

OH YEAH! COVER SHEET-PLEASE READ FIRST—

In looking over the enclosed second installment of OH YEAH!, I found some minor problems which I want to note here. Also, reaction to Part I is now pretty much in, and I'd like to comment a little on that as well.

Firstoff, there has been some speculation about my motives in writing the piece. I write it only because two factors are present that make it easier to do so: (1) I believe that a great deal of what we did and what we faced is common to past and certainly to future worldcons, and, therefore, some sort of record of what we did both right and wrong is of value, and (2) I think we, as a team, did a damned fine job and presented the best con within the limitations of hotel, lack of fortunetelling, and special problems would permit. I have heard an awful lot of people gripe about the *size* of Discon, but very, very few gripes that we did things wrong. Had it been another NYCon III or St. Louiscon, I don't think such a report could be properly written. It was not. It was a good con made of the hard work and sweat of literally 50 or more people, and I am proud of the result.

I am not bidding for a worldcon this year, next year, or any year in the foreseeable future. I *do* enjoy working on cons, and I feel that I have proved myself and my abilities many times in that regard. While I would love to try my hand at running one someday, mostly for the challenge, I must ruefully admit that, at this stage of the game, I am happy that I was not in Ron Bounds shoes, and believe that I did a hell of a lot more work of good quality because there was someone kicking my tail. I begin to fear that I am a natural Vice-Chairman. I was comfortable in the role and did my best work.

Second, there's been comments on both sides on my "prelude" first page and a half talking about the Baltimore bid and the DC in '71 bid, etc. A few friends of mine who are new enough that they didn't know me when I was a concious rotten bastard in the 60s were shocked at the depth of acrimony to which I would stoop in those days. I am amazed myself sometimes; the primary reasons other than normal adult maturation that caused me to change was that I didn't really like myself all that much, either. However, it didn't change the facts that that was what happened for that motivation, and I thought it part of the total picture and worth putting in. Others involved have hastened to assure me that they acted against me in the early stages without malice. I certainly accept the fact that most of them did, and I apologize if those people got the wrong impression. It did not take their collective malice to trigger an emotional response that *was* malicious on my part. I have grown up a good deal since then.

Third was the response from people like Ron Bounds that they would have to "rebut" my version. I regret that most of all, and hope it doesn't happen, because it will lead to those endless rebuttal-counter-rebuttal-counter-counter rebuttal—etc. series that do no one any good. Bob Pavlat and I had a long talk about this only a few nights ago. We agreed that OH YEAH was the situation as it appeared or as it was presented to me. As with any large and factionalized group, a distortion of the total picture is inevitable. This is why I urge Ron not to rebut, but to write his own complete convention history. I wouldn't mind seeing Bob and Bill do the same. None of the four versions will agree in interpretation, although they will agree in 95% of substantive fact. For example, one might argue that Ron wanted me in after Jay had left, knew I was bitter about a lot of stuff, and therefore played the part to me of the man in the wilderness who needed my help in order to win me over. I don't know if that's true or not; if true, it shows that my version is correct *as I saw it and as it was presented to me*. If proposition A is correct, though, it is a subjective truth showing Ron to be a better Chairman from the start than he appeared to be at the time. Ron's version would be 180 degrees from mine, though, wouldn't it? And both of us would be telling the truth. This is why I'd like to see all 4 principals write their subjective convention histories. With all of them then all of us would get a total picture and be able to make value judgments based on all the facts. But since nobody else did it, I did, because one looks around at other con committees—ending acrimoniously (LACon), in club and marriage dissolutions (St. Louis and others), etc. WSFA did it and WSFA stayed together and we're all still on friendly terms. Somebody should have done the whole thing on demands, pressures, etc. long ago. They didn't, So I have, and I sincerely urge the other principals in the drama to do the same. It would be then a much more valuable record than my own subjective reminiscences could show.

Another point seems to have been misunderstood, so I'll clarify it. By March Ron Bounds was undeniably the Chairman and grew more in responsibility and executive ability than I've ever seen anyone grow in so short a time. I have the utmost respect for him.

PART II of OH YEAH contains a major distortion of fact that I want to clear up before you read it. It was done for expediency's sake and was inexcusable. Bob Pavlat was brought in late and with reluctance, like myself. He agreed to give his opinions and expertise where needed, but he strictly limited from the beginning his functional role, which was Hotel Liason—a large, essential, and thankless task. When the Harpers left for Okinawa, Bob also agreed to take over the Art Show, a massive undertaking consuming a huge amount of time and effort. These were his two areas. The other areas of responsibility listed under BOB PAVLAT AREAS on the chart were not his. They were nobody's, since we were stretched too thin. They were considered basically undemanding and therefore were left to the department heads alone. As these areas did have problems which will be discussed later, in Part III, I saw, after listing them under Bob, that I would be unfairly casting aspersions. I apologize to Bob. Actually, all other areas were under the fifth CC person's Personnel area, which was a null.

The lines that run off the edge of the chart go only to connect each other. Nothing is missing.

Sorry about the corner stapling, but I muffed the margins.

The serious turn this report has taken caused me to severely limit its distribution. By restricting it to the 35 members of SAPS, the 65 FAPAns, and Bounds, plus two people who asked for copies who are high up on future con committees, I am reaching the total audience I wish to reach, and no copies are going to the general public in any way. If they were, I couldn't be as frank as I think I should be.

All best to you, and please be assured that this is the *only* report of this type that I will be writing on any con. Let the next group do it—better. See you all with Part III in July SAPS and August FAPA.

Jack L. Chalker 4/7/75



OH YEAH! part II



This is OH YEAH! #2, Second in a Series of 3 or 4 little fanzines that make up the unorganized memoirs of Discon II of one Jack Chalker, 5111 Liberty Heights Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21207 USA. It is intended for the April 1975 SAPS mailing and the May 1975 FAPA mailing. No notes, mirrors, or artificial aids were used in the preparation of this text, so watch it! All of the contents of OH YEAH are strictly the thoughts and opinions of Jack Chalker and in no way necessarily reflect the thoughts and opinions of any other member of the Discon 2 Committee, World Science Fiction Conventions, Inc., the Washington Science Fiction Association, or Humanity or Inhumanity at large...

=====
=====

Now, where was I. Oh, yeah...

YOU, TOO, CAN RUN A WORLDCON!

The collapse of the original committee and the creation of a new one which included at least two different people in the power structure--Bob Pavlat and myself--really meant a restart. The original idea that you could better prepare by bidding two years in advance was fine, if the committee stayed together that long. As it was, it was into March of 1974, the con was 6 months away, and we were starting from scratch.

There is this idea, prevalent even in the WSFA, that the Central Committee had all sorts of secret meetings and policy wrangling. Actually, the CC had only 2 true meetings until August, and most of the decisions were reached by consensus using the telephone. I had pressured Ron for a clearcut committee structure, and late in March one was developed along more or less military lines which may be put down to being the logical result of bureaucratic input--but I believe it was the best one possible and I still believe it's the best one. Having talked with Ken Keller, Don Lundry, and others ad infinitum on this, none of whom agree that this is the way they will do things, has not dissuaded me. KC's committee structure is too blurry and fragmented to get the total picture at all times, although that's my opinion and time will tell. The other extreme, the one-man or Cabal convention committee, generally loads so much on one or a very few people that it breaks down. This lack of grass-roots, from the beginning committee structure has been at the heart of more worldcon committee breakdowns at the cons than anything else I've seen. Maybe you have a better, but here's ours, as evolved by Ron and shaped by the rest of us, and the only thing I can say is that it works.

First, the Cardinal Rule: Argue all you want, but the Chairman is an absolute monarch and when the decision is made it is Made. Basically, lower structure fights the battles before the Chair, and the Chair decides--and everyone abides by the decision, like it or not. A democratic con central committee is an inevitable anarchistic one.

Second, Policy is made by a clearly defined group of no more than 5 people. Too many and decisions will not get made in reasonable time or manner. Too few and you don't have enough inputs for proper decision-making. Everyone on your con staff should know who these people are.

Third, establish clearcut areas of responsibility to the Central Committee. The Chair should oversee the CC, and the CC should oversee

=====

everyone else.

Fourth, replace anyone who is not doing the job no matter how hard it is to do personally.

Fifth, hold frequent meetings of the entire staff, once a month or so for the last year before the con, then on a weekly basis starting 4 to 6 weeks before the con. These will be basically party-oriented despite giving everyone a chance to report on their activities, BUT they accomplish two things (A) they let everyone know what everyone else is doing, and (B) they build a close-knit team spirit.

As for Committee organization, we originally had a Chairman and 3 assistants of roughly coequal rank but with differing responsibilities and your Treasurer. As was mentioned earlier, one of the 3 assistants was unwilling to sacrifice his time when it was inconvenient and therefore became useless. So, we were left with a 4-person board.

The major functions were divided more or less as follows:

RON BOUNDS CHAIRMAN - oversees the rest. Also oversaw Program.

JACK CHALKER VC/SPECIALS - oversaw routine business functions (like '76 balloting, etc.) and special activities (masquerade, awards, auctions, etc.).

BOB PAVLAT VC/STATIC FUNCTIONS - oversaw Art Show, other fixed and static exhibits, rooms, etc. Equally, Hotel liason pre and on-site.

BILL EVANS TREASURER - oversaw all money functions (i.e. banquet menu, registration, etc.)

What is missing, of course, is the man/woman needed for Personnel. This was originally filled but fumbled; we all took on the function, and because there was no single person on it consistently from the start it caused the only organizational problems. Were I do do it again, I would first state that the Chairman should have no specific functions--like Program--and that the actual work on such things as Art Show, Masquerade, etc. should have been given to a staff and chaired or supervised by the VCs, not actually directly and personally run and dominated by them. It gives them too much to do to do everything right.

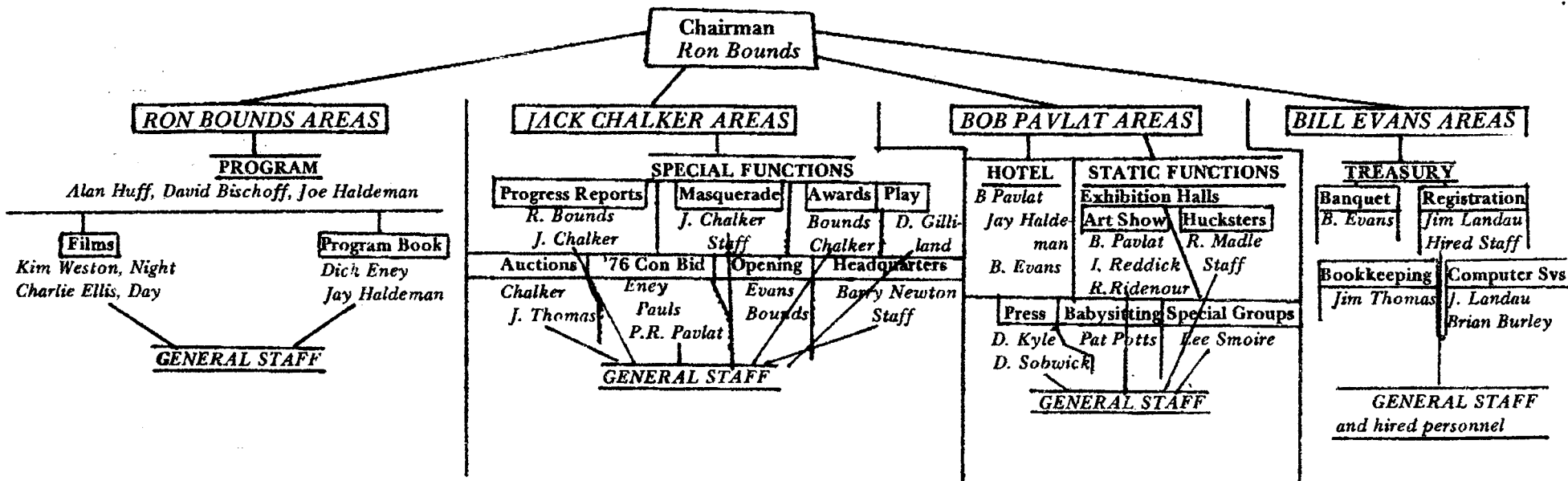
Originally all under us were to be Staff, but Lee Smoire made some objections about in-charge people being ranked with gophers, so a new category was created for the Department Heads--the Film man, the Headquarters Supervisor, the Program Chairman, etc. etc. etc. Those people listed as "Committee" with specific functions in the PRs and PB. We referred to them as Department Heads but the official title was OFFICIALS. It was accomplished at Discon I that way and worked then, too. Everyone without a specific area of responsibility was STAFF.

The two rough flow-charts on Page 3 are the Actual and the Ideal from my point of view. Obviously there were and are a number of Departments not listed for sake of brevity. But it's a good system, efficient, it works, and it keeps everyone under control at all times.

Up to July the processes were mostly administrative. I have a motto that IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT WILL KILL YOU and so we strived to get a system that would nip the little things in the bud.

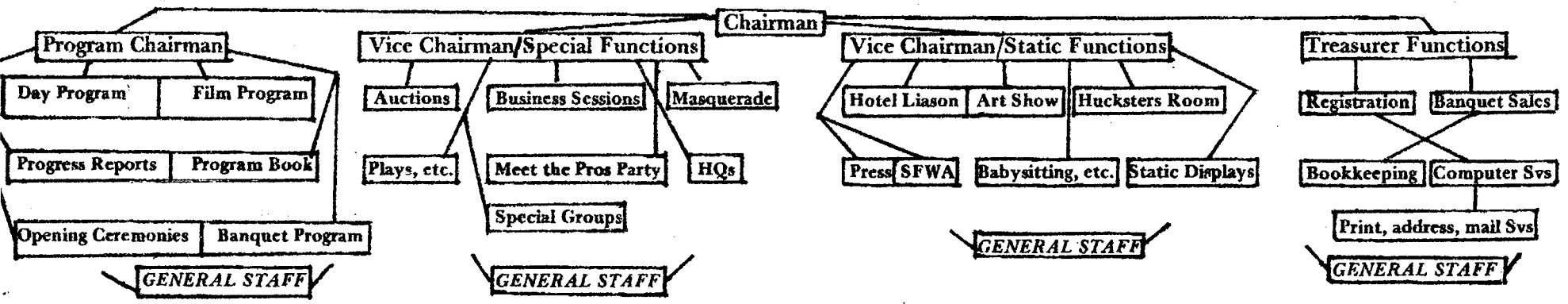
Programming was developed from a rather remarkable program item

DISCON II COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



While the above represents the actual table of organization, it omits a rather large segment of people by lumping them into the Staff/General Staff category. In general, where Staff is noted in the table, it represents those people who were committed before the convention and were in on the general planning and open committee meetings from the start. When it gets to General Staff, it refers to personnel not involved in planning but only in on-site execution. Although this included the bulk of the Washington Science Fiction Association, it also included a large number of out-of-town fans, many of whom volunteer to work on all world conventions. Their expertise on-site should never be refused.

RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



The above scenario differs in several ways from the one above, most notably in the addition of an additional central committee person. This more evenly distributes the supervisory load. A few functions were shifted to reflect more common areas of concern. "Banquet Program" is considered to include awards. The other major change is the fact that the Chairman is only at the top, in overall supervision of the con, and has no "areas" of his own. To have such is a killer schedule beyond human endurance. You should also note the large duplication of names in the departments themselves in the top figure. This, too, caused inhuman overloads. Each one of the bold-faced Departments should have a department head not connected with the five top spots. Those top spots should supervise all Department heads under their jurisdiction, not do their jobs.

list prepared in about 48 hours by Dave Bischoff. Unfortunately Ron and others eliminated Dave's fantastic titles, which someday will have to be used. These were shaped into a basic 4-day program by Ron, Dave, and Alan Huff, the whole crew of which huddled into the wee hours on nights and weekends getting the thing in shape. Joe Haldeman was out in Iowa, but he had the major writer contacts we needed and so was Discon 2's Official Procurer (his term). As the Program Crew fed the program in to him with suggested personnel, Joe would proceed to contact them and corral them in.

Although I tried to keep abreast of every single thing in con functions, I did neglect programming, and so still can't tell you how 3 individuals with such a combined superhuman capacity for continually imbibing brew ever got that program into shape, but they did.

Programming, of course, can be done early only on topics; it's impossible to get firm commitments from speakers until fairly close to the con, when all are fairly certain if they will be there. Certainly your program structure can be up by March or April, but nailing down the Who is usually best attempted between mid-May and your Program Book deadline. Even at PB deadline you will not know everyone who'll be on your program. Don't worry about it--it's the Pocket Program that gives that kind of information anyway.

At the start we were already structured in a few ways. First, we decided long ago--it was Jay's idea--to have the Meet the Pros Party in late afternoon. This broke the balance fine and gave us a nice ease-in on Friday afternoon, but it left a severe gap for Friday evening. We were aware that we could expect 4,000 people plus and had to plan for them. I was extremely concerned that 4000 people should be blotto with no functions other than films on the first night of the con. It would set a crowd control tone hard to regain. Thus, I suggested that the Gillilands be pressured to put on a new performance of Inside-2001: A Space Opera, which Alexis had written for a Disclave a couple of years back and which, under Doll Gilliland's direction, had been a big hit and had even played some DC coffeehouses afterwards. Many of the original cast were left around, and remembered most of it. The rest could be recruited. Doll is a strict and exacting taskmaster, and insists on things Her Way, and she almost scuttled the production in disgust several times (as the cast included many Department Heads--and Ron and me). There was also the hesitation and nervousness that what went over so well in a 250-seat hall and a 100-seat coffeehouse might be impossible in a 4000-seat auditorium. But it was needed and I believed in it, and after a while everyone else did, too. So we pressured Doll to continue and she got even by being as strict as possible. We rehearsed every WSFA meeting for an hour or more. We rehearsed on alternate non-WSFA weekends. We even rehearsed during and after general committee meetings.

Thus, the basic structure, from about May on, was: Registration on Thursday, noon on, with films starting about 5 PM for entertainment of the early crowds, which we estimated at about 1000 or less on Thursday, coming in and spread out all day. This was an error. Registration should have started on Wednesday, for that number were in by the end of Wednesday, and we could have avoided the 2000 person registration crush on Thursday.

Friday, Open registration at 9, Static Rooms at 10 (Art Show, Huckster Room, etc.), officially open at 12:30, program to 4:30, then Meet-the-Pros Party, and Inside 2001, followed by all-night films.

The decision to do almost 24-hour film programming came late, in June, when we realized that 4000 people were a huge number and had to be dealt with. It was felt that day film programming would siphon off a significant number of people and we were right. It helped save our ass.

=====
Saturday presented the same structure, but ended with the Pro GoH Speech until about 5:30, then the Masquerade. The decision to have the Fan GoH (Fri) and Pro GoH (Sat.) speeches outside of the banquet was based on the past two years precedents, and were good ones. The banquet is overlong to extremes now, and serious speeches are out of place there-- and don't do justice to the presentations. Later on I'll cover Banquets and what should be done about them as they now stand.

Sunday same format, except the ending was the Hugo Awards Banquet. Monday we put the Business meeting at 10 (a mistake--more again later) and ended proceedings about 5-5:30, with a shut-down after.

It was a traditional format except for Friday, but there is something to be said for it. Kansas City is departing from it much more radically than we, but I do not feel that the basic format is wrong or needs changing. It is comfortable, but it allows for a maximum of creativity. There is a temptation to experiment wildly, but my general feeling is that structure is the foundation stone upon which you build your personal convention; more radical departures than one or two at a time could cause a foundational collapse.

Of course, the program presented us with a serious problem in that we would have three functions when a large part (perhaps 85%) of the people at the con would be present, these being the play, the Masquerade, and the Banquet. We ignored the play for two reasons, the first being that while we adequately planned for the total number of attendees we did not expect them all to be there by Thursday. Second, at the time we planned everything, we didn't know about Harlan's film.

I have always advocated showmanship at conventions, and pressed for some at Discon II. Back at Discon I, Scithers and his group had used the bagpiping of Carl Fredericks for the Masquerade and in show spots and had had a really spactacular opening sequence involving a sword-fight. It was impossible in the end to get two qualified fencers for a repeat of that opening, but we did decide on a bagpipe motif for the Masquerade which later extended to the opening as well. A local Alexandria bagpipe group, semi-pro, was contacted through the local SCA people (these were not SCA, but the two groups had performed at the same places in the past). For the Masquerade I'd thought in fairly modest terms, say two pipers and a drummer, but we wound up within budget getting the entire pipe and drum corps. For the opening a local piper with SCA connections was hired for a walk-through that we believed would get things going on the proper spirit.

The point is that a World Science Fiction Convention is not just a convention, nor, in the strictest sense, is it a convention at all. Virtually all conventions in any professional area have a serious business purpose; they are put on so that people in a given profession can be exposed to the newest techniques and equipment and procedures for doing their work better. Although they are highly social, the social action is peripheral to the primary idea or contributes to it (i.e. a famous author promoting a book line, etc. at the ABA Convention). Even in informal and social conferences, such as those of social groups like the VFW and Shrine, the purpose is organizational--it is where the national/international officers of those groups come to make the decisions affecting their memberships for the coming year.

People don't come to a worldcon for that.

=====

A World Science Fiction Convention is an entertainment event. There is no proper analog to it. In a worldcon, business, while serious and intense, is peripheral, and the con committee has nothing to do with it. The primary purpose of a worldcon is to entertain the large number of people who like the subject, with the only underlying business motive that it generally promotes the whole field. As a result, committees must approach the problem as producers of a large-scale, multi-media entertainment program and not as a traditional convention. This means that your major production values concern the maximum amount of diversified entertainment for the people who come, and it places the primary responsibility of the committee towards the attendees, who are a random and cross-cultural, cross-diciplinary mob not possible to categorize further. When this number of people is a small group, the task is reasonably easy, but when it numbers in the thousands it is a massive undertaking.

One of my primary concerns from the start was crowd control. Basically, no matter what the size of the group, if you give them something to do, something that entertains, they will act as a controlled mob--that is, they will do things when and where you want them for your easiest purposes, and you will have a minimum of trouble. If, on the other hand, you leave a group of that size at any time to their own devices--you bore them, in other words--the mob becomes unruly, uncontrollable, and you have problems.

Much has been made of the problem of limiting attendance at worldcons, but this is neither a serious problem (you can keep to a minimum the number of functions at which the largest share of your attendance will be in one place at one time) nor one that should be addressed to the fanatical lengths that places like Kansas City seem to be taking them. It's not the number of people that is the problem, and we at Discon recognized this. It's how you handle crowds--any size crowd. A few examples.

The Masquerade has usually been a mess because it's extremely long. But even short Masquerades, such as the one at Torcon, has serious crowd control problems because little was done for the audience during those long breaks. Thus, they milled, spilled over the platforms, loused up the light and other fixed things that are necessary, and made a mess of it while the bulk of the audience sat bored or restless. By the time the next run-through came amount, the audience had been mentally and in some cases physically lost, and the control of the crowd around stage and contestants had become at worst unmanageable, at best a war between the committee staff and the audience. We were determined that such things could be controlled. Also using Torcon (not because it was the worst--indeed, it was a damned fine con--but because, as we are to Australia and KC, it was the most recent one we had to measure ourselves against) the Torcon banquet was ruined when nonpaying fans were told to sit anywhere in the paying sections and chairs were set up for them that even blocked the views of the paying banquet people. These people in many cases became offensive, uncontrollable, or just plain rude. Again, we planned against this. If someone's going to pay \$10-\$12 to sit at a banquet, they should have the best view and their own company.

Crowd control plus the primacy of the entertainment fuctions were the two items we kept most in mind, and they are the two most important items for any con committee to remember.

=====
The funny thing about Discon II is, despite the sleepless nights and ulcerous days, once the basic structure of the con was evolved and diagrammed, and once the central committee and department heads were all formed up and given their tasks, it fell together much easier and with fewer problems than any of us had anticipated. A few areas of special and unusual interest developed during the last 3 months and I'll run some of them down here, not necessarily in order.

PROGRESS REPORTS

For heavens sake, always have a staff to do the progress reports. Jay had done PRs 1 and 2 himself, even printed them himself, and so when 3 and 4 came up we had no one to do them. What it wound up was that Ron and I would get together at the Pavlats with one or two drafted volunteers (Barry Newton in particular) on a Saturday and Sunday and we'd write the damned things. Then they'd be all brought over to my house, where Ron and I would take turns on this typewriter typing up and rewriting the material. We used 11 X 17 sheets and used this face (IBM Bookface Academic 10 Pt.) double-spaced, then reduced 50%. Ted Pauls was prevailed upon to provide Pres-Type headings, and we struggled to add the ones with available Pres-Type that we hadn't thought of in advance. Usually a 2-day and all-night session here would nail it down, and then Ron would get it to the printers for printing and binding. Jim Landau would sneak a computer run on Pentagon computers of our addresses, or Brian Burley would do the same from his Army job in New Jersey, and there'd be a frantic rush to get it all out. This was true of both 3 and 4. #3, indeed, was brought in pieces to Balticon, and, down a long hall stretching from the con suite party, we all (and we included anybody not inebriated who came into or out of the party) stuffed the PRs and inserts in the envelopes, slapped labels on, sealed them and stamped them. Ron then left the con to run them down the Post Office on Saturday night, where he overloaded the central night mail bin. #4 was only slightly better, collated at WSFA.

Such a rush for tired and very busy men also meant mistakes were made and others not caught. We asked Ted Pauls to make up the '76 World-con mail ballot, and none of us noticed until it was in the mail to people that Ted had written VOTE FOR ONE ONLY on the ballot when my instructions in the PR properly instructed an Australian Ballot.

The Hugo nomination forms were even worse, since none of us could find any copy of the category definitions and we finally used an old one which wasn't 100% right.

Jay Haldeman had semi-obligated Discon to a set of awards that were sponsored and paid for by Lin Carter, for fantasy writers, to be called Gandalfs. Jay had forgotten to tell us about them, and Lin came up with them shortly before the nomination ballot was to go out. To us, it sounded like a bad idea for several reasons: (1) Contrary to Lin's claims, fantasy and swords-and-sorcery has won Hugos and a fair percentage of them, (2) too many awards cheapen the ones you do give, and (3) it looked like a set of parallel Hugos. The only category it did not duplicate was the Grand Master of Fantasy award, and this we decided to list and count. Lin was asked if we should exclude non-20th Century writers, or at least disqualify Tolkien since he was sure to win if he wasn't and the award was in his honor anyway. Lin said no, so events went as expected there. Somehow it never occurred to Lin that Tolkien would win....

=====

PROGRAM BOOK

A separate Program Book staff should always be used. It wasn't, and it was our major personnel failure--nobody would take or touch the job, and as things progressed fewer of us had time. Finally, in early June, we talked Dick Eney into it, although Dick was so recently returned to DC fandom and hadn't been a real participant up to this point and it remained for Jay Haldeman and Ron Bounds to take Dick's PB and redo it. It wasn't anybody's fault, simply the fact that a PB editor must be found and in from the start.

AT THE DOOR PRICES

Jay Haldeman had committed Discon II in print to less than \$10 at the door, but it became increasingly clear very early that, if we were to prepare for the large number of people expected and cover expenses, we would have to have a much larger kitty available. We jacked up the advance rate to compensate, but when the budget was done--and it was done about 120 times by Bounds, by Bounds and me, and by Evans, and by Evans and Bounds, and by Evans, Bounds, and me--we realized that we needed a strong at the door charge to offset any potential losses.

Look, the con committee takes all the risks. It gets little pass-on from past cons, it has enormous expenses (see your Final Discon PR), and all of this is obligated by the con committee. We formed a supervisory corporation, Science Fiction Conventions, Inc., to consolidate and organize, but theoretically if the con went bust we the Directors were liable after the meager assets of the corporation were liquidated. You must plan for the worst, and this we had to do for contradictory causes. (1) If 5000 people might show up, and they might, we had to spend or commit the money for the activities to pay for what they would require. (2) If, having spent or committed this money, only half or less showed, we'd be broke and minus at the \$5 rate. So we upped it to \$9--still under \$10, but what we needed.

I am totally opposed to Kansas City's advance scale, though, which badly discriminates against people in bad economic times. A rate of \$7 advance is adequate for capitalization up to August 1, and there is never much of an excuse for more than \$4 for Supporting (ours was kept at \$3) at any time. The rest is either profiteering or monumental insecurity.

By the way--ads do not and can not pay the cost of the Program Book and PRs, where costs are enormous. The most democratic and least felt area to spread the costs around is in the attending memberships.

HUGOS

John Millard promised us Hugos, but we were nervous over those empty bases at Torcon and reports of technical problems. By May we still hadn't any Hugos, so Ron and I talked it over and he decided to get our own. They were made via Alva Rogers and Charlie Brown, and arrived in late July. The 1st of August or so we went out to Larry Beck--The Trophy King in Baltimore and there Ron sketched and diagrammed the bases he wanted and left a sample Hugo. We ordered 15 custom bases to Ron's design; we had 15 Hugos. Why so many? You can't wait until all the votes are in to see how many you need, you have to assume the worst and get a couple extra for insurance. Also, casting sometimes gives people less than a perfect set (a couple of our rockets looked as if they'd survived meteor storms). The rocket design is standardized, but the bases are not.

Ron also brought up to the Central Committee a proposal to give a special Hugo to Chesley Bonestell, the great astronomical artist whose works had influenced a lot of SF and had also been the earliest attraction and

=====
 deep influence on Ron himself. The rules specifically said that anything with Hugo on it had to be voted upon, but there was ample precedent (remember Heicon's Hugos to the Apollo 11 Astronauts for Best Moon Landing Ever?) and as there is nothing that really legally binds a committee to the rules (Torcon showed this) we gave unanimous consent.

HUGO BALLOT COUNTING

The nomination ballots were given to Mark Owings and Jim Landau to count, and about 400, or a little under, were received by the deadline. Mark looked up each nomination to check its eligibility under the rules and a few were thrown out because of this but all of the major contenders were validated. The Campbell was the toughest to validate--a non-Hugo--and the Gandalf got the most varied nominations, some of whom were almost unbelievable.

The nomination ballots were counted under a minimum security blanket, but not a serious one. We knew, however, that the final Hugo ballots would need absolute security. Some thought had gone into computer counting, but this was rejected on two grounds, that it would put too many people in the know and that it was a cumbersome program to write and validate.

Bounds originally wanted to count them all personally, but as I was handling the awards and plaques and would pick up the Hugos anyway, and because when he looked at the about 1000 ballots in he realized the magnitude of the job, I was elected.

For two days and nights in August, starting the night before Nixon resigned and going right up to and through Ford's swearing-in. The count was done with Bounds and I the only ones around in his massive dining room, and with countless phone calls from convention people and con business associates interrupting at all hours.

Every ballot went down to at least the fourth elimination to get a majority, and most went the route. The tie question was the roughest to resolve, as there are no ties in an Australian ballot system. It became evident to us, though, that in a couple of categories we had two competitors who were never more than 20-30 votes apart out of 700-1000 cast, and, even more seriously, we discovered that in those categories the lead had changed (although never by more than those 20-30) with almost every recount after dropping the lowest total and counting second, third, etc. place votes. The closeness occurred in the Campbell Award and in Short Story, Fanzine, and Fan Writer categories; however, in the Campbell and Fanzine categories we also had that multiple lead changing. It was clear that the final winner in those two categories was being determined by a few fourth and fifth place voters--so we awarded ties in those two categories. In the others--short story and fan writer--we did not declare a tie, since the winner in each case had been the leader all along, never changing, even if by a slim margin.

There was no question at any time who would win the novel, Gandalf, Novella, Novelette, Pro Artist (the biggest runaway), Pro Editor, Dramatic Presentation or Fan Artist (second biggest runaway). All were leading from the start and increased each count.

The Central Committee had argued about how to announce the winners. Heicon had started the Miss America Pageant type of "First runner-up," "Second runner-up," etc. announcement, and Noreastcon had continued it (Tony Lewis told me it was because they thought that was how it was

done, the majority experience of their committee having been Heicon) and it had settled in. It was my strong feeling that we should have no such thing, but should stick to "The Nominees" and the winner. A Hugo has great commercial value--it means bigger advances, bonuses, extra sales when on book covers, better contracts. Even "Hugo Nominee" has value. But "Third Runner-Up for Best Novella Hugo" has not appeared anywhere for obvious reasons. A loser can always console himself that perhaps he was second, or still use the Hugo Nominee label with pride. Somebody who came in fifth in a five-person race has little of value commercially or egoistically. It was my feeling that the placement of the runners-up should not be given out. The CC agreed, and, finally, Ron agreed as well. Instead, we'd give out nice Certificates of Nomination to all nominees. This typewriter hasn't gotten entirely clean of the gold from typing those certificates yet.

Of course, when word of this got out things started popping. Charlie Brown was the worst offender, even making a direct personal attack on me in LOCUS and calling up people and getting other people to call and write against this policy. Ron finally cracked under the pressure and gave Charlie the runner-up orders on the Sunday night of the con. I blew my stack on it when it came out in LOCUS and, frankly, not because I believed it was bad.

Ron had agreed and ruled on a policy decision, and we had proceeded and acted from that decision. Then he unilaterally and without informing the rest of the committee reversed this policy, leaving many, like myself, looking foolish, or like liars, for past actions.

Remember that rule at the start? The Chairman is Dictator; when he makes his decision, agree with it or not, you do it.

But there's a corrolary for the Chairman that he should always remember: ONCE A DECISION OF POLICY IS MADE, STICK TO IT or you're going to shaft the underlings who acted on the prior decision. This does not mean inflexibility; if Ron had changed his mind, though, it should have been announced at and to the committee session ahead, not sprung later.

A Chairman is never any better than the people working under him or her, and alienating those people before the fact is fatal, after the fact is gratuitous insult and unnecessary roughness to people who worked their asses off.

This was a relatively minor issue, true, but actions of the Chair like this--some not so minor, some not so minor to the people it was done to--have wrecked post-con clubs, friendships, etc. ALWAYS GIVE THE UNDERLINGS CLEAR POLICY, NEVER SHAFT THEM. This a Chairperson must do.

By the way, I was extremely happy to see that Ron got the order wrong in two categories. And I'm not saying which two.

AND FOR THE NEXT INSTALLMENT....

Well, I've brought you up to the critical last weeks before the con and showed you some of the major reasons we did things, how we did things, and why. Obviously missing is the frantic air, the ulcers, the hard labor, pressure, and other such. One final point: one author we wrote to to appear on the program replied yes, he would, and we could send his \$100 fee to.... I replied that it wasn't possible to do so. By the end of Discon II, about 150 people would have worked on the con at great physical, mental, and financial sacrifice. None was paid. About 85 people were on the Program. If this almost 300 people were paid \$100 it would be \$30,000, an impossible sum, beyond the means of any worldcon financially. And who's to decide who gets paid and who doesn't? It was decided that, after the con, we'd refund the memberships of all people on the program and workers, and after that we'd see what the surplus allowed for reimbursements. It's all anyone should and can do. Next: The period August 15-29, and a convention blow-by-blow account.