

THE ZED

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General comments . . .

The Westercon report in this issue is long overdue and cut off short just where things get interesting. Sorry, but even if I could fill it out at this late date, I can't afford to publish it. Sorry.

The bacover illustration last is was by Jerry Bixby. He was very unhappy to discover that although the stencil was legal length, the paper wasn't. I made him obliterate it all out, in spite of his protests that "It ought to be . . ."

Still another apology: the crossword puzzle solution got crowded out. I'll try to get it into next ish; I ought to have a job by then.

Of the death of kings:

Bela Lugosi died on August 17.

I doubt if any of you know of him except as a perennial monster of horror movies. I think he deserves a little better than that. Give me license, at least, to indulge myself in a little sentiment; for to me he is fabulous.

Before he became inextricably identified with Dracula, he had been famous in Europe as a romantic actor in the plays of Ibsen and Shakespeare. From having seen him twice as a handsome and fascinating Dracula, I can imagine him in such roles as Henry V and Othello, or Peer Gynt. Olivier would have seemed pallid beside him. He might have had the reputation of a Barrymore.

What a waste it was: that great talent, that matchless profile, type-cast in third-rate horror movies! What humiliation when he was reduced to personal appearances as a freak sensation! Small wonder that he became addicted to narcotics, from which he freed himself only a year before his death.

No; let us remember him as he was before his fatal success. Let us remember him as one who might have been --- who surely was --- the equal of John Barrymore or Edwin Booth. For even in his horror movies, we can see the greatness of his talent.

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
And tell sad stories of the death of kings.

NOT-POETS' CORNER

Sermon for an Age of Revolution, Asserting Eternal Verities for
All Able to Discover the Scansion

by Poul Anderson, B. S.

Hold fast to the faith your fathers wrought,
And you shall be strong also!
Remember there is no number on earth
Which you may divide by 0.

When death and chaos ride the skies,
Cling to the truths of yore:
Log 22
x1.4. . .

Though civilization whimper away
In neototic whines of Sex,

dx^{ex}.

These are the truths your fathers found.
Stand by them though you die!
The gates of hell shall not prevail ---
You'll have 3.141592654. . . in the sky or your y⁻¹.

Poe m in Praise of Practically Nothing, but Not the way Samuel
Hoffenstein Meant It

by Karen Anderson

Consider the minute impurity
That raised germanium from obscurity;

Regard, my olds, your noble cerebation
Which functions by a slight electrification;

Behold the rays of stars, that when they meet
A thermocouple, will record their heat;

Observe the radio tube whose atmosphere
Is thin as outer space at its most drear;

And praise the things that function as they ought
With the help of practically naught.

Pickle Posterity for Bloch

IN MEMORIAM

BELA LUGOSI

1883 - 1956

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings.

King Richard II
Act III, Sc. ii.

son's genius cat; then the cast was to be photographed in costume. This was done. (NO I'm not going to put clip ings in every copy of the Zed! No time, no money.) Then, Johnson's props being on the stage, Kitty K. had to rehearse.

Kitty K. didn't feel like rehearsing, and by the time he was through with her my cast had all disappeared, with the sole exception of the Beautiful Girl in the fourth scene---namely, me. At last, though, they came back, and I forced them through three rehearsals. One member had never showed up at all, and Poul took the part; then I needed four extra Children of the Lens. I got Forry Ackerman, Marvin Bowen, and Jerry Bixby for three of them; and then Tony Boucher came up leading a blond, chubby young man. "

"Richard Matheson is willing to be a Child of the Lens," he said.

Picking up my jaw, I told him what he would have to do, and added his name to my list. However, I was still short one monster, and went on hoping Poul wouldn't be forced to double in that role. I told the cast to meet at the end of the afternoon program for one final rehearsal, changed back out of my costume, and headed for the bar, where I built up my shaken constitution with a couple of rich, creamy Grasshoppers.

Someone brought out a clipping from an English newspaper advertising for young men in connection with space travel research. I forget the wording, but it either stated or directly implied that manned rockets were being planned. This was passed from hand to hand, and discussed in a rather blase fashion.

Eventually we went home and to bed.

..-OXO-..

Saturday we reached the hotel around eleven. The bar was absolutely empty---not the bar of last night, but the PRIVATE bar, opened for the Westercon---and Tony Boucher stood rather forlornly by the entrance. "What is everybody standing out here for?" I asked. Tony didn't seem to know, so the three of us went into the bar, hoping others would follow; but they didn't. Eventually, however, the bar filled up; but by then it was time for the program to begin. Marilyn Tulley, chairman, herded us into the Bowl (which is rectangular).

After the installation and address of the chairman, Tony Boucher took the stand to introduce notables and distribute ego-bec. At one point, he confided to the audience that he was curious to see who WOULD stand up this time, and called on Jack Vance to take a bow; adding that this should once for all take

REPORT ON THE WESTERCON '56

This, Phthal help me, is being composed on stencil. Today (July 7) is the final end of the Westercon, and the last fan in town has just phoned to tell me he's leaving.

Whoooooh.

On Fridgythe 29th, Poul and I left Nellyboo with a sitter and drove to the Leamington for a final rehearsal of the improved production of MAGNET. The first thing we saw as we went in was Porry Ackerman, and the second was E. Everett Evans; so we knew that whatever the convention committee thought, the Westercon '56 had begun.

I went on into the Leamington Bowl, looking for my cast. There were Rog and Honey Wood (Phillips) (Graham) (choose one), talking to a handsome young man with a moustach and a fascinating little beard. I hung around hoping to be introduced, but nobody did. At last I heard Rog call him "Jerry," and it dawned on me at last---migosh, this is Jerry Bixby!

"Hey, you're Jerry Bixby!" I said.

He admitted it, and looked confused.

"Don't you remember me either?"

He didn't.

"I'm Karen Anderson. We met in New York."

He did a double take. "By God, you are! But you didn't have red hair then, did you?"

"No, but you didn't have a beard, either."

Later, I mentioned that we needed some music for MAGNET, and it developed that there was a piano in the room, and he could play the theme music. I immediately conscripted him.

Before I had a chance to get my rehearsal under way, a photographer wanted to take some pictures for the paper. First he had to get some pictures of Kitty K., Robert Barbour John-

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As soon as the formal program for the afternoon was over, my own work began: trying to get that cast of mine through another rehearsal. We began with Scene 2, skipped to Scene 4, did Scene 5, and then knocked it off. Nobody was willing to do Scenes 2 and 3.

Poul and Jerry and I decided to go out for a snack before the banquet, assuming that an 8:00 banquet would begin at nine or so. On the way out, we saw a pretty girl sitting alone in the lobby. First Jerry, then Poul stopped to look at her badge to see if they recognized the name. They didn't; and she didn't even act like she realized theirs. Although their interest in her seemed slightly dimmed by her complete lack of awe, we invited her to go along with us for a snack anyway. Coralie Allen was her name; but she answered to Corky, she informed us.

When we came back, I took Corky and Jerry to Dave Rike's room, where he had invited me previously for a Nuclear Fizz; but by then they had drunk all the liquor. Hurt at this perfidy, we went back downstairs and settled down in the bar. I ordered tonic, but after I'd had that, Tony Boucher bought me a Gibson.

I was just well settled down to the Gibson, and Poul had come downstairs from his nap, when I noticed it was eight.

"Come on, let's go in and sit down," I said.

"Oh, you know these things never begin on time" he said.

About thirty seconds later, Marilyn Tulley came through the bar in great distress. Seeing me, she said, "Can't you get Poul and Tony in there? The banquet's already begun, and it looks pretty bad to have the speakers' table so empty." Then she disappeared in search of more of the speakers.

Breaking it to them gently, I made Tony and Poul understand that the banquet had actually begun on time. They bore up bravely under the shock, and we went in to eat.

Incidentally, that banquet was terrific.

After the eating was taken care of (very enthusiastically!) there were various matters, including the delayed Margaret St. Clair speech. Forry Ackerman delivered his usual run of patter, including a reference to "that dress Karen is almost wearing," which was a strapless black velvet formal, my costume for the play. Then he said in a confidential tone, "I happen to know the secret of that dress. I saw her pouring black coffee on the front of it so it would stay up all night."

Okay. I thought it was kind of funny.

After the minor things were over with, and Tony had delivered tributes to various people ---for one thing, he made

care of the notion that Vance was Kuttner.

Nobody stood up at all. Seldom have I seen so disappointed an audience.

Then the panel on the troubles of pros trying to make a decent living in the present state of the writing market, and what's to be done about it? They came to the conclusion that advertising and higher newsstand prices would be the only way of improving rates and writing quality.

Or so I'm told. I've heard all this many times before, and as soon as I saw that it was the same as ever, I slid out to the bar in search of new thrills.

I found one.

Jack Vance.

He ISN'T Kuttner! Nor is his wife (also present) C. L. Moore. They're really, truly, two other people; which increases by two the number of delightful people in science-fiction.

Longabout this time, Jerry asked me if he couldn't be dropped from the Lens lineup, as it would take too much dashing back and forth. I demanded that Vance take his place.

Vance cringed. "Who, ME?" "Yes, you," I said, and pointed out that if Matheson was willing, he ought to, to. He gave in at last, and I delightedly added his name to the list.

After the intermission, which I spent introducing people to Vance and watching their reactions, I stayed through Robert Barbour Johnson's "The Fantasy of Fantasy Fiction," in which he pointed out that the average fantasy is of necessity much more true-to-life than the average slick magazine story. It turned out that Margaret St. Clair (Idris Seabright)'s speech was cancelled, and would be given later; so the next item was Reg Bretnor on "Polar Bears". He introduced it thus:

Once a Frenchman asked an American friend, "Qu'est-ce que c'est, thees 'polarbear'?"

The American said, "A polar bear is a large white bear that sits around on icebergs and eats fish."

"Nom d'un nom!" cried the Frenchman. "One has asked me to be at my dear friend's funeral a polar bear! Now I go to refuse!"

His subject turned out to be the troubles of science fiction again, so I wandered unobtrusively to the bar, and spent the remaining part of the program swilling tonic water, without any expensive gin in it.

a reference to Es Cole as a person who "has the unique ability to cook cheese cake and be cheesecake," and called on Jack Vance to stand and be recognized --- the guest of honor, Matheson, gave his speech.

That speech was magnificent.

I shoved my way to him as soon as he'd finished and demanded first publication rights, which he agreed to give me. Stop drooling, though---I'm going to save it for my first Fapa issue. Besides, there isn't time to stencil it, or money to pay for stencils or paper. Too bad.

Then I went behind the screens to get my cast in line, and help those that needed it with their costumes. Then we sat around waiting for our turn, while Kitty K. went through her act. She was rather bored by it all, and gave a magnificent display of non-cooperativeness. Gandhi could have learned about passive resistance from her.

Honey Wood got a bad case of opening-night jitters while we waited, so I did my best to calm her by talking about something or other---I don't offhand remember what; probably linguistics, a subject on which I have an amazing amount of half-information. She remonstrated with me about being so calm when the show was about to begin.

Finally our turn came. You've seen the play, if you were in SAPS last mailing; here is the cast:

Announcer: Robert Barbour Johnson

Kinnison: Rog Phillips

Chief: Tony Alhinoo

Old Space Hound:

Honey Wood Phillips

Bergey Girl: Paula Salo

Monster: William Martin ("Mr. Winona McClintic")

2nd. Girl: Me

Boskonian₁: Poul Anderson

Boskonian₂: Tony Boucher

Boskonian₃: Dale Rostomily

Children of the Lens:

Marmin Bowen

Karl Boyer

4sj Ackerman

Jack Vance

Richard Matheson

One change in the script was made: In Scene 3, where the monster attacks the Bergey girl, it turns out he wasn't attacking her at all, but merely wanted to ask the way to the public library. The Bergey girl is highly annoyed, and stomps off saying "What kind of a crummy monster do you call yourself, anyway?" Whereupon the monster shrugs in bewilderment and walks away.

The play was backed by the Elves', Gnomes', and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder and Marching Society of Berkeley; produced, directed, costumed, and supplied with properties by

M E ! !

It was a lot of work, but boy, was it ever fun.

After that, there were some movies. I saw "Born of Man and Woman" again, but decided to miss the others. Somewhat later, when everything planned was over with, I received a hush-hush invitation to a party at the convention suite. Here there was much quiet fun, including a picture-taking binge by Honey. At one point, I'm damned if I remember why, various men were dropping coins down my décolletage. Ah yes---it comes back to me now: Rog and I had spotted a dime on the floor at the same moment, and he beat me to it.

October 4:

All this was long, long ago. I cut the preceding stencils in the hope of publishing them in the July mailing, but found I couldn't afford the paper. The last Zed, by the way, was published by Rog Phillips, who was in the business at the time; but he unfortunately couldn't make a living at it, and he's now working as a Pinkerton agent.

Ghod (Phthalo) only knows how I'm going to get this pubbed. My brother-in-law may be bringing me a mimeo Saturday, but I won't know till then. And that's too long to wait.

"I have a copy of THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES in Pitman shorthand."

"Can you read it?"

"No, but it's very interesting."

Why is Elvis Presley?