



THE PASSING PARADE #3

FULL 10/2

## THE PASSING PARADE #3

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### THIS IS THE QUARTER THAT WAS

On the convention bidding scene, the major item of the last three months is that we've found ourselves a hotel for the 1975 NASFIC. The hotel is the Marriott and it hasn't opened yet. Reliable sources tell us that it will open in August 1973 though. We had a choice between four hotels in the Los Angeles area which were capable of holding a large science fiction convention; the Marriott, the International, the Ambassador, and the Biltmore. There is also a fifth hotel, the Century Plaza, which is large enough, but the price is prohibitive and expensive even. The International was quite easy to deal with and it was a fairly good hotel, but a little short on function room space. The Ambassador has more function rooms, but fewer sleeping rooms and a higher price for almost everything. The Biltmore has both function room space and sleeping rooms at moderate prices, but it's in a bad area and the staff is composed entirely of trolls.

Which brought us to the Marriott. Just to show how dedicated we are the committee had to don hard hats and tour the hotel while it was still under construction. You won't find every convention committee doing that. Several of the features of the Marriott seem quite attractive. The hotel has lots of function room space, 1000 sleeping rooms, a 24 hour coffee shop, a retail liquor store on the premises (so you don't have to sneak in booze for room parties), and soft drink and ice machines on every floor. The swim-up bar is sort of cute too. The prices as of 1975 will be \$20-single, \$22-double, \$27-triple, and \$32-quadruple. For 1975, these are fairly moderate prices. Even if we went back to the International, we couldn't get the prices we had in 1972 for 1975.

When I first rough drafted this paragraph I made the statement that Pelz and Associates were the only 1975 Nasfic bid which was fully underway. (Pelz and Associates includes Bruce Pelz, Elayne, Fred Patton, Lois Newman and myself) If you include the qualification "fully underway" the statement is still true; however, Chuck Crayne has now announced a rival bid against us. I have no information on his hotel or personnel at the moment. It's possible that he might intend to take over our hotel arrangements if he wins. I don't really know that those are his intentions, but it is a thought that has occurred to us. While we were thinking along those lines, we made an agreement among ourselves not to switch sides if the Pelz bid lost.

Our financial statement from LACon is due out in the immediate future. (translate: as soon as one member of the committee can catch another member of the committee and nail one of his feet to the floor for a long enough period of time) I'm sure that our financial statement will be a closely scrutinized document. I don't think the financial statement is going to hurt us any, although I don't expect that we will be entirely free from bitching. The cost of movies and the program book are two items which have already been criticized. The limits of allowable bidding expense is also an item which I'm sure will be

brought up. For instance is travel to the convention at which you submit your bid an allowable expense. Two of our members took it as a bidding expense, so I imagine it will be mentioned. As a business expense, I don't think it can be seriously questioned; however, some people will object on the basis that the committee members were having fun while they were entering the bid. Even the IRS (thrice cursed be their name) doesn't have any requirement against enjoying yourself while you are pursuing your business.

There's another factor which may complicate the political situation. That's the development of an anti-Nasfic group. There have been a number of people who were opposed to the idea of a Nasfic, but a problem arises if they try to kill off the Nasfics by railroading a motion through the business session. I think it's entirely too easy to railroad anything through the business sessions these days. I would suggest that the business meetings be moved to prime time rather than 9 a.m. in order to get a more representative sample of voters. That might also slow down the eternal diddling with the Hugoes and the rotation plan which has been going on for as many years as I can remember without accomplishing much of anything.

Aside from convention activities, I'm taking a course in "Investment in Securities" this quarter. It's quite a shift from the Old Testament to the stock market in a short period of time. People who try to analyze my personality by the courses I take become terribly confused after awhile. I simply became interested in the stock market, so I'm taking a course in it. I'm not going to do an article on the subject as I did the the Old Testament, so you don't have to worry about that. I doubt that such an article would make much sense to anyone who wasn't already following the stock market. Is there anyone in the audience who does follow the stock market?

I've been thinking lately of my various interests that I haven't been able to pursue lately. My movie watching has dropped off to practically nothing and at various times I've been quite an avid movie fan. I've played duplicate bridge about three times in the last year. For a time there, a number of fans in Los Angeles were using duplicate bridge as a hobby to get away from their hobby. I enjoy the game, but other things have been intervening in my schedule. Then there's science fiction. I was reading some science fiction just last July. That was my concerted effort to read the Hugo nominees. Since then science fiction hasn't had a high enough priority to be programmed into my schedule. It's too bad, since I still enjoy science fiction when I get a chance to read it.

In this issue, I've got the usual odd assortment of things. An article on one of Joanna Russ' articles which I mentioned last time, an article on some of my reactions to this year's mystery convention, an article on the books of Samuel from the Old Testament, a letter from Ted White indicating that he isn't entirely happy with me followed by my own grief stricken reply, some fanzine reviews and a letter column. You never know what you'll find in an issue of my fanzine. Sometimes I'm not too sure what I'm going to have in a given issue either. Next issue promises to be equally odd but completely different. I haven't the foggiest notion what's going to be in that one.

It seems that every issue I say that I must get around to doing some FAPA mailing comments. Well, this time I'm going to do it for sure even if I have to postmail. It's programmed into my schedule right between learning to play polo and translating the Koran into Yiddish. This time for sure.

## YOU'RE ALL WRONG JOANNA RUSS!

---A Column of Moderate Criticism

It's been fairly seldom that I encounter a piece of writing which I disagree with in every particular. I must say that the experience is certainly stimulating to the adrenal glands. The piece of writing I'm referring to is Joanna Russ' article "The He-Man Ethos in Science Fiction" which appeared in Clarion II. To give a brief summary of what Joanna Russ is objecting to, let me quote the following, "The real he-man is invulnerable. He has no weaknesses. Sexually he is superpotent. He does exactly what he pleases everywhere and at all times. He is absolutely self-sufficient. He is emotionally dependent on nobody, for this would be weakness. Toward women he is possessive, protective, and patronizing; to men he gives orders. He is never frightened by anything or for any reason; he is never indecisive; and he always wins.

These specifications exceed those possessed by all heroes and any but the Christian God. I have never encountered a character in science fiction who fits these specifications. The characters of Van Vogt and E. E. Smith come the closest, but they don't quite make it as sexually superpotent. (Do you suppose there is something we haven't been told?) Such traditional heroes as King Arthur and Ulysses are still further from the ideal, and many people would regard them as eminent he-men. It might be concluded that the point is somewhat overstated and that what she is objecting to is the merely exceptional individual who can conquer a world or defeat fifty armed foes with a frozen salami.

With the characters of Smith and Van Vogt, their lack of finite limits is an active fault. Of course, Smith and Van Vogt aren't very good writers. If they were better writers, they might have noticed that all the heroes of mythology and folklore do have their limitations. As often as not, their limitations destroy them in the end. Maybe there is some innate sense of equity which demands that superhuman abilities must meet superhuman adversities and that all creatures must share equal portions of success and failure.

Joanna Russ objects not only to the he-man in particular, but also to mythology in general. To quote again, "There is only one thing wrong with this creature (the he-man) and that's what's wrong with all mythologies. Everybody knows that he doesn't exist, but we still believe--despite what we actually know about other people and ourselves--that he ought to exist, that he somehow constitutes an ideal standard, or that men ought to try to be like that, foredoomed to failure as the effort inevitably is."

Many human efforts are foredoomed to failure and it doesn't seem to have any significant deterrent effect. It seems to be in the nature of an ideal that it is something which is aspired toward but never entirely attained. The core of most ethical systems is that man should aspire to be more than he is. Setting up ideals of this sort seems to have been pretty much a universal human activity. I would say that it is a universal human activity, except that someone would bring up the Grunclutch Indians of South Dakota who have never been known to do anything of this sort. The Grunclutch Indians have never been known to do anything of any sort, so anthropologists can always use them as a group which contradicts any idea you have about human nature.

On the matter of mythology, Joanna Russ is missing one of the major elements of all literature. In order to be a true myth, a story has to tap an area of general human psychology. The mythic figure is a psychological archetype.

Thus Ulysses or Christ can appear in a modern novel and have a force that is not the property of the average literary character. The subject of why the human mind works the way it does is a subject for almost unlimited speculation, but it doesn't seem to change much from century to century. Things that were of interest to people two thousand years ago are generally still of interest today.

There have been those occasions in human history when a mythic figure turned-up in the flesh. Take Napoleon Bonaparte for example. It must have been a real ego trip to be Napoleon Bonaparte. Yet he had no superhuman powers, just considerable ability and relentless drive. He lived in a well documented period of history and his accomplishments were phenomenal. Thomas Edison and Albert Schweitzer are two other men who have become almost mythic figures, but they were also for real. Edison has become the prototype of the super inventor in science fiction. Yet even Richard Seaton could produce inventions only slightly faster than Edison did it in the real world.

Of course, reality is no excuse for putting something in a work of literature. There is the additional factor that Napoleon, Edison and Schweitzer are interesting. They're interesting to think about. It's a feature they share with Ulysses, Christ and King Arthur. That literature should be interesting is a principle which writers often ignore.

Underlying this entire article is the objection that men are doing all of these things and not women. Most of our traditional heroes come from warfare and fighting. There has been an active effort on the part of most human cultures to keep women out of warfare and fighting. This effort makes pretty good sense in terms of racial survival. Even today you hear objections that the bombing of North Vietnam is killing women and children. Differences in other areas can mainly be attributed to the fact that women become involved with child bearing while men have to pursue a trade throughout their lifetime. Child bearing is an activity of obvious importance and it is not an activity which is likely to be distributed evenly between the sexes.

Joanna Russ feels that science fiction should offer solutions of some sort for social problems. There's no earthly reason why it should. As long as science fiction contains interesting ideas, people will read it. It doesn't make the slightest bit of difference if those ideas will work. Socially conscious science fiction usually dredges its ideas from yesterday's newspaper and that is a source which doesn't interest me very much. In fact, social consciousness is usually an excuse for not very imaginative propaganda. If it were imaginative propaganda, I wouldn't particularly mind.

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## MISCELLANIA

In October, we had A. E. Van Vogt speak at one of our LASFS Directors' Dinners. The talk was quite interesting because of the insight it gave into how his mind works. He described at length how he had first made a study of A and then a study of B and then a study of C and so on. These studies were not only segregated in time, but I also got the impression that they were kept in separate memory units in his mind. Since everything in my mind sort of sloshes around in one mass, I'm always a little surprised when I meet someone who has a compartmentalized memory. It's not a common thing, but I've met a number of other people who had minds that seemed to work the same way. Thinking back on Van Vogt's fiction, the idea of a compartmentalized memory seems to make sense.

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Gail Knuth really deserves a special mention. In a twelve<sup>x</sup> month period, Gail will have worked on five different convention committees; Westercon, LACon, Bouchercon, Fantasy Film Con, and Equicon. Because of the Los Angeles interlocking directorate convention system, it isn't unusual to find a person on several convention committees during the year, but five may be a record in fandom.<sup>x</sup>

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Recently I received a publication which never fails to ticle my sense of wonder. The publication is the UCLA Extension catalogue. The people who dream up courses for UCLA must be very strange. For instance, my favorite course in the whole book is "Concepts of Power Volleyball." Honest, they give a course in it in the department of Kinesiology. As near as I can figure it, Kinesiology is what we used to call physical education in the old country. Some other course offerings include: "Gestalt Awareness: A Workshop in Creative Expression," "The Life and Times of Malcolm X," "An Inquiry into Self-Fulfillment," "Dances of the Balkans," and "Human Sexuality." With only a little bit of effort, you could acquire a really strange education from classes at UCLA.<sup>x</sup>

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Thankfully I am now through with my annual Christmas depression. About a dozen years ago, I established a personal policy that I would not become depressed about things, but Christmas is the only remaining exception to that policy. The reason Christmas depresses me may sound a little strange. You see, you're supposed to feel happy at Christmas time. However, since my mood doesn't change much, I feel about the same at Christmas time as at any other time. This in turn depresses me. So I sit by myself on Christmas Eve with a hot bowl of gruel and thoughts about how a nuclear war might do a great deal to improve the world.

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## THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT WITH ASIMOV AND TYPEWRITER

It was back in my undergraduate days that I decided I was going to read the Bible someday. Thus it joined many another project on the other side of the endless plain of Real Soon Now. College is now seven years in the past and I finally got around to at least reading the Old Testament. Which is pretty good time if you compare it with the passing of geological ages.

Two influences in my senior year of college led to my determination to read the Bible. One of them was a chapter in Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy. The chapter was entitled "Hebraism and Hellenism" and it dealt with what Arnold considered to be two fundamental drives in Western Civilization. Hellenism was the drive to know things as they really are and Hebraism was the drive to right conduct. The two drives are not necessarily opposed to each other, but they definitely can be on given occasions. I thought about the idea for awhile, and it appeared to be a fairly accurate descriptive construct. Once I accepted Arnold's idea, it occurred to me that I knew almost nothing about Hebraism.

I don't come from a Judeo-Christian background, so religious training is something that just doesn't exist in my experience. I think I was in junior high school before I knew what the difference between a Catholic and a Protestant was. Once I knew, I didn't much care. Long before that, I knew that most people in my neighborhood were Jewish. Of course I knew what Jewish was; it was just a long time before I knew there was any religion attached to it. On the other hand, I was up to my neck in Hellenistic thought. I'd read all sorts of Greek philosophy, history, and drama. I'd read enough of it so that the Hellenistic view of the world seemed like the most natural thing in the universe.

The second influence behind my determination to read the Bible was one of my professors who pointed out that almost no one was familiar with the Bible. Since he was talking to an English Lit class at the time and there were no objections to his statement, I suddenly realized that my own ignorance was not unique. This is more than a little surprising, since the King James Bible is certainly a very major influence on English Literature. After thinking about this point for awhile, I realized that the Bible might almost qualify as a volume of arcane lore, the sort of thing you might see advertised in the back of a science fiction magazine. If the Bible represented obscure knowledge, I obviously had to read it, since I'm a great fan of obscure knowledge.

There are several problems connected to obscure knowledge. The major problem is that the knowledge may be so obscure that you can't understand it. Therefore, it sometimes becomes necessary to cheat. Previously I had browsed through the Bible and I could tell that certain forms of cheating would be helpful. My first form of cheating was to audit a course in the Old Testament as Literature. I audited the course rather than taking it for a grade, because I still enjoy taking courses and learning things but I just can't convince myself anymore that grades and tests are particularly important. My second form of cheating was to buy a copy of Asimov's Guide to the Bible. I chose his book over some of the others which were available, because I know that Asimov was a good popularizer. I don't know how he does it, but it always seems that Asimov can digest a huge body of data into a comprehensive and readable summary.

My initial reaction to the Bible was something in the order of "Gee, it's sort of like Tolkien only some of it is real." In other words, if you treat the Bible entirely as a creation of literature, it's a very interesting fantasy world. I don't know of anyone who regards the Bible as being completely unreal, but there are many who seem overly concerned about the Bible not being 100% accurate in all respects. Considering the normal human capacity for error and something over a thousand years of writing time, a few glitches here and there don't seem too surprising. On the positive side, the thousand year writing time gave the Old Testament writers a long time to look for exactly the right word to express what they wanted to say. The style and conciseness of the Old Testament are really quite impressive. There are literally hundreds of examples in which the Old Testament writers use a paragraph to describe something that would take a modern writer twenty thousand words. In most cases, they pick the right paragraph. Part of this conciseness is undoubtedly due to hand copying books. A society that hand copies books can't very well tolerate wordiness as a literary vice. A certain part of my mind suspects that not paying writers by the word may also have had something to do with it.

One of the major things which influences a person's reaction to the Bible is his own religious convictions. As I mentioned earlier, I don't come from a Judeo-Christian background, so I have no early church indoctrination to revolt against. Christianity and Judaism don't really mean a great deal more to me than Buddhism or Hinduism. There is, of course, the pervasive cultural influence, but that's not something which inspires strong feelings on my part.

This does not mean that I have no religious opinions. I rather tend to think of God as the collective mind of the universe. This is admittedly an assumption which I can not prove, and you can not disprove. There was a point in my intellectual development where I found it necessary to postulate a God factor. That was the point at which I could no longer accept randomness as the ruling force in the universe. There's simply too much order in the universe to allow me to accept that. In my own interpretation of things, the existence of a God factor does not imply that the universe is a moral place. Morality is related to esthetics and both are functions of the human mind. Morality and esthetics both find their source in the human quest for proportion and order. You can find a lot of local variations in both areas, but there are always some underlying principles which are the same.

So what does all this add up to? Well, I think the Old Testament writers were concerning themselves with a phenomenon which is real and important. Coming from a radically different culture a couple thousand years in their future, I don't see the universe and God the same way they did, but I can still regard their effort as a serious one. If I regarded the belief in God as being entirely superstitious, my reaction to the Old Testament would be quite a bit different. Even in that case, I would still have to give the book credit for its considerable literary merit.

As I was following the Old Testament with Asimov's commentaries, I found myself wondering about his idea of God. It's pretty clear that Asimov does not believe in miracles. When something of a miraculous nature is described he either tries to find a non-miraculous explanation or he discounts it. This doesn't really tell you exactly what he thinks about God, but it does locate him in a certain theological area. An apparent miracle may be the result of either divine intervention or human factors such as misunderstanding or fraud. Since I have seen no examples of the former and numerous examples of the latter, I also would tend to discount miracles.



Of the entire Old Testament, I think my favorite section is the two books of Samuel. These two books recount the founding of the monarchy under Saul, the successful revolt by David, and the reign of David. In connection with some of my earlier comments about reading the Old Testament to find out something about Hebraism, these two books are certainly not the most Hebraistic in the Old Testament. The reason I like them is because they contain some excellent human drama. It's not impossible to regard these two books as entirely human drama and more or less disregard the participation of God.

At the beginning of the first book of Samuel, Samuel is a judge over Israel and is actively engaged in fighting the Philistines. It seems most reasonable to regard him as a guerilla leader hiding out in the hills, since the Philistines are enjoying a period of military success. The people call on Samuel to appoint a king as a national rallying point and also as a force for order. (The book of Judges describes Israel as being in pretty much of a state of anarchy; so order was a fairly important consideration.) Samuel doesn't like the idea, but popular pressure eventually forces him to do it.

So he anoints Saul as king. There are two stories as to why Samuel chose Saul; one of them makes it pretty much of a random choice and the other story makes Saul a successful military leader before he is anointed king. He continues as a successful military leader and gradually he gains control of most of the country. However, he eventually runs afoul of Samuel. Samuel has told Saul that God demands a war of extermination against the Amalekites. Saul defeats the Amalekites and wipes out most of them, but he takes their king prisoner and doesn't destroy their livestock. (In the Old Testament, normal warfare is only killing the men, women, and children. Total warfare is killing the cattle and sheep too.) Samuel tells Saul that God has turned against him for not following orders. Samuel then anoints David as king and begins stirring up the forces of civil war.

Of course, Saul doesn't just lay down and die when Samuel informs him he's all washed up as king. His reign goes on for a number of years. His reign comes to an end when he is defeated and killed at the battle of Mount Gilboa by the Philistines. By the time of that battle, Samuel is already dead. In fact, shortly before the battle of Mount Gilboa Saul supposedly has the witch of Endor raise the spirit of Samuel from the dead to give him advice. The spirit of Samuel tells him that he's really going to get it. And he does. "And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armor, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people. And they put his armor in the house of Ashtaroth and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan." Some days nothing goes right.

Once Saul is dead, David sets himself up as king of Judah. David is one of the most completely developed characters I've encountered in a long time. When David becomes king he is at about the middle of his career. He's come a long way from being the kid Samuel introduced at Saul's court and he has a long way to go before he finishes his forty year reign. At the end of it all, I felt that I knew what David was like and that I knew why he was the way he was. He isn't always represented as doing the right thing, but he is always eminently believable.

There are two versions of how David arrived at court; in one of them David kills Goliath and in the other Samuel has him introduced at court as an expert harpist. The second is a more probable story, although the first is certainly not out of character. After arriving at court, he becomes a successful military

leader. He eventually becomes a little too successful and provokes the jealousy of Saul. Realizing his situation, he finds it prudent to become a rebel leader in the hills. ("And every one that was in distress and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men." A rather concise description of the type of operation David was running.) After Saul launches an intensive campaign for the elimination of David, David decides that the safest course is to become a mercenary for the Philistines. He remains as a vassal of the Philistines until after the death of Saul at which point he sets himself up as the king of Judah. That's basically OK with the Philistines until David eliminates the remnant of the house of Saul, unites Israel and Judah under a single monarchy, and conquers Jerusalem. By the time the Philistines realize David is dangerous, it's already too late to stop him. David goes on to become Israel's great conqueror king.

There is one scene which to me represents the essence of David's character. The scene takes place as David is having the Ark of the Covenant brought into the city of Jerusalem. The Ark of the Covenant is both a national and religious symbol and having it brought into David's recently conquered capital is obviously quite important to him. With the description of the ceremony you might expect at such an event is the line, "And David danced before the Lord with all his might." This gave me quite a picture of a frenzied and lustful personality at the height of triumph. In case you might think that David was just doing a conservative little two-step out there, his wife Michal, who was the daughter of Saul, condemns him for making a disgrace of himself in public. David doesn't take criticism too well and he tells Michal that he will have nothing further to do with her. In the long run, this is a pretty good policy, because David later has five of her sons hung. (These were sons by a man Michal was married to while David was hiding out in the hills) That's the sort of thing that can foul up the home life of even the most absolute of monarchs. Of course, David's marriage to Michal was a political ploy from beginning to end. When Saul suggests the marriage to David he has it set up to either form an alliance with David or kill him. You see the dowry was one hundred foreskins of the Philistines. (That may be one of the most unusual dowries in all history as far as I know.) So young David marries into the house of Saul or he dies. Saul was willing to accept either alternative. Later, David uses his marriage to Michal as a claim to legitimacy. By the time he has conquered Jerusalem, he doesn't need that ploy anymore.

To get back to David's personality, there are a number of things he does that are in keeping with the image of him dancing in front of the Ark of the Covenant. One of them is the grief he goes into at the death of his rebellious son Absalom. He doesn't experience just a little grief, he goes all out. Joab, the leader of David's army, finally tells David to stop it or he will lose the kingdom. David had made every effort not to have Absalom killed and it was Joab who killed him against orders. Joab is a completely ruthless individual, but he does have a practical turn of mind. David replaces him after he kills Absalom, and Joab kills his replacement to regain his command. One person I know has argued that Joab is probably the force that is keeping the kingdom together. I don't know whether I quite accept that, but Joab certainly has his uses and sometimes his judgement is better than David's.

Another place we see David's personality in action is in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Uriah was a soldier serving with David's army and he had a beautiful wife named Bathsheba. David lusts after Bathsheba and goes to bed with her. After that, Uriah just doesn't fit in very well with David's conception of the ideal nature of things. "And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die."

While God seems to accept the realities of politics in the Old Testament world, the killing of Uriah is a bit more than he can take. Nathan the prophet tells David in no uncertain terms that he's in trouble with God. "And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick." While the child is sick David goes into mourning, but when it finally dies he gets up and goes about his business. Since this was rather uncustomary behavior, David's servants ask him about it and receive a reply that isn't very characteristic of Old Testament thinking, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The thing that makes this passage so uncharacteristic is that it isn't even theistic thinking. It also represents a different aspect of David's personality. He's a person capable of passionate frenzy, but he is also extremely resilient. He would have never got through all the trouble he managed to get himself into if he hadn't been extremely resilient.

Immediately following the passage describing David's reaction to the child's death there is another passage which deserves some attention, "And David comforted Bathsheba his wife and went in onto her and lay with her: and she bare a son and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him." In other words, the result of David's evil act is the birth of the wisest of kings and the builder of the Temple at Jerusalem. This story certainly wasn't concocted as a moral lesson, so I suspect it must be true. An incidental item which is sort of interesting is the way sex is handled in this passage. It's representative of the way sex is handled in the Old Testament in general. It tells you what you need to know for the purpose of the story but certainly doesn't give any description. Not a bad way to handle sex if your primary interest is in telling the story.

David is the main character in both of the books of Samuel. The next book is the first book of Kings which deals with the reign of Solomon and the later kings of Israel and Judah. Solomon is much less interesting than his father. He just sits around and is wise and makes lots of money. I suppose that is indicative of his wisdom come to think of it. There is one chapter that shows a little promise though. It begins, "But King Solomon loved many strange women..." Ah ha, here's a man I can sympathize with. But all they were talking about was his seven hundred wives and his three hundred concubines. Maybe I should qualify my comment about Solomon just sitting around and making money. While he wasn't doing any of that stuff, he managed to find time to compose three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs. I think the impression you're supposed to get from all this is that Solomon was Macho.

After finishing the Old Testament, I find that I'm rather sorry that it isn't used as a literature text in the public schools any longer. It's certainly vastly superior to most of the pap we were fed when I was in high school. It often seems that high school literature is chosen for blandness and no other quality. Whatever you may think of the Old Testament, it certainly isn't bland. And it's chock full of topics for discussion, argument, or blood letting. You can't say that about every book.

-end-

JOB

## REPENT MILTY SAID THE...

December 14, 1972

Dear Milt,

In my perusal of the most recent FAPA mailing (which, for reasons best known to the Postal Service, arrived today), I came across your PASSING PARADE.

It made interesting reading, right up to the bottom of page seventeen. There I find myself described as someone whose editorials "typified" you as "either a thief or an associate of thieves." On the next page, "For this I got represented as a cheap, thieving bastard by Ted White."

Nowhere in anything I have written for publication in any medium have I so described you, your co-workers, or any member of the LACon committee. You know this quite well, but for reasons of your own, you have chosen in a series of cheap shots to represent otherwise. I suggest, Milt, that you carefully reread my editorials in AMAZING and FANTASTIC, digest what they have to say rather more thoroughly than you appear to have thus far, and either make a public apology or cite chapter and verse to back up your statements as quoted above.

Additionally: My ideas on running a convention were put to good effect in 1967--which con had its headaches but none like those you delight in recounting; we made no attempt to hassle deadbeats and thus had a much less unpleasant time. Your petty Pig trip is no doubt an ego trip for you which will give you much to gloat over in the months to come, but it doesn't sound as if it enhanced the convention for you much.

Moreover, both Toronto and Washington are following "My ideas" to the extent that they are lowering their membership fees; Washington made no bones throughout its campaign that it was returning to more sensible fees and advertised its annual Disclaves in this fashion as well. Wake up, Milt: the rest of the world is ahead of you.

You overlook one essential fact: my editorials were written after reader pressure informed me in no uncertain terms that this was a popular sentiment. You've become tied up in the special ego trip of being An Insider Who Really Knows What Is Going On; you think this gives you license to patronize those who merely come to the cons you help put on. Well, Milt, watch yourself. I take your patronizing and ill-informed contempt for what it's worth. APA-L was a long time ago, wasn't it? (Oh, and by the way: will the LACon break with tradition and issue a financial report?)

Yhos,  
Ted White

### AND A FEW WORDS FROM MILT STEVENS

The receipt of this letter surprised me somewhat. I have you absolutely cold on what you said in print and I find it almost incredible that you would make an assertion which is so obviously false. Chapter and verse, most certainly.

June 1972 Fantastic pg 112-113 "Next month, in the July issue of our companion magazine, Amazing Science Fiction, I will discuss the immediately looming potential for the corruption of the Worldcon, as fans of dubious reputation and

demonstrated avarice move in--and also the choice of alternatives which awaiting the Worldcon in the present decade." I think that anyone would have to admit that the LACon was the most "immediately looming" worldcon available.

July 1972 Amazing pg 127 "The potential for abuse is obvious and cannot be ignored much longer. (There are those who say we've already waited too long.) Fans whose interests lie in the money they can make from putting on a Worldcon are eagerly awaiting a grab at it. If they are allowed to gain control of any Worldcon, the results will assuredly be disastrous." If "immediately looming" wasn't specific enough, the little parenthetical element up there about the folk who are saying it's already too late could only refer to Los Angeles or Toronto. Los Angeles was certainly the more "immediately looming" of the two.

In the September Amazing, you make it clear that you are hedging against a libel suit (as if anyone couldn't have realized that without it being mentioned) and specifically let the Toronto group off the hook in your reply to Mike Glicksohn's letter. "And the fact of the matter is that if every Worldcon committee (or potential committee) held such responsible attitudes this entire series of editorials would be unnecessary."

Your statement, "I do not consider the reputations of anyone involved in past or present Wordcons to be 'questionable' and I do not care to call anyone into question." is in the October Fantastic which did not appear until after LACon. In other words your attack was calculated to do us a maximum amount of damage and throwing in a disclaimer which could do us no good whatsoever seems to make the intent of the attack more obvious.

Now let's deal with your ideas on running a convention with a quote from Granfallon #15, "If conventions were honestly non-profit, we'd still be seeing \$2.00 membership fees." In this case the underlining is yours and not mine. This statement rather contradicts the one in the October Fantastic. From Toronto and Washington you seem to be willing to accept a variance of three or four hundred percent. That's quite a margin. Could it be that it is really the personnel and not the price that is the primary area of objection? As I understand it, you don't like the Boston group any better than you like us. Both of our groups share the distinction of being far outside your sphere of influence. There are members of both groups who didn't think much of you even before your current series of attacks. Both groups have also been fairly successful on a number of major fan projects in recent years. I think the opportunity to launch an attack which would smear two fan centers you don't like was enough to move you to action. I consider that your attack was entirely malicious.

The huffing and puffing about ego tripping seems to serve no purpose except as an attempt to obscure the issue. If I were as egotistical as a whole platoon of Harlan Ellisons, it would still be utterly irrelevant to my stated grievance. Egotism, after all, has nothing to do with honesty. You don't know me well enough to make any authoritative statements on what my personal ego trips may be, but the matter isn't really worth going into at length.

As for watching myself, I don't much care if you throw a fit in every fanzine available with Amazing and Fantastic thrown in for a chaser. I've never been known to give less than I receive. You're getting the benefit of the doubt on your wording that you weren't contemplating a physical attack. If I'm wrong on that point, it's a matter which should become readily apparent.

## MEANWHILE IN ANOTHER FANDOM

In October, I found myself attending a mystery convention. That is, a convention devoted to mystery fiction. There was no particular mystery regarding the location or purpose of the convention itself. The convention was held at the International Hotel, which was also the site of LACon, and went under the title of Bouchercon III. I must say that the International Hotel is sort of a nice place when it isn't cluttered up with a couple thousand science fiction fans. With an attendance of between seventy and eighty, Bouchercon didn't do nearly as much to clutter the area. The attendees were divided between science fiction fans who read mysteries and are in the habit of attending conventions and some pure mystery fans who have nothing to do with the science fiction field. The Bouchercons were started three years ago when it was discovered that the pure mystery fans were already publishing fanzines and generally deporting themselves in the manner of cofandon.

This year's Bouchercon was chaired by Len and June Moffatt with Bruce Polz as treasurer, so the organizational influence of science fiction fans is still rather prominent in these mystery conventions. I attended the convention partially to socialize with the people I know would be there and partially because I have a mild interest in mystery fiction but not as a reader. Aside from the Sherlock Holmes stories, I could probably count all the mystery stories I have ever read on one hand. However, it has occurred to me that while I know relatively little about science I do know a fair amount about crime. Therefore, if I were going to try a little proac, (which I sporadically think about doing) the mystery field might be a better idea than the science fiction field. From what I gathered by listening to the programs at Bouchercon, maybe that's a reasonable idea and maybe it isn't.

As a non-reader of mystery stories, the whodunit aspect has always appeared to be the most prominent feature of mystery stories. I once stated in print that the main reason I didn't read mystery stories was that I didn't care who did it. That may seem a little strange considering my line of work, but there are many things you enjoy as a participant that you don't enjoy as a spectator. In response to my comment, Elinor Busby said that she didn't care who did it either, but that she read mystery stories for the personality conflicts and the background. This was an idea which I encountered again during Bouchercon.

One particular place I encountered this idea was during a panel titled "Mystery Fiction: The State of the Art 1972." The participants on the panel were Jon Breen, Pat Briscoe, Howard Browne, William P. McGivern, and Randall Garrett. (Funny how some of those names sound sort of familiar.) Jon Breen led off with a condemnation of the scientific detective story. Breen maintained that readers couldn't understand or identify with the scientific detective story. In Breen's opinion, this was causing mystery writers to move their stories back to the 20's and 30's where the detective could wallow about in pure deductive genius. Browne, McGivern, and Garrett were quick to agree and add their own details to the aggregate of anathema.

It's entirely possible that the quest for simplicity is leading detective stories into becoming a subspecies of fantasy. Even in my limited acquaintance with the field, I've read stories where the criminal conveniently leaves cryptograms

for the detective to figure out and thus solve the case. I think that verges on being an offense against common sense. Criminals do many strange things, but leaving cryptograms isn't one of them. If things like that are accepted in mystery stories for the sake of simplicity, you're going to lose any dramatic value which might come from the reality of crime.

A detective has to assemble enough information to reach a conclusion about a crime. He doesn't have to collect all the information personally and it certainly wouldn't be very economical if he did. In the average murder case, the detective first looks at the crime scene and takes pictures. He then waits for a report from S.I.D. (Scientific Investigation Division) which can cover ballistics, fingerprints, and various microscopic and chemical analyses. He also gets a report from the coroner on the results of the autopsy. This, plus any information the detective was able to collect from people who were at the scene of the crime, forms the basis for a trial solution. The reason the trial solution is necessary is because there are an almost unlimited number of things you can do in an investigation. So you have to make some assumptions about the crime to determine your most likely course of action. Even with all the scientific help in the world, the rest of the investigation may be quite time consuming. For instance in the Manson Case, forty-five homicide investigators worked for a month before they came up with anything. This was sort of a process of looking under every rock you can find and then looking for more rocks. So there is still a lot of room for the detective working by himself after he has received the results of the scientific detection effort. If some mystery writers are concentrating too much on the scientific investigation aspect, it's simply unimaginative writing.

Last year in Los Angeles, the clearance rate for murder was 83%. This is higher than the clearance rate for any other crime. While I wouldn't want to detract from the accomplishments of our homicide investigators, they do have a considerable advantage over investigators in other areas. Most murders are self solving. Wife-husband fights are probably the most common cause of murder. Since our society limits the number of wives or husbands an individual may have, the number of suspects is also limited. Gambling and child abuse are two other causes of murder which are quite common and essentially self solving. Murders which occur during robberies or rapes require quite a bit more investigation, but they are also crimes which fit into larger crime patterns. Therefore, you can assemble other similar crimes and investigate the whole lot as a package. If you do a good job of assembling, this gives you quite a bit more information to work with. (Assembling crime patterns is where I come in. I've never really had a good hit on a murder, but I've compiled some things that certainly looked interesting on paper. Most of the murders I've worked on were long shots by the time they got to me. While I may not have succeeded, neither did anybody else by any other method.)

The fact that 83% of murders are solved rather implies that 17% of murders aren't solved. It does seem to work out that way. These are generally crimes where you don't know anything. Sometimes you don't even know who's been murdered. For instance, you find the body of a man with his throat cut lying in a gutter. He has no identification and his fingerprints aren't on file with the FBI. Nobody in the neighborhood has ever seen him before. Not only will you probably never find the murderer, but you'll probably never figure out who the victim was.

There was one case in South L.A. where a group of workmen were putting on a roof. One of the workmen suddenly drops dead. It turned out that he had been shot through the head. It appeared that the workman had been shot by someone who had been discharging a gun at random. In all probability, the murderer didn't know he'd

killed anyone. Not a very encouraging place to start an investigation, especially when you don't even have the bullet.

A general class of murders which aren't solved too often are the so-called gangland slayings. These involve pimps, gamblers, dope dealers and God knows what. The usual reason is a market dispute of some sort, although for a pimp to kill one of the girls who work for him isn't too unusual. That's sort of standard pimp enforcement policy. In these cases, it isn't too difficult to find out who did it, but it's almost impossible to prove anything. The victim, the suspect, and all the people they know are usually underworld characters, who may talk but never testify. "Why ah'd druther commit suicide than testify against Slimey Sammy," is pretty much the way it goes.

During the panel discussion at Bouchercon, I brought up the point that mystery stories seem to devote an inordinate amount of attention to murder. There are lots of other crimes in the world to investigate that would be even better for the problem story format. I realize that murders are considered to be more dramatic, but in reality they are often routine. The Park Avenue drawingroom type murder cases which fictional detectives spend so much time on are fanciful in the extreme.

Take burglary for instance. There's a crime you can really get your teeth into. A good burglar may be perfectly rational and very methodical about his work. He may be the very devil to catch. There was once a burglar named G. Gordan Atturbury. He committed literally thousands of burglaries over a four or five year period. He'd go in and hit every house on a block. Once he hit every house in a block except for the one which belonged to one of the watch commanders at Van Nuys Division. For most of the period he was operating, the police knew who he was and couldn't catch him. He was a slippery customer and not only knew every trick in the book but had invented a few new ones. One of the methods which was first used by him was to turn up a thermostat to cover the noise of a burglary. He also developed a couple of mechanical gadgets which fortunately have not come into general use. After he finally got caught, he wrote a book on the subject of burglary and later became a crime consultant for the State of California. It's sort of an American success story actually.

There's a lot of room for detective work in tracking a good burglar. Even a not so good burglar may require quite a bit of work. A lot of it is checking with informers and rooting around in the underworld. That should be fairly good material for fictional purposes. Even checking out details and collecting information may take a detective almost anywhere.

Obviously the mystery convention gave me something to think about. It was also interesting because it was like what I imagine science fiction conventions were like in the years before I was born. The group is older of course, but there is the spirit of a small group of enthusiasts. Some of the pure mystery fans have also noticed the similarities and view the future with much wonderment and trepidation.

\*end\*



## FANZYNES, A REVIEW THEREOF

Yandro #217 (Robert & Juanita Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, IN 47348 40¢ 4/\$1.50 12/84) The most interesting item in this issue is Dave Locke's description of going through management sensitivity training. If I ever have to go through the same thing myself, I think I'll borrow his line, "My problem is too much apathy, but I don't care." I've been through a couple encounter groups myself, although I was probably corrupted by the stress interviews I'd had before I ever heard of encounter groups. The whole idea of a stress interview is don't let the bastards wear you down no matter what. I went through the two encounter groups in exactly the same fashion. From all I've ever seen, I think encounter groups are a game environment which don't accomplish anything in particular outside the limits of the game.

Crossroads #13 (Al & Sally Snider, H-2 370 Central, Orange, NJ 07050 75¢ 2/\$1 4/\$1.75) This issue fills in some of the details of the life of Al Snider since the last issue of Crossroads, which was some time ago. The material in this issue is a little bit dated, but the layout is quite nice. The last time Crossroads was appearing, I thought that Al Snider had the potential to become the top fanzine editor in the field if he kept at it. Hopefully, he will keep at it this time.

Prehensile #6 (Mike Glycer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342 35¢ 3/\$1) The editorial, "A Polemic Against Fuggheads," touches on many of the same points which I was talking about last issue. I'll be interested in seeing the response to this one. Dan Goodman is present in this issue with another current fan history column. This time the subject is Tom Digby. Digby is one of those writers I find entertaining in small doses. He is certainly an original thinker, but his original thinking gets to seem sort of similar after awhile.

Algol #19 (Andrew Porter, P.O. Box 4175, New York, NY 10017 75¢ 4/\$3) Contains an excellent article by Marion Z. Bradley, a so-so article by Fred Pohl, and a downright inconsequential article by Ray Bradbury. In the introduction to this issue, Andy mentions the various meanings of his fanzine title. The thought had crossed my mind that I might think twice before using lots of reprints in a fanzine titled The Ghost. It was just a thought Andy, honest.

This issue contains one authentic sense of wonder fact. Buck Coulson rents an eight room house for \$75 a month. I knew there must be some reason for him living in Hartford City. You couldn't rent an unfurnished single apartment for \$75 a month in Los Angeles (or at least, not in any area where the cockroaches were smaller than you were).

No 12 (Ruth Berman, 5620 Edgewater Blvd, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417 25¢) Ruth has an article replying to Harlan Ellison's article in Again Dangerous Visions on amateurism. Harlan uses amateur in the pejorative sense and compares the lowly amateur with the vastly superior potential pro. Ruth's article points out that there isn't really any good way of distinguishing between the two. Harlan apparently isn't aware of the centuries in which gentlemen amateurs were the only respectable people in literature. People who had to make a living from writing were obviously debased and lacking the the finer sensibilities. By the 19th century it was acceptable to make a living by writing (or at least more acceptable than being a horse thief) and in the 20th century you could even get some egoboo from it. Then again, you could probably get quite a bit of egoboo from being a horse thief these days.

Title #11 (Donn Brazier, 1455 Fawnvalley Drive. St. Louis, MO 63131 25¢ or the usual) Ben Indick has a first person robbery victim article. Do you suppose I've started a trend or something? It was once reputed that being pregnant was always worth a few pages in a fanzine. Maybe the same can be said for being robbed. If you happen to be both pregnant and robbed, you've probably got material for a whole issue.

The last few issues of Title have been running material from Richard S. Shaver. Shaver seems to be sincere but more than a bit off. It would embarrass the Hell out of me if I had to listen to him in person.

Kyben #3 (Jeff Smith, 4102-301 Potter Street, Baltimore, MD 21229 35¢ 3/\$1) Dan Mertz has a thought provoking article on California fandom. The main thought it provokes is that we'll give him a cement overcoat the next time he comes here. Imagine him spreading vicious lies about us like all it takes to qualify as a fan in California is to have read Dune and Stranger in a Strange Land. We require a great deal more than that. For one thing, we demand that you pay your gambling debts. Of course if you're a girl, you don't even have to be able to read.

Umbra #4 (CAPCON, Box 801, Albany, NY 12201 40¢ 3/\$1) I assume John Robinson is the major figure behind the collective pseudonym. At least, I'm attributing the fanzine reviews to him. The reviews include some nominations for this year's fan Hugoes. I was thinking of doing something similar myself, but finally decided that my opinions were still in a state of flux. I will certainly agree with Robinson on nominating Awry for best fanzine. It's a fanzine I'm rather fond of. I'd also nominate Dave Locke as best fanzine writer. Tina Hensel is also quite good, but her volume is awfully small to be a Hugo nominee.

These fanzine reviews contain a sentiment I've seen before in Beardmutterings against Charlie Brown's presumed practice of sending out free copies of his fanzine to worldcon mailing lists. If that's what he was doing, I don't see anything wrong with it. I send out free copies of my fanzine for the purpose of expanding my mailing list. I don't reasonably expect that The Passing Parade will have as wide an interest as Locus, but the theory is the same.

K-4 Pacific (Frank Denton, 14654 8th Ave. S.W. Seattle, WA 98166 4/\$1) Frank talks about his secret peripatetic desires and other matters. Frank wants to walk from the Canadian Border to the Mexican Border without going anywhere. However, he's been having trouble with his feet, so now he's not walking and not going anywhere. Expect this matter to be on the quiz at the end of this fanzine.

Melikaphkhaz #33 (Lon Atkins, 12724 Caswell #1, Mar Vista, CA 90066) and Timebinders #1 (Don Markstein c/o The Times Picayune, New Orleans, LA 70140) Both of these publications deal with the history of SFFPA (Southern Fandom Press Alliance) in honor of its 50th mailing. By checking my records, I find that I was a member of SFFPA from the 25th mailing to the 41st mailing, which is why I got a copy of both publications. (By the way Don, I would also be interested in getting a copy of Timebinders #2 when it appears) These two fanzines aren't general circulation, but you might be able to get a copy if you can convince the editors that you have a fanatical interest in fan history or something.

Maybe #22 (Irvin Koch, 835 Chattanooga Bank Bldg., Chattanooga, TN 37402 50¢ 6/\$2.50) Letters and fanzine reviews. There's also a note in one margin that I really must get around to answering after I finish typing these stencils.

Kwalhioqua 1, 2 and 3 (Ed Cagle, Route #1, Leon, KS 67074 will accept contributions of money, but no amount specified. Also locs, trades, and contributions) I've always said that a man who has a pet toad can't be all bad. I say dumb things like that all the time. Ed Cagle has a pet toad along with many other strange facets to his personality. One of the strangest things is that he is really publishing this fanzine every month. While I believe in Ed Cagle more-or-less, I don't believe in all of his assistants. In particular, I do not believe in Trudy Squirrel. Get a copy of this fanzine and you can find out about Cagle's activities such as outraging Avon ladies.

Procrastination #11 (Darrell Schweitzer, 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, PA 19087 25¢ 4/\$1) Darrell Schweitzer has written 224 fanzine pieces in three years. Mad, impetuous youth. If he keeps on that way, he'll burn himself out in no time. I haven't written 224 fanzine pieces in 13 years and you may notice that I'm hanging on in fandom like a barnacle. Lethargy and long life, that's the secret.

Schweitzer says that Dave Hulvey is a hoax. That's nice, maybe he can fix Dave Hulvey up with Trudy Squirrel and they can publish a joint fanzine which will drive everybody crazy.

Syndrome #1 (Frank Lunney, 212 Juniper St., Quakertown, PA 18951 50¢ or something better) Oops! If this is Syndrome #1, howcome it has a column full of letters on Syndrome #1. Either Lunney or all of his letter writers have made some sort of a mistake. Speaking of mistakes, the jump pages from Bill Kunkel's article (which go backward in the issue) led me to read parts of two other articles. Somehow, I now have this impression that Bill Kunkel is a terribly confused writer.

Granfalloon #16 (Linda and Ron Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave, Prospect Park, PA 19076 75¢ 3/\$2) The Bushyagers have been house hunting. I've been thinking of doing that myself. Not because I need a house, my current two bedroom apartment is quite adequate for one person and even two, but since the CalVet people are willing to loan me \$25,000 at 4½%, house buying becomes a rather good business idea.

Jeff Glencannon has a fanzine column with no reviews at all this time. The lure of pure criticism is always insidious. It's pretty good as pure fanzine criticism. It's certainly quite a bit different from my free association reviewing. Mike Glicksohn has an article on the problems of crossing the Canadian border. The times I've been across the Canadian border the guards on either side of the border never did more than check my ID. Even when I was smuggling all that Chinese ivory and jade into the United States, I never had any trouble with the customs people. Maybe Mike Glicksohn lives wrong.

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It's the day-to-day surprises that make life interesting. Like receiving the latest Torcon progress report. It rather changes some of the things I was saying back on the first couple pages. It doesn't change our intention of holding a NASFIC of course, but it does introduce a couple new elements to the game. I'm about 95% certain that the position represented by Smockler's opinion will not be maintained. It will simply foul up the worldcon rules beyond the point that anyone can deal with them. If the Toronto people don't change their minds, they're going to have to change their Hugo ballots which include two categories which were created at the LACon business session which they just threw out. Bruce Pelz has written a letter to John Millard (with copy to Locus) which states our position. There isn't a great deal that can be done about the situation at the moment except sit back and watch all the excitement.

## IT CAME FROM OUT OF THE MAILBOX

ROBERT BLOCH  
2111 Sunset Crest Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90046

I appreciate your sending THE PASSING PARADE, and rather imagine you wanted my comments on the SFWA meeting at the Worldcon.

Apparently there's been quite a few accounts of what went on--some quite erroneous, like the one reported in a recent LOCUS. Since I was present at that meeting and was asked to serve as a liason between SFWA and future Worldcon Committees to transmit "gripes" and/or suggestions; I made it my business to listen pretty carefully. As a matter of fact, an 8-page, single-spaced report of what I heard has been sent out to both Toronto and Washington, containing recommendations and conclusions which came out of the impromptu SFWA session. I won't try to paraphrase it here, but I do want to set your mind at ease on certain points:

Since it was an open meeting, everyone had a chance to sound off, and some people did so rather extravagantly. It was George Clayton Johnson who called for a boycott of Conventions--on the basis of Harlan Ellison's contention that pros should be paid for attending. But Harlan, while quoted to this effect, did not originate this idea at the SFWA meeting. He said it earlier, on the public platform, during his talk to the Con attendees, and he said it as his personal opinion: he was not speaking for SFWA.

Nor did SFWA, at their meeting, concur with George Clayton Johnson's suggestion. There was no SFWA vote in support of such an idea.

While possible convention profits were a subject of discussion and speculation, there were no "plans" for payment offered at this meeting or adopted by it--where this "\$100 speakers' fee" came from or the idea for paying pro room-rent I can't say, but I can and do say it didn't originate at the SFWA session. What was suggested--and seemed to meet with general approval--is that when conventions showed a profit as they apparently are doing, it would be equitable for the Con Committee to refund membership fees to all those who took part in the actual program or otherwise assisted in the proceedings, fan or pro. G. of H. and toastmaster expenses were, it was pointed out, usually paid by the Convention because of the extent of participation involved, but there was no SFWA consensus that Harlan's notion be pursued. While there were gripes and guesses about the extent of Con profits, they didn't center on the LACon per se but on most of the Cons in recent years. No one said that a ConCommittee was not entitled to make money and do with it what they chose--but it was felt that everyone helping to make the Cons successful was entitled to some acknowledgement--hence the idea of refunding the membership fees to such participants. And any or all rumors about extent or disposition of profits could be easily dispelled by the publication of an audit.

That, in brief, is the gist of what was said concerning the points you mention. Rest assured, once and for all, SFWA doesn't want a dime from any Con Committee for itself or the appearance of its members. Individuals sounded off and may continue sounding off, but they speak only for themselves--not for prodom as a whole, or for SFWA. Now that I've sounded off, let me thank you again for the issue--a very nice job indeed!

Best--Robert Bloch

((I wish you the best of luck in your efforts to reach an accord between SFWA and the conventions. You are possibly the best person in prodom to take on such a job. You have stature in the field combined with a reputation for diplomacy and common sense

which is hard to find anywhere.))

((Still of the subject of the SFWA meeting, Jerry Pournelle asked me to mention in this issue that he at no time favored the payment of pros by conventions. It is now officially mentioned.))

ALJO SVOBODA . I certainly enjoyed THE PASSING PARADE #2, certainly. This  
1203 Buoy Ave: is a short note of appreciation (as I call my junior sized locs)  
Orange, CA 92665 . . . so that I'll be able to receive THE PASSING PARADE #3. What an  
amazing proliferation of personal zines, is all I can say to the  
newest intimate resurgence. I'm sure you faneds on high are using personalzine studs  
to breed them at such a fantastic rate. Either that, or they're worse than rabbits.  
I'm almost tempted to get in on the action myself, but the difficulty I have in  
publishing Tapszines, Cultzines, and in the near future, a mailing of Slanapa, easily  
dissuades when I have such thoughts. Since my method of publishing is at a junior  
high school I don't attend anymore, the romarkably damp days we've been having of  
late have prevented me from my appointed rounds as well. Would you like to hear my  
troubles? No, no..let it pass. I'll put it in my forthcoming personalzine.

Your convention report seems remarkably subjective for an objective piece of  
writing. I like it. In a loc to POTPLATCH over a year ago (my first ever published,  
too), I asked why Joyce Katz told about mostly the bad aspects of a Lunacon she'd  
attended. That was before I got to Westercon, and realized just how intensely  
subjective a convention is. It's more impossible to get a complete overview of even  
the smallest convention than it is to receive and loc every fanzine being published.  
And now I find this is true even for those in High Places, who I'd previously thought  
(with one or two reservations) oversaw the entire event, day and night, completely  
and in its entirety, and with a serene complacency about it as well. Another bubble  
popped. Are there no Fen like Ghods?

I like subjective conreports (though not all conreports by any means), and I liked  
yours. I suppose to have good friends you have to have good enemies, and you didn't  
hesitate to make you opinions of people clear, no matter what those opinions were.  
And opinions can change; you showed that too. People can change too...The fandom you  
see, though seems to contain quite a few more unsavory characters than I, with my  
tunnel vision, see in my fandom. Probably because of your position as Official Pig,  
eh? When I met them (for the first and only time, at Westercon), George Senda did not  
seem to me a psychotic moron, and George Clayton Johnson did not seem obnoxious at all.  
Tunnel vision? I feel quite troubled about the Senda Affair. It rather burst the old  
myth that fandom will accept Society's misfits with some degree of tolerance, and long  
before he apparently became a third-rate con man. Strange that all this whould take  
place while at the same time, fandom rejoices over the relcase of James Nelson Coleman,  
whose crimes must certainly equal if not exceed those of Senda. What sort of a double  
standard are we employing? If you believe in the prison system as punishment rather  
than rehabilitation, then sure, George has to "pay his debt to society." But must he  
be deserted at the same time?

Anyway, it certainly seems that the Twelve Nastiest Bastards in Fandom have been  
teaching at a furious pace, judging from the results obtained by their most ardent  
students at Worldcon. And zot...I didn't know there were that many fanzines in all  
the world...And all with articles on Asian Flu, eh? Yarst, fandom is becoming  
contagious, more so all the time. I enjoy the concept of sprint and long-distance  
writers. Perhaps locwriters would be like gymnasts or ice skaters with the compulsory  
openings and egoboo, and the more artistically satisgying freestyle locs. And, of  
course, the boxing arena would be used for only the better feuds.

Sincerely, Aljo Svoboda

((The difference between Coleman and Senda is that Coleman did not commit any crimes against fans and Senda did. A number of years ago, there was a LASFS member who did 180 days in jail on a bad check charge. He was never expelled from the LASFS, although he wasn't encouraged much either and eventually faded away. On the other hand, Steven Pickering was run out of fandom a few years ago for ripping off Forrie Ackerman.))

((You'll eventually meet your own unsavory types in fandom. At the moment, you're still in your initial happy phase where everything is great and you want to be friends with everyone. Unfortunately, that passes. The world would be a really great place if it weren't for the people who live in it. ))

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Thanks much for Passing Parade 2, the LACon issue. Funny thing; for 2-3 years I wasn't getting much out of the FAPA mags because I couldn't find time to READ the big muthas. Now I get maybe 3 FAPAZines per quarter, have time to read them, and enjoy the hell out of them. So it goes.

Convention Pig was of special interest to me because my own job at Seacon was troubleshooting the beefs with the hotel. I'm awfully glad we did our trick here when Cons were still small and relatively simple! (Nowadays? Forget it!)

Senda: he was bad news when he first turned up at Donaho's 2nd Noncon, on Heidelberg weekend. All he did there was butt into private conversations and get underfoot a lot too much, but later that same weekend (I think) he was hauled in for ripping off someone's apartment. I don't know how a Committee can guard itself against that kind of jerk, without supermultiplying the red tape. (Accept no checks except from "known" fans or cosigned by same? You and Bruce could have done that, maybe, but many ConComs aren't all that au fait with active fandom or Con-fandom. I see no easy answers—and not even any really good hard ones...)

Reading on, I like the flavor of the way you handled various hassles—the journalists, etc. The main problem is that newsies try to run things for their benefit, rather than for the enjoyment of the attending membership. Fuck that.

I hadn't thought about it but you're right; the problem with the coffee shop (aside from just plain too many people) was lousy design. The waitresses weren't loafing; that's for sure. (I didn't eat there much, seeing the long lines. We walked a mile or so up Sepulveda and shopped around there, most meals.)

Dedicated deadbeats are a real pain in the ass, aren't they? I applaud Jack Harness' idea of offering real Broke Fans the chance to work out their membership fees; that's a goodie and the Con should publicize it in advance, so the kids will know. But as for Jardine and Evans "having no interest in the Con"—hell, I've been to a number of Cons at which I saw maybe 2% of the Program. But I joined up, anyway. It's the ambience you're paying for, and it takes the whole Con to create that.

I'm surprised that Humphrey Clayton Bogart would come on as you report; he is generally one of the Good Guys. Maybe he got back on his Power Trip again...that always turns me off some, too. But I'm saddened to hear it.

"Requiring people with material in the Art Show to buy at least a supporting membership in the Con"? No. You're mixing up two separate dealings. One is putting stuff in the Art Show; the other is seeing the Art Show. One is between individual and Art Show; the other is between individual and Con. Don't mix them up or you will be flooded with special cases and unable to maintain a consistent policy.

Maybe the easy way would be to have a simple admission charge to the Art Show for non-members. (I'm sure some non-fan people at the Con hotels would dig that.) And one-day memberships, which someone told me you did have... ((Yep, at \$5))

I always figured a banquet should break even, including covering the freebies, but then we didn't get hit with having to set any "minimum", either. For a hotel that size to insist on such a thing is definitely a hype, I think.

Harlan can raise a lot of hell if he feels like it, and when he does he's pretty spectacular—which is why he gets a Bad Press a lot of the time. Mostly, as you found, he's a fine guy to have in your corner. In 1960 when we first met I was surprised to find I really liked him, having heard so many "Horrible Harlan" stories.

I think the Con should have papered the house for Norman Spinrad because the Brunches were the Con's idea but simply weren't promoted well enough—and as you say, the scheduling got fucked up sometimes, too. Also, if I have it right, Spinrad's was set up awfully early in the morning to be attractive to the average Con-goer. ((All the brunches were at 11 a.m. That's a fact I wouldn't remember at this late date except that I'm a methodical sort and I've saved all the LACon paperwork which ever passed through my hands. I've even got all the requests for special room assignments, although I'm not quite sure why I'm saving those.)) But mainly it would have been more humane to spare the guy's feelings; that must have been a hell of a jolt to him, even aside from the unfortunate last-minute bit.

I was up in Hollywood seeing my agent at the time of the SFWA protest meeting, so I missed it. I can see some points for the idea that if Cons are taking in big money, the "drawing cards" (fan or pro) should get a few perquisites out of it. The GofH traditionally gets free membership, free banquet, and free room rent. At the other end of the scale you (retroactively) gave free membership to all Program participants. Well, that's about right for a panelist, especially if it's a panel that requires little advance homework. And somewhere in between is about right for single-speakers, keynoter, toastmaster, etc. If you want to escalate the scale (for GofH f'rinstance), his or her tab for meals eaten in the hotel would be a logical extension. Fees as such, though, are out, I'd think. Not practical. And all perks would just about have to be on a sliding scale, depending on how much profit the Con actually made. But some of the Con-expenses of people who are asked to come and perform, it seems to me, have as good a claim (and maybe better) as do the traditional "fannish charities." When the Con is in the black....

Well, it's a starting point for discussion, anyway.

All in all, an interesting writeup, Milt. It's unfortunate that you're bugged as some people I like, but that happens a lot, to ConCommittees, and eventually it it wears off. I do feel that anyone who is on a ConCom more than once has Serious Problems—but what would the rest of us do without you?

Best, Buz

((Before LACon, none of us in Los Angeles knew that George Senda had a previous arrest record. When he first applied for membership to the LASFS a couple years ago there was a flap when the board of directors debated his membership application. They were debating it because of the non-criminal negative aspects of his personality which had been reported by Bay Area fans. Some people wanted to remove the power of approving membership applications from the board of directors because they didn't feel that anyone should be denied membership in the LASFS. This was after his membership had been approved. If his record had been known, his membership might not have been approved.

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Thanks for PASSING PARADE #2 (and #1). Enjoyed your inside account of LACon. I was one of those people who was attending the convention on extremely short funds—I had just enuf money to keep from starving; I crashed on floors, etc. I arrived at the con feeling a little belligerent about the \$10 entrance fee. If I'd had the opportunity to work for my membership I'd have jumped at it.

The security-guards bothered me on principle but rationally I understand that they were necessary. George Clayton Johnson--boy, I've never seen him that mad before --was bothered by the emotional oppression-sensation given by the presence of guards-- I hope you can understand his feelings, even if you don't agree. (I tried to calm him down but, whoceeee--) I hope you sent GCJohnson a copy of PP--I think he'd appreciate your point of view in such a well-expressed essay.

((I sent copies of PP#2 to everyone who was mentioned with the exception of George Senda, who had disappeared by the time I was sending out copies of the issue. Somehow, I don't feel much like sending copies of my fanzine to L.A. County Jail, which was where Senda was last time I heard. Since George Clayton Johnson was looking for a reason to sue me during the convention, I did have a few second thoughts on the matter. I finally sent him a copy anyway.))

((Having been a cryptographer in the Navy and now being in the computer field, wearing ID badges seems like a normal part of life to me. When I'm working at System Development Corporation I have to put my badge in a viewer before I can get in the door. A voice from the wall says "Thank you" and the door pops open. I know a lot of fans work in similar environments and I suppose it's an example of cultural fragmentation that things which are a normal part of life to some could be bothersome in the extreme to others. Not that I would act any differently if I had it to do over again at the masquerade, since I had no idea whether or not I was being watched by an agent from ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control).))

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Good con reports are hard to find. Good con reports from responsible people are even harder to track down. Luckily I had no tracking at all to do TPP2 arrived of its own accord.

To be frank, the cover put me off a bit. Anybody who has to parade around his name or initials six times on one sheet of paper has my sympathies though not my liking. But you're in good company. I hold a similar grudge against DAW Books.

However, you don't read the cover of a fmz as much as you do its interior, so you're saved. TPP2 was the main impetus behind my move to get on the FAPA waitlist. If all FAPA stuff is this good it will be a worthwhile apa all over for me.

One of the disadvantages of "committeeing" a con is you miss all the great stuff that goes on there. Well, those hidden parties were nice and, all in all, the con was very good to me--a second time Worldcon goer. I know that my own tiny opinion really doesn't account for much but I really dug LACon. It was mostly due, of course, to the people but the con did run smooth and I must admit that not once at Noreascon did I stay awake for 40 hours straight. Of course I didn't know anybody at Noreascon but what of it.

I'm mighty glad that L.A. is entering a 75 NASFIC bid though I disapprove of NASFIC altogether. I'd like to see if the S.F. people will still oppose Australia if they realize there's a chance of not getting NASFIC should they lose Worldcon. Why, by the way, did you-all decide to make a bid.



Sorry this loc is so short. There really isn't much I can say about a well written con report other than "Thanks" and "Do it again sometime soon."

Norm

((When I ask for a fanzine cover I don't specify the subject matter. I sort of like being surprised...within limits. You may notice that on this issue I have a space ship that looks like an obscene gesture. Twasn't my idea, but what the heck. When I asked Bea Barrio to do a cover I guess all I told her was the title and that it was my personalzine. I suppose she wanted to give me a cover to go with my monogrammed underwear. I thought it was sort of interesting that two different artist gave me white on black covers when I didn't specify a thing and they didn't consult with each other.))

((Why we-all decided to make another bid is an interesting question. Ted White would tell you that it was some sort of a power-insider-egotrip, which sounds like sort of a dumb reason to me. I think that our real reason is related to games playing. Los Angeles is the most games oriented of all the fan centers. We play bridge, poker, risk, diplomacy, and even miniture golf. In the convention field, we've found a team game we can play again and again. It's a complex game which gives us an opportunity to plot and plan and finagle and do all sorts of other fun things. Of course, we'll be beaten in the end and then I guess we'll have to find another game. ))

IAHF George Scithers (No George, I haven't caught up with Tyrone Turkey as yet), Bill Berger, Rose Hogue, Jerry Lapidus, Rosemary Hickey, Jeff May, Donn Brazier, Frank Denton, Doreen Webbert, Bob Vardeman, Sandra Miesel, and Frank Balazs/Matthew Schneck. And Mike Glicksohn too. (May still have forgotten somebody but....)

FINAL NOTE This being the third issue of the Passing Parade I'm finally getting around to evaluating my mailing list. If I don't know you very well and I haven't heard from you after three issues, you are in danger of being dropped from my mailing list. If that is the status you're in, you'll find an L on your mailing label.

SAVE OUR OPEN SPACES