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SAPS #96, July 15, 1971

The unFabulous None-too-Gala *15th Annish*!

We are just back from the Westercon today (July 7) and I'd better scramble if this is to appear as intended.

I guess it was a good Con; I enjoyed it, anyway. All I saw of the Program was about a half-hour of the panel during which Norman Spinrad delicately offered to bust Ted Johnstone's rear elevation all over the stage in small pieces, plus quite a lot of the Costume Ball. A high spot of the latter was provided by local (meaning Seattle) fans Bill and Bubbles Broxon. Bub's costume consisted of a fig-leaf fore, another aft, an 8-foot rainbow boa named Sigmund tastefully draped around her shoulders, and an apple. Bill accompanied her with several versions of an apple salesman's spiel, all quite suggestive and funny as hell. They won the First for Humor.

Other SAPS present included JACK CHALKER (did we ever get a chance to say hello, JACK? Oops, by golly, we did, at the Costume Ball, in fact), DAVE HULAN, LARRY NIELSON (forgive me, LARRY; I had a feeling I was supposed to know you from SOMEwhere but at the time couldn't put it together), FRED PATTEN and MILT STEVENS. I think that's all.

We drove down a little early to be with the bunch NonConning Thu evening and Friday at Donaho's. This time the word didn't get out too much and the crowd was well within comfortable bounds (it's the local fringies there who overcrowd sometimes).

Mightily missed, to go back to the last paragraph but one, were DON FITCH and ED & ANNE COX. Wha hoppon to y'all???

The Volvo took us down and back again in fine shape, as usual. The only unusual thing was that I discovered exactly how far it will go on a full tank of gas. Luckily this was only about 150 yards short of the gas station I was aiming for when I came to notice that we had a problem there. It was also only about 6 miles short of our destination for the day.

At the first of the trip I thought the car's handling had deteriorated somewhat but it turned out that I was merely out of practice and needed to get warmed up again. At any rate it did beautifully this morning when I changed lanes abruptly in a tight turn downhill at about 75 to thread the needle between two mousetrapping cars who momentarily got out of step and left me the opening. (I love that Volvo...)

Actually I don't seem to have a great deal to say about the Westercon. There were some very fine parties with great fannish chatter and all. It wasn't much of a Bar Con: we were in the bar a few times with small groups of friends but never for any great period of time all at once. Nothing like '58 or '62 at the Alexandria in LA, for instance-- or '61 or '64 at the Leamington in Oakland, for that matter. Now those hotels (which are a lot alike) tend to produce Bar Cons; the SF Hilton does not. Even apart from the fact that many attendees these days can't get the type of kicks they want, in a bar. (And there was lots of that around, too, of course.) The only other thing I can think of just now is that neither Elinor nor I ever DID get into the pool at the Hilton; it was altogether too damn cold on the SanFran side of the bay, until the final afternoon of the Con, and by that time we had to get our stuff packed and out of there. Oh well; Donaho's pool/whirlpool/sauna is more fun.

So much for that. Now, since I wouldn't be able to get MCs onstencil in time even if I had the mailing checkmarked which dammit I don't, I might's well blather on a bit about what's been happening around here since our last thrilling episode.

One thing is that I'm into *writing* pretty heavy these days. Since the first of April I've done over 75,000 words of science fiction, every single one of which is as of this date, proudly unsold. Actually only 3 pieces (about 45,000, total) have achieved final manuscript-copy form and been entrusted to the mercies of the Post Office and of editors. Two bounced back and I'm knocking wood on the third. Anyway, one of those and a 30K sequel and an 8K start on a further sequel look like insisting upon becoming a book and perhaps that's the only way the lot can be sold, if at all. (Yep, after sweating out how to write At Length after never getting past 6,000 words in the old days, now it's stuff UNDER 6K which is more salable. ROWG!)

Westercon addendum: Two reasons fans didn't hit the bar too much: (1)It was quite overpriced; (2)Randall Garrett held forth in there a lot. Or maybe it only sounded like a lot, just because it was.

Probably the last I'd mentioned in here about writing was having finished the 75-K(iloword) book last fall; first draft took 5 weeks; revisions took as many months, including about 3 months of Total Freeze on the project. So I didn't get a helluva lot done through the winter - except a few *starts* on things - being hung up on the book, which I do not expect to sell in this lustrum. But it was worth writing anyway, because I enjoyed doing it and because by doing it I learned how to get some length between a title and a punchline, and also much about revising and Rewriting Without Pain. It didn't teach me much of anything about Plotting because essentially it is a picaresque non-pornographic sex odyssey if that makes sense which I doubt. And I never could spell odyssey or oddyssey or however it goes, in case you wondered...

During April and May I was attending a *Creative Writing* class sponsored by the YWCA. Yes, the YWCA. Though I am neither especially young, nor a woman, nor by any strict definition a Christian, I am definitely Associated. Well, the class was sort of fun. With just me and 15 chicks, can you doubt it? It only ran one afternoon a week and was mostly slanted toward selling 400-word articles to the magazine section of the Sunday paper, but it was fun anyway. For one thing, the ladies dug my stuff... and egoboo is where you find it, baby!

Recently I'm into a heavier scene: a Writers' Workshop in S-F out at the U of Wash, modeled roughly on Clarion, I guess. Actually the Westercon trip knocked out (for me) 3 days of George Clayton Johnson's week and 3 of Joanna Russ' also (she has tomorrow and the next day left and I'll be thar!), but there are 4 more weeks to go, so maybe I can catch up somewhat on whatever I may have missed.

So you see, I'm sort of serious about this whole kick. I don't HAVE to write but I WANT to. And this spiel is also an explanation of how and why I'm goofing off with just a small squib this time in here - a poor reward for the kindly folks out there who voted me such a lovely boost in the Poll, I know. Mea culpa, for sure. At least I can comfort myself that it's been rare in the past 60 mailings that I've had to apologize much for shorting the good troops here. But unfortunately I can't really promise (I can hope, though) to do more than minac for the next few mailings. I'll try, though, and things can't be as tight as they have been, later this year...

As far as the regular s-f prozines go (and that's the natural place to try to start, I suppose), Elinor says that my trouble is that I write too dirty for Campbell and not artsy enough for F&SF. That does kind of cut down on The Market, doesn't it? It's not that I write dirty on purpose; it just comes out that way. For instance, in one story the protagonist about halfway down page 2 pees on the floor. This is not just to Be Earthy or anything like that; the poor sumbidge is in a cage and this is essential if I am going to get him OUT of that cage, 20 pages later. (You'll just have to take my word for that, I'm afraid; the gimmick is too complex to explain in a few words here.) Anyway, I don't think I could sell to Campbell in his present incarnation, at all; my sense of humor is too unlike Dick Tracy's & I can't fake it.

And so much for THAT, too. Well, now; JIM and DOREEN, you picked the right year to be away from Seattle. Mark Twain once said the warmest winter he ever spent was a summer on Puget Sound and this was the kind of year he was talking about. It seems to be the poorest summer (to date) we've had since 1948, which was a real pisser. (Nonetheless we've had enough good days so that a Retired Gentleman who likes to sit out in the backyard on sunny days can show up with a better tan at the Westercon than most of the LA troops. But you got to be on the stick and Get Out There and *bake*.)

Hmmm... this low on the stencil I'd best settle for saying that I hope to see a batch of y'all at the Worldcon in Boston - at this point it looks as if we can make it, though nothing is truly certain in this imperfect world - and good wishes, & all.

OK; next time I hope to be back with Comments and the whole bag. *Cheers*.