

RUNE

83

CONVENTIONS

# What's Inside

<b>Past Lives</b> .....3	compiled by Geri Sullivan and Karen Shaffer
<b>Down and Out at The Bistro Californium</b> .....7	by Victor Raymond
<b>Conventions: Commentary</b> .....8	compiled and edited by Tom Juntunen
<b>Minicon: The Year of Living Languorously</b> .....22	by K.J. Routliffe
<b>Beyond The Twiltone Horizon</b> .....24	by Jeff Schalles
<b>Fanzine Reviews</b> .....25	by Geri Sullivan
<b>RUNELOCS</b> .....28	compiled by Garth Danielson
<b>Minn-Stf Board Minutes</b> .....32	compiled by Polly Peterson
<b>Passing the Torch</b> .....33	by Tom Juntunen

Those helped stick and stuff the previous RUNE were:

Mitchel Thornhill  
Mog Decarnin  
Garth Danielson  
Reed Waller  
Peter Larsen  
Marc Sperhauk  
Denny Lien  
Jeff Schalles  
Lee Peltz  
Karen Johnson  
John Stanley  
Terry A. Garey  
Steve Glennon  
Giovanna Fregni  
Ken Fletcher  
Geri Sullivan

(freshly returned from England & Ireland)

Jeanne Mealy  
Larry Becker

Ta Dah!

## SPINNING EDITORSHIP

**Garth Edmond Danielson – December ♀ Ken Fletcher – March**  
**Thomas Juntunen – June ♀ Jeff Schalles – September**

## PHOTO CREDITS

## ART CREDITS

**Scott K. Imes**  
Pages 3 and 10

**Larry Becker**  
Page 29

**Jeff Schalles**  
Pages 4, 7, 12, 14, 16-17  
and 22-23

**Wayne Modjeski**  
Page 31

**Fred Levy Haskell**  
Pages 5, 9, 11 (both), 13,  
15 (bottom left), 18 (both),  
19-21 and 25

**Teddy Harvia**  
Page 9210

**Thomas Juntunen**  
Front cover

**Chuck Holst**  
Page 8

**The Unknown Fan**  
Pages 6 and 15 (upper right)  
*These were contributed by*  
*Dave Wixon from Gordy*  
*Dickson's files.*

All photos are ©1992  
by the artist credited.

Volume 14, No. 3  
July 1992

**Published by:**  
*Minnesota Science Fiction*  
*Society*  
PO Box 8297  
Lake Street Station  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

©1992 by the Minnesota  
Science Fiction Society. All  
rights revert to the contributors.

## Disclaimer:

If we said you had a nice body  
would you hold it against us?

# Past Lives

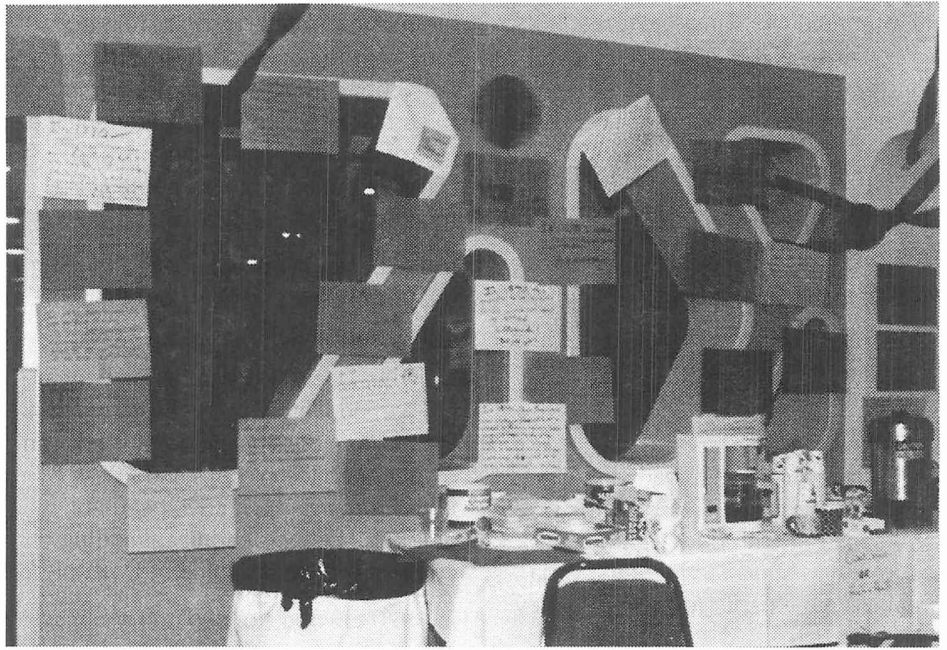
Last Fall, when Karen Schaffer ventured forth to Litin Paper to buy party supplies and decorations for ReinConation, little did she know the napkins would inspire one of the convention's high points. Not that it was a dull convention, mind you, rather that Karen bought the cheapest party napkins she could find. The Litin sale bins ("all you can fit in a paper bag for \$1") were stuffed with colorful napkins exclaiming "Happy 21st Birthday!" At the ReinConation sign-making party, discussion soon turned to the fact that someone just turning 21 would have been born in 1970, and the sign-makers swapped stories from that year. Never one to let opportunity slip, Karen made a sign asking "What were YOU doing in 1970, 21 years ago?" She posted it in the consuite, with crayons, paper, and tape nearby. By the end of the weekend, a wall was covered with our tales of past lives. I could go on, telling you how time-binding and community-building the whole thing was, but figured you'd rather see for yourself. — Geri Sullivan

Four days into 1970, I moved to Colorado. (Three years later, I discovered fandom.) ((Later still I discovered Minneapolis.)) **Gordon Garb**

In 1970 — **Denny Lien** attended his first convention (after ten years in fandom as a hermit letterhack), was failing at getting up the energy to write a dissertation, was buying up multiple copies of Marvel Comics, and going to bad monster movies at Tucson, AZ drive-ins, and planning to give up and move back to Minnesota to go to library school and get appendicitis and learn to print neatly.

In 1970, **Rob Ihinger** was living in Claremont, Calif. and reading Dickens, Dumas, Hugo, among others. He played frisbee between classes and bridge during lunch hours. He had the second highest cumulative point total for the Thursday night bridge group (2 tables). He also did sets, props, sound and lighting for school plays and watched a lot of TV. He weighed 98 pounds and was second smallest in his class.

In 1970, **Beth Friedman** read her first SF novel, *The Door Into Summer*, after having



Part of the Reinconation wall

exhausted the supply of short SF story anthologies at the three local libraries.

In 1970, **David Emerson** attended his first science fiction convention.

In 1970 I lived in Inglewood, California, a mile off the end of LAX's north runway. I was married to a guy from Minnesota who was going to school while I worked as a bookkeeper. My male friends and relatives were being sent to VietNam, and I was actively anti-war. (Then I was Carol Sather) **Charlie Kennedy**

in 1970...

- i did not win a Nobel prize
- i did not yet discover girls.
- i didn't discover boys, either.
- i did not make any friendships that lasted to this day.
- i did not smoke any dope.
- i did not smoke anything else.
- i thought beer was revolting.
- i believed in GOD and thought that Hell was a bad place
- i always capitalised the first person pronoun
- i completed first grade...

**Colin Hinz**

1970 was the first year I learned about fandom, followed by conventions and FanPublishing. Lots followed. **Garth Edmond Danielson** [My life got changed after 1970 Whoopie!!]

In 1970, half of my genome was still missing. **Corwin Brust**

In 1970, **Ctein** first got laid. (He was a slow starter)

In 1970 . . . **Dave Romm** was speculating on what he'd be doing in 1991. He **still** doesn't know.

In 1970, **Neil Rest** had just begun his career as a hippie bum, selling newspapers, and wasn't even on welfare yet.

In 1970, **Pamela Dean** was suffering from unrequited love and reading E. R. Eddison with about equal puzzlement.

In 1970, **Don Bailey** was changing his major to computer science, meeting an odd group called Minn-Stf, and wondering what he would be doing in 21 years.

In 1970... **Chadis the Fixer** travelled to Winnipeg 5 months after getting the Driver's License. Camped, saw the city, & drank Canadian Bheer. It is Recommended.

In 1970, I...

- Was a camp counselor at a surrealistic camp in the virgin pine forest of New Jersey
- Graduated from college (despite my best efforts to flunk out during my final quarter)
- Went winter camping in the Adirondacks and lost both big toenails

- Headed south with my best friend in a '68 Firebird. Kinda like Thelma & Louise without the bloodshed. Came closer than we wanted to armed robbery, actually, but it was 1971 by then...

**Sharon Kahn** (The toenails grew back.)

In 1970 **Barb Jensen** was hanging out on the West Bank, hair down to my waist, taking LSD, psychoanalyzing my mother, contemplating world peace. (and lecturing my high school English class on *Stranger in a Strange Land*) (and contemplating getting laid) Later I cut my hair.

In 1970 — **Terry (Garey)** can't remember much specifically but it was horrible, just horrible . . . . I think I was a fry cook in Richmond, California 'cause it was after starving in Nevada and before the paper route in Berkeley and then there...

In 1970, this month to be exact, **Andie Dunne** was about to attend kiddygarden! Feel old yet?

In 1970, I was being an ordinary, serious college freshman (later sophomore) physics major. I hardly programmed computers at all. i wasn't of legal drinking age. i went to school and got sort of good grades. (It was not until years later that the federal government paid me to smoke marijuana, that I made hundreds of dollars as a medical guinea pig and discovered science fiction fandom.) And that's the truth. **David S. Cargo**  
**ograC .S divaD**

In 1970, **Don Fitch** celebrated his 12th Fanniversary, & wished he could afford to travel to Minicon.

1970 was the first year I grew my hair too long for the surrounding community! (But I couldn't grow a beard, yet.) **Mitch Pockrandt**

For my tenth birthday, my Gramma and Grampa gave me 5 dollars and took me to Rosedale. I bought *Neutron Star* by Larry Niven. With the rest of my money I went to a real sit down restaurant all by myself. I had a slice of pie and realized I didn't have any money left for the tip. **Eileen Lufkin**

Long, long ago... about a year after Trek Classic bit the dust and shortly after that giant leap on Luna, a nine year old

**Patric** was staying up all hours watching Horror Inc, forming a combination SF, F & C -cum- rocketry club, roaming around from bar to resort to hunting lodge in the northwoods of Wisconsin, collecting old pop bottles and scrap iron to earn spending money, lamenting the loss of our local soda fountain, and scheming diligently to become a member of the real world...

In 1970, **Maria Pinkstaff** was attending the first grade in what is now Calhoun Square parking ramp.

In 1970, **Drew** was wondering why a girl named Darcel LaDue liked his best friend more than him. Darcel is now an owner of an ice cream stand. Best friend is married with two beautiful children. Drew is happily attending conventions and meeting new people.

In 1970 **Elwood** stopped being a hood and started down the road to fandom — he could no longer see the board.

In 1970 I was a student at Long Beach City College cutting up small lifeforms and working part-time. I was also a newlywed and learned to function on 2-3 hrs sleep — a skill often used in fandom! **DragonLady**

In 1970 I was not even a gleam in my mother's eye. **Caley Barry**

In 1970 - **Elise** had another name and was living in hell (a.k.a. a small town in Wisconsin populated largely by fundamentalists, Posse Comitatus members, and American Nazi Party

members. It's a long story.)

In 1970 — I wasn't born yet! (I being **Erik Baker**)

In 1970, **Karen Schaffer**, with great reluctance, allowed a friend to coax her into reading *R is for Rocket* by Bradbury. ("But I don't LIKE those sci-fi movies!") "The books are different — trust me!" After the third story, she figured out that he wasn't going to tie them all together...

In 1970, **Felicia Herman** was:

- 1) in Raleigh, NC
- 2) starting 10th grade
- 3) a "gawdamned hippy freak"

In 1970, **Geof Stone** had a broken leg and was forced to slide down the stairs to get to the library.

1970 would only fit on one of these sheets if I could do it with a ball point pen instead of one of these things.

**Jack Targonski**

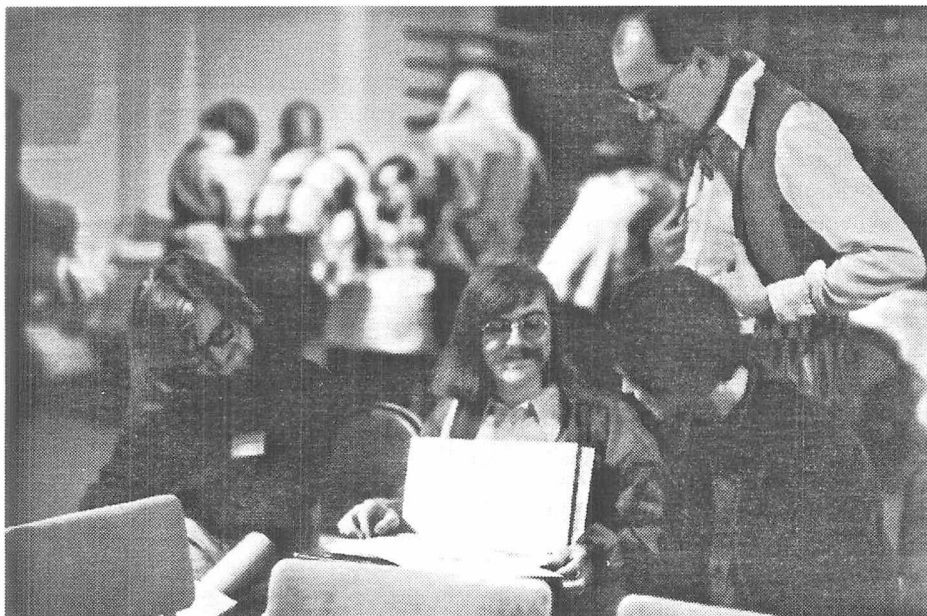
In 1970 I was in first grade, and had just figured out that this "reading" thing was a *really* neat idea. **Cally Soukup**

In 1970 . . . I was a sophomore in high school. Oldest of 6 kids, rabid reader of SF library books, enjoying sports, but not quite in the right gear. My family made 2 moves in the next few years: to Ft. Wayne, IN (bleh — 2 yrs. of parochial school!) and La Crosse, WI. There at college (having graduated high school in the fannihly-significant year of 1973!), I helped create an SF club. Somehow or other, we discovered fandom — ICON first, then MINICON!



The Minneapolis in '73 suite at Minicon 27





Ken Fletcher, Tim Boxell and Al Kuhfeld

Gosh wow! Fans, fanzines, apas, con... and FRIENDS. **Jeanne Mealy**

In 1970 I tried to find another speaker to import to the University of North Dakota who would be as popular as Willey Ley who I'd brought in to UND the year before. **Scott Imes**

In 1970 **Mark Richards** was starting his Sr. year in H.S. being a strange and lonely fan and not knowing it.

In 1970 — **Joyce Scrivner** was stodgy and (alas) white at a retreat to discuss racism, black power, La Raza Unida and the Weatherman, later tutored math and worked on a 24-hour Crisis line which fired her for racing in wheelchairs and crutches.

In 1970 — I took my first trip to Europe, wrote poetry for my high school publication, and dreamed of becoming an archeologist, as I knew I could never make a living as an artist. **Kara Dalkey**

In 1970, **Karen Cooper's** mother refused to let her wear fishnet stockings to 5th grade. This later proved to affect her entire life.

In 1970 **Giovanna Fregni** was living in the U. P. of Michigan under the assumed name of Laura Smith. Later that year she would move to Milwaukee and not successfully escape until twenty one years later.

In 1970 — I was working making blueprints & filing engineering tracings for Pioneer Industries (a division of Portec,

Inc.) — a major manufacturer of *portable* 50' rock crushers... I had a wild fantasy life as a convention-going fan, riding 6-in-a-car for 18 hours going to a con on vacation time. **Ken Fletcher** P.S. Don't change ammonia barrels for a living.

In 1970, I was cutting classes at Wellesley H. S. and selling the *Real Phoenix* (before the Phoenix-Real paper war) on and around Boston Common. Also acting a lot and reading Tolkien. **Jane Strauss**

In 1970, I was in first grade; and trying to learn my ABC's. **Kurk B. Marston**

in 1970 **Laramie Sasseville** was entertaining her high school friends with an imaginary griffin and paintings of unicorns battling dragons.

In 1970, my now ultra-conservative parents (who feel SF/Fantasy = EVIL) were presumably thin, young, and wildly in love — because I was born in 1971. Then again, that's one Fantasy I have a hard time believing. Maybe I was adopted. <insert wild speculation on true parentage here> **Laurel Krahn**

In 1970, **Lee Pelton** was found psychologically unsuited for military service, got a girlfriend, joined a rock & roll band, and learned how to make a baby. It worked!

In 1970 — **Chuck Holst** was co-editor of Rune and VP of Minn-stf, being at the ripe old age of 26 one of the oldest members of MN-stf.

In 1970, **Margo** was Judy Bratton, had finished junior high, barely, got tossed out of her sophomore class for wearing the wrong clothes, got in trouble for not going back, and went to reform school, where she really worried the other young women. Not yet in fandom, and already freaking the mundanes.

In 1970 I celebrated New Years in 3 different cities. Sasebo, Japan; some nameless airfield on Okinawa; and San Francisco. The bar in San Francisco had the nakedest hostesses. Later in 1970, I had my first comment letter published in a professional SF magazine, began a rather short lifetime correspondence with John W. Campbell, and got a 6 credit 'A' in an independent study project on Science Fiction. Also in 1970, I tested out of my freshman year of the University of Wisconsin and got a 4.0 in my first semester as a sophomore. Things went downhill from there. I seriously considered attending the Worldcon in Boston. **Ken Konkol**

In 1970: I dropped out of eighth grade and divided the remainder of the year between wandering the streets of Phoenix late at night and walking 2 miles to the library for more Andre Norton and Robert A. Heinlein. **Martin McClure**

In 1970 **Nancy McClure** spend eight days in Washington DC, finding out on each day that the machines in the Smithsonian ladies' rooms eat dimes and fail to dispense napkins. She went home and taught herself to use tampons. For Christmas her parents gave her "three more books by the writer of that book you liked on hobbits."

...by 1970 I wuz playing in a rock band, going to college (majoring in physics) drawing 10 cartoons a week for SF fanzines. (2 were in Locus) Cured my asthma w/LSD, bought a VW bus, bought my first 2 mimeographs, bought my first 35 mm camera, lost 40 lbs., had mono, quit ROTC (but took a date to the ROTC Ball), learned housepainting, went to my first Philcon, became an English major, joined 2 other bands, joined my first 2 apas (APA 45/RAPS) etc. etc. **Jeff Schalles**

Early in 1970, **Geri** discovered she was Geri. Eight plus years later, she made it legal.

In 1970, I was

- eight years old, a white suburban child
- having fun with rocks and learning about pioneers in school — and raising baby ducks
- learning to play violin (just starting)
- reading everything, including Edward Eager and E. Nesbit, eventually up to John Christopher's Tripods books
- not yet writing in bulleted lists
- building forts (with tomato stakes and blankets) in the back yard. **Karen Babich**

In 1970 **Martin Schafer** was first taken to a B Daltons where he spent all his birthday money buying books by Heinlein, E E Smith, and Robert Howard.

In 1970 — **Michael Wallis** was in Grade 8 and already reading SF. That summer was the Great Rocket War across the Ottawa River (I think) and I started taking pictures of the TV coverage of Apollo 14. It was also the year I first joined a rock 'n roll band.

In 1970 I'd finished up a year of hard doping and was getting ready for something completely different. Being a hippie had become a bummer (4 of them, actually.) In November I met my husband (now x), found theosophy (the answer for me), and the Liberal Catholic Church. I should write a book. **Judy A. Cilcain - Anuké**

In 1970 **Nate Bucklin** married Caryl, moved four or five times, played in a band with Max Swanson on flute (and generally converted from teen band to nightclub music), cut his hair shorter and started seriously collecting s-f magazines.

1970 was the worst year in **Peg's** life. BAR NONE. (Even the ever present NOW). Don't ask.

In 1970, **Polly Peterson** sang "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds" in the choir in the Junior Class production of *Our Town* (her twin brother played the pedantic professor) and entered her senior year. She played first chair trumpet in the band and got an award for being the most enthusiastic member of the Pep Club.

In 1970, long, long ago, **Mog Decarnin** was suicidal for the very first time over unrequited love — the start of a proud tradition carried down to modern times. She was listening to her idol, Jean Genet, speak at a Black Panther rally,

while Abby Hoffman stood behind her in a black cape and the national guard trucks lurked nearby... This was before she knew about *cons*.

In 1970 c.e. I stopped being "group leader" for the art and creativity group of the experimental collegiate unit "College A," at the State U. of N. Y. at Buffalo, and reported for active duty as a logistics officer, at Shaw AFB in South Carolina. This started my personal guerilla warfare with the air force. I was still waiting for Michael Moorcock to publish the short story of mine he bought in 1968. I met & fell in love with Betsy Danforth (from S. D. not Indiana) and moved her into my B. O. Q. room at Lowry AFB in Denver while I was at school there. After returning to S. C. and Shaw AFB, Lesley Hudson, the first woman I lived with moved to S. C. to be with me. I met Bob & Ginger Maurus. Went to cons. Wrote some. I flew on a C5A. Very big. I was helping Gordy Dickson with SFWA stuff. I continued to get more radicalized. I went thru great emotional pain when Betsy left my life. I was getting friendlier with Vaughn Bode & Larry Todd. I also scammed the Air Force & the State U of N. Y. at Buffalo, to allow me to attend the science fiction arts festival I helped set up at the U. Before I was activated. I got a week's leave before I had built up any leavetime. Harlan berated me (in jest) for scamming the A. F. instead of going to Canada. He did this publicly at the beginning of his speech. I wouldn't become Dr. Knowledge for many years. I started becoming Uncle Rick in Jr. High. **Rick Gellman**

In 1970 I was three years old — my exposure to fandom limited to Star Trek re-runs. The highlight of my summer was the arrival of my brother Jim, at the age of 6 days. **Ann Totusek**

In 1970, **Peter Hentges** was 3 years of age. He hadn't yet begun to read cereal boxes, much less SF. He missed meeting Fred Haskell at his first worldcon (being in South Carolina). Having joined fandom now, he is much happier.

In 1970, **Ruth Anderson** was getting over Kindergarten withdrawal in Ottawa.

During the period in question (1970), **Steve** (the other one) **Perry** was working on getting himself kicked out of college

(for the first of several times), leaving the exciting and rewarding field of hambergerology at Paul's Foster Freeze and Root Beer Emporium, and entering the cloistered life of a squid courtesy of Uncle Sugar's Yacht Club (U. S. Navy). All the while bemoaning the cancellation of Dr. Who on KQED - San Francisco.

In 1970, **Mark Earnest** began searching *outside* of Albert Lea for SF after the librarian at the city library replied, "Huh? What's that?" Forays for books were few and far between tho... he got his drivers license in 1972!!

In 1970 **Tom Grewe** was not yet in Kindergarten, but was discovering how to decipher those strange, intriguing heiroglyphs called The Alphabet with a little help from this daring new T.V. show called "Sesame Street."

In 1970, **Victor Raymond** had just read Space Cadet and was wondering where he could find more like it.

In 1970, **Marty Helgesen** was pretty much as he is today.

*With thanks to Karen Schaffer for typing these up.*

*ReinConation Too will take place September 11-13, 1992, at the Radisson South Hotel, Minneapolis. (Well, Bloomington, to be exact, but you get the idea.) James White and Jeanne Gomoll are our guests of honor, and we hope lots of Rune's readers are able to attend. Pre-registration is \$18, or \$19.73 if you are feeling particularly fannish. It's \$25 after August 15 or at the door. Child registrations are \$7 pre-reg, \$10 at the door. Please make checks payable to ReinConation and send them to ReinConation at the Minn-stf PO box. (ReinConation is sponsored by Minn-stf.) Attendees from outside the USA may register at the door for the pre-reg rate. Come on up to Minneapolis after MagiCon.*



*Joe Haldeman and Gordon Dickson*

# Down and Out at the Bistro Californium

by Victor Raymond

It's been a few months since I was released from my post as President of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society. Since then, I have continued in my position as one of the co-chairs of Minicon 28, which just happens to be occurring next year at Easter.

I have a few observations about the state of MinnStF which seem to be worth passing along. I make no claim for their absolute veracity, but I think they make sense. You let me know if that's true for you, too.

*The "party animal versus sercon" split is not only stupid, it's a false dichotomy.* For the past several years, we've been treated to a series of semi-public debates between various people about how MinnStF favors one crowd of people or another. Usually it gets cast in terms of the sercon folks being repressed by some sort of Old SMOFs network. This is pretty bogus. Nobody is going around telling people to shut up whenever a discussion of science fiction literature gets underway. Nor, for that matter, is there any sort of "membership committee" that encourages or discourages various people who want to get involved in the club.

*MinnStF isn't an umbrella organization* (SF MN can have that role, thank you). What it is can be described as a social organization made up of loosely connected groups of people with common interests and social relationships. Its strength comes not from being all things to all people, but as a fairly stable meeting ground for fans in general. And, in particular, MinnStF is what people make of it. If you don't see anything you like going on, you have only to come up with a project and do it. If you

think it'll take some money, talk to the Board about it; they might agree with you. The best things that I can recall happening in MinnStF came directly out of someone inspired to have fun with a great idea.

*The local sf&f writing community is slowly drifting away from MinnStF.* Not that it shouldn't, mind you. It's just that the rather egalitarian relationship that Minneapolis fans and writers used to have has been changing, mostly for the more tenuous and less familiar. And, as I see it, it is because MinnStF doesn't serve the needs of the writers very well. We've got dozens, literally dozens, of sf&f writers here in the Twin Cities, but most of them do not attend MinnStF meetings. Some of them may not know what MinnStF is, anymore. And the feuding between various sub-sets of fandom doesn't help, either.

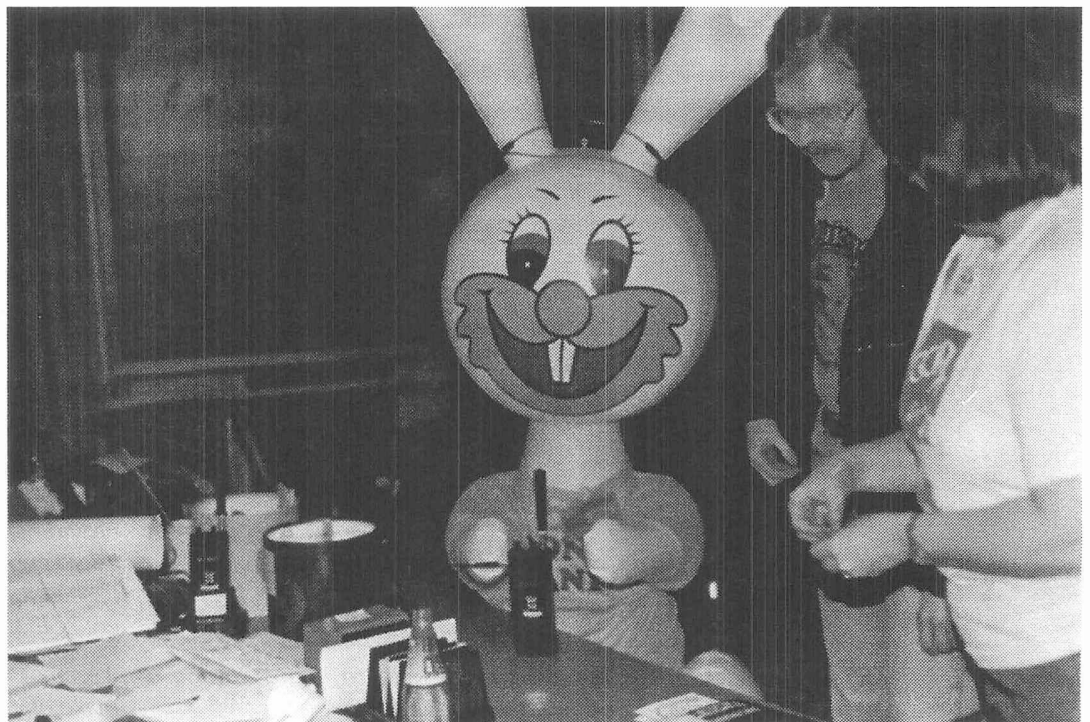
*Much of what MinnStF is going through has happened elsewhere already.* Maybe we could learn some things from other groups (gasp, shock). When I have talked with Ben Yalow and Lise Eisenberg and lots of other

bnfs from other cities, they assure me that our problems and issues are not unique. This is both reassuring and rather horrifying. Reassuring, because we could learn from what has gone before, and horrifying, because nobody should have to go through the problems we have had (although I understand as well it could have been a lot worse...).

and finally,

*I am no longer one of the youngest fans in MinnStF.* One of the greatest things that happened during my tenure as El Presidente para la Vida de la MinnStF was the emergence of the so-called Younger Set. Led by Corwin Brust, among others, we got around a dozen to eighteen teenagers that think that running Minicon and MinnStF would be absolutely the best. The difficult part for these teens is going to be how well they hold it together when they get to college, but I bet that this group just might be able to pull it off (with, of course, a little help from the right people).

Besides, *somebody's* got to show them how to take over.



Martin McClure and Geri Sullivan prepare a new troubleshooter at Minicon 27

# CONVENTIONS

*The whole purpose of this article was to get a cross-section of opinions about Minn-Sf, Minicon and SF conventions in general. If I had had the time and resources, I would have liked to do this for a much larger sample of people. The ones actually presented here are people whose opinions I respect, who are familiar in much of fandom and agreed to answer the questions. I also felt I could count on most of them to provide interesting answers.*

*The people who responded and are printed here are: David Dyer-Bennet, Jon Singer, Scott Imes, Victor Raymond, Emma Bull, Geri Sullivan, Will Shetterly, Ken Fletcher, Chuck Holst, Jeff Schalles and (of course) Uncle Fred Levy Haskell. I wish to thank them all for their time and efforts.*

*I am fascinated by conventions and still wish to do a larger version of this article, perhaps a zine along the lines of Geri Sullivan's Dare to be Stupid. If you have a letter of comment, send it to Rune for publication here. But if you wish to discuss conventions in more detail, possibly participate in another version of this questionnaire or write an article on SF conventions, you can contact me directly at: Thomas Juntunen, PO Box 24676, Edina, MN 55410. I can also be reached electronically through Terraboard.*

## **Which was the first convention you attended?**

*I asked this question to help establish the baseline from which the respondents answered the questions. In other words, how long have you been doing this stuff? Note that nearly half of the eleven attended Minicon as their first convention.*

**DAVID:** LAcon, the 1972 worldcon in Los Angeles.

**JON:** In January or February of 1970, there was a one-day conference at what was then Harpur College, and is now SUNY-Binghamton. Harry Stubbs was the GoH, as I recall (it's been a while). I went, and had a great time. Hooked, you know, in one short shot...

The first con I *failed* to go to was PhilCon of 1969, the previous fall; I didn't think I had the money, which was probably correct and probably a mistake anyway.

**SCOTT:** Minicon 8 – 1974 – Dyckman Hotel.

**VICTOR:** The first con I attended was the Minicon held in conjunction with the Minneapolis Public Library, but I was entirely too young to understand what a con was, much less attend one. So the first con I attended with malice

aforethought was Minicon 13 (I think), the first one at the Minneapolis Radisson downtown. I was particularly impressed with the con suite, but then, so was everybody else...

**EMMA:** Minicon 13

**GERI:** Minicon 17 at Minneapolis Radisson, 1981.

**WILL:** Minicon

**KEN:** I was on a trip to Washington DC with my family in 1963. The hotel we stayed at was the location of the 1963 Worldcon Discon. I watched the convention and fans in the halls and coffee shop, and peeked into function rooms full of fans laughing at Isaac Asimov's jokes.

The first con I had a membership in, was the Worldcon in 1967, Nycon 3, in New York City.

**CHUCK:** Minicon 2 in 1969.

**JEFF:** The 2nd Pghlange, 1970, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**FRED:** The first real convention I attended was Nycon 3 which was the 25th world science fiction convention in New York City in 1967. Earlier (in July 1964), Frank Stodolka had put together something he called PAINc Con, in fact the first annual PAINc Con. We met at Frank's house, total attendees: Frank, John Kusske, Gil Lamont and Fred Haskell. Gil was up from Beloit and John was up from Alexandria. I was in fandom even earlier. Nate Bucklin and I were listed as new members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation in December, 1962 (according to Nate).

## **Which has been the best or the worst convention you attended and why?**

*Figuring that the best and worst happenings are the most memorable (as well as providing the best object lessons), I asked about good and bad experiences. I asked for one or the other but usually got both.*

*It seems clear that a con is what you make of it. As Jon says, some people have a talent for enjoying a convention*



Left to right: Kelly Freas, Ann and Bob Passavoy, Tucker, Richard Tatge, Gordon Dickson, Loui Spooner, Jim Young and Ben Bova. Minicon 8.



*other people find miserable. However what a concom does with and at (and, perhaps, to) the convention makes differences that can be felt. Providing the right elements in the right setting is much more condusive to making your own fun.*

**DAVID:** Worst is a toss-up between Conspiracy (the 1987 worldcon in Brighton) and the Providence World Fantasy Convention. In both cases there was a problem of committee attitude, compounded by loudly attempting to deny that anything was wrong. In both cases there were hotel problems.

Best is harder. Cons I feel were bad usually had clearly-visible problems. Cons that I had a wonderful time at may have simply been during the right phase of the moon for me personally. For both technical and personal reasons, Noreascon 3 (1989 Worldcon in Boston) was one of the best cons I've ever been to.

**JON:** I'm not much of a one for favorites. There have been quite a few cons that really stand out, and I'm not at all sure that I could hang a hat on one of them and say "best". I seem to have a talent for having a good time at conventions that are a pain in the ass for other people, like the 1987 WorldCon in Brighton England, which was a tremendous shining wonder for me. Best? Hell, how do I compare my first 4th St against, say, the SFRA conference in 1970; or the con where Annie McCaffrey took half an hour out of her own party to talk to a couple of us about Keith Laumer; or having Ted Sturgeon teach me a whole lot about hugging in a very short time by using me as a demo subject at that one WesterCon; or sitting around yacking about 64 million things with Debbie Notkin, Mike O'Brien, Jim Young, Teresa Nielsen Hayden; or the expedition to Mataam Fez from the PenultiCon in Denver; or arriving at MidAmeriCon and having Fred show me the issue of Rune with the Jon Singer Fan Club ad in the back (gaaahh!!)... no, I can't make any one thing or con be "the best", it just don't work that way for me.

On the other side of things, I have had relationship problems at several cons, and that kind of ruins what would otherwise be a perfectly acceptable convention, so I'd hate to say that some particular con was the worst when there really wasn't anything wrong with the

con itself. (What I'm saying in many words is that this is not a question I'm good at answering.)

**SCOTT:** Maybe my best non-Minicon was MidAmeriCon at which I had so much fun being in charge of closed circuit TV, but perhaps it was the Icon at which I was having such a good time that I didn't notice that the Guests of Honor and all other banquet attendees were locked out of the function space and served a cold, undercooked chicken dinner in a dark and damp basement corridor with a wet rug.

The best Minicon might have been the one at which three attendees had a mock fight in their hotel room using (a year's collection!) 50 POUNDS of old fashioned computer card (waste) bits. On another occasion at that convention, I had to give a drunken mundane the impression I was willing to fight him outside to lure him out of the convention.



*Denny Lien and Jim Young*

**VICTOR:** This is a tough question, as I tend to forget the "worst" conventions I have been to, and it is hard to choose the best from all those I have attended. The best conventions tend to be ones where there is good conversation, particularly with interesting writers and fans, access to good restaurants, and enough attention paid to the little details that make a convention comfortable - things like a nice proportion between parties and programming, a jacuzzi that isn't always out of order, stuff like that.

**EMMA:** Best: Most 4th St. Fantasy Cons, World Fantasy Con in Ottawa, Rivercon ('91) in Louisville, Noreascon

3, Armadillocon 13, my second Minicon. Worst: World Fantasy Con in Providence, Windycon '89 and '90.

**GERI:** The worst convention I ever attended was the one Archon I went to in St. Louis. I had been to a couple Czarkons and knew a few people. I had never been to an Archon before and was looking forward to it. This was one of those conventions where the committee went to great lengths to get into the way of people having a good time. For example they had the consuite with about 24 signs telling you what NOT to do. Don't take food and drink into the consuite. Don't take it out. Don't sit on the stairs. Don't stand in the doorway. Another problem was that that convention was a great "pro-suck" convention. They awarded pros and other notables gold badges, and gold badges were license to break any rule. If you didn't have one, you were scum of the earth.

**WILL:** Best: 4th Street Fantasy, because it's small and focused on written fantasy and science fiction. There are too many worst to list.

**KEN:** It was probably the same convention, Westercon 1971, Santa Barbara. I learned to make my own fun.

**CHUCK:** Torcon II - the worldcon in 1973. Bev [Elmshauser] and I threw the first Minneapolis in '73 post-bid bidding party. I got into lots of pro-parties, the con was well run and I was not a member of the committee.

**JEFF:** The best one was the first World

Fantasy in New York City in 1975. They didn't know what they were yet — this was a refreshing change from the usual 1970s regional conventions. They hadn't turned into the bunch of nonsense the World Fantasy is these days. In the beginning there was no costumes, it was semi-professional yet still fannish, they made up most of it as they went along, but it was an attempt to return to a large, literary-based convention.

**FRED:** There have been some uncomfortable conventions over the years. Minicon 3 wasn't too wonderful. That was the year we were going to demonstrate our expertise for running a worldcon. We were still actually bidding for 1973, and everything sorta went wrong.

Bill Colsher and I went to (I believe) a ConFusion. It was certainly in that dismal Plymouth Hilton where all the conventions seem to be these days in the Detroit area. It is hard to have a good convention there. The coffee shop closes at noon or one or something and gets surly at about 8:30 in the morning. You don't have much choice either, there being no restaurant within miles of the place.

There have been a lot of good conventions. Susan and I were just down at Kubla Khan in Nashville and that was big fun. I have no idea whether the convention was any good or whether anyone else had fun, but we were having our little convention within a convention.

Steve Brust and Susan and I went down together. Steve and I and a woman from the Louisville area named Kiratash sat and made music. We had three nights of top-notch music which Steve and I agreed we'd never managed before, and that was huge fun. Kubla Khan is really Ken Moore's party: they do have a banquet and programming, but it's low key. They also have an art show that puts Minicon to shame. It's a very small, very relaxed convention that's been around for about 20 years.

Some of the Minicons have been pretty good in terms of meeting people and making music. If there weren't good conventions I would have quit going long before now.

#### **What is your favorite metaphor for conventions?**

*I wanted to know how everyone felt about conventions, how they affected them personally, so I asked about their favorite metaphors. The "party with my most intimate friends, some of whom I haven't met yet" theme was popular and nearly all of them emphasized that other people are very important to a good convention.*

*A long held virtue of fandom is the willingness to give newcomers the benefit of the doubt— "you're a fan, I'm a fan, we must have something in common!" Unfortunately the changing face of fandom means we all have less in*

*common as special interest groups proliferate. Thus some of the respondents look forward to renewing auld acquaintance more than building new ones.*

**DAVID:** A wonderful weekend of party for a few hundred of my closest, most intimate, friends.

**JON:** Metaphor, Gracie?

**SCOTT:** Literary, educational and scientific conference.

**VICTOR:** It's well-worn, but true for me: "a con is a party where there are lots of my best friends, some of which I haven't met yet."

**EMMA:** The Family Reunion (with all its attendant positive and negative connotations. Conventions like 4th St. Fantasy and better World Fantasy Cons don't fit the metaphor, however; they're a different activity entirely from large or small fannish conventions.)

**GERI:** A convention is a gathering of a comfortable number of my closest and most intimate friends, many of whom I haven't met yet.

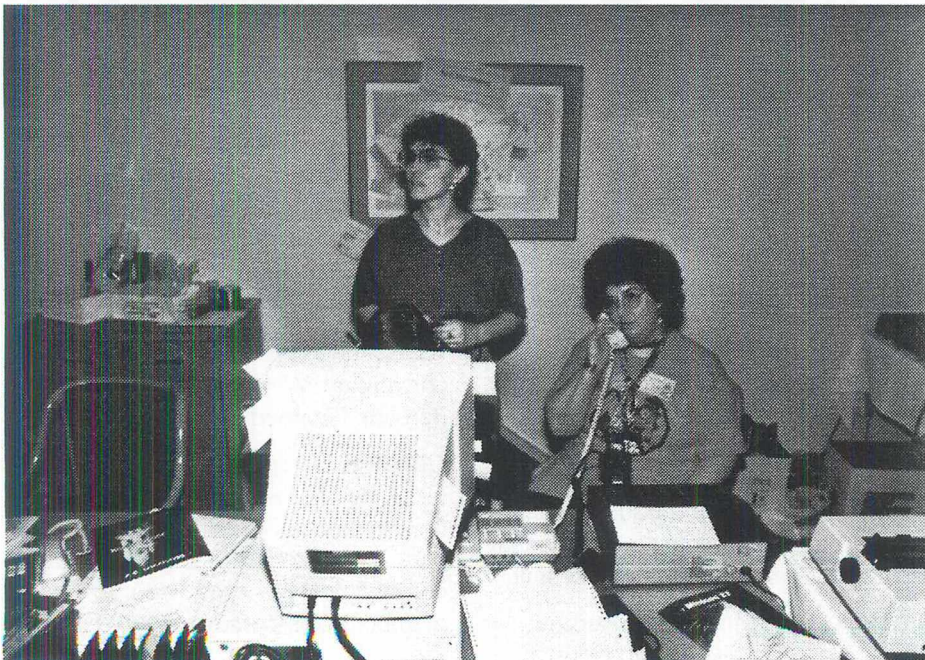
**WILL:** A zoo. In a good zoo, it feels like there's room for everyone, even if there isn't.

**KEN:** Socializing silly-putty draped over the jungle gym of official programming.

**CHUCK:** The Family Reunion.

**JEFF:** Cons are an ongoing social event interrupted by weeks and months of real life. You see someone you haven't seen for 12 months and you pick up where you left off. This is "convention Krishna consciousness." This includes the instantaneous ability to stay up all night even when you'd normally go to bed. So you walk into a convention and become a completely different person, but the same person you were at the last convention.

**FRED:** I used to say to mundanes, "I'm going off to party with a thousand of my most intimate friends this weekend." There are some conventions that is still true of, but they're much more rare because fandom is not as tight-knit nor as focused as it once was. Currently it is more like an erector set; a box with a bunch of pieces and what you make out of it is up to you. What



Cat Ocel and Sharon Kahn on the Minicon 27 Bridge



special interest groups such as Whovians and Trekkies, those who prefer other media to literature, "fringe fans" and even casual SF fans are all pulling apart as everyone pursues their own interest rather than a common interest in SF. This divisiveness is probably the principle reason more and more small, specialty conventions have come into existence. As Victor says, when a large convention tries to please everyone you get the lowest common denominator. This wastes resources while failing to please everyone.

**DAVID:** There seems to me to have been a gradual change in who attends SF conventions over the time I've been attending. It is no longer a proud and lonely thing to attend an SF convention; it's now a fun way to kill part of a boring weekend. This is no doubt a fine thing for many people, but it greatly dilutes the specialness of SF conventions for me.

**JON:** Another tricky item. I think that the trend toward 3000-person cons that try to cover all the bases is fine for some people, but not for me. The trend toward smaller, special-purpose cons, however, suits me quite well. Any trend away from written words is difficult for me. This includes media like TV and movies, games, and so on. One possible exception is music. I like filk, I like Minneapolis-style music, I like regular folk stuff.

On the other hand, I am becoming more and more seriously allergic to tobacco smoke, and because of that, I have to stay away from Minn-StF music sessions. This is seriously annoying. Lots of my friends are in there, and they are doing things I want to hear!

**SCOTT:** A trend I like is the expression of the technological curve, e.g. in the 1970s, fans brought the Control Data Corp. PLATO system for all to play with—in the 1990s, fans brought their Cray system for all to play with.

Some trends I don't like are: the move away from SF literature as evidenced by the (admittedly beautiful and interesting) non-book items which seem to crowd books out of the huckster room, that the average attendee seems to lack initiative (intelligence?) to help make Minicon a better convention, and all those old writers are dying.



Lynette Parks and Bill Bowers at MidwestCon, 1976

**VICTOR:** I am most concerned about the tendency to for conventions to try and do everything for everybody. They can't - when they try, we get McDonald-Con, and the convention will look like a lot of others. Cons are distinctive and stand out from the pack when they have clear differences from others; one reason why I like to go to Wiscon.

**EMMA:** Fandom may be getting less tolerant of its own diversity. Fans with special interests are increasingly hostile toward other special interests, and lots of fans are hostile toward younger ones, especially those who dress funny, have weird hair, and listen to annoying music. We are becoming our parents. This Must Stop.

**GERI:** One of the things that has annoyed me over the years, particularly with Minicon, is that we are very good at not listening to what we say. The thing that led me to publish *Dare to be Stupid*, was our picking lots and lots of local guests, year after year. Each time, immediately after the selection there was lots of angst, "Oh my ghod we did it again!" and then the next year, turning around and doing it yet again! We aren't listening to ourselves. I've seen us do similar things over size. One of the things we've done is say "Anything we come up with will be worse than the problem, so let's just deal with being a really big convention. Not that that's what we want to be, but we don't really have any choice." I totally disagree. I think we have choices and we can

make it be what we want it to be. Collectively, and I want to point out that I don't differentiate much between committee and attendees, we DO have the ability to make differences in the convention. It won't always be easy, but it can be done.

A "trend" I am rather concerned about is how for two years running, Minicon has made what I will call "a stupid committee decision." Minicon 27 made a policy about name badges, with the best of intentions and reasonably communicated, that exploded in our faces. I hope this can be avoided next year or people will start to feel, "Oh, what's it gonna be this year?" If you set up the expectation, the people will cause a problem even if the committee doesn't.

I have always felt individuals can have a positive influence on a convention. This is one of the things I like about fandom. Several years ago, I started emptying ash trays in the smoking consuite and did some bheer fairying for a time. By demonstration I showed others that you could do something useful and still have fun. Now I have fun being up in the consuite and watching other people walking around, emptying ashtrays and helping out. I'm not saying they got this from me, they didn't, but they are perpetuating the behavior to make it nicer for other people.

**WILL:** No.

**KEN:** Some types of convention have become commercialized, done for profit

as a business. The owners of such conventions have sometimes considered not-for-profit conventions as "unfair competition," and sought legal remedy. I don't like this.

Books have become a small part of the core of conventions—this does reflect the interests of the con attendees, but still seems odd.

Since the 70's conventions have become larger in membership and there are more of them (and more flavors of convention!) There also are more obviously conventions tucked inside conventions. Also, tiny, specialized conventions! I don't like or dislike it, but it's a major trend. The sizes of the cons aren't that much larger since the mid-80's, but the number still seems like it's increasing.

**CHUCK:** Some trends I dislike are: 1) Incestuousness—making local fans GOH's; 2) Increasing size; 3) Large numbers of non-fans or fringe-fans — see answer to #3 above; 4) Lack of books and old mags in the huckster room (they used to dominate).

**JEFF:** I dislike disruptive fringe fans. There's always been some of them around, kids who were fringe-comic fans or something. This goes all the way back to the fifties and sixties and they've always been a disruptive element. All of a sudden there's hundreds of them, thousands of them! Even more disturbing are the ones who are vandals. All of these people who have no ties to what I think of as "our fandom". In fact I don't think they have any feeling for fandom at all. They hear Minicons a party and they come to it.

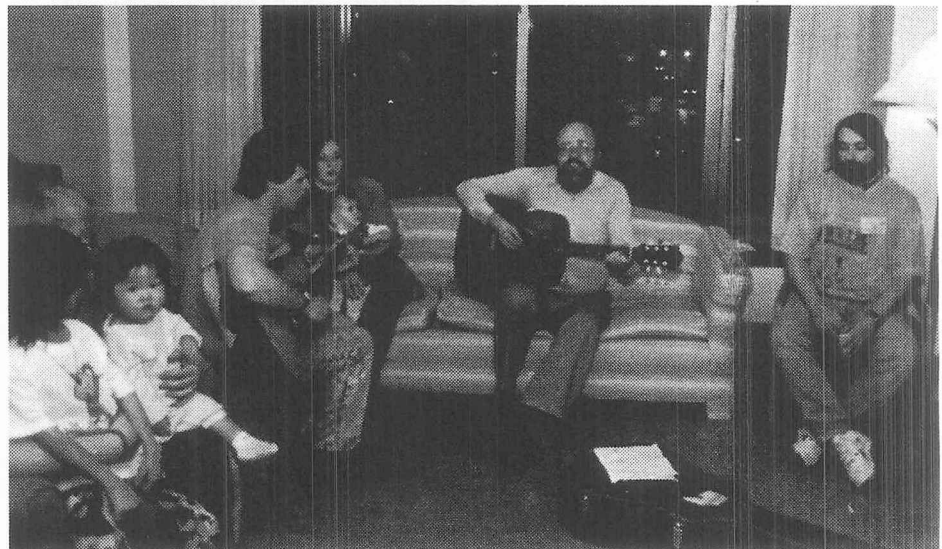
We saw this on the East Coast years ago and eliminated alcohol in the con suite back then, mainly for insurance and other reasons. It didn't cause a fuss, we didn't get secret societies of committee haters. It did reduce the problem. It made it tougher on underage drinkers and reduced the liabilities of the con committee.

I do like the growing professionalism of the concomm.

**FRED:** Things have gotten much worse. Size in and of itself isn't a problem. I went to a Discon with about 3500 people. I walked into a crowded lobby and my first reaction was "Oh no,

a crowd!" Then I realized I knew three-fourths of the people! And everyone at the convention was a fan! So size isn't a problem. The problem is diffusion and lack of unity. I wouldn't mind 2000 people at Minicon if they were (in my opinion) the right people. People I want to hang out with. But a lot of the out-of-town folks have quit coming because they don't like it anymore and a lot of the locals I don't really have any interest in. They have a right to come and do something, but if their only interest in science fiction is Dr. Who, I kind of wonder why they're at Minicon.

The floundering fathers [of Minn-Stf] were Ken Fletcher, Jim Young, Frank Stodolka, Nate Bucklin and myself. You'll notice that five out of five on that list are male. One of the trends I enjoy is that there are more women around now.



*The "non-smoking" music party — Minicon 27*

#### **How many attendees is an optimum number for conventions?**

*This question was not phrased very well, but the respondents answered what I really wanted to ask: Do you prefer large or small conventions? In essence, most said both—depending on the focus of the con. The answers seem to hint at the existence of some critical mass where a con seems unable to keep its focus and becomes instead, a large gathering of people, some of whom are interesting. A couple respondents said size was irrelevant—it's the quality that counts.*

*According to the philosophies expressed in these answers, Minicon is not at a good size for its function. The Minicons of a decade ago seem to be good*

*examples of prime a Minicon. Later in the answers, Minicons lack of focus is discussed. If present-day Minicon can get back that focus, then perhaps the size differences can be overcome.*

**DAVID:** Depends on the kind of convention. I've liked 200-person conventions, I've liked 6000-person conventions. Actually, with the exception of World Fantasy Convention (a special case for lots of reasons already) I find the intermediate size cons, 750-1500, to be not as interesting as either smaller or larger conventions.

In general I seem to prefer attending small conventions, and working on large ones.

**JON:** What kind of conventions are we talking about? The optimum for a con like 4th Street is probably 250. The

optimum for something like MiniCon is probably more like 1250. Well, maybe 650 if you really wanna be harsh about it. The optimum for a WorldCon is however many you can get, and you bloody well better have the facilities and committee to handle it!

**SCOTT:** 800 fans randomly assembled or 200 of my handpicked friends.

**VICTOR:** It depends on whether or not I'm working on the con committee. If I am a concomm member, I like a big convention - it makes the job of running the con more interesting. If I'm not a concomm member, then I like a small convention where I can get to know people. Cons like 4th Street Fantasy



Convention, Icon and Corflu are just about right - somewhere around 150-300 people.

**EMMA:** Depends on what kind of convention you want. I don't have a favorite size.

**GERI:** It depends on what you are trying to do at the convention. My favorite convention is a small convention. Corflu these days has maybe 80-100 people or so. That's a comfy gathering and I still get to meet new people there. I also like the energy and some of the things that can happen at a medium size convention. For me, the ideal Minicon would be 750-1500 people.

**WILL:** It's not how big it is, it's how well run it is.

**KEN:** 60 for interaction/socializing around a special interest. 300 for one track of formal programming, and other "traditional" con greeblies—including some clout with the hotel. A con committee! 1000 is critical mass for a classic-style SF con—allowing some money security and an imported guest or three. Even more clout with the hotel (or hotels), two tracks of programming (oooh! aaah!) Con subcommittees!

**CHUCK:** 200?

**JEFF:** What sort of convention? A small convention, like a Corflu or a relaxacon, maybe 150 to 300 people. Then there are large regionals like those



Gay Haldeman and Mike Glicksohn

up in Winnipeg, maybe 600 to 1500 people wouldn't be too bad of a convention. Then there are really big regionals like Boskone, Westercon and Minicon where you might as well give up. You can't limit it, so you may as well aim for 4000—pack'em in, collect the money. I think it's too late to try and change Minicon back into a smaller regional. Now we have 4th Street and Reinconation which are less embedded in the framework of the fringe fans showing up. They haven't found the other conventions yet, maybe they won't find them.

**FRED:** It depends on the facilities and what they can handle, it depends on what the committee can handle, who the people are and what the intent of the convention is. I've been to perfectly good and awful conventions at both ends of the spectrum. It isn't numbers, it's preparation, facilities and who those people are.

**What is the minimum time you would want to see spent in planning a convention of such a size?**

*This question was a poor one and Victor said what was probably on my mind when I dreamed it up. It is clear that numbers make little difference if you have inexperienced people. The more capable the concon (and the more people on it who are capable) the less intensive planning is required.*

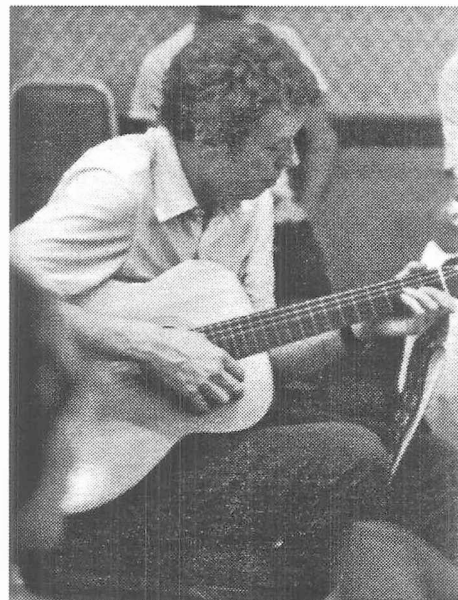
**DAVID:** Man-hours, or elapsed? A 200-person convention should be doable in about 6 months, though more time is better. For any size convention, a year lead-time gives you *much* better chances of getting the guests you want, and may be relevant to getting the right members also.

**JON:** Impossible for me to say, partly because it depends on which type of con is under discussion, and partly because I don't know. I have been a GoH or Toaster at several cons, but I've only participated in planning one or two, and that was a long time ago. Have you asked Ben Yalow about this?

**SCOTT:** Three months for the 800 random fans or two weeks for my handpicked 200.

**VICTOR:** Well, since this is obviously a trick question about how much time

we need to plan Minicon, I think that Minicon needs about 2 years to go from deadstart to holding the damn thing. One way to gauge this is to look at how long the planning cycle was for Worldcons when they were the size Minicon is now; about two years.



Gordy Dickson filking

**EMMA:** As much as it takes. I've never heard of a formula, say, number of planning hours per thousand attendees. An experienced committee can plan a larger convention in less time than an inexperienced one.

**GERI:** For an established convention (like Minicon) and for all the pre-con planning, 15 months is nice in that you can let people know "Yeah, we're coming back" and have your guests selected. Of course the intensity of this planning has some lulls and some hotspots. Timeline is affected by market realities too. Hotels get booked further in advance. Guests need more time too, many have schedules filled for over a year in advance.

**WILL:** What's necessary.

**KEN:** For 60 people, one year. For 300 people, two years hotel negotiation, one and a half years promotion, for an executive committee, plus six months intensive organization with a general concon. For a 1000+ convention, one year of intensive organization (monthly meetings) would be best.

**CHUCK:** Depends on the organization. Planning of early

Minicons sometimes started only 7-9 months before the con (and the committee numbered less than 12).

**JEFF:** A small convention doesn't take a lot of planning other than getting the hotel set up and the information out to the attendees. A large regional can take a year or more to plan it and get some things in place like guests of honor. Worldcons take two or three years to plan. Minicon is a year to year thing with the infrastructure well in place and seems to be doing well in a years time.

**FRED:** The optimum time for planning is the amount of time you need to get it right, whatever that may be.

way, no "market-driven" company has ever been an industry leader.

Committee vote isn't too bad, if "committee" is defined meaningfully, but it tends to lead to blandly mediocre results.

4th Street Fantasy Convention guest selection has been actively fun; whoever is at the meeting that night sits around and kicks ideas back and forth until we're happy with something. This works because it's a small convention with a clearly-delineated purpose, and a small committee which is not at war with itself.

The most common method seems to be to let the chairman select them, which is

convention is organized. A club-run con can ask for a vote from the membership. A con run by a free-standing committee (including Worldcon) can select guests by committee votes, or by consensus among the committee members. Or select 'em by fiat of the con chair. It also depends on why the convention invites guests. Are they there to be honored? Are they an attraction to draw interest and increase membership? Or both?

**GERI:** Consensus!

**WILL:** What works.

**KEN:** Random lot. Or open selection separate from organization meetings.

**CHUCK:** Consensus.

**JEFF:** The Corflu method—pulling a name out of a hat with all the members names in it Saturday night. He or she then becomes the Guest of Honor. That leaves you Sunday to write your speech.

**FRED:** My very favorite method is someone coming to me and asking who the guests should be. The guests should have merit in the area they are being chosen for. You don't want an author guest who can't write his way out of a pay toilet. You don't need the greatest author since sliced bread (depending on how you feel about sliced bread) but the author should have demonstrable merit. It's also nice if they are charming, interesting people to meet. A fan guest ought to have done something worthwhile in fandom, as well as be interesting, neat and available.

[Susan Levy Haskell] I want to add that it can be tiresome having a guest on the basis that sixteen other conventions are featuring him as well.

**How much input from persons not involved in running the convention do you think is optimum?**

*Another murky question. This arises primarily from the debates over the Minicon 27 "closed committee" structure where some people were unhappy with the available channels for input on Minicon. What I should have asked was: What sort of person makes a good concomm member? Everyone made it clear that the value of someone's ideas or opinions had no connection with their relationship to the convention. Jeff points out how some people work very hard on*



*The Minneapolis in '73 suite — Minicon 27*

**What is your favorite method of selecting Guests of Honor?**

*It seems guest selection is something of an art. My own impression was most guests are selected by some form of ballot so all those with an interest had some chance of getting their favorite person selected. Emma points out that the intent of the concomm will often dictate the methods. Several of the others prefer consensus—presumably of the membership. Fred makes a good point about not overlooking the quality of the guests.*

**DAVID:** My least-favorite is popular vote. Choice of guests is one clear way to show people what sort of convention you're trying to have, and giving that control away is a bad mistake. Or, to put it another

as good as anything. If you've got a stupid chairman you're in such bad trouble already that it doesn't much matter what guests you select.

**JON:** You know, I've never thought about this. What methods exist?

**SCOTT:** Convention committee picking from the elderly, unwell or distant professionals who would otherwise be unavailable in Minneapolis.

**VICTOR:** If I don't get to do it myself (i.e. as Con Chair), I prefer letting the people who are in major positions of responsibility in the con comm decide. It is one of the few perks that people get for working on the con comm, and we should recognize that.

**EMMA:** Depends on how the

the convention, throwing a room party say, yet have very little feedback with the convention. It is important for a concomm to provide feedback channels and to make it reasonably clear what they are. It is equally important for those who feel they something to contribute to find out for themselves how to use them rather than wait for the concomm to come to them.

**DAVID:** Depends on the person. In general, the usefulness of "input" from somebody has nothing to do with his connection with the convention.

**JON:** Depends on who they are. If they are people like Ben Yalow and Tom Whitmore and Chrissy Benders, I'll take all I can get. If they are people who don't have experience but are likely to attend and may work even if they aren't committee, I want to hear the ideas they may have. There are other kinds of people who won't get as much of my time.

**SCOTT:** Input from uninvolved fans:  $\pi\%$ . Input from uninvolved pros:  $e\%$ .

**VICTOR:** Depends on how much I have to listen to 'em. Seriously, the answer to this question isn't any quantitative amount - this many reams of commentary, that many open forums - it is qualitative in nature. One of the best resources con committees have are other con committees who have tried things out, and are willing to share their pearls of wisdom. Aside from those folks, getting input from pros is vital, writers, artists, you name it. And fans play a big role in this as well, but the bottom line is that it is the people who work on the con who should get the final say on how things are run.

**EMMA:** Again, it depends on the convention organization. If it's a club-sponsored con, it should represent in some measure the interests and strengths of the club. If not, the committee should still take into account the needs and enthusiasms of the people they hope will attend. The committee should always accept input from people who didn't help run the con once it's over, since that's the only way the committee can find out if there were problems or successes at the user level.

**GERI:** I think it's vitally important that people feel there is an avenue to express their opinion that does actually get seen by the committee. One way people



Left to right: Dave van Ronk, Art Widner, Heather Wood and John (Mike) Ford

have provided this in my experience is to write convention reports in fanzines and then send a copy to the committee. I don't think conventions require open committees to have input. Minn-stf is having troubles now because it is changing from a time when everything was very open. I was not at all disturbed by the closed committee meetings from last year. I didn't think it affected my ability to write a letter or call a committee person on the phone and say "Hey, listen to me!" It did mean the committee people didn't have to sit through endless meetings while everyone expressed their opinion.

**WILL:** What's good.

**KEN:** This is entirely dependent on the philosophy of those politically running the convention. Who is the convention done for? "Consumers?" Members of the convention? The convention committee? Those directly or indirectly making money from the con? Entertainment industry professionals?

**CHUCK:** Depends on the quality of the input.

**JEFF:** Anyone with a paid membership should have a method of feedback to the committee about the convention. This can be done with something as simple as a suggestion box, but in no way should they be prevented from having their say. It is their convention, they did pay money to come to it. Not everyone who attends should have to volunteer. It's nice when they do, but not necessary.

Some people work very hard but are not considered that way by everyone. There

are those who work very hard to set up a nice party where people can come and have a good time, which is important to the convention but not usually recognized by the committee.

**FRED:** Every decision Minicon makes should be cleared with me, but other than that I don't think there should be any input from anybody else. More to the point, MinnStf has never been a democracy. It is foolish to try to run it that way and especially stupid to try to run it as a consensus democracy. One of the reasons we created the Board was to get rid of those long stupid business meetings.

Peoples say in Minicon should be related to their position on the committee. The chairman has more to say about it than a gopher. There is a hierarchy there, and it is important to pay attention to that hierarchy. It doesn't hurt if people get advised opinions from various old hands, and that's really what I was alluding to when I said everything should be cleared with me. No, I don't have all the answers, but tradition should be paid attention to, and certain of the old time people around here who know how things are should perhaps be listened to from time to time, but it shouldn't be a free-for-all.

People around here don't remember that when Minicon started it was Jim Young's baby, and he was the chairman, period, and that's how most conventions are run. We eventually evolved the Executive committee because there were too many talented people for there to be positions for everybody, and in order to give everybody an opportunity to work in

some capacity as we were expanding things at that time.

The problem with an exec is that there is no distinct place where the buck stops. I like David's approach that the buck stops with him, but he doesn't have to make piddly decisions. He wanted to pass authority down as far as possible, and I think that's the approach we ought to be taking.

**How do you rate Minicon in comparison with other conventions you've attended?**

*This question is a little vague but deliberately so. If you had to reduce all the many parts of a convention down to one overall feeling, how would that feeling compare?*

**DAVID:** A good number of the best conventions I've been to have been Minicons. 4th Street and World Fantasy are the other two that I find fairly consistently good. Others seem much more variable.

**JON:** Quite good, actually. Even despite aforementioned problems, several of which occurred at MiniCons, I have had excellent times, and I tend to commend MiniCon to people.

**SCOTT:** Better than any except worldcons.

**VICTOR:** BIG. It is unfair to compare Minicon to other conventions, because it has grown to something bigger than just a major regional. It is the next biggest thing to a NASFiC or a Worldcon that we've got, so I think we end up with more character and better organization than most of the Worldcons that have happened recently, save Noreascon Three.

**EMMA:** Very good—but it's hard to be objective about it. Minicon is too



David Emerson and Nate Bucklin — Minicon 3

familiar, and too dependably populated with people I know and like, to be compared rationally with other cons.

**GERI:** Minicon used to be the best, mostly because it did a such a good job embodying crazy Minneapolis fandom and it had a good effect on fandom as a whole. Minicon for me these days, is better run than most and a comfortable place to go get lost in the crowd. It is still a good place for people to make a good time, but it doesn't have the feeling of cohesiveness for me that I have found in other conventions of all sizes.

**WILL:** High.

**KEN:** I don't feel qualified to answer—I've not been to enough large regional cons or worldcons recently.

**CHUCK:** Well organized, but low in creativity and quality of programming (the last one was an exception).

**JEFF:** I've been to practically every Philcon, Lunacon, Balticon and Discon since 1971. I've been to the last three Minicons and they are as good as good

examples of the previously listed conventions. So I think Minicons rate with the finest regional conventions in the country.

Something can make a convention bad for you without making it a bad convention. If a snowstorm causes your car to break down, you might spend the rest of your convention worrying about how you're going to get home. The extra stress can make it a bad convention.

**FRED:** There's a lot to be said for Minicon: there's still a lot of specialness that can happen. In some ways, though, it's back to the Erector set: Minicon is the garganzo, top of the line, 50 gazillion parts Erector set, and as far as I'm concerned, most of those parts aren't necessary, so I go and have my convention within a convention. I'd like to have an opportunity to mingle with a greater percentage of the people who are there, but it's not going to happen. It's a pretty fair convention, it's smoothly run, I don't think any big disasters happen. There's plenty of opportunity to have a good time, but there isn't the opportunity for the feeling of intimacy that you can get at some other conventions, and the feeling that we're all us here. It is nice to walk into the public area of a convention and know that everyone there is more or less of like mind, rather than being different segments of different fragments of different subfandoms.

Minicons ain't bad. They've got a lot of good momentum, and lots of good possibilities. They are a little more diffuse than I would like them; they're



Don Blyly, Mark Riley and Larry Propp — Minicon 3



not as intense in some good ways but then they're not as intense in some bad ways. They're a cut above mediocre; they used to be pretty wonderful. It's always possible to have a good time at Minicon, but it's not always easy.

**What do you think is the most significant change Minicon has ever made? (This need not have been a permanent change)**

*While most people pointed to the Minicon 26 alcohol policy or the changing committee structure or the con location, Fred feels it all stems from the evolution of Minn-Stf. Look at the changing face of Minn-Stf and see the turmoil in Minicon.*



Hank and Leslie Luttrell — Autoclave

**DAVID:** The transition from the formerly-happy anarchy to the department-and-exec system.

**JON:** Yeepers, I don't know! Growing a mustache? Uhhh, Blue! Uhhh, there is no rule six! Uhhh, crottled greeps, that's it.

**SCOTT:** Registering more than 1,000 attendees.

**VICTOR:** Ooog - a tough question. I think the biggest change was in getting rid of the bheer for a year. Not so much for the internal strife that decision caused, but the "clearing the air" effect it had on the attendee population. We lost a significant number of people who were there for the bheer and not the con - and that is all to the good, I would say.

**EMMA:** Hmm. Having to leave the

Minneapolis downtown Radisson wins by a nose over not serving beer in the con suite, in the most significant change sweepstakes.

**GERI:** The first 19 Minicons were held in nine different hotels and facilities. No run lasted more than three years here and there. We've now been at the Radisson South since 1985 which makes it eight years straight at the same hotel. This has affected the tone and expectations of the convention a lot. In some ways this has made it a lot easier for the committee to function because there is this solid known factor and it's a good relationship. I sometimes wonder if this doesn't tend to stagnate things

since we don't have to figure out different things or how to work with different spaces.

**WILL:** No alcohol in the con suite. I liked it.

**KEN:** Having year-round monthly convention meetings.

**CHUCK:** Bringing in non-fannish (professional) entertainment.

**JEFF:** Changing from the open committee system with public voting by large numbers of members on issues such as guests of honor to a closed, secretive committee has been quite significant.

**FRED:** Well, the alcohol policy (from Minicon 26) sure shook a few things up. The Exec was a change, but then when Jim quit running it by himself and co-

chaired with Don that was a change. There's nothing that at the time shatteringly changed things forever, or changed things tremendously and then they changed back. It has just been various kinds of evolution. I don't think you could point to any one thing; rather it has been the influx of people, and the influx of diverse people with different needs and interests.

**What do you think is the most significant challenge Minicon has yet to face?**

*The chief problem seems to be how we are going to replace ourselves without alienating too many newcomers in the process. SF is the literature of change and so we must change, gracefully if possible. Instead of searching for a vision we once had, perhaps we should forge a new one that can accomodate the fractions fandom has split into.*

**DAVID:** We haven't resolved the conflicts that nearly tore the committee apart over the previous five years. For Minicon 27 and 28 this was largely held to the bidding phase (apart from some sniping and political posturing from some quarters), but I don't think anybody intends that to be the permanent process.

**JON:** Probably a good question, but I have no idea about the answer(s). The most significant challenge I've watched MiniCon face to date has been committee burnout. Something is not right somewhere, and I'm probably not close enough to it to put a finger on it, but I can suggest that interpersonal communications skills are almost certainly involved, and it might be good for everyone to learn more of same...

Running a con is a relatively high-stress business, whether it seems so or not. I've heard some of the younger set (not someone I actually know, by the way) claim that they did fine with no sleep for an entire weekend, but my own personal experience is that *judgement is the first thing to go*. I have had my own incompetence under sleep-deprivation forcibly demonstrated to me, and it ain't fun. I much prefer Chrissy Benders' WorldCon Rule, which is a *minimum two meals and five hours of sleep per 24-hour period*.

**SCOTT:** The challenge of avoiding the use of Minicon as a worldcon springboard.

**VICTOR:** That's pretty easy: what do we do when we outgrow the Radisson South? I would dread being on the con committee the year any switchover takes place.

**EMMA:** Finding a way to attract and incorporate the next generation of fandom, without insisting that it become exactly like the last generation; and striking a balance between representing Minn-stf and offering attendees from outside the club a varied and satisfying convention.

**GERI:** We have not yet faced deciding what it is we want Minicon to be. I think we keep tripping over things and having minor agonies because we have lost whatever nebulous, cohesive vision there once was. You used to be able to count on the departments keeping the flavor of Minicon because they were all part of the same group. We have successfully inculcated a lot of people, but we don't know how it is that we do it and in the process of stumbling along, we've alienated a lot of people too.

**WILL:** The same old one: what to be.

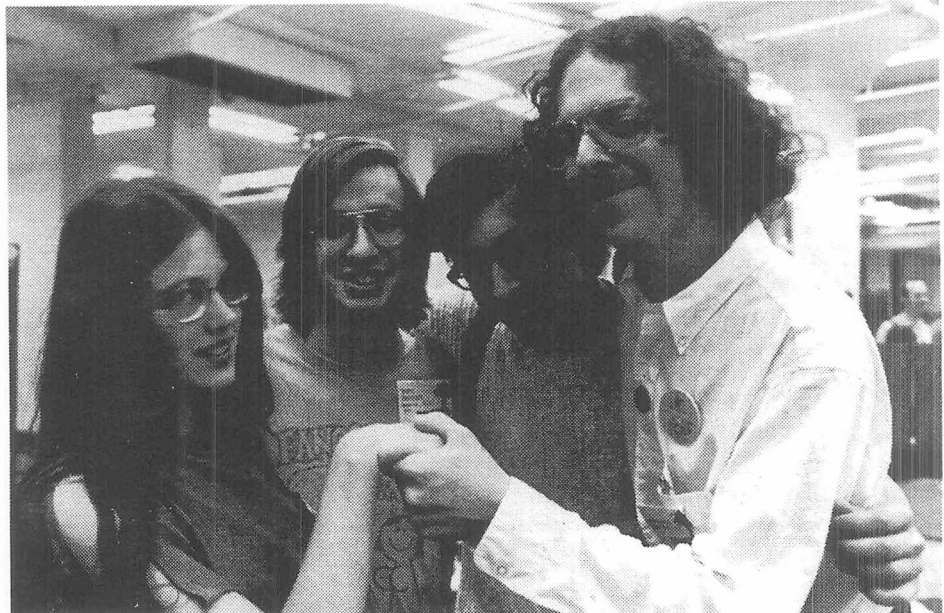
**KEN:** Dealing with becoming a regional arts festival and tourist draw. The fantasy flea market in the Minneapolis convention center will require an extra effort in administration in and of itself.

**CHUCK:** Keeping the size down.

**JEFF:** Continuing burnout of behind-the-scenes workhorses, with them then being replaced by less-responsible, less fannish, less-club-oriented attendees who inherit the convention by default.

**FRED:** How to get rid of the people who are coming and getting in the way of other people having a good time. One of the things that I continually harp on, so as to not be misunderstood, is that there are a lot of people whose major preoccupation in fandom is gaming, but who are in fact fans, and there are a lot of comics fans who are in fact fans. I'm not saying that people shouldn't have interests in other areas, I'm saying if they don't have that fundamental interest in the literature of science fiction, what are they doing at this convention?

There is absolutely nothing wrong with somebody whose total be all and end



*Bridgette Dziedzic, Barry Smotroff, Jeff (Jan) Applebaum and Jon Singer — Discon II, 1974 Worldcon*

all in anything resembling science fiction is a love of *Star Trek* and *Star Trek the Next Generation*. If that's what winds their watch, and they want to get together with other people and talk in stardates, that's absolutely wonderful, but if they don't have an interest in the literature of science fiction other than the *Star Trek* books, one wonders why they are at Minicon. God bless 'em and let them go some place to be with other people of like interests so that they're not making it hard for me to find people who have interests that are like unto mine. Some of them are pretty nifty people; just because I'm not interested in most media science fiction doesn't mean there's something wrong with people who get their jollies that way. It's just that I don't think we have a whole lot in common to sit and talk about, and I'd rather not have to fight through those people to find the people I do have something to talk about with at a convention. It's not any kind of personal attack, or saying they are less than I am; they're different than I am, that's all. So the indirect challenge is to get these other groups of people to organize themselves, and to encourage more of us to come back to Minicon, because there are an awful lot of us who have quit coming.

**Should MN-STF ever mount another worldcon bid?**

*You can't ask this many questions without at least one silly one.*

**DAVID:** Sure, when there are enough people with department head and higher experience on Minicon *AND OTHER CONVENTIONS* who want to do so, and at the same time 20 or so people with less experience are interested enough to be willing to go to two additional out-of-town conventions a year for 3 years on their own money to promote the bid.

I don't know if I'd be interested, but if there were that sort of interest I could happily be a non-player, without worrying (more than usual) about whether they could pull it off.

**JON:** Yes, absolutely. But this time make sure nobody gets hurt quite as badly as certain people did last time. (Hah! Not an easy thing. Friends don't let friends run WorldCons.)

**SCOTT:** Not during my lifetime—the continuing “Minneapolis in '73” worldcon bid is enough for me.

**VICTOR:** No, and that's final. (well, maybe for 2001...)

**EMMA:** No.

**GERI:** Absolutely not! Friends don't let friends run worldcons.

**WILL:** No.

**KEN:** Assuming there will still be world SF cons, Minneapolis is bidding for 2073, whether it wants to or not. With luck, St. Paul will escape.

Individuals may choose to mount a worldcon bid and convince MN-STF to support the bid (if they are politically skillful enough).

Enough people in the Twin Cities area have convention and administrative skills to assess the risks and benefits of running a worldcon bid.

**CHUCK:** No.

**JEFF:** Always, for 1973!

**FRED:** I think MinnStf should continue to bid for 1973, until we finally win that one. Then we can discuss other bids. More to the point, there is a singular reason why bidding for '73 is such a good idea: it gives us all the fun and pleasure of throwing bid parties and all the recognition and all the schmoozing, and avoids all the horseshit politics and the danger of ever actually winning a worldcon. It would be incredibly stupid to bid for a real worldcon. We've got our cake and we're eating it too, bidding for '73.

#### Additional comments

*Several people had other things to say that I thought were worth repeating.*

**DAVID:** A question you forgot to ask was: How many conventions can Minneapolis support each year?

I don't know the answer, but I think it's something we should think about a little. I get the distinct feeling that segments of the publishing industry feel torn between coming to 4th Street and Minicon. As a result we don't get as many at either one as we'd like. I think old-time fans with Minneapolis connections feel a conflict between Minicon and Reinconation, and again not all come to both.

What I'm afraid of is that once people start thinking seriously about *which* Minneapolis con to attend, they may start thinking about *whether*. I hope that this is not yet occurring.

**CHUCK:** The first cons came about because fanzine fans and letterhacks wanted to meet in person. For all the feuding in fandom, until the sixties or seventies, most of the people you would meet at Minicon and other regionals had a common background—SF books, SF mags, fanzines, local fanac. Minicon was a community event. Are members

of the fan community even in the majority of Minicon anymore? I see lots of Star Trek fans, Dr. Who fans, costume fans (not including 'dresses). Bidding parties, which used to be major events, are poorly attended. Guests of honor get little respect. Only about a hundred people stayed after opening ceremonies to hear Dave van Ronk [at Minicon 27], noted blues and folk singer, old fan and music GOH, make music.

I remember a Minicon at the old downtown Radisson when C.J. Cherryh was pro GOH. Avner the Eccentric was the principal entertainment at opening ceremonies.\* He ran overtime, making Cherryh wait in the wings, then the hall of people emptied out, leaving only about twenty fans to hear our pro GOH's speech. This is an honor? This is fannish?

I would like to see Minicon focus on fandom and literary SF. Let the Whovians, Trekkers and Trekkies find (or found) their own conventions. Old SF fans should not feel out of place at Minicon.

This is off the top of my head and not well organized, so it reads more dogmatic than I intend, but I think you get my drift—let's keep Minicon's focus on SF, fandom and science. The rest can go hang.

*\*This was before Shockwave.*

**FRED:** [While answering one of the questions, Fred and Susan started expounding on fandom and what has changed. I feel their comments are worth repeating here].

They're [the people who attend conventions] not what I used to call fans. All them have some sort of claim to something they themselves call fandom, but it isn't what I think of when I think of fans.

They are people who if they don't do fan publishing at least know it goes on, who actually read science fiction books from time to time, and may have other interests but have that core thing of reading science fiction and being

aware of some of the history and traditions of science fiction and fandom.

It is being interested in the history, the connections that is important. Nobody comes in knowing it all, but new fans then would listen to an in-joke and ask for an explanation while now, all too often it is "Hah, that's an in-reference! You're excluding me!"

Part of it used to be (and I think this is Reed Waller's theory), is back when we were kids, science fiction was bizarre and looked down upon. The people who read it tended to be loners, tended not to have many friends, tended to be very bookish and not very socialized or weird. Many had an early false maturity and when younger they would hang out with their parents adult friends and were thought to be very adult, but hadn't had much chance for peer socialization. When we discovered fandom, we thought "What an interesting place, I'd better figure out what's going on, what I'm supposed to do." Or you could dive in and get slapped. Either way you had a chance to get acculturated.

Now that science fiction (or things that pass as science fiction) aren't so weird and almost everyone has some exposure to it, there is a tendency for a person to get into fandom and say "This is a neat party!" and drag ten of their friends in. Now they can hang out with their friends, in their own group, and have no real need to find out what's going on or change their behavior since they are still in their own group. This isolation in addition their numbers effectively prevents any acclimation or acculturation from occurring.



Reed Waller and Cliff Simak — Minicon 3

# Minicon: The Year of Living Languorously

By K. J. Routliffe

So there I was, walking into the Hotel Fontainbleu, resplendent in crisp white business suit, valise (complete with notebook) by my side. No telling what I might need at my first science fiction convention....

Oops. Wrong story.

(For the record, though, within 24 hours of walking into Suncon, I made the successful mutation from science fiction reader to fan.)

Cut to quiet Chicago street, 15 years later. Jack and Bob and I are packing everything into Jack's Taurus SHO, and for the first time in half a decade or more, the lads are not doing the dance of the trunk stuffing obsessives. Everything fits. No one knows exactly how it happened. Suitcases, coolers, guitar, bags of unidentified things....we're READY. On, to Minnesota! I like you Minnesotans. After several years of enjoying your hospitality, I can say with conviction you're nice, friendly and civilized.

Notwithstanding, of course, sporadic feuds (or strong, STRONG disagreements), semi-annual communal or individual angst, and The Chart.

Gee, the long winters must make you guys real creative.

I stay away from those things (I think). I like everyone, whether or not they like each other at a particular moment. Heh. And if that's the worst I can say about you pathologically polite folks, I guess that's not bad. And the best I can say about you is that you are creatively bent, fannish, organized without being anal retentive, thoughtful without being pedantic, flexible without being chaotic....

Uh, yeah. Minicon. As we tooled north in the SHO, we were hardly out of Illinois when I saw a deer feeding by the side of the road.

I've never seen deer in the wild. This one was very close to the highway, but it seemed uninterested in the intrusive traffic. Perhaps half an hour later I saw a hawk in the air, barely visible in the



*Mhistrress Elise instructs fawning acolyte "Bhob" Berlein and oldphart wannabe "Fhred" Levy Haskell in a typical BNF ritual.*

failing light. An hour later I saw five more deer, standing still in the moonlight.

Just south of the Wisconsin-Minnesota border, I saw another deer, maybe two.

The night trips to Minicon are always a little surrealistic, marked at their end by the hilarity of sleep deprivation. This time, for me at least, it seemed even further removed from real life. Silent deer, silent hawk, quiet car moving beyond and below them...I wonder if they told me something?

We got into Minneapolis earlier than we normally do. We had time to go up to the con suite. Once we unpacked

(within the first five minutes of getting into our poolside cabana...some processes only improve with time) we wandered heavenward.

It wasn't particularly crowded where the music was; I was glad to sit and listen. I had a couple of beers, said hello to people. That's when I noticed it was hard for me to continue a conversation past the first few sentences. When I tried a few desultory harmonies with Bob, I discovered that I didn't really want to sing either. I bade my beloved goodnight.

Poor Bob. I do - usually - react more sociably than I did that first night. About



3:45 a.m. Friday I woke with a monumental headache, lively and malevolent. When it finally catapulted me from my bed about 9 a.m., I headed for breakfast in the Cafe Stuge, inhaled coffee (lots and lots and LOTS of coffee) and read the newspaper. I was ready to take on the con.

Individually.

Strange thing, that. Since coming to Chicago and getting back into fandom (poverty having earlier made me inadvertently gafiate) I had enjoyed it as a group activity with Bob, and our small circle of friends.

But years before I had been solitary, and for the first time in recent memory, I wanted to sample Minicon by myself.

Maybe it was a chemical imbalance.

Whatever. It was pleasurable. I wandered the art show - relatively high quality artwork with an admirable lack of fuzzy unicorns, and many pieces with an engaging sense of humor.

Over in the huckster room I wandered about looking for garish earrings (my personal weakness) and spied some books I wanted to buy.

Lots of books, in fact. That, too, was (I'm ashamed to say) unfamiliar. Over the years I've not had near as much time to read as I'd like. I'd fallen into the habit of using the Jack Targonski lending library and not buying on my own.

How refreshing to spend too much money on books!

We were to act as co-hosts to Jack's and Geri Sullivan's cognac tasting party that night. They needed us like fish need bicycles, for they are cosmic host material, but we were glad to help.

I believe the party was a great success, attracting some very fine folk after Dave Van Ronk's concert, even that gentleman himself. Again, however, after a couple of hours I found myself glad to get away from the crowd. By this time, Bob was looking at me funny.

Saturday was the one time I actually enjoyed singing, at Dave Clement's afternoon concert. He's wonderful to listen to, as are the people he surrounds himself with, although it felt odd to sit in a row facing a group lined up like

seminar attendees.

I ducked out early, to join Susan Levy Haskell in a Target run for stockings. (These things are important, aren't they, girls?)

That night there were several different music parties, and I was dead certain I was going to join Bob at Fred's and Susan's at the very least. Didn't happen.

After a brief, but enjoyable, stop at Mike and Linda MossLevin's room for their Reed Waller fund-raising effort, I went back to our room. I looked at the books I had bought and suddenly, the cabana porch beckoned. Those porches are wonderful: you can read, watch infinitely variegated fan life go by, and almost no one pays attention to you. I got my cigarettes out, settled in, and read until something like 2 a.m., then went to bed.

Do you detect a pattern? By this time, my long suffering husband had asked whether it was something he did, I'm sure Susan wondered why I seemed incapable of speech during our trip to Target, and others may have thought me curmudgeonly to forget promises to appear at their parties. In retrospect, I think I simply took advantage of something which Minicon has always offered me, of which I haven't always availed myself; the chance to wander alone in the fan world, without being required to actively take part. I began my fan life that way, and I think it's healthy to return to the practice every so often.

This year, I may have entered observer

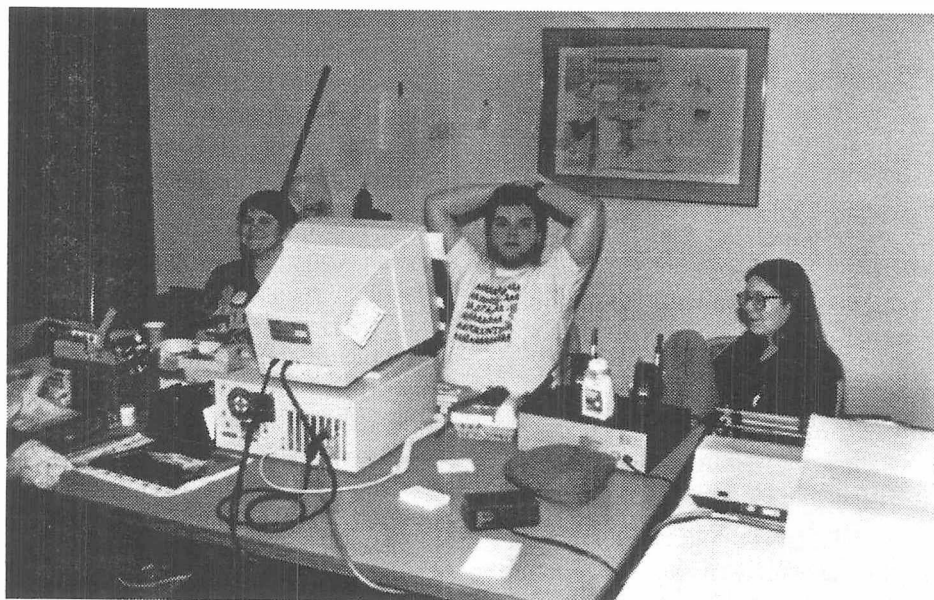
mode because I was more tired and burned out from job pressures than I knew. And the bemusement of my nearest and dearest was a negative side effect, albeit one that was short lived. But the end result - learning to love cons all over again, without the "hurry up, we've got places to go, let's get in gear, we've got people to meet" syndrome from which we all suffer occasionally - was much needed and appreciated.

Saturday night I realized that, as I looked out over the pool area from Mike and Linda's balcony. Christmas lights and banners festooned other balconies; colorfully dressed fen wandered below us; a group of enthusiastic drummers added audible evidence of the rhythm which always underscores Minicon.

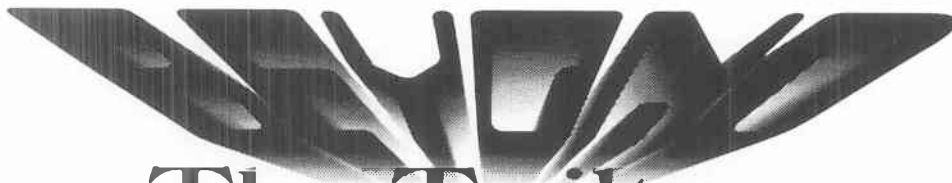
It was, I mentioned to Mike, a tiny village, set up by mutual consent, and full of the heart only a community of shared souls can create. Sure, we all had to pack up eventually, sure there were, undoubtedly, tears being shed somewhere within the Radisson, angst being spewed on some of the floors.

But the sight which greeted me from that balcony set my own soul at ease. By Monday, I was able to go over to the Sofitel for the traditional eat-till-you-bloat-laugh-like-a-fool-and-putbread noses-on-your-face mode. I was back among the sociable living.

And it was all thanks to you, you Minnesotans, you.



*Thomas Keeley commands the Minicon 27 Bridge*



# The Twiltone Event Horizon

by Jeff Schalles

Two *Rune*'s ago I told my co-editors that I wanted to have an editorial presence in every issue. Nobody squawked about that. Garth did, however, hold out that as Editor-In-Chief he wanted to have control over the letter column. Therefore, I need to apologize to Garth and to any readers who were confused because, as I was formatting the type for the letter column in *Rune* 82, I brazenly inserted a couple of brief comments of my own—something every typesetter has wanted to do at one time or another. Unfortunately, this eventually this leads to unemployment.

So I'll keep my comments to this page

Reminder to potential contributors: three months from now there will be another issue, the on-time though probably not under-budget September *Rune*. I am responsible for the material, and I want your contributions by the last week of August. You can get it to me on disk or by modem. Typewritten is just fine too. Your assignment is to write a humorous, compelling fannish personal essay.

Maybe I should talk for a bit on what we fannish types mean by this, and what we think we are accomplishing by writing in this form. To the wider fan audience, the few fanzines they see are filled with uneven reviews, amateur fiction, inconsistent art, and barely-edited letter columns. Not to mention spotty repro and fuzzy dot matrix type. Many fans think this stuff is just fine, read their issues avidly, vote for them in the Hugo's. They may wonder, though, just what fanzines like *Trapdoor* or *Mimosa* or *Idea* or *Spent Brass*, not available for money but instead for some mysterious thing called "the usual," are all about.

One of the great things about fandom is the infinite variety of interests we bring to our discussions. Science Fiction and

Fantasy literatures are our basic meeting point, our origin and our one true common ground. Everything else, everything, fanzines, apas, conventions, movies, comics, animation, music, costuming, gaming, stuffed dragon dolls, big-eyed acrylic on velvet paintings of Kirk, Spock and McCoy, follows after.

Once you get past your starry gosh-wow literary neohood and quit trying to find people to discuss SF with, you're home free. If you want to write for fanzines, and can expound knowledgeably and colorfully on a subject, no matter what it is, you can have an audience. The more components of the collective unconscious you manage to touch upon in your essays, the wider your audience will be. And that is what we all want and need, an audience. Because that means egoboo. You want that.

Humor helps. Pessimism and ill-will may annoy or distract your reader. Subtle irony, satire, a detached feel for enchantment, particularly in subtext or multi-level structures, shows sophistication. Linear pendentism, where the words continually stumble, where the reader needs to work against impediments to smooth motion, shows a lack of care or lack of interest in learning to write. But it is something you can learn, here at least.

Fannish writing gives you a solid feel for writing to an audience. Our audience is small enough that we can easily picture them sitting in their easy chairs by the fire, sipping a favorite drink, reading the small pile of fanzines that arrived in the mail that day. Sadly, year after year, even though there are more and more fans, there are fewer and fewer fanzines and fewer new fanzine fans. Which is sad, because fanzines were at the white hot core at

the founding of fandom. And some of us still think this is where the action is.

So. Some people do fanwriting solely for the joy of composing the personal essay. There is no pretense that they are or will someday be professional writers. This is to be encouraged: the polished personal essay is a dying lifeform, endangered in part by frenetic computer bulletin board use, part by life's general reality overload.

Others see themselves just the opposite, fledgling or seasoned pros demonstrating various levels of vanity and ability. But no matter what the motivation, personal enjoyment of the act or anticipation of the egoboo, odd things sometimes happen. In the midst of writing, or just before falling asleep, while walking in the woods or while driving down the highway, chance connections, bizarre illuminations, fanciful branchings drift like wisps of smoke from your seething subconscious. Elements given to you by your muse to incorporate into your piece or to save for another day. A transcendence, a bonus nugget your freshman comp teacher probably never warned you about.

So you write stuff down, in notebooks, on the backs of envelopes, on scraps of paper thrust into your pockets. Some really with it people dictate notes into little tape recorders or carry notebook computers around with them. But not all of us are equipped with fresh batteries for daily life in this bustling world.

But to get back to *Rune*. We now have four editors with four slightly different approaches. If one issue doesn't blow you away with its obvious awesomeness, wait a few months. Another one will come along. Stick around.

*Modern bizarre structures (science fiction, etc.) arise from language being dead, "different" themes give illusion of "new" life. Follow roughly outlines in outfanning movement over subject, as river rock, so mindflow over jewel-center need run your mind over it, once, arriving at pivot, where what was dim formed "beginning" becomes sharp-necessitation "ending" and language shortens in race to wire of time-race of work, following laws of Deep Form . . .*

— (Jack Kerouac)

# Fanzine Reviews

by Geri Sullivan

Who needs another fanzine review column? *Cube* just published the definitive survey of the best fanzines of 1991, written by non-other than fanwriter Hugo nominee Andy Hooper. *Astromancer Quarterly* launched a fanzine column by Leah Zeldes Smith. Avedon Carol writes fanzine reviews for *Science Fiction Chronicle*, and lest you think fanzine reviews are the domain of clubzines and semi-prozines, Barnaby Rapoport devotes 14 of the 24 pages in *Let's Fanac #3* to them.

But when the topic of fanzine reviews came up at a recent Rune editors' picnic (held in my backyard, so I got to sit in), I suddenly turned fierce, "please, oh please, let mmmeeee do the fanzine reviews." Tom readily agreed, perhaps out of a healthy respect for the shish kabob skewer I was waving about.

My outburst left me wondering about the importance of fanzine reviews, and, of more immediate importance, just what I wanted to say.

"Perhaps writing fanzine reviews will appease the guilt that's accumulated along with the stacks of fanzines waiting to be locced," I thought. "At least I can point *Rune* readers to some of the delights that await in the pages of fanzines other than the one they're

holding in their hands."

Robert Lichtman recently wrote, "If fanzines talk about what's in other fanzines, it gets that old sense of connectivity happening again. That's the next step in remaking fanzine fandom. The mostly lost tradition of fanzine reviews that are more than simple listings of titles, editors, availability and perhaps names of contributors (à la FOSFAX and too many others) is something long overdue for revival."

The revival seems to have already started, but Robert's comment got me to thinking about why I care about fanzines. Here are a few of the things in recent fanzines that turned me on and got me thinking. I hope they do the same for you.

Robert's mention of connectivity is a good place to start. From the fannish news and gossip that fills the pages of *File 770* to Carol Carr's, Robert Lichtman's, and Karen Haber Silverberg's accounts of the Oakland Fire in *Trap Door*, fanzines connect people and events in a very personal way. In *Ramblings IV*, Bruce Schneier shows me Southeast Asia in a way I'd never see it, even if I were to spend a month there myself. Besides being completely entranced by his smooth, comfortable way of writing about

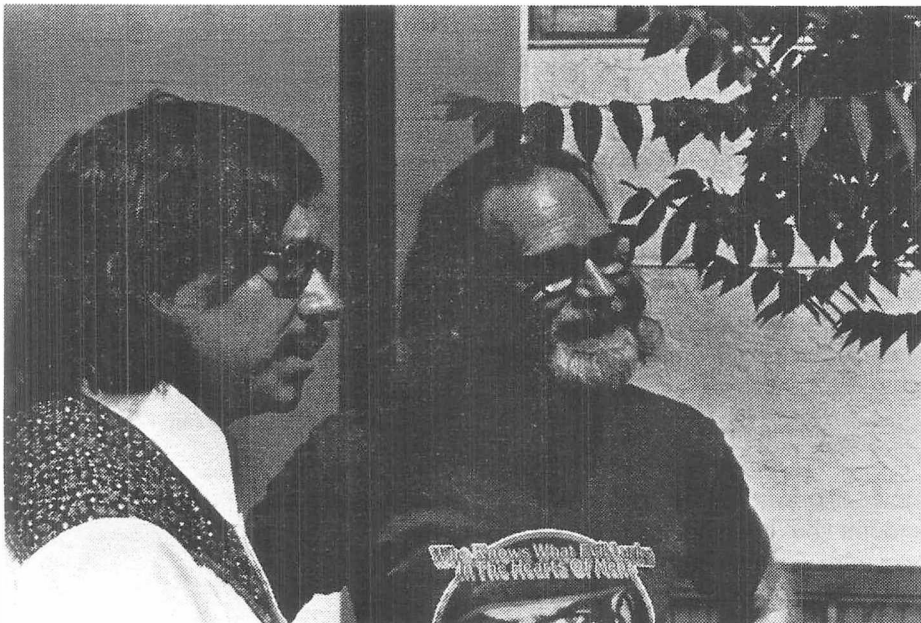
everything from currency to eating to helping the natives hustle other tourists, I got to learn more about Bruce in the bargain. He really gets into the experience, wherever and whatever it is.

The connections stretch through time and space. Just today I stumbled across a reprint from Chuck Harris' *Lonconfidential*, his report of the 1957 worldcon in London. In Chuck's words, I found a succinct example of what I think every sf convention should strive to achieve: "I know what Damon Knight meant when he referred to our conventions as a sort of 'love-feast.' No matter how disillusioned and cynical you get with fandom, once you have checked into the Con hotel, and gotten lost in the melee, all the resentment and feelings of ineffectuality vanish and are replaced by a sense of contentment and, more important, kinship.

"Here there are 268 people who share my viewpoint, who accepted me as one of themselves, and who were, in varying degrees maybe, pleased to see me. I FOUND MY SENSE OF WONDER. I discovered I was just a goshwow boy at heart, and I skittered about meeting Big Names, getting people to sign my programme booklet, talking myself hoarse, and, well, having myself a wonderful time."

Traditionally, fanzines served as the vehicle to form the bonds of kinship that tie fans together. They still form and strengthen those bonds today.

Another thing that turns me on about fanzines is how they enhance and promote understanding. Whether it's political opinion in *FTT*, Eric Mayer writing about the birth of his daughter and the death of John Lennon (reprinted in *Desert Island*), Dianna Wynne Jones telling of the differences in writing for children versus adults in *The Medusa*, or the pointed Rostler cartoons in *Fanthology 1988*, fanzines help me better understand the world around me. That could be a scary thought, since fanzines are not subject to the 'rules' or reporting standards of the mass media. But in fanzines it's very clear that events are seen through the human filter. I know I'm getting one person's view and



Ken Keller and Rusty Hevelin

understanding of things, but that only serves to make it more accessible. CNN reports flow through my consciousness, but the words and the experiences of a Croatian fan stick with me, months after I first read them: *"Things are going crazy and no one really knows what's up. I venture to think that truth does not exist any more, since all sides are manipulating it for their own benefit. Truth is nowadays a shy young lady who dances as the strings are pulled. There are no criteria you can use to form your own opinion. Everybody uses truth in his own way, to show that he is right. Newspapers and journalists that have tried to be objective were censored and fired. It's a media war as well as a civil war. But I can tell you one thing for sure — I took one of the last trains from the bloody battlefields."* The short article in FTT #12 closes by saying, *"I suppose it sounds very perplexing. Must be, because we're talking of political events that have their roots in 1918, and my story has barely scratched the surface of the subject. Yet it's obvious that hundreds of people who formerly lived in certain critical zones of the Republic are abandoning their homes every day. Many are being killed in the endeavour to defend their villages and estates. I can feel the crisis. A global crisis."*

Likewise, Dianna Wynne Jones' consideration of the assumptions made in different forms of writing, *"...I found myself thinking as I wrote, 'These poor adults are never going to understand this; I must explain it to them twice more and then remind them again later in different terms.'* Now this is something I **never** have to think when I write for younger readers. Children are used to making an effort to understand. They are asked for this effort every hour of every school day and, though they may not make the effort willingly, they at least expect it." The light bulb of enlightenment shown brightly through her words. I make a fair chunk of money each year writing for adult audiences, but never before had I stopped to consider the 'whys' behind the rules of repetition. ("Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em, tell 'em, tell 'em what you told 'em.") Understanding the why, or at least this aspect of it, could well help me write more effectively, and perhaps even more subversively.

A similar lightbulb of enlightenment went off when I read Judith Hanna's observation in FTT #11: *"Have you noticed how Debate drives out discussion? What's the difference, you ask? Discussion explores complexities of a question; Debate simplifies an issue down to two opposing sides, each distorting the other to an extreme straw position to be knocked down. I write about perspectives on feminism...and we get a lot of letters focusing on the anti-censorship vs anti-pornography debate. I try to widen the discussion to political censorship, the market forces of labelling or boycott, and the nature of public space, and get a lot of letters focusing on the censorship vs pornography debate. The trouble with structuring a discussion around letters responding to a previous discussion is that inevitably they retread the same ground, albeit raising new angles, rather than advancing to new philosophical frontiers."* Notice a common theme? People, adults at least, want it in simple black and white terms, shades of grey just muddy the water. But black and white doesn't really help us deal with the complexities of our 4-color world.

Understanding does not come easily, even in fanzines. Every fanzine is different, and material that I find exciting, interesting, or funny may well leave you cold. Plus there's the ever-present truth that what are hilarious jokes to some are nothing but obscure references to others. Fannish mythologies form and transmute, either for sheer entertainment value or through misinformation. Take, for example, Arnie Katz's reporting, in *Folly 15*, that vegetable concerns itself with one's "vegetable, season, and seed." *Rune 79* readers will remember the true purpose of the fannish cult, the discovery of one's vegetable, spice, and condiment, as first revealed to the masses by Elise Matthesen and Sharon Kahn. But what of the multitude of fans who read naught but Arnie's heresy in *Folly*? Will some of them pick it up and further transmogrify the cult?

Not that it matters, of course. I only mention it to remind you that while all knowledge may well be contained in fandom, you'd best not believe everything you read in fanzines. Even in the fanzine review column in *Rune*.

## How to get 'em

Most fanzines are available for "The Usual." That means a letter of comment, contribution, or other form of interaction with the editor. Some stamps, or a dollar or two for postage rarely hurts.

Fanzines received by *Rune*:

*Erg #115, #116*, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, N. Yorkshire, YO12 5RQ, GREAT BRITAIN. Terry Jeeves, editor.

*File 770:92*, 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys CA 91401. Mike Glyer, editor.

*The Frozen Frog #2*, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, Cap-Rouge, Quebec, G1Y 1Y9, CANADA. Benoit Girard, editor.

*FTT #11, #12*, 5a Frinton Road, London, N15 6NH, GREAT BRITAIN. Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas, editors.

*Idea #4, #5*, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315. Geri Sullivan, editor.

*The Insider #171*, Saint Louis Science Fiction Society, PO Box 1058, Saint Louis MO 63188. Cheryl Medley, editor.

*Instant Message #509, 511*, NESFA, Inc., PO Box G, MIT Branch Post Office, Cambridge MA 02139. Editor unnamed.

*Little Free Press*, Box 54177, Minneapolis MN 55454-0177. Ernest Mann, editor.

*Outworlds #62*, PO Box 58174, Cincinnati OH 45258-1074. Bill Bowers, editor.

*Spent Brass #8/9*, 4228 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle WA 98103. Andy Hooper and Carrie Root, editors.

*STET #5*, 17 Kerry Lane, Wheeling IL 60090-6415. Leah Zeldes Smith, editor.

*The Texas SF Inquirer #42, #43*, FACT, Inc., PO Box 9612, Austin TX 78766. Dale Denton and Alexander R. Slate, editors.

*Transmissions V14, #2*, Panhandle SF Society, P.O. Box 16382, Panama City FL 32406-6328. Anne Davenport, editor.

*Trash Barrel*, 6543 Babcock Ave., North Hollywood CA 91606. Donald Franson, editor.



Also received by *Rune*: 1992 HOGU & BlackHole Nomination Ballot from Elst Weinstein (11850 Mt. Harvard Ct., Alta Loma CA 91737) and apazines from Harry Andruschak (PO Box 5309, Torrance, CA 90510-5309) and Ben Indick (428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666).

Other fanzines that are either really good or otherwise mentioned in this column:

*Alyson Wonderland* V1, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, GREAT BRITAIN. Skel and Cas, editors.

*Astromancer Quarterly*, NFSFA, PO Box 500, Bridge Station, Niagara Falls NY 14305. Joe Maraglino, editor.

*BBB* #1, 330 S. Decatur Blvd, Suite 152, Las Vegas NV 89107. Joyce Worley Katz, Laurie Yates, and Aileen Forman, editors.

*Cube* #47, SF3, PO Box 1624, Madison WI 53701-1624. Steve Swartz, editor.

*Desert Island*, 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, GREAT BRITAIN. Skel and Cas, editors. (Reprints from Eric Mayer's fanwritings.)

*Fanthology* 1988, 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys CA 91401. Mike Glyer, editor.

*Folly* #15, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas NV 89107. Arnie Katz, editor.

*I-94*, PO Box 20132, Castro Valley CA 94546. Spike Parsons, editor.

*Let's Fanac* #3, PO Box 565, Storrs CT 06268. Barnaby Rapoport, editor.

*Let's Hear It For The Deaf Man*, NESFA Press, PO Box G, MIT Branch Post Office, Cambridge MA 02139. Ben Yalow, editor. (Reprints from Dave Langford's fanwritings.)

*The Medusa* VI, #1, Box 7253, Minneapolis MN 55407. Emma Bull, editor.

*Ramblings* IV, 730 Fair Oaks Avenue, Oak Park IL 60302-1545. Bruce Schneier, editor

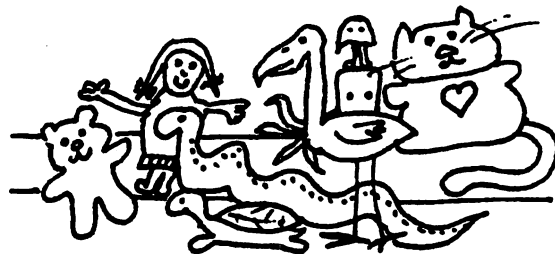
*Trap Door* #11, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen CA 95442. Robert Lichtman, editor.

*Weber Woman's Wrevenge* #42, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde, NSW 2112, AUSTRALIA. Jean Weber, editor.

# 4TH ANNUAL HUG-A-THON

What can one person do to make a difference in the world? With the help of Gerri Balter and Herman Schouten and their furry children (2,005 and multiplying even as I speak) David Cummer has solicited pledges (per hug) and raised \$3,000 for the Minnesota Aids Project Emergency Financial Assistance Fund over the last three years.

This year's **FOURTH ANNUAL HUG-A-THON** will be held on **Saturday July 25, 1992 at 2 pm**, again at the home of Gerri and Herman, 1381 N. Pascal Street, in St. Paul. You are invited to come and cheer David on and pledge money for this important cause. Your furry friends are welcome, too! Every hug counts.



## HUG-A-THON '92 PLEDGE FORM

Name

Phone

Street

City

State/Province

Postal Code

Pledge (cents per hug)

Please make checks payable to:  
**Minnesota AIDS Project**  
c/o David Charles Cummer,  
3511 Lyndale Ave S.  
Minneapolis, MN, 55408

*Thank you. Your contribution is tax deductible.*

# RUNELOCS

[Hi, back again, here's some more stuff.]

**HARRY WARNER, JR.:** Apologies are due you for the lateness of these comments on the two issues of Rune you've sent in recent months. The slowness isn't reflective of the joy I experienced at receiving Rune after an interval of several years. Instead, it's a case of the loc machine having fallen into such bad condition that it will probably cease functioning altogether before long.

The December issue impressed me particularly for all the material about collecting. This topic has its roots deep in my conscience and my psyche. Over the years, I've managed to abandon a few collecting enterprises that I indulged in long ago, like stamp collecting and, well, there must be another example or two. But I'm still piling up the books, records, music, videotapes, and assorted other oddments faster than I enjoy them.

As some of the pages in this issue hinted, collecting can lead to guilt sensations and doubts about the rightness of it all. I don't know if it's logic of sophistry that makes me excuse some of my purchases by the fact that these secondhand books and records and such will be spared while in my possession the damage or destruction that more careless purchasers might inflict on them, assuming no catastrophe wipes out my home and all its contents. But then my superego challenges my ego by pointing out that when these things sit untouched for months at a time in my home, I'm depriving someone else of the pleasure that would come from reading or listening to them. I don't worry much about the danger that collecting might be done subconsciously with profit motives, because I never sell anything I acquire and have no intention of changing that policy unless financial reverses force me to choose between eating and keeping valued possessions. I can also excuse my accumulations by my place of residence: there is no FM station that features classical music closer than 70 miles to Hagerstown, the

local public library doesn't have large collections of the types of books that interest me and disposes of most books after they've circulated a few years, so if I don't keep my hoarding, I won't be able to read or hear many of my favorites whenever the mood strikes me.

Fortunately, I've managed to avoid the completism that strikes so many persons who start as occasional collectors. This spares me the expense of paying high prices for a particular book or magazine to complete a set of an author's fiction or a year of a prozine. On the other hand, there's the constant worry about what will happen to all this stuff after my death. It isn't massive enough or rare enough assembly of stuff to be purchased by a major university or other institution but there's too much of it to sell at an estate auction. I'd hate to think of it being bought in bulk by a dealer who would throw away everything except the items that are particularly rare or in heavy current demand.

Enough about my internal confrontations. This issue in general had much of the atmosphere of fanzines a decade or two ago in editorial atmosphere and variety of material. Sue Grandys' little essay on house buying struck home with me, although fortunately my bad experience occurred 35 years ago and the memory has grown mercifully less vivid. My father handled the transaction for 423 Summit Avenue and suffered the fate of having two realtors claim commissions for sale. It took the Warner family's one and only recourse to an attorney to straighten out the mess.

The art work in both issues is so special that it deserves a loc all to itself. But this late in life, I still remain incapable of rattling off the analyses of the qualities of individual examples of fanzine art so I suppose I must generalize to some extent to try to verify to your satisfaction the pleasure I felt from almost everything from the sensational pull-out illustration just inside the front cover of the December issue to the smallest sketches in the April issue. I couldn't wish for anything better unless it consisted of a

lot of Ken Fletcher drawings.

You will please pardon the poor typing and you will also shed all doubts you may have felt about the authenticity of this letter. In case the news has not penetrated to the snowbound fastness of the Twin Cities, I have finally been forced to stop using my familiar Underwood and, six months after I began to use this electric machine, I still am unable to subdue my bad habit of brushing the keys I have no intention of depressing with sufficient force to activate them.

[New, typer, huh. It can be traumatic, learning a new machine. I started typing zines again, I used to carve them, it was like therapy, so I needed a typewriter and I bought a modern electric. I didn't want to invest in a computer, unless I felt I had a real need. I read that 40% of the men who had computers didn't use them. I enjoy writing in long hand, it's so much more natural. You can do it nearly anywhere you want. Perhaps I need a laptop.]

*I think you're right to save things for the future. So much is lost in each generation. There should be a large established library or museum who might be talked into taking fans collections and turn them into one big collection, with everything. Chills run down my spine.*

*At least there are people like us who save stuff and occasionally pass something on. Our little group, the League of Psychotronic Gentlemen, pass videos amongst ourselves and because of that I got to see Attack of the Mushroom People. This is the Japanese film that Gilligan's Island is based on. A sailing ship carrying seven people sinks by an island. Gilligan changed one of the men into a woman and the sailing ship into a motor launch. The cast spends the rest of the film trying to escape, but sadly they are turned into Mushroom people. I don't think they used the mushroom idea on GI, but I did quit watching it near the end. Any fans out there, write if you can.]*

**RICO POPOQATEPITETL:** *Andale Areba!* Rico here, sayin' howyadoin' to alla ju in *Rune* an' my many frien's in the Manystuf! I know I been gafiated for a long time bein', but ju know when Uncle Jorge say I gotta come and run security on the family farm in Columbia, I jus' say "Way!" So now all my new frien's are named uzi! They don' speak in more than one syllababble at a time, but when they do, ever'body listens! Ha haha, Rico one funny guy!

Yay yay yay yay *Rune*!

Yay! Two of mos' fav' frien's inna world are back publishin' zines! Garth is back doin' *Rune* and Joe Wesson be messin' with Joe Wesson Magazine. Hey Garth! I'm likin' it! Put more stuff 'bout food in *Rune* like ju do in your pers' zines, because man, we don' get no chip did down here! Hey Joe! Where you goin' with that gun in your hand?! Ha haha Rico loves to laugh! Joe ju one bad dude! Hey! Ju wanna drive down and visit Rico?! I make it worth your while! Jes tell Benny or Pablo at the border ju know Rico! Bring some chip dip, man! You mind if I send some stuff back in your floor boards?! *Areba!* I think I know how Joe, the big masters of the understatement laconic would describe his car then: "That's an expensive ride, man!" Hey, there's no snow on Rico's roof!

Some a' the time the time she just draaaaags by down here. Not much to do except rotate ammo boxes, clean guns. We don' even do not target practice until we go to town Saturday night! It's okay though 'cause Uncle Jorge pays for ever'thing Monday. An' way, Rico got a little lonely for his frien's in Manystuf and just happen to look through the family collection of SF fanzines. Oh ju don' know Rico's great-great-lots-a-greats-to-a-big-number-power granddad was a first SF fan?! Sorry I musta had a much to much Columbian Marching Powder and it slipped my mind. Ah sure ever'body back then coupla thousand years was SF fans. Science fiction was 'breviated not SF but ZX, pronounced AZT and EKS, so we called ourselves AZTECS. The glowing guys with the big rubbery heads in their shiny flying burritos were stoppin' by back then, and lemme tell ya they knew how to party! Yeah, alla chicks gotta do it with the glowing guy!

Ju know we invented the first con? Sure. We built those pyramids as the first con hotels because the partyin' got pretty wild! We went through a lotta huts until Uncle Hotelsajumpin came up with that idea! Course, back in those days we called 'em GODS, not GOHS, but they were still the hot draw. It was the damn Sercon guys who came up with the virgin sacrifices. Some people you can't tell nothin! Another shiny guy we called Maizepopl 'cause he invented munchies, ju know, popcorn. None of them came up with chip dip though, dam. Then they made like a bambino and head out, never come back. I guess some other planet musta got the Worldcon bid.

*[Always a pleasure to hear form you Rico, hope your work in Medellin turns out to be profitable and safe. The Larry Becker drawing done on his recent visit is reproduced somewhere near this letter. L.]*



**TEDDY HARVIA:** Although my cartoonist chauvinism tells me an all-cartoon issue of *Rune* is a great idea in theory. In reality it is too much of a good thing. To borrow KenF's film analogy, fanzines need text to play the visual heavy to give art the part of breaking it up.

I agree with Steve George that the real value of books is not in them as physical objects, but in the ideas that they contain. I collect books to read and reread. A friend pointed out to me that most readers break the spines of paperbacks they read. A used paperback whose spine is not completely broken was not worth reading all the way through. Some collectors must not read.

*[Okay, first there is no such thing as too much of a good thing! Remember the Subgenius motto, "Too much is better than not enough." You must not read enough comics. I can read them all evening and often do. I wish we could have made the issue larger in fact. There was so much left over.*

*I rarely break the spines of a book I'm reading. It's usually the older books, ones with dried out spines, that break during reading. The only reason the spine of most modern books gets broken is if you bend the covers back so that they touch. There's no reason for that. I'm careful, but not to the point of obsession, I might want to enjoy something later. If it's in good shape I'll enjoy it more than if it's all beat up. It's a matter of how you take care of your toys.]*

**BUCK COULSON:** I'm not much of a fan of cartoons, though I got a couple of chuckles out of the Harvia/Thayer "Xenon" one.

I disagree strongly with Brian Earl Brown about format. Three columns? Are fans too lazy these days to swivel their eyes across a whole 8 1/2 x 11 page? I see nothing much wrong with two columns, but three would interfere with comprehension. Or if not that, at least be highly annoying, as well as taking up much more room, especially with justified margins.

I can see Steve George's viewpoint, and I'm no longer keeping every book that arrives here. But a reviewer is in a little different position; there are reasons for referring to previous volumes, and

memory isn't infallible, so I still keep most books that arrive. I have, however, given up the ambition of owning the largest science fiction collection in the world, partly because I know people with bigger ones and partly because we're just about out of room here. (On the other hand, I've been paid for copying material for authors who failed to keep copies of their own output, so one needs to keep some things, or pay heavily to get them when you need them.

*[The two column format works for me. I like to reduce a bit and get that little bit more on a page. Postage, you know. I heard a rumor that Tom J was planning to do three columns. We each are the master of our own ships, which I think helps add to the chaos.]*

**RUTH BERMAN:** Friday a 13th, that seems like a good day to write and say thanks for the copy of the December Rune with the January 21 Star Tribune bacover of Uncle Hugo's about to go up in smoke (but not doing it). Seems a difficult act to follow as bacovers go.

Collecting seems to be the topic of the issue. I think I got warped in that direction from having lots of OZ books around the house (collected by older siblings - I've been making a habit of giving copies of OZ reprints to the nieces/nephews - Books of Wonder has been doing facsimile reprints, making color pictures from the early editions generally available for the first time in over 50 years, for instance). Ohio fanartist Barbi Johnson for several years did a series of delightful painting of illustrations to a book that no one could find, *The Enchanted Forest* by William Bowen. One of his children's books, *The Old Tobacco Shop*, won some award, and so can often be found in libraries, but not the others. Finally, I realized that I would never find a copy of the book, and asked Interlibrary loan to get me one. It's so rare, that what they got me was one library's photocopy of another library's copy. So then I photocopied a copy of the photocopy for myself. What I'd actually like would be a printed copy - with Barbi Johnson's illos.

*[Thanks to the libraries. I've photocopied many an unavailable book from the library. It's getting tougher to find so many things. All of P.G. Wodehouse is not in print. After AIDS kills off 2/3 of the*

*world population, things will be more readily available.]*

**TOM DIGBY:** Like many collectors, I have strong pack-rat tendencies. My criterion seems to be that I can throw something out if I'm sure I will never have a use for it and that I will never come into contact with anyone else who might want it. If I have no use for something but feel that someone else might, then I can't throw it out but I can mathom it. Lucky for me that LASFs has a mathom shelf in its clubhouse.

Why do I have this attitude? I think it's because when I was little my parents and grandparents used to give me things like defunct clocks and appliances to take apart and play with. This developed my aptitude for hands-on tinkering (something I as an engineer now find very useful), but it also taught me to think of junk in general as irreplaceable. If I broke something I might be able to use the pieces for something else, but if I lost something or threw it away that was it, forever. The waves of chance might cast a replacement up on my personal shore, but there was no such thing as simply going to the store and buying another one.

On using the 11 x 17 cover without doing it as a wraparound, my first thought would have been to try to reduce it to fit sideways on a regular 8.5 x 11 sheet. Without that vertical Rune 81 down the right side it's 11 x 14 which would fit at 77% And there would still be room along one edge for a smaller version of the title and issue number. Having the staples at the top would be a little odd, and you'd have to turn the zine 90 degrees to read it after opening the cover, but still...

That seems to be it for now, except that I just ran the above through the spelling checker. It suggested that I change "mathom" to "fathom", which would've been quite a sea-change for the meaning of the sentence. And "one-of-a-kind" left it completely at sea: It flagged the term incorrect but could offer no suggestions at all.

And have you noticed that newspapers and other professional publications are showing more and more instances of what looks like a word being typoed and then "fixed" by someone taking the

wrong suggestion from the spelling checker? The example that comes to mind is the tire-safety article that claimed that "Dry brush is easily ignored by a lighted cigarette." While that's sort of true in that tossing a lighted cigarette into dry brush will often fail to start a fire, that was probably not the writer's intent. I expect to see more of this kind of thing for a few years, gradually fading away as computer programs capable of checking whether words make sense in context become common.

*[So, you're an engineer, eh. What the hell's a mathom. The dictionary is too far away.]*

*I agree with you on the cover. When I first talked to Kathy she said she didn't think it would reduce down very well, but as soon as I saw it I knew the illo part was 11 x 14, a size I work in a lot.*

*I fear for newspapers and magazines as the quality of writers goes down. I see bad writing in the Star Tribune all the time. It's like desktop. There are a lot of people doing desktop who have no idea of style or aesthetics. Often, if they get the graphics and layout right, there is nothing worth reading.]*

**JOSEPH NICHOLAS:** At one point in Rune 81, in reply to Walt Willis's letter, you state that you'd like to hear about the differences in the house - moving experiences of US and other fans. I can't tell you much about house - moving experiences, but I can certainly tell you about the differences in the size of houses; and that is that US houses in general seem larger than houses here. I am of course excluding (for obvious reasons) country mansions and city - centre bedsitters from this observation, and applying it primarily to the suburbs, but the reason is not hard to find: you have more land than us, so there's more per person. And the fact that US houses are larger than their British equivalents means that US fans can indulge their collecting mania to a far greater extent.

In theory one should never respond to one's reviews, since such responses tend to result not in the promotion of informed debate but of tedious squabblings over intended (and unintended meanings) - but I can't pass up Jeff Schalles's comments on FFT in Rune 81, and in particular his



discription of it as a "humourzine". He mentioned only issues 7 to 10, and may not have seen issues 11 and 12 (I think he might have been dropped from our mailing list for non-response in early 1991; but didn't we send copies of those issues directly to Rune?) but those two issues are no different in tone and style from the previous four. These six issues have published a lengthy debate on feminism and censorship; articles on museums and the heritage industry; travelogues on the Soviet Union and boating in Texas; critiques of Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis; a contribution to the emerging debate on European identity; and a score or so of letters commenting at length on these and allied topics. By absolutely no stretch of the imagination can such contents be described as "humourous"!

[Sure doesn't sound like it Joe, but I can't say myself not having seen your zine. Jeff's reply follows below.

*I think house size varies by area. My neighborhood has smallish houses. Jeff's neighborhood has largish houses. Mine's about 24 by 36 feet, just over 800 square feet inside. The rooms are smallish, it's cozy for me. There's a converted attic and a full-size basement. The lots 40 by 120 feet. How does that compare.*

*Jeff's reply: So Geri calls downstairs, "how about a short review of FFT for this column" and I, highly embarrassed that numerous FFT's have come and all I've ever gotten around to reading were Judith's editorials (which are usually first), recalling that they were humorous and chatty, blurted out my content, wisely incorrect little review, for which I apologize.]*

**ALGERNON D'AMMASSA:** You may as well know that David D'Ammassa no longer exists. In 1989, he went off in search of Amelia Earhart, and apparently found her. At any rate, I am confident that no one answering that name will ever turn up again. On his behalf, I was pleased to receive the new issue of Rune, and congratulate you for getting it up and running again.

[Thanks. Changed your name, huh, wow.]

**MARK LONEY:** It took three and a half months to get here and I haven't even read it yet, but I'm glad to see that Rune

has returned. It's enough to make me feel guilty about not publishing The Space Wastrel since 1988 or letting the March issue of Thyme slip by (though Greg Hills as co-editor also has to make up excuses.

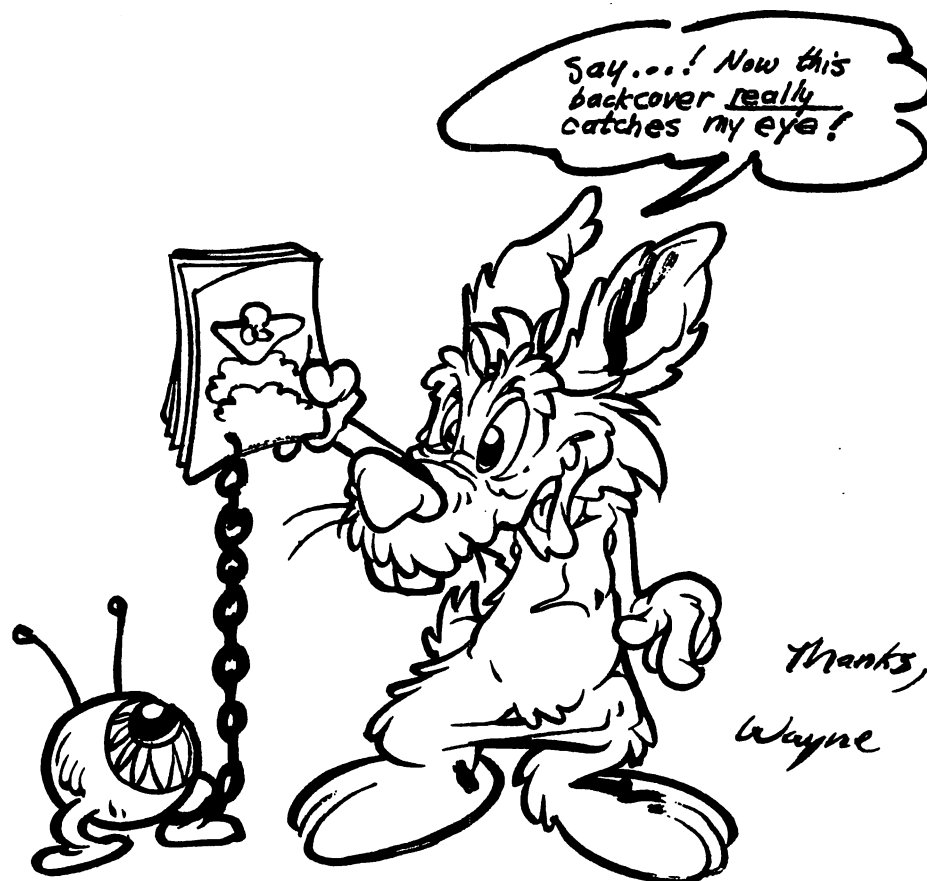
I am glad to see from the back cover that Uncle Hugo's survived, but must admit to wondering about Gopher Hall. Was the name just a coincidence or did it have something to do with Minn-Stf? Perhaps the next issue will reveal all.

I look forward to future issues of Rune and intend to go off and read Rune 81 real soon now, just as soon as I finish the two 1500 word essays that I'm really supposed to be doing today!

[Gophers are big here on the prairie. Sorry the issue took so long to get to you, just trying to economize in postage money. I've been thinking we should encourage out of towners to come visit and pick their issues up. It's only 4 times a year.]

We also heard from NOLA FRAME-GRAY, who sent a comic strip on collecting. The Tucker Awards sent some info. J. CODERRE requested an

issue, and NEIL REST requested issues of 81 be sent to the people in his Parcon report. It was done. BEN INDICK thanked Ken for all the nice art in issue 82, so do we all. HARRY CAMERON ANDRUSCHAK wrote wondering how do you comment on an all cartoon issue or Rune. Imagination, my boy. MELODY RONDEAU thoughtfully sent some stamps, which we swapped for a subscription. There was a postcard from DONNA BARR, and LINDA MICHAELS sent some art. K.J. "SHEPP" STAHL wrote to tell us that the cartoon issue has inspired his cartooning. Good news. Is this the same SHEP that did the cover to 81. Anyone care to clear this up for me. SHEPP? SHEP? I don't know. R LAURRAINE TUTIHASI has her packratism under control and what with all the advantages to buying a house she thinks she hasn't anything to complain about in LA. What about those riots? ROBERT WHITAKER SIGIGNANO sends a submission but doesn't mention his name change. ERNEST "FREE" MANN writes to let us know he is stopping publishing his newsletter after 90 issues in 23 years. He plans to pursue freedom in a sailboat. Wow, wish him luck. Be seeing you.



# Minn-StF Board Minutes

11 May 1992

Persons present: Dean Gahlon, Laura Krentz, Geri Sullivan, David Cargo, Kay Drache, Joyce Scrivner, Art Johnson, Laramie Sasseville, Eric Heideman, Martin Schafer, Jonathan Adams, Polly Peterson, Sybil Smith, Leif Pihl.

## The Everybody Wants Money Meeting

### ReinCONation Report

Martin reported that the Radisson's insurance paid the \$800 loss due to theft in the Dealer's Room/Art Show at ReinCONation, so the con made some money on its first convention.

### \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

The Board started out hearing requests for money for projects and decided that they should figure out a rough budget for the year to see what they can afford to fund. Roughly: (without taking inflation into account, for instance. Carol Kennedy, of course could tell us exact amounts and estimates.)

	Last Year	Proposed
Rune	3000	3000
TOTU	1200	2400
Lecture Series	300	?
Minn-StF Meetings	1000	1000
Minn-StF Hot line	250	250
Postage	?	?
Einblatt	500	500
Mpls in '73		
(at other cons)	200	?
<b>Total</b>	<b>6450</b>	<b>7150</b>

Martin suggested that we need about \$12,000 to fund standard yearly expenses and most projects that the board might want to pursue. Polly reported that David Dyer-Bennet thought at the department heads postmortem that Minicon 27 made about \$19,000 after all the bills are paid. And so...

### History of Minnesota Fantasy Society

Joyce Scrivner would like to publish (co-edit with Karen Cooper) Red Bog's history of the MN Fantasy Society. This involves editing stuff that has already been done (Ruth Berman published 5 sections) and getting input from living members so that they can fill out the parts that happened during WWII. They would like to have \$200-300 to print 100-200 copies and publish it for Minicon 28 (1993 in case you aren't counting) They would sell them for \$5 (\$6 by mail) and it would likely take a while to get the money back into the treasury. The board is generally favorable

to the project and will likely fund it in some time frame, but would like Joyce to get back to them when more of the work is done and they have a little better idea of their costs. Joyce will come back in the fall.

### Minicon 28

Polly (wearing her Grand Triumvirate hat) wanted to know how much the board wants Minicon 28 to make for the club so that the G.T. can plan their budgets for the con. After some discussion the board consented on shooting to make \$15,000.

### SF Minnesota and Diversicon

Eric (acting as spokesperson), Art and Sybil, representing SF Minnesota asked if the board would be willing to give them money to seed their convention, Diversicon. They have filed papers with the state to get non-profit educational organization status, but have not yet filed the federal papers. Jonathan suggested that they do so because it will make it easier and cleaner for other 501(C)3 groups to give them money. It was pointed out that unless they want to be perceived as another Minn-StF off-shoot, they should also pursue money from other groups. After discussion of other cons that the club has helped financially, the board came up with the Minn-StF Challenge Grant: The club would be willing to match, in the \$500-\$1000 range, grants from other organizations to help Diversicon get off the ground. Whether or not the money would have to be repaid would depend on how profitable the con is.

### Mpls in '73 at Magicon

Geri has grandiose dreams for Magicon (*her words*). Minn-StF has traditionally funded a Mpls in '73 party at world cons but she would like to do a Mpls in '73 suite for the whole weekend along the lines of the one at Minicon. They have a suite in the party hotel of the con and although she and Jeff and Don, (who would be co-hosts) would pay the costs of their sleeping space, they would like the board to fund the parlour (\$700 for the weekend) and some party supplies to the tune of \$1000. The suite would be outreach to the world about Minnesota fandom and they would have Minicon flyers there. The board approved the request and she will come to them for money in July or August.

### Storage

Leif Pihl opened a discussion of the

possibility of having two funds created for the future: A building fund to get some space for the club, whether it be storage or office or club space was not specified; and a Worldcon fund so that sometime in the distant future someone, not necessarily Minn-StF could put on a worldcon. He decided that he was not ready to make a formal proposal yet. There was some discussion of what having a clubhouse would do to the finances, simplicity of operations and culture of the club.

Laramie brought up the problem of storing Minicon property and the particular crisis that Bill Bader's garage is beginning to leak and the Art Show panels are in danger. Kay has looked into possible storage space and finds that the price is totally dependent on square footage (\$30-80). The board felt that after hours accessibility is important for people who have jobs and need to get into the space. Kay will talk to Charles and other pertinent people to help decide what size space we need. 10' x 10' seemed good to people.

On a separate but related topic, the board discussed the possibility of getting new **art show panels** since the old ones are showing their age. David Dyer-Bennet has access to Boscon's design for standard-sized, nifty, lighted ones and he would be interested in paying part of the cost of building new ones in return for being able to use them at the 1993 World Fantasy Convention which will be here. Martin will talk to DDB about getting these designs.

### Mailing List and the PO

David was looking into updating our mailing list to have it conform better to PO standards and thereby get us cheaper mailing rates. The Post Office would, for free, add zip + 4 to our list and make minor spelling changes. There is a company in Minnetonka which will do a little more tweeking for \$35. We have also had a higher than usual number of problems with mail delivery (or non-delivery) recently which Rob attributes to the PO going through a system change which is losing people! David C will look into the mailing issues with Scott Raun (VPDP) and see about documentary evidence which we can use to get refunds for PO mistakes from, say, recent Minicon mailings.

The board authorized paying Jonathan Adams \$150 for the legal work he did when we were having discussions with the IRS.

# Passing the Torch

by Thomas Juntunen

FIAWOL. Fandom Is A Way Of Life. A truism among trufans, but increasingly out of vogue with a younger generation. In this issue of *Rune*, I set out to examine some aspects of SF conventions. One that emerged clearly was "fandom ain't what it used to be." Let's consider some of the evolutionary cause and effect in fandom.

SF is old enough to have traditions. The fight against obscurity is over and it's time to sit back and reap the rewards. Except, looking around, it isn't quite what was expected. SF is the literature of change, yet people are more resistant to change than the genre is. Thus, people gather in cliques with others of like mind where it's more comfortable. And, as Emma Bull says in the *Conventions* write-up in this issue: "Fandom may be getting less tolerant of its own diversity. Fans with special interests are increasingly hostile toward other special interests and lots of fans are hostile toward the younger ones, especially those who dress funny, have weird hair, and listen to annoying music." Sound familiar?

Fred Levy Haskell (who credits Reed Waller) theorizes the changes stem from today's wide-spread acceptance of SF. He explains (also in the *Conventions* write-up) how it was a lonely thing to enjoy SF when it was considered an aberration. He goes on: "Now that SF isn't so weird and almost everyone has some exposure to it, there is a tendency for a person to get into fandom and say 'This is a neat party!' and drag ten of their friends in. Now they can hang out with their friends, in their own group, and have no need to find out what's going on or to change their behavior since they are still in their own group." This is a trend going nowhere good and should be changed. But how?

In my readings of what fandom was like in the earliest days and in my conversations with fans from later periods, one thing stood out pretty clearly: the fans then were as interested in showing

others why they were fans as they were in being fans. This drew others in and gave them the desire to know more about fandom, and some of these others brought new ideas about fandom with them. The thought of change wasn't uncomfortable.

At Minicon 26 I wandered into many room parties and talked with several interesting people. Since I am intrigued with beginnings, I often asked the people how they got started in SF and conventions. The particulars varied, but they had all read a book or seen a show and immediately wanted more. It was apparent that this had been a shining moment for some of them. However, every one of them assumed I must feel the same way — otherwise I wouldn't be there, right? Not necessarily. As David Dyer-Bennet says (in *Conventions*), "It is no longer a proud and lonely thing to attend an SF convention, it's now a fun way to kill part of a boring weekend."

The key to reducing the divisiveness in fandom lies with education and understanding. Education in the sense that we, "the older generation," must try to demonstrate to the next generation why fandom is so great, why SF is so fun. And we must try to understand that SF is not the same as it used to be, that it will never be the same, and that that isn't a bad thing. If done correctly, the next generation will better understand the history and traditions of SF and why some people feel they are important. They will better appreciate where we are coming from, and in turn, they will help educate us in what they really want from us instead of passing off everything we do as either elitism or authoritarianism.

Easy for me to say — I don't have kids, so I don't know what it's like. It would be great if they read some books, but they won't even keep their rooms clean!

It's true I don't have any kids. But I have experienced how baffling it can be to talk to someone 10 or 15 years younger than myself. At Minicon 27 I was co-

head of operations and talked with some teenagers who were involved with some of the difficulties that convention had. They were there to drink alcohol and hang out with their friends and resented anyone getting in the way of that. They had reasons of course: "This is Minicon, there aren't any rules!" and (when asked why she drank so much) "But this is Minicon!" These people had no other interest in Minicon. Contrast this with what the respondents in the *Conventions* write-up felt were elements of a good convention.

It is up to us, this generation, to give the next generation reasons why they should carry on the traditions of fandom or *invent their own*. Either way fandom is served.

Look back and remember why SF is important to you, how you discovered it and why you couldn't put it down. Then try to communicate how you felt. It isn't always easy, you may have to use analogy, wave your arms around or even steal quotes — SF has some of the most evocative phrases of any literature — to make your point. Be sincere! People will respond to that even they don't understand. Make it clear it's important to you and some will be curious to learn more. Keep an open mind. Maybe to you it isn't SF if it's on video tape, but other people are as much a victim of culture as you are. Don't revile other mediums, proselytize books instead.

You can't reach everyone, but chances are you can reach *one*. It might be your kid, a friend's kid, someone at work or even someone you just met in the consuite. If you convince one person, that person may go on and convince one more. If enough of us do this, a chain reaction will result and the critical mass will remake latter day fandom.

You may not succeed. You may only convince others that you're a loon. But you may get through to someone and demonstrate to them just how to reach out to others and pass on the torch. And someday, you may be able to go to that 3000-person con and feel right at home.

# CARTOONS TO THE EDITOR

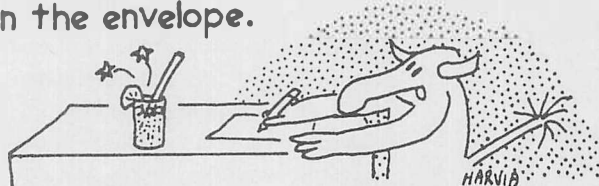
by TEDDY HARVIA



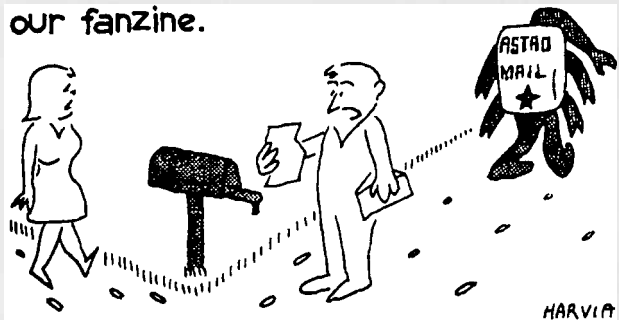
I enjoy *RUNE* in the morning. It's great with granola and cold milk.

Dear Editor,

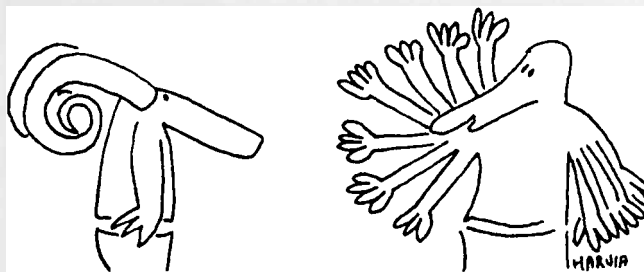
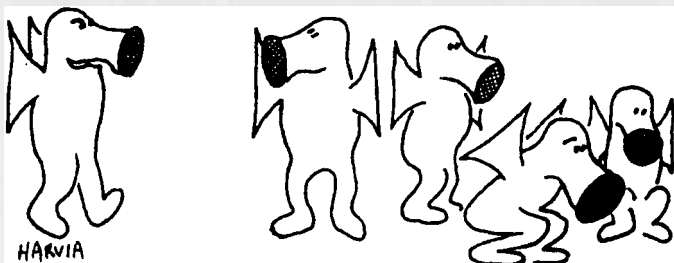
Please send me a copy of your fanzine. Enclosed is "the usual" for me, a Martian meteor on the rocks. I hope the ice doesn't melt in the envelope.



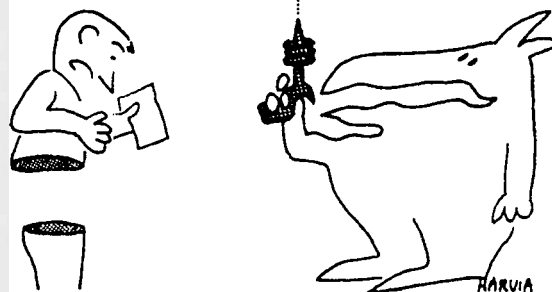
It's a LOC from the planet Mer ordering us to stop publishing their top secret government reports in our fanzine.



Page 9210! That's impossible! No fanzine has that many pages. Let me see that.

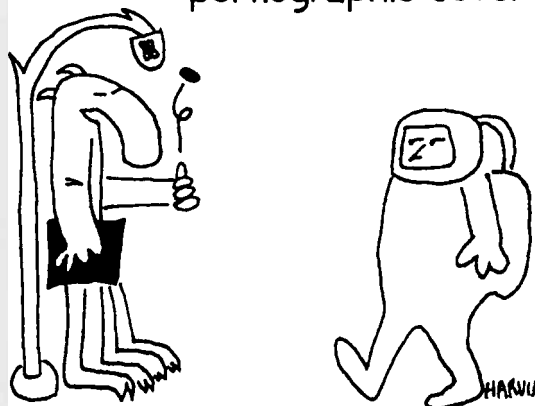


I can count the number of good fanzines on the fingers of my hands.



That's the trouble with you fan editors. You can't take criticism.

Hey, Earthling. You want to buy a fanzine with an absolutely pornographic cover?



The Famous *We Also Herd From!*

