

No. 5
ETHERLINE

The Science-
Fiction Newsletter

ALL THAT'S NEW
IN THE WORLD
OF SCIENCE
FICTION

Magazines

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Books

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Films

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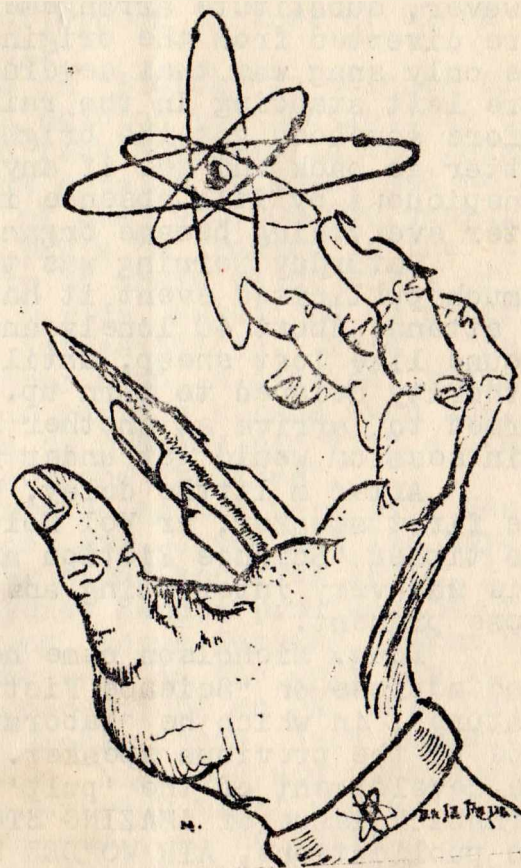
Publishing

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"Fandom"



REPORT ON THE 2ND AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION.

The main impression gained from this convention was that of bad organization. It reeked of it. Where the blame is to be laid is a matter for conjecture as the organizer blames the committee for giving him no help, while the committee promptly hands the buck to the organizer. The fact remains, however, that it was the show that suffered.

On Friday night affairs started off on a very bad footing, as the original booking was cancelled at 5 PM, with the cocktail party due to start at 8 PM !! However, substitute arrangements were made and people were diverted from the original site to the new one. The only snag was that several interstate visitors were left standing in the rain at the original venue before somebody got the bright idea that maybe they'd better go back and see if anybody was left. Beer was conspicuous by it's absence in the early stages, but after everything became organized it wasn't too bad.

Saturday Morning was the most dismal start for a much publicised event it has ever been my misfortune to attend. About 40 lonely and misguided fans wandered around like lost sheep, until about 11.30 somebody in authority deigned to turn up. We were immediately informed to arrive at another building at 1 PM when the main session would get under way.

After a little delay, MC Ken Martin introduced the first speaker, Mr Vol Molesworth, whose address was titled "Science Fiction and Modern Literature". This was very interesting and was warmly received by those present.

Doug. Nicholson came next and delivered a very good address on "Science Fiction and Specialist Literature", in which he elaborated on several points made by the previous speaker. Doug's main theme was the development of the 'pulp' magazines, starting on Gernsback issue of AMAZING STORIES, through his other two publications, AIR WONDER STORIES and WONDER STORIES into the second stage of the pulp field, ASTOUNDING

STORIES. In 1934 Clayton Publications were forced to relenquish control over ASTOUNDING STORIES, and it was taken over by Street & Smith, who launched it under the name of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION. A series of slides was shown depicting covers from these earlier magazines but, unfortunately the screening was marred by faulty presentation. Mr Nicholson concluded by questioning the future of the pulp magazines in the light of the large interest shown by hard cover publishers in science fiction.

Next Speaker was Mr Phineas (Bluey) Glick, who discussed "Science in Science Fiction", and caused much amusement by pulling the "science" employed by quite a few writers to pieces. His address was, in my opinion, one of the best of the afternoon in that Mr Glick knew what he was talking about.

Mr Rex Meyer spoke on "Biology in Science Fiction" and stressed that in his opinion the possibility of us finding another humanoid race anywhere in the galaxy is extremely unlikely, as it entails an identical evolution with man's for a period of over 900,000,000 years. The android and intelligent BEM's he treated in the same way, with the possibility of there being BEM's of some sort inhabiting other worlds. Mutations or super bods are again, he thinks, an impossibility. Extra Sensory Perception is, on the other hand, a distinct possibility indeed, it is apparent in certain humans even now.

Graham Stone wound up proceedings with a discourse on "Science Fiction Fandom and Fanzines".

Among the interstate delegates were Bill Veney & Harry Brook from Brisbane, Mrs. Joyce and Ian Moyes all the way from Adelaide, Mr Nicholson from Perth, & yours truly from Melbourne. Sydney fandom provided celebrities including Rosemary Simmons, Norma Hemming, Norma Williams Lyell Crane (who, by the way, is the only fan in the world to have attended conventions in UK, USA, Canada & Australia), Dave Cohen, Graham Stone, Jack Leggett, Vol Molesworth, Doug Nicholson, Mike Bos and numerous others.

The film shows on Saturday night was undoubtedly the best run part on the con., as no serious breakdowns occurred. Program included that fine old Czech fantasy, "Krankatit" by Karel Capek, "History of the Helicopter",

and "How to Catch a Cold".

On Sunday morning the lack of organization once again showed through as the advertised time came and departed. The auctioneer apparently found himself unable to find transport for himself and the books for auction. Jack Leggett once again came to the rescue, and brought the material in. Eventually Bluey Glick took over the rostrum and started the auction. The first items were BRE Astoundings, which averaged 1/- to 2/- each. The earlier issues followed and fetched up to 5/- each. Pocket Books were not very well received, but the American magazines fetched fabulous prices as was expected.

Sunday afternoon found the Business session in full swing, with the first speaker being Graham Stone who reported on ASFS. The title was recently changed to Australasian in view of some New Zealanders being members. The latest figure available gave the membership at 155. Mr Stone outlined the aims of ASFS, and wished to inform the assembly that it is his aim to make every reader of science fiction a member of his organization. He said that the overseas fans and pro mags were almost unanimous in their negative reaction to Australian fandom.

Mr Molesworth delivered a report on the Futurian Society of Sydney, and he outlined its varied & chequered existence. He requested that all aid be given to FSS by fans.

Mr Veney addressed the session on behalf of the North Shore Futurian Society, which was formed under his guidance after the last convention by Mike Bos. This organization has expanded rapidly and already has affiliations with the Port Phillip Futurians in Melbourne.

Mr Crozier reported on the activities of fans in Melbourne.

Mr Veney again arose on behalf of the Brisbane Science Fiction Group, and outlined its growth and development. The present attendance is small, but it is hoped that in the near future this will become a bit larger.

Mr Moyes reported on behalf of the Adelaide Group and said that at the moment it was in a formative state.

Mr Nicholson of Perth attended but was not in a position to report as he was not in touch with any fans.

Mr Cohen, representative of Operation Fantast, reported on the aims of the organization. Many sections & departments are included, and OF is not interested in making money. He will be glad to help any fan who should write to him.

Mr Les Raethel, Librarian of the Sydney Group, is also in charge of the auctions held on a Thursday night and said that they were proving very satisfactory in a financial way. He also reported on the Futurian Library, giving figures on the present number of items.

Mr Doug Nicholson, prior to his departure for Ballarat, provided an interesting insight into the pitfalls of publishing a semi-professional magazine. The first issue of Forerunner was a duplicated effort, while No. 2 is photo-litho, making for a better presentation of the contents. He thinks the time is nearly right for a full professional magazine, and will do all in his power to make this dream a reality.

Miss Rosemary Simmons, as secretary of the FSS, reported on the clubs activities over the past year. She also recounted the history of Vertical Horizons, a femme fanzine which she edits in association with several other members of the opposite sex.

Mr Don Lawson gave the meeting a short history of the auctions at the Thursday night group, and thanked all supporters for their valuable aid. On the subject of films, he reported that the Group was a registered user of the State Film Board, and this enables it to obtain a number of films free of charge.

MOTIONS FROM THE FLOOR.

Mr Veney moved that Mr Stone be forced to give the interstate groups more co-operation through ASFS. He explained that in his opinion, the lack of this support from Mr Stone was damaging to Science Fiction Fandom as a whole, and he would like to hear from Mr Stone regarding his future plans on this subject. The ASFS was originally

planned purely as a registering body for Australian fandom, but lately it had developed into a fully fledged club, with Mr Stone as its self elected & self controlled executive. Mr Veney said that when he offered to take the post of State secretary for Tasmania, he was informed by Mr Stone that he was not acceptable. Relations between the interstate & a certain section of the Sydney groups and Mr Stone had degenerated to such an extent that some method of placating both sides had to be found. If Mr Stone wished to continue on the way he was going then he would have to realise that the interstate groups had to have some consideration.

Mr Brook, in seconding the motion, said that Mr Stone had launched a personal attack on Mr Veney by correspondence, and in his opinion, this was not doing fandom any good.

Mr Dunk, in opposing the motion, said that Mr Veney apparently had a personal feud he wanted aired in public.

Mr Lawson supported Mr Dunk, and eulogised Mr Stone in his work, explaining the amount of time & money he put into his work.

Mr Crozier, in supporting Mr Veney, said that Mr Stone would be wise to revise his attitude towards the interstate groups. This was not a personal matter, but solely on the ways Mr Stone operated.

Mr Glick explained the aims of ASFS, as Mr Stone refused to make any comment, except to answer "Who is the controlling body of ASFS?" with "I am a law unto myself".

After much heated discussion on the issue, Mr Veney withdrew the motion with the approval of his seconder.

It was planned that one organizer be appointed by the FSS to take control over the next convention which would be held in Sydney at Easter next year.. The person appointed is to delegate the various jobs to people of his own choice, and he would be solely responsible for their work. He would report to FSS at regular intervals on the progress being made, &

a sheet would be issued to keep all fans informed as to the latest developments.

Mr Molesworth wound up proceedings by reminding the meeting that of the 12 months since the last convention, Mr A. Haddon had carried out his work faithfully for the first nine months. I can see Mr Molesworth's point, but the fact remains that if Mr Haddon was unable to discharge his duties in the last vital 3 months, he should have been removed from office immediately. The least Mr Haddon could have done was to turn up at part of the convention he was supposed to be running.

Next year should be Sydney's chance to show the rest of Australian fandom that it can run a convention efficiently. If not, then it should be its last.

I. J. Crozier.

McGILL'S

FOR ALL THE LATEST IN

SCIENCE FICTION

183 ELIZABETH ST.

MELBOURNE