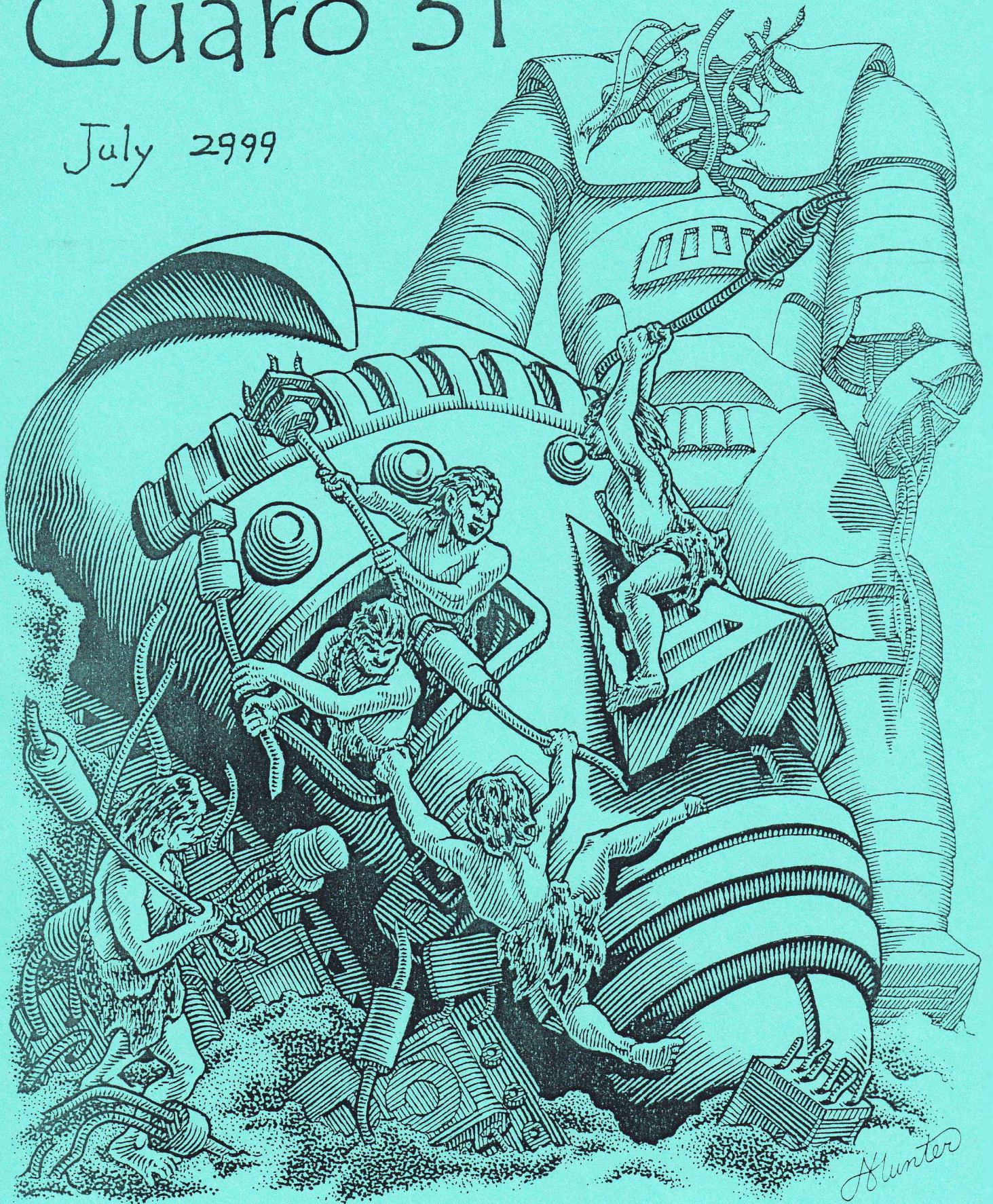


Quaro 31

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Email: <bugr@mcn.org>

"He meant well," sighed the hangman, as he tightened the noose." Thus my old buddy, Louis Russell Chauvenet, many, many years ago, as I scrood up once again. It still applies today. I took the April mailing with me as I embarkt for Midwestcon 50 in Cincinnati on 24 June. I read & markt most of it on the plane ride east, finishing it off as I flew back to Seattle for a visit with grandotr Magenta & Missy & gtgrandson Ian. I then rented a car & took off for Spokane & Westercon 52. I left the mailing behind so I cdnt possibly lose it at Wcon when I wdnt need it anyway. I left ^{Spokane} early Mon morn & drove like I shdnt in hopes of getting back in time to see gdotr Nikki & husband Tom from Denver. Good—I made it & we had a nice visit. The next day I got home & drove up from Frisco & pooped out after two weeks travel, the last three days of wch was running on the reserve tank. The next day I got cot up (mor or less) w a mountain of snailmail & (whats the word for a whole gang of electrons?—blizzard?) of email.

OK, now ive just got time to whip tgr a batch of MCs & get it off to Burnett. OH NO! I frantically scabbled thru my carrion bag—cameras, film, all the zines, flyers etc I had pikt up at both cons, *Sky & Telescope* and the latest *File 770*, wch I also had read—but no SAPS mailing. Aargh! I hastily phoned Missy, but theyre evidently off on a biz trip or something, as I havent heard back yet. I figure that I mustv left it in the room

where I stayd, then Nikki & Tom movd in while I was gone to Spokane, & praps tuckt it in a drawer to get it out of their way & forgot to tell me abt it. If that isnt it, then Ghu nose where it is.

So that's how come ive gotta make do with gin two cons & a triport.

I wafld quite a bit abt this trip & probly wdntv gone at all if John Hertz hadnt cald me, wanting to share a room at Westercon. I had pretty much decided to give Wcon a pass, having no desire to visit Spokane, wch I had mistakenly put down as another El Paso, since my impression of two previous "visits" (when I whipt thru hastily, eager for the Cascades & the cool Pacificoast) was hot, dry & full of ritewingers. All the fen I talkd to confirmd my prejudice. When I said I was "thinking about" going to Wcon, with one exception, they said "Where is it?" with the implication that since it wasn't on the coast it was Nowhere. When I replied "Spokane," the immediate rejoinder was "Spo-KAN?!" with rinkld nose & heavy emfasis on the second syllable.

Another factor that dampend my enthusiasm was that last fall Shirley & I had been thinking seriously abt getting an RV & becoming "snowbirds" even tho our area isnt all that cold, in fact, positively tropical compared with Minnesota, where the original RV snowbirds that invade Arizona & NM every winter come from. We even looked at a couple offerd for sale & went so far as to have one checkd out by my mekanik. Then in the aftermath of her lumpectomy, they took Shirley off estrogen & her osteoporosis & -arthritis came back with a vengeance. Its in ~~her~~ her lower back where the pain is referd to her hips, so that she cant sit for very long.

Before that, I was thinking of driving the RV to Seattle, visiting grandkids etc, taking in part or all of Wcon, then continuing on to xplore Snake River Canyon & Glacier International Peace Park, but it doesn't look like that's going to happen anytime soon. I don't want to do it alone.

Before John cald, I was leaning slitley toward Midwestcon, altho Cincinnati isnt xactly my favorite city either, bcoz it was the 50th anniversary & a lot of oldtimers I hadnt seen in years wd likely be coming von der voodvork oudt. Then the lite bulb went on. I cald Lucy Huntzinger, girl travel agent, & she workd out a nice pkg for me, featuring a long isossawockle triangle; SF to Cinci, back to Seattle, rental car to Spokane & back, & Seattle-home.

The only fly in the ointment was the damnd insurance they make u buy on the car—costs almost as much as the rental. I didn't think to quiz my own ins co abt it b4hand, so I took the minimum I cd get away with, & it was still a lot.

Midwestcon, as most of u gezers kno, is fandoms oldest floating erap-game relaxacon. I playd hi stakes poker for the first time, with Joe & Gay Haldeman, Mike Glicksohn, Bill Cavin, Linda Bushyager & some guy named Al. Never eat at a restrant cald "Mom's," & never play poker with a math teacher (Glicksohn). For that matter, watch out for a certain sf writer's wife. She just sat there, innocently batting her big blue eyes, absolutely nothing showing, then whacking us with flushes & full houses. Im used to yr friendly 'hood nickel dime & quarter games, & it cost me \$150 the first nite to learn how the big boys play (even if two of them were girls!). A dollar

a bet, with up to three \$10 raises allowd is a whole different ball game. The 2nd & 3rd nites I held my own, & if time hadnt run out I mytv got back even. Ah well, it was much pleasanter giving it up to friends than some strangers in Vegas—to say nothing of the House.

Bcoz it was the Big 5-0 Annie, there actually was *gasp* some programming, but very informal. Mostly it was BOFs reminiscing about MWCs past, WAY past. But big-hearted Howard Devore & Rusty Hevelin & their ilk were not boring to me. What took some of the fun out of it however, was that fact that Bob Tucker came down with flu & cdnt make it. Mike Resnick fild in as TM, but even such an accomplished adlibber as he cdnt quite make up for the absence of Le Zombie.

One thing that croggled me was Sotheby's catalog on Sam Moskowitz's collection, wch Joe Siclari brot along. (the catalog, not the collection, Mark). I xpected something elegant, & it was, partly, with glossy paper & nicely reproduced pages & pages of Frank R. Paul & Virgil Finlay originals etc. Somebody no dout put them up to it, bcoz it was obvious that whoever was in charge didn't know doodley about stf, esp *early* stf. It was arranged like an old Ace Double, with all the serious stf in the first half, & comix upside down in the 2nd half.

However, they shdv cald Arthur Hlavaty to proofread it. I didn't mind such things as "Philip Jose *Framer*," but youd think a big prestige outfit like Sotheby's wd kno how to spell "Anonymous." They got it "Any noumus," f'Ghu's sake. Rick Sneary is no dout spinning in his grave, laffing his hip bones off. Poctsarcd shd live so long.

Looking back now at the "program," I note that it was really The Fanhistoricon 9 program & wish I had attended the other items as well, particularly the one on the Cinvention & "What do we do with all this stuff?" The former was just at the point where I was fatisfied by moving from MA to CA, & I suspect where fandom was moving into a new era (1949) wch mytv interestd me mor than the previous one, wch I was tiring of. The latter is of great interest to me now, with 50 years accumulation of "junque" to get rid of b4 the world gets rid of me. I cant imagine how I skimd over the announcement w/o it registering. I spoze it was the fact that they skedld it for 8pm, just when the poker game was picking up steam. Or praps I was out to lunch-dinner. I do hope Joe Siclari or somebody who was there does a report or tape of it.

On the way to Cinci I was subjected to the humiliation of using a wheel chair for the firsttime in my life. For the last few months ive been xperiencing something like plantar fasciitis, wch is the inflammation of a bundle of ligaments that run under the heel & arch jof the foot, connected to the Achilles tendon. The heel becomes tender & painful & walking on a hard surface is torture. (& I'm not even a fascist!) Shirley had it & wore a brace for some time until it gradually improvd. My case wasn't as bad & was very slowly improving to where I was only limping slitley. However, the nature of it is that when one is immobile for a while, sitting or lying down, the first few steps after getting up are pure hell.

So the flyt from SF to OHare was late, & the original 45 min I had to make

my conexion for Cinci had shrunk to 15. Ordinarily, a piece of cake. But OHare has gotten so big, w/o any of the redesign that has gone into newer airports (like Seatac, with its neat subway system) that it's a major hike just to get from the far end of B concorse to the other end of C concorse. I strugld out of my seat, down the ile & up the ramp, hurting a lot, took one look at the diagram of where I had to go, & knew that I cdnt make it in 15. If I had 45, I cdv plugd along slowly, used the few slidewox available, & made it OK. I took a few steps down the long long walkway, trying to hurry, then noticed that the upcoming slidewok was clod for repairs. That tore it. I lookt for one of those electric carts like golf carts, but there werent any. In most cases I disdain them unless it's a time crunch like this one. A young lady with a wheel chair noticed my despair & askd if I needed help. I hated to do it, & made one last effort, asking abt an electric, & if indeed my destination was as far away as I thot. She said yes, that's going to be tite, get in ryt now! I caved.

She got a workout. It seemd like nearly a half mile, then down an elevator & along another half mile of subterranean pasaj, up another elevator & finally to the gate for Cinci. She was huffing & puffing (altho she lookt to be in pretty good shape) by the time we got there, but pushd me ryt thru the boarding line & up to the gate. I didn't object.

I'm gradually learning to handle Windows 98, but I still have a long way to go. The book for dummies helped. However, I still don't care for its patronizing attitude. It gratuitously capitalizes "I" when I don't want it to & sticks in apostrophes where I prefer to leave them out, as in don't & cant, (hah, it mist one there) but somehow ignores things like havent—how come? And it nastily underlines in RED all my semi-fonetix. But at least it has the decency not to print them, so I suppose I shdnt (shouldn't) complain. FU98.

of the panel

Coming back, I had more time & not as far to go, but a couple of blox down the line I spotted an electricart sitting with nobody in it. I lookt around but cdnt see a driver. There was a desk across the way with a woman standing behind it who lookt like she myt be a dispatcher. No such luck. She was as ignorant as i. I wokt.

My karma with weather was still holding. Cinci was warm but not hot. A Tstorm or two, but the lytning stayd a comfortabl distance away. Seattle had the usual leaden skies, but only straind out a spritzl or two while I was there. I'll spare u my usual rant abt not being able to rent a stick shift, as the Neon they gave me was quite aceptabl. Auto trannies have improvd a lot since the days of the early "slushboxes" & I admit that they are OK in heavy stop&go trafic, but I still wdnt buy one for the winding hilly Hwy #1 that I frequently have to drive. When I hit a steep 180 up or down I want the car in the gear *I* want it in, not what some Detroit engineer guest myt b a good gear.

My apologies for not visiting mor of u fine folx in Seattle, but I really thot with Westercon as close as Spokane, I wd see mor of u there than I did. Far as I kno, only Buz & Elinor made it. I also wanted to see grdotr Magenta who lives up near Mt. Baker, & that took up two days out of the week.

That was a pleasant trip. Since she was living in employee quarters in one of the parks, it meant complicated directions, so she phoned me to meet her at Milano's restrant in Glacier, the last town bfor the ski resorts. I had xpectd ~~just~~ another routine Italian restrant in such a small place, but was quite imprest with the quality of the food we had for lunch. Not yr usual spageti & meatball joint at all. The eggplant parmigiana was xnt & a fine glass of chianti to go with it.

As usual with a dedicated snowboarder (an instructor during the winter) Magenta has some kind of injury she is recovering from. This time however, it was a spraind ankle from stepping in a hole on a funky volleyball court. An amusing sidelite to this was that she was sporting an xpensiv looking removable cast. She told me that community medicine works up there on the mountain, bcoz if u get an injury, u don't have to spend a lot of money on the type of cast or whatever the doctor or hospital orders. U just ask around among yr friends & yr bound to find somebody who has had a similar injury & is somewhere near yr size.

Magenta guided me up the road to where the skilifts start, but we didn't get to see Mt. Baker itself bcoz of the fog & clouds. I usually make most people nervous on mountain roads, so I drove at a moderate pace, enjoying the views etc, but at one point she nervously urged me to drive faster! It seems this particular section still had large accumulations of snow on the upslopes that were just abt ready to let go. That made *me* nervous. On the way back back, I hustled by that stretch w/o being told.

The road follows the Nooksack River for quite a distance, & on the way down we stopt to look at the falls; quite respectable for what isnt much mor than a creek. They had a chain link fence all around it, as the gorge was quite steep at that point with mossy slippery rox all along the ej, & dire warning signs all over the place. Magenta told me that just the week bfor, a woman had climbd the fence, ignoring the warnings in order to get better fotos, slipt & fell to her death. Did any of u see it in the papers around late June? M said the falls are hier than Niagara, but I cdnt check it bcoz we were at the top & the bottom disappeard in

spray around a bend in the canyon. My guess is abt 100 ft.

Back at the cabin we made dinner out of the doggie bags from lunch. I wish I cd describe the bread they baked on the premises, of wch we orderd seconds & brot several slices home with us. I love Italian sourdo, but this put any bread I ever ate bfor in the shade. The crust was crispy & crunchy, lots of poppy seeds & some kind of herbs & spices that put me into absolute orbit. Neither M nor the waiter knew what they were. I guess the baker keeps it a secret, & well he myt.

I was all set as a guest of Wcon & had my room res w John, but I had forgotten the name of the hotel! Fortunately, I had Buz's fonumber, & he clued me in. Thanx Buz; odderwise I wdv had to do some class A sleuthing, wch gets stressful when unsuccessful. The drive wasn't as long or as tiring as I xpectd. A new car makes a difrence. Like I-5 & I-280, wch I have pvtly kristnd "Do 80," the speed limit was 70, wch was what the trux & RVs were doing; other vehicles were doing 80 or better.

I get a kick out of rooming with Sir John Hertz of Regency dancing fame. I have little interest in dancing or the Regency period, but watching him prepare & don his "costume" is a kick. Everything has to be ironed just so, but he isnt the least bit prissy abt it. Rather, I'd say hes meticulous. I didn't realize that those early 19th century dandies wore panty hose, but it makes sense, as anything else under those skin tite knee breeches wd spoil the effect. The codpiece is a marvel^{of} sartorial design. When in place, its well ny invisibl. And remember, there were no zippers then. I didn't ask him, but I imagine taking a leak is almost a federal project. It wd never do for me & my hair trigger bladder.

My first xperience with W52 was a turnoff. They *charged* for food & drink in the con suite, so I never went back there. Garth Spencer & Graeme Cameron of Vancouver BC took charge of the fanzine lounge & brot in some chips & dips & soda, so I chipt & dipt in & hung out there most of the time when there wasn't something specific to do. Incidentally, John also had great karma bcoz our room was ryt across the hall from the FL!

But I had a better time than I xpectd. Don Fitch showd up & we had a fine time hollering at each other. He is even deafer than I am. I also fell off the tobako wagon as I joind Don in going out for a smoke a few times. The brand he was smoking, however, was so strong that I had no trubl getting back on the wagon come Mon morn.

My panels went well. I was supercargo on the first "The Wonderful World of Fanzines," wch had six people already on it, including Buz & Elinor, so I sat in the audience so they cd have one. By & by a few others stragld in & it became a sort of round table on "Where are the new faneds going to come from when all us old geezers die off?" The only answer they came up with was the children of said geezers, like the Webers. As the panel broke up, I was too late getting my point in, so I will now. I think the young zine fans are already with us, like Janice Gelb, who was ^{on} the panel. I askd her how old she was & she bridled a bit, not getting my point, wch was that she was thinking of herself & peers as "old" at around 40. True, we arent all teenagers as once was the case, but Mark & Rocky & Anna & Ray found (US), so where did youse guys "come from?"

STAY TUNED; FILM AT 11

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SAPS (P.1)