

HAVE BAG WILL TRAVEL

TAFF BULLETIN #2

YOU DON'T WANT HYPHEN! - NOT WHEN YOU CAN HAVE ONE OF THESE LOVELY FANNISH MOMENTOS STEVE GREEN HAS THROWN UP INTO!!



Part Two: "America"

The gentleman wearing a Corflu Vegas T-shirt and holding the "Toner for Tudor" board turned out to be Ben Wilson and he, thankfully, knew his way through the labyrinthine complexities of Vegas Airport to the baggage collection point.

We'd gone no more than ten steps from the arrival gate when we saw conclusive proof that we'd arrived in Vegas - a couple of rows of bright, noisy, slot machines!

It was fortunate indeed that Ben had met us because I'm sure that my jet-lagged brain could never have coped with the various buses and corridors that seemed to be involved in traversing the airport. Eventually though we arrived at the collection point, collected our bags and headed out to the Wilson's car. As he drove us back to their apartment, Tom explained that his wife, Cathi, was working at the moment, but he'd pick her up when her shift finished at 10pm and, if we liked, we could go out and eat. He filled us in on who was coming from out of town, what was planned for the weekend and told us we were welcome to stay with him and Cathi when we weren't staying at the Four Queens for Toner.

When we got to the apartment Ben apologised for the unpacked boxes - he and Cathi had only moved into the apartment two weeks ago - but I assured him it made us feel at home: our house currently being full of boxes of TAFF auction material.

Helena, meanwhile, was introducing herself (and falling in love with) Ben and Cathi's cat Nimue. A beautiful grey and peach "tortoise-shell", Nimue was in a playful, skittish mood and being more accustomed to the sluggish, bad-tempered behaviour of our own cat, Polly, this was a delightful change.

Ben called Tom Springer and Tammy Funk, to see if Tom had collected Christina Lake okay, and Helena and I freshened up and changed our clothes. Apparently Tom hadn't found Christina yet, so Ben went out to collect Cathi. When they returned he checked with a couple of casinos to see what time their buffets served until. It turned out that they all finished around 11pm and as it was after 10pm now, he suggested a local bar in their old neighbourhood. I (reluctantly, of course) admitted that I could probably manage a beer, or two, and off we set.

Ben had described this as a "local bar", but it was local in the American sense of course - about ten minutes drive, rather than walk, away. The T-Bird was a neat bar littered with 50s-style memorabilia and more recent pop culture stuff such as Galaxian arcade-game tables. I opted for a Shiner Bock (a tasty, dark beer) and Helena tried a Seagram's Wild Berry wine cooler. The food was good, the drinks were fine, Cathi was also a smoker, we felt comfortable and at home.

Cathi Wilson was short, dark-haired, pretty and, given the fact that she'd just finished a shift at Taco Bell (where she was Assistant Manager), amazingly bright and bubbly. After a couple of drinks we headed back to the apartment, with Ben, of course, insisting on picking up the bill. (I'd been forewarned by Pam Wells of the incredible hospitality and generosity of the Vegrents and the next week was to prove her absolutely right.)

When we got back to the apartment Cathi called the Funk/Springer household for a Lake update and we discovered that Christina had apparently missed Tom and vice versa - with each of them wandering around different parts of the airport periodically calling Tammy to find out what was happening. Ben allowed himself a (quite restrained) gloat - "I told him he should've done a sign!"

Before we'd left the UK Dave Cox had given us a sealed envelope with instructions not to open it until we were on the plane. With all the hassle prior to our departure we'd both forgotten it; but as she unpacked Helena found it and we now opened it. We'd expected it to contain nicotine patches and/or gum but instead discovered a good luck "Tabby National" greetings card with best wishes for "a great honeymoon" from Dave and \$100.00 - thanks Dave, that was really appreciated! (Why not embarrass the poor perisher across several continents, eh?)

After confirming that Tom and Christina were likely to track each other down shortly we all headed for bed - it looked like Friday was going to be a long hectic day.

Having slept on both flights Helena and I expected to have some trouble sleeping, but as it turned out we were both out like lights and awake early the next morning. After a coffee and shower I went out to the balcony with the laptop and was working on the first instalment of the trip report by 8am. (Such discipline eh? Well I was impressed.) Cathi surfaced a little later with Ben, who is not a morning person, sometime later.

After we'd eaten our fill of the pancakes Cathi prepared, Ben got on the phone to Tom to sort out the plan of action for the day. Tom and Ben were the main movers and shakers for Toner, with Cathi and Tammy supplying all the food - they'd apparently been cooking and freezing food for several weeks! The plan for the day turned out to involve vast amounts of driving for Ben and Tom with yet more cooking for Tammy and Cathi - a pattern that seemed to run throughout the weekend.

As we went downstairs and outside to the car Helena and I got our first real idea of how HOT it was. Sitting indoors in the air conditioning or out, in the shade, on the balcony hadn't given us a clue as to how hot it was in the direct sunlight: it was like walking into a wall of heat. I swear you could feel the liquid in your body evaporating and I was surprised that I couldn't see steam rising from my skin. The relief when we were sitting in the car and Ben turned on the cool air was intense.

Ben dropped Helena and I off at the Four Queens, where we met up with Tom and Christina about noon. Once Tom had booked all of us into our rooms and he and Ben had moved the first load of stuff up to the con suite they headed off to collect more out-of-towners from the airport and supplies for the con suite - arranging to pick us up from the hotel bar around 3pm.

Tom Springer is impressive, at 6'2" and 285lb, dark haired, heavy-built and with a cute boyish face, he radiates enthusiasm and a zest for life that it is hard to withstand. He promised that as soon as the con was up and running we'd have plenty of time to sink a few beers - at the bar stagger that was planned for Saturday night and the following week

when he'd take us to a real pub with draught Guinness - my kind of fan!

While Helena had a shower and got changed I sat down to work on the first instalment of the trip report for an hour. When Helena was ready we called Christina's room and went down to the casino. Christina was desperately hungry so we went to grab some food in the casino's restaurant. Although we all opted for what looked like a light lunch on the specials menu (bearing in mind the warnings we'd received of the vast amounts of food Joyce Katz would be preparing) it turned out to be pretty hefty and far too tasty to leave. But we managed to finish and then wandered over to the Four Queen's cocktail bar.

Casino Hotels are quite an experience; rather than the funereal quiet of the lobbies in UK hotels, you walk from the heat and noise of the street into chill air conditioned chaos. Every available corner seems to contain a slot machine. Vast ranks of them fill the lobby, spilling over into the casino proper; most of them occupied by little old men and women - with their attention totally focused on the spinning, flashing or rolling symbols. But the first thing that hits you, even before the cold air and the flashing lights, is the sheer NOISE. Bells, clangers, sirens, horns and, of course, the constant clatter of coins dropping into slots and spilling out into the trays.

The cocktail bar was at the far end of the casino from the restaurant, so we slowly negotiated our way past all the slot players, coin girls, and card tables. The bar had an enormous video wall on its back wall, with smaller video screens, beside it, all showing different sports programmes. The surface of the bar counters contained more slot machines - one for each bar stool; so I slithered in between two stools and bellowed my orders to the barman, eventually finding a beer that they did stock, and then we settled down at a table as far from the video screens as we could - it wasn't exactly a peaceful place for a drink!

Around 3.15pm I wandered off to find the toilet and then over to reception to see if anyone was about. It was difficult to miss the disheveled hair, bald spot and beard which adorns the head of DUFF winner Perry Middlemiss, who'd just arrived along with Bill Rotsler and Lenny Bailes. I chatted with Perry for a bit, exchanging travel stories - Perry had been on the go for 24 hours and was ready to crash - then I fought my way through the slot machines back to the bar.

Ben had arrived by now and he drove Christina, Helena and myself over to the home of Arnie and Joyce Katz for their pre-con party.

"Cups and Cakes"

Ben started introducing us to the other early arrivals: Woody Bernardi, Ken Forman, Marcy Waldie, Dave Whitman, Richard Brandt, Michelle Lyons, Robert Lichtman - at which point Arnie interrupted to point out that it had only taken two TAFF trips for Robert and I to meet. Arnie introduced himself, accusing Ben of leaving him out, though Ben was quick to defend himself - claiming that he had been building to a Katzian climax.

Woody offered to take us on Joyce's nickel tour as Joyce was on the phone; along the way he explained that it was wise to avoid Arnie and Joyce's enormous, mean-looking ginger cat, Slugger, as it had a disposition even meaner than its looks hinted at - and was particularly fond of attacking unsuspecting ankles. (I noticed that everyone but Joyce gave Slugger a wide berth throughout the party.)

The Katzes live in a great sprawling bungalow, with bedrooms, bathrooms and small offices off to the left-hand side and a large comfortable lounge area, large office with a big Gestetner, kitchen and a dining area complete with a serious, collating-sized table, to the right. We grabbed some drinks from the bathtub as Woody headed out the bathroom's second door and followed him into through the covered patio by the hot tub, out to the pool.

At this point Helena woke up. A keen swimmer and devoted sun worshipper, Helena had been eagerly anticipating a cool dip in this pool all day. She'd put her costume on under her clothes and had insisted I wear my trunks under mine - although being a devout non-swimmer and boozier I had NO intention of taking a plunge.

Just past the pool was a stone alcove with built-in bench and on the table in the middle was an ashtray - this, Woody explained, was the tobacco smokers area.

We went back into the house and sat around the large coffee table for a while sampling the various dips and appetizers that Joyce, Marcy and Belle kept bringing in from the kitchen.

Joyce Katz was almost exactly the way I'd imagined her - short, aproned (she seemed to be cooking and/or carrying food out all evening), friendly, smiling and charming - a lovely hostess. Arnie, however, was totally different to what I'd expected, at least physically. He was far taller than I'd imagined at 6'3", with a shock of unruly black hair - somehow I'd expected a short, balding guy. But as for his personality... that was spot on: we all sat and listened as Arnie told story after story about fans past and present, conventions and fanzines, with the occasional contribution from Robert Lichtman. Fascinating stuff.

As the evening progressed more and more people arrived and I gave up trying to keep track of them all. Every so often Ben and/or Tom would bring in another batch of out-of-towners from the hotel, grab a soda and shoot off again, either to the airport, back to the hotel or on another shopping expedition. As I was suffering enough from the heat just sitting around drinking, my admiration for them both was increasing by leaps and bounds.

Then Joyce announced that dinner was served - dinner?! We'd all been stuffing our faces for hours, but yes there was more to come. Helena and I had been force-fed all the way from Heathrow by airline staff, eaten an enormous meal Thursday night, a hefty breakfast Friday morning and a substantial "light" lunch. But the food wouldn't stop - and it was all too good to ignore; so we kept on nibbling away.

Dinner consisted of an enormous buffet of meats, cheeses, lasagne, meatballs and I can't remember what else. After a while both mind and stomach overloaded - Vegas fans are seriously into food!

Helena joined Christina, Belle Augusta and others for a swim, I ducked indoors again for a beer and to avoid the risk of Helena dragging me into the pool. Eventually Helena surfaced and came out for a cigarette.

Dave Whitman, who had joined the smokers (Don Fitch, Cathi, Helena and myself) at the table earlier, had remained there most of the evening. So when Helena went over to the table and lit up Dave was still there. He was talking to, I think, Richard Brandt and launched into a spiel about how terrible nicotine addiction was, the damage it did to your health and how annoying it was that when he came outside for fresh air he ended up breathing tobacco smoke.

Now, being British, Helena just sat there through this - and refrained from asking the obvious question: if tobacco smoke bothered him so much why had he made a beeline for the only table surrounded by smokers and stayed there all evening? (As they say back home, "There's nowt as strange as folk.")

The party continued; yet more food was served and a small group formed around the hot tub, which was now bubbling away. By now Aileen Forman had arrived and she joined Christina, Belle, Sue Williams, and others in the tub; while a group of smokers - Cathi, Don Fitch, Art Widner, Helena and myself - sat around the tub chatting (of course Dave, realising all the smokers had moved over to the hot tub, came over to join us).

It was here that I discovered that Tom Springer and I weren't the only ones with a pathological hatred of bugs - suddenly Aileen screamed, pointing at a beetle-like "water bug" that was scuttling around the edge of the hot tub. Sue quickly started throwing water at the bug to chase it away and it scuttled under the platform I was sitting on. Mindful of the importance of keeping cool I took several large slugs of my beer, dragged heavily on my cigarette and squashed the urge to leap up screaming myself - though I kept a wary eye on the platform in case the bug reappeared. Her mood destroyed Aileen retired indoors - carefully, watching every step.

Gradually people started drifting to their various homes; while Ben and Tom, having had oh, almost an hour or two break, started running people back to the Four Queens. Finally I helped Tom and Tammy carry out some crock pots they were borrowing for Sunday's soup tasting and Tom drove Helena and I back to the Four Queens.

Saturday we were up bright and early again, I typed up another chunk of the trip report and then we wandered down to the con suite for the promised bagels, doughnuts and, most importantly, coffee. We chatted for a while with rich brown, Cathi, Karl Kreder, Bill Rotsler, Don Fitch and others, hearing all about cans of Japanese helium beer from Karl - the thought of what the average British lager lout could get up to with cans of helium packed beer boggled my mind. Having had several caffeine fixes, I grabbed a beer from the bathtub and headed back to our hotel room to work on the trip report some more before the opening ceremony at noon.

Geri Sullivan was, as usual, on form and, once Tom had introduced her to the audience, she read from an enormous scroll she'd brought with a description and explanation of the nature and importance of Roscoe. She then unrolled another scroll to be signed by all Toner attendees and invited Tom to be the first to sign.

Having signed Geri's scroll and drunk, ate and chatted some more, we headed back to our room. Helena read various Vegas shopping and tourist magazines while I finished the first instalment.

I was working as fast as I could in order to finish it in time to attend Arnie's round table discussion "Can The Numbered Fandom Theory Be Saved?" at 2pm - but I failed to do this. It was gone 3pm by the time I'd completed and spell-checked it and Helena had subbed it all. So I transferred it to disk ready to print off and we wandered back to the con suite.

We arrived there just before Arnie and the crowd returned from the meeting room - Arnie announcing to the room that fanzine fandom was saved, we didn't have to worry any more, we could just party.

We did.

Piles more food, which Cathi and Tammy had been busily preparing for the last few weeks, was wheeled out, including: BBQ hot wings, Teriyaki Wings, Spicy Meatballs, Ham & Asparagus Roll-Ups, Devilled Eggs (which Tammy swore she'd never make again - but which were delicious), plus dips, vegetables, pasta salads, crackers, etc, etc. As everyone dived in Helena tried desperately to convince me to eat more, but I was determined to save SOME room for the beer on the bar stagger which was due shortly. (When I questioned Cathi about all this food this later, she grudgingly admitted that Vegas conventions are really just combined food fests and cookery competitions - if only British hotels would allow this!)

Given that all the decent bars and pubs are way out of the centre of Vegas, Tom apologised for the fact that the bar stagger would have to be restricted to the casino bars on Fremont Street - he needn't have worried, they were great.

First was the Golden Nugget - a typical casino bar with the slot machines built into the counter (we'd voted unanimously to skip the bar in the Four Queens). It had a few interesting beers which we sampled, while Geri won some money on the slot machines and Art Widner won even more. Tom squealed with delight (honest, I heard him) as he spotted that Bill Kunkel was drinking alcohol and rushed over to share a toast with him. Then we moved off, taking our drinks with us to the bar in the back of the Horseshoe Casino.

Neither Helena, nor I, could believe the number of people wandering around Fremont Street with drinks in their hands - a practice which is frowned upon in Britain, some places it's illegal. And the fact that none of the bars objected to your bringing in drinks from other bars - this simply wouldn't be allowed by any pub or bar back home.

The Horseshoe was decorated like a Wild West Saloon and the bar was fantastic. An enormous wooden counter with no slot machines in it! Thick, red, velvety curtains were draped across the walls and it had a decent selection of drinks and a friendly barman. Again we had a couple of drinks there before moving on - 'though I for one would happily have sat the for an hour or two chatting with Tom, as it was one of the few bars where you could hear yourself think, situated as it was beside the card tables with no slot machines near by.

As we wandered out on our way to Sassy Sally's House o' Beer, someone noticed it was almost time for the next Fremont Street Experience Light Show, so we hung around for a minute or two to watch.

Fremont Street has been covered with a tapestry of computer controlled neon tubes or cables. On the hour each night a different light show begins, lasting for about 5 minutes, during which they block off the traffic. The shows have different themes, the one we watched was the "Viva Las Vegas" show - with 20 foot light-pictures of cartoony Frank Sinatras; dancing girls and cabaret music - fairly impressive stuff.

On to Sassy Sally's which has got to be the noisiest, tackiest, casino in Vegas. Above every bank of slot machines there is a T-shirt and shorts clad young girl badgering you to come and play THEIR machines - as you fight your way through to the bar. I'm not sure whether their air-conditioning was playing up or whether it was just the heat from the kitchen next to the bar, but it was uncomfortably hot in there. However, by way of recompense, it had the widest range of beers that we saw in any of the bars.

But the heat was TOO much and Bill Kunkel headed back to the Four Queens, while the rest of us headed off to indulge in the dubious delights of the Shrimp Brother's ritual meal - a shrimp cocktail at the Golden Gate Shrimp Bar.

Tom was most insistent that I, as a card-carrying shrimp brother, HAD to eat a shrimp cocktail and so I did. The driest tasting seafood I have EVER experienced, with a very strange spicy tomato-style sauce. Certainly an experience.... Geri and Christina were even less impressed - not even trying to finish theirs; 'though they raved about the Imitation Crab Cocktails - declaring themselves the Crab Sisters. (The imitation crab was that strange white and pink, processed unidentified shell fish meat that is packed and sold as "ocean" or "crab" sticks in the UK - urgh.)

To wash down the seafood (and remove the taste from our mouths) we finished up at the Las Vegas Club casino bar; where Helena and Tammy were delighted to discover 13 flavours of De Kuyper schnapps plus loads of bizarre flavoured liqueurs.

As they ploughed through a selection of butterscotch, almond, and lord knows what else flavoured shots - washed down with \$1.50 frozen cocktails such as Mudslides and Dreamsicles; I downed a number of glasses of the best beer I'd found yet - Rhino Chase Peach Wheat Beer. This was the Vegas Club's draft beer of the month, \$1.25 a glass, and it was very cold, very tasty and wonderfully refreshing.

As people were beginning to flag (we'd lost Art Widner back at the Golden Nugget) we headed back to the Four Queens. As we left the Vegas Club we were just in time for the next Fremont light show - this time the sf show. An enormous hatch stretches the length of the street, slamming shut; the sound of lift off; stars rushing by; planetfall with bizarre animals bounding past; the hatch slams shut again; lift off. Again quite impressive stuff.

Helena and I popped back to our room to freshen up, but Helena discovered she couldn't and crashed instead. As I wanted to check with Tom what time he intended to set out on his errands Sunday morning, I wandered down to the con suite.

(Tom had offered to run me to his apartment to print the first instalment of the trip report off from his pc and, as he had a few errands to run, take me to a copy shop as well.)

There was no sign of Tom when I got to room 1248, figuring he was resting his knee (which had given way earlier), I joined Perry, Rotsler and Karl. They were talking about violence and how to deal with it. As I have been casualty of many brawls Perry asked for my input and I told them what you shouldn't do. Rotsler described how to intimidate with mannerisms and expressions (which he also demonstrated) and Karl explained how to rip someone's ear off (which he fortunately didn't demonstrate). After a couple of cans of Guinness I turned in for the night.

With the first instalment finished and ready to print I enjoyed a lie in on Sunday morning - wandering down to the con suite for coffee around 10am, to see if Tom had surfaced. No sign of Tom, but Cathi, Tammy, and Shelby and Suzanne Vick, were there and we drank coffee and chatted for a while about the incredible energy of Geri Sullivan. Suzanne explaining this with the fact that Geri was obviously an "energy vampire" - so the next time your feeling exhausted after several hours trying to keep up with Geri as she 'partys on down' you'll know why!

We discovered that neither Tom (whose knee was pretty bad now) nor Ben (who was burnt

out) were likely to surface, but Tammy and Cathi were running the errands and said we were welcome to tag along.

Having stopped off along the way to pick up some mason jars to display Ben's seven different home made wines, we arrived at Tammy and Tom's apartment. I was relieved to discover Tom used a word processing package with which I was familiar so it didn't take long to run off a set of masters and paste-in Dave Hicks' illo.

We packed yet more food Tammy had prepared into the boot of the car and headed over to Kinkos - where Cathi and I discovered our brains were too dead to operate the copier, so we left the masters at the counter and popped back to - you guessed it - pick up more food that Cathi ("the Cake Mistress" as her Rotsler-badge proclaimed) had prepared. We also collected Ben's home made wines, one of which "The Toner Grape" had been produced from Joyce's first grape crop.

On the way back to the Four Queens I shot into Kinkos and collected the copied and collated first instalment, and as soon as the car was unloaded at the hotel I dashed upstairs to staple some copies. I was determined to hand some copies out in the con suite before heading over to the Royal Pavilion meeting room in the North Tower for Joyce's round table discussion at 2pm - "Should Fanzine Fandom Proselytize?". I especially didn't want to miss this item as I'd sent a longish loc to WILD HEIRS on the same subject recently.

It was a great buzz handing out the first instalment - the look of chagrin and venomous hatred from fellow fan fund winner Perry Middlemiss being worth all of the effort in itself!

Tom announced that the discussion would be held in the con suite as it was too much hassle to keep dragging people over to the meeting room in the North Tower. (There were armed security guards at the bases of the elevators checking keys, the keys were different colours depending on which Tower your room was in.) Unfortunately Tom took me to one side and said they hoped to start the Fanzine Auction earlier than the scheduled time of 4pm, as there was so much stuff to sell - so I missed most of Joyce's discussion as I had to start sorting the TAFF fanzines.

Because of the vast amount of fanzines that had been supplied by DUFF, Toner and TAFF for the auction, the TAFF stuff needed to be pruned quite severely and prioritised. Robert Lichman offered to help with this but I lost track of him after Joyce's item. I tracked him down indulging in a sidebar in Joyce and Arnie's room (I know, I should've guessed) and I joined them there. Tom, Arnie and Robert quickly scanned through my list highlighting what should go first, whilst leaving a sizeable amount of material for LAcon III.

The sidebar was probably a bad idea for me - I'm completely out of practice and so it hit me pretty hard. However it did have a major benefit - the auction was the first fan programme item I have taken an "on-stage" part in without a cigarette in my hand for over 13 years and I barely felt the need for a nicotine fix. (Of course, I could barely feel anything, distanced as my head was from my body, but....)

Arnie said a few words and passed it over to me, as I had the most to sell. I started with a "lighter" item to help warm things up - an autographed, hard-cover copy of THE LEAKY ESTABLISHMENT by Dave Langford which fetched a disappointing \$11.00 and a copy of Eric Bentcliffe's 1960 TAFF Trip Report, EpiTAFF, sold for just \$9.00; this was hard work! Prices began to pick up when I moved on to a Pickersgill classic, RITBLAT/GRIMNEWS #1 and #2, fetching \$15.00 and then a run of Hansen's EPSILONS, #7-18, picked up \$20.00, with six assorted fanzines by Owen Whiteoak fetching \$18.00. A few bits and pieces went for under \$10.00 a time and then I took a break and passed over to Arnie and Robert - while I sorted through what we had and reconsidered my strategy.

Round Two: I decided to go with a big gun but only managed \$20.00 for a copy of HYPHEN #22 (sorry Walt), and a fascimile by Vinc Clarke of his copy of HYPHEN #1 fetched \$10.00. I decided to try more recent stuff and got \$8.00 dollars for a single issue of Christina Lake's SORGENKIND (helped by Christina trying to describe what was in it), #3-#9 of Michael Ashley's SALIROMANIA went for a respectable \$13.00 and RASTUS JOHNSON'S CAKEWALK from Pickersgill fetched a very respectable \$35.00; PULP #1-19 fetched \$50.00; but a rare run of three issues of the Cretin's INDIAN SCOUT fetched only \$15.00, although I managed to get a further \$7.00 for just one additional copy of the three. Time for another break - I passed back to Arnie who called on Perry to do his stuff.

All through this, of course, Helena had been fetching fanzines and keeping track of what was selling for what. (Tom was keeping the actual auction tabs, but I wanted an idea from my list of what was fetching what and how much "stock" I had left.)

Things were definitely slowing down when I stood up for my "Third Round". After several fanzines went for figures that Arnie felt were too cheap, I received a bid of \$35.00 for EMPTIES #1-16, but Arnie called out to save it for Lacon III. I was glad to have a rest - being so far out of it I had already referred to the "WILD HEIRS" editors as the "WEIRD HEIRS" - hopefully everyone who noticed thought it was deliberate!

The auctions didn't do too badly with DUFF raising just short of \$50.00, TAFF \$255.00 and Toner around \$220.00.

Perry helped Helena and I carry the fanzines back to our room and then I decided to have a nap before the soup tasting started at 6pm.

Two hours later I woke up - an hour after the soup tasting had finished. We wandered down to the con suite but there wasn't much going on, so Helena and I decided to take a walk down Fremont and have or drink or two.

We went back to the Las Vegas Club, as Helena had several more schnapps to try and relaxed for a while.

When we got back to the con suite an hour or two later the party was going again. Helena sampled a few of the soups that were left and we both tried Ben's home made wines - the Plum being the overall favourite, though several others ran a close second.

The conversation moved on to what was happening regarding the tour of the Hoover Dam on Monday - no one was sure. So Christina, Helena and I wandered down to Joyce and Arnie's room to find Tom, Ken, Ben and other allegedly responsible bodies.

We were all horrified to discover that we needed to be ready to roll by 9am - so after sampling a few more wines to steady our nerves we headed for bed. Tomorrow the Dam Tour!

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[This has been the second of six installments of HAVE BAG, WILL TRAVEL - Martin Tudor's 1996 TAFF Trip Report; written on the 28 & 29 August.

Parts One and Two will be re-appearing in WILD HEIRS #16. Future installments will be available, as they appear, from Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH, England (send four self-addressed, stamped envelopes or eight IRCs). In the USA copies can be received in person from Martin Tudor or by passing him stamped, self-addressed envelopes for future installments. Copying and distribution of this and future installments (verbatim) is encouraged (and appreciated).

[The completed report (with an introduction, lots of splendid illustrations and seventh installment/conclusion) will be available in November 1996 from Martin Tudor, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX, for a mere minimum 3 pounds donation to TAFF (or the equivalent of 5 pounds outside the UK), inclusive of postage and packing. Cheques/money orders payable to "Martin Tudor".

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