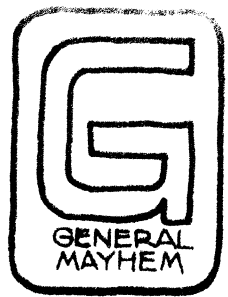


XENIUM



THE BREAKFAST OF BOY WONDERS AND
CANADIAN DUCHESSES



KIDS!
FREE INSIDE!

A WALKING
RICHARD
LABONTE
DOLL

(SEE PKG. BACK)



WITH HUGO BITS!

bathurst/austin BAKERS

XENIUM



Special Torcon Issue

23-6

June 1974



0 Happy Band of Pilgrims, James Mason Neale

By the time you get this, I'll be in England for the summer and then I hope to see a lot of you at DISCON II. But for TORCON 2, and a lot of good fanzines, "Thank You." It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, but I'll never forget it!

Eek!



PLEASE TAKE THOSE
LITTLE OLD LADIES
OUT OF THE HOTEL,
THEY'RE SCARING
MY SNAKE

A NON-REPORT ON TORCON 2

This is a non-report because I don't have any notes, or any plan as to how to try to capture the spirit of my TORCON, which we all know was completely different from the twenty-seven hundred other TORCONS that happened to occur over the same weekend. All I have is a brain cluttered with a lot of memories and impressions, a glass of Scotch to loosen a few of them for me (right, Jerry Kaufman?) and a desire to put a few thoughts and conclusions on paper.

This non-report happens to have a non-title because I couldn't come up with something that properly captured my overall reaction to TORCON. I thought of quite a few possible sub-titles, but rejected them all as being overly negative. Perhaps I'll scatter them throughout this article in appropriate places. Don't let them scare you, it's just my typing fingers playing games.

And if the impressions that get put down here are a mite chaotic, or lacking in chronological exactitude, that's probably just as well, since that's precisely the way I recall the entire convention. You won't find overly many references to specific times, places or people here, because for the most part I'm unclear on such details. In typing Susan's report, I spotted what seemed to me to be minor factual errors, but I left her manuscript intact since her memory of the events is as trustworthy as my own... which is somewhat like saying Nixon is as honest as Agnew...

-0=(+)=0-

TORCON was a success. In fact, it may well have been one of the most successful Worldcons to date, if the comments that have appeared in the fan press over the last ten months are anything to go by. To those of us in that small band who attended the last few committee meetings, this is nothing short of a miracle. (DON'T BLAME ME, I VOTED FOR DALLAS) That all those loose and non-existent ends could so quickly and completely come together into something capable of pleasing a huge number of people ranging all the way from First Fandomites to sf readers at their first convention says a lot for the theory that it's people who make a convention, and all the committee can really do is ice the cake. But it's nice to ice it properly.

I wish I could take lots of credit for the success of TORCON 2, but I can't. The

things I did could have been done by anyone with two fingers, a tongue, a mimeo, a sharp knife, a steady hand, access to a free Xerox machine, a few years experience with conventions and a somewhat reluctant willingness to turn one's brain off for a few hours each time a Progress Report or Program book was ready.

The imagination behind TORCON came from people like Peter Gill, and John Millard, and Don Hutchison, and Susan, and several others and it's to them that any kudos are owed. I happened to have the summer off (one of the fringe benefits of being in the ed. biz.) which freed me to type up a few hundred membership cards, stuff a few hundred membership packets and prepare them for mailing, and join members of the local club plus others of the committee in the mind-numbing task of collating and distributing our various publications.

I also have a mimeo, which occasionally came in handy, since it was faster (and cheaper!) than commercial printers, and access to the Xerox machine at the Ontario College of Education. This was a godsend, since Susan needed a hell of a lot of copies of things for the AOY Room (we're both 'way beyond the 'Fandom is one big happy family' stage and into the 'Expect and defend yourself against ripoffs' philosophy which, sorrowfully, seems essential to concons nowadays.) Susan conceived and executed the AOY Room and has received a lot of well deserved praise for a brilliant effort. I helped when I could, mostly coolie labour, digging out display material, scrounging poster board and other construction materials, making copies of rare items, and slicing up the slogans Susan printed up for the walls. All the work at the con itself was done by Susan and her helpers, and I trust they got the egoboo they deserved.

The single most concentrated effort I put into preparation for TORCON was an entire weekend devoted to the preparation of certificates to honour the Hugo nominees. In keeping with a policy established by NOREASCON which was unfortunately allowed to lapse by LACON, TORCON decided to present all the nominees with something to indicate the prestige involved in being a Hugo nominee. Accordingly Derek Carter made up a nifty looking certificate saying "_____ was nominated for a Hugo Award in the _____ category etc, etc" and we had a hundred printed up on really classy looking parchment. Since I'd been a prime mover behind this touch, and since I'd published fifteen issues of a fanzine liberally sprinkled with Letraset titles, I was "elected" to complete the certificates. Accordingly I went down to the printers, picked up the blank forms, trotted over to the artist's supply store and bought five sheets of the same Letraset that Derek had used to design the wording on the award, and came home to spend an entire weekend filling in all those blanks. Since only John Millard and Gordon Van Toen knew who had won the Hugos, I lettered up a certificate for every nominee, the idea being that John would discard those made out in the names of the actual winners. I spent about forty eight hours on those certificates. Carefully laying down each letter, checking for uniform spacing, making sure the various entries were properly centered, etc. I had my own standards as well as TORCON's to live up to. Eventually I finished, and presented them to Peter Gill at the next committee meeting. Whereupon he lost them.

Well, he didn't actually lose them, they just got put away with every good intention of distributing them once the Hugos had been announced. Only when the Banquet finally took place, and the winners had been announced, nobody was quite sure where the runner-up certificates had been put for safe keeping. So they never did get handed out. Sigh. Finally, some nine months after TORCON, I tracked them down and retrieved them. I took them to this year's DISCLAVE and gave out three or four, and I'll take them down to DISCON and give out as many as I can there. If it's any consolation, good people, you'll likely get your certificates before the winners get their rocketships!

The other non-coolie activity I engaged in before and during the convention was in supervising the auction section of the program. But that is Another Story...

I suppose it's a truism of conventioneering the members of the concommittee aren't supposed to enjoy the convention. So I'm not going to complain too much about all the things I missed, or about all the things I never even heard about until I read a variety of conreps in fanzines appearing after TORCON.

Of course, Susan and I weren't officially on the TORCON Committee, but we both felt a great deal of obligation to do whatever we could to ensure the success of the convention. Part of this was simple self-protection. To a large number of active convention and fanzine (where the reports on the con would appear) fans, we were Canadian fandom. That sounds rather puffed-up (as Tiny Tim was wont to say) and it denigrates the committee as a whole, but it's true that most of the people working hardest for TORCON had a relatively low profile in fandom. Susan and I were the only members of the committee who had combined publishing fanzines, writing for other fanzines, and extensive convention attending over the years prior to TORCON. A large number of people wrote or telephoned directly to us when they required information about TORCON or had a beef with the committee. It was in our own self-interest to work hard for the success of the con, since we stood to be prime targets for the brickbats if things went wrong.

(A minor example. Although we didn't know it, Susan and I were the only members of the committee who had ever met Bill Rotsler. But when the committee received the photographs for the program book from Jay Kay Klein, they accepted his word for the fact that the people were whom he claimed them to be. The result was that Bill Rotsler, Fan Guest of Honour at TORCON 2, was represented in three thousand copies of the Program Book by a picture of John Schoenherr! I knew as soon as I saw the finished book that the picture in question wasn't Bill, but there wasn't a lot to be done by then. I undertook to apologize to him on behalf of the committee, and he was most gracious about the entire affair. His reaction, so typical of his brilliant quickness, appears facing this page. I'm sorry, Bill: how about sending Australia a picture of yourself and claiming it's me?)

There were parts of TORCON that I never did get to visit. This wasn't entirely due to my semi-official position, but it helped. I'm not talking about the program items, of course; no-one really expects to attend more than one or two panels or speeches at a convention. (I did regret being forced to miss the panel I was supposed to appear on because of duties involving the last auction and the payment of various early departures who had donated material to the TORCON auction. Apart from the egoboo involved on being on a Worldcon panel, I missed out on the free lunch TORCON provided for its speakers. Sigh. (Are you paying attention, DISCON committee? There'll be a quiz...))

I never saw the Powers exhibit, for example, or the Gestetner room with its free mimeos and electrostencils, or the Press Room, or the Bakka Book Store. During the day, when these places were open, there were always other things to be done. I never really had a chance to see Susan's AOY Room with the degree of attention it deserved. When I had some time to see it, the security guard would bar the door, and when it was open to the public, I never had the time it merited. Luckily I'd seen most of the material prior to its assembly in the room. And I watched the carousel, to see which of the slides I'd set aside for Susan had been used. My apologies to the numerous photographers in fandom: the age of the Instamatic is upon you.

Missing interesting parts of the rest of the convention was due to its sheer size. Each night I partied until five or six in the morning, and yet I know I missed out on meeting a great number of people I would have liked to have spent time with. I never did make it to the apa-45 party, or to any of a dozen other fine gatherings I was kindly invited to. A lot of people have remarked that despite the enormous size of TORCON 2, they had no trouble finding the people they really wanted to see. This reinforces the concept of the conventions-within-a-convention idea that has dominated recent Worldcons. It tended to be true of TORCON: I was able to spend my

AM I MAD BECAUSE
YOU USED THE WRONG
PICTURE IN THE
CONVENTION BOOK?

WHERE EVERY
ONE I KNOW WILL
NOT RECOGNIZE ME

AND ALL THROUGH
HISTORY **THAT**
IS THE
WAY I WILL BE
REMEMBERED ☐

NO, OF COURSE NOT...
— ANYONE CAN
MAKE A MISTAKE

AFTER ALL — WHO
CARES ABOUT BLOWING
A ONCE IN A
LIFETIME EGOBOO?

HAPPENS EVERY
DAY THAT NO ONE
KNOWS WHAT
YOU LOOK LIKE

potsh

spare time with the small circle of close friends I wanted to be with, but in general I found it difficult to meet the new people I would have liked to convert from acquaintances-on-paper to friends-in-the-flesh. I think more and more Worldcons are getting to be places to meet old friends, and the smaller, less complicated regionals are the places to make new friends.

If there's one story that shows just how busy I found myself during TORCON, it would have to be the time Norbert Couch offered to buy me a beer...and I had to turn him down! Anyone who knows me in the slightest will realize the colossal magnitude of such a sacrifice! (er...Norbert, I'll be at DISCON and...)

(Let me take this opportunity to thank the countless people who helped out our ridiculously small committee behind the registration desk: people like the Couches, the Avocado Pit, Sandra Miesel, and countless others without whom we never would have been able to handle all the work involved. Such people are an unsung godsend to a harried committee, and unfortunately they never get the recognition they deserve.)

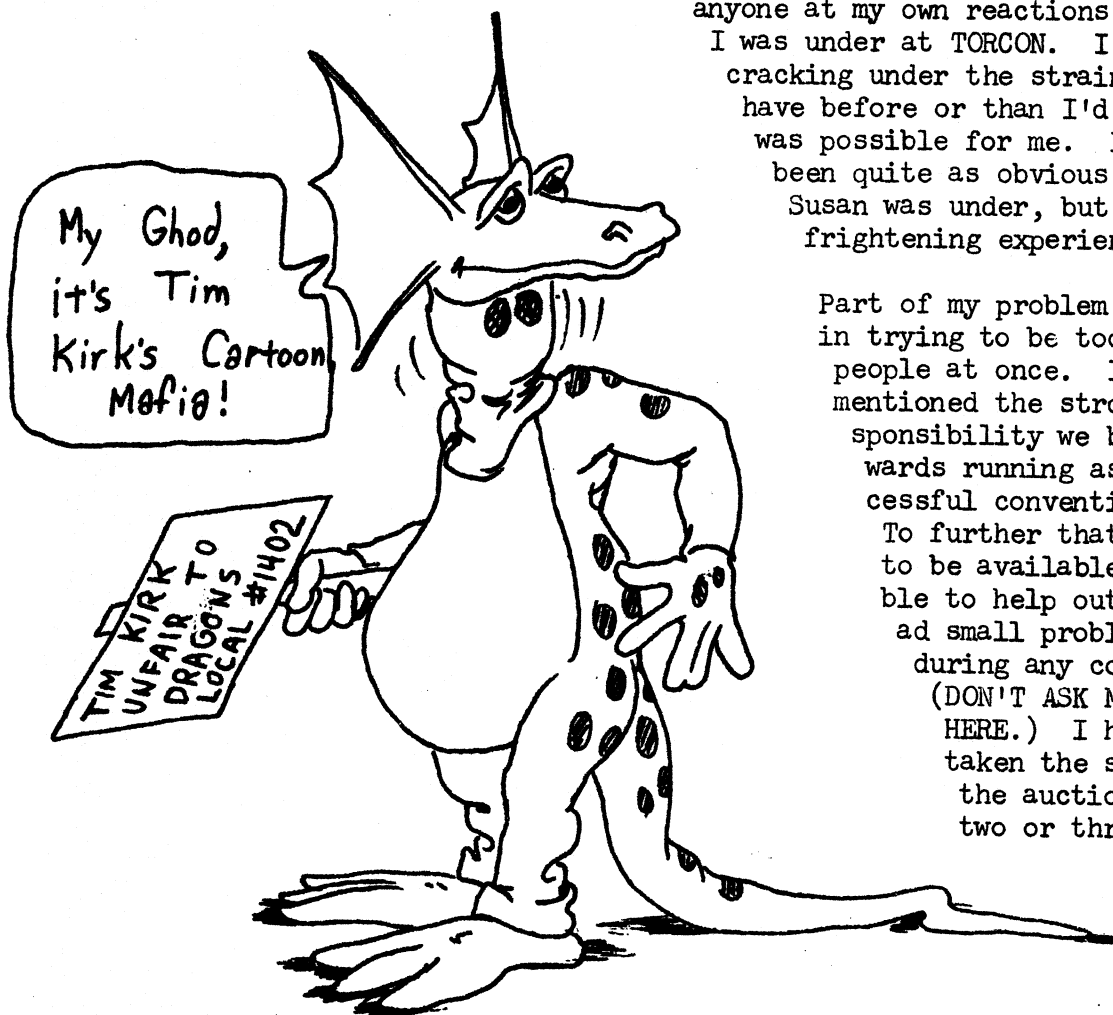
o(+)=--/-(=+)o

I have a reputation (unwarranted though it may be) of being a fairly placid individual. I'm thought of as being even-tempered and relatively unemotional. And it is a fact that I'm not often given to displays of excessive emotion. I do have a manic side that comes to the fore quite often and leads me to bound down the street doing an imitation of a chimpanzee or climb the nearest tree or fountain or statue or imitate Gene Kelly in torrential downpours. But other than that I'm supposed to be fairly calm. I don't shriek. Or wail. Or snarl. Or get hysterical. Or so

they say. And since I tend to believe that myself, I was probably more surprised than anyone at my own reactions to the pressure I was under at TORCON. I came closer to cracking under the strain than I ever have before or than I'd ever believed was possible for me. It may not have been quite as obvious as the strain Susan was under, but it was a rather frightening experience nonetheless.

Part of my problem at TORCON was in trying to be too many different people at once. I've already mentioned the strong sense of responsibility we both felt towards running as smooth and successful convention as possible. To further that aim, I tried to be available whenever possible to help out with the myriad small problems that arise during any convention.

(DON'T ASK ME, I ONLY LIVE HERE.) I had also undertaken the supervision of the auctions, which meant two or three hours each day moving material back and forth, trying to en-



sure that nothing was lost or stolen, keeping records of all monies taken in, and so forth. (Let me pause in this sordid tale of True Confessions and publicly thank the people who so ably ran the auctions despite my fluttering around: Jack Chalker and Bob Passevoy, who did almost all the actual auctioneering; Anne Passevoy, who was the most dynamite looking page I've ever seen at a worldcon auction; John Douglas and his relatives, whose names I regret I've forgotten, who helped on the money end of the auction; and Gay Haldeman and Astrid Anderson who also collected money, kept the records and generally kept me from dashing off in all directions. Without them, it wouldn't have come together at all, and I hope they all know how grateful I was/am.)

Then, too, I was a huckster at TORCON. And the lure of filthy lucre added its persuasive pull to the pressures exerted on me. I'm not a real huckster, of course: I was just selling off my own collection of comic books, horror magazines, and a few pieces of science fiction and fannish memorabilia that no longer truly appealed to me. And I made so incredibly fucking much money at it! It completely boggled my already unshaky mind: I'd sit there at my table for just a couple of hours a day and people would insist on thrusting ten and twenty dollar bills at me. I almost ran out of pockets to stuff the money into. And at that I only sold a very small fraction of the stuff I had with me. I kept thinking, whenever other duties or desires pulled me out of the huckster room, "Gee, if I wasn't doing _____, I could be earning another hundred bucks back at my table..." and "Golly, I'm sure glad these twenty seven hundred fans are all upright, honest dependable people with broad mental horizons and sensitive fannish faces, 'cause apparently that pile of unguarded paper is worth several thousand dollars..." Of such thoughts is a certain degree of uptightness bred, particularly in those of us unused to the feel and the sight of cash type money.

(Second story to indicate my mental state during TORCON: my wallet, as do most such devices, has a 'secret compartment' built into it. I seldom use it. But sometimes when I'm trapped on the toilet with nothing to read, I'll go through my wallet and look at the little notes I've stuffed in it, trying to figure out what the hell they mean, or play poker with the serial numbers on the bills. I was doing so some two weeks after TORCON and checked the secret compartment on a whim. Inside I found three twenty dollar bills! I've not the faintest recollection of putting them there, but I must have done so for safe-keeping some time during the con. I wonder how much money I just lost by sheer stupidity?)

As well as being a de facto committee member and a would-be huckster, I even tried to be a TORCON attendee. Foolish, I know, but hope springs eternal etc ad nauseum. For me that meant going to the



business meeting, the site-selection meeting, and the art show auctions. (Program? What program? You mean there were movies at TORCON? Nah, musta been some other convention...)

All of which meant that most of the time I was being torn between doing the things I wanted to do, doing the things I had to do, and doing the things I felt I really ought to do. It was liked being pulled in several different directions at once, and I freely admit that that is a sensation I could well live without. I kept thinking how nice it would be to be cloned and not have to make such decisions.

Enveloping everything else was the strain and the tension of my personal life which was coming to a head at that time. Susan and I shared a room, but we did not share a convention, partly because of our different official and semi-official duties, and partly because of the state of our relationship at that time. We seldom saw each other, and in fact, when Susan changed her plans and left early, I was tied up paying off the artists and didn't even get to say goodbye to her. It was a difficult and trying time for us both, and I'm glad we seem to have come through it as well as we have.

Mix all those aspects together and you end up with someone who at times was more a Boy than he was a Wonder. I know my brain was acting at considerably less than peak efficiency and my memory seems to have been fitful at best. I recall meeting Roy Tackett once in the lobby: he tells me we had several conversations throughout the con. Sigh. At two separate points during TORCON, Lee Smoire offered me tranquilizers, which is more than slightly incredible for someone as supposedly phlegmatic as I. More incredible still is that I accepted them. I really don't know what sort of profile I presented at TORCON, but if anyone thought I acted rather strangely towards them, they were probably right. Sorry about that, as the saying went. It was a bit freaky at times. I know I made some rather poor decisions... but I'm all right now...really I am.."Daisy, Daisy.....

But even if TORCON was a strained and strange convention in some ways, I don't mean to imply that it wasn't enjoyable. The parties were great, what I remember of them, and thanks to the understanding of my friends and the generosity of fandom as a whole there were pretty terrific highpoints as well. I'm just trying to capture the whole picture in these ramblings. As I said, it was the best of times, it was the worst of times, but above all it was memorable. (SURE I'D DO IT AGAIN...IN ANOTHER 25 YEARS.)

o+=)-(=+o

But what of the convention, you ask? Quite reasonably. (And thanks for reading this far... Dad...) So let's try an ordinary type convention report to balance the personal revelations.

For me, TORCON more or less started on the Tuesday before the actual convention began. Being the only (temporarily) unemployed member of the Charmed Inner Circle of the committee, I volunteered to staff the small room that had initially been given to us as an office. This entailed getting to the Royal York hotel at nine in the morning and sitting in an empty room for about five hours until various minions of local commercial establishments began dropping by with boxes filled with envelopes, program books, advertizing matter, paper, plastic nametag holders and various of the other paraphernalia so essential to confusing everyone at registration time.

By late afternoon other members of the committee had arrived to help on the delightful task of stuffing the registration packets. Some early arriving fannish friends were also put to work; Andy Porter and Jerry Kaufman were there, I think... I suppose the convention semi-officially seemed to begin for me when a hotel employee showed up with a lone unknown fan in tow whom he'd rescued from wandering around other parts of the hotel. I explained (this was fairly early in the afternoon) that

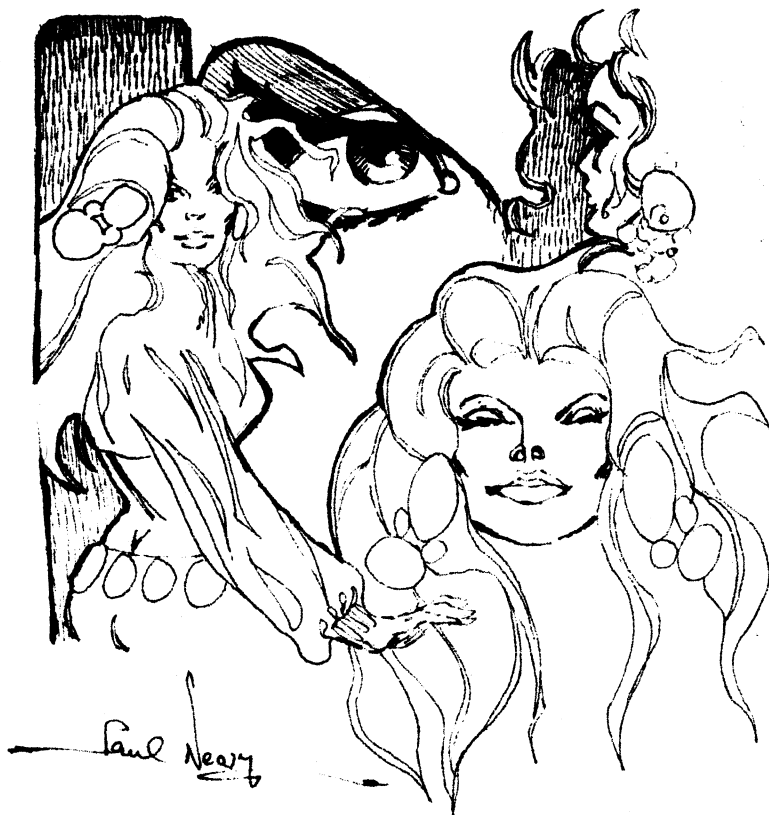
he was three days early for the con and was croggled to find he'd come all the way from Seattle. A few minutes later, when we finally got around to introducing ourselves, I was even more croggled to find out he was Loren MacGregor. Naturally, we put him to work.

(I really don't guarantee chronology on this. If I say "Tuesday" it might have been a day or so either side. For that matter, I might be thinking about LACon, or Fan Fair 2... But I'm fairly confident of the few details so far. If I get things wrong, though, write and tell me: I'll include all corrections in the hardcover edition...)

The hotel had asked us to take over our rooms on Wednesday, and since we weren't paying for them, we graciously agreed to do so. This entailed a relatively short cab ride encumbered by four or five boxes of the kipple I hoped to sell, a couple of suitcases, all of Susan's clippings, fanzines, boards and posters etc, and some TORCON type stuff, like the five inch high registration signs I'd lettered up on the assumption that they'd smooth out the process of registering. The ease of actually getting to the con was probably one the few advantages to having it here in Toronto. A lot cheaper, too. (ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I'D RATHER IT HAD BEEN IN MINNEAPOLIS.)

By this time, we'd moved into the room that was to be our permanent headquarters, and had begun to set up the convention in earnest. The usual group of much-needed volunteer assistants helped moved piles of boxes from one room to another, helped lug tables and chairs around and generally made themselves indispensable to a short-staffed and extremely grateful committee. More and more early arrivals appeared, to be greeted with genuine if somewhat hurried enthusiasm. The hotel began to take on the atmosphere of a convention hotel. And the small crises that give a special flavour to a worldcon began to happen, on both a personal and conventional level.

That night we had dinner with the Miesels and perhaps a couple of other friends (or ex-friends, once they read this) and, I suppose, spent the night in celebration. At least, I don't have a voucher for an unused evening that I can redeem, so some-



thing went on somewhere. (Don't you enjoy these precise, detailed reports?) Somewhere or other in those two preliminary, pre-convention days I remember picking up some \$3500 worth of Paul Lehr artwork and numerous other goodies for the auction; finding Suzle Tompkins and telling her not to worry because someone had turned her wallet into the hotel security office, only to discover that she hadn't even known she'd lost it (Typical TORCON Tale #3: the \$125 or so dollars in the wallet were still all there!); meeting numerous old friends I hadn't seen in two months, or two years, plus many old friends I'd never met before; discovering what a real Aussie hat looked like and putting my old hat out to pasture for a while; and doing a few of the hundred and one chores necessary to give the majority of the attendees the impression that everything is under control and running smoothly.

Thursday night I had the honour of being a sort of semi-official host for a dinner for some of the committee members and our fan guest of honour ~~John~~ Bill Rotsler and his charming companion Vincene Wallace. (Translation: I had the money and got to pay the bill: with eight diners and several bottles of wine at a fairly decent French restaurant, it was close to being a Religious Experience.) I recall it as one of the more relaxed and enjoyable parts of the convention.

I think it was Friday morning that I went back to our apartment and picked up Larson E. At the parties Thursday night, several people had expressed a strong desire to meet him, and I'd been planning on bringing him in anyway. I recall that Joni Rapkin needed a reel-to-reel recorder to get some music taped for her costume ball presentation, and I'd offered to do the taping for her. Larson E was a big hit at TORCON, delighting and petrifying large numbers of fans. He was also responsible for the Royal York blowing their image as a Grand Hotel, as far as I'm concerned. The hotel that prides itself on being able to handle anything, including a horse ridden through the lobby one football final weekend, freaked out over a harmless seven foot snake. After he'd spent a day quietly curled around my neck at the reg-

istration desk, auction and my huckster's table, and an evening fascinating various fans at the Australia party, the hotel manager asked me to keep him out of sight. Apparently he was terrifying several of their other guests. From a distance, I suppose. I did take him home (Saturday morning, was it Randy?) but it seemed like a tempest in a teapot to me: he couldn't, and wouldn't, have hurt anyone. I'm glad I had a chance to introduce him to those who wanted to see him: he died two weeks ago, and I'm going to miss him.

It must have been Friday that I started my short-lived but lucrative career as a huckster. A great deal of my financial success I owe to Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell who constantly lent me their comic book price guide so I could get some idea of what the other dealers were probably charging. They also kept an eye on my table during the many hours I was away doing other convention duties, and I'll take this chance to thank them publicly for their help. Gay Haldeman kindly brought me some food on a couple of occasions, noting, I expect, that I was too avaricious to seek out such non-essentials myself. The very first day, in fact one of the very first times I opened the table, Ron Graham, the



Australian fan, ambled over and bought over a hundred dollars worth of comic books, magazines, prints, and fanzines: I realized I could get to like this sort of life! Ron was also looking for someone to mail his purchases back to Australia, since he couldn't take them all with him. He was offering an ungodly amount of money for this relatively simple service. I offered my services free of charge, and in the days after TORCON I wrapped up and mailed off seven packages of stfnal material to Yagoona. Some time later Ron very kindly sent me a near-complete set of VISION OF TOMORROW, his now-defunct prozine, and again I owe a public word of thanks. It was good to be able to promote better fannish relations between the colonies.

Much of the rest of the convention is just a chaotic series of similar memories to which I can attach few names, times or places, interspersed with a smaller number of very vivid incidents. I partied somewhere each night, because I never got to bed before about six am, but I'm not too sure just where those gatherings were. I suspect that possibly most of them were in the Australian suite, and I do recall being the last to be ushered gently but firmly out of the Australia suite by a tired Merv Byrns one night. Most of the TORCON parties I read about later on.

I saw the costume ball, Saturday night, and took quite a few slides. I was particularly delighted that Randy Bathurst won, because he'd been calling me for months before the con and giving me progress reports on the costume. Other people found Randy photogenic, and at one point when I was gagging around with him, me in my red caftan, Randy in his green dragon suit, Harvey Bilker took a picture which later appeared as a full-colour, full-page picture in SWANK magazine. The sort of people who buy SWANK probably weren't looking at Randy and me but it's an honour of some sort. I suppose.

Earlier that day, Susan and I had spent a rare daytime half-hour together watching Australia wrap up the 1975 Worldcon and hearing them announce us as Fan Guests of Honour. Although I still feel that an honour of this magnitude could have been given to a great many more deserving fans, it is certainly a great thrill, and I'm looking forward to the trip of a lifetime that summer. Assuming I can afford the trip, that is! I doubt that any committee deserved to win a worldcon bid in recent years to the extent that the Australians did. I'm delighted that fandom agreed with me.

Sunday, of course, was the climax of my fannish career to date. The Hugo banquet and subsequent celebration.

I hadn't really expected to win the fanzine Hugo, but I certainly wanted to. I didn't realize just how much I wanted to until the banquet started to draw closer and I began to get more and more nervous about the whole thing. Looking back, it was ridiculous to get uptight about the matter, but perhaps it was the whole combination of events I described previously that caused the reaction. Susan and I took our TORCON-sponsored free dinner that night in the dining room of the Royal York and in the company of the Bowers, the Miesels and Sheryl Birkhead. It's no reflection on the company, but I remember rather little of that meal.

I remember the awards' presentation, but with a strong sense of unreality. Susan was feeling the pressures even more than I, and had gone to the room to calm down a little. I went to the banquet room to get us somewhere to sit where we



could see and hear the ceremonies and also, just in case, get to the podium without knocking over more than a couple of dozen people in the process. The rest, as they cliche, is history.

We could have done without the cretins who demeaned the entire presentation by hissing when LOCUS was announced as one of the nominees, but I guess there are fugg-heads everywhere and at every occasion. Andy Porter was leaning against the wall a couple of feet away from us, and we shrugged at each other when ALGOL was announced in third place. When LOCUS was called out in second place, I'm sure my heart jumped, and I think I heard a gasp of pleasure and surprise that had to be louder than just Susan and I. Then I was picking my way through the crowd, in a daze, receiving congratulations from friends along the way, vaguely hearing cheers, seeing people on their feet?, or was that just wishful thinking? I remember Lester's broad and understanding smile, and Susan's obvious joy, so strongly echoed by my own feelings. Susan said thank you, and I said something inane, and then it was all over except for the incredible sense of disbelief that it had actually happened at all... and the tangible evidence of that neat wooden block to prove that it really had. (BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE ORDERING THE HUGOS...)

Possibly the most beautiful part of the whole thing was the very real pleasure that the award gave to our many friends. So many of them came up afterwards to offer congratulations, and some even had tears of happiness in their eyes. The knowledge that you've created such love in another person is worth more than all the rocket ships in fandom. For all those friends who helped us, supported us, and made the whole thing possible, the magazine and the award, a sincere and humble 'Thank you.' Moments like those are very rare: I wish I had a more complete memory of how it all happened, but I'll treasure what I do remember of it. And some day, Real Soon Now, I'll have that rocket ship, right John Millard...?

Back at our seats, Susan gave me a beautiful Enzenbacher demon that she'd bought me as a consolation for losing (if the electrostencil works, you might see it as a preliminary cover to this section) and we shared a last quiet moment together. Then the banquet was over and we were being kissed, and thumped on the back and shaken by the hand by large numbers of well-wishers. We'd planned a party for those who had lost in the voting, and unfortunately there were people such as Bill Rotsler and Robert Silverberg who were eligible to be there. We shared some champagne, and I celebrated with my very last bottle of Ballantine's IPA, and soon the party was spilling out of Rosemary's room and filling the hall. It was a night of celebration, tinged with a sense of unreality that the whole thing was happening. A night, as they say, to remember.

(One thing I remember of it was encountering one of the really top names in the comic book industry very, very early the next morning. The man was spaced out of his mind, staggering down the hall, dried blood covering one temple, from a fall or a fight, belligerently seeking another party with more free booze or dope. It was hard to reconcile that pathetic figure with the millions of kids who respected and admired his professional image. Feet of clay... there's a lot of it going around.)

Monday was supposed to wrap up the convention. Ha. I've already mentioned that supervising the final auction, collecting the unsold material, paying off the contributing artists, etc., caused me to miss the panel I was supposed to be on, and resulted in Susan leaving without my having a chance to say goodbye. So it goes. Once again it was Gay and Astrid who manned (or is that "personned" nowadays?) the desk and helped me get the details straightened out. I don't believe anyone complained, so I suppose I managed to work things out reasonably well.

One of the drawbacks to being a teacher and a fan is that school invariably starts the day after Labour Day which means teachers have to leave the Worldcon fairly early on the Monday and miss out on the last night parties. At least at TORCON I was



able to stay until about nine o'clock before packing up everything left over from the previous five frenetic days and heading back to Maynard Avenue. At that, I missed Alice Haldeman biking through the halls of the Royal York. But just as I was ready to leave, and was saying goodbye to friends in the DC suite (?), someone discovered that we could get out through the windows and onto the roof, overlooking much of the city. It was a beautiful night, even if somewhat muggy. (The oppressive heat and humidity didn't break for several more days.) I stood on the roof, surrounded by friends, the tensions and pressures finally over, and we watched the fairyland of lights beneath us: it was a tranquil, beautiful moment, in startling contrast to the days that preceded it. And amidst that peace, I said goodbye: to a lot of friends, but not to TORCON...

A small part of TORCON came back to my apartment with me. The Bowers were staying a few days, to wind down after their convention. Bruce Gillespie was staying for a week or so, to see more of the city and its people. Jerry Kaufman was staying overnight, just to be terrified by the least unusual and most innocuous of my menagerie. And Paul Anderson needed a place to sleep before moving on. And I had to be at work the next morning at 7:30. Naturally, we stayed up until early in the morning discussing fanzines, fandom, and conventions.

In fact, with Bruce, Bill and I on hand, The Perfect Fanzine was a topic of considerable conversation over the next three days. Unfortunately, with all the work involved in starting out a new year of classes, I really wasn't a very good host, but my guests were kind enough not to complain: I suspect they all appreciated a chance to relax and recover from the convention. After the Bowers left, Bruce stayed on for several days, and we talked about fanzines, and about how surprisingly similar we both are in basic character, and about living the bachelor life, and we were both interviewed by a Winnipeg radio station over the telephone. TORCON continued.

It was several days before I was able to get down to the Post Office to pick up the package I'd received notification was waiting for me there. When I did, I became possibly the only TORCON attendee to see the half dozen beautiful George Barr paint-

ings that George had mailed to me a couple of days too late to get into the Art Show. So I mailed them back to him: and I mailed Ron Graham's purchases to him: and I got several duplicate slides made from the group Susan had used in the AOY Room and sent them off to the people who had asked for copies: and eventually, after over a month, I got my own slides developed and copies made of those I liked to be sent to the friends in question. And so TORCON slowly drew to a close for me.

But TORCON isn't really over, even yet. And I don't mean in just the symbolic sense of remaining alive in my memories. It won't be over for me until I've handed out the last of those Hugo runner-up certificates; or until the last of the money TORCON is putting into a party at DISCON 2 has been spent; or until that silver phallic symbol rests upon the wooden base, rather than my little demon.

And when that moment comes, I'll raise a glass of good scotch in the direction of the Royal York Hotel and offer a toast to Larson & to all the things that began and ended with TORCON. And likely I'll breathe a sigh of relief and think to myself, "Put on a Worldcon in Toronto? WELL, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME!"

oO-)+=+(-Oo

endit

The newspapers! Sir, they are the most
villainous--licentious--abominable--infernal
--Not that I ever read them--no--I make it a
rule never to look into a newspaper.

--The Critic, Richard Brinsley Sheridan

HARD
PRESSED

Sheridan may well have been onto a very sound idea there! In 1948, press coverage of TORCON consisted of stories consistent with the headlines ZAP! ZAP! ATOMIC RAY IS PASSE WITH FIENDS! and DON'T WAKE UP SCREAMING HORROR BOYS INVADE CITY! In a vain effort to discourage such stories, TORCON 2 set up a press office, staffed by intelligent committee members, with blowups of those earlier stories on the wall coupled with a request to avoid such childish approaches this time around. Here are most of the newspaper items that resulted from TORCON 2: you judge how successful we were!

Sci-fi freaks turn out in force for big Toronto convention

Three thousand science fiction fans ignored the beaches this weekend and headed instead for Toronto's Royal York Hotel.

The occasion was the 31st World Science Fiction Convention and the first to be held in this city for 25 years.

Robert Bloch, perhaps best known as the author of *Psycho*, was the guest of honor on that earlier occasion and remembers that only 200 people turned up.

This time, however, Toronto sci-fi freaks turned out in force, along with large groups of tourists in town especially for the occasion.

A record-breaking 490 people paid \$10 a head to attend the three-day session of science fiction lectures, film shows, book sales and informal discussions. Bloch, incidentally, was once again the guest of honor.

One of the most important parts of the convention, which

is held annually in different parts of the world, is the presentation of the Science Fiction Hugo awards.

This year, Mike and Susan Glicksohn, of Toronto, won a Hugo in the "fan-zine" category (magazine for science fiction fans) for the high quality of their publication, *Energumen*.

Next year's convention will be held in Washington, D.C. In 1975 it is scheduled for Australia.

Sci-fi no longer pie in the sky

Prophetic stories turning to human approach

By NORMAN HARTLEY

Science fiction fans, tired of being laughed at as lovers of monsters and little green men from Mars, are fighting back.

Journalists who go down to TORCON 2, the 21st World Science Fiction Convention in Toronto this weekend, prepared to make fun, will be greeted by a display making fun of them for having always misunderstood the extraordinary phenomenon of science fiction.

In 1948, 200 sci-fi fans gathered in a cramped studio on Queen Street East for TORCON 1 and the press made jokes about monsters.

This year 3,000 fans are here—from many countries and the display shows the press is still making fun.

But the conference makes it pretty clear that somewhere along the line, the mocking outsiders have missed a very big point.

For one thing, too many of the early science fiction writers' predictions have become science fact for the mockery not to sound a bit hollow.

With men walking around on the moon and repairing spaceships in orbit, it's pretty hard to make snide re-

marks about the plots of the several hundred books on display at the convention.

But in other ways too, the public is only just beginning to catch up with the sci-fi fan.

Ecology, a fashionable concern at the moment, is old hat in science fiction where stories warning of what will happen if we don't marshal the world's resources more intelligently date back 40 years or more.

In Toronto this weekend, the science fiction fans are enjoying their joke at the expense of skeptical onlookers but it is a gentle joke.

One of the most striking features of the convention is its good humor. Science fiction fans like to have fun; there is no generation gap and no shortage of things to talk about—from bio-feedback brainwave monitoring to speculation about sex life in undersea villages.

One man who is enjoying the variety of delegates is Wilson (Bob) Tucker, author of *The Year of the Quiet Sun*, a science fiction classic, who attended the Toronto convention in 1948.

"Back in 1948 we were mostly gawky young kids. Now there are far more women and girls and the kids who are the same age as we were then

are a lot more sophisticated now."

Walking about the convention floor, Mr. Tucker makes no secret of his enjoyment at watching the mini-skirted and long-haired girls but he is more cautious in his approval of the entry of sex into science fiction, a new trend which, he says, dates back only six years or so.

"Sex is the big new trend in science fiction," he said "but I think space stories still account for the biggest percentage of science fiction in books and magazine stories.

"But there is better characterization too. People are more human."

One feature of the convention is that not only the authors are experts; science fiction fans seem to have the capacity to store incredible amounts of information about the genre.

One woman who spends much of her time helping the science fiction lore to circulate is Susan Glicksohn, one of Canada's leading experts and science fiction critics.

With her husband Michael, she edits an award-winning science fiction fan magazine, *Energumen*, and teaches science fiction studies, while a doctoral candidate in Canadian literature.

At the convention opening she circulated wearing a "helicopter beanie"—

a little hat with a plastic propeller on top which several other delegates wore in fun, to play up to the outside world's image of a sci-fi fan.

"There's a very close relationship between science fiction's professional writers and their fans," she said. "Many of the leading writers began as fans and contributors to early fan magazines."

She sees a current trend away from stories about gadgets toward human problems created by them.

"Writers are starting to move away from the straight voyage-to-the-moon kind of story and are trying to deal with the human effects of future developments," she said.

But anyone who is curious to know how Canada's future looks to science fiction writers should look into Wilson Tucker's next novel which is due out shortly.

"It takes place in Canada about 300 years from now during the approach of the next ice age," Mr. Tucker said.

"When the story opens there is a huge glacier about to encroach the country and the Canadian and United States governments have bought Mexico and transferred all the Canadians there to live to save them from being crushed by the ice"

No little green men in halls at science fiction conference

By ROSEMARIE BOYLE
Star staff writer

Science fiction fans say they aren't "weirdos who believe in little green men," although they read "fanzines" titled Energumen, hold costume balls and wear beanies with propellers.

A "fanzine" is a science fiction magazine. About 2,500 "fanzine" readers and science fiction buffs are in Toronto this weekend for Torcon 2, the second Toronto conference of the World Science Fiction Society.

The conference, sponsored by the Ontario Science Fiction Club, is being held at the Royal York Hotel.

It continues until Monday with guest speakers, including Isaac Asimov, a physicist and science fiction writer, movies and auctions.

Science fiction fans say there is more to their hobby than just the fun and costume balls.

"I don't understand much of the scientific aspects of science fiction writing," says organizer Susan Glicksohn, editor of Toronto-based magazine Energumen. "I'm more interested in the human consequences of technological change."

The Glicksohns have attended three of the world conventions, held annually



ISAAC ASIMOV
Physicist and writer

in different parts of the globe, and this year their magazine has been nominated for a Hugo, an award presented annually to the best amateur science fiction magazine.

Mrs. Glicksohn has been interested in science fiction since, at the age of 13, she wandered into a library and picked up Lucky Starr and

the Pirates of the Astoroids, by Isaac Asimov.

"The librarian told me I shouldn't be taking out those books because they were for boys," she said.

In another part of the Royal York hotel, her husband, Mike, was selling old comics and science fiction books, sporting a pet boa constrictor around his neck.

A sign on a convention-room wall advised delegates: "If you decide to attend bring plenty of money, a zapgun and a helicopter beanie."

"But fans don't go in for that anymore," said Mike Pirolli, of Philadelphia. The 19-year-old college student said he was not as "fanatic as most of the other delegates."

"I'm sure a lot of these people are the type who can't go to sleep at night because there are so many science fiction magazines covering their beds."

He came to Torcon because he wanted to "meet other fans and to buy some old books that just aren't available anywhere else."

He's more interested in the fantasy side of the cult than in the technological side, he said.

He said Robert Bloch, guest of honor at the convention, is his type of writer. Bloch, the author of the

Alfred Hitchcock movie thriller Psycho, spoke at yesterday's opening.

"Yesterday's fantasies are today's realities," Bloch told the delegates, who gave him a standing ovation.

"We science fiction fans never scoffed at the future. We lived in the space age when most people were still riding streetcars."

* * * * *

The first of these three articles was seemingly the only coverage granted TORCON by The Toronto Sun, the city's sensationalistic morning tabloid. It appeared under a picture of two SCA types staring with artificial intensity at a display case full of sculpture. The caption was correct, and the story, possibly because of its brevity, contains only one error and a misprint. The epithet in the headline, though, does leave something to be desired!

The Globe and Mail, Canada's national newspaper, provided the second story here and I think it rates as one of the more intelligent and thoughtful looks at a science fiction convention that I've seen in the press. I don't know if Bob Tucker really

thinks that sex in science fiction only dates back six years, but I suspect from the accuracy of the rest of the article that he probably did say that. It's nice to know that at least one journalist both read and understood the plea we placed on the Press Room wall.

The Toronto Star, largest of the three Toronto papers, doesn't seem to have changed its basic line of thought about science fiction fans in the quarter century since the first TORCON. In those days, we were "horror boys", attending the annual meeting of the Torcon Society, whatever that may have been. And the third article presented here makes it pretty clear that they don't take too seriously our claim that we aren't "weirdos." This article also has far more errors than those from the other papers, providing a genuine sense of historical continuity with that first Toronto convention. Susan seems to have been quoted fairly accurately, but it's interesting to note her promotion to organizer of TORCON and editor of ENERGUMEN. I'm also wondering which three "world conventions, held annually in different parts of the globe" we've attended? That "sign on a convention-room wall" was years old, of course, but why bother with such minor details for a cult of weirdos?

The largest amount of coverage TORCON received was also in The Star, but for reasons of size and lack of interest, I'm not reproducing that article here. It was a half page story which appeared on Monday and featured a pretty good photograph of The Abominable Doctor Phibes costume from the masquerade. Typical of The Star was the caption which identified a second costume as Flash Gordon, although it was obviously the comic book character, the Flash. The article itself dealt mostly with the Burroughs Bibliophiles luncheon and quoted guest Buster Crabbe at length. The title of this opus of creative journalism? 3,000 SCI-FI FANS ARE HERE AND 'THEY'RE WEIRD, JUST WEIRD'. The quotation in the title was attributed to a "hotel housekeeper" at the Royal York, and as I recall the whole tone of the piece was typical of the condescension which that paper invariably treats sf. We had two working journalists handling the press relations for TORCON 2, but it really didn't seem to help us a great deal. If there's a solution to the problem of decent press coverage, I don't think we've found it yet.

Probably the best media treatment that I was personally aware of coming out of the convention was a forty five minute CBC Radio program on science fiction and fandom. It was co-created by Vancouver fan Daniel Say, using material taped at TORCON, the Vancouver convention earlier in the year, and possibly some other west coast gathering. While it didn't tell an established fan anything new, it did give an intelligent and fairly thorough basic introduction to the field as a whole.

+oO=(:)=Oo+

I never did hear what, if anything, of the twenty minutes of telephone interview Bruce and I did with CBC Winnipeg was actually aired. But a few days after the con, the editor of the journalism magazine at a local institute of higher education came over and interviewed me at length for a long article on fandom she was writing for her journal. We'd met very briefly in the committee room on the last day of the con when she came in looking for some details for her story. We both stopped, looked at each other, and realized instantly that we'd been in the same Grade 6 class together, even though we hadn't seen each other since that time. It's rather weird to be told that after sixteen years, a foot of hair and a full beard, that you haven't changed a bit! (But it must be true, because she recognized me, even though she didn't remember my name.)

Although I'm rather badly misquoted in a couple of places, maybe I'll reprint that interview sometime. It's a far more sympathetic treatment than the regular press has given us. And the young lady didn't even enjoy the convention! If the media is still the message nowadays, then it seems to me that the message is we've got a long, long way to go before science fiction fandom gets any respect from the fourth estate.



WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE

TELL BRUCE GILLESPIE

I REALLY AM

SANE SOMETIMES?

a TORCON 2 report by Susan Wood

TORCON 2 began the day I got a brick in the mail from Jodie Offutt. It ended on September 2, 1973, as I sat on Air Canada flight 161 to Regina. Numb with exhaustion, kept awake by screaming children (a special breed developed by tobacco companies to render nonsmoking sections uninhabitable), scared by the immediate future and confused by the immediate past, I tried to write a conreport. The very attempt was ridiculous. Yes, Michael, I know I promised... but what, exactly, am I doing, sitting in my apartment in Regina eight months and 2,000 miles later, trying to write that same report?

Maybe I should buy a bottle of scotch, to help my fanwriting powers? Except the events I'm recording are already a blur.

What is a convention report? A chronological account of who you saw, had dinner with, partied with? (No-one who writes conreports ever seems to have come within a mile of the program.) Or is it an attempt to recreate the feel of the convention? I attempted to make a partial chronology on that plane flight. On Labour Day, while my friends were still at the Royal York watching Alice Haldeman ride her bike through the halls, I couldn't remember what I'd done in the previous six days. My last clear memory is of a pleasant evening spent ambling down the Yonge St. Mall with Jerry Kaufman, eating butter-cashew icecream, complaining about the 90° heat, and nattering. That was the last time I relaxed. The city filled up with fans, we moved into the hotel, the heat went up to 97° with humidity to match. (This is Typical Worldcon Weather; I wonder how Melbourne will react to 90° temperatures in midwinter?) The worldcon began, and I sailed off on a fatigue-and-excitement high.

The spirit of my TORCON is summed up by an incident on Sunday afternoon. As usual, I was sitting (or flapping around) in the All Our Yesterdays Room, enjoying the company of the friends who made it their hangout: Linda Lounsbury, planner-by-mail, without whom there would not have been a fanhistory display; Linda Bushyager, who helped run the show; Jerry Kaufman, gopher extraordinaire; Connie Faddis, whom I was delighted to see again; Eli Cohen, Richard Labonte, Suzle Tompkins, Dena Brown... faces who tried to talk to me. I had reached the stage of having to tell my mind to slow down, formulate its concepts into simple words, and force the mouth to utter these, slowly and distinctly: "Jerry. Here, money. Coffeeshop, basement. Breakfast, please." And in five minutes food would appear, and within an hour or so, someone would force me to ingest it. I was directing a stream of verbal meanings at Eli Cohen when I suddenly stopped and said (slowly, carefully): "Eli. I'm exhausted. I'm not making sense."

He patted me on the propellor beanie Leigh Couch had donated. "It's ok. You're making sense... it's just that you're waving your hands around, and you're all jittery, and the words are coming out twice as fast as normal. You sound like you're on speed."

A Perfect Stranger turned from his contemplation of ODD #20 (the one with the band-aided dragon) and said: "Bad trip? Want some Quaalude?"

I stared in horror, waved my hands about, and said "Huuuh? Uh, er, no!" -- by which I hoped to indicate that any interference with my metabolism would leave me, in 20 seconds, out cold, fit only to be propped in a display case labeled "Fiawol" for the rest of the convention. David Emerson arranged this display on Monday morning, but that's Another Story.

I wasn't on speed at TORCON, just naturally crazy. But I wish someone would tell Bruce Gillespie that I really am sane sometimes.

My TORCON was, first, the All Our Yesterdays Room, conceived as a tribute to fandom's history on the 25th anniversary of the first TORCON. Since this event had taken place nearly two months before I was born, my knowledge of fanhistory was limited to the memories of all the fans I could badger; resources like ALL OUR YESTERDAYS and FANCYCLOPEDIA; fanzine collections, mostly Michael's with help from Terry Carr, Boyd Raeburn and Bruce Robbins; Charlie Brown's guided slidetour of fandom; and especially the archives and memorybanks of Harry Warner Jr. I have two regrets: Harry decided his health was too poor to make the Toronto trip; and I only managed an incomplete record of fandom's history-through-fanzines -- public apologies especially to Buz and Elinor Busby, editors of the Hugowinning CRY.

I hoped to remind older fen of their past -- so they'd sit around reminiscing for the benefit of the neos and sf readers at their first convention. In the process, I learned a lot about the world of Hoy Ping Pong, crifanac and blog. I bought a water pistol, briefly considered sewing a "Friar Tucker" robe, and spent one fine evening stuffing Progress Report 4 into envelopes while trading lines with John Millard: "It's Eney's fault." "He's down in the bar." "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here!" "Bloch is Superb!" The neofan coolie labourers from the local sf club were crogged, but John and I had a great time. I began to hope others would too when Jodie sent that brick for the Tucker Hotel.

My TORCON was, second, a chance to meet people -- especially the Australians, who'd asked Michael and I to be their Fan GoHs in '75. I hoped, particularly, to meet Bruce Gillespie the Person, as distinct from Bruce Gillespie on Paper, superpublisher of SFC. Anyone who disliked all the books I liked, but enjoyed Loudon Wainwright and Hunter Thompson, had to be interesting.

Wednesday. We moved into the hotel, dragging boxes of Michael's comics (to be sold for his plane fare to Australia); my books and clothes (to accompany me to Regina); the AOY materials (including the brick) and assorted necessities (such as Michael's last bottle of IPA, for Hugo-banquet night.) In the convention office, people were busy but amazingly organized. TORCON had been hanging over our lives for two and a half years; now it looked like it might actually work. Early fans drifted in. I started to feel excited as I sat down to process registrations.

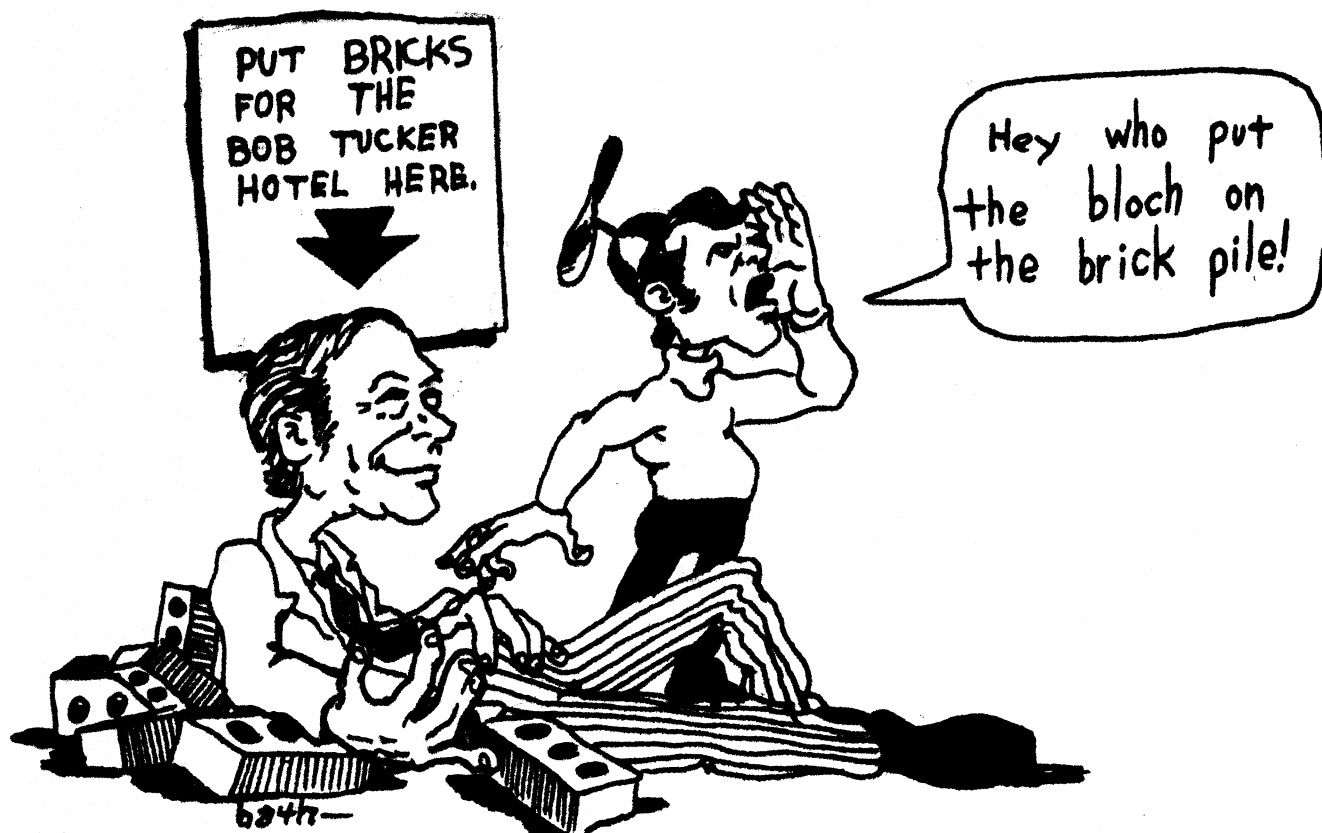
And then Bruce Gillespie walked in. "Bruce!" I carolled blithely. Well, ok. I yelled. Shrieked? "Hi! I'm Susan." He looked startled, winced, but ambled over, still jet-lagged. As he turned briefly to speak to Michael, I spotted another figure in the doorway: the rainbow-shirted form of Bill Rotsler. Now, Mr. Rotsler is not only a talented cartoonist, Hugo-nominated writer and our Fan GoH; he's also a cheshire-cat-like cuddly man. So I shrieked "Bill! Hi!", bounded across the room and hugged the Nice Man -- who picked me up, hugged me back, and said "Hi!" before

shaking hands with John Millard. I walked back, sat down, picked up the registration cards, and turned to talk to Bruce. He looked dazed, and soon politely excused himself. Pity: it was the last time I talked coherently to any fan until Christmas.

Thursday, nine A.M., was setup time. Somewhere Out There, the concom was hassling with artshow hangings held up across the border, Hugos ordered in January that had not materialized, films that weren't delivered, registration queues. Somewhere Out There a convention went on all weekend, with serious discussions of sf, keynote speakers, even some of the weird'n'freaky programing Richard Labonte and I suggested. I hope people enjoyed it. Meanwhile in the Toronto Room I confronted empty display cases, blank display panels, several boxes of fannish artifacts, and the realization that, however well the Room was planned in my head, it lacked a certain ... concreteness. It was a manic, hassled day, saved by the capable Lindas. They coolie-laboured, ran interference with people who dropped in with material and stayed to visit, and chatted with the security guard. He was a young West Indian who liked sf, enjoyed the crazy people, and gently closed the doors when the craziest one of all shrieked, "Oooout! The display opens tomorrow, maybe! OOOUUUTTT!! Oh, sorry, Bruce, not you!" -- but he'd vanished.

Shayne McCormack brought in some pictures. "Have you met Bruce yet?" she asked. I explained that I had, but incoherently. "I really AM sane sometimes," I added. "I'll talk to Bruce when the Room is finished." Shayne looked dubious, observed that Bruce seemed to prefer quiet women, and left when I started shrieking: "Where is Ben Jason? He promised me his worldcon program book collection! I have a whole empty display case! Where is Ben Jason?" At which point Bruce walked in again, handed me some photos, and fled.

Dinner Wednesday night had been Japanese, with the Miesels, Rosemary Ulliot, and Jerry Jacks. Dinner that night was French, with Bill Rotsler, Vincene Wallace (as pleasant as she is gorgeous), Rosemary and the Trimbles. Dinner the next night was



the Great Wall of China banquet, in the company of that most charming of gentlefen, Walt Liebscher. See, I can write a proper conreport! The food was, I'm sure, superb. The company was witty and entertaining; I wish I could tell stories like Bjo. But I might as well have been eating Kentucky Fried cardboard (that was Saturday night, at the Mars restaurant) completely alone. I was tired. I was hypertense. Thursday night, the Room was still a mass of posterboard on the floor. While everyone else partied, I locked myself into the Toronto Room. At 3 A.M., I drifted up to the Bushyager's party, hoping Ben Jason would arrive in the morning with his program books. Linda told me he had arrived... without. I was too tired to shriek.

I opened the All Our Yesterdays Room at 9:30 Friday morning. One Linda handed me coffee. Another spread out copies of Tucker's NEOFAN'S GUIDE. And the legendary Tucker appeared! He admired the bricks for the Tucker Hotel. He put on a propellor beanie. He smiled fondly at the 1948 TORCON issue of LE ZOMBIE. Tucker approved! Tucker said: "I'm sorry I didn't answer your letter about the project, but I was in Florida recuperating from an operation. I dug these out for you." He handed me an envelope full of the photos from ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. I looked at Tucker. I looked at the empty display case. And I whipped out the file of Rotsler cartoons I'd been hoping to use in the display, and, muttering, "So that's what Bill Rotsler looked like in '48!" set up a picture display in ten minutes flat.

So the Room worked. The First Fandomites hung around, trading stories. The neofans bought the GUIDE, and perhaps went away less puzzled than I was at my first worldcon, where the hucksters were selling copies of ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, and I couldn't see the point of it. Various of my friends made it a quiet spot to sit and chat. I met Gina Clarke, the original Duchess of Canadian Fandom. I met Ned McKeown, chairman of the first TORCON, as he and John Millard knelt in front of a case full of '48 souvenirs, and chuckled. I was made a Tucker Groupie, while Tucker and I chatted to local reporters in front of blowups of the 1948 convention coverage. "Zap! Zap! Atomic Ray is Passe With Fiends!" shrieked the GLOBE AND MAIL. "Don't Wake Up Screaming, Horror Boys Invade City" advised the STAR, whose reporter has quoted "Wilson Tucker of Bloomington, Illinois" at length. The reporters, who had only wanted to find someone standing still, were impressed enough by the capture of the first TORCON's Fan GoH to give us reasonably serious coverage -- despite the STAR's announcement, a week before, of a "Monster Convention" for "three thousand fans of monsters, the incredible and the unknown."

The convention came together while I fell apart. Friday night, I thought I could relax. The magnificent Rosemary Ulliot, Elizabeth Buchan Kimmerly, my earthmother, Susan Phillips the ACUSFOOS mascot (whom I hadn't seen since Fan Fair II) and a select group of Nice People -- including Bruce Gillespie -- found ourselves in my room. In my closet actually, admiring Larson E, placed there for safety when people started noticing him around Michael's neck, and fainting. I believe I began to make some intelligent remarks about Kurt Vonnegut to Bruce. I believe he began to suspect I had a brain in my head.

Then Monty Python came on. Sandra Miesel, Bob Silverberg, Eli Cohen, and half the immediate world had drifted in by the time it had ended. And in the midst of the party that decided to foist itself on me, an Ottawa Fandom Revival surfaced, with "Hey, remember the time at William Blake House when Fifth Avenue brought over the garbage bag full of popcorn?" "Yeah, that was the Vernal Equinox party when you promised me David Andrews, the Pound specialist, so I read the whole of Ezra Pound, and I hate Pound, and David brought two cases of beer and three women!"

Imagine not one, but four manic women, giggling hysterically. I tried to explain some of the references to Bruce, who kept muttering, "You're all mad." Eventually, I led my roomful of bodies down the hall, Pied-Piper-like, to the Aussie suite. Bruce had vanished, and I was worried. After all, tomorrow he had to announce the worldcon bid, with me as half its Fan GoH; I was afraid he was regretting the

choice. I cornered Paul Anderson. "Paul," I said slowly, thinking out the words so they'd come out clearly, "Paul, please, do you think I'm crazy, because I'm not like this normally, really, but I think Bruce thinks I'm crazy and I'm sure he's sorry about asking me to be Fan GoH because I can't talk coherently to anyone, or stay in one place for five minutes, but really I can, and would someone please tell Bruce I really am sane sometimes?" At which point I realized I was waving my hands and babbling incoherently.

Paul Anderson raised an eyebrow, looked down (he's about seven feet tall), and said, with great deliberation, "Mad? Welllll... you certainly are... vivid." I abandoned my group, and my attempt to act like a normal human being, and went to bed.

Saturday morning came all too soon, as far as my brain was concerned, but my body was wide awake and bouncing around at 7 A.M. I put an Aussie t-shirt on it, let it bop down to the St. Lawrence Market (one of my favorite places in Toronto) for apples, and pastries, and bunches of flowers for the Room. After insisting somewhat hysterically that yes, I KNEW everyone wanted to go to the consite bidding but I HAD to go, so PLEASE guard the display for me, I trundled off to the one program item I attended.

Now I was feeling fairly calm, confident that the Aussies would win, if only for the fabulous fannish spirit of their movie. But the calm, confident Bruce Gillespie was zipping through several manic-depressive cycles, running around the Canadian Room getting lights, mikes and projectors set up, whipping away my Genuine Aussie Digger Hat so Roger Zelazny could wear it while seconding the bid, checking to see that Progress Report Nought (that's zero -- I did some interpreting between speakers of the Queen's English and King Nixon's English) had been typed up since the publicity material hadn't arrived, and generally acting frantic. "Hello, Bruce!" I said cheerily. "Look, you're certain to win the bid. Everything will be fine. Calm down."

Bruce actually stopped running in circles for thirty seconds, looked at me in horror, and said: "You're telling me to be calm?"

Then John Millard pointed to the huge pile of ballots for Australia, and Bruce was off on his own private trip of high-octane egoboo. I remember leading an Aussie expedition to the local liquor store, during which I think I showed Merv Binns and Eric Lindsay that I could simulate a reasonable facsimile of sanity -- but I don't think they told Bruce. I remember that the costume ball took place; and I remember attending the Aussie victory party and chatting coherently with the Miesels about Sandra's magnificent "Queen of Air and Darkness" costume. Then I dropped in on Don and Sheila D'Amassa's apa-45 party for a few minutes before bed. My goodness, all those interesting people I only knew through the mail! I folded up on the floor, carefully (I was wearing a 30-year-old satin dress of my mother's) to have a sane, serious conversation with... Bruce Gillespie, about Australian sf. Then Will Straw walked into the room. WILL STRAW?!

"Will Straw! You're real!" I shrieked, bounding across the bed and several bodies to verify his corporeal existence, say hello, and apologize for thinking he was a hoax. Then I went back to Bruce, and the sentence I'd been in the middle of. Bruce gave me a strange look, and soon left.

The next morning, I met Peter Gill and John Douglas from the concommittee. Peter looked unharried for the first time in months; apparently the con was Going Well. "Hey, did you hear, the artshow hangings arrived!" he grinned. "And that's not all. You know how great the hotel staff are being?" -- I nodded appreciatively. "Well, you know Tom Smith, the convention manager -- he's a respectable executive type. But he's really enjoying the con! Turns out he reads sf. He moved his family into the hotel for the weekend; his kids are down watching the movies. And last night,



about ten o'clock, there he was, running through the con-floor lobby shouting 'Bjo! Where's Bjo Trimble? The hangings are here! Bjo!' He's as crazy as the rest of us!"

"Speaking of crazy," I said, "the Aussies think I am. Every time I try to talk to Bruce Gillespie, something happens in mid-sentence, and in ten minutes when I get back to Bruce, he's given up." I told them about Will Straw, ending with "And so would you please tell Bruce I really AM sane sometimes?"

Peter laughed, pointed out he hadn't talked to anyone, including his wife Judy, all week, and hurried off. John, immaculate in a three-piece junior-exec. suit, raised a practiced eyebrow. He glanced from the top of my propellor beanie to the tip of a grubby toe in a beat-up sandal, protruding from under a flowing blue dress. He noted the twitchy hands, the unfocussed eyes, the fuzzy outline, and he said, calmly: "Do you want me to lie?"

I was calm Sunday. Catatonic, in fact. Two hours sleep, too much excitement, and the realization that, two thousand miles and two days away, was my first teaching job, for which I was totally unprepared, can do that to a person. The knowledge that the immediate world considered me insane didn't help. Besides, we were getting uncomfortably close to the Hugos. I didn't expect to win the fanwriter Hugo; I hoped Terry Carr would. But I didn't expect to win the fanzine Hugo either.

I'm sure people drifted in and out of the Room all day. I don't remember. Terry Carr and I were interviewed at 10 A.M. for CBC Radio by Chuck Davis, who swears we were coherent. I don't remember. I did, finally, make a quick tour of the art show, where I saw the Alicia Austin painting Michael coveted. I did remember that, well enough to order its mate, a portrait of Larson E, as a Christmas present. And I even made it into the huckster's room, where Lesleigh Luttrell asked me if I wanted to join the new film apa. I laughed. Did she think I was crazy?

Across the room, the Enzenbachers were displaying their sculptures. We'd been impressed by their work at Westercon, and had urged them to come to Toronto. Gargoyle sculptures. Jewels. An intricate silver chalice. Covet, covet. I didn't expect to win the fanzine Hugo. I knew Michael would be disappointed, would need more consolation than a bottle of IPA. Besides, I needed something spectacular to celebrate my first Real Job. A bronze demon leered up at me. Quickly I wrote a cheque for it, and a beautiful garnet set in a twisty silver claw.

At last, I locked up the Room for the last time, changed into the silver dress I'd made to lose the Hugo in at Noreascon, made last minute arrangements with Rosemary who was having our Hugoloser's Party in her room, and trotted off for a Fancy Dinner. Sheryl Birkhead had been coaxed out of her hidey-hole to share the company of the elf-like Jerry Jacks, the platypoid Miesels, the legendary Bowers, and the fabulous fannish Glicksohn. The Boy Wonder, I mean. I was only there in the most literal of senses. Falling asleep over my plate, I numbly excused myself, went to my room to splash cold water on my face -- and suddenly was awake and down, crying and exhausted. Eventually, I pulled myself together and got to the banquet hall just as Lester Del Rey finished his pre-Hugo remarks. I don't know why he began with "Best Novel", unless he knew Isaac couldn't stand the suspense. I know I couldn't.

And then... third place to ALGOL... second to... LOCUS? And Michael and I gasped, I was on my feet, knocking people flying... halfway to the platform, I realized I'd never heard who won. Maybe SCIENCE FICTION COMMENTARY? And then I was clutching a wooden base with a plaque that said ENERGUMEN, giggling insanely, and hugging everyone in sight -- including Bruce Gillespie, whom I knew would never believe I really could be sane, sometimes.

Ten minutes later, I finally realized what had happened. "Michael!" I said, awestruck. "We won!" He nodded. "But, but, I bought you a consolation present, because we'd lose, and now what am I going to do with it?" Michael decided it would be all right to give him the demon -- as consolation because TORCON had lost all the Hugos.

Later that night, I was in the vicinity of the First Fandom party. I sat at the feet of Leigh Couch -- a great lady, and a tower of strength to harried concommittees. Dave Kyle said I could sit there. He and Tucker made me an honorable First Fandomite. Above me, fabulous fannish reminiscences proceeded. All I was aware of was Leigh's blue-purple robe, with gold embroidery that writhed before my eyes. I was cold, tired, alone in the middle of 2,700 people, shaking. And I was rescued -- by Bruce Gillespie and Phyrne Bacon, who chatted at me for ages because, they said later, they were afraid to leave me alone. I think they were worried because I was quiet, and sitting still. I hope they realized how grateful I was.

Monday. After three hours sleep, I packed for Regina, then packed up the Room. "Jerry. Money. Breakfast. Please. John Berry? FOOLSCAPS! Thank you! Sign receipt. 'Bye. Coffee?" At some point, Bruce drifted in while I was trying to say goodbye to friends; make sure irreplaceable material got back to its owners; deal with the showcase-rental people; kneel at Tucker's feet; and thank my helpers. He decided I was still insane, and vanished. That was the last chance I had to talk to Bruce, or to any of the fen I'd glimpsed. Not that I was able to talk. As Richard Labonte, David Emerson and Eli Cohen bundled me onto the airport bus, I had just enough presence of mind to clutch my Hugo base, and not enough to say goodbye.

I understand there was a TORCON. I hear people enjoyed it. Ted White in AMAZING, and people like Jodie Offutt, David Emerson, John Millard and Tucker Himself in letters said they'd liked the Room. Jodie talked about sitting in the Cincy suite, listening to Tucker and Liebscher swap stories. David told me he'd been

down in the bar, listening to Tucker, Liebscher and Rotsler tell stories of the Slan Shack, "and bawdy they were, too." And I talked to at least one goshwow neo who'd had Lester Del Rey re-autograph a book he'd signed for the kid's father, at the first TORCON.

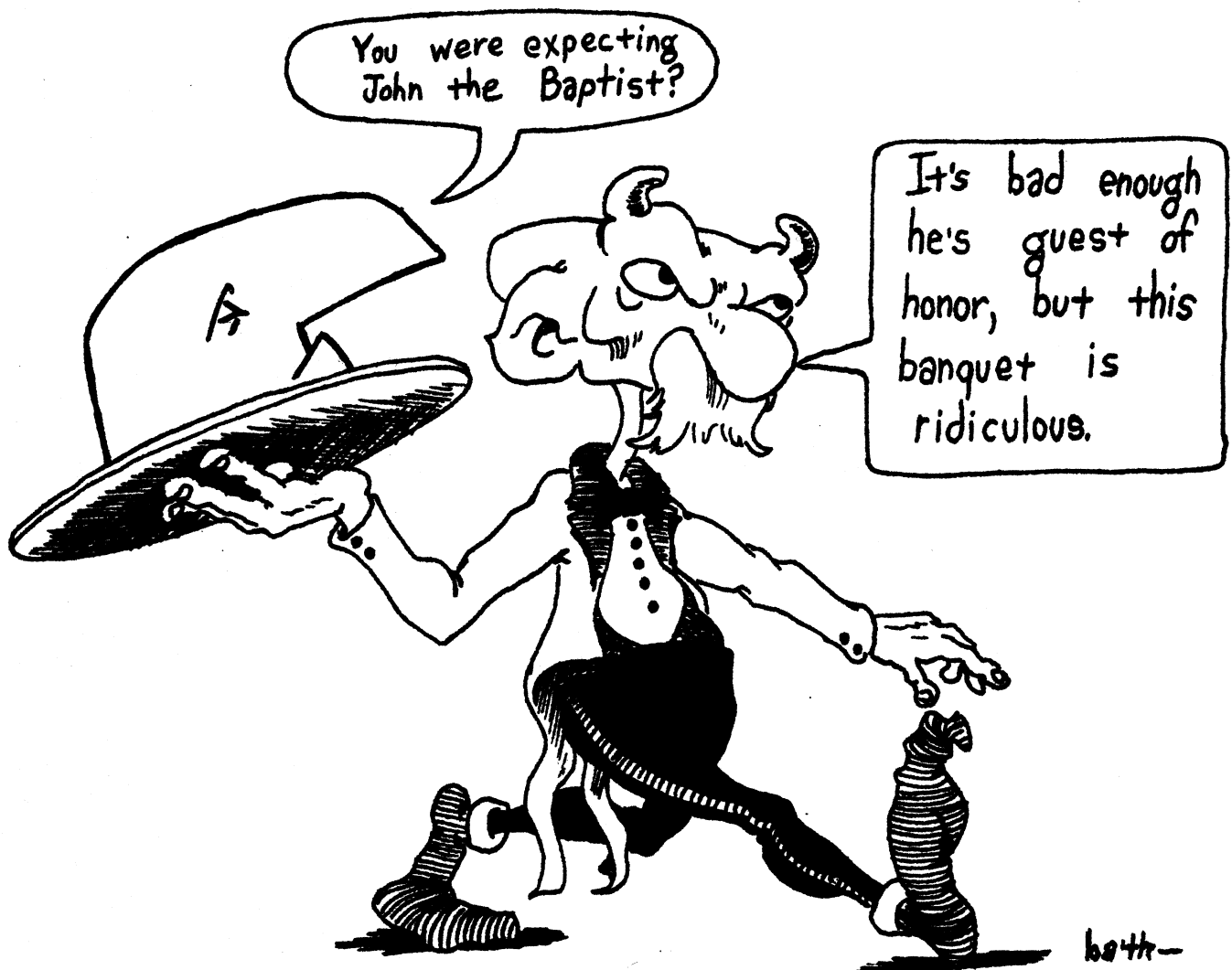
I apparently made a distinct impression on the congoers, even if the con made a blurred one on me. David's letter continued: "So.... how are you doing out there in the frozen wasteland? I had an image of you walking into your first class, handing out a few dittoed sheets, dismissing class, and collapsing on the floor. Then again, that image was wearing that blue dress of yours and a propellor beanie."

Well, yes. But the months went by, with only an empty Hugo base to remind me that TORCON had happened. My classes and colleagues seemed to think I was sane. More important, I began to feel I was sane. I put out several issues of a personal-zine, to assure the world I was coping with it. And I got a letter in response from Bruce Gillespie, which said, "Things seem to be working out well for you in Regina. You burble, not shout. The impression I get from your writing is that you lead a very satisfactorily crazy life."

"Crazy"... hey! Listen, will somebody please tell Bruce....

Oh, never mind.

o+(-o=o-)+o



ONCE SUBWAY
JAN 4 PM 7:25
ISSUED AT
BLOOR

These transfers allow you to move on to the next fanzine free of charge. But read the credits below before you go. And thanks for reading this far!

[illegible]

COME TO MIDDLE-EARTH!



* KANSAS CITY IN '76 *

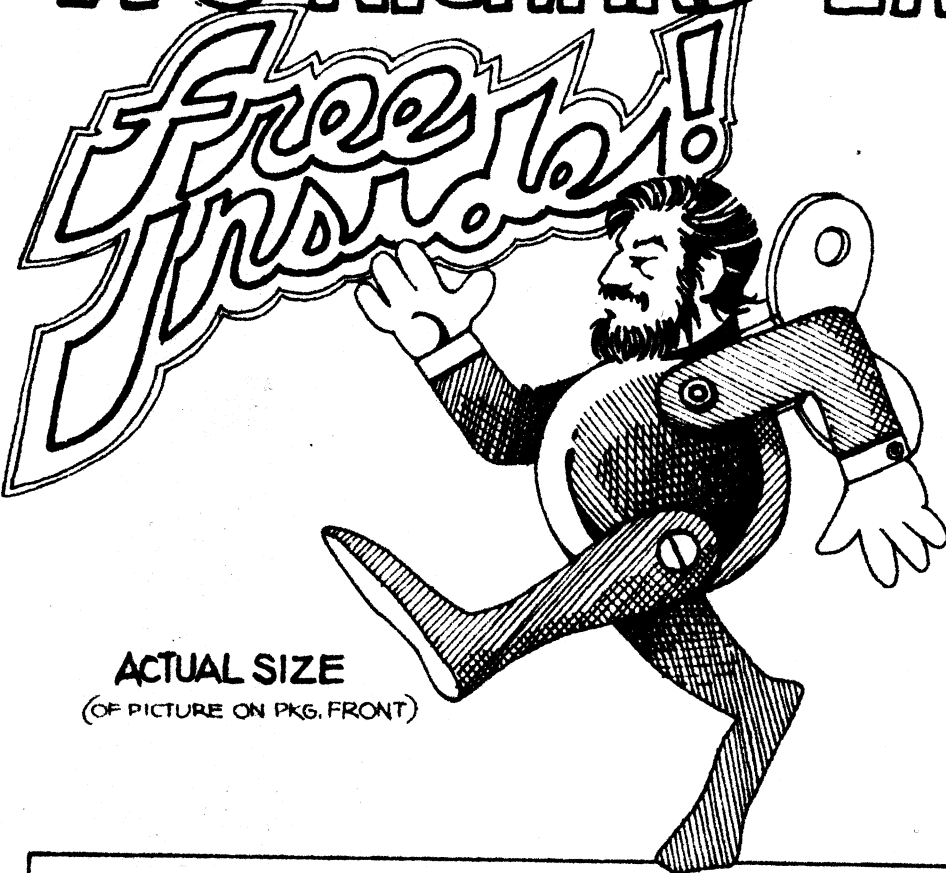
Despite its stereotyped cowtown image, Kansas City, Missouri is a modern, dynamic metropolis located on the Missouri-Kansas state line. It is easily the most accessible location ever offered as a site for a World Science Fiction Convention, being only 200 miles from the exact geographic center of the U.S. As an independently organized group, the K.C. in '76 Committee is composed of members of the Kansas City Science Fiction and Fantasy Society (KaCSFFS), which actively supports the K.C. bid for the 34th Worldcon. Our proposed hotel facility, the nationally known Muehlebach Hotel, has already made available its massive 51,000 sq. ft. convention center, and has also blocked 700 sleeping rooms for the '76 convention. Because the preceding only begins to outline the many details of the Kansas City bid, we invite you to write and request a FREE copy of our bidding information brochure. Find out for yourself why Lazarus Long traveled 200 years in time, and countless light-years in space, to come to Kansas City. Could he know something that you don't know? Please address all correspondence to:

XENIUM

**nutritional
information:**

THIS PRODUCT IS ABSOLUTELY
GUARANTEED **NOT** TO CONTAIN
ED SULLIVAN, AN ESKIMO, OR MORE
THAN 10% OF ANY PETROLIUM PRODUCT.

IT'S RICHARD LABONTE!!!

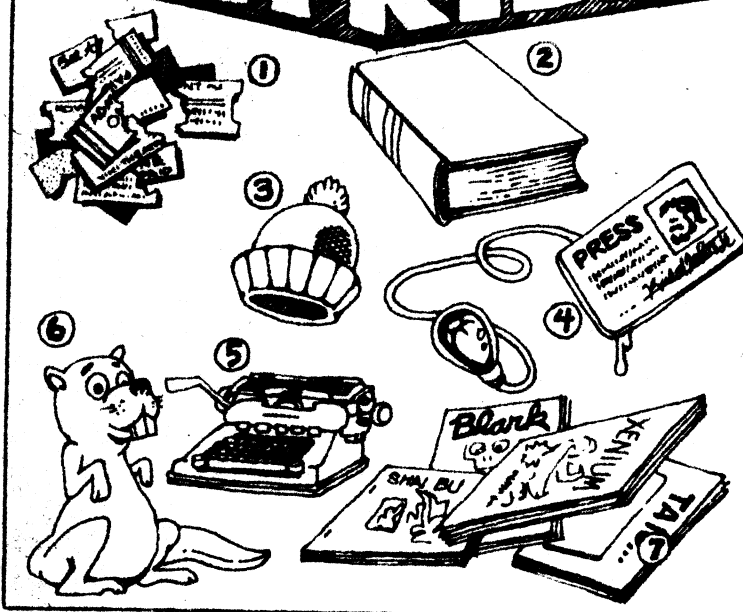


ACTUAL SIZE
(OF PICTURE ON PKG. FRONT)

**HE WALKS!
HE TALKS!
HE TYPES!
HE'S ALMOST
ALIVE!**

HE'S 99 AND $\frac{44}{100}$ ths
PERCENT PURE
FANNISH!

HEY KIDS



**BONUS! THE OFFICIAL RICHARD
LABONTE ACCESSORY KIT!
ONLY \$14.95!**

- ① 4007 ASSORTED MOVIE STUBS
(INCLUDING "QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE" AND
"DRACULA VS. BILLY THE KID")
- ② ENGLISH-FRENCH CANADIAN DICTIONARY
- ③ GENUINE LUMBERJACK HAT
- ④ SQUIRTING PRESS PASS
- ⑤ A RUBBER TYPEWRITER
- ⑥ A PET BEAVER
- ⑦ A DUMP TRUCK FULL OF FANZINES

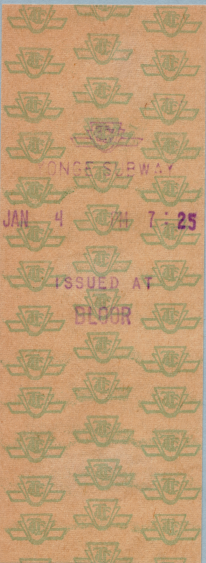
JUST SEND CHECK OR
MONEY ORDER TO:
SUAMI PUBLICATIONS
141 HIGH PARK AVENUE
TORONTO, ONTARIO

Xenium 6 (2.3) Original Covers Colour

Xenium 6 "Special Torcon Issue"
Page Original Paper Colour

Xenium 6 (2.3) Original Colour Paper

Xenium 6 "Kansas City in '76"
Page Original Colour Paper



KONGSLEWAY

JAN 4

7:25

ISSUED AT

BLOOR