

\*\*\*eCube WisCon 27

Volume 3, Issue no. 00

\*\*\*LOOKING BACK AT WISCON 26

WisCon 26 was a tremendous success thanks to our guests of honor, all those who worked so hard on the committee and those who volunteered time at the convention. About 650 people attended WisCon 26 on the weekend of May 24-27, 2002. Nalo Hopkinson and Nina Kiriki Hoffman were our guests of honor. They were friendly, accessible, entertaining and gave brilliant speeches. Financially, we did fine and ended up in the black. We received some interesting comments and suggestions in the surveys returned to us after the convention, The full text and statistical breakdown of answers is posted on the web at \_\_\_\_\_. What follows are some comments and questions that I thought deserved an answer. Responses are by Jeanne Gomoll, unless noted otherwise. [Q = comment or question; A = response]

\*\*\*PUBLICATIONS

Q. [You should include] Bio of participants, especially writers -- it gives us a LITTLE publicity, which we can always use! Also, it gives newbies a leg up on friends to make, seek out.

**A. This idea has been suggested a lot recently. We're going to try collecting short participant bios in next year's program survey and hope to publish them in the pocket program book.**

Q. I REALLY MISSED the Tiptree winner/short list/long list description in the Souvenir book.

**A. We did too. Unfortunately, the Tiptree judges hadn't finished writing the short list before WisCon. Since the award ceremony is at Readercon July 12-14 this year, they didn't make the "WisCon Deadline." We hope to include the list at WisCon 27, but again it will depend on the timing of the judges' deliberations.**

\*\*\*MISCELLANEOUS

Q. Walk-in registration should have started sooner. I was there at 2:00 to register and catch the first panel, but walk-in registration didn't start till 2:45.

**A. Sorry about that. We intended to open registration earlier but the laser printer died at the last moment and another one had to be brought in.**

Q. I do miss the Tiptree ceremony when it's away. I think the winners deserve a whole con full of honor.

**A. They do get a whole con full of honor ... but sometimes that con is not WisCon. In 2002 it was Readercon, in Burlington, MA, July 12-14, 2002. In 2003 it will be Seacon in England.**

Q. The request for volunteers should be on the registration form -- let people know how important it is & how valuable an hour or 2 of their time is. Maybe reminding people about volunteering as they check in. (Maybe you already did this, I don't know cuz I checked in early).

**A. Please look at your registration form more carefully next year and check off the volunteer box! Thank you! We DO ask for volunteers on our registration forms and there's also a sign at the registration desk asking people to volunteer. But we think we need to improve the way we ask for and make use of volunteers. So look for changes for WisCon 27. And please volunteer!**

Q. We sent our pre-reg in February and there was nothing to indicate that we should expect to receive a receipt or confirmation (and many cons don't do this anyway). Our pre-reg evidently got eaten by the mail and we had to register

at the door at the more expensive rate (bad for starving writers). Please note on registrations in the future that a receipt is forthcoming and if not received, contact WisCon for confirmation.

**A. We agree wholeheartedly. Failing to provide members with receipts was the thing I most wish I could change about WisCon 26. We had a problem accessing the needed information on our mailing list, but we've addressed the problem for WisCon 27 and expect that registration will proceed more smoothly. We're very sorry for having inconvenienced you!**

\*\*\*PROGRAMMING

**NOTE: To all those who included program ideas in their WisCon 26 survey forms, make sure you submit these ideas on line for WisCon 27! Hand-written ideas on survey forms may not make it to the list of proposed panels unless they are formally submitted.**

Q. But all these good programs go on simultaneously. Could you offer participants a cloning option?

**A. Well, you could volunteer to help the Program Ops staff. They would give "5-minute" and "10-minute" warning signs and then you could drop in on ALL the programs.**

Q. Who makes the final programming decisions? Is it a committee, or does an individual choose & allot programming slots? I ask because I went to spontaneous panels more than programmed ones & at each I was told that the panel had been proposed, but turned down by some mysterious woman who made the programming decisions. I could see nothing wrong with the standard programming, mind you; I just have a preference for non-traditional topics of debate & exploration, & there didn't seem to be much of that going on, except in the spontaneous sessions, or in the late-night programming. It's probably just my expectation that a con as unique as WisCon should be a forum for discussions of socially-uncomfortable topics as well as more traditional liberal/feminist ideologies. What voices/ideas for new programming are being sought by the con's program people? Though, as long as you keep space for the spontaneous programs (which this year seemed to be well-attended and well-moderated), at least the ideas have SOME chance to find an audience.

**A. It's not a conspiracy, really. In fact, the program participants have a huge say in what programs are formally scheduled and which ones are dropped. Your so-called "mysterious woman" in charge of programming at WisCon 26 was Jane Hawkins, not so mysterious at all and she's developed a system with an enormous capacity for input from hundreds of people. She and the rest of the program committee gather panel ideas from everyone and anyone connected to WisCon -- panelists from previous years, guests, concom members and attendees. These programs are then collated into one list and offered to potential panelists (i.e., ANYONE who wants to be on programming), who are asked which programs they would like to join as participants.**

**This is the point when some ideas are kept and some ideas are dropped. If only one or two or no one signs up for a given program idea, it does get dumped. If 5 or 10 or 20 people express enthusiasm for a different program idea, it gets kept. Pretty simple. You may have attended a spontaneous program that had been originally proposed as a formal program, but what that means is that it didn't attract enough sign-ups by panelists.**

**We will continue to offer space for spontaneous programs and hope that if you attended a particularly interesting one at WisCon 26 that you will suggest it for WisCon 27.**

Q. Spontaneous programming: Huh? There was some?

**Yup. Second floor. Conference Room 1, right next to the registration desk.**

Q. Keep the clothing swap/panel -- but I'm glad a spontaneous one occurred. Bigger room for movies of year-x panel.

**A. This is one of those programs that needs more than an enthusiastic audience/participants. It needs a person or persons who are willing to do the rather enormous amount of work involved in collecting clothing and**

**bringing it to the convention. Saint Freddie Bear coordinated this project for several years ... from San Francisco! It's no wonder that she decided that she wasn't able to do it again for WisCon 26. We were glad when someone did a spontaneous clothing swap, but we can't promise to repeat this program unless someone volunteers to take responsibility for it. How about you?**

Q. A couple panels I attended were interrupted by people's cell phones ringing. Perhaps a gentle suggestion in the pocket program and/or the newsletters that people switch off their phone ringers.

**A. Good idea. Unfortunately, one or two of those cell phone interruptions were probably caused by official phones carried by concom members. We hope you will sympathize with concom members who attempt to sneak in a few programs into their busy schedule, but who must still be available to respond to convention emergencies.**

Q. I think programming shouldn't start till later on Friday. ... Late night & early morning programming is too much. ... Love the night time panels.

**A. But what about the people who go to sleep early and want earlybird programming? We're sorry that you miss good programs because you're sleeping -- but you would miss it anyway if we cancelled it, or if it was cross-programmed against another program.**

Q. Jane & Deb & company have done, as usual, a fine job. Could we get more people in on the process, too? Other voices, other styles --> more voices, more paradigms! Sometimes WisCon seems a tad clubbish -- newcomers struggle to fit in, meet people.

**A. [Amy Hanson responds:] I remember that vividly: seeing clumps of people heading out for dinner and feeling like a loser because I didn't know anyone and was going out for Greek food all by my lonesome. If only I'd known the two secret solutions: volunteer at the con and/or join one of the feminist sf listservs. Joining a listserv requires a little prior planning, but it allows you to study a nametag and suddenly gush out "You're Phoebe? Hi!" (We're working on a list of feminist SF listservs for the BU newsletter, stay tuned.) As for volunteering, it's a great way to meet a lot of nice people, especially if you volunteer in the consuite. That comment made me smile, too, because a whole crowd of us were bemoaning our busyness on WisCon Monday -- having too many responsibilities, too many things to do, rushing around the whole weekend like headless chickens and not having a chance to savor any of it. We all gloriously remembered our first con where we didn't know anyone and had time to stroll around campus, to shop along State Street, to spend hours at the Farmer's Market. Now we can hardly get away for a meal at the Noodle House with our listserv friends. Not knowing anyone your first WisCon is merely a milestone -- not knowing anyone your second WisCon is a problem.**

Q. A different badge holder would be much preferred -- pin or clip, but not the inseparable combination.

**A. You will just have to come to the Name badge Necklace activity at WisCon 27's Friday afternoon fair!**