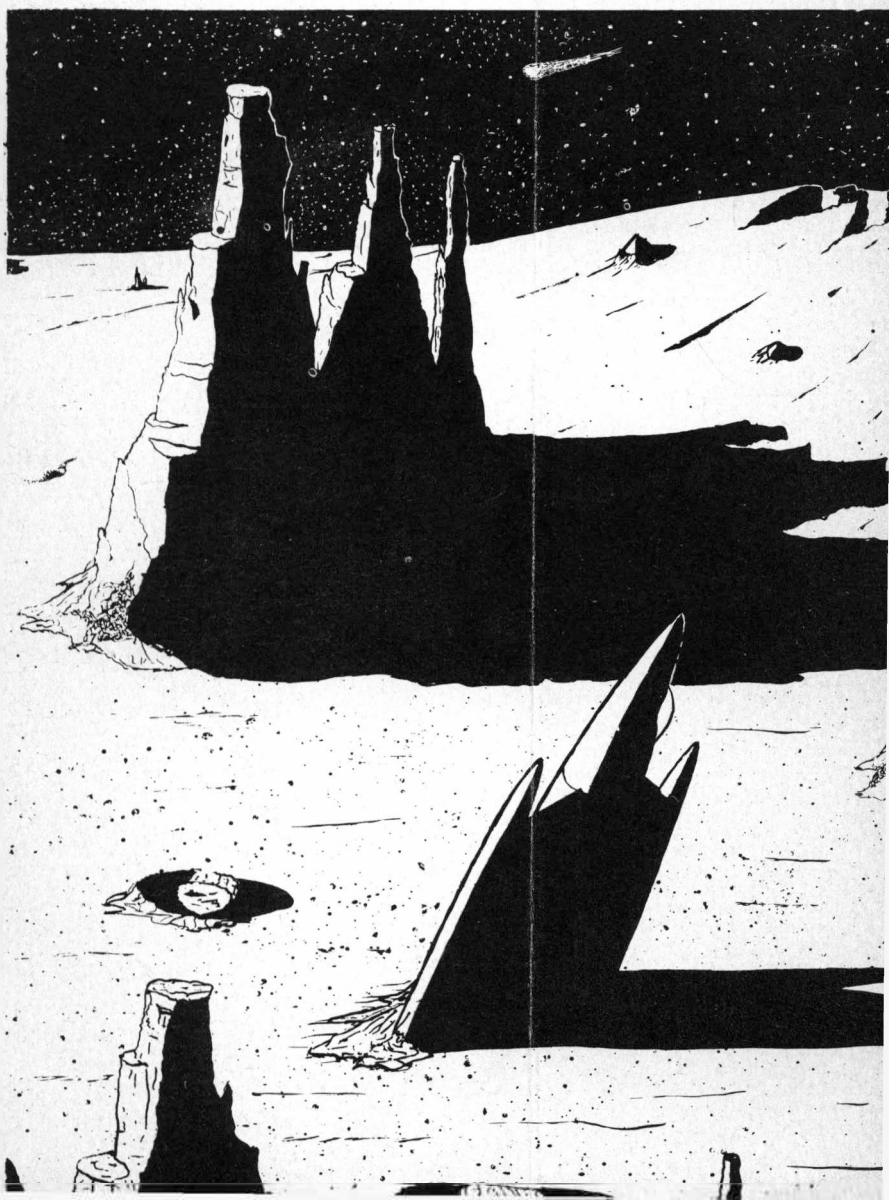


SF CON

AUGUST 1954

PROGRESS REPORT #4



323. Mrs. John H. Madison, Jr.
324. Harold Stanley
325. Bruce Stanley
326. Sam Woolsey, Jr.
327. William Ellis
328. Mrs. Wallace A. Green
329. B. M. Olphaut
330. Karen K. Anderson
331. Lt. J.G. R. T. Pinkerton
332. Mrs. Eve Whyte
333. Andrew Adams Whyte
334. Al Wright
335. Futurian Society of Sydney
336. Judy Merrill
337. K. Martin Carlson
338. Winona McClintic
339. Barney Berlin
340. Don Wegars
341. George Faraco
342. Louis Goldstone
343. Cynthia Goldstone
344. Marshall Cutrer
345. Betty Pope
346. Walt Willis
347. Ken Slater
348. Mrs. Zema L. Murray
349. Peter Mikkelsen
350. Beverly Walker
351. G. E. Koberg
352. Paul A. Shoemaker
353. Merrill Malkerson
354. Raymond Storie
355. Mary Alice Knowlton
356. W. C. Brandt
357. Robert A. Hemmes
358. Mrs. Robert A. Hemmes
359. Glen W. Price, Jr.
360. Joan Da Vanzo
361. Stephen Bartolowitch
362. Robert Bloch
363. Paul E. Richardson
364. Helen Smith
365. Arnold C. Smith
366. Morris Scott Dollens
367. Edward A. Nelson
368. Thomas Hobson
369. Richard Kyle
370. John F. Maus
371. Alice Dwyer
372. Elise C. Francoeur
373. George Topliff
374. Robert Oldland
375. Beardsley Graham
376. Mary Barbara Taylor
377. Sonia Appell
378. Hy Douglas
379. Edward Kisch
380. Jeanne Kisch
381. 1/Lt. M.M. Sheller
382. James E. Rawlings
383. Sandra Phillips
384. Dr. Samuel Gottfried
385. Janice J. Johnson
386. J. H. Johnson
387. Dona Jones
388. Natalie Gill
389. Stanton A. Coblentz
390. Walter H. Fisher
391. Liam O'Gallagher
392. Robert Rheem
393. William H. Hamlin
394. Linda S. Russell
395. Walter S. Drummond
396. Phyllis Boucher
397. Larry Boucher
398. James Boucher
399. Beatrice F. Gittery
400. Cedric E. Clute, Jr.
401. Mrs. F. A. McVicar
402. Yvonne Jelenik
403. Gelbert E. Gowen
404. Cal Beck
405. Jane C. Welsh
406. Opal McCarte
407. Bob Pavlat
408. Charles D. Allen
409. Richard A. Perkins
410. Marian Van Kirk
411. Clyde E. Field
412. Jessica Paul
413. John Cramer
414. Flora J. Turner
415. Wally Gunser
416. Flora Jones
417. Julia Woodard
418. R. H. Drummond
419. Ed Wyman
420. Elinor Busby
421. Frances McKinnis
422. Wm. N. Austin
423. Delcie Austin
424. Ron Elik
425. And Friend
426. Raymond E. Banks
427. Mrs. Mildred C. Smith
428. Mrs. Elede Prince Morris
429. And Guest
430. Norman C. McQuilling
431. Calvert B. Cottrell
432. William B. Cottrell
433. Alice B. Cottrell
434. Nickolas B. Cottrell
475. Phillip J. Farmer
476. Mrs. Phillip J. Farmer
477. Larry J. Touzinsky
478. Ed Counts
479. J. M. Simmons
480. John L. Magnus, Jr.
481. Eugene DeWeese
482. Lou Tabakow

PPROGRESS REPORT

By

Poul Anderson

Just what the title of this will be, I don't as yet know. The discerning reader (and all my steady readers are, of course, people of rare discernment...hmm, perhaps I'd better say unusual discernment) will have noticed that we have had a Pprogress Report and a Rprogress Report. The possibilities are fascinating..something on the order of factorial 14 combinations, I think...but as this is the last one I'll have to trust that our editor Gary Nelson will make it really good.

As of this writing, the schedule of speakers and other entertainment is shaping up very nicely. There will, of course, be a talk by the Western-con guest of honor, Jack Williamson: subject unannounced as yet, but those who have heard Williamson before, or simply read his stories, know that he'll have a good deal of interest to say. Technically, I heard him at Cincinnati, but can't honestly give any forecasts on that basis. There was something wrong with the PA system, or maybe I was just sitting in a bad corner; at any rate, to me Williamson's speech read, "Mumble, mumble, urk, sep, ogglefutz mit Sauerkraut," and so forth: very interesting to the student of comparative linguistics, but a trifle discouraging to one who'd been looking forward to hearing him discuss science-fiction. However, others have assured me that it was one of the best talks given, and that acoustics at the Drake are excellent.

The SFCon guest of honor, John W. Campbell, Jr., has written that we can bill him as discussing "Mind And Machine," adding that this title is rather like "Minus to Plus Infinity." In spite of the noncommittal phrasing, every reader of Campbell's editorials, as well as those who

have been fortunate enough to hear him speak or get a letter from him, knows that his discussion will be highly original and informative, as well as phrased in a manner which is most encouraging in these days when public speaking is becoming a lost art. The management is not responsible for damage caused by flying concepts and sharp wit.

Tony Boucher, co-editor of Fantasy & Science-Fiction, will also be on the platform. Again, I don't know what he will take up, but as an experienced speaker and a man of ideas, he is certain to be interesting.

Horace Gold of Galaxy regrets that he'll be unable to attend, but his popular and stunning wife, Evelyn Paige Gold, will represent him.

Willy Ley will definitely be on the program. He'll probably tell about the newest developments in rocketry though you can't trust these all-around experts. He may suddenly start a lively discussion on the history of science and science-fiction, or reveal what's new in the Jurassic Period. Not so incidentally, I believe he's also agreed to moderate one of the bull sessions which we will have as a side dish for those who like to swap ideas.

Dr. Dean Frazer, biologist at the University of California, plans a fascinating intellectual exercise. The adjective "intellectual" is put in to reassure people like myself whose idea of exercise is three minutes of vigorous finger-bending twice a week. However, this talk will have solid thinking behind it. Hal Clement, in "Mission of Gravity," as well as other stories, postulated certain definite extraterrestrial conditions and built up a life form

which could logically exist there. Dr. Frazer will do it for still another kind of planet.

Dr. Nello Pace, researcher for the Navy on the biology of high altitudes, will discuss the latest developments in space medicine. By the way, I would like to propose some other term than "space medicine." It suggests treatment of disease by the administration of large doses of empty space. As everyone knows, empty space is not good for the human metabolism. On the other hand, a phrase like "medical care of the human being under conditions likely to be encountered in interplanetary space" sounds clumsy in any language except German, where you could make one word of it. Suggestions are welcome.

Lest all this sounds too formidable, be it here said that the Committee, in response to the wishes of what seems the majority, are planning to have most of the talks short and on the humorous side. There'll be ideas and information, but there'll also be a lot of pure fun. See the last report, which I'm too lazy to find and consult just now, for a list of other notables who will be there. It's quite a long list, you remember.

Turning to other subjects, Ben Stark has accumulated a large number of foreign science-fiction books and magazines -- some of them translations, some original. They'll be on exhibit, and most of them will be for sale. Even if you don't read Dutch or Japanese, you'll want to see what's going on overseas and, if you're a collector, to get a conversation piece for the shelf.

We've already mentioned the masquerade and what a gala event we hope to

make it. Since then, I have seen the three paintings by George Faraco, which will be given away as prizes for the best costumes. The first prize will be a large canvas, showing Earth seen from a space station; the other two are lunar landscapes. I'm not speaking as a promoter or booster, but only as a guy who likes to look at good paintings and deplores the non-existence of decent reproductions, when I say that these are very good and I wish they were mine. In fact, Karen has threatened to resign from the Committee so that she can have a chance at them. Of course, then she can't attend business meetings and eat Es Cole's cheese pie, so she's still wavering.

We also have definite promises that there will be originals by Emshwiller and the incomparable Bonestell...for exhibit only, dammit. May I repeat that no printing process ever reproduces a painting well, that you must see the original to know what the artist's real intention was. An excellent amateur, Tom Gould, will also have an exhibition, and Morris Scott Dollens' fine science-fiction photography (having seen it, I assure you it is good) will be there--possibly some of it, at least, for sale.

The well-known artist Kelly Freas is doing the cover for the program booklet, which will be in four colors. This is a place to remind prospective advertisers, fan and professional, that the deadline for copy is August 2; that any kind of copy the law allows can be reproduced; that the rates are very low; and that you should write to the Committee, Box 335, Station A, Richmond 2, Calif., about it. If you want a large public to see your ad or your greetings, there isn't much

time left to get it in.

Incidentally, a mimeographed list of recommended places to eat and things to see and do while you are in San Francisco, will be included with the booklet.

There's a chance that we can get the shell of Westinghouse's robot, Electro, for display. We have to report a couple of failures, too. Disney will not be finished with "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" in time for the convention. We also tried to get one of "Them" for exhibit, but as those who have seen the film might have guessed, all of "Them" were burned in the line of duty.

A new feature, which we hope will become another tradition, is being introduced this time. All ports of entry in San Francisco--that is, train, bus, and plane terminals--will have an official greeter. As you get off the conveyance, look around for a booth or sign welcoming you to the SFCon. Go on over. There will be someone there to extend a friendly tentacle, say hello, and give you directions for finding the hotel, and help you out generally.

Now we come to a piece of news which may be good or bad; it represents a break with tradition, we would much prefer not to do it this way, but there isn't much choice. I refer to the matter of

FINANCES

There's a general impression that a convention committee gets rich off the attendees. This is simply not true. A committee works its heads off (never mind how many heads each) for months, and is lucky if it clears enough to hand something over

to the next committee for a starter. At present, Les Cole is spending one day a week just soliciting ads to make ends meet, to say nothing of giving nearly all his evenings and holidays to letter-writing, organizing, and general Sturm und Drang. The exact figures will be given at the convention when the financial report is read, but you can get an idea from the following: Each report costs \$50 to \$60 for printing; then it must be mailed; then there is a huge amount of correspondence--all of which means that only some 40¢ is cleared on each membership dollar. Out of this 40¢, such expenses must be met as: \$150 to \$200 for printing the program booklet, \$200 for rooms, \$250 for the masquerade, etc. Registration as of this writing is not yet 500, and it is proving unprecedentedly hard to sell advertising. The plain fact is that the \$1 membership fee was established back when a dollar was worth two or three times as much as it is now.

By cutting the program and facilities to the bone, we could probably squeak by, but we want to give you the best and most varried convention possible, especially since many people will be traveling a long way to get here. We've pledged ourselves not to pass the hat or otherwise stick people. So there seems only one way in which we could add more to the program.

Everything previously mentioned is, of course, free to all who attend, except the banquet, and the price of that will not be raised. We are, however, going to sell special admission cards, which we believe most of you will want to buy. These will cost from 50¢ to \$1--in short, less than two slugs of Scotch. The exact amount hasn't been set, because we

aren't sure of one prospective item which would be a major expense. These cards will carry the following privileges:

1) Admission to a special exhibit of science-fiction and fantasy art, to be held at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. This is only a short ride by bus or streetcar from the hotel (or possibly a car pool can be arranged). The building itself is unusual, and the surroundings include parkland, gardens, museums and a magnificent view of the Pacific, the Bay, and both the Golden Gate and Bay bridges, so you'll probably want to spend some time strolling around after seeing this extensive and interesting exhibition.

2) The Universal-International movie, "This Island Earth," based on a well-known story by Raymond F. Jones. From advance accounts, the movie is excellent, and if not a world premiere will not have been released long. (There may also be other movies, some of which will be on the regular program and therefore free, but we can't say anything definite yet.)

3) Admission to the banquet at a lower rate than the set price.

4) A science-fiction opera. This is still only a possibility, though a strong one; the price of the privilege card will depend on whether we can offer this too or not. The opera, a half-hour piece by the well-known American composer Charles Hamm, is based on Ray Bradbury's "A Scent of Sarsaparilla." At present, W. D. Bond of Oakland is lining up the cast. Since the score calls for a chorus of about 16, the production is contingent on Mr. Bond's being able to assemble that many singers.

We think he will, and that this opera—its world premiere—will be one of the most unusual events ever offered a science-fiction convention. Since it will be held only two weeks before the opening of San Francisco's opera season, you may find yourself rubbing shoulders with some famous stars.

There it is. I repeat, the promised program will be there, free to all. These three or four additional items are sidelights; because we feel that all of you would like to have such entertainment, and because we could only bring it to you by making a slight additional charge, we have done so. If money should suddenly start raining down from the sky on us, we will of course cancel the admission fee. If not, I honestly think it's about the best four to eight bits' worth you have ever gotten a chance at.

That seems to wind up the reports. It's been a long haul, and there's still much to do. The Coles especially deserve a sincere vote of thanks for effort above and beyond the call of duty. The double convention will be going on for four days, and we think it will be one of the best yet. We're looking forward to seeing all of you there.

Con Notes are squeezed out this time. So as a final reminder, we wish to emphasize the following: you must have your membership cards with you, during the actual convention. Don't forget them! If you haven't made your reservations, do so now. It will soon be too late. And get those ads in. That's about all; it's up to you now. See you in a few months!

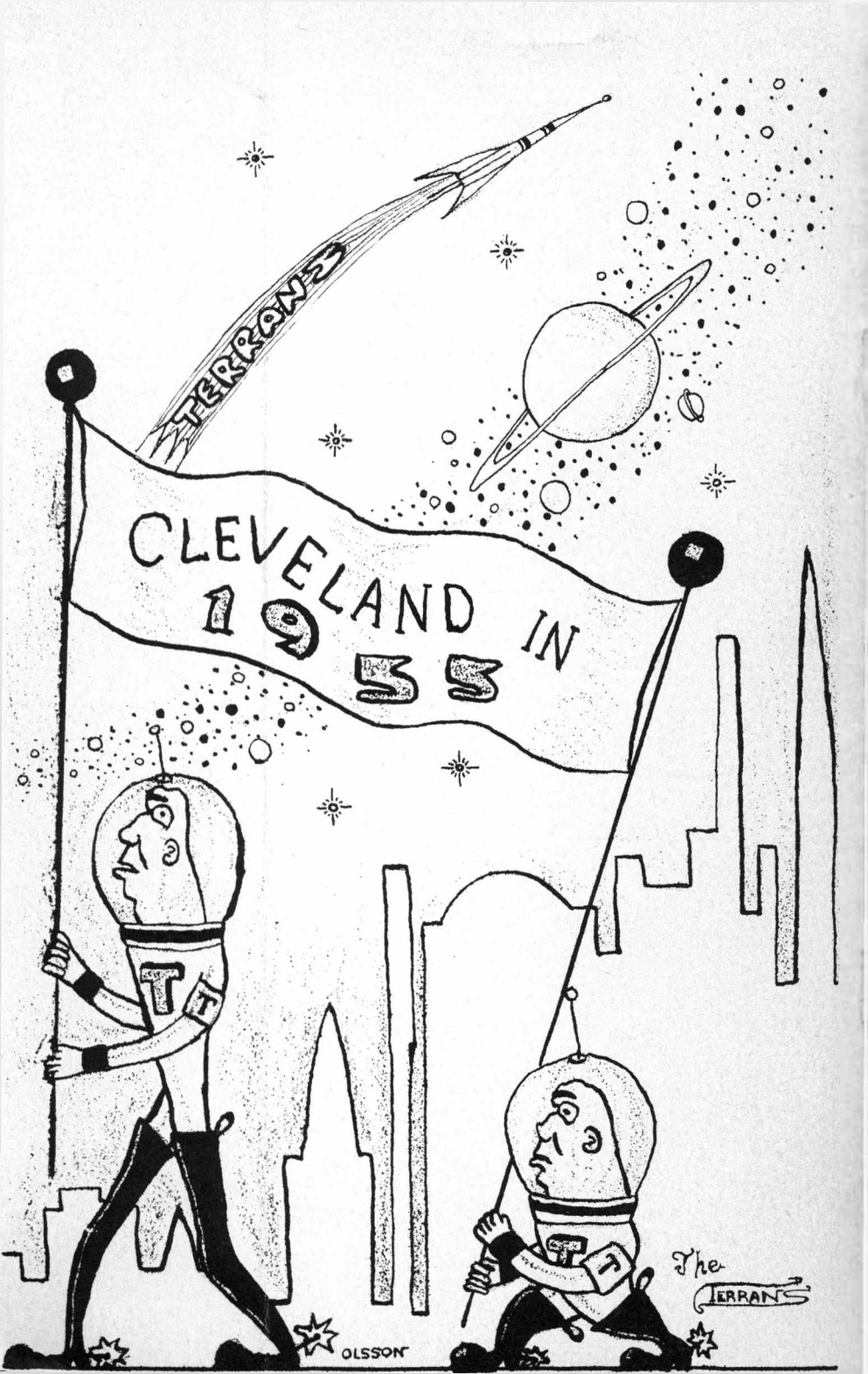


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