



Newsletter

Number 23, Summer 1986

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I must say I feel quite honored for having been elected World SF president. I feel honored, but also a bit worried because in comparison to the well-known personalities who have preceded me (Harrison, Aldiss, Pohl and Lundwall), Gianfranco Viviani feels over-shadowed. There are really only a few people who really know me; on the contrary, our former presidents are internationally known.

I hope that with my election as president the association will receive a boost, because I intend to make it more dynamic and, more importantly, I hope to define its purpose.

This is my intention, but I can not promise that I will succeed because it all depends on the people who will be helping me in conducting the association.

In practice, I will place at World SF's disposal my organizational ability. Moreover, I will steer World SF based upon the philosophy that I have developed in the years since the Dublin meeting when World SF was founded.

"World SF was created to become a meeting place for individuals with the same professional interests."

This was the actual philosophy and it seems that until now this was the basis of our organization and this purpose served to bring us together, but now this type of philosophy is a bit too simple for World SF to continue functioning. When one speaks about "professional interests" one speaks also of money and the possibilities of work that World SF must promote and stimulate.

When one speaks about "professional interests" one also speaks about promotional operations--and why should not we publicize ourselves?

In particular, I can think of thousands of potential colleagues who are not members of our organization because they are not yet known to us. I can think of thousands of people who, due to linguistic barriers, remain confined to their own "realities."

The World SF organization needs to have an aim that goes beyond a yearly meeting and must become organized to provide a service for its members. This service will only be possible if we begin to lay down the foundation for a more efficient organization.

I speak of an organization that is efficient on an international level, but above all efficient in every nation, to represent the work and activities of its members, to promote and defend its members' activities.

This is my point of view concerning World SF and I intend to base my work upon this line of thought. Naturally, I cannot assure you of the results because I do not intend to work alone. But each of my ideas or proposals will be brought before a consulting committee which I intend to form immediately.

But if on the one hand I can not assure the results, on the other hand I can promise you that I will do my best.

One thing is certain: World SF can no longer limit its action to our yearly meetings and newsletters that have always been laboriously and with heroism prepared by Elizabeth Anne Hull.

World SF must carry its weight in the world of SF and for that to occur it must act continuously outside our field.

Doing so, World SF will have a future. Certainly it will be a point of encounter and a reference for fantasy and sf professionals, but it will also be an instrument that will take care of promotion and protection of its members' works, an instrument that goes beyond idealism and can also be involved with economic endeavors.

Thank you very much for expressing your faith in my potential by electing me your president. I will do my best to earn that faith.

--Gianfranco Viviani

THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

I feel very happy about my election as Secretary and I shall do my best to carry out the duties of the office. I wish to thank all World SF members for their confidence in me.

I have sent a reminder to all the national secretaries who had not previously sent reports on sf publications in their countries for 1985. To any national secretary who has somehow not received the message, I would appreciate your writing to me for the form and completing it as quickly as possible. If there is another person in your country who will complete the form, please let me know that also.

--Patrizia Thiella
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THE 1986 MEETING SUMMARY

The 1986 World General Meeting of World SF took place on the campus of the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada, on May 27-28. Although the attendance was smaller than usual (partly due to the distance for most European members and partly due to competing attractions in North America, such as the annual American Booksellers' Association convention), members were present from seven countries: Canada, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the U.S.S.R. Gianfranco Viviani was elected the new President of

World SF, replacing the retiring Sam J. Lundwall, by a nearly unanimous vote. (Complete election results and other actions of the meeting appear elsewhere in this issue.)

The UBC campus is located on a large tract of land overlooking the Strait of Juan da Fuca. Part of the area is wooded or farmed, and the campus contains two handsome botanic gardens, as well as museums, libraries and bookstores. Members attending the World General Meeting were housed in apartments designed for visiting scholars or attendees at conferences of various sorts, which made possible evening parties in addition to the daytime program.

Besides the World SF program there were other attractions such as the Canadian national sf fan convention, V-Con, on the weekend before World SF's meeting, and the convention of Canadian writers on the weekend following. There was also Expo 86, which was not only spectacular in its own right but had a program of readings by a number of Canadian science-fiction writers during the World SF meeting.

VANCOUVER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Because no one person was in attendance at all the meetings all the time, no official record of minutes is available. However, several important points were discussed, and decisions made which should be shared with the membership not in attendance.

Awards Procedures

There was a lively discussion of procedures for awarding the coveted Karels. The procedure recommended by the Committee chaired by Anne-Marie van Ewyk several years ago has never been fully implemented. One particular concern was that the awards not be limited to a prize for translations from (or to) English. After lengthy discussion, members agreed that the President should ask individual countries to come up with their own procedures for nomination, subject to executive approval, and that the president form a standing committee entrusted to decide how to administer the awards. Point of clarification: the Presidential Awards will still remain at the discretion of the President and the Harrison Award of course will continue to be the prerogative of past President Harry Harrison.

Elections

The slate of officers as nominated in Newsletter 22 was elected, with the addition of three write-ins for Trustee. Since the amended constitution permits a variable number of Trustees, the officers of World SF are as follows:

President: Gianfranco Viviani (Italy); Secretary: Patrizia Thiela (Italy); Treasurer: Harry Harrison (Ireland); Trustees: Brian Aldiss (England); Claude Avice (Pierre Barbet) (France); Gerald Izaquirre (Brazil); Sakyō Komatsu (Japan); Peter Kuczka (Hungary), Sam Lundwall (Sweden); Charlotte Franke-Winheller (West Germany); (Piergiorgio Nicolazzini (Italy); Yeremy Parnov (USSR); Frederik Pohl (USA); Annemarie van Ewyck (The Netherlands); Ye Yonglie (People's Republic of China).

The Trustees reelected from among themselves Vice President East Yeremy Parnov, Vice President West Frederik Pohl and Vice President Asia Sakyō Komatsu.

The Newsletter Editor was instructed to mark boxes for either yes or no next to each name on future ballots to avoid ambiguity in interpreting the intentions of the members casting absentee ballots.

European Liaison Abolished

The informal designation of European Liaison Officer was discussed. This title was never officially sanctioned by the constitution or by amendment thereto and was therefore officially abolished since the need for it no longer exists.

Dues & Treasury

Dues structure and amount was briefly discussed; no changes were settled. Dues remain at the local equivalent of 25 Swissfrancs.

The officers of those countries which did not send financial reports are asked to send accounting to the Treasurer and new Secretary of World SF as soon as possible so the trustees can determine whether and where there are any monies available to the organization for purposes such as printing of the journal, etc.

Periodicals: Newsletter & Journal

The membership discussed the policy of not printing any advertising or political statements in the newsletter. Members confirmed the no-advertising policy currently in effect. As to letters, the editor may acknowledge receipt (with a non-biased summary of contents) of letters from official writers' organizations in any of the member countries. If in doubt, the editor will refer the question to the President and Trustees.

Many members expressed opinions about what should go into the newsletter. Some people thought it should contain more "personal" news, while others felt that it should be limited to "official" news. The Forum of SFWA was suggested as a model, but it was pointed out that this would extend its size considerably. The editor explained the policy of mailing first class, which severely limits the amount that can be included.

Once again the members expressed the need to have a journal which could serve the purpose of providing information that is not so "timely" but nevertheless of great value.

The problem of printing of the journal in Poland was discussed at length. The consensus of the members was that literary criticism is by nature controversial and that if the journal is to be a useful tool, it should be free to publish interpretations and foster dialogue among critics with differing viewpoints. Members agreed that the delay in printing in Poland was intolerable and if the differences can not be resolved, we must look for other possibilities for printing. Two issues have been prepared by editor Kirpal Singh of the University of Singapore.

The new President will explore other possibilities for printing the journal. Any member who has suggestions in this regard is urged to contact the President.

Other Publications

Many members expressed a desire for an updated Directory. The new President will explore possibilities of compiling and printing a new Directory before the next annual meeting.

Fred Pohl & Betty Hull reported that their "novel with 19 authors"--Tales from the Planet Earth--is scheduled for fall 1986 from St. Martin's Press. Editrice Nord in Italy and Hayakawa in Japan have already expressed interest in publication in those countries. Publishers in other countries are urged to contact the editors for bound copies of uncorrected galleys which are now available.

Precise information on the World SF anthology edited by Sam Lundwall and Brian Aldiss was not available since neither attended the meeting but Brian Aldiss mentioned in a phone conversation that the book is available now from Penguin in the U.K. Gianfranco Viviani confirmed that this is also in production for December 1986 in Italy from Editrice Nord

Asia Recruiting

The deplorably low membership rate in Asia and particularly Japan was discussed. Takumi Shibano was asked to publicize World SF in his magazine Uchijin because it is so widely read and respected by sf professionals in Japan.

Program Events

Valerie Broege of Vanier College, Snowden Campus, Montreal, Canada, presented a paper on human reproduction as it's depicted in science fiction, followed by a lively discussion during which many suggestions were made for additional works to be considered.

Elizabeth Anne Hull of William Rainey Harper College, Palatine, Illinois, USA, presented a paper on plotting (using Arthur C. Clarke's Childhood's End as a model), with the thesis that satisfying plotting can be achieved by a web of actions that are not just causally linear, but form an overall pattern that can be thematically related so the audience can intuit a unified whole, rather than merely a beginning, middle and ending.

Lorna Toolis of the Spaced-Out Library in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, provided information about the collection of 28,000 volumes which began with the personal library of Judith Merrill and is now part of the Toronto public library system.

The Spaced Out Library in Toronto was officially designated as the second World SF Depository (see story elsewhere in this issue for details).

National Reports--Highlights

Canada: Judith Merrill reported that recognition for Canadian sf writers seems to be increasing both within Canadian borders and in the US. William Gibson, of course, made a sensation by winning both the Nebula and Hugo Awards for his novel Neuromancer and is at the heart of the new sf literary "movement" called Cyberpunk. At an international festival of writers in Toronto in October 1985, Merrill's anthology of Canadian sf short stories, Tesseract, was launched with readings by the writers. Press Porcepic wants to be "the" Canadian sf publisher, promoting Canadian-born writers rather than adoptees, and they are much more active in French, publishing both native Canadian writers and those from France. Also at the festival in Toronto there were a number of international sf guests reading on a special sf stage. John Robert Columbo (World SF member, writer, critic and anthologer) won a prize from the festival which included a word processing system and a substantial cash award. There will be a "Canadian Clarion" writers' workshop in August. A number of Canadian sf writers will be reading from their own work at Expo 86, including Margaret Atwood, Candace Jane Dorsey, Judith Merrill, Michael Gilbert, Elisabeth Vonnarberg (reading in English while the French text is projected on a screen), Monica Hughes, Michael Coney, and J. Michael Yates.

Great Britain: Duncan Lunan reported that there was only one short story published in his country, the winning entry in a competition sponsored by the Glasgow Herald, and no Scottish sf publishers. Some Scottish international authors do sf "on the side" or incorporate sf into their mainstream writing. There is some sf poetry, but some publish only in Germany. As for England and the rest of Great Britain, sf is not doing particularly well. Gollancz is still publishing sf but under

strained circumstances and Sedgwick & Jackson have terminated sf publishing. SF for libraries seems to have vanished, a black picture except for Interzone, an experimental magazine.

Hungary: Peter Szabo and Peter Kuczka reported that last year Hungary published 26 sf novels, 10 Hungarian, the others by authors from various nationalities; two magazines, Galactica (monthly, circulation 50,000) and Rogue World (juvenile, bi-monthly, circ. 70,000), which published 40 stories by Hungarians, 60 in translation. The estimated number of readers of sf in Hungary is 200,000 (of a population of 10 million); however a single popular book could go much higher (Star Wars and Huxley's Brave New World both sold 280,000.) The average age of sf readers is estimated at 25. The World SF Chapter has received authorization to publish books for profit to the World SF Treasury. An SF encyclopedia for 7 socialist countries is being compiled--a first step toward European SF. Till now it's been very difficult to obtain information even about neighboring countries. This is the first time an sf encyclopedia has come out of Eastern Europe. There are other problems with publishing sf from other countries--Hungary must pay according to the Geneva Copyright agreements but they're afraid they will be publishing fewer and fewer Western authors because of currency problems--perhaps they will have to ask similar favors as the Poles. They brought copies of Galactica for the Spaced-Out Library.

Italy: Gianfranco Viviani reported for Italy that they have an estimated 100,000 sf readers, although only 30,000 are regular. Last year they published 121 novels, 72 new and 49 reprints (the previous year had been 50-50 new and reprint); of these 17 were hardbound, 103 pocketbook (but a "class act" with jacket), 1 novel in a magazine. Fourteen of the novels were by Italian authors, 107 were translations (97 from English, 7 French, 2 German, 1 Spanish). Three sf magazines printed 80% Italian stories, 20% translated stories. Six publishers published 90 series, but only two major ones. There were 7 anthologies of Italian authors and 39 anthologies in translation. Estimated average age of readers is 30.

Japan: Takumi Shibano reported that Studio Ambient supplied the figures, which are rounded off because categories are different. There were 550 sf and fantasy novels, 531 separately published as books, 57 in magazines (some were both); of these, 100 were reprints, 450 were new, and 150 were beautifully bound books, 350 pocketbooks, 50 in magazines. Whereas a few years ago there was a 50-50 split, last year 390 were by Japanese authors and only 160 were translations. English (American, British and Australian) account for 144 of the translations, 10 were German (all Perry Rhodan), 1 Russian, 1 Italian, 2 misc. other. There were only 2 "real" prozines: Hayakawa's SF Magazine (13 issues) and SF Adventure (12 issues); 2 semiprozines: SFism (3 issues) and SF-No-hon (Books of SF--2 numbers). Additionally, there was The SF Yearbook and 2 Japanese versions of American Magazines (Starlog and Omni), both of which published 12 issues. Approximately 90% of the material in magazines is of national origin, 10% translated. Eleven publishers published more than 10 books apiece; 12 "series" publishers' imprint--also about 40 more series in the sense of Perry Rhodan or Star Trek. The estimated number of regular sf and fantasy readers is 50,000, based on magazine circulations of 100,000 (which may be inflated as much as double). Regular readers of Perry Rhodan, Star Trek, and national series of this kind is 100,000. Best sellers may go to 700,000. The average age is estimated at less than 20. Game books (which may sell 1 to 2 million or more) are not included in any of the statistics above.

Sweden: Sam Lundwall sent a report stating that in 1985 there were 126 sf and fantasy novels published in Sweden, comprised of 114 new editions and 12 reprints, 72 hardback, 20 pocketbook, no novels included in magazines, 38 by Swedish authors and 88 in translation (52 from English, 36 from other languages). There were two magazines (Juleserne, 6 issues and Nova, quarterly) printing 20% stories by Swedish authors and 80% in translation. There are two publishers of sf, 3 series, 4 anthologies (1 Swedish, 3 translated). Estimated number of readers: 10,000 (3,000 "regular" readers); estimated average age 25-35.

U.S.S.R.: Yerey Parnov reported that in 1985 the USSR published approximately 50 sf titles (20 paper, 30 hardcover), of which 70% were new, 30% reprints. Four or five were anthologies, one volume of best sf classics from the Golden Age, one anthology of Italian short stories, one sf & f of socialist literature, one collection of Scandinavian short stories, several books in other republics of USSR (first collection of Yacoutian - Siberian - Far Eastern, especially important because before the Revolution the Yacoutian people had no alphabet). The magazine Soviet Literature had two special issues about sf problems: one "SF Today" was translated into English, German, Spanish and French; the second into Turkish and Hungarian. Estimated number of readers: 20 million, many of whom are scientists, students, young workers. A system of 300,000 libraries in the USSR supplies statistics on their readers. Print runs of sf range between 100,000 and 200,000 and copies are passed around to an estimated 200 readers per each book.

U.S.A.: Fred Pohl and Betty Hull gave a brief informal summary in lieu of a report. According to Locus, around 1300 sf and fantasy books were published in the U.S. in 1985, about half original, half reprints. The regular readers number approximately 100,000, but may go as high as half a million for best sellers and a number of sf titles have been in the best-seller ranks in the past year. The "charts" seem to be an important marketing tool, and if a book appears on the B. Dalton list, it may be selected for, say, supermarket or drugstore bookrack distribution, thus reaching a much wider than usual market. The US market still does very few translated sf books, however, with the exception of writers who have gained international reputations and are generally marketed as "mainstream" authors.

1986 Karels

The Karel Awards for excellence in translation were presented to Francesco Porrua of Spain, Roland Adlerberth of Sweden, Lev Djanov of the USSR, Marek Marsol of Poland, and Joe Randolph of the US.

Other World SF Awards

Dedicated Service Awards were given to Leslie Flood of the E. J. Carnell Agency in England and Peter Szabo in Hungary.

The President's Awards for Independence of Thought in SF were presented to E. F. Bleiler of the US and Pierre Versins of Switzerland.

The Harry Harrison Awards for Improving the State of SF Internationally went to Roelof Goudriaan of the Netherlands and Denise Terrel of France.

Future Meetings

The choice of Budapest, Hungary, as the site for the 1987 World General Meeting was confirmed by the vote of the Vancouver meeting. Peter Szabo and Peter Kuczka discussed plans for the 1987 meeting. As the proposed dates conflicted with other events, the actual scheduling is yet to be resolved, but the dates will be announced in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Duncan Lunan proposed Glasgow, Scotland, as the site for the World SF General Meeting in the spring of 1988. Members tentatively accepted the bid, subject to confirmation at the 1987 meeting.

Several people endorsed the idea of holding a World SF meeting in the US at some future time. In the past this has been against our policy. Pros and cons were discussed without a definite decision reached by the members present. Other members should express their concerns on this issue to the new President, to their national officers, or to one of the Trustees.

1985 KARELS

Through an editorial oversight, the winners of the 1985 Karels were not previously published. The awards for excellence in translation given at Fanano, Italy, in June 1985, went to Georges Barlov (France), Walter Brimm (West Germany), Doina Oprita (Roumania), Gianpaolo Coassato and Sandro Sandrelli (Italy), and Tetsu Yano (Japan). Apologies to the winners for this oversight and congratulations for the richly deserved honors.

Canada's only specialized collection of science fiction, the "Spaced Out Library" in Toronto, has been named a second book depository for works of science fiction from all over the world. The Spaced Out Library was originally formed from the donation of Judith Merrill's extensive science-fiction collection to the Toronto Public Library system and has become a major resource for students of science fiction, as well as for the public at large.

All authors and publishers of science-fiction books from all countries outside of North America are urged to send copies of science-fiction works to the World SF book depositories, so that they may be catalogued and made available to researchers and to publishers who may wish to consider offering contracts for issuing the books in North America.

Copies should be sent to:

World SF Book Depository #1
Kenneth Spencer Research Library
University of Kansas Libraries
Lawrence, KS 66045 USA

World SF Book Depository #2
The Spaced Out Library
40 St. Georges Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2E4 CANADA

NEWS FROM CHINA

Sponsored by the two magazines, The Tree of Knowledge in Tianjin and Scientific Literature and Art in Chengdu, China's first sf story competition (1984-5) ended in success and the prize-giving ceremony was held 15-17 May 1986 in Chengdu. Attendance was over 100. Among about 2,000 stories sent to the two editorial departments, 23 received China's first Galaxy Awards. During the session, authors, editors and fans exchanged their views on sf concepts and the current problems in the creation of sf in China. Two foreign fans of Chinese sf also aired their opinions about Chinese sf. They are Miss Alcie Childs from Britain and Mr. Iwagami from Japan. The meeting leaked out the news that The Mystery of the Ancient Chart of Stars, the first sf novel published by the People's Literature Publish-

ing House (a mainstream publisher), would be adapted into a serial tv program. All attendants expressed the hope that further sf story competitions would be arranged soon.

--Wu Dingbo, Shanghai

NEWS FROM FINLAND

Just back from Helsinki, being guest of honor at Finncon 86. This was a very genial and lively occasion. Finnish Finns and Finnish fans are well-organized, and publish at least three semi-prozines, well-produced A4 size, with circulations in four figures. These magazines are Ikaros, Porti, and Aikakone.

The Finnish conventions were started by Sam Lundwall, distinguished World SF ex-president, and are now mainly the work of Chairman Tom Olander, plus a hard-working team. Our two new World SF members are, in fact, Tom Olander, whose name appears on the masthead of all the above magazines in one capacity or another, and Pekka Supinen, a professional translator, critic, and sf story-writer. Pekka is also Secretary of the Finnish SF-writers Association. Both are fully professional in the Finnish sense. Our members will be able to meet both these engaging gentlemen at Conspiracy in Brighton next year.

If you are interested in Finland as a market, Kirjayhtyma Publishers have a very good, exclusive list and publish elegantly. The editorial manager there is a charming anglophile lady, Ritva Makela.

The convention received very good coverage in the national papers--no fancy dress, no monsters--and on TV, so that prospects for more enthusiastic reception of sf in the future look good.

--Brian W. Aldiss

CORRESPONDENCE OF GENERAL INTEREST

World SF received a letter from Georgi Markov, First Secretary of the Board, USSR Writers' Union, dated 18 February 1986, on the subject of writers supporting nuclear disarmament.

A card from John Brunner reports "with heavy heart that his beloved Marjorie suffered a stroke on 14 April 1986. Her recovery, if she is fortunate enough to make one, could take months or even years. There will be unavoidable delays in answering correspondence and settling accounts. Please bear with me."

WORLD SF MEMBERS ATTEND CONGRESS OF UNION OF SOVIET WRITERS IN MOSCOW

Frederik Pohl and Elizabeth Anne Hull, from the United States, and Mr. and Mrs. Claude Avicé (Pierre Barbet), from France, were among sixty-eight foreign writers invited to attend the VIIth Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in Moscow, June 24-28, 1986. Also present were Soviet members of World SF Maria Ossintseva and Eremy Parnov. The Union of Soviet Writers has a special section on science fiction of which Parnov is vice-chair.

Some 2000 persons attended the Congress, which was held in the Great Kremlin Palace. About a quarter of those in attendance were official delegates elected by the local and regional organizations, who carried on the actual work of the Congress, most of the remainder being other members of the Union and the invited guests from abroad.

CAMPBELL JURY CHOOSES WINNER

The John W. Campbell Memorial Award for the best novel in 1985 was presented in Lawrence, Kansas, over the weekend of 18-20 July 1986 in a special celebration and conference organized around the theme of the future of science and the arts.

Winner of the Campbell Award was David Brin's The Postman, with Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s Galapagos in second place, and third place shared by Greg Bear's Blood Music and Keith Roberts' Kiteworld. The winner is selected by an international panel of writers and critics, chaired by World SF member James Gunn. Publishers interested in making nominations of their best titles in 1986 should write to Gunn at the University of Kansas for names and addresses of the jury members.

WELLS SOCIETY MEETS IN LONDON

The International Wells Symposium met in London 24-27 July 1986, with many prominent World SF members present, including Brian Aldiss, Dr. Kirpal Singh, and Arthur C. Clarke, but missing renowned scholar from the USSR, Julius Kagarlit-sky, who canceled at the last minute.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

Previous issues of the newsletter sent to the following World SF members were returned as undeliverable: Gerb Reinmann (West Germany), Yver Fremion (France), and Carsten Schioler (Denmark). Please advise the Newsletter editor if you know a current address for any of these people.

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