

WHY NOT # 5, published for the September 1962 mailing of N'APA by Al Lewis, 1825 Greenfield Ave., Los Angeles 25, Calif.

"I can't," I said to myself, "just let this mailing go by and get thrown out for lactivity. It wouldn't be proper, my being an ossifer and all." Actually, this N'APA Treasurer's job is the nearest thing to an apa sinecure that has been invented. All I've seen of the treasury is one dollar in the last three months.

I'm glad the next OE is over twenty-one. The Treasurer, you see, doesn't do anything. "Hey, Bob," I said, "write the Treasurer's report, would you?"

"Well, OK," said Bob.

"The only money I've seen was a dollar from --a--about June or July--I think I wrote you."

"Ah, yes," said Bob, "that was a-let me think--"

"Mike La Rochelle!"

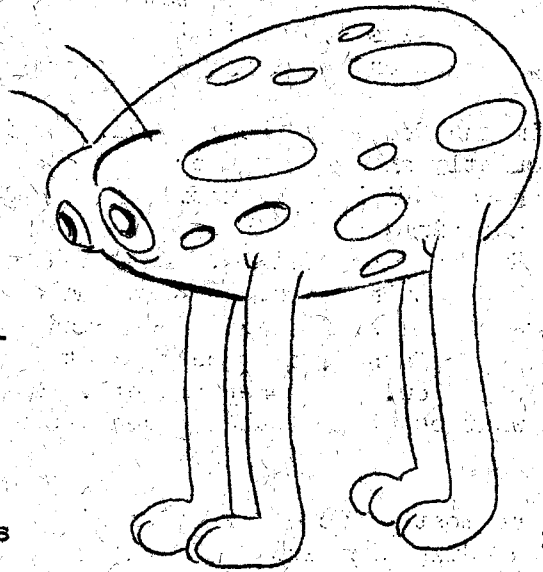
"Of Paradise, California."

At least that was the way Janie had reported him to us in the new member lists a couple of months back, and the name had stuck. There is something terribly epitomical about a name like that--and, of course, only a California real estate promoter would have the inborn modesty to name his city "Paradise." It is like those many subdivisions of "Rolling Woods," "Foxtail Acres," "Royal Woods," and so forth which have mowed down hills of chapparel and covered them with bright, white, ugly pieces of uninspiration.

"Foxtail Acres," by-the-way, illustrates the danger of unexpected connotation. Instead of a typical Virginia landscape with Jackie Kennedy horsing it over split-rail fences in a red coat, the picture that immediately comes to most native Californians is that of a weedy field full of a particularly persistent sort of sticker--the thing that kids used to have to pick from their socks and pants up until the time they became auto-borne and vacant lots lost their attraction as the main playground through which we stalked Indians and German spies, and enemies from imaginary countries.

At any rate, a dollar dues from Mike LaRochelle of Paradise, California (where is Paradise, Mike?) is all the N'APA money I've seen this quarter. Everything goes to Bob and he pockets the money and pays out the postage and keeps the books and all I have to do is be legally responsible for seeing to it that the next OE gets the full treasury--and of course, that means that if Bob absconds to Mexico I pay. So you may be sure that I am keeping a very close watch on him.

In fact, a couple of weeks ago it was necessary to ground all planes in the United States in order to keep him in the country--of course, we used a cover up, some government double-talk about "Sky-Shield" in order to avert suspicion, but I think that now it can be told. Sometimes I get very desperate.



illo
by

Cawthorn

The Chicon III was for me the most enjoyable convention in several years--since the Soladon, as a matter of fact. The hotel was badly laid out and pretty snotty, their food was terrible, the masquerade ball was handled even more badly than was Seattle's last year, and I saw only a handful of the program items--but I had an awfully enjoyable convention.

Mostly, it was meeting people. Seeing Jim and Doreen Webbert again, bugging out of the Washington party and sitting quietly and talking for a couple of hours. Talking fan politics with Bill Donaho and Bill Evans until the daylight routed us. The whole Chicago gang--renewing acquaintances with Earl and Jim O'Meara, beginning to become acquainted with Vic Ryan and Bob Briney. Meeting for the second time Jon Stopa and Ann Dinkelman and Martha Beck. Fred Prophet and Jim Broderick, inseparable duo. Bill Mallardi who writes like a nut and parties like a fan. Listening to Les Gerber deliver fatherly advice to that sexy fifteen-year-old. Larry Kafka who hang the Art Show. B. Joseph Fekete. Chuck Hansen and Ellis Mills. A TRIP TO HELL and what ought or could be done about it.

Martin Moore.

This was, thanks to Martin, the most efficient auction I've seen at a worldcon, and this is a device DC and succeeding cons would do well to emulate. Martin and I worked as a team, and a very good one--Martin the more talented auctioneer, myself the more experienced in fan items and on several occasions the comedian. One of us selling an item while the other picked out his next--playing alternately on some, against each other on others. At one point we were selling faster than George Price and Rosemary Hickey who were handling the table could take in the money. It was not my best auctioneering stint, but it was certainly the easiest and most relaxed. With two of us working the time pressure was off--not that we didn't have more to sell than we could possibly manage, but we had more time to do it in--about 50% more because there was no lost time. There was not the seconds of dead space that intervene while the auctioneer hunts for his next item. I will be interested to find out what we actually grossed in sales--I am sure it was quite high. Martin is one of the easiest people to work with I've ever met, and I hope we can team up on another auction sometime.

Martin is one of the fans for whom I have acquired a very high respect in a very short time. I remember with delight his finessing of the Seacon last year in regard to the Hugo rules--how he carefully sounded out all sorts of objections from all sorts of people in relation to the nominations and voting, approached the floor as the champion of all of us who had any sort of objection to the Hugo Committee's report, and while we all sat there in utter confidence and acquiescence, amended the report in just the fashion he wanted; and not until afterward did we awake to the realization that this had resulted in removing from the rules everything relating to the nominating process, so that Chicon could have a free hand. A lovely piece of political finagling, and one the Chicon committee took excellent advantage of.

Martin is starting to talk up Cleveland in '66, and with proper backing, he'd make a top convention chairman. From here he gets all the support I can give.

There were lots of others I should mention, too--in fact, almost everyone there. And the speeches--Sturgeon and Leiber and Bloch all in an evening. A very, very, fine convention.

And so in the midst of all this fine fannish euphoria I said "yes." Not once but three times. The first time George Scithers had written asking if I would be a judge for the Costume Ball. It all grew out of that article Bjo wrote in SHAGGY a few months back, and the fact that I had jumped into the middle of a hassle that arose out of the Seacon ball judging, and in short, that I had opened my mouth. Well, there was George, and there was this problem, and there I was, and I had some opinions, and...

And so I get to help judge the costumes

ball, and not only that, but the judges have a whole year to help make up their own rules. George Scithers is another of the fans for whom I've acquired great respect on short notice. He passes the buck so nicely.

That was number one. Number two was the Committee to find another source for the Hugos. Ben Jason is quitting production after 1963 and the 1964 con will face the problem of finding another source. Ben Jason, Howard DeVore, Bill Donaho, Jim Webbert, and I are on this one.

But numbers one and two were pretty tame. Number three is the real stinger.

I'm Chairman of the Morcon Committee.

Well, it happened this way. Way back a couple of years ago--in fact, way back before the dust of the Solacon had quite settled down, several of us LA fens began to think about putting on a world convention. Another one, since the Solacon had been so damn much fun. Seattle came first; they had never had a worldcon, and so we felt it was only fair to hold back and give them clear sailing next time the West Coast came around again. But '64 now... So we started talking up "Mordor in '64," which was funny but esoteric, and "LA Once More in '64" which was still euphonic and had the additional advantage of being intelligible even if you hadn't read Tolkein, and telling where on Earth "Mordor" was if you had.

We bid for and secured the 1962 Westercon, formed a Committee which we intended to carry through for the 1964 bid, and then all sorts of things happened: Ralph Holland died and I found myself suddenly responsible for the N3F just when I should have been giving Westercon my full attention; John Trimble's mother became ill, and three distinct personal situations became interlocked for a particularly unpleasant mess that looked for a moment as though it were going to get entirely out of hand. Then we spent the two weekends immediately prior to the Westercon moving Mathom House and about twenty-four hours straight getting the Program Book published in the very nick of time--and by the time the Westercon had rumbled through to its conclusion, and I had fought the hotel for three days and the PA system for two, I was most thoroughly exhausted. "Never again," I said, and handed Bruce Pelz the bag, and the whole Committee staggered off to recuperate.

Now the problem was that we really did want an LA convention--and with a red-hot crew of Barea fans bidding, we realized that nothing less than our best could win a bid for LA; and it soon became apparent that Bruce Pelz, who, when he is really sincerely and eagerly interested, is one of the most competent fans around, was going to need some backing. Ted Johnstone, who was slated for the Chairman spot was in San Diego going to school, and Morcon needed an LA Chairman--and Bruce didn't want the job; he wanted to be Treasurer. Bruce had picked a competent crew, but I had just finished putting on a Westercon--and experience teaches more than any amount of advice can. Quite plainly, so far from not wanting to put on another convention I wanted nothing so much as the chance to do it all over again--right. Not that the Westercon hadn't gone off pretty successfully, but there were so many things that I would have liked to do just a little bit differently. There is one great advantage that West Coast con committees have over all other sections of the country. The Westercon is a place to try out a Committee and ideas and gain experience before the Big Show. Los Angeles has the '62 Westercon behind it; the Bay Area will try out their Committee in '63. Whichever of us wins the 1964 bid is going to know a good deal more about putting on conventions before they begin than most committees in other parts of the country have to start them out.

It took about two months for the reaction to wear away. Los Angeles has its Committee now, and I think it is a good one; it is a much stronger Committee than the Committee that put on the Westercon this year because we have learned a good deal--about each other, and about what jobs need doing. Here is the Committee

for the 1964 World Science Fiction Convention, Los Angeles version:

Chairman: Al Lewis
Vice Chairman: Ted Johnstone
Treasurer: Bruce Pelz
Hotel Relations: John Trimble
Publicity: Ron Elik
Publications: Don Fitch
Art: Don Simpson
Masquerade Ball: Steve Tolliver
Art Show: Bjo Trimble
Fashion Show: Julie Jardine
N3F Hostess: Ann Chamberlain

There are also a number of jobs that we can see coming up that we haven't explicitly filled, yet. Program Director, Editor of the Program Book (as distinct from the Publisher, who is a good one); Advertising Hugos (at the moment, at at least until after the Discon, that job is mine); Auction material; and others which will come to mind as the year progresses. We have eliminated the post of Secretary, that was originally slated to be filled by Fred Patten, and we haven't got a jog yet that will make maximum use of Fred's capacity for conscientious hard work--he is one of the people we are saving for that absolutely essential job that we didn't think of the first time around. Secretary wasn't it--that job subdivides into many distinct sub-jobs. Hotel Relations, judging from past experience, is the dirtiest job of the lot--and hence a single person to handle all those relations, room, banquet and financial. And a job, I might say with relief, which takes one hell of a load off the Chairman, particularly with such a conscientious and capable person in charge.

Los Angeles wants this convention, and we want it badly. Here are a couple of illustrations. Bjo originated the idea of a fashion show four years ago at the Solacon; it was pretty successful, and barring a couple of unforeseen circumstances would have been even more so. Still, there was room for improvement; Adrienne Martine and Eleanor Turner combined to stage one for the 1962 Westercon. "I'd like," said Julie Jardine, "to do the NEXT one!" So Julie is in charge for 1964, and with experience behind her, I'm looking forward to seeing what she comes up with. This is apparently something that challenges every femmefanne, and it looks like it is here to stay in West Coast fan-gatherings. I understand Karen Anderson has taken up the challenge to try her hand at BayconII next year--and if her work comes anywhere close to the sort of things with which she is always winning costume prizes at masquerade balls, it should be a treat to see.

In a similar manner, just after we returned from Chicago Steve Tolliver called up and asked to be given charge of the masquerade ball. Steve had been with us at Solacon and Detention, and last year he assisted with the Seacon. Steve will be working pretty closely with me on ideas, and we may get a chance to try a few of them out at DC.

We will be holding our first full-scale Committee meeting shortly (probably just as soon as the Willises leave town) to discuss convention plans and strategy for winning the bid. We already have some pretty interesting ideas along that line.

But mainly it consists simply in this: we intend to convince you that Los Angeles can put on the best damn Worldcon that anybody ever saw.

A BIT OF POST-CON

As usual, Los Angeles had a large contingent of fans at the Worldcon--twenty-one, this year. As unusual, there was only one car. John Trimble, Ernie Wheatley, Jock Root and I drove east in John's new 1962 Volkswagen, and in Chicago traded Jock, who was returning to New York from his vacation for Bjo, who had been sick and had flown to the Chicon, and who accompanied us on our return trip. As usual, we took along sleeping bags and camped out to save on expense, a device that reduced the cost of transportation simply to cost of gasoline and maintenance, which on a VW is delightfully low. We averaged from 31 to 38 miles per gallon, with the car hitting its maximum efficiency across the high plateau country of northern Arizona and New Mexico.

The first day after the Convention was spent in packing up and an afternoon expedition to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. Ethel Lindsay had particularly wanted to see the Doll House, and this was one of the items I had missed when I had been through the museum last year. In several batches, a large coterie of fans descended on the museum--most of the LA crew, Ethel, Chuck Hansen, and assorted others whose names escape me just now.

When we entered the museum Bjo went to the Information Desk and explained that we had a visitor who had come all the way from Scotland to see the Doll House and she understood there were special lectures given and could they tell her when.

The museum replied that ordinarily these were given every hour but that if we would identify ourselves when we got to the display, the guide would be very happy to give Ethel the full treatment whenever we arrived. We did, and listened with great interest to the exposition of this marvelous fairy-tale castle. At one time I possessed a model railroad and I have always been captivated by miniatures--my favorite ride at Disneyland is the boat ride through the exquisite miniature villages and forests of Storybook Land--and the furnishings, the scheme of the castle, from its stained glass windows to its sweeping glass staircase, the dolphin tables, the miniature books, the fountains with running water, Sleeping Beauty's bedroom, Cinderella's coach, the Oz frieze (with Denslow rather than Neil characters, both Bjo and Ron noted), captured our admiring exclamations. In one respect I suppose I am a Philistine; I could care less what snuffbox was donated by the Dowager Empress of China or the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, but fine craftsmanship excites me.

The most remarkable display in the entire museum, however, and the one which most filled me with awe at the meticulous rigor of technical skill involved may be found in the ascending stairwell behind the bookstall. Here we have two corpses, sectioned in planar slabs about half an inch thick, stained with great artistry. One of the two human beings--the man--is cross-sectioned horizontally; the other--a woman--is cross-sectioned vertically. Only remotely do these resemble the plates in the anatomy books. These are real. This IS lung-tissue, and there are the hair-follicles and that conglomeration is the heart and that the kidney, and the thing running down through the middle is the spine and so on. And this in actual fact, is what they do look like, spongy, fatty, gristly, or what-have you. Mounted between glass slabs, they make the sort of a display over which I would like to be able to pour for hours, text-book in hand.

We broke up after leaving the museum; the larger part of the LA contingent was returning by Greyhound, while Bjo, John, Ernie and I were spending the night at the home of my aunt on the north side, with hopes for taking off early in the morning. After an excellent dinner, Bjo and John and I finished wrapping the artwork which was to be returned to the Project Art Show exhibitors.

The following morning we breakfasted, headed for the post office, where they took all but two of the packages, which were too big for the mail. Next stop was the United Parcel Service where we dispatched one for New York but discovered that they did not serve Santa Cruz, California. Finally, a trip to Railway Express dispatched the last package to George Metzger, and we finally got away from Chicago shortly after noon. From Chicago to Knobnoster Missouri the first night. From Knobnoster to Tucumcari New Mexico the second night. The third night we planned to spend near Gallup, New Mexico, and so we had time for a visit with the Tacketts in Albuquerque.

Albuquerque, by the way, is the only city wherein I have ever seen whole housing tracts full of cracker-box pueblos.

The Tacketts live out on the northern edge of Albuquerque with a yard full of chickens, turkeys, rabbits, dogs, and the other sort of paraphernalia that every fan keeps around to run his mimeograph, grace his table, etc. Roy and Chrystal were looking remarkably cheerful when we arrived, considering that they had just dispatched a Greyhound full of fans westward the night before--or may be because they had just dispatched a Greyhound full of fans westward the night before. Chrystal served us a sumptuous lunch of leftovers--Chrystal's idea of leftovers being a full-size roast, potatoes, two kinds of vegetables, home-grown tomatoes, bread, and home made-jam, and fresh-baked pie for dessert. Even Ernie Wheatley gave out before the food did.

We sat around and talked for several hours, and Roy played us a tape which he had received from Japanese fandom. Most everyone knows how Roy discovered Japanese fandom to the Western World, and it was our privilege to show him the latest results of Trans-Pacific contact: two Japanese fans had submitted material to the fan art show, and walked off with three prizes between them--Ryuto Mizumo taking second in cartooning (losing to Atom--which is hardly a disgrace) and Eiichi Kojima bagged first in Experimental Art and Astronomical Art. The tape that Roy played us was most interesting, particularly so since he had a copy of UCHUJIN, Japan's first English language fanzine with photos from the recent Japanese convention, including several of those whose voices we were hearing on tape. Their English was for the most part remarkably good and easy to understand. Taperesponding with Japanese fans might be extremely interesting--but, as they said, remember to speak slowly and clearly.

We spent most of our time talking things Japanese and things fannish. Roy will be heading up the Overseas Bureau for the N3F, and is obviously the fan most qualified. He is also running for Director this year and would make a very fine one--all you members of N'APA out there may consider this a campaign plug--I'd very much enjoy working with Roy.

Finally Roy took off for work, about two-thirty in the afternoon (naturally we'd picked the day he had to go to work early) and we said goodbye to Chrystal and set off for Gallup, New Mexico, where we tossed out sleeping bags and fought mosquitoes until the dawn broke.

The following morning we drove into Gallup for breakfast, and then west along Highway 66 until Bjo realized we shouldn't be on 66 at all. A quick consultation with the map, two less quick consultations with construction crews, and then up and over a highway project, and then north on improved dirt surface through the Navajo reservation to Window Rock and...



THE NAVAJO FAIR



The Navajos are the largest of the American Indian tribes. Their reservation occupies the northeastern portion of Arizona, the northwestern portion of New Mexico, and part of southern Utah. Their population in the latter part of the last century was estimated at from eight to fifteen thousand; today it is about seventy thousand and growing. The Navajos comprise about one-fourth of the Indian population of the United States.

The September 1962 issue of Arizona Highways magazine had carried several pages in color on the Navajo Fair, and we were most elated to find that this year it would be possible to drop in on our way back from Chicago. It promised to be a most interesting experience, and in fulfillment proved to be all that we had hoped and more beside--and quite unlike what we had expected.

The Navajo Tribal Fair as an institution is sixteen years old this year. It was inaugurated by a forward-looking Supervisor who sought a means whereby the Navajo could present himself and measure his progress in Westernization--for the problem of the Navajo is the same as that of other underdeveloped peoples the world over--to catch up with the Affluent Society.

The Navajo fair resembles any county fair held anywhere in the United States. Here are displays of livestock, of farm produce, of handicrafts. There is carnival entertainment from imported ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds. There are hot-dog stands and there are exhibits. But there is a very significant difference. It is Navajo. It is modern Navajo. It is the Navajo adapting to the modern world.

The duality is borne in to the visitor the moment he gets off Highway 66 and enters the Reservation. There are fields of corn stretching between the pastures--some of these fields are full of ripening stalks and might be anywhere in Iowa or South Dakota. Others are sparse and scattered. "The old method," said Bjo--they plant the fields several times during the year, and take three harvests from a single field. This must be the last crop. I've read about this, but this is the first time I've seen it." Along the side of the road were the Hogans--round-topped earth dwellings. At one spot we saw the rubble of an abandoned Hogan next to a new one obviously in use. "The old one is abandoned when someone dies," said Bjo, which I already knew, and then pointed out. "But they must have had a good location here, by their well."

Bjo is one of the most rewarding people to travel with I know--she immediately spots the anomaly or the significant detail. It is this same quality of acute observation that makes her such an excellent artist. And she is filled with all sorts of lore on almost any subject one cares to name. I have learned many a detail about my own specialty from her curious and retentive mind.

The Indian of the 19th century loved his horse. The Indian of the 20th century loves his pick-up truck. Everywhere one goes on the reservation there is a Hogan or a cluster of Hogans, and beside each is a car--not new, necessarily; and at least half of these are small pick-ups. Here is the old and the new wedded together into a pattern of change. Even the Indian Service favors pick-ups, and we were most charmed to note that the truck pulled in beside us at the gas station painted black-and-white with the stencil "Bureau of Indian Affairs" lettered on the side of the truck was a Chevrolet "Apache."

We arrived at the fairground entrance just before the nine A.M. opening--already lines were forming and they continued throughout the day as many Indians and a handful of

tourists continued to pour into the fairgrounds. The Indians that we saw at the gate and that we watched throughout the day were dressed in the motliest admixture of styles. The men wore what has come to be regarded as the traditional Cowboy dress in greater or lesser mixture. Nearly everyone wore Levis--almost a requirement, and boots--either the high-heeled Cowboy riding boot, or the lower, heavier construction boot that is worn by a very large proportion of those who work outdoors--and by Bruce Pelz. From the waist up no such uniformity existed. Plaid shirts seemed to be favored, but there were also short-sleeved sprtshirts, solid-colored workshirts, and assorted jackets of various styles, with leather predominating--but truck-driver type leather jackets, not the fringed buckskin of traditional frontier garb. Their were a few of those, but the most spectacular outfit was that worn by a grizzled old type who looked like something straight out of the pictures of Buffalo Bill -- less the goatee. He was a real western character, allright, had been around for years--as a professional photographer and artist.

Crew-cuts predominate among the younger generation of Navajo men, but here and there oldsters could still be seen with the old braid carefully looped at the neck and tucked up under a broad-brimmed and high-crowned hat. Jewelry, too, was as much in evidence among the men as the women. Silver-and-turquoise bracelets and necklaces adorned both men and women, and this, seemingly, was also the point wherein the younger generation who most scorned the traditional and had been most thoroughly --"Americanized" is NOT the word to use in this context--modernized were most willing to adopt what the outsider thinks of as "Indian."

Indian jewelry is certainly not a tourist item--and one learns with surprise that the Navajo only adopted silversmithing in the middle of the last century. In fact, most of the outward attributes that one associates with the Navajo are adoptions. In fact, a bit of reading will lead one to the surprising conclusion that there is no such thing as a traditional Navajo way of life. The Navajo moved into his present lands about the time the white man came and he has been borrowing material attributes ever since, and the Navajo culture is quite as flexible in its own way as the white with which it has come in contact. In fact, it is thás very flexibility which explains why the Navajos now make up about ¼ of all Indians in the United States--they, themselves, are a mixed people, and a highly adaptable one. At the moment, as we were soon to be impressed, they are adapting at an astonishing rate.

Dress, as an outward indicator, remains, as one might expect, far more conservative among the women than the men. Long skirts, Jewelry, braided hair, Indian blankets (which are quite distinct from the rugs which are woven for sale to Whites), multicolored sashes and all of the other paraphernalia--all of it, of course, set off by the stunning silver jewelry that is my personal favorite among the Indian crafts.

The Navajo Fair, as we realized upon entering the main exhibit house, is run for the Navajo, not for the tourist--and because of this, it is far more informative than any fair to base its appeal on gaudiness. The displays, for instance, are designed for a dual purpose--the educate the Navajo about the white man's world, and to give him a sense of his own progress in fitting into it. And that progress, in the past ten years, has been impressive.

For instance there was an educational display urging Indians to school, and proudly pointing out the growth of Indian schooling: 8,000 Navajos attending school in 1952; 33,000 attending school in 1962. There were also charts showing the development of new schools, and we could testify to the reality of one of these bright new buildings that we had passed coming in on the dirt-road cutoff from Highway 66 to Window Rock.

Other displays in the exhibit hall were designed to acquaint the Indians with well-digging machines, with the geologic structure underlying the plateau and the explanation for Artesian wells and such, with methods of irrigation, with conservation techniques, and other

means of more efficiently utilizing the land.

The Social Security Bureau had a display to acquaint the Indian with his rights under the law, including a booklet written in entertaining fashion in both English and Navajo.

Another display which I found quite interesting was a voting machine, the first that I, as a Californian, last holdout of the long paper ballot had ever seen. The guide (Indian by the way) was most interesting and detailed in his explanations, and ranged far beyond what he was merely required to say--indeed, we received a capsule view of Indian achievements and problems. For instance in New Mexico (where this voting machine was from) there is no restriction on the Indian's voting rights, but Arizona imposes a literacy test. For his own Tribal Council elections, the Indian votes on a ballot which bears not only the name of the candidate, but his picture--thus avoiding the literacy problem. This, however, is a problem of the past; the new generation will grow up well-schooled.

One of the most stunning achievements is the series of Chapter Houses which are being built by the Navajo tribe--not, mind you, the government, but the tribe itself, with its own money, gained from the sale of lumber and the lease of oil and mining rights. Of the 59 or so Chapter Houses, over half were already completed--within the past five years, and most of the rest were now in the process of construction. These Chapter Houses are very similar to the Community Centers of 20th century American suburbia, but their principal use reflects the Navajo's intense desire to catch up. They are the meeting place of the regional districts, the governing groups of the Navajos. From each of these Districts one representative is chosen in the Tribal elections to represent his district in the Tribal Council. And the Council appears to be genuinely the governing body of the Navajo--and in recent years it has taken over much of what used to be the responsibility of the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Federal Government.

The first event on the morning program was a beauty contest--but here again the duality of Navajo culture was revealed. Competition was being held not for one but for two queens. A Traditional Queen and a Modern Queen, and here we were introduced to one of the most interesting features of the day--the whole program was conducted bilingually, in English and Navajo. The introductory speeches were repeated in both languages, and judging from the gales of laughter, the Navajo-language speeches were by far the most interesting. This was a phenomenon we were to encounter all day; this was most definitely a Navajo fair. Then came the speeches of the queens--and we were in for another surprise. The modern queen of the previous year, Alice Goodluck, delivered a most interesting statement on the position of woman in Navajo society--and made no bones about the fact that Navajo woman was after the same sort of recognized equality that "her Anglo sisters" had achieved in the earlier part of the 20th century. Interestingly, the Modern Queen contestants all competed in English, and the traditional contestants in Navajo. This is the first Beauty contest that I have ever seen that was conducted for a thoroughly well-conceived and utilitarian purpose. It was the dual problem of the Navajo: to accept the best that was good from the modern world without losing that which was most valuable in his heritage from the past.

That evening Bjo struck up a conversation with the mother of one of the contestants--her daughter, too, was a Goodluck, and a relative of last year's queen, and for that reason she did not expect her daughter to win--"too many Goodlucks, people would say." Her daughter was competing for Modern Queen--and then came the moment of insight. Her children had never been taught Navajo, but only English--"they'll never have the language problem I had when I went to school; they'll start right out with all the Anglos." The family spoke only English in the home. But it was sort of sad when they went out to the Reservation, for her parents spoke only Navajo, and the grandchildren had never been able to talk to their grandparents.

I think in that story the problem of interlocking cultures began to hit home, and the Navajos became people.

Other displays stressed the duality of modern Navajo society. Here was a 4-H club display, complete with livestock auction. There were displays from several missionary schools. A projector was running continuously with films stressing automobile safety --though I noticed this same projector had had a much more interested and attentive audience a couple of hours before when it had been running a Woody Woodpecker cartoon. Displays of Art, of weaving, of needlework, of silver, of rugs--including one horrid but obviously well-loved American Eagle bearing the words "God Bless America" in his beak. Displays of food, vegetables, home-made cakes.

The major event of the afternoon, however, was a Rodeo, the first I had seen since I was a child. I have become a bit cynical about Roy Rogers and Hollywood-type Cowboys, but there was nothing artificial about these Indian cowboys. The calves were obviously scared; the broncos obviously rough, and nothing obviously phony--the number of cowboys who failed to ride their horse or rope their steer testified to that. It was also some damned rough riding--the horses were obviously out to unseat their riders at the earliest opportunity. I remember one magnificent black that must have jumped his own height into the air--and then with his rider off, broke into the most graceful canter imaginable. I have never had much use for horses, but if I could ever have fallen in love with a horse it would have been with that magnificent beast.

And here I find my powers of description failing--it was an afternoon of high excitement, and one can describe in general terms a bulldogging, or calf-roping, or bull-riding event, but how to compare them, how to suggest the unique individuality of each event, the sense of physical contest, the power, the valor, the technical skill? It was four hours of sheer adventure, and it has made me a rodeo fan.

For dinner we managed to secure the last two pieces of Indian fried bread the booth had for sale, and I have never, without exception, tasted a better bread. Flaky and tasty, with just the right note of crispness and char. Still hungry, we had to content ourselves with hotdogs and corn-on-the-cob, from one of the booths that made this as much American carnival as Indian Fair.

The evening featured dances, and here for the first time, the tourists from the neighboring white settlements were in evidence in numbers. Indians of various tribes were gathered, from Oklahoma to Zuni, from Apache to Hopi to Mojave and Navaho. These are, we were told by the Ranger at the museum, almost the last stand of really authentic Indian dances. The Hopis perform at this festival alone outside of their own tribe--they have long since ceased attending the "All-Indian Congress" at Gallup, New Mexico, in mid-summer, scorning it as too tourist-centered, and a celebration where the Gallup chamber of Commerce has relegated the Indian to the status of hired performing artist.

Most astonishing was the Apache dance--sinister masked figures who dance for a young girl's coming-of-age--but happily. In this case the dancers separated into three groups. The demons in their masks, the young girls, and, aside, the married women of the tribe who dance a small shuffle in line that is at once a part and apart from the active dance of the younger folk. Among the most skilled dancers present were several groups from the seemingly-unlikely Los Angeles Navaho Club. Here are Indians who have left their reservation, who have gone off to the city and made their way, and who have found it meaningful to come back to the ritual of their people, and perfect it as the Navajo on the reservation who is fighting for his cultural integrity cannot do. They have won their battle, and in victory can come to rescue that part of their heritage which they left behind them. We met them at a Hobby Show in LA recently, the same one that LASFS had a booth in last spring. "Our hobby is being Navajo," one said.

The Navajo Fair is an experience I will treasure for years to come--and one I intend to revisit, the first time I have a chance.

--Al Lewis
September 1962