

Campus dining: return of the roach

Fiction ??

by Michael Ollie Clayton

This time last year I was at odds with the people who ran the dining commons.

We had been on a collision course for many weeks before that, but they probably didn't think too much of it as students have traditionally bitched and moaned about the taste and texture of the food they serve.

Instead of being some whining, sniveling, snot-nose upstart who couldn't deal with the fact that I wasn't being hand fed by Mommy, I was, by their reckoning, a serious contender to be reckoned with.

Why so? Well, a roach—a very big roach had strolled across my plate and pitched camped on my sandwich. The little bugger had nonchalantly strolled across the table, impervious to big human hands and the shrill, squealing voices of girls in panic, and casually began to spread a picnic blanket on my sandwich. The conceited insect also took out some Chablis Blanc white wine and some caviar.

As I sat there watching Mr. Roach play Donald Trump on my sandwich I couldn't help but laugh. Mr. Roach casually glanced up and said, "Hi!" then excused himself.

Instantly I found myself infuriated by the nerve of this brazen roach. *Hey, I'm a human being, I thought to myself, and I ain't gotta take this from no lowlife roach!*

Immediately I ran to a dining commons manager and told the man, "Quick! Alert the Roach Busters."

He shrugged and said, "There ain't no roaches in here and there ain't no 'Roach Busters!'"

I countered with, "There is a

roach and he's kickin' it on the sandwich that I've just spent a good seven minutes preparing. I spread the mayonnaise on that sandwich better than I've ever spread mayonnaise in my life. It was a work of art. It was something to behold. I threw down on that sandwich! From the tenderest leaves I took my lettuce. I selected the juiciest, reddest tomato and carefully, all so tenderly centered it on top of the lettuce. As I shuffled through the roast beef I let my carnivorous self loose in order that the best of the prime beef be pulled from the fake silver tray. Good Lord, man I'm telling you that a roach is defiling my Picasso—now, get over there and do something about it!"

The manager turned as red as a beet. He didn't say anything, but from the look on his face, he was quite probably wishing that I was a roach and that he was a can of Raid. After all, how dare I, a paying student get up the nerve to insult his palace.

Eventually the man followed me over to my sandwich. And, as if on cue, Mr. Roach shuffled from wherever it was he had gone to and climbed back up on my sandwich as if he had been the one who fixed it.

I could see his beady little eyes glowing at the sight of my sandwich. His antennae swirled in culinary delight.

I turned to the manager with a classic "I-told-ya" look on my face. Before I could say a word, the manager, feeling like Goliath I guess, pounced on the cool roach and converted him into a puddle of bug juice.

Splat!
Glitch! The roach, or what was left of him, went north, south, east, and west.

I couldn't believe my eyes. I didn't anticipate such a show of force. I wondered if the manager was a Ninja. I mean; come on, he could have flicked Mr. Roach into oblivion (which is where all bugs go when you thump them away). Going into oblivion means plucking a bug with your forefinger with just enough "Uumpf" as to not kill him, but to get him out of your space. *Plucked bugs do live!*

But that wasn't it! There was more to come! The manager, who doesn't work in the Dining Commons anymore finished the assault by quickly wiping the bug away with a towel that he had been wiping the stainless steel counter tops about the serving areas with.

The manager smiled at me, as if I were pleased that he'd just sprayed roach remains across the better portion of my sandwich.

What else could I do but thank the man?

Macho Man was beaming as I just stood there with my palms turned upward, wondering to myself, *where do we go from here?*

As his smile dropped, he gave me a You're-fext-look.

My eyes grew wide. I wasn't scared of him. I was scared that he might rub some roach juice on me. A fist in the mouth I could deal with, but not bug juice. I'm sorry, but I'm not partial to roach remains.

I grabbed my tray and ran from the Roach Ninja.

As if in some Twilight Zone episode, just as I neared the area where one disposes of one's tray after he or she has finished their meal the same manager's head popped out from where the trays were being deposited.

"What's the matter?" he asked in a thick Igor voice. "Don't you want your sandwich?"

I froze in my tracks. I couldn't possibly imagine how he could have gotten from the middle of the dining commons back to the tray depository before I had.

"Uh...uh...uh, I...I..."

"Don't you feel ashamed of yourself?" he asked, his voice low and dragging. "There are people in the Third World who would slit your throat for that sandwich!" He flashed a Jack Nicholson grin and

said, "You know, I'm from a famine stricken land myself..."

"Well, this is America, and we can throw food away because we have too much of it to keep for leftovers anyway."

His eyes grew wide and began to glow.

I looked down, feigning shame, though really trying to conceal my fright. Suddenly I spotted a piece of garlic on the floor. I leveled my tray with my right hand and swiftly stooped and swiped the piece of garlic up from the floor.

"That only works on vampires," said the roach murderer.

Damn it! I thought to myself, as I reached under my shirt for the silver bullet attached to the chain around my neck.

"And you're gonna need a gun for that..." he chimed matter-of-factly.

I panicked! My tray fell from my right hand. Just as I opened my mouth to holler, a roach—a King Kong size roach materialized behind the murderer! The monster roach formed it's antennae into a hand. He singled out the antennae-made forefinger from his antennae-made hand and placed it over his lips, signalling me not to say anything.

The roach murderer let out a

hideous laugh. "You're food wasting days are over dude!" He reached out for me. Just as his green hands neared my throat the King Kong roach raised one of his six legs above the roach haters head.

A heavy shadow covered us both.

The Roach-Hitler's attention turned away from me. He peered over his shoulder. As the King Kong roach came into view the roach murderer opened his mouth to let out what I thought would be a blood curdling scream.

"BAD KARMA!" roared the gigantic roach as he brought his raised leg down on the roach killer. Guts, spleen, brains, and pancreas shot everywhere!

Nine Months Later...

After they let me go from the insane asylum I enrolled in UNLV again. It has been a whole year since the roach smasher was himself smashed. I've recovered, somewhat. So they tell me. Though I do feel sluggish at times like I did those first hours of post-lobotomy. But most importantly, I haven't seen anymore roaches in the Dining Commons.

Star Trek convention beams to Las Vegas

The Star Trek Convention returns to Las Vegas. The convention will be held at the Hacienda Hotel and Casino, 3950 Las Vegas Blvd. So., on April 7 and 8 (11 am-7 pm, both days). Billing for this convention is being shared with the Fox Network's Alien Nation TV series.

The professional guests of honor will be Mark Lenard (Sarek, Spock's father as well as other roles, in the Star Trek series) and Jeff Marcus (Albert Einstein, the clumsy "newcomer" genius, on Alien Nation).

There will, of course, be a dealers room at the convention. They will also have auctions, contests, and slideshows. News updates on "Star Trek" and "Star Trek the Next Generation" the "Star Trek Bloopers Reels" and previews of the (soon to be released) "Dick Tracy" and "Gremlins 2" movies will be featured as well.

Creative Commercial Enterprise, based in New York will host the extravaganza.

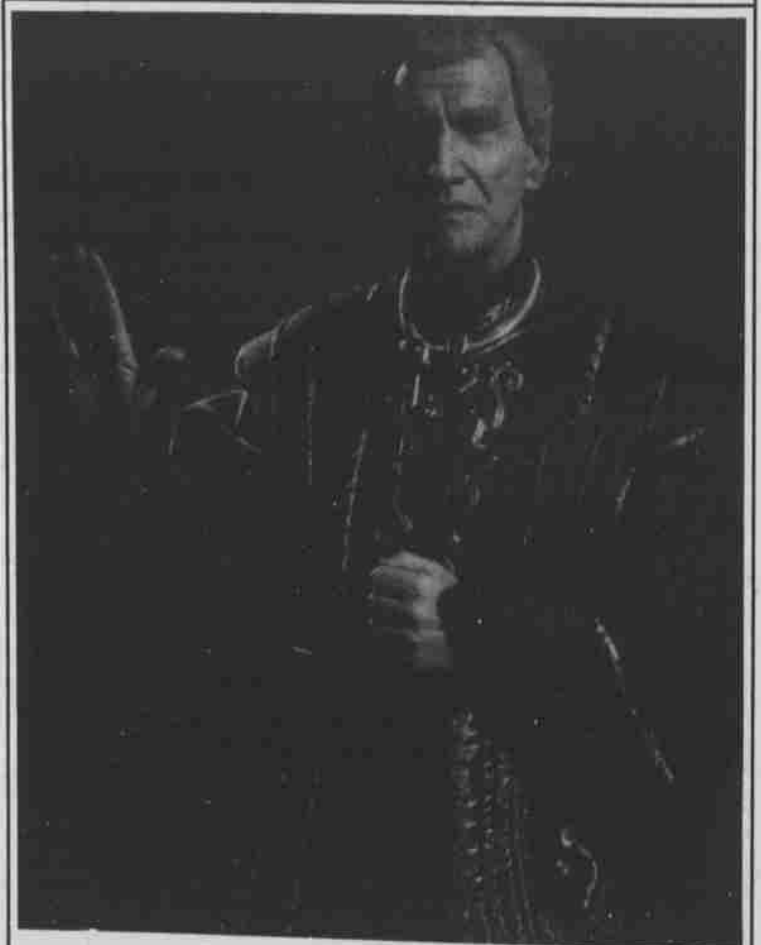
They travel around the country with their "Star Trek & Sci-Fi Convention."

This will be the fourth convention in three years that Creation has brought to Las Vegas. The three previous conventions were

held at the Showboat Hotel and Casino.

The Convention will open at 11 am, on Saturday April 7, and close at 7 pm on Sunday April 8.

Tickets are available at Ticketron Outlets and Page after Page Comic book store, for \$11 per day (kids 6-12 \$8, under 6 free) or at the door for \$14 per day.



LIVE LONG AND PROSPER- April 7, Star Trek fans unite at the Hacienda hotel for the Star Trek-Alien Nation convention.

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