

FOOTLE 778





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FILE 770:77, the faanish newzine last seen on your breakfast table on the back of a milk carton, is edited by Mike Glycer of 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys CA 91401. This issue offers several NOLAcon reviews, hardly expurgated at all. Next issue will publish all the convention reports I've been sitting on since June -- and I enjoyed those conventions! If you think you can stand the suspense, get on the F770 bandwagon by subscribing 5 issues for \$5.00, \$1.25 overseas air printed matter rate -- or whatever other surreptitious means you can devise!

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FREE AT LAST: Lloyd H. McNallie is now a graduate of one of the institutions of lower learning in the state of Washington. On July 5, he was paroled from prison. His parole will conclude December 16, "At which time I will be a normal, free human being once again. Well -- as free as any of us really are. And of course 'normalcy' is a pretty subjective concept."

MEANWHILE... Fan artist Mathew Bard Davison married Mary Ann Moore in Chico, CA, on August 8! And St. Louis fans Michelle L. Tenney and Richard W. Zellich wed August 27. (It's traditional for File 770 to get these items published in advance of the first wedding anniversary. Which reminds me: Shelly Dutton wed Steven Berry back in February. Whew...cut it close on that one!)

THE WASHINGTON POST: The romantic story of how Laurie Sefton and Chuq von Rospach (of Other Realms) discovered each other on Internet, and married last year, provided a sidebar story for The Washington Post's coverage of computer networks in the paper's November 20 issue. The main article provided a concise, anecdotal explanation of how computer networks really work for the users when not being blitzed by headline-grabbing virus-planter. (Clipping courtesy of Martin Morse Wooster.)

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THE 1988 HOGU RANQUET:  
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Guest of Honor Jack Chalker expressed shock at my absence without leave from Sunday's Hogu Ranquet, but it was just as well for master of ceremonies Elst Weinstein who said he took in a record amount of bribes and perhaps didn't need an IRS witness... After all the votes were counted (yes, Mr. Burley, the green ballots with Lincoln on them are worth five times as much as ballots with Washington) the winners were:

The DeRoach Award: Dan Quayle  
The Aristotle Award: Morton Downey Jr.

Best New Feud: NOLAcon II vs. Itself  
Best Traumatic Presentation: Ron and Nancy Reagan in Stars and Vibes Forever  
Best Religious Hoax: Pat "God is my Vice-President" Robertson  
Best Hoax Awards: The Republican Presidential Nominations

Best Type Face: Michael Jackson Post-Surgery  
Best Professional Hoax: World Wrestling Writers Federation  
Best Fan Hoax: The Vandroids [for The Shaft's World Tour]  
Fandom's Biggest Turkey: Brenda Mings  
Worst Fanzine Title: Globes of Snot

Best Dead Writer (Must Be Living To Qualify): L. Ron Hubbard  
Best Hoax Convention: NOLA Contest  
Best Pseudonym: Pat Robertson (aka Nehemiah Scudder)  
Devo Award: Charles Platt  
Best Has-Been: Ed Meese

Banger Award: Andy Porter  
Cuisinart Award: NOLAcon Program Guide  
Special Grand Bastard Award: Roger Reynolds  
Most Desired Gafiation: Dennis Dolbear

BLACKHOLE AWARDS:

Standard Blackhole: Jimmy Swaggart, George Bush, Jesse Jackson, Wesley Crusher  
Invisibility Award: NOLAcon II Committee  
Incompetence Award: Bobby Sacks  
Publisher's Award: Bridge Publications  
Greed Award: Sheraton

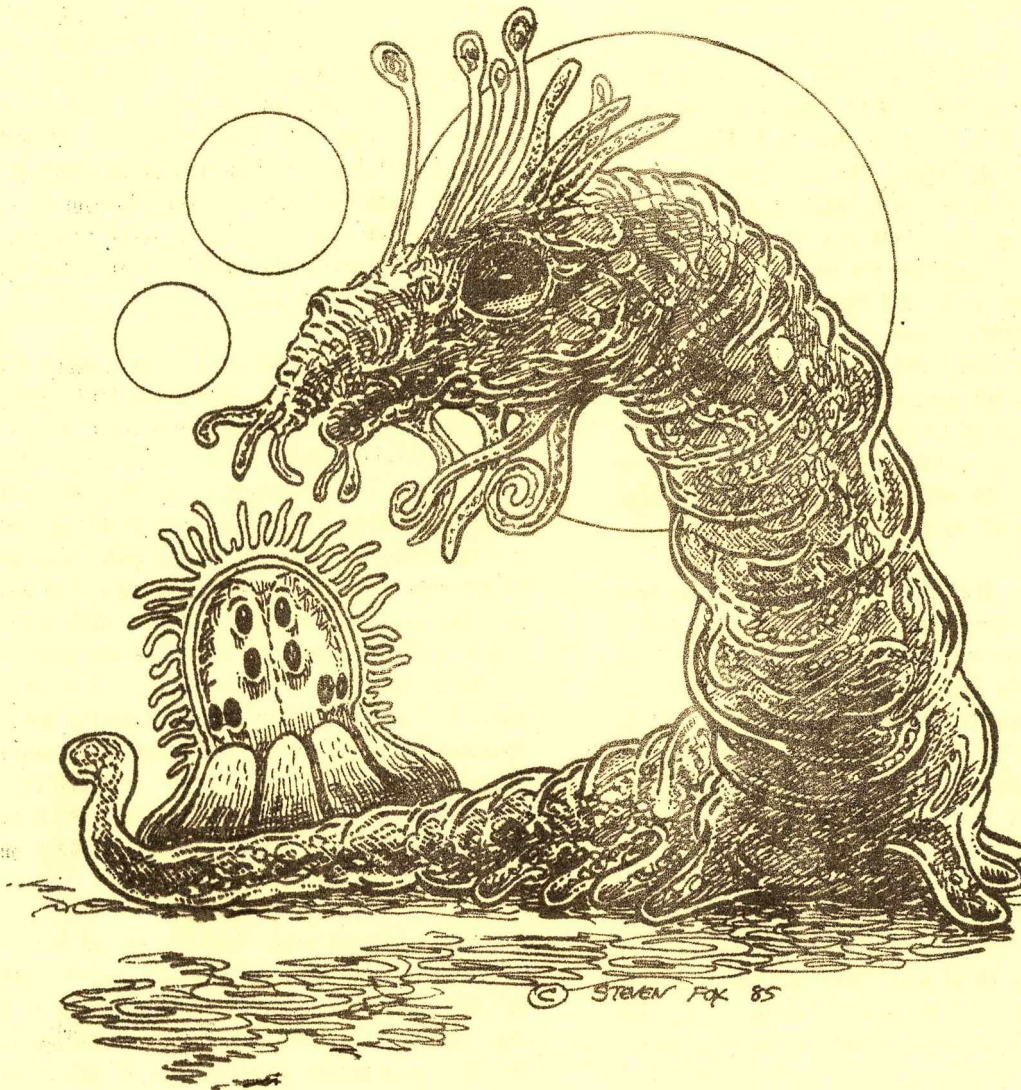
Half-Asses Con Officiousness: Disclave  
Brown Hole Award For Outstanding Professionalism: Judge Bork  
Free For All: So many pedestrians, so little time  
Special Bagelbash Award: 976-SFWA  
Best New Disease: Siamese Fiction (Shared Worlds)

Most Bizarre Hall Costume: Dread Pirate Oral Roberts  
Best Alien Music Video: "Burger King Videos" by ALF  
Mixed Media: Cheech & Chong Brownies in "Willow"

Closest Encounter of the Fourth Kind: Elevator Parties  
The Queen Victoria 'We Are Not Amused' Award: Harlan Ellison  
Space Geek of the Year Award: Wesley Crusher  
Willard Scott Pre-Memorial Typhoon & Blizzard Award For Con Weather: NOLAcon

# WHAT WE DID RIGHT

GUY H. LILLIAN III



The other day I went up to the Nolacon II office for the first time in several weeks, and only the second or third time since the 46th World Science Fiction Convention. The room had seen livelier days. For almost two years, ever since my segment of New Orleans fandom won the right to hold the '88 WorldCon, it was the focus of ever-

intensifying effort and attention: the floor beneath the mail slot grew harder and harder to find beneath the swelling swathe of membership mail and other correspondence; the light on our message machine was forever found blinking and anyone spending more than a moment or two in that little office eight floors above the



French Quarter could count on receiving at least one phone call. The postal pile grew; the phone calls came more and more frequently; typing time in front of our one computer became harder and harder to find. Finally, as Labor Day '88 grew closer and closer, and then within a week, the activity grew frantic, with mail and registration packets and paste-up sheets and checks incoming and outgoing crossing and meshing in a chaos of hands and plans that was both maddening and thrilling: two years of bidding, two years of work, and God knows how many years of dreaming, and it was here upon us: Nolacon II. That little room eight floors above the streets of the French Quarter had seen an awful lot.

But now it was empty, or relatively so. A place to store books: Shaggy B.E.M. Stories, Mike Resnick's fabulously successful anthology of SF parodies, the first publication of the Nolacon Press; Up There, the NESFA collection of short stories by Donald A. Wollheim, Nolacon II's guest of honor; Let the Good Times Roll, the souvenir book on which Peggy Rawson and I had squandered months of effort, she as designer, chief-paster-upper and Mommy, me as editor, article-cajoler and Daddy -- yes, she was Mommy, I was Daddy, we weren't married, and it was a real bastard to do. Now those copies not ensconced in Nolacon's distant storage facility sat boxed in our office, along with our other quality pubs, surrounded by emptiness, awaiting mailing and storage. The once-thriving office had become a place to stash boxes of books.

The phone was silent. That is, the message machine held nothing; the phones were gone, returned to the people who'd lent them. So was our computer and printer, off for the future office of the Nolacon Press at Justin Winston's house. Where mail once mounted by the doorway two or three lonely envelopes sat, and God knows how long they'd been there unattended. Such was the aftermath of WorldCon. All over but the shouting.

This article, and those that hopefully follow, will be a voice in that cacaphony. I was a member of the Nolacon committee since the first day of its existence, and a department head in charge of most Nolacon publications. While my input into most of the most vital decisions (or lack of same) was limited -- Nolacon's lack of coherent structure was a most grievous flaw, if not the most grievous -- I was close to the center where those decisions were made. I know what we did right, and I think I have some explanations for what we did wrong. Mike Glyer has been kind enough to offer space in File 770 for these reminiscences. With luck, these will not be a waste of ink. (What am I saying? I was a Hugo nominee in 1988 for Best Fan Writer, which meant I got good seats at the awards ceremony. Maybe I'll luck out again...)

So, what did we do right at Nolacon II? Where were we

successful?

Well, personally, I think we put out one hell of a souvenir book. When we won the con in '86, Ken Keller approached me and said, "I'll put onto you the charge of Tom Reamy: 'Do it better!'" Ken was recalling his own MidAmeriCon (1976) of course, and Reamy's epic program book, the hardback, dustjacketed masterpiece that revolutionized the genre. Well, I knew my poor abilities, even with the professional talents of Peggy Rawson behind me, were no match for Reamy's, and furthermore knew that Conspiracy had come as close as anyone could to equalling Tom's professional look. But Peggy pointed out that Frontier Crossings also looked a little stodgy -- joyless, like a textbook, and if there is one thing Nawlins is not, it is joyless. So I went for fluff, for a lightness of heart, lots of art, lots of photos. I came up with a simple innovation, adding pictures of Hugo winners picking up their trophies to the list of same that runs in every book. It juiced up a lifeless row of statistics with faces, introduced personality into SFdom again -- an introduction it always seems to need. What genius!

Okay, my own exemplary work aside, where did Nolacon go right? All ego aside, we did one thing absolutely right: we chose outstanding guests of honor. Donald A. Wollheim practically created science fiction fandom and SF anthologies. His selection as Pro GoH was of course decades overdue. But we found qualities of humor and graciousness in Wollheim as our guest that were actually surprising -- qualities that were more than matched in his glorious wife and partner, Elsie. WSFS ought to create a Sweet Lady category in the Hugos and give it to Elsie Wollheim for its first ten years. I never will forget watching the Wollheims learn the mystic municipal art of doubloon-throwing during our Opening Ceremonies -- it was joyous. Also a joy to the financially conservative committee -- the Wollheim's room service bill, something like seven dollars. That kind of courtesy is as rare as that level of achievement.

And what a delight Roger Sims was as Fan GoH. If I would have given Nolacon a point, a meaning, it would have been to emphasize the humorous at the expense of the pompous, the faanish at the expense of the serious; to regard WorldCon as a gathering of amiable SF nuts, and less as an accumulation of arrogant pros ("I love fandom. It's like slumming.") and their sycophants. Roger Sims' fandom is a fun fandom: it's the fandom of wild room parties (a la Room 770 at the original Nolacon, where Roger was host) and crazed camaraderie, open to everyone.

My beloved Rosanne Stetts and I visited two parties one night at Nolacon II -- one featuring such champions of fandom as Roger, his soulmate Lynn Hickman, my mentor, Julie Schwartz, the eternal Tucker; the other party, a

sour gathering of youngish pros and BNFs. You could have made a dent in the ego with karate -- maybe. I was impressed with the "heavyweights" -- the Hugos these represented, the talent, that complacent arrogance, as if it were a roomful of doctors there instead of a bunch of guys who eke out a living writing about spaceships. Rosanne saw things differently. Back to Sims, Hickman and company, she commanded: those were the heavyweights to her.

And I've got to compliment us on the choice of Mike Resnick as Toastmaster. As he pointed out in Let The Good Times Roll, there is a select inner core of SFers tapped for the toastmastering task, and few are those who achieve excellence thereat. Mike's premiere in the job showed that he is bound to repeat: Strong, funny, organized, in control... the new face was ace. Oh yeah, he'll be back.

Mike's qualities showed themselves off best at the Hugo ceremonies, of course. I'm of two minds about our Hugos -- the trophies themselves, I mean. The tallest and heaviest Hugos ever; I wonder...were they avant garde or just outlandish? Masterpieces or monstrosities? Striking or stricken? Ned Dameron's base design was certainly original and dramatic -- but was the idea of showing the Hugo rocket in flight brilliant, as Chairman Guidry seemed to assume, or across the cutting edge of dumb, as I thought? No one agrees. But it was definitely a valid innovation both to sculpt the Hugo base and to utilize resin as the material. Despite its odd feel of candlewax, the stuff is great -- perfect for those conventions seeking to create a distinctive base. May I advise, however, that the distinction sought be one of beauty, only, and that such alleged qualities as "tallest", "heaviest", and "most hassle to handle" be left to we pioneers in the field.

Our tall, heavy, hassle-to-handle Hugos fell to some deserving works and deserving folks -- I thought Pat Mueller would spin through the ceiling. If I do say so, the special honor paid to the SF Oral History Society was a touch of class on Chairman Guidry and President Winston's part, and the Other Forms category...well, WSFS ought to make it a permanent part of the ballot. It's the best thing to come out of Nolacon II.

We came up with Other Forms after Conspiracy's brouhaha with The Dark Knight Returns. As you recall, Frank Miller's graphic novel -- that "comic book" to the great unwashed -- was shunted into the Nonfiction category by Brighton's Hugo Committee, setting off a volley of criticism. With an even more astounding "graphic novel", Watchmen, lighting fires all over fandom in 1987, we knew we'd face the same situation. The thing's bound to get nominated for something, we figured. So were do we put it?

To allow Alan Moore's masterpiece to compete as a novel -- it has the requisite wordcount -- would have played havoc with tradition. A novel is prose. Watchmen was something else. To ignore the work -- as some advocated, fearful that certain SMOFs would disdain a WorldCon that honored \*ick\* funny books -- would have done violence to the Hugo's purpose: the vox populi of fandom. So we pored over the WSFS constitution and discovered Art. II Sec. 15. No category fit for Watchmen? Okay -- we could create one.

But there were other items published in '87 requiring our notice -- items with the same problem. What about Ellison's I, Robot script? It qualified in terms of publication time -- but where? A film script isn't a novel, a novella, a novelette or a short story, and unproduced, doesn't qualify as a dramatic presentation. Where's it go on the Hugo ballot?

"Other forms" -- the term is Justin Winston's -- was the solution. And the reaction was amazing. "At last -- a Filk Hugo!" sang a headline in a filker's newsletter. The sense was that the Hugo had been liberated, and dammit, I think it was. Science fiction's growth in terms of number has also meant growth in terms of media -- we're doing stuff in fields where before we never trod. "Other Forms" gave credit to those other, uh, forms -- those other outlets of the SF impulse. Filks. Anthologies. Scripts. Comics...excuse me, "graphic novels". Other Forms opened the Hugo to the whole creative spread of science fiction. Slam that door shut again? Nay I say! I'll propose permanence for this category to WSFS as soon as I figure out how!

I have to name some people who handled their assignments well. Locals first. Joey Grillot ran a crackerjack film room which not only published a schedule but stuck to it. None of us having yet seen the movie, we were disappointed that the premiere of Alien Nation fell through, but we did have one terrific debut: Mike Jittlov's featurelength Wizard of Speed and Time. Joey is as local as they come and competent as anyone. Also in the media line, Mary Lynn Cahill handled that aspect of the programming splendidly, bringing us not only the voice of Roger Rabbit, but Nawlins' own Morgus the Magnificent, one of the city legends.

Handling the worst of the convention duties, registration, Mary Wismer did yeoman's work before the con and six yeomans' work at it. God, what a job -- but she did it, hassles from every quarter and all. As for Jim Mule, well, his courage was absolutely beyond belief. Suffering from kidney failure and peritonitis, Jim troubleshot up and down the line, showing a dedica~~tion~~tion that was a lesson for everyone.

The contributions of the outsiders...well, what's to say?

One thing we did right, if not quite soon enough: we called in superb, experienced people. The Art Show, Masque and Dealers Room were very competently run by Liz Pearse, Drew Sanders and Dick Spelman. Rusty Burke's banquet (that's "a small banquet", isn't it?) in honor of Novelynne Price Ellis was a success, and Miss Ellis, longtime friend of Robert E. Howard, was a doll. As for Messrs. Glycer, Foss, Pavlac and Mmle. Gelb, who struggled with Nolacon's massive programming problem -- there are no words. Generosity on such a scale is no common quality in mankind. Nolacon must have done something right to attract the kindness of such people. I must particularize gratitude to Robbie Cantor, Canadian goddess, for her help with Con Ops. Such were the lady's exertions on our behalf that Chairman Guidry had to haul her bod to medicos on Monday night. The ear infection did not last. Our gratitude will. There are dozens like her.

We made money -- or, more to the point, we didn't lose money. Winston, our dollars-and-cents man, could be frugal when he wanted to be, and with the WorldCon, he had to be. We paid our bills as they came along and emerged from Labor Day with a small but tidy profit. After the financial disasters of Constellation and Conspiracy, any WorldCon that makes money should be a relief for the SF community. Fandom shall have no harlequin-clad financial albatross around its neck! And if that metaphor isn't worthy of a Hugo....

Harlequins... Mentioning our convention symbol brings a certain convention moment to mind, and a certain personal pride in one very basic thing Nolacon did right. I believe it was Saturday when I took my tour of Liz Pearse's Art Show, an Art Show utterly bedecked with...harlequins. From almost every panel at least one SFnal jester gazed down upon Nolacon. Our symbol had struck a responsive note -- it had carried our bid advertising through to victory and had decorated our PRs and program book in many guises by many hands. Here, in the Art Show, it blossomed into a thematic garden show. For many reasons, I was delighted. I'd come up with the harlequin symbol in the first place, a purely personal high. But I'd done so out of a feeling that New Orleans was its own best sales point, that New Orleans symbols -- the harlequin, Mardi Gras throws, jazz -- would excite fandom's imagination. We'd been warned at the outset that fandom knew nothing about the doubloons and beads we planned to pitch to its multitudes. That's all right, we said; they'd learn.

And they did learn. The message was clear: NOLA was an amazing city, and wouldn't you like to come see it?

We did this much right: we brought SFdom to New Orleans. It's never found a more congenial home. A nervous woman condemned us for beaming her with doubloons at our Opening

Ceremonies. Lots of SMOFs have condemned our gruesome lack of organization. The cry is ubiquitous: what happened with programming? I will meet these questions -- any questions -- in articles to come, here (I hope) and elsewhere. Just let me hear from you. I promise answers as straight as I can make them, and apologies where due. But you will hear no apologies from me or any of us for our city -- for bringing fandom to the City that Care Forgot. For having pride in New Orleans and what it has to offer.

On Saturday morning of the WorldCon I escorted a group of gourmets down Royal Street from the Marriott Hotel. Our object was the fabled restaurant Brennan's, and breakfast there. We dined like royalty. The event was magnificent. Back to the con we staggered, sated with the essence o Nawlins...

Nolacon is done. But New Orleans remains. We eagerly await your return.

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Guy adds: "I'll be glad to respond to any questions or gripes your readers have about Nolacon. My address is 4217E Fontainebleau Dr., New Orleans LA 70125. My phone is (504) 821-2362.

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#### PRELIMINARY REPORT ON NOLACon ATTENDANCE

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By Mary Wismer: The following report is a preliminary tally of attendance figures at NOLACon II. Still missing from my records is an accurate count of the pre-registration membership who actually attended the con, and the pre-registration membership who did not attend. The reason for this is that the sign-up sheet for pre-registration is missing at this date.

Unofficial count for pre-registered attendance: 4,108  
Total monies taken in at the door for membership: \$60,733

Number of records in the membership database: 6,724. This includes presupporters, supporters, attending and one-days, plus some comp memberships, deleted records and duplications. The total number of comp memberships issued by John Guidry are not included in this number as accurate records were not kept at the convention.

Full attending memberships (\$100) taken at the door: 370  
Full attending memberships (\$75) taken at the door: 51  
Two day memberships (\$50) at the door: 70  
One-day memberships and children's full attending: 580  
Total of all at-the-door memberships: 1,116



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MIKE GLYER

## INCREDIBLE CHANGES AT THE LAST MINUTE

[A shorter version of this report appeared in the November issue of Locus.]

Asking for a WorldCon report from somebody who spent virtually all of NOLAcon working program operations is like asking a submarine commander to describe 12,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean from his view through the periscope.

However, I saw enough strange things while working inside Sheraton 817 to want to steal this title from a well-known Broadway play. For the rest of what actually happened beyond the blue door of room 817, I've had to read other people's convention reports over the past three months.

"Why weren't things planned in advance?" and "Why were there so many program changes?" were the two most common complaints at NOLAcon. Here are answers.

When Los Angeles fan and travel agent Rick Foss attended the New Orleans Fantasy Fair in January 1988, NOLAcon II Program Department head Dennis Dolbear recruited him to create "mainstream programming" for the 1988 WorldCon. Program origination happens to be Rick's gift because he intuitively realizes that fans and program participants alike want to be challenged by scientific and philosophical ideas. Once back in LA, Rick asked me to

help.

We told the committee we required three things to do the job. We needed the information and materials to do a general contact mailing to the pros. We needed precise information about the facilities allocated to programming the Sheraton and Marriott, seating, dimensions, and technical support. We wanted the authority to schedule the program.

The first thing they gave us was a mute response. Many weeks passed with our requests unanswered. Late in March, Steve Jackson phoned me from Austin after his offer to publish the WorldCon daily newzine was deflected by Guy Lillian's information that I was already doing that job. Oh yeah? While I was telling Steve to help himself to the job, because of my new program duties, Steve casually mentioned he had just received a NOLAcon program participant mailing from Dennis Dolbear. That's how we discovered Dolbear had done a mailing to the pros.

Or at least the SFWA membership list. Foss and I spent the next several months finding out who had been contacted. Indeed, George Alec Effinger and Debbie Hodgkinson had to deal with a number of people who were outraged by their omission from the contact mailing, for example non-SFWA member Jack Chalker. She went around Dolbear and sent supplemental questionnaire mailings to non-SFWAs, members

of ASFA and SFRA.

Next, the committee did not agree to let us control scheduling for our events. We were contacted by Dolbear's assistant, Tom Hanlon, a former Cleveland fan who has passably learned to say "Y'all" and owns a comic book store in Baton Rouge. The committee charged him with allocating facilities to all events at NOLAcon, which also made him responsible for WorldCon program scheduling, that authority having been determined too great to assign out of town. Then, because they had a local person in charge of scheduling, Guidry and Winston were not receptive to the suggestion that Foss and I be flown down to become familiar with the two WorldCon hotels,

Hanlon, husband of registration and membership committee person Mary Wismer, is young, energetic, sincere and enthusiastic. His lack of WorldCon experience was compensated for because he had one thing notably absent in many others: a work ethic. Nevertheless, working with Tom was like trying to do an important part of our job by remote control.

Meantime, Dennis Dolbear stalled sending any feedback to us, first, because of Mardi Gras, second, because he had guests in town for the Jazz Festival. I resorted sending a mailing of my own to 130 writers and artists.

The delay was ridiculously prolonged, until Debbie Hodgkinson discovered that Dolbear had not picked up his mail for five weeks. On June 17 she intervened and mailed us the long-awaited copies of over 100 questionnaires sitting in the NOLAcon office.

Before that happened, Dolbear, Tom Hanlon and Mary Wismer visited Southern California for the American Booksellers Association convention. Accompanied by Foss, they came for a meeting at my apartment.

Any attempt to hold a business meeting with the incredibly charming Dennis Dolbear involves more anecdotal pericycles than pre-Copernican planetary motion, so it hardly helped that the four also arrived hungry. We spent an hour throwing pages of information at each other, then went to dinner. At that dinner, Rick and I learned that every time a new mailing list of pros had been uncovered (SFWA, ASFA, Horror Writers of America, Science Fiction Research Association, National Space Society) a different person had been assigned to contact and program them. Even the organizer of children's programming was off soliciting writers to participate. Foss and I were at our wits end trying to determine how many people were out there duplicating our work, contacting and scheduling the same pros.

We knew Dick Lynch was producing fannish programming,

because he contacted us at the outset to share information. There was also Fred Patten, handling requests for special interest programming, a Los Angeles fan. Months of detective work revealed the other track programmers included Rusty Burke (Houston), who was in charge of horror programming, Teresa Patterson (Texas) who developed more art programming than has likely ever been seen before at a WorldCon, Mary Lynn Cahill who coordinated media presentations by Hollywood promoters, and Aleta Jackson (of the National Space Society) who recruited scientists and space program experts for the science track.

Dennis' troubled reign over NOLAcon programming was marked by long bouts of inactivity, occasionally interrupted by fits of letter-writing offering the unlikeliest people free memberships, free hotel rooms and meals in return for their participation on the program. While convention policy required writers and artists to buy full-price memberships, Dolbear proposed to comp space speakers, an sf radio show producer, and others. "Oh, you have a Dennis Dolbear letter?" delivered with a grin in the voice became one of our stock phrases as the recipients contacted us after months of no reply from Dennis. These letters came back to haunt us time and again, and nearly cost us the entire science track of programming not to mention a threatened personal lawsuit against Guidry when he repudiated all the Dolbear letters two weeks before the WorldCon, including that sent to the National Space Society.

The National Space Society's Aleta Jackson was the most organized and visionary person associated with NOLAcon programming. It is very regrettable, but in hindsight unsurprising, that she was thoroughly burned by the committee: relying on Dolbear's offer, Aleta used her personal and political capital in the National Space Society to persuade major speakers to forego their customary substantial speaker fees and appear in more than 15 space-program items. A number of them came to NOLAcon despite it all, including the fellow who in the interim had turned down an expenses-paid trip to Australia in order to honor his prior commitment to Aleta.

Despite its negative aspects, Dolbear's sense of grandeur about the WorldCon budget still brings a perverse smile to my face. He dearly wanted to hire a famous New Orleans show band, the Neville Brothers, for halftime entertainment at the Masquerade. They were even willing to cut \$5,000 off their usual \$15,000 performance fee. He was also working on another coup, to bring Isaac Asimov to the convention for the NOLAcon premier of a computer game based on his works. The computer game company asked, "How much do you usually charge for this sort of thing?" I was sure Dolbear would blaze a new chapter in "The SMOF Game" by making them pay \$10,000 to allow Isaac Asimov to attend NOLAcon, and using the money to hire the Neville Brothers.





England Expects Every Man: Sitting with John Guidry on the floor of Scott and Jane Dennis' suite in Brighton on the last night of Conspiracy, I had the same feeling many other fans had in the two years leading up to NOLAcon. Here was a friendly guy facing an enormous job, and I should try to help him. Despite the pleasure I'd had attending Confederation and Conspiracy as a reporter instead of a member of the con committee, I offered to do NOLAcon's daily newzine. Perhaps I expected John to leap up, grab me by the shoulders, kiss me on both cheeks, and say, "Bless you, my son, here's a chromo," but he restrained his emotions and said, "Well, that'll probably be all right, but I'll have to check it with Jus' [Justin Winston]."

Like many others who attempted to volunteer their services to the convention, I never heard from Guidry about the job again. The following January, at Boskone, I heard the names of experienced fans who were declining other NOLAcon jobs then being offered partly because of the short time remaining to organize but mainly out of justified pique at the committee's failure to acknowledge their attempts to volunteer a year earlier. The committee also seemed to have a peculiar way of recruiting. Joe Siclari, contacted about doing convention operations, says he was told to submit a proposal to the committee and if his "bid" was the best, he would be selected. Siclari had been a reluctant recruit to begin with, given the short

notice and his other responsibilities as a '92 bidder, therefore he said if they had a proposal from someone else, by all means take it.

The trouble was, they had no other proposal. By default an enormous load of responsibility dropped in Tom Hanlon's lap. Tom did his best, calling everybody he ever heard about who had WorldCon-running credentials and asking them questions. These fellows would have nothing to do with working NOLAcon so late in the game (or so they thought in May!) so Hanlon cajoled fifteen or twenty including Tom Whitmore and Ross Pavlat into being his "unpaid scientific advisors."

One of Hanlon's main problems was having no program operations department. It's a fine thing to organize a schedule of 350 program items (including readings and autographings), but if you have no department responsible to implement it, it will sink at the dock. The committee could not find an experienced fan willing to take charge of this function, although several offered to assist. (Forgiving their past experience with the NOLAcon committee, Joe Siclari and Edie Stern even went out at Disclave on Memorial Day weekend and recruited 15 people for the department. Hanlon did not take effective steps to commit them to work.) Late in July, the committee informed us that Marty Gear agreed to run program operations.

Partly because he asked for advice, and partly because Hanlon was the only person many fans could call on the NOLAcon committee to get a straight answer, outsiders' concerns about NOLAcon's finances and hotel contracts involved him in items not in his domain. At the end of July, Guidry and Winston decided to chop back Hanlon's job description. Depending on who you talk to, Hanlon was fired, or Hanlon quit, or Hanlon was fired and not told for two weeks. Guidry accused Hanlon of making more Dolbearesque promises of room and board. In my opinion firing Hanlon was a political solution for lazy executives who felt their control of the NOLAcon was falling into the hands of somebody who was actually trying to do the work. Unfortunately, they couldn't afford the luxury of firing Hanlon one month before the convention because that left nobody even theoretically responsible to create the WorldCon schedule. With only four weeks to go, Foss and I assumed the responsibility of scheduling the convention from scratch.

Just in case that wasn't enough to keep us busy, when NOLAcon was only seven days away, Foss and I suddenly realized (from electronic mail sent to us) that our Programming Operations department head, Marty Gear, believed his job was to arrive at the convention ready to take over department Foss and I had already staffed and organized. He had not volunteered to form the department, nor would his business responsibilities allow him the luxury of enough time to do so. By then Rick and I had bitten the bullet so often we had .45 caliber teeth. We started calling people for advice on setting up a program operations department. We located Bruce Farr and Terry Gish working on the CopperCon program, who crowed over being asked for advice by LA fans. (Rivalry, in the Southwest?) We did not know within 48 hours there would be a new head of Program Operations.

Like the luckiest "Asteroids" player alive, I was about to see how two equally insoluble crises could smash together eliminate each other.

#### The Tall Blond Fan With One Black Laserprinter:

Tony Ubelhor, a tall, blond, Indiana fan with the patience of Job, had proposed a pocket program design for NOLAcon which the committee swore was a marvel to behold. Tony is a computer pro known for designing the airline-magazine-quality graphics in his local Evansville clubzine, Pulsar. Unfortunately, the program process had become so mired down he'd been forced to abandon his original design for lack of lead time. There remained a plan for him to translate our dBase III program files into camera-ready copy to be delivered on short notice to Guy Lillian for the Pocket Program. We merely needed to send Tony the schedule. When Foss and I completed the first version of the schedule early in August, we Federal Expressed him a copy of the computer disk.

Turning a program schedule over to a committee is like a writer giving his script to a production company: everyone wants to put his mark on it. Jim Mule, for reasons detailed below, promptly went to work rearranging items. We negotiated a second version of the schedule, and Janice Gelb spent Sunday at Ashton-Tate incorporating the changes in the database and preparing disks for the committee. But Mule said to send all the disks to him: he promised forward Ubelhor's copy after he added the Hugos, dances, and other items being scheduled in New Orleans.

One day after Foss and I had our conversation with Farr and Gish, Federal Express delivered my proof copy of Ubelhor's camera-ready text of the schedule for the Pocket Program. It was the unchanged original program. Calling Ubelhor and Mule, I determined that Mule had not only shortstopped Ubelhor's copy of the disk, he had persuaded Guidry to drop Tony from the process, all without ever informing Tony. Or for that matter, informing Guy Lillian, who did not learn until the Gripe Session why Ubelhor had apparently failed him.

Instead of being able to feed Ubelhor a few last-minute changes over the phone, the entire pocket program schedule had to be recreated from the raw database within five days. Rick, Janice and I spent the next 36 hours recompiling the latest data and telemailing it to Mule. In the end, Mule was unable to make good on his claim to be able to generate a text file from the descriptions in the database. His coup-de-grace was to turn in a text file so utterly useless that George Alec Effinger and Debbie Hodgkinson stayed up around the clock retyping the text so it would be available in time.

This effort wiped out our Program Operations recruiting time. Foss and I got NOLAcon chairman John Guidry on the phone. After explaining all the implications of our current crisis, we got his permission to recruit Ross Pavlac to take over Program Operations. The next day we secured Marty Gear's consent, then approached Pavlac who agreed to do it as a personal favor. Over the weekend Pavlac recruited 30 people to work the convention, and NOLAcon fared much better thanks to his expertise, and the indefatigable efforts of folks like Rick Katze, Nancy Mildebrandt, Glen and Duke Boettcher, Judy Bemis, Joe Sicalri, Edie Stern, Marie Bartlett-Sloan, Wolf Foss, Ulrika Anderson, Terry Gish, Bruce Farr, Spike Parsons, Liz Gross, Ron and Valerie Ontell, Sara Paul, Yale Edeiken, Bob Hillis, Tony Parker, Larry Ruh, Gary Feldbaum, Marty Gear, and the others.

Trouble Is My Business: NOLAcon would officially begin Thursday, September 1. On Tuesday, August 30, I flew down to New Orleans, checked into the fabulous Meridien Hotel where I would occasionally catch a few hours of sleep during the next week, then walked two blocks to the NOLAcon



office.

The Maison Blanche office building had a real Raymond Chandler flavor: its lobby was full of brass-colored elevator doors, but only one car was running, and inside it sat the largest elevator operator in captivity.

Except for NOLAcon, every tenant of the 8th floor specialized in some kind of prosthetic device. At the NOLAcon office, far from being an intruder, I was welcomed as the only person present who knew how to access dBase files and search the membership list, which they had been frantically trying to do in response to phone calls.

Wednesday morning, Justin Winston collected an emergency order of NOLAcon membership badges from the printer and came to the office. Shortly before the convention, the committee learned from its badgemaker in Boston that their carefully designed, die-cut, bas-relief plastic membership

Incredible Changes at the Last Minute: Why were there so many changes in the NOLAcon program? Because the time we had to work on this program was compressed into the months of June and July. The committee gave us the feedback from the questionnaires so late that we had to concentrate on program development, and consciously omitted an important step normally taken by every sensible convention programmer, which is an early mailing to make sure the participants are willing to be on the programs you've assigned them to at the times you've chosen.

Over 450 writers, artists and fans responded to Dolbear's questionnaire. They first saw their proposed schedule in August, so all the feedback affecting the schedule came at the last minute. During the five month interim many participants had refined their travel plans. Several were affected by the the Hollywood writers' strike either because it had gone on so long they could not afford to attend the convention, or because it had just ended and



badge would be ready -- in October! In an ironic drawl, Justin announced that the 5000+ badges had arrived from the printer "loosely alphabetized". As a result there were hours of delay in readying registration, and it was unable to open at the announced time.

Wednesday afternoon, Guy Lillian went Winston one better (or worse). He displayed a sample copy of what the printer had done to his Pocket Program, completely butchering the layout. Guy had turned the program back for another run, and been told it would be ready 10 AM Thursday morning -- after convention registration was already in full swing. (By Saturday, Debbie Hodgkinson, who wrote "Advice on Parking" for the Pocket Program, had had her car towed away twice.)

they were going back to work.

Then, I found it frustrating to organize a five day convention and discover a lot of writers who originally answered that they were available for Friday and Monday programs meant: after their plane came in Friday afternoon and before their bus left for the airport Monday morning. They were really only usable on Saturday and Sunday.

A great deal of this information came in during the last two weeks before the convention, after the hotel resume was assembled, even after the very-last-minute rush-job pocket program went to press. There were 150 changes to participants' schedules made the last weekend before the convention. When key people dropped out, or changed their travel plans, we were sometimes forced to move an item to avoid losing it altogether. Fifteen pros informed us in

the last week they could not come. (NOLAcon was already under way when before I was informed that four others, Andre Norton -- who Locus says informed the committee four months before -- Howard Waldrop, Robert Asprin and Lynn Abbey were not present.) We added 28 newcomers over the same period.

Warren to Wollheim to Wesley: The biggest rescheduling crisis of the convention, impacting Guest of Honor Donald Wollheim, and the SFWA benefit auction for Warren Norwood, amply illustrates all of the factors that conspired to mangle the schedule.

On August 18 I was taking minutes at the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society meeting when Marty Cantor read a press release from the Science Fiction Writers of America announcing a benefit auction would be held at NOLAcon for Warren Norwood. Despite being in regular phone contact with the committee, and by then having the scheduling job dropped in our laps, Foss and I had never been consulted. We were not organizing any of the big events (Hugos, Masquerade, dances) being held at times or locations outside the scope of our program, and given that the 1986 Wellman auction with Harlan Ellison had been such an enormous draw, we assumed the Norwood benefit was also being handled as a separate event. Strike one.

On August 21, I spent 5 hours on the phone with NOLAcon's Jim Mule. He and John Guidry had to turn in the function room resumes to the hotels the following Tuesday, and Mule wanted to review every item in the schedule, and make changes to rooms or times that affected 93 program items. In my opinion what the hotel needed to know was how we planned to subdivide the main ballrooms, and that every room should be set theater-style during the day. The hidden agenda was that these room and time assignments would be programmed on the hotels' closed-circuit monitors and all subsequent corrections were stubbornly refused by the management.

Mule had some valuable input, like the correct day for the Robert E. Howard Banquet (Saturday). He informed us the convention lost the use of all function rooms in the Sheraton on Monday at noon -- compelling 16 more changes. We reassigned other items to create space for Convention Operations offices in program rooms. Mule also argued that no media-oriented events should be scheduled at the same time. On his assurance that the Marriott Mardi Gras Ballroom ABC segment would hold a media-oriented crowd without the help of counterprogramming, I rearranged things as he asked. And in five hours the Norwood benefit never came up. Strike two.

August 24, Debbie Hodgkinson relayed word from Betsy Wollheim that Donald Wollheim had "forgotten and written a speech." Over ABA weekend, Dolbear and company had met

with Wollheim. Everyone agreed he would be shown to best advantage in an interview rather than a speech, and Don recommended C. J. Cherryh as the interviewer. One week before the WorldCon, Betsy was saying her father didn't write a speech every day, and we really ought to find a place in the program for him to deliver it. The Pro Guest of Honor speech a last-minute addition to the program? It could only happen at NOLAcon!

By a minor miracle, there was someplace appropriate to put it. Craig Miller informed me a few days before that Gary Kurtz decided to reshoot part of Slipstream, and would not be coming to NOLAcon to promote the film. That left nothing in our largest program room, the Marriott Mardi Gras Ballroom DE at 11:00 AM Saturday. Even if it was in the middle of the SFWA meeting, it allowed us to use the room most appropriate to the GoH speech, without running the item on Thursday before many people arrived, conflicting with his Friday interview, or overprogramming him on Sunday.

The convention began Thursday, September 1. Guy Lillian III's pocket program (Mark II) came back from the printer before midday. We discovered that Mule had scheduled the Warren Norwood benefit auction Friday at 3:00 PM in the Marriott Mardi Gras Ballroom DE without ever telling us, (and SFWA had broadly publicized the information among the writers). The auction was scheduled in the one-hour block I had deliberately left vacant following the Wollheim interview so that we wouldn't have to commit the gaffe of cutting off the guest of honor at 2:59 in order to bring on another program. By the same token, we knew perfectly well the Norwood auction would not be a one-hour item, and in Yale Edeiken's words, "Everybody knows it's suicide to cut off a benefit auction!"

Although long before sunset, the forerunner clouds of hurricane Florence cast a pall over the city as Ross Pavlac called to order Thursday's Program Operations meeting. Room managers for Thursday's media programming said the Marriott Mardi Gras Ballroom ABC was hopelessly overcrowded, with people hanging from the rafters for the Starlog Magazine movie previews.

Since the crowding presumably be be worse for the next day's Star Trek item, "Solving the Wesley Problem", scheduled in ABC Friday at 3:00 PM, a series of chess moves were required to resolve the crisis. Because the addition of the auction to the schedule forced us to use Mardi Gras DE at 3:00 PM, (1) we reassigned "Wesley" there (2) put the Norwood benefit in ABC, and (3) bumped the 4:00 program in ABC by an hour to give the auction a two-hour block.

The relief of having made this decision was promptly replaced by a realization that only three people at the convention knew it, and we had better clue in 5,000 others



real fast. Fortunately, daily newzine editors Steve Jackson and Monica Stephens were completely cooperative with the need to circulate corrections, and every day they published a full, revised schedule. (A job made easier by data-conversion programs Karl Ginter and others wrote on site.) The announcements were reinforced by signs posted at the rooms, produced by Wolf Foss (Rick's twin brother).

The number of schedule changes, and the confusion they engendered, were frustrating not only for the attendees and program participants, but for me, and I probably made about 95% of the changes.

We were not even fully successful in circulating this information inside Program Operations. Poor Bob Hillis was the track manager who tried to oust Jan Howard Finder from ABC when he set up the Norwood auction, then Bob was forced to commit what in his book is one of the deadly sins, and cut off the WorldCon guest of honor to bring on (of all things) a Star Trek program. I apologized to Bob. And I would like to apologize to the folks whose program we bumped for an hour to accommodate the auction, because you don't cut off an auction, and long after 4:00 PM they gave up and did their panel in somebody's room. I could even apologize to anyone who went looking for Wollheim's speech on Saturday morning, because it turned out he had only 15 minutes worth of material and decided to deliver it as a preamble to his interview because the committee never fed back to him that we had serviced the request to schedule his speech.

Cheer the Heroes and Hiss the Villains: In November, Windycon convened a panel called "Just Say NOLAcon", with dealers' room czar Dick Spelman, program staff Ross Pavlac, Glen Boettcher and myself, and pro liaison George Alec Effinger. At one point I asked the panelists to give credit to someone on the New Orleans committee they felt had worked effectively. Spelman named Tom Hanlon, Pavlac named Debbie Hodgkinson, I named Mary Wisner. Boettcher said, "You've already said all the ones I was going to." I asked Effinger, "Tell us some of the ones we missed," and he said, "You've named them all!"

I have the feeling a bunch of people from New Orleans who helped make this convention work are laboring in undeserved obscurity. Certainly Joey Grillot's film program was widely praised. He had to overcome the complete loss of Thursday's schedule because the Sheraton contract allowed it to remain occupied by delegates of the Lott Carey Baptist Missionary Society.

Some feel the convention leadership should be named among those who were especially unprepared and uncooperative, which may be true, however John Guidry never forgot to thank those of us who worked on the program for our efforts, and he spent most of his WorldCon apologizing to

people, so I do not consider John under the same shadow as Jim Mule and Mary Lynn Cahill.

Jim Mule has become a legend: he was the direct cause of the most serious scheduling problem, he usurped Tony Ubelhor's job then failed to deliver the promised Pocket Program text, he hamstrung convention operations by ordering 55 radios and no base station, and he still found time to exclaim during NOLAcon, "I don't know why they just don't let me run this convention!"

Mary Lynn Cahill developed the media program track as a private fiefdom. She came to Program Operations one midnight to deliver a tantrum about people "sabotaging" her program. After NOLAcon when Tech department head Bill Parker and I compared notes we realized Cahill had tried to embroil Program Operations and the Tech crew in a civil war by telling each of us stories calculated to arouse anger with the other. In fact, Cahill, despite several calls by Foss attempting to learn what media items she was organizing so they could be properly scheduled with the required technical support, never provided such information. We got the titles and descriptions from some fragmentary notes left over from Tom Hanlon, and dealt with the tech requirements by ordering one of everything (screen, 16mm, slides, etc.)

Backstairs at the Sheraton with Jacqueline Lichtenberg: I wonder how many program participants who say they couldn't find their program item came to the Green Room in Sheraton 819 as they were requested? Those who did were escorted to their program items by the Green Room staff. But I understand perfectly why somebody already in the Marriott, informed he was assigned to a panel in the Marriott, declined to cross the street and fight his way up crowded elevators just so a gopher could lead him back across the street to a program location he already assumed he knew.

The committee ran the Con Suite, SFWA suite, ASFA suite, Green Room and Program Operations out of suites on the Sheraton 8th floor. It was a busy place. And were the elevators crowded? Well, I discovered halfway through the weekend that the Green Room staff was avoiding fatal delays on the elevators by leading panelists through the dank concrete maze of the Sheraton fire stairs. On my way to a panel I wound up following a gopher with Jacqueline Lichtenberg and Jean Lorrain who handled it like troupers.

Indeed, the presence of the Programming Operations office in an 8th Floor suite was against the express instructions of the Sheraton, and our scheme to use 819 as an office despite them caused yet another controversy at the convention.

The Mighty Room Service Issue: When I returned to LA it was still unerased on my answering machine: John Guidry's long,

rambling message (left in August) that the Sheraton would not allow us to use one of the 8th floor suites as an office, therefore we would have to appear to be using it as a convention hospitality room by occasionally ordering things from the hotel.

It is not unusual for some of the people putting on WorldCons to work 18 or 22 hours at a stretch, skip meals, eat junk food, and stress themselves out of their minds. Their work suffers; they feel lousy; still they keep right at it. Some conventions set up a committee den and provide some basic food for the staff, but that takes forethought and effort, therefore has no place in a NOLAcon report.

Part of Ross Pavlac's agreement to organize Program Operations on five days' notice was that he have signature authority on the hotels' master accounts so that he wouldn't have to track down the chairman every time he needed a power cord or a water table setup. In fact, Pavlac was authorized to sign for up to \$2,000, which went toward a necessary phone line costing \$150 a day, office supplies, and renting easels to display schedule change signs. As long as he was within budget and had been instructed to order food from the Sheraton to disguise our use of 817 as an office, Pavlac ordered up breakfast one day and dinner another day for a bunch of the staff working interminable shifts. These orders amounted to \$671.00.

On Saturday, Craig Miller (another last-minute rescuer, brought in to second chairman John Guidry) descended on Program Operations to investigate "over \$2,000 in room service orders in two days." Nobody ever did explain that figure, but people sure did enjoy spreading it all over the convention. Even after he learned the truth, Craig's opinion was an occasional order of potato chips would have been enough to keep the hotel happy, and ordering room service meals for workers was completely out of line. Pavlac figured he did it under Guidry's authority and within budget, so it wasn't Craig's call. Nobody asked for my opinion, which was that the food sure was good.

The room service report provoked bitterness in other departments where no one was caring for the staff, most of all Convention Operations where the department head worked herself into the hospital emergency room by NOLAcon's end. The fact is, future convention committees will have to more carefully attend the physical needs of the people carrying the convention on their backs because of lot of them established their bad work habits in the '70s and '80s and they just aren't 18 anymore.

With the story making the rounds, Pavlac devoted much of Saturday's 3:00 PM department meeting to justifying his actions, and stating there would be no more room service

orders. Half an hour into the closed meeting there was a knock at the door. The door opened, and there was a gasp from the "door dragon". Pavlac turned to look, threw his hands in the air and screamed. Thirty people rushed to see. There stood waiter in a tuxedo pushing into the room the biggest cart of fresh fruit and cheese you'd ever want to see. They laughed hysterically for the next five minutes. When someone was finally able to breathe, they learned from the bewildered little man that when the Green Room closed Debbie Hodgkinson had sent the leftovers next door to us...

Closing Ceremonies: By Monday morning the loss of the Sheraton to the Black Narcotics Agents convention became much more than an academic planning point. Given that the committee scheduled its Closing Ceremonies for 11:30, I wanted to make sure it would come off. I also had one last schedule change to make: in proofreading the schedule copy going into the daily newzine I failed to note the Gripe Session was shown in the wrong room, and the only place to publicize this information was at Closing Ceremonies. So I got down there as the band was playing and Guidry was thanking people. I made my announcement, then joined the audience to be pelted with thousands of potmetal NOLAcon doubloons thrown by the Noreascon 3 committee marching as a krewe in front of the stage.

The Gripe Session: Just as high school graduation is not so much for kids as for their parents, a WorldCon gripe session is not for the benefit of the committee, who very likely will never run another WorldCon, but to give a cathartic outlet for the fans.

I determined to chair the Gripe Session to avoid any blurring of the difference between "cathartic outlet" and "lynch mob".

There were about 150 people in the room. It was as hot and close as a Tennessee Williams set. The noise from hallway exhibitors at the Black Narcotics Agents' convention forced us to close the doors so people could hear.

Guy Lillian III was the only New Orleans-based committee person to show up for the first twenty minutes. Guidry, Winston and Hafer came in later. Virtually none of the "permanent floating WorldCon committee" who had manned departments at the last moment appeared at the session. Dozens of people wanted to speak, so I divided the house and alternated between the two sides, helped by Tom Hanlon and Robert Sacks, who kept track of the order of speakers. I thought it was touchingly ironic how much work I had seen Hanlon do during the weekend, and that he was now up front at Gripe Session.

All the big questions were asked rapid-fire. Why weren't things planned in advance, so that the con had to be



rescued? Why were there so many schedule changes? Why did NOLAcon's contract permit the Baptist missionaries to keep the Sheraton until Friday, and require NOLAcon to give up the Sheraton mid-Monday? Why had there been so much delay and crowding getting into the Hugo Awards? Why was there no closed-circuit tv of the Masquerade?

Hotel liaison Ken Hafer's answer to the last question about closed-circuit tv blamed it on the prudery of the hotels and the reputation of the WorldCon Masquerade for nudity. This prompted the only outburst of the session, with Rick Albertson jumping to his feet shouting that was a lie, that the committee had simply told him doing closed-circuit video wasn't important enough to bother with, and Mike Weber following suit with his own outburst. Both had worked with the Tech staff during the convention. Many of the "rescuers" later claimed their absence from the Gripe Session mainly had to do with their fear of being provoked into similar outbursts by committee rationalizations.

At your first WorldCon, everything is new and wonderful and appears to work exactly as it should. Based on meeting people whose first WorldCon had been one with serious problems, but told me that MidAmeriCon or Iguanacon was the best they'd ever been to, I expect to meet people in the years to come who will say NOLAcon was their first and best WorldCon experience. But NOLAcon even violated that myth: a neofan specially went to the Gripe Session to say he'd stood in line 1-1/2 hours to get Robert Asprin's autograph. As long as that line was, it didn't stretch to Michigan, where Asprin was spending the weekend, a last-minute no-show.

Late in the two hour session, an unnamed fan delivered a long, rambling comment intended to soothe people, which was riddled with unintentional humor. All cylinders were firing when he said this year's daily newzine was far better than any of the past ones; those who knew I'd edited the daily newzine at four WorldCons, like Diana Pavlac and Janice Gelb, melted in laughter. Then trying to get the audience to appreciate what an enormous task it is to run a WorldCon, and how overtaxed the volunteers were, the fellow said, "After all, it's not as if any of the committee were professional travel agents!" Rick Foss, who is a professional travel agent, stalked from the room with a mock scowl.

The Gripe Session helped me to understand the committee's psychology, at long last, as Lillian and Guidry repeatedly referred to having done "everything humanly possible". Most WorldCon committees are run on the basis that there is a job which must get done, and whether that job gets done is the measure of their performance, not whether they tried. In this case, the committee did as much as fit in with their lifestyles, and graciously thanked those who

rushed in to do the other 50% at the last minute.

Even at the bitter end the committee, like the undead protagonist of a series of horror movies, had their final paroxysm. A woman at second row center asked, "We hear rumors there were special NOLAcon staff t-shirts. Is this true?" In words that still haunt me, a seated John Guidry admitted, "Yes, there are. They're in my room."

# NEWS

CONSPIRACY SOUVENIR BOOKS: Shortly after the announcement that Conspiracy, the 1987 WorldCon, had gone broke, I contacted Linda Pickersgill, and offered the assistance of SCIFI to distribute the 1100 convention program books belonging to nonattending North American members. Linda had them freighted to her father's house in New Orleans, and handed many out at NOLAcon. SCIFI is taking responsibility for delivering the others, and the expense of mailing them. Drew and Kathy Sanders hauled one crate of books back to Los Angeles with the NOLAcon masquerade equipment, and Yellow Freight recently deposited the remaining 1200 pounds of books in my parents' garage. Bruce and Elayne Pelz have been checking the mailing labels, and I will also be comparing them to my address file. We anticipate sending postcards to verify the addresses on Conspiracy's list before posting the books themselves which are heavy and will not be cheap to send mail. -- In a way this is the answer to Sheryl Birkhead's many notes wondering when she was going to get her program book from the Conspiracy committee...

DON C. THOMPSON: Ending his five-year mission as editor of DASEFAX, the Denver clubzine, Don C. Thompson explains in the October issue, "Health, as some have surmised, IS a factor. A melanomic mole was recently removed from my chest, and while a second surgical procedure left no residual cancer tumors, the prognosis is one of uncertainty. The odds are slightly more than 50-50 that cancer will recur. Somewhere, sometime.

"That sort of thing does tend to focus one's attention. I have been postponing a number of personal writing projects for a long time now. Suddenly I feel like I'd best get started on them."

THYME MARCHES ON: As of this notice, Thyme, the Aussie fan newzine, has discontinued the use of a North American agent. Future issues will be mailed directly. Thyme is available from LynC at PO Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria 3052 AUSTRALIA.

# FROM THE CON OPS LOG

## ROBBIE CANTOR

[Robbie Cantor is another charter member of the "I-volunteered-to-help-NOLAcon-and-(almost)-lived" club. For reasons explained in her convention report, she became the leader of Convention Operations at the WorldCon. The following excerpts are taken from her convention report Coming In From The Snow 73 and 74, published in LASFAPA]

\* \* \*

...On July 24th (as nearly as I can determine), Tom Hanlon called in the later half of the evening to tell me that as there was a basic disagreement between himself and the rest of the committee as to what his job entailed, he had resigned. And so had his immediate assistants. I asked what this meant in terms of my job. He said as far as he knew, I still had my job. I asked who could tell me for certain. He said John Guidry, the chair, could.

When I asked what was going to happen to my position in ConOps now that Tom had departed the scene, [Guidry] explained that, as Craig Miller had previously volunteered to do just this sort of thing for them, they were going to give the job to him. I asked if he had been speaking to Craig yet. He said no and I decided that would be a good next move. Before I even had a chance to tell Craig why I was calling he asked if I knew my boss in New Orleans had been fired. I said no but had he heard what NOLAcon had decided to do about it all? He said no and I explained that John Guidry had just told me he was planning to throw

the ball into Craig's court in view of Craig's previously volunteering. Craig said it would depend on the shape of the ball. I asked him to see if he could find out what was going on and whether or not I still had a job and what sort of job it was. He said he would.

Over the course of the next few weeks before the con I kept in touch with both Craig and Ben Yalow (who had contact with the committee through Mike Sinclair) and by the week before the con the only thing I knew was that I was still theoretically in charge of ConOps at the Marriott with Jim Gilpatrick apparently in charge over at the Sheraton and no one yet put in charge of us both. I had also heard some very disturbing things about radios, as in there were to be 55 radios given out to all the main staff and no beepers. I could foresee communications chaos ahead if this remained as it was planned. With help from Ben Yalow (still working through Mike Sinclair), I managed to get the message through that beepers were essential and some were ordered. I had also gotten a very late mailing out to Atlanta's ConOps staff as Tom had had problems on the home front with computers and stuff that prevented him from getting me a list early on. Ah well, at least it was out.

....[Ben Yalow] said there was good news. NOLAcon had decided to put someone in charge of ConOps. I asked who and he said, "You." Now, while this is most flattering that they should choose me, it is not exactly the sort of news I wanted to hear less than a week before the opening of the con. Especially as all my plans were based on the premise of running a portion of ConOps, not the whole shebang. Added to this, Ben said that there was someone lined up to handle the Sheraton side of things, but it wasn't Jim Gilpatrick, and he couldn't remember who it was.

I was sitting there thinking to myself, I have to catch a plane first thing tomorrow, there is no time to rearrange



my plans before arriving in New Orleans, and it's going to be hideously expensive to do so by phone on site. Not only that, but having Bobbi (Armbruster) as my second was no longer the optimum plan, it was the worst possible scenario -- she had no experience and would not be able to take over during the busy daytime nor during the quiet night as she needed 8 solid hours sleep every night or she would become ill. It was beginning to look like NOLAcon was going to be my worst nightmare come true. I could only hope that John Guidry would tell me it was all lies and that someone else had been given the job a month previously and all was well....

Do I really need to say this was not so?

....Anyway, there I was, the Monday before a WorldCon finally being told that I was in charge of all of ConOps when I was only prepared to deal with being in charge of part of ConOps. Now, I could have told John to take a flying leap and get himself someone else, but I realized that at this late date there was unlikely to be someone else and I said I would do my best for him. He told me there was to be a meeting with the Marriott Hotel the following day and did I want to attend? I said yes, and headed off for bed. It was going to be a long convention.

....The hotel meeting was pretty standard fare, but it did allow me to get my hands on a copy of the hotel resume -- one of those essential pieces of paper ConOps needs. It also led into a short "meeting" with Jim Mule and John Guidry at which radios and beepers were discussed. Jim Mule had indeed ordered 55 radios and could not understand what we needed beepers for (although, thank Ghu, I did get some) -- you gave one radio to all important staff and you didn't need any beepers according to his view of communications. I have only seen this utter reliance on radios at mediacons before and they usually end up being in the hands of a few high level staff and Security. They also usually end up being used as playtoys or portable personal phones. Neither of these uses has any place in ConOps or in a WorldCon, for that matter. Fortunately, [Guidry] backed me on my decision to go to beepers for high level staff and radios only for Tech, Security and ConOps. He said I was the one who would be using the equipment and therefore I had to be the one to decide how it would be used. I really appreciate his backing me. I hate going head to head with a local who's on the committee when I'm Johnny-come-lately. Anyway, the radios were due to arrive the following day as were the beepers and I asked Jim to make sure they were delivered to my hotel room so I could make sure they got given out in accordance with my plan of action (as opposed to his). The radio issue would be a running battle all through the con, starting with the next day when Jim disregarded my request to have them brought to my room and had them taken to Tech Services. Fortunately, I got more cooperation

from Bill Parker who was actually running Tech Services on-site. He arranged with the radio rental people to get us earphones and a base radio we would need that Mr. Mule had not bothered with -- which is a neat idea, since none of the 55 radios received all four channels that our radios were distributed among. You would have needed a minimum of three radios in ConOps to receive all four channels. \*Phoodey!\*

The radio/beeper problem was only the first of many run-ins with Mr. Mule's pre-con arrangements. Jim had also taken it upon himself to assign function space for the con. The only problem was that his consultations with the departments needing the space left a great deal to be desired. Handicapped Access/Medical are obviously the sort of department that needs one room, closeable, near to main con functions, that never, ever moves. Right? At the meeting with the hotel, I noticed that Handicapped Access/Medical was slated to move in with ConOps Saturday morning. I pointed out that this would never do -- Con Ops is not a quiet place at the best of times and if Medical had a patient this would be a problem. Since the daily newzine was going to be run out of someone's suite (as was previously mentioned in this meeting), this meant there was a room at the end of the hall on the fourth floor that was now empty. They decided to put Handicapped Access/Medical in there. Not an ideal solution, since they shouldn't have had to move in the first place, but their room got given to Art Show for the auctions starting Saturday, so...

Thursday, one of the Handicapped Access people told me there was no way they could move in with us as it would be too crowded, and besides, there was a bad case of mold on the fourth floor (of the Marriott, where ConOps was). I explained that they were no longer due to come into this room and asked if the whole floor suffered from mold or just this room. She said the whole floor. I said let me work on it. I looked at the hotel resume and figured that the only solution would be if Programming was willing to lose a room on the third floor or if Registration could squeeze into only two sections of their three-section room starting Saturday. Programming said no way, but Registration said no sweat, so I arranged to have Handicapped Access/Medical shift over one room for Saturday morning little thinking that even this would not solve the entire problem. [Allocation of space for use of the art show required yet another move for Handicapped Access on Monday: the direct cause for the Gripe Session to be moved!]

....After the snafu with the radios got cleared up with Bill Parker's help....I had two immediate problems to solve. One was when could Registration open its doors. Mary Wisner, who was in charge of registration, was understandably worried as she had planned to open by mid-

to-late afternoon and Jim Mule had just informed her that the [Marriott] had sold the space out from under her and she would not be able to open until late evening or the next day. Having just gone over the resume with the [Marriott] the previous afternoon, I had no idea where Mule had gotten any such notion; our use of the space was not due to begin until the afternoon and the Hotel had the Registration area set down as starting at 5:00 PM. So I checked with the hotel contact to see if anything had come up since the day before and she assured me it had not. And I assured Mary that she could move into the Registration area by 5:00 PM as per the resume.

[After trying to confirm the suite booked for Steve Jackson use producing the daily newzine:] ...I went to bed, wondering whether or not the only real problem that had reared its head was truly solved: Did Ken Hafer really accept that he was Hotel Liaison, did he know what this entailed and would he be able to cope with his newly discovered duties? This was sort of important in my mind as Hotel Liaison is one of ConOps key contacts for getting problems solved.

Mind, when I got to New Orleans, Ken Hafer was most definitely listed as Hotel Liaison. But the problem arose because he was under the impression that his job only entailed booking rooms for guests and staff, nothing more. He had this impression because that was the job he agreed to take on -- and nothing more. Craig Miller had arranged for the hotel contracts and Jim Mule had said he would handle the rest of the Hotel Liaison duties if Ken would take on the room bookings. Ken considered this reasonable as he had never had any experience with the other aspects of Hotel Liaison and didn't want to get in over his head. A commendable attitude, frankly, and one I wish Jim Mule had shared. Anyway, I pointed out to both Craig and John Guidry that this would not do. We needed a Hotel Liaison who was willing to go out and talk to the hotel whenever things got sticky and Jim Mule would not do -- he was too sick to even do his own job of Tech Service. The two of them talked with Ken and an arrangement was reached....

And indeed it was so. Surprise! Ken Hafer did a very fine job as Hotel Liaison once he got the job concept clear. His assistant over at the Sheraton (who did not arrive until Friday), Robert Lupton, also did a good job, though he and ConOps did seem a bit at odds for while....

....Friday, the biggest excitement during the day was when my toe decided to pop out of joint. which got me a free ride to Medical and an ice bag on my foot. The other distinctive thing about Friday is that this is the day that ConOps started assigning people to run various aspects of the con because the people who were supposed to be in charge could not be found. So it was we farmed out the Fanzine Room when no one could find the fellow who was

theoretically assigned the post a week or so before the con and so it was we put someone in charge of gaming when no one could even tell us who was supposed to be doing it. Whether or not these sections worked as they should have I consider irrelevant. There would have been no gaming and no fanzine room if we had not put people in charge and that probably would have been worse.

....Other problems that day included union difficulties at one of the off-site locations, the Orpheum, which we left in the capable hands of John Guidry and the resident lawyer, Dennis Dolbear. I'm assuming it got solved since messages about it died out by late afternoon. I'll never know for sure, I guess. However, the other one I know got solved: the Sheraton's security demanded to see our insurance policy saying that if we didn't have enough coverage for the private security we had they would close us down. Justin handled this one with help from various quarters.

[Planning for the crowds returning from the Masque] I had asked Gopher Command for one gopher per elevator lobby in both the Sheraton and Marriott and I left that information with Ben [Yalow] when I went off to Medical [with an incipient migraine]. However, Mike Sinclair's opinion was that this was an unnecessary effort as not all the Masque attendees would be returning at the same time nor would they all head for the same hotel. Apparently in my absence his view prevailed and the gophers never did appear. And they were most definitely needed over at the Sheraton. The result was that I had to scrounge for bodies to police the elevators and the stairwells at the Sheraton in order to keep the Sheraton security people happy. I "volunteered" anyone with a gopher badge or staff ribbon who looked even slightly unoccupied.

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NOTE FROM THE CONOPS BLACKBOARD: "We have an answer. If you're lucky, it's to your question."

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....I was up and about in ConOps after the Closing Ceremonies and trying to find out what had happened at same. And no one would tell me straight out. I mean, I know Closing Ceremonies is where people either do or do not get thanked and I had heard Jim Mule tell Bill Parker that the Tech people had been thanked. All I wanted were some details. Like, was it "Thank you to Tech Services" or "Thank you to Bill Parker, Rick Albertson and Jim Mule"? Elayne Pelze was the one who eventually told me that Jim Mule had been thanked quite specifically and I hit the roof. I haven't been that furious in a very long time and I hope I won't ever be again.

This man had been the root of 90% of all my problems, from the radio fiasco to the screwed-up allocation of rooms and I frankly didn't and don't give a damn if he was sick or made himself sick accomplishing those things. He had no



business being allowed to fuck the con over so thoroughly and certainly deserved no praise for being a stupid ass and taking on jobs he had neither the knowledge nor ability to do. NOLAcon had no logistics department. This is because, prior to the con, Jim Mule took care of many of the logistical problems and no one thought to make sure there was going to be someone in charge at the con. Jim Mule assigned Handicapped Access/Medical to a room they could not stay in. Jim Mule got me 55 radios on four channels, but no base so I could reach everyone from one source, and no beepers or earphones or microphones for the tech people (who need a hands-free operation when it comes to radios). Jim Mule promised a Japanese animation person a party room and didn't bother to tell anyone else so we had to have Ken Hafer bail the guy out. Jim Mule set up the stupid video room arrangement and didn't bother to tell any of the three people working the room who the others were, nor did he tell his staff what he had set up so they would work with it. Jim Mule didn't bother to tell [Joey Grillot that] films couldn't start until mid-Friday so the schedule began at early morning and the equipment had to be set up in the middle of the wee small hours of the morning because we had lost the function rooms in the Sheraton on Thursday and couldn't get into the room before midnight. The list goes on for quite a distance....Jim Mule had no right to take over jobs outside his department and he should have been stomped on when he tried (like a couple of others who were stomped on, in fact).

[Summing up the convention:] I suspect that most of the attendees were only really aware of the hassles with the program schedule (which changed constantly) and not of any of the other problems. I do feel that most of the people I worked with on the rest of the committee were trying their best to make things work and were more than willing to recommend changes if needed. I only harbor resentment towards one and he's been Named already. All in all, not the best con I've ever been to, but I did enjoy myself, and I did have some "quiet time" when I was available by radio but not in ConOps on "duty", even if I didn't get as much sleep as I would have liked.

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**THE APA MASTER FILE:** The N3F's Tim Gatewood has begun producing an index to amateur press associations. A 12-page forerunner named The Apa Master File, appeared at NOLAcon to circulate some of his existing information and stimulate people to send him more and better data. The N3F, in the person of Gatewood, and Imaginapa's Eric Watts intend to produce an extensive apa index called The New Moon Directory, a name that alludes to South of the Moon, whose former editors include Mike Horvat and Harry Andruschak, and one installment of which appeared in a File 770 anniversary issue. Write to Gatewood at PO Box 12921, Memphis TN 38182-0921.

# FAN MAIL

## EARLY RETURNS ON NOLAcon

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**BOB TUCKER:** File 770 was the third magazine to arrive here with news of the Hugo winners, not the first, but that was because of an error on my mailing label. Despite the correct zip code number, someone or some machine in the LA postoffice has been sending the past few issues to Bloomington, Indiana. Which indicates that someone or some machine pays little or no attention to zip codes.

I noted that you failed to list (in the "other awards" paragraph) that Nancy Tucker accepted a not-Hugo on behalf of the Oral History Association. I was at the ceremonies and was amused at the length the presenters went to, to specify that it was not a Hugo. And then, of course, they gave her an award that was identical to all other Hugos except for the name on the plate.

Do you suppose that the Oral History not-Hugo will take its place alongside Lou Tabakov's 1955 Hugo as a ghost-Hugo? I've been publicizing Lou's ghost-Hugo all over the midwest circuit for the past few years and now, maybe, I can add this one as proof that the Wimpy Zone is being discriminated against by the Secret Masters.

(PS: Nancy Tucker is no relation.) (And yet another PS: One of the ushers told me afterward that about a half-dozen spare Hugos had been made up and were sitting backstage, just in case of a mishap.)

((Actually, Peter Weston of England has been the source of the Hugos since the 1984 WorldCon. They're manufactured in lots of 20, so a Worldcon committee inevitably has a few left over. These usually disappear into the private collection of the committee chairman and his top executives.))

**ALLYSON M. W. DYAR:** In regards to the new and improved Hugo award, I was sitting in the back during the ceremonies and almost choked when I saw the award because it really \*did\* look like an intergalactic dildo. Looked even worse when I saw it up close.

**Pam Fremont:** Many of us (you can define 'us' as you please; call them my friends or the people I talked with at Nolacon) feel that you and Rick Foss did a superb job putting together the NOLAcon program, considering the

little time you had to do so. Many thanks.

By the way, Monday at NOLAcon one S.B. said a third issue of Nola Contendre should be produced. It could then be mailed out with PR #4...

RON SALOMON: You're the first one in print to tell me who won the WorldCon bid. Nothing fannish to report here. Mundanely, (what -- my kid mundane? never!) son David is working on sitting up by himself and teeth #3-6, real soon now. For the past couple months he's been verbalizing nonsequiturs, e.g., "cool dude" and "Eggo beware" are particularly memorable phrases of old. We've been attempting re-education and just this morning, he said da-da. Then again, he could grow up to be an art critic. Although all his favorite food is either beige or modern. To me this is all much more interesting than whether or not Budrys has "sold out". Some of his best friends...eh? Sure.

DONALD FRANSON: I don't know what the weather was in New Orleans, but if the WorldCon had been held in Los Angeles this year it would have been the hottest one ever. Labor Day is always hot in SoCal: in 1984 and back in 1958 it was over 100 degrees. I was thinking, why must we have the WorldCons on Labor Day? This started out when most fans were students and had long summer vacations, and July 4th and Labor Day were the only choices. Maybe the WorldCon should be held in the Spring, at Easter, another 3-day holiday. England has always had an Easter convention as an annual national con, even the same years as British WorldCons. Why can't the US do this?

The controversy about the yearly rotation plan hasn't been properly settled (three years advance notice, three zones conflict -- why not four zones?) so let's have another controversy about dates. This plan wouldn't eliminate NASFiC. It would just move it to Spring and let the "world" have its WorldCon as it insists on. US does need a national convention, all the other countries have them, so let's have one every year, but not in the hot summer.

It's true you're inside in air-conditioned hotels, but the hot weather takes some of the joy out of visiting the cities, and the trip. I passed up the Classic Jazz Festival today simply because I didn't want to dress up and leave the house. Of course, you could stay in the pool...

At the time the first WorldCons were scheduled (and misnamed), there was an argument between proponents of the two holidays, but other holidays weren't considered. Now there is no more "con season", and a lot of cons are at Easter, proving its superiority, though Thanksgiving is a good contender. In this age of flying you don't need much travel time, and people can get a few days off anytime;

### Extra! Extra! Read Late About It!

besides, summer is the worst time for tourist crowds.

There are other considerations, such as convention date availability (any weekend is easier than midweek, which is for businessmen) and summer rates (it's true that summer rates in Phoenix are low, but so are winter rates in Fairbanks).

But think about abandoning Labor Day as a WorldCon or NASFiC date, and consider the pros and cons.

### SON OF FANAC

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK: Received File 770:76 which I regard as a waste of paper. Did we really need this long interview with Budrys? If so, did it have to be in File 770? Where is all the juice [sic] gossip about NOLAcon II?

By the way, I have a copy of CONSPIRACY THEORIES and it is fascinating reading, especially in conjunction with all the UK fanzines I get. All in all, I am impressed by Budrys' ability to "rationalize". As a recovered alcoholic in you-know-which group, I hear a lot of this sort of rationalization.

Let us face it. No matter how you slice it or dice it, it is not really the "Writers of the Future." It is L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future. And Hubbard is the man responsible for the dianetics and scientology scams. Tainted money is tainted money, and I think at bottom most fans are quite aware of this. Shit sticks.

Please, in the future stick to news, not interviews. Plenty of zines doing interviews, after all. (Do you sub to Niekas?) But at the moment you are the only source for fannish news that Locus and SF Chronicle tend to ignore.

MIKE CHRISTIE: As someone who was involved with Budrys both over the Conspiracy troubles and the Writers of the Future competitions and workshops, I was interested in your interview with him. You asked some of the questions that are in everyone's minds -- for example, it's good to hear an unequivocal declaration from him that he is not a Scientologist. But you didn't push him on a couple of points that I feel are central to the discussion.

No doubt you've read Conspiracy Theories by now. Something that emerges very clearly from that is a division of opinion about the morality of sponsorship. You should also have seen a discussion of this subject in the loccal of A Free Lunch by now. One side, represented best by Chris Priest, says that it is simply immoral to take money from



an organization that you believe is corrupt and dangerous to the public; the other side (Budrys et al) claim that the set-up of WoTF allows a moral separation to go along with the supposed organizational one.

Two things there. Firstly, you have to believe Scientology is corrupt to be worried about sponsorship. I do so believe, as do many other fans. It seems clear to me that the morality involved is indistinguishable from the morality of taking funds and support from the South African government, or the regime of Pol Pot or Pinochet. Once you take the money, you are not unbought. If you dislike your sponsors you are a hypocrite; if you like them, then I may think you are wrong, but at least you're honest. So does Budrys actually think Scientology is harmless? If so, he's honest but I disagree with him; if not, he's a hypocrite. If he hasn't tried to make a decision, I think that's little better than hypocrisy.

((Pol Pot? Pinochet? If you find Scientology indistinguishable from murderous regimes, perhaps you need a better source of factual information on the subject than Chris Priest.))

Secondly, you ask him (p 10, col 2) about the possibility of secondary publicity for the Church (via the prominence of Hubbard's name in the WoTF publicity) being the reason that the program was set up in the first place. Budrys says: "There's no way the Church can go and start a literary agency like Author Services or start a publishing company like Bridge. Because the minute it does that it lays itself wide open. It doesn't have to do that. Hubbard doesn't have to have it do that for him." This is impossible to check, of course, but what is interesting is that Budrys seems to feel that an (unprovable) separation of intent makes a difference to the value of the publicity. This intent makes a difference to the value of the publicity. This secondary publicity is the whole point of the objection many people have, and it is ingenuous to dismiss its relevance like this. It's also worth mentioning that the publicist for Writers of the Future in the UK, Sarah Baziuk, makes no bones about being a scientologist; in addition to which Budrys told me that she was personally devoted to spreading Hubbard's fame, as she (apparently like many Scientologists) felt he deserved to be far more widely appreciated. This no doubt makes her ideally suited for the job of publicist; it also makes nonsense of Budrys' comments that the Church is unconnected with the WoTF program.

However, the organization behind WoTF is only of secondary importance. The main point is that fans should realize that we are a small enough community to have effect by consumer pressure. If those who disapprove say so loudly, and attempt to convince those who are uninformed, it may make a real difference to the suffering that the Church of

Scientology has been consistently alleged to cause.

One last note; if you haven't read Bare-Faced Messiah, the unofficial biography of Hubbard, I urge you to do so as soon as you can. It's not just hysterically funny, it demolishes any possible illusion about Hubbard being a big-hearted philanthropist.

((I don't know about you, but I've met members of cults from time to time -- in fact, quite recently I had professional dealings with two members of a local cult which made headlines when accused of beating children, and the death of one. The preoccupation and quirkiness of cultists is unmistakeable. In contrast, for 17 years I've had contact with Scientologists, and (ironically) even more since I went to work for IRS. I have personal opinions about the church and the commercial instincts of L. Ron Hubbard, but the members do not behave as cultists do. Therefore I am compelled to extend to them the same benefit of the doubt given to others who are sincerely devoted to a religion.

((If you haven't noticed, the fannish press conveys a clear impression that fandom is anti-religion, and routinely Christianity is equated with Falwell, Islam with Khomeni, Judaism with Israeli Army treatment of West Bank Arabs, and Scientology with the reputed greed of its founder. Within fandom, freedom of religion is confined to the freedom to practice religion as long as fans can't see you.))

SKEL: ...Which of course brings me to the Budrys interview. Now I wasn't at the convention, but from the reports I read I formed the opinion, apparently similarly to many attendees (or at least attendees who reported their reactions in fanzines), that it had sold its soul to the Scientologists (in fact Harry Andruschak wrote, in Nowhere Fast 4, which arrived at about the same time as this issue of File 770, "What is this I hear about Conspiracy going bankrupt? And this after selling their souls to the Scientologists for money?") Like many fans apparently I am unable to properly differentiate between the various tentacles of the L. Ron Hubbard corporate octopus. I will henceforth consider myself duly ticked off.

One thing that does come across from the interview is Algis' strong commitment to the Writers of the Future program, and his unquestioned integrity. By another of those strange coincidences a third zine that came in here last week was Pat Mueller's Pirate Jenny which contained John Moore's "Egoboost in Malibu", a report of the workshop week held for the winners of that WoTF contest/year. I was thus able to finish the interview and move straight on to the article and the two, read in such immediate juxtaposition, complemented each other superbly.

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MY FAVORITE YEAR

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MARTYN TAYLOR: The 10th Anniversary Issue did very nicely. I was most taken with Bertie MacAvoy's SoH speech. Now I discovered her in a (Nielsen Hayden?) fanzine writing about a trip to Ireland -- "The Harp Goes Harpside" -- and enjoyed the piece very much.

BRIAN EARL BROWN: Let's see if I've got this right: Last year's WorldCon is now bankrupt. Next year's WorldCon is already fishing for a bailout (a \$100,000 bailout was the impression I got) and this year's WorldCon seems to be missing in action. As I think about this the more I think that Neil Rest's CruiseCon wasn't such an unworkable idea. It seems like recent File 770s have all been dominated by WorldCon politics. Maybe this is my own faulty perception, or maybe it's a reflection of your own increased involvement with WorldCons. I find myself wishing for some other mix of news, but that's just me. ((I'm a bit overwhelmed with the subject myself, and I suspect others will be pleased to see many other aspects of fanac getting attention in the next several issues of File 770..))

I was surprised by my Blackhole nomination. I thought I'd kept my nose pretty clean last year, but obviously people like Ben Schilling have it in for me even when I'm just

the facts. ((I've always found that fairly hazardous all by itself!)) He can't refute what I said about Confusion but acts like I slandered the convention when all I did was notice its notice about vagrancy.

Mr. Loney's LoC was confusing because the editorial aside made it appear that Michelle was Terry Dowling's girlfriend and subject of the Thyme photographs.

Congrats on 10 years. I enjoyed your self-interview, Milt Stevens' column and Eric [Mayer's] homage two two centenary fanzines. A couple more years and we'll have to write something in F770's 100th ish.

...@@@#\$\$\$\$(((( CONTRIBUTORS' ADDRESSES ))))\$\$\$\$###000...

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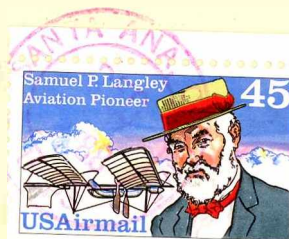
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