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TEN CENTS

THE SFCOn REPORT CLEVELAND IN 1955

by Arthur Jean Cox

"The Westercon" (Friday, Sept. 3, 1954)

San Francisco, Calif., 4 Sept. (Via Air Mail) (CNS) - I arrived in San Francisco late Friday evening, as a result, I missed the addresses made by Tony Boucher, Dean Frasier and Poul Anderson at the "Westercon", the Pacific States regional convention held by West Coast fans, the day before the 12th WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION. I also missed the panel discussion on "Science Fiction vs. Hollywood", which had Dick Friendheck as moderator; and Forrest J Ackerman, James Gunn and William F. Nolan as panelists.

However, I was in time for the nominations and voting on the site of next year's "Westercon". Los Angeles won, opposed only by Seattle. Next was a panel discussion valled "Science Fiction and The Detective Story". The panelists were Lenore Glen Offord, Mike Roscoe, Edward E. Smith and Miriam Allen de Ford. Mr. Roscoe, both a pro-

fessional detective and a detective story writer, walked off with the honors, his simple, unassuming manner and good-natured comments evoking much laughter and applause. The panelists decided that "peaceful co-existence" between science-fiction and the detective story was possible. This discussion was followed by two TV films, Judith Merrill's "Shadow On The Hearth" and Richard Matheson's "Born of Man and Women". The first was presented by the Civil Defense Administration and the second by The Chamberlain Press.

THE 12th WORLD S-F CONVENTION (The First Day - Sat., 4 Sept. 1954)

When the 12th WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION opened the morning of the 4th, the first items of business were the welcoming address by Lester Cole and short speeches by A. E. van Vogt and Forrest J Ackerman.

Van Vogt said that Shasta Publi-

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cations would soon publish his "Child Of The Gods" series and that he is about finished with a novelization of his "Ezwal" stories. He has managed to work into this latter book two novelettes originally unconnected with the three "Ezwal" stories: "The Green Forest" and "The Sound" affecting this by a few alterations and interpolations. "The Players of A" is to be published soon in France and he has received a pocket-size book offer for it here, which he may accept. He remarked that at the last three "Westercons" he has stated that he was going to return to the s-f field and, as yet, he hasn't. This time he would make no promises -- so, perhaps, he might really do some more work in the field.

Ackerman spoke on the "State Of Science Fiction", which he said was poor but there was no cause for despair as yet. His brief talk contained several interesting bits of information, including: Martin Greenberg will publish a new theme-anthology, "Occupations Of The Future"; Gnome Press will publish a new collection of Northwest Smith stories by C. L. Moore, and has contracted with Leigh Brackett to continue the "Conan" stories (based on the character created by Robert E. Howard); Derleth will issue an anthology of new writers, "Morning Star", and so will fan San Sackett, although many of the latter's stories will be taken from outside the s-f field; Bradbury will edit a second anthology and Japan will attempt a second s-f magazine (A Japanese reprint of Amazing Stories being the first).

The auction was conducted by Sam Moskowitz, the original s-f auctioneer, and Walt Daugherty.

(Saturday Night - 4 Sept., 1954)

San Francisco, Calif., 5 Sept. (Via Air Mail) (CNS) - so far, last night's Fanquet proved the most successful presentation of the convention (which many of those I've spoken to have considered on the dull side) even though it did cost \$4.00 a plate, Buffet-style!

Robert Bloch was Master-Of-Ceremonies, and was his usual humorous self. For his toastmaster services to this and past conventions, he was presented with a monstrous metal star with the word "Hero" stamped on it; the pres-

entation was made by Les Cole.

Jack Williamson, Guest Of Honor of the "Westercon", spoke first. He stressed the need for new frontiers and hoped that s-f would be able to discover them. Anthony Boucher read a poem by L. Sprague de Camp entitled "Lament", its meter derived from one of W. S. Gilbert's ballads (The one with the recurring line: "And I can't think why!"). Evelyn Paige Gold, E. E. Smith and Forrest J Ackerman all spoke very briefly, confining themselves to a few humorous remarks. Richard Matheson gave a short talk in which he deplored the patronizing attitude which serious critics of literature have towards science-fiction. The climax of the evening was the speech by John W. Campbell. Robert Bloch said, "If you want to see what John W. Campbell has meant to science-fiction just try to imagine what it would be like without him." Campbell was greeted with very generous applause, the audience standing to acclaim him. Campbell thanked them and tried to impress upon his listeners the idea that he was merely frontman for a team.

His talk was extemporaneous; it was pretty much like a John Campbell Astounding editorial. His thesis was that very few advances had been made lately in the physical sciences. He cited an article in the MIT Review which stated that the numbers of inventions per year has been steadily declining the last few years. Furthermore, each new development which does appear, he claimed, is achieved at a greater cost than the previous one. "The economist speaks of 'The Point Of Diminishing returns'", he said. "I believe we have reached that point in the physical sciences." The next science to be developed, he believes, will be 'the sciences of the mind'; he was largely referring to "Extra-Sensory-Perception", and such like. He intimated that we would see more stories in Astounding dealing with these themes.

When he sat down he was again greeted with such thunderous applause that he had to stand up again and repeat his assertion that he was "merely a front man for a gang".

His talk was reported in the San Francisco News under the heading: "Psychiatrists Are Dopes", says science-fiction editor.

(The 2nd Day - Sun. 5 Sept. 1954)

(The following is taken from the notes of David A. Kyle. -the editors)

On Sunday morning the regular annual meeting of the National Fantasy Fan Federation was held. (This is a get-together meeting of all NFFF members attending the convention). The Auction was continued after this, plus "Meet The Authors" where all authors present were introduced.

On Sunday afternoon, addresses by Reginald Bretnor and Margaret St. Clair were heard, followed by an Art Exhibit.

The highlight of the convention for Sunday was the presentation of science-fiction's first Opera, held at 8:00 PM. The Opera was adapted by Charles Hamm, from Ray Bradbury's short story "A Scent Of Sarsaparilla". It was a Ronald Chase Production, starring Sue Belle Stark and Keith Bentley. The music was conducted by Howard Alnetson and monerated by Tony Boucher. Two 1/2 hour performances were given. Kyle stated the Opera was an exciting success.

(The 3rd Day - Mon. Sept 6, 1954)

(Editorial Note: Sat. 11 Sept. Since the report of the 3rd and last day of the convention has not arrived from Arthur Jean Cox, at this time, we telephoned Mrs. Gold, and she was kind enough to tell us the happenings of the third day for this report.-the editors)

The first item on the last day of the convention was an Editors Panel with Mrs. Gold, John W. Campbell, Tony Boucher, Martin Greenberg and Sam Moskowitz. Poul Anderson was moderator. The Panel discussed such items as Why Science-Fiction Magazines' sales are only to a limited audience. The Increase In Women Readers Of S-F, Adult Science-Fiction, and others. John W. Campbell, Mrs. Gold and Tony Boucher expressed the need of a good juvenile science-fiction magazine.

After the panel came the final auction in which the most interesting items were Copper - Coal statues of Mrs. Gold, Boucher and Campbell were auctioned off. The Boucher and Campbell statues went for about \$2.50 each, while Mrs. Gold's statue went for \$5.00.

While no figures are now available on the auction, Mrs. Gold reports that the Convention met all expenses, at least.

Then came the Science Panel with Nello Pace as monerator and John W. Campbell, Willy Ley, Poul Anderson and John Pierce on the panel.

Cleveland won the 1955 Convention site, with Buffalo and Detroit trying hard to obtain it. Cleveland tried hard to obtain the 1954 Convention in Philadelphia in 1953, and has been spending the time between conventions fighting like mad for the previlage of holding the 1955 Convention.

The Masquerade was one of the finest ever held, with costumes galore. For the first time in the history of science-fiction conventions, a real live Dixie-Land Jazz Band supplied the music, which Mrs. Gold described as "Real Gone". The judges for the best masquerade costumes were: Mrs. Gold, Boucher, Campbell, Bob Bloch and "Vampire". They awarded the following: The Most Beautiful to a gal dressed as "Miss Galaxy"; The Most Ingenious to a fan dressed as "D.O.A." (Dead On Arrival); The Most Exotic to one dressed as "Deep Space" and The Most Amusing to the well-known "Mad Professor". Four honorable mentions were also given.

Mrs. Gold reports that over 700 persons attended the convention. Less than at Chicago in 1952, but more than at Philadelphia in 1953. She had high praise for the Convention Committee that put on the convention. She said they worked hard and put on a well-timed and well-planned convention that was the best she had yet attended.

NEXT YEAR: CLEVELAND!

(Editorial Note: We expect more detailed reports in from our reporters at the Convention, perhaps in time for our next issue. Our thanks to Mrs. Gold, Dave Kyle and Arthur Jean Cox, who made this complete report possible.)

The most enjoyable conventions in the NY-NJ area are the Fanvet Conventions. ..Come to the next one, THE FIFTH FANVET CONVENTION, Sunday, April 17, 1955, at Werdermann's Hall, 3rd Ave., at 16th Street, New York City, NY. Program begins at 1 PM. No admission charge.

THE OKLAHOMA II REPORT

by Donald E. Ford

Sharoville, Ohio, 7 Sept., (CNS) - The OKLAHOMA II, regional Oklahoma State Convention, was held on September 4th and 5th at the Biltmore Hotel at Oklahoma City. About 40 fans were present. Outstanding fans from that area were: Dan McPhail, the old-time fan from the early thirties; Sam Martinez, editor of Shadowland, with his helper Bill Shell; Don & Dolores Chappell (Tulsa); and Kent Corey, editor of A La Space. Bob Martinez, Sam's son is "10 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old" showed up with his Dad & also with his own fan mag called Saturday Evening Ghost.

Attending with me from the Cincinnati Fantasy Group was Jim Holtel, a newcomer to fandom. We made some phone calls while passing through St. Louis and persuaded Larry Touzinsky, editor of Fan-To-See, to ride out with us. Pros were exceedingly scarce. Neil Goble, a fan who had some material printed in a college mag was present. Alvia Hart, a doctor of Scientology and editor of Aberree, gave a 10 minute talk. From Tulsa was Gerry Greenstreet, who had her story published in the July 19-54 Amazing. Sam Martinez also has sold 1 or 2 stories to the pros.

However, a good time was enjoyed by all. I showed some Kodachrome slides of various con activities I've attended in previous years. (Chicago, Midwestcons, etc).

The Hotel was nice; they treated us nice; and the people out that way were very friendly. Material from Life and Universe was auctioned off (art-work). Huge amounts of magazines and books were also auctioned off. Jim Holtel got most of the large size Amazings, Amazing Quarterlies, and old Astoundings.

A vote was held and Tulsa picked for next year's con (OKLAHOMA III) to be held on the July 4th week - end. Don Chappell, editor of Nite Cry, will be the chairman.

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