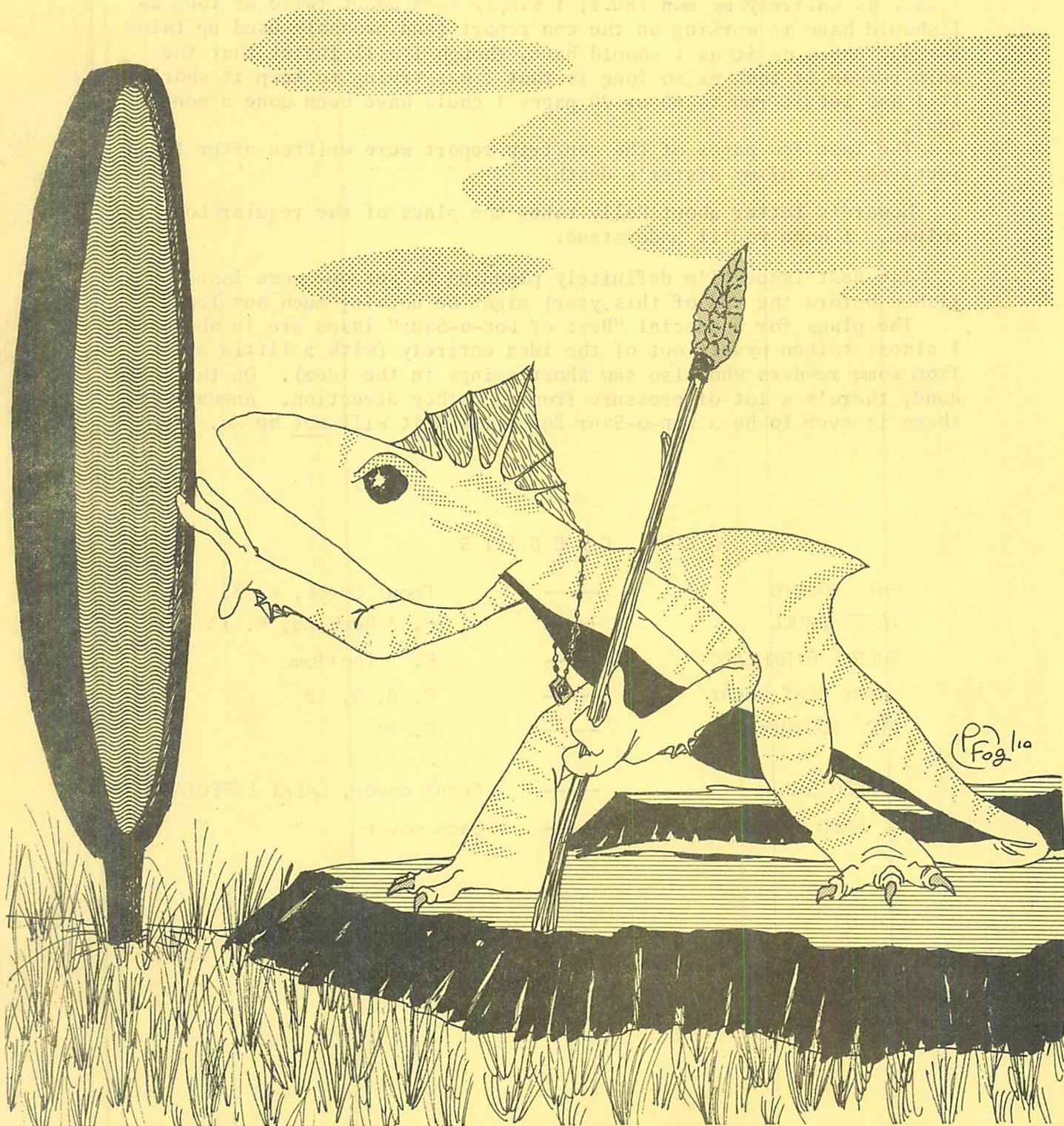


# DON - o - SAUR

43



This is the October/November issue (1975) (it was supposed to be the August/September issue, but you understand how these things are) of a science fiction fanzine published (supposedly) bi-monthly by Don C. Thompson of 7498 Canosa Court, Westminster, Colo. 80030, whose telephone number is (303) 429-6562.

This is the special Aussiecon report issue, with the special George Beahm-Ken Smith's *Phantasmagoria* supplement, all more or less as advertised way back in July in D-o-S 42. The long delay in getting it published is entirely my own fault; I simply took about twice as long as I should have in working on the con report (and probably used up twice as many pages on it as I should have, though I will insist that the main reason it took me so long is that I was trying to keep it short; if I had let it run to 60 or 70 pages I could have been done a month ago).

The last few pages of the con/trip report were written after I had received news of my sister's death.

Howard's letter about Polly takes the place of the regular Loc column. I hope you'll understand.

The next issue (I'm definitely planning to get one more issue published before the end of this year) might be nothing much but locs.

The plans for a special "Best of Don-o-Saur" issue are in abeyance. I almost talked myself out of the idea entirely (with a little help from some readers who also saw shortcomings in the idea). On the other hand, there's a lot of pressure from the other direction. Anyway, if there is ever to be a Don-o-Saur Bones issue it will not be No. 44.

## A R T      C R E D I T S

PHIL FOGLIO	-----	Front Cover, P. 32
JAMES SHULL	-----	P. 3 heading, P. 13
SHERYL BIRKHEAD	-----	P. 3 (bottom)
BARRY KENT MCKAY	-----	P. 8, 9, 18
VIC KOSTRIKIN	-----	P. 23
 KEN SMITH	 -----	 Front cover, GREAT EXPECTATIONS
GREG SPAGNOLA	-----	Back cover      "      "

# Polly Ryan

Oct. 16, 1930 -- Oct. 23, 1975

[Having already shared so much of Polly's life with the readers of DON-o-SAUR, it seems not only appropriate but inevitable that I now share her death with you as well. What follows is a portion of a letter from Polly's husband. The letter was sent not just to me but to all their friends and relatives, so I don't feel that I am violating anyone's privacy by printing it here. It was important to Polly that she share her terminal illness experience with as many people as could possibly be helped by the sharing. It is Howard's expressed desire to share the experience of her death. I am willing to help. I wish to express my personal thanks to Howard for writing the letter, and my even more profound thanks to him just for being there, and for helping to make her death as beautiful as her life was.]

Howard E. Ryan  
10424 Lake Ridge Drive  
Oakton, VA 22124

. . . Polly and I celebrated our 27th wedding anniversary on October 6. We actually celebrated on October 5 by going out to dinner at the Flagship

Restaurant in Washington and then spending the afternoon driving along all the back roads along the Potomac River from Washington to the other side of Great Falls on the Virginia side of the river. It was such a beautiful day and Polly and I just enjoyed the river, the fall leaves, the interesting little side roads.

Polly's time has been filled with doing things which she enjoyed, such as painting, making macrame hangings, weaving, metal work and putting together slide and music shows. The house has become filled with her many creations.

We mentioned in our June letter that we were active in a "Marriage Encounter" group. Our first Marriage Encounter weekend was a month prior to Polly's hospitalization with a recurrence of cancer. When we looked back, we could see how carefully God had planned things -- putting Marriage Encounter ahead of what could have been a grave crisis, so that we were prepared and able to handle the situation without depression. By our dialogue, both before and immediately after what could have been a crisis, we remained calm and rational, supporting each other and our children with an inner strength and peace that could only have come from God and our faith in Him. We had always made a point to live life to the fullest. Thru our dialogue, we decided what we still wanted to do with life together, and we have been doing these things. We have been sharing with other couples the importance of time.. The message being: Do not put off living or enjoying life or each other until there is no time left-- DO IT NOW! It has been of such comfort to us that we have lived our life together to the fullest.

Polly and I became very much involved with a group known as "Make Today Count" back in March of this year. It is a mutual help group to give emotional support to seriously and terminally ill patients and

their families. The purpose of this group is to help each other feel less alone in the personal crisis of coping with a long illness or death. When we returned from Wyoming, Polly and I started speaking to groups who were interested in how we were dealing with the problem in our relationship and our relationships with others that came into being as a result of Polly's terminal illness. Polly and I both felt we had a lot to share with others who were having these same problems, also for the doctors, nurses and clergymen who deal with the terminally ill and their families.

Polly's strong desire and ability to help others made her feel most useful. She wanted to tell her story with all its ups and downs and how we dealt with the problems. She felt this would give strength and help to others. She wanted to reach out to as many people as possible and share ourselves with them. We spoke as a team, each telling of the changes in his or her life that Polly's terminal illness had brought. Polly was always ready and willing to speak to any group. Our last speaking session together was October 17. Polly and I felt a real special mission in life in bringing our story to others. Polly's total willingness to share all her feelings about her illness made this mission possible.

Polly had really been making every day count during the last eleven months since the cancer reoccurred. During this whole period, Polly ran a temperature that had to be controlled every four hours every day. Polly never complained after she accepted her disease. She just went ahead and accomplished as many things as possible.

On the evening of October 15 (Wednesday), she experienced pains in the abdominal area and a very high temperature which was not responding to control too well. Polly asked that Father Cassidy be called and for him to bring her Communion. After she received Communion, Father said the prayers for the very sick. Following Father's departure, we went to the hospital where they gave her some medicine for the pain. She did not feel at all well but at that time they could not determine any specific reason other than the general size of the cancer tumors. Polly celebrated her 45th birthday on October 16 with birthday cake and friends.

On October 17 (Friday), Polly and I spoke in a "Make Today Count" panel session; however, she was not feeling well. Saturday her condition was not good but we still had not detected the sign the doctors had asked us to watch for. Her condition became more severe on late Sunday. Early on the morning of October 20 (Monday), we went back to the hospital. They performed a series of tests and took X-rays to determine the problem and to see if they could do anything about it. It was established late in the afternoon on October 21 (Tuesday) that the tumor masses were blocking the intestinal tract and neither radiation nor surgery would help. Polly knew she had only a short time to live and told the doctors she wanted to go home to die.

It had been her expressed wish to die at home since January when she knew her illness was terminal. The doctors quickly ordered an ambulance, got the necessary medicines together, and I parked my car so I could ride home in the ambulance with Polly. I called the children and told them I was bringing their mother home.

As we drove through the countryside that evening, Polly asked me to tell her where we were. I not only told her where we were, but I described the lights, the stars, the clouds, the scenery, the total countryside for Polly's enjoyment because I knew this would be our last drive through the countryside together. I had told the driver that I just wanted a smooth slow ride home. When we got Polly home, she was much more relaxed. She was where she wanted to be, which was most important to both of us.

When the children greeted her, she extended her arms to theirs and Polly's beautiful smile is beyond description. She said she felt like she was just "glowing" (which she was) and that glow was radiating back from our faces (which it was). We were all very happy because Polly had made it home. Polly asked us to call Father Cassidy and ask him to bring her Communion. Father arrived shortly and after she received Communion, they had a very short talk. Polly appeared very calm and peaceful. That night, Polly's head was slightly elevated so she could breathe a little easier. I slept in the bed next to hers so I could look into her eyes. I cannot say I did a lot of sleeping; I watched her and she watched me. We talked together at times, just sat and held hands at times, Polly rested at times, and every so often she would open her eyes and look at me . . . I think just to make sure I was there. Polly mentioned the names of our many dear friends, some who also were having big problems to deal with, and she would ask me if they were doing "okay." I would tell her what I knew or that I thought they would make it "okay." My being able to assure her that these friends were going to see their way through their difficulties helped her to rest. Although it was extremely difficult for Polly to speak, she would repeat the name until I would say the name clearly back to her.

Wednesday, a number of friends happened by and Polly was happy to see them although it took a great deal of effort on her part to say very much to them. Polly was so at ease even when she was having a great deal of pain. I knew how much it meant to her to be home with her family and friends at this time because we had talked about it many times before and this was the way she wanted things to be at the end. Someone was always there to hold her hand if she wanted it held.

Polly was resting more by late Wednesday evening. Prior to that, she was very busy communicating both verbally and non-verbally. Polly's very special friend, Olga Lloyd (a nurse), took care of Polly most of the time she was home this last week. Early Thursday morning, Polly rested or slept and I also slept while Olga kept a watchful eye on both of us.

Thursday morning, I sat and held Polly's hand from about 5 to 6 a.m. I helped the children get breakfast and head off to school while Olga was with Polly. It was a beautiful and bright morning when the sun came up...Such a pretty day with the leaves now so many colors! Olga and I bathed Polly so she would feel fresh. When we were through, I was holding her in my arms so the bed could be straightened up a little. I was telling her how fresh and gentle she now looked as I was kissing her. I also was telling her now she could rest for awhile. She died as I was holding her. I gently let her head and shoulders settle back onto the bed. Then I knelt beside the bed and said a prayer to God that He had taken her from her suffering.

Months before, when we had discussed what the end might be like, Polly had expressed two thoughts. First, that she would not like to suffer very long and, second, that I could be there to hold her hand. I thanked both God and Polly that they had chosen both the time and place. I knew Polly could only be happy knowing it had happened the way she wanted it.

Although I knew Polly would one day die and had cried many times before, I just knelt beside the bed with our hands together and my head upon her breast and cried and sobbed for more than half an hour before I could think about what yet remained to be done.

Olga and another friend now combed Polly's hair and arranged her body. With a friend, I then went to school and picked up Heidi, Teresa, Christine and James and brought them home. Father Cassidy arrived as we all returned home. We had a special prayer service for Polly right there in our own bedroom for the family and those wonderful friends who happened to be with us at that time. After the children had a chance to spend some time with their mother's body in private, it was time for Polly's body to be moved to Georgetown Medical School. Polly had donated her body so perhaps they could learn more about the disease so others could be helped.

As I pause for a moment, I wonder what has not been said. I would like to just add a few items. Polly's remains will be buried in Flint Hill Cemetery in Oakton when the medical school has completed its study. This will be a year or so from now.

Polly planned her own Memorial Mass. It reflects Polly's outlook. It is happy and joyful and scheduled to be held on Thursday, November 6, at 8 p.m. at St. Mark's Church in Vienna, Virginia.

Instead of flowers, Polly's wishes were that remembrances be given to St. Stephen's Indian Mission, St. Stephen, Wyoming 82524, or Make Today Count, 10018 Morningside Court, Fairfax, Virginia, 22030.

In closing, I can only say that Polly and I had a beautiful life together and we want to share that joy with you.

My love and best wishes to each of you,  
Howard and family

One final note: Polly's Book, *JOURNEY IN VIRGINIA: A History of 300 Years*, is finished. Polly got the first bound copy of it on Oct. 3 and "sat right down and read it as if it was a new book which she had never read before." The book is hard bound, more than 200 pages, with 47 pictures and charts. It sells for \$9.95.

# WALKING IN A DREAM

No. 43

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## SO FAR AWAY, SO CLOSE TO HOME

In Los Angeles, on the way back from Aussiecon, I did something rather stupid and potentially dangerous. Instead of accepting the hospitality and comforts and companionship of NASFiC at the Marriott Hotel, I took a bus into downtown L.A. I had reasons. Admittedly they weren't much good, but they were mine. I'll get to them in a while.

It was a gray, foggy, lusterless day, getting on toward late afternoon. Only five hours before it had been early morning in Hawaii. And only 15 hours earlier it had been 8 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 31, as the DC-10 left Auckland, New Zealand. Now for the second day in a row it was Sunday, Aug. 31. Late afternoon. We had arrived in Los Angeles four hours before we left New Zealand. That took some getting used to, but it had absolutely nothing to do with my decision to go downtown.

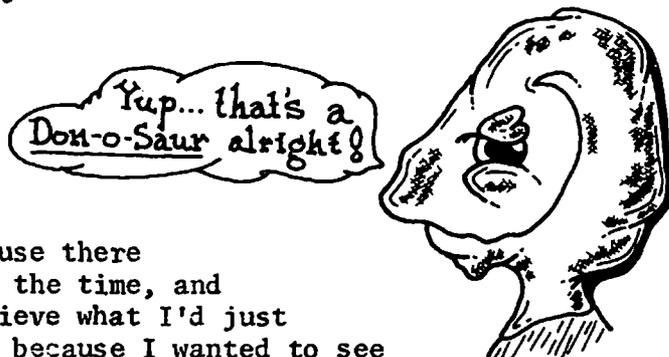
It was gray, foggy (really more fog than smog, I believe), almost chilly. I had packed my overcoat in a suitcase and stashed all my luggage in lockers at the airport. After all, we had left winter (such as it was) behind us, in the southern hemisphere. It was supposed to be summer in Los Angeles.

What with one thing and another, a variety of decisions and details and delays (I handily missed the bus that would have taken me all the way downtown, to the bus depot, and so I took the next one, to the Hilton Hotel) it was dusk when I got off the bus. If dusk is the right word for it. There was no way to tell where the sun was, but the fog had become a much darker gray.

I had a general idea of which way I wanted to go, because I had spent a couple of minutes studying the street map at the airport booth where I'd bought the bus ticket, but even without that precaution I would have been able to orient myself. The tall buildings were that way, wavering in the mist but discernible enough. I walked toward them, a downhill trek. The lights of Wilshire Boulevard came on, providing the luster that the day had lacked, but starkly emphasizing the absence of car or pedestrian traffic and reminding me vividly of one of the stupidities of my expedition.

This was Sunday night. I knew that in the abstract; I'd been playing with the idea for hours, but I was just beginning to comprehend it in real terms. Downtown L.A. would be deserted of course. There would be nothing at all to see or do. My little test would be meaningless.

But I kept on walking, partly because there didn't seem anything else much to do at the time, and partly because I still didn't quite believe what I'd just figured out. And partly (largely) just because I wanted to see downtown again. One reason for being here was nostalgia. But I hate to call it that. Nostalgia is something older



people have, something disreputably emotional, sentimental. My pre-occupations with the past are generally a simple matter of refreshing my memory for intellectual purposes; but I'll be honest once, and in this case I'll call it nostalgia.

Many eons ago (or in some alternate time line) I was 20 years old and a soldier in the United States Army; I was a clerk typist, stationed at McCornack General Hospital in Pasadena. It was, since I've decided to be truthful, an incredibly soft and unmilitary existence. The hospital was grossly overstaffed with clerk typists and orderlies and temporary MPs. There simply weren't enough jobs to go around, not enough unskilled work to keep all the unskilled young GIs occupied. So we had a lot of free time.

There were streetcars in those days. (This is the year 1947 I'm talking about; be happy if you don't remember it; except for a rather exciting World Series it was pretty much of a nothing year). But I seem to recall that what ran between Pasadena and L.A. wasn't called a streetcar. A tram? No. Anyway, it was an electric railway, and it was cheap, and the terminal was in the heart of downtown L.A. -- at Sixth and Main -- and a lot of the useless soldiers from McCornack made use of the rail line. Sometimes I would go in with a group (because of my thinning hair which made me look older than I was, I could sometimes get my buddies into bars; and that's why they tolerated me). But just as often I would go alone, for I was basically a solitary sort of person then, as now.

As I walked on down fog-shrouded Wilshire Boulevard, away from the Hilton Hotel, some of the street names began to seem familiar. Figueroa, definitely. Wasn't that the street that the rail line came in on from Pasadena? But Flower I wasn't sure of, nor Grand. Olive? Hill.

Then Broadway.

And Pershing Square!

I tried to judge whether Pershing Square had changed, but I found that I had no memories of what it looked like. Something about its openness and neatness seemed mildly incongruous, but I didn't try to analyze it. Only the name was vividly familiar -- and the knowledge that Sixth was to the right. My feet seemed to know that. I turned without thinking about it, went only a block and then turned left again and walked to the next intersection.

And stopped there in bewilderment.

Spring Street? What had happened to Main? Damn it, was I lost after all? Had I somehow gotten into the wrong part of town altogether? I began to wonder just how I expected to get back to the airport tonight if I was indeed lost. But I just shrugged; it didn't seem crucial. I assumed I'd be able to catch a bus someplace when I needed one. A cab? Never! The thought didn't even enter my mind.

My immediate concern was Spring Street. Where had it come from? I knew that Main was only one block beyond Broadway.

Unable to think of anything else to do, I kept on walking. And there was Main. And so much for vivid memories and clear knowledge.

But as I turned right onto Main and saw the row of bright lights and saw the clusters of people and heard their voices and heard the sounds of the cars (as though there had been no lights, no people, no cars until just now), the memories did start flooding back.

\* \* \* \* \*

One evening in Auckland, New Zealand, on the way home from Australia, Mike Glicksohn asked me, "Are you planning a special Aussiecon edition of Don-o-Saur, or at least some kind of special report on the trip?"

I said I expected to write a lengthy trip-and-con report.

"But you said you haven't been taking notes. How can you remember all this stuff? Or maybe you have been taking notes and I haven't seen you

"No. Except the first few days. It'll be a very subjective, impressionistic sort of report. I don't like to read travelogues -- we did this and then we saw that, and then we met so-and-so -- and I hate to write reports that way."

That might have been the wrong thing to say. Mike Glicksohn had been taking notes--voluminously. He had a notebook bulging by now with notes that I would have needed a magnifying glass to read.

Actually, though I was not lying to Mike, I did take some notes on the trip. Maybe it was partly because Mike had mentioned it. Anyway on the very day that we left New Zealand I found time to jot down a very sketchy day-by-day summary of the preceding three weeks' events. And I'll probably even make some use of those notes as I continue with my own con/trip report. Maybe at the end of my subjective-impressionistic narrative I will print the notes, or at least a digest of them, as a sort of appendix or supplement in order to provide a chronological framework. In my narrative, I intend to skip back and forth in time rather freely, and I'm sure it will become confusing. A chronological appendix could serve to orient both you and me.

In case you're confused already and are wondering why I started by telling about that weird visit to downtown Los Angeles, let me assure you that it's an integral part of my report, a very important part of it, though I haven't gotten to the important aspect of it yet. But I'll be referring back to the LA experience repeatedly, and I hope that by the time we're through its importance will become evident (but I don't promise anything). (And let me reassure you that I don't intend to get sidetracked into detailed reminiscences of my Army days in that LA segment).

Now, as to the trip itself . . .

The logical place to begin would be in Los Angeles on the first leg of the journey, since I've already started in Los Angeles on the last leg. (That's logical? No, I suppose not, but it does seem appropriate).

I arrived in L.A. from Denver fairly early Friday afternoon, Aug. 8, and caught a bus to the Marriott Hotel and checked into my room, which I had reserved months in advance -- and then suddenly noticed that I had nothing to do for the rest of the day. I wondered why I had hastened to get here so early. Well, yes, there was to be a party that evening, sponsored by LASFS and the travel agency, but it would have been no calamity to miss it. Not having anything special that I wanted to do, it had been pointless to have been in such a hurry. Gail Barton, the only other Denver fan going to Aussiecon (that I knew of then), had gotten to L.A. even before I had, but she had a reason: she wanted to spend a day with the robots at Disneyland.

And that's one big difference between me and Gail--between me and a lot of people. No, not Disneyland; the fact that they plan ahead, have reasons for what they do, make good use of their time, are sensible. Me, I seldom do more than minimal planning for anything; just go ahead and do things and then wonder why; and given the opportunity, I am wont to squander time shamelessly. (Except that I'm then ashamed of it).

I wandered around the hotel for a while, looking for fannish faces, finding none. I called the Lundryst room (Don and Grace), thinking it might be polite to let them know I was here, but they were out. I found the room where the party was to be. I wandered around some more. Then I went back up to my room and wrote a letter to Mae Strelkov -- or started one. I had received a second installment of Mae's amazingly long Don-o-Saur loc just before I left home. I had wavered a bit at the last moment about whether to take my typewriter along or not, and Mae's letter provided the affirmative answer. I had to write to her. Even if I got no other use out of the typewriter, that would justify taking it.

There was a party that evening. I was practically the first one there. Not quite, because I was met at the door by Bruce Pelz. I recognized him, having seen him at several previous cons, World and Wester, though we had never actually met. What surprised me was that Bruce recognized me. "That looks like a Don C. Thompson," he said as I approached. "You are Don Thompson, aren't you?" and I acknowledged that I was, but I didn't ask how he happened to know, because he immediately introduced me to his wife, Elayne, whom I distinctly recalled having seen quite a lot of (in fact all) at previous cons; and then other fans started arriving.

The party never got very wild, but it was worthwhile-- a chance to meet some of the people who would be on the trip. I'd met some of them before, such as Ned Brooks, Mike Glicksohn, Susan Wood, but there were many others that I hadn't met previously, such as the Lundrysts, Fred Patten, John Berry, Dennis Lien, Jack Chalker, Alan Frisbie . . .

And the people from the travel agency were there with tickets and Air New Zealand flight bags.

What that party was really lacking though, I decided later, was Bob Tucker. And so it broke up early, with no dead dog afterward, and so there was nothing to do but get a good night's sleep, which I did.

Saturday was interesting.

Various members of LASFS provided transportation to the open house at the LASFS meeting hall. (Does it have a name? I should have taken notes; I don't even remember where that place is located). Gail and I caught a ride with Fred Patten, who took a detour via A Change of Hobbit, which I was particularly eager to see, having heard much about it from Ed Bryant and others.

I will say this about A Change of Hobbit: It has a very lovely proprietress whose tattooed cleavage is indeed as charming as Ed Bryant had assured me it was; and Sherri Gottlieb runs a neat and attractive SF book store where I could spend many happy hours and a lot of money, and I regretted that we couldn't stay longer. But I have to add this: Lois Newman has a much larger SF book store in Boulder, with a more complete stock and greater variety, and it is equally neat and attractive, with the added glamor of wandering through the catacombs of a former bank vault (it's possible to get lost for days in there, and to spend a fortune); and even though Lois Newman may not have tattooed cleavage, she is nevertheless a very nice person.

How many SF groups have their own building? (That's just a rhetorical question, but if anybody happens to know, I'll appreciate an answer). I almost expected to be paralyzed with envy at LASFS headquarters, but I wasn't really. Admiring and respectful, certainly. It's a nice place. Not large. A single story building, at one time a private residence. The living room-dining alcove have become the meeting hall. the kitchen is still a kitchen and the bathroom a bathroom. The bedroom has become a library. All very nice, particularly the library. But Gail

and I had the same thought at the same time about the meeting hall: "Not big enough for a DASFA meeting." But then someone pointed out that LASFS meets once a week instead of once a month, and anyway not everybody tries to crowd into the meeting hall at once on meeting nights, because some people are busy collating APA-L and some are in the library. In addition to which, LASFS has plans to build an addition onto the rear of the building.

The other tourist attraction that Saturday was Bruce Pelz's fanzine collection (with Fred Patten still providing the transportation). Bruce has an impressive library of SF books and magazines by any standards, and all very neatly and systematically arranged, with all the hardback novels in one section and the hardback single-author collections and anthologies in another section, and all the paperbacks somewhere else; but the main feature of the Pelz palace is the fanzines.

Not only does Bruce have nearly all the fanzines that you might be able to think of, and a good many that I have never heard of, and not only does he have them all filed and catalogued so that he can keep track of what he has and what he lacks, the truly impressive thing is that he has many of these zines (if not most) in bound editions. Professionally bound, in simulated leather, with the title and volume numbers stamped on the spine.

During the week or so before the trip was to begin, I had begun making the first faltering efforts toward getting my fanzine accumulation into some sort of order. I had spread them out all over the floor and couch and table in my basement room, in alphabetical order; and I had started logging them, according to title, editor, frequency of publication, how many issues I had, etc; and I was trying desperately to think of some way to store them that would be both fairly neat and yet leave them accessible.

Well, Bruce Pelz has the answer. But it costs. He wouldn't say how much it costs, but he didn't have to; I have a general idea. There's gotta be a cheaper way. Looseleaf binders for some of them? Clip binders? Even those cost. And where does one get the time even to get all the zines catalogued? I got through the Ds before the trip and haven't gotten back to the project since my return.

Let's get on to Australia, shall we? And quit dawdling around in L.A.

What I remember most vividly about the trip is that it involved a hell of a lot of waiting. It seemed it never would actually begin.

There was a period of waiting around at the hotel late Saturday afternoon, before the bus took us to the airport. And then there was a long period of waiting around at the airport, because the travel agency wanted us there about three hours ahead of time to take care of such details as checking the baggage, registering valuables with customs, getting the boarding passes, etc. It didn't take very long to get all those things done. And there was still lots of time to wander around, to have supper, to wander around some more... I wandered around a lot with Ned Brooks and had supper with him. And finally everybody started congregating in the Air New Zealand boarding lounge for another long and rather uncomfortable wait. The lounge was crowded and all available seats were quickly taken, with a lot of people left standing. Eventually, in response to some mysterious signal that I neither saw nor heard, everyone stood up and started forming a line. In which to wait some more. Eventually the line started moving. Eventually we were on the plane, all

*in our proper seats.* That must have been about 9:30. That plane actually

took off at about 10 p.m. And that was the end of the waiting, you think? Nope, that was the start, because the trip itself was nothing much but a

matter of waiting. It wasn't as though we had to pedal or flap our wings or anything; all we could do was wait for the plane to land.

I figured out that that night--the period of darkness that began at 7 something Saturday evening, Aug. 10--was by any measurement you want to use the longest night of my entire life. For one thing, it didn't end until about 10 a.m. Monday, by my watch, so conceivably I could claim that it lasted more than 40 hours, but that's cheating, because there wasn't any Sunday.

(That's not quite accurate; we did get about an hour of Sunday, in Honolulu, landing there at midnight, local time, and leaving at 1 a.m. Sunday, a day that then evaporated as we crossed the International Date Line).

Here's how the time-paradox confusion went, if you're interested in this sort of thing (I find it fascinating):

OK. Left L.A. at 10 p.m. Flight to Honolulu took five hours, but we gained three hours crossing time zones, so it was only midnight (instead of 3 a.m.) when we landed.

Left Honolulu at 1 a.m. Sunday. Flight time to Auckland was about nine hours, with two hours gained but a whole day lost, so that arrival time in New Zealand was 8 a.m., local time, though my watch said 1 p.m.

There was a delay in Auckland; some kind of problem with the navigating equipment. Departure time was 9:50 a.m.

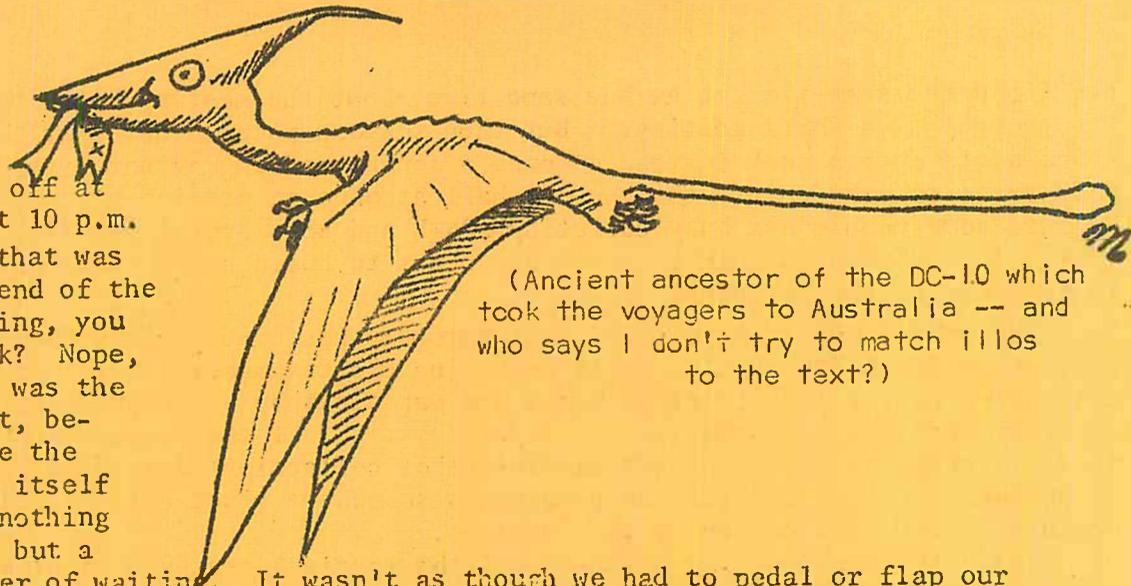
Travel time between Auckland and Sydney is about three hours, but there's a loss of another two hours, so that we arrived, Sydney time, at 11 a.m. Monday. Total elapsed time from L.A.: 20 hours.

(And that period of darkness that I was concerned about lasted just about 15 hours).

The flight wasn't just a matter of sitting and waiting. We seemed to spend a lot of time eating. I lost track of the number of times they fed us, but somebody assured me later that it was four, and I know it was at least that many meals. And they were meals, not simply snacks. But they came at such odd hours -- breakfast at noon. But maybe that's not so odd for some people.

There was a one-shot which helped pass the time for some of the fans, and there was considerable confusion as to whose typewriter was going around and whose stencils were being used. I was inadvertently given credit for helping with the one-shot (PlaneCon I), but I had *nothing at all to do with it really.*

*I had brought my portable typewriter on board with me, because I had some vague notion that there might be room and time and oppor-*



(Ancient ancestor of the DC-10 which took the voyagers to Australia -- and who says I don't try to match illos to the text?)

tunity and inclination to use it, but as it happened I found none of those things, and so my typewriter served as an unneeded and unwelcome footrest for the entire flight.

It was finally established pretty certainly that Alan Frisbie of Cambridge, Ohio, was the owner of the typewriter and stencils, but the person actually circulating them and contributing even more to the confusion was -- if I finally have his name right -- Louis Elver Gray. Or maybe it really is L'Elver, as it appears in the one-shot. Bob Tucker always spoke of him as "Elder Gray," and I thought of him as the Gray Eminence, or sometimes as Treebeard. Anyway, he is a very gray person-- tall and quiet, with brooding eyes and a woeful countenance and long gray beard and moustache. Woeful countenance. That's from "Man of La Mancha," isn't it? That's not bad; there was something of Don Quixote about him, though in a rather shy and retiring sort of way, generally. He seemed to hover around the fringes of the crowds, intent on the impossible dream of being inconspicuous.



Prehistoric kangaroo?

One of the proudest moments of the entire trip for me came during the fairly early hours of that long flight.

Bob Tucker and Rusty Hevelin were sitting together in the row of seats directly in front of me. Tucker sat very very still for the first couple of hours (I didn't realize until much later that this was his very first flight), but eventually he did get up and do a certain amount of wandering around and visiting. As he was returning to his seat he stopped and spoke to me. (And remember that I had never met Tucker, nor he me; I had no idea that he knew who I was, and it didn't occur to me that there was any reason why he should, though I had spotted him instantly and recognized him without anyone having to point him out when he appeared at the airport, but then I had seen pictures of him and heard descriptions).

"Hey, I saw you there at the airport," he said, speaking to me as though he'd known me all his life, I didn't know yet that he speaks to everyone that way. "I wanted to at least say hello to you then, but I was with a lady who was seeing me off, and I couldn't leave her, but . . . You know, just a few weeks ago in Cincinnati I had the very great pleasure of announcing that the winner of the first FAAn award for best fan writer was Don C. Thompson."

I emitted a sort of squawk and said, "Oh, you made the presentations? I didn't even know that!"

#### AN EXPLANATORY AND APOLOGETIC INTERLUDE

Yeah, about that FAAn Award . . . I really feel stupid.

The last issue of DON-o-SAUR was out around the middle of July, wasn't it? The FAAn awards were presented at Midwestcon around the middle of June, right? DoS 42 had a long thing about my burning

ambition to win a Hugo; but there was not a single mention, anywhere in the issue, indicating that I had already won the FAAn Award. Didn't you sort of wonder about that? I just hope no one thought it was because I didn't even care about the FAAn Award, because I did. And do. I'm very proud, and very grateful, not only to those who voted for me but to the people who worked so hard to set up the awards (with scarcely a word of encouragement from me, though I did approve of the idea) -- Moshe Feder, Linda Bushyager, Mike Glycer, Bill Bowers, Harry Warner, Donn Brazier, Mike Glicksohn, Sam Long, Jeff Smith, Don D'Amassa, Darroll Pardee. . . And I'm particularly grateful to Don D'Amassa for publicly, in his own zine, urging people who had nominated him to vote for me. Some apparently did.

The reason I didn't mention the award in the last Don-o-Saur, and the reason I feel stupid is that I didn't know I had won until about the first of August. It was my own stupid fault.

You see, I didn't nominate. That was bad enough, but then I didn't vote, either. (I meant to, but the ballot got buried, and by the time it surfaced the deadline was past). And so, by not indicating that I wanted to learn who the winners were, I of course did not learn until much later. There were a couple of early hints (a postcard from Sheryl Birkhead that said simply: 'Congratulations!' and some cryptic references in a couple of letters) but I dismissed them when there was no immediate confirmation.

Eventually and somehow (I never did get the details), John and Margaret Senatore of Pueblo delivered the trophy to Ted Peak and Judith Brownlee; and they in turn delivered it to me.

At the September DASFA meeting we enacted a formal, five-second presentation ceremony.

Thanks again to everyone involved -- not forgetting Randy Bathurst for sculpting the perfect faan symbol!

#### AND NOW BACK TO LIVE ACTION!

I was in the middle of a short conversation with Bob Tucker, but with Tucker's permission I will skip the rest of it, okay? In fact, I will skip over the rest of the flight if I have at least managed to convey the impression that it was a long flight.

Might also mention that I got virtually no sleep. I closed my eyes occasionally and sometimes when I opened them there had been a lapse of as much as 15 or 20 minutes, but I don't call that sleep.

The plane landed at 11 a.m. Sydney time, and there was then the business of standing in line to be checked through Australian customs, but that didn't seem to take much time at all. The worst of the waiting was over. And then we were being greeted by a flock of Aussie fans, including Robin Johnson (the ubiquitous), Eric Lindsay, Ron and Sue Clark, Kevin Dillon and several others. Shayne McCormack might have been there too, and I know that Ken Ozanne was, though I didn't manage to meet him until at the con. And then we were being herded into buses and conveyed to the Hyatt Kingsgate Hotel.

I suppose the first thing any American visitor to Australia notices is that people drive on the wrong side of the street, and that the driver's seat of all vehicles is on the right. I thought I had seen enough English movies to be able to accept that fact with aplomb, but I confess to experiencing a momentary sense of panic

when the bus pulled into traffic. In fact, that mirror-image traffic flow was the hardest thing for me to get used to during the entire trip, even as a pedestrian (which I was most of the time). And it's not only a matter of looking the wrong way in crossing streets. On more than just a few occasions I almost ran into an embarrassing situation in the form of a physical person who would be approaching me on a collision course; and I would veer automatically to the right and the native would veer automatically to his left. I nearly always gave way first.

The Hyatt Kingsgate is a thoroughly Americanized hotel, as is the Southern Cross in Melbourne. Perhaps a trifle more civilized. The only significant difference between them and any expensive American hotel was that they had a refrigerator and an electric coffee pot (or teapot -- a ceramic urn that heated water for instant coffee or for tea bags) instead of a color TV. My room mate both in Sydney and at the con was Jim Landau (of Arlington, Va., and he had also been my seat-mate on the plane). Jim is an ice-water drinker; I am a coffee and tea drinker. So together we made good use of the hotel amenities.

It was still the middle of the day, Australian time, and only early evening by my own watch, which I had kept on Los Angeles time so I could measure just how long the trip took. I changed it now to local time. And even though I had been without real sleep for something like 36 hours, it felt like the middle of the day, and I was not sleepy. So I went out for a walk.

I was pretty cautious at first. See, I have virtually no sense of direction. (Well, sometimes I can tell up from down, but not always, and anything more subtle than that is beyond my grasp). And this was the first time in my whole long life that I had ever set foot on the streets of a non-American city. That's literally true. I was in Canada once as a teenager, but not in a city and not on foot. Ordinarily I don't mind getting lost. Indeed, when I go out walking in a strange city I expect to get lost. But it didn't seem appropriate to begin this particular visit that way, so I made a special effort to keep track of which way I turned and which way the hotel was. And I did not get lost. Not this time.

Here are some of my initial on-foot impressions of Sydney.

The people look pretty much like the people in Denver or L.A. The younger people wear jeans and have long hair and/or beards, and the older men have short hair and wear suits and the older women wear dresses. (But they talk like Australians; it's a very distinctive accent, quite a bit different from the English accents--and I was somewhat taken aback, later, when I overheard Australians talking about my American accent).

There are a lot of little shops in the vicinity of the hotel -- jewelers, tailors, chemists, milk bars, coffee shops. . . I don't remember all the different kinds. Yes, newsagents. Now, I knew that British Commonwealth cities don't have drug stores-- that they're chemist's instead --but I'd never seen them with my own eyes before. And I never did really get used to the idea that about the only things you can get in a chemist shop are cosmetics and drugs.

The signs for all the little shops are of uniform size and shape,

long, narrow wooden boards extending horizontally over the sidewalk, not very high above head level.

None of the firms' names include 'Inc.' Many of them, however, have 'Pty. Ltd.' That stumped me for a while. 'Ltd.' was no problem. Everybody knows about Limited. But 'Pty'? Pity? Property? Posterity? I wasn't going to ask. I manage to sound dumb enough to most people even without asking a lot of dumb questions. I was prepared to go through life without ever knowing what 'Pty.' meant, but a few days later I overheard Jack Chalker use the term 'proprietary limited' in a conversation with someone else.

The cars were sort of interesting. Not because of their differences from American cars but because of the extreme similarity. Many of them are American cars (only with the steering wheel on the right). I saw a lot of Fords. Also a lot of Japanese models -- Toyotas, Datsuns, Hondas. In fact about half the cars that I checked were either American or Japanese; the other half had such names as Holden, Leyland, Kingswood and Morris. I learned later that the Holden is an Australian car -- except that it isn't: it's owned by General Motors. There weren't as many compact and very small cars as you can find in Denver. More different kinds of minis, though.

Nor did I ever see adults riding bikes, either in Sydney or Melbourne or in Auckland. They don't know about the energy shortage.

Only a short distance from the Kingsgate is a street known as 'The Dirty Half-Mile.' It's a long block (though not that long) lined on both sides of the street with pornography and sex aid device shops, adult movie 'clubs,' and strip tease 'clubs' -- possibly Sydney's total supply of triple-X establishments; at least I never saw any more of them anywhere else in the city. The places being there at all surprised me a little, because some of the informational material that I'd received about Australia indicated that censorship was strict and that anyone bringing in prurient publications was in danger of having them confiscated. (I was bringing in copies of DON-o-SAUR, is how come I happened to be alert to that item). I was somewhat relieved to note that the sexual revolution was going on even here.

The sight of the Dirty Half Mile sent a recollection of Main Street Los Angeles between First and Sixth flashing through my mind.

I don't know how long I wandered around, exploring the narrow lanes that looked like they should be alleys but were lined with little shops, each displaying its banner-like sign across the sidewalk -- areas that reminded me more than anything of some of the quaint malls or large American shopping centers.

There was a bank near the hotel and I changed about 300 American dollars into about 250 Australian dollars and was baffled by the problem of how to fit the Aussie bills into my billfold.

Australian money is not just worth more than American, it is also prettier and larger. That is, the larger bills are larger; all of them are prettier, more colorful. It's a very sensible and convenient arrangement, once you get used to it: Different denominations are distinguished by different colors and by different sizes. But it does mean that the oversize \$20 bill does not fit neatly into a wallet made to hold U.S. currency. I finally learned to fold them horizontally

and just not carry very many of them around with me.

I was tired enough when I got back to my hotel room that I lay down on the bed, wondering if I could really sleep until the following morning and willing to bet that I could.

A gentle, almost hesitant ringing awoke me. So that's what the telephone's Australian accent sounded like! A glance at my watch surprised me with the information that 45 minutes had passed instantly. I said, "hello" in a cheerful, alert tone of voice.

It was Kevin Dillon calling to tell me that a group of fans was going to A. Bertram Chandler's place for supper or a party and I was invited if I'd care to come. I thought Kevin said something about Chandler wanting to meet me, but then I thought I must have misunderstood, because Kevin talks rather rapidly and very softly and I was seldom quite sure that I was catching everything he said.

Anyway, I definitely wanted to meet Bertram Chandler, so I hurried down to the lobby . . . and met him.

There seemed to be several clusters of fans as well as assorted individuals drifting around aimlessly, but I spotted Kevin's black bristly beard and wirey form and made my way to that group. Gail Barton was there, too, and the Clarks, and Elver Gray among others. At their center was a stiff, erect gentleman with a face graven from ruddy marble. He looked a lot like a sea captain, somehow. When he got a chance, Kevin introduced me to him, and A. Bertram Chandler said, "Ah, yes, Don Thompson. Don-o-Saur. I've been looking forward to meeting you."

I still wasn't quite sure that I'd heard correctly, and I had no idea how to respond to a statement like that. The only thing I could think of was that I had taken him off the DON-o-SAUR mailing list recently, having never heard from him and not being at all sure that he'd been receiving it. I decided not to tell him that.

The place where Chandler took us -- it was within easy walking distance over some of the territory I had covered earlier -- can scarcely be called an apartment, and in fact



Scots influence  
is strong in Australia

no one did call it that. It was a tiny room with an even tinier kitchen off of it. There was a desk and typewriter, bookcases and a few chairs. The seven or eight fans filled the place to overflowing.

Chandler busied himself in the kitchen for a while and passed around plates of stew and fried rice.

In a little while I was sitting on the floor beside A. Bertram Chandler and listening to the plot details of his new novel, which takes place on an alternate time track in which Ned Kelley was not captured but became the leader of Australia's war for independence; and when the United States withdraws from Vietnam, Australia drops atomic bombs on Hanoi, thus setting off World War III. John Grimes is involved in the book somehow.

Some time after that the party adjourned to Robin Johnson's room in the Hyatt, and continued until at least 1 a.m., which is when I began to feel like I'd been without sleep for 48 hours and decided to try to remember what it felt like.

Some of the U.S. fans took a boat ride with Bert Chandler the next day. I did not. He and I were on a first-name basis by then, but that did not, as I saw it, mean I was under any obligation to take a boat ride around the bay with him. Early August is, after all, still winter in Australia. Now it was not a terribly harsh winter. There was no snow, no ice, no howling winds. But there was light rain now and again and overcast skies and the Australians spoke of the temperature as "oh, around ten or twelve degrees," and I don't care if they didn't mean fahrenheit. Ten or twelve degrees is too cold for me to be comfortable no matter what kind of scale you use.

Nevertheless I spent a major portion of the next day out of doors. Not with a stiff sea breeze blowing the salt spray into my face, to be sure; but still outside on a gray, overcast, chilly day, and me without an overcoat most of the time. Uncomfortable, but not quite miserable. And, remarkably, suffering no lasting ill effects at all from the experience.

The temperature of Australia bothered me quite a lot. I spent a great deal of time it seemed, both indoors and out, right at the edge of extreme discomfort, wiping my nose, stamping my feet, rubbing my hands together -- and just knowing that I would wake up with a bad cold. But I never did. And it wasn't that there weren't bad colds going around. Jim Landau, who was still my room mate in Melbourne, came down with it early in the con and so did quite a few other Americans. I didn't, but I didn't go around gloating about it either.

I spent most of that second day in Australia with Kevin Dillon, getting a guided tour of the downtown bookshops. There are many of them, but book prices in Australia are high, and so I exercised restraint, both then and later. Gail was with us for the first half of the day, and many of the books she collects are available only in the English editions; her restraint was not as noticeable as mine. After she left us to go see the zoo, I got to lug her flight bag around; so I know.

It occurs to me that I don't know whether Kevin Dillon eats or not. I never saw him do it. Gail and I had lunch at one of the innumerable little milk bars that Australia has instead of hamburger stands or cafes, and Kevin sat and talked with us, but did not eat.

That evening, while Kevin and I waited for Gail to return from the zoo so we could see her off on the night train to Melbourne, we were joined at our table in the train station cafeteria by an Australian businessman, who fell into instant and effortless conversation with Kevin, though they had never seen each other before. I watched in utter fascination as the businessman consumed his entire plateful of roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy and assorted vegetables without the upside down fork ever leaving his left hand or the knife his right; and he shot occasional apprehensive glances at me as I fumbled my implements back and forth between hands. And Kevin sat and talked to both of us, but did not eat, and seemed not to notice that we were.

Gail arrived and reclaimed her book bag and then was gone again. Kevin is a proof reader in a government office and was due at work, so he left, after giving me careful directions on how to get to the right place to catch the right bus to get back to Kings Cross. I thanked him profusely for everything and assured him I would have no trouble.

And I didn't. I got lost immediately, with no effort at all. And I had the first of several long, long walks by myself that, taken together, constitute one of the important aspects of my Australian trip. I walked for perhaps two hours this first time, beginning in well-lighted downtown streets with both auto and pedestrian traffic fairly brisk, but then, setting my sights on tall buildings that I thought to be in the direction of the hotel area, I soon found myself in dimmer regions, with fewer people and fewer cars. I lost sight of the tall buildings and for a while relied entirely upon my own infallibly erroneous sense of misdirection until I turned a corner and saw, startlingly only a few blocks away, surprisingly large, the Sydney Opera House, with the Harbor Bridge visible beyond it; and I knew that I'd walked many blocks beyond where I should have turned for the hotel. But it was sort of an awesome, eerie sight, seeing the Opera House, bathed in light, at such close range, and I stood and admired it for a while, following the graceful overlapping of its half-shells and thinking of the wry joke that Bert Chandler had unsmilingly dropped into the party last night:

"There are three hours difference between Sydney and Melbourne, you know. Yes, our zoo, our bridge, and our opera house."

I'm trying to figure out why I think that long walk, and the others like it, were important. No, I know their importance; but I'm not sure how much of an effort I should make to try to express it. My literary conscience and I have been having a debate. I've been arguing thusly:

"Keep it simple and straightforward, just a chronological con and trip report-- a factual, journalistic account. Tell what you did and who you met. Use a lot of names. That's what people want to read. Forget that crap you told Glickson about being subjective and impressionistic. Just go ahead and write it the way you've been doing -- the way it happened."

And it looked like I was winning the argument for a while, though the writing has been progressing very slowly and I've had to force myself to confront the typewriter. And now my lit. consc. has definitely begun to assert itself:

"Of course the writing has been tough and slow; you haven't been writing about the important things, the inner reality of things. There'll be a couple of dozen chronological-factual con/trip reports; do that if you want to; one more or less can't hurt. But try to remember why you

started doing Don-o-Saur in the first place. It was not, if you recall, to fulfill the expectations of someone else. It was an opportunity to write what you wanted to write."

Okay. All very true. So I'll compromise. The walks are important, so I'll tell about them in as much detail as necessary to try to convey their importance, but at the same time I'll try to tell about the other aspects of the trip. Because I do have a certain obligation. As a responsible journalist I must, to some extent, have some regard for the expectations of my readers.

(Conscience is a terrible thing, too -- either literary or journalist-ic; or both).

Part of the importance of those long walks in Australia and New Zealand was a purely physical thing. In the month before the trip I had developed the habit of taking long bike rides every other day or so. It was the closest thing to physical exercise that I had subjected myself to in a good many years, and I was a little surprised to discover that I still had enough muscle left in my legs even to ache. By the first week of August my legs were accustomed to some fairly vigorous exertion nearly every day. And by the end of that second day in Sydney they were feeling the lack of it.

So partly the walks were just to keep my legs from atrophying. But it was more than that.

I flew to Melbourne, with a sizable group of visitors who had chosen not to make the trip by train. (I didn't decide until practically the last minute, so it cost me more than if I had planned ahead as most of the others had, but that was all right. I'd refused to do any planning, so I was prepared to pay for it. (And in fact I probably came out ahead. Many of the Americans, including Bob Tucker and Rusty Hevelin, had bought rail passes for about \$100, with the idea of doing a lot of traveling by train and saving a lot of money. Unfortunately they hadn't clearly understood the implications of "school holidays" a term meaning that all the school kids and their families take train rides for a week -- and they have had reservations for months in advance. So the passes are no good if you can't get bookings. It didn't bother me, because I had not come all the way to Australia just to do more traveling.

Almost the first thing I did after checking into the Southern Cross Hotel in Melbourne was to go out for a walk. Not a very long walk, and not with any hope or expectation of getting lost. I just wanted to get an idea of what the city was like and what was within walking distance. One of the earliest impressions I got was that Melbourne, in spite of its efficient and attractive (and quite economical) streetcars (or trams), was a less interesting city than Sydney. And that was confirmed by later observations, but remember that my observations were from a pedestrian point of view and pretty much limited to just the downtown areas of both cities. Neither city is quite flat, but Sydney has more and steeper ups and downs; Melbourne has just one noticeably low portion in the downtown area -- like a sheet of paper held in both hands and sagging in the middle. Downtown Melbourne is laid out neatly in a symmetrical grid of blocks and streets and alleys (only the alleys are called "Little" streets, having the same name as one of the nearby "big" two-way streets; and the traffic in the little streets is one-way, and the streets are lined with shops of all kinds.

Well, no. Not all kinds. If Melbourne has a sin section or a dirty half mile or a skid row, I never came across it in my travels on foot. All the stores and shops, all the buildings, all the neighborhoods that I saw in Melbourne seemed clean and wholesome and new. Dull.

My roommate, Jim Landau, is a railroad nut, and so he had gotten the tramway timetables and schedules, and during the five days we were in Melbourne he explored the city thoroughly via streetcar until the cold immobilized him. But he didn't tell me much about the outlying neighborhoods; he was very excited about having been to the rail spur extending farthest south in all Australia. Or was it the whole world?

I did take a number of long walks in Melbourne, both in daylight and at night, but I wasn't able to get lost, I didn't cover as much territory as I did in Sydney and later in Auckland, nor did they have the same emotional or spiritual (or whatever) significance. On my final day in Melbourne -- lemme see, that would have been Tuesday, Aug. 19; the con was really all over on Sunday and then on Monday, having nothing else special to do and not quite realizing where we were going, I joined an all-day excursion by train to Balarat, which turned out to be a typical Old-West mining town like we've got hundreds of in Colorado, but the train ride was interesting even though uncomfortably cold (spent that entire day in the company of Bill Huxham, a quiet Aussiefan who, not for anything special except the generosity of his own heart, presented me, Bob Tucker, Rusty and Mike Glicksohn with mint commemorative Australian half dollars . . .

That final day in Melbourne (as I started to say), I had intended to take the morning train back to Sydney, but I was so tired after getting back from Balarat that I wasn't sure I could get up and organized early enough in the morning, and so I booked a sleeping compartment for the following evening.

I did sleep fairly late Tuesday (following the deadeast dead dog party on record -- Tucker's "smo-o-o-th" routine was conducted in whispers but I was out of the hotel with all my luggage transferred by taxi to the train station by noon.

And I spent virtually the rest of the afternoon -- until about 5:30-- walking, exploring the downtown area of the city, confirming my early suspicions that it was impossible to get lost, and learning that it's almost impossible to walk out of the downtown area, bordered as it is by train stations, harbor and freeway. Late in the afternoon I found myself on a street that showed promise of angling away from downtown, but I decided it would be unwise to get lost then and so I cut back to the station, tired, my leg muscles nicely numb and my feet screaming in anguish with each step (because the one pair of shoes I'd brought were not my walking shoes), but neither exhausted nor intoxicated from walking.

(Keep that word intoxicated in mind; it's a clue to the importance of the walks; or maybe it says it all).

That train ride was thoroughly enjoyable, one of the most pleasant experiences of the entire trip in some ways.

My opinion of Australian trains had not been very high just on the basis of the Balarat visit. The cars we occupied were approximately a hundred years old, to begin with, and though they were quaintly compartmented, European style, we learned on the return trip that they are unheated. Well, except for a sort of metal log that's placed in the

middle of the floor of the compartment to be used as a footrest. I was impressed by the fact that the logs did actually emanate a little warmth, and by the fact that they were still warm at the end of the long trip. I would have been more favorably impressed if they had radiated more warmth.

But those sleeping cars on the Southern Aurora were something else. A far cry from the Pullman sleeper cars that were the epitome of American railroad luxury when I was a child, the Aurora compartments are masterpieces of efficiency and economy. (Economy of space utilization, I mean; the fare was about the same as for a plane ticket, but well worth it). Each snug little cubicle has its own fold-down wash basin and toilet stool, closet space, table space in front of the seat if you want to sit up writing, as I did for several hours; finally finished that letter to Mae Strelkov; and a seat that folds down instantaneously into a deliciously comfortable bed. It was a perfect atmosphere for writing -- absolute privacy and no distractions except the gentle rocking of the train -- but along about midnight the train was rocking me to sleep, and I was glad the bed was so effortlessly available. I woke up several times, just enough to realize where I was, to listen to the rhythmic clatter of the train, and to smile blissfully as it rocked me back to sleep. I could feel that I was getting my money's worth.

That next day involved a lot of walking, too--more than I wanted to do--and for the first time I began to feel downright exasperated with myself.

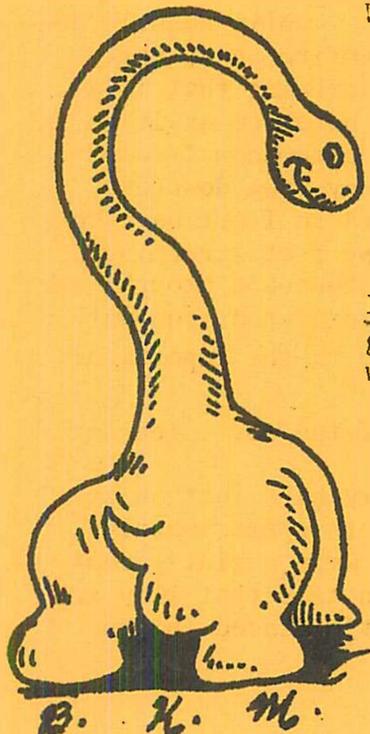
My tentative plan was to get a cheap hotel room as close to the train station as possible, and then . . . well, nothing special until the weekend, when I definitely intended to visit Eric Lindsay in Faulconbridge. Meantime I had some names and numbers of people in Sydney. I wanted, absolutely, to see Ron Graham's fabulous collection, if nothing else. But first, get a hotel room.

I put all the luggage except my briefcase in a locker and set out on foot. I knew there would be no trouble. I could see a half dozen hotel signs right from the station.

What I didn't then realize (and it took a while for me to figure it out) was that in Australia not all hotels are actually hotels. Some are just pubs -- bars; drinking establishments. Unless a hotel sign also says something about accommodations, or unless it specifies "private hotel" the chances are that you can't get a room there. No one told me that; I figured it out on my own, but not before I had done a lot of walking around, carrying a briefcase that got heavier and heavier. I got lost and didn't want to take a room not knowing where I was. I found my way back to the station and studied a listing of nearby hotels (with rooms) and decided on a specific one on Elizabeth street, only five minutes walk from the station.

After half an hour I decided I was lost again, and that's about the time I started getting exasperated with myself.

I could have asked somebody, you're saying?



Or simply hailed a taxicab and given the driver the address? That's what any sensible person would do?

I suppose so. But that just isn't the way I do things. I may not have any sense, but I've got principles, and one of those principles is that I won't ask directions unless I've been lost for several days. Sydney's an easy city to get lost in. I liked Sydney. But the area around the station is sort of a slum; I was a bit hesitant about moving into just any of the with-rooms hotels close by; but finally, nearing exhaustion, I went into the Mansion House (on Elizabeth street and only about three blocks away from the one I had started out looking for, as I learned later) and booked a room for two nights at about \$6 a night. After I'd paid, the desk clerk told me, "Your room's on the seventh floor but the lifts are out and the repairmen are on strike. You'll have to use the stairs or take the goods lift."

I suppose I could have demanded my money back and found a better hotel, or I could have selected a good hotel to begin with. There was no reason at all, financial or otherwise, for me to move into the cheapest place I could find. I can't even claim that curiosity to find out what a real Australian hotel was like drove me to it. I'd already spent one night in a real Australian hotel and I hadn't been that crazy about it.

(That second day in Sydney, Kevin Dillon helped me move out of the Kingsgate Hyatt and into a cheaper hotel across the street almost; so when I finally got my bearings that evening walking back from the train station, after I'd had that somehow-mystical vision of the Sydney opera house, when I went home it was to the Imperial Hotel, not the Kingsgate. And the Imperial was considered still a rather nice hotel: the lifts worked, and breakfast was included in the \$12 price tag, but even there the rooms were unheated -- at least I thought they were unheated until I walked down the hall to the bathroom and found out what unheated really means).

Anyway . . . I had made a decision to economize on hotels, and I stuck with it. And in that same spirit of irrational consistency, I chose not to be unpleasant about the seventh floor room with no lifts.

The goods lift worked, more or less.~ Most of the time. It was almost fun learning to operate it, making sure the outer door was closed, and then slamming the grill as hard as you could. I soon learned that it was actually faster to walk down the stairs, but going up, the goods lift was preferable -- if you didn't mind waiting for the deliverymen to get it loaded and could then crowd in among the laundry and cleaning supplies.

The room on the seventh floor was just plain dismal; that's the polite word for it. Lots of room, but all of it overhead. Cold. No extra blankets. Not exactly dirty, but clean certainly wasn't the word that came to mind in examining the peeling walls and the warped bare flooring and the rickety wardrobe and the chipped and stained wash basin. It reminded me somewhat of a jail cell in which I'd once spent a night, except it wasn't nearly as cheerful.

Nevertheless it was home for three days, and while I didn't come to love it, I at least survived. Nor was it the most severe hardship that I survived.

I had to make two trips to get all my luggage transferred from the station to the hotel. Then I rested for a while, sacked out on the

bed. I wrote a couple of letters. I did some laundry in the wash basin.

(There's where I did my real economizing during the trip. Carolyn had thrown in a small package of Woolite as I was packing and had made sure my shirts were of the drip-dry type, and she instructed me in the gentle art of washing out one's socks and undies -- and I saved the money that other people spent in laundromats or in hotel laundries).

That evening, for entertainment, I went out for a walk. But it was a short one.

The next day I called Keith Curtis and took a cab out to his place in the suburb of Earlwood, getting there at about 12:30 or 1 o'clock. (I hadn't realized how inexpensive cabs are in Australia; Keith's place is maybe 10 miles out, and the fare was less than \$2--and no tip.

I had met Keith Curtis at the con -- at the very tail end of it, on Sunday night. I'd left the party and was on my way to bed but somehow detoured through a room containing Kevin Dillon, Eric Lindsay, Ken Ozanne, Keith, and maybe one or two others; and somehow Keith and I got to talking and found we had a great deal to talk about -- books, primarily, but also magazines. He was interested in the fact that I have a large number of old detective story pulps (for sale), and I was interested in his book collection. I got his phone number and address.

Keith met me at the front door and led me through a hall into his living room, where I stopped, spread my arms and murmured: "Home!"

Keith's living room is done in wall-to-wall books. I'm sure there must be a floor, but as I visualize the room now, in my mind, all I can see is books. There are shelves along the walls jammed with books, and there are great mounds of books all over the room, some of the higher ones, I deduced, being the result of tables which had vanished under the stacks of books. Keith led me to a chair but I had to wade knee-deep through books, and the chair itself was just barely visible among the piles of books that surrounded it.

(Ken Ozanne's place in Faulconbridge is not appreciably different from Keith's, so if I get around to telling about my visit with Ken I shouldn't have to describe his living room. And I never saw the inside of Kevin Dillon's house, but other Sydney fans assured me that Keith's is a model of tidiness and order in comparison).

Keith already had one guest: Jackie Simpson of Glendale, Calif., whom I'd seen on the flight and at the con but hadn't actually met before. She too had arrived from Melbourne the day before, only at night, and she'd had much worse luck than I did with hotels. She had phoned the ones that had been recommended to her and finding all of them filled, she chose not to prowl the streets looking for one, as I had done; she started calling fans instead and accepted an invitation to crash at Keith's. Keith told me that Jackie's reaction to his living room was identical to mine.

Jackie is a cat person as well as a fan, so she and I had lots to talk about too, and we vied for the attentions of the cat that makes itself at home with Keith.

The first time anyone looked at a watch after I arrived, it was close to 6 o'clock. Jackie made a quick shopping run, came back and whipped up a fantastic spaghetti dinner; and the next time there was a lull in the conversation was at about 2 a.m., at which time I took

a taxi back to the hotel and got some sleep.

Those hours with Keith and Jackie were, as I look back on them, among the most pleasant of the entire trip. This was the first time that I'd gotten really deeply involved in conversation -- so deeply as to lose all track of time. The talk started with books and had a way of always coming back to books, but I'm not sure there's a single subject we left untouched during that afternoon and evening. At some point I mentioned that I collect, very unsystematically, James Branch Cabell, and Keith showed me a copy of *The Soul of Mellicent* (Stokes, 1913, with illustrations by Howard Pyle) that I had never seen before. "You don't have that one?" Keith said. "Well, now you do." And he refused to let me pay for it. Later (or earlier?) I happened to mention that I was reading Brian Aldiss' *The Shape of Further Things* (which I think Keith had recommended to me during our talk at the con). Keith showed me a copy of GEGENSCHIEIN 20, Eric Lindsay's zine, with a review by Keith of TSOFT, written in the same intimately autobiographical style that Aldiss uses. I was impressed, and I told Keith so, and I told him he should consider publishing a personalzine of his own.

The next day was also fannish, and far more touristy than anything else I did on the whole trip. It was an excursion to the zoo with Keith and Jackie and Bob Tucker and Rusty Hevelin (Bob and Rusty having also moved in with Keith). I was glad to take the zoo trip, largely just so I could tell people that I did, after all, see some kangaroos and wombats and koalas (and get some pictures of them), but also because the zoo is across the harbor and is reached by ferry, which provides the truly impressive view of the Sydney Opera House and the Harbor Bridge, which I also got pictures of. Also, of course, because Tucker and Hevelin are pleasant and congenial people to spend a day with, and I had more of an opportunity to become better acquainted with each of them than I'd ever had previously.

However, that evening, as we returned from the zoo, I declined Keith's invitation to go back out to his house with the rest of them. I made some feeble excuse and had the cab driver drop me off at the Mansion House.

I probably said I was tired, and I was, a little, physically; but lying down for a half an hour remedied that. On a deeper level, though, I was suffering from a type of fatigue that I'd always known I was susceptible to, but which I became more and more intensely aware of and sometimes ashamed of and often depressed by as the Australia trip continued.

People fatigue is as descriptive a term for the malady as any I can think of. It's quite common in fandom, especially among fans who write. In fact many of us communicate in writing simply because we are so inept at the normal, customary, in-person forms of communication -- socializing. Actually, in very small groups I usually don't have any trouble, and in a one-to-one relationship, under some circumstances, no problems at all; and for that matter I can at least be coherent in formal group situations, such as a panel discussion or when I'm talking to a class or some comparable-sized crowd. But in an informal context, involving even as many as four or five people, my communicative functions become severely impaired. My mental processes operate at only about one-eighth to one-quarter capacity, and I start sounding and feeling like a retardate.

The effort to not make a fool of myself (even though I know it's wasted effort and no one gives a damn anyway) is a tremendous strain. So quite often during the trip it became a matter of urgent necessity for me to get away from people for a while, so I could relax. So I could think.

I'm almost through with this con/trip report, if you can believe it-- another four or five pages maybe --even though it hasn't developed at all the way I wanted it to: it hasn't been either informative or vividly impressionistic; my attempt to compromise has fizzled. You may have noticed that I have said virtually nothing yet about the con itself. You may also have noticed that I have not returned again and again, as I almost promised I would, to that Aug. 31 visit to downtown Los Angeles, and so its meaning is still murky at best. If I could give myself another 20 pages and another month in which to fill them, I believe I could cover everything I want to and tie it all together, and even make the meaning of the title so clear that it would be unnecessary to explicate it or even to refer to it.

But I'm running out of time (and this issue is already a couple of months late), so in order to bring this to any kind of conclusion, it's necessary to take short cuts.

Here's my route for the rest of this report:

First I will explain what I had in mind with the title.

Then I'll do an extremely sketchy report of the con activities.

Then I'll return to the evening in Sydney that I was starting to tell about, following the trip to the zoo; and in telling about the long walk I took that evening I'll have to include a minor discourse on sex and sin, whereupon, taking cognizance of the fact that I'll be skipping over another major segment of the whole trip--FaulCon; the weekend with Eric Lindsay, Ken and Marea Ozanne, and Ron and Sue Clark in Faulconbridge--I'll leap ahead to New Zealand to tell about more walks, more impressions, and for more observations on sex and sin.

And then, finally, I will end where I started, prowling the streets of Los Angeles in the neighborhood of Sixth and Main.

Four or five pages, I said?

Well, no more than eight or ten anyway, at most . . .

But why should I have to say anything about the title? It's self-explanatory, isn't it? In any case, it's simple. The thing is that even though I was something like 8,000 miles from home (give or take a thousand), and though I was constantly aware of certain superficial differences, such as the way people talked and drove and the fact that toilets were flushed with a button instead of a handle, I never once felt really that I was in a far and foreign land. Partly of course it's just the nature of fandom, which may be terribly provincial and narrow in some respects but is certainly not constricted by nationality. I always felt at least as much at ease and at home with some of the Aussie-fans as I did with the U.S. fans. Even the accent seems not particularly noticeable after a very short time. Leigh Edmonds' manner of speaking was no more difficult for me to get used to, for instance, than Ned Brooks' soft Southern intonations.

Quite apart from fandom, Australia just isn't a very foreign-seeming place. In spite of the left-handed traffic and the chemist shops, neither Sydney nor Melbourne managed to impress me as being even quaint, let alone alien. Even the little alley-ways lined with

shops were no more exotic than the mall areas of some American shopping centers.

The thought occurred to me several times during my long walks, planting the seeds for the Los Angeles excursion, that I had often felt more isolated, more threatened by strangeness in some American cities than I ever did in Australia or New Zealand.

One difference I noticed that I should mention: In Sydney the only police I ever saw were directing traffic. In Melbourne I don't recall that I saw any policemen at all. In Auckland the police were highly visible, strolling along the streets, unarmed, in pairs, dressed like and behaving like the stereotype of the London Bobby. In Los Angeles also the police were visible, but in sleek squad cars, not on foot, and with cold, restless eyes alert. It was just a feeling and I wouldn't try to defend it rationally, but I felt very strongly that the most dangerous aspect of Main Street was the cops.

Now, about the con . . .

I was on a panel the second day of the con -- a fanzine panel -- and the only thing I can remember of what I said (maybe it was the only thing I said) is that while it had been a great thrill to meet so many of the friends I had acquired through DON-o-SAUR, I wouldn't be able to really communicate with them -- to tell them what I thought about them and Australia and the con -- until I got back home and could write about it in my next issue. Bill Wright told me afterward that he could hardly wait for the next issue (and I apologize for making him wait so long).

Anyway, it was a great con. Small, but great.

My difficulty in writing about it is that it has blended with the rest of the trip; the whole thing was a three-week con and it's hard now to isolate the four days of formal WorldCon from the rest of it. Nevertheless, my journalistic conscience says I gotta try. But maybe I can be subjective and impressionistic about this. (After all, you'll have read factual accounts of it elsewhere. I hope.)

To start on a totally subjective note I'll tell how I felt about not winning the Hugo:

Relieved.

Really. (I had a sort of an acceptance speech all ready, expressing my gratitude to Don and Maggie Thompson of Cleveland, but it was a bit dumb and as John Bangsund started with the Hugo announcements, I started going cold inside with the realization that there was actually a mathematical chance that I'd win; and I discovered that what I had been saying was true -- that I didn't want it. Not just yet. And so I sighed with relief and thawed out when John Bangsund (who was at least as apprehensive as I was, but about his own chances of winning) announced that Richard Geis was the winner. Once the name was out, it seemed inevitable; of course he won; he has a larger readership than anyone else. (He's also a fine writer, but what does that have to do with anything?)

Until then I hadn't much enjoyed the evening, except to note that the banquet fare was tasty and the service excellent. (And the courage of the

OINK!  
oink?



waiters performing their duties in the face of the withering barrage of paper airplanes was truly admirable, though the hazards were probably exaggerated by Robin Johnson, the only one who seemed worried).

But after the Hugo presentations were over I was able to relax and enjoy the parties.

There were some fine parties, throughout to con, both large ones and small, some hosted by the Aussies and some by U.S. fans. There was at least never any trouble finding a party. My nomination for the most ingenious excuse for a party goes to Denny Lien and Don Bailey, sponsors of the traditional (?--anyway it is now) "Minneapolis in '73" party. As Don and Denny explain it, the bid is not entirely frivolous. They figured out that if it's possible to arrive in Los Angeles four hours before leaving New Zealand, it is only necessary to cross the International Date Line a certain number of times (several thousand; Don can tell you the exact number) from west to east in order to get back to 1973. Admittedly the plan has a few technical details to be worked out but they'll worry about them after they win the bid.

Fine party. As was the "meet the pros" party which, because of the extreme scarcity of professional writers at the con, relied upon a continuous slide show of notables.

There was even one (at least) pot party, with cigar-sized joints, apparently half tobacco and half grass, going around.

Sometime during the con the Sydney area fans decided that this one was such a success that they would like to host a worldcon sometime, too, and so they started selling pre-supporting memberships in Sydney Cove, 1988 for a dollar. I sighed up. Sure, why not? The chances of making it to 13 years in the future should be at least as good as getting to two years in the past.

What more can I tell you about the con? I met some very nice people there, and I didn't even get the names of all of them. (There was this one lovely girl in particular . . . ) Met Tom Cockcroft of New Zealand (compiler of the Index to the Weird Fiction Magazines. Had a couple of long talks with Frank Brynning; got acquainted with Lee Harding, Leigh Edmonds and Peter McKay, and renewed acquaintance with Paul Anderson and Bill Wright.

It's getting to be a long time ago already. Memories fade. . .

Later, in Sydney, after the trip to the zoo, after I had parted company with Keith and Jackie and Tucker and Hevelin, and after I had rested for a while and then had some supper, I went for a walk -- a long one, because I got lost again.

I didn't really intend to get lost this time -- hadn't wanted to, because I was a little tired and I knew I'd have to get up fairly early the next morning to move out of the hotel and meet Keith and the others for the train trip to Faulconbridge where we were spending the weekend. So when I started out that Friday evening I intended only to walk up to Kings Cross, explore the Dirty Half Mile again, perhaps watch a strip show, and then get back to the Mansion House. And I knew exactly how to get to Kings Cross -- so many blocks on Elizabeth Street, then turn right and keep going. But I took a short cut.

Hours later, I could see the lights of the city below and behind me, so I turned off the thoroughfare (Oxford Road?) that I had been

# SYDNEY COVENIN

'88

- 1788 Captain Phillip founded the first colony  
in Australia
- 1952 1st Australian SF Convention - Sydney  
1955 Canberra SF Convention  
1956 5th Australian SF Convention - Melbourne  
1971 Q-Con 1 - Brisbane  
1972 Advention 1 - Adelaide
- 1975 AUSSIECON - 33rd World Science Fiction  
Convention (14th Australian SF Convention)
- 1976 U S Bicentennial Year
- 1988 Australian Bicentennial Year

IT'S FATE --

SYDNEY'S GREAT

IN '88

- |                       |                           |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 7 Alf Van Der Poerten | 21 Kelvin Roberts         | 35 Gordon Valdare     | 49 Jack Chalker   |
| 8 Eric Lindsay        | 22 Mervyn Binns           | 36 Alan Evans         | 50 Jan Noble      |
| 9 Ozanne              | 23 Brisbane F & SF Assoc. | 37 Fred Patten        | 51 Don Thompson   |
| 10 Ned Brooks         | 24 Maureen Smith          | 38 Robert Silverberg  | 52 Jackie Simpson |
| 11 Keith Curtis       | 25 Warren Nicholls        | 39 James Styles       |                   |
| 12 Ellen Sheerin      | 26 Nilson Tucker          | 40 Bruce Pelz         |                   |
| 13 Ozanne             | 27 Leigh Hyde             | 41 Elayne Pelz        |                   |
| 14 Mike Baldwin       | 28 Peter McKay            | 42 Don Fitch          |                   |
| 15 Shane Lonergan     | 29 Paul J Stevens         | 43 John Millard       |                   |
| 16 Doug Nicholson     | 30 Dave Pengelly          | 44 Neil Rest          |                   |
| 17 H Curtain          | 31 Stephen Hitchins       | 45 AE Ackerman        |                   |
| 18 Harold Salive      | 32 Blair Ramage           | 46 Ben Yalow          |                   |
| 19 Ron Graham         | 33 Kevin J Dillon         | 47 A Bertram Chandler |                   |
| 20 Helena Roberts     | 34 Derrick Ashby          | 48 Allan F J Bray     |                   |

Bidding Committee for the 46th World Science Fiction Convention  
c/o Eric Lindsay 6 Hillcrest Avenue Faulconbridge NSW 2776  
AUSTRALIA

trudging along and plunged into a maze of narrow, winding, poorly lighted lanes in which I could have become eternally enmeshed except that this was one of the times when I was able to distinguish between up and down. So just by going downhill whenever possible, and bearing a little to the left, I emerged eventually (about 12:30 a.m.) and to my total surprise, in the neighborhood of the Kingsgate.

I was in a state of numbed intoxication by then, having walked well beyond exhaustion. I was not aware of my legs or even of most of the rest of my body. There was my head, floating around way up here; and there were my feet, those nubs of pain and fire, so far below; and there seemed to be some definite connection between head and feet but it was far too subtle and tenuous to worry about.

I followed my feet into a strip club.

Here begins a discourse on sex and sin.

Because of my Southern Baptist upbringing, or anyway because of my mother's Puritanism (and I suppose my father's evasiveness, to some extent), sex and sin became equated very early in my mind. Both were forbidden. Taboo. But sex was pleasurable. Therefore sin was pleasurable. Therefore anything pleasurable must be sinful.

Okay, I cast off the mental shackles of Baptist fundamentalism while I was still in my teens. I read a lot of Thomas Paine and Robert G. Ingersoll and Bertrand Russell and I called myself an atheist and denied that there was such a thing as sin.

But just as it is the fingers, not the brain, that learn to type, so the concept of sin is woven somehow into the total fabric of being and is not perceived by the mind alone.

So even though I know, intellectually, that sex is perfectly natural and should not be taken any more seriously than any other natural function, yet I also know, somewhere in my synapses, that sex has a special delicious thrill because it is somehow sinful, forbidden, taboo.

At any rate, for as long as I can remember, sex has been a particularly fascinating area of interest for me. At the same time, because of its sinful, forbidden nature, it has been very difficult for me to write honestly (or even to think honestly) about.

When I was in the Army, stationed at Pasadena, my trips to downtown Los Angeles were generally in quest of sin-and-sex. At about that time alcohol began to be strongly equated with sin in my mind, too; and since alcohol was much more readily available, more plentiful and much, much cheaper than sex, by the time I was discharged from the army I was still pathetically inexperienced sexually but well on the way to becoming an alcoholic.

I have been, in a very minor way, a student of sex in the arts. My Army buddies accused me, kiddingly, of preferring to read about sex than to practice it. They weren't too far off. Reading left no residue of guilt feelings. After my first couple of expensive, guilty and less-than-satisfactory carnal encounters, my visits to Sixth and Main were confined to the burlesque theaters, the bars, and to long, long walks. (Walking was a cheaper way than drinking to get drunk, though it took longer). As the Sexual Revolution has progressed, I have been an interested observer rather than an active participant -- a purchaser of porn, a viewer of the skin flicks, a sampler of topless nightclub

acts. Actually, I'm not even a very good student. I have a short attention span, and sometimes months or years have gone by between visits to porn shops or night clubs; and I'm at an age now where even the thrill of the forbidden is not as compelling as it used to be (especially since it isn't even forbidden anymore).

Nevertheless, when I got to Australia and discovered the Dirty Half Mile of Sydney I was interested in making comparisons between sin-and-sex Down Under and the Back Home variety.

So . . .

Here's something I didn't tell you about my second day in Australia: Tuesday, Aug. 12. After Kevin and I had moved my things from the Kingsgate to the Imperial, and after we had said goodby to Gail and I had said goodby to Kevin and had set out walking, only to get lost and find myself miraculously close to the Sydney Opera House, which materialized in front of me like a shimmering dream, and after I had finally found my way back to the hotel . . .

After all that I rested for perhaps half an hour and then went out again. To a strip show. I had walked beyond exhaustion, into intoxication. My head simply followed my feet.

My feet descended a short flight of stairs into a basement. The atmosphere was dim and heavy with smoke and the throb of music. I paid my \$3 admission (or membership) and went on in. It was like an American night club -- but not much. There were tables and booths and chairs and people sitting looking at the stage area where a totally naked girl was writhing in the spotlights. But I was not guided to a seat by a scantily clad waitress (or any other kind; I had to find a seat for myself, and no one asked if I would like to have some company or what I wanted to drink). The place was crowded but not noisy (aside from the music). I had no trouble finding a seat, but it was practically in the aisle that ran between the audience area and the stage area, and I had to keep pulling my feet back to keep them from getting walked on. Nor was there a table near enough for me to lean my elbow upon. One thing I noticed immediately was that no one was drinking cocktails. Many people has brown paper sacks on the tables and beer bottles in front of them, and some people had soft drink cans, and some were sipping coffee. I couldn't see a bar or any barmaids. After a long time (several strip acts) a young lady did show up and ask me what I would have to drink, but she didn't seem to care much whether I had anything or not. (I bought a 60¢ cup of coffee).

The performances made me realize what a really poor student I am: I had no basis for making comparisons. I haven't been to enough comparable places in the United States to know whether these acts were any "good" or not (in terms of whatever art is involved) or even whether they were different.

I can say with a fair degree of certainty that the Denver area has nothing like what I was seeing here, but surely the big, cosmopolitan American cities do? San Francisco, definitely, because at a recent Westerncon I walked a few blocks from the St. Francis Hotel and found a topless-bottomless strip establishment. I wondered if this sort of place existed where the burlesque theaters used to in downtown L.A.

Anyway, these acts were not quite like anything I had seen before. I watched with a sort of detached interest as girl after girl would wander on stage, moving more or less in time to a rock recording, divest herself of clothing either rapidly or slowly, generally staring blankly over the heads of the audience, and then writhe or wriggle in the nude for a bit,

again more or less in time to recorded music. When the music ran down the girl would strike a dramatic pose, the curtains would close, the audience would applaud politely, the announcer would babble, more music would start, and another girl would appear.

Most of the girls seemed totally bored. The audience seemed totally bored by most of the girls. I was bored. Full nudity is unstimulating, un-erotic. Dull. Only one of the strippers displayed any real enthusiasm. She was older, heftier, with saggy breasts, and to make up for her physical shortcomings she played the audience -- thrusting her breasts or bottom into the faces of men sitting at ringside. The second time I was there, after the con, after the trip to the zoo, the same performer was going even further in her efforts to evoke audience response. She masturbated vigorously with three fingers, arching her back and pivoting to provide the best view. Then she selected a victim and stuffed a breast into his mouth. She moved on, wrapped one leg around another customer's head and pumped her hips. The rest of the audience applauded politely.

On both visits, I found myself becoming more and more depressed and gloomy rather than entertained and titilated, and so I left, feeling unsatisfied and vaguely resentful. (But at least I didn't have to feel guilty, since I hadn't enjoyed the show).

Following the FaulCon weekend (which I'm skipping over entirely except to acknowledge that looking at the southern heavens through Ken Ozanne's 10-inch reflector telescope was one of the major highlights of the trip for me), all the voyagers reconvened in Sydney for the flight to Auckland, New Zealand.

Somehow, in wrestling my luggage around at the airport, I managed to wrench my back, inflicting great and continuing pain upon myself which I didn't really notice until the next day. (I have a somewhat fragile back anyway; the only surprising thing is that it didn't give me any more trouble than it did, or any earlier).

When my back is tormenting me, lying down doesn't help. Neither does sitting. Or standing. But sometimes walking seems to do some good. I did a lot of walking around Auckland. At home I take Doan's Pills sometimes for my back. Couldn't find 'em in Auckland; but do you know that in New Zealand you can get codine-based pain pills without a prescription?

I spent a lot of time in Auckland walking around, spaced out on codine. Feeling no pain.

The group flight itinerary included a sightseeing bus tour to the Waitomo Caves and Rotorua, in the interior of New Zealand. I refused to go, pleading agony.

Auckland is a nice city to walk around in. It has many ups and downs and the streets tend to curve; but for some reason I was never able to get lost.

I found the Sin section; walked there unerringly the very first night as though drawn by a magnet; but since I didn't yet have any New Zealand money I didn't investigate the strip shows. The next night I did, and wished I hadn't. The girls were even more lackadaisical and the audiences even more apathetic than those in Sydney. And the announcer should have been strangled at birth.

Again I wondered where this type of entertainment was in the States and why I hadn't encountered more of it, and I wondered how it compared to this. Was nude dancing really this dull everywhere? And if so, why

did anyone bother with it--either to do it or to watch it. And it was about this time that my resolve to visit the Sixth and Main area of Los Angeles took definite shape.

Partly it was nostalgia; partly it was curiosity; to some extent it was a renewal of an old, fruitless search for 'Sin.' At the same time I was hoping to test the impression that I could feel like more of an alien in an American city than I did in Australia or New Zealand.

And if you want to say that stupidity was also an important factor, I won't be able to argue with it.

Nostalgia and curiosity were rather quickly satisfied: The area had changed remarkably little in 25 years; the buildings were the same, looking no more shabby and decrepit now than they did then, and the people were no less shabby and decrepit. I was certain that I recognized many of the bars and pawn shops. Only one thing had changed: the burlesque theaters were gone, or rather had metamorphosed into XXX movie theaters. But not into total nudity strip tease places. I walked the length of Main between First and Sixth two or three times, on both sides, and found no sign of any such establishments. If they existed in L.A. (and I'm quite sure they must, since they do in San Francisco), it was someplace else.

And I did feel alien.

In Australia and New Zealand, all the voices I heard in the cities were speaking English -- somewhat strangely accented, perhaps, but unmistakably English. There was a far wider range of accents here in downtown L.A. -- from the predominating Spanish through several European tongues, to standard uneducated American. If I had spoken (I don't recall that I did all during this episode), I would have betrayed my foreignness just as surely as I always did in Australia.

And there was a subtle menace in this section of Los Angeles that I never felt Down Under. Part of it was the police, cruising slowly along the street in their gleaming, powerful looking squad cars, their mask-like faces visible through the car windows. But also it was the way some of the denizens looked back at the police. . .

It was chilly and damp, becoming more so. I had found (or not found) what I'd come here for. There was no reason to stay. Why didn't I catch a bus and go on back?

But back where? The airport? Why? My plane didn't leave until after noon on Monday. What was I supposed to do until then? How long had it been since I'd utterly stopped thinking? But I couldn't even figure out how long I had been without sleep..

I began seriously considering the possibility of getting a flea-bag hotel room downtown. It seemed like an excellent idea. I stopped in at a short-order eating place (would have been called a milk bar in Australia, I suppose, but I never saw one this dingy there), and had a bowl of soup and a sandwich while I thought some more about it. I noticed then that I was almost out of money -- less than five dollars in cash.

Oh, sure, I had credit cards and a couple of hundred dollars in travelers' checks still. No self-respecting hotel in the world would refuse them. But these were Skid Row hotels.

I guess I quit thinking again. Quit trying to make plans. I walked some more. Along Main, then up a block to Spring and along it for awhile, then up another block to Broadway and back along Broadway to where it converged with Main (not remembering until then that they did converge). I

felt trapped. I walked past the entrances of bars and heard the noise and laughter inside and wondered why I didn't go in. But though the street had remained unchanged for a quarter of a century, I had not. I walked on.

When I realized that I was actually staggering, and that I didn't have any idea of what I might say to a policeman if one should stop me and start asking questions (I felt guilty, having no answers), I spent \$2, almost the last of my cash, on a ticket to a 24-hour XXX movie theater. It was about 1 a.m. I had no idea where the time had gone.

All-night theaters exist for the benefit of bums. The snores were louder than the sound track of the movie. I pretended I was on the plane again -- who knows? In a few years they may be showing movies like this on airplanes -- and closed my eyes. When I opened them, 20 minutes had elapsed. I repeated the process. Several times.

A light stabbed my eyes and I snapped to total alert. Cops! One was walking down each aisle, swinging the flashlight beam along every row of seats. I sat upright and attentive, studiously interested in the action on the screen. When the police left, without arresting anyone, I slumped wearily, waited five minutes or so, then got up and slunk out, into the fog, into the 4 a.m. silence. Amazed by weariness, I walked on branded feet along

*. . . the ancient empty streets too dead for dreaming.*

This is the eerie part. The important part. The reason for telling about this episode at all.

I walked away from the Main/Broadway area. It was dead, a hollow husk, a corpse, cold and empty. I walked uphill, along Sixth street, crossing Olive and Grand and Flower, then Figueroa. The Harbor Freeway lay like a dried up river bed across my path. It too was empty and still.

There were no cars moving anywhere. No people. No life.

I walked on. Tall buildings towered in the mist like dream castles, floating closer or farther away or shifting position beside me as I walked. I lost all sensation of walking. It was the buildings that were moving, not me, and it was fascinating to watch them growing or receding or turning their various sides to me.

I have had a recurrent dream of being on open land outside a city consisting of tall buildings piled one on top of the other, the entire mass rising to an incredible height. I try to walk to the city, but I can never reach it. I lose sight of it for a while and when it reappears it's off at an angle, to my left or right, but just as far away as before. I thought of the dream as I watched the skyscrapers. But though I could consider each tall building as sort of a city in itself, I did not really recognize this scene as the dream. I wondered if having seen something like this a long time ago might have provided the material for the dream. I don't know. Even the feeling I was getting from this was not quite the same as in the dream. The feeling of the dream is one of absolute frustration and futility: I want so much to reach the warmth, comfort and security of the city, but it's impossible, no matter which way I go or how long I walk; the city always moves out of my way. Here, there was no problem reaching a destination. I could walk to the foot of the skyscraper (and did, just to prove it; but of course there was nothing I could do with it, having reached it).

The prevalent feeling that I recall from that walk in L.A. is simple and utter aloneness. Not loneliness. I didn't crave company, nor did I feel like an outcast. Nor was there any feeling of apprehension. I was in awe of the silence and the emptiness and the sheer size of the buildings and the distances between them. I had a certain sense of vulnerability. I remember thinking, in a very leisurely manner, with the words forming themselves slowly and carefully in my mind and arranging themselves into balanced sentences, and then the sentences taking the shape of dialogue:

The trip's nearly over; this night is almost over. All I need to do is survive a few more hours.

Ah, yes, but the chances of survival diminish steadily as you keep walking. This is Los Angeles, one of those notorious cities where it isn't safe to walk the streets alone at night.

It's safe enough. There's no one else around anywhere.

Maybe. But if there is . . . If someone decides to slit your throat, you are too tired to run, too weak to fight.

True.

But it didn't seem important. I had an awareness of potential danger, but virtually no sense of actual danger.

I walked back and forth, around and around, for something like two and a half hours. Several times I stopped (while the buildings seemed to keep moving in the drifting fog) at bus benches or at the entrances of apartment houses. I gave serious consideration to the idea of sitting down. But the night mist had laid sweaty hands upon the benches, and the doors were locked, and it seemed as easy to keep walking as it would have been to sit down and then get up again.

The feeling of awe dissipated, and for a while there was no feeling except that of being balanced precariously on the very edge between existence and nonexistence. Or as though, with only a few more steps, I could be in a universe or dimension in which this chill silence and emptiness, punctuated by the towering buildings and my own scuffling footsteps, was total and eternal.

Then that feeling also faded. The sky grew lighter. Car headlights appeared, and the Harbor Freeway began to whisper; the river began to flow.

I directed my steps deliberately toward Sixth and Main. Toward the bus station.

For all practical purposes, the night was over.

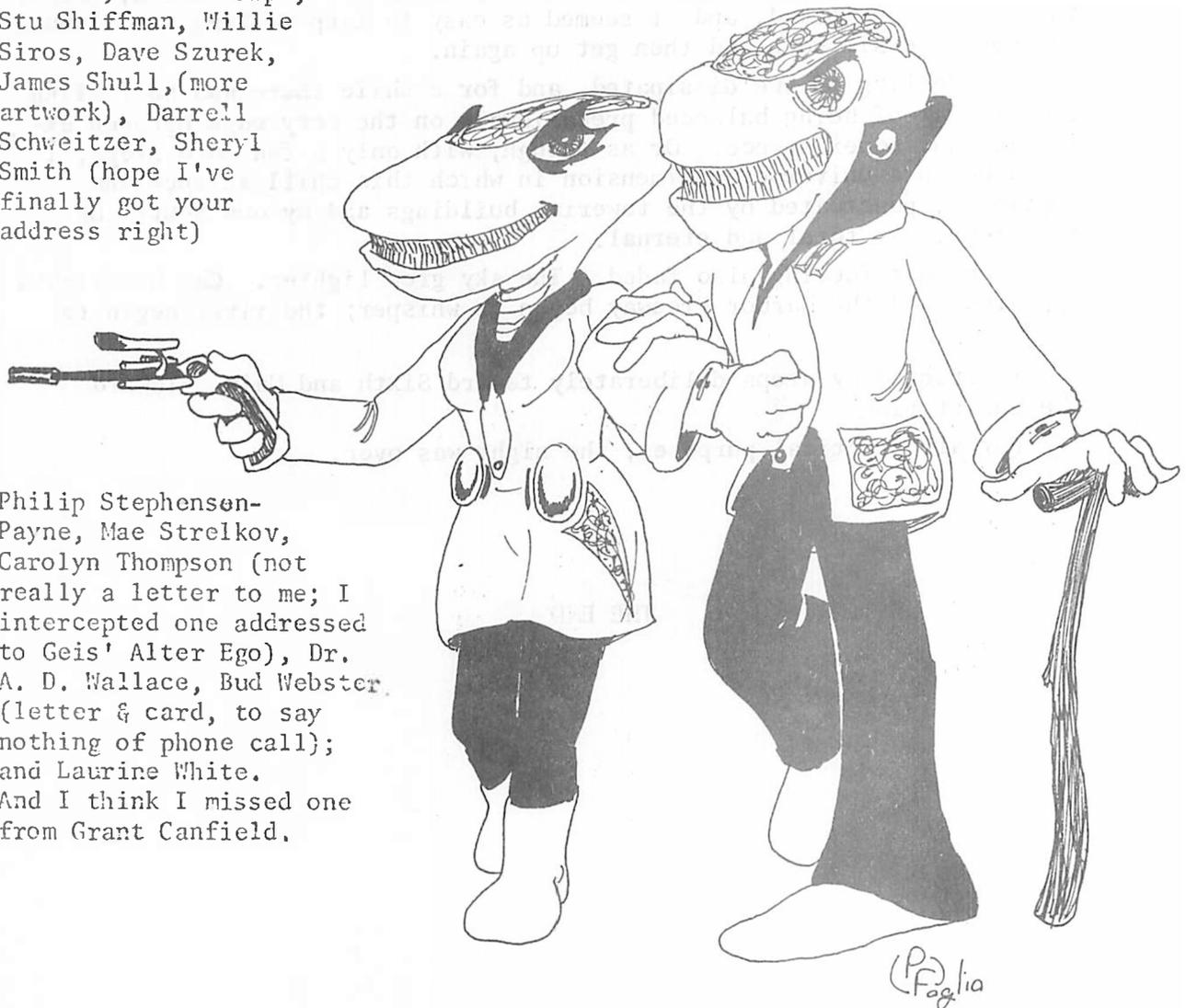
THE END

## I ALSO HEARD FROM . . .

[For reasons mentioned at the beginning, there is no letter column this time. But here is a list of people I got mail from. The list may not be complete. If you're left off, it's unintentional and I hope you will let me know about it].

Jim Allan, Doug Barbour (two), George Beahm, Steve Beatty, Ruth Berman, Sheryl Birkhead (a couple of cards, a letter and some lovely artwork, including a cover), Mark Blackman (a letter, some artwork and, just recently, a phone call as he was passing through town), Denny Bowden, Mike Bracken, Brian Earl Brown, John Carl, Ned Brooks, Lora and Ralph Collins, Brett Cox (two), Keith Curtis, Don D'Amassa, Hal Davis, Dan Dias, Kevin Dillon, Andy Dyer, Graham England, Angelo Faccione, Al Fitzpatrick, Gil Gaier, Richard E. Geis, David Gerrold, Mike Clicksohn, Jack Flanagan (several), D. Gary Grady, Patrick Hayden, Hank Heath, Jackie Hilles (several, and each treasured!), Chris and Shari Hulse, Ben Indick (I kept the dollar; thanks!), W. S. Jones, Keith L. Justice, David Kleist, Ginny Kucmierz, Eric Lindsay, Sam Long (letter and card; who, me, gafiate?!), Wayne W. Martin, Ken Mayo, Jeff May, Shayne McCormack, Steve McDonald (letter and two phone calls), Barry Kent McKay (letter & artwork), Will Norris, Jodie Offutt, Ken Ozanne, Russ Parkhurst (several), Bob Peterson, Joe Popielowski, Andy Porter, Blair Ramage, John Robinson (two or three), David Romm, Ronald Salomon, Mark Sharpe, Stu Shiffman, Willie Siros, Dave Szurek, James Shull, (more artwork), Darrell Schweitzer, Sheryl Smith (hope I've finally got your address right)

Philip Stephenson-Payne, Mae Strelkov, Carolyn Thompson (not really a letter to me; I intercepted one addressed to Geis' Alter Ego), Dr. A. D. Wallace, Bud Webster (letter & card, to say nothing of phone call); and Laurine White. And I think I missed one from Grant Canfield.



# GREAT EXPECTATIONS



K E N   S M I T H ' S   P H A N T A S M A G O R I A

By   G e o r g e   B e a h m

(A *Don-o-Saur* Supplement)



## FOREWORD

Early last spring I decided to write a lengthy, meaty article on Kenneth Smith and his PHANTASIMAGORIA. The idea intrigued me, and I quickly wrote to Don Thompson to see if he would be receptive. Immediately I heard from him, and indeed he was anxious to see the article. Feeling the article would be out in less than a month, I used the paper offset masters he sent and typed directly on them, feeling a first-draft composition would fit the bill. Unfortunately, in the interim, many things have delayed the issue's production, including my dilatory behavior in getting the commissioned Greg Spagnola (a young, dynamite cartoonist from Virginia) cartoon based on Smith's KSP to be printed.

Regardless of what I said in the article about the availability of Ken Smith publications, I urge you to write to him and enclose 50¢ in stamps for his latest catalog. A quick look at the current issue of KSP #4 will prove revealing; in addition to his usual stock, he has added a new philosophy book, new paintings, and new etchings.

But let us speak of the fourth issue of KSP. The first thing that strikes you is the elaborate production values. The issue, like its predecessors, is photo offset, meticulously and lovingly printed on heavy stock, coated to insure fine reproduction. The cover itself is a fine halftone job; it folds out flat with the back cover to produce a panoramic scene of otherworldly qualities. The inside front cover sports a bizarre drawing that was originally rendered in black ball-point pen; it is striking: a scene of nubile wenches, BEES, and Smithian monsters in abundance. The main focus of the issue, however, is the long fable, an illustrated story along the lines of his "Eggs Over Easy" in issue #2, this one entitled "Cereta Dreaming." I confess that I haven't read the story itself, other than to note the parallel of reality to fantasy. The artwork is what one notices. How often do you see four full-color process plates within a fan publication? Jan Strnad in his ANOMOLY printed two full-color process plates, but four plates? Further, the pieces lend impact to the story, since they are not bunched together but distributed at strategic points. The last plate is a shocker.

For comic fans, the unique collaborations with artists Wally Wood, Roy Krenkel, and Frank Frazetta will be greeted with loud hosannas of joy. There is, too, an unpublished Hannes Bok collaboration; Petaja had this piece in his possession, then lent it to Smith for this special issue. The "My World" format allowed Smith to integrate these four distinct drawings into collaborations that fused their talents and his talents, their interpretations and his interpretations, into Smith's poignant "Cereta Dreaming." For those who enjoyed Robert Pirsig's ZEN AND THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE, and for those who felt that Jonathan Livingstone Seagull was saccharine and vapid, "Cereta Dreaming" would be a worthy addition to your collection. At \$5 an issue, KSP is not cheap; but this is \$5 that proves to be an investment repaid many times over.

-- George Beahm  
September 1975

F O R E W O R D

... I decided to write a lengthy, warty article on  
... the idea intrigued me, and I  
... would be receptive. I had  
... and indeed he was anxious to see the article.  
... would be out in less than a month. I read the paper  
... and typed directly on them, feeling a thrill  
... in the information. Unfortunately, in the interim,  
... the issue's production, including my history  
... (a young, dynamic  
... on Smith's 25th to be printed.

... I said in the article about the availability  
... I urge you to write to him and advise  
... A quick look at the current issue  
... in addition to his usual stock, he has  
... and new techniques.

... The first thing that  
... the issue, like its  
... and lovingly printed on  
... The cover itself is  
... with the black cover to produce a  
... The inside front cover sports  
... in black ball-point pen  
... and British monarchs  
... in the long hole,  
... in issue  
... I haven't read  
... the parallel of reality to fantasy.  
... do you see four fall-color  
... in his A.D. 1900  
... but four finest? Further, the  
... since they are not punched together  
... The last page is a book.

... the volume with artists fully  
... will be covered with low  
... for collection; basic  
... to Smith for his special  
... to introduce these four dis-  
... their titles and his  
... into Smith's  
... Robert Smith's 25th  
... but for those who did not  
... and rapid "Growth  
... in issue, 1978  
... to be an investment

# G R E A T E X P E C T A T I O N S

K E N S M I T H ' S

P H A N T A S M A G O R I A

By G e o r g e B e a h m

In the summer of 1971, Kenneth Smith came to the New York Comicon with a fanzine called PHANTASMAGORIA that was thoroughly professional; the \$2 price tag did not deter the comic fans, who were used to paying \$5 for fanzines, but the science fiction fans thought \$2 was far too much. ALGOL, TRUMPET, OUTWORLDS, and SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW were considerably cheaper and more digestable. Now, four years after the advent of the first issue of PHANTASMAGORIA, the major science fiction fanzines are under attack by sf fans as being professional zines, thereby making their publishers ineligible for the Hugo; critics maintain that because certain fanzines are taking advertisements and making money in the process, it isn't fannish and therefore shouldn't be eligible. The question is this: do those editors make enough money off their magazines to make a living at it? If it is a vocation, then it is a professional publication; if, however, it is an avocation, then it is still a fanzine, regardless of the method of printing and the price on the cover.

Part of the fault lies in the traditions of sf fandom. Jim Strand, in RB-CC, wrote in his column, "Eycing the Egos,"

Many more s-fers are outraged at having to pay for-real cash money for a fanzine. They say, Why can't I loc and get one free? What if I send you a stamp? How about some sample copies? Namely, sir, because I have yet to find a printer who will accept 800 letters of comment in payment for his work, and I'm not about to work my tail off at my low-paying campus job for six months just so I can hand you a free magazine. In other words, it costs me to put it out, so it costs you to get it.

Strnad's point is justified. Sf fanzines are, by and large, either dittoed or mimeographed. Their editions are small and relatively inexpensive to produce. Their editors can afford to trade copies, to send review copies, and to give them away for letters of comment. In comics fandom, the fans realize that to produce material by offset, to have color covers, to use fancy stock, and to utilize half-tones and double burns costs money. And these comics fans pay the price: \$5 for HERITAGE, \$5 for SQUA-TRONT, \$3 for ANOMALY, \$3 for BADTIME STORIES. Their editors cannot afford the expense of giving away copies; they don't want to compromise with the fidelity of an original piece of art, so they spare no expense.

Unfortunately, PHANTASMAGORIA is caught between a rock and a hard place. If it catered to an SF fan's conception of a fanzine, it would be cheap in price and would be published by mimeograph; if it catered to a comic fan's conception it would be almost an art folio and nothing else. But the stories in it

are a little harder to digest than the stories in "Spider-Man and "The Fantastic Four."

Before I beat you over the head with the particular virtues that PHANTASMAGORIA holds for me, let's hear from Ken Smith in a self-interview:

I've seen Phantasmagoria but I want to know just what's going on in them. What have you got in mind with this magazine?

The contents don't all fit under a neat rule. The odd-numbered issues are given over to a series of myths or fables illustrating crises in the great animal-civilizations from the history of evolution: the first issue of course did this with reptiles, the third with fish, and the fifth will deal with insects. Seven will take up amphibians and nine, birds. The idea is to weave a complete world around the characteristics peculiar to each of these species, to deduce the values and social order that each kind of creature would naturally tend toward.

This is a continuing series?

Not in any obvious way. Once all the ages have been done, the fable-history will have a certain coherence to it--that is, the stories, in proper sequence (not the order they were published in), will have places in a more complex web of development. They can be seen to interlock and resonate with one another. Eventually.

This is an ongoing project?

Yes, and the even-numbered issues have nothing to do with that history. The even numbers' contents depend on what I happen to be working on in the way of stories and art: issue 2 has a couple of science fiction horror stories, a bit on the Orwellian side. Issue 4, going to press now, will have a long dream-fantasy, a series of incredible episodes in the dream-life of a mysterious creature called Cereta. Issue 6 has a couple of stories aimed for it: one about a strange little alien, Pender, who is a poet wandering from one weird people to another; the other about a race of creatures who evolve from embodied organisms to disembodied eyes (I call them Eyeggs).

How often do these things appear?

Phantasmagoria, if it's lucky, is an annual publication. The stories, as I've just suggested, incubate for several years. I could, working full-time, turn out four or five issues a year, but the magazine won't support anything like that rate of production, and the subscriptions simply won't accumulate fast enough to pay those kinds of printing bills. So it remains a rodest little weekend pursuit, a whetstone for my talents in art and fiction.

What kind of a creature is Phantasmagoria?

In the parlance of science fiction and comics fandom, it is a fanzine or a prozine, depending on what your criteria are. It's a limited-edition publication, in this case with a print run of 3000 or less, but in any case far fewer than the 100,000 run that is usually required to interest a national distributor in the product. It is advertised in special-interest adzines that appeal to people who might have a taste for more elevated illustrational fare.

and it gets distributed by direct mail from myself and from those dealers, in the U.S. and Great Britain and Australia and France and the Netherlands and God knows where else, to whom I wholesale it.

People buy it sight unseen?

Mostly. Of course my ads include snippets of illustrations from the issue being promoted. Also, although this is insignificant in terms of total volume of Phantasmagoria sales, there are also conventions held all around the country to attract either science-fiction or comics fans or both: a major part of these conventions is the hucksters' room, usually an immense ballroom given over to the marketing of rare and not so rare comics and science-fiction magazines and books. Over the past few years, the merchandise has been expanded to include old toys, old movies, movie posters, and other kinds of memorabilia of American pop culture.

What are those conventions like?

Hell on wheels. Usually there are panel discussions on a variety of topics and a continuing schedule of selected films, auctions, and so forth. I enjoyed them a devil of a lot more--seeing friends, fans, and fellow artists again after some separation--back when I didn't have the hassles of pushing Phantasmagoria. I only manage to attend the summer conventions, usually only the ones in Houston and Dallas, because my schedule is more pliable during the summer, and also because Phantasmagoria's printing deadlines create a peak of desperation for finances during the summer and fall.

There are other fanzines like Phantasmagoria?

Well, nothing quite like it. Most fanzines contain fannish, that is to say amateurish, work; they are generally stepping-stones in some novice's path to professional status, and as a result don't survive too long, as a rule. Among the zines that contain only professional contributions, as Phantasmagoria does, there are probably not more than four or five still struggling along today. Typically these are anthologies of different people's work, making a melange of spot-illustrations, comic-strip stories, illustrated fiction, articles, and what-not. Phantasmagoria is unique in being a one-man production and in, usually, being a coherent and unitary work rather than an accidental collection of some kind. I suppose it could also be considered unique in a number of other respects--the quality of production (printing, stock, etc., accounting for its luxurious cost), the fact that all the work in the magazine was done intentionally for the magazine (i.e. none of it is just cast-offs), and, it's safe to say, the level of intelligence that it appeals to. I advertise it, a little unabashedly, as the aristocrat of zines, which may be unfair in that, really, there isn't much competition at that level, but just the same it's true and no one could mistake the fact that this is a publication dedicated first of all to quality in all its respects.

This is its reputation?

Phantasmagoria has always been a critical success, as they say, from its earliest issue. To some extent its popularity, such as it is, used to derive from my own

reputation as a professional artist (for magazine and paperback covers, as well as about 40 fanzines put out by other people); since I haven't done any work outside of Phantasmagoria for about 4 years, obviously my name is, as time goes on, attracting fewer and fewer people who remember my professional contributions. But on the other hand, as comics and SF fans grow older and their tastes mature, it is often just a matter of time before they come around to Phantasmagoria.

This is national or international popularity?

Hah, mostly international but not national. There is a much more refined taste for this kind of work on the Continent. Here in the U.S. there is, frankly, no market for anything like this: there is no proper place to advertise to reach a suitable public, the public one does reach is generally unacquainted with anything of this quality and doesn't really know what is is; in general it is caviar to the masses. The economics of the situation is thoroughly depressing.

How does it make enough money then?

Who said it did? In the best of times, it can pay its biggest bills at least, and the others I have to pick up. Something like this is supersensitive to the squeeze of inflation and consumer resistance. Of course, "making money" could mean a number of things--showing a profit over money-investment, or showing a profit over the investment of money-and-labor put into it. I calculated that the time so far consumed by the magazine, plus the money, would conservatively amount to an investment of something like \$40,000 or more. No way it'll ever bring in even a fraction of that.

What the devil are you trying to do with the magazine then?

I wouldn't even think of it in those terms, usually. I publish, and produce, the thing for its own sake: I feel I'm in a position, somewhere in no-man's land between philosophy and art, to produce a kind of work that nobody else can. I think that kind of work deserves to be brought into existence, just because it's unique. Maybe I need the outlet for imaginative hypotheses and for directing my energies in art toward a larger purpose. Maybe some people will find the magazine is illuminating and gives them access to a subtler comprehension of the issues in our existence. Maybe it does things like this and more, but these kinds of things wouldn't make my work on the magazine the imperative experience it is for me. I'm an artist, my talent is a demon that I have got to respect and allow to live its own life. Is that enough of a "why" or not?

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Considering Phantasmagoria's cost and content, what kind of reception has it found? The first major review of PHANTASMAGORIA #1 appeared in GEORGE IV, an unbiased review-zine put together by Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., Robert Napier, and Jan Strnad. In that issue, PHANTASMAGORIA #1 received the "fanzine of the month" award -- other fanzines that took honors: GRAPHIC STORY WORLD, FUNNYWORLD, GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE, and SQUA-TRONT. The review of PHANTASMAGORIA #1 was, as

expected, laudatory. Robert Napier said:

Here is one fine zine. Flawless printing on expensive, slick paper couple with an excellent creative effort by Smith to give Fandom something unique.

Most of KSP consists of an illustrated fable (nota strip) entitled 'Eggs Over Easy,' a multileveled story about the discovery of a huge egg in a reptilian society. Text and art blend beautifully on every page, Ken hand-lettering everything cover to cover including editorial, notes, and the fable itself.

It's obvious that Smith put an awful lot of work into KSP to produce a zine of the best quality he could muster. He did just that; top-flight art, fine story, and a strikingly handsome package.

We suggest you get it before the price goes up. What more can we say? KSP cops our Fanzine of the Month Award with a rating of 10 out of 10.

When I asked Kenneth Smith for biographical data, he sent a sheet that elaborated on his academic distinctions. For those who find a fascination in knowing the man behind the artwork--after all his background is what urged him to create his own publication--a few words on Kenneth Smith the Scholar: He took his B.A. degree in 1966 from the University of Texas; by 1972, he took his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. His academic honors include a B.A. magna cum laude, a Junior Fellow in 1963, College Honors in 1965, Dean's Honors List, fall 1965, magna cum laude, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow in 1966-67, Phi Beta Kappa 1966, College Honors in 1966, Essays in Riata, and Honorable Mention in the American Scholar essay contest in 1967. He was a teacher from 1969 to 1970 at Yale University, and since 1971 he has been an assistant professor of philosophy at Louisiana State University. His Dissertation topic -- "Dialectical Concepts of the Spirit: Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche" -- has led him to scope out the topic and produce his upcoming book, NIHILISM AND IDEOLOGY, in addition to another book on epistemology.

As a fan, Kenneth Smith contributed extensively to comics fanzines with art portfolios, short stories, and comic strips. As a professional, his work has graced Warren publications, paperbacks (notably Moorcock's CITY OF THE BEAST and Carr's NEW WORLDS OF FANTASY), and letterheads. As a collector, Ken looks for Pogo books and books illustrated by artists such as Dulac, Timlin, Parrish, Rackham, Wyeth, and Pyle. That Ken Smith is familiar with the fantasy artists is obvious. Jean-Pierre Dionent, French author and reviewer for ALFRED and GRAPHIC STORY WORLD, spoke of Phantasmagoria's first issue: "Curiously modern resonance: the lizards resemble us rather much...The author is Kenneth Smith, an artist who has assimilated the world of Rackham, the graphic power of Finlay, the epic sense of Frazetta, the humor of Wood . . . "

The least expensive way to get into PHANTASMAGORIA is to send Kenneth Smith 50¢ (preferably in stamps) for his profusely illustrated, 16 page catalog. On the front cover his statement about PHANTASMAGORIA speaks for itself.

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All Phantasmagoria publications are dedicated to an exceptional principle, one that virtually no other publisher in our time cares to try out: underground and overground comics, science-fiction magazines and paperbacks, are in complete agreement in practice that fantasy art and story has to fall into line with the larger commercial policies of our age. To maximize profits, fantasy must be made a consumable -- something that will grab the consumer's attention for one intense moment, even if it palls and disinterests him the next. Fantasy art is made shallow and so is its fiction by the fact that it occurs in a culture where everything is dated and of passing significance: planned obsolescence does to comics and magazines what it does to cars and dishwashers, satiates the reader for a limited spell of time and then leaves him ready for another onslaught of equally ephemeral commodities.

Phantasmagoria publishes for the ages. The art is rendered with infinite care, the story constructed with many different levels of meaning folded into it -- Phantasmagoria magazines and prints are packed with rich and almost inexhaustible contents, contents that will continue to delight and amaze you years later. Phantasmagoria publications are designed to be appreciated, not consumed. The meaning of the stories and the structure and impact of the art are not hastily composed and simple things. They are complex because they are meant to grow along with you: the wider your imagination, the deeper your understanding, the more these publications will resonate in you.

Phantasmagoria makes this commitment because fantasy is worth it: the wealth of our imagination is what keeps us human, what enables us to see alternatives and hidden implications in ourselves and in others. What has become of fantasy publications in the American marketplace is obscene -- only rare and exceptional individuals seem able to break the hold of the crushing forces that make fantasy illustration and art something superficial and trivial, that makes fantasy a cheap escape from reality instead of an enrichment and expansion of reality.

In thus attempting to keep alive the highest traditions of illustrated fantasy, Phantasmagoria finds itself without a great deal of competition, and there is a reason. The other route is far easier and far more profitable. Phantasmagoria will never be repaid even in part. Phantasmagoria is a labor of love, but love alone cannot keep any kind of labor going for long -- Phantasmagoria's publications are printed on costly permanent stock to insure fidelity in reproduction, and the presswork involved is slow and tedious -- all increasing the cost of production to an amount double and triple that of comparable publications. In addition, the open-minded spirits who find Phantasmagoria challenging and gratifying are few and far between; there is no economical way to reach them in any convenient way, and this difficulty multiplies the cost of advertising far beyond any reasonable hope of a strong return from responses. Because of the tribulations Phantasmagoria has been suffering from these factors, it has become unavoidable that prices should be raised...((PHANTASMAGORIA is now \$5 per copy))

To many fans -- in sf fandom, those who wish to break into professional writing; in comics fandom, those who wish to break into professional drawing -- the question may arise: why doesn't Ken Smith do professional work and use that money to finance PHANTASMAGORIA? In an editorial in PHANTASMAGORIA #2, Kenneth Smith elaborates.

My quarrel with the pro field is not simply put. I am not likely ever to have grown accustomed to its conventions -- the low fees (compared with commercial art generally or with any other profession), the uphill fight to keep ownership of originals, the inferior quality of high-speed printing, the vagaries of the art-directorial mind, the degrading stereotypes of fantasy material imposed by publishers' conceptions of its audience, and on and on. I note, too, that while most pro artists officially regard a career in professional art as the consummation of any true illustrational talent, nonetheless a remarkable number of them put their best efforts into work for extra-professional publication--in the fanzines, which have, as a result, undergone a geometric increase in quality which exactly corresponds to the artists' own morbid loss of respect for professional media whose sales will never, apparently, be proportional to their quality. ...I also have to say that I would not turn out material of Phantasmagoria's caliber for any publisher at any price. Perhaps no amount of compensation would motivate me to render material to the Nth degree, but my own self-satisfaction would...If Phantasmagoria does no more than pay its bills--and that is what it is priced to do, and all it has done so far--I can feel content just on grounds of this craftsmanly satisfaction. If Phantasmagoria cannot pay for itself, however, it is definitely a luxury too rich for my blood; I will never be able to support a vanity-press publication.

Having left the pro field for good, what about the possibilities of him working for the fan press? Kenneth Smith, in the same editorial, said that "I no longer have time to spend for other publications...I am done with all of it, and I insist I will answer no more requests for contributions." Sadly, Ken's experience with the fan field have been dispiriting: faneds keeping originals and sometimes mutilating them, faneds asking for zeroxes for free, faneds procrastinating in sending art back. The solution was obvious: put everything he had into PHANTASMAGORIA.

Interestingly enough, other artists have turned to the limited edition print runs, catering to fandom, in an effort to achieve fidelity from their originals. Fandom is fortunate in having a coterie of artists who are willing to work full time in order that, on the side, they can publish artwork for those who care enough to pay the money for artwork as it should be reproduced; a quick look at the sf prozines will show you the disadvantages of pulp paper for interior illustrations and high-speed printing for the color covers that merely hint at the richness of the original art. Frank Kelly Freas (Route 4, Box 4056A, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 23457) has published 4 portfolios of posters that are unbelievably gorgeous. You may wish to send him a SASE for color flyers that advertise these gems. The first set, "Six to Go," may be out of print; the second, third, and fourth sets are all 12½" x 19" in size and are \$19.95 per set. Kelly Freas wrote that "these beautiful pictures are not high speed commercial reproductions, but art prints. The colors are nursed on to fine paper with the tenderest of loving care, by Virginia's finest color house. The initial print order is very small, and allows for the closest attention to quality." In an effort to diversify his stock, he published a b&w portfolio of his ASTOUNDING drawings and, just recently, a set of full color postcards are available, too.

Richard D. Garrison of Heritage (PO Box 721, Forest Park, Georgia, 30050) is dedicated to the attributes of the limited edition publications, too. Ushuring in his Collector Print Series, Richard published a "Lord Greystoke" color print, hand-corrected, for \$35; mounted, signed and numbered by Jeff Jones in an edition of 100, this 14½" x 20¼" print is another indication of the dedication of certain fans.

The problems that Kelly Freas and Richard Garrison face -- the hassles attendant to being the publisher and distributor, the necessity to generate flyers and other advertising paraphernalia to promote their products, the response that, in no certain way, can be gauged before publication of a product, the enormously expensive costs in printing publications that will not compromise the artwork, the headaches of mailing merchandise out and keeping track of incoming orders at the same time, the reluctance of fans to spend money -- are the same problems that any fan publisher must face, too. Oddly enough, some fans with whom I've had contact with expressed the opinion that since Playboy magazine is \$1.50 and has nearly 300 pages an issue with full color for covers, photographs, ads and cartoons, how the hell can people like Kenneth Smith have the gall to ask \$5 for a 40 page publication? Kenneth Smith responds:

Newsstand-publication prices are something else: newsstand magazines are in fact a crazy kind of economic commodity, one that is being sold to consumers at a price less than it costs to produce. For the average magazine receives enormous subsidies from its advertisers, to the tune of around 2/3 of its income: thus, in effect, the consumer pays only 1/3 of the magazine's value at the newsstand. Differently put: if the magazine chose to increase its

advertising rate by only 50%, it could afford to give copies away for free (as some of them do). What newsstand customers do not realize is that a magazine's business is not primarily what it seems to be to the customer: the effort of a magazine to sell you a package of stories, pictures, and art, accounts for only 1/3 of its income. Twice as important as this is the ability of the magazine to sell you, as a potential market-place, to its advertisers. The powerful factor of advertising is what explains the death of the general-interest magazines (Life, Look, the S.E. Post) whose general readership was vast but worthless in attracting special-interest advertising. All three of these factors -- wholesale purchase of stock, high-speed presses, and subsidy by advertisers -- make mass-distribution publications a wholly different world from that of limited-edition publications. Difference in scale brings on a totally different set of circumstances. Outside of fandom, where limited-edition publications can at best break even, the prices of limited-edition work published for profits approach (and sometimes surpass) the prices of original art in galleries.

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Kenneth Smith speaks of why PHANTASMAGORIA hasn't sold enough to make a profit and also speaks of the price, which puts off purchasers:

Now I never expected PHANTASMAGORIA to become even remotely popular. I am no big-name pro, I have no widespread charismatic reputation to trade on; also, admittedly, my work is not only aimed well over the heads of the vast majority of fans, but also is directed toward topics that most people would rather avoid or gloss over with a cliché'. People who are smitten with PHANTASMAGORIA seldom realize that its virtues are not exactly obvious to everyone -- this magazine is composed as a mind-expanding experience, one that lets gusts of fresh air into a stale and stuffy world. The virtues of PHANTASMAGORIA have to work on the reader gradually, through his own contemplation.

I think now that I have worried more than I should have about fans' complaints over the price -- if the magazine were a dollar cheaper, some claimed, they would buy it up right away. For some reason this rhetoric got to me in the past. It has taken me some time to see that these people's sense of economic value will always be behind the realities of present costs and prices -- these people are the same ones who thought \$2 was too much once upon a time. Now they will just have to go on thinking that \$5 is too much. I won't be losing any business from them, because in most cases these people would resent any price. Everywhere else, commodities are costing two and three times what they used to cost. Any person who tries to be different in his pricing policies is just trying to sweep the tide with a broom.

Interestingly enough, fans are now collecting original art -- and paying top dollar. Thank God the prices have not spiraled out of reach; the prices seen at the local art gallery, The House of Alexander, are astronomically high, and to my mind, the fan can buy more for his money at a convention or through Russ Cochran's GRAPHIC GALLERY. Unfortunately, artwork is to many prohibitively expensive. In 1971, Jeff Jones was selling original oils for \$125 and \$250 for most of his work. In the same year, Frank Frazetta sold finished oils for \$400. Although the artists had exhibits at the major cons, artwork did not bring in the revenue expected. In the science fiction field, George Barr, Alicia Austin, and Tim Kirk had been for years the artists to collect, if you could find their originals for sale. Many conventions had their art on display with the initials "NFS" (Not For Sale) prominently displayed. It wasn't too long ago that Hannes Bok was selling his originals for \$35 and up -- and you had a choice of what piece to buy. Now the artists are commanding the market, and they are finding buyers. Russ Cochran, in an effort to curb the fans buying art, advertising it unfairly, and sending it through the mails in an unprofessional manner (two pieces of cardboard with a manila envelope), decided to start a publication that would insure the buyer would see what was for sale and would also know that, in many cases, the artist involved knew of the deal and often put his own price on the art. Through GRAPHIC GALLERY, Frank Frazetta has sold many oils and watercolors; the highest price paid so far is \$3,500 for the symbolic crucifixion scene on the cover of NATIONAL LAMPOON. Jeff Jones has advertised his statues (\$50 each, numbered & signed by Jeff) in GRAPHIC GALLERY; in addition, he has sold hand-colored drawings for \$300, with his oils going for \$750.

Although sf fandom does not have any publication devoted entirely to the buying and selling of original art, the fanzines advertise talent and draw enormous attention. At the recent Worldcon in Washington over the Labor Day weekend, Tim Kirk originals started at \$150 and then skyrocketed, out of the reach of many fans. Now that the fan artists, who not by coincidence put their best work in the fanzines, have achieved prominence and are now professional artists in every sense of the word, the prices for their art is expensive and only the well-off can afford them.

Unfortunately, limited edition lithographs and statues and etchings and linoleum prints have not yet been mass marketed, except in isolated cases. Jeff Jones has started a series of lithographed prints (#1 out of a projected set of 5 is now out; \$50; edition of 120, signed and numbered) under the auspices of TK-II. With Russ Cochran, Jones has been selling his Neanderthal Caveman sculpture for \$50 in an edition of 100. I sometimes wish that the artists would think of the alternatives -- surely the printing they receive from the professional publishers leaves something to be desired! Sadly, lithographs and etchings take time, something that most professional artists simply don't have. Consequently, you are either satisfied with the shoddy reproduction on paperback book covers or you buy an original.

The only other alternative -- limited edition, i.e. less than 1000 as a print run, posters or "art prints" -- has been explored. Even the commercial publishers have seen the possible revenue involved, and as a result, an entire series of new Frazetta posters on glossy stock, though somewhat unsatisfying, have been made available. In the fan press, posters have been a standard for the industry. Bud Plant's catalogues show the vast selection from which one can

choose: Frank Frazetta and his 'Worldbeater' posters; Vaughn Bode with his Pictography posters, his TK-2 posters; Berni Wrightson; Jeff Jones (by far, the most diverse and prolific in terms of posters on the market -- thankfully, they are uniformly excellent); Kenneth Smith (who personally supervises the printing, just as Arthur Rackham did in his time); Mike Kaluta; Mike Hinge; Maxfield Parrish (the new posters lack the brilliance and luminiscence of the posters printed in his time); Arthur Rackham (the high speed presses take their toll here, too); J.R.R. Tolkien; Tim Kirk; Al Williamson; Roy Krenkel; Richard Corben; Neal Adams, et al. I hesitate to put Frank Kelly Freas' color art prints in that category of 'posters' for the word has acquired a pejorative meaning. Instead of thinking of faithfully reproduced art prints, people instantly have visions of posters being those things you stick up on the wall with tape and would not think of framing. I remember that at a recent local convention, a Freas art print was matted and framed, enhancing the print to such an extent that one fan remarked, "Is that an original?" Now that's an art print! A poster, on the other hand, gets this response: "Where'd you get that poster?" The difference is not in semantics.

In his catalogue, Kenneth Smith offers, in addition to fine art prints, original etchings; for those with money to spare, original acrylics are for sale, too. Ken has much to say about etchings and artwork in general:

During the nineteenth century a branch of art grew up bent on making original fine art available democratically, to as many people as possible and not just to those who have fortunes to invest in art. This type of art involved the production of original prints -- prints that have not been photographically reproduced. This kind of "print" is often confused with mere reproduction but is something completely different: the artist in graphics works directly on a plate (which may be copper, zinc, limestone, wood, linoleum, plexiglas, or whatever) which is then inked and used to print with. The plate is not itself a work of art -- the artist does not put inked lines on it but only scratches which will catch the ink (lightness and darkness thus appear for the first time on the print). It is important to note that the graphics prints are thus not copies of some pre-existing original, even though they may all be virtually identical. If, of course, that plate is damaged it cannot be replaced simply by photographic means, as a printer's lithographic plate can, and the work is lost in that case.

Graphics have the tremendously significant result of making possible multiple originals, every one of which is an individual and not a copy of something else. Graphics thus brought fine art into the price-range of average-income people; in spite of this diminished price, graphics do increase in value just like paintings and drawings (one lithograph bought 4 years ago for \$34, for instance, is now worth three times that). Graphics enable someone of modest resources to own something that is, directly and indirectly, the handiwork of an artist -- its quality of line and texture and color has not been affected by the

processes of reproduction, its production is the result of individual handcraft (from the engraving to the inking, wiping, and pressing of the plate) rather than mechanical and automatic processes.

Since 1970, Kenneth Smith has been engaged in the media of graphics: 3 of his early graphic prints have been published in PHANTASMAGORIA 2 (pages 12, 13 and 19 show linoleum-block prints), and more recent work may be seen in PHANTASMAGORIA 3 (pages 11, 38, and 39 show dry-point prints produced by scratching lucite-plexiglas with a dissecting needle). It is possible to do far more exacting work in graphics than can be done by many direct media (pen and brush, e.g.). PHANTASMAGORIA 4 and 5 and various issues of PLETHORA will also show more of these drypoint prints (by that time, most of them will be sold out, however). Offset printing of course will capture little of the fine texture (the graphics press forces the etching paper into the scratches, which may literally be felt on a graphics print). Other compromises must be made with reproduction — the loss of precision through halftoning, the loss of the richness of oil-base etching inks through standardized offset inks.

The number of graphic prints from a plate is limited, usually to 30 - 50, because of wear on the plate. Since graphic prints may well be gone within months of being printing, it is not feasible to illustrate here the prints which are available. The price-range on these prints (all of the finest Rives etching paper) is from \$10 to \$30 at present. An investment of \$2 will bring you electrostatic copies of the graphics currently available. In the future, limited-edition sculpture will also be available, cast and painted by the artist's own hand, and based on a hand-made mold of an original statuette (range: \$25 to \$35). All prints and statues will be numbered and signed.

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If you have seen any of the adzines or, indeed, any of Ken Smith's flyers for his products, you may be puzzled at what is available and what is currently out. First, a list of the projects that are not out; pending capital, they will be out.

1. PLETHORA, a magazine that has portfolios, interviews, reprints, and others items that don't quite fit into PHANTASMAGORIA; issues 1-5 at \$30
2. future issues of PHANTASMAGORIA -- #6 through #10 are now open at \$3 the issue; issue #4 is due out soon, with subscriptions to up to KSP #5 being taken at \$5 the copy -- \$ #1 through #3 are in print.

3. THE ARTIST'S GUIDE TO BLACK AND WHITE TECHNIQUES (\$3), a nifty booklet that shows you what Ken Smith has learned in the course of his experimentation with art.
4. COLOR PORTFOLIO "A" and "B"
5. statuettes

For more information on these -- all mentioned in his 16 page catalogue with illustrations and textual material, too -- and for information on items already available, write to Kenneth Smith and enclose the 50¢ in stamps (or, as a last resort, in coin) to:

PHANTASMAGORIA  
 Box 20020-A  
 L.S.U. Station  
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70803

The items that are currently available are as follows:

1. PHANTASMAGORIA #1-#3 at \$5 each
2. original acrylics (more on them later) from \$100 up to \$400
3. etchings
4. linoleum prints
5. portfolios
  - A. a set of 6 prints, 11x14, from KSP #1 and some scenes of cavemen; \$5
  - B. the second portfolio, consisting of 4 pieces (the 11x17 cover to KSP 1; the 11x17 caveman centerfold; an uncropped color print of the cover to KSP 2; an 11x14 print of an exquisite BEM surrounded by a border of monsters & things, which originally appeared in a Warren publication) for \$4
  - C. a new portfolio consisting of a melange of 5 prints, two of them (the woman in the swamps; the nude girl in front of the dinosaur) in full process color. Other prints include a girl riding a dinosaur, printed in rich purple-black ink; a nude girl in the forest; a little whimsical print of "goulies and ghosties and long-leggedy beasties".
  - D. the fab collaboration portfolio, consisting of fine prints rendered by Kenneth Smith; each artist drew a scene, gave it to Ken, who then rendered it in his distinctive style. Those who collaborated with Ken were as follows: Roy Krenkel, Frank Frazetta, Wallace Wood, Hannes Bok (Petaja furnished a b&w drawing that, to my mind, is distinctively Bok and particularly attractive), and Mike Kaluta.
6. a number of portfolios with an illustrated envelope; these Maxfield Parrish prints (10 in number) are printed with care -- the dingy reprints one often encounters with the other portfolios is lamentable and, more often than not, expensive, too.

Because original art is expensive and, in terms of rarity, extremely desirable, perhaps it is fitting that they be mentioned last. To be put on the mailing list -- zeroxes will be made of each available original -- send \$10 to Kenneth Smith. Those who have seen his originals can vouch for the detail; indeed, Finlay originals have the same love for detail that the Smith originals have in them, too, and the effect is particularly pleasing.

In a flyer entitled "Just What You've Been Looking For," Ken Smith speaks of these acrylics:

I have stored them in files long enough -- it has occurred to me that many of these roughs are fine enough that they could be rendered in paint, that is, tinted and modeled in lustrous permanent acrylics. Several have now been rendered very handsomely: the acrylics, which I have only recently brought up to the level of competence of my oils and watercolors, are both extremely brilliant and also quite subtle, since they are, basically, a watercolor-like medium. I found, in fact, that the results were so pleasing to me that I am almost tempted to revoke my original intention and to decide to keep the things.

Each of the paintings has been rendered in layers of transparent acrylic glaze, to enhance the luster and intensity of the colors; and all of them have a protective final glaze to keep the art safe from skin oils, dust, and superficial scratches. They have been matted by the artist to suit the complexion of the painting...I won't even attempt to describe the colors; suffice it to say that none are lackluster, and all are even richer in colors than the printed covers to of Phantasmagoria 2 and 3....I should note that I am selling rights to these originals only, not publication rights (which I am retaining, as you can see by the copyright sign on each).

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Five years ago, when a fan asked Vaughn Bode in an interview about fandom, Vaughn replied that fandom would become more professional. This is now true. Comic fans have long since adopted the photo offset route, albeit expensive. Science fiction fans are now adopting photo offset too, after a hiatus of years. Richard Geis switches from mimeo to offset with his ALIEN CRITIC; Algol is thoroughly professional and much handsomer than the SF prozines, GALAXY, F&SF, ANALOG, AMAZING, and FANTASTIC -- in fact, it resembles VERTEX, if anything. Now that SF is getting ballyhoo from the mass media -- you can learn SF in the classrooms of colleges and universities across the nation; you can see that the major book companies do publish SF; you can hear SF writers lecture on college campuses; you can read SF criticism -- the fans find that artwork is getting scarcer. More people know it is there and they are buying -- the Worldcons are bigger every year, and original art is getting more expensive. But, fortunately, there are those artists who have put their efforts into making fine art available to the fans -- Kenneth Smith is, of course, a prominent example, but we should support all of them.

VAUGHN BODE - - A PERSONAL RESPONSE

By George Beahm

Vaughn Bode is gone.

Part of the rage I feel comes from the knowledge that I did not call him up and had not heard from him since early June, when I left for Ft. Sill, Okla., to begin my obligation to the military. At that time, I was swamped with things to do: organizing my life to a new kind of life; working with printer and publisher Richard Garrison for the BODE INDEX, Vaughn's last and most important collaborative effort. I knew Vaughn had an enthusiastic reception at the 1975 Comicon over the July 4 holiday.

And that same month he would pass away.

On 22 July I received a short note from Jan Strnad, close friend of four years. He wrote, simply, "Vaughn Bode passed away earlier this month. Did you know anything about this?" I stood there in the mail-room, stunned, shocked, and those around me noted the expression on my face. I wandered around for the next hour in a complete daze, unable to believe the news, to acknowledge the facts. Before class started, I found myself in turmoil. I was excused from class to spend the rest of the day in my BOQ room where I sat numbed.

I thought how dumb I was not to have called earlier. I had meant to call him, but I didn't. Now, obviously, it is far too late. I remember once reading in AND FLIGHTS OF ANGELS (Emil Petaja's beautiful tribute to the late Hannes Bok) something a Bok friend had written. He said he had planned to visit Bok, but, strangely, Bok had not answered his last letter. Then, suddenly, when talking with a friend, the news came out: Bok had died in his New York apartment. The news struck the man hard, and he never forgave himself for not calling earlier. I feel the same way.

I knew Vaughn for only four years. My initial meeting came in 1971 at the July Comicon when Richard Garrison suggested visiting Jeff Jones at his New York apartment and studio before the con started. In driving rain we walked through the streets and made it up the stairs to Jeff's place. There Vaughn and BB Sams were present with Jeff and his family. Vaughn showed me his latest work, and we talked late into the night.

Since that time I saw Vaughn infrequently. I graduated from high school, worked my way through college, took a commission in the Army, and entered active duty status. I knew though that no matter what I did, Vaughn's work would always follow me. I collected his works; I visited him at his Syracuse and Woodstock studios; I called him up, and he called me; we exchanged letters; I recorded interviews with him at his studios; and now I mourn his passing.

My original intention on doing an Index on him was simply this: too many are written and published after the man's death. I never wanted to do an Index under those conditions, feeling that the artist should have the joy of seeing his work collected by another person. Vaughn and I worked on the Index for four years, snipping it until it grew all out of proportion in relation to its original size. How obscene and empty it

feels to know the Index will be coming out -- but Vaughn can never see it. It is hard to believe, and harder to accept, that a man of his talents and uniqueness could leave us. Those who knew him by his prolific output, most of which is unpublished, noted that he worked in the fanzines, then worked for the prozines, then broke into CAVALIER where fellow underground artist Robert Crumb began his meteoric climb.

Over the Labor Day weekend I went through Jan Strnad's collection. I flipped through his copy of the Bantam paperback featuring "Deadbone" and I came upon "Mossy Sparks." For many, this little six-panel vignette struck deep. Vaughn had a talent for focusing on emotions and thoughts; he expressed his feelings, and not coincidentally they were the feelings of many people.

To me it seems obscene that Vaughn isn't here to show us his interpretation of life with his all-too-human lizards and chicks, with his irreverent Cheech Wizard romping through an enchanted forest. H. P. Lovecraft said of REH: "His passing was a loss of the first magnitude!" The same can be said of Vaughn's passing. In many ways, though, Vaughn reminded me of Hannes Bok, that bundle of energy pouring paint on canvas, creating artwork that stands beside Virgil Finlay and shines. Both men were gifted with an original style that demanded attention; both were excited about life, about the depth, intensity and values in life that showed in their works; both contributed heavily to the fan press and, later, to the professional publications. And both died at too early an age.

For those who knew him as a friend, Vaughn was: a tremendously devoted family man; a bundle of energy that glowed with creativity and pulsed with all-night drawing sessions in his studio; a person who enjoyed travelling and lecturing to college students and comic fans; a dynamic lecturer with his Cheech Wizard in the "Bantam Lecture Bureau" series; a writer of unbelievably fine letters, penned with various colored magic markers; a man who, when you were with him, insisted upon paying for all lunches and dinners; an artist, writer and publisher; an influential artist in the Underground who sparked off many imitations, notably Tom Foster, and whose ill-fated GOTHIC BLIMP WORKS died after a half dozen efforts, due to distribution problems; a man who appreciated quality in any form, particularly in artwork; a man who refused countless offers from companies who wanted to have him draw what they wanted, and whose restrictions made him shun them; a cartoonist who popularized felt-tip markers in the field -- Jeff Jones and Berni Wrightson both experimented with them with notable results; a man whose projects never stopped, whose projects permutated and sometimes fell down but usually succeeded with great results; an original talent, a gifted writer and artist, the kind of friend who makes you think of Roger Zelazny's succinct line upon hearing of Bok's passing: "I rage at the loss of what once lived."

We shall never see his like again.

12. 1. 19

12. 1. 19



GREG SPAGNOLA