

RUNE 88



AND
MINNEAPOLIS IN 2073
PROGRESS REPORT 6



Rune #88

Volume 15, No. 2

Simultaneously, Minneapolis in 2073 Progress Report #6

Matthew and Kelly Strait, editors

Published by the Minnesota Science Fiction Society

You are getting this because:

- ☐ You are a voting Minn-stf member
- ☐ You are a pre-supporting member of Minneapolis in 2073
- ☐ You LOcced/otherwise contributed to this issue/Editorial whim
- ☐ You are a club we've heard of
- ☒ You picked this copy up at a con or similar

You ought to get the next issue if you:

- Are a member of Minneapolis in 2073 and the next RUNE is also a Minneapolis in 2073 Progress Report like this one (probable).
- Send us a letter of comment, fanzine in trade, or any amount of money (suggested amount: \$2.07; checks to "Minnesota Science Fiction Society").
- Are a voting member of Minnstf.

You can request receiving the next issue on paper if you got this one by email, or vice versa, or to request a large print edition.

For RUNE and Minneapolis in 2073:

RUNE / Minneapolis in 2073

c/o Matthew and Kelly Strait

1228 E 54th St #1E

Chicago IL 60615

mpls2073@mnstf.org, rune@mnstf.org

mpls2073.livejournal.com, mnstf.org/Rune

For general Minn-stf correspondence:

MNSTF

PO Box 8297

Lake Street Station

Minneapolis MN 55408

info@mnstf.org

mnstf.org

Please contact Minicon and the Minnstf fallcon as directed by each convention.

Uncredited material ©2013 Minnesota Science Fiction Society. Credited material ©2013 or as marked by the contributors, all rights reserved, except as follows: Content by Matt Strait is bequeathed to the public domain. Photo by Kevin G. Austin is released under Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike, creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0. Except for the board minutes, nothing here constitutes official statements by the club.

Here we are again

Welcome back to RUNE. Or, in case you’ve never seen one before, welcome to RUNE. RUNE is the Minnesota Science Fiction Society’s extremely sporadic clubzine. Nevertheless, we’re pretty sure that another issue will follow this one in a manner that passes for promptly in our book (the last issue was in October, to give you an idea of that), so keep the letters, articles, and art coming.

Interested in older issues? Since last time, *many* have become available for viewing at falh.net/fanzines.html thanks to the intrepid scanning work of Fred A Levy Haskell. A few more are available on the official RUNE page, mn-stf.org/Rune. If you happen to have or know of a copy of #1–4 (called the Minnesota Science Fiction Society Newsletter), #9, #15, or #30–32, we would very much like to know about it. We are zeroing in on a complete set (of our *own* fanzine), and these are the outstanding issues.

Contents

Letters of Comment 4

Board Minutes 9

A Small Manifesto, *Rachel Kronick* 13

Luck Point Economies: Encouraging Liquidity, *Rachel Kronick* 14

Musing on the Cost of Conventions These Days, *Matt Strait* 19

MPLS in 2073 Progress Report 23

Rules of Rummage (First Edition), *Jeanne Mealy* 25

The Mark Time Awards (1998), *Jerry Stearns* 27

Notes from the Archivist 31

Minn-stf events 33

Mnstf Births

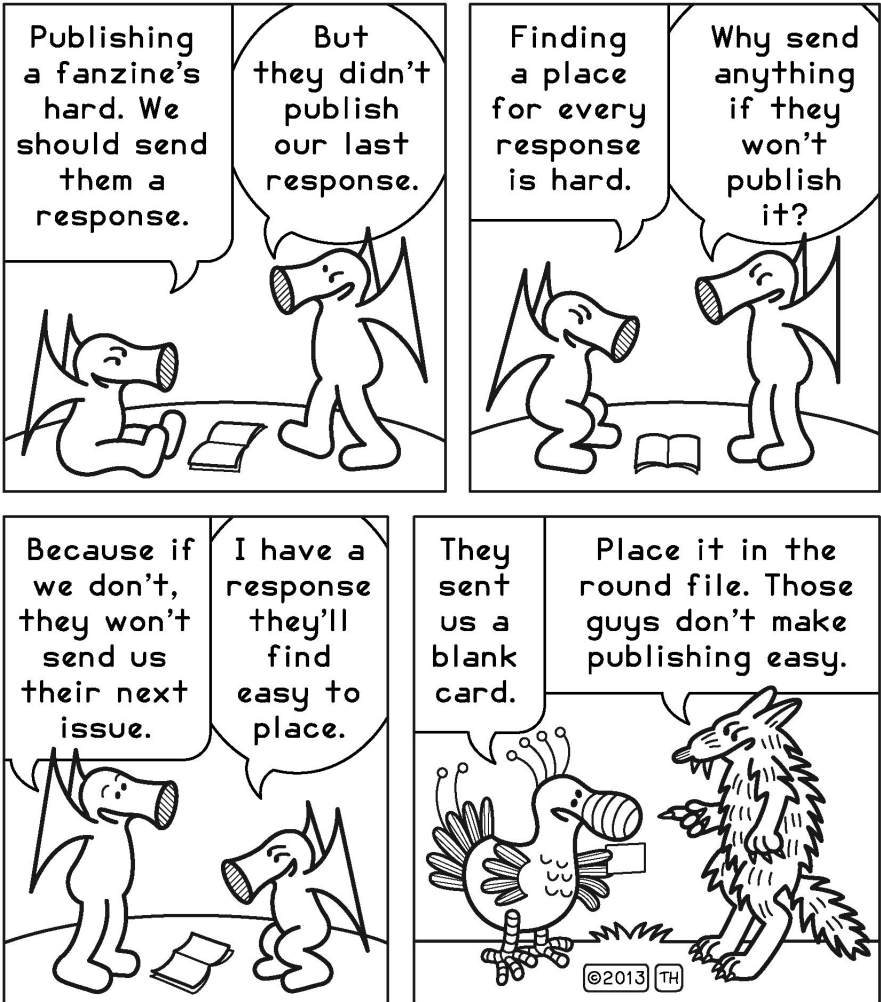
Eleanor “Nora” Marian Strait was born to Matt and Kelly Strait on 17 June 2012 at 6:20am. She was 8 pounds 10 ounces. On 23 February 2013, Nora attended the pool party, thereby becoming a Minn-stf member.

Alma Evelyn Krantz was born to Kat and Ralph Krantz at 1:49pm on 19 October 2012, She was 19.5”, 6 pounds. Scott and Irene Raun are the proud grandparents.

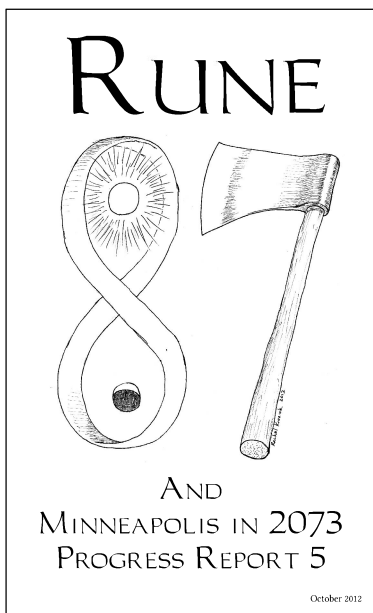
Art/Photo Credits

- Cover: Thorin Tatge
- Page 3: Teddy Harvia
- Page 8: Brad Foster
- Page 13: Rachel Kronick
- Page 22: Brad Foster
- Page 23: Thorin Tatge
- Page 26: Kevin G. Austin
- Page 33: Kevin G. Austin

WINGNUT LOGIC by Teddy Harvia



Letters of Comment



From Lloyd Penney:

January 8, 2013

Dear Matthew and Kelly:

Sorry it's taken so long to respond to Rune 87. Good to see an issue of it again... I have the 2002 issue, and several of the pre-1995 issues. In spite of the usefulness of social media, nothing, IMHO, gets the conversation going as well as a paper fanzine. It's in your face, so what are you going to do about it? Respond...

I never met Jim Young... many zines I've seen have marked his passing, and there's been many remembrances in those other zines. Many essays show how much his is missed and loved. I think John Purcell, a former club member, has something about Jim Young in his own fanzine Askance.

I don't think anyone in Minneapolis needs to worry about a Toronto World-con bid in 2073... I think they will bid before that. There, I've put the fox in the henhouse with that remark. Have fun in Texas, we're saving for London in 2014.

Those earlier minutes are readable, but hard on the eyes, so I will return to my old apa days, and say RAE, BN(further)C.

It's interesting to see that generation ships are being cost-analyzed, and that the idea is being even considered. However, I am not surprised to see the potential cost being so high as that the word 'quadrillion' is being used. Not long ago, I saw something about a similar cost analysis being done for a real, honest-to-Ghu Death Star. That analysis not only used 'quadrillion', but also 'quintillion'.

Minicon is being extremely transparent in listing this financial report. There's a lesson here for many conventions, and not just in tracing your spending per attendee.

My loc... Scott Imes passed away just before Rune 86, and now Jim Young for Rune 87. No one pass away for Rune 88, okay? With the years passing, both Yvonne and I are marking 35 years each in fandom. (Where's our gold watches, dammit?) And, even with what I said in my letter, we retired, this time with finality, from the Ad Astra committee, after 30 years. We returned to help out, but realized that our 30 years of experi-

ence were probably very dated.

Bring on Rune 88, please! I will loc it quicker, I promise. We'll see you then.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

1706-24 Eva Rd.

Etobicoke, ON

CANADA M9C 2B2

From Brad Foster:

Greetings Matthew & Kelly

Have had the new RUNE #87 for almost a month now, but got here just in time to be buried under a pile of other mail/notes/assorted pieces of paper that have been piling up while life got in the way for a bit. But, have now been spending the last couple of days digging down through that pile in search of the actual desk top, and have reached the RUNE geologic layer.

First, in thanks for actually producing a print version zine, a rarer and rarer sight these days, I want to keep up my fannish "subscription" by attaching here two brand new pieces of weird toonish filler art. As is usual, feel free to turn down anything you don't care for, just let me know. Otherwise, will note in my files these are being held for use there. Certainly do hope there will be more issues to come soon, without the decade-or-so gaps that popped up earlier!

Sorry had to start this one off with a death announcement, but put together a nice group of remembrances from folks, and also seems appropriate that all this stuff about Jim is in print, rather than just pixels on the web.

I'm curious about one thing with the

Minneapolis in 2073 bid. You printed a listing of "new" members, but since this has been going on for several years now, what is the total number of members? By the time it gets closer to 2073, it might end up being easier to just list the few people left in the world by that point that haven't been signed up.

[Minneapolis in 2073 has got 564 members as of Minicon 48. As for your next point, now I'm going to have to make a graph with a totally implausible extrapolation to see if you're right. See later this ish.]

I liked Rachel Kronick's thoughts on world building, and about how sometimes creating for the fun of it is reward enough. Cindy and I started playing with ideas for a world to stick some characters in ages ago, with hopes of one day turning some of it into a children's book. No concrete book yet, but there is a binder here with about three inches of notes, sketches, diagrams, short "scenes" etc, filling in tons of characters and places. And I can agree, without yet having settled on a plot, the creation of all that on its own has been a blast to do.

Was astonished to see you actually managed to put in all the Minn-stf minutes since the last time out. Maybe even more astonishing was that I found myself reading a lot of it. The early minutes especially had a nice narrative quality to the way they were written up. And, to go along with the oddness of reading long-ago board meetings notes, I found the article on the Minicon Budget also of interest — it's actually the kind of stuff I

seldom get to see, never having been on that side of things with conventions, and was interesting to see the kinds of things that must be considered and dealt with by those who are putting on cons for the rest of us to just show up and enjoy.

Regarding the article on analyzing exactly how many red shirts ended up biting the dust in ST, have you seen the meme floating around these days of “the most interesting man in the world” from the Dos Equis ads? The tag-line is: “I don’t always play a red shirt on Star Trek. But when I do, I survive the whole episode.” Evidently the actor did have a small role as an unnamed crewman in one episode and, though he was in a red shirt, he made it all the way through.

Looking forward to 88 and beyond — hey, you’ve got to at least get this up to 100 ya know!
stay happy~

Brad

Brad W Foster

PO Box 165246

Irving, TX 75016

bwfoster@juno.com

From Denny Lien:

*I dreamt I saw Jim Young last night,
Alive as you or me,
And I said “But Jim, you’re lately dead...
“I never died,” said he.*

Jim was the manager/owner of some small museum full of strange unrelated objects. There was a convention (?) in town and I asked a few members to come join me in going through it, but I neglected to tell Jim about it and I was

horrified when a hundred or so people showed up at once — the “museum” was literally housed in a series of small connected rooms/closets, some of which couldn’t fit in more than two or three people at a time, and anyway I didn’t really know enough about the collection to be a guide.

Jim let me know he was gruffly irritated at my thoughtlessness, but forgave me and kindly gave me a self-guided-tour book (in the shape and size of an old sf paperback) to help me guide the group through the collection. Between the room size problem, the bad behavior of the crowd (they had started loudly singing something, possibly bawdy filk songs), and my sudden realization that (a) I didn’t have time to skim the guide before the tour was to start, and (b) in any case they all had to be back at the convention within an hour, I gave up and woke up.

I think the “strange unrelated objects” part of the dream was inspired by a TV news report I’d seen that evening on the auction of the remaining personal household kitsch of local convicted con-man/fraudster Tom Petters. Don’t know where the small, interconnected room venue came from, except as a claustrophobe I often seem to have dreams involving travelling from the outdoors into an interior and then into smaller and smaller rooms until I am forced to stop. (Usually in such dreams I am driving a car at the time.)

It was nice to see Jim again.
Denny Lien

From Louis Fallert aka Blue Petal:

I had read most of the issue when I first received it. It was good/sad remembering Jim Young.

The bit of Minicon Finance was interesting. At this late date, looking back at what I remember of Minicon finances is somewhat vague.

I do remember Ken Fletcher mentioning that Minicon IV had lost money, and that there might not be a Minicon V the next spring. I am not sure how but at some point it was decided that we would put on a Fall SF Convention, and I got stuck with being the chairman. This might have been because I was one of the few members who was not a student, had a job, had an apartment, had no significant other and was fool enough to do it.

I fronted the money for the convention, it may have been as much as \$100. Since I was only making around \$2.00 an hour it could not have been much more than that. We went back to the Andrews, the cheapest of the downtown hotels so we could get rooms for under \$10 a night. We rented the function space, rather than attempt a banquet, which was the usual way of getting function space from the hotel.

We started getting registrations in just as the money started getting low. We ended up with no GoH, our hoped for surprise guest was unable to make it, but we did have a con suite, maybe 60–80 attendance, and I believe a good time.

I was paid back the money I had put

up, and the profit went to the next Minicon. I don't remember how much it was, but the next spring there was a Minicon VI.

Things were a bit anarchic back then.
Louis Fallert aka Blue Petal

From John Purcell

It has been a long time a-brewing, and definitely good to see Rune rear its mangy fanzine head once again. Congratulations, Matthew and Kelly Strait, in resurrecting the clubzine.

Over the years since Rune's demise — rather, more of a slip into limbo — there have been assorted calls for its return. In a way it is appropriate that this particular issue is to pay tribute to one of Minn-stf's floundering fathers, Jim Young, who deserves the honor, no question. I have many memories of hanging out with Jim at the Minnesota Technology office when I attended the Multiversity of Minnesota, and also years worth of Minn-stf meetings and Minicons. Jim was one of the nicest people I have ever met in fandom — and I mean that as in Anywhere in fandom — and he made me feel comfortable when I first discovered the club back in 1973. Definitely one of the Good Guys, as far as I am concerned, and I miss Jim terribly. These tribute articles were very nicely done. Nate Bucklin's remembrance was obviously painful to write, but I am glad Nate did so; by writing it, I am sure it was a cathartic, therapeutic release for him. I think that so many of us who knew Jim from Way Back

When understand. Maybe all I can really do here is to thank Nate, Greg, Jude-Marie, Robin, and Michael for their written contributions. The unwritten tributes from everybody else mean just as much to me.

As far as anything else goes in this particular issue for commentary, there really isn't much that I can find, except that Minn-stf certainly is one big, honking, active group. It sure as shooting was big when I was active in the club — thirty to forty years ago — and Minn-stf doesn't look like it has any plans to slow down. I may have to fire off a check for \$19.73 to you folks just because. Am I correct in assuming that will buy a pre-supporting membership in the Minneapolis in 2073 WorldCon bid? Woe to our descendents who will have to run that con.

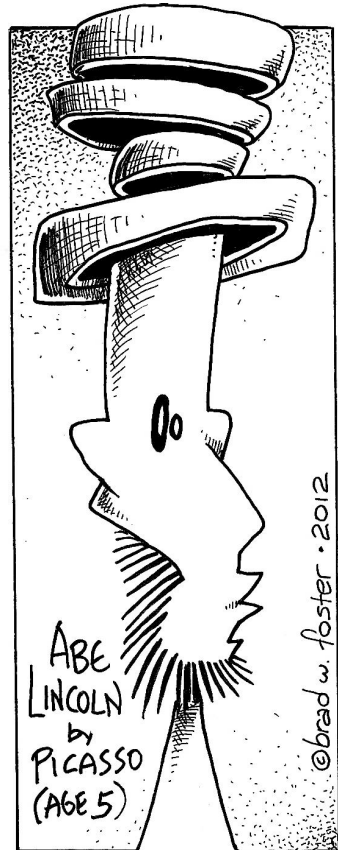
[*\$2.073 buys a standard pre-support, \$20.73 gets one at the "blogger" level. \$19.73 probably gets one at the blogger level too, we're not that picky!*]

Anyway, many thanks for posting the fanzine, and I hope to see lots more issues from you guys. Keep it on the Strait and narrow — sorry; couldn't resist — and I will happily provide you with a fan arkle or two at some time or other.

All the best,
John Purcell

We also heard from:

John Wardale, noting a nice table of Starfleet casualties at [en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Starfleet_casualties_\(23rd_century\)](http://en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Starfleet_casualties_(23rd_century)). **Claire Brialey** and **Mark Plummer** (*Banana Wings*), from whom we are stealing the format of this section. **Mike Glycer** (*File 770*). **The Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society** (*ConNotations NewsZine*). **NESFA** (*Instant Message*). **David M Shea. Tisch**. And possibly others lost in the shuffle. (Sorry! Please complain in your LOC.)



Minn-stf Board Minutes

(Only 4 pages of normal-sized print this time!)

December 15th, 2012

Held at 3:00pm at the home of Scott and Irene Raun, Minneapolis, MN.

Attendance: Emily Stewart, Hershey Lima, Dean Gahlon, Beth Friedman, Scott Raun, Irene Raun, Laura Krentz.

Conjecture: Patricia Zetelumen is working on contacting hotels and will keep us in the loop. Beth submitted a balance sheet of -\$195.90 and would like to be reimbursed for that amount. The request was approved.

501(c)3: Beth talked with Emily Robinson, a tax attorney that works with non-profits. They talked about getting help filing for our 501(c)3. So far we have incurred charges of \$219.45 and we will be billed monthly for her services.

We are still a 501(c)3, but not in good standing. We need to send a determination of type and have it approved. There are two types of 501(c)3 corporations. First is private foundation. There are lots of rules that apply that we don't want to deal with. The other is public charity. For that we need to show that our money comes from diverse sources rather than a few people.

What this form will require will be 5 years of good financial information.

Need financials for five years, broken up into certain categories:

1. Anything like gift or contribution
2. Membership fees
3. Admissions, merchandise, and

such. (This is our big one.)

4. Investment income (interest in bank account)
5. Other income

Renewal with Secretary of State is due this year (form J-975). Can do it online. Upper left-hand corner "file amendment or renewal". Third one down in the list — non-profit domestic. Beth has taken care of this, and provided her e-mail address for official notices (order number 6327756). That this was not taken care of before December is an issue discussed under "organizational issues."

Beth is taking care of getting information from Minicon and MnStf finances for the past five years. She will report her progress.

We have received notice from the IRS that we have not filed all of our forms. Beth will talk to Carol about filling out forms.

Organizational Issues: We need an annual checklist, or some way to see that our ducks are in a row each year. This will be an agenda item for next month. The goal is to not be dependent on a person's memory to see that our things get done.

Treasurer's Report: Beth will talk to Carol about getting a treasurer's report available for the web.

Website: The most pressing issue is that our sites are currently hosted by

people who may need to re-prioritize their finances. Because we are apparently very close to resolving our IRS issues, and we will then be moving our hosting to another provider, we will reimburse our hosters \$120 to keep our accounts current.

Cafe Press: The cafe press store does exist, but does not seem to generate revenue. A follow-up email was sent to Kevin about the option of closing the store and re-opening it.

Steve MacDonald Songbooks: Beth is working on finding a low rate for mailing and will continue to update us. Hershey will pick up the song books and deliver them to Beth's house.

Radish Tree: The Radish Tree is in

February 17th, 2013

Held at 2:00pm at the home of Beth Friedman in Richfield, MN.

Attendance: Emily Stewart, Hershey Lima, Dean Gahlon, Beth Friedman, Scott Raun

Fallcon: Patricia should know that if we are forced to use the hotel from last year, she should do so before May, though someone else may reserve it before then. Ideas for other hotels were discussed. People will look at spaces and tell Patricia about them. It has been suggested that PayPal be added as an option.

501(c)3: Beth has five years of good financial information from MnStf and four years of information from Minicon. She hopes to have the fifth year of information by the end of this week. Beth will be meeting with the lawyer again this

the storage locker. Hershey will also pick up the Radish Tree to bring to Scott and Irene.

ASCAP: Minicon Head of Music job description will be amended to include ASCAP paperwork. Emily or Hershey will verify that such is taken care of at next Minicon meeting at Clay's house. Emily will send email to Matt Strait and ask that such report be filed with the board.

Pool Party & Board Nominations: Matt Weiser is in charge of arrangements for the pool party. Beth Friedman will contact him about communication.

Next Board Meeting: There are many conflicts. We will figure by email and announce.

month and will probably have another update in March.

Tax Forms: Beth believes that we may not be up to date on tax forms and will talk to Carol about it.

Organizational Issues: The annual checklist was created and will be posted to the LJ community, the Natter list and the Concom list for completion. The final version will be posted on the MnStf wiki.

Treasurer's Report for the web: Will be based on the five year report posted to the board chat list on Feb 17th.

Website: Will be moved to a new Mnstf Dreamhost account as soon as 501(c)3 status is established.

Steve MacDonald Songbooks: Beth has the Steve MacDonald songbooks and will send them via MBag to Steve.

Pool Party & Board Nominations: Carole Vandal wanted some logistic information that she will get from non-board members. Patricia and Mark Richards are hosting.

Check Signing: Currently two signers are needed to sign checks for MnStf reimbursement and none of them are the

March 16, 2013

Location: Dreampark

Attending: Hershey Lima, Kevin Austin, Beth Friedman, Dean Gahlon, Scott Raun (by phone)

We met, and settled on the officers:

- President: Patricia Zetelumen
- VP: Lydia Nickerson
- Treasurer: Carol Kennedy
- Membership Secretary: Laura Krentz
- Corresponding Secretary: Clay Harris
- Einblatt Editor: Scott Raun, with Emily Stewart printing and mailing the printed copies
- Recording Secretary: Kevin with Beth as backup (yay! you all may be able to tell from these notes that I am *not* good at notetaking)
- Archivist: Matt Strait
- Rune Editor: Matt Strait
- Botanist: Kim Huett (subject to my contacting him, which I have yet to do, but will do in the next week or so)

The above is all that I took notes of.

treasurer. The treasurer, Carol Kennedy should be added as a signer. The current signers will arrange for this to happen after the voting meeting.

Next Board Meeting: Probably at the voting meeting. March 16th after the voting meeting.

I have a vague recollection that Beth reported on the status of the 501(c)3 process, but only remember that things were proceeding apace.

Next meeting: April 6, at 2:00 PM at Joel's.

—Dean

[addendum by Beth Friedman]

What Beth said about the 501(c)3 process was the following:

1. She has received 5 years' worth of financial information in one form or another from all the necessary parties.
2. The tax attorney said they were not sorted into acceptable categories, and it would be prohibitive for her to do the work at attorney rates.
3. Beth is meeting with Pat Wrede (an accountant) on Monday, April 8, to try to get the financials sorted acceptably.
4. If that can be done, she'll schedule another meeting with the tax attorney.

April 6, 2013

Taken by Kevin G. Austin, Recording Secretary

Location: Home of Joel and Beth Phillips, 6323 Excelsior Blvd., St Louis Park, MN

In attendance: Scott Raun, Beth Friedman, Hershey Lima, Dean Gahlon, Kevin G. Austin

Meeting began at 15:40

Fallcon: Provisional approval given to the proposal by Patricia Zetelumen pending an actual hotel contract.

Non-profit status: No update from addendum in last month's minutes.

Signer change over: Dean reports: We do need all signers, new and old, present to do the change. We can do it at the branches in Lunds and By-erly's stores. This is more convenient for us because they have longer hours. We are retaining Dean Gahlon, Irene Raun, and Richard Tatge as signers. We are adding Carol Kennedy, club Treasurer, as a signer, and we are dropping Kevin G. Austin as a signer.

Minicon: We aren't sure where copies of the proposals for Minicon 49 and 50 are. Kevin will ask Matt Strait. We aren't sure of the status of the profit check for Minicon 47. Kevin will ask Matt about that as well.

Webmaster: We should have one, and it will be critical to have one when our 501(c)3 status is reaffirmed and we move to a Dreamhost account of our own. We're fairly sure that this person

will not be Eric Forste. We might look for someone to take on the move as a project, instead of being webmaster as a long term position.

Tax forms: Getting up to date on tax reporting is tied up in the 501(c)3 project and will be resolved when that is finished.

Annual checklist: Emily Stewart currently has a copy in Google Docs and will email the URL to Beth. Beth will then edit them into an appropriate format and post them in various places for comments.

Minutes for 2012: Kevin will talk to Emily about getting the minutes that have not yet been posted.

Treasurer's report for web: Kevin will review the minutes for previous meetings and see if he can clarify what he's looking for.

Steve MacDonald songbooks: Beth reports that these have been mailed.

mnstf.info: Scott reports that we lost out on this domain as well. General reaction of "meh" from the board. We didn't really care much about this domain.

Archives: It was decided that we would not move any of the archives to the storage locker.

CONvergence Party: Joel Phillips reports that he will be hosting Thursday, and Brian and Susan will be hosting Friday and Saturday.

Next meeting: May 18th, 2013 at 12:30pm at Beth Friedman's house. ■

GAMING ROOM



A Small Manifesto

By Rachel Kronick

Roleplaying is like improv, but better; it's like a children's game of make believe, but better; it's like a Choose Your Own Adventure novel, but better. There are many things that roleplaying games resemble, but RPGs are different from all of them. When a group plays an RPG, they use a set of rules to guide the story, and to tell them what's possible and what's plausible, but the story that emerges belongs solely to the group who weaves it — the story is not determined before the group come together to collaborate, nor is the story determined by the rules. The people in the group describe their characters' actions, and the game master conjures up the world that they explore. Unlike improv, there is no audience other than the people playing the game; unlike make-believe, there are rules that clarify what works and what doesn't. And unlike any pre-

written novel, computer game or even boardgame, the nuances and possibilities are endless.

RPGs are a unique artform. There really isn't any other form of art where a group of people get together to spin a story, for their own enjoyment, while they are creating it. Theatrical improv gets close, especially when the audience is invited onstage and given opportunities to make suggestions. But even then, there's a performer-audience duality going on that isn't present in RPGs. Novels can offer the complexity of RPGs, but not the unpredictability or interactivity; boardgames give unpredictability without the fine-grained infinities of possibility that RPGs give.

Roleplaying games create art that is meant to be enjoyed *while* it is being created, *by* the people creating it. Roleplaying games eliminate the border between

author and audience; roleplaying games eliminate the border between creation and appreciation. Roleplaying games are one of the most transgressive forms of art that exist.

These facts have all kinds of implications for how RPGs work, from use

of music in gaming, to how genre emulation works and doesn't work, to how we enjoy or don't enjoy other people's gaming stories. But to keep this a small manifesto, I will not go into those implications here. ■

Luck Point Economies: Encouraging Liquidity

By Rachel Kronick

In an earlier article on my RPG blog,* I discussed how much a luck (/fate/hero/plot/benny) point system can resemble a monetary economy. The recent downturn has a valuable lesson for RPG luck point economies: it doesn't matter how much money is in the economy, if it all just stays put in one sector.

I've been in a fair number of games with luck points where the GM seemed to have all the tokens, and the players had few or none. The players end up clutching their luck points through hours of gameplay, trying to decide whether this moment is the game-changing moment that will finally justify use of their incredibly precious luck point. And then they finally use it, and it doesn't really change anything, and the result of all this tension is just... disappointment. The players learn that either luck points are more precious than anything, and therefore not worth using, or incredibly pointless, and therefore not worth striving for. Luck points end up a zero or negative effect on the game, and

everyone is poorer for it.

As the recent downturn has shown us, money only helps everyone prosper if it circulates freely. In RPG terms, that means that luck points need to be exchanged frequently from GM to players and back again. How to achieve that?

GMs, just do "your job"?

The biggest remedy is, of course, for the GM to make an effort to give out luck points. In the real-world economy, the US treasury can't just print a billion dollars in bills and then plunk them all in a safe, or (equally as bad) give them to banks who in turn just plunk them in a safe. In most games, the GM is the primary source of luck points; thus, it's the GM's responsibility to make sure that luck points are flowing freely. So ideally, the GM should be giving luck points out for cool ideas, nifty quips, amazing stunts, great roleplaying and everything else that luck points reward.

This is easier said than done, however. The GM has a lot to keep track of, even without having to track who's done

*See <http://www.bladeandcrown.com/blog/?p=276>

something worthy of a luck point, and it can be very easy in the heat of the moment to forget that someone's amazing quip or stunt deserves a reward. Adding one more responsibility to the GM's load (usually heavy in even the lightest games) may even make the GM resent the need to distribute luck points, and thus shrink from it even more.

The Fate system has a particular problem with this, think. In default Fate, every character has 10 aspects, all of which can give them Fate points when used, and all of which the GM can compel to reward the player with Fate points. It might seem like this is a good idea: more ways to reward points and more ways to use them should make the exchange flow more easily, right?

But in actual play, having 10 aspects means the GM has that many more things to track. Rather than increasing the amount of luck points flowing through the economy, it's more like having multiple denominations of currency that everyone has to track. "Have you got change for a $\$ \pi$ bill?" If there are five players, the GM effectively has to keep track of 50 (!) different possible compels going on to keep the Fate points flowing. All too often, in Fate games I've been in, the GM simply forgets most of the aspects and the players become shy about spending their Fate points because they know they may not get them back. And this is true for all the GMs I've played Fate with, not any particular one.

Reduce sources of luck points

A lot of games have learned from the Fate experience and kept their luck point sources in the range of 3 to 5. Jeremy Keller's *Chronica Feudalis*, for example, gives each character three Aspects to start; the *Riddle of Steel* starts characters with five Spiritual Attributes. My system, *Blade & Crown*,* keeps the Traits to four per character. All these games work differently, of course, but Aspects, Spiritual Attributes and Traits are where characters' luck points (or near equivalent) come from in these systems. If the sources of luck points stay within a manageable range, they're more likely to get used.

Even then, though, it can be tricky for the GM to keep track of everyone's luck point sources. Cutting the number of luck point sources from 50 to 15–25 makes it *easier* to remember, but perhaps still not *easy*. More manageable, yes, but still not perfect.

How else to keep the flow of luck points steady? It can also be good to have a mechanical *requirement* that they flow — something where the rules directly cause luck points to get exchanged. Heirs to the Lost World† does this; when a character tries a Stunt and gets a very good result, they receive Heirs' equivalent of a luck point. This directly encourages players to try to do outlandish acts of derring-do, because stunts are the primary way of getting luck points. This makes it really clear what the game

*<http://www.bladeandcrown.com/>

†<http://www.obsidianserpent.com/>

is about and helps set the mood very well. James Bond 007 does a similar thing, where luck points are awarded for rolling high-level successes on skill checks. Roll a critical success, get a luck point; easy to remember.

Even here there are problems, though. If luck points are awarded when the player rolls really well, as they are in Heirs or James Bond 007, it feels like the award of luck points is out of the player's hands — like it just amounts to luck. And because luck points help make a character feel, well, luckier, it can feel like a vicious circle: roll poorly, lose luck points, stay unlucky. Heirs to the Lost World alleviates this to a good degree: by allowing players to come up with stunts, it feels less random. But if you have a bad string of rolls, it's still possible to feel like your entertaining efforts are receiving insufficient reward.

Automatic luck points?

Is it possible to have a strict, non-random, mechanical way of awarding luck points? One example I know: In Fantasy Craft, you receive a set number of Action Dice (the game's equivalent of luck points) per session. The luck points aren't really rewarding any particular kind of player behavior — they're just there, automatically.

How, then, do the luck points reward good contributions? How do players get additional Action Dice in Fantasy Craft for doing cool things? Here's the game's advice to GMs:

Everyone starts with a small pool of them but it's your job to keep them flowing. Any time you're impressed with a player or PC's behavior or performance at the table, you can award the player a bonus action die and gain one for yourself.*

(GMs in Fantasy Craft also get Action Dice.) The game then says that GMs will evolve their own criteria for awarding action dice, but gives some specific ideas.

So, even though there's an automatic, non-random way of getting luck points in Fantasy Craft, the primary method — and the method that rewards players for doing cool stuff — still seems to come down to GM fiat. And that still means the GM might forget to award them on a frequent-enough basis; the strong language used by Fantasy Craft ("it's your *job*") implies the importance, but also difficulty, of keeping the luck point economy flowing.

We've discussed random and semi-random ways of awarding luck points. We've also discussed luck point sources such as Aspects, Attributes or Traits to keep the flow steady. What other methods are there?

Players in control

How about if the players are in charge of generating their own luck points? In Blade & Crown, for example, you as a player are wholly in charge of deciding whether or not you'll use your char-

**Fantasy Craft*, p. 365.

acter's Traits to make their life more adventurous (read: dangerous). The GM and other players can offer you enticements, and suggest ways of approaching situations, but it's ultimately up to you to get those Traits back.

This can work well. In my experience with this system, I've seen players thinking through the roleplaying possibilities, trying to devise ways their character can get into trouble, and it's great fun. When they ask "Can I get tokens back by using my Trait of Gregarious to talk with those guards, even though I should be sneaking past them?" — well, that's exactly how Traits are supposed to work.

This system, too, has problems. I've seen players forget that they can get tokens back through Trait use (despite frequent reminders!). And it can be tricky when the GM and player disagree about how adventurous a Trait use is. "Telling the truth about how awesome I am is *totally* a good use of my Honest Trait!" — that kind of thing.

A major solution for luck point liquidity, seized on by lots of GMs, is to allow players to award luck points to each other. Put a bowl of tokens in the middle of the table, remind players that they can award each other and get back to other GM duties. In theory, this can work great; it's handing off narrative control to the players, after all, and players often have much less to remember than the GM.

As is becoming rapidly apparent, however, no solution is perfect. What if the players can't remember everyone

else's luck point sources? (After all, if the GM can't remember 50 luck point sources, how can anyone else?) What if one person is really good at remembering to hand out luck point awards and no one else is? That person can begin to feel like their generosity is being met with silence.

One method I'd like to try, but haven't had the opportunity: give each player a small number of luck points that they *must* distribute to their fellow players before the end of the session. (Perhaps using color-coded tokens, so players can remember who a given luck point comes from.) This could help make sure that everyone is on the lookout for nifty things each other is doing, and handing out rewards accordingly. But I can foresee problems with this method, too: players giving out tokens when another character needs rescuing, rather than when they've done something neat; giving out all your tokens in the first hour, then feeling like you can't reward your fellow players for the remainder of the session; disagreements about just what constitutes "awesome" behavior. So while it's an experiment I'd like to try, I'll go into the experiment cognizant that it is no cure-all.

The social contract

There's one major way of increasing luck point liquidity that I haven't examined yet, though I've hinted at it. It's the social contract.

In *Blade & Crown*, one thing I've noticed that helps the players ask for their

Trait tokens back is having a formal way to do so. If we first formally establish the phrase “I’d like to get tokens for doing X because it’s a negative use of my Y Trait” as *the* way to ask for tokens back, the players know they can make it clear to the GM what they’re asking for, and that the GM needs to give a clear response.

This can all be for nought, however, if it’s unclear to the players that a) they’re allowed to make these requests or b) the phrasing itself is unclear. If someone says “That was awesome!” but there’s no group agreement that “awesome!” deserves a luck point, it may be unclear if they were just making an observation or actually requesting a luck point. If there’s no agreement on just *how* amazing something has to be before it deserves a luck point, the award system may seem capricious or imbalanced.

It’s also difficult when there are wider social sanctions against asking for what you want. Here in the Midwest of the US, people like to say that they are direct, but to actually say “I did something cool, and I deserve a luck point!” is seen as self-aggrandizing and greedy. It’s also thorny when combined with social sanctions against women (and other groups) saying what we want in direct, explicit ways. Some groups can overcome these wider social expectation, but (at least in my experience) it’s difficult and rare. More often, a player who declares their own awesomeness will slowly build up a reputation as a selfish jerk, even if they’re enriching the game by doing amazing things.

These are all aspects of the social contract, a topic that I think we gamers don’t talk about enough. Another aspect of the social contract is making it clear what out-of-game behaviors deserve luck points and what don’t. If a player makes cookies for the group one session and gets no luck points for it, but someone else brings chips and gets a luck point, then it’s likely become unclear to all concerned what behaviors are sanctioned for, what are sanctioned against. If a player keeps working witty Monty Python references into the conversation, is that something to be reinforced, or something to be chastised? It helps all of us have better gaming if we can address these kinds of questions in forthright, reasoned discussion.

In sum

What has all this taught me? What seems to encourage a liquid luck point economy?

1. A manageable number of luck point sources
2. Empowering players to distribute luck points
3. Rigorous mechanical requirements that luck points be distributed
4. Formal ways for players to ask for luck points
5. Making the social contract clear to all concerned

As I said before, none of these methods is perfect, but together, and well-executed, they can create a pretty good flow of luck points. ■

Musings on the Cost of Conventions These Days

By Matthew Strait

In the last issue, I explained the current Minicon budget in excruciating detail and gave our reasons for lowering the membership rates for Minicon 48 as compared to previous years. I also looked at how the number of people who come to Minicon affects the price per member, which is where I want to jump off from here.

To recap, Minicon gets rapidly cheaper per member if we increase our membership because most of our costs are fixed rather than being per-member. In the Minicon 48 budget, we spend \$41 per member,* but only \$16 of that goes to things that increase if more people come. To put things in an easily digestible format, we're planning to spend \$11,800 plus an additional \$16.20 per member, and we're expecting to make \$900 plus an additional \$2.80 per member (t-shirts and art sales), not counting membership fees — net \$10,900 plus \$13.40/member.

So if we knew for sure exactly how many people would attend Minicon, what should we set membership fees to? In a simplified model where everyone pays the same amount, it's \$13.40 plus \$10,900 divided by the number of members.

It's more complicated than that, though, because, in fact, different people pay different amounts. To arrive at a pre-reg rate, I look at our statistics and see that the average pre-registered

member at Minicon 47 paid 81% of the standard pre-reg rate — some paid less because they were under 21, GoH or former GoH, or registered at Minicon 46 and got \$5 off. The average at-the-door member paid \$46 — less than the adult at-the-door rate of \$60 because of members under 21, day memberships, and more former GoH.

Let's assume that we leave the at-the-door rates the same. A bit of algebra says that the pre-reg rate should be:
$$\frac{[(\text{flat cost})/(\text{number of members}) + \text{cost per member} - (\text{fraction of members paying at the door}) \times (\text{average paid at the door})]}{[(\text{fraction of pre-reg rate paid on average}) \times (\text{fraction of members pre-registering})]}$$

Yes, really. Or, numerically, $\$17,275/\text{members} + \5.23 . (That looks better...). Results, then:

Members	Average	Pre-reg
100	\$122	\$178
200	\$68	\$92
300	\$50	\$63
400	\$41	\$48
462 (M47)	\$37	\$43
500	\$35	\$40
700	\$29	\$30
1000	\$24	\$23

Of course, we don't know ahead of time exactly how many members we are going to have. But in the last 7 years, the total has been sufficiently stable that we

*This figure includes the money used to run Minn-stf for a year

can figure an educated guess will probably get it within 20 people or so. And since Minnstf has savings, we have the luxury of being able to aim directly at our target income instead of having to aim high for safety. Given that, you can pretty much take the above table literally as to how I would set the pre-reg rates, except that we *usually* do things in \$5 increments.

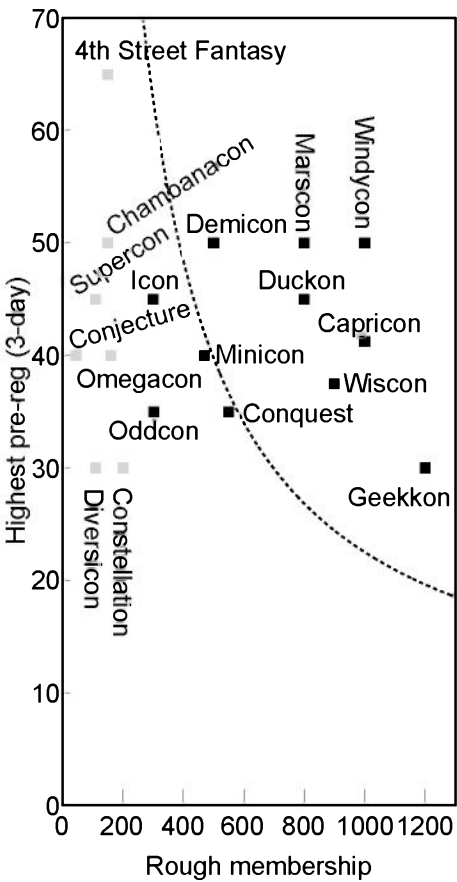
In the table, the very low end is pathological; it illustrates the fact that one would not try to hold Minicon in the RadishTree* if it had so few members, or one would negotiate a radically different contract that used only a fraction of our current function space.

I continued the table up to 1000 because I think that's about when the assumption that more members don't add to the hotel cost breaks down. One could probably quibble with this, but certainly we have quite a lot of breathing room. So if Minicon grew to near 1000 members, we could set the standard pre-reg rate at \$25.

What's With the Cost of Other Cons, then?

Surprisingly (to me), the math I described above seems to have no bearing on the actual cost of other cons. Of course, they aren't in the same space as we are, and they may choose to spend their money in different ways, but I would still expect the same general trend that, within some wide range of sizes, the cost should fall as the size increases.

Instead I find the following:



The dotted line is the result of my Minicon formula above. Here's the methodology for the data on other cons: If a con has multiple pre-reg deadlines, I've taken the final rate because I suspect that is the one most people pay. For 4-day cons, I've used $\frac{3}{4}$ of their rate for a fair comparison. Some rates may be a little out of date, but not more than a year, I think. Membership totals are often hard to come by. Some

(Minicon, Conjecture, Oddcon) are exact counts. Some (Capricon) are round numbers that the con itself advertises. Others are variously gathered from my perception of size from attending the con myself, informal guesses from concom members, or other people's guesses in con reports. I don't think that any are wrong enough to affect the conclusions.

I've marked the smallest cons in gray to indicate that I don't expect them to follow my formula. They naturally use much less space and save money accordingly. There are some larger cons on my list too (not shown) that I likewise would not expect to follow the formula. But between 300 and 1000 members, why is there no trend *at all* towards being cheaper?

But hold that thought. What about larger conventions? Surely there is *some* economy of scale to be found, even though I would not expect them to follow the line on my graph? Apparently not. Archon (St. Louis) had 2185 members last year with a pre-reg rate of \$60. Convergence, which is now a 6000 person convention, has a 3-day-equivalent pre-reg rate of \$45 (i.e. \$60 for 4 days). Worldcons hover around \$120 (\$200 for 5 days). (I don't want to talk too much about Worldcon, but I had better mention that I understand it needs convention center-style space, and in particular a ballroom or theater large enough for the Hugos, and this drives the price up. Nevertheless, I think it could be cheaper.)

Now then, what's the deal? Here's my suspicion. I think that con runners, instead of setting rates by making a budget that includes what's needed to run the con they want, instead charge what they think is the "going rate"* and then find ways to spend however much money comes in as a result. This "going rate" is apparently perceived to be \$40–45, with some wiggle room. And, of course, once a con starts paying for X, where X is whatever they wouldn't have spent money on except that they turned out to have enough for it, it is difficult to *stop* spending money on X in future years.

I was going to fill this space with speculation about where said excess money was going, but then I realized that I know enough people who run these conventions that I can probably put together some real information for the next issue rather than guessing. Instead, I'll expand on:

Why Bother Making it Cheap?

A common objection to all this is "So what that the membership is \$60? That's a small fraction of the cost of attending after you take into account the hotel rooms, travel and eating out." As I commented in last issue, yes, surely for 90% of members, it doesn't really matter. But 10% of members are poor, local (little or no travel cost), won't eat out (or only at Burger King), and aren't getting a room. For these people, the difference between \$35 and \$60 (or even \$35 and \$40) may

*Those are scare quotes.

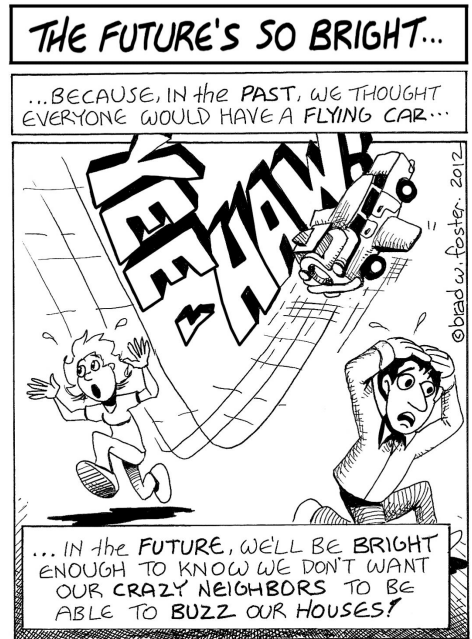
matter a good deal.

But never mind that, for the moment. A better argument, in my mind, is that Minicon should be run like a big party in which everyone chips in to cover the cost, not like a corporate show in which the organizers set rates to maximize the profit. If you throw a party and put in a group pizza order, you don't ask each of your friends to pay the "going rate" for pizza, but rather only what's needed to pay the bill. That goes even if you have very noble plans for what to do with the excess money. (If you want to charge them each an extra dollar that goes to charity, you'd better at least make that clear up front, like how I try to be clear that Minicon funds Minn-stf parties/meetings.)

To get more starry-eyed, if we set the rates so that they are just sufficient to cover costs, and our members *know* that, I hope that makes them feel more included — more like *members* and less like customers, ticket-holders, attendees, etc. I dare say it might even make people feel more personally invested in the convention so that they are inclined to volunteer. If I put down a large chunk of change for a show, I want to sit back and be entertained, but if I chip in just enough to cover renting some rooms,

flying in the GoH, and keeping the con-suite stocked, I don't feel like I'm owed so much.

The trick here is the *knowing* part, and of course for the roughly half of our members who neither come to opening/closing ceremonies nor ever read a Minicon publication in depth, this may simply not happen. On the other hand, we don't need 100% success. Every volunteer helps, and everyone who *doesn't* grumble about how much they had to pay to get in makes it a better party for everyone. ■



Progress on the Minneapolis in 2073 Worldcon Bid

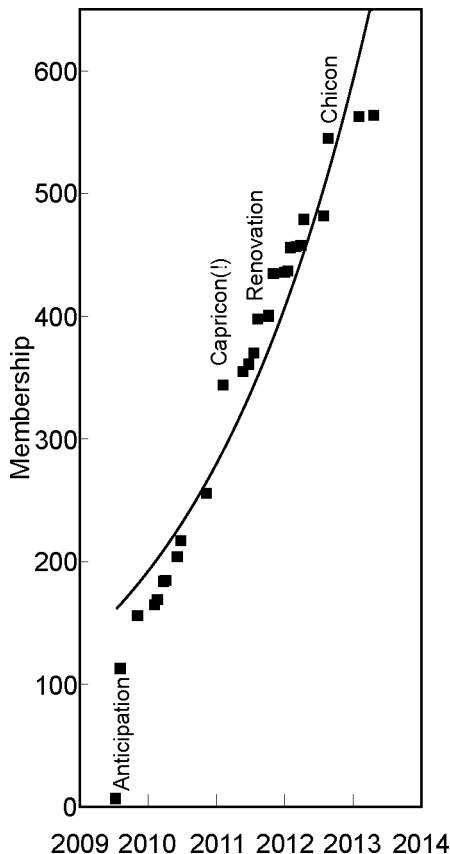
The Minnesota Science Fiction Society is bidding to hold the 2073 Worldcon in Minneapolis! Why? Well, honestly, we figured that by the time 2073 gets closer, everyone would just *assume* it would be in Minneapolis, so we thought we had better get started on the planning and not let it sneak up on us.* Barring catastrophe or temporal anomalies, this will be the 131st Worldcon.

Since our last report in October, we've continued our regular flyer mailings, took memberships at Windycon, Minicon and Oddcon, and also threw a bid party at Capricon despite the concerted efforts of the winter weather to stop us. Not too much else has happened (I think we're *still* tired from Chicon), but through no effort of ours, we seem to have progressed numerically. Because it's very easy to subtract 2013 from 2073, all of a sudden I hear a lot of people say, "Oh, that's only 60 years from now".



And now, a graph (sorry for the relatively poor record keeping during mid-2010 through mid-2011 — I had

stopped noting the membership total in my paper notes, but hadn't yet started recording the dates people joined in the database):



Using an exponential fit to the data, as shown, which is *clearly* the right function for the job, I can answer Brad's question from the letter column. I confidently predict that by 2071, we will have 1.7 trillion pre-supporters, which is well over half of the expected human population.

*Confused? <http://fancyclopedia.org/minneapolis-in-73>

Ok, the truth is that the trend is shockingly close to linear. (We included a straightedge with this issue so that you could verify that for yourself.) At this rate, 4 μmembers per second, we'll have only 8000 pre-supporters by the time of the vote. Of course, we *do* plan to step up our recruiting efforts at some point.

New Members

Standard pre-supporters

Bill Surret	Jessica Guggenheim	Sandra Levy
Blake Hausladen	Kathy Lehman	Sharon Kahn
Cliff Roth-Suda	Keri O'Brien	Shirley McKinzey
Hiteshri Parikh	Liz A. Vogel	Treisha Bacon
Jade	Michael MacKaplow	Troy M. Narik

Dodos

Brigid Potter	Laura Hawks
David Gallaher	Weal Litherland

Financial Report

Bid Revenue	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Memberships	\$312.00*	\$443.46†	\$340.01 + \$ $\frac{7}{13}$ ‡§	\$490.74	\$41.49
Donations	\$0.00	\$39.95	\$149.45	\$165.46	\$22.00
Extra Ribbon Sales	\$0.00	\$36.50	\$47.00	\$52.50	\$23.00
Expenditures					
Parties	\$0.00	\$400.09	\$320.96	\$355.15	\$24.33
Printing/mailling	\$1.36	\$55.99	\$77.93	\$401.06	\$0.00
Ribbons	\$110.00	\$130.00	\$120.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Misc	\$0.00	\$21.38	\$46.28	\$30.00	\$0.00

*Also a French Franc, a small rock, coupons with cash value 0.3 cents, 2 half dollar chocolate coins, an uncashable check for exactly \$2.073, and tuppence.

†Also a very short story on a business card, a peanut M+M, a Taiwanese dollar, a penny cut in rough thirds, and a gram of silver.

‡We are *still* holding \$6/13 in escrow for the next 6 people who need \$1/13 to complete \$2.073. Gotta remember about that...

§And 25 Iraqi Dinars.

||Plus 8.02 Israeli Shekels, 2 Pfennig, a button, and a rock that is bigger than the last rock we got, but is nevertheless still a small rock. Or perhaps the first small rock would more properly be called a pebble. This is a subject of some controversy. In any case, this second petrological object originated at the southernmost point of Canada.

Rules of Rummage (First Edition)

By Jeanne Mealy

Rummage sales. Garage sales. Porch sales. Church sales. Whatever the sign says, they seem to be everywhere in the spring and summer. You will find a mixture of old and new, useful and decorative, and downright puzzling items for sale. And the people-watching is great. Here are some guidelines to help you have a good time.

PREPARATION:

1. Finding sales. Look in the newspaper, check online by neighborhood, and look for signs at intersections and on telephone posts. Most neighborhoods have an annual rummage day with many sales. I saw a notice years ago for a Festival of Garage Sales. My significant other and I had never seen an entire neighborhood filled with sales. When fatigue and hunger caught up to us, we stopped at a little gas station where we passed a cooler full of bait on the way to the refrigerated sandwiches. This is Minnesota, Land of 10,000 Lakes. We still go to the sales, but we find other places to get food.

2. What to bring. I have seen snow flurries in early May and nearly gotten heat stroke in June. Wear comfortable shoes or sandals. Bring sunblock, water and snacks, and cash in small bills. Many people won't take checks. Most sales will offer bags. You can bring your own, especially the sturdy reusable ones. Those wheeled shopping carts can be nice, but a pain in tight spaces. Keep an eye on yours so it doesn't disappear with your

treasures.

3. Navigation: Bring a city map. Some sales offer free maps. Locate public restrooms. Most people will not allow strangers inside their homes. If you go to a gas station or fast-food place, buy something.

AT THE SALES:

1. Get there early for the best selection. Sales are generally open from 8:00 to 4:00, but many close by noon. Don't expect to get in early. If someone is setting up, you can ask if they'll let you look around. If the sale area is large, it's best to move the car or bike rather than trek 'way back to where you started.

Enjoy being out on a nice day. Admire pretty gardens and daydream about impressive houses. Make a game out of spotting the unusual object that inexplicably appears at many sales (and write an article about it for *RUNE*). Don't expect that you will find something even if you've always seen it at sales. A friend pointed out that nearly every sale will have a leopard-print item. I think the aliens are keeping an eye (?) on us.

2. Be polite. Don't walk on the lawn unless it's obviously OK to do so, and avoid damaging flowers or bushes. If you decide not to get something, put it back where you got it. And if you break it, you bought it.

3. Buyer's Remorse, Part I (Prevention): If you aren't sure you want it, hold onto it until you're sure or you may see it sold to someone else. // Buyer's

Remorse, Part II (Prioritization): It's so cheap. This is like trick-or-treating for adults! But what will you do with it? Be aware of your weakness for books, yarn, fabric, tools, etc. If you or someone you know can use it, great. Otherwise it's not a True Deal. Think twice about items that need repair or require a lot of energy to make useful. Do you really need another Project?

4. Caveat Emptor (Buyer Beware). Most sales are final. Be sure of the price and that all of the parts are there. Check the item thoroughly to avoid rips, bad smells, stains, and other damage. If it's supposed to do something, does it work? Most people will let you test electronics, vacuums, etc.

5. While bargaining isn't necessary, it can be fun and lucrative. You can also offer to buy more than one item in a group. Prices are usually quite low to start. If someone rejects your offer, be a good sport about it.

One of my best deals was after a sale closed. We were driving by in the alley and asked a woman if we could look around. She said apologetically and tiredly that almost everything was packed up. She was holding a box with dozens of small kids' toys and I asked how much she wanted for them. She said \$1 for the box. Woo-hoo! When I agreed to buy them, she brought *another* box

over! I got both boxes for \$2. My significant other's expression was priceless. I assured him I would only keep a few of the toys. I did, and donated the rest.

6. Food and drinks are sometimes sold, often by kids. Buy something and help make their day.

7. Pack out your trash or ask someone if you can toss it in their garbage bin.

8. Be safe. Keep a close watch on your wallet and lock your car, especially if you have dropped off some deals. Put items in the trunk or underneath a blanket to discourage break-ins.

AFTER THE SALES:

Boxes or piles of rummage labeled "FREE" really are free. If the sale host is nearby, offer to pay them if you take something substantial.

At home, put away your bargains as soon as you can. Wash the clothes, dishes, and cookware before using them. If you're giving things to someone else, do so. When something doesn't suit you, pass it along.

Is rummaging a hobby or a way of life? That's up to you. I go to a few of the mega sales as well as smaller individual sales. My treasures are not just the things I bought. It's the whole experience, often shared with friends. The stories of what I saw are also fun to share. For now, I have rummage fever and am off to the sales! ■



Rune #86 was published in March 2002, but before that Rune #86 there was another Rune #86, dated April 1998, that was fully produced except that it never made it from the computer onto paper (nor the web). The piece below, included in the lost Rune, has not to the best of my knowledge been published elsewhere nor found its way onto the Internet. While dated, much of it is still interesting, so I'm publishing it at last. The Mark Time Awards, by the way, are now sponsored by the Geek Partnership Society and given out at Convergence.

The Mark Time Awards

by Jerry Stearns

"The bestspecial effects are the ones inside your head. The best aliens are the ones that only you can see, and you only see them in your own mind. That's what I believe, anyway.

"And that's why we decided that we would institute an honor roll and a yearly award for the best science fiction audio. It's one of the largest genres in the whole world of audio publishing anyway. Mostly because people love to listen to it. It's movies in your mind."

—David Ossman, Minicon 32

The Mark Time Award for Best Science Fiction Audio Production of the Year grew out of a conversation at Minicon 31. David Ossman was the audio guest of honor because of his extensive credentials in writing, producing and directing SF audio over the past 30 years. He suggested the idea of an award, but says "it was sort of a lark" at the time. He and Richard Fish, proprietor of Lode-sStone Media (probably the best purveyor of SF audio in the country) and I discussed the idea for the rest of the weekend. Later I assembled some guidelines and an application form, which we developed over the summer of 1996. We received nine entries this first time. I'll tell you some more about those in a

minute.

Back in October of 1988 local SF writer Gordon R. Dickson presented one of the noted MinnStf Lecture Series talks on the subject of the collaboration between the writer and the reader. His basic premise was that he could put into a book only that which he knew and understood, but what the reader got out of that same book included their own experiences and knowledge. He could present a great deal about the characters, places and events of the story, but the reader would invariably fill in details that he had not thought of, nor could have imagined in the writing.

This same kind of interactivity happens when one listens to radio theater.

The voices, the background ambiances, the sound effects and music all present the structure of the story. But the imagination of the listener fills in all the pictures, the fine details, and finally the full meaning of that story to the listener. You become involved in the creation of the story. Marshall McLuhan would say it is a HOT medium.

This does not happen with television or films. There the creators fill in everything, unless they are unusually creative. They are COLD mediums.

Science fiction and fantasy work very well in the audio medium. As David Ossman said, "The best special effects are the ones inside your head." The image in your own mind of the Horsehead Nebula out the viewport is going to be the most spectacular, and the one you'll remember.

Radio theater is not books on tape. Although those books are there to listen to, they do not have the same ability to reach out and engage the imagination, the way a good full cast audio drama does. On the listener's end it takes a certain amount of paying attention to get the full benefit from audio. Most people listen to radio only in very small pieces, usually while driving. So unless a broadcast drama or comedy piece is very short, few people will hear the entire work. That is why the popularity of drama on tape and CD is growing. You can choose what to listen to, and play it in the location and duration that fits your schedule. And you can revisit the story later, while painting your kitchen,

and still hear something new.

One of the productions we received for the Mark Time Award contest was The Reader's Chair seven-tape reading of Lois McMaster Bujold's novel, *Shards of Honor*. This was a very good character-driven book, was unabridged and used two voices instead of the usual single voice reading. But it was a reading, not a dramatization of the book. We learned from this to be more clear in our description of what we were looking for — audio drama.

Another entry was "The Searcher", from Scott Howard of Sandy, Utah. It is part of a continuing storyline about "Searcher and Stallion" that has been on the air in Utah for a few years. It began as a narrative reading of the story, with sound effects and music. The Mark Time entry production used the narrator and some more dramatized scenes for a story of the beginning of the long search. Its biggest drawback was that it was the kind of Star Wars/Galactic Empire derivative science fiction that is everywhere in cartoons and comics.

"The Funnt Files", one of a series of episodes from Tharsis Productions of Chicago (Mark Wolverton, Producer) was really fun, but their dialogue and acting were not up to the standards we would like to see in modern audio theater. It is still worth listening to.

Cat Simril Ishikawa and Peter Stenshoel sent us "The Infinite Trilogy". Although well produced, the story was a bit difficult for me to follow. I also felt the acting was inconsistent. It did have

some really excellent dialogue and unexpected twists that I liked.

The Atlanta Radio Theater Company sent us three pieces. “Cyber Dick”, a short and unfocused detective parody, and “A Case of Abuse”, a rather heavy-handed message story, seemed to be throwaway pieces that weren’t up to what I’ve grown to expect from that Atlanta, Georgia group.

But their other entry, “The Island of Dr. Moreau” was different. It is the H.G. Wells novel adapted by Thomas E. Fuller and produced by Henry Howard. The acting is first rate. The production sound and music is rich and effective. It tells you the story, yet gives you plenty of room to fill in the details and scare yourself. And most remarkable of all, it was a full hour performed live. We gave it a Silver Mark Time Award for second place.

And finally, Jason Cole and Kevin Swan, now of Bloomington, Indiana, produced two further episodes of “The Apotheosis Saga.” We gave them the Gold Mark Time Award as the Best of the Year. Episodes 5 and 6 are each a half-hour long. The story line — a man in a highly technical future world who is given godlike powers, trying to find the other gods to determine what he should do with these powers — is highly original and fast moving. The characters and performances really keep your attention. The music and sound effects are big and dense and deeply integrated into the sound track along with the voices. It will certainly take a number of listens

to get all there is to get from this production. I look forward to the rest of the projected 12 episodes of “The Apotheosis Saga.”

Both of the winning entries can be obtained from the LodesTone Catalog, by calling 1-800-411-MIND, or on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.lodestone-media.com/>.

Minicon has been very supportive of audio science fiction in the past 17 years, allowing Dave Romm, myself, and others, to present a live radio show at the opening ceremonies. We have worked hard to bring some intelligent and funny and original work to the convention each year. We acknowledge the immense contributions to those shows of Kara Dalkey, Brian Westley, Jane Yolen, Jon Singer, Emma Bull, David Emerson, Ed Eastman and many others. We also greatly appreciate that Minicons 31 and 32 have supported Audio Guests of Honor — David Ossman of the Firesign Theatre, and Tom Lopez of ZBS Media — who both wrote new material just for our show. Tapes of these shows are available from Dave Romm or Jerry Stearns.

MinnStf has also given financial support to two audio productions of my own, “Solid State University” and “Tumbleweed Roundup” (with Brian Price). You can find out more about those, and other Science Fiction audio and radio programs on the World Wide Web, at: <http://www.mtn.org/~jstearns/>.

Many SF books on tape and radio plays are available at Uncle Hugo’s Sci-

ence Fiction Bookstore in Minneapolis. Be sure to check on the ZBS Media productions of RUBY, The Galactic Gumshoe, and the Jack Flanders mystical fantasy stories on cassette and CD there, as well.

Some of the best SF audio made in recent years is not available on tape. Kevin Singer's excellent "SCI-FI Radio," a 26-week series for NPR, has let the rights run out on the contemporary SF story adaptations that comprised the anthology series. "Alien Worlds," a pretty good series for commercial radio, at least partially written by J. Michael Straczynski (creator of Babylon 5), used to be available from The Minds Eye mail order service. But since the company was sold to new owners, they do not seem to know anything about tapes of the series any more. And I have been unable to find out much of anything about a truly excellent four-part story called "The Radio Arcade" by E Radio Theater. It's about a fellow who plays some amazing video arcade games, one of which (The Campaign Game) sucks in his father, and he spends two episodes trying to get him back out.

But there is still plenty that *is* out there to hear. There are a number of Star Wars and Star Trek audio productions available from many vendors. LodesTone Media carries tapes of Jeff Green's excellent work. "Spaxter" and "Spaxterback" are two of the best stories around. Spaxter is a future detective, with a mind-reading implant and a virtual reality glove. The writing is very

good, the production is superb. There are seven more by Jeff Green available, and all of them are marvelous. Try "The Tuning" and "Somebody Listening To You" for starters.

Also look for "Alien Voices", a new series of classic SF tales by John de Lancie and Leonard Nimoy. They are bringing back Jules Verne and H.G. Wells stories to audio.

And my favorites are RUBY, The Galactic Gumshoe by Tom Lopez at ZBS, or his fantasy adventures of Jack Flanders. My favorite, "The Incredible Adventures of Jack Flanders" is the most *sf*nal, in my opinion, and the most whimsical.

Some of these will be aired on NPR Playhouse, a regular weekly series available to NPR stations around the country. One of the four half-hours presented each week on NPR Playhouse is of the genre Sci-fi/Mystery/Adventure. Listen for ZBS' fine adaptation of the second Dinotopia book "The World Beneath" in the fall of 1997 (September-October), and the latest Jack Flanders story, "The Mystery of Jaguar Reef" in November. If your local NPR station does not carry the Playhouse, be sure to call them and ask for it.

There are studies that show that the same parts of the brain that are stimulated by reading are also stimulated by listening to radio drama. These brain areas — and most others — are deadened by watching television. The choice is clear. You hear? ■

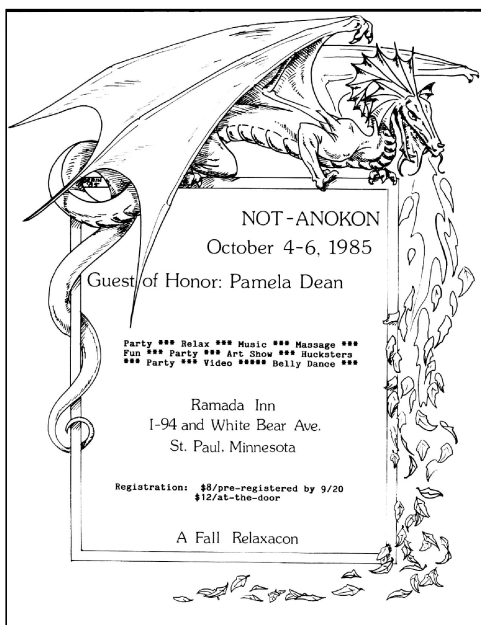
Notes from the Archivist

By Matt Strait

A lot of work has been going on recently to archive materials from our line of fallcons stretching back to 1978 (or 1971 if you count the fall Minicons). Well, first a fair amount of work went into just confirming which years we *had*

a fallcon and then figuring out what all of them were named. But we've got that list all straightened out now...probably (see following footnotes). Here, then, for the first time, is a list of the 81 (give or take) conventions that Mnstf has run:

1968: Minicon 1
1969: Minicon 2
1970: Minicon 3
1971: Minicon 4, Minicon 5
1972: Minicon 6
1973: Minicon 7
1974: Minicon 8, Minicon 9
1975: Minicon 10
1976: Minicon 11
1977: Minicon 12
1978: Minicon 13, Anokon 1
1979: Minicon 15, Anokon 2
1980: Minicon 16, Not-Anokon 1
1981: Minicon 17, Not-Anokon 2
1982: Minicon 14, Plergbcon
1983: Minicon 19, Maxicon 1
1984: Minicon 18, Maxicon 2
1985: Minicon 20, Not-Anokon '85
1986: Minicon 21, Not-Anokon 8*
1987: Minicon 22, C'ntraction
1988: Minicon 23, Consensus†
1989: Minicon 24, Confection
1990: Minicon 25, Conscription
1991: Minicon 26, ReinCONation 1
1992: Supercon 1, Minicon 27, ReinCONation 2
1993: Supercon 2, Minicon 28, ReinCONation 3
1994: Minicon 29, ReinCONation 4



NOT-ANOKON
October 4-6, 1985

Guest of Honor: Pamela Dean

Party *** Relax *** Music *** Massage ***
Fun *** Party *** Art Show *** Sucksters ***
Party *** Video ***** Belly Dance ***

Ramada Inn
1-94 and White Bear Ave.
St. Paul, Minnesota

Registration: \$8/pre-registered by 9/20
\$12/at-the-door

A Fall Relaxacon

MAXICON
Crazy Minneapolis Fandom
is at it again and you are a contributor!
You have volunteered to:

<input type="checkbox"/> Party	<input type="checkbox"/> Gopher	<input type="checkbox"/> Prep
<input type="checkbox"/> Swim	<input type="checkbox"/> Be Silly	<input type="checkbox"/> Chop
<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy	<input type="checkbox"/> EAT	

(pick one or more of all!)
Maxicon will be held Sept 23-25, 1983
Midway Motor Inn
198A University Ave.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104
Call Hotel collect for reservations: 612-645-8681

Attending
Supporting
SMM Concretly

*The evidence for this name is solely one reg confirmation postcard. It doesn't make sense to me, even as a joke, so I'd welcome confirmation or denials.

†With Don abstaining

1995: Minicon 30, ReinCONation 5
 1996: Minicon 31, ReinCONation 6
 1997: Minicon 32, Not-A-ReinCONation
 1998: Minicon 33, Flashback!
 1999: Minicon 34, Millenium Falcon/ditto 12'
 2000: Minicon 35
 2001: Minicon 36, Consume/Relaxacon 2001?
 2002: Minicon 37, Consume/Relaxacon 2002
 2003: Minicon 38, Consume/Relaxacon 2003?
 2004: Minicon 39
 2005: Minicon 40
 2006: Minicon 41, Convivial 1
 2007: Minicon 42, Convivial 2
 2008: Minicon 43, Convivial 3
 2009: Minicon 44, Convivial 4
 2010: Minicon 45, Conjecture 1
 2011: Minicon 46, Conjecture 2
 2012: Minicon 47, Conjecture 3
 2013: Minicon 48 (so far)



You can see detailed information for the fallcons, when known, and scans of some of their publications at mn-stf.org/fallcon. We have the dates for every con, and, for all except Anokon 1, we have at least a few more tidbits of information, such as the name of the hotel or who chaired it.

Given especially that some of these fallcons fell rather heavily on the party-with-a-name-ending-in-“con” end of the PWANEI‘c’/serious-convention spectrum (unless I’m mistaken — I wasn’t there — but that’s the impression I get), the fact that we have a list of any sort could be construed as a miracle of the Internet. I’m reminded of an early RUNE I read

(I wish I could find it again, but in any case it was published in the mid ’70s) in which a letter writer asked for a list of some basic information about the Minicons that had happened so far. The editor made an attempt, but already, at that point, it was difficult to find the dates and location of some of them!

In the last six months, new scans have been added for Not-Anokon 1, Plergbcon, Maxicon 1, Not-Anokon ’85, Not-Anokon 8, Consensus,‡, Confection, Conscription, ReinCONation 1, ReinCONation 2, and ReinCONation 6. Many thanks to Kevin Austin for scanning and Geri Sullivan for lending material for scanning. More to come! ■

*Sic. Not “Millennium”

†It is not clear if this was or was not officially a Minn-stf convention. Ditto for 2003.

‡with Don abstaining

Minn-stf events

We hold bimonthly parties, usually at members' houses. They are called "meetings", but don't let that fool you. The typical party runs from 4pm to after midnight and contains a 5 minute business meeting (mostly to announce the next meeting location) at 5pm.

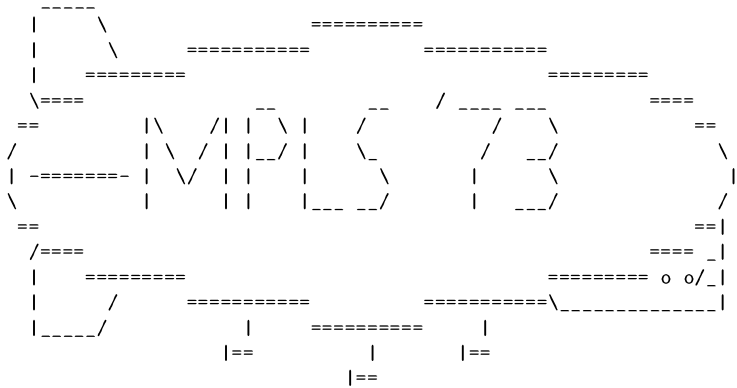
To find the next meeting, look at the front page of our website, mnstf.org, or the Einblatt, mnstf.org/einblatt, for up-to-date information. You can subscribe to get the Einblatt monthly by e-mail or, for \$10/year, on paper. If you are lucky enough to be reading this before June 15, the next meeting is at Emily Stewart & Aaron Vander Giessen's, 2829 Alabama Avenue S, St Louis Park, starting at 4pm.

Our summer picnic will be held Saturday, July 20, at Minnehaha Park, Picnic Area #2 (same place as the last few years), between Nawadaha Blvd and Godfrey Pkwy. It will start at noon and continue through around 8pm. Snacks and beverages are provided; bring your own food to grill. People will insist on still playing board games, even though

we are outside, but we will also likely play croquet, bocce ball, horseshoes, and the like.

Upcoming MNstf conventions:

- October 18–20 is, provisionally, **METHOD Con**, our fallcon for 2013. It is a small science fiction and fantasy convention geared towards relaxation. There will be food, music, gaming, and even some programming. Stand by for hotel and registration information.
- Easter weekend 2014, March 17¹/₂–20, is **Minicon 49** (mnstf.org/minicon49). Guests of honor: author Catherynne Valente, author Janny Wurts, artist Don Maitz. Minicon is a general-purpose science fiction and fantasy convention and our biggest event of the year. See the ad/registration form in this issue.
- Easter weekend 2015, April 2–5 (4 days): **Minicon 50**. Guests of honor: authors Jane Yolen, Larry Niven, and Brandon Sanderson, musician Adam Stemple, publisher Tom Doherty.



MINICON 49

April 17½-20, 2014

Author Guest of Honor: Catherynne Valente

Author Guest of Honor: Janny Wurts

Artist Guest of Honor: Don Maitz

Become a member of Minicon 49! Postmarked by March 17, 2014:

- ☐ Adult \$40 ☐ Student (13-20) \$20 ☐ Supporting \$15 (convert to
☐ Kid (6-12) \$10 ☐ Child (0-5) free attending for additional \$40)

☐ Can you help us with a \$10 additional donation? We will use it to help keep our low membership rates in place or even to lower them if enough people chip in who can.

Make checks to: Minicon 49, PO Box 8297, Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408-0297 or register at mnstf.org/minicon49

Rates at the door: \$60 full adult membership; \$45 if arriving on Saturday; \$20 on Sunday. \$25 full student membership, \$15 kid, \$0 child. Th/F-only: \$30.

☐ Do not list me as a member on the web or in print publications

Please contact me, because I want to:

- ☐ Volunteer ☐ Be on programming or share panel ideas
☐ Throw a room party ☐ Know more about kids' programming

First Name Middle Last

Badge Name (if left blank, we will use your full name above)

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City State/Province Postal Code

Country (if not USA) Phone Number

Email Address

Birthdate*: Year month day Sex* When was your 1st Minicon?*

* Optional: For demographics; can also help plan kids programming.

☞ Please take our registration survey: mnstf.org/minicon49/regsurvey.php

☞ For more details about Minicon registration, see our FAQ at mnstf.org/minicon49/

☞ Hotel information to follow. Watch the progress reports and website.

Next up, Minicon 50: Apr 2-5, 2015, author GoHs Jane Yolen, Larry Niven, and Brandon Sanderson; musician GoH Adam Stemple; publisher GoH Tom Doherty.

Rune/MPLS2073
c/o Matthew Strait
1228 E 54th St #1E
Chicago IL 60615

