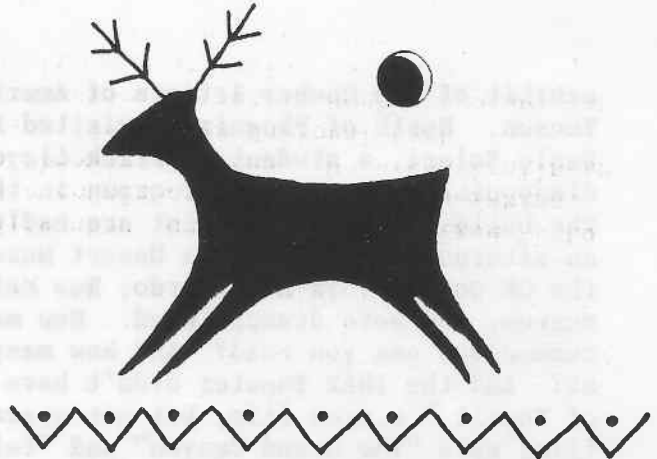


THE ROGUE RAVEN 47

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A LITTLE TRAVELING MUSIC, PLEASE

I've been away for awhile, both in spirit and in body. Although we returned from an eight-week trip in early December, much of my thought has been in Arizona and New Mexico ever since. When we decide to go traveling, we don't mess around. We left home on October 15th to tour part of the southwest and we returned home on December 7th; eight weeks on the road.



This was our first trip to the southwest, except for one fly-in to Phoenix for a weekend World Science Fiction convention. During our teaching careers we were only able to travel during the summer, and we always felt that the southwest would be way too hot for these moderate climate people to enjoy it very much. I think we were right. We were able to hike places in southeast Utah, Arizona and New Mexico at this time of year in our shirt sleeves with the temperature between 60 and 70 degrees. It was extremely pleasant.

I won't bore you with all of the details about our travels. Suffice it to say that we did a lot of hiking. We did a couple of volksmarches in Yakima, Washington and Boise, Idaho and later in Phoenix, Arizona. We hiked trails in Great Basin National Park in eastern Nevada, in Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park and Bryce Canyon National Park in southern Utah. In Arizona we hiked the canyon that contains the Anasazi ruins known as Hovenweep, and in Tonto National Monument, as well as a few hours in the Superstition Mountains (no, we didn't find the Lost Dutchman mine). Near the end of our trip we hiked down into Canyon de Chelly to view the incredible White House Ruins. In New Mexico it hiking into Cochise's Stronghold in the Dragoon Mountains, and into Fort Bowie in the Chiricahua Mountains.

Another goal was to visit Anasazi ruins. Besides Hovenweep, Tonto and Canyon de Chelly, we visited the Edge of the Cedars State Park near Blanding, Utah, a small Anasazi site at the north rim of Grand Canyon, Montezuma's Castle, Casa Grande, and Chaco Canyon. Chaco was incredible, and we had the canyon nearly to ourselves. We spent the day exploring primarily Pueblo Arroyo and Pueblo Bonito. The Anasazi lived in these various places as early as 500 A.D. and abandoned them sometime between 1100 and 1200. That any of their structures remain seems like a miracle to me. There are still a number of Anasazi sites which we have not seen and we will have to return one day.

The third goal was to spend some time on various Indian reservations. This we did; on the Navajo reservation, the Hopi Mesas, the Chiricahua Apache reservation, the Acoma Pueblo (the city in the sky, atop a mesa, continuously lived in since 550 A.D.) and Zuni Pueblo. We passed through several others and did not have time to stop and see what was worth seeing.

Naturally there were other things we saw and experienced. We visited The Heard Museum and Phoenix Art Museum in Phoenix, which had a wonderful annual

exhibit of the Cowboy Artists of America. We also visited the Art Museum of Tucson. North of Phoenix we visited Arcosanti, designed as a desert city by Paolo Soleri, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright's. It was a great disappointment. It hasn't grown in the twenty-three years since it was begun. The buildings which do exist are badly in need of paint. In Tucson we spent an afternoon at the Sonora Desert Museum. In Tombstone, Arizona we visited the OK Corral. In Alamogordo, New Mexico we visited the National Space Museum, and were disappointed. How many biographies of astronauts and cosmonauts can you read? And how many small bits of space craft can you look at? And the IMAX Theater didn't have a space film. It was showing "The Fires of Kuwait," a fine film, but not space-related. Two rather wonderful IMAX films were "The Grand Canyon" and "Yellowstone," seen at Grand Canyon and Albuquerque, respectively.

The plazas of La Mesilla, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Taos were quite wonderful. We learned that the Rio Grande is not only the border between the U.S. and Mexico, but runs out of Colorado and fairly straight south through the center of New Mexico. We ate fried bread and mutton stew with the Navajo, fried bread and mutton and hominy stew with the Hopi, and lots and lots of Mexican. One evening we stopped in a motel and the East Indian woman running it said that the town had lots of restaurants. We found four, all Mexican. We learned to eat food with green chile sauce, had our first taste of gorditos, and had some terrific Mexican dishes. We trained our tongues to eat a little higher on the hot scale, and learned that we liked it.

We spent two days birding on two different wildlife refuges. At Bosque del Apache we witnessed 20,000 snow geese and 30,000 sandhill cranes, as well as several kinds of hawks, cattle egrets, Gambel's quail, many ducks, and the beautiful Hooded Merganser. And also saw five coyote that day. Not far from the Bosque is Lincoln, New Mexico, major site of the so-called Lincoln County War, which made Billy the Kid famous, although he wasn't really that important to it. Also the lovely valley of the Rio Hondo, with pasturage and apple and cherry orchards. And at Ruidoso, the wonderful quarter horse race track (unfortunately not racing when we were there) and the beautiful Museum of the Horse, which just by chance was also opening an exhibit of Warner Brothers cartoon history, with many animation cels and large screen television running choice cartoons (Bugs and Elmer in "What's Opera, Doc?" among others). Why, shucks, we even visited the Rex Allen Museum in Wilcox, Arizona.

Along the way we visited some fine people. First we saw an old friend in Phoenix, Arizona. Ken St. Andre is a librarian and game designer whom I first met in 1971, if I remember correctly, at a Westercon. I called Ken when we reached town and he came by the motel and chauffeured us to a very good Mexican restaurant downtown. Afterward he drove us around so we could see the sights and get our bearings a little bit. It was quite helpful the next day. Then he came back to our motel and we talked until midnight or one o'clock. It was good to see him again.

Another whom we visited was an old friend, the writer Bob Vardeman who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We met Bob and his five-year old son, Chris, at a Mexican restaurant in downtown Albuquerque. Bob's wife, Patty, is a teacher and could not make it for lunch, but showed up later so we were able to catch up on the news with her as well. Bob often makes disparaging jokes about his son. We had not seen Chris since he was a baby. He has become a handsome and very bright little boy. I was amazed that he behaved so well

over such a long period of time. There was very little fidgeting and he must have been bored out of his skull while three adults sat around eating and talking their tongues off. I will not allow Mr. Vardeman to make jokes about his son ever again. He has begotten a treasure. (And, yes, in spite of his jokes, he knows it.)

We also spent four days with my nephew in Albuquerque and had Thanksgiving dinner with them. Ken and Sarah made us really feel like family as we sat around the Thanksgiving table. Sarah doesn't much like anyone in her way in the kitchen. I stayed out of the way and watched football on the tube. Anna Jo managed to sashay around Sarah and help with some of the preparation. No matter, the dinner was fabulous and the company couldn't have been better. We finished the day by watching the movie AIRPORT on the VCR. This is Ken's favorite movie, and what better for a person whose career is in air traffic control.

On one of those days we got a personal tour around the FAA facility in Albuquerque, seeing just how traffic is controlled once it is out of the jurisdiction of the airport tower. A fascinating tour. Ken is responsible for much of the new equipment which will go into various control centers and for the design and placement of that equipment. The latest news, however, is that with cutbacks, there won't be quite as much equipment going in as was originally thought.

On another day Ken took the day off to escort us to Acoma Pueblo, which I mentioned earlier. We ate an Indian lunch at the cafe in the building which housed a Acoma museum and the ticket booth where one must buy a ticket for the bus trip to the top of the mesa and a tour guide who will show you around. You must also buy a ticket for each camera you intend to use. You are also not allowed to photograph the interior of the church nor the grave-yard. Our guide had a sing-song voice that was quite unique, and her little speech as we moved along was sometimes hard to follow. Along the way Acoma potters displayed their wares and lacking any restraint whatsoever we managed to buy two lovely pots.

Ken is a member of a hot air balloon team. In the spring they had flown balloons from below the Acoma mesa. He was very interested in speaking with various people at the pueblo to see how whether they had accepted that activity and if they thought it worth repeating. They were very receptive and all that I heard told him that they hoped that the flights would be repeated this spring. Ken was also interested in purchasing gourd seeds. We found a small store in one of the pueblos where the owner did have seeds of variously shaped gourds. We both bought a small packet of seeds. Ken, of course, is living where gourds grow wild. He's likely to have a much better opportunity for success than I here in the Northwest. The object for both of us is to dry the gourds, remove the insides, and sand both inside and outside, then shellac or varnish to make decorative bowls of them. He's done a couple with gourds which he found growing wild and they are quite beautiful.

THE ROGUE IS FED UP WITH POLITICS BUT CANNOT CANCEL HIS INTEREST

As a staunch Democrat since F.D.R.'s time, I have had to swallow some pride with the recent Republican landslide. At my age and with my bloodpressure it seemed a reasonable thing to do my best to ignore the pronouncements of the new Speaker of the House (and we sometimes thought Dan Quayle misspoke

himself)(I do not intend to go shoot giraffes) and the freshman representatives and their Contract with America. I find, however, that they are not easy to ignore. Our wonderful Senator Gorton (yea, he of the Gloucester Gortons who bring you such delicious clam chowder) has for the last four or five years been the charming defender of the elderly, visiting senior centers and retirement homes, and featuring oldsters (like me??) in his campaign television commercials. How political of him to change quickly to talking of cutting entitlements, not mentioning, of course, that this could mean social security benefits for the likes of those same oldsters. Ah, well! Our no longer youthful Steve Largent, who set records while playing for the Seahawks, is now a freshman representative from Oklahoma. He appeared on CNBC last evening, decrying the fact that his elders in committee and in the Senate have said that we cannot reduce the deficit for at least seven years. His argument was that with commitment, of course we could reduce it. Ah, Steve, you have so much to learn. Meantime pork barrel politics continue as if nothing had changed. Louisiana was listed as getting \$58 million for pork barrel projects in the coming year. Not bad. Millions of dollars are appropriated for projects that do not even exist. Today the chairman of the Appropriations Committee tells us that "we just cannot continue to provide school lunches for the children of families with annual incomes of \$125,000." Is he serious? Not in any school Anna Jo ever taught in. So the more things change, the more they remain the same. And I will continue to sit back, laugh at the antics of a Congress which does little to respond to my concerns and continue to attempt to control my blood pressure. Hey, they are all rogues on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats. Yea, verily, I remember Dan Rostenkowski. And - *he whispers* - some of my best friends are Republicans.

THE DENTONS GO NATIVE . . . AMERICAN

Don Fitch occasionally talks about attending Indian pow-wows in his fanzine, Wondering and Wandering (formerly From Sunday to Saturday). He's been following Indian affairs and celebrations much longer than I have. But having spent some time in the southwest on various reservations and pueblos, I was certainly ready for some Indian experiences.

We've attended two pow-wows in the last two months, and one other Indian event perhaps of a little more seriousness. "How did this come about?" you ask. A phone call from our eldest son, Tim, set us in motion. Tim has been partnered with Delane for quite a number of years. Delane is half-Indian. In the last couple of years she has become increasingly interested in her heritage and has sought entrance into the Native American community. She is especially interested in the healing arts. So obviously Tim and Delane find out about Indian events more easily than we might. Tim called to tell us that there would be a pow-wow in our own backyard.

The Highline Indian Education Association was sponsoring their first pow-wow on a Saturday. As it turned out most of the family met at the event. Our second son, Sean, and his wife, Mary Rose, attended for several hours. Tim and Delane brought Delane's ninety-one year old grandmother, who had raised her. We were delighted to meet her as we had not done so before. It was a perfect rainy Saturday for staying indoors, and the pow-wow was held in a large multi-purpose building at the high school.

Anna Jo, who had taught in the Highline School District, met some students

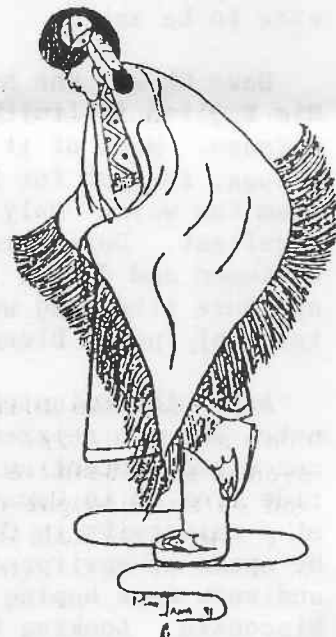
she had taught several years back. We ate fried bread and were served mutton stew late in the afternoon. But mostly we just sat, enjoying the drumming and singing and the dancing. A young man, aged seven, danced every danced unless it was a woman's dance or he was drumming and chanting with his own drum circle. There were five drum circles with Indian Heritage being the host drum. The others were Sitting Horse, Eagle Dancer, Hoka-hey, and One Beat, One Nation. Traditional, fancy, grass, and intertribals were the most common dances. The women got in one crow hop, which is great fun to watch. The women tend to be young and this dance is their opportunity to become a little less staid than the ordinary traditional or intertribal allows them to be. So graceful. There is a beautiful young woman who is a part of Sitting Horse whom I've fallen in love with. *sigh* The men got in one Sneak Up, another one I love to watch. When the drumming and chanting stops the men must freeze, then move again when the drumming and singing resumes.

The drumming and dancing went on from Grand Entry at 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. when there was a supper break. During the break we were entertained by an Inuit group from one of the Alaskan islands. Their dances acted out various activities, telling a story.

Nearly a month went by. We noted an announcement of a pow-wow in Poulsbo, on the peninsula. Why not? A pleasant drive down through Tacoma, across the Narrows Bridge (yep, the famous replacement for "Gallopig Gertie"), on up through Bremerton. We could have taken the ferry, but chose to drive since the day was nice. On the way we saw a soaring eagle, a particularly fine omen, we thought. And so it turned out.

This pow-wow was somewhat larger than the previous one and was sponsored by the United Natives. The Highline pow-wow had been a social pow-wow. This one was a competition pow-wow with prize money for the dancers in the various dances, for both men and women. The pow-wow was held in a gym, and a second smaller gym was used for overflow vendors. Chairs for participants and elders lined the edge of the gym floor and we spectators took seats in the gym seats. Eleven drum circles this time, with Sitting Horse as the host drum. It was good to see that several of the drums were composed of young people. Eagle Dancer was present, but all of the rest were new to us: Young Nation, Spirit Wind, Redstone Singers, Dene Spirit, Shaobahah, Takosha, CMP Spirit, Spearfish, and One People, One Voice. Of the new drums I heard, I was especially impressed by Redstone Singers.

After the Grand Entry at 1, a number of inter-tribal dances were held. Both men and women dance, and both dancers in regalia and those not may dance. As we saw people not in regalia entering the dance from the sidelines, we decided it was time for us to participate. The first dance went very well; I was quite comfortable being on the floor, which is considered sacred ground from the time of the Grand Entry and invocation until the final dance. The second dance was one in which someone determined that it was time to honor the drum. The circular rotation ceases as the men in regalia make their way to the drum and the



women dancers and non-costumed people form a large arc around them, all facing the drum and singers. The men danced intensely, by ones or twos dancing energetically and then moving out of the circle to give way to other men. I could feel the intensity and emotional feeling rise. It was quite an unusual experience for me, although one I'm sure I'll share again at some future pow-wow.

Early in the afternoon an old friend suddenly appeared before us. Now a grown woman, many years ago Dona McPhillips was a student library assistant of mine in a junior high school library. We're talking around 1958 or so. Her mother, Dorothy, was on the faculty and we were very close friends. We had not seen either of them for quite a few years and I must admit that I didn't recognize Dona at first. It was a thrill to see her again and to find out that she follows the pow-wow trail quite a lot. So I'm sure we'll see her again. She introduced us to her friend, who had just purchased some beautiful material to sew a ribbon shirt for dancing for her son.

A wonderful day. We stopped for a light meal on the way home and arrived home about 8:30. A full day, but for me a very fulfilling day. I hardly have enough Indian blood in me to speak of it, but it must be coming out. I'm 1/128 as far as I can tell. I don't believe that's enough to share oil profits; matter of fact there is little or no oil where my Indian blood comes from.

The other Native American event we attended was a bit more serious. Arvol Looking Horse, a Lakota spiritual leader and Keeper of the Sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe, spent a week in the northwest, along with another spiritual leader, Dave Chief. Looking Horse was named Keeper by his people when he was 12 years old. He visited several reservations nearby, spoke at a community college during the week, and spoke to a crowd of over 600 at Daybreak Star, the Indian Community Center at one our large natural parks in the city. On a Sunday evening he spoke at the Odd Fellows Hall in Seattle. We met Tim and Delane there, and were honored when we were invited to take seats in a section reserved for the elders. We declined, because we had good seats, but it was nice to be asked.

Dave Chief, who had only a third grade education in English, spoke first. His English is limited, but there was nothing wrong with his presence nor his message. Much of it had to do with two very traditional Native American things, respect for the elders and taking good care of children and teaching them the ways. Only one drum was present, Standing Eagle. They were excellent. During intermission two of their women singers and one man costumed and danced for the audience. I was surprised to see that perhaps 1/2 of those attending were white. Perhaps many of them, like me, have only a trace of Indian blood, and it doesn't physically show.

After intermission Arvol Looking Horse spoke. He spoke easily, without notes and was relaxed, but appeared tired. The theme of his talk primarily concerned protecting the sacred sites, and in particular he talked about a ride from up in Canada to be held in 1996. It will begin after a conference at a university in Canada and will end at Devil's Tower in eastern Wyoming. He spoke of environmental concerns and how we should respond. Many in the audience were hoping he would speak of the white buffalo calf that was born in Wisconsin. Looking Horse said that it was a warning to care for the environment and predicted that the calf would eventually turn tan, then brown,

and finally black. It would not be a white buffalo as an adult. A Pendleton blanket was displayed that will later be produced in a limited edition. It shows buffalo entering from the right, a white calf and White Buffalo Calf Woman (who gave the Lakota the sacred pipe) in the center, and buffalo leaving and turning black on the right side of the blanket. I'll bet this is going to cost a pretty penny. The first blanket of this design was presented to Arvol Looking Horse by the Pendleton Woolen Mills.

During the evening raffle tickets had been sold. This is pretty common at Indian affairs. After Looking Horse's speech there were a number of items to be drawn for. We waited expectantly, but didn't win a thing. Star quilts are usually the big prize, but there were several blankets, an entire tanned elk skin, many books, pow-wow tapes, and several pieces of art. An interesting evening.

I STILL READ

I've been reading a collection of ghost stories by E.G. Swain. This vicar, who lived from 1861 to 1938 only wrote nine stories; an additional six have been added by David Rowlands. The stories are known as the Stoneground Ghost Tales. They feature Rev. Batchel and most of the stories take place either on the rectory grounds or nearby. The vicar's parish was in the fen country of East Anglia. There is a good bit of humor in the stories, even though ghostly apparitions are the stock and trade of the ghost story. For the most part the Rev. Batchel's ghosts are quite kind. This book was the first publication of Swain's stories since 1912. Unfortunately the English publisher, Equation, was bought by another publisher, and there is no thought of keeping these stories in print. Equation had done six or seven such books. A pity they weren't able to continue.

I recently finished Brian Stableford's *THE WEREWOLVES OF LONDON*. It's the first in a trilogy. I had thought that I might read all three books, but I think not. I occasionally read books which are a challenge, but this was more of a challenge than I care to accept. Heavily philosophical and often dealing with religious ideas which are not a part of our history (or perhaps they are and I'm not aware of it), I found myself slogging through the book. Reed Andrus, a good friend with whom I share thoughts about books read, told me that he gave up within the first fifty pages. I persevered for 467. I've got to learn to stop doing this. I recall reading Stableford's six "Hooded Swan" novels many years ago and enjoying them immensely. Between times he's obviously been doing some very deep thinking and he's gone beyond me, at least.

BRICKMUSH

My dear wife, sitting calmly in a chair on the other side of the living room, and reading something from a 3-ring binder, suddenly said, "Brickmush!"

"Yes," I responded calmly. "We simply called it fried mush. Mom had a special pan, square-sided so that it came out like a brick. She'd whip up a batch of cornmeal mush, or sometimes cream of wheat, pour it in the pan, smooth it out, and then set it in the refrigerator. When it was cold we'd simply cut off slices, dip them in flour, and fry them in a pan. Pour syrup over them and you had breakfast. Dad used to make the syrup. Water, sugar, vanilla, maple flavoring. I wish I could remember the proportions."

"Yes," Anna Jo mused. "Even after we were married we used to be able to buy bricks of it in the store. It looked like a brick of cheese, in its waxed wrapper."

Ah, such nostalgia for the simpler times. We've come all the way from brickmush to lattes and radiated meat and vegetables. What brought all of this on, of course, was that Anna Jo was reading from a borrowed copy of various mailings of "The Vic and Sade Society." In other issues of TRR, I must have talked about being a fan of old time radio, and belonging to and being an officer of REPS (Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound). Many of our members are collectors of the old time shows, and there are more of these in existence than you might believe. (Another OTR organization to which I belong has over 9000 hours in its cassette library.)

Anyway, REPS recently held its second conference, a full day with some wonderful guests, including Gale Storm (My Little Margie), Willard Waterman (the second Great Gildersleeve), Lon Clark (Nick Carter, Master Detective), Jack Kruschen (character actor on both radio and in movies), David Ossman (The Firesign Theater, among others) and many others. During the day and evening several recreations were done. Waterman reprised his role as Gildy, Lon Clark played Nick Carter once again. (Since this was written Mr. Waterman has died.)

And Anna Jo got to play Sade in an episode of Vic and Sade, along with Frank Buxton (author of THE BIG BROADCAST) playing Vic, Merrill Mael playing the role of Uncle Fletcher, which he did on radio, and another club member, Brian Haigood, playing Rush, the son of Victor and Sadie Gook. The recreation came off splendidly and we're waiting for copies of the tape. (Wanna hear? Send me a blank. The program is only fifteen minutes; I'll put some real Vic and Sade on the rest.)

I have a collection of about 400 hours of old time radio; minuscule by the standards of many collectors. But I do have access to two large collections from which I can borrow. However, Vic and Sade was a program we had never listened to until Anna Jo got involved in this recreation. Vic and Sade was a very down-home program with hundreds of characters, but only four actors on mike. The rest of the characters were merely talked about. I'm sure it would be too laid back and down home for most audiences. The humor was often dry and understated, but there's a charm that is inescapable for people of my generation, you know, the Old Fogies.

So I will send an appropriate amount of money to the woman who runs The Friends of Vic and Sade, Drowsy Venus Chapter, Sacred Stars of the Milky Way. And before you know it, we'll have some Vic and Sade tapes in our collection. Paul Rhymer wrote over 3500 fifteen-minute episodes from 1932 to 1945, when the show went off the air. Unfortunately only about 60 of these episodes survived. But that's better than none.

Randy Mohr : 324 Euclid : Sandpoint, ID 83864

Fandomineous Serendipity: In the letters section of TRR 46 was featured one from Alden Hackmann from Indianola. Being from Indianola itself was enough get my attention (my favorite husband/wife bookbinding team are Indianolans). My attention increased when he mentioned Mendocino, Michael Hubbert and hurdy gurdys. I know Michael Hubbert, I play one of his volks-gurdys! I had heard through the folk music grapevine Michael had sold the

rights to the volks-gurdy to a couple on the Olympic Peninsula and here they were in the pages of TRR!!! Too much! At Folklife in Seattle I met them showing off their first hurdy gurdy and I'm happy to say it's a fine instrument; in fact the keys on the keybox play better than mine (sorry, Michael) or, at least respond better to my fingers. We chatted happily of our common association with TRR and Frank Denton! Only in fandom!! Hi, Alden, hi, Cali, keep up the good work.

Wait, I did read some sf (incredible!): FOREIGNER by C.J. Cherry. Excellent, a nice Japanese-type flavor to this one. I also read THE SECRET HISTORY by Donna Taitt; excellent.

Music: there is a new 4-CD box of Mike Oldfield's music I find I must have despite the \$65 price tag. I love his music. His latest, Tubular Bells II, a masterful parallel universe rendition of the first from 20+ years ago. Unfortunately, some of the best pieces are edited in order to fit on the CD. Sublime passages of music.

[[Terrific that you got to meet Alden and Cali and try out the hurdy gurdy. I'm glad it was a success. Since you were talking about music, let me slip this in here. My latest find in music.]]

DENTON DISCOVERS A DIFFERENT MUSIC - ASTOR PIAZZOLLA

Our library has a pretty fair collection of CDs for borrowing. Every once in a while, not having a large enough collection of my own, you understand, (ask Anna Jo) I go through the various categories and pick out some artists or composers whom I have never heard. Thus I came upon Astor Piazzolla y su Quinteto Tango Nuevo. "The New Tango." One listen and I was hooked. Piazzolla, obviously an Argentine Italian, lived briefly in the United States as well. His father bought him an accordion-like instrument (all buttons, no keys) called a bandoneon. At some point he studied classical composition with a former student of Stravinsky's, but was told "the bandoneon is your instrument, the tango is your composition." Piazzolla believed that the tango was not just for dancing. It was to be listened to, hence the new tango. The quintet is bass, guitar, violin, piano, and bandoneon. It's a most unusual combination, one small enough that you can the interplay between the various instruments. The music, too, is unusual, changing tempos, becoming quiet and introspective, then changing suddenly to something passionate, sometimes dissonant. There is one series called Camorra, which depict the fights which often broke out in Buenos Aires brothels. Other music sets the poetry of Ferrer to music. There is even a tango opera, "Marie of Buenos Aires." I'm fascinated by what Piazzolla has written and how he plays. Late at night, after I've done reading, I stick the earphones in my ears and using the Discman, listen closely to about fifteen minutes of this music before going to bed. Fortunately there are quite a few recordings of the Piazzolla and the quartet, one a beautiful concert in Central Park, another in a Vienna concert hall, yet another with Gary Burton at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Good stuff! Piazzolla went into a coma in 1990 and died on July 4, 1992, before I even connected. But he left a wonderful legacy of recordings. I've always had a broad musical interest, but I'm as surprised as anyone that this music appealed to me so strongly. I know it's not for everyone, but try it and let me know what you think. The best recording for beginning is the Central Park Concert (Chesky Records JD107).

Jessica Amanda Salmonson: P.O. Box 20610 : Seattle, WA 98102

The topic of Conventions changing for the worse is a popular one among us old fogies; and I do sometimes wonder if it isn't in part a generation gap. Why can't these kids these days go about things the way we did in our day! But mainly I don't believe it's that, because I've seen close-at-hand the lack of knowledge or interest today's convention-goers have in writers and writings.

Conventions used to be a genuine extension of a fandom that was connected through magazines and books, not to mention fanzines, and we could all know each other years before actually meeting at a con. Today cons are wide open businesses for a mass audience who wants to party-party, not share an idle love of fantastic literature or meet people they've read in fanzines or books since they were little. Even supposing the silly horde did read stuff (which by and large they do not) they are not connected to one another in this larger sense. If our quietest community of readers want old timey cons, we'll have to do the work of putting them on ourselves, and I don't know about you, but I'm a lazy lass not apt to start up any conventions real soon now. So it's left to the suburban media fans, adolescent role players and gamers, costumers and assorted twerps, to do the shitwork of running a con, and why should they run it for us?

If I was a little bit better off financially than I am ever apt to be, there'd be no real problem, I could go to Necon, Readercon, Potlatch, World Fantasy Con, BoucherCon and a couple of others, and not have to cope with illiterate slackers in their would-be superhero costumes. But I shan't be even at BoucherCon when it's here in the neighborhood because it is only for middle class and rich bastards, not for working class shlubs and artists for whom \$70 has got to be stretched for a month's groceries; and, of course, most of the time these cons are far, far away, so those of us on a diet of dried peas and dandelion roots assuredly can't afford hotels and airfares. So the damnable thing is that it used to be you could find a cluster of pleasingly goofy bookworms at any neighborhood convention, but nowadays they're scared away by the flash and glitter and pushiness of illiterates and costume-clowns who were always present but didn't used to rule the roost.

{{ Jessica's envelope was a wonder, coming from her alter-ego, Pag-hat the Rat-girl at the Cafe of Disfigurement. A wondrous sticker entitled "The Dream of Pag-hat the Rat-girl" said it was "#22 of 24 dreamstickers, collect them all!" and continued, "I had magic socks and was able to charge fees to people to see me walk on the ceiling." Much, or perhaps all of what Jessica says is true. But then she lives very close to the edge. I know that there are people who scrape and save to attend the conventions of their choice. And of course many who have swell incomes from which they can support their convention habit easily. I just don't find much of interest to me at conventions anymore, which is why I enthused about Potlatch so much in the last issue. Jessica, when Anna Jo and I win the lottery, we'll establish a foundation for you so you can attend the cons where people still read and want to share their delight in what they've read. }}

ENDIT: Not much room left. We've been trying to program the VCR+ program in a new VCR we recently acquired. What frustration! We seem to end up with the Discovery channel a lot. We may fall back on the old method of programming. I'd like to record the movie of Agatha Christie's Death on the Nile tonight, with Pete Ustinov and the rest of the fine cast. I frustrate easily these days, so Anna Jo is doing most of the fussing. Bless her.