

I WENT TO LOS ALTOS AND FOUND GOD

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BY MARV BOWEN

A nonvention, for those who don't know, is an unprogrammed gathering for fans unable or unwilling to attend the World Convention. Nonvention 6 was held over the Labor Day weekend at Ed and Jessie Clinton's house in Los Altos. It was a blast.

The party unofficially started, quietly enough, Friday night after the Little Men's meeting, which was also held at the Clinton's. A tent had been set up in the yard as Nonvention headquarters for blondes, brunettes, and redheads (female). The information as to whom the tent belonged was declared classified. Only those (female) who had a "need to know" could find out.

Ed's tape recorder was pressed into service to record nonhighlights and nonmessages to LASFS. Why this was necessary, I don't know; most of those at the party were either present or former members of LASFS. In fact, I may have been the only nonLASFSer there.

I have only a hazy recollection of the ending of that first night as I had been imbibing a laxative called screwdriver. (That damned orange juice!) All that I can recall is Jessie inveigling me into an early morning painting session in Ed's study with Ed crapped out on the couch mumbling critical remarks in his sleep. (Translation: stupor.)

The next afternoon, people started arriving for the Non. After a short talkfest, I walked the fan guest of honor--God. God, in his mortal incarnation as Elmer Perdue, immediately grabbed a beer, took off his clothes, and donned a pair of bathing trunks. This was a sight unbelievable to behold. God is a large man in several directions. To top it off, he insisted on showing everyone His; to Him, beautiful navel. (The theology of this overwhelms me.)

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God in fact had passed a miracle to arrive. The night before he had made arrangements with the Yellow Cab Company to pick him up at 7:30 a.m. and deliver him to the railway depot. Turns out they failed to make the pickup; and after God had shouted enough, the Yellow Cab Company graciously (?) took him free to the airport, gave him free a first-class fanjet ticket to San Francisco, and invited him to make use of the peninsula cab services to reach the Nonvention from the airport--at their expense. Hospes Clintonius picked him up instead. All weekend God kept chortling, "God (?) bless Yellow Cab. Only way to fly!"

Then there were two deaf fans there, Barry Miller and Sam Walters. Sam is a natural comic. When everyone was at least high--let's face it, everyone was drunk, including Sam--he decided to teach Jessie how to talk in sign language. He told her to copy his motions. It is, of course, impossible to describe adequately what happened. They pantomimed two hunters waking up, donning their clothes, eating breakfast, hunting for deer, and shooting (with a lever-action rifle). By this time, everyone was howling with laughter at Sam's antics and at Jessie's confused attempts to follow him in detail. But now--the guns misfire and the deer charges! Sam tells Jessie to throw her gun away, grab her knife, and stab and hack at the deer. Now get the picture: we were all drunk and laughing like mad, including Jessie; Jessie and Sam kept hacking at that poor deer; and Sam began backing toward the door. Finally he said, "Man, this is too much for me!" and bolted from the room, leaving Jessie alone with flailing imaginary knife and invisible mutilated deer. Then, after we had finally stopped laughing and regained some composure, Sam came running back in and set us off again: "Did you kill it?" he asked her. Meanwhile, Calvin Demmon had slept through all of this on the study floor, so Ed put a sign on him: "Dead deer."

Sam's contributions to the general pleasant idiocy were numberless. For example, later in the evening he asked Jessie where Barry was. Jessie said that he was in the W.C. Sam went and banged on the john door; which is proof that he was mighty drunk, because Barry is his deaf buddy. Finally, failing to get through to Barry, he returned and asked Jessie to go in and see if

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it was Barry in there, because he didn't want to do it himself--there might be a female in there! (I don't know whether Jessie complied or not.)

Still later, it was time for Ed to contribute, all unwittingly. Announcing indignantly that he was going to bed, he vanished. About an hour later Jessie discovered he wasn't in bed after all. She and Miri Knight initiated a search party. You guessed it. He was sleeping, all right--in the can.

The next morning, everyone left over from the night before found themselves suffering from an obscure disease known as the Madagascar Madness. Around noon we all went to Stickney's for breakfast. (Does anyone realize how horrible that name sounds when one is hung over?) The party picked up again in the late afternoon with the rearrival of the Rolfes and others.

Sunday afternoon Warner van Lorne, pro guest of honor, spoke, launching the Amalgamated Society for Sane Ulterior Propriety (ASSUP) to aid in the clothe-all-animals movement. It was received with a somewhat mixed reaction.

Sunday evening was somewhat quieter than Saturday had been, with word games and cards predominating. Monday was much the same. Everyone seemed to feel that this was the way to end it all, a sort of relaxed tapering off. Finally, having held on to the bitter end, the Rolfes and I left. Quiet descended over the Clinton pad.

And the last one up, there? God, in a dirty bathrobe.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

AND WERE THEY EVER!

- Homo Sapiens Hospes Clintonius Ed: who sleeps in strange places
- Jessie Clinton: who wanted her drink
- Mary Bowen: who purred
- Alva Rogers: who didn't know Rick Sneary
- Sidonie Rogers: who gave her call name to a cat
- Robert Buechley: who was bitter
- Felice Rolfe: whom God thought beautiful
- Joe Rolfe: who knew a limerick
- George Sackman: who wasn't himself
- Calvin Demmon: who was glad he left Los Angeles
- Jerry Knight: who thought it was a funny kind of quiet Sunday evening
- Miriam Knight: who had the kind of hiccoughs the Pope died of
- Barry Miller: who admired Miss March
- Robert Christenberry: who admired some slides of a certain nude woman
- Dick Ellington: who brought the watermelon
- Pat Ellington: to whom God bumped His forehead
- Paul Healy: who was late
- Robert Healy: who likes Beethoven
- Shutupsid: who likes shoulders
- Miss March, Playmate: who worried Alva
- Sam Walters: who was the deerslayer
- God: who passed a miracle to come to the Nonvention
- Tony Clinton: who came home again
- Ben Rolfe: who ran away
- Poopsie Ellington: who was a good girl
- Suzanne Rolfe: who was quiet
- Bob Lichtman: who never talked politics

Alex Bratman: who slept all over the place

Don Fitch: who was L.A. fandom

Valerie Langdon: who walked barefoot through a carpet

Elmer Perdue: who was a cardsharp

Two Horses: whom Miri Knight watched from a car

Warner van Lorne: who founded ASSUP

The Los Altos Police: who picked up one of the guests

Mark Halpern: who didn't play the game

Martin Billik: who found fandom

Norm Metcalf: who was Boticelli's grandfather

Assorted Waitresses, Restaurateurs, Grocerymen, and Salesmen; A Microphone Which Had Brandy Poured into It; A Rocking Chair Which Suffered; A Typewriter Which Was Sacrificed for Sonic Purity; A Tent Which Drooped; A Tape Recorder; and Assorted Tables, Chairs, Automobiles, and Decks of Cards.

FUN!



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