TAWF
TIMES TWO
The 1962 Trip Reports

Walt & Madeleine Willis

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The 1962 Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund Trip Reports

Walt and Madeleine Willis

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Cover photo: Madeleine and Walt Willis at the 1957 London Worldcon. From the collection of Norman Shorrock; probably taken by Peter West.

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Foreword
Rob Hansen

> "They complement each other very nicely. If ever these Trip Reports come out as an entity – they should be produced together." – Ethel Lindsay in *Haverings* #21 (March 1966)

When American fans decided they wanted to bring Belfast fan Walter Alexander Willis to the US they set up a one-off fund to achieve that aim, one whose slogan was "WAW With The Crew in '52". After months of fund-raising via auctions, donations, and the sale of special publications such as *Willis Discovers America* (now available as a TAFF ebook) they succeeded in that aim and Walt duly attended the 1952 Worldcon Chicon II, held that year in Chicago. He wrote a long report on the convention and on his adventures in the US, both before and after that event. Titled *The Harp Stateside*, it set a standard that later writers would seek to match.

The following year, fans in Philadelphia set up a similar fund to bring British fan Norman Ashfield to the US. When he declined the honour, the Philadelphians offered the funds already collected to UK fandom for any fan we chose to send over there instead. After much debate at the Coroncon, the 1953 UK National Convention, British fans decided instead to use this donation as seed money in setting up TAFF, the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, which would seek to send a fan across the Atlantic on an annual basis, UK to US alternating with US to UK. It continues to this day, though US and UK later expanded to North America and Europe.

In 1962, the tenth anniversary of the Willis fund, the Worldcon was once again being held in Chicago. Despite that being a year in which TAFF would be sending a UK fan to the Worldcon (Ethel Lindsay won that race), a bunch of American fans decided in 1961 that it would also be a great idea to bring Walt over again. To this end they set up the one-off TAWF, the Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund (details at [1] below). Walt's letter of acceptance appeared in *Fanac* #72 (April 1961, edited by Walter Breen):

> I started off this letter with the ribbon disengaged still from stencilling, which I suppose is about as near as I could have got to being speechless. I came down for breakfast this morning, focused with difficulty on the small pile of mail and reached for

a small envelope, which experience has told me is more likely to contain a letter. “Read that first,” said Madeleine, pointing to a big brown one, “It’s Important!!” And by Roscoe it was. *((It was the* Void *Willish with covering letter. whb))* After a few minutes she reached over with a feather and knocked me down. I was half an hour late for work, not that it mattered because I didn’t do any, and we talked it over this evening again. And still all I can think of to say is... thanks, Ted. And you too, Greg, Pete, Sylvia, Les, and the others. It was a wonderful thing to do.

To be more specific, thanks for having had the idea and thanks for putting the invitation like that. What can I say but that I appreciate it more than I can express on paper, and that if the rest of the fans over there feel like you think they do, we gratefully accept. You must know how much I’d like to see the States again and all my old and new friends, and maybe even more to introduce Madeleine to them, and all that’s been worrying us is the thought that such a Fund as you and Les have suggested wouldn’t either deserve or get enough support. I’d dread to think of a few good friends like you left holding the half-empty can. You must promise me that if it looks like being like that, you’ll tell me right away and we’ll call it off. I’m old enough in the ways of fandom to understand and conscious enough of my recent shortcomings as an actifan, and the likely future ones, to accept it without surprise.

Bless you all, anyway.

You’ll note that this time US fans didn’t want Walter alone; hence the slogan used by some, “WAW With The Crew (and Madeleine, too)”. Though doubtless unintentional – the slogan (echoing the famous 1842 US political catchphrase “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too”) was not part of the original document announcing the fund – having Madeleine’s name bracketed like that by those who coined it made her inclusion look like an afterthought. Which was unfortunate given the tendency of some to see wives and girlfriends as adjuncts of their male partners rather than as fans in their own right, as many were. Nor was this a new problem. LASFS member Morojo had complained about it in 1939 when Jerry K. Westerfield, a former assistant editor of *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures* wrote a report on the very first Worldcon for *Writers Digest.* She took issue with the bit where he wrote:

“But the pay-off came when a [West] Coast fan and his lady

> friend walked in dressed in clothes of the future." Why relegate me to the category of "lady friend"? Why emphasize the feminine? Why not say "Two West Coasters came dressed in clothes of the future"? I may be a friend of another Pacificoaster but I was at the Convention as a *fan*. [2]

Visitors to the Willises' home may have encountered Madeleine as a consummate hostess but, as Walter wrote in *Hyphen* #16 (August 1956):

> My name is Walt Willis; my wife, Madeleine, is a fan in her own right... We have two children – Carol aged 8, and now Bryan, aged six months. We own Oblique House, a name carried over from the days of *Slant*, where all Irish Fandom meets Tuesday nights and Sunday afternoons.

Science Fiction was a shared interest, though neither realized this at first:

> In the late Thirties I stopped collecting promags and turned my attention to women. Fortunately I wasn't a completist. After a while I started going steady with one Madeleine Bryan. We'd been going together for quite a while when one day she darted in a newsagent's shop. I followed her because I'd noticed a copy of *Astounding* in the window, and found she'd just bought it. She had, it turned out, been reading science fiction for years. It didn't seem so important or surprising at the time but as the newer Campbell authors, mainly Van Vogt, made their appearance our interest began to increase. By the time we were married (1945) we knew to the day when the next British Edition of *Astounding* was due out, and sometimes we used to read it together. [3]

After TAWF succeeded in bringing the Willises to America, both wrote reports on the experience. Walt's was collected as *Twice Upon a Time* in *Warhoon* #28 (dated 1978, published 1980, edited by Richard Bergeron); but this is the first time that Madeleine's *The DisTAWF Side*, the longest piece of fan writing she ever did, has been collected. It appeared in thirteen instalments, which were published in Bruce Pelz's SAPSzine *SpeleoBem* between 1963 and 1966. As they stand the various parts don't make much sense as standalone chapters, with Madeleine breaking off the narrative at sometimes very odd places. That being so, I've split the text at more logical points where necessary, resulting in fourteen chapters. I *think* I've located everything she wrote, but if a further chapter or chapters turn up these will be added.

So here, in the sixtieth anniversary year of TAWF, are the trip reports

of Walt and Madeleine Willis finally collected and published together. Enjoy.

My thanks to Dave Langford, my co-editor on this one, for doing much of the work on the ebook you're reading; to all those who maintain the Fanac.org archive without which this volume would not exist; and to the indefatigable Pat Charnock for her careful proofreading.

– Rob Hansen, November 2022.

[1] *Axe* #0 (April 1961, ed. Larry and Noreen Shaw) https://fanac.org/fanzines/Axe/Axe1-01.html
[2] *Shangri-LA* #1 (March 1940, ed. Forrest Ackerman)
[3] *Canfan* #25 (June 1955, ed. ?)

Twice Upon a Time
Walt Willis

Madeleine and Walt Willis, 1957

Chapter 1
Belfast to New York

Sunday 26th August 1962

"What am I going to say to all these people?" pleaded Madeleine, handing me another wet cup. It was about one o'clock in the morning of Sunday, 26th August, 1962, and tomorrow we would be in America. At the moment though we were in the scullery of 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, washing dishes. It would save time in the morning and we wouldn't be able to sleep anyway.

Secretly I was almost pleased she was getting a bit panicky at last. It made me feel calm and confident, the authoritative male. I reviewed my vast experience of these matters. "You could try and think up answers to what-do-you-think-of-America," I suggested. "Now's the time for it, 'cos you won't have time when you get there. America is all space and no time."

"Like what?"

This was a problem which had baffled me ten years ago, and I was still no nearer a solution. "I'm sure it will be very nice when it's finished," was smart, but unoriginal, and the thing which really surprises our particular category of visitor to America is almost too silly to mention. It's those 180 million nonfans. Having been fans for so long, and hosts to so many American visitors, few of the usual differences surprise us: but conversely we share the subconscious conviction of British fandom that all Americans are at least science fiction readers. Hence the occasional presence of bemused American servicemen at British convention parties.

We went to bed with the problem still unsolved, and got some sleep. At 8:15 in the morning it was raining relentlessly out of a dark grey sky. It looked a pretty good day to leave the country. We finished packing, had a late breakfast, called at Madeleine's parents' house to say goodbye to the children, who had been packed off the day before, and soon after noon we were on our way. We were making for Shannon Airport on the West of Ireland, via Lisburn, Lurgan, Portadown, Armagh, Monaghan, Clones, Cavan, Athlone, Birr, Nenagh and Limerick. We had made this trip once before in 1953 to meet Bea Mahaffey for the Beacon tour reported in *Hyphen* 4, and indeed we were using the same AA Route Chart, still

showing the scribbled addresses of the fans we meant to send postcards to along the way – Hoffman in Savannah, Bloch in Milwaukee, Ellison in Cleveland.

We left Belfast along the whole seven miles of Ireland's first freeway, which had been the wonder of the year: the local bus company was still running tours along it. The rain stopped as we were leaving Armagh, and County Cavan was pleasant, all woods, lakes and old country houses. Then through the Goldsmith country and into the central boglands of Ireland, the Bog of Allen, all purple and green and brown, and in the distance the blue ridges of Slieve Bloom Mountains. In County Tipperary we could see the unmistakable Devil's Bit Mountain, on the other side of which Madeleine had spent her childhood running barefoot through the bogs. She had come a long way since then, and was going further.

We lost our way in Limerick, as usual: we had a street map, but the street names on the walls are in Gaelic letters which we can't read... not from a moving car anyway. But by 7:15 we had arrived at Bunratty Castle Hotel, five miles from Shannon, and had put the car away for the next five weeks in one of the stables, amid a morgue of old furniture. We were just in time for dinner; it wasn't too bad for the West of Ireland, except for the asparagus soup. "If this is real asparagus," said Madeleine, "I'm Chinese. And as you know," she added demurely, "I'm not Chinese."

Afterwards we looked round the hotel, a long low pink two-storey building full of odd things. Like Norse twin cradles with dolls, a big over-wrought iron room-wide grill across the dining room, long horns, antique ashtrays, and two antique silver bracelets weighing several pounds and fastening like handcuffs.

Monday 27th August 1962

Next morning was calm and sunny, so we strolled down to have a look at Bunratty Castle, We'd realized this was no ordinary Irish tourist attraction when we saw it floodlit last night, and by daylight the transatlantic influence spreading from Shannon Airport was even more evident. There were signposts, a souvenir shop, admission prices, and a tape-recorded account of the castle's history. From this we learned that it had been built about 1251 and its variegated career had included a siege in 1646, when it was defended by an Admiral Penn whose young son, when the siege was raised, went and founded Pennsylvania. It was an interesting thought that if those walls had been a foot less thick Pittsburgh would have been

somewhere else.

The receptionist called us a taxi, and by noon we were at the airport, with over two hours to wait. We went to the Duty Free Shopping Centre, a huge room full of beautiful and expensive things from all over the world. I had only thirty shillings left in sterling, to buy petrol on the way home, but I had a tobacco tin full of hard currency accumulated over the last ten years. Ten years of *Hyphen* subscriptions vanished in as many minutes, as I piled little towers of coins on various counters. Ah well, I thought; easy come, easy go. Then, leaving the commerce of the free port to shudder to a halt, choked by my glutinous mass of sticky nickels, dimes and quarters, we went upstairs to the Observation Lounge. Madeleine had coffee and biscuits while I prowled about restlessly, and at last our flight was called. Quite suddenly, it seemed, we were in the aircraft, surrounded by men with American accents.

One of them sat down beside us, smiled, and held out his hand. “My name is Kennedy,” he said. I had heard the new administration was encouraging tourism, but this was ridiculous. However, he turned out to be an employee of the New York City Transit System, as was everyone else on the plane except us, and they’d all been revisiting the Old Country. Most of the men still seemed recognisably Irish, but their womenfolk were thoroughly American.

With surprisingly little fuss the great plane, a Boeing 707 called Padraic, rolled across the tarmac, turned and paused, then whuffed determinedly down the runway and took off. We were on our way to America. The children had not fallen ill, neither had their grandparents, neither had we, the office had not cancelled my leave, war had not broken out, the car had not crashed on the way down, the Fund had not turned out to be a hoax, and now the plane had taken off safely. It was extraordinary. I felt I couldn’t just sit there, and yet I didn’t feel like reading; I didn’t want to be a sophisticated world traveller, I wanted to absorb every quantum of sensation that was going. With a keen sense of psychology, the pretty green-clad air hostesses began serving dinner (and very good it was too, a curious mid-Atlantic combination of American and European eating) and handing out Immigration Forms, Baggage Declaration Forms and a Passenger Sample Survey Questionnaire designed to find out for the airline’s information the sort of people they were carrying. We were pleased to find a question “What magazines do you read regularly?”, but felt that the space for the answer was inadequate. We got in all the prozines all right, but had to leave out several quite reputable fanzines.

After a couple of hours our Captain told us over the Public Address

System that his name was Quinn and that we were now in the middle of the Atlantic. A hasty glance through the porthole reassured us that we were still a considerable distance above that fate: about six miles in fact, we gathered from the rest of Captain Quinn's schtick. "That's a mile higher than Everest," I pointed out to Madeleine, refuelling my sense of wonder, "and you can't breathe there."

"If there's no air out there," Madeleine asked reasonably, "what's holding the plane up?"

Fortunately a ship appeared below us before this disquieting query could get to the Captain, and there was great excitement. It may have been the Queen Mary for all we knew, but it looked no bigger than a match. Then Captain Quinn came on again to break the news that because of 70 mph headwinds and heavy traffic at Idlewild we would have to land at Boston to refuel. We would be an hour late in New York. I visualized Larry leaping into one of his hotrods and driving to Boston to meet us there, so I asked Kennedy how far it was from New York: I still had this idea that he knew all about Boston. He said it was 500 miles. It was to avoid this call to Boston that we'd taken this particular flight, but as it turned out it was worth it. Soon there was a spectacular scimitar of land, and then we were flying over the American continent. It was nearly as green as Ireland, and there were a lot more trees, but the most striking sight was the cars, hundreds of them, threading along the roads like hypnotized ants.

At Boston we landed effortlessly, with just that brief moment of fear when the brakes go on so hard and yet the plane seems to go even faster. As we coasted to a stop there was a round of applause from the passengers. As an encore Captain Quinn made an even more stylish landing at New York, and received a positive ovation. I half expected to see him emerge from his cabin with his hands clasped together above his head, or at least bowing modestly.

This applause was a new phenomenon to me, and for a while I thought it was just these connoisseurs of transit recognizing a fellow craftsman. But then I thought that I'd often felt like pausing on my way along railway platforms to pat the noble locomotive and say a few words of thanks to the honest figure in the grimy blue overalls looming up there in the steam. Maybe he has always felt that I should too, and maybe these New York City Transit System employees were just behaving the way they would like their own passengers to behave.

The Manhattan skyline is a breath-taking sight even from an aeroplane, and to us it symbolized so much that we were in a daze as we

gathered our things together and stumbled out of the plane and down the steps. Madeleine went first and when she got to the ground she turned round and waited for me, holding out her hand and smiling.

"Welcome to America," she said.

Chapter 2
New York

Monday 27th August 1962, continued

We followed the other passengers across the tarmac, looking wide-eyed around us. First impressions were chaotic. Open spaces. Noise. Aeroplanes. Cars. Heat. Futuristic buildings. A distant roof crowded with people waving. I waved back at them.

"Who are you waving at? Who do you see?" asked Madeleine, clutching my arm.

I didn't see anyone, I assured her. It was just that if there was anyone up there waving at us, they would think we were waving back. And if there weren't, everyone would assume we were waving at someone else. So both waving enthusiastically but frustratedly at a roof-full of strangers... roof-ful greeting, you might call it... we passed under them into the bureaucratic maze.

It was much better than Hoboken ten years ago, and obviously Mr. Kennedy's new policy of hospitality had percolated right down to the lowest level. The only thing was that by the time it had got there it had somehow become subtly different from what I think the President envisaged. The Immigration Officer, having scanned in a specially provided mimeoscope the X-ray plates of an anxious middle-aged couple... for those of you who like happy endings, they got in... held out his hand silently for our passport and looked us up in a big black book. There were three Willises in it, I noted, peeking, but none of them was us. Then, still without raising his head, he went riffle stamp riffle stamp hopeyoufolksenjoyyourstaynext. We were five yards away before I realized we had been officially welcomed to the country.

We now found ourselves in a huge room with a glass enclosed balcony all round, rather like something in a very modern zoo, waiting for our baggage to be delivered for inspection. It was a nerve-wracking wait, poised thus on the threshold of the New World. There was nothing for us to do, and for myself I sedulously avoided looking up at the people in the balcony lest we should see someone we recognized... or, worse, thought we should recognize... and then spend an indefinite time either grimacing at them or ignoring them. But at last the baggage came, and was passed,

and we lugged it through a double glass door into America.

It is a mental failing of mine that when I am looking for one particular thing I can't see anything else, so while I was still scanning the crowd of people round us for Larry Shaw and Ethel Lindsay, Madeleine was already greeting Dick Eney, Terry Carr and Ted White. Terry incredulously asked Madeleine how she recognized him and Madeleine said from misrepresentations in the fan press. Then Don and Elsie Wollheim appeared and I recognized Don from a 16-year old photograph but Madeleine in her confusion asked him what fanzine he wrote for. I was nearly as bad: starting to explain to her who this was I was for a few desperate seconds completely unable to remember the name of Ace Books. Meanwhile Dick Eney and Ted White were giving me a *FAPAnthology* and a dinner invitation, respectively, and Dick had picked up all our three suitcases and was heading across a road along which huge cars were tearing in the wrong direction. What with one thing and another it was a well filled few minutes, and it wasn't until we got to the car park that I realized that despite the unaccountable absence of Will Sykora and Calvin Thomas Beck I was not going to be deprived of my traditional New York welcome. There seemed to be some delay in getting into the car and it was gradually borne in upon me that there were two cars: indeed there were two separate and rival welcoming parties.

By the time I had appraised this problem... really, I just couldn't believe it at first... Madeleine had solved it by volunteering to travel in Ted White's car while I went in Dick Eney's. With mingled horror, amusement and delight I found myself separated from my wife after five minutes in New York, a living example of the schismatic influence of that city. But it was a tribute to the warmth of our separate but equal welcomes that I wasn't worried by the fact that we were being separately conveyed to unknown destinations in a strange country. After a few minutes I did make a humble enquiry as to Madeleine's possible whereabouts and eventual destination, and learned that we were all to rendezvous at the Wollheims' house in Clyde Street. I was glad to know they had decided to continue living there even after Ackerman's notorious pun about *When Wells Clyde*.

Revelling in the unaccustomed luxury of leaning my elbow out of the car window without getting it frozen, I talked to Elsie and Dick with what attention I could wrest from the spectacle of New York. They told me about Bruce Berry's paranoiac autobiography and I said it sounded as if it should have been entitled *Mein Kemp*. Dick Eney didn't seem to understand the reference and Elsie and I, as members of the older generation, started to pull his leg about the Thirties, as Bob Tucker used to

do with Lee Hoffman about the Twenties. (It was when he said he remembered Lindbergh that she started calling him “Grandfather”.) It was good fun and Dick entered into the spirit of it, but I later came to think that he probably knew as much as either of us about “Mein Kampf”, if not more, and that his apparent incomprehension was just his usual pause for reflection before answering. He has this habit of first drafting everything he says, which I should have remembered reading about. But I was composing on stencil myself at the time, and touch typing at that, and besides I was expecting some difficulty in making myself understood and assumed that any hesitation in answering me was due to that. It wasn’t until I had started to slow down my speech deliberately that I was able to get rid of the feeling that there was some sort of wall round Eney, and I was just getting to know and appreciate him when I spoke to him in Chicago for, frustratingly, the last time.

We had barely sat down in the Wollheims’ roomy living room when Madeleine and her escorts arrived. I asked her what she thought of America: she said she was sure it would be very nice when it was finished. It was a very pleasant quiet evening and we actually relaxed, but of course I can’t remember much of what was said. Wollheim was presented with a copy of Eney’s *FAPAnthology*, which was dedicated to him, and he leafed through it with a sort of rueful pleasure. The black covers and the bulk reminded us of the Bible, which I said I hadn’t read since it was serialized in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, and there was some fascinating speculation as to which fan and pro artists would have illustrated the various Books. Ted White said he wasn’t worried about Moskowitz attaching his property because six months ago he had made out a formal deed transferring everything he owned to Les Gerber for a dollar. Terry confirmed this, adding confidentially that he had bought it off Les for $1.50. And sold it to SaM for $2.00.

After a very fine dinner and a lot more talk Elsie thoughtfully pointed out that it was now nearly dawn by the time we had started the previous day on and maybe we should get some sleep. We didn’t feel tired... or at least we were unable to disentangle this lesser feeling from all the others... but we hadn’t even seen Noreen and Larry yet so we tore ourselves away from the Wollheim hospitality and set off with Eney, together this time, for the Staten Island ferry. Once aboard, we got out of the car and looked at the lights. It was hot and humid and dreamlike. Just that afternoon we had been in the cool calm of County Clare: now here we were among the exotic lights of New York, sailing past the Statue of Liberty. It was not believable.

Staten Island was more like home and the Shaws' house even more so, despite the unfamiliar domestic architecture. Larry was an old friend from seven years ago, and so was Noreen after fewer minutes. Her first words were "Madeleine: Why you're *pretty*!" After which it would have been difficult for her to put a foot wrong. It was a real fans' house, the table in the living room invisible under a pile of mundane magazines, unread while Noreen cut stencils for *Axe*. Noreen asked us if we'd had a bath at the Wollheims'. We looked a little surprised, and Noreen explained that "The Wollheims met Ethel and took her home and gave her a bath." Poor Ethel had had a long and wearing journey via Iceland, and apparently this had been her first priority.

Too restless to sit down just yet, we roamed around like cats in a strange place, looking at books, pulling things out of our baggage to show, and absorbing the strangeness of an American home. We had in a way been indoctrinated gradually to the upside-down light switches, because in the Wollheims' house they were mounted sideways; and I think it was there too we first encountered that most alarming of all American artifacts, the concentric bathroom doorlock. The distracted foreigner enters the bathroom, nerved to do battle with exotic plumbing, and immediately comes straight up against a completely unexpected trap. There is no bolt on the door. Can it be, that...? No, that's Japan. There must be some way to obtain privacy. There is a sort of flange thing in the middle of the knob, he observes keenly. It might turn. It does, he notes complacently. These things just need a little intelligence. But better check that the door is really locked. He turns the knob and pulls, and the door opens. Shut it and try again. Shut it and turn the flange further. Shut it and turn it the other way. Shut it and pull. Shut it and push. Shut it and gradually accept the concept that the door is always open from your side, but may be locked from the other. You have to take it on trust, like the light going out inside the refrigerator when you shut the door. It may be all right for Americans with their faith in technology, but you need look no further than that bathroom door to know why foreigners in America suffer from a deep-seated feeling of insecurity.

It was very late even by local time when we went to bed, but even then we had some difficulty getting to sleep. We hadn't yet adjusted to the 30° difference in temperature. Outside it had started to rain quietly, and nothing we had seen so far was as strange to us as this, that in the darkness and rain the air should still be so hot.

Tuesday 28th August 1962

Next morning we awoke long after Larry had left for work. We showered, enjoying the unfamiliar luxury of a warm ambient temperature, and had a long talkative breakfast with Noreen. One of the things we learned was that we had been invited to dinner at the Wollheims' that evening, by a cable sent to Dublin Airport. We hadn't received it, not having left from Dublin... a pity in a way, because I've never been invited to dinner by cable before... and I suppose it's still waiting for us there. I had tacitly accepted Ted's invitation at Idlewild. But his hostess was someone called Esther Davis whom I'd never heard of and therefore would scarcely have heard of us, so I called Ted to tell him we were accepting this prior invitation from the Wollheims. But from Ted I learned that in fact this dinner was for us, and that all sorts of good people like Les Gerber and Terry Carr and Walker Breen and Andy Reiss would be looking for us there. I told Ted we'd meet him at Greyhound station at 1 p.m. and hung up, bemused. Both parties had left it squarely up to us, so we talked it over, decided to accept Esther Davis's invitation on grounds of the least unhappiness of the lesser number, and set out to make our own way to West 50th St. in the heart of Manhattan.

Following instructions jotted down in a notebook, we got to the railroad station and onto the right train without difficulty, even making friends with the conductor. He had a son in Australia, which seemed somehow to create a bond. We gloried in the ferry trip on the good ship *Cornelius G. Kolff*, going straight up to the top deck to goggle at the Manhattan skyline of which this was Madeleine's first view by daylight. I was to see it dozens of times, but I was never able to really believe it. Then, happily unconscious of our doom, at approximately 12:15 p.m. we went underground to proceed to West 50th Street via the strange and intricate formation known as the New York Subway.

After an elapsed time of 45 minutes we shambled into the open air at 42nd St., muttering "An' dark. An' nowhere starlights," and waving feebly for a cab. Since at least the last change of trains we had, I figured, been proceeding steadily in the wrong direction but from the cab I couldn't see how 42nd Street could be so far from 50th St., and round so many corners. The cab sped spasmodically down one street after another, the driver carrying on an intermittent conversation with the driver of another cab about buying a third until I felt like a shareholder. About two dollars later we arrived at the Greyhound Station, twenty minutes late. Good ol' Ted was still waiting, and I left Madeleine talking to him while I went to get our International Mobius Trip Tickets. This turned out to be quite a Project. First I joined one line to find out which other line to join, and then

I had to produce our joint passport and sign my name on virtually every document the Greyhound Company could possibly want, except perhaps an undertaking to assassinate the President of Trailways. Then I had to go and get Madeleine to sign another batch of her own. Then I had our tickets validated for Chicago, an awesome moment. Here I was, standing in New York, buying a ticket for Chicago. Again.

Inspired by this climactic moment, I marshalled enough courage to telephone Elsie Wollheim, and found to my relief that Noreen had already prepared the ground, bless her. With that off our minds, we went out to sight-see, starting off with lunch in an automat. It was an experience of more sociological than gustatory interest. The fruit in the pies tasted as if it were not only cooked by the machine, but grown in it. After this Madeleine was the only one with any clear idea of where she wanted to go so we set off for Macy's.

We eventually arrived there, despite having almost left Madeleine behind countless times as she was attracted to dress shop windows like a starving moth. Ted and I were exhausted by then, though we hadn't walked nearly as far, so we decided to find some place to sit down while Madeleine ran amok. We found a restaurant from the store directory, but it turned out to be one of those turnstile places where you never know what you're letting yourself in for, so we looked around for somewhere else. There was a kitchen department nearby full of dishwashers and air-conditioning equipment and such, and Ted and I sat thankfully down on a couple of straightbacked chairs at a formica table. I gave Madeleine some money, told her to call back for us, and looked around for some landmark. There it was, just above us, an enormous sign of a quite impossible appropriateness. It said, simply but quite incredibly, FAN CENTER.

I don't expect you to believe that, but I solemnly assure you that every word in this report is true.

When Madeleine had cased Macy's like a comparison shopper from Gimbel's, we went to call on Terry Carr, who had been waiting in all afternoon for a new bookcase to arrive from the self-same store. I was feeling somehow guilty at not having brought it with us, but it had already arrived and been put in position, looking very vacant and self-conscious. Ted and I, electronic wizards that we are, took his hi-fi system apart for him and re-installed it in the bookcase, and to my surprise at least, it still worked. "What hath Ghod wrought?" I murmured. Meanwhile I was mentally adjusting to the style of *Void* editor fandom chitter-chatter. It is one of the pleasantest things about fandom that you can go anywhere in the world and join immediately in a conversation, but this is a basic degree

of comprehension, not a maximum. Each fan group has its own way of thinking and talking, and real assimilation takes some time. It's only partly a matter of such transitory problems as accents and modes of speech. At Oblique House over the years we have noticed that it takes as long as twenty hours total exposure time for the average sharp-minded fan to become wholly integrated, and since we are probably an unusually inbred fan group because of our physical isolation, it was almost as difficult for me in America. Sometimes I felt I was just having to leave a fan group just as I was getting into full rapport.

In New York, for instance, they don't go in much for puns, and I got out of the habit of making them. So much so that when I came up against Dean Grennell I was at first as completely outgunned as a rowing boat against a battleship, and it was only after a couple hours frantic rewarping of my mind that I was able to hold my own. Then I demolished this armoury again way down the West Coast... and arrived naked and defenceless in Los Angeles.

To take a minor example, Ted and Terry were talking about some sexual deviate who got his kicks from breaking windows and I said it was an example of the pleasure-pane principle. This was of course a mere throwaway, and was properly treated as such, but in Belfast, Fond du Lac and Los Angeles its passage on the way to the garbage can would have been noted with at least a raised eyebrow. In those places subconscious warning mechanisms like mine have evolved to detect the pun camouflaged in the conversational structure. Elsewhere, where the pun is not common, it has to be in a sense badly constructed to be noticed. I don't mean crude or unclever, just noticeable. A good pun lies in ambush, fitting naturally into the context: its secondary level of meaning has then more of the element of surprise which is the essence of this form of humour.

But I was more concerned with adapting myself to the local climate than adapting it to me. *Void* fandom humour is strongly influenced by Burbeeism, the elements of which are anecdotal rather than conversational, and the techniques of which are shrewd and often cruel character delineation, fake solemnity and significance by repetition. Burbeeism without Burbee has evolved in the absence of Socrates, but probably more successfully. Every man has become his own Burbee to everyone else's Laney.

Eventually Carol came home, admired the bookcase, made us some coffee and we all walked along to Esther Davis's apartment. This was one of the few times I ever walked anywhere in America, but I'm afraid Greenwich Village was rather wasted on me. It's hard to sell quaintness to

an Irishman, and the Village looked far more like a normal city to me than the rest of New York. We were evidently early for the party, but the two people already there were doing their best to make the room seem crowded. First impressions were of a Michelin tyre advertisement and a pressure gauge screaming at one another, but they turned out to be only Les Gerber and Andy Reiss exchanging birdcalls on plastic whistles to the accompaniment of jazz on the hi-fi. So this is Birdland, I thought. But immediately Les became several years older and Andy several decibels quieter and we talked convivially until dinner.

It was this meal which made me realize that we had made the right decision that morning. It was almost embarrassingly clear that we were the guests of honour. There were toasts yet, and we were enthroned on two high-backed red leather chairs at the head of the table, like royalty. How vacant those chairs would have looked if we hadn't turned up, I thought. Though indeed it wouldn't have been entirely our fault – people who live in glass houses shouldn't stow thrones.

Fortunately for our peace of mind, another guest of honour more accustomed to the role arrived after dinner. This was Paul Krassner, editor of the satirical magazine, *The Realist*, a small swarthy intense young man with a twisted mouth and sad eyes. He had an ample blonde with him whom he introduced as Miriam, and though I was almost sure this couldn't be Miriam Carr I wasn't able to check this out to any more places of decimals because she didn't say a word all evening. While Ted White was explaining fandom to Krassner, who reacted with a sort of respectful incredulity ("You mean all you get out of it is satisfaction?") I read through a copy of *The Realist* and, finding it excellent, passed it to Madeleine. At which point Krassner looked up from his seat on the sofa at the far end of the room and asked her what she thought of it. All Madeleine had seen of it so far was the cover, which featured prominently the legend "US SAILORS STERILISED IN NUCLEAR SUBMARINE Coloring Book". The current "Coloring Book" craze was unfamiliar to Madeleine so the last two words of the headline meant nothing to her and she assumed naturally enough that the magazine was produced by some nutty left-wing equivalent of the John Birch Society. She said something about going too far, as G.M. Carr might say about Hitler, and Krassner, used to this comment from squares, smiled wryly and resumed his conversation. I hastily filled Madeleine in on the Coloring Book angle and she looked stricken. Krassner had, we knew, been commissioned by *Playboy* to cover the Chicon. Madeleine envisaged herself branded in future *Fancyclopedia*s as responsible for another write-off of fandom on

Goshwowboyohboy lines, or worse. So I looked through *The Realist* for its sub rates, which were quite realistic – $3.00 a year, bimonthly – insinuated myself beside Krassner, praised his magazine, explained the misunderstanding, told him about his English equivalent, *Private Eye*, and gave him a five dollar bill and my name and address. I was hoping for two dollars change, until I found out later five dollars was the cost of a two-year sub. The sort of magazine *The Realist* is, they probably figure the world won't last another two years.

That off my chest, Terry Carr and Andy Reiss and I collaborated on a Fan Coloring Book ("This is George Willick, in shining armour. Colour his mail black, with a yellow streak.") but then everyone was off on the other current kick, the Wind-up Doll. Doing my best to adapt, I contributed the Ted White wind-up doll... you wind it up and it doesn't work... only to realize by the exaggerated reaction that I had struck some sort of exposed nerve. This fact was impressed on me even more in Chicago, when within five minutes of my arrival Ted Johnstone, straight in from LA, told me he'd heard my Ted White joke, but I didn't fully understand the reason until I caught up on my FAPA mailings. However Ted White himself that evening took it so well I wasn't much worried, and had quite an enjoyable evening apart from that damned hi-fi. I find it difficult enough to tune into one of a babble of voices without mechanically generated static.

Between the invention of radio and the development of the tuned circuit radio operators were largely selected on their ability to listen to a Morse message of one particular tonal quality to the exclusion of all the others thronging the atmosphere. For this brief period a talent developed in millions of years of evolution had its brief flowering of usefulness, and then fell back into desuetude. It remains, however, a survival characteristic for large parties. Madeleine has it and I haven't, facts which turned out to have unexpected results. At home the male fans are all naturally quiet speakers and Madeleine, being slightly hard of hearing, sometimes finds it difficult to follow the conversation closely. She has as it were to assemble what people say from partial data. But in America the general level of background noise is so much higher than in Ireland that everyone talks much louder and Madeleine could hear them as well as I could. And having this mysterious ability to separate out voices she was able to join in conversations quite happily, whereas I became the one who was hard of hearing. I could usually strain out what people said, but it took that little extra time that loses conversational opportunities, so the bigger and noisier the party the quieter I tended to become. I still enjoyed myself as much,

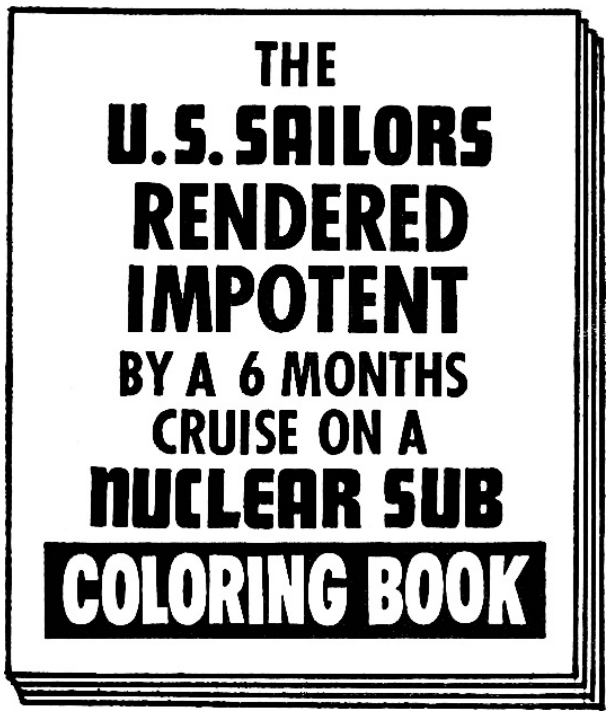
however, because I like listening to interesting conversation, and it was nice to see Madeleine enjoying herself. This was the girl who had been wondering what she would say to people!

One disappointment was that Walter Breen hadn't arrived as expected, and as the evening wore on Esther Davis became increasingly worried. She telephoned his apartment but there was no answer, and she wanted someone to go round and see if he was all right. When no one did this she seriously suggested telephoning the police and asking them to check: even I, unaccustomed to the local mode of life, could see that this suggestion was not greeted with any degree of enthusiasm. At about ten o'clock Krassner said he had to go and do his radio spot and asked if we would suggest something for him to say. (The casual manners of American radio are almost blasphemous to one accustomed to the BBC.) Someone told him a Harlan Ellison story, and he duly repeated it on the air half an hour later. It seems that Harlan was leading a couple of girls home from a party at two o'clock in the morning when three men passed them. One of the girls said, "Look, Harlan, there's Richard Nixon." "You're kidding," said Harlan. "No, honest," said the other girl, "It was Nixon." So Harlan turned and shouted "Hi Dick!" The middle one of the three men stopped and, campaign reflexes taking over, shouted back, "Hi." Whereupon Harlan shouted, "You're a crook!"

I mentioned this unusual form of egoboo to Harlan three weeks later in Los Angeles and he was delighted. He told me what had happened afterwards. A big black car had pulled up beside him and two men got out, pinned him to the wall and questioned him for half an hour about his political affiliations. "I told them," said Harlan plaintively, "I told them I didn't even belong to the Book of the Month Club."

After Krassner had signed off Ted conducted us to the subway, not having his car with him, and gave us instructions so explicit that we arrived at South Ferry as uneventfully as if we had been commuting for years. And still on our own we successfully made our way by train back to Grant City and Grant Place. We felt pleased with ourselves for finding this one street in the whole of America, until we realized we couldn't find Larry and Noreen's house in it. For one thing, the entire district had been rotated round 180° during our absence. For another thing, while we knew the address all right, for some nightmare reason the house numbers were not consecutive. For a third, it was dark. It was raining heavily, and we went sneaking up to the doors of likely looking houses, like a drowning man in a Sargasso Sea of straws, striking matches to see the numbers. Finally Madeleine identified the Shaw residence by the station wagon in

the driveway next door. We peeped in the window, saw a pile of magazines, knew this was it and tip-toed in the side door as previously instructed... to be greeted by the cheerful face of Larry, staying up late to catch up on his work. After half an hour's intensive talk we all went to bed, motivated by duty rather than inclination.



From the front cover of The Realist,
June 1962

Chapter 3
New York and Departure for Chicago

Wednesday 29th August 1962

It's amazing how quickly you can get used to things. The pattern of the next morning seemed already familiar – the train to the ferry, the view of Manhattan, getting lost in the subway. I still think we'd have been all right if we hadn't had to make a change in a three-tier station, and that I could have found our way quite competently in a mere hour or two more. But time was already short, so we surfaced resignedly and I waved for a taxi. This was only the second time in my life I had done this, and I felt cosmopolitan and sophisticated. Especially having an address to give as exotic as "52nd and Third", but I still didn't understand the street system well enough to risk being left at the corner of 52nd Avenue and Third St.

But even to a cosmopolitan sophisticate, it was heartwarming to see two familiar and friendly faces suddenly emerge from the anonymity of the New York crowd... two people who lived nine thousand miles apart converging to meet us here. As well as Ethel Lindsay and Ron Ellik there were Pat and Dick Lupoff and Peggy Rae McKnight, and in a few moments we were seven old friends having lunch together. Ron and Dick shared the duties of host so masterfully, calmly collecting our orders and relaying them to the waiter, that I had time to relax and look around at what could be seen of the restaurant. It was a place called Le Cave Henri Quatre, full of expensive-looking darkness, the only illumination in each alcove being a huge candle which the waiters had to reach across. The place was full of the atmosphere of high living, all crêpes suzettes and charred armpits. It even had antique book matches, and a menu which looked like the illuminated charter of a mediaeval town.

Having eaten our way through several most delicious clauses, we eventually blinked our way into the daylight again, said a temporary farewell to Ron and Ethel and Peggy, and went along to the Lupoff apartment for a restful afternoon. We talked leisurely about books and fandom, strenuously avoided politics, and wrote a joint letter to Ian McAulay on the electric typer. Later, Madeleine went to sleep for a while

and I went out with Dick, watching wide-eyed at him preparing for the party. Accustomed to the hectic home-cooking of Oblique House festivities, I marvelled at the sophisticated techniques of delicatessens and paper plates. It was, I realized, Instant Hospitality – just add money. A cup of coffee back at the flat, and suddenly it was time for the party and people were arriving.

In the months before the trip I used quite often to wake up in the middle of the night with a nightmare. It was always the same nightmare. I was in the States: I had been there two or three weeks and was having a marvellous time... and then I realized I had not taken any notes. The shock was so vivid and the feeling of guilt so acute that I usually had to go downstairs and smoke a pipe before my nerves would recover enough to let me go back to sleep. Now, thinking of that wonderful party, I feel something of the same desperation at being able to remember so little. I made notes before we finally got to bed, but even then it had all gone: all that seven hours of good talk and laughter had vanished, leaving just a warm glow.

But I still have that and always will have, and that's something. But there are some details I dearly wish I could remember, like what Lee Hoffman and I said to one another when she suddenly appeared in the room. For some reason I hadn't been expecting her to be there – it seemed somehow too good to be true – and I said the first thing that came into my head. All I know is it seemed right at the time and what she said was right too, and that I remembered how Lee and I had always known what to say to one another. The years sloughed away from both of us, and we were back in the happy days of 1952. Everything was suddenly so nostalgic we half expected Max to walk in.

There were other pleasant surprises, too many to absorb. Jim Blish, for instance, who I thought was hundreds of miles from New York. We had a long but too short talk, in which I had barely recovered from the surprise and delight of meeting him before I was swept away like a cork in a current. I kept thinking I must get back to him, and then suddenly it was two in the morning and he had gone. Some time during that timeless interval I dimly remember there was food going about, but I didn't recognize it at the time, though I hadn't eaten anything since lunch. I had simply forgotten about eating. If that party had lasted long enough I would have starved to death without noticing it, and died happy.

The reason you don't remember the details of a good party is that you are fully engaged: there is no detached observer in the mind taking notes. But there was one time I was shocked into consciousness. Lee and I were

sitting on the floor with five or six others whom I won't specify for fear of inaccuracy, when it suddenly came to me what a congenial homogenous group we were to have come together so improbably out of all the uncomprehending world. I thought to myself, this is one moment I must remember. "This *is* a nice group, isn't it?" I said in a sudden strange emotion. We smiled at one another, and then we were reminiscing about the life we had so curiously shared the past ten years. Terry Carr mentioned a joke about an ashtray I dimly remembered to have made in Chicago in 1952. I asked him how he'd heard of it and he said it was part of the folk-lore of American fandom but he'd read it in *The Harp Stateside*. I was awed at the first but denied the second. Not only had I first, second and third-drafted *The Harp Stateside,* stencilled it, run it off and collated it, but I had actually *read* it just before leaving Ireland again. (I thought it wasn't bad, if you're interested.) So I knew what was in it. But nothing would convince Terry. "I'll bet you... I'll bet you $1,784,66." he said.

"Done," I said, so Terry borrowed Dick's copy of *THS* and retired from the conversation. Later he emerged, admitting he owed $1,784.66. "Good news for *Axe* readers," I called to Larry "Refunds after all."

But Terry confessed he didn't happen to have that much money, so I magnanimously said I would take it out in subs to *Lighthouse,* keeping him publishing till Halley's Comet. But Terry had the last word. "Make a note," he told Peter Graham. "Next issue, another check square on the back cover. 'You are Walt Willis and the price of this copy is $1,784.66.'"

Lots of nice things happened at that party, even pleasanter than winning such large sums of money. Dave Kyle blew in with Ruth and two huge bouquets for Ethel and Madeleine. It was a lovely and Kyle-like gesture, but between you and me I think Madeleine appreciated even more the corsage of five little roses that Jim Blish gave her.

There were things that were sad too: but only in retrospect, for how was I to know that so soon I was seeing some people for the last time. Jim Blish, for instance, whom I had met long enough to like as a person as much as I admired him as a writer, and Bob Pavlat who had turned out to be so unaccountably different. I had always thought of him as small, pale and quiet, but here he was in the flesh, big, brown and expansive, obliterating in ten minutes the image I had built up in ten years. But I didn't regret its passing: the new Pavlat was even better. Then there were people I didn't even get to talk to properly, like Lin Carter, and people that weren't even there, like Jeff Wanshel. He telephoned me from Larchmont to say hello, and asked me to call him when I got back to New York in the

far off unimaginable future. I never did, what with the bother about the luggage and everything.

There was another telephone call, Earl Kemp, all the way from Chicago. It was magical and almost fearfully thrilling to be feeling almost at home in a Manhattan apartment, and then to hear a voice from the dark interior of America and be reminded I was still on the fringe, and how much more was to come.

The Shaws had gone home early, Larry being tired from so much recent overwork, so Ted White drove us to the ferry about two o'clock, with Terry Carr and Peter Graham. It was a long Wagnerian journey through near-deserted streets, with the *Void* editorial board singing and going through their vaudeville routines in the front seat. We got a taxi to Grant Place from the ferry and tiptoed to bed about four, after scribbling a few hopelessly inadequate notes.

Thursday 30th August 1962

When we awoke we were well into Thursday, the day we were leaving for Chicago. Noreen had her hands full with the two young children, so we thought the best thing we could do would be to go along to Manhattan and have lunch there, leaving our luggage in the bus station and wandering about seeing the sights.

We packed leisurely, leaving behind a few odds and ends not likely to be required between here and the Pacific. But even without the keys of Oblique House the bags were heavy, and got heavier all the way to the station.

When we were about a hundred yards away we saw the train coming, and I broke into a lumbering trot. I had not previously tried running in New York in the summer carrying two heavy suitcases and wearing a tweed jacket, and I did not regret that my life hereto had been deprived of this experience. At the station entrance a thoughtful porter told me not to run, the train would wait for us. I slowed down gratefully, and it did. On board the friendly conductor greeted us as regular customers. I like the Staten Island railroad.

We decided to save 30¢ this time and took a taxi direct to the Greyhound terminal. Directly, that is, via the docks. There the driver pointed out the *Mauretania* from which, we thought, in another probability world in which we had not been invited to the West Coast, we were just now disembarking. For once we had a communicative driver, the others

having been more like Trappist monks than the fictional New York cabbie, and I was naive enough to ask him a question the answer to which even Madeleine knew. What, I asked, was the figure “91” underneath the time in the big signs outside banks? I thought it was the humidity index, or the current value of the dollar or something. My only excuse is that I’m not accustomed to figures like that being temperatures. The official handbook for Youghal in our sub-tropical south refers, I noticed the other day, to its “high summer temperature, 65 degrees”.

At the entrance to the Greyhound depot we stopped, appalled. The place was like a slow-motion stampede in a slaughterhouse. Great lines of people extruded from every departure door and ticket window, merging in a milling mass in the middle of the hall. It was the first time I had come up against the mundane aspects of Labor Day weekend. I left Madeleine to mind the baggage and plunged into the melee to find an empty locker. There were banks of them all over the place, all full. I went back to Madeleine to report lack of progress and made a more extensive foray, finding more lockers, on the bus departure platforms. On the departure platform for Poughkeepsie I found an empty one, returned to base and battering-rammed my way back with the suitcases, only to find that the larger case couldn’t go in. There were, I now noticed, two types of lockers, the ones on the bottom rows being larger and 25¢ instead of 20¢. I got Madeleine a glass of orange juice and tried again, concentrating on the bottom rows. It was hopeless. Not only were all the lockers engaged, but there were people lurking in front of them ready to pounce.

I was still regarding all this as part of the adventure, but the temperature and the emotional pressure were getting too much for Madeleine, to whom American bus stations were a new and alarming experience. She said she couldn’t sit still any longer, so I took my turn to wait while she cased the women’s restrooms. I saw what she meant. When she got back we both felt we had to get out of here, so we went out into the street again to get something to eat. Boyd Raeburn had warned us never to eat even near a bus station, but our baggage outweighed the weightiest advice, and we went into a diner a few doors away. At least it had a huge fan overhead, which must be the biggest in the States outside Berkeley. Feeling as if a helicopter was about to land on us, we had hamburgers and turkey sandwiches and melon.

Refuelled if not refreshed, we made our way grimly back to Greyhound. After another vain search for a locker I figured there was no point in both of us being anchored in this Turkish bath, so I sent Madeleine out to buy some underclothes to take our minds off our troubles. Left alone

I lugged the cases up to the gallery and sat down to sweat out the rest of the afternoon. I knew it would be just as warm up here, warmer if anything because hot air rises, but there was less noise and turmoil. Psychologically, it was cooler.

After about half an hour some gangster came along to retrieve his sawn-off shot gun, leaving a locker vacant not ten yards away. Slowly and painfully I leapt to my feet, staggered along with the cases, put my foot in the open locker, fished out my quarter and bent down to check the instructions.

It was at once absolutely clear to me that I was the victim of a vast conspiracy, the ramifications of which were far beyond my feeble understanding. In this place, and this place alone, the large lockers on the bottom row were two dimes. I did not happen to have two dimes, having farsightedly traded them in for a quarter.

One thing more was also clear to me, I was not going to take my foot out of that locker. Anyone else wanting to use it was going to have to stow an amputated foot along with his luggage. I was going to keep my foot in that locker until Madeleine came back if necessary. Meanwhile I went through all my pockets three times, and I had ten of them in that suit. Then I made a public appeal to the weary would-be travellers sitting in front of me. “Anybody got two dimes for a quarter?”

I don’t know what has happened to American enterprise, for there was a very poor response to this investment bargain. All that happened was that a coloured lady a few seats away excavated in her purse, produced a solitary dime and smiled regretfully. Hopping on my left foot, I swivelled round and broadcast my appeal in the other direction. At the second transmission, on a tighter beam, a middle-aged white lady about ten seats away also produced a single dime.

As all of you will understand who have stood for any length of time on one leg in a bus station in a heat wave on Labor Day weekend, a mere distribution problem like this is nothing. I hopped back so I could see the coloured lady and asked her if she had another ten cents. She had, I introduced her to the other dime owner and supervised by remote control the necessary transaction which left her with two dimes. I gratefully gave her a quarter for them and put the cases away. Turning back to thank her again, I found her fishing in her handbag. She gave me another five cents.

It was curious, but after only three days in America I was already colour sensitive. If it had been the white lady I would, I realized, have told her to keep the five cents.

I went downstairs and found Madeleine coming to relieve me, with

the secretly self-satisfied look of a woman who has just bought some sexy undies, and we both went out into the streets again feeling as if some great weight had been lifted from us, as indeed it had. I felt some sort of celebration was called for, some symbol of release, so we went into a cocktail bar called Hector's and ordered two Tom Collins. You would have to know me intimately to realize what a daring reckless thing this was for me to do. I'm a very occasional drinker having failed, despite thirty years of endeavour, to acquire a taste for alcohol, and I had never bought a cocktail before nor any drink in the States at all. I ordered a Tom Collins partly because they were the only cocktail I knew, and I knew there was ice in them, and partly because I'd had them on the *Neptunia* ten years ago and they had a sentimental association.

Hector's version of the drink was far nicer than the *Neptunia*'s and indeed they were the first alcoholic drink I ever really enjoyed, but there was more to it than that. You would have to have shared my humdrum provincial life at home to realize how profound was the sense of wonder I felt to be sitting in a cocktail bar in Manhattan, waiting for a bus to Chicago. It was a sensation worth prolonging, but the bar was filling up and I had an uneasy idea I should have tipped the bartender, so we left.

We turned a corner and found ourselves on Broadway, among the tourist traps. Larry and Noreen had warned us about these shops, but Madeleine saw a necklace she liked at some incredible price. I drifted in after her, irresistibly drawn by the transistor radios. I never could resist well made electronic equipment. (Remind me to tell you about my fabulous collection of Air Ministry surplus 0.1 mfd. capacitors.) While one salesman was beating himself against the brick wall of Madeleine's sales resistance, the other descended on me like a wolf on a particularly naive sheep. While Madeleine was still refusing fifty cent necklaces I had bought a ten dollar transistor radio and was already regretting it. I had meant to get one for my daughter Carol, but not to carry it to the West Coast and back, and I knew I had been overcharged for the batteries at least. On the other hand maybe I was lucky to get out before I bought an entire hi-fi system, and it was a nice little radio and Carol was delighted with it and the envy of her school.

It was five o'clock by now, one hour to bus time, so we started back in case we lost our way and found ourselves outside Hector's again with still forty minutes to spare and in sight of the bus station. We went in for some more Hector nectar, and it seemed from the way the barman greeted us as as old friends and regular customers that it had been all right not to tip him He even brought us a huge full tray of little things to eat, and

Madeleine didn’t believe me when I whispered to her that I thought they were free. I didn’t really believe it myself. Free food is just not part of our cosmos.

Back at Greyhound I was even more glad we had already got our tickets. The bedlam was worse than ever, and I was almost sure I recognized some of the people in the queues. I extracted our cases from that hard-won locker and we took our place at the end of the line for Chicago, already alarmingly large. At intervals we peered up and down the line, but saw no other fans. At last the line moved forward and for the first time we used the strategy I had worked out: I gave Madeleine her ticket and she got onto the bus to book a double seat, while I checked the baggage at the side. That done, I struggled on to my first Greyhound bus in ten years.

They had green glass in the windows now, I noted, swimming through the submarine depths peering for Madeleine. I was beginning to think we had got onto different buses when I found her on the last seat but one, defending my half with tooth, claw, and a copy of *Lighthouse*. I showed her how to work the reclining seat and then looked around to see what else was new. There were adjustable headrests and footrests, but it was still Good Old Greyhound. Neither of them worked. Nor did one of the reading lamps, and we were over a wheel arch. And as we whined out of the depot, I realized one thing I had forgotten about Greyhound buses. The engine is at the rear.

But none of this mattered: we were on our way to Chicago.

Chapter 4
Chicago Chicago 1 (Worldcon)

Thursday/Friday, 30th/31st August 1962

As the Scenicruiser threaded its way south-west through New York and its New Jersey environs we saw some fine bridges and terrifyingly complex road formations, but were inspired with awe rather than surprise because these were things we had seen in photographs. Similarly I suppose a first instinctive reaction among fans to live tv pictures of the lunar landscape will probably be how closely it resembles the extrapolations of Bonestell and Pal. What did surprise us was the occasional outcrop of nature and unreconstructed humanity – marshes, dumps, waste ground – which stood out against the metropolitan landscape like a beercan on the Moon.

But soon we were on the turnpike, which is the ultimate so far in man-made environments and seems to bear out the theory that as travel gets faster it gets duller. All you see on turnpike travel, unless the configuration of the countryside is intrinsically interesting, is signs. It's rather like flying by instruments, in that all you know about where you are is the basic data necessary for navigation. Which is as frustrating as making passes at a woman blindfold, knowing only her vital statistics. Similarly two hundred years of American history are inadequately represented by seventeen signs intimating the proximity of Philadelphia, and it's depressing to learn you have missed it altogether by the mere fact that the signs are now heralding Harrisburg. It was, I thought, rather like space travel. You are transported in a sealed container through vast barren distances at speeds so high that any accident would be fatal, intersecting the orbits of exotic places – SIRIUS PLANETS NEXT SEVEN EXITS, ALDEBARAN 73 LIGHT YEARS – but never actually seeing anything but artificial refuelling satellites, Howard Johnson asteroids.

We were far from losing our sense of wonder, but it was being converted into something more hypnotic than hysterical. The first Howard Johnson, for instance, had been a tremendous thrill. These fabulous diners had been one of my clearest memories of 1952, and I delighted in introducing Madeleine to all their marvels – the chocolate malts and

orange juice (though both seemed to have got alarmingly more expensive), the rest of the fabulous menus, the little toy cartons of cream, the free iced water, maps and matches, the automatic vendors and all the other fascinating things on sale – and she was terribly impressed. But as the night wore on I began to feel like the unfortunate Mr. Gall in Peacock's *Headlong Hall*, when he tried to lay down the law about landscape gardening.

"I distinguish," he said, "the picturesque and the beautiful, and I add to them, in the laying out of grounds, a third and distinct character, which I call 'unexpectedness'."

"Pray sir," said his enemy Mr. Milestone, "by what name do you distinguish this character, when a person walks round the grounds for a second time?"

For the second diner was exactly like the first, right down to the fellow customers from the other buses, and so were the next and the next. As the night wore on we began to get the dreamlike feeling that there was really only one diner, to which we were continually being returned in some recurring cycle.

But having stumbled through the darkness into yet another identical diner, we emerged again into unexpected daylight. It was the dawn of Friday, the first day of the Chicon. We were, I found from a tiny notice over the diner door, at a place called Indian Meadow, Ohio. Chicago was only 300 miles away.

But it was a long 300 miles. Madeleine had not been able to sleep and now it was daylight again there seemed less chance than ever of her getting any real rest before the Convention. I was worried about the future as well as the present. For if she couldn't stand long distance bus travel, which as a calculated risk we had taken, all our plans were shot to pieces and our $198.00 tickets wasted. Fortunately, she was tougher that I'd thought, and brightened up as the day went on. And, I told myself, it would be better on another bus. We were inured to the engine noise below us by now, but the wheel arch had become correspondingly more obtrusive. A less expected annoyance was the much advertised rest room, a cramped little cubicle which provided neither rest nor room and which by now could scarcely be used for any other purpose. The Greyhound Corporation advertise this Scenicruiser amenity with a photograph of a little girl whispering in her mother's ear. If that little girl had been on our bus she would have had no need to ask where the rest room was: its location would have been distressingly obvious. It hadn't been cleaned out since New York, and it smelled. Furthermore the lock didn't work and the door kept

banging open and shut, even when there was someone in there. Since I was sitting beside it I was tacitly appointed by the rest of the passengers as guardian of both their sleep and their modesty.

Sometimes in the weeks that followed I felt like publishing a rival Scenicruiser leaflet, from the point of view of the passengers. This would describe the new Obscenicruiser, and would show a little girl holding her nose. The other illustrations, of air conditioning, picture windows and the air-suspension ride, would show sweaty passengers peering exhaustedly through dirty windows at the walls of bus depots, while their 35¢ pillows are being snatched away from below their aching heads.

But to be fair the seats were comfortable, the windows sometimes quite clean and the air conditioning usually worked. It was just that on this first trip it seemed to give up about twenty minutes before each rest stop, so consistently that Madeleine suspected it was by arrangement with Howard Johnson. If so the stratagem certainly worked on me. The first night I had two chocolate malts, four glasses of orange juice, one orange drink and one cup of coffee. As you can deduce from that sequence I was getting worried about the money I was spending, so I finished off defiantly with four glasses of iced water. But as I pointed out to Madeleine at the time, I was eating less while I drank more and Howard couldn't rely on making a profit unless he charged for iced water. The reason for the peculiar behaviour of the air conditioning system was simply that they took on a load of ice cubes at each diner, which all melted before they reached the next source of supply. Actually it didn't particularly worry me, because I can stand a lot of heat and I like being made thirsty as long as there is chocolate malt and orange juice about. In fact these beautiful thirsts are one of the things I love about long distance bus travel in the States, and if Greyhound want to save on their air conditioning and use the money to bring down the price of chocolate malts that would be just fine by me.

Since dawn the big green and white signs had been presaging Chicago, but soon after nine they began to announce routes to various parts of the city itself. We had seen enough of turnpikes by now to realize that this didn't mean the city centre was yet anywhere near, and the main question in our minds was whether the bus would take the much heralded "Chicago Skyway", listed among the alternatives at each parting of the ways. At fork after fork our driver silently answered yes and at last we saw the road before us rise into the air, soaring gracefully above the early twentieth century's muddle of unplanned urbanization. An impressive but smog-limited view of miles of city and then, sooner that I had expected,

we were in the unforgettable Chicago of the lake shore – parks, fountains, great soaring buildings and, as fantastic as ever, the unexpected sea of Lake Michigan dotted with little white ships. Then the bus turned away and plunged into a strange region I had not remembered at all, a weird underground world of catacombs, a whole subway road system with rows of pillars stretching limitlessly in all directions. It was like something in a Van Vogt novel... a great proud city on the shore of an improbable sea, and here the catacombs of the revolution. What a strange ever-surprising city Chicago is.

Through the crypts of Chicago the bus crept into the basement of the bus station and swung into a bay. It was 9:40 a.m. local time: we were twenty minutes early. I claimed the bags and manoeuvred them up the escalator while Madeleine went to freshen up for the second most important occasion of her life. Then we found a cab and I told the driver, "Pick-Congress". I don't remember anything about that taxi ride to the hotel; in fact I doubt if I saw anything, until the big white facade of the Pick-Congress, and the cool foyer all black marble and leather, and strange faces we should be recognizing. Until suddenly we were both trying to grab each other's arm and saying "There's Forry!" And there indeed he was, big friendly familiar Forry, a breath of home all the way from L.A. As he beamed towards us I thought that of all the ways we had met, London and Belfast in 1951, Chicago and Los Angeles in 1952, and London in 1957, this was the strangest and most wonderful of all.

Talking excitedly to Forry, insofar as it's possible to talk excitedly in the presence of that reservoir of relaxation, we drifted to the reception desk and signed in: and in a moment of sobriety, looked round for our luggage. We saw it being lugged away by an elderly bellboy and, pausing only to ask Forry how much to tip, set after it. On the way to the elevator we met Bob Briggs, whom I remembered from 1952. Then he had told me in the course of conversation that New York would rather be the dirtiest city in the world than the second cleanest, and I had made a note of this epigram and said I would quote it. But somehow it had never found its way into *The Harp Stateside*, lying instead for ten years on my conscience. I was glad to tell Bob that I would keep my promise, however belatedly. Satisfied, he returned to Washington immediately: at least I never saw him for the entire remainder of the convention.

Holed up in Room 642, in a strange intense mood of mingled eagerness and apprehension, like a rather diffident Napoleon just in from Elba, I showered while Madeleine made up her mind what to wear. Then I paced about the room while she showered and changed. It wasn't a very

large room, but large enough to pace in and luxurious by the standards of the hotels we were used to. It had a private bathroom (an awesome convenience we could easily come to regard as a necessity), an air conditioner, a radio-intercom, a dressing-table-desk thing, a double bed, and various other gadgets whose purpose Madeleine was able to explain to me out of the arcane knowledge women have about these things. There was also a television set which I turned on because I dimly remembered that in some previous existence I had wanted to see American television. There seemed to be about eight channels available but how many different programmes this represented I wasn't able to concentrate enough to determine. Suddenly I seemed to have lost every vestige of interest in television.

Showered and changed and as ready for the fray as we would ever be, we took the elevator down again and plunged once more into the foyer. We began to meet people at the rate of about ten a minute. There was Ted Johnson, who momentarily dumbfounded me by referring to a joke I'd just made in New York, Bruce Pelz looking dramatically different from everything I had expected, Jack Harness in a shirt dramatically like what I had expected, Bjo whom I would have easily recognized from 1952 as a rather paler Betsy Jo McCarthy... but it would be misleading to give impressions of people now as if I were calm enough to make assessments at the time. Actually to give you the right idea of my state of mind I'd have to employ some sort of action writing technique, like telling you to tear these pages into fragments and throw them into the air like confetti, reading them as they shower round your head.

Besides, one's impressions of people may change as one knows them better, so let's wait until we have parted with them and can recollect them in tranquillity. Unfortunately one of the people we were now about to part with was Theodore Sturgeon, and there was no tranquillity in which to remember him for three days. But then there wasn't much to remember. He came up to me and said how glad he was to see me and that we must have a long talk later. He then disappeared, with a characteristic agonized smile, and I never spoke to him again. Nevertheless I felt that my long standing friendship with Sturgeon had ripened since our last meeting in 1952, when he addressed six words and a smile to me without, I think, knowing who I was. I felt that in another few decades Ted and I would be regular buddies. I was satisfied. I don't mean to sound snide: sincerely, I admire Sturgeon's writing so much I'm quite happy to worship from afar lest any clay become visible on closer inspection of the junction between his legs and the pedestal on which I have placed him.

A seventeen hour bus journey is not the best acclimation for a convention, and after some indefinite time we felt the need of some peace and quiet: yet we hated to miss anything. Forry and food seemed the ideal answer, so we separated ourselves out and strolled along to a shop window restaurant. There we calmed down enough to eat and listen to Forry fill us in on what had been happening in the last few years at the other end of the unbreakable but tenuous line of communication between him and us. This had started when we asked him the time, having remembered the existence of that property of the continuum. He consulted his wrist watches. We asked with interest though without surprise why he wore two, and he explained that he liked watches and since he had plenty of room on his wrist he wore two, one on local time and the other on his publisher's time in New York, usually four hours different.Thus he knew instantly where his publisher was likely to be if he wanted to telephone him. It seemed quite logical to us, and if I had two such nice watches and a publisher in New York I would do the same, but Forry confided that this was one of the things about him which had annoyed Wendayne and led to their divorce. She objected to unconventionalities like this, while he saw no reason to change since he wasn't doing anyone any harm. A woman, he thought, should accept her husband as he was and not try to make him into someone else. They were nice watches, he explained, and indeed he had another dozen strapped to the arm of a statue at home. "I wouldn't wear just any two old watches," he said wryly.

Back at the hotel Forry was instantly apprehended and taken into custody by a movie-house of monster fans. Abandoning him to his fate we turned away and there to our delight was the welcome face of Dick Eney, now ranking as an old friend from back east, and beside him another one from even further east, the tiny but indomitable figure of Ethel Lindsay. That Ethel and I should be together at a Chicago convention was quite incredible, and we both knew it. "You know, Walt," said Ethel, "if I really believed we were here I would just go into that corner and have hysterics. The only thing that saves me is knowing the alarm clock will go off any minute."

"You should worry," I said. "Let me tell you about this recurring dream I seem to have...."

Just then I almost came to believe I really was dreaming, because I noticed some young women wearing strange name-badges and Eney told me with a heroically straight face that they were Catholic girls. Catholic girls again, it was too much. Instantly I thought of the one person in the world with whom I could properly share the wonder of this, and like magic

there she was. “Lee,” I said, “there are Catholic girls again.”

“I know,” she said simply. “Korshak finally got them out of the Convention Hall.”

“Lee,” I said wildly, “let’s go up on the roof and look for Max. Or go along to Wimpy’s and talk to Sam Moskowitz. Nobody else is talking to him these days.”

“Walt, you are forgetting something,” said Lee. “Rich Elsberry is watching us.”

“Well, all right,” I agreed “But let’s go and have a chocolate malt anyway. I’ve still got that cow on my shoulder.”

“So that’s what it is,” said Lee, with her uncanny gift for the esoteric allusion, “I thought it was the hamburger you promised to wear in your buttonhole.”

I couldn’t match that – why, I still can’t remember the context in which I wrote it eleven years ago – so I just went over and extricated Forry and introduced him to Lee all over again, as I had done in 1952, and took everybody to the hotel drugstore and bought them chocolate malts.

As we sipped them happily I noticed Lee was already wearing the little harp brooch I had brought over for her, after scouring Belfast for one exactly like the one I brought her in 1952. Curiously, I didn’t remember having given it to her yet. I felt in my pocket. I hadn’t. There was a brooch still in my pocket, accompanied now by a warm glow in my heart. Why, the dear girl had kept that harp brooch all those years and brought it out for this occasion. I took out the new brooch and silently showed it to her and we just smiled at one another: there was nothing we needed to say.

Conventions and life in general being what they are, this idyllic interlude didn’t last long. The next thing I remember is being accosted in a corridor with the gleeful news that Jim Webbert was here and looking for me. But apparently a very different Webbert from the brash youth I had pilloried in 1952. He had changed completely. The new Webbert was adult, mature, strong and had studied Judo and Karate, so that he could kill a man with one blow of his cigarette lighter. Terrified, I retreated to the protective darkness of the bar, where I cowered behind Bill Donaho with a loyal bodyguard comprising Lee, Forry, Ted Johnstone, Andy Main, Dick Schultz and reinforcements which arrived from time to time. Actually I did meet Jim and found him indeed a different person, so that I regretted even more blackening his name on the assumption he had left fandom for good.

The bar was a most peculiar place called The Highland Room. The drinks were served by pretty girls in short kilts and charged for by a strange system which must have originated in Aberdonian hostelries

frequented by rich and guileless English tourists. Every drink ordered at a table throughout a session was put on a single bill which was presented to the last to leave, so that to buy a single round at a time everyone would have to go out and come in again. I could see that this would make for a quick turnover of clientele but it was singularly unsuitable for conventions.

However on this occasion I was only too happy to play Casablanca. As I left to follow the others to the registration room we were invited to dinner by Jim Warren with Forry, John and Bjo Trimble, Bob Madle and Jock Root. I accepted with pleasure but also with secret relief at the fact that we had to register first. I wasn't hungry, and I knew if I ate now I would regret it. At times like these I'm prone to nervous indigestion, from which the only protection is fasting. So I waited quite happily at the end of a long line talking to Dick Schultz and others, while Forry hovered about impatiently. I think this was almost the last I saw of Dick Schultz. Next morning someone told me he was supposed to have been "monopolizing" me (maybe Rich Elsberry was there) and though I indignantly denied it I'm afraid someone may have said the same to Dick. It was true he had been with me for some hours, but by no means unwelcomely: indeed I appreciated his sensitive understanding of the most nostalgic mood of that first day, evidenced in his cartoons in the current *Bane*. The only criticism I could possibly make of him was that he appreciated some of my jokes more than I did, and that's more an accomplishment than a fault.

It was while standing in this line holding a sort of unofficial audience with various people who came by, that I realized what a boon my special convention-attending suit was turning out to be. As you know, James White works in the tailoring department of a multiple store, and this suit was his own particular contribution to TAWF. It had been specially designed for attending American conventions, being of a strong but light-weight Terylene mixture and having no less than ten pockets. Including one for holding American size fanzines, unfolded, one for the programme booklet, one as a sort of quick-draw holster for a notebook, and one in the waistband of the trousers for an American size billfold, so strategically placed that anyone wanting to pick my pocket would have had to seduce me first, and at least I would have got something for my money. This last pocket was quite a contribution to my peace of mind during the trip. In 1952 I had carried all my money in my hip pocket and for years afterwards I found myself in moments of stress tapping my bottom with the knuckle of my thumb to make sure it was there. Which of course it wasn't, and I hate to think of the effect on my subconscious of these multiple shocks.

But the use I was making of the suit now was one neither James nor I

had envisaged. When you meet someone you have been looking forward to meeting for years, there is so much to talk about that you sometimes don't know where to start. There can actually be incredible frustrating moments of silence while each searches for some remark not too unworthy of such a climactic occasion. It helps to have something trivial, but immediate and comprehensible, to start things going. I broke a lot of log-jams with that tweed ice-breaker.

After half an hour or so Forry lost patience and following a whispered discussion with members of the Convention Committee at the registration table brought Madeleine and me to the front of the line, and when we had registered started to shepherd us in the direction of the dining room. But there was one little thing I had to do first. I pinned on my name badge, and then took out of my pocket something I had kept for sheer sentiment and could now, incredibly, use again. I pinned on the other lapel my 1952 name badge.

In the dining room I realized worriedly that I still wasn't hungry, though it was now quite late. But I couldn't sit there and fast, with such a congenial host and such pleasant company. And maybe I would be all right by the time the food arrived. So I ordered. But the service was too good, and now I faced an even worse problem. I couldn't leave the food my host was paying for, and it looked so delicious, and maybe I could chance it. So I did, only to realize almost immediately I had made the same mistake I had made with a certain hot nut fudge sundae in Los Angeles ten years ago. I listened dully to the scintillating conversation going on around me, wishing I could join in. But all I could do was sit there like a Buddhist monk contemplating my navel, or what was going on beneath it. John Trimble was wearing a badge saying "Repeal the 19th Amendment", the effect of which would be to strip women of their franchise, and outlining his programme subsequently. Forry advanced a rival slogan, "Repeal the Liberty Bell". It was, he explained innocently, not all it was cracked up to be.

At this point I whispered to Madeleine to apologize for me, and left hurriedly. I had of course been exposed to Forry's puns before, so I knew he wouldn't feel guilty. By the time I got to my room the wave of nausea had receded, but I knew it would be back. I tried to make myself sick, but failed miserably, so I lay down to see if I could sleep it off. But neither my stomach nor my mind would settle – here in Chicago I couldn't just lie there – so after a while I got up again. I had a shower and felt a little better, so I went downstairs again and found the dinner party over but Madeleine still bravely flying the family flag in the corridors. We met the Busbys, the

Grennells and Boyd Raeburn, who had just arrived. That alone seemed achievement enough for one day, and we decided to go to bed and conserve our energy. It was only about half ten, but after yesterday in New York and the night in the bus and the sort of day we'd had since, it seemed to us we must be exhausted if we only had the sense to realize it. So we stole away to our room and found it was so, and drifted off to sleep thinking happily of all those wonderful people around us whom we were to see more of tomorrow.

Saturday 1st September 1962

So we were up bright and early next morning at the crack of 9:15 winding up slowly for the day buying postcards in the hotel drugstore and strange American breakfasts and endless cups of coffee with the few others who were alive at this hour. This peaceful prelude ended when I caught sight of the man whom some of you know as Robert Bloch. I whispered tensely to Madeleine, "There he is." The brave girl tidied her hair, adjusted her clothing and we went to confront him. I must say he rose to the occasion with all the old world gallantry one would expect from a member of an older generation. He gave Madeleine a lecherous look, whispered his room number in her ear and added as a further inducement that he knew what I had done with Max Keasler. "How are you going to ditch your husband?" was the way his suave advances continued.

Fortunately the Programme was now about to start, with the Introduction of Notables. As we passed the sign to the Florentine Room where this was to take place Bloch commented that they mustn't know yet what fans were like, or they'd have called it The Quarantine Room. Inside we sat about two thirds of the way up on the right hand side and looked around. We had, I found, Forry Ackerman on one side and Dean Grennell just behind us. It seemed too good to be true, but... "Forry," I whispered, "have you ever met Dean Grennell?" He shook his head and looked around interestedly. "Dean," I said, in quiet triumph, "may I introduce you to Forry Ackerman?"

What greater honour could fall to a fan all the way from Ireland, I thought, than that of introducing Grennell to Ackerman? As if in answer, Doc Smith asked for my autograph, an accolade marred only by my good memory – I knew he collected autographs for his daughters. As I passed the book back I noticed the man directly behind me was wearing a name badge saying he was Harry Stubbs. I introduced myself and told him how

James White had regarded it as the ultimate in egoboo when he was recently compared to Hal Clement. On behalf of Clement, Stubbs said he liked James's work too, and I fixed the last three events firmly in my mind. All in all it was a couple of minutes guaranteed to impress the striped pants off James.

At 11:50 Dean McLaughlin and Howard Devore began to perform their own introduction of notables, taking the fans and pros neither respectively nor respectfully. Larry Shaw, introduced among the pros, stood up and said simply "I'm a fan," for which I admired him all the more. Many of McLaughlin's more willing candidates for professional honours were not there, including Fred Pohl and Cele Goldsmith. Nor was Vernon Coriell, though I carefully examined the chandeliers.

As the introductions went on and on, and my hands got too sore to clap any more, an uneasy thought struck me. Now that I had introduced Grennell to Ackerman the stage was set for that Ultimate Pun, the one which would bring the world to an end. But I refused to have the world end now: I was enjoying it too much. So after all the notables had been duly introduced to one another we whisked Dean and Jean up to their room, ostensibly to discuss the panel that evening. The centrifugal forces of the convention had swept Forry safely away, so nothing worse occurred that afternoon than a small earthquake in Iran. I tremble to think what might have happened if Forry had been in that room with us. Dean showed us one of his guns and then combined all his various interests by taking a photograph of Madeleine holding it and by saying casually that since this was a Mickey Spillane type shot he would take it with "Mike Hammera". So you can see how narrowly the world escaped extinction. *

** For Dean Grennell's response see Appendix 2: The Fastest Pun in the Mid-West. [Ed.]*

We had learned only last evening what the subject of the panel was going to be (The Sense of Wonder) but already Dean had a Chairman's introduction all typed out, and said the rest of us were supposed to make short speeches too. This rather shook me because I had optimistically assumed that all a panel had to do was answer questions, so I borrowed Dean's typer and tried to compose something myself. But I found I couldn't write with other people present (I have these incantations to make, you see, and that cockerel bit makes rather a mess) so I went back to our room while Madeleine went downstairs to see if we could offer any help, material or otherwise, with the arrangements for the reception. She came back to report she'd been told just to run along and get ready, and

this she proceeded to do while I finished my speech. (I don't mind writing speeches: maybe Sam Moskowitz and I should go into partnership.) She was pretty nervous, but managed to pull herself together, after which I zipped her up. We arrived at our reception only two minutes late. I had never been the recipient of a Reception before, but I didn't find it all that different from the rest of the convention. The difference was to everyone else. Sometimes the nicest people you could wish to meet don't introduce themselves for fear of pushing themselves forward, and the idea of setting aside a time when they're supposed to push themselves forward is a wonderful one. Whoever conceived it – Larry and Noreen I think – deserves an Award, and already has our undying gratitude. It is not only nice to meet people, but a relief to know you haven't missed anyone who wants to meet you.

Someone had had a little piece printed up about us, which had been issued with the programme booklet. I glanced through it then, blushed furiously, and haven't dared to read it since, though I think Madeleine knows it by heart. The Shaws and the Lupoffs were making Pepsi-Cola flow like water. Dean Grennell had made us a little plaque reading "Oblique House: Chicago Wing" which I put on the wall. Robert Bloch made a welcome and typically thoughtful appearance at the beginning and the end to lighten the load. Bob Tucker manifested himself at the Convention for the first time in the middle of it, escorted by Lee Hoffman, and was immediately swallowed up in the throng. But not before he was noticed by Ted Johnstone, to whom I was talking at the time. "Is that Tucker?" he asked wistfully. "I've always wanted to meet him." So I pushed my way through the crowd with Ted, asked Lee, "Is this where you get to meet Tucker?" and performed another notable introduction.

Altogether we thought the reception was wonderful, and the only sad memory of it is that it was virtually the last time we talked to Tucker. It's curious how one can regard as an old friend someone one has met only twice in ten years. Curious, that is, to anyone who hasn't met Tucker.

Quite suddenly, it seemed everyone had gone and so had the whole afternoon. Exhausted but happy we went out to dinner with Ethel, the Lupoffs and the Grennells. On the way Dean saw in an art shop window a plaster statuette of the head and the bosom of an Egyptian princess, and said he was going to buy it for the National Fantasy Fan Federation. It was, he understood, a girl named Neffertiti. I agreed this was a good idea; in fact I'd heard they were expecting a bust in the N3F.

While we were away at dinner the venue of the panel discussion was changed, but unfortunately someone told me about it. They rushed up to

me in great agitation, apologizing for the fact that the event had had to be moved to a smaller room. I received this blow stoically. The smaller the room the less people would be there, which I considered a trend in the right direction. I'd have been even more pleased with a telephone booth.

So, it turned out, would have been nearly everyone else, and indeed the room we had been moved to did have one of the characteristics of a telephone booth, in that there seemed to be as much electronic gadgetry as people. Initially everyone was quite pleased to see this, because the doors couldn't be closed on account of the crowd and there was quite a lot of noise from outside. But after some inaudible speeches and only too audible interruptions it emerged that the microphones were connected only to tape recorders, so that the only people able to hear everything were Frank Dietz and posterity. It was rather like one of those fake events arranged solely for television, in which the live audience is a mere backdrop. However the confusion over the microphones had one extraordinary result: there was no microphone near me so I didn't rely on it, and was one of the more audible speakers. Altogether I was reasonably satisfied with my little contribution – I even got laughs with both my jokes – and sat back almost happily to await the questions. And then some loud voiced character got up and said, "I would like to ask Mr. Willis to make another 3 or 4 minute speech." Quite taken aback, I just said "Tomorrow", meaning the banquet. I thought the implied criticism, or so I considered it at the time, was unfair, because four minute speeches by five panellists were quite enough for a one hour discussion programme. And so it turned out, because the panel speeches took so long there was time for only a few questions from the audience and the event broke up in general frustration. The brightest moment had been when one young fan completely dumbfounded Dick Eney by referring to him as "one of your generation" in the course of some remarks about contemporary sf. Quite apart from the question of the degree of senility of Dick Eney, it still seems extraordinary to me that there could be fans who feel about the science fiction of today as we felt about that of the Fabulous Forties. It is rather like finding your children prefer tinned salmon and powdered eggs.

Making a rapid escape from the panel room I went upstairs to shower the sweat off. Then I zipped Madeleine into her blue ball gown and we went downstairs to see the fancy dress. In the big room there was a huge crowd seeming to consist entirely of strangers and photographers, in the middle of which we caught an occasional glimpse of people in fancy dress shuffling around in a solid circle, as if trapped on a congested turntable. It was, apparently, supposed to be a parade, but there was nowhere for them

to parade to; all that happened was that more fancy dresses crushed into the circle and none got out. Finally we gave up the chair on which we had been standing to yet another photographer... this seemed to be another fake event staged for posterity... and retreated to the outlying regions. There we met Bob Madle, who abruptly asked me if I ever kept the sf magazines I used to buy in the Thirties. I couldn't honestly say I did, because my mother kept throwing them out under the mistaken impression that they were not great literature, but after more interrogation Bob elicited an admission that I had held onto a couple of science fiction books. He then told me that as an old-time Collector from way back I was qualified to attend the First Fandom Party, and was hereby invited. Proud and kind of humble as I was to receive this fatted calf from ancestral fandom, it was quite a shock to absorb the additional information that I was in fact two years older than father-figure Bob Madle himself.

By now various entrants from the fancy dress parade had been expelled from the melee like pips from an orange and were mutely challenging people to guess who they were... a particularly testing task for us, who had barely learned to recognize them in their normal guise. The most remarkable transformation was that of Bruce Pelz, who had performed the notable feat of wearing fancy dress throughout the Convention until he looked quite normal in it, and had then changed his clothes, shaved off his beard, had his hair cut and left off his glasses.

The judging apparently over, a very loud dance band started to play and conversation became impossible within the blast area. We stayed for a while watching the twist session in which only about a dozen people were participating, half of whom seemed to be Boyd Raeburn, and then fled to the back of the hall carrying the fragments of our eardrums. Bruce Pelz and Jock Root with great initiative pulled across a folding and partly soundproof partition and we talked with them and various others until nearly 2 a.m. Then we went out with Ted White to eat, roaming the warm and brightly lit streets of Chicago happily until Ted found a place to which he thought he could entrust us.

Back at the hotel Ted went to bed, and we thought that before we went to the First Fandom Party we would take up a couple of other invitations we'd been given the night before, from Marsha Brown and Don Ford. At Marsha's we sat for a while on a bed listening to Jerry Pournelle and H. Beam Piper singing obscure Scottish folksongs at the top of their by no means obscure voices, and to Jerry castigating some other folksinger who had apparently struck it rich and was driving about in foreign cars. "What's so folksy about a Ferrari?" he roared indignantly.

On the way out we were invited to breakfast at the Playboy Club and regretfully declined, on the grounds that we'd just had dinner, or something, and had two more invitations to take up. But on the way to Don Ford's room we met Don himself, with Lou Tabakow and Stan Skirvan, and he told us the First Fandom Party was over. We sat in Don's room talking quietly and congenially for a while, and then in came the man who had asked me to make another speech. It turned out that his name was Fry, and he was still asking questions. He wanted me to expound further on the Sense of Wonder, and also to explain to him just why I don't want to speak in public. At the time, for some reason, neither of these subjects was irresistibly attractive to me, and anyway it was obvious that Don had intended to go to bed soon, so I side-stepped the argument and we left. We found ourselves in the empty corridor again, with nowhere to go. It seemed all wrong somehow. To be at the Chicon with no one to talk to was not only anti-climactic, but after those two crowded days almost incredible. We realized we had gone to bed early the wrong night, but there was more to it than that. Emotionally of course my subconscious was convinced that people just didn't want to invite me to their parties, but intellectually I surmised the reason was in one important difference from 1952 which I had overlooked. Then I had come by myself, and was always with some in-group or other. But this time Madeleine and I constituted a little in-group of our own. It had meant we could get away from it all without being accused of being stand-offish or monopolizing each other, but it also meant that, as now, we couldn't always get back to it all again.

So, rather mournfully, we just went to our room and to bed.

Sunday 2nd September 1962

At ten next morning, wakened unintentionally by the cleaning woman, we dashed down to the Florentine Room just in time to miss the intentionally scheduled Business Session. However on the way back to coffee we were solemnly assured by Bob Silverberg, one of the early bergs, that nothing sensational had occurred... except, of course, that the next Con had been voted to Belfast. For once he was unable to create a willing suspension of disbelief and we continued breakfastwards comparatively unshaken. I had a vague idea there might be some sort of intelligence test going on somewhere about this time, but lacked even the intelligence to find it. In any case I had this deep instinctive feeling that at this time of the morning the most intelligent answer to this test was to be in bed.

I felt better after coffee at the hotel drugstore, with Lee Hoffman, Ruth Kyle and Sid Coleman, a varied but congenial group. I just had coffee, because we had a very important lunch invitation and I wanted my stomach to accept it too. At Madeleine's suggestion, I visited the N3F room after breakfast, but found it apparently not at its best. There were only two people there, both so uncommunicative as to be obviously members of the Unwelcome Committee. So I rejoined Madeleine at the Art Show and browsed there happily for a while marvelling at what these arty fellows could get up to. Until Bjo came along and started to explain something, so tactfully that at first I didn't realize I was being chucked out. The room was being closed for the judging, she explained charmingly, though of course if we wanted to stay... I didn't want to be in the way, and I had the vague idea that we mightn't be allowed to leave during the judging, like fake cardinals in the Vatican. Rather than be a wet blanket on the smoke signals, we left after thanking Bjo sincerely. I tell you, being thrown out of a room by Bjo is an uplifting experience.

At 12:30 our host, Algis Budrys, collected us outside the dining room, brought us to a table and then, in the course of what seemed inconsequential chat, quietly dropped a depth charge in my life. He was, I realized, quite seriously suggesting I write a book for Regency, for which he would pay money. I was so taken aback as to be quite unable to face the idea at the time, so I just said I'd think about it and changed the subject. People had suggested professional writing to me before but I'd always dismissed it as persiflage. But now someone, and a real live publisher at that, had actually invested real money, to wit the cost of two excellent lunches, thereby raising the concept to an entirely new level of reality. It was like hearing that Imperial Chemicals have bought a Hieronymous Machine.

The next thing I remember after the traumatic experience of being Taken To Lunch By My Publisher is listening to Marvin W. Mindes discoursing on Science Fiction, Mental Illness and the Law. A wide field, as he disarmingly admitted "The nature of ultimate reality," he said cheerfully, "I will take care of in passing." He went on to take care of psionics in what I thought was a less guarded assessment than one would normally expect from a lawyer. The Dean Drive, the Shaver Mystery and Psionics, he affirmed categorically, were all instances of the legitimate science fiction field being taken over by nuts. In answer to sporadic protests he conceded that some subjects like the Rhine experiments might be legitimate fields for speculation, but they had been invaded by nuts. Valid scientific territory was being polluted, and hypotheses being

perverted into cults. The job of those of us who could differentiate between science and a lunatic craze was to nail the nuts.

Despite the absence of John W. Campbell and other prominent figures in the unnailed nut world, it was an entertaining three quarters of an hour, and after it even Frank Robinson's talk on science fiction in the men's magazines seemed to lack dramatic impact. Madeleine whispered she had a headache and slipped out, after a few minutes I followed her to see if she was all right. I left by an unused side door near my seat, and found myself in the world of an *Unknown* story. The little men were not ready for me: today had not been finished here. The marmoreal elegance of the hotel was, I found, a mere facade propped up by scaffolding behind which was a whole strange world of chaos and confusion. Now I knew why this hotel was so hard to find your way about in. It was rebuilt every night in a different way. Picking my way through endless dim regions of protocorridors thronged with planks, plywood and paint pots, I eventually emerged to the surface world and found my way to our room. Madeleine was not there. I thought she had probably gone back to the Convention Hall while I was lost in the labyrinth, so I went back to check. But she still wasn't there, and all I saw was Ted Sturgeon denouncing the common assumption that sexual excitation was somehow wrong. I agreed, but at the time the subject was of merely academic interest to me and I didn't feel like sitting on a hard chair, even listening to Sturgeon. I was worried a little about Madeleine too, so I went upstairs again. Our room was still empty, so I started to re-write my banquet speech, in which I had by now completely lost confidence. But having started to brood about the banquet... I hadn't had time since the Convention started to get in any serious brooding... I began to feel terrible, so after a while I lay down and tried to sleep it off. Instead I drifted into a sort of nightmare halfworld in which I was swept by a great wave of rage against extroverts. Damn those smiling loudmouthed bastards who force us poor introverts to make speeches, I thought. Damn everyone who has ever put anyone's name on a Convention programme without being asked to. Damn everyone who has ever shouted "Speech." They are the sort of fiends who would bury claustrophobes alive for fun. When extroverts visit introverts in our studies, I thought in a fresh access of self pity, do we push them down in front of typers and command them to write columns for our fanzines and jeer at them for not writing enough? We have suffered meekly too long, I thought blackly, it is time for us to rise in our thousands in righteous wrath. At a secret signal let every introvert rise and slit the brazen throat of every insolent extrovert. What a wonderful peace and silence would reign

over fandom. After that blessed St. Bartholomew's Day, how much we could enjoy conventions.

A thing which, I realized, I was hardly doing at the moment. I must pull myself together. I got up again, found the tranquillizers Dean Grennell had given us and took one. After a while I fell into a less troubled sleep.

Madeleine woke me at 7:15 to ask me to zip her up. The banquet was only fifteen minutes away. Both of us took another tranquillizer, Madeleine because she had just been told she would have to "say a few words" too. She kept suggesting little jokes she might say and I kept telling her, out of my vast experience of public speaking, that they wouldn't do. One thing I did know was that, public speaking being a medium of communication so vastly inferior to the printed word, jokes have to be simple. While I was still in the shower Ethel called for us to give and get moral support, and we all went down to our fate together.

We were shown to a table just below the speakers' dais, and found we were sharing it with Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Hindes, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Hamilton and of all people, Bill Hamling. This was his first appearance at the convention, so I hadn't seen him since September 1952, when he gave me a cheque for $50.00 and a frozen daiquiri. He remembered me, but evidently not the circumstances of our meeting: nor did he seem to know the circumstances of this one....

"Have you come over specially for the Convention?" he asked friendlily.

"Well, yes..." I said.

"Do you hear that?" he said enthusiastically to Hamilton. "All the way from Ireland to attend our Chicago Convention. And he did the same in 1952. Such loyalty!"

"Well," I said, "it wasn't just... Well, you remember –"

"Say," he said, "didn't you have a beard last time I saw you?"

"No," I said, "it was a frozen daiquiri. Don't you remember –?"

But at this moment Bob Tucker came by to tell us to keep our speeches short because Ghod was due to appear unexpectedly at exactly 9:45. In fact we needn't even go up to the dais. While Ethel and I were discussing the implications of these three statements Hamling got involved in conversation with his neighbours across the table and I never did get the chance to tell him how much that $50.00 had meant to me in 1952. I looked for him after the banquet but he had disappeared again.

By the time the food arrived I had assessed what my first tranquillizers had done for me, and was not impressed with this miracle of modern science. True, I wasn't nervous any more, but then neither is a

man who knows he is about to be hanged. Nervousness implies some sort of hope. I felt even less fitted to make a speech without my reserves of nervous energy. Maybe the food would help, I thought, if I could trust my stomach. I took out a precautionary Alka-Seltzer and dropped it in the glass of iced water. It fizzed reassuringly round the ice cube. What confidence it inspired, I thought, that powerful chemical reaction, it was doing me good already. “It’s a form of fizziotherapy,” I confided to Ethel. “What is that you’re drinking?” asked Mindes. “Iced Alka-Seltzer,” I explained, and held up my glass in a toast. “The American Way Of Life.”

We had opted for turkey because it is a luxury at home, and were the only people at the table who had done so. I thought I had made a mistake until I found everyone else thought the same about their beef. “Have some of this red stuff,” suggested Madeleine. “Diane *[Berry]* says it helps John’s appetite. It’s called Cram-Berry sauce.”

During the meal, Sturgeon announced portentously, we would be privileged to hear a recording of the original Orson Welles broadcast of *The War of the Worlds*. But after a few minutes the invading Martians were routed by several hundred hungry conventioneers armed only with knives and forks, and their sponsors conceded defeat. Hush fell only when the banquet was over and the presentation of special awards began. I claim the honour of having led the standing ovation to Bob Tucker.

When our turn came we decided to go up to the dais so that at least we wouldn’t be invisible as well as inaudible. Having arrived at the microphone I made to feel in my pocket for my notes and pulled out a couple of pieces of lettuce I had taken off my plate for the purpose. But this little throwaway gag was half hidden by the high lectern and noticed only by one fan with good eyesight and an even better memory, who giggled perceptively. However the rest of my bit went over quite well, so that I began to think I might get the hang of this speechmaking business if I didn’t hate it so much. Then I waited while Madeleine said her few but sincere words of thanks and escorted her back to our table. There we relaxed, ready now to enjoy the best of the banquet, the Sturgeon.

We did, though I thought the business with his wife’s book a little chi-chi, and its spontaneity suspect. But it was a remarkable performance, not only in content but in structure. Being of a cynical turn of mind as far as speechmaking pros are concerned, I had conjectured that the imminent Ghod would be Heinlein, and listened attentively from this point of view as the thread of Sturgeon’s discourse unrolled.

Sure enough, at exactly 9:45 he reached the exact point at which Heinlein’s name should occur. It did, and I looked expectantly at the door.

But nothing happened. Sturgeon carried on without the slightest hesitation, and half an hour later had again reached a point where Heinlein's name naturally arose. Now to write a good speech is not difficult for a man who can write like Sturgeon. To be able to deliver it so well is an added gift that seems almost unfair. But to be able to take a speech apart in mid-air and reassemble it, and to do it so well that people afterwards who don't even know he did it praise the speech for its structure, is quite awe inspiring.

Heinlein's entrance was certainly dramatic, but I thought his white dinner suit almost too theatrical for a man who had travelled vast distances at breakneck speed to arrive unexpectedly in the nick of time. However – fortunately for my peace of mind – Steve Schultheis, who is an authority on all sartorial matters, explained everything to me later in Santa Barbara. It is of course perfectly true that, as every good little neofan believes, Heinlein struggles each year through sleet, hail, rain, snow and mud in his exquisite evening dress, climbing mountains, fording rivers, scrambling over fences, trudging through fields, hacking his way through undergrowth and fighting his way along alleys, in his desperate efforts to get to the Convention on time. And it cannot be denied that in the course of these heroic journeys even a man like Heinlein must occasionally be in danger of getting a speck of dust on his clothing. But what I had not realized is that he is not alone. He is closely followed, Steve revealed, every step of the way by a devoted retainer who used to be a batman on Heinlein's aircraft carrier and thus acquired the ability of intercepting every speck of dirt before it reaches his master's person. He ceases from his dedicated task only at the very door of the Convention Hall, where he waits humbly clutching the well-worn little long leather Hugobag.

These appearances of Heinlein are becoming one of the most charming traditions of fandom. They remind me of a series of faan-fiction stories I once started based on the theory that conventions are becoming more and more stylized, and will eventually develop into something like carnival or circus, or the British Christmas Pantomime. The Heinlein Manifestation would make a fine conclusion to any such performance. The distribution to the audience of favours and of gaily coloured but inedible food symbols would be the prelude to a series of ritual incantations before a number of silver spaceship shaped objects, which would culminate in a blinding flash and the miraculous apparition of The Heinlein in a Technicolor tuxedo. After the Bob-Up, as they call it backstage where they operate the trapdoor, there would be a knockabout comedy turn involving other traditional characters like the Doctor and The Surgeon and The

Tucker and The Clerk and The Farmer, and then The Heinlein would wrest one or more of the silver objects from them and disappear with demoniacal laughter in another flash and puff of smoke. The children will love it, and indeed The Heinlein does re-appear for them later in a number of smaller tents simultaneously, like Santa Claus in department stores, where he gives autographs to those who bring serial wrappers.

Next morning over noon coffee I mentioned to Sid Coleman that I'd heard Heinlein was up already receiving visitors again. "He isn't up already," said Sid, "He hasn't been to bed already." We contemplated for a moment in silence the thought of Heinlein after that long journey sitting up all night talking to fans, and still at it. "You know," said Sid, "it's possible that one of the most admirable things about Heinlein is his insincerity." He went on to point out that for years Heinlein had had, literally and metaphorically, no time for fans; and that we have never been informed as to what brought about his sudden conversion. A nasty cynical person might speculate it was because he had suddenly realized that the acclaim of fandom might be of some practical advantage to him. But, Sid pointed out, if this cultivation of fans was coldly deliberate, how much we should respect him for his strength of will, and how much more for the perfection with which he does it?

After this conversation with Sid I decided to go up and judge for myself. I hadn't meant to, because I needed all the time I had and more to see the people I had really come to meet; and I had nothing worth saying to Heinlein that wouldn't involve us in a long argument. But watching him, and then talking to him, I found it was impossible either to dislike the man or fail to admire him. I couldn't detect any phoniness in his friendliness. Even if it did originate as an act of policy, I think he is still a man we can like as well as admire. A great man will first try to change his environment, but if this is impossible he will adapt himself to it. It is possible that Heinlein, having made up his mind to get on with fans, set himself to see what there was in us to like, and succeeded.

But to get back to Sunday night, which is still young. After the banquet I made for the reception desk to send a cable to Brian Aldiss, on whose behalf I had just accepted a Hugo. I had promised Ian McAulay, Ph.D., whose scientific soul had been seared by the concept of interplanetary cobwebs, that I would boo and stamp my feet if the *Hothouse* series got a Hugo, even in the very act of accepting it, but my own spirit of justice had already been crushed by the award to *Analog*. (Besides secretly I rather liked *Hothouse*.) At reception I was told I had to go to my room to send a cable by phone, so I did that taking Ron Ellik

with me to act an an interpreter between me and Western Union. As I remember the cable as drafted by me and dictated by Ron Ellik said simply and economically CONGRATULATIONS HUGOWINNER, but that complex English address cost the earth.

That pleasant chore accomplished, we came down again and ran into Fritz Leiber in a corridor. He said everyone had been telling him he looked like my father. I told him I appreciated the compliment, without explaining what a compliment it really was – ten years ago everyone had been saying he looked like me. This was a great comfort to a fan who has just found out he is older than Bob Madle, and is beginning to feel it.

Then we went along to Bloch's lantern lecture, which was both the oddest and most successful convention turn I have ever seen. The oddest because it was aimed simultaneously at two entirely different audiences, monster fandom and sf fandom, and the most successful because Bloch scored direct hits with both barrels. Even in the dark you could detect quite clearly the patterns in which the two groups were seated by the scattering of the laughter, like radar echoes.

We stayed for a while to see Emsh's *Danse Chromatique*, solely on Les Gerber's recommendation, and then went up to the party in the Shaw/Lupoff suite. We were still in time to see part of the recorded panel discussion on tv in which most of the Convention pros seemed to be appearing, but somehow we weren't able to concentrate on it. There were so many people here I had been wanting to talk to. Boyd Raeburn, for instance, whom I had been almost ignoring up to now for the most peculiar of reasons. There were lots of people I had been ignoring because I would see them after the Convention and I had just realized I'd been subconsciously including Boyd in the same category. Not because I had any plans to go to Canada, but because he never seemed to have left Belfast. He had fitted so naturally and congenially into the life of Oblique House that here he seemed a familiar friend from home. Breaking to my subconscious the sad news that Boyd didn't really live in Belfast, I sat down beside him and we had a long discussion about all manner of things, so congenial that we actually not only risked discussing politics but agreed on something.

Then there were Phyllis Economou and Wrai Ballard, a combination of beauty, intelligence and strength that had no difficulty in persuading me to put my name back on the FAPA waiting list. Phyllis was so nice a person she didn't need to be half as pretty to be an exceptional woman. Wrai I thought deserved the sort of adjectives like strong and kindly and good that seemed too corny for anyone with his sense of humour. There

was also Marion Bradley, whom I had already met one and a half times. There was the night she arrived, when someone pointed her out to me and I rushed along and introduced myself. She looked through me and walked on. Someone explained she was just tired and I gave this a 55% probability only because I couldn't think of anything Marion could be cross with me about except a little argument we had in FAPA many years ago about tornadoes. I know someone was castigated once for speaking disrespectfully of the Equator, but that was in the narrowminded Nineteenth Century. I worried about it a little, when I had time. Then at our reception Marion came up and said, "Since you're a much nicer person than I am I'm sure you will forgive me for spreading malicious gossip about you." I said sure, sure, feeling rather like someone who has been wakened in the middle of the night and told he has been sentenced to death and unexpectedly reprieved. I hadn't heard any malicious gossip. So when I saw her for the third time sitting on the bed in the other room I thought, oh well, two falls out of three, and went over. And found her a very agreeable and interesting girl. I still don't know what that business was all about because I didn't ask. If Marion was willing to forget it I was happy never to know it. I liked this attractive blonde girl that mature Marion Bradley had turned out to be.

There was also Buck Coulson, who was just as solid and sensible and likeable as I had expected, and Betty Kujawa who was more of everything than I had expected, and many others who even in that long party I didn't get to know as well as I would have liked. I was so engrossed that I only gradually became aware that some of our hosts had gone to bed, that they had been trying to restrict the party and that maybe we should go to bed. So we left, and went down to the main lobby again, which you seemed to have to do to get anywhere in that hotel, and found a sight the like of which for sheer poignancy I had never seen since Lee Jacobs was refused beer in a hotel in London at 10:30 p.m. in 1951.

There on a sofa in the great silent hall sat Don Studebaker and four other young fans, like sparrows in a sepulchre. They were drinking tea. When they saw us they sprang up eagerly and asked us if we knew where there was a party. It was heartbreaking to have to tell them that we didn't, and watch their faces fall, and see them flutter sadly back to their perch. Averting our eyes from the mournful sight we went ourselves to the elevator and pressed the final fatal button to end it all for the day. It was five a.m.

Monday 3rd September 1962

I know we got up next morning at 10:15 because I made a note of it, but what I seem to have forgotten to do is make a note of why I made a note of it. Probably the way I felt it seemed a notably valiant thing to do. But then this was our last day. Our original well-laid plan had been to stay on in Chicago until everyone had gone, and then stop off at Fond du Lac on our way to Seattle in time to catch Dean Grennell between business trips. But Dean's schedule had been changed, his day off was to be Tuesday, and if we were to visit Fond du Lac post office with him we had to leave today and come back to Chicago Wednesday. The inconsiderate action of that Fond du Lac furnace company was to inconvenience a lot of good people on the West Coast, but at the time it seemed to me the only real waste of time would be the four hour journey back from Fond du Lac. And I was determined to come back, to see more of Chicago than the glimpse I had caught in 1952. I hadn't yet realized that Conventions had got longer at both ends since 1952 and that many people were staying over Monday night.

After a daring breakfast of waffles and syrup with Sid Coleman and Charles Wells, the latter almost unrecognisable from the rather stiff young fan of 1952, we went up with Robert Bloch to see Heinlein in his morning shift. Not that he was actually wearing a shift, but the informality of his habits was reminiscent of those of the French aristocracy who held court in their bathrooms. Bloch was amused. "Ghod," he quasi-quoted, "in a clean bathrobe." Maybe, I thought, this was the garment known as a Mother Hubbard. Outside again, Bloch invited us to lunch and en route to the dining room we were joined by Mike McQuown, an unexpected privilege. One had to admire the authoritative way in which he said "Four, please" to the Head Waitress, and he was a great help in filling up the embarrassing pauses which tend to occur when you are trying to make conversation with a man as dull as Bloch.

The rest of the afternoon was all partings, some for days, some for years and some, perhaps, for ever. But we steadfastly refused to acknowledge the existence of this last category, holding pathetically to the belief that the entire Convention membership would be transported bodily to London in 1965. It was sad enough to leave all these old and new friends without feeling the parting might be permanent. And it was only now we realized how many people we had barely met. Our only consolation was that we had tried. Except for the bare minimum of sleep we had spent the entire three days talking to fans, much of the time separately. Every now and then I would look over the heads of a crowd and see Madeleine talking animatedly to a group of people, positively

radiating happiness. I felt quietly proud of this girl who hadn't known what she was going to say to all those people. I can't honestly say I enjoyed the Convention so thoroughly myself. Parts of it were ecstatic, parts of it were miserable; in fact it was rather like life. And like life, I wouldn't have missed it for anything. The fact is that I've never wholly enjoyed a convention since I became a celebrity. But even if I'd hated every minute of it I'd still have been glad I came because Madeleine enjoyed it so much.

As for the Convention as a Convention, it was so full of contradictions I found it hard to assess. Finally I came to the conclusion that it was like the old paradox of the irresistible force and the immovable object. Simply, it was the best Convention ever pitted against the worst hotel ever.

The Convention was fabulous not because of the programme, though what little I saw of it was excellent, but simply because the people were wonderful, and there were so many of them. Everyone was there. But big conventions are always frustrating because you meet so many people you'd like to know better. I remember in 1952 Vince Clarke used to pull my leg because nearly every time he mentioned the name of an American fan I would say, "Oh yes, he/she's nice," and this time I find myself equally limited in describing dozens of people. It would be nice to be able to give penetrating character analyses of half the Convention membership, but the number of thumbnail sketches I could give might be counted, as you might say, on the fingers of one hand. Nor can I express surprise about the characteristics of American fans in general, because I've known since 1952 that they're not Ugly Americans. But there was one thing I noticed more than ever through having Madeleine with me: how very polite and considerate they were, even the youngest of them. In fact I might even say especially the youngest.

With so many interesting people to meet in so little time, physical obstacles such as the hotel so determinedly interposed became intolerable. It was bad enough that the Convention should be split into two separate buildings: that access from one to the other should then be hindered by defective elevators seemed positively malignant. But even those handicaps could have been overcome if there had been one concourse where you could find people. As it was they could be on one of two or three floors (I never did figure out how many there were), or one of the several widely separated public rooms, or merely just struggling to get from one place to another. In fact you met more people in transit than anywhere else... waiting for the elevators or in them as they ascended sluggishly from the

depths like great Mohole borers bearing fossilized samples of life from the strata below.

Shortly before five that last afternoon I felt I couldn't bear to say one more goodbye, and stepped out onto the sidewalk for a last look at the hotel before we left. It looked smug and menacing but I couldn't help feeling love for it too, and a premature twinge of nostalgia. It was in spite of itself a shrine for many happy memories. Like the Morrison in 1952, which we thought dreadful at the time. How we had wronged it, I realized: compared to the Pick-Congress it had been perfection. Looking across Wabash Avenue towards the Morrison I asked myself an old question.

Why did the Chicon cross the road?

Chapter 5
Chicago Chicago 2

Monday 3rd September 1962, continued

About five o'clock, after a few farewell photographs, the Grennells and Willises strolled along to the garage where Dean had stored his car. All our baggage had, by some strange and magical means, been already transported there and put in the car. This was a possibility which would not have occurred to me, because in my case it is never possible to store baggage for a trip in the car without deep thought and employing my esoteric knowledge of the more intimate recesses of the Morris Minor. However when I saw Dean's station wagon glide out of the garage like a great glassed-in air craft carrier I realized the problem had been no more difficult than that of getting a pint into a quart pot. Where the ordinary huge American car finally gave up and dwindled away into fins, this one continued steadfastly on into the distance.

Jean and Madeleine and I had been waiting on the narrow sidewalk of the garage entrance while Dean completed his negotiations, and piled hastily in so as not to interrupt the urgent commerce of Chicago. I examined the interior, awestruck. I had never thought it was possible to feel agoraphobia inside a car. "Anyone for tennis?" I thought wildly. In a car this size, I realized, one really needed that power-operated rear window: it saved quite a long walk. Naturally I am a sports car fan myself, having been brainwashed by Boyd Raeburn for one thing, and for another, being unable to afford anything more like a Detroit barge than a Morris Minor, a car to which the sports car fraternity accord a patronizing approval. But the wealth of gadgetry which Dean demonstrated to our unsophisticated astonishment was as irresistible to a science fiction fan as the interior of a spaceship. It had power-assisted everything, the only such mechanism not strange to us being the power operated rain for cleaning the windscreen.

To be specific, it was a 1962 blue Oldsmobile estate car and, if you promise not to tell Boyd Raeburn, I would rather have had it than a sports car, providing of course a small oil well came with it. To use it in Ireland I would probably have had to have it drawn by a team of bullocks, as in *Things to Come*. Dean threaded his way knowledgeably northwards

through a web of freeways and turnpikes (is there not a generic American term for what we call motorways?) and briefly reached 100 mph on the Tri-State for our benefit. Here, I noticed, the minimum speed limit was 40 mph. If it hadn't been for the evidence of the speedometer I'd never have known we were doing the ton: on this road in this car the experience was less impressive than doing the 12 cwts in my Minor on an Irish road. It was all rather like that famous opening scene in "The Marching Morons".

After an hour or so we stopped for a meal at a service area called the Lake Forest Oasis, where the restaurant was built on the bridge over the road. It was impressively vast and modern, but it reminded me unexpectedly of the Middle Ages. It hasn't been since then that people habitually built shops and inns on bridges, and it's a style that has been absent far too long. There is something essentially relaxing in the contemplation of activity for which one has no responsibility, whether it be the sea or a river, or merely watching men dig a hole in the road. It doesn't do to underrate the Middle Ages, even in their urban traffic schemes. In towns like Chester, for instance, with their second floor level pedestrian sidewalks and shopping arcades, they attained complete pedestrian/vehicle segregation, a concept originated by Leonardo da Vinci and one to which we are only now haltingly trying to return.

Somewhere near Milwaukee we entered the ordinary road system for the first time. This was more the America I remembered... a bewildering complexity of traffic signs in a conflagration of neon. We called at Dean's brother's house to collect the six Grennell children, after which even the Oldsmobile station wagon seemed to fill up a little, and eventually arrived at Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, a quiet cul de sac with wooden houses. Ten people got out of the car and the Grennells fed and despatched six of them to bed with a kindly efficiency which was a source of wonder to us mere dilettante parents. It proved that even a man who could offer a suggested *Hyphen* cover cartoon involving a snake in a cage up a tree and a caption referring to "python pen ladders" could still be a good husband and father.

Tuesday 4th September 1962

In the Willis family I am the early riser, and at the crack of 10 a.m. I stole downstairs to prowl about the silent house. Only to find that everyone had been tiptoeing around for hours except Dean, who had been processing Convention photographs in the basement since 7 a.m. He had so many, as

he pointed out, that all he needed was to string them together to get a silent movie of the entire convention. In the intervals of giving unskilled help and eating a light but protracted breakfast I roamed the fabulous basement, "OPEN," as a notice proclaimed, "TO THE PUBLIC ONLY". It was the room of a man who does everything well. It was thronged with the appurtenances of three separate interests... "hobbies" seems too dilettante a word... at all of which Dean was better than a professional, and it contained no junk. Even the four refrigerators were in use, if only as storage cabinets, and everything was in shipshape order without being obsessively neat. This was just as well, because the combination of fandom, firearms and photography seemed an explosive one. Fortunately perhaps, fireworks are banned in Wisconsin. À propos of which, Dean told me that once when he was blasting away at beercans in the city dump, a police car drew up and two cops raced up to him. Dean showed him his smoking .45 and they said, "Oh all right. We thought you were letting off fireworks."

While the mysterious alchemy of photography was proceeding Dean and I wrote a long joint letter to Chuch Harris, filling him in on the Chicon and reassuring him that the world would probably continue to exist.... "Well, here we are freeloading with the Gunsport BNF. As you will have noticed, the world did not come to an end on Saturday. No blinding flash, except from Dean's electronic nova-producer, followed the historic meeting – just a sort of warm glow."

Some time during that long quiet morning I went out for a little walk by myself. The air was cool and the grass green and moist, like Ireland. But at the next house, the road and the resemblance ended. There was no fencing between the houses, and no fences between them and the stream which separated them from a playing field. Why, here was valuable land lying around loose, with no indication as to whom it belonged to. It was a sight that was almost shocking to one from a country where every square inch of land has been fought over for hundreds of years and is accounted for meticulously on centuries of musty documents, and where no man can rest easy unless the exact extent of his holding is circumscribed for all to see.

Back at the house for lunch, and for photographs in the garden including one of Madeleine and me reading the *Flying Saucer Review* with contemptuous expressions while a Grennell-manufactured flying saucer, formerly a Ford hubcap, hovered over our heads... and later as that long lazy morning-after extended imperceptibly into the afternoon, a leisurely visit to a supermarket. This was the first average suburban American

supermarket Madeleine had seen and she walked along the endless aisles in a sort of trance. I remember reading that psychiatrists have found that women do in fact sometimes fall into a slight hypnotic daze in these places: maybe they should be called stupormarkets.

Madeleine and I meant to pay the check as a slight gesture of our appreciation to the Grennell hospitality, so we included some ice cream and sherbet for the children. But then we found that Dean was buying the whole month's groceries so we didn't, and felt a little guilty about having been so generous with his money. However, it was now on to the Post Office. I had called in the Fond du Lac Post Office in 1952 to mail a parcel, and when Dean entered fandom he was thrilled to hear of this and created the legend that glowing footprints would appear on the Post Office floor to presage my return. But it was five past five and the Post Office was closed, and when Dean returned from parking the car I had to break the news to him. "They said," I told him gravely, "that I was ten years and five minutes late." There may or may not have been a phosphorescent glow visible beneath the door of the Post Office, but to tell the truth nothing about the facade of the building was in any way familiar to me, and it may be that the place I called at in 1952 was some sub-office elsewhere in the town.

Back home we found Madeleine had taken over cooking dinner, to give Jean a rest. Not just that, but she was making a steak and kidney pie. Now Madeleine is good at steak and kidney pies, in fact she is a steak and kidney pie maker by appointment to no less a gourmet than Boyd Raeburn, but I viewed with awed admiration her courage in trying this exotic dish on an American family not accustomed to snails and kiwi eggs and such. The Grennell parents would I knew eat the pie if it killed them, and being the sort of people they are it would be impossible to distinguish their dying agonies from cries of delight, but the children... However we left Madeleine hectically assembling familiar ingredients from unfamiliar containers and retired to the living room to make the great Gesundheit picture.

The inspiration for this was an exploded beercan from one of Dean's target practices. This one had exploded in such a weird and spectacular fashion that Dean had brought it home as a curio, and it was now his intention to take a photograph of himself bending over this disintegrated can as if he had been drinking from it, with a handkerchief in the other hand, while I with an aloof and faintly disgusted expression said, "Gesundheit." This word Dean had carefully lettered on a cardboard caption-balloon which he now suspended in mid-air. The job of arranging

ourselves and the beercan between this and the camera took quite a while because we kept collapsing in hysterical laughter as our simple minds visualized the picture that would result, but we had several takes made in time for the steak and kidney pie.

This, to Madeleine's intense relief and pleasure, was very well received, even receiving an unsolicited accolade from Patsy Grennell, an outspoken teenager. Afterwards, to return the compliment, we tried an exotic Grennell sweetmeat called "Halvas". They were delicious. Dean admitted modestly that he had made them himself, being an expert in this field. "I'm a rambling wreck from Georgia Tech," was the way he expressed it, "and a Halva Engineer."

Having stuffed ourselves we spent the rest of the evening in a contented torpor, talking desultorily with half an eye on the tv the children were watching, and still unwinding from the convention. It was, it occurred to me, just what we would have been doing at home. In fact we were at home. The Grennell hospitality, like a perfect prose style, was unnoticeable except in its effects: which were that we felt we were with old friends. It seemed impossible that we had met them only a few days ago. It also seemed incredible that Dean and I had ever been worried about not being able to understand one another: why already we intuitively understood one another without speaking. We had the same empathy with Jean and even the children, who were not only the best behaved we had met but individually likeable as people. Altogether our two families seemed such natural neighbours that the distance of 4000 miles between our homes suddenly seemed intolerable. Our mood that evening was such that when we found that the Grennells and ourselves had been married within a day of one another seventeen years ago the coincidence seemed to have some deep significance.

Wednesday 5th September 1962

After our being up so late I didn't for a moment believe Madeleine when she said she'd get up at seven to see Dean off. She does like a nice lie in. But to my utter astonishment she was out of bed before me, at 6:45. This is the most extravagant compliment anyone has ever paid Dean Grennell, though he would have to be married to Madeleine for seventeen years to appreciate it fully.

We sat in the kitchen while Dean finished his breakfast and other preparations, helping by keeping out of the way of the highly efficient

progress. Then Dean got into the car and Madeleine went out in her nightie and dressing gown to see him off, and I took a photograph of the scene for DNQAC. With a last wave Dean was gone leaving the house and ourselves suddenly quiet and empty. I don't think I've ever missed so much someone I've known for such a short time.

We did our own packing and said an affectionate goodbye to the children as they left for school – Chuck gave me his favourite conjuring trick for Bryan, another thing Greyhound lost – and then we phoned for a cab to take us to the bus station for the 9:30 a.m. bus to Chicago. While we were waiting our next hostess, Rosemary Hickey, called all the way from Chicago to warn us that there was no such bus. She had checked our ETA with Greyhound in Chicago and they'd told her it was no longer running. Having checked in Fond du Lac myself the previous evening, where there was a little notice to the effect that this bus was being kept on because of the rail strike, I told her it was leaving Fond du Lac whether Chicago was ready for it or not. Then the cab came, and we were off again on our travels.

The bus was the familiar unpretentious kind I'd known in 1952, almost like one at home. It was strange to be taking such a short journey, a mere four hours, and somehow we felt almost absorbed, integrated in the American scene; just two normal Americans taking the bus into Chicago like everyone else. We even took the normal road system this time, through Milwaukee. Nothing about the town was recognisable to me from 1952: strange, because the town had character, a sort of semi-rustic Bavarian look to it. Between there and Chicago there was a lot of housing development and I noticed an advertisement "If you lived here you'd just be starting for work now." Untrue, but striking.

We were about fifteen minutes late arriving in Chicago. I looked carefully round the subterranean concourse for Rosemary and then lugged the cases up to street level. She wasn't there either. After a while I called her apartment, but there was no answer. We reasoned she must still be on her way, so Madeleine had a cup of coffee while I visited the travel agency in the building to enquire about routes to Seattle. We had wanted to visit Yellowstone Park so we could wave to the children from the Yogi Bear cartoons, but they told me Yellowstone was closed now that summer was officially over. I got a timetable for the shortest route to the northwest and went back to Madeleine. Rosemary still hadn't arrived, so I called her again. She was there now; in fact she had just got back from the bus station. She had been there punctually to meet us and, being unable to find our bus listed on the arrivals board, had enquired after it at the information

desk. There she had been positively assured there was no such bus. After hanging about for some ten minutes she had gone helplessly home, at just about the same moment as our ghost bus was drawing up below.

Rosemary said she'd pick us up at the Randolph St. entrance, so after venturing out to look at the street names on the lamp posts we waited there another while, numbly resentful at Greyhound for wasting all this precious time. Then Rosemary tore up in a black Volkswagen, stopped in a no-parking area while we piled hurriedly in, and took us to a place called Marshall Fields for lunch. It seemed to be a sort of department store. I'd heard the name before, but if I'd been asked what it was I'd have guessed an army training area. However Madeleine seemed to know all about it and was impressed. All I noticed was that the restaurant had some unusual customs, such as a menu designed like an examination paper. Instead of telling the waitress what you wanted, you just checked squares and after a while an invigilator came by and silently collected your work. The concept was sound, but set the restaurant rather uncompromisingly at the middle class level in the social structure. For on the one hand one cannot imagine a millionaire checking squares unless he happens to have his secretary with him, and on the other what about people who cannot read? How terrible it would be to be flunked from Marshall Fields, having failed your entrance examination. Another slight defect was that they didn't provide erasers for the irresolute. I was quite ashamed of my paper when I handed it in, all blotches, and half afraid it would be refused, or that the culinary computer into which they presumably fed the data would be thrown into a nervous breakdown or serve a messy mixture of several meals. However, computer processed or not, the food was quite good, and my only regret was that I hadn't realized there was a fixed charge or I'd have been even greedier. Thanks to Greyhound it had been a long time since breakfast in Fond du Lac. On the way out Rosemary produced a credit card, the first I had seen, and I gazed awestruck at this modern power symbol.

With what I later appreciated as a fine sense of priorities, Rosemary now took us straight to the Prudential Building. Even on the sidewalk below it, I was impressed. More than that, I was humbled. There, standing on the sidewalk of East Randolph, I received a shock to my native self-esteem comparable only to the one I had received nearly thirty years ago when I had found out that Mr. F.W. Woolworth was not a Belfast business man. Not only was it obvious that this was no branch office of a British firm: I even began to have disloyal doubts about the Rock of Gibraltar itself.

I was literally staggered too, for craning my neck to look at the

summit I fell back with a sort of vertigo. “The building’s falling!” I cried.

“Never mind,” said Madeleine kindly, “It’s probably insured.”

Who with, I wondered, as I followed the ladies into the vast entrance hall and over to a bank of elevators. A smooth surge upwards, two unexpected flights of escalators, like a sort of American equivalent of taking off one’s shoes, and we were on the Observation floor. It was full of light, flooding in through great windows looking into space. There were also a souvenir shop, a commentary on the public address system and a turnstile. On the other side, we made straight for the nearest window.

I have climbed quite a few mountains in my time, or what passes for mountains in Ireland, and.I know what it’s like to be on high places. Or even on steep places, like the 2000 feet cliffs of Slieve League in County Donegal. But none of them was like this. It was more like ascending on a rocket out of Chicago, poised halfway over Lake Michigan, blue in the afternoon sun, stretching out to infinity... or at least Canada. On either side the coasts of Illinois and Indiana disappeared into the distance over the curvature of the Earth. On the horizon at the right was a long white line like foam on a distant reef. And straight below Chicago sprang up all around in a bewildering confusion of detail. Ships on the river – I’d forgotten there was a Chicago River – piers, low buildings, high buildings, higher buildings, streets, railways, advertisements, and immediately below a fantastically huge car park in which thousands of coloured cars glittered like beads in a box. Through them threaded a tiny bus: could this be a bus to take people out of a car park? We roamed round the other sides of the Observation Floor, but inland the air was smoky. The Lake drew us back. I invested a dime in one of the automatic telescopes and identified the white line on the horizon as a low sandy shore. Taking bearings on a map, I figured it to be the coast of Michigan, some sixty miles away.

One can only absorb and remember so much, and I hated to think I would forget any of it, so I went to the souvenir shop and bought a set of transparencies of the view. I hadn’t a viewer, but I would buy one later. Then we left. But two floors below, just as I was about to step into the elevator, a little old lady caught my arm and offered me a handful of money. It was the clerk from the souvenir shop. She was quite out of breath, and it took me a moment or two to gather that I had given her a twenty-dollar bill and this was my change. I thanked her and tried to give her a bill, but she just smiled and ran back to the escalators without a reward... except, I hope, the knowledge that someone in Ireland thinks well of Chicagoans.

Back at the ground level we ran the Volkswagen to earth in the huge

car park and made for the Hickey's flat. It was in an area slightly reminiscent of Dublin, where the same Georgian houses may be either filthy tenements or elegant dwellings. It was interesting to see the process of reclamation that was taking place, as well-to-do families moved into poor areas. The first thing they did, evidently, was to paint the front door blue. We came to the Hickey house from the back, down a narrow alley with garages along it. Rosemary screwed the car forcefully into one of these and we went up some steps past boxed plants and gaily painted garbage cans into the apartment. It was all in a straight line, rather like a very wide railway carriage, and a fascinating place to browse along. The Convention had obviously passed over it like a huge glacier, suspending all normal household life and leaving moraines of fascinating detritus – unread books, unsorted magazines and unassembled equipment of various kinds. I enjoy this sort of decor immensely, as long as I don't have any responsibility for it, and peered about quite happily until Dick came home and I had someone to talk to while the womenfolk were preparing dinner.

Soon after the host the other guests arrived, a couple called Jay and Irene Smith who had just returned from camping in the wilds. There was some playful badinage about this because it turned out their idea of camping was not the same as ours, its most primitive aspect apparently being that the water closets were not in the same building as the "Camp". They were a nicely contrasting couple, Irene an attractive blonde and Jay very dark. That was all I would have had to say about their appearance, except that just now Madeleine has told me that Jay was a Negro and it seems strange this never occurred to me at the time. I wonder if this does not show that Americans are more foreign to Europeans than either of us realize: that the average European is so bemused by the strange customs and variety of racial types that variations in comparative pigmentation pass unnoticed unless forcibly brought to his attention.

The dinner, which consisted surprisingly of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, was excellent despite the fact that the beef had been cooked in Chablis instead of the sherry suggested by the recipe. I don't know what wine they use in Yorkshire but Rosemary seemed worried and asked us if it was all right. I said that personally I felt we had been Chablis treated, and again felt the need for a little flag to wave with "Pun" on it. Then after dinner the Smiths produced a record they had brought specially for me, made by a very successful folksinging group called the Clancy Brothers.

I listened to it with mingled pleasure and frustration, rather like a oyster-lover finding that people attach value to the little stones he has been spitting out for years. These songs were as familiar to me as nursery

rhymes, utterly commonplace. Or were they. Hearing them unexpectedly in a Chicago apartment they sounded strangely different.

After the record we went to visit The Rising Moon, one of the little Bohemian nightclubs that had sprung up in Wells St., the sort of thing that Paris calls a “boîte”, I think. It was apparently just entering the tourist class, because there was a one-dollar cover charge and it was still crowded. The decor was all hard chairs and huge bizarre antiques, including a deer’s head, an improbable leopard skin and a reredos. The act, two men and a pretty girl, sang a wide variety of songs including one of my old Belfast ballads which I’d just heard from the Clancy Brothers and a number which Lonnie Donegan had had on the British hit parade six months ago. However any patronizing complacency I felt about being more hip than these Chicago cognoscenti was swept away by a flood of allusions to local politics which went right over my head. The evening finished with a good old-fashioned sing-song, showing that an intellectual audience can be as corny as any provided there are no Philistines about.

Before going to bed that night I finally got around to checking the new Greyhound timetable for Seattle, and found that the express bus now left at 7 a.m. and took two whole days for the journey. But it seemed unthinkable to leave Chicago again so soon, and Rosemary was very pressing in her hospitality, so we decided to defy Greyhound and stay until Friday morning. It was now well into Thursday and, this decided, we made plans to start for Lake Michigan early in the morning. As a necessary first step we went to bed.

Thursday 6th September 1962

I stumbled blearily about the apartment collecting my bathing trunks, camera and senses, and then found myself being driven through Chicago in search of breakfast. Any sort of reality is hard for me to face before coffee and Chicago made me cringe all the way to a place called The Jewel, where other grim-faced silent people were nerving themselves to face the day. I felt better after breakfast, but I was still reminded of the saying that Americans prefer luxury to comfort: to go out and have other people make your breakfast and wash up afterwards is merely a luxurious form of the chuckwagon. The proper approach, it seems to me, is indicated by a sort of alarm clock made in a factory in Belfast: before it wakes you up it makes a cup of tea.

Having left Dick off for his work we set off along Lake Shore Drive

and the Skyway, admiring en route in the 8-lane highway the power-operated kerbs which rise and set like tides according to the time of day and the exigencies of traffic, and subsequently entered a turnpike system which brazenly recognized the dullness of this form of travel. They let you into the system free, but you had to pay to get out again. In this it resembled no other human institution I can think of, except perhaps marriage.

I would have thought a little Volkswagen to be out of its element in this world of high speeds and long distances, but in fact it buzzed along efficiently like a very determined wasp, and eventually we came out onto an ordinary road heading north west along the shore of Lake Michigan. Rosemary thought we would like to see some of the lakeshore homes, and we plunged into a maze of little winding roads, all pleasant bungalows, post boxes and stop signs: Rosemary eventually lost her way, which didn't surprise me at all – I had lost my own sense of direction about 16 turns ago – but at last we emerged onto the main road again and celebrated with a cup of coffee in a little diner so quiet and refined it might almost have been an English tearoom. I think it actually had table cloths. Then we set off again along a road so close to the shore that we caught occasional tantalizing glimpses of white sand and blue water. Rosemary told us this was all private and there was no public access to the beach for miles yet. This was strange to us, for back home a private beach is such a rare phenomenon that people think it is not only immoral but illegal. Actually it isn't the latter anyway, merely impracticable for the reason that land between high tide and low tide belongs to the Crown and nobody can fence it off. I could see the situation would be different though in the case of a lake. I had to keep reminding myself this was just a lake.

We stopped at one of the roadside stalls with displays of large and colourful – and in many cases quite unfamiliar – fruit and vegetables, and bought a bag of peaches. Madeleine was so impressed she had me take several colour photographs, and I think all that wonderful, and cheap, fruit impressed her as much as the Grand Canyon. I must say it was a lot easier to photograph. Then we entered Warren Dunes State Park and drew up at a deserted wooden building. All I remember about it were notices to the effect that it was against the law to change your clothes in the lavatories, which seemed to me at the time an unwarranted and unAmerican interference with the rights of the individual. The right to change your clothes in the lavatory is the right to be free. Then through some stunted trees and bent grass to the shore.

It was immense... white sand and blue water as far as the eye could

see. Nothing else but a few litter baskets and about the same number of people. Apart from the litter baskets the beach population seemed quite normal to me and I didn't appreciate until Rosemary sent us at home a picture postcard of the place in its normal summer state, that it had been by local standards utterly deserted. I found it hard to understand this American convention that summer ends at 12 p.m. on Labour Day. National Parks close, tourist facilities are withdrawn and people stay away from the beaches in droves, while still the sun shines obstinately in a clear sky. I can only imagine that in the States the seasons are so *thorough* that people get tired of them. After months of unremitting sunshine they positively look forward to fall and as it were meet it halfway. Whereas in Ireland, if we did happen to have a warm day in October the entire population would stampede for the shore like lemmings, tearing off their clothes en route.

Compared to Irish strands Michigan was not sensationally beautiful. I would have given it about six out of ten, ten being to me Tramore Strand in County Donegal, which has firm golden sand, dunes, grass, wild flowers, cliffs, caves, a fantastic island right in the middle of the horizon, and so little frequented we were shattered one year to find another human footprint. The sand here was soft and coarse, with no shells, and dipped steeply into rather opaque water. I walked quite a distance along and there was no change: obviously it went on like this for dozens of miles. However it was very pleasant, the air being warmer than one ever finds it in Ireland more than once in five years, and the water slightly warmer than I'm accustomed to if not as warm as I had hoped. We splashed about happily for a while and then lay and sunbathed and ate peaches and relaxed. After the artificiality of our environment this last while it felt good to get back to nature. Yes, we liked Lake Michigan. It might not be as beautiful as some Irish strands, but to enjoy the latter like this you would have to be staked out beside it for months waiting for a sunny day, and spring on it from ambush. Ireland is a wonderful country to live in, but I'd hate to come here for a visit. We were a long way from Chicago, somewhere behind that haze to the southwest, and Rosemary had to register at the University that evening. So we tore ourselves reluctantly away from Lake Michigan and sped straight back, in and out the turnpike system and over the Skyway for the third and last time, into Chicago. We left Madeleine at a hairdresser's and I went with Rosemary to the University, a big modern building all big windows and quiet classical music over the public address system, a sort of intellectual Muzak. While I was waiting for Rosemary I met George Price, Convention Treasurer, who

seemed none the worse for it. We talked mostly about the Convention, but he did mention à propos of something else that he had been one of the recipients of the 12-page cri de coeur Vince Clarke had published when Joy left him: since he had never been a correspondent of Vince's it seemed that this intimate human document had had a wider circulation than realized at the time.

Apart from this interlude it was a long and uneventful wait, suspended thus in an unfamiliar locale, but boring only in a rather pleasant way. For one thing it was a comfortable place, all deep sofas and air-conditioning, and for another my recent life had been so hectic that boredom was a rare and almost piquant sensation. Before it palled Rosemary appeared, we had a snack in the University canteen and then went to collect Madeleine and her new hair. Then we went back to another University building where Dick was supposed to be registering. We waited outside for some time, Rosemary getting increasingly impatient and beginning to wonder if we had missed him: traffic out of the building was definitely dwindling. Finding myself suddenly in charge of two dependant females, I went into the building to look for him. I nodded in an offhand way at the guardians of the door and strode briskly for several hundreds of yards through a maze of registration tables manned by curious officials. None of them challenged me, proving my theory that you can go anywhere as long as you look as if you knew where you were going, but I didn't find Dick. I reported back to Rosemary, who then rang the apartment and found he had gone home not realizing we were meeting him.

Silently we got into the car and made for home, by way of the Prudential Building. Rosemary tucked the car into a corner of the huge carpark we had seen from above yesterday afternoon and at the exit I made a detour to the Greyhound depot to validate our tickets for tomorrow's journey to Seattle. This was the very first time I had ever been on the streets of Chicago by myself and I felt my sense of wonder renewed, with the addition of that sense of power which complete anonymity gives. Why, I could get a bus to anywhere and never be heard of again. The feeling made even more enjoyable the experience of not doing so, but of finding my way back to the Prudential Building, and up the lift and escalators back to the Observation Floor, to join Rosemary and Madeleine quietly at the same window we had looked out of before.

It was, I thought to myself, hard to sterilize beauty out of the world. Crush together a million soul-less tons of concrete and steel, light them with garish tungsten and neon, cram the interstices with automobiles and, incredibly, the result is even more beautiful than the daytime landscape it

dispossesses. Chicago by night is as breath-taking as the stars, but where in the inanimate universe is a colour like the strange luminescent green of Michigan Boulevard, alive with the light of humanity? While the stars are cold and mysterious, this night city was somehow poignant. While it was vast the lake was vaster, and beside that great darkness, like the edge of space, the lights were brave and human... pulsing through the night creating their accidental by-product of unforgettable beauty.

"Man," said Pascal, "is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature. But he is a thinking reed. The universe need not exert itself to crush him: a whiff of vapour, a drop of liquid will suffice. But even should the universe crush him, Man will still be nobler than his executioner, for he knows that he dies. The Universe knows nothing." Here by this lake was Pascal's reed.

Chapter 6
The Bright Land 1 – Chicago to Minneapolis

"But westward, look, the land is bright."

Friday 7th September 1962

I'm not quite sure what time the bus for Seattle left Chicago, except that it was far too early in the morning: among the items lost with our luggage was one of the world's finest private collections of Greyhound timetables. However, after a terse breakfast Rosemary and Dick Hickey got us to the depot in good time. At least it seemed good time to us for any bus that left before the world was properly assembled, but almost as soon as we arrived we heard it called over the public address system. It was now loading at Gate 3 downstairs, the omniscient voice proclaimed, like Jupiter announcing a departure by Charon.

This bus was going to be our home for two days, so we wanted to make sure of getting seats together. We said hasty goodbyes, too hasty to thank Dick and Rosemary adequately for their hospitality, and fled downstairs. On the way to Gate 3 we passed a bus labelled Seattle and taking on passengers, but continued trustfully on. No doubt it was a non-express service, or an alternative route. But when we got to Gate 3 there was no sign of life, mechanical or otherwise. In desperation I accosted a passing driver. He smiled at the idiosyncrasies of the people upstairs, rather like Moses explaining another minor plague to his Egyptian friends. It used to leave at Gate 3, he explained simply and clearly, but nowadays it left at Gate 6. We rushed back to Gate 6, in time to get two aisle seats several yards apart.

I think it was at this point I realized the far-reaching changes which had taken place in the Greyhound bus service during the ten-year period in which I had, as it were, been out of its clutches. Some of you may remember that in the course of my 1952 report I made passing reference to certain mechanical breakdowns which had occurred from time to time. In 1962 the buses were perfect, but the organization was breaking down. It was obvious that the head of the Greyhound organization, a Mr.

Ackerman, had obtained through some relative a copy of my 1952 report and taken a clear-cut executive decision. He had simply switched the staff around. I have to admire the majestic simplicity of this solution, but feel he eventually will be forced to find a home outside the organization for his other relatives.

All through the morning we edged erratically around Madison without ever arriving there. Poring over my inadequate map, I figured that we were by-passing it along the fragments of an uncompleted freeway system. We would speed along one of these stepping stones for a few minutes, and then turn off along a ramp marked “Madison” and wander slowly through a maze of interchanges and ordinary roads until we found another ramp and another stretch of freeway. The changes in direction were quite bewildering, and at times I had the feeling that the driver was hopelessly lost. By a careful study of the signposts on intersecting routes, however, I realized we were in fact making steady progress northwest. This fact was, however, not so obvious to the lady next to me, who had, I gathered, been travelling on buses for the past six weeks virtually nonstop, but whom even this experience of Greyhound Post Houses had not convinced that it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive. The bus was already a hundred miles past Madison when she began to complain it was an hour overdue. It was obvious no one was getting out at Madison, at least, and I wondered if Madeleine and I would be separated all the way to Seattle.

We rejoined the ordinary road system just past a place with the evocative name of Portage, without having to get out and carry the bus, and shortly found ourselves in a town which seemed to be called Wisconsin Dells. As a town it was undistinguished but the countryside had gradually become more interesting than the flat lands of southwest Wisconsin and northern Illinois. There were wooded hills, grassy slopes, and occasional rock outcrops. And once or twice, glimpses of lakes, so unusual a thing to see from a bus that people pointed excitedly.

Somewhere in the region of Tomah and Black River Falls, which we passed through in the early afternoon, there was a great panoply of signs heralding a major tourist attraction. It was a museum of sea shells from all over the world. I was mildly surprised until I realized that we were just about in the middle of a great continent, and that until recently at least, many of the natives here could have lived their lives without seeing a sea shell in its natural state. Certainly, if you happened to have a collection of sea shells, this was the place to take them. But somehow it seemed strangely sad to think of all those little marine skeletons exiled so far from

their natural resting place.

National Interstate Highway US 94 sprang into existence again just in time to by-pass Eau Claire, and we sped towards Minneapolis like an arrow released. Only to thud anticlimactically into St. Paul, through which we threaded a laborious way for more than half an hour. I tried to follow our progress in a street plan in a guide lent me by Rosemary Hickey, but found it impossible to establish frames of reference. By the time I found on the map the street name glimpsed at the last corner, we would have turned another, so that various imposing buildings were only provisionally identified. However, the Twin Cities were strangely and impressively different from anything we had seen so far, their domed buildings and convoluted streets giving them a faintly Eastern European look. The Mississippi on the other hand, or what I took to be the Mississippi, was disappointingly narrow, and, having told Madeleine how impressive it would probably be even this far north, I felt vaguely ashamed on its behalf. However, at the St. Paul depot several people got off, and, having got a seat together, we didn't care if the Mississippi disappeared through a chink in the ground.

At 4:30 p.m. we finally arrived at the Minneapolis bus station. Outside there was a confusing intersection, and we were afraid to go far in case we got lost. Madeleine reconnoitred nearby restaurants while I called Redd Boggs at a curious sort of open-air phonebooth. I found D.W. Boggs in the phone book, not without a touch of awe, but it was Redd's father who answered, and he claimed Redd was in California. I rejoined Madeleine, and after some hesitation we bought a couple of hamburgers at what looked like an ordinary diner, until it turned out to have no place to sit down, and no plates or cutlery. After the phone booth, I began to speculate wildly that the local inhabitants suffered from endemic claustrophobia, but finally concluded the diner must have been for take-out orders.

Chapter 7
The Bright Land 2 – Minneapolis to… Seattle?

Friday 7th September 1962, continued

Back in the bus again we sped northwest from Minneapolis, spending a forgettable 45 minutes in Fargo, N. Dakota. This was about 10 p.m., and all I remember about it was that we sent a postcard from there to our ten-year-old son Bryan. He is a follower of Wells Fargo, and we thought he might imagine it had been brought out by stage coach. En route again we found the bus almost too warm for sleeping, and Madeleine asked the driver to turn down the air conditioning.

Saturday 8th September 1962

At 1 a.m. we were awakened from a sound sleep and ejected into Bismarck, N.Dakota. We had missed the Missouri. We spent a frustrated hour hanging round the depot waiting for the bus to be serviced, realizing more clearly now that Greyhound gave adequate meal stops only when everything but the Post House was closed.

Back in the rejuvenated bus we fell asleep again quickly, and when I woke again it was dawn at the Montana border. We had slept through the badlands. All I could see in the ghostly light were grey clumps of grass, and between them something lighter which I could not identify. It certainly wasn't ordinary soil, and I thought it must be sand or gravel.

But by the time we arrived at Glendive, Montana, the growing daylight and the waning neons between them revealed the mystery: it was snowing. "Now look what you've done," I reproached Madeleine, who woke up when the bus stopped. "You would complain about the heat."

After pressing on through a snowy wilderness populated only by depressed-looking Christmas trees, we arrived at Miles City at 7:40. We had breakfast there, running through the snow to a drugstore in our light summer clothes. It was very cold, there was a strong wind, and the snow lay half an inch deep on the sidewalk. It was curiously unreal. How could

it be snowing when we had been sunbathing only the day before yesterday?

The drugstore was peculiar too. There were several men there who looked so much like real cowboys that I wondered if I'd missed the horses tied to the parking meters. What really disturbed me was what they were reading. I could accept cowboys driving Chevrolets instead of riding horses – I could visualize them leaping into the driving seat with a cry of "Hi, ho, Chromium" – and even sitting in drugstores sipping chocolate malts and reading pocketbooks. What did worry me, for some reason, was the fact that all the pocketbooks were Westerns. I felt vaguely that I was faced with some profound philosophical problem, to do with the effect of the observer on the thing observed. When an authentic cowboy thinks of himself as an authentic cowboy, is he still an authentic cowboy?

It was snowing less violently when we got to Billings at 11:15 a.m., with half an hour to spare. Madeleine went back along our route to case a dress shop she had noticed, and I prowled around for a gas station. In 1952, travelling by car, I had rapidly accumulated a sheaf of free gas company maps, but buses never seemed to stop near filling stations. However, I found one now and looted it. With maps covering every mile of the way to Seattle I felt oriented and more secure.

In Livingstone at lunchtime (which could be the title only of a very sick song) it was still snowing out of a leaden sky, and a bank sign admitted that the temperature was 40 degrees. We had a horrid meal in a squalid Greyhound diner, without even pretensions of being anything but the greasiest of spoons. The best that could be said of it was that it was better than the one at Bozeman, where the food was, if possible, even worse, and the only toilet was overflowing on the floor. There, if you were so foolish as to eat the food, you were stuck with it.

But from there on, things began to improve. For one thing, we found that everyone's feet were swollen. For weeks before we came away, Madeleine had some kidney disorder which caused her ankles to swell, and this swelling had begun to happen again on the bus. But in the universal gossip about the toilet conditions at Bozeman, it emerged that all the women were finding their ankles swollen, and it was just from sitting so long. So that was a serious worry gone. Then, during the afternoon, the snow stopped, and the sky began to clear, revealing ranges of wonderful mountains. Our spirits expanded with the horizons. This was the real West, we thought, our sense of wonder reawakened.

We were climbing steadily now, how steeply I realized only from the way our driver kept changing through a seemingly inexhaustible supply of

gears. I counted at least six. In brilliant sunshine we were threading our way upwards through narrower and narrower valleys, all rocks and fir trees. Then, in a particularly tortuous defile, we came unexpectedly upon the most thrilling notice we had ever seen, the most exciting single moment since that first sight of Manhattan from the air. It said, simply, "Continental Divide. 6418 feet." We were on the other side of the American continent, in the watershed of the Pacific. We blessed the people who had put up that sign for the joy they had given us. That stream by the side of the road was on its way to the Pacific, and so were we.

The driver shifted up a couple of gears, and we began a breathtaking descent towards the West Coast. Straight below us, so straight below I could have dropped a stone onto it, was our road, circling its way down among the trees and rocks. The driver hauled us round a succession of hairpin bends, and soon we were speeding through western Montana, all fertile green plains with snowcapped mountains in the distance.

At 5 p.m. we arrived in Butte, an untidy conglomeration of wooden buildings, with shanty banks, shanty drugstores, and shanty bus station. There seemed to be only one permanent building, probably a saloon. However, quite a few people got out here, probably homesteaders, and we observed with interest the various techniques used by the remainder to settle themselves in for the night. Long distance bus travel, we noticed, had its own expertise. The most obvious examples were two English girls who had been sitting in the seat in front of us, where they could put their feet up on the window ledge. Now, coming back to the bus at Butte, they split up, spreading themselves and their belongings across two seats each, contriving to give their environment such a lived-in look that you would have sworn they had been there since New York. During the day they had been getting friendlier and friendlier at each rest stop with a lone soldier, and he, following after them, hesitantly occupied a third double seat. Then the new passengers got on, a positive horde of them. Assessing the new situation with a rapidity which would have delighted his commanding officer, the soldier gallantly surrendered his seat to the first woman who got on, and joined the prettier of the two girls. Soon all the seats were occupied except one, across which sprawled an old lady, obviously fast asleep. The one surplus passenger, a pretty young dark girl who looked vaguely Spanish, stood helplessly in the aisle until the driver came to see what was wrong. Even he hesitated to waken the dear frail old lady, until a more cynical woman passenger behind said, "Give her a shove. She's only pretending." By a curious coincidence, the dear old lady woke up at that moment and moved over, and with a good grace helped the young girl to

get settled in. In a few minutes they were chatting away as if they had been friends for years.

We continued steadily westwards, passing, shortly after seven, through a place called Drummond – so hideous to look at that the sun immediately sank in horror. But here in the north the twilight lingered as it does at home, and for a long time we stayed awake, chasing the sun through the overhanging defile between Bearmouth and Nimrod, beckoned by a single star in the western sky. Tomorrow morning we would be in Seattle.

Chapter 8
The Bright Land 3 – Idaho to Seattle

Saturday 8th September 1962, continued

At 10:50 p.m. we awoke to find ourselves unexpectedly in Idaho. "Unexpectedly in Idaho" sounds like a fine musical comedy number, and we have already provided the choreography.

A glance at the map and timetable had told us that not only did Idaho in fact thrust up a finger between Montana and Washington, but that, true to its policy, Greyhound had once again provided an adequate meal-stop when only the Post House would be open. After our grim experiences at Livingston and Bozeman, we were determined to foil them, and as soon as the bus had stopped we were out and marching along a cold deserted street to a distant neon sign. Our momentum carried us through a door and along a carpeted corridor into a dimly lit lounge, where we came to a standstill in belated self-doubt. It was only too obvious that we had gatecrashed a private party, either a high-class orgy or the exhausted remnants of a wedding reception. People were lying about on sofas eyeing us bemusedly, and a sophisticated-looking receptionist was bearing down on us with a cold stare. Simultaneously we realized that the door behind us was still open, admitting a blast of cold air and the remainder of the busload of passengers. They had obviously followed us like sheep behind a Judas ram, assuming that anyone who made his way so confidently through nighttime Wallace, Idaho, must "know a place".

I felt quite inept to explain the situation, grabbed Madeleine's arm, and retreated hastily and silently through a door marked "toilets", leaving the rest of the bus to explain itself as best it could. Another corridor and another door let us out into another street, with another distant neon sign, from which came convivial chinking sounds. We went up a flight of stairs and found ourselves in a smoky bowling alley. Peering intently round, we eventually concluded there was nothing to eat here but pretzels, so we left again, passing on the way the vanguard of the busload. Leaving them transfixed on the stairs, we scurried round the next corner, and, to our

relief, saw another sign which definitely committed itself to offering food. Quite pleased at this hard-won success, we sat down and ordered, realizing only then that we had come in by the back door of the Greyhound Post House from which we had started. However, the food was not too bad, and the service was excellent, possibly accounted for by the fact that the place was virtually deserted except for a puzzled-looking bus driver. We ignored him, and the questioning stares of the remainder of the passengers as they straggled in small harassed-looking groups. I tried to assume a worldly sophisticated air, as of one who had taken a few minutes to revisit old haunts in the underworld of Wallace, Idaho.

Eventually the bus left, somewhat late, and full of passengers clutching half-consumed items of food, but gradually resuming its normal nighttime tranquillity as it sped west through the darkness.

Sunday 9th September 1962

Except for one sleepy glance at Spokane, Washington, I slept until sunrise. We were floating through a dreamlike landscape of mist and trees, with golden disembodied mountain tops on either side. I nudged Madeleine awake, a thing I would do only in the rarest of emergencies. “Wake up, dear,” I said, “We have come to a pretty pass.” It turned out to be Snoqualmie, and it led down to Seattle.

From the map it seemed we might get a glimpse of Mount Rainier, but when I started peering through the opposite window, the lady sitting there explained kindly that this was not so. From this road you couldn’t see Mount Reneer, as it was pronounced. She gave such a helpful account of the various other places from which you could see it that when, five minutes later, Mount Rainier hove clearly into view over her head I had to draw Madeleine’s attention to it in a furtive manner more appropriate to the display of filthy postcards than snowy mountains.

There was another glimpse of it from the exciting floating bridge across Lake Washington, but this body of water itself was worrying me. The question I had to decide was whether or not Lake Washington counted as the Pacific Ocean. It was, I saw from the map, connected with Puget Sound, and the question seemed to boil down to whether the tide made its way up that far or not. The whole situation seemed to me most unsatisfactory. As I had designed the American continent in my head, the traveller from the East breasted a last ridge of mountains, and saw spread out before him the whole wide expanse of the Pacific, all breakers and

coral sands. This present quibbling about Lake Washington wasn't at all the sort of wild surmise Keats had led me to expect, this piecemeal doling out of the Pacific in drips and drops surely not what Cortez had seen. Indeed, from the point of poetic truth even Puget Sound could not count as the Pacific, and I might not see it at all from Seattle. And in fact I didn't. I had to chase after the Pacific Ocean for days yet, and over thousands of miles, before finally hunting it down.

However, I dismissed all this from my mind, for we were now in Seattle, and very exciting it was. About the same size of a city as I had expected, but somehow more casual, informal. The buildings were lower, but built on unexpected hills. The whole place had a vaguely timber camp air about it. It was about half seven in the morning when we ended up in the ultra-modern bus station, half an hour early. We didn't want to phone the Busbys before schedule, so we had cups of coffee from a futuristic machine which gave you every variety of beverage except the one I wanted, coffee with milk and lots of sugar. Then I phoned up Buz, and he said, among other joyful and welcoming words, that they would pick us up at the north entrance to the bus station. I stepped outside to check from the position of the sun which one that was. On the way back I was asked by one lady to work the coffee machine for her and by another to direct her to the north entrance, and when I rejoined Madeleine I found her deep in conversation with a lady who had come from Belfast, so all in all I began to feel quite at home in Seattle. Besides, the air, moist and cool, was very like Ireland, after the dusty aridity of the rest of America.

I took Madeleine and the luggage to the north door, and very shortly Buz and Elinor drove up, with a dachshund. We got in, and I said "Wie geht's?" to the dachshund, addressing it in its own language to ingratiate myself right away with the really important member of the household. I had never studied a dachshund before, and was amazed how well it moved with such inadequate means of propulsion. Only because I know Elinor is a Beatles fan would I dare repeat one of the Beatles' remarks about one of these dogs at a boarding house where they stayed before they became famous: "It had no legs," said Paul flatly, "and every morning the landlady took it out for a slide."

Another dachshund extruded itself from the door of the Busby bungalow when we arrived, and, pausing only to reassure it that they had not in fact deserted it, the Busbys efficiently and with great sensibility installed us on the back lawn with cool drinks. There we passed a very pleasant relaxing morning, getting the Greyhound Bus Company out of our system. Not quite completely, however, because on trying to get back to

the garden after lunch, Madeleine tried to open the door by pulling at the chromium towel rail, which unfortunately resembled the bar they have on the glass bus depot doors, and which, not being meant to be attacked by hardened Greyhound travellers, promptly came away in her hand.

After lunch I diffidently suggested I might have a look later on at World Championship Golf on television, which I had noticed from the tv programme magazine in the Grennells was on at 3 o'clock that afternoon. Buz pointed out I had better have it on now, on account of the time differential, which I had completely forgotten, and I sat down in front of the tv all agog at finally being able to see this great event. But I had overlooked some important points, the first being the nature of American television. This was a live transmission of only one match, and most of any golf match is the people walking between the shots. I should have realized it was impossible for commercial tv to waste all this air space, and what we had in fact was interminable commercials, with a few shots of Palmer, Nicklaus and Player swinging clubs. It wasn't my idea of golf at all. The other fact I had overlooked was that golf couldn't compete with the Busbys, live, in the adjoining room. I kept going in there to listen, and finally forgot about the golf altogether. What I say is that conversation is killing the art of watching tv.

When the sun had gone down, we sat in the living room with our swollen feet up, still talking, Buz treating a sore shoulder with an infra red lamp. "He won't go to the doctor with anything," Elinor complained. "He just comes home and curls up like a wild animal." "Like a wild animal with an infra red lamp," I amended.

Mentally we were happy and relaxed, but physically we were exhausted, and scenery still seemed to be flashing past our eyes, so quite early in the evening we retired for a twelve hour rest stop.

Chapter 9
The Bright Land 4 – Tourists in Seattle

Monday 10th September 1962

I awoke at a time conditioned by that of mail deliveries 7000 miles away – driven, you might say, from pillow to post. From the kitchen came the muffled sounds of Buz being dispatched to work. I have only a few days here with these fine people, I told myself sternly; could I possibly waste any of this precious time in mere torpor? Ignoring the affirmative reply from every fibre of my being, I got out of bed, dressed perfunctorily, and tottered into the kitchen, where I found a slightly out-of-focus Elinor. We carried on a conversation vaguely reminiscent of the attempts of two sailing ships in a dense fog trying to ascertain each other's intentions by indistinct signals. With great subtlety I eventually ascertained what she would normally be doing at this hour "What would you normally be doing at this hour?" was the way I phrased the key question, and elicited the admission that she might get some more sleep. So I spoke to her as man to woman. "Let's go to bed," I said.

By the time Madeleine and I really got up it was half eleven, and Elinor was apparently out shopping. We made our own breakfast, after a struggle with the toaster which taxed all our feeble intellectual resources. This was the second automatic toaster we had encountered, but at Grennell's the problem had been comparatively simple. All you had to do was wander into the vicinity of the toaster with a piece of bread in your hand; the machine would wrest it from you and return it to human ken only when its transmogrification was complete. Our simple peasant minds accepted this in the same way that tribesmen in Central Asia accept the airplane but are bemused by the bicycle. The Busby toaster required a certain amount of programming, not to mention propitiation by burnt offerings.

It was raining in the afternoon, in a nice homely way, and it seemed as good a time as any to visit the World's Fair. Elinor had a cold, so she drove us to the entrance and deposited us there with her blessing and a sheaf of left-over tickets.

International Exhibitions remind me of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. When Lenin was asked what mandate he had from the Russian people to accept such humiliating terms, he said, wryly, that they had voted for peace with their feet. The bigger the Exhibition, the more varied and irresistible its attractions, the more the feet revolt against it, and at the end they carry the day by refusing to carry you. Even now there is such a cloud of fatigue in that corridor of my memory that I can't believe there would be much of interest in it to you. Except possibly the still-vivid recollection of seeing at the exit from the US Science Pavilion, in great gold letters on the wall, a quotation from a *Hyphen* subscriber. Unaccountably they failed to mention this fact, mentioning just the name, Robert Conquest – presuming no doubt that his chief claim to immortality lies in his poetry and not in his letters of comment on *Hyphen*. Admittedly he hasn't written many of the latter lately, his subscription having lapsed, but let that be a warning to you. Let your *Hyphen* sub lapse, and you may find yourself reduced to writing on walls in Washington.

What else can I remember that would be tired and frustrated enough to convey my feetal *[sic]* memories of the World's Fair. Elvis Presley and Arnold Palmer... I mean Arnold Palmer and Elvis Presley... were there somewhere, but we didn't see them. Madeleine was given a demonstration of a voting machine and it didn't work, shaking our faith in the Western Alliance. We didn't climb the Space Needle because you had to stand in line.We saw a fabulous collection of furs, or so Madeleine says. Personally, I hate to contemplate the suffering of the poor dumb creatures who are skinned to provide these luxuries... namely men. And we starved to death in the Food Circus.

This last came about because we had been invited out to dinner by Sandy and Joy Sanderson, who were in Seattle at the time. The tragic circumstances of the breakup in Inchmery Fandom were still fresh in our minds then, and although we liked the Sandersons as much as we always had, we felt sympathetic enough toward Vince Clarke's side of the affair to feel that if the Sandersons wanted to stand us an expensive meal we would jolly well get their money's worth. We must, I told Madeleine, Eat For Vince. Just call us bloody pro-Vincials.

But since we had had nothing to eat since morning, we began to get very hungry, and late afternoon found us drawn to the Food Circus, a huge arena full of stalls selling food from all parts of the world. In our famished state the odours were maddening, and it was agony to choose something that wouldn't spoil our appetites. I hesitated among so many things that I don't remember anything about what I actually had except that I could

have eaten lots more of it.

Fortunately the dinner was worth the wait. It was at the Hyatt House, site of the previous year's Convention. The food was good, the company congenial, and the service improbably excellent. Madeleine asked for Sauterne, and the waiter said regretfully that they didn't have any; a few minutes later a plane landed outside and the waiter scurried in with a bottle. Sandy said, "Well, thanks, but you shouldn't have gone to all that trouble."

Back home in the Busby bungalow we talked late again, drinking home brew.

Tuesday 11th September 1962

Next morning we slept even later, and felt even tireder when we got up. Obviously this sleep stuff was an addictive drug, and we were hooked. Elinor and Buz took us to the Volunteer Park, where, in the museum, I saw for the first time the three-dimensional cartoons in ivory called netsukes, and then for a stroll along the shore. It was very nice, even if it wasn't really the Pacific, and familiar yet strange, like the twin brother of an intimate friend. There were big wooden posts lying in the sand which Buz said had been carried there for some reason, and I said maybe they were tote 'em poles. Then we went along to the harbour where they had porpoises in small tanks, which we hated, and where they advertised oysters and clam chowder in earthy terms – "Only one to a customer without your wife's written permission." We bought fish and chips and ate them at a wooden table in the open. It was all very pleasant, and like a glimpse into the almost unknown America of the last century, before the car homogenized it.

Next item in our leisurely agenda was a cruise round Puget Sound, but it was off or something, so we settled for a short trip round the harbour, with a guide explaining where all the ships were from and us looking for ones made by Harland and Wolff at home. He also explained very carefully to his passengers what tides were and how they behaved, which amused us islanders no end. At home children hear of the tide before they hear of the sea – at least when I was young people in Northern Ireland called the edge of the sea the tide.

Somehow the whole day had drifted pleasantly away, and it was time to go to the Nameless meeting. It was at Wally's house, in a maze of dirt roads. We were taken to marvel at the stump in the basement and the

antique Thatcher furnace, which had something wrong with its pipes... ducts disease, I suggested... and then everyone sat round in the big low livingroom and talked. In format it was rather like a meeting of Irish Fandom, but more fragmentary: there had been some talk of me writing up the minutes instead of Wally, and I was glad to see he didn't take it seriously. Later Wally showed slides of the Convention, and Wally Gonser cut Paul Stanbery's hair in the kitchen. We gave the shorn Paul a lift home at the end. He seemed a very likeable young man, reminiscent of the best products of the English public school system without the arrogance, and without the slightest real evidence I was quite prepared to accept that he might turn out to be a genius.

Wednesday 12th September 1962

We were up at the crack of 9:40, very drowsy and in desperate need of a cup of tea. Madeleine stumbled into the kitchen, the kettle beckoning her like a Holy Grail, and inaugurated the life-giving ritual. Eventually the kettle boiled, and with shaking hands she infused the magic potion. She had just finished pouring in the boiling water and was bearing the teapot in triumph to the table when it disintegrated in her hand and shattered on the floor. She stood among the shards with a dazed expression on her face, in a little cloud of steam.

Buz had just appeared, making a bee-line for the pot Elinor had left on the stove, and leaving no doubt as to his intentions ("If that isn't coffee I'll kill myself.") He explained it was all his fault: the handle of that teapot had come off before, and he had stuck it on again, with epoxy resin glue. It must be no good. "The great Teapot Doom Scandal," I said, with a grasp of lesser known American history which even at the time I felt to be remarkable in the circumstances. Elinor, examining her kitchen floor, pointed out we could tell all our fortunes at once. When Madeleine pointed out that all the catastrophes, like the towel rail incident and being bitten by a mosquito yesterday and now this, were happening to her this time instead of me, Buz said it must have been eproxy resin glue he mended the teapot with. Feeling somewhat weak at this point for some reason, I suggested Madeleine find another teapot and try again. "That's right," said Buz, "send 'em up again right away."

This was the day of the Great Mountain Hike, and soon our native guide Burnett Toskey arrived, and we were bowling along the road by which we had first come to Seattle, towards the Snoqualmie Pass. Having

parked the car, we distributed the loads of food and cameras and plunged into the primaeval wilderness. There was a very well defined path through it, with every now and then little direction signs and notices identifying types of trees. The combination of wildness and civilization seemed very strange to us. The path, or trail as it was called, led up the slope in long zig-zags. After the fourth or fifth abrupt change of direction I realized with a blinding flash of illumination the real meaning of the word “switchback”. The trek was curiously tiring, and I think one reason for this may have been the fact that there was nothing to see but the dense trees, so that there was no distraction from one’s physical sensations, and no excuse to stop every now and then to admire the view. It was like being in a very healthy subway.

But after a few hundred feet we arrived at the clearing for the railway line, and I thought maybe the American style had its points. All the stored-up impact of the last half-hour burst on one at once – the huge mountains across the valley, and countless more beyond them, everything on a tremendous scale.

After some redistribution of loads, we entered the subway again and toiled back and forth for a long time, but eventually the trail levelled out, and it became just a pleasant walk. And at last we came out from the trees to find a little jewel of a lake, blue and calm among wooded slopes, as silent as if its beauty had been untouched since the creation of the world. My feeling that we were really the first human beings to see it was not entirely dispelled by the presence of public toilets, picnic tables, and discarded beercans. American scenery can take a lot of punishment.

It was called Lake Annette, Toskey said. We thanked him for it and strolled about for a while in admiration, then, humanity being what it is, began to feel hungry. While we were eating, Madeleine saw a chipmunk, which would have made everyone’s day if it hadn’t been made already. It seemed nearly as interested in her as she in it, and ate some of her sandwich. There was plenty for it, despite the gloomy prognostications of the women that they hadn’t brought enough. There is always too much food at picnics. I think it must be some sort of strange Law of Nature, because it happens to everyone. Why, I remember reading of a picnic given by a very famous person indeed. There were five thousand guests and he only brought five loaves and two fishes, and still there was stuff left over.

We stayed at the lake as long as we could, and then started the trek down. I found it harder than going up, but Madeleine ran ahead as she always does going down mountains. She thinks of herself as a mountain

goat, but I always feel more like one of the Gadarene swine.

There was a waffle party that evening at the Pfeifers'. There we had our first waffle and our second meeting with Seattle Fandom. First impressions confirmed were that they were a very likeable lot, but very heterogenous. So this, I thought, is what Irish Fandom might have been like in another probability world in which we had constituted ourselves as an open club. There was a strange variety of conversations going on, from light banter to intellectual battle. Pournelle and Tapscott, for instance, were arguing about politics, and putting each other down with an admirable kind of cold politeness unknown in Ireland, of which I can remember only one example. Pournelle had offered some instance which he regarded as relevant to his argument but which Tapscott had ignored. Pressed, he said disdainfully, "I was wondering if you were making a value judgement or merely offering an odd piece of information."

In another corner Stanbery was being asked how he felt about Coventry* now, on the lines of "Apart from that, Baron Frankenstein..." He did not actually say that he felt that it had got out of hand; rather he conveyed the impression that all that had happened was that somebody had come up to him one day and asked for an imaginary world, and he had given him one he just happened to have lying around.

** An sf role-playing game created by Stanbery and rich brown in the late 1950s, popular in LA fandom but eventually leading to bad feelings and feuds. [Ed.]*

The sands of our stay in Seattle were rapidly running out, because we had to catch the bus south at 2 a.m. Buz and Elinor took us home for a last meal and our baggage, and then they both came down to the bus station and saw us off. It seemed very sad and sudden, more like a bereavement than a scheduled departure. Fandom was wonderful that it should have brought us together, but there was something basically wrong with a mundane world in which natural next-door neighbours should have to live 7000 miles apart. In a Utopia we would live between the Busbys and the Grennells.

Among the nice things you could say about the Busbys, the most comprehensive was that they deserved one another. They complemented one another miraculously, and I thought what a wonderful thing sex was and how grateful we must be to Burbee for having invented it in 1926. The way Buz's forceful frankness was balanced by Elinor's deep empathy reminded me vaguely of the old definition of a lady as one who never showed her underwear unintentionally. Elinor, I thought, would never

insult anyone unintentionally.

Leaving these two life-long friends on a Seattle sidewalk, we felt the American continent to be a vast wasteland lit by two warm home-like glows. Fortunately we were to find more.

Chapter 10
The Bright Land 5 – Seattle to San Francisco

Thursday 13th September

Obviously it was sensible to try and get some sleep before dawn, so we told ourselves there was nothing all that exciting about setting out for San Francisco along a thousand miles of the Pacific Coast. We found this difficult to believe, but our bodies accepted it willingly, and after a couple of hours I awoke to find it was true. We were becalmed in a depot somewhere, about six inches from a high featureless concrete wall. There was no sound of movement anywhere, as if we had drifted into some backwater and been forgotten. It was like being in the *Mary Celeste*. All the other passengers were asleep – or dead. I had the impression we had been here for a very long time.

I drifted uneasily back to sleep, and when I awoke again it was broad daylight and we were bowling past signs for Vancouver. Vancouver? How did we get here? Of course, I thought, it was while we were asleep at that sinister depot. The other passengers had been transferred to a southbound bus and we had been transported unconscious to Canada. But I had scarcely adjusted to this concept when the signs began to proclaim Portland. Looking blearily at the map I found there was indeed a place called Vancouver near Portland. But it was 7 a.m. and we should have passed Portland long ago. I fumbled for the timetable in the rack above. Yes, Portland, Ore. ar. 5:35. I had found that most of the riddles of the universe that present themselves during bus travel have their answers somewhere in the timetable's cryptic footnotes, but there were no notes for this timetable at all. I ran them to earth at the feet of another timetable altogether, and was rewarded with a new and strange shaft of illumination: "All service operates on Local Time; except in the state of Oregon where all times are shown in Pacific Standard Time." So we were in the right place after all, but an hour backwards in time. To be abruptly transported 300 miles in minus one hour is a harrowing experience at the best of times, and unbearable before breakfast. I lit a cigarette. With uncanny timing the driver made his first announcement of the day: We were now entering

Portland, Oregon. Because of the delay in the depot at Olympia only fifteen minutes would be allowed for breakfast. Smoking was not permitted on buses passing through Oregon and all cigarettes should be immediately extinguished.

I was even more put out than my cigarette. Consulting the timetable again, I found the next stop was Eugene, Oregon, two hours and ten minutes from Portland. Over two hours without a cigarette. I realized I was faced with a crisis that would call on all my resources of will power, and that I had an immediate and vital decision to make. Should I face this great trial physically weakened by lack of food, or psychologically handicapped by being dirty and unshaved? I decided to use the fifteen minutes to wash and shave. The sort of breakfast I wanted I couldn't get in that time, and I would have to have a cigarette afterwards, should the entire state of Oregon vanish in a cloud of flame. Besides, I could shave around a cigarette.

It was a long dismal journey from Portland to Eugene, and I began to dislike the state of Oregon. It had started to rain, and there was nothing to be seen but a vast number of wet trees, obviously invulnerable to a flame thrower, let alone a cigarette smoked in a sealed bus. There was one bright moment, a sign outside a tailor's shop reading "LOW PRICES. TIMID SALESMEN", but apart from that the state seemed to consist entirely of coniferous trees and no-smoking signs. On this interminable journey to the next cigarette I realized fully for the first time the significance of the phrase "the Oregon pine".

At Eugene we made straight for the Posthouse, where I assembled a breakfast of scrambled egg, toast, hash brown potatoes and coffee. Madeleine had the same, but with orange juice instead of potatoes. The egg proved to be rubbery, the toast leathery, and the potatoes even colder than the coffee. Examining my change, I found I had been charged $2.90 for these bounteous repasts. I am normally a mild-mannered person, but suffering had made me all bitter and twisted inside. Breathing cigarette smoke like a diffident dragon, I looked for someone to complain to. For the first time, but not the last, it was impressed on me how cunningly bus stations are designed: they are more like packing and grading depots for vegetables, processing passengers rather than attending to them, and the process is self-automated, controlled by a row of push buttons in Chicago. The Posthouse, for instance, was run on a cafeteria system, rather like a soup kitchen without the sympathy, and there was nobody in charge.

Well, at least I could check my facts. I went back to the cashier and asked her the price of eggs, toast, potatoes and coffee. She said $1.45,

studiously refraining from asking why. But I told her anyway, figuring that if anyone had any authority it would be the one who took the money. “I just wanted to check how much I had paid for the worst meal I’ve had in the United States,” I said experimentally. She bridled. I had never really understood until then what bridling was exactly, but I knew it when I saw it. I realized I had been bridled at by a professional. It was truly a virtuoso performance, and if there is ever a bridling event introduced in the Olympic Games, the Greyhound team will win hands down. Hands down and shoulders hunched, the cashier said simply, “It’s nothing to do with me.” I looked around the rest of the bus station for someone it would have something to do with, apart from me, but the only vestige of higher authority was a notice on the Posthouse door proclaiming it to be a member of the National Restaurant Association. And even this fitted perfectly into the Posthouse pattern: it was for last year.

Anyhow, now it was time to leave, and with a great grinding of gears by the driver and gnashing of teeth by the passengers we set off again. It was southwest we were heading now, for the Pengra Pass, 5128 feet. The rain was still pouring down, but what we could still see of the scenery was becoming more interesting. There were steep, tree-clad slopes, the pines remaining obstinately perpendicular at fantastic angles to the ground, digging their heels in to stop themselves sliding onto the road. They were getting sparser, and between them were occasional patches of bare sandy soil. It looked eerie country, where one might die in exhaustion and terror a mile from the highway. And maybe there were some worse things in this place than loneliness. Looking at the map I saw with a faint *frisson* that we were close to “Windigo Pass”, and I remembered the Algernon Blackwood story about the fearful elemental of the North American forests which moves through the trees like a whirlwind. It is called the Wendigo.

After the Pengra Pass, from which there was frustratingly nothing to be seen but a slightly wider vista of cloud, we stopped at a place called The Halfway House. It was in a clearing in the forest, and nothing much had been done with the felled trees but nail them together to make this rustic diner. Everything about it was of an engagingly rustic simplicity, right down to the inscriptions on the walls of the men’s rest room. These were strongly reminiscent of those I had seen a long time ago in Europe, and coming on them again here in the Far West made me quietly proud of our common cultural heritage. “Please do not put cigarette butts in the urinal,” said one notice, “It makes them soggy and hard to light.” Another appeal for fair play on slightly different grounds was made on the opposite wall: “We do not piss in your ashtray.” And that was all. It was enough,

though, to convey the simple homespun character of Oregon. None of the perverted assignations of the East Coast sophisticates, nor the tortured mysticism of the Irish which I saw once revealed so starkly in an inscription in a public convenience in Belfast. “If you want real relief,” it said, “Come to Jesus.” No, the Oregonians were not frustrated about sex or religion. It was those smoking restrictions that were getting them down.

Outside again, we thought of going into the main building for something to eat, it now being 11 a.m., but were momentarily deterred by a striking advertisement we had not noticed before. “SUDDEN SERVICE”, it proclaimed. Sudden? I had a momentary vision of walking into the place and being served instantly with a custard pie, in the face. However, we braved the prospect... after all, we had already survived a buffet in Oregon, the slap on the face we got in Eugene... and were rewarded with nothing worse than a slightly greasy hamburger on the hand. Afterwards, we walked in the thin drizzle in a semicircle around the bus, looking for wildlife. But there was nothing to be seen any wilder than a middle-aged lady passenger complaining to the driver about the scenery. Where was the Pacific, she wanted to know? This seemed a little unjust, but the driver explained quite patiently that she was on the wrong bus. It was the “Redwood Empire Route” that ran along the coast. She accepted this resentfully, for some reason failing to ask the obvious question as to why this was called the Pacific Highway Route when it was over 100 miles from the sea.

By the time we reached Chemult, the rain had stopped, but the clouds were still low, and all we could see of the Oregon scenery was direction signs to National Parks and a tantalizing glimpse of Klamath Lake through the trees. We were getting tired of trees. They were still getting sparser, and the sandy patches more frequent, but the change was very gradual, and as a spectacle had about the same dramatic impact as grass growing. To anyone from Ireland, the most striking single feature of American scenery is the way it keeps going on and on after it has made its point.

But on thinking it over, I began to realize that this is a peculiarity of Ireland rather than of America. The European continent is a wedge projecting into the Atlantic, and the apex of the wedge is Ireland. Everything in Europe focuses on this little island. In North Donegal, in the latitude of Labrador, you can stand on the shore of a fjord at midnight and still see clearly the breakers roll in from the Arctic. While in Kerry, only 300 miles to the south, palms wave in the tropical air of the Gulf Stream. In between are recapitulated in miniature nearly all the European landscapes. The Sierras of Spain in the Galtee Mountains; the central

European plains in the Great Bog of Allen; the Massif Central in the granite Mournes; the alluvial lands of the Rhine Valley in Meath and Down; and the Scandinavian Highlands in Antrim and Donegal. Ethnically, too, we have people from all these places – Norsemen, Saxons, Normans, Flemish, and the Milesians from Spain. Our Celtic language is half-brother to both the Teutonic and Romantic tongues. Our religions range from Calvinism to Catholicism. We are the outpost of the Old World, its standard-bearer in the Atlantic, and we hold the essence of Europe. We kept its learning alive once as the land of saints and scholars, and we may do the same again, if the Old World cannot be saved by the President we gave the New.

All this in the space between two Greyhound rest stops. So maybe it's not surprising if American scenery seemed at times somewhat persistent. What we really wanted to see was mountains. Our own are only about 3000 feet high, and we had already climbed to nearly twice that height in the bus. We were now only 100 miles from Mount Shasta, all of l4,162 feet, a great mountain by any standards, a fantastic one by ours, and the reason we had come by this route instead of the coastal one. We have the Atlantic at home, and while it may not be as large as the Pacific, there's not all that much difference from our front door.

We spent a meal stop at Klamath Falls without seeing anything more reminiscent of waterfalls than a soda fountain, but when we came out again eating an exotic form of ice cream, the sun had come out. The mountains shone all around, and the prospect looked brighter. But these mountains were only about 8000 feet; would the clouds lift another 6000 feet in 100 miles?

Twenty minutes out of Klamath Falls there was a further lightening of the atmosphere as we entered the free air of California and I lit a cigarette. The feeling of daring which accompanied this act was accentuated by the fact that we were now boarded by some sort of customs inspector. He made some unintelligible announcement, walked smartly to the rear of the bus and back again, and retired into his shed. It looked like the sort of job that would suit me down to the ground. I don't know what he was looking for, but I could have had a ton of it. Maybe he was just making sure that everyone was smoking.

One of the items it was forbidden to import into California must have been clouds, for now the sky was clear. We stared due south eagerly. The road turned. A new vista opened up. And I remembered ruefully an old saying: mountains make their own weather. Far in front and slightly to the left a huge column of cloud piled into the air. Into it rose a great mass that

could only be the base of Mount Shasta.

We watched it despairingly, and then with renewed hope. The cloud was rising and thinning. Minute by minute as we sped towards it the mass shrank, boiling off into space, becoming a fleecy cap, a plume, a wisp, until Mount Shasta itself shone proudly in a clear sky, majestic in black and white over the pale green and brown of California.

Like all solitary mountains, it gives the impression of being in a valley. The ground seems to slope down to it, a wilderness of trees and scrub becoming vaguer in the distance, until, with a perfunctory flourish of foothills, the great black mountain thrusts proudly into the blue air. It seems to be all black rock, with great expanses of snow clinging to the slopes, until they fall away in defeat.

It was a beautiful mountain from any angle, and we watched it in its changing shapes until we lost sight of it on entering the town of Weed. There cannot be a place in the world more aptly named, consisting as it does of a pretentious and tasteless triumphal arch heralding as miserable a collection of hovels as you could hope to avoid in a day's journey. It occurred to me there were unexpected advantages in having scenery on the lavish American scale. Anywhere else a place like this so near to a beautiful mountain would have been an intolerable eyesore. But here nature was so vast that nothing man could do seemed to matter much. America can absorb a lot of ugliness.

The signs of desert were now becoming more obvious. There were great patches of bare earth, an extraordinary phenomenon to one from a country where it requires constant and unremitting effort to stop things from growing. Already we felt the need of this land for water. Dried creeks and riverbeds lay pleading mutely for rain. In this country any lake would have been a fine sight, but what we came to was more than that. It was Lake Shasta, the most beautiful piece of landscaping man has ever done. It has a beautiful situation among mountains and trees, but for some reason the trees do not come down to the water... there is this broad golden belt around it, like sand. But it can't be sand, because the slope is too steep. Nor can it be ordinary earth, or plants would have grown on it. Presumably it's clay or some specially treated border to preserve the purity of the water. But whatever it is, it looks wonderful, like a band of gold round a great sapphire.

Now we were in the Shasta Lake recreation area, steep-sided wooded valleys in which perched vacation villages. Little winding sideroads turned off at unexpected angles to find their devious way down to luxurious homes. It looked like Utopia.

We were beginning to fall in love with California, and even the Posthouse at Redding failed to disenchant us. Madeleine had seen an interesting shop on the way through the town to the bus station, and daringly gone to look for it, with the result that she had no time left to eat anything. So she bought some fish “to go”, as they say in the States. Unfortunately it was so far gone already she had to throw it away at the next stop.

This was a place called Orland, where we had ten minutes and two hamburgers. The scenery was still pleasant, but more muted – great brown vistas with distant purple mountain ranges. Getting back in the bus we overheard another conversation between the driver and the middle-aged lady who had been complaining at the Halfway House about the absence of the Pacific from the middle of Oregon. She was now apologizing, and congratulating him on the mountains. She may have been unreasonable but you couldn’t say she was unfair.

At Corning we saw for the first time the things we thought of as really Californian – Spanish architecture and palm trees. I think these impressed Madeleine more than anything she had seen so far, but outside the town the yellow grass appalled her. Grass should not be yellow, it was wrong. It had, of course, been getting less green for hundreds of miles, but south of Corning it seemed suddenly to have given up trying.

Madeleine kept eagerly pointing out palm trees and exotic architecture and identifying olive groves for me until darkness fell with sub-tropical suddenness. There were no more rest stops, and incredibly we dozed off. Just after ten we awoke to find ourselves on a great bridge, and almost before I could work out that it couldn’t be the Golden Gate, we were in San Francisco bus station, ten minutes early. I went to get cups of coffee, leaving Madeleine to guard the luggage, and came back to find her surrounded by people, all talking excitedly. There was Bill Donaho, beaming good will like some great welcoming lighthouse on a strange shore. And, why, who was this but Ethel, delighted to be surprising us. How nice to come all that distance in a strange country and find ourselves among not only new friends but old ones. I had a sudden vision of fandom stretching across the Northern Hemisphere like a lifeline.

There were two other friendly people, but since I hadn’t been there when they were introduced I didn’t know who they were and I didn’t like to ask. Bill said we were staying with Jerry and Miriam and for a while I thought this must be them. Miriam Dyches-Carr, I supposed, but it looked even less like her than Krassner’s silent blonde. How many Miriams was I going to have to sort through, I wondered? And who was this little girl

who seemed to be accompanying us? But as we started for the car someone called her Poopsie and everything fell into place. Of course: Dick and Pat Ellington. I felt like saying hello all over again.

Bill led the way to a low-slung blue car, one of our heavy suitcases hanging from each hand as if he'd forgotten he'd picked them up. He put one down and pulled up on the handle of the trunk. Nothing happened, except that the wheels left the ground. So we piled into the car, suitcases and all. This uncouth invasion was superciliously witnessed by a self-possessed white cat which had come along for the ride, having been kitnapped on the way. All in all it was a very Berkeley welcome.

I had half expected to be taken to some Bohemian basement, but if this was a pad it was one straight out of *Good Padkeeping*. It was a pleasant little semidetached house in a sort of mews, very European, and inside it was full of books and drinks and unfussy thoughtfulness. Somewhere, sometime that evening, we must have had a meal, but I was so exhilarated and there was so much to take in that I can't remember a thing about it... and indeed can quite believe I didn't even notice it at the time. All I remember is that we talked until everyone had left but us and Jerry and Miriam. We were at home. Eventually, to everyone's reluctance, Jerry and Miriam did something telekinetic to convert the sofa into a bed... a clear case of mind over mattress... and left us to get some sleep, very happy to be in San Francisco.

Chapter 11
A Day in San Francisco with Ethel

Friday 14th September 1962

We awoke in the middle of the living room to find that living had started without us. It now included Cal Demmon, who had been sound asleep (we could hear the sound from outside his door) when we arrived late the previous night off the bus from Seattle. In the subhuman life form I assume before breakfast I was in no condition to divine where in this calm giant could be hiding the mercurial Cal I knew from his writing, and shortly both of them left for work. I dressed in the bathroom while Jerry Knight made the mystic passes which transformed our double bed into an ordinary settee, and then he and Miriam and we had a leisurely talkative breakfast of toast and coffee. American bread tastes rather lifeless raw, but regenerates itself when toasted, like a phoenix. Then Madeleine devoted herself to the difficult problem of the appropriate costume for sight-seeing in San Francisco in an open Volkswagen, and I strolled outside feeling a catlike need to familiarize myself with my immediate environment.

We were, I found, living in a tiny two-storey red brick house rather reminiscent of a mews cottage. It was in the corner of a little courtyard, off a wide main road which stretched limitlessly into the haze. The day was warm and sunny, a strange meteorological phenomenon which even we from Ireland were beginning to accept as commonplace. So adaptable were we indeed that I gave my sense of wonder a mental pinch to try and waken it up. We're in San Francisco, I pointed out to it. But it just lay there, unimpressed. Strolling along happily in the morning sunshine it was certainly difficult to work up any tension, and there was nothing very startling to be seen. A commonplace motel, an ordinary gas station, the usual advertising signs. There was a small store subtitling itself "The Sincere Grocers" and I made a mental note to suggest, when passing it in fannish company, that it must specialize in frankfurters. It's hard to sustain a reputation for native wit while coping with a foreign country.

American streets are so monotonously straight and long that there never seems any point in walking unless you are making for some definite

destination, so after a few hundred yards I turned back, carrying out a post mortem on my sense of wonder. I just didn't feel I was in a foreign country, I realized: I felt quite at home. I could walk back into 947 University Avenue, Berkeley, California, with no more tension than into 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast. Was it possible I had met Miriam and Jerry only last night?

If walking alone along a street in California wasn't enough to waken my sense of wonder, it obviously needed something out of this world. Back in the courtyard outside the house I found it. When everything is alien a familiar sight can awaken wonder, like a castaway on Mars finding a primrose among the lichen. Or maybe I should say a sprig of heather, for anything as staunch and resilient as this Scottish flower blooming under an alien sky. There in the sunbaked Californian courtyard was Ethel Lindsay, a little more sunburned than when I had last seen her in Chicago, but as cheerful and happy as ever. It was a wonderful surprise to find her here in Berkeley. We had been travelling in different directions ever since the Convention, but here our paths had crossed, for Ethel's last day in San Francisco and our first.

I don't know how much later it was that we started. It was one of the nice things about Berkeley fandom, and one of the things that made it like Ireland, that time didn't seem to matter. There were a number of pleasant things that could be done if we felt like it, but there was no hurry. The day was open-ended. But it must have been about noon when we all piled into Jerry's Volkswagen convertible and he whisked us off to the Golden Gate.

Whisked was the word. We started off with the top down, but the wind soon blew that idea out of our heads. We stopped and Jerry put the top up while the girls had still some hair style left. It was as well we did because the day got misty and cool as we drove further into the Pacific. By the time we got out to the Golden Gate it was quite chilly and the bridge, one of the few contemporary structures to figure in a science fiction story, could only be extrapolated. However we were the people to do it, and besides I bought a very nice picture postcard of it when we stopped for a cup of coffee at the far end. After all, as I pointed out philosophically to Madeleine, we had been on the bridge and we had seen what it was like. What more could we ask?

Then we went to the museum, where there was some Rodin sculpture. We visited the Chinese room too, our appetite for sculpture being still as it were unjaded, and then on to Miriam's favourite modern ruin. This was a wonderful fairylike castle made out of canvas and plaster for some exhibition and now rapidly disintegrating, but of such charm that not only

had it been left undemolished, but a fund had been started to reconstruct it of permanent materials. As we admired it across its moat, moving from time to time to dodge the wind-borne fallout from a massive stone fountain – these Americans have some fancy lawn sprinklers, I murmured – the highly original thought struck me that San Francisco was a very different city from Los Angeles. There they specialized in lath and plaster reconstructions of masonry: here they made masonry reconstructions of lath and plaster.

I had been coming to like San Francisco anyway, having seen enough despite the mist at the Golden Gate to know it was probably the most beautiful city in the Northern Hemisphere (sorry, Berkeley fandom, but I have this notion about Rio de Janeiro) and now this crazy idea made me suspect I was going to love it. In most places it's hard enough to get people to pay for the preservation of ruins of genuine historic interest. Of course it's probably accounted for by the well known breeding habits of familiarity. The Egyptians, for instance, seem quite content to make reservoirs round their antiquities and dam the consequences. Only the foreigners worry. And in Ireland only a few years ago Killymoon Castle was sold for £100 to a farmer who put pigs in it. But in San Francisco, Miriam told me, there was great indignation when it was found that a new five million dollar elevated motorway obstructed the view of the Ferry Building, which although of no particular architectural interest had been a historic San Francisco landmark for all of two generations. So it was decided to pull it down and rebuild it somewhere else. No, not the Ferry Building, silly. The motorway.

We continued further into downtown San Francisco, looking for that contemporary chimera, parking space. It sometimes seems to me that half the population of the world is at present devoting its life to getting a motor car and the other half to getting rid of it. San Francisco has this latter problem in a particularly acute form, being a European-style city with an American-style traffic problem. In his search for a distantly glimpsed multi-storey carpark Jerry was entrapped in a relentless spiral of one-way streets, borne steadily further and further from his objective as by some sort of inverted whirlpool, until it was obvious even to me that he was lost. I felt quietly happy about this. It always happens to me when I take visitors to tourist attractions.

However Jerry eventually evaded the cordon of signs, homed in on the car park and whizzed up a series of spiral ramps, which it would be fun to roller skate down, until he found a vacant space on the umpteenth floor. After admiring the view we took the lift again and found ourselves

thronging the streets.

It reminded me of Paris. Not that I've ever been to Paris, but that's what it reminded me of. It was stylish, elegant, sophisticated, cosmopolitan. After the aggressive Americanism of every other city I had seen in the States it was like a breath of European air. The advertisements seemed less blatant, the shop window displays subtler, the buildings more permanent, even the traffic less hectic. The men seemed more quietly dressed, more polite and more relaxed. The girls were tastefully dressed and pretty in every conceivable racial and multi-racial way. There was, above all, a general impression that people liked one another and liked living in San Francisco. I was beginning to understand why, and how this city had redeemed America in the eyes of the world at the time of the Krushchev visit, and for all we know saved mankind. This was what America could become.

It was a revelation. It seemed to me that everyone at home who is inclined to resent the creeping tide of Americanism in our cities should come and look at San Francisco, and see for themselves that Americanism... which is just the term these people use for a society based on mass production, high consumption and the automobile... can be integrated with traditional European values. People who run screaming from the concrete desert of Los Angeles should pause for breath in San Francisco and see that there is another answer. A city which is the hope of the world.

But after crossing a few intersections we found ourselves in another city altogether, an Oriental one. We were in Chinatown, where everything was Chinese except the price tags, and even the telephone kiosks were little pagodas. Hundreds of little shops offered strange and fascinating things for sale. Miriam and Jerry were looking for a Mexican restaurant, of all things. Madeleine was looking for a cheap cheongsam, a garment which has done more than Mao Tse Tung to unsettle Western Mankind, and Ethel, who had had an early breakfast, was looking for food. I didn't mind one way or another because though I liked cheongsams and food, I thought the situation of three Celts, a Slav and an Anglo-Saxon looking for a Mexican restaurant in the Chinese quarter of an American city founded by Spain was the last word in exoticism. However Ethel's was the most basic need, transcending the instincts of sex and even the craving for enchiladas, and since the place was fairly crottling with Chinese restaurants we finished up eating a typical fannish meal of four dinners among five people.

Outside again we went to catch a cable car. San Francisco is built

upon what appears to be a miniature mountain range, and only sheer determination prevents the entire population from slithering down to the waterfront. Those who have ended up there are periodically dredged up again by cable cars, for redistribution about the peaks of the city. The cable cars are engagingly antiquated contraptions. Emmet-ations* of ordinary single-deck trams, driven by a clutch engaging a moving cable through a slot in the ground. This device permits the most dramatic effects of acceleration and braking, and what with this and the clattering and grinding and lurching they seem to go at crazy speed through the more respectable traffic. They are more like something in a funfair than a means of public transport, and everyone seemed to enjoy them as much as we tourists. You feel somehow that San Francisco has a holiday running down the middle of its streets.

** Alluding to UK cartoonist Rowland Emmett's drawings of elaborately silly tall-chimneyed trains puffing their way along obscure branch lines with fanciful names like the Far Tottering and Oyster Creek Branch Railway. [Ed.]*

A cable car finally ground to a halt on level ground at the waterfront and everyone reluctantly got out. It was now positioned at a sort of turntable, and to my delight I found all the passengers were helping to push it round ready for the journey up again. Yes, I liked San Francisco.

The reason we had come down to Fisherman's Wharf, apart from riding the cable cars, was to visit a famous store called COST PLUS where there are all sort of exotic imports at bargain prices. But Miriam, who was leading the way, slowed down and stopped and looked worried. I realized at once what was wrong, having seen this sort of thing on the newsreels. Men were walking up and down in front of the store carrying placards. We stopped in a group on the pavement, irresolute. "I've never crossed a picket line in my life," said Miriam, "but Madeleine coming all this way..."

"I'll tell you what," said Madeleine cheerfully, "we could go in and *steal* something."

"Well, let's case the joint anyway," I said bilingually, so we went over to look at the windows The first thing we saw was a big notice saying OUR EMPLOYEES ARE NOT ON STRIKE. It went on to give a long involved explanation full of technical terms from American labour relations, the gist of which was that the employees were getting what they wanted. Miriam was nonplussed, so I suggested we go and see what the pickets had to say. We went over to the nearest one and, nodding to him politely, studied his placard. He stopped walking and held it steady for us,

averting his gaze as if he merely paused for a rest. Having digested his message we coughed apologetically to attract his attention and asked him about the notice in the window. Whereupon he launched into another equally involved explanation, the gist of which was that this employer couldn't be trusted and that they were picketing him until he kept his promise. After ten minutes or so of hearing evidence and cross examination we adjourned our little industrial court and, thanking the picket, retired further down the sidewalk for consultation. Miriam and Jerry said whatever we decided would be fine by them, Madeleine said firmly that she'd just as soon not go in, and we all retired from the arena feeling quite happy at having struck a blow for downtrodden labour.

Curiously this little episode made me feel even more at home in San Francisco. Up to now most of our hosts in America had been Republicans, who would regard our Conservative Party as a bunch of dangerous radicals They were very nice people and I thought none the less of them for that. Of course I am very broad-minded about these things; I would even be prepared to make Republicanism legal between consenting adults. But it did feel good to be back among people who thought like Europeans and whom you didn't have to be afraid of offending.

So we happily wandered along the waterfront for a while looking at baby alligators and other strange things, including the little seahorses they offered to mail live anywhere for a dollar. I don't know what Her Majesty's Post Office would think of this... the only sea creature I've ever heard of them delivering by post is COD. Then we took the cable car again for another cheerful jangling ride back up into the city. Half way it stopped dead and stood there for some time without any apparent reason. Nobody seemed to be at all concerned. A passer-by called out something and the driver shouted "Coffee break at the power station," and everybody laughed. It didn't seem the sort of thing that would happen in New York, or even London.

I can't remember if we ever found out the reason for the stoppage – maybe it *was* the coffee break – but eventually we jangled off again, and hopped off in the middle of the city and went to collect the Volkswagen.

We shot down the spiral ramp into the streets like a ball on a pin-table, only to be caught in a huge traffic jam on the approaches to the Bay Bridge. While thus becalmed in a Sargasso Sea of cars I heard from Miriam and Jerry of the first murmurings of San Francisco's Revolt Against The Freeways. It was becoming clear that every city motorway built to solve the problem of too much traffic carries the seed of another problem, the traffic it creates. Which necessitates another motorway and so

on until the city itself is obliterated by concrete, dispersed into crevices between roads and car parks. Los Angeles has yielded to the automobile, but not San Francisco. Even then there were plans for a modern commuter railway system, and recently I saw on television a San Franciscan who threatened to blow up a projected new freeway. I nodded approvingly: that was my San Francisco.

Back in Berkeley we met Bill Donaho and Dick and Pat Ellington and their little daughter Poopsie, a farewell gathering to see Ethel off on her long journey back home. We all went for dinner to a big eating place called Brennans, which unaccountably was owned by a German and employed Chinese waiters. The food was very good and there were the usual lavish helpings, which no one was able to finish except Bill Donaho. Little Poopsie was hardly able to make any inroad at all into her dinner, and I was delighted to see Bill relieve her of her almost untouched plate and finish it off. It's great comfort for a visitor to the States to have Bill Donaho around. Not only does his vast size give you a sense of security, amply justified by his less obvious character and intelligence, but he relieves you of the nagging guilt you feel in restaurants at the waste of all that good food. With Bill around this problem is drastically reduced. On this occasion he polished off a couple of side dishes for me as well, enabling me to concentrate my flagging forces on my huge hunk of strawberry shortcake. It had turned out to be a very pleasant surprise. I have been ordering this dish with unquenchable optimism for the past thirty years at various places in the world, and this was the first time I had ever found it made with fresh strawberries and real, fresh cream. Ethel had it too, and I don't think she could have wished for anything better for her last meal in California.

As usual unquestionedly assuming command, Bill made sure we arrived at Oakland's bus station in good time. Bill checked in Ethel's luggage, I found out which gate the bus would be at, and then there was nothing to do but wait for the bus to come in from San Francisco on its way to Salt Lake City and New York. It was, of course, late. We stood in a little group round Ethel, talking nervously and desultorily. The Berkeley fans couldn't be their usual bright and cheerful selves, because this was a sad occasion, and they couldn't just keep saying sad farewells, and they all knew that when the bus did come in there would be a rush to get on and we couldn't hold Ethel back. So the conversation was spasmodic and interspersed with the usual objurgations to take care of herself and give their love to so and so in England and try to persuade Atom to stand for TAFF and so on. For myself I just kept thinking, I'm responsible for all

this. I wrote the article in *Nebula* which brought this little Scottish girl into fandom, and I started this TAFF thing, and now here she is in a California bus station among friends she had made across six thousand miles. Now she looked a little sad, and I could understand it. Her great holiday all over, she was leaving the sun and warmth of California for the long anti-climactic journey back to winter in grimy London, no doubt worrying all the way as to whether she had made a good impression. The bus swept suddenly in and the queue pushed forward and the Berkeley fans said their hurried last goodbyes and I knew there was only one thing for me to say. So as she was swept past me in the queue I bent down and whispered, “I’m proud of you Ethel.” And I was, though it wasn’t until I saw the genuine sorrow and affection on faces around me as that brave little figure disappeared in the crowd that I realized just how much.

Letter to Greyhound

Excerpts from a Letter to Greyhound President Ackerman from W. Willis

Dear Mr. Ackerman:

My wife and I have just completed a five week tour of the United States and we are grateful to your company for carrying us so safely over such vast distances. So much so that I feel I should let you know of some respects in which it might be said to fall short of perfection, before I mention them in a series of articles I am writing for publication in Great Britain and the States....

The food at many Greyhound Posthouses is expensive, inferior and dirty. I am sorry I cannot give more detailed instances, but after our first experiences, of which I did not take notes, my wife and I avoided Greyhound Posthouses as much as possible. However, at Eugene, Oregon, on 13th Sept., I was charged $1.45 for a breakfast of cold bacon and rubbery egg, old leathery toast and cold coffee. At Redding, Calif., at 5:45 p.m. on the same day, my wife was given some fish “to go” which was so far gone that the whole meal had to be thrown away after the first bite. At 6:20 p.m. on 25th Sept., at Columbus, Ohio, I was served a chocolate milk shake containing a mass of slimy yellow fibrous matter. My impression of these places was that standards had sunk because passengers simply did not have time to complain, the meal times actually allowed by drivers being between two thirds and one half of those provided for by my timetables. On 25th September, for instance, en route Los Angeles-New York, we left Indianapolis at 1:50 p.m. and travelled nonstop to Columbus, Ohio, where we were supposed to have forty minutes for dinner. The driver allowed us 20 minutes, and we then sat in a stationary bus for a further 25 minutes. The next stop was at Pittsburgh, Pa., at 12:25 a.m. In retrospect, I cannot help feeling that 11 hours was rather a long time to be asked to subsist on one milk shake, though I admit that after that particular one I did not feel like eating. It was rather noticeable that the only adequate meal stops provided were between midnight and 2 a.m. and the other passengers seemed to be of the opinion this was a policy designed to force us to patronise the Posthouses. Incidentally, going without dinner at Columbus did give me time to complain about the foreign matter in the

chocolate milk shake: the lady in charge said it was probably pineapple and what did I want.

Epilogue: The Wearier Bard

I'm an old traveling giant, and tired. Already this week I've fallen asleep twice in the office, and I think if I hit the sack there once again, I'll be given it. I think the days and nights must have been shorter in America... it stands to reason the sun must have picked up speed by the time it gets over there... and last Sunday was the shortest night of all. At 11 p.m. we were still roaming the echoing corridors of Idlewild: three hours later we were rushing to a rendezvous with the dawn, five miles over the Atlantic. I woke up to see a jumble of pink and white clouds ahead, lit up as though by footlights, and behind us the great brooding amphitheatre of night. Then, sooner than we expected, there was Ireland below, a patchwork quilt in shades of green with a border of silver lace. We glided down the coast of Galway Bay, wheeled round County Clare, and then there we were stepping out into a sunny showery Irish day at Shannon.

In its way it was as wonderful as that landing in New York five weeks ago. I don't know how Irish emigrants must feel coming back after years, because we had only been away a little time and we were sort of choked up. We went quietly through all the formalities... funny how already everything seemed to be at lower pressure... and got the bus for the hotel where I'd left the car. When we alighted it was raining, so I left Madeleine sheltering under some bushes at the bus stop, and went to collect the car. The hotel was locked up and deserted, and the rain was now coming down in torrents. However, round the back I found a half open window into the stables, made my way to where my poor little Morris Minor crouched among broken furniture and poultry droppings – it was only too obvious our car was still under higher perches; you could see the deposit – and drove it out. It started second time (advt.) but what a tiny little car it was. I got soaked propping open the double doors of the yard – every time I drove the car at them they closed, like an anti-social supermarket – and thinking of poor Madeleine I thought I'd better drive down and rescue her first. On the way down the drive, who should I meet but the hotel manager and his receptionist. We both stopped and conversed through the car windows. They were very nice, considering that I had broken into their premises, and apparently left the gates open and without paying my garage bill. They said there'd be no charge for garaging the car and they'd lock up after me, so I carried, on, collected Madeleine, and we set off for Belfast, determined to try and reach there today if I could keep my eyes open, for

this was our daughter's birthday. (Incidentally, if any of you ever stay at Shannon overnight, and I hope many of you will, this was the Bunratty Castle Hotel, Bunratty, Co. Clare.)

However the first priority was gas for the car, so although the cloudburst was continuing, we stopped at the first filling station we came to. The proprietor came out with a coat held over his head and filled us up. Five weeks is a long time for a car to be laid up, so when the last little hard lump of petrol had clattered into the tank, I asked him to check the oil. It was ok, and I felt so guilty about the old boy getting so wet I told him to keep a shilling out of the change. "Och not at all," he said, thrusting the correct change through the car window. "God bless you, sir." Yes, we were back in Ireland all right.

We stopped for lunch at O'Meara's hotel in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, quite an expensive place by our previous standards, and had soup, roast chicken, Limerick ham with bread sauce, creamed celery, baked potatoes, pineapple souffle and coffee, all for the equivalent of $1.00 each. We marvelled at everything – cream in a delph jug, sugar loose in a bowl, the profusion of cutlery – how strange it all was. It was a lovely day for driving, clear and sunny, and there was very little traffic, which was usual in Ireland I kept remembering, and before ten p.m. we were home, to see Bryan before he was put to bed and wish Carol many happy returns. It had been a long trip... 15 thousand miles I make it, more or less... and the last twenty miles were the worst.

As I think Larry has told you, I'll be retracing our footsteps serially in *Axe*. But our baggage is still lodged in some niche in the Greyhound network and it contains some of my early notes. I'd like to wait a while and see if they turn up. Besides, as I said, I'm tired. Another thing many of you many have been wondering is did the money last out. Well, it did. In fact after everything we had nearly a hundred dollars left over. I thought of contributing it to TAFF, but then TAFF is pretty affluent at present so we figure we'll use it to fix up the guest room at Oblique House, where I hope many of you will stay in the future.

Finally, I'd like to say that I haven't seen a list of contributors to the Fund, so if any of you have been wondering why I didn't thank you individually, that's why. But on behalf of Madeleine and myself, I thank you all now for a wonderful, an unforgettable experience.

"Larry" above is Larry Shaw, co-editor with Noreen Shaw of Axe, *where the first three chapters of "Twice Upon a Time" were to appear.*

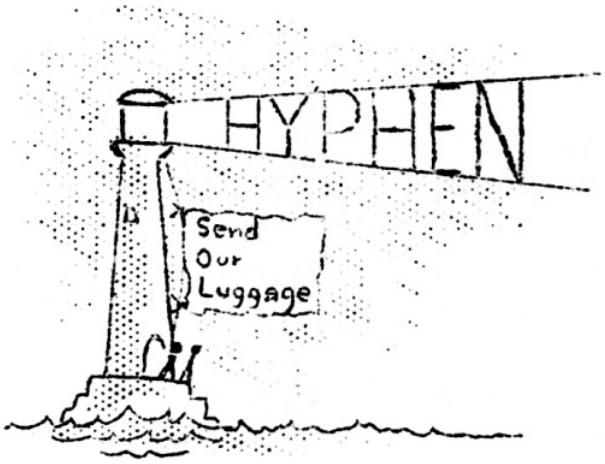
Aftermath

Hyphen *#31 (March 1962) was published before the Willises set off for the USA. The following issue #32 was published exactly one year later in March 1963. It included an article by Ted White that had been held over from that earlier issue, and Walt's editorial invented a TAWF-related reason for this:*

So solicitous are we about the accuracy of everything that appears in *Hyphen*, ever since the unfortunate incident when I announced a London fan's wedding several years before it took place... jumping the shotgun as it were... that we spare no effort to check the veracity of every item. So we went over to inspect Greenwich Village and Brooklyn to make sure they were exactly as Ted describes them. After all we didn't want to be sued by two Metropolitan Boroughs – everyone knows you can't fight even one City Hall.

We were relieved to find they were exactly as Ted says. In gay mad exotic Greenwich Village you can indeed buy Pepsis at half ten at night. In fact you can buy bread, butter, bacon and eggs there half an hour after midnight. I know, because Madeleine and I bought some there in a gay mad exotic supermarket, for breakfast in Brooklyn later that morning.

And it's true that Brooklyn is different. The first time we went there it was by the dusty and desolate New York subway, which we were already quite familiar with having lost our way in it three times. After a few miles the subway emerges into the open air, broadens out and becomes Brooklyn. The main difference is that you can now smoke. Though to be fair (and to explain Arthur's little drawing on the back cover *[the traditional* Hyphen *lighthouse now flying a banner reading "Send Our Luggage"]*) we were in no mood to appreciate the beauty of Brooklyn, the Greyhound Company having just lost our luggage. At the moment of writing (28th March) it is still somewhere in the States, and anyone finding himself in a bus station with time to spare is invited to ask after a brown duffel bag and a blue fibre suitcase, probably tagged KE 452 192 and 193.


HYPHEN
Send
Our
Luggage

The DisTAWF Side
Madeleine Willis

The famous "Gesundheit" posed photo of Dean Grennell and Walt Willis, as described both above and below.

Chapter 1: New York

I started my trip as I was to continue – a lush. The plane passengers were offered soft drinks free, and, as we were determined not to miss anything, we took the first chance that came and ordered orange squash. The hostess came swaying back along the passageway with a tray of drinks and handed us orange coloured ones in stemmed glasses. (Did nobody else think it funny when this type of glass was specified in the protocol for the water-drinking ceremony in *Fanac* #85? Maybe I have an odd sense of humour.) I lifted mine to my lips and drank thirstily. "That drink has a kick in it," I whispered to Walter. He sniffed at my glass. "Yes, it's a screwdriver." He beckoned to the hostess; she came back, looked confused, took away Walter's untouched drink and brought back his orange squash in a paper cup. I pretended to notice nothing; I looked out of the window and sipped my drink; it helped to disperse the slight nervousness I was feeling, I was so conscious of my position as part of the clouds of glory surrounding the BNF. No one would ever have raised a fund to bring *me* to America. At the same time, I had a feeling of exhilaration: I was visiting America, I had no responsibilities whatever for the next five weeks, and I was going to meet the fabulous people I had been reading about for years. This excited feeling mounted as we came nearer to the American coast.

Our first sight of land was over Cape Cod. This is America, I thought, I am now seeing the land which brought hope to the hungry and dispossessed. I thought especially of those from my own country who fled here during the famine years; America was still the generous host to the Europeans.

When we made our second landing, at Idlewild, and the air-conditioning was switched off and the doors opened, I got my first taste of the American climate. It was hot. For months Walter had been telling me that it would be hot in America, and I thought I believed him. I had pictured it as being perhaps a little warmer than it had been at the height of our summer, perhaps even 75 degrees – after all, it was nearly the end of August. When I stepped out of the plane I wondered wildly for a moment whether someone had made a mistake and set us down in Miami – the temperature must have been about 90 degrees. Outside the arrival lounge I saw Dick Eney. I greeted him first, and as he was relieving Walter of one of our cases, I recognized and greeted Ted White and Terry Carr. This surprised them. "How did you know who we were, Madeleine?" was the

way Terry put it. The simple explanation was that I had seen their photos in the fan press; maybe they thought I didn't read fanzines.

The fact that I read fanzines also surprised Bjo. When I mentioned that I read all the fanzines that came to the house, including borrowed SAPS, FAPA, and OMPA mailings, she exclaimed, "Then you must know a lot more about us than we know about you!" I must have been about the most knowledgeable inactive fan; the half dozen or so articles I wrote about 1954-55 would hardly count. I also read all the outgoing and incoming letters.

Now things are a little different. Bruce *[Pelz]* asked me to write this trip report for him, and me with nary a note taken. Ian moved to Dublin and I cut ten stencils for *Hyphen*. Walter started to write a book, and I wrote the letters. Where is it all going to end?

There was a tense moment when Ted took my case. Dick Eney said he was taking us to the Wollheims' for dinner and we should go with him – he had been nominated Deputy Host by Larry Shaw, with whom we were to stay. Ted put in his claim as Chairman of the Willis Fund. To avoid argument, I said I would drive with Ted and Walter could go with Dick. We were really in New York, not Miami. I had a sense of déjà vu, purely second-hand, of course.

Looking back on it now I wondered where Ted had intended to take us. Elsie Wollheim rose to the occasion nobly, and the only indication I had that maybe there were more guests for dinner than expected was the fact that she grilled some hamburger steaks in addition to the roast beef. The Wollheims arrived as we were still milling around. The name of Donald Wollheim had a familiar ring to it, but I was ashamed that I couldn't place it immediately. I asked Don what fanzines he wrote for. Well, if I was going to his place for dinner I didn't want to put my foot in it by referring to the wrong fanzines.

As we were leaving for Staten Island later that evening Elsie said something about expecting us for dinner again tomorrow, together with Ethel Lindsay and the Lupoffs. We had already been asked out to dinner by Ted and we had said that we would have to see what arrangements the Shaws had made. We felt very awkward about the whole thing and promised to ring Elsie and Ted the next morning and let them know what we had decided.

Dick drove us to the South Gate Ferry Terminal and on to the ferry and I was soon out at the bows enjoying the breeze off the water. This ferry boat trip became the favourite part of our journeyings around New York and we didn't feel a bit worried about the distance the Shaws' house

was from the centre of New York. I looked back at the fabulous skyline of Manhattan amid the myriad lights; it was nearly too much to take in all at once. I was amazed, though, to see spelled out in neon lights “79 degrees”. I couldn’t get over the fact that it could still be so hot, even after midnight.

At the Shaws’ we were warmly greeted by Noreen and Larry. Noreen is vivacious and a ball of energy. She looked after a semi-invalid father and two small children and yet still found time to cut the stencils for *Axe*. As something had to go, the living-room table was covered in two years’ issues of such magazines as the *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Good Housekeeping*.

Later, when we settled down for a chat, Larry told us that the New York group had agreed not to invite us to any private parties so that there would be no jealousy. Because of Noreen’s onerous domestic responsibilities and small kitchen the Shaws couldn’t do any entertaining, so they had nominated the Wollheims to look after us in the evenings. I was disappointed that we wouldn’t get much opportunity to get to know the Shaws better. I felt that they were principally responsible for the success of the fund and I would have liked to do some sightseeing during the day and talk to the Shaws in the evening. However this was not suggested to us. So, on the basis of having already visited the Wollheims, not knowing them as we did Ted by correspondence, and having an appointment to lunch with the Lupoffs on Wednesday before the party at their apartment, we decided to accept Ted’s invitation.

We couldn’t understand the bitterness of the Shaws’ opposition to our going with Ted. Larry, on hearing of the proposed invitation, had actually gone to the trouble and expense of sending us a warning cable. We had never received it, because Larry had sent it to Dublin Airport, and we had left from Shannon. We went to bed feeling a bit bewildered and worried. It was this kind of thing that the New Yorkers had tried to prevent, only now matters were much worse. We hated to go against the wishes of the Shaws, but we felt that we were doing the right thing.

Dick had already left for Washington, and Larry for the office, when we got up the next day, so we had a leisurely breakfast with Noreen. I liked the American idea of sweet rolls for breakfast but tea is almost indispensable for me first thing in the morning. Walter conservatively preferred plain toast but he enjoyed coffee at any time. Afterwards Noreen showed us where the station was and left us to do her shopping. We were alone with the American transport systems for the first time. We got on the train for the ferry and I looked around with interest at the other passengers. These were Americans at home, going about their usual lives. I gazed out

of the window feeling a sense of awe at actually being here. I had thought of Staten Island as being a sort of semi-rural retreat for New Yorkers, but everywhere I looked I could see houses being built and others being torn down to make room for larger ones.

The ferry journey was as enjoyable as ever and I could now see the Manhattan skyline more clearly. I drank it all in, trying to store up my impressions for when this wonderful trip would be just a memory.

The next stage of our journey was by subway, and I knew immediately that I was going to avoid it as much as possible. It was hot, noisy, dirty, confusing, and crowded. I became thirsty, and decided to try my first ice cream from a slot machine. It was so hot that the chocolate covering slid down onto my skirt before I had eaten a quarter of it. And we got lost. This was a blessing in disguise. Walter likes subways; he enjoyed the Underground in London when I didn't; following maps and directional diagrams are a challenge to him. But the New York subway system and its charts are so confusing that he had to give up.

Before we came up into the air again I drew Walter's attention to a notice headed "To Visitors to New York". It started out mildly enough, merely welcoming strangers to the city, then it got down to brass tacks. Do not spit in the subway. Do not throw litter about. Try and be courteous and good-mannered. We fled.

We decided to take a cab the rest of the way to the Greyhound terminal where we had arranged to meet Ted White. I liked the New York cabs. The drivers didn't give me the inferiority complex the ones in London did. Here taking a cab seemed the most natural thing in the world. The fares were very reasonable compared with the prices of other things.

We arrived twenty minutes late. After quite a lot of red tape we were issued with our 99 days for 99 dollars tickets. Then Ted took us to Macy's where I was to get my first taste of shopping in America.

Ella Parker had told me, when I wrote to ask her advice as to what to bring in the way of clothing, that nylon things are dirt cheap in New York. Fortunately I only half believed her. I thought the nylon clothing was as dear, if not dearer, than at home. Walter gave me ten dollars and let me loose. I astounded the men by coming back with five dollars intact. It was here that I bought one of the items which I bitterly regret having lost in my luggage, a beautiful pair of white and gold sandals. I bought them at one of the bargain counters in the basement, for all of one dollar.

We went from Macy's to Terry Carr's place. I at last realized what was meant by a one and a half room apartment. There was one touch of luxury, bought with the proceeds from Terry's first sale to *F&SF*, an air-

conditioning unit. I think if I was living in New York this would be my first priority. Our second honeymoon was a frost... well, perhaps that isn't *quite* the right description... until we reached the West Coast.

Carol came in from work when it was almost time to leave for Esther Davis's. She is an attractively exotic looking girl with long black hair, which she is in the habit of tossing back from her face. The Egyptian jewellery mentioned by Terry Carr in *Cry* suited her admirably.

On our way to Esther's I stopped at a confectioner's window. "What's that cake called?" I asked. It was cheesecake. At long last I realized why pin-ups are sometimes known as cheesecake. They look good enough to eat. This is a misnomer in the British Isles. What is known as cheesecake in the shops here is a small cake consisting of a thin shell of poor pastry containing a cake mixture of indefinite flavour and dry texture. It exemplifies all that is worst in the bastardization of a great Swiss recipe. This American confection looked light as a meringue, yet rich and creamy, and it came in different flavours and in combination with such things as strawberries. Carol slipped into the shop and bought me one. I felt that I had made a major discovery.

On the way to Esther's place Ted explained that she was the common-law wife of Walter Dupree and they had been together for about twenty years. Since Ted's move from Greenwich Village their little group had taken to meeting at Esther's. Esther was a new fringe-fan.

When we arrived we found that Andy Reiss and Leslie Gerber were before us. Les was shouting for staples and I murmured something about how he could barley be heard. Les looked pleased. "Oh, you do it too?" he said. We said hello to Esther and Walter and I handed her the bottle of Californian wine I had brought. She looked at the label. "1957, that was a good year," she said.

Very shortly we were ushered to our places at the table. There were two very large red leather covered chairs at the head of the table, and I thought these were for our host and hostess. I sat down on the nearest chair. "No, no", she said, "You and Mr. Willis must sit at the head of the table." The dinner was brought in, and we were served before anyone else. Then Esther poured out some wine. When all the glasses were filled she held up her hand. "We must drink a toast," she said. "To our Irish guests, Mr. and Mrs. Willis". I looked down at my plate. This was a bit overwhelming – fans don't usually do this sort of thing.

After a wonderful dinner, cooked by Walter, Esther took hold of my hand. "Would you mind if I tried to read your hand?" she said. She told me that I should have had three children, I was yet to meet the great love of

my life, and that I had an artistic nature. I'll settle for the last one.

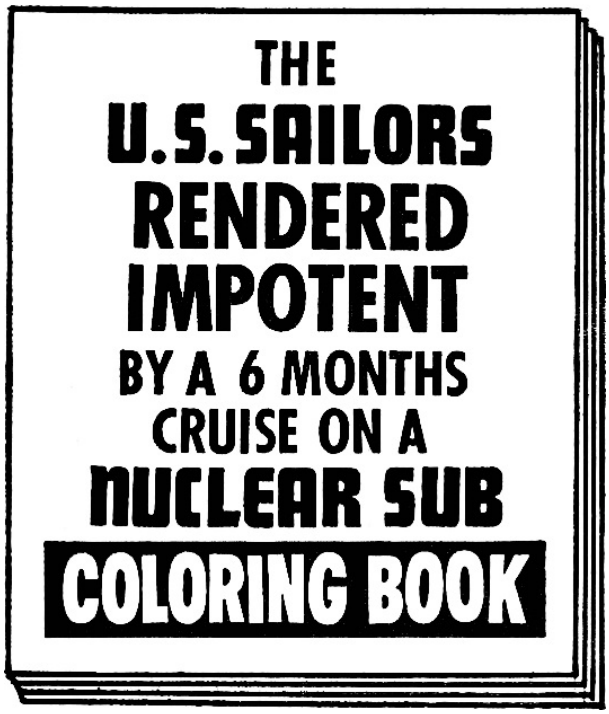
Esther then put on the record player and danced round the room waving her arms gracefully in the air with a beatific expression on her face. At times she had an almost frenetic gaiety.

Paul Krassner, of *The Realist*, came in with a blonde girl who sat at his feet all evening. I was introduced to her, but I don't remember her saying a word.

The group round Krassner were examining the latest issue of his magazine when I joined them. Walter handed me the magazine. The headline screamed in bright red letters "US SAILORS STERILIZED SAILING IN NUCLEAR SUB". Before I had time to examine it further Paul looked up and asked me what I thought of it. I said I thought it was going a little too far. Someone started another topic of conversation and I was left in decent obscurity. Walter came over to me and quietly pointed out that *The Realist* was a satirical magazine. In small print under the headline were the words "Coloring Book". I didn't know what this meant so Walter explained about the current colouring book craze. Krassner was to cover the Chicon for *Playboy* magazine and I wondered what impression he had of the fandom which would go to the trouble and expense of importing such a dimwit. However, Walter explained to Krassner and he said I was forgiven.

When we left with the Carrs and Ted White I was starting to worry about how we were to get to the Shaws' place. This time we were escorted to the subway and given precise directions so we got to the ferry easily enough. We reached Grant Place without mishap, but we had some difficulty in finding No. 16, as all the houses weren't numbered. There even seemed to be some left over. It was raining, so I took out the old half-petticoat I was discarding and wore it on my head. All the houses looked alike in the darkness; the only means of identifying the Shaws' house was to find the living-room table covered in magazines. I tip-toed up and down front paths, peering into darkened rooms, the petticoat swirling round my shoulders, and eventually found it.

We went round to the back door as previously instructed by Noreen and walked in quietly. Larry stared at me as I pushed the waist elastic off my forehead. He had stayed up late correcting proofs for his magazine. As I had effectively taken his mind off his work he called it a day and a half and sat down with us for a late snack. [1]



From the front cover of The Realist,
June 1962

Terry Carr:

Getting Madeleine's trip report was a brilliant coup. A few comments on this first instalment, which was very good, of course: It was I who suggested that Walt go with Eney while Madeleine went with us, and bighod I want credit for this particular bit of Solomonizing. The actual mix-up about who was to meet the Willises must be laid at the Shaws' door: they had originally delegated Ted White to meet them at the airport and bring them back to the Shaws' place. The feud between Shaws and Ted then began growing under the surface (Ted didn't know anything of it, nor did I, until the day the Willises arrived) and apparently the Shaws' sent Eney off to do the job instead. However, they didn't tell Ted of this, even when he talked with them the night before. It's not surprising, then, that there were two delegations to pick up the Willises at the airport. The contention that "the New York group" (who's that?) had "agreed not to invite (the Willises) to any private parties so that there would be no jealousy" is utter nonsense: the schedule of parties at the Wollheims' didn't call for open parties by any means, and the way Ethel Lindsay was kept under wraps during almost her entire stay in New York further negates the thesis. (I hear Ethel was puzzled, and somewhat upset at not getting to meet more of the New York fans, by the way.)

It's Henry Dupree, not Walter.

Redd Boggs:

Terry has caught most of the errors in Madeleine's report (which I hope we'll be seeing further instalments of), but I do have a couple of comments. She says, "I wonder where Ted had intended to take us," and the answer was exactly where Eney had intended to take them: Staten Island. Noreen, in a burst of fannish humour, had sent both Eney and myself to pick up the Willises and take them to Staten Island for dinner, to which I too had been invited. As I understood it (and considering the multilevel faction-splitting going on which I wasn't aware of at the time, it is entirely likely that I was wrong in this), the Wollheims made their dinner offer at the last minute and it had not been planned. The meal was made up of several different meats (which I enjoyed), which makes me think they hadn't planned on one and had simply gotten out what they had. The plane had been delayed by a couple of hours, of course, and had the Willises gone straight out to the Shaws they'd not have gotten there until after 9:00 p.m. – too late for Noreen to have a big dinner. I thought the Wollheims did the best possible thing, smoothing over the impending breach caused by Noreen sending two delegations, and all like that, and the conflict over dinner dates for the following night upset me considerably. I am shocked at the revelation that the Shaws had sent a cable warning against my dinner invitation. And, like Terry, I knew nothing of any agreement against "private parties". On the whole, though, I hope this sudden resurgence of the old New York spirit did not dampen the Willises' enjoyment of their stay too much. [2]

Madeleine Willis:

I wouldn't for the world come between a fan and his egoboo. If Terry thinks he suggested that I go with him and Ted White I can only feel flattered. However, I distinctly remember thinking how brave I was being in actually suggesting a parting from Walter so soon after arriving. Perhaps we both had the same idea simultaneously? I have this feeling that Terry and I are twin souls or something....

I have perhaps done the Shaws an injustice in describing their cablegram as a "warning" one. The warning was not against Ted White's dinner invitation as such; it was to warn us that there would be other invitations to be considered and not to accept just the first one offered to us.

I was mistaken in saying that the Wollheims were asked to entertain us in the evenings. The only invitation to the Wollheims was on the second night of our stay in New York. The dinner at the Wollheims' on the night of our arrival was a last minute arrangement as Ted has rightly assumed. It

follows therefore that Terry's statement about "the schedule of parties at the Wollheims" is no longer relevant. The only open party we attended in New York was that given by the Lupoffs. If Ted and Terry thought we should attend open parties, they had their chance to give one while we were staying in Brooklyn.

I cannot speak for Ethel Lindsay, but I wonder why, if they failed to write to her and arrange a meeting, they didn't phone her at the Lupoffs' while she was in New York. I'm sure she could have thrown off those "wraps" for long enough to answer the phone. [3]

[1] *SpeleoBem* #18 (January 1963, ed. Bruce Pelz for SAPS)
[2] *Hobgoblin* #10 (April 1963, ed. Carr and Boggs for SAPS)
[3] *SpeleoBem* #20 (July 1963)

Chapter 2: New York to Chicago

The next day was the party at the Lupoffs' apartment, but first we had an appointment for lunch with them. We had subway trouble again, so again we took a cab. It slowed down at an intersection and I saw Ron Ellik and Ethel Lindsay looking out for us. It was nice to see their familiar faces. I had liked Ethel for years, having met her at several English Conventions. Ron Ellik had been a most welcome guest at Oblique House the previous Easter.

Ron endeared himself to me immediately by saying: "You're looking lovely, Madeleine." He had already endeared himself to me during his visit to Ireland. I had confided to him how I was getting cold feet about the expectations being built up in the American fans, especially since I was older than most of them. Ron replied most gracefully by saying that the fans would see what they expected to see, a woman in the prime of her life.

This was my first visit to an exclusive restaurant, and I was surprised at the dimness of the illuminations. It seemed the kind of place where all sorts of mysterious assignations could take place. The tables were set into little booths, lit by candles, the seats were upholstered in red velvet and the walls above them decorated with sporting prints, some of them repeating the mysterious assignations theme.

Ron led the way to one of the booths, and introduced us to Pat and Dick Lupoff and Peggy Rae McKnight. Dick is tall, full of bonhomie, and Pat is slight and gentle. They seemed slightly more sophisticated than any others we had met. They thought nothing of eating in such an exclusive establishment, and Dick carried off with aplomb the little ceremony of tasting the wine before signalling to the waiter that it was good enough for his guests. Peggy Rae is young, merely eighteen, with a madonna-like hair-style and the slenderness of a willow branch.

After a wonderful meal Ron and Peggy took Ethel to a matinee and we accompanied the Lupoffs back to their Manhattan apartment. This was almost luxuriously furnished, complete with a real fireplace. We were introduced to Kenneth, an engaging little fellow, and the pleasant coloured woman who did housework and baby-sat for the Lupoffs. The air-conditioning was so pleasant, the atmosphere so restful, that I took this opportunity of catching up on my sleep. The next thing I knew was Walter shaking me awake and Pat offering me a cup of coffee. Although they

were expecting about fifty guests that evening I never saw a more relaxed couple. They explained that they had arranged for food to be sent in from a delicatessen.

The first guests to arrive were the Kyles. They thoughtfully brought two bouquets, one each for Ethel and me. I asked Kyle what he thought of London. Unfortunately he took it seriously and told me – a ploy wasted.

James Blish arrived, and presented me with a corsage of five little roses. I was immensely pleased with this. I had never been given a corsage before, and I have a great admiration for Blish. I felt a little over-awed at first as I thought of him as one of the most intelligent authors. I didn't expect to be able to keep my end up in conversation, but he was very nice, maybe even wonderful.

Lots of people had now arrived and I received two shocks one after the other. The first was when one of the male fans told me I looked like the Queen. This seemed so wildly improbable to me that I was knocked off balance and babbled "which Queen?" The other was when another fan quoted my definition of a spiral – which as far as I knew was known only to Walter and Walter Breen. (It was mentioned by Walter in an autobiographical sketch done for the *Fannish* IV.)

Dick Lupoff added to the confusion by introducing me to everyone as Ethel Lindsay and plying me with gin. I became very vivacious; one sherry after a game of golf is my usual tipple. Peter Graham arrived. By this time I was ready to tackle anyone. As Dick was elsewhere, plying someone else with gin I think, I walked up to Pete and said "I thought you were dead." "Who are you?" he asked abruptly. "I'm Ethel Lindsay" I said, "or at least so Dick Lupoff says". "You must be Madeleine, then. What are you drinking?" Pete asked in his abrupt voice. Taking him up in the wrong way as usual, and still a little uncertain in my new role as a lush, I asked if I appeared to be drunk. "I was only trying to be polite," he answered. We later became very friendly, and Peter announced his intention of teaching me to do the twist.

Les Gerber was wondering what his "image" was like. "How old would you take me for, Madeleine?" "Twelve", I answered. Walter softened the blow: "That's good, there are too many teenagers in fandom," he said cheerfully. Lee Hoffman came in with Dick Eney and sat on the floor. Walter looked relieved and happy and sat down beside her with a sigh as at a happy homecoming. Not wanting to intrude, I went into the bedroom where Ron Ellik, Peggy Rae, her sister Tony, Lin Carter and Bob Pavlat were having a quiet talk. Peggy was stretched out on the bed and Lin was lovingly massaging her back. "She's very sweet," he confided to

Ron, “but eighteen is a little too young,” he said – sadly, I thought.

Tony is a nice friendly girl and I soon felt that I had known her for years. Bob Pavlat seemed to think so too, and as I liked Bob I soon left them to improve their acquaintanceship.

I had another screwdriver, and felt very gay, but thought that I shouldn’t disgrace myself on the *outward* trip so I decided to switch to coke. Pete, Terry Carr, Ron and Peggy Rae were in the kitchen with me when I asked for a coke. Pete remonstrated with me. “We are boycotting the Coca-Cola people” he said. He explained that they refused to employ coloured labour. Being in agreement with his views I settled for a Pepsi. It was just as well too, for Walter became worried when he missed me and came looking to see if I was all right. I have this nervous tachycardia condition which is sometimes brought on by overt strain, but I never felt better. I felt I was floating in a sea of good-will and friendliness. Walter looked relieved when he saw the innocuous drink I had, and my happy expression.

Walter Breen appeared briefly in the kitchen and Peggy Rae fled precipitously. I didn’t see what all the fuss was about, for I liked what I had seen of Walter, and later at Chicago, and more so at Berkeley, I got to know him better and was very impressed with him. However Peggy Rae is very young.

The party was a huge success from my point of view, but there were some people whom I had merely greeted briefly. I was brought to my senses slightly and felt that perhaps I had stayed too long with the same little group when a girl, whose name I’m not sure of, on saying good-bye to said, “So glad to have *seen* you.” But perhaps she didn’t mean it that way at all. It’s just my guilty conscience.

Some people, notably the Kyles and Ted White, thought it a shame that we should be travelling to Chicago by bus. At that time I thought that the bus would be more comfortable, and looking back on it now I still think that it had some advantages. I was unaccustomed to the heat, and travelling in a car with the windows open would only create a warm tempest. The bus had semi-reclining seats on which I hoped to be able to sleep. I knew I couldn’t sleep in a car. Also, I was still suffering from the nervous stomach disorder which came on some four days before we left Ireland. The rest room on the bus would ease my mind on that score.

We left for Chicago next day after an exhausting afternoon in the 90° heat of New York, marooned in the bus station because we were unable for a long time to find a large enough locker in which to leave our big case. We had hoped to leave our luggage there until near bus-time and do some

sight-seeing. All I remember of that afternoon is coming out of the hot sunlight into the comparative coolness of the bus depot, then, after a few minutes finding the bus depot uncomfortably hot and noisy and full of exhaust fumes. We found an oasis in an air-conditioned bar and sipped gratefully at Tom Collinses. They were life-savers, but unfortunately we couldn't remain indefinitely until bus time drinking in a bar, I suppose. We again braved the heat of the pavements, and again, walking more quickly as we neared the bar, went in for a couple more Tom Collinses. Bob Bloch doesn't know how near I was to realizing ten years later the story he told about Walter spending the 1952 fund money drinking in the Bowery.

The bus left New York at 4 p.m. A wasted day. It was exciting, though, to be at last seeing more of America.

The rest stops were confusing. We seemed to be interminably going into similar diners; even the waitresses looked alike, and of course we were always with the same crowd of people. It took on the quality of a recurring dream. I found I couldn't sleep for long at a stretch. I merely dozed off from time to time, waking up as we came to toll-gates where the lighting was very bright. The driver seemed to be in cahoots with the managers of the diners. At every stop he would switch on the overhead lights to make sure everyone was awake enough to go in and spend money. I wondered if it was my imagination that the bus would get warmer as we neared each stop, and we went in for cool drinks. I discovered honeydew melons, and practically lived on them and glasses of orange juice all over the U.S. I liked the way they served hamburgers. Not just a meat patty and a bun, but also a helping of salad, and in some places a few potato crisps. This type of eating suited me perfectly as I was never hungry enough for a full meal.

The seat reclined all right but the foot rests didn't work and I found that my feet slid about when I dozed off. I am small and my legs weren't long enough to get a traction on the floor with my feet. This was complicated by the fact that I had picked a seat over the wheel base.

The dream gradually changed to a nightmare as the night passed. The rest room which I had thought was going to be such a comfort became ill-smelling and dirty. It couldn't be flushed and could only be cleaned out when the bus was serviced. I became one of the first off the bus to rush for the rest room in the diner. I thought it was a bit much to pay 10 cents every time, so I tried to be first in line so as to use the free toilet and still have time for a bite to eat and a drink before the bus moved on again. Some times the free toilet would have a lock on the door, more often there was none. Not on this leg of our journey, but on a later one, I developed a

technique to deal with this problem. I would carry my jacket into the rest room and throw it over the top of the door as an “engaged” signal.

I think the most remarkable thing I saw on the journey was a truck herding cattle in a small field. I could imagine the frustration the driver felt as the cattle turned away from the direction he wanted them to go and he had to swerve all over the field. Here the farmer leans over the gate smoking a pipe while a dog does the chasing.

The bus journey took seventeen hours and I think I slept through about two of them. Not a very auspicious beginning for the convention.

We took a taxi to the Pick-Congress and walked into the lobby. The first person I saw was that lovable eccentric, Forry Ackerman. Then we were ambushed by filksingers with copies of their songs. One of them handed me two copies. I worried about all the effort that had gone into the publishing of them and here they were being dished out to two people who would rather do almost anything, except travel another seventeen hours in a Greyhound bus, than be in a filksinging group. I started to say I don’t sing so I am not much interested in filk music, and caught myself as disappointment crept over the faces surrounding us, and finished by saying, gracefully I hoped, that I didn’t really need *two* copies, and put away one of them. We went on up to our room and hung up our clothes, showered and changed. I began to feel a little better. We went to lunch with 4E; when we returned to the hotel he was borne away by a crowd of monster fans.

Walter and I separated, and I met some of the L.A. fans, notably Ted Johnstone. We went up on the escalator to the first floor and sat on a comfortable couch watching the fans come up. Bruce Pelz made a most dramatic appearance. He was wearing a black shirt, trousers, and boots. His hair was long and black and bushy, as was his beard. He made a wonderfully romantic picture. As I said to Ted, he looked like a masculine version of Aphrodite rising from the waves. Among other things I commented on the small space allotted for autographs on the official programme. Someone suggested that a sheet would make a good thing to collect the autographs. I agreed that it would at once be the simplest and safest way of sleeping with the whole convention.

I went down to the lobby again and, as is usual with visitors to America, was introduced by Ellis Mills to his mother.

We stood in line for some time in order to register. I remember being surprised at how young-looking Earl Kemp was. We met Rosemary Hickey briefly, and were reminded of our promise to stay with her on the day after the convention.

I went up again to my room to change for dinner with Forry, Jim Warren, the Trimbles, Bob Madle, and Jock Root. I was hemmed in by some of the MASLA* crowd, and all of the buttons were pressed excepting numbers 3 and 8. "What's wrong with 3 and 8?" I asked of no one in particular. Someone showed their latent fannish spirit by pressing the neglected buttons.

** The non-fannish Catholic convention that was being held in the same hotel. [Ed.]*

At the dinner I met Jim Warren for the first time and thought what a handsome man he was. I was a little taken aback to see him wearing dark glasses in a dimly lit room. John Trimble was wearing a remarkable red cummerbund. I kept thinking how appropriate a dagger would look stuck into the folds of that cummerbund – he had the look of a "commando". Jock Root looked interesting in a sinisterly sensual fashion; it was the combination of thin scarlet lips and a pointed beard.

Walter was feeling sick and had to leave before eating any of his dinner to go and lie down. The combination of hours of travel and the excitement of meeting so many people had brought on an attack of nervous indigestion. I felt as smug about my feeling of well-being as Walter had in 1952 when Joe Gibson succumbed to heat exhaustion and Walter didn't.

I wandered up to the first floor, pardon me, the second floor, again and Bruce kindly offered to escort me in the absence of Walter. I was extremely grateful, but first I wanted to see if maybe Walter was feeling better. He was, so we went down again to see who was arriving.

We were standing at the top of the escalator when I saw the Busbys and Boyd Raeburn coming up. Buz ran up the last few steps with a beaming smile and outstretched hand. In a moment I felt I had known them for years, as indeed I had in a way through letters. It was a little while, though, before my preconceived notions of Buz's personal appearance merged with the reality. This fan, to me, had had stature and respect. But he wasn't *really* seven feet tall. Elinor on the other hand was just as I had pictured her, intelligent and gentle-voiced and pretty.

The next people we met were the Grennells. I felt protective about Jean, a small-town girl at her first convention, and tried to take her under my wing. I found it was entirely unnecessary. She was immediately at home with all the fans and making little jokes. I was the one who needed the protection. Dean was everything we had expected. He was even wittier than in his letters and in the pages of *Grue*. Walter and he made a great team.

We would have liked to have stayed up later that first evening but we thought it would be wise to go to bed in order to survive the next few days. That was a mistake. We should have clung to the Busbys and the Grennells for longer.

Chapter 3: Saturday at Chicon

On Saturday the first thing I did after breakfast was to go down to the lobby to enquire if Harry Warner had arrived. I'm sure the desk clerk must have got tired of the sight of me. That was the biggest disappointment of the trip, when Harry didn't turn up. I have a vast admiration for him.

The next moment my disappointment was forgotten, for Walter introduced me to Robert Bloch. Here was a man who made his living by writing. Anything written for fanzines was in effect taking the bread out of the mouths of his family. Yet he had spent many hours doing just that, his writings radiating with his wit and warmth of heart. He whispered his room number in my ear; I looked forward very much to visiting him later that evening. Perhaps he would even let me participate in one of his ouija board sessions with the ghost of Edgar Allan Poe. This rather idealized picture was rudely shattered by Walter, who told me of Bob's rather lurid reputation with the femmes of fandom. I wondered whether Walter was making a mistake but he clinched the matter by quoting Bob's own boast. "When I enter a room a sign flashes on, 'Fasten Chastity Belts'." I was really hurt – why, Bob hadn't even sent me flowers or offered to buy me a drink. The adulation of fans over the years had so inflated his ego that he thought I would capitulate at a word.

The evil influence emanating from Bob Bloch had changed the way of thinking of even such a nice girl as Noreen Shaw. When I confided, innocently, to her that I thought that Jim Warren was handsome (I had already told her that I thought that Terry Carr was charming), she said, "I see we'll have to watch you." This was even before Phyllis Economou had inveigled Walter into putting his name on the FAPA waiting list.

In my search for more wholesome company I wandered in to the NFFF room. I found to my horror that they weren't welcoming people to fandom and proselytizing about what a worthwhile hobby fandom was. They were swilling coffee and gorging on cookies in one corner of the room, while in the other corner a gambling game was going on. The participants were so engrossed in this evil pastime that they didn't even look up when I spoke to them. It was some kind of space game, probably introduced to them under the guise of science fiction by Tucker or Bloch.

The time for the reception in the Park View room was getting very near and I began to feel nervous about meeting all these people. The first person I saw was Bob Bloch. I hadn't managed to shake him off. I spoke

to Ethel and found her to be as nervous as myself. However, all those who came were so nice and friendly that I soon found myself enjoying it all. In fact I was sorry when it came to an end. Especially when Bloch came in again. However the good fellowship I had been shown that afternoon had strengthened me, and I was able to talk to him as if he were a normal person.

After a nice relaxing interval having dinner with the Grennells, the Lupoffs, and Ethel, the tension began to mount again. Walter had to appear on the "Sense of Wonder" panel, and I was suffering through the waiting period as well as he.

Sometimes I think we introverts should rebel and not do what is expected of us. Many people are literate and expansive on paper but suffer acutely if they have to stand up in public and address a crowd of people. It doesn't help even if they know all the people present. One very active young fan confided to me that he could never stand for TAFF as he couldn't possibly make a speech. People may make polite noises about it, but I am sure that when a person is very nervous it builds up a reaction in the audience and they begin to feel uneasy too. All it gains is embarrassment all round. The Convention Committee have filled a spot in their programme; the delegate has "done his bit"; but those who came to listen have been cheated.

The "Reception" organized by the Shaws and the Washington group was the antithesis of that kind of thing, and therein lay its triumph. We were both very grateful to have that opportunity of speaking informally to so many people, and I think it's an idea future Convention Committees should copy. It probably was also a help to people who might be a little shy of approaching us at other times. Let the speeches and panel appearances be done by those who have the self confidence to make a good job of it. There are some fans who can – Dick Eney *volunteered* to take Harry Warner's place on the "Sense of Wonder" panel. This rather surprised me; I had the impression that Dick was rather shy, but he tackled this project with the same dogged determination which he brought to those two mammoth publishing projects of his – the *Fancyclopedia* and *A Sense of FAPA*. Dick earned further admiration from me and from many others.

I didn't want to have to watch Walter, knowing the state he was in, yet I couldn't stay away. I sat down at the side of the small Lincoln Room twisting my hands together. The microphones were not connected to any speaker system, merely to Frank Dietz's tape recorders, and this had an unfortunate effect: the speakers spoke into the mikes and the audience couldn't hear. The doors leading to the hall wouldn't shut, and the noise of

the people talking outside was another distraction. A middle-aged man near to me spoke up loudly and asked for Mr. Willis to make another three or four minute speech. I admired the way Walter replied simply "Tomorrow" (at the banquet). This man interrupted again to say that the microphones at his side of the room weren't working. I was furious. I wanted to know who he was, so I took my programme booklet over to get his autograph. It was Alderson Fry. I was sitting next to Sylvia White and she tried to comfort me by saying that she thought he was being complimentary – he merely wanted to hear more from Walter. I doubted this was his intention; it had the opposite effect.

The panel was broken up by Kemp not a moment too soon for my taste, and we made our way with the Grennells to the costume ball. I was overwhelmed by the sight of so many beautiful costumes. They were fabulous flights of fancy and made a wonderful sight as they joined the line to pass before the judges. The judging arrangements weren't as good as the costumes, and it soon degenerated into a shambles.

The dance band took over and I watched Boyd Raeburn teaching Phyllis Economou and Elinor Busby the twist. I was glad to see that Elinor didn't comport herself like a "Woman of Advanced Years". For a few minutes I wished I had Pete Graham there with me.

We sought a quiet place to talk and made our way to the back of the hall. We met Jock Root again, and he had on a stunning costume; the raygun looked authentic enough to produce that effect by itself. Two fans in costume came up to us; one was Dian Girard, a pretty brunette and a promising young fan; the other was a stranger. He took off his headgear and mask, watching me all the while with an expectant expression. I thought I should know him. I stared at his face again. "I recognize the expression in those eyes!" I exclaimed. "Maybe if you took off your shirt..." Walter looked at me a little quizzically. "It's Bruce Pelz," he said. Bruce had shaved off his beard, cut his hair, wasn't wearing glasses, and had changed to a light-coloured shirt. The only thing unchanged was the gap between his front teeth. It was a long time before I could realize that this was indeed Bruce.

We met several other fans and talked until we began to feel a bit hungry. We found Ted White, who was also hungry, and went out to eat.

We had two invitations to parties that evening, one from Marcia Almost-Brown and one from Don Ford. We went to the Browns' party first and listened to H. Beam Piper and Jerry (I.Q.) Pournelle singing several verses of "Bonnie Dundee". You simply couldn't do anything else if you were within a fifty-foot radius. This was a new angle on the

formidable Ph.D.; he really *was* inhuman. The Browns were a nice couple, and so in fact were all present, but they weren't fanzine fans and we didn't have much in common with them, so we decided to go on to Don Ford's suite, especially since this was the second evening we had been invited there.

When we got to Ford's room the party had broken up, and we wondered what had happened to the evening, but we had a nice chat with Don and Doc Barrett. Alderson Fry appeared after a while, and tried to get Walter to expand on the Sense of Wonder. Walter looked tired, and I think he couldn't make up his mind whether he wanted to argue with Fry or not, or on what level. But Fry persisted, like a heckler at a political rally. "Good God man," he said, "I admire your fanzine articles, but what's holding you back from speaking in public?" Walter looked doubtful, and I suspected he was thinking of saying "Good God man, I admire your loud speaking, but what's holding you back from writing fanzine articles?" However before he had made up his mind, Don Ford looked half apologetically at him and said something about Fry being rather gruff but a good fellow at heart. We were willing to take his word for it. We made our excuses and Don repeated his warm invitation to stay at his place on our way back from the West Coast. I hoped it would be possible. Amiable old Doc Barrett also issued us an invitation to call by at his place and see his "collection". There was a sly twinkle in his eye as he said this and Walter nodded comprehendingly and made a careful note of how to get in touch with him.

We went to bed then, at about 4 a.m., a little sadly because we hadn't been to any fanzine fan's party, yet with a sense of accomplishment. We had met with the "other fandom" and had been on very friendly terms with them all.

[As for what happened to Bruce's beard, here's his explanation:]

Bruce Pelz:

I cut the rest of the programme for Saturday, getting in on the last bit of the reception for Ethel Lindsay and the Willises and part of the auction. After dinner I headed out to find an open barber shop, in preparation for a switch of identity during the costume ball. When I eventually found one – at the Greyhound station – the barber was slightly croggled at my request for a flattop haircut. I can't really blame him; at the time I had a six-months beard and a month and a half worth of hair. The LAreans were starting to suggest using my picture for a mascot for *Shaggy*. But I got the

flattop, then went back to the hotel and up to my room. There I got rid of the beard and climbed into the Dr. Fate costume. The final step was the abandonment of the glasses and the substitution of contact lenses, but here the plans went awry. The helmet for the costume fit too tightly to allow the constant blinking demanded by the use of contacts (I'd only had them a couple weeks). So I had to go in my non-lens state – semi-blindness. The idea was to make a complete character change, including a switch from my usual black outfit to a light tan and white one, right after the masquerade, and see how long it took people to recognize me. But the word got out, somehow, and people kept looking under the helmet (which covered the full face and head) to verify the rumour that I'd shaved. Still, it did surprise quite a few people – even Dian, who knew beforehand what I was going to do, walked right past me several times later that night without seeing me.

The masquerade itself was a mess. There were all sorts of costumes there, but it was so crowded and disorganized that no one had much of a chance to show off (with the exception of the femmes, of course). Worse, there was no opportunity to announce the titles of the costumes, and I'm almost positive the judges hadn't the slightest idea what some of those costumes were. The L.A. crew had come as members of the Justice Society of America – eight comic characters from the old *All Star Comics* – and there wasn't even any chance to let it be known we were a group.

With the Grand ~~March~~ Shuffle over and the winners announced, the masquerade broke up. I had no complaints about the winning costumes with the exception of the one for female anatomy – I wasn't even aware that sloppy-looking broad was even in costume; I thought it was her natural beatnik outfit. It was later announced as a "wood nymph": uh-huh. Even so, I thought Sylvia Dees's Polychrome "the Rainbow's Daughter" (or Dian Girard's Wonder Woman, Bjo's Firebird, or any of several others) should have beaten her. In any case, with the raucous music of a twist filling the room, I left quickly, and in company with Dick Schultz and several of the other Justice Society members headed for the bar.

– *Ankus* #6 (November 1962, ed. Bruce Pelz for FAPA)

Chapter 4: The Chimax

Sunday 2nd September

Walter woke me up with the news that the next convention had been voted to Belfast. I didn't believe him, though it would have been nice to look forward to seeing all our new friends again so soon.

We went down to the hotel drugstore and breakfasted with Lee Hoffman, Ruth Kyle, and Sid Coleman. I got on wonderfully with Lee. She had changed a lot from the girl, uncommunicative to the point of rudeness, who had visited us in 1956 after the Kettering Convention. I hadn't liked her one little bit then, and wondered what all the fuss was about this supposedly witty editor of *Quandry*. She was now smiling and friendly and relaxed. She had the wonderful gift of making *me* feel witty.

We next visited the Fan Art Show. The exhibits were all of a very high quality, but my favourite was "Rima", by Bjo. It is wonderful to find such a fabulous personality to be a very talented artist as well. I was glad to see that all of ATom's drawings had "Sold" on them already, but thought that perhaps the prices quoted for them could have been higher. Some of the other drawings which I didn't like half so well were priced at double or treble those of ATom. That lovely man Avram Davidson was distributing bagels, which look almost like doughnuts. He gave me three. He had Grania with him this time, and I was able to admire in the flesh the lovely complexion which I had admired in the photographs he had shown me. Grania's pride in her pregnant state could only be compared to the Sense of Wonder.

We were invited to lunch at the hotel coffee shop by A.J. Budrys. He is a quiet-spoken, almost shy-seeming young man. I didn't have much appetite as I had been told that I was expected to say something at the banquet that evening. What I really wanted was a butterfly net, but it wasn't on the menu. What happened next was so exciting as to make me forget all about the banquet: A.J. suggested that Walter submit a book to Regency. I went around feeling a bit dazed for quite a while after that.

I have been making no mention of the programme, since other fans have covered it already. I didn't sit through much of it, as the most important thing about the convention from my point of view was the fact that under one roof were gathered most of the active fans of North

America, and I would have an unrivalled opportunity of meeting and talking with them. This I threw myself into doing with the utmost enthusiasm. I felt wonderfully exhilarated most of the time, the only bad times were when I was expected to act like a celebrity. I sat with Walter and Lee Hoffman through part of "Science Fiction, Mental Illness, and the Law" – a curiously apposite topic, though Walter told me later that Marvin Mindes didn't mention D. Bruce Berry even once.

> *[Per* Fancyclopedia *3, in 1958 fan artist Berry – who would go on to ink Jack Kirby's pencils for DC comics in the 1970s – began sending bizarre letters to Earl Kemp. Kemp took him to court and Berry was soon committed to a mental institution, from which he was released in 1960. In 1962, however, apparently timed to embarrass Kemp as chairman of Chicon III, Berry and Robert Jennings published a fanzine,* A Trip to Hell, *which told a story about alleged events in 1958 and accused Kemp and Harlan Ellison of attacking Berry on the street in Chicago... at a time when Kemp was at the Worldcon in LA.]*

I whispered to Walter that I would go outside for a while.

For the past five days I had only been outside for a very short time. Most of the time I had been sitting in people's houses, in a Greyhound Bus, or in the Pick-Congress. Now Chicago beckoned. I decided to visit the Lakefront and see the Buckingham Fountain. I met Ted Johnstone and Owen Hannifen, and we went out together.

Chicago was bright and sunlit, and the slight breeze off the water prevented us from being too warm. That sunlit effect is the strongest impression I have of America. It gave a lively air to everything: the cars glittered, and the buildings looked bright and clean. The "Celtic Twilight" is not just a colourful phrase – it is a perfect description of the slight mistiness and dreamy quality of our muted Irish sunlight.

We went to the tree-lined park which separated the imposing line of tall buildings from the lake shore, and sat on the grass. I lay back and enjoyed the sunshine and admired the trees, colourful with little red crabapples. Ted and Owen were gay companions, and time flew. We sauntered round the fountain and watched the small boats which seemed almost to fill the harbour. I had never seen so many small craft together in my life, and it seemed a very enticing way of spending an afternoon. As we walked along, enjoying the cool breeze, we came upon a sign pasted on the concrete path. "Air-Conditioned by Westinghouse" it proclaimed proudly. They were doing a better job of it out here than in the public

rooms of the hotel. Suddenly, it seemed, it was time to go back to dress for the banquet.

A pathetic sight awaited me when I got to our room. Walter was fast asleep in bed; even in sleep his face bore a worried look. The dressing table was littered with sheets of paper with most of the words crossed out. He had been composing a speech and had finally given up and taken a tranquillizer tablet. I woke him up and showered and changed. We had fifteen minutes to get ready. Ethel came in to accompany us as previously arranged, and I envied her air of calm efficiency.

I, on the other hand, had about three sentences written down, and I kept wondering if I could manage to deliver them without a quaver coming into my voice. I was going to thank the Convention Committee for going to such a lot of trouble to make us feel at home by putting out of order the escalator which now only went up on the left-hand side; mention collecting the autographs on a sheet; and run the three wheel-shaped bagels from Avram up the rostrum and say that it was now a free-wheeling convention. When I actually got up there I was petrified and took Walter's advice, merely thanking everyone for giving me such a nice time. When I spoke to Bloch afterwards, he chided me for throwing away a golden opportunity: I could have spilled the dope on Walter. Or on him, I thought.

We next saw what was for me the highlight of the official programme, maybe even of the entire four days – Bloch's lantern slides. There were two factions in the audience, monster fans and humour fans, and Bloch scored a triumph by being equally interesting to both parties.

We had been urged by Leslie Gerber not to miss the next item – Emsh's *Danse Chromatique* – so although we wanted to go up to the Shaw-Lupoff party we stayed, and found it worthwhile. Les has very good taste in many things, and though I'm glad to see that he is maturing into a fine young man, I am sorry that that peppy, bouncing personality is gradually mellowing. We will all lose something when Les finally grows up.

The Shaw-Lupoff party was our first opportunity of the convention to be in the company of most of our favourite people, all at once. We met Buck Coulson again, and as I know he doesn't read Convention or Trip Reports I can be as rude as I like about him. He and Juanita weren't at their best when we first met them – they were both sick – but now Buck had recovered somewhat, and, in spite of his views on fan writings, he turned out to be quite affable. I met Wrai Ballard and found him to be very charming. There were so many people to talk to, and I enjoyed myself so much, that I am annoyed with myself to find that I cannot remember much

of it. It all resolved into a rosy blur – I got the gin but not the gen. I remember that Danny Curran attended the party in bare feet – probably in the hope of making Walter and me feel at home. He spoiled the effect by kissing my hand as we were leaving, but it was a nice gesture all the same.

It was about five in the morning when we made our way back to our room and saw a very sad sight: there in the deserted lobby were three fans sitting with cups of tea. They brightened up when they saw us. Could we tell them where to find a party, they asked. We were sorry to have to tell them that the Shaw-Lupoff party had broken up and we didn't know of any other. As we were talking, Betty Kujawa came through the lobby with Ethel, walking in a suspiciously purposeful manner. But they said they were going to bed. Don Studebaker and his two friends sank back into their former gloom as we said good-night.

Monday 3rd September

I think this was the morning I had a long conversation with Tucker, and found that behind the facade of the charming and witty pro and fan was... a charming and witty person. He confided that the one facet of his life that was perhaps less than perfect was the fact that his wife didn't understand fans. We met Bloch again, and he invited us to lunch – our lunch, his breakfast. He told us that he had been at a dull meeting of tired old pros the previous night – he was getting too old to participate in the high-jinks of a fannish party.

As we passed through the lobby, Bjo stopped us and kindly told us that this would be a good time to see Heinlein – the crowd in his room had thinned out. As Bjo's slightest word is a law unto all good fans, we obediently went on up to Heinlein's room. At the door, I backed away nervously. Heinlein was attired in his dressing gown, and we wondered if we were interrupting his rest. But he bade us welcome, gave us cigarettes, and apologized for not having got as far as Belfast on his trip to Ireland. He was altogether very charming. We were introduced to Jack Williamson – an awesome moment, and one which we treasured to relate to James White on our return to Belfast.

As Bloch really needed his first coffee of the day, we regretfully tore ourselves away, accompanied, for some reason, by Michael McQuown. Michael immediately assumed command of our party and stalked ahead of us into the coffee shop and asked masterfully for a table for four. Bloch turned his charm on me after I had forgotten myself for a moment and paid

him a compliment. Fortunately, before I could succumb, Michael stepped boldly into the breach and enquired what Bloch thought of television. Bloch replied he never watched it, and turned again to me. But the spell was broken, and I was safe from his wiles. Before we left we arranged to visit Bloch at his home in Hollywood.

We had plans to see Chicago with Rosemary and Richard Hickey after the Convention, and then go on to Fond du Lac to visit the Grennells before making our way to Seattle, but unfortunately the company for which Dean worked changed his day off to Tuesday, so in order to visit the Grennells we had to leave for Fond du Lac today and come back to Chicago on Wednesday. So during the next few hours I tried to see as many people as I could, in order to say good-bye.

I asked as many people to sign autographs as I could, and later I found that I had asked Tucker to sign twice. He didn't say a word, but he must have wondered about it. I was flattered by being asked to sign for other people. Two young neofans, on seeing me sign some, approached diffidently. Was I an author? they asked. I tried to explain who I was, but they looked blank when I mentioned Walter Willis and fandom. Seeking to allay their disappointment, and pleased to find myself, a stranger and the recipient of so much kindness from American fans, in a position to render them a service, I told them I would find an author for them. Bob Silverberg came by and I asked him to come and sign some autographs. The two boys looked dubiously at this other young fellow. A look of delighted incredulity came over their faces as they read aloud the signature: "Robert Silverberg." "Not *the* Robert Silverberg?!" they chorused. "Heinlein is here as well," I said, "Would you like to get his autograph too?" They looked at each other and nodded vehemently. I told them the room number and they sped away, talking excitedly. It was one of the nicest moments of the Convention for me.

The Convention was still going on, and I watched enviously as people settled into little groups, with another evening ahead of them. My badge "London in '65" became a sort of talisman against despondency. To those whom I wouldn't be seeing again in America I said "See you in '65." But all wasn't gloom and despondency – we were now to visit one of the nicest couples in fandom.

Chapter 5: Chicago to Fond du Lac

Monday evening, 3rd September

We waved good-bye to the few people in the lobby and went out into Chicago with Dean and Jean Grennell. We walked briskly after Dean, round the block to the back of the hotel. Dean gave a sharp look round, and crossed the road. He looked at a garage and hesitated. We wondered if anything was wrong, then he admitted he wasn't quite sure where he had parked the car. We set off again in another direction, and after about fifteen minutes we finally ran it down to concrete. Dean went inside to pay off the charges, and warned us to be ready to jump in when he drove to the exit. This was another example of the rush and bustle of American ways, this conveyor belt loading and unloading of cars. There were attendants chivvying people out, whistles blowing, and a hectic scramble to get in before too many cars lined up behind Dean, We threaded our way out of Chicago, mulling over our impressions of the con.

We all agreed that it had been a good one, though chaotic. I was sorry to be leaving, and we were all a little tired, but strong enough to survive the pun session between Dean and Walter. It is almost impossible to make notes in a car, and I was taking in the American scene, but I remember one of the more ghastly ones. We were passing a road sign with a bear as an emblem, and Dean challenged Walter to make a pun about a bear. Walter shook his head. "That would be a bit too grizzly," he said. There was another sign advertising beer, which led to Handel's Lager.

When we got out onto the expressways Dean showed us what it was like to do the ton. In his station wagon it felt much the same as fifty in our Morris Minor. That car of Dean's was the largest I have ever been in, and we could now understand why Dean wasn't too worried about bringing home the children as well as us that night.

We had decided to have something to eat on the way to Fond du Lac, and Dean turned off the Tri-State at a sign reading Lake Side Oasis. I didn't see any Lake, but it turned out to be quite an oasis. There was a feeling of being further away from the traffic than the actual physical distance. This was because the restaurant was built over the road. Here at home, because of the slower-moving and more sparse traffic, one can pull

up at the side of the road, and be quite comfortable, but to do that on the Tri-State would put one in the midst of a whirl of activity, enduring constant vibration from the speeding traffic. We ate an appetizing meal poised over the concrete chasm, the cars almost comprising a many-hued ribbon as they flashed by underneath. We discussed the con again. The point that surprised us all the most was the fact that it was still going on. For the more dedicated con attendees, the event could well cover a week from the warm-up sessions with friends on the way to the last look-round the sights of the convention city. We were also all agreed on the success of the event. The only thing wrong with it was caused by its very success – there were too many people present whom one wanted to talk to. One's time had to be shared out, and there could only too easily be a hiatus between leaving one group and joining another. The Grennells also had found some difficulty in tracking down friends at room parties; there were too many semi-closed parties.

We continued on to Dean's brother's house to collect the Grennell children as dusk fell. The evenings were appreciably shorter here than at home, because of the southerly latitude, and I thought of how here in mid-America the leisurely games of tennis and golf and other outdoor pursuits must be severely curtailed. Against that there was the bright street lighting, the lights from shops, signs, and cars, and the warmth. One could stroll in any town at night instead of hurrying shivering from one meagre pool of light round a lamppost to another.

We were introduced to the Grennell children. The boys and younger girls were more out-going than I expected, but Patty reminded me of my own daughter, Carol.

As we continued towards Fond du Lac I exclaimed aloud over the extraordinary kaleidoscope of lights from neon signs, and gaped at the great lines of blazing headlights coming towards us and stretching in an unbroken stream behind. The Grennell children must have thought me quite a country hayseed, but at least they perhaps got an insight into the contrasting way of life from which I came.

In Fond du Lac we turned off the main street and went along quiet avenues to Maple Avenue. Here was another contrast; the side streets were appallingly bumpy, presumably because of the many private cars and the constant abuse to which the roads were subjected. It must cost a lot to keep them in condition, and perhaps the householders haven't realized that along with the more obvious expenses of keeping a car goes a high tax towards road maintenance. All of the houses were of wood, which to the British eye gives them an air of impermanence, but inside they are

furnished to what we consider to be a luxury standard, two bathrooms and central heating being customary.

Here again, as at the Shaws', the most used route into the house was through the kitchen. First impressions as we entered the living room were of dolls of every size, and a breezy welcome as Dean opened the window and switched on the enormous fan. He had central heating but no air-conditioning. Dean produced a soft drink and challenged us to identify the flavour. The drink was called Dr. Pepper, and it had such a seductively mysterious taste that I soon had sipped my way through a large tumbler of it, though I wasn't thirsty. I never tasted anything like it before or since.

The Grennells efficiently bedded down the children and we went down to the basement, the heart of American leisure activities. Dean showed us round. There was the fanning corner, with duplicator, two typewriters, and neat stacks of fanzines; the photographic corner, where we leafed through hundreds of fannish photos; the gun collection, with boxes of ammunition; and the place where Jean kept her four fridges (I'm not sure how many of them were deep-freezes) and her washer and dryer.

Dean is a very remarkable man. There are so many careers in which he could be very successful; his agile mind and sense of humour and ease with people would be perfect in the entertainment world; his writing and photographic ability in journalism; and there is his knowledge of guns and sharp-shooting success. Yet the only field in which he has made the fullest use of these talents is in the part-time occupation of writing and illustrating in the magazine *Gunsport*.

Tuesday, 4th September

We awoke next morning to a radical change in the weather. A cold front had moved in from the north and the morning was misty with a slight chill in the air. It made us feel even more at home with the Grennells than ever. Dean had been up early developing some of his photos. We duly admired them, and in the intervals of watching with fascination the faces of fans magically appearing on the sheets of white paper swirling in baths of solution. Walter and Dean collaborated in writing a letter to Chuck Harris. Though Chuck is no longer active in fandom, the influence of his personality was such that he was the obvious choice for us to tell all about our experiences in Chicago and, of course, he and Dean have been corresponding for years. This happy chore over, we adjourned to the garden for a photo session.

We posed under a suspended motor hub cap for a very realistic flying saucer pic. We crawled up the front steps to illustrate a picture of two exhausted fans begging for Grennell hospitality. The one which pleased Dean the most, and which broke him up almost to the point of not being able to set the scene, was one of him bent over an exploded beer can, with Walter standing beside him with one hand warding him off and a disdainful expression, captioned “Gesundheit.”

We had lunch, and went to the supermarket. There I gathered the ingredients for a steak and kidney pie. I was to get an opportunity to demonstrate my cooking ability, and I was delighted to be giving Jean the opportunity to lie down for the afternoon. We went on to the Post Office, where Dean was expecting glowing footprints to appear. (Walter had posted a letter to me from Fond du Lac in 1952, before Dean had entered Fandom.) But we were too late, the office had closed.

Patty was going out for the evening, and I admired her hair style. I mentioned that Carol was wondering what to do with her hair and kept putting off visits to the hairdresser’s as she hadn’t liked the way it had been done the last time. Patty was very helpful, and brought down quite a collection of magazines devoted to hair styling and lots of cuttings from magazines; she said I could have them for Carol. I thanked her very sincerely, and Carol, when she received them, was very grateful.

Jean retired to bed, Dean worked again on his Chicon photos, Walter watched tv, and I prepared to cook my first meal in America. I approached this task in some trepidation. How terrible if I made a mistake, so easily done in unfamiliar surroundings. Andy enquired what I intended to cook, and, on being informed, said “We can’t afford steak and kidney beans.” This distressed his parents, but I understood how he was being considerate of them. He is obviously a serious and thoughtful boy, and he merely wished to shield his parents from the heedless extravagance of a visitor who probably didn’t appreciate the economies necessitated by such a large family. I hastened to reassure him. I explained that the steak was the cheapest cut, for stewing, and the kidney ingredient was beef kidney. This use of kidney in cooking made the Grennells a little uneasy about whether they would like the finished dish. None of them except Patty had tasted kidney before. Patty said she had been served it at the hospital where she worked sometimes, and she had quite liked it. I remained in the kitchen, working under the slightly critical gaze of the younger Grennell children.

I had already interrupted Dean twice to get me some of the things I needed, so when I came to roll out the pastry for the pie I just washed over the formica table and rolled out the pastry there. The youngest Grennell-

girl watched me in slightly horrified fascination. “You’re making an awful mess,” she said. “An awful, awful mess.” I think she was wondering if I would get off more lightly than she would in similar circumstances. I finished the pie, washed the table, and was sweeping up the crumbs when Jean appeared. Phyllis gave me a pitying glance as Jean said, “Oh, why didn’t you ask me for the waxed paper?”

The children had their supper and went to bed, and I produced the pie from the oven. It *looked* all right, I noted with relief. There were general murmurs of approval, which I wasn’t sure enough about in the case of the elder Grennells, knowing that they would be bound in politeness to pretend an enthusiasm which perhaps they didn’t feel. The accolade remained to be given by Patty. She looked at me in approval. “It’s delicious,” she said, “may I have a second helping?” We lingered over the meal, then helped with the washing-up. Dean told me to inform John Berry that he really didn’t make a mistake in doing the washing-up when he visited the Grennells in 1959. We saw with our own eyes the dishwasher lying unused. Jean told me that she had hoped to get it repaired this year, but the money was spent on their trip to Chicago.

Chapter 6: Fond du Lac to Chicago

Wednesday, 5th September

Dean had to set off on his day's work at 7 a.m., so, though we had been told not to bother, we came down in our night attire to see him off. We had our breakfast and sat waiting for the taxi to take us to the bus station. The phone rang, and it was Rosemary Hickey to say that there was no bus arriving at the time we had arranged to meet. We assured her that there was, and we would be on it.

We left Fond du Lac regretfully, and took our shortest-ever trip in a Greyhound back to Chicago. We searched the bus depot in vain for Rosemary then, while I had a cup of coffee and minded the baggage, Walter phoned her apartment. Rosemary was full of apologies. She explained she had been to the bus station and been assured so authoritatively that there was no bus that she had gone home again. It seems that the head office hadn't known that the bus had been temporarily retained on the old scheduled time because of the threatened rail strike. This was typical of the Greyhound Bus Company.

We waited for Rosemary to arrive, then accompanied her to Marshall Fields, where she insisted on buying us our lunch. We were interested to see that this was one of the American restaurants that realistically provided "children's portions." Rosemary told us that in some places they had to refuse these servings to adults who were slimming or had some other reason for ordering a small helping. The price was lower, of course. This was the first occasion on which we saw a credit card being used – Rosemary had the lunch charged to her account.

She then asked us what we would like to see that afternoon, and we said the Prudential Building. She first made her way to a large car park, so large that when we later, from the Observation Deck of the Prudential, saw a bus making its way to the far end of it, we wouldn't have been a bit surprised to find that it made regular trips from one end to the other.

We looked up at the Prudential, all 600 feet of it. Because of its isolation from other buildings, we had the feeling it might topple over at any minute. When Walter mentioned this I said not to worry, it was probably insured. Seeing this giant building made us wonder if the parent

firm was really British as we had always thought. It made a more imposing picture than their trademark of the Rock of Gibraltar. And, we soon realized, the view from its top was probably more awe-inspiring too. We saw the shore of the vast lake stretching away into the distance, and identified the white sands near Michigan City, all of sixty miles away. But the greatest attraction lay at our feet, the sprawling metropolis of Chicago. There was the river bearing quite large ships, the car parks with the multi-check patterns of the variously-coloured cars, the many skyscrapers, more isolated than those of New York and thus more easily admired; the long straight roads alongside the lake with their borders of green parks and trees, which reminded me of the pictures of the gardens at Versailles on a much larger scale. The Natural History Museum with its portico seemingly rising out of the little lake, Grant Park and its geometrical designs with the very large Buckingham Fountain as its focal point, the maze having its counterpart in the immense car parks. We came down in a state of bemusement, vowing to return at dusk to see the splendour of the lighted city. Walter must have been specially affected, for he forgot $17.00 change when he bought some slides, and the lady in charge had to chase us down two floors to return it.

Rosemary took us to her apartment, pointing out on the way various houses which had been rescued from slum conditions and modernized in very elegant fashion. Mohawk was in the process of becoming a “desirable neighbourhood”. People, tired of commuting from the suburbs, were moving into the city again. Thus one constantly found in juxtaposition seedy apartments and smartly painted dwellings. Rosemary’s place was one of the latter – even the dustbins were painted in bright colours. The garage was small, and Rosemary had to leave space for another car. She horrified us by her manner of parking her Volkswagen. She drove it in so tightly to the wall, at speed, that she ricocheted off strategically placed planking. In time this process could produce a shrinking van, and the car be more properly known as a foldswagen. She was proud of her garden, and pointed out several varieties of plants. We climbed a flight of wooden steps, decorated with pots of geraniums, to a balcony, and through the kitchen to a long low living room with archways and small rooms, little more than alcoves, leading off it. Rosemary and Richard had a curtain drawn across where they slept, but there was none for us.

Our first priority on unpacking was the care of the photos Dean had given us that morning. They were still wet, and beginning to curl up at the edges. We are almost completely ignorant where photography is concerned, so we placed them on the window-sill to dry, weighting them

down with books. We later realized that this was a mistake, when we found that some of the dye from the book bindings had stained the pictures, not to mention Rosemary's disgust at the damage caused to the books – though she had helped in arranging them.

Richard came in, and we all helped to set the kitchen to rights and start the evening meal. Neither of the Hickeys had been home since the previous Thursday evening, and there were still traces of the hectic time they had had before the convention. There were Hugo voting forms, and traces of sawdust from the last-minute sanding down of the bases. Rosemary wanted to serve a Yorkshire pudding with her pot roast, and called on me to help her. I was pleased to make a helpful suggestion to her when she mentioned that she didn't care for the soggy middle portion of the pudding. I said to use cupcake or patty tins instead of one large tin.

We had hoped to see some of the Chicago fans, but Rosemary told us that they were now relaxing by getting away from it all, literally as well as metaphorically, and we just spoke to the Kemps on the phone as they were leaving town. We thought the convention hadn't been as bad as all that.

So instead of a fannish evening we met two friends of Rosemary's, Jay and Irene Smith. They were a very amiable couple; Irene told us all about their vacation in the north woods – on an island in a lake with a nice fishing lake on it containing another island. Jay took us all to The Rising Moon on Wells Street after dinner. I later in Seattle, when trying to find a common ground in conversation with Jerry Pournelle, mentioned this visit, and felt very put down when he dismissed it as "touristy".

The Rising Moon has suddenly become famous in Chicago, and its decor is perhaps touristic. The imitation tiger skin and deer's heads on the walls made us smile a little, but it was a very interesting interlude all the same. This new status of folk singing was remarkable to us – many of the songs they sang were ones I had heard in my youth in the south of Ireland. This "quaint" decor couldn't compete with my memories of sitting round the turf fire on the hearth, waiting for the supper porridge to cook on the glowing "kerauns". The modern songs included some satirical items which were very funny, and illuminated for us some facets of American politics.

Back at the apartment we had a consultation as to whether we should catch the early morning bus to Seattle. We had intended to leave Chicago on Thursday afternoon so as to arrive in Seattle on Saturday, but the express bus now left Chicago in the early morning, and the afternoon bus took several hours longer on the journey. We were worried about our schedule of visits on the West Coast, and we had realized that the Hickeys were still a bit nervy and tense after their hard work before and during the

convention. But Rosemary took our suggestion of leaving early in the morning very hard. She reminded us that we had promised to stay with them for a full day, and there were actually tears in her eyes as she begged us to stay till Friday morning. She was very keen to show us her favourite picnic spot in one of the State Parks on the lake shore, and she said we had still to view Chicago by night from the Prudential Building. So we agreed to stay till Friday.

Thursday, 6 September

We were wakened by Rosemary next morning at 6 a.m. and I crawled wearily and a little uncertainly to the bathroom. I hadn't yet got myself accustomed to this new life of different routes to differing bathrooms nearly every morning, and the daze in which I did so wasn't helped by the lack of light in the room itself. There was little or no natural light, and the lighting fixture was a fluorescent one. The night before, I remembered wearily, there was some complication about this light. I switched it on, nothing happened. Was this one of those oddly arranged American switches, I wondered? I switched it off again, just as there was a flicker of light. I switched it on again, and belatedly remembered that this was one in which one had to wait through a warm-up period, and we had been told that it was better to leave it on for a time than to use the switch too much. Hoping guiltily that no one had noticed, I washed and emerged to look for a strengthening cup of tea. I was even prepared to settle for coffee. No one was in the kitchen; still feeling dopey, I realized that Rosemary was asking me to listen to the weather forecast for her. Before going to the beach she wanted to know if it would be warm enough for us to bathe. The recorded voice gave the expected temperatures and wind force; it was to be quite a nice day. I relayed this information to Rosemary as she tapped by on her bedroom mules. Later, when we got to the beach, I was to be chided by her for not noting the forecasted wind direction – which was apparently the most important fact.

It appeared that we were going out for breakfast. I had to get dressed, and packed, and appear alive, before imbibing my morning caffeine. To me there is something almost uncivilized in having to face the outside world breakfastless, yet we were later to find that this was quite an accepted part of the American way of life. It seems strange that in a land where almost every imaginary gadget is available to the average family, this parallel with the pioneering days, when one had to gather firewood

and water, and coax a fire to a blaze before breaking one's fast, still remained. I was glad that, in addition, I didn't have to guide the car through the traffic, just building up to the rush hour, and find a parking space. This Rosemary did with efficiency, if a little testily, and we sat down amid a crowd of other like minded people. There was one, or perhaps two, advantages: each of us could order a different breakfast without having to worry about giving trouble to the cook, and we didn't have to wash up afterwards.

We left Richard off at his office, and made our way along the lovely Lake Shore Drive in the direction of Michigan City. We here noticed for the first time an ingenious arrangement of kerbing on the road. This was normally a double four-lane highway, but in the morning rush-hour it could be adjusted to provide five or six lanes leading into the city, and a reverse arrangement coped with the out-going traffic in the evening. We were later to see this same arrangement in Seattle, on a smaller scale. I thought it was very clever, and was suitably impressed.

The early morning start was necessary because of the long distance we were to travel. It was hard for me to realize that a drive of seventy-five miles wasn't far to Americans. We think that thirty-five miles is far enough to travel for a picnic, yet Rosemary intended to be back again in Chicago in time for she and Richard to register for evening courses at Chicago University that evening. Accordingly, she drove very fast by our standards. Of course, the roads were built to take higher speeds than ours, but I thought the Volkswagen protested a little at seventy miles an hour. The engine noise built up to a whine, and the whole car vibrated in sympathy.

Sooner than we had thought possible we came to the farming area, a region rich in corn and fruit. Here Rosemary lost her way, and we travelled on narrow dirt roads for a while. We came upon a way-side stall, where there was on display an almost tropical profusion of fruit of every kind. It made a very colourful picture, a showy still life. There were enormous pumpkins, squashes, and melons of varying shades and shapes, three or four different kinds of grapes, peaches, plums, apples, and berries. We bought some plums and peaches at the very low price of 29 cents a pound, and took a picture of the scene. This glowing picture was, alas, lost with the others from this part of the trip, but I can still remember it. We were very near the lake now, and we came upon an idyllic retreat. The road we now followed skirted the lake shore and it was bordered by the summer homes of the wealthy. There was no public access to the beach for several miles, just houses with large gardens, their privacy ensured by trees and

flowering shrubs.

We eventually came to the entrance to the Warren Dunes State Park and travelled through a tree-lined avenue to the lake shore. This place was set up to deal with thousands of summer tourists: there were changing rooms, rented for a period by a coin-in-the-slot mechanism, toilets, and shower facilities. There was other evidence of a more civilized milieu than ours in the provision of many garbage baskets on the shore, and picnic tables and chairs in the woods. Picnic facilities are much more liberal in the U.S. – there were even charcoal braziers as well. A notice above the door leading to the lavatories warned people that the Park Authorities would levy a fine upon anyone using the lavatories as changing rooms. We didn't have to use either, this was out of season and we had the beach almost to ourselves. It was lovely; it stretched for miles in both directions, with groves of small trees and coarse grass waving atop the sand dunes. It erred from perfection in our eyes, however, because we are so used to sand being golden, and this was white.

The sun was bright and the air warm, but the water, when we entered it, was a bit cold. Nevertheless, the bathe we had there was more enjoyable than many a midsummer one here in Ireland. We lay on the beach and sunbathed, and relaxed, and ate peaches. It was a nice interlude, but too soon we had to leave for Chicago.

Rosemary asked us if there was anything special we wanted to do, or if we would just accompany her to the University. Walter felt too tired to do anything, so I decided this would be a good time to get my hair done. The University was situated in the coloured section of the city, and Rosemary enquired if this would worry me. I assured her that it wouldn't, so she and Walter waited while I made my appointment, then left. I sat alone in a diner, to have something to eat first, and felt very conspicuous since most of the other patrons were coloured – though I kept telling myself that this was quite an ordinary situation.

At the hairdresser's I was attended to by a startlingly lovely girl at a rather startling charge – the price of the hair-do was about four times what I am accustomed to paying. The girl was something like a younger Dorothy Dandridge, and I stared at her in admiration. I wondered how long it would be before her milk-chocolatey skin would become the standard aimed for in the United States. It shouldn't take too long, I thought, in spite of Governor Wallace and others, for so many white Americans already possess a much sallower skin than their relatives in the British Isles.

Wearing a much smoother hair style than usual – curliness was

evidently not to be encouraged in this district – I wandered out and round the shops. I had some time to kill before the others returned. I was quite happy at first, but then I began to feel conspicuous again. There were groups of young men standing about, and even at home I would feel self-conscious loitering like this, as there would usually be stares and sometimes whistles from the by-standers. But this was worse than at home, though the semi-mocking attitude was missing. In spite of myself I began to feel that these people were different. I finally pulled myself together by concentrating on the thought that to them I was just another white person and they probably didn't even notice me. It was a relief, though, to see the black Volkswagen turning the corner, and the familiar faces of Rosemary and Walter looking out for me.

We returned to the University to pick up Richard, but he wasn't at the place where Rosemary had asked him to wait. We wandered round the big modern building looking for him, but eventually Rosemary gave up and rang the apartment on the off-chance he would be there. Richard answered, and said he had felt tired and had just gone on home. We went on to the Prudential Building to view Chicago by night, and Rosemary, who had been looking rather taut, came to life again when she noted our delighted reaction to the scene from the top. She identified for us some of the flood-lit buildings and pointed out the aircraft beacon on top of the Drake Hotel. But the most compelling aspect was the jewelled ribbon of Michigan Avenue. The streets were ablaze with variously-coloured lights, there were jumping neon signs, and beside it all the great brooding darkness of the lake, dotted near the shore with the lights from ships at anchor.

We returned to the apartment, and all retired early, tired out. Tomorrow we would have to be up early to catch the bus to Seattle

Chapter 7: Chicago to Fargo

Letter to Bruce Pelz: 9 January 1964

When you asked me to make the report I should have written a foreword to it, but even at this late date perhaps I could make a few comments. I can only write of what I can remember, and my memory is faulty. I remember looking on indulgently while Walter took notes at various occasions, now I am grateful to have access to them. All I had to do, I thought, was to enjoy myself. Now that I am writing a report myself I find that this attitude of detachment from the mechanics of remembering and note-taking is producing inconsistencies in the report itself. I can remember very clearly most of the first few days, when everything was new and strange, but I find myself regretting that so many of my more detailed memories of the later part of the trip are trivial happenings. I would dearly like to be able to recall more of what Dean Grennell said and did; the witticisms of Bob Bloch, the learned conversations of Jim Blish and Tony Boucher, the horrible puns of Forry Ackerman, and many, many more. In the report itself I can only try to be as sincere and truthful as I can.

Wally Weber can make us laugh at the things that happen to him – he is a master of the twisted viewpoint; Walter Breen can write with erudition; Terry Carr can satirize; John Berry turns everything into slapstick; Walter can write with wit and warmth; me, I can only be frank.

About this frankness in the report, I have felt a little guilty of reporting the incident involving Michael McQuown, but how else can I convey that others comported themselves in a more mature fashion. It might have been better for all concerned if, when Michael attached himself to our party, one of us had just told him gently that we had an appointment together for lunch and that we would see him later, but he made it difficult for us at the time by his attitude of taking it for granted that he was welcome, and we were too soft-hearted to dismiss him. Now that I have committed myself to writing about the trip I have perhaps lost the sense of empathy that Don Fitch writes about. Distance lends disenchantment to the view.

I left all last week free in order to be able to devote myself to the next instalment of my report. Hah. I promptly went down with influenza. This week I am just about able to crawl about the house, though I feel as though

I am floating around – a most peculiar feeling, sort of a combination of dizziness and weakness. So in the circumstances I am afraid I must beg off doing anything for the coming mailing. Walter has offered to type up a page or two which I struggled to write, and it may arrive the day after you get this letter. I am doubtful about this, for I feel that it would be better to run more of it at a time, but I'll leave that to your editorial judgement.

Letter from Walt:

Dear Bruce,

Here are Madeleine's notes, or rather her first draft, hastily typed up by her husband, nurse, and temporary clerk-typist. The wages aren't much, but there are fringe benefits.

Which reminds me about one of my confreres in the civil service who had a habit of working about the garden in the most disreputable clothes. New neighbours moved in next door and the woman felt sorry for this poor, ragged old man and asked if the lady of the house treated him all right. "Oh yes," he said gravely, "in fact she lets me sleep with her."

But enough space wasted... though I must say congratulations to you both and I hope you'll be as happy as you both deserve for your good taste.

[Bruce Pelz and Dian Girard had become engaged. They married on 1st February 1964.]

The second letter did arrive today, 14th January, and in the belief that a short *DisTAWF Side* is much better than no *DisTAWF Side* at all I am running it... BEP

Friday 7th September 1962

We breakfasted again at the Jewel Restaurant, saw Richard off to his office, and arrived at the Greyhound Depot in good time for the Seattle bus. We were to spend 52 hours on the journey, so we wanted to make sure of getting seats together. We thanked Rosemary again for her hospitality and said goodbye.

We passed Gate 6 where a Seattle bus waited, probably not an express one, or perhaps one that left later than the one stated by the voice of authority over the PA system to be loading at Gate 3. We were pleased to see that we were near the top of the queue. As the scheduled departure time drew near we peered round the banks of lockers at buses entering and

leaving the boarding area and became more and more uneasy as our queue melted away and that at Gate 6 grew longer. Finally, Walter seized a passing bus driver and learned that the office staff had blundered again. We rushed belatedly to Gate 6, joined the line of people getting on, and found that all the window seats had been taken. Walter and I had to take two aisle seats, but at least we were seated across from one another.

We were very annoyed with the Greyhound organization by now. First there had been that ghost bus from Fond du Lac, which had caused us to waste an hour waiting for Rosemary Hickey, and her to waste a couple of hours driving back and forth. Now here was this ghost loading bay. Since then I have learned that the Greyhound Company has many other connections with the world of fantasy. The luggage department is run by a team of poltergeists, there are goblins to make people gobble through meal stops, the advertising section is run by satyrs, and the man in charge of it all is some kind of spectre.

I had a horror of falling asleep on a stranger's shoulder, but uneasy sleep at last overtook me. I awoke to find I had managed to stay on my own side of the seat and to see that Walter was still taking in the scenery as if committing it to memory. I, on the other hand, only looked dazedly at the outside world, seen in green at the side and in deep blue at the corners of the windows. Such is the poverty of the human spirit that slight discomfort looms larger in the mind than the wonder of crossing a continent. My world had shrunk to the dimensions of the bus, my mind occupied with questions of comfort, rest stops, timetables. Some parts of the day seemed to go faster than others. The mid-day stops usually lasted only half an hour, there was little provision for afternoon tea, and there was a long unbroken period ending at seven or half past. At home the reverse would have been the case. The long meal break would be at mid-day, and the shorter one in the evening. My stomach was still unaccustomed to this changed meal schedule, and I hadn't yet realized it was a good idea to carry food along, such as sandwiches and fruit. Other people had, I noticed: there were quite a number with flasks and lunch baskets.

The man beside me left the bus at St. Paul, and Walter and I at last shared a seat. I looked with more interest at the scenery. It reminded me a little of County Fermanagh with its hills and woods and lakes. It was more interesting now than the rather flat land to the north of Chicago, especially since we were now no longer on the turnpike system.

I had looked forward to seeing a lot of America from the bus, but I hadn't realized the vastness of it all. My mind was numbed from looking at

so much, and I almost regretted we hadn't flown to Seattle. Turnpike travel is monotonous, but you don't really see much of interest from a bus anyway, just frustrating glimpses of things of beauty. An awful lot of time was wasted on this part of our journey by having to slow down through town traffic, while the more scenic stretches were passed through at 70 mph. If the situation had been reversed, both would have been a lot more exciting.

At Minneapolis, about 4:30 p.m., I paid 35¢ for a pillow. I hoped it would help me get a good night's sleep, but at Bismarck at 1 a.m., where the bus was serviced, they took it away again. So I learned to ask how long the period of hire of the pillow was in the future.

Later that evening the bus got uncomfortably warm, and while getting on again at Fargo, N. Dakota, I asked the driver if he could cool it down a little. I must say he really worked at it: before morning we were driving through three inches of snow.

Chapter 8: The Road to Seattle

Saturday, 8th September 1962

We reached Bismarck at 1 a.m. If it had been left to me, I wouldn't have known anything about it, but the driver switched on all the lights in the bus to make sure we all woke up, and we were then asked to leave. We were in no condition to appreciate this, our first really long rest stop, for most of the town was closed up for the night, and it was bitterly cold. The bus was due to be serviced here, and we thought it a pity that we couldn't have had this done at a more reasonable hour. There was one major advantage – to the Greyhound Bus Company: as everything was closed in the immediate vicinity, we were all unwilling customers of the Post House. So this was how they recouped part of the loss on our tickets.

Full but unsatisfied, and pillowless, we fell asleep again quite quickly, and woke up again long before the breakfast stop was due. The road noise had changed, and the scene outside was unbelievable after the heat of Chicago. Snow lay inches deep everywhere, softening the bleak expanse of the prairie country.

At last we arrived at Miles City, Montana, for our 7:20 breakfast stop. Though we were still dressed for the heat-wave conditions, we braved the cold air and escaped briefly from the toils of the Greyhound organization to a drugstore. Many of the men were dressed in cowboy attire, which surprised me. Walter drew my attention to the selection of books for sale. They were mostly westerns, which seemed like finding a copy of *Screen Romances* in Elizabeth Taylor's bedroom. I didn't see any horses hitched up outside; all they reached for on leaving the store was their car keys, but I consoled myself with the thought that perhaps the car pedals were stirrup-shaped. They must have some trouble with those high heels, otherwise.

We had half an hour in Billings at 11:15 and, though it was still snowing, I was drawn back along our route by the attraction of a shop window full of dresses with a sign above it saying Thrift Shop. It turned out to be a sale of second-hand clothing in aid of charity. Over here we call them jumble sales, and have a habit of referring to someone who is tastelessly dressed as "looking as if she bought her clothes at a jumble sale." That would hardly apply here. Most of the goods were very new

looking – the castoffs of a more prosperous community. I could have browsed happily there for hours, but a glance at my watch made me run all the way back to the depot, where Walter waited with his hands full of maps. He had been indulging in his hobby, too.

Back in the bus we felt much better equipped for the journey, and were able to lend out our maps and time-table to the people with the flask and lunch-basket, who had kindly given us sweets and fruit. I was almost sorry that they were so kindly disposed toward us, as they became very talkative. The woman had short, straight hair, a pale, almost greyish complexion, and a sharply twanging mid-western accent. I hadn't noticed this kind of accent in any of the fans I had met, but in this woman it was combined with such a sharp penetrating voice that the sound was disagreeable. It was underlined for me that it wasn't just the accent I disliked, as the husband was quite nice. We learned that they had been touring the country for about six weeks. They were in very good spirits, and still enjoying themselves. This was probably accounted for by the fact that they often stopped off the bus at a hotel for a good night's rest. They were curious about us, and we satisfied them, without getting involved in too many explanations, by saying that we were on our way to visit the World's Fair in Seattle.

There was another interesting couple in the front seat. They were two young English women, who furnished further proof that the mid-western accent wasn't of itself so bad by having accents as wearing on the nerves as the American's, and they talked continuously. One of these two had gradually become more and more friendly with a soldier who was travelling alone – voices apparently didn't mean as much to him as to me. This situation added another dimension of interest to the journey as I speculated on when she would ditch her travelling companion and share a seat with him instead. Once I woke up in the middle of the night to see them talking together in his seat, but she returned to her female companion to sleep.

Several of the passengers seemed to know each other; perhaps they had been travelling together for longer than the rest of us. One of the group, a frail and innocent-looking old lady, showed herself to be possessed of more nerve and astuteness than many a younger person. The bus was filling up rapidly at one stop, and she was in danger of losing her double-seat, so she lay right across it and pretended to be asleep. Her ruse would have worked if there hadn't been exactly the same number of passengers as there were seats. The very last passenger aboard stood in the aisle until the driver came to look over the situation. I think even he was

unsure about what to do, until one of the other passengers said, “Give her a shove, she’s only pretending.” The old lady sat up and looked bewildered, then moved over. It was an excellent performance.

We had missed a lot of the scenery because of the snow, but later that afternoon the weather gradually cleared, it became warmer, and we were able to see the mountains ahead. The road snaked through mountain passes, the slopes covered with snow-bedecked fir trees. The road was alternately brilliant with sunshine, and deeply shadowed, as we followed the twisty valleys. Soon we were traversing such a closed-in section of the road that we wondered if we were to see any of the Pacific side of the mountains before nightfall. The bus, I noticed, was labouring slightly, the driver must have reached the bottom gear (there seemed to be at least six), when Walter and I grabbed each other’s arm simultaneously. There at the side of the road was one of the most awe-inspiring sights of the trip. It was a simple strip of boarding, with immense emotional impact. It simply said “Continental Divide 6414 feet”. I had to clear my throat before saying to Walter that we were at last really on the other side of the world. It was a heady feeling to realize that from here on, the mecca of every drop of water was not our own Atlantic but the Pacific.

The descent on the other side was much steeper, and for a moment I thought there must be another road down there on another level – until I realized that it was our road. To get there we teetered on the edge, going round hair-unpinning bends. We saw a railway, too, and the mountainous nature of the country was emphasized for us as we counted, not the number of carriages, but the number of locomotives it took to pull it uphill. I think there were at least four, but then American trains are much bigger than ours, about treble the size, I think. Another thing that struck us as strange was the number of times the bus stopped, sounded its horn, and crossed unguarded railway lines. Here in Northern Ireland there is only one unattended crossing, and travelling that road is done in a state of apprehension. One often sees letters in the papers about how dangerous it is, but there has been only one accident that I can remember.

This part of America was more like what I had been expecting, the scenic northwest really living up to its name. The steep slopes covered in fir trees, the high mountains, and the absence of dwellings made one more easily visualize the life of the early pioneers and lumberjacks. This was still a frontier, and the little urbanized community of Northern Ireland could almost have belonged to another planet. But night fell too soon, and we were turned in on ourselves again. I shifted about, trying to stave off sleep until we had had our supper, and happened to look at my feet. They

were appreciably thicker round the ankle, and my shoes were uncomfortably tight. Elephantiasis is still to be found in the southern states, and I wondered if many of the Chicago convention attendees were similarly afflicted. It would make life simpler for the fan cartoonists, at least. Walter rolled down his socks and confirmed that he had it too. But when we reached Wallace, Idaho, at 10:50, I noticed that most of the other passengers also had thick ankles. It must be another unadvertised facet of Greyhound travel, a rush of blood to the feet caused by not putting one's feet up to at least a horizontal position during the night.

As usual, I was first off the bus, and in my haste to escape from the Post House I led Walter and some of the other passengers into a very expensive-looking bar-restaurant. A waiter came forward to show us to a seat, but I walked as nonchalantly as I could towards the restroom. Walter disappeared into the adjoining one, but the rest of the passengers were trapped. We escaped through a back exit and climbed a flight of steps opposite. I stepped up to a counter arrangement and enquired of the young man in attendance whether they served food. He seemed not to know what I was talking about. He merely looked bewildered and asked if we wanted to bowl. I looked around more carefully, and realized that we were in a bowling alley. However, we explained that we were looking for a drugstore, and he directed us to one where we found some of the cleverer passengers already almost finished.

Sunday, 9th September

The night had been cold, but we managed to sleep until just about sunrise, when Walter woke me to say "We have come to a pretty pass." I let him live, because Snoqualmie *was* pretty. There was mist lying in the valleys, but higher up the sun was gilding the mountain tops. For a while the scenery was too exciting to permit me to fall asleep, but I settled down again so as to be feeling fresh for Seattle, which we should reach about eight. Walter is more of a mountain buff than I am, and he announced his intention of not wasting any more time in sleep. But I was still seeing scenery behind my closed eyelids. It kept flashing past, and I had much the same sensations as when I have been reading for a very long while before going to bed – I see whole sentences with my eyes shut. My optical nerves must have a very long retention period.

He awoke me again, saying, "Mount Rainier, Mount Rainier." I peered out of the window, but only caught a tantalizing glimpse of what

looked like an ice cream cone impossibly high in the sky before it was obscured again by clouds. A knowledgeable passenger told us that we would soon be seeing the longest floating bridge in the world – the Lake Washington Floating Bridge. Soon we were travelling along it, seemingly only inches above the water. I wondered if one would become seasick if a storm blew up. As we travelled along we could now see clearly straight ahead to the distant peaks of Olympic National Park. They were snow-tipped, and obviously very high. What a perfect setting they made for the city of Seattle.

Here, as in Chicago, there was provision for rush hour traffic. There were traffic lights suspended over each of the four lanes; in the mornings there were three green lights and one red suspended at intervals overhead for incoming traffic, the outgoing traffic on the other hand faced three red lights and one green. A simple, flexible, and efficient way of making the fullest use of the road space. I wonder why it hasn't been more widely copied.

Seattle is very different from any of the other American cities we had seen. The houses are mostly of the bungalow type, set at different levels on the many hills. Downtown Seattle is impressive, with many skyscrapers. I knew that Seattle had approximately the same population as Belfast, both were seaports, and both had an aircraft industry, but the differences were startling. Instead of the separate dwellings, Belfast has rows and rows of dreary houses joined to one another so that they look like one large building with lots of chimneys, and in addition the houses back onto other streets, so that many districts are extremely congested. The air has an amazing clarity in Seattle, but on entering Belfast over the hills at dusk and seeing the enormous smoke pall over the city one thinks that visibility down there must be limited to yards. In Belfast there are so many old houses and buildings that have been exposed to the smoke for years that the whole city has a dingy appearance. Here in Seattle the blessing of central heating and cheap electric power gives a fresher air to the place.

There was water everywhere. I knew beforehand that Seattle was a port, but I hadn't visualized this large Washington Lake, and it made it hard for me to orient myself to the surrounding country. All this was complicated by the many hills; one could never be sure what lay over the hill – it might be the sea, a lake, or just another hill. We entered the bus depot, and Walter went to phone the Busbys.

There was an interesting variation from the usual Post House formula. There was an automat, and we fed coins into it for coffee. Walter felt very cosmopolitan when he helped an American lady to cope with it. I sat at a

table while Walter watched out for the Busbys, and it was a weird feeling to find that the lady who came and sat down opposite me came originally from Belfast. I didn't ask her if she ever was homesick, because at that minute I most certainly was not. Everything was too exciting, and I was still, even after 52 hours in a Greyhound bus, very appreciative of my good fortune. Here I was, over 6,000 miles from home, eight hours backwards in time, and not a bit worried.

Buz and Elinor arrived, and what a pleasure it was to hear fannish voices again! We walked out to the car, to be greeted by a friendly brown dachshund called Lisa. At the Busbys' there was some delay in opening the door – there was another little brown dog called Nobby trying to get out as eagerly as we were trying to get in. We are cat lovers ourselves, but we found Nobby and Lisa to be very ingratiating members of their species.

I entered the house, and was immediately assailed by a tantalizingly unfamiliar smell. Thoughts of sandalwood and cedarwood entered my head, and I went up to the wooden wall and sniffed curiously. Buz opened the door and said it's merely a stuffy house. I demurred, saying it was a nice, spicy smell. I finally tracked it down to a cupboard – it was Buz's home brew. Now Walter and I don't care for beer, but Buz's home brew is another thing entirely. For one thing it has as an ingredient one of our favourite foodstuffs – honey – and I think we could eventually have acquired quite a taste for this exotic form of beer. We did, in fact, enjoy many glasses of it during our stay.

We were later to find that fresh air was a fetish of Buz's, and it was often a tug-of-war between him and Elinor as to whether to have the door open or shut. It had to be the door or nothing, because the windows wouldn't open, the previous occupant preferring fug. After a while the sun gave promise of a warm day, so we all went out into the back garden. Elinor and I lay on a rug in our shorts, and I renewed my love affair with this strange Americanized sun.

On entering the kitchen to go out into the garden, I automatically grasped at the chromium-plated rail. It came off in my hand. I just stood there wondering how we were to get out. Elinor said to turn the knob; I had become so accustomed to the tugging at handles in Greyhound depots that I had momentarily forgotten that doors are usually opened by turning door knobs. Personally, I thought it was very unfair of the others to laugh at me – there was no towel on the rail, and whoever heard of a waist-high towel rail anyhow? There were some cracks about home-wreckers and FAPA waiting-lists, but my real moment of truth was still pretty far off.

Elinor prepared a simple but tasteful meal, one of the courses being of

salad – the freshest-tasting one I had ever had. She simply wandered along the edge of her garden, plucking a couple of different kinds of greens and her own cherry tomatoes. So Americans could get nice tomatoes to eat after all. The ones I had seen offered for sale in the supermarkets had looked completely inedible – tough brown skins and overly large in size.

We went to bed early, in the Busbys' own double bed. That was some rest stop!

Chapter 9: Seattle

Monday, 10 September 1962

Walter woke up at 8:30 a.m. as usual, at the same time the mail arrives at home. (He says it's a case of being driven from pillow to post.) He found that Elinor had just got Buz off to work, was suffering from a cold, and that it was raining outside. By mutual agreement they both went back to their beds.

We finally got up at 11:30. Elinor was out shopping, so we made our own breakfast after some difficulty with the toaster. At home we place the bread beneath a grill and watch it, turn it over and watch it again, but at Grennell's we had been introduced to toasting by automation. Here we were halfway back to nature, in that you had to do certain things as well as presenting the bread to the machine. However, fortunately, Elinor returned before we had run out of experimental material.

It was still raining after breakfast, so we decided to visit the World's Fair and leave Elinor in peace to nurse her cold. She drove us to the entrance and left us with a sheaf of tickets, promising to call back for us in time for us all to go to the Hyatt House, where Joy and Sandy Sanderson had invited us for dinner.

This was the first exhibition of any kind I had seen since the Festival of Britain in Battersea, which we saw while in London for the 1951 Convention. That had been reminiscent of a carnival in many respects, and here in Seattle, though this was more of a scientific and serious affair, there were echoes of that same gaiety. I found it hard to take solemnly any Fair that had as its symbol a flamboyant orange-coloured flying saucer. There were many flags flying, and many of the pavilions were decorated with gaily-coloured bunting. Soon after entering we stood back to let go by one of the little trucks for carrying visitors – the American version of the rickshaw. I think they added greatly to the informality of the scene.

The first place we made for was the British exhibit. We felt a resurgence of patriotism here after being exposed to so much that was foreign and strange, and in spite of being Irish we felt a sort of neighbourly pride in seeing all these British inventions, most of which, like television and jet engines, had been so thoroughly developed by America that even we had forgotten where they originated. Some of the American visitors

looked a little bemused, I thought. As well they might, with such odd juxtapositions as the archaic uniform of the Horse Guards and the latest hovercraft.

However, it was a small exhibit, and soon we were looking for the US Science Pavilion, which we thought would be of more interest to SF fans. We made our way to its soaring Gothic arches and waited in line to get in. There was a film to introduce the exhibit, elementary to any reader of *Analog*, and we found there was to be no browsing around inside. The whole exhibit was carefully designed to channel, I might almost say process, the spectators. It was scientifically set up to permit an optimum number of people to pass through without hold-ups or crowding, and one could not go back to have another look at any part of it without starting at the beginning again. As if to justify this approach, the first section after the introductory film dealt with the limitations and unreliability of the human senses.

Next was the Spacearium, where we got to go on a simulated journey of 60,000 miles to outer space. It seemed even better value for money than Greyhound. There was a huge circular ceiling, and we were supposed to stand in tiers holding onto railings. Exhibitions, and people, being what they are, everyone sat on the floor.

The trip started with the sound of doors closing with a great whoosh of escaping air; then the shutters of the dome opened and we were gazing at the Earth illuminated by a late afternoon sun. We orbited the Earth, watching the light change over the landscape, and then the announcer said we were on course for the moon. Then there was the full moon straight ahead and coming nearer. I thought this part of the simulation a little disappointing. We turned away slightly to pass by the Sun; then came Mars, occasional asteroids, and Saturn. We passed Pluto's orbit and approached the nearer stars through a great black gulf. This phase was very well done. We headed towards clouds of light which resolved themselves into the millions of stars comprising the Milky Way. We saw some different types of star systems; then we were told to grasp the handrails, we were leaving the Milky Way for Andromeda. This was the most exciting: we saw star clusters, a small spiral galaxy, and a supernova which was brighter than all the stars combined. The show was very well done, and only a little disappointing even to a Bonestell-blasé fan.

The next section explored the nature of behaviour and, paradoxically, aroused my sense of wonder far more than the previous one. I think this was because I knew so little about it. I was especially interested, though faintly repelled, in the one where a baby monkey was the subject. It

received its milk from a wire skeleton shape, but went to sleep on the soft and warm lap of another artificial mother. The poor little monkey preferred to spend most of the time on the warm lap, and returned to the hard figure only when it was hungry.

To a science fiction fan the method of transportation used to approach the next section was evocative. As we were carried along the moving floor of the corridor to the Horizons of Science, I whispered to Walter, “The Roads Must Roll”, and he nodded nostalgically. If one can be nostalgic about the future.

Naturally we couldn’t miss the display by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. What amazed me most at this was the smallness of the craft used by Commander Shepard. I had read the dimensions in the newspapers, but it wasn’t until I looked into the capsule that I realized the Commander was practically a push fit.

We were so disappointed that some of the exhibits we wanted to visit had long queues outside, especially the Space Needle. We had wanted to see Seattle from above. However, visibility was still poor, though the rain had stopped shortly after we entered the Fair.

We went into the Interiors, Fashion and Commerce Pavilion, just in time to miss the Fashion Show. Walter winced at the fabulous furs on display, and tried to distract my interest by expatiating on the suffering inflicted on the poor creatures who were trapped and skinned alive to provide them – namely men. We moved on to the Mobil Economy Run where there was provision for 12 people to take part in a simulated drive. I kept urging Walter to have a go, but he refused on the grounds that he would only make a fool of himself by turning the wrong way, or trying to drive a Cadillac through a space just wide enough for a Morris Minor. The situations in front of each candidate were visible to the audience and to the girl commentator, who had a fine technique of making fun of them without giving offence – except possibly to her partner, whom she introduced as Miss Mobile of 1928. Walter said she looked more like Miss Nubile.

This all seemed to me a very American activity; there was no lack of willing victims, and the girls did their part with wit and flair. I find it almost impossible to visualize British girls doing this sort of thing, and this difference can be noticed in every sphere. Young Americans seem very much more assured, possibly because of their educational methods. Here... though decreasingly so since the Education Act which assured every child of ability the chance of a grammar school education... one finds that type of poise among the upper classes who would not need to perform before the public except in politics.

We were drawn to a show of the Scenic Northwest, sponsored by Nally's Foods, but had first to sit through coloured slides of the Nally production methods, from growth to distribution. Their exhibit was housed in what purported to be an "ultra-modern structure," but to me it looked more like an old-fashioned whale than anything else. I wondered if those slides really told the true story of their food processing methods – that whale must symbolize something. We were disappointed in the pictures of the Scenic Northwest in comparison with the reality we had already seen.

In the United Nations Pavilion I was invited to record my vote on questions of world affairs at the display put on by the American League of Women Voters. This seemed an odd place to garner relevant data on feminine views of world affairs, but I suppose they expected to find quite a few foreign visitors they wouldn't have contacted otherwise. I felt flattered to be given this opportunity, and gleefully pointed out to Walter that he didn't count here. The first machine I tried didn't work – I suppose this was only to be expected, that a party machine should ignore the female electors – but the second was OK after I decided to vote as an Irishwoman. There was no provision for Northern Ireland, the first time I have ever felt anything in common with Red China. I never saw any results published of this survey, so they have probably joined Walter Breen's *Fannish* IV in Limbo.

We were hungry by this time, so we went to the Food Circus. This was a terrible place for two fans who had determined to enter the Hyatt House that evening and Eat For Vince. There were big signs advertising Po-Boy sandwiches, but I never did find out what they were. Tempting odours and appetizing sights greeted us on every hand, undermining our resolution, but we confined ourselves to simple snacks. Then, having roamed around a little longer, we made our way to the exit to be claimed by the Busbys.

The Hyatt House must have been a wonderful place for the Seacon. I liked the bright modern one-level layout. No trouble here with out-of-order lifts and escalators. The Sandersons led us into a large dining room, where we all ranged ourselves half-way round a table on a big semicircular banquette of red leather. The waiter produced the wine list, and Sandy, quite at home, ordered a nice light rose wine. We were asked what we would like to drink with the meal, and I asked for Sauterne, which was one of my small repertoire of slightly sweet wines. The waiter said they didn't have any, but shortly after there was the sound of an aircraft landing and a bottle of Sauterne arrived. Sandy said he was sparing no expense to please us. The dinner was very nice, and we were glad to have saved our

appetites. It was here I had my first baked potato, and since we came home I have served it often. In fact, at the first full gathering of Irish fandom after our arrival home, I served baked potatoes, cole slaw and chicken pie, so you can see I approved of many American dishes; Irish fandom, I am glad to say, concurred. I don't know why British restaurants stick to the other ways with potatoes; but then one often finds roasted potatoes in Britain, and I never saw them in America. Another thing I thoroughly enjoyed was the custom of serving hot biscuits and butter with dinner; this is unheard of in the British Isles, where the only breadstuff usually served is a hard crisp roll with soup.

We had a lot of fun with the Sandersons, comparing views on America. We both deplored the tastelessness of the apple dishes – American apple pies are ghastly – though the profusion of other fruits makes up for it. And presumably it takes a cool climate to produce the strongly flavoured cooking apple we have in Ireland.

Chapter 10: The Final Days in Seattle

Letter to Bruce Pelz: 6th September, 1964

Well here I am, late again, with all the old excuses plus the fact that we have put Oblique House up for sale. We have been busy for months re-decorating and now I am obliged to have the whole house ready for any prospective purchasers to see over it before 2 p.m. every day.

I am very sorry for the mix-up in getting the last instalment to you. As you may have guessed, I forgot to take your address away with me when going on holiday and the only Los Angeles addresses on the fanzines we had were those of Redd Boggs and Bob Lichtman. But it all ended well in the end, at least the instalment appeared in the mailing. I know that Lichtman and you don't much care for each other and am sorry to have put you in a position that you had to go to his house and be under a compliment to him.

I was extremely pleased at the results of the Fan Poll. I have you to thank for encouraging me to start writing the report. I'm afraid I hadn't your confidence in my ability and it has been a source of wonder to me ever since at the reception it has received. I have no belief in my own writing talent, but somehow my reactions to the experience have pleased many fans. The only trouble with the egoboo is that I now re-write every word at least three times and agonize over every sentence. This is another reason for my tardiness in posting off each instalment and their shortness.

Tuesday, 11 September 1962

The tempo of life had slowed down for us. In the undemanding company of the Busbys we had by now become completely relaxed. So this morning we all slept late, ate a leisurely breakfast, and prepared for a quiet day with the minimum of sight-seeing. Today was the start of Buz's two days off work, and we set off for Volunteer Park and the Puget Sound.

The museum at Volunteer Park is set in a large garden, so we explored the conservatory first – mainly to see the more exotic plants of

this other continent.

Then we entered the museum. Now normally I would have to be dragged screaming inside, but here, in this company, it was most enjoyable.

Our first stop was at the jade collection. It surprised me that this comparatively small city of Seattle had such a fabulous collection. It brought home to me the fact, which I had never consciously thought of before, that the United States is only across one ocean from China and Japan, and so was much nearer the Orient than we were. The jade was most beautiful. I had had a vague mental picture of jade – it was green – but I hadn't realized just how many variations on that colour there could be, or the soft translucence of the carved pieces.

We went on to the ivories section, and here I found that Buz is not quite the serious constructive type at all. I had been admiring the cunning artistry evidenced by the minute details of the carvings and the fact that each was carved from one piece of ivory. But here in these ancient masterpieces Buz drew our attention to what I can only describe as four-dimensional cartoons. He pointed out to us the most comic features of what were obviously his favourite pieces. I never laughed so much in a museum before.

On the way out I picked up some leaflets about the exhibits, but there was a maverick in the collection. It was headed "Are You One of the Chosen Few?" Well, I supposed I must be to be here at all. I opened it to reveal a curiously ornamented heading – some of the letters had been replaced by nude figures. It was *Liaison*, subtitled "The Biweekly Newsletter of Love". Fascinated, I read on. "Dear Friend: Are you a member of the sexual elite?" Well, Walter had never complained. It went on to give information as to its attractions – "colourful extracts from court testimony in divorce and adultery cases, reports on newest contraceptive products, suggestions for uncommon and uncostly gifts to present to your lover on birthdays, etc., articles on such subjects as 'The navel as an erogenous zone', 'nudity in the home', and 'fantasies during sexual intercourse'." It was almost as hilarious as the ivories. The others looked at me curiously as I chuckled over it. I was confident enough of our similar sense of humour to watch for the delighted grins that covered the Busbys' faces as they read down the first page. I shared my leaflet with others, too, but I later became a bit wary. At the Nameless meeting that night I showed it to Virginia West. She read half-way down the first page, then a frozen expression came over her face and she handed it back to me without a word. I brought it out again in Berkeley, thinking that here in this perhaps

more bohemian atmosphere it would be appreciated, but Pat Ellington took a serious interest in it, and it was only with difficulty that I extricated myself from a Serious Discussion.

We got into the car again and went down to the harbour area. We wandered around the wharves and admired the ships of all shapes and sizes. This reminded me that Seattle had started life as an Indian fishing village. The seagulls wheeled about against the sun, and it seemed an inspiration when Buz suggested a boat trip. The longer trips were fully booked – that dog of a bus company again – so we settled for a trip around the harbour. We set out in a large covered-in motor boat. We were a bit startled at first to hear a voice speaking overhead, but there was no sign of a pillar of cloud ahead of us, so we realized that it was merely the pilot. Among other less familiar pieces of information, he explained to us how the moon's attraction caused the tides. We had a look at some of the boats in dry dock, which seemed to tower impossibly high over us, and turned again and again to look across the hills of Seattle to the imposing backdrop of the Olympics.

The sea trip had given us an appetite, so we sampled the local fish and chips. It was quite different from home. We sat at a long wooden table in the open air, and the chips came in little cardboard containers with forks instead of in greaseproof bags, to be eaten in the fingers. Not that I would eat them that way at home anyway, but some people do. Why, Ian MacAulay was quite scandalized at the sight of me emptying my chips onto a plate and using a knife and fork. They taste better, he said, taken in the fingers directly from the paper bag. Another difference was that instead of vinegar, a bottle of ketchup accompanied the salt. But the aroma was the same, and so was the al fresco atmosphere.

We went on to see some of the stalls and sideshows. Outside one of the latter was a small tank containing two seals. This was supposed to be an indication of the attractions inside, but it had quite the opposite effect on both Elinor and me. Another stall had a sign above it reading "Husbands must have the written permission of their wives before being served with a third drink." I thought how sensible this was, but the drinks weren't alcoholic, they consisted of clam juice. Elinor whispered that it was supposed to have an aphrodisiac effect, so Walter and I tried it. We had never cared much for sea food, and this was no exception, so we weren't able to take more than a sip of it. I'm afraid I'm in no position to make a report on the reputed qualities of this drink. It's a pity, for I could do with the extra fillip such research would have given to my trip report.

It was here that the Busbys were given extra evidence of my accident-

proneness. The evening began to be a little chilly, and I started to put on my cardigan. Something fluttered briefly in one of the sleeves, then I jumped in the air and started to drag it off again, yelping all the while. They regarded me in amusement. “Got a thorn in the sleeve?” they asked. However, they made up for it later, and helped me to extract the sting – it was fully half an inch long. I’m glad we don’t have hornets here in Ireland.

It was now time for us to leave the waterfront for the Nameless meeting in Wally’s house, better known as Stumphouse. Shortly after our arrival we were taken down to see the stump which was reputed to be holding up the house. It was quite true, there beside an ancient furnace was the stump of a tree, and the basement ceiling was resting on it. Walter said the tree was obviously a proplar, and I commented that if the stump ever rotted away Wally would be left in the larch. Walter eyed the dumpy looking stove with its many apertures, and said it was a good example of ducts disease.

We all went out to the garage to see Wally’s new car. Behind Wally’s quiet and gentle demeanour I fear there lurks an aggressive personality, for there, filling the entire length and breadth and width of the garage, loomed a monstrous green Chevrolet truck. He had to admit that he only bought it because he liked it – he had no ambitions in the truck business. It was so high that Ed Wyman said he had to let the air out of the tyres to get it in and out, but I *think* that was a slight exaggeration.

We returned to the meeting proper, and it was quite different from what I had been expecting from reading the minutes in *Cry*. The only official business transacted was the circulation of a slip of paper so that Wally could record the names of all those present. I suspect that Wally made up all those Minutes himself. That out of the way, Wally proceeded to show slides of the Worldcon in 1957. There were the Dietzes again in their weird costumes, and even one of me on the edge of a circle of fans around Walter. We weren’t offered any of Wally’s famous frozen chicken dinners (I think he made up that story too), but we had plenty of crisps, cookies, and cola. Sometimes I think that the hard “k” sound could symbolize America. I am thinking of the vast quantities of crisps, cookies, colas, cars, ketchup, and concrete that we saw – far more of each than one would ever see in Europe.

I got a new viewpoint on Elinor Busby that evening. Elinor had seemed to me a very quiet type like myself, My mental picture of her was of an upturned face listening intelligently to who ever was speaking. But here she got into a lively discussion with Paul Stanbery about *Stranger in a Strange Land*. She gave as good as she got, and this was some

achievement, for Paul, a young man with an intense face, seemed to be almost too talented to be true. All we had known about him was that he was staying with Toskey and writing a novel. He gestured, smiled, and talked a mile a minute. He held strong opinions and seemed to know a great deal. He struck me as a budding genius. I was interested in the discussion, but I didn't feel disposed to add anything myself. To me, *Stranger* was merely a piece of fiction, and I was surprised to find that so many fans seemed to think that Heinlein was signposting a new way of life.

We really enjoyed that evening, especially getting to know more of the Nameless Ones, but we had to leave early; tomorrow we had an appointment with the Cascades.

Wednesday, 12 September

We got up a little earlier than usual, because today we were to go on our much anticipated mountain climb. I stumbled out, mouth parched, half awake, to make my tea – the others preferred coffee. It seemed ages till the kettle boiled. Then I heated the teapot, put in the tea, added the boiling water, and took one step towards the table with my precious load. I could almost taste the tea in anticipation. I took another step, and I was left holding only the teapot handle. At my feet lay broken pieces of teapot, while all around wet tea leaves spattered the floor and part way up the wall. I really must have seemed a Jonah to the Busbys by now. Walter asked if I intended to do fortune telling from the floor, and Buz called it the great teapot doom scandal. Bus and Elinor said comfortingly that it was all their fault for not buying a new teapot – they had mended a broken handle with glue. As I stood there in a daze, Walter immediately put the kettle on again, and Buz said, "That's right, send them up again right away." Elinor produced another teapot, unmended this time, and I made myself another pot. As I carried it over to the table Buz said, "If that's not coffee I'll kill myself."

Toskey arrived to act as guide on our expedition. He is the only real open air fiend among the Nameless, being the veteran of many mountain hikes and an ardent fisherman to boot. We were later furnished proof of this latter hobby by seeing him carry a long fishing rod all the way up the mountains. This morning he was a little withdrawn. He had been attending the dentist, and the tooth hadn't yet settled down after the extensive drilling. He took some aspirins, and made us feel that it was still a pleasure

to show us one of his favourite climbs.

On the way to the mountains we stopped at North Bend. We didn't see Jack Speer, but I saw some sweet rolls to which I was becoming addicted – cinnamon they were – and I brought them along to have after our sandwiches.

Soon we were among the foothills of the mountains, near Snoqualmie Pass. A river ran beside the road. It made a pretty sight, as it was alternately shadowed by tall fir trees and flashed in the sunlight in the open stretches. There is something about mountain streams that always appeals to me. It is somehow satisfying to the soul to gaze over water or to listen to its music, especially if it is gurgling over boulders and there is an occasional quiet pool mirroring the sky or overhanging branches. I think all I remember most vividly about our American trip is connected with water, from our first sight of the waves breaking against the Nantucket shore to the day-long swim in Bob Bloch's pool.

We parked the car and set foot on the beginning of the 3½ mile trail to Lake Arnette. A trail such as this was a completely new experience for us. Here in Northern Ireland if you want to climb a mountain you find your own way to the top. This trail was obviously maintained by some authority, for there were little identifying plaques on many of the trees.

We stopped often to rest, and had little breath for conversation. Elinor and Buz especially found the going hard. In spite of my being accustomed to walking more than ten miles a week round a golf course, I needed frequent rests too. Walter didn't seem to have much difficulty keeping up with Toskey – he even carried Toskey's rucksack most of the way.

Once we left the sparsely wooded area at the foot of the trail, I was amazed at the drop in temperature. Here, deep in the woods, the sun's rays couldn't penetrate very deeply. It would be very cold, as well as frightening, to be lost in these woods. I would very probably starve, too, for the local edible berries looked very strange to me. The only ones that looked at all familiar were the blueberries, and even they were somewhat different from the bilberries which they resembled. The salmon berries with their beautiful pale orange-pink colour looked like the poisonous cuckoo pints, while the salal berries didn't resemble anything I had ever seen before. I stepped off the trail for a minute, and it was terrifying; the ground could only be glimpsed occasionally, for all around was a wilderness of fallen branches and brushwood.

Toskey had mentioned that there were switchbacks on the trail. I wondered about it, for I had always connected the word with those aerial rides in fairgrounds which swoop up and down steep inclines. When we

came to them I realized that they were merely hairpin bends.

We climbed for a couple of hours, so completely hemmed in on each side by the trees that we couldn't see a thing. I think there's a phrase for that, but I can't think of it at the moment. The only indication that we were going anywhere was the fact that we kept going uphill. Quite suddenly there was sunshine ahead and we came out on the shores of a calm and beautiful lake. Straight across the water a tall peak soared upwards, and there were streaks of silver gleaming against the dark green of the trees where mountain streams ran in waterfalls down to the lake. There was very little open space as the trees came right down to the water's edge right round the perimeter.

We were miles from civilization, in the heart of a primeval forest, communing with nature, and there in front of us was a restroom. The hand of civilization had touched here, but only briefly, for it was a simple dry lavatory. There was even a picnic table as well.

Toskey went off to do some fishing and the rest of us decided to light a fire. It would be useful to cook the fish if he caught any. Now we had been warned not to smoke on the trail because of the dangers of forest fires. We lit a fire on the third try – sometimes I think these forestry people are overzealous. As Toskey was unsuccessful at his fishing, we settled for sandwiches and sweet rolls.

We had finished our lunch and I had wandered away from the others, when Buz called me and pointed at something. I hurried over just in time to glimpse a small animal scurrying away into the undergrowth. It was a chipmunk. All the way up I had been looking out for one, and I had just missed it. Then it reappeared again and as if it realized my disappointment it came in my direction and stopped a few feet away. I was unreasonably pleased, and it was a very cute looking little animal, too.

The walk back down to the road was much easier, though I didn't walk, I ran most of the way. I hate walking down a steep hill as there is so much strain on the calf muscles. I find it much easier just to let myself go, stopping only at twists in the trail. I paid for it later, though. That night we had to sleep in the bus, all the next day we sat in the bus, and in San Francisco I went "ouch, ouch" as I walked up and down steps.

We went straight to the Pfeifers' house for our last evening in Seattle. It was a charming little house owned by two charming people. We here tasted our first waffle. Pat brought me into the kitchen to watch. The waffle was cooked in an elaborately besprigged delf receptacle, surely not meant to be called a mere waffle iron. I approve of waffles.

We met some more of the Nameless Ones, including Scotty Tapscott.

He and Jerry Pournelle seemingly don't get on well. I'm afraid that Walter and I may have appeared to be guilty of partisanship when we roared with laughter at a quip of Scotty's. He said, "I was wondering if you were making a value judgement or merely offering an odd piece of information." I thought Jerry cast us a hurt glance, but I am probably mistaken. It is hard to think of Jerry Pournelle being hurt by anything said during an argument.

We left to go and pack and get ready to catch the 2 a.m. bus to San Francisco, telling Buz and Elinor to leave us at the bus station and go and get a reasonable night's sleep, but they insisted on staying with us until bus time. We were glad they did, for we had become very fond of them in spite of their political views (we reached an agreement not to argue about politics), and it was sad to think that we wouldn't see them again until 1965.

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F.M. Busby:

Naturally we've been waiting impatiently for the Seattle Instalment of "The DisTAWF Side". As anticipated, Madeleine has brought that visit back to buoyant life; I find it not only easy but mandatory to forgive her few slips of recall after all this time. F'rinstance, the "Teapot Doom Scandal" was Walt's pun, not mine (naturally I envied him it). And the failing handle had been "fixed" with epoxy glue, so that after Madeleine had been stung – by a narsty yellowjacket wasp of the same ornery species that got *you*, John Berry, your last day here – Walt was saying how *he* generally took his lumps on trips, but this time Madeleine was serving as his eproxy! And *honest*, gang! It wasn't "Elinor and Buz" who had such a rough time getting up the mountain. Just Elinor – she had a cold left over from Chicon III and was souped up on antihistamines, poor girl... these are minor quibbles indeed to a narrative I'm enjoying so very much.

– *Retro* #35 (January 1965, ed. Busby for SAPS)

Chapter 11: Seattle to San Francisco

Thursday, 13th September

We had now become almost blasé about travelling in America, but this journey was to San Francisco: the very name has a charisma of its own. There must be very few of my generation who do not feel almost homesick on hearing the name of the city, because of the famous song, but San Francisco itself managed to live up to anything I had heard or read about it. And we were on our way to California, a mecca even to Americans themselves. But still we were tired, so, wondering briefly what fate the Greyhound Company had in store for us this time, we fell asleep.

We awoke to find ourselves in a bus depot, later identified as Olympia, not feeling at all godlike. There was no sign of a driver or a restaurant or facility of any kind. Nor was there any information about the reason for the stop, but we were too sleepy to care.

On Greyhound buses the driver is a sort of tyrannical deity, dispensing an extra ten minutes here, cutting fifteen there. As we entered Portland, Oregon, he announced that, since we were behind schedule, we would have only fifteen minutes for breakfast instead of the scheduled thirty. He didn't seem very put out about this himself, and after brooding about it, we came to the conclusion that he had had, appropriately enough, his own breakfast in Olympia. There was another thunderbolt to follow: the state of Oregon, he proclaimed, did not permit smoking in buses. So we breakfasted on coffee and nicotine, and I went to sleep again as we continued south.

I woke up again longing for a real breakfast and another cigarette, and regarded the face of Oregon with a jaundiced eye. The scenery consisted entirely of wet trees clinging to the slopes of hills. There was no sign of the mountains for which we had forsaken the alternate coastal route. At Eugene we reached the nadir of the Greyhound Post House chain. On the surface everything looked fine at first: we had plenty of time and there was no waiting for service. We walked straight to the mounds of food on the counters and pointed out what we wanted. The worst disappointment was the scrambled eggs, but everything was cold including the coffee. The eggs had congealed into a tough tasteless mass. For these, toast and orange

juice, the bill was $1.45 each. Even Walter, surely one of the most easygoing people I know, was outraged enough to complain to the cashier.

Things had to improve after that, and sure enough, the scenery gradually became more interesting. We were climbing towards the Pengra Pass, the trees were thinning out and the hills were steeper. But at the Pass itself, the weather had not cleared up enough for us really to appreciate the fact that we were over 5000 feet up. The overcast sky effectively cut us off from the view in every direction, and we began to worry that we might miss Mount Shasta, the main attraction of this route to us. We descended into the trees again, and they seemed to stretch interminably in all directions.

The next rest stop was called Halfway House, and the rough building looked just like one. It was a single large log cabin in a clearing in the forest. We weren't very hungry, so we walked around with hamburgers looking for some quaint sight or local wildlife. But there was nothing, just trees and the road disappearing into the misty distance.

At Klamath Falls we had some ice cream and our first glimpse of the mountains. The sun had come out, and we began to feel more cheerful. Back in the bus, we shortly crossed the state line into California, after a brief and unexpected inspection by some kind of official, and lit up celebratory cigarettes. Even the weather was rapidly becoming Californian. We could see the mountains all round us, and the prospects for Mount Shasta looked brighter. However, we had forgotten how, in Ireland, even on the sunniest days, a mountain can be hidden in mists. Straight ahead, where Shasta ought to be, there was a great solitary pillar of cloud.

But to our delight, the nearer we got the faster the clouds seemed to dissolve, and more and more of the mountain became visible. It may seem odd for us to be so excited over this mountain, when many of the ones we had seen in the Rockies must have been just as high, but the height of a mountain is relative. What makes a mountain exciting is its contrast, its separation from its surroundings. Some mountains in Ireland have this dramatic quality, though they may be less than 3000 feet. Mount Shasta stands quite alone. The eye can follow its slopes upwards, and it is so high it dominates the whole countryside. It was a beautiful, majestic sight.

Our last sight of Shasta was of it standing out against a clear blue sky, and then we plunged into the Lake Shasta Recreational Area. This was all the little wooded valleys with little winding roads leading down to them which I would have loved to wander down. Then we came to the Lake. It was an incredible deep blue, bordered with yellow sand, or clay. On a dull

day I suppose it might have looked bleak without the softening effect of trees and grass, but in the bright California sun it was startlingly colourful.

Though the sun gave life to lakes, rocks, and sand, it had stolen it from the vegetation. The grass began to have an unnatural brown colour seen only occasionally in Ireland, in short grass during droughts. Here there had evidently been drought for centuries. Even the leaves on the trees had a greyish dusty look. But at Corning I was enchanted by the palm trees and the Spanish architecture, this part of America being like nothing we had ever seen, and farthest from Ireland in more ways than one. We watched this rich and strange countryside until darkness came with a suddenness dramatic to one accustomed to the long twilights of a northern latitude. Then we slept.

We woke to find the bus rattling over a long bridge, which turned out to be the Bay Bridge at San Francisco. Bill Donaho was to meet us, but we were ten minutes early, so Walter went to get coffee while I minded the baggage. Suddenly I was surrounded by a joyous welcoming crowd, and a hot container of coffee put in my hand. Our welcomers had seemingly anticipated our wishes and had been getting the coffee for us as the bus arrived. There was Bill Donaho again, still as amazingly big and gentle; Dick Ellington, smiling broadly and almost stammering in the exhuberance of his welcome; his wife Pat, who reminded me of Honor Blackman; and, most surprisingly of all, Ethel Lindsay, who we had thought was thousands of miles away. And there we were telling Ethel all about our Seattle visit while she was trying to tell us all about Los Angeles. It was a happy welcome to San Francisco.

Bill told us he had arranged for us to stay with Miri and Jerry Knight, and I felt just a little nervous as we entered their little house. I had never heard of Jerry, and all I knew about Miri was that she used to be married to Terry Carr and I had liked her fanzine. However, once I met them I knew that Bill had arranged things well. Miriam was one of the most fabulous women I had ever met, and Jerry was quiet and likeable. It was fascinating just to sit and look at Miri gesturing with her graceful hands, so small for such a tall girl, and watch for that curiously charming little wave-like motion of her upper lip as she smiled. For the first time in years I felt almost jealous as I noted how impressed Walter was, too, with our hostess. Also staying with the Knights was Calvin Demmon, one of the brightest stars to have appeared in the fannish firmament for years. He had already gone to bed, since he was suffering with a cold, and we wouldn't be seeing him until tomorrow, I was told. I went upstairs looking for the bathroom. On one of the doors there was a notice saying "Ladies," so naturally I

walked right in. In the intermittent flashes of light from something like a traffic blinker, I could see an occupied bed. I should have realized this was a fannish household, not a bus station.

Walter and I slept on a convertible settee which was very comfortable. It was pleasant to find again that the twin beds of the American cinema weren't typical of the normal household.

Friday, 14 September

During the early morning I woke briefly at what I thought was the sound of the milkman leaving his bottles on the doorstep. At breakfast time, thinking more clearly, I realized it couldn't have been the milkman; in America people collected their own milk at the supermarket. Miriam cleared up the mystery for me when she enquired if we had slept well, and hoped we hadn't been disturbed by people using the coke machine just outside the window. It seemed that next door was a motel, and the crusty proprietor wouldn't move the machine to where it would be less of a nuisance. Now it was daylight I could see the motel pool only a few feet away, and I agreed with Miri and Jerry it seemed unfair they couldn't use it occasionally when the motel wasn't full.

We met a half-awake Calvin before he left for work. He was quieter than we had expected from his fanzine contributions, but sometimes I think quiet people make the best fans.

After breakfast Ethel joined us for a day's sightseeing with Miri and Jerry. It was very hot in the courtyard outside the house, so we set out for the Golden Gate with the Volkswagen top down. But as we neared the Pacific a cool breeze sprang up and a mist rolled in from the sea. We women in the back seat had to beg the men to stop and put the top on again before we were blown into the bay. This was part of the charm of San Francisco, the unexpected mists and the cooling sea breezes; they brought a kind of European air to the city. We noticed also that here people didn't dress as casually as elsewhere in America. They were both more cosmopolitan and more relaxed, and the atmosphere was one of culture more than of bustle. The cool sea mist gave me more energy to take in the scene, but unfortunately it also took the scene away, for the Golden Gate Bridge was completely obscured. However, as Walter said, as he bought some postcards at the other end, we had been on the bridge and we could see what it was like, so what more could we want.

We visited a museum and admired Rodin sculptures, and then Miriam

took us to her own favourite sight. We stood at the edge of a little lake and looked across it to an ancient grey anachronism in this modern city – an ancient ruined Gothic castle, complete with cupolas, towers and statued niches. What was it doing here, we asked? The explanation was more fantastic than the castle. It was a sort of custom-built ruin, constructed on the occasion of some exhibition. The people of San Francisco had been so charmed by its age-darkened plaster and synthetic lichen that they had kept it after the exhibition was over. Not only that, but now that it was becoming a genuine ruin they had plans to reconstruct it of more permanent materials. I grew fonder than ever of this romantically-minded city.

We were now looking forward to our promised ride on a cable car, but first Jerry had to find a parking place. This at first sight appeared quite impossible. The streets were as narrow as in any European city, they curved and twisted just as much, and to cap it all they were even steeper than those in Seattle. However, American ingenuity had found a way, and Jerry, after going for miles in the opposite direction from his objective in a succession of one-way streets, at last penetrated to a multi-storey car park. It was the first one I had ever been in, and I watched with awe as we spiralled up and up the ramp looking for a floor with space on it. We found one at the top, and after admiring the view took the elevator down again, being bowed into it with such courtly politeness by another pedestrian that it felt more like a sedan chair.

Back on street level, we wandered a few blocks and found ourselves in Chinatown. Straight from a multi-storey car park we were plunged into a world of lanterns, pagodas and... what were those coloured things in the air?... yes, kites. If all this were a tourist trap I was perfectly willing to be caught. What immediately took my fancy was the cheongsam, of which there were numerous examples on show. I fancied myself being inscrutable in colourful brocade, but prices were high even for the cheapest ones, and I doubted if I could get one in a petite size. I was quite happy to keep on looking and marvelling at all the other unusual things in the shops, but there was a rival groundswell of opinion in favour of food. Ethel had had her breakfast earlier than us. Jerry and Miriam were looking, with what Walter described as a singularly sophisticated perversity, for a Mexican restaurant, but we finally settled for one of the hundreds of Chinese ones.

Its appearance was a complete contrast from the usual American diner. No expanse of formica, no leather-topped stools and absolutely no chrome. It was like nothing so much as an old-fashioned Irish pub. To top

it all we were bowed into a little curtained booth exactly like what we call a “snug”. It was really strange to find familiarity in combination with this exotic district and alien food. Alien or not, Miriam and Jerry had chosen well, because it was delicious. I had my first sweet and sour pork here (the only other time I had been in a Chinese restaurant was in Manchester at the SuperManCon, where I got crottled greeps) and I have never tasted better since. As Walter said, if you have to wait half your life to taste sweet and sour pork, San Francisco is the place to hold out for. The other dish I remember was ginger beef, and it was almost as delicious. We had four dinners between the five of us, and though we were all hungry, it was plenty.

Our next destination was Fisherman’s Wharf, and we were to get to ride a cable car down to it. The cable cars were a strange amalgamation of tramcar and jaunting car, propelled by some sort of underground cable. We sat on the outward facing seats as it careened downhill, jangling as it went. It was an exhilarating experience. Everyone seemed very light-hearted, even those who didn’t seem to be tourists. There was a gay air of almost fannish camaraderie, as when the car stopped for no apparent reason and the cheerful driver said it was because of a coffee break at the power house. Then, at the bottom of the hill where the car was turned on a turntable, nearly all the men passengers stayed to help the driver. I thought it fun for everyone to lend a hand. It was a really civic transport system.

We experienced a disappointment that was yet in a way a pleasant experience when we reached Fisherman’s Wharf. Miri wanted to take us into the Cost Plus shop which had a large assortment of exotic articles for sale at low prices. But on the pavement outside were two men walking up and down carrying placards; they were picketing the establishment. Miri surprised me by being hesitant about entering across a picket line. Somehow I had got the impression that most American fans were anti-labour. It was nice to find that our hosts on this occasion had similar political views to our own, and we were quite happy not to enter but to wander around looking at all the other shops.

Ethel had to leave San Francisco that evening, so we all went back to Berkeley to meet Bill, Cal, Pat and Poopsie for a farewell dinner. For this, Bill took us to a very cosmopolitan restaurant. It served food in the German style, was owned by an Irishman, and employed Chinese waiters. I think what was German about the style was the size of the helpings – they were large even by American standards. I suspected Bill’s motives in picking this particular restaurant, as, in spite of the pleasantness of the food, he got to finish up many side dishes and most of Poopsie’s dinner.

On one visit to London, Walter and I were fed so inadequately that we entered a second restaurant immediately after leaving the first, and ordered another complete meal. When Bill goes there, I can see him making a pilgrimage from one restaurant to another, a modern Flying Dutchman, never at rest. But here in Berkeley he assuaged any guilty feelings we might have about wasting that lovely food. Unfortunately, he couldn't do anything about those other guilty feelings we were having about Ethel. This was at the end of her trip, and we had so much still ahead of us. We could see that the others were sad about it too, and yet this, paradoxically, lightened our mood. We were proud of the impression she had made on American fandom. I was specially pleased, as a feminist, that our first woman TAFF delegate was such a success.

Chapter 12: San Francisco and Santa Barbara

Saturday, 15th September

Miriam was much more concerned about our disappointment at the Cost Plus store yesterday than we were. So immediately after breakfast she took us to the local equivalent. This type of “import outlet”, which was the unlikely sounding name for an Aladdin’s cave of all sorts of goods from the far East, was completely new to us. Contributing to the atmosphere was a rickshaw, parked on the pavement outside, It had a little hood as in a pram or baby carriage, and was fairly modern in that it was propelled by cycle power instead of the older runner version. I was urged to pose for a photograph, and rather timidly I sat inside while Calvin sat on the saddle. Walter hurriedly took the picture before the store owner could object to an Irish import getting mixed up with his oriental ones. Though come to think of it, I was the only Eastern import there. Miriam’s honour being satisfied by our purchase of some souvenirs, we returned to meet Pat Ellington, who was giving up her day off to drive us to the Charles Lee Tilden Regional Park.

We were to go via the Canyon Road which I visualized as a desolate ravine, with rocks perilously perched on steep slopes, dry and dusty as a desert. The reality reminded me of the Glens of Antrim, except that it was very hot, and the trees had an unfamiliar look, for it was a charming and twisty valley with trees on either side, and a small stream running along the bottom. We bought hamburgers, and stopped at yet another picnic table to eat. These sunny hours we spent eating out of doors spell America to me. The tables and benches on a grassy expanse, trees in the background, and luxurious warmth. We went on down the canyon, past where the Ellingtons used to live, and came to a little schoolhouse such as we have here in country districts. But this one had been Americanized. It had a well-equipped playground with swings, a slide, and even a permanently painted hopscotch lay-out. The little country school I attended had merely a bare expanse of concrete around it, and we played hopscotch on the chalked pavement. We had a leisurely stroll along the banks of the stream to admire the redwood trees, then we returned to Berkeley to prepare for Bill’s party.

We entered Bill's house to find the place crowded. Nearly every fan in San Francisco seemed to be there, looking friendly and welcoming. Rog Graham dropped in for half an hour along with Honey (he had to retire early as he was recovering from a heart attack) and he and Walter reminisced about the 1952 trip from Chicago to Los Angeles. Walter was able to tell Rog that the brash teenager who had almost set the car on fire then had now matured into a responsible married man. I spoke to Joe Gibson and he paid me a compliment. Later, hearing him speak to Roberta, I realized that he had taken care to refurbish his "image" at the first opportunity. It was a pity, for I liked the more courtly Joe Gibson much better. I had a conversation with Dave Rike, whom I remembered from the pages of *Innuendo*; he seemed very shy for a left-wing agitator. At the same table was seated Dick Ellington, who, though possessing much the same political opinions, could never be described as "shy". He was very easy to get to know, and told me about his first, second, and third mistresses. I'm still not sure as to whether he wished to shock or impress me, or merely to feel out my opinions on the matter.

Almost imperceptibly through the evening, with all the cheerful talk I had become happier and happier. Walter provided me with another possible reason. He had been with Alva Rogers, Tony Boucher and others, in the passage outside the jakes, listening to Bill Donaho giving Al Halevy advice on fanzine publishing (which made it a privy counsel, I suppose) and he came to check on a report that I had disposed of a whole bottle of wine by myself. At first I refused to believe it; I was willing to believe, with him, that I should be dead drunk. I decided to test my ability to walk a straight line which in itself, I suppose, gives a pointer to my condition. Dick Ellington saw what I was doing, and started from the other end so that we bumped into one another in the middle. "This is fun," he said, "let's do it again." I had noticed that Karen Anderson had a whole bottle of rum to herself, so I challenged her to walk the straight line too. She did it perfectly, but I think I issued the challenge too early, since she still had half a bottle to go.

Into this scene of gaiety and conviviality Bill interposed a more serious note. We couldn't put off making a decision about leaving for Santa Barbara any longer. We knew that Bill had made tentative arrangements for us for the next night, and we hadn't been able to say whether we would still be in San Francisco or not, as we hadn't been able to contact Steve Schultheis. It now seemed that a formal dinner party was being arranged for us at the home of Alva and Sidonie Rogers. Walter, helped by Miriam, phoned Steve again, and this time found him at home.

He had arranged to take some time off on Monday, therefore we needed to leave San Francisco early the following day. It was an agonizing decision. We had to choose between disappointing an old friend since the 1957 Convention, and disappointing a large group of people less well-known to us. We asked if our hosts and Calvin had been invited, and found they were not. But Miriam pointed out that they had had us to themselves for a couple of days, and they didn't really mind. We were rather inclined to think that the party might be rather "proish" yet we hated to let down people who might already have gone to some trouble in making arrangements to entertain us. We finally decided, as fans, who had, we thought, been brought over by fans, to leave for Santa Barbara the next day. Bill was very helpful. He said he would take the blame, as after all we *had* said that we might be leaving the Bay Area on Sunday. Sidonie Rogers, unfortunately, was not quite so amenable. She seemed more annoyed than regretful, and told me that for days she had been borrowing all sorts of things such as dinner knives, etc. I tried to apologize again, but she replied that she'd be more sorry than I would. Karen Anderson said that she'd had a pot of beans soaking, and now she supposed they'd have to be thrown out.

It was quite a relief to find suddenly that some of us were hungry, and there was a suggestion that a party of us should go out to eat. This would be a quite horrifying and insulting suggestion to make here in Ireland. If you feel hungry at a party, the hostess is in honour bound to provide the food. Besides, there wouldn't be anything open after 11 p.m. anyway. One of the advantages of the American system is that many more people can be invited to a party than could be invited to a meal. So at about 2 a.m. we set out. Another car followed us, and when the first place we tried was full (that was the most surprising thing of all, that there should be so many people eating out, as if it were still early) the pursuing car drew up beside us and Andy Main shouted to follow him, he knew a pizza place. A third car had now joined the convoy, and we shouted back at them, "Pizza place, pizza place." We took over the pizza place when we found it, and the party was continued there for some time.

Back at Bill's we found a quiet corner with Walter Breen, and had a long talk with him. I congratulated him on his inspired typo in a recent *Fanac* – he had referred to Joni Cornell as "Yoni" – and he admitted what I had been suspecting, that is, that he had done it deliberately. I think that must have set the tone of our following conversation, for he regaled me with the tale of how he had arranged with Wally Weber to be assigned the number 69 for his membership in the SeaCon.

The last memory I have of Bill's party is, appropriately enough, of Bill himself. His genial beam had become wider and wider during the evening, but he hadn't been able to hold his liquor as well as I could, and when we looked for him to say good-bye, we were escorted to his bedroom. There was a touching sight: The giant Bill was stretched out on the bed, bare-chested, stripped to his shorts, almost filling the bed, but leaving room across one corner of it for the dainty little figure of Poopsie Ellington. We wrote a good-bye note, placed it on his chest, and tip-toed away.

Sunday, 16 September 1962

We awoke to yet another bright and sunny day, a fact to which I was rapidly accustoming myself. There was no hesitation in dressing, no doubtful looking out of the window and then going out the back door to get a wider view of the sky. Grey skies presaging rain and colder weather hold no part in my memories of San Francisco. There was no time either for sadness at our imminent departure, we just got up and started packing. Miriam came down a little later, then Calvin; Jerry slept late. Miriam and Calvin drove us to the bus station; we were a subdued quartet. The only excitement on the journey was when there was a loud report. We stopped to check that the tyres were okay, and Calvin told us we had merely run over an empty wine bottle. At the station we stood around for a few minutes, saying all the words that people the world over say on these occasions. Suddenly I was overcome with the feeling that these words we were saying, because of their utter familiarity and inevitability, were quite meaningless, parrot words. It seemed utterly ridiculous that I should be saying these things to two such good friends, whom I should very probably never see again. There should be other words, I felt, than the usual "sorry to be leaving, it was wonderful having you, I hope we'll meet again soon" formula. I said those parrot words, parrot fashion. Then I realized what I had done. No one else could read my mind, no one could see what I was feeling. The others looked at me, and Walter said "Madeleine!" in a shocked voice. I felt trapped, what could I say now? How could I explain, in the minute or two before we left? I just said, "I'm sorry, I'm being stupid, it's been wonderful meeting you, and I do hope we'll meet again some time, give my love to Jerry and say good-bye to him for me."

And so for the last time we looked across San Francisco Bay, across the blue sparkling water, letting our eyes linger on the marble-white

buildings rising in tiers to the gentle green slopes of the hills beyond. San Francisco *is* a beautiful city.

We were travelling the Coast Highway route, but on studying the map we found that this route was nowhere near the coast for most of the way. It was a pleasant enough journey, nothing remarkable to see, just hills shimmering in the heat haze, and nearer at hand, the sun-scorched grass.

It was very late in the day, at about seven in the evening, when we saw what we had been looking for ever since we had arrived in Seattle, a week and a thousand miles away: the breakers rolling in from the open Pacific onto a stretch of golden sand. Here at last was the Pacific coast as we had imagined it. This was at Pismo Beach. The road ran alongside the beach for a few miles and then turned up into the hills again. It was almost dark when we reached Santa Barbara. Here we found evidence of the fannish equivalent of the "old school tie network," in that a friend of Andy Main (bem), namely Bob West, was there at the bus station to meet us as well as the fully accredited Goon* representative Steve Schultheis. We were welcomed to Santa Barbara and whisked away up winding narrow roads to a bungalow hidden away amongst greenery.

** The Goon Defective Agency (GDA) was a joke private-eye outfit whose adventures were chronicled by John Berry and Arthur (Atom) Thomson in their fanzine* Retribution. *See* The Goon Omnibus *in the TAFF Free Library. [Ed.]*

We said hello to Virginia, and were instantly made at home in the Spanish-type living-room. This was the only home we visited in America that seemed foreign to us, yet it had echoes of the primitive farmhouse interiors I was used to in the south of Ireland in that the walls were uneven and white-washed. But the resemblance ended there, for the room was very large, as there was no need here in sunny California to huddle around the fireplace. There were beautifully-shaped arches at either end of the room, and further evidence of cat fandom in the two scratching posts set up in a corner of the room. I think that, of all the fans we met in America, the Busbys were the only ones who didn't cherish the feline tribe. I had read of cat scratching posts, but these were the only ones I had seen. Their presence, I think, was further evidence of the care which Steve lavished on everything which pertained to him. James White, in *Hyphen,* had already described the care and attention Steve expended on his sartorial appearance, and here was evidence that he cared for the appearance of his furniture – very nice it was, too. We were shown his den and his fanzine collection. I was not a bit surprised to find that it was housed in a steel filing cabinet, properly filed in alphabetical order. I think Steve is

hideously miscast as a Goon operative; he would be much more at home as Lord Peter Wimsey.

Monday, 17th September

We slept late, and made our own breakfasts in the neat kitchen. We had been shown the night before where everything was, but I think even if we hadn't we would have been able to manage all right. We just had to look in the most logical place, and there we would find what we were looking for.

We went out into the garden to sunbathe, and there at last was evidence of the dichotomy in Steve's character: it was a Goon garden. Everywhere we looked greenery rioted unchecked, and the dividing line between Steve's and the next-door neighbour's garden could only be extrapolated. Down one side of the garden was a no-man's-land of plants and trees and overgrown vegetation. We looked for a spot to lie down, and found no soft grassy place such as there would be in a garden at home. There was grass, but the California sun had made it tough and brown and scratchy. We went inside again for rugs, lay down beside the lemon tree, and read magazines until Steve could come back for us at lunch-time. I was surprised that there was a lemon tree with ripe lemons on it, for we had had canned lemon juice at breakfast. But then Virginia was a career girl as well as housewife, and it must be much simpler to collect your lemon juice already prepared.

Steve drove us to a rendezvous with Virginia and Thelma Evans, widow of E.E. Evans. Virginia had brought hamburgers along for a picnic, and we asked where she had bought them. They were Broomeburgers, which had been recommended to us by Andy Main. It was unanimously agreed that these burgers were Good, like those of Calais. Thelma had been to the local bakery, and had brought some chocolate eclairs, filled with confectioners' custard. This was the first time I had encountered this particular substitute for whipped cream. I thought it a better substitute than the "mock cream" made from white fat which is commonly sold here in baker's pastries, but it was typically American in that it could only be in common use in conjunction with refrigerators, as it became slightly liquid at normal temperatures. We chatted for a while, then said good-bye to Virginia and Thelma.

We went down to the beach and took a stroll. It seemed somehow unfair that just then a cool breeze sprang up, but it was still much warmer than at home, and we were comfortable in shorts and sleeveless tops. Here

again was evidence of the American tradition that summer ended on Labor Day, for we had the beach almost to ourselves. The only other people about were a couple who were probably foreigners like us, or possibly the man was an overworked executive who had been ordered to take a holiday, for, as I watched, fascinated, he went through a long and varied repertoire of exercises. If he had to spend part of his time on a sandy beach, well by God he was going to make some use of it. There was an air of grim determination about his corpulent figure.

The beach ended abruptly inland at a steep bank topped with green. We found a place to climb up, and found the green wasn't grass, it was a plant I had never seen before. An ice-plant, I think it was, and it grew thickly, ankle-deep in places. This was apparently the Californian substitute for grass. It didn't need watering or mowing, it was coolly green under the hot sun, but it wasn't good for sitting on. But then in California, as in most other parts of America, the ubiquitous wooden bench was usually not far away.

The perfectionist in Steve came briefly to the fore again. His logical mind couldn't accept the immaculate sartorial elegance of Robert Heinlein as he had appeared at the banquet at Chicago. *He* knew what behind-the-scenes work went into that beautiful white jacket and immaculately creased trousers. He had a theory worked out to account for this which he shared with us. It seems that Heinlein has a valet (his former batman from wartime days) whose devotion, paralleled only by the little dedicated band of Hugo voters, is such that he shares all those hazards of Heinlein's breakneck dash across the mountains, plains, and swamps that combine to make Heinlein late, stands guard with his little clothes brush to banish any least little speck of dust, mud, snow, hail, or fall-out from the Water Brothers' ceremony before it can settle on his master's person.

Steve drove us round part of Monteceito and we admired the traditional Spanish style of architecture. Those are nice old Spanish buildings, we said. Those are *new* old Spanish buildings, corrected Steve.

We passed the Valley Country Club and saw what we had previously seen only on television: buggies being used by golfers to save walking. We had been rather amazed at the popularity of these, and a little scornful of the golfers who would use them. Here in California I took it all back. When the cool breeze wasn't blowing, it would indeed be an effort to walk round a golf course in the heat, let alone swing a golf club. I had been so completely acclimatized by now to the American style of unfenced gardens, that when we came upon one that was completely surrounded by a fence of impenetrable greenery I was quite surprised. "What have they

got to hide?” was the way I put it.

We left Santa Barbara shortly after 5 p.m. on the express bus for Hollywood. It was a very short journey, a mere two hours.

Chapter 13: Los Angeles

Monday, 17th September (continued)

Time, the great healer, has mercifully erased from my mind the terrifying conglomerations of traffic as we neared Los Angeles. There were five or more lanes in each direction with cars pouring in from all directions. I had seen some pretty complicated intersections near Chicago, but here were mobius strips gone wild, clover leafs gone rampant, and horrendous hordes of signs. I should hate to have to find my way to anywhere in Los Angeles and District. One would first have to know how to get to the entrance to the freeway or expressway required, fight through the traffic (and even the slowest lane seemed fast to me) and watch out for the signs for the various exits. There were four-level interchanges, and a different lot of exits and entrances depending on whether you were going north, south, east, or west. All you can see on the freeways converging on Los Angeles are the palm trees, the signs, and the land sloping up on either side of the road. The restricted view one gets on many freeways and turnpikes is like nothing so much as travelling certain railway cuttings here in Ireland.

Forry met us at the bus station, and drove us to his home on Sherbourne Drive. On the house wall, where the house name would normally be, were his own initials painted in red, about two feet high. I think the prominence given his own initials is part of the charming simplicity that makes up Forry's character. You know where you are where Forry is concerned, but it also makes one fearful for him. He needs protection from his own lack of deviousness; when he is so open-hearted himself it is hard for him to realize that others sometimes wear a mask. This can also lead to his friends being a little secretive about things that they don't wish to become common knowledge – not that Forry is a common gossip, but that he is so soft-hearted that he finds it difficult to refuse requests, whether it be for information or something material.

I cannot visualize Forry's house at all, as it was hidden from view by trees and shrubs. In a way this was reminiscent of the castle of the sleeping princess, only that this house was dedicated, not to times gone by but to the future. The trees made the house dark inside as the sun couldn't shine into any of the rooms. This was in complete contrast with what would be desirable in this sun-starved island, but here in Los Angeles it made the

house pleasurably cool and restful after the heat and glare of the streets outside. There must have been furniture inside, but it too seems nonexistent to me now. What I do remember are the walls covered with all sorts of pictures having a source in any one of Forry's three main interests – science fiction, horror, and sex. Up to and beyond picture level there were shelves of books and magazines, and every room was thus filled.

I had heard of the famed three garages filled with books, and how the car had to stand in the driveway, but when we were there this latter-day Augean stables had been so tidied up by Walt Daugherty and his two young helpers that at one point Forry could have driven his car in. It would have made a historic picture, but unfortunately Forry had been away at the time, and since then more shelves had been put up and more books added to the collection.

In the kitchen a refrigerator was humming away, busy at its self-appointed task of covering its mortal coils with several inches of frost. Inside, two trays of ice cubes huddled together for company in the vast empty wastes. When staying in other American homes we had been taken out to meals occasionally, but this one was the first where there was absolutely no provision for eating at home. I was a little disappointed at being done out of queening it in the kitchen, being a firm believer in the old proverb that "the hand which readies the crocks rules the world." That night, when we started thinking about going to bed, Forry asked us if we wanted anything, and we said we were used to having cocoa or hot chocolate last thing at night. Forry took out the car and drove us to the nearest snack bar. At 3 a.m.

That evening we sat around and talked, bringing each other up to date on what had been happening since we saw each other last in Chicago. We told Forry about our mountain climb and other adventures in Seattle, and about the wild Berkeley party where the young fans returned from a shopping expedition with fresh supplies of drink and three traffic blinkers. These last were greeted with glad cries of "Get one for me!" The young fans promptly went out for more. I hated to think of the hazards left facing unsuspecting motorists on the roads round El Cerrito; but, as we told Miriam in a letter a few days later, we might disapprove of their actions, but we would visit the criminals in gaol. Berkeley Fandom had always been noted for its open minds; now, as I told Forry, we could call them "The Free Blinkers' Society".

Forry entertained us on the piano, singing to his own accompaniment. I think he has this rather idealized picture of Home Life, friends gathering round the piano of an evening and singing together. Neither Walter nor I

can sing, but on Forry's urging I gave it a try. After one duet, Forry closed the piano lid. As he said regretfully to Walter, "She's all heart; there's no room left for a voice."

We were shown up to the main bedroom, which was to be ours during our stay. Forry hadn't been content to give up his bedroom that first night – he slept downstairs on a couch even though there was another bedroom upstairs, leaving us a whole floor to ourselves. He knew we'd been sleeping in Greyhound buses and other confined and semi-public places, and presumably he felt we might like to whoop it up a little all over his top storey. I suspect that even the bedroom was thoughtfully set up for us, too. At any rate, from the bed we could see ourselves in two large mirrors, one on the dressing table and the other inside a closet door. It was a type of hospitality which doesn't yet seem to have occurred even to the editors of Good Housekeeping.

The last peculiarity we noticed was an intercom set over the bed. While making sure it was switched off I accidentally touched the burglar alarm, waking up half of Southern California. It took Forry a few moments to turn it off, but fortunately the police didn't turn up. Maybe they didn't want to get involved.

Tuesday 18th September 1962

We slept late, me later than Walter. Walter has this built-in urge not to miss anything; the little clock in his brain tells him that most other people are up, doing, writing, and saying things, so he gets up even if he still feels tired. He's not so naturally lazy as me, but sometimes I think he goes too far. What do you think of someone who puts one television set on top of another so as to watch two television programmes at once? It's this same urge that led him to join FAPA even though he hasn't had time enough to fulfil all his present fanning commitments.

But I digress. This morning he was *very* frustrated. Forry was up even earlier than Walter – he probably got to sleep sooner – doing some work on his *Famous Monsters* magazine. The snag about working at home for Forry was that he couldn't afford too many interruptions, like phone calls from Little Monsters, so he had a quiet phone bell. Forry told Walter that there had been a call but he hadn't bothered to answer it. Walter was a little annoyed, for he was expecting a call from John Trimble. He tried to get John at the twine manufacturers where he worked, but in vain. I too, when I finally got up, was worried. John had gone to a lot of trouble for us

yesterday on account of this quirk of Forry's. (We had tried several times to get in touch with Forry from Steve's place, and had finally given up, and on Steve's advice had phoned John. John had driven across to Forry's to deliver our message in person.) But as always it was hard to remain annoyed with Forry for long, so we just hoped that John would ring again when we were there to answer the phone.

We went out to breakfast, and called at a bank to cash a cheque. Now at home, these have the same uneasy effect on me as doctors' and dentists' waiting-rooms. I get this guilty feeling in banks that perhaps I'm not really entitled to the money they reluctantly hand over. Here in Los Angeles I found a more proper attitude. This was a business firm, and people taking money out were clients just as much as those paying money in. I supposed this was all part of that good old American Kow Tow I had heard about.

Forry was throwing a party for us the next night, so when we returned we helped him decide on who was to be invited or left out. I thought it was perhaps asking a lot to expect people to come on such short notice, and so wasn't surprised the next night when many didn't make it. But Thursday was out because of the LASFS meeting, and Friday was reserved for our visit to Disneyland. The only person on Forry's list of invitees that I vetoed was Trina Castillo *[now better known as Trina Robbins]*. And I am ashamed of myself.

I had heard of Trina in the fanzines, and all I had against her was the fact that there was a beautiful nude study of her adorning one of the walls of Forry's house. I am not normally so possessive, but I just didn't like the thought of her being there in person for Walter to look from the photo to the actual girl and back again. It made me curl up a little inside just like all the horrible nagging wives I had ever read about. This was a facet of life in the big city that I just wasn't big enough to take. Forry looked at Walter, and Walter just smiled and shrugged to show he wasn't bothered. A later episode in Los Angeles was to give me some justification for my action – a little jealousy on Walter's own part.

The afternoon was, as now seemed an immutable law of nature, hot and sunny, and we were delighted at Forry's suggestion of a trip to the beach at Santa Monica. Before we left, Walt Daugherty drew us aside. "See that Forry doesn't stay out in the sun too long," he said. "He's not used to it, and he might get sunstroke." This was one of the strangest happenings of the trip, that two tourists from rain-sodden Ireland should be charged with protecting an inhabitant of sun-baked California from sunstroke. The beach was only half an hour's car-ride away, and we soon realized how unused Forry was to this sort of thing. He got lost taking us

there.

We were soon enjoying the water and sunshine. But it wasn't until I had been nearly run down by a surf-rider, and feeling all indignant about it, that I noticed the near-by sign. "Out-of-bounds to swimmers, surf riding" it said. When I told Forry, he looked unrepentant, but in spite of this I was mindful of Walt's injunction and anointed Forry with my sun-tan lotion, and came away before we had quite got our fill of this unaccustomedly warm water and glorious sunshine.

Forry had arranged to take us to the Chesley Donovan Foundation that evening. We hardly knew quite what to expect. All I remember Forry saying beforehand was that one of the leading lights of the Foundation, Helen Urban, was on her third re-write of an immensely long novel. When we entered the dimly lit hall, a showing of slides was in progress. We groped for seats in the half dark, and tried to make sense out of what was going on. A voice in the background described the various techniques he had used to produce the colourful effects shown on the screen – some slides had been washed with permanganate of potash, some had been scratched with a pin, and there were oohs and aahs of appreciation from the audience. I watched – abstractedly, I think is the way to put it – and tried to take an intelligent interest. But I gave up when the interior of a building was shown on the screen, first right way up, then sideways, then upside-down, and everyone squealed in delight.

We made some excuses and said we would have to go. The next minute everything changed. The lights were put on, people started to talk to us, and Helen Urban plied us with some delicious cake. But Walter had already phoned some fanzine fans to come and talk to us at Forry's place, so, making apologies all round and feeling a bit guilty now, we left. Through all this Forry just sat there looking urbane, yet I still feel puzzled over his part in the whole episode. I don't think he appreciates that kind of creative activity any more than we do, and I still can't figure out his motives in taking us there.

Back home at Sherbourne Drive, we were soon talking to Bruce Pelz, Jack Harness, Dian Girard, Bob Lichtman, and Joe Sanders. Then we had another showing of slides. But this was one we could appreciate – we were just simple, uncomplicated fans, after all; it was of slides taken by Bruce at the Chicon. It showed us even more clearly that there had been an awful lot going on at the con that we hadn't known about. Bob Lichtman looked at some of Forry's collection of girlie magazines. Someone had mentioned, in justification of disapproving of Forry, among other things, this habit Forry had of leaving lying around girlie magazines and such. They didn't

like the way in which any young fans had free access to anything in Forry's collection. I didn't see anything in it to object to. I think that possibly most of the young fans in the Los Angeles area were more au fait in sexual matters than the person who advocated censorship. I don't like censorious people.

I was glad of Dian's company, and I took her up to the bedroom to seek her advice on what would be suitable wear for Disneyland. I hadn't seen anyone wearing the kind of shorts I had brought with me, and I was doubtful about them. They were *very* short, Dian said the boys would appreciate them, and pooh-poohed the idea that I need worry about them being unfashionable. She mentioned, though, that I would perhaps need slacks to protect my legs on some of the rides. As she was moving about, she accidentally set off the burglar alarm *again*. I told her she would have to confess to Forry. I couldn't very well have made the same mistake twice running.

Chapter 14: The Ackerman Party

Wednesday, 19th September

There was a nice note from Bjo waiting for us the next morning, expressing regrets at not being able to attend the party, and arranging to accompany us to Disneyland on Friday, together with a thoughtful gift of two orchids. I had never even handled an orchid before, and these were beauties, grown by Bjo's mother. I put them away in the refrigerator to keep them fresh for the party.

There was also a phone message from Len and Anna Moffatt. They said they would be over to call for us at 10:30 to take us to see Rick Sneary. I was pleased to be going to see Rick, he was one of the first American fans I had heard of – an Elder Ghod of fandom. But Len and Anna were late, and it was almost 11:30 before they arrived. We were beginning to feel frustrated at the impossibility of fitting in all the things we wanted to do and see in Los Angeles. It wasn't like in Belfast, where you can do one thing in the morning and arrange another outing for the afternoon. So we were annoyed at the Moffatts for keeping us hanging around most of the morning. It wasn't until much later, when we studied a map of Los Angeles, that we realized that Downey was about 18 miles across the city from Sherbourne Drive.

Anna first drove us to the Bird Sanctuary. It was closed, and when we ventured a little way into the grounds we were wet with sprinklers.

We next visited Griffiths Observatory. It also was closed, but we were told that the view from it was worth seeing. It was obscured by smog.

Next on the agenda was the Planetarium; it was closed also.

I think it was almost in desperation that poor Anna began to point out such places of interest as the Downey Public Library. All I wanted was to get out of the heat and have a nice quiet visit with Rick Sneary. I began to think that Ireland's climate mightn't be so bad after all, as even when the car speeded along one of the freeways with the windows open I began to feel dizzy with the heat. It was now 96, I noticed, about 30 degrees above what I had been accustomed to all my life. I thought how sensible the Spaniards are to take a siesta in the afternoons.

But relief was at hand, the Moffatts took us to a fancy expensive air-

conditioned restaurant for lunch. It was the Silver Saddle, where they served second helpings free. I began to feel bad about not liking Anna more, but this feeling didn't last long. Anna told me that short shorts were not worn in Los Angeles, and as for bikinis, only showgirls and models wore those. The way she said it made me feel almost brazen for having appeared in such attire.

After lunch we went to the Moffatts' house. It was a nice house, with long French windows opening onto a shady patio, but the conversation was a little stilted. I think if we'd got Len to ourselves we might have got along fine, but we didn't feel that we had much in common with Anna. She tried to be hospitable; she and Len bought us a fine lunch; she gave much of her time in driving us over many miles of the city; but it was as though there was a wall of ice all round her. Walter and Len looked through some APA mailings, I forget of which one, and then, finally, we set out for Rick's place.

It was of necessity a short visit, as we had to return to Sherbourne Drive for the party, and it was well into the evening when we got there. Rick was very welcoming. He showed us his prized collection of fanzines, reaching back into the dim past of fandom, and his more recent collection of knives and daggers. These last somehow didn't fit in with my idea of Rick's personality – I didn't realize that he was also a sword-and-sorcery fan. I resolved to send him the same kind of paper-knife that I had given to Walter as a Xmas present. Even though Walter isn't by any means a sword-and-sorcery fan, he was enough of a romantic at heart to appreciate this little knife. It was made in Spain, a Toledo blade, a miniature sword all jewelled and ornamented. But, like most resolutions, especially mine, it wasn't kept. But some day, when I am again in Belfast, I hope I will remember.

We returned to prepare for the party. Walt Daugherty had already set out many dishes filled with fresh fruit, sweet rolls, potato crisps, and sweets. It looked as though, for once, I would be sober at an American fannish party.

Lee Jacobs, whom I always remember from Walter's 1952 Convention report as the fan who had the traumatic experience of being refused beer at his hotel, arrived well prepared. He carried several cans of beer, and I never saw him again empty-handed. Bob Lichtman had a small bottle of expensive wine with him. It was almost empty when I was talking to him, but he let me have a taste of it. This gave me the idea of going out and getting a bottle to share with him and Bruce, even though I might incur Forry's displeasure.

Bob offered to drive me to a nearby supermarket, and I went out with him to his car. The car fascinated me. It was an enormous (to my European eyes, of course, most American cars seemed enormous) blue car, still new enough looking to be worth at least £400 at home, I could hardly believe it when Bob told me he had only paid $300 for it. This must be one of the basic differences between teenagers in the U.S. and in Gt. Britain, the fact that one group, almost without exception, has access to a car, and the other has to make do with a bicycle or public transport.

We arrived at the supermarket, and found some difficulty in deciding amidst the bewildering variety on show. I asked the proprietor's advice, and wandered round the counters. While we were choosing the wine, I noticed that the owner and his wife seemed to be talking about us. When we brought back the chosen bottle, they asked if I was Scottish. It seemed that they had been arguing about my accent. I said I came from Northern Ireland, and the proprietor smiled triumphantly; he must have guessed right. The Ulster accent must puzzle anyone who hasn't heard it previously, as it has its roots in both the native Irish tongue and the Scots Gaelic spoken by those Scots who settled in Ulster in large numbers in the 16th Century.

We must only have been away from the party about half an hour, but some jokers had told Walter, when he suddenly missed me, that I had been last seen over an hour ago, sneaking out with Bob Lichtman. I was surprised by the reception we got when we re-entered the house. At first I thought all the interest was in the bottle which I was guiltily half-concealing, but people were watching Walter's face and mine. I suddenly realized that Walter was questioning me almost jealously, and I was relieved and a little amused. It was true that Bob Lichtman was attractive, but I could never think of myself as a "Tea and Sympathy" heroine. Even without the wine to help it along, the party was a swinging affair from then on. It was a wonderful lift to my morale to find that my husband of nearly twenty years could still feel that I was attractive enough to appeal to youngsters half my age.

But there was at least one person present to whom I knew I didn't appeal at all. Forry told me there was a known homo present, and asked if I could pick him out. I had no difficulty in doing so. I don't think I'm vain, but I had particularly noticed that when I was introduced to this man he had looked at me with absolutely no spark of interest in his eyes, They looked sadly and emptily into mine. Forry was surprised at my perspicacity, but then he hasn't got the type of equipment that I have.

Walter came over excitedly to tell me that Harlan Ellison had arrived,

and to come and be introduced. Harlan perhaps over-reacted – he turned round from the people he was talking to and looked up in stunned surprise. I suddenly felt shy of walking across the crowded room. The distance between us that I had to traverse seemed to stretch out, and I felt that every eye was upon me. Harlan took my hands in his, and turned round to share his admiration with everyone. I hardly knew what to say. All I could think of at that paralyzingly embarrassing moment was that saying of Bob Bloch's which had appeared on a *Hyphen* back cover and which Bob had wickedly attributed to me: "Harlan Ellison was running around with a cigarette in his mouth and burnt a hole in the knee of my pants." I stupidly paraphrased the saying to Harlan. But Harlan is quick-witted, and he had a ready comeback: "She's fannish as well," he said admiringly.

I found that Harlan was a born raconteur, and he was soon holding everyone within earshot spellbound. I made my escape back into the security of the kitchen with Bob, Bruce, and Dian. There was a problem in getting the bottle opened, for of course Forry didn't possess any corkscrews. However, Bruce hacked away with a penknife and we all had a drink.

There were many attractive girls present. The one I most admired was the Chinese wife of one of the pro-authors. She was dressed in a most becoming cheongsam, made from a wondrously rich-looking brocade. She seemed shy, and I found that it was because her English wasn't very good. I admired her dress – I had seen nothing to compare with it in San Francisco – and she told that it had been sent out from home. Another attractive girl was Ellie Turner; she and her husband made a very handsome couple. Terry Pinckard, a well-upholstered brunette with a revealing cleavage, came to talk to us and have some of the wine. Harlan came too, and going up to Terry he said with a leer, "May I physically assault you?"

We all returned to the main party, and I met many interesting fans. There was Elmer Perdue wearing a yellow sequined tie and pontificating in his best God manner – he was delightful; Joe Sanders, the blondest man I had ever seen; Don Fitch looking scholarly; Mitch Evans telling old shaggy dog stories. Harlan was still telling stories, and a phrase he used – "women alcoholics" – suddenly seemed to hold an awful significance for me. I caught Dian's eye and almost ran out of the room to collapse, laughing hysterically, in the kitchen.

When we went back again, Walt Liebscher was playing softly on the piano, and people were starting to leave. We felt sad and nostalgic. Bob Lichtman and I went out to examine Forry's electric typer, in his office

just off the living room. Bob sat down and typed, “Bob Lichtman – drunk.” He looked at me and then typed another line. It was “Madeleine Willis aussi.” I nodded my head in agreement, said good-bye, and went off to bed.

> *And that, alas, is where the report stops. Madeleine had previously (before any of the above instalments) written a brief homecoming note that serves as an epilogue and appears below. As to why neither report was finished, this was because of the house move Madeleine alluded to in her letter opening* Chapter 10*. For the same reason Walt discontinued his column for* Scottishe*, whose editor Ethel Lindsay explained in its pages that the work required at their new home in Donaghadee – which was much bigger than Oblique House – was taking up all their time. However, Walt had already provided us with a 1965 postscript in his long-running column “The Harp that Once or Twice”, which at that time was appearing in Tom Perry’s* Quark*. See* Postscript by Walt Willis *below. [Ed.]*

Epilogue

In deference to the expressed wish of Les Gerber I shall try not be be folksy: it is, however, difficult not to be when writing about our homecoming. Both Danny Curran and Paul Zimmer regretted that I did not come from the other side of the Irish border and I told them that though I was born in Northern Ireland I was only first generation British; both my parents were born in the south. When I caught my first glimpse of Ireland after being away only five weeks in time but a life-time in experience, I realised what a sloppy sentimentalist I was. It didn’t matter that this country I was just about to land in had a different flag, a different Government, or a different coinage, it was home. But there *was* a difference. I noticed it first in the customs hall; I had noticed nuns and priests in the departure lounge at Idlewild (one of Eire’s chief exports) but while we were waiting for our two small cartons of baggage to be examined (one containing Brian Aldiss’s Hugo and the other presents for the children) I saw this Customs Officer wheeling one of those supermarket-type carriers loaded down with five pieces of handsome luggage. “Is there any more, Father?” he asked, and the tall and handsome priest carelessly held up two fingers. The Customs Officer scurried away to find the missing cases and I went on my way shaking my head

sorrowfully. It could never happen in Belfast, not even with the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

Postscript by Walt Willis

Case Report

Having your luggage lost by the Greyhound Bus Company and then stolen by one of its employees is not an experience which any right-thinking fan can be expected to regard with equanimity. Furthermore I had before me the inspiring example of Vince Clarke, who took on the whole might of British Railways over a far less serious matter and with one vitriolic letter secured not only complete satisfaction and abject apology, but a refund of his twopence-halfpenny stamp. Great public corporations, I thought, might well be impervious to the inarticulate murmurs of the man in the street: but they could be vulnerable to the deadly weapons of the combat-hardened fan, trained by years of feuding.

So when I got home in the autumn of 1962 I wrote quite a number of letters, only to find I was up against a more modern and sophisticated opponent than honest old British Railways. Greyhound had perfected the cockroach technique, invented by a famous airline. The man who exposed it had found a cockroach in his soup and written a letter of complaint about it. He had a reply about two pages long signed by the President of the Company, full of profuse and abject apology. A full investigation had been carried out. It was incredible that this unheard-of misfortune had indeed taken place and they were deeply grateful to him for bringing it to their attention. Three employees of the airline had been dismissed and the entire catering arrangements completely overhauled so that such a dreadful thing could not possibly recur. They hoped he would accept their apology and not withhold his patronage in the future. The recipient of this letter was pleased and flattered, until he noticed that the envelope also contained his own letter, inadvertently returned. And that on it someone had scrawled: “Send this drip the cockroach letter.”

Eventually a point of law cropped up, and I sent all the papers to an American fan with legal connections who volunteered to pursue the question from that angle. But because of private difficulties of his own the matter languished for nearly a year. Last February I decided I was damned if I was going to let Greyhound have victory by default, and that it was time to seek the aid of the worldwide organization of trained correspondence commandos to which we all belong. I hadn’t done this

before out of a feeling that fandom had done enough for me already, and even now the appeal took only the form of a mimeoed statement of the situation enclosed with *Hyphen*, which any reader could pass along to someone who might be interested, or simply ignore.

But it was enough. I felt like someone tied to a stake in an Indian encampment hearing the bugles of the United States Cavalry. Tom Perry had written to the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Chamber of Commerce: Dave Kyle had written to Joe Hensley and the law firm of Metford and Hensley had written to Greyhound's General Baggage Agent; Joy Sanderson had written to her Senator, the Attorney General, and to the Cleveland Better Business Bureau. And this was only what I knew about in the first few days. I was awed anew at the energy and ingenuity of fans.

Why hadn't I done that before, I thought, reading Tom Perry's letter to the Interstate Commerce Commission and their interim reply. Why, even the paragraph dealing with the purely legal question of their powers opened up a whole new vista of possibilities. For all its dry legal style it was haunting, evocative, full of sense of wonder...

> Insofar as the merits of claims for loss or damage to property are concerned, you are advised as a matter of information that this Commission is without jurisdiction. When a carrier denies its liability in whole or in part, the shipper's remedy is by a suit in a court of competent jurisdiction. The Commission has expressed this lack of authority on various occasions; for example, as to claims for loss or damage to property, see *Blume & Co.* v. *Wells, Fargo & Co.*, 15 ICC 53, 55, and *Jumbo Pizzas Inc.* v. *General Expressways, Inc.*, 314 ICC 467,468. It follows that a complaint to this agency would not toll the operation of any statute of limitations.

I was not alone, I realized, neither in space nor time. I had by my side not only fannish friends, but such ghostly allies as gallant old V. Blume, a refugee from persecution in mid-nineteenth century Europe, whose tailoring equipment along with all his other few pitiful belongings had been lost off a stagecoach somewhere West of the Pecos. In my mind I saluted the grave of this old comrade in arms, where he lay forgotten by the side of some new freeway, and swore that we who survived would carry on his struggle. On the way back from the past, momentarily disoriented, I somehow found myself in another probability world....

Tom Perry's letter had come in the morning post, and by 11 a.m. I had conceived the Great Plan. Calculating the time on the West Coast to be

3 a.m., I picked up the telephone and asked for a Los Angeles number. It was only a matter of a few months to the Pacificon and there was no time to lose. This was a time for swift positive action, a time to call on the aid of a master in another field of fan communication. After a brief delay while the operator broke into a local call I was connected. “Harlan?” I said....

In Washington Square, Ted White, moving quietly among the checker boards, approached the seventeenth name on his list of internationally recognised pizza connoisseurs. It was Homespun Hank Hogcaller, folksinger. “Jumbo?” mused Hank, lighting his corncob pipe with the automatic corn cob pipe lighter on the dashboard of his custom-built Ferrari. “Haven’t tasted one in years. Remember I had one lunch, but the eggplant... Yup, that’s right, eggplant. It was a Greek made them. Guy named Lephantiasis. Eggplant Lephantiasis, they called him. Never cared for the eggplant movement myself...”

But Ted was already on his way to the nearest drugstore. Minor disagreements forgotten, he called Sam Moskowitz. From the records of Sam’s frozen foods company it took only a few minutes to turn up the particulars of former client E. Lephantiasis, creator of Jumbo Pizzas. Starting in a modest diner on Sixth Avenue he had risen in the pizza world like a meteor. The crash had come when he tried to open a pizza factory on the West Coast. A suitcase containing his secret pizza formulae had been lost in transit; an inexperienced factory supervisor had improvised to meet an urgent order: a terrible mistake had been made. Unable to meet the damages awarded to the widows. Lephantiasis had fled the country and was now living in retirement in Ensenada, Mexico. Picking up the company phone, Moskowitz dialed a Berkeley number.

At an emergency meeting of the Pacificon Committee the following evening, minor outstanding business was adjourned indefinitely, including some proposal about banning a fan from the convention. Bill Donaho reported that special emissary Bjo Trimble was expected to telephone any moment, and a supply of ditto masters was available for briefing fandom. Dead on time, Bjo called.

The Committee did its work well, and by the end of the Convention Phase 1 was complete. Charmed by Bjo, Mr. Lephantiasis had parted with the keys of his enormous disused pizza factory in Fresno and his secret recipes. Under Bjo’s supervision, a working party from Los Angeles had put the factory back in working order, machinery overhaul being looked after by Elmer Perdue and a team from Burbee’s machine shop. Inside the factory was stacked ready a vast supply of foodstuffs brought by

Convention members from all over the United States, stored neatly under the supervision of Wrai Ballard. The ovens, serviced by Dean Grennell, stood ready.

On the Tuesday after Labor Day the entire convention adjourned to Fresno and worked for 24 hours. When they were finished they had raised to the sky a delectable mountain. Carefully stacked by Terry Carr and Ron Ellik, there rose towards the stars a veritable leaning tower of pizza. Phase 2 was finished.

Phase 3 had originated in the devious mind of Bob Shaw, from a memory of his own experiences when he left Canada for Ireland in 1958. They were going to the South Gate convention en route and Bob had bought Greyhound tickets to Los Angeles and checked the family's luggage on ahead. But at the last moment they decided to fly instead. Bob collected a full refund on his tickets from Greyhound, but retained his baggage checks and used them to collect his baggage in Los Angeles, brought there by Greyhound for nothing.

It was this chink in the defences of Greyhound's unwieldy organization that we relied upon to bring about its downfall. Once we saw that Greyhound could be made to carry baggage for nothing, we realized they were defenceless against our diabolical scheme.

Five hundred fans had brought old suitcases full of foodstuffs to Fresno. A blitz on West Coast junk shops and family closets produced 1500 more. Into each suitcase went one Jumbo pizza. The remaining thousand were made into parcels, padded by crudzines into various shapes. Throughout the rest of the week there fanned out across the country a horde of ruthless and determined warriors, armed with their deadly pizzas.

The procedure was simplicity itself. At random points fans would break their journey at a Greyhound depot and buy a ticket to a random destination. They would check in a concealed pizza, apply for a refund on their ticket, and go on their way chuckling evilly. By the middle of next week they had all arrived home and mailed their baggage checks to fan headquarters in Chicago. A code message appeared in all fanzines: Phase 3 was complete. All fandom waited expectantly.

It was only a few days before Greyhound headquarters in Chicago began to realise that something had hit them: subtly at first but unmistakably, the entire Greyhound organization was being pervaded by the smell of decaying cheese. By the end of the second week the situation was becoming catastrophic. From coast to coast Greyhound Posthouses were deserted: even the staff were eating out. Passengers were refusing to wait for buses inside the depots, and drivers were losing more in parking

tickets than they were collecting in fares. Booking clerks in 37 depots had gone on strike and hundreds of others were reporting sick. It was rumored that Trailways were taking them on.

In the Greyhound presidential suite the emergency conference of senior executives dragged into its tenth hour. Haggard face stared hopelessly into haggard face. Police guarded the windows to prevent more of the suicides that had been disrupting traffic on Dearborn. In the wretched silence the phone rang startlingly. The President picked it up listlessly. “Good evening,” said the pleasant voice of Earl Kemp. “This is the Cheese Odour Eradication Company, Inc. I understand you have a little problem over at Greyhound?”

Soothing the pitiful appeals of the Greyhound President, Kemp suavely explained. His company had wide experience of this sort of problem, with a staff of skilled operators throughout the world. For a fee of a mere $50,000 they could guarantee a virtually complete solution to the immediate crisis, but to prevent its recurrence the entire Greyhound system would have to be kept under expert surveillance indefinitely, at an annual retaining fee of ten thousand dollars. He would supply a list of operators to be provided with free passes. They would include technical consultants from Europe, whose names he would supply from time to time, and whose fares across the Atlantic would of course be paid by Greyhound. No, of course his company’s methods were a trade secret, but they would take effect within four days.

This was all the time it took for Kemp and his committee to send the baggage checks to fans in the towns of the destinations shown on them and for the deadly pizzas to be withdrawn inconspicuously from the hundreds of baggage offices. At the end of that time Greyhound was able to breathe again – literally – and fandom entered on a new era.

There was, however, one further strange development that came as a surprise to Greyhound, to the fans, and to the whole world. Seventeen fans reported that the baggage they had tried to claim was missing. And, almost simultaneously, public health inspectors broke into a mysterious warehouse in Hoboken. Later, some mathematicians at Harvard advanced the theory that the infinite convolution of worldwide transportation systems had set up a sort of topological whirlpool, a sort of Sargasso Sea of lost property. Among the strange items found in that Hoboken warehouse, in addition to seventeen enormous decaying pizzas, were a portrait of the Duke of Wellington by Goya, the skeleton of Ambrose Bierce, two arms from the statue of a nude female, a battered chalice, a portable tailor’s shop, and a blue suitcase and a brown duffel bag

belonging to an unknown couple from Ireland.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

Eastern Greyhound Lines
1400 West Third Street
Cleveland, Ohio, 44113

March 25, 1965
File # J 6722

AIR MAIL
Mr. Walter Willis
170 Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast 4,
North Ireland

Dear Mr. Willis:

I have just had the opportunity to read our file on the unfortunate loss of your baggage.

I am sincerely sorry that you had this bad experience with our service and have enclosed our draft number E67528 in the amount of $225.00 in settlement. This represents the maximum liability on any single piece of baggage transported by the company.

Please accept our sincere apologies for this unfortunate circumstance.

Very truly yours,
R.J. O'Connor
Vice President – Marketing

Thanks, friends. Lay that pizza down.

Many years later in Hyphen #37 – published in Autumn 1987, more than 22 years after issue #36 – Walt ran an excerpt from the Greyhound letter and added a few more details. The Warhoon *#28 reference is to the first page of the reprinted "Harp" column above. [Ed.]*

So ended a saga which began in September 1962 in Phoenix, Arizona, when we got off the coast-to-coast bus to visit the Grand Canyon leaving two of our suitcases consigned to New York. They didn't arrive, and

Greyhound said their liability was limited to $25 per case unless the contents had been declared and insured. So it said on their baggage receipts. Then in May 1963 they wrote again to say that one had been found and their New York Office would turn it over to Irish Airlines for shipment to us.

It never arrived, and eventually turned out to have been stolen in New York. So we were back to square one again. Or were we? Madeleine (Not Just A Pretty Face) saw that this time Greyhound had consigned the bag, not us, that we had declared the contents, and that we had not been given the opportunity to insure them. We put this to Greyhound but they weren't moved: so we unleashed fandom on them, with results comparable only to the descent of the Assyrians like a wolf on the fold, you know, cohorts gleaming in purple and gold and all, as described in *Warhoon* 28, p.418. (No no the Assyrians weren't in Wh28: that was Byron.) (The Destruction of Sennacherib.) (I'm really insufferable since I got the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* from the Book of the Month club.)

Appendices

Appendix 1
Notes on *Twice Upon a Time*

Twice Upon a Time was originally published in fanzine instalments as below; for this ebook, titles have been supplied or expanded to make the Table of Contents clearer. All but the last of the segments titled "The Bright Land" in *Ankus* carried the epigraph "But westward, look, the land is bright." – from Arthur Hugh Clough's 1849 poem beginning "Say not the struggle nought availeth". Chapters 1 to 11 were first assembled (without the previously written and published epilogue) as *Twice Upon a Time* in *Warhoon* #28 (1980) edited by Richard Bergeron. Some corrections, including typo fixes, unscrambling of dates and restoration of missing text, have been based on the original fanzine appearances.

- Chapter 1 (26-27 August 1962) – untitled in *Axe* #34, February 1963, edited by Larry and Noreen Shaw.
- Chapter 2 (27-28 August 1962) – untitled in *Axe* #35, March 1963, edited by Larry and Noreen Shaw.
- Chapter 3 (29-30 August 1962) – untitled in *Axe* #36, April 1963, edited by Larry and Noreen Shaw.
- Chapter 4 (30 August to 2 September 1962) – as "Chicago Chicago" in *Hyphen* #34, September 1963, edited by Walt and Madeleine Willis.
- Chapter 5 (3-6 September 1962) – as "Chicago Chicago" in *Hyphen* #35, April 1964 edited by Walt and Madeleine Willis.
- Chapter 6 (7 September 1962) – as "The Bright Land" in *Ankus* #14, February 1965, edited by Bruce Pelz.
- Chapter 7 (7-8 September 1962) – as "The Bright Land" in *Ankus* #15, May 1965, edited by Bruce Pelz.
- Chapter 8 (8-9 September 1962) – as "The Bright Land" in *Ankus* #16, August 1965, edited by Bruce Pelz.
- Chapter 9 (10-12 September 1962) – as "The Bright Land" in *Ankus* #17, November 1965, edited by Bruce Pelz.
- Chapter 10 (13 September 1962) – as "The Bright Land" in *Ankus* #18, February 1966, edited by Bruce Pelz.
- Chapter 11 (14 September 1962) – as "A Day in San Francisco with Ethel" in *Les Spinge* #13 edited by Dave Hale.

- “Letter to Greyhound” – as “Excerpts from a Letter to Greyhound President Ackerman from W. Willis” in *Axe* #33, January 1963, edited by Larry and Noreen Shaw.
- “Epilogue: The Wearier Bard” – as “The Wearier Bard” in *Axe* #33 as above.
- “Aftermath” – from editorial in *Hyphen* #33, March 1963, edited by Walt and Madeleine Willis.

The original fanzine appearances are all available as scans at Fanac.org:

- *Ankus* https://fanac.org/fanzines/Ankus/
- *Axe* https://fanac.org/fanzines/Axe/
- *Hyphen* https://fanac.org/fanzines/Hyphen/
- *Les Spinge* https://fanac.org/fanzines/Les_Spinge/

Appendix 2
The Fastest Pun in the Mid-West

In the huge Walt Willis collection Warhoon *#28, Richard Bergeron inserted the following on the page that refers to the Ultimate Pun.*

One of the great shots of the Chicon III probably was stillborn. I had fetched along a little .38 S&W Chiefs Special and snapped a memorable pic of Madeleine squinting across the sights in malevolent splendour.

"That was a Mickey Spillane-type photo," I explained to Walt. He nodded politely and braced himself for the sting.

"That's why I shot it on mike hammera," I concluded.

Alas, I think that was on the 35mm cartridge that didn't get secured to the takeup reel, so the film never left the canister...

As Walt and Madeleine were leaving our hotel room, Walt tugged politely but futilely at the door, which tended to stick.

"Excuse me," I said, reaching past him to give the knob a savage wrench. "It takes a strong Yank," I explained, as they made their exit. Walt regarded me with a dreamy smile.

Later, having left the convention, motouring up the tollway toward Fond du Lac (we would have motored, but I put in the extra u out of deference to our British passengers), we stopped off at the Lake Forest oasis for refreshments. The dining area is a large room, with a massive gridwork on the ceiling.

"Every time I stop here," I remarked, "I get the feeling I'm beneath the plates of a gigantic waffle griddle."

Walt glanced upward thoughtfully: "Yes," he agreed, "closing in upon us, syruptitiously."

I recognized it as his revenge for the strong Yank line.

– Dean Grennell, 25 August 1977
in a letter to the editor.

Appendix 3
Notes on *The DisTAWF Side*

Madeleine Willis's report appeared in Bruce Pelz's fanzine *The SpeleoBem,* where the serial instalments often break off at some arbitrary-seeming point. For this ebook they have been redivided into a more logical sequence of chapters, and a few corrections made on the basis of Madeleine's original typescript of early instalments. The covering letters from Walt Willis included in the resulting Chapter 7 of *The DisTAWF Side* above, and from Madeleine in Chapter 10, were not published at the time and are taken from carbon copies. For reference only, the original fanzine appearances were as below.

- Part 1: *SpeleoBem* #18 (January 1963)
- Part 2: *SpeleoBem* #19 (April 1963)
- Part 3: *SpeleoBem* #20 (July 1963)
- Part 4: *SpeleoBem* #21 (October 1963)
- Part 5: *SpeleoBem* #22 (January 1964)
- Part 6: *SpeleoBem* #23 (April 1964)
- Part 7: *SpeleoBem* #24 (July 1964)
- Part 8: *SpeleoBem* #25 (October 1964)
- Part 9: *SpeleoBem* #26 (January 1965)
- Part 10: *SpeleoBem* #27 (April 1965)
- Part 11: *SpeleoBem* #29 (October 1965)
- Part 12: *SpeleoBem* #31 (April 1966)
- Part 13: *SpeleoBem* #33 (October 1966)
- "Epilogue": as "The DisTAWF Side" in *Axe* #33, January 1963, edited by Larry and Noreen Shaw.
- "Postscript by Walt Willis" – as instalment 40 of "The Harp that Once or Twice" in *Quark* #10, July 1965, edited by Tom Perry; plus further comment from *Hyphen* #37, Autumn 1987, edited by Walt Willis.

All the above fanzines are available as scans at Fanac.org:

- *Axe* https://fanac.org/fanzines/Axe/
- *Hyphen* https://fanac.org/fanzines/Hyphen/
- *Quark* https://fanac.org/fanzines/Quark-Perry/

- *The SpeleoBem* https://fanac.org/fanzines/SpeleoBem/

The End

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