

Special Minac Issue
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JULY STARTED OUT BUSY, and shows no indication of letting up. The first week was taken up by Westercon (and a couple side-trips while we were in the Northern California area). As I was Westercon Treasurer this year, I'll still be involved in con matters for the next month or so, as the bills get paid and the accounts get closed.

I had hoped to get a SAPSzine done before we left for the con the night of June 30, but I didn't make it. Maybe there was some premonition that I wouldn't be able to hand it to the OE at the con because said OE wasn't going to be there after all. (Rumor has it that one of her spells backfired again and left her confined, if not to quarters, at least to Phoenix.) Better luck next time, to both of us. Maybe if the Noble OE is planning to attend the NASFiC over Labor Day, I can get a zine done for Mlg. 113 and have it handed to her then. (I don't know as yet when we'll be back from Australia, and there is a chance it won't be until Labor Day itself.)

We got back from Westercon the night of the 7th, took some time to find out from our housesitter, Bob Hollander, what had happened during the week, and collapsed through a good part of Tuesday. We did manage to drive down to pick up Australian visas and our Austrailpasses. Tuesday night there was a Last Showing of some of the films we'd borrowed for Westercon, and we went over to the LASFS clubhouse for that. I even watched one of the films -- "Phantom of the Paradise" -- instead of spending the time in the other room talking conventions and other fanpolitik. (This rather surprised a few people who know I never see a film a second time. What never? Well... .) I'll be disappointed if "Phantom" doesn't take the Drama Hugo this year.

Wednesday night I reacquired the equipment necessary to begin fanzine work again. I hadn't expected to do so, as Drew forgot to bring the typer he had borrowed, before the Westercon, when he came to pick me up to play bridge. But when we got to the bridge club it was closed -- both of us had managed to forget that the largest bridge regional in the country, Bridge Week, was still going on, and the clubs would be closed. So we had time to trundle over to his apartment and retrieve the typer. Now all that was needed was time to use the thing.

Thursday night was, as usual, LASFS. The program was a Westercon Critique (read: gripe session), and most of the comments that were negative revolved around the obvious fact that the hotel was too small for the 1600+ members that the con attracted. There were also the usual gripes from the two classes of Permanent Non-Committee Types: the Undesirable and the Unavailable. As an example of the first, Frank Gasperik complained that there was only one good party (the Committee-thrown Dead Dog Party on the Sunday night), but he kept saying "Oh, yeah -- that was a good party, too," as other people mentioned other parties over the weekend. As an example of the latter, Greg Chalfin suggested the Committee have an Ombudsman, who would be available all during the con to handle complaints and find remedies for problems. He, of course, declined the job for next year when it was offered to him. There were also positive comments. David Gerrold, who may have been biased, since he was the GoH, started listing all sorts of things the con had had right with it. John Brunner, in town on business between Westercon and returning home, said he'd enjoyed it ["Take what David just said, and translate it into English, and that's about how I feel."], and, somewhat startlingly, Jerry Pournelle was being effusively and enthusiastically complimentary about the con and about the committee work.

After LASFS there was a small poker game at The Tower. Only about \$15 changed hands, and Drew Sanders went home with most of it. I wound up with all but a nickel of the \$1.80 Larry Niven lost. (And after he managed to deal himself a pat jack-high straight in a hand

of Jacks Back -- beating hell out of the pat 9-high straight he dealt me -- too!) Of course, it wasn't really a LASFS-Poker game -- not a hand was dealt all evening that used wild cards. The worse we dealt was Assassination (5-stud high-low).

Friday night we went to the movies for the first time in several months. Sometime last year, Elayne added the various novels of Kyle Onstott and his collaborators to her collection of self-styled "trashy novels," and I managed to read about 1/2 of them before getting bogged down, so when "Mandingo" showed up we decided to see what they'd done with it. We waited, of course, until it was playing with something else worth seeing -- in this case, "Blazing Saddles." (I'd missed the latter on its first go-round, not realizing until "Young Frankenstein" that one should see anything Mel Brooks does. So I've been catching up. Saw "The Producers" a few months ago, when it appeared with "Murder On the Orient Express.") They'd done fairly well with "Mandingo," but in cramming it with a lot of Message they completely changed one character -- Agamemnon -- and put in an ending that was (1) too stupid; (2) bloodier than either the original or necessary; (3) a dead-end that precludes filming a lot of the other books; and (4) an obliteration of the more believable Message that the book included. Oh, well... . I expect too much of films... .

Saturday we went to a wedding of one of the local fans, Joe Minne -- another of the poker players, who works for the University of California at Irvine -- down in Birch Country, Orange County. It was a Catholic wedding, and only the second or third such I've had to sit through. [The doubt is cast by my not remembering whether the one Dian and I went to for one of her friends, held at St. Somebody-or-other's, was Catholic or Episcopal.] Leave it to a Minne wedding to have a Maxi-service. We and the Nivens were the only fans present, though the Golds had been invited and had sent their regrets. The reception was quite nice. I put away a fair amount of champagne and a reasonable amount of the buffet, and spent an enjoyable time talking to Joe's maternal aunt Magda about the various places she'd travelled to -- like Rumania, Bavaria, Greece...in 1940. There was a lot of kitsch and ticky-tacky about the wedding and the reception, but I've learned not to be too obvious about sneering at such. After all, it their family, not mine. I do admit to whistling "The Vatican Rag" as we got out to the parking lot after the ceremony, but I figured anyone who recognized it would appreciate it and the others wouldn't be bothered. Larry, on the other hand, had to be restrained from following a particularly sticky song at the reception, by the bride's sorority sisters, with a rousing rendition of "I Am I, Don Quixote." Fuzzy and I told him that it was in the rules that anyone who got into a sorority in the first place had to be allowed to have sticky songs from her sorors at her wedding. "I didn't know that!" said Mr. Tact, in his Highly Amused tone of voice.

From the reception we stopped off at the LASFS Open House, which was all but empty, since the few previous attendees had gone to dinner. We waited until they got back, yakked a while, then went home to get some work done. Forty percent of the other attendees -- Milt Stevens and Craig Miller -- came over later, and we killed the evening with Fanpolitik and convention planning.

Sunday the 13th was our first anniversary, which takes care of the kindly types who opined it wouldn't last a year. (We will now work on taking care of those who said it wouldn't last more than a year.) Being a Traditionalist, I gave Elayne Paper gifts -- and we went to Los Cerritos Mall -- previously unexplored by us -- to see if she could find something to spend one of the gifts on. LCM turned out to be a first-class mall; its pet store even has kittens! SPASM will send a Certificate of Approval. It is, however, financially dangerous -- we found an electronic organ at a price we couldn't refuse. (We'd been planning to save up for an organ, with a projected purchase date of mid-1976, but... .) It's a used (but guaranteed) Conn, with just the right stops and couplers that I want, and none of the junk the new organs all have. I've no use for the built-in cassettes or rhythms. So we bought it, resisting the temptation to call the salesman a Conn artist.

We then finished off celebrating by having dinner at The Odyssey, overlooking the North San Fernando Valley. The food is good and not overly expensive. They even have a semi-decent wine list. (We killed a bottle of the Pedroncelli Zinfandel '71 without too much difficulty.) Maybe LASFS might try it for a banquet... .