



## Editorial Notes by Mike Glycer

**Comes the Jubilee:** There's a good reason nobody ever complains to Bruce Pelz that they're not ready for the millenium -- they remember what he told them the last time the decade changed. We had an LA in '96 bid party at the 1989 Windycon, when the bid was only two months out of the starting gate. A fan Bruce asked to buy a presupport blurted, "I'm not ready to think about the '90s yet!" Bruce's answer was, "If you don't want to think about the '90s, you better die in the next two months!"

**The Truth Commission:** Two readers straightened out your humble editor in recent letters:

**Bjo Trimble:** "...You announced *PawPrints* with only my name, yet Lora was first on the masthead. *PawPrints* was her idea and her baby. (Unfortunately, it did not get enough support and has already folded after only 4 issues.) It's bad enough to lose a lovely little publication, but to have someone else get all the credit is an extra insult. You announced OUR CCXX [CostumeCon] bid withdrawal with only my name as instigator and Lora as an afterthought. Why?"

It was myopic age-ism on my part. I apologized to Lora when I met her at Loscon.

And **Dave Langford** sent along a correction: "*Ansible* did not suggest that Julian Headlong and Paul Kincaid would



stand for TAFF. They were reported (in a "Fanfundery" paragraph in issue 136 that didn't mention TAFF at all) as planning to stand for GUFF."

**My Club's Not Dead Yet!** Last issue's article on science fiction clubs stirred up a heated discussion.

An East Coast fan saw an early draft of "Is Your Club Dead Yet?" and asked: If a club tries heavily to recruit new members to keep itself going indefinitely and in doing so changes its nature to the point where the older members leave, has the club really been successful? Is a club which satisfies its members and ultimately disappears better or worse than one which cycles people through as its focus continually changes to reflect, say, the interests of people in their 20s?

Both questions suggest that clubs might market themselves in such a way as to survive by replacing the membership. Unlike the bureaucracy, clubs don't exist to perpetuate themselves. Clubs usually measure whether they are "successful" by their ability to encourage socializing and friendship. A club that does those two things will be well-remembered by fans -- even after it finally fizzles out. Fans are, after all, timebinders.

(Robert A. Heinlein said in his 1941 Worldcon GoH, "Timebinding" ...is a technical term invented by Alfred Korzybski and it refers to the fact that the human animal lives not only in the present but in the past and in the future.... Science fiction fans differ from most of the rest of the race by thinking in terms of racial magnitudes -- not even centuries, but thousands of years.")

**A Brief History of Timebinding:** And at this point it's tempting to veer off into the cosmic topic of "What Is a Fan?" Two generally-accepted characteristics of fans are that they have a sense of wonder, and that they are timebinders. However, I suspect Fandom is the residue of many individuals to participate in organized fanac -- fanzines, conventions, clubs, etc. -- for as many different reasons as there are for people to become friends.

An interesting problem for those who look to science fiction to supply the

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# File 770 128

*File 770:128* is edited for the 21st year in a row by Mike Glycer at 705 Valley View Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016. All the news that fits we print. **Telephone Number:** (626) 305-1004. **E-Mail:** MGlycer@compuserve.com

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## News of Fandom



### Stolen Art Surfaces

A University of Texas art student told the FBI he was solicited by e-mail to buy four of the paintings stolen from Janny Wurts and Don Maitz in 1995.

Twenty original oil paintings in a black wooden crate were taken from a Federal Express delivery van near the site of the 1995 World Fantasy Con in Baltimore. FedEx offered a \$5,000 reward, but the theft remains unsolved.

The art student says he received e-mail on December 10 "from someone called [tslip@forex.com](mailto:tslip@forex.com). It was an advertisement for some fantasy art complete with pictures. This person or group of persons claimed they received my name from the art auction at BucConeer and knew that I had bought one of Hannah Shaperio's works. I looked at these pictures for a good while that they claimed a woman by the name of Katherine Cummings had painted. But there was something too familiar about them."

He checked the web pages of major fantasy artists and discovered the four paintings offered for sale were among images of the stolen works shown on Maitz's web site.

The student contacted Federal Express, spoke with Janny Wurts, Don Maitz and was interviewed by an FBI agent

from its Baltimore office. Frustrating the investigation is that the text of the e-mail could not be retrieved from the student's AOL account. An AOL tech reassured him it was only system maintenance and everything would be available when it was completed. Instead, "All my e-mail had become a victim of what's known as a mail dump. I had no new mail, no read mail, and no sent mail. It was all gone. The next day... one of the FBI's computer specialists [spoke] with AOL on the matter. It seems that AOL handles over 250 million pieces of mail a day and once it's gone from the server, it's just gone."

If you received a similar solicitation and still have the e-mail, please contact the authorities or *File 770*.

### Death Valley Days

Jerry Pournelle took the long way home from COMDEX in Las Vegas. His Bronco blew a tire on a dirt road in Death Valley, went up a berm, rolled and landed on the driver's side. The truck was completely totalled and when Pournelle scrambled from the wreck, bruised and bloody, he found himself 23 miles from the nearest paved road and outside the range of cell phone service.

Pournelle decided to walk out. He tied an old t-shirt around his head as a

bandage for his head cuts, collected his backpack containing 7-up in bottles and extra clothing, and set out on foot. He started about 4:30 p.m. After walking for an hour he realized by watching the direction of sunset that he'd been disoriented and had gone the wrong way -- the long way out of Death Valley. There was no choice but to turn around.

No cars passed for hours. Darkness fell. High desert nights are very cold, so Pournelle put on all his extra clothing and continued without stopping to rest because, rather like a Jack London story, he might not make it if he stopped.

Eight hours later he made it to the paved road. The first few cars to pass him refused to stop for the apparition wearing spare trousers as a hood. Two more hours passed before a pair of Mexican nationals in an 18-wheeler collected him and drove him into Baker.

Baker is where drivers on the way to Las Vegas hit the mountain side of the Mojave Desert. Those who fail to heed the "Please turn off air conditioning for next 18 miles" road sign soon return, hooked to a tow truck. Jerry checked into the Bun Boy motel and called his family. His son, Alex, came and drove him home.

The full, first-person account of this harrowing adventure can be found on [www.jerrypournelle.com](http://www.jerrypournelle.com)

## *I'll Be Your Weather Man*

Wondering when the next weather disaster will strike? My advice is -- ask Guy Lillian III when he's coming to your state. A few months ago Hurricane Georges forced Guy to flee New Orleans and take refuge with friends in Alabama and Georgia. Recently, blizzards marred Guy's return from a Christmastime visit with relatives in the Buffalo area.

Worse yet, Guy had driven to Buffalo in a Geo Metro -- not a car built for braving polar winds and ice-encrusted roads. So upon his return Guy sent an e-mail to every citizen of North America reassuring everyone he'd made it safely home by an indirect route:

"I couldn't possibly make it through an ice storm in such a tiny car. They'd find me icified in a snowbank come the spring, my fingers gnawed off by badgers. So I went west, through Canada -- a very pleasant drive. Until I reached Windsor, on the Detroit border. There and then, I hit the real storm.

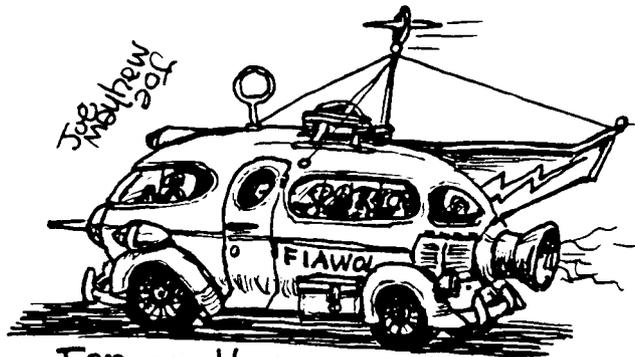
"It was the storm you've read about in the papers, and it was every bit as awful as they said. Blizzard wind, blizzard snowfall, blizzard road hazards, blizzard non-visibility. I crept south in a state of abject terror on I-75, but for only a few miles. When I spotted a Knights Inn through the swirling haze, I made for it. It was only 3 p.m., but I decided that the few miles I might rack up before plowing into a snowbank for an experiment in suspended animation wouldn't be worth it. I got a warm room, watched Arizona whup the despicable Dallas Cowboys, read *Island in the Sea of Time* (recommended) and let the storm do its thing."

The following day he lined up with the rest of the traffic in I-75's one open southbound lane for a slow drive home.

Where to next, Guy?

## *Suing Their Wild Oats*

Elfquest artists Wendy and Richard Pini have joined in a lawsuit over the misuse of endorsements for the Natural Sex Pill.



Fen on their way to  
the 1934 WorldCon.

They originally appeared on TV's *Hard Copy* in 1995, together with a screenwriter, an actress, a sex therapist and a publicist for *America's Funniest Home Videos*, saying that the homeopathic remedy (made of oats) had done wonders for their sex lives. Two years later, they claim their edited remarks were used in a frequently-aired infomercial for an inferior pill they had never tried or endorsed. Their Los Angeles Superior Court action seeks more than \$400,000 in damages for libel, invasion of privacy, false advertising and unwanted commercial exploitation. *[[Source: Los Angeles Times]]*

## *Inside the Tower of Babel*

Fred Lerner's *The Story of Libraries*, now in bookstores, describes the important role of libraries from the time of the Sumerians down to the present day. Fred admits in his FAPazine, "I'm anxiously awaiting the first reviews of the book. Very anxiously, now that my publishers tell me that the *National Enquirer* has requested a review copy."

The 254-page hardcover is available for \$24.95 from Cassell & Continuum -- call (800) 561-7704.

Eric M. Heideman is now the children's librarian at Southeast Public Library in Dinkytown.

## *Writers and Editors*

Want to Win Ten Grand? Writers have until January 29 at 5:00 p.m. to enter

their unpublished science fiction or fantasy novels in competition for the \$10,000 George Turner Prize. Transworld Publishers, the contest's sponsor, accepts entries of 60,000 to 150,000 words in length -- don't forget to enclose the \$30 entry fee. Contact: The George Turner Prize, Transworld Publishers, Ground Floor, 40 Yeo St, Neutral Bay, NSW 2089. *[[Source: Australian SF Bullshead #112]]*

William Stoddard is the new editor of *Prometheus*, the Libertarian Futurist Society's quarterly sf-oriented publication. He takes over from Anders Mosen who did the job for five

years.

## *Barefoot and Regnant*

Philadelphia's Eric Raymond "is now so awesomely powerful that he has merited a front-page article in the *Washington Post*," reports Martin Morse Wooster, sending along the clipping. The December 3 piece -- with inset photo showing Raymond barefoot in front of his computer -- touts him as "a full-time evangelist for 'open-source' software." Raymond believes that software makers should make available their source code, partly as a means of restoring the early Internet's creative freedom, partly to improve the reliability of operating systems by a broad peer review, and partly as a means of loosening Microsoft's dominant grip on the marketplace.

Raymond believes that "open-source" creates a dynamic "gift culture" in which programmers create features and repair bugs in return for the prestige it brings them. Sounds a lot like egoboo, doesn't it? How fannish!

Wooster sighs, "And to think I knew him way back when he was a filker at Discordian Business Meetings."

## *Speaking of Repairing Bugs*

More Y2K: According to *Instant Message* #634: "We want to reassure our vast reading audience that NESFA is taking all possible steps to make *Instant Message* Y2K compliant. Here is what our panel of

experts recommends: No one issue of *Instant Message* should contain more than 1999 pages.... NESFA should not encourage fans who were active in fandom prior to 1901 to join...."

**Disarmament Desired**

Will Joseph Nicholas' well-known passion for eliminating strategic weapons soon be surpassed by a new passion for eliminating small arms? Judith Hanna's letter to *Australian Bullsheets* #112 makes me wonder. One week in September, police raided a crack house in their neighborhood, a fatal shooting occurred nearby, and a couple of days later: "A house on the other side of our block sprouted cop-pers guarding its front gate, and clamoring up when asked what was going on. The local papers said, thinly, that a gunshot had been heard about midnight, and when the police arrived the house was empty. Since then, all's been normal -- quiet except for the traffic." Was Joseph okay? Sure, Judith says he slept through all of it.

**Medical Updates**

**Nancy Tucker Shaw** made rapid progress after suffering a massive stroke in September. She regained the use of her left hand and arm -- though will have to do a lot of work to get back full strength and control.

However, she was briefly rehospitalized in November for heart fibrillation -- the same condition doctors believe caused her stroke. Discovering that two chambers of Nancy's heart were not working normally, doctors performed a cardioversion, described by Misti Anslin Tucker as being "What we see on all those Emergency Room dramas when the doctor puts a pair of paddles on the patient's chest, yells 'Clear' and a large jolt of electricity makes the patient's body jump up off the bed several inches. Basically what Nancy calls a 'jump start.'" The cardioversion was entirely successful, and Nancy's heart went back to beating normally.

Nancy is now back at the Heartland convalescent home. She was allowed to celebrate Thanksgiving at home with her family. Before the heart problems, Misti was confident that Nancy would be able

to attend ConFusion in January, where she will be Fan Guest of Honor. All fans hope Nancy will enjoy a rapid and complete recovery, and celebrate her return to fanac at ConFusion. *[[Sources: Misti Anslin Tucker, Joyce Scrivner]]*

**Forry Ackerman** celebrated his 82nd birthday in November with 110 friends and suspects. But shortly before the birthday bash, 4E experienced a momentary blackout in his bedroom and spent five days in the hospital undergoing tests. The tests, including lung x-rays and a catscan of his brain, did not show anything wrong, so the problem has yet to be undiagnosed.

In 1999, look for Ackerman At Marscon (Minneapolis), Summer of Horrors (Chicago), CONvergence (Twin Cities), Monster Bash (Pittsburgh), Dragon\*Con (Atlanta) and a flock of other cons, winding up the year as guest of honor at the celebration of the 2000th Perry Rhodan publication in Germany.

**Short Waves**

**Mae Strelkov** is out of hekto carbons and **Bill Bowers** would like to do something about it. Mae, 81, is undoubtedly Argentina's best-known fan, and a wonderful

artist. Bill asks, "If you have any sources, or, even more appreciated, actual supplies, you can send them to me: Bill Bowers, 4651 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45238-4503 ...or directly to: Mae Strelkov, 4501 Palma Sola, Jujuy, Argentina."

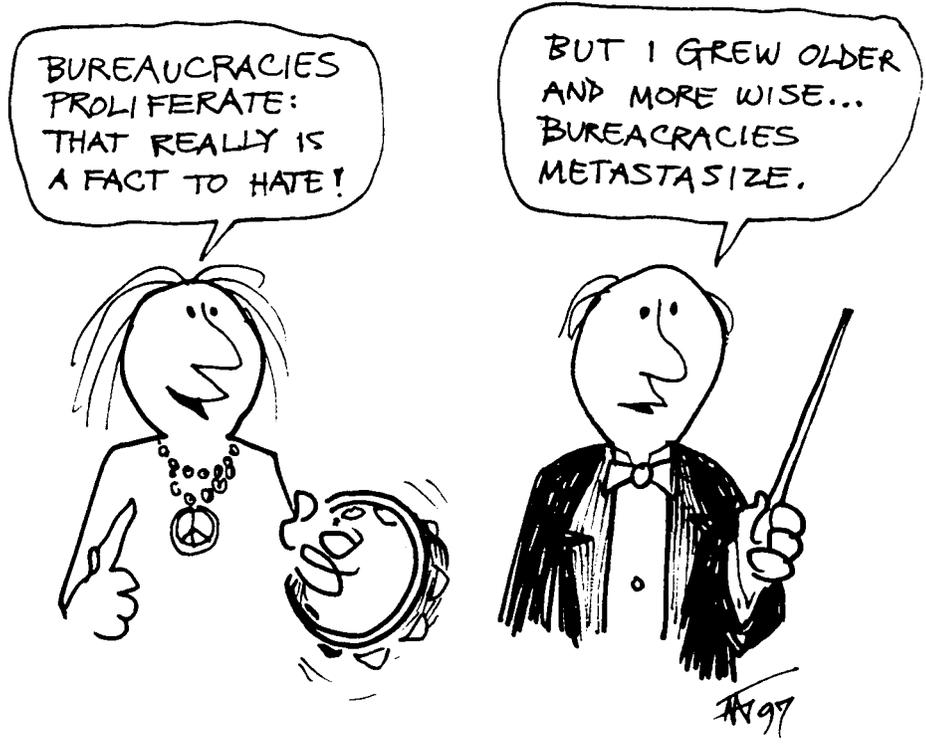
Bill adds, "And I'm sure she'd enjoy hearing from you if you haven't been in touch for a while -- or appreciate receiving your fanzine, if you are so inclined."

**Joyce Scrivner** is putting together an exhibit on **Ann Layman Chancellor** for display at Minicon.

**Chris Logan Edwards** and **Lorna Carlson** are the proud parents of **Hannah Susan Edwards**, born December 8. The baby weighed in at 7lb. 4 oz., 21-1/2 inches long. The parents' weight and measurements have not been announced.

A fourth addition to the **NESFA Skunk's** family apparently was detected and will be called **D'Artagnan**. *[[Source: Instant Message 635]]*

**Chthulhu (sp?)'s Tentacles Reach East Coast:** Organizers of the West Coast H. P. Lovecraft film festival have invited the Philadelphia SF Society run a mirror of their festival on the East Coast. The club voted to explore the idea at its October meeting.



## *TAFF Results*

Vijay Bowen outpulled Sarah Prince in the 1998 US-to-UK TAFF race, according to Mike Scott of *Plotka*:

	<u>US</u>	<u>UK</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bowen	47	8	55
Prince	12	3	15
Hold Over Funds	3	2	5
No Preference	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>16</u>
Total	72	19	91

Bowen will travel to the 1999 Eastercon in Liverpool.

British and European participation was almost completely missing this time -- less than 15% of the tally in the race which selected Maureen Kincaid Speller.

The overall turnout was equally dismal: less than half the total in either of the last two races. Compared to 91 votes for Bowen and company, Maureen and her competition received 223 votes altogether, and Ulrika O'Brien and company received 224.

I'll also add a "Bravo!" to the Plotka News Network for providing a place where newzine editors who want to know the TAFF results can learn them....

*DASF*x editor Sourdough Jackson's reelection platform promises to move the Denver clubzine to a Linux platform, "away from Windows, Microsoft and the Borg. Resistance is *not* futile, and we are darn well *not* going to be assimilated! Linux: Live free or die!"

### *Changes of Address*

Stan Burns, 1317 N. San Fernando Rd.  
#362, Burbank CA 91504

Dave and Keri Doering, 289 W. Hidden  
Hollow Dr., Orem UT 84058

Jill, Donald 3rd, and Donald 4th Eastlake,  
65 Shindegan Hill Rd., RR #1, Carmel  
NY 10512

Tom Feller, E-mail:  
tomfeller@aol.com

John Mansfield, 516 Portage Ave.,  
Winnipeg, MN 53C 0G2

Bob and Fern Tucker, E-mail:  
btucker@davesworld.net

**Eastlake Family:** A month of being laid off by CyberCash, Donald Eastlake 3rd was hired by IBM in Hawthorne, NY. Thanks to a "super relocation package" and the sale of their old place, the Eastlakes quickly acquired a new home under construction in Carmel, NY -- sited on nine acres amid trees and overlooking a cliff. They were able to have telephone wiring and ethernet installed to their specifications before the walls were sealed -- my idea of the best kind of "fixer-upper"! They expected to move there in mid-December.

### *Clipping Service*

**Marc Ortlieb** in *Australian SF Bullshead* #110: I've heard it said that, by mourning the death of a person, you are somehow demeaning their achievements. I hope that Ian [Gunn's] achievements are not tarnished by the fact that I am saddened by his death. He was a special and unique talent -- in his writing, his artwork, his organizing, his editing and in his entire presence. He championed tolerance, pointing out at the Basicon 2 business session that fandom was one group. And he was a good bloke. I'll miss his humor and his irreverence, his ability to gently point out foolishness through his cartooning and his writing. Australian and international fandom has lost a worthy champion, we've lost a mate, and Karen has lost her husband. Yes, I mourn for Ian, not for any lack in his achievements but because I wanted more."

**A Creative Life:** The spirit in which Ian Gunn wanted to be remembered is readily found in his humorous art and fanwriting. One of the last installments "Gunshots", his column for *Ethel the Aardvark*, made this satirical appeal for Australians to treat American visitors nicely at Aussiecon 3:

"Like, don't make fun of their accents. They can't help it. Try to suppress the urge to ridicule their national inability to pronounce the letter 't' in the prefix 'inter' (*Innernet*, *innernational*, *inneractive*, *innersection* and so forth) or their peculiar blind spot towards the second 'i'

in 'Aluminium'.

"Now some -- a few at any rate -- of these guys will be decades older than fans you usually associate with; it can take a lifetime for an American to put aside enough cash to travel this far, and they quite often need to be retired before they have enough time on their hands to make the trip worthwhile. Poor buggers get minimal holiday leave and no long service. But don't let their obvious decrepitude worry you; many of them are quite bright and sprightly and can even walk short distances unaided. Incontinence is the exception rather than the norm. Sure, they may want to regale you with rambling reminiscences of cons they attended in 1934, or the time they met Jules Verne, but fannish history is important to these guys -- mainly because they were *there*-- they call it 'Timebinding' and it's a big thing.... Just nod politely and shout a few encouraging words into their ear-trumpets and they'll be happy."

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## **Obituaries**

### *Richard Wright*

Richard Wright was found at home December 29, dead of natural causes. The precise cause was not immediately known. Although Richard did have major bypass surgery last spring, friends who saw him at SMOFcon thought he appeared to be fully recovered.

According to Becky Thomson, Wright "had Christmas dinner with friends on Friday and spoke to two different friends on Saturday, which was the last we know that anyone heard from him." He was discovered by the fellow who shared his apartment.

Thomson knew Wright as "the current Chairman of the Northwest Science Fiction Society, and my Third in Command in the At-Con Office at BucConeer.... Richard has been a constant supporter of NWSFS and Norwescon practically since their inception. It will be hard to imagine Northwest Fandom without his presence."

Wright is also the third member of the Chicon 2000 committee who has died. Chair Tom Veal praised him online: "Richard was not only a personal friend (I am one of the few who knew him when he was young and thin and had hair) but an early and enthusiastic supporter of the Chicago in 2000 bid.... He and I had worked together many times before, notably at MagiCon, where he was my principal assistant for site selection balloting, and at Bucconeer, where he was one of the con office supervisors. He always worked diligently and intelligently, and his calming personality helped defuse many of the tensions of a hyperactive Worldcon weekend."

### *Vincent Clarke*

One of Britain's most beloved fanzine fans and Fan Guest of Honor at Intersec-tion in 1995, Vincent Clarke passed away November 29 at the age of 76. He'd spent most of the last seven months under medical care. In the end, he was taken by pneumonia.

Rob Hansen had visited him the previous afternoon: "He was barely able to move, kept drifting in and out of consciousness, and I found it almost impossible to understand what he was trying to say to me. I held his hand for a while and talked to him about friends in fandom, but I'm not sure how much he heard or understood."

Clarke was a living connection to British fandom of the 1930's, but quite transformed since those times. In a longer tribute online, Patrick Nielsen Hayden noted, "It was hard to remember, knowing

the courteous gentleman of his later years, that he was once known as a feudmaster, quick to respond with hot words. Something happened to change all that. And the owl was once the baker's daughter."

Clarke was the original TAFF winner (in 1954), however, he lost his job and couldn't afford the trip. American visitors to the UK in the 80s and 90s found him a charming friend and devoted host. One of them returned the favor by making him a kind of GoH in absentia at an early Corflu. And some encouraged him to fulfill his TAFF dreams.

Gary Farber, posting online, remembered staying with Vince during a 1996 trip to the UK:

"I tried, against the odds as I knew it was, to convince him that fans in America would love to see him, that we would love to have a fund for him to visit us, but it seemed to me that to him, while the idea had its attractions, the idea of visiting America was nearly as fantastic as if I had proposed a fund to bring him to Mars, or to Fairyland: they were each equally fantastic and mystical places that one would want to visit but that one knew one really couldn't."

Clarke's daughter, Nicky, requested that memorial donations be made to The Arthritis Research Foundation, Copeman House, St. Mary's Court, St. Mary's Gate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 7TD U.K.

### *John Millard*

Toronto fan John Millard passed away on November 28, two weeks after entering the hospital complaining of chest pains. His condition continually declined during his hospital stay and he was unconscious for the last 36 hours. Millard would have been 81 on November 30.

Millard chaired Torcon II, the 1973 Worldcon, and was "honorary chair emeritus" of the Toronto in 2003 bid. He was Chairman of the Friends of the Merrill Collection from its inception in 1980 until about 1990. He was one of the earliest and most active of the science fiction fans in the Toronto area.

Millard requested that there be no funeral service. There was a gathering of his friends at the funeral home on December 2. Lloyd Penney writes, "Yvonne and

I attended the gathering at the funeral home. Some tears, but some laughs, too, recalling John at various events. At that gathering, many found out that John had one of the world's greatest collections of books on Antarctica, and he was regarded by some scholars as an Antarctic expert. The collection was sold at auction by Sotheby's, who had heard about the collection, and drooled over it at length."

His collection included a journal from one of the many expeditions to the Antarctic, bound in vellum and autographed by all the members of the expedition. Sotheby's auctioned it for a substantial amount.

Contributions may be made in Millard's memory to the Friends of the Merrill Collection, who will accumulate and use them to purchase an appropriate book or piece or artwork for the Collection. The Friends of the Merrill Collection, 3rd floor, 239 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 1R5. (Donation receipts will not be available.)

Torcon II was the second Worldcon I attended, and John's presence as chair immediately registered with me as being something worthy of emulation. I kept him in mind as a role model years later when I worked on L.A.con III. (The early influences seem to be the most indelible!)

Sam Frank died on December 27 after a prolonged hospitalization during which he remained in a coma.



## Shibboleths of Fandom

by David Bratman

A shibboleth is any term which members of a group use correctly, but which outsiders almost invariably get wrong -- usually by mispronunciation or using the wrong term. They're useful for being often highly accurate indicators as to whether a stranger understands the ethos and aesthetics of your group.

In fandom we have a number of useful shibboleths, and the existence of these was brought to mind as I read the sf fandom section of *Idiom Savant* by Jerry Dunn, a new book compiling short vocabularies of the slang terms of various occupations and interest groups. The section for fandom was very short and omitted obvious useful terms like "neofan", but despite a few small errors it was overall remarkably accurate, and quite lacked the roll-on-the-floor-laughing, jaw-dropping flood of inaccuracies of most such outsider-compiled lists.

A glance through the acknowledgements revealed one reason for this: Dunn had help from a number of worthy fannish netizens, including among others Avedon Carol, Rob Hansen (whose last name he misspells), Jane Hawkins, Seth Breidbart, and an individual credited as "Patrick N. Hayden" (see below).

Here are what I have found to be some useful fannish shibboleths. I'd be interested in reading comments, additions, and corrections on the origin and nature of terms.

1. The name of our field. Dunn says that the correct short term is "SF", that "sci-fi" is a derogatory fannish term for bad SF, and that "skiffy" is a definitely derogatory variant of the latter. This is about half-right, and misses the shibboleth entirely. The term "sci-fi" was coined by Forry Ackerman by analogy to "hi-fi", but it was so quickly and eagerly adopted by mundanes for whom science fiction meant *bad* science fiction that it became taboo within fandom. But despite many public warnings never to call the stuff "sci-fi" (Terry Carr used to post comments to this effect in anthology prefaces), people still continue to drift into the outskirts of fandom using it, so its usefulness as a shibboleth continues undiminished. It was noticed early on that, although in practice "sci-fi" meant "bad science fiction", the taboo on the term was so strong, and its usefulness as a shibboleth so great, that it couldn't be used by fans for that special meaning until a marker was developed to put on the term to show that it was not being used from ignorance. I'm not sure when, or by whom, the deliberate mispronunciation "skiffy", followed quickly by the appropriate spelling, was developed, but I think it was about 1978, for I never heard it before then. The first person to say "skiffy" in my presence was Tom Whitmore.

2. To attend a convention, one must pay the convention committee a sum of money. What is the term used to describe what you're getting for your money? The fannish term is "membership"; the nonfannish term is "ticket." Here is a shibboleth deriving directly from a difference between the fannish and nonfannish ethos. To a fan, a con is an interactive, participatory event. It's like a club or other organization, and I believe

"membership" has always been the correct term in fandom. "Ticket" implies a passive audience viewing a show, and is often used by people whose primary con-going experience is with big-business media conventions, where the term "ticket" is used and is an accurate indication of what you're going to get there. Harlan Ellison has used a useful term for the sort of people who treat conventions as places for passive or sheep-like behavior: the term is "stone fans", presumably deriving from their sitting there like stones, or from having rock-like heads. But it seems not to have caught on, as when I use it people either look blank or think I said "stoned fans", which means something entirely different.

3. The most stringent of all fannish shibboleths is the ability to spell Teresa Nielsen Hayden's name correctly. Not only do people who ought to know better add a hyphen, or file her under "H", or both, but they spell it "Theresa Neilsen-Hayden", even when they're copying it from a source which got it right. For extra credit, mangle her husband's name too (see above). These errors are sometimes perpetrated even by people who ought to know better. The simple act of spelling Teresa's name correctly is a strong indication that you are not just a fan, but part of the fannish ingroup, possibly even a BNF yourself.

4. The fannish infix "h", the use of which originally derives from Donald Wollheim's Lovecraftian-parody deity, Ghu. Fans may use it occasionally in a few designated vocabulary words, such as Ghod or Bheer. Non-fans may quote fannish usage with a quizzical tone, usually with quotation marks around the word. Anybody who uses the fannish "h" on any other word more than once in an article is a neofan. (Spelling "Teresa" as "Theresa" doesn't count.) This usage is not hard to spot, as when excessive it's usually a lot more excessive than that. Thus, this shibboleth doesn't distinguish well between fans and non-fans, but it can certainly distinguish between neos and other fans.

In Tolkien fandom, we have a few special shibboleths of our own. To be accepted as a Tolkien fan, be sure to:

1. Spell the man's name correctly. It isn't "Tolkein" and never has been. (Strangely, I've never heard the pronunciation "Toll-kine", which would be the proper German rendition of this oddity.)

2. Know that the word "Valar" (the gods of Tolkien's imaginary world) is the plural only, and use "Vala" for the singular.

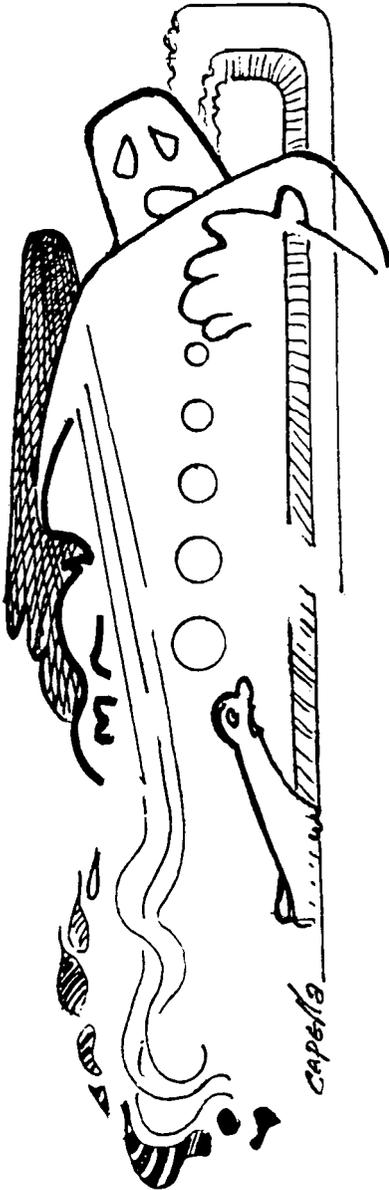
3. Never call *Lord of the Rings* a trilogy, still less "the Trilogy." It's a single novel in three volumes. Tolkienists will go to war over this.

4. Use the term "Tolclones" for the class of books which have blurbs reading "In the tradition of Tolkien" or the equivalent.

5. Know that the Inklings didn't read their manuscripts aloud to each other in a pub, but in college sitting rooms.

I'm sure there are many other useful shibboleths in fandom and its subgroups. It could be useful to compile them, but don't worry about giving away any secrets: judging from Terry Carr's experience battling "sci-fi", nobody will pay any attention.

*Editorial Notes, continued  
from page 2*



central purpose for their club is whether sf literacy is still possible. There are too many books, movies, tv shows, for fans to count on relating to a common body of reading. That's why you get "Asimov who?" Though I guess if the problem of establishing a common body of reading was that important, fandom would have collapsed 50 years ago:

"Camille Cazadessus founded [DAS-FA] when the Denver group that put on Worldcon 1941 couldn't agree that Edgar Rice Burroughs wrote science fiction."  
[DASFax 1/98]

**Looking Backward from the Year 2000:** Andrew Porter called to say he was mentioning my clubs article in his editorial for *Science Fiction Chronicle's* 200th issue. He wistfully concludes, "So something will evolve, perhaps, to replace the SF books, and the SF fandom that I know and love. But, of course, it won't really be the same, will it?"

Probably not. But I know there are fans who think it hasn't been the same since, oh, about 1970. For example, a lot of people joined LASFS around the same time I did, getting into all its activities. They flooded the club's weekly apa with enthusiastic, badly copied zines -- sparking the so-called "Crud Crisis in APA-L." They were not only unworthy of invitations to the exclusive "Pinckard Salon", they were barely housebroken -- Len Moffatt uttered dire threats to anyone caught using his Chivas Regal in a mixed drink, while a despairing Larry Niven posted a set of directions on his toaster oven, and the penalties for violating them.

The confusing thing is -- the invading barbarians who overwhelmed fandom in the 1970s think they are synonymous with the historical fandom of the 1930s. Which works fine, because their perception matters more than reality. The original fanish culture survived because the barbarians -- who are ourselves -- found in it a valuable way of life.

That transmission of values and a sense of fanhistory will continue into the 21st century. We might not recognize our fandom in the fanac of our heirs were we able to see it, but they will see it, and that matters most of all.

**My Club's Not Dead Yet!** Plenty of you wrote to tell me about your own experiences with local clubs.

Doom and gloom are not even an issue at SFSFS, the Ft. Lauderdale club, which not long ago became the fourth SF club to acquire its own meeting facility (after LASFS, NESFA and BSFS):

**Mal Barker:** Our clubhouse is so small that once you sit down for a meeting you are forced to stay through it because it is impossible to leave. Much like being the first sardine in the can.  
[SFSFS Shuttle 133]

**Southern California: Mike Donahue:** Well, I think that these whiny people are bemoaning their own success in SF. The purpose of SF (to me) has always been to popularize technology and innovation and to nurture new writers and disseminate information and ideas into the general population. Remember how wacko it was to consider going to the moon?

Well, we're suffering from our own success... losing members to the internet, to the SF Trek and Star Wars and B5 monopolies, and our society is now more accepting of fans.

But don't forget there's more SF clubs in the world now than ever before, more SF fans attending more conventions than ever before. And, my goodness, we've even had big business start to muscle into the convention scene.

If there's something wrong with your club, fix it. If you're not interested in the people there, invite interesting people. And also, if there's someone there driving away everyone else, get rid of them. Boorish people don't have the right to ruin other's social evenings. Demand respect from others in your club, and give them the respect they deserve.

**Maryland: Martin Morse Wooster:** When I read your article about clubs, I could see fandom collectively shaking their crutches and shouting, "Dagnabit! Those young people aren't like us! Why, back when we were young, we had to *save* the lime jello so we could pub our next ish with it!"

But seriously, I am a member of three local clubs and the founder of one: the Silver Spring Science Fiction Society, which has had monthly meetings since October 1985. All three clubs have small core memberships, but seem to be thriving. The oldest, the Potomac River Science Fiction Society, was founded in 1975 about the same time (and perhaps for the same reasons) as the "sercon discussion group" you started in LASFS.

In my view, large clubs are in greater trouble than smaller ones for two reasons. First, large clubs have hierarchies, committees, and a treasury, all of which can start of fuel feuds. If you have a club with a constitution, there will always be

one or two nerds who will want to revise it. Second, older clubs have a core of oldphart members who will want to assign activities to their friends and are hesitant to reach out to newcomers.

There will always be a place for sf clubs because fen are social animals. You can't go out to dinner with your computer. (Well, you *could*, but it would be a very peculiar dinner.) But the three clubs I know survive because they stick to the basics -- getting together, talking, having meals together. They don't strive for anything grander.

The biggest problem, of course, is retaining members. Some move. Others have kids. Others quit for other reasons. One fairly active local fan I know appeared to have some sort of mental problem, and invented imaginary reasons to quarrel with clubs so that she could quit them.

So how do you get new members? I've placed ads in the *Washington City Paper*, our local alternative weekly. These ads have resulted in some peculiar members: I'll never forget the woman, who appeared to be in her late 20s, who showed up at one meeting and after five minutes announced, "You people are too old!" and stormed out. But we've gotten some very good members, including a Clarion graduate who had never been involved with fandom until he joined my club.

Science fiction club presidents: potential fen are out there. You'll just have to do more work in reaching them than you've done in the past.

**Nashville:** *Tom Feller:* I've only been in Nashville a little over a year, but my wife Anita tells me that attendance at the Nashville club meetings has declined over the years. The current club, the Middle Tennessee Science Fiction Society, is a merger of two clubs, the Middle Tennessee Speculative Fiction Association and the Nashville Science Fiction Society. The only difference between the two was that the former was more literary oriented, and there were some people in one club who didn't like some people in the other and vice versa. They merged when someone realized that the people who didn't like

each other had stopped coming to meetings. The current practice is to meet once a month at a branch of the public library and then adjourn to eat at a specific restaurant.

My other experience was in Jackson, MS, where I joined the Chimneyville Fantasy and Science Fiction Society shortly after it had survived the departure of its founder. I think CFSFS suffered because we could were unable to reach a consensus over where the club should be going. Some, like myself, wanted an SF-driven purpose, zines and/or conventions. Others wanted a purely social club. Still others wanted to move into SCA-style areas such as costuming and role-playing. The end came when a divorce split the membership.

I agree with the theory that the lack of purpose is what kills clubs. Of course, it is not any easy problem to solve when the members cannot decide among themselves what they want to do. It doesn't have to be sercon. It can be purely social, if that's what the members want.



**Kansas City:** *Ken Keller:* Well, all I can say is that The Kansas City Science Fiction & Fantasy Society, Inc. is approaching its 27th year this coming July. (Gary Mattingly and I founded KaCSFFS in July of 1971, and the club has been meet-

ing monthly ever since.) Like fan clubs everywhere, we've had a constantly revolving door through which many have passed. But many have stayed, too. Sometimes for awhile, sometimes permanently. Actually, over the last decade, we've had just the opposite problem from those clubs that you sight in your e-mail: We've been growing larger. (I've even been exploring various creative ways that we can obtain our own, permanent full-time club facility. Some very promising things are on the horizon.)

Current (paid) membership is now more than 100, and counting. We have a healthy treasury and do all the usual "official" things that most larger SF clubs do: clubzine (*Cacaphony*), dinner group, (The Fanivores), a movie group (The Film Cadets), even two bowling league teams (The Space Cadets and the Un-Nameables). We have our own Webmaster who maintains a full-featured website with various links to KC fandom and beyond. He also maintains two very active e-mail lists--the KML (KaCSFFS Mailing List) for news and the KDL (KaCSFFS Discussion List) for everything else. In May, we're coming up on our 29th regional con (ConQuesT). We've also been hosting a second (no kids) relaxacon (CONtraception) for the last decade, usually on or near the Halloween weekend.

KaCSFFS is always "re-inventing" itself, when necessary, but without losing sight of our literary and fannish origins. Yes, fannish politics does, indeed, rear its head on occasion -- of course, this is fandom! -- but it has never gotten out of hand like we've seen, all too often, in other, more contentious groups. This is actually at the heart of that all-important secret of our success: We've never lost that sense of *community* that is necessary for longevity. No one can legislate this into being. First, you have to work hard to develop it and then to maintain it. Constantly. Otherwise, SF fan clubs will become history. For KC, it's "so far, so good".

**United Kingdom:** *Cheryl Morgan:* As you probably know, the UK does not believe in clubs. Attendance at the Tun is



down, but this may simply be because the Jubilee is far too small for the number of people.

**Washington, D.C.** *Joe Mayhew:* Your article "Is Your Club Dead Yet?" should provoke a good discussion. There are some fen who view the great explosion of the 70's as a sort of metastization in which the stable properties of fandom were overwhelmed by the sheer numbers who flooded in at so rapidly, beyond fandom's ability to assimilate them. They were attracted by "Science Fiction," without realizing that SF fandom had been about written stuff.

What had begun as a semi-voluntary ghetto turned into a loose concatenation of social associations, lacking very little common purpose, and traditions.

SF, prior to the great influx was about written stuff, about ideas and the exploration of the mind. Some fen were a tad wanky, but most were active readers. Fanzines, Filk and Costume were occasional activities in which most fen indulged, rather than primary occupations, as they have become today. Since the 70's we have ravelled into fringes losing the boundaries which had identified us. In a way, the Organs of SF fandom grew into separate species inside the same body.

It is amazing that it has taken this long. Boston ran into many of the problems the rest of us are now having more than ten years ago. Their publishing seems to provide a coherent base for their continued survival, but con-centered groups seem all to be in trouble.

The basic problem is, "Why do we do this?" Running cons was, to some extent, an exercise in offering local hospitality to

fen one did not see at every meeting; providing contact, and doing something fun together. As cons got bigger, they began to produce non-social functions for "Crowd Control" (e.g. running films all night instead of just one which everyone went to).

Art shows were once a means for fen to see, or even own published SF illustrations. Now, they are chiefly filled with product and rather unattractive to professional artists whose work is very unlikely to meet the require number of bids for the auctions. The illustrators now have a number of other venues, so they don't come as often. However, on the East Coast there is a "Permanent Floating Art Show" group which has become a sort of fandom in itself, tirelessly offering its work, I suspect, more for the camaraderie than their love of the art -- which is very fannish.

If a group meets twice a month and provides free beer and nosh, as long as it has the money to do so, it will attract people looking for free beer and nosh. When it runs out of money, those so

motivated may well wander off looking for another party. WSFA's cash cow is Disclave. It pays for the Beer and Nosh. If we don't have a Convention in 1999, even bail-outs from the WorldCon won't keep us afloat.

I first joined WSFA in 1960, and have seen it mutate into several very different clubs. At many of the previous incarnations, WSFA seemed to have a commonly accepted focus. Presently, it does not. Disclave, like so many other regionals, reflects this lack of focus. One year the chair appointed a LARPer as head of programming, who didn't know who Gardner Dozois was (and made no effort to find out when he came to the con -- for the last time). They moved the con to larger and glitzier hotels with multiple-year contracts (which were always rescinded when Disclave failed to meet the hotel's expectations.) But with no real, practical experience our neo-smofs gradually lost us the credentials needed to get a hotel we could stay in for more than one year. It wasn't that they didn't listen: it was that they didn't know *who* to listen to. Some of our Yuppies told them that our threadbare old hotels were too horrid and we really needed something "nicer." Of course they didn't understand fan economics. If Disclave had had a good track-record with its hotels prior to the 1997 disaster, we would not have lost our hotel.

When any living thing dilates beyond its ability to retain control of itself, it usually ceases living.

Clubs which survive, will do so because their members actually share something other than a need for passive entertainment, free nosh, and sympathetic ears. The free-loaders eventually find the door locked and the lights off.

On the other hand, many established activities, if explored logically by those who produce them, would cease immediately. The willingness to pursue "Excelsior!" fanatically is central to all fanac. My spelling isn't good, I'm not sure what the difference is between the word for "Ever Upward!" and the one for packing detritus.



## Conventional Reportage



### Dragon\*Con Moving to Labor Day

Dragon\*Con, the major Atlanta sf and popular culture event that draws over 10,000, will become an annual Labor Day weekend event in 2001. Chairman Ed Kramer feels the convention at its current size is a poor fit with downtown Atlanta facilities -- too small to afford being a fully convention-center based event (using the same facilities as Comdex, the Georgia World Congress Center) and too large to confine itself to the Marriott Marquis and Hyatt Regency (even though the Hyatt has three times more space than when it housed the 1986 Worldcon.) The committee has voted to downsize Dragon\*Con and concentrate it in the two hotels -- however, in 2001 the hotels are only available over Labor Day weekend.

Dragon\*Con hosted the 1995 NASFiC, and some of its committee members led an unsuccessful Atlanta bid for the 1998 Worldcon, so Kramer is experienced in Worldcon fanpolitics. Expecting fans to be sensitive about Dragon\*Con moving to Labor Day, he raised the question months ago on the SMOFS list-serve:

"Quite surprisingly and overwhelmingly, the response I received (about 20 e-mails) reflected that they thought that Dragon\*Con had grown too large, and it was universally felt that the crossover of Dragon\*Con and Worldcon on Labor Day would not affect either (and in the case of six responses, felt it would benefit Worldcon by possibly attracting the 'fringe' fans which they felt distracted from their event). No response reflected

anything to the contrary."

It remains to be seen whether broadcasting the date change will provoke a more passionate response or ratify the indifference already shown. Will fans perceive Dragon\*Con as poaching on the sacred weekend? Would they care more if this was happening in another city -- the last two Atlanta Worldcon bids having been rejected by the voters? Or did Bucconeer demystify Labor Day weekend, showing a North American Worldcon bid for another date can win?

Kramer notes, "Dragon\*Con employs one full-time office manager (the Atlanta street-poet, Mobius); all other staff members -- 950 in 1998 -- are volunteers."

Dragon\*Con's dates through 2005 are:

1999	July 1 - 4
2000	June 30 - July 2
2001	August 31 - Sept. 3
2002	August 30 - Sept. 2
2003	August 29 - Sept. 1
2004	Sept. 3 - Sept. 6
2005	Sept. 2 - Sept. 5

### No 1999 Disclave

Michael Nelson, a former Disclave chairman, reports: "At the December 4... WSFA meeting at the stately Gilliland manor, Sam Pierce sadly announced his resignation as Disclave 1999 Chairman. Sam cited his heavy workload and the short-

age of time remaining as his reasons for resigning. We gave him a round of applause for his efforts and some members got carried away and offered to walk over to the cooler in the next room to get him a beer. Disclave 2000 Chair, Covert Beach, is continuing his search for a hotel."

### Condiments

**Boskone** may adopt Mark Olson's radical idea of ditching its customary souvenir book in favor of a memory book to be published and mailed to members after the con. Mark believes it would be an interesting book, and would help publicize the following year's Boskone. His concerns are whether advertising sales would suffer and how many people would be annoyed not to get a souvenir book at the con.

**SF '02:** San Francisco's currently unopposed 2002 Worldcon bid committee has selected Tom Whitmore to chair the convention if they win. The SFSFC Board of Directors gave him a unanimous vote at their November 9 meeting. Kevin Standlee will continue chairing the bid until Site Selection is completed.

**Eurosmofs Alert:** A "European Smoffing Event" is being organized for the year 2000, to take place in Darmstadt, Germany (July 28-30). Bjorn Tore Sund of Norway is Chair. Conrunners from all over Europe are invited to come and swap ideas and experiences, and get to know each other better.

**Loscon 25**  
**November 27-30, 1998**  
**Burbank Hilton, Burbank CA**  
**Report by Mike Glyer**

Thanksgiving Weekend saw 1300 fans at Loscon 25 celebrating with a slate of popular guests. Author GoH David Brin showed his sense of humor by engaging in a mock feud with Chaz Baden's daily newzine. (Brin also wrote a short-short story for the zine.) Artist GoH Sue Dawe displayed her finest original paintings and prints -- even selling a copy of "Jules Verne's *Nautlius*" to Ray Bradbury. Fan GoH Marjii Ellers brought grace and wit to her panel appearances. And the con's special guest, *Babylon 5* creator J. Michael Straczynski, shared bittersweet moments with fans of the series that had just completed its five-year run.

And that is the truth of it, despite a strong temptation to begin instead by saying that Loscon 25 continued a long tradition of ambivalence. Loscon seems ever surrounded by an aura of disappointed expectations. Some LASFSians still believe Loscon is *supposed* to be an annual convention bigger than the 1986 San Diego Westercon, although that would be twice the size it has ever reached. Loscon took years to shed a reputation for being "the same old thing" -- most of those complaints went away when the complainers were put in charge of the program. And there is usually some poison in the well thanks to bookseller Marty Massoglia's pure cussedness in declaring to one and all "This Loscon sucks" nearly every year.

That's why a Loscon chair is under pressure to think of improvements and innovations that will be widely felt and highly visible. Loscon 25 chair Kim Marks Brown put her stamp on the con by making bold changes to room allocations.

This year, the Art Show moved from one of the towers into a section of the ballroom formerly used for programming, giving the show more prominence and consolidating more programming in one area -- two definite pluses. Friday night's Ice Cream Social, which in the past has been held in a ballroom, was instead set up in the ballroom lobby and the ballroom itself was released for Regency Dancing earlier than usual. The layout was fine for serving ice cream, but a total loss for the award announcements made at the event. Part of this was obviously due to the failure to have a working PA system -- emcee Tadao Tomamatsu can only shout over a crowd for so long. But nobody seemed bothered by the unsuccessful experiment. Full credit to Kim for trying to avoid a Loscon cliché.

I'd spent the earlier part of Friday visiting out-of-town fans manning publicity tables in the Convention Center. Chicon 2000 was represented by Tom Veal and Becky Thomson. (Local fan Joe Fekete asked them to explain the Chicon 2000 name. Tom brazenly told him there were 1999 previous Chicons, many of which were unreported.)

Tom also preened over a new Hyatt Chicago brochure that describes the hotel as host to groups from Fortune 500 companies to science fiction conventions. So many cons struggle with their

facilities that it's nice to see one hotel paying respect to the Worldcons. But fans love to be ironic: Becky was sure, "I'm sure we do less damage than the Legionnaires." Tom added, "At least we don't have a disease named after us."

Becky told me the latest news. She shares a property with Elizabeth Warren and others. At the moment her acre of land in Washington was an acre of mud. Her prefab house was settling, and she had a problem with windows popping out. "I don't like being a home owner. I like being able to pick up the phone and tell somebody, 'Fix it!'" The sidewalk between two houses had been dubbed "Lake Elizabeth" because it was under 2-1/2 inches of water. Becky demanded, "I want to go back to Orlando -- where they have *predictable* hurricanes!"

Jane and Scott Dennis were at two other tables, one stationed in the registration area selling the official con t-shirt, the other in the Dealers Room for the other Fo' Paws merchandise. Supposing they'd been at the recent Windycon I asked Jane about it, and learned to my surprise they'd been unable to get dealers tables so had stayed away. Apparently, Windycon's scheme allows the chairman to assign some tables while the rest are awarded by draw. Under this scheme not only did Fo' Paws lose out, even a recent Windycon GoH, jeweler Darlene Coltrane, couldn't get a table.

My afternoon spent table-hopping continued when I took a shift at the LASFS table. This was a perfect vantage for listening to an impromptu digger-doo concert. The aboriginal instrument is a three-foot long tube that in this expert's hands sounded like a serenade from a hip-hop air conditioner. I was entranced -- which to the rest of the world may have looked the same as being glazed over. Eylat Poliner came up and warned me, "It's only Friday, you've got a long way to go."

Francis Hamit stood by the table checking his copy of the program grid, identifying the items he felt his professional sales and other experiences qualified him to speak about that he had not been invited to join. Said Francis, "I'm about to remind them of something they've forgotten. There's something worse than having me on a panel...." I completed the thought: "Having you sit in the front row of the audience."

Next to the LASFS table members of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Space Society, OASIS, were promoting their club. They attracted fans into propaganda range with a bottomless bowl of mini-Mars bars. They had scored 25 bags at after-Halloween candy sales. Ironically, the table was run by two members of Weight Watchers.

Evenings, Loscon benefitted from the a wide spectrum of parties being held to promote various bids and established cons.

The local fan called Ol' Ben encouraged everyone to attend the Spokane Westercon -- "It will be a great trip, and you can even take a boat." Westercon chairman Bob Ladd gently corrected -- Spokane is in landlocked eastern Washington. "You can pull a boat behind your car -- if that's technically 'taking a boat.'"

Phoenix fans down the hall ran a party to promote several Arizona conventions, and their new Arizona in 2002 Westercon bid. I'd really like to see another Westercon there. Of course, I'd

also like to see another Westercon in LA, so it's no coincidence that I'm already on the LA in 2002 bid committee. The ideal solution would be some kind of mutual agreement for one of us to switch to 2004, and for each committee to endorse the other. (Did those words just fly off my fingertips? My, these are kinder and gentler times we live in.)

Along the way an anonymous Deep Smof told me, "Don't be surprised if an Auckland, New Zealand bid for 2002 crops up." This conspiracy theorist (uh, get it, Conspiracy?) believed both West Coast bids were weak (there still were two, then) and there was a golden opportunity for Australian voters to help capture a Worldcon for a comparatively nearby site.

On Saturday afternoon a panel gathered "all living Loscon chairs" -- (a peculiar title, considering that none have died.) Charlie Jackson 2, 1984 Loscon chair, predicted "This is the panel in which each panelist will say 'All Loscons since mine have been crap.'"

Bruce Pelz corrected anyone who thought that Loscon 25 was also the 25th anniversary convention: that will be in 1999. Why the discrepancy? Two Loscons were held in 1977 -- one a relaxacon in April, the other the first Loscon held on Thanksgiving weekend.

The panel ended on a saner note as Glen Olson asked a young femmefan in the audience when *she* was going to chair a Loscon. She answered, "Any year in which my choice is to shoot myself or chair a convention."

Saturday was also the day Jerry Pournelle unexpectedly turned out to be *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* #1 fan, even moderating the *Buffy* panel.

Early on Sunday Larry Niven alarmed everyone by winding up in the hospital with stomach problems. A huge get-well card was set up on the autograph table for fans to sign. (I saw the card at Niven's over the holidays, and it was one solid mass of signatures.) Niven soon recovered.

I spent the better part of Sunday afternoon in the "green room" with the proud few who were either avoiding J. Michael Straczynski's *Babylon 5* presentation, or simply had no choice because they were scheduled for panels at the same time. Lounge host Ulrika O'Brien, Regina Reynante and I exchanged translations of our given names. Regina, of course, means "queen." And Michael means, "He whose name is like almost every other child's."

After awhile, Rick and Jaice Foss arrived with their kids. Their daughter's Princess Leia hairdo proved to be simply coils of rope on a pair of paper plates hitched together like earmuffs. Pretty clever.

Barbara Hambly and George Alec Effinger came from spending most of the weekend at a Beatles convention and were still dressed for it. George had on a white Nehru jacket, and trousers printed with colorful wavy lines. Barbara wore a tweed jacket, white shirt and a gray tie patterned with pink circles. They let people know they'd just been married. George said his wedding gift to Barbara, costing thousands, was an old *Photoplay* cover autographed by all four Beatles.

Jerry Pournelle reported into the green room for a 2:00 p.m.

panel that he was now going to have to do solo, Niven having been hospitalized. He was able to give some details about Niven's condition people hadn't heard yet. Jerry was just about to ask George where Barbara was when he suddenly recognized her. "You look terrible!" said Jerry, and repeated himself about eight more times during the conversation that followed. "This is the first time I've ever seen George looking better than Barbara." Most people would not take that very well, but it was evident that Barbara admires Jerry and knew it was intended as a kind of a playful affection.

In fact, Jerry was having quite a good time in his pose as arbiter of style and taste. He claimed he had started the fashion of wearing explorer vests and driving trucks, now sadly degraded -- "What they're driving now are those candy-assed things... Why do I start these trends?"

Bill Warren demanded, "Were *you* the one who brought back cigars?"

Soon, Laura and Kelly Freas came in. Kelly tucked himself in for a nap on the couch beside me. Suddenly finding myself at the feet of the master, I learned from Kelly's example that nothing else was going to happen at Loscon that required being awake. So I put away my notebook and headed for home.

### *Smofs on Rocky Mountain High*

Teddy Harvia's postcartoon from the 1998 SMOFcon says "There were several climatic moments at the con." The drawing shows a rat (an LA rat?) saying, "The highlight of SMOFcon in Colorado Springs was San Francisco winning the right to host the con in New Orleans the second weekend in December 1999." A snowman, decked out in a propeller beanie, replies, "I thought it was the inch of snow falling on fans in sandals and t-shirts."

Teddy adds, "Any resemblance the rat has to Bruce Pelz is purely reprehensible."

Tom Whitmore, who will chair San Francisco's 2002 Worldcon (assuming its unopposed bid wins), spent the weekend running around having meetings with people. One Smofcon member says a plan for him to co-chair with Portland's Ruth Sachter was opposed by some members of the bid committee.

During the Fannish Inquisition, Teddy Harvia and Co. were presenting for Cancun and someone asked about the necessity for visas. They said that no, you didn't even need a passport, just a drivers license. Joe Siclari kept insisting that he was sure you needed a visa or other visitors document and finally Teddy said "Well, maybe they asked *you* for one..."

Bay Area fans will run Smofcon 17 over the December 10-12, 1999 weekend in New Orleans. Hotels under consideration include the Doubletree, where the last New Orleans SMOFcon was held. Memberships are presently \$40, will escalate during the year and cost \$70 at the door.

The address for SMOFcon 17 is P.O. Box 61363, Sunnyvale CA 94088-1363. Make checks payable to "SFSFC Inc."

Portland fans are aiming to hold the 2000 Smofcon at hotel used for Norwescon, the 1950 Worldcon.

# The Fanivore

## Buck Coulson

On Site Selection, you mentioned that the "decisive" votes came from local fans on the last day. But Philadelphia had more votes by mail and on *every* day of the con voting, according to your chart. If Orlando had won on last-day voting it would have been an upset. Philadelphia winning merely confirmed the trend, somewhat more emphatically than previous votes had done. They were already 49 votes ahead; not much of a lead, but a consistent trend. Statistics depend upon interpretation.

*[[Two things to bear in mind. First, people don't learn about the daily voting numbers until after the close of the polls. Their belief that the race was close came from hearing people talk. Second, near half of all ballots cast were submitted on Friday. Philly's 49 vote lead on Thursday was trivial -- almost 20 times that number of votes was cast the next day, and a much higher proportion of those votes went to Philly than previously.]]*

## Joe Mayhew

I've called Lloyd to tell him that I DID NOT have another infarction after folding up Disclave. What put me in the hospital was Tachycardia. The important difference is that the latter did not leave further residual damage. Disclave may not be in as good shape, as of last Friday, the chair had not signed with a hotel.

## Brad Foster

We had some major problems getting out of the Omni the last day of Worldcon (took us over an hour-and-a-half to get to the lobby from our room on the 19th floor -- tried walking down and up once with luggage and almost had a heart attack.) Cindy dropped a note of complaint (also pointing out what we liked, since it wasn't all bad) to the hotel manager, and got a nice phone call and apolo-

gies and a bit of a refund.

Liked Alan White's cover to issue 126, took me back to my old high school days when a group of us set up a small Kenner Construction city street on a table in my backyard four weekends in a row to make a little mini stop-motion epic. Had to carry the setup inside each week, then pull it out again for the next weekend's shooting. Figured using natural sunlight was better than any cheap artificial lighting we could set up. We were fascinated to see the unanticipated effect of thus having shadows on the set move across it in rapid sequence about half a dozen times, for the six days of shooting. Kids.....

Thanks for the special mention of Joe's acceptance speech for the Fan Artist Hugo. He made me proud to have my name even linked with Ian and himself. That speech was a very class act.

## Michael Nelson

I want to thank you for your kind Bucconeer review in *File 770:126*. I would just like to add that while Michael Rosen built and helped design the Bucconeer Hugo bases, it was Martin Deutsch and Mike Mannes who did the majority of the design work. I listened in fascination as they reported on the evolution of their design efforts at committee meetings over the years. Their original plan actually called for blocks of white marble, which is used for door steps for many old Baltimore houses. We occasionally spoke of placing a Hugo rocket in a bottle as a fitting pirate gag. This was my first Worldcon as an "insider" and watching plans such as the design of the Hugo bases come together are some of my fondest memories of Bucconeer.

Speaking of memories (shameless plug)... as you mentioned at the end of your review, Bucconeer will definitely be publishing a memory book -- *The Parting Shot*. The official deadline to submit material is December 31, 1998. But since we're been so extremely "relaxed" since

Bucconeer (the current publication date for *The Parting Shot* is "some time next Spring"), people can likely send material up to the end of February. There is more information about this project on Bucconeer's website at <http://www.bucconeer.worldcon.org/poop-deck/index.htm> (along with some photographs taken at Bucconeer). I may be contacted at [michaelnel@aol.com](mailto:michaelnel@aol.com) or 3178 Summit Sq. Dr., Apt. D9, Oakton, VA 22124-2880 USA.

## Allan D. Burrows

I especially enjoyed your article, "Is Your Club Dead Yet?" Television would be worth watching and newspapers worth reading if this was the standard of thought and expression put into the majority of journalism. I admire the way you examined the various arguments that others have posed and refuted them according to evidence. A lesser writer might have dismissed them without cause. You took the time and space to do it right! I for one would like to see more of these!

Aside from a few assorted typos, I felt that there was one small flaw in your article. You quoted Lionel Wagner as saying of OSFS --

"... Monthly meetings will continue in a desperate attempt to maintain some personal contact."

But then you interpret that quote thusly -- "... Wagner winds up emphasizing that there are members 'desperate' for personal contact." In fact, Mr. Wagner didn't say who it was that was desperate for personal contact. He might have been referring to himself.

In all, however, it was an excellent article. I hope to read more of these.

I see from your report, by the way, that Fred Patten is planning on doing to furry fandom what he did to the C/FO. I hope somebody out there is writing an accurate history of furry fandom.

*[[Give the man a chance, already!]]*

Harry Warner Jr.

It strikes me as sort of unsporting for worldcons to fail to identify the guests of honor with their status as fans or pros or whatever. This will be known to anyone active in fandom but it must confused the individuals who are attending their first con without a background of attending club meetings or reading fanzines. It will also make it difficult for future researchers to be sure why certain individuals were honored, in the cases of those who just happened to be local committee favorites rather than prominent in one field or another.

*[[Making the Long List into a helpful tool for fans at their first Worldcon falls into the category of "a nice idea" rather than "the controlling value." Anymore, editing the list is more a political act than a homework assignment. Future fanhistorians will be able to analyze the footnotes in the same way political scientists used to scrutinize which Soviet leaders appeared on the Kremlin balcony on May Day. Your idea for including the real reasons certain people were picked as guest of honor would fit right in with today's atmosphere, except that would cause an even bigger riot than we already enjoy.]]*

There is other good stuff in this issue, too. I enjoyed John Hertz' Westercon pages, although his style here seems oddly different from what I've grown accustomed to since he put me on the mailing list for *Vanamonde*. It was particularly encouraging to read about his encounter with Don Fitch, which seems to tell me that Don is coming along well after his health problems.

The comments from Teddy Harvia and Donald Eastlake, 3rd, have persuaded me to delay even more the date when I will acquire a computer and get involved in electronic fanac. This brings that date to some time in the latter part of 2075.

Joseph T. Major

**File 770:126 Cover (by Alan White):** "Remember when all you needed to be your own George Pal was a plastic model kit, some firecrackers and a movie cam-

era?" the cover asks. Sure, I remember. It was when I accepted guys in rubber monster suits, cardboard space ships and blaster blasts that suspiciously resembled scratched-off emulsion. However, there was imagination to supplement the lack of skill. Sadly, as skill has increased dramatically, imagination seems to have ebbed more than correspondingly, on both sides of the equation.

**Little House on the Yucca Flats:** This house thing seems to be a new trend in fandom. Just remember that *every* house is a "fixer-upper", as I found out a couple of weeks ago when I started to wash in the downstairs bathroom and the cold-water knob on the faucet came off in my hands....

**Bucconeer Report: Did We Win? SF and its Takeover of Popular Culture:** *The Flintstones* might possibly not have been so bad if it had had eighteen writers. It had **thirty-three** credited writers -- one wondered how many uncredited ones. George R.R. Martin did not begin to scratch the surface of the problem. First off, the way to get a line on a scriptwriting assignment, for a new writer, is through a writer's course. These courses lay out a standard line of plot developments -- and, as with all such, they become cliched. Then, most producers will not even look at a script unless it has been rewritten by a script doctor. The production company will have its own rewriters. The stars will have their own writers, so will the directors. There will be one or two credited special item writers. The result will have any originality, individuality, or noteworthiness rewritten out of it. Then there is the problem of MTV-style scene division, for the ADD generation, but not to get into that!

**The Liars' Panel:** "Silverberg introduced himself by claiming to have written all the work of the other panelists by using their names as pseudonyms. (If the others had been around in the 50s, I think we would have believed him.)" No, he would have had to share the credit with Kuttner. (As when James Blish got a fan letter beginning, "Dear Mr. Kuttner.")

**Fan Lounge:** I went there twice. Once there was a collation of some New York apa. The other time was similarly lacking.

However, when I was leaving I did miss a step and fall flat on the floor, to be immediately jumped on by three fans and two hotel employees asking if I were all right. No, half of me is left. ((c) Stratemeyer Syndicate.)

**Hugo Ceremonies:** It may interest you to know that the USS *Constellation* has been the center of a famous controversy in naval historical circles. You see, there was a USS *Constellation* built with the USS *Constitution* as one of the "superfrigates" that did so well in the War of 1812. However, as all things do, the ship deteriorated and was sent to the dockyard to be repairs in 1854.

The controversy was whether the *Constellation* had merely been extensively repaired, or had been replaced with a new ship of the same name. The records were deliberately obscure. Since it often cost less to build a new ship than repair an old one, cash flow was no help. Moreover, Congress was erratically parsimonious, willing to spend money to repair existing ships, but denouncing as aggressive and useless the building of new ones. Hence this pattern of deception.

My copy of *U.S. Warships of World War II* lists the launch date for the *Constellation* as 1797. That was of course for the "superfrigate." You can see that that argument lost.

**Seattle is Gone:** Worldcons seem to be running up against the limits of its nature. The expanding interests, desires and needs of fans require a more permanent organization and a longer lead-time, both of which are historically difficult for fans to maintain. The next time a professional con-running organization puts on a bid it will be harder to oppose. The Dragoncon bid managed to lose through poor planning of its NASFiC, recall, but this may not hold.

*[[What relation have these arguments with the fate of the Seattle bid? Seattle folded because they couldn't reserve their facilities. Otherwise they would have campaigned until the 1999 Worldcon. Lead-time was also not a problem, unless you know how the Seattle committee could have gone into suspended animation with instructions to be wakened after Starwood's manager Yogi Hudson gets*

*fired.]]*

**DUFF:** Guy Lillian's Sherman (as General Sherman was teaching in an academy in Louisiana when the war broke out, it is not inappropriate for him) illustrates a problem, counterpointed by the subsequent CUFF discussions. There is only a small group which has the necessary connections to be seriously interested and considered for fan funds. This is a clique, the same as at school, where the preps ate in one part of the cafeteria and jokes in another, with the hoods in a third, and so on, all going to their own parties, running around after school together, etc. This was just the sort of thing that fans got shut out of in school and yet here it comes again.

*[[Do I understand rightly, that your expectations are disappointed because fandom is not some kind of all-accepting love feast? Fandom is, after, all, famous as a refuge for the bright and socially maladroit. And aren't the numbers of fans voting for fan fund delegates rather too large to be dismissed as the functioning of cliques? In two recent TAFF elections, Ulrika O'Brien got the majority of 224 votes cast, and when Dan Steffan won 365 ballots were cast. And I believe that Guy's finances are the main reason he didn't run for DUFF -- he's quite capable of withstanding any controversy that might arise.]]*

### **Lloyd Penney**

Seattle not in 2002. I wonder if some kind of investigation might explain why the Starwood chain, and the manager named after a cartoon character, would tell all its hotels not to deal with any science fiction organization. I'm thinking of a friendly reporter at one of the local dailies who might want to find out why this chain would want to prevent more than \$4 million from entering the local economy. (I know I've said that the press is not fandom's friend, but in this case, it could be fandom's tool.)

### **Mike Glicksohn**

Lloyd Penney suggests a science fiction club can provide some people with the

company and physical contact they would otherwise lack. I'm sure this is true. I'm also sure there are names for such people: like "losers", for example. If your only contact with other human beings is at the meetings of a science fiction club I'd have to say you need to get a life. Clubs have their place, sure. But I'd feel very sorry for anyone whose only social life was via monthly meetings of the local sf group. (Having written that, I'd better pack up the things I'm taking down to The Foxes Den tomorrow night for the monthly First Thursday social gathering...)

I hate to disillusion Harry but it is possible that the canine obedience he has observed is somewhat more sinister than he realizes. A while ago I was at an end-of-year staff party and observed that the hostess's large, enthusiastic (and totally adorable) dog was staying well within sight despite the fact that the hostess's property is totally unfenced and backs onto a very large public park. It was then explained to me that there was a buried cable around the back yard and the dog wore a collar that would give it a stiff jolt should it cross that hidden border.

Well...somewhat later in the evening I discovered just *how* stiff that jolt was and I'm not at all surprised the dog didn't stray far from home! (I must have been coerced by an evil demon to try out that collar. Because I think I heard someone say "It must have been the djinn made him test it out." At least I THINK that's what they said...)

*[[Or did they get you to try on the electrified collar by claiming it was a tapse for pooches? Heh heh...]]*

### **Robert Whitaker Sirignano**

I'm glad someone did enjoy [Bucconeer]. I'm afraid I didn't. The endless walking wore me out.

What with the high cost of conventions, Worldcons might be seen as the outposts for the trufan. After typing that line I realized that a lot of fannish legends never bothered to go to much more than the regional conventions -- and that's because they're cheaper. After a couple of the East Coast Worldcons in the 70s, I

realized that I wasn't going to meet people like Charles Burbee. Worldcons are realizable fantasy -- finances are reality.

Perhaps Worldcons are too involved. It goes back to the split of the early 60s when comics fandom came into its own.... Perhaps there should be a judgment made about panels that seem to be at every Worldcon -- to have them at every *other* Worldcon. Or acknowledge convention outposts, where cons are held on opposite sides of the country, using audio/video hookups.... Does anyone else have any other ideas?

Though I've often considered Robert Sacks a strange kind of gadfly in fannish politics, every now and then he says something weirdly correct. Yes, it is not hard to see why he feels that the Hugo Awards should be redubbed "Popularity Awards", where the "Best" novel of the year is no longer the "best" in terms of quality, but the in the number of people who read a nominated work and enjoyed it. However, there are a number of academically-oriented people who would love to jump at the chance to post notices for several of their dry, wordy favorites. I listened to someone talk in Baltimore about how unfair it was that the sleep-inducing Stephen Milhauser wasn't nominated for something. But the Hugo votes are unsolicited, the voting is honest and no one has ever tried to block-nominate a media tie-in novel. Popular, yes -- but the best? Time corrects that with insightful hindsight. No one has ever complained about a growing reputation.

*[[What exactly would be improved by getting rid of the word "best"? Individual voters would still voting their preference among the eligible works. Isn't there a word for this? I think it's "democracy.]]*

### **Sally A. Syrjala**

The article on the decline of sf clubs was most interest and can reflect onto other types of organizations. My husband and I have recently joined the local chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. The age level is such that we are one of the younger ones in the group. The attendance is about 30 to 40 for the meetings we have attended. Yet there is an out-

reach for new people in that notices are put in the newspapers about meetings and new members are given a small seedling *Rhododendron* for their garden. The club also tends to a garden at a local library that helps to create beauty and give the public a chance to enjoy *Rhododendrons* in a public space.

There are many clubs and groups. I would think that science fiction fans would have diversified interests with many different clubs claiming a portion of their attention. Some are civic in nature and others might be a tie to ethnic roots. One of the problems in our area is that there are so many clubs and so little time.

The net is all well and good, but I view it as a world of bytes in more ways than one. It is more than a sound bite, but there is a lack of full-dimensional interaction. Meeting people in person helps to flesh out matters. It allows a fuller discussion and communication with body language as well as words. For me, the facial expression and vocal tone all contribute to the communication process.

Clubs of all types attract those whose minds can work in a similar fashion to your own. They provide a forum for a conversation that will provide more information than is currently possessed. With the transitory nature of today's life, clubs can provide a lasting root system where personal interactions can form friendships which will last for life.

One thing I appreciate about fans is for the most part there is no standardized mold that has been cast and in which all fit. There is a diversity that helps views to be seen from different perspectives. In-person meetings allow for give-and-take which is not possible in other communication forms.

Another thought that was caused by the article is the fact that our "can do" spirit seems to have evaporated from society at large. Now we are into absolute safety and risk alleviation. What is forgotten is that life is a risk. We are formed from a people that were natural risk-takers. Crossing the Atlantic Ocean in a small wooden boat to come to a land that held nothing but wilderness was not a "safe" thing to do. Going ever deeper into

unexplored land to find that sense of wonder was not "safe." Being shot into space was not particularly secure. Yet these things were done. A risk assessment would have most likely ruled all things out, but something deeper ruled -- the sense of wonder. now it is an endangered species.

Sense of wonder also denotes a spirit and a feeling. This is an age where lack of feeling and coolness are in vogue. Recently I read an article about *The X-Files* which spoke of their image of coolness and how it expressed the image of our society. Sense of wonder speaks of caring and the opposite of this reaction, so maybe its invocation is not the currently in-thing to consider.

Coolness is cyberspace. E-mail and such give in to instant gratification and ideas are spewed out without having the opportunity of stewing into a more concentrated and focused manner.

If you consider the *X-Files* angle for a moment longer, you can also see how it speaks of a maverick type of being -- individualism and alienation. This is not a sense of community and belonging and community is what clubs are really about. It is a way for people of like interests to get together and share their thoughts, and, more importantly, their visions and dreams.

So it would seem that clubs are viable -- be they sf clubs or other special interest oriented clubs -- and those clubs help to form the community that is our life. Thanks for another issue helping fans to keep in touch with the happenings in each other's lives and communities.

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### *Lan Laskowski*

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Once again it is nice to get a copy of *File 770* and the news it brings, even though some of it is sad. I am sorry to see that Ian Gunn has passed on. He recently sent me a letter to support my condition with cancer, even as he was dying from it. I do hope that Karen Pender-Gunn works through her grief and stays the excellent person she was while taking care of Ian.

My own condition is labeled as "stable." The tumor has neither grown nor decreased in size, but has been making

itself felt by stimulating the nerves in the surrounding tissues. The pain specialist I saw said that I am experiencing classic pain from the pancreatic/duodenum/liver tumor, but was still amazed at how well I looked. A positive attitude, a supportive wife and good friends and students this year have helped me keep my spirits up. The doctor has recommended some strong prescription pain-killers, which are getting me through the day.

It was very nice to read that Ed Meskys got his very own Hugo Award to display, courtesy of the Ditto 11 committee. I've admired Niekas for its thought-provoking articles, slick artwork, and high production values.

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### *We Also Heard From*

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**Bjo Trimble:** You sure got around at Bucky. I enjoyed it, but will certainly rent a scooter for the first day, next time I can afford a Worldcon.

**John Mansfield:** Interesting comments on "Is Your Club Dead Yet?" It should have been placed on Smofs online.

**Joy V. Smith:** I liked the cover artwork on *File 770:127*. What a useful robot. I was sorry to read of Ian Gunn's passing. I loved his work and humor.

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