

S-F TIMES

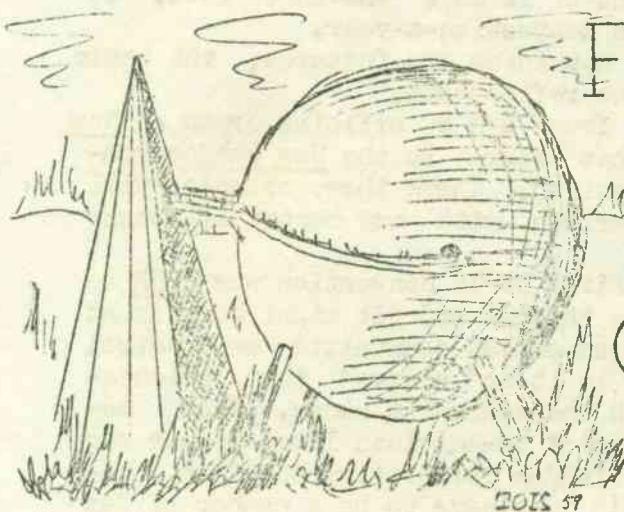
"THE WORLD OF TOMORROW TODAY!"

NO 319

Vol. 14 - No. 14

JULY 1959 ISSUE

TEN CENTS



FIRST WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION HELD 20 YRS AGO

by James V. Taurasi, Sr.

NEW YORK, 2 July, (CNS) - Twenty years ago today Science-fiction fandom's first World Science Fiction Convention was held in this city. It was the work of a National s-f club New Fandom. For one year the leaders and members of this organization worked hard to bring about what has become an annual custom in the world of science-fiction fandom. Unlike the usual full cooperation given the World Conventions these days, these early fans had to fight each step of the way. Not only did they have to originate the many basic features of a World Convention, but they had to first: Convince the professional science-fiction editors that this was a good thing for science-fiction and that they could put one on successfully. This first step was a somewhat easy one. With hundreds of members in a National organization behind them, the editors were early convinced that this was it. After that they outdid themselves with help of every kind. They donated free space in their mags to advertise the World Convention, they donated hundreds of inside illustrations and covers for the big auction. They were also on tap for any advice the committee needed. They also saw to it that they themselves would be at the Con and also every author they could possibly talk into it. In those days editors and authors (with some exceptions) never attended a fan gathering. They were the easy problem. The second and hardest problem these young lads had to face was fandom itself, or rather a small part of it. This part was the communist element in fandom. They wanted the World Con for their propaganda machine and pulled every trick in the "red" books to get it. But the New Fandom boys held firm, refused them any voice in the preparations for the Con, and finally twenty years ago today threw them out of the convention hall itself when they refused to behave themselves. They had come fully prepared with numerous "red" propaganda books etc. The boys and gals who put on the convention were painfully rolled over the

coal by part of fandom for throwing out the reds for years afterwards, but when recently asked if they knew what was coming would they have done it, those who were asked answered with a loud YES! They still feel to this day that it was the only thing to do in order to have a World Convention. Had the reds been admitted they feel, that the Convention would have ended in a shambles and the whole World Convention idea would have been lost. Current World events seem to bear them out!

The First World Convention Committee never dreamed that the World Convention could and would be held every year. They thought of it as a "one-shot" idea. It was the Chicago fans who thought up the idea of a convention-a-year.

Although later World Conventions introduced new ideas and features, the basic features are still the same as the first with some refinements.

We have chosen three articles (news-items) from the official organ of New Fandom (Vol. 1 - No. 6) published late in 1939 that brought to the New Fandom members the complete report of the First World Convention. These three articles will present some mighty interesting reading and comparison with any report of recent World Conventions.

It is further interesting to note that the First World Convention was FREE to all (including communists that promised to behave themselves) (It might be said at this point that as far as is known none of these so-called communists were actual members of the Communist Party, but they believed in it and believed that science-fiction fandom's future survival was tied up with the communist cause. They believed that if s-f fandom didn't follow the communist un-American line, it was soon to die out. How wrong they were can be seen by fandom celebrating the 20th Anniversary of that First World Convention), you did not have to be a member of New Fandom, the sponsoring organization, to attend the Convention. No fee of any kind was charged to attend the convention. In fact, a FREE hall in the 1939 World's Fair grounds in Flushing, New York was turned down because the attendees would have had to pay admission to the Fair Grounds to attend the Convention. Remember these were hard depression years and money was hard to come by.

We pause in our news reporting to celebrate the biggest thing science-fiction fandom has ever done, THE FIRST WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION. May future World Science Fiction Conventions live up to the ideals of the first.

THE FIRST BANQUET

The Evening Of July 3, 1939

(Reprinted from New Fandom, Vol. 1 - No. 6)

Some there were who said that the most enjoyable part of the entire Convention was the banquet. Right or wrong, your reporter for one will remember it to his dying day. Not because of any tragedy that occurred, but because of the sheer ecstasy of it.

The banquet was held in the Wyndham, one of the ritziest places in New York. Many fans looked with askance. They could not believe that they were in the right place. The banquet was held in honor of Frank R. Paul, most popular of fantasy artists. Some thirty fans paid a buck apiece to be present, which, of course, included dinner. From memory, among the diners were Frank R. Paul, Willy Ley, Forrest J Ackerman, Sam Moskowitz, Morojo, William S. Sykora, James V. Taurasi, John V. Baltandonis, Mario Racic, Jr., Robert A. Madle, Ross and Frances Alberti, Jack Agnew, Ray Bradbury, Millie Taurasi, Ray Van Houten, Oswald Train, Jack (John Bristol) Speer, Mark Reinsberg, Erle Korshak, Flossie Hardart, Frank Murphy, A. Lincoff, and others whose names elude me at the moment.

First, of course, after pre-dinner discussion, was the dinner itself. Lest a certain fan explode I will not give the menu, but it was satisfactory. Then came the after-dinner speeches. (Of course, every one talked during the actual eating).

William S. Sykora introduced the genial guest of honor Frank R. Paul, who was grinning from ear to ear. Paul, in modest style, thanked the assemblage, remonstrating the honor was undeserved, and in expert fashion passed the buck to Willy Ley. As an extemporaneous speech, Willy Ley's was a sheer marvel. In fact, we thought it was so good, we had him write it down as near as he could remember it, and we present it in this number. Sam Moskowitz, whose voice was crackling, (and besides hoarseness was finally creeping in from the speaking and auctioning of the last two days) outlined Paul's career, bringing out numerous unusual angles, and lauding Paul's abilities bountifully. One by one most of those present were called upon. Good work was acknowledged, and the entire affair was thereby enjoyed.

After hours of talks, everyone split into sections and lounged around the luxuriously fitted room, speaking about every conceivable subject. It was here that Mark Reinsberg, with the experienced help and suggestions of New Fandom's Convention Committee, conceived the idea of the Chicago Science-Fiction Convention to be held in 1940. The Major-dome, after much glaring and arguing, finally got the gathering out at the unreasonably early hour of 1:00 A.M. No one left before. This event will never be forgotten by any who attended.

THE SOFT-BALL GAME

/The Third Day - July 4th, 1939/

(Reprinted from New Fandom, Vol. 1 - No. 6)

Flushing Flats, fandom's amusing nickname for a big athletic field directly opposite James V. Taurasi's home, was the scene of the most unusual event ever to take place in science-fiction. A soft-ball game between two teams picked out of fandom!

For the sake of convenience the titles "PSFS Panthers" for one team and "Queens Cometeers" for the other were adopted, though it is entirely true that there was not an accurate representation of either. The pros, evidently afraid of a good hiding, did not make themselves shown. Here is how the teams lined up.

QUEENS COMETEERS

1. Sam Moskowitz (ss), Captain.
2. Langley Searles (p-rf).
3. A. Myers (lb).
4. Stan Backrack (2b).
5. Pete Racic (cf).
6. Jimmy Taurasi (3b).
7. B. Mosher (rf).
8. Julius Unger (c).
9. John Giunta (lf-p).
10. Erle Korshak (sf).

Mr. Charles Sykora, umpire; Mario Racic, Jr., water boy.

SCORE BY INNINGS:

Queens Cometeers: 3 2 2 3 6 0 7 0 0 - 23

PSFS Panthers: 0 0 0 1 2 4 0 3 1 - 11

PSFS PANTHERS

1. J. Baltafonis (3b-p), Captain.
2. Jack Newton (2b).
3. Jack Agnew (3b).
4. Bob Madle (1b).
5. Ray Van Houten (1f).
6. V. Kidwell (cf).
7. Will Sykora (p-rf).
8. Art Widner (rf-p).
9. Ossie Train (rf-p).
10. Mark Reinsberg (sf).

Among the many spectators were Jack Speer, Charles D. Hornig, Ross Rocklynne, Hyman Tiger, Millie Taurasi, etc. Motion pictures of the game were taken by Will Sykora and have already been shown, once at a Queens SFL meeting, and again at the Second Annual Philadelphia Science-Fiction Conference.

Searles was outstanding in the pitcher's role. He was so terrible that the

Panthers could not get a hit, and up to the moment when Searles hurt his wrist and had to be replaced at intervals by John Giunta (not that Giunta allowed all the runs -- he certainly was a good relief pitcher) held them with barely a run.

Every inning the Panthers loaded bases but could not concentrate their hits to come through in the pinches. A double play was scored each of the first three innings by the Queens Cometeers. Clever technicalities also frustrated the Panthers. The only home run of the game was scored by Art Widner. This was a weak hit that barely got out of the infield, but the short center, Korshak, missed it and Widner got to first. Pete Racic threw wild to second base and Widner got to second. Taurasi missed a ball coming right towards him and Art got to 3rd and home. A home run on errors! Other outstanding hits were Will Sykora's two bagger, a long centerfield hit that was a surprise after poor showings the two previous times at bat. Moskowitz hit the longest hit of the game in center field, but was too tired to get past second. Langley Searles netted five singles. Ray Van Houten struck out five times at bat to take some sort of record. Fielding was led by Julius Unger who was plain poison behind the plate. His hands were like glue. He caught impossible foul tips and flies, and did not miss a resonable ball all game (outside of Searles terrible-good pitching). The pitching was not only terrible, actually, but also good because it was terrible to be hit effectively. Outside of that there were few outstanding performances.

After the game was over, the Panthers challenged the Cometeers to a second game, which the Cometeers emphatically declined. Though they won, the Cometeers were almost too exhausted to walk after the game. They would have taken a horrible licking if a second game had been played.

FIRST CON MADE \$36.06

(Reprinted from New Fandom, Vol. 1 - No. 6)

CONVENTION EXPENSES

Program	\$70.56
Hall Rent	36.00
Hall Attendant	5.00
Elevator Man	4.00
Soda and Ice	16.40
Pie Losses	7.00
Rental For "Metropolis"	15.00
Cost of Stills	1.50
Cost of Astronomy Film And Professional Lecturer	25.00
Poster Ink45
Rental Of Projector	10.00
Mario Racic's Carfare	3.00
Postage	13.50
Envelopes	1.60
Post Cards	7.00
Ream of Mimeo Paper25
Frank R. Paul's Dinner	1.00
Other Dinners	32.00
Deadbeat's Dinners	3.00
Tips	4.00
Softball Equipment	2.68
New Fandom Advertisements	10.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE - - - - - \$269.94

CONVENTION INCOME

Advertisements	\$130.00
Booster Ads	33.00
Authors Ads	31.00
Auction	65.00
Fan Mags	15.00
Paid Dinners	<u>32.00</u>

TOTAL INCOME - - - - - \$306.00

NEW FANDOM'S PROFITS:

Total Income \$306.00
Total Expenditure . . 269.94
NET PROFITS - - - - \$ 36.06

This does not include a sum amounting to over one hundred dollars which was spent by New Fandom executives Moskowitz, Sykora, Taurasi, Racic, and Van Houten during the year leading up to the Convention, nor does it include the money spent on the preliminary First National Science Fiction Convention held last year in Newark, N.J*. This quite considerable sum, the New Fandom's council's contribution to the World Convention is not deducted from income.

*The First National Science Fiction Convention was held in Newark, N.J. in the same hall now used by the Eastern Science Fiction Association in the Summer of 1938.

STATE OF FANDOM

Interesting Happings In Fandom

"TIMES" EDITOR MARRIES

Little Falls, N. J., 26 June, (CNS) — Ray Van Houten, one of the editors and publishers of Science-Fiction Times, married Cornelis Van Biert today at the First Reformed Church of Little Falls, New Jersey at 7:50 P.M. At the wedding ceremonies were Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Van Biert, parents of the bride; Mr. John A. Van Houten, father of the groom, Miss Ruth Sytsma, daughter of the bride by a former marriage, and Miss Sally Van Houten. The knot was tied by Rev. William Geitner. The couple plan to live in Paterson, New Jersey for the next few months until their new home in the vicinity of Paterson is completed. Our congratulations and wishes for a most happy and long life together to the happy couple.

MIDWESCON - NO 10

CINCINNATI, Ohio, 2 July, (CNS) - The 10th Annual Midwestern Conference, although officially announced for 27-28 June week-end, jumped the raygun with a good-size group already partying Friday nite, and the last fans not departing till Monday morning. Introduced by Dr. Barrett, co-masters (and comic masters) of Ceremonies at the well-attended and enjoyable banquet were Harlan Ellison and Thos Scortia, who called on Doc Smith, Forry Ackerman and Joe Hensley for speeches. Paintings and black & white originals were raffled and auctioned for the benefit of the TAFF and Berry Funds. A colored slide show of hi-lites of the past 9 conclaves was presented by Don Ford and narrated by Lou Tabakow. Personalities present at the Poolside Plash included Robt Madle, Bea Mahaffey, the Kyles, Geo Young, Niel de Jack, Dale Tarr, the Dietzes, Geo Nims Raybin, Lou Ann Tremper, Jean Bogert, Steve & Virginia Schultheis, Dirce Archer, Martin Greenberg and Ted Cogswell.

WESTERCON - NO 12

SEATTLE, Wash. 3-5 July, (CNS) - Hi-lite of the extremely informal, almost relaxing-con-type conclave just concluded here, was the banquet. As the only officially scheduled item of entertainment, it drew top attendance of 42 to hear Alan Nourse as MC introduce Tony Boucher who spoke on "The Aliens Are Among Us"; Forry Ackerman, who reported on the recent Midwestcon and a remarkable reunion he had had late last year with an old-time sci-fi author, Ulysses George Mihalakis (ala Siliki Ali Hassan); Jack Speer, elder fan, pointed out to the group that this day (July 4) was the anniversary of The First World Science Fiction Convention 20 years before; Don Day auctioned five art pieces for the benefit of The Berry Fund; and a round of applause was tendered the Busbys and Nameless Ones for their sponsorship

of this year's Westercon. Later, the new amateur fantasy movie featuring Fritz Leiber, Bjo and Forry Ackerman -- "The Genie" -- was shown to an appreciative audience along with films and slides from previous cons. Others in attendance included Ron Ellik, GMCarr, Elmer Perdue, Wally Weber, Jim Webbert, Bert Toskey, Gordon Rix (from Canada) and Ben Stark. Guy Terwilliger Et Ux won the bid for the 1960 Westercon: Boise, Idaho.

CAR CRASH HOSPITALIZES FEMME FEN:

Fangelenos Bjo and Djinn Faine, within 125 miles of Seattle, cracked up enroute Westercon #12 in a car driven by Al Lewis, recent Shangri-Laffaires editor. Lewis WAS UNHURT WHEN HIS BRAND NEW AUTOMOBILE was demolished; passenger-fan Bard Carlson suffered shock; but Bjo & Djinn were bedded for a week, Djinn with whiplash injury, Bjo with Jarred jaw and stitched chin.

SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES - - - - - "The World Of Tomorrow Today!"/
* EDITORIAL OFFICE: 18-36 129th Street, College Point 56, New York.*
* Published twice-a-month b y SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES, INC., P.O. Box 115, Solvay*
* Branch, Syracuse 9, New York. 10¢ per copy, \$2.00 per 20 issues, \$2.40 per*
* year. Permanent subscription \$15.00. *
* BRITISH: 9d per copy, 7s6d per 10 issues, 15s0d per 20 issues, Permanent sub-/*
* scription: 3 Pounds 10s0d, from H. M. Johnson, 16 Rockville Road, Broad Green,*
* LIVERPOOL 14, ENGLAND.
* AUSTRALIA: One Shilling per copy, Ten Shillings for 10 issues, One Pound for 20*
* issues. Permanent subscription: 5 Pounds, from ROGER DARD, Box S1387, GPO PERTH*
* WESTERN AUSTRALIA.
* SWEDEN: 50 ore per copy, 10 kronor per 20 issues, 12 kronor and 50 ore per year.*
* Permanent subscription is 75 kronor, from STURE SEDOLIN, P.O. Box 403, Vallby*
* 4, SWEDEN.
* James V. Taurasi, Sr., Frank R. Prieto, Jr., and Ray Van Houten,
* Editors and Publishers.
* Advertisements: \$10.00 per full page, or \$6 per half page.
* SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES, INC founded 1937 - SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES founded 1941*

SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES, INC.
P.O. Box 115, Solvay Branch
Syracuse 9, New York