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PROUDLY PRESENTS

EDCO

The SUPER TAPP candidate!



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Cover by June Moffatt

THE DEN

Composing "in the stick" does make for errors, such as are found in my trip report last issue. The villages I visited are--more or less--northwest of Pittsburgh, and the missing-the-train-and-catching-the-bus adventure took place in the P.M. I missed the 5:20 P.M. train and so had to rush to catch the 5:35 P.M. bus. My thanks to Messrs. Speer and Evans for bringing these errors to my attention.

Note to Alva Rogers: Yes, I have met E. Hoffman Price--at one of the Bay Area cons, as I recall. Y'know, I'm still not sure who was putting on whom in that bar discussion. Our Tucker Fan could very well be one of the greatest poker-faced con men of all time, but he sounded and seemed so sincere in his fantastic beliefs that we didn't have the heart to really argue with him.

In case anybody is wondering, I'm commenting--at random--on mailing comments that appeared ~~in it by itself~~ in the February '67 Mailing...

This column has always had a tendency to ramble, not only within its content (within it's content? that shore sounds funny...), but from one zine to another. As I recall, the Den has appeared in MOONSHINE, THE OUTLANDER MAGAZINE, SEAGY, SPIANE.... well, that's not too many.

The Den itself (for which the col is yclept) has rambled from one place to another over the years, going along, as it must, with its dweller. One of these times I'll write an essay or an article about it. It might turn out to be a Fascinating Subject--for me, if not for you.

One of these times I'll write an article on the manufacturing (and selling) of folding cartons, as requested by Juffus not long ago.

But this time, I want to make a few more comments on comments, and then tell you about my life as an amateur scholar and publisher. Last week I didn't even know how to spell scholar and now I am one. Kidding aside (or partially aside; never like it to get too far away on accounts without incoher life can get somewhat dull, grim, even), Tony Boucher refers to me as an "amateur scholar" in the May ish of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, and June says he is right. She is a bit prejudiced, of course. (She has always been a Boucher fan...)

I suppose if we were getting paid for publishing the JDM BIBLIOPHILE, June and I would be professional scholars. Also, professional scholars get sabbaticals, whereas amateurs like us get mimeographer's cramp, typerfingeritis, and so on.

And so on to more mcs... Looks like Rick's JOHN DICKSON CARR BIBLIOPHILE and our JDMB have inspired others to do similar checklists for FAPA. I was happy to see both the Sayers and the Stout checklists, Bill and Chuck. Question: Did you run extra copies, or save stencils in order to run more copies? Reason For Question: Buffs writing in for copies of JDMB have asked if they could obtain similar info on other mystery writers, including Sayers, Stout, Charteris, etc. We won't refer the Sayers and Stout fans to you gents, though, without your respective okeys--so pls advise.

Note to Wrai Ballard and other interested ~~people~~ convention-goers: Am not sure which I prefer--a motel or a hotel for a con. Depends on the type of con, and you don't always know that until you get there. Rick has a point in that motel cons do tend to spread out more, and require more footwork. On the other hand, it is fun to see femmes in swim suits, and nice to get out into the fresh air and sunshine without having to leave the area of the con motel/hotel. However, hotels are usually better equipped to have conventions, with meeting rooms on the same floor, and other such conveniences. But, going back to that other hand, newer motels (as well as old ones) are catering more to cons, I think, and perhaps trying to provide the same facilities that a big hotel does. Hyatt House is a good example of this; the one in Burlington really didn't seem like a motel at all. To me, it was a modern hotel complete with convention facilities, swimming pool, etc. The main problem with a motel-type layout is that the sleeping rooms are usually a good distance from the meeting rooms. Slide-walks is the answer. ((Would you believe roller skates? -jmm))

Speaking of answers to problems at conventions, I may as well segue into the amateur photographer's problem, the mention of which last issue brought some comments in ye last mailing...

Mike Deckinger makes a good point about those demon photographers who flash directly into their subjects' eyes. Oftimes this is unavoidable, but it should not be done without warning. I usually try to let my subjects know that I'm about to shoot; they can still be facing the camera, but can adjust their eyes, or their heads for that matter, so as not to catch the full glare of the flash. Of course, as you say, my flash was a tiny thing, so it wasn't as disturbing as the bigger, fancier jobs. However, the answer to my problem is not quite as simple as you suggest. Ordering Jay Klein's con memory book is all well and good if you want a book of black and white photos taken by somebody else. The reason I take pics at a con is to get the particular shots that I want, and get them in color--preferably slides. Mr. Klein's book just won't work on our slide projector, and besides, most costume shots look better in color than in b&w.

I can only agree with Bill Evans that the problem of shooting the costume ball (as well as the rest of the con) gets worse each year, due to the increasing variety (and quantity) of equipment brought by the various shutterbugs. And if I ever discover, invent, or hear of a solution, I'd certainly pass it along to the con committees. My own answer is to get me an available light rig, when I can work one into our budget. And, learn how to use it. I like my simple little camera with its simple little flash (great line for a song, there!) and as I think I said lasttime, would hate to get tangled up in a lot of equipment.

Harry Warner's suggestion that the chap with the simple little camera utilize the movie camera's floods (and not use flashbulbs) is fine--if your subject is not between the floods and your camera. I'm not sure what shooting directly into the floods would do, as I tried not to at Tricon, for fear of overexposing my film. I have used floods when they were behind me, with good enough results, but that wasn't the setup at the Tricon. Flash cameras were not permitted at that end of the room. Yes, the restrictions were fair enough--at least an attempt to be fair to all the photographers, but as I've said, it didn't work out that way for me and my li'l camera.

Of course, if I spent less money on other things, I could afford a really good available light camera, and my problem would be solved. But what about the fans who can't afford anything more than a simple camera and flash attachment? They have as much right to shoot pics at a con as any other con member, and I think they should be helped and encouraged. For that matter, some of the best shots I've seen were taken with simple flash cameras, and some of the worst were taken with expensive, fancy, equipped up the yingyang cameras.

Tell me not in mournful numbers that it is tough bananas if a fan can't afford to buy an expensive camera to use at a con. That's like saying that a fan shouldn't publish if he can't afford a super Rex Rotary or a fully equipped Gestetner, with wire wheels, yet. We all know that some of the most interesting fan publications have been reproed on cheap mimeos or dittos, or even from ye hecto jelly, and that some of the most boring reproed by multilith, etc.

The fact that I take a simple flash camera to cons is tough bananas, of course, because I could (now that I've learned that some cons are harder to shoot than others) get me a better camera, available light type, or wotever. But there are fans who do have to scrape up every penny just to get to a con, let alone buy expensive cameras, and among them may be the person or persons who could take the best con pictures of the year, given a chance, with their cheap li'l cameras.

In re-reading Harry's comments, a kind of solution to the problem comes to mind. Okey, divide the room in half. Keep the moviemakers and their floods at one end. Let the available light shooters roam at will. And let the small flash cameras also roam at will. ((Oh, give me a Con/where the cameras roam... -Jm)) This still puts the large flash shooters at the other end of the room, but perhaps it is a step in the right direction. Getting all of the costumed persons (not just the winners) to pose for the various types of cameras, before or after the judging, is another answer--but difficult to accomplish. People will stand for only so much "regimentation" even when they know it's for a good cause (i.e., for the benefit of the various photographers, as well as for their own ego-boo). And, at a large con, it is difficult enough to get the costume parade organized.

The platform at the Tricon was a bit high--for me, at least. Yet it had to be that high so that people in the back could see the contestants when they mounted it to parade for the judges. How about a platform on two levels? One for the photographers, and the other for everybody's benefit?

The stage and ramp extending out into the room, used at the Westecon in Long Beach a couple of years ago, worked quite well. But then, that wasn't as crowded a con as the Tricon. The ramp idea was used for the Fashion Show at the Tricon, and was fine for the audience in general, but again bad for small flash shooters...

That's enough on that subject. Too much for some of you, I'm sure. If nothing else, it serves to illustrate one of the many problems that con committees have to rassel with, and why you should never volunteer to be on a con committee with the idea in mind that you are going to please everybody. You have to make (or go along with) some hardnose decisions, and be as fair about it as is possible. No matter what you do, somebody is gonna holler "unfair", so have another belt, and forget it.

Somewhere in this mailing, you should find a NOTICE TO FAPA MEMBERS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING THE JDM BIBLIOPHILE. Please read it, if you are interested in our John D. MacDonald project. If not, have another belt, and forget it.

As stated in ye Notice, Tony Boucher plugged the JDMB in the NYTimes, in EQMM and on FM radio. As a result, June and I allofasudden became Genzine Publishers. The same thing happened to Rick a while back, when Tony plugged the JDCARR BIBLIOPHILE in his NYTimes col. Like Rick, we had to run more copies of the then-current (5th) issue. We also had the stencils for the 4th ish, and ran more copies of it. We also updated the checklist of novels, and ran more copies of it. We had overrun copies of #3 on hand, but soon ran out of those--and, as of this writing, #4 and #5 are out of print. The pertinent (checklist) material in past issues will be reprinted in future issues, updated as much as possible, depending on the feedback we get on the clue sheets. And we are getting feedback, as well as lcs, etc.

The requests have come (and are coming) from a wide variety of people. Apparently, John D. MacDonald is popular with persons in all walks of life, to use a quaint old expression. Housewives, kids, university professors, ministers, publishers, editors, authors, newspaper writers, students, servicemen and numerous persons whose occupations or vocations weren't identified.

Edco (for TAPP!) has been bugging us from the start to get all of the identified JDM titles onto filing cards. We plan to do this, Ed, we plan to do this. We could have done it from the xerox tear sheets sent to us by MacDonald (you are correct there, Juffus), but it will be just as easy to copy the info out of our copies of JDM--and less unwieldy.

We have built up a set of file cards on our readers. We are keeping accurate records, not only for the name and address bit, but also as to the kind of request, feedback if any, etc.

Some sent stamps, some sent money, some sent checks, one sent international postage coupons, some sent small, self-addressed stamped envelopes... Too small to contain even one copy of the mag, but we covered 'em anyway. A few wrote notes or cards, mostly polite, but enclosing nothing. (Only one that I can recall sounded somewhat Demanding, like: Send me my FREE copy of your JDM Bibliophile!) No request was rejected, and some of those who didn't send stamps the first time did respond with stamps or money for same after they received their packages.

Many of them weren't quite sure what they were requesting--but once they got it, seemed happy with it, and want more. A couple or so have sent their Want Lists, which we will publish if we don't get too many of them. We can't use space for a swap column --not yet, anyway. Our primary object is to eventually publish as complete a checklist as possible on all of the stories that JDM has published. Once we reach the stage where it looks like the project is finished, the mag may or may not continue, depending on the readership and the material supplied by them.

In the meantime, MacDonald is croggled about the response, and worried that June and I are taking on too big a job. I have assured him that it is still a hobby project, and that it keeps us out of the pool halls. If we didn't enjoy it, we wouldn't be doing it--we wouldn't have sent copies to Boucher, for one thing. We knew there would be a deluge of requests--we just didn't know when. It depended on when Tony could work the plug into his column. We didn't ask him to plug it, but we hoped he would. Why? Because the people we are hearing from now are primarily mystery buffs (many of whom are collectors and professional scholars, if you will) who can help us track down the unidentified stories that we have been listing in the "clue sheets".

A few of our readers read hastily or do not absorb everything they read. Tony's Times col commented on Ross MacDonald and then segued into commentary on John D. MacDonald, ending with the plug for the JDM. One of our requesters said he wanted all the info he could get on Ross MacDonald, no matter what name he wrote under.

We get Questions, too. Some we can't answer, but we'll print 'em in the hopes that other readers can.

Anyway, if you want to join the fun, be sure to write.

In any case, Keep Smiling!

-LJM

When I was a small child in short skirts, I did not think that someday I would become the wife of an Amateur Scholar. Indeed, this was the furthestest possible thought from my young mind. My young mind was occupied with more immediate problems--such as did the wolf really eat up Red Riding Hood and grandmère?

Yet, in the reading of Red Riding Hood, the Three Billy Goats Gruff, etc., I was laying the groundwork which would in future years enable me to embroil my Amateur Scholar husband in a Ferocious Controversy. My favorite set of books at approximately age 6 was the six-volume My Bookhouse. Book One, for those whose childhoods were deprived, is mainly nursery rhymes and tales. In Book Two, we get into the meatier tales--Snow White and Rose Red, The Twelve Dancing Princesses, the Highly Moralistic tale of The Pony Engine and the Pacific Express, Master of All Masters--to name only a few.

Naturally, I had favorites among all of these. Oblingly, the Table of Contents was compiled in the form of an alphabetical index--which I thought was very nice--until I began looking for a favorite title--The Battle of The Firefly and The Apes, let us say. The title begins with "The". I looked under "The". I not only did not find the title I was looking for, I did not find ANYTHING beginning with "The". I felt down-trodden and betrayed. I KNEW it was there--where were they hiding it?

Eventually I found it, by going down the index, and there it is--listed as "Battle of the Firefly and the Apes, THE". What a dirty trick, I thought. Almost as bad as indices which do not list First Lines. Eventually, I comprehended the fact that these Evisal Editors always list titles this way. I went along with the gag, because there wasn't anything else to do about it, but a Resolution Was Born. Someday--ain, someday!

So, there is the answer to Why The Titles Were Listed That Way in the JDM Novel List. It was the Frustration of my Early Years cropping out. And, like the Gentleman he is, my Amateur Scholar husband stood between me and the slings and arrows of outraged Fortune--pretending it was all His Own Idea. (He keeps the JDM Novels alphabetized on our bookshelf according to the system that Everybody seems to think is correct.)

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Len has mentioned Response as being the keynote to remaining on our mailing list. This response takes interesting form, at times. Not too long ago, we received a request from Harald Mogensen of København, Denmark. He sent "international reply coupons" in lieu of stamps, which, to our rather provincial surprise, our local post office accepted with easy Continental sophistication. (Our local postmaster seems to be on the calm side anyway--when we were mailing out JDMBs in the most hectic period, we took about 76 be-enveloped JDMBs and placed them on his counter, half expecting to be told to take our business elsewhere. He ran his eye over the rather sloppy stacks they made, and said "All ready to go?" We replied in the affirmative, and he swept them easily into a large canvas sack that hung from a rack next to him.)

The JDMB to Mr. Mogensen was, of course, airmailed. We have had some experience with the 6 to 8 weeks required for surface mail. The other day, we received our response from him. Two paper-bound booklets, one for 1965 and one for 1966, of a club named after Edgar Allan Whataisname and almost completely printed in Danish! Now, in spite of having been born to the name of Poulsen, I neither read, write, speak nor understand Danish (which my grandfather would no doubt find disgraceful).

In the upper right-hand corner of the cover of each of these booklets is the word "Årbog", with the date beneath. (Årbog? Abrog and Gorba are one and the same--a prophet and wizard wrapped up in one name! --but I digress...) (Ruth? Are you there?) The word (or words) "Poe-Klubben" appear next, and in the lower right-hand corner is the word "Spektrum". (Poul Anderson, where art thou at this hour?)

Since about all we can do is guess, we will guess that "Årbog" means "yearbook" or something similar. Inside, there is a page titled "Indholdsfortegnelse" which apparently means "Table of Contents". (Mr. Mogensen may well reply ((and I wish he would)) with an account of the fun and games he went through to learn English--but at least he had a teacher and/or textbook at hand!)

It is in the perusal of the tables of contents of these two booklets that the real frustration begins. A few samples will, I hope, suffice to give you an idea of this:

- Jorgen Elgstrom: Vad haade 1964?
- Jens Krause: Hvorfor Maigret er stor og tyk
- Annelise Schønnemann: Josephine Tey, en omvurdering
- Julian Symons: Detektivens fremtid
- John Dickson Carr: Det fornemste spil i verden (med en introduktion)
- Harald Mogensen: Eksperimenter med hjørnesteine
- Henrik V. Ringsted: Edgar Allan Poe og filmen
- Kaj Engholm: Baker Street Mysteriet
- Jan Broberg: Samtal med Margory Allingham
- George Orwell: Raffles og Miss Blandish

And so on. There is just enough English--or words close to it, to make the frustration complete. What about Josephine Tey--one of my favorite authors? The "Baker Street Mysteriet" was a little better--it turned out to be in comic-strip form.

It opens--if I interpret correctly--on a cold November afternoon in 1895. Watson is promptly hit on the head with a brick which has been tossed through the window, note attached. Holmes and Watson run down the stairs and into a hansom-cab. There follows a pictorial reference to The Adventure of the Six Napoleons, then a picture of Watson plunging abruptly into a liquid of some sort, with the legend: "Holmes! The Grimpen Moor!" (The use of the word "the" in this sentence leads me to believe that the whole sentence may be in English, whereupon I would point out that it was the Grimpen Mire in The Hound of the Baskervilles. The moor was a different kettle of fish entirely.) (It isn't often you get to nitpick at something in a furrin language.)

Next, we meet Miss Violet Smith, calmly pedaling along as she did in The Adventure of The Solitary Cyclist. Next, Watson spies The Dancing Men, scrawled upon a milepost. Immediately thereafter we see Silver Blaze and The Creeping Man, followed in the next panel by a reference to Blessington Hall, and what is no doubt a hilarious remark at the bottom of the page. The last page of our story shows that Danish dogs bark "vov-vov" instead of "bow-wow".

On the way home, Watson again plunges into the mire, to the accompaniment of a dry remark from Holmes: "Pas nu på det mudderhul, Watson!" They return to their Baker Street lodgings and find it ransacked, whereupon Holmes' calm deserts him and he tells Watson to call the police.

A delight--or it would be, if I could understand all of it instead of just a word here and there!

-jmm

Ruth Berman - Your "Star Trek" script is beautiful! Have you tried to sell it?