
 WESTERCON IV A GOOD SHOW; GEORGE PAL GUEST SPEAKER; SAN DIEGO IN '52!
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The fourth Annual West Coast Science Fiction Conference (Westercon IV), sponsored by The Elves, Gnomes and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society, was held in San Francisco over the June 29th and 30th weekend. Two Outlanders, Rick Sneary & Stan Woolston, were among the 150-odd fen present. Herewith their report:

Sneary arrived at the Garden Library in Berkely Friday evening, June 29th. About 40 fen were there, E.E. Evans of LA being the first out-of-towner to arrive. (The GL has lots of stf titles) About 50 3-dimensional color slides of the Norwescon and The Little Men were shown. Later some of the fen adjourned to D.B. Moore's residence, where Sneary spent the nite. Anthony Boucher, LeRoy Tackett, Hans Rush, Claude Plum & others played records, drank beer and yakked. It was learned that Wilmar Shiras was not expected and that the hoped-for preview of Pal's 'When Worlds Collide' would not be shown as the film was still being colored. (This stf pic will be released in August)

The Little Men's Rhodomagnetic Digest had planned to publish an editorial about Galaxy but H.L. Gold (in about 10 letters of which he had photostats made) said he would sue if they used the editorial! Boucher thinks Gold takes things too seriously. Later Boucher revealed that the Magazine of Fantasy & SF regretted passing up Bradbury's "Fly In The Middle of The Air". Boucher is interested in more "little animal" stories (hurkles, etc.) for the mag.

Woolston arrived at the con hall in Frisco Saturday AM, June 30. He had this third breakfast with Knappheide and met a few others there. No one present to take the dollar admission fee or register names. The Little Men, who had taken over the con after the breakup of the club originally sponsoring it, spent only 10 days in preparation, via phone, letters and telegrams. A beer and coke booth was being set up.

The formal program started before noon. Chairman Tom Quinn introduced Honorary Chairman Boucher, after saying that the conference was a trial run for the 1953 world convention which Frisco wants. Five fen from Oregon & Paul Gordon, Bill Cox, Mel Brown & Roy Squires from the LA area were among those present. A panel book discussion included Evans, Boucher, Sam Peoples, Kepner, Quinn and Roger Nelson of San Diego, who won the 1952 Westercon bid by acclamation. Sneary reminded everyone of South Gate in '58! R. Bretnor, an intelligent but "wandering speaker" talked on The Future of Stf, asking everyone to propagandize & teach stf. Next a forum was held. Ideas discussed: Expanding field environment of man makes his end impossible... Stf goes beyond Plotto; introduces new ideas... Effect of pseudo-science on stf is like dianetics... Identity of reader with hero essential... Extrapolation today is at a minimum.

Bidding at the Auction was healthy. Outstanding items were a Bonestell original, originals by G. Faraco and a Bradbury manuscript.

Margaret St. Clair started a "wild research" for story ideas but said the ideas offered were not strong enough. Quipped she didn't see why men should get beautiful girls when the women didn't get beautiful men. She chews gum when writing. Finds writing fun but thinking sometimes miserable.

The Psychological Aspects of Stf was discussed by Dr. Bernard I. Kahn. Fact & fantasy. Stf an old subject, i.e. figure out what people will do. They have 3 ways to react: fight, run or associate.

He said s-f and fantasy were as old as recorded history & religion.
A recording of a Dimension X program was played. "The Barnhouse Effect".

Boucher spoke several times during the con and at the fanquet that evening. (Sunday was evidently spent in informal fangabbing, motating, recuperating, etc.) George Pal was presented with an "Invisible Little Man" award for his fine work in producing adult stf films. Pal said he was being typed a science fiction movie producer and was proud of it. He gave much credit to writers like Heinlein, Balmer and Wylie and showered a great deal of praise on artist Bonestell. He said Bonestell was already at work on the sets for his next production which will be H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds"!

Boucher apologized for the dollar admission fee but said it was necessary because of the last minute organizing of the con. (No time to save up money for it, we guess.) However the fans were treated to a free theatre party where they saw the superb French fantasy film (English titles) Orpheus. So--despite the pre-con difficulties--Westercon IV was apparently a good show. And now it's Westercon V in San Diego in '52, Nolasco in '51, Detroit in '52?, Frisco in '53?, and...South Gate in '53!

THE OUTLANDER

MAGAZINE

Published three or four times a year by The Outlander Society.

We have given our readers an average of 25 mimeographed pages per issue. Plus printed front and back covers.

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Stop Press Book Review:

THE SPIRIT WAS WILLING, by Milton Luban, Greenberg, Publisher* Publication date: July 2, 1951. \$2.50. 188 pp.

Here is a lightly written novel which carries a heavy subject. At times the lightness of the writing seems too weak to bear the weight of the truly serious topics but it is a good try.

We have people who are afflicted with ~~rose~~ prejudices and who are aware that many books have been written pointing up the stupidity of bigotry. Consequently, because of the very strength of their prejudices they will not read these books. However these same people might be tempted to read...say, a book written in "the Thorne Smith tradition". Well written ribald, humorous fantasy is enjoyed by all sorts of people, even bigots. That seems to be the purpose of The Spirit Was Willing. That is, get the prejudiced reader interested and then hit him in the face with it!

Unfortunately this book is not the well written ribaldry in the Smith manner, although the author's spirit was obviously willing. The characters are apparently deliberately stereotyped, including the ghosts involved. But they do consume a lot of likker. There is some s-e-x in the story but it is almost spiritless. Some of the dialogue is ancient chapeau; some of it is funny. The face slapping given those crackpot sects and cults which stir up race hates and take money from the suckers is fairly well done. However the writer seems to take a very broadminded view of astrology. Either he believes in it himself or feels that astrology is a harmless superstition which demands a certain amount of respect.

Psychologists who practice dianetics are also given the haw-haw treatment. All in all it is an amusing item and I hope this review doesn't help to defeat the above mentioned purpose of the book.

-Len J. Moffatt

*Greenberg, Publisher 201 E. 57th St. New York 22, N.Y.

NEWS NOTES FROM HERE AND ABROAD

JULY 3, 1951 (OSNS)

Evidently Forry and Wendy Ackerman find the city of Paris quite an Eiffel. A picpostal of the Eiffel Tower from our temporary fan-continental says they are "Having a High Time here!" The Ackermans should be back in LA sometime in August, after a tour of England, Scotland and various parts of the Continent.

Con Pederson, our wayfaring Outlander, who has spent the last couple of years in Minnesota and Pennsylvania, is expected here (LA & environs) anytime now. We are about to meet a legend....