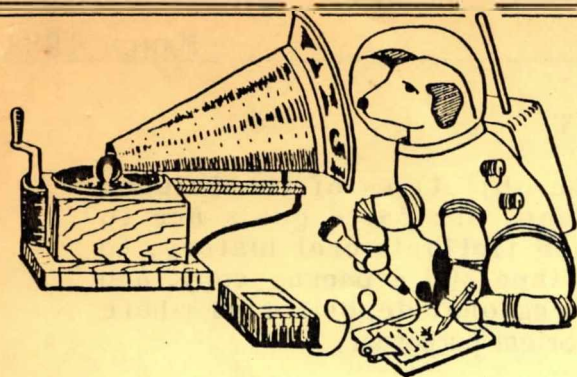


# THE SCIENCE FICTION ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1988



## SFOHA DIRECTORS

The current SFOHA Officers are:

President	Larry Tucker
Vice President	Nancy Tucker
Secretary	Suzi Stef1
Treasurer	Jean Barnard
Director-at-Large	Howard DeVore
Director-at-Large	Lloyd Biggle

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT MARCH-DECEMBER 1987

INCOME	
35 Memberships	175.00
Donations	195.00
Interest	<u>63.60</u>
	433.60
EXPENSE	
Paper for Newsletter	25.95
Bank Deposit Stamp	4.16
Postage Stamps	22.00
State License	10.00
7 Audio Tapes	<u>23.50</u>
	85.61
Net Worth 1 March 1987	1240.68
Net Worth 31 December 1987	1588.67
Net Gain	347.99

## SUPPLEMENT COMPLETED

Lloyd Biggle (wearily) reports that the first supplement to the SFOHA Catalog has been completed. It includes listings of 120 tapes which were acquired by the end of November of last year. Since the November deadline, Lloyd's report continues, we have received an additional 45 new tapes to be included in the next supplement.

## NEW MEMBERS

During 1987, and early 1988, the following people joined the ranks of SF Oral Historians: Alice Coatney, Joshua Grosse, Mike Lalor, Dick & Nicki Lynch, Michael J. McDougale, and Jennifer White.

Welcome aboard!

## LIFE MEMBERS REINSTATED

According to the records, they hadn't paid their dues in three years or more. The reason, it turned out, was that they no longer needed to pay dues--they were life members.

Two people who paid for, but were not credited with, life memberships in SFOHA have been returned to the roster. Martin Helgesen was reinstated after he returned the questionnaire that was included in the last issue of the SFOHA Newsletter. Martin has been an active member of our group for a number of years. Recently, he has been involved in the prodigious task of creating an index to our Archives.

The other misplaced life member made his presence known to us during a business meeting over which he was presiding. That's right, it was none other than our current president, Larry Tucker.

This seems to be an appropriate place to insert a reminder to all our members. If you think that the membership status on your mailing label is in error, don't get mad--get out a postage stamp and let us know about it. Corrections should be sent to:

Jean Barnard  
1810 Charlton  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

# 1988 BALLOT ENCLOSED

### WHY WE EXIST

Article II of the SFOHA Bylaws states the objectives of the Science Fiction Oral History Association. In summation, our basic goals are to acquire tapes of material significant to science fiction's oral history, to maintain dual archives consisting of the original tape and a backup copy, and to donate copies of the recordings to official regional depositories where they will be available for study and preserved for historical purposes.

The publication of guides to our archives in the form of a catalog and supplement has introduced a problem we have not been confronted with previously because no one knew what recordings we had collected. Scholars obtain access to the catalog and send us long lists of tapes they would like copies of for use in their research. Teachers want to know how to obtain certain tapes to play for their classes. Fans would like to have tapes of their favorite authors just to listen to.

The Bylaws make no provision for SFOHA to provide copies of items in its archives on request. Neither do they impose on SFOHA the responsibility for directly assisting scholars with research projects. This is the function of the regional depositories. A scholar wishing to use the oral history archives for research in science fiction can go to Eastern New Mexico University, Michigan State University, or University of Kansas, where copies of all of our tapes are to be found and where there are facilities for listening to them.

SFOHA has no license to make copies--and neither do the universities housing the regional depositories. Copies can be made only with the permission of the speakers. Even if we could legally do so, we do not have the facilities or the people power to make copies on request, package and mail them, and fuss with all of the details of managing the expenses and billing and collecting. Making copies of tapes is a time-consuming chore.

It is SFOHA policy to furnish copies on request to people actually represented on the tapes. This of course is legal, and we consider it an obligation. We have from time to time offered tapes to our members at cost--but we do this only after first obtaining permission from the speakers, and that is usually a permission with a time limit. (Whenever tapes are offered, members wanting copies should order them immediately. We may not be able to repeat an offer.)

Officers of SFOHA, because of their close association with both oral history and with science fiction, naturally acquire expertise in aspects of science fiction research. They are sometimes consulted about research projects and on occasion they have even assisted with them, but this was done on an individual basis and not as an official function of SFOHA, whose objectives are stated above. Unfortunately, SFOHA simply does not have the resources to enable it to undertake projects outside the scope of its Bylaws.

Why, then, publish the catalog and supplement? First, they are guides to the archives for those using the regional depositories. Without them, the collections would have very limited value because no one would know what was there or how to find it. Second, and equally important, they are reports to the membership. They inform you about our progress in achieving the objectives defined in the Bylaws. Please notice that on the cover of catalog and supplement we clearly indicate that the publication is intended for members of SFOHA only and is not for sale.

--The SFOHA Directors

## TAPE ACQUISITIONS, MEMBER DONATIONS

In the past, SFOHA has made several efforts to organize the recording of events at World Science Fiction conventions--with very slight success. Wally Smart has remedied this failure to a degree, all by himself. He simply attends Worldcons and records as many sessions as possible. He has donated seven cassettes he recorded in England at Conspiracy 87.

Wally also has donated recordings from Windycon XIV and from Ad Astra 7/ Convention 7, a Canadian convention held at Toronto. All of these tapes unfortunately arrived a week too late to be included in the First Supplement to the Archives Catalog.

Al Trestrail has donated eight more tapes for his AT Series. These tapes were recorded at Convergence, held last November in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Moscon, held last September in Moscow, Idaho.

Eric Leif Davin has contributed a copy of the manuscript of a two-part article based on an interview with David Lasser (a recording of the interview is in his ELD Series in the SFOHA Archives); and also a copy of the published version of the article in Fantasy Commentator, Fall, 1987.

Our thanks to Martha Beck, who has donated six 90-minute blank cassettes. SFOHA always is in need of quality tape. The quantity of tape we use would surprise our members. When we list 100 cassettes in a catalog, this means we have just used an additional 200 tapes--one for a first copy and one for a backup.

Note the word "quality," however. We are storing irreplaceable information, and we can't risk putting it on bargain cassettes. We recommend that members stay with "name" brands, such as Fuji, Sony, TDK, or 3M. We further recommend that you use high bias tape, as opposed to normal bias. It costs a little more, but the results are worth it. Metal tape, of course, is even better still. How can you tell if a tape is normal or high bias? It says so, right on the package.

## PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENT, NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

The current SFOHA Directors unanimously endorse a proposed amendment to the Bylaws, appearing on the 1988 Ballot. This amendment would change the election date for officers from November to March, and the terms of office from January-December to April-March. It is the judgment of the Directors that this change would place the terms of office in better synchronization with the SF convention calendar.

The Bylaws amendment is tied in with a proposed SFOHA Newsletter publication schedule, which would call for issues to be published in October, February, and June. The October issue would feature a call for nominations for the next Ballot, con reports on Midwestcon, Worldcon, and any other conventions with which SFOHA had been involved, as well as plans for Oral History activities at ConClave, Windycon, and ConFusion. In the February issue would be the Ballot, year-end summaries of activities, and reports on Fall and Winter conventions. The June issue would publish election results and plans for upcoming conventions, including Midwestcon and Worldcon.

## REELS REMASTERED

Martha Tattan has earned our undying gratitude by completing the task of remastering our reel recordings onto audio cassettes. Thanks to her efforts, we now have twenty-three additional cassettes of material that was previously on reels and thus not available to us.

This finally ends most of our problem with reels, except for a few that were recorded at odd speeds and constitute an engineering problem.

SFOHA NEWSLETTER, March 1988,  
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EDITOR: Larry Tucker

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE:

Jean Barnard  
Lloyd Biggle  
Larry Tucker  
Nancy Tucker

## THE LOOM OF ORAL HISTORY

A friend in England recently sent me a book entitled, The Private World of St. John Terrapin. It is subtitled, "A Novel of the Café Royal," by Chapman Pincher. However, it is presented as a non-fiction book with a preface by Pincher describing Terrapin's life and the diaries upon which the book purportedly is based. The premise is a magnificent idea, and I wish I had thought of it myself.

Terrapin lost his hearing at the age of twenty. He had excellent eyesight, however, and he trained himself to be a highly competent lip reader. He also taught himself shorthand. A modest legacy made him financially independent for life.

He devoted his life to oral history. At the time--1886-- the Café Royal, and especially its Domino Room, was much in the news because of the celebrities who frequented it. Terrapin visited the Domino Room and was so captivated by it that he became the habitué of it and its successor, the Brasserie, until the latter closed in 1951. There he sat, day after day, with his notebook in front of him, reading lips and taking down the conversations in shorthand of all the celebrities of more than sixty years: artists, critics, musicians, actors and actresses, politicians, the nobility. The Domino Room was ideal for his purpose because the walls were lined with long, gilded mirrors that permitted Terrapin to eavesdrop upon conversations from several angles.

And so the notebooks of St. John Terrapin contain a wealth of oral history recorded for many years before recording apparatus came into common use. Whistler, Oscar Wilde, Beardsley, Shaw, Paderewski, Toulouse-Lautrec, D.H. Lawrence, Caruso, Verlaine, Augustus John, Enid Bagnold, Virginia Woolf, every British celebrity of the day and many from the continent had their conversations duly entered into Terrapin's notebooks. It is a fascinating concept, and the modern oral historian, fussing with microphones and permission forms, will envy him deeply!

It also is a reminder of how much of human history we lost before a recording apparatus was invented. If Boswell had possessed a tape recorder, he could have given us a much more detailed, more comprehensive--and far more accurate!--picture of Samuel Johnson, and modern historians would be able to restudy and reevaluate his work.

Unfortunately, the Terrapin notebooks of this novel do not exist. The glittering, priceless oral history the book describes is non-existent. All oral history is non-existent until someone makes the effort to put the words on paper--or get them on tape.

--Lloyd Biggle