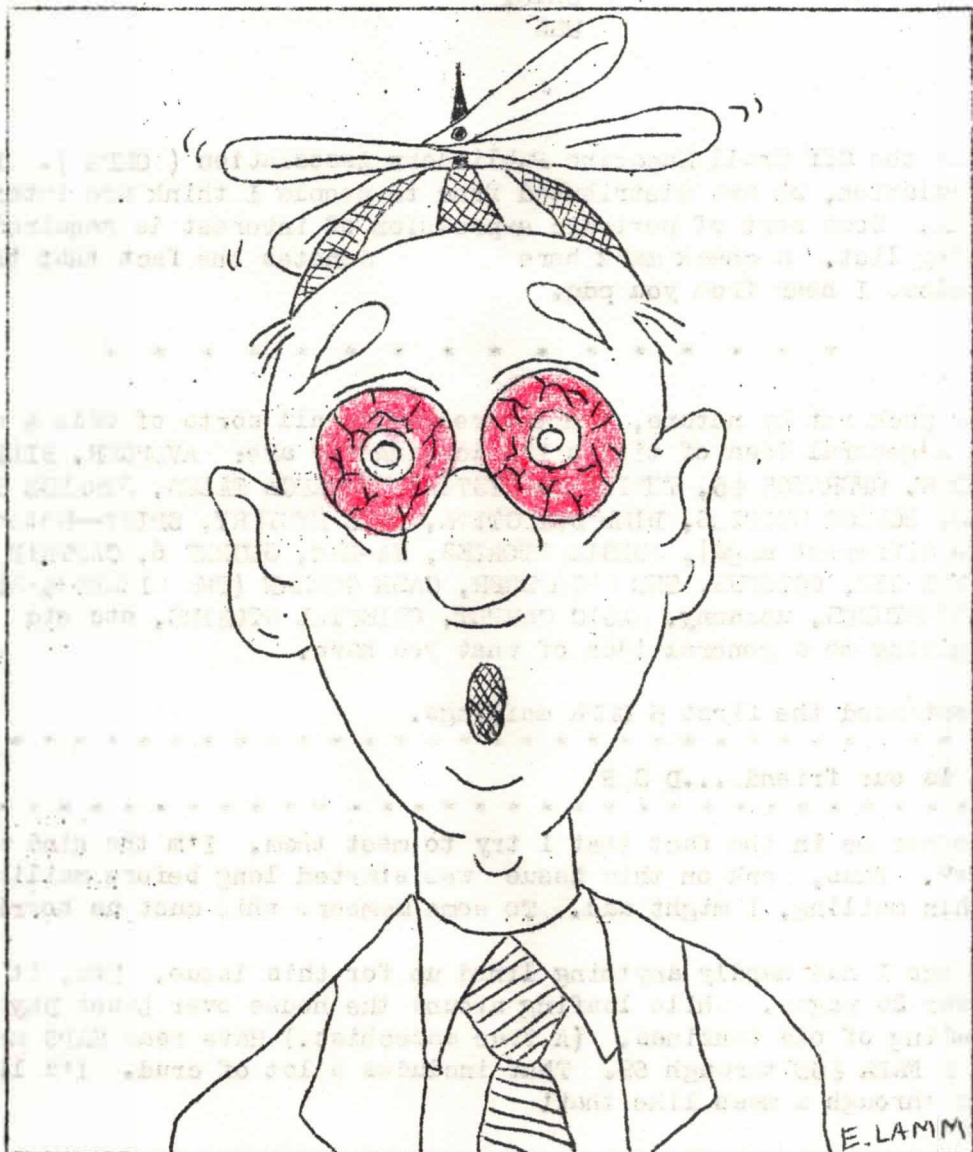


POOKA #4

DEC 1956

OMPA 10



Who needs a room? It's only a 4 day convention.

December 1956

OMPA 10

Published by

Don Ford
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Published for the Off Trail Magazine Publishers Association (OMPA). In addition to OMPA circulation, 35 are distributed free to people I think are interested in reading POOKA. Some sort of periodic expression of interest is required to remain on the mailing list. A check mark here denotes the fact that this is your last copy unless I hear from you pdq.

* * * * *

Since I am a pack rat by nature, I'm interested in all sorts of odds & ends in the pulp mags. A general idea of titles I'm looking for are: AVENGER, BILL BARNES, SHADOW, SPIDER, OPERATOR #5, THRILLING MYSTERY, STRANGE TALES, STRANGE STORIES, G-8, TERROR TALES, HORROR STORIES, DIME DETECTIVE, DIME MYSTERY, SPICY—Detective, Mystery Adventure (3 different mags), JUNGLE STORIES, KA-ZAR, SECRET 6, CAPTAIN SATAN, Dr. DEATH, Dr. YEN SIN, OCTOPUS, THE WHISPERER, CASH GORMAN (THE WIZARD), SECRET AGENT X, THRILLING ADVENTURES, uncanny, MAGIC CARPET, ORIENTAL STORIES, etc etc Drop me a brief note giving me a general idea of what you have.

Oh yes, I want/need the first 5 OMPA mailings.

Lou Tabakow is our friend....D S R

Deadlines bother me in the fact that I try to meet them. I'm the kind who gets "train fever". Thus, work on this issue was started long before mailing #9 arrived. Sort of a thin mailing, I might add. To some members this must be horrifying.

A few weeks ago I had hardly anything lined up for this issue. Now, it looks like it'll run over 20 pages. While loafing around the house over Labor Day week-end, I did more reading of old fanzines. (A true masochist.) Have read SAPS mailings #10 through 28; & FAPA #55 through 69. That includes a lot of crud. I'd like to see Archie Waade through a mess like that!

POOKA may never rate #1 on the fanzine hit parade, but I've certainly learned a lot of what not to publish after reading stacks of old crud. How many times have we all read: "I'm writing this directly on the stencil & it's 3 AM. I've been drinking for 2 days, now, so please excuse any typos you may find." Then follows page after page of effluvia. I still think a fanzine should be published with the idea that it should be readable 5 - 10 years from the date it's published. Too many read like last week's newspaper....& a country weekly at that.

A trader, named Sandy McVeetie
 With a cannibal King made a treaty.
 In a glass of gin-sling
 Mac toasted the king;
 And then the king—toasted McVeetie.

There was an old maid of Shanghai
 Who was so excessively shy,
 When undressing at night
 She turned out the light
 For fear of the All Seeing Eye.

Backtracking to the SAPS & FAPA mailings I've been reading—I'd like to say that I think OMPA right now is better than these two. SAPS for quite awhile managed to get in a lot of bitter personalities & feuding that certainly didn't help the whole group. FAPA had some of this, too, but not as much. Funny thing, some of this was caused by the same ones in each. I hope OMPA never comes to that. SAPS, the younger of the two, spent half it's mailing patting each other on the back & saying how much better than FAPA they were. FAPA being older & more settled, always seems to me to be a bit stodgy. A large proportion of their membership is older & their fan energies have run down a bit.

OMPA has a fresh approach & the fact that it has members in several countries is an aid in keeping a more rounded & diverse viewpoint. It also seems more friendlier. One thing that Lee Hoffman Shaw mentioned that I think would be well to consider was her idea of voting in new members. If someone gets on the waiting list that is a troublemaker, how would you presently go about keeping them from being a member? Just a thought I'm tossing at all of you. Reactions?

* * * * *

The moving was quite a deal! After making my down payment on the house, the bank account was low. I decided to move everything, myself, in order to save money. It was Margaret's first move. Been a long time since I'd moved; but as a child it seemed like we moved every 6 months. This is somewhere around the 20-25th place I've lived in.

My magazines were mostly in apple boxes. When turned sideways these make nice shelves. Lou Tabakow, who was once the "Apple Box King" of Reading, Ohio, gave me quite a few & I'd collected others from the grocery stores over the years as my collection grew. Anyway, it was fairly easy to move the individual boxes with the magazines still intact, rather than repack in cartons. The only thing was the number of them! I moved 96 apple boxes full of magazines & still had others to box up that had been on shelves. A 5 sectional bookcase had the Weird Tales & color slides. Then, there were 4 apple boxes full of pocketbooks, about 500 hard cover books, 75 or 80 record albums of the old 78 speed, about 1,000 records in boxes, steel filing cabinet, mimeo, desk, de-humidifier, Hi-Fi rigs (2), tools, 2 studio couches, photo equipment and box after box of fanzines completed the former cellar room.

After getting all of that moved out of the old place & set up in the new, I was ready to start in on the household items like furniture, etc. (The things that tend to clutter up a place.) I hope I never move again. It took from the middle of July to the middle of August. Stan Skirvin gave me a lot of help for which I'm grateful. Since moving men charge \$12.00 per hour for 3 men & a truck, I figure I saved about \$150-200. I earned it, though.....the penalty of being a pack-rat.

'You ain't nothin' but a hound dog'.....LT

4
A nudist who lived on our street
Loved to dance in the snow & the sleet,
But one chilly November
He froze every member
And retired to a monkish retreat.

The Reverend Mathew Alonzo de Sweet
Decided one day to be indiscreet,
As usual, after a round
The reverend found
You repeat, and repeat and repeat.

Missed the New York convention this year. From the accounts I've heard, it was another con whereby the attendance was so great that if you didn't know anyone from previous cons you were lost somewhat. Chicago was the first con where that happened & a group of us set out to prevent this from happening at Philadelphia by going together & renting a suite for a party room. For future cons I think all larger cities should plan to do this.

I feel sure that I would have had a good time & enjoyed myself thoroughly at New York. One thing I did miss was in not getting to see Ted Carnell or being able to vote for London. Doc Barrett, I'm sure felt the same.

One half of the "Gold Dust Twins" bogged down the business sessions with asinine suggestions & motions. Seems like he does this at every convention he attends. I expect the con committee to receive adverse comments because the con went into the hole financially. What the full story is, I don't know. I do know many of them personally & know they worked pretty hard. So they went broke...so what. Let's hope future convention committees will profit by their mistakes.

"You gotta stop being a hound do & be a bird dog.".....DF

A religionist is one who is sure there is a god. An atheist is one who is sure there isn't. An agnostic is sure that one of them is right.....Stan

The U.S. Navy has named their atomic submarines as follows:

1. Nautilus
2. Seawolf
3. Skate
4. Skipjack
5. Triton



9th MAILING

OFF TRAILS...Mailing arrived in good shape Sept 22nd. Archie did a nice job of wrapping. Hope you will continue to give deadline date & roster of officers on 1st page of every issue like you have in this one. I trust you & Norm Shorrocks will get together & correct my dues status by next listing.

CONTOUR...Liked all of the articles very much.

FANG...Disappointing.

VAGARY...Enjoyed "Them Days Is Gone Forever" despite poor reproduction & the strain on my eyesight.

STEAM...The writers & editors outside the field of S-F called it "Sci-Fi" over here.

ESPIRIT...Noted

MORPH...The installments still remain interesting. Your idea of the photo insert is something I want to do one of these days.

THE LESSER FLEA...Noted

BURP...I'm sure Walt has good reasons for much inactivity the past year. I think anyone (Charles Lee Riddle as well) who has really good reasons should be allowed leniency. However, I don't think he should have to kiss all four cheeks of each member, though. I favor letting the officers work it out.

SCOTTISHE...Like the Goon story & the drawings throughout the mag.

ARCHIVE...Like most all discussions on jazz. Yep, I turned green, Archie. Gotta quit drinking this stuff. I enjoy Rock & Roll. 15 years ago we called that same style, "nigger blues". I like the beat. Another name was "race records". Decca, Bluebird, Okeh, etc all had separate catalogs or listings for their "race" recordings. A good book for you is: THE PL YEARBOOK OF JAZZ 1946 edited by Albert McCarthy. Published by Nicholson & Watson, 26 Manchester Square, W.1. London. A 30 page chapter on blues is quite interesting.

GALLERY...Best item in this issue was "C W O" by Pavlat.

DIMENSIONS 16...Cover was all right! The Five Hour Hour appealed to me. The brief account of your trip was the sort of things I like to read in the fanzines. RIVERSIDE label has some folk music out on Lp. I've a few, but the quality varies due to poor 78's they were dubbed from. Suggest you play them before purchasing. How about: SCIENCE FICTION FICTION, ATOMIC S-F, SOLAR, SCIENCE FICTION CRUD, WARP, SCIENCE FICTION CONFIDENTIAL, etc for new titles?

VAPOTED...There seems to be someone at each convention who's determined to pull a hoax. You'll never get one big happy family in fandom. OMPA was a natural outgrowth. It wouldn't surprise me to see more apa's formed in the future.

6
Why not amalgamate the Masons, Elks, Odd Fellows, American Legion, VFW, K of C, etc into one big lodge? As far as I'm concerned, your suggestion of merging with FAPA goes over like a lead balloon. There's too much pampering of neos everywhere. In school, little Johnny has got to be just as good as Joe Blow who has twice the intelligence. In High School, fraternities are banned because he might not get invited to membership & all his grandchildren might develop engrams. Neos will break into anything, even banks, if they want to bad enough.

I remember my first trip to Cleveland in 1950. It was in the winter of 1950-51 & we were to meet a group of the local fan at the bar of the Carter Hotel on a Sat. afternoon. Arriving a bit early, we checked into the hotel & wandered out to a book store nearby. An insufferable, pimply faced, loud mouthed runt of a juvenile attached himself to our group & started showing us S-F. We appeared somewhat ignorant of it, & answered in monosyllables hoping that if we kept quiet he'd go away. The time for our appointment arrived & we kept wandering about the store, not wanting to drag him along to our rendezvous. Finally he left & we all breathed a sigh of relief. Hastily we paid for our purchases & dashed over to the bar, hoping they'd still be waiting for us & not be too angry at us for being late. The gang was all there & in their midst was this same nudnick! In the introductions that followed, it was learned that his name was Harlan Ellison. A name that we never forgot.

Your suggestion of providing some sort of method of electing from the waiting list sort of ties in with what I mentioned earlier.

The general subzities are a poor place to get anything printed. I've had numerous articles die because the fan editor up & quit & by the time he remembered about returning anything, it was hopelessly outdated. As for any neo, the sub editors want "big names"; not newcomers, so he's out right there.

But, here we are getting serious & all worked up over a hobby that's supposed to be fun. When OMPA is no longer fun, you won't have to kick me out...I'll bow out of my own accord.

A bugler named Dougal McDougal
Found a striking new way to be frugal.
He learned how to sneeze
In various keys
Thus saving the price of a bugle.

Despite many pleas to install a program & make an enlargement of the 1957 Midwestcon, we (Doc Barrett, Roy Lavender, Stan Skirvin, Lou Tabakow & myself) are not going to do so. We're going to have it in June as near the end of the month as a banquet date will permit. June 29 & 30 is the probable dates. Lou wants a banquet & I'm against it. It's been resolved by Lou assuming all responsibility for a banquet. Each year the food, time, place, service, etc has not been satisfactory to a few loud complainers. I figured a little shock therapy might help by having no banquet at all. The June date should make for warmer weather for swimming & allow those with vacations, or children who'd otherwise be in school, attend.

We're going to keep the same old informality & frankly hope that the attendance does not rise. Too many makes it impossible to visit with everyone. Lou Says that Robert Merrill plans to attend next year, so, we are waiting to see how he reacts to our business sessions. (We have none.)

A SHEEN UNTARNISHED BY

Raymond W. Washington

As I write this, I am, with no enthusiasm, approaching my thirtieth birthday. I am out of touch with fandom; I no longer look with awe and delight on the "big name" fans, past or present; the years have dripped their acids on my head and many a savour has turned sour on my tongue—but one enthusiasm remains, one promise still beckons, and one addiction remains uncured: the thirst for, and the joy of, science-fiction.

I was born in 1926, and it seems providential to me that it was in the same year that the first science fiction magazine was published. My attraction for S-F goes back even before my ability to read: to the first run of such movies as "She", "Frankenstein", and "Dante's Inferno". (I would agree that the latter two are fantasy rather than science fiction, and also throw in the first-run showing of "The Werewolf of London", which I recently saw again after so many years.)

After I saw "Frankenstein" I constructed, in my play-yard, the closest approach to a Frankensteinian apparatus that my childish mind could contrive. I even had an arrangement of ropes and boards whereby I could raise the lifeless body of the monster into an oak tree, in the hope that lightning would give him the cosmic spark of life.

This, you may say, is a crude beginning; but I submit that it is some indication of an early passion for science fiction.

I am, I hope, more critical than before. Old or stupid plots, without good writing or new angles to commend them, bore me; I am impatient with faulty characterization and with gadgets that even my untechnological mind can spot as unlikely. Where once I bought and devoured everything smacking of science fiction that I could afford, I am now content to pass much of it by. But the basic feeling for science fiction remains, and if I should be here after another thirty years have passed, I believe I will feel the same.

There have been other passions that developed since the first rapturous discovery of science fiction, and they have suffered more corrosions. They are less original—women, liquor, and travel on the sea. For more than six years I earned my living going to sea; I drank, then and after, what I may conservatively estimate as more than beneficial to my body, mind, or pocketbook; and as for the women, we may mercifully draw a curtain over that field of endeavour. I am now reasonably happily married to a blonde girl who has a B.S. in Journalism, also two children provided her by me. (She argues with me over my rigid insistence upon the basic compartmentation of fantasy in one field, and science fiction in another.)

There was a time when I sweated in the pygmy wars of fandom; when, in the unlamented days of Claude Degler and the Cosmic Circle, I was in the midst of a schism that threatened to destroy the doubtful unity of fandom; and if you aren't interested in hearing of the "old days", don't worry; I'm not interested in the telling of them.

It saddens me that I did not meet more fans when I was young enough to be

thoroughly delighted in them. I met Forrest Ackerman in December, 1950, after coming home on a troop-ship from Korea. Eight or ten years before he was a demigod to me; at that late date he was only a nice fellow, with whom I had pleasant associations, and whom I regarded as having a high and deserved place in the microcosm, Fandom, for which I still felt affection.

Fandom played an important part in my development. I lived as fantastic a hermit existence in my own home town as one is likely to find; and the personalities, publications, and controversies of fandom were my food and drink. I would have been an even shyer and more maladjusted young ignoramus when at last I ventured forth into the tough, uncaring world than if I had not had my gestation period in fandom's womb.

I smile as I look back on several situations I got myself into when the current of life was taking me into dangerous waters. Having yearned for adventure, I could not for long allow the fear that adventure brings to make me recant those yearnings. The timid fan who retired on his fan's monastery had more than one fist in his face, and on one occasion, a blackjack on his head; he sweated in mortal fear when his ship lost her power plant and rolled helpless in a typhoon in the Pacific; after a collision at sea off New Jersey, he scrambled in terror through the black interior of a sinking ship. He stood at the rail off Inchon at D plus 9 and watched the 17th Regiment disembark, wondering, in sadness, how many of the men he had spoken to would be killed.

These were some highlights, out of years that were mostly mundane. With that time long past, I can look back upon my fannish years in more perspective.

They weren't bad years.

I won't ever be able to recapture my earlier delight in fandom. But science fiction—with its illimitable vistas of possibility in the grandeur of this universe—has a sheen untarnished.

Taken from the CINCINNATI ENQUIRER September 25, 1956 (letters to the editor)

In regards to your editorial of Sept. 21, I have just finished compiling a mathematical graph dealing with popular American singers, past & present. To do this, the singer's mental & physical characteristics, and talents, were translated into mathematical symbols from which equations were derived—producing a peculiar graphic curve. With this method, and recent Elvis Presley data, I have been able to predict what the next popular singer will be like, and am scared out of my wits.

Elvis Presley doesn't worry me anymore, it's what his successor will be like that has me screaming. According to my calculations the next juvenile idol will have sideburns so long, they will meet under his chin—producing a peculiar simian effect. Instead of a limited 5th grade education, he will have no schooling at all, and will sign his name with an "X". He will retain more than a $\frac{1}{2}$ crouch position when singing—he will sing on all fours.

Instead of a palpitating echo, his voice will have a sharp baying effect, & will be particularly noticeable during the full moon. He will travel barefoot, and have a passion for raw meat. The younger set will refer to him as the "rawest, meanest, most brutish, drooliest hunk of daddy-o man", and will quit school in his honor.

Robert T. Grumman, 3336 Boudinet Ave. Cincinnati, Ohio

REPORT ON THE NEWYORKCON

by

LOU TABAKOW

I had hardly got back from New York and was still in that rosy convention after-glow that precedes the let-down incident on returning to the usual mundane rut, when I received a 'phone call from Don asking me to do a con report for POOKA. I gave him a vague so-so assent; you know the manana kind of answer, and was all set with a dozen excuses for not writing such a report when I received the following letter, and not being a complete fool, realized how much I wanted to write it.

September 4, 1956

Dear Lou:

Now that you're back from the big city I need a convention report for POOKA.

This will immediately conjure up to your fertile brain all sorts of rationalizations on why such an article cannot be written. In case you get stuck, telephone Charlie Tanner who will supply additional reasons for procrastinating.

However, speaking as the staff of POOKA, we will brook no such excuses. Payment will consist of two copies of the mag in which your con report appears. (At that, that's better pay than some pro mags I could name....L.T.)

Refusal to write such a report may cause me to rewrite some of my past con reports of conventions at which you also attended...in minute detail! As you dwell on the import of such a fiendish idea, you will realize that the easiest way out is to write a standard con report of the New York Con and let the simple minds of POOKA's editor and readers be content. (Your friendly appeal has convinced me...L.T.)

Then too, such a con report will serve to crystallize in your own mind the story you intend telling Carrie about the con. It will serve as a guide or synopsis in your repetition of said story when she cross-examines you. (I just tell her I spent the entire time with George O. Smith and consequently don't remember anything, and even if I did I wouldn't be responsible...L.T.) (I can't figure out why George O. would waste his time on you....Don)

Stan Skirvin has found 13 Convention Memory Books for me. His quote upon hearing you may have discarded the remaining unassembled copies was: "Tabakow had better be prepared to excrete Memory Books if Carrie can't find them!"

Charmingly yours,

Don

Since I am so kind-hearted and obliging, (you've got a kind face, too, Lou.) how could I resist agreeing with the clear-cut logical appeal of the above, especially as it was asked merely as a favor to a friend, and no undue pressure brought to bear. (I thought it was the high rates POOKA pays...Don)

Let me warn you in advance that this report will be incoherent in some places, incomprehensible in others, lacking details on the formal doings, and completely biased.

To begin with I detest writing reports of any kind. (Yeah, but that's what keeps you cab drivers so honest.) If you report orally on something, you can always make like a politician and swear you were misquoted. (Your idol, Harry Truman was good at that...Don) Therefore when you set it down in imperishable print you are forced to temper your remarks. Also, certain chicken- - - editors sift out your meatier phrases in fear of being banned by the Post Office Department. (You are so right. If you're going to be a fannish James Jones you'll have to put out your own mag....Don)

One may remark casually that so and so is a dirty s. o. b., and later with a clear-eyed innocent look (I challenge you to do either...Don) insist you didn't say "dirty". One may remark in passing that the Hieronimus machine is "Tackier than you think", but if you have such a statement printed you may find yourself among the great fraternity of "Hieronimus Anonymous", and be forced to submit (You, Lou ? Don) any future attempts in writing to Real True He-Man Magazine of Pornography, Scatology and Fetichism, "under such titles as "How I saved the price of a trip to Denmark", or "Never Fight a Barracuda Unless You're Wearing a Steel Cup". (Never mind...too late) Note to Harlan Ellison: Rights to the use of the above title in any real true confidential he-man article will be released for the asking. (Yeah, and 10% too...Don)

I arrived at Doc Barrett's home at Indian Lake about 6 PM Wednesday Aug. 29th, and since any gathering of two or more fans constitutes a convention we officially called the convention to order and proceeded to fill each other in on our latest acquisition of pornographic humor.

With the delicate finesse for which I am noted, I maneuvered an invitation to dinner by remarking that I wasn't really hungry but would have a cup of coffee and watch them eat. Two and a half hours later after washing down the coffee with a few pork chops (Kosher, of course) and sundry side dishes we were ready to start.

I had been looking forward to riding in an air-conditioned car, but the Joe Bftsplk in me threw a monkey wrench into that idea. The unit threw a steady stream of tepid air which felt like it had ambled through an iron foundry on its way. At any rate we were forced to shut it off and roll down the windows, relying on natural air-conditioners, like the commoners who whizzed by in their Fords and Plymouths. (It would've taken a 10 ton unit to compensate for all that hot air...Don)

Midnight found us at East Canton, Ohio, about 175 miles from Indian Lake, where we stopped at a motel. After a refreshing four hours sleep, Doc took a sadistic delight in waking me with an artificially cheery demeanor, (How about the Ford way ?) and a half hour later we were on our way again, having still 500 miles to go.

I wish to go on record here as stating that Evelyn Barrett does not have a particularly heavy foot on the gas pedal. She slowed down to seventy at the tunnels and

sometimes even 60 if she noticed a trooper sitting at the entrance. Even at this rate of speed it took us approximately 12 hours to cover the remaining distance.

About 3 PM we approached a region of seemingly perpetual night. The fog and smog didn't lay in pockets & tendrils as it does elsewhere. It lay everywhere like an impenetrable blanket. As we crossed the bridge and turned on our headlights we realized we were in New Jersey where the night people live.

For any fan living in the Jersey lowlands I wish to make a startling revelation. There are places in our country where the sun can be seen after 3 PM. The Sun is a large ball of incandescent gasses which lights & warms all portions of our planet with the exception of Mammoth Cave & New Jersey. It is here that the electric light bulb was perfected. Edison had no choice. He had to perfect the incandescent globe so he could see what he was doing. (Meanwhile back at the con...Don)

After sitting for 45 minutes at the entrance of Lincoln Tunnel the cop (No, Lou; it's "Police Officer", now...Don) condescendingly waved us on and we were permitted to enter the portals of the sacred city. (Why didn't you wave a \$5.00 bill at him, you fool!...Don)

We arrived at the Biltmore about 7 PM and were met by the usual committee of greeters in violent argument as to who had arrived first. I believe there was one avid fan who claimed to have been there waiting since the 1939 convention, but I have it on good authority that he is prone to stretch the truth a bit. I understand that he was just left over from the 1950 Hydracoh. He had spent all his money for originals & being unable to pay his bill had been held in escrow by the Henry Hudson Hotel in lieu of baggage, since he had pawned his luggage as well as his wife & kids to pay for a stack of old fan mags. The Hudson had finally turned him out to make room for a retired ecdysiast, and drawn by the fan smell had unerringly found his way to the Biltmore. (The ecdysiast's?...Don)

After a bit of room hopping, I found myself on the subway & at 4 AM unaccountably wound up walking alone in the neighborhood of 181st Street. (Boy they not only got rid of you, but took you for a ride!...Don) I entered a subway station & spent 10 minutes trying to feed a dime & nickel into the coin box at the entrance before it finally dawned on me that I needed a token. I knew the ice tasted sort of strong in the last drink I'd had. The cashier's cage was closed & a passer-by informed me it was 8 blocks to a station that had an all-night cashier on duty, so much as it hurt I hailed a cab & returned to the hotel. I tried to explain to the driver that I also drove a hack and Laissez faire etc. But he didn't speak French & I had to pay the bill in full. (Giving him "the finger", no doubt...Don)

I had promised Franklin Dietz to meet him at noon the next day & subway out to 102nd street where we were to pick up Dave Kyle's car & bring the recording equipment down to the hotel. I roped Doc Barrett in on the deal & after wandering about for an hour we finally realized that Kyle, true to form, had forgotten all about the arrangement & had picked up the car, himself.

In order to salvage something from the trip we walked over to Hannes Bok's studio, & found him as interesting & vital as ever, but still cracked on Astrology. However since he's eating high off the hog with his income from readings maybe I'm the one who's cracked. Still I can't help deploring the waste of real talent.

That evening Earl Perry & myself were invited to have dinner with Norm Wagner, a former member of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, now living in Brooklyn. He took us to Mama Leone's & warned us it would take 3 hours to eat. He lied. We were finished in exactly two hours and forty minutes. I remember though I had never eaten a clam before I had 15 of them prepared in different ways, which the waiter kept bringing to whet our appetites. The closest thing to this expansive spread that I know of is the Pompano Dinner I once had in Tampa, Florida. At any rate 2 bottles of wine and 20 lbs of food later the waiter brought the check, and to show my good breeding & general lack of nosiness (no pun intended) I turned & struck up an animated conversation with Earl while Norm paid the bill.

We had set up an appointment for Ted Carnell to visit Bok's studio at 8:30 & since we still had time we decided to meet the gang there. I remembered that Bok lived on 109th street in the neighborhood of Amsterdam ave. but had neglected to note the number. It is here we were treated to a very good example of the "Generous indifference of big cities". As soon as we began to ask questions the people looked at us suspiciously & losing their ability to speak & understand English threw phrases at us in a variety of Puerto Rican dialects, meanwhile gesticulating helplessly with their hands. (Why didn't you threaten to send "Cheech" after them?...Don)

After climbing 5 flights of stairs in every 5 story building on 109th street, we finally located Bok $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours later. (Remember Natural Bridge State Park?...Don)

Bok told us that Doc Barrett's father had passed away that afternoon so we beat it back to the hotel where I was able to see Doc before he left. This sort of put a damper on the thing as I knew how much Doc had looked forward to the convention, so I retired relatively early, for the first & only time during the convention.

I read the program for Saturday morning & slept soundly through the introductions & roll call. During the intermission I finally got around to registering & viewed the exhibits & huckster's wares. I was fascinated by a little gadget about the size of a turtle which ran about clicking madly & flashing a light. Whenever it encountered an obstacle in its path it stopped & took off in a new direction. I never did figure out whether it worked by radar, sound waves like a bat or by tactile sense by means of the filaments extending from its head. Someday I'll take time to listen to some of the formal programs & find out about such things.

That afternoon in company with the E. E. Evan's, Steve Schultheis & a few others we went to the Shanghai restaurant for a North Chinese meal which differs from other Chinese cooking in that the courses are mostly meat rather than vegetable dishes. I recall as an example a whole fish served in the center of the table from which we cut slices. I finally was able to do the carving by averting my eyes & avoiding the reproachful stare of the victim. (I always distrust people who can't look you in the eye....Don) I know how a cannibal feels while a missionary gazes at him accusingly from the stew pot.

Moral for the tender-hearted: Never look a fish in the eye as you slice off a filet. (And you a cab driver, too....Don)

There had been quite a bit of talk about trouble in getting an orchestra for the costume ball but the union finally agreed to a 6 piece band at double time. In my opinion the money would have been wasted at $\frac{1}{2}$ time as I counted exactly 8 dances averaging about 3 minutes each. The rest of the time was taken up with intermissions

and judging of the costumes. The judging was very badly managed & dragged on interminably. After about the 30th circuit of the dance floor I began to feel sorry indeed for the sweltering contestants. (You went as your charming self, I take it...Don) In fact the lucky ones were those eliminated & able to return to the side lines early. After this fiasco it will be a brave masquerader indeed who will venture to expose himself again. (But it's the girls we want to expose themselves!...Don) I would like to award personally to each contestant a medal for bravery over & beyond the call of duty. And while we're passing out medals shed a tear for the poor viewers who stood patiently on the rim of the dance floor for what seemed like 2 hours while the learned judges sat & thunk.

Olga Ley as usual won the prize for the most exotic costume. Franklin Dietz in a costume designed by Bok looked very exotic indeed but his legs to be charitable left much to be desired. Two very beautiful gals posing as satellites to a muscular male planet took a prize largely I suspect because of leg appeal. Don't get me wrong. Had I been a judge I would have liked nothing better than to pin a ribbon on their (pardon the expression) chests.

A radio-active alien enclosed in a huge lead sheath was an interesting variation as were the 2 auto-trophic creatures who undulated about very realistically.

There was the usual array of cheese-cake princesses & brawny space cadets...& damnit, now I wish I had made notes.

Overheard as Steve Takac's wife danced by—"Careful there, my husband's watching" "Huh? Who cares? My wife's watching too, what could he possibly do to me that she won't?"

I found much dissatisfaction with the way the display rooms were managed. Due to the New York fire laws it was necessary to keep the doors to the display rooms open at all times. A watchman was hired from 11:30 PM until morning, but the rest of the time those with material on display were forced to remain chained to their display. (Yeah, but at Cleveland they griped because they locked the doors during the regular sessions. You can't win....Don)

This kind of minor irritation which spoils a convention for those affected could easily be avoided by a little advance planning & correspondence with previous committees who have faced the same problems.

Query: Why did Kyle ignore the numerous letters from the Cleveland Committee offering help & advice?

Overheard: "In all the years I've been attending conventions I never saw so many celebrities before." —Doc Smith.

A few of the personalities one doesn't usually see at National conventions were: Al Capp, Jean Shepherd, Nelson Bond, Ray Cummings and..damnit, now I wish I'd made notes again.

The hucksters (bless their pointed little heads) got together a kitty & threw a cocktail party, but the crush of the free-loaders was so great that after dutifully downing 1 highball (they twist your arm?...Don) I made my way to a private room

where I spent the next 6 hours replenishing my stock of dirty stories at the expense of Walt Liebscher who is tops as a dialectician in my books. (It was all a wasted effort, though....Lou only remembered 4 of the lousy ones when he came back home. DF)

Lloyd Eshbach & the Cleveland group threw a party in the Cleveland suite & one had to be facile indeed to avoid stumbling over some supine celebrity measuring his length on the floor. (!!! ..Don) I am happy to state that the conversation here reached a high level indeed. (Indeed...Don) 50% was devoted to breasts & only 50% to legs & kindred regions.

Overheard: Intense young fan--"Do you believe in the theory of a pulsating universe ? "

Bored Old Pro--eyang his nearly empty glass--"I wouldn't know. Say, is there any more Scotch left ?" (Boucher ? ...Don)

Robert Merrill (Formerly Merrill Gwosdof & known as one of the "Gold Dust Twins"...Don) stirred up quite a fuss with his proposal to have the committee officially sanction a North American Conference. He was busy as the proverbial 'cat on the hot tin roof' trying to get signatures on a petition & was very much put out when I refused to sign it. He was even more affronted when I assured him that the MidwesCon committee was not even remotely interested in being designated as the official N. A. conference. (Amen...Don) He had a long list of celebrities names affixed to the petition & seemed to go on the theory that because Joe Celebrity signed it, it was a good idea.

Since Doc had had to leave I was forced to ease up on spending as I had a \$27.00 train ticket to buy which I hadn't anticipated; so much as I hated to, I didn't play but only kibitzed the poker game in Evelyn Gold's room. Tucker's marriage seemed to have reformed him also. As far as I know he didn't get in any poker games either. (O.K. Bob, you can give Lou that \$5.00, now...Don)

The balance of the night I spent in Frank Andrasovsky's room in a long drawn out bull session. Steve Schultheis spent the entire evening snapping blackmail pics. Every time any one would get on a bed with a fem fanne he'd snap a picture at such an angle & leaving out all background detail that...anyway, he said he was merely laying up security for his old age, but I doubt very much that he'll live long enough to enjoy it.

Someone brought in a bottle of Vodka & Frank was very much taken with it. It also took him. He spent the entire night quoting poetry & philosophy & assuring me that he had now become a new new vital Andrasovsky. No longer would he hide his light under a bushel. He would be strong, assertive, extrovertive. What a shame to waste the whole line on Steve & myself. He could have had a couple of young femme fans swooning at his feet in admiration.

I figured that Merrill with his proposal would waste all morning, so I decided to sleep through the morning business session & found out afterwards how right I was on this score. They went round & round for 2 hours accomplishing nothing until finally Sprague in desperation banged his gavel & unparliamentarily announced the session over. (He should have banged the gavel on Merrill's head....Don)

I think it would be a very good idea for future conventions to impose a gag rule on any new motions; say 5 minutes each for the pro & con. As any fan knows these controversial motions from the floor have been hashed out ad nauseum before they are ever brought up formally & 5 minutes should suffice for summing up all the arguments for & against. (I've a better idea, Lou; let's gag Merrill with one of your old socks...Don)

At the afternoon session Merrill's proposal was brought up for a vote & Sprague wisely limited the debate. The motion was turned down by a conclusive majority of almost 4 to 1, and Merrill (How ridiculous can you get ?) demanded a count of hands saying he was dissatisfied with the voice vote. I forget the exact figures but they were something like 38 for & 147 against, and everyone breathed a sigh of relief as Merrill was forced to subside.

A young fan introduced a motion to prohibit recruiting of any kind by exhibitors; meaning the U.S. Air Force. Possibly he was afraid that the glamour depicted in the posters would catch him in a weak moment & he would wake up some morning with a hangover listening to reveille. The officer in charge of the display explained that the recruiting service was the branch in charge of all such displays & the posters, etc were displayed at all places the exhibition visited. It was also pointed out that such a motion would prohibit any bookdealers or publishers to solicit or sell anything at future conventions. The motion was of course defeated.

We then voted on the permanent committee & 6 directors were elected; 2 for 3 years, 2 for 2 years, and 2 for 1 year. George Nims Raybin was elected legal adviser to the committee.

The Berkeley-Oakland group put in a half-hearted bid for the convention, but everyone present knew that sentiment this year was in favor of swinging the convention to London, thus making a reality of the title, World Science Fiction Convention. London, as the fans all know now was the overwhelming choice & from the talk & enthusiasm I witnessed I wouldn't be surprised to see two plane loads of Statesiders attend. One to return in two weeks, and one to return in a month. Anyway, Good Luck, and Happy Convention, London!

After all this with no note of warning, Kyle announced he would now make the financial report. Ah, fine, I thought; here's a convention run in a business-like manner. I leaned back waiting to hear how much was to be passed on to London. Wouldn't it be wonderful, I thought if we could pass on about \$500.00.

I was rudely awakened from my dream by the voice of Kyle announcing that the convention was over \$1100.00 in the hole! Kyle had guaranteed (without consulting the committee) 400 at the banquet; and this at \$7.10 per plate. A little over 300 tickets had been sold & the hotel demanded its guarantee. It was either pay or be blackballed from every first class hotel in the country.

On top of this, 3 space-suited mannikins had disappeared from the Air Force display; and the officer-in-charge trying to avoid signing a statement of charges, demanded \$450.00 which Kyle as an Air Force Reserve Officer felt obligated to pay. (Anyone ever search that young fan's room who offered the motion to ban recruiting ? ...Don)

This is the first time I ever heard of a convention being responsible for the

safety of a display in a public room. If the display were so valuable why didn't the officer-in-charge requisition an around the clock MP guard? (Maybe he was a Reserve Officer, too...Don) Why should the fans be held responsible for his blunder? If Kyle feels obligated; let Kyle pay. Before I left, Raybin, as Treasurer of the committee, assured me he would under no circumstances O.K. any check to the Air Force.

At any rate the \$700.00 had to be paid to the hotel as well as a number of other minor items, not the least of which I understand is \$300.00 which Kyle persuaded Art Saha to guarantee for some bill or other. (The orchestra, wasn't it?...Don)

An appeal was made for money & those present responded very generously I felt. Over \$300.00 was raised in an audience numbering only about 200, & the fans were asked to send contributions from their respective clubs at home. Harlan Ellison raised another hundred or so with some additional raffles & auctions. I still haven't heard what the final outcome was. However without question, we the fans are responsible for everything but the Air Force display.

I'd like to ask Dave some pointed questions without meaning to sound smug or nasty. Why didn't you avail yourself of the repeated offers of Nick Falasca to do your printing, since he was still holding the machine he had bought for the Cleveland Convention? You know you could have saved at least \$1,000.00 this way. Why was it necessary to hire a band for the costume ball at such exorbitant rates when you had no money available & no apparent way to raise any more? Why, when you found out you were 100 seats short of fulfilling your banquet commitment, didn't you appeal from the floor explaining the situation. I personally know a number of fans who could & would have bought banquet tickets had such an appeal been made.

I spent the last night room-hopping & wound up in Schultheis' room where Steve, Frank & myself decided we would forego sleep altogether the final night. We had a charming concurrer in the person of Phyllis Economu.

After eating breakfast we planted ourselves in the lobby (potted, anyway...Don) and wished godspeed to each fan as he departed. Frank ground away madly on his new camera and at bright mid-day bemoaned the lack of light for good clear pictures. Someday, somewhere I'll meet a camera addict who will look out and say, "What a perfect day for taking pictures."

At 6:30 AM with a campaigners ache in my right hand from shaking hands, I climbed aboard the train for Indian Lake & Doc Barrett's where I had to pick up my car. I didn't have to be back to work until Thursday afternoon at 4 & I was very glad that I had given myself an extra day to get over that let-down feeling one experiences after every convention at the prospect of resuming our respective dull routine. (Speak for yourself, Lou...Don)

As the wheels clickety-clacked I began to turn over in my alleged mind the things I had heard and seen, the old acquaintances I had renewed, the new personalities I had met, and the usual resolutions to be more active in fan affairs in the future.

Some of my favorite people: For warmth and friendliness; Lloyd Esbach and Jeannie Smith. Intelligent, stimulating; Doc Smith, Frank Robinson, Bob Bloch, Tucker, Phyllis Economu, Vital, interesting, friendly; Evelyn Gold, Charlie Doyet, Warm personalities, likeability, Marty Greenberg, Basil Wells, the E.E. Evans',

Frank Andrasovsky, Ben Jason, Steve Schultheis, The Falascas. (Hey Lou! What list you got my name on, huh Lou ?...Don)

I see it is an almost endless task trying to list & type the friends I've made at conventions. The list could be lengthened indefinitely and each has qualities that overlap in other categories. In fact I like all fans; well, almost all fans & some I love; platonically of course, dammit. (Of course...Don)

I arrived at Doc's Wednesday morning & stayed there until 3 PM filling him in on what went on or came off as the case might be. (Hey, you didn't tell me that!...) We set a date for early October when a gang of us will converge on Doc and add a sort of extra chapter to the 14th World Science Fiction Convention.

There you have it, Ford; and let me warn you that from here on Tabakow is also going into the blackmail business to be used only as a means of protection. (You can't scare me. You can't operate a camera & you're too lazy to print a fan mag..Don)

Thereonce was a man named McGruder,
Who canoed with a girl in Bermuder.
But the girl thought it crude,
To be wooed in the nude,
So McGru took an oar and subduder.

She was peeved and called him "Mr."
Not because he up and kr.,
But because, just before,
As she opened the door,
This same Mr. kr. sr.

A serious thought for today,
Is one that may cause you dismay:
Just what are the forces
That bring little horses,
If all the big horses say "Nay" ?

There was a young lady named Twilling,
Who went to her dentist for drilling.
Because of depravity,
He filled the wrong cavity,
And now Twilling's nursing her filling.

There was a young man from Montrose
Who could tickle himself with his toes.
He could do it so neat,
He fell in love with his feet,
And christened them Myrtle and Rose.

God's plan had a hopeful beginning,
But man spoiled his chances by sinning.
We trust that the story
Will end in God's glory,
But, at present, the other side's winning.

An attractive young maiden named Myrtle
Had quite an affair with a turtle.
And what's more phenomenal,
A swelling abdominal
Proved to Myrtle the turtle was fertile.

A wanton young lady from Vimley,
Reproached for not acting quite primly,
Answered, "Heavens above,
I know sex isn't love,
But it's such an attractive facsimile."

There was a young lady named Uhr
Whose mind was so awfully pure,
That she fainted away,
In a bird store one day,
When she saw some canary manure.

An eccentric old person named Bough
Took all of his meals with his cow;
He explained, "It's uncanny
She's so like my aunt Fanny!"
But he never would indicate how.

CONFLICTS

A PORTION OF PROGRAM

By Nick and Noreen Falasca

In the grand tradition of past conventions, the program of the 14th World S-F Convention started one hour late. Approximately 1,000 persons were assembled in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Biltmore that Saturday afternoon. The Ballroom itself was a large, ornate place, heavily decorated with plaster scroll work. We were pleased to see it ready for the meeting. When we arrived on Friday, workmen had the Ballroom and most of the foyer covered with paint drop cloths and were madly plastering, painting and repairing. By Saturday morning, however, all the rubble was cleared away and at 2:00 P.M. the convention was called to order by Assistant Chairman Jean Carroll.

It was one of the hottest days of the summer and humidity hung like a damp blanket over the skyscrapers. The hall, in spite of the windows being open, was stifling. It was a great disappointment to the attendees that the meeting rooms were not air conditioned. The hotel's air conditioning stopped at the 12th floor & we met on the 19th. Most of the fans who insisted on being in the air conditioned section were placed there by the management after some little argument. The rooms were a cool oasis after the 19th floor.

During the morning, many fans & pros had gathered in the Cafe Modern, which was adjacent to the ballroom, and were having a reunion. The attention of all present was centered on Ray Cummings, of "Girl In The Golden Atom" fame. He was surrounded not only by fans, but such prominent authors as Anthony Boucher, Edmond Hamilton, Isaac Asimov, Frank Belknap Long, Nelson Bond and S-F's first great artist, Frank R. Paul. The crowd was almost overwhelming the colorful old gentleman. It was obvious that they had wanted to meet him for many years & were making the most of their opportunity. He was like a figure from a by-gone, and, perhaps, kindlier age, as he stood against the light smiling at these people who admired him.

After Jean Carroll had turned the gavel over to Chairman Dave Kyle, the official program was under way. Mr. Kyle made a rather lengthy speech in which he reviewed the history of the convention from its beginning 17 years previously to its present status as a "World gathering". He gave us a run-down on what the next 3 days would provide as entertainment, & expressed his happiness at having such a good turn-out to welcome the convention back to New York after so many years.

After this address, George Nime Raybin, Convention Treasurer, read the rules by which the convention was to be governed & they were passed without comment. Miss Ruth Landis, Executive Assistant & one of the loveliest girls in fandom had the task of keeping the members informed on the latest announcements & she became a familiar figure on the platform during the convention. She made several announcements, the most important of which concerned the banquet. She urged all members to obtain their tickets for it as there was said to be a limited supply available.

Dr. C. L. Barrett, well known Ohio fan, collector, & one of the sponsors of the

annual Midwestcon was scheduled next to give the roll call of the U.S. & foreign countries. Unfortunately, Dr. Barrett had been called home because of the unexpected death of his father, so Dr. Milton Rothman filled in for him. Dr. Rothman is the only man to have ever Chairmanned 2 conventions. When Jim Williams died just before the 2nd Philadelphia convention, Dr. Rothman stepped in & kept things going smoothly. The roll call itself did not seem to come off too well. There were embarrassing silences when such sparsely populated states as Utah, Nevada and Maine were called, & all in all, it seemed to be a fruitless effort.

Committee member Lin Carter introduced Arthur C. Clarke, who spoke a few witty words of greeting to the members, but saved his long address for the banquet. Then came the most exciting part of every convention, the introduction of the celebrities. Sam Moskowitz, Anthony Boucher, Bob Tucker and Bill Hamling were scheduled to do the introducing, however Mr. Hamling did not appear. As each name was read, they gave some of the person's background in the field & built it into a short history of fandom. There were many who had not been to a convention for many years. There were those that always attend. There were newcomers seeing their first big show. All of these found the introductions fascinating. The list of celebrities is endless: John W. Campbell, Jr., Donald Wolheim, Ted Sturgeon, Mildred Clingerman, Milton Lesser, Evelyn Gold, Frank Kelly Freas, Randall Garrett, Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, Isaac Asimov, Forest Ackerman, Willy Ley, L. Sprague de Camp, James Blish, Judy Merrill, Damon Knight, William Hamling, Ted & Judy Dikty, P. Schuyler Miller, Fritz Leiber, Cyril Kornbluth, Ed Emswiler, E. E. Smith, Lloyd Eshbach, Robert Sheckley, A. J. Budrys, E. E. Evans and on and on and on.

There was a brief intermission during which the fans again gathered in the Cafe Modern & tried in vain to cool off. The 2nd session was to feature a panel of S-F experts discussing the field in general. We can't give a report on this as we were still in the Cafe Modern cooling off.

There had been an announcement made to the effect that the balloting for the achievement awards (to be presented at the banquet for the best novel, short story, magazine, etc. of 1956) was still in progress because so few had voted during the year there was no real decision. Dr. Thomas S. Gardner was to hand out ballots to all who had not voted as yet & these were to be deposited at the door. We made a diligent search but could not locate Dr. Gardner, his ballots, or deposit box, so we gave it up as a bad job.

L. Sprague de Camp, well-known novelist, critic, and long-time collaborator of the late Fletcher Pratt delivered a moving eulogy to his friend & partner. Pratt was a man of incredible erudition & an expert on everything from naval warfare to S-F. He was always ready to help an aspiring writer or give a convention committee a hand, if he could. In spite of the fact that a great deal of his work was outside the S-F field, he never deserted it and it remained close to his heart. His untimely death has left us immeasurably poorer.

The Convention Committee was fortunate in being able to obtain a color movie on the U.S. Satellite Program which was very well received. Booklets from the Glenn L. Martin Co. concerning the Satellite were distributed at the registration desk. General Powers of the U.S. Air Force had been slated to speak, but was unable to make it. Instead, he sent a large display with a model rocket, some manikins dressed in space clothes & a publicity officer to attend the display booth. It was most

unfortunate that this officer was instructed to make a recruiting speech to the assembly. It was poorly received, as might be expected, and later, a resolution was introduced to prevent such a thing happening in the future. (More later.)

Saturday evening, the Cleveland & Detroit groups, which included ourselves, Ben Jason, Roger Sims and Bill Dignan, took Harlan Ellison out for an "Appreciation Dinner". Last year at the Cleveland Convention, Harlan was responsible for the success of our auction & we wanted to give him our thanks. Harlan has grown away from the "bad boy" of fandom character & has turned into a professional writer. He has sold over 500,000 words this year alone. We had a wonderful time at dinner & returned to the hotel for the evening program.

First on the agenda was a fan produced movie entitled "Longer Than You Think", written by Harold Lynch & Will J. Jenkins. The Philadelphia club was responsible for this effort & it got a lot of laughs. The next item was to have been a talk on "Science-Fiction On Broadway", by Arthur Kingsley, a New York fan. We heard conflicting reports as to whether this actually took place. A number of people say it never did, & others say they heard it. It definitely did not take place when it was scheduled.

The announcement was still being made urging all to purchase their banquet tickets before they were completely sold.

An interesting & unusual ballet entitled "Cliche" was next on the program. It was produced by Ruth Ramsey & starred Mrs. Olga Ley. The program described it as "The Daring, Wonderful and Colossal Adventures of Captain Hero" & it lived up to its description. Mrs. Ley, along with being a wife and mother is one of the most beautiful women we have ever seen, & as if that were not enough, is also an accomplished ballerina.

Following the ballet was the cocktail party sponsored by 11 publishers. This would have been an overwhelming event, except for one minor flaw. They had tried to pack 300 people into a room that held 50. The bar was so situated that when one managed to struggle through & get their drink, there was no place to go except back through this mob, holding it aloft. Surveying the situation, and fostering a dislike for both Manhattans & Martinis, we gave our tickets to a thirsty George Barley. The temperature in the room must have been close to 100 & this fact, coupled with the surging mob, made for chaos instead of cocktails. This affair cost the publishers a considerable amount, but it struck many of those present that the money could have been spent more productively.

We spent the remainder of the evening visiting with some Chicago fans who were Ed Wood, Sid Coleman, Lewis Grant, Jon Stopa, Bob Briney & Earl & Nancy Kemp. Incidentally, this group is involved in one of the most worthwhile fan projects in a long time. They have formed a company called Advent Publishers, and, as their first selection, have published a collection of Damon Knight's wonderful critical essays. The book is called "In Search Of Wonder" & deserves a prominent place in every fan's library. Damon Knight is second to none as a critic & his evaluations of S-F & the men who write it are sparkling, witty, knowledgeable and accurate. Advent is to be congratulated on such a sterling first effort.

Saturday was a crowded evening & ended up with the Masquerade Ball. The

costumes this year were better than ever & some were really outstanding. More and more fans are coming in costume each year. A live orchestra was part of the program & the dance came off quite well. After the Grand March, prizes were presented for the best costumes.

Towards the end of the masquerade, we departed with Roger Sims for Jimmy Ryan's and the music of Wilbur De Paris' Dixieland Band.

We spent the rest of Saturday night in Ben Jason & Frank Andrasovsky's room talking to Ben & Phyllis Kelfer, Ellis Mills (Ohio fan now in the Air Force & an International fan extraordinary) and Vally Weber, from Seattle. Ellis showed us pictures from Kettering's convention & all the talk was "London in '57".

Sunday morning dawned dark, hot and rainy. A sightseeing boat trip around Manhattan Island for fans was underway, but the sight of water would have finished most of them off forever, so it was sparsely attended.

We had breakfast & returned to find the afternoon session late in beginning. Throughout the entire convention, program selections were switched around, and at one time, with cancellations & switches, few speakers knew when they were to appear. John Campbell was seen alone in the hall looking for Kyle. He told us he did not know when he was to speak & he was very upset.

The afternoon began with an address by P. Schuyler Miller, book reviewer and writer, who gave an assessment of the reader's survey of S-F books that he had conducted in his column in Astounding Science Fiction. Mr. Miller ran a similar survey several years ago & got some surprising answers to the question "What are the 10 best S-F books that are basic to every fan's library?". The passage of time has toppled some favorites and created some new ones. However, the McComas and Healy anthology "Adventures in Time and Space", and Heinlein, van Vogt and Asimov are still secure in the reader's affections.

Don Ford, editor of Pooka, and prominent Ohio fan was to give a run down on the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund to date. An addition to the Ford family kept Don home this year & he was sorely missed. Ted Carnell, Chairman of the London Con, gave the British report & was to have been followed by Ellis Mills, reporting on S-F in Germany, but there was another slip-up in scheduling, and Mills never appeared.

The saddest thing of all, program-wise, was the fact that Kyle had counted on some very big names in mainstream literature to speak. They included Herman Wouk, author of "The Caine Mutiny" and the short story "The Lomokome Papers", Aldous Huxley, author of "Brave New World", and Philip Vylie, who wrote "Tomorrow" & "When Worlds Collide", etc. None of these people appeared & Kyle felt it necessary to read their letters of refusal. This was in rather bad taste, as such correspondence is usually a form letter typed by a third secretary. Huxley was in California, Vylie in Florida (his home) & Wouk was "out of town". The surprise would have been, if any of them had shown up.

This is not too important, in itself, because contrary to belief, most fans would much rather see Asimov, Bloch & Garrett than 5 Aldous Huxleys, all lined up. What is unfortunate is that large sections of the program were reserved for these people who failed to show. There were others present, who, by their presence on the

program, would have made it a rousing success, but were never even asked to speak. This was the real tragedy, & at this point the convention turned into minor chaos.

In the second afternoon session, John Campbell finally got to deliver his talk on Paionics & we spent the rest of the time talking to Sam Moskowitz & Rickey Slavin & have no idea what happened. We note, however, that Wallace West was scheduled to speak, & at no time did we see him anywhere. We do not think he appeared.

By this time the attendance at the program was dwindling. After its first day peak, it never again had more than 300 people. Most sessions had fewer than 100. At the business meeting, it picked up a little.

After this, Harlan Ellison & Sam Moskowitz conducted the auction & the Morris Scott Dollens paintings were sold as fast as they were put up. There was no back-drop this year, since it was said that the Dollens' arrived too late to be hung.

At the end of the auction, another very important part of the convention was taking place. About 25 people out of the 1,000 registered, gathered in the back balcony of the hall to discuss the By-Laws and any changes in them.

It is an eternal characteristic of fans that they never get interested in motions & by-laws until it is too late to do anything about them, & this convention was no exception. It was a long, bitter session and had unfortunately been scheduled just before the banquet. So, naturally, everyone was anxious to have it over with so they could dress for dinner. There were many objections to the by-laws, the technicalities of which it is beyond the scope of this report to discuss, and indeed, would be a full report by themselves. The main objections centered on the incorporation of the World Society without a vote of the members. George Nims Raybin, acting as committee lawyer & also convention treasurer, stated that there were NO MEMBERS of the Society at the time of its incorporation since he had not legally received the dues & list of paid members, as Treasurer. This was a point, the morality of which is open to question. Consensus of opinion seemed to be that it would have been far better to vote on the incorporation at this convention. But it was already an accomplished fact. The by-laws that had been drawn up by a committee headed by Dave Kyle & George Raybin, were distasteful to many persons. It was pointed out, by George, that if they were not accepted & passed by the convention proper, at any time in the future, the three current directors (Dave Kyle, George Raybin and Art Saha) could meet and pass these by-laws and they would be binding. There was also objection to the fact that the committee officers are no longer responsible for the debts of the society, but rather, the society as a whole, is. This is an important point, as we shall see later. These are just a fraction of the behind-the-scenes events that made up the dissension at this convention & what happened concerning them may prove of great importance to fandom in the future.

At last George Raybin, using the premise that any changes in the by-laws would just cause confusion, persuaded those who had any changes to withdraw them, for the present, and the session adjourned in a flurry of bad feeling.

The banquet began a little after 8:00 p.m., & was attended by 310 persons.

The main course of the dinner was raw chicken & Al Capp. Mr. Capp did very well & showed himself to be a real S-F fan. After his speech, the large crowd that

did not attend the dinner was admitted & the program continued. Isaac Asimov, Bob Bloch, and Randy Garrett delivered various humorous remarks on the state of science-fiction & fandom in general. Arthur C. Clarke gave his main address, & a brilliant one it was. He ranged far & wide in this topic of s-f & what is wrong, (and right!) with it. Each point was tellingly made & Mr. Clarke received a standing ovation.

The achievement awards were presented by Bob Bloch. The trophy was an Oldsmobile hood ornament bolted to a board and, unfortunately, there was only one of these. Toastmaster Bloch announced that as each winner came forward to accept it, he should pose for the photographers with it, & then return it to the podium, so the next person could receive it. There was an announcement to the effect that others were being made & would be mailed out to the winners later.

Robert Heinlein won for best novel of the year, Murray Leinster for best novella, A. C. Clarke for best short story, Astounding Science-Fiction for best magazine, Inside for best fanzine, Willy Ley for best feature writer, Frank Kelly Freas for best illustrator, Bob Silverberg for most promising writer & Damon Knight for best critic.

A movie preview was to follow the banquet, however none was ever shown & the program broke up about 11:00 p.m. At its conclusion, we retired to a typical fan party in the Cleveland block of rooms.

Monday was still very hot & by then, the strain of the heat & little sleep was starting to tell. We had a hurried breakfast at the Automat & got to the ballroom in time for the morning business session. L. Sprague de Camp was presiding & once again proved himself to be a brilliant parliamentarian. This session was so complicated that nothing less than a tape transcript would be necessary to report what happened with any degree of accuracy. Most of this discussion concerned a resolution which would provide for a "North American Conference" endorsed by the World Society in any year the convention went abroad. Most of us present were against it on the grounds that it was unnecessary, for one thing, as there would be many local conferences anyway, & that it was morally wrong, because it would mean handing other countries an empty title. Merrill C. Woodford, (now called William Merrill) who presented the resolution, did not have too many supporters present. He attempted to delay voting on this resolution until others arrived. He used every parliamentary device to delay, including the fact that no quorum was present. Since the by-laws did not define a quorum (and it would have been impossible to get one) de Camp ruled the entire session invalid on just those grounds. In order to circumvent such a thing in the afternoon session, the 3 directors got together & ruled that a quorum was 30 people. It was not too legal, but was accepted because another call for a quorum might have wrecked the business session & there would be no 1957 site chosen.

The afternoon began again with a panel of experts answering questions that were at best, half-hearted. There seemed to be a mix-up in panels, & what was to have been the fan collectors panel turned into an information panel, with half of each panel making up the whole. It was most confusing.

At the afternoon business meeting, the by-laws were passed by a slim margin. Most of the people present by then realized that it was a case of "or else". You would get them one way or another, so with much reluctance, they were passed. Directors of the new society were elected & these were: Forrest Ackerman, E. E. Evans,

Dave Kyle, Roger Sims, Jimmy Taurasi, Nick Palasce, Franklin Dietz was named recorder-historian & George Raylin, legal representative. Site bidding began. It was London against Berkeley, California, & London took it easily to make it a real "World Convention".

The resolution to have a North American Conference was defeated & also the one forbidding recruiting speeches. Most people were in agreement with the spirit of this, but it got into "three apesoh" territory, so it was defeated.

At this point on Monday afternoon, Dave Kyle made an announcement that completely demoralized what remained of the convention. He said that they had lost a total of \$1700, and were completely bankrupt. Of this figure, \$639 was lost on the banquet, \$250 on the band, \$400 & \$300 were ascribed to the loss of the Air Force Manikins & Cover paintings, respectively, that were stolen. More about these later.

Kyle stated that the committee had guaranteed the hotel 400 persons at the banquet & only 310 had purchased tickets. Therefore, there were 90 tickets left over at a price of \$17.10 per ticket to pay for. He said that the Musicians Union had forced them to take a larger band than they wanted & that the extra \$250 went for that. He also said, on the same subject, that in past years, fans who played instruments had donated their services free but that New York was not so fortunate. The Air Force manikins had been taken when the display was left unguarded by the officer in charge, and Dave, being a member of the reserves, felt it his duty to pay for them. Luckily, 2 of these later turned up. Some of the very valuable cover paintings, that had been loaned by the publishers for display purposes only, had also been stolen, and Dave felt that these should be paid for.

A brief analysis of the situation revealed these facts; at the time the committee gave the hotel its guarantee, in writing, for the number of people to attend the banquet, only 750 persons were registered. The banquet was the highest priced in convention history, at \$17.10 per ticket. On the basis of registration, no more than 250 persons at the very most should have been guaranteed the hotel. Kyle stated that the committee did not wish to have to disappoint any late comers who wanted tickets, so they had given a high guarantee. Hotels have a set policy whereby they will accept 10% more people than any guarantee you may give them, at any time up to 1 1/2 hours before banquet time. Far better, it would have been, to disappoint a few persons than to take such a risk with convention funds. The registration & price of banquet simply did not warrant such a high guarantee. Even with Al Capp as an *her d'oeuvre*, a lot of fans will think twice before they sacrifice the price of two books to see him.

In addition to this, after the guarantee was given & the tickets were still unsold, it would have been 100 times better to announce that if the remaining ones were not sold, the convention would be bankrupt, than to announce in an off hand manner that "a limited number are still available".

In any discussion of bands at masquerade balls, it must be remembered that many conventions have had no band at all, only phonograph records. Two that we know definitely did have a band, were San Francisco & our own, Cleveland. In both of these cases, fans did not donate their services, but professional orchestras were hired & paid hard cash. We are unable to check on this, but it is said that one other convention had a band which may or may not have been fan donated. In any case,

It is bad practice to spend money you do not have.

The manikins & some of the stolen paintings were recovered, so that debt is largely invalidated. The F.B.I. was called in to investigate the disappearance of the manikins because they were government property. Had they not been recovered, however, George Nims Raybin was heard threatening to sue Dave if he paid for them with convention funds. Earlier, George had told us that in case a convention ever went bankrupt, the creditors could sue for years & never collect. This seems an odd moral point, especially since the prime reason for having a society at all is to give fandom dignity & be able to point to a sponsoring body for the benefit of hotel managers. We can't help wondering how many hotel managers will be impressed by a Society that is bankrupt & being sued in court by past hotels. It is well that by the end of the convention, all but about \$400 was collected to make up the debt. Things look much brighter for both New York & London.

Dave looked very tired at the end of all this, but he & the committee bore up bravely. All of this, of course, points up the fact that it is wrong & dangerous to take financial responsibility away from the committee. It is a rain that keeps a close watch on finances. Instead, as things now stand, people who had nothing whatever to do with incurring the debt can be held responsible. For these many years, conventions have made a little money or broke even, there is no reason to suppose they would not do so in the future. If you, yourself, will be held to account for the money you spend, you will think twice about it. How many persons will even want to bid for a convention that carries a \$500 debt & a lawsuit with it?

Putting on a convention is difficult, yes, but not as trying as it is sometimes made out to be. You need great perseverance & the ability to take advice from people who have had experience in running one. You must give unselfishly of your time and, perhaps, your own money & above all, use your common sense. This is not meant as a criticism of the New York group, some of them worked very hard indeed. However it is not enough to win a convention & then wait until June to start organizing it. You must work on it every day for about a year & forget everything else, then you will have a sure success. If you do not, then it is only a force of nature that kept you from doing so, you have the satisfaction of knowing you did all you could.

There was no program on the last evening of the convention, however there was to be a special performance of Karel Capek's "The Makropoulos Secret" at an off Broadway theatre. Tickets for this were \$1.50. We have not met anyone who went & did not go ourselves, so we hardly are qualified to review it. Rather, we saw Rex Harrison & Julie Andrews in "My Fair Lady", so we don't feel that we missed too much.

To sum up the entire convention program, it may be said that those fortunate persons who knew a lot of people & got around to talk to them had a good time. Those at their 1st convention, little Joe Fan, who does not know the big names & depends on the program for entertainment was very disappointed. So much of it was cancelled, or rescheduled beyond recognition, or just fell flat, that it made for one of the most haphazard conventions in history.

A word of praise for certain members of the New York committee. Struggling against almost insurmountable odds, they came through in magnificent style. In particular let us commend Art Saha (a tower of strength), Dick Ellington, Frank Dietz, Ruth Landis, Jean Carrol & Dan Curran. These people gave beyond the call of duty.

I found out that I ended up with a blank side left over. This is designed to fill that space & at the same time allow me some final words of wisdom to impart to you.

Nick & Noreen wrote me after their piece was stencilled to add in a paragraph. Too late. The gist of it was the fact that Ben Jason & Frank Andrasovsky shelled out a bundle of cash to throw the Cleveland party they mentioned. Nick & Noreen wanted to be sure those two got credit for their act of kindness.

As for the New York con, most people I've talked & written to feel sorry for Dave Kyle rather than angry with him. There is considerable feeling that the committee who helped Dave was shoved into the background as far as giving them any recognition at the con was concerned, and that they really did a lot of work which entitles them to more thanks & praise than they received. I gained the distinct impression that once again a convention was put on by just a handful of people who were swamped with work. I rather suspect that a lot of fans who gave big promises of all the help they were going to do...didn't.

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The following piece is quoted verbatim from TIME Oct 22, 1956:

Said the University of Toronto's President Sidney Smith to his students: "If you choose to work, you will succeed; if you don't, you will fail. If you neglect your work, you will dislike it; if you do it well, you will like it. If you join little cliques, you will be self-satisfied; if you make friends widely, you will be interesting. If you gossip, you will be slandered; if you mind your own business, you will be liked. If you act like a boor, you will be despised; if you act like a human being, you will be respected. If you spurn wisdom, wise people will spurn you; if you seek wisdom, they will seek you. If you adopt a pose of boredom, you will be a bore; if you show vitality, you will be alive. If you spend your free time playing bridge, you will be a good bridge player; if you spend it in reading, discussing & thinking of things that matter, you will be an educated person."

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The Cincinnati Fantasy Group has had some address changes & moves lately. New addresses are:

Stanley C. Skirvin	1476 Foxwood Drive	Cincinnati 31, Ohio	WE-1-7954
Walter E. Pratt	Box 264	Parkersburg, West Virginia	

Dale Tarr has moved, also, but I don't know his address as yet. His old 'phone no. is still the same, though...AV-1-2864.

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Doc Barrett is mellowing, now. In fact we think he might be getting old. He traded off his Red & Yellow Chrysler for a white Lincoln. Maybe too many people kept mistaking it for a taxi, that he decided a color change was due.

Roy Lavender has acquired a tape recorder & it's no longer safe to even pass wind.

Overheard on a camera club field trip: "He's going to focus!"

See you in a mailing or two. What with working 7 days a week, getting the house winterized, TAFF, fan activities, camera club, etc I'm busier than a cat on a marble floor.

CAPTAIN FUTURE

	40	41	42	43	44			
Winter								
Spring								
Summer					○			
Fall				○	○			

CAPTAIN ZERO

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Jan	<input type="radio"/>							
Feb	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>						
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