

The basic question is what does one mean by "stf"? If we take it as a straight abbreviation for "scientifiction" or science-fiction then, of course, some of those named on the two lists do not belong at all. Tarzan, Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, Harold Shea, and Conan are more properly fantasy characters. Northwest Smith and John Carter are marginal. If, as was evidently done by the MFTF and the LASFS, one uses "stf" as a general term for the entire field of science-fiction/fantasy then these are readily admissible. In any event it is an interesting question and one which I now put to First Fandom. You have all been reading stf for 10, these many years so who, in your opinion, are the 12 greatest heroes of stf. I think that in this connection we'll define "stf" as including the entire field: science-fiction, fantasy, science-fantasy, sword and sorcery, and all the other related elements. Send in your answers and I'll publish the results in the next issue. My own choice? Number One is Kinnison. After that I must stop and do some thinking on the subject.

THE SECRETARY REPORTS ON FIRST FANDOM MEETING AT MIDWESTCON

The First Fandom meeting held at this year's Midwestcon was in the Cincinnati suite, room 8, at the North Plaza Hotel. This followed a banquet at which everyone stuffed themselves full. The banquet had been dropped for a number of years at Midwestcon and was resumed this year by popular request. It was held at David's Buffet, out Reading Road from the motel. It was a Smorgasborg. If anyone did not get full, it was because they were bashful, or else Lou Tabakow was there ahead of him.

Present at the First Fandom meeting were: C. L. Barrett, Dr & Mrs A. W. Miller, Bea Taylor, Bob Madle, Don Ford, Oscar Moeller, Dale Tarr, Howard DeVore, Ed Bielfeldt, Ben Keifer, Lou Tabakow, Joe Mensley, Lionel Inman, Ed Hamilton, and Bob Tucker.

The Treasurer reported \$74.00 in cash on hand and no bills outstanding. A letter from Roy Tackett was read noting that there is a decided lack of participation from the membership with regards to the magazine. Comment and contributions are needed and asked for.

Madle brought up past business and discussion ensued on the following:

- A. First Fandom display booth at World Conventions.
- B. Hall of Fame Award.
- C. The inactivity of the committees appointed for these projects.
- D. Science Wonder project.

Madle reported that Lynn Hickman has quit his old job and is now back in Ohio. It is hoped that he will have time for more fan publishing in the future. One project Lynn is working on is a fanmag devoted to the old pulps and titled "The Pulp Era."

The subject of an ad in the Discon Program Book was discussed and a full page advertisement was authorized. Madle, Pavlat, etc., to take care of details.

The First Fandom meeting at Washington was discussed and it was decided to schedule it for Sunday night (Masquerade Ball is Saturday night) immediately after the last item on the program. Discon promises not too much program anyway so we'll meet about 8:30 or 9:00. Madle was stuck with the task of picking out a good meeting room. We'll get the ice and glasses...bring your favorite libation and we'll have a swinging meeting.

A trophy for the Hall of Fame Award was selected. It will be a standard trophy modified by the addition of a Mobius Strip at the top. The trophy has been ordered and will be modified when received. There being no further business we adjourned to the nearest party.

DON FORD

FIRST FANDOM AT WESTERCON XVI

Reported by

ALVA ROGERS

The first official meeting/party of First Fandom ever to be held at a Westercon was held Thursday evening, July 4, 1963, at 10:00 p.m. in the convention suite, room 328, of the Hyatt House, Burlingame, California.

Several months ago, while working up the program for the 16th Westercon, Ben Stark and I discussed the possibility of scheduling a First Fandom meeting--an idea that came to me after reading Bob Madle's account of the Chicon III meeting in FF-8, and checking off the number of west coast members in The Membership. I mentioned it to both Roy Tackett and Don Ford and they both said, "Why not?" Why not, indeed. Ben and I talked our co-committeemen, Bill Donaho and Chairman Al Halevy, into letting us list a First Fandom meeting as part of the regular program, but limited to members and selected guests.

The meeting was scheduled in the Program Book to follow the film (Fritz Lang's DIE FRAU IM MOON), and was also announced to the members viewing the film immediately following its conclusion.

Sometime during the afternoon Ben and I realized we'd neglected to do anything about refreshments for the party, so we each kicked in ten bucks and I went over the Bayshore Freeway into Burlingame and bought three quarts of bourbon, one quart of brandy, and a half-dozen or so big bottles of mix, figuring this would be plenty for the handful of old timers who would show up.

The party started off quietly. The first person to show up, I believe, was Art Widner, who has in recent months come out of hiding and begun to be active in The Little Men and the Golden Gate Futurian Society. Hard on the heels of Widner came Don Franson, who is a Good Man, and was a big help to the concom by manning the registration desk when we ran out of help. The next person to come in was Elmer Perdue. Getting real stuffy, I asked Uncle Elmer for his credentials. God admitted that he wasn't a formal member of First Fandom, but claimed eligibility by virtue of having joined Ackerman's mail order lending library back about 1930 or so. Just then Forry came in and I asked him if he would vouch for Elmer. Forry's memory wasn't quite as sharp and keen as Elmer's, but he allowed as how it was probably true, so we decided to let him stay. By this time most of the aged and decrepit fans had arrived and were making alarming inroads on the booze, which managed, however, to last. The remaining bona fide members attending were Roy Squires, Stan Woolston, and...Fred Pohl. Yes, Fred flew all the way from New York to attend the First Fandom meeting at the Westercon.

Being neo-First Fandomites, and not knowing how these things are customarily run, Ben and I invited Tony Boucher, who thinks he just might qualify for First Fandom and is seriously thinking about applying, Samuel Davenport Russell, who insists he's not old enough to be in First Fandom, a nice guy named Jim Blish who ought to be in First Fandom, and a couple of rank neo-fans, Bill Donaho and Al Halevy.

No party is a success, as far as I'm concerned, without its quota of women. The party really didn't have its quota, but it was certainly enhanced by the presence of Fred Pohl's wonderful wife, Carol; lovely Lyn Watson, who came with Roy Squires; bouncing, ebullient Gretchen Schwenn, squired by Bill Donaho; and my own incomparable wife, Sid. These lovely ladies gave the party a tone it would have lacked otherwise.

Roy Squires, whose impeccably groomed salt-and-pepper beard gives him an aura of dignity that is most impressive, proposed the only item of business that was brought up at this meeting/party. Roy's proposal, as near as I can remember, was that this group draw up a resolution to be presented to the membership for a vote that Honorary Memberships in First Fandom be bestowed automatically on any fan who started reading science-fiction prior to 1934 without said fan having to apply, that the membership be for life, and that no dues would be required. Nothing concrete was arrived at, but we had fun kicking the idea around for a while and discussing the possible eligibles: Torry, Perdue, Tollheim, Tucker.

At frequent intervals during the course of the party there would be persistent scratchings at the door, and when I'd open it I would find myself confronted by hordes of callow neo-fannish faces, all clamoring to be let in to the old fogies' party, and calling me all sorts of uncomplimentary names when I refused to allow them entrance.

Despite these annoyances the party progressed smoothly for an hour or so with much animated conversation and ~~an enormous consumption~~ of liquor. Finally, the pitiful cries of the excluded ones at the door could be resisted no longer and I threw open the door of the Convention Suite (or the bordello room, as Sid called it all during the con because of the oppulent ugliness of the furnishings and decor of the place) and let the youngsters in. The first Westercon First Fandom party was officially over and now belonged to fannish history.

I was real pleased with the turn out for this first West Coast First Fandom bash. There were eight official members present: Ackerman, Pohl, Tidner, Squires, Franson, Woolston, Stark, and Rogers. In addition there were three who meet the requirements for membership but who do not belong: Blish, Boucher, and Perdue. And one I think would qualify but who modestly demurs: Sam Russell. This certainly suggests that this should -- and could successfully -- become a permanent feature of Westercons just as it is at Midwestcons and Worldcons; and also conclusively affirms the fact that "First Fandom is not dead."

ALVA ROGERS

First Fandom is not dead--just suffers from broken arms apparently. Inasmuch as not even the President feels it necessary to notify the OE of a change of address this issue is going first class so that it will be forwarded to its ancient addressees. New address: Robert Madle, 4406 Bestor Drive, Rockville, Maryland. Said address change cribbed from STARSPIRIT, Ron Ellick's chitter-chatter newszine.

BELLOW

From ambient slime I take this substance.
It briefly holds the shape I give to it.
By my beast hands this lump of mud
Is different from other slime.
Mind through my beast eyes seeks outward
In the darkness to where Rigel thunders,
And farther yet, toward the edges of the wheel.
With wind from my beast throat I speak to you
Handless, accursed and blind, unanswering stars.
I have made this.
What have you done?

CLAIRE BECK

AUGUST DERLETH
SAUK CITY, WISCONSIN

Dear Don Ford,

All thanks for yours of the 17th. I'm afraid that my early ears are an open book to anyone who has read EVENING IN SPRING, WALDEN WEST, VILLAGE YEAR, etc. --and even such juveniles as THE MOON TENDERS. I suppose, specifically, I haven't put down much about science-fiction because, to tell the truth, it played a relatively minor part in my life -- for me it has always been a division of fantasy, and nothing will change that. I made my acquaintance with s-f in Weird Tales, to which I was introduced by the corner druggist, who knew I bought Secret Service every week and figured I was a sucker for WT. And, of course, I was. I began it with Number 2, but wrote quickly for Number 1 and I still have a complete run. After the initial years of WT, I was quite ready for Amazing Stories when it came, and I read it avidly, though I have kept only the first two years of it, and some scattered issues since. I still subscribe, however, as I do to several other s-f magazines. But you will know it's a common experience for all of us that the s-f of today can't hold a candle to the s-f of yesterday. That is not, of course, because of the degree of excellence--that has really nothing to do with it; it is only because, being older and more widely read, our frame of reference is wider, and our critical faculties much sharper than they were in the 1920s.

From WT -- by August 1926 -- I branched out to correspondents -- first H. P. Lovecraft, then Clark Ashton Smith, Henry S. Whitehead, Don Wandrei, Robert E. Howard -- and on to Bob Bloch, Hank Kuttner, Fritz Leiber (who shortly joined the Cliff Dwellers Club, of which I was an out-of-state member, Ray Bradbury -- but why name them all? I've corresponded with a great many writers in s-f; I remember even Dr. Miles J. Breuer in the early days. David H. Keller is still a correspondent. All of these people served in a very real sense as my windows on the world -- Lovecraft was the fountain of ideas, guiding my voracious reading habits to some extent -- and with younger writers there was always the exchange of current ideas. A writer in a small town is virtually submerged, well away from those people who could be talked to on a common plane -- and sometimes this is true of a writer no matter where he is -- so correspondents frequently take the place of friends at hand. Of course, I corresponded with people like Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, Jesse Stuart, etc., etc., etc., too, and Zona Gale lived only 29 miles away on the one side of town and Frank Lloyd Wright 23 miles on the other -- so I was not exactly isolated. And the University of Wisconsin was only 25 miles east of Sauk City. I seldom look over my shoulder now; most of those early correspondents are gone. Don Wandrei still writes once a week or so, D. H. Keller as the spirit moves him, and those who are left of the younger--now middle-aged writers -- Bloch, Leiber, Bradbury -- are too busy to write. Today I have my own younger correspondents, all trying to write, and the wheel turns, inevitably.

Despite all this, however, I was not at all obsessed by fantasy as some of the fans seem to be in every generation. I had some devotion to Sherlock Holmes -- ran my own S.S.S. (Secret Service Syndicate - there's something about this in EVENING IN SPRING - and note the parallel with HPL's Providence Detective Agency!) -- not for the detection of crime -- oh, no! -- for the accumulation of gossip which might serve me to blackmail oldsters who kept getting in my way -- and it did serve me well, importantly, twice (also in EVENING IN SPRING) -- not blackmail for money, but simply for silence and non-interference in my first love affair!!!

And I fished -- alas! I have no time for that now; the last time I fished was in a river slough for sunfish in April 1942: -- long hours, too -- hiked extensively, etc., etc., and managed to rank near the top of my class in high school -- and fantasy over the whole field was only a part, as it is now, of my reading. Too many fans are devoted to s-f or the general fantasy field too exclusively, and their value-judgements are sad, sad. I had to work in summer -- in a canning factory (I wrote about it in MAIDEN WEST) -- my family wasn't poor, but it wasn't well off, either -- we got along comfortably, but no more, sans bank balances, et al, and my father frequently put in an 18 hour day as a blacksmith and wagon-maker, later as a carpenter, house-painter, dance-inspector, construction crew foreman, deputy sheriff, etc. So I worked for 11 summers, until I was 25, and then quit because I could make more money writing even then than I could working at the munificent wage of 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ an hour!

Nothing is in those years of s-f fanaticism. I read not only Wells and Keller and Verne, Poe, Lovecraft, Smith, Whitehead, Breuer, etc., but also H. L. Mencken and Walt Whitman, Thoreau, Emerson, Thomas Hardy, Proust, Thomas Mann, Turgenev, Tom Wolfe, Huysmans, Machen, Compton Mackenzie, etc., etc. So I am afraid that there is very little in my early years of any interest to First Fandom.

Best to you, cordially,

AUGUST DERLETH

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Contrary to your last sentence, Brother Derleth, both Don Ford and I found your letter to be of much interest and we felt that it would also be of interest to the rest of First Fandom. I'll have to agree about fans devoting themselves to the fantasy field almost exclusively as I am one of those unhappy creatures. These days anyway. A few years ago my reading tastes were more catholic but at the present I don't have as much time available for reading as I did then so I stick pretty close to sf for light reading and to ancient history and archaeological texts for the non-fiction side. One of these days, though, I'm going to catch up....I keep telling myself. RT

And now we have

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The recent First Fandom meeting, held at the Midwestcon, was small, but fruitful. It was definitely decided that the initial First Fandom Hall of Fame Award will be presented. The recipient is one of the really great men of science fiction -- and, after a short discussion, was unanimously selected. It is anticipated that similar awards will be made annually.

We took in two new members at the meeting -- Edmond Hamilton and Bob Tucker. Ed, who has been writing S-F since 1925, referenced a letter in a 1919 ARGOSY as his qualification for membership. Bob has been boycotting the organization because we have been taking in as members fans who don't date back to 1934.

The feeling among the officers of FF is that maybe we have been trying to get too many big projects going at once. It was decided to tackle them one at a time. The Hall of Fame Award is now off the ground. The next effort will be discussed at the next meeting. This meeting will be held Sunday, September 1, at approximately 9:00 p.m. at the Worldcon. The exact room number will be listed in the Program booklet.

Bring your own poison.

ROBERT A. MADLE

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Bob Tucker in First Fandom? Oy, this young fellow is certainly becoming active in fandom. Last year, I believe it was, he joined the National Fantasy Fan Federation and now First Fandom. Wouldn't be at all surprised to find him putting out a fanmag one of these days.....probably call it LE ZOBBIE or something like that.

That's it, good people, till next time. Like later.....Roy