

mlg #13

MILTY'S MAG

Milton A. Rothman, 1730 P, NW, Washington, D.C. Fall, 1940

Pre-convention stuff:

Here we are in Philadelphia, on the third day of our lovely, magnificent vacation, with a week to loaf at home, recuping from our strenuous summer of school and work, four days in New York with editors, authors, and the World's Fair, and three lovely days in Chicago, where I will see most of you guys who are going to read this later on. So, with five rolls of 35 mm film in one pocket, and a dozen or two foto-flash bulbs in another we will hiho for the open spaces, and you will no doubt hear more about it later.

WASHINGTON CELEBRATES

The Washington Worry-warts, composed of Jack Speer, Elmer Perdue, and Milty, hit it up high Friday night, August 16, by going out to Glen Echo park and riding on the roller coaster. This was to celebrate the end of summer school and the beginning of our vacation. It was Elmer's first ride on a roller coaster, and he was duly impressed; we practically had to carry him off. Elmer had a Pepsi-Cola, which he later regretted when he took the whirling airplane ride; Jack had something pink, and Milty had a coke, straight. Jack also had a hot dog. Fortunes were won and lost in the penny arcade, where the three vied their skill with the electric machine guns. Elmer hit the highest, with 240 hits out of 300. Jack, who works for the War Department, will make a note to recommend Elmer for enlistment in the air corps. After this evening of sophisticated pleasure the three wended their various ways to home.

MORE ABOUT MILTY

Milty tells us not to talk about him so much. It embarasses him. But we can't resist poking him in the ribs and kidding him about the way he wept because he couldn't play the piano anymore. That last issue of Milty's Mag made him pretty sore, and he went and moved into a place where they had a piano so he could practice an hour or two on Sats and Suns -- he couldn't play on weekdays on account of because working thir-teen or fourteen hours a day and he had to sleep -- and he was very surprised when he found that he could thusly continue to mangle Chopin.

But we want to warn Milty now not to be too optimistic. He's just gotten an idea in his head that things are going to go along pretty easy now. Here he is with a soft job, making a salary at which he would have fainted if somebody had offered him half of it two years ago, and going to school at night, which while hard work is very soul-satisfying, and he suddenly got the fixed idea that ten years from now he is going to get a Ph.D. in chemistry, but the Futurians could tell him what the Dialæctic is going to do to that.

PICTURES AT A CONVENTION

Tragedy struck the second morning of the convention, when I awoke to find that my camera was gone and not to be found. The loss of the camera was not nearly as serious as the loss of the pictures that were within it. I had some exclusive shots: the convention audience from the top of the table in front of the room, the parade outside the hotel, with Reinsberg standing on top of a garbage can making a speech, and many others. This, then, is not an account of the convention, which would be trite, but a series of pictures that might have been taken at it. Even though I have lost my camera I still have my typewriter, and it will perhaps serve better.

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The outside is dark, and the train is roaring through the flatlands of Ohio, or perhaps Indiana. The motion is comfortable, and I have fallen asleep in my chair, for it is two in the morning. Suddenly the lights go on, awakening me. We are approaching a station, I assume, and get up to stretch my legs and get a drink of water. Looking through the door into the car ahead, I see that there is something going on there. A woman detective comes out and stations herself at the rear of my car. Two girls, beautifully, happily drunk, come out, complaining that they want peanuts and pink lemonade. I assure them, with tears in my eyes, that there is no peanuts and pink lemonade for hundreds of miles. In the car ahead people are being searched, and baggage is being gone through, just like I saw in the movies about Germany, while the train roars through the night. They never came into my car, and I never found out what was happening.

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Eight in the morning, and Union Station in Chicago. I disembark, and while walking to the head of the platform, see in the distance an unruly mob carrying banners. I do not have to go closer to know who they are. And so, in one bewildering moment I greet Reinsberg, Korshak, Ackerman, Morojo, Pogo, and many, many, others.

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I stand in the lobby of the Hotel Chicagoan, Saturday evening. A middle aged man walks in, dangling a camera, and asks: "Are you Korshak?" "No, I'm not Korshak," I answer, and without further ado the man walks away. It was Dr. Smith.

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The pre-convention in Morojo, Pogo, and Gert Kuslan's room. Mobs and mobs of them piling into that tiny chamber until it looked like the Marx Brothers' stateroom scene. The creme of the crop; everybody was there.

The march through Chicago. Reinsberg stands on top of a garbage box outside the hotel shouting things to the public, while the costumers stand about helplessly, and the populace gazes on with much amusement, and I sadly set up my tripod in the middle of the pavement, and set off my flash. "This is not an invasion from Mars," Reinsberg Howls. "This is a science fiction convention." Whereupon I fold up and go back into the hotel, leaving the rest to invade the newspapers and force the bored photographers to take their pictures.

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Dr. Smith stares me in the eyes as he talks to me, and I stare him back, just like Seaton and DuQuensne, with black and steely green, only his are blue, and mine have a tinge of green in the grey. Never before have I talked to a more staring person.

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Sunday night, after the party and auction, a mob of us slip away and go a-beering. We settle down in the second joint, which was low enough to satisfy anyone, and drink beer after beer, discussing the latest pornography for the benefit of Miske. For Miske was there! Yes, Miske was along of his own free will, guzzling beer with the best of them, and showing himself to be not really as bad as he seems when he writes. And so the picture: A table in the celler of a dive, around which sit Art Widner, Miske, Perdue, Tullis, Shroyer, Milty, Lewis Martin, Madle, and Michel. Oh, it was lovely. One of the happiest moments of the convention. And so to bed at six A.M.

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Sh-h-h-h-h-h-h-h!

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Tex Singleton and Gert Kuslan.

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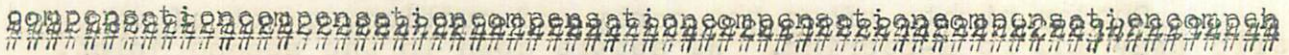
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And who kept getting between Elmer and Pogo?

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The final moment. The howling mob charging through the midnight streets of Chicago from the YMCA Hotel to the railroad station, taking turns carrying my bag. A long line of shouting science fiction fans from all ends of the country, picking up stragglers from beer-joints, singing songs - He's a Jolly Good Fellow -- The Internationale -- winding in a turbulent snake-dance.

Glory, Glory, Hallelujan, with head high, and breathing deeply of the rare atmosphere, drinking in every last drop of every last moment, marching through light street and dark street until the station is reached. The train in a half hour, plenty of time. Sit down at little tables and have sodas. Everybody sitting down, frightening the waitresses out of their wits. Then suddenly it is ten minutes to train time, and I flee with Morojo to the train. Down that long, long platform, the both of us say goodbye, alone. (Squeeze the last drop of sentiment out of it, boy.) Morojo goes back, and I sit in my chair, suddenly relaxed. But from the rear of the platform comes a growing roar, and it is the mob, which has followed me, clamoring at my window, amusing the others in the car no end. They wave wildly to me, and I wave weakly back at them, and then go to the end of the car, to look at them through the door. I stand there, smiling very silly like, while the conductor breaks the train starting cord in his vexation. Then people shout: "I'll see you in Denver." And I, continuing in my little joke, say: "I'll see you in camp number 42," and sneak back into the train.



STUFF WHILE LEANING AGAINST THE PHONECREE
ON THE CORNER

"The trip to New York with the Futurians was lovely," Elmer says. "We left Chicago Tuesday morning and arrived in New York Friday night. It was what I needed as a slow letdown from the convention. Else I would have wept thousands of tears instead of only the 23 that I did."

"It was a lot different going by train," Milty says. Elmer looks at him and smiles, slowly. "Yeah. Look at the fun you missed."

Milty shrugs his shoulders. "I slept most of the trip and read a Weird Tales the rest of the time. It stank. The Weird Tales, that is. I didn't need a lot down from the convention. It was out of my mind the minute I got on the train."

"It was some send-off you got. The man sitting beside you, next to the window in the train, enjoyed it. I threw him a kiss."

"Yes, it was quite a thrill. Of course, I didn't kid myself very much about it. They would have done the same for anybody else who happened to be leaving at the moment."

"Yeah."

"What do you think of the people there?"

(The rest is unpublishable, save that Shroyer came out on top.)

And so Milty stands alone on the street corner, leaning against a phone pole, talking to himself.

So Jack Speer thinks that scientists, being scientists, and not politicians, should sit back and work at their science, and let the others take care of the job of running the world. The only thing wrong with that is that it has been done for some thousands of years, and I don't like how the professional world-runners have been doing the job. Not that scientists would be any better. Scientists are a bunch of dopes. There is no getting away from that fact. You might think that, being educated in logical thought and advanced ideas, they might have more sense than the average person, so you come across the picture of Alpha Chi Sigma, the leading chemical fraternity, being anti-semitic. Chemists, as a rule are bourgeois, being owned hand and foot by the large corporations that employ them. It takes so much of a person's energy to learn to be a chemist that he doesn't have much chance for anything else.

So I distrust the people who have run the world up to now, for they are making a mess of it, and I am cynical about the lovely scientists whom some would have lead. There are certain things that I believe would be very nice to have. Various books can explain those things better than I could. But what one would like to have happen, and even what one can work at to try to bring about -- is very much different from what is going to happen. The happiest people are those who can adjust themselves to that which is going to happen. Some people are constitutionally unable to do so. Those people are called radicals. Oddly enough, it is the reactionaries who are going to adjust themselves.

Anyway, we got off the track. It was Speer's fault. I wasn't talking about scientists running the world. I wasn't talking about scientists running the world. I was just wondering if a scientist ought to make something deadly like atomic energy at a time when it would surely be used to kill people. Of course, in a capitalist world, with wars every 25 years or so, it would be a silly boy who would wait until after a war to finish a thing, because it would only be used during the next war. Under that idea, then, a truly pacifistic scientist must work on only those things which could never be used in a war at all, such as fertilizers, vitamins, etc. So I guess it doesn't really make much difference whether they get atomic energy now or after the war, because they'll ruin themselves with it sooner or later, and maybe it'll be a good thing.

And so the used stencils of this are being filed away between pages of the Socialist Call. How subversive. Elmer was talking very subversive while turning the handle for page one of this (plug). He actually says that the conscripts will be used to defend interests, and he called the President a bastard. Such language, Elmer.

ART DEPARTMENT;

Because we forgot that page six would be an outside page, we have to spend fifty more sheets of paper so that our art can be pasted into the middle of the opposite page. It was wonderful the way we got that picture. One evening we were reading, calmly, and a bunch of magazines lay upon the table. Suddenly the little metal-man slithered out of an Astounding Stories and started to glow, glowing with an eerie luminescence as it did so. We snatched up our camera and snapped it, whereupon it shriveled into dust and disappeared.

SILLY SIBILANT DEPARTMENT (Apologies to the Koenig)

From E. von Keyserling's novel: "Abendliche Häuser."

"Nein," wiederholte er leise und zischend.

Which translates to: "No," he answered, softly and hissing.

DEPARTMENT where we wonder what to do for half a page.

First, thanx to those who voted us secretary of the FAPA. Now all we have to do is to get the records and money from Madlo. That will probably require another blitzkrieg. Second, thanx to those who have just joined. We think you will find it worth while. Hopes that the many expiring will rejoin. Things should go much more smoothly now than they have up to now.

This is the fastest production of Milty's Mag yet. The first page was composed in Philadelphia before the convention. The next three were composed in snatches after the convention. Five was composed while Elmer turned the handle for Speer's Sustaining Program, Speer being in Oklahoma at the moment. The pages were stenciled, and Elmer ran them off immediately after. This last page is being composed right on the stencil, and Elmer is sitting smoking a cigarette, waiting for this stencil, asking "What's the matter with you?" as I turn to see what he is doing. The prints for the page opposite have yet to be done, and I dread the task. But it is my masterpiece.

We get annoyed at the way we oscillate between the use of the editorial "we", and "I". Originally there was a subtle distinction between the use of those two and "Milty", but in the heat of composition we become careless. We could probably explain it, but it would be rationalization, we confess.

Oh, well, auf widerschm in Denver.



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