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PHILCON REPORT : 1963 :

by John Boardman

Fred Pohl. L Sprague de Camp. Judith Merril. James Blish. Lester del Rey.

You'd think that a convention that featured these speakers would be a howling success. It wasn't. Poor planning on the part of the 1963 PhilCon committee turned a list of brilliant speakers into a dull and dragging affair.

I arrived at the Sheraton without my girls, owing to the revival of Walt

Disney's Fantasia. On the previous evening Perdita, Karina and I had gone to see it in NY, and had enjoyed it so much we sat through it twice. Perdita decided that she'd be too tired the next day to get much out of the con, so I went down alone.

The Con got under way only about an hour late, with what appeared to be "Instant Panel", the much-touted "Special Event" produced by Hal Lynch. This meant that de Camp, del Rey, and Blish sat at a table and offered to field any question thrown at them, without any introductory remarks to set a theme for the panel. Del Rey, even under these trying circumstances, got off some bons mots: "SF is what the editor of a SF magazine published"—and, in answer to Fred Lerner's question "What mainstream authors have had the most effect on SF?", came del Rey's reply, "Heinlein!"

Del Rey also stated an opinion much heard among pros and fans these days: that there are no SF mags for beginning readers. With the passage of Planet, Startling, usw., the new reader is plunged directly into the technological complexities of Analog or the stylistic elegance of F&SF. ("They use the snaffle and the bit all right, but where's the bloody horse?") Blish said that, instead of the pulps, young readers now get saturated by SF comics. This led off into a discussion of the boom in SF comicbooks, with del Rey maintaining that most of them are read by adults.

When asked whom they thought the most promising new writers, del Rey cited those newcomers to prodcm, Heinlein, Dick, & Anderson. Blish plumped for Aldiss and, with qualifications, Budrys. Judy Merril ventured from the rear of the hall that the best new talents are currently being developed in England, and cited Aldiss, Ballard, Brunner, and one or two others.

Judy Merril then took the podium as a solo speaker, while the Phila. Mercurians passed around a questionnaire of egregious silliness. As the approximately 40 attendees puzzled over the appearance of a hypothetical ET beast called a "pog-blof", or the possible functions of such implements as "meezers" and "dokawilglns", Judy remarked that SF differed from mainstream fiction in that the culture & environment enters more into SF, and that mainstream tends to set higher literary standards. She cited a recent influx

of SF elements into mainstream fiction in such novels as The Child Buyer (Hersey), Catch-22 (Heller), and The Centaurs (Updike).

She concluded by stating the intriguing opinion that mainstream literature is escapist, in that it avoids the very likely developments of science and society that will certainly take place in the near future. SF, on the other hand, faces the consequences of such possible developments.

Fred Pohl, also doing a solo, expanded on these ideas by considering whether mainstream extrapolatory novels such as Congdon's The Manchurian Candidate are SF. On the basis of the psychological techniques basic to the plot of this novel, he concluded that it did qualify. When asked whether a straightforward political extrapolation with no scientific elements in it, such as Tully's Supreme Court, could be called SF, he said that as a prediction of the future it could be regarded as in this field.

Pohl also spoke of his editorial policy in the Galaxy group, saying that he gave authors perhaps too much leeway in planning their stories. This implicitly contrasted the Galaxy policy with that of various other magazines, here nameless, which do the contrary.

A fan panel composed of Dick Eney, Jack Chalker, Gerry Dunwoody, & Morris Fried, with Hal Lynch as moderator and Will Jenkins as a co-opted participant, then evaluated the Mercurians' questionnaire and gave their own opinions. Lynch dominated the discussion, and some members of the panel looked as if they'd have gladly been elsewhere. The first page of the Fragebogen asked the reader what the happiest decade of his own life was, or is expected to be ("Childhood, teens, 20-25, 25-30, 30's, 40's, 50's, 60+") and the happiest decade of the century for most Americans. He was also asked whether he expected the SF, mainstream literature, and films of the '70's & 80's to be better or worse than those of the 20's & 30's. There was division of opinion on the first two of these last topics, but the past outpolled the future heavily on films.

The second page, stripped of verbiage, asked whether people would rather read true-to-fact adventure or fictional adventure. This point gave rise to more discussion than it was worth. Consensus was that adventure fiction had the value of escapism and would attract more readers. This is probably true; King Solomon's Mines is far better known than Lost Cities of Africa.

The 3rd page put before the reader some made-up names of animals, implements, & customs of the hypothetical planet Spang, and asked for identifications. What a psychologist would make of the results of this is anybody's guess. There was general agreement that inteltingerwiks are repulsive in appearance and unpleasant in habits, and that a teyo-tayo-tooyo would be a lighthearted and pleasant sort of affair to attend.

After this had been milked dry, the con adjourned for dinner and party. The previous year's procedure of renting a hotel room for the party had proven expensive according to the con committee, which was a pity as I recall it as one of the most enjoyable con parties I'd ever attended. Instead, we got a room above a bar a few blocks away, where we also ate a passable steak supper. The party was a bore, or would have been had I not there renewed acquaintances with a number of friends, including Anita Simon, George Heap, Dick Eney, and Rochester's most promising neofanne, Cindy Cramer. ((No, I don't have her address, let alone her phone number.)) Heap led a folksong festival which included such favorites as "The Orcs' Marching Song", "The 12 Days of Fandom", "S is for his Stronghold Down in Mordor", "No John No", and "High Fly the Nazgûl". This shaded gradually into topical/political songs, mainly from the IWW songbook of revered memory. ("Let the gentle Jesus/Bless your dynamite.")

Things broke up at about midnight, owing to an exodus of fans to a party at Harriett Tolchak's & to bus terminals, and an influx of Canadian sailors. But if it was a dull con, it will be good training for the worldcon 4 years hence. The first bid for that year was put in by a group of delegates whose badges proclaimed "Baltimore is Heaven in 67". For you west-coasters who don't recognize the local references, Baltimore is famous as being the only city which is capable of boring even Philadelphians.--jb

PHILCON FOOTNOTES. Tom Purdom is credited with the choice of site for the postcon party.

The "S is for his Stronghold" song is by Boardman, apparently unpublished, and to the tune of M-O-T-H-E-R: "S is for his Stronghold down in Mordor, / A is for the Armies at his call, / U is for the Uruks in his forces, / R is for the Ring that rules them all, / O is for his forge in Orodruin, / N is for the Nazgûls at his back, / Put them All Together, they spell S-A-U-R-O-N, / And you're lucky if he doesn't wring your neck." I have before me a program flyer ("Constitution Room, Sheraton Hotel, Nov. 9, 1 PM") and it fails to identify the committee or name any event except "Instant panel":

AVRAM & GRANIA DAVIDSON FIGHT THE MEANEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD: Readers of
HOMUNCULUS

3 recall the hassle the Davidsons had with their ex-Milford landlady, one Mrs. Shirley Riordan, who did her worst to drive them out so that she could re-rent the Mare's Nest at higher seasonal rates. She made various "juridical assaults" on them, the latest being arresting them for alleged "malicious mischief". The Davidsons' lawyer promised to notify them in advance of the grand jury's convening. A few days before this writing, said lawyer returned to them all material connected with his proposed defense, and resigned their case, refusing to represent them any longer, and adding that the grand jury was to meet in 36 hours. Needless to say, Avram & Grania could hardly make it back to Milford from Amecameca, Mexico, in time to represent themselves, and naturally the GJ found a "true bill" against them. The kickers: the lawyer had held their cheques and other materials for months, yet gave his ex-clients only a day and a half notice before quitting; no other Milford attorney will handle their defense; and the prosecuting atty. just happens to be Mrs. Riordan's own lawyer. Trial date is set for the last Monday in February. I think the best thing we could do is to try to raise a fund for the Davidson defense. Shaws--are you listening? Are there any fannish lawyers around? (Avram & Grania are at Quinta Chelius, 13 Libertad, Amecameca; and no, I don't know if they have been properly served with a summons.)

GRANIA DAVIDSON, on the other hand, is expecting Embryo Homunculus II to arrive sometime in August; should they be out of Pike County jail by then, the Davidsons hope to head for the Barea in July, staying there for the birth and the con.

YEAR OF THE JACKPOT AGAIN? Following hard on the Year of the Gnurrs, comes a flurry of deaths of people well known to or in fandom:

¶ MARK CLIFTON, of lung cancer, around the 14th of Nov., in California.

¶ DR. TOM (Thomas S.) GARDNER, oldfan who took part in the Lunacon debate reported in #93, 11 Nov., age 55, Rutherford, N.J.

¶ C.S. LEWIS, famous for "The Narnia Chronicles", "Out of the Silent Planet", "Perelandra", "That Hideous Strength"; in Britain, within the last couple of weeks--more details when I get them.

¶ ALDOUS HUXLEY, famous for "Brave New World", "Ape & Essence", "Island" and many mainstream novels; age 69; presumably in Los Angeles, within a few days of Lewis's passing, both deaths being overshadowed in news coverage because of the regrettable affair in Dallas. Huxley's death was the more shocking to me, since only a couple of weeks earlier the medium Eileen Garrett had strongly urged me to contact him at his Westmoreland Ave. home, and from illness I delayed completing the letter.

¶ DR. MARGARET ALICE MURRAY, outstanding authority on Egyptology & witchcraft; 13 Nov., in London, age 100, only four months after publishing her autobiog, "My First 100 Years". She correctly viewed witchcraft not as antichristian demonolatry but as the survival of the Old Religion of the Mother Goddess and her Horned God consort, dating back to the Aurignacian period or earlier; without her, neither Robert Graves's researches nor SF novels such as "Sign of the Labrys" would have come about in anything like their actual degree of authenticity. Born in Calcutta, raised in Germany, she was by age 17 the only European ward nurse in Calcutta hospitals; at 30 she joined Sir Flinders Petrie's archaeological expeditions, continuing to do occasional field work of this kind till she was 69 (she was the first woman ever to conduct her own excavations), in the meantime teaching hieroglyphics, lecturing, and cataloguing antiquities. At 70 she spent many months in the desert with nomadic Bedouins, studying their secret rites. Still later she made herself an expert on the Old Religion, writing the Encyclopedia Britannica article on witchcraft, and two books, "God of the Witches" and "The Witch Cult in Western Europe". Her researches served as source material for much SF and fantasy as well as for other anthropological studies. Not content with merely interpreting archaeological materials, she sought out members of witch covens in various parts of England. Though her views have been disputed, they are sound. For her, ESP is a fairly common property of advanced witches; "magic", i.e. techniques for obtaining telekinesis and the like, is a fairly routine method of obtaining results.

RAY NELSON just showed me, in jubilation, a letter from NUGGET Magazine dated Nov. 6 which pretty much explains itself: "Dear Mr. Nelson: / We'd like to use 'Losers Weepers' in our upcoming issue, but wonder if you can make the ending more explicit without using any more space (it is being set for a 2-page spread and wordage is important). Apparently, the girls are going to get their kicks by having George either rape or bugger Ray, but we aren't positive. Just a sentence coming from Annie to pin down the perversity of it would make it shockingly clear. ¶ Can you get back to me quickly on this? / Cordially, /s/ Seymour Krim, Editorial Director." § In addition, the one and only damon knight, now editor of Berkley Books, has accepted a SF novel from Ray on the basis of first chapters and outline of remainder; working title not yet determined, but the plot concerns the quest (by a man who finds that he simply goes on living for century after century) for selfknowledge. From what Ray has told me of it, and the brief excerpts I've seen, this thing promises to be quite good.

MIKE McQUOWN (see CoA) is the second fan in a year to have had his pad burn down. His Gaines St. apt. was gutted, his typer and an estimated \$800 worth of other belongings, Cultzines, other fanzines, etc., all being destroyed, and (for FIATOL types) on top of all that some of the burnt Cultzines included half the copies of an FR he'd just put out. Since only 12 copies of the FR had been sent out before the fire, his membership is jeopardized; the Cult constitution requires that all 13 members and 5 active waitlisters be sent their copies at substantially the same time. # The other fan whose place burned to the ground was Ben Orlove; middle of p.2, FANAC 92.

ATTENTION, RONEL: MARION BRADLEY finished Bloody Sun about the 6th or 7th of Nov., or well before you stenciled SS #25 mentioning her "working" on it. By then it was already approved by Wollheim, without revisions being required. Marion has also gotten a long-delayed anthology contract and is working on still another novel. And fortunately surgery for her knee seems a very unlikely consequence. (Eventhough this is a Doom & Gloom issue, there's no need to exaggerate its amount.) She's been invited into Alpha Chi, the small colleges' counterpart of Phi Beta Kappa, and will graduate presumably at least cum laude. Cheers, MZB.

§ While we're about it, Ron, if you really think FANAC is "worthless", don't bother to continue subbing; I'll be happy to drop you from my swollen mailing list. I won't bother to feud with you, though feuds have started over far less. § People who live in glass houses, etc., and first stonecasters should at least be guiltless. A few of yours may now come back to roost: "northern California, who are the remaining bidder"; "infectuous hepatitis"; "Colloseum"; "The Hills of Dionysus"; "harrassing"; "Near Preson, Lancashire", etc.

ERBAn RENEWAL DEPT.: Several fans have sent copies of the NYTIMES 26 Nov 63 article on the Edgar Rice Boreus revival. It's mostly a blurb for Canaveral Press (Richard A. Lupoff, editor), "one of 5 publishers now issuing ERB titles in cloth cover and pb". Two books first scheduled from the 40-50 unpub'd ERB mss. for Canaveral issue: Tarzan & the Madman (the Madman being someone who imagines himself to be Tarzan--the height of fame, presumably, being for a lunatic to imagine he is you; written in WW 2 but not pubbed because of paper shortage), and I Am a Barbarian, "a fictional biog of Caligula" finished Nov. 1941 but rejected as "too gloomy" for escapist WW2 readers. They are to appear respectively in March 1964 & fall '64. Hulbert Burroughs is quoted as saying that he & his brother John Coleman B. ("who have written some SF on their own") are going to try to complete an unfinished ERB Tarzan jungle thriller, some 25,000 words of which were found with the other ERB mss. in the safe, acted a telephone interview "from the company's HQ at Tarzana, Calif." (The "company" is ERB, Inc., copyright holders.) (Jon White tells me Lupoff has a pro-ERB article in the current ANTIQUARIAN BOOKMAN.)

PUBLIC NOTICE: I take no responsibility for anything said or done by Kevin Langdon, or attributed to me by the said Mr. Langdon. He was left in charge of my apartment over the summer, but when I returned on 10 Sept. it was an uninhabitable wreck; damages are in the neighborhood of \$500. He avoided the place while I was trying to render it again livable, and has repudiated any responsibility for damages by him or his guests (persons unknown to me). On my objecting to this, he began a campaign of lies, "slandérs and distortions reminiscent of Messrs. Degler, Wetzel and Bruce Berry. Potential hosts are hereby warned.

A SNIPPET A DAY FROM ALL OVER: LES GERBER is sick with infectious mononucleosis, the well-known "medical students' disease", often called "kissing disease" because supposedly spread by kissing. As a result, he will almost certainly lose the entire school semester at Brooklyn College. Get well soon, Les. :: GORDON EKLUND (see CoA) writes that as of 16 Nov he still hadn't gotten his SAPS mailing --or almost any other fanish correspondence. The CoA refers to a furlough, after which he'll be shipped to Travis AFB in California, unless the AF changes its excuse for a mind--so maybe he'll make it to the Pacificon after all. :: Mention of the McQuown fire reminds me that a fire at the LA Terminal Annex PO (and the ensuing confusion) all but cost TERRY CARR his SAPS membership; his minac hadn't arrived at the OE's POBox in time, but Pelz decided later in all fairness--on seeing the postmark and getting the official explanation--that Terry's SAsE zines would constitute legal renewal credentials after all. :: TED JOHNSTONE aka DAVID EDWARD McDANIEL is marrying JOYCE MADELEINE POTTER, Saturday 21 December, 12 noon, at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Faith, Locust & Grace Sts., Inglewood, Calif., presumably to the strains of coventrian hymns intoned by the Upper Twelve in full regalia. Kidding aside, all best wishes to the happy couple and may they have many satisfying years together. I am only sorry I won't be able to attend; the chances are high that I will have to spend the hollydays in the hospital, to be reasonably sure of getting the neurological workup (ordered by my doctors, to make sure that the trouble is only from a piece of scar tissue and not from a brain tumor--hi, Larry Anderson) finished before MZB arrives in the Barea. :: ATTENTION HARRY WARNER: I notice Ron Bennett, without his tongue quite visible through his cheek anyway, speaking in SKYRACK 57 about one Walter Gillings's ((who he?)) "complete history of fandom which scarcely could have a more authoritative writer at its helm." Gosh-wowoboyoboyoboy... :: SFTIMES GETS AXE: We hear that J. Vissarionovich Taurasi approached Larry Shaw about "combining" SFT and AXE, and got some such gag reply as that quoted; but it still remains to be seen if SFT will incorporate the AXE title into its masthead. :: JOHN BOARDMAN sends in a NYTimes clipping to the effect that one Rev. Morton A. Hill, a Jesuit affiliated with St. Ignatius Loyola's church, 84th & Park (spell it back'ards) Ave., NYC, has gone on a hunger strike to force Mayor Wagner to pass uncompromisingly stiff laws (act a mayoral promise to "Operation Yorkville" July 63) against the sale of porno to minors. These would include setting up a fulltime police unit against porno, and a special court trying only porno cases. The kicker is that Section 484, NYState Penal Code, forbids dissemination to people under 18 of "pictures of nude or partially denuded figures, posed or presented in a manner to provoke or arouse lust or passion or to exploit sex, lust or perversion for commercial gain." (Italics mine; does this Jesuit want them to prosecute PLAYBOY, ROGUE, etc.?) He claims that sales of such stuff "lead to sexual violence and introduce the child to narcotics" (!).

STOP DUPER: 6 Dec, Daniel S Curran was apprehended and arraigned on federal charges of draft violation, bail being provided by Dick Ellington, kindhearted soul that he is. The warrant grew out of failure of a draftboard letter (ordering Curran to report for re-examination) to reach Curran. Local FBI people, especially one known as "the Hobbit", proved unexpectedly courteous and understanding of the situation, which seems to be largely a US Post Office foulup rather than a result of anything Curran has deliberately done.

TRUTH WILL OUT, cont'd: LICHTMAN has been spreading reports of my having rejoined Xianity and become "a minister in something called the Free Catholic Church". The truth is that this fall I was ordained priest and consecrated bishop in the Pre-Nicene Catholic Church (HQ is in NY), one of the groups which split away from Rome in 1870 over papal infallibility; it has since gone farther from traditional Christian beliefs. We reject any anthropomorphic concept of God, reject the antisexual and antilife morality of "St. Paul"/Saul of Tarsus, adhere to mystical views nearer to Taoist and early Gnostic teachings than to anything later, and to an ethic of love and nonviolence. The "Pre-Nicene" name refers to our rejection of the whole Roman framework following the Council of Nicaea, AD325. There is actually little ethical difference between the Pre-Nicene beliefs and those of the dormant Church of the Bro'hod of the Way. As for being Christian, we revere Christ as the latest in a long series of martyred sacred king/prophet figures. Validity of my orders and authenticity of apostolic succession of my bishopric has to be recognized by RC, Anglican, Orthodox & Old Catholic hierarchies. Ironically, the archbishop who consecrated me has since deserted for more orthodox forms of worship, leaving me as his successor! But in fandom I'm still plain WB.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS; or, Now You See 'Em, Now You Don't

Allan B Calhamer, 5 Oxford St., Belmont, Mass. (attn: Paul Williams)

Phil Castora, room 307, Burbank Hotel, Burbank, Calif.

Ron Bennett, 17 Newcastle Road, Penny Lane, Liverpool 15

Gordon Eklund, 14612 18th SW, Seattle 66, Washington, till 10 Jan. 1964

Harvey Forman, 1214 Disston St., Philadelphia 11, Pa.

Joe & Connie Gresser, 3160 Essex Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Dale Hart, 236 S. Coronado, Los Angeles 90057

Dave & Katya Hulan, 17417 Vanowen, apt. 21, Van Nuys, Calif.

Jim & Judy Hetland, 540 W 122, NYC 27 (Judy is former Mrs Lin Carter)

John Jackson, 870 N Fordham Ave., Aurora, Ill.

Ted Johnstone, c/o Pelz, Box 100, 308 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles 90024

Rich Brown, c/o Pelz (out of service)

Maxim Jakubowski, 22 rue Robt. Houdin, Paris XIeme, France

Harriett Kolchak, 2330 N. Hancock St., Philadelphia

Bill Rickhardt, 1818 Hearst, Berkeley 9

Claude N Saxon jr., Administration Bldg., Western State Hospital, Tenn.

Randy Scott, Rte. 2, Watts, Okla., 74964

Bob Smith, c/o 1 COD, Sgts Mess, Bandiana, Victoria, Australia

Pvt El Elliot K Shorter, US 51517420, E-11-4 (MP) USATC, Ft Gordon, Ga., 30905

Jack Speer, 330 Alamo Drive, Santa Fe, N.Mex.

Marcello & Pat Truzzi, Hasbrouck 43A, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, NY

Mike McQuown, 308 S. Franklin Blvd., apt. 7, Tallahassee, Fla.

FROM DER VOOVORK OUDT: Jan Jansen, Alfons Schneiderlaan 46, Deurne, Antwerp, Belgium.

Former subbers to CONTACT can get their \$worth in new, renewal or extension subs to KYRACK; contact Bennett for details.

STOP DUPER: Bill Rotsler says that vol I of Sex, Spice & the Single Man has been on the stands for a couple of months, full of fan names--Tucker, Warner, Boggs, Ballard, etc., and that he's working on vol. II now. # Redd's & Jim Harmon's lawyer is definitely going to court to recover \$\$\$ due the authors for "P-----n S---p". (No, none of this stuff is unmailable.)

more CoA

Alan J Lewis, 430 E 70, apt 18, NYC 10021 eff 15 Dec.

Bhob Stewart, 207 W 80, NYC 23. (since Discon; inadvertently omitted from ##94-5)

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