

# Tails of Fandom

from the '99

## Travelling Fête 6

in

### Cocoa Beach, Florida

**Dateline** - Sunday, July 18 (Dina Pearlman is 48 today)

**Eddie Stern** - Sunday afternoon at the Travelling Fête consists of sunburned bodies, slow stories, and Joe mumbling "rats in the walls". Carlos is still feeling guilty about stocking the consuite with wine in a box. ("Carlos, you bought a case of wine? No, I bought a box of wine.")

After days of fun and sun and a special tour of Cape Kennedy, which I missed, we're reduced to telling international toilet stories. That's right, it's stories of defecation, urination and consternation. A common denominator for all travelers is their belief that their exotic travels include exotic toilet stories. We've had stories of Asian toilets, holes in the sand, outlines of feet on the ground, and Carlos and the walls of New York City. More about that later.

**Carlos Perez** - Everything these people type here is a lie. After a weekend of fun and sun and space and recreational plane crashes, they are tired and delusional and imagining strange things. It also probably has to do with the drug infused food served in the con suite. We had apple pies made by our guest of honor that were phenomenal; fruits and vegetables; some really frightening red zingers that Judi brought; there were beers and ciders; there was chili; there was soda and soda and soda and soda; there was chocolate and cookies and crackers and all sorts of other fannish foods.

Eddie is interrupting my typing here to ask if genital burns interfere with sexual performance. No-one seemed to know or would admit to ever experiencing one.

The weirdest thing to happen to me this weekend was when the maid came to clean the con suite, it was full of people. I told her to come back and she had me sign a piece of paper. I guess she didn't want me to sue her. Remember that all of these people are liars. All that I tell you is lies.

**Doyle Green** - (only six months younger than *Astounding/Analog*) remembers Europe from serving in the army of occupation following the second world war, but it sounds like not much has changed with reference to public conveniences. The stories brought back fond memories.

**Edie again** - Doyle is the only one of us to remember a toilet AND bar story all in one. His European memories include having a bar to hold onto in the men's room so as to position oneself athwart the trough. (He says it was in the latrine in a Belgian army barracks).

**Melanie Herz** - It's late! It's 3 PM! After a weekend of sun and fun, I'm tired and I want to go to bed. My cat Sammy has not seen me since I've been away from him for three days. Anyway, we visited KSC, saw an Astronaut (It was the 30th anniversary of the Moon Shoot), and relaxed.

Patti and Joe Green suggested two really great restaurants and everyone had a great time. We blew up toys for the pool and then deflated them. We ate cookies, gummy bears, cheese, you know all the "good" stuff. And lastly, I listened to the stories..... Goodnight!

**Edie another time** - I took my first trip to China last month, and among other things, gained a passing acquaintance with Asian toilets. Now, this is my third continent, so I'm almost halfway to having a complete set. Having visited Europe a number of times, I thought I was a sophisticated traveler with useful experiences in dealing with unusual toilet equipment. I know what bidets are for. I know to look for switches outside the bathroom to activate the heater so that the dial inside the bathroom when turned will actually cause the water for the shower to become hot (scaldingly so). I know that some toilet flushes must be pulled up, some must be pulled down, and some go sideways. I was not prepared for Asian lady's toilets. < /font>

If you have no interest in exotic toiletry, skip this part. Picture it -- a flush urinal, flush to the ground in a small stall with no toilet paper. That is, a porcelain urinal, seemingly identical to a men's room urinal, but set into the ground so it is even with it. A handle near the wall lets you flush when finished. There is no toilet paper. There is no place for any toilet paper. In China, you bring your own with you if you intend to use it. This is tougher than England, where you only have to bring your own washcloth. Asian women must have great knees. I do not.

I avoided the Asian toilets studiously. I held my water. I remembered the location of European toilets. I drank less beer. For all my careful planning, of course, I ended up with more practical experience than I wanted. After dragging my companions blocks out of the way to reach a European toilet late at night after dinner, I found to my horror that the restaurant with the European toilets had blocked them off to do a little maintenance/construction on them. With much persuasion, the waitress was convinced to let us into the staff toilets. And of course, they were all Asian toilets. Skirts can be far more practical than trousers. I was wearing trousers.

I survived. My knees survived. My trousers survived intact. Somehow, I don't think this is a story to dine out on. It'll have to join the French unisex toilet story, and Dina's story of painted outlines of feet around a hole in the desert, in the scatological category. Or at least the scat category. Hey -- does anyone know what kind of toilets they have in Africa or South America?

**Joe Siclari** - Little memory bits from the Fête:

Joe Green told us that the 15,000 foot runway at the Kennedy Space Center is not really 15,000 feet. When the construction crew was building the runway, it was to be the longest runway in the world. Then they heard that a few other airfields were in planning stages with the same length runway. So they added

an extra foot of runway at no additional charge. Then they could really say they built the longest runway in the world.

Planning out a new Worldcon. We decided to have it on a train doing a circle route around the United States. We could bid in any zone. Transportation would be minimal for anyone who wanted to attend; we would pick people up en route. The masquerade would be held near Wichita; the costumers would all line up along the track and we would slow the train down so they could do their presentations for each and every person as we rode by. The film program would be really neat; we planned to have large picture printed of each frame and hang them up along the track. We would pass them at 30 frames a second so they could be seen properly. Sound would be available for those who want it over the headphones at each seat. If you didn't want to listen to the movies, there would be channels for filking and for the programs. There would be two track of programs on the rails.

On the KSC tour, next to the Shuttle Columbia on the pad, the most photographed sight was a railroad car with instructions painted on the side: "Do Not Hump".

We were listening to the JFK, Jr., crash search. Carlos compared this attention to Princess Diana's death but said JFK had not even done memorable things like Diana's interest in children with AIDS and land mine removal. He figured that her best solution would have been to send the children with AIDS to walk through the mine fields and they could find the mines.

Toilet stories dominated Sunday afternoons discussion. Edie touched off a series on toilet experiences. We talked about Dan's visit (at age 10) to the unisex toilet in the Paris zoo. When three young girls walked in on him, he zipped up so fast, I thought he was going to be a permanent soprano. I had to descend into the bowels, no pun (well only a little) intended, of a railroad station (Victoria ??) in England to find a toilet -- only to find that I did not have the right change to get into the stalls and had to climb back up to get the right change. Doyle remembered something similar when he had been there in the Fifties. Then we recalled Dan's trip in the opposite direction -- up three stories to a toilet at a restaurant/bar on the Grand Place in Brussels. He had climbed up the stairs to find an old woman guarding the door who asked him for cash to enter. Down he came, holding his water, and then back up to have his release.

Inflatable pool toys are the most prevalent visible things at a Travelling Fête. Trying to inflate these, we destroyed Bill Wilson's new air pump which he normally uses to inflate his wheelchair tires (luckily it was still under warranty). We had killer whales, snakes from three inch diameter to eight foot long, multiple sharks and dinosaurs from 18 inches to 8 feet. Giant hands and Godzillas and manta rays, even the whole universe. The final deflation of all these is a bizarre sight; fen all over the con suite hugging and humping and squeezing vinyl. "Obseen" is just about the right word.

Edie and Carlos will talk about the penis stories now.

And the spelling checker tried to change Melanie into a melon.

**Carlos again** - Remember that I said these people were liars. There will be no penis stories here. There were no penises at the Fête. Just ask anyone who was there... anyone but Joe Siclari. That does bring up that we had three Joes at the Fête: Joe Green, Joe Mant, and Joe Siclari (all in alphabetical order of

course to avoid ruining anyone's ego.) Just imagining someone saying "Hey, Joe!" and having three people react. Anyone who knows Joe Siclari knows that he already is one Joe too many. (one of the Joe's in edit mode: Carlos can't count or can't spell; he forgot Kathy's husband, Joe Mansy.)

Eddie just hollered about the name badges that we never got. I had the best intentions; there were these really pretty badges that I had to print out on the laser at work. I tried copying them to see how they would reproduce on card stock but the result was not pretty. So I ran off a bunch of badges on the laser and was going to cut them out and glue them to the cards. There wasn't enough time to run the cardstock through the laser. But then that's always my problem: time. There are never enough hours in the day. I need to invent some kind of relativistic device that will allow me to have at least 30 hours in a day. Cloning isn't an option as me and the clone (or is it the clone and me?) would end up killing each other.

Did we mention pies? Our guest of honor Kathleen Ann Goonan baked up some really good apple pies. I kept threatening to bring vanilla ice cream for the pies but we really didn't have a freezer to put it in. Which brings me to the facilities. Two refrigerators: the small one was the only one working. The larger one made noises like a dying elk after Doyle tinkered with the thermostat. We left it off. The microwave didn't work. We had a sink that worked. Bill Wilson's tire pump for his wheelchair was killed in that room. George Peterson tried to be "Tool Time Tim" and repair it but it was to no avail. The air conditioner was freezing the first night that I was in the room but it slowly petered out as time went by. Such is the curse of Travelling Fetes: mechanical equipment dies.

Shirlene Ananayo-Rawlik just walked in with little Petey Rawlik (future Chairman of Tropicon XXXVII) and the baby conversation started. There's nothing more pathetic than watching well-educated science fiction fans relate to a baby .

Of course everyone at the Fête got slight or severe sunburn, except for the Con Chair unceremoniously chained inside the con suite and that's me. Why? Every person I asked to watch the con suite gave me that "deer caught in the headlights" look of terror. How hard could it be? I did it for three days. After many rejections I finally gave up and selflessly chained myself to the con suite. Joe (Siclari) said I should handle rejection better, but as a male Latino I am genetically predisposed not to.

I would like to thank several people:

Joe and Patti Green, without who this Fête would not have happened. They gave me such immeasurable help that I can't thank them for it enough. The tour, dinner plans, moral support, and brainstorming ideas were greatly appreciated. They are a big reason why this Fête was successful.

Mal and Ericka Barker, for subjecting themselves to shopping for the con suite with me. Mal kept chanting "Stay on target" like the pilot with Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars* (the first one, which is now really the fourth one) as if it was a mantra to protect him from the evil shoppers, Carlos and Ericka.

Judi Goodman, for shopping as well and being such a kvetch in order to keep me motivated and inspired.

Kathy Goonan and her husband, Joseph Mansy, for being such great guests and really wonderful people. They are also another reason for the success of this Fête.

I am a really lucky bastard.

My turn, (**Magpi**) Young Master Rawlik was getting a mid-afternoon snack a la natural, but he has decided to let me type without having to keep one hand under him to support his head. Now he is delighting the remains of the Fête with his few tricks. Of course, many of them have to be done whilst the holder is standing.

But enough about the baby. We're supposed to be writing about the Fête. I enjoyed it, what little I was able to attend. The price of being the mother of the youngest and smallest member of SFSFS. Not that I'm complaining, mind you -- I'm merely stating a fact. Oops, once again, I have strayed.

Since everyone is waiting for me to finish so that we can go "do dinner", I am going to keep this short and sweet...highlights of this Fête included:

-- Patti Green and her phallic rocket KSC souvenir beverage container. She spent some time while we were waiting to re-group after lunch giving Dea O'Connor's spaceman KSC souvenir beverage container "rides" on her "rocket". Beck y Peters declined a "ride" on behalf of her spaceman; and,

-- watching as Mal Barker attaching a Jar-Jar image thing to the Con Suite door. I told him that he had to "lick the other eyeball" so he could affix the Jar-Jar to the door without tape.

Okay, that's it. We're hungry...we've got to go. Petey's the only one who has eaten at this point. Lucky him. Future SFSFS mommies should know that Carlos is learning how to be a better babysitter. By the time Petey is out of diapers, Carlos will probably be a pro -- at babysitting, not at being out of diapers. Okay, maybe that part is not as funny, but you had to be here to appreciate it fully.

"party livened up when Scruffy's 'g-string' broke"

**Joe Siclari again** - the Fête is going to have a small deadrocket party. Most of us have to leave. We would have stayed until tomorrow if the launch had been scheduled just a day earlier. Bill and Carlos and Doyle are going to stay for the Shuttle launch.

**Several days later:** The Shuttle finally took off three days late. I don't think anyone stayed the entire week to wait and see it close-up. Edie and Dan and I went outside to our front yard to watch. It really feels like the right kind of future sometimes. When I can go outside and watch a bright red streak going into the sky and suddenly I realize that I really am seeing people being launched into space. It's 150 miles away but it is almost commonplace. The future IS almost here.

-- Joe Siclari

Published by Joe Siclari and Edie Stern, 4599 NW 5 Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33431-4601

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