

From Sunday To Saturday

Tuesday, 15 Feb. 1966: How do people reconcile themselves to the limitations of time? Most of them apparently do it; they go through life doing life things, calmly going through a daily routine and having time left on their hands, frequently. Rarely do they express a wish that there were more time...time to do this, that, or the other thing. And yet, with me, it has become almost an obsession to want more time; I am greedy to do so many things, and am unable to admit to myself that there is not time to do even a small fraction of them. This willful blindness, and the lamentations which grow from these attempts to do more than can be done, must cease ... well...at least diminish greatly.

There are, for example, several Apa L distributions at hand, and with them are pages of notes (and more yet are in my mind) which would fill eight or ten stencils, at the least; there is little likelihood that more than a small part of these will ever get stencilled and published, but I shall do what I can, starting with a colophon (which is to be skipped by those who already know most of what will be in it).

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Catching Up, a little:

Bjo Trimble: Do you happen to remember the precise context of the statement I'm supposed to have made to the effect that "It doesn't matter if what you say is true or not, as long as it's Clever and Witty" The thing is, this is so thoroughly alien to my basic philosophy (for the past decade or so, at least) that I can hardly believe that I said it, or that I said it seriously, even in the midst of some temporary flirtation with a New Outlook. I am, however (as you may know) more than slightly addicted to the use of irony -- a mode of expression which unfortunately sometimes doesn't come off properly in print (or even in conversation), much less at second hand repetition. There are people who believe that Wit is All (and indeed it does sometimes seem that humor justifies a statement which is not precisely accurate); when well done, a witty remark may shed more light on a situation than pages of serious and/or impassioned commentary...but this is the case in which humor is used to penetrate to, and illuminate, the soul of a matter, and probably not what you had in mind, because it is thus effective only when it deals with something which is recognizably True.

Presumably there was supposed to be some Point in the above paragraph, but I cannot now see it. The temptation to elaborate on the idea of using irony is powerful, but it would be too long an elaboration for the space here -- and might lead people to search my words too carefully for those wry inversions of meaning -- it's the sort of thing which can be found almost anywhere (even though it wasn't intended) if one looks hard enough.

John Trimble: I hope that no one I like publishes an anthology such as the one you describe; it is extremely easy to take a number of sentences out of many pages of material, thoroughly out-of-context, and make the writer look utterly silly or fuggheaded or whatever. It is so easy, in fact, that the person who does it makes an ass of himself. Still, there are times when even I am tempted to take statements with which I strongly disagree (John Boardman makes a lot of them, and Ted White a few) and print each in the center of an otherwise blank page. It's the Ultimate Put-Down, implying that the words condemn themselves.

Russ Brooker: What makes you think that I don't like Pomona Fandom, or think that there's something "wrong" with it? If I didn't enjoy it (or its products in Apa L), and it posed no particular threat to me or to Civilization As I Know It, I'd simply ignore it and devote the time & cet to more rewarding things. After all, probably the single most effective way of causing new fans to Go Away is to ignore them entirely. (This is not, of course, to be taken as implying that anyone who ignores a new fan, especially in print, is attempting to discourage him, necessarily; the Mailing Comment scene is pretty hectic, and we tend to concentrate mostly on people we already know and on a few topics of especial interest.)

My comments to the Pomona Group have not been, and will not be, fully favorable or adulatory; if you fall very far short of what I believe to be your capabilities, I may let you know it in no uncertain terms. On the other hand, you don't have to pay any more attention to my opinions than you want to, because, after all, they are only opinions.

Perhaps (or even "Certainly") it was unwise to suggest that you un-clique and mingle more with the other LASFen; the course you and Jim Schumacher both point out -- that of taking things gradually and not being too obtrusive at first -- is probably the best method of getting into things. It does take time and persistence, however, and LASFS members are, perhaps, more accustomed to a more flamboyant sort of entry. (It's not that we like this in neofans, just that we're used to it by now.) Humm...on the whole (this is a speculation tossed in for evaluation by the old-timers) it seems that the quiet-entry type have more staying power -- they remain around longer than the more spectacular ones (who, perhaps, are discouraged by failure to become Big Wheels immediately, or at all.)

Yes, *Sigh*, I have gotten the feeling that after LASFS, when I had to go back to work, the rest of the world was hopelessly, dully mundane. That was long, long ago, back when Len Bailes was just learning to read (well, no, only 6 years, actually) when I was a neofanmurmuring "Oh Brave New World that hath such people in't." In time, of course, Disillusionment came -- I discovered that these idols had feet ofsince this is a Family Apa ...clay, and that these Bright Ideals I was encountering were by no means always practiced. This Disillusionment was accompanied by some sadness, some bitterness, but mostly with a growing understanding of the nature of people. Fortunately, I stayed around (unlike so many fans who discover that their first picture was not an entirely accurate one) long enough to find other values in fandom -- values so suited to my nature that it's probable that I'll be on the scene for many years yet. And still, even to an Old Fan, and Tired, there are many Thursday evenings (or Friday mornings) when it is a wrench to return to the prosaic world of Mundane.

You give a clear impression of the way you feel about LASFS, but you don't say why; you don't give us your Image of fandom. It would be interesting to know what the Pomona Group thinks fandom is like; then the rest of us could point out your misconceptions, or maybe try to live up to them.

Fred Whitlege: Sometimes I'm tempted to join the ranks of the non-attendees of the LASFS -- people such as yourself, Dave Hulan, Al Lewis, and Ron Ellik, but this step into nearly-complete fan-social gafia is a Big One. Still, it is tempting, especially after two or three Thursdays when the after-meets at Kal's & the Lab are as dull as the meetings themselves. But then comes an evening when Bjo scintillates at Kals, or someone I know-well-but-have-never-met visits, or a Lab Session turns up with Bailes, Gilbert, Baker, Klassen, Gold, and maybe a few others in Good Form, and I remember the old Al Lewis dictum: "Only one LASFS meeting is 16 is really good -- but that makes the other 15 worth it."

So I decide that maybe the 15 to 1 odds are worth it, and go. Only Maybe Not -- I'll probably be on an alternate-week basis starting late this month, if I can find someone to agent my Apa L zine. (With all but one of the first 70 Distributions, the thought of dropping is not to be contemplated.)

Many fans will probably take Strong Issue with your suggestions concerning the regulation by adults of children's reading -- but then, fans tend to favour a sort of idealized concept of Absolute Freedom and non-interference, and to extend the principle of self-determination even unto very small children. As far as I can see, the whole issue is very cloudy and Subjective; I'm strongly in favour of the revolt against overly-strict parental/pedagogical domination of children's literary and ideological intake, but to abandon the child to the tastes of the child does not seem to be the way to encourage the production of an adult. A parent may, of course, forbid his/her child to read certain things (though considering the natural contrariness of human nature being what it is, the effect may be the opposite of that intended), but I think "Guidance" is the more useful keyword.

Having known too many people who never passed beyond comic books or mystery stories or Romances or Westerns or Space Opera, I have little faith in the theory (currently advanced by Ted White, I believe) that people naturally tend to progress in their reading towards Better Literature. They don't often, I think, advance that way without guidance from parents, teachers, & others more mature than themselves, or stimulation from their more-advanced peers. The child who reads at all for pleasure is something of a rarity, and more than one parent has said "I don't really approve of that trash (mysteries, science-fiction, &cet.) my kid is reading, but I'm happy that he's at least reading something." And, with a little encouragement and direction (&, perhaps, the proper maladjustment) such a child may go on to read better things. The non-reader, the Average American who reads less than one book in three years, is charted on a different course.

Ted White: "Nostalgia" is one way of describing the Camp and In aspect of Batman (Do you remember "Davey, Davey Crockett, king of the wild frontier"?) but one may speculate on the ubiquitous use of "Camp" in connection with this particular phenomenon; the homosexual personality usually seems to be pretty much hung up on late childhood and early adolescence -- a period of extreme egocentrism, irresponsibility, emotionalism, and hesitation to accept the obligations implicit in the role of the adult (which may go far to explain the once-homosexual type clothes, haircuts, &cet. of many of today's highschool and college students).

In times of world stress, like the present day, people don't want to grow up; they are (most reasonably, perhaps) afraid to face the Reality of the Present, and find refuge in comic books, in super-heroes, in folk-heroes such as Bob Dylan, and in similar fantasy worlds drenched with optimism, security, or superiority. It would be oversimplification to say that The Reason for the Batman Fad is that sort of Retreat, but it does seem to be a significant factor. Although, come to think of it, I haven't heard "Batman mentioned during the past week -- maybe this is the lull before the storm, maybe Peyton Place fulfills the function better, or maybe it has become so In that it is Out (but not far enough Out to be Campy to the second power). Hey, have I yet used the lino:

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In some circles, comic books are Camp; in mine, collecting comic books is Camp.
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June Koningsberg: A neat analogy, that of the person wearing tight new shoes going Straight Up 20 feet when he gets his toes stepped on in a way that wouldn't cause other people to react much at all, but it doesn't seem quite right, somehow....probably it's just that I think people ought to have more control than that over their actions/reactions, or else keep their feet out of the way.

Hey, that feeling of Having Missed an Installment is precisely what I get reading "Way of Life"-- do you think Bruce publishes alternate chapters in some other, secret, weekly apa? Or maybe he and Dian talk out episodes and he neglects to write down all of the events. His mention of Peyton Place was rather *à propos*, considering that (so I gather) he views fandom/the LASFS rather as a sort of TV serial; worth watching, at least on Thursday nights.

Fred Patten: While I like the idea of utilizing the Westercon as a sort of Substitute when the WorldCon is in England (or elsewhere outside the U.S.), mostly because it encourages lots of N.Y. &cet people to come out here where I can talk with them, there's something to be said for the idea of rotating this sub-con too -- play up the MidWesterCon the next time the WorldCon's in England, the EasterCon the time after that, &cet.

Not only is relating a fact easier than composing a philosophical discussion, it's also much more concrete. When we tell about our operation, or what happened at a fan party, or what the current issue of GALAXY is like, we're dealing with facts, in a sense, and we more-or-less know what we're talking about. Many of us feel somewhat lost when it comes to Philosophical Questions, and some have the obscure feeling that if greater minds than ours have been examining them for these several thousands of years without coming up with obviously-correct answers, then we're not likely to achieve very much, really. The process is fun though, if one doesn't take it all too seriously.

Andy Porter: P.S. Magazine promises to be well worth the 60¢ -- certainly the first issue is, if only for Jean Shepherd's article on the New (or feminine) Man. Writing such as this you don't hardly find any more:

"And of course there is that matter of Responsibility. This is one of those words that is slowly beginning to creep out of the language as others have in the past, like "Honesty", "Patriotism", "Courage", and "Immoral". ... "Responsibility" is a word that now is used almost exclusively to describe something that Society should have toward the individual and is hardly ever mentioned, if at all, in the reverse. ...

A male who has adopted a female role cannot be expected to have the responsibilities of Fatherhood, being Feminine, and conversely a female who has clothed herself in the outward guise of masculinity should not be asked to wash the dishes.

And ultimately, of course, Sex will have to go too, since it obviously entails many dangers, such as who is going to do what to whom. And even more to the point why? So the development of a race of Neuters sliding back and forth on the identity scale at will was inevitable....

And he has one extra-good lino; "James Bond, the New Helen Trent..."

Dwain Kaiser doesn't seem to me to be much different in person than in print (except maybe that he doesn't so much talk to fill up time as he writes to fill up pages) but he's more ...amiable. If he has fuggheaded ideas (i.e., those with which I disagree) at least he doesn't insist upon them. He's not so amiable that he'll let one talk him out of his ideas, usually; he'll stubbornly insist on his right to hold them for himself, but he doesn't persist in trying to convert other people to his way of thinking, which means that it's difficult to actually dislike him. (One tries, of course, but....)

Later