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T H E F I R S T P S I P

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE BALTIMORE SCIENCE FICTION SOCIETY

WELCOME

to Balticon 9, and to BSFAN NUMBER ONE, MARCH 1975. In which BSFS members will thrill and delight you with wild but strictly true stories of things BSFSers do and things BSFSers are, in hopes that you too will be inspired to join us.

Our Current Officers. Our current officers are: President - Sue Wheeler; Recording Secretary - Judy Kurman; Corresponding Secretary - Bill Simmons; Treasurer - Ted Pauls; Parliamentarian - Ed Welch. Any resemblance of these officers to any person or persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

Our Publications Committee, which shamelessly assumes full responsibility for whatever is in this issue, if anything (except p. 5), consists of Mike Kurman, editor; Rich Dixon; Steve Miller; Artemus; Sue Wheeler; Judy Kurman; Rick Neff; Gary Svohla.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily the opinions of anyone. Letters of Comment are solicited.

THE NEW KINGDOM

Sue Wheeler

Later you will hear the saga of the old and middle kingdoms. Now to the once and future B.S.F.S (fingers crossed). To scotch a persistent rumor, it was not the sole effort of one mysterious Susan Wheeler. However, for two months after the 1974 Balticon, where the actual seed was carelessly dropped by Fred Lerner and nurtured through several interminable conversations with such as Sally Turner, Barry Newton, and Edgar Welch, the cry resounded through Baltimore, "When's the first meeting?" Finally, after recovery from the virus which we always seem to bring home from conferences, an organizational meeting was held in April and here we are at Balticon.

Why? Remember the standard cartoon showing the parched, emaciated creature crawling across the barren wastes toward the mocking image of a con? This picture describes the feelings of some Baltimore fans in their sense of isolation between conferences; where do those thirty-six Baltimoreans who subscribe to Locus lurk?

B.S.F.S began with seven members. However, a severe case of writer's cramp (addressing flyers to Baltimoreans on the T-K Graphics mailing list, thank you, Mr. Pauls) was rewarded by a doubling of membership after the third meeting. Since then, by application of the discovery that membership

grows most readily when plenty of sangria is available (rum for the President), B.S.F.S has grown to some twenty-odd, very odd members.

Having survived the great battle of the constitution, B.S.F.S turned to more sercon matters. Under the leadership of our recording secretary and program chairperson for Balticon, Judy Kurman, a two day program of lectures, panels, movies, and exhibits was held at a branch of Baltimore County Public Library. It was so successful that we have been requested to work up a program for Job Corps participants.

However, our major project since November has been Balticon. Only you can decide how well we have done this time. If you live in the Baltimore area, stop any committee member, and he/she/it will be delighted to give more details. If you are not so sercon, don't worry; we will let you sit with our official Club Lout. Besides, the best part of the meeting is after. Come and see.

THE BALTIMORE SCIENCE FANTASY GROUP
Artemus

Would you believe that the average meeting lasted from Saturday night at 8:30 until Sunday morning at 11; traditionally ending with George of the Jungle, singing along, of course.

It was essentially Jack Chalker (Resident Guru), Ted Pauls (Reconstituted Beatnik), Don and Debbie Sobwick (Ace Reporter and Moll), Mark Owings, Kim Weston, Ed Krieg, Myself--the resident neo, and a host of transient types.

The meetings were usually held in West Baltimore at either Kim's ~~North~~ ~~Blk~~ apartment, or Ed's home about a block away. These consisted of general socializing, mayhem, yarn swapping (those were innocent times), and even (rarely) a Business Meeting. Then around midnight the entire group would go out for dinner, usually at IHOP or the Double T.

The second part of the meetings were really unique. A caravan to East Baltimore, to the Sobwicks', where Don had a closet full of board games that would have made Fibber McGee nervous. And off into the wee hours playing every game imaginable. You name it and we played it. The longest meeting I know of went until 5:30 Sunday evening. That one was a Poker Game. I think I won two dollars...gads! And there was a club project. If you were out of a game you could add another chapter to our pornographic novel. It was TERRIBLE.

One interesting extra-curricular activity that sprung up was the group that started regularly attending meetings in other cities, such as the Lunarians in New York and PSFS in Philly. Chalker started the whole thing with the Magic Mercedes. Soon a crew was regularly piling into the car and Baltimore was represented in force all over the Mid-Atlantic region (we never did make NESFA).

We would also take some pretty far out routes: New York by way of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the Cape May-Lewes ferry, or through rural Pennsylvania. Saw quite a few oddities. I particularly remember a place that served teaberry ice cream. It looked and tasted like a leading antacid.

I have a feeling that there will never again be a group quite so ~~ludicrous~~ faanish. Too bad. When the Sobwicks moved to greener pastures, the club pretty much folded. This was about 1970-71, when the proliferation of conventions was just starting. Between them, Lunarians, WSFA, etc., the need

for a local club seemed to diminish. We all saw each other in other towns just as often.

But, if you pay attention to committee members of various conventions, you'll see for instance that Jack is running Luncon this year and is active at other cons, Ted is running registrations and huckster rooms at four or five different conventions as well as being vice-chairman of the New York in 1977 Worldcon bid...who says the Baltimore Mafia is a myth?

BSFS: THE EARLY YEARS
vaguely recalled by David M. Ettlin

A very strange name, BSFS. And very appropriate. Not from the acronym point of view, but simply from the first two letters--BS. The early existence of BSFS is strangely dependent upon two bus (bs) rides.

The first occurred somewhere around the winter of 1961 during one of those rare, incredible Baltimore blizzards. I was taking a bus home from City College and it took nine-hours to get from 33rd and The Alameda to Park Circle on the Number 22 line. During that time, about a foot of snow fell and I met Jack L. Chalker. It was my introduction to fandom, with the result that I got on several fanzine mailing lists and was lured into joining the NSF (for those who don't know, that's the National Fantasy Fan Federation).

The first bus ride led about a year later to more bus rides--aboard the Trailways at regular intervals to Washington for meetings of WSFA. During this time period, Baltimore fandom grew to include 5 people, and since a decade is a long time and I'm no longer sure which were the first 5, suffice it to say there were 5. I thought it a bit ridiculous to keep riding a bus to Washington and suggested on one back-seat return trip that we start BSFS.

An Australian ballot election was held on the back seat and Chalker became the first President. Somehow, Chalker always won those elections. He was the only one who knew anything about Robert's Rules of Order, anyhow, so it was all for the best.

Meetings were held the second and fourth Saturdays each month so as not to conflict with WSFA meetings, and the sixth Saturday was reserved for parties. As sixth Saturdays were rather infrequent, we took to having parties of a sort at every meeting.

BSFS accomplished only one lasting feat--starting the Balticon, an annual conference held here around February (and this year, for some dumb reason, March and in Pikesville). Maybe taking away Washington's Birthday weekend from the 22nd and making it slightly more unpredictable had something or other to do with my confusion on that point.

Along the way, BSFS managed to suck into fandom such characters as Ron Bounds, a strange chap who ended up running the Discon II with Chalker, Jay Haldeman and the like; Jerry Jacks, who split to San Francisco and became a big name fan and leader in the local gay movement; David Katz, a brilliant high school student best known for trying vodka and chocolate milk at a Phillycon a decade ago and barfing his way upstairs in the Philadelphia YMCA elevator afterwards (Katz has long since gaffiated and gotten into transcendental meditation, which is considerably safer than vodka and chocolate milk); Mark Owings, a science fiction and fantasy scholar who may be the quietest person in the world and the man who can answer any question about a story or writer, no matter how trivial; Edward Krieg, who still shows up at cons and whose sister, Alice (who was much sexier), married Jay Haldeman (since parting

the ways.

BSFS tried to get a worldcon bid, had a secret agreement from Clifford D. Simak to be guest of honor, but lost the bid back in the middle 60's. And not long afterwards, Ettlin went gaffia.

Along the way, I met a lot of neat people, expanded my horizons by learning there are a lot of folks with interests like mine, and got drunk at a few conventions. It was fun. Maybe I'll show up at a meeting sometime and get disillusioned. And if I can find the way to Pikesville, I'll see you at Balticon.

1974 was a fertile year for sf author Tyrone Schulse. Though his conscience was at times a trifle bothersome, the checks that came in the mail were a thrill. He had made more than carfare this past year from a number of short stories, the hard science themes of which he had lifted directly from A Bit Far Out Stories, a very limited circulation prozine of 1943, never distributed outside of Illinois and Indiana, which had folded after seven issues.

However, Schulse soon reassured himself that moral discomfort was the price one had to pay for money and fame. But one thought ever nagged at him: What if he got caught? What if someone remembered one of his stories--recollected the plot, recalled the character development--and leafed back through his own valuable copies of A Bit Far Out Stories and discovered the truth?

But could any copies other than Schulse's still exist? There had to be a handful in scattered collections. Very well, decided Schulse, we'll put the matter to rest once and for all. I'll advertise, under a pseudonym, in the prozines and in the most widely read fanzines offering to pay top dollar for issues of A Bit Far Out Stories. I may use up my earnings, he thought resignedly, but I'll have my fame, and my safety.

NOVEMBER IN ROSEDALE

Michael Kurman

The weather was getting colder. The woods in the back of the angular but graceful white building were as bare as rooms J & K of Levering Hall after 9:30 P.M. on second Saturdays. The parking lot in front of the building was as full as a group of fans finishing their Peking Garden dinner. Inside, two hundred men, women, children, children; and children were thoroughly enjoying a showing of Star Trek bloopers. At other times during the day, which was a Saturday, and on the previous Wednesday night, from 60 to 90 science fiction enthusiasts, including fans from Baltimore, Washington, and area colleges, heard speakers, panelists, and viewed five films.

BSFS's first major endeavor was a mini-convention, staged November 13 and 16 at the new Rosedale branch of the Baltimore County Public Library, as our contribution to B.C.P.L.'s 1974 Fall Festival of Literature. Attendees entered a building embellished with science fiction sculpture, paintings, movie posters, and exhibits. Eight of Helen Struven's magnificent sf paintings hung along the high concrete block walls. Leonard Paul's highly imaginative sculpture and paintings were prominently displayed. Movie posters from the extensive collections of Gary Svehla and Rick Neff drew eyes upward. And there were two display cases. The first exhibited a variety of faanish artifacts.

The second displayed materials on Roger Zelazny, Baltimore's resident pro. Who has been, however, since February a resident of the top of a New Mexico mountain. Exhibited were books, articles, photographs, and one of Zelazny's two Hugos and one of his two Nebulas. And, in possibly his last Baltimore appearance for some time to come, Zelazny gave a wide-ranging talk Wednesday night to an attentive audience. Topics he touched on included the history of science fiction, differences between sf and fantasy, the prognosticative quality of science fiction, and what we can expect from Roger's typewriter in the near future.

Saturday programming was continuous from 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. with but a half hour break for lunch. A panel on fandom brought together Washingtonians Dick Eney, Mark Owings, and Ron Bounds (now a Californian), and Baltimoreans Jack Chalker (Mirage Press), Sue Wheeler (BSFS President), and Steve Miller (UMBC sf collection). Miller also gave a sprightly talk on writing science fiction, and told of some of his experiences at Clarion.

The mini-convention attracted more people than any other Fall Literature Festival program, and BSFS has been invited to participate in next year's festival.

LOUTING with Artemus

Paramount in importance is the proper choice of cheap wine to bring to the various BSFS meetings. Intoxication must proceed in sync with the other attendees. At full club meetings, Lambrusco has materialized from five separate sources at the Neffs' apartment. For meetings at Hopkins or some other dull place, Sangria is the choice (even though at Hopkins God has provided us with a nearby Rathskeller serving cheap beer). However, at committee meetings or closetcons, Schlitz Malt Liquor, yer very cheapest Giant Food-type sodas, and packaged whiskey sours seem to be the order of business, ..official or otherwise. BSFS is a young organization with nevertheless a few hard and fast traditions. And a few fast and loose ones are showing promise.

RARE SCIENCE FICTION AT UMBC Steve Miller

About the time the new BSFS was being organized another development of interest to science fiction fans was taking place: the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Library was starting a formal collection of science fiction, to be housed in the library's Special Collections area.

I was called for an interview with Mr. Antonio Raine, Director of the Library, concerning the possibility of a job as Curator of the collection. We discussed material that could be acquired, the direction the collection would take, and its scope. The collection was to be much more than a few hardback books sitting on a shelf. The library already was in possession of fairly complete sets of pulp magazines, including a complete run of Amazing. I pointed out that it might be a good idea to represent some of the recent history of science fiction, through fanzines and manuscripts. It came to light then that the collection had been afforded the opportunity to acquire the bound Foundation typescript, signed by Asimov, and the incredibly complete fanzine collection of Mr. Walter Coslet.

I accepted the position, recommending that both the Foundation script

and Mr. Coslet's ten thousand fanzines be acquired. Since that time not quite a year ago the collection has grown to include artwork by Kelly Freas, and manuscripts and typescripts by Roger Zelazny, Charles Harness, and others (the most recent manuscript addition is Gladiator-At-Law by C.M. Kornbluth and Fred Pohl). The collection began its own fanzine, SF BIBLIODD, and is on a standing order plan that brings in most of the hardback science fiction and fantasy items published in the U.S. as well as a number of fan items published by the specialty houses.

The UNEC Science Fiction Research Collection currently consists of nearly complete runs of seventy pulp-magazines, around one thousand hardbacks, more than two thousand paperbacks, well over eleven thousand fanzines, and assorted artwork, manuscripts, and other items of interest. The collection is open daily 1-3 or by appointment, and is available to researchers, fans, readers, and the curious.

HAWKWIND SPACECRAFT RAIDS BALTIMORE
Rich Dixon

Unable to reach Canada, the British spacecraft Hawkwind found it necessary this past year to chart a flight into the virgin minds of an unsuspecting Sunday night drinking crowd at the Latin Casino. Gathered for the usual "pop" music they listen to through the week on primitive receiving sets, the liquid refreshed audience found their minds and bodily electrons run through some great cosmic sieve by that Space Rock band known as the Hawkwind.

A science fiction group in frequent collaboration with Michael Moorcock, the band consists of many former rockies for such as Cream and Jimi Hendrix. The S.S. Hawkwind has been described as a two dimensional ship which on occasion crashes into three dimensional space. This they do with such numbers as "Sonic Attack" which should be saved for future performance at Armageddon. Starting as an old fashioned psychedelic dance band, they have evolved into an impressive art show, using their synthesizers to paint vast backgrounds of star-blinding ecstasy or mind-bending fear for their unique (and quite lengthy) songs.

Alas, the much renowned Stacia was nought to be found this particular night, and her primeval dance was sorely missed (Hawkwind tours with their own stripper). And alack, there was little room for their ship to maneuver. Their normal contract calls for a stage forty feet by forty feet, but the low ceilinged hall forced them to leave outside a third of a tractor-trailer of light show. However, if the effects of the little hardware they stuffed into the club that night on an unsuspecting crowd--pure spellbound--was any indication of things to come, Baltimore had best beware future flights of the Hawkwind through native orgone streams.

* * * * *

* Scratch this panel to acquaint yourself
* with the odor of the most hazardous sub-
* stance you are likely to encounter at the
* convention. If you detect this odor at any
* time notify a Balticon committee member
* immediately.

* * * * *

DON DOHLER? WHO HE?

by Artemus

Don Dohler, co-coordinator of Balticon's Amateur Fantasy Film Festival, had his First Contact (faanish) in 1960, through the venerable Graveyard Examiner in the venerable Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine. He ordered a copy of SNUDGE, a humor zine, which was a crude but worthy dittoed job.

Then came the Revelation that fires many of us: Gee, is that all you have to do is to get hold of a ditto machine? Thus WILD was born. WILD was a humor fanzine also, a very crude dittoed mini-Mad. Don enlisted the talents of Jay Lynch, now a prominent underground comix artist, then an obscure Miami fan. The zine soon gained access to facilities to do color work; issue #5 had a nine color cover, the tenth issue featured a Kelly Freas painting rejected by Mad magazine. As an early stomping ground of Jay Lynch, and as the magazine for which Don invented Projunior as a mascot (later to become a prominent underground comix character in the hands of Lynch and R. Crumb), WILD remains today a most rare and sought after collector's item to those who really know.

WILD was wiped out by an act of God--a flooded garage in 1964 wiped the dittoed sheets clean. In 1970, Don, who had been out of fandom for quite a while, received a package from Bijou Publications: five copies of Don Dohler's Projunior. Where's my lawyer?

In 1972, having seen an article in the Baltimore Sun on George Stover's BLACK ORACLE, Don called Stover, and an early interest was renewed--the publishing of a magazine devoted exclusively to special effects in film-making. He picked up a co-editor, Mark Estrin, who had been doing research on Projunior for A History of Underground Comics, and CINEMAGIC sprang onto the scene. In two short years and three issues, CINEMAGIC has become a respected journal in its field with a circulation in excess of 1500. Don and Mark are also preparing a book which will probably become the bible of special effects, with contributors such as animator Bruce Dodds and makeup artist Bill Blake.

Don is himself an award winning amateur film-maker. "Mr. Clay" has garnered awards from the Washington Society of Cinematographers and the New York 8mm Film Contest. "Alone" has also taken prizes.

In the mundane world, Don holds a managerial position. He is married, and has two children, ages 7 and 5. Don probably doesn't realize how widespread his influence really is. With all his activities, this Baltimore fan is likely to become more well known in the future.

How to fold your copy of BSFAN into a pyramid, which will resharpen razor blades, preserve your ham sandwich, and deyellow the pages of old fanzines:

1. Turn to front of BSFAN. Fold in half horizontally, if copy is not already folded. Unfold.
2. Label points on front page as follows: top left corner - A; top right corner - B; middle of right edge at fold - C; lower right corner - D; lower left corner - E.
3. Fold along line A-C. Unfold. Fold along line E-C. Unfold.
4. Place fanzine on flat surface, folding flap ACB to meet flap ECD at point BD. Now you are ready to use your pyramid for good or evil.

CHRISTOPHER BIRD "DOWSES" CITY

Rich Dixon

Displaying several tools of the "art of searching", Chris Bird spoke on dowsing in January at the Aquarian University of Maryland.

Co-author (with Peter Tompkins) of The Secret Life of Plants, Bird exhibited the different dowsing tools that have been developed over the years. Constructed of either organic or inorganic matter, a dowsing tool can be of the familiar Y shape, usually made of fruitwood; a pair of metal L's; or a pendulum, often of glass. The L's are used by holding one in each hand, in parallel and pointing away from the body; a crossing of the rods indicates response. The pendulum can be used over maps (cross-referencing from several directions to pinpoint a location), and in statistical dowsing over sheets of information.

There seems no limit to the number of uses to which dowsing has been successfully applied. The art has been employed, Mr. Bird pointed out, to find lost persons and objects; weapons caches in Vietnam; mineral and oil deposits; archaeological artifacts; and in medical diagnoses and cures. Yet dowsing remains a very personal art, the dowser playing an integral role. Concentration works for some dowsers, while others must relax. Motive is important. Apparently altruism rules over greed, so don't bother trying to dowse which horse in the fifth. Also, in the vocabulary of computer science: garbage in, garbage out. If you ask the wrong question, or the right question in the wrong way, you'll not find what you search for. Seekers of gold walk over silver.

Although a personally developed art, dowsing can be taught, and Bird believes that anyone can dowse. The Biggest Dowsing Question is whether a force in the ground moves the rod or whether the rod amplifies a sensitivity in the dowser. Laboratory evidence indicates muscular motion in the wrists prior to any movement in the dowsing rod. Also, neither dowser nor rod respond when the adrenal gland is shielded from all magnetic fields. Perhaps when scientists find more time for such research, locating those specific zones of sensitivity may lead to greater fine tuning techniques, and better amplification of bio-signals.

Incidentally, Mr. Bird told of dowsers' conventions, which sound as fascinating as of cons.

WANTED. Any or all issues of A Bit Far Out Stories, March-September 1943. Will pay highest prices. John A. Jones, 936 Patapsco River, Balto. MD 21203.

THE BIRTH OF THE CLOSETCON

Judy Kurman

Little did all of us realize that night, after sorting and lugging old rusty shelving that would someday be renovated and used for a BSFS library, that a possible new offshoot of fadism was lurking just around the corner, within the dark cobwebby recesses of a closet. Though we didn't know it then, we were about to "attend" the first of many closetcons, so dubbed because one of the earliest ones took place in Baltimore on Philcon weekend.

It all started innocently enough. We were looking at and discussing a new book by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, Handbook of Psi Discoveries. This book has if you don't believe it, here's how to try it experiments with

all kinds of psychic phenomena. The authors show how to record the emotions of plants, take Kirlian photographs, see auras, construct pyramids, record voice phenomena. Those present had attitudes ranging from super-cynic to hum, maybe... At any rate, some of the experiments sounded fascinating, and we decided to try one or two.

The first problem was finding experiments that could be done within one sitting--and believe me, some described in the book depended upon how much sitting you felt like doing. For example, to see the Od energy force, you must sit in a totally dark room for 3 to 4 hours (by that time you are probably either hallucinating or asleep). We settled on attempting to see auras, since this required only a sober pair of eyes and a mirror (yes, we were sober). Since a full length mirror was in the bedroom closet, this is how we came to the aforementioned room (this closet is so huge it is most definitely a room). We did as the book instructed, and within half an hour all of us had seen our auras.

Actually, after a future closetcon (during which we were not sober), some of us decided that although we were seeing something--a yellow to orange-red glow that varied in intensity--it may not have been an aura. This is because we saw the same thing around a tennis racket and a picture frame (auras are supposed to appear only around living things).

That first night we did eventually get around to trying to see the Od force; after all, we were already in a room that could be made totally dark. We did not see Odic energy. Of course, we didn't have with us in the closet any of the helpful paraphernalia mentioned in the book: copper wire, a bar magnet, a pyramid.

Fools as we are, we did not let these experiments die. In fact, they became addictive, and we repeated them and tried new experiments. So, if at Balticon you hear muffled laughs or strange conversations from within locked closets, you know what's going on inside.

an observation on COZMIC BALTICON by Rich Dixon

Stars...

Back in November, Libra Artemus was elected Balticon Chairperson. That night long ago the moon was in Libra. Here we are on Easter weekend, and as Balticon begins Mother Moon is once again in Libra. During the festivities, however, she moves into Scorpio, sign of Vice-Chairperson Lee Smoire.

Whatever this means for Lee or Artemus, the planets bode well for a weekend of no snow, soulful service, and general passion.

Since the invasion he had been constantly depressed. The world seemed an abyss; fist into palm he would pound and pound. He would remember as long as he lived the Battle of the Block; and the Siege of Pikesville, during which to his horror Rick Neff was unmasked as an alien spy. After the conquest he'd go from bar to bar, numbly observing as if from afar his tastes beginning to change as the aliens subtly altered the atmosphere. He developed a predilection for female American Indian motorcyclists; once he picked up a Sioux wheeler. Now the sun was setting as he downed another beer. Soon ice would be forming on the windshield of his car outside. But one bit of knowledge had of late been igniting those old joyful fires within him: spring was just around the corner, and it was almost time for Balticon 10!

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