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AROUND FANDOM IN 59

LASFS CELEBRATES 25th ANNIVERSARY; VAN VOGT, ROBERT BLOCH SPEAK

The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society observed its 25th anniversary on Oct. 29 by holding its 1159th consecutive meeting in the Commodore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. The special meeting, with Director Bernard Cook presiding, was attended by well over 70 people among whom were many prominent West Coast fans, including Bjo, Ernie Wheatley, John Trimble, and Forrest J. Ackerman, who was distinguished by having attended the first LASFS meeting back in 1934. Robert Bloch, the guest of honor, made a speech commenting on LASFS members, past and present. Since his talk was printed in its entirety in Shaggy #47, it will not be covered here.

Morris Scott Dollens showed a large number of color slides of his astronomical paintings. Al Lewis (West Coast) received the Evans-Freehafer Award for 1959 for being the most outstanding member of LASFS for the year. Al was chosen for his work as editor of SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES. Bjo was given a special Certificate of Recognition for her contributions to fandom over the past several years.

A. E. van Vogt appeared and was induced to talk from the rostrum. Since he had not prepared a speech, van Vogt invited questions from the floor. Someone asked how many books he had written. He replied by saying he had written fifteen or sixteen; he was not sure of how many exactly. He went on to say that his works had been translated into many languages, including Swedish, German, and Japanese. He was asked if it took him very long to write a book. "Oh, yes," he replied with a smile, "especially in Japanese."

In answering further questions, van Vogt said that he:

** Used to write fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, during his most prolific period. This went on for four years. One year he produced 300,000 words for publication, but that he has never equaled that since, especially since he discovered that Cleve Cartmill could produce 500,000 words a year with just one hand.

** Came to live in Los Angeles in 1944 (He was previously a citizen of Canada.) . After some months in L.A. he discovered LASFS, and for about two years "they couldn't get rid of me." But eventually he came around less and less, finally dropping out altogether.

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(van Vogt's remarks)

- ***Has always enjoyed Henry Kuttner's writings.
- ***Has a high opinion of Forry Ackerman as a writer's agent. He receives about a thousand dollars a year from Forry in royalties on his old stories and books. These royalties are realized from obscure markets, such as foreign rights and reprints. "Now," said van Vogt, "I think it is time I replenished the well." This remark was received with warm enthusiasm.
- ***Collaborated on a technical book on hypnotism, which has sold well.
- ***Used to write confession stories, which is how he got started in writing.
- ***Took a college course on the modern novel about two years ago. He learned a lot about the modern novel, and someday he expects to be able to put that knowledge to use!

Van Vogt continued to answer questions, most of which concerned dianetics, hypnotism, and psychiatry. Unfortunately, space prohibits covering these remarks.

Conspicuous by their absence: Ray Bradbury, who had unavoidable business elsewhere that night; and Fritz Leiber, who was visiting Chicago.

Following van Vogt's talk was a showing of photos from LASFS' past, most interesting among which was a group photo taken at the 100th meeting, twenty years before. LASFS members of that fargone day included E. E. Smith, Ph. D., otherwise known as "Doc" Smith; Robert A. Heinlein; Jack Williamson; Edmund Hamilton; and a very youthful-looking Ray Bradbury.

To sum up: it was the high point of the year for LASFS, and it was generally hoped that everyone concerned will be around for the fiftieth anniversary meeting in the foreboding year of 1984!

Al Lewis, long-time editor of the LASFS publication, SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES, is resigning his editorship as of Jan. 1, 1960. He will be succeeded by John Trimble, who has been associated with Shaggy for over a year. Everyone will be sorry to see Al go, but they are consoled by the fact that he will be replaced by a man who has proved that he can do a good job.

LASFS held its annual New Year's party at the home of Len and Anna Moffatt in Downey, Calif. Like all fan functions, this party was a smashing success. No fatalities were reported, though it was reported that the stomach pump and the mechanical resuscitator were called upon to revive several members whose enthusiasm got the best of them. We leave it to your imagination to fill in the details.

--- IN MEMORIAM ---

It has reached this reporter that Bruce Wenstell, promising young West Coast neofan, a close friend of Randall Garrett, and a crusader for ninth fandom, died suddenly a few days ago. The report was unconfirmed, and most details are lacking at this writing. Bruce, whose enthusiasm for things fannish knew no bounds, was rather well known on the west coast, and fandom in general will miss him.

Glenn Lord, editor of an Arkham House book Always Comes Evening, the collected poems of Robert E. Howard, is preparing a bibliography of Howard's stories. In an interview with Glenn Lord recently, it was learned that Howard wrote under several pen names: Patrick Ervin, Patrick Howard, Sam Walser, and Robert E. Ward, though the last has not been authenticated as really belonging to Howard. Howard was a really prolific writer, and his stories, besides appearing in Weird Tales, were printed in such magazines as Jack Demme's Fight Magazine, Action Stories, Argosy, Top Notch, Cowboy Stories, Golden Fleece, Sport Story, Thrilling Adventure, Oriental Stories, and Action Stories, all of which are out of print. The stories in question appeared in these magazines between 1931 and 1937, a year after Howard's unfortunate death.

LASFS HELD ITS SEMIANNUAL ELECTIONS recently, and the results were startling. Bernard Cook, running for a second term as Director, was defeated by Ted Johnstone, who has been secretary for the past year. Jack Larness, otherwise known as Scribe JR, is the new secretary. Barney Bernard, LASFS Treasurer for as far back as the memories of the present members go, was replaced by Rick Sneyry. Barney's upset was the surprise of the year for many. Senior and Junior Committeemen are John Trimble and Ernie Wheatley, both active in fandom for many years.

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ADVERTISEMENT: I am interested in buying copies of de Camp's THE TUNNELS OF IF, and THE TRITONIAN RING. Anyone who has copies of these two books, preferably in good condition, should contact the editor of this fanzine. Will pay a reasonable price.

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UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL recently hosted LASFS at a special slide showing of THE 4D MAN. Many thanks to U-I, but frankly, fellows, your science fiction movies still stink. Why don't you grow up?

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