

MOONSHINE

MOONSHINE is prepared for the #85 FAPA mailing, Nov. 1958 by Rick Sneary, of the publishing firm of Moffatt, Sneary, and Woolstone which is known by those in the know, as the "Hub." We regret that we have been unable to keep track of what whole number this issue is, and would be most grateful to any bibliographer who could furnish such information. Editorial address for this issue: 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, California. Publication is being done in Dialectography on the Moffatt machine... ((Done 11/1/58.... I hope I set this in, intime for the mailing.))

CONVENTION REPORTS are not usually written by members of the Committee that gave them, and now I can see why. First off, any report I would write, would have to start 18 months before. That is, it will if you are willing to except my word that the other 8 years were only very logically constructed fan-dreams.

The other problem is that if I were to write a really truthfull and detailed report of all that went into making the SOLACON, I would have few if any friends left. For while there never was a split or major disagreement within the Committee, or with outside groups, there was virtually no one that I didn't find myself at odd's with because of what I felt was a stupid idea, or action (or in-action.) I'd have to lay it on the line, about all the troubles and grips we had. and I can see no point in raising these long dead issues now, which might discourage some one from trying to put on a Convention.

On the other hand, a report that left these things out would give a false picture of just what it is like to put on a world Convention, and might delude some one into putting up a bid for one. Because as fifteen other Committees will, I am sure, agree, it is a hell of a lot of work.

It's fun too, if you happen to like working hard and seeing the results of that work enjoyed by others.. And that isn't ment as a bitter remark. I was far to busy with details to really enjoy the SOLACON, especially the first day and a half. But there is a plesent glowing feeling that comes from knowing other people having a good time, because of what you have done. Especially if they keep telling you about it.

A lot of fans asked me how it felt to have my dream come true. And while I smiled and gave the usual type answeres, I really couldn't say how I did feel. Because I actually didn't feel anything at all. Maybe I was just to busy; maybe it was knowing how little I had actually done; or maybe it was the knowelage of what was going wrong, but I never felt overly thrilled about anything. Even the standing ovation. Infact my main wish throughout the Con was that I was someone else, so I could enjoy myself.

The largest share of credit for the success of the SOLACON goes to Anna Moffatt. With out her firm hand on the wheel, we would never have gotten it together as well as we did.

PEOPLE AND PLACES are mainly what I remember of the Solacon. Those I met, I saw, and those I didn't. So rather than try and give a report of things as they happen --which as Treasurer would mean accounts of worry and wonder-- I'll talk mainly about the fans I met, and the things that happen to me. It started when the.....

NEW YORKERS ARRIVED on the 23rd, via plane, and a convoy of local fans went down to meet them. Beside the Dietzs, Raybin, and Walt Cole, there was Ed Bielfeldt of Chicago. Three cars of locals dashed to the port, only to realize that on one remembered which of six lines they were coming in on. (Belle had telegraphed me, but it wasn't delivered till after I'd left home.) Luckily Ellik was with us, and he had met them all before. He spotted Raybin, so we gathered them all up to return to Bill Ellern's house for luncheon and an open-house. Most of local fandom showed up during the evening, and we finally got the outoftowners to the hotel by 2:00 AM. after being up for nearly 24 hours.

As to the many problems that had developed in the operations of the W.S.F.S. Inc., I had met them with the mixed emotions of anticipation and apprehension. But I needn't be worried, for they all proved very agreeably friendly. Especially the Dietz's, who didn't agree with me on some WSPS questions, but were fun to be with the rest of the time. I liked Belle, who was younger and more attractive than pictures or reports had made her out. They were both quite a help throughout the Convention, doing all sorts of needfull jobs, that earned them little glory other than the thanks of the inner-circle of workers.

Raybin, like Cole, was a jolly fellow that didn't seem really fannish, but he shows movies of the NYCon, and the LunCon. These made Len Moffatt and I feel a little uncomfortable. The shots of the fine displays at the NYCon, and the color and pageantry of the London made us wonder if had anything that would compare. At the moment it didn't look like it. We had a program, yes. But what would show up? Already we knew that Tucker wasn't going to make it. Nor were Larry Shaw or Hans Santesson -- or many of the other Pros we had counted on. We had no big movie previews.. We were of mixed moods when we got home that morning.

WE KIDNAPED BLOCH off the plane on Monday, as the only way we would ever get to see him. Anna and I met the Good Man's plane while Len man the switch-board at home. I'd been a little worried about my recognize Bloch after 12 years, but he spotted me. We loaded him into the car and drove back to the Moffatt House. There he relaxed, and we basked in the knowledge that we had the fabulous Bob Bloch all to our self.

Ofcourse, like the other fabulous people I have met, he turned out to be not so fabulous after all. No more so than say, such other friendly types like Boucher, Burbee, Tucker, Willis. The air was not rent by lancet-edged puns, or flooded with remarks of great wisdom. Just some pleasant talk, with one of the nicest people we've met, who quickly became a very old friend. So we were greatly cheered by the news that the whole Bloch family might be moving to

California in the near future. And, as it might involve a try at radio writing, it would probably be to the Southern Calif. area, rather than the misty-maze of the Berkeley-Bay.

Another un-sung talent we found, was the ability to talk just like Tony Boucher. There is a strong similitude in normal conversation, but Bob can do an exact imitation of him. Odd that they have never cashed in on this for laughs. They both even use cigarette holders.

A DAY LIKE ANY OTHER DAY, but at last it was the day before the Con, and I was to move into the hotel. I picked up George Fields, and we headed for the hotel with a car full of last minute stuff. And atlast it began to feel like the Convention was really going to happen, and that I'd be there. The last 20 minutes of the drive were the most exhilarating I had. After that I was to busy thinking about what was to happen next, to relish anything that was going on. But for these few minutes I did sort of get a charge out of it all.

Some of the past months apprehension lifted as we reached the hotel and started to greet the early arivals. Bloch ofcourse, the Bouchers, as well as the whole moter-cade from Detroit, that had arrived 18 hours ahead of their ETA. After the many months of bi-weekly letters, Rog Phillips and I had a tremendous reunion. There seemed to be fans all over. -- As Len and I talked over some details in the lobby, I noticed a very striking young woman registering. I made the wild guess she was a fan, as she was wearing a wide-brim black hat that had little plastic men launching a rocket ship off the edge. So all polite and ellik-like, walk over and introduce myself... She smiles nicely down at me and said, "Yes, we've met. I'm Karen Anderson."

Good,

I turned a nice shade of chargin, and mumbled an apology. I'd met her two years ago, and I don't see how anyone could forget her, but I have a guift. I'd met Poul in 1950, but didn't recognize his back. But then I have never been able to recognize this bushy hair young man I see at Cons, as The Poul Anderson. He looks as unlike a successful science fiction writer as did, say, van Vogt.

CENTRAL CONTROL was set up Thursday night in what was to be our Art Display room. It being the only meeting room the hotel had turned over to us in advance. Len and I kept it open most of the evening, while various fans wondered in to say hello. One of them was a tall, rather lean chap with dark hair and mustache, who introduced himself as Ron Bennett. He came closer to being what I'd pictured than anyone else I met durring the Con. Here he had just crossed the country by car in less than a week, had only a few hours sleep in a borrowed bed (not expecting him tell the next day, the Golacon hadn't booked a room ready for him) and there he was as bright and witty as if he had just popped in from across town.

He kept saying he knew we were dissappointed because John Barry hadn't won TAFB. And while it was true that most of us had supported John, Ron was no dissapointment. For different reasons we had been hopping that each of the TAFB candidates would make it, some way. Infact the only thing most of us were sorry about is that we got to spend so little time talking to Ron. We expected this in any case, but didn't know it would be so bad.

IN A SOFT VOICE a pleasantly average looking youngish fellow ask if I were Rick Sneyry. And I, always ready with an answer, admitted that I was, getting up to welcome -- I thought -- another neo-fan. He, in a rather shy voice, introduced him self as Bob Shaw.

I don't know what I had expected. Ofcourse others had met him when he arrived acouple days before, and I had talked to him on the phone, (probably the longest conversation I had with him) but to find one of the fabled Wheels of IF before me as just another fan, was a shock. I didn't really expect him to be carrying a Ghoddmitten bat, drinking blog, and make a pun the first minute....but then I never expect famous fans to be merely human. But then, like others I have known, his really true guift for humor didn't clobber you over the head. As Alex Bratmon remarked later, it took you a while to notices that Bob had added something to the conversation. Two minutes later you realized it was a pun. And five minutes later it became the funnist thing you'd heard all day. I've said how sorry I am that I couldn't spend more time with nearly everyone at the Colacon, but it is especially true of the Shaw's. Partly becouse of the.....

SENSATIONAL GADIE. I knew little about Bob, and even less about Gadie. Only that she wasn't much interested in science fiction, and if their little girl hadn't become travel sick, she was to have spent her time seeing Los Angeles. I had sort of expected a plesent, round-faced little woman, with "practical" shoes and cloths to match. Rather, in swearls a radiant little creature, with all the attributed charm of an Irish colleen, even if from the Northern part. In the full sence of the word she had the most attractive face of anyone I met, while throughout the Con she was one of the most chicly dressed. And when she spoke to you, she projected person-ality in a way that left no doubt why Willis thinks all si-fi females are beautifull. That's the only kind he is use to.

OTHER PEOPLE that I met for the first time that evening were Joe & Robbie Gibson. They had driven down from Berkeley with Rog & Honey, and I fond my self spending a good deal of time with them throughout the Con. (Atleast in compairason with other new friends.) A thing I'm very happy about as they proved to be people easy to like. Joe and I have been around fandom quite a while, but this was the first we had had contact, and I atleast was impressed. Joe looks and acts like one of Astoundings two-fisted heros. Solid looking in person and personality. An ability to make people real confident in him. Or, atleast I did. You know how it is, there are a lot of strong looking types around, like Ellik and Bradbury. But when you get to know them they don't seem like Marine heros or football stars. Infact there are few fans one could trust to get you out of the Brazilian jungle. Well, I think Joe might do it.

And after the Mask Ball there was a good deal of debate as to who had the best looking pair of legs, Joe or Robbie. -- Admittedly the opinions were bias and predictable in advance, but..... As for Robbie, she was the usual... You know the "usual." -- Friendly, attractive, charming, intadagent.... To bad they moved to Berkeley..

A CALL OUT OF THE NIGHT invited Len, Will Jenkins and I up to Earl Kemp's room. Do to a couple misunderstanding our relations with Earl had been a little strained in the past, and Len and I wondered again, what the meeting would be like. Again it was quite pleasant. O'Meara was there too, and we talked about an hour till the rest of Chicagoians returned. Earl was a Cassius type, and while friendly enough never really seemed to be having a good time. I didn't see to much of him, and the impression is probably wrong. I don't know why the leader of a major fannish faction should be unhappy. --Even after they lost the bid for the next Con.. His nominating speech did seem to lack punch, and it is possible Fritz Leiber could have swung more of the un-committed votes. Not that I think there were many who hadn't made up their minds before. The campaign had been too hot for too long to have anyone un-committed.

FRIDAY MORNING, and the Con began with the usual mad confusion. Some of the Committee and our loventees hadn't shown up, while early fans were wondering around asking everyone if they could register or buy banquet tickets yet.. We found the door onto the balcony where the registration desk was to be was padlocked, and no one in the hotel could find the key. The rented typewriters and the girl from the CofC hadn't arrived. The P.A. system hadn't been hooked up and tried, and displacers were looking for space --things we found we couldn't do as planned the night before because of some other banquet-- Yes, things looked like they were starting off by going to Hell... But, atleast the management sawed the lock off the door and people started coming in the right way, and we knew the SOLACON had started.... Or atleast Honey knew it, as she was trying to handel all three jobs at the registration desk by her self. The Moffatt's, Rog and I were doing only two jobs apiece.

But then Rich Stephens started helping Honey, and Stan Woolston & Dottie Faulkner arrived....and ofcourse more fans....and things got worse.

A RED MIST sort of blots out the rest of the morning and afternoon. I know I was doing something all the time, and didn't get any lunch, and felt very upset because things seemed to be going badly. The plan to interview fans as they arrived had layed a bomb. No one could hear or see them, and no one else but us cared. They wanted to talk, not listen, and so our biggest surprise idea was a wash out. It was meant as a ice-braker and to remove the need of introducing everyone later. But the only ice around was already in glasses, as nearly everyone knew everyone else to start with. Like some other things that went wrong durring the Con, from the Committee planning viewpoint, it turned better or into something just as good as far as the membership went. I must admit that while we on the Committee did do a lot to make the Con what it was, we owe a lot to people who came a long at the last minute with help, and to luck. I think a lot can be explained by the mere fact that everyone wanted to have a good time, and pitched in to see that it was a good time for all. And despite the bitter words in fanzines for months perviously, that augured well for much fireworks, I saw no great arguments. Everyone seemed friendly with everyone else. The D.C. fans didn't even lynch Pete Graham.. In fact the only battle proved to be.....

THE GREAT TEA DRINKING CONTEST had been one of the fannish things I had set my heart on seeing, and I had worked on the plans for it all year. As we'd expected Berry, but when we found he couldn't make I got the idea of a limited number from around the world. There could be Ron Bennett, Bob Shaw and Mike Hinge for the U.K., and Larry Shaw, F.M. Busby and myself for the U.S. I'd gotten Bjo to agree to handle the details about tea, and arranged with the hotel for space and hot water.

Then came Friday, and things fell apart. Bjo had to be out of town the last week, and was two weeks behind (it seemed to her) on work on her own Fashions of The Future show. Larry couldn't attend and Mike and Buz declined to run.. It was 3:00 o'clock, and no tea, no contestance, and still no lunch. I was going mad. I turned to Ted Johnstone, who had wanted to be in the contest, and asked him if he could make the arrangements. He seemed very doubtfull of what to do, but I told him to go and do his best. He went away, and later came back saying that there was trouble about getting tea, and what should he do? I told him I didn't know, but go ask some one else. So he went off looking worried. I was trying to be too busy to worry..

About 4:00 o'clock I crawled away from where ever I was and down to where the contest was to be held. Nothing... But on the way back I met Bloch, who was to be one of the judges, with his usual cluster of followers. All had come to see the contest. Ackerman was to be the other judge, but he was in the WFS Directors meeting, so that was something else we needed. Djinn Faine showed up, still interested in being in the contest. (She had spoken to me about her ability to consume tea before, but I thought it somewhat "bad form" for a girl to be in it. heh!) It seemed everyone wanted to be in it. I was dying, and still no tea.

Then along came Ted with a cart and two pots of tea water.. Some one talked Paul Anderson into being the other judge, and as we clattered back into the room we found two bussboys setting up tables. But as we fought down to places there seemed to be ten contestants, and only two pots of tea, no cream or even spoons, and no one to pore... There was a great rushing to and froe, while snarled at dear friends, ordered strangers around, and finally collapsed onto the table muttering "to Hell with it all." I was through, beat, tired, fed up, and I no longer cared what happen.

But, more and more people arrived and some pitched in to help. Mike started brewing more tea, while G.M. Carr, Monett Corning and a couple other angels started filling cups. The strong aroma sort of revived some of my belief in the world. Bloch declared the contest began. And after the first cup I was even able to notice I was seated next to Karen Anderson. (This only shows how far gone I'd been.) -- All through the contest she kept saying she didn't know why she was here as she didn't like tea... and then downing another cup. She totaled out at 18 cups, which was only five under the winning 23 by Djinn.

MY ONLY GLORY in drinking only nine cups in just under one hour was that it was two more than Bob Shaw. The one touted as the hard one to beat. Djinn had told me she could drink a lot of tea, but I didn't believe she meant that much....

I also fear that while the Tea Drinking Contest was enjoyed, it may not become a standard part of Conventions. Under the stress and tension of the place, problems develop that would not be noticed at a quiet private gathering. I have a nervous stomach at times like this, and had to give up just under an hour, for fear of throwing-up.. I managed to reach my room and relax, but I understand that not all were so lucky. Not that spoiled anyone's time, but Ted -- to whom most of the credit for it actually coming off goes -- complained of burned-out taste buds for the next few days.

THE MAYOR AND I officially opened the SOL CON, nearly on time, about 7:10. We had worked out the details of this operation months before. After an exchange of letters between mayors, we got my own Mayor Weaver of South Gate to come down and welcome everyone. And then, with the permission of the mayor of Los Angeles, proclaim the Hotel Alexandria a part of South Gate, for the duration of the Convention. The mayor who I hadn't met before this summer was a grand fellow, and started his little talk off with as monstrous a pun as was heard during the Con. I was quietly proud.

As part of the Committee, I sat through the opening business, and then sneaked off to find some dinner. As throughout the Con, I missed about as much of the program as anyone. Except for parts watched through the Hall doors, or when there was absolutely nothing more I could do. That evening things still seemed to be going badly, and they looked like they could get worse.

I GAVE UP AT LAST, after things quieted down, and wandered over to see if the PRS had ever started to set up their display yet. I found a handful of young people putting something together that might have been either a rocket display or an early Rose Parade float. I never got back to find out, but that evening my attention was drawn by a small group at the other end, around a real gone piano. I found out why, Jerry Bixby and Walt Libesher were playing at duo-improvisation. I luckily found a spot next to Joe Gibson, draped over the back of the piano, and spent the most completely enjoyable hour of the whole Con. As I listened, I felt my nerves relax and my tenseness melt away.

They were playing a little of everything, from the classics to low-down blues, and even some of Walt's original material. One would "lead" for a while, while the other improvised an accompaniment. Some times together, some times in diss-balance; and many times off on wild rides just to see if the other could keep up. I'd never thought of being able to make people laugh with music, but these two gifted jokesters were able to. There was never more than a dozen others listening at any one time, but I had a feeling I'd stored up at least one golden moment from the Con. At last things broke up and I drift off to bed. But things didn't look so bad, now..

BUT ALL TO SOON it was morning, and things started off just as hectic. A gillion little things to go wrong; dozens of people asking questions I had no answers for; money to be collected and placed in the hotel vault or pay expenses with; and of course try to talk with a few people. People like Al Ashley. The same old Al, a little older, a little more haggard, but the same old soft smile. I didn't get to talk to him much, but like Burbee, he was around for most of the Con.

Some people I got to talk to only briefly. Max Keasler I saw for about five minutes. I spoke to Lars Bourne in an elevator, once. --He was a rather surprise, as I'd sort of pictured him as tall and frowning follower of Beatism. But he proved to be as uncontroversial looking as Foyd Raeburn.-- I exchanged a few words with Sylvia Dees, who proved to be as prett as I'd imagined her, and I'm sure she sings well too. (She was very chummy with a large guitar most of the times I saw her.) FMBusby I got to talk to for a while in Kris Neville's room, and came away with the feeling that he was really B.R.Toskey. I never did get to talk with our Guest of Honor, Dick Matheson. Or, for that matter with Campbell, Leiber, or Arch Obler..

SOUTH GATE AT LAST. It was nearly Noon of Saturday, and part of the old dream was about to come true. When the Outlander Society first adopted the idea of S.G. in 58!, they also planed a reunion on the City Hall steps, and the appointed time was near at hand. We had imagined how it would be, with members returning from all over. Willis wrote an account of how he thought it would be, and how he wished he could be there. And at last it was happening.

This were utter-confusion at the Hotel, but I had to make it. I talked Ed & Jessie Clinton into driving me out, as I was in no shape to drive myself. Ted Johnstone and Dottie Faulkner, a true Outlander who had carried our banner to London, went too. I expected Woolston was with the Moffatt's in one of the other cars. So I wasn't worried when we got there first, with time to spare. We sat in the Sun, enjoying the quiet and fresh air. But then the Firestone plant blew it's Noon whistle, and I knew the time had come. Dottie and I walked up the long concrete walk to the steps, embraced, and had our pictures taken. I dipped the banner in memory of the 16 or so Outlander not there, and once more for Willis, who believed it would happen. Then we walked back...sort of knowing that I knew it would be like this all the time.

The Moffatt's arrived 15 minutes latter, after having had their car ramed from the rear, and their tail-lights broken. Such is life.

SATURDAY NIGHT WITH BOUCHER in the Con-suite, we mapped out what we would do at the Business Meeting the next day. Tony was our parliamentarian, for which we owe him a great debit. We have always liked him, and knew that he would be an unquestionable choice, by anyone else. But it was more than just lending his name, he was a major help, and confirmed if there was any doubt that he is one of the really Good Men in fandom.

Do recent developments we knew a bitter fight was shapping up, including a move to disband the WFS Inc. We couldn't see any answers, and it was our opinion that there was no way we could legally disband. The Committee too, had become tired of all the arguements and attacks. The only answer seemed to be to de-clair in carefully worded terms, that the SOLJON was a California Convention, and not part of the WFS Inc. and that we would not be able to conduct the business of that Society. - After which big Bill Donaho askfor a vote to petition the WFS Board of Directors to dissolve the Society. After which there was a grate roar, and everyone was rushing around. Mostly to congratulate the Committee, and especially Anna, for her handeling of things. The Convention went very much better for us, from this point on.