

Out of This World Convention

Forrest J. Ackerman

The background of the lower half of the page is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this is a complex, abstract pattern of thick, bright pink lines. These lines form various geometric shapes, including rectangles, squares, circles, and triangles, some of which are interconnected to create a maze-like or circuit-like structure. The lines vary in thickness and orientation, creating a dynamic and modern aesthetic.

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Title: Out of This World Convention

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Release Date: April 7, 2009 [EBook #28535]

Language: English

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Forrest J. Ackerman, prominent Los Angeles agent and Science Fiction enthusiast, reports on the recent World Convention in New York. Mr. Ackerman, who attended the first World Convention seventeen years ago, has been prominent in SF circles since the early thirties.

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by FORREST J. ACKERMAN

An eye-witness account of the 14th World Science Fiction Convention in session.

I was a spy for the FBI—the Fantasy Bureau of Investigation! Learning of a monster meeting of science fiction "fen" in New York, I teleported myself 3,000 miles from the Pacificoast to check the facts on the monsters. And it was true—the 14th World SciFi Con was tremonstrous.

In all seriousness, the *Newyorcon* was one of the greatest aggregations of s.f. enthusiasts I have ever seen. A far cry from the *Nycon*, the *first* "world" s.f. con of 17 years before, when the turnout of 125 was considered colossal. Now more than twelve hundred fans, authors, editors, artists, publishers, agents, anthologists, reviewers and readers of science fiction and fantasy registered for the Labor Day Weekend gathering of the clans, a conclave of the slans.

From 37 of the 48 states they came. And from Canada, Cuba, England, Germany, India, Israel and the West Indies. The roll call of celebrities read like the Who's Who of S.F. Prodom: Theodore Sturgeon, Isaac Asimov, Fritz Leiber, Willy Ley, Nelson Bond, John W. Campbell Jr., L. Sprague de Camp, James Blish, Judith Merrill, "Ted" Carnell (Editor of *New Worlds*), Kelly Freas, Edmond Hamilton, Leigh Brackett, Anthony Boucher, William Tenn, James E.

Gunn, Frank Belknap Long Jr., and numerous others, including Guest of Honor Arthur C. Clarke.

A standing ovation was given Arthur Clarke before and after his speech at the Banquet, a serious address that lasted forty-five minutes and covered many philosophical facets of the s.f. field. Especially rousing hands were given two of the real old-timers present, artist Frank R. Paul (Guest of Honor of the first Convention), and—out of the Ark—the man who once was an assistant to Thomas Alva Edison, the pioneer novelist of scientific romances and the man who discovered the Golden Atom—Ray Cummings. World famous cartoonist Al Capp gave a hilarious speech at the Banquet Sunday night, other large laughs being garnered on the occasion by Isaac Asimov and Anthony Boucher, Robert Bloch again proving that he has no peer as a Master of Ceremonies.

The Masquerade Ball was filmed for televising, and was a sight for bugging eyes. Extraterrestrial glamour girls came in spectrumatic colors: one, Ruth Landis of Venus (formerly Nuyok), was a verdant beauty, fresh as a breath of chlorophyll; while tall Tam Otteson, a recent import from England, had the judges agreeing that just looking at her was an education. Olga Ley won for the Most Beautiful costume, and Jos Christoff—a survivor from the first convention of them all—was another prize winner. Monsters, mutants, scientists, spacemen, aliens, and assorted "Things" thronged the ballroom floor as the flashbulbs popped.

John Campbell lectured on and demonstrated his controversial psionic Hieronymus machine, and famous fans sprang from der vood-work out—Sam Moskowitz, James Taurasi, Bob Tucker, Julius Unger, Raymond Van Houten, Allen Glasser ...

David Kyle, E. E. Evans, James Taurasi, myself and 2 others were elected Directors of the World Science Fiction Society.

No account of the Newyorcon could be complete without a deep bow of appreciation to the altruistic trio of committeemen (including one comely woman) who all but destroyed themselves engineering the Convention: David A. Kyle, Ruth Landis and Dick Ellington.

By a vote of 3 to 1, London was selected as the site of the 15th Con, to be held in '57. For an unforgettable experience in the fantastic universe of science fiction enthusiasts, plan *now* to attend the LONCON!

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CONVENTION ***

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