
FANTASY FICTION

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DISCON REPORT

by Bill Mallardi

The 21st Annual Science Fiction Convention, held at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Washington, D. C., over the Labor Day weekend, was officially opened Saturday, August 31. Of a total membership of 820, 583 were present at the convention, and 442 attended the banquet. San Francisco was selected as the 1964 convention site, and the San Francisco delegation reported that more than 200 had already paid their membership fees for the 1964 con.

The Discon was officially opened by chairman George Scithers at 12:30 PM. After introducing some of the Discon committee, he announced that the costume ball, beginning at 7:30, would be closed to anyone who did not have a name tag. He also asked that flash cameras be used only during introductions and periods of applause, and not while a speaker was talking.

Scithers then introduced James Blish, first speaker on the program. Blish talked about "An Answer of Sorts," wherein he blasted American book reviews as being mostly lousy and about to become extinct. His opinions were that American reviewers, by and large, are morons who review books by reprinting the jacket blurbs on the backs of the books they review, especially newspaper stf reviewers, like one from New York who praises every stf novel that comes along. He thought P. S. Miller's column in ANALOG to be one of the few good ones. He also had kind words for Asimov's column. Blish cut his address short because of an attack of stage fright. The program was continued with the promise he would be back later.

Robert Silverberg and Ed Emshiller gave an interesting discussion called "Ring Around an Illustration." This concerned writing stories around cover illustrations and vice versa and the problems both artists and writers encountered trying to please pro mag editors. Ed said there was no difficulty for the artist to do a cover--you just PAINT it! But Bob said it is difficult for the authors to explain some of the scenes depicted on the covers, and sometimes they have to "cheat" to get out of it. Some of the incidents given were humorous, some serious.

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Other panels and discussions followed this. Katherine MacLean and Lester Del Ray volunteered to fill up the time left by Blish, with completely unrehearsed talks, and they did a very good job with them. The main ideas behind the talks were that there is very little creative thinking going on now in the world; the populations have become a bunch of parrots. Katherine thought people do not want mechanized Utopias, they want to do things, but it seems we are getting a de-centralized anarchy instead. She got applause with her closing observation: "And these Burroughs books being sold indicate lots of barbarians taking over in fandom." Del Ray talked on conformists and non-conformists, and said in science fiction and fandom it is sad to see a trend toward conforming. In other words, joining the mainstream. He is for more non-conformity in both places, and closed with: "It's a proud and lonely thing to be a man."

Blish returned and finished his speech about reviewers. It was his opinion that British reviewers stand head and shoulders above most American sf reviewers, because they actively care about what the author is trying to do. This is not true in the US, he said, and the only way to remedy this is to change a few things. He said: "Who in the US knows and cares about science fiction? Answer: You do. It has to come from you! Through general revival of lettercolumns in professional science fiction magazines!" This brought enthusiastic applause.

Willy Ley gave a talk entitled "Mysteries of Astronomy" -- the problem of finding out if there is life on other planets without sending men there. He concluded that, since machinery is not trustworthy enough, man will be essential in this project.

The costume ball had some fairly good designs by the fans, and the facilities for judging and picture taking were excellent. Winners and categories were: Carol Pohl dressed as "The Donna Greery Navel Science" from "Reefs of Space" (Judges' Choice); Jon and Joni Stopa as "Incubus and Succubus" (Most Beautiful); Larry Kafka as "Conan, King of Nquilonia" (Sword and Sorcery and Judges' Choice); Bill Bowman as "Wolfman" (Best BEM); Jock Root and Adrienne Martine as "Maragon (The Subtle) and His Lady Claire La Brun" from Hyborian Legion (Fantasy); Bruce Pelz, Dian Girard and Ted Johnstone from NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS (Grey Mouser Group) by Fritz Leiber (Best Group and Judges' Choice); Judith Ann Lawrence as "The Birdwoman" from DAY AFTER DOOMSDAY (Authentic Science Fiction).

On the second day (Sunday) Dick Lupoff showed a Japanese cartoon film by Fumio Suzuki, about "Astro Boy", which will appear in syndicated form

THE FANZINE FIELD

by Mike Deckinger

HYPHEN #33 (Walt Willis, 170 Upper M'Ards Road, Belfast 4, N. Ireland, irregular, trades, 7 for \$1.00) Most of today's better fanzines tend to undergo periodic bad spells, when they can't seem to come up with anything better than an unimpressive array of generally mediocre and uninspired material, usually apologetically presented by the editor. HYPHEN seems to be one of the few exceptions to this disheartening rule. I can't recall reading a bad issue of HYPHEN, ever. I think that if Walt deliberately set out to produce a below par issue he couldn't do so. The name HYPHEN immediately denotes the overall high quality, and detractions to this peak are very limited, if at all. With this issue we have Brian Alldiss' Peterborough con report dominating the issue. Alldiss writes in a witty, humorous, and oft-times surprisingly informative style, which completely belies the up-beat image of him his fiction has created. Ken Potter wryly writes on art museums, and Bob Shaw wryly writes on Ken Potter. No lack of camaraderie here. The lettercol, masterfully edited as usual, brings everything to a pleasant, but regrettable close. Either you get HYPHEN or you don't, and if you don't go tell your troubles to a more responsive ear.

DYNATRON #17 (Roy Tackett, 915 Green Valley Road, Albuquerque, New Mexico, bi-monthly, trade, contributions, 15¢) DYNATRON is a remarkably unspectacular and unpretentious fanzine which diligently appears every two months or so and seemingly shouldn't be quite as good as it is. The repro is so-so, the artwork is nothing to raise the roof over, and the material, for the most part, reads like it's been taken from the N3P Material Pool. Yet nonetheless, editor Tackett fashions everything with such a dogged persistence that you can't help but admire his tenacity, and like DYNATRON as well, even if only a little. This issue proves to be of a higher calibre than most, materialwise anyway. Jack Speer's sercon article on "Precocity" takes top honors, with Speer's acute probing into juvenile initiative. Ed Cox has a better than average after-the-bomb story, and several features and a good lettercol close the issue. As I said, nothing to rave over, but developed skillfully into a surprisingly satisfying issue. Once you get by the Deindorfer cover the sailing's good.

THE REBEL #5 (John Jackson, RR #7, Box 137-D, Crown Point, Indiana, irregular, trades, cont. 20¢) Several years ago a neofan who has since dropped out of sight, named Alan Boatman, launched a fanzine titled NON-COMM, which, the editor proudly proclaimed, was to be a non-conformist fanzine, embodying in its pages the true spirit of non-conformity. The title was indeed a misnomer. As it turned out, NON-COMM was every bit a typical fanzine, with few areas in which some noticeable deviation existed. Fanzines, by their natures, are non-conformers and reside in a unique category which they alone have carved out. Removing them from that, for the sake of non-conformity, only shuttles them back to the

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dreary obscurity of what passes for the norm. Boatman learned this too late, Jack Cascio never caught on, and it seems that Jackson has taken cognizance of the fact too. THE REBEL leads off, in a markedly un-rebellious manner with a good AFOM multi-lithed cover, depicting an abstractionist viewpoint of an alien landscape. The material content is uneven. Someone named Bernard Dietchman tries to be funny and is more pathetic than laughable. The almost-late Dave Locke does a good job on reviewing fanzines, and editor Jackson contributes an ambitiously cast example of an ancient Norse epic, complete with free verse and heroic allusions. The letter column is bland, though Kris Carey injects what seems to be a stream of controversy by some unfortunate anti-Negro remarks. At least John is assured of printable editorial fodder after this.

DIFFERENTIAL #12 (Paul Wyszowski, Box 3372, Sta. C, Ottawa 3, Ont., Canada, irregular, review, 2¢) Judging from the comments I've seen on this, DIF is strictly a labor of love, and greater love hath no fan than when he constantly releases issue after issue of a crudzine, written and published for his own enjoyment. Usually not exceeding two pages in length, DIF contains everything from denunciations of fandom to small bits of unimportant trivia. There is some mishandled poetry, some articles of little value, and even an illo or two to brighten up the stuffy image of this zine. What DIFFERENTIAL really is, I can't say. (Though I'm damned sure it's not the "impressionistic abstraction" Paul mentions in his editorial.) But as long as there's someone like Paul around to publish it, and there are others around to read it, then DIFFERENTIAL will be with us, and who am I to criticize anything with so noble a purpose?

THE PROCEEDINGS: CHICOM #3 (Advent Publishers, P. O. Box 9228, Chicago 90, Illinois, \$3.50) This is the much talked about, scarcely seen and inhumanly detailed compilation of last year's worldcon. It is by far the most exhaustive record ever produced of a con, and invaluable both to the attendee and the non-attendee. Running 200 printed pages, many with photographs, THE PROCEEDINGS details practically everything that occurred during the con, taken from tapes and recordings of the various proceedings. It represents a landmark in fan publishing, it's invaluable to anyone who thinks of himself even remotely as a fan, and I can not advise you too strongly to send away to Advent for the book, if indeed there are any extra copies left by now. Don't shirk this opportunity to own this detailed and highly entertaining fannish memory book.

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, lineup for NOVEMBER

Wings of Song (short)	Lloyd Biggle, Jr.
A Rose For Ecclesiastes (novelet)	Roger Zelazny
Mama (short)	Philip Winsor
SCIENCE: Welcome Stranger!	Isaac Asimov
Winged Victory (short)	B. Dorman
Books	Avram Davidson
Eight O'clock in the Morning (short)	Ray Nelson
The Eyes of Phorkos (short novel)	L. E. Jones
Ferdinand Peghoot: LXVI	Grendel Briarton

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over NBC Television for a year in most major cities. (Astro Boy flies with jets for legs, can hear 1000 times better than a human, etc.)

The banquet was held in the Presidential Room at 2:00 PM, with Guest of Honor Murray Leinster, Toastmaster Isaac Asimov, and the presentation of the Hugos. Leinster (Will F. Jenkins) gave interesting anecdotes about experiences he had gone through from WW2 until now, re: stf and its discoveries to help the war effort. He finished by talking of fandom and closed thusly: "I do think stf fandom is a large and disorganized bull-session...and I've enjoyed every word of it." He was given a standing ovation by all the banquet attendees. Asimov then announced the Hugo winners. Best pro mag--MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SF; Best fanzine--Pat and Dick Lupoff's XERO; Best novel--Philip K. Dick's THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE; Best short story--Jack Vance's "The Dragon Masters"; Best pro artist--Roy G. Krenkle; Best dramatic presentation--no award; Special award #1--P. S. Miller's "Reference Library" book reviews in ANALOG; Special award #2--Isaac Asimov for adding science to science fiction.

After the banquet the Fan Art Show prizes were awarded, and the results were: SCIENCE FICTION: (1) Larry Ivic--"The Lost World"; (2) Don Simpson--"The Lensman Group"; (3) John Wilson--"Revolt of the Machines"; Honorable Mention--Phil Normand--"Barsoom", OUTRE ART: (1) Judith Lawrence--"Coven"; (2) Don Simpson--"Artifact Found Off Innsmouth". CHILDREN'S FANTASY: (1) Barbi Johnson--"The Encourager's Recalcitrant Guide"; (2) Joni Stopa--"Frog Chorus", CARTOON: (1) Arthur Thompson--"Martian Invasion"; (2) Ryotaro Mizuno--"Space Fishhook"; Honorable Mention--Kantaro Hamada--"Untitled". HEROIC FANTASY: (1) Jim Cawthorn--"Earl Aubec and the Golem", ASTRONOMICAL: (1) Bob Martinez--"Landscape", JUDGES' CHOICE: (1) Sylvia Dees--"Witch Boy", OPEN AWARD: Don Simpson--"Death", FANTASY ART: Don Simpson--"In Mannannan's Castle"; (2) Judith Lawrence--"Country of the Blind"; Honorable Mention--Ted White--"Krazy Kat Group". PHOTO SALON: (color) Bruce Pelz--"Mannerdamerung"; (black and white) Chris Moskowitz--"Greetings From Earth". NO AWARD categories: Fellowship of the Ring, Most Promising of Show, Story Series Photo, Experimental Photo.

At 5:30 de Camp, Asimov, Ley, Mash and Leiber expounded on what a BEM looked like...rather disappointing in that Willy Ley limited the possible size and features of an E. T. to be almost human in shape, function, etc., under given properties of the planet they may live on.

At 7:30 the annual business meeting began. Forry Ackerman announced the Big Heart Award would go to James V. Taurasi for his work in fandom and on SCIENCE FICTION TIMES. Sam Moskowitz announced a new award: First Fandom's S. F. Hall of Fame, with the first member being M. E. "Doc" Smith. Since Ben Jason will be unable to supply Hugo to future cons, the Detroit group, under Howard DeVore set up a committee to find someone who can get them. San Francisco bid for the '64 convention, and it was made official. And Steve Schultheis offered changes in rules of Hugo awards for Dramatic Presentation; it was passed unanimously. After the meeting came a change in schedule; a Burroughs panel was moved to Monday in the spot of an editors' panel, and vice versa. This editors' panel consisted of John W. Campbell, Don Wollheim, Budrys and Cele

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Goldsmith, with Fred Fohl moderating. Each editor asked for more stories from the fans for their respective magazines. But Campbell chided everyone for not coming up with a new "breakthrough" in a stf story since Smith's "Skylark" series. This resulted in an animated discussion with the audience participating and arguing with Campbell on supposed "breakthroughs." Blish stood up and clarified "breakthrough" as being meant in treatment, not idea, which John conceded. But he was still adamant as to the repeated use of old themes and repetitious stories by S. F. authors. He says he wants new blood in ANALOG.

On Monday there was the Burroughs panel, an auction, and various other panels and discussions, the more interesting being with Hal Clement and P. Schuyler Miller re: "Is the SF Story a Mental Exercise?" One thing both agreed on was that it is a mental exercise for the author, but not necessarily for the reader. Hal says it was--in relation to a "who-dun-it" mystery story--although in stf it is called a "what-if?" About 2:15 all the "dirty pros" put on a skit--E. Dean Piper, Randy Garrett, Judith Merrill, etc. The fans seemed to enjoy most of it.

The Fourth Convention was a meeting of the membership to close the convention, where chairman Scithers happily turned over the gavel to J. Ben Stark of the San Francisco group.

The proceeding of the 21st S. F. Con will be published, at an estimated cost of \$1.00 over the con membership for its attendees.

George Scithers received a plaque from the pros entitled "The Stripped Gear Award." And thus ended the convention. #

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