

# THE WSFA JOURNAL

The Official Newsletter of the Washington Science Fiction Association

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Available from the secretary: Mary Morman, 1802 Sanford Road, Silver Spring, MD 20902-4008

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## MINUTES

Minutes of the WSFA Meeting held Friday September 2nd, 1988 in Room 4830 of the Sheraton New Orleans at Nolacon II, the 46th World Science Fiction Convention. John Pomeranz, acting as Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 9:28pm

Lots of people were there, including revelers attending the concurrent DISCON III party.

The Treasurer's unofficial delegate reported that we had lots of money. The Entertainment Committee announced it was bringing you the Worldcon. (Those handing out blame take note)

Past Disclave Chair reported that everybody had fun.

Future Disclave Chair announced the guests and dates for the convention and told everybody to come.

Mr. Heneghan moved to dump the Constitution. A motion was passed unanimously to table Mr. Heneghan.

Mr. Walsh announced that he was selling books downstairs.

The meeting officially welcomed special guest President Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson and made him an honorary member of WSFA for the duration of the convention.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm. The party was adjourned sometime after the Redskin game Monday night/Tuesday morning.

## MORE MINUTES

The third Friday meeting in September was called to order at the home of Kent Bloom and Mary Morman at 9:08 pm on the 16th of September. The secretary announced that the September WSFA journal was available and John Pomeranz produced the minutes from the meeting at NOLACon. The treasurer was missing. The trustees announced that the 3rd Friday in October will be the election for 1990 Disclave Chair. Please give your nominations to Steven Fetheroff, Judy Newton, or Mel Scharadin. Nominations will also be open from the floor.

Tom Schaad reported for **DISCLAVE PAST**. He says NESFA will pay us about \$2500 from their credit card receipts for us and that he hopes to turn over to the club an amount of approximately \$2500. Someone asked if NESFA would pay interest on the time they have held the money, and Tom replied that it was inappropriate in that NESFA had done us a favor in letting us use their card.

Mike Walsh reported for **DISCLAVE FUTURE**. He chatted with the new people at the old hotel with the new name yesterday. They are very eager to have us back, and will send us a proposal. The room rate will be \$62 instead of \$60. They have started some room renovations.

Kent Bloom reported for **DISCON III**. They had a 'presence' at NOLACon. He thanked John Pomeranz - who received a round of applause. He also thanked Evan and Joe and everyone else. He felt that there was a big turnout and that we made a big impression.

Alexis Gilliland reported for the **ENTERTAINMENT** committee. We have been invited to a preview showing of *Alein Nation* to be held on Tuesday, September 27th at 7:30 pm at the Westend Theatre at 23rd and L streets NW. Chris Taylor, from the relevant studio was there to ask us to dress up in alien costumes and stand around outside the theatre.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

The Sturdy Wooden Cabinet Committee reported that the Sturdy Wooden Cabinet had arrived, was in the dining room, and was full of the WSFA files. WSFA owes Kent Bloom \$201.00.

The Publications Committee had published five alternative solutions to the problem of whether or not to buy a computer for the *WSFA Journal* in the September issue of the *Journal*. Mary Morman asked for a vote on these alternatives at the next meeting. Joe Mayhew moved that the issues be voted on top-down one at a time. Barry Newton seconded the motion. Erica VonDommalen told us there was too much at stake and we couldn't just make a decision without debating the monetary issues first. She wanted a discussion of IF we should do something, not WHAT we should do. She wanted to present financial information before the issue is raised. Someone pointed out that there was a motion on the floor. With much discussion and some animosity, the following motion was passed with 20 votes for and 7 against:

**At the first Friday meeting in October WSFA will vote on proposition #1, as published in the September WSFA Journal, and if this proposition is defeated, then WSFA will vote on proposition #2, if it is defeated, then WSFA will vote on a ballot choice of propositions #3, #4, or #5.**

The propositions, as previously published in the *Journal*, are printed again here:

- 1 WSFA should not purchase any further computer equipment at this time.
- 2 WSFA should allot a maximum amount of money and leave it to the computer committee to purchase an appropriate computer.
- 3 WSFA should authorize \$2500 to purchase a MACINTOSH publishing system (without a printer).
- 4 WSFA should authorize \$1500 to purchase an IBM publishing system (without a printer).
- 5 WSFA should authorize \$2500 to purchase a laser printer and publishing software to use with our existing IBM clone.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Evan proposed we buy soda dispensing equipment. Coke won't provide it free anymore. Pepsi will, but theirs doesn't work very well. It will cost \$2400 for a good system. \$1200 for not so good a system. Soda from a machine costs about 1/3 of what bottled soda costs. Mike moved to table this until the computer issue is settled. Evan will write the proposal out for the next *WSFA Journal* so we can weight the issues.

Tom Schaad told us that NESFA is trying to raise money to defray the legal costs incurred over a contract problem with their hotel. This is an issue that specifically effects all WorldCons, and by implication, all science fiction cons. Atlanta made a profit of \$90,000 on their convention. LA made over \$100,000. Both committees were downright nasty in their negative reply to an appeal for funds. Tom proposes we wait a couple of months until other issues are settled, and then make at least a token donation to NESFA. The idea is that WorldCon money should go to support WorldCons, not to make an individual club rich. He will bring this up as Old Business in November, and will attempt to write up the issue for the *Journal* ahead of time.

Joe Mayhew wants permission to use the Disclave database for use with the Unicon mailing list to contact people and the get both data bases cleared of old and invalid addresses. Seconded by Steven Fetheroff. Carried unanimously after some discussion.

The president solicited volunteers for the September fifth friday party. Jack said that Elaine said no. Steve Smith was volunteered - he agreed but warned us he will be out of town and his door will be locked. The party will be at Peggy Rae Pavlat's but we will all have to leave at 2am.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mike Walsh has a new job selling books for Johns Hopkins Universtiy Press. He has books for .75 or three for \$1.00. \*\*\* Brian Lewis is now the first assistant manager of a Crown Books store. \*\*\* Alexis has heard from Avedon. She is alive. \*\*\* Steven Fetheroff says his birthday starts at midnight. \*\*\* Matt Lawrence also has a new job and a new place to live. He would like you to loan him furniture. He has a truck. \*\*\* Steve Smith says he has no entiries yet in his 500 word essay contest to determine a good home for his enormous number of bookcases. The deadline is October 1st Friday and if he doesn't get any entries the bookcases leave the science fiction family for the Salvation Army. \*\*\* Jim Elmore won an art award at NOLACON and is retiring. \*\*\* Kate Terrell recommends Daedalus Books, and has a catalog. \*\*\* Erica says that the Book Stop is moving and books are 40% off. \*\*\* Dan Hoey wants to know if there is anyone who will go over DISCON names with him. \*\*\* Joe Mayhew is buying a house and will soon reside at 75 Research Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770 with a phone number of 301-474-2110. His brother has a new roommate. \*\*\* John says that, just to balance all the new jobs, he is recently unemployed and looking for a programming job.

The meeting adjourned at 10:23pm.

## FRACTAL FANDOM submitted by Lance Oszko

Describing the Universe in 500 Megabytes or less. Excerpts from a lecture at George Washington University: "Fractals - Just Say No" or "The Three Scourges of the Eighties - AIDS, Herpes, and Fractals". Once again we push back the envelope of fadom. Having received mildly favorable comments about computer animation as a con program ite, one arcane word kept being murmured by computer cognoscenti - siggraph, siggraph the cutting edge, **SIGGRAPH THE BOLD**, SIGGRAPH - THE SPECIAL INTERST GROUP FOR COMPUTER GRAPHICS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF COMPUTING MACHINERY!

Consulting the book of forbidden knowledge (the Encyclopedia of Associatins with 30,000 entries), paging by the Gay and Lesbian Engineer's Society, the Doris Day fan club, the American Peruvian Freindship Society, the American Science Fiction Association (ASFA); we arrive at Siggraph's 17 local chapters.

After making the required number of offerings to the diety of telephonic projections, it was revealed, as in a dream, that Siggraph would possibly gather in secret discourse. Piercing this veil of anonymity and wrong numbers, the computer wizards did convene at the appointed place, an ivory tower room 640, at the setting of the sun.

An IEEE Sorceress, formerly of the University of Georgia, held forth on the application of fractal geometry in modeling reality and imagination. Using properly derived mathematical transformations, it is possible to create accurate representations using vastly less information. An aerial photograph of 130 megabytes was reduced 10,000 fold to 13 kilobytes.

This process, along with an artificial intelligence program to automate the pattern recognition and derivation of the appropriate mathematical transformations, would enable television transmission over phone lines. Data storage and transmission would also be greatly enhanced.

The state of the craft is such that a depiction of an arctic wolf appeared as a high quality illustration. The satin hat of a bolivian girl had the proper sheen and highlights. A sunflower was replicted to an infinite field with perturbations to the fractal equations so thatwhile all were sunflowers, no two were exactly alike. A wind swept paisley plateau shrouded in fog would win high honors in any art show.

The grand chapter head Nathan Golan has a wide collection of computer graphic videos on 3/4 inch tape. Moreover he is willing to arrange displays at SF conventions. He attended Constellation as a part of a space interest group. Siggraph plans to organize a film festival, possibly with the Air and Space Museum, as a fund raiser. Memberships are available in Siggraph. You can contact them at 301-530-0262. Siggraph has a bimonthly meeting and a newsletter.

## A LETTER FROM STEVEN FETHEROFF

The secretary of WSFA has suggested that the club purchase an Apple computer on which to do the WSFA journal. I do not feel this is a good idea at the present time for many reasons. My objections can be broken down into three categories.

### A) MONEY

- The price of the computer, quoted by Mary Morman as \$2500, is 20-25% of the money WSFA has in the bank.
- The club is heavily involved financially in the Discon III bid. If the club buys a computer and the bid needs more money, it could seriously deplete what reserves we have left in the bank.
- WSFA spends approximately \$3500 a year for such things as cookies and beer. This does not include entertainment, lawyer's fees and other expenses incurred throughout the year.
- We need to keep money in the bank as a reserve for emergencies and unexpected expenses, such as a liability suit, a Disclave loses money or the hotel cancels out contract. We need to be prepared for those kinds of problems if we are to avoid bankruptcy.
- The price of the system is not the system's total price: there is also a laser printer to be purchased when Mary is no longer secretary.

The money in the bank is not Monopoly money but it is often treated as such. We have an obligation to ourselves to make sure that we remain able to pay our way in the real world and fandom. Just because we have the money does not mean that we should spend it all. We are in a sense a business and we must show fiscal responsibility. It would be nice to have an APPLE but that does not mean that we should spend \$2500 on one. We need a financial buffer, especially because for the last two years Disclave has not made a profit, equalling WSFA's annual expenses.

### B) USE

- The WSFA Journal is a one to four page newsletter put out one a month. Can we justify spending \$2500 on a computer to do this amount of work?
- What will happen to the computer next year? Will the new secretary need or even want an apple?

Using the Apple for other things, such as signs or a fanzine, is a good idea, but trying to arrange the time for others to use the computer would be difficult. These difficulties may make those uses impossible.

### C) WE HAVE A COMPUTER

- WSFA owns a computer which currently resides at the secretary's home. The computer was purchased by the club for Disclave and WSFA.
- If a computer is really necessary to produce the WSFA journal the one we have probably can be adapted for under \$300. I own a PC clone and with my monochrome screen and ATI graphics card (\$125) I can do all the graphics required to do the WSFA journal with or without desktop publishing software. If our computer can be adapted to run desktop publishing software, then maybe that would be a better way to go.

The club should not be forced to spend thousands of dollars for the convenience of one member. Other secretaries have done just fine with a typewriter and will continue to do fine without an Apple. Another reason that has been put forth for getting the computer is that with an Apple computer the journal could be so much better and the club could do so much more. I agree the journal would look nice and professional since almost no one contributes anything and the journal consists mostly of the minutes. Would that change if we had a computer.

There are enough computers among club members to do just about anything we need to do. It is, in my opinion, a bad idea to buy a computer system costing potentially \$5000 for the WSFA Journal. The computer that we have with its word processing program is sufficient to do the job. If we want something more, then our computer should be upgraded; if it is impossible to upgrade, then we can get by with what we have. I feel we can get by for a long time with out an Apple computer to do the WSFA Journal.

## SOME COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARY

I find a great deal to agree with in Steven's letter, but would like to address one or two points directly. Yes, of course, we can get along without a computer for the *WSFA Journal* and yes, of course, if it costs too much money we shouldn't buy one. But "too much" is a relative term - I think that it's up to the membership of WSFA to make an informed decision on how much of the club treasury they want to spend on this, or any other, project. Conversely, I think it is up to the membership of WSFA to decide how much of a 'sink' of funds we need to keep on hand. Steven feels that \$2500 is too much to spend. I don't. WSFAns will vote, and we'll find out who agrees and disagrees. That's what voting is all about.

Just so that both sides appear in print, here are my comments. Starting from the top, I have no desire to dispute most of what Steve says about WSFA's financial situation. If this seems like too much money to most WSFAns, then let's put it off until another year. But I **DO** have confidence in the ability of the WSFA members to make an informed decision about how club funds should be spent. I do **NOT** think that we will decide to spend it like 'Monopoly money'. Disclave is WSFA's single big money-raising activity of the year - and the people who make Disclave work, who bring the money in by their volunteered labor, are the members of WSFA. We have a stake in these funds, we earned them for the club, and we can decide how to spend - or not spend - them. As a last point, WSFA has donated funds to DISCON III - but WSFA does not have either a moral or contractual obligation to donate more money - or an unlimited amount of money - to DISCON III in the future. It is one of several ongoing club activities that need to be considered in making this decision; it is not a financial obligation.

Steven's points about the use of the computer are all valid. We do not **HAVE** to have this computer. *The WSFA Journal* will come out whether we get it or not. The whole point of the computer is to make the job of secretary/newsletter publisher easier - less of a trial. WSFA has had trouble in the past several years finding a volunteer (read that: chump) to take the job. It's time consuming and laborious to put out the one to four page journal that includes little else than meeting minutes. Joe Mayhew has taken on the job a number of times because he couldn't find anyone to pass it on to. As past secretary and current secretary, Joe and I both feel that having a good computerized system would make the job less time-consuming, and leave more of our time to try to find - or write - other things to publish. It may also make the job of secretary slightly more attractive. If you don't think so, then by all means vote against the computer. It's no really big deal one way or the other.

On point C, I find I must totally disagree. The current WSFA computer and dot matrix printer do not reside at the home of the secretary - they reside at the home of the Disclave Registrar. I also happen to reside at the home of the Disclave Registrar. Both of us work forty to fifty hour weeks, have the same family and housekeeping obligations, and thus exactly the same blocks of time available to do home computing. Even if the computer (which is a whiz at data bases but no tough shakes at word processing) were available to me on a regular basis, I think Steven is way out of his depth in saying that it could be converted for \$300. I think it would cost five times that much and still would not solve the problem of having only one machine available. Don't take my word, talk to your favorite computer guru.

I recommend allotting \$2500 to buy a MacIntosh computer for club publications. I do not think that this will deplete the club treasury to a dangerous level, and I do think it will make the job of secretary easier and more attractive. I hope that most of you will agree with me and vote accordingly, but if you don't - that's okay too. It didn't hurt to ask, and it has filled the pages of at least two issues of the journal!

## FANNISH LITERACY PROJECT

Michael DuCharme of Madison, Wisconsin would like to enlist our help in a private publishing project. He intends to compile a list of the 1000 (or so) Essential Terms of F&SF Fandom. He's looking for responses in the following categories: Fannish Activities & Phraseology (conventions, fanzines, fangroups, etc.); Fan History and Lore; Media (TV, film, radio, etc.); Important Dates; and SF and Fantasy in all its written forms.

This Fannish Literacy List should be composed of the basic information a being must possess to thrive in the fannish world. **EXAMPLE:** Upon hearing that there is an award for SF Poetry called the Rhysling Award, a fan should know why it is called the Rhysling Award -- or ideally, be able to deduce what it is an award for when hearing what it is called.

To get your synapses firing, here is a (very incomplete) starter list: FIAWOL; FIJAGDH; Robert Heinlein; 1/26/86; The Futurians; Bheer; WorldCon Site Selection Rules; *Who Goes There?*; Ben Bova; Lt. Commander Montgomery Scott; *Hyphen*; "Smooth"; Hugo; neofan; *2001*; WorldCon; etc. \*\*\*\* He hopes that these examples make the idea clear and that you will send your ideas to him at: Michael J. DuCharme, 214 North Brearly, Madison, WI 53703

## A LETTER FROM STEVEN VAUGHAN-NICHOLS

Ok guys, time out. Put the keyboards down and take that mouse cable from around your buddy's neck. Take a deep breath and count to ten. Now then, if we're all calm, let's talk about whether or not WSFA should buy a new computer and/or software.

The first question we need to ask is what will we be using any new hardware or software for. As far as I can tell the arguments which have been put forth for getting a new computer boil down to doing the work we are now doing on our IBM XT clone. And what is that? Putting out the WSFA Journal, with a circulation which can't be more than a hundred, and keeping a few mailing lists. The next argument in this chain is that a new machine will let us do these things better and faster. Well, yes it will. No question about it. Shouldn't we do it then? My answer to that question is a story which makes the rounds of the computer consultant trade. Once upon a time there was an executive who wanted a certain project done. He called in one consultant, and this one told him that it would be no problem at all to get the job done. That one was sent packing. His secretary then brought in the next consultant. After listening to the job description, this consultant scratched her head, and said there was no way the project could be done. She left in a hurry by the door. So finally the manager calls in the last consultant. This one listened carefully to what the company wanted done and said yes, it could be done, and then said, "and here is what it will cost you." He got to direct the project, and lived happily ever after in his Potomac mansion.

Is it worth the money is the real question. The software/hardware combination most often mentioned will run at least 3000 dollars. About 30% of WSFA's current resources. The MacIntosh package or an equivalent AT combo are the only real choices if WSFA does decide to do this. I know, I know, you're positive that your Amiga, your Commodore 64, or your Cray that you smuggled out of work in pieces can do the job. If WSFA were buying its first computer then you would have valid points, but remember the argument for doing this. It's to upgrade from word processing and basic data base processing to desktop publishing and advanced data base management. The sad truth is that these top of the line programs run only on Macs and MS-DOS machines. A side issue resulting from this is that it will do no good to just buy Windows and Pagemaker for our current pc. I don't know the WSFA computer's exact specifications, but I do know that it's a slow machine. There's a place in hell just laid out for editors which feature 8088 based computers crawling their way through fat documents using Ventura or Pagemaker.

In essence, it all boils down to whether the work which will be produced from any hypothetical new system is going to be worth the investment. The odds are that I won't be there to cast my vote, as a morning person trapped in an organization of night people, I find myself home more often than not at 9pm on Friday night, but do think about it.

Finally, two other points. One, let's get this settled quickly. None of us like fussing at each other at a WSFA. I suggest that we vote on to do it or not to do it at the next meeting, decide a ball park figure if we decide to go through with this, and then appoint a committee with full power to decide on the specifics of hardware and software and the power to make the actual purchases. We can then return to the true business of WSFA: flirting, drinking, story telling, and smofing. My second point is a suggestion. Rather than spending so much of our capital on this investment, we, or those in WSFA who can't live without a new system, could also start a fund raising campaign for the express purpose of getting together the cash for a fancier system. Chocolate chip cookies for computer chips anyone?

## MORE COMMENTS FROM THE SECRETARY

I agree wholeheartedly with Steven's sentiment: let's decide whether or not we want to do this, get the decision over with, and get back to being fannish. A vote is just a way for the club to say how they really feel on an issue - rather than having one person say "I think we ought to do so and so and I'm sure everyone agrees." Whichever way the decision goes - let's not take it personally.