

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ELVES', GNOMES', AND LITTLE MEN'S SCIENCE FICTION, CHOWDER AND MARCHING SOCIETY

For some unaccountable reason it has become real sportin' in some quarters of fandom to characterize THE LITTLE MEN as a serious and stodgy club, a club made up of a bunch of squares who do nothing but listen to dull talks on science and other uplifting subjects and boast but the most tenuous connection with science fiction or fandom. For the life of me I can't understand how such a monstrous lie can be accepted as gospel by so many.

Of course, we do have talks on science, but every effort is taken to get them on offbeat subjects and by authorities in their field--such as the talk presented by Ben Stark on Chromatography and Ion Exchange wherein he explained and demonstrated the uses of this procedure in his work as a chemist with the United States Department of Agriculture where he is doing research in connection with the sugar beet industry. Of, if professional lithography can be called a science, the lecture by Ed Brandt on the technicalities of offset lithography. These two programs, plus the talk by Dr Hollister on mood drugs mentioned in the last Proceedings, constitute the sum total of our programs devoted to science and technology since the first of the year. Perhaps the report given us by Poul and Karen Anderson on the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in Denver last January (which they attended) might be included in this category of programs; but I really don't think it should be, being concerned as they were with the science fictional overtones of the meeting--particularly Hal Clement's speech which has been reprinted in Karen's VORPAL GLASS. One of the interesting highlights of the Andersons' report was the account of their visit at the home of Robert Heinlein following the meeting.

So much for science as far as THE LITTLE MEN are concerned.

As I mentioned in the last Proceedings the annual summer picnic of THE LITTLE MEN is a gala event. This year's was no exception. We held it, as in previous years, in Tilden Park, which is located behind the Berkeley Hills. Tilden Park is noted for its rugged natural beauty. Karen Anderson prepared the traditional chowder and the LITTLE MEN supplied the beer, cases of it. It may or may not be significant (and in no way reflecting on the excellent quality of Karen's chowder), but by the time the last LITTLE MAN left at 5:30 there wasn't one can of

beer left from the several cases supplied by the club; but poor Karen had to lug a fair-sized kettle of chowder home with her--whether or not Poul had chowder with his meals for the rest of the week hasn't been disclosed.

Everyone had a swinging time (with that much beer, who wouldn't?), including that well-known fan and eminent author, Poul Anderson, who, encouraged by some of the children and the beer he'd consumed, essayed the Tarzan bit and proceeded to gambol through the branches of a giant tree which spread over the picnic area. We were all immensely relieved when he made it safely to the ground. By 3 o'clock most of the revelers had departed, leaving a hard core of fans to finish the beer during a cutthroat poker game got up by Miriam Knight.

The weekend following the picnic was the Westercon XV weekend and the stodgy, serious bunch of fans known as the LITTLE MEN managed to be well represented at that science fictional, fannish gathering: Al haLevy delivered a significant speech on "The Mythological and Romantic Elements of Modern Fantasy;" Ed Clinton was the moderator of a panel of pros; Poul Anderson was a panelist on Clinton's panel; Al haLevy presented the INVISIBLE LITTLE MAN trophy at the banquet to Hal Clement (which was accepted in proxy by Poul Anderson, who later presented it in person to Clement during the award ceremonies at Chicon III); and I gave a speech, as Fan Guest of Honor, at the banquet. And, as everyone knows by this time, THE LITTLE MEN were successful in their bid to put on Westercon XVI in the BArea in 1963.

When meetings were resumed following the short summer vacation the first program we had was an informal report on the Westercon and a discussion of the first issue of RD which was launched at the convention.

The next program was one of the most fascinating we've had in a long time. Bob Buechley, who had been doing research on the relationship of arsenic in cigarettes to lung cancer, had been invited to present a paper at the International Cancer Congress in Moscow this summer, and he gave us a graphic and humorous account of his trip to Europe and Russia which was one of the best off-the-cuff talks I've ever listened to.

The program for the next meeting was a change of pace for us. Dr Healy, the Chairman of THE LITTLE MEN, gave us a couple of short films which purported to trace the development of motion pictures from its very beginnings to today. Both films were quite interesting, but the second one shown was so beautifully, ridiculously corny, that it could stand as a classic example of unintentional humor. This meeting marked the opening of Nonvention 6, a sometime tradition of fandom, a marathon party held on the same days (and nights) as the Worldcon as a solace to those fans who are unable to attend the con. (It originated in Los Angeles in 1953) I won't go into it here as it's admirably reported elsewhere in these pages.

And finally, we had the report on Chicon III by those who attended; Al haLevy, Walter Breen, Ben Stark, the Anderson's, and Andy Main being the ones contributing the most to the discussion. This actually was more in the nature of a party and fangab session with everyone sitting around drinking beer and yacking up a storm. We left at one AM, but I understand it didn't break up until 4 o'clock or so.

And so once again the Proceedings of THE LITTLE MEN have been accounted for. If I have given undue emphasis to the lighter (and more bibulous) aspects of the proceedings of the club, it was purely intentional and intended to counter somewhat the distorted picture of BArea fandom (of which THE LITTLE MEN constitute a marked majority) circulated in some areas by unthinking --or unknowing--fans. THE LITTLE MEN, being a club of adults, many of whom are engaged in scientific, educational, or technical work of one sort or another, and all with keen, inquisitive minds, interested in every facet of life and the world they live in, welcome serious talks and discussions during the formal portions of their meetings; but when the meetings are over and the beer begins to flow they become, believe me, almost human.

--Alva Rogers, Secretary

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Starting with the next issue of Rhodomagnetic Digest, the price for single copies will be 35¢, and the subscription price will be 3 copies for \$1.00. (This does not affect present subscriptions.) The price increase has been made necessary by an increase in the postal rate, and by increases in cost of production of this magazine. All correspondence concerning single copies or subscriptions should be sent to Ben Stark, 113 Ardmore Road, Berkeley 7, California, and checks should be made out to Ben Stark. Please do not send stamps. All editorial correspondence should be addressed to Al haLevy, Editor, Rhodomagnetic Digest, 1855 Woodland Avenue, Palo Alto, California.