

## Congratulations

If you're receiving this newsletter, you are pre-registered for a weekend of fun at Minicon 32 on March 28-30, 1997. The monthly mailing is intended to keep pre-registered members informed of progress as we move toward the next convention.

Please note the e-mail and regular mail addresses listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have comments or suggestions for the monthly missive, do drop us a line.

## Corrections

The first order of business is to clarify a few items from the first newsletter. For one thing, the web page address listed in the newsletter was incomplete. The URL listed in the last issue (<http://www.mnstf.org>) will take you to the root server for MNStf, and Minicon information can be found by using the menu there. However, the full URL for the Minicon homepage will provide easier access. The correct URL is <http://www.mnstf.org/minicon> 32.

Also, please note that the other homepage listed last month (<http://www.waste.org/~nawick>) is not officially sanctioned by Minicon or MNStf. It is an independent web page that has been set up to facilitate general comments and suggestions for Minicon.

Finally, the pre-registration form did not indicate a cutoff date for supporting memberships. No supporting memberships will be sold after 2/14/97 (the same cutoff date as regular pre-registration). The at-the-door registration fee is \$60.

## July Happenings

The July general meeting fea-

tered the vote on a theme for Minicon 32. After starting the process with 49 possibilities, the field was narrowed down by a vote of those present at the meeting. Some of the early casualties included M32: It's Not Just For Breakfast Anymore; M32: That's No Moon, It's a Science Fiction Convention; M32: SciFi A Go-Go; M32: Accidents Happen; M32: Bathing is Optional; and M32: Not Just a Bra Size.

After a second runoff vote narrowed the field to the final three choices, the stage was set for the final poll. The second runner-up was M32: Not Just a Tiny Globular Cluster. The first runner up was M32: Not What Darwin Expected. And the winner is [insert drum roll here] . . . M32: Even Chaos Has a Pattern.

The remainder of the July meeting was dedicated to a report from the Tech Support coordinator, Jeff Berry. See the summary that follows for more information.

Due to the amount of time taken up by voting on the convention theme and reviewing Tech Support, the discussion regarding Programming topics was postponed until the August general meeting. If you have issues to be discussed or questions concerning the content of Minicon programming, please plan to attend the meeting on August 11 at 2:00 pm at the Radisson South. If you cannot attend the meeting, but you have suggestions or questions that you'd like brought up, please send them to Minicon at the regular or e-mail addresses listed below. (Note: Discussion of "adult issues" at Minicon will be held separately at a later meeting.)

## Tech Support

The following is a summary of the report presented by Jeff Berry, the Minicon 32 Tech Support coordinator, at the July meeting. Jeff, Janet Moe, and the rest of the tech crew will provide all the audio/visual equipment and technical expertise to bring the convention to life.

### A Short Summary of the Function Space Changes for 1997

The challenge facing the Minicon committee is to develop an effective compromise that establishes a workable, manageable, and cost-effective convention — one that is able to accommodate a wide and diverse variety of fanish interests, and provide Mn-stf with a stable and relatively secure financial base for its activities. The purpose of this change in function space allocation is to address these concerns.

### Changes in Function Space Allotments

**Dealers' Room:** Currently, the Dealers' Room occupies the Grand Ballroom East, and Verandas Three through Eight. The total square footage of these areas amounts to some 10,000 square feet. However, this is broken into two distinct areas, with attendant problems of an inefficient layout that cannot maximize the total number of tables available and circulation problems for the dealers' customers, as well as a security and liability problem caused by the number of doors that open into the space.

For 1997, the Committee will move the Dealers' Room into the Grand Ballroom Center and West. These two rooms together provide the same amount of square footage,

10,000 sq. ft., but in a totally clear space that would enable the staff of this department to develop an efficient room plan free of the present constraints. In addition, the concentrated arrangement of the doors that lead into this space are much easier to secure, while allowing unimpeded access by the convention membership to the room. Access to the space for arriving and departing dealers would be through the existing service corridor, with a clear run for carts and two-wheelers. It may be noted that since most (if not) all dealers drive to the convention, large and bulky objects are generally not a part of their transportation problem.

**Mainstage Space:** Currently, the Mainstage function space occupies Grand Ballrooms Center and West, with 10,000 square feet of space. Current plans call for a nominal seating of 1400 chairs. In practice this amounts to only 1000 to 1100, due to the requirements of the stage layout and other technical considerations. From a strictly technical standpoint, the largest single problem with the space is the equipment and labor (and therefore the expense) of producing quality programming in a room of this size and layout. All of the various areas of the technical support have to use specialized equipment to account for the long distances from the stage to the various lighting and video positions, and the distances from the audio equipment to the audience. All of this increases the drain on the limited financial resources of the convention, as well as requiring a high degree of organizational and technical expertise to produce a high quality show. Operational problems, and more expense, come from:

1) Having to put the Masquerade Green Room in the Bloomington Room; a pipe and drape corridor

must be erected for this one event to solve the problems of traffic flow and lobby congestion;

- 2) One of the larger function rooms, the Bloomington Room, becomes unusable by Programming for most of Saturday evening;
- 3) The Bloomington Room is simply too small for the size of Green Room needed for the current size and quality of the costuming of the Masquerade, at 1,888 square feet.

To address those concerns, Minicon 32 will move the Mainstage into the Grand Ballroom East. This would reduce the total space to 6000 square feet in area, and actual seating to 580 - 600 seats. While the total seating in the room would be lowered, the use of the existing closed-circuit video system largely eliminates the problem. Technically, this smaller space is both easier and cheaper to provide services in, as distances are smaller; this is also the only ballroom that can accommodate a truss system on the east-west axis. Cost savings arising from this smaller room size can be used to subsidize the technical needs of other departments. In addition, there are a number of compelling operational reasons for this move:

1) Verandas Five through Eight can now provide a Green Room with direct access to the backstage and stage areas, lowering the pipe and drape costs involved with the current system. Total square footage for the Masquerade Green Room goes up to a comfortable 2,700 feet, with the additional advantage that this space can be returned to Programming, for that department's use as a Multi-function Room.

- 2) Verandas Three and Four can now be combined into a "Media Theater" for film and video, seating 150 people; this is an almost doubled increase over the current available seating in Atrium Four of 80 seats. This area, as has been mentioned, can be funded with the cost savings from the Mainstage area.
- 3) Veranda Two stays in place as the Programming Department Office.
- 4) Veranda One becomes a combined Technical Support Services area, with all of the functions formerly divided between the Grand Ballroom Service area, foyer, and Veranda One located here. This move is more efficient in terms of equipment, crew, and costs than in 1992 through 1996. Two or three separate video systems will be combined into one overall system. These efficiencies include reducing the Closed-Circuit TV system to one channel [for the schedule information and for live Mainstage events] and feeding the Media Theater with video programming.

**Other Changes:** The other changes in the current plan that would occur as a result of this plan would be that the Bloomington Room and Atrium Four would be returned to the Programming Department for the entire duration of the convention. In addition, the Multi-function Room created from Verandas Five to Eight would be available for use all of Friday, Sunday, and most of Saturday [only being out of use during the Masquerade]. A more detailed breakdown of room sizes and seating is available for your perusal.



**Other Benefits:** A major advantage to this plan is also an intangible one. By breaking the areas used by the Mainstage events into smaller and more efficient sections, much of the current level of criticism of current convention planning and policies would be reduced or muted. This change in rooms would have the effect of "de-emphasizing" what some have considered to be useless extravagance, while still retaining the best operational and technical solutions to the tasks inherent in the current level and type of programming on the Mainstage.

Further, the cost reductions inherent in this proposal, while

ensuring a continued high level of quality support for Mainstage events, bring the total expenditures for technical support back into the realm of feasibility. The authors believe that the only two disadvantages to the proposal, lowered Mainstage seating and some reduction in ease of access through the service corridor to the Dealers' Room, are more than outweighed by the many operational, financial, security, liability, and "public relations" benefits that are the basis of the proposal.

### Hotel Updates

Hotel reservation request forms were included in the June mail-

ing. Please return the completed forms to the Minicon P.O. Box (listed below) by September 1, 1996. Please contact the Minicon 32 Hotel Department with any questions (see Contacting Minicon).

### Minicon Meetings

Minicon general meetings are open to all interested parties. The meetings are held at 2:00 pm and will take place at the Radisson South unless otherwise announced. Upcoming 1996 dates are: Aug. 11, Sept. 8, Oct. 6, Nov. 3, and Dec. 1. In 1997, the meetings will be held Jan. 19, Feb. 2, Feb. 16, March 2, and March 16.

#### Contacting Minicon

US Mail: Minicon  
PO Box 8297  
Lake Street Station  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

MNStf Hotline: 612-824-5559

Minicon Voicemail: 612-333-7533

E-mail (general):  
request@minicon32.mnsth.org

E-mail (Minicon Monthly):  
updates@minicon32.mnsth.org

Minicon FAQ:  
info@minicon.mnsth.org

#### Brought To You By . . .

The following is a partial list of the Minicon 32 ConCom, the people working to bring this convention to you. All departments (including those not listed here) can be reached through the regular mail address listed below. Special department e-mail addresses, if applicable, are listed here.

The Exec (exec@minicon32.mnsth.org)  
Operations (ops@minicon32.mnsth.org)  
Hotel (hotel@minicon32.mnsth.org)  
Programming (prog@minicon32.mnsth.org)  
Parties  
Registration  
Masquerade  
Dealer's Room  
Artshow

Tom Juntunen & Cat Ocel  
Loren Botner, Linda Paul & Thomas Keeley  
Victor Raymond  
Anna Bliss, Stephanie Lindorff & Jody Wurl  
Erik Baker  
Kate Carey  
Kat Peppmiller  
Kelly O'Donoghue  
Kris Spiez

Minicon 32  
P.O. Box 8297  
Lake Street Station  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

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**Next Meeting: Aug. 11th • 2pm • Radisson South**

## How to Build a Minicon with Your Fellow Earthlings

During the Minicon 32 public meeting in June, the theme for the open discussion was "implementing solutions." It seemed logical to begin there because, whether someone has an idea or a solution to a problem, if there's no process in place to bring it to fruition, what's the point? With that in mind, we first looked at who actually makes decisions and implements solutions, and why.

### Mundane facts and sensible sensibilities:

1. Minicon is a fund-raising function of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society. The Mnstf Board of Directors approves the appointment of the Minicon Exec and charges it to make a specific profit margin. Therefore, the Exec, responsible for all this budgetary inflow/outflow, *must* have final authority over everything. (They stick their necks out, the least y'all can do is allow them to choose the manner in which they hang themselves).
2. No matter how much we would like to construct a dome over us, a hyperdrive under us and create a homey little nest somewhere else in the galaxy, the mundane truth prevails. We are stuck at the Radisson South in Bloomington, Minnesota. As such, we are bound by nasty, awful things called 'legal realities'. These include items such as 'indecent exposure' in hall costumes, copyright laws which govern several areas of programming and make it prohibitively expensive to have a diverse film selection, or allowing attendees to sleep in corner hallway couches. (A double whammy; not only can it legally be called vagrancy, it's against the Radisson's corporate policy. They lose money when people sleep for free. Then they raise the room rates. This is not a nice thing for once Exec to stick the next year's Exec with. Not to mention how unfair it is to the vast majority of our attendees who would like to see the room rates stay affordable. Do you really want to pay more so some freeloader can catch his z's in the lobby?) There are, of course, many, many others too numerous to list. Coupled with the litigious age in which we live, we must pay attention to these mundane concerns and abide by federal, state and local laws.
3. The purpose of the Convention Committee (concomm) is to implement new ideas. Minicon is a living organism, growing and changing to fit the wants and needs of its members. Each year, new and different members volunteer to help figure out what those are and how to make them work. Individuals who volunteer to work for Minicon take on varying levels of responsibility within the organization. Along with increased responsibility comes more hours of pre-convention labor (ex.: a co-Head of Operations will put in several hundred hours of work BEFORE the convention in any given year). The vast majority of Department Heads perform this labor of love for Minicon to see their own ideas come to fruition and to have a crack at solving some of the problems they've seen over their own years as attendees. Understandably, it would be frustrating for them to be forced to implement something that doesn't fit their vision of how their department should function or that they simply can't buy into. What all this translates to is, since they're doing all the work, they get to make the choices (within the restraints #'s 1 and 2, above).
4. Consensus is good, but we will probably not always get it.
5. People will *always* complain, no matter what.

Whew! Well, with all that thrashed out, the next logical question was, "So what?" So we thought about it, talked about it and decided that, even though some will accuse us of being anal-retentive (see #6, above) and even discriminatory (a modicum of literacy is required) the process we want to set up is one of two-way communication in writing. It turned out to be based on the expectations we have of each other as concomm and attendees.

### Here's what you can expect from us, the concomm:

1. There will be an announced opportunity for public discussion. Instead of the usual few minutes for people to speak their piece about whatever subject happens to hold their interest at the moment (that qualifies as an announcement, not a discussion), we will have a topic at each monthly meeting that will be discussed by anyone interested or concerned enough to participate. We realize there aren't enough months in the year to get to every subject, but there are some that seem of overwhelming interest to lots 'n lots o' fhans (ex.: hotel room assignments, programming content, hiring professional help).
2. Both the future discussion topic and a summary of the topic just concluded will be published in the monthly Minicon mailing, Einblatt, the Guide to Minnesota Science Fiction Groups, Minicon-L, the Web site and e-mail. We will also have copies of the current mailing available at the monthly Mnstf party (if Don Bailey, our current president, is amenable).
3. We will poll and/or survey our members to keep abreast of current interest and complaints.
4. We will listen to our members and will respond to anyone who has a question, comment, complaint, idea or anything else you wish to communicate about as long as it's in the proper format (see section below).
5. We're compiling a list of FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) to be published sometime in the future. Hopefully it will provide factual data that will dispel some mythis, provide a better idea of what we're all about and create a base of information that can be added to and revised as Minicon annually recreates itself.

### Ah, now we get to the good part! Here's what we expect from you, the members:

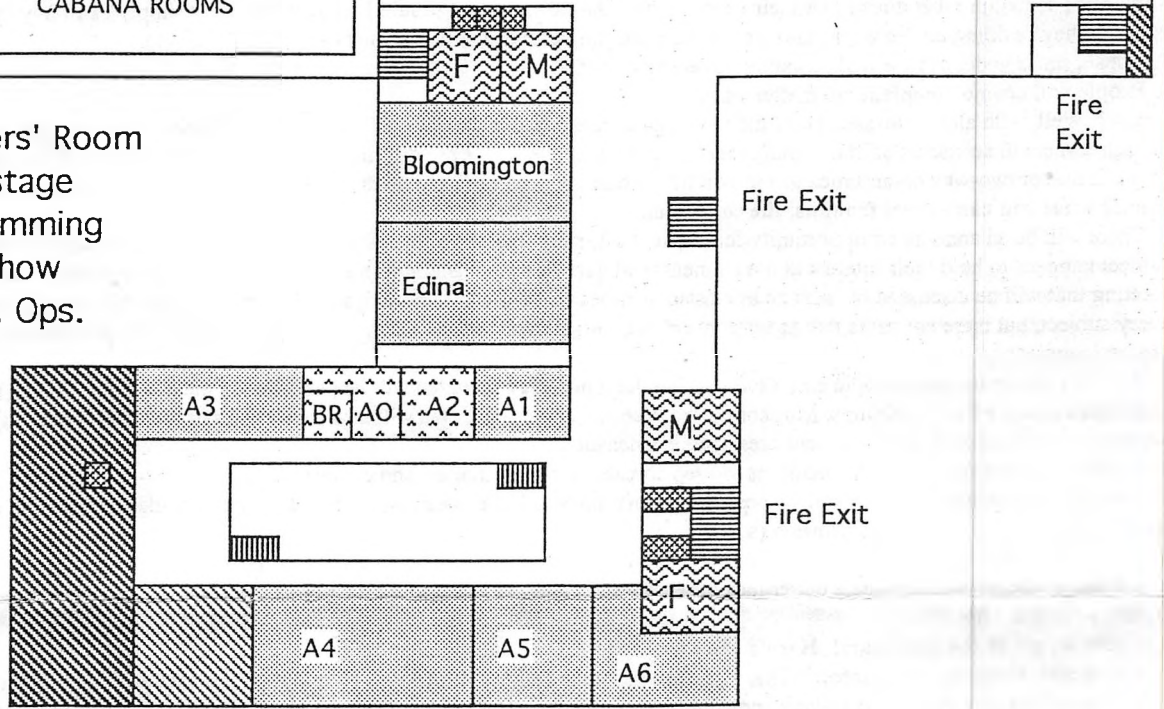
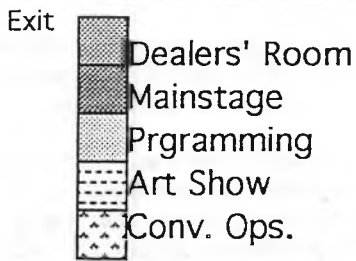
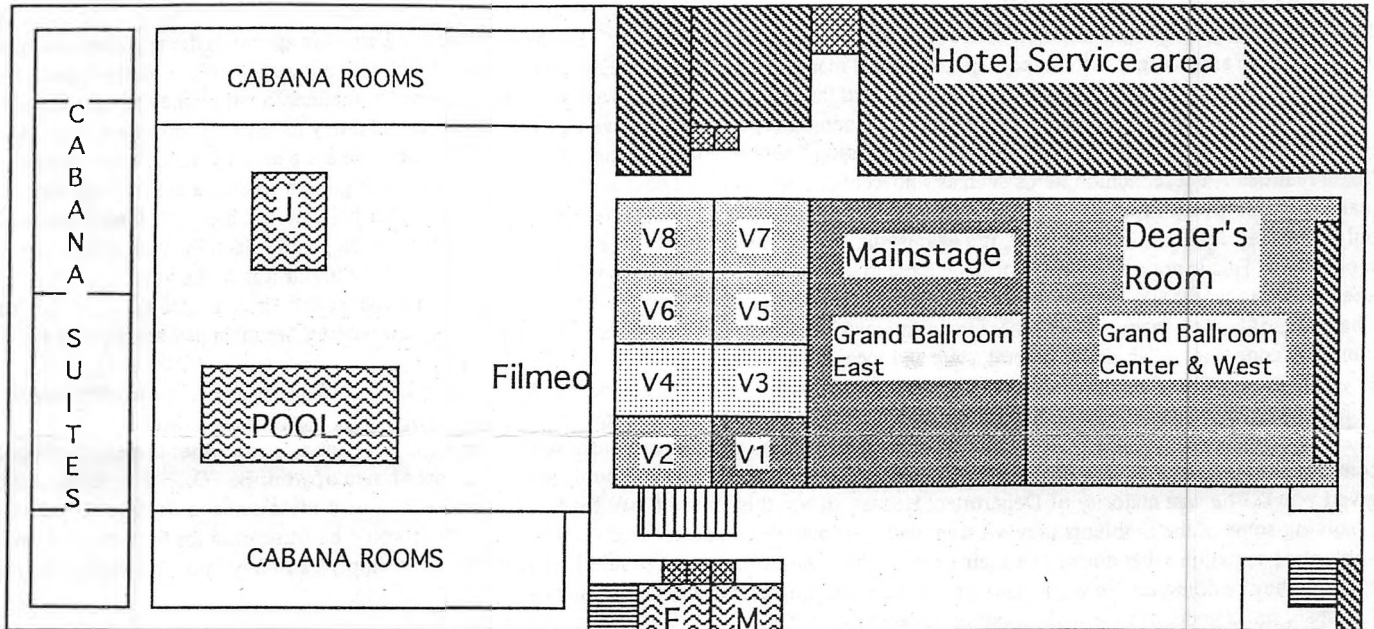
1. Volunteer! Volunteer! Volunteer! This is the driving force behind Minicon! You're not an audience waiting in your seats to be entertained. You're members of a group that gathers annually for a common purpose, Science Fiction, in all its myriad forms. Minicon will only be as good as you, the members, make it.
2. When you have a good idea, please flesh it out and write it down. If, for example, you think an 'Ice Cream Social to Meet the Guests of Honor' would be a spiffy thing to have, you could help us out by calling a few local vendors and getting a price range on individual and bulk products, perhaps even some price brochures. Do they deliver on Easter weekend? What do you see for crowd size, big enough for the Garden Court, or small enough to fit in the Mpls. In '73 suite? Would you or your friends be willing to help host some or all of it? Send your proposal to us at the return address on all our mailings with your name, address and a phone, voice-mail or e-mail number, or, if snail-mail is not your thing, e-mail us at [exec@minicon32.mnstf.org](mailto:exec@minicon32.mnstf.org). If you really care, and want to make Minicon *your* party, get involved. Talk to us.
3. Check out our monthly meetings when the topic is near and dear to you. We'd like to hear from you personally, especially when there's an invigorating think-tank going on to spice up the creative juices. We're setting our priorities by accentuating the fun, the creative and the positive. Come and be a part of it.

In summary, the Exec has the primary authority to make policy decisions for the upcoming Minicon. They and the Department Heads who make up the concomm have agreed to take on the fiscal and physical responsibility of making Minicon happen. They take that responsibility seriously and work together as a team for the better part of a year in order to achieve that goal. Your help in transforming Minicon into all the interlocking pieces that makes it possible for each of us to find our own 'ideal' con is both welcome and necessary. To help them keep things organized and the ideas flowing, please write your proposals down and sign them. Come to meetings when you can and let us know how you feel about things, what directions you think Minicon should be going and, most of all, what you can do to help get us there. Thank you.

# RADISSON SOUTH HOTEL - Proposed Plan for 1997

scale approximately 1" = 100' @ 100% size

Exit



Hotel Service areas

