

The Third Convention

BY

RUSTEBAR

This is the impression that the Third World Science Fiction Convention gave a new fan. It started officially on July Fourth, but to me, it started much earlier. As early as Wednesday, the Second, I had already met Lou Martin, Glen Higgins, Al McKeel, D. B. Thompson, and Adam Long. We discussed you-know-what and played cards. Martin, McKeel, and I had even gone out to the army field where Charles Schneeman lives since being drafted by our big uncle. We were unable to get in touch with him as he was off on leave at the time.

Wednesday night, we ascended to the fourth floor of the Shirley-Savoy Hotel and invaded the temporary home-stead of the Heinleins. The Futurians and others arrived later to make quite a roomful of fans. Mr. and Mrs. Heinlein proved to be real fans. Smokes and cokes were liberally provided, and so many things were discussed at such length that before we knew it, the next day had arrived. The invading hordes slowly ebbed from the room to allow the hosts a short time for sleep and rest.

More fans began arriving the next morning, and before the day was through, old friendships had been renewed and many new ones formed. On the eve of the convention, nearly thirty fans were already assuming command of the hotel and wandering about the lobby collecting autographs in "Stephan the Stfan", given by Morojo in exchange for an autograph.

As the evening wore on, small groups began leaving the lobby and drifting languidly into the streets of Denver. As they wandered along, they watched for signs which would

tell them they had found what they sought. Finding them they would slink into the dive of their choice, and partake joyously, amidst jokes and much laughter, of what came to be known (via Widner) as "beep". As a result of too much application of joy tonic, one group became belligerent and almost caused a pre-convention brawl. Happily, a little diplomacy prevented this mishap. Thereafter, a joke session was held in Widner's room. This little meeting became a nightly occurrence. Widner hardly let anyone else get in a joke edgewise.

The official convention got started the next afternoon after a morning of waiting. Once it got started, it kept up a rapid pace all the way through. Almost 70 fans registered, and many interested persons in Denver dropped in at various times. Among the best-known fans present were to Ackerman, Don Thompson, "Poll-Cat" Widner, the Futurians, Korshak, Unger, the Galactic Roamers, Demon Knight, T. Bruce York, Schwartz, Ladie, Fortier, Freshafer, Morojo, Phil Bronson, and Rothman. The fast rising "Doc" Daugherty and his Eleanor honeymooned at the Convention. The Heinleins, Edmund Hamilton, and Willard E. Hawkins proved themselves real fans as well as pres-

As late as the opening evening, fans were still arriving. This was a real fan convention, introducing several new fans as well as the old. Several total unknowns appeared, among them Elmer Meukel and Dave Dawson (from Washington), Charles Mansion (Salt Lake City), Jillian Deutsch (NYC), and Rustebar (Calif-

ornia).

At the opening session, everyone was introduced via the register, and stood to be seen and known. The guest of honor, Mr. Robert A. Heinlein, gave an excellent speech which proved to me that he is a fine speaker as well as a fine author. He discussed "the scientific method" and the future of fantasy fandom as associated therewith. He told us the necessity of its use in our changing social conditions. The talk, very complimentary to the ego of the listeners, was received courteously and appreciatively by the convention.

Shortly after the close of this speech, Galactic Roamer E. E. Evans talked to advocate more cooperation and purposeful planning in fandom. He suggested that fandom eliminate feuds and plan a long range program for its own future. He passed out a resume of his speech so that those present could read it over and give more thought to it.

After a recess for dinner, the evening session was begun with the costume party. Mr. Evans devastated the convention with his carefully done "Bird Man from Rhea". He depicted a member of an advanced race of evolving bird-people who had become space rovers after overcoming their own planet. The costume, which must have cost many hours of labor and no little cash, took the first prize. It was vividly colored, each feather being put on separately, and the eyes (cockeyed) were up on stalks. This costume was donated to the committee and sold to Morojo at the auction.

"Doc" Daugherty copped second prize. His costume was made up mostly of experimental materials used by the airplane factory where he earns his living. He conceived the idea of converting to his own purpose experiments which went wrong. Thus he built up his "\$500" space pilot costume which incorporated plastiglass helmet, shoulder guards, ray gun, and a protuberance

on the headpiece which was purported to be a means of thought expression. From the shoulder guards, a flowing black cloak fell down behind a suit of blue and gold.

Third prize was taken by Morris Ackerman who appeared to be the Hunchback of Notre Dame. He wore a rubber head-mask which was a panic. It was somewhat loose in the front and he achieved a rather grisly effect by purposeful breathing. As he went about the room beckoning to people to come near, the face contorted gruesomely. No one seemed to reciprocate his desire for companionship.

Other costumes to be seen were "Akka" (Morojo), "The Improachable Man" (Elmer Meukel), Pinero (Deutsch), Jno Star (Damon Knight), Heinlein's prophet (Cohen), a skeleton (Korshak), a mad doctor (Kornblutn), and Doc Lowndes as a zombie with a slashed throat. Bob Heinlein, who had prepared no costume, came as "Adam Stink--World's Most Lifelike Robot", and Art Nidner was a wow as old Granny from "Slan!". He portrayed her--voice and all--almost directly from the story. He was so good that no one knew who "she" was for a while. Many fans felt that this impersonation and costume should have taken one of the prizes.

Following the party--and some struggling to get there first--came drinks, consisting of a barrel of beer and two kinds of wine. Most of those present partook thereof. When things finally calmed down, we found that the film "Lost World" was ready for showing. Everyone still able found seats and the show was on. Being pretty happy, some of the audience provided allegedly witty sound effects and helped out by petting the monsters on the screen and creating new ones by hand. Wally Beery and Lewis Stone appeared in the picture, Beery playing "Professor Challenger". At the close of the picture, various Denverites again sought the Denver dives and the elixir of

15.....
joy. This lasted only until the dives closed at the ungodly hour of 2 o'clock, when part of them again went to the Widner joke room.

On Saturday art-work was displayed and admired, several varied discussions held, a goodly number of mags were sold, and little was done otherwise until evening. Then came the auction! With eager anticipation we watched the auctioneer, Mr. Korshak take the rostrum to direct the fight over the spoils. Only F. F.M., Planet, Future Fiction, Astonishing, Cosmic, and their companions contributed, so there was a shortage of good material. However, under the guidance of the redoubtable Korshak, prices zoomed high. Brady paid \$9.50 for a Finlay black-and-white. Other prices went correspondingly high. Top buyer was Gus Zillmerth, who took home everything he could get, including Unger's only complete bound set of FFF. Wiggins got the only Dold offered. Heinlein got stuck with Korshak's skeleton head, so he proceeded to auction it again. This time Schwartz was hooked into it by Heinlein. At this time Heinlein's greatest embarrassment came. Daugherty, who recorded the entire convention, made a disc of this episode and then played it back. It was a kick.

After a highly successful evening, most of us went to the local amusement park and made whoopes on the rides and in the fun house until we had to get out. Then, once again, some had to attend the Widner joke school.

Sunday we got started with the soft ball game. Widner's hand-picked team managed to tie Korshak's opposition team in the fourth and last inning after trailing 7-2 from the beginning. Relieving Korshak, Daugherty gave up the needed 5 runs to tie. Dale Hart held 'em down for Widner.

Upon the opening of the last session before the banquet, bids were made for next year's con. Joe

Porter, bidding for Frisco started out by telling of the plans the Golden Gate boys had worked out. They had nearly everything promised for free, but didn't win the bid.

Milt Rothman then expounded the good side of Washington as convention grounds, but due to subversive propaganda re conditions there, he also failed. RAM then managed to get one other vote for Philly.

With an earnest plea, and without promising anything but a good convention, Walt Daugherty then coped a 2/3 majority vote to hold the convention in Los Angeles. Even with this majority, the decision aroused considerable ill-feeling among some who wanted the Con in the East again. However, it's LA in '42, and let's all be there.

Then the heat of wrath died down, Daugherty once again took the rostrum and spoke to further advocate Evans' ideas. He then awarded medals to the following people: 4s for best fan and being of most service to fandom; Roy Hunt for best fan artist; Wiggins for the best and most consistent fan mag; Damon Knight for being the top humorist, and Julie Unger for putting out the best news-weekly.

After much discussion and revision, a resolution to support the NFFF was passed. The convention session then adjourned to allow preparations for the convention topper, the banquet.

Everyone should have had enough to eat, and everyone had a chance to say something. Heinlein, Lownes, Daugherty, and others presented speeches. Franklyn Brady then delivered a fine presentation speech and presented Mr. Heinlein with eleven books bought by popular subscription and selected with the assistance of his wife. These were gratefully received by the honor guest.

The convention ended with everyone bidding sad farewells, vowing to be in LA next year, and autographing the books for Mr. Heinlein.