

Aug '61

FAPulous #18

F. M. Busby

Seattle

Washington

Matter of fact, it is still 2852 14th Ave West, Seattle 99, Wash. With luck.

The gaps on page 4 are stencil-cement splices. If there is no page 4, they did not hold up through the run. Page 4, if it appears, contains what were originally two stencils, plus a last-minute 3-line signoff. Comments on the 95th Mailing will run to the bottom of this stencil and then will stop. Seattle in '61!

M Z the Brad: Foop. I had wanted to take considerable space in appreciation and comment on your beautiful job on Tolkien. Herewith the appreciation, at any rate. There was to have been a biapan 4-page comment on WHY IS A FAN, too. There isn't. Dick Ryan: I have no wish to suppress ideas, even of the Communist variety; they can sound off in public all they please, for my money. It's the undercover bit and the actions (leading to such as the Rosenberg case) that vitally needs stomping. OK? Dikini: I "was defending Socialiam against (your) libels"? Reread me, please.// My point re the anti-HUAC "I'm an antiCommunist, but.." contingent was like, prove it. Bill Evans: John Birch society? All I've seen on it is the "exposures" in the papers. From those, it sounds like a caricature of what it supposedly purports to be. If I were Krushchev, I couldn't ask for a better instrument with which to discredit any & all antiCommunist activity in the US. Judging from the papers, that is. I dunno...

The Busbys in the V&T RR pic (for which, thanks) are no known relation to me, but our family has met several of that family over the past 60 years or so.

Buck & Juanita: I got out of line and overly-sarcastic re you & young Bruce in the Feb mailing. The reason relates to me rather than to you; you have my apologies!

Ted White (here's what I was saving space for) and Norm Metcalf: I could have sworn that John Champion was in on this bit, too, but unless he succumbed to the Original Sin of postmailing, and I lost it-- I would've sworn in vain. OK, to horse:

My comment in Mlg 94 was "Amen, Bob, it's just about unanimous, the way we calloused types who have had our lumps in the Armed Forces have a rough time finding much empathy with anguished protests from folks who naturally want to avoid those lumps". At least, that's how Ted quotes me, and I trust him. You might reread it... Norm translates this as "you've been through it and look down on those who haven't", then sets to demolishing this his very own straw man. Ted's version is that I "become fanatically enraged with those of us who find ways to avoid their fate". Maybe you'd better read my remark still once again, Norm and Ted. I'll wait...

Let's clarify. "look down on" non-veterans, do I, Norm? I didn't say that, and it is in no case the truth. I look down on people who whine about having to take the same chances as the next guy with regards to the draft and other unfortunate facts of life. This means, of course, that sometimes I have to look down on me; that's tough.

Ted, where do you derive the idea that I "want to inflict what (I) had to go through on everyone else"? I did not say that, nor mean it. I redound, then, to the effect that it is the bitching and not the predicament, with which I fail to empathize.

I deplore the draft, and necessity for same; if it picked types who would easily fit into service life it wouldn't be so gruesome. I do not think that everyone needs a tour of GI duty nor that it is necessarily beneficial; certainly a lot of crap could well be eliminated from the GI routine. I am not about to look way back into Mlg 92 to see whose plaint sparked this whole thing or what was said. If Ted gets drafted or Norm gets extended, each of you will have my sincere sympathy. But I still refuse to pander to the self-pity of anyone who gripes that the deal is unfair to him, any more than it is unfair to everyone else. Like, try dodging Death, huh?

New subjects, Ted: well, I expected more of you, too. I expected that you might have some informative answers to my questions, instead of just the same old reflex. I'll restate the question: (assuming for the sake of argument that the HUAC is a Bad Thing) what measures would you advocate, to deal with undercover subversion? Or do you feel that the Rosenberg, Fuchs, and Blake cases indicate that we are only wound up in "freedom of ideas"? /// I've asked this question in several forms several times in two apas and have had no direct answers from the anti-HUAC contingent. I say it's a reflex, and as of now, I say the hell with it.//Sorry to skimp people.//Happy days.

G r o k A r o u n d T h e C l o c k -- t h e B a y C o n !

It's a week now since we got home from the BayCon. I've enfolded it, am about to cherish and praise it now, and eventually hope to grok it in fullness. Meantime, waiting is...

Possibly a Con Report could be put into chart form. Across the top of the page could be the Days of the Con as column-headings. Down the left side of the sheet would be the obvious chronological sequence of a day's activities-- just fill in the answers for each item of each day, and there you have it. For instance, you start with "Arose at" (____), "Feeling like" (____), "Breakfasted at" (____), "With" (____...____), "Returned to hotel and met" (____..____), "In the" (____). This goes on to cover the day's activities, ending with the locale and personae of Parties, and "To bed at" (____). "With" (____) would of course be optional.

Now that the blue smoke left by Buck Coulson's departure has thinned, let's get on with it. Elinor and I had planned to drive down, but ran out of time and took the train instead (this is vital info because it explains our lack of wheels during our stay in Oakland). We arrived Friday morning, saw Joe Gibson walking away from the hotel as our cab pulled up, and couldn't raise another fan until evening, in person; this was the low point of a Con that was otherwise superb-- a regional Con that ran two days officially but about five days all told. A Good Thing, yes.

South Gate was a "bar Con" and I saw less than half the formal Program. Pitt was a "party Con", and the parties didn't start until late evening, but still I saw very little Program. BayCon was both a bar and party Con, and just for a change I hit practically all of the Program. Some of it I even remember.

The Hotel Leamington made a good Consite; all the Con facilities were handily grouped on the mezzanine, and the hotel did not mess with the parties. The coffee-shop prices were sort of croggling (considerably higher than those of our Consite which has been faulted in this respect from some quarters, and not comparable in either quality or quantity, for the money). I gripe not, however-- and the proof is that I ate there three times, when I'd sooner pay than do all that walking. The only other possible gripe is actually quite funny-- with two Conventions running in the same hotel, one of the two elevators was Out Of Order for the entire weekend. It could only happen to fans-- and the Canadian Legion (who loused up the bar, in the evenings, by gathering around the piano and singing World War I songs with no apparent diminution-of-enthusiasm over the 3 days (not to mention the 43 years since WWI). But this is all along the lines of Local Color; I grotch not, neither do I creeb.

It seems I've let this go too long already to do a chronological recapitulation with my heart in it. So here is the outline. Friday and Saturday nights the party was in 641 by courtesy of good ol' tyrannical Al Lewis (auctioneer-superb) with the Harsh Eyes-- on Saturday it was with keg beer as provided by "Chicago in '62!" On Sunday evening, about 40-50 people hit the Bouchers' "open house", and Monday night occurred at the Bill Donaho - Danny Curran residence. These were good parties; on Friday evening I got a little too planked but got to bed by 3am. The next three nights I held out better, sacking out around 5 or 6 am in each case but not incurring the Elinorial displeasure. Oddly, I didn't get stretched all out of shape too badly at BayCon from "personality pressure" and the like; Cons are a strain, along with the pleasure, but the problem seems to have eased off a lot for me-- either I'm aging into increased durability, or else they are making the B-1 pills better than ever.

Early Friday evening, a bar-party grew all out of bounds, so we began to put tables together in order to accommodate newcomers. I think it was at the fourth table that we hit critical mass and were fissioned by the management. Anyhow, some hours later I came downstairs from someplace or other, entered the bar, barstooled it alongside Terry Carr and others for a bit. Terry and I had an item to discuss, so we adjourned to a table. This did not last long; one by one, people joined us-- we knew that pretty soon we were going to reach critical mass again, if it kept up; it was on our serious constructive minds no end. So each and every person who joined the group was greeted with howls of laughter by TCarr and myself, and went plaintive on us, needing explanation. After awhile we got the patter down to professional standards of brevity, so that no one understood us at all. Par for the course, like.

The barkeep never did get around to break us up; I think maybe we were too near the piano and he didn't want to buck the fallout from World War I. After a while we broke up on our own hook and drifted up to 641 where I got too planked.

Saturday night the keg-beer party started in a mezzanine room, but there was some misunderstanding and the whole deal moved up to 641 where it belonged. The beer was warm (and with keg beer this is even less good than with other varieties); with the move, ice was arranged-for and helped a lot. In the interim I went to the bar for a cold beer to put me back into shape; naturally, the bar was all out of cold beer, so for one of very few times at BayCon I eschewed beer for something with ice in it. Oops-- an odd thing-- since we went to home-brewing in '57, I've not liked commercial beer too well. But at BayCon, for the first time, I discovered a solid difference between commercial beers-- one of our local brands has much less "chemical taste" than most brands. You live and live, and sometimes you even learn.

So I went up to 641 and had a talk with Bill Rickhardt; it seemed to be indicated. Turned out that we were speaking, that Bill didn't know just what the hell got into him for awhile there, that he too wishes he had answered a letter of mine of some time back, and that he's held a good-but-rugged job for over a year now. I always like to see a guy come out of a slump under his own steam. Bygones are.

People are the Con-- any Con. Rog Phillips looked like walking death last year at Boise; this year he looks good and was obviously having a good time. Cheers.

Friday a girl came into the display room wearing a sweater with "Pogo AC" on the front and "and DC" on the back. OK, so I had to ask who it was-- first time I had seen Karen with a haircut (you gamin, you, Karen). Next day, suffering nobly from the night before and speaking of the Delian Law that punishes Excess, Karen said "First time I've been fluffy since I was 15!" So-- I like it; somehow, a "fluffy" Karen is tremendously appealing; that's how it is, and no way out of it.

Herewith notice that it is no longer topical to sneer at Bruce Henstell from the Con-behavior standpoint. This young man attended two WorldCons at too early an age, it would appear. At PittCon he was compulsively loud-and-frantic and none too comfortable to be around. But youth is (tragically) the most curable of conditions. Bruce Henstell at BayCon was a very pleasant guy to have around. He was obviously concerned with fannish criticism of his earlier appearances-- and I trust we'll all note that non-embittered acceptance of criticism is rare at any age. So it is only the decent thing, to dig this Henstell fella in present-tense from now on, strictly.

The "enfant terrible" spot was not left vacant, though. If there is one thing I can't stand it is a 13-year-old Socrates who has all the answers without regard to whether the rest of the philosophers through the ages just might have had something to say on the subject. And who talks all the time. I think Sid Coleman fingered the problem very well: "If a child claims adult privileges, he can't claim childish privilege at the same time" --- I'm lousing Sid's phrasing, but the point is there. But let's not crowd it-- the young spook will either integrate or go away in the next year or two. In either case, no point in lashing him by name.

A Boucher party is a strange thing: you have the full run of the place, including the refrigerator-- but your host is sunk into a poker game and couldn't seem to care less what goes on in his house. He will speak to you, cordially, but you must go to the poker game and wait for noncritical juncture, for the very best results.

Bill&Danny's party was a nice one-- everyone was too pooped to be anything but restful; this one was much fun. Young Socrates cornered Boucher and Poul Anderson in the kitchen, but I stayed away except for picking up a fresh beer now and again, so it wasn't bad at all.

On the way out to Boucher's it turned out that someone wanted to stop&eat at a drive-in, so the rest of us were stuck with Young Socrates. He sort of bugged my dear wife, especially when he took off on the obnoxiousness of the two 3-year-old BayCon attendees, Poopsie Ellington and Walter T Nelson (who had in fact behaved beautifully). Elinor finally said "I do not find children of that age anywhere near as obnoxious as children of some other ages". Like, wow-- that's my girl said that.

Boucher was a wonderful toastmaster at the Banquet; in about 3 minutes he had the attendees welded into a warm little ingroup; it was GREAT. So was Leiber as GoH.

((4th & final page of SERCON'S BANE #7 from F M Busby, Boy Octagenarian))

Leiber's talk was fascinating-- he skipped from one subject to another so that any hint of organization eluded me completely-- but fascinatingly.

Incident: Toastmaster Boucher announced "A young lady left her keys in Al Lewis' room". He squinted at the keys and said something about household appliances, then "so if Miss 'Norg-eh' will step up and claim her keys.." It got a good laugh, but then-- then the roof fell in-- when Poopsie, in all the dignity of her 3½ years, advanced in a purposeful straight line from the rear of the audience right up to the speakers' table, held up her hand, and said clearly "MY keys!" They were, too, and I suspect that Mr. Boucher had more than a mild misgiving that he had somehow been had-- although actually it was just One of Those Things that Do Happen, to the delight of one and all who were lucky enough to be on hand for the occasion.

Poul Anderson is a superman. Early in the Sunday program, there he stood, speaking with calm and couth and urbanity and forethought and wit. I was utterly croggled, because it had been very late the last time I had seen Poul, and it had been I and not he who had chickened out and left the party, and it was about all I could do to get to the Program and just sit down quietly (whereas there he stood, speaking with all those attributes I was just now mentioning)! Yes; well...

Margaret St Clair is not an accomplished speaker; she read her speech and made no bones about technique. But she is a damn good thinker; she brought up some points that needed it. Like for instance: it's no news that modern medicine is by-passing "natural selection" by preserving naturally nonviable types so that these can reproduce themselves. But Miz St Clair also pointed out that modern medicine is preserving the lives of children who would ordinarily die of emotional crippling the first time they were hit with serious illness (will to live, and like that-- these days, penicillin substitutes for a sturdy spirit). So (she said) for the first time in human history we are raising a great crop of people who are totally unfitted for human relationships such as (her subject) love. It's a major point she makes; it disquiets me, and I suspect the Juvenile Courts would shudder, too.

Frank Herbert turned out to be quite a lively speaker and a nice guy (he was that Nut With the Beard). Reg Bretnor suffered from failure of the PA-system and from the distracting whining of a tape recorder that turned out to be his taper

The Laney Memirs state that Alva Rogers was Laney's best friend "until Rogers went overboard for Communism in 1945". Alva Rogers says Laney was a damn liar; he says he stayed friends with Laney regardless of ideology. This was in the bar on Sunday evening and Larry Ware said everyone had better watch those dirty words or a big greasy-headed bastard at the barside was going to pick a beef. Sure enough, this big drunk muscled over and began to interrogate Alva's wife, Sid.

It was pretty funny. I could sympathize with the jerk, because I cannot myself stand present-time Communist-leanings in anyone. But this issue was not in question and here was Mr McJerk trying to be subtle about baiting Sid Rogers. It was a real gas; McJerk was very heavy-handed, and Sid was crowding him right to the edge at all times (she told him she is a card-carrying Girl Scout Leader, and showed him the card). He finally gave up and went over to play the piano and sing WWI songs.

How about Tuesday? Elinor and I were to be taken out to the Ellingtons' by Bill and Danny, in the early afternoon. So we didn't get up until Bill called, and so missed breakfast. It was a fine day but with winds; everything went fine until Bill hit 65-70mph and Elinor&I turned green-- she got carsick and I got chicken. Regardless of what a car does (I've had cars with loose front-ends flip me a couple of times and I'm disenchanted) Bill could doubtless hold the wheel steady; what he or anyone else could not do is keep some intermediate stress-point from shearing and dumping the whole works into a nasty mess. So I got chicken; I've walked away from four "totals" between 1939 and 1947, but only the first time was I a passenger; so maybe I am getting neurotic or something. Anyhow, Bill was nice about it.

So Elinor snoozed-&-recovered; Dick & Pat treated us all royally with chili & beer and the best of inimitable fangabbing, until we had to go back to town to meet (shhh!) some non-fan ex-Seattle friends. Would've been another page, but too late now.