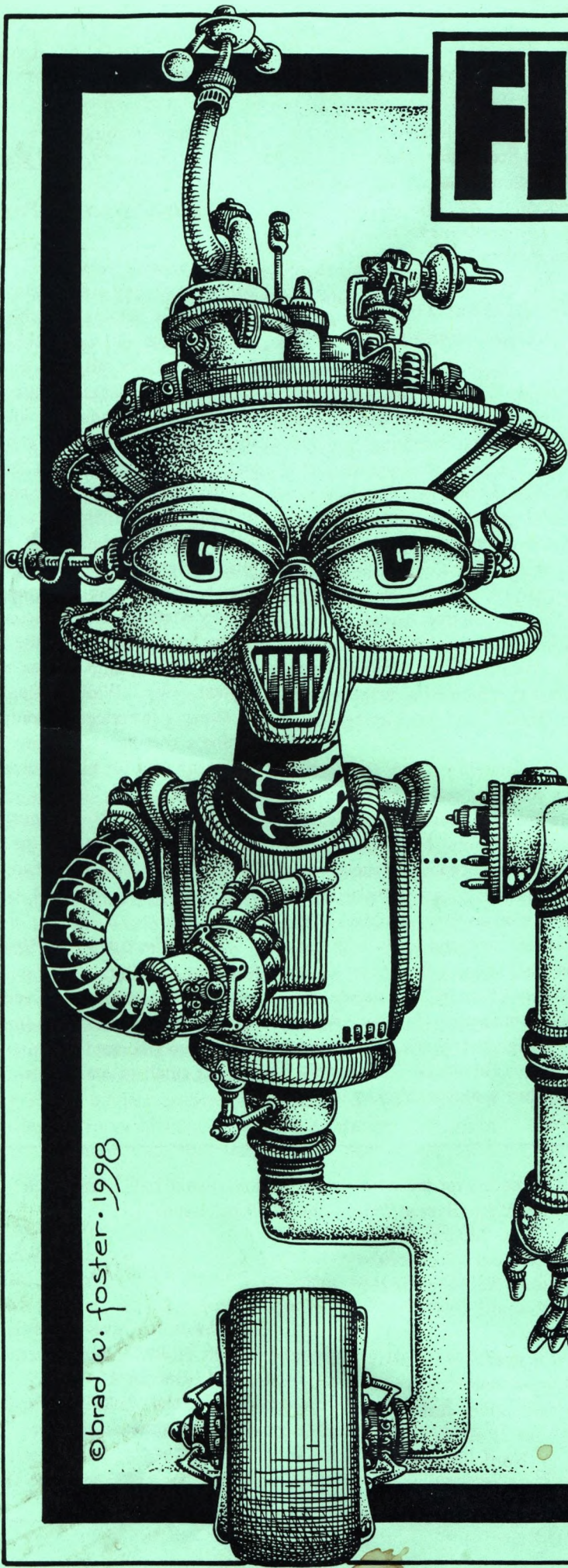
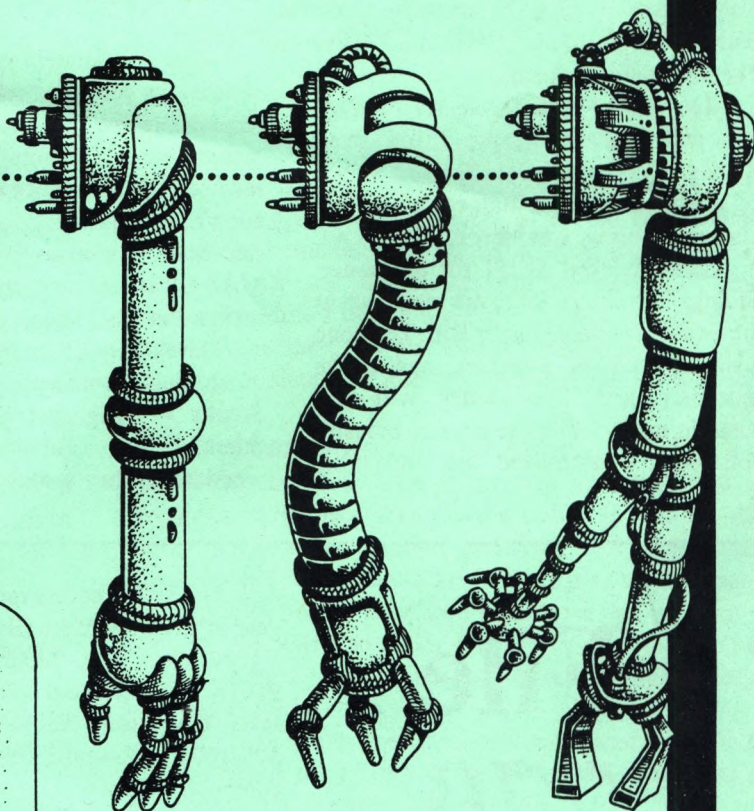


# FILE-770



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## Steve Stiles Wins Rotsler Award

Steve Stiles has been selected as the first winner of the Rotsler Memorial Fanzine Artist Award, presented by SCIFI (the Southern California Institute for Fan Interests).

SCIFI created the award in memory of William Rotsler to honor the lifetime work of outstanding fanartists. Steve was selected as the first Rotsler Award recipient in recognition of his lifelong generosity and the unique talent reflected in his work.

Steve's distinctive fanart has appeared for nearly 40 years, starting with work published in *Cry of the Nameless* in 1959 and continuing to the present with his contributions to *Trap Door*, *Outworlds*, *Idea*, *Mimosa*, and other leading fanzines. An exhibit of Steve's work will be on display in the Loscon 25 Art Show at the Burbank Airport Hilton over Thanksgiving weekend.

The annual award consists of \$300 cash and an award plaque. Mike Glycer, Richard Lynch, and Geri Sullivan served as this year's award judges. Mike will assemble Loscon's exhibit of Steve's art.

Steve thanked SCIFI for the honor, adding: "It means a lot to me inasmuch as the award was named after Bill; I've long admired both as a person and as an artist/cartoonist. The money will also come in handy; after the comics industry collapsed, I discovered that my other

commercial art skills had been rendered obsolete by the computer revolution. I'm currently working in a non-art job and slowly accumulating the money for computer equipment -- this will go to a printer and modem."

## I Know What You Did Last Summer

NESFA members visiting the clubhouse on a night in July were astonished to see three half-pint skunks rambling through the back lot. *Instant Message* reports: "They now believe that Mr. Skunk is no longer a valid gender designation."

The discovery makes it almost certain that NESFA Press' forthcoming autobiography of Mr. Skunk will be nominated for the Tiptree Award.

Meantime, club members are dunning Mark and Priscilla Olson to follow up their original purchase of a membership for Mr. Skunk by registering the offspring.

Michael Burstein spared them the expense by moving "that Mike Glycer be responsible for the Family Dependency memberships." Before Burstein could recommend an independent counsel be appointed, Priscilla protested "this [is] a scurrilous motion as it is doubtful that Mike Glycer had anything to do with the increase in [the] skunk population."

Davey Snyder ended the debate by purchasing memberships for the young skunks -- designated Stank, Stink and Stunk. Chip Hitchcock skeptically wondered if they were contributing to the

delinquency of minors.

[[Source: *Instant Message* 629]]

## Willis Collection Published

In *Fanorama*, fans will rediscover a goldmine of long out-of-print columns by Walt Willis originally published in the Scottish prozine *Nebula*. Robert Lichtman has assembled all 40 columns that appeared in *Nebula*, plus five more installments published after *Nebula* folded: one in Lichtman's own *Psi-Phi* and four in Pete Weston's *Zenith*.

Ted White believes the new collection of Walt Willis prozine columns "Belongs on every Timebinder's shelf...." Published this November in an edition of 150 copies, the volume also includes Beryl Henley Mercer's letter reacting to Walt's review of her fanzine in the penultimate "Fanorama" column, which supplies the context for Walt's final column. Lichtman's introduction contains Darroll Pardoe's comments on how "Fanorama" paved the way for his eventual discovery of fandom.

**Fanorama**, 100 pages, including covers. \$10.00 postpaid (to anywhere). Order from Robert Lichtman, P. O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, USA

## Aussiecon Trip Planned

Ron and Val Ontell have put together a tour after Aussiecon 3, running from August 20-September 26 (including the convention.) To see the tentative itinerary drop an email to [ontell@cari.net](mailto:ontell@cari.net)

# File 770 127

*File 770:127* is edited for the 20th year in a row by Mike Glycer at 705 Valley View Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016. News believed before breakfast. **Telephone Number:** (626) 305-1004. **E-Mail:** [MGlycer@compuserve.com](mailto:MGlycer@compuserve.com)

*File 770* is available for news, artwork, arranged trades, or by subscription. Subscriptions cost \$8 for 5 issues, \$15 for 10 issues, mailed first class in North America or surface mail rates overseas.

Air printed matter rate is available for \$2.50 per issue.

## Art Credits

Brad Foster: Cover  
Allan White: 3, 6, 13  
Teddy Harvia: 4  
Bill Rotsler: 7, 8, 9, 10  
Sheryl Birkhead: 12

# News of Fandom

## *Seattle is Gone*

Like Superman in the presence of kryptonite, the Seattle in '02 worldcon bid was brought to its knees when local hotel management declined to commit their facilities. The committee has withdrawn from the 2002 race, leaving San Francisco unopposed.

Seattle bidders were forced into the decision because of the impending deadline to submit documents showing hotel and convention center reservations, required by the World Science Fiction Society, to be placed on the Site Selection ballot for the 2002 vote.

The committee needed a block of at least 1,000 rooms per night to qualify to reserve the Washington State Trade and Convention Center. Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc., has declined to provide the committee with a room block at any of the major downtown Seattle hotels that it owns or operates, including the Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Towers, Westin Hotel Seattle, Days Inn Towncenter, The Edward Meany Hotel, and Sixth Avenue Inn, as well as the new Group W Hotel and the proposed hotel to be built at the Convention Center.

The committee's repeated queries to Starwood for an explanation have gone unanswered.

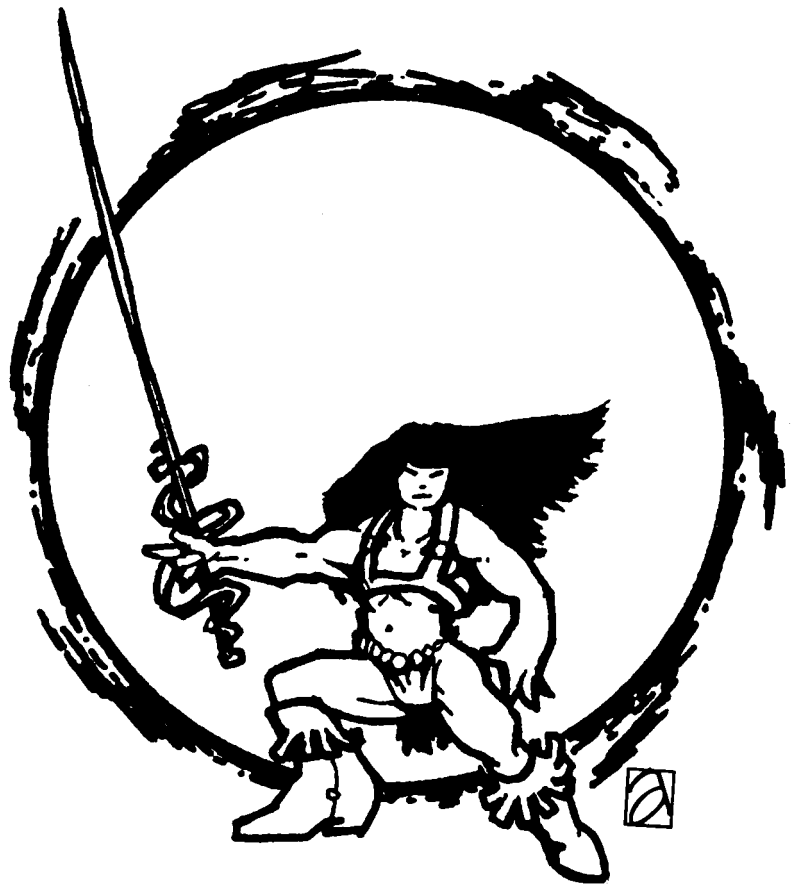
Not going quietly, the bid committee issued a press release designed for local effect that begins: "An estimated \$4 million in revenue will be lost to downtown Seattle business as a result of Starwood Hotels' decision to block a local group's efforts to host the World Science Fiction Convention in 2002. A Worldcon in Seattle would have generated an estimated \$3.8 million dollars in local spending. This includes \$300,000 in room and other tax on a weekend when no other group has used the Convention Center for several years." The release pointedly adds, "Starwood's de facto ability to control which groups can reserve the Convention Center is lamentable."

The Seattle bidders originally believed it would be easy to get the desired room blocks because the downtown area is not crowded on Labor Day weekend, due in part to the local Bumbershoot Arts Festival.

## *San Francisco Offers "Cross-Grade" Presupports*

The San Francisco in 2002 bid issued a press release full of respectful sympathy for Seattle's decision, and immediately followed with an announcement designed to attract Seattle's presupporters into its own ranks.

Seattle charged \$10.01 for pre-supports. San Francisco charges \$20.02. Chair Kevin Standlee offers to let Seattle's presupporters convert by sending the difference, \$10.01, to SFSFC Inc., Cross-Grade Membership Offer, PO Box 61363, Sunnyvale CA 94088-1363. This offer is good through April 5, 1999. It does not affect anyone who already has an SF presupport.



## *Immortal Storm*

Guy Lillian III was briefly forced out of New Orleans by Hurricane Georges. "I stayed one night at kind Toni Weisskopf's Birmingham home and two nights at the Fort Valley, Georgia abode of Fred and Mary Ann van Hartesveldt. I took the opportunity while I was in Southern Georgia to visit the site of Andersonville, the Civil War P.O.W. prison, and will present an account with pictures in the 8th *Challenger*, now in the works."

## *Lindsay and Weber Coming To US*

Jean Weber and Eric Lindsay plan to visit the USA in late November/early December. Jean's father is turning 80. Her family will have its reunion in Lacey, WA (near Seattle) at Thanksgiving. According to Eric, "We figure we will manage to catch up with Seattle fans. Don't think we can get to any cons however. We will also make it to Las Vegas (the hotel can be included in the air fare, thanks to the usual strange holiday deals available at times)."

They have settled into their new apartment in Airlie Beach, but Eric claims to be "very distracted by the great views and all the other things available for us to do."

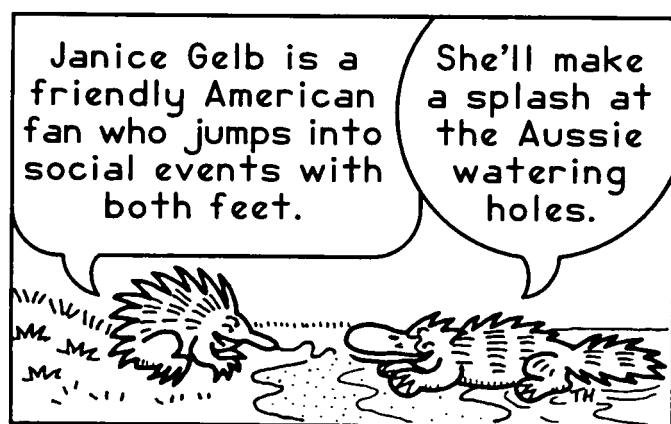
"One of the local pub keeps running free SF movies on its video screen, so I feel obliged to grab a pitcher of beer and catch up on films I didn't see when they were released. Had a bunch of small parrots turn up at breakfast and beg for scraps of bread on the balcony. So far the bush turkeys and the peacocks that wander around the units have been unwilling get real close, and

scatter when you get a few feet away. Then there was the Hobbie 16 World sailing championships for two weeks, which we could view from the balcony, so the binoculars got a workout. I've been so tired from walking up the 210 steps from the beach several times a day that I've often had to take to the spa to recuperate.

### *More Tales of the South Pacific*

**DUFF:** Three strong candidates have entered the DUFF race to become the delegate to Aussiecon in 1999. Lise Eisenberg, Janice Gelb and Andy Hooper all filed for the ballot. (Guy Lillian explains why he did not in the following article.)

Victor Gonzalez has put up a web page promoting Andy Hooper's campaign. Dick Lynch is editing a zine in support of Janice Gelb: when ready, it will go out with the next *Mimosa* and be posted on Janice's web page.



### *Why I Stayed Out of the DUFF Race by Guy Lillian III*

Thanks for the nice DUFF thoughts. I may make a run someday, either for DUFF or, if the fanzine world is quiet, for TAFF, but I can't next year.

First is a matter of finances. DUFF provides a goodly amount for an Australian trip, but hardly enough to cover all expenses. Though I'm making a decent living as a public defender, and have taken care of most of my debts, I still owe lots and lots of back taxes -- and that *must* be my first financial priority. I couldn't justify an expenditure of several thousand dollars when the money is not available.

Second is a family matter. My dear mother has reached the age when she needs assistance in her daily life and is approaching the point when supervisory care will be needed. Now, I live 1400 miles from her, and even were I closer, wouldn't be able, either by training or temperament, to provide routine care for a sick old lady. But I can give assistance to my brother, who lives close to her and is stuck with the day-to-day decisions and stress of her deteriorating condition. He's asked that I spend my vacations for the next year or so giving him a break from the supervision of our mother's needs, and all things considered, it's a small request. So again, I can't justify leaving the country for

a month in the midst of a family problem.

Third, although I have only heard of two other candidates, one is someone I wouldn't mind supporting and the other is someone I respect but don't want to argue with. Janice Gelb has mentioned a desire to run for DUFF and I would happily lend her a vote. She's the senior female member of SFPA, has done yeoman's work for any number of worldcons (need I tell *you?* her Hugo ceremony at L.A.Con was delightful, and efficient) and does very lively (and detailed) con reports. She'd make a fine candidate and delegate. I also understand -- from a conversation with Vic Gonzalez at worldcon -- that Andy Hooper is gearing up for another go at the race. I respect Hooper a great deal and enjoy his writing (can't wait to hear him on McGwire/Sosa -- too bad Sammy's not American-born, so we can't run them for national office), but his attitude (and even his *Apparatchik*) on fanzines and fandom is exclusivist, elitist, snobbish. I wouldn't mind debating with Andy over the most rewarding manner in which to embrace the fannish experience, but not when something tangible, like a DUFF trip, is at issue. Besides, Gonzalez -- a nice guy, with *excellent* taste in lady friends (hi, Sheila) -- seemed to couch a possible GHLIII-vs.-Hooper race as a contest between the Ted White Group Mind and one who has challenged (!) its hold on fanzine fandom, and frankly, I have better things to concern myself over. (I put this thought a bit more saucily in *Challenger* #8, due sometime this autumn if another hurricane doesn't strike).

Fourth reason: I don't think I could win. Studying the last U.S.-to-U.K. TAFF race taught me a lot about the nature of contemporary fandom and what it takes to become well known in its environs: you have to work the Net. My clumsy assertion that Ulrika O'Brien may have won TAFF because of her popularity with L.A. people was countered by those who knew better, that Ulrika's activities on rassf and other outlets made her far better known and liked -- and gave her an advantage over longer-term fanzine fans like Vicki Rosenzweig and Tom Sadler, both of whom deserve more recognition from their peers than we've given them so far. I'm not even hooked up on the Internet, at home -- this message is coming to you courtesy of an expensive Kinko's rental! To successfully win *any* contest in modern fandom, it's obvious I'd have to toe the mark on its turf, and its turf is the Net. I don't mind being trashed in any competition, but I don't want to be *utterly* trashed.

So, with deep thanks and apologies to those of you who encouraged me to place my name in DUFF competition, I had to pass on this year.

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### *Other Fan Fund News*

**CUFF:** Lloyd and Yvonne Penney have succeeded R. Graeme Cameron as co-administrators of the Canadian Unity Fan Fund. Lloyd's take on the controversy raised by Cameron's pronouncement that CUFF exists for fanzine fans is:

"The CUFF discussions continue apace, but we have decided that while CUFF should be open to all, we suspect that fanzine

fans will continue to win CUFF because of their built-in communications network. Besides, if you want convention fans or costumers to win...well, we just did. Getting a consensus of Canadian fans' opinions on CUFF will be difficult, since most people don't seem to care too much about it."

**TAFF:** Maureen Kincaid Speller, winding up her TAFF tour of North America before returning to England, visited Los Angeles in October. She's the first TAFF delegate in memory to do so who was not here for an LA Worldcon. Maureen and her local hosts, Ulrika and Hal O'Brien, came out for a party at the Pelzes on October 17. Ben Yalow, on his own continuing SMOF tour, was also in town for the SCIFI meeting preceding the party. Enthusiastic sharing about favorite Civil War histories broke out in the middle of the usual smoffing.

Rumour, courtesy of *Ansible*, suggests that Julian Headlong and Paul Kincaid will be standing. Terry Frost also noted that Steve Davies might stand for TAFF in the next Europe-to-North-America race. (A race is still in progress between North American candidates Vijay Bowen and Sarah Prince.)

### **Medical Updates**

**Peggy White** had surgery November 2 in Belfast. Neurosurgeons removed a benign tumor from the surface of her brain, and she's recovering well.

Geri Sullivan reports: "The recovery prognosis is excellent - Peggy was walking two days after the surgery, and she quickly grew tired of the daily checks confirming she knows who the prime minister is...."

"Peggy has some weakness in her left arm and leg, but that is expected to pass.... All of the symptoms caused by the tumor before surgery are gone, including the splitting headache that had developed along with hearing and vision problems."

Cheery cards and letters are most welcome: James & Peggy White, 2 West Drive, Portstewart, Co. L'derry, Northern Ireland BT55 7ND, U.K.

**Vincent Clarke** has been rehospitalized, for depression, according to a Rob Hansen post: "....Living alone in a single room of your house, hooked up to a feeding machine for 16 hours out of every 24 would be enough to get anyone down, I imagine." It's uncertain whether Vince will be able to return home or whether he'll need to move to a nursing home or other long-term care facility.

**Walt Willis**, who suffered a small stroke this summer, is making a slow recovery since being release from the hospital.

[[Source: Geri Sullivan]]

## **The Zine-o-File**

### **Ditto 11**

At Ditto 11 guest of honor Ed Meskys received a surprise: his very own Hugo rocket. When *Niekas* was voted Best Fanzine, in 1967, Meskys and co-editor Felice Rolfe received a single Hugo Award, now held by Rolfe. The Ditto committee decided it would add a wonderful touch to the con if they could present Ed with his own copy of the award. Their international intelligence network located a surplus Hugo rocket in the SCIFI arsenal. They made up a wooden base with a brass plaque identifying it as a replacement Hugo. Ditto 11 committee member Mark Olson made the presentation.

*Niekas 45*, an Essays on Dark Fantasy issue, edited by Joe Christopher, was distributed during the 1998 Worldcon and at Ditto 11. The 120-page issue is available from Niekas Publications, RR #2, Box 63, 322 Whittier Hwy., Center Harbor NH 03226-9708; (603) 253-6207; edmund.meskys@gsel.org.

Ditto 11 drew 33 fans to Newport, R.I. Saturday afternoon program items were, The First Amendment and Fan Writing; Proud and Lonely (Can fanzine fandom survive in its current form? Should it try?); Fandom and Ed Meskys; and, Something by Bob Webber.

Ditto 12 will be held in Minneapolis, Oct. 29-31, 1999. The con will be organized by Karen Cooper, Bruce Schneier, Martin Schafer, David Emerson, Dean Gahlon and Jeff Schalles. Memberships are \$25 until the end of the year. Contact: Ditto 12 c/o Karen Cooper, 101 E. Minnehaha Parkway, Minneapolis MN 55419; karen@counterpane.com [[Source: Murray Moore]]

### **Gone in 60 Seconds**

The poet who wrote, "He who steals my purse steals trash" should meet Bill Bridget. Bill feels the same way about his car, now being driven by a Chattanooga car thief.

"The thief, whomever he may have been, assuredly must have realized his mistake from the moment he sat in the driver's seat and the hypodermic sliver of steel from the broken spring ripped through his underdrawers and stabbed into his left buttock. You can't sit down in that driver's seat...."

"I can see him in my mind's eye, spotting a bevy of teenage beauties and reaching up above his head to use the horn on the steering column... only to discover that horn won't work. It's on the same circuit with the cigarette lighter and the radio which don't work either. I picture him slumped in the seat in order to avoid a possible puncture of his colon, hammering on the steering wheel in impotence and sexual frustration, running a stop sign that he couldn't possibly see in that position, and being subsequently picked up by a patrol vehicle for running the light."

### **Incompleat Tucker Marks 25th Birthday**

Bill Bowers would like fans to know he still has a small supply of *The Really Incompleat Bob Tucker* available. The 60-page compendium of Tucker works was produced in 1973 by Dave Locke and Jackie Causgrove, to fund Tucker's trip to Aussiecon.

Bowers donates all proceeds, after postage, to the Science Fiction Oral History Association.

Cost: US\$10.00, from: Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503.

### Short Waves

**Ned Brooks**, in a letter to *Knarley Knews*, recalls: "I did meet 'E. B. Frohvet' -- or at any rate a person claiming to be the editor of *Twink* -- at the Worldcon. But he (a tall thin bearded person of about my own advanced age) did not reveal his real name other than to say that his first name is Michael." A fan named Michael. Great. Now we can eliminate from our list of suspects the 10% of male fans who *aren't* named Michael.

**Plotka News Network:** The *Plotka* cabal has opened a web site for news, views and other topical writing of interest to the SF fan community. The Plokta News Network, or PNN, can be found at <http://www.plokta.com/pnn>. Plans call for weekly updates to the site.

**Pay Me My Money Now:** Did Buccaneer achieve Peggy Rae Pavlat's goal of issuing membership reimbursement checks in September? No, but their speed is still impressive. The first mailing of the checks to program participants and committee, staff, volunteers, and gophers who worked 30 or more hours, went out in mid-November.

**Sheryl Birkhead** recently wrote, "The family is close to signing to subdivide the farm -- sigh -- gonna hafta move."

An interview with **Harlan Ellison** appears in *The Door*, issue 160, writes Robert Whitaker Sirignano. Ellison reveals that he's been in correspondence with an official from the Vatican since the publication of "The Deathbird." No name is given, but it *isn't* the Pope. *The Door*, which contains religious/Christian satire, often chooses unusual and unlikely interviews -- like cartoonist Callahan in an earlier issue. Robert's verdict: "The interview is good and, like Ellison at cons, funny." Order *The Door* for \$5.95 from P.O. Box 33, Dallas, TX 75221.

**The Y770 Crisis:** Victoria Smith asks: RUY2KOK? And she warns, in the spirit of *Jabberwocky*:

*Beware the bank reserves that twitch,  
And also too the GPS glitch  
(21-22 Aug 99)(& 9 Sep 99)  
May your 770 pubs be uninterrupted!  
(Cross fingers, toes, arms, eyes....)*

**Corporate Makeover:** At its November 1 meeting, NESFA voted to incorporate the NESFA Press as a separate 501(c)(3) corporation.

[[Source: *Instant Message* 633]]

**Money, Will Robinson!** Following their successful preview of the movie *Lost in Space*, the Melbourne SF Club forwarded a \$427.25 donation to its official charity, Lifeline.

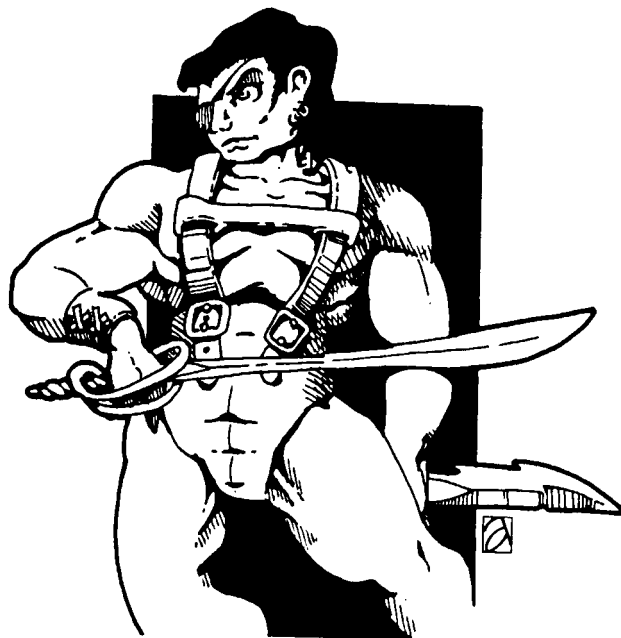
[[Source: *Ethel the Aardvark*]]

**Message From a Higher Critic:** Does it surprise anyone to hear that Prometheus award-winning writer J. Neil Schulman carries a concealed handgun? Schulman wrote in a recent letter to the *Los Angeles Times* that he holds permits from four states to carry concealed weapons. He criticized a suggestion that would require these concealed handguns to be equipped with technology that would disable them when not in close proximity to the owner's personal computer chip:

"If I am injured or dying, I might, in order to save another's life, need to pass my firearm to someone I trust to continue the defense.... [There] is nothing less safe than a gun that does not fire when the trigger is pulled in order to combat a lethal threat. And, nobody who has just spent two weeks debugging a new computer, as I have, would ever consider trusting his life to one."

I wasn't surprised to hear about the handgun, just that he needed two weeks to debug his computer.

**The Monty Wells Project:** In memory of the late Monty Wells, several NESFA members are assembling a session for school teachers called "When Worlds Collide: A Symposium on Learning and Science Fiction." It will have two tracks of programming overseen by Priscilla Olson (grades 4-8) and Michael Burstein (high school). Marvin Minsky will give a luncheon keynote speech. Deb Geisler and Priscilla Olson also hope to line up a closing speech to tie everything together.





## Quoth the Flamingo, "Nevermore"

At Bucconeer, when the Orlando bidders finally said "Turn out the lights, the party's over," they weren't talking about just a paltry few dozen yards of ceiling lights as I reported last issue.

Chip Hitchcock writes that the decorations of the Boston for Orlando in 2001 party included almost half a mile of lights on the ceiling. "We found a party-supply chain that was going out of business and bought the entire stock of lights at several stores.

"We had over 3000 watts of lights -- since they were spread all over the ceiling, they were enough to light the room without any of the built-in lights."

Since I didn't smell any frying insulation, I wondered if they made special arrangements to power so many lights?

Chip answered, "It turns out those little lights don't draw very much; a digital ammeter reported ~250/amp.

"The hotel was *supposed* to provide us with extra circuits for margin, but it turned out their electrician didn't understand the concept of providing circuits even though there was at least one heavy-duty socket in the room. With careful division we got almost everything on the two circuits built into our half of the room, and the hotel ran a cord into the other half for our last few lights. (I did build some distribution lines because the lights themselves were on very light-weight wire that allowed only a few strings to be chained together.)"

## The Fur Frontier

Fred Patten agrees, "Yes, I am writing a history of furry fandom, and Joe Rosales is also planning a 'Brian Aldiss' history of furry/talking animals in popular culture." But he feels that Taral's comments about these projects, quoted in *File 770:125*, while accurate in general are erroneous in detail.

Neither Patten nor Rosales feel their books are "revisionist" views of the same topic, any more than one would claim that Aldiss' *The Billion-Year Spree* is a revisionist view of Harry Warner's *All Our Yesterdays*. Rosales will focus on literature and popular culture, and Patten

will chronicle furry fandom.

Patten will only supply a broad overview of the history before moving on to his main topic, furry fandom:

"There is an Egyptian tomb painting ca. 1500 B.C. of a lion and a gazelle playing whatever the Egyptian equivalent of checkers was. This is a bit more indisputably 'funny animal' than animal-headed gods, or neolithic cave paintings of what might have been anthropomorphized animals but could equally well have been tribal shamans dressed in animal skins. Parables featuring talking animals can be traced from the tales of Aesop and Terence through the Medieval ballads of Reynard the Fox to the refined literary fantasies of the 18th century French Court and the 'Uncle Remus' Afro-American folk tales of the 19th century. (And don't forget the Monkey King tales in the Orient.)

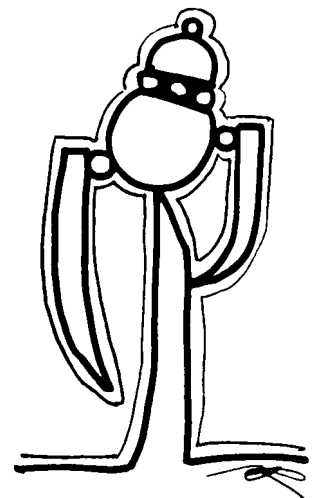
"Anthropomorphics have especially proliferated during the most recent 200 years, with the popularization of talking animals in childrens' literature (Lewis Carroll, etc.); talking animals in political cartoons (which predate Thomas Nast's Democratic donkey and Republican elephant); advertising mascots like Tony the Tiger and the Trix rabbit; movie and newspaper funny-animal stars like Krazy Kat, Mickey Mouse and Pogo Possum; and so on. I will summarize all this in a very broad overview as the Introduction to my history of organized furry fandom. Rosales will concentrate entirely on the history of talking animals through 5,000 years or more of popular culture.

"My thesis is that furry fandom coalesced out of sf fandom and comics fandom, blending elements from both of them and achieving its own critical mass in 1983/1984. The first clear signs of the independent furry fandom were the creation of its first apa, *Rowrbrazzle*, and the decision by some fans to self-publish furry comic books because there seemed to be enough fans of stories with talking animals to support them (as distinct from earlier attempts to self-publish comics which had to hope for sufficient sales from the general public alone.) Some key titles in this evolution of 'furrydom' were *Cutey Bunny* (which first appeared in

October 1982 but attracted attention during 1983), Alan Dean Foster's *Spellsinger* novels starting in mid-'83 (influential in establishing funny animals as respectable reading for adults), and the *Rowrbrazzle* apa and the comics *Albedo*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, and *Usagi Yojimbo* all during 1984. *Critters* and *Captain Jack* weren't until 1986.

"*Rowrbrazzle* started in February 1984. Since it was specifically an apa for writing and drawing funny animals as a genre and discussing the new fandom that was forming about them, it is a handy landmark to say that 'furry fandom existed at this time.' I do not claim, as Taral implies, that furry fandom was started by the birth of *Rowrbrazzle*. But I have asked whether anyone can supply an earlier date that can be clearly identified as belonging to furry fandom, as distinct from being an isolated furry event within sf fandom (such as the preview of the *Watership Down* movie at the 1978 Worldcon) or comics fandom (such as R. Crumb's *Fritz the Cat* in 1968 or Marvel Comics *Howard the Duck* in 1976; and so far nobody has.

"Considering that the worthwhile histories of fandom such as Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* and Harry Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* and *A Wealth of Fable* have each taken about a decade to write, I will be very surprised if my book (working title: *Animal Masks*) is ready for publication as soon as next year."



# Is Your Club Dead Yet?

In which we pile **Apocalypse** on top of **Apocalypse**, then **sheepishly admit** the entire **crisis** is actually **smaller** and more **personal** -- and is already being **solved**, one **fan** at a time.



As you can see from the last financial report, the club is broke.... Several social events I had wanted to arrange -- bigger, better things than just another house party -- have gone by the wayside due to lack of funds and lack of response.... The time has come to ask some questions about the future of WCFSA -- yes, again. Changes need to be made if the club is going to survive as a functional, living entity and not just a mailing list.

*Lisa Gemino (BCSFazine, April 1998)*

The New Jersey SF Society suspended monthly meetings in January of this year because there weren't enough dues-paying members to continue using their present location.

*Intergalactic Reporter*

Attendance at the meetings is down, way down, from the times when a hundred or more people would show up for the general meetings held every 3rd Saturday. Perhaps even more distressing is the overall lack of interest in anything S.T.A.R. ...The apathy has been so thick lately that you couldn't cut through it, even with a lightsaber. Ironically, there's never been a shortage of criticism for the gallant few who have tried to keep S.T.A.R.'s flame burning, while those who have criticized sat back and demanded, 'Entertain Us!' Rich Kuhaupt about *Star Trek Association for Revival*, San Diego chapter (*Interphase*, November 1996)

With the club standing on the brink of complete breakdown, we must either find a way to revitalize the organization, morph it into something that works, or shut it down as a relic that has outlived its time.

*Don Glover the Younger*, about NWSFS (*Westwind*, March 1997)

**Down here in Houston, the local SF clubs seem to have died out years ago.... Other clubs are suffering, too: the computer clubs have disappeared and a couple of NSS chapters have sort of fizzled.**

*Greg Bennett*

The Ottawa Science Fiction Society is evolving into a loose association of like-minded people in cyberspace.... Monthly meetings will continue in a desperate attempt to maintain some personal contact. Attendance is so sparse, they could be held in private homes.

Lionel Wagner (e-mail quoted in *BCSFazine* 295-6, December 1997)



For the past several years, local Jeremiahs belonging to a lot of well-known clubs have been warning that the end is near. I could run a column in this zine titled "Club Suicide Note of the Month" and never fail to fill it. What is going on?

All of the writers are club officers, sincerely trying to reverse a downhill trend. Though thousands of miles apart, they are fighting the same problems -- A massive fall-off in attendance; All the work of keeping the club going left to an overworked handful; Fewer and less interesting activities; Empty treasuries.

Science fiction clubs are not immortal. Many of us have personally experienced the birth and death of some fledgling group. The attention-grabbing difference is these writers are sounding the death-knell for sf clubs that have met for over 20 years.

What's more, these warnings come at the same time that fandom at large wonders how long it is destined to continue. Everybody hears about "the graying of fandom" and sees how the average age of *Locus* readers creeps up from year to year - from 36 to 43 since 1988. We're not foolish enough to think we won't get old, but where are the new, young fans? Even the newbies are gray. When Lou Tabakow was an old lion, we were the neos. Who will inherit everything we've invested in this way of life?

The popular notion is that the decline in clubs can be explained by the same theories offered about the ultimate fate of mainstream fandom -- but is that true? And how do fans feel about sf clubs today? This article explores both questions using direct comments gathered from members.

**Apocalyptic Visions of the Last Days of Fan on Earth:** S.T.A.R. San Diego used to have a hundred fans at meetings, now they're hovering around 30. In January 1998, the New Jersey SF Society gave up its meeting place: there were no longer enough dues-paying members for them to afford it. LASFS attendance has dropped by one-third since 1990. Attendance at many clubs peaked years ago and has tailed off dramatically, including at one of Albuquerque's two sf clubs:

**Roy Tackett:** Albuquerque has the Albuquerque SF Society, which I founded in 1963, and Alpha Centaura, which came along in the early 1970s. AC was originally a Star Trek club and had about 400 members. That's a bunch. It has dwindled down to about 15 now but still meets regularly every month and Star Trek is seldom mentioned.

The ASFS meets monthly also and has 25-30 members. It puts on Bubonicon every year (with our 30th coming up this year.) There is some overlapping of membership between the two clubs. ....I would say that both are stable.



The sf club concept was popularized in the 1930s through prozines like *Wonder Stories*, whose editor, Charles Honig, launched the Science Fiction League in 1934. The formula is simple. Fans show up, elect a president, make announcements and review the latest sf, and adjourn to eat. Once they raided the sherbet mine at Clifton's Cafeteria, nowadays they consume mass quantities of pizza. The old formula still works at BASFA (the Bay Area Science Fiction Association):

**Kevin Standlee:** Around 10-25 people attend the meetings, which are held [each Monday night] at a Round Table Pizza parlor. There are regulars who can be expected to be there nearly every week and others who attend only now and then. The main part of each meeting is usually the reviews of what folks have been reading and watching.

It primarily exists as a regular weekly social meeting where fans can gather to talk with each other.... BASFA's lack of ambition actually makes it easier to hold together, because we're not constantly asking the membership to do things other than have fun.

At troubled clubs something has torn the social fabric and the simple, proven formula cannot hold people together any more. When it happens at a club that was once large and ambitious,

the remaining members grieve over the major changes imposed by failing attendance. For them, withering to BASFA-size is a terribly discouraging change.

On the other hand, you never see one of these club suicide notes from a NESFAn. That club remains energized by the orthodox recipe for science fictional success: a belief that science fiction matters, backed up by hard work on book publishing, discussion groups, conventions and fanzines, balanced by many social gatherings. Did the distressed clubs lose the key to their success? Or are people not relying on sf clubs to meet their needs?

**Didn't I Join an SF Club?** Whether speaking of the doom of clubs or the death of fandom, some fans blame both on the fact that fandom is not about sf anymore. Pat Gulley, a member of PorSFis (Portland, OR), warned members against this trend in her 1996 *Pulsar* editorial:

...In the case of our club, the frayed edges are starting to happen. The old rhetoric 'you don't have to know anything, just come and enjoy, why not run for elected office, let's go to a new restaurant after each meeting, when are we partying, is there kid care, what's going on in another club, what about gaming, how's the science fiction center doing, read any comics lately, what's at the movies, aren't the science fiction movies and tv shows awful, did you catch *Seinfeld*....' Hey! WHERE'S THE SCIENCE FICTION? All that stuff is part of the conversation of a social get-together, some is part of announcements, but is it why we

joined a Science Fiction Club? I feel this present agenda is why we are sliding away from what should be the main focus of a club that calls itself a SCIENCE FICTION CLUB....

...The key word here is purpose. The club should have it and something must be expected from each of the members. I really think that's why we lose so many new faces to OryCon: it has purpose that reaches fulfillment yearly. Nothing is expected from PorSFis members. It has to be among the top reasons why it's so easy for people to lose interest.... If you have any doubts, look at some other clubs like the L-5, The Baker Street Irregulars, Sisters in Crime, the Lions Club, Kiwanis, Wilamette Sailing Club, Portland Skyliners-The Tall Club, Parents Without Partners...lots of purpose.

Of course! Clubs are ailing because they're no longer really about science fiction! When "mainstream fandom" stops participating in its core activity, who can be surprised by the lack of new "trufans"? We've become no different from the Moose, Elk and every other lodge competing for mundane members. Or so I enthused.

When I read Pat's letter I felt lightning-struck because I recognized same the mindset she in my home club, LASFS: obsessed with everything except science fiction and wondering why its attendance has fallen off by one-third in the 1990s. I could hardly wait to borrow Pat's soapbox to make my own plea to restore the exciting ideas of science fiction to the center of club activities.

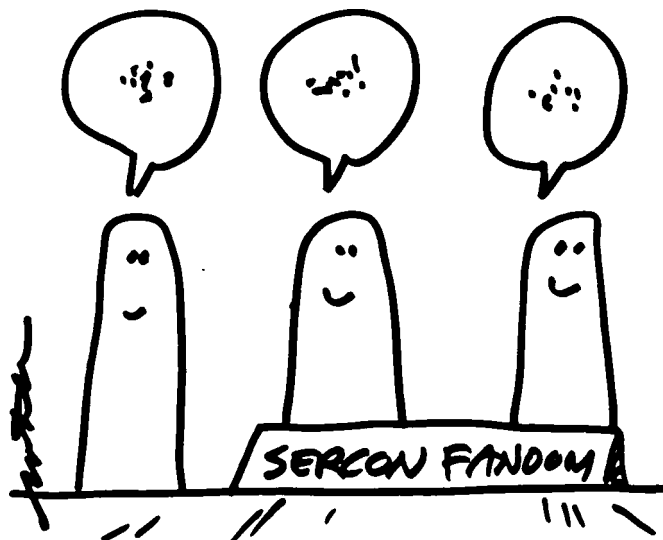
Then I thought again. I joined LASFS in 1970 and witnessed its explosive growth. The reality of those times was a bit different than you would suppose from Pat's argument.

My quest through the pages of '70s fanhistory found rather different role models than Pat's theory would predict. Certainly, if it's science fiction purism you seek, you can search the history of LASFS in vain for something to go back to.

You've probably read Harlan Ellison's description of the place that LASFS met in for awhile in the 1960s, before I joined. "The Hill" was a big, weatherbeaten house immortalized in "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin":

Gothic, hideous, with grass half-cut and the rusted lawnmower sitting in the middle of an unfinished swath -- as if the half-cut grass were a placating gesture to the outraged tenants of the two lanai apartment houses that loomed over the squat structure on either side.

Boundless enthusiasm for mind-altering substances, not a fanatical devotion to literary excellence, is the legend that survives about fans who lived at the Hill.



LASFS in 1970 was experiencing one "barbarian invasion" after another as it was discovered by local pockets of self-invented fandom: the Third Foundation, CalTech students, Granada Hills High School students -- and USC "experimental college" students, like me. The first clubhouse, purchased in 1973, was immediately outgrown. Its successor was bought in 1977.

Were all these fans attracted by a focus on sf? Yes and no. There's always been just as much -- or as little -- sf as anyone wants at LASFS. A fan could tie into a state-of-the-art sf and science discussion with Larry Niven, Jerry Pournelle, Dan Alderson and others. (After all, it was LASFSian Flieg Hollander who first proved that the Ringworld is unstable, before moving on to UC Berkeley.) But current films, comics, costuming, gaming, local bus schedules, air dates for recording tv reruns, ammo reloading, and silly news reports ("the Committee on Surrealism in Everyday Life") have been discussed just as passionately and as often. I must admit that what made me join LASFS was the chance to go with Joe Minne to the after-LASFS poker games at Larry Niven's house....

When LASFS attempted its own sf discussion group in the mid-1970s (attended by Milt Stevens, Elst Weinstein, Dan Alderson, Marty Massoglia and me), we abandoned it after a few months. While the club drew 104 members to the first meeting in its original clubhouse and kept on growing until it bought a bigger property in 1977, our sercon discussion group never grew at all.

Skyrocketing attendance at LASFS was not the byproduct of any organized attention to the genre. Nor was there a correlation between attention to sf and the growth of clubs in other cities, for example, Minneapolis:

**Denny Lien:** Minn-STF has "always" (at least from 1971 when I moved to town and joined until mid-1995 when I stopped showing up) been pretty much a social club with very brief business meetings and no programming, and sf-related conversation was never necessarily a dominant theme at any given meeting/party anyway. So by the definition that appears to be assumed here, we've been spending at least two-and-a-half decades in decline/crisis, and certainly nonetheless seem to have been pretty robustly healthy for almost all of that time....

Tending to lean more towards the sercon than faanish side, I was ready to embrace Pat Gulley's argument. Instead, I am skeptical. The kind of attention these clubs give to sf hasn't really changed. We cannot bring back the days of explosive growth by retrieving the devotion to sf known in the days of yesteryear.

In fact, as I reviewed my memories of what science fiction fandom was like when I first got involved in the early 1970s,

I began to suspect that the anemic state of science fiction clubs in the 1990s is not due to fandom's failure to achieve its goals, but is the penalty for its success.

**Defeat Through Victory!** However few clubs keep sf as the focus of their activity, all of them depend on sf to filter people into fandom (and membership) in the first place.

I started this article looking for the grand theory that explained the rash of "club suicide notes." Pat Gulley's theory didn't hold up under analysis. Then something Leah Zeldes Smith wrote online made me wonder: Could it be that the fatal problem is not at fandom's center, but at its boundary? Perhaps sf can no longer be the medium that filters people into fandom once the gradient between sf and mass culture disappears.

One evening, Leah Zeldes Smith went to a business dinner with a marketing consultant, a judge, and another fan. The conversation turned to the relative merits of various sf TV shows and movies (mostly panned), recommendations of books, the failure of the modern day to live up to childhood predictions of the future, and the gloominess of modern sf vs. the optimism of Asimov. Then it segued into Walt Disney, the stock market, and the effectiveness of various local PR agents. Leah realized:

These people were engaging in nothing more than smalltalk with chance-met strangers about subjects of modern cultural literacy. Had I had a conversation like this with strangers 20 years ago, we would have been hailing each other as kindred souls, taking down each other's phone numbers and I'd have promised to send info about fanzines or cons. But it was nothing like that at all. The only thing that inspired either of them to take out pencil and pad was my recommendation of a Greek restaurant.

Science fiction has become such a prevalent part of mass culture that it's no more difficult to find a fellow enthusiast than it is to find a Democrat or Republican. With opportunities for fanac on every street corner, why do people need to join a club?

There's practically no reason at all if you agree with Moshe Feder's famous comment:

**Moshe Feder:** It was the outside world's scorn that was crucial in leading fans to band together. As that scorn has diminished, so has fandom's attraction. It was the goal of early fandom to make SF universally popular. Judging by the list of all-time most-successful movies, by what one finds on TV and on the best seller lists, that goal has come as close to being achieved as is practical. That success has rendered fandom obsolete. Why should a kid seek out an SF



club or write a LoC in order to discuss the exciting ideas he finds in SF when he can do it with almost any kid in his class, even the girls?

Whether one believes that prospective fans are attracted by fandom's unique emphasis on sf, or get rejected into fandom because of an unacceptable obsession with sf, the mass acceptance of sf must be seen as short-circuiting the psychological forces that fandom relies on for new recruits.

Dave Kyle properly diagnosed the blight on modern fandom years ahead of any of the rest of us in his superb FGoH speech at the 1983 Worldcon (now available in Joe Siclari's *Fanhistorica* 5.) In his view, true fans are people with a Sense of Wonder, an emotional responsiveness that points the way for our logical minds, and also a Sense of Mission, a special, vigorous characteristic that makes an enthusiast more than just a reader. Kyle said in 1983 that "we *all* have a Sense of Wonder," but as for the Sense of Mission, "few of us have it now."

We had a mission, a sense of purpose, we had found a form of literature which liberated us and which could liberate the rest of the world -- if only the rest of the world could know about it. To us, science fiction was a miraculous Aladdin's lamp of hope. Our mission was simple: sing the praises of science fiction.... Because of our beliefs, filled with the power of our dreams and sure of the infallibility of science, we supported causes which had high purposes and benevolent and humanistic goals.

The Sense of Mission is missing today for obvious reasons: "After all, we have achieved our goals: to make science fiction known and acceptable to the general public."

**If You Can't Live Without Me Then Why Aren't You Dead?** ©Lynn Maudlin

So, if the roots of fandom have been severed, why is it the tree still upright?

In spite of having brilliantly described the problem, Kyle did not grasp the full implications of the psychological truth he had discovered, which is that the vitality of fandom comes from having a Sense of Mission -- period. The original catalyst of fandom's Sense of Mission was love and loyalty for science fiction. But other things can also catalyze fannish activity -- including a the commitment to perpetuate of fandom itself.

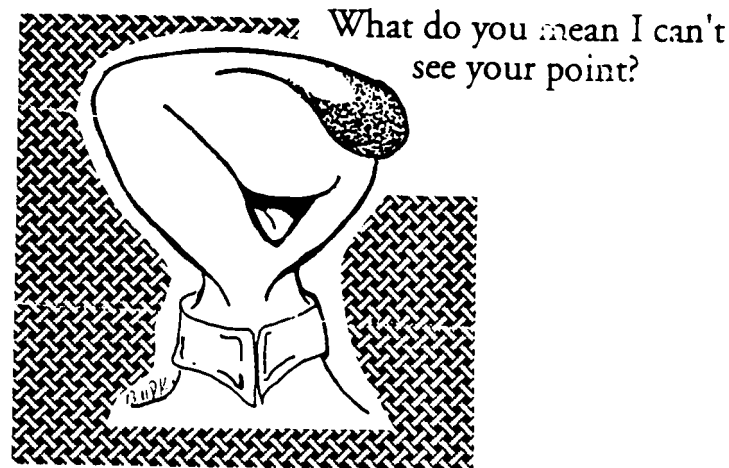
Once the sociology of fandom came into being, the rest was "just engineering." Fans applying what they'd learned in sf fandom also went out and founded fandoms for comics, media sf, mystery fiction and Regency romance novels. Nor did it pose any problem in starting a fandom if the genre was already fully accepted by mundane Americans.

Joining fandom is an option that only a tiny minority have

ever pursued. When pulp magazines reported circulations of hundreds of thousands of copies per month, there were only a few hundred fans, period. Today, when sf is popular with millions, there are thousands of actfans. So many people are interested in sf that, somewhat like the primordial "nutrient soup" once theorized by biologists, fannish life is bound to spring forth.

In fact, that's been happening all along: Lee Gold's Third Foundation, and the library-sponsored group I joined in 1967, are just two examples of the many clubs that formed without input from trufandom.

Important from the perspective of Feder and Kyle is that the promise of a new generation of fans includes no assurance they will perpetuate the fandom owing its traditions to Speer, Ackerman, Warner *et al.* From that viewpoint, it is necessary that clubs survive whose leaders are socially networked into mainstream fandom and will introduce newcomers to our history.



**Why Clubs Survive:** What are fans getting from the local club that keeps them coming back meeting after meeting? That's fairly obvious: socializing and friendship. Clubs also satisfy some people's desire to become attached to a tradition or identify with a history. In short --

**Sourdough Jackson:** It's COMMUNITY. DASFA is a lively social group that happens to revolve around SF fandom. Without our meetings and parties, and our friends at those meetings and parties, there would be something irretrievably missing from our lives.

Clubs build community through face-to-face social interaction. They answer our human need to be among other people. Though other forms of fanac (fanzines, apas, newsgroups, etc.) also promote friendship and fannish identity, they never fill that well of loneliness in the same way that being present in

person at a club meeting (or a convention) will.

**Other Media:** Lionel Wagner of OSFS tried to blame his club's shrinkage on e-mail lists, chat rooms, web pages, and other Internet technologies:

The Ottawa Science Fiction Society is evolving into a loose association of like-minded people in cyberspace.... Monthly meetings will continue in a desperate attempt to maintain some personal contact. Attendance is so sparse, they could be held in private homes.

Lionel Wagner (e-mail quoted in *BCSFazine* 295-6, December 1997)

But in the course of blaming cyberspace for OSFS's low attendance, Wagner winds up emphasizing that there are members "desperate" for personal contact. The human need for face-to-face, in-the-room-with-you personal contact cannot be fully satisfied by a computer experience, or by a letter, phone call or other remote communication.

I don't believe the various Internet activities compete against sf clubs' most important attribute, in-person socializing. Don't forget there are hundreds of fans out there having no difficulty staying active as club members and active on the Internet at the same time. I'm skeptical that fans ever find themselves making a choice between cyberspace and the local sf club.

**It's COMMUNITY:** "Community" is a feeling that people know when they find it, and comes in a wide range of styles.

As I mentioned, you never see "club suicide notes" from NESFans. You also never see them from Lunarians, which is more remarkable because club minutes portray the group as being one of the most contentious since the Laney LASFS, yet the club is going strong:

"'The secret of managing a club is to keep the five guys who hate you away from the five guys who are undecided.' Casey Stengel." *The Lunarians Meeting Notice*, February 1998

Fannish organizations come together like an army of *condottiere*, a few from here, a few from there, each group deciding to join for different reasons. Individuals fans have a range of interests. Clubs admit and reflect that diversity. They also develop a rough consensus about the activities that will be supported with club resources. Yes, even a science fiction discussion group that appeals to only half a dozen fans might be tolerated if it keeps them around....

Because of the paperback sf boom of the late 60's and the media sf boom of the mid-70's, we've become

accustomed to seeing large numbers of people respond to the merest hint of organized fandom. And when a club is enjoying explosive growth, as LASFS did during my first 15 years as a member, people's struggle to get connected with the social life of the club isn't evident in the membership numbers but in the visitor records. One afternoon I went through about 700 guest cards collected by LASFS registrars in the 1980s and learned that less than 10% of guests ever came to a second LASFS meeting. It's tempting to wonder how large LASFS could have grown if we'd worked harder to get to welcome our guests. Australian fan **Paul Ewins** finds the same challenge facing his local club:

The last expansion [of the Melbourne SF Club] coincided with the boom in the Star Trek clubs following the local release of *ST:TNG*.... Over the past few years there had been an unwillingness to go looking for members, probably through sheer apathy and perhaps because in the last boom new members had come looking for us. While the club is now in stable shape, it is likely to decline again if we get another apathetic committee that sits around waiting for things to happen.

Those who are not content to take their chances waiting for new members to wash up on the beaches of their personal desert islands have to actively work at building relationships with guests and new members. Joyce Katz wrote that Las Vegas fandom was started from scratch through forging individual relationships, what some would call "friendship evangelism."



A welcoming atmosphere is created by conscious effort. Sometimes literally: for example, LASFS outlawed smoking in the meeting room in a controversial vote. However, seven smokers immediately quit coming to meetings, which reminds us that politics and feuds are also poison to a club.

T. Bruce Yerke, looking back on the 1930s LASFS, wrote: "The activity was undiluted with cynicism, vicarious motivation, and petty jealousy which later wrecked the [club]." Meetings drew 50 fans a week in 1941, but once problems struck, attendance gradually dwindled until there came a meeting in early 1945 when only Laney and Ackerman were present. (Plenty of more recent feuds that might serve as examples will go unmentioned in hopes they won't be revived in these pages.)

There are many strategies for getting people to come once to an sf club, but really only one reason for them to return: enjoyable social interaction.

**Where You Find Them:** By the way, the best strategy for building a club where you'll want to stay is this: recruit people who are already engaged in the activities you enjoy.

Scott Patri delivered a clear-minded and eloquent sermon on the importance of bringing readers into fandom, in *Fosfax* 176:

We cannot return to the past, nor wallow in the reminiscence of it, but we must bring the spirit of those days to the present if we are to survive. Reading is a part of it, for it was the word that fired the imagination, while the visual just makes us react, and the reaction is to purchase and sell, not to dream or think.

Barney Bernard, a LASFS legend, went to bookstores and put club business cards in the science fiction books. These days, we hope to get a table at UCLA's annual bookfair: some members are collecting donations to pay the hefty entry fee. An idea that clubs could adapt locally is the Buccaneer committee's science fiction contest for students.

Web pages are also a good example of advertising a club to people already engaged in an activity members enjoy. Fans designing web publicity for clubs need to keep in mind Avedon Carol's critique of convention advertising: "They advertise to people who've seen movies about aliens. They should be looking for people who *feel* like aliens."

Clubs need to avoid advertising themselves as if they are another form of passive entertainment, thereby attracting people who will transfer to club membership the habits learned in theater seats. From the viewpoint of club survival, their presence is a two-edged sword: they attend and pay dues, but they frustrate the fans who keep things going. As Rich Kuhaupt wrote, "Ironically, there's never been a shortage of criticism for the gallant few who have tried to keep S.T.A.R.'s flame burning, while those who have criticized sat back and demanded, 'Entertain Us!'"

**The Magic Goes Away:** So far I've been arguing against some of the suggested explanations why a number of sf clubs have lost a high percentage of their members.

(1) *Purpose:* I'm not convinced clubs pay less attention to sf than they used to.

(2) *Mission:* Fandom has not been doomed by public acceptance of science fiction: as sf's popularity and respectability has multiplied, the size of mainstream fandom has multiplied -- as a constant, tiny percentage of the overall audience.

(3) *Formula:* Healthy and troubled sf clubs are more alike in their style of organization than they are different: it's not like some use poorer methods than others.

But I do have two observations to make about **Oldpharts** and **Outlanders** that might have something to do with the membership problems some clubs confront.

**Oldpharts:** I believe a lot of these troubled clubs have in common that they were formed 20-25 years ago in the boom time of the 1970s. A crop of longtime members have hit age 40 and decided to redirect their energy to unrealized ambitions outside of fandom. Younger fans aren't filling the gaps in the ranks the way they used to when most of a club's members are fortysomething, the club only attracts newcomers who feel comfortable socializing with people in that age group.

**Dennis Doms:** About survival: I think one reason is the range of ages of active participants in KaCSFFS. Youth and energy combined with age and treachery is a good combination.

Most organizations that I have been in weakened perceptibly when the influx of new (active) people dropped below a certain level (though you also need the continuity of longer-term members).

Another thing clubs have to overcome in order to attract new members is the unwelcoming appearance of longtime members' established relationships:

**Matt A. Smith:** As an organization of people who'd known each other for five, ten, even fifteen years, [S.T.A.R.] was virtually impenetrable to strangers unless they plainly offered something to make it worthwhile to the longtimers to reach out to them (physical attractiveness, artistic skill, or deep pockets, for example.) [*Interphase*, August 1997]

The relationships and shared history of remaining core members, some of them club founders, may be an invisible barrier to new members.



**Rob Ross:** S.T.A.R. has degenerated into a number of small "cliques" that go off and do their own thing, while paying lipservice to the larger whole that makes S.T.A.R. [*Interphase*, August 1997]

**Outlanders:** While clubs certainly lose members whose interests or responsibilities (family, work, religion) change, I have noticed clubs also have a circle of formerly active members who remain attached to its social life although they no longer come to the actual meetings.

Outlanders is admittedly not the best handle for these fans -- the historic Outlanders were an independent, very fannish Southern California group in the late '40s. But some fans became Outlanders when LASFS didn't appeal to them anymore, and it is in that LASFS-centric sense I am applying their name to this section of my article.

LASFS members have always gathered for an "after-meeting" at a local coffee shop or restaurant.

**Glenn Glazer:** Even groups as successful as LASFS and NESFA have the structure of an actual meeting somewhere followed by an "after-meeting" which allows for both formal and informal social dynamics to occur.... I can't speak for NESFA, but with some few exceptions LASFS meetings are pretty dull. Why anyone still goes to them is because *of the people who attend them*. In other words, I don't go to LASFS to hear the reading of the Menace [Minutes] (easily the funniest and best part of the meeting), I go to see my friends on a weekly basis. [*Interphase*, August 1997]

But within recent memory, a core of members have formed the habit of skipping most of the club meetings and going straight to the after-meeting.

A number of clubs have a "cometary halo" of once-active locals who have remained in its social orbit. If these clubs knew how to rekindle their interest in the club, there would not need to be such a desperate search for new members.

**No Room At The Top?** In the midst of this angst about why clubs lose members and can't seem to replace them, I will point out that it could be even worse, and there is a reason it's not.

A malady that strikes clubs with a lot of veteran members is a kind of "leadership gridlock" that happens when a club is full of talented workers but has a finite number of high-profile jobs. A few exceptionally gifted new members are immediately catapulted into leadership. Others with ambition are in for a longer haul. Fans may lose interest when their talents have too little room for expression in the organized life of the club.

I'm intrigued by Tom Veal's comparison of contemporary

fannish demographics with those in 19th-century France:

...Society can cope as France did in the mid-1800's, when it experienced similar demographic trends. The young can accustom themselves to painfully slow advancement, with some finding solace in their avocations or pleasures and the rest growing into the sour malcontents portrayed by Balzac. [*Chicon* 2000, PR#1]

Few large sf clubs have sour malcontents who have been locked out of leadership roles by more senior members because most of them run a proprietary local convention, or have an overlapping membership with a local conrunning group. The formation of con committees within these clubs expands the number of leadership jobs, relieving the "leadership gridlock."

Interestingly, in one town where there is no central club anymore, the locals recognize that their Worldcon bid committee is providing a club-like social structure:

**Alex von Thorn:** [In Toronto] there is no overall science-fiction club similar to NESFA, LASFS, etc....

In practice, functioning concons play the role of social club, with monthly meetings, e-mail discussions, parties, and other events....

The proprietary con provides an outlet for the ambitious, and good work for competent fans who would not be content to sit on the sidelines.

But of great interest is what will happen in Minneapolis where a club convention that provided an outlet for the gifts of newer fans is being recaptured by an earlier generation of leaders:

**Joyce Scrivner:** Minicon is being worked on. The 'council' of twelve has a two year commitment to the immediate changes and a five-year commitment to action. They are mostly older and mid-age fans locally, though. The changes have flaked off many of the newer and younger fans from being (visible at least) at committee meetings. There is a wide variety in the age range, but most of the admitted committee are older fans returning to work on the committee again, not younger fans coming for the first (or third) time. It's too new to see what's happening here, but it is being actively pursued.

**Death Will Not Release You:** Since "club suicide notes"

abound, you'd think that in the two years I've been working on this article at least one of these clubs would have disbanded.

Instead, in every instance what has happened is that the remaining members have adjusted and continued on a smaller scale. S.T.A.R. San Diego has left its hilltop meeting location for a nomadic existence at local pizza parlors. (Though isn't it a little redundant to be meeting at the Round Table Pizza in La Mesa? -- which is Spanish for "the table.") Attendance has stabilized around 30, with a healthy percentage of new visitors. OSFS has not evaporated in a flash of pixels: it still meets, and has even managed to find an editor to resume publishing a paper clubzine. Etc.

It helps keep things in perspective to remember that few sf clubs have ever pulled 100 regularly-attending members. Many "large, successful" clubs draw fewer than 40 to meetings. The majority of clubs are smaller yet. No matter their size, almost all clubs necessarily lead a nomadic existence, meeting in homes, libraries, bookstores, coffee shops, condo association rec rooms and student unions. Clubs rely on a relatively small number of people to hold things together. They have limited income from dues and donations. For all of these reasons, uncertainty and change are the norm in an sf club.

Whether fans suffer from insecurity and stress when these limitations affect club life depends on each individual. Denny Lien laughs it off with a tongue-in-cheek suggestion that Minn-Sf has spent "two-and-a-half decades in decline/crisis." That contrasts with Don Glover's dire prediction about NWSFS which led off this article:

With the club standing on the brink of complete breakdown, we must either find a way to revitalize the organization, morph it into something that works, or shut it down as a relic that has outlived its time.

Don Glover the Younger, (*Westwind*, March 1997)

It is bemusing to set his prediction alongside comments Greg Bennett made in 1987:

I think the NWSFS has lost its identity with literary sf. Their hold on the necessary sound business practice that enables the organization to survive is tenuous. And they have no goals. When I suggested they consider a few long-term goals, such as getting a clubhouse, enlarging the membership base, improving *Westwind*, or hosting a major SF convention, the response was generally that those goals weren't worth pursuing because they were unachievable.

Greg Bennett (letter to *File 770*, October 1987)

The April 1998 issue of *Westwind* announced that NWSFS'

May Social would include "*Kuhoda Garden* tours; *Hot Tubbing* -- bring your swimsuits and have fun! *A fannish tradition revived* -- an *Eye of Argon* reading, complete with tank of helium...." Does this sound dead to you? Me neither. Changed from, and not so ambitious as, the NWSFS Greg Bennett originally shaped, perhaps, but the heart is still beating.

The message is: as long as a club continues to fulfill enough members' needs for friendship and social opportunities, it will keep going, though its purposes and membership may fluctuate.

### *Aurora Awards*

The 1998 Aurora Awards were presented at Con\*cept '98/Boreal '98/Convention 18 in Montreal in October.

**Best Long-Form Work in English:** *Black Wine* by Candace Jane Dorsey

**Best Long-Form Work in French:** *L'Odyssée de Penelope*, by Jean-Pierre Guillet

**Best Short-Form Work in English:** "Three Hearings on the Existence of Snakes in the Human Blood Stream" by James Alan Gardner

**Best Short-Form Work in French:** "Une lettre de ma mre" by Yves Meynard

**Best Other Work in English:** *Northern Frights 4*, edited by Don Hutchison

**Best Other Work in French:** *Solaris*, Hugues Morin

**Artistic Achievement:** Jean-Pierre Normand

**Fan Achievement (Fanzine):** *Warp Factor* edited by Chris Chartier

**Fan Achievement (Organizational):** Peter Halasz (The National SF & Fantasy Society)

**Fan Achievement (Other):** Larry Stewart (entertainer)

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# The Fanivore

## Harry Warner Jr.

The envelope that obviously contained an issue of *File 770* arrived here on Friday, August 8. I was stunned because I assumed instantly that you had been so Up To Date that you'd published a special issue dealing solely with the first day of the Worldcon. Then I felt the thickness of the envelope and decided it couldn't be that, because nobody could write that much about just one day of the event. Then I remembered Evelyn Leeper. Finally I opened the envelope and found pre-con fannish news and so, a couple of days after the Worldcon, I still haven't heard anything about what went on there but am cheered by the fact that nothing so terrible happened that it made the national television newscasts or the main wire of the Associated Press.

[[*Didn't they even report Straczynski's cold on CNN?*]]

It's been only a year or a little more since I felt great relief when I learned that reports of Robert W. Lowndes' death were false. Now I must accept the bad news which you seem to have received from irrefutable sources. He was probably the gentlest and calmest of the Futurians and as a fan he did some pioneering things. He published nearly forty issues of *Le Vombiteur* over a two-year period, and it was perhaps the first of the very small, frequently appearing, and mostly give-away fanzines, whose contents were frequently similar to today's perzines. Its title inspired Bob Tucker to name a similar publication *Le Zombie*. As a pro, he was the first to buy one of my science fiction stories and pay me for it (previously, a Mexican prozine had lifted one of my stories from a fanzine, translated it, published it, and paid me only in a free copy of the issue in which it appeared.) Lowndes achieved a great deal of success on a very small budget with the prozines he edited. It's too bad he hadn't been remembered as well as the more combative Futurians.

I gather that dogs in your part of

California are allowed outdoors only on leashes. A somewhat more enlightened rule prevails in Hagerstown: if the dog is trained to obey its master and stays close to him, it can be granted outdoor privileges. A surprising number of local canines are adhering to this sort of freedom, I've found in my yard sale rounds. They like to mingle with potential customers and go no further from their homes than the sidewalk and the edges of the lawns with no need to be yelled at frequently by their owners. Maybe California could create a park of obedient dogs without leashes.

Sourdough's letter really deserved the status of an article with a title and everything. It says a great many wise things about hobbying and its problems. When I read about the riots in Reno the other day, I thought about big science fiction conventions and the danger that something of the sort might happen to some of them, if far-out individuals continue to attend them *en masse*. So far these non-fans seem to have confined most of the bad behavior indoors, but it could conceivably spill over into the outdoors where it would be seized upon by the media and involve law enforcement authorities, now that the biggest cons usually involve walks between buildings and sometimes groups of fans wandering the streets in search of cheap eating places. Reno's trouble seems to have been caused by very small minorities of those who came to town for rock and partying.

Since writing that letter you published in this issue, I've come across a newspaper article about the longevity of computerized stuff. It came from the Knight-Ridder syndicate. It quotes the National Media Laboratory, a research organization, as estimating that data on a CD-ROM will be safe only ten years under normal storage, fifty years under ideal conditions. Material recorded magnetically may have a life of only five years, this group claims. The change in hardware, this article says, has made material stored in the 1980s on eight-inch floppy disks "out of reach." Jeff Rothenberg of Rand,

a research organization in Santa Monica, is quoted as saying, "The record of the entire present period of history is in jeopardy."

It was surprising that George Flynn failed to dodge just one auto. He is much younger and should be more agile than me, and I somehow escaped crossing a downtown street the other day while five autos were running a red light. I had no trouble evading four of them, but the fifth very nearly got me. Then last week I scared myself to death by suffering a heavy fall in my home. I just topped sideways when I got up from a chair for no apparent reason. I don't think I busted anything although there was considerable rib pain when I breathed for several days. I'm proud of myself for having the courage to continue this activity instead of yielding to the temptation to avoid the pain.

## Lan Laskowski

Thanks for the latest issue of *File 770* with such good articles about fanclubs and news of fandom. The news that Poul Anderson received the Nebula Grand Master ward will hopefully urge fans and authors to contribute something to my efforts in honoring Poul for his 50+ years of writing SF/F and entertaining fans for all that time. Although I've set a deadline for submissions on Labor Day, I am willing to accept articles, anecdotes, art, etc. until the end of September.

Sorry to hear that Teddy Harvia has dropped from the DUFF race for this year, but I think his decision is wise, considering the work it takes to run a Worldcon bid. I trust his plans to run in a later year will come to pass after he knows if Cancun in 2003 wins or not.

I hope that George Flynn is recovering well from his accident.

The "Fanivore" section was most intriguing. Sourdough Jackson's commentary was a good kick-off about fan clubs. He is absolutely right about a club being a community. Long after regular meetings



for a club have vanished, the members continue to interact on the social level, something borne out in the Detroit area fandoms. The difference between the Phoenix and Denver fan groups for running their respective Worldcons is definitely the fact that people got along well socially in Denver while much the opposite was true in Phoenix. Additionally, Denver had an edge. There was a most respected fan leader around whom the fans could rally: the late Don C. Thompson. His charisma and easy-going manner helped make Denvention II a success, and the club-damage minimal. With his presence the recovery period for the group was short.

### ***Buck Coulson***

A bat in the bedroom? Nothing to get excited about; we've had that right here in Indiana. We encourage bats in the barn, since they're insect-eaters and make some inroads on the mosquitoes around here, but prefer to keep them out of the house.

I wouldn't call Wiscon fabulous and I don't see any reason for strolling in downtown Madison when the con is indoors along with the people I want to talk to, but I agree that it was a pleasant con.

A lot of Jackson's comments on Denver fandom would seem to apply to the old Indianapolis club that Juanita and I belonged to, and in part at least to the Columbus, OH club that our son Bruce belongs to. I assume it would apply to most fan clubs, despite reports of feuding here and there. If members don't like each other, what's the point of having a club? Otherwise, I'm fully agreed.

Closest I ever came to a tornado was when Juanita and I were guests at a con in Birmingham a good many years ago. A funnel was sighted, the filkers were in the basement anyway and considered themselves as safe as possible, and the rest of us kept on with what we were doing. As I recall, the tornado did some damage in the northern suburbs but missed the hotel entirely.

Otherwise, the hole in my ankle has closed, the specialist gave me up as a

good job, and I'm out of the wheelchair and working to get rid of the cane. Still need it for support while traversing long hotel hallways at cons, and for getting up and down stairs at home, but the legs are strengthening.

### ***Mike Glicksohn***

My abysmal memory (which has been shot to pieces during the war with the Scotch) won't allow me to regale you with the tale of how the Ontario Science Fiction Club (OSFiC) -- which I helped form in 1966 and which was the core for the 1973 Worldcon -- came to its unlamented end but perhaps Taral has already taken care of that. It is telling, I think, that Toronto appears to be one of the very few major North American cities involved in bidding for a worldcon that doesn't have a central SF club. But so it goes.

There are a couple of aspects of the Weiss-Sawyer brouhaha that you might not know which may put things in a slightly different light for you. First, *Realms* is really just a glorified fanzine, distributed for free on the Ryerson campus and at various comics type stores in town. Rob probably thought he was getting involved in a typical fan feud and how many sensible pros do we know who've done that when they know better than to respond to a negative review in the real press?

Second, just prior to this whole mess erupting, Weiss had gone out of his way to embarrass and humiliate Rob's wife at a poetry meeting they were both at. If anything pushed Rob over the top and made him ignore traditional caution, I'm sure it was this incident.

Lastly, what happened with the party/Hydra evening was that several of Rob's friends decided not to attend the Hydra event as a protest against Weiss's presence. After some of them advised Rob of their decision, he decided to have a social gathering of his own so his friends wouldn't be deprived of the opportunity to party. Kinda like having a NASFiC for those who choose not to go to an overseas worldcon. I find it hard to fault Rob for that.

Everything I read about Gary Ander-

son makes me regret that I never knew him, or even knew of him. He seems to have been a remarkably fine person and it's a damn shame that fandom is so diffuse nowadays that our paths never crossed.

### ***Garth Spencer***

R. Graeme Cameron is within his rights to limit the Canadian Unity Fan Fund to fanzine fans. It may be right or wrong, but at least it's a decision. Mansfield can attack this decision if he wants, but he doesn't seem to attack it on its merits and demerits, or refrain from personal attacks. Much of the verbiage is beside the point, anyway; Cameron, and other CUFF administrators, are actually struggling with the massive apathy of Canadian fandom, they're not faced with gaming and comics and anime and furry and costuming fans clamoring to participate. Would that they were.

### ***Lenore Jean Jones***

I was just reading *File 770:125* -- nice to get a copy hand-delivered! I'm always delighted when I receive a copy, and usually read it cover-to-cover the same day. (Since it's Worldcon, I got distracted and waited two days.) I especially enjoy con/trip reports, and I agree that obits and health updates should remain in your 'zine.

Sourdough Jackson writes, among other things, about the situation at Disclave last year. Although I agree with much of the letter, I fear Sourdough, and many others, are making the same mistake others make about us -- assuming we're all the same. The presence of one fool in a group does not mean all members of that group are fools. Furthermore, I'm puzzled by the reference to inviting unrelated groups. Don't we usually define a fan as anyone who calls her/him-self a fan? If that's the definition, these people met it. I get real nervous when we start deriding any group as too far out or not serious. We got called that too often when we were younger, and sometimes still do, but yet I keep hearing sneers about "Goths", media fans, etc. Let's face it,

folks, they're no more far out than we are --just different!

I think the proper issues to consider are (1) helping new fans to understand the etiquette of fandom and conventions, and (2) keeping the attendance at a con a community. Sourdough is right in putting an emphasis on community. If you can do that, over-enthusiastic young people/newbies will be restrained by the older or more experienced crowd. I don't think the problem is substantially different from that of the last big Boskone, where we ended up demonizing 16-year-olds. Let's address the community problem without throwing out all those fans whose special interest is shared with a couple of fools.

### **Robert Lichtman**

Congratulations on your purchase of a new home! Even though a fixer-upper, it must feel good to have you and your collection ensconced somewhere more or less *permanent*. Of course, now you will get to experience the Joys of Home Ownership that are absent from rental dwelling: the cost of those wonderful sudden repairs, etc.

The new issue of *File 770* made enjoyable reading -- yours is the first reportage I've seen on the recent Worldcon -- and as is usual when I encounter an issue that's entirely convention reportage I didn't have my usual pencil with me to make marginal checkmarks and notations. So when I came to the commentary on the "Introduction to Fanzines" panel I wasn't prepared for the mention of myself and the annual tally of fanzines received I publish as a running feature in *Trap Door*. There, Mike Glicksohn is quoted as being of the opinion that few of the fanzines I receive are by new fans, and here I would hasten to disagree. Now, of course, one's definition of "new fan" is subject to, er, interpretation, since in these halcyon days a new fan may have been active in some other part of the vastness of modern-day fandom for years, even decades, before surfacing in the fanzine arena. However, that said, I would say that in recent years I've enjoyed publications from people that I

consider to be new fans: Ulrika O'Brien, Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer, "E. B. Frohvet," Ken & Aileen Forman, Tom Springer, Ben & Cathi Wilson, Bridget Bradshaw, Steve Davies, Tommy Ferguson, Debbie Kerr and Alison Scott.

### **Lloyd Penney**

You've been there before several times now, but Worldcon for me was mostly sitting at the bid tables and helping with the bid parties. Not enough fanzine activity, but several opportunities to go and explore the con and environs. The impromptu fannish feud *[[a program item]]* on the last day was a laugh, and I brought back a handful of doubloons and a lot of good memories. Those memories largely consist of people, like Olexandr Vasilkivsky from Ukraine, who co-edited *Chernobylization* some years ago with Boris Sidyuk, Leonid Kouritz, one of the Kiev SMOFs, Al du Pisani and the other South African fans who made it to Worldcon for the first time, and Neyir Cenk Gökçe, the only active Turkish fan, who, I found out, now lives in Ottawa!

Some updates on the Sawyer/Weiss tempest... There was a fundraising barbecue on August 15 at the home of John Robert Columbo in Toronto. It attracted a number of the local SF cognoscenti, and Yvonne and I even got to go, but this lawsuit has split the local SF community to such an extent that Hydra North seems to have disbanded completely. Allan is now so litigious over Robert's unfortunate response to his review, people are afraid to speak out for or against him for fear the lawsuit will be expanded to cover them as defendants. This story is definitely not done, and may not be done for several years to come.

Bad enough that the fannish death toll continues to rise...now there are reports of fannish retirements. Steve and Sue Francis have worked hard on the Rivercons, but they can't do it forever. Yvonne and myself have semi-retired from convention running after 16 years, but are doing so to concentrate on the Toronto in 2003 Worldcon bid. Is there a next generation behind us ready to pick up the reins and ride on, staging more conventions? Does-

n't look like it. More and more, it looks like we shall gather electronically in an Internet chat room and reminisce.

Sourdough Jackson sums it up...a club provides community. Man is a social animal, and needs to gather from time to time. A club provides the company, community and physical touch we all need, and often must do without, to our detriment. The Internet provides some social contact, but not the company or touch. A recent report said that many go to the Internet to relieve loneliness, but the Net actually aggravates the situation, and people feel more lonely than ever. That's why fandom needs the club...we need the company. The everyday world may think we're a little mad, but when we gather regularly and form our communities, I honestly believe we're among the sanest people on the planet. We must fight to keep that community, and our conventions and clubs serve our purposes...with death and retirements, are those cons and clubs in danger? Yes, they are. What do we do? Support our clubs, look for more members, value our friends that much more. Tell them how you feel; we're adult enough not to be embarrassed.

Joe Mayhew adds to it with his essay on the Disclave problems. I know that Joe suffered a myocardial infarction because of the stress he endured; I hope winning a silver rocket at BucConer has helped Joe's recovery. Lee Gilliland expressed the same sentiments in Baltimore...it's deserved and long overdue.

The one thing fans do best, and sometimes most viciously, too... correct another fan, as if the most irritating thing you could do is be mistaken. How many of them growled at you in anger, and demanded that you "Get it RIGHT!" They take a perverse joy in correcting others, putting other down and somehow extracting a little ego-boost for themselves.

### **Teddy Harvia**

Your street name made me wonder, is the view from the bottom or top of the valley? *[[Neither -- our street is one in a series. It falls between Ocean View and Mountain View.]]*

I applaud your selection of Steve Stiles for the Rotsler Award. I like his style. I hadn't realized he started back in 1959. We chatted in Baltimore and he hardly seemed old enough to be that old.

We just put stairs into our attic. Now all those boxes of fanzines cluttering the floor of the garage will have a new home. Those of *File 770s* were heat-treated to 140 degrees, right?

[[Readers have treated some issues to 451 degrees, so I hear.]]

### **Roger Wells**

I have a few comments on your "Westercon Editorial" in *File 770:125*. I have observed more of a Washington state Westercon following that you indicate -- not as large as might be desired, perhaps -- but it is there and growing slowly. My impression of the Spokane Westercon group is that they are quite competent, although young and with somewhat limited experience -- similar in many ways to Portland fandom in the early 1980s when they first started bidding on Westercons. I have urged them to attend the Southern Zone Westercons; the typical response is that they would like to, but cannot afford it. Give them a few years, a bit more experience, and higher income brackets and I suspect we will be more of a regular Westercon following from Spokane.

There are several factors that have hurt the Bay Area's ability to bid for Westercons. One such factor, I would suggest, is the current North/South rotation, which places the Bay Area in the Northern Zone. Although much closer to Los Angeles and San Diego, it is bidding in the same zone as Portland and Seattle, roughly 660 and 832 miles away. The Bay Area has not won a Westercon since the current rotation scheme was adopted.

### **We Also Heard From**

**Bjo Trimble:** You sure got around at Bucky. I enjoyed it, but will certainly rent a scooter for the first day, next time I can afford a Worldcon. I didn't make it to any of the parties, except the Costumer's Guild ones in the Hilton, and the bid parties on the ground floor of...what? But

the elevators in all the hotels were so bad, I had lots of company in the lobby!

**Jim Young:** Weighing in on the side of obits/appreciations, whether we like it or not, they are news for the stf community. Besides, they have been some of your best writing over the years. You most likely don't like having to do them, but you rise to the occasion.

**Franz Zrilich:** Have *File 770:124*. Good work. Am on Chap 4 of 25 of *A Nantucket Blast Furnace in Pharoah Ramses II's Court*, or *Nantucket Time Ride*, my response to S.M. Stirling's *Island in the Sea of Time*.

**Joy V. Smith:** What a great, fun cover on *File 770:126*.

I'm glad you're moved into your new house; it does take time to find the right home. Sounds like it has a lot of potential; and that lovely, tree-shaded patio sounds so inviting. (It's still hot here.) And what a nifty zip code!

Excellent WorldCon report, and I loved your title. I also liked your closing paragraph. There will be problems, and from everything I've read, the Bucconeer committee did a fantastic job of dealing with them.

John Hertz' WesterCon report was also thorough and enjoyable.

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### **Obituary**

#### **Ian Gunn**

Ian Gunn's long struggle with cancer came to an end on November 9. Karen Pender-Gunn e-mailed fans on Ian's support list:

"Yesterday, we were married in the Box Hill Hospital chapel with about 50 friends wishing us the best. Ian lasted out the party until about 1:30 in the afternoon then returned to his room. Later in the night his condition deteriorated and this morning the registrar said we should call in family and friends. Ian was surrounded the entire day by friends and family who I am sure helped him to a peaceful and pain-free death. I have never seen anyone die and I am still in shock. I have sleeping pills to take tonight as I have not sleep in three days. I have been supported by friends and family for the past few days and it has been the most enormous help to me in this time of my grief. The tears haven't started for real for me yet."

A funeral in the chapel of John Allison Monkhouse of Springvale, followed by a committal service at the Springvale Crematorium, was held November 16. The celebrant wrote to the list, "Gunny requested that no one wear black, he wanted everyone to dress in colorful clothing, and for it to be seen as a real celebration, and not a morbid situation."

According to *Australian SF Bullshead #110*, this was observed. "While there was sadness, there was a celebration of Ian's life and his humor. The music for the funeral was the Frasier Chorus ambient version of 'Anarchy in the U.K.', the Bonzo Dog DooDah Band's 'Jollity Farm' and 'Kiss' by The Art of Noise with Tom Jones. There were fans from Perth, Adelaide and Sydney there, along with people from Ian's work, the hospital, and Ian's Scout Group."