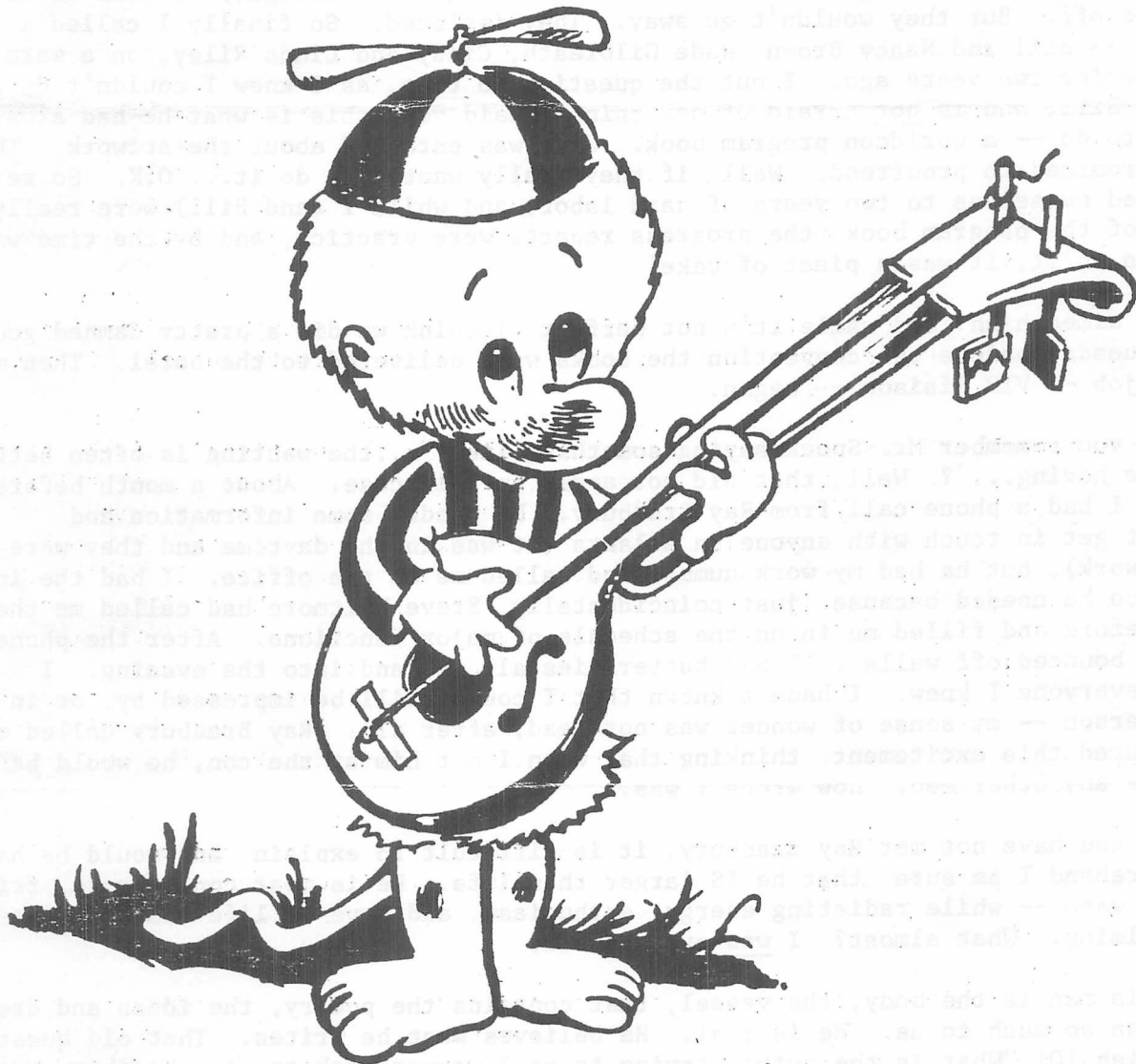


ANVIL

41



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This time last year I had just gotten back from Australia, and felt that I had had THE experience of a lifetime. It was over, and I probably would never again reach such heights. I published a special Aussiecon Not-a-trip-report, and really and truly believed that my adventurous life was over...that I would only relive past glories and tell old war stories.

The worldcon in Atlanta seemed too close to home to be all that exciting, and the job of editor of ConFederation's major publications was very difficult -- but not without compensation. No one knew better than I that I was not qualified for the job. I was asked to take it because the concon (a) wanted someone in the South to do publications, (b) someone known in the fannish community and (c) someone they could depend on. They asked me and I flatly refused. (I do this. I dig my heels in and refuse every new challenge. It's hard for me to begin new things.) I made excuses. I begged off. But they wouldn't go away. They insisted. So finally I called a meeting -- Bill and Nancy Brown, Wade Gilbreath, Cindy and Linda Riley, on a warm fall evening two years ago. I put the question to them, as I knew I couldn't do it alone. Bill, who is not afraid of new things, said yes, this is what he had always wanted to do -- a worldcon program book. Wade was enthused about the artwork. The girls promised to proofread. Well, if they really wanted to do it... O.K. So we committed ourselves to two years of hard labor, and while I (and Bill) were really scared of the program book, the progress reports were practice, and by the time we got down to it, it was a piece of cake!

We aimed high, and while it's not perfect, I think we did a pretty damned good job. Tuesday before the convention the books were delivered to the hotel. Then my second job -- VIP liaison -- began.

Do you remember Mr. Spock saying something like "...the wanting is often better than the having..."? Well, that did not apply in this case. About a month before the con I had a phone call from Ray Bradbury. He needed some information and couldn't get in touch with anyone in Atlanta (it was in the daytime and they were all at work), but he had my work number and called me at the office. I had the information he needed because, just coincidentally, Steve Whitmore had called me the night before and filled me in on the schedule of major functions. After the phone call, I bounced off walls... I had butterflies all day and into the evening. I called everyone I knew. I hadn't known that I could still be impressed by, or in awe of, a person -- my sense of wonder was not dead, after all. Ray Bradbury called me!! I treasured this excitement, thinking that when I met him at the con, he would be a man like any other man. How wrong I was.

If you have not met Ray Bradbury, it is difficult to explain, and would be hard to comprehend I am sure, that he IS larger than life. He is most considerate, friendly, and warm -- while radiating energy, enthusiasm, and love of life that is almost overwhelming. What almost? I was overwhelmed.

This man is the body, the vessel, that contains the poetry, the ideas and dreams, that mean so much to us. He is real. He believes what he writes. That old question in English 101 "What is the author trying to say?" comes back to me. Bradbury may or may not be writing for his entertainment or ours, but it is patently clear to me now that he is most assuredly writing to tell us about our feelings, our loves, hates, fears, dreams and nightmares. A force, a personality, a presence of this calibre... and I was there. I was, for crying out loud, IN CHARGE.

I did the best I could, and after it was over, I felt rotten. It took a long time to figure out why (the squeamish may leave the room, or skip ahead to the next chapter), but here it is:

I was so immensely sorry that I had this glorious opportunity to know, and be known by, someone so special, and I blew it. I was stiff and awkward, tongue-tied and dull -- at best, I was a harried victim of the Peter Principle.

Why? How did this happen? Was it lack of opportunity? The conditions were such, I told myself, that I was never in a position to 'come across' as the intelligent, thoughtful, perceptive person we would all like to be to someone we admire. Or was it purely and simply that I am an ordinary person, and no amount of 'opportunity' would make me any different or better? (And I'm not that bad!)

The second is, obviously, the right answer. Having admitted it at last I have a better perspective. If Ray Bradbury is all that great and wonderful (and he is), NOBODY could measure up. The man KNOWS the world is full of mediocrity, and yet, knowing me for what I am, he still was just as kind to me as if I were someone special. He wrote me a beautiful note... "...thank you for a fabulous week... You made it all so easy, warm and wonderful!"

The foregoing recital of self-doubt and recrimination is not to be construed as a bid for sympathy, nor am I fishing for compliments. As Popeye said, "I yam what I yam". For a while there, I was a minnow in the ocean, and lost sight of what I am. The aftermath was as traumatic as death, when one greives that it is over and there will never be another chance. But I feel better now. Thanks for listening.

It was an experience I would not have missed, and that I do not regret. It was a Once-in-a-Lifetime. (If you think I have a bad case of hero-worship, you're right.)

Last year, Australia. This year, Bradbury. Is this it? Or will there be other exciting chapters in Charlotte's life? Stay tuned.

Last year I gave you a Not-a-trip-report. This year you get a Not-a-con-report, which is a subjective view of ConFederation -- not necessarily as it was, or as others saw it. We're still waiting for the reviews to come in.

The opening chapter, "The Most Wonderful Day of My Life..." is by Meade Frierson III. The rest (except for Jerry's side of the shooting story) is by me. Cover art by Wade Gilbreath, from Meade's program book ad. The illo on page 15 is by Tim A. Cooper.

ANVIL 41 is being mailed in the same envelope with #42, the regular issue. How do you like the new green tint paper? There was this sale, see... Keep those cards and letters coming. ANVIL 43 will be out early next year. Last stencil typed: October 2, 1986.

"THE MOST WONDERFUL DAY OF MY LIFE....."

...is how I described August 30, 1986 to my wife, Penny, and later to editor Charlotte Proctor. To put this remark in context, I must tell you that day was amid ConFederation, the 44th world science fiction convention in Atlanta. ConFederation truly represented what I had always imagined my first southern worldcon would mean: 1) the presence of southern fans from my early fannish days who may or may not attend regional cons any longer and 2) the "crazy" worldcon experience only savored five times before.

However grand those elements were (and they were!!), there was one feature of this con which makes it an impossible act for any other con to follow. I refer, of course, to the fact that ConFederation was the first worldcon honoring the writer who has most influenced my life, Ray Bradbury.

Ray Bradbury wrote the stories which were broadcast into my mind indelibly on the radio program Dimension X (at age 10 before I read much), spread on the silver screen when I was 13, and translated into my favorite E.C. comics. Thus hooked, I read everything he wrote.

So Ray Bradbury came to ConFederation. On Friday he gave the most rip-roarin', inspiring Guest of Honor Speech in the history of conventions. Decked out in his wonderful ice-cream suit, he told us about himself and about us, about the ideas we love and expressing that love. On the way out I met him briefly and he was photographed with Penny.

On Saturday morning, these themes were further explored and elucidated by the question-and-answer session. His answers were prompt and fascinating, and he explained that a prompt response insured an honest answer (from the heart, before the mind could play games with the truth).

I have been a corporate lawyer, and apparently a good one, but for less than half my life. Whether he knew it or not, what Bradbury was telling me, reminding me by his revelations, his presence, his example, was that I am much more. I am, as he is, the books, comics, radio shows and movies that I loved: I am the poems I have written and will write again. I am the enthusiasms which should not be stifled, the emotions which should be touched. Bradbury speaks, without guile, of grown men weeping with the excess of emotion provoked by one person or event or another. A writer such as he is not much entrained with society's conventions and his weeping would seem proper. It is not an admission which a scientist, politician, businessperson or lawyer should readily admit. But I will not be the same after ConFederation.

So, Saturday afternoon was my time to escort Ray Bradbury to bookshops outside the hotel. Atlanta's finest stretch-limo had been provided and we were joined by Tom Teepe, an intelligent columnist for the Atlanta Constitution. The throngs at the bookshop (Border's) were astounding -- and a bit astounded as he jogged to the signing dais attired for the tennis courts. As if to emphasize that my disbelief had to be suspended, I encountered, as assistant manager there, a fan from Birmingham I had not seen for 15 years. The time there, with each of Bradbury's admirers telling him little stories and of their special loves among his works, and his stories and responses, was yet another treasured event for me.

Lest I be tempted to deify this wonderful man, that day I was reminded of the fans of another man-in-white, Lawrence of Arabia. Like the character played by Anthony Quinn, I have to admit "he is not perfect." At age 66 Bradbury had forgotten my 1973 contract to produce a comic in which Steve Fabian was to have illustrated "Leviathan '99" (a then unpublished BBC radio drama by Bradbury based on the Moby Dick theme) and a tale of Spender from the Martian Chronicles. He also did not recall the piece for TV in which he, his wife and daughters portrayed a family in a house in the future. He is not perfect... but God doesn't often make 'em any better.

After the book signing he autographed the small selection I had brought from my extensive collection - a copy of Dark Carnival (previously autographed in 1948), a Bill Nolan fanzine of tribute in 1952, a first edition paperback Martian Chronicles, his marvelous portrait executed by Wade Gilbreath for the program book, and his most recent novel, a mystery.

After that, because of some slipped plans (not the convention's fault) a second autographing session was not necessary so I suggested some drinks and Tom Teepen suggested his home. There, Sara and Tom Teepen, Ray Bradbury and I lounged comfortably, had some beers and talked about all manner of interesting things. It was not strictly an interview and I don't know yet whether Teepen wrote anything as a consequence. But it was more opportunity to hear this man talk, for me to learn, to continue the cherished experience of understanding how to tread the deceptive course between emotions and the excesses branded as "maudlin" or "sentimentality". (Those words were never expressed - the concepts discussed as such at no time.)

Those four hours away from the hotel (with its sfnal vistas and neat "crazy" people) are never going to escape me. I cannot truly share them with you, as I have discovered in writing this, because it was a personal experience and, for me, those seem to suffer when written in detail... the characterization chosen gains reality and the memory becomes restricted to the written version. Thus, the experience's nuances and continued percolating effect might be thwarted and I cannot risk that even for the kind ladies who made this experience possible for me - Penny for forging ahead with a con which would honor Bradbury (and seat me within 20 feet of his grand speech) and Charlotte for placing me in close proximity to him outside the hotel.

In summation, your honors, I wish to plead guilty to the charge of adoration. Even from his writings, I did not fully appreciate all the themes and messages until I had this personal contact and now it all makes sense, now I know what writers since Homer have been trying to do - Ray Bradbury is a living, radiating example of the art of writing and that most noble of the arts, that of being a human being.

Ray Bradbury gave us the vistas of a colonized Mars and the rain-forest of Venus. No matter that now we know these places cannot exist in this solar system: it is of no more importance than that Camelot or Moby Dick are not "real". He showed us the dark side (and power) of "innocent" children and yet behind the chills lay truth - always a pro-human, upbeat message. For every grand future, love can make it happen: for every dark alternative, love can keep us from this. For these and all his other gifts, let us be truly thankful.

- Meade Frierson III, 9/8/86

BADGES? BADGES? WE DON'T NEED NO STINKIN' BADGES!!!

I picked up Ray Bradbury at the airport Thursday about the time the Opening Ceremonies were happening. We would have been back to the hotel sooner, but his luggage refused to appear. Steve Bullock was there with his car for just such an eventuality, and we finally had to leave him with it. (After filling out all the lost luggage forms, and asking various Delta personnel, Steve finally found it in a corner, so all was well.)

Ray Bradbury finds delight in every new experience... on the talking train in the Atlanta airport, for instance. The mechanical, authoritative voice admonished us to "Hold on. We are stopping now." and "Move away from the doors. The doors are closing now." I turned to Mr. Bradbury and said, "They knew we were coming..."

"And they baked us a robot cake", he grinned.

At the hotel, Robbi and Curtis Dyer met us at the door and we all went to Mr. Bradbury's room. (Robbi and Curt were his special liaison during his stay.) I tended to business, gave him his convention package and thought I had taken care of everything.

The first thing Mr. Bradbury wanted to do was see the Dealers' Room, so off they went... the Dyers leading the way... down the elevator, down the back escalator, across the street to the Hilton, to the Dealers' Room.

Uniformed officers were on duty checking that no non-convention members went in. They challenged Mr. Bradbury, but Robbie and Curt vouched for him, saying he was our Guest of Honor and hadn't picked up his badge yet. (How COULD I have forgotten?) Through the doors, a member of the dealers' room staff was on duty, double-checking. She said "You can't come in without a badge." Again, Robbi identified him. The staffer, a young girl, was mortified... that she had challenged The Great Man. She put her hands on her face and melted from embarrassment.

But Mr. Bradbury is nothing if not kind, and he put his arm around her, saying that it was all right. He then dismissed Robbie & Curt - he wanted to look around by himself. (While he was relatively incognito, he wasn't mobbed.) I came in, was told what had happened, and flew back to get the badge. It was a while later before I caught up with him again and pinned it on, saying "Now, you are official."

I saw a young woman in the dealers' room recognize him, and... very timidly... ask for his autograph. He took the book and turned to the table to write in it. Behind his back, the young woman was grinning delightedly and bouncing on her toes with excitement. It made me feel so good. That's how I felt.

The young woman who had challenged Mr. Bradbury became something of a minor celebrity herself. A friend made her a special button. When Mr. Bradbury heard of it, he asked for a copy.

The button reads "Bradbury, Sch. adbury, you still need a badge."

WILL THE REAL BOB SHAW PLEASE STAND UP?

That was the title of a panel Friday afternoon. Greg Pickersgill had begged off, and I had asked Mike Glyer to be guest moderator. I was supposed to be, but didn't feel up to it. I had been going at a dead run, one meal a day, too little sleep, since arriving on Tuesday. But the panel turned out not to need a moderator, especially. We just took turns telling Bob Shaw stories. Unfortunately, as I was fading out, I don't remember any of them.

Bob Shaw is many things to many people. He's an old friend to the fans in Britain, but to most Americans he is a new discovery. Or, as I said to him when Steve Francis asked him to be CoH at next year's Rivercon, you have a new audience for your old jokes! Bob thought about the invitation for every bit of two seconds before giving a definite "Yes".

Bob is also known to some fans only through his professional writing. When I first learned he was coming to Birmingham in 1981 I looked forward to meeting the man who had written the Slow Glass stories. Since then I have learned better... the fannish thing to do is to enjoy Bob's fannish writing, fannish talks and little jokes.

It has only been a year since I had seen Bob in Australia -- Aussiecon II -- but Steve Bullock, who was at the airport with me, asked if I would recognize him.

"Well", I said, "if he has lost weight, that's him" He had, and it was.

"This is the New Bob Shaw", Bob explained. "I haven't had a beer in 4 months. I've lost 45 pounds." "The more often one says 'No', the easier it gets" he went on. "It becomes a habit." You mustn't be too concerned, though, gentle reader, as while beer, potatoes and bread are not on Bob's diet, it seems that whiskey and soda are, if not on the diet, at least not forbidden.

The New Bob Shaw introduced the New Hugo Awards to America. "I'm nervous about this" he told me; "...in Britain everyone is so casual, and if you made a mistake, they just laugh, and heckle from the audience. But in America, they take their awards more seriously. I'm afraid it won't go over well."

"Don't worry about it, Bob" I assured him... "just get up there and be clever, witty and original for five minutes between each award." "Thanks." he replied.

But, in point of fact, and in practice, you just can't invite a humorist to stand up there and instruct him to not be funny. He should do what he does best. And he did. During the fan hugos, he told stories of his fannish career, and between the professional hugos, he told stories about his pro career. It worked wonderfully well, and he has captivated a whole new continent.

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER...

Ushering is a tough job. I know, I was Steve Whitmore's shadow at Connie. One must keep pushy fans from sitting in the VIP seats, for instance. But this year some of the ushers were not fully aware of the rules, and exceptions thereto, which led to some amusing incidents. As some of you may be aware, Bob Shaw was late for the GOH speeches. As there was another glitch that only got strightened out as he appeared, I was able to tell him truthfully, when he asked, that his late arrival had not held things up.

Meanwhile, on the front row, Bill and Nancy Brown were sitting with Terry Carr - Nancy had been assigned to escort him there, and Bill went with her. Although I had notified House Management how many seats I needed and for whom, the info hadn't filtered down. The usher in charge of the front row challenged Bill and Nancy -- told them they weren't supposed to be there. Nancy explained that she was on duty. Bill, of course, after all that good work he did for publications, could sit up on stage if he wanted to. (When he registered, they said "Oh, yes, Bill Brown. You can have anything you want. Wait a minute, I'll get you a yellow badge." But Bill didn't want to wait around.) The usher then turned his attentions to Bill, who was wearing a sports shirt, unbuttoned, over his Bill the Cat tee-shirt. "You're ruining the looks of the front row."

Now, Nancy gets all excited over things like this and tends to sputter, but Terry assured them they looked fine. The usher retreated and glared. Soon Jim (Standing Buffalo) Gilpatrick came in, wearing faded jeans, a tee-shirt that had seen better days, and a yellow badge. He hugged Nancy, shook hands with Bill and sat next to them. The usher slunk away.

Later I had to intercept Bob after Carr's speech, on his way to the podium to introduce Bradbury. "Not yet, Bob, there's a musical interlude."

"Oh." Bob's eyebrows rose. "You didn't tell me about this?"

"I wanted it to be a surprise." (There's nothing like pretending your mistakes aren't.)

The next night, Bob was to MC the Huto Award Ceremony. Having learned his lesson, he was there on time and I turned him over to the technical people and went to seat Mr. Bradbury and keep him company. Only later did I learn that Bob had almost not made it at all. The VIP entrance was also Staff entrance and Handicapped entrance. The usher at the door had a single-track mind, however, and repeatedly and forcibly denied him entrance because, he said, this was the Handicapped entrance. Nancy Brown and Anne Valentine were escorting Bob that night, and nearly died from embarrassment. "You don't understand" Nancy said, "This is Bob Shaw, your Master of Ceremonies." It didn't do any good. The usher refused to budge. Anne finally stuck her arm through the crack in the door and physicall pulled an usher out. They established communications, let Bob in, and the Hugos went on as scheduled.

Looking back on it.... if any of them had had a lick of sense they would have furnished Bob with a walking stick or an eye-patch or something, and breezed right in.

THE HUGOS

The Hugo Ceremony was a hit. I have told a bit about it earlier, and now I want to tell you about the opening.

The stage, as the audience filed in, was bare except for a podium on one side and a table in the middle with a cloth covering suspiciously pointed objects. At about 2 minutes after 8 o'clock Saturday evening, the lights went down. Blackout. As Also Spract Zarathrustra awalled in the background tiny red lazer beams began to play on the silvery rockets. A mist on the stage enhanced the lazer beams, which bounced and reflected in all directions. A spot gradually illuminated the line of Hugos, and suddenly, as the music reached a crescendo, in the center of the stage a huge rocket appeared, rising out of the groundfog, brilliant against the black backdrop. There was a breathless hush. Then, to thunderous applause, the hatch slip open, and our Master of Ceremonies, Bob Shaw, trim and resplendent in his velvet dinner jacket, stepped down and strode across the stage to the podium. The lazer show was over, the lights were up, Bob was ready to begin, and when I glanced back to the center of the stage, the rocket was gone... curtains, I suppose, had revealed it, and then removed it from our sight. It was a wonderful beginning, and it seems almost like a dream.

WHAT COLOR ARE RAY BRADBURY'S EYES?

Just days before the convention, as the program book was being prepared for the printer, Wade Gilbreath was working on the color picture of Mr. Bradbury. It had to be done, right then, and before the next morning, so that the color separations could be made. We're talking 11th and a half hour, folks. I was at Bill and Nancy Brown's doing last-minute proofing. The phone rang.

"Charlotte? This is Wade. I'm working on this picture, and got to thinking... What color are Ray Bradbury's eyes?"

"Blue, I think", I replied...(aside) "Nancy, what color are Ray Bradbury's eyes?"

"Blue, I think, but let me see if I still have the tape of Ray Bradbury Theater."

"I'll call you back, Wade." Click.

But Nancy couldn't find the tape, and all the pictures we had were black&white. Hard to tell. I had to call Atlanta anyway, so when I finished my business I asked:

"What color are Ray Bradbury's eyes?"

"Blue, I think."

Well, this was getting me nowhere, and in the meantime I knew Wade was sitting, staring into space. We had to know, and know now. I dialed the phone. A woman answered. "Mrs. Bradbury? This is Charlotte Proctor, with ConFederation. We're doing a color portrait and need to know: What color are Ray Bradbury's eyes?"

"Blue, I think," she replied.

As promised, I called Wade back with the information that Ray Bradbury's eyes are bluish-gray. (After some discussion, we had settled on that description.)

"Well, I've already done one of them brown, is it all right if I just do the other one blue?"

"NO!" Click.

CLOUT

Working with this convention has provided me with the opportunity to meet new people and do new things. When soliciting ads for the program book I learned to say "I'll have to consult my production manager about that" when asked questions I couldn't answer. Bill Brown would get an hysterical call from me... "What's a bleed ad? Can we do it? Does it cost any more?" But I muddled through.

While at the convention one of the women I had dealt with, Simone Welch, sought me out and introduced herself. She invited me to 4014. Simone... have you ever known anyone by the name of Simone? She looked like a Simone should. She spoke with a tiny (French?) accent, was blonde, petite, beautifully tailored and coiffed. If I had allowed myself to think about it, I would have felt awkward and klutzy beside her. So I didn't think about it.

Sunday night, while waiting at the door to the Masquerade for my friends, Simone approached and asked me to help her -- she needed to give Maurine Dorris a script for the masquerade. This seemed important, and I was glad to try to help. Not wanted to step on the toes of some other department, I asked at the door if an usher could take Simone to deliver her message to Maurine. NO, I was told, ushers were not allowed in the masquerade area. Gophers or masquerade personnel were not available either. I said to Simone that I was sorry for the delay, that we were a volunteer organization. She said that she understood, in the kindest way, with no hint of criticism in her voice. But she stood her ground, with her neat little feet planted closely together. She was not pushy, but rather firm in her intent, and not about to go away.

There was nothing else I could do. "Follow me", I said. She did and we made our way toward the front of the hall. An usher appeared and began to say (as she should) "You can't go...." -- then her eye fell (I suppose) on my yellow badge. She teleported to one side and said "Excuse me!"

As we continued on our way, I heard Simone murmur behind me... "What clout!" It made my day.

FANS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT

Worldcons are great. There's no doubt about it. But I have yet to be to one where I could really sit and visit and party with and get to know the people I run into that I have always wanted to meet. I have been to four worldcons, and worked them all.

I got to meet Mike Glicksohn, though. He's cute. Mike was on a panel with me, I think. I know George "Lan" Laskowski was. He's cute, too, and wears a coon-skin

cap. I was proud to lose (the Hugo) to Lan. You know, people kept saying things that were meant to cheer me up... as if they thought I were disappointed. "It's an honor just to be nominated..." and things like that. But oddly enough, or perhaps not so oddly, I was not in the least let down. I guess because I had not built up any anticipation. After our first little fling here... ANVIL staff party, chortling about it in ANVIL 40... I had pretty much put it out of my mind. There was absolutely too much else to do, things (fannish things) that were so much more critical than getting excited about winning a Hugo. Sure, it's important... but I didn't feel winning the first year's nomination would be that likely.

I met Brian Earl Brown just briefly after a panel, but we didn't have a chance to talk as I was on my way to somewhere else. Maybe next time...

Another fan I passed in the night was Jerry Kaufmann. We missed connections altogether, I am sorry to report, thus dashing all those rumors. It seems I had come to the door of a party, and gone away to get something, and Jerry Kaufmann was sent to retrieve me. He never came back. The scuttelbutt was that "the last time we saw Jerry Kaufmann, he was chasing Charlotte Proctor."

Oops, I almost forgot this part. I had told Patrick Nielsen Hayden that I would meet them (Patrick, Teresa, TAFF winner Greg Pickersgill and Linda) at the airport. I think I qualified it with 'if you see me, I'll be there'. But in any event, I was meeting with the hotel that morning trying to arrange limo pickup for Shaw, Carr and Bradbury, and they just didn't seem to think that TAFF delegates were in the same league. Fools! Since Penny's car was a mess, and mine is a VW beetle, there didn't seem to be any way I could get there. Patrick called from the airport, and I had to tell him that not only was I not there, I wasn't coming. Oh, shame. Nonetheless, Patrick and Teresa were delightful to be around, although I can't get a word in edgewise.

Greg Pickersgill seemed in a daze every time I saw him. Is he always like that? I asked him one time, in passing, how ConFederation compared to other conventions he had been to.

"It's like being on Mars", was all he could say.

But so far as the hotel was concerned -- it was so futuristic, so undeniably right for an SF con -- Ted White summed it up best. He said...

"When I was a boy, this is the way I thought the future would look."

THE NATIVES ARE RESTLESS TONIGHT

There was a story going around the con that Sarah Shaw was mad at Bob because he didn't get in until 7:40 Sunday morning. "I know she was angry," Bob said, "because she went out and didn't even leave a note."

Now, I don't know if there is a grain of truth in this, but it made a good story. If it were true though, I was going to see that Sarah got to see the "Fancy Dress" and Bob would sit with her. This, in spite of the fact that Bob and Terry had been overheard to say that they neither like to go to masquerades as they were

so long and boring. (To each his own.) So there we were... second row seating, I think... Bob, Sarah, myself, Andrea Gilbreath, Lydia (Jim Gilpatrick's fiancée), and Jim himself. The hall was long and narrow, but each entrant upon leaving the runway proceeded down the center aisle, the better to be seen by those in back.

Unfortunately, the hall was blacked out for the next presentation before the first costume had made it all the way back. There was a murmur from the back.... when the same thing happened again, the murmur turned into an ugly roar. Dire threats and great obscenities filled the air. We, in our special seating, looked at each other, round-eyed. What would happen? ConFederation had run so smoothly up to now-- would it end with a riot? Angry fans are nothing to be taken lightly. Marty Gear explained about having to black out the house, and that there was only one light switch for the hall. (I thought this seemed a bit odd, as the Marquis certainly had every other amenity... surely there was more than one light switch for such a large hall.) By the third time the fans in the back of the room didn't get to see the costume, we up front were looking for the nearest exit. It was hairy, folks.

But tekkies being what they are, they found the separate switch. The ugly roar changed into good-natured applause and all was well. From then on, we in the front saw the costumes, applauded as they exited, and then listened to the wave and ripple of oohs and aahs and applause as the costumers made their way down the center aisle all the way to the very back of the room.

Later, there were a couple of riske costumes. One lady had nipples painted on to her pushed-up bosom, and the other was an accident with a real tit showing. Andrea and Lydia were hiding their faces in embarrassment, and when Sarah saw that, she not only laughed at the costumes, but (kindly) at the girls who were so unsophisticated as to be embarrassed by nudity.

PHILOSOPHY

This bit is prompted by Mike Glyer's introduction of me on the panel entitled "The Care and Feuding of the Fan Hugo". Oh, that wasn't the name of it? Well, it was something like that; if it wasn't, you could have fooled me. There was a near-riot in that room at one time, and at another Teresa nearly burst into angry tears. The representative of one of the two zines that caused all the rukus by getting on the ballot left the room in frustration.

Things were getting totally out of control with people shouting and throwing chairs around when Patrick pounded on the table: "All right, all right," he shouted, "none of us live up to our own high standards, and NONE of us deserve the Hugo!"

"Speak for yourself, Patrick," I replied. About that time, Ted White stood up, pointed an accusing finger and said, "I don't mean to attack you, Charlotte, but..." I crawled under the table and stayed there the rest of the hour. Glyer, proper moderator that he is, handed me a mike. When Ted questioned the legality of ANVIL being on the ballot, I handed my copy of the WSFS Constitution up to Mike to read. My position under the table gave lie to Ted's assertion that I was "too visible" in fandom.

Where was I? Oh, yes, the introduction. When Mike introduced me as editor of

of the clubzine, ANVIL, I quickly corrected him -- Genzine, and he said "editor of the genzine ANVIL put out by a group of people in a club."

Now, wait a cotton-pickin' minute. If, besides being a fresh, new upstart in the world of fanzine fandom (there were those who were surprised to learn of ANVIL's long publishing history), the fact that it started out as a clubzine makes it a secondclass zine in the eyes of fanzine fandom, I want to protest. In the first place, ANVIL has been a Charlotte-zine from the time I took over. I do all the editing, layout (such as it is), typing and production.

In the second place, what difference does it make where the money comes from? Of course, money does make a difference... one of the complaints was that some fans have more money to spend on their zines than others, and poverty shouldn't keep one off the ballot if one puts out the best. (If poverty keeps one's circulation small, it had better be sent to the voting public, tho.) I am reminded of Penny's observation that when people say it's not the money, it's the principle of the thing, they mean it's the money.

I have always tried to give credit where credit was due. If people are going to write great locs to me, and send articles and tradazines, I want the people who financially support ANVIL to feel a part of it all. Actually, my best ploy for keeping them involved is to throw ANVIL collating parties. For the privilege of supporting ANVIL, they get to go round my dining room table 200 times, whereupon they are allowed to staple and insert ANVIL into envelopes. The crowning achievement is to write "address correction requested" on 200 envelopes. I think they are catching on though -- sometimes I have to say "Lasagna" before they will come over. Actually, Linda does want to be more involved: "PLEASE let me proofread it before you go to press..."

No one knows better than I that I cannot compete with beautifully-produced zines, any more than I can compete with Simone Welsh in the looks department -- I just don't have the resources. Goodness knows I tried to upgrade ANVIL, at Wade's urging, but perfection is not my forte. Then Tony Cvetko wrote to say "... congrats. Next year we'll work on "Rats on Fire"'s nomination. I say don't upgrade ANVIL's appearance. It has that "fuck you, asshole" texture, a gritty realism... If you do anything, degrade it some. Really, there are too many "nice" fanzines out there."

Now that's what I like to hear, it takes some of the pressure off me. So my philosophy is... ANVIL will be what it will be... it will not try to be XENIUM nor yet FLASHPOINT, but its own self.

By the way, I finally saw that "No Award" ad (published and signed by fanzine fans who urged the No Award category be not forgotten in the best fanzine category this year) and it was totally inoffensive to me. I, too, feel that special interest zines have no place in the fanzine nominees, but am not too sure about drawing the line to exclude all this year's candidates on the grounds they don't meet "the standard of excellence we associate with the phrase 'Hugo Winner'." That puts me right back into competition with FANAC, YANDRO, et al. Well, in any event, while it would be nice (Nice? It would be terrific!) to win a Hugo, I don't expect to ever, and so far as this year is concerned, I've said it before and I'll say it again, I am proud to be runner-up to Lan's Lantern. Congratulations, Lan.

TERRY CARR IS ALIVE AND WELL ...

Tuesday morning. The con is over. Ray "Whirlwind" Bradbury is gone. Things are going to be dull today. Better call Terry's room to make sure everything is squared away for his flight this afternoon. I was at the bellstand, making arrangements for the limo.

"Terry? Are you about ready to go?" I inquired.

"I don't think..." his weak voice answered..."I'm going to make it..."

"Are you sick?" I demanded. "Do you need a doctor?"

"Yes..."

"I'll be right there." Hanging up, I then called Robbi who is an Army nurse, to meet me at 1117. The bellman gave me a key. I called C&C. Why should I have all the fun?

Unfortunately, the night latch was on, and Terry had to get out of the bed to let me in. "I have a nurse with me" I told him. He looked terrible, and was burning up with fever. Robbi took over. I called the hotel hot line -- 55 -- and ordered a doctor. Meade Frierson came up and helped me get Terry's personal effects out of the parlor -- we were giving it back to the hotel and keeping the sleeping room.

The doctor said to come to Doctor's Memorial, where they have a closed ER. I ordered a wheelchair. Curtis helped him dress. The wheelchair came. A taxi was waiting -- no messing around with limos now. As Robbi, Curtis and Terry left the room, I remarked to Terry that he must not be feeling too bad, he was combing his hair, so as to look dashing in the lobby.

They went away. C&C found Rachel Holmen as instructed. When Robbi returned, she and Rachel got Terry's things and went back. Rachel stayed with him. I was glad he had a friend there. After a week of abusing his body, becoming prey to virus infection, Terry was feeling pretty poorly. But the hospital staff infused new life into him, and later that afternoon Rachel and Terry came back. They caught a later flight home.

I called Carol a few days later. She reported Terry had a sore throat and can't talk above a whisper... ".... I had a wonderful time.... I had a wonderful time.... I had a wonderful time...."

BUT SOME OF HIS FRIENDS DON'T FEEL TOO GOOD...

I just had a note from Terry urging us not to fret about his health, he is feeling fine now. I have not had a similar note from Bob Shaw. By the time Bob arrived in Birmingham, he had been laid low for a couple of days with a mysterious virus. I wasn't feeling too well myself, and blamed it on Terry Carr who, in a fit of passionate gratitude, had kissed me good-by in Atlanta. Bob said that's where he got it, too -- Terry had kissed him.

My feelings on the subject were that Bob should have thought up his own excuse-- Typhoid Terry probably had nothing to do with it. Bob also kept telling everyone who would listen that his cold was much worse than mine -- that if my cold were as bad, I would be sick in bed. I took exception to that and reminded him I couldn't go to bed, I had company. This ill-tempered exchange (probably brought on by neither of us feeling well) put such a strain on our friendship that Sarah and I went shopping with Penny, and Bob went shooting with the Birmingham Gun Club (a.k.a. the Saturday Night Specials).

The first firearm presented to Bob was a Smith and Wesson 44 Magnum, just like Clint Eastwood's but with a shorter barrel. He happily fired that for awhile until, in spite of the rubber grips, he discovered great patches of skin had been stripped from his hand. "I think I need gloves", he mentioned hopefully.

"Naw, you don't need gloves," Frank confided... "you'll eventually get calluses."

The next firearm Bob selected was a Swiss army rifle that he could fire from a prone position. In spite of being out of practice, Bob fired a respectable pattern in the man-sized target. The ejected cartridges, however, after a few rounds of making their expected and traditional parabolas to the right, began to zoom straight back and bounce off Bob's forehead. With his usual dignity and imperviousness to pain, Bob only whined "Does it always do that?", until, wiping the sweat from his brow, he discovered that it was not sweat at all, but blood. That did it.

"I'm wounded!" he shouted... "Where's the whiskey... er, the first-aid kit?"

Having had all the fun he could stand for one afternoon, Bob and the shooting party called it a day. That evening Bob dozed on the couch through a rerun of "Zulu Dawn", muttering an occasional "ouch" when he disturbed his open wounds, and rousing only to take aspirin and medicinal whiskey for the worse case of Carr-flu known to fan.

JERRY'S SIDE OF THE STORY

Realizing that Bob Shaw hales from Britain -- where the mere thought of handguns gives the populace the quivering horrors -- we determined to give him a day of fun shooting. It would have been simpler if he had served with the Bengal Lancers and not spent his life concocting SF to delight the masses, but one has to make do with what one has. We had at first planned a day similar to that endured by a Marine Corps boot camp trainee. But upon learning that our author had contracted the Asian crud we scaled our plans down to the measure of a pleasant outing with the Girl Scouts.

Puritans that we are and ever mindful of safety, we took no whiskey along and Bob's performance and endurance was seriously crimped by this decision. The insidious Oriental virus which had gripped his innards thus was allowed to regain a tad of its vigor, and before long our author's face began changing from red to white and back again like an uncertain neon sign.

Our chosen target was a man-outline at about 15 to 20 yards. Shaw's first weapon was the Smith & Wesson .44 magnum, that of Dirty Harry fame, and it really made his day. Although I had loaded the rounds with less powder than usual and equipped the weapon with soft rubber grips, it still retained a large measure of its famous roar and kick. Bob was nevertheless shooting well with it, scoring regular hits on the outline when, after about 50 rounds, he glanced at his right hand and, lo, the skin had been removed from his thumb and part of the palm. It was clearly time to switch to a rifle which I quickly produced -- a Schmidt-Rubin, which back in 1911 had been the pride of the Swiss Army. As with everything Swiss, it operated like clockwork. It fired accurately and ALWAYS threw the spent cartridge cases to the right. But for Bob it suddenly became decidedly un-Swiss. On the fourth round it tossed the case straight back and into Bob's forehead, leaving a nasty cut.

Obviously it was time to scale down our expectations. We let him fire some antique black powder weapons -- a caplock and a flintlock -- followed by some less-than-ferocious handguns like the .38, the 9mm, and Bill Brown's .380.

But at this point Bob began changing colors like a chameleon and it clearly was time to return home to coolness and alcohol.

During our outing Bob had horrified us with tales of the decline of the British Empire. Only recently, he said, some British citizens of Northern Ireland had been arrested and jailed for FLYING THE UNION JACK. Churchill, Nelson and Henry V no doubt were flipping in their tombs. Fearing that Bob's spirits had been tainted by the moral decay which ate away at the Empire, we decided a bit of brainwashing was in order. Once home we put a tape of "Zulu Dawn" in the VCR. It was a movie depicting the redcoats at the very height of Britain's power and affluence. It should have stirred the heart of even a Chinese peasant and set him to humming "God Save the Queen." Bob sat on the couch rubbing his wounded hand and shortly fell asleep. Clearly, the Empire has sunk a long way.

