

I picked up the phone around lunch time yesterday, and Dave Hulan said, "I'm at Grand Central; is your office nearby so I can deliver your SAPS Mailing?"

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So it was that I finally received a SAPS Mailing by personal delivery of the OE.

MEET ME IN ST LOUIS IN 1969!

Dave treated me to lunch and we discussed many things, including conventions. One topic that came up interested me very much -- the proposal that's currently being kicked around to have a sort of Continental Convention if, say, Heidelberg shd win the '70 Worldcon. The idea behind this is that damn few Americans are going to be able to make it to Germany for even a Worldcon (I'd estimate less than a hundred, but I wd be most surprised if it went over 200; on the other hand, it occurs to me that I don't know how many Americans -- and Canadians -- made it to Loncon II), and that this leaves from 500 to 1000 fans without a major convention to attend.

Such a Continental Convention, it wd seem, would not (of course) be a Worldcon, and wd probably have little effect on attendance at Heidelberg (especially since the German convention wd almost certainly not be held on Labor Day Weekend, there being no Labor Day in Germany). If it did have some effect on the overseas attendance, it seems to me at least that this effect wd be relatively slight, since (at least according to my guesstimate) less than a hundred North Americans wd go there anyway.

If Heidelberg suffered a sharp drop in attendance off London, this wd also probably be due more to the language problem than ^{to} any competing convention (held, I remind you, at a different time of the year). I myself intend to try to attend Heidelberg (or wherever), because I think it wd be a gas even if the only German word I know is donnerwetter (and who said I cd spell German?). Among other things, there wd probably be a sizeable batch of English & Irish & Scottish fans, very few of whom I know at all, and whom I wd like to meet.

But this is off from the main purpose I had in bringing all this up -- namely, the several problems that a Continental Convention wd bring with it. I do not intend to be exhaustive about this (not this issue, anyway), tho I may very well be exhausting you.

As I said, these matters have begun to be discussed, in Apa L and the Cult at least; I have not, however, given them much attention because I did not have my attention focussed on the subject until Dave Hulan brought it up.

Questions have obtruded since then. Where is this ConCon to be held? Who is to run it? How is the selection to be made? How will it square with the rotation plan if an East Coast city gets the ConCon, for 1970, followed in 1971 by another huge East Coast con? Wd this not possibly engender some hard feelings? On the other hand, it wd probably be out of the question to attempt to apply the Rotation Plan to the ConCon situation; if, at St Louis, Boston got the ConCon, wd not Baltimore justly complain if the '71 Worldcon, which they are bidding for, swings out to the West Coast, skipping their legitimate turn to bid for it? Whew!

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I'm sorry I even brought that possibility up! Ok, let's establish then that this ConCon is unrelated to the

Rotation Plan in any fashion; it wd cause infinite complications were it to be otherwise.

This still leaves questions. First off, will fans support a ConCon? It wd, you realize, come on the scene mother-naked, with no tradition, no reputation, no aura, no pizazz. I grant you that convention-attending in the last few years seems to have become the steady avocation of about two or three times as many fans as you cd find four years ago and earlier. But it strikes me there may be a delicate tightrope the ConCon ConCom might have to tread, between "Well, this is really the Worldcon but we're not calling it that," and "Well, this thing is a...well, it's a Noncon, which is..." etc.

It might be argued that trufans will know and understand; but if it's not carefully worked out, the ConCon ConCom might not understand.

This crux exists because there will be a lot of turmoil about "is it fair to put on a convention that competes with the Worldcon, even if the Worldcon is out of this country?" There is a tradition of Noncons, true; there are West Coast Noncons when the East Coast has the Worldcon, and vice versa, and both coasts have them when London gets the Worldcon; but these are basically local-area affairs, drawing the ingroup fannish types (both fanzine fans and convention fans in this case). This is not at all the sort of thing I understand the ConCon wd be set up to be.

Is it fair?

And who shd put it on? (If the answer to the previous question is Yes, that is.)

If it were agreed that a ConCon might have a bit of a difficult time making headway, then perhaps a group of people might simply coalesce, attract backing of BNFs throughout the country, and, one fine day, announce: "Hey, fandom, we're putting on a completely unofficial Continental Convention over Labor Day in 1970, for all you people who won't be able to go to Heidelberg ((or wherever)). Join, attend, and enjoy." This is the same thing that, in miniature, is happening in L.A. right now, where, with the tacit blessings of the Baycon, a not-a-Westercon-committee is spontaneously generating itself, with the idea that they will hold a not-a-Westercon at the traditional Westercon time, in Los Angeles. (For those unfamiliar with the situation, the Baycon committee bid and won the '68 Westercon at the '67 Westercon this July, then went on to win the Worldcon and, as is traditional, decided to merge the two into one Labor Day con; L.A. is interested in a not-a-Westercon as a sort of consolation prize and because they've gotten in the habit of having a con the first week in July. And for other reasons, perhaps, but there's no need to go into that here. At any rate, I'm all for the idea of a not-a-Westercon.)

Or it cd simply be announced as up for grabs at a special session at the St Louiscon. A problem here wd be the likelihood of confusing the usual fairly large group of new and unknowledgeable fans as to just what was going to happen next year, throwing a dirty big bugger factor into the whole thing. I remind you of the idiot measures that are always proposed at the idiot Business Meetings at Worldcons, the Nycon Business Meeting being *sigh* no exception. I'm not at all sure I want to make FD a collating-point for opinions on all this stuff about the Continental Convention, but with its SF WEEKLY readership and its circulation in both NY and LA fandom, it might be worth a try. At least for a while, anyway, I'll print LOCs on the subject, and if I get tired of it, I'll announce same well in advance. Hoping you are the sane... -- dgv