

Hits, Cons, and Errors

This is a letter-substitute (also available for the usual) from George Flynn, P.O. Box 426069, Kendall Sq. Stn., Cambridge, MA 02142. (Note the change in box number, if you don't already have it; the Postal Service has decided "to better facilitate the processing and distribution of mail" by giving us all six-digit numbers. Yeah, sure.) E-mail: g.flynn2@genie.com (though that may also change soon). The contents are mostly cloned from recent issues of my apazines, *Not Necessarily* (Apa: NESFA) and *The MMI's Curse* (Apa: 2001). Completed June 9, 1998.

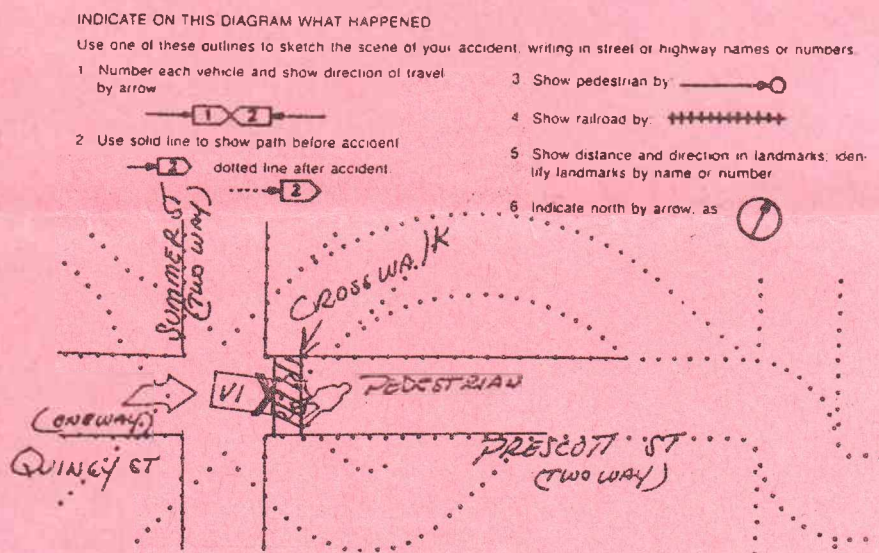
I've gotten hopelessly behind on my locking over the last few months, and the situation is not likely to improve in the near future. Why? Well, let's see: (1) Certain mailing lists that I'm on, which shall be nameless, have frequently exploded to unreasonable sizes, so that I spend most of my spare time just keeping up with them. (2) NESFA Press managed to give me *three* fairly large books to copyedit almost simultaneously. Not that I haven't been enjoying the work: They're collections of the science fiction of Murray Leinster, Charles L. Harness, and Anthony Boucher. (The Leinster includes a previously unpublished big-rock-hits-the-Earth story written in 1919.) And after these we're going to do the collected works of Hal Clement. (3) There is this Worldcon bid . . . (4) And then there were certain distracting events in my own life, which at least gave me something to write about:

Fun with Conservation of Momentum

On the morning of Tuesday, April 28, I set off for the bus stop as usual. As I started across Prescott St. (see diagram below), I cast a wary eye on the car across the intersection (a 1986 "Cadillac Cimмерon," claims the police report). But it was motionless, so I went ahead. The car started moving about when I reached the middle of the street; but by then I had cleared the right lane, so the driver had plenty of room to go behind me. Instead he came straight at me . . .

(Note: The diagram — from the police accident report — is slightly in error, since Quincy St. is really slightly offset from Prescott. So in coming toward me he was in fact traveling forward in a straight line. Not that that's any excuse.)

The next thing I knew, I was borne up onto the car's hood. As the driver jerked to a stop, I was thrown off, landing at least ten feet from where I had been to start with. (My briefcase made it to the far side of the street unaccompanied.) I demonstrated my coherence by yelling, "What the hell were you doing?" As the 20-year-old driver rushed out to help me, he was babbling about how he had been



watching the cross traffic on Summer St. — and presumably not looking straight ahead. (It certainly would have been interesting if there'd been another vehicle in my place.)

After I established that nothing seemed to be broken, the driver helped me up. I was sitting in his front seat, trying to figure out what to do next, when a neighbor came out and said she'd called 911. In short order we had a Somerville police car, an ambulance, and a fire truck on the

scene. The policeman kept asking me the same questions over and over, presumably to confirm that I didn't have a concussion. After a few minutes they put me in the ambulance and rushed me to the nearby Somerville Hospital. There the emergency room staff took my clothes off, looked me over, questioned me at considerable length, bandaged a cut on my face (probably associated with my broken glasses), gave me a tetanus shot, and finally let me go. I hobbled to the nearest bus stop, and got to work an hour and a half late.

Besides the aforementioned cut, my visible injuries were mostly a string of bruises all the way down my right leg. (The car hit me on the left side, but the marks were all on the right — probably from when I hit the pavement.) The bruise on my hip and buttock was especially spectacular. My left leg was unmarked, but pretty sore (especially when I flexed the knee) and very weak, so that I was walking with a considerable limp. In fact, I was moving with such difficulty that for a couple of days I took a cab for the final half-mile stretch between Kendall Square and my office. But mostly I was just sore all over. They told me it'd hurt more the next day, and they were right.

I'd been told to see my own doctor in a couple of days, so I called and made an appointment. The next day I arranged for a ride from work to the health center — where I found that the doctor wasn't even in: I'd definitely been told "tomorrow," but what they wrote down was the day after. Well, so instead I went and got a new frame for my glasses. The following day I tried again and did see the doctor. He examined my legs, admired the bruises, did lots of "Does this hurt?"ing, and gave me a prescription to help me sleep (which wasn't easy, since I couldn't find a position without a sore area on the bottom); I don't think I ever had occasion to sign a narcotics register before.

The weeks have passed, and the bruises have faded, though I still have an interesting lump on my hip. Meanwhile, the bills have started coming in. Cataldo Ambulance Service wants \$275, and the hospital wants \$386. I sent them copies of the accident report (which included the driver's name and insurance). And more recently, the driver's insurance company told me they'd pay, and sent me a release to sign. I'm studying it . . .

(Now, the *previous* time that I was run down by a car, I was six years old, and it was my fault. I came out of Sunday school and ran across the street without looking. THUNK! I was horribly embarrassed, jumped up, eluded pursuit, and ran away home. Meanwhile, someone had gone into the church to get my mother. Fearing the worst, she rushed out — and found that I wasn't even there. As I recall it, I got a spectacular bruise on my buttocks that time too. Does this mean that I'm due for another collision in about 2054?)

(The most exciting accident I was in, on the other hand, was on the way back from a Balticon or Disclave or some such. We were on the Palisades Parkway, and the driver [not the owner of the car] managed to drift off the pavement. We did a full 360° spin, and when we finally stopped found dents in *both* sides of the car from hitting the fence. But nobody was hurt, and we drove away from the scene. With a different driver . . .)

Random Notes on Corflu UK

This year's Corflu was held in beautiful downtown Leeds (England, that is), the weekend before Lunacon. So after arranging transportation through Lucy Huntzinger, I set out from Boston on Wednesday afternoon; flew to JFK and then to Manchester International Airport; made my way to the railway station (which was *in* the airport, but about eight people movers away); took the Transpennine Express to Leeds; walked around the corner; and staggered into the Griffin Hotel at about 11:15 Thursday morning. Then I left my luggage, and wandered around town until I could get a room at 3 P.M. (sharing with Doug Faunt) and collapse.

Downtown Leeds is mostly Victorian commercial buildings. (I imagine it's one of those places that was too poor to redevelop, so the old buildings stayed around till they became picturesque. Other examples I've seen are Lowell, Mass., and Covington, Ky.) Threaded through this are a lot of shopping malls. Some are marked as "Heritage Shopping" on the map, and seem

to be genuine Victorian glass-roofed arcades (or good reproductions) full of quaint shoppes, while others look almost American (but why is it T. K. Maxx in Britain?).

The previous Sunday's NESFA meeting had been pleasantly interrupted by the receipt of e-mail from Geri Sullivan (well, actually Geri had sent it to Ben Yalow, and Ben phoned it in to the meeting). Geri told how she had delivered the Skylark Award (passed to her at Boskone) to James White, who was so delighted that he had in turn presented Geri with a complete set of *Slant* for NESFA. Geri offered the *Slants* to me, but I decided I didn't really want to take responsibility for them. So the original plan stayed in effect, under which Geri gave them to Davey Snyder at Minicon, and Davey subsequently delivered them to Boston. Another triumph for the Fannish Intercontinental Courier Service!

About 20 people were in Thursday night (out of a total attendance of 90-odd, maybe 25 of them American). Nearly all of us went to dinner together, then did a perfunctory pub crawl (one pub) before returning to the hotel bar for the rest of the evening. The program didn't start till Friday evening, but people sat around the lobby or bar most of the day socializing.

The opening event was a Pub Quiz, with people assigned to teams. (Sample questions: *SF & Fandom*: In Larry Niven's *Protector*, how do you spell Phssthpok? Name 3 fanzines from Dave Langford. *General Knowledge*: What do "tamagotchi," "karaoke," and "sumo" actually mean in Japanese? What well-known Shakespearean quotations have the initials NITWOOD; AHAHMKFAH; IMBTFOLPO? *Silly Animals & Media*: How many pet goldfish are there in Britain? In the second season of *Lois and Clark*, who was described as "galactically stupid"? I was on the team with Mike Scott, who had won the Boskone trivia quiz; most of what he didn't know, I did. But we only came in second (perhaps because Ted White and Greg Pickersgill were on the winning team).

In the auction, a copy of *The Silence of the Langford* went for £9. Elsewhen, I was talking to Dave Langford when someone came up with a copy for him to autograph. After doing so, he handed it to me, saying, "You can also have it signed by the intrepid proofreader."

In other NESFA Press news, Caroline Mullan was telling me how much she had enjoyed John M. Ford's *From the End of the Twentieth Century*. I promptly led her to the lobby and pointed out the author. Shortly afterward, I witnessed the meeting of Mike Ford (American) and Mike Ford (British); photos of both subsequently appeared in the newsletter, *The Debauched Sloth* (produced ridiculously often by the *Plokta* cabal and their digital cameras).

Speaking of similar names, Ted White was saying that he keeps getting lecture invitations intended for Theodore H. White (of *The Making of the President* fame). This is especially interesting since the latter has been dead for 12 years.

There was an appreciable undertone of annoyance among the Brits directed at "conrunners." In particular, Tim Illingworth was referred to as "the Demon Prince of Conrunners" (© Greg Pickersgill). This was all rather annoying to those of us present who *were* conrunners (me, for example).

In particular, the final panel on "The Future of Fandom" turned into a heated debate on the proposed British Worldcon bid, on which many seem to think the Soul of British Fandom (or something like that) is at stake. After this, Ian Sorensen offered KIM Campbell the £160 Corflu surplus if she'd give up the bid. KIM replied jauntily, "I can't hear you." However, Michael Abbott (of the *Attitude* group) leaped up and said, "If you give me the £160, I'll give up *my* Worldcon bid!" (Didn't work.)

Ted White was complaining that nobody ever asks ex-Worldcon chairs for advice, so Worldcons keep making the same mistakes. (Pause to contemplate Horrible Examples.) I helpfully mentioned that the Orlando in 2001 committee has *four* ex-Worldcon chairs.

Tom Becker: "I have friends who are compulsive conrunners, and friends who are alcoholics, and the alcoholics are dealing with their problem better." Me: "So do you think we should start Conrunners Anonymous?" Tom: "Yes, a twelve-step program . . . The first step is to organize a conference on the problem."

Let's see, the rest of the con (as sensory overload took over) . . . Well, there were panels on sex, drugs, and fanzines. And lots of hanging around in the bar. At one point, I was proclaimed an honorary Brit, on the grounds that I was paunchy, sensible, and in the bar; sounded fine to me. Saturday night most of the con ended up in the same Thai restaurant. And Sunday afternoon was the banquet.

Con events were supposed to continue Monday, but I was off to the airport bright and early. After showing my documents 6 times in Manchester and twice in New York (where Delta had contrived that I had to walk from Terminal 3 to Terminal 2 going both ways), I finally got home late Monday evening. And found about 250 messages waiting in my e-mail . . .

Editing 101

Here is an excerpt from my (otherwise boring) article for *SF Chronicle* on the 1997 WSFS Business Meeting . . .

as I wrote it
(and submitted it on disk):

Four of the ratified amendments, and five of those given first passage, were part of an ongoing effort (led by Tim Illingworth) to "clean up" the WSFS Constitution, and made no substantive changes. The one amendment that failed of ratification was originally in this group, but fell afoul of a confusing argument over the treatment of "None of the Above" in site-selection ballot counts. Two other ratifications merely moved text from the Standing Rules to the Constitution, and one first-passage added "the customs and usages of WSFS" to the rules governing the Business Meeting.

as Andy Porter printed it
(changes underlined):

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Compare and contrast.

Don't Believe Everything You Read

Some of you may recall that in 1989 the Noreascon 3 committee gave a special award to artist Alex Schomburg for lifetime achievement. After Schomburg's recent death, the obituary in *Locus* reported this as a "special Hugo," which of course it was not; the wrath of the WSFS Mark Protection Committee has been invoked upon them. But then *Ansible* reported that the award had been given in 1990. So I complained about this to Dave Langford, who quite reasonably replied that he had gotten the information from the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Yep, that's what it says.

I should have known. The *Encyclopedia* has two mentions of me, both of them at best half-truths. And in spite of repeated complaints since the 1980 edition, it still says (s.v. STRAUSS) that

the MIT Science Fiction Society is “now known as N.E.S.F.A.” (While most of the founders of NESFA did come *from* MITSFS, the latter is still going strong.)

At this writing *SF Chronicle* (see editing sample above) has not yet chimed in on the Schomburg issue. But the latest issue referred to “the New England SF Association’s clubhouse in Medford, Mass.” (it’s on Medford *St.* in Somerville). And a couple of months ago the *SFC* story on the move of the Boston in 2001 Worldcon bid to Orlando managed to include five errors in one paragraph. (Particularly impressive was the reference to Joe Siclari and Edie Stern as “Joe and Eddie Stern.”)

All of which does make one wonder how many errors there may be in print about things one *doesn’t* have direct knowledge of . . .

Orlando Flamingoso

Speaking of the Orlando in 2001 Worldcon bid . . . You *do* know about this, right? How the Boston hotels wanted \$200/night, so we pulled up stakes and changed the venue to the Swan and Dolphin hotels at Disney World? You can find the boring (and some not-so-boring) details at www.mcfi.org, or write to Magicon 2, c/o MCFI, P.O. Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701. End of commercial. *This* is about silliness. Whatever happens, we’re having fun.

Soon after the move, it was revealed unto us that the symbol of the bid was — The Flamingo. In the course of implementing this concept, we’ve found that there’s a truly amazing amount of flamingo kitsch out there. Better I not try to spell out the details: for the appalling evidence, come to our parties at Bucconeer. Anyway, at one of our meetings, Deb Geisler (elected chief-sueker con chair on April Fools’ Day) brought in a string of flamingo-and-palm-tree Christmas-tree lights. Davey Snyder was moved to exclaim, “Oh, my God, what next? Flamingo carols?” This was a foolhardy thing to say in my hearing . . .

After an abortive attempt at “On the first day of Worldcon Orlando gave to me / A flamingo in a palm tree” (couldn’t come up with good enough continuations; besides, it’s been done — well, not with flamingos), I produced the following (slightly edited here to replace in-jokes):

We three cons in Boston did run.
Now we head for Florida sun,
 With flamingos,
 Yes, by jingo!
See you there in ’01.

Oh . . . Con of Dolphin, con of Swan,
With flamingos marching on.
 Southward flying,
 Still we’re trying
To produce the perfect con.

I will spare you the subsequent verses, which were composed when I couldn’t sleep on my transatlantic flight, and look it.

And then there are the, er, jokes. Like the following interlineation (for which I take full blame):

[FX: Bird sounds and ponderous THUD!s, both growing steadily louder]

[Voice over:] He’s big. . . . He’s pink. . . . And he’s headed for Orlando!

[FX: Partial view of huge *beak* looming over Disney World]

FLAMINGODZILLA!

(and watch for the thrilling sequel, “Flamingozilla vs. Mickey”)

Where will it all end? (In Orlando, we hope.)

Ditto Doings

Meanwhile, as you can see from the enclosed flyer, I've gotten onto yet *another* con committee. (I hasten to add that my name comes first only because of alphabetical order.) In case you lose the flyer, I'll repeat the basics here: Ditto 11, Nov. 6–8, 1998, at the Newport Harbor Hotel in Newport, RI, \$30 attending/\$10 supporting, \$79 single/double in the hotel. For more info write to ditto@mcfi.org, or to MCFI at the same address as in the preceding section.

Newport's a nice place. As it happens, I'm spending a fair amount of time there of late: A few weeks ago my niece got married, with the reception at one of the Newport mansions. And in another couple of weeks, her *sister* is getting married in Newport. (Fortunately my brother is rich — though probably less so than a few months ago.)

As for what will happen at the con, we're still working that out. But presumably there'll be the usual couple of hours of programming on Saturday afternoon, surrounded by lots of socializing. We'll think of something. Come on down, why don't you?

As it happens, on the same weekend in November 1999, we — a different set of "we" — are running the World Fantasy Con in Providence. (We tried Newport, but couldn't get adequate hotel space.) This could get monotonous . . .

I should really try to fill the rest of this page, but I don't want to hold this thing up any longer. (Besides, the most likely filler would be yet more flamingo silliness.)

A Fun, Friendly, Fanzine Convention

Ditto 11

Newport, Rhode Island

6 to 8 November, 1998

Membership Rates

Attending Membership: \$30 US
Supporting Membership: \$10 US

Supporting Members receive all Ditto 11 Publications

Hotel Information

Newport Harbor Hotel & Marina

800-955-2558 * 401-847-9000

FAX 401-849-6380

Room Rate: \$79 Single or Double

Rate guaranteed until 7 October 1998

Program Themes

What's Worth Reading?

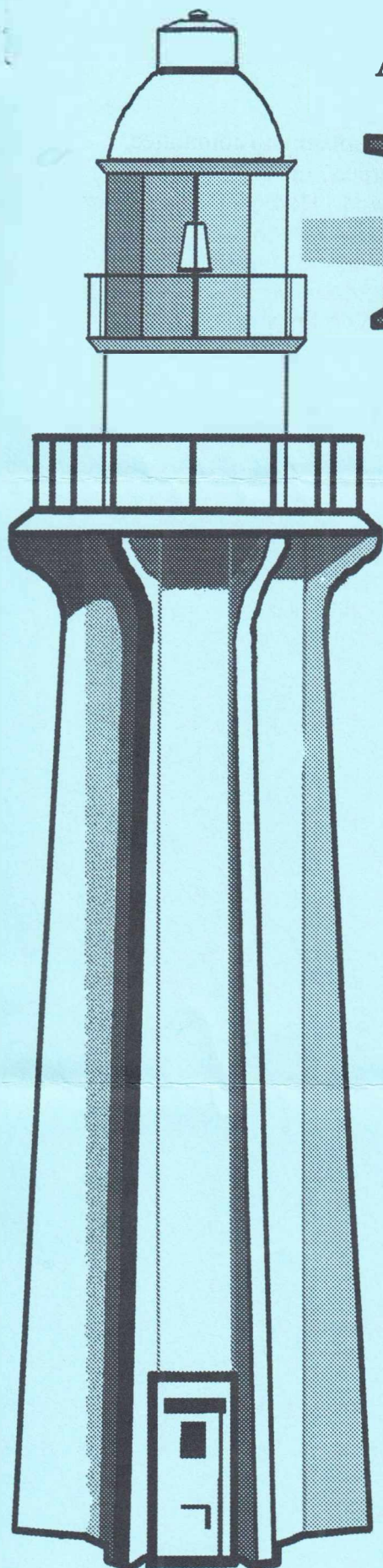
Criticism, and How to Survive It

Legal Rights & Pitfalls for the Self-Publisher

What is Usenet, & Why is it Saying
These Terrible Things About Me?

How to Know When Your 15 Minutes are Up

Finding *Your* Audience



Ditto 11

PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-1010 USA

<http://world.std.com/~sbarsky/ditto.html>

Ditto is "the other" fanzine convention, with its own traditions, a friendly atmosphere, and an orientation that includes other aspects of written communication and amateur publications as well as traditional paper fanzines.

Ditto was started in 1988 in Toronto as a one-shot response to some fans' inability to attend Corflu. It was such a success that it became a repeating event held in the fall of each year.

In 1998, the 10th anniversary Ditto is being held in *Newport, Rhode Island*, from the 6th to the 8th of November. The 1998 Ditto is sponsored by MCFI, and the committee consists of George Flynn, Mark Olson, Priscilla Olson, and Bob Webber

Newport is easy to get to: Rhode Island's T.F. Green International Airport operates in all weather. A short shuttle ride to Newport provides a sneak peak at the Rhode Island scenery.

For those preferring ground transportation, Newport is an easy driving distance from New York City or Boston. Newport can also be reached directly by bus, or by rail to Providence and bus to Newport. Our hotel is a short walk from the bus station in Newport.

Rhode Island (mottoes: "The Ocean State" and "America's Ocean Playground") is a particularly appropriate place for Ditto, a convention for fanzine fans who need more than one fanzine convention a year. The state was founded in 1636 by Roger Williams, a puritan who found his coreligionists in the Massachusetts Bay Colony a little too mundane. Rhode Island has been home to countless

amateur publishers and fanzine fans, including H.P. Lovecraft, Don D'Ammassa, and Ditto 11's own George Flynn. We're not quite sure why the smallest state should produce such a high proportion of fanzine fans. Maybe it's something in the water: the US Industrial Revolution started in Rhode Island in the 18th century.

Newport, where we're holding Ditto this year, is built at the entrance to Narragansett Bay. This bay is sometimes referred to as the "Cradle of the American Navy." On 12 June, 1775, Rhode Islanders decided that the acts of the British crown in pursuing deserters and repressing smuggling were intolerable, and the state legislature created a navy. This navy, with its home in Newport Harbor, consisted of two armed sloops, *Katy* and *Washington*. Their mission was to lift the blockade imposed by Britain and exemplified by the frigate *HMS Rose*. Although this effort was not entirely successful, the *Katy* successfully engaged the sloop *HMS Diana* and drove her ashore. The success of the *Katy* encouraged the Continental Congress in the construction of further warships.

In the 19th century, Newport became the playground of the super-rich, who competed in building "summer cottages" in Newport, costing up to a billion 1998 dollars. These mansions are spectacular (like the Brighton Pavillion, but more elaborate and perhaps a bit more tasteful), and many of them will be open for tours during Ditto 11. Today, Newport is probably best known for the Newport Jazz Festival and as a yachting center and former home of the America's Cup race

Ditto 11, c/o MCFI, PO Box 1010, Framingham, MA 01701-1010

Make checks payable to MCFI. We also accept Visa and MasterCard. Please don't mail cash.

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I am buying _____ attending membership(s) at \$30 US each and _____ supporting at \$10 US each, Total _____

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Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date: _____

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Signature: _____