



This is THE#14, brought to you by Richard Harter from 5 Chauncy St. #2, Cambridge MA 02138 with the invaluable assistance of Alphonse. Mimeography is by Bruce Pelz.

I'm not sure at this writing whether or not Marsha described Rita's or not so I will take the chance that she did not and give a report on it. A week ago last friday Marsha and I and Freslie (Fred Isaacs and Leslie Turek) made our way to Rita's in Chelsea. We had been told that it was open three evenings a week, that it was a sub shop by day, that they served an eleven course Italian dinner, and that it was one of the best Italian restaurants in the city.

The four of us met at MITSFS and set out for the place. After several circuitous detours we arrived at what indeed looked like a sub shop in a rather unprepossessing neighbourhood. We entered said sub shop, walked upstairs through the kitchen, and sat down in a cozy little dining room which had about a dozen tables. The owners son, who appeared to be the only waiter, immediately sat a pitcher of wine on the table, a pitcher which he kept refilling every time it got within danger of being empty.

The first course was a plate of little goodies which he said were milk croquets. Since alles were quite hungry they disappeared with great rapidity. Next came something he called little nothings. These turned out to be a stuffed hot pastry witha delicious flaky hot crust and a meat and things stuffing. These also disappeared with great speed to the accompaniment of appreciative noises. Then came the stuffed mushrooms which have to be the best stuffed mushrooms I have ever had. After that it gets sort of hazy. There were shrimps en bianco (lovely.) There was the best manicotti I have ever had. There was something very nice in chicken. They even managed to take squid and make of it something delicious. (This was a great enlightenment to me - heretofore I had never believed that it was possible to make squid more than remotely edible, let alone tasty.) There were indeed eleven courses, all of them excellent, and the whole much more than one could eat but we all did our very best.

I had thought I had disposed of worldcon rate commentary but I see the topic has come up again. I expect I can toss a few comments in here.

FLIEG HOLLANDER (Der Hollander 197) - It might seem that "if registration is set up properly" that it shouldn't matter whether people register at the door or not, but it isn't so. At Noreascon there were something like 1700 people attending. If it took one minute each to register an attendee that would come to almost thirty hours of processing. Granted it doesn't take a

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minute per person and granted that multiple lines, etc., can reduce the amount of time one must stand in line. However registration nonetheless represents a substantial amount of effort and time which has to be done the first day of the con (or at least the bulk of it does.) There are three things you have to do for someone registering at the con - you have to get his name and address, you have to give him a con membership, and you have to take his money. You also have to give him a program book etc. but you had to do that anyway. Individually this does not involve much time but it does in the aggregate.

*** Aside to LACon committee - I assume you have already planned to do this, but if not, it's worth noting. One of the dodges used in Noreascon registration which worked very well was to have a special trouble shooters table. Anyone registering whose registration was not routine was shunted over to that table regardless of the reason and taken care of there. It worked out well ***

Adrienne (Spice) - Your heart is in the right place but some of your facts are shaky. F'rinstance:

Printing is not a significant cost to the con attendee - most of the cost of printing program books and progress reports is made up by advertising. Ted White claims that in 1967 advertising did cover the costs of printing and I believe him. In 1971 the costs of printing were about \$1500 for both the progress reports and program book. Advertising receipts were about \$1000. The net cost of printing to the con attendee was about a quarter. The reasons for the loss in 1971 versus the breakeven in 1967 are twofold. First of all there was a recession on and it was not possible to get as much advertising revenue. Secondly the effective cost of printing was higher. I say effective because the increase was not in the printing cost itself but in the shipping cost.

The hotel did not charge for the function rooms. This does not represent any overwhelming generosity on the part of the hotel - 50 rooms which would have otherwise not been rented pay for the function rooms. This generosity, however, does not extend to such little things like setup charges.

Where then, you may ask, does the money go. It goes for a large assortment of things. There is the film program (\$2000). There are security guards. Security locks at thirty bucks apiece. The Hugos have to be paid for. There is an ungodly amount of postage. There are setup charges for the masquerade. There is tape equipment, film equipment, and lighting that must be rented. There are things like meals for the guests of honor. There are, as you note, various fannish charities and projects. Etc., etc., etc. When the Noreascon books get closed out later this year you can get the details.

I might mention that the rumor that is widely circulated that Noreascon showed a profit is true. This is not surprising - if higher rates and a recession did not stop people from turning out in record numbers there was bound to be an overage. Off the record the surplus is going for printing and distributing the proceedings. (Free to Noreascon members of course.) Since the tapes are already transcribed and in process of being edited I expect this will happen without real difficulty.

Your points about the general rise in con hotel costs are well taken as are your remarks about the relative cheapness of SF cons relative to other cons. Nobody on the Noreascon committee anything from the con - quite the reverse - everybody, including Tony, paid for their memberships and banquet tickets. There were, however, collateral benefits such as several free meals franked by the hotel sales staff. (Come to think of it I take that back - The con did sponsor a party for the committee at the end of the con.)

Me (The#12) - I was wrong about the difference \$5 might make to a con attendee. This was pointed out to me indirectly by Morris Keesan. Morris was over the other day for an operetta rehearsal and was collecting some electrostencils I had run for him. These ran to a total of three dollars which he asked that he could pay for later. He then explained that he only had five dollars in the bank and that he was going to Balticon this weekend. I was sort of boggled and said "But Morris, what are you going to eat?" He replied that he brought food with him. I then asked where he was going to stay. He answered that he never slept at cons or that, if he did, he crashed with somebody. I then asked how he was going to get there and he lifted his thumb. At this writing I am certain that Morris is now down in Baltimore attending the Balticon, having started out with a knapsack, a ready thumb, and four dollars in his pocket - three dollars for registration and one dollar for the hucksters room. I don't know; I guess I must be getting old.

Robert Hollander (ITISM#111) - No, no, no... Playing the King of hearts immediately is not the best play. If west leads the jack of clubs you should play a club instead. Playing the King of hearts is a revoke and will cost you two tricks... (Sorry about that - I couldn't resist.)

Fran (Star Light and Candle's Glow #8) -

90% of () is wrong.

Bill Warren (WNATWW#97) - Time flies. You can't; they're too fast. Quotation marks optional.

Blue Edward (Knight of Pens #52) - Rolling up a ton of unrolled plutonium wire would be a critical mistake.

Dan Alderson - I would also like to thank you for running the Mariner Bulletins through L. They are very much appreciated even though they are not particularly commentable. Keep it up and thanks.

Tom Digby (Probably #351) - I have not read your zine. Have you ever had a kittycat sit in your lap while you were sitting around without any clothes on? Have you ever had a kittycat insist on sitting in your lap while you were sitting around without any clothes on...

Elliot Weinstein (Space ~~Patria~~ Petrol) -Er, I hate to say this, but can't you improve the quality in some respect?

Larry Nielson (Grinking Thru the Wanderwood #19) - All things considered I think that I like Analog better than Amazing and Fantastic. Analog suffers from blandness and formula fiction. Amazing/Fantastic occasionally have some very good stories and (to my way of thinking) and incredible amount of unreadable crud. Their real merit in my eyes is the non-fiction material, particularly Greg Benford's science column. One of things that I particularly like about Analog is the layout, artwork, etc. I tend to be sensitive to that sort of thing and it greatly affects my enjoyment of what I am reading.

Matthew Tepper (Ankh Ptui #95) - Zin.

Jay Freeman (LFO#32) - quantization of the harmonic oscillator? I don't know if Milt is interested, but this is a derivation I've got to see!