



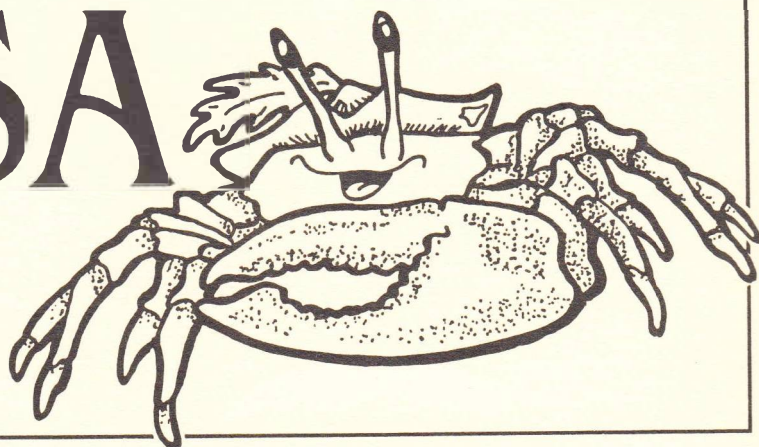






# MIMOSA

## 23



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*Mimosa* is a fanzine very much devoted to the preservation of the history of science fiction fandom. We publish *Mimosa* approximately twice a year; this twenty-third issue was published in January 1999, and is available for four dollars (U.S. currency or equivalent), which includes cost of postage. We welcome letters and e-mails of comment; one of those, or a fanzine in trade, will get you a copy of *M24* later this year. (We'll assume all correspondence we receive is intended for publication unless otherwise indicated.) We also have a continuing need for first-person articles & essays of an anecdotal nature about science fiction fandom and/or things fans do, especially if they are of fan historical interest; publication of same here will keep you on our mailing list for as long as we continue to publish. Copies of most back issues are available; please write us for more info on price and availability. This entire issue is ©1999 by Nicki and Richard Lynch, with individual rights reverting back to contributors after this one-time use. All opinions and versions of events expressed by contributors are their own.

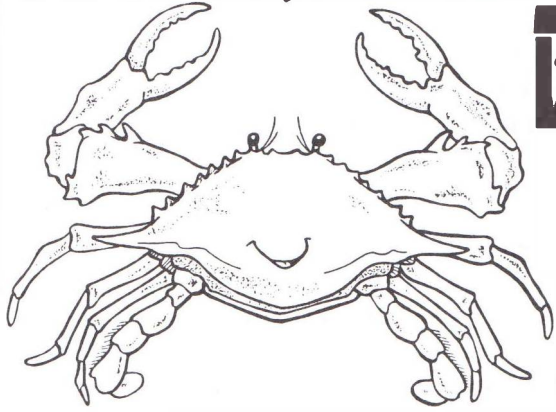
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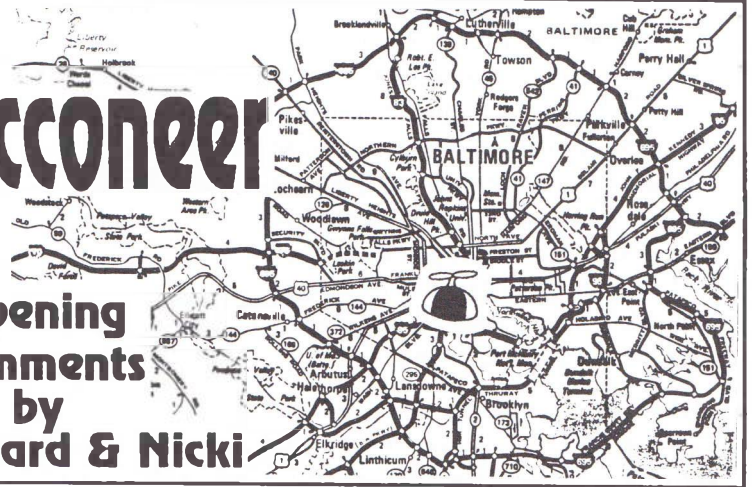
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# On the Road to



# Bucconeer

Opening  
Comments  
by  
Richard & Nicki



**Richard:** "...and this is the United States Capitol Building. It was blown to pieces in the movie *Independence Day*. It was destroyed in the movie *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*. It was demolished in the movie *Deep Impact*..."

It takes about six hours to do my 'high intensity, gonzo, full court press' walking tour of Washington. Even though it's not really all that strenuous (there's lots of places to stop), I advise people to bring comfortable walking shoes because they'll cover about 12 kilometers on foot by the time the day is done. The TAFF delegate, Maureen Kincaid Speller (and her husband Paul), arrived in town a couple of days before the start of Bucconeer, and they got the full treatment, complete with its many photograph opportunities – high up in the bell tower at the Old Post Office, on Albert Einstein's lap at the National Academy of Sciences, standing in the bread line at the Roosevelt Memorial, touching a piece of the moon in the National Air and Space Museum and a piece of Mars in the Natural History Museum. Maureen and Paul held up quite well, and we even had time for a trip to Hagerstown for a special photo-op with the occupant of 423 Summit Avenue. It was a good way to begin Bucconeer week.

Bucconeer was our eleventh consecutive worldcon, a streak that began when we were still living in Chattanooga, Tennessee. (I had a packaged tour for out-of-town friends, there too: "...and this is *Missionary Ridge*. It was taken by General Grant in 1863..." ) It was the first Eastern Zone worldcon in six years, which meant that it was driveable!

**Nicki:** I'm not a big fan of air travel, so it was nice for a change to not have to travel long distances to get to a worldcon. However, Baltimore was still a little

too far away to come home each night. I suppose we could have saved some money and driven the hour to and from Bucconeer each day, but we've done that for other local conventions and it gets old rather quickly – each successive day we tend to arrive later and come home earlier, to the point where we ask ourselves, "Do we *really* want to go there today?" Not exactly the frame of mind you ought to be in when you're attending a worldcon. And best of all, not commuting to the convention meant we didn't have to search out a parking garage each day and wonder if we should party as long as we really wanted to.

So, we'd made the decision earlier in the year to go ahead and get a room in one of the non-party hotels. (We were among those who did not have hotel booking problems – the reservation form sailed right through without any trouble whatsoever. Maybe the hotel booking agency was only messing up reservations of those living too far away to drive over and mess *them* up.) But we still didn't end up at one of the close-in hotels – we were assigned to the Omni Hotel, a long, hot five blocks up the hill from the Convention Center. We arrived on Wednesday morning and checked in, or tried to. The hotel registration area was chaos, and it took until early evening before we finally got the room. When we were finally allowed to crowd into the hotel elevator with our luggage, I noticed that it whistled whenever it stopped at a floor. I remarked to Rich that I thought the hotel was carrying Bucconeer's 'Pirate' theme a bit too far by piping people on and off the elevator!

But despite our initial poor impression, it actually did turn out to be a good idea to stay there. If we had stayed anywhere else, we probably wouldn't have met



the South African fan contingent (publishers of the fanzine *PROBE*) at breakfast one morning in a nearby coffee shop. They were at their first Worldcon and having a great time; that chance meeting was the only time the entire convention we ran across them. It turned out we often ran into people we wanted to see while walking between venues; maybe there's something to say for staying at those perimeter hotels after all. And if we'd stayed at a close-in hotel, we wouldn't have gotten all that great exercise of walking between the hotel and convention center!

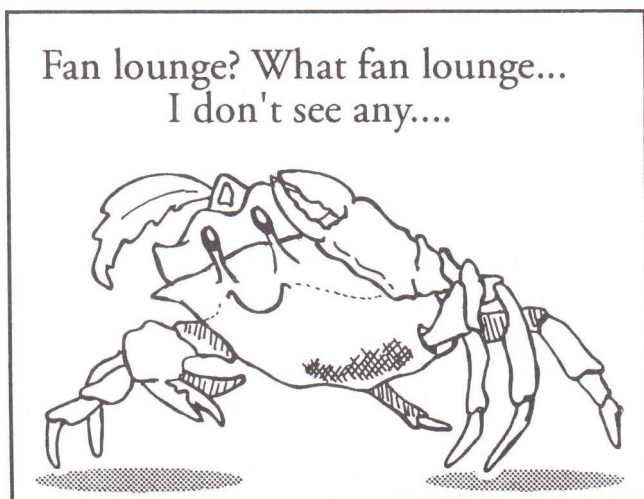
**Rich:** The fan lounge was way out there too, next door in the Hilton – not a very good location for attracting new fanzine readers. It turned out that there was supposed to be *two* fan lounges at Bucconeer – a fanzine sales area during the day at the Convention Center and a separate fanzine fans party/lounge room in the evening. But the former never really came into existence – it was stuck in a corner of the large area that included the dealers room and art show, and there were never any tables supplied for fanzines, or curtains supplied to create a separate area. What was provided was worse than nothing at all – a couch and several comfy chairs that made the area a nice place for drowsy people to take over for naps. It just wasn't going to work as a fanzine sales area, and so it was decided to cut the concept back to one room. And there's where the other problem was – the one remaining fanzine room was just too far away during the days, and any program event that was held there (such as my interview with Bob Madle) was poorly attended. (And worse, any program event there was also subject to rude distractions; about ¾ of the way through my interview with Madle, someone started

such a commotion outside the room, wanting to come in and party, that the interview had to be cut short by about ten minutes. I will never again agree to be on a program item in a fanzine/party room. The event would have had a much larger, more respectful audience if it had been held down in the convention center.)

**Nicki:** At Bucconeer, I was on two media panels – “Forgotten SF Films” and an entertaining panel about the television show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* titled “I Can't Believe I Like *Buffy*.” (I was also supposed to be on a fanzine panel in the fan lounge, which didn't happen because it took place in those comfy chairs in the convention center. Only one fan found the panel, so we sat around and chatted.) Even though I am more of an SF fan than ‘media fan’, I do enjoy talking about SF and media SF, and the two media panels were fun events. Like many SF fans, the media SF that leans to the literary is what draws my attention. I also don't see media SF as the be all and end all. With the new TV season, there were a number of SF- and fantasy-oriented shows; as usual, there are a few surprises, a few greats, and a few failures. But in the failures I discovered something – why SF/fantasy movies and TV shows often disappoint me.

The show that opened my eyes was *Mercy Point*, a new show about a hospital space station. Don't bother looking for it; it lasted three episodes before UPN canceled it. Was it that bad? Well, it wasn't bad so much as unnecessary. The scripts were standard TV doctor stuff set in space. As for the SF content, that was abysmal. The main story line of the debut episode was a mysterious virus killed one of the hospital workers and was spreading. Turns out it was (wait for it) a computer virus! Clever, huh? Fortunately, they were testing an ‘android nurse’ and her systems provided the ‘antidote’ to the virus (which made little sense). Even the actors didn't seem too enthusiastic about the whole thing. Just about any of the stories that involved the medical section on *Babylon 5* or the *Star Trek* series (including *Voyager*) were much more interesting than any of the three episodes that were shown of *Mercy Point*.

While I was disappointed in *Mercy Point*, it wasn't because of the silly science or that putting a hospital in space was purposeless. The main reason I was disappointed was that I had read a number of stories about a ‘hospital in space’ (primarily James White's *Sector General* stories) and knew how it *should* be done. I didn't think that the series would live up to those stories and I was right. My guess is I was probably





one of the few viewers who had heard of or read any SF stories that dealt with the concept; I don't think the creators of the series ever did.

I was also disappointed because SF done badly means the next time someone comes up with an SF series that might be good, it will not get the attention it deserves. The networks will just point to the failure of *Mercy Point*.

However, not all series suffer from ignorance of the genre. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* premiered two seasons ago and proved that a well-acted, well-written series about a teenager who fights evil can do very well. The creator/producer has done his homework and knows his stuff. If more people who read the genre as well as watch the movies produce series like this, we may get a *Sector General* instead of *Mercy Point*. Now that would be worth watching!

**Rich:** I was on even fewer program events than Nicki – just one other panel besides the Madle interview, not counting the Hugo Awards Ceremony. *Mimosa* was the Fanzine Hugo winner again this year, but the honor for that goes to our many fine contributors, and our thanks and appreciation go to our readers. This was the fifth time that *Mimosa* has won the award, and we're only too aware that some of voters think that's at least four too many. We neither encourage nor discourage anyone to vote for *Mimosa*; we don't campaign for honors, but we don't turn them down, either. I can sympathize that many of the non-winners deserve their moment up there on the stage, and I hope that someday they will all be able to take home at least one rocket. We've enjoyed the ride over the past seven years, and as soon as it ends, we'll be appreciative of the next fanzine that wins everyone's favor. Some of all that was probably going through my mind as Milt Rothman was handing us the Fanzine Hugo, so it seemed like the right thing to do, in front of God and Charlie Brown, to actually thank Kelly Freas and Andy Offutt for starting us on the road to Buccaneer almost a quarter of a century ago.

It was back in 1975, when we had been in Tennessee for only two years, that I'd noticed an announcement in an issue of *Analog* for an upcoming science fiction convention called 'Kubla Khan'. Nicki and I at that point were science fiction readers, but not yet fans – we had never been to a science fiction convention before (we were too poor while in college, and there weren't any conventions in the wilds of northern New York, anyway). This one was relatively close – just a two hour drive up Interstate

24 to Nashville. But what made us decide to attend were the guests – the Guest of Honor was *Analog* cover artist Kelly Freas and the Master of Ceremonies was Andrew Offutt, author of what I (still) consider as one of the ten best science fiction stories ever written ("Population Implosion," in case you're wondering). We went, and had a good time, and while we were there, we happened to meet Irvin Koch, who was busy organizing a small science fiction convention early the next year for Chattanooga. That event, the first Chattacon, was successful enough that a local club soon came into existence, and with it a clubzine (*Chat*, which we edited). And the rest, as they say, is history.

**Nicki:** The Buccaneer Hugo design was elegant simplicity, constructed, in part, with wood from the ongoing restoration project for the Sloop-of-War USS Constellation, the last remaining Civil War ship afloat. Rich had his practically glued to his hand for most of the evening, and that's how we discovered one of the little-known uses for a Hugo Award – it makes a very fine Key to the City, or at least a Key to Closed Parties. It got us into the SFWA suite without an escort, no problem at all. We also made it into the Japanese fans' party, where they were giving out Samurai-style cloth headbands and had all kinds of unfamiliar but tasty food. It was pretty much a very late night of unrestrained partying for us (we normally go to bed about midnight) and for most of the other winners as well. The person who seemed to have the best time of all was Bill Johnson, whose story "We Will Drink a Fish Together" won the Hugo in the Novelette category. At six feet eight inches, he's the tallest person ever to win a Hugo. And for the rest of the night, he was about a foot taller yet, walking on air as he floated through each party.

**Rich:** A very memorable moment at the Hugo Awards Ceremony was Joe Mayhew's moving acceptance speech tribute to fellow Fan Artist nominee Ian Gunn, whose health was deteriorating rapidly. In a way, it was a reminder of our own mortality.

Some of our readers may be familiar with the term 'Year of the Jackpot' (borrowed from the Heinlein story of the same name). It refers to the year 1958, a year when many notables authors and fans in the science fiction world died – Henry Kuttner, Cyril Kornbluth, Francis Towner Laney, Kent Moomaw, and Vernon L. McCain were among them. And now,



forty years later; 1998 has been another cruel year for the number of prominent pros and fans who have died, among them authors Jerome Bixby and Jo Clayton, artists Paul Lehr and Alex Schomburg, R.W. "Doc" Lowndes (better known as an editor, but also one of the 'Nycon Six' that were excluded from the very first Worldcon, in 1939), former worldcon chairman John Millard, and First Fandom members John V. Baltadonis, Paul G. Herkart, and T. Bruce Yerke.

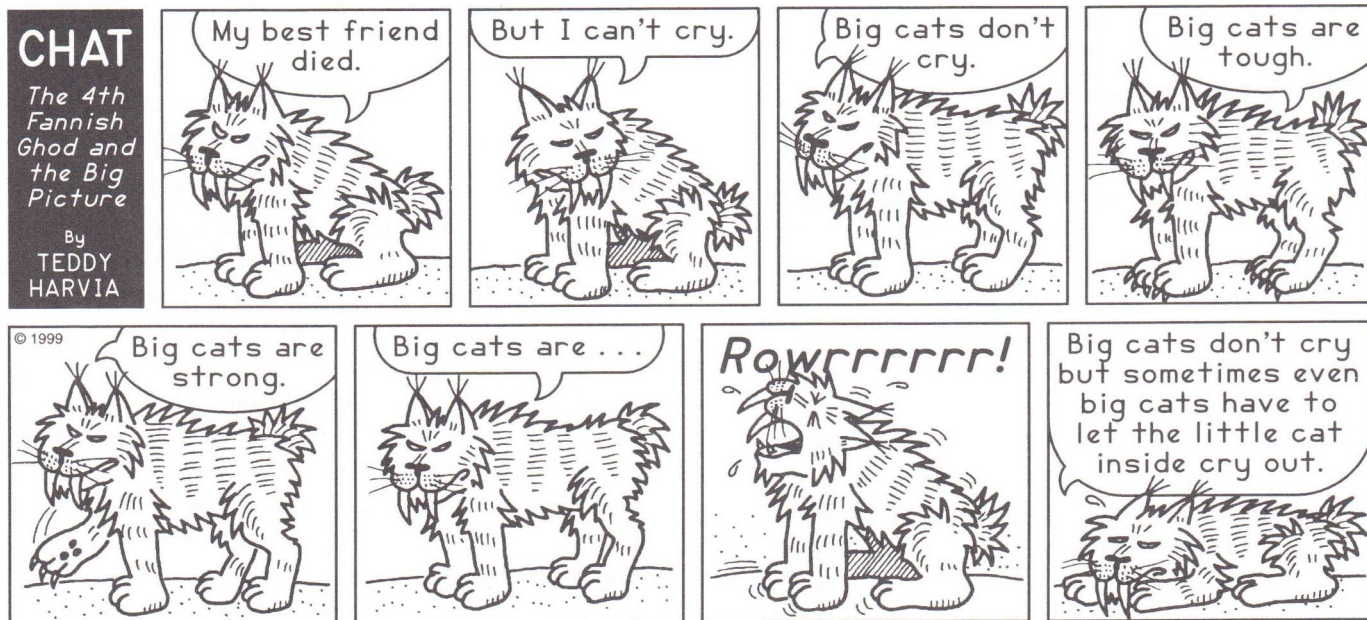
Two deaths that hit us especially hard were those of Vincent Clarke and Ian Gunn. I'd heard about Vince's death while I was in Slovakia on a business trip, and even now I think I'm still in a state of denial. He was a good friend and a wonderful source for historical information about British fandom. I will miss him very greatly, and regret very much that we'll never again be able to feature one of his warmly humorous remembrances in *Mimosa*.

We'll also miss Ian Gunn very greatly. He'd been in a losing battle with cancer for almost a year, so his death wasn't really a surprise. Up to then he was an irrepressible presence in many fanzines, including *Mimosa* – his 'Alien Spaceport' cover for M18 is one of our favorite pieces of fan art. He had plans for a sequel that we would have featured on next issue's cover, and was looking forward to seeing us at Aussiecon Three in September. Such was his optimistic outlook on life, and we are all diminished by his passing.

And there's even more discouraging news – word came from Geri Sullivan by e-mail that Walt Willis is not in good health; he suffered an apparent stroke a few months earlier, and has not (and may not ever be) completely recovered.

In my return e-mail to Geri, I tried to find the right words... "I'm dismayed that Walter's health deteriorated. It's even more frustrating to know there's not a single thing I (or apparently anyone) can do for him. He's in my thoughts, anyway. So is Vincent. And Ian Gunn. And all the others. Damn."

And so here we are, five months after Bucconeer, nearly at the brink of the new century. Fandom is now about three quarters of a century old, but the early years are still not very well documented. (For instance, how many people now even recognize the names 'Vernon McCain' and 'Kent Moomaw', much less know why they were well-known back then?) The good news is that much of that history is preserved, but mostly in the memories of those who were present then. Fandom is in the midst of change, as every year we lose more of those who were so important to making us what we are. And that's why we do what we're doing. We began publishing *Mimosa*, at least in part, because there *were* so many stories that needed telling, for future generations of fans to read and be entertained. It's something we hope we can keep doing – to save these moments, frozen in time; to prevent the memories from fading away. ✧






This year's worldcon, *Bucconeer*, happened to be our 16th worldcon, and it was the 20th anniversary of our first worldcon trip. In case you're wondering, sixteen worldcons is not even close to being a record; there are many fans have been to quite a few more than that. One of them is Mike Resnick, who returns now with more remembrances of some of those previous worldcons. In part 2 of this series, Mike's worldcon adventures feature the launching of his writing career, the discovery of how to get THE best view of a worldcon masquerade, and more.

# WORLDCON MEMORIES

## PART 2

by Mike Resnick



### 1966: TRICON (Cleveland)

Though we had met a number of fans during the past couple of years who would become lifelong friends – Pat and Roger Sims, Bob Tucker, Ed and Jo Ann Wood, Dave and Ruth Kyle, Hank and Martha Beck – we nonetheless spent most of Tricon with the Edgar Rice Burroughs fans. After all, it had been through the Burroughs door that we entered fandom, and Burroughs would never be as popular with the Hugo voters again as he was in 1966. The Barsoom books were on the ballot for Best All-Time Series, Frank Frazetta was up for Best Artist primarily because of his ERB covers for *Ace*, and *ERB-dom*, on which I was the assistant editor, was up for Best Fanzine.

Camille Cazedessus, Jr. – Caz to everyone – showed up late, and found they had sold his room out from under him. In fact, they had sold *every* room out from under him, and he was forced to accept a huge suite for the price of a room. The *ERB-dom* crowd – Caz (the editor) and his wife Mary, us, John F. Roy, John Guidry, Neal MacDonald, and a new artist, Jeffrey Jones – spent every evening camped out there.

This was the worldcon that hosted the first Asimov/Ellison Insult Contest. It was generally considered that Isaac was winning when Harlan segued off into a lengthy description of a fistic encounter with a couple of Frank Sinatra's bodyguards, and then the hour was over.

One of the most memorable, if not the most pleas-

ant, memories I have of Tricon is the bagpipers. You see, back then the worldcon wasn't large enough to fill a hotel, let alone the two or three we now take over, and we shared the premises with other groups. In 1966, it was a group of happy bagpipers, who went up and down the corridors in the wee small hours of the morning, wearing their kilts, drinking their Scotch, and blowing their bagpipes. Loudly. (I don't think you *can* blow a bagpipe softly.) It was the first, and probably only, time in worldcon history when the fans complained to the hotel that the mundanes were making too much noise.

I sold my first sf novel at Tricon. In retrospect, I wish I hadn't. It's a pretty good Burroughs pastiche but a pretty awful Resnick novel, and copies of it come back to haunt me at every autograph session. (I resist the urge to tear it up, and just remind the reader that I was a teenager when I wrote it and I've gotten a lot better.)

(No, I wasn't a teenager in 1966. But it took me half a dozen years to sell that sucker. I should have listened to the first thirty editors.)

Now let me tell you about the Hugos. Back then you didn't have to be a member of the worldcon to vote. The worldcon drew maybe 600 attendees or thereabouts. *ERB-dom* had a mailing list of close to 1,000. All Caz did was copy the ballot and mail it out with the last issue before the voting deadline, and *ERB-dom* became the first Burroughs fanzine ever to win a Hugo. (And the last. I think the rules were



changed the following year. They were certainly changed soon thereafter.)

Harlan won his first Hugo, and when it came time to announce the award for Best All-Time Series (a ridiculous award, since it presupposed that no series written after 1966 could possibly be better), he took the microphone away from a shocked Isaac, who was the Toastmaster, and announced that *The Foundation Trilogy* had won. Nowadays everyone just yawns, but on that night it was a shocker – the sf fans all thought Heinlein's Future History had a lock on it, the fantasy fans couldn't see how Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* could lose, and the old-timers voted *en masse* for Doc Smith's Lensman series. And of course, there were enough Burroughs fans there to give Hugos to Fra-zetta and *ERB-dom*, so they felt certain the Barsoom series would win.

Having been to one worldcon already, I knew what the dealers room was like (and back then, it sold almost nothing but books and magazines), so we took along an empty suitcase and I filled it up, courtesy of a few dozen friendly hucksters.

I had overslept every morning, and we had an early train back to Chicago on Labor Day, and I was worried about sleeping through it. I mentioned this to John Roy the night before, and at 5:00 AM he phoned me and started reciting the longest, stupidest series of filthy limericks I'd ever heard. They were so dreadful that I was totally awake and ready to leave at 5:15.

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### 1973: TORCON II (Toronto)

In 1972, as I was standing shoulder to shoulder with half a hundred sweating photographers trying to get pictures of some of the masquerade costumes, I noticed that the costumers all looked cool and composed and (especially) uncrowded, and I decided that I'd been on the wrong end of the camera long enough. All I had to do was convince Carol to make a costume for us to wear, and we'd finally be able to *enjoy* a worldcon masquerade.

Well, oddly enough, she thought it was a fine idea, and we spent the next couple of months trying to decide what costume to make. We finally hit upon Lith the Golden Witch and the wonderfully-named Chun the Unavoidable from Jack Vance's *The Dying Earth*.

Chun's robe was covered with eyeballs, so while Carol made an elegant flowing black velvet robe, I got a few hundred ping-pong balls, pasted irises and pupils on them, and strung them on a series of glitter-

ing wires which she then attached to the robe. Then, to make the costume complete, I carried the eyeless head of Liane the Wayfarer.

Carol's costume was a little more problematical. She would wear patterns of gold feathers on her arms and legs, and gold body paint, and gold leaves in her hair, and a gold loincloth, and she would carry a gold cage containing a frog, but what she mostly was was naked. We brought along a brass bra in case she changed her mind (i.e., lost her nerve), but she had three or four vodka stingers an hour before we were due on stage and that was enough to curb any inhibitions she might have had.



We had a wonderful time, posed for a trillion photographs, were interviewed on Canadian television (American news programs weren't wildly anxious to run interviews with a topless witch back in 1973), and won the award for Most Authentic Costume. There was no 'Best In Show' at Torcon II, but Joni Stopa, one of the judges, later told us that she polled the other judges and if there had been a Best In Show, we'd have won it. We enjoyed the experience so much that we would do four more costumes in the 1970s (and three would be even bigger winners).

The con was held in the Royal York Hotel. I remember an endless bridge game in the N3F room, and some nice room parties, but what I mostly remember was that they nickel-and-dimed you to death. You wanted matches with your cigarettes, it was an extra penny; ice with your water, an extra penny; and so on. After the masquerade, Hank Beck and I got hungry and decided to grab a sandwich. The only place open was the nightclub in the basement. We didn't want to be drowned out, so we called ahead to find out when the singer was taking her break, showed up two minutes after she left the stage, ordered and ate our food, and left before she came back

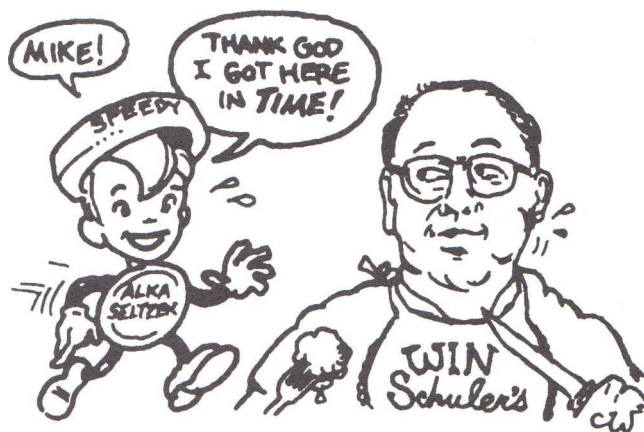


on – and nonetheless had to pay a substantial entertainment charge.

This was the year that the Hugo rocket ships didn't arrive on time, and the committee was able to hand out only the bases. Later that night John Guidry and I went up onto the roof to catch a breath of fresh air, and we found Ray Lafferty, who'd had a few too many, on his hands and knees, obviously looking for something he'd misplaced. We asked what he'd lost and offered to help him find it. He held up the Hugo base. He was pretty sure he'd won a Hugo earlier that night, but he couldn't remember what happened to the damned rocket, and he thought maybe he'd lost it up here on the roof. We gently escorted him back into the hotel, and he picked up the rocket the next year at Discon II.

I'd pretty much lost touch with all of the Burroughs fans except for John Guidry and John Roy, but when we heard that Buster Crabbe was to be the Guest Speaker at the Burroughs Bibliophiles' Dum-Dum (which was held at the worldcon until the end of the decade), we jumped at the chance to hear him. He was a brilliant, funny speaker. In all my experience at all the hundred-plus conventions I've been to, only Isaac Asimov and Bob Bloch ever performed better.

We'd taken our Dodge maxivan to the con, so we could carry our costumes, and on the way home we offered a ride to Martha Beck and John Guidry. When we hit Michigan we stopped at Win Schuler's, one of my favorite steak houses. They began by giving you free meatballs and bar cheese while you perused the menu. Martha, John and I put away a quick four or five pounds of meatballs while waiting for our meals to arrive, and finally Carol decided to take a table at the far end of the restaurant and pretend she didn't know us. It was quite some time before we even realized she was gone.



## 1977: SUNCON (Miami Beach)

No one knew if there was going to be a worldcon in 1977. Don Lundry's group, known as '7 for 77', won the bid without naming a city. They later hit upon Orlando, lost their hotel a few months before the con (I think they were waiting for it to be built and it was behind schedule, but I could be misremembering), and then moved to Miami Beach and the Fontainebleu. A couple of weeks before the worldcon, the Fontainebleu went into receivership, and no one knew if it would stay open. As a result, Suncon was the smallest domestic con of the decade...but that just meant that those of us who showed up had this enormous, semi-empty hotel in which to play and party.

Carol and I arrived a day early, and came away with a pair of collector's items because of that. We were among the first to register and get our badges and program books and giveaways. A few minutes later they closed down registration. Seems they forgot to include Harlan Ellison's copyright notice on the program book bio he did of Toastmaster Bob Silverberg, and they had to make up a hand stamp and stamp the copyright notice into every program book. We have two of the ten or twelve copies that got away before the omission was discovered.

This was the con at which Second Fandom was created. It was First Fandomite Dave Kyle's suggestion, but a number of us modified it a bit. We wanted to be able to throw a party in which all the oldpharts didn't drink all our booze and the kids didn't eat all our food, so we created a group with restrictions at both ends: to become a member, you had to have started reading science fiction after the cutoff date for First Fandom (at the beginning of 1938, as I recall) and before the day that *Astounding* became *Analog*. We were formed solely to have parties at worldcon, and while I suppose we still officially exist, we haven't thrown one in a few years now. The person to complain to is Roger Sims, who's been our president since the beginning. (We actually did create the Groff Conklin Award, to be given to the author who did the most to interest us in science fiction, and we gave it out once – to Sprague de Camp, a worthy recipient – but we decided that awards were against the spirit of party-throwing and we never gave out another.)

The Fontainebleu was a bit shabby and run-down for a luxury hotel, but the lobby was magnificent: two thousand people could sit comfortably and visit. There was an Olympic-sized saltwater pool out back,



and literally hundreds of fans spent goodly portions of their day in it. (It was *so* buoyant from the salt that it was literally impossible to sink; dozens of fans wiled away their afternoons floating on their backs and reading whatever they'd purchased in the huckster room.)

We attended the Dum-Dum to listen to Leigh Brackett give a speech. So did Keith Laumer, whose entire personality changed after he suffered a stroke. He became abusive and offensive, and only Leigh could quiet him down. Mainstream fans knew all about his problems, but this was Burroughs fandom's first exposure to him, and they didn't know how to react or what to do. A very awkward couple of hours.

Carol was willing to make me a costume, but she didn't want to go in costume herself. I hit upon Clark Ashton Smith's "Master of the Crabs", and tried to coordinate it by long distance with Angelique Trouvere (a.k.a. "Destiny"), who had to cancel at the last minute. I had a number of large, realistic-looking plastic crabs on my jeweled robe, and a long white beard, and a trident, and a bunch of other stuff, but Carol decided it needed something authentic, so the morning of the masquerade she went out to the Fontainebleu's unkempt beach and brought back a bunch of seaweed, which she then hung on the robe. By masquerade time it smelled pretty awful; no one wanted to be within 30 feet of me – including me. I won Most Outstanding Costume, and two minutes later I was in the shower stall, scrubbing as hard as I could (and two minutes after that I was dousing myself with the strongest, cheapest men's cologne I could find. Neither helped much.)



The Fontainebleu had an all-night coffee shop. Lou Tabakow, who had become perhaps our closest fannish friend after we moved to Cincinnati, lived there. I think he had about 15 snacks – pie and coffee

– a day with various friends, and never did order anything resembling a meal. (He also caught the costuming bug, and won a prize for a very funny fannish costume.)

Our room had a sign on the wall, asking us to please not litter the floor with food crumbs. We didn't know why until late one night, when we were using a basement passage from one tower to another, we ran into a small army of palmetto roaches, each about four inches long and ugly as sin. I went right back up to the room and made sure the floor was spotless.

Phil Foglio won his first Fan Artist Hugo. We felt partially responsible, since when we lived in the Chicago area, I was convinced Phil would go all week without eating and then visit us on the weekend and down 17 or 18 pounds of meat, and if we hadn't let him in, he would have died of malnutrition without ever having made it to a worldcon.

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#### 1982: CHICON IV (Chicago)

Chicon IV began awkwardly. We had been to Windycon at the Chicago Hyatt the year before, and had been stranded on the 22nd floor for a couple of hours. (The elevators went straight to the rooftop, then began coming down – but when they reached a certain weight level, which they always did before the 22nd floor, they expressed right to the lobby level, and then repeated the procedure.)

Now, a few years earlier, Windycon had been held in the Radisson, just across the Chicago River from the Hyatt. The rooms had been very nice, there was a great pool on the 13th floor, the elevators all worked, and the restaurant served a memorable brunch... so I wrote a letter to a number of our friends, detailing our experiences at both hotels, stating we would be staying at the Radisson, and recommending they do the same.

We showed up a few days before worldcon began...and found that the Radisson had lost our reservation. After considerable acrimony they found a room for us that was somewhat smaller and considerably dirtier than a broom closet. The corridors needed carpets and a paint job, the help was surly, there was a stale odor permeating the place. Third World facilities can nosedive like that in a couple of years, but we hadn't expected a member of a major chain on Chicago's "Miracle Mile" to degenerate so quickly.

So I left Carol there, walked half a mile to the Hyatt, found they had a room on the 5th floor, took it,



went back, got Carol and the luggage, and moved to the Hyatt – and am *still* catching hell from Jo Ann Wood and a few others, partially for suggesting the Radisson and partially for deserting it.

Of course, once Larry Propp (the co-chair) found out we were on the 5th floor – which was reserved for committee bigwigs and the Guests of Honor and did not require elevators – he spent an hour every morning trying to get the hotel to move us out. Didn't work. Finally Kelly Freas, who was the artist Guest of Honor, showed up, and Larry dragged him to our room and explained that it had been reserved for Kelly, and since Kelly was an old friend, we agreed to move to the 24th floor – only to have Kelly decide that he'd rather be with fans on the 24th than committee members on the 5th. At which point Larry left us alone for the last couple of days.

The CFG was on the 7th floor and the SFWA Suite was on the 6th, and the escalator went to the 4th, so we never once had to take an elevator. I remember Frank Robinson and Jack Williamson were stranded somewhere around the 30th floor when they were due to participate in a midnight panel, and never did make it down.

Larry Tucker was busy filming *FAANS*, the now-classic video starring just about everyone in Midwestern fandom, and it frequently made the 7th floor corridor inaccessible. It was worth it, though; *FAANS* is every bit as important to fandom as *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* or *Fancylopedia II*.

My first few legitimate sf novels (as opposed to the Burroughs and Howard pastiches of more than a decade ago) had come out during the year, and for the first time I went to an autograph session and didn't just sit there getting sympathetic looks from passers-by. It was also the first time an editor bought us a meal at a worldcon; Sheila Gilbert of Signet took us to Doro's, my favorite Italian restaurant, and a place we used to go to celebrate each new book contract.

We had driven up from Cincinnati, and on the way back we stopped for a housewarming at Lynne and Mark Aronson's new home in Chicago's Rogers Park. John Guidry came back to Cincinnati with us. I gave him a map of the local second-hand bookstores, bade him good hunting, and hardly saw him again for the next three days.

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### 1988: NOLA CON II (New Orleans)

This one's going to take a while to explain. To this day, everyone else complains about Nolacon II.

Me, I had a great time. But there was no reason why I shouldn't have had a great time: I was the Toastmaster, and I was given the Presidential Suite at the Sheraton.

Let me tell you about that suite. It had four bedrooms. It had six bathrooms. Every bathroom had its own television set. It had a four-poster bed on a raised platform in the master bedroom. It had a living room with a 60-foot window wall overlooking the French Quarter and the Mississippi River. It had a dining room that could seat two dozen people at the mahogany table. It had an express elevator to our front door on the 49th floor. We had a liaison (read: gofer/driver) all week long. We had complimentary breakfasts all week long. And since we were in New Orleans, and nobody eats in a hotel when the French Quarter is only a block away, we were given a substantial per diem.

Hard not to like a situation like that.

Which is not to say that the con ran smoothly. (My suite ran smoothly, but that's a while different matter. In fact, we made up hundreds of invitations to huge parties in the suite on three different nights. We spent the first four days passing them out, and the last three days partying until dawn in the suite.)

Nolacon had asked me to edit a reprint anthology of sf parodies to be known as *Shaggy B.E.M. Stories*. (Damned good book, if I say so myself – even though the editor was never shown the galleys, and hence the final version has well over 200 typos.)

Anyway, one night John Guidry called to say that I had listed an Arthur C. Clarke story in the table of contents, but it wasn't on the disk I sent him. I said sure it was. He insisted it wasn't. I told him to put the disk in the machine and I'd tell him how to find the story. He had never worked a computer before, and was sure he'd wipe all the data from the hard disk with a wrong key stroke, and refused. I kept urging him to turn on the goddamned machine, and he began getting hysterical, so finally I told him to go out into the hall of his office building, find the first room with a light on, knock on the door, and bring whoever answered it to the phone.

Which is how I met Peggy Ranson. She turned on the computer and promptly found the story. She also mentioned that she had slipped a number of letters under the door to the worldcon office, asking for information, but had never been answered. By the end of our conversation, I realized that I was speaking to a very bright, very friendly, and (most importantly)



very competent person, and I told John that I insisted on Peggy as my liaison, and that I would accept no other.

Good decision. Five years later she won a Hugo for Best Fan Artist, and she's been on the ballot ever since.

So we show up for the con, and the hotel has no idea that we're coming, or that the committee had reserved the Presidential Suite for us eight months earlier. (The Pro and Fan GoHs, Don Wollheim and Roger Sims, had first choice. Both chose huge suites in the Marriott, which was half a block closer to the Quarter.)

We get that settled, and the first order of business is the Opening Ceremonies, which goes rather smoothly. I introduce Don and Roger, a jazz band serenades (if that's the right word, and I suspect it's not) the crowd, and everyone goes off to pig out in the Quarter.

The next order of business does not go quite so smoothly. It's the Meet the Pros party. Now, I haven't been to a Meet the Pros party since my first worldcon back in 1963, and somehow I do not feel culturally deprived. I would much rather meet the fans, and in smaller groups, but what the hell, I am the Toastmaster and the Toastmaster presides at this. (Or so I thought, until I was drafted to do it again in Orlando when the Toastmaster refused.)

I know from hearing the pros talk about it that every year they wore funny hats or Mickey Mouse ears or some other distinguishing thing so that the Toastmaster can identify them and the fans can spot them, and every week for a year I ask some committee member or other if they've figured out what the pros will be given to wear and I have been assured that it's under control and there's nothing to worry about. I also request that I be given a couple of spotters, one at the door and one on stage, because I don't know every pro by sight, especially the newer ones, and I don't want to slight anyone. No problem, I am told; we would never dream of embarrassing you or slighting a new writer.

So I show up and ask who my spotters are. Spotters, they say; what's a spotter?

Okay, I say, we'll get by without them. What are the pros wearing?

You're the Toastmaster. We thought you knew it was your responsibility. What did you bring for all 400 of them to wear?

So I turned around and went back to my suite, one

minute into the Meet the Pros party. I have no idea how, or even *if*, it went.

My novel, *Ivory*, came out that week, I did a joint signing with Michael Whelan, who painted the cover. Autographed upward of 300 copies, at which point I thought my hand would fall off.

Since we had all these extra bedrooms, I invited my father and Laura to each take one, which they did, and I seem to think Laura invited an old high school or college friend to use the fourth bedroom a couple of nights. Laura had just started selling romance novels; it would be another five years before she won her Campbell...but since she had been raised in science fiction, she already knew most of the fans and pros, and managed to hit just about every party, escorting my father – an old party boy – to most of them.

By 1988, I was writing for a lot of publishing houses, and we were wined and dined by editors at some of the finest restaurants in town: Arnaud's, Toujaques, Antoine's, Broussard's, and Brennan's. We went to Commander's Palace, probably the best single restaurant in town, with Pat and Roger Sims, and found that our old headwaiter from some previous trips to Brennan's – the only headwaiter who ever recognized my name or read my books – had moved there. We got the best table, the best service, and, as with Brennan's, no bill. (We promptly invited him to one of our room parties, and he actually showed up – with a bunch of his friends.)

(I have to add, in all immodesty, that those were some of the best parties ever given at a worldcon. We got to see almost every one of our old friends – something that gets more and more difficult each year, as I have more and more business meetings – and that suite was so big that no one had to stand unless they wanted to. We took all the money we'd normally spend on room, board, and plane fare, and blew it on food and drinks for the parties. We got everyone from old-time fans to Hugo-winning pros to my daughter to my agent to help host the various shindigs.)

Roger Sims had asked to be roasted, rather than make a GoH speech, and the committee accommodated him. I was the Roastmaster, and Dave Kyle, Jack Chalker, Jay Kay Klein, Lynne Aronson, Jo Ann Wood, and Pat Sims took their best shots at him. It was a lot of fun, especially if you weren't Roger.

Carol had to judge the masquerade on Saturday night. It was on the other side of the Quarter, and the



pre-judging started early, which meant we couldn't eat together. I'd had so many 8,000-calorie meals I didn't feel like going out to a restaurant, so Fred Prophet and I went down to the second floor of the Sheraton, where all the bid parties were, hit each one, picking up some cheese here and some ham there and some cake over there, and after we'd made the circuit we felt like we'd had a huge dinner and were ready to go watch the costumers do their thing.

The Hugos were Sunday night. The committee had given me a contract, stipulating the amount of the per diem I was to receive. When we showed up, they gave me some of the money they owed me and asked us to wait a few days for the rest of it, since they were very tight for cash and would be taking in tons of money at the door, and I agreed. I asked co-chair Justin Winston for the rest of my money on Friday and Saturday, and was put off. Sunday the word was passed to me: we think we've paid you enough, we don't really need you anymore, so we're not going to pay you the rest of your per diem.

Fine, I said. I got into my tux, went down to the auditorium, and waited backstage. The room filled up. The time for the Hugo ceremony to start came and went. I stayed backstage. The fans started stomping their feet. I began reading a book. Finally a panicky message reached me: what the hell is going on? Answer: certainly not the Toastmaster, at least not until he gets the rest of his per diem. Justin gave the money to Craig Miller (an innocent bystander), and Craig got it into my hot little hand less than 30 seconds later. After which I went on stage, told some funny stories, and gave out the Hugos.

But I was so pissed that I became the first Toastmaster in history to boycott closing ceremonies.



Still, that suite made up for just about everything. As Jack Chalker told me after he toastmastered Con-Stellation in 1983, once you've had a presidential suite at a major hotel, you're never going to be happy with a mere room again.

Boy, was he right!

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### 1992: MAGICON (Orlando)

We showed up a few days early, since we would be leaving for a month-long Kenya safari with Pat and Roger Sims immediately after Magicon. This gave us a chance to sample some of Central Florida's attractions. Carol, an ardent birder, had me drive her and Rick Katze to Merritt Island at (ugh) 6 o'clock in the morning, and a couple of days later I took her and Barb Delaplace back at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, just to see those birds who like to sleep as late as I do. We also hit Busch Gardens with Laura, Rick Katze, Michelle Sagara and Thomas West.

I started a tradition of taking "my" Campbell nominees out to dinner. We went to an Indian restaurant with Laura, Barb, and Michelle (who came in 2-3-4 to Ted Chiang, and came in 1-3-4 the next year, at San Francisco. Nick DiChario, who I met for the first time at Orlando, and who was also one of "my" Campbellians, came in 2nd at San Francisco.)

(Pat Cadigan, who was up for a Hugo or a Nebula, I can't remember which, berated me all weekend for only taking my Campbell nominees out, so beginning in 1993, I also took all "my" Hugo and Nebula nominees out to dinner at worldcon. Given the amounts of food these men and women could put away, giving up editing anthologies a few years later may have been the most financially prudent decision of my career.)

As always in the 1990s, I spent too damned much time deal-making and nowhere near enough partying. Still, there was one deal I was absolutely thrilled to make: St. Martin's gave me the editorship of the Library of African Adventure. (I was a little less thrilled after we brought out the first three books, and the library is now at Alexander Books, which is owned by my old friend – and sometime sf writer – Ralph Roberts.) Also, John Betancourt brought out a beautiful, leopardskin edition of *Adventures*, my favorite of my own books. More importantly, Harry Warner's *A Wealth of Fable* finally got the illustrated hardcover edition it deserved.

We stayed at the Peabody, where the B-Line restaurant, built to resemble an old-fashioned diner,



was frequently empty at 3:00 PM but always filled to overflowing at 3:00 AM.

We'd used a coupon supplied by the worldcon committee to rent a Cadillac for \$90.00 for an entire week, and made good use of it. We'd been to Orlando a number of times, so we knew where to go to get off the tourist trail and find the best restaurants.

On Sunday, we had some time between a reading and preparing for the Hugos, so we drove through a couple of areas called Bay Hill and Windermere, visited some open houses, and decided that that was where we wanted to retire to. (We're getting closer all the time. These days we split our year between Cincinnati and Orlando, but haven't quite gotten around to selling our house yet. Dick Spelman is already down there, as is my father, and Pat and Roger Sims plan to move there in a couple of years. Bill and Cokie Cavin keep saying they plan to move there too, and so do Greg and Linda Dunn. So we should be able to put on a Midwestcon South before too much longer.)

I remember that the Hugo was absolutely gorgeous. (The rocket ship is always the same, but the base is different each year, and this year it was made from the platform that held the Apollo moon rockets.) I really faunched for it...so of course I lost.



A week later I was sitting 20 yards from a herd of elephants at a water hole in Samburu, and somehow losing it seemed a little less important, at least for the moment.

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#### 1998: BUCCONEER (Baltimore)

A lot of our friends didn't show up for this one. John Guidry's father died the day before the con began, and George Laskowski had contracted liver cancer. My own father, who managed to attend a few

cons this decade, was unable to leave his assisted-care home for this one. I hate all these reminders that I'm not 23 anymore.

We showed up on Tuesday – not a bad idea, since by Wednesday almost every hotel had managed to screw up their reservations list – and promptly got our room in the Marriott. After seeing all the other hotels (the Hilton, the Omni, the Holiday Inn, Days Inn, and the Hyatt), we came to the conclusion that the Marriott was the pick of the litter – but that it was a pretty ugly litter.

The hotels were spread out, which meant we missed a lot of parties, and missed seeing a lot of friends who were walking around the area looking for us while we were looking for them.

Carol, who found out the week we left that she's got a couple of herniated disks in her neck and needed an awful lot of physical therapy, cheered herself up by falling in love with the Inner Harbor and walking there every day. She and I took every water taxi on every route that existed, and while I was doing panels and hanging around the huckster room (my favorite daytime location at a worldcon, just as the CFG suite is my favorite evening location), she spent hours touring the area.

My first panel was held at 10:00 PM Wednesday (that's what I get for telling them not to schedule me in the mornings), and Lawrence Watt-Evans, Roger MacBride Allen and I dutifully trudged to the Omni for some kind of quiz. But the quizmaster and the questions never arrived, so we sat and stared at the audience for a while, and they sat and stared back, and we finally wound up the hour plugging our books and telling fannish anecdotes.

The huckster room had more books and magazines than usual, and the art show was outstanding. I had three new books out, two hardcover novels and a trade paperback collection, and they seemed to be moving pretty well. Laura's first hardcover fantasy novel had been published a month earlier, and I surreptitiously made sure it was prominently displayed on every table that stocked it (something I have never done with my own books for reasons that currently elude me.)

The SFWA Suite – Laura, who spent more time there, called it the SFWA Sauna – was as far from my hotel as you could get, and barely had room to turn around in. I went once, stayed ten minutes, and didn't return, which was pretty much par for the course. CFG had its usual hospitality suite (in the Marriott,



where almost all of us stayed), and we spent the latter part of each evening there.

Thursday we went to the crab feast. (Some people never learn.) We waited half an hour, in the semi-blazing sun, for the water taxi to arrive. Once there, we discovered that a) we would be eating outside in the heat; b) that the only remaining table was about 15 feet away from a country/western band equipped with state of the art loudspeakers; c) there were no hot dogs or hamburgers [and I *hate* crabs], which means that I paid \$30.00 for a drumstick and a corncob. We arrived at about 7:00. The crab feast was to continue until at least 10:00. I was ready to leave after half an hour, and much to my surprise, everyone in our party – Carol, Dick Spelman, Sue and Steve Francis, Pat and Roger Sims, Mark Linneman – felt the same, so we returned in time to hit some parties.

I did very little business at this worldcon. I had only one book to sell, and only a few publishing houses to touch base with. Friday we had breakfast with del Rey and lunch with Bantam and a drink with Tor, which took care of most of my obligations, and allowed me to revert to being a fan for the first time in maybe a dozen worldcons.

Except for Friday night, which was the Hugo ceremony. I wore a white suit – Josepha Sherman calls it my Good Humor Man suit, while Barbara Delaplace, who doesn't pull her punches, refers to it as my Italian Pimp Suit. I thought I had a decent chance with "The 43 Antarean Dynasties," since I had won the *Asimov's* Readers Poll and the *Sci Fi Weekly* Hugo Straw Poll...but I hadn't even been nominated for the Nebula, and writers can be pretty insecure people, so as usual I had no speech or notes prepared. And suddenly I was walking up to the stage to accept my fourth Hugo. I can't recall exactly what I said, but it must have been okay, because the next day about 300 people congratulated me on my moving and memorable acceptance speech, whereas only a dozen or so mentioned that I'd written a moving and memorable story, which managed to be both ego-inflating and ego-deflating at the same time.

We'd flown in with Stephen Boucher, who, being an Aussie, was helping to host the Hugo Losers Party. He pointed out that I had cheated in the past, losing Hugos on the same nights I won them, but this time I was only nominated for one, and if I won he promised to personally throw me out of the party. It was five or six blocks away, and I wanted to get out of my suit and take a shower, but I couldn't deny Stephen and

Perry Middlemiss the pleasure of forcibly ejecting me, so I stopped by the Hugo Losers Party at the Hilton just long enough to be given the bum's rush, and then we spent the rest of the night celebrating at the CFG suite.



Saturday morning was the SFWA meeting. I usually make it to one a decade, and this was the one I chose for the 1990s. It was noisier and nastier than usual – our president of 36 days' standing barely survived a censure vote – and reminded me why I don't go more often.

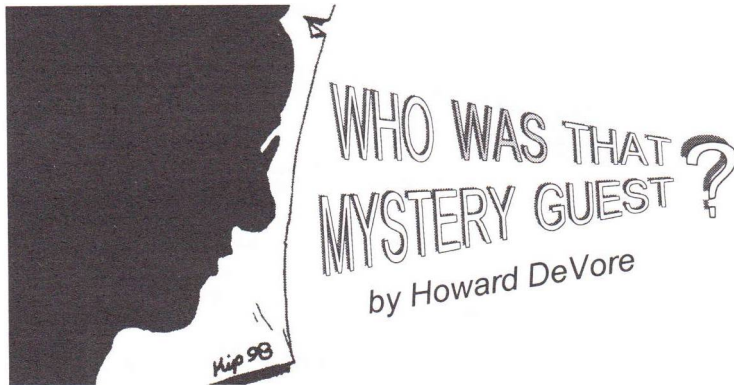
I was scheduled to do an autographing in the huckster room in the afternoon, and to my surprise, my line was immense – a regular Ellison or Asimov-type queue. Made me feel I'd finally arrived. I still hadn't finished when my hour was up, and had to move to another table to take care of the last few people who'd been patiently waiting. I was sitting next to Gardner Dozois, who thoughtfully signed my name to a few books just to keep busy.

We ate three good meals at the worldcon, all across the Inner Harbor in Little Italy, the last of them Saturday night. We partied with our fannish friends in the CFG suite, went to bed, packed in the morning, and went home. The flight from Baltimore to Cincinnati took 75 minutes. Laura, who bought cut-rate tickets on Northwest (which she has since dubbed 'Northworst'), reached the Baltimore airport a couple of hours after we did on Sunday afternoon, but didn't get home until daybreak on Tuesday, due to a series of snafus that found her making the final leg of the journey, from the Detroit airport to the Dayton airport, via a bus that left at 12:30 AM Tuesday morning.

All in all, a memorable con, if not always for the right reasons. ✧



Bucconeer was the 1998 Worldcon, but there are other types of world conventions besides the science fiction one. The mystery genre, for instance, has its own worldcon – Bouchercon, which was actually started by science fiction fans out in Los Angeles. This brings us to our next article, about a science fiction worldcon and the mystery surrounding its Mystery Guest. It's time to introduce detective Howard DeVore with his report on solving this mystery...



When Sam Moskowitz died last year, it triggered memories of the 1955 Worldcon, in Cleveland. That was a very interesting worldcon; it was the only time Isaac Asimov was a worldcon Guest of Honor, and it was only the second time the Hugo Awards were presented. Sam Moskowitz played an important role at that convention. In many of the obituaries written about Sam, it was mentioned that he was that convention's "Mystery Guest." It's true, he was. But it's more complicated than that, so I'm going to tell it my way. You see, Sam wasn't the committee's first choice.

The Cleveland committee won their bid at the SF Con, the 1954 Worldcon, and almost immediately began thinking of gimmicks to stir up attention (and generate some memberships and money for the convention). Perhaps they should honor one of fandom's best people – a special person, someone long involved in fandom and universally respected. To add to the suspense, they could also hold a contest – print a silhouette in the progress reports and let the membership guess who it was.

So the committee announced that they would honor one of fandom's pioneers, but to add some intrigue, the selection would remain a mystery, even to the person selected, until the convention began. At the banquet the first night of the convention they would announce who he was and the fact that they were picking up the cost of his room – and *only* the room, mind you, not meals nor travel expenses. It actually wouldn't cost them anything at all, as the hotel was supplying the free room.

Nowadays things are different, but back then,

Labor Day was traditionally a lousy week for the hotel business. Especially for the Manger Hotel in Cleveland, the site of the convention. If the committee could fill a couple hundred hotel rooms, there would be no charge for the Manger's convention facilities, and the hotel would even provide free-of-charge a suite and a few sleeping rooms that the committee could use for themselves. The committee chairs (Nick and Noreen Falasca) would take the suite and Guest of Honor Isaac Asimov would get a free room, with yet another free room they could assign to their special guest.

It all made financial sense. In those days there were no buckets of money to spread around and Brinks did not send around a truck to carry away a worldcon's daily receipts. During most of the 1950s, a complete worldcon membership cost one dollar, attending or non-attending. (In 1959, Detroit raised the membership fee to two dollars and was criticized for doing so.) Total income was primarily \$500 for memberships plus the receipts from auctions of artwork donated by science fiction magazines. You might buy an original cover painting by Finlay or Frank R. Paul for \$10 or \$15. Black and white interiors by Emsch or Freas might wind up stacked on a table – your choice for 50 cents. I have a number of them in my own collection, each purchased for less than a dollar.

And so the committee's selection for 'Mystery Guest' was Robert Bloch. Bloch had already sent in his dollar and announced that he would be there; he'd been contributing to fanzines since 1933, frequently appeared at Midwestcon and was universally liked.



There could be no finer choice. They prepared a silhouette of his head and started using it, but if you looked closely it might resemble Robert Bloch, but it might also resemble a hundred other fans.

There was apparently one other decision the committee made concerning Bloch – they wanted him to be their Toastmaster, and this they *did* communicate to him. In his autobiography, *Once Around the Bloch*, Bloch stated that he was asked to be Toastmaster at the 1955 Worldcon but had to turn it down because he was broke and couldn't afford to go. Earlier, I mentioned that the convention's Guest of Honor was provided a free room. But not the Toastmaster. Back then, being Toastmaster would have been an expensive operation. There was the bus fare from Milwaukee (probably about \$15). A nice room could cost you another seven or eight dollars a day. Bloch informed the committee that he could not be present.

They'd lost their Mystery Guest!

The only way to get him back was to offer to pay his expenses. But that was unplanned, and would have upset their budget. Ben Jason was the convention's treasurer and I can well imagine the fight he would have put up against unnecessarily spending money. So the decision was made, and Bloch was out.

But now there was a problem – they had this contest but they no longer had a Mystery Guest. They had to find a new one, and quick! It had to be someone important, but beyond that it didn't really matter – no one knew, and when it came down to it, one Mystery Guest was as good as another. It wasn't until they took a closer look at the silhouette they'd been using that someone remarked that it looked a lot like Sam Moskowitz, and hey! SaM was a big name fan, wasn't he? And so that was how Sam Moskowitz became the Mystery Guest at the 1955 Worldcon.

But there's more...

Ben Jason confesses that his memory sometimes fails but he does remember that Dave Kyle and Moskowitz were sitting at a table during the banquet when the buildup for the announcement started. Various events were related about the Mystery Guest's fannish past, things that seemed to describe Dave Kyle – so much so that Sam became convinced that Dave was the one. He turned to Dave saying, "Dave, you're the Mystery Guest! You'll have to give a speech!" And at that moment the speaker announced that Sam was the Mystery Guest.

Ironically, it turned out that Bloch *did* in fact

attend Clevention. In his autobiography, Bloch mentioned that when the editor of *F&SF*, Tony Boucher, learned that Bloch would not be going to Cleveland, he phoned him and offered to buy a story sight unseen if Bob could do it instantly, which would provide the money for Bloch to go. Bloch wrote "All On a Golden Afternoon," perhaps appropriately, in just one afternoon; he sent the story to Boucher, and received the money in time to attend the convention. The story ran to about 11,000 words, and at 3¢ per word, that would have provided him \$330 – I guess he lived high on the hog that week!

I have no reason to believe that Sam or Bloch ever knew of the switch and I'm maybe the last person who knows the facts. *How* do I know? In the 1950s, Detroit and Cleveland fandoms were close, and I was told all of this by someone on the Cleveland committee (but I'm not sure exactly who). It was all a long time ago. When I considered writing this account, I was somewhat reluctant, since both Sam and Bob were friends of mine and I would not dishonor them for any reason. But I can't see how it matters any longer.

Much of this narrative is based on my memory, but I also checked some sources. Roger Sims, one of Detroit's most active fans of that era, vaguely remembered some of these events, but wasn't really sure. Ben Jason said he knew nothing of it and didn't even think it ever happened, but admitted that he had relatively few memories of that convention. And when I called Noreen Falasca Shaw, the co-chair of the convention, she also was not sure that it happened that way. At that point there was no one else to turn to, so I was going to drop the whole thing. But three days later, Ben Jason called me back and said that after he had thought about it, I was probably right. He did now definitely remember that Bloch was to be the convention's Toastmaster, but there was a problem with money so they picked another toastmaster, and then Bloch showed up after all.

Sam would go on writing for another forty years, publishing many books and articles, and by the time of his death in 1997 he was known as a major researcher of science fiction. Before the decade of the 1950s was over, Bloch would be working in the 'flicker factories' of Hollywood, and he would soon earn the money and fame that had eluded him earlier.

I don't suppose it mattered who was the 'Mystery Guest' but our history is so easily lost that I thought I ought to contribute my knowledge of the event. ✧



One of the things we've come to appreciate most about worldcons is their international nature; it's something you rarely see in a typical North American regional convention. Each year, we look forward to "putting a face" on non-American contributors or fan groups that we've "met" through *Mimosa*. This year at Bucconeer, it was a group of South African fans (who publish a very fine fanzine, *Probe*). Maybe next year it will be the writer of the following article, who provides us a fascinating look at the beginnings of Norwegian fandom.

## When Fandom Came to Norway

by **Cato Lindberg**

Illus by Kurt (from Flensburg via Toledo, not Norway) Erichsen

Monitoring Nazi  
broadcasts, Dad?

I don't think so. Apparently  
creatures from New Jersey  
have just invaded Mars.



I was born in Norway in 1937, at a time when my country and most of the world was getting out of the depression. Then, in September 1939 World War II started, and before I turned three years old, came 9 April 1940 and five years of German occupation of my country. "Will there ever be peace?" was one of the most important questions of my childhood. Sometimes we kids, who did not remember a time without war, were pessimistic, afraid that the war would never end. Other times we found it exciting, with all the German military activity on the one hand, and the illegal resistance activity on the other. Luckily, there was no bombing or destruction in our town, except for a few sabotage actions. All radios, except those of the Nazi collaborators, were confiscated by the Germans, and my father, who had started a radio shop just before the war, had to find other things to do to make a living. In secret, he made radios for the illegal home front, and I had to learn to keep my mouth shut about this activity and about my family listening to news in Norwegian from London. Victory Day, 8 May 1945, is a day I'll never forget – I have never afterwards experienced such joy and celebration. My youth coincided with the reconstruction of the country after the lean war years. In particular, the first years after the war were very happy and optimistic – in spite of the beginning cold war and the threat of nuclear war.

I grew up in Drammen, 50 kilometers southwest of the capital Oslo. Our house was situated just where the town ended and the farmlands and countryside started and I enjoyed hiking in the woods alone as well as playing indians and cowboys and other games with the other kids. Car traffic was sparse, so we had plenty of elbow room then. I also enjoyed cycling down to

town to savour the more urban pleasures – four cinemas and a well-stocked Narvesen newsagent. Which brings me closer to the theme of this article – science fiction and fandom. The 'Narvesen kioskkompani' is a chain of newsagents started more than 100 years ago. In their kiosks and stores you could (and still can) find virtually every magazine or newspaper published in Norway, but also much foreign stuff – especially English and American magazines, newspapers and paperbacks, but also publications from the other Scandinavian countries as well as from Germany, France, and other countries. What comes nearest to it in Great Britain is W.H. Smith; I've never found anything in the U.S.A. like Narvesen – not even in New York City. Drammen also has many good bookstores and an excellent library, which has an extensive children's literature department. I was an avid reader of everything from the classics and general literature to thrilling books for boys, westerns, historicals, crime and detection, and comics.

We started to learn English in sixth grade, and I didn't know many English words before I started buying American magazines like *Mechanix Illustrated*, *Motion Picture*, *True*, *Collier's*, Fawcett and Dell Comics, and others, many of them financed with money earned by collecting and selling return bottles. The Dream of America was very vivid then, in a country where many goods were still rationed or not yet available. American magazines and Hollywood movies gave us a taste of that dream, showing us what an affluent society looked like.

I am not sure when I got my first taste of science fiction. Norwegian folk tales had been my nourishment since I was a little child – and many of these tales



have strong fantasy elements, if not science fiction. Among the first books I read were those of Jules Verne. Occasionally, articles about space travel appeared in various Norwegian magazines, and around 1951 to 1953 I found some paperbacks at Narvesen with some wonderful covers. The Signet edition of Robert A. Heinlein's *The Man Who Sold the Moon* even included an Interplanetary Tour Reservation form, issued by the Hayden Planetarium, with the possibility of making reservations for tours to the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn! (But for some reason or other, I never sent in my reservation.) And then in 1952, the first science fiction magazine ever displayed for sale in Norway appeared – the British *Authentic Science Fiction*, edited by H.J. Campbell. Some of my first sf books were anthologies (Bleiler and Dikty, Healy and McComas, and others) including many of the classics of the genre, and I was very soon hooked. Then the first American sf magazine was displayed – and for some strange reason Narvesen had chosen the pulp magazine *Science Fiction Quarterly* (May 1953), not any of the more obvious candidates – *Astounding*, *Galaxy* or the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. But I enjoyed *Authentic* and *SFQ*, and one very fine thing about them was that they both had columns about fandom. In 1954, a Norwegian sf paperback series was launched with translations of Asimov, Heinlein, Van Vogt, and Wyndham. Also, a few home-brewed Norwegian sf novels were published then, but much more was to come in the 1960s. This was also the time of science fiction films like *The Thing from Another World*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *When Worlds Collide* and others, all of them shown in the cinemas of Drammen.

I did something very typical of Norwegian youth at that time. In 1954, 17 years old, I worked my passage over to New York City and back again as a pantry boy on board M/S *Oslofjord*. This was before cheap air tickets, when most travels between the U.S.A. and Norway went via the Norwegian America Line's three passenger vessels. In New York City, my three greatest experiences were the view from the top of the Empire State Building, the show at Radio City Music Hall, and a long, narrow record store in Manhattan, E. Geiger Records at 815 Broadway. They mostly sold used records, but in the innermost corner I found a paradise for a budding science fiction fan – several shelves with used sf magazines. I spent several dollars of my total pay of \$10 on issues of *Astounding*, *Starling*, *Amazing* and others, all at 10 cents apiece.

I started to get ready for fandom. I'm not sure if it

was via the fanzine columns in *Authentic* or *SFQ* that I got my first contacts. I wrote to some fanzines, but the first ones I received did not impress me much. Then I received Charles Lee Riddle's *Peon*, and I was hooked! The November 1954 issue was a beauty of a fanzine, with stories and articles by Jim Harmon, Terry Carr and Isaac Asimov, and fine illustrations in a beautiful layout. And soon other fanzines started to arrive, among them the now so famous *Hyphen*.

I had a neighbour and good friend, Roar Ringdahl, two years my senior. By some strange coincidence, two such kindred spirits happened to live in the same street. Both of us were avid readers and moviegoers, and both of us had the hobby of making miniature cities and hand-written magazines. These magazines had a circulation of one and no readers except ourselves, and sometimes Roar's younger brother Ulf and my very patient and kind mother. As soon as he moved to my street and we got acquainted, when I was nine, we started to make these magazines together – magazines containing stories, comics and jokes. Some of the other kids found this a strange activity and called us *redaktørene* – the editors – meant as a derogatory term. Roar also shared my interest in science fiction, and when I showed him *Peon* and *Hyphen* and suggested that we make a fanzine, he instantly agreed very enthusiastically. I thought that *Fantasi*, Norwegian for 'fantasy', of course, was an apt name for our fanzine.



The first issue of *Fantasi*, dated December 1954, had a small circulation of five, and was produced by carbon paper. The contents included translated stories by Ray Bradbury and Fredric Brown, science fiction news, and book reviews of Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Van Vogt's *Slan*, H.J. Campbell's *Another Space*, *Another Time* and *Brain Ultimate*, Curt Siodmak's *Den friggjorte hjerne* (*Donovan's Brain*) and a Norwegian science fiction novel in the Van Vogtian tradition by Hans Chr. Sandbeck, published in 1945.

It was not until issue no. 3 that we started produc-



ing the fanzine by the spirit duplicating method, and mailing it to other fans. We were unable to find other interested people in Drammen. At school, I propagated for both science fiction and space travel, but was met with very little enthusiasm and much scepticism. Very few of my other friends thought much of "that Flash Gordon stuff" and very few, if any, believed in space travel. So our first readers counted only a few Norwegians (none of whom we were able to convert to fandom), but several Swedes like Alvar Appeltofft and Lars Helander, because Sweden at that time already had a fandom as well as a professional sf magazine, *Häpna*. Both Appeltofft and Helander contributed fiction, which we published in the original Swedish, since most Norwegians read Swedish without problems.

We experimented with various types of inexpensive duplicating methods to increase our circulation, among them a primitive spirit duplicator using what we called a 'Rory-rull', a washing machine roller to roll across the master and receiving paper. Later we used the stencil method, and since a Gestetner mimeograph was beyond our means, we fastened the stencil to a large stamp pad. Issue no. 6, in January, perhaps the finest issue of the eleven issues published, had a photocopied cover showing Roar's cartoon of us during our 1955 trip to England. We began getting contributions from fans outside Scandinavia, and No. 6 included a story by Paul Enever: "Roar's Head," and No. 7 included letters from John Hitchcock from Baltimore, Ron Bennett from Harrogate, and Paul Enever from Middlesex. I am not sure about the circulation; I believe it was around 75-80.

I left Drammen to go to radio school in the army in 1956, and during those 26 months Roar took over *Fantasi* and published Nos. 8, 9, 10 and 11 (the last issue was in January 1958). The eleven issues of *Fantasi* contained all sorts of typical fannish and sercon material. We were very fascinated by fannish language and customs, and liked to include cartoons of ourselves with propeller beanies on our heads.

In 1958 I went to sea, and for almost two years I worked as radio operator on board a Norwegian steamer, S/S *Mataura*, calling at ports like New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Savannah, Miami, Havana, Ciudad Trujillo, Tampico, Vera Cruz, La Guaira, and Belize. I met some American fans then, and especially remember young John Hitchcock of Baltimore who impressed me with his linguistic knowledge and acquaintance with the complex language situation in Norway – the differences between *riksmål*, *bokmål* and *nynorsk*! I

also once met John Magnus and some other fans in Baltimore (and therefore read with interest Jack Chalker's story of Baltimore fandom in *Mimosa* 20). Even in a large city like Baltimore there were not many true science fiction fans then, and when I look through my old copies of Hitchcock's fanzine *Umbra*, I see very few locals writing there; instead, there were internationally-known names like Jan Jansen and Ron Bennett. It is not strange that two young guys in little Drammen, Norway, had such a hard time converting people to sf fandom, when there were so few in a large town like Baltimore. In New York I visited Dick Ellington and his wife in their flat in Greenwich Village, and learned about the Industrial Workers of the World. He gave me copies of his fanzine *FIJAGH* and a propaganda brochure for the 'Wobblies' in Norwegian(!). Ellington had a Linotype machine in his apartment, and I had the impression that he was a kind of free-lance typographer. I also met the active fan Mike Deckinger in New York City. He came over from New Jersey to meet me at Grand Central Station. I, of course, visited Stephen's Bookstore, 45 Fourth Avenue, and was overwhelmed by seeing so many science fiction books in one place. This was the world's only specialised science fiction store then, but Stephen told me that I had been his only customer that day. He mainly made his living by dispatching books ordered by mail. During this period, I contributed some "Reports from America" to the Swedish fanzine *SF-Fronten*, writing about my meetings with American fans.

About this time, Roar started to cooperate with the Swedish fan Sture Sedolin Hällström to combine Sture's fanzine *Super* with *Fantasi*. The first issue of *Super-Fantasi*, "the only true triangular fanzine," had a cover by Atom and articles in English, Swedish, and Norwegian. After two large issues, *Super-Fantasi* ceased publication, partly because Roar's interest in cinema started to compete with his interest in fandom – he soon started his first film review magazine (which is still being published regularly). But he still remained a fan; for some time he led the 'Norwegian branch office' of the International Science Fiction Society, which published the magazine *Sirius*.

Well-known American fan Ray Nelson and his Norwegian wife Kirsten lived at Ulvøya (near Oslo) at the end of the 1950s and became acquainted with Roar. Ray contributed many cartoons to *Sirius* and even published two issues of his own *Le Marché aux Puces Fantastique*, a fanzine in French published by an American living in Norway and printed at Roar's office in Oslo. Ray and Roar made a movie short at



Ulvøya, *Monster on the Loose*, starring Ray himself as a monster unable to scare a single soul and finally committing suicide. Roar was amused to later read in Ray Nelson's and Philip K. Dick's novel, *The Ganymede Takeover*, about a rather sadistic major Ringdahl of Ulvøya Prison. Roar cannot but hope that this sadistic major was not based on Ray's impressions of Roar's behaviour during their time together in Norway. I can attest that Roar is anything but sadistic, although he has written some very scary horror stories. He has two published short story collections, and one novel coauthored with Per G. Olsen. I, on the other hand, have had only two short stories published, one in a paperback anthology, *Malstrøm* (1972) and one in the Norwegian sf magazine *Nova*. The story from the anthology, "de Anima", by the way, found its way into two German anthologies, one that was published in East Germany without my prior knowledge, and the other published by Heyne in Munich. On the back-cover of the Heyne edition I am mentioned as "one of the best known Norwegian sf authors," proving that the blurbs of sf magazines and books are not to be trusted.

While I was mostly gafiating, Roar was very active during the *Sirius* period and he finally managed to recruit several Norwegians into fandom. Now, it was not a two-man fandom any more. In 1962, he met Per G. Olsen (now Per G. Hvidsten), and together they published a very fine fanzine, *Alphabor*. Per G. Olsen, as far as I know, is the only one from this pre-1965 period who is still very active in fandom, being a sort of link between our fandom and the next to come. Roar was also involved in many other fan projects at that time (maybe we can persuade him to write an article for *Mimosa* about this).

If the American numbering system for fandom is to be applied to Norwegian fandom, our fan activity in Norway must be considered to be First Norwegian Fandom. Roar and I published fanzines and had contacts around the world, and even a few here in Norway, especially after Roar started publishing *Sirius*. When students at Oslo University started the science fiction club Aniara in 1965, Second Norwegian Fandom was born. The club's founders probably had no knowledge about our early efforts.

I have had many other hobbies besides sf and fandom throughout the years. I am married; my three children are now on their own and I have three grandchildren. After my time on board *Mataura*, I went to engineering school, went back to sea again for two more years, worked two years at the Oslo Spacetrack

Facility, a few years as an electronics engineer, and most of my working life as a technical writer. I still like to keep in contact with fandom, am interested in fanhistory, and have attended most Norwegian cons. In 1995, Roar and I published a 41st anniversary issue of *Fantasi*.

Aniara and Norwegian fandom since 1965 should be a topic for a future article in *Mimosa*, and there are many people who are well qualified to write it. Since 1965, there has been an unbroken Norwegian fandom with high activity and many fans, cons and fanzines (the first Norwegian con was not until 1975, though). Much Norwegian science fiction has been published during this period by authors like Jon Bing, Tor Åge Bringsværd, and Øyvind Myhre. Since almost all Norwegian fans read English, the market for science fiction in Norwegian is small, and it is a long time since we had a professional science fiction magazine. But Aniara's beautiful fanzine, *Algernon*, published since 1974, may be considered a semi-professional sf magazine.

At this summer's Intercontact '98 convention in Oslo, I noticed a decrease in the number of attendees, even with Pat Cadigan and Gwyneth Jones as GoHs this year. This may have to do with the fact there is now competition with other cons related to science fiction television series and various types of sf and fantasy games. As Nicki wrote in the previous *Mimosa*, the times are changing, and here in Norway, as in the U.S.A., we are experiencing an increase in sci-fi media fandom and possibly a decline in the old literature-based sf fandom.

My old profession as a radio operator has become obsolete since I quit the sea in 1965. Morse code is no longer taught in military or civilian schools. Much of what I learned in engineering school has become obsolete, such as the use of vacuum tubes and the slide rule. Many of the great ideas of science fiction which were unknown to most people (except science fiction readers) back in the 1950s are now, if not obsolete, old stuff to millions of television viewers worldwide. But even back then, the older fans debated the loss of the 'sense of wonder' and were worried about the future of science fiction and fandom. I was full of this sense of wonder then, and did not understand these debates. Now, it's my turn to worry about the lack of new ideas and the staleness of most new science fiction. Probably, the young media fans of today would not understand such grumblings, but find the genre full of wonder still. And let's hope many of them will discover the pleasures of reading, too. ✧



☞ We always look forward to the month of August, because it means that the worldcon weekend is not too far away. That was especially true this year, as *Bucconeer* was at the beginning of August instead of the usual Labor Day weekend a month later. But there's another reason we look forward to August – it's the month of our local County Agricultural Fair. This year was its 50th anniversary, and there was one whole exhibit room devoted to timebinding on its history. In looking over the clippings, we noticed how similar it was to organize a County Fair and a science fiction convention. There are other similarities, too, as the following article points out.



I'll confess it up front: I like worldcons, and I like the Minnesota State Fair.

Now that you've absorbed that shocking admission, I'll continue. This is not the first year I've noticed parallels between these special events (the differences are almost as much fun), but for some reason I felt compelled to share my insights with you. Maybe it's because I missed the worldcon this year.

The obvious parallel is that worldcons and the Fair both feature varied entertainment and attract large numbers of large people wearing odd clothing. Well, it isn't just the large people wearing the odd clothing – they're just more noticeable. People-watching is one of the prime activities in both instances. The typical worldcon is about five or six days long and attracts about 5,000 people; the Fair is 12 days long and claims an attendance (this year) of 1,689,034. SF/F fans who have enough money attend cons, whereas anyone who can spare a few bucks for admission, is easily amused, or has a specific Fair-related interest (such as crafts, animals, farm machinery, eating a wide range of bizarre food) goes to the Fair. The State Fair is held at the end of August through the beginning of September, which usually means hot, humid weather and *way* too many large people wearing unflattering clothing. Fans may be slans, but they don't always know how to dress. (Please don't make me describe the horrors of span-

dex abuse, I beg you!)

Much of the Fair takes place outdoors over many acres, so we have to deal with the vagaries of weather. Most worldcons involve some outdoor walking, but the events are held indoors. Air conditioning isn't always up to the task in crowded rooms, though. State Fair attendees have to deal with the crazy bees that want to share your food and drinks without telling you first, which necessitates looking before you bite or sip to avoid a trip to the first aid station.

Both the Fair and worldcons have hucksters, special performances and ceremonies, exhibits, and food. They're held only in certain areas at conventions, whereas the Fair knows no such limitations. At the Fair you're literally surrounded by a heady (or nauseating) collection of merchandise booths, media promotions, bandshells with groups loudly playing everything from country-western to rock, dance groups (ethnic, square, etc.), and hard-to-define acts (we saw *Weird Al* Yankovic one memorable year), and (of course) food booths. (More on those later.) I've heard there are also talent contests, but haven't had the nerve to observe one. As for entertainment, there are music concerts and car races in the grandstand, with fireworks at closing each night. These are all audible all over the fairgrounds.

**HUCKSTERS:** There are *Miracle Mops*, ever-sharp knives, cookware by the truckload, and more,



all available at the State Fair Special Price! The tacky becomes tantalizing, even irresistible. It's even better if you're wandering around at night, with neon and other interesting lighting creating a magical glow. As for purchases at a con, ever get home and wonder just why you thought a certain art object, piece of jewelry, book, magazine, etc., had to be yours? The light of day, a little more sleep, and reality slurps you a big wet one.

**SPECIAL STUFF:** Worldcons have thrilled/surprised/bored us with the Hugos, the masquerade, and numerous other, uh, unique events. I've enjoyed a lot of the exhibits featuring fannish history, but I also get a kick out of the giant farm machinery, crafts, and school displays at the Fair. An art show is common to both the Fair and worldcons, and more than a few of the State Fair entries would not look out of place at a con. This is especially amusing if the artist and judges apparently thought it was Serious Mainstream Art. Oftentimes there are booths at cons with companies trying to educate us about their products and services. There are certainly plenty of these at the Fair, ranging from the truly educational (*Emu: A New Frontier in Ranching*) to the self-serving capitalists (most of them). But maybe there really isn't that much difference between the table pushing info about Girl Scouts and the people claiming that the Sci Fi Channel is God and we should spend money to bring him/her/it into our homes.

**FOOD:** Food at conventions is often minimal and expensive; on the other hand, food is the main reason a lot of people go to the State Fair. They'll even say so, often while chowing down on a foot-long hot dog and holding a bag of mini-doughnuts. There are few areas at the Fair where a food booth of some kind is not within a few yards, and people are eating all of the time. Of course, by 'food' I mean everything from cotton candy to porkchop-on-a-stick. It's great fun to see the new, weird food. This year saw the premiere of deep-fried pickle slices and pepper rings, elk burgers, french-fried ravioli, Italian sundaes (ice cream which looked startlingly like spaghetti with meatballs, and fettucine Alfredo), Nummies (numbly-sweet Rice Krispie bars drizzled with peanut butter and chocolate, on a stick), pasties, wild game, and Oats-Cream. Prices range from highway robbery to good deals. I'm in the ranks of those amused by food on a stick. The Info Booths have a huge listing of things on a stick, and occasionally someone takes off on that for non-edibles, such as the Internet on a Stick.

**REGIONALISMS:** It can be a lot of fun to see what worldcons do to toot their local horns, from local writers to special foods, and the same can be said for the State Fair. I must qualify this by saying that I haven't been to other State Fairs. For all I know, *all* State Fair queens have busts carved of their heads out of butter. (I personally can't tell much difference between the busts or the queens.) And then there's the all-you-can-drink-for-50-cents milk truck. There's just nothing better than sauntering over there with a cone of fresh, hot chocolate chip cookies and chowing down like there's no tomorrow. Walleye, wild rice, and lefse are available, though lutefisk rarely is (thankfully).

There are many features of the Fair and conventions that do not cross over neatly. Politicians at the Fair are entertaining, but just can't compare to site selection parties (bidding and winning). The Midway also comes to mind, as do the bungee jump, the Ejection Seat, the gondola ride, the giant slide, the Space Tower, and the Old Mill (a mildewy Tunnel of Love). I suppose the Haunted House could be compared to a number of things at a worldcon, from a badly-handled con suite to a messed-up masquerade. Haven't seen any cow-milking demos at a con, though a lot of fans would like the print shop with working old-time linotypes and other hulking pieces of machinery. The Technology building is very popular and is sort of a cross between the hucksters and the propaganda booths. Most years the Fair has some sort of special display. For several years it was giant sand castles; this year I was delighted by the butterfly garden. It was also fun to pose for the photo buttons and digital postcards with silly friends. (I was able to send the latter to defenseless e-mail friends, too!)





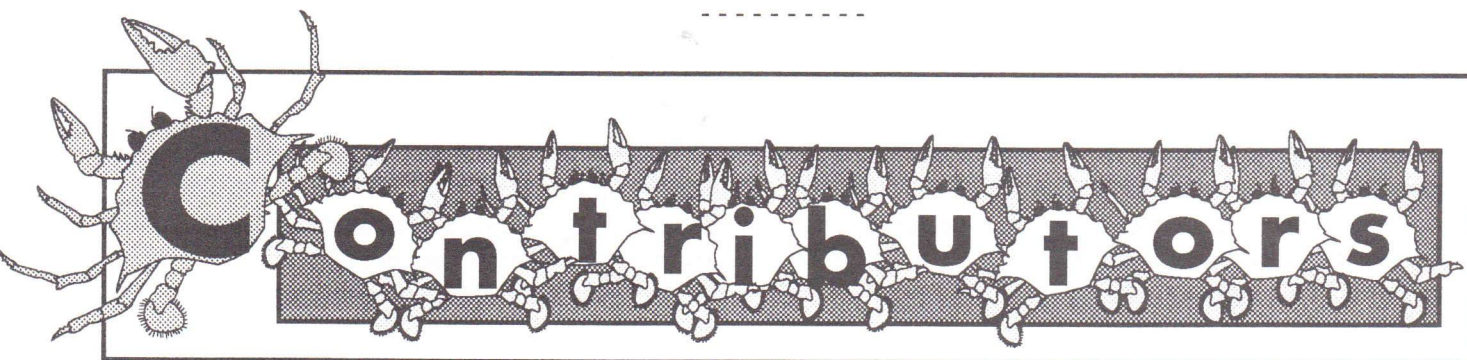
The Fair's daily parade feels like a touch of small-town life to me. There are floats full of beauty queens, media folks, and people who apparently just got the chance to ride. Thousands of people watch marching bands, drill teams, and horse-drawn vehicles with all sizes of horse, pony, or mule and whatever they're pulling. The Budweiser Clydesdales are always impressive, and one year we got to see the Oscar Meyer Weinermobile. There are little kids riding in the recycling cup train. Clowns, fancy ropers, Smokey the Bear, McGruff, the State Fair mascots (giant gophers), and many more walk or ride through the fairgrounds. We know the parade is nearly done when the giant steer statue comes along, followed soon after by the street sweepers.

A worldcon often has a fanzine room, computer room, panelists' green room, movie premieres, and many more delights. But the Fair has its own delights, too. Do I dare mention the DNR pool with

giant fish? The largest pig on display? The enormous pumpkins? The Pet Center with daily surgery on TV? Empire Commons (the dairy building) with exhibits and great ice cream, as well as the butter heads on display? The tourism building? I'm sure you'd want to see Carousel Park, with a gorgeous carousel and space to sit and gather with family and friends.

Well, that's probably more than enough evidence of the similarities between worldcons and the Minnesota State Fair. (Are you laughing or screaming?) Do your own comparison sometime! Local fans are often happy to show visitors around, which creates a really wonderful crossover of a worldcon and the Fair.

Like Brigadoon or Atlantis, the State Fair and worldcon appear. Each year they're the same in many ways, and each year they're very different. Like a soap bubble or a rainbow, they won't last long. So, enjoy all they have to offer – and save me a fanzine on a stick. ☆



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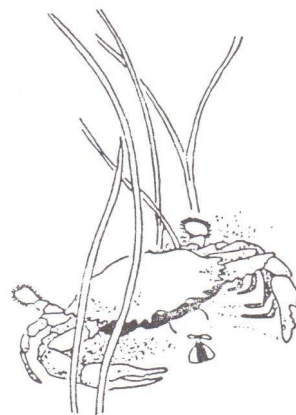
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Worldcons more than any other convention seem to stick in everyone's memories, but sometimes it's the place where a convention is held that helps make it memorable. Bucconeer would seem to be such a convention; it was held in Baltimore's spectacular inner harbor area, with its many sights to see, things to do, and good restaurants to eat at. Ron Bennett now returns to our pages with a story about a convention that was perhaps more memorable for it's hotel, but for a *different* kind of reason.

# KINGSLEY CAPERS

by Ron Bennett

Last week I was down in London. I normally stay at an hotel a couple of hundred yards from Russell Square and handy for my favorite port of call, the wonderful, the fantastic, the overwhelming British Museum. I was returning to the hotel from the Tottenham Court Road tube station. By foot. One does walk in London. By chance, I took a slightly different route from that which I'd normally have taken.

And there it was! Heavens, I'd forgotten that the place existed. The Kingsley Hotel, the large gray cube of a building on Bloomsbury Way, the site of the 1960 British SF Convention...

The first British convention of the decade began its life in rather dramatic circumstances. There had been a welter of complaints (complotynts, yes, yes, I know) about the high prices being charged at the committee's first choice hotel, the Dominion at Lancaster Gate (not too far from the King's Court which had hosted the 1957 WorldCon), and accordingly the convention had been switched to the more reasonably priced Sandringham also on Lancaster Gate.

But three days before the EasterCon was due to burst into life on the Good Friday of that year, plans were thrown into chaos by the management at the Sandringham suddenly raising its hands in horror. These people, who were going to use their beautiful hotel, were going to *drink!* And *alcohol* at that!

Fans the world over will immediately sympathize and appreciate that the Sandringham management had no alternative but to cancel the convention booking. Immediately and fifthwith.

Actually, the Sandringham was not licensed to



sell alcohol and yes, I too am surprised that there actually was such an animal as an unlicensed hotel. Initially, the management had kindly agreed that we could drink on the premises, provided that this was alcohol we brought in ourselves. Definitely a switch on the usual state of affairs. Perhaps we should have charged corkage.

But with only three days before this horde of crate-toting fans was due to descend upon the hotel, the management changed its mind, stating that we were considered a bunch of rowdies. Heavens! It wasn't as if we'd tried to hide it!

I travelled to London a couple of days before the convention's opening. For one thing, I wanted to see Don Ford, the Cincinnati Big Name Fan and collector who was due to attend the convention as the year's TAFF delegate. Don had been one of the Fund's founding fathers and also one of the many kind people who had hosted me during my own TAFF trip a couple of years earlier.

I met up with him at Ted Carnell's office at Nova Publications in Southwark. I was at that time one of TAFF's Administrators and had some monies for Don, who was being reimbursed for having laid out the required cash for his plane ticket. I'd already sent some cash to him care of Ted.

"Hi, Don, Ted," I said upon arrival.

"The cheque bounced," Ted told me.

It had, too. I couldn't understand why, as the account was solid enough. Not until I'd been shown the cheque. This bright TAFF Administrator had forgotten to sign it!



Don took a couple of photos with his camera and new flash gun. He was a keen photographer and a member of the Cincinnati Photographic Society. He specialized in some wonderful artistic shots of moving traffic at night. Ted told me that he'd been driving Don around London and that Don had been aiming his new electronic flash at girls on street corners waiting to cross the street when the lights were against them, startling the poor dears out of their wits. Ah, we were young and innocent in those days.

Meanwhile, local convention committee members Ella Parker, Bobbie Gray, and Sandra Hall had been heroically, or if you like heroine-ically, trying to find another hotel which would be willing to host the convention. And at such short notice.

And they were successful, too, with the Kingsley the new venue. All those convention members who could be contacted by phone were told the joyous tidings; others had to wait until they actually arrived in Lancaster Gate to be informed that the shindig had moved across town.

It's interesting to note that as this convention was under the auspices of the recently formed British Science Fiction Association, the convention membership fee offered BSFA members a one-third reduction. A great idea long gone, I'm afraid.

The convention program consisted of a fine balance between science fiction and fandom. Don Ford spoke about the deplored practice of pigeon-holing fans into categories such as 'convention fans', 'fanzine fans' and the like. He also showed color slides of American fans as well as several of his prize winning shots of Cincinnati by night.

Doc Weir gave a talk on his theory of the whereabouts of Atlantis and Ted Carnell spoke of plans for Nova Publications. He also stated that he was disappointed with *Astounding's* recent name change to *Analog* which he felt would not be successful, the original name having served the magazine well for almost thirty years.

Dave Kyle made an unexpected appearance, being introduced by Ted Carnell. Dave declined to make a speech, declaring that he'd already made one, adding after sufficient a pause to have his audience look completely blank, "at the Sandringham."

On the Saturday evening there was a fancy dress party with Ina Shorrock and Ethel Lindsay winning prizes for their costumes. Norman Shorrock presented Don Ford with a Liverpool orange box. It was well known that Don's extensive collection in his

basement was housed on shelving made from orange boxes, quite the norm in those days.

Amateur movies made by Ted Carnell and Dave Kyle were shown, as well as one professional movie, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. And there was a joky *This is Your Life* session organized by Eric Bentcliffe at which Norman Shorrock found himself the surprised victim.

Several fans were, at the time, keen on making their own cine films. One of them was Dave Kyle who had come over to these shores, perhaps to act as minder to Don Ford. Or perhaps, vice versa.

Dave was intending to produce a fannish documentary (ha!) of the weekend. He hired a taxi and filmed it driving up to the hotel. The taxi doors opened and fans poured out, eager to savor the convention's delights. Of course, Dave had in focus only one side of the cab; fans were climbing in the out-of-shot far doors and emerging into the area Dave was filming. There were perhaps twenty, possibly more, of us, purportedly all having been crammed inside the confines of the cab. Of course, there had to be some clown with his own notion of Marx Brothers' type farce and who had to circle behind the cab and go through the rigmarole again, emerging for the second time from the "crowded" taxi interior. And even a third, fourth, fifth and sixth time. I was quite exhausted by the time Dave called it a day.

Those who attend the conventions of today will have difficulty understanding the submissive behavior of those attendees of yesteryear. Today's conventions bustle with dynamic life throughout the twenty-four hours of any day. If there are no late-night or early-morning official program items, then attendees will still gather in the lounges, along the corridors or up and down the stairwells, deep in animated conversation or conducting their own science fiction charades and quiz games.

Not in those far-off days. I can recall what was intended as an all-night three card Brag game being broken up by the police at a fifties Kettering convention, though happily on another occasion the investigating copper took off his tunic, sat down and joined in. Er, no, Meyer, we didn't let him win. The hand of fannish friendship might reach out to mundane officialdom, but when there's money in the pot...

There were no late night Brag sessions at the Kingsley. There was very little late-night *anything*. Once the public bar had closed and its clients had been turned out into the Easter chill, the hotel put up



its shutters in its individual interpretation of room and board. All good little boys and girls were supposed to retire quietly and make sure of a good night's sleep ready for the ordeals of the day ahead.

But we were fans. Fans, real fans, *Trufans* don't attend conventions for bread alone. Nor the program. Great Ghu! Hadn't the Kingsley's manager heard of all-night room parties?

Evidently he had. And was adamant about their not being allowed on his hallowed patch.

This totally unreasonable attitude... well, yes, I admit to being a little biased... led to fans creeping about the hotel's dimly illuminated corridors searching for a room party, *any* room party, like the Flying Dutchman searching for a safe harbor. One would creep along a quiet corridor, listening for the muffled sounds of merriment exuding from a closed door, *any* closed door, when one would suddenly be confronted by...

The hotel manager dressed in quilted dressing gown and, of all things, a hair net.



He suggested in no uncertain terms that one returned to one's bedroom and good night. I don't remember the word 'sir' being uttered. Perhaps he expected the title to be addressed to *him*.

Now, in those days very few hotel rooms boasted their own en-suite facilities. Bathrooms were located along various corridors. Which, of course, provided enterprising fans with the ready-made excuse to be corridor-wandering. One merely threw a towel over one's shoulder, stuck a tooth brush in one's mouth and marched forth. A smart, "Good night," to the snoodclad manager... yes, he seemed to be everywhere; only now do I wonder whether he was an early experiment in cloning... and one was on his merry way, listening intently at the next series of closed bedroom doors.

A following confrontation with our friendly manager found him clutching a clipboard. "You are in room 231," he would announce. "That's on the far side of the hotel. You must be lost. I'll show you the way." One would be shown back to one's bedroom, would wait for five minutes and would open the door ready to resume the search for the all-elusive party, and would be confronted by the manager who had been waiting outside in the corridor for exactly that eventuality.

One night I heard that Ethel Lindsay was hosting a party and called her room on the house phone to see whether there was any truth in the rumor. "No, I'm sorry," a sleepy Ethel told me. She apologized the following morning. When the phone had rung in her room the couple of merry-making fans fell silent while Ethel took the call. She had suspected that the call might be monitored by the manager.

Don Ford did manage to host a party one night, until a call from the management put paid to that merry gathering. Don suggested that the party move, *en bloc*, to Dave Kyle's room, so a solid wedge of fans went tippy-toeing, yes tipsy-towing if you like, along the quiet corridors.

When we reached Dave's room, the door was open and the room vacant. We entered, closed the door behind us and made ourselves comfortable. Liquid refreshment appeared from somewhere and in no time at all a decent room party had come to the aid of fen and was in full atmospheric swing. When Dave returned he took it all in good grace and the party continued for a short time. Until we suddenly realized that Don wasn't with us. He'd foisted us on Dave and then had gone off to bed.

"I know!" Dave suggested, "we'll get our own back. We'll go down to his room and continue the party there." As with *every* suggestion Dave makes, this was a fine idea. We all trooped out into the corridor.

Click! The door behind us was suddenly closed. And locked. A wonderful ploy for ridding one's room of any unwanted party attendees. Any attendees? For the entire party.

I called it a night and left the others to wander the corridors without me. I still have dreams of some fannish hell in which convention attendees wander forever the unhallowed corridors of the Kingsley, being confronted on a random schedule by a snood-adorned devil figure. ✧



☛ We mentioned earlier that the sixteen worldcons we've attended is not even close to the record. The record-holder is Forry Ackerman (the subject of the following article), and Bucconeer marked the 55th worldcon that he has attended. Several weeks ago (as we write this), Forry celebrated his 82nd birthday. Most of us would have loved to be there to celebrate with him, but then it's always a celebration when Forry is around. No one knows this better than Dave Kyle. Last time Dave talked about Nycon, the first world science fiction convention; this time he shares his friendship with and an appreciation of the extraordinary Forrest J Ackerman.



There's a very big house that sits on a winding road in the Hollywood Hills. Three stories high, it has eighteen rooms, all of them more or less filled with science fiction and fantasy artifacts. The address is Glendower Avenue and it once was the residence of a famous movie star, Jon Hall.

This is the home of Forrest J. Ackerman and the site of his Ackermuseum.

I know the house well, for although I'm an Easterner and the place is in Hollywood, California, I've visited it innumerable times. My wife Ruth and I have been there overnight. For us it was like living in a very special, fascinating museum. On our first night there, we stayed in his own big bedroom. On a bedside table was an autographed picture of Maureen O'Sullivan, as young and as beautiful as she was when she was Jane in the *Tarzan* movies or earlier as LN-18 (Helen) in the fabulous s-f musical film, *Just Imagine*. I believe it might have been the same bedroom in which years later Horace Gold, stressed out, his mind going, appeared to a startled Forry and Wendy still abed.

My children have also frequently visited the Ackermuseum. Forry met my daughter Kerry and my son Arthur (A.C.) when they were babies because they were always with us at worldcons. He treated them with affection and respect, a man who has no

children but deserved to have some. In a way, however, he has many many children, all part of that very special extended family which he has. Forry is quite naturally "Uncle Forry" to daughter Kerry and son Arthur as he is to thousands of other young people, too, because of the unique picture magazine, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, which he edited for years. He became the center of life for a generation of youngsters with his undeniably distinctive contribution to our current culture. For this, and for Arthur and Kerry, Ruth, and I love Forry.

Not too remarkably, I have known Forry for most of my life. When I married Ruth Landis, he was present at the wedding in The Little Church Around the Corner. When Ruth and I went on our honeymoon, Forry went along with us – because we were on our way to London by chartered plane for the first worldcon outside the U.S.A. For a few hours or so when Ruth first appeared on the s-f scene at the Clevention in 1955, Forry knew her better than me. Her favorite book, *Roads* by Seabury Quinn, was a gift from Forry inscribed to "Mona," his special name for her inspired by her charm and beauty. This thoughtfulness is the essence of Forrest J Ackerman.

The way our friendship began is a typical old-time science fiction fannish story. He saw my letter in *Wonder Stories* in 1934 which boasted, "My mid-



dle name is Ackerman,” and he wrote me a letter in green ink. I was so impressed hearing from the number one fan of the world that I began using purple ink so I could be distinctive, too. This happened only months after Gernsback had started the Science Fiction League, and honored teen-age Forry as a Director. I didn’t know he was less than three years older than 15-year-old me. He actually opened up the whole world of fandom unknown to me. We aren’t related, but over the years we frequently pretend to be cousins.

Forry has had an enormous influence on my life. At the very beginning, he was the inspiration which made me a prolific readers’ column writer, too, joining other enthusiasts such as Milty Rothman, Bob Tucker, Jack Darrow, Bob Madle and many others. The purple ink led to my use of ‘The Purple Bat’ as a signature for an anonymous published letter, a name by which Bob Madle still calls me. It was the Californian license plate on his big, flashy Cadillac which led me to obtain the same for myself in Florida – a souvenir now up over my doorway – SCI-FL. And he’s the one person with whom I can, with no twinge of misgivings, have a non-alcoholic, ice cream binge.

We didn’t personally meet until 1939. That was at Nycon, the first world science fiction convention in New York. He was 22 and I was 20. Among the gathering was this quiet, rather shy fellow from California, conservatively dressed like the rest of us, who showed up along with the other “number one fan in the world,” Jack Darrow of Chicago. Young Ackerman was slim and handsome and quietly friendly. Hardly the giant of the correspondence circuit and certainly innocently undeserving of the punch-in-the-stomach jealous greeting from the far younger literary prodigy Cyril Kornbluth. The enthusiasm for science fiction which Forrest had revealed in his letters was to me dramatically demonstrated by his sudden appearance in a futuristic street costume, a cross between H.G.Wells’ Cabal and Phil Nolan’s Buck Rogers. Emblazoned on his front was the stylized symbol of “4SJ.” That was the moment which began the tradition of costumes at worldcons, one of countless fanish contributions which he would make over the next sixty years.

I didn’t come to know him well those first few days. My time was devoted to inadvertently “blowing up” that Nycon with my infamous yellow pamphlet of protest and I didn’t hang around him. For all its various exchanges of information through the printed

word, fandom then was still fragmented into various national regions. Subsequently, however, by the end of that July 4th weekend, when the Futurians held their “rump convention,” we progressed into a relationship of more than just letter buddies.

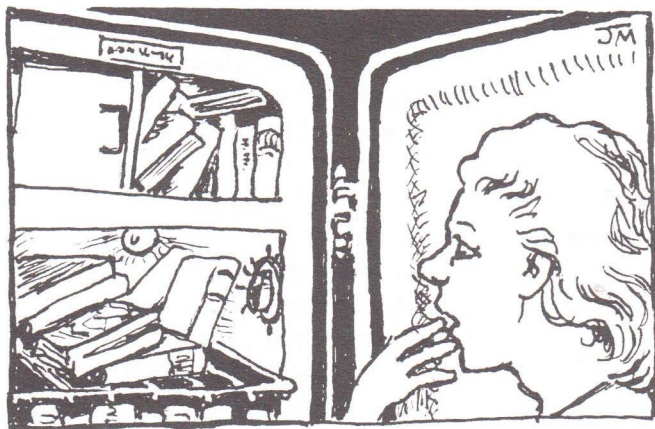
The following year at the second world convention in Chicago our relationship was solidified. Small as the first con had been, Chicon was even smaller and more personal, much less a gathering of the professionals of the day. Forry again had a costume. This time so did I. I was “Ming the Merciless” and I followed Forry’s lead in visiting a newspaper office to beat the drums for our unique activities. My closeness to the California crowd grew with my exciting auto ride back to New York with Elmer Perdue. {{ed. note: see “Chicon Ho!” in *Mimosa* 7 }}

With each passing year, the friendship between us grew. We would frequently be up on the con stage together. With such weekends lengthening we came to look forward to our meetings. The longest time we had together since the honeymoon trip was after the convention in Detroit when he and Marty Varno of Hollywood and Ruth drove back east. That was the time late at night in the mountains of New York when Marty stepped out into the darkness for a rest stop and staggered back shocked and bewildered by an unexpected encounter with the electrified wire of a cattle fence when he was most vulnerable. Forry still laughs about it.





There is a wealth of memories connecting the Kyle family with Forry. Some are a bit outlandish, such as taking us to a rather erotic movie about *Mr. Teas* (with nudity quite shocking for the time) believing Ruth to be the prudish daughter of a minister, a kind of educational process for her benefit. She wasn't offended and doesn't now remember the incident. However, Ruth does remember the time when she and I were staying at his home and in the morning, when she went into the tiny kitchen to prepare breakfast for us, she opened the refrigerator and was startled to find it was actually a repository for books, books, books.



Forry has also shared some of his many personal friendships with us. There was a day that I remember with much sadness, when we visited Clark Ashton Smith's home near Monterey, California. Smith was then a wizened old man, famous as an early writer of unusual s-f and fantasy, who, economically hard-pressed, kept his dignity even as he displayed his weird handicrafts and sold them to his visitors. Another memorable friend of Forry's, in San Francisco, was Anton Szandor LaVey, the self-styled head of the Church of Satan who was so concerned for Ruth's pregnant condition. The house in which he lived, seemingly so ordinary and typically San Franciscan, was incredible. It had secret passages and hidden rooms and false fireplaces which swung back and a bathroom which was painted black with brilliant red trim. (La Vey himself was kind of incredible, too. For years a friend in the Bay area sent me news clippings about LaVey, and particularly about his pet, domesticated lion which grew from a cub into a neighborhood threat.) In recent times in New York City, I left the spring I-Con weekend on Long Island just to see Forry who had an event in New Jersey and who invited me to Greenwich Village to meet Brother

Theodore, an old-time unusual entertainer. We sat together in a tiny theater, a simple, darkened room with foldaway chairs, and afterwards visited Theodore backstage not more than fifty feet away. Another time at Crystal City, south of Washington, D.C., at a Monster Convention, Forry introduced me to all sorts of major and minor celebrities who were there because he was there. That was the last time I saw Bob Bloch, who was in the tender physical condition of his final years, yet still with a sparkle in his eyes and a smile on his lips.

Forry, 4e, 4SJ, Forrie, the Ackermmonster as he is wont to describe himself, inveterate punster as he is, is The Fan for All Seasons. From his early magazine letters, his fanzine publishing, his fan writings, his club foundings (LASFS), the fellow who is the only one to have been to more worldcons than me, with only a halfway-attendance to mar his otherwise perfect record, has made history in an extraordinary life. For his remarkable fannish contributions he received the very first Hugo Award ever presented. In his generosity and good-fellowship he created the now-traditional Big Heart Award to annually honor other fans, given now in conjunction with the Order of St. Fantony in which he is a Knight. He created with me and John Flory the Science Fiction and Fantasy Film Society which gave Star Fire Awards to Fritz Lang and George Pal, an homage to the movie business which is his extra special love and in which he has been a movie actor in scores of sf/fantasy/horror films.

He was and still is Fan Number One; he is the epitome of Fanac and EgoBoo. What a "shy, introverted tongue-tied kid" (in his own words) he was! Look how he grew up and still remains a child! My hat is off my gray-haired head to you Forrest J Ackerman, Fan for All Seasons. ✧



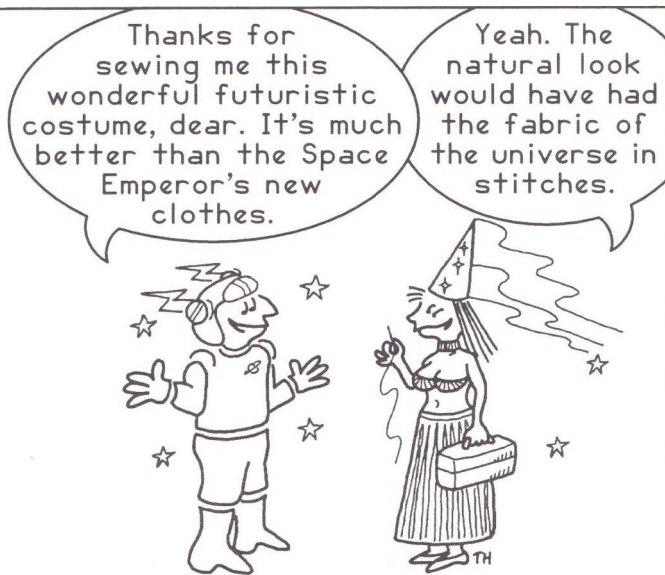


Speaking of Forry, he now returns with Part 8 of his autobiographical series of remembrances. In *Mimosa* 22, Forry talked about meeting some of his favorite authors. In this installment, he recalls the roots of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society (LASFS), a club among the oldest continuously in existence, and some of the people that made it special.

# Through Time and Space with Forry Ackerman

PART VIII

by Forrest J Ackerman



I moved, without my parents, from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1934, and I attended the very first meeting of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, which was held in October of that year. Of course, it wasn't called that at first; LASFS originated as one of the branches of the old Science Fiction League.

That very first meeting of all was attended by nine people. There was a young fan named Roy Test; he was interested in Esperanto, so we called him 'Esperan-Test'. His mother, Wanda Test, was our first secretary. In those days of the 1930s, *Thrilling Wonder Stories* was on our minds, so her minutes became known as 'Thrilling Wanda Stories'.

It's unfortunate that many of the fans who attended LASFS meetings during its first decade are not all that well remembered. There was Australian-born Russ Hodgkins, for instance, who became a director of the club in the late 1930s. There was T. Bruce Yerke. He created something called 'Kwerkean', a funny language all his own, and later wrote an early history of Los Angeles fandom called "Memoirs of a Superfluous Fan." There was Morojo, Myrtle R. Douglas, about eight years older than I. She first came to my attention when we were together in a class learning Esperanto. For eight years, though (and we didn't have the term then), she was what we'd call my 'significant other'. We went to the first world convention in 1939 together. I'd dreamed up a futur-

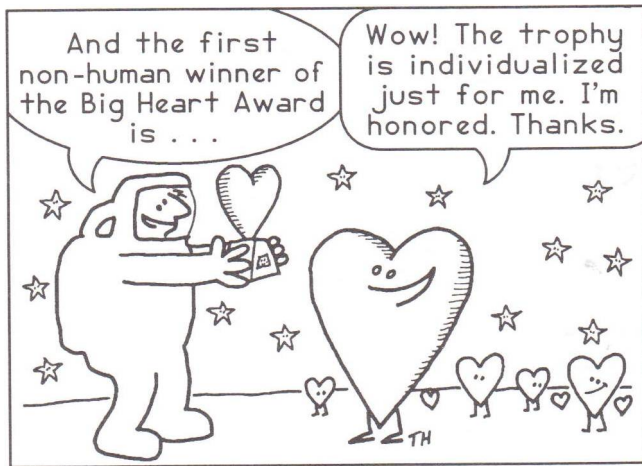
istic costume to wear there, and she was responsible for all the sewing and whatnot on it. Together we put out about fifty issues of *Voice of the Imagi-Nation*, which in 1996 was awarded a retrospective Hugo Award.

And there was dear Paul Freehafer. He was not much to look at, but boy, he had a big heart. Unfortunately, I think his heart did him in. None of us had the slightest idea he had any cardiac problems when he went off back to Idaho in 1944, for a summer vacation. He never came back. He was a tireless worker for the club, always involved with projects that would make LASFS a more interesting and better organization. Whenever there was a feud in the club, he was a peacemaker, an acceptable mediator to both sides. After he died he was mightily missed. He was just a grand fan.

And speaking of 'Big Heart', there was Walter J. Daugherty. Walt's first appearance at LASFS was at about the sixth meeting. For some reason, we had gotten off on the wrong foot with each other and were a bit antagonistic toward each other for a year or two. But after that, Walt has been one of my dearest, closest friends, to this very day. We mutually created the 'Big Heart' Award shortly after E. Everett Evans died in 1958. Evans was an elderly fan; he didn't have much money but was extremely generous. At world-cons, if he saw a young fan who he realized wasn't



going to be able to attend the banquet, a ticket would appear under the kid's door. Walt and I decided we didn't want E. Everett Evans to be forgotten, so we created the award that's presented at the worldcon each year. Frankly, in the beginning, I just kind of played God; I knew that Evans would have appreciated Doc Smith being a winner, and also Bob Bloch, and Dr. Keller. But when we had eight or ten people who had gotten the award, I would send out postcards to them with two or three potential names, or ask them to suggest someone. So after a while, the selection began to actually be by choice rather than just my personal opinion.



To this day, Walt Daugherty physically gets the awards created; I only tell him what wording to put on them. He's very good at 'individualizing' the awards; in the case of John L. Coker III, who received the Big Heart in 1996, he being a photographer, there was something symbolic of photography on the award. I think Walt has kind of a world record for being a hobbyist; he has something like 52 major hobbies. He retired, I think in 1946 as the dance champion of America, in waltz I believe, and he's very knowledgeable about Egypt. He did fanzines in his day, and in 1941, at the world convention, he was the first person to record speeches, in particular Heinlein's "Discovery of the Future" talk, as it was called.

The first meetings of the club were held in what was called the Pacific Electric Building in downtown Los Angeles. I think that once a month, a man who worked there was able to get the seventh or eighth floor free for us. Then we moved to Clifton's Cafeteria, a feature of which was their free limeade and lime juice. Some of the members who didn't have more than a nickel or dime to spend guzzled a lot of that

free juice.

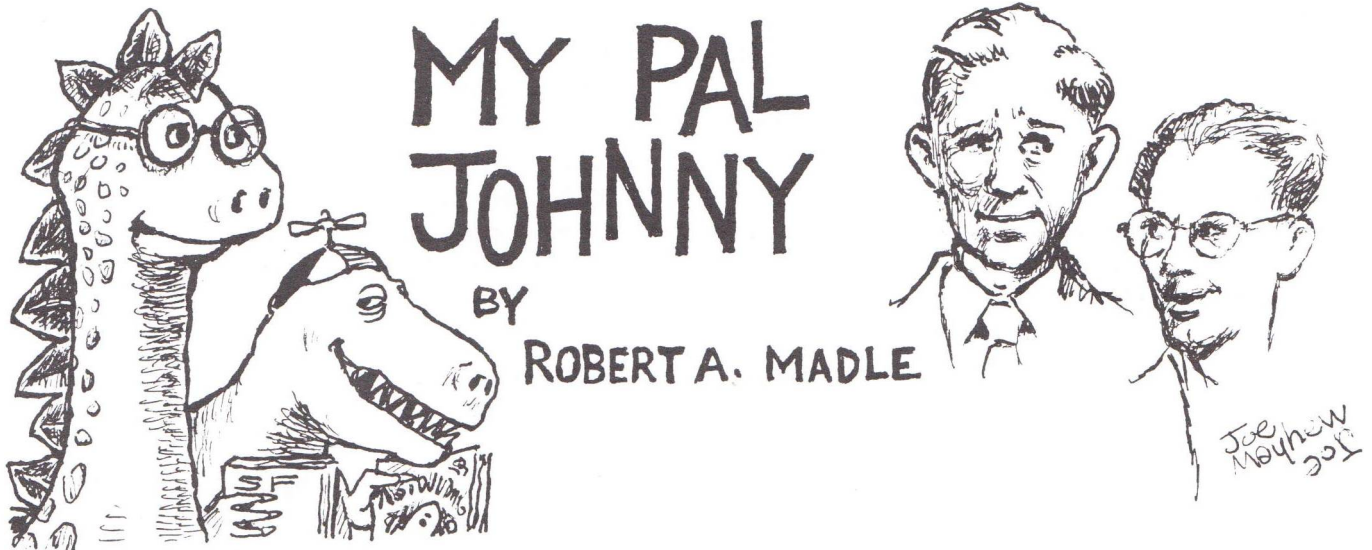
In those earliest days of the club, we science fiction fans had hardly ever laid eyes on a real live author. So when Arthur J. Burks came to the club one evening, it was an Event, and he didn't let us down. He was kind of a fiction factory; he said, "just throw out a word." When someone said "lamp shade" he was off and running, and made up a whole saleable story right then and there. There were other notables who visited the club after that. Dr. Keller came to town with a young Julius Schwartz and his friend Mort Weisinger. Another author, Bob Olson, actually lived in town; Bob Olson was the greatest friend ants ever had, he practically wrote 'sci-ants fiction'. It's true! The short-lived magazine *Miracle Science and Fantasy Stories*, in its second issue, advertised, "Don't miss the great science fiction novel in our next issue!" But it turned out there never *was* a next issue! So for some years, fans wondered what in the world that 'great science fiction novel' was. Well, Bob Olson later told me he had sold a novel to them titled *Ant with a Human Soul*. He said it had been accepted via Western Union; the telephone operator had read him a telegram that said "Offer two-hundred dollars for *Ant with a Human Soul*," then said "Excuse my curiosity, sir, I've heard of trained fleas in flea circuses, but is that *possible*? An ant with a human soul?"

At any rate, I've been to about 1,500 of the over 3,000 meetings of LASFS. I was at the 3,000th, and as part of the program that night I reminisced about some of those early meetings. At various times I was a director, treasurer, secretary, librarian, club organ publisher, pariah, and even janitor. It's been a fascinating six decades! ☆





There were many memorable moments at Bucconeer, but one of the most moving was Bob Madle's appearance at the Hugo Awards event where he announced the recipients of the annual First Fandom Awards, and gave a brief remembrance of one of the honorees, John V. Baltadonis. Many of our readers probably are not aware of just how popular and well-respected a fan Baltadonis was in the eofan days of the 1930s – he was active in all areas of fandom back then and was voted the most popular fan of all in the last two years of that decade. We've asked Bob Madle to write at greater length about his friend John Baltadonis; here is his remembrance of the life and times of this remarkable person.



John V. Baltadonis, one of the most active fans of the late 1930s, died of lung cancer in July 1998. He was 77 years old. John was born in Philadelphia, in February 1921, and resided in that area all of his life, except for 3½ years in the Army during WWII. Prior to this, he obtained a degree in Art from Temple University and, after the war, supplemented it with a Masters in Fine Art from the Tyler School of Art.

Johnny and I met in first grade at the Vaughn School, in the Kensington section of Philadelphia. We lived within a city block of each other and became the best of friends. This was 1927, during prohibition, and Johnny's father ran a 'speak easy' where beer and liquor was dispensed. It was a very large house, and I have fond memories of all the games we played there.

Both of us, apparently, had learned to read before starting first grade and we soon discovered boys' books. We were friendly rivals in most things we did from the beginning and thus it was we both assembled a worthy collection of such titles as *The Outdoor Chums*, *The Battleship Boys*, and *The Grammar School Boys*. These were the first items we ever collected and those books meant a lot to both of us.

Time went by and soon it was 1930. Several events of "great importance" occurred. *Buck Rogers*

began to run in January 1930, *Tarzan of the Apes* appeared in the comics section of *The Evening Bulletin*, and a movie was released that shook us to our very foundations – *Just Imagine*, starring El Brendel. It was a musical, as were most of the 'talkies' of that early period, but this movie took place in 1980, fifty years in the future! In reality, we had become science fiction fans already.

Johnny was tall, blonde, blue-eyed and handsome, even as a pre-teenager. And he always had to be first in all our activities. So, as he was able to obtain money from his parents (which was a rarity in those days), he had the best boys' book collection, the best chemistry set, the best set of skates. And when he discovered Edgar Rice Burroughs, he was able to buy new books from the bookstores! (They cost all of 99 cents each!) But he let me read them as long as I kept them in perfect condition. I remember that, when reading those pristine copies, I would always remove the dust wrappers.

Then, in early 1931, we discovered S-F magazines. We were in a local junk shop when Johnny found two copies of *Wonder Stories*, with marvelous Frank R. Paul covers on them – the December 1930 issue, featuring "The Synthetic Man" by Ed Earl Repp and the April 1931 issue, featuring "The Man



Who Evolved” by Edmond Hamilton. Wow! Were we impressed! But we didn’t know where to get other issues (remember, we were only nine years old) and it wasn’t until the spring of 1933 that we discovered back-date magazines stores and the S-F magazines. And, beginning with the January 1934 issues, we were able to purchase them from the newsstands (this was very neatly accomplished by the method known as “not eating lunch” – and spending our Junior High School lunch money, 15 cents a day, on S-F mags). But back issues were only five cents each (six for a quarter) and we both amassed our early collections in this manner. By this time, Jack Agnew, who is my cousin, joined us and we became a trio. Jack had no choice but to become an S-F fan, too.

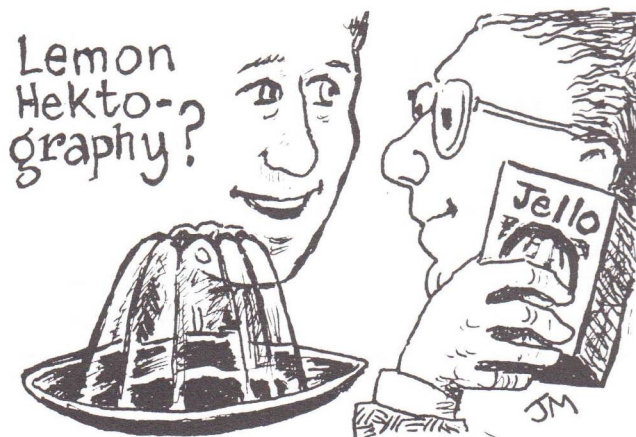
In April of 1934, Hugo Gernsback started the Science Fiction League in the pages of *Wonder Stories*. This was probably the most important event ever to occur from the viewpoint of S-F and, particularly, S-F fandom. SFL chapters sprang up worldwide. One of these was the Philadelphia SFL, organized by Milton A. Rothman, with the first meeting occurring in January 1935. We attempted to contact Rothman but received no answer so we assumed he felt we were too juvenile. Little did we realize that Rothman was just a year or so older than us. So, about this same time, we organized the Boys’ SF Club, consisting of John Baltadonis, Jack Agnew, Harvey Greenblatt, and me. And we actually produced a ‘fan mag’, as they were called then, titled *The Science Fiction Fan*. It was carbon-copied (there were only two or three copies), and featured some S-F magazine reviews plus a short story, “The Atom Smasher” by Donald Wandrei, which was copied from a 1934 *Astounding Stories*. But also featured were the first illustrations by John Baltadonis. They were acceptable – I thought they were excellent – but they gave no hint of the John’s latent talent that would propel him to the top of the fan field and make him known as ‘The Frank R. Paul of the Fan Artists’.

In 1935, John and I both had letters published in *Amazing Stories* and this time Rothman contacted us! We brought our Boys’ SF Club to his home and the first reorganizational meeting of the Philadelphia SFL was held with our group plus Rothman, his fan friend Raymond Peel Mariella, Oswald Train (who had just moved to Philadelphia), and a couple of others who never showed up again.

Baltadonis, Agnew, and I had been working on

another carbon-copied fan mag, called *Imaginative Fiction*. After attending the first PSFL meeting, we added a couple of pages and Baltadonis did a remarkable cover (for a 14-year-old). And he had to do it twice, as we made two copies (there were no Xerox machines then!). The three of us then decided we were going to publish a printed fan mag, like *Fantasy Magazine*, to be titled *Fantascience Digest*. We actually bought a press, but had no idea how to set type – and we didn’t have any type, anyway! It had taken all we could beg, borrow, or steal to buy the press, so getting type would be another day. But all was not lost; that very week we received in the mail the initial issue of Morris Scott Dollens’ *The Science Fiction Collector*, certainly one of the most amateurish fan mags published to that time. It was hand-written – not even typed – but it had illustrations and they were in a blue color! We found out it was done by a process called hektography.

Baltadonis managed to get some more money, did a little research, and called Agnew and I to come over one day to observe his new publishing equipment. We arrived to find that his ‘publishing house’ consisted of a pound of gelatine, a large rectangular cake pan, a purple typewriter ribbon, and a small jar of blue ink. The gelatine was heated until it became liquid, and was poured into the cake pan and allowed to harden. The typed page was placed face down on the gelatine and allowed to remain for a few minutes until the gelatine absorbed the purple ink, and then removed. A sheet of typewriter paper was then very carefully placed on the gelatine, pressed slightly and pulled off. Eureka! There was a marvelous reproduction of the purple-typed page. With luck, this could be repeated about 50 or even 60 times; thus was born the era of the hektographed fan magazine.





Philadelphia's first fan mag (not counting the carbon-copied ones) was called *Fantasy Fiction Telegram*; it was dated October 1936 and was about 20 half-size pages, all in purple, with blue illustrations, all by Baltadonis, and material by the local group plus an article by the leading fan of the time, Donald A. Wollheim. The original Baltadonis hektographed artwork didn't even begin to suggest the prolific talent he would display in the near future.

John made more trips to the store – the gelatine was called “Ditto” by the way – and made an amazing discovery, one that would ultimately make him an immortal of early fandom: hektographed ink was available in many colors! From an artistic viewpoint, the possibilities were astounding. The third issue of *FFT* appeared in many colors, and Baltadonis received rave reviews of his artwork (the cover and all interiors). But *FFT* lasted only one more issue, the fifth issue never being completed.

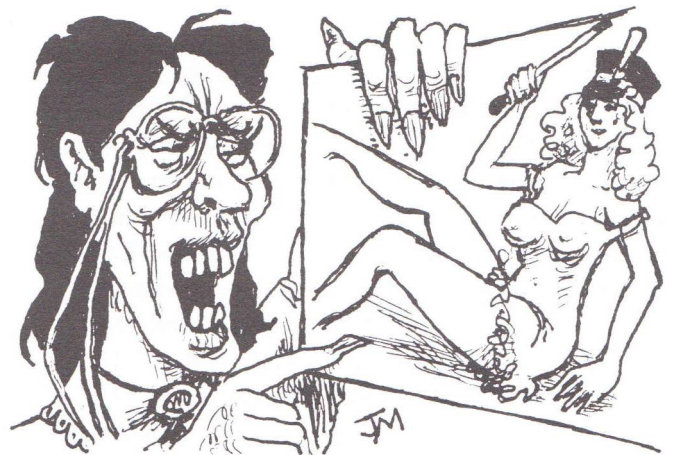
Morris Dollens published the *Science Fiction Collector* for 13 issues, through June 1937 when Dollens announced that would be the last issue. But it wasn't really the *last* issue. A 14th issue (dated July 1937) appeared and what an issue it was! Sam Moskowitz described it in *The Immortal Storm* as follows:

In late August of 1937, the first issue of the new *Science Fiction Collector* appeared under the editorship of Baltadonis and staffed by Train, Madle, and Moskowitz. The result set the fan world agog and unified its struggling remnants. For Baltadonis had done the near-impossible; not only was *Collector* ahead of the old insofar as quality of material was concerned, but Dollens' hektography had actually been surpassed. Some of the most important names of fandom were contributors, and in the space of one issue, the *Science Fiction Collector* became the leading representative fan journal.

Sam could have added that the Baltadonis artwork was extremely impressive – and “all in color for a dime.” It was at this junction that fandom almost universally recognized Baltadonis as the premier fan artist. Morris Scott Dollens had introduced the varied-colored hektograph fan mag but Baltadonis perfected it. He was not only outstanding in the handling of color and the mechanistic aspects of illustrating – he was also a master of ‘figure study’, as the following anecdote shows.

Back in 1935, when we graduated from Penn Treaty Junior High School, we had read a letter in *Wonder* or *Amazing* from Philadelphia fan Raymond Peel Mariella, who mentioned that one of his teachers was an S-F writer who taught at Central High School. We also had read a letter from a Philadelphia writer named Stephen G. Hale who had several stories in *Amazing*, and who was also a high school teacher. It had to be the same writer, we assumed, and both of us attempted to attend Central – to no avail. “You go to Northeast,” we were told, and so we did.

But on the first day of art class, we were amazed to realize that Stephen G. Hale (author of “The Laughing Death” and “World's Apart”) was our art teacher! He told us he had several other stories awaiting publication (*Amazing Stories*) – but they never appeared. Anyway, one of our first assignments was ‘figure study’. So far as drawing was concerned, I was as bad as Baltadonis was good. We came to the deadline, and I hadn't finished the assignment. “Not to worry,” said the over-accommodating Baltadonis, “I'll do an extra one and give it to you at class.” But it turned out to be a scantily-clad figure study of a female band leader named Ina Ray Hutton. She was drawn wearing short tight pants, and John made sure he disguised nothing. I turned it in and, in the next art period, Hale yelled out, “Madle! Come up here!” I stepped forward in fear and trepidation because I knew he was going to accuse me of turning in someone else's work. But that wasn't it at all – he was extremely angry that I had turned in this “piece of pornography” and that he was considering sending me and the drawing down to the principal's office. But he relented – perhaps because we had discovered his stories a few days earlier.





JVB, as Baltadonis became known in fandom, not only edited and published one of the leading fan journals of this period, but he also conceived of Comet Publications, which comprised all of the fan journals published by the Philadelphia group. At one time, circa 1938-39, Comet Publications comprised about 15 different fan mags. (It should be mentioned that the 1936-41 fandom was so small that some active fans used only initials. In addition to JVB, there was DAW [Wollheim], FJA [Ackerman], MAR [Rothman], RWL [Lowndes], and RAM [Madle].)

JVB was one of the attendees at the October 1936 meeting in Philadelphia when the New York group came to visit the Philadelphia group. This became known as the 'First S-F Convention', partly because, during the official meeting, Donald A. Wollheim suggested it. JVB was active in producing the annual Philadelphia conference and in helping produce Nycon in 1939 – the First World S-F Convention.

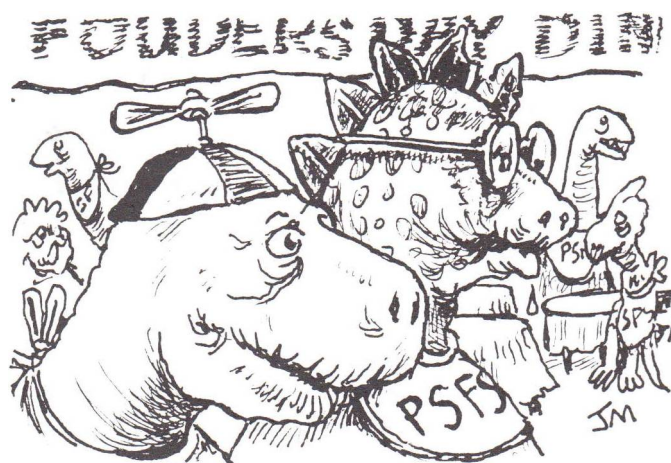
JVB's activity in the 1936-41 period was amazing. He did everything a fan could do – he wrote, illustrated, collected, corresponded, wrote to magazines, organized and attended conventions. During the years 1937-40, he was always voted one of the top fans in the world. In fact, in 1938 and 1939 he was elected as Number One Fan. And this was during the times that active fandom consisted of such as Ackerman, Bradbury, Wollheim, Moskowitz, Tucker, Pohl, Lowndes, and other great names.

Seventeen issues of the *Science Fiction Collector* appeared under JVB's editorship from 1937-41. It was a treasure-trove of early S-F and fandom, beautifully illustrated in multi-color. The final issue was dated Winter 1941 and marked the end of JVB's tenure as an active fan; in reality, the start of World War II in December 1941 marked the end of the grandest of all fan periods.

After the war, Baltadonis rejoined the PSFS for a while, but upon starting graduate work, drifted into inactivity. He did illustrate the Program Book for the Philcon of 1947 and, in 1948, did the dust wrapper and illustrations for New Era's only book, "The Solitary Hunters" and "The Abyss" by David H. Keller. Despite his S-F illustrating talent, he appeared professionally only once when Lowndes reprinted "The Abyss" in *Magazine of Horror* in the 1960s. But his entire career was art-oriented – he taught art in Haverford, Pennsylvania school system for 35 years, then became art programs coordinator for the district until

his health forced him to retire.

Our paths crossed occasionally during the late '40s and early '50s when I was attending Drexel University. In 1953 I moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, and later to Washington, D.C., and we rarely made contact. However, beginning in the early '80s, Agnew, John, and I attended Philcons and PSFS Founders' Day dinners, and it was like the old days again. At the Philcons and dinners, John's wife Pat, my wife Billie, and Agnew's wife Agnes learned more than they wanted to when discussions of the old days came up.

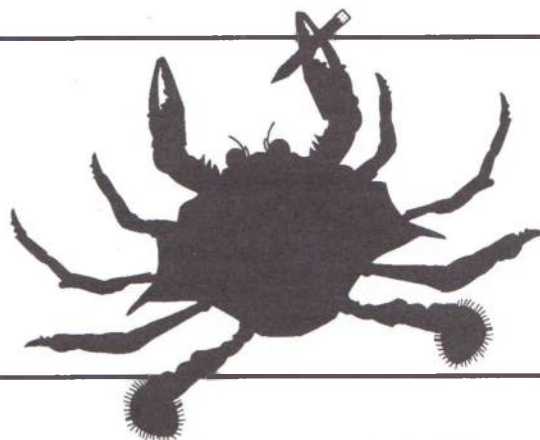


John always retained his interest in S-F. He went from reader to collector to fan and back to reader. Fan history will certainly show him as one of the most important members of the 1936-41 period of fandom. (Just look at the indexes of Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* and Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* and this becomes quite evident.) It's difficult to accept that John V. Baltadonis is gone – but the memories of the friendship and the numerous hobbies, interests, and activities we shared, will be remembered forever. ☆





# MIMOSA LETTERS



{{☞ As we mention in our opening comments, it's been a sad holiday season, with the deaths of two of our fan friends, Ian Gunn and Vincent Clarke. There wasn't enough time to include remembrances of them in this issue, but we will have articles about them next time. The article that received the most comments from our previous issue was actually Nicki's closing comments, about the growing disconnect between today's media-oriented fandoms and 'traditional' fandom. We'll begin with those but first, given the somber mood, it might be appropriate to start out with a few comments about the *Mimosa* 22 covers, by Peggy Ranson and Teddy Harvia, one of which depicted a somewhat somber winter scene. }}

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**Joseph Major, 1409 Christy Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky 40204-2040**

Very artistic covers by Harvia and Ranson! {{☞ "Suspension of Belief" and "Belief in Winter"}} Just gorgeous! These continue the *Mimosa* tradition of storytelling front & back covers. Are "Spring" and "Fall" forthcoming?

Concerning Nicki's closing comments {{☞ "Connections" }}, it looks like that humor piece I wrote about Worldcon facing three takeover bids (by thinly-disguised Disney, B5 and Creation Cons) is more real than expected.

There is no single focal point – sixties media fen had only *Star Trek*, seventies media fen had *Star Wars*, but today the *Sailor Moon* fan has nothing to say to the *Sliders* fan and neither can connect with the out-of-it dude, who, like, *reads*, you know? And each group grows on its own. Every media fan has its own net-group, which encourages simultaneously growth and separation. I hear that Trek fictionzines have about died out, but Trek fiction continues on the Net. (The *Star Trek* Welcommittee has disbanded.)

{{☞ You're right that the fracturing of fandom probably began in the late 1960s with the start of Trek-fandom. Media fandom fictionzines are probably

dying out due to the expense of publishing and the cheapness of the Web. Actually, media fen have a lot to say to say to each other on the Internet and often cross-post to newsgroups devoted to other media-oriented subfandoms. We've never seen anyone objecting to participation in more than one media newsgroup. In some ways, media fen are even very similar to 'mainstream' science fiction fandom. A big difference is that media fen lack the history that we 'trufans' have. }}

So of course does 'traditional' fandom and indeed many heretofore well-represented fans have vanished into this ephemeral medium. This may be another reason that SF fandom appears to be dwindling. It looks like, now more than ever, we need Scott Patri to come back from that writers' course. Those who recall his enthusiastic crudzine *The Zero-G Lavatory* will feel a thrill of nostalgia at his harum-scarum layout and amateurish drawings. But his main thesis, one which Nicki seems to be collecting evidence in support of, was that a new and unwholesome fandom was growing up, one that instead of creating its own fannish experiences was content to absorb it. If he had not limited his animus to 'Trekkies' this thesis would have been apparent.

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**Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 9ES, United Kingdom**

Thanks for *Mimosa* 22; but entitling the front cover, "Suspension of Belief"? Surely a misnomer; I've seen it in reality – well, the reality of fiction, that is. Beg, borrow or steal a copy of *The Sword in the Stone* by T.H. White and in chapter eighteen, where Arthur (the Wart) is taken to the goddess Athene, you'll find a perfect description of the scene on your cover. (Closely followed by an equally sfinal concept.)

As Nicki points out, science fiction has never been so popular, especially in the media, in college



and on the street; I like to think it was us single-minded fen who kept the dream alive, sustained it through the decades to give it the public recognition that it has now. And, in a sense, we are the last generation, because our purpose is now done. Of course, our one great failure has been to see 'sf' crushed into the dust by the relentless tread of 'sci-fi', but when the product's so prevalent, who cares what names it takes? For electronic fanzines and feedback, I'm sure there'll come a point when spending hours before a flickering screen will seem too much, when print on paper will be a brand-new concept. The one drawback I can see, though cheerfully ignored by most, is what happens when your machine 'crashes', when you can no longer contact the outside world via the Net? And, horror of horrors, it's no longer repairable and you've lost all your files? There's a lot to be said for old-fashioned paper.

But, for the prevalence of media fandom, of Who-vians and Trekkers – well, there must surely come a point when every episode, every last scene has been analyzed to destruction, when they've exhausted all the fan-fiction about their characters, put them in more and more impossible situations. Then perhaps they might look outside, see what else is on the sci-fi shelves, start writing about it; include a bit of their personal lives and opinions; and fandom will be born again.

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**Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue Avenue #9-B, Trenton, New Jersey 08618**

You have had some incredible covers lately, and this issue's is certainly one of them. Cosmic concept, the woman-trees in summer and in winter, superbly executed. In fact, as fine as the written contents are, what really makes *Mimosa* stand out for me are its airy, spacious graphics. The large print is part of it, setting off some of the best art in fanzines.

Dave Kyle's article about the first Worldcon {{☞ "Caravan to the Stars" }} is vividly written fan history. It is difficult to realize how young these pioneering, legendary fans and pros were. Perhaps that explains in part their contentiousness; they hadn't aged enough to mellow a little. Plus the whole nature of their feelings themselves set apart by their passion for science fiction and fandom, then such a beleaguered thing, ignored or scored by the general public. There were Jiants in those days, even if they were also just kids, like as not bespectacled and pimply faced.

**Robert Coulson, 2677 W 500 N, Hartford City, Indiana 47348**

Concerning Nicki's closing comments, I don't know of a lot of media cons here in the Midwest, though the ones I hear about are big, and largely professionally run. When *Star Trek* began, there weren't any other cons for the fans to go to, though they soon began starting some, and they did gravitate into fandom. For that matter, Roddenberry catered to science fiction fans to some extent – he needed their support. Juanita and I got very good treatment – including visiting an officially 'closed' set – when we and Kay Anderson visited the studio. And one of the Trekkies who shifted over to science fiction fandom when she found out about it was Lois McMaster Bujold; I think she's worth more than the legions who stayed in TV-movie fandom. Fanhistory has always been a footnote in popular culture, and we're still getting some new fans. There is, after all, a limit to how many can be absorbed into printed-fanzine fandom, as prices go up for every-thing including conventions. Conventions are feeling the pinch, too; Louisville fandom has announced an end to Rivercon in the year 2000. Too many atten-dees, not enough workers, and the regulars are getting tired.

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**Lloyd Penney, 1706-24 Eva Road, Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2B2, Canada**

With all the fanhistory books listed in your Letters Column, here's another project for the Timebinders – assemble a list of all these fanhistory texts with titles, author/editor names, who produced them, and how to get them, if indeed they're still in print. I will heartily second Robert Lichtman's recommendation of *Years of Light: A Celebration of Leslie A. Crouch*. It's author, John Robert Columbo, is a literary historian with decades of research into Canadian literature, but has been on the outskirts of Canfandom with books like this and his friendship with many of the local SF authors. Part of the book is about Crouch and his fanpublishing, but another part is about Canadian fanhistory right up to Torcon II in 1973.

Great closing comments, especially about e-zines and paperzines. I've received a couple of e-zines (Cheryl Morgan's *Emerald City* and Tommy Ferguson's *Tommyworld*), but in the long run, I received text files. BCSFA in Vancouver can now provide .pdf versions of *BCSFazine* which are then translated back into visible fanzine form through the use of Adobe Acrobat. Still, a paperzine is physical, textural, and



sent to you because someone wanted you to have it. A text file is downloadable if you want it.

The popular of sci-fi today does indeed undermine SF. The new public popularity of the genre means science fiction channels both in the United States and in Canada. The Canadian channel, Space: The Imagination Station, will interview authors for filler pieces, but broadcasts some great (and many not-so-great) science fiction television shows. The last Canadian show to profile and showcase SF authors, *Prisoners of Gravity*, has been shown, but is now relegated to awkward hours. I've asked if there might be a programme dedicated to the sources of SF, the authors, but the reply was that that's dull, and most of the stations money is tied up in partnered production of sci-fi shows. It's great to have a science fiction channel, but not when it broadcasts mostly sci-fi.

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**Edmund R. Meskys, RR #2 Box 63, 322  
Whittier Highway, Center Harbor, New  
Hampshire 03226-9708**

In your letters column, I liked Harry Warner's suggestion that Mike Resnick's list of fandom-related books, plus additions, be made into a reference bibliography for neos. I have added many of the titles to my 'must buy' list, but most are faanish or small press items and will be hard to find at this late date.

Nicki's closing piece is all too true. I wonder if young kids who saw the HBO series *From the Earth to the Moon* or the movie *Apollo 13* really feel they are watching real history, or if it just blends into *Trek* for them. I have met young fen at cons, but it is no longer "a proud and lonely thing to be a fan." Fandom has changed greatly since I got in in 1955 and I am afraid it will continue to evolve as the skiffy media fen take a larger and larger role.

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**Tom Becker, P.O. Box 724, Mountain  
View, California 94042**

**<twb@fanac.com>**

Dave Kyle's report on his "subversive" activities took a topic I thought I was familiar with and made it fresh and immediate. It seems now that we're on the Internet, the future has arrived and science fiction is irrelevant. But there still is war, and we're not living on any other planets besides the ever more fragile earth. Has anything really changed since 1939?

If Mike Resnick had written an alternate universe version of his Worldcon memoir {{☞ "Worldcon Memories (Part 1)" }} that left out his mean-spirited com-

ments about ConFrancisco, it might have been entertaining. Resnick seems to have overlooked the very nice hotel on the same block as the Marriott (I think it's where the SFWA suite was), and he makes mountains out of streets that are about as flat as you can get in SF, but I don't want to quibble with him over his impressions. I am concerned, however, that some fans may get the impression that the clever stunt Resnick pulled with the Marriott was somehow okay. Depriving a con of room nights could throw a con into the red if it causes the con to come in below the required minimum in their hotel contract. Fortunately ConFrancisco got a good turnout so the loss of the room nights was not a fiasco, but it surely affected the bottom line, which in the case of a non-profit means less money was available for charitable causes. In other words, Resnick made sure his dollars went to extra hotel profits when they could have gone to future Worldcons and to TAFF and DUFF. Possibly even worse is the way Resnick went with a hotel that had been playing hardball with the con, and essentially rewarded it for being difficult. But enough of that. A lot of water has gone under the bridge since '93 and I wish those who are still holding grudges could just let go of them. I can't speak for ConFrancisco - I'm just one of the local fans who helped out with the con - but I have a lot of respect for Mike Resnick as a pro, and personally I'd be happy to accept an apology from him, buy him a drink, and move on to better topics...

...such as Richard Brandt's article {{☞ "How Michelle Went to San Antonio, Attended the Hugo Ceremony, and Found God" }} which was a hoot. It was nice to be reminded just how good a writer Richard is, plus the article itself is a wonderful reminder of the joys of fandom and even the satisfactions of helping out with a con. I wonder if his standing in for the Deity is what finally made it possible for the LoneStarCon 2 fanzine lounge to happen (late but worth the wait).

In Greg Benford's article {{☞ "Save the Last Masque for Me" }} his find of a bag of um, spaceship models on the Rotsler estate reminded me of something that happened while we were setting up ConFrancisco. Spike Parsons ran the Local Color division, which included exhibits, and Don Herron brought down some of Fritz Leiber's memorabilia, including one of Fritz's Hugos. The night before the con, because of a temporary shortage of display cases, Fritz's stuff had to share a shelf with the historic



vibrator museum we had on loan from Good Vibrations. It was a sight to see, and I like to think of Fritz looking down and cracking up with the rest of us.

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**Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue,  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740**

With respect to the Six Degrees game in Richard's opening comments {{ "Six Degrees of Walter A. Willis" }}, I do quite well as far as political, literary, and show business people are concerned. For instance, is anyone else in fandom able to claim Stalin as a third degree connection? I can. The chairman of the board of directors for the local newspapers in mid-century was William Preston Lane, who served as Governor of Maryland for a while and was quite big in behind-the-scenes national Democratic party politics. I knew Lane pretty well, and he was acquainted with most of the big shots including FDR, of course, most of the Republican leaders and some world figures. FDR knew Stalin, Churchill, and just about everyone else, although I'm not sure if he ever met Hitler. I've also met Carl Sandburg, Clifton Fadiman, and Forry Ackerman. They should provide me with pretty close relationships with everyone in mundane and fantasy literature throughout the 20th century.

The Lee Hoffman letter quoted by Walt Willis in his column {{ "I Remember Me" }} is priceless, because it finally settles the old question of whether there really was a horse that caused Lee's gafiation. She had written about a horse in print but I don't think anyone in fandom had ever seen a horse that matched her description and we never heard about what happened to the mysterious horses. Obviously, it existed, as this bit of private correspondence proves.

Ron Bennett's history of *Skyrack* {{ "When the Sky Was the Limit" }} is useful information. His description of the Penitentiary (and there's nothing strange about the name of the apartment, because it refers to the famous Parker merchandise to be found in every stationery store) brings back to mind the strange change in Ella Parker, one of the most gregarious of all fans when she was active in fandom, and by the time of her death an extreme recluse.

Finally, Nicki shouldn't feel too unhappy when people are unable to remember anything about the first moon landing. I saw somewhere the results of a survey of the American public on such things as who won World War Two (I believe only slightly more

than half of the people knew the right answer) and how long it takes for the Earth to go around the Sun (fewer than half got it right). People are incredibly ignorant nowadays.



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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19149**

[<mattea@juno.com>](mailto:mattea@juno.com)

The Willis piece touches on a bit of fannish history which I've never quite understood, though I'm old enough to remember the tail end of it. There was a time, circa 1950, when prozine letter-hacking was major fannish activity. Fannish reputations were made that way. I am not even sure the fans read the stories before rushing to get their next letter off to *Startling Stories* (there being no e-mail then, although the post was a lot faster). Prozines had 20 pages of letters in tiny type. This is a completely lost world, as I can tell you from my own prozine-editing experience. It is impossible to coax more than five or six letters an issue out of 20,000 readers. *Weird Tales* will get two or three good letters an issue, which I try to work into the editorials.

But it was all different in days of yore, only there was another side to it. As the response from H.L. Gold to Walt Willis makes clear, a *lot* of readers in those days *didn't* want letter columns in prozines, and when *Galaxy* put the matter up to a vote, allegedly there were six-thousand letters received saying, "No!" The numbers are completely incredible in today's field, and as for the sentiment, well, when I was a kid I had a friend (who was sort of a fan) whose father had read SF (and they lent me a lot of early *Galaxies* to read), and the opinion of both father and son was that fandom was full of stuffed shirts and that given

the chance, fans would wreck science fiction and certainly wreck any prozine they got their hands on. Meanwhile *Galaxy* prospered and *Startling Stories* folded, and while I am not sure that the presence of a fannish letter column had anything to do with it, certainly many readers felt that way. Nowadays most fans would probably never imagine themselves writing to a prozine. If I can work the subject into a panel sometime at a convention, I'll ask for a show of hands from the audience.

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**Ahrvid Engholm, Renstiernas Gata 29, S-116 31 Stockholm, Sweden**

<ahrvid@algonet.se>

Regarding "The Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" game, I suppose I'm only one step away from anybody else, since I've met Forry Ackerman – and he has met everybody else!

Speaking of Bacon Numbers, I probably have a high Bacon Number for most world leaders, since I've met and interviewed the former Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt who probably has met them all. I also have a Willis Number of 1, since I've met Walt Willis. (His article in the issue was, though a bit short, excellent as ever. I think he was right and Horace Gold wrong about letter columns. Most people writing letters to prozines don't write about too important stuff. But the letter column gives a feeling of intimacy that's hard to beat.)

Dave Kyle's article was, for me, the most interesting in the issue. I don't think I'll ever read enough of the Nycon Exclusion Act. He managed to give some new perspectives on it, even if I thought I had heard everything. I'm convinced fans 500 years from now will still talk about Nycon, and Kyle will be quoted as an Important Source. However, it would be interesting to read that pamphlet he was supposed to distribute. I'm sure its quite innocent, but it would be interesting nonetheless. What did Moskowitz et al do with the copies confiscated? Did any copies survive?

{{☞ The entire text of the pamphlet was reprinted in Dave Kyle's very first article for us back in *Mimosa* 6 ("The Great Exclusion Act of 1939"). We don't know how many copies of the original yellow pamphlet still exist, though it's been reported that at least one is in the Moskowitz collection; it's likely that most of the copies confiscated at the 1939 Nycon were thrown away that same day. }}

Dal Coger's article {{☞ "The Legendary Slan Shack" }} was interesting, but didn't answer all the

questions around the original Slan Shack. Was the Slan Shack a collective dwelling or just the home of the Ashley's where they sometimes had fan meetings? I also lack details of day-to-day Slan Shack life. In my fannish universe, the different collective dwellings of the Futurians in New York in the '40s was always more of a model. Maybe this is because there is more written about them? (Like in Damon Knight's *The Futurians*, which also tells about daily Futurian slan shack life.) But Coger also makes it possible to correct an old mistake. Harry Warner wrote, in *All Our Yesterdays*, that "Jack Wiedenbeck was the first fake-fan." Reading about Wiedenbeck makes it obvious that he wasn't a fake-fan, but we have "Thelma Morgan, a dark, quiet woman, who loved to read and enjoyed fans, without being one herself." Thelma Morgan was the first fake-fan, perhaps?

Nicki raises some discouraging questions in her closing remark. I too am not sure that "true fandom" will survive into the next generation, or at least the next to next generation. *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, e-mail, the Web, etc., makes it difficult for the trufannish generations to come. Printed fanzines are on the way out. While Internet makes contact between people easier, contacts also becomes more shallow – fandom has always been about deep, personal contacts. Web-versions of zines like *Mimosa* or mailing lists like Timebinders are steps on the right track, but far from enough.

Is it even desirable that fandom as we know it survives the transition into the information age? I think it is, because fandom has at least one unique quality that makes it worthwhile: fandom was one of the first successful examples of the Global Village. Fandom established a Global Village long before we had Internet, CNN and whatever. Fanzines were sent all over the world, or at least in the triangle North America-Europe-Australia. The Worldcon hasn't been entirely successful as a WORLDcon, but people have tried their best (and there aren't too much of sf culture in Asia, Africa, etc., – not the Worldcon's fault). You seldom see fans being excessively nationalistic (with some exceptions, but they are considered odd). Nobody says, 'your zine is shit because you're from Austria or India'. We send people around the world in fan funds. Healthy, non-threatening nationalism occurs in fandom, but on the whole fans tend to say: he's a fan first, and secondly he's Italian/ Mexican/Norwegian (but that's not too important).



**Bob Tucker, 2516/H East Washington  
Street, Bloomington, Illinois 61704-4444**

One small typo crept into Dal Coger's splendid report of the legendary Slan Shack. E.E. Evans joined the Slan Shackers, not E.E. Smith. That article brought back a torrent of memories and no, I will NOT tell you what my score was on that Jack Speer test that gave Al Ashley a score of 194. We had a lot of fun at Al's expense after that, in person, in letters, and in the fanzine prints. Someone coined the phrase "Ol' AA-194" and it stuck to him for the remainder of his life.

**Eric Lindsay, P.O. Box 640, Airlie Beach,  
Queensland 4802, Australia**

**<eric@zen.maths.uts.edu.au>**

I wonder what degree of closeness I can claim for having Bob Tucker stay at my house around the time of the first Aussiecon. Or indeed for visiting with him when I drove from Los Angeles (where if I recall right we had visited Mary Beth Wheeler) to the east coast with Rusty Hevelin. Or being in the same apa with him? Boy, those were the days.

{{☞ The writers of many of the letters we received had fun describing some of their fannish 'connections', but surprisingly, nobody picked up on the main 'connectivity' feature of *Mimosa 22* – the issue was designed so that each article had a 'connection' to the article that immediately preceded it. Maybe we were a little too subtle. }}

Like you, I'd read Pohl and Moskowitz and Knight on Nycon, most recently when I was making a few notes about Worldcon history for the Aussiecon Three web site. So it was great to see yet another account of those days from Dave Kyle. I was also amused to see Dave mention the formality of dress of early fans, as that was something I'd also noted in photos from the time. No wonder A.E. Van Vogt had some of his characters wearing ties in *Slan*, despite the plastic houses and the spaceships and atomic energy.

Thanks for printing Greg Benford's memories of Bill Rotsler. Bill was one of many fans who stayed at my place around the time of the first Aussiecon in 1975. He was the one who complained about the quality of the toilet paper (cheap and harsh), but he forgave me that. Last time I saw him was at his birthday party at Loscon. I guess we will all miss him, every time we see another of his illos, which I'm sure

will continue to appear over coming decades.

**Janice Gelb, 1070 Mercedes Avenue, Apt.  
2, Los Altos, California 94022**

**<janiceg@marvin.eng.sun.com>**

I would love to see the full con reports from which Mike Resnick extracted these gems. My favorite was his note about passing the little old ladies wearing sweaters in the furnace heat of Phoenix and deciding he didn't want to be immortal after all. Having grown up in Miami Beach (The Place Where Little Old Jewish People Go To Die), that had real resonance for me!

Based on the LoneStarCon2 report from Richard Brandt, I seem to have passed on a fannish tradition. Lori Wolf 'interned' with me when I ran the Hugo ceremony at LAcon III, and I used the term 'Voice of Ghod' in my script, having stolen it from a previous Hugo ceremony's script (I believe Noreascon 3). My VoG was Marty Gear, who had done it previously so he didn't even blink an eye at the term!

Finally, the behind-the-scenes look at the making of *Men In Black* {{☞ "From Rags to Off the Rack" }} was fascinating and I enjoyed it thoroughly... up until the next-to-last paragraph, when Lowell Cunningham rated meeting Mark Hamill as a bigger thrill than meeting Tommy Lee Jones. He credits this to being a long-time SF movie fan, so I guess I don't qualify!

**Steve Jeffery, 44 White Way, Kidlington,  
Oxon OX5 2XA, United Kingdom**

**<peverel@aol.com>**

Reminiscences from both Mike Resnick and Richard Brandt remind me that I was once probably a wide-eyed neo (I wonder what ever happened to him?) at conventions where Famous Real Authors were wandering around. Happily, the U.K. convention scene does not pander to the star syndrome, and you soon realise that many authors at cons are fans who happen to write the books that you like to read (in the same way that you might be making the car they like to drive). But you do get an impression of how it might have been when non-fan friends or colleagues learn that you've met Terry Pratchett or Anne McCaffrey.

As intriguing as the tale of how *Men In Black* went from comic to film was Lowell Cunningham's story of how it started from a chance remark to become a comic in the first place. There must be hundreds of moments like that where you just go "oh

yeah” and an opportunity sails into the lost realm of might-have-beens. Sometimes (I know this is criminal) they don’t even get turned into fanzine articles.

Pamela Boal’s letter about Julia Morgan-Scott sends me straight back to the cover of *Mimosa 21*. Now that’s impressive. I’ve played with scratch board, but not with results like that. I love the armadilly wimmen. Hell of a lot of work must have gone into that.

{{☞ Here’s what Julia told us about her *M21* cover.

“A confession about my cover for *Mimosa 21*: The idea for “Armadillo Ladies” came from my work as a scientific illustrator for Dr. Timothy Gaudin, a paleontologist who specializes in the study of Order *Xenarthra* (armadillos, sloths, and anteaters). Order *Xenarthra* – ‘Xenaville Saloon’ – get it? Obscure, I know.

“It wasn’t until after I had finished the picture that it occurred to me that it fit right in with LoneStarCon’s armadillo theme. Talk about being out of it! Another thing – I realized, too late, that the original song is ‘Buffalo Gals won’t you come out tonight.’ But Dr. Gaudin said, ‘Perhaps female armadillos prefer to be called ladies.’

“Sadly, though, for Ruth Shields’ wistful hope that the Armadilly Wimmen survived, I have a dark suspicion that they were doomed, or at the very least got their tails squished.” }}

I agree with Nicki’s closing sentiments about science fiction and sci-fi. It’s increasingly obvious in the proportion of media novelizations, tie-ins and ‘spinoffery’ in review books, and its most damaging effect on published sf/fantasy seems to be the destruction of the midlist as the market splits between high advance titles by established (and hence proven selling) authors and the pile it high, sell it quick media domination of shelf space. Would there be no room now (or in the future) for an author like, say, Tom Reamy, or Bob Shaw? It’s a (literally) incalculable loss to sf if this proves the case.

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**Martin Morse Wooster, P.O. Box 8093,  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20907**

I’m not as depressed as Nicki about the state of fandom. I’ve been reading fanzines since 1975, and as long as I can remember, the core audience for fanzines has always been around 300 people. Obviously, the 300 fanzines fans today are not the 300 fanzines fans 20 years ago, but I am guessing that the core audience for SF fanzines has remained pretty constant over the years. What *has* changed is that the methods

by which fanzine fandom reached out to new people have atrophied. No SF prozine reviews or even mentions fanzines. *Science Fiction Chronicle* still tries to mention some fannish events, but stopped reviewing fanzines about two years ago. There are few fanzine panels at conventions (and fewer conventions). I’ve found, however, that new fans *are* interested in fanzines. I run a small sf club, and routinely give away fanzines at each meeting. (Not *Mimosa*; I keep those.) Younger fans may not know about fannish traditions, but they aren’t that much different from fans or our generation.

Lowell Cunningham’s experience as an extra in *Men In Black* was not terribly different from the one day I spent on the set of *Twilight of the Dogs*, a local sf/horror film in which I played a disciple of the evil Rev. Zerk. My part consisted of having an upside-down peace sign sprayed on my forehead, putting a while robe over my clothes, and spinning about a dozen times until an actress shouted, “Defiler!” in the general direction of the heroine. If the film is ever released, I am in it for one second. (How did you get Cunningham to write for you? Did he used to be a fan?)

{{☞ Actually, we’ve known Lowell for years (from well before his *Men In Black* fame), and he has always been a fan for as long as we’ve known him. As for *Twilight of the Dogs* (which featured several members of the Washington Science Fiction Association in “key roles”), we’ve heard that it’s been released – in Asia – and will be coming out on video this spring. }}



**Ron Bennett, 36 Harlow Park Crescent,  
Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 0AW,  
United Kingdom**

Lovely, gentle article from Walt Willis, gentle because it sits pleasantly among pieces of more fren-



etic activity. Loved the mimeoscope story; haven't heard of one of these things for goodness knows how many yonks. The piece was, of course, far too short.

I also liked Ian Gunn's very original piece {{☞ "Never Work With Children and Animals" }}. Very well told, like the story about the goat getting stage fright, but in context, his following remark about the storyteller being surrounded by *kids* is just a tad ambiguous. Ian deserves a medal for persevering with this group.

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**William Breiding, P.O. Box 2322, Tucson, Arizona 85702-2322**

<wbreiding@juno.com>

I was particularly fond of Curt Phillips' piece on firefighting {{☞ "10-70 Structure" }} – it was vivid and incredibly lucid – I felt as though I was right there with him. And Richard Brandt's piece was one of the best convention reports I've read in quite awhile, a singular report like this has a chance to be much more successful than one that starts with pre-con travel arrangements and rides the entire tide of the convention through the dead dog party and on back home. To write that kind of con report takes an incredible intensity of spirit and emotion that few fan writers have. My kudos to Mr. Brandt.

Also, I was much amused when I saw the heading for Richard's Opening Comments. In most cases I am two degrees away; hard to believe that with Tucker – I was at any number of Midwestern conventions in the '70s at which he was omni-present in those days, but somehow always failed to meet him, or even be in the same room with him. Odd!

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**Jerry Kaufman, 3522 NE 123rd Street, Seattle, Washington 98125**

<JAKaufman@aol.com>

Both Lowell Cunningham's and Ian Gunn's memoirs were entertaining. Ian brought back memories of my visit to St. Kilda in 1983. John Foyster lived there at the time and hosted a big post-Natcon party for all the out-of-town, out-of-country visitors and locals; the highlight of the party was our visit to Luna Park. Cunningham's piece inspired me to want to read his comic books to get the original flavor of the thing. Julia Morgan-Scott's illustrations for Ian's piece were wonderful. Are these scratch board, like her work in the previous issue? They look like wood or linoleum cuts.

{{☞ Yes, Julia works almost exclusively in scratch-board for the covers and interior illos she does for us. }}

Still more interesting stuff here, especially Curt Phillips on being a volunteer fire firefighter. Does he ever explain what a '10-70 Structure' is? I couldn't find it, but maybe I wasn't being careful enough.

{{☞ We'll let Curt explain that one himself: "Good heavens! Did I actually forget to explain that in the article? '10-70' is the radio code for a fire. A '10-70 structure' is a house or building fire. We've also had '10-70 train', '10-70 dumpster', and '10-70 tree'. (The tree was hit by lightning and set ablaze. I ran that one. Took me nearly an hour to completely put it out.)" }}

Dal Coger touched on the matter of fannish socioeconomic status. If he's right about where fans came from, then he might have touched on an explanation for differences between fandom then and now. Fans today seem to be in, or from, professional or solidly middle class families. I think there isn't the same pool of people forced to be underachievers because they couldn't afford higher education. Fans used to need fandom to find their creative outlet; the same sort of people today can express their abilities in work that's more challenging. It's a topic that deserves a lot more thought and even research than I can give it here.

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**Dave Rowe, 8288 W. Shelby State Rd. 44, Franklin, Indiana 46131-9211**

Do you know how the 'Men in Black' legend started? It was with a book published in 1956 entitled, *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*, whose dust jacket proclaimed it was, "The true story of what happened to certain researchers and investigators who found out where the saucers come from." It was written by Gray Barker and centered mainly on Albert K. Bender who said he quit his amateur research after being intimidated by three men in black. About a decade later Bender finally 'reappeared' with a book of his own under the unimposing title of *Flying Saucers and the Three Men* in which he claimed that the M.I.B. had not been government agents, oh no, they were aliens and they actually took him up in a U.F.O., etc. etc. One reviewer in slamming it wrote, "I had got into a frame of mind where in I felt anything might happen," and Bender's publisher, desperate for a good blurb, quoted it word for word. Showing that if nothing else, the publisher knew the market.

Ian Gunn's uproariously funny recollections of the

Scout's Melbourne *Gang Show* and its urinating goats brought to mind an odd memory with a couple of tentative connections. The 'big time' *Gang Shows* were started in London by Ralph Reed who not only produced the show but wrote all the sketches and songs. Of all the songs Reed wrote at least one became a standard: "Strolling," which was made famous by the professional musical comedy team of Flanagan & Allen. Bud Flanagan was also a part of a comedy team called 'The Crazy Gang', and one time when they appeared on ITV's *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*, some bright director had the idea of having the whole Crazy Gang sing "Strolling" while walking dogs back and forth. You guessed the other connection – on live television, as the Gang strolled from right to left, one of the dogs stopped at about center stage, cocked his leg, and a jet of liquid fertilizer watered a two-dimensional scenery bush. Bud Flanagan (to his credit and to the applause of the audience) reappeared, as the Gang strolled from left to right, with a mop and bucket, and as the song continued, he cleaned up the mess.

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**Kevin Standlee, P.O. Box 64128, Sunnyvale, California 94088**

**<Standlee.Kevin@menlolog.com>**

Over the years, I have been personally connected to perhaps a dozen or so mundane news events that were covered by television, radio, or newspaper. With rare exceptions, the coverage has been wrong, or at least one-sided and incomplete. This bothers me, because it tends to imply that the reporters ALWAYS get it wrong.

One might hope for something better from fanish sources, but clearly there are sometimes severe disagreements on matters of fact, not opinion, regarding events that should be clear. Witness Dave Kyle's mention of various errors of fact in previously-published fan histories in his article, "Caravan to the Stars." Obviously, multiple observers of the same events have completely different memories of it.

With this in mind, it is with severe trepidation that I try to comment on Mike Resnick's "Worldcon Memories" of ConFrancisco. I cannot hope to change his mind about it. If anything, I will reinforce his opinions. I fear that my comments will be ignored as those of a biased member of the convention's Executive Committee with an ax to grind. However, in my opinion, Mike paints his word picture with too broad a brush.

As one of the most visible people in the group

that Resnick describes as "some committee members [who] have spent years on the computer networks arguing with unhappy attendees...", I would presume that my opinion would be highly suspect. After all, I was the convention Secretary, and one of its Division Chiefs. Presumably, I would like to paint a picture that was all sweetness and light, where all 7,100-plus attendees were perfectly contented and the convention ran utterly without blemish.

This is nonsense, of course. ConFrancisco had some really annoying operational difficulties, and worse, they were the sort that inconvenienced a large portion of the membership. A major operational difficulty that only inconveniences a few people is rarely as obvious or commented-upon as forcing a large portion of your membership to queue up for excessively long periods of time.

We would be fools if we didn't admit to, as a group, having made some serious tactical mistakes at ConFrancisco. Actually, we admitted to them rather pointedly during the 'Gripe Session' on the last day of the convention, with Tom Whitmore and me being among the first to admit our failings and apologize for them. (This seemed to surprise many in the audience, who apparently expected us to deny that it had happened.) In particular, our attempt to emulate a successful Registration area run by Noreascon Three four years before us missed some of N3's elements that turned out to be critical. In my opinion, our major events were not run with the audience or participants' interests in mind. Judgement errors by some of the convention management magnified the mistakes until they became nearly disastrous.

In short, we blew it, and in a way that was impossible to disguise or deflect. The only bright side I can find about that part of the experience was that some of our mistakes were so irritating that we've been used as a specter with which to frighten other Worldcon committees into making sure they don't repeat our mistakes. As a result, registration for every Worldcon since then has been relatively trouble-free, and queuing for major events has been handled reasonably well (notwithstanding the people at ConAdian the following year who complained about the doors to the main hall opening *too early* – apparently some people *like* standing in line).

Without going into great detail about the loss of the San Francisco Marriott for the 1993 Worldcon – a subject which would make an article of its own – let me just say that the facts are not quite the way Res-



nick states them. Personally, I wish we had been playing closer attention to the hotel booking situation in San Francisco; that way, when Ford stiffed the Marriott, we might have been able to get back in there, with a hungrier, and therefore more cooperative, host hotel.

I'm not sure where Resnick concludes that "the con committee was pissed because we cost them 300 room-nights." I do not recall ever saying anything like this; indeed, I remember one of our hotel liaisons being somewhat relieved that we had enough people staying "off-block" that we could accommodate everyone who wanted to stay in our convention hotels. ConFrancisco ended up drawing a lot more people (about 30% more) than we originally planned; depending on how you measure "attendance," it was either the second- or third-largest Worldcon held to date. Housing all of those people was a challenge, and it was a relief to be able to handle everyone. Any irritation I personally felt was not directed at the people staying at the Marriott – who could blame them for getting what they perceived to be the best deal? – but was rather annoyance that the Marriott would get any money from our attendees after having forced us into using other hotels. It isn't as though we were happy about having our headquarters hotel be located 960 meters (about six-tenths of a mile) from our convention center instead of one-third that distance. As I've often said, it was like driving cross-country on a mini-spare-tire. (It was still closer to Moscone Center than the places at which I stayed during ConFiction and Intersection were to their respective convention centers, but people seem to be more willing to accept this separation at non-North American Worldcons.)

One of the good things about bidding for the 2002 Worldcon has been talking to many people who have *good* memories of ConFrancisco. I know that anyone reading Mike Resnick's article would have to assume that nobody who was there in 1993 could possibly have enjoyed themselves. With that many people attending, and with the mistakes our committee made, I know that there are some people whose Worldcon experience was certainly less than ideal, and for that I apologize. This is not the same thing as "arguing with unhappy attendees that they did so have a good time."

It is regrettable that some of the things ConFrancisco did very well have been, in my opinion, ignored, forgotten, or at least have gone uncredited. For in-

stance, I think we had excellent publications. In particular, a variation of the spiral-bound Pocket Program designed by Gail Sanders is now touted as one of the best ways to balance the conflicting demands of a Worldcon pocket program. David Levine very nicely cited Gail's design when he adapted it for Westercon 48 in Portland, but he is an exception. Memories of good things are shorter than those of bad, I guess.

It is generally much easier to write a negative review than a positive one. Most of what Resnick wrote about ConFrancisco was correct, as far as it went. He merely didn't cover the entire story, and he left out enough that I know personally to be true that it concerns me that all of his convention memories are as similarly selective. This would be a shame, because they all are so entertainingly written that I want to believe them.

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**Robert Whitaker Sirignano, P.O. Box  
11246, Wilmington Delaware 19850**

I didn't meet Mike Resnick at the swimming pool at the first Noreascon, but I did see that nude pool bash. I recall wandering by an amused happy-looking Robert Silverberg and seeing a couple in coital engagement at the shallow end of the pool (years later, I wonder if chlorine and water was really a good lubricant for this act). I felt left out. I was still a virgin.

On a different topic, I got a mild shock while reading Stan Freberg's Autobiography, *It Only Hurts When I Laugh*. Freberg mentioned that one of his duties during World War II was running a base newspaper. He turned over the editing and writing to some guy named Forry Ackerman. Small world?

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**Leigh Kimmel, 821 South Park Ave., Apt.  
B, Herrin, Illinois 62948  
<kimmel@siu.edu>**

I enjoyed the reminiscences in Walt Willis' "I Remember Me," in particular the observations about the travails of the often-overlooked bit-part characters, who are treated like so many objects in a set piece rather than valid characters with motivations. I also enjoyed the latest installment of "Through Time and Space with Forry Ackerman" particularly for the memory of his meeting H.G. Wells, who was quite a bit different in real life from his portrayal in the movie *Time After Time*.

And Greg Benford's "Save the Last Masque for Me" was a very good remembrance of the late Bill

Rotsler. Although I'm sad that I never got to meet him, I'm glad that there appear to have been quite a few unpublished cartoons among his personal effects, so that he will continue to be with us for a long time after he's gone.

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**Marty Cantor, 11825 Gilmore Street #105,  
North Hollywood, California 91606**

I would like to point out to Mike Resnick that I found the 1978 Phoenix Worldcon to be quite comfortable – and I spent most of my waking hours (I stayed at the Adams) wearing a tie and a tweed jacket (among the rest of my clothes), even when I had occasion to cross 'The Anvil of God' (as I remember it being called, not 'The Sun's Anvil' as he refers to it). Where I found it uncomfortable was at the 1983 Baltimore Worldcon. One step out of the airport and I wanted to immediately reverse course and head back to California where the heat is dry. What I hate is humidity – I love dry heat.

I read Rodney Leighton's Letter of Comment about the 'We Also Heard From' listing with interest and then looked at the people you WAHFed, noticing some rather well known names in said listing. Any good faned knows that BNFs and WKFs are often WAHFed even though they have written good LoCs because other LoCcers have produced just the right word you need to express a certain thought and your space constraints force you to place the remaining LoCcers in the WAHF listing. Pubbed or not, the production of a LoC is always a pleasurable experience; and, like all writers (even of LoCs), it is my hope that what I create will be enjoyed by others. LoCcers do not just produce for editors – we always hope that we can contribute to the enjoyment of a zine which the readers experience.

{{☞ You're right that a good Letter of Comment serves many purposes, not the least of which is to actually provide some feedback for the contributors to the issue being commented on. That's why we make sure that we send a collection of *all* the comments we receive (whether or not they were actually published in the Letters Column) to the respective writers and cover artists. As for why a reader would send us a LoC, though, you didn't mention an obvious reason – the person just dropped us a note to say thanks. While it would be nice to get long, substantial LoCs from everyone all the time, sometimes we get just a "thanks for sending me the fanzine, and I liked most everything in it" type of letter. Nothing wrong with that, because it shows they thought of us, but it's not really something for the Letters Column. }}

**Dennis Caswell, 2424 Maryvale Court,  
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**<dennisc@networx.on.ca>**

Seeing all the history in your fanzine, I decided to tell you my own personal fan history. About 1977, I went to my first convention. This was a gaming convention, and I continued to go to these for several years. But in 1987, while I was at Windsor Gamefest, I picked up a brochure for a science fiction convention known as Contradiction, to be held in late October in Niagara Falls. Anne McCaffrey was scheduled to be its GoH. Now, I knew that Anne McCaffrey lived in Ireland, and rarely visited North America due to her problems concerning flying. I figured that I would never get another chance to see her, so I decided to go to the convention.

What an eye opener! I found that I enjoyed myself at Contradiction more than at the best of gaming conventions. And while I was there, I found a brochure for another convention, known as Draconis, to be held in Louisville, Kentucky in March of 1988. Again, the GoH was Anne McCaffrey. I went to this one, and again enjoyed myself. An SF fan was born.

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**We Also Heard From:**

Forry Ackerman, Don Anderson, Harry Andruschak, William Bains, Martha Beck, John Berry, Pamela Boal, Bill Bowers, Ned Brooks, Ken Bulmer, Vincent Clarke, Chester Cuthbert, Sharon Farber, Naomi Fisher, Dean Grennell, Ian Gunn, Sam Helm, Craig Hilton, Irwin Hirsh, Ben Indick, Ben Jason, Terry Jeeves, Irv Koch, Robert Lichtman, Bill Mallardi, Todd Mason, Catherine Mintz, Murray Moore, Pär Nilsson, Marc Ortlieb, Elizabeth Osborne, Robert Peterson, Greg Pickersgill, Derek Pickles, Mike Resnick, Fred Smith, Steve Sneyd, Gene Stewart, Jon Stopa, Mae Strelkov, Alan Sullivan, Roy Tackett, David Thayer, Michael Waite, Ted White, and Zdenko Zak.

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**Artist Credits**

Sheryl Birkhead – pages 2, 3, 5, 24, 37  
Kurt Erichsen – pages 18, 19  
Alexis Gilliland – page 43  
Alexis Gilliland & William Rotsler – page 40  
Teddy Harvia – pages 6, 31, 32  
Joe Mayhew – pages 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36  
Julia Morgan-Scott – covers; pages 22, 23  
Charlie Williams – pages 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15  
Kip Williams – page 16



