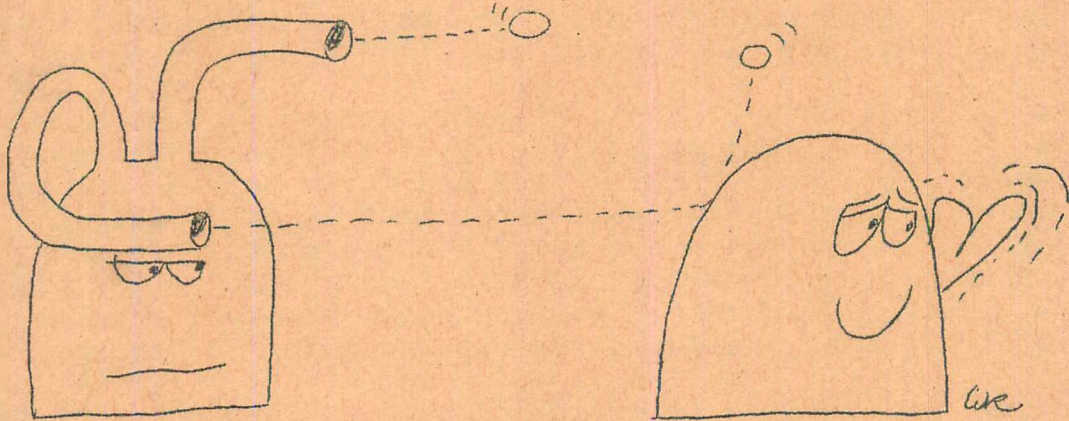


HOBGOBLIN



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I WENT TO THE DISCON, but I have no intention of writing any sort of formal conreport on it. This is mainly because I didn't take notes, though technically speaking this shouldn't prevent me doing such a report. After all, I took no notes on the Solacon either, and three months after it I sat down and wrote 20,000 words about it (I HEARD THE BEAT OF FANNISH DRUMS). Somehow, though, I didn't find the Discon quite as memorable.

In a way, the convention came as a bit of an anticlimax for us, because on the Tuesday night before the con we had a rather wild party here at our place. A number of people were in New York on their way to the con, and somehow a small getogether we'd planned developed into a Raucous Blast. In addition to Ted and Sandi White, Esther Davis & Henry Dupree, Carol and me, we had nearby outoftowners Gary Deindorfer and Lee Thorin and many people from the hinterlands: John Koning, Bruce Pelz, Dian Girard, Fred Patten, and Ted Johnstone. Everyone drank a lot and joked a lot, and sometime during the evening a number of them typed a stencil for a one-shot. I read that stencil the next day, and I can guarantee that you won't find the one-shot in this mailing, because it was without a doubt the worst one-shot ever written and I tore up the stencil with my own hands. But the party was great.

So maybe I was expecting too much of the convention when we set forth by Trailways bus Friday evening. Pete Graham had of course been down in DC earlier in the week for the March (he was on the organizing committee), and he'd called us from the Statler Hilton where he was staying to tell us all about the hotel. We told him we'd be arriving shortly before midnight, and would see him then.

But Friday afternoon Pete called me at work and said he was back in New York. "What the hell are you doing here?" I said in welcome. Well, it seemed the March committee had decided to hold a meeting that day to discuss the results and plans for the future, so Pete had flown back to sit in (disclaimer). He'd have to go back down again that evening, so he'd be joining us at the bus terminal. When Carol and I met him there I said I thought he was going about the whole thing the hard way, and he confessed that his presence at the meeting had been superfluous. "Graham, you've done it again," I chortled, and we got our tickets and lined up by the proper door.

A few minutes later I spotted Randy Garrett, and he came and joined us in line (giving up a place about fifteen people ahead in the process). Pete kept running back and forth between our door and another one where he suspicioned there might be an earlier bus to DC. After awhile his sharp eye noted a movement forward among the crowd at that door. "Come on," he said, and led us to the other line, which was indeed filing onto a waiting bus. However, when we got to the front of the line, we found the bus was going to Chicago.

"Graham, you've done it again," I said. "That was last year."

Well, we eventually got on our bus, the four of us grabbing seats right behind the driver. This worthy Trailways employee told us he'd been called by his employers to drive an extra bus to DC that night, so he hadn't had dinner, having had to rush to the depot.

"I guess this sort of thing happens a lot to you guys," Randy said. "You never know when you'll get a call for an extra trip, or where you may be going."

"You're right," the driver said. "Coupla months ago, they called me in for a special trip. I hurried to the depot, got behind the wheel, and said, 'Where'm I going?' 'Boston,' they told me. 'I've never been there,' I said. 'How do I get there?' 'That's your problem,' they said. 'But you're due there at midnight. Get going.'"

"Did you get there?" we asked.

"Yeah," he said, and shook his head. "About four next morning. I drove all over half of Massachusetts before I found Boston. I was stopped at a red light in Pacoima or somewhere, and I leaned out the window and says to this cop, 'Where am I?' 'Main Street and Broad,' he says. 'Yeah, but what town?' I says. He told me it was Pacoima or whatever it was. 'Is that in Massachusetts?' I asked him. He gave me a funny look."

"Weren't the passengers wondering about all this?" Pete asked. "And couldn't you have asked them how to get to Boston?"

"I'd have looked pretty silly doin' that, wouldn't I?" he said. "Anyway, time I got good and lost, all the passengers were asleep, and we're not supposed to do anything to wake up passengers while we're on the road. I finally found a freeway goin' to Boston, though, and we pulled in about four in the morning. The despatcher says, 'Where you from?' I says from New York. 'Last bus from New York came in two hours ago,' he says. 'Yeah, but I'm the one before that; I'm late.' So he stared at me like he didn't believe me, and finally he asks me, 'Where you been?' I stared right back at him and said,

'Main Street and Road, Tacoma.'"

We went on to regale us with many other stories of this nature while we chuckled and counted the miles to the convention. Then about eleven o'clock Andy sat forward and said, "Just one thing I want to know: how come we just passed a sign saying 'Now Entering Maine?'"

We got into DC a little before midnight and took a cab to the hotel. (Pete said we could walk there easily, but after lugging suitcases around in roughly a circle for half an hour we gave up.) Carol and I had a reservation, of course, but when Pete stepped forward to check in again -- he'd just checked out that morning, of course -- he found there were no more rooms available. He'd have to go to the hotel around the corner. "Graham," I said --

"I know," he said. "I've done it again." He went away.

As Carol and I started off after the bellboy to our room, Frank Dietz hove into view, hawking copies of LUMA. I bought one, and asked where the action was. In the N3F Hospitality room, he said, and told me the room number.

So after we'd emptied our suitcases and changed clothes, we went there. Pete, having checked in at his hotel, met us there. We found a miscellaneous assortment of unfamiliar faces sitting around talking, while four teenagers played poker at a table in the middle of the room. They were using matchsticks for chips.

Pete is a cynical person, but a fun-loving one. Earlier that day, in New York, he'd cashed his unemployment checks for the past month (he'd been working fourteen hours a day seven days a week at the March office and hadn't had a chance to cash them earlier), and he was now carrying in his wallet a hundred-dollar bill and a wad of ones -- thirty or forty of them, I suppose. He gimlet-eyed the poker players, then with a determined motion dragged up a chair and sat down. "All right, let's get this game rolling," he said, and peeled off the hundred dollar-bill and threw it into the middle of the table, allowing the players to see the thickness of the rest of the wad but not that the rest was all one-dollar bills. They stared at him, quite taken aback. Pete sat still, raising his eyebrows at them. When they didn't say anything, he scooped up the bill without a word and stalked into the other room of the N3F suite.

There was one familiar face in the room, I found -- or rather, one familiar beard. Walter Breen was sitting in the middle of a group of young fans smiling benignly. (He looked just like Forry Ackerman, only maybe not quite.) I greeted him and he showed me a copy of the coinfandom newspaper Coin World, which had a photo of him and a story about him, since he was starting a new column for the paper. I read through it and was struck dumb by the line, "Still a young man, Breen has already been held for some years in the field as a living legend." I read this line aloud, and chortled, while Walter smiled mythically.

"Yeah, but did you invent sex in 1927?" I asked him, and he grimaced and said, "Aaargh!" (Walter will deny this, by the way. He swears up and down that he absolutely never says Aaargh. In fact, he gets all up in arms about it sometimes, and when I tell anyone that

he's in the habit of using the word he'll throw back his head and groan, "Aaaaarrgh!")

I asked Walter where everybody I knew was, and found to my dismay that the Busbies hadn't come to the convention. I was very much disappointed at this, having been looking forward to the con largely as an opportunity to see them again. (I missed you throughout the con, Duz and Elinor.) But Walter told me that a lot of the New York types, with the addition of Calvin W. "Himself" Demmon, were up in John Koning's room. Carol, Pete and I went there.

I'd met Calvin a few times in Berkeley before I'd come to New York, but he'd been pretty much on the fringes of fandom then, so I was looking forward to meeting him again. He walked in the door and I recognized him immediately from photos. I opened my mouth to say something like Hello there, and he grasped my hand and said, "Hi, Terry Carr, boy, you're a lot funnier in person than you are in print!"

I felt like going out and coming in again, but instead I conned John Koning into giving me a swig of his fine booze. (Actually, it was probably terrible, but after the milk and cookies of the N3F room it was wonderful.) We sat around and talked awhile, the booze ran out, and several of us went out for a late-night snack. Thence off to bed.

I missed virtually the entire program Saturday afternoon, spending my time mostly in wandering around in the Art Show and display room, talking to John Magnus and buying old fanzines from him, and so on. (I found a copy of VULCAN, my first fanzine, on sale, and John gave it to me free, since all my files of my fanzines are back in Berkeley. Later, looking through it, I found there was a page missing, apparently due to an error in assembling on my part years before, and I consider this just retribution.) While I was in the display room, a man whom I didn't know walked up to me, glanced at my name-badge and pumped my hand. I peered at his name-badge and found that he was Charles Lee Riddle, once publisher of the fine fanzine PEON, which had been the first fanzine I'd ever seen. Lee had published my first material in fanzines, too -- several short stories which were absolutely terrible, written when I was twelve years old. I pumped his hand in return, and he told me he planned to revive PEON. He also introduced me to his son, who is 17 -- five years older than I'd been when I'd first known Lee.

I went into the Congressional Room just in time to catch the end of Larry Ivie's and Dick Lupoff's discussion of comic books. It was the question period. A man raised his hand and asked Dick if he didn't think that comic books had once been sadistic and a bad influence, probably fomenting a lot of needless violence among young people. Dick calmly replied, "No, but if you'll come up to the rostrum, sir, I'd be absolutely delighted to punch you in the nose."

I figured the program was going along quite well, and went off to our room, where Carol and Pete were sitting watching an old Jean Arthur movie on the room's television set. We decided to go out and buy some liquor for use during parties and such.

At the liquor store we bought about \$20 worth of stuff: vodka, bourbon, apricot brandy, retsina, and batches of mix, as well as a lot

of ice. While we were there, Sid Coleman came in to buy something, and we left together. I asked him if he'd ever had any retsina.

"Well, yes," he said. "Actually, I was introduced to retsina last summer when I was in Greece, when the Chairman of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission took me out to dinner." He paused, and noted my impressed expression. "That sounds very impressive," he said, "until you stop and think, the Greek Atomic Energy Commission?"

The GAEC, he explained, consisted of a reactor bought for Greece by the United States, and a salaried Chairman and his secretary. "I didn't like retsina much that first time, but the second time I had it, when some friends of mine in London took me to a fancy expensive restaurant, I liked it very much. I thought for awhile that it was just a drink that grows on you, but then I realized that the Chairman of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission just couldn't buy a very good sort of retsina on his salary."

That evening we went to the Costume Ball, which was on the whole kind of dull. Some of the costumes were good -- the Fafard group was quite good, for instance -- but most were embarrassingly bad, and the band played very tired phrases from popular songs as each contestant paraded across the stage -- "A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody" and such.

Pete Graham was in his best form. There was a girl at the con, whom we shall call Lorna Brick, who was one of these rather disgusting professional virgin types who enjoyed flirting with everyone in sight. She was irritatingly coy, and during the earlier part of the convention (before several of her admirers started comparing notes on what she'd told them) she was followed around by a good number of young fans. One of her playful bits was switching name-tags with a fellow whom we'll call Edgar Barf. She walked up to Pete Graham wearing this name-tag and said, "Hi, I'm Edgar Barf." Pete glanced at her name-tag, then looked her over appraisingly. "No you're not," he said. "That makes you so sure?" she asked. "Because you're a girl," Pete said.

She lowered her eyelids and said sweetly, "How do you know that?" Pete gazed back at her calmly for a moment, then casually but quite deliberately reached out and stroked her right breast twice. "That's how," he said. She went away.

Pete's next schtick came after he'd been noticing all the fans dressed in heroic costumes with huge swords. "That is this adolescent crap?" he muttered several times. Finally, his mouth a grim line, he strode up to two of the people so costumed -- they happened to be Ted Johnstone and Jock Root, though there were many others there -- and turned them to face each other. "We've had enough of this goddam posing," he said. "Now let's see some action!"

Ted and Jock squared off against each other, swords drawn. "All right," said Pete, "on three you go to it. One...two...three!"

They both turned on him immediately and chased him halfway across the floor.

After the Costume Ball we had a party in our room.

We'd invited various people at the Ball: Sid Coleman, Harry Warner, Boyd Raeburn, Ted and Sandi, Les Gerber, John Koning, Les Wrenberg, etc. Liquor (almost the whole \$20 worth) flowed freely, and I've been told numerous times since by those who were there that it was the best party of the convention. I don't know about that, but it was the best one I was at.

The whole thing began with Sid Coleman sitting in the middle of the floor and telling us a long, involved and absolutely hilarious story about his troubles in Istanbul with an obscure Near Eastern virus or somesuch which caused him to drip urine constantly. This story went on for half an hour or more, and I can say quite literally that my stomach hurt from laughing, and I was having trouble getting my breath. Sid Coleman just may be the funniest raconteur I've ever met.

Ron Elliot came by a bit later, looking for somebody. He wasn't at the party, whoever he was, but I invited Ron and a friend of his who was with him (whose name is on the tip of my typing fingers...but I forget, dammit) to stay for awhile. So Ron sat down and told us some funny stories for awhile. (His friend's name was Russ Martin -- I told you I could almost remember it.)

Then we got to singing rock and roll songs. This may not sound like a proper activity for high type minds such as are possessed by fans of our calibre, but let's just say it was all entic as hell. (Lee Jacobs was also there, by the way -- another rock and roll fan.) Pete and I sang "It Certainly Is A Wonderful Thing," and Carol joined us for a fine rendition of "Thingy," and Les Gerber sang Presley's version of "Heartbreak Hotel," accompanying himself on his nose. His performance on this fine old standard (the song, not the nose, I mean) was great, and somehow he managed to get in the echo-chamber effects too. Maybe he has cavernous sinuses, I don't know. Boyd and Lee and Pete contributed a lot of wonderfully stupid songs like "Tell Laura I Love Her" and "I Heard A Wreck On The Highway, But I Didn't Hear Nobody Pray" and "They Are Burnin' Down The House I Was Brung Up In" and many more, and it was just a gas.

Later on, for some reason, we all went down to the H3F room. Things were dull down there, and our group split up, some of us going out to eat and others going off to other parties or off to bed or something. (I later heard a wonderful story about the H3F room. It seems John Koning at one point walked into the room and an H3F type, probably figuring he didn't look like her concept of a Heffer, ran at him shouting, "Get out. Get out! This is the H3F Hospitality Room!")

The next afternoon we went to the Banquet Luncheon. At our table, in addition to Carol and me, were Jon White, Ronel, Walter Breen, Les Gerber, Henry and Esther, Boyd Raeburn and maybe a few others. I thought the food was fine, though the portions were ridiculously small. (When dessert came -- ice cream with chocolate syrup -- Walter shocked the waiters by calmly getting up and going to their cart to dip an extra spoonful of syrup on his ice cream. But they didn't do anything about it, either because he was perfectly within his rights or because his beard frightened them, or both.) The program at the affair was pretty good overall, though Will F. "Biff Leinster" Jenkins

gave a speech which was mostly dull except when he was telling 'Rastus and Mandy jokes. He was a tremendous disappointment to me.

Asimov was in fine form, though, and for his performance alone the banquet would have been worthwhile to me. (By the way, maybe he was surprised when he won a Hugo, but I'd been expecting it since his first joke on the subject.) Pete Graham hadn't come to the meal, but when the speeches were in session he came in, smuggling in the apricot brandy and some brandy glasses we'd bought the day before. We sipped the brandy throughout the speeches, passing it around the table, and Boyd testified that it was "the most gracious damned banquet I've ever attended."

We skipped the rest of the program that day, though out of a sense of some sort of loyalty I was present for the beginning of the fan panel, on which Ted White, Juanita Coulson, and the Thompsons were to explain how to stencil artwork and such. The whole idea had impressed me from the moment I'd first heard of it as approximately the worst program idea ever presented. In the first place, how many people at a convention are interested in one rather technical aspect of fanpublishing? In the second place, how did the convention committee ever get the idea that stencil-cutting could be explained coherently from a podium? Juanita started off by a general discussion of the subject: "You can use thin lines or thick lines, depending on your stylus. There are many types of shading plates, and you can mix them up for special effects..." I found the whole thing embarrassing, as did Ted apparently, judging from his expression as he handed the proper items from the assortment before him on the table to Juanita as she went on, "This is a stylus. This is a writing plate..."

It wasn't Juanita's fault, nor anyone else's who was on the panel. It was just a catastrophically bad idea on the part of the con committee, and I told George Scithers so while the discussion was droning on. "Well, the fans complain if a con committee doesn't schedule something for them, so we had to have something," he said. "But this is really a very poor idea," I said, "and look how few people have even stayed to hear it -- maybe two dozen." "Well, if it's such a bad program item," he replied with relentless logic, "then I guess it's a good thing not many people are here." Then he went away, while I stared after him scratching my head.

I stayed just long enough to hear Ted give his talk on the the fascinating subject of stencil-cutting, because I am a true and loyal friend, and mainly because he'd told me earlier that if I walked out on his talk he'd tell a lot of lies about me to the audience.

Out in the hall a young fan came up to me and told me he'd bought the original manuscript of LORD OF KOR at the auction, and asked me if I'd autograph it for him. I was delighted, of course -- I've been asked for an autograph less than half a dozen times, and from what Asimov said at the banquet it seems the pleasure never grows dim. However, the fan didn't have the script with him, so I told him to catch me the next day and went off to gather Carol and later Pete to look for a party. Phil Harrell had invited me to a closed-door pro party in his room, so we went there first. There was a sign on Phil's door saying, "Private Party, Restricted to Pros. No Fans Allowed," which I thought was quaint to say the least. Several lowly

fans like Boyd, Lee Jacobs and Pete were with us when we arrived, but Phil threw open the door for us all, saying he'd be glad to see any friends of mine. Phil was being very much the gracious host at the party, which we immediately discovered was crowded to the rafters.

I had a drink in my hand within thirty seconds, thanks to Phil, and I craned my neck to see all the pros. But the party was full of fans, which would have been fine if I'd known any of them. H. Beam Piper was there, but I didn't know him either. Fritz Leiber was in the middle of a crowd in one corner; I made my way to him, said hello and challenged him to a game of chess on the spot. He called my bluff, though, so I retreated. Phil came over and told me he thought WARLORD OF KOR was a fine novel. "Don't be surprised if you get a Hugo for it next year," he said. "I'll be thunderstruck if it's even nominated by one person," I said quite truthfully. (I'm reasonably satisfied with the book, but it is, after all, only a simple little space opera novella.) "Oh, I'm going to nominate it," Phil said. "You shouldn't be so critical of your own work -- I've noticed that writers frequently underestimate themselves." Not knowing what else to do, I thanked him and gulped at my drink. Phil is a nice guy, but he has, er, lousy taste, if I may say so.

Our group left the party soon after -- it was just too crowded. We went to the big party thrown by Los Angeles and Berkeley -- a dual victory party at which Berkeley celebrated getting the convention next year and LA celebrated getting out of it. However, this party too was crowded. I had another drink, shot the bull with host Ronel and Russ Martin for awhile. Ron wanted to know where the FANAC Hugo was -- he'd written me a week before the con to say that if I didn't hand it over to him at the con he'd run me out of fandom. (Ron and I, of course, have dual custody of the Hugo, and we trade off every year or so. He'd brought it east with him on his way to England on his TAFF trip last year.) I hung my head and said that I'd brought it to the con, but, uh...well, there'd been this poker game the night before, and I'd had a losing streak, and...

"Carr, you didn't!" he groaned.

"I'm afraid I did. Bruce Pelz has it now." While he gazed at me with mingled shock and loathing I beat a hasty retreat, and the whole lot of us -- which by now included Ted, Les Hirenberg, Jon White, and probably several others -- went off to wander the halls looking for a good party.

The tale of how we tried to crash the Sigma Frap dance, and of how Jon White was smuggled in and ended up being delegated by the Sigma Fraps to guard the door against the outsiders, has been told elsewhere, so I won't repeat it here. One other wizard wheeze hasn't been mentioned in print, though: We suddenly realized that we were standing right outside the door that led to the hotel's catering center. We were thinking of repairing to someone's room to have a party of our own, but we needed ice. So...

So Pete went through the door, took six steps and turned around and came out. "There's someone in there," he said.

Les Hirenberg raised his eyebrows. "That's no problem," he said. "You just have to look authoritative." He squared his shoulders

and sauntered through the door. We heard the sounds of some conversation within, and a couple of minutes later Les came back out, puffing on a cigar and carrying a pitcher full of ice cubes. "Nothing to it," he said.

We all chortled madly, and I cried, "That's it! Here it is almost midnight -- every party in the hotel is now out of ice! Gentlemen, we now have the entry into any party going!"

Les went to the door to the Sigma Trap dance, where Jon was on guard. He opened the door and said calmly, "You ordered ice?"

However, this broke us all up, and the whole group left the Sigma Traps. We'd been attracted to the dance originally only because they had a good band, but currently there was a bad comedy act on the stage. We all repaired to our room, and Les and someone else went to the N3T room to get some paper cups. We sat around in our room for awhile, drinking and chatting and chortling, then decided to go back and see how the LA-Berkeley victory party was going, it now being pretty late.

The party was still crowded, hot and loud. We milled around, and in awhile I noticed that Harry Warner had just come in the door. Knowing how he hates loud parties, I went over to him and said, "God, it's awful in here."

He smiled his quiet, dry smile. "Terrible. Tell me, where can I find a good and loud party? Where's the action?"

Jack Speer once told me that Harry has no sense of humor, but that's patent nonsense.

In the middle of the room I found John Boardman in the middle of a raging argument with a rather disgusting racist type who was claiming that the recent March had been a terrible thing. I went over and stood listening for awhile, but it was all very depressing. John Boardman is the only radical I know, in fandom at least, who can argue with a racist and still come out seeming like an idiot. His eyes flashed, he was literally quivering with rage, he sneered and shouted platitudes and not much else. The other guy was an idiot too, of course, but that was to be expected of a racist. The spectacle of a man who was in the right making such an ass of himself and of his position, as Boardman was doing, was too distressing for me. Anyway, it was late and I was getting sleepy, so Carol and I left.

As we went down the hall toward our room, Phil Harrell came by. "You should go back to my party," he said. "There's a great argument going on there, with Ed Wood and..."

Out of the frying pan and into the fire, I thought, and shook my head. We went on to our room, and the last thing I saw that night was a totally confused drunk reeling around in the hall, muttering, "Seven? What the hell'm I doing on the seventh floor?" I guess it was that time of night.

Not much happened during the day Monday. I attended the editors'

panel, but found it not too good. Each editor -- Cele Goldsmith, A. J. Budrys, Fred Pohl and John Campbell -- said a few words about their aims, and then the floor was thrown open to questions. Everybody but Campbell was ignored completely thereafter, and had to sit on stage sort of twiddling their thumbs while the fans got into the same old arguments with JFC about new ideas and breakthroughs in s-f and psionics, ad nauseum. It was a potentially good program, but I think maybe what the field really needs isn't new ideas in s-f but new ideas in questions from the floor at conventions.

Carol joined me to sit in and listen to the discussion of what it's like to be married to an s-f writer by Barbara Silverberg, Carol Emshwiller, Carol Pohl, and A. J. Budrys' wife. This turned out to be pretty tame, with a lot of polite inconsequentialities being discussed. There was a similar discussion earlier this year at the Milford S-F Writers' Conference, and I hear it was much more lively, since the wives there weren't playing to an open audience.

That night there was another party in the LA-Berkeley suite, this one a comparatively quiet one. A lot of people had left for home already, the next day being a working day. Carol and I had each taken Tuesday off, though, so we had a chance to attend the only really relaxed open party I saw at the con.

On the way to the party the fan who'd bought WARLORD OF KOR came by with the manuscript, so I signed it for him. Unable to think of anything clever to write, I settled for a simple "All best wishes," which was merely pretentious. But what the hell.

We came into the party suite to find Ronel flaked out on the couch amidst several girls, looking remarkably uninnocent. I think that TAFF trip ruined Ron: he's not the teetotalling aw-shucks-ma'am fellow we used to know and love. In England he was corrupted by the hard-drinking fen there, and now he looks, somehow...hard. Have you ever seen a squirrel who looked...hard?

Bruce had brought the FANAC Hugo and set it on the floor next to Ron. He rolled over, noticed it, and muttered, "Whose goddam Hugo is that? Somebody get it out of the way...it's cluttering up the floor."

"Well, if you don't want it..." said Bruce, reaching for it, and then Ron realized that it was his. His eyebrows shot up, he grabbed it and ran off to stash it carefully away from thieves and poker players. (Actually, of course, Bruce had only had the Hugo because, since I was going to the con by bus, I'd given it to him in New York to bring down to DC by car.)

Well, I talked with Ted Johnstone and Ruth Berman and even Don & Maggie Thompson at the party. It was an occasion for talking with people I'd missed throughout the con...including Chuck Hansen too. Later on there was a fil-sing in a separate room of the suite, where Sandy Cuttrell held forth from The Bosses' Song Book and Les Gerber and Ted Johnstone did fannish songs and such. It was a tremendously enjoyable session (I'd never heard Sandy before -- he's very good), and a fitting climax to the con.

-- Terry Carr