

Boskone VI

As the sci-fi elite meet

by Nancy Williamson

More than 200 science fiction fans gathered at the Statler Hotel in Boston March 22-23 for Boskone VI, the annual conference sponsored by the New England Science Fiction Association (familiarily known as NESFA).

The conference opened Saturday afternoon with a brief, jocular speech by Dr. Isaac Asimov, science fiction laureate, author of 95 books (27 science fiction, 68 non-fiction science books). The audience, obviously tuned in to the latest in science as well as science fiction, kept up a rousing repartee with Asimov, who praised science fiction in general and his own work in particular. When asked by one young man in the audience, "How does it feel to be the last living Renaissance man?" (as he has been described on the jacket of one of his books), Asimov responded quickly, "It tires me out."

Questions ranged from very general inquiries about the future of science fiction as a literature to specific questions about Asimov's own work and the work of other authors. Lively discussion centered around ways to improve science fiction writing, the desirability of widening the science fiction audience, the possibility of analyzing human emotions through mathematics, the effects for good or ill of science fiction on television. Asimov was strong in his defense of science fiction primarily as a literature of ideas which seeks constantly to improve its style and to widen its audience but which cannot and should not try to appeal to everyone. "We must," he said, "overcome this feeling of inferiority that there are so few of us. As long as we keep writing really good science fiction a large group of people will not find it appealing. Every now and then there

will be marginal stuff that will attract larger numbers and this marginal stuff should be as good as possible. However, science fiction as a literature of ideas will never appeal to everyone."

The Asimov discussion was followed by a report on the Mariner Project by Dr. Louis Suito of the MIT Instrumentation Lab. Slides from the Mariner Project were shown along with a short film demonstration of a vehicle for unmanned landings on Mars which has been recently developed by General Research Laboratories, Santa Barbara, California. Dr. Suito discussed the Mariner Project's goals — Mariner in orbit around Mars (1971); an unmanned Mars landing (1973) — and answered a host of questions from the audience.

After a break, fans joined in a panel discussion of "The Feminine Viewpoint" — the role of female heroines in science fiction — moderated by Hal Clement and featuring Anne McCaffrey and Marion Zimmer Bradley.

Sunday afternoon the guest of honor, well-known science fiction illustrator, Jack Gaughan, gave an informal talk and answered questions. On Saturday and Sunday Mr. Gaughan autographed some of his original illustrations which had been auctioned to the audience along with other rare black and white artwork by other science fiction illustrators.

Throughout the conference there were various side attractions such as taped readings of science fiction, hucksters' tables for the sale of used and hard-to-find science fiction literature, and free refreshments. Saturday evening the Tolkien Society of America met to consider "The Economics" and "A Defense of Middle Earth" and "Hero."

For the past 30 to 40 years science fiction fandom has been a

growing subculture; it is comprised mainly of people who believe that it is important for science fiction to be technically as well as stylistically sound. These people believe with Isaac Asimov that science fiction is a literature of ideas. While they are interested in widening the subculture, they are not interested in lowering the standards. Any fandom is inherently esoteric through its possession of a body of knowledge unfamiliar to the outsider. Science fiction fandom is no exception; it has a language of its own which is at best confusing to the novice whose knowledge of the literature extends little beyond Arthur C. Clarke and Ray Bradbury and whose scientific background may be little more than freshman biology and television space.

Although the people at the Statler March 22-23 ranged from grade schooler to grandmother in age and from staid to hip in dress, their questions and discussions indicated that they had in common an intense interest in and knowledge of science fiction and an impressively uncommon understanding of scientific theory and technology.

Susan Lewis, member of NESFA and Boskone VI Committee Member in charge of Membership and Hospitality, says that science fiction devotees comprise people from all walks of life but that there is a larger percentage of engineers, technologists, and scientists, plus a heavy sprinkling of people from publishing and those generally interested in writing, specifically about fantastic and imaginative subjects. Miss Lewis says that new members to NESFA are desired and welcomed, but she emphasizes that they are looking for people with a genuine interest in science fiction. NESFA meets twice monthly at the homes of its members and its activities, in addition to spon-

soring the annual conferences, include publishing a bi-monthly "newszine," a quarterly "fantasy," and yearly supplements to the Index to the Science Fiction magazines. There are various memberships ranging from \$2.50 to \$10.00 depending on the extent of your participation. For further information write NESFA, P.O. Box G, MIT Branch Station, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The Tolkien Society of America



holds meetings throughout the United States and publishes "The Tolkien Journal" and a newsletter "The Green Dragon." The Tolkien Society became associated with the science fiction conferences because many Tolkien fans, also science fiction fans, found it convenient to hold the meetings concurrently. Hobbit fans should contact Ed Meskys, Box 233, Centre Harbor, N.H. 03226 for further information.

BOSKONTI VI

March 22-23, 1969
Statler Hilton

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Statler Hilton, Park Square, Boston
Sponsored by the New England Science Fiction Assoc.

The Boskonti VI Committee

Chairman	Leslie J. Turek
Program Advisor	David A. Vanderwerf
Tolkien Society Program	Ed Meskys
Program Book	Jim Ashe
Membership Cards & Hospitality Suite	Susan Lewis
Award & Plaque	Ed Meyer
Taping	Bill Desmond

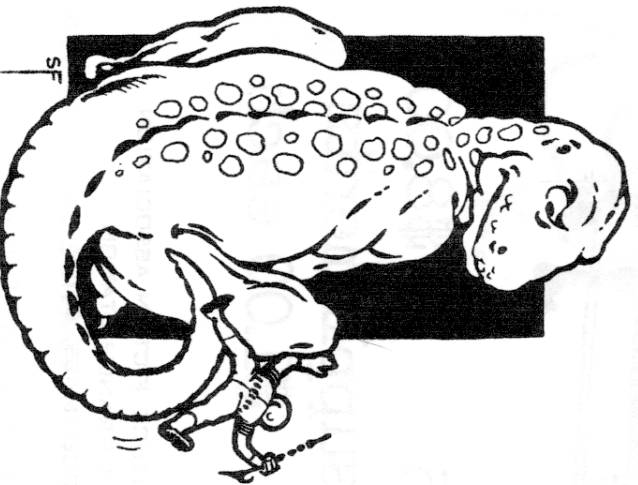
Jim Kavaney, Al Kent, Linda Kent, Judy Krupp, Tony Lewis, George Phillips, Cory Seidman, Harry Stubbs, Mike Symes, Andrew Whyte, Evelyn Whyte, JoAnn Wood.

Thanks to:

Judy-Lynn Benjamin, for providing auction material.
Stephen Fabian, for the cover drawing.
Joe Ross, for obtaining AAA maps.

The New England Science Fiction Association meets twice a month at the homes of various members. In addition to sponsoring the Boskontis, our activities include publishing a bi-monthly newszine, INSTANT MES-SAGE; a quarterly fanzine, PROPER BOSKONTIAN; and yearly supplements to the INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES. There are various classes of membership with dues ranging from \$2.50 to \$10.00 per year. For further information, write to NESFA, PO Box G, MIT Branch Station, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The Tolkien Society of America holds meetings throughout the United States and publishes THE TOLKIEN JOURNAL and a newsletter, the GREEN DRAGON. For a fee of \$2.00, a member receives the next four TOLKIEN JOURNALS and all GREEN DRAGONS published during that period. For additional information, write to Ed Meskys, Box 233, Centre Harbor, N.H. 03226.



PROGRAM

Saturday, March 22, in Stanbro Hall on the Mezzanine.

1:00 pm Question-and-answer session with Isaac Asimov.

2:00 pm Report on the Mariner Project, by Louis Sistro of the MIT Instrumentation Lab.

3:00 pm Auction of black & white artwork and Isaac Asimov.

3:30 pm THE FEMININE VIEWPOINT, a panel discussion of female heroines in science fiction, with Anne McCaffrey, Marion Zimmer Bradley and others, moderated by Hal Clement.

BREAK

8:00 pm Tolkien Society of America meeting.
Dainis Bisenieks on GAMES HOBBITS DON'T PLAY.

Dave Erdreich defending Sauron as a hero.
Ed Meskys, Steve Gillis, Eileen Bremer
and Russell Seitz on ECONOMICS AND TECHNOLOGY OF MIDDLE EARTH.

10:00 pm Party in Room 437.

ALL DAY: Hucksters Tables and refreshments in Room 437.

Sunday, March 23, in Stanbro Hall on the Mezzanine.

10:00 am Taped readings of "Star Pit" by Samuel Delaney and "The Girl Had Guts" by Theodore Sturgeon.

BREAK

1:00 pm Auction of black & white artwork, and the original computer print-outs of the 1966 and 1967 Indexes to the SF Magazines.

1:30 pm Presentation of the E. E. Smith Memorial Award by Isaac Asimov.

2:00 pm THE THIN BLACK LINE, a talk by Guest of Honor Jack Gaughan.

3:00 pm THE FUTURE OF THE WORLDCON, a discussion of the new plans for Worldcon rotation, with Elliot Shorter, Fred Lermer, and others, moderated by Tony Lewis.

ALL DAY: Hucksters Tables and refreshments in Room 437.

1973-75 - Rethinking the Art Show

When I turned my sights to running the Boskone Art Show, I decided that I wanted to make changes. As a convention attendee, I didn't like how the long-drawn-out auctions conflicted with the rest of the program. And as a convention runner, I didn't like the percentage commission system, which made it impossible to predict income. So at Boskone X I introduced a flat-rate panel fee, and started the conversion to most sales being done via written bids. There was some resistance to this, but eventually the changes took and this is how most convention art shows are run today.

Boskone X Art Show and Auction

March 9-11, 1973

Dear Artist:

We invite you to enter your work in the Boskone X Art Show. This year we are trying out a new system, so please read these instructions carefully. The philosophical reason for this change is that we feel that the artists should not subsidize the convention through the payment of percentage commissions to the art show; but that a flat fee, which more nearly coincides with the service the convention renders the artist, is more appropriate. The art show committee will be glad to clarify any points or answer any questions.

Basic Fee:

The basic art show fee is:

- \$12 per hanging panel or table
- \$6 per half panel or table
- \$3 per quarter panel or table

Each panel is approximately 6 feet wide and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. Smaller units than $\frac{1}{4}$ panel will not be sold. For this basic fee, the art show provides the specified display space and conducts a written bid sale of the artwork. There are no other commissions or fees deducted except for voice-bid auctioning (see below).

Special First Year Offer:

We expect that this new fee system will result in larger profits to the artists. However, we understand that some artists, particularly newcomers, might be concerned about having to pay fees even if they do not sell their work. Therefore, we are making this concession, at least for this first trial year. Artists who do not sell anything will be refunded the price of their first $\frac{1}{2}$ panel.