



THE 26



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I suppose I really ought to mention a telephone number in the colophon. Since I didn't do so there I will do it now: The telephone number at MIT is UN4-6900.

For reasons that escape me at the moment I have become a con chairman. That is, I have become sort of a con chairman for sort of a con. Now this is really quite remarkable - I have had all sorts of chances to become a con chairman before and have cheerfully, nay determinedly, passed them up. With all due respect to all of my various friends who have put on cons I find it beyond comprehension that any rational human being could want to put on a con. However there are circumstances...

It all started at the NESFA meeting just before the Boskone. Fred Isaacs, who was running this years Boskone had just made a motion authorizing the Boskone committee to spend an extra couple of hundred dollars. I made an idle inquiry and elicited the information that this made the total Boskone budget something like \$1600 and sat back to go back to sleep. However that figure kept percolating through my mind - sixteen hundred dollars. Now mind you all of that money was legitimately spent on the con. No question about that. However all of that money represents a lot of time and effort on the part of a lot people to put on a well organized event with a lot of different activities going on. (Noreascon was a dress rehearsal for putting on bigger and better Boskonos?)

The upshot of my ruminations was that after all of the serious business was over I made a motion to the effect that NESFA put on another con, either in addition to or in replacement of, the Boskone and that this convention take place in the late summer, and that it be minimally programmed. The whole idea was enthusiastically greeted, although there were mutterings that "we can't just do nothing." After some discussion I withdrew the motion and Sue Lewis announced that the whole topic would be discussed in a committee of the whole at the next discussion meeting (the NESFA other meeting.) In between times I followed the idea up and checked with a couple of motels about the feasibility of holding a con of this sort in the late summer (we were originally talking about October but switched our minds to early August.) At the discussion at the other meeting I sort of ended up de facto in charge of the discussion. Various people suggested various ideas about things to do. However, with a little enlightened guidance from the chair, the meeting came to a consensus, that being that we would do no programming and would do nothing to get people to get to the motel. Programming would consist of supplying a blackboard where people could make announcements of things that they wanted to organize. It was agreed that the Con would supply some beach balls and some frisbees, and maybe some kites. After the discussion I was elected con chairman by acclamation - based on the fact that it was my idea and that I had done something about it.

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So here I am, a real live con chairman, despite my opinions on the futility and foolishness of being a con chairman. It is, however, a con carefully tailored to the amount of work I want to put into it. Programming - zero. Function rooms - zero. Hucksters rooms - zero. Art show - zero. Where and when it will be is not yet settled, although I expect it will be in the next two weeks. The major expense will be the publicity, which won't be a great deal. Registration will probably be a dollar although I am going to hold out for 90¢. Maybe, if it turns out to be popular, we can cut the exorbitant rates next year. (After all, if it turns out to be popular, we won't need any publicity next year.) Think of it as a stripped down Midwescon. The one event we may have is a poolside barbecue.

Oh yes, while I'm at it I will explain about NESFA other meetings. Once upon a time NESFA had two business meetings a month. After a period of growth of the club and expansion of its activities it came to pass that there was dissatisfaction with the meetings. Among the complaints were:

1. There were many people who felt that the business meeting itself was a dead bore.
2. Some people felt that NESFA should be doing things with a greater range of expression. (Now that is a hell of a poorly constructed sentence - let me try again.) Some people felt that the business meeting with its emphasis on business unduly narrowed the scope of the club and its activities.
3. The attempt to combine business and program led to very long meetings which was felt to be unsatisfactory.
4. There was and is much business (principally committee meetings) that cannot be conducted at the business meeting without interfering with both. As a result additional time was being chewed up beyond and above the business meetings. People weren't happy about this.
5. The meetings were becoming crowded by people coming for a variety of reasons.

After some experimentation we evolved the Other Meeting. At it there is no formal business transacted. Various committees meet there and hold their discussions. There is a fair amount of programmed activity, such as dramatic readings, etc.

Enough. And now for that section of the zine that all of you quivering egos have been waiting for - disty comments, this time on L-366.

Moffia: But I tried wiggling my scalp and my nose fell off...

Wiff O'Jin: It may console you that there has never been any real doubt in my mind as to whether or not you were a .oax. The only thing that bothers me is that you don't seem to be sure or not whether you are...

Vixen: Actually Marine Corps sargeants are not in a position of priveleged irresponsible authority - it only seems that way to privates.

Wandering Through the Grinkle Wood: On cutting mimeo stencils - Actually film is not all that critical; the reason for using film is mostly to keep the keys from getting munged up with wax. Almost all machines will produce better results if you use a typing plate (also known as a cushion plate or an equalizer plate.) Typing with a manual typewriter is an art - you have to learn how to hit the keys with a very even application of pressure. A typing plate is essential for some machines such as Selectrics.

INTERLUDE: As some of you may have noticed all of this up to now has been typed using a Courier typeface instead of the usual scribe. You may also have noticed that the repro in previous issues was somewhat erratic due to some keys not cutting well. Even if you didn't notice, I did. It had been my supposition that the golfball was getting worn so I went out and got a new one. After having written the above it finally occurred to me to check and see if the golfball was dirty. I checked and, sure enough, it was. The reason it hadn't occurred to me was that the scribe ball is only used for cutting stencils and we always use film. Nonetheless many of the more commonly used letters were filled up with wax. A little bit of work with a safety pin and a toothbrush I got the ball cleaned off and it seems to be cutting OK again. Now back to disty comments and back to the courier typeface.

Fred: Your comment to Tepper has to be one of the all time disty comments. Have you ever considered putting out a genzine or maybe a one shot entitled "The Detonating Snails?"

Bill Warren: One of the local underground papers here did a long article on "All in the Family." Their main pitch was that the show is elitist liberal - that we are invited to laugh at Archie and, by extension, the working class that he represents and is a caricature of. I think they may have something there.

Elst: Your statement that the sun always sets in the North in Devonian leads to some interesting speculations. I am not really familiar with the Devonian mythos so I don't know whether Devonian is a planet or a country on a planet or something else. Nor do you say whether the sun sets in the direction of true north or merely northerly. If Devonian is a country and the sun sets northerly then the answer is simple -- Devonian is in the southern hemisphere and the sun both sets and rises in the north (but not due North.) The fun begins however if we assume that the sun sets in the direction of true North in Devonian. In that case Devonian cannot be a country on a spherical planet. (It could, however, be a country on a rather lopsided planet. However I much prefer to believe that Devonian is located on an object and in a space whose properties are such that the apparent direction of the setting of the sun is the same everywhere. I'll think about it...

Digby: Re the supercrudzine: It sometimes happens that a page doesn't feed properly through a mimeo and the printing comes out a large angle to the page. Presumably a skilled mimeo operator could get this to happen consistently. In getting wrinkled paper it helps to wait for a day with high humidity. If you wait for a day when the air is practically sopping you can get all sorts of paper feed problems with no trouble at all. Another thing that would help is using a dirty transparent sheet over the text to be electro-stencilled. This will help in producing a random cruddy effect which is not glaringly obvious.

Putting in curdzine four times was not intentional. It really hadn't occurred to me that anyone would miss the point. Sigh!!