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September 1989

A ShadowFax Publication

from

Martin & Margaret, 43 Saddleback Rd, Shaw, Swindon, Wilts. SN5 9ST

DON'T PANIC

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Order has now been restored after last months takeover of the means of Mammalian communication. The perpetrators, Chris "I Volunteer" O'Shea and Caroline "A Creme Egg a Jacuzzi and thou" Mullan, have been exiled to occupied New England.

HUGO AWARDS 1989

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NOVELCYTEEN C.J.Cherryh
NOVELETTESchroedinger's Kitten George Alec Effinger
NOVELLAThe Last of the Winnebagos ... Connie Willis
SHORT STORYKi inyaga Mike Resnick
NON-FICTIONTHE MOTION OF LIGHT IN WATER.. Samuel R Delany
DRAMATIC PRESENTATIONWHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT
FANZINEFile 770 Mike Glyer
PROFESSIONAL EDITORGardner Dozois
FAN WRITER Dave Langford
PROFESSIONAL ARTIST Michael Whelan
FAN ARTIST Brad Foster & Diana Gallagher Wu (Joint winners).
SEMIPROZINE LOCUS

Results courtesy of Tim Illingworth, errors and typos courtesy of the Mammal.

NOREASCON III (Dateline Sunday)

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As of Sunday morning NOREASCON was reported as running well with only one major problem. The fire officers had insisted that the art show be completely rebuilt. Something which took a day and a half. Also one reel of ~~MOONTRAP~~ MOONTRAP failed to arrive leading to possible censure of the committee for letting the other reels through.

Our anonymous correspondent had so far spent most of his time in the business meeting (and the award for best semi colon goes to) so news of how the other 99% of fandom spent their convention will have to wait until next month.

WORLDCON BUSINESS MEETING

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The amendment which would have prevented any of the 3 American zones from being skipped twice in a row was not ratified.

An amendment to allow books about science into the non-fiction category was defeated. (There seems to be a genuine difference of opinion between U.S and U.K fans on this point. I can't imagine this amendment being defeated here.)

NOLACON announced that it had broken even.

The Chairman Don Eastlake caused some mirth at one point by announcing that the 1993 ballot "had already been fixed" (ie all the contenders had now declared themselves).

The site selection ballot had not been counted by Sunday Morning but the withdrawal of Washington for 1992 leaves MAGICON in ORLANDO as the certain winner.

EASTCON

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From its planned beginnings as a convention on the East coast EASTCON has now wandered to the Adelphi in Liverpool from the Clarendon convention centre in Birmingham. As soon as any reasons for the cancellation of the booking are forthcoming the matter may be placed in the hands of THEMENWITHBIGSTICKS.

Now that the convention has a site again the looks of panic have disappeared from the faces of the committee, to be replaced by the usual expressions of absolute terror.

One of our main aims for EASTCON is to expand on the role of the Easter convention as a central point for the many different areas of fannish activity which are now flourishing within their own groups and holding their own conventions. We are therefore inviting other groups and convention committees to put on items during the EASTCON program. These should NOT just be descriptions of your group or convention but should be entertaining items in their own right demonstrating the best that your group or committee is capable of. Please contact the Mammal address if you would like to take us up on this offer (or see any of the EASTCON committee at the Wellington).

EASTCON membership is £20 attending, £9 supporting to EASTCON, 15 Maldon Close, Camberwell, London SE5 9DD.

Planning meetings (for those interested in helping with the convention) are on the 2'nd and 4'th Wednesday of the month in THE COCK, 2 Diana Place, Triton Square (Behind Euston Centre which contains Capital Radio and Thames Television) this address supersedes THE SKINNERS ARMS near Kings Cross which was mentioned in the last BSFA newsletter.

SIGGRAPH 89

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This years "computer graphics worldcon", also held in Boston, was of interest to SF fans for the first demonstrations of CYBERSPACE as something you could actually buy (assuming you could afford a £40,000 computer for each eye !).

The CYBERSPACE or "Artificial Reality" systems on view consisted of a display covering both eyes and a "dataglove" which senses the position of the wearers hands. Everything the wearer sees is generated by the computer enabling him/her to do things

like walk through buildings which haven't been constructed yet (indeed one of the first real uses of the system was by Chapel Hill University, to win an argument with the architect of their new computer science building.

From the talks and panels on the subject it is obvious that the developers of this type of system are just as influenced by SF and the rocket scientists of the 60's were.

The first conference on CYBERSPACE will take place at the University of Texas in Austin in May . next year.

BRITAIN IN 1997

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A British Worldcon bid for the 90's was formally announced at NOREASCON. One of the motives for declaring early was to prevent such a bid being ruled out by the "no double skipping of any American zone" rules amendment if it had been accepted at NOREASCON.

Three sites are currently under consideration. Brighton is not amongst them !

The possibility of going for 95 was originally rejected because it was thought that Washington would reschedule their 92 bid for 95. This now appears unlikely and there is some pressure from U.S fans to move the UK bid back to 95. However some of you may remember that CONSPIRACY was originally persuaded to move its target date forward in the same way.

Atlanta is bidding for 1995 and Texas is considering a bid for 1997 using the San Antonio conference centre.

Supporting membership for the bid is £5 (Kathy Westhead will be passing amongst you at the Wellington meeting with a receipt book and an interesting selection of arm locks). As well as money the bid currently needs artists and artwork urgently. Please contact the mammal address.

U.S fans were all definite however that if CONFICTION ran into problems then European bids would have little chance for some time to come. Therefore we need to contribute as much effort to CONFICTION as possible (cue for next item).

CONFICTION GOPHERS

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Martin Hoare and Tim Illingworth are coordinating operations on behalf of the CONFICTION committee. The mammal has been asked to organise gophers (a task equivalent to squaring the circle) for the convention. Once again any volunteers should contact the mammal address.

If the CONFICTION committee agree I would like to have a theme for the gophers. The "theme" would be the defensive line of an American Football team, emphasising that the job of the gophers is to stop problems getting through to the committee and to get out of their way for the rest of the time. Any cartoons, filk songs etc on this theme will be gratefully received at (all together now) the mammal address.

DATELINE BOSTON (WAITING FOR THE WORLDCON)

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Since I was in Boston for SIGGRAPH, one month before the Worldcon, I took a week off and spent a large portion of it with NESFA as they prepared for NOREASCON.

NESFA is based in Cambridge rather than Boston. Cambridge is divided from Boston by the river but there is little indication that the two are separate cities. To imagine the inhabitants you would do better to think of the whole area as Cambridge, it is very much a University town. Estimates for the number of colleges

range between 25 and 36. Dominating them all is M I T and surrounding them in the suburbs are the birthplaces of DEC, PRIME etc and a host of other computer companies. NESFA fans are consequently very similar to their counterparts in the UK Cambridge group.

Boston feels like the safest city I've ever been in in the U.S. With so many colleges I suspect that the city government wants to keep it a place where Americans are happy to send their children. The kids themselves aren't going to want a place that is that safe of course. Hence NESFA's problems in having their local convention BOSKONE overrun with people who just want to get drunk and party. A problem they have solved by moving the convention out of town.

I'm ashamed to say that the main thing I discovered on this trip was just how bad my prejudices about the states had become. I've been exposed to three series of SPITTING IMAGE and some rather hysterical reaction to the CONFLECTION victory since my last trip to the U.S. In fact the average American fan wants to vote for the convention they feel will be the most fun, hates hotel managers from Brighton, has an individual approach to politics and is a source of strange and esoteric knowledge and terrible puns. Sound familiar ?

In general Americans are friendlier than us but they are also more assertive which often gets mistaken as aggression. I suspect this is at the root of a lot of trans-atlantic disagreements. Of course we also have our own image problems, most people I met wanted to ask me about football hooligans at some stage.

NESFA itself has a clubhouse on the north of town. It is basically a disused shop (about the size of one of the Wellington bars) which they have put a lot of work into themselves. Obviously the meetings there were not typical as they were just going into "panic" mode on NOREASCON work while I was there. At the start of my visit they were having two work sessions each week, with an attendance of about 50 people, and these were being stepped up to daily meetings by the time I left. There were also quite a lot of meetings at members houses. The houses of all U.S fans seem to have basements big enough to take their book collections (envy, envy !).

NESFA does seem to inherit some of their areas puritan history. Despite Boston having some good local brews the whole of NESFA drank less in the week when I was there than 7 British fans during one hour of a CONFLECTION ops meeting. Where NESFA does score is in the range and quality of food they seem able to produce at the drop of a propeller beanie (Maybe we can persuade them to take on the BECCON committee in a competition sometime ?).

NESFA is probably the most experienced convention running group in the world. BOSKONE has had memberships larger than SEACON and the new slimmed down version is still the size of a Eurocon. Consequently the NOREASCON organisation is much less centralised than anything we are used to. Area heads are assumed to be able to solve problems and make decisions with less reference to a centralised ops structure. Everyone has worked with the others before and knows who they need to contact directly. The chairman Mark Olson acts as back up for unexpected problems or if heads do need to be banged together. The end result is rather like a BECCON committee with Peter Weston as chairman.

Relations between con-running and fanzine fans seem to be worse in the states than here. Despite the rather dire state of British fanzines there still are quite a few fanzine/con-running fans. In the U.S the two groups seem to have completely diverged.

American fandoms perception of us is as being similar to an American regional group. In fact where their fandom is divided by geography ours seems more divided into special interest areas. I hope we will be able to publish a better description of UK fandom in support of the 1997 bid.

Thanks to Bill and Barry Lehrman for putting me up during my stay and to the various NESFA members who provided transport.

TIMCON

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Despite the success of CONTRIVANCE it now has a competitor for best con of 1989. Tim Broadribb arranged a small but well lubricated celebration of his birthday on a barge/restaurant cruising down the Kennet & Avon canal. Food was superb. Readings were supplied by Lisa Tuttle and Terry Pratchett. Music was supplied by Malcolm and ~~Malcolm~~ Gytha. Videos shot by Andy Morris and Richard Rampant.

This one could go straight in at number one.

RUBICON

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RUBICON took place as usual in the Chequers hotel, Newbury. Total membership was 65. The program was organised by John and Eve Harvey with an emphasis on silly throughout. Various people passed through who appeared to be under the impression that Newbury was on the way to Boston but for this weekend at least most people were happy to regard large conventions as things which happened a long way away and were run by other people.

The Chequers, previously a superb hotel, appeared to be undergoing the equivalent of a nervous breakdown in its organisation. A possible reason for this was discovered late at night when a conversation with the new deputy manager revealed that he had been trained by one Mr Fred Hutchings of the Metropole Hotel, Brighton. The Chequers intends to restore normal service as soon as possible and promise to have things sorted out in time for INCLINATION next year.

The status of RUBICON itself is uncertain as the dates are so close to CONFICTION. If it is run again next year no one is sure if the membership will be reduced to zero as everyone will be broke or if it will zoom off into the hundreds because of American fans interested in a relaxacon after Holland.

Such serious discussion as there was centred around "the state of fandom today". The most surprising statistic was that only 6 attendees regarded themselves as ever having been involved in fanzine publishing (even worse this number includes the mammal). Discussing the current crop of fanzines with Avedon Carol I felt as though she was describing some strange Alien Civilisation. Most of the writers I used to enjoy seem to have dropped out while those now active seem to be aiming at a much narrower interest group. (Please insert previous mammal tirades about the state of British fanzines at this point).

UNICONZE

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has won the 1990 Unicon site selection ballot. It will be held at new hall Cambridge. Guests Barrington Bayley, Dave Langford, Ian Watson.

Membership £9.50 to UNICONZE, c/o Clare College, Cambridge.

CONJUNCTION

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GOH will be Greg Stafford (Runequest). The fund for Greg's travel is known as ISSARIES. All donations gratefully received.

Membership now £12 attending, £5 supporting. Dates 27 - 29 July 1990.

ORYCON 11

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November 10-12 1989. Columbia River Red Lion Inn, Portland. Goh's Michael Bishop and Dave Langford. (Dave is of course a widely travelled fan. So much so that he amazed a market researcher investigating the lure of Newbury to tourists by revealing that he had come from as far away as READING! to sample the delights of RUBICON).

RUBICON (the bit I forgot)

..... ..
The only people who did not seem to be enjoying the convention were the wedding party who were sharing the hotel with us on the Saturday. Full marks for observation of character go to Chris Priest for spotting this, and then constructing theories based around the demise of the brides mother. The truth it appears was even stranger. Because of a family feud someone got up and answered "Yes" at the "If any man know just cause why this man and this woman should not be joined together in Holy Matrimony" prompt. Following this one half of the family left en masse leaving only enough to cause a small altercation in the cocktail bar.

(The manager of the Bull, opposite AT THE SIGN OF THE DRAGON, apparently remarked after a DRAGONCON that he preferred SF cons to Weddings because weddings always ended in fights.)

DRABBLES

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DRABBLES II. Another 100 stories of 100 words each will be launched at EASTCON. Deadline for submissions is the end of September.

Meanwhile the TOWNSWOMAN magazine has run a Drabble competition and received 200 entries. Roger Robinson and Rob Meades are helping to judge the results.

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION

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Rob Meades is organising a group to support the work of the SF Foundation at the Polytechnic of East London. The main activities of the FOUNDATION are publication of its critical journal and the maintenance of its reference library.

Those interested should contact Rob Meades, 75 Hecham Close, Walthamstow, LONDON E17 5QT for further details.

EVENT HORIZON

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- 22 - 24 Sept - PREFAB TROUT - Single program stream SF convention at the Swallow Hotel Glasgow. £10 Attending to Malcolm M Reid, 55 Cederwood Ave, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 5LL.
 - 3 - 5 Nov STL CON - Hatfield Polytechnic. Another in the series of fames "shoe-string cons". Goh Iain M Banks, £5 attending, £1 Supporting to PSIFA, c/o students union, Hatfield Polytechnic, College Lane, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9AB. Make cheques payable to H.F.S.U.
 - 17 - 20 Nov - NOVACON 19 - Excelsior Hotel, Birmingham. Goh Geoff Ryman. Membership £12 until 30/10/89, £15 on door. Contact Bernie Evans, 7 Grove Ave, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 7UY.
 - 9 - 10 SEPT - UKCAC89 - Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1. The UK Comic Art Convention. £20 Membership for both days. Membership is limited so at the door entry cannot be guaranteed.