

Voice of the Clam

August 1991

Westercon 46 Committee 'zine

ISSUE 1

Several Worldcon committees have had internal committee news magazines (committee 'zines), such as Noreascon 3's Mad Three Party. These carry letters discussing the "nuts and bolts" of organizing and running the con (convention). They're intended primarily for the committee members who are putting on the convention and others who are interested in the con organization. One might say that they are the service manuals whereas the progress reports, mailed to everyone attending the con, are the user manuals. We've decided to produce a similar committee 'zine for Westercon 46.

I originally got the idea for this 'zine while reviewing my copies of the committee 'zine for the 1980 Noreascon 2. This 'zine, called the Voice of the Lobster (VOTL), was one of my first introductions to national convention fandom. Growing up around Puget Sound, I've long considered Ivar Haglund and his clams symbolic of Seattle. Thus, the name Voice of the Clam, abbreviated VOTC.

Our format will be simple. We solicit letters from anyone who might have something to say about Westercon 46, or the Westercon in general. The 'zine will consist entirely of such letters and editorial comments. This 'zine is designed to foster communications. Anyone submitting a letter should include an address for publication; in addition, please provide a phone number which will not be published.

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Voice of the Clam is issued monthly. It is provided to all committee members and to various fannish organizations and is available by subscription. Subscriptions are \$4.50 for 6 issues to U.S. and Canadian addresses; \$8.00 to foreign addresses. Payment must be in U.S. funds, payable to "Voice of the Clam". Subscriptions and letters to be considered for publication should be sent to: Voice of the Clam, P.O. Box 24292, Seattle WA 98124. Anything not a subscription that is addressed to "Voice of the Clam" will be considered for publication.

Current editor is Roger Wells.

Now that we've opened the box . . .

So, it's been a while since our spectacular success at Westercon 44. Most of the glow has subsided from our well-done job and it would seem to be time to get back to work.

Many of you may be curious as to what's next for Westercon 46. After all, we had tremendous energy and presence during the bid phase and if we can't get on the ball, we will soon lose the edge that we had, right?

What we are doing now is building a convention from scratch. This does not mean that Westercon 46 will not have familiar features. What it does mean is that we will be evaluating every aspect of convention programming, planning, structure, etc., over the next several months and determining how, where, and if it fits.

Our goal is to develop a structure that enhances the flow of communication and ideas and to develop a convention that exemplifies what is best in Northwest Fandom.

To do this, though, requires an immense amount of input and dialog. We need more people on our committees and we also need people who are willing to tell us what they think. Hopefully VOTC will serve as a forum for this dialog, as well as the formal and informal discussions that we'll be bringing to the local cons [and regionals]. The major thing to remember is that this is an open discussion, and we will be prepared to listen.

Larry Baker
16640 31st Ave S
Seattle WA 98188

Dear Roger:

I believe your idea of VOTC is an excellent one. I hope you can maintain the enthusiasm to keep it going. Since you seem to be making this an open forum about things Westerconish I would like to take this opportunity to make a point to the committee as a whole that I have made to individuals.

One of my concerns with the committee is 'pacing'. Being, as we are, from a variety of cons [science fiction conventions] in this area, ALL of which are yearly cons, we may very well have a problem with pacing. The vast majority of the committee, with a couple of notable exceptions, are persons who are used to yearly turnaround on the convention planning. In fact most con work in this area really gets done in nine months. With Westercon 46 we currently have 23 months to do the planning necessary for the execution of WC 46. At WC 44 we had a big push, and in the months prior to the vote we worked hard and furious, but while it is nice to see that people wish to carry this over into the planning stages, it is my contention that we can not maintain that level of activity and enthusiasm for the next two years, we need to pace ourselves or else we will suffer major league burn-out well prior to the con.

People need to remember that there are many major decisions that just don't need to be made now. We have time to lay the ground work to do an excellent convention, we can sweat the details.

Jeanine Gray found an excellent quote I would like to share with you: "Tradition is what you resort to when you don't have the time or the money to do it right". -- Kurt Herbert Adler (1905-1988).

We don't need to resort to 'tradition'; we have the time (and quite probably the money) to 'do it right'.

Don Glover, the younger
424 1/2 First Ave. W.
Seattle WA 98119

Hopefully, by now you will have been able to catch your collective breaths following our spectacular success at Westercon. Now, however, comes the time when we must start looking toward the kind of Westercon we want to put on. In the recent past you have heard me talk about "team building" as well as building the Westercon structure from scratch. In this article, I hope to bring you more fully into my vision of the possibilities that Westercon represents and arm you with the knowledge and desire to participate in this exciting project.

When the fans at Westercon 44 so overwhelmingly affirmed our group as the one that they trusted to bring the vision of Westercon 46 to full fruition, they also handed us, with a few exceptions, a clean slate and a unique opportunity. We have, in the members of the Seattle Westercon Organizing Committee, a degree of experience and competence far beyond any previous Seattle-area convention committee. As such, I feel it is imperative that we use this talent to build the most deliberate convention structure possible; not only for Westercon, but for the good of Seattle fandom.

The unfortunate thing about this is that it takes time. Those of you who may have had your hearts set upon doing a particular job for Westercon have been put in the frustrating position of waiting to see the kind of structure we end up with, perhaps not even knowing how to provide input into the consideration of the things that concern you. The good thing about this process, though, is that there are very real ways that you can help determine the shape of Westercon 46.

The first and most fundamental of these is to work with the teams that encompass your concerns. To date, we have created the Site Management, Budget, Publicity, Publications, Programming, and the Policy and Staff Development Teams to specifically deal with the formulation of structure, policies, and procedures for Westercon 46. The team leaders are listed on the back with phone numbers for your convenience. Most of the teams are currently in a brainstorming mode and would welcome any relevant input as well as new members.

Another way to provide your input is through the events that we will be hosting over the next two years at various northwest conventions and other functions. Whether it's an actual S.W.O.C. meeting, like those planned for Dreamcon and Rustycon, or a Westercon panel at other events or a Westercon 46 party, we will endeavor to provide a bendable ear for you to chew on.

Still another way to get to us is through this publication. The Voice of the Clam is intended specifically as a forum for debate, for you to tell us what we're doing right or wrong or not at all.

By the way, when I use "we" or "us" in this article, I in no way mean to imply a closed group of individuals that will make decisions exclusively or capriciously. I merely mean it to designate those that have made the decision to get involved, which, hopefully, will eventually include all of the readers of Voice of the Clam, and some more besides. And when I use "you," I address myself to those who have yet to decide.

I have been very pleased and gratified to see the way that events have developed so far. The teams have taken their tasks very seriously and are working on them diligently. We still have a big job ahead of us, one that will take the very best that we have to offer as well as the deepest commitment we can muster to see it through. It is also a job that can only benefit from widest possible involvement; and this means you!

Richard Wright, Westercon 46 Chair
4220 S. 154th. #2
Seattle WA 98188

I'm from the concom and I'm here to help you . . .

Since I'm the editor (and I've got white space to fill) I thought I'd introduce myself. I was born in the city of Seattle---right in the middle of the giant '49 earthquake. My first brush with fandom almost occurred in 1973 when I was stationed near Austin, Texas; I had just made contact with the local S.F. club when the Air Force saw fit to send me to Okinawa. Because of this unfortunate detour, my early fannish life didn't begin until Portland, Oregon, where I helped organize PorSFIS, the local club, and the Orycon conventions. In 1985 the Oregon economy, or lack thereof, encouraged me to transfer to the Los Angeles area. I joined the LASFS (Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society) but was more active in the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) during that time. I assisted in reviving and editing the Son of Scientific Caidian, a publication for the SCA Sciences. In 1989 I moved back to the Northwest and, sure enough, fandom caught up with me. My Westercon background includes attending every Westercon since 1984, working in some capacity on the last three, and helping with several Portland Westercon bids. In addition, I served on a committee making recommendations for Westercon site selection.

Roger Wells, editor

Voice of the Clam
P.O. Box 24292
Seattle WA 98124

Site Management Team

Larry Baker (206) 244-7341

Budget Team

Don Glover (206) 286-8824

Publicity Team

Vickie Bligh (206) 742-8943

Publications Team

Leroy Berven (206) 938-4844

Policy and Staff Development Team

Rick Bligh (206) 742-8943

Programming Team

Leroy Berven (206) 938-4844