

History of SF Fandom in DENver & Colo.

Fandom in DENver goes back to about 1932 when Olon Wiggins started writing to the letter columns. Shortly after that he started putting out the Fanmag 'The Science Fiction Fan', which continued until about 1941. Also writing to the magazines was a Fred Walsen, but as far as I know he never got active in Denver fandom. Along about 1937 Roy Hunt and Chuck Hansen met in high school and found they had a common interest in science fiction. They also located Lew Martin, who was a couple of yers younger than they were. Along about 1938 they looked up Olon Wiggins and he gave them some pointeres about publishing, and they started putting out the Alchemist. They put out 4 or 5 issues before the war, and after the war we put out five more issues.

The thing that sort of pushed things along in DENver was the Chicago convention in 1940, which Wiggins and Martin went to via freight train==which is quite a .story. While they were there they bid to give the 1941 concention in Denver and when they got back, the four of them formed the Colorado fAntasy Society to put on the convention. Chuck Hansen moved to Washington in 1940 to go into raising mink wich his father, and so was not active in putting on the convention., Hunt, Martin and Wiggins got the Shirley Savoy Hotel for the convention (one of the better hotels at the time) and the convention was over the 4th of July 1941 with about eighty attending.

After the convention, the Colorado Fantasy Society was continued with the fellows meeting on an irregular basis. They kept putting out their fan mags until sometime in 1941 when WW II was close. Martin and Hunt both enlisted in the armed forces and nothing much went on during the war years.

Chuck Hansen moved back to Denver in 1942 as the mink farm could not be continued during the war. When Roy got back from ~~the~~ Navy service in 1945, he and Roy started meeting and Roy met Stan Mullen when both worked at the Colorado State Historical Museum. I came to DENvr in 1946 in Feb. when I was discharged from the Air Force and had been given Chuck's name when I visited the Los Angeles group. Wiggins was not active at this time. Martin never came back to DENver after the war. He went to college at MIT and got a degree in Physics and then got a job in Los Angeles. Shortly after looking up Chuck, he and I and Roy and Stan started meeting at members homes almost weekly. Shortly thereafter we settled on Saturday night and continued meeting weekly until the late 1980's,

We four formedthe group for the next four years. We also had meeting with us on occasion so~~me~~ GI's stationed at Lowry Field. I had read a letter by Paul Juneau in some magazine and got in touch with him. Also with him was Jim Fee., Later Chuck Friedenthal and Howard FEldman joined us.

Dukring the late 1940's we had several out of town visitors. The ones I remember were James Streiff, FRancis Laney, Forrie Ackerman gus Wilmoth, Dave Kyle and DB Thompson. Stan soon left the Museum

and did enough writing to support them (with his wife also working as a waitress). He had several stories in Planet and analog, and also put out a book of short stories called Moonfoam and Sorceries. The book was illustrated by Roy, who also did a few illos for the old Stirring and Cosmic Stories back in 1940. Shasta also published a novel by Stan, Kinsman of the Dragon, which was in the Merritt tradition. About 1950 the Mullen's moved back to Colorado springs, where they had come from. We did visit them several times. One time, Bob Heinlein was there, and another time they were living in Heinlein's house while the Heinlein went around the world.

About this time, Wiggins joined us for several years and we ended put playing an hour or two of poker during most meetings. Wiggins sort of drifted away afer divorcing his wife and marrying again. Tom Walker, Roy's son-in-law, started meeting with us after a hitch in the army (about 1959). He worked for the Burlington Railroad in various capacities and then ended up doing art work for them in such fields as safety posters. He was transfered to St. Paul, MN in 1967, and retired there a few years ago.

Norm Metcalf came to Lowry Fied in 1959 and started meeting with ~~us~~ when he could. He was there until 1960 and then transfered to Tyndall field, FL. He was also stationed at Ft. Riley, KS for while and made one of the Meetings by hitch-hiking both ways. after getting out of the army, he went to school at Calif. Uni. at Berkley. He then moved back to the area in 1968, living in Broomfield and then Boulder.

Lew Martin after working awhile in California, got a job with Ball Aerospace in Boulder and started meeting with us occasionally. He never really got to coming regularly.

our next rather permanent addiron was Bob alvis, who came to the area in about 1965, living in Broomfield atfirst. He worked for the US Govt==DEpt. of Commerce in Boulder. He was moved to Washington in 1971 and worked there for a year and a ~~hix~~ half or so. One time I was in Washington for a hearing in connnection with my trucking business and had breakfast with him. After returning in 1971 they bought a house in Boulder and are still living there. However, he is retired (and selling books on the internet) and they are in the process of moving to Parump, NV.

Camile CAzadesus came to the area about 1965 and was a member of the group for several years. He was in the book business as well as publishing his Burroughs fanmag. He brout Stuart Titler to Denver to be with him in the ~~book~~ book business, and Stu was part of the group for awhile. He was more interested in Lost Race stories than science-fiction. Someone talked to him recently, and I believe hs is in San Francisco.

WE found we were all interested in sherlock Holmes and Norm got us involved in the Baker Street Irregulars. We founded a scion society called 'The Council ofFour' (from the story 'a Study in scarlet'. We published the 'Science Fictional Sherlock Holmes'

in the 1960's as a lot of you probably know. It is out of print now. Don Grant was a big help in putting it out.

About 1970, Caz had a difference of opinion with some of the members of the CFS, and he decided to found a club which would be bigger and meet monthly in a bank (several banks had rooms a person could reserve without charge). I should mention that Don Thompson was meeting with us some, but due to working on the Denver Post on Sat., evening a lot of the time, he could not come very often. Anyway Caz put notices in libraries and other places and had an organizational meeting with about 15 people present. Chuck and Roy and I joined but did not meet with them much. Another organizer was Doris Beetem, whose daughters are still active. Don Thompson was active real early and, I think, followed Caz as president. DASFA, as it is known is still active, but the Colorado Fantasy Society is pretty much defunct. DASFA puts on the Milehi Con in Oct. and many of the members helped with Denvention II.

Chuck Hansen ran into Emile Greenleaf in the late 1960's at an Astronomy Club meeting and he started meeting with us. He was married at the time, but was later divorced and two of his girl friends came to meetings quite a bit. The first was Jean Franck whom he met in the Colorado Mountain Club. The second was Gay Greenleaf, whom he eventually married. He got lung cancer from having worked for John Marville down in New Orleans as a chemist, and died several years ago.

There was a fellow in Greeley, CO (about 65 miles north of Denver), Bob Johnson back in the 1960's who was rather active in fandom. He published a mag called ORB and went to at least one convention. We went up and visited him a couple of times. I have no idea what has happened to him.

I might mention that about 1951 or 1952 we decided to have an annual dinner. The first one was attended by only Chuck, Roy, Olon and myself. We ended up at a steak house called Joe (awful) Coffee's. He was a boxer who ended up with a restaurant. The next year we went to the Buckhorn, which was a steak house that dated back to 1890. At that time it was run by the son of the founder, Mr. Zietz. It is still around, but has changed ownership. The 1981 Worldcon had a dinner there. When we got into the Sherlockian business we started having the annual dinner at a Chinese restaurant in the VFW. We also included wives and added some other Sherlockians who were not SF fans.

The DASFA started putting on the Milehi Con soon after starting. Some of the members were also active in setting up Denvention II in 1981. Don Thompson was co-chairman, Bob Alvis was Treasurer and I was assistant Treasurer. It was really very successful.

In 1983 Nancie Hunt, Roy's wife had both a stroke and heart attack. She survived but her right side was paralyzed and she was in a wheelchair most of the time. She could walk only a little and we had a hard time getting her up steps. About this time we gave up

Saturday evening meetings and started meeting Wed. noon at Chuck's for 'high noon theatre.' He was taping movies off of TV and we had our choice of almost a 100 movies to watch. In 1984 both Olon and Chuck died. After Chuck died, we started meeting weekly on Wednesday noon at Hunts. He would serve us Chili or something similar. A friend of his from high school would also attend. This kept on until 1986 when Roy died. He died maily from exhaustion of taking care of Nancie. For a while a grandson of Nancie's took care of her and after that they had to find a nursing home for her. After being in the nursing home awhile she was able to move to an apartment with a companion. I would goto see her almost every week. She died in 1989. It hardly seems that all these people have been gone over ten years.

A couple of others I forgot to mention were Paul O'Connor and Ellis Mills. Paul moved to DENver in the late 1940's and did not live here very long. He was a friend of sTan's and did a little publishing as the 'New Collectors GRoup.' He did a couple of Merritt stories as far as I can remember. He also put out a fanzine for awhile together with another fellow I did not know. Ellis was stationed here at Lowry in the 1960's. He was regular army. He bought a small cabin about 15 miles west of Denver and had us up to eat a few times. He was a gourmet cook. I have heard nothing of either of them lately.

After moving back to Louisiana several years ago, Caz moved back to Colorado--Pagoza Springs, in southwest CO. He still publishes a fanzine of pulps wich includes an advertising section.

There is another fellow here in DENver who is a member of First Fandom. He is allen Bartlett. I have met him a 2 or 3 Worldcons. He no longer goes to conventions as he is suffering from emphysema. He says he was at the first DENvention, but we have not found his name on the list of attendees.

Norm Metcalf still lives in Boulder and I see him occasionally. I see Bob Alvis once in awhile, but they are now moving from Boulder to Parump, NV. He has been retired several years and sells books on the internet.

Don Thompson also died several years ago. dASFA is still in existence and still meets monthly. They still sponsor the Milehi Con.