

e - ZOMBIE

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First Fandom is not dead, only doddering granddaughter

BLOOMINGTON INVADED BY DAWN PATROL ZEALOTS!

Months of Secret Plotting Exposed!

Townpeople Flee in Terror!

Mayor Takes Action!

TRAVELING GIANTS DEPT: They came from exotic foreign places like Canada and California; they came from exotic distant states like Georgia, Florida, Oklahoma, Kansas and North Dakota; they came from exotic neighboring states like Iowa, Indiana, Missouri, Minnesota and Wisconsin; they came from exotic Chicago. [But there is no truth to the rumor that a Martian and a Klingon were found together on the fifth floor.] They came from all over in response to a clarion call from the ringleaders of The Dawn Patrol = come to Bloomington on August 3 and 4 to throw a party for the Tucker tribe. And so they did, a hundred of them, filling forty rooms in the Empire Inn. [There is no truth to the vile rumor that the manager gave me a kickback on every room rented by a fan and actually paid for.]

Fans, mundane friends and family mixed for the weekend, some coming as early as Friday afternoon and some leaving as late as Monday noon. Fans, friends and family regarded one another with admirable restraint but some of the friends were sorely puzzled by some of the fans. I was asked if "these were the people I went to those conventions with?" and "Does he always dress like that?" and "Does he ever take off his hat?" and "Say, he's cute!" [You are cute Robin Bailey.] One friend confessed that he was baffled by a fanzine and asked me to translate some of the fannish terms found therein. "What's a ditto? What's a fanquet? How does a smof?"

Fern and I enjoyed a family reunion = we played hosts to three sons and one daughter, their spouses and/or significant others, four grandchildren and one great-grandson, one sister, plus numerous nieces and nephews. A family photo by Keith Stokes reveals eighteen family members plus two close friends who snuck into the frame for the fun of it. Everyone stayed for dinner. The banquet cook was coaxed out into the open and given a hearty round of applause = he had been working for two days on dinner preparations to feed 105 of us. Jimmy Hollaman and Sheri Dean deserve equal applause = they worked for weeks on the table decorations, a Tucker book set among a floral decoration on each of the dozen tables.

The indoor pool was occupied after-hours while most of us were whooping it up in the consuite but alas I saw no skinny dipping. The consuite was well stocked and again those mundane friends and some family members ogled the beer in the bathtub, the wine and bourbon on the sidebar, and wondered "Is it really free? Do your fans do this all the time at the conventions?" The smooth routine with the bottle of Beam's Choice caused open astonishment among some newcomers and I doubt that they joined in.

FANZINE DEPT: Two fanzines were available during the weekend = Nancy and Ross Hathaway had free copies of a special edition of The National Star Enquirer of the Midnight Dusk Petrol while Dick and Leah Zeldes Smith circulated copies of Spirits of Things Past. The first named was a tribute edition with dozens of new and old photographs and three reprints in its 14 pages. The second was a 12 page progress report on the upcoming ditto and FanHistoriCon conventions to be held in Bloomington on October 12-14, together with old photos and new articles on historical fandom. Fern and I signed a number of these fanzines at the autograph table on Saturday afternoon together with many, many books = some of them truly ancient.

After Dinner Tributes

Keith Stokes, serving as toastmaster, read aloud letters from all over the civilized world, letters from far off exotic Sri Lanka to far off exotic Ireland with 27 stops in between. I knew I had friends around the world and now I was pleased that so many wrote loving testimonials. I knew that in years past I had given a few fans hints on writing and selling but now I was amazed to learn how many I had taught to be professional writers. They said I did so it must be true. Who am I to question their accuracy, their memory banks? [It is a proud and lonely thing to be able to teach a fan anything.] Fern and I received letters from Phyllis Eisenstein, Lee Killough, Jack Williamson, Christine Beshar, Mike Resnick, Marie Willbrand, Pat Taylor, Harry Harrison, Crispin Burnham, William Wu, Larry Niven, Vivian Mouser, Algis Budrys, Joe Haldeman, Rob Chilson, Frank M. Robinson, Emilie Jacobson, James Gunn, George Zebrowski, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Erle Korshak, Julie Schwartz, Kelly and Laura Freas, Mark Tiedemann, Alan Steele, Dave Truesdale, Arthur C. Clarke, and Keith Stokes. In all a treasure trove, now bound in book.

Roger Tener, known to be the instigator and mastermind behind this weekend, presented Fern and I with plaques on behalf of the Dawn Patrol. One plaque was in recognition of my work in the science fiction and mystery fields, while the second made note of my long and sometimes-glorious fan career. [There was no mention of my many inglorious moments.] Fern's plaque was one of praise for tolerating me while I did the above work. She has managed to tolerate me for 48 years and richly deserves the praise and the plaque.

Overcome by the majesty of it all, marveling at the number of fannish visitors to the city, awed by the Dawn Patrol banner, Judy Markowitz, the mayor of the city, issued an official proclamation naming Saturday to be the official Wilson Bob and Fern Tucker Day in Bloomington. We were given a framed copy of the proclamation. Thunderous cheers shook the room while apprehensive bellboys ran to protect the windows from shattering. Roger was seen to wipe a tear from his eye.

And then he turned the microphone over to me "for a few words."

A Few Words

"Fern and I want to thank the good people who organized this happy weekend = Keith Stokes, Barbara Walley, Roger Tener, and ... and who else? ... This is who else ... Susan Satterfield, Nancy Hathaway, Belinda Jamison, Joan Marie Knappenberger, Sherry Dean, David Moreno, Jimmy Hollaman and Jules Verne, eleven in all. They worked so carefully and did their jobs so well that I think of them as "the con committee." In one special sense this gathering is a science fiction convention and that "con committee" is responsible for bringing us all together.

"But now, I have some questions for the con committee.

"How come the 9 o'clock panel was thirty minutes late in starting this morning? How come only two of the five famous writers showed up for that panel? How come all the missing writers were found in the bar and how come the bar was open at that hour? Who chose the topic for that panel anyway? Who wants to get up at 9 in the morning to listen to hung-over writers debate the topic "Shall we build ski slopes on Mars?"

"How come the noon autograph session was postponed until Sunday? Where were the five famous writers who were supposed to sit at that table? Why was the bar open at noon?"

"Why was Susan missing from the children's story hour? Why did you wait so long to explain her absence? Why didn't you send a carload of strong-hearted fans downtown to rescue her from that escalator when you first learned the electricity had failed?"

"Why was the masquerade nearly an hour late in starting? Were you just being funny when you propped up the master of ceremonies and tied him to the chair? And where were the Billboard Bimbos that were supposed to open the show? How come only one Bimbo made an appearance on stage and why didn't Diana do the dance of the seven veils? Do you really take Robin's threats seriously?"

"What will happen to your reputations as a responsible con committee when the word leaks out that your convention closed with five drunken writers and one drunken bartender standing at this microphone, all trying to sing Sweet Adeline in the same key?"

"In short Barbara, Roger, Keith, and ... and who else? ... This is who else = Susan, Nancy, Belinda, Joan Marie, Sherry, David, Jimmy and Jules Verne = you did a bang-up job! Fern and I offer you a thousand thanks."

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Keith's photographs may be found here:

<http://kcsciencefiction.org/01tucker01.htm>

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