

S A F A R G

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My God but you guys have never seen the likes of the pile of letters that keeps building up here for me to answer. Now, I hate to write letters, almost as much as I hate to write comments on comments etc. Anyway, I no longer need any sort of excuse to cut my activity down to the very minimum as prescribed by our evil hearted Brucifer. For me it says three pages this mailing. And as I have not, in all honesty, finished reading the last mailing I'll have to stumble through this one on stencil. But then what shall the subject be? The SEACON, of course!!!

From the very beginning the CarGO caravan got off to a slow start. Spending the night at our house were Jon Stopa and old buddy O'Meara. The alarm went off on cue, 3:30 AM (a most revolting time) and Lee Ann arrived promptly on time at four. Arriving in some sort of order were George and Lou Ann Price with Mark Irwin and Bob Pavlat with Martin Moore. We were all set to go with three cars still unaccounted for. Ted White had telegraphed that he, Sylvia and Walter Breen were running late and would catch up somewhere enroute. No word for a week from John and Sally Kidd (who didn't make the trip). No word from Bill Millardi who was driving overnight alone from Akron. Departure time passed and the natives were restless. Five AM and the drum beats were deafening; we started loading the cars and re-shuffling the passengers. At 5:30 George and Bob pulled out. We waited until six, stuck notes on the front door for Millardi and any one else who might be curious then headed for the expressway. I was driving, I missed the turn-off and went about 20 miles out of the way; a good start all the way around.

The first night was spent at the Rushmore Motel in Sioux Falls, South Dakota where a beer party was enjoyed by all. The next day took us through the Badlands, Mt. Rushmore, Custer State Park, Wind Cave and the Black Hills to Spearfish, SD for the night. Here Ted White and Bill Millardi both caught up with the caravan. The next morning we had a delightful hike around Devil's Tower then drove on to Yellowstone where Bob and Martin hosted a cocktail party in the pre-fab-lush, new Canyon Village.

Around the park the next day, playing like typical tourists in a hurry and spent the next night in West Thumb. In the morning we saw the rest of Yellowstone and took off through the Grand Tetons for Craters of the Moon and Boise. We spent the night there, as guests of Guy and Dianne Terwilliger (with some over-flow being accommodated by Chuck Devine). The Terwilligers entertained royally, this was indeed a highpoint of the whole trip, if not the convention itself. And in the AM it was off to Yakima (taking along Chuck Devine).

We arrived here so early that Jim, Nancy and I decided it was such a waste to stop that we drove on to Mt. Rainier. The Sunrise road was bathed in liberal fog, the switchbacks were very hard to see as up we went -- but no Rainier was visible. We caught the eight PM Ranger fireside lecture, and started to bed-down for the night, hoping the fog would lift so we could see the mountain.

It didn't.

And it was cold as hell. In the low 30s. We decided it would be best to go down to the base of the mountain for some warmth (and it was a good 10+ degree difference) -- back down the foggy switching road. Ask Jim sometime about scenic turnouts, he likes them in the fog. At the foot it was still too cold to camp out so Nancy and the kiddies sacked out in the back seat of the car with blankets and Jim and I in the front in sleeping bags; outside it rained and rained. It was a long, cold, eventful night with visions of hurtling down the mountain road at high speed, among other things. In the morning we started back up to Sunrise, for a last look at the clouds, arriving just before the restaurant opened and in conjunction with a smallish blizzard. The wind howled through the restaurant walls with such audible force that our breakfast cooled before we had a chance to eat it.

The clouds never cleared.

We left with almost a half inch of snow covering the parking lot and slid down the Sunrise road and off to Olympia Rain Forest. Here are beautiful ferns, mosses galore, magnificent trees and the worst damn roads in creation; liberally seasoned with rain. Then via the inexpensive ferry to Seattle and the Hyatt House.

We came in on the wrong side of the road; and for those that don't know, 99 is damn near uncrossable. Eventually we made it; checked in, shouted hello to many people; unloaded the car and while Nancy ran the kids through the water-party size shower, Jim and I ducked out to a nearby garage to have the car fixed up after the long trip. We fixed ourselves up in the bar next door while we waited for the mechanic to do his job.

And the con was on. The details are a swirl of sight and sound, a flavor remembered here; a joke there and the touch of a friend's hand too long at the fair. I remember the two night-long parties, Jim, Jon and Sidney Coleman hosted in the Rainier Suite, the gallons of good booze that flowed and flowed; the 15½ gallon inexhaustible keg of beer that blocked the bathroom door. But most of all I remember, with gratitude, the many bottled contributions that served to augment the CHIAC booze. Thank you, again and again.

I remember the truly exemplary manner in which Robert A. Heinlein lived his part as guest of honor. A rare man, a superb host, a gentleman, and a friend ... I can say nothing more about him, I lack words good enough...

I remember Ella Parker, a ray of sunshine, a toy, a delight with a crazy accent and a large supply of tea to last her through her excursion to the colonies. The hanging stairs to the Satellite room. The stupid no-walk-and-drink laws. The cops patrolling the bars. And Wally, doing his best, and Buz, sort of disbelieving and in a hurry. And Doreen and Jim, both looking like an advertisement for bliss, with red-tipped canes and Smirnoff. And the other Wally, dishing out money; Otto dishing out fanzines. And Harlan, dishing out sthicks in a tux, and very nicely so, thank you. And Ayjay, spreading bottled happiness. And Phyllis Economou, our fan-neighbor, beautiful and captivating.

I remember Virginia. I remember Jim, mixing my usual drink for Lou. I remember many bitches about loss of sleep (but no one hurrying to bed). And Sylvia, even without her bikini, surrounded on the floor. And Wally asleep on the sofa. And Jean Carroll. Louie Grant in a kilt (at last I know what they wear...).

I remember Joni in a brief thing. The masquerade; flurry and hurry and make the last two costumes in the set on the people. What a delight to poke Sid in the rear with a spear. And many people crawling over the beer to get to the toilet, "don't you boys dare look this way, I'll call my husband..." Rod mosen with brandy in a kookie bottle. Waiting in line in the hotel coffee-shop. Stealing the hotel ice container. Gerbage cans and ball point pens. Many beers and chats with Art and Nancy. Al Lewis, bang-up auctione-

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er, 92 bucks!!! Bruce Henstell, a fine young man (whatever happened to that miserable punk?). A campaign to buy shoes for Walter that didn't get off the ground, along with the other one to buy a dress for Karen. The N3F room, doing a tremendous job there G.M. Burnett in a suit and Burnett in a god-awful loud shirt. The art show with all those lovely pictures. Bjo working too hard. John and Squirrel and Hi, Ernie. And the movies, over and over. All the glass walls and the pool that I never got into (Nancy and the kids loved it though). Forie and a nameless magazine. Doc and Jeannie, the old town isn't the same without you somehow; you are missed greatly. Jack Speer, efficiency with a gavel.

I remember Carole Pohl. I remember the few, the very few, quiet drinks with Jim and Jon and Al Lewis and Buz and all the problems of the world between frantics. The seemingly endless fights with Western Union over bungling inefficiency. The hourly demand upon Mr. Andrew, the assistant manager, for some special service; a noble man he. The hotel personnel, delighted with the art show, the masquerade, feeling for all the world like delegates. (Some bought too, and some asked for information about how to track down a fondly remembered, once read fantasy.) The luxury of the hotel. Mad dashes across highway 99 for beer and mix. Wild, tension relieving, drives around the countryside in the holiday deadness -- and at last, a delicatessen with more grapefruit juice. Tomato juice in the morning, please. And sadness. And disappointment. And gut-twisting blows, inside . . .

I remember a certain Hugo. A gavel. Money. Expected responsibility and reams of letters waiting to be written.

The packing up, the sad goodbyes, the leave-taking.

And off to Deep Creek State Park, Idaho. It is cold there, by the roaring fire, with dampness all over inside and out. Overhead the stars are many and frequently streaking across the sky; like many cigarettes consumed and snuffed out, a word suddenly cut short in mid-sentence, a conversation postponed . . .

Then on to Glacier.

How spectacular is Glacier, Going-to-the-sun and Logan Pass. Below you is the snow, the trees, the countless water falls, the weeping walls. Such beauty, far surpassing any natural sight for the whole trip.

Walking down the old creek bed, shooting pictures, anywhere, everywhere; a little keepsake to remember how cold it is -- how high and lifty and how very lonely except on the rocks, sheltered by the scrubby trees to keep off the wind, where the sun can reach out and touch you in the isolation like an old friend, "I am here . . ."

Then glorious Sumatra, Montana and a blown transmission seal. The 17-mile tow to civilization: Melstone, Montana (2 bars-1 open; 2 hotels-total 12 rooms; 2 motels-total 4 units; 1 drug-hardware; 2 restaurants; 5 churches;

someone would stand up to recite the wasps would start to edge down their way and that person's mind just naturally strayed away from the lesson.

The Seacon was great.

I was bartender for both the Chicago allnight parties which was pretty interesting to say the least. Sometime or the other you get to see everyone at the convention, even though you don't get to talk to them too long, as they walk past the bar.

It was pretty rough getting things ready for the party, what with sneaking the hotel ice chest to cool the beer and having the manager find out that his chest was missing. One of the help had told us earlier in the day that it was all right for us to use it, but the manager didn't know about that. The hotel did replace the barrel with a garbage can so we were able to cool the beer down after a fashion even though it meant that most of the bathroom was taken up by the beer. And also that the rest of the hotel was without ice since it took six six-packs of beer, in two layers, surrounded with ice cubes to raise the barrel high enough in the garbage can to get the pitcher under the spout. It also meant that the bathrood door couldn't be shut, even in an extreme emergency, which led to some problems when female guests just had to use the "facilities" (and thank you Ella Parker for that quaint little foreign word).

The trip to and from the Seacon was great even though there was a forced stop in Montana on the way home. Montana seems to be about the end of nowhere. If you don't live there it's about the dullest place on earth, and if you do live there I suspect it's about the dullest place on earth. It is damn hard to find something to do in a town where there is not one single example of amusement or entertainment to be found. I've had enough of Melstone, Montana to last me for the rest of my life.

The rest of the trip was great. Especially the Black Hills country and Yellowstone.

Someday, when I have more money and time, I would like to go back and see all the things we missed. Earl and Nancy had planned the trip so that we could take in the most things possible in the shortest amount of time, but even so there is still a lot of things that you could see if you could only have a couple of months to do it in.

I saw my first snow this fall when we were at Mt. Rainier and I had a hard time convincing my family when I called them up long-distance, since Chicago was in the midst of it's worst heat wave of the year. And there I was, outside in the driving snow, with the wind cutting through me, standing up at one of those lousy walk-up telephones.

Somewhere else in this issue Earl is doing a more coherent job of writing up the con (Which just goes to show you Old Buddy, you only read on the surface. EK). I am suffering from a kingsize head cold at this writing.

They told me those bacteria cultures I am raising in biology were harmless, but I'm beginning to wonder. This may be their way of making room for more students. This cold really has me down and I don't feel much like writing but if I want to stay in SAPS I have to get this done tonight.

The remark of mine, about making room for more students, brings to mind the smallish squabble over the new site of the University of Illinois in Chicago. It is in a former residential-near-slum area called Harrison-Halsted. The natives don't want to vacate for the construction of the new, ultra modern campus and buildings. They are picketing with signs that say "Ban the Halsted

