

stimulated! [-ecl/jrrt]

Mark Leeper
MT 3D-441 908-957-5619
...mtgzy!leeper

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT ALMOST BLANK

MagiCon 1992
(Part 4 of 4)
Con report by Evelyn C. Leeper
Copyright 1992 Evelyn C. Leeper

Panel: SSSSeeeevvvveeeennnn DDDDDeeeaaaaddddllllyyyy SSSSiiiiinnnsssss ooofffff SSSSFFFF-----
IIInnnnvvvveeeennntttt YYYYYoooouuuurrrr OOOOwwwwnnnn

Sunday, 1 PM

Roger MacBride Allen (moderator), Pat Cadigan, Eileen Gunn,
Maureen F. McHugh, Connie Willis

This turned out to be the silly panel--or at least started that way. Datlow showed a copy of her anthology A_l_i_e_n_S_e_x and then said, "If anyone wants it, they can come up to me or Pat [Cadigan] after the panel." Willis again mentioned losing big at the Hugo Awards ceremony. Cadigan, on the other hand, described herself as "Connie Willis Lite," because she had lost two-thirds fewer Hugos that night before.

But eventually the panel turned to the topic at hand, and it was surprising how their rambling comments, when organized, tend to match the traditional "Seven Deadly Sins."

For example, under the category of sloth would fall the sin of leaving boring stuff boring. The panelists all said, "If it's boring, rewrite it."

Gluttony? Here is the same sin mentioned in the "Alternate History Stories" panel: putting all your research in the story. Also attacked were long elvish names with no vowels and lots of apostrophes, and just about every tavern scene found in a fantasy series. (One panelist claimed all these, and the "Star Wars" cantina sequence for that matter, are patterned after a sequence in Samuel R. Delany's J_e_w_e_l_s_o_f_A_p_t_o_r.)

Slander? People said wasting your time on GENie or other electronic bulletin boards trading gossip will quickly undermine your writing.

Greed? In science fiction, it's called sequelitis.

Envy? The panelists decried "band-waggoning," by which I assume they meant writing about something just because it's a hot topic. An example not in the science fiction field would be the enormous proliferation of high-tech thrillers after Tom Clancy hit it big with T_h_e_H_u_n_t_f_o_r_R_e_d_O_c_t_o_b_e_r.

Pride? What about characters who read science fiction and can cope better with whatever is going on because of it (the main flaw of Harry Turtledove's E_a_r_t_h_g_r_i_p, as I recall). McHugh said that her experiences reading science fiction did not prepare her for living in China for a year (nor vice versa, since she apparently caused a

bus accident when a bus driver who had never seen a Westerner before got distracted watching her walk down the street and ran into a car).

As far as lust, there were a lot of jokes about Cadigan, some convention-goer clad only in a loincloth, and alien sex. There was also the sin of having sex acts described in such a way as to make the reader a voyeur rather than a participant.

Anger was not directly touched on, but undoubtedly with a little effort one could come up with a sin for that. (How about stories written only to preach the author's point of view?)

One major sin the panelists mentioned was underpopulating your stories. You need characters your protagonists can talk to, argue with, do things with, and so on. Raymond Chandler once said, "Never have explication in a story except under heat." Never have your characters thinking about something they could be talking to someone about. Never tell when you can show. (On the other hand, don't have scenes with two minor characters talking where the only purpose is to inform the reader of something important.) And try to have more than one thing going on in a scene. (And, by the way, stories should have protagonists, not heroes, and villains should not be undefeatable, especially if your protagonist is going to defeat them.)

Not thinking about the logical consequences of everything was another sin (also much discussed in the alternate history panels). Padding, total honesty (as in the line "'No,' she lied."), false pretenses for the book, future slang that doesn't work, not enough research, and many other sins were also mentioned.

Starting the story too soon was another mistake beginners make. The best lesson along these lines is to be learned from Frank Capra's film L_o_s_t_H_o_r_i_z_o_n. When shown in a test screening it did rather poorly, so Capra threw out the first reel of set-up, started the film with people fleeing to the airport in the midst of a civil war, and made a classic.

One panelists said the sin that annoyed her the most was thinking that plot and character are bourgeois inventions. Other "hot buttons" included stories that turn out to be just a dream and talking heads and disembodied voices. Someone's pet hate was "HAITE," defined as a story that consists of "Here's An Idea. -The End." But they said the worst sin of all was not breaking any of the rules.

Panel: TTTThhhheeee AAAAllllttttteeerrrrnnnnaaaattttteeee CCCCiivvvviiiiiii WWWWaaaarrrr
Sunday, 2 PM

George Alec Effinger, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, S. M. Stirling
(moderator), Harry Turtledove, Walter Jon Williams

This is the third alternate history panel of the convention and I'm beginning to wonder if Turtledove and Stirling are secretly Siamese twins--I always see them together!

Turtledove again told the story of how his alternate Civil War novel (T_h_e_G_u_n_s_o_f_t_h_e_S_o_u_t_h) came to be written; see the "Build an Alternate History" panel for details. Rusch's alternate Civil War story was this year's Hugo nominee, "The Gallery of His Dreams," which is not alternate history, but time travel involving Matthew Brady. Rusch has, however, written a couple of alternate history stories ("The Best and the Brightest" and "Fighting Bob"), and has a strong background in history. In fact, in college she was the only woman in her "History of War" course, the rest of the students being ROTC enrollees who h_a_d to take it. Williams wrote "No Spot of Ground," in which Poe becomes a general instead of an author, and mentioned that he had also written an alternate Mary Shelley novel published (or to be published) by Axolotl. Stirling's Drakka trilogy has already been discussed for the "Build an Alternate History" panel. Effinger (who wrote "Everything But Honor," in which an African-American physicist uses a time machine to alter the outcome of the Civil War) arrived late and couldn't even fit on the dais. Note to future conventions: make sure the dais, table, or whatever in each room is large enough for your largest panel in that room! (We had this same problem at the "Hugos for Electronic Fanac?" panel.)

One of the things the panelists emphasized is that if you postulate an alternate Civil War in which the South wins, then you need to rethink World Wars I and II, since their outcomes depended very much on a unified United States. And the panelists reiterated what was suggested at the alternate Civil War panel ("The North Shall Rise Again") at Boskone last year: most people believe that the South couldn't win the war, but the North could lose it. Actually, the Boskone panelists thought that only even worse Northern generals--hard to conceive of--would have made the war last longer, and even then the North couldn't help but win by 1866 or 1867. Only with massive outside intervention did they think a Southern victory possible, and they couldn't come up with a reasonable scenario for such interference. But this certainly ties in with the observation from the MagiCon panelists that often we forget to look at the rest of the world for factors.

The panelists also thought that the argument about the North having all the technology and industry and therefore having the edge because of that was flawed; Turtledove noted that at the end of the war, the South did not lack for guns or bullets or anything produced

by the technology. It was more the whole issue of states' rights that caused them problems. Nothing could be decided without all the states agreeing. As I commented about last year's Boskone panel, many areas of the South actually supported the North, West Virginia seceded from Virginia, and Texas almost seceded from the Confederacy. This hardly contributed to a unified front. As Stirling said, "War is a great centralizer": it is very difficult for a loose confederation to win against a unified opponent.

Someone on the panel mentioned that the title didn't specify w_h_i_c_h Civil War, and this led to the suggestion of using the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) as a basis for an alternate history. It was the largest war between 1800 and 1935, costing 20,000,000 lives and weakening the Manchu Dynasty enough to contribute to its downfall fifty years later. It was started by Hong Xiuchuan, who claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus. He swept through southeastern China and eventually captured Nanjing in 1853, having raised over a million supporters. Eventually he was defeated by Tseng Kuo-Fan, Li Hung-Chang, and Charles George Gordon in 1864. One of the panelists recommended George MacDonald Fraser's F_l_a_s_h_m_a_n_a_n_d_t_h_e_D_r_a_g_o_n as good historical fiction about this era.

A couple of alternate Civil War novels mentioned (and criticized) were Harry Harrison's A_R_e_b_e_l_i_n_T_i_m_e and Leonard Skimin's G_r_a_y_V_i_c_t_o_r_y. Panelists pointed out that in Harrison's novel a black FBI agent is sent back to stop a Southern white supremacist time traveler. First of all, they wouldn't send a black agent back, and second, the Southerner had supposed never heard of John Brown--a highly unlikely occurrence. In Skimin's book, the people are all from the 20th Century--not literally, but they think like 20th Century people, and talk like 20th Century people, and act like 20th Century people. (It's what my husband Mark calls the H_a_p_p_y_D_a_y_s syndrome--the show was set in the 1960s, but everyone in it was straight from the 1980s.)

As to the greater question of why alternate histories are popular, three reasons were suggested. First of all, there is perhaps more dissatisfaction with the present, so people are looking to see how things could be better ("if only") or console themselves

that they aren't worse ("thank goodness"). Second, alternate histories allow one to reduce very complex issues to one simple change. They give people the feeling that they could actually control their world. And lastly, more authors are historically trained. Turtledove, for example, has a doctorate in Byzantine history, but there is not a great market for Byzantine historians right now, so he has become an author instead. And as an author, he writes about what he knows best.

MagiCon

September 7, 1992

Page 5

Panel: OOOOpppppeerrrrraaaa &&&& SSSSFFFF
Sunday, 4 PM

Thorarinn Gunnarsson, Evelyn C. Leeper, Mark R. Leeper (moderator),

Originally Lisa Barnett and Susan Shwartz were supposed to be on this panel, but Barnett wasn't able to make it, and Shwartz was so exhausted when she arrived at the Green Room that she decided to skip it and try to get rested enough to judge the masquerade later that evening. (I suspect it was also partially that Mark's idea of what the panel should be about was too analytical for her.) Since I had been the one who had suggested this panel initially, I agreed to help fill in the gap.

Gunnarson was trained as an opera singer, so he had some actual first-hand experience on this subject.

We got into a bit of a discussion at the beginning about exactly what i s opera. For example, is Jeff Wayne's W a _r _o _f _t _h _e
 W o _r _l _d s opera? Technically not, since it has some narration, and opera is defined (at least in some circles) as being entirely sung. On the other hand, that definition excludes Bizet's C a _r _m _e n (generally considered an opera) and includes L e _s _ M _i _s _e _r _a _b _l _e _s (generally not considered an opera), so I suspect the best definition of opera may be similar to Damon Knight's definition of science fiction: "It's what I point to when I say it."

We also drifted off into a discussion of how opera (actually

music in general) fits in with the creative writing process. Some writers say that listening to music while they are writing inspires them; others avoid music at that time. ("While they are writing" was used to mean, I believe, the period of time during which they were working on something, not just the time they were sitting at the typewriter or word processor.) Gunnarson claimed that Sterling and Shiner fall in the latter category, though someone from the audience said they had heard that these writers did listen to music. The vagueness of what time periods specified may have led to the confusion, but the basic idea--that music can affect what you write--remains.

And this led to a brief listing of books in which opera or music play a role. Thomas M. Disch's O_n_W_i_n_g_s_o_f_S_o_n_g is certainly one that examines the power of music. Tom Holt's E_x_p_e_c_t_i_n_g_S_o_m_e_o_n_e T_a_l_l_e_r is a humorous novel set in the world of Wagner's "Ring Cycle." (And Shwartz said that one of Marion Zimmer Bradley's novels is based on Verdi's "La Forza del Destino.") Jack Vance's S_p_a_c_e_O_p_e_r_a deals with a traveling opera company. These three examples show the variety of ways in which a book can relate to opera.

Speaking of Wagner's "Ring" led people to say they had seen the Ring staged in all sorts of settings: mythological, Nineteenth

Century, and so on, but not in space. Then someone said they seemed to remember having seen that!

Before coming up with possible science fiction operas, we discussed the requirements for a successful opera in general. It needs a limited cast (you can have a lot of extras, but three dozen major characters will strain the resources of any opera company and the memory of any opera goer). It must also have an emotional story with a clear conclusion. The most difficult requirement is that it not be "narrator-oriented." It turns out that many (most?) of the popular science fiction novels are narrator-oriented, making them unsuitable for opera.

I pointed out that there had been a plan to make an opera of

_ S_ t_ a_ r_ T_ r_ e_ k, but this failed, in large part because the planners had very little knowledge of opera. The proposal was put to the New York City Opera sometime late in 1990 (I believe), but the requirement was that the opera open in 1991 for the 25th Anniversary of the show. But an opera takes much longer than that to plan and stage, and eventually Paramount (or whoever) withdrew the idea.

Other suggestions from the audience and panelists which were not so time-constrained were Tom Godwin's "The Cold Equations"

(well, it certainly has a limited cast), Mary Shelley's _ F_ r_ a_ n_ k_ e_ n_ s_ t_ e_ i_ n (I'm surprised this hasn't been done already), _ S_ t_ a_ r_ W_ a_ r_ s (which has been made into a ballet), Jules Verne's _ T_ w_ e_ n_ t_ y_ T_ h_ o_ u_ s_ a_ n_ d

_ L_ e_ a_ g_ u_ e_ s

_ U_ n_ d_ e_ r_ t_ h_ e_ S_ e_ a, and any of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Gunnarson

has already scored _ T_ w_ e_ n_ t_ y_ T_ h_ o_ u_ s_ a_ n_ d_ L_ e_ a_ g_ u_ e_ s

_ U_ n_ d_ e_ r_ t_ h_ e_ S_ e_ a. (He also

said he had written a diptych _ E_ r_ e_ U_ n_ t_ o_ D_ e_ a_ t_ h with each piece

patterned after the structure of a Beethoven symphony.) Someone

observed that _ S_ t_ a_ r_ W_ a_ r_ s meets all of Verdi's requirements. If

anyone can enlighten me as to what these requirements are, I would be grateful.

Picking something to make an opera from is not as easy as it may seem. It was observed that even Shakespeare's works, which would seem like prime candidates, have not transitioned well: only

_ M_ a_ c_ b_ e_ t_ h, _ O_ t_ h_ e_ l_ l_ o, _ R_ o_ m_ e_ o_ a_ n_ d

_ J_ u_ l_ i_ e_ t, and _ T_ h_ e_ M_ e_ r_ r_ y_ W_ i_ v_ e_ s_ o_ f

_ W_ i_ n_ d_ s_ o_ r

of his thirty-seven plays have been made into operas.

Someone (Gunnarson, I believe) cited a study that claimed in 1991, more people attended opera than attended baseball games. (I wonder if that is counting all baseball down through Little League, or just major league games.)

Someone pointed out this panel was just like real opera: of the fifteen people in the audience, three fell asleep for part of it.

When this panel was announced, I asked on the Net for examples of science fiction operas; this is what I got:

Benford, David & LeGuin, Ursula K.	"Rigel-9"
Benford, David	"Star's End"
Blomdahl, Karl-Birger	"Aniara"
Davis, Anthony & Atherton, Deborah	"Under the Double Moon"
Dresher, Paul & Eckert, Rinded	"Power Failure"
Glass, Philip	"Einstein on the Beach"
Glass, Philip	"1000 Airplanes on the Roof"
Glass, Philip	"Hydrogen Jukebox"
Glass, Philip	"Juniper Tree"
Glass, Philip & Lessing, Doris	"The Making of the Representative from Planet 8"
Haydn, J.	"Il Mondo della Luna"
Janacek, H.	"The Excursions of Mr Broucek"
Janacek, H.	"The Macropoulous Affair"
Ligeti, G.	"Le Grand Macabre"
Mackover, Todd	"Valis"
Menotti, Giancarlo	"A Bride from Pluto"
Menotti, Giancarlo	"Help, Help the Globolinks!"
Monk, Meredith & Chong, Ping	"The Games"
Offenbach, Jacques	"Tales of Hoffman"
Offenbach, Jacques	"Journey to the Moon"
Rice, Jeff	"The War of the Worlds"
Swan, Donald	"Perelandra"
?	"A Wrinkle in Time"
?	(Robert Anton Wilson's stuff)

An addition suggested during the panel was "The Voyages of Edgar Allan Poe" (composer unknown).

M M M Ma a a as s s sq q q qu u u ue e e er r r ra a a ad d d de e e e
 Sunday, 8:30 PM
 Rick and Wolf Foss (masters of ceremonies)

The Masquerade began with an announcement that it was being dedicated to the memory of Fritz Leiber, who died Saturday, September 5.

Once again, Mark and I decided to avail ourselves of the privileges accorded us because of our Press ribbons and chose to sit in that section instead of waiting for the mad rush when the doors opened.

Before the masquerade proper, there were the usual announcements, including the one about no flash photography. This was followed immediately by someone taking a flash photo, at which point two guards ran over, grabbed the person, and carried her out. (I suspect it was all staged. :-)

There was no booklet listing the entrants, which would have been a nice touch. I understand the difficulties in producing it, though, since it can't really be done ahead of time, and finding the

facilities to produce it over Labor Day weekend may be difficult.

MagiCon

September 7, 1992

Page 8

However, the committee did do something new which I think is a great idea: in addition to the usual photography area, they arranged for an area where the visually impaired could l the costumes (assuming this was okay with the entrants, one supposes--it's conceivable that a costume could be so fragile as to preclude any touching). I would be curious to know if anyone took advantage of this arrangement.

As usual, the children's masquerade preceded the main section. There were only three entries, so this went fairly quickly. There were about fifty entries in the main masquerade, and everything had been organized so that this section went smoothly, and the first run-through was finished around 10:30 PM, which gave me plenty of time to make the preview at 11:30. The quality of the costumes this year was well above that of the preceding few years, and the spate of fan-fold costumes that one seemed to be seeing all the time for a while has given way to a more varied assortment. (For example, "St. Alia of the Knife" used a stained-glass-window effect.) However, there are still too many which are songs or skits rather than costumes, though the number seems to be declining--I don't know if this means that people have gotten the message, or that the committee is actually weeding out the non-costumes. In general, I was in agreement with the awards: "At the Ball" for Best of Class (Novice), "Pumpkinhead" for Best of Class (Journeyman), "Ice Spirits" for "Best in Class" (Master), "St. Alia of the Knife" for Most Spectacular, and "Heroes" for Best of Show. (There were other awards, but these were the major ones.)

I would like to point out that "Heroes," the Best in Show (and most people's favorite to judge by the applause), was a Journeyman entry. (There are three classes: Novice, Journeyman, and Master; which category you are in depends on how many awards you have won in previous contests.) This was an entry based on the works of Gordon R. Dickson, and consisted of two large models of books. As the covers were opened and the pages turned, characters in the illustrations stepped out of the books and came to life, while the voice-over narration described how the reader, a young boy, learned about heroism, bravery, loyalty, and so on, from these books. I hope Dickson was there to see it; if not, I hope someone sends him a

videotape of it.

(One of our friends missed the masquerade; he was paged before it started and it turned out his son had broken his hand in the car door.)

MagiCon

September 7, 1992

Page 9

Preview: D D D Do o o oo o o or r r rs s s s
Sunday, 11:30 PM
George R. R. Martin

This was the second showing of the sneak preview of the Columbia Pictures/ABC pilot D o o r s, and was somewhat sparsely attended. I assume most of the people interested in it attended the first show, but I didn't realize it was an alternate history show until friends returning from the first showing told me so.

The title, by the way, will be changed. The studio thought that there would be no confusion between this and the film T h e D o o r s but Jim Morrison's estate thought otherwise, so the studio is casting about for a new name. The most likely candidate at this point seems to be D o o r w a y s.

This was the pilot for the series (six more scripts have been ordered, each of which will be an hour long). This film was seventy minutes long, designed to run in a ninety-minute time slot. (The European version will be in a two-hour slot, with some additional scenes.) This was a very rough cut, minus many of the special effects, sound looping, and color timing. The music used was only temporary and there were no credits. In particular, the special effect of the Door itself is missing.

The show starts out in our world. An unidentified woman is brought into the hospital. This turns out to be Cat, a fugitive

from some cyborg warriors who are chasing her through "doors" to bring her back to their timeline under the orders of a "Dark Lord." She escapes the hospital with Tom, the doctor who decides to help her get to the door opening up in Colorado. They get there, have a fight with the warriors, and Tom ends up going through the door with her--at which point he finds out the doors are one-way only (or so Cat thinks). This new world is one in which some bioengineering got out of hand around 1978 and a bug ate all the oil in the world, and in fact, all petroleum-based products. (This bug is apparently still around, since in the longer version there is a scene in which Tom's credit cards dissolve.) So we have what looks like almost a standard post-holocaust society, with cars being pulled as wagons by horses (shades of T_h_i_n_g_s_t_o_C_o_m_e), and all sorts of mongrel technology. The warriors have followed them through, however, and even follow them to Denver when they arrange to have an injured man flown there by U.S. Post Office hot-air balloon, in part because a door is opening there soon. This door opens after Tom and Cat again fight the warriors, and they jump through and almost fall down what appears to be a giant cliff. Then the camera pulls back and we see they're really standing on the top of a giant Mt. Rushmore-type sculpture (in Colorado?--they've already said the doors don't change your time or physical location) with the sculptured faces of Benjamin Franklin, Davy Crockett, Victoria Woodhull, and an Iroquois chief whose name I didn't catch.

The show is full of humor of the sort copied from Arnold Schwarzenegger movies. In one scene, Tom says, "Of all the emergency rooms in all the hospitals in all the world, why did you have to come into mine?" There's a running gag about Cat biting people's noses off. Mercifully, there were no jokes about "Tom and Cat."

There were some minor flaws in the script, with characters behaving in unlikely ways. My major complaint was that there was too much in it. The parallel worlds would have been enough without the warriors and the Dark Lords and all that stuff. But it i_s alternate history, so if and when it shows up, I'll be watching. Whether it lasts is another story. As Martin said, "Our success will be determined by how well we do."

Panel: L L L L o o o s s s t t t t A A A A r r r r t t t t o o o o f f f f
t t t t h h h h e e e e N N N N e e e e w w w w s s s s z z z z i i i i n n n n e e e e

Monday, 1 PM

Mike Glyer (moderator), Timothy Lane, Dick Lynch, Laurie Mann

The first thing I heard when I got to this panel was that Mike Glyer is hoping I get my con report done early so he can use it to help him write the con report for _ F _ i _ l _ e _ 7 _ 7 _ 0. Talk about ego-boo!

One reason proposed for the decline of the newszine was the rise of electronic bulletin boards and electronic communications in general. By the time any traditional fanzine can get out, almost everyone has already heard what news there was. What the boards don't cover, the semi-prozines do, and with more staff and money than a fanzine can dedicate. And even a lot of clubzines have started printing news of interest to their members as well. Newszines have to be timely, and unless they're done electronically, that's almost impossible these days. Of course, I pointed out that Mark has said that between the death of live television in the 1950s and the rise of electronic bulletin boards in the 1980s, there was no real way to make a fool of yourself instantaneously around the world. Now, once again, there is. And even newszines are not immune, and make mistakes. Consider last year's Hugo nominees list that appeared in _ L _ o _ c _ u _ s: in an effort to scoop the competition, _ L _ o _ c _ u _ s printed up the first list Chicon V sent them. (Chicon was using _ L _ o _ c _ u _ s to verify the story lengths, so _ L _ o _ c _ u _ s was in a privileged position.) After it was typeset and almost ready to go to press, Chicon released a longer list of nominees--the short list was due to a misunderstanding of where the cut-off was to make the ballot. So _ L _ o _ c _ u _ s ran an addendum to their list of nominations with more nominations. But the result was that nominees and voters knew whether someone had been at the top of the nominations list, or further down. A lot of finger-pointing went on, but I would say the basic flaw is in giving one newszine a preference over the others by releasing the names to them first. Surely the committees can find a better way to validate nominations.

People who still produce newszines say that this timeliness forces them to drop a lot of letters of comment to make room for

current news. Long convention reports also get cut. (Long convention reports? No one writes those any more, do they? :-)

On the other hand, there is still a need for a newszine that interprets the facts, instead of just reporting them. (Consider the parallel to the everyday world. We get our factual news from radio or television, but many people still subscribe to a weekly "news magazine" which gives us more of an interpretation and background for the news than we can get from other, more immediate sources.)

Mike Glycer closed by reading the Hugo winners, which I do not have handy, so I hope he saved his copy for F i l e 7 7 0.

Someone on the panel described this as a panel of heavyweights; I don't think they were speaking entirely figuratively. :-)

Miscellaneous

All business passed on to the MagiCon WSFS Business Meeting passed, including counting electronic fan writing toward Hugo fan writer eligibility and restricting Hugo voting and business meeting participation to natural persons only. (I guess this rules out Data, right?) The electronic fan writing amendment contains a reference to "generally available electronic media," which should prove an interesting phrase when the issue of electronic fanzines comes up, since WSFS has now recognized the concept that electronic media c a n be considered "generally available."

The hotel had an automatic check-out through the television, and it was working, making check-out a breeze.

One more time, I'll list the Worldcons I've attended and rank them, best to worst (the middle cluster are pretty close together, and it's getting harder and harder to fit the new ones in, perhaps because the cons of fifteen years ago are hard to remember in detail):

- Noreascon II
- MagiCon
- Noreascon III
- Noreascon I
- Midamericon
- LACon
- Chicon V
- Discon II
- Seacon
- Confederation
- Chicon IV
- ConFiction
- Conspiracy

Iguanacon
Suncon
Nolacon II
Constellation

I note in passing that this con report clocks in at about 20,000 words, my longest ever, which I would like to attribute to the abundance of interesting programming rather than my own verbosity. (At Chicon V last year I went to twelve panels; this year at MagiCon I went to sixteen.)

In another hard-fought battle, Glasgow won the bid for 1995, making 1994/1995 the first time the Worldcon has been out of the United States for two years in a row. 2541 votes were cast, even more than last year's heavy voting of 2108: 1310 for Glasgow and 1147 for Atlanta. The counting went much faster than last year, because the ballots, mail-in _ a _ n _ d on-site, were validated (verified that each voter was a member of Magicon and had paid his or her voting fee) as they arrived. Samuel R. Delany and Gerry Anderson are the Guests of Honour; the Fan Guest of Honour will be announced at ConFrancisco. The convention will be called Intersection and be August 24 through 28, 1995. (Contact address in the United States is Theresa Renner, Box 15430, Washington DC 20003.) In a very lightly voted contest, Atlanta won the NASFIC: DragonCon, which will be held July 12-16, 1995. (Note that this was not the same committee that bid for the Worldcon.) It will be fascinating to see what the unusual scheduling of the con does. Will there be more fans who attend both? Will more students and teachers attend the NASFIC? Stay tuned.

Next year in San Francisco!

