

READERCON

PROGRESS REPORT 3

Writer G.O.H.
Publisher G.O.H.

GENE WOLFE
MARK ZIESING

Holiday Inn of Brookline, 1200 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA 02146

RATES: \$65 single/\$75 double/\$85 triple/\$95 quad **RESERVATION DEADLINE: JUNE 6**

MEMBERSHIP: \$10 until 6/5/87, \$15 at-the-door, \$5 Supporting (publications only)

JUNE 27-28, 1987

Hello, here we are again. It's been an interesting few months since you last heard from us. Since February the committees has expanded to almost full pre-con strength (though we still need to talk to some of you before the con; see "Joblist" on page 9); to the challenge of designing the con has been added that of building a "real" organization. Until recently, we were a small crew, and not merely a fledgling organization, but partially an organization of fledglings (both the Chair and Program Chair are new to this sort of thing; inspired by the idea of bringing something meaningfully different to the convention scene, we decided to get involved in a way we might never have otherwise). Given this inexperience, it was inevitable that some of our notions about what could be done, what it would cost, how much work and time was involved, and how much revenue to expect should collide with reality in unforeseen ways. Some of our early plans may prove to have been too ambitious for cons twice our size, but we are determined to enact all that are central to our vision of a readers' convention, either next time or in a more modest version than originally planned (see

"Announcements" for details of some changes). We look forward to applying what we learn this time around to Readercon 2.

Since this is the last you'll be hearing from us before the con, we've tried to make this everything a good final PR should be; as complete a guide to what you can expect as we can come up with as of this writing (late April). This includes:

- a) a description of our program
- b) information on our hotel, our function spaces, and various policies (including room reservations)
- c) a hotel card, if you're just joining
- d) a list of jobs for volunteers
- e) directions on how to get here by car, plane, and various other forms of transportation
- f) a schedule

We hope this material answers your questions (if not, give us a call), and that we'll see you in June!

READERCON is:

Robert Colby/Chair • Eric Van/Program • Spike MacPhee/Staff Office • David Broadbent/ Hotel Liaison • Diane Rosenberg/Registration • Kathei Logue/Treasurer, Operations • Janis Hoffing/Hucksters • Adina Adler/Information • Janice Eisen/Green Room, Con Newsletter • Ken Meltsner/Publications • Anita Van/GOH Liaison • Marsha Finley/Sales, Registration (asst.) • Robert Ingria/Network News

SPECIAL THANKS: David Hartwell, Arthur Hlavaty, Bernadette Bosky, James Turner, Joe Shea, Stanley Wiater, Ellen Kushner

WRITE: P.O. Box 6138, Boston, MA 02209 • PHONE: 617-576-0415 (evenings/weekends)

reed.
5/29/87

HOTEL UPDATE

The change-over to Holiday Inn management is now complete, bringing some welcome changes in the room reservation policies described in PR 2A. Please see "Getting a Room" in the Hotel Information section for details. You should take *very* seriously what this section has to say about the reservation deadline. We will do what we can if problems arise, but cannot promise miracles.

One less welcome change is the Holiday Inn policy on food and beverage. As things stand, we cannot bring either into the hotel. Unfortunately, the prices we have been offered are too high to allow us (or any other group that doesn't charge at least \$30 for memberships) to serve continuous complimentary munchies in the Con Suite, at least during the day. Since this policy also applies to attendees, we must, alas, rescind our request that you help us out with this (at least not by bringing food). We will have to look very hard at our budget to see what we *can* do.

SOME POLICIES

Some of these items will be obvious, others refer to things we haven't discussed so far.

- **Things we won't be doing:** Films, video, gaming, or any *events* for costumes, although you can wear what you like within reason, except for weapons. Also, we won't be doing an Art Show until we can come up with an innovative approach that also reflects our special emphasis. We can't say when that will be.
- **No Weapons (period!)** : Massachusetts laws are quite specific on this, and anything we consider hazardous in a public area will be prohibited. Nor do we wish to see fake or display weapons, which detract from the atmosphere we're trying to create. The committee reserves the right to revoke memberships without refund for those who don't cooperate with our requests in this matter.
- **No Smoking** in program areas or Hucksters' Room
- **No Eating or Drinking by customers in Hucksters' Room.**
- **No Pets (except for guide dogs):** Many con attendees are allergic to a number of animals. As we are in enclosed spaces, we must ask you to respect their rights. Also, hotels tend not to like snakes.
- **Child Policy** : Small children attached to adults do not need a membership. Anyone old enough to benefit from the program *does*. Children of any age seen wandering around on their own will be judged to be in the latter category. Please note: our facilities and budget do not allow for babysitting or any kind of childrens' programming.
- **Party Policy:** As we've noted, the hotel's policy is that food and beverage cannot be brought into the

hotel. Standard advice for party-givers applies: keep it covered until it's in your room, be discreet, and check with us at Information (where we'll be keeping a list of open parties), for an updated situation report.

WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU....

The following items describe some of the things we've been planning that have proven not to be feasible this year.

- **Small Press Award postponed**

After consulting with a number of people on the small press scene, we have come up with a preliminary procedure for nominating, voting on, administering, and financing these awards. However, it's become clear that there just isn't time to implement this system this year. The "Looking Forward" section of the Program Book will give you some details on what we're planning for next time.

- **Banquet unlikely**

While a lot of you seemed interested in this idea initially, the price we were able to offer you (\$24) was an obvious turn-off, since only a handful of you told us that you'd attend at this price. Since the hotel requires a minimum of 50 people, it's very unlikely that it will happen.

- **No writers' workshop, either!**

After examining our facilities, resources, etc., we've decided that a full-scale workshop is not in the cards ("full-scale" to us means a dedicated function room for a significant number of hours over several days at least) and that anything less wouldn't really merit the commitment in time, etc. that it *would* take.

However, we do have two items that will be of interest to writers. One is a system to help you set up local or by-mail workshops on a continuing basis (for details, see "Events"). Another is a 90-minute session by local author and poet Elissa Malcohn that focuses on character creation (more details in the "Mini-track" section). Also, Gene Wolfe will be answering questions about the Writers of the Future program.

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

There will be a few changes in this area. From the beginning, we've planned an ambitious publications program (in relation to our size and membership fees). However, one of the things we've learned in the past year or so is that printing and postage cost more than we could have ever imagined. We were also a bit optimistic in estimating our ability to sell advertising before we'd actually put on a convention. We're still determined to give you more than you

would normally expect in this area (including a post-con Final Report), but since we'll need to be recognized by the government as an official non-profit corporation before we can lay hands on the special cheap mailing permits available to such organizations, we'll be making adjustments in *format* and *length*. A quick comparison of PR's 2 and 3 demonstrates the format changes, which apply only to Progress Reports (including the Final Report). The Program Book will be a full, magazine-format (i.e. like PR 2) publication with a separate, heavier stock for the cover (however, interior pages will be 20-lb. stock such as you are reading now, rather than the 60-lb. stock used in PR 2). It will be shorter (partly for fiscal reasons, partly because our earlier estimates included a larger number of ad pages, and partly due to time and workload considerations). The Final Report will also be shorter (probably a lot shorter).

Here are the major features you should expect the Program Book and Final Report to have:

Program Book

- An introductory essay by Gene Wolfe (first printed in PR2)
- Essays about, and book-only bibliographies of, both our Guests of Honor

- A statement of our philosophy and direction
- Complete (as of early May) information on what's happening
- Any information available on Readercon 2
- With the larger lead time involved in the preparation and printing of the Program Book, not everything may be final by the time we go to press. An update newsletter and program schedule will be included with it as supplements, and at least one issue of a con newsletter will be produced *during* the convention.

Final Report

- Guest of Honor Speeches and interview highlights
- A short con history
- A final program and participant list, with as much commentary as we have room for
- A final roster
- Financial report
- Projections for Readercon 2 and beyond (more detailed than in the Program)

Work on the Final Report will probably begin sometime in mid-September (we're all going to need a vacation); expect delivery sometime in the Christmas season or early next year.

. . . And the Lurid Glare of the Comet

More Turkish Delight from Britain's Oldest Young Turk

Brian W. Aldiss returns to Serconia Press with this collection of seven essays, a speech and an autobiography. In it he ranges from Australia to Yugoslavia, from the sixteenth century of Bruegel to the twentieth century of the Acid Head Wars—and beyond. Faren Miller of **Locus** says of it, “. . . Models of eloquence, invariably interesting.” It's a book every member of Readercon will want to own.

. . . And the Lurid Glare of the Comet is 124 pages, hardbound, sewn in signatures, a handsome companion to Serconia Press's first book, the Hugo-nominated *The Pale Shadow of Science*.

Lurid Glare is \$13.50; *Pale Shadow* is \$10.00. Please include \$1.00 shipping and handling for the first copy and 25¢ for each additional copy. Washington residents please add 7.9% sales tax. Order from: Serconia Press, P.O. Box 1786, Seattle, WA 98111. (Wholesale discounts are available; please inquire.)

The Holiday Inn of Boston at Brookline (that's the full title; we've been calling it The Holiday Inn of Brookline) is a completely rebuilt hotel which in its previous incarnation was part of the Travelodge chain. Its official address is 1200 Beacon St. in Brookline, although the new entrance actually faces St. Paul Street at the corner of Beacon and St. Paul. There is a garage and ample on-street parking.

Construction continues as of this writing, and there may still be some touch-up work being done at con time.

Getting There (by Eric Van)

Flying In

The Federal Government, much to Ronald Reagan's dismay, will soon be paying for something called a "third harbor tunnel." All of Boston rejoices. Logan International Airport, you see, is not in Boston proper but across the harbor in "East Boston" (which is north of the city, just as "South Boston" is east). The only way to drive to or from the airport is through the harbor tunnels. Members arriving at, say, Friday afternoon at 5 P.M. who insist on driving to the con are thus faced with two choices: attempt the passage of the existing tunnels, or wait for the completion of the new one in 1996. The latter course is clearly unacceptable, as it involves missing the entire convention. The former course, however, involves a waste of *subjective* time every bit as great (if you're thinking that worse things could happen than getting stuck in traffic for an hour, you're right; traffic from the airport toward the tunnels during rush hour is usually sent on a hellacious detour through the urban wasteland suburb of Chelsea. How do you like being stuck in traffic for an hour while driving in the exact opposite direction from your destination? And then you get lost...).

Fortunately for us, the "T" — Boston's public transportation system — literally goes right by our hotel's main door. From the airport, take the Blue (and only) Line inbound. Switch to the Green Line at the Government Center stop and — important! — get on a "C" train inbound (Green Line trains come in four varieties, referred to, naturally, as B, C, D, and E). After Kenmore Square, the line rises to ground level. Ask the driver to be let off at St. Paul Street (1200 Beacon).

If you're coming in late Friday night (after 8 P.M.) and are pointlessly extravagant, I suppose that renting a car and driving to the hotel would be a possibility. When you come out of the tunnel, follow signs for Storrow Drive. You'll first get onto Interstate 93 North — aka the "Central Artery," the most congested stretch of highway in the country (don't worry, the Feds are helping us fix that, too). Keep right, because the exit for Storrow Drive comes up a lot quicker than the signs imply, and because that maniac in

in the tractor-trailer one lane over's not going to give you a choice. Once on Storrow Drive Westbound, follow the directions below.

Driving

There are really only two ways to get to the hotel by car. From the west, or any reasonable approximation thereof, take the Mass. Turnpike (I-90) to Storrow Drive Eastbound. From truly north or south, you can take I-93 South or the Southeast Expressway and Central Artery (technically 93 North) to Storrow Drive Westbound (for those unfamiliar with the city, Storrow Drive is a somewhat narrow, somewhat twisty, four-lane highway that runs along the south bank of the Charles River. Exits are as likely to lead from the left lane as from the right, and do not always have corresponding entrances. Exits and entrances for eastbound traffic bear only a casual resemblance to those heading west). Consult a map. Unless it looks *considerably* longer to take the Mass. Turnpike, do so. Traffic on the Turnpike is actually quite reasonable, while traffic on 93 is hell.

From the Turnpike:

Get off at the Allston/Cambridge exit (exit 18). Bear right on the exit ramp (signs for Boston and Cambridge). There'll be a wait at rush hour. At the end of the ramp, the Embassy Suites hotel (also known as "the old Coke plant") is to your right. Take a right onto Storrow at the second light — before crossing the river. Storrow will curve to your left, you'll see a sign for "Brookline" pointing over the right lane, pass under a railroad bridge, and then see a sign saying "Boston University next 2 exits." Your exit comes up almost immediately. Just as you get off you make a mild right turn at a flashing red light, and proceed a very short way to Commonwealth Avenue, an unmistakable, wide thoroughfare.

Take a right onto Comm. Ave. and move toward the left lane as quickly as you can. You'll come almost immediately to a major traffic light, where a left turn is illegal; go through it. You'll pass another traffic light (perhaps flashing), where a left turn is impossible, and then hit a third light — a quarter mile from the first one. This is St. Paul, your first permissible left turn since getting on Comm. Ave.; take it (you might look for the Chandler Farquhar Machinery building on the far left corner).

Go down St. Paul a quarter mile to a traffic light. Take a left down Freeman Street, then a right onto Powell Street. You'll come out to Beacon Street. Take a right, and the hotel parking entrance will be on your immediate right.

From Storrow Drive Westbound:

Proceed for awhile, then get off at the Kenmore Square exit, bearing right on the exit ramp to get to the Square itself. You'll come out at Beacon; take a right. The road forks immediately at B.U.'s Myles Standish Hall; bear left, toward the huge Lite Beer billboard. There'll be another traffic light 1/10 mile from the exit, then the main Kenmore Square traffic light at the quarter-mile mark. Go straight through this, keeping the Lite Beer sign to your left and the Bank of Boston to your right.

Stay on Beacon Street. The hotel entrance is exactly one mile from the Kenmore Sq. light. You'll pass a number of traffic lights; the hotel is between Powell Street and St. Paul, on your right.

Getting a Room (by David Broadbent)

Some of the hotel information we reported in Progress Report 2A has changed because of the change of ownership. A few policies have changed to our advantage.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Use the enclosed hotel card (assuming you're a new member; if you're not and you don't have your card yet, yell) to make your reservations. The hotel strongly prefers that you reserve rooms this way, so please do not call them.
- 2) The reservation cut-off is 6 June 1987. If you return the card after this time, it is unlikely the hotel will have rooms at any rate (one correction to our last letter; you *will* get the con price *if* rooms are still available). **RESERVE NOW !!**
- 3) You do not have to guarantee your room with an advance payment. If you want to, you may guarantee a reservation with a major credit card. **THIS IS A POLICY CHANGE.**
- 4) If you must cancel your reservation, you must do so within 48 hours of your planned arrival. If you do not, you will be charged for one night's stay.
- 5) Hotel check-in time is 1 P.M., and check-out is a *firm* 1 P.M.
- 6) Hotel guests receive free parking.
- 7) You must reserve suites through the convention. Write for details.

We will still have 125-150 rooms blocked around the pool courtyard area in the center of the hotel. These rooms open onto the courtyard area and contain either two twin beds or one king bed. Each room is accessible by a magnetic key card and you must ask for all of your keys at the time you register. Be prepared to pay \$10.00 per extra person in your room if you ask for several keys.

At this point, we do not believe the above information will change. Let us know if we can assist you with any special needs or accommodations you may need. That's what we are here for.

Getting Around

As we said above, the hotel's new entrance faces St. Paul St. on the corner of Beacon and St. Paul. From the lobby, it's a short walk to two 500 sq. ft. rooms, which will serve the following purposes:

- 1) Mini-track: This room will run a program of special items such as readings, discussion groups, and a special 90-minute session by author and poet Elissa Malcohn. These are described in our Program section.
- 2) Staff Office: The main purpose of this room is to be a place where people working on the con can go to volunteer, get assignments, plan, etc. Registration and Information will be run out of this area on Friday from 2 to 8 P.M., and on Saturday night to 10 P.M. All *program participants* will register here throughout the con.

There is also a restaurant nearby. Beyond this area is the hotel pool and courtyard. Close to the two function rooms described above is a staircase leading down to...

The Conference Center

This area has several function rooms:

- 1) The Ballroom (4600 sq. ft.) is divisible into two areas. Ballroom A (2200+ sq. ft.) is where our main track of *panels* will be held, as well as the Meet the Pros(e) Party Saturday night. Ballroom B (2300 + sq. ft.) will contain the *Hucksters' Room*, which currently has 12 tables assigned. We have made plans for an autographing area in this room. **NOTE TO DEALERS:** there have been delays in getting final layouts from the hotel due to construction, but you *will* be getting a Huckster PR in early June.
- 2) The State Room (1000 sq. ft.) will be the *continuation* area (place where discussions begun in previous panels can continue uninterrupted), except for when we're holding the Auction, and possibly one or two other functions. Our previously-announced plan to use this room as a part-time Green Room for program participants has been dropped; participants will be informed of the Green Room's location upon registering.
- 3) **Registration and Information** will be located in the 1800 sq. ft. Lobby on Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 A.M. As noted above, these areas will run

out of the Staff Office on Friday, and Saturday from 8 to 10 P.M. Program participants will also register there.

- 4) There is also a lounge (off the lobby), which will hold around 40 people.

Con Suite

This suite should be open for general socializing for most of the convention. We're planning a special Friday night reception for early arrivals, as well as one for Publisher GOH Mark Ziesing (hosted by Gene Wolfe) for Saturday night. A schedule will be posted next to the door.

Intro to "Panels"

Before turning you over to Eric Van again, I'd like to make a few points about the panel descriptions you're about to read.

First, these are not final. Some of these may be dropped if we can't get enough good people for them, and it's still possible to add one or two. However, these are the panels we are soliciting participants for; a new idea will not only have to be *very* hot, the person suggesting it will be expected to help us find qualified panelists.

Second, panels at Readercon are not intended to be just a collection of talking heads imparting wisdom. The panelists are there because they have something significant to say about the subject, to you and to each other. But don't forget that *your* participation is encouraged in this process.

In fact, you may just find yourself on a panel! Since we're a new convention, we expect to be a bit short on "pros" until we establish our reputation, so now's the perfect time to borrow something from Sercon (a kindred-spirit convention of no fixed abode), namely the practice of including non-professionals on panels. What we ask is that you write us and establish to our satisfaction that you have something interesting to say about the subject, that you be reasonably courteous to your fellow panelists (this *doesn't* mean you can't disagree vehemently with them; it *does* mean, among other things, that you shouldn't cut someone off when they're talking), and that you have confidence in your ability to speak in front of others. If we have the need, you may hear from us!

PANELS (by Eric Van)

Big Issues 101 — Literature? Who? Us? Since

When?: Since much of the discussion of Readercon will center around so-called "literary" f&sf, one of our first panels will take a few minutes to define literature (after which, no doubt, we'll successfully refinance the national debt and prove the existence of God). Is literature simply work that

survives to be read in future centuries (if so, doesn't that make Sherlock Holmes literature?). Or must higher standards be met (and what are they)? Are those standards different for f&sf than for realistic fiction? When writing f&sf, are compromises with traditional literary standards acceptable? Inevitable?

"Shakespeare Signs for Next Three Romeo and Juliets" — Art vs Economics: Do some writers actually write whatever they want with zero regard for the marketplace? Or do commercial realities affect the lives of even our most committed artists?

Do some writers really write whatever they think will sell? Or does artistic ambition creep into the soul of even the most shameless hack?

And what about the vast bulk of writers who fall in between those extremes? Sometimes Art and Economics fit hand-in-glove, but more often they fit fish-in-bicycle. How do different writers juggle two so very different objects? Are some writers squandering genuine artistic talent in the quest for a new Volvo? Are others squandering the Volvo in a fruitless quest for Art? Can we name names? I mean, can we talk?

What I Read That's Terrific, But Not Fantastic:

More than just a recommended reading panel, although that *is* a big part of it. We'll also look at the qualities that attract us to f&sf and see if they're reflected in our other reading. Why, for example, is it likely that a Philip K. Dick fan will like *Red Harvest* best of Dashiell Hammett's novels?

On the other hand, which of our other reading (besides box scores and stock market quotations) attracts us because it offers us things that f&sf can't?

Alternate Histories We'd Like to See: Readers ignorant of all history propose alternate worlds they'd like to see novels set in, while the scholarly few attempt to devise chains of events that might have brought them about. Alternately, readers ignorant of all sociology propose events that could have happened differently, while the scholarly few attempt to figure out what kind of worlds would have resulted.

The Legacy of Cyberpunk: No doubt you've seen or heard this "new" sf movement defined, praised, and condemned more times in the past year or two than you can count (with or without the aid of man-machine interfaces). Enough already! With its founders signaling their desire to strike out in new directions, it's time to say more than "dig the new breed!" What are the actual accomplishments of this school? What paths may its graduates take next? What kinds of writers will the cyber-reading youth of today grow up to be? And what will the whole field look like when it's over?

The Book of the New Sun: A discussion of Gene Wolfe's four-volume masterwork.

Beyond the New Sun: Examining the *other* fiction of Gene Wolfe.

Applied Big Issues 101 — Turning on the Real World/The (F&SF) Classic Bookshelf, 2100 A.D.: All the heavy theoretical armament devised in Big Issues 101 is rolled out and aimed dead square at a lifetime of our favorite books. Which f&sf classics are most (and least) likely to convert a well-read neo? Which will still be read in the far future and which will be forgotten? While we're at it, will any of today's acclaimed mainstream lit be forgotten? And what about stuff from other genres — will they teach Jacqueline Suzanne at Yale?

You Can't Tell a Book by its Cover (Unfortunately): But you can tell a cover by its book! Which is to say, the average publisher gets a manuscript, classifies it in the most superficial way possible, and then orders up the corresponding cover from Marketing (you know, barbarian with sword, two high-tech starships in battle, etc.). Aren't these covers often misleading — isn't a lot of fine stuff being passed off as generic blather? How do you tell the difference?

This isn't just an art panel, though. When every fantasy novel published in the last twenty years has a cover blurb that says "Not since Tolkien...", how do you read between the lines? Which famous f&sf authors are reliable and which will plug anything?

And finally, how can writers, agents, and readers get publishers to do a better job of recognizing and reaching a book's potential market?

Out of Obscurity: A bunch of folks recommend obscure f&sf books to each other. Why are certain novels underrated? Overrated?

What Will We Write About Next?: What are the scientific, political, and cultural developments that will form the basis of the imaginative literature of the future?

Philip K. Dick — Evaluating the Opus: Okay, *The Man in the High Castle* is brilliant. After that the disagreements start (yes, even *Ubik* has its detractors). Which of the oft-ignored slapdash efforts of the sixties are actually neglected gems? What about those thorny periods at either end of his career — the posthumously published mainstream novels of the fifties and the *Valis* tetraology of the seventies? Just how many masterpieces is one person allowed anyway?

Academic Attention — Good, Bad, or Ugly?: Academic attention may be the best thing that's ever happened to the genre, as writers get real-world attention and correspondence increases in advances. Or it might be the worst disaster of them all, as the very lifeblood/sap/coolant fluid

is drained from the genre's twitching body. Or maybe it depends on which academic attention? Absolutely no firearms or other weapons will be allowed in the program area for this panel.

Losing Money for Fun and Profit — Small Press How-to: Nearly self-explanatory.

Out of Boundaries: Many works of imaginative literature are not, for a variety of reasons, marketed as f&sf. We'll try to bring as many of these to light as possible, but like our other "recommended reading" panels, we'll discuss the phenomenon, too. What factors make publishers — and other writers — downplay the fantastic or science-fictional aspects of certain books?

That's Entertainment? — The Future of the Arts: What's the future of interactive computer fiction? What other new potential art forms lie in store for us? And how will technology change existing forms?

Stalking the 'Literary' Hard SF Novel: In part, we'll continue the discussion of Applied Big Issues 101, with specific focus on the conflicting demands of literary craftsmanship and hard science. Will the themes and goals of hard sf ever attain the "legitimacy" of soft sf/mainstream? How successful have the novels of Greg Benford, David Brin and others been in forging this alliance?

Exceptions to the Rule: All con long we've talked about the ideas, styles, and aesthetic values that distinguish good literature, because written literature is the medium where we expect the creative cutting edge of the f&sf field to lie. But is it *always* that way? Can the intelligence and subtlety that inform a great novel or short story translate to other forms? Are there ways that those forms, properly used, could surpass written literature at the things we expect literature to do best? As well as identifying some outstanding existing work, we'll talk about we'd like to see in the future.

The Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition: Not a panel, but an incredible stimulation. Named after ("in honor of" doesn't seem quite right) the quintessential hack so brilliantly portrayed in Barry Malzberg's *Herovit's World*, this will kick off our Meet the Pros(e) Party Saturday night. If you know the game "Fictionary" (itself derived from "Dictionary"), you know the competition. If not, it goes like so:

A sample of genuine bad sf prose is read — only it ends in mid-sentence (often in mid-metaphor). It is *not* identified. Each panelist completes the sentence (on paper). All these bogus sentence endings are then collected, and read aloud — along with the real ending. Audience members then vote for the ending they think is genuine. Panelists get a point for each poor fan they fool, while audience members earn a point for spotting the real ending. Anyone

able to identify the immortal prose scrap in question earns two points (on the honor system, most likely).

Winners get a John Norman novel. Runners-up get two John Norman novels.

The Mini-Track

This is the new name for our collection of small, non-panel items. These will all be in one 500-sq. ft. room on the hotel's main floor. The following paragraphs will describe these items in more detail.

Readings

So far we have been able to sign up both fiction writers and poets for this; the list so far includes James Patrick Kelly, Ellen Kushner, Jeffrey A. Carver, Darrell Schweitzer, Cordelia Sherman, Scott Green, and Elissa Malcohn. We are also looking to sign up some critics.

Discussion Groups

These come in two flavors. First is the group of items that you have asked us to let you organize. So far we have two of these (by Donald J. Roy and author Geary Gravel).

The second is an experiment directed by us, first described in PR2. We call it "If you like X, then you'll love..." Here's how it works: say you like a particular writer or writers (Gene Wolfe and Ursula LeGuin, or William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, or Clive Barker and Ramsey Campbell, or Philip K. Dick, or whoever). What do you think other fans of that sort of thing might like, and what would you like to turn them on to? We will set up discussion groups based on this idea for different values of X; your job is to talk, not about X, but about other authors you think will be of interest to people who share your tastes. Along the way, we hope to generate some insight into the attributes that draw different types of readers to different types of writing. The number of these that we'll be doing depends on how much time remains on this track after subtracting everything else.

Persona Workshop

Led by local author and poet Elissa Malcohn, the purpose of this 90-minute session is to focus on character creation. You (as a group) will do just that: create at least one character. This is a very insufficient description of what is sure to be one of the most interesting activities of the weekend. There is a maximum limit of 20 people for this item; we suggest you sign up in advance by sending us a note (writers only, please!).

Events

Receptions/Saturday Night Party

There will be two receptions in the Con Suite, on Friday and Saturday night. The Friday night reception is for those of you who've arrived pre-con. The Saturday night reception is for our Publisher GOH (Mark Ziesing), and will be hosted by our Writer GOH (Gene Wolfe); it will start around the time the Saturday night party ends in the ballroom.

The Saturday night party will be our main social event, and will begin with the freewheeling Bad Prose competition described in "Panels".

We have yet to decide what we will be serving, whether we will have a cash bar, etc (see "Hotel Update" in Announcements for details) for these events.

Auction

We have now received enough promises of material to go ahead with this. Material we've been promised includes stuff from the collections of Gene Wolfe, Geary Gravel and Mark Ziesing, some nice Wolfe-related items from the

VOLUNTEER NOW!!

As you know, conventions do not run themselves. If you've been to SF conventions before, you also know that they're usually run entirely by volunteer labor (the kind of conventions that can afford paid staff tend to be the kind of "professional" business conferences that often charge attendees \$100 and up).

What this means is that we need your help! There are lots of jobs that would like to be done by you, if only for a few hours. The best way to do them is to get in touch with us beforehand. The best way to do *that* is to call our Staff Office co-ordinator, Spike MacPhee (preferably in the early afternoon Mon-Fri, or Saturday if that's inconvenient) at the Science Fantasy BookStore (617-547-5917) in Cambridge. If you have some experience and know what you'd like to work on (and if calling's not practical), send us a letter and write "Attn: Spike MacPhee" after the address (make sure to tell us what hours are best for you).

When we get enough information, we'll put it together (we may have to suggest some other task or time, depending on what others are doing). The next step is to report to the hotel as early as possible after 12 noon on Friday, June 26. Once the Staff Office is set up, we will be able to give you your assignments. Most areas listed in our staff listing need help; don't be shy!

Science Fantasy Bookstore in Cambridge, Mass., some items donated by Arbor House, and other things as well.

Do you have material of interest to collectors (first editions, galleys, manuscripts, bound or rare magazines, correspondence or signed items) that you would like to sell (we ask a 10% commission) or donate in order to help us continue doing this kind of convention? Please get in touch with us by using the coupon, telling us what you have, whether it's a donation, what minimum bid you would like us to set if it's not, and anything else you'd like us to know about.

Of interest to writers...

As we said back in *Announcements*, we're working on a system that will help you organize writers' workshops on your own. The Information desk at the con (next to Registration) will have a writers' questionnaire available. It will have space for you to describe your location, experience and taste. Turn it in at-con or send it to us later, with a request to be put in touch with other writers either on a ge-

ographical basis, or with people who have similar tastes and artistic goals (or you might want the challenge of working with your artistic opposites). We will send you a list of whom we think you should get in touch with (we'd appreciate hearing the results, too). Our thanks to Helena Findeisen of Boston for getting us interested in this project.

We will also be having a Q&A session with Gene Wolfe concerning the Writers of the Future program, which offers advice, recognition, publication and cash awards to aspiring writers. This will take place either in the State Room or the Mini-Track area.

Credits

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- I would like to organize a discussion group.
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THE SCHEDULE SO FAR...

Reversing the usual procedure, we've made the schedule less detailed this time than last. Since panel schedules and GOH activities depend partially on the schedules of the people involved, it was premature of us to divide those activities up by day. The same applies to closing times for the program, so you should consider the ones we have listed to be estimates. Remember, although nominally a two-day convention, we are trying to give you as much of the "three-day" experience as possible by starting early Saturday, going a bit late on Sunday, and providing something for Friday arrivals as well.

Friday, June 26

- 12 noon Local volunteers, please report!
- 2-10 Early registration (in the staff room)
- 4-9 Dealers, please report for Hucksters' Room set-up
- 6-7 Staff descends on local eateries for get-acquainted supper
- 8 Reception for Friday arrivals

Saturday, June 27

- 8am Staff office opens
- 8-9:30 Hucksters' Room set-up (cont.)
- 9:10 Registration opens (Conference center lobby)
- 9:30 Hucksters' Room opens (open until 6pm)
- 9:59 Opening Ceremonies
- 10 Main Program and Mini-Track start
- 4:30pm Auction
- 8 Registration and Information move to the Staff Office
- 8-10 Meet the Pros(e)
- 10:30 Reception for Mark Ziesing

Sunday, June 28

- 9:10-10am Registration/Hucksters/Main Program/Mini-track open as on Saturday
- 5pm Hucksters' Room closes
- 5-7 Dealer close-out
- 6 Programming ends
- 7:30 Staff office closes
- 7:30-10 Clean-up

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