

THE HOTEL OF WELLER

A one-shot produced
on the site of
the wake.

THE HOTEL OF USHER

a Bay Area Rapid Fanzine one-Shot

We wish this were the Fall of the Hotel of Usher. Instead, it was it's Labor Day.

It was 11:00 pm Sunday night, Banquet night, Hugo night at the BayCon. Inside the Banquet Room, Philip Jose Farmer was doing a Sam Moskowitz imitation--and had been for the last hour. In the hotel lobby, three wearied fans sat together and discussed the BanCon Committee and its inspired choice of hotels. "What we really ought to do," one said, "is put out a one-shot to make sure nobody ever forgets what this place was like." The other two agreed--too enthusiastically for the idea to be dropped.

An hour later, one of the fans had located a typewriter and a supply of ditto masters, one had carried the typewriter to the room chosen for the one-shot, and the third had put up signs in both elevators (The automatic and the hand-operated one), up the stairs, and twenty yards up the first floor's corridors announcing to bypassers the room in which the one-shot would take place.

Four hours later the one-shot was over--ended by the simple tactic of having the fan in whose room it was taking place pick up an aluminum pole and menace everyone then in the room with it (about twenty people). Somewhere during the interim, over sixty people had signed up for copies of the one-shot. Over 15 pages were done fast right on an electric typewriter with overactive key reflexes. Some of these pages have been retyped because overenthusiastic writers forgot to take out the interleaf between the front and back of the ditto master. This issue was published on a UCLA ditto (hand-cranked) Wednesday and Thursday (not 4 and 5).

The one-shot door had a sign: "This is NOT a party." People come in anyway. Those wanting beer were invited to get a can from a party and bring it back to the hate session. Many did. Most beer parties broke up at 2:30 when the beer ran out, thus proving alcohol is weaker in staying power than adrenaline.

Among other works of enlightenment, the one-shot session showed several Midwest fans what a one-shot is. They didn't know. It seems the tradition is dying out east of the Rockies--possibly killed off by APAs. We urged them to go home and one-shot.

Contributions in this one-shot are not identified by author or by much of anything else. The reader should simply assume that each new paragraph ~~xxx~~ is a new comment by a new person.

We reserve the right to have another Hotel of Usher production if any future World Con hotels ~~we~~ live down to the standards set by the Claremont.

Any relation between the hotel portrayed in the following pages and the ~~Claremont~~ Claremont is probably true.

Contributors to

House of Wishes

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Vonda Neal McIntyre

Mother, The Black Sorcerer
and Sister

prologue

It sat there, upon its black Mountain, a seething bed of ~~the~~ tawdry marble and wood, a spot of evil upon the face of the earth

After the NYCon III in 1967, a good deal of comment was passed through the fannish press that despite the use of what some people considered to be underhanded tactics in the acquisition of the 68 worldcon site, the use of any such tactics if they were underhanded, was justified since the ends were so wonderful.

Then I saw the Claremont.

What was worse, I stayed there.

During the course of the speeches at the NYCon, we all learned what a large and wonderful hotel the Claremont was. About its fantastic facilities. About all the rooms it had.

Then during February of 68 it was discovered that there no longer any single rooms available for reservation. Doubles quickly followed the way of singles. Before long, all were gone.

Thus I learned in advance of just how large the Claremont was. When the BayCon Committee was talking about capacity they forgot to mention a few things. Like the mentioned capacity was if all possible rooms also had rollaway beds in them.

But the ConCommittee had the solution to the problem. Overflow. could go to the Durant Hotel which was not too far away. Just a few miles. The very thing to do at three o'clock in the morning. When you're tired.

Then when the Durant was filled up, the faithful ConCommittee had the right idea for that problem. Send the overflow to the Shattuck.

Thursday morning of the Con, the overflow was finally winding up at the Leamington, and one of the bellboys there asked if the science fiction con was coming back to the Leamington. Each one of them coming closer and closer to the bay itself.

.....
I have No Room But I Must Sleep
.....

chapter one Thursday afternoon check in & encounter

When I first checked into the Claremont, I was surprised to find a bar of soap under my bed--with the wrapper neatly folded up next to it. I told a friend. "You're lucky," she said. "I don't have any soap at all.

.....
"Are you sure there are roaches in the hotel?" "I saw at least one."
"Perhaps it was one of the staff."
.....

I've been in hotels before where the water pipes talked back to you, but this is the first I've been at where they played concertos. Sunday morning it was hard to tell the pipes from the rock band.

Then there's the air conditioner. It's a blast--of hot air. Down in the basement, of course, it's a little cooler. That's where the heater outlet is..
.....

The Claremont is so bad even the stairs are out of order.

Friday morning I tried the hotel restaurant. It had two waitresses for 80 tables. It saves time though. They don't wash the silverware.

Hitler is alive and well and funning the Claremont. They don't use gas ovens. It's too expensive. They just shove them all in the elevators and let nature take its course.

Then there's K Veda, the elevator operator with the mechanical smile and the malfunctioning elevator. She told Ellison, "Why are you invading my elevator?" "Lady, I don't want to overthrow your elevator by force and violence," replied Ellison. "I just want to ride up on it."

Veda spent the night of the Masquerade Ball watching the contestants with a glazed smile and horrified eyes. Someone once managed to shock her out of her catalepsy and get her to operate the elevator. He did it by starting to run the elevator for her.

They bring up the ice to you here without too much complaint though--at only 55 cents for a one pound bucket. Then if you don't tip the bellboy, he takes the bucket back.

The night of the Hugos, the water ran out. I think they're still desalinating sea water in order to get some more. I went over to a waitress's table to get some more water. "Get away," she cried. "Get away.. Get away."

"I never did get any dessert," a friend told me. "Considering he rest of the meal, maybe I'm lucky."

Where was the coffee? Towards the end of the meal (?) my sister and I smelled the glorious odor of coffee. However, the coffee decided it wasn't there. It decided to stay a few tables down and so on as that is where I saw it after the banquet. However, I'm not so sure that I would have wanted some as another fan at the banquet got some that curdled the cream. When I went out for coffee the open 24 hour coffee shop was closed....

Hell out there. This is the friendly Insomniac. I'm writing from the embattled room of free fans against another Claremont or some such thing. Actually I'm at the Shattuck (First Jackhammer from the left of the street pkt.)

We have Ray Bradbury on our floor (No, not the room floor stupid) and this makes up in part for the initial
Page Two



IT'S TRUE BAN
TAKES THE
WORRY OUT OF
BEING CLOSE

WINE TASTING
PARTY

The Inconvinces Still Speaks

treatment at the hands of the staff.

The staff at the con hotels cannot read. Our reservation guaranteed two rooms and we received one. So I threatened them with invasion of 10,000 hippies. (..e got the two rooms.)

I understand ice is 35¢ at the Claremont. (1.50 without bugs).

The help is really helpful though, especially the elevator lady who asked why we had pushed the buttons for two elevators for two loads of people. (I do not have a settuter...this is an electric typewriter.)

You know I usually have a great place to say about things and I do about this con. They were very careful about things getting into the wine tasting party. The owners of the brewers or whoever they were tried to throw my 20-year-old wife out.

The Claremont has a fire escape that's a long slide instead of steps. It was provided in the eventuality that some drunken fan might find it, but it is suspected that the hippies did instead.

The Claremont has the only screwy fire escape in the world. Riding it is a screwy experience. In fact, it's quite a blow to stop at the bottom--and hit the broken light bulbs, flower pots and banquet food (the good stuff that the cooks held out on but couldn't eat quite all of by themselves.)

You realize of course that the fire escapes are a screw designed mechanism. But they weren't made for people. At the first sign of emergency the Claremont burrows underground.

Mrs. Peel - You're needed....
Oy v y, are you needed!

This afternoon I was walking up to my room. As I passed the second level I saw the elevator in the motions of chopping a little old lady in half. The interesting fact was that she was in a wheel chair. I was amazed...to see that the elevator was in motion at all.

Program Note: 12:30 p.m. - 3rd annual Berkeley riots

Interlineation by Randall Garrett--69 is an oral contraceptive

The masquerade ball was a huge success, with the best successful costumes being those people masquerading as musicians.



HELLO I'M
YOUR FRIENDLY
PLANT-A-TOZ Z

ALRIGHT,
YOU
SWINE!

WHADDAYA MEAN...?
IT ISN'T FIT FOR
A PIG!



GAWS!
EVEN
THE
ROACHES
GOT
SICK
AT
THE
BANQUET!



...A MESS OF FACTS CONCERNING OUR OWN "DREADFUL SANCTUARY"

THE HOSTILE CLAIRMONT

MEANING: THERE'S
A LOT OF DRAFTS!!!

There's no light because the
lamp is broken; there's no
music the radio is broken.
There's no water because the
tap is broken. But, there's
a sine draft - the window is
broken.

I GUESS I'LL
HAFTA USE TH'
SPARKS... OH
YEAH, THEY'RE
OUTTA ORDER,
TOD!



SJC

12.31.56

HOWABOUT
SENDIN'
ME A
CABLE?

OUT OF
ORDER
YOU'VE
LEAST THE SHOP?

BY SJC!

You had to shift through the sugar to make sure there were no bugs in it. Maybe you were lucky to find some - at least they have nutritional value.

The service is a dream. For that matter, so's a nightmare..

THEORY: A somewhat bad hotel, with problems such as slow elevators (that are not a serious problem because the place is only 5 or 6 stories) or somewhat poor food facilities, or a management you get angry at but that doesn't actually put a serious crimp in anything may actually make for a good convention by giving everyone a common enemy. Remember one of the high points of the San Diego Westcon was sitting around in some room somewhere making up verses to a parody of @What Shall We Do With A Drunken Sailor@ with the hotel manager substituted for the unfortunate inebriated seaman. (This is an electric and all the capital numbers are wrong so quotes come out @ and an apostrophe is *.)

Actually, the cockroaches are meatier than the capon. I figured that with such a dumb staff it was only natural that they mistook cardboard for cardboard.

At least there's wall-to-wall air conditioning. With all the cracks the air has to go somewhere.

We actually have a color tv. It's brown.

People complain that I'm drunk. Here it's a pleasure to drink to forget. In fact, it is vital.

I wouldn't mind paying 50¢ for 7-up if it at least tasted as good as the water.. And here it is hard to taste as bad as the water.

The chicken died of old age. I'm glad that it didn't live through the indignity of being cooked by the Claremont.

At least they renovated the lobby. They reweaved the mothholes in the curtains and filled up the termite holes. In fact, I think the entire Claremont was used to fill up a termite hole. And they didn't even bother doing a good job of filling it.

It is not true that the Claremont's architect was drunk. He had been dead for years and didn't know the difference.

They were going to dirty up the Claremont to shoot a horror movie. When they saw it they cleaned it up instead.

The Claremont has class; it has a built-in sauna bath. All you have to do is get several people in any room and sweat, baby, sweat.

You can have fun at the Claremont. All you have to do is walk out the door. It's even more fun running, but considering the state of the walkway it's not too safe. Maybe that way is best - at least you'll be put out of your misery.

S.J.C.



OUR AD-HOC
SWINEZINE
BRINGS YOU
A

BONUS!

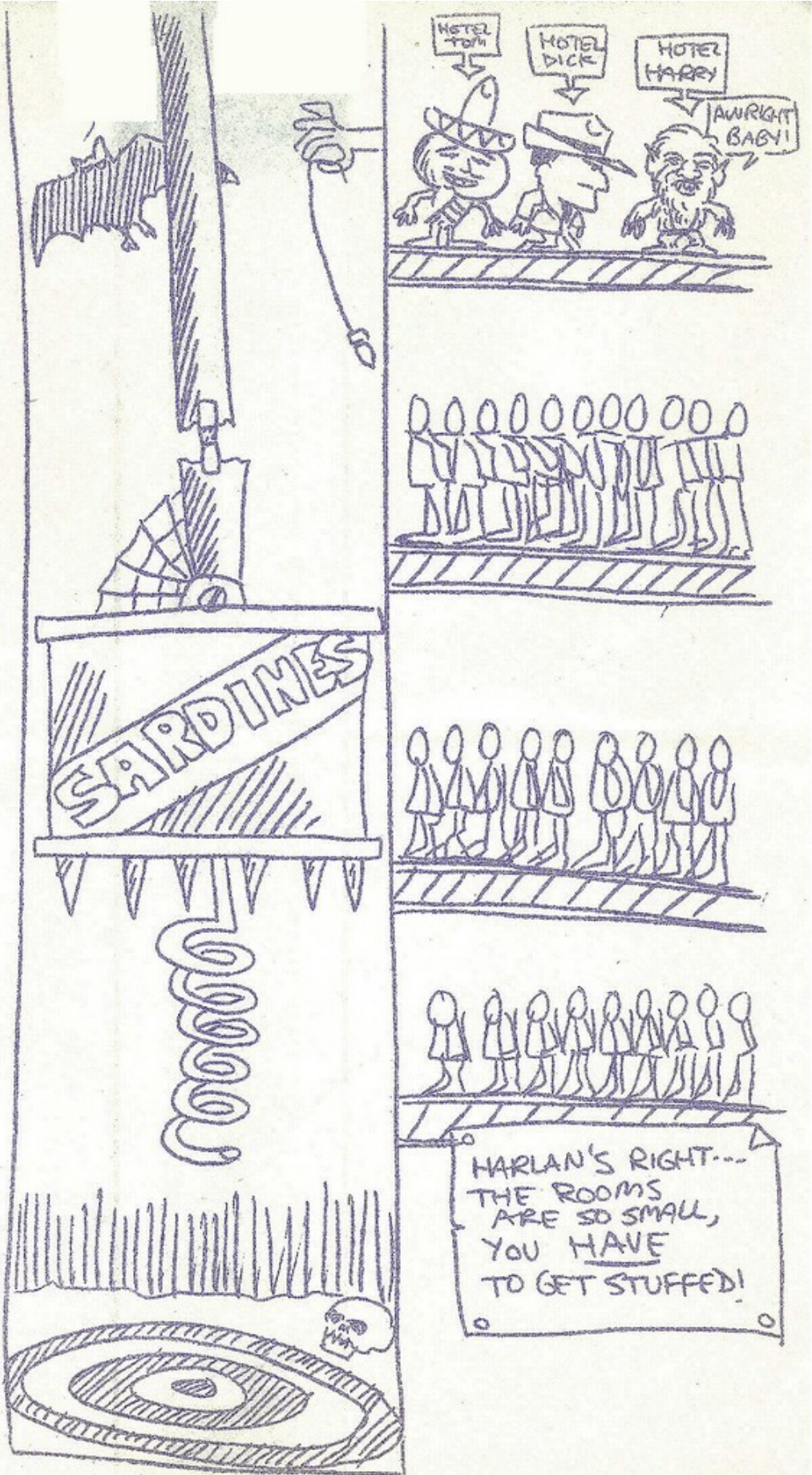
... A SPECIAL
DIAGRAM
OF THE
CLAREMONT'S
ELEVATORS!!!
(THEY EXIST,
RUMOR HAS IT!)

COURTESY
OF
SHAW!



JOHN CARTER
SAYS:

SUDDENLY,
THERE WAS
THE SOUND
OF A TAUT
WIRE SNAPPING.



HARLAN'S RIGHT...
THE ROOMS
ARE SO SMALL,
YOU HAVE
TO GET STUFFED!

SOME THOUGHTS BY SOMEONE

The Claremont is no place to lose anything. I know of too many writers who have lost their huggos, fans who have lost their wallets and girls who have lost their virginity at the Claremont. The staff has no sympathy for you - crying towels cost fifty cents. A dollar clean. The place is as cheerful as a picnic with H. P. Lovecraft as the Guest of Honor.

The style is early Disneyland - and even this will not be improved when Harlan finishes installing his pedestal suitably inscribed: "On this spot Harlan Ellison won two Hugos."

This local replica of the Gehenna Hilton has all the charm of an episode of Lost in Space - and the staff seems to be something out of the same show. The elevators are in league with Judge Crater - none of them have been heard of for years. ♪

There is no truth to the rumor that a slum previously existed on this site. It still does.

The Claremont was designed by six sadists and a bore. No matter where you sit down, you are behind a pillar--especially in the coffee shop. However, in the coffee shop this is a blessing. You don't want to see how what you are eating got prepared. That's assuming that you can get any service. The waitresses are just as likely to tell you that they can't wait on you - it's Tuesday. But don't try to complain. The manager is never in. If you want to complain you have to go to the Shattuck to do it.

The only thing less preferable than the Claremont would be a speech by Sam Moskowitz. In fact, my idea of hell would be a speech by old Sam in the so-called Banquet room. I lie awake and have nightmares about this. But this is the only thing you can do at the Claremont - lie awake. The rats run races in the walls.

This is the only hotel I know of where room service is delivered on a cart drawn by six matched cockroaches.

And finally there is no truth to the rumor that the Baycon committee has been sentenced to a life term in the Claremont. They are being told to hang in there. (We will be glad to supply the rope for that.)

I'm told there are cockroaches at the Claremont. I find it hard to believe. What cockroach would voluntarily stay at a hotel as bad as that.

.....
Actually the Claremont isn't really a hotel. It's the world's largest tennis court locker room.
.....

They're digging up Berkeley now to make tunnels--maybe for a subway. If we're lucky, they'll find they have to dig up the Claremont too.

THE CLAREMONT IS A RESORT...
THE LAST RESORT!

AVOID DRAFTS—
LEAVE THE CLAREMONT

EVERYONE IS PLASTERED IN THE CLAREMONT...
too bad the walls aren't!

THE HOTEL DOESN'T HAVE A LEASE...
IT'S GOT A LEASH

legalize Claremont

Support the claremont... it needs some thing to hold it up!

CLAREMONT POWER
(IT NEEDS IT)

PRAY

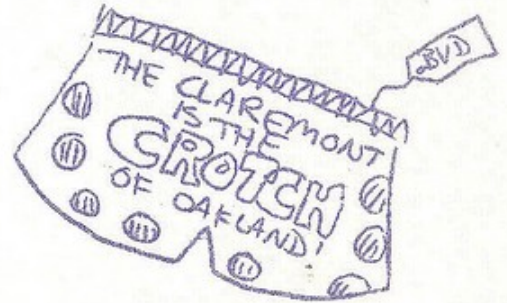
FOR THE CLAREMONT,
TO HELL WITH ROSEMARY'S BABY!



IS THIS A HOUSE OF ILL DISPUTE

THE **COCKROACHES** ARE REVOLTING

WHY AREN'T THERE FOUR LETTERS IN "CLAREMONT"?



the Claremont is a way of strife

ART BY SHAW!
COMMENTS BY HUMANITY!

STAMP OUT STAIRWAYS



A SCIENTIFIC SURVEY
HAS SHOWN CONCLUSIVELY
THAT THE CLAIRMONT DOES
NOT HAVE COCKROACHES!
THE HORNETS
ATE THEM!



when I arrived in Oakland and grabbed a cab (which wasn't easy), and first viewed the Clairmont, I gagged and called it the Dracula Hilton. It was worse inside. But then I began hearing rumours of the bed-bug fights on the beds in the Durango Corral, the tear gas in the Shadrack, Mesasch and Abendango and the Leakington still having the same dirty towels in the racks that the last Pacificon left there. I decided that maybe the fault was not in the Clairmont. The fault was in the San Andreas and it was long overdue to shift.

I shambled down lonely corridors in the Clairmont, the single yellow bulb casting eerie shadows upon the crumbling walls, throwing themselves over the azure-blood carpets. A lonely aura of death and terror lay heavily in the smog-laden air, the clammy hands of despairing thoughts enveloping me. My footfalls sounded heavily in the ancient wooden halls, echoing in beat with the beating rapidity of my laboring heart.

Superficially, there was nought but an unclassifiable fan of unsure proportions, a strange premonition tightly grasping me.

Towards me, his unholy girth filling my lone hope of salvation, loomed that unholy monster... A Bob Bloch...

-Ross Rocklynne-

Due to the peculiar construction of the Garden room, you were given the unique privilege of being able to see absolutely nothing from any given spot in the room.

But it could have been worse. It might have been held in one of the other Berkeley-Oakland Hotels.

This banquet was a great convention for lip readers... assuming you had brought along your binoculars. The sound system was excellent for producing squeaks, whistles, howls chirps, and even occasionally a dumbly heard spoken word emanating from the podium. It is fortunate, nay, actually beneficially inspiring that at least booze was available (for cash) to lighten the effort (or negate it) of trying to listen to the post-banquet speakers.

THE CLAREMONT HOTEL

(ARE YOU SURE?)

(IT
MAKES
AN ASS
OF
ITSELF!)

I bring you the tale of the Claremont Hotel.
The truth of this story we know all too well.
From attic to basement
To each broken casement
Each bedbug and roach has a story to tell.

If anyone knows of a fixture or such
That's stayed in one piece at the lightest of touch,
The Claremont will want to
Replace it, and pronto
With one that will not hold together so much.

So on your next visit to Berkeley, 'tis said,
Believe not the stories and rumors you've read,
But take our advice, sir,
And do not think twice, sir,
But visit another -- be happy instead.

| ELEVATOR SCHEDULE | |
|-------------------|------------|
| LOCAL --- | |
| 1 st | 7:00 A.M. |
| 2 nd | 9:00 A.M. |
| 3 rd | 11:30 A.M. |
| 4 th | 2:00 P.M. |
| 5 th | 4:30 P.M. |
| 6 th | 9:45 P.M. |
| EXPRESS --- | |
| | 1:00 P.M. |
| | 7:30 P.M. |

SUBJECT TO CHANGE
WITHOUT NOTICE

I LOVE THE
CLAREMONT! I
LOVE WALKING
UP STAIRS! I
LOVE POTAMINE!
I LOVE BROKEN
LIGHTS! I LOVE
COCKROACHES!
I LOVE NARM
DRINKING
WATER! I
LOVE...



This Hotel was wonderful except for a number of technicalities. Like if you wanted to breathe, in the meeting rooms. Also, the locations of the columns being strategically planned to provide a minimum of view from any position or given seat. But enough about technicalities. Let's get to the food. (And that wasn't easy). There really wasn't any trouble there, unless you happened to be hungry. There was a wonderful coffee shop. It took me a little while to figure out how they made the coffee. Apparently they cut two coffee beans in half and quickly ran hot water over them. The prices were reasonable (for Rockefeller).

As for "elevators", the stairs weren't too steep. All in all, this must rate as one of fandom's worst experiences. Fantasy at it's best.

+

COMMENTS ON PASSING-- the passing of a hotel

John Brunner speaking... This hotel has some of the qualities of the castle in that delightful movie "The 5000 Fingers of Dr T" - in other words I would not be in the least surprised to discover that somewhere in the ~~the~~ basement ~~that~~ there are dungeons containing ~~fans~~ who gave offence to the Bayson committee, condemned for the rest of their lives to go through a series of meaningless motions such as cranking ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ imaginary mimeographs, duelling with nonexistent weapons, and cooling ~~each~~ other with invisible intangible fans. Setting aside the minor details listed above, I must however say that I've enjoyed the people, the main facility of any convention and the only one which is entirely independent of the management.

Seekidy Sander;s Speaks:

The Gardesn Room is one of the most fantastically constructed rooms of all time.. Due to numerous pillars it is possible to see nothing from anywhere.

Quotes overheard: Things like that should not be done to strawberries.

Farmer reminded me of his story "Riders of the Purple Wage" --long and senseless.

It could have been worse. It could have been at one of the other con hotels.

This hotel has everything. Some of the guests got dysentery. We're not sure though whether it was from the food or the water.

.....
For those who have eaten the food here, requiem in pacem.
.....

According to the hotel brochure, Frank Lloyd Wright "was inspired to comment, "This is one of the very few hotels in the world with warmth, character and charm." When we got here Thursday we found it had warmth. Oakland was 101 degrees. It has character too--Veda among them. Charm? Well, two out of three isn't bad .

In Berkeley Town there died a con
Please listen what I say
In Berkeley Town there died a Con,
The hotel choice did bring this on,
We'll go no more to the Claremont with you dear fans.

Chorus

The Claremont, the Claremont, the Claremont was our Koo-i-a
We'll go ~~max~~ no more to the Claremont with you dear fans.

We went expecting all the best / Please listen what I say
We went expecting all the best
We couldn't get a good night's rest.
We'll go no more to the Claremont with you dear fans.

The waitresses there were far from good/ Please listen what I say.
The waitresses there were far from good.
We'd get more help from blocks of wood.
We'll go no more to the Claremont with you dear fans.

by Nathan the Black Sorcerer & sister

||| |%| ||| ||| ||| ||| |||

TRACT

I speak to thee, oh brothers and sisters, of the good inherent in that great institution of comfort and sustenance, the Hotel Dreamont. I speak to thee of the smiling, friendly service attendant on thee, the waitresses' smiling faces as they bid thee good morning after thou hast waited one hour, their grinning faces as they take thy order, their gleeful faces as they greet thy starving death's-head face when finally they deliver thy order.

I speak to thee of the smiling face of the busboy as he courteously requests, "Get that *&%*! newspaper off that kempt table," an empty table at which no one is presently sitting, at which no one intends to sit, and at which no one ever has sat because all the other tables are empty.

I speak to thee of the dried spinach on the silverware.

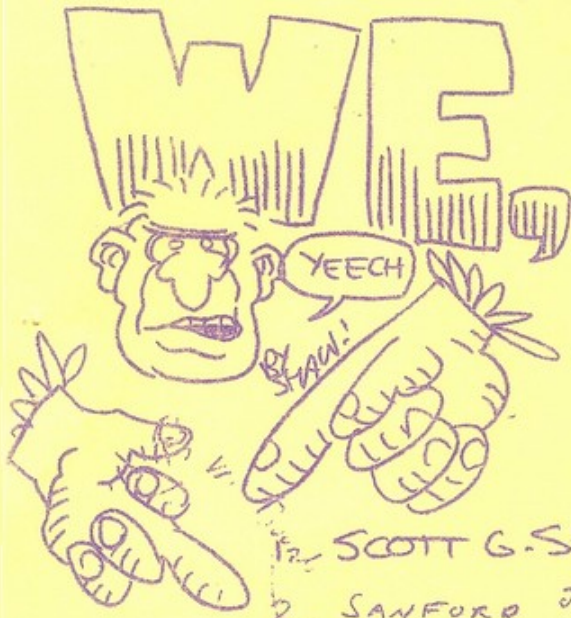
I speak to thee of the complete impossibility of getting a hamburger at this, the world famous resort hotel of 27 acres of beautiful trees, grass and weed, the Hotel Dreamont.

I speak to thee of the necessity of Harlan Ellison's bullying the kitchen wenches in order to provide thy obedient servant and voracious chronicler with a glass of milk. (Thank you, Mr. Ellison) Vonda McIntyre

???

ANNOUNCING A NEW CONTEST

Why I hated the Claremont in 2,500 words or less. Prize: free lifetime subscription to The Third Foundation. Booby Prize: a week at the Claremont. Send to ~~max~~ Lee Klingstein 1435 So. Bundy #4 Los Angeles, Calif., 90025



the underswined, do hereby declare the CLAREMONT to be the most eldritch hotel this Side (OR ANY OTHER) of Arkham, Mass.!

I CAN'T SPELL... BUT I KNOW A BAD HOTEL WHEN I SEE IT!

1. SCOTT G. SHAW
2. SANFORD J. COHEN
3. DAVID CLARK
4. LEE KLEINGESTERN
5. M. RANKIN
6. KATHLEEN SKY
7. ~~NEW SANDROSS~~
8. Ed Baker
9. Richard Schultz
10. ~~Small A. Simpson~~
11. ~~Read~~
12. Rich Cook
13. ~~RAK~~

14. Bill ~~W~~

Eldritch is a positive value judgment

Says one dissenter

15. Tina Howard
16. Cyrano Jones
17. Dorothy Monahan (that is debatable however - like the Shattuck (was a close second))
18. Vonda Neel M'Intyre

