

THE BURNING BEARD

The China trip is dead -- it would interfere with too many other things. I especially think I'd better attend the Special Libraries Association Conference and see to my duties on behalf of the Physics-Astronomy-Mathematics Division. (Treasurer and Hospitality Chair.) Particularly since the PAM Nominating Committee has asked me to be Chair-Elect next year. (PAM seldom has an election -- the Nominating Committee presents a Slate, and the members say yes-yes, and that's it. It isn't as if there are all that many members itching to be officers, after all -- it's a small Division (135 or so members total). But I still think they were getting desperate this time... .)

Librarians are very strange when it comes to things they don't consider themselves capable of doing. I've been Parliamentarian for the Librarians Association of the University of California for about 17 years now, mostly because everyone else seems to be afraid to try the job. (It's always been my opinion that a Parliamentarian has to (1) carry a copy of whatever Rules Book the organization claims to prefer; (2) sound like it knows what it is doing at all times; and (3) use common sense to keep things running smoothly and sit on troublemakers.)

The other thing they are apparently not capable of doing is running a ~~consulting~~ hospitality suite. I got roped into helping run the PAM Open House at the second Conference I ever attended, because one of my UCLA co-workers was in charge and Needed Help, and I've run the last couple -- in Boston, then in Anaheim (both in hotels VERY familiar to Worldcon attendees) -- by myself. And I'll be doing it again in Denver in June. In late July there's a Colloquium of the International Astronomical Union being held in Washington, D.C.: Library Information & Service in Astronomy. (LISA). A PAM member is on the local arrangements committee, and the PAM treasury is serving as a collection point for donated funds to aid overseas librarians meet expenses of the Colloquium. So although I'm not actually an astronomy librarian, I wasn't too surprised to get a note offering a free membership in the Colloquium and "maybe the banquet" if I wanted to come be their "Open House supplier." UCLA will give me paid leave. It'll be interesting, and I'll have almost a week in D.C. with some free time even if I attend all the colloquium -- which I probably won't. And it'll look good on my review next year... . Easy pickings... .

Skipping the China trip I also get to go to Midwestcon and to X-Con. Speaking of getting desperate, X-Con -- Milwaukee, in case you've never heard of it -- has got me as a FGoH. I discovered this fact by finding a flyer for the con at Boskone. Giovanni

Fregni had asked me last year -- on the phone, around March -- if I'd be interested, and I'd said yes (of course). Hadn't heard anything more, and assumed it'd got shelved. Nope, the Guest of Honor Liaison just hadn't had a chance to write... . Anyway, as long as they don't mind that I have to be in Denver by the Sunday night (for SLA), everything is fine. I think.

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NOTES FOR AN ARTICLE FOR SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES

LASFS Elections can range from the Extremely Dull to the Highly Amusing. The officers who run the week-to-week activities of the club are elected every six months, and, in general LASFS figures it can survive almost anyone for that long. (Since about six years ago, the Treasurer is elected only once a year; before that, all five procedural offices -- President, Vice President, Treasurer, Scribe, and Registrar -- were up for grabs in June and in December of each year.)

There have been a number of Stories about LASFS Officers and how they did their jobs, how they got along with each other (and with the club itself), and how they got elected. To me the most amusing of the latter is the story of The Bedroom Cabinet.

It is a Fact of LASFS Elections that the primarily-male membership will elect a female -- especially an attractive one -- to any office, if the candidate has been around long enough to be recognized by most of the attending membership. Six months is usually enough.

At one time not too many lustrum ago, such an attractive female appeared on the scene and became interested in running for Director. (The office now known as President.) Since she had managed in a year or so to become Involved with several members of the In-Group and Almost-In-Group, the amusing idea was hatched to see if the club could be maneuvered into electing her and electing her Close Friends to three of the other four offices.

The Director office was always filled first in an election, and she was duly elected. No problem. Then came Secretary ("Scribe" nowadays), and a non-targeted LASFSian got elected. Oh, well, three out of four was still possible. Treasurer was a cinch; a mere re-election of the incumbent. With Senior Committeeman ("Vice President") the plot failed -- yet another nontarget LASFSian snuck in. Ah, well, it was a nice idea. The schemers settled for 50% of the offices; the final office, Junior Committeeman ("Registrar"), went to a Close Friend.

It wasn't for another year or so that the plotters found out that the success ratio was actually 75% -- one of the non-targets was -- shall we say, a Sleeper?

Oh, and if only we'd been able to get Steve elected instead of Fred!

(As a matter of record, the Bedroom Cabinet did quite a good job running LASFS for the six months.)

TRIPLE CO-RESPONDENT

29 of 32 people met -- 91%. Again, my percentage improves as the roster drops.

EVE: Guilty Pleasures? Oh, actually reading all the comic books I collect, I guess -- crud & non-crud alike.

When I was at UF, the student union -- usually called "The Florida Union" -- was attached to the cafeteria, where the Florida Speleological Society met at mealtimes. I remember there was a shortcut through the connecting wing to get to the main part of campus, and when a couple of the FSS were escorting a new, rather petite female-type member, she asked where they were going. The answer was supposed to come out "We're taking a short cut through the Union" but somehow, the FSS having their minds in the usual gutter, an extra consonant found its way into the word "cut." She stayed around anyway, and the line became a catchphrase. (So did "Will you please get your damned elephant out of my bathroom" -- but that's another story.)

MATTHEW: A Heinlein Festschrift would have been quite in order during 1987, as it would commemorate RAH's 80th birthday. (He was born 7-7-07). I've often wondered why the SF field doesn't go in for professionally produced Festschriften -- there are all sorts of opportunities and possibilities for the things, and at the very least every sizeable library in the country would buy copies.

ANDY: If the local Savoyards ever need a King Gama, I may recommend you to them. Can you carry a tune? (It probably isn't essential, come to think of it.)

The percentage of time I spend on fanac depends on your definition of the term. According to Rotsler, "Anything two fans do together is fanac." If you mean corresponding with fans, attending club functions, and contributing to or producing fanzines, then my percentage is not very large. If you include reading zines, mags, books (and comics), it grows to quite sizeable proportions. (And by Rotsler's definition, it becomes around 60% of total time, not just spare time.)

ALAN: The Ethical Dilemma makes interesting reading -- keep us informed as to updates, please?

Does anyone who has SCA connections know the present state of gay/les participation that is sanctioned? (This was sparked by your historical notes in the Ethical D.) A number of years ago, I heard there was a ruling regarding the carrying of same-sex favors by competing knights, and I was going to try doing some research to see what the historicity of such stuff was, but -- of course -- I never got around to it.