

BLOOMINGTON

October, 1949

No. 13

NEWS LETTER

the leading newspaper of the science fiction world

SCIENCE-FICTION MARCHES ON!

Cincinnati Ohio, Sept. 3-4-5, 1949: the 7th annual science-fiction convention is history and the staff of the Hotel Metro-pole would like to have us back again--the steering committee having thoughtfully tipped them \$50 to smile and say nothing.

In a succulent nutshell, this is what happened at the convention:

* 175 delegates signed the register and an estimated 15 others failed to do so.

* Science-fiction conclaves moved into the realm of Big Money when this one had an official income of one thousand, three hundred and seven bucks -- plus fifteen cents:

Received from Toronto (1948):	\$ 50.00
Ditto from memberships sold :	277.00
Ditto from auction profits :	980.15
Total:	1307.15
Convention expenses (1949) :	443.96
Balance:	863.19

* The chair-appointed finance committee doled out this balance as follows:

To Nat'l Fantasy Fan Fed'n :	\$ 50.00
To Portland for 1950 aid :	150.00
To buy books & magazines for the fan club in England:	150.00
To buy books & magazines for fan club in Australia :	150.00
To Cincinnati Fantasy club :	363.19
Total:	863.19

* Portland, Oregon, won the 1950 party after three hard-fought ballots.

* 116 persons attended the banquet, many of them in costume. Banquet money came out even when secretary Don Ford, finding himself with \$15 left over after paying the bill, tipped the chef and his assistants.

* Four newspapers, a television program, and a national wire service spread the convention story all over the nation and to Sydney, Australia.

(continued on page three)

Redd Boggs

The hydra's head ..
A professional index ..

After the third and final ballot at the Cincinnati convention, which designated Portland, Oregon, as the site of the 1950 conclave, one delegate was heard to remark with a relieved sigh: "After frittering away the whole afternoon, the convention has done the right thing." A quirk of the eyebrow elicited the information that this person feared --had New York City won-- the 1950 convention would have become a professionally dominated propaganda showcase calculated more to impress the public than to entertain fans.



This belief was current at Cincinnati and Milton Rothman gave voice to it on the platform between ballots. It was also current at Toronto in 1948, when its wide acceptance had a part in removing New York from consideration for this year's event. Undoubtedly it'll play a part in future s-f conventions.

Because my personal belief was that the west coast deserved 1950, I voted for Portland over New York, but I saw no reason then (or now in retrospect) to be alarmed over the possibility that New York's Hydra Club might remove the annual convention from the domination of fandom. The authors, editors, artists and agents who attend a convention are the people who really "make" such an event, but equally it would not be an s-f convention without the fans. As long as a good show is put on, it matters little who produces and directs it.

In fact, there is good case for the view (to which I subscribe) that the more the professionals dominate the conventions, using them to propagandize the public about science-fiction's growing popularity and appeal, the better it is for the fan field. Why?

(continued on page six)

BOOKS

THE BEST - SCIENCE FICTION STORIES: 1949
edited by Everett F. Bleiler & T.E. Dikty.
(Frederick Fell Inc, New York, 1949, \$2.95)

It will be a rare reader indeed who can quarrel with the title of this volume after noting the 12 top yarns chosen by two editors who know the science field forward and backward. They are to be congratulated for selecting good stories, regardless of the author's name; although the names happen to be Shiras, Padgett, Bradbury, Anderson, Asimov, Gardner, Coupling, Brown, Fennel, Leinster and Kuttner.

This is the first of a series of annual "Bests" and if we may, we'd like to recommend for next year's volume "Opening Doors," the follow-up Shiras story; and Robert Moore Williams' "Refuge For Tonight" from Bluebook. This volume is another for your basic s-f library. -BT

THE WORLD BELOW by S. Fowler Wright
(Shasta Publishers, 5525 S. Blackstone Ave,
Chicago, 37, Illinois. 1949, \$3.50.)

It could be said that Stanley Weinbaum read Wright for source material, for other-worldly creatures and settings which made his own works outstanding. This 344 paged novel, in addition to an absorbing story, has a highly imaginative and eye-opening scene, concept or creature on almost every page. The plot carries a time-traveller to the far future when this world has slowed down, when species other than Man rules it, and our traveller is akin to an intelligent dog.

A part of the novel was published in London in 1925, entitled "The Amphibians"; In 1930 the author added part two, "The World Below" to complete the adventure. -BT

THE BIG EYE by Max Ehrlich
(Doubleday & Co., New York, 1949, \$2.50.)

If you're tired of magazine novels reprinted in book form to meet the demand for science-fiction, this is for you. Based on a basic science theme-- atomic war in 1960, the author writes an adult, entertaining novel which introduces still another twist: the coming of a new planet into the solar system. Ehrlich demonstrates one sure-fire way to avert war: the discovery that the strange planet is riding a collision course with point of contact a bare two years distant.

During those two years Ehrlich shows the stoppage of industry, of war-making, of farming, of transportation, of most government; and in their places the rapid rise of other pursuits to keep citizens happy until the day of execution. We repeat: this is adult, non-magazine science-fiction. (Half a million readers will receive the volume from the Dollar Book Club this fall.) -BT



bookplate by Hannes Bok
-courtesy Eibon Daemos Syn

THE THIRTY-FIRST OF FEBRUARY by Nelson Bond
(The Gnome Press, 421 Claremont Parkway,
New York City 57, N.Y. 1949, \$3.00 .)

An anthology of some of Bond's finest fantasies, as well as a few of his poorer ones; included in this volume is "The Monster From Nowhere" which is stirring up a national controversy. (See BNL, September.) The "Monster" herein is word for word the same monster as appears in a 1946 anthology over the byline of Donald Wandrei.

Gnome Press states that the 1946 volume was in error, that they used this Bond monster and mistakenly gave credit to Wandrei; Wandrei in turn had his own monster (same title) in an Arkham House collection in 1944. -CH

TRITON by L. Ron Hubbard
(Fantasy Publishing Co, Inc., 8313 Avalon
Blvd, Los Angeles, Calif. 1949, \$3.00)

If you are one of those fantasy fans with a prize collection of Unknown Worlds, you'll remember Rene Lafayette's "The Indigestible Triton" in the April 1940 issue. Now using his real name, Hubbard has dropped the long preface used in the magazine and rewritten the opening of this undersea fantasy.

It is an easily-readable yarn of a man who takes refuge in an insane asylum to avoid marriage, and accidentally winds up in the ocean kingdom of Neptune. -BT

THE FOX WOMAN (& Others) by A. Merritt
(Avon Books #214, New York City, 1949, 25¢)

Claimed to be the only complete collection by Merritt, this contains 9 novelettes and short stories, all that remain by the author other than his novels. This version is five paragraphs shorter than the "Fox Woman" which appeared in book form in 1946 (New Collectors Group, New York City.)

Convention

On the opening day the Cincinnati POST ran a front-page story of the affair, including three pictures. As usual, the Buck Rogers boys were kidded to hell and back. People in the pictures were Vincent Hamlin ("Alley Oop" cartoonist), Nancy Moore, Lois Miles, Charles Tanner, and Louis Garner jr. Two weeks later the Cincy ENQUIRER ran a double-page spread of pictures in their Sunday pictorial section, three of which are reprinted on the opposite page. Other pix in their layout showed Nancy Moore in a ray-gun pose, and Jean Bogert as a vampire.

Sunday, second day of the convention, Sterling Macoby telephoned from Australia to report he had planted a newsstory in the Sydney DAILY MIRROR, and on the same day Ackerman reported the Los Angeles TIMES ran a convention story. Dave Kyle of the New York office and Tucker of the Chicago ditto covered the conclave for TransRadio Press, a national wire service for radio stations.

An historic scoop was scored by the Cincinnati committee on Sunday night, 6:30 to 7 o'clock, when the first science-fiction round table went on the air over television station WLWT. Moderated by Dave Kyle, the program featured Hannes Bok, Judy Merrill, EE Smith, EE Evans, Jack Williamson, Fritz Lieber jr, Ted Carnell, Forrest Ackerman, Lloyd Eshbach, Erle Korschak, Jim Williams, John Grossman, DR O.L. Barrett, Lois Miles, and Bob Tucker. Theme of the program was the growth of science-fiction and how the fan of today is the professional tomorrow. Committee members may stand and take a bow.

Ted Carnell, visiting fan and editor from London had a whale of a time though remaining sober, and telephoned his wife in England to assure her that gangsters and Indians had not wiped him out.

Raymond A. Palmer, ex-editor of AMAZING STORIES, combated the town trying to locate copies of his new magazine, OTHER WORLDS. His printer had promised to deliver 200 copies to the convention, but failed. Palmer, in announcing his resignation from Ziff-Davis, said he preferred ASTOUNDING's kind of fiction and would try to print same in his new mag. He is the "Robert Webster" who publishes FATE and OTHER WORLDS. (1144 Ashland Ave, Evanston, Ill.)

Lois Miles of New York, an attractive blonde model, appeared in scanty costume (see picture on opposite page) and was dubbed "Miss Science-fiction of 1949". The beanie crowd went to work with cameras.

John Campbell, unable to attend, mailed a letter hinting at something big to come in the November issue of ASTOUNDING, saying that fan magazines would be sent the news about the time the November issue went on sale (October 18th). His letter suggested the carrying-out of a prophecy. Sharp-eyed readers already know the secret.

SPEAKERS:

during the three days were: Lloyd Eshbach (who reminisced on his 22 years in science-fiction, watching the fans of yesterday become the artists and writers of today); Lester del Ray (who bemoaned the inept love and sex handling in present-day s-f yarns, and urged writers to modernize same to keep pace with future social patterns in their stories); Jack Williamson (who advocated better stories, with theme being of secondary importance, instead of vice-versa. He also compared the merits of s-f to other types of fiction); Ray Palmer (who talked on his new magazines and the Shaver myth); Vincent T. Hamlin (who read s-f for twenty-five years but could not put interplanetary plots into his cartoon strip until the army rockets at White Sands proving grounds made the public moon-conscious. Stated he would not be caught dead reading an s-f magazine having a cover picture of girl & monster); Fritz Lieber jr (who discoursed on science-fiction and culture).

Other speakers were: EE Smith (who replied that such covers were the fault of magazine business-offices and fans couldn't do much about it); Arthur J. Eureka (who showed how much the average reader can influence the policy of any magazine, and cited several personal incidents); and Ted Carnell, fan guest of honor who touched on British and American fandom, his magazine, and the current high time he was having.

The National Fantasy Fan Federation held a business meeting, where after much argument, it was decided to publish another art folio and to issue a subscription fanzine with Redd Boggs as editor. The NFFF club bulletin may switch over from mimeograph to planograph format in the near future.

Judy Merrill led a round table discussion panel composed of Rothman, Lieber jr, Eshbach, EE Evans, and Ackerman.

The Philadelphia club staged a space-opera sequel to the humorous opera put on in Toronto last year, with the Williamson character "Giles Habibula" taking most of the ribbing.

FANTASTIC FICTION FOR SALE

Brand new, cloth-bound,

library size sample: \$ 1.00

Catalogs 10¢ (refunded)

HOUSE of STONE

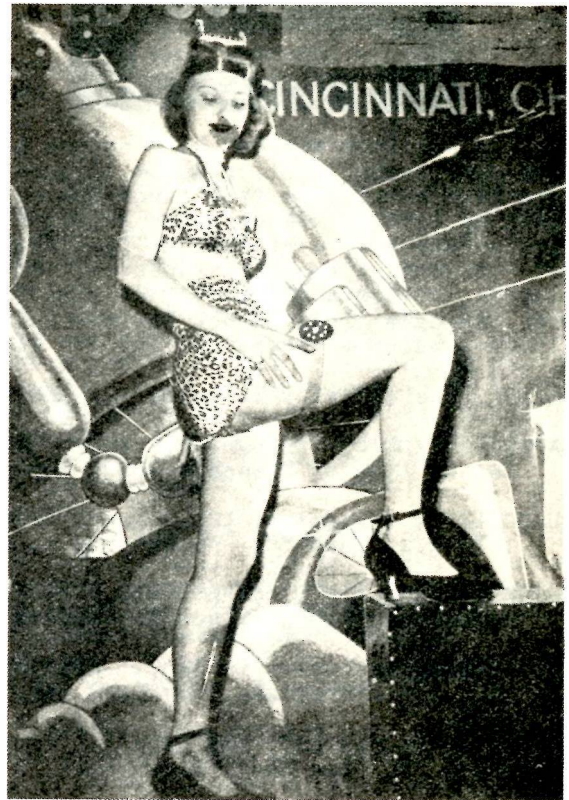
Lunenburg, 20, Massachusetts

BUSINESS:

Will Sykora bid for New York in 1950, to be followed shortly by Lester del Ray and Jerome Stanton also asking for the city. After some confusion, it developed they were not opposing the other, but that all were boosting the one city. F.J. Ackerman made the bid for Portland (having papered the hall with reams of propaganda), while Harry Moore & Paul Juneau entered New Orleans as a contender. Finally, Dave McInnes made the bid for Washington DC.

On the first ballot, New York copped 48 votes, Portland got 36, Washington had 29, & New Orleans only 8. The latter two were declared out of the running. On the second ballot, Portland and New York tied with 60 each, while 1 joker voted for Washington. There followed a great scurrying-about as partisans for each camp rounded up voters who were outside the hall. On the third and final ballot, Portland won with 67, the New Yorkers trailing with 63. Two ballots were declared void for voting for other cities. Ackerman began selling Portland memberships to all comers.

SUB-ROSA: Shasta Publishers threw a cocktail party in their suite, where one of the bartenders (a Chicagoan) soon passed out from too-eager sampling. "Lucky Ned" McKeown, floating from one poker table to another, won \$115 on a pair-of-nines and on the following evening cleaned up another \$103 on a new game he introduced, called "Canadian roulette" --- a pistol furnished to every player. The Outlander Society of California mailed in a convention bid for "South Gate (Cal.) in 1958".



BELLE OF THE AFFAIR was Lois Jean Miles, New York City, who sported a walkie-talkie attachment, had a difficult time keeping receiving set upright on her blond head.

all photographs on this page by
Ran Cochran.
reprinted through courtesy of
The Cincinnati ENQUIRER



ATTIRED in wild beard and futuristic cap, Arthur Rapp, Saginaw, Mich., college student, said he was a "mad scientist." "Or maybe," he added, "you could just call me a typical science fiction fan."



HENRY CHAVOT, New York City, attended in yellow shorts and red jacket, flourished a toy ray gun. He prefers science fiction and fantasies to literature. "They don't insult my intelligence," he says.

FAN MAGAZINES: 1949

In addition to the 51 fanzines listed here last issue, BNL presents 11 more that were accidentally omitted from the earlier list, or have sprung up since August first. Please note the first fanzine from Ireland. And in noting the milestones of fan publishing, we certainly should have mentioned Joe Kennedy's fine, annual FANTASY REVIEWS, (1945-7) which reviewed s-f and fan events.

title .. periodicity .. price ... publisher

CANADIAN FANDOM, irregular, 10¢. Ned McKeown, 1398 Mt Pleasant Road, Toronto.

CHANGELING, irregular, 10¢. Frank Kerkhof, 1539 N.W. 18th St, Washington 6, D.C.

INTERIM NEWSLETTER, bi-monthly, no price. James Love, 198½ Wilson St, Newark Ohio

LAUREL LEAF (recently folded). Evan Appelman, 195 Laurel Ave, Highland Park, Ill

PORTFOLIO OF FAN ART (no data). Franklin Dietz jr, Box 696, Kings Park, N.Y.

RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST, monthly, 20¢. Elves', Gnomes, & Little Men's Science-fiction Chowder & Marching Society, 2524 Telegraph Ave, Berkeley, 4, California.

SCIENCE, FANTASY, & SCIENCE-FICTION, quarterly, 65¢ yearly. (See Dietz, above).

SCRAP-BAG, irregular, 10¢. Florence Anderson & Charles Henderson, 2146 East 13th Street South, Salt Lake City, 5, Utah.

SLANT, irregular, 4 issues 25¢. W. Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland. (Prozines accepted).

SPARX, irregular, 10¢. Henry M. Spelman, 75 Sparks St., Cambridge, 38, Mass.

TIEMPO-DE-FANTASIA, bi-monthly, 5¢. James Taurasi, 137-03 32nd Ave, Flushing, NY. (Spanish edition of FANTASY TIMES.)

Here is one of the best fantasy books of the year
FROM OFF THIS WORLD

Gems of the "Hall of Fame" Classics—Edited by Leo Marguiles and
Oscar J. Friend—with a jacket design by Virgil Finlay
About 400 pages · \$2.95 sent postpaid

The 18 stories included in this anthology are the pick of the crop of thousands of stories. They include: *Gardner*—The Last Woman; *Sharp*—The Eternal Man; *Hamilton*—The Man Who Evolved; *Starzl*—Hornets of Space; *Herbert*—The World Without; *Tucker*—The Cubic City; *Smith*—The City of Singing Flame; *Stangland*—Ancient Brain; *Hilliard*—The Green Torture; *Weinbaum*—A Martian Odyssey; *Miller*—The Man from Mars; *Binder*—Conquest of Life; *Keller*—The Literary Corkscrew; *Williamson*—Through the Purple Cloud; *Smith*—Beyond the Singing Flame; *Weinbaum*—Valley of Dreams; *Kuttner*—When the Earth Lived. Order NOW from:

Niel De Jack, 203 W. Sixth St., Mishawaka, Indiana
(write for catalog)

THE SPOTLIGHT

Hannes Bok has been signed to do the jacket and six illustrations for THE BLIND SPOT, and jacket and four interiors for THE SPOT OF LIFE, the Austin Hall & Homer Eon Flint novels Prime Press (Philadelphia) will publish this winter. Alfred Prime has dropped out of the firm bearing his name, leaving Jim Williams & Ozzie Train at the helm.

A beautiful memorial edition of A. Merritt's adventurous fantasy, THE SHIP OF ISHTAR, has been published by the Borden Publishing Co. (Los Angeles) at \$3.50. The 309 pages have many Finlay illustrations.

Mystery writer Howard Browne is now editor of Ziff-Davis magazines, replacing Ray Palmer. AMAZING S. will begin running book reviews soon.

New York's Hydra Club is contemplating an s-f fan-and-pro conference for late winter or early spring.

Paul Banks has replaced Bob Johnson as editor of fanzine LUNA (1852 11th Ave, Greeley, Colo.) Likewise, Bill James and Arnim Seislstad have taken over MUTANT (1500 Fairholme Ave, Grosse Point, Mich.) from C.S. Metchette.

The Cincy convention committee sold 51 pages of advertising for the souvenir program booklet. A huge, colorful backdrop 10 feet high by 30 feet long hung on the front wall facing the hall, the work of artists Grossman and Kroll of Des Moines.

Following the conclave, Ted Carnell (London) and Ned McKeown (Toronto) journeyed to Chicago for a four-day rump session with Korshak, Butler, DeJack, Wheeler, Les Tina, Bleiler, Dikty and Tucker.

Don Grant's Grandon Publishing Co. (51 Empire St, Providence, 3, R.I.) are planning four books this season: PORT OF PERIL and SWORDSMEN OF MARS by Otis A. Kline, THE GOLDEN CITY by Ralph Milne Farley, and DWELLERS IN THE MIRAGE by Abe Merritt. All at \$3.

The Sept. 3rd issue of ANTIQUARIAN BOOKMAN (weekly booksellers' magazine) was a special Science-Fantasy number, with pictures of 2 s-f window displays plus 3 articles on the science-fiction book trade. BOOKMAN reprinted the convention program, praised the field in an editorial, ran a review of s-f books coming this fall, and published a check list of science & fantasy volumes, as well as running 25 advertisements by fantasy publishers and dealers. To wind up, one article pointed out that book dealers may keep abreast of the field, both in news and new-book reviews, from these 3 publications: Derleth's ARKHAM SAMPLER, Walter Gillings' (British) FANTASY REVIEW, and your old friend the Bloomington News Letter.

REDD BOGGS:

Science-fiction may be winning new readers at a spectacular rate --everybody says so-- but I have seen no evidence that it is winning new fans, those active enthusiasts who like to write and talk about s-f as well as read it. I believe the fan field is in the horse latitudes, despite science-fiction's increasing prominence. The crop of current fanzines rates poorly compared with that of the pre- and mid-war years; the current citizenry of fandom seems relatively untalented and very juvenile beside the old-guard element--- which achieved a striking success upon graduating to the pro ranks as editors, writers and agents.

Though the attendance at the Cincinnati convention was perhaps larger than that of the first conclave in 1939, I don't believe the increase was either marked or significant. It seems probable that with the aid of widespread and skillful publicity, any convention so far could have attracted 200 or 300 fans instead of the 100-plus which has been the average attendance up to now.

Well, then: it is to our advantage, is it not, to have professional publicity and propaganda attending on the conventions? Surely no other single factor in fandom is likely to create fans out of casual readers than a convention, where the latter are brought in contact with celebrities and see the brotherhood of s-f in action.

Such propaganda tactics as foisting a "Miss Science-Fiction" on the convention are relatively harmless and since, on the one hand, they do not detract from the enjoyment and, on the other, may actually aid in enriching fandom with many bright-eyed recruits, I believe professional assistance (if not dominance) should be encouraged by all fans.

----*

After the nausea experienced by this writer upon reading the line-ups of Merlin Press' two science-fiction anthologies, it is refreshing to receive word of a good s-f anthology --namely, MEN AGAINST THE STARS, the Gnome Press book to be edited by Martin Greenberg.

This collection is, according to advance blurbs, a "new type of anthology (which will) taken in its entirety, tell a story." The story of the conquest of space, from the first trip to the moon forward into the far future when terrestrial civilization will have spread to the farthest star. The idea of building an anthology around a theme is a new and striking one, and reading the tentative line-up of yarns, I believe editor Greenberg is exercising excellent taste in selecting the stories to tell of the great adventure. I'm convinced that MEN AGAINST THE STARS will return the science anthology to a position of eminence whence it will have fallen with the Merlin Press fiascos.

Mr. Greenberg is readying two other anthologies, each having a motif popular with fantasites, which will be published

by Gnome Press next year. The second of these, which has been only tentatively planned, should be even more fun to edit than to read. Both of them are worth watching for.

----*

The fan field has published one of its too-infrequent contributions of lasting interest. This time it is the INDEX OF MAGAZINE SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Wm. Evans and published by Robert Petersen (BNL, August '49). Abounding with typos and inaccurate and incomplete information, execrably mimeographed, poorly arranged and pitifully "bound," this index probably is worth the one-dollar price asked, for it represents a tremendous task of compiling, classifying, stencilling and mimeographing, but as it stands it cannot be unhesitatingly recommended.

Perhaps we should be glad the job was done at all, for this is the first definitive magazine index of s-f in more than ten years; but it seems to this writer that if science-fiction is growing so whoppingly popular, the project of issuing such indexes is no longer a matter for amateurs.

Rather than publish some of these magazine novels such as THE KID FROM MARS, which do not deserve the dignity of hard covers, it seems that some publisher could do a service and make a profit if he would put an s-f index into printed, hard covers. Certainly a professionally printed & bound volume, moderately priced, would sell widely enough to warrant such a venture. I do trust that, if none of the present fantasy publishers wish to tackle the job, the next time some fan gets the urge to establish a publishing house, he will make such an index of magazine fantasy his first project.

.....

BLOOMINGTON NEWS-LETTER

Number 13. October, 1949

Edited and published by Bob Tucker
Post Office Box 260, Bloomington, Illinois

Published every other month, free of charge, as a news service to the science-fiction field. It is necessary to mail a request if you wish the next issue, ready about December fifth. Illustration on page one by Ralph Rayburn Phillips; craftint column heads by William Rotsler.

NEWS LETTER is available in New York at Stephen's Book Service, 45 Fourth Ave; in Chicago at Shasta Publishers' offices, 5525 S. Blackstone, at the Vagabond Bookshop, 1117 East 55th St, and at the University of Chicago Bookstore; in Seattle copies may be obtained at the Wolf Den Bookshop, 724 Pike Street. There is no charge.