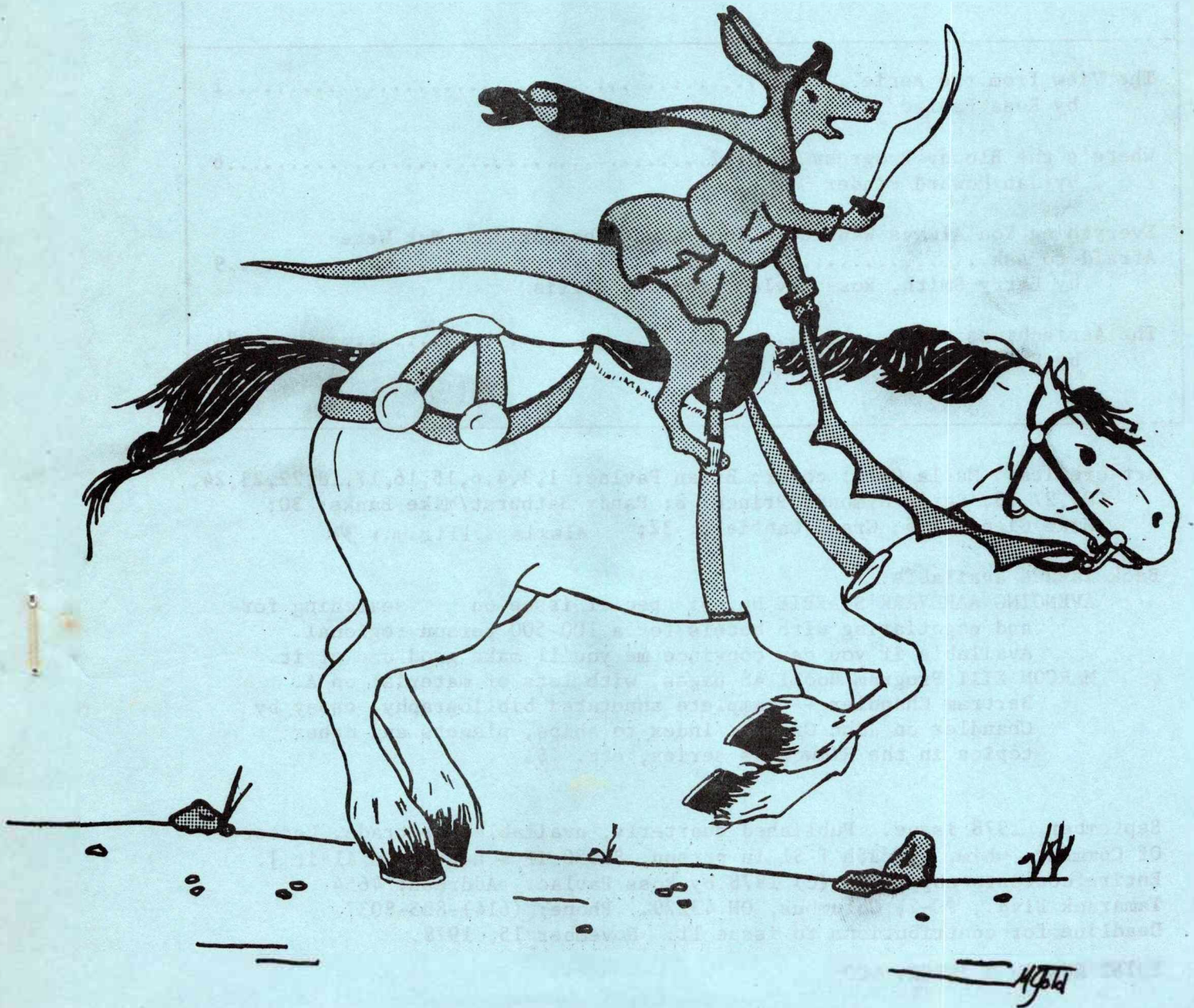


AVENGING AARDVARK'S AERIE NO. 10



AVENGING AARDVARK'S AERIE No. 10

"The journal that reduces reality to an absurdity"

This issue dedicated to my father,

Charles Pavlac,

in memory of the good times;

and to Fawn Liebowitz

because life must go on....

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Art credits: Marla Gold: cover; Brian Pavlac: 1,3,4,6,15,16,17,18,22,23,24,
25,27,28; Sarah Symonds Prince: 8; Randy Bathurst/Mike Banks: 30;
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Bertram Chandler -- complete annotated bibliography, essay by
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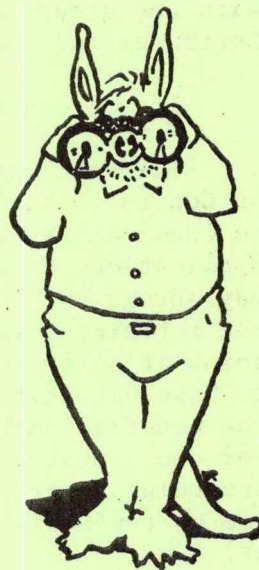
September, 1978 issue. Published quarterly, available for trade, Letter
Of Comment, whim, or ca\$h [\$1 in person, \$1.50 if I have to mail it].

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Deadline for contributions to issue 11: November 15, 1978.

PRINT RUN THIS ISSUE: 400

The View from The Aerie



Hello again.

Yes, I'm back into publishing general-circulation zines again, thanks to an offset plate maker that was recently co-purchased by Marcon, Mark Evans, and myself. Previously, my two options for plates were (1) cheap but slow and erratic (via a local fan); (2) Expensive but quick. Now, they are medium-priced and quick. Of course there is the little matter of running off enough plates to amortize the \$600 platemaker investment, which should provide lots of incentive for me to publish large zines.

Unfortunately at the same time, I am now forced out of apas because (at least as I see it right now) the plate maker is not cost-effective for apazines (due to the short shelf life of the chemicals once you open a container; also, the minimum quantity of developer that the plate maker needs to work is a quantity sufficient to turn out 25 plates). For the technically-minded, these are metal plates, being run on an AB Dick 320 tabletop offset press.

The plate maker has the capability for making metal plates for a wide variety of offset presses, so if there is enough interest shown, we could probably set up some kind of service. Cost of a plate would probably be in the \$2-\$2.50 neighborhood.

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1978 has been a year of changes for me, much more so than most years have been. Let's look at some of the more outstanding ones in somewhat chronological order.

Probably the first major item was the debacle over myself and Larry Smith and the loose-knit group of convention-workers colloquially referred to by many as the "Columbus 7th Cavalry" being hired then fired by Iguanacon. The whole incident was stupid, tacky, and deceitful to the point that I have become madder over this than I have over anything else that I have ever come across in my 14 years in fandom. The vicious gossip and distortions that I have been subject to make me wonder how anyone could ever have said "fans are slans" with a straight face. Just as in the mundane world, fans are much more interested in making up their own minds on issues like this without doing such simple things as asking the principals involved what their feelings and attitudes are. Ahhh, ptooeey! I would go into much more detail on this except that the whole thing has recently taken another bizarre twist -- for reasons which are still unclear to me,

the group in Phoenix appears to have suddenly done an about-face and decided that it made a mistake and that Larry Smith and I are NOT evil ogres after all, and are attempting to apologize. Therefore, I shall withhold my thoughts for the time being until after I have had a chance to chat with the group in Phoenix and find out just what the Hell has been going on. Curiouser and curiouser....

If you don't know what the above paragraph is about, just ignore it.

The next change was that after 4 1/2 years as a systems programmer on Control Data 6000's at Battelle Memorial Institute, I have moved to Chemical Abstracts Service, where I am a large-scale data base Applications Programmer on an IBM 370/168. You non-computer types may shrug, but those of you who know what I just said are aware that the retraining for the new job is ah, rather traumatic. However, I think it's for the best -- the work is more interesting, my new boss seems to have his shit together more than my old boss did, the money is better, the benefits package is better, the new job is closer to my apartment. For you computer types out there, I'll have more on this in future issues, including an article that I sort of promised to Sue Robbin on the more useful textbooks in the field. Hint: Warnier diagrams are where it's at!

The most recent change was that my father died in July. The coroner claimed July 20, but clues that Sherlock Aardvark discovered in dad's apartment indicate the afternoon of July 22. Whatever. Please, don't express sympathy to me unless you know me well enough to be able to mean it -- I have gotten sick and tired of phony reactions of sympathy that are as automatic and as sincere as saying "God bless you" when someone sneezes.

To those of you who have close relatives likely to pass away in the moderate to near future: make damn sure that in a nice, easy to find central location, there is (1) a current will; (2) military discharge papers, if any; (3) social security card; (4) copies of all current insurance policies; (5) list of all creditors and people who owe your relative money; (6) list of and location of all savings bonds, stocks, etc.; (7) list of people who should be informed of the event; (8) listing of all bank and savings accounts, etc.; (9) list of any previous employers who may owe your relative retirement money; (10) cancelled checks from the last 3 years (minimum); (11) key to safe deposit box, work lockers, etc. -- clearly marked as to what the key or combination is for. We found most of the above fairly easily, but if you are missing much of the above list, tying up the loose ends is going to be a real pain.

As is to be expected in a case like this, I have been going thru all kinds of reminiscence head trips and regrets for lost opportunities and all that. I guess the thing that has been running thru my head the most is that I hadn't realized how alike dad and I were (I'm the oldest of 4 -- Dawn is 25, Brian 22, Sherrie 20). The most mindboggling example was when we were cleaning out his apartment and we had to find his army discharge papers in order to apply for VA benefits. Dad is a packrat (which he has passed along to Brian and me) -- his apartment was full of all kinds of stuff. I thought about it for a minute, walked over to the file cabinet that was sitting in his walk-in closet, pulled open the drawer with "M" in it, looked for a folder labeled "Military" --

and there were the discharge papers. Then I thought for a minute about what I had just done (until 10 minutes previous, I had never been in that apartment before). Wow.

I am pretty much back to normal at this point, but the death of a close relative really does shake up your life a bit, just like the "scale of personal trauma" charts in pop psych articles say.

/* */

On to other topics.

My brother Brian got his bachelor's from Bowling Green State University in June. [Good work, fella.] But it wasn't enough, the masochist is carrying on the family tradition -- he intends to be a history teacher. So it's back for a Master's...and he managed to do enough fast shuffling to get another year studying at the University of Salzburg in Austria, which he begins at the end of September.

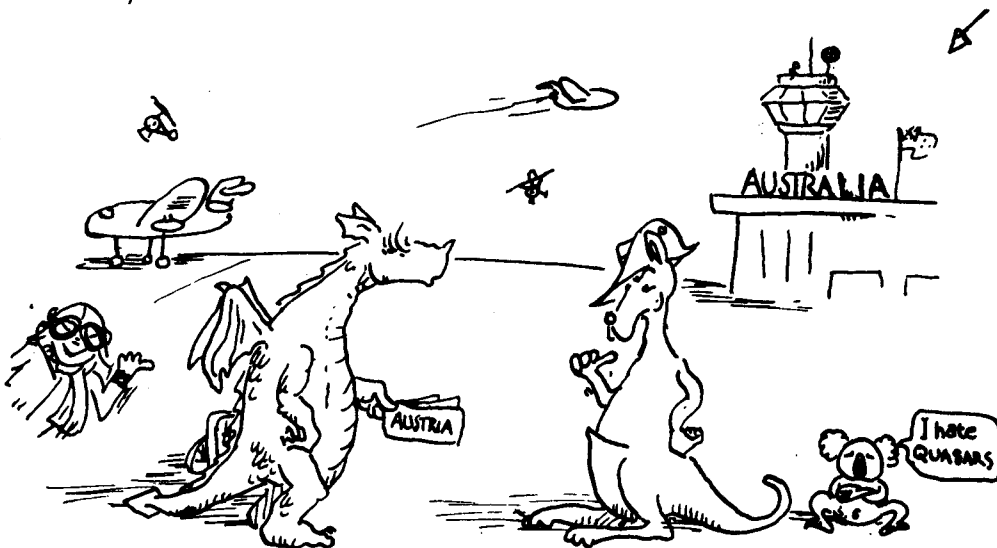
Which means that I will be in desperate need of artwork very soon -- this issue exhausts most of the good stuff that I have on file from Brian and from the remains of the art file from the now-defunct Kallikanzaros. So please contribute, all you lovely artists out there! Naturally, artwork involving aardvarks is preferred. As Brian was working on some things for Phoenix lately, he has not been doing any large work for me and I have NO art on hand for next issue's cover! Agh! Help! Please?

/* */

Gave blood again recently. The thought ran thru my mind that giving blood is a form of immortality -- part of you coursing thru others' veins, and if they give blood, the karass is propagated....

/* */

The Columbus Police are busily defending our morals again. They busted a local movie theatre and confiscated prints of Behind the Green Door and Resurrection of Eve. Ptoöey! Why don't they spend some more effort getting rid of our world-famous ugly prostitutes?



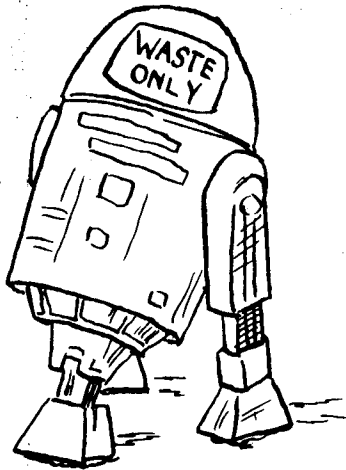
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Also on the sex front, it looks like gays may be getting some help just in the nick of time. A new report from the Kinsey foundation consists of an in-depth study of gays and reports that (gasp) gays aren't any different from the rest of us in terms of how happy they are or how mentally well/ill they are. It's about time someone respectable began standing up to Anita Bryant and her fellow witches and ghouls. I'm damn sick and tired of hearing those turkeys rant and rave about how much of a danger a gay teacher is, and completely ignore the even higher incidence of hetero teachers seducing students. Blah!

It also frightens me very much to think that someone like Anita is so widely respected and listened to. As anyone who read the Playboy interview with her knows, she is appallingly ignorant of sex and of Christian theology. One cute thing that the interview sure seemed to imply, tho it didn't say it directly -- one of her main reasons for disgust at (male) gays is that they swallow semen -- which she feels is a first-class horrible sin because semen is supposed to be used only for procreation. The unspoken implication is that heterosexual couples who engage in this practice are equally degenerate. Cute, Anita. A sudden thought -- has Anita ever ranted against lesbians in particular?

Although I am not gay, I strongly support gay rights legislation. If you can be fired for what you do with another consenting adult in the privacy of your own home, the Powers That Be can come up with lots of other irrelevant reasons for firing people, too. And I'm quite sure that sooner or later they'd come up with one that applies to me.

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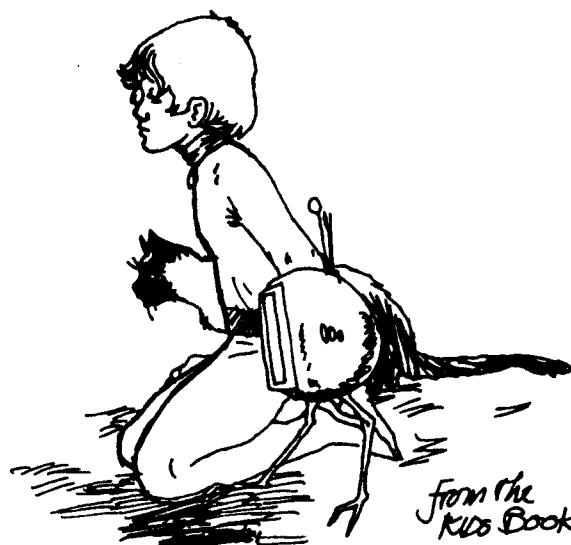


Well, the Star Wars are now firmly entrenched among us. In being far more successful than I dared hope for, STAR WARS has now permeated our culture. One of the local grocery store chains (Big Bear) is having a STAR WARS week. Their ad flyer has columns with headlines such as: "May the Force guide you to Big Bear coupon values", "Master the Force...in Big Bear Country!", "free STAR WARS poster when you buy any of the following detergents", "Polar Power provides frozen values!", "Chewbacca delights in Dairy-land", "Princess Leia's favorite bakery", and [last but not least] "They never grew food like this on Tatooine!" Now, that last slogan has possibilities (like at con banquets)....

The mass merchandisers are also running rampant. The latest thing that made me urp was the "Close Encounters Frisbee"!

And the ripoff artists are there, too. A toy department I wandered thru had "laser swords" (gee, wonder where I saw those before?) and a set of toy space figures with "X-wing toy rocket" -- I kid you not, it SAID X-wing and it sure as hell looked an awful lot like you-know-what! I hope those bastards get their asses sued off. [Please refer to comments on lawsuits, below]

In the questionable area, Battlestar: Galactica is supposedly being sued for ripping off by STAR WARS CORP. I dunno, one of the versions I heard was that the guy who came up with the idea had been trying to peddle it for a couple of years and they ignored him until the success of you-know-what. It's quite possible. I suspect a lot of SF projects hitting the big time suddenly now are going to be suspect when in reality they've been kicking around for a long time and are suddenly being paid attention to.



Also re Galactica, the ships and such supposedly look like you-know-what from STAR WARS because they were designed and built by the same people. That's pretty much what I'd expect -- they found a design and building technique they like and they're going to tend to stick with it. How much variation have a lot of other special effects shown over the years. I mean, SPACE:1949's special effects look just like LOST IN SPACE's -- when you have a winner, you stick with it.

/* */

The Torontofen brought some of the notorious fruit-flavored potato chips (yes, you heard me correctly) to AUTOCLAVE and I tried some. Ecccchhhh!!! Everyone should try them once, but I can't see ever buying a bag of them more than once every passing of Halley's comet.

/* */

FILMS: Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band is interesting, but when you think of what could have been done had the Beatles done it with better scripting, you sniff a tear of nostalgia. Frampton is terrible as Billy Shears. The BeeGees are OK actors, but their singing voices are not powerful enough to handle the repertoire of Beatle songs they have to perform. George Burns and Steve Martin are, as usual, delightful. Advice: see it at a dollar matinee or second run. Boy, does that script have problems at times!

/* */

ANIMAL HOUSE, however, you should see early and often! It is one of the funniest films I have ever seen! Belushi is a mad, scene-stealing genius! It's such a lovely film, so very, very well done. Easily the finest non-print product that National Lampoon has ever produced!

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Well, time to let you get on to the rest of the issue. Next time: Lots more material on A. Bertram Chandler and updates to the material in the Marcon XIII Program Book. See you in November!

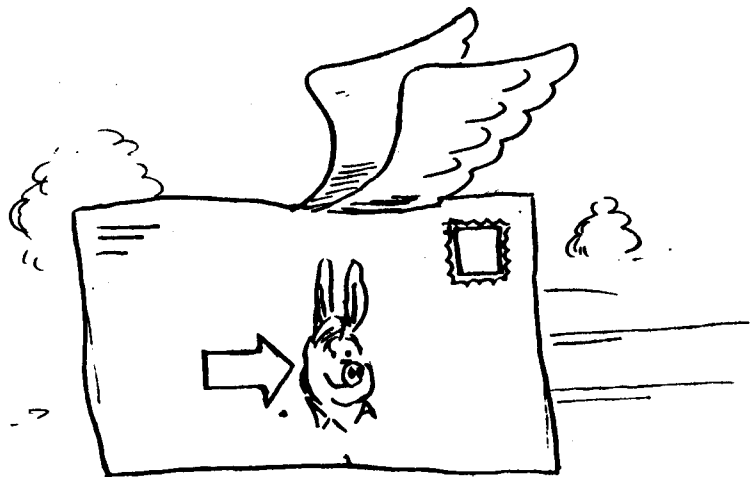
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Where's the bloody Progress Report?

By Jan Howard Finder

A problem associated with a Worldcon in particular, or any con in general, is how to get the Progress Reports to members living overseas in a reasonable length of time and at the lowest cost.

While I am very much aware that "overseas" can mean North America to the con committee located in London, Adelaide, or Tokyo, I shall limit my article here to "overseas" meaning outside North America.



Thus, I shall try to elucidate the divers methods for posting Progress Reports to "Foreign Countries" via means other than bulk rates.

From personal experience, it can take up to 3 months for a PR to arrive by surface mail. Not only that, but bulk rate items are not always afforded the same degree of courtesy that are higher classes of mail. I am also aware that first class or airmail can be quite expensive.

In the case of the Supporting Member, receiving a PR very quickly is not all that critical, except in the case of the PR's containing (a) the Hugo nominating ballot, (b) the Hugo ballot, and (c) the con site selection ballot. For the Attending Member, probably all the PR's contain information that should reach the AM as soon as possible.

Now the question is: how to do this?

The obvious answer is Air Mail. However, the term Air Mail is not that simple. It turns out that there are three ways to air mail printed matter and in special cases, material mailed surface mail will go via air mail.

Let me take the case of Monsieur Jean Phan of Metz, France. He reads in the SPANG BLAH of the 34th World Science Fiction Convention in Kansas City. Though he can't attend, he does want to join. Off goes his Ff 30.- to Keller and Associates. Just in time-he receives PR 5 with the site

selection ballot for the 1978 Worldcon. Alors! To his ghreat surprise he learns that the 1978 Worldcon will be in the Western part of the US of A, where he will be in August of '78 on business. Hence, a few days extra tacked on to his trip would let him attend. So with ghreat glee he sends another Ff 25.- in order to become an Attending Member of the 36th World Science Fiction Convention. Fine, M. Jean Phan is all set. But is he?

Mr. Joe Phan [no relation] is the Postmaster General for the 36th World SF Con. It is his task to get the PR's out to members. As are most Worldcon Committee members, he is brilliant. Thus, he already has in his hands the current edition of "Publication 51: International Postage Rates and Fees" from the US Postal Service. Publication 51 is distributed free of charge. /* Editor again -- the latest one I know of is the June 1978 edition */

From his studies of Publication 51, he is aware that PR's usually fall under the category known as "AO Mail". Thus, he has his choice of mailing the PR's to M. Jean Phan via air under the classifications of Letter Mail, Parcel Post, and AO Mail. The PG's job is now to choose the proper means to get the PR or other con material to Jean in the most economical way. In order to effect a comparison of the divers rates, Joe has constructed the following table [note: rates are for FRANCE, and will vary from those below depending upon the country involved]:

WEIGHT	INT. 1st CLASS (surface)	AO MAIL	AIR PARCEL POST	AIR MAIL
to 0.5 oz.	\$0.20	\$ 0.73	\$ 2.98	\$ 0.31
1.0	0.20	0.73	2.98	0.62
1.5	0.36	0.73	2.98	0.93
2.0	0.36	0.73	2.98	1.24
2.5	0.48	1.02	2.98	1.50
3.0	0.48	1.02	2.98	1.76
3.5	0.48	1.02	2.98	2.02
4.0	0.48	1.02	2.98	2.28
6.0	0.96	1.31	3.64	3.32
8.0	0.96	1.60	3.64	4.36
10.0	1.84	1.89	4.30	5.40
12.0	1.84	2.18	4.30	6.44
1.0 lb.	1.84	2.76	4.96	8.52
2.0	3.20	5.08	7.60	16.84
4.0	5.20	9.72	12.88	33.48
...			
44.0			118.48	

From the above, you can see that (except for very slim PR's) the cheapest way is via AO Mail. However, AO Mail, like International 1st Class (surface mail) and regular Air Mail, have a weight limit of 4 pounds. The limit is 44 pounds for Air Parcel Post to most countries. Thus, the average PR should cost between \$0.73 and \$1.89 to mail overseas. I must note that AO rates to other parts of the world vary, but not enough to change the conclusions listed here.

There is still one other category of fan, who is often left out in the

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cold. This is GI Joe Phan [no relation to the others]. There he or she is, living in some far-off land, having given up the civilized wonders of Manhattan, Kansas or Wind River, Wyoming for hardship spots like London, Rome, or München. GI Joe Phan's address reads as if it were a stateside address, though it is not. The "APO" or "FPO" indicates that GI Joe is far from the land of the Big Con.

That this is so has often in the past been lost on the fine fellows who have mailed out PR's. However, our Intrepid Postmaster General has the situation well in hand. He has investigated the possibilities and has discarded all but one: regular First Class mail! Second Class is too variable -- it can take two weeks or twelve weeks or longer. Even using PAL or SAM does not insure quick delivery. The reason 1st Class Mail works so well is that it is airlifted from the postal gateway to the international airport in Europe, Asia, or Australia nearest to GI Joe Phan. If necessary, it is carried in the diplomatic pouch to the chap stationed in Moscow or the like. Thus a really heavy PR will go for maybe 67¢ and take, at the most, a week to arrive.

That GI Joe Phan also provides an entry way into the local postal system is another matter. From here, up to 30 pounds of printed matter can be airlifted to him or her for under \$10. Air Parcel Post for up to 30 pounds is \$81.52.

Obviously, there are many more tricks to the trade. I hope that this has been a help and will try to answer any questions the article raises.



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE WORLDCON
CONSTITUTION REVISION BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

By Larry Smith, Ross Pavlac, and Bob Hillis

HUH?

Worldcon constitution revision.

WHAT?

At the last Worldcon, a committee (originally formed at the business meeting at MidAmeriCon) was formed for the purpose of drafting a proposed revision to the Worldcon constitution.

WHO CARES?

You do.

WHY?

The Worldcon is organized science fiction fandom's most visible public activity. By its demeanor, we all are judged. If the Worldcon runs well, the general public gains a favorable impression of our maturity and ability to control our actions as a group. If the Worldcon is managed in a disorganized fashion, the mundane world is more likely to get the impression that we are indeed a collection of immature juveniles wasting their time on trash literature.

Well, actually it's more than that. Even within fandom, the Worldcon is the unofficial focal point. It is the one convention that annually draws us all together from EVERYWHERE for our annual family reunion in our own portable Disneyland.

And public views of us is not merely a question of how the average mundane views us. The Worldcon has been growing. It is a LARGE convention (at least in theory) and as a result it needs hotel and facility space that is in the big leagues of conventions. It is important that we are respected by the hotel industry. -- Conventions like the Shriners have to lay out LARGE damage deposits in advance of the convention because they have these cute habits of doing things like throwing TV sets out of windows. Convention bureaus keep files on large conventions. A hotel is much more likely to do less gouging of a convention that will bring in lots of people and money and do little damage and pay its bills promptly.

SO?

The Worldcon is one of the largest conventions that is run completely by amateurs, i.e., that does not hire professional convention managers to handle the mechanics. Due to the growth of Worldcons over the last 10 years (e.g., the 1966 Worldcon in Cleveland had 850 attendees) and some of the other things that have been added to features now considered "traditional" for Worldcons, the Worldcon is now stretching the limits of fandom's ability to run it properly. No, not properly, even marginally.

BUT ISN'T A WORLDCON JUST LIKE A REGIONAL, ONLY BIGGER?

No, no, a thousand times no!!!!!!

HOW SO? EXPLAIN THIS, AND IT HAD BETTER BE GOOD.

Okay, we'll try. There are a number of factors, each one of which by itself is not insurmountable, but when added together, make a formidable task.

It is considerably larger than most conventions. Recent examples haven't been the best, but DISCON (1974) had 4400+, and as of this writing Iguanacon had 4200+. As a convention grows in size, the problems grow exponentially, not linearly.

Along with the growth in size, a change in philosophy must occur. Powers and authority that Chairmen and department heads can reserve for themselves when running a regional must be delegated considerably more when a Worldcon is involved. Although this sounds simple in theory, very few recent Worldcon committees have been able to do this in practice.

A Worldcon lasts longer than any regional, which is where a lot more philosophical changes must occur. A typical Worldcon nowadays begins on Thursday for most people and lasts through late Monday, with a considerable number of attendees arriving early and staying late (especially with the advent of week-long excursion airfares). The committee has usually been camped in the hotel since Monday or Tuesday. Now, at a regional, lots of con workers take the attitude of "Well, I'll just blast thru the con on little or no sleep and crash on Sunday afternoon" -- and for a weekend-long regional it is indeed possible to go for 48 hours with little or no sleep and actually be functional. But the human body -- or even the hardiest of fan bodies -- can NOT take the wear and tear of going full tilt for 8 days! (or more!) At a minimum, the concom has to be in and setting things up on the Tuesday before. And after all the fans have left, all of the displays have to be torn down and packed, all of the supplies have to be moved out of the hotel, etc. That's talking about working from Tuesday through Tuesday AT A MINIMUM!

Due to the large number of attendees, the convention has a significantly larger amount of money to handle than a regional. A typical Worldcon budget is in the neighborhood of \$40,000 - \$60,000! That's a lot of money to have to keep track of, and most people (not just fans) are not capable of keeping track of those kinds of sums, especially when it's not their own personal money.

A Worldcon is a one-shot. A group bids for it, holds it, and a completely different group holds the one the following year. This spins off several problems. First, there is very little continuity in staffing from year to year -- committees keep tending to re-invent the wheel (and it often turns out square). Two out of the last three Worldcon committees had never run a convention of more than 300 (or so) fans before they won the Worldcon. And they ended up having a lot of traumatic experiences because of it.

Second, a Worldcon in a given city has no track record. There is no way to predict how many attendees a Worldcon will have 2 years in advance, which is when the budgeting must be done. Combined with the tendency of a lot of fans to register at the last minute, budgeting a Worldcon is a real nightmare. The asses of several recent Worldcons that would have otherwise gone down the tubes financially were saved at the last minute by a flurry of eleventh-hour registrations -- which CAN'T be counted upon in advance!

As long as we're talking about advance planning, a Worldcon has a lot longer lead time than other SF cons. Due to the amount of planning necessary, and to the problems in reserving hotel space of the size needed to hold a Worldcon, bidding is done 2 years in advance of the convention. In

an ideal case, a bidding committee would have to be together for at least a year before winning the bid. That's more than 3 years total. The kicker, of course, is that the average fannish generation is something like three years. Gaffiation will often take away one or more key committee members between the forming of the bid and the convention itself. Also, three years is a long time to keep a group of fans working together in harmony and growing in friendship and skills.

Because of its universal nature, a Worldcon has worse coordination problems than most other cons. A typical regional draws 80% or so of its attendees from the state the con is held in and the 6 or 7 surrounding states. A Worldcon draws from everywhere. Which, even domestically means lots more Post Office problems and lots more phone bills to strange locales. And the Worldcon deals with the problems of communication with fans all around the world far more than any regional (for more on this, see the article on international mailing in this issue).

Worldcons have the Hugos. The Hugos are the only science fiction awards that fandom has any real say in. Over the years the Hugo has evolved from a cute idea for egoboo and gratitude from fandom to additionally having clout on the mundane book market. An author who wins a Hugo will (usually, if his agent is any good) get a substantially larger advance on his next book. Hugos are a very touchy subject to a lot of people.

In addition to the Hugos, a Worldcon committee inherits the unwritten obligation to carry on most, if not all, of the "traditions" of past Worldcons. True, the committee does not HAVE to carry on all of the traditions, but, what would happen to a Worldcon committee that decided that the Masquerade was too much of a logistical nightmare to cope with and that it therefore will not be held? Right. Tar and Feathers. And a rail. Maintaining all of these "traditions" (and we feel that they should be maintained) uses up a lot of manpower and money. And time.

The advance nature of the Worldcon has caused some additional interesting financial problems -- since most committees advertise a lower rate for initial members (in order to raise working capital quickly), lots of fans have tended to join early. If the committee does not properly scale its rates, they may discover to their dismay (as have at least two recent Worldcon committees) that they are running a LOSS on everyone who joined during the first few months after winning the bid.

Oh, an additional note on the problem of size. The June 1978 issue of Human Behavior (pg. 36-7) has an article called "Intensive Care for Corporations" by R.W. Dellinger. The article discusses a consulting firm that specializes in bailing out corporations that are on the verge of bankruptcy and falling apart in general. One of the consultants, in the course of discussing why a corporation often has severe problems as a result of growth says that the head of a company that is in trouble due to growth is often "a person who gets emotionally involved in every decision, who won't take advice from anybody, who can't delegate authority, and who has an ego need to dominate every situation, no matter how inconsequential. All these traits work for the company as long as it stays small. After it reaches a certain size, however, things start falling apart because it's physically impossible for the entrepreneur to do everything and because he doesn't have the expertise to stay on top of every facet of his booming business...."

One of the really nightmarish problems is that of accountability. A regional convention is accountable to no one because they are doing their own thing and if the fans in the area like it they attend, and if they don't

they won't. The free enterprise system at its purest. The Worldcon, however, is supposed to be representative of fandom and its needs and wishes for the annual family reunion. A committee can make all the promises it wants before the convention at which the winner is chosen. After a committee wins the Worldcon, however, **THE COMMITTEE IS ACCOUNTABLE TO NO ONE!!** If they were smart enough to incorporate, they are responsible to the state of incorporation and to the IRS (but only in a narrow legal sense). But if fandom gets upset, the only voice the committee has to listen to is its conscience, if any.

What has this led to? Worldcons that at six months and counting have NO contract with their hotel (a YEAR is a reasonable minimum). Worldcons that have had no formal budget until a month or so before the convention, or who make up a budget and ignore it. Worldcon committees writing checks during the convention and having NO idea as to how much was in the checking account. The lack of a secret ballot (note the latest site selection ballots, wherein the name and address portion is directly on the back of the voting portion, so the winners will be able to know who voted for the opposition -- and fans love to feud and hold grudges). Violations of the Worldcon constitution, often consisting of ignoring it completely. Nearly every year, some fan gets stung by the "gee, we never got your ad for the PR/program book -- snicker, snicker" routine -- this has happened to at least one Worldcon bidder. Worldcon committees not bothering to cash attendee checks for upwards of six months and being lax about sending out registration acknowledgements. Worldcon committees not mailing out program books after the convention to those who didn't attend. Worldcon committees not being aware that the real world requires lots of lead time to function (last-minute demands for equipment such as hand trucks, radios, etc. won't work-- other groups are also in line for the same stuff). The list goes on a lot longer (and can get considerably more vague and esoteric as it drags on), but the above are some of the more obvious, clear-cut recent problems.

WELL, WHY DON'T FANS JUST SUE THE WORLDCON IF THEY'RE UNHAPPY?

To start with, because lawsuits are considered tacky by most fans. Some of the longest-running and most bitter feuds in fandom have arisen from lawsuits that were only threatened or hinted at, often indirectly.

Second, exactly whom are you suing? Are you aware of the intimate legal structure of a given Worldcon? If a con chairman happens to be doing something irritating in his role as corporation president, you sue the corporation, not the con chairman, unless you can prove IN COURT that he is personally responsible by himself.

Are you aware that suit has to be filed in the jurisdiction in which the alleged offense occurred. This may not be the state of incorporation or the state of the chairman's residence and it's probably not your home state either. Are you prepared to show up in person or pay a mundane lawyer whose only interest is high fees \$50 an hour to show up for/with you? You can't enter a suit by mail.

Where do you sue him? What court? You've got 5 or 6 to pick from (civil, criminal, city, county, state, federal, small business, small claims, etc.) and if you pick the wrong one, they'll happily process the suit until it becomes clear that you're in the wrong place -- at which point you get to start over, along with having to pay the bill for the costs incurred thus far. For example,

if you want your \$25 membership back, you could go to small claims court. But you might decide (on the advice of your lawyer and/or friends) to shoot for "Mail Fraud", i.e., soliciting funds under false pretenses through the mails. -- it sounds a lot more important, doesn't it? But it's a lot of effort to go through just for spite.

The real kicker is lead time. If, for example, you are trying for a civil suit in New York City, be prepared for a 36 MONTH wait before you reach the docket. In most cases, any lawsuit brought because of things discovered in the six months or so before the convention are useless, because by the time the case is brought to court, the convention will be over. Oops.

Disclaimer: the above section is NOT to be construed as a definitive legal opinion as we are not lawyers, but is based upon conversations we have had with lawyers in fandom such as Propp, Frierson, Edeiken, et al.

GEE, IT LOOKS LIKE A LAWSUIT COULDN'T WORK.

Yup.

SO WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Funny you should mention that! [writing articles consisting of rhetorical questions and answers is a lot of fun!]

One possibility that has been seriously raised by a number of fans is: just quit holding Worldcons. No, huh? Well, we don't like that idea either.

Okayyy....then what has to be done is to rework the Worldcon to be a lot more stable operation with a lot more continuity between committees and some checks and balances. This is EXACTLY what the drafting committee is trying to do in reworking the constitution. And that's ALL it's trying to do!

BUT HASN'T THIS BEEN TRIED BEFORE? I'VE HEARD STORIES ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS BEING TRIED AS EARLY AS THE FIFTIES AND IT WAS CONSIDERED A LAUGHING STOCK -- AND THE WORLDCON HAS SURVIVED IN SPITE OF THE FAILURE OF SUCH ATTEMPTS (HEH, HEH)!

Right. However, past attempts were more of a grudge match between feuding ex-convention committees or a poorly-disguised attempt to steal the Worldcon for one group in perpetuity than a serious effort to solve the problems mentioned above.

Also, the problems of the Worldcon are considerably more serious now than they were in the fifties or sixties. Many of the problems occurred when the size of the worldcon rose above 1000 to stay, then 2000, and more. Anyone who seriously talks about trying to limit the size of the worldcon is ignoring reality -- fandom has grown such that Worldcons of 4000+ are to be expected as the norm rather than an aberration.

The current drafting committee...

NOW WAIT A MINUTE! I'VE HEARD THAT THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE IS A BUNCH OF SELF-SERVING SMOFS OUT AFTER THEIR OWN POWER AND GLORY WHO WANT TO SET UP AN EMPIRE! AND THAT THEY'RE NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF FANDOM! WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, MR. SMOF-1 AND SMOF-2?

Protestations of innocence are generally not believed. The committee will have to be judged on its track record in terms of what it is proposing and on the personal reputations and track records of the individuals on the committee.

While there is absolutely NO ONE in fandom who will say that the committee

is ideal, it is a reasonable combination of talents and is about as good on an overall basis as fandom can hope for.

OH? HOW SO?

The committee contains SEVEN current or past worldcon chairmen from the period 1963-1979, including the chairmen who are generally regarded as having run the most competently-run Worldcons in fannish history. Most of these have long since dropped out of power-jockeying in fandom -- they paid their dues and feel no need to give themselves more grief.

TEN of the fifteen (overlapping with the above list, of course) have run regional SF conventions, most within the last 5 years.

Two are practicing attorneys, which assures that whatever else happens, whatever gets passed eventually will be legal.

EVERY member of the committee has had a responsible role at one or more worldcons.

Most of the members have responsible positions in their mundane jobs, and have a good grasp of how the real world functions.

Ten of the fifteen have been in fandom CONTINUOUSLY for TWELVE years or more, and some for considerably more than that.

Several of the committee have been prolific fanzine publishers and/or letterhacks (some still are).

EVERY geographic area of the country is represented (members hail from WASHINGTON state, Washington D.C., Phoenix, Massachusetts, Ohio, Missouri, California, Pennsylvania, Alabama), as is overseas fandom (Britain and Australia).

As you can see from the above, the committee is a good cross-section of fandom, and certainly is a good cross-section of those fans who are aware of the problems of the Worldcon on a firsthand basis.

OKAY, FOR THE MOMENT ANYWAY, I'LL ACCEPT THAT IT'S AT LEAST A REASONABLE COMMITTEE. BUT WHAT PRECISELY ARE THEY TRYING TO DO?

The committee is trying to make the Worldcon a viable, continuing organization. The committee desperately wants the Worldcon to have a permanent, continuing, lasting framework, so that the Worldcon can continue to be viable. They want to legitimize the Worldcon in the eyes of the mundane world, especially the eyes of the hotel industry, the film industry, IRS, and other worldly business concerns. They want a set of continuing records, including financial records and membership. A permanent mailing address. The possibility of spreading capital investments out over several Worldcons (e.g., a radio net, art show hangings, minicomputer system to keep track of memberships and perform registration functions at the conventions, a film library of popular films, backdrops/props for masquerades and such, -- the possibilities are endless). Provide a stock of answers to the standard questions, i.e., a pool of past experience to help avoid the reinvention-of-the-square-wheel syndrome

UMMM...COULD YOU BE A BIT MORE SPECIFIC?

Sure.

First, the World Science Fiction Society will be incorporated, NOT the Worldcon!, as a not-for-profit literary society. This gives us Federal recognition, tax-exempt status, and is the minimum basis for a stable framework. In this day and age, a joint proprietorship (where everybody is equally liable) is too hairy to be viable.

WHY INCORPORATE THE SOCIETY RATHER THAN THE WORLDCON ITSELF?

Because each Worldcon is the individual creation of the group that puts it on, and the committee does NOT want to stifle creativity and individuality. Each Worldcon should have its own personality. What it boils down to is that the committee just does not want the Worldcon to go down the tubes and if things continue as they are, it's all too likely that it could happen.

HOW WOULD WORLDCONS HAPPEN, THEN?

A board of directors would be set up to act on behalf of the members of the society. Essentially, the Worldcon bidding process would be unchanged, except that as well as being separately incorporated [we hope], each Worldcon elected by all of the members of the Society (i.e., the members of that year's Worldcon) would also be franchised by the board as that year's official "World Science Fiction Convention".

All a franchise means is that if a Worldcon committee screws up irretrievably, there is someone other than a court of law available to bail the convention out. Currently, the only remedy is injunctive relief (i.e., you have to convince a judge that grave and significant harm is about to be done to significant numbers of people). For the disadvantages of lawsuits, see above.

HOLD IT, STOP, HALT, ARRETE. HOW IS THIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS DECIDED UPON?

The current best thought is that members of the board would be elected on a rotating basis at the business meeting of each year's worldcon. Board members would have 3-year terms, with 1/3 of the board being re-elected each year. Current thought on number of directors is 15 seems the best guess at a reasonable number that would be large enough to be representative and small enough to be able to communicate with each other. No director would be allowed to serve for 2 consecutive terms -- e.g., if Joe Smof was elected, he would serve his 3 years, then have to wait at least 9 months before becoming a candidate again [the 9-month rule is because Worldcons are not always held on Labor Day -- e.g., Aussiecon, Seacon, etc.].

The above paragraph is not an absolutely hard view of the committee, but is an approximation of the type of system that would be most workable. We're sure there will be lots of debate on how many board members there should be and how long the terms of office should be and so forth, but none of this is critical to the proper functioning of the proposal. It's the overall purpose of the proposal that's important, and whether you think there should be 12 or 15 or 18 board members is fun to debate but the proposal does not live or die on issues like the number of board members.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "BAIL OUT"? WHAT KIND OF POWERS SHOULD A BOARD HAVE OVER A WORLDCON AND HOW COULD IT POSSIBLY ENFORCE THEM?

Good question.



YEAH, I KINDA THOUGHT IT WAS. HOW ABOUT IT? HOW'S THIS THING GOING TO WORK?

Okay, in order to bid, a committee will have to sign a franchise contract with the Society, which spells out specific rights that the Society will give the committee if it wins, and what obligations the committee will have to the Society if it wins.

FRANCHISE? ISN'T THIS GOING TO TURN THE WORLDCON INTO A MCDONALD'S? WON'T IT ROB WORLDCON COMMITTEES OF THE CHANCE TO DO INNOVATIVE AND ORIGINAL THINGS? WON'T WORLDCONS END UP BEING MECHANICALLY-RUN AND [ugh!] DULL?

No. The Worldcon IS a franchise NOW, if you sit down and think about it. But it is a franchise operation with no formal obligations on either side. And, as we said above, this hasn't been working due to the size and complexity of contemporary Worldcons.

HRUMPH! WELL, ANYWAY, WHAT KIND OF STUFF WOULD BE IN THE CONTRACT?

Mostly the kinds of things that a competent committee would do anyway. What the contract does is lets the committee know what it is expected to do in order to plan, coordinate, and manage a well-run Worldcon. Additionally, it specifies that reports be made to the Society (via the Board) on the progress of the convention so that there are no sudden surprises or long lapses of silence.

Examples of the kinds of things that would be specified are:

- Receipts of money, financial instruments, and materials (e.g., ad copy) would be promptly processed and acknowledged.

- Mailing out of items such as Hugo nominations and ballots, site selection ballots, etc., [things for which timely mailing is IMPORTANT] will have deadlines established in the contract. Penalties and alternatives will be specified in the event of noncompliance.

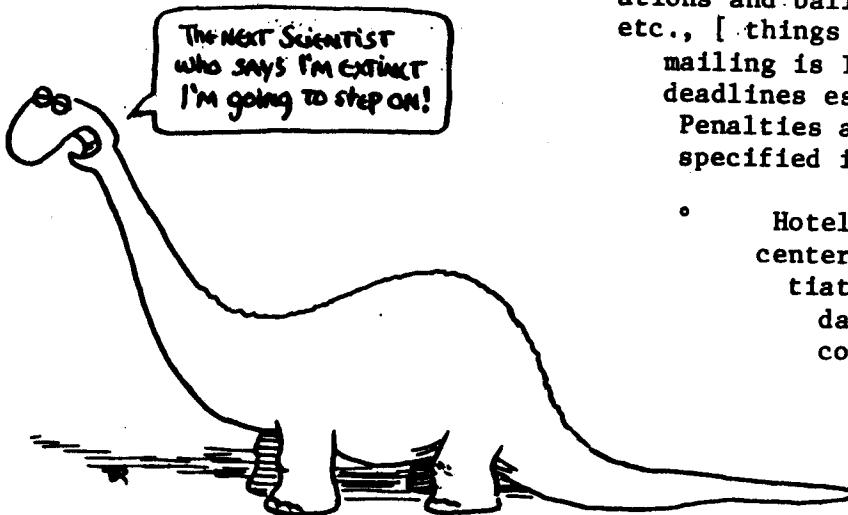
- Hotel contract(s) and convention center contracts will be negotiated and signed by a specified date, and would be required to contain clauses covering the kinds of things that are in any good hotel contract.

- The committee's corporate constitution, permanent mailing address,

etc., will be on file with the Society by a specified date.

- Meetings of the committee will be held. Minutes are to be kept.
- Financial records will be kept in a responsible manner, and copies will be periodically transmitted to the Board.

The above are some of the possibilities being discussed for possible inclusion. There are a lot of others being discussed, and the list is by no means frozen.



WHO DECIDES WHAT IS TO BE IN THE CONTRACT?

The drafting committee will include a suggested contract in its final proposal; further modifications will be made by Worldcon business meetings.

ALL RIGHT. LET'S GO ON. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES CAN THE BOARD NAIL A WORLDCON TO THE WALL?

The only cause the Board would have for taking action against a Worldcon would be for flagrant violation of the franchise contract.

DOES THAT MEAN THAT A WORLDCON COULD GET NAILED IF A PROGRESS REPORT OR BALLOT WAS A WEEK LATE?

No, we said flagrant violations. The Board would pretty much ignore minor violations such as a week's delay in a ballot mailing. However, repeated instances of such violations would certainly not help relations between the Board and the Worldcon committee.

WHAT IF THE BOARD DOESN'T LIKE THE MASQUERADE RULES OR THE CHOICE OF GUEST OF HONOR OR THE COLOR OF THE NAMEBADGES?

The Board couldn't do a thing about it. Only violations of the franchise agreement are grounds for action by the Board.

IS THE BOARD THE ONLY GROUP THAT COULD NAIL A WORLDCON TO THE WALL? COULD I DO IT?

If an individual feels that there is a legitimate violation of the contract, then he can force the Board to conduct an investigation.

HOW?

By filing a written complaint along with photostats of pertinent documents.

DO I HAVE ANY OTHER OPTIONS?

Yes. You can sue the Worldcon committee. Or file criminal charges. [Please refer to comments on lawsuits, above.]

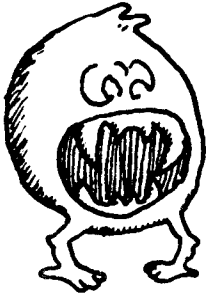
OH. ANYWAY, WHAT KIND OF INVESTIGATION WILL I GET?

The President of the Board of Directors will contact the Worldcon committee, state the charges, and give them a set time to respond. If the committee does not reply or if the President feels that the response was not satisfactory [i.e., full of shit], he will poll the other directors by phone to determine if there is sufficient cause to hold a hearing.

If the Board votes to conduct a hearing, the Worldcon committee will be notified that a hearing officer(s), appointed by the Board,



will arrive on a specified date. The committee will be given reasonable allowances in setting a mutually agreeable date.



Upon arrival of the hearing officer(s), a "record hearing" (detailed minutes) WILL be kept by a competent secretary, possibly one hired thru Kelly Girl or whatever. The original accusers, the committee, and such other outside parties as have anything relevant to present will have a opportunity to have their say either by mail or in person.

After the hearing, the officer(s) will produce an opinion within 15 days. If the committee is unhappy with the recommendation, they may appeal to have a hearing held before the entire Board (this would probably be done by conference phone call). If the committee is unhappy with the Board vote, the franchise contract will require that it be referred to a 3-man panel --

one representative of the committee, one for the Board, and a member of the American Arbitration Association. The decision of the panel will be compulsory and binding upon all parties involved.

^E
CONFERENCE PHONE CALLS? ARBITRATION? WHO'S GOING TO PAY FOR ALL THIS?

If the committee is found innocent, the Board pays, out of money recieved as franchise fees.

BUT THAT MONEY WON'T BE COMING OUT OF THE POCKETS OF THE BOARD MEMBERS!!!!
WHY SHOULD THEY CARE WHAT THEY DO WITH MY MONEY?

If the members of the Board do act frivolously, they'll be in for all kinds of public flak and humiliation. Not to mention possible impeachment at the next business meeting. The defense against having an irresponsible board member is having a large enough number of directors to make it extremely difficult to get a majority consensus over a frivolous issue. At the same time, of course, the number of directors has to be small enough to make efficient communication possible -- the 15 figure mentioned above is considered by many to be in the ballpark of the most reasonable compromise between number of voices and communication efficiency.

If the decision is against the Worldcon committee, to continue, the committee pays the cost of the trial.

COULDN'T THIS PROCESS BE DRAGGED ON FOR SEVERAL MONTHS?

Yes, but it beats the 2-3 years that would be involved using the only method currently available -- lawsuit. [Please refer to comments on lawsuits, above]

The tradeoff that is being made is speed vs. due process/fairness. The hearing and appeal procedure could be speeded up considerably, but would involve giving more power to the directors, which increases the possibility of a kangaroo court situation. The method described above does at least guarantee a definitive answer within a finite time. A decision made by a member of the American Arbitration Association would be a fair one -- that last level of appeal is the one in which

neither an unscrupulous Worldcon committee nor a scheming set of directors would be able to get away with any funny business. And decisions by American Arbitration Association members are entered in a court of law and are enforceable by any judge who has jurisdiction by means of injunctions -- instant justice.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE COMMITTEE DECIDES TO THUMB THEIR NOSES AT A DECISION?

Within 72 hours or thereabouts, the chairman of the Worldcon would be in jail on contempt of court charges. If the chairman still refuses to cooperate, the injunction could be expanded to include the entire committee. Penalties could involve fine and/or imprisonment.

You see, this is the real world. One of the arguments often heard against the board of director concept is that they could (1) frivolously decide to screw a Worldcon; and (2) would not be able to enforce any decisions that went against the Worldcon. The American Arbitration Association is a professional organization that exists for the sole purpose of arbitrating in SITUATIONS JUST LIKE THIS -- union contract negotiations, conflicts between two businesses, etc. By making use of this organization, if a conflict should ever get to this level, it WILL be resolved in a responsible manner and the resolution WILL be able to be enforced.

BUT THAT MEANS WE'RE ASKING OUTSIDERS TO SETTLE DISPUTES BETWEEN FANS!!!!!!
WE'RE DIFFERENT!!!!!!

Not in the eyes of the law. We're an organized body just like any other. One that transacts business in the several tens of thousands of dollars/year and that negotiates and signs and follows through on contracts with other businesses. If the Board and/or the Worldcon committee is stupid enough to let the machinery of due process go that far, then we become no different from any other group that can't settle its internal disputes internally.

You wanted to hear about a due process mechanism that will work. This will work. We didn't say it was going to be pleasant if things go that far, or that there will not be a lot of hard feelings generated.

ISN'T THIS ALL KIND OF COMPLICATED? AREN'T YOU SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME HARPING ON SOMETHING THAT WILL LIKELY NEVER HAPPEN?

It was your question. This area of the proposal is one of the most knee-jerk reaction-getting aspects and one of the most controversial. Thus, it deserves a detailed answer.

HMM. OKAY, SO A DECISION GOES AGAINST A WORLDCON. IT IS PROVED GUILTY OF MISMANAGING FUNDS OR WHATEVER. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE WORLDCON?

The worst penalty that could be invoked would be revocation of the franchise. As an alternative, compromises could be reached such as having the Worldcon IMMEDIATELY remedy the problem(s) and pay the costs incurred. Being more specific is difficult, as it would depend on the nature of the charges, who was involved, how much time is left until the convention, etc.

20

OKAY. NOW LET'S GET DOWN TO THE NITTY-GRITTY. WHAT HAPPENS IF THE BOARD ACTUALLY DOES TO REVOKE THE WORLDCON'S FRANCHISE? WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

Hoo boy, is this a tough one.

YOU KNEW THE JOB WAS DANGEROUS WHEN YOU TOOK IT.

Yeah, yeah. There are no simple or easy answers. The drafting committee is divided on this issue and discussion is still going on. Below are listed some of the possibilities being discussed by the drafting committee and others:

The simple, basic answer is that the board would not stop the committee from holding the convention. It would no longer have the right to call itself the worldcon. In addition, the board itself would award the Hugos and handle site selection by mail.

- (1) In addition to the basic answer above, if sufficient time is available, declare the Worldcon open for bidding and hold an emergency site selection ballot by mail. Advantages: would let fandom have the choice of what should be done instead (an option for "no award" would of course be on the ballot). Disadvantages: Even with a year to go before the con, a potential bidding committee would be hard-pressed to get their act together in time to form and carry through a competent bid. Also, finding a hotel could be very difficult with that kind of lead time. Lots of flak and hard feelings. BLAH!!!!!!
- (2) Have the Board take over the Worldcon and assume responsibility for contracts already signed by the Worldcon. The Board would either run the con themselves or appoint a committee. Advantages: Money and contracts to date would be unaffected and the convention would be run competently. Disadvantages: All kinds of [probably valid] accusations would be made against Board members, alleging that they trashed the committee so they could take over. You'd also have a very confused hotel on your hands. ECCCCHHH!!!!
- (3) The Board would select an existing regional in the same zone as the defunct Worldcon and call it the Worldcon for that year. Advantages: we'd have someplace we could call the Worldcon. Disadvantages: Few regionals have the flexibility to gear up for the SUDDEN increase in attendees that a Worldcon would mean. The newly-selected "Worldcon" concom would be in for lots of hard feelings. Fans would still have money in the possession of the defunct committee and the hotels. UGH!!!
- (4) The basic answer as above, unmodified. The Board would put the Worldcon on the shelf for a year and handle stuff like Hugos and site selection thru the mail. Advantages: No one could be accused of trying to manipulate fandom so they could "take over" the Worldcon. The Board would be spared the hassle of trying to salvage a disaster. Disadvantage: no official Worldcon that year.

Ross prefers option (4) as being the least intrinsically ugly and prone to creating even more hassles. Larry and Bob offer no opinion, pending discussion with the rest of the drafting committee.

LET'S GET BACK TO THE HEARING PROCEDURE. WHY CAN'T FANDOM AS A WHOLE VOTE ON THE DECISION TO YANK THE FRANCHISE?

(1) Ferocious cost. To be fair, the complete documentation of whatever charges there are, along with complete minutes and records of hearings to date would have to be sent to every member of the Society by 1st class mail or equivalent.

(2) As of what date do you freeze the membership list? There is the possibility of people joining the Society (e.g., the current Worldcon) just for the purpose of voting on the franchise-yanking issue.

(3) A far worse time delay would result from this method than a vote of 15 or so. 15 people can be pressured into responding quickly. 4000+ members of a Worldcon can't be given the same time deadlines.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CONVENTION EITHER FALLS APART OR HAS BEEN PROVEN GUILTY OF "EVIL DEEDS" SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE DATE THE CON IS TO BE HELD?

If a Worldcon committee can keep their troubles secret until six weeks before the con (or any other similarly short period), any problem that arises will have to be lived with, most likely.

If the situation involves "EVIL DEEDS", the committee will probably be sued or criminal charges will be filed, which of course will be too late to do anything about before the con. A criminal charge would probably involve injunctions, which might do some good. A lawsuit would definitely not be able to be resolved before the con. [Please refer to comments on lawsuits, above.]

If the committee falls apart, the Board will offer what help it can and coordinate the mobilization of fandom to pitch in and help.

Falling apart due to incompetence should be irrelevant, because if a Worldcon committee has been adhering to the clauses of the franchise contract up to that point and signing contracts properly and keeping a budget and financial records and such, the committee has been performing at least minimally competently, BY DEFINITION!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. ENOUGH OF THIS TALK ABOUT WORLDCONS GOING BELLY-UP! THIS IS GETTING DEPRESSING! WHAT ELSE WOULD THE BOARD DO?

Handle the mechanics of Hugo balloting, site selection, run the business meeting, and keep a permanent set of records. And provide an ongoing source of advice and experience for novice Worldcon committees to draw upon if they so choose.

HUH? I CAN SEE THE BOARD RUNNING THE BUSINESS MEETING [YUCCH, WHAT A DULL AND DRY PILE OF SPACE-MANURE!], BUT WHY SHOULD THE BOARD CONTROL HUGOS AND SITE SELECTION?

The Board constitutes a permanent committee that doesn't have any pressing duties to worry about. The role of "watchdog" in charge of monitoring Worldcons for signs of violation of the franchise agreement

will take up very little time in practice and tend to be a dull, mechanical process.

The mechanics of processing nominations and ballots is not something that has ANY slack space for Worldcons to express their individuality and innovation by doing new and different things. Many of the problems of recent years have arisen from Worldcons ignoring the Worldcon Constitution rules re Hugos and site selection, or regarding decisions re these processes as being programming decisions.

The best argument in favor of the Board doing it is the precedents set since 1974. Not once since then have Hugos and site selection been handled properly -- late or erratic mailing of ballots, poor print quality on ballots, non-secret ballots, the chairman of the convention arbitrarily redefining Hugo rules, etc. Hugos and site selection have been consistently mismanaged! Part of the reason may be that because it gives the people handling it not much of a chance to shine, Hugos and site selection have often slipped in priorities and attention when more attractive or creative or critical matters were pressing.

I'VE SEEN THE CURRENT PROPOSAL AND IT'S FULL OF ALL KINDS OF LEGAL GARBAGE! IS ALL THAT SPACE-WASH REALLY NECESSARY? WHY NOT WRITE IT IN PLAIN, ORDINARY ENGLISH?

As far as fandom is concerned, no the space-wash isn't necessary, but remember, this document has to be workable in the real world of the IRS, judges, courts, etc.

Much of the space-wash or space-puckey or whatever is "boiler plate" -- words and phrases that over the years have acquired very unambiguous meanings in courts and the legal system.

If you don't like boiler plate, yeah, it can be put in terms of simple English -- but it takes (as a rule) FOUR times the space to do it!!!!!!

If you think the draft is too long, the Women's International Bowling Congress, an organization that exists to regulate the operation of bowling leagues and tournaments, has a constitution of 65 pages!

HOW CAN I HAVE INPUT INTO THIS?

The simplest and most direct way is to show up at Worldcon business meetings and speak.

If you wish to express your views directly to the drafting committee, send a minimum of 25 copies to the drafting committee secretary:

Laurence C. Smith, 875 Oakland Park, Columbus, OH 43224

HOW DO I KEEP INFORMED ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON?

(1) Attend Worldcon business meetings.

(2) Send the drafting committee secretary money (\$1 minimum) and you will receive photocopies of whatever is currently being sent out to drafting committee members. This will continue until the money you have sent runs out.

IS THE PROPOSAL GOING TO BE PASSED THIS YEAR?

No. At least, it will only over the dead bodies of the entire



drafting committee! The committee feels that much work needs to be done in terms of further discussion of the proposal and ironing out of misconceptions that are rampant in fandom re what the proposal is and is trying to do.

WHAT'S THIS ALL GOING TO COST ME?

The functions of the Board would be financed by instituting a membership fee for the Society (of say, 50¢/year) that would be collected as part of the Worldcon registration fee.

WHEW! ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH FOR NOW! I'VE GOT TO SIT BACK AND DIGEST THIS AND DISCUSS IT WITH MY FRIENDS. CAN WE CONTINUE THIS SOME OTHER TIME?

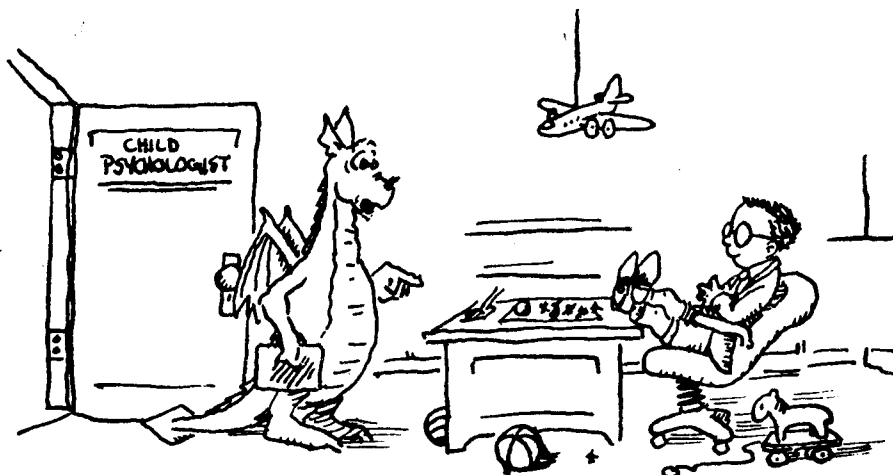
Of course. And thanks for listening. It's been a pleasure talking to ourselves. Lord knows we do it often enough anyway.

*
* Ye olde disclaimer: the opinions expressed in this article are *
* the personal opinions of the authors and are not intended to *
* be construed as being identical with the opinions of the *
* various members of the drafting committee. OK? *
*

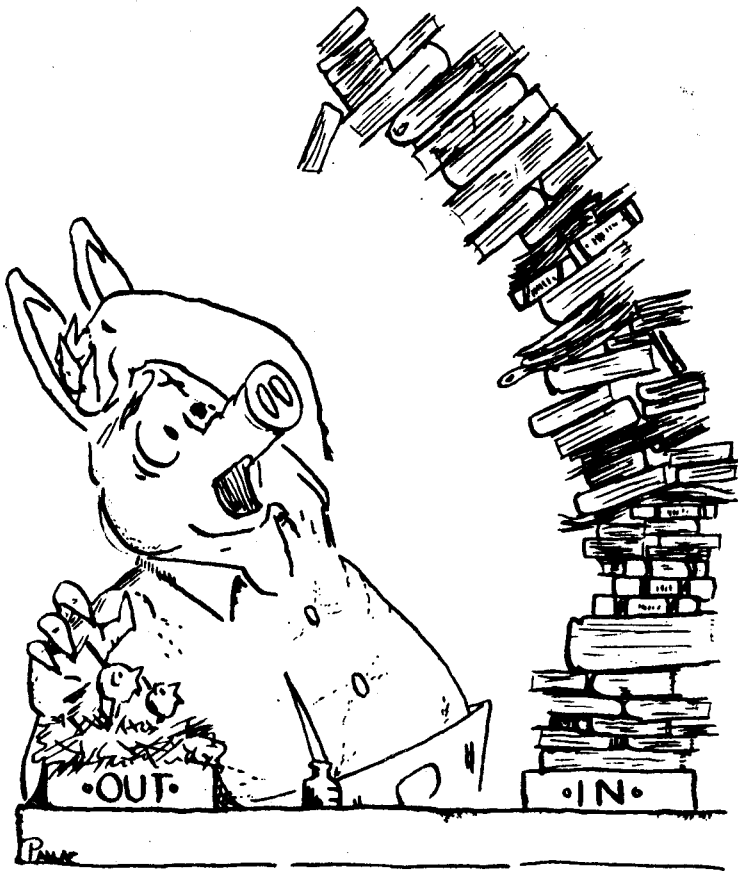
Editor's note:

This was not intended to be a definitive discussion, but to cover some of the main points of controversy and help clear up some of the misconceptions we have encountered. Not all of the material discussed here is literally in the current draft -- some is listing possibilities in addition to what is currently in the draft, some is an English translation of the boiler plate and of explaining what some of the references to Robert's Rules of Order really mean.

If there are sufficient LoCs on the subject [hint, hint!], I will print them and/or run a forum or something on the subject in the next issue.



The Archives



As you may notice from the aghast look on my face in the illustration on the left, the pile of books to review has been growing ever larger.

I suppose I had better dig in and get some of them out of the way, and... No, wait a minute! that's not what I wanted to say. I've got some really good stuff I've been itching to tell large numbers of people about, and it's been annoying to be limited to doing it on a one-on-one basis. As usual, of course, there's the expected smattering of turkeys I

feel that it is my duty to warn you about. So here goes....

CINNABAR by Edward Bryant [Bantam, \$1.50]. A collection of short stories about "a city at the center of time". I was first drawn to this by the attractive cover, read the jacket blurbs, and became intrigued. Fascinating, fascinating. Strange book. It reads very, very much in the style of Cordwainer Smith (with maybe a smattering of Delaney at his peak), yet not so much like it that it grates (a la Shannara's ripoff of Tolkein). Haunting. If you like Cordwainer Smith, read this. You notice I'm not bothering to describe the stories. -- I sat here for a few minutes trying to, then gave up. Bryant is growing in stature. A man to be watched.

THE FLORIANS, WILDEBLOOD'S EMPIRE, THE CITY OF THE SUN by Brian Stableford [DAW, \$1.50]. I thought that Stableford's early books sucked galactic moose, as Mike Glyer is fond of saying. I therefore ignored his stuff for quite a while, until some friends insisted I try ummm, SWAN SONG, I think. Anyway, it persuaded me to give him another chance.

These are the second thru fourth of a (supposedly) five-book series (the fifth is not yet out) about a survey ship out looking for the results of man's expansion into space. Colony ships were sent out long ago, and it is only now that Earth is getting around to sending a survey ship to see if any of them are still around and how they're doing. The protagonist is a biologist who desperately wants man's expansion in space to continue. You see, this is the second survey ship -- the first one found nothing but

dead and degenerated colonies and the Powers That Be on Earth are divided about whether space colonization will show any useful results. Sounds familiar.

Anyway, every time they land [1 landing per book], the survey crew finds a socioeconomic/ecological puzzle waiting for them. Things are never what they initially seem. They're light reading, but highly entertaining. Stableford has now reached the point where he can tell an entertaining story and write about reasonably nonstereotypical characters.

ALL MY SINS REMEMBERED by Joe Haldeman [St. Martin's]. I have a real problem reviewing Haldeman's stuff objectively. I've known Joe for five years and Joe is very popular at cons and lots of fans rave about what a great guy he is and all that. Which muddies the waters. Haldeman got lots talent, no doubt. But how much? Is he really as good as everybody says he is or am I suffering from hearing so many other fans hyping him? Ah, well. *shrug* I suppose I'll never know -- overhyped or non-overhyped, he's still on my "automatic buy" list.

Oh, yeah, the book. A bitter, dark novel about an interplanetary secret agent who takes over other people's identities in order to do his thing. Powerful. Grim. I would have liked it a lot more if it had been less grim, but that would have destroyed the whole point of much of the book. Good stuff, but don't read it when you want some escapism to cheer you up.

TIME STORM by Gordon R. Dickson [St. Martin's]. Dickson also suffers from the over-hype problem, at least to me. He too, though, is on my "automatic buy" list so apparently as far as I'm concerned he must be doing lots of things right hype or no hype.

Dickson has been slowly and steadily growing in stature over the years. The premise of this book is a fascinating concept. Earth is beset by time storms -- storms that make one chunk of acreage exist in 1978 or whatever, and you walk a hundred yards away and you're in 1880 or 2250 or.... Neat idea. He does a lot with it and comes up with a book that is so close to GREATNESS that I winced after I finished. Not sure of the problem -- I think that it's that he didn't keep as tight a control over the storyline as he might have -- let things wander into subplots and interludes a bit too much. Read it.



Jewel + Trian

MASTODONIA by Clifford D. Simak [Del Rey]. Typical of the stuff Simak's been doing for the last several years -- not a classic but good entertaining stuff anyway. A man discovers a time portal on his farm, steps through it

accidentally, and discovers himself in the era of dinosaurs (yes, Simak, as usual, did his homework so we don't have all the different dinosaurs around all at the same time). He then discovers that the portal is not accidental, but created by a cheshire catlike alien who does things like that out of boredom. You see, he's stranded, and.... Anyway, our hero decides to do the logical thing -- cash in on it! -- and runs into the all-too-well-known problems with bureaucracy and the IRS and ripoff artists and.... Fun.

GATEWAY by Frederik Pohl [St. Martin's]. My, St. Martin's is turning into a prolific publisher of lots of really good SF! I never heard of them before Joe Haldeman was published by them, and that wasn't all that long ago.

This is a really, really good book! The plot concerns an Earth corporation that is making use of a space station left behind by a long-gone alien race. The station is loaded with FTL starships with the capability to go anywhere FAST. The only catch is that no one has quite figured out how to operate them. Starting the thing up is easy, but the aliens apparently didn't leave a convenient atlas behind. So one is reduced to punching in coordinates at random, and taking one's chances on what is waiting at the other end.

I'm a sucker for a well-done alien artifact book, and this is one of the best I've read in a long time. Pohl is turning out stuff now that is every bit as good as he was doing in the fifties!

-- and I'm not just saying that because he is the Guest of Honor at the 1979 NorthAmeriCon in Louisville, Kentucky, of which I am a committee member. [this has been an unpaid sneak commercial. Surprise!]

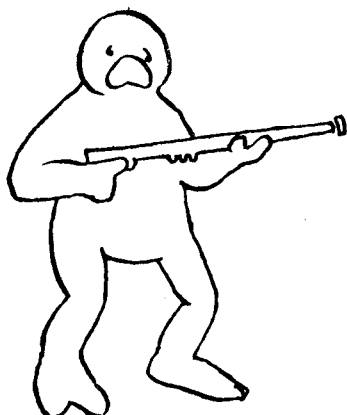
A SCANNER DARKLY by Philip K. Dick [Doubleday]. And I said Haldeman was writing grim stuff? Hoo hah! This makes Haldeman's grimmest look like Horatio Alger! An undercover narc must keep his identity secret even from his employers. He even reports on himself, to keep up the cover, pretending that he is one of the other users. A tense life, and one made considerably tenser when he begins getting hooked on mind-destroying drugs and the addiction is getting worse as he is getting closer to the source of the drug ring. Wow. Not a cheerful book at all. I think Dick arranged with the publisher to put some of the addictive drug in the pulp paper -- this was one I wasn't able to put down at all until I finished it, at which point I let out a long breath and lay back and thought about life for a long, long time.

STARGATE by Stephen Robinett [Signet, \$1.50]. Speaking of addicting, this is one of those books that I picked up to do some light reading to zip off a few chapters before bedtime and the next thing I knew it was 2 am and I had finished the book and I had to be at work at 7 am. *groan* Industrial espionage in the early 21st century as a corporation nears completion on a teleport gate capable of traversing interstellar distances. Giles Habibula fans will love Scarlyn Smith, the elderly and crusty-but-loveable troubleshooter who has a delightfully cynical outlook on life. Robinett has just been added to my "automatic buy" list.

UNDER A CALCULATING STAR by John Morressy [Popular Library, \$1.50]. Morressy writes good space opera, with interesting characterization. The

frustrating thing is that he keeps falling just short of turning out something that could set the SF world up to pay more attention to him. This is a book about treasure hunts on deserted worlds and revolutions of slave classes and palace intrigue. It falls apart when he takes the two main characters and sends them off in two different directions, and the rest of the book kind of dribbles into mediocrity. OK, but nowhere near as good as he's done before.

THE PRINCESS BRIDE by William Goldman [Ballantine, \$1.95]. IF YOU LIKE FANTASY AT ALL, BUY THIS BOOK! It is delightful, crammed with classic



scenes, beautiful princesses (not just beautiful, but the most beautiful in the world!), fierce battles, evil magicians, all the classic elements of a good fantasy. To describe the process of creation of the book would take too much space, but it is worth your trouble to pick up the book on the stands and read the forward. If that doesn't hook you, forget it -- it won't be your cup of tea. By the way, ignore the cover blurbs -- it is not a "hot fairy tale" -- it is a return to suspension of disbelief in the Grand Old Manner. Yale Edeiken turned me on to this book and I am very grateful. After all, any book where a hero spends years pre-

paring for revenge and memorizing, "Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die!" is off to a good start. EXCELLENT!!!!

SUPERMIND by A.E. Van Vogt [DAW, \$1.25]. As with many other readers of SF, Van Vogt was a powerful and early shaper of my reading tastes. Slans and null-A were important parts of my early reading. Empire of the Atom was one of the first books I came across in elementary school (when I was zipping thru the SF section at the local library. One of the great frustrations of my early reading was that the librarian wouldn't let me take out a copy of Asimov's The Naked Sun -- I think she looked at the title and decided it had to be dirty and therefore unfit for impressionable fourth graders. -- or had she too seen the provocative ads SF book club was running for the book on the back covers of the SF mags of the period, showing a female wrapped in nothing but a towel and dwelling in fascination upon the strange cultural mores of other worlds? But I wander.) that I found was written at a higher level than I could then appreciate. He was one of my favorites.

Alas, he has fallen on hard times. Most of his recent stuff has been mildly entertaining and barely readable. This one isn't even that. Muddy, muddy, muddy. I sadly put it down after 30 pages (VERY rare-- I nearly always finish every book I start, especially if I like the author). Unreadable. Avoid.

THE PROMETHEUS CRISIS by Thomas N. Scortia and Frank M. Robinson [Bantam, \$1.95]. A "disaster novel" about a nuclear reactor meltdown. Suspenseful, well-written. The problem I had with it was that it is a book that plays on people's fears about nuclear power. I am very PRO nuclear power -- unless and until efficient solar power is developed, we ain't got nothin'

else in the long haul. And oil is running out fast and we NEED oil for plastics and lubricants and petroleum jelly and stuff like that!

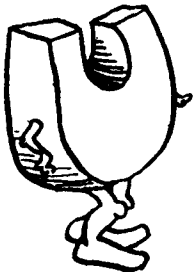
LUCIFER'S HAMMER by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle [Fawcett, \$2.50]. A long, sprawling novel about a gigantic comet striking the earth. Filled with all kinds of fascinating characters and subplots. When I first heard about this, I said to myself, "aha--they've decided to cash in on the disaster novel craze". Well, I don't care -- they deserve every bit of the huge sums they are reported to have been paid for this. It is without a doubt the best "disaster novel" I have ever read. In addition, it is better than any of their previous collaborations (and Mote In God's Eye was pretty damn good!). BUY IT BUY IT BUY IT BUY IT!!!!!!

TO CONTROL THE STARS by Robert Hoskins [Del Rey, \$1.50]. Lot of interstellar teleportation gate novels around recently. This is an OK space opera, but nothing outstanding. Good light reading. Hoskins has potential.

The Kent Family Chronicles: THE BASTARD, THE REBELS, THE SEEKERS, THE FURIES, THE TITANS, THE WARRIORS, THE LAWLESS by John Jakes [Pyramid/Jove \$1.75-\$2.25]. Now, this is an epic! Even if you didn't see THE BASTARD on TV, you've probably heard of this series by now. Jakes has left the SF ghetto to make BIG BUCK\$ writing historical novels that hit the bestseller lists. And very entertaining ones at that.

If you don't already know, the series traces the escapades of the Kent family from the Revolutionary War days to the beginning of the 20th century. As with other historical books of this type, the Kent family is one of those families that has been very important in our heritage, but never quite important enough to make the history books. But these are far better written than most historicals of this type. You find yourself developing a real interest in the Kent family, its follies and fortunes and constant up-and-down bobbing in the waves of history.

Bob Hillis, our local history expert (he has a master's in it and teaches it), says Jakes makes very few historical errors, and always minor ones.



In the most recent book, Jakes makes noises to the effect that he intends to end the series with the next book, which will (he hints) take us through the Spanish-American War. He doesn't say why, but presumably it's a combination of getting tired of writing about the same family and increasing problems in keeping the size of the Kent minions to a manageable number so that the reader can keep track and so that there can be a cohesive plot (in his almost occasionally-desperate efforts to keep numbers down, lots of Kents tend to die young, usually by violence, of course).

I'm disappointed. I had been hoping that what he really had in mind was to take the Kents up through the present, and, with all those millions hooked, start projecting the Kents into the future and start writing science fiction that would be automatic bestseller material! Clever, huh? Well, apparently that's not what he has in mind. Too bad.

/* An additional note on Lucifer's Hammer -- rumor mill claims that

Niven & Pournelle were negotiating for film rights to the book when the film moguls suddenly backed off, claiming "it's been done" and pointing to a couple of films currently in production with similar themes. According to the rumor mill, Niven & Pournelle are ticked! If this is indeed true, so am I. All I can do is take comfort in the thought that if they'd made it into a movie, they would have probably botched it. */

PRISON OF NIGHT, INCIDENT ON ATH by E.C. Tubb [DAW, \$1.50]. The two latest in the Dumarest series, which I have been following since high school in the late sixties. Even us hard-core Dumarest freaks are beginning to wonder if Tubb ever really plans to have Dumarest find Earth at last. I hope he has at least a short story with the conclusion placed aside for publication in the event of his untimely end -- if not, he's gonna be in real trouble in the afterlife.

Even so, the series is starting to wear thin. The subplot of the Cyber brains decaying seems to have been forgotten about -- don't recall it being mentioned for 3 or 4 books now (Ath is #18 in the series). And Dumarest is close enough to finding out the coordinates of Earth that Tubb seems to feel compelled to lower Dumarest's IQ in order to insure that he keeps missing that one last clue that would solve everything.

They're still pleasant reading, but the last few, especially ATH, have shown dangerous tendencies of having the series slip to the Gilligan's Island level of predictability. And I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

THE MAKING OF THE TREK CONVENTIONS by Joan Winston [Doubleday, \$7.95]. This is a book about the New York Trek Conventions. The famous ones. The ones that led the way for Trekdom and Trekcons as we know them. These were also among the best-run ones, if not the best-run.

Ostensibly, this book is written to supply all kinds of anecdotes about Shatner, Nimoy, et al. Which it does.

But for those of us who run conventions, the book has a far greater significance. For in the process, Joan sneaks in all kinds of trivia and stories about the headaches of running large conventions, and Trek conventions and "our" kind of SF conventions do indeed share a great many of the same problems.

If you run conventions, and are interested in reading about other people's experiences in doing the same, I highly recommend this book.

COLONY by Ben Bova [Pocket Books, \$1.95]. An excellent novel about O'Neill colonies. Bova has quit Analog, and the last I heard he was hired to edit Nova (or whatever they decide to call it). As far as I'm concerned, if Bova wants to get out of the editing game completely and write full-time, it's fine by me. This is really good!

DINOSAUR PLANET by Anne McCaffrey [Del Rey \$1.75]. The first of a new series, and up to McCaffrey's usual excellent standards. For those who like to speak of different female authors in relation to each other, for my money McCaffrey is the best female writer in the field today. This is about a survey party that becomes marooned on a planet that has dinosaurs and all kinds of neat stuff on it. Interesting characters, too. Great stuff.

ILLUMINATUS: THE EYE IN THE PYRAMID, THE GOLDEN APPLE, LEVIATHON by Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson [Dell, \$1.50]. COSMIC TRIGGER/THE FINAL SECRET OF THE ILLUMINATI by Robert Anton Wilson [Pocket Books, \$1.95]. The Illuminatus trilogy was first published in 1975, and is one of the more bizarre romps in recent years. It is an orgy of conspiracy and coincidence and counter-coincidence. Those who always suspect that there are groups consciously manipulating the stories behind the headlines went through a real catharsis when reading this. It is a fascinating work to read, despite the fact that the constant changes in setting and timeframe (with no warning in most cases) interrupt the flow of reading often enough to be disturbing.

COSMIC TRIGGER is a new, "non-fiction" work which rambles about the background behind the Illuminatus books, and about the thoughts and happenings that Wilson underwent before, during, and after publication. It is an interesting book, with much that is valid and intriguing, and much that strikes me as being space-puckey. Of course, which is the good stuff and which is the space-puckey is in the eye of the beholder. F'rinstance, I am highly skeptical of numerology and while it's fun to joke about the Law of Fives or the significance of 23 or whatever, I maintain that anything can be warped and twisted to obey those laws OR THE LAWS OF ANY OTHER ARBITRARY NUMBER if one is sufficiently ingenious.

If you liked the Illuminati books, this is a MUST. If you didn't or haven't read them, this book is not for you.



"...so, anyway, Pavlac volunteered to help these neofans - who were actually Low Tabakov and Tucker in disguise - find a room. And would you believe..."

THE MALACIA TAPESTRY by Brian Aldiss [Ace, \$1.95]. Aldiss is one of those authors who is highly erratic in the quality of his work-- he can turn out really good stuff and utter garbage, seemingly at random. Well, this one is garbage. The cover touts it as "A MAJOR WORK" -- it ain't.

The supposed theme of the book is "Renaissance Man in an alternate reality" -- with the alternate reality being one in which mankind has evolved from reptilian origins, rather than from primates. Sounds intriguing, right? Wrong. Alternate reality, yes. Takes place during the Renaissance, yes. Mankind descended from reptiles, yes. But. The only apparent reason Aldiss had for putting the book in an alternate universe was so he could use anachronisms at will and not have his readers jumping up and down and screaming.

Yeah, man is descended from reptiles, but the only reason seems to be so the Aldiss could have a dinosaur big-game hunt in a Renaissance setting! The descent is mentioned a few times in passing, but as far as any of the characters of the book are concerned, they might as well have been primate-descended -- no significant or even interesting aspects of the book involved any kind of physiological or mental difference that would result from the alternate descent. Why bother?

I suspect, cynical fellow that I am at times, that Aldiss did it simply so he could sell the book as fantasy, 'cause other than the dinosaurs and the anacronisms, the book is NOTHING more than a longwinded, BORING novel about a ne'er-do-well rogue in a Renaissance period. He is unlikeable, most of the other characters are neither interesting nor likeable, the plot meanders and builds suspense only occasionally. Blah. Yucchh-ptooye!!!!

THE GENESIS MACHINE by James P. Hogan [Del Rey, \$1.75]. Hogan is a computer person who is into writing "hard", scientific extrapolation-type SF in the Grand Olde Tradition. This is the first book of his that I read, and though it is rather creaky and strained in parts, showed enough promise that I put him on my "keep an eye on" list. This is a novel of super-inventors in the near future and is a combination of EARLY Doc Smith and the Tom Swift books (especially in depth of characterization). Pleasant but by no means outstanding.

INHERIT THE STARS, THE GENTLE GIANTS OF GANYMEDE by James P. Hogan [Del Rey, \$1.50, \$1.75]. A couple of months after I finished GENESIS MACHINE, I came across INHERIT THE STARS. It looked interesting and Hogan's name rang a bell, so I bought it. This is a hard-science puzzle novel about the origins of life on Earth, with lots of discussion and extrapolation of physics, geology, astronomy, etc. Some men travelling across the moon come across a corpse in a spacesuit. Sad, but not unheard-of. Except that the spacesuit is of a completely unknown type, the corpse, as near as anyone can tell, is 50,000 years old, and the creature inside is a human!!!!!! The book tells the story of the subsequent investigation as scientists try to piece the mystery together. I liked it, so much so that...

I bought the sequel as soon as I heard it was available. One of the discoveries made in the first book was the existence of an alien race in the solar system, thought to be long-extinct or departed or whatever. One of the artifacts the scientists are playing with happens to be a distress beacon, and one of the scientists (of course) accidentally sets the thing off. The inevitable results and some of the unresolved mysteries from the first book get explained further.

Watch this man. He's improving rapidly.

MURDER INK by Dilys Winn [Workman, \$7.95]. If you read mysteries and suspense at all, this book is ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE! It is 500+ pages chock-full of articles on the mystery genre, on specific authors and characters, factual articles on how crimestopping works in the Real World, etc. I can't say enough nice things about this book! It even has an article on one of my favorite characters from kiddylit, Freddy the Pig, who is (as all good kiddylit fans know) a part-time detective and Master of Disguise. BUY IT!

A WORLD CALLED CAMELOT by Arthur H. Landis [DAW, \$1.25]. An interstellar

espionage agent has to work undercover on a planet that is at a medieval state of development. The result is a delightful novel of science versus magic (magic seems to work here, by the way). Landis' style is that of a first-rate storyteller a la H. Beam Piper or Christopher Stasheff. Has he written anything else? If he has, I want to read it!

INTERFACE by Mark Adlard [Ace, \$1.50]. This is the first of a trilogy, I think, and is about a dystopia in the 22nd century. Ugh! Ecch! Argh! This book is awful! No decent characters to identify with or against, an incoherent plot, no suspense. No redeeming social value whatsoever. As is usually the case with books that are this awful, I pitched it against the wall after 50 pages or so, shouting "BULLSHIT!". Avoid this turkey like the plague.

CHARIOT OF FIRE by E.E.Y. Hales [Avon, \$1.75]. A novel about a sinner who goes to Hell -- the Hell of Dante and Milton. He arrives to find that such historic figures as Cleopatra and Mark Antony are plotting to take over the upper circles of Hell. God is not pleased. Neither is Satan. Our sinner becomes a key figure in the power struggle -- you see, he is an expert on trains, and both Satan and the other Powers involved need to transport troops and artillery and there is only one rail system in Hell.... An amusing book, if one is willing to overlook the fact that the ending is (ahem!) predestined. Strongly Roman Catholic in orientation. If you like things like THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS (altho this is nowhere near as good), you'll enjoy this.

TELEMPATH by Spider Robinson [Berkley, \$1.50]. A novel of the future, where civilization has collapsed due to an irresponsible scientist being the cause of everyone's sense of smell being heightened to the point where things like cities really do stink to high heaven. An interesting book, but one read with a great sense of frustration. Spider is capable of MUCH better than this and I wish he'd write it soon so I can read it.



THE CORNELIUS CHRONICLES:
THE FINAL PROGRAMME, A CURE FOR
CANCER, THE ENGLISH ASSASSIN, THE
CONDITION OF MUZAK by Michael
 Moorcock [1 volume, Avon, \$2.95].
 Moorcock is another of those
 writers who is highly erratic.
 In Moorcock's case, it is because
 he is constantly experimenting.
 I read THE FINAL PROGRAMME a while
 back and enjoyed it immensely.
 It is a wild and zany tour-de-force
 written in a highly experimental,

very new-wavish style, and is a lot of fun. So I eagerly bought this, expecting more of the same. No. He burnt out the idea in the first book. What is exciting and interesting for one book degenerates into gibberish over the course of four. The work as a whole is cute and experimental and zany to the point of incoherency. *sigh*

A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON by Piers Anthony [Del Rey, \$1.95]. Anthony is yet another erratic author, but he seems to have snapped out of it, at least in his most recent four books. His latest stuff ought to damn well make us sit up and take notice.

This is a fantasy about a world in which everyone is born with the ability to cast one particular type of spell. There are two catches: (1) You have to discover the spell yourself -- no one around you has any way of knowing what it is. (2) The spell can be something useful like invisibility or shape-changing....or can be something of --ah, questionable value, like the ability to change the color of one's urine at will. The story revolves around Bink, a boy who apparently has no magic ability (unheard-of!) and his quest to find out what his magical ability is. This is a highly-readable book, one of the best fantasy novels I have read in a LONG time!

THE CLUSTER TRILOGY: CLUSTER, CHAINING THE LADY, KIRLIAN QUEST by Piers Anthony [Avon, \$1.75 each]. This is Anthony's first MAJOR work since MACROSCOPE, and a major work it indeed is. It is a sprawling series that covers thousands of years and several galaxies and dozens of well-defined alien races.

There are two major themes: tarot and Kirlian auras. Anthony's thesis is that an individual with a Kirlian aura significantly above the norm can transfer its mind into the body of another creature, even one many light-years distant. Tarot and heraldry are everywhere; they are universal constants.

The plot is a good, meaty one of intergalactic intrigue and energy wars and love and communication and finding a meaning in life.

What really stands out, though, are the characters and the alien races. The characters are nearly always interesting and well-delineated. He has given a lot of thought to the various races of aliens and their physiology and history and philosophies. And what makes this very rare among SF -- he actually has the physiology and history and such really affect the characterizations and philosophies of the characters! Real aliens! Wow! I don't know about you readers out there, but I get awfully tired of rubber-suit-type aliens -- characters that have a minor quirk in their personality and are made into aliens seemingly just to serve the purpose of involving non-humanoids in the plot -- in most SF, the alien characters could just as well be slime molds as orangutans. Anthony has written a series with REAL cultural differences between different races, not just a set of random differences casually pasted on with stickytape.

Even if, like me, you think tarot is for the birds and Kirlian auras are interesting but of unproven potential, you will enjoy the hell out of these books. Highly recommended.

The Fletch & Flynn books; FLETCH, CONFESS, FLETCH, FLYNN, FLETCH'S FORTUNE by Gregory McDonald [Avon, \$1.75-\$1.95]. These are very well done suspense books, involving crime (organized and personal), espionage, etc.

They are written with a light, tongue-in-cheek style that is very endearing and highly addictive. These are fairly good-sized books (circa 250 pages each) and I keep finding it impossible to not read one in a single sitting! Fletch is a freelance investigative reporter who keeps finding himself in situations involving Evil Deeds and Lots of Money, and has the ability to wise-crack and think

himself out of trouble constantly. The plots are tightly convoluted and tend to grab your interest and hold you and not let go.

Flynn is a Boston Police Inspector with a hazy background (apparently one of international espionage -- things are too warm overseas so he's spending some time lying low and continuing to fight evil) who is mistakenly after Fletch in CONFESS, FLETCH. McDonald liked him so well he gave him a book of his own, FLYNN.

McDonald has twice won the Edgar Award (the mystery equivalent of the Hugo), maybe for one of these books (the cover blurbs are unclear). He deserved them! Good stuff!

'SALEM'S LOT by Stephen King [Signet, \$1.95]. King is the author of CARRIE, which I enjoyed. Even so, due to the hype surrounding this book, I was reluctant to buy it until several friends urged me to. It is absolutely excellent.

It is a contemporary novel about a vampire entering a small New England town and proceeding to Do His Thing. With all due respect to DRACULA, this is the best and most suspense-filled vampire novel I have ever read.

THE SHINING by Stephen King [Signet, \$2.50]. A novel about a young boy with emerging ESP powers, alone with his parents in a resort hotel haunted by evil spirits who are stirred to greater and greater activity and consciousness by the boy's presence. An incredibly well-written book; the only bitch I had was that it is difficult for anyone to write a 447-page novel in which a five-year old boy is the central character -- it is difficult to portray the inner workings of a five-year old for that length and it is difficult for readers to identify with a five-year old.

It is being made into a movie by Stanley Kubrick, and this is just the kind of thing he could do really well! It sounds like it has excellent casting, with Jack Nicholson as the boy's father and Scatman Caruthers as the black resort cook. Rumor was that Kubrick was considering white actors for the role of the cook, but finally changed his mind and decided to go along with the way it is in the book (good! The part really calls for a black.). He is apparently going to stick fairly close to the book, but for various reasons has thrown out the wasps, the hedge monsters, and REDRUM as being unworkable. Should be good....

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THE WATERGATE!



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| <input type="checkbox"/> I'd like you to contribute | <input type="checkbox"/> George, our staff elephant, put down the wrong address |
| <input type="checkbox"/> You paid ca\$h (thank you!) | <input type="checkbox"/> Whim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your name is Mary Anne Mueller | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aardvark Faandom lives! |
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Thanks for LoCs and such to:
Mike Glycer, Neicer Hudspeth,
Brian Earl Brown, Mike Banks,
Harry Warner Jr., Tony Cvetko,
Linda Emery, Jessica Salmonson.
The AERIEMAIL lettercol will be back next issue.

Printing by John Ayotte.

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