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Here we go again and if I make this one I'll feel that I've managed to beat the dealing once and for all. I confess to crowding it many times and to doing the barest minimum that'll maintain my membership.

It has been a hectic year and an even more hectic winter, for the last few weeks I've thought that I MUST find an empty day and get off the eight pages for FAPA. Today, at work I made the solemn reserve, "Tonight I go home and start on it and spend every available minute until it's finished." The only doubt in my mind was as to whether I had two weeks or three to get it ready.

I got home about a half hour ago and one of the first things I did was check the deadline. It seems it's got to be in Calif in the next 7 days. It may not make sense and likely won't but I'm going to make the try!

The funny thing is that it never worried me in SAPS. I've been running the deadline for perhaps 10 years and never failed to make a mailing. But, then I'm used to doing it in SAPS.

So, here I sit, stencils, typer, a quarter bottle of seven crown & great determination.

Made another convention last weekend. Confusion 13 held in Ann Arbor, a supposedly very minor convention. Last year I was asked to be Fan GOH (and accepted). It was so minor that I had somewhat less than a month's notice (and I was one of the first to know). It was held in the Student Union, ran three days, etc. Lloyd Biggle was GOH. Again an example of quick, cheap planning. I joked about it at the time, saying that it had become customary to pay expenses for Guests & they figured they could get me for about \$1.50 in gas money and since Lloyd rode with me each day they could get two for the price of one.

In any case it was a most enjoyable affair and they started planning the second affair as soon as the first was over.

This year they invited Fred Pohl and offered to pay his expenses. The idea being that they would pay all expenses from the airport in Newark until he arrived back there. I had some reservations about this, expenses can be expensive and last year's top crowd was some 80 people. That's a chunk of money for eighty people to cover I'm happy to report that everything went beautifully and it turned out to be one of the best conventions in years.

A month before the con Gordie Dickson phoned about something else & mentioned that he expected to attend if he could get part of his backlog caught up. Then a couple of days before the con he called again & confirmed that he was definitely coming. A convention with 'ole Gordie can't fail!

So, I squeezed the post office a bit and talked them into giving me the weekend off. In the past there was been no real problem with this. On Saturday's I work a job that is semi-essential. It's not an important job but I'm the only one trained for the job that normally works on Saturday, consequently when I take off a Saturday they have to pay the regular man time and a half to replace me. The PO doesn't like

spending money but they'll do it once in a while. I get along good with the Supt of Mails and he realizes that such things are important to me.

As I explained it once ... "I've always had the weekend off when I need it, and I don't call in sick on Saturday, like your other employees." He understood the meaning and we had an un-official agreement.

Only the Supt had a heart attack early in Dec and we got a new one!

Luckily I get along well with this one too, so I asked and got the weekend off. I'd heard that the con would be opening up mid afternoon on Friday so I packed a few books to make expenses and showed up in Ann Arbor about 3 PM. People were wandering about the motel with badges - it looked like I'd misjudged the time. Hell, it looked like they already had eighty people. I got the hand truck out of the trunk and unloaded the paperbacks (and a few hard covers). A few people were already in the Huckster Room. I put 'em up on the table & the first customer handed me \$18.

Hot Damn! They must have something besides students this year, last year I didn't make much more than table rent! As the evening wore on various others came by and left money. I guess we closed up somewhere around eight O'clock and I'd already made more money than I expected to spend for the weekend.

Parties started rolling, Tom Claeson showed up, and we started a conversation on what significant materials were being published, then Hoe DeBolt of Albion College appeared, more pro talk got started -- now both of these are becoming important in research but they are also nice people! By this time the program has started, and we were spoke at by a gent from an Ann Arbor Research outfit. I've forgotten the name but the organization had been receiving wide spread publicity on laser research.

I'm not a technician, frankly I thought it would be boring and was The Chairman of the convention,

Somehow, Re Nagy, the Chairman of the convention had talked these people into sending over one of their top men he gave a talk on the work they are doing. Now, I'm not a technician and I expected to be lost from the start. There was a fair amount of technical information but this man was a good speaker and he managed to explain it and to make it interesting.

Very, very roughly they take these little grains from the ocean, hit 'em with a laser beam and convert them into hydrogen and oxygen, this produces hydrogen gas that can be burned (the oxygen will assist and produce power at a rate that's a considerable savings. For reasons of convenience and safety the company wants to convert this hydrogen to methane gas.

I have no desire to recall the little that I can recall and I'm sure I'd make errors but it does look workable and there is the definite evidence that Texas Oil & Gas has invested 30 million in the research.

It appears, to me, that the goddamn money grubbing oil companies don't spend money unless the chances are good. I have a feeling it's going to work, although it may take a while to get it producing.

So, it's interesting and I think it's gonna work.

That's two stencils down - it's 11.15, the whiskey is somewhat down and I'm still working at the stencils and whiskey.

Friday night produced a fine party The committee had hoped for 150 people, which would cover their expenses (hopefully) and they had provided sufficient beer and booze for the people.

It was early morning, things had quieted down, the fans had finally left the con suite ... the fans were gone and so was the booze

Saturday morning would see a new trip to the likker store, membership was somewhere around 250. an amazing lot of people had already shown up. There was heavy representative of students, then a crowd showed up from Chicago, a few flew in from Baltimore, (Baltimore ?) Joe Haldeman (& Gay) wandered in from Iowa, (Iowa ?). Damn if Lou Tabakow didn't bring a crowd from Cincinnati!

The convention was growing. Fred Pohl was circulating, Dickson had arrived from Minneapolis, Yang, the Terrible had convinced the Dorsai and they wandered the motel, robbing and raping!

The convention was shaping up!

Somewhere about this time I shuddered at the pillage and sneaked out, crawled into the Buick and headed for home. GEE. it was quiet at home Maybe it was the time.

I got up at 9 O'clock. Damn, it's a lousy hour .. but I snatched a bite of breakfast and headed for Ann Arbor. It was half of a trip!

Five miles out of Ann Arbor (on the expressway) the Buick started losing power. Now, the car hasn't been taken care of and I'm rather sloppy about it. If a car runs I drive it.

So, it's been missing a little along the way, well, any car can be sold and that will affect the performance, so I ignored it, somewhere the other side of Ypsilanti it became pronounced. I was losing power.

I was rolling down the expressway at 50 MPH and approaching a small hill. Then I was doing 40, and 30. Breaking down on the expressway, between towns can be very troublesome. I started hunting for an exit and there it was, right ahead of me.

I took the cutoff up onto a surface road and started looking frantically for a gas station. No station in sight and I was down to 20 MPH, with my foot flat on the floor.

I recalled that Karol described just such a situation four years ago when an oil line plugged up and she burnt out the motor on the blue Mercury.

Now, the car doesn't have much value, it's a '66 Buick, but it has only a minor amount of rust and the motor has only 36,000 miles, I'd figured I might get 2-3 years wear out of it yet.

I was sure gonna feel bad when I had to junk it and buy another in lesser condtion.

There was no indication that it was overheating but I had a suspicion. As the engine died I let it roll to the side of the highway & sat there.

I sat there a few minutes. It was raining and I was thoroughly disgusted. Finally I got out in the rain and raised the hood. No sign of any problem. I opened the radiator cap a bit and a cupfull of water bubbled out. It wasn't steaming though. Maybe it wasn't as bad as I thought.

Cautiously I pumped the gas pedal and turned the key. The engine turned, caught, spasmed a time or two and ran steady again. I put it in gear and started down the road.

Over the hill, around the curve and I spotted a gas station. I rolled in, bought gas and checked the oil. The oil was way down but then I can't recall when I last checked it. I had oil poured in and tried it agagin.

The car ran steady and I drove off searching for the Hilton motel.

With car trouble I always avoid expressways, but just ahead of me was an entrance ramp and frankly I had no idea how to get from the surface street into Ann Arbor, across town and out to the motel. I took a chance and headed down the expressway to the motel.

Whoever runs things up there must have taken pity on me, I reached the motel and have had no problems with the car since then.

The day went nicely, I made a sackfull of money and when the Fan GOH started his speech I closed up for the day. More and more I'm coming to Rusty Hevlin's view. Get your expenses and a little extra in case you wanta buy something ... then close down and get off to the parties. Mike Glickson gave a fine speech. He started by saying that he'd accepted but really had no idea what he would talk about & that he'd been fascinated with my speech the previous year. He went on to say that I'd given a serious speech, full of facts and figures about fandom and since he couldn't match that sort of speech he would present an off the cuff sort of thing.

After the speech we got together and I told him that I thought he had mixed up my speeches. Some four years ago I gave one at Lunacon & I'd labored over it. I threw in inspiration, jokes, etc and I was sorta pleased with it.

When I agreed to be GOH at Ann Arbor I thought, "Oh, that's simple. I'll just rework a few sentences from the Lunacon piece and throw it out again. After all it wasn't likely that anyone in NY would be in Ann Arbor.

So, the day before the Ann Arbor affair I looked for the Lunacon speech. The damn thing was missing! Matter of fact it stayed missing until a couple of weeks ago. Now, I had a problem. I went to the garage and started looking, sure enuf I found Jim O'mera's publication, "Why Is A Fan". I grabbed the fanzine out of the file and reached for a pencil. I was gonna get one after all!

To shorten this account I wrote the thing in a half hour or so and gave it the following day.

So, I told Glickson. You got it wrong, you were referring to the Lunacon speech I was going to give and I lost it so I hokied up a thing on fan surveys.

Glickson said, "No, that's the one I mean. With the figures on how fans are left footed and so forth. Mike was more than generous with his praise- I know how little effort I put into it and I'm also aware of how well his own speech went over.

So, it was evening. The beer and likker had been replenished and to avoid hall problems (the police had arrived the night before) the management suggested that the committee run a party in the large meeting room we'd been using.

As soon as the party got started the night manager came storming into the room, ordering everyone out. It seems we were serving alcohol in a meeting room and they could lose their licence for that. The chairman pointed out that it was his suggestion and if anyone was guilty then it was the motel management, not the committee.

I later suggested that we ought to threaten to report them and put the squeeze on them. There may have been some of this the following day since one of the committee members is Jim Martin, law professor at the U of M and I've been told quite good in local circles.

Fred Pohl had given his GCH speech following the banquet, another one based rather broadly on the energy shortage. He warned against going into nuclear fuels too strongly, saying that once the fuel became common it would be easy for almost any organization of radicals to hijack 20 pounds of fuel and use it for extortion.

As an example he suggested that First Fandom might well steal a batch of fuel and that Lou Tabakow might well smuggle 10 pounds under his coat, another First Fandomite bring in the other 10 pounds and then threaten to blow up the Hilton motel unless the mayor of Ann Arbor came up with 10 million bucks.

At this point several fans offered to help Lou smuggle it in and set it off, without any ransom demand being made.

The parties were especially good that night, Rusty Hevlin was hosting an Orleano party. Providing soft drinks and popcorn. He seemed to do as well as the committee suite with the overflowing liquor load.

The committee had purchased sufficient beer and liquor for parties for 150 people, with some left over. Saturday morning they found it wasn't going to hold out and had made a second trip to the liquor store. By evening memberships were around the 350 marks and they had some money to spare so they made still a third trip. At this point the owner of the liquor store asked just where and how they were getting rid of that much booze.

Somewhere around 1 AM I wound up in a room full of Dorsai singing dirty limmericks, with Fred Pohl perched on the back of a couch adding his contributions. It was 30 miles to home and I was exhausted, I thought it time to fold my tent and gamble on the car & expressways.

Sunday was pretty much a repetition of the two previous days, the one thing that stands out was the afternoon handling of the loot. For the last few years it's become somewhat common for the committee to pay themselves for their labor, one way or another.

Some, perhaps most convention are showing a profit but in many cases the profit seems to vanish. The Ann Arbor group seem determined to return to old time principles.

At an open meeting they announced that they would be making a profit ranging between \$200 and \$400, depending largely upon how thoroughly the motel management went through their pockets and cleaned them out.

They announced that they could not give exact figures but they wanted the membership to vote on how the profits should be distributed.

They asked that they be allowed to retain \$100 to promote a convention the following year, at about the same time of the year. This was quickly voted on and approved.

It was then suggested that a part of the proceeds go to the Tucker Bag and Jackie Frank announced that Tucker Bag already had more money than they would need, and that they expected to use some of their excess to send Susan Wood & Mike Glickson to Australia. Mike & Susan have been promised free accommodations but will have to provide their own transportation.

At this point someone suggested a 50-50 split between the couple & the Duff winner. It was widely expected that Rusty Hevlin would win DUFF and this would amount to split between Mike & Rusty, both of whom are widely liked.

I raised my hand and explained that if this vast sum was going to go to fannish charities that I was expecting to marry off my daughter Karol in April and I'd appreciate anything that might be left over.

Nobody seconded the motion and it died for lack of interest.

Eventually we wound up voting to split it as suggested and got on with the last of the meeting.

The convention started breaking up in mid afternoon. I'd been invited to the home of the chairman, Ro Nagy for coffee and goodies.

Got over there, about the time he, Rusty, & Jim Martin were asked to appear on an FM radio station that night to answer phone-in questions about SF.

None of us had had much sleep so we broke up to let the label members catch a nap before they went on the radio. I went home.

I turned on the radio at 10 pm and started listening to the funny people phone in. It may have been scheduled as a SF program but the listeners were concerned with flying saucers, the Bermuda Triangle and Ezuikel and his wheel. They got the usual scattering of people who had figured out the UNIVERSE. After all, it's right there in the Bible! "Have you ever really studied the bible? Man, you've just got to believe if you read it!". They also had a few people who had seen or chased a flying saucer, but none who'd actually ridden in one.

tip that would have paid off \$100. The following week he'd play the tip and lose, that gave them another excuse to cuss.

John could understand the feeling of winning \$100 but he had no interest in big money. Some six months ago he hit the Michigan lottery for \$50,000 and had so little interest that he wouldn't go down for the drawing - instead his older brother Frank went down and claimed the prize. I would guess that the money got dumped in the bank and forgotten.

There is a still older brother Louie who is not in the book business and Louie is either a professional mooch or plays the part. It was interesting to watch them together. Obviously Louie has always depended on John for spare cash.

Louie has been on sick leave from his job for months and each time I saw them together Louie was hitting John for another \$50 or \$100.

When he walked into the store you'd hear John cry out. "Watch it! Louie's here, don't let him get near the cash register and keep an eye on him at the cigar counter. If you turn your back he'll stick a box full in his pockets."

Frequently I would pick up their out of town newspapers at the post office and deliver them about 10 o'clock at night. The store was closed and I'd go in the back door and stay to visit for an hour or so, John was one of the people that you feel comfortable with.

Early in December I worked my eight hours on Saturday and when I got ready to leave the boss asked, "Are you taking the papers tonight?"

I thought a second and decided against it, I had some plumbing to do and wanted to start it that night.

John was 44, he'd never been to a doctor in his life and he used to joke about his bad heart, saying his bones ached and he couldn't work as he used to.

He had taken a day off, with upset stomach and came in about 8 pm on Saturday, started sorting out the papers for Sunday's business and the rest of the employees left. About 11 pm the janitor showed up, let himself in the back door and found John lying on the storeroom floor. From all indications he'd suffered a heart attack and the fire dept thought that he was dead when he hit the floor. A cup of coffee on the table was still warm at 11 pm and I keep thinking that if I'd gone out there I would have likely stayed till 10:30 and might have been there when it hit.

At the same time I'm a fatalist, if it was his time to die I wouldn't have prevented it.

Karol took it very hard, she'd worked with John a lot and used him as a father confessor. When she fought with her mother, Me, or her boyfriend she take off from here in the car and go talk it over with John. Sooner or later she'd be back, all calmed down.

like

Karol does not like the thought of death and had never been to a funeral or seen a corpse. She asked if I was going to the funeral home and then offered to go with me. The night before the funeral she was sick most of the night but she went, despite my suggestion that she stay home. She simply said, "John would like it", and settled the subject.

At one point one of the callers wanted to prove his point and said he could do it with the aid of several books published a few years ago. These books were scheduled to be reprinted but the government had prevented it.

Also, when the books were first published the government had taken them off the newstands. At this point Rusty raised the point that perhaps you couldn't buy them because they were lousy sellers and the newsdealers had taken them off sale and sent them back to the publishers to be converted into waste paper, a better all round use.

The program was due to end at 1 am and about a quarter to one I couldn't control myself any longer - I phoned the station and asked, "Can any of the SF experts explain the legend about the man who sawed Courtney's Boat?" A voice came back at me saying, "Bob Tucker will explain that one to you, Howard".

I don't know how good the speaker in the station is and I still wonder if Rusty recognized my voice, or if he assumed that I was the one person listening who remember the old gag.

At One O'clock I turned off the radio and went to bed, the convention was finished and so was I.

The family lost a friend in December. I guess I've mentioned that Karol spent the last few years working for the local Little Professor bookstore. She started at the age of sixteen and stayed there six yrs on a part-time basis. She started while in high school and when she went away to college used to drive home and work weekends, a 500 mile round trip. It kept her in spending money till she graduated from college.

The store was owned by three brothers, the old time Horatio Alger type operation. When their father died they sold papers on the street to support their Mother, later they rented a shabby store and opened up with newspapers and magazines. From time to time they sold one store and opened another. Then about four years ago they rented a warehouse and started franchising stores all over the country. These stores are self-owned and the warehouse supplies most but not all of their hard covers and some paperbacks, particularly the quality stuff.

It has made them a great deal of money and it's assumed they'll make a lot more before they are finished. The younger brother John has never had a real interest in making money. He'd worked hard all of his life and simply wanted to be left alone with his books and newspapers. A semi-shy, unassuming type he usually worked nights, coming in at 3-4 pm and when the store closed at 9 he'd stay on, getting things ready for the next day's business. His sole entertainment was movies, TV and a mongrel dog that crapped all over the house. The older brothers married and moved out, he stayed on with his Mother and when she died he stayed on in the house.

To him money was something to be used. He gave generously to any cause, pulling a roll out of his pocket and handing out a ten or twenty. He played a great deal of pinochle and played the horses almost every day and would cuss and scream that he'd failed to take a