

THE SKYRACK NEWSLETTER

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DEATH OF DON FORD

Fans the world over will be both shocked and saddened at the report that Donald E. Ford, the American Mid-West's "Mr. Science Fiction," died of cancer at the age of forty-four a week last Friday, 2nd April.

Don was a life-long reader of s.f. and possessed one of the largest magazine collections in the world, his applebox shelved basement collection being a talking point by many more fans than those who had gazed enviously at the complete runs of pulps and digest sized prozines.

In addition to being a leading light of many years' standing in the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, Don was Chairman of the 1949 Worldcon, the Convention, a photographer of more than local renown, a member of OMPA since December 1955 and a founder member of First Fandom.

He was the only fan to administer the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund without actually having made the trip himself across the Pond. Under the guidance of Don Ford and Walt Willis the Fund came safely through its period of teething troubles and Don was himself finally rewarded with a TAFF trip to the 1960 Easter London Convention at which he made many friends, thrilling the audience with a show of some of his many prize winning colour slides and introducing to British conventions a new technique in party-throwing.

Little Don, all six feet six of the man who lived for science fiction, is no more. On a recent trip to see fellow fan Dr. Charles L. Barrett, Don had mentioned a pain in his groin. Tests showed a malignant knot and a subsequent operation came too late.

Science fiction has lost a tireless worker. Fandom has lost a true friend. The sympathy of fans everywhere will be extended to Margaret, Terry-Ann and the rest of the Ford family.

THE BSFA CONVENTION will be held over the forthcoming weekend at the Midland Hotel, New Street, Birmingham, a weekend which looks to be a feast for sf film fans. The Conquest of Space, Forbidden Planet and When Worlds Collide are three feature films which will be shown. Harry "Deathworld" Harrison will be the Guest of Honour and other feature speakers will include George Scithers and Geoff Doherty. The Con Committee is organising a special fanzine display room, details from Mike Higgs, 138 Barrows Rd., Sparkhill, Birmingham 11. Ted Tubb, Brian Aldiss, Terry Pratchett and James White are expected to attend the conclave. At the time of writing it is believed that the convention is some 15 members short of the required number for the full 30% discount promised on hotel rates should booking exceed seventy-five. Let us hope that the Birmingham New Wave enthusiasm is not to be marred by the advent of the August World Convention. Several convention regulars will not be at Brum, amongst them most of the Liverpool Group, Eric Bentcliffe and several London fans.

1964
POLL
RESULTS

In the 1964 Skyrack poll, the sixth annual assessment of the merits of British sf fandom ended with the following thirty fans having returned ballot forms: Ron Bennett, Sid Birchby, Carl Brandon Jr., Bill Burns, Ken Cheslin, Keith Freeman, Jim Grant, Graham Hall, Alma Hill, Bill Hillan, Dick Howett, Terry Jeeves, Ivor Latto, Ethel Lindsay, Jim Linwood, Archie Mercer, Michael Moorcock, Harry Nadler, Doreen Parker, Chuck Partington, Charles Platt, Chris Priest, Peter Singleton, Rick Sneary, Des Squire, Brian Varley, Frances Varley, Tony Walsh, Walt Willis and Charles Winstone. The results of the voting, which covered the entire British fan field for the period January to December 1964, were:

THE BEST BRITISH FAN PUBLICATION OF 1964

1. THE SKYRACK NEWSLETTER. 165 points. Joint leader last year.
2. ZENITH(now Zenith Speculation; Peter R. Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31. 2/- per copy) 147 points. 8th last year.
3. LES SPINGE(Dave Hale, 12 Belmont Rd., Wollescote, Stourbridge, Worc; trade, contribution or letter of comment) 136½ points. 3rd last year.
4. BEYOND(Charles Platt, 325A Westbourne Park Rd., London W.11; 2/3d per copy) 84 points. 17th last year.
5. VECTOR(Official organ of the P.S.F.A., Edited last year by Archie Mercer and subsequently Roger Peyton) 75½ points. 5th last year.
6. HYPHEN(Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast 4, N. Ireland; 15¢ or 1/-) 70½ points. Joint leader last year.
7. SCOTTISHE(Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey; 1/9 or 25¢) 55 points. 4th last year.
8. CAMBER(Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts; 2/6 or 25¢) 53 points. unplaced last year.
9. HARLEQUIN(John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast 4, N.Ireland. Published for TAFF at a minimum of 2/6 per copy) 43½ points.
10. ALIEN(now Alien Worlds; Harry Nadler and Charles Partington, 2 Matlock Avenue, Lower Kersal, Salford 7, Lancs; 1/3 or 25¢) 40 points. unplaced last year.

It is naturally appreciated that any fanzine which runs a poll is going to have returns weighted in its favour. Accordingly, the above listing must be taken as a moral victory for Pete Weston's Zenith with its excellent all-round coverage of the sf scene. Out of last year's top ten go Colin Freeman's Scribble, John Berry's Pot Pourri, Tony Glynn's Squeak and Lang Jones' Tensor.

Runners-up this year are: 11. QUOTE CARDS ANYONE?(Lang Jones 38½ pts), 12. THE SCARR(George Charters 33 pts), 13. LINK(Beryl Henley 31 pts), 14. SQUEAK(Tony Glynn 30 pts), 15. A CHILD'S GARDEN OF OLAF(Ken Cheslin and Mike Higgs 28 pts), 16. THE SHUDDER FANZINE(Mike Higgs 25 pts), 17. NEXUS(Pete Weston 23 pts), 18. HAVERINGS(Ethel Lindsay 22½ pts), 19. GARBISTAN(Charles Platt 20 pts) and joint 20's CON(Chris Priest) and EAST FANGLIAN TIMES(George Locke) 19½ pts each.

THE BEST INDIVIDUAL FANZINE FEATURE OF 1964

One again there were a good many items listed, a bumper crop, in fact, of no fewer than sixteen. Ken Slater's General Chunterings column in Vector won narrowly.

THE BEST FAN COLUMN OF 1964

1. Walt Willis' resurrected Fanorama column in Zenith.
2. The Doctor Peristyle column in Vector.

THE BEST FAN ARTIST OF 1964

It was good to see some new names appearing in this section, with Dick Howett and Brian McCabe being prominent. For the sixth successive year the leading two places went to 1. Arthur Thomson and 2. Eddie Jones. Jim Cawthorn was once again third, though this year he shared this place with Brian McCabe.

THE YEAR'S BEST FANZINE REPORT

In this category there was a tie for leading place between the Lang Jones one-shot, Quotecards, Anyone? and the Charles Smith Repetercon report in Les Spinge.

THE BEST PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE OF 1964

Despite the claims of two fans that there are only two professional magazines, votes were registered for six! Last year's leader won again, namely SCIENCE FANTASY.

THE YEAR'S BEST PROFESSIONAL FEATURE

In this section also, choices varied considerably, the result eventually being a tie between:

Period of Gestation by Thom Keyes in Science Fantasy 67, and Blue Monkeys by T.B.Swann, serialised in Science Fantasy 67 - 69.

THE BEST PROFESSIONAL WRITER OF 1964

Brian Aldiss ran away with this section for the third year in succession, polling three times as many votes as his nearest rival, J. G. Ballard.

THE BEST FANZINE COVER OF 1964

It was wonderful to see that the best fannish traditions were being kept up. Bastion, which has not appeared for over two years, received two votes! The winner was the Eddie Jones cover on Zenith 5.

LEADING FAN PERSONALITY OF 1964

Archie Mercer, short distance quantitative travelling giant, won this category for the second year in succession.

THE BEST BRITISH FAN WRITER OF 1964

1. Walt Willis(52 points) The leader for the fourth year in succession.
2. Archie Mercer(27 points) 5th last year.
3. John Berry(26 points) 2nd last year.
4. Charles Platt(21 points) Unplaced last year.
5. Ethel Lindsay(20 points) 7th last year.
6. Brian Varley(19 points) 3rd last year.
7. Terry Jeeves(18 points) unplaced last year.
8. Ron Bennett(16 points) 8th last year.
9. Beryl Henley(14 points) Unplaced last year.
- Bob Shaw(14 points) Unplaced last year.

Out of last year's top ten placings go Colin Freeman, Fred Hunter, George Locke and Phil Harbottle.

That's it until next year. Many thanks indeed to all who voted. -- rmb.

Your subscription expires this issue ; next issue . You voted

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London SE 11(temporary).

WILLIAM F. TEMPLE is due to go into hospital shortly for a hernia operation. Meanwhile, south of the river, recent TAFF Administratrix and OMPA editor, Ethel Lindsay, is in hospital for treatment of an ulcer. Let's trust that both are back in circulation very soon.

ON SUNDAY 28th FEBRUARY the Liverpool Group, from behind a barricade of empty wine casks, turned up in force to defend the Shorrocks homestead against an onslaught of tape recorders, film projectors and sound effects records borne by Delta members Dave Trengove, Chuck Partington, Tom Holt and Harry Nadler. Target for the invasion, after a welcome and delicious meal, was the Shorrocks den for a very hectic recording session in an attempt to add the sound track to one of the Delta Worldcon films, The Castle of Terrors. Ina, Norman and sundry Shorrocks were backed up by Eddie Jones, Stan and Marge Nuttall, John Roles, John Ramsey Campbell and Norman Weedall who supplied werewolf calls, screams, groans, bangs, crashes, thwacks(!) and everything that couldn't be found on record. There is, however, definitely a market for chirping crickets! The following weekend saw the Delta gang arrive at the LiG Clubroom to show the film. In addition there was also shown the very early silent fantasy, Nosferatu. During the evening Messrs. Nadler, Partington and Holt were tied by the ears, draped in white robes and sentenced to ordeal by Russian drinking mug for showing Castle. Plans were later made for a third visit to re-record the sound track — correctly this time. (HN).

RADIO MOGUL and New York - London biannual commuter Dave Kyle is in London and is a possible Bruncon Easterweekender. Dave, and his wife Ruth, the matzoball kid, will be at the London WorldCon, not only to have convention fun, but also to interest British attendees to vote for Syracuse as the site for the 1966 WorldCon. Syracuse puts up a good case, but so does Ben Jason of Cleveland. Initially it appears to be a difficult decision and possibly fliers will shortly appear on the matter from either centre. Or both.

ZIFF-DAVIS, publishers for many a year of Amazing and Fantastic, have sold both titles to Sol Cohen until recently the publisher of Galaxy. Mr. Cohen has left Galaxy to form a new company. It is not yet known how the change will affect the policy of any of the three magazines concerned.

SKYRACK 77, sadly
from Ron Bennett
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