

DITTO II

Post-Con Notes

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This is the Ditto wrapup. Today is November 8, so it's been almost a month since the convention weekend. Beside the known commitments (work and a week-long trip to Boston), there was that major interruption to our lives on Tuesday, October 17. After making sure Gary and my family in Hayward were OK, I heaved a sigh of relief that the con had ended before the quake hit. The idea of all those people in the top of a downtown high-rise was nightmarish. You see, I'd worried about coordinating 50 fans four blocks to the banquet restaurant. Getting them safely out of the con suite and down 26 flights... Well, it didn't happen that way.

I'm pleased with the way it turned out. I hope you are too. And, folks, we're looking forward to reading con reports in your fanzines! In case you felt your mailing list was incomplete, we're including addresses with this membership list. By mailing it out after the con, we're able to include at-the-door members. Hopefully, since you're home and as organized as you ever are, you'll be able to add people or update your addresses.

DITTO III will take place in the Chicago area. Dick and Leah Smith will be the co chairpersons for that convention. Their flyer indicates that it will also be held in October. Room rates at the hotel, the Allgauer Hotel, will be approximately \$70. For information, write Dick & Leah Smith, whose addresses are in the mailing list.

And don't forget Corflu 7 in Manhattan. For information on that you can write Moshe Feder or Lise Eisenberg, whose addresses are also in the enclosed mailing list.

Thanks again to all those who helped and those who donated items for the auction both for Ditto and for DUFF.

The Big Ditto One Shot In the Sky

(26 Floors Up, To Be Exact)

for Ditto 2, San Francisco

October 13-15, 1989

Abstract:
Colorless green ideas
swim furiously.
--Noam Chomsky

[Who invited him?--Ed.]

Friday
October 13, 1989

The first afternoon of Ditto 2 and the computer is set up for anyone who wants to contribute to the one-shot.

Ok, What I want to know is, has Phil Paine REALLY traveled to Upper Volta and not contracted river blindness? Is it true that Rich Coad used to be svelt? Did Gary Mattingly say "Huh?" when he was slapped upon birth? Did Don Fitch ever have a beard?

And what about Moshe Feder? Was it too much Coke that made him reveal to the masses that he thought Manhattan was a great place for a fanzine convention? Was married life an easy way for Bill Bowers to Gafiate? Was he tired of all those geeks hanging off of his gaunt, rather spindled elbows? --wmb

[Don Fitch cannot remember ever having a beard -- but then, today is Friday the 13th, and the moon is full. -- DF]

Blessings upon Bryan, purveyor of fine books, cool postcards, and irretrievably mixed up gossip. Where would we be without him?

Exeunt Bryan to attain oneness with real food. Enter Alan Bostick, who always writes in the third person.

How peculiar, he thought, that one-shots are now being produced on Micro 386 computers with NEC MultiSync 2A VGA monitors. Things were different in his day, he thought, thinking back over those days of yore when he had to walk ten miles through the pouring rain to the knacker's to get horses hooves to make gelatine to make a hektograph to make twenty-seven copies of purple thumb-prints.

Bostick continued his musings, the musings of an old fart. An old fart! Face it, he thought, he was an old fart now. He couldn't adjust, he never would be able to adjust to this new-fangled gimmickery. Word Pluperfect 5.0! What ever happened to the days of typing one-shots directly on stencil? I tell you, boy, (Bostick wrote, slipping out of third person in his excitement) I tell you, we could write in those days! We had to! Every false letter we typed would be permanently on stencil, and recorded in perpetuity in the resulting one-shot for all the future generations to read. Now, however, these kids who call themselves writers are wimps! Nothing permanent until it is printed out, and sometimes not even then! You can change anything! [Bostick, it is clear, never heard of corflu in those good old days.]

A wicked thought occurred to him, the demon of temptation. You could change anything, even something someone else wrote!

The temptation proved too much for Bostick. After all, he thought, this newfangled technology has us old farts at a disadvantage. We got to make use of every chance we get. And, chuckling with glee, he messed with Bill Breiding's contribution, weakening the jokes, dulling the language, and with one swift block delete (Ctrl-F4!) removed the funniest paragraph.

Hee hee hee, Bostick wheezed, once again, old age and treachery defeats youth and skill. . .

God, he interlineated, my second one-shit in a week. This could become habitual...

Speaking of constipation.

Why is it that Bryan Barrett has the unerring ability to pick restaurants that have dancing coackroaches.

Ditto 2 meets the Effinger test of quality . . . a good restaurant guide.

What it is, is what it is.

The rest is silence.

Joke time: Why is it you hardly ever see any blind skydivers?
Answer: Because it scares the shit out of their dogs.

the pantheon, "born to dupe."

SCHROEDINGER'S ELEVATOR

Ever since I attended the physics summit conference at the Boston worldcon with Greg Benford, Sidney Coleman and John Cramer, I have been hearing more and more about the uncertainty principle and the state of the universe. Is it true that we are all granular and can be defined with only finite precision? Yesterday, Gary Mattingly observed that whenever fans enter a convention hotel the elevators immediately become inoperable. According to what Greg Benford told me, we have no way of proving this. It is only our knowledge of the state of the elevators which breaks down.

If conventions to come remain indiscreet, perhaps the problem with the cat may continue to seem like Greek to the layfan. Today Rich Coad has corrected my spelling of the word "discreet". Last night Ctein appeared to assure me that whenever this conversation comes around the cat must surely be indiscrete. (Get it? Look in dis crete and see if da cat's still functioning)

--lennyb

"What is to be done?" asks the first issue of *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, somewhat querulously, I thought. "About what?", I mentally reply, but it turns out that David Hartwell and the dedicated cast of dozens merely mean this headline to introduce a discussion of their plans for future issues. What IS to be done? About the state of science fiction, the simultaneous advancing average of fans who actually read and the decline in the percentage of younger fans who read anything at all -- my favorite neofan is a film buff, God help me; what is to be done about 7000-person Worldcons where nobody can find any of the people they spent their vacation time and \$ to renew contact with; what is to be done about the proliferation of mediocre editors jockeying to fill the shoes of the late Terry Carr vis-a-vis first-time novelists (both to give them heart and tell the rest of us that their stuff is worth spending our time reading)?

SIDEBAR?: Richard Thompson appeared recently at Berkeley Community Theater and introduced one song saying, "This song addresses the question of Rock and Roll menopause." He paused, then continued, "and let me tell you, it doesn't get much of an answer!"

The trouble is, there are always more questions than answers, and the real question is some kind of unspecified dissatisfaction with the present and a glorified remembrance of our past satisfaction level (which probably wasn't any higher than it is now). DITTO is part of the answer. Cons like this one are the flipside of giant worldcons. At the banquet today, we counted four other cons this same weekend around the country, none of them over 100 people. Hallelujah DITTO!

--Rachel Holmen

If they caught any fish, they'll tell you.

--Marion Holmen (my mother)

Now, I have not read any of the preceeding material except what I can see on the screen (which starts with "of the late Terry Carr"), so I may be repeating something that someone else has already said. I will agree with Rachel that there are always more questions than answers. In fact, I will go farther: most of the questions are better than most of the answers. Whether this constitutes a problem, however, may be a matter of outlook. (In fact, more and more of the problems I find in my life begin to appear to be matters of outlook or stance rather than of fact or truth.)

The question of oneshots is, again, another matter. I decline to address this issue.

I also think I should refuse to commit too much neep-need here, so I won't talk too much about the machine I'm typing on, except to comment that the spacebar doesn't seem to work too well.

I am tempted to talk about convention size or about food; these are easy and favorite topics. This convention is the smallest that I have been to in many years, and I like that in both senses (that it is small, and that there are more fans than there used to be, so that we are not quite so ingrown); on the other hand, I think that the most effective size for a wonderful convention is 200-250 people. This is not to say that you can't have a wonderful convention at 1,000, just that it's much easier at 200.

Dave Stirrup is reading over my shoulder here, and he comments to the effect that there seems to be a logistical breakpoint at 300 - that his experience has been that as you pass that number, things get screwed up in some arcane fashion, and become less easy to manage. (Also, in some sense, more trouble for the con committee than could be accounted for by a simple linear extrapolation.)

Dave, on the other hand, comes from the Magickal Land of Oz, and things may be different there. (Hah!)

*** TAKEOVER ATTEMPT BY CRAZED OZZIE SUCCEEDS @ DITTO II*****

Well that individual was Jon Singer rambling on and so on (He requested that plug). The breakups as I see them for Conventions are 2 to 50, 80 to 300, 250 to 1000-odd, and then headaches.

The first bracket seems great for relaxacons where you can get to know people and feel that you haven't badly missed interacting with everyone. Second seems to suit....ouch! (ooops! Dave has sorta disappeared. Looks like that parenthesis will never be closed. On to the redoubtable Alyson L. Abramowitz:

We seem to be talking about cooking food now. Catherine Crockett is going to be cooking a feast for various bits of local Bay Area fandom and teaching me to cook Indian food. Jon Singer and

Catherine are discussing what dishes could be made and various food and cooking restrictions. There appears to be a large fanzine/cooking fandom. [Jon Singer here again - in fact, not only is there a large connection, but Sheila D'Ammassa and I once started an APA devoted to cooking, handicrafts, and other suchlike things. It went 9 issues or so and croaked, but I have recently been thinking about reviving it.] Another cooking APA would be WONDERFUL. I've recently encountered cooking with people as a pastime (until then I've generally fed my friends). Lots of fun if both parties truly know how to cook. Jon points out that even if the other person doesn't know how to cook but is generally handy it is a lot of fun. I think Jon is right. I've had people help me who didn't know how to cook. I've always found it enjoyable. I find that it is even more fun when the other person knows how to cook. Rather like working on a one-shot. Each person adds to the experience.

By the time people read this in print we will have had a Wonderful Feast and I will have learned to cook Indian food. I get hungry just imagining the smells.

Time to go away before the World Series traffic complicates the drive home.... On to Catherine....

Well, at least I HOPE it will be a wonderful feast. I'm the one who is supposed to be teaching Alyson how to cook Indian food. (Probably mainly Bangladeshi stuff.) We'll be doing the whole routine - Alyson is taking me to an Indian grocery store & I get to play guide & explain what all the inscrutable dried things are, etc. I'll be cooking for an informed audience, too, which is always more fun, and I love to have someone to cook with and explain things to.

I am intensely gratified that those of us who held Ditto I managed to start something that other people feel is worth continuing. I've had an absolute blast at Ditto II, I loved running Ditto I, (I felt almost self indulgent getting to run something so close to my idea of the ideal convention.) and I eagerly look forward to Ditto III in Chicago.

Catherine Crockett

AaaaaaaRrrrrrrrrGGggHHhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Well I finally got back to the keyboard after Alyson elbowed me out of here.....As I was procrastinating about Con sizes and such.

The second bracket (80-300) is OK for getting new blood in as there are sufficient people and programming to allow some choice of association and hopefully involvement etc. etc., make up your own reasons. Organisationally you need more than a couple of people and significant volumes of time.

The third sizing (250-1000) appears to be a frustrating size, big enough to NOT be capable of meeting everyone or if you are a neo-

fan without strong connections to feel lost. Operationally you are talking major lifestyle commitment, if you can get together the right team etc. etc. otherwise nightmares....

Finally, BIG, well the potential for nervous breakdowns anyway. You enter into a new domain of involvement, so I will not comment except to say that there are limits to sanity. At large cons I end up being more selective than I want to be. Difficult to catch anyone without some sort of battle plan and contingencies and never enough time or sleep etc.. Anyway I'll stop two finger typing here and let someone who is faster add more than my half penny's worth.

David Stirrup.

I've been waiting so long to get at the controls that I have changed the concept of my contribution at least three times. I was intending to talk about the cooking, but I have been talking to enough people about travelling around the US that I now want to talk about that.

We came down to the con from Camp Curry (Yosemite), which made for a mellow beginning. Now it appears, in reading Wendy Council's fanzine and talking to Brad and Art and various others that I have visited more of the most beautiful parts of the country than anyone else present. I'm not sure what to make of that.

Ken Ozanne.

This is Art Widner, The Brave Little Toaster, as it was the first time I had done such a thing. Fortunately, I didn't have much warning and not much to do.

I really liked what Moshe had to say about going thru the old boxes of fanzines. It reminded me, not only in content, but in style as well of HG Wells philosophizing at the end of War of the Worlds. What comes next? I see a continuation of the trend to smaller cons and fanzine fandom big enuf to continue its existence, with a continuing trickle of new fen from various sources.

I thot it was a significant milestone when Fred Pohl gave us a wonderful plug from the best of all positions, giving out the Hugos in Boston. Too early to tell whether it has done much good, but we have been harping about visibility as the key to our survival, and we certainly got it in spades there. I think we have been getting thru to con runners gradually, and I hope that more of them will be impressed by the message coming in from "on high" as well as below.

Two interesting developments I have noted recently may add to our recovery and survival. Sometimes I think of fandom as like the splintering of the Protestant church in the Reformation, and now we are entering a new phase of what might be thot of as an Ecumenical movement. 1) Other fandoms are beginning to impinge on us; some imitative and others which have developed quite independently. 2) Foreign fandoms, which seem to have now reached the stage we were in in the late 40s and 50s. Excepting of course,

inevitable, and must be expected. Only when people are comfortable exposing their work to public scrutiny can criticism be productive instead of damaging.

Effectively, we need a cadet fandom, an immature branch where newcomers are allowed to make (small) mistakes and find their feet before graduating into "adult" fandom. (One can argue that some of the non-stf fanzines are serving this function, except that the people doing them don't know we exist.) The most obvious way that we make our fandom a desirable goal is by some sort of apprenticeship program. If each "master" fan took an apprentice under their wing for a year or two, who then became a journeyman and was replaced by another, then we would quickly have a growing and vibrant community whose future would be assured.

An awful lot of people who might qualify as "master" fans don't publish any more, and perhaps this would solve that problem too. Would you be more likely to write and publish if there was someone young and enthusiastic on whom you could unload the scutwork? (In exchange for passing on skills, traditions and contacts...) I think this just might work.

Before this scheme gets cast in stone, let's make it very clear that I don't advocate a formal structure with a certifying body, etc. But the idea is sort of loosely based on the Guild structure--perhaps con program items could be sponsored by some kind of "Scribes' Guild" and be accorded the same kind of status as costumery. I think the idea merits discussion...

You read it here first. Just in case it comes to pass, let the record show that I was the one who suggested it--Exil Q Trob.

++++
Dave Stirrup.

I dunno Trob, that sounds to me like the boy scouts in disguise.

If we think that young people are just wandering around looking for the magical group of like minded individuals then we are tunnel visioned. The average adolescent has multiple aggressive industries competing for their attention and successfully obtaining it. We are in the position that mature young people have a broad spectrum of entertainments available and we would still be one of several social subculture options even if we were more visable.

It's not that we are less "visable" but that other groups are apparently closer to expectations and more plentiful. Fun is a major attraction to anybody from the outside and it takes a bit of effort to see the undercurrents that hold us together.

It would help if we prepared ourselves for questions from potential fans who may cross our paths, even if you have to carry a note. Often the first and only answer to people is the one that can forever bounce them away.

I'm told I have to wrap it up so bye for now and thanks for the great time and new faces.

Thirty-Seven Cents of Wonder:

A Brief Revival of a mid-70's fanzine:
The Return of TALKING-STOCK

I typed the column title above (which was used on my irregular column for Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins on *The Spanish Inquisition*) and the fanzine title (which I used on my first real fanzine in the very early seventies) because this convention has reminded my exactly why I started writing fanzines in the first place. Only part of it was that I planned to be a writer, some day. I knew, even then, that "fan writing" and "writing" were two separate things.

John Berry once said that fanzines were the last refuge of the personal essay. (There is a conversation going on directly next to me which is fascinating but which is causing me to lose track periodically; so if this is a bit disjointed, it is because they are discussing things which are quite interesting but which

ARE NOT PART OF THIS!

* pant pant pant * Sorry. I got carried away for a moment.)

What he said is quite true: with very few exceptions, ranging from the "have you ever wondered..." musings of Andy Rooney to the more trenchant (read "Nastier") observations of Calvin Trillin, there is no place to sell a personal essay, whether humorous, serious, or something in between. And why publish a piece "like Calvin Trillin" when you can publish Calvin Trillin. (Thomas Disch, who I'd love to publish in a fanzine, is instead the drama critic for **The Nation**.)

FanEds of the Future

Above someone (whose piece has not yet been run off, so I cannot refer to the hard copy) set out criteria for locating the faneds of the future (to which David S. replied that it sounded as if he were looking for boy scouts). The suggestions were valid, but part of the answer is that over the last twenty years the validation of many people -- including potential fans -- has shifted from a desire for common bonds to a desire for money, and many of the young faneds are indeed publishing, but they are publishing comic books and selling them through the mail. This is a very real form of response, and it is continually being validated by everything they see around them. "Egoboo" is for many people no longer coin of the realm -- not when someone like Frank Miller, the artist-writer on The Dark Knight, gets both egoboo and a half-ton of money for writing and drawing comic books, then gets offered the chance

to do movies and to pick and choose the projects on which he chooses to work. It's very hard to get people excited about having an article or drawing printed for free in a fanzine when the role model has shifted from Charles Burbee to Frank Miller.

However, there are still young kids out there (and old farts like me, of course) who would love to pub their ish. All you have to do is reach them. So at the next convention you attend, pass out your fanzine to as many sixteen year old fans as possible.¹ If you are of the proper generation they will be easy to identify: look for short, fast-talking hyperfans that resemble 16 year old versions of Gary Farber, Patty Peters, Moshe Feder, Anna Vargo, Jerry Kaufman, Lise Eisenberg. Etc. You will know them when you see them: they will exhaust you while they are standing relatively still in front of you, simply by the way they vibrate in place.

Ignore The Rules

Ignore the rules about not giving away fanzines at conventions. This merely means that you cannot give away a fanzine to a fanzine fan of your own generation, this being the equivalent of the Secret Handgrip of Fandom²; it is important to recognize that for people like this, as you have not seen Patia von Sternberg in years, you will also never again see your fanzine and will never see a letter of comment. On the other hand, if you give it to someone who bounces in place and, as you do, whisper the Drug Code³ in their shell like ears (which, come to think of it, sounds like fun...), you may well get some form of response; and they may give it to a friend; and then there will be two, trapped in your net.

I am encouraging you to recruit; I am encouraging you to confirm every parents' worst nightmare, that their daughter or son may grow up to be a... a... fan. Oo, ick.

This has been a Gospel, because I am feeling religious tonight. (But this dead dog is done gone.)

If someone above has said this con was a lot of fun, I can only say "".

-- Loren J. MacGregor

¹This requires first, of course, that you publish your fanzine. So start already.

²This is an obligatory Obscure Fannish Reference.

³"The First One Is Free..."

Good ideas, Loren. Another reason for me to pub my ish someday. This is Hope Leibowitz and it is 12:37 AM. There are only eight people left at the dead dog party. Not fair that a lot of the locals have already left. For a small con like Ditto, locals should take Monday off from work!

I wish I were going to be here through next weekend so that I could learn to cook some ethnic food too! Maybe then I wouldn't eat out so much. (I am trying to read everything that came before, but I want to finish this and get back to the party. This con is almost over, wah. But my visit still has four days to go, so I'm not too sad) I couldn't stay another weekend because I have to deal with unemployment insurance when I get back to Toronto, and it could be hard enough to explain why I haven't sent any resumes since I lost my job on August 15th, and spent a week in San Francisco.

I have cousins here, the other reason that I came all the way to the West Coast for a con. But alas, I realized this weekend that I'd much rather spend the next four days seeing Steven Black and Loren MacGregor and Ctein, and other non-fanzine fans in the area. Oh well, they will probably forgive me. And anyway, they sold their house in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn and didn't even tell me until a week before they left. So much for relatives.

Finally read Trob's ideas on getting fresh new blood into fanzine fandom. (Also need to get stale old blood like me to publish.) A combination of Trob's and Loren's and any other ideas could all produce some results. (Ah, I remember how to underline in WP 5.0 and do a reveal codes) But it all seems so calculating and so much work. What about just talking to people you see on the subway or other public places who are reading SF? (Or even reading something interesting.) Phil Paine does that all the time, with some success, at least as far as getting other people to meet them. Though I have seen quite a few people lately reading SF in public, and most of them look terminally mundane.

Wow, Patia von Sternberg. Now there is a name I haven't heard in years. Some people seem to never lose touch with fandom while others just disappear. Can you imagine us 40 years from now? We will be in our eighties or so, still going to cons, going to sleep around 10 or 11 PM, and still talking about the good old days. Frightening thought.

This con has once again made me resolve to write more locs and pocs, and make up for 17 years being a fringe fanzine fan. Maybe this time when I get back to Toronto, I will hold on to my resolve, look for a job, cook more and write all those people I haven't written in years.

Or maybe not. I thought of promising myself that I won't go to another con until I have at least locced all three zines I received at this con, but I haven't been to NYC in over four years. That could be a foolish promise. I was not the only person here that

