitable names called out of people not present. These were one and all declared to be - "Down at the bar!" I was able to see many of the professional and fan faces that I had heard of for so long. The Guest of Honour Theodore Sturgeon looked just like the painting of him on the cover of E&SF. Perhaps

it is the pointed beard..but the faun-like impression remained. Time wore on and the names marched before us...Karen and Poul Anderson, Walter Breen, Marion Zimmer Bradley(why..she wears glasses and is just my height)Doc Smith, Phyllis Economou(isn't she pretty),Algis Budrys, Bob Tucker, Mike Deckinger, and on and on whilst I felt my excitement grow! There was a wonderful reception for Walt and Madeleine - how glad I was to be there and see this day! When the 'tellers' could find no more, we all streamed out for lunch.

I went back to the Coffeeshop and this time was called to join Virginia and Steve Schultheis - two good correspondance friends - who were sitting with Ben Jason. Ben had been responsible for making all the Hugos and he told us something of this, and that he was thinking of giving it up. Now the time was upon me for the reception that was to be given for the Willises and myself. This was held in a small hall on the convention floor and there I found Noreen and Larry laying out bottles of Coca-cola and plates of potato crisps. This sight I greeted with relief - it was not to be the stiff and formal affair which I had dreaded. Dick Lupoff had told me that I should be standing at the door to shake hands and, although I more than half knew he was kidding again, I was glad to be reassured.

Among the first to arrive was Howard de Vore who brought with him mats which he had made, boosting the bid for the 1965Worldcon in London. We placed these carefully around the table, but shortly after the guests arrived I was delighted to see many of them wearing them as badges! A large number of fans turned up and the whole idea seemed to be a great success; everyone seethed around happily and I talked with dozens and dozens of fans. When I looked across the room I could see that fans were nigh three deep around the Willises; I could just make out Walt as he is tall, but Madeleine was lost to view. Looking back I can only isolate a few fragments from a welter of memories. Dirce Archer, small and spry, who said "I am so glad you won TAFF. It's about time a woman did so!", she then nodded her head briskly and laughed. I remember Bob Tucker and feeling rather over-whelmed to realise that he knew who I was. At almost the same moment I found he had the most remarkable ability to make you feel at ease and in a comfortable joshingly friendly relationship. It was different when I met Robert Bloch for his effect was to make me tongue-tied; and when I did blurt out a remark it seemed to thud on the floor with a dull sound. I remember Walt coming up and saying.."Ethel, this is Jean and Dean Grennell!" and my wanting to pinch myself again. Dean wanted to photograph me - standing between Dick Eney and Bill Donaho! This was sent on to me after my return home with the caption- DOWN IN THE VALLEY. Standing in that room whilst fans swirled all around..I felt so happy it's a wonder I didn't burst. We told the Shaws that it had been a wonderful idea.

I went with the Willises up to the Grennell's room. There we all collapsed in seats and beamed at each other. I watched through a happy haze Dean draw a punning cover for HYPHEN. Dean had a stack of squares of plastic on which, ~~using~~ a felt pen, he drew slogans. The one he gave me said FOOD IS NOURISHING EAT SOME EVERY DAY. We then went out in search of food and were joined by the Lupoffs. As we strolled along Michigan Avenue in the sun, Dean would stop abruptly every now and then to look in a shop window. Jean would wheel round with him. She explained to me.."He moves so fast, and then he's gone, and I am likely to lose him in the crowd, so I keep an eye on him." She laughed and added.."He always says I was just over there!" Dean sat at the head of our table and looked as if he'd like to sweep us all home with him and tuck us in

with the rest. Jean, for all that she was a small woman, looked as if she could have coped--nae bother!

On opening our Program Booklets, Dean, Walt, and I had discovered our names down for a Panel; the subject was A SENSE OF WONDER. So this was our next point of call--another small hall where we found the other panelists--Phyllis Economou, Ruth Berman, and Dick Eney. Dean was chairman. He had written out what he thought of the subject; and proposed to read this out first and then have we others give our views. Dean has a dry and humorous delivery and he read out a good definition of what we call 'a sense of wonder' and explained why some fans think they have lost it. Dick followed, but his statements on SF were not very controversial. Walt spoke next, he sounded good--even if he did finish with a pun! Phyllis had a lovely voice and spoke wittily, but very softly. I came next and felt I had added little to the general theme. Ruth had a good sharp delivery; showing that she was the one most accustomed to public speaking. There was a good deal of laughter at one point when a young fan, who rose to speak his thoughts on present day SF, referred to Dick as if he were very old indeed. It was comical to watch Dick's expression as he gave a mock bridle. The young fan, in an effort to make matters better, only succeeded in making them sound worse..the whole room dissolved in laughter..and he gave it up, and sat down with a helpless shrug. The questions were just beginning to sound interesting, when Earl Kemp appeared at Dean's shoulder and whispered that time was up. I'm afraid this discussion never really got off the ground. The trouble was - that no one on the panel was controversial enough. We were all too moderate in our opinions; and what could have been a good thing, petered out very disappointingly. I think it would have benefited by some discussion among all the panelists beforehand. A quick look at my Program showed that my sojourn had meant I missed the panel IS SF REALLY LITERATURE? I heard that it had been good, and wished I could learn to be in two places at once. Our own panel finished at 9pm and everyone scattered to get ready for the Fancy Dress Ball.

On my way to the hall I met Wally Weber who confided that he dreaded such gatherings. "I forget," said he, "when I'm editing the CRY lettercolumn, that I am going to meet these people!" Whilst still laughing at this, I saw a fearsome object which closed my mouth with a gulp; this was Stu Hoffman in his Monster costume. He wore an awesome dragon-like head which had five large eyes which flashed light alternately. He seemed to have an electrician in attendance! Inside the hall my first sight was the crowd round Karen Anderson; she was magnificent in a Moth costume which she had both designed and made herself. She was surrounded by photographers; she patiently turned and posed for them. I had planned to take heaps of photographs of this affair but I had found out too late that the drugstore did not have bulbs to fit my camera, so I had to hoard carefully the few I had. They were soon used however as I saw so many magnificent costumes. The time and trouble that the Americans lavish on their costumes is in marked contrast to the few stalwarts that appear each year in Britain.

The hall was not particularly suited for this purpose as it was L-shaped. This meant that it was impossible to walk all round the tables which had been set out, and that in one end left free there was a large crowd of people in not enough room. I walked over to the back of the tables and looked forward to a small space where Juanita Coulson and Theodore Sturgeon were entertaining the audience with songs to guitar music. It was impossible to hear what they were singing. There were loudspeakers at the crowded end of the room

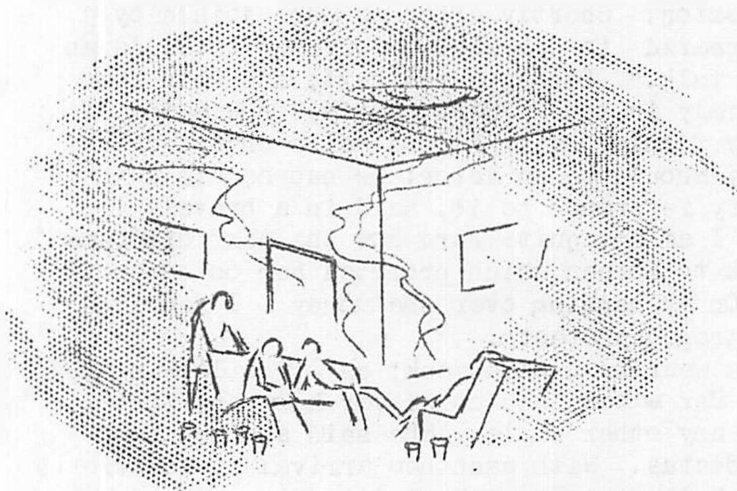
but this seemed to produce a very distorted sound which was not helped by the sea of noise from the crowd standing around. I looked over the tables to a range of faces-not one of which I knew, behind me more costumed figures appeared which I could not recognise. Suddenly a feeling of loneliness swept over me..where to go..to whom should I speak; all at once I felt foolish. Standing there, I could not pluck up the courage to move forward and ask to join a table.

I turned - and there was Gene Kujawa! With a sigh of relief, and without thinking I said, "Oh Gene, I am glad to see you, I suddenly felt so alone." He looked down at me and then said, "What you need-is to come with me for a drink"; before I knew where I was he whisked me out of there and into the bar. I protested that it was time I bought him a drink. He retorted, "You have a choice-either you buy me a drink, or we still stay friends.." Gene told me that he was not a fan; but had agreed to come along with Betty. So far he had been agreeably surprised to find so many people with whom he could talk enjoyably. He had not come along with very high expectations; and had been given a very favourable impression. Shortly after we were joined by Arthur Economou, and then Betty appeared to see what we were up to..it's an awful mob in there..you just can't talk." Buz appeared next; and then came Doreen Webbert with Wally Weber firmly in tow. "Here, Betty," she said, "I have delivered him to you. Equally firmly, Betty kissed Wally on the cheek to much cheers and laughter. Wally should be an actor: he cupped his hand over the lipstick mark and, at every reference to it, said in a bravely modest voice, "It will heal soon!" I am not quite sure how the next bit came about; I must have made some remark to Doreen which prompted her to offer to 'sell' Wally to me for 25 cents. On my handing over the money - I received a receipt from her over Wally's outraged protests.

A face suddenly hovered above me wearing a bird mask; as I was looking up I was able to say at once.."Bjo!" Her ~~makeup~~ was so clever however, that I could not have recognised her from any other angle. She said she had been having great fun with her unknown status. With each new arrival my conscience would prick me at not being in the hall; yet I was having such a good time I was loathe to move. I was also very interested in Gene's reaction to Wally. He looked at Wally suspiciously..what was all this nonsense about running away from women! He questioned him: "this act now..you must meet girls at your work?" "Oh no," said Wally in a meek voice, "I work in an engineering office." Bjo said, "In that case, what about some research?" Wally replied swiftly, "Oh no, I'm not up to lab work yet." Gene's baffled look turned to an appreciative grin.

Elinor came in(another twinge of my conscience) and we all sat there having a whale of a time; and agreeing that if we waited long enough the whole fancy dress parade might join us, and indeed we saw many of the costumes. The time flew past amid much joking with Wally and my admiration grew for his patient good nature and ability to always have an answer. All of a sudden it was 2am and they wanted to close the bar! So we set off to find a party. We all had an invitation to Boyd Raeburn's room, and there was also the Washington 'open' party. As we went along the corridor I noticed vaguely that we seemed to have acquired a 'tail' of very young fans. I was deep in conversation when I realised that we were splitting up and saying "Goodnight"; whilst Betty said to me.."Come to our room Ethel." American conventions are so big that it is almost impossible to have the type of 'open' party that is a feature in Britain. So this manoeuvre is sometimes necessary if you do not want to arrive at a private party with about a dozen fans; some too young to be enc-

ouraged where drink is available. In a short while we all joined together again in Boyd's room. On our way we had passed the Washington 'open' party this was held in a suite of rooms. It was obviously mobbed and there were crowds of people sitting out in the corridor, so we decided to go back after the first rush died down. Inside Boyd's room we also found Bill Donaho and Wrai Ballard. There was plenty to drink but, as is usual in these small gatherings, little was drunk, we were all too eager to talk and listen. It was after 4am when we broke up and I went downstairs with the Busbys. We looked into a now strangely quiet Washington suite. All that remained were a few very white-faced folks and some weary hosts. So we said..hello..hope you had a good time..and goodnight and headed for our respective rooms.



Sunday September 2nd 13th Day

I awoke at 9am and lay and reflected that at this very moment the Business Meeting was taking place. It had been slated for this time -so I'd heard -to ensure that only hardy and interested souls would appear. With a terrific effort I got out of bed; but the meeting was well over before I reached the hall. In fact the hall was closed for the IQ Test was started. I took this opportunity to visit the Project Art Show properly. I had popped in earlier but this time I went round slowly and admired the high standard of entry. I was pleased to see that ATOM had been gaining prizes again with the work I had carried over. I met Don Wollheim, he was carefully taking photographs of the exhibits; we were both too interested to say more than "hello" as we passed round.

The hall doors were opened and I went in, folks were surging around as they excitedly discussed the paper. I said that I would have liked to have been in this and wondered if I might have a paper. The man in charge was very dubious about this, as they were test papers in general use. Someone told him I was a visitor and a nurse. "Oh then," he said, "that's alright. You will know about ethics." So I have a copy here before me, but all I can tell you about it is-that I think I would have done alright on the questions requiring a knowledge of words. However, those requiring a knowledge of maths, would have floored me completely.

The Personality Test came next; and this I decided to try. I spotted Wally sitting at the front with Harriett Kolchak and went and joined them. The test was conducted by Jerry Pournelle. The questions came in sets of two; you had to choose either the one you liked best or, (if you liked neither) the one you disliked the least. We three started amid some giggles which became louder as Harriett spotted a tricky question in No 66. This was: A: I would like to accomplish something of great significance..or B: I like to kiss attractive persons of the opposite sex. Wally blenched. For the next five minutes he kept trying out different solutions to get around choosing B. In the end he did choose A - on the grounds that if he did kiss someone it would be accomplishing something of great significance! He beamed proudly at this solution whilst Harriett and I were convulsed with laughter. This drew Jerry's attention to us; he remarked, "There will probably be a Gestalt personality from that corner...oh, well I've always though Wally was more than human." Wally's pride lasted a short while until he was informed by Harriett that further on came more questions in the same vein. He muttered: "This test is changing my personality". As he underlined the next question.. "I'm getting meaner as this test goes on." I've never sat through a test at which I had such a good laugh.

After this I visited the 'huckster' room where I found a large display of SF on sale. Amid so much temptation I came away with slides by Morris Scott Dollens, Bloch's THE EIGHTH STAGE OF FANDOM, and finally fell for a hardcover Edmund Hamilton THE HAUNTED STARS. As I handed this to the guy behind the stall I realised it was Howard de Vore. "Please accept it as a gift, Ethel", he said. So I got him to sign what he really is - Big-hearted Howard.

As the afternoon program began I was feeling tired and things seemed to be happening from a long way off. The first item was SCIENCE FICTION, MENTAL ILLNESS, AND THE LAW; the speaker was Marvin Mindes. I had my notebook in my lap and, as I enjoyed the talk very much, I must have thought it would be easy to remember for all I wrote down was - 'good clear speaker.' Yet not one word of that talk have I retained; there is just a blank in my mind for that period. I must have known I was pretty played out for lack of sleep for I next went up to visit the N3F room where I gratefully accepted a cup of hot coffee.

There was quite a group of people sitting around; some were playing a game, some were frankly dozing, and a small group sat at the window quietly talking. I sat down at the window between Madeleine and Don Studebaker and found they were indulging in the latest fashion..wind-up Dolls. The coffee had perked me up so I scribbled some of them down as I sat and listened. The Heinlein Doll: you wind it up and it offers you a cup of water. The Willis Doll: you wind it up and it crosses the Atlantic. Andy Mains..learns another language. Betty Kujawa..out comes a stream of exclamation marks. Bjo..cooks breakfast for six people. Eisenhower..does nothing. Fapa..gafiates. The Cult doll..it insults some one. Liz Taylor doll: takes someones' husband. Well: that's all I can quote and still not be sued for libel! This N3F room was a wonderful idea as hot coffee and a quiet place to sit was available day and night.

I got back to the hall in time to hear the question and answer period from the talk by Frank Robinson on SF AND THE PULP MAGAZINES. Apparently some very good SF has been appearing in these magazines. The next panel was called IS THERE TOO MUCH SEX IN SCIENCE FICTION? Earl Kemp called out "Would the Sex panel please assemble?" Kathleen Moore was Moderator and she started the ball rolling by saying "Kingsley Amis had said there shouldn't be any" I took notes on what was actually said and perhaps from this you can obtain .

the gist of what it was all about. POHL: Sex has been creeping in for 30 years. No subject should be taboo if it is necessary to the story. KNIGHT: A lot of writers would write about sex if they weren't chicken, and afraid their mothers might read it. STURGEON: Unselfconsciousness is necessary. I quote Dickson.. "You can't do it without a quorum." WOLLHEIM: Is it true that sex helps to sell? I think it is a trap. There is a danger there could be too much sex in SF. SF is cerebral; to titillate is to subvert the prime aim of SF. To try to imitate good writers like Farmer could be dangerous. The lead story in F&SF by Sturgeon is a sex story-without a quorum! BEAUMONT: Is there too much breathing in SF would be the same question as is there too much sex. DAVIDSON: Is there anyone with a car going to New York with room for an editor and his sexy pregnant wife? FARMER: It is impossible to distinguish between cerebral and glandular - the brain is a gland. STURGEON: What is too much? If sex keyed on Victorian ideas then it is automatically bad. He mentioned the book SEX IN HISTORY, said we ought to investigate the word sex and finished up by saying --humanity is a pretty sick kid. KNIGHT: Advertising sex to buy a little red automobile or a playtex girdle is legal. You are supposed to prefer cigarettes... POHL: We are conditioned from the time we are born - pretty girls advertise everything from mortuary caskets to--lost in laughter. He quoted an advertising jingle -Nothin' smells lovin' like somethin' in the oven. There was a question to BUDRYS: Does the conscious avoidance of sex by authors warp the story? He answered yes. A question from Chris Moskowitz "Since when was the brain a gland? In answer FARMER: The statement came from this gland here..and he touched his heart; then went on to say: We are technically advanced, but sex is neither better nor worse than among primitives. There should be more anthropological study. There ought to be a National Association for the Advancement of Healthy Sex. Thus the panel ended. Although everyone entered with a light-hearted spirit into this discussion, there was an under-current of seriousness; and the idea of more study of our social ways met with all their approval.

Next came the Auction conducted by Al Lewis and Marty Moore. I heard an original manuscript go for 15 dollars, and 29 dollars bid for artwork. So I departed for the drugstore and drank a cup of tea to soften the shock..shades of the prices paid in Britain! On the next stool sat Mike Deckinger. I found him a serious young man who quizzed me about the NHS whilst I questioned him about life in an American college, so that we were mutually pleased with the conversation. Back at the hall I found many young boys clustered round the table eagerly bidding. They made me feel at home for I found myself worrying in case they spent their eating money, a thing I often felt whilst watching the boys back home.

It was time now to change for the Banquet; and as I dressed I mentally rehearsed my short speech. I had asked the Willises if I might call for them as I rather dreaded going in by myself. I went to their room with 15 mins in hand. There I found Madeleine looking rather pale and not yet fully dressed. Walt, she informed me, had been lying down for a couple of hours, and was in the shower. I offered to come back later, but she would not hear of this. Walt ambled out and greeted me sombrely. "These Americans!" he said, half-serious, half-joking, "every ten years another speech!" Much to my amazement I found they had been taking tranquilisers. Nervous as I was, I began to feel much calmer at the sight of the pair of them! Yet there was a dream like quality in the air; as if this couldn't be really happening to us. Madeleine had been told she should speak also and was toying with the idea

of telling a joke, Walt was peering at a piece of paper. I began to silently bless my attendance at Public Speaking classes. I knew I had a speech to make (we had been asked to keep it to ten minutes, so I'd made mine five), and the signposts to it were clear in my mind. Soon, soon, it would be all over and, I knew from experience, that the small spot of heat in the pit of my stomach meant I would be able to put it over alright. It is an entirely different feeling from that of butterflies - which means that I shall sound nervous and spoil it all.

Our table was directly beneath the top table; as I sat down I was aware of such a babble of voices and clatter of dishes; there seemed to be hundreds of people there. Bob Tucker, who sat in the middle of the top table as Chairman, looked down and winked at me; then he suddenly appeared between Walt and I. He said confidentially "They've told me to hurry things up because at precisely 9pm Ghod walks through that doorway; but I'm not going to have my friends messed about with, so you just do as you like!" He said we could - if we wanted - stay where we were and merely stand up when we were introduced. Both Walt and I looked at each other and hesitated. "Think about it," said Bob, "my line to you Ethel will be..TAFB you know is just an excuse to have someone come over here, whom you can't understand a word they say...Then you give them some broad Scots--it doesn't matter what--can you do that?" Thinking rapidly I said yes; then said I really wanted to stand up and at least say thank you, that I felt I could not possibly do less. "Right" said Bob, you're on first".

When he had gone Ron Ellik appeared and began to tell me rapidly what to say, at which I began to feel a leetle irritated. They all meant well I knew but, at the last moment, is no time to be thinking up what to say. I feared he would drive the words from my mind. As it was I mentally scored out three quarters of my speech. Walt and I then amused ourselves by trying to guess who Ghod might be: Walt thought Heinlein, I thought Campbell. The menu was a choice of Roast Beef or Chicken Maryland, though to be dead honest it was the worst meal I ate in the States. Tucker stood up and said: "Right, now you've been underfed and overcharged, so let's begin.."

At his cue line for me I got up and, still faintly amazed at my own calm, walked up to the microphone. There I gave them my "little bit of Scots"... "Frae ghoulies and ghosties, an' lang-legged beasties, an' things that gae bump in the night. Guid Lord deliver us!" At which point from the back of the hall came a loud "hurrah". The thought-Joy!- flashed through my mind whilst I took a breath and continued--"and also, dear Lord, from delivering speeches. I should like to thank all those who, by supporting TAFB made it possible for me to be here. I am very honoured to share this convention with you. Thank you for having me." As I returned to my seat I figured . . .

that at least I ought to have pleased those who like short speeches. Walt and Madeleine followed and spoke equally briefly.

One could see why they wanted us to be brief, there was a formidable programme ahead. There seemed to be dozens of awards and quite a lot of speakers. The main speech of course was from Theodore Sturgeon. It was the most moving I have ever listened to; at times there was almost tears in my eyes. In fact, I only kept them back by the thought that I was in his direct line of gaze; and that it would be a mite disconcerting to any speaker to see a member of the audience in tears. His speech was in three sections, addressed to fandom, to the editors, and to the publishers, but the theme throughout was love. I felt that here was a man who had learnt to love everything. Twice he smiled down at me, once when he mentioned TAFB,

and once when he quoted "things that go bump in the night"; and his smile made me feel good. He had a little ploy at the beginning of each section. He had a book and would ask someone to come up and read it, without saying what it was. The first two burst out laughing; but the best reaction came from Avram Davidson. He looked at the book quite deadpan, walked back to his seat, and then broke up. he was a sight to see. We had been promised that this would be read out to us at the end, but instead Sturgeon set it on fire. I hear tell it's no use asking Avram, he just goes into fits of laughter.

The last item was the presentation of the HUGO awards. No one was at all surprised to hear that WARHOON had deservedly won the fanzine prize. The award to STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND was no surprise either; but after it had been collected by proxy, Earl Kemp stepped forward and said he demanded a personal acceptance...and in walked Heinlein. Walt said: "I told you so!". Like Sturgeon, Heinlein received a standing ovation. He was wearing a white dinner jacket and looked immaculate. He said that his wife was complaining about "having to dust all these things!" He added more seriously that he regretted to say that she was quite ill at that time. He then announced that he had come straight from the plane, and that his room number was 601 and all were welcome! With this brave announcement the banquet ended.

Looking back I think I was silly; for all the time it would have took, not to have stuck to my original speech. There were very few fannish items in the programme, so I had little need to be curtailing any of it.

After this I met up with the Kujawas again and we headed for the bar. I had a nice long talk with Phyllis Economou; I thought she was the loveliest woman there. Her colouring was beautiful. She was very interested in my reactions to being TAFF delegate; and asked many questions which showed she had the type of sympathetic personality that can put itself into another's place. Later came a long talk with Marion Z. Bradley and Elinor Busby on the subject of the novelist Mary Renault. We discovered a mutual liking and knowledge of her books; and were soon deep in conversation over their many implications. In the midst of this I felt sweep over me the 'sense of wonder' whose loss I hear so many mourn. This I felt was fandom and what it meant to me: people with whom I could talk, people who shared my interests-not always necessarily science fiction. I think we are bound together more by a love of reading, than anything else.

Although Gene scoffed at me, I determinedly left this lovely group to go up to the hall - after all I had a trip report to write! I found that I was too late for the Fritz Leiber talk; and the Robert Bloch slide show had begun. This was entitled MONSTERS I HAVE KNOWN. He had brought some good slides from Hollywood; and his running commentary was hilarious. Every now and then he would show a picture of Tucker as a young man to much increased laughter, and the show ended with a baby on a mat...I got up as the lights went on and saw Tucker sitting at the back with a sardonic expression on his face. "You were well featured", said I. "That I expected", he grinned. We talked of Heinlein's entrance at the banquet. "You know" he said, "next time he really must try and look as if he had dashed from a plane; I must advise him to muss up his hair a little and give his tie a yank." I spotted Elinor at the other side of the hall and joined her. She also had deserted the bar and was waiting to see the films made by Emsh. They certainly were worth seeing. He had photographed paint being put onto a surface in large abstract slashes; and this was really poetry in colour. His other film featured the use of film

which was speeded up in conjunction with film very much slowed down. It started with a man's eye, open and immobile; then gradually the figure of a woman, always in superswift motion, came onto the screen. The man's eye, face, hands, body, always stayed in slow motion; whilst the woman's became swifter and swifter. It was rather a shattering experience!

After this it was back to the bar and more good talk; and then a gradual shift to the Lupoff party. Pat and Dick had a suite which consists of two rooms and the bathroom. In one room I found a group of people watching an SF programme on TV, especially put on for convention time. I went into the other room where the talkers were. Gene and Buz were discussing fandom. Gene had said that he had enjoyed himself much more than he had expected, that he had thought we would not talk about anything except SF; the range of conversational topics had been to him an agreeable surprise. Buz was naturally pleased at this, and explained that one could be nonconformitist in thought without necessarily being a 'beatnik'. Betty, at the other side of the room, was looking very attractive in a sky-blue Chinese style dress. I kept meaning to go over to see what they were arguing about, but the talk between Buz and Gene was too interesting to leave. Eventually there was a gale of merriment from the other group; Betty had been talking for well over an hour to Don Wollheim under the impression that he was Larry Shaw. Don, sly thing, had realised this early on, but kept mum.

With this we all broke up as we realised that it was now 5am. In a happy daze with a carefree feeling at the back of my mind..I wandered off to bed.

Monday September 3rd

14th Day

Once again I got up at 9am by the use of the magic phrase.."You've got all the rest of your life to sleep!" Down in the hall I found the first item was a Puppet Show, put on by the members of the Committee for Interstellar Friendship of the All World's and All-People's International Club. I waited to see what a hefty sounding title would produce. The plot which the puppets acted out was of the visit of an alien from Pluto to our convention, who was worried that Earth might destroy itself. It consisted of some rather heavy propaganda; there were long speeches from puppets of every nation. Larry Ivie murmured to me, "This should be called the NSF of Outer Space." Still: the dialogue was pretty clever, with the best part being the dance of the puppets at the end. Willy Loy spoke next; his topic was - CHANGING CONCEPTS ABOUT THE PLANETS. He was a charming and witty speaker, with the ability to give facts leavened with humour. First he named all the planets.."in case you have forgotten them..". Then he went over each one describing what theories had been aired in the past, and how many had been exploded by new knowledge, and what had yet to be discovered. One phrase tickled me so much I wrote it down.."I hate to say anything about a planet (Venus) called after a lady, but it is a terrible nuisance." He added that we will have an answer to Venus in our lifetime.

There is another blank in my mind over this period. I see in my notes "mind keeps wandering to coffee". Further on comes either "Ring for Belle" or "Ruins for Belle". I can remember meeting Belle Dietz and promising to do something for her; but she is going to have to translate that one for me! I know I did meet Lloyd Miggles; I pleased him by saying I had voted for his story THE MONUMENT. Also sometime around then I met James Taurosi who asked me if I would like to be British correspondent for SCIENCE FICTION TIMES. Giving a slight peek into the future and shuddering at all the work I saw ahead, I said emphatically -"No thank you!" However, I did promise to let British fandom know he was looking for someone. He also handed me a copy of a special convention issue. Apart from giving the official news, it added that there had been 500 attendees...no wonder I had looked at a sea of strange faces! Often though, I had been gratified by someone unknown to me pausing to talk; and hoping that I was having a good time. Sometimes they asked about something British. I was always so pleased when they did this, and wished it would happen oftener.

Leaving him, I picked up a pamphlet called TERMS FOR FREEDOM; this came from the Roman Catholic display-they were also having a convention in the hotel. I was forever meeting young girls in the elevators telling each other how wonderful Sister soandso was! I can't make much sense out of the pamphlet except that it seems to be against World Government.

Then I acquired a copy of ROGUE magazine: it happened this way. I was sitting in the drugstore talking to Jock Root when a young fan came in with this copy of ROGUE, which he showed to us. After a look at some of the typical ROGUE pictures, I remarked that I must try and get a copy for the boys of the London club. The young fan said that they were being given away free, but that they had all gone now. Then he hesitated, looked down at the magazine, and said:"Give them this copy." When I remonstrated that I could not take his copy, he said "Oh yes do.." and rushed off. I am so annoyed that I did not get his name for it was such a thoughtful thing for him to do..he must have been about 14yrs old, if that.

I must have eaten lunch somewhere and sometime that day, but the blank in my mind over details remains till 2.15 when I was back in the hall to hear the last panel POLITICS IN SCIENCE FICTION. The moderator was George Price, and the panelists were AJ.Budrys, TH Cogswell, Poul Anderson, Norman DeWitt, Dean McLaughlin and J.Pournelle. Dean started off by discussing STARSHIP TROOPER, and ended up by saying he felt that he'd had no choice in the last Presidential election. Cogswell said that unhappily there was too little of politics in SF, and that writers often wrote in "a political vacuum." He said that he himself was reacting to events of 20 years ago, he mentioned that Orwell "looked ahead and got scared stiff." He finished up by saying he "thought it was more fun to talk about Sox in SF". DeWitt quoted Finagles Law -"That under ideally controlled laboratory conditions, human beings do as they damn well please." He gave the amusing story of Miss Priscilla Perk, a professional fire-eater whose livelihood was threatened when Britain declared petrol rationing. To get petrol she put herself down as a taxi. Was turned down. Tried as a hearse. Was turned down. In the end she was issued with a permit as a stationary engine! After this Poul Anderson became more serious and said that it was legitimate to introduce propaganda if it were entertaining. He said "The concept of the perfect society is naive." Budrys said he had been set up as a political expert. He was born in East Prussia, which was the heart and soul of nazism, he grew up in a political atmosphere.

He remembered seeing Hitler when he was a child of 4. Naturally he used this background in his writing. He mentioned the theory of "the man who does not fit". He pointed out similarities in famous men-Hitler, Caesar, Alexander, Lincoln. He wondered if it were vaguely possible that, if changed in time, Hitler and Lincoln could have changed roles. He was very soft-spoken and I missed quite a bit of a very interesting theory. Pournelle spoke last and was the best speaker. He pointed out that we must realise that human beings can be swayed by "a man on a white horse". He said politics in SF.. "there had better be; it is one of our few good political laboratories!"

An extra talk was announced; but I wandered back to the drugstore, where I was introduced to Willy Ley and found him as charming as he had appeared on the stage. Then it was time to say goodbye to the Willises who were leaving to visit the Grennells, we hoped to meet again on the West coast. The hall now contained an auction, so I sat in the lounge outside and realised that the convention was beginning to break up..the Kujawas had left earlier in the day and I missed them. I went for dinner with Charlie and Marsha from New York, and with us came Stu Hoffman. We went out to a Steakhouse famous for its meat. That certainly was the best steak I have ever tasted! The service was excellent, we could see the steak being cooked over charcoal broilers as we waited. The only snag was their system of broadcasting each customer by number, and calling the waitress when the meal was cooked..very distracting. I heard that Al Lewis, deadbeat from his long auctioning session, had left before his number was called..just unable to bear it!

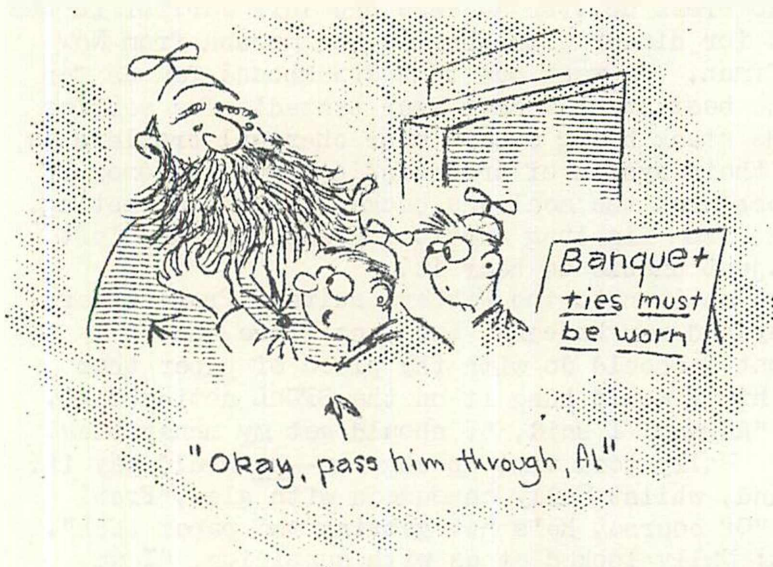
That night Wrai Ballard took me down to the Webbert suite. Present were Doreen and Jim, Rosemary Hickey and her husband, Lou Anne Price and Wally Weber. Wally wanted to know what I should do with the piece of paper that said I had bought him..I told him I would hang it on the SFCOL noticeboard, at which he groaned mightily. "Anyway" I said, "I should get my money back, you don't do what I tell you." Wally took that up eagerly--he would pay it. I gravely accepted the money and, whilst Wally announced with glee, "Free! Free!", I murmured to Doreen, "Of course, he's not getting the paper back". Doreen and I started to giggle; Wally looked at us with suspicion. "I am free amn't I?" he demanded. "Who says anything about free," quoth I "what I asked for was my money back and you gave me that." Wally clutched his hair in despair while Doreen and I exploded.

Some time later Bloch came in and said to me "What are you going to do in LA, Ethel?" I replied that I was going to Disneyland. "Oh no" said he, "what you should do is visit Forest Lawns." He then entertained us with a hilarious description of this well-known cemetery. He lovingly told of the LITTLE CHAPEL IN THE GLEN and the souvenir gift shop! He had bought many "gifts" and, when he went to hospital, displayed them all round his room. " room," he said, "was the most popular among the nurses" This I could well believe! No wonder he is a success on TV; he had us all helpless with laughter.

There was a phone call from someone in Heinlein's room, begging the use of some glasses. Carrying our drinks and extra glasses, Doreen, Lou Anne and I went up there. The room was jam packed with people. On being introduced Heinlein told me he had visited Scotland. He had met JT McIntosh and done a "round of pubs with him." He went on.."When I got on the train I saw in the corridor a man wearing a kilt and waving a bottle of Scotch. He said he was Piper Lyle. When I said that was my Mother's name-he welcomed me with open arms..we finished the bottle between us. When I woke up the next day I not only didn't know what hotel I was in..I didn't know what city!" Heinlein

then waved his arm at a sideboard groaning with bottles; and said to have a drink.. "I put two bottles there at the start", said he, "but they seem to have hatched." He had been holding open house since the banquet (and did so all Monday as well) so it was as well the fans rallied round!

Later, in Buz's company, I went back to Boyd's room where there was another gathering. I mostly talked with Elinor then, and I remember that quiet time with her with pleasure. I had been planning on sleeping all Tuesday forenoon- but then I heard Buz propose a farewell breakfast and that they should all meet at 10am. I hesitated and then said poo to sleep; and asked if I could come too. As it was after two by then I went off to bed. However when I got there I found myself too strung up to sleep. So I lay and read Bloch's THE FOURTH STAGE OF RANDOM until 3am when my head at last began to nod.



Tuesday September 4th 15th Day

We went for breakfast to a cafe in Michigan Boulevard; present were the Busbys, Boyd, Phyllis, Marion Bradley and her son, Walter Breen, and Forry. It was a nice way to end the convention and I was so glad I had managed to be there. They were a group who, by yearly meetings, had got to know each other well, and it was a real thrill for me to be with them. I hated saying good-bye to them, but soon it was time for me to contact the LA group.

I phoned Ron Ellick's room; he answered in a startled voice.. what time was it? When I told him 12 o'clock - it sounded as if he leapt out of bed! So now I became a part of the LA group. Apart from the Trimbles, there were Al Lewis, Dian Girard, Bruce Pelz, Ted Joynstone, Ernie Wheatley and Ron. We all went to the Museum of Science and Industry. In the main hall I headed over to the postcard stand; but by the time I had picked out a few, Al had obtained a illustrated brochure for me. Meanwhile Bjo had arranged that there would be a guide to show me around the famous DOLLS HOUSE. I was very touched by their thoughtfulness. THE DOLLS HOUSE OF COLLEEN MOORE.. is really a fairytale castle. It is filled with the minatures which are Colleen Moore's lifetime collection. Cinderella's slipper is just barely quarter of an inch long. The Diningroom made us gasp; for here is King Arthur's Round Table, the dining service is of gold. I was enraptured by it all; but mostly be the bedroom of the Princess.

The canopied bed of gold was shaped like a swan, and its coverlet was a golden spiders web. The guide gave us the special tour; and I have, thanks once again to Al, a lovely booklet as a memory of this visit. This was the best museum I have ever seen. Everything was laid out with imagination and any student who can visit here is lucky. By push-button, do-it-yourself exhibits you find in a very short time some of the mysteries of physics becoming plain. How sound waves work--has a giant ear to help explain; how an airline control tower works - has a full scale replica to show you; how a submarine works--has a faithfully reproduced submarine at your disposal! What I admired most was the hall for Medical Science. There I found a heart big enough to walk into, a human cell one million times larger than life size.. Lastly, but certainly not least, is an awesome display..two corpses sectioned both horizontally and vertically. Short of witnessing an autopsy nothing could be more valuable in the study of anatomy. I felt dead envious of every student in Chicago..how much easier my anatomy lessons could have been! I came away from this museum with a lively appreciation of American technical skill.

We then split up with many "See you in LA" calls. This left me with the group who were travelling to LA by Greyhound bus. This consisted of Dian... tall, long black hair and an easy way with the 'boys'; these were Ron(the sergeant in charge of one TAFF delegate), Bruce Pelz, easily recognisable in black shirt and western style boots, Ted Johnstone, small and nicknamed The Hobbit, and Jack Harness, his nickname was The Scribe. With myself that was six of us; and as we walked along through a pleasant park, I began to see that this would be an enjoyable trip for they were an engagingly friendly bunch. I was impressed by the way decisions on what to do next were made. No one was ever noticeably in charge, first one and then another would make the decision, and there was never any quibbling from the others. I have never seen a group effort which required so little discussion; none of the time wasting "well-do-you-think-we-should" or "how-about-this-way?" politenesses that can waste half a day before you get started.

We went to the El-which is an elevated railway above street level, so that you have a novel view of the city. From there we drove back to the centre of Chicago; this meant we passed through one of the poorest parts..and this was slums-the worst I have ever seen. Rows upon rows of wooden 3-story houses, so dreary, so near to the rumbling railway that, every train had a full view of the rooms. Most of the tenants seemed to be coloured - a very depressing sight it was. Back in the centre of Chicago; what a contrast! Lights, shops a-glitter with every kind of ware, small restuarants, fancy restuarants, night clubs, girlie shows, and the sidewalks seethed with crowds. They took me to the top of the highest building; the Prudential. This had an observation tower, complete with restuarant and gift shop. By looking down I could see Michigan Avenue with its constant stream of traffic making a golden stream.. the whole thing was quite breathtaking, and the final touch was when the fountains below began to play coloured patterns.

Now for the Greyhound depot. In large cities like Chicago they were quite tremendous. On the main floor were shops and restuarants of every kind. I was rather pleased with the "Ladies". 10¢ was the ordinary toilet price, but for 25¢ you also had a private washbasin, and for 30¢ a private shower. We found a large queue waiting for our bus. Jack began to push his way forward, and Ron called out "Three doubles Jack, get your luggage on them" which I felt was a little optimistic. For quite some time the crowd pushed and swayed-but

no 11pm bus. In fact: it did not leave until 12.10. Ron gave me a quizzical look; I was being introduced to Greyhound!

We did not get the seats they wanted; in fact we were lucky to get seats at all. I found myself sitting beside a very old and frail-looking coloured woman. She spoke to me and I discovered to my dismay that her southern accent was too thick for me to understand, nor could she understand me. I put my head back and with a sigh, settled for sleep. Just as I was dropping off my companion slowly slid to the side and onto my lap. Politely I pushed her back and noted, with a sinking feeling, that she was the type who sleeps head slumped forward which makes the slide to the side inevitable. Yes, I was polite in my first shove at her, but as each time she woke me with a start, I became less polite. I tried to tell her to put her head back, but between her sleepiness and lack of understanding..all I got was an incomprehensible mumble. I was feeling quite desperate by the time the bus made its first stop and I hastily told Ron of my predicament. He very nobly insisted that we change seats. Fortunately as the bus started off again, he found that there was an empty seat beside Ted and moved over. With a great relief - I slept.

Wednesday September 5th 16th Day

During the night whilst I slept we had driven into Missouri; we stopped at St Louis at 7am for breakfast. After this I sat up and began to take notice! The houses began to have a different look-wooden with front porches and often a rocking chair at the doorway. Now and then I would see an impressive building; one was white and gold, but these always turned out to be funeral parlors. It was hot, but the bus was air-conditioned, I saw signs at every garage advertising that ice was sold. We all slept most of that day, and my memories of the landscape are pretty hazy; but I do remember travelling through the Ozark Mountains because they were so beautiful. The road ran smooth through miles of richly-wooded scenery; this appeared to be very much a holiday spot. There was very little housing; yet spang in the middle of seemingly nowhere I saw a sign: TEN BOWLING LANES. SWIMMING POOL! Presumably this was a motel back from the roadway. Then motels came into view, and signs advertising the sale of gifts..a sign flashed by INCA CAVE-ALWAYS OPEN. At such times I longed to stop and explore. I remember one part where, as the bus rounded a corner, I looked down into a wooded valley where sunlight beckoned between the trees, and thought I had rarely seen anything more beautiful.

We stopped at Joplin for lunch where the boys headed out to a drugstore. I gobbled my food for we had only half an hour, and drugstores fascinated me. I would wander around happily looking at the displays. I never had any difficulty remembering I was in a strange land, when I was in a drugstore.

On my return to the bus I at last voiced my discontent to Ron (who was now my seat partner) at there being no ashtrays in the bus so that you had to make an ashy mess on the floor. He explained that it took too much time to empty them; it was quicker to clean out the bus completely. I was now dozing my way through Oklahoma. Fortunately Ron was half asleep when I produced the unoriginal remark that the whole thing was a fraud--no cowboys singing OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING. Instead; as far as the eye could see, stretched flat and rich looking land, I suppose it was a dude ranch where I saw the sign
INDIAN DANCERS! BUFFALO HERD!

We stopped at Tulsa and I saw that the men now wore western style boots and hats, and bola ties. The boys phoned Sam Martinez who very quickly came across town to meet us as we waited to change buses. I was impressed by the way Sam downed tools; even though it was only for a 15min talk. Within two seconds Bruce had him filling out a voting form for FAPA! Fans can be much more isolated in America than at home, which is why they think nothing of going quite long distances to meet each other. I think it was here that I rushed to the postcard stand and grabbed a folder which said "15 unusual views". Much to the merriments of my companions--they were 15 bathing beauties. I was getting to know them better now, they were a tightly knit bunch; to an outsider much of their talk might be incomprehensible. Fortunately I know something of their fantasy land COVENTRY, and talk of the Cult I could also follow. Bruce, I discovered was a real completist, and his collections were all bound. Ted was a disc jockey, this confused me rather, as he seemed so young; which caused me to reflect that it was a fine thing when everyone in their twenties was beginning to appear 'young' to me.

Thursday September 6th 17th Day

We had a stop at Amarillo at 2.30am. Here I drank tea and ate peaches with a fine disregard for the time which had begun to lose meaning for me as we travelled on. As this was Texas I demanded to see the stars, so Ted and I walked out of the posthouse where, to my disappointment, the sky was overcast. Still: there were neon lights everywhere to make up! Indeed I never tired of watching the lights and often was wakeful to watch them flash by in all their colour and sudden sun-burst. I know it's not supposed to be 'cultural', and I know that it was only commerce seeking customers..but in the black night as these gay displays loomed up, they gave me great delight.

We arrived at Albuquerque at 8am and there waiting to meet us was Roy Tackett. Fortunately he had a large car for into it he packed what I had begun to tally at each stop--I Squirrel, 1 Hobbit, 1 Scribe, 1 FAPAN, two femmefans, two helmets (from the costume ball) 1 guitar case containing a whacking great sword, and a bundle or two apiece! The helmets had drawn attention to us wherever we went for the easiest way to carry them was on somebodys-anybodys head! Roy took all this calmly and even seemed glad to see us. Roy was dressed western-style, and had a round pleasant face with plenty laughter crinkles. He explained that their house was just outside the city limits, and shortly we found ourselves before a single story frame house which Roy informed us had been built in 30 days! This also included the

digging of a well. "Outside the city limits, so no water rates!" chuckled Roy.

Chrystal welcomed us in and I at once fell in love with her voice; in a lovely drawl she pronounced thang for thing..it was an accent from Arkensaw she told me. Their oldest daughter Diana was at school; but the youngest, Rene, a blonde expressive-faced child, looked at us all with eyes of wonder. Chrystal had the table set and breakfast ready. We fell upon this in a way that seemed to please her, she is the type of good cook who loves to watch folks eat...and we did! There was a reverent silence as we manfully did her bacon, eggs, sausages, waffles hot from the stove, the justice they deserved. She seemed quite happy to go on cooking as long as we ate, but eventually we slowed to a stop and all sat back with a look of content. They took us into town after that and showed us the Old Town Plaza. This was a pleasant square in the centre a white bandstand with a cannon at the side, around were Mexican style houses and shops. We naturally went to the shop which had a wooden Indian outside, it was a gift shop. They told me that lots of the work was done by Indians. I bought some Bola ties for the boys back home-but the only one with the nerve to wear one is Pat Kearney..and even he takes it off when he goes outside!

Chrystal took me to a shop featuring Mexican skirts, these were embroidered with gorgeous bright threads and beads; I hung over them longingly. We went to a smaller square and visited a candle shop. I have never seen such a display of candles, each one perfectly decorated for a particular occasion, the bridal ones were beautiful. I bought what I thought was one candlestick for a dollar, but it turned out to be a dollar for the pair. They looked worth more. I was beginning to have a little trouble with the dollar; either I thought of it as a pound note and had a heart attack at the price, or I thought of it as 5 shillings and so miscalculated the price.

The sun was hot, but not uncomfortably so. On our return to the house the travellers flaked out to sleep with the exception of Ted and myself. I had the feeling it was a sin to go to sleep when the sun was shining! Behind the house I found a large garden; and they had pets with a vengeance. Chrystal explained that after all the years of living in Army accommodation she wanted the children to have a home life which had none of the restrictions to which they had been accustomed. One of the things Army life had deprived them of was pets-so now they had two Chihuahuas dogs, two turkeys, a cat, and pigeons! I adored the dogs, they were so small and cute, but from the turkeys I kept a safe distance. Roy had to go off to work at his TV station at 4pm unfortunately so the time with him flew by all too fast. Their older daughter Diana came home from school. They were two fine children, Diana and Rene, alert but never pert. As by now I was the only visitor awake, they approved of me. "Why do they all sleep so much?" asked Diana. "They are very lazy, are they not?" queried Rene. I said that they were all so tired because they had not been sleeping for days, at which the children looked duly impressed.

Later the sleepers awoke and wandered out to admire the flower garden and to kibitz the game of horseshoes that I was playing with the children. All too soon it was time to depart; Chrystal drove us down to the bus depot, our bus left at 11pm. I was so sorry to wave goodbye to Chrystal, I had found her extremely easy to be with, as if we'd had a friendship for years, I felt no constraint when a silence fell between us..which is the biggest test of all. Someday I would like to go back there and spend more than one golden day, but I have a memory of a happy home, gay flowers in the garden, the smell of home cooking, the cheerful sounds of children and dogs, and sunshine all the day long!

Friday September 7th 18th Day

I slept soundly all night; we had breakfast at Flagstaff..after which I began to wake up. I could see more express-ways being built, more motels, and then I fell asleep again! I remember that we stopped for coffee at a place called Prescott where Ron spotted a street called Willis. I remember waking up and noting that it was only 9am when I had been sure it was afternoon..my sense of time was really fouled up. We were now in Arizona and between blinks I could see many lovely silver birch trees. Ron and I waking up at the same time at one point held a short TAFF meeting and amiably agreed with each other on everything. I was beginning to spot cacti now; the scenery changed to long rolling hills very like the Highlands back home; less bleak though because of the steady sunshine. I caused a small spot of excitement by spotting my first Burma Shave sign. The boys obligingly read it off as I scribbled it down..... ANGELS WHO GUARD YOU WHILE YOU DRIVE USUALLY RETIRE AT 65. By 10am we were driving through the Mohave Desert. Chalk up-one Burma Shave sign, one desert, you could get blasé this way! As I looked at the desert I was glad I was in an air-conditioned bus. Everything looked so bleached and the only break to the eye was the cacti-quite big now-and occasional tumbleweed.

By mid-day we reached the Colorado River and passed into California. We stopped for lunch at Blythe. As I stepped out of the bus the heat was like a blow in the face; Jack checked for me and said it was 96 in the shade. We went to a Spanish place and there I ate Enchilados, Tacos, and Barritos. These were delicious, and a surprise to my conservative eating habits. As we went back to the bus I looked round with satisfaction - this was what I had come so far for - hot sun, wide streets, low ranch-type houses, palm trees, western-style clothing on the people. It would have been impossible to conjure up a picture of Surbiton!

We stopped again at Indio in the afternoon and here the temperature was 106. We had been passing miles upon miles of date groves; so the gang headed for the posthouse to order fresh date-shakes. They informed me that this was the only place where you could get them; but I passed the opportunity up-not being fond of the eatable kind of date. Our driver was very informative and obviously enjoyed telling what he knew. He pointed out the dates all tied up in paper bags to protect them, and made us laugh by telling us that it took one male to pollinate 49 female date trees. He also pointed out grapefruit trees making me realise I had never known before where they came from. We finally rolled into Los Angeles at 6pm.

Waiting to meet me were Rick Sneary and Len Moffatt; we stood and beamed at each other whilst Ron found my luggage. Len said that Anna was driving round and round the block as no parking was allowed. She had been doing this for some time, so I quickly said goodbye and thanks to my travelling companions and hastened out to prevent Anna from getting dizzy. My first confused impression of LA was of the enormous amount of cars; and I looked at the back of Anna's blonde head with respect as she swiftly made her way through it all. Their house was in Downey, a suburb of LA, and Rick lived in nearby Santa Ana. The Moffatt house was on the one-storey plan which I liked so much; they had a large living-room one wall composed of sliding doors which led out onto a patio. They were all as I had imagined them to be, they looked at me with glad smiles, and made me feel their hospitality was boundless. Over dinner we sat and talked..and I would look round with a sigh of surprise..I had really got here.

Saturday September 8th 19th Day

It was nice to have a leisurely breakfast and take it easy; I sat and chatted with Len who seemed to be such a kind person. Then Rick arrived to take me to Olvera Street. This was on Ella's orders: she had said I must not miss it! We drove into LA and I began to see that it really was a sprawling town. We passed huge supermarkets, I gaped at elaborate freeways, and everywhere there were neon lights. Olvera Street or El Paseo de Los Angeles..The Walk of the Angles, is a block-long narrow street which is a bit of old Mexico. It is lined with tacos stands, restaurants, nightclubs, art and gift shops, fortune tellers, all operated by Mexicans in their colourful national costumes. I have never seen anything more gay; all the colours were so bright. I went from stall to shop with delight and Rick seemed to enjoy my delight also. I very much admired the many beautiful handicrafts on display. I told him I wanted to buy a handbag as Ella had, for I had been envious of the one she had proudly produced. There were many shops selling them and Rick told me that Ella had inspected them all carefully before choosing a particular shop. "Right," said I "lead me to it, for she will have found the one with the best value." Rick grinned at my canny way, and led me to it. In this shop was a huge array; the leatherwork was intricate and lovely. I had a hard time choosing but in the end bore one off in triumph.

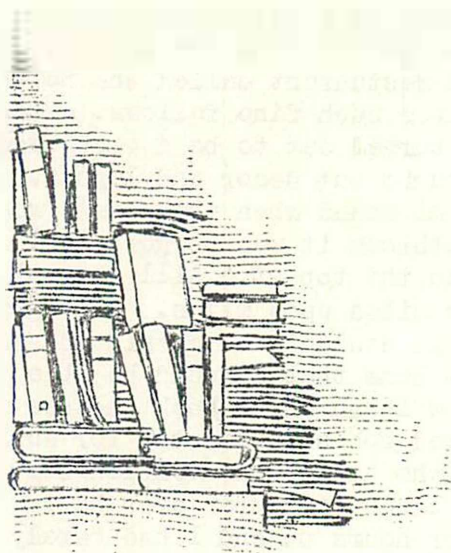
We sat at one of the outdoor restaurants, and I again enjoyed the taste of tacos. It was a chance for a nice quiet talk with Rick whom I had long admired. He once wrote me.."If you keep along in the same old rut long enough, people begin to think you built the highway." What I like about Rick is that he sees fandom with a clear eye. He always deplores any unpleasantness, but always maintains stoutly that the friendships he has found in fandom are the best reason of all for its existence, and that quotation above is typical of his modesty.

That night the Hoffatts had generously thrown their doors open wide to LA fandom for a party on my behalf. My travelling companions all turned up looking refreshed and full of high spirits. With them came Steve Tolliver, Fred Patten, and Don Fitch. A couple called Primerose came who had newly moved to LA from Ohio. Ron Primerose treated me with the gift of three magazine first editions, which quite overwhelmed me. Shortly after they were all gathered, Bruce Polz presented me, on behalf of LASERAS, their Fun Fund Bottle; which was crammed full of money. On checking this later I found it totalled 25 dollars and 3 cents! I've had presents before of course, but this was the first time I have ever received a present like this out of the blue. I don't think I'll ever forget that moment as I stood with that jar in my hand, realising that so many people had thought kindly of me. I made a mental vow that from then on TAFF should come first, and that nothing I could do for it would ever be adequate enough.

Anna had gone to bed as she was not feeling well, but the party went on fairly quietly. Burbee came in and sat in the kitchen drinking coffee; I went in to listen to him as the others started to quietly folksing. Burbee was pretty quiet too; he had been late at another party the night before and was feeling very tired. He has a very handsome strong-featured face, and eyes which can turn swiftly from mournfully sad to a wicked glee. I think I saw a subdued Burbee that night; but he smiled at me kindly and begged pardon when he went off early.

After they had all gone, Len and I wandered around happily clearing away the glasses. It had been the kind of party I liked(I am a fugitive from the 'organised' party)quiet talk, friendly folk, and easy laughter. The folk-singers had amused me by ripping through-"With 'is 'ead tucked underneath 'is 'arn."..

I could not sleep at first; but lay thinking of the LASFAS gift. My mind travelled back to a similar gift from my own club in London, the unexpected gift of money which had arrived by post one day from a friend,,and I suddenly felt tears in my eyes. How many good people there were in fandom: Rick was right--this was the most precious part of it!



Sunday September 9th 20th Day

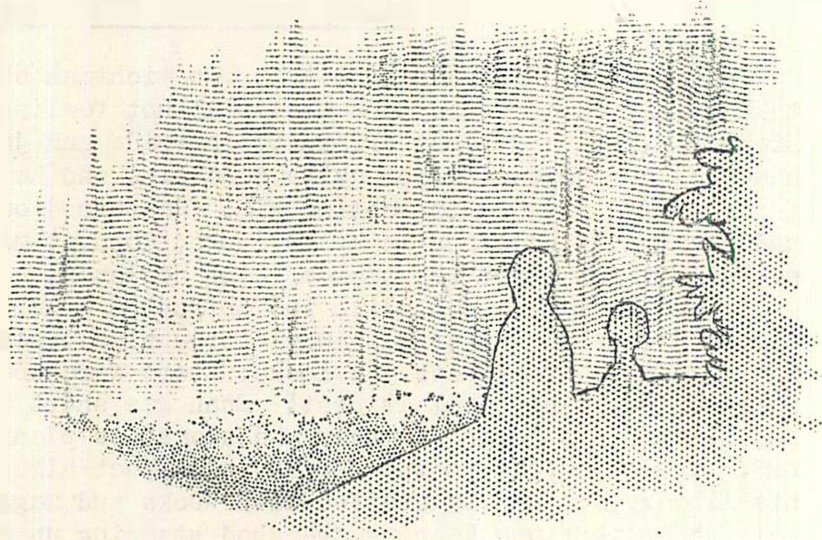
Today it had been arranged that Bob Lichtman should call with his car to take us all out; but as Anna was still not feeling too well, she begged off. Rick, Len, Bob and I set off in Bob's pride and joy-his new car. Bob and I had been corresponding for quite some time and he was my American agent; so I had looked forward to meeting him. He turned out to be much taller than I had imagined. Tall and lanky he looked down at me with an infectious grin as we set off first for the home of Stan Woolston.

Stan's house was much like the Moffatt's - but not inside! Stan is a bachelor and his Mother was away at the time...his way of keeping house was interesting. Everywhere you looked there were books, magazines and papers,I fear one could not call it neat! Stan was short and broad-shouldered, he rump- led his hands through his hair and seemed so pleased that we had come to see him. He led us out to the garden to inspect his fanac shed. This was also his library; it was so stuffed with books and magazines that I suspected the only thing that was keeping the shed standing up was the loaded shelves inside. He "reckoned it was kinda full", he was planning an extension one day..if he just cleared a little space here..I could see his duplicating machine! He had a gurgling sort of laugh; I felt he didn't have a care in the world! We had planned to visit next Rory Faulkner and, as Stan did not seem to want to part from us, he suggested that he would come along too. So we all piled back into Bob's car and dashed off again.

Rory lived in such a neat little house; she popped out with loud cries of welcome, looking not a day older since I had seen her in London and just as spry as ever. She began to make some tea and asked for my assistance. Like all Americans she expected me to be fussy about tea..but all I ask is hot and wet! We all sat around, Stan cross-legged on the floor, and talked about science fiction. Rorys collection was well laid out and she had some beautiful artwork. She is determinedly right-wing in her views and none loathe to tackle us all at once; she threw out a few challenging remarks with a gleam in her eye. But we all looked at her affectionately and refused to be drawn. She has such a zest for life, it is impossible to remember her age. When I said I had never seen a muu-muu (the Hawaiian dress) she put on. It is a shapeless garment, rather like a nightshirt and very popular because of its coolness. When I asked if I could photograph her wearing it, she dauntlessly went outside so that I could do so.

We returned Stan to his home where he gave me a silver dollar as a memento. Then Bob gave us a tour of LA. I could see now that it was one vast suburb that stretched for miles. We stopped at a restaurant called the Hot-n-Tot and I felt very proud to prance in with three such fine fellows. After this Bob decided to show us his home, and this turned out to be a very beautiful place. I have rarely seen a more well thought out decor and layout. His parents made me welcome and kindly showed me round when they saw I was interested. They nearly lost me in the pink bathroom it was so gorgeous!

On our way back to Downey Bob took us to the top of a hill so that I might see the lights of LA - there they were for miles upon miles. As I gazed down I was seized by a feeling of unreality--this couldn't be me sitting here, and I wondered if it would be later when I got home that I would be able to grasp that it had all really happened. Well: now I can think back and see myself in that car; but I cannot remember if I thanked Bob sufficiently for such a wonderful day. I had caught a cold from Dian(who had the convention cold--you know the one we nearly all go home with) but I cannot remember ever having a cold and paying it so little attention. Why for hours on end I had barely noticed that I had one!



Monday September 10th 21st Day

We were all up early for Len and I were bound for Disneyland. Anna was to drive us there, after she had visited the Doctor. She had asked if she might bring me to see his consulting rooms; and her Doctor had agreed to this. It was quite a fair sized building. The main waiting lounge was spacious and tastefully laid out; there was a counter for the receptionist, and we did not have to wait long. We were led into a narrow corridor and along to the Doctor's consulting room. He was very welcoming and said it was a pleasure to show me round. He added that he was proud of the facilities he had to show. From this corridor there led off many rooms - a small operating room, many different rooms for patient examinations, a full X-Ray unit, and a developing room. In another part of the building was a fully equipped pharmacy. In effect what I was seeing was a small scale hospital; no wonder he was proud.

We all met at Disneyland at 10am, the time of opening. On our arrival I found Bruce, Dian, Ted and Jack. We were joined later by Fred Patten who gave me a miniature flag of California. In front of me I could see a long row of turnstiles with people already queuing. I had been given a special reduced entry card by Len. You buy a book of 'Adventures'; the book I received held 20. As you went on each Adventure, you handed over a ticket, thus saving forever having to pay out cash. Inside, I found myself looking at Mickey Mouse waving gaily to all who entered. "Have your photograph taken with him" urged Bruce...and I have this before me as I write, a souvenir from Bruce.

I was lucky in my going to Disneyland; I was with a bunch of people who loved it, who accepted its illusions uncritically, and entered into the spirit of fantasy and make-believe. I should have hated to have gone in the company of anyone with a cynical turn of mind! Yet, there is an atmosphere present which makes it difficult to be cynical; for nothing could be gayer or more faithfully produced than Main Street through which we first walked. Lined by trees and shops, filled by holiday-dressed Americans, patrolled by horse-trams and coaches of every kind, flanked by 1890 buildings of a painstaking reproduction, it immediately conjured up a holiday mood such as I have not experienced since childhood.

Bruce, I discovered, was the expert on Disneyland, and thanks to his guidance we covered an amazing amount of sight-seeing without fatigue and with the minimum loss of time. In Main St. we looked at the Upjohn Pharmacy, built in the style of 1880. This was really a museum, a typical exhibit being a wood and paper microscope, still in good working order, built in 1700. From the enticing shops here, we set off for Adventureland. There we embarked upon the Jungle Cruise; this was in small canopied boats, which took us through jungle-lined banks upon whose trees and plants the sun beat a realistic adding touch. On the banks we could see a native village; in the clearing sunken ruins of an ancient lost city, with a great stone face rising out of the water. There was a group of elephants, with a small baby one squirting water. I had great difficulty believing that these were all mechanical figures; when our boat passed through a crowd of bathing hippos, and one yawned immediately in front so that our guide whipped out a pistol and fired a shot at it, I had no difficulty in feeling an authentic thrill. This was a beautiful ride, particularly as our boat passed beneath the Schwitzer Water Falls, and I looked forward to the next thing with mounting expectation.

This was Frontierland; they decided the best way to see this was to take a trip in the MARK TWAIN steamboat. From this we had a panoramic view of Tom Sawyer's Island which appeared to be alive with children, the Indian village, Fort Wilderness, and best of all, the sight of children having the time of their lives with log rafts. After this we took a train-ride to Fantasyland; and I began to have some idea of the vastness of this place.

I just loved Fantasyland. We passed through the gateway of Sleeping Beauty's castle into what looked like all the story books rolled up into one. I wanted to go on all the Fantasyland Adventures, and indeed there were not many that I missed. Typical of them all were two: Storybook Land and Peter Pan's Flight. The first was by canal boat on which were perched pretty girls as guides dressed in what I thought of as Swiss costume. Our guide had a lovely voice; it was a delight to listen as we wended our way past Pinocchio's village at the foot of the Swiss Alps, Mr Toad's house, and Cinderella's dream castle. This was a peaceful ride, the minatures before us were a story come true. I had no difficulty responding to the dreamy voice saying.. "Now children Mr Toad must be entertaining Mr Rat to tea, for there is his boat" ..the little boat rocked gently in the water, and I could easily visualise the cups of tea and the plummy fruit cake. Peter Pan's Ride was, as so many of them were, built on the principal of the Ghost Train ride at ordinary carnivals. Here, however, they were built with real imagination. Our carriage was a pirate galleon, brightly coloured with full sail, and as we entered there was an immediate sensation of flying through the night! We swooped over London and to my amazement I could see below me Tower Bridge, then on to Pirate Island with the pirates firing up at us, over the fairy lights, and then through Never-Never land - till we came out blinking into the sun and filled with exhilaration.

I tried them all - in Mr Toad's car for his 'wild ride', in a caterpillar through Alice-in-Wonderland, in Dumbo the flying elephant high above the crowds, and in a teacup at the Mad Hatters Party with three of the boys wheeling madly at the centre in an effort to make our cup go round in its saucer faster than anyone else's! For something to eat we entered a pirate ship full size and authentic from the crow's nest downwards. Inside however was an efficient cafeteria service; with our trays we went through, past a squaking parrot in a cage, to walk the plank to a small island dotted with tables. One of the pleasantest meals in my memory, and oh how I enjoyed the sun!

Our next visit was to Tomorrowland, there we travelled by Rocket to the Moon. We sat in seats around a circular space; when the lights were dimmed and the sounds of takeoff began, a film was shown on this of the earth receding. It was all pretty realistic, although Len said he had seen better. In Tomorrowland we also went a tour by Monorail. Bruce made sure that I had a window seat in the front so I had a marvellous view. We also went the bobsled run on the Matterhorn mountain which was the most breathtaking of all; it ended in a great splash through a 'glacier' lake. It was less thrilling on the flying saucers, but more fun. I sat in the middle of my flying saucer which had a rubber edge. On the special flooring beneath were many round holes and through this came compressed air. All you had to do was lean to one side to go skimming across the surface and head for the one you wanted to bump.

My favourite here was the submarine ride. Through my porthole I looked out onto all the beauty of the sea, plus some of the seas' legends. There were sunken wrecks with jewels spilling out of heavily bound cases, mermaids combing their hair, a fight between an octopus and a huge fish, and last touch of all - a gigantic sea-serpent.

Among the many other things we did that day was visit an exhibit-The Art of Animation; how I wished that ATOM was with me then! Apart from a history of animation, there were many fascinating displays of how Disney films are made. Right at the end of the hall was a screen showing TEN THOUSAND DALLATIONS; the scene was of the dogs watching television. I became caught up in its spell and had to drag myself away with the remembrance of time passing all too quickly.

We left at closing time in the company of vast crowds streaming homewards. I realised that I had rarely in my life spent such an enchanting day..yet it was not ended! The indomitable Bruce was determined that I should see the famous Knetts Berry Farm and visit the Calico Mine there. I won't describe the history of this amazing place for Ella Parker has already done so, but I was frankly staggered to realise it was almost as big as Disneyland, and had a variety of sights to offer. The Calico Mine justified Bruce's insistence that I see it for it was most cleverly laid out. There were mechanical figures depicting the miners at work; in the dim light they looked very real indeed. As with all the guides I had seen that day - the whole affair was put over with deadpan seriousness - even to the suggestion that if the train didn't get through fast enough we might all be blown up by the dynamiting!

However we all emerged in one piece, I am glad to say, for our next port of call was the home of the Trimbles. We had phoned Bjo earlier from Disneyland using a special callbox which had a microphone instead of a receiver so that a group of people could speak at once. Bjo had survived that with admirable aplomb; and invited us all over for dinner. She led me out to the patio where I found Dian and Ted already in the swimming pool. Having a cold I did not join them though offered a costume; but I tested the water-it was lovely and warm. John was busily cooking steaks on the outdoor barbecue and there was the most gorgeous smell. Rick was waiting to join us so that when we sat down to the fortunately long table..we were ten in all! We all tucked into the steaks and pronounced them delicious. As usual there was salad on the side. I never ate so much salad at home..but then there was a world of difference between the tossed salads given to me by the Americans from the hunks of lettuce with a dismal piece of tomato inside which musters for salad over here. Ours always makes me want to say..no thank you..I am not a rabbit.

After the meal when we sat and talked(mostly about the conversation)I gradually discovered what was the familiar look which Bjo and John shared. They both have very mobile features; as they talked they did not just tell you - they acted it out. As this is a characteristic of my friend Frances Varley, no wonder I'd felt something familiar. They are both fascinating conversationalists; I was happy to just sit there and listen and admire Bjo's expressive face and hands. They also have a warm 'giving out' which embraces you and makes you feel a 'part' of their whole.

Too soon, too soon, the day ended.

Tuesday September 11th 22nd Day

Anna took me out driving to show me something of LA suburban life. We visited first a laundrette which was completely unattended and coin operated. Into a machine we dumped my, by now, rather grubby slacks. Whilst I had been out gadding the day before, Anna had kindly washed and ironed a blouse for me. Leaving the machine at work, Anna said she would take me across the road to the shop where Blue Chip coupons could be redeemed. And so--we drove across the road--thus letting me see that it is really true that Americans do not even walk across the road!

Blue Chip and Green Shield stamps were given away with everything; in fact the give-away element in American life did my heart good. Once, when in the company of Rick, I had gone into a store to buy a pack of cigarettes (200 for 1 dollar..did I ever smoke!) and was approached by a salesman as I lifted out a pack. He offered me another brand and gave me a spiel on its better quality. Then he clinched the deal by saying that if I took his brand I could have a dozen bottles of Coca-cola free. How Rick laughed as I hastily put back the first pack. This Blue Chip shop had every kind of goods available from a linen sheet to a television set.

After collecting my laundry we went to the main shopping centre; this was one of the big supermarkets which I had been oying longingly for some time. Here I was able to buy a few needed pieces of clothing and admire the tremendous amount of choice available. On our way home Anna took me a small tour of the residential area; she was very knowledgeable about the fashions in housing styles. Apparently the most sought after thing is to have your house of stucco decorated to look like red brick, or wood or any other material at all. This rather croggled me as I thought of the rows of dreary red brick buildings that stand row upon row in London; and how many folk there pay good money to have them covered with stucco! We gradually came upon the wealthier houses which are architect built; many of them were truly lovely, my favourites always being the low Mexican (or is it Spanish) style. But, as Anna would point out, some of them went crazy with the amount of decoration they slapped on the basic house. When I ventured the phrase "everything but the kitchen sink" Anna nodded vigorously.

I was glad of this time alone with Anna for till then I had been the kind of guest seen in the morning and not again till night! She really took trouble to see that I got a good view of the neighbourhood, pointing out the lovely schools and taking me in to see the efficient library system. We returned to the house for lunch, after which Anna suddenly presented me with an unusual heavy chain necklace. It made me feel happy to know that she still felt kindly of me at the end of my hectic visit to them. They had also given me a large pile of pocketbooks, but Len insisted on posting these to lighten my load.

Our next visit was to the home of Forry Akerman - for no visit to LA would be complete without seeing this famous home. The first thing I noted was the well-known initials FJA on the wall of the house; a spotlight trained upon this and the figure of a black cat set in the lawn. Forry hurried out to greet us. As I went in my eyes flew automatically to the walls--I could not see them..they were so thickly covered with bookshelves and artwork! Next, my eyes lighted upon a group of miniature robots and flying saucers: my first remarks were.."Oh, I'd like to play with these!" Then, and only then, did I notice that Bjo was there with Al Lewis. Bjo said "None of them are working,

Forry lets all the kids of the neighbourhood play with them, so they get busted!" Forry gave his sheepish and goodnatured grin. Then I was being introduced to Ann Chamberlain a long-time correspondent, who embraced me with glee. She had such a kind face; Bjo had been telling me the previous night of how generous Ann always was, and this had confirmed my impression of her. Forry conducted me on a grand tour of the house, although I think museum would be a better word, for the whole of it is dedicated to science fiction and fantasy.

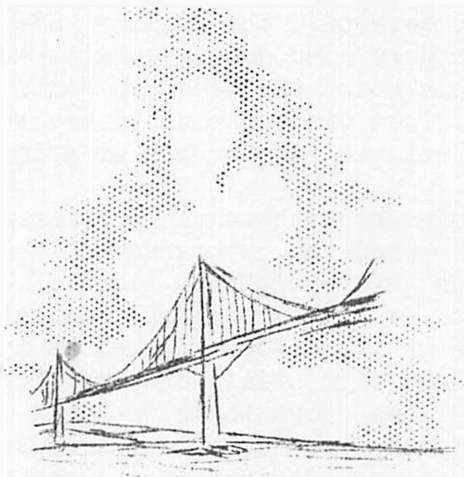
Every inch of wall space is covered; on my way round I found that my eyes could only take in every third or fourth object, on the way back I saw a new lot! The ground floor has three rooms leading on from each other, all packed. If at first sight it seemed just packed; I have noticed with interest, that I remember seeing the rows of magazines with each first edition placed carefully forward to show its cover. There is a short staircase up to the second floor at the top of which Forry showed me the portraits of his Grandparents whose home this was originally. There were two bedrooms, the smaller made ready for the coming of the Willises; its walls were also decorated with art work and posters. This made me ask-"Is the whole house the same?" Forry showed me the other bedroom and there, for the first time, one could see the house beneath the museum. Even here, however, science fiction was creeping around the edges!

On our way out to the garage we passed through the kitchen and I remarked that it appeared untouched. Forry grinned and opened the cupboards--no pans met my gaze--but stacks of fanzines! The famous garage with its lines of library stacks had been the object all summer of two young boys who had set it in order. Away at the back were some stacks as yet untouched and, as I looked at the piles of unsorted papers, magazines, film stills etc, my fingers itched to get at the pile myself. I envied these boys their task; it must have been fun wondering what would come next--as good as a treasure hunt!

We all went out for dinner, and on our return Anna decided to go home as she was feeling tired. She was gone before I completely realised that this was the last time I should see her. I was to leave for San Francisco that night. As always, events were moving too fast for me to assimilate them. In came Daugherty..and they informed me that this was the man who was getting Forry organised by building him a desk and work area. I had already admired this business-like element in the midst of fantasy. Daugherty began to talk to me about Forry, whilst Forry stood with a deprecating smile upon his face. "Do you realise" said Daugherty, "that this man puts out a magazine single-handed? I've never seen such concentration as his..there I am hammering on wood at his ear, the phone rings all the time, kids are in and out asking Please Mr Akerman can I play with your robot..and all he does is keep his head down, pound away at the typewriter and say yes to everything!" His description of the children running in and out all day collecting stamps from Forry's mail, borrowing magazines, and playing with the models, made me smile Bjo added:"He drives every secretary he's had mad!" Forry stood and listened to this, the smile remained unchanged, and his air of good humour was genuine. I felt that I was looking at a dedicated man; and that beneath this good nature there could be a quiet ruthlessness. Forry must have always listened to what folks said..and then went ahead and did his own way. He gave me a copy of his record MUSIC FOR ROBOTS. When I asked if he would sign it, he did not just scribble his name upon it, but went off with it to his desk. When he brought it back it was inscribed DEAR ETHEL YOUR WINNING TAFF WAS MUSIC TO OUR EARS. HOPE YOU'VE AN IRON CONSTITUTION WHEN LISTENING TO THIS. STEEL YOURSELF!FORRY. Which is a typical Forry gesture of kindness.

The time came for me to head for the Greyhound depot. We drove Ann home first; I said goodbye knowing that our short meeting would make our correspondence much richer in the future. With me now were Bjo, Rick, Len, and Al. We checked in my luggage; then went to a nearby doughnut shop. This was a coffee shop which specialised in all types of doughnuts. I had a hard time choosing which flavour as they were all so delicious and fresh.

We were having a wonderful time together - yet time was marching on in its horrible way; I had the awful feeling of grasping at something that was slipping out of my fingers. Then I was sitting in the bus..peering out the window at Bjo, at Rick, at Len..Al..another glimpse of Bjo..and they were gone. I felt numb that it should all be over so quickly.



Wednesday September 12th 23rd Day

My bus left LA at 12.15pm, and I slept soundly all the way, awakening only when we stopped at Modesta for breakfast. In San Francisco I was met by Karen Anderson, Walter Breen, and Andy Main. Karen was to take we three on a sight-seeing tour. We drove first to the harbour and visited an old sailing ship called the BALCHUTHA. This had been built in Scotland and was filled with interesting items of the old whaling days. After this we visited a famous spot in San Francisco - Fishermans Wharf. The harbour was filled with brightly coloured fishing boats making a picturesque scene. There were many stalls to tempt tourists such as myself, nor did I come way empty-handed-but treated myself to a ring of abalone pearl. We went for lunch to a Japanese restaurant there, where I was delighted with the kimono-wearing Japanese waitress. As is the custom, she cooked our food on a brazier at the side of the table.

Then began our tour of San Francisco; Karen explained that the city had mapped out a scenic route which gave a circular tour. This breathtakingly beautiful drive showed me the loveliest city I've ever seen. I was lucky again as this was a day of splendid sunshine; as we drove over the Golden Gate Bridge I could see that it really was golden from the rays of the sun. This city is built on a hill; at its foot lies a sweeping bay of blue with the Golden Gate at one end, and Alcatraz(looking like an ancient castle)perched in the middle. No wonder all around is called the Bay Area..for this scene meets the eye

countless times as you sweep up and down the streets and never fails to draw a quick breath of admiration. One of the places where we halted was the Californian Palace of the Legion of Honour where we saw a good display of the works of Rodin. Outside the gates stood two stone lions; when I asked Karen to pose for a photograph, she quickly clambered upon a lion and posed gracefully. She said to "alter and Andy.." "Come on up and get taken too!" With Walter looking rather dubious, and Andy amused they got up and I'm happy to say it has come out fairly well.

Nearly everyone has seen photographs of the steep streets of San Francisco but this has to be travelled to be fully realised. You are driving along when suddenly the car in front dips completely out of sight..you know that here comes another sudden descent which will look too fantastic to negotiate! Yet Karen drove calmly along with her hands resting so lightly upon the wheel, sometimes even removing one hand to point out a beauty spot. She even took us down the Crookedest Street in the world..Lombard St. As I sit here looking at a postcard showing its steep and hair-pin bends, I wonder how I managed to sit there without closing my eyes! It was a wonderful tour and will remain long in my memory.

Towards late afternoon I discovered myself becoming drowsy; with a quick look Karen noticed this and suggested we adjourn to her home for tea. This was also on a hill and I saw that she had to be a superb driver just to get in and out of there every day. Karen said that the whole hill was built upon, but in such a way as to hide each house from the others this explained the sudden and sharp bends. It was a lovely house, low and rambling with a fountain playing out at the back, and a cat sunning itself at the front door. After a wash and some tea..I felt like a new woman again.

From there Karen drove me to the home of Bill Donaho. Here was a different house entirely, a bachelor establishment in the grand manner. Everything was gloriously untidy and comfortable. Bill welcomed me in and gave me a letter from Don Fitch. It said that Don had missed the LASTAS pun jar and the enclosed was to add to it. The enclosed was a five dollar bill! Before I had got my breath back from this lovely surprise, and with barely time to say "hello" to Norman Metcalf..Bill whisked Karen and I off as it was his intention to take us out to dinner.

We went to a Chinese Restuarant whose sudden quiet I found soothing. I remember this as a friendly unhurried meal with interesting talk and mild hilarity over the fortunes found in the Fortune Cookies..YOU WILL NEVER KNOW HUNGER..ho, ho, laughed Bill..HE THINKS THAT HE COULD EASILY WIN YOUR HEART ..now that could bust up a fine dinnerdate..THE ONLY ROSE WITHOUT THORNS IS FRIENDSHIP. Indeed, and indeed..there were no thorns that night. On our return to Bill's house we found the joint jumping. There was Joe and Robbie Gibson, Alva and Sid Rogers, Pat and Dick Ellington with their daughter and many more. I had a marvellous time and remember talking nineteen to the dozen..but when I try to recall details this part of the evening blurs in my mind and I mix it up with the evening I spent at the Trimbles. So that I cannot recall which evening it was that two fans kindly went out and got bulbs for my camera.

I can remember Bill sitting placidly whilst little Poopsie Ellington clambered all over him. I tried to photograph this but in my excitement forgot to roll on the film so spoiling a wonderful shot. I can remember the excited look that comes into Bill's eyes during a discussion. I have a picture of the kindly interest in Alva's face as I talked to him. I discovered that Joe and Roberta were as frank and forthright as their magazine. Bill kept bagpipe

records going to "make me feel at home". There was a lovely hubbub of talk and it was with amazement that I heard Karen say goodnight..so quickly had the time passed.

It was time too for the Ellingtons to go. I then realised that all those folks had to go to work the next day, and thought how good it was of them to throw this midweek party for me regardless. I was to stay with the Ellingtons, so went with them. They tried to persuade me to stay and come in later but I knew it was late enough for folks who had to go to work. So, much as I had enjoyed the party, I went off into the cool night air with them. By then Poopsie was asleep, I shared her room..and it did not take me long to join her.



Thursday September 13th 24th Day

Pat and Dick lived in the ground-floor of a 3-storey house with a large back yard in which Dick keeps one of his three cars. He has, I gather, a passion for picking up second-hand bargains! Pat starts work early whilst Dick finished late; this works out very well as Dick can take Poopsie to the nursery where she spends the day, and Pat can collect her in the afternoon. So, when I got up it was to find Pat gone and Dick and Poopsie breakfasting. There was a feeling of real freedom in this home; the door was never locked, I at once felt at home, and quite naturally headed for the teapot! I discovered that it was built with a strainer which delighted me(my friends the Varleys would not have liked it of course, I darkly suspect them of chewing the tealeaves); I have always loathed getting a tealeaf in my mouth. I was strongly tempted to pop this teapot into my suitcase.

After ~~out~~ many years in OMPA together I felt I knew Dick well; we had no difficulty in finding many topics to discuss. He had much of the detached and humorous view of life that I had liked in Don Wollheim. When he left, heading for the nursery, I took the opportunity to wash my hair. This was something that I had been trying to do since leaving Chicago; but always there had been more exciting things on the horizon! It was with a real sense of achievement that I finished this chore-the air was warm and it dried quickly.

I went to find a telephone box to ring up Miriam and Jerry Knight who had

the previous evening, offered to escort me that day. I found a box but then ran into trouble. I was doing something wrong though I could not discover what; there is no button B to recover your money if the call does not go through..I quickly used up all my 10 cent pieces. Getting change, this time I rang the operator, explained my predicament, and she kindly put me through. Miri, I could tell at once, was in the throes of a nasty cold. When I said that, considering this, I could manage fine to amuse myself, she would not hear of it; shortly after she and Jerry appeared in their car. They took me first to a music shop as I was after a particular record wanted by a friend. This was in the University district as the many book shops seemed to indicate. When we went to a small self-service place for lunch-I made a note of the prices-Burger on French bread 55 cents.Salad 5 cents.Tea 10 cents-and I assure you it was a mighty filling meal.

Miri called in at her Wells Fargo Bank and I picked up a leaflet describing the TV program sponsored by the Bank called SCIENCE IN ACTION. This featured such programmes as OXYGEN THERAPY,PHYSICS IN ACTION, and LEARNING MACHINES.

That evening we drove to the University of California where we had been invited to dinner by Joe Gibson. We went to the Students Union. This was built by the students and alumni "without the use of a single tax or state dollar" an event of which they were all proud. It housed "the whole social, recreational, and cultural life of the students". It held beautiful lounges, a ballroom, meeting rooms, games rooms, an art activities centre, a bowling alley, and quiet rooms for studying. I saw shoeshine stalls, snack bars, a whole store at which practically anything could be bought at low prices; but I was most impressed by the large amount of space devoted to the art activities room. Here students could embark upon projects that would have been impossible at home or in the classroom.

Miri and I went off to the Ladies Room and discovered that a room led off this furnished with divans complete with pillows and blankets. This was labelled QUIET ROOM! We were also puzzled for a little by some unusual-looking toilets, till we figured out that they were especially designed for the use of paraplegic students! We all met up and our crowd turned into the Gibsons, the Knights, Pat Ellington with Poopsie, and Calvin Demmon. Calvin had a cold also which, I think, made him more solemn than I had expected. Both he and the Gibsons were working at the University; they described to us the natural chaos that was reigning due to it being the start of a new session at the University. Pat appeared awfully young to be the mother of Poopsie, and she was obviously enjoying the outing.

Joe led the way into the canteen; although that seems a very dim name for such a magnificent layout. The self-service was handling a large amount of people; I have never got through this type of service so quickly before. I could see that the layout had been well planned to facilitate a quick service. I wish now that I had made notes of just how this was done! There were no holdups whilst someone dithered about, or waited for their order; this was quite amazing to me. In no time at all we were through. One reason for the quickness was the service tables. From these you collected such things as napkins, cutlery, sauces(a large variety)sugar, in fact all the staple items. As there were many of these tables this helped to eliminate congestion on the service line. We carried our trays over to the table; there was no need to look round for a place to stow them-you ate off the tray. When finished these were carried to a conveyer belt which whisked them off to the kitchen. I craned my neck to watch this and Joe declared.."We almost lost her there!"

Joe told me the University had seven campuses, and they showed me around one of them. It was large and very pleasant, with green grass swards, and a running stream. We came to the tall Campanile Tower which they informed me was now closed off to prevent students jumping from it! The problem of student suicides appears to be universal at all Universities. Roberta and Joe had to leave after this but it was fine getting this opportunity to meet them. Rick had described Joe to me as "tough as nails; yet with real artistic feeling" and, as usual, Rick's description cannot be beaten. Both Roberta and Joe have a quick no-nonsense way of speaking that does not completely conceal two very kind hearts.

We others then returned to the home of the Ellingtons, shortly after Bill Donaho joined us thus completing another fine fannish gab session. Poopsie showed me her collection of unusual stones. Some of them were as beautiful as jewels. She wanted to give me some and I selected a small amount. However when I unpacked my case later I kept finding more and more; so I guess she decided that I hadn't taken enough! When I asked Poopsie how she had enjoyed her day at the nursery she replied.. "They hurt my feelings: they made me go back to my cot." So I gathered that there was an enforced afternoon rest.

Later we all piled into cars and went off to meet the Willises who were arriving that evening. They were travelling in the opposite direction from me, so it was lucky that I managed to get a meeting point. At last I had the opportunity to say "Welcome" to them. They were both bubbling over with the grand time they'd had visting Seattle. They now looked much more relaxed although a little tired from the journey. We all escorted them to the home of the Knights where they were to stay. Miri hospitably made coffee and we all tried to talk at once. Still..tomorrow was another working day so we did not stay too late.

Poopsie
Ellington



Friday September 14th 25th Day

The Knights called round for me in their car as they had kindly included me in their day with the Willises. We set off for the centre of San Francisco, Jerry and Walt in front, and we three females seated at the back. On our way Walt turned round to me and said: "Ethel, do you ever get the feeling that you are dreaming?" "My goodness, yes" I replied warmly, with the sudden realisation that here were two people who were feeling in somewhat the same daze as myself. It was good to be shocked out of it a bit by Walt's remark, although my first thought was of the way time was rushing past. In the town centre Walt pointed out, as I had noticed, how many pretty women were to be seen; I also admired how smartly they were dressed. I saw that the latest fashion was to wear a nylon net bonnet over the hair to protect it from the wind. I liked this so much I bought one, but have never had the nerve to wear it at home but once.

Jerry parked the car midtown in a spiral-type carpark, the car was driven up a ramp. When we got out at the 7th floor we had a magnificent view of the city. We walked through Chinatown; I thought this much prettier than in New York. Strung across the streets were bright lanterns and flags, the buildings were all Chinese-style--as was even the telephone boxes! There were shops, restaurants and bazaars galore; we were forever losing Madeleine who kept falling in love with a Chinese dress. They were all very expensive so I hope she eventually found one. We all wanted to have a cable car ride and it was indeed an exhilarating experience. We managed to get an outside seat and bounced happily down the steep hill to Fisherman's Wharf. There Miri had meant to take us to a wholesale warehouse; I had been whetting Madeleine's appetite for this by describing one they had taken me to the day before. In these places things were really dirt cheap, and I had a lovely wickerwork suitcase bought for two dollars to prove it. When we got to the warehouse we found it was being picketed by union members. "Well," said Miri, after consulting with Jerry, "I have never crossed a picket-line in my life, but after all you are visitors and..I dunno!" Walt said sensibly: "Let's ask them what they are picketing for first". So over he and they went, whilst I was content to abide by their decision. I was pretty sure anyway that they would decide not to go in, and so it was. So we walked on to Fisherman's Wharf and visited the shops there instead. We found some stalls at which I lingered; they were selling baby alligators that looked real cute, and guanas, and turtles. There was also a sign offering to post live seahorses, but when I asked Jerry about this, he gave it as his opinion that it was a swindle. We went back up on the cable car, after first watching it being swung round on the turntable. Coming out of the carpark was almost like going down Lombard St again! Going back over the Bay Bridge we got caught in a traffic jam. The Americans sure do everything in a big way--even their traffic jams are the biggest!

We met Bill, Calvin, Pat, and Poopsie and all went off for dinner together. For my last meal I chose a Turkey sandwich and Stawberry cake. A sandwich, of course, is a wrong name altogether for the huge plate of turkey with trimmings and bread on the side which I tackled...indeed before the end Bill had to help me out. We passed round postcards to send to London and Liverpool fandom which had a picture of the Bay with Alcatraz prison. This had WISH YOU WERE HERE messages signed by us all. Not to be outdone Walt produced one for Irish fandom too. I was feeling both gay and sad during that meal..gay with the good

company, and sad at the thought that I soon had to leave.

They all came to the bus depot with me. I sent my large case ahead and was ready to travel light. This was another leavetaking with the anguished knowledge that there still was so much to be said. We milled around; Poopsie was excited among all the crowds and bustle, and I felt suddenly as if I were isolated and cut off. I got into the queue resignedly. Just as it moved forward Walt leaned over to me and said quietly.. "I'm proud of you, Ethel". So, after all, I went off in a warm glow, and sat contentedly behind the driver. Still feeling happy, I watched the lights go flashing by, we swept through Sacramento at 10.30pm where I saw the Californian Capitol State Building floodlit. Its golden dome seemed to float through the air and then I must have floated off to sleep.



Saturday September 15th 26th Day

I awoke with a start at midnight to find we had stopped at a place called Colfax. We were, I found, in the Sierra Mountains at a height of 2421 feet. All I could see was an unattended railway crossing with a flashing red light and a warning bell. In a short while a Southern Pacific train passed by. At 2am we drove through Reno and immediately I could see that we were now in Nevada the state where gambling is free. At the posthouse the walls were lined with 'one-armed bandits' at which many people were playing. I wildly tried one 10¢ piece and when this did not turn up the jackpot went for a cup of tea. I doubt Ron Ellik would have been disgusted with me! The stop at Reno was short but the bus drove right through the town. It was so brightly lit with neon signs that it appeared clear as day; despite the time there were many people on the streets. On the outskirts I goggled at the lights of a club called the Golden Nuggett-this had a huge sign showing a prospector and three dancing girls. I dozed off and on for the rest of the night awakening now and then to gaze at the lights as they whizzed by.

We stopped at 8am in Elko where for one dollar I breakfasted on fruit juice, eggs and bacon, potatoes and tea. From there the countryside became very flat and sad-looking, the road stretched for miles with only scrubby-looking grass to be seen. There were some hills on the horizon and it all looked very like a Western movie--it is at times like this that you begin to

appreciate the vastness of America. I also began to have some inkling of why Americans consider they can't do a European country in a few days; of why their emphasis has so often been on what was big. I realised that, when they visualised their country, they thought of a continent; at this so much about them that had puzzled me became clear.

Salt Lake and the entrance to the city looked very drab. However when I walked out I found myself in a beautiful city. It is set in a valley bounded by hills; the streets are broad and Salt Lake City has a feeling of great spaciousness. The sun was shining, giving me 90 degrees of heat, so I wandered happily in the direction of a large shopping centre. In the sun all the colours seemed so much brighter; as it was a Saturday the shops were busy and I looked at the people around me with curiosity. The women wore very little or no makeup and yet they were all smartly dressed; I wondered if this had anything to do with the Mormon religion. I went to Temple Square, this is a ten acre block in the heart of the city in which is housed a museum, the Tabernacle, and the Temple. In the museum I found some interesting relics, such as the plow (as it was spelt) that turned over the first acre in Salt Lake Valley. A guided tour went round every 20 mins so I joined the one just starting. Our guide was a young man with a frank yet earnest expression; he carried with him a microphone which he could plug in everywhere. His first stop was at a monument to a seagull and, after casually plugging the microphone into the base, he told us about it. The first harvest in the valley, he said, in 1848 had been threatened by a plague of crickets. When the pioneers could not get rid of this, they prayed for help, and a crowd of seagulls arrived to eat up the crickets and so save the harvest.

The building that interested me most was the Tabernacle. Although built in the 18th century of timber and sandstone, it stood 80 feet high, had a huge dome roof and could seat 8,000 people. Its acoustic qualities are famous; a pin dropped near the pulpit can be heard clearly at the opposite end of the auditorium 200 feet away. All the timber for this building was hauled to the valley by ox-teams. The choir is famous by way of many broadcasts. Our guide said that although they were not present we would be able to hear them..immediately the Tabernacle was filled by the unmistakable sound of a first class choir. A tape-recorder of course, but it was a nice surprise. As I came away I saw people beginning to come in for the evening organ recital which is open to the public. I should have liked to have stayed but my bus left at 9pm.

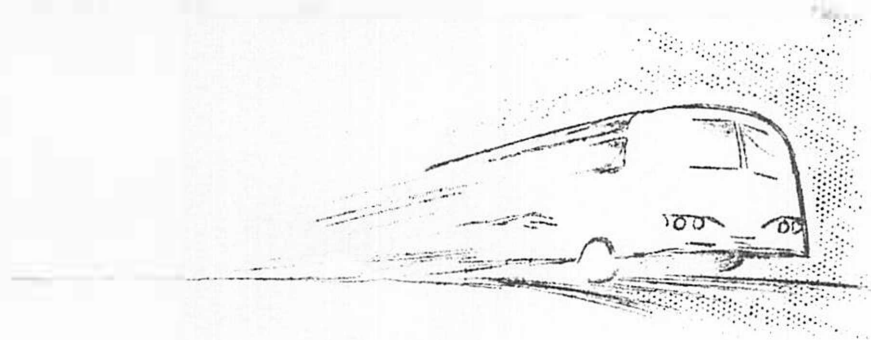
For about an hour I sat admiring the driver's skill as he sped over a winding and curving road in the darkness. There were few lights, we were now moving into Wyoming; I could just see that our road ran between a mountain range on the right and a National Park on the left before I fell asleep.

Sunday September 16th 27th Day

We arrived at Cheyenne at 7am. I felt in a foul temper as I opened my eyes! the posthouse was merely a waitingroom, we appeared to be at the back of a railway station, and I suddenly hated Greyhound buses! I grumped my way along a dusty street and went into what I mentally termed a poky little cafe. There I worked my way through a substantial breakfast. On coming out I surveyed the land and decided I would forgive Greyhound for it being 7am, and for showing me what must have been the drabbest part of Cheyenne. I poked my head into the station and was rewarded by seeing a stage coach on display which had been used to make trips from Colorado. I then got a timetable from the posthouse and re-boarded the bus.

Soon I made the sickening discovery that I had got my times all wrong. I was not to arrive in New York until the Tuesday morning instead of the Monday as I had been told. Somehow I would have to contact Elsie and warn her as she had arranged to meet me. Glumly I looked out at the landscape and saw that it was again flat and wide, and with many fields of grain. We passed through North Platte the home of Buffalo Bill; the driver told us that this was the road along which had gone the old Pony Express. I began to sleep a lot. The sight of the road rolling out ahead became wearisome; although I knew that my low spirits were due to worry about how to contact Elsie. When we stopped at a small place called Grand Island I battled bravely with the telephone operator to find out the Wollheim number - and emerged victorious in time to rush back onto the bus.

Feeling more cheerful I sat up eagerly as we passed Boy's Town and wished I could see inside. I had to content myself with a postcard of the statue of the boy saying "He ain't heavy, Father..he's m' brother." At 10pm we came into Omaha, Nebraska. Here I found a large posthouse with all the amenities where I headed for the telephone and called Elsie. It was good to hear her voice and we quickly arranged to meet. After this I felt very light-hearted and looked out onto the lively city of Omaha with pleasure. This feeling remained when I again boarded the bus. When we crossed over the Missouri River and swept onto a freeway I felt as if I were in civilisation again! I reflected that the prairie would never do for me; though I added somewhat shamefacedly that my worriting tendencies had undoubtedly obscured its beauty for me that day. Still: I watched the neon lights with satisfaction and giggled to myself appreciatively at a restuarant sign saying.....
HIFTY PIFTY!



Monday September 17th 28th Day

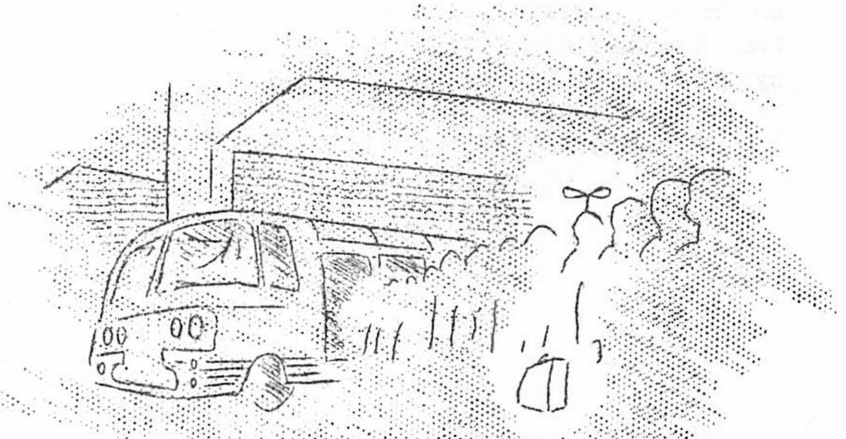
We stopped at Davenport for breakfast where I admired the white frame houses each with their own verandah. I found that I had slept through the state of Iowa and this was its last stop. We then crossed over the Mississippi River - which looked disappointingly like any other river. Here we started to fiddle around with the time. I put my watch on an hour obediently with no sure feeling that I was doing the right thing!

In Illinois now..I watched the children streaming to school and saw the large signs nearby adjuring the motorist to WATCH FOR THE KIDS! There seemed to be a great many funeral homes all built in a very grandiose style around this part. At a stop in Erie I saw the American flag waving in a breeze at the corner of the street; and a row of old men sitting on a bench in the sun. We swept past a huge Sears store..as large as a whole suburban shopping centre back home..with an equally big carpark for the shoppers.

I arrived in Chicago at 1pm. I had to get out of my bus which was taken away. To my dismay I found I would have to line up again. What a scramble! A solid mass shoved forward, not a queue. By this time however, I had the sense to hang back and wait for the second bus which would inevitably be put on. Sure enough, this appeared and, to my delight, I once again regained my seat at the front. Seasoned Greyhounder that I was I knew from here I would have a clear view, I could stretch my legs out into the passage, and be near enough to hear every word the driver said. This was a 'thru-express' bus which made the journey from Chicago to New York in 17½ hours.

As it drove out of Chicago I was thrilled to get a glimpse of the Pick-Congress hotel-and to think- I was there! I also saw the park which I had walked through so happily what seemed like such a long, long, time ago.

I had for my seat companion an elderly lady who beamed at me kindly and then went off to sleep. I promptly followed her example



Tuesday September 18th 29th Day

It was lovely to see Elsie again; she came driving up for me all smiles and welcome. First I had to tell her some bad news..my large case had not arrived, although the man at the counter had told me it would probably arrive that afternoon. Elsie drove me to her home and I told her all my adventures whilst we ate lunch. Later that afternoon we started to try to phone Greyhound. This turned out to be a very frustrating thing to do-between us we tried for nearly an hour before we got a reply. My case had not yet arrived! As I was due to fly out the following day at 2..I began to worry. I had no clothes but what I was wearing- a pair of short jeans, a thin blouse and a cardigan. Thank goodness, I thought feverishly, I had held on like grim death to my last travellers cheque.

I was very tired and when Don arrived home he found me pooped out on his sofa. With dinner I revived, and was much interested when Don showed me the slides he had taken of the Chicon, particularly some very good ones of the Art Show. After this however I began to get agitated again at the thought of my lost case. Although my mind agreed with Don's philosophical "You'll look back on this in a year's time as a great story to tell"..my emotions would not!

Don took pity on me and drove me back into town to Greyhound. Almost the first person I saw was my seat companion who was searching for her luggage! There was a large amount of people at the baggage counter bent on the same quest, I even went behind to look for myself..but to no avail..no case! By this time I was in a real stew and determined to go to the manager. His office was on the floor above and I headed for the stairs. Don took one look at my face, and prudently stayed behind! When I got into the manager's office I literally wept all over him..he listened very sympathetically, declared he had "always said we should tell people there can be these delays.."and took my home address. He promised that Greyhound would send my case onto Surbiton if it did not arrive before I left.

Having wiped away the last tear I came downstairs again to Don feeling all of a sudden as if I didn't give a damn (so that's what they meant in my psychology lectures about a release of tension!) and startled him with a smile. Indeed, and indeed I have cause to be grateful to Don that night. He drove me out, knowing full well that nothing could be accomplished but the giving to me of a feeling of having 'done something'. He had thought himself well home for the night and here he had instead a long drive with a well-nigh hysterical female--greater thing hath no fan done for another!

On our return Elsie packed me off to bed where I slept like an exhausted log on a bed that strangely stayed still.

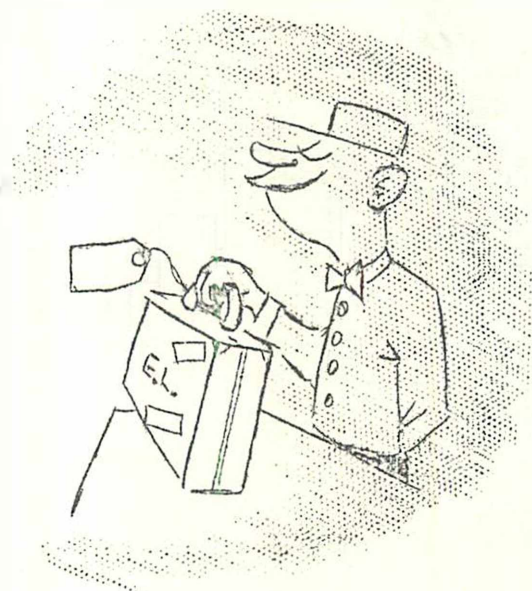
Wednesday September 19th 30th Day

On the dot of 9am I phoned Greyhound and gosh..wow..my case had arrived! Elsie drove me downtown and I was so pleased to see my case again I felt like kissing the man who handed it over. When I said so he replied.. he wouldn't mind that a bit! I had a quick-change of dress, and then we went out to the airport. I was feeling so deliriously happy at this last minute miracle that when the girl in the Icelandic Office said the flight had been postponed for a day --I didn't even turn a hair. I'd had my nervous breakdown for this year! It would have taken a great deal more than the complete upset of my homeward plans to shake me.

Elsie seemed to share my carefree mood and we went back to her home with laughter. I could have done all sorts of things that day in New York but, although I felt as gay as could be, I did not feel able to make any moves at all. For the rest of the day at odd intervals I would think...I must phone Pat...but I could not get up the energy to do even this much. I was content to sink into Elsie's routine which, in any case, I felt I had disturbed enough already. Her daughter Betsy was due home from school and she had many household chores to see after. I begged her to let me help and at last she consented to let me iron some handkerchiefs. This I did in her basement to the accompaniment of a local radio station. I was fascinated by the disc jockey's patter. I love ironing - it is so soothing and you can let your mind wander at will.

We spent a most comfortable evening listening to Betsy's talk of school and after she went to bed watched television. There was a 'spectacular' show on starring Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, and Dean Martin, three of my favourites which I enjoyed very much.

Well: maybe I could have spent that day dashing madly about New York doing and seeing all sorts of things....but I had enjoyed being a part of an American family, and I thought....what better way to get to know America than through the kindness and natural hospitality of an American family?



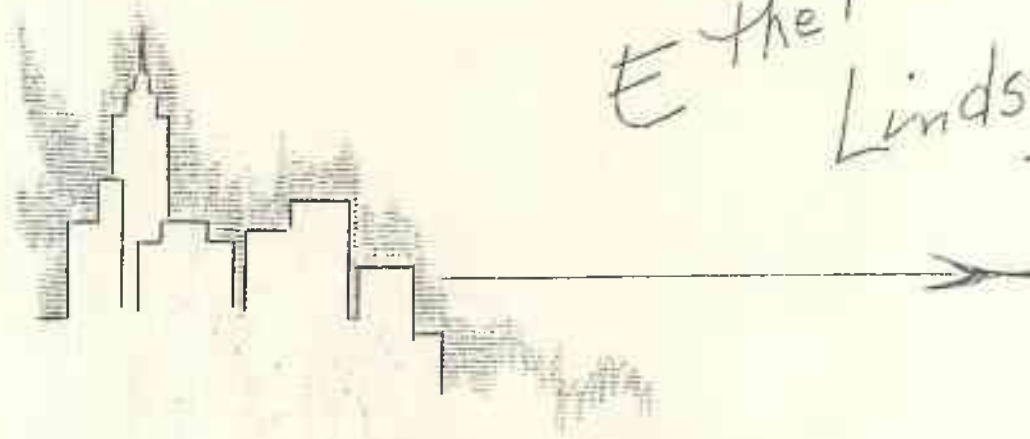
Thursday September 20th Last Day

Elsie again drove me to the airport. We had lunch together there and I sadly chose my last American dish - a pizza pie! Ordinarily I hate saying goodbyes and the many reiterated phrases that go with them; but even to the very end Elsie and I had things of interest to talk over. When we parted I knew that we could meet again in the future and take up comfortably from where we left off.

Although with that parting my American trip had ended I found myself still jotting down notes all the long way home till I arrived at London Airport at 2.15pm on the Friday. I even jotted down a final note in the car that took me from the airport to Courage House...."Dream-like from want of sleep or too much brandy!" One thing about airtravel-they feed you well!

I have relived my trip as I have written this and enjoyed it all over again. I have tried to let you know what it felt like; I hope you will forgive me if I have not always had the ability to do so. TAFF was conceived to promote friendship and understanding between fans of different nationalities and this it most certainly does. I can no longer think of America in abstract terms. When I hear people over here talking of America and Americans I can now often detect the preconceived ideas we all so often have of people and places that we have never seen but only heard about. Now when I think of America I think first of vastness..roads that roll on endlessly, horizons that stretch for miles. When I think of a small American town..I think of the row of old men sitting at Erie and the home in Albuquerque. When I think of Americans- I think of Pat and Dick, Elsie and Don, of Chrystal, of Anna, of Bill, of Poopsy - and when I think of the best in America - I think of the United Nations Building on the banks of the river in New York.

E the
Lindsay



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ONE DOLLAR or 7/6d. All proceeds to TAFF.

