



View of Convention Hall (D)



Forrest J Ackerman (D)



Joe Kennedy



Milton Rothman & L.A. Eshbach (D)



PSFS Clubroom (BT)
G. De La Ree; Helen
& Geo. Pullis; Gus
Willmorth



Niel de Jack; T.
Kuslan; Tucker;
Eve Anderton (BT)



Ned McKeon &
Beak Taylor (BT)



Forry Ackerman &
Rita Dragonet (BT)



Pamela MacInnes visiting
PSFS Clubroom (D)



(L to R) Hershel Levin; Bob Madle;
Joe Kennedy; Ron Maddox; Bob Tucker;
Ron Christianson; Jack Agnew (D)



Trudy Kuslan &
Bob Tucker (BT)



Eve Anderton (BT)



(L to R) Beak Taylor - Forrest
Ackerman; Milt Rothman (D)



(L to R) Julius Unger; L.A. Eshbach;
G.H. MacGregor; A.J. Donnelly; L. H.
Honck; Paul Dennis O'Connor. (D)



Banquet: Forry Ackerman
(talking); (Foreground fac-
ing camera) Stan Mullen; (to
either side of his head)
Mrs. & Mr. David MacInnes;
Paul O'Connor has droopy eyes
fixed on Ackerman; Girl with
back to camera - Mrs. Mullen.
Others not identified. (FP)



Poker Session: (Back to Camera) Erle
Korshak; (L to R clockwise) Jack Agnew;
Bob Madle; Tom Hadley; Niel de Jack;
Ollie Saari; Art Widner, Jr - holding
out glass for another high ball -
A.E. "Bud" Waldo. (D)

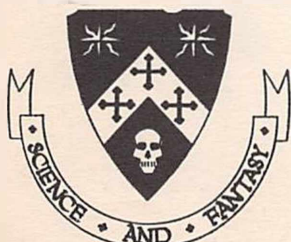


(L to R) Milton Rothman;
Alvin Brown; Melvin Kor-
shak (auctioneer) (D)

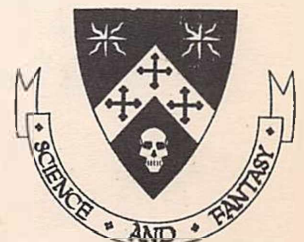
PHILCON

MEMORY BOOK

CREDITS: Photos marked:
(D) taken by Ted Dikty;
(BT) by Bob Tucker
(FP) Fantasy Press



NATIONAL FANTASY FAN
FEDERATION



NATIONAL FANTASY FAN
FEDERATION

FOLDEROL IN PHILADELPHIA

BY

ALEXANDER M. PHILLIPS

((Alexander M. Phillips, author of "The Mislaid Charm" and many other fantasy tales, is an old-time member of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society. This account of the Philcon was written by him in his official capacity of historian of the convention. Additions are the work of Milton A. Rothman, convention chairman, so that this account may be considered reasonably official.))

In retrospect, my impression of the PHILCON, the Fifth World (?) Science Fiction Convention, is one of long, rather placid months of preparation, in which all moved to a stately, deliberate tempo, followed by a sudden, brief frenzy of motion and sound, which was the convention itself, and then silence. I had the experience of one who, gliding down a tranquil, dreamy river, is suddenly plunged over and into a roaring cataract, and left gasping and astounded on a silent, barren beach. So you find me now.

Through the summer of '46, through the winter of '46, the spring of '47, and through the inevitably subsequent summer of '47, we listened, as the bi-weekly meetings of the PSFS came and went, to Milton Rothman report on "Progress of the Philcon Committee." On the 19th of January, 1947, we received the first issue (there were only three) of the PHILCON NEWS, and I was a trifle startled: things were really under way -- out there, in the days between meetings, somebody was really at work; Bob Madle had begun molding the program booklet, and was asking for ads; Milt was in there wrestling with the array of speakers, events, arrangement; out in California, Mr. Ackerman had an idea that an Englishman could be brought over to Philadelphia, and started "The Big Pond Fund;" and, our Arman E. (Bud) Waldo was launched on his long headache with hotel reservations. Tentacles and tendrils were spreading out from the PSFS clubrooms at 56th & Pine.

One touch of lightness and whimsy was introduced by someone who proposed the question, "Who is giving the PHILCON? The PSFS, or the PHILCON SOCIETY?" Will I ever, I wonder, encounter a query more academic than this? It seemed, then, that I caught echoes of the famous chicken and the egg, and, further back, of some angels and a pin-head. And I think I might have capped it by asking--- "Where is the PHILCON SOCIETY?" ((Answer: In the Charter Bank, of Philadelphia, through which passed several hundred dollars of fandom's money.))

Sometime in April or May, 1947, the second issue of the PHILCON NEWS came out. This issue, in contrast to No. 1, had, for me, a calming, a reassuring effect. The PHILCON SOCIETY (wherever it existed) was established; it was going about its proper business without apparent haste or excitement; and it had 124 members. The current of the river Time was still smooth and soothing; lulled, I lay back and drifted with it, unsuspecting its subtle, secret acceleration.

Then came the third, and last, issue of the PHILCON NEWS, late in June, and there was phrase in it that proze me: "This will be the final issue of the PHILCON NEWS," it said! And for the first time, and from there on, I felt the mighty stirrings of the irresistible current on which I now skittered onward.

Still, the 30th of August seemed a long, long way off from that date at the turn of July. The whole summer intervened. The days, and the weeks drifted by. Then, suddenly, the editors of VARIANT, the PSFS mag, were agitated bewilderingly. They would, they dramatically promised us, have the Convention Issue out on time, if it meant working all night! It did. All night, every night, for the last few days before the convention. And one of them amazed me, as I haven't been amazed since last I saw a s-f fan, by working all day, as well, in a bank! All day in a bank, running a bookkeeping machine; all night in the Prime Press offices, running a Varityper! (In reference to which you will notice the verse on page 15 of VARIANT.) The editors are, incidentally, members of the...ahem...weaker sex.

((Let us not be obscure about this; the editors of VARIANT are Allison Williams and Helen Cloukey.))

This tight-wire display held my dazzled attention all thru the last week, so that when the moment came, when the Eve of Fri., August 29th, settled with a luminous, silver-blue twilight on the office buildings of central city, I was as unprepared as in the distant days of PHILCON NEWS No. 2. I went over the brink and down into the maelstrom with a startled shriek and a threshing of limbs. It was into the Open House at our clubroom that I first plunged. Starting late, I ran into a trolley block (this only happens in Philadelphia when you're late), and was further delayed a half-hour or more, arriving at 56th & Pine about 11:30 p.m.

What I observed of the PSFS's Open House, I was obliged to absorb in about 5 minutes by the clock. I entered a maelstrom of people milling about a warm, low-ceilinged room, caught a so-brief glimpse of Forrest J Ackerman and Bob Tucker, and would have been boosted out the door on the instant, had it not been for Jim Williams. He seized the helm and steered for the back room, where I did manage to bring-to for a minute or more. Jim introduced me to Lester del Ray, who surprised me considerably. Accustomed to the towering, formal dignity of L. Sprague de Camp, the vibrant, dynamic energy of George O. Smith, and the massive majesty of Dr. David H. Keller -- the only science fiction authors I had, at that time, had the opportunity to observe -- I'll admit that I found Mr. del Rey's boyish slightness and quiet diffidence utterly unexpected.

I had, however, little time to observe them, for I suddenly found myself whirled out of the clubroom and tucked into a car, along with the McKnights, Jim Williams, and others. To the present writing, I haven't seen our clubroom since.

We landed at the home of the Goldmans, where we found, among others, Harry K. Buck and Alfred C. Prime, and I began almost at once considering how I would return to my native heath, for this was terra incognita, and Philadelphia street cars, in the outlying sections, are captious and eccentric, particularly in the early-morning hours. The problem was solved for me by Harry B., who returned a group of us to the central part of the city, after considerable fan-gab.

In town, the McKnights and I found our way to Thompson's Cafeteria, the open-all-night-and-questionably-patronized restaurant favored by such PSFS members and other assorted odd characters as linger abroad in the smaller hours. Here, we had coffee and watched a gaunt young woman evacuate the contents of her stomach upon a table and the adjacent floor. None of the other patrons appeared disturbed or interested, so I concluded that the performance was one of the quaint customs of the place. Altho the gaunt female gave the appearance of standing in considerable need of such sustenance as she might retain or acquire, she seemed to feel better afterward.

The streets, I noticed, as I finally took my way homeward, were alive with inebriates of varying degrees. I hoped that it would not prove a portent.

THE DAY THE FIRST (Afternoon Session)

As always (and I swear it is fate and not lethargy!), I was late for the opening session. Introductions were about completed when I arrived. L. Sprague de Camp, George O. Smith, Dr. E. E. Smith, Dr. David H. Keller, Bob Tucker, Ralph Milne Farley, Forrest J Ackerman, Stanley Mullen, Harry B. Moore, and others had been presented to the convention.

((Prior to Phillips' arrival, the chairman had opened the meeting with a short speech explaining the nature of the convention. Immediately following the introductions, Forrest J Ackerman read a message from Ted Carnell, explaining why he had not been able to make the trip from England, and giving the best wishes of the British fans.))

It was my good fortune, however, to arrive just in time for the fascinating talk by John W. Campbell, Jr., the featured speaker of the convention. Mr. Campbell spoke primarily of the prospect of usable, peace-time power to be derived from atomic energy.

First, Mr. Campbell asked us to distinguish between atomic energy and atomic power. Atomic energy, he pointed out, had

actually been used directly only once -- in the bomb. Atomic power, on the other hand, results from the reduction of atomic energy to energies of lower level, principally to that of electrical energy.

All commercial, or peaceful, uses of the chain reaction, according to Mr. Campbell, are planned for the employment of atomic power rather than atomic energy -- for obvious reasons of temperature, control, and the radioactivity associated with the chain reaction. In other words, the atomic energy of the chain reaction in the pile will be converted to electrical energy, which can be much more readily handled, directed, and controlled.

Mr. Campbell pointed out: Heat in an atomic pile is planned with a specific end-purpose in mind. Most of the piles so far constructed have been built for the production of plutonium for bomb purposes. The construction of a pile for commercial or power purpose would be a different thing entirely. And, as yet, our technicians know so little about the production of atomic energy and power that considerable financial hazard would be involved in the construction of such a pile. Once the pile was built and set in operation, it could not be subsequently dismantled, because, although the chain reaction can be halted easily, the pile would be a raging furnace of dangerously radioactive isotopes formed during the time that the reaction had been going. So, states Mr. Campbell, commercially, there will be a certain amount of hesitation in investing a sum like \$20,000,000 in the construction of a pile which might prove inefficient, and which could not be broken up for a rather lengthy period -- perhaps 5,000 years.

The public, Mr. Campbell observed, has shrugged aside the bomb, or closed its eyes to it, and is now interested in the constructive, the commercial applications of atomic power. Whether or not this is true, no matter how imminent or how removed from us the bomb may be, the subject of Mr. Campbell's talk remains an intriguing one, and his presentation inspiring. Perhaps our generation may be extinguished by the bomb, but the fact of atomic power opens door after door of marvelous speculation and possibility. We glance briefly down corridors and vistas of tantalizing prospects, altho we may never be permitted to explore them.

((We must not fail to mention one of the most noteworthy moments of the discussion which followed Mr. Campbell's talk. Previously, Ralph Milne Farley had proudly informed us that he had introduced into the American Legion Convention a resolution favoring the elimination of civil liberties as protection for subversive individuals. That is, freedom of speech would not be allowed as a legal defense for individuals accused of trying to overthrow the government. When Campbell's discussion moved around to political topics, Campbell stood up there on his hind legs and told Mr. Farley that he disagreed strongly, and told him why... For that, Mr. Campbell gets a hat-off from me.))

The second part of the afternoon session -- "The Editors Speak" -- I found rather slight. The only editor who did speak on the subject of his magazines was Mr. Merwin of Standard Magazines. He assured the assembled fans that THRILLING WONDER and

STARTLING were vigorous and healthy, and expecting steadily to improve the quality of their stories. He also took the opportunity to apologize for the cover illustrations, over which he asserted he had no control. The question and answer part of Mr. Merwin's appearance was enlivened in a somewhat startling manner: One of the PSFS members (and I blush to admit it) inquired of Mr. Merwin about the possibility of the revival of UNKNOWN, the discontinued magazine of Street & Smith Publications!

I should like to have had more magazines represented by their editors at the convention, but, unfortunately, Miss Gnaedinger & Mr. Wollheim failed to show up, while L. Jerome Stanton did not appear until later in the evening.

Following Sam Merwin, there was a short and violent prepared message from Edward E. Smith, in which he lambasted the science fiction editors for policies which were, he claimed, spoiling the magazines. Whither, he asked, were these policies leading the magazines?

Chairman Rothman answered that question concerning the two new Avon magazines. They were withering nowhere, having been suspended even before they got a chance to start.

The chairman then explained how he had invited fans to talk on science fiction writing, book collecting, fan affairs, etc. One fan had requested time to speak on the subject of "etc.," and so the chairman introduced Bob Tucker, who had been allotted one minute and 45 seconds in which to speak on "etc."

Tucker began by explaining the vast preparations he had performed for this talk, including going to the library and requesting information from the librarian, who fortunately knew Greek. Just as he was about to launch into the subject of "etc.," the chairman solemnly informed him that his time was up. Thereupon, Bob just as solemnly thanked the assembly and took his seat.

And now we arrive at the third part of the afternoon session, labeled in the program booklet "Introduction of resolutions and discussion of fan business." I was not a little surprised at this part of the proceedings. (I was continually being surprised!) Although this is the first World Science Fiction Convention it has been my luck to attend, I have been present at several of the Eastern Conferences held here in Philadelphia. And I have read Jack Speer's account of the Pacificon of last year, as well as other reports of earlier world conventions. Through both my own experiences and by this reading, I had come to expect the business meeting of any science fiction convention to be a thing of sometimes wild excitement. But, both this first afternoon and the final business meeting which concluded the convention were conducted on a plane of almost unrelieved placidity, which at times seemed to verge upon indifference. Why? Are we getting older? Is fandom growing more mature? Are world conditions weighing on us? Or were the fans just tired?

((Maybe they were hungry.))

The first subject brought up for discussion was the disposal of convention funds, and suggestions were offered and discussed in such a lackadaisical manner that our chairman, Milt Rothman, remarked on it with a surprise of his own.

All resolutions proposed in this first business meeting were only to be introduced here. Action was to be taken in the final business meeting, on the third day of the convention, allowing the interim for consideration.

To eliminate suspense, we will skip ahead and note herewith the finally accepted disposition of the convention profits.

To the treasury of the PSFS: \$100.

To the 1948 World SF Convention: \$50.

To buy books and magazines for a veteran more or less permanently quartered in a veterans hospital (proposed by Alex Osheroff): \$15.

The remainder of the profits (approximately \$135) to be divided equally between the NFFF and the Fantasy Foundation.

Total profits, after receipt of debts still outstanding, approximately \$300.

Altho that section of fandom which habitually attends conventions seems uncompromisingly split on the propriety of taking any official recognition of the unique policy of the Ziff-Davis fantasy publications, it still received Jack Speer's resolution relating to this policy with only a measured amount of conflict and excitement. I have this proposed resolution by me as I compose, and it is indeed a stern and rigorous accusation. Various fans arose and expressed opinions for and against official adoption of this resolution, but with nothing of the fire with which this schism has flared at other fan gatherings. ((With the exception of a very emotional harangue by Guy Kendner at the final session.))

Finally, an alternative resolution, approaching the matter from a different angle, was ordered written for consideration on the occasion of the concluding business meeting, and A.M. Phillips was delegated to prepare this alternative.

This concluded the afternoon session of the Day the First of the Fifty World Science Fiction Convention.

Now, I had time to examine the meeting hall, which, as I had already noted, was comfortably large enough for the members of the convention, and for the art work and publications that were exhibited along the walls. The room was quite long -- 100 feet or more -- extending east and west, with windows in the east wall, behind the speakers' platform, and looking out on 39th St. The one door we used was set in the north wall, and conveniently located with reference to elevators and hotel entrances.

The hall was painted a powder blue, trimmed with white, and set off with strikingly red drapes. The ceiling was set with white bas-relief ornamentation and supported white-painted chandeliers in baroque style. The general effect was very French and elegant. The air-conditioner, while slightly erratic, kept the place comfortable the majority of the time.

A fairly large exhibit of fantasy art was hung along the walls, and there were a number of fanzines on the tables beneath. Several of the fantasy publishers had attractive exhibits of their wares arranged, Eshbach's Fantasy Press uncontestedly leading this field, with a splendid array of art, a spot-light, and a publishing surprise: "Of Worlds Beyond," an anthology of papers on the writing of science fiction and fantasy by a constellation of well-known star authors.

All of this I had to take in very hurriedly, for by this time it was past six p.m., and I had to get home for dinner and return for the evening session -- the auction. And, as is always the case in these affairs, I never did find time thereafter to examine this material with the attention I should like to have given it. It had been raining heavily during the afternoon, but when I left the hall the evening was glowing with sunlight, and the night promised to be brilliantly clear.

((A few words concerning the exhibits might be interesting. Against the long end of the hall was a table upon which publishers and sellers laid out their wares. Prime Press had its samples of "The Mislaid Charm," "Venus Equilateral," and "Lithconia." Vanguard Records had samples of their first few releases, including "Song of Worlds Unseen," by Chan Davis. Fantasy Press was off by itself at the rear of the hall, where Eshbach and his boys had set up a wall-full of illustrations from "Spacehounds" and "The Forbidden Garden," upon which they focussed one of the hotel's spotlights.

Hung on the walls were drawings by Lawrence for "The Minimum Man," from Famous Fantastic Mysteries, including the cover illustration. Several Cartier drawings were up -- mostly from "Old Doc Methuselah," in the current Astounding. There were also several assorted Finlay drawings. Rogers was represented by the cover illustration for "Children of the Lens," but this was still in wraps, and labeled "not to be opened until the auction." Several fans had their work exhibited: namely, Russell Swanson, of Philadelphia, John and Gordon Cockroft, of California, and Ralph Reyburn Phillips, of Oregon. Swanson's painting was a striking scene of Saturn as seen from one of its moons, and was hung at the head of the hall, behind the speakers' stand.

As a whole, the place looked quite respectable, and it was a shame to tear down all of the stuff for the auction.))

Evening Session:

I arrived a trifle late, but the auction apparently had been not long under way. The program lists "Messages from publishers"

as a preceding event on the evening schedule. If there were any such, I heard no mention of it.

((I shall never trust Phillips' sense of elapsed time. A "trifle" late, he says. The publishers began talking at 8 p.m. and kept it up for well over an hour. I'd expected maybe three or four of them, and there were about seven. There was the Prime Press, The Hadley Press, Fantasy Press, Avalon Press, Shasta Publications, New Collectors Group, Vanguard Records, and a couple of others. All of this time they occupied in telling of new publications!))

We had, for the auction, two auctioneers -- Sam Moskowitz & Erle Korshak -- and, altho both were vigorous and able, the bidding appeared to me to run with some reluctance. The highest price received was \$31 from Tom Hadley for a Paul cover painting, illustrating "The Moon Devils," by John Beynon Harris, in the Apr. '34 Wonder Stories, one of Paul's finest pieces of work.

Erle Korshak, I recall, at one time became so enthusiastic that he unwittingly attempted to auction off some of the Fantasy Advertiser's display drawings, which were not for sale! A long wail from the publisher set that right. And again, Mr. Korshak made this unforgivable pun: "This is a Keller illustration, and it really is a keller!"

A great deal of the art work put up for auction I thought really superior, and was frequently surprised at the slackness of bidding on some of it. I particularly liked some of the abstractions by Ralph Reyburn Phillips, and did bid on one set, but was quickly outbid. (On the piece I liked, at least, the bidding was not slow! Perhaps I should have bid on all!)

There was one other abstraction that particularly took the eye. It consisted, as well as I could make out from where I sat, of six or seven particolored blobs which appeared to be bleeding a polychromatic fluid, the whole against a palish background. Helen Cloukey, with a frivolity astonishing in so austere and forceful a lady, suggested as a title for this painting: "The Dance of the Broken Easter Eggs," and I must admit to seeing a certain appropriateness in the suggestion.

At any rate, throughout the auction the audience appeared interested, and were completely attentive to each painting or book put up for bidding. Glancing about, I even noticed one gentleman, off to one side, observing the fine points of the pieces with the aid of a small pocket telescope.

((There were three heavy spenders at this auction: Tom Hadley, Dr. C.L. Barrett, and Jim Williams, who was bidding both for himself and for Alfred Prime. The rest of the boys who picked up the left-overs appeared not to have too much money to throw around. And yet, when I added the thing up the auction turned out to have brought in \$360. That is, it will add up to that when a check comes in from one of the boys.))

Benson Dooling, the PSFS's most intellectual and decadent

member, strolled in at some time during the proceedings, and I enjoyed a moment or two of conversation with him. He disapproved heartily of the entire event, threatening, so revolted was he, to depart forever not only from the convention but from the PSFS as well. Instead, on his way out he encountered some convivial spirits, and was launched on a complete and unbroken, altho entirely underground and "unconventional," attendance at our convention. I saw him, I believe, only thrice thereafter, and then only briefly. He had, it turned out later, one of the best times of his life, altho occasionally but dimly remembered.

About midnight, becoming uncomfortably aware of the increasing heat and humidity of the convention hall (the air conditioning is apparently turned off in the evening), several other PSFSers and myself strolled outside and sat for an hour in one of the member's car, talking of stef and fan affairs. And thereafter home and to bed.

Upstairs, in the hotel rooms of the delegates, we in the car gathered, the night was filled with music, and the cares that infest the day were being properly taken care of.

((This was as much a part of the convention as the regular meetings. For it was in the hotel rooms that the boys let down their hair -- where high and mighty editors sat on the floor singing bawdy songs with writers and fans, and where a glass in the hand was worth two in the sink.

Tom Hadley had a suite. Fantasy Press had a couple of adjoining rooms. Jim Williams and George O. Smith had a double room representing the Prime Press. You wandered back and forth between 757, 655, and 696 until it seemed that the hotel was a second home, that you had been there for aeons, that you never wanted to leave.

In any one of these rooms could be found John W. Campbell, Theodore Sturgeon, Lester del Rey, Chan Davis, George O. Smith, L. Jerome Stanton, William Tenn, Bruce Elliott (who writes The Shadow), and an assortment of lesser drunks.

Also wandering about the hotel were mobs of young boys, also drunk -- but they belonged to a fraternity which was also holding a convention. In a way, this was fortunate for us -- since any of our rowdiness was covered up by their much more extensive activity.

Those of the science fiction group who did not join in the drinking upstairs could be found sitting down in the convention hall, chattering away. Usually in this group were Edward Elmer Smith and David H. Keller, PhD and MD, respectively.

Say what you will -- it was the upstairs parties which really made the convention for some of the people -- and it was music to my ears when on the last day John Campbell said to me, "I had a better time than I'd thought possible."))

The first day of the convention -- gone.

THE DAY THE SECOND

Afternoon Session:

For this I arrived a shade late again. In the foyer to the Convention Room I found Al Pepper, Frank Goldman, and a few other lost souls wandering back and forth about the small room in a markedly lost or strayed manner. Inside, I could hear L. Sprague de Camp speaking. I thought those in the foyer refrained from entering the convention room in order not to interrupt the speaker, and, impressed with such consideration, and taking such good precept, my native hue of resolution was sicklied over with the pale cast of thought. My current toward the door to the convention room turned awry and lost the name of action, and I came to a halt as indecisive as the others.

That such delicacy was utterly unwarranted was quickly revealed, as various delegates wandered idly as clouds in and out, but, before I entered and took a seat, I had a few words of conversation with Joe Selinger, one-time PSFS member who last year moved to the West Coast. When Joe lived here in Philadelphia, the World Convention was held in Los Angeles, so he hitch-hiked west. Then he moved to California, and the convention was held here. He hitch-hiked east. The next convention being set for Toronto, I suppose it's up to Joe to move to New Orleans.

Mr. de Camp's talk was based upon the research he had performed in connection with his new book on occultism, which will be on sale shortly. It concerned his contacts, in pursuit of this research, with various groups operating here in the United States -- the astrologers, numerologists, the Rosicrucians, the Theosophists, the Yogi, and the like.

Occultism, Mr. de Camp revealed, is far from being defunct, even in these opening days of the Atomic Age -- and in some few cases -- such as that of astrology -- it approaches the field of big business.

Discussion after the talk was rapid and interesting, with Mr. de Camp exposing a number of the tricks by which adherents of these "isms" are deceived. Mind readers, telepathists, and the like in vaudeville also employ interesting and clever subterfuges in the performance of their feats. It was emphasized that the only person qualified to conduct a real investigation into the veracity of alleged occultists is a professional magician -- for the tricks possible are so obscure that an untrained person, even a scientist, would be unable to see thru them.

Larry Benedict, our most patient PSFSer, wanted to know which of all the occulties made the most money, and was informed that astrology unquestionably led the field in this respect. Whereupon, Larry asked what was the best way for an ambitious young man to get started in this line! Well, now, Civil Service does not pay any too well, either....

The next event on this afternoon's program is listed as: "Discussion: 'Is Science Catching Up With Science Fiction?' to

be conducted by Chan Davis." This discussion might have twisted and its way into almost any of the major sciences. As chance would have it, it settled on an aspect or aspects of the biological sciences -- its alienness, the difficulty of communicating and perhaps of recognizing such alien life as life. The fans seemed to feel that if as and when man begins interplanetary or interstellar exploration he will be seeking, insofar as life forms are concerned, creatures like himself. The consensus of opinion, I gathered, was that weird, monstrous life forms, if encountered, would have little interest for any but the technician.

For myself, I cannot agree. One of the things which make other people interesting and intriguing to me is their difference, the mystery of their motivations, of their behavior, of their philosophical response to their environments. Further, the probably forever unknowable consciousness of the lower animals -- the dog, the cat, the ape and monkey -- of necessity so vastly more alien, so tremendously further removed from my own, or that of any human creature I could observe, has been for me a tantalizing locked box for many years. How then, with a creature utterly, basically alien? A creature whose only common environmental factor, possibly, is the very cosmos itself. Could I communicate (and safely!) with such an intelligent creature, I'm sure I'd settle down to one of the most absorbedly interesting hours of my life!

Turning to mutations, the conclusions reached seem to indicate that mutations will increase for various reasons, but that the chance of such mutations being beneficial is extremely slight. Mr. Campbell pointed out that mutations are much more likely to occur among the higher -- rather than the lower -- animals, since the lower you go in the scale of evolution, the less affected by radiation are the individuals. Mr. Campbell liked the effect to that resulting from altering simple and complex blueprints; a change in a simple print is much less likely to radically effect the organization and performance than a similar slight change in a very complex print. ((Maybe so, but the percentage change would be greater.))

Discussion on both of these topics was prolonged and interesting, but unfortunately had the effect of crowding the second half of the afternoon's program.

The second half began with Erle M. Korshak's very entertaining and well-presented talk on "The Collecting and Enjoyment of Fantasy Literature." This part of the program I believe I enjoyed as much as any, which I find surprising since I am not a collector. The explanation lies, I think, in Mr. Korshak's thorough and scholarly preparation. The one fault I found with the talk was not entirely to be laid at Mr. Korshak's door. That fault was the rapidity with which he fired the names of rare and obscure science fiction and fantasy books at us, but since Mr. Korshak had a limited time and a large number of items to present, he could hardly have done otherwise.

((Korshak is another guy with no concept of time. Before he spoke he assured me that he didn't think he had enough material to fill a half hour. He spoke for at least 45 minutes and was still going strong when I had to squelch him.))

Although I am no Lovecraft fan, I found Mr. Korshak's Lovecraft curiosa very interesting. That original edition of "The Shunned House," of which 12 were sold and 170 some remain, had indeed an odd history.

Mr. Korshak gave us a list of rare and very rare fantasy books, bringing prices from \$100 on down, with interesting sidelights on numbers of the items. I made some sort of an attempt to record the names he gave, but soon gave it up as hopeless. Mrs. Keller, who had the next seat to mine, was no more successful than I in getting all the titles, nor were other members of the audience, for requests to repeat and spell were frequent.

I shall list here below such titles as I did manage to get, in order to give the reader some idea of the type of material discussed, and will at the same time ask the reader to excuse such errors as may appear.

The Roger Sapphire	The Pale Egg	(All by
The Weird	The White Wedding	M.P. Shiel)
The Isle of Lies	The Evil That Men Do	

The Swoop, or How Clarence Saved England, by P.G. Wodehouse
The Flying Cows of Biloxi, by Benson Bidwell
Some Women of the University, by Christopher Blaire
Gold Like Glass, by Frederick Carter.
Synzoia: A Voyage of Discovery into the Inside of
The Earth, by Adam Seaborn (J. Simms)
Tales of Terror, by Monk Lewis

There were far more than these I managed to catch, and many sounded quite interesting. All, however, appeared to be very scarce. ((Korshak, saving the most scarce items for the last, began approaching the stage where only a few copies of each book were known to be in existence. He mentioned one item of which only two copies were known -- one in a certain library, and the other in another library. Whereupon a member of the audience quickly announced that he possessed a copy, also.

Following Mr. Korshak, the Eastern Science Fiction Association presented a series of speakers, leading off with Dr. Keller, who gave a fascinating series of reminiscences of the early days of science fiction. Gernsback, said Dr. Keller, had the keenest appreciation of what a science fiction story should be, and I suspect most of the early fans will agree. Farnsworth Wright is regarded by Dr. Keller as the finest editor of weird fiction we ever had in America.

Joe Kennedy, of the ESFA, next gave a brief, but clear and knowledgeable talk on amateur fan publications, and the afternoon session closed with a very good defense of the "series" stories in science fiction, given by a gentleman who has just recently discovered fandom, although he has been a reader for some years. Unfortunately, his name I did not catch, and subsequently forgot to ask Sam Moskowitz for it.

Evening Session:

Dinner this evening I obtained in the neighborhood of the hotel, and so was hardly late at all. This was the evening for fan entertainment, emceed'd by L. Jerome Stanton, associate editor of Astounding, who had been volunteered for the job. Tops for me in the entertainment was Milt Rothman and his "Ritual Fire Dance". (That composition happens to be one of my favorites, and I like Milt's piano playing.) Next, put me down for Phil Klass (alias William Tenn) and his "fan mail." In presentation and subject matter it was practically unlimited hilarity. What but a recording of this? It certainly deserves preservation.

George O. Smith did his "splitting a human (and invisible) hair" pantomime, winding up with sewing his fingers together with the (still invisible) hair. L. Jerome Stanton and Theodore Sturgeon combined on guitar and banjo to unwind a couple of very interesting blues numbers. Following this, there were two songs by the young lady who was with Sturgeon. (This is very poor reporting, but I fail to recall her name. I also fail to recall the names of the songs she sung. One of them had words by Ted Sturgeon and music by Chan Davis, and is connected with a story by Sturgeon appearing in the November Astounding. The other song was an old ballad, very beautiful, and sung very beautifully, with accompaniment by Sturgeon on the guitar.)

Chan Davis concluded the entertainment with presentations of three original piano compositions: "Song of Worlds Unseen", by Chan Davis, "Noise" by Jim Blish, and "To the Philcon," by Chan Davis. These were in the modern idiom, and quite interesting.

The entire entertainment was wonderfully received by the audience, who could have gone for twice as much.

The entertainment concluded, I wandered about the hall a bit, regarding this and that, and then betook my way homeward, traveling part of the way with Mrs. Williams, whom Jim, with characteristic expansiveness, had left in the foyer and completely forgotten.

((The second night marked the high spot in the convention's merriment. A gabfest continued in the convention hall until two AM, at which time I closed the door. How long they talked in the hotel lobby, I don't know. Up in the Hadley-Eshbach-Williams suites, the drinking continued apace. One of my happiest memories is of John Campbell and Chan Davis firing felthy limericks at each other with machine-gun rapidity, while occasionally Benson Dooling would rouse himself out of his saturated stupor to chant a limerick in his own inimitable style.

Another moment that must be mentioned occurred just before the entertainment program. I had started to discuss with Chan Davis the idea of scientists working for the military forces. This expanded into general political discussion, and somehow John Campbell got into the thing. I was called away on some piece of business, and when I came back there was a large crowd gathered around Chan Davis and John Campbell who were going at it tooth and nail. This was a clash between two of the most dynamic characters I have ever

seen, and the space around them was filled with fields of force, high-potential electricity, and the smell of ozone and burning sulphur.

It was a little bit after this that the two were tossing the limericks at each other.))

THE DAY THE LAST

Afternoon Session

For this, the last lecture and business session of the convention, I arrived just late enough to miss George C. Smith, which astonished me considerably since I was not more than 15 minutes late. (((!!! The meeting itself was over 15 minutes late in getting started)

Subsequently I challenged George with not having spoken at all, and he claimed that he had spoken for not over 10 minutes, and suffered from stage fright throughout! George insisted his scientific armament was utterly outclassed by the big guns of such as Chan Davis, John Campbell, Willy Ley, and Thomas Gardner. Knowing something of George's enormous and ready knowledge, I concluded that the rest of us must be equipped with cap pistols.

Then came the Wagnerian, the incredible, the ubiquitous Willy Ley. He has echoed around my horizons for many years. Before the War, when I had interest and some time for the natural sciences, I was perennially surprised to find articles by Willy Ley in almost all its fields -- paleontology, zoology, ornithology, in problems of evolution, in curious of evolutions and in practically everything else. Rocketry, the physical sciences, astronomy, apparently, were not large enough for this amazing giant! And then, when I'd gotten involved in fandom I began hearing legends which I pictured him as a kind of Teutonic Paul Bunyan!

Well, here he was, massive in physical appearance, and Germanically massive in manner.

The "Symposium on Interplanetary Travel," as it is listed in the program, was divided into two parts. Mr. Ley spoke first, on the advances, the problems, and the prospects of the chemically-driven space-rocket. The conclusion with which Mr. Ley presented us was that, with present chemical fuels Man cannot place a rocket on the moon. The next advance, he told us, will be the Navy Neptune which will reach a height of something over 200 miles, just beyond our atmosphere. The fact that this rocket will leave our atmosphere will give it the distinction of being the first rocket to enter interplanetary space.

However, Mr. Ley pointed out, if Man cannot at present equip and fuel a moon messenger to start from earth, he could launch one from a Moon Station, if it were established about 400 miles out. At 4 kilometers per second, which is possible, the mass ratio is 9.1 which would allow short run rockets to carry small amounts of excess fuel to the Moon Station, where it could be accumulated for the big jump.

The general impression Mr. Ley left with me was that the Moon Messenger is, in one way or another, not too far in the future. Deferrent, of course, to whatever casual war may be in the chronological neighborhood!

(The universal science-fiction fan's dream? --- if the great, dignified, mature, omniscient, benign Nations of the Earth spent their energies in cracking interplanetary space, instead of each other into small drab and guady bits?)

Dr. Gardner then gave us some idea of the possibilities and problems of using a pile of rocket propulsion. The pile, he said, could be approximately 200 lbs in weight, with a 50% concentration of U235. Dr. Gardner's idea is to use a combination of jet and rocket, the jet to be used in the atmosphere until a speed of 1 mile per second had been attained in the high reaches of the atmosphere; the ship then to emerge into outer space and convert to rockets. The atomic pile would be used as a heat source -- the mass fuel for the rocket being hydrogen peroxide. The biggest problem, of course, is the shielding of the pile.

As may be imagined, both of these speakers unleashed a torrent of discussion, most of it far too rapid and technical for me to understand, let alone record. Rocket planes, it was brought out, are highly inefficient, simply because they do not travel fast enough -- the faster the rocket moves, the higher is the efficiency of its fule. ((Definition of "efficiency," please?))

And there was a lengthy period spent on the problems of the effects of heat and abrasion on rocket tubes. All of it was interesting -- and more; we in the audience, although we might follow only vaguely, did catch glimpses of those minds at work among us now at planning the future, and possible something of that future itself.

With the close of the discussion period, and the intermission, the end of the lecture part of the convention had arrived; there remained only the final business meeting and the banquet. I could again feel Time closing in. This had been without doubt the finest, the best planned, science fiction convention I'd ever attended, and I was reluctant to let it go. And rumor had it that the extra-curriculata (if there is such a word?) had set a new high in all-out, I-can-let-go-with-both-hands fun.

And yet, and yet, I had, and have, the feeling that the Fifth World Science Fiction Convention is but the predecessor of better, finer, more delightful, and more entertaining conventions to come, for which it has but set a pattern and example. (At any rate, I won't be historian at later conventions, and have to sit and take notes all through the sequence of events.)

During the intermission I went out to look for somebody, and was gone for but a very short period, yet when I returned, the matter of the disposition of the convention profits (already given herein) had been settled, and the final business meeting well under way.

((A committee of three--Jack Speer, Sam Moskowitz, and Henry Seplman -- had been assigned to draw up a plan for the profit dis-

position. This plan was approved unanimously by the convention.))

The matter of proportionate representation at conventions was brought up by Jack Speer, but was defeated. The purpose of this was to weight the votes of delegates according to their geographical location when electing a site for the next convention, in order to prevent the large bloc of local fans from keeping the conventions in one part of the country permanently.

The business of the resolution condemning the editorial honesty of our wayward professional magazine, and the milder alternate resolution came up for voting and engendered the most emotional heat I observed throughout either of the business sessions. But by comparison with earlier conventions I've attended this was but a very slow boil. It was concluded by adopting neither, but tabling, instead, the whole problem until next year. (Fandom apparently hopes, and thinks, the whole thing will go away by that time.)

((This wound up the business part of the convention, and the hall was cleared to make things ready for the banquet. Just prior to the preceding paragraph it should have been mentioned that the site for the next convention was voted on. Bob Stein nominated Milwaukee, and John Millard spoke for Toronto. After some discussion concerning import duties and how they would affect the business of dealers and publishers, Toronto was chosen for the next convention.

They had such a large majority that it made the talk on proportional representation a waste of time.

Jack Speer certainly had a busy hour. He was in on every piece of business brought up, and at the same time was endeavoring to mimeograph a copy of his resolution. He had brought my machine to the hall, intending to put out some sort of daily bulletin, and at the last minute had discovered that there was no paper to be obtained, all the stores being closed.))

THE BANQUET AND FAREWELL

I had non-science-fiction friends coming to the banquet, and so hung about the lobby until they arrived, watching legionnaire stragglers from the American Legion convention of the previous week wandering into the hotel to register. How did they get over here, and where were they going? That hotel certainly led a busy life, what with us, the young fraternity crowd who had been raising merry hell, and now the legionnaires!

My friends arrived and hauled me off to the bar -- the first time, I believe, I visited that particular adjunct since I arrived -- and there we remained until extracted at 7 PM by our table mates, with considerable haste and hurry. We entered the banquet hall and took our seats, and discovered that all haste and hurry had been much too optimistic -- we didn't actually get anything to eat before 8 o'clock. It turned out that there were two dinners going on at the same time, and only enough

waiters for one.

George O. Smith, unable to endure this wait (have you ever seen George eat?) set on to the palm leaf table decorations, but found them rather tasteless even with salt and pepper. Then, somehow, our table of nine became possessed of one fruit cup, and the nine of us proceeded to eat it. It was good, especially after waiting so long, but it only went around the table twice.

Then there was another long wait, enlivened by impromptu entertainment by Dr. Keller and various fans, some of it very good. Although hungry, the crowd seemed in excellent spirits.

Finally, and at last, the meal began, and whether it was because I had been cunningly prepared through semi-starvation by the management, or because it was really well-selected and cooked, I found it surprisingly tasty.

At the conclusion Milt Rothman called for a few final words from various authors and fans. Dr. Smith spoke for several minutes on the background of the Lensman stories, and Fred Pohl, Lester del Rey, Bob Tucker, Sam Moskowitz, and several others made the usual sort of remarks that people make upon such occasions.

Then there was the awkward moment of disengagement and good-bye, of the vague, dim sense of sadness, of something ended, and the Fifth World Science Fiction Convention was over. People were streaming towards the door; already many had gone. Many to whom I had intended to speak, and never had. There had been so many things I had intended doing, and where had the time gone? It seemed incredible, now, that we PSFSers had been looking forward to, and planning this thing for a full year.

The convention crowd in halls and lobby now had a broken, scattered look, hurrying for exits and trains with luggage, cameras, and like impedimenta.

My non-science fiction friends drew me back to the bar, and there I made one last acquaintance of the convention -- Tom Hadley, the publisher, whom I had never met, although he had previously been to the PSFS clubroom.

Although our stay at the bar was brief, when we came out the janitors were already at work cleaning out the room in which the convention had assembled. It was the note of mortality -- the final, definite, and conclusive Curtain.

I went out into the cool, dark night, and home to bed.

FINIS

SURIANO FUND

When Alex Osheroff, Treas. of the Eastern Science-Fiction Asscc. wrote to Arthur Leo Zaget (stf author) Zaget told of Joe Suriano.

Joe Suriano is an ex-GI located in Ward 3-D, Vet's Hosp., Bronx, N.Y. Zaget, among his other activities is at the head of an organization formed to help GI writers get back on their feet. In his excursions through the wards Zaget was attracted to a bed littered with science-fiction periodicals. This was the bed of Joe Suriano, paralyzed from the waist down by a wound incurred in combat. Almost skin and bones Suriano's only exercise is obtained by chinning himself on a swing-like device suspended from the ceiling. Constantly in pain, his one remaining interest in life was science-fiction and in this connection he well-remembered the name of Arthur Leo Zaget.

At the Fifth World Science-Fiction Convention, Milton A. Rothman, Chairman, appointed Sam Moskowitz to administer the Joe Suriano Fund (\$15 of convention profits). Many believe that the setting up of this fund marks another step in the maturity of science-fiction fandom. A fandom which can take some concerted action to help one of their own in trouble.

Moskowitz administered the fund as follows:
1/ Books supplied at dealers prices (Suriano was already receiving magazines). 2/ Selections based on Zaget's observations. 3/ No published titles from Fantasy Press, New Collectors Group, or Prime Press as they were donating copies of them. 4/ Sent in installments to assure a more worthwhile quality selection.

Group #1: Best of Science Fiction (Groff Conklin); Pilgrims Through Space and Time (Bailey). Group #2: Slan (Van Vogt); Mightiest Machine (Campbell); Group #3: Adventures in Time and Space (McComas & Healy); Skull Face & Others (Howard); Mr. Mergenthwinkers Lobblies (Bond) Total expenditure \$15.05. This amount, while including postage to Suriano, does not include any of Moskowitz's own expenses in gathering the books, etc. The finally package was mailed in appropriate Xmas wrappings. All packages were prominently addressed as "FROM THE FIFTH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION."

The total retail value of the books is \$24.73.

(Editor's Note:

May we compliment Sam Moskowitz for a job well and efficiently done.)

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THANK

Thanx are due to the following:

Milton A. Rothman, Convention Chairman, and

A.M. Phillips for the official write-up of the Convention.

Joe Kennedy for the drawings of personages and the "Lowlights" writeup.

John Cockroft for the cover drawing.

Bob Tucker, Erle Korsak, Ted Dikty, Lloyd Eshback (Fantasy Press) PHOTOS

YOU

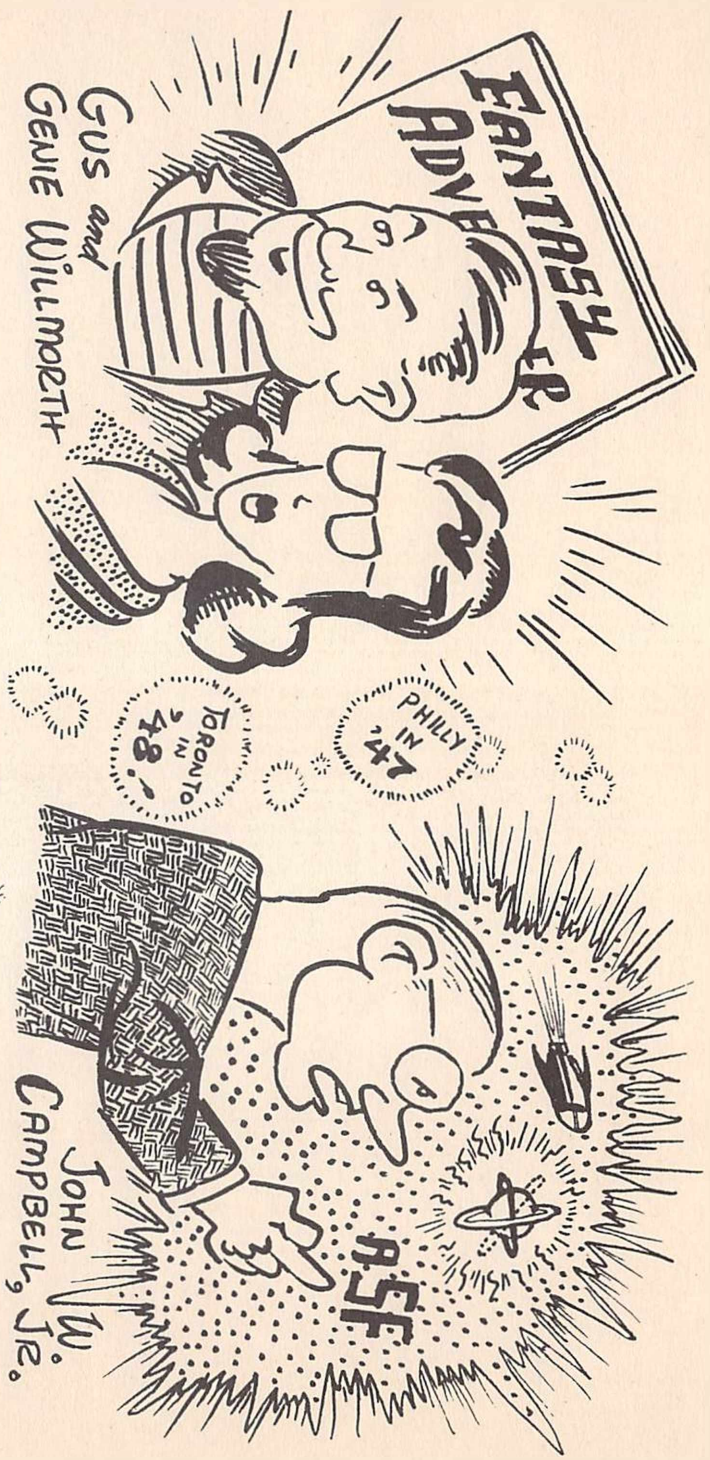
K.M. Carlson for gathering and mailing as well as helping where ever he could.

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Don Critchfield and Ray Ramsey for help in assembling.

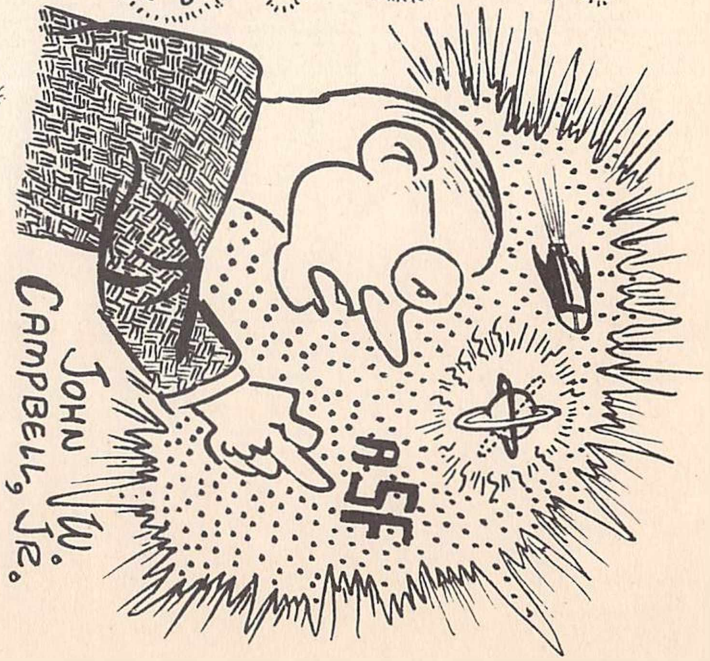
Walter Dunkelberger for mimeographing, assembling, etc.

-oOo-



CONVENTION CELEBRITIES

by KENNEDY WITH APOLOGIES TO THE VICTIMS!



LOWLIGHTS OF THE PHILCON

BY JOE KENNEDY

According to veteran fans who should know what they're talking about, the Fifth World Science Fiction Convention in Philadelphia was the best affair of its kind to date. While I've never attended a previous "world" convention, it wouldn't surprise me if that opinion should prove to be the consensus of fandom as a whole. Of one thing, however, I am certain -- I've never spent a more enjoyable Labor Day weekend in my life.

A successful convention obviously stems from sound planning and capable leadership. For supplying these vital factors, Chairman Milt Rothman and the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society deserve the heartfelt thanks of every Philcon attendee.

Perhaps, too, the success of the affair can be attributed to still another quality: the Philcon was the most friendly fan gathering I've ever attended. The supposedly traditional fights, feuds, and fireworks which have marred past conventions was strangely absent. When Ralph Milne Farley announced that he proposed an amendment to the United States Constitution which would outlaw "un-American" activities, a heated political discussion seemed inevitable. But by the tacit consent of the gathering, the entire matter was dropped -- and the session became once more a science-fictional one. When arguments about a proposed anti-Shaver resolution showed signs of becoming bitter, the whole subject was tabled until next year's Convention, with the resounding approval of the majority; yet even those who disagreed with the move were good sports about it.

Attendance records are incomplete, but I'd estimate that upwards of 150 writers, artists, editors, fans, readers, and collectors showed up at one time or another. Probably at no session did the audience much exceed 100, with a couple averaging as low as 50 when the discussion waxed too technical and/or the listeners got hungry.

This, then, will be a highly informal account of the proceedings, as seen through the eyes of one fan. While lack of space, and a gnawing suspicion that I'll be repeating a lot of what has already been said elsewhere, will preclude going into great detail, the idea of this report is to take you behind the scenes ... to bull-sessions over sandwiches, and personal gab-fests with celebrities ... and, all in all, to delve into the "lowlights" of the convention, which frequently can be as much fun as what goes on inside the meeting hall itself.

It all began on the warm, late-summer afternoon of Friday, August the 29th. Five fans -- Gerry de la Ree, Phil Froeder, Ron Christensen, Ron Maddox, and myself -- were crammed into Maddox's wheezing flivver, circling the outskirts of Philadelphia. Christensen had a jar of plastic bubble fluid, was busily engaged in blowing monstrous bubbles and tossing them out the window at passers-by.

When for the umpteenth time we were confronted by signs announcing THIS WAY TO THE AQUARIUM or JUST AROUND THE BLOCK TO THE ZOO, Maddox coaxed the shuddering auto to a grinding stop in the middle of a spacious park. Froeder hollered to a by-stander: "How do we get to Philadelphia?"

"You're in it," was the reply.

An hour later we were disembarking across the street from the Penn-Sheraton. Maddox commenced flinging baggage out of the trunk and onto the pavement. I was stretching my legs when I glanced up to see two sad-faced, bespectacled youths heading straight toward us.

"Aha," I thought. "The welcoming committee."

The chap in the lead waited until he was about a yard away. Then he shouted, "Are you S. A. R. ?"

"Huh?" I gaped. "Nope, we're N. F. F. F. !"

After w'd lugged our baggage into the hotel lobby, we discovered from the bulletin board that the Sigma Alpha Rho fraternity was holding a convention at the same time as ours. The Sigmas were a delightful bunch. In the middle of the night they'd run up and down the halls, banging lustily upon the doors with what must've been base-ball bats, and flinging garbage cans from the seventh floor.

De la Ree and yours truly shared a room on the third story, and a surprisingly neat lay-out it was -- complete with twin beds, phone, tub and shower, a radio, and other necessities of life. As soon as we'd checked in, we cooled off with a shower; then set out to look for other signs of fan life.

The liveliest spot in the building was the suite occupied by Col. and Mrs. David H. Keller and their pet pekinese, Yum-yum. Here we met Ted Dikty, Alex Osheroff, Gus and Genie Willmorth, Harry B. Moore, and -- oh, yes, a couple other guys. Wilson Tucker and E. Everett Evans. They must've been new fans.

"I'm Joe Kennedy," I said, shaking hands with Tucker.

He replied as follows: "Blaaaaughh!" (unquote).

He did, however, recommend a restaurant called "The Blue Bird". The starving quintet who'd arrived with Maddox immediately went off and had dinner there. The restaurant, incidentally, was subsequently dubbed "The Blue Beard". Mackerel was the feature attraction on its bill of fare...but it proved delicious. In fact, Gerry de la Ree liked it so much that he insisted upon ordering mackerel at every

meal. This, coupled with the fact that the heavily-chlorinated Philadelphia water smells, looks, and tastes like fish, prompted me to predict that before the weekend was over, de la Ree would be sprouting gills.

Back in the Keller's suite, we witnessed a discouraging example of the disinclination of fans to make introductions. Christensen and I squatted by the door for twenty minutes before it dawned on us that the pleasant-looking, quiet gent in Khaki who was listening to Mrs. Keller was Forry Ackerman.

The phone jangled. I answered it. "Hullo," said a thick voice on the other end. "This is Tom Hadley. C'mon down to my place. I got likker down here."

But nobody was inclined to move, so inside of three minutes Hadley was thundering at the door. He entered, plunked down on the bed, mumbled, "Pardon me" while he refrehed himself from a gin bottle conveniently tucked in his coat pocket. Ackerman's eyebrows shot up twelve notches.

A discussion of fan book publishing broke out, Dikty suggesting that a special medal be struck off for every fan who has NOT published a book. I thumbed an advance copy of Edison's Conquest of Mars.

The evening was spent in the sanctum of stef, the PSFS clubroom. As soon as the key had been located, the doors opened wide, and hordes of people began gushing into the original-bedecorated basement. Flash bulbs were popping left and right. Christensen, Maddox, and I tossed darts in the back room, with Chris astounding us by scoring a bulls' eye on his first try.

In the front room Tucker and Evans had located an old Ouijah board. Placing his fingers tensely on the little wooden indicator Evans inquired, "Are the Shaver stories true?" The indicator immediately zoomed to YES.

I got into a discussion with correspondent Richard Frank, a very likeable guy. He's a long-term fantasy fan, and a newspaperman as well -- now working for Grit. Among other things, I learned that his Bizarre Series of fantasy booklets is now selling for as much as \$10 a set at New York City dealers.

Tucker told his joke about the lumberjack. ("Why did the train stop in the middle of the forest? To let the lumber jack off....")

And then Claude Degler arrived.

In more ways than one, Degler was the mystery man of the convention. By the way, he's now known as John Paul Chrisman. Thinking that the Philcon was scheduled for the 4th of July, he told me later, he arrived two months beforehand. He took up temporary residence in Camden, N.J., and frequented the PSFS where it seems nobody knew him by sight. Under the Chrisman nom de plume, the Cosmic Circle Coordinator used the Prime Press's equipment to publish the first issue of Weird Unsolved Mysteries, devoted to the flying saucers: organized Alta Publications; published The Alta Advertiser;

announced that Frank N. Stein would publish Expose and The Damp Thing; began organization of the Central States Science-Fantasy Society; and planned other projects. During the convention, Chrisman was quiet and mild-mannered. In fact, it is the private opinion of yours truly that he was one of the most well-behaved Philcon attendees! Vociferously maintaining his identity as Chrisman, he attempted to squelch rumors during the latter part of the con by wearing a button reading I AM RICHARD S. SHAVER. WHO ARE YOU?

When he arrived, de la Ree made a crack about last seeing him sleeping on the floor at Larry Shaw's place. Chrisman grinned, said nothing. Maddox introduced himself as Raym Washington, but got no reaction other than a free copy of Weird Unsolved Mysteries.

De la Ree was passing out ballots for the latest Beowolf poll, conducted entirely at the Philcon, but the would-be humorists who blight the lives of poll-takers were very much in evidence. Tucker was urging people to list only authors named Smith; under favorite living fantasy author he picked God! One voter was very honest -- under favorite fans he simply wrote, "Can't fill this out. Both Tucker and Ackerman are sitting at the table with me!"

More and more people were pouring in. Edwin Harler. Bob Thompson. Dr. C. L. Barrett. Bob Madle. Jack Agnew. Erle Melvin Korshak (whom I'd previously thought to be two people!). Rothman. And countless more. Froeder and Maddox and I dodged across the street to the corner grocery for 7-up and cheese sandwiches. Around 11, de la Ree, Moore, and yours truly trolleyed back to the hotel,

In the days that followed, we got to bed early. Early in the morning.

Maybe it was the excitement, or maybe the heat, or maybe the yells of the Sigma Alphas, or possibly the fact that somebody was banging milk cans in the alley all night -- but despite the unexpected softness of the beds, we slept horribly. Shortly after dawn we arose, and breakfasted in Horn and Hardart's with Art Widner, Boff Perry, Henry Spelman, Paul Carter and Andy Lyon. Back to the Penn-Sheraton again, where we encountered Fred Ross Burgess, fan publisher and letter-hack from North Carolina, and chairman of the Norcon some months ago. Burgess stands out especially in my memory because of the garb he'd affected from a Brian Aherne movie -- a sash and a cigarette holder.

By ten o'clock in the morning the sky was as dark as night. Rain was splashing downward and thunder rolled ominously as Maddox's battered car lurched through Philly's winding, treacherous streets. Eight of us were crammed inside -- including veteran fantast John Wasso Jr. -- and yours truly was croutched in a neck-breaking position with my head in the front seat and feet in the back.

"Stop!" somebody yelled. "There's a book store!"

We piled out, scurried through the raindrops. Altho there was a

towering stack of Amazings, nothing much over a year old was encountered. However I did buy a book I'd been promising myself for a long while -- Joyce's Ulysses. While wrapping up the tome, the dealer confided that only yesterday a customer had come in and asked for a copy of "Useless, by James Joyce"!

Beak Taylor, Ned McKeown, and Norm Stanley had arrived when we returned to the Kellers' suite. Both Colonel and Mrs. Keller are swell people, and while I flipped through such treasures as Sign of the Burning Hart and La Guerre de Lierre, Mrs. Keller discussed the relative merits of Northern and Southern Hospitality with Burgess and Lyon.

By one o'clock, the Penn-Sheraton's convention hall was jam-packed with people. We signed the register, recieved copies of the program and buttons with a space to write your name. These were worn on the lapel, making it easy to recognize correspondents you'd never seen before. A carload of posies to whoever thought of the idea. Familiar fan faces were popping up among numerous never-before-seen stefnists. Harold Cheney. Mr. and Mrs. Stan Mullen, of Gorgon fame. Al Lopez. Mr. and Mrs. D. A. MacInnes. Bob Stein. Sol Levine. Charley Lucas. Sam Mason. Oswald Train. Jack Speer. Paul Spencer. Don Grant. Johnny Nitka. Julie Unger. Sam Moscovitz. Lloyd Alpaugh. Robert Briggs. Oliver Saari. Trudy Kuslan. George and Helen Tullis.

The convention hall was spacious and well decorated. Originals for the auction plastered the walls. Fantasy Press had commandeered the entire rear wall. Which was bedecked with originals from Spacehounds of IPC, The Legion of Space, and The Forbidden Garden. Copies of these volumes were being offered for sale, as well as the new title, Of Worlds Beyond, recieved from the printers only a day before. Prime Press had also taken part of the room to sell The Mis-laid Cham. Specimen copies of Venus Equilateral were also on display. Helen Cloukey and Allison Williams were busily vending the hyper convention issue of the FSFS organ, Variant, which they admitted would have to sell 250 copies at two bits each in order to break even. The prizes for the Big Pond Fund auction were also on display -- including the very fine cover by Finlay for The Star Rover.

The introductions which opened the convention gave us a look-see at such notables as E. E. Smith, Lester del Rey, Ralph Milne Farley (who'd come east to attend the American Legion Convention in NY), Lloyd Arthur Eshbach, Isaac Asimov, Ron Clyne, plus a number of fans who'd Travelled long distances. John W. Campbell's speech on atomic power was technical but good. After the intermission, the editors were supposed to speak. Sam Merwin was the only one who showed up, Campbell not included. Most of us were surprised that Don Wollheim failed to put in an appearance at the convention -- tho Rothman revealed that the two literate stfantasy magazines which Avon had been planning had -- alas -- folded. But at any rate Merwin spoke briefly and interestingly upon that nebulous subject, editorial policy. During the question period, one well-intentioned fan asked Merwin when Unknown would be revived.

When the echoes of the shots died away, E. E. Smith read a carefully prepared speech entitled "Whither Science Fiction?" in which

he took some hefty wallops at reviewers who disliked space-opera. When Jack Speer announced that he'd visited Hamling in Chicago, learned that Z-D threatened legal action against fans who opposed the Shaver series, he introduced a resolution that the convention declare itself against the Lemurianovelets. The argument waxed heatedly. Oddly enough, neither Will Sykora, James V. Taurasi, nor Raymond van Houten -- previous champions of anti-Shaverism in the East -- were present at the Philcon. The session ended on a mild note of confusion, after several fans had expressed their opinions on the matter (and widely differing they were!), but no conclusions were drawn, nor was the motion immediately rephrased.)

From eight o'clock till midnight, the evening session dragged on. Following talks by the publishers present, came the gala auction. With "F. E. Boone" Korshak and "L. E. 'Speed' Riggs" Moskowitz taking turns at the gavel, some vast profits were dumped into the Philcon Society's coffers. There were a heck of a lot of beautiful items; but some of the crappiest stuff brought highly respectable prices, while medium-good stuff sometimes went very reasonably. The stellar attraction was the Rogers cover for "Children of the Lens", which I'm pretty sure went to Jim Williams for some fabulous sum like \$27 or \$35, or thereabouts. A fine J. Allen St. John framed oil painting for an ancient Weird Tales was not sold, since the artist had demanded a minimum bid of \$40, which nobody was prepared to advance.

Christensen blew a bubble which sold for 27¢. An indescribable, "modernistic" Ralph Rayburn Phillips brought the unbelievable sum of \$3.50. And yet I snared a fairly nice Finlay for \$2.25. Twelve bucks gave de la Ree the Finlay cover for "The Minimum Man". Toward the end of the auction, Korshak grabbed a sheaf of fan art and offered 'em at 50¢ a throw to the first comer. Lloyd Alpaugh, being a Cockroft admirer, was one of the heaviest buyers. NYC fan Al Brown became auctioneer during the last ten minutes of the affair, and disposed of the Fantasy Press originals in short order. Even the little chapter heads for Spacehounds brought a buck or two each.

Reluctant to go to bed until we were dead tired, Gerry and I took the elevator up to floor ten, and to the "penthouse" shared by Alpaugh and Monroe Kuttner. Here we played a hand of rummy, and introduced Phil Froeder to the evils of the daring and complicated game of flipping pennies. Tiring of this, we unsuccessfully tried to hunt up Maddox with the intentions of taking a nocturnal cruise in his horseless carriage. We stumbled into a dingy little room blue with smoke and reeking of bottle-juice, in which about two dozen convention celebrities were jammed like olives in a bottle. Across the hall, David Kishi was selling British Proazines and looking slightly saddened because he was losing money on the deal. I bought a Gillings Fantasy Review that mentioned Vampire.

We finally did locate Maddox, though, and toured the city at 2 A. M., stopping briefly for sodas. Around 3, we tumbled into bed.

Gerry and I wrote some postals to relatives Sunday morning. Lloyd Alpaugh and yours truly had written a parody on "Begin the Beguine"

which we intended to sing at the afternoon session. We rounded up three or four guys and rehearsed it up in the hotel room, and thought it sounded quite good for the first time. It starts like this:

"When they bring out A-maz-ing
We shout to the skies the praises of Shaver...."

However when the afternoon session was about to start, Alpaugh and Fox backed down on me. Since the program of the session didn't appeal to them, and also because, I suspect, they suffered last-minute doubts of their musical ability -- they ducked out to a movie. Chan Davis was willing to accompany the number on the piano, but at last it was decided to postpone the masterpiece for "Entertainment Night", scheduled for that evening.

Personally, I enjoyed L. Sprague de Camp's "Adventures in the Occult" talk. De Camp, a polished and good-humored speaker, revealed some intriguing facts about pyramidology, telepathy, witchcraft, and associated topics -- but reiterated that he'd found nothing supernatural which couldn't be traced to a natural explanation.

The discussion "Is Science Catching up with Science Fiction?" fell to pieces. This was lamentable, because Chan Davis conducted it with intelligence and originality, and some of the fans who commented contributed some advanced opinions on alien life and the possibilities of space flight. However, the change from one extreme to the other -- from occult to technical science -- found many of us either unprepared for a superscientific discussion, or simply not interested. Handfuls of fans began straggling out the door. Jack Roberts, of Ohio, brought in an armload of originals and began to auction them off. I'm afraid I insulted the guy by offering him two bucks for his prize Finlay. A wad of guys clustered around, bidding for Fuquas and Laurences; since most of the commentators on "Is Science Catching up with STF?" neglected to face the crowd and couldn't be heard, more and more drifted over toward the original sale.

During the welcome intermission, Moskowitz requested me to make a speech at the ESFA hour which would soon follow -- and I, egotistical imbecile that I be, agreed to do so. Having something like 50 minutes to get a subject for the talk and prepare it, I made a mad dash up to room 355 and there furiously began scribbling down notes. De la Ree helpfully began to read the less comprehensible sections of Ulysses aloud. Finally it was done, and we dashed back downstairs, where the Eastern Science Fiction Association's hour was in progress.

I regret to say that I missed Korshak's speech on "The Collecting and Enjoyment of Fantasy Literature", which was favorably reviewed--altho several collectors commented that it made them drool to hear of all the fabulously rare items which they'd never get for their collections.

David H. Keller's colorful and entertaining talk summarized and amplified some of the high points in his speeches to the ESFA and PSFS in past months. He described his entrance to the professional field, his early days of writing, and how Harper's was forced to

reject "The Sign of the Burning Hart" because he refused to explain the story. "And now," Col. Keller concluded, "the old story teller sits back from the fire, his tale finished; someone passes him a marrow bone, which he is content to eat, grateful that it is not the cup of hemlock which might have been given him by some editor."

Moskowitz introduced me as a #1 fan whom he was hastening to present because my prestige was slipping rapidly. Egotism and modesty aside, my talk on the history of fanzine publishing up to the field today was probably mediocre at best, but anyway it was stefnistic....and did inspire an inquiry or two from people unfamiliar with fanmags. In the middle of a plug for Tympany, Bob Stein got up and waved a stack of that highly commendable newssheet.

"Sequels and series in science fiction" was the unusual topic of James B. Cullum's exceptional talk. Cullum, who had been up till 2 in the morning ransacking his memory for examples of famous series stef, maintained that sequels could be justified because they do sell the mags that feature them, "-and when a fan picks up a series story he feels he's sitting down in the company of old friends." Toward the tail end of the ESFA hour, the attendance had dwindled rapidly, as more and more fans suffered the pangs of hunger. Cullum's talk being one of the more interesting items of the program, its too bad it couldn't have been given a better spot.

Gerry and I had dinner with NYC newfanne Eve Anderton, and Algis Budrys. The conversation swung towards favorite story plots which most fans have, but will probably never write. Budrys told us his "unborn baby" -- a plot about water being an alien entity with an intelligence all its own, and what happens when the oceans decide to revolt. It sounds like a walloping good story, for either a Ray Bradbury weird short, or a George Allen England saga!

Back at the Penn-Sheraton, Beak Taylor and Ned McKeown were snaring material for Canadian Fandom by plunking people down at the typewriter and having them wallop out a paragraph or two. Mrs. Keller called me aside -- and she and Colonel Keller, in appreciation of my mediocre speech, presented me with a copy of one of the rarest books David H. Keller ever wrote. If I mentioned the title every red-blooded collector in the audience would drool profusely. While the Kellers advised me not to tell anybody about it, I believe such kind generosity should have the public attention it deserves. "Rather than fame or money," Dr. Keller told me, "I'd rather have friends in this world who think well of me." Dr. Keller, here's one fan who'll always think highly of you. That book which you considerately autographed, is the most valued item in my collection.

Although we had no time to rehearse it for musical accompaniment, Burgess, Fox, Maddox, and yours truly agreed to render "When They Bring out A-ma-zing" for the evening's entertainment. With L. Jerome Stanton as master of ceremonies, the show went over well. Rothman played Debussy's "Sunken Cathedral", De Falla's "Ritual Fire Dance", and an encore which he reluctantly granted, but only got halfway through. He recieved a big hand from the crowd, as did Stanton and Ted Sturgeon's guitar-banjo duet on "St. Louis Blues". George O. Smith pantomined the mad scientist, whipping out a hair from the scalp of a girl who volunteered. With this he proceeded

to whip a cigarette out of Stanton's mouth. Chan Davis played his "Song of World's Unseen", and Jim Blish's "Noise". William Tenn (Phillip Klass) read a series of hilarious letters from fan admirers, which had us rolling in the aisles with pointed cracks anent deros, saving the world, scientific errors in stef, etc.

Miss Mary Mair, a gorgeous gal with a superb voice, sang the folk-song, "Peter Gray" (which Burl Ives features; you've probably heard it) -- and a musical setting to Ted Sturgeon's poem, "Thunder and Roses". I'm patiently waiting to hear that she's recieved an offer from the Met any day now.

The quartet's off-key rendition of the "Amazing" parody was vastly improved when the solo-man, Burgess, sputtered into laughter when he couldn't figure out a typographical error on the page.

Harry Warner, who'd been scheduled to appear on the program, unfortunately didn't make it.

Then Alpaugh, de la Ree, Maddox, Froeder, Fox, Kuttner, Budrys, and I went to the midnight burlycue. The Troc, Philadelphia's lone theatre catering to this form of the higher arts, is an ancient and decrepit-looking joint with a beer ad for a curtain. We sat in aisle Q. The place was filled with Sigma Alpha Rhos. Especially of interest was the theatre's impressive chandelier -- which consisted of one lonely light bulb dangling from a cord. The band was pretty corny, but the show was fine. During the intermission, I spotted Unger, Dikty, Frank, Grant, and other patrons of the arts sitting capitalistically in a box way down front. I'd love to quote a few of the choicer scraps of humor -- but this is a family mag.

IV.

During the night, Speer, Christensen, and Davis had been up on the roof of the Penn-Sheraton firing off sky-rockets and firecrackers, while down below the cops circled around and around and around. Oddly enough, nobody thought of going up to the roof, so after one final barrage which nearly blew half the hotel's tenants out of bed, the conspirators safely escaped. In the morning Tucker started a rumor that Speer was in jail, that he and Korshak had bailed the culprit out with \$65 worth of poker winnings.

We breakfasted late. I think it was this morning that Harry Moore led de la Ree into the Chess bar with the avowed intention of borrowing a chess board to play a game or two.

Alpaugh, Fox, Maddox, and Froeder disappeared just before the afternoon session; rather than listen to speeches they preferred to visit Fox's grandmother over across the river in Berlin, N. J.! Seems the grandmother wasn't home, tho, but this didn't faze the lads. They accidentally broke a window or two getting into the house, and returned laden with ginger-ale, melons, apples, peaches, and potato chips. These delicacies formed the basis for a gala spread that night after the "Banquet", up in Alpaugh's penthouse. Just the same, I doubt if Fox will have the courage to visit his

grandmother for a long, long time to come.....

Willy Ley's excellent speech on space travel was one of the very best things in the convention. Reviewing the history of inter-planetary science-fiction from the early Greeks up to the present, Ley went on to comment that the main factor which was delaying space travel was "the well known mathematical symbol consisting of a capital S with two vertical lines through it." Tom Gardner's talk on atomic energy to power spaceships provoked some debate from Campbell.

During the intermission, Budrys and I lugged a modeling-clay statuette of his into the hall and placed it on exhibition. Budrys, who didn't feel like carrying the masterpiece all the way back to Dorothy, N.J., heartlessly donated it to the Fantasy Foundation so he would have to drag it all the way back to Los Angeles. Maddox had returned with half a basket of peaches, only to find that most of them were rotten. He generously offered them free for the asking, but there were few takers. (Around midnight the peaches were accidentally on purpose chucked off the tenth-floor fire escape.) Somehow or other, a cluster of peach pits appeared on the exhibition stand with a little card indicating that they were meteorites; but I doubt that the experts were deceived.

Beak Taylor and Ned McKeown had been working into the wee hours decorating the hall with streamers and signs reading TORONTO IN '48. Milwaukee was the only other bid, so Toronto won by an overwhelming vote. The convention profits disposed of, Speer passed out nine copies of his anti-Shaver resolution, but when fireworks threatened, Tucker made a motion that the whole business be tabled until the Convention. It was.

While waiting for the banquet, Christensen and I killed time by whipping up a spoonerized version of Speer's resolution, but the only good item was the twisted prozine title Mysterious Fantastic Fannies.

All during the Philcon, a beautiful chalk drawing of an alien landscape with the outline of Saturn gleaming through the blue night sky, had been hanging behind the speakers' platform. Now I learned that it had been sold, and envied whoever got it. It was I'm pretty sure, the work of Russell Swanson. Funny thing about the drawing, though -- everybody who looked at it saw a different thing. I'm not the only fan who, at first glance, thought it was the trail of a rocket transiting the crescent of the earth. To this day George Fox insists it was a kind of cosmic bow-and-arrow.

The food at the banquet was tasty, but at three-fifty per plate, there was painfully little of it. Because of the shortage of help on Labor Day, the courses were served at approximately half-hour intervals. Our table polished off two towering stacks of bread and rolls before the butter arrived.

The convention hall had been decked out with circular tables seating eight. While we were waiting for the appetizer, Tucker played a one-note piano solo, McKeown made a comic speech, Dr. Keller cracked a couple of jokes, and Harry Moore sang "Cocaine Lil",

the last stanza of which goes-----

"As she lay there in her dishonor
She felt the hand of the Lord upon her;
She said, "Lord, my soul repents,
But that'll cost you 89 cents.'".

Dr. Keller suggested that the quartet repeat its "Amazing" parody, but unfortunately (or maybe fortunately.) only 50% of that august vocal group was present.

After the meal, celebrities were called on for comments. E E Smith described the outline of the Lensman series, and Col. Keller proposed that \$50 be invested in Tom Gardner's longevity vitamin so Dr. Smith could live another 150 years -- long enough to complete the Lensman saga. Moscovitz stole the show with a recitation of a Longfellow poem; then the convention ended with acknowledgments and cries of "Toronto in '48!" and everybody dashed for the lunch counters.

All kidding aside, I was really sorry when the last goodbyes were said. And I still think fans in general are darned swell people.

I'm looking forward already to the Canvention.

How about you?

FINIS



John W. Campbell, Jr.
Keynoter(D)



Sam Merwin, Jr. (BT)



L.A. Eshbach and Willy Ley(FP)



Jack Speer (BT)



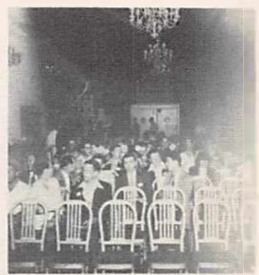
Erle Korshak speaking on "The
Collecting and Enjoyment of
Fantasy Literature." (D)



Dr. Edward E. Smith,
Ph.D. (FP)



Lower left, John W. Campbell, Jr.
with Dillard Stokes(Wash.DC); Mrs./
Stokes; Mrs. J.W.Campbell(dark
blouse); Ted Sturgeon; E.E.Evans
(White Coat); Mrs.E.E.Smith; be-
tween Mrs. & Doc.Smith is Lee Haw-
kins Garby (collaborator on "Sky-
lark of Space") half hidden behind
Doc Smith is L.A.Eshbach; G.H.Mac-
Gregor(Fantasy Press); L.H.Houck;
behind E.E.Evans is Hubert Rogers
(he shows between Mrs. Smith & Mrs.
Garby) Rogers is a famous illustra-
tor.(FP)



Convention Hall(BT)



(L to R) Jack Agnew, Milton
Rothman & Erle Korshak during
auction (D)



Milton Rothman, PHILCON
Chairman (FP)



Auction: Korshak, auctioneer; "Beak
Taylor silhouetted at right; Right
of Korshak with glasses and mass of
hair is Sol Levin, illustrated Geo.
O. Smith's "Venus Equilateral". Look-
ing over his shoulder is Marty Green-
berg (New Collector's Group) (FP)



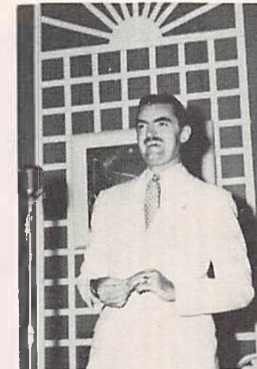
Entertainers (BT)



Ted Sturgeon and
Mary Marin (BT)



(L to R) Entertainers at the Philcon.
M.C. Jerry Stanton (Assoc. Ed of ASF);
Rothman; Wm.Tenn; Geo. O. Smith; Ted
Sturgeon; C. Davis; Mary Marin; un-
identified; Joe Kennedy; unidentified.(D)



L.Sprague de Camp (FP)



Banquet: Lester del Rey (in white);
Sam Moskowitz (left); Alex Osheroff
(in shirt sleeves); Dr. Thomas Gard-
ner (dark suit - angular chin -
facing out of picture to Rey's left)
(F.P.)



Trudy Kuslan and
John Millard (BT)

CREDITS: Photos marked:
(D) taken by Ted Dikty
(FP) by Fantasy Press
(BT) by Bob Tucker

PHILCON

