

PROSPECTUS 19

2/2/71

PROSPECTUS is the irregularly published newsletter of the Fantasy and Science Fiction Society of Columbia University. It is available to dues-paying members of the Society (dues are \$1.00 for the academic year). Edited by Eli Cohen. The Society meets every Thursday at 8:30 in the Postcrypt (basement of St. Paul's Chapel). Except when it meets in my room. For information about the Society and its activities, contact:

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As you can see, we're back to ditto again. I think you will understand why if I tell you that that miserably reproduced copy of PROSPECTUS 18 you received was one of the top 50% run off. There are a few technical difficulties involved with the mimeo machine, you see; hopefully, nothing unsolvable -- but I doubt if it will be worthwhile to use it for PROSPECTUS in the near future.

Due to an oversight, I neglected to mention Mondo-Con in the last issue. If anybody who wanted to go missed it as a result, well, I'm sorry. . . but that'll teach you not to come to meetings. I herewith present my own, personal, worm's-eye view of:

MONDOCON

MondoCon was held at the New York Statler-Hilton, Jan. 22-24. My final exam in probability theory was handed out Jan. 21 and was due Jan. 26. This may appear to the casual observer to constitute a dilemma. But to the trufan, there was only one course of action possible.

Since Isaac Asimov was scheduled to speak at 12 on Saturday, I arrived at the convention early, around 12:30, only to find that contrary to all fannish custom and common sense, the program had started promptly at noon. From what I did see, the Good Doctor was his usual witty and entertaining self. He was followed by Harlan Ellison, who plugged his new book, told anecdotes, answered questions, and generally tried to kill time until the next program item could be arranged. He had been scheduled to speak at 2, but the fan panel on conventions scheduled for 1 p.m. wasn't all there, and poor Harlan was faced with the prospect of entertaining everyone for two solid hours. He was doing pretty well, but running out of steam, when he was rescued about an hour and a quarter later. The panel had finally been rounded up, and proceeded to do its thing for a while, after which Robert Silverberg and Lester del Rey attempted to argue, answer questions, and otherwise kill another hour. I'm afraid that even with Asimov and Ellison kibitzing from the audience, they just didn't have that much to say.

This was my last contact with the official program. I had by now, as is my wont, attached myself to the WPSFA (Western Pennsylvania SF Association) group, alias Pittsburgh fandom. I think I spent most of the remaining time till supper talking with Topher Cooper about his computer program for speech recognition.

Dinner was a marvelous affair. Nine of us -- Charlie & Dena Brown, Ted Pauls and his fiancée Karen Townley, Topher, Greg Moore, Ginjer Buchanan, Maurice (whose last name I've forgotten), and myself -- went to the Dynasty, a superb Chinese restaurant in the Bronx. We had many strange and wondrous things, and generally stuffed ourselves. When they finally rolled us out of there, I for one was quite contentedly full. But some evil demon in the group said, "Let's go to Jahn's for dessert." So we went to Jahn's for dessert. And lo, Dena did cast her eyes covetously on the Kitchen Sink, a dish whereof she had heard much, and her desire caused her to wax eloquently upon the merits of this dish; and lo, the multitude succumbed, saying, "There be nine of us, tru-fans one and all; therefore should we not order a Kitchen Sink, and devour it to its last morsel?"

<p>Knock. knock.</p> <p>Who's there?</p> <p>Avocado.</p> <p>Avocado who?</p> <p>Avocado lovely bunch of coconuts!</p>	<p>They brought out the Kitchen Sink, a <u>huge</u> bowl of assorted ice cream, covered with whipped cream and cherries, with four bananas sticking out of it, and a peach slice on top with something burning in it. We tried; believe me, we tried. But try as we would, we barely made a dent in the huge mass. Ah, where were the heroes of yore? Where was Jon Singer, he of the fabled Baskin-Robbins 6-cup? This Kitchen Sink, which the mythical Elliot Shorter could doubtless have finished alone, proved too much for the nine of us. I can do naught but draw the curtain on this painful scene with Greg exhorting Ginjer to eat her share, while the mountain of ice cream melted slowly into its ocean of whipped cream.</p>
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We got back to the hotel; Ginjer hurried upstairs to make preparations for starting the Pittsburgh party, only to find that Suzanne Tompkins had begun it two hours before. Except for a brief interruption (the re-trial of Sherna Burley in the Court of the True Faith of the Sacred Cat (see PROSPECTUS 16), wherein the Janandra (Umt., SM! SM!) in his ineffable wisdom accepted Sherna's bribe and then found her guilty anyway, after which Sherna proceeded to write in ornate letters "The Janandra is a Phynque" on every available surface), I stayed at the Pittsburgh party until it ended.

WPSFA had divided itself among two rooms, one for the guys and one for the girls. (When I say WPSFA, I also mean WPSFA-in-exile, alias WPSFA East, which includes such illustrious members as Nancy Lambert and Jeannie DiModica.) The party was in the girls' room, and the girls evicted everybody at 4 a.m. with a flimsy excuse -- something about Ginjer and Suzanne having to drive back to Pittsburgh the next day. My conscience started to nag me about my probability exam, but it seemed silly to go back to Columbia at 4 in the morning, so I shouted it down. I was persuaded to crash in the other WPSFA room; I followed Greg Moore to said room, and discovered 11 bodies literally packed from wall to wall. Like, someone had to get up to make room to open the door to let us in! At this point Greg and I decided that 4:15 a.m. was practically morning, so why bother to go to sleep?

By about 9:00 I had thought of a few reasons; we had breakfast nevertheless, and hung around until the convention rewound

itself and got going again. For obvious reasons, things are not too clear after this. (For one thing, since my earliest class is at 11:00, I can't even remember the last time I was awake at 9 a.m.; and for another, the shock of eating breakfast -- something I haven't done in years -- upset my whole system.) I remember Gardner Dozois attacking every girl in sight, and AKOS co-editor Janet Megson interviewing Hal Clement. There were good-byes, and "see you at Boskone" 's (or Balticon, or Lunacon, or whatever). I think Hal Clement gave a speech on sequels some time that afternoon. Eventually I got a ride back to Columbia, and promptly went to sleep.

At this writing, I'm still waiting for the results on my probability exam (which I did manage to hand in on time). I wonder, if I explained to the professor how it was, whether he would understand. . . .

While we're on the subject of conventions, it seems like a good idea to give a list of the upcoming ones. If you want to keep informed about current and future happenings in fandom, I suggest that rather than depending on the haphazard publication schedule of PROSPECTUS, you subscribe to one or more of the newszines. I recommend LOCUS (available 10/\$2.00 from Charlie and Dena Brown, 2078 Anthony Ave., Bronx, NY 10457), which is bi-weekly, and LUNA (30¢ a copy or \$3.50 a year from Frank and Ann Dietz, 655 Orchard St., Oradell, NJ 07649), a monthly that is more formal but has a good long-range calendar of events.

Some of the following information has been cribbed from LOCUS 71.

BALTICON will be held Feb. 12-14 in Baltimore, at the Lord Baltimore Hotel. Guest of Honor will be Harry Harrison. Registration is \$2 in advance or \$2.50 at the door.

In March, we have BOSKONE 8, in Boston, the 12th thru 14th (at the Sheraton Rolling Green; information available from Jill Trugman, c/o NESFA, Box 6, MIT Station, Cambridge, Mass 02139), and MARCON in Columbus, Ohio, the 26th thru 28th (information from Larry Smith, 5730 Roche Dr., Columbus, Ohio 43229). BOSKONE has usually been well run; this year I've heard they are field testing some of the things they plan to do at the Worldcon in September (see NOREASCON, below), and it promises to be fascinating.

LUNACON is April 16-18 in New York City, at the Hotel Commodore. John W. Campbell will be guest of honor. There will be a banquet Saturday evening at which Isaac Asimov will be Toastmaster. Membership is \$2.50 in advance, \$3.00 at the door. (Send money to the New York Science Fiction Society, c/o Devra Langsam, 250 Crown St., Brooklyn, NY 11225.)

DISCLAVE will be held Memorial Day Weekend (May 28-30) in Washington, D.C., at the Shoreham Hotel (Conn. Ave. & Calvert St. NW). For information, write Jay Haldeman, 405 Southway, Baltimore, Md. 21218.

June is MIDWESTCON in Cincinnati, the 25th-27th (information from Lou Tabakow, 3955 St. Johns Terrace, Cincinnati, Ohio 43236), and MINICON 4 in Minneapolis, the 18th-20th (information from Jim Young, 1948 Ulysses St. NE, Minneapolis, Minn. 55418).

WESTERCON will be in San Francisco the July 4th weekend.

August features PgHLANGE III in Pittsburgh, the 7th-9th, at the Chatham Motor Center. Guest of Honor will be Lester del Rey; Guest of Honor Emeritus will be Robert Silverberg. (For information, write Ginjer Buchanan, 5830 Bartlett St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217.)

And now we finally come to the big one: The 29th World Science Fiction Convention, NOREASCON, Sept. 3-6, at the Hotel Sheraton Boston, Prudential Center, Boston, Mass. 02199. The Guest of Honor is Clifford D. Simak, the Toastmaster at the Hugo Awards Banquet will be Robert Silverberg, and the Hugo presentations will be made by Isaac Asimov. If you want to vote for the Hugos, you have to join the convention early enough. Until August 10, the registration fee is \$4 supporting (if you just want to receive progress reports and vote) or \$6 attending. Send your money to NOREASCON, Box 547, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

THE ADVENTURES OF GRAYSON GREENSWARD

It was snowing outside that Christmas Eve, but inside the old pub it was warm and cozy. A hefty log was ablaze in the ample fireplace, holly and mistletoe adorned the walls, and there was plenty of eggnog and other Christmas cheer for the thirsty. The latter included Grayson Greensward and a few of his cronies, who were gathered around the hearth, swapping stories. One of them had obviously just concluded a tale, for out of that corner of the room came a mournful chorus of agonized groans.

Grayson was the first to recover. Climbing back into his chair, he managed to stop gagging long enough to say, "Ferdinand, old friend, that was the worst pun we've had all evening. Even Siegfried here hasn't been that outrageous. You should be made a Baron for that -- or at least knighted."

"Weren't you knighted once, Uncle?" inquired Grayson's nephew Thudden, who should have known better than to give his uncle an opening.

"Not quite," Greensward replied. "But I was present at the knighting of an acquaintance of mine, and played no small part in the event myself. This chap was in our, ah, line of work, so to speak, and he had just pulled off a rather nice little job for the king of some minor country on an out-of-the-way planet somewhere, and as a result he was being given a knighthood. This odd little kingdom had the custom of bestowing knighthood in several stages or degrees, each with its own special ceremony and symbolism. The king must have been quite impressed to give this fellow the whole works, and not just stop with a few degrees. When I arrived on the scene, he had already gone through all but the last step. Good thing I got there as soon as I did, too, because the poor guy was in a bit of a jam.

"You see, each ceremony had gotten more and more secret and esoteric; my friend had made it through the last one by pure luck alone. The final step promised to be virtually impossible for anyone not steeped in the culture and mores of that world. Naturally, I promised what assistance I could give, since my colleague had no desire to remain merely a partial knight.

"Actually, that last ceremony was the simplest of the lot.

The king and a few other nobles simply asked him a series of questions, mostly on a metaphysical level. Before he could answer, I whispered to him, "Don't say anything. Don't make a sound." Sure enough, he made it through, and was told afterward that if he had even tried to answer these unanswerable questions, he would have been denied his final degree of honor.

"So that's the story. Let's stop for a while and sing Christmas carols."

"Wait a minute," said one of the others. "How did you know that he was supposed to keep quiet? You didn't know any more about their customs than he did."

But Grayson had already started singing, in his cracked and wavering voice: "Silent knight, wholly knight. . . ."

----- Yarik P. Thrip

(with thanks to David Emerson)

TO MY SLEEPY WIFE

by

Fred Phillips

Over rooftops softly stealing,
Dawn infiltrates gloomy night
With a radiance appealing
To whoever sees her light;

Wait, my love, another moment,
Later we will go away:
While we sit, and talk, and foment
Plots for Fandom's Greater Day!

FSFSCU its portals open
To all Fen and FemmeFen,
Alma Mater's children hoping
They can use the Crypt again.

Read the story; read the poem,
Talk until your throats rebel;
My wife's feet are set for home---
Cajole her before I yell!

Fandom's fires seethe and simmer
In this writer's fannish breast;
I have seen the distant glimmer
of the Islands of the Blest;

I have trodden throughout Faerie,
Never panicked, never daunted,
Never! Quite to the contrary --
Ghosts avoid me -- I am haunted!

Save, O Lord, our mundane brothers
From their sterile world of rue;
Let their fathers and their mothers
Send their sons to FSFSCU!