

Black Bike

Number "X"



Our time in Minneapolis hasn't affected us in the least - has it Valma?

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Ken Fletch '74

BLACK BIKE "X"

Brought to you by Leigh Edmonds who is normally from PO Box 74, Balaclava, Victoria 3183, AUSTRALIA, but for this time only this magnificent SAPSazine is brought to you from inside the USA through the kindness of all those who gave their dollar to DUFF and a lot of other things which could get a bit complicated if I could remember it all but I reckon I might not be able to so let's call an end to this colophon and get down to the real business of keeping that magical chain unbroken and also to save an even more important SAPS membership. By the way I've no real idea of what day or date it is (taking a long holiday does that sort of thing to a person) but at the moment I'm sitting in front of a typer which belongs to Fred Haskell and is situated in Minneapolis, which is a long way from Phoenix but a lot closer than I'm used to.

For a very obvious reason there won't be any mailing comments this time, maybe next time but that depends on a lot of things, like what's going to be going on when we get back to Australia. So instead of the usual I might find myself reduced to writing about various things that have happened in the last month like the beauty of downtown Albuquerque or DISCON II.

A lot of people have asked me what I thought of the WorldCon but it seems that I really don't know what I thought about it. I reckon that to be expected since it's the only Worldcon I've ever been to and certainly the biggest convention I've been to (though that goes for everybody most likely). A lot of people have complained about the population but I didn't notice it very much or at all. While I might not have met all the people I wanted to meet I got to meet so many people that I seem to have forgotten a lot of them.

For people who attend the worldcon every year I'm told that the standard operating procedures are to try and find a dozen or so really close people and to count the rest as a bonus. I imagine that a lot of the trouble I had in finding people I wanted to meet wouldn't exist for US fans because they usually have the advantage of having met the people they want to meet before and so they know them when they see them.

I reckon it was pretty lucky that AUSSIECON had set up a table where we were selling memberships because I was there an awful lot of the time and just about everybody would have wandered down through that area at one time or another and since they were doing that and fans seem to be curious by nature a lot of them came over to see what was going on and a lot of them even came over to see me, which is kinda nice.

Of the programme there is very little that I can say because I attended very little of it. On the first day Susan Wood talked me into going and seeing Isaac Asimov and Harlan Ellison toss insults up and down the room but I was quite unimpressed by it so I didn't stay to see it all. When Harlan said the Audience were assholes for being so interested in listening to himself and Isaac I thought he was more or less right and since I was getting very rapidly bored (and just a bit disgusted) I left well before the event finished.

On the same evening we went and saw "2001 : A Space Opera" which was okay I suppose but I didn't enjoy it too much as there were lots of references which I assumed were not internationally directed and anyhow, apart from the singing, I thought that the "Joe Phaust" that we did a while ago was a whole lot funnier. But then I'm obviously biased so don't pay me any attention.

The fiasco of "A Boy and His Dog" was just about the only event I didn't get bored with totally and maybe it was sympathy for Harlan that brought that about. What I saw of the

film looked as if it would be good but the DUFF TAFF Party that Dick Eney organised for the next day meant that I couldn't get along for the showing of the whole thing but since the party went well I didn't mind too much.

Getting

Back to the next day of the Con I seem to remember that just about the only thing we got to see was the Masquerade and the thing that amazed me about that was the amount of not particularly good costumes that got to be paraded. I had been under the mistaken impression that a pre-judging meant that all the costumes would have been looked over and only the best shown. Well I suppose that was a sort of dumb idea to get since it would be a very easy way of insulting a lot of people but on the other hand a lot more people got bored. Now if somebody had told me that I didn't have to sit through the final masquerade but only through the final run through I would have been saved a lot of idleness. As it was Valma and I got bored and went off and fed our faces just over the corridor and came out just in time to see some of the costumed people appearing out of the door of the hall (and to get to move on by one of the committee members as we were blocking the road, and we must have been standing in the one place for all of five seconds (ten at the most). I was a bit annoyed at the fellow but then he was trying to keep a convention running so I really don't blame him too much, I'll probably be worse next year.

The main event of that evening was, as I said before, the TAFF/DUFF Party, and thanks very much Dick for thinking it up.

On the next day we'd promised Susan Wood that we'd go and see the panel she was going to be on about academic stf (or something like that). The adventure wasn't that informative or educational but that was probably because the event was called to a close almost before it had a chance to get going, and I'd imagine that a lot of people in the audience who were particularly interested in the topic would have been a bit disappointed.

Never mind, the next event was the banquet, and I can't say that I wasn't warned, though most of the warnings had concerned the food which was almost edible. It was the whole business of the speeches and the awards which was off putting, the honourable toastmaster went on and on and then there were all those awards with nobody to pick them up. I was a bit amazed that things didn't run a bit more smoothly. To say the least, it was a relief to get out of the room after the end of it all.

The next thing that happened was that there was this AUSSIECON party, dee and Valma and I had brought this bottle of Jim Beam all the way from Australia for Bob Tucker to demonstrate Smoooooooooth with and we got to doing it a lot and some time after that it became 8 am and I had to be up at 10 so I grabbed an hour and a half sleep and was up as fresh as a wilted cabbage to attend a TUCKER FUND auction at which I spent my \$10 for a copy of Ethel Lindsay's TAFF report and dozed fitfully. After they wound that up I get the distinct impression that I wandered over to where the business session was being held but quite honestly I wasn't up to that sort of excitement so after a while I tottered off to the AUSSIECON table to sell lots more memberships, which had a certain excitement value of its own.

And

I think that that was about all the official programme that I got to see, and it was probably just about all the convention that I got to see apart from all those parties that seemed to be happening all over just about all the time. Some were small and nice and some were big and nice and they all filled in the time in an enjoyable nature and that's about the most that one can expect I expect.

And since there are a lot more pages yet to be filled up I suppose I might as well go back and mention the highlights of down town Albuquerque. Well all we saw of that area was from inside Bob Vardeman's car but after we'd been in the city for four or five days I thought that it was about about time that we did the city the honour. The down town wasn't too much to speak of but the main reason for getting to look at it was because I had had the impression that the area around the Holiday Inn was the beautiful downtown area and it was a bit sparse on things like shops but then I wasn't familiar with the ways that you US citizens conduct business and maybe that's what your central business districts were like. So on the day before we left to get to DISCON Bob put us in his car and drove us over quite a bit of the top half of New Mexico and we saw Los Alamos and some ruined Indian cave dwellings and the grandure of Santa Fe and then back to Albuquerque where we ate Italian food in a STRANGE place (by Australian standards) and then got driven downtown and uptown and all about and the city impressed me very much and though I've now discovered that I like Minneapolis and Providence (RI) I thought that Albuquerque was a pretty marvelous place.

It occurs to me that I may as well up-date the notes for my DUFF report and get you all interested in my exciting adventures at the same time so I'll take up with what happened in Minneapolis so far.

To begin with we were met at the airport by Fred Haskell, this was a relief as we'd heard about the singing receptions that Minneapolis is renowned for. Thank Ghod I said and then we walk past this little construction on the concourse and there were six or seven Minneapolis fans there and one had a funny little three stringed instrument and they sang a strange version of "Waltzing Matilda". We were a bit flattered and a bit bemused by strange antics. Then everybody but Fred and another went off and we lept into Freds little (by US standards) car and got driven to where Fred lives. It's supposed to be in a run down part of the city but I don't quite believe it.

We expressed an interest in food and having a look at the city so Fred served as native guide and took us for a walk to downtown Minneapolis where we investigated the form of food known as Subs and walked about the skyway system which must be a marvelous invention in winter when, so everybody keeps telling us, it snows a lot. We also investigated a bank where we got some travellers cheques turned into spendable money, a bit of the library and a bit of the museum and also pottered around the streets and shops a bit more. There were a few visitors that night but we didn't last too long.

On Saturday we went with Fred and Ruth Odren to a Minn Stf meeting which wasn't too exciting since most of the people there seemed to be involved in playing Dungeon which is okay if you're really interested in that sort of thing and you get there at the beginning of the game. So we hung about for a while until it was highly obvious that there was no point in staying any longer. So we drove back to this area and picked up Jerry Stearns who had earlier said that he'd come with us if we were going to be going to a burger King. So we got there and instead ended up going over the road to a place called Embers where they sell nice Embergers and very nice strawberry Pie. Valma is one of those people who has eyes bigger than stomach ((that should read "her stomach" but I've already corflued that bit once so I won't mess about with it again.)) so that she was bloated by the time she got through the mass of delicasy which we are a bit unused to in our native land.

In the end we ended up back at Fred's apartment again and there was a sort of party which kept us entertained untill all hours of the morning

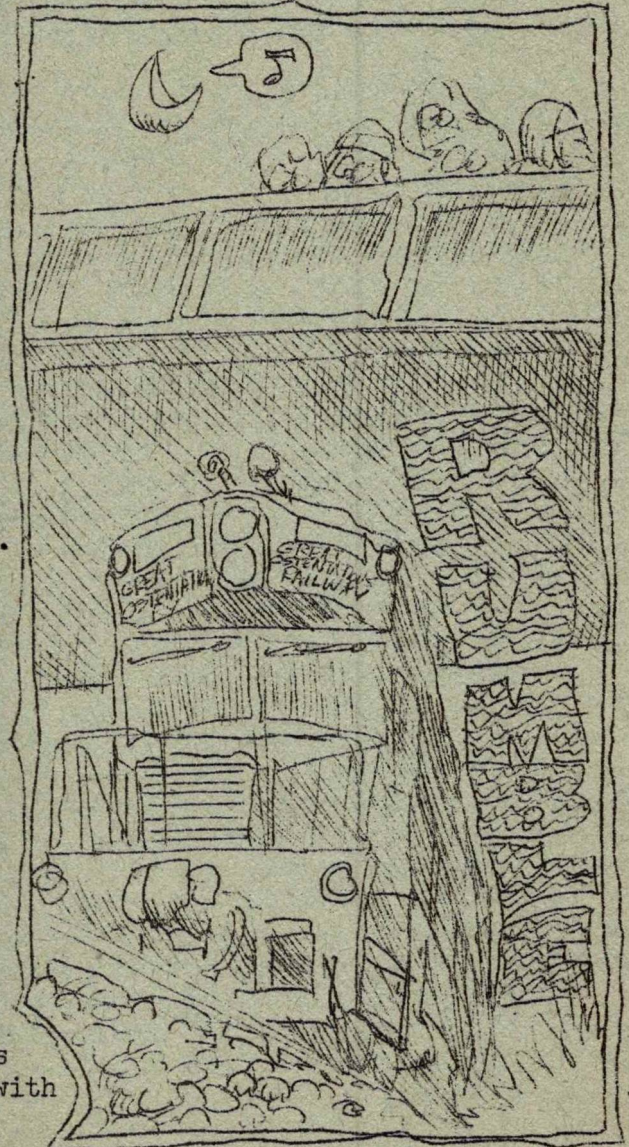
and also ended up arranging a Jim Young all-walking, all-talking two hour tour of the immediate area of Minneapolis.

The next day began very instructively with Pro football on the tv with Fred giving a running commentary on the points which would be obvious to one who had known the sport for a long time but would not be so obvious to people looking for the first time. Sometime during the middle of the game Ken Fletcher, Don Blyly and Jim Young arrived and so after the game had finished and we had collected ourselves we set off. For some reason or another we ended up at a Dairy Queen establishment where Valma and I (not knowing better) ordered the largest serves of whatever we wanted and got well overfed.

The next place we called on was a pretty little park with ducks swimming in it and from there we walked up and down hills looking at houses and scenery (not to mention calling into the Guthrie Centre). There was after that another lake which had something to do with Olws but all I saw were ducks, sand gnats and frisby players. Then we came across a slightly odd house which was said to be the first house that Frank Lloyd Wright ever designed and after we walked a bit further it was time to eat so we stopped at a place called the Rainbow Restaurant which was quite strange and about as middle class as they come though the roses in their solitary vases were quite genuine. We emerged and the sun had gone down and we began walking in the general direction of Fred's place. We were walking over a bridge which turned out to be a railway bridge and quite by accident a train appeared so we stopped to look. There were three locomotives which I thought was a bit excessive until I counted up to 126 wagons which is what they had attached on behind. I reckon it was one way to learn about the vastness of US commerce.

We kept on walking and made a side visit in at the abode of Tom Foster where we chatted a bit and looked at an absolutely ridiculous tv show called "Police Surgeon". Finally we woke Jim Young and headed home but no sooner had we walked in the door than there was a call from Gordon R. Dickson (some may call him Gordy) but us Australians are not too familiar with writers in the flesh so it was Gordon R. Dickson up until some time during the evening when the effects of drinking Scotch straight took hold and by 5 in the morning I was just a little bit out of my usual state of mind. Gordy, along with the few other writers I've met so far have all impressed me on just about all levels and their drinking capacity is truly something to be wary of. I should have known better than to keep more or less up with Gordy after a night at Bubonicon with Busby.

The next morning I had the worst



hang over in about four years, worse than the one I remember having with John Foyster and John Bangsund and a few other people back at the convention that John (Foyster) and I ran in 1971. The experience was enough to put me off drinking booze for a long time (I expect).

Whatever else happened on Monday seems to be rather unimportant alongside what I mentioned in the previous paragraph. However that evening Valma and I were treated to a cultural experience which, while it is said to exist in Australia is something I've never seen before and may never see again. I refer, of course, to the exhibition of women taking their clothes off and dancing around with nothing on in a professional capacity. This was more interesting from the point of view of seeing what the sort of place where these things happen in is like rather than seeing lots of rather well formed female bodies prancing around - PLAYBOY is for that sort of thing after all even if the bodies do stay in the same place.

So we arrived at this place at about 7 in the evening and stayed until about half an hour before it was ready to close down for the night at one in the morning. The most instructive and enjoyable part of the evening was getting to meet a couple of the women who were nice people and obviously didn't mind displaying themselves. One thing, from the stories one of them told about the conditions working in such a place it must be an exciting life.

We drove one of the women home and then went and fed ourselves and then went back to Freds place and went to sleep, which is the sort of thing that one does after a long evenings activity and when one still feels a little strange from the night before.

Tuesday we went shopping in the downtown area of Minneapolis, which is to say that I spent about \$25 on books and stuff about music at one of their music shops. Such an array of literature on music I've never seen before, but I'm led to believe that I will see the like of it again once we get to San Francisco. Of course buying up big in books and records and bits and pieces of stuff is that ones case begins to get rather heavy (but I mention this mainly because I just attempted to lift a case which I had put a lot of books in, and while it wasn't impossible it wasn't much fun either.

Moving right along from the great book buying adventure we come to one of the endless numbers of parties that have seemed to have happened in front of us while we've been touring about. Some are more enjoyable than others and this was about the most enjoyable that's happened since the party that Bruce Gillespie and Valma and I held back at the beginning of the year but there were differences since there weren't millions of people hanging about and I didn't know them all and, even better, we didn't have to clean up afterwards. Nate & Caryl Bucklin hosted the affair and for us the party began with a quick walk around tour of their house which is almost vast by Australian standards and not so vast by our standards since our place is a little larger than normal. Still, having upstairs rooms and a basement is a little unusual in Australia, unless a person happens to be a little more financially endowed than most.

The most enjoyable part of the evening was when Nate got out one of his band amps and plugged SynthiA into it and then Nate got plugged into SynthiA and we played for a time (I don't know how long) until Nate was feeling a bit exhausted so he packed up his guitar. I couldn't say that what we did was marvelous or even good but it was very instructive. Then some people juggled an electric piano into place and Jim Young (who is a decent pianist) played upon that until I seemed to collapse of exhaustion. Well, not quite but I was beginning to get rather vague about things so there wasn't too much point in

continuing.

And here, dear SAPS, is where I throw myself on the mercy of the OE's, it isn't too long now until we have to get packed up and get to the airport to get on a plane which will take us all the way to Seattle where we'll be staying with FM and Elanore Busby for a couple of days. I haven't got a hope of filling in the rest of this page to make up the six pages so I hope that you all will be a bit understanding of a poor DUFFER who has had to go to so much trouble to keep his SAPS membership up.

Anyhow I promise to do better next time. As far as I can figure out the contribution I did for the last mailing got lost by the Post Office but I've got the stencils of it still so I may get a chance to run them off again but that won't be in in time for this mailing so you'll have to wait until next time.

See you all then.

KAPUT