

The Science Fiction Newspaper

Science-Fiction Times

"The 'World Of Tomorrow 'Today!'"

JOHN GIUNTA '57

17th YEAR - Vol. 12, #279

Second September 1957 Issue

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LONDONCON A "HOWLING SUCCESS"

South Gate Wins '58 Con
Without Opposition

"Astounding S-F," "New
Worlds," "Science Fiction
Times" Awarded Hugos

PRESS, RADIO AND T-V COVERAGE BEST
OF ANY CON SO FAR; 268 ATTEND,
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP WAS 556.

A Fandom House Publication

15th World S-F Convention

-Via Air Letters by JOHN VICTOR PETERSON-

THE FIRST DAY

London, 6 September, (CNS) - A pre-convention press conference was called in the bar at 7:30 P.M. by Chairman Ted Carnell. In readying myself to go, I had the radio on in my room and heard the taped interview held with John W. Campbell, Jr., (Guest of Honor at this Convention) upon his arrival at London Airport. The interview was prefaced with news of the fact that the 15th World Science Fiction Convention was being held at the King's Court Hotel, etc. It took about 5 - 8 minutes of BBC airtime. The meat of it being that Campbell felt that reaching the moon was strictly a matter of economics and that given the funds, we could reach the moon within 24 months.

At the press conference, Ted gave the floor to Dave Kyle who presented Arthur C. Clarke with last year's trophy for "The Star". Ted then introduced John W. Campbell, Jr. who said but little then. John Brunner then took over and answered various questions from the press regarding the program. JWCjr advised the press that it would be strictly an informal session as in a regular scientific meeting with people meeting face-to-face, person - to-person, discussing the things with which they are personally concerned -- not something you can program. He said "we have no message". He went on to say that there are no journals of speculation - of speculative thinking - of disciplined imagination - and that the s-f mags come closest to that. Ted mentioned some of the more notable s-f authors present such as John Wyndham, Arthur C. Clarke and John Christopher. The press asked what is the average circulation of a s-f magazine. Ted Carnell said he sells about 20,000 copies per issue. JWCjr. says he sells about 95,000 per issue and that his recent poll showed that each issue

is read by 1.9 persons. The press then asked where all the ideas for s-f stories come from and JWCjr said that he has frequently given a single idea to six different authors and received six entirely different stories. Ted then mentioned that s-f writing requires a certain background knowledge and a definite technique -- all of which calls for authors in a specialty. Then the press asked if s-f authors use their own names and a discussion resulted during which JWCjr mentioned Heinlein's departure from his "future history" with the Anson MacDonald yarns. He also mentioned the two-headed Robert Randall (saying one head - Silverberg - was here). Further that Will F. Jenkins periodically writes s-f under the name of Murray Leinster (incidentally, we're in Leinster Gardens). Finally, JWCjr mentioned that John R. Pierce writes s-f under his own name but articles under the name of J.J. Coupling (because Bell would not take kindly to his publishing of extrapolated science under his own name). Then the press asked: What Is Psionics? Campbell mentioned Rhine and "psi" and said that he had stuck on the "-onics". JWCjr said that psionics is the science of phenomena for which there is no explanation and that the old name "magic" is the closest correlation. He went on to say that s-f is by and for amateurs. He said his own hobby is s-f and that he makes his living by it. He said that an amateur spent 20 years on a curious problem and charged it off to entertainment, not losing a nickle, while a commercial outfit can't afford to do that. The press asked what is the usual membership of a convention. Dave Kyle said that last year's was around 1,200, with over 800 attending. The press asked how the word got around about the conventions. Brunner explained about the fan mags and clubs. The press inquired as to whether any authors otherwise prominent

JOHN VICTOR PETERSON had his first story published in Astounding a few years before the war. Being an Army Officer during WWII stopped his writing, and he had a very slow start making a comeback after the War. Now he is quite frequently found in the s-f magazines. Altho John has been a close friend and has done numerous articles for your editors' Fantasy-News and Science-Fiction Times, this is his first assignment as a reporter. Our sincere thanks for a job well done. -eds

wrote s-f and Arthur C. Clarke said that almost every well-known writer has penned at least one s-f yarn. Campbell said that flying saucers are no longer used as a story basis and went on about Ike Asimov's "duck".

THEN the First Session began at 9:00 P.M. as programmed. JWCjr was introduced. He said he has to be a professional prophet since he buys six months ahead of publication. Said he's taken no part in Conventions because of his position and because he could not be able to handle the details and feels the fans do it well enough. Dave Kyle came on and said he felt he had no right to look back and introduced American's fan representative, Bob Madle, giving background since 1936. Bob briefly gave his thanks, says he's here five days and feels he's already covered a full convention. Ted wound up with a tale of how he went out to London Airport on a motorcycle to get John W. Campbell, Jr.

Adjournment 9:30 P.M. (and to the Bar).

THE SECOND DAY

London, 7 September, (CNS) - The Convention Luncheon, scheduled for 1:00 P.M. did not begin until 2:00 P.M. due to delay and confusion in seating the attendees. Had the tables borne numbers and the attendees been issued cards with table and seat numbers, the whole procedure would have been expedited. At 2:00 P.M. Peter West took a picture of the assemblage. I must mention here that the main hall is about 100 to 120 feet long by 15 to 20 feet wide. At 2:05 the Luncheon began. Seated at the main table were David A. Kyle, Ruth Kyle, Roberta Wild, Arthur C. Clarke, Bess Campbell,

John Wyndham, John W. Campbell, Jr., Ted Carnell, John Christopher, Robert A. Madle, Rory Faulkner and Forrest J Ackerman. The meal priced at 13/6 (\$1.90) consisted of Canteloupe Melon, Chicken Soup, Roast Duck with Orange Sauce, Roast New Potatoes, Green Peas, and mixed fruit. The "eating" began at 3:00 P.M.

Ted Carnell then introduced John Wyndham, Committee President, who proposed the toast to Her Majesty The Queen; then John said, to gales of laughter, "Now you may smoke!"

Shortly thereafter Ted read a cable from Earl and Nancy Kemp of Chicago, expressing their regret at not being able to attend. There was then a 15 minutes gap during which individual conversations were held.

At 3:40 P.M., Ted introduced Arthur C. Clarke, the Guest Of Honor at the 14th World Science Fiction Convention, who, with due apologies to Poul Anderson, addressed the assemblage as "Gentle Beings". Arthur said he was here by miscalculation, having expected to arrive after the ceremonies had been begun and thus avoid any "work" in connection with the preparations. He went on to say that he was pleased as last year's Guest to propose this year's. To him last year's convention seemed not a year past but either 5 minutes or 5 years. He stated that he felt he could introduce John Campbell much better than many others since he doesn't rely on John for income, being less emotionally attached than Isaac Asimov, for example. He said that John publishes more good s-f than any other magazine and that his influence on the field is enormous. Stated that John differs tremendously from Hugo Gernsback. Gernsback being a technologist with John being a scientist (not a gadget man). Said that John was the first s-f writer to delve into quantum physics. Said further that John Campbell and Edgar Rice Burroughs are at opposite poles. Clarke said he still remembers the names of characters in John's stories (quoted some) and said he doesn't remember the names of characters in his own yarns. Clarke said that John in his alter ego of Don A. Stuart had written "Twilight" and "Night" which had inspired his (Clarke's) "Against The Fall Of Night". Clarke said that his first dealings with John had been when he,

Clarke, was a Flight Lieutenant on a radar station 5 miles from Stratford-on-Avon. He had sent a story to John and received a request from Street & Smith for a certified copy of signature for their files. He took a cycle and went straight down the main runway of the airfield, heading for Stratford where he went to the Commissioner of Oaths and swore, certifying that Clarke was Clarke. The story was "Rescue Party". He then proposed a toast to John W. Campbell, Jr.

Ted Carnell then introduced John.

John said that the document which Street & Smith had required was to the effect that the story was an original composition freeing S&S in the event that the story had been plagiarized. He mentioned that not too long ago a New York book publisher had put out a detective novel and sent it to Anthony Boucher for review just before the book was to be released. Boucher recognized it as a complete steal.

John went on to say that an editor can help authors quite a bit. An editor has a unique opportunity to study how not to write a story. He stressed the importance of the power of negative thinking. Said he has read at least 200,000 lousy manuscripts, many from well-known writers which, if published, would have been sheer humor but deadly to the authors. He said that the main fault with many writers is lack of organization, and that the message is no good if the story is not entertaining. He said that many dozen of fans continue to write asking for a revival of Unknown with great intensity of interest. But, unfortunately, the number of people who bought Unknown were not enough to make it an economic success. It would, therefore be futile to consider reviving it. Said that Horace Gold thought he had found the flaw that made Unknown an economic failure and had brought out Beyond only to have it fail. John said that s-f cannot be defined on the basis of what it has been because then it isn't. He touched upon many things such as the fact that his present great interest is philosophy; that rocketry and atomics were okay for s-f in 1940 but not in 1950; that mankind's greatest need is not for more physical powers but how to integrate the achievements he has made. He said that you can't build the

fifth floor of the building without beams on the first floor. He said that social sciences require a discipline, noting that physical sciences have a rigid non-human discipline. Scientists must move into social sciences.

John said that Astounding is the interaction of many minds, not his alone. He considers his office as a clearing house where many people's ideas are passed around. He feels that it has turned out quite successfully and hopes to continue.

Arthur C. Clarke then called on Bob Madle to propose the next toast. Bob went back to the very first convention, mentioning that there had been 16 kids present and that Donald A. Wollheim had named it the First Science Fiction Convention. It was decided to hold the First World Convention three years later. That and all conventions since until this one have been primarily U. S. Conventions, this being the 1st truly World Convention. Bob then proposed a toast to the committee.

Ted then introduced John K. H. Brunner who told about how David A. Kyle had introduced the British fans to the difficulties of putting on last year's Convention to the British Committee last Easter at Kettering. Brunner said please don't waste time telling the committee how much you appreciate what they have done and are doing but to get on enjoying the Convention.

Ted introduced Forrest J Ackerman who proposed a toast to absent friends. Forry started by mentioning H. G. Wells and Olaf Stapledon; then mentioned Eric Frank Russell, Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, Robert Bloch, Isaac Asimov, Bob Tucker, Tony Boucher and others.

Rainer Eisfeld, a 16 year old fan from Germany, was then introduced. Rainer spoke very precise English, stating that there was a very strong science fiction club in Germany, consisting of approximately 1000 fans. He brought forth a gale of laughter when he said "You know Germans like to be organized." He says that youth is the main element in German fandom, that they are treating s-f seriously, feeling it the best means of worldwide understanding. The German S-F Convention is being held next week at Hamburg. He said that Forrie Ackerman is going and invited all to come

who might wish to do so. He ended by saying that he "wishes all to be our friends as we are yours".

Ted then called upon Lars Helander of Sweden. Lars, a good looking blond boy of 18, said that he was the only Swedish fan present. He expressed regret at the absence of others. Said he was not the official representative of Swedish fandom. Said that the Convention is much in the news in s-f fandom circles in Sweden.

Then Ted called upon Sam Moskowitz. Sam said that he was pleased and surprised to find eight of those who attended the First World S - F Con were present, namely: Robert A. Madle, John W. Campbell, Jr., Harry Harrison, David A. Kyle, Forrest J Ackerman, Oswald Train, John Victor Peterson and himself (Sam). He reviewed the costs of the 1st Con, stating that the banquet had been \$1.00 a plate, which many had considered to be "highway robbery". Said that 32 had attended the banquet, 29 being paid with Guest of Honor Frank R. Paul and with 2 deadbeats (unknown). Said that 200 persons had attended. He said that at that First World Convention, three persons had come from LA by train, namely: Forrest J Ackerman, Myrtle Douglas and Ray Douglas Bradbury. He said that the 1st Con had cost about \$236.00 while the 14th had cost over \$7,000.00.

Ted then introduced Pete Daniels from Lancashire, England. Pete said he doesn't like to say "Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen" since the Chairman just has to be one or the other. He discussed in a very humorous vein what troubles he had encountered seeking advice as to what to say at the Convention; then said, "It's nearly time for tea, and, with all due respects, Mam, let joy be unconfined!"

Ted then read a telegram regretting that illness prevented the attendance of Peter Hamilton of Nebula Science Fiction.

The Luncheon then ended and the BBC and ITV came into the hotel and set up television cameras. The Luncheon ended at 4:35 P.M.

Adjournment then until the Evening Session.

During the Luncheon an announcement was made that both BBC and ITV would take movies of the main celebrities and of those who would be costumed for the

ball. At about 6:00 P.M., BBC set up its camera and floodlights in the lounge and began shooting. ITV came in at about 8:00 P.M., made films for about an hour and then left. BBC stayed on all night, finally stopped at 6:00 A.M.! The continued work of BBC hampered the convention proceedings to a considerable extent since their work went on in the lounge and the Con activities were being conducted in the Main Hall. Drinking was curtailed to a considerable extent because the mobile bar was in the room adjacent to the TV set-up and so many people were milling around that the waiters had definite need for telekinesis!

Judges for the Fancy Dress Parade, of the evening session, were Peg Campbell, Barbara Silverberg, Mrs. Eric Frank Russell and Tom Voardman, Jr. Winners were:

1. Franklin and Belle Dietz as The Denebians.
2. Norman Weedall as The Executioner.
3. Dave & Ruth Kyle as The Honeymooners.
4. John K. H. Brunner and Marjorie Keller as the Krishnans.

There were many other fine costumes, and the judges took a long time to reach their decisions. The winners were filmed extensively by BBC.

Things continued to run late.

THE THIRD DAY

London, 8 September, (CNS)- At 2:45 P.M. The Cheltenham Science Fiction Circle, headed by Knight Grand Master Eric Jones and Knight Armourer Robert Richardson, presented The Ceremony Of St. Fantony, an extremely colorful production in which the following were vested with The Order of St. Fantony: Ken Slater, Walter Willis, Terry Jeeves, Bobbie Wild, Bob Silverberg, Frank Dietz, Ellis Mills, Bob Madle, Boyd Raeburn, Eric Bentcliffe and Rory Faulkner.

The next item scheduled was a programme of amateur 8mm cine films. It was delayed considerably because the projector couldn't be made to perform. The films, presented by Mad Productions and the Cheltenham S-F Circle, were hilarious although highly amateurish. The delays, added together, forced cancellation of the scheduled Grand International Tea-Drinking Contest.

At about 5:20 P.M., Dave Newman introduced Harry Powers who presented a demonstration of hypnosis, his subject being Eric Jones, Cylvia Margulies, Harry Clements and others. The demonstration was extremely convincing.

Adjournment, then, until the evening session.

The Sunday evening program began at 8:15 P.M. with John Wyndham and Bobbie Wild on the stage. Bobbie announced that John W. Campbell, Jr., was to receive the Award for the Best American Professional Magazine: ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, and asked John Wyndham to present the trophy; a bronzed spaceship on a pedestal. John Campbell briefly voiced his appreciation. Bobbie Wild then stated that THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION had been a close second, and tied behind that had been INFINITY SCIENCE FICTION and GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION. Bobbie then announced that Ted Carnell's NEW WORLDS SCIENCE FICTION had run away with the Award for The Best British Pro S-F Magazine. John Wyndham presented a bronzed trophy to Ted. Finally Bobbie announced that SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES had won the Award for the Best Fan Magazine, beating HYPHEN by two votes with INSIDE a close third. John Victor Peterson accepted a silvered trophy on behalf of the editors of the "TUES", stating that while he was not directly affiliated with SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES, he had been a personal friend of James V. Taurasi and Ray Van Houten since the 1st World S-F Convention, and of Frank R. Prieto, Jr., for several years. He indicated that SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES, now 16 years of age, was the oldest magazine in the fan field.

It is curious to note that all of the men in the Awards ceremony are known in science-fiction circles by the first name of John. They were, as noted above, Johnny Wyndham (John Beynon Harris), John W. Campbell, Jr., John Carnell (Edward John or "Ted" Carnell edits under that name), and John Victor Peterson.

Inasmuch as voting had been very close on the awards other than that for NEW WORLDS, the trophies had not been engraved. The trophies will be brought back to the States by John Victor Peterson and the legends will be airmailed to John W. Campbell, Jr., and the editors of SCIENCE-FICTION TIMES for subsequent

attachment.

Following the Awards ceremonies was a taped program called "Taperama" and then a truly spectacular and beautiful animated fantasy film entitled "Mr. Wonderbird", Special Award Winner of The Venice Film Festival, was shown. This film has not yet been released either in England or America. It will unquestionably be widely popular since it combines fantasy and science-fiction in a splendid way.

Sunday evening wound up with an auction wherein Sam Moskowitz assisted Ted Tubbs in a highly efficient and entertaining manner.

THE FOURTH AND LAST DAY

London, 9 September, (CNS) - The Monday morning business session opened promptly at 11:00 A.M. Two amendments to the by-laws were proposed and unanimously adopted. Nominated for Directors of The World Science Fiction Society were Arthur Kingsley, Belle C. Dietz, and David Newman. Voting was carried on and Forrie Ackerman and Bobbie Wild tabulated the votes. The results were as follows: Belle C. Dietz: 21. David Newman: 16, Arthur Kingsley: 15. The first two were therefore Directors for a term of 3 yrs.

Ted Carnell then announced that there had been only one bid for the site of The 16th World S-F Convention, that of "South Gate in '58", and introduced Forrie Ackerman. Forrie made a most entertaining speech wherein he said we'd no doubt go into an "If World" if South Gate doesn't get the site, and went on to name the curious results which would occur. Forrie introduced Rory Faulkner who said that preparations were well underway to make the 16th WSF Con a howling success. It was moved that South Gate be selected and seconded and carried unanimously. Thereupon Ted placed on the rostrum a sign reading:

LOS ANGELES
CITY LIMITS

The meeting adjourned until 2:15 P.M.

There was a delay in starting the afternoon program. Finally at 2:35 P.M. it was announced that a program change would be made and that Bob Madle, Forrie

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by Sam Moskowitz

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Ackerman and Sam Moskowitz would have a round robin of questions and answers to determine which of the three was the best authority on science-fiction. Sam stated that similar contests had been held in 'smoke-filled rooms' at previous cons. It seemed that an argument had developed on the plane as to which of them was the best all-around s-f specialist. The questions were extremely difficult, such as Forrie's question to Bob Madle as to what magazine appeared in 1931 and ran two issues, dates of those issues, cover artists, cover stories, editor and publisher; which Bob answered almost without hesitation. Bob led the game by one point right through the third round, at the end of which the score was 8-7-7. Then Bob missed a question and the game ended in a three-way tie: 9-9-9.

At 3:35 P.M. Sam Moskowitz presented a summary of the Science Fiction Market Survey of 1956 which appears in full details in THE SCIENCE FICTION YEARBOOK. At 4:15 P. M. Sam introduced John W. Campbell, Jr. for a talk on "Psionics". John said that he felt a question and answer session would be best and asked Eric Jones to join him. Eric brought a psionics machine to the stage and a discussion of the same resulted. Eric Frank Russell joined them briefly to mention the devining of buried electric cables being done now in this country with a metallic devining rod. The matters discussed have been

for the most part previously covered in editorials and articles in Astounding.

At the opening of the evening session Bobbie Wild presented Peg Campbell with a Scots Guard (model) 'on behalf of the ladies of the Committee. Dave and Ruth Kyle were presented with something for their home, and Frank & Belle Dietz were also given a present.

Ted Carnell said a formal goodbye to all present; then Harry Harrison presented Dave Kyle with a scroll from the people on the flight from America expressing their appreciation for his splendid efforts in making the flight possible.

A further auction was then held with Ted Tubb doing a hilarious and masterful job.

A private party was then held for the Committee members and those from the States who had aided the Committee, while a second showing of the amateur films was given in the Main Hall. At the private party Ted Carnell showed movies which he had made both in the States just after the 14th WSF Con and after his return to England.

The party broke up shortly before dawn and your correspondent paractically collapsed.

Despite delays, an awkward hall, etc., I feel that the Convention was a howling success. The official paid membership was 566 and the official attendance figure was 268.

Winner -- Science Fiction Achievement Awards, 1955 and 1957.

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