

Shadow of a Fan



HAROLD

by WAYUN

All Hannes Bok Illustration Issue!

#2, Winter, 1996-97

Shadow of a Fan #2

comes to you from:

Joe Siclari & Edie Stern,
4599 NW 5 Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33431-4601
E-mail: jsiclari@icanect.net

This issue:

- 1 Cover by Hannes Bok
- 3 Following My Shadow - Joe Siclari
- 5 How I spent My Summer Vacation
(part 20) by Edie Stern
- 10 To Build a Space Station in La-La
Land by Joe Siclari
- 16 Bacover by Hannes Bok

All art by Wayne Woodward aka Hannes Bok: 1, 2, 3,
4, 6, 7, 9, 16

Filios in La-La Land are adapted from the Art Explo-
sion clip art collection: 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Shadow is available for the usual or 2 bucks while
they last.

Some other fanhistorical publications available (all
prices include postage):

FanHistorica 4, 50 pp., Rogers, Lupoff, Shaw, Laney,
Tucker, Nelson, \$4.00

FanHistorica 5, 52 pp., Laney, Yerke, Kyle plus
Acolyte art, \$4.00

Warhoon 28, 620 pp. hardbound collection of great
writing by Walt Willis, plus bio by Harry Warner,
Jr. & biblio, \$28.00

The Complete Quandry, Vol. 1: four facsimile issues
of *Quandry* #14, 15, 16, 17, 116 pp, \$7.50

The Complete Quandry, Vol. 2: four more issues #18,
19, 20, 21, 94 pp, \$7.50

The Enchantment: Walt Willis' trip report to Florida for
Tropicon 7 in 1988, 36 pp., offset, lots of illos &
photos. \$5.00. All proceeds to Tropicon.

It's been a while since I have done a generally available fanzine and now *FanHistorica* 5 and *Shadow* come out within a month. I needed better and newer addresses. And as usual friends came through. Thanks to Dick Lynch, Arnie Katz, Perry Middlemiss, Greg Pickersgill and others with the right *Attitude* (Pam, John & Michael), I now have lots of addresses and people to torment. So respond somehow to one of these zines and I'll keep sending them. Otherwise I still have the rest of their lot to go though.

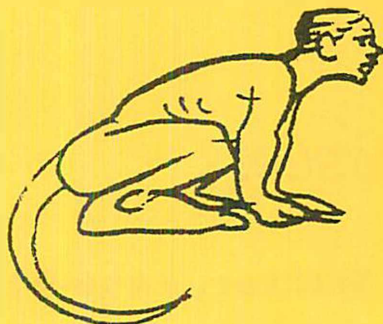
Following My Shadow

— Joe Siclari

Why is this issue illustrated by Hannes Bok?
You might well ask. He hasn't been a fan
artist since 1942.

Well, it's because we have some of his early
drawings and sketches from before 1942 and
we would like to share some of it. Enjoy!

Some years ago, Edie and I went to the Se-
attle Conflu. We actually attended
under false colours. We hadn't
published a gener-
ally available
fanzine for nearly
a decade. Apazines
and convention



publications don't really count, even though
we did a lot of them.

There were a lot of people there whom we had
never met; some we had never heard of, and
many had never heard of us. But we had the
feeling of being at home. When you enter
fandom through fanzines, I think that re-
mains central to your concept of what fandom
is really about. We had a great time and never
really said thanks to Jerry Kaufman and
Suzle and the rest of the Seattle fan. The beer
was really good too — especially that phoney
stuff with the homemade labels.

We had run off at relatively the last minute,
leaving Dan with relatives and a promise to
bring him a souvenir from the Northwest.

Suddenly it was Sunday afternoon. We had a night flight and we did *not* have a souvenir for Dan. Guilt-ridden modern parents that we are, we got in the rental car and drove around looking for someplace we could get a *Northwest* gift for Dan. Most places were closed, the drugstores were full of drugs (no junk!). But we saw a sign about a new local Indian exhibit that was in the museum on the Washington University campus. So, after getting a little lost we reached the museum at about 3:45 PM. It was probably a very good exhibit but it closed at 4 and they had a \$6.00 entrance fee. Even guilty yuppies have some sense of money. Besides they let us into the gift shop for free, and Dan got himself a t-shirt with a totem pole on it.

On the way back, I saw a sign for Alley Cat Books, actually an arrow pointing down a back alley. If you know me at all, you know I can't pass up a small used bookstore. We parked and decided to see if anyone was there. As we walked down the alley, we reached a metal quonset-type building. There was a broken window through which a black cat stuck its head. And a painted sign that said Alley Cat Books. They were open.

As we pushed open the heavy metal reinforced door, the first thing I noticed was the moist, musty smell. The second thing I noticed were several prints thumbtacked near the ceiling. There were two pages torn from a calendar and one print from the Powers lithographs — all by Hannes Bok.

Now, you have to understand my interest in Bok. I have been enthralled with his distorted sense of proportion and absurd associations as well as the beauty he makes of all of it. I still have great feelings of annoyance and upset with Forry Ackerman because he distracted me during a fan auction at LAcon in 1972. I had pulled some fanzines out of boxes to bid on them and no one else was bidding on old fanzines. Forry came in and started bidding against me on some. He said he was looking for fanzines he had written for. So, I said I would help him find duplicates if he wouldn't

bid on the others. As I was helping Forry find some, the bundle of *Futura Fantasia* I had pulled came up and was sold. After he closed the bid, Len Moffatt called me over and asked why I hadn't bid on them. I was crushed. I had wanted them for the Bok covers! Yes, I know having a Bradbury fanzine would be nice too. But I wanted the Bok covers! The rest of the auction was anticlimactic. And Edie liked Hannes Bok's art even before we met. Talk about reinforcing reactions.

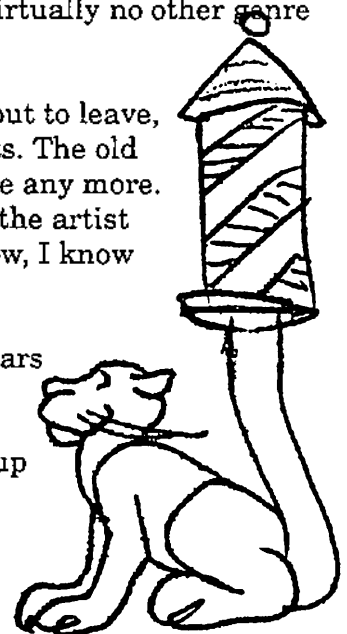
Anyway, we wandered about the small shop — it was almost the Haunted Bookshop. Down an alley, an old deteriorated metal roofed hut, mold on the walls, two-thirds of the stock were ancient classical records (and a large selection of old opera). A large, very old dog greeted us as we entered. Actually, he leaned his mangy side against my leg and slid to the ground. There was quite a chill along with the normal Seattle moisture, and no heat in the room. The owner really seemed to be "10 years older than god" as Edie whispered to me. He wore a ragged overcoat, wool pullover cap and gloves with no fingers. The cat kept going out the window, again and again. But he didn't come back through it. Weird.

We didn't find much but I kept looking at the dirty prints up in the corner. They had probably been there for decades. They seemed out of place — there was virtually no other genre material in the shop.

Finally, as we were about to leave, I asked about the prints. The old man said he didn't have any more. He kept them because the artist was a friend of his. Now, I know I'm slow.

"But Bok died 15-20 years ago" I said. Not even thinking that Wayne Woodward had grown up in the Seattle area.

The old man suddenly looked at us like we



were real people. But we had no idea who he was. "Wayne used to come over to our house when we were kids." We talked for a long while about Bok who he told us was always drawing on something and throwing it away because he didn't like it. He told us he used to take Wayne's drawings out of the wastebasket. He seemed to remain skeptical about us until we mentioned we were only in town for the weekend for a science fiction convention.

When we mentioned that we were flying home soon, he said he had something we might like to see. He kicked a pile of books and trash away from the bottom of a file cabinet and pulled out a black, 1930's hardbound catalog from The American Monorail Co. of Cleveland Ohio. As he opened it, we saw dozens of sketches inserted between the pages, some barely scrawls, some unmistakably Bok. We drooled. These were the early stuff, virtually all before 1940. They show an interesting evolution of style and lots of experimentation. There were cutout figures, color tests, little figures, portraits, unusual characters, and lots of different cats.

I tried to figure a polite way to ask "Would you be willing to part with a couple?" He said no, a dealer had offered to buy them all but he did not want to sell them off to strangers. As he said that he reached in and pulled out another catalog — again filled with sketches. We must have spent an hour or more looking at them and talking to the old man who finally said

his name was Harry. I think he realized our interest and admiration for his friend's talent. I guess we quickly developed a *rapport* through our mutual admiration for Bok.

At length, he pulled some more junk from behind the file cabinet and then cleared some dirt from two old pieces of fibreboard. Two early paintings: a nude Eve, obviously a class study, and a lunar landscape, very reminiscent of Bonestell. They were dirty, moldy but unmistakably Bok (actually Woodward). A note on the back of the lunarscape basically says: "Harry, The sky has faded. The dark blue used to be a bright violet. Wayne." The sky was now a solid black.

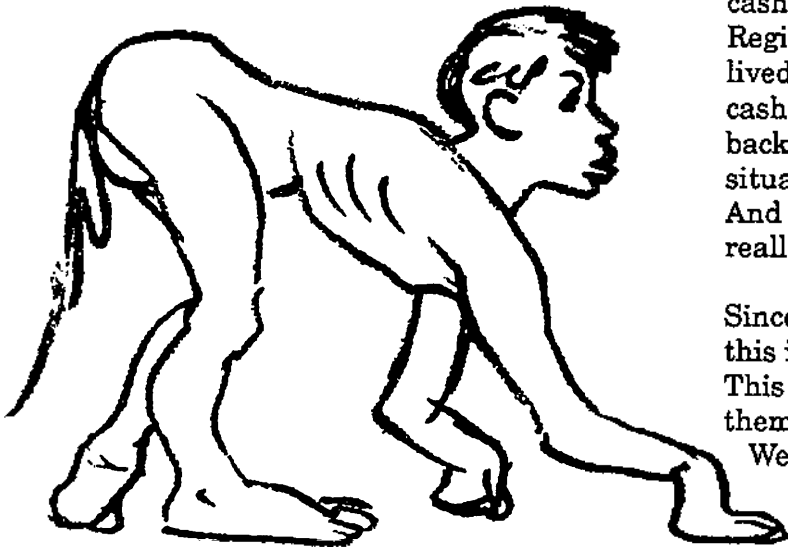
As we were admiring them, Harry said that he had wanted to find a good home for all of them. I'm not sure about Edie's reaction at that moment — I froze, disbelieving what I had just heard. Harry had said he didn't want to sell us a couple of the sketches. Now he said he wanted to keep everything together. He thought we would take care of them and give them the admiration they deserved. He named a price which we thought was reasonable and we quickly agreed. But he wanted cash and we had less than \$100 left between us. He may have been old but we were from out-of-town.

We begged off and said we would try to cash a check. Right! at 5:30 on a Sunday afternoon in a strange city. We raced back to the con and cashed a check for as much as was left in Registration. Jerry said he knew where we lived. It wasn't enough and the hotel wouldn't cash a check against a credit card. So we went back the Alley Cat Books and explained the situation. Harry took a check for the balance. And that's how our Hannes Bok collection really got started.

Since Harry wanted the art to be appreciated, this issue contains a number of the sketches. This reproduction is not the best way to print them but we hope you find them of interest.

We'll try for some more next time.

— Joe Siclari, 10/24/96



What I Did on

My Summer Vacation

(Part 20)

by
Edie Stern

This year's summer vacation was composed of a preamble, a beginning and an end. I'm not quite sure what happened to the middle. Perhaps it disappeared in the skew.

The beginning and end of course centered around LAcon 4, the 1996 Worldcon. The preamble was a mad dash down the California coast line, which is much longer in person than it appears on the map. Joe and I had planned a few days to leisurely drive down the coast, a journey we'd wanted to take for years. Unfortunately, we planned a few too few days, and were able to only hit some high points. Sort of like vacation blitverts rather than a settled peace of mind. The blitverts were very cool however, and well worth the visit.

We started at San Francisco airport, and worked our way down to Anaheim in three days. We even took the 17 mile (\$7) ride on Pebble Beach. For Florida kids it was a lot of fun to see off-shore rocks with scores of seals and sea lions honking and cavorting among the gulls. No cages, or barriers, just a reminder that there are big mammals here and they aren't all us.

Our most surprising moment came further south, at Morro Bay. We drove in at about 10 at night, and checked into a Quality Inn. In the morning, when I opened the curtains, someone had grown

a BIG MOUNTAIN right in the water off shore. It was Morro Rock, a falcon sanctuary, and it seemed for all the world that it had not been there the night before. There was a delicious bit of mental sideslip for a moment; neither of us had known it was there, and had spent ten minutes the night before gazing at what we thought was deep, unlit sea from our ocean-view balcony.

San Simeon and the Hearst Castle were remarkable. The outside pool is a dead ringer for the settings from one of the Maxfield Parrish pieces I love the best. The calendar is off though — that piece was painted around the turn of the century, and Hearst didn't start building at San Simeon until decades later. Four tours of the grounds are offered, each about an hour and a half long. We went on the one suggested for first timers, featuring one of the guest houses and part of the main building. They also offer nighttime visits, with docents simulating party time at the Castle. That sounds like a tour worth planning for.

The food theme for our coast drive was (in retrospect), calimari. Joe, being Italian, was weaned on calimari. I'm fond of squid as well,

and only complain when I get legs caught in my teeth. We were delighted to find a calimari festival at a Santa Cruz Indian restaurant. They had an entire menu of calimari, enough to depopulate an entire beach. We sated ourselves. Down the road in Santa Barbara, we were charmed to find calimari steak on the menu at our hotel. Now, calimari have a pretty small cross section, so calimari steak seemed an interesting menu item. We asked how it was prepared, and by dint of several incredulous rounds of questioning found that 1) there was no calimari in the calimari steak 2) there was beef in the calimari steak and 3) we must be nuts to think they would have squid steak on the menu. Moral — don't order calimari in Santa Barbara unless you've a mind for adventure.

Santa Barbara is about 100 miles from Anaheim. Our journey continued with a trip through the LA rush hour on Tuesday morning.

* * *

If you're expecting a proper convention report, you'll have to go elsewhere. This is an eclectic mood piece here, and will only touch on the



crossroads chaos of a proper worldcon. In my mind, a worldcon is a temporary version of a fannish Samarkand, or Macao. While I've never been to either place, the names evoke an excitement of cultures in overlap, and exotics all around. Worldcon has the overlap texture (when it works), and at its best, the excitement of never knowing who or what will be around the corner. See, I'm an old and tired fan, but I do remember. Why, at my first Worldcon, I came across Isaac Asimov, and Harlan Ellison, standing across a crowded room (each on chairs I believe) yelling insults at each other. That was exotic; I'm probably still a bit traumatized even though I didn't believe all that stuff about Harlan's penis anyway.

* * *

We checked into the Marriott Tuesday before the con. Our project for this convention was to make a little Sector General in the convention center for James White's GoH spot, and our construction plans called for several days worth of work before it would be ready. We had been preparing for at least a year, with a South Florida planning group checking supplies, experimenting with techniques, and so on. Tuesday and Wednesday were dedicated to construction. Along with some terrific volunteers, the beginning of our convention was spent on ladders, tearing duct tape with our teeth, and manhandling vast quantities of silver taffeta covered foamcore. We attached the foamcore panels to the pipe and drape used to divide areas within the convention center; not a bad way to simulate space station walls. They did look pretty solid. Remembering the code of Hammurabi (if a builder builds a wall, and it falls on someone's son and kills the son, the aggrieved parent is entitled to kill the son of the builder), we used a lot of duct tape.

We toiled. We taped. We covered the walls with esoteric hardware, cardboard tube piping (to simulate plumbing), techno-gizmo-trash, and so on. We'd had LA fandom collecting techno trash

for a year, and they had a lot of it. We also had medical paraphernalia, of which more later.

(The moon is being eclipsed as I type. We just went out and watched the shadow of the earth start to cover it. Real life interlineations are the best.)

Most of our Sector General was for the convention center. Danise Deckert had a bang up idea for making this enormous area scale to human size. Mylar balloons shaped like stars were strung up in patterns suspended from the ceiling. It effectively dropped the ceiling, and gave it an SF glow. Very well done, and a most impressive effect. Working far more efficiently than any radio, a small red balloon on a long lead was attached to the Exhibits floor manager, Gary Louie. We found him when we needed him. Frequently. Both Danise and Gary, as well as division head Bobbi Armbruster were there when we started the pre-con gurney races. Picture middle aged fans. No, picture middle aged smofs who supposedly know better. Picture us doing slalom races amongst the pipe and drape with a bald headed ex-worldcon chair on the gurney. Now, picture the division heads studiously ignoring us so they wouldn't have to do anything about it. It was great fun; I should have known Mike Drawdy would be a fast runner. Those gurneys corner much, much better than supermarket shopping carts. Even with big guys laid out on them.

By the opening of the convention, the walls were up. The decorations were up. Everything was done except constructing the space ship that would crash through Sector General's hull. Vince Miranda's head was our requisite alien touch for that part of it. Well, it wasn't really Vince's head. It's an alien rubber face that had been part of his collection, and served us Worldcon weekend as a pilot in distress, at least from the neck up.

* * *

Dan joined us in Anaheim, finally, on the first day of the con. He stayed in Florida as long as

possible so as to miss as little school as possible. Schools in Florida start much too early. It was time for the convention to begin.

The convention proper began on Thursday. Opening ceremonies were torturous, boring and went on too long. Friends of ours played parts in the opening skit, which was something about Audrey Three of *Little Shop of Horror* fame, and the actors' SF quest to turn her into a vegetarian. With Roger Corman as Media Guest of Honor, I suppose it was inevitable. Marcia McCoy did a terrific job on one of the skit parts. Boy, can she come up with a sexy voice and project it, too. The skit did manage to introduce LAcon's Guests of Honor. In addition to James White as GoH, and Roger Corman as Media GoH, the Shibanos were Fan Guests of Honor. Connie Willis acted as Toastmaster.

The Fan Lounge at LAcon was thoroughly enjoyable. Geri Sullivan put together a homey, comfortable lounge with fanzines, food, and good toys. James spent a lot of time there as well. While he is a professional with almost 40 years of writing credits, his roots in Irish Fandom and many friendships in all of fandom make him a very approachable, fan lounge loving,



GoH. James White, for those that don't know him, is an absolute delight. His wit, humor, insight, and good nature are immense. He positively emanates joy of life, and an intense interest in the good things life has to offer (like the space program). The highlight of our convention was spending some time with James.

Those qualities stood him in good stead during the GoH interview Friday night. His interviewer, normally very smooth, had few questions prepared apparently. I think James interviewed himself, and certainly turned the evening into some intriguing sidepaths. Sexual fantasies on ice skates? Nurse Murchison? You had to be there. The big news Friday was that his Sector General stories had been optioned for film, and he's writing the screen treatment.

LAcon programming looked about average, and commentary from the fans seemed about the same. The descriptions in the program guide lacked excitement, and for me, lacked interest. There was a lot of media oriented programming, as one would expect in LA. I should admit that other than the events (Hugos, GoH speech, opening and closing), I didn't attend any programming. Shame on me.

(Eclipse check. The moon is about two thirds gone.)

As a reformed Worldcon bidder, I can't help but check out the parties. Party space at LA was fabulous. The Hilton has a level on which there are three interior courtyards, surrounded by suites which open out through sliding glass doors onto the patios. The parties spilled out into the night, and the usual *m. o.* was to wander the courtyards looking for fun. Boston in 2001 had the great idea of bringing lights and stringing them outside the suite. It was noticeable, bright, and became an instant bid party landmark.

Gay Ellen Dennett, a key member of the traveling worldcon artshow staff, ran LAcon's artshow.

The show looked pretty good, and ran very smoothly. The dealers' room was efficiently run by Dick Spelman, with a little help from his friends. LAcon tried an interesting experiment in using booths as well as tables. I'll be curious to hear the postmortems on that. Booths restrict the amount of space per dealer. Most dealers prefer more flexible arrangements. I suppose you can tell I've worked dealer room tables before.

I spent a few hours listening to the films, both formal and informal. As usual, there was one piece that caught me up completely, and I've no idea who performed it, or what it was called. A poem it was, of surprising intensity and passion. The refrain was something about dancing with witches. I wonder if tiredness works a little like ritalin, and allows one to concentrate what attention one has so thoroughly that everything becomes intense and crystal clear.

(The moon is pretty well gone. Lunar eclipses are very stately phenomena of nature. There's time to go to the bathroom, get a drink, drag out some chairs and pop some popcorn. We've been on the cell phone with Joe's Aunt Rose, who's watching from her front sidewalk. Someone stopped their car in front of her house and asked her what was wrong with the moon.)

The GoH book was a NESFA production, *The White Papers*. It is beautiful; you should buy a copy. A cool part is the classification system section, by Gary Louie. If you're a James White fan, you know that his latest Sector General novel, *The Galactic Gourmet*, was published just before the convention. What you don't know is that the manuscript for the next book was turned in just a few days before *The White Papers* was to go to print. Editors Patrick and Theresa Nielsen Hayden shipped the manuscript to Gary so he could read it, and incorporate the data into the classification system section in time to go to press for *The White Papers*. So, it records the updates from a book that won't even be published until next year. Split second timing rarely

figures into non-web publishing, but it certainly did in this case. *The White Papers* has new stories, old stories, and reprints of articles originally published in fanzines. In fact, south Florida readers will be tickled to see "Fester on the Fringe", an autobiographical set which was reprinted over the last two years in the *SFSFS Shuttle*.

* * *

LAcon was a large worldcon, but fun. As usual, the smoffish venues and the fan lounge provided some good opportunities to find the folks we wanted to find. It had been three years since Dan had seen some of our friends. He's grown at least six inches in those three years. Some asked me about him ("Where's Dan?") when he was standing next to me.

On Sunday, we crashed our space ship with requisite alien through a specially prepared, breakaway space station wall, and had a simulated high speed gurney run through the convention center aisles to get the alien to treatment. It was fun; Sci-Fi Channel covered it (poorly). Imagine about half a dozen fans clad in hospital greens stenciled **SECTOR GENERAL STAFF** on the back, running with a gurney with an alien writhing in either pain or hysteria. They're pushing IV poles carrying bags with green and blue goo (and gummy worms). James is running slightly behind, with me bringing up the rear and trying to convince him to run more slowly. Now imagine us doing it again. His physician had told him to take it easy, walk very slowly, and etc., if he was to be allowed to go to America at all after his heart attack. James took no hurt, and seemed to enjoy it all. His only disappointment was that Peggy couldn't come. The alien, by the way, was Melanie Herz, in consort with Vince's head. One afterword to it all — we sent a set of hospital greens to Peggy White, who used them to good effect, surprising visitors to their home in Portstewart.

Teardown was faster than setup, and faster I think than packing our suitcases (and boxes) to head back to Boca. I've left out the grand reunions, the Hugos, the midnight smof sessions where entire bidding campaigns were launched, developed, enjoyed, and abandoned, the heroic efforts of committee members, the absolutely drop dead gorgeous Janice Gelb in her emerald green Hugo awards outfit, delightful dinners with erudite and entertaining companions (not to mention enormous strawberry desserts), and sneaking out of my room at 7 AM to find a payphone and play vacation hooky by dialing in to work. It was a short vacation, after all. We recharged our fannish batteries, and wore down our bodies. We worked hard, tried to do good deeds, and only smof'd in appropriate company.

(The moon is coming back. There's a bright sliver of reflected light showing now just how dark the rest had become. If I hadn't finished my drink, I'd pour a little on the ground in libation.)

See you next year, in San Antonio?



Decades in the planning! Years in the construction!

Scant days of operation!

A crash! Mere hours to destruction!

Sounds like the stock market . . . or a space station. Let me tell you how

To Build a Space Station in La-La Land!

Joe Siclari

James White set us on this course with his series of Sector General stories nearly 40 years ago. Sector General is, for all you *illiterati*, a multi-species hospital occupying an incredible multilevel space station in James' stories. From his stroke of genius came an intriguing set of stories on the hospital space station where determining the patient from the disease is often as critical as curing the patient.

In 1993, LAcon III announced James as its Guest of Honor. Shortly thereafter, Ben Yalow asked me to run the Exhibits subdivision. Plans were made; good people were put in place for dealers room (Dick Spelman), art show (Gay Ellen Dennett), local honcho (Gary Louie), Sector General (Edie Stern & Mark Olson). Appropriate silliness was planned. And with James as Guest of Honor, Sector General *had* to be a central set piece. I proposed that we expend a little extra time and effort and money on creating a space station effect with the decor. Basically, turning the convention center into Sector General.

Ben and Bobbi Armbruster had reservations, I think, but Chairman Mike agreed and we were *Go!*

There were lots of ideas — grandi-

ose and fantastic. Medical emergencies and crashed spaceships. Alien life support cabins, leaking air-locks, gallumphing Tralthans and other intriguing aliens. Special Sector General staff and operational hardware.

As things would have it, distance and mundane interference caused me to resign from the full exhibits job a year out, but I could not give up the idea that building Sector General would be a great backdrop for the convention

to play against. It could be the extra *business* that often make something memorable. At least, so I hoped.

And it seemed to be a *simple* project that could be planned and designed from 3,000 light-years miles away.

Lots of people were enthusiastic



about the idea but dubious that we could make it happen because of the large scale we had to build. We had no idea of how much wall space we needed to construct or the layout of the exhibits area, so we had to plan for the largest size. We set an arbitrary limit of 2,000 feet of corridor to build. Then we started to play.

How would you plan to build 2000 feet of space station corridor if you only had 24 hours to actually construct it?

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Mark got busy with some other LAcon projects. He edited *The White Papers*, the guest of Honor collection (which you should definitely get). He was doing the con newsletter. And Edie started almost weekly work trips.

I recruited some local (Florida local) people; some dropped out (I won't mention the faint-hearted by name). Judi Goodman, Mike Drawdy, Melanie Herz, Edie and I were the original team, with Dan doing some kibitzing. Around February, I asked Sarah Clemens to help. Possibly that was the best idea I had. Sarah provided more experience in this kind of set-up than the rest of us together. She used to do the decor for elaborate themed parties. Vince Miranda told me that they had once turned the ballroom of the Boca Raton Hotel (a local 5 star property) into the streets of Casablanca. It didn't hurt that she's an artist and a big fan of James White.

Well, we had a list of things that all needed to be done first:

- we had to figure out the kinds of materials that would be the easiest to use
- we had to design items that could be constructed quickly
- we had to know how much footage we would have to put up (unfortunately, this would be the last piece of information we would have).

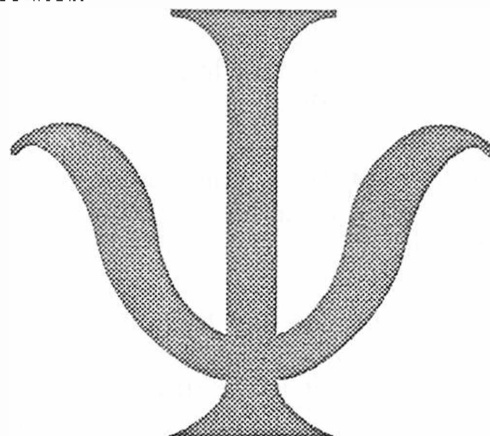
I came up with some ideas and the others

batted them about and usually came up with better ones. About the only idea I came up with in the beginning that we actually used was that we stayed with foamboard.

We decided that we had to go with a modular design, segmented by the size of the panels we would use: 4 ft. wide by 8 ft. high. This would allow us to expand or contract the length of any wall as necessary.

Then we assigned tasks and broke up into projects. At this point the non-committable broke off coming to meetings, the talking part was over and we lost the alien-creation people. Judi Goodman focused on decoration. Melanie was keeping our paperwork and checking on adhesive and binding type things. Mike was pricing large quantities of materials. Edie went out of town. I tried to fill in everywhere and assure Ben and Bobbie that things really were moving along. And I tried to get floor plans.

A year out, we had no specific plans. Edie and Mark and I had brainstormed some ideas. We had pretty much established that we would use foamboard, in 4x8 sheets as the basic panel materials. Ted Atwood and Kurt Siegel had some ideas on creating leaking air locks and gaseous materials. These, unfortunately, had to be abandoned. The final layout did not give us any good corridor locations. Besides, Kurt, in his other hat as Safety Officer for the convention, did not feel the Fire Marshal would appreciate lethal atmospheres, even pseudo-lethal, spreading through the convention center.



At the time, though, I proposed this idea over the phone to Ben Yalow:

"Ben, we've got a great idea to create some verisimilitude about being on a multi-species space station!"

"Great!" He responded. "What do you want to do?"

"Well, many of the creatures on Sector General breath different atmospheres. Right?"

"Yes," he said hesitantly. Ben may be slow sometimes, but he's not real dumb. Besides, he's worked with me on cons for 20 years.

"Each species has to have its own areas with its own atmosphere. And we'll have fake airlocks from the oxygen-breathing areas to the other areas."

"Sounds good." He answered cautiously.

"And since there is always work going on and damage occurring, we'll have some of them leaking strange atmospheres into the oxygen area."

The deathly silence that I received over the phone after I proposed this was worth all the torturous and twisted thinking. Only for me, mind you. But now you can share.

After a remarkably long while . . .
"Uh! I don't think so."

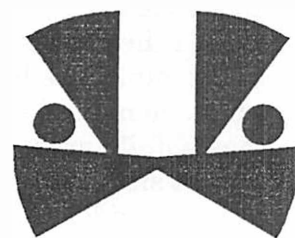
And so it went: the flying balloon-type aliens were killed by a ban on helium in the convention center.

We started narrowing things down.

Steel-gray foamboard would be the base. Mike got a great price including shipping that was

half the price that had come out of L.A.

We decided to use multicolored tubing to indicate plumbing, chemical, and atmospheric pipes. Judi found a source for these in multiple colors and multiple sizes.



There are always (in movies anyway) miscellaneous gadgetry and switches marked **DANGER** and **HIGH VOLTAGE** and **DO NOT TOUCH**. I made signs and also a variety of insignia and strange warning labels. (B&W versions of some are illustrating this article.) And we collected high tech *junk* and other assorted stuff. Gary Louie had a box in the LASFS clubhouse for over six months to collect miscellaneous throwaways.

This is a hospital station, isn't it? So we had to have a variety of medical gear. We bought some hospital greens and Judi's brother made some iron-on transfers from my laser output. Sarah's husband, Ray, works for a medical equipment company that provides supplies to nursing homes. Once boxes of some materials are opened, unused portions have to be thrown away — to Sector General, of course. We really did use the lowest bidder! I was praying that no one would open my luggage at the airport. They would have never believed me! "Medical supplies for a space station. A fake one, yet! Sure!"

Kurt brought more medical garb and paraphernalia that were outdated supplies from his job. We could have supplied the nurse on duty at the convention center — if she had ever been there.

About the end of June, things seemed to be getting organized. We had tried out the painted foamboard, tested



the binding materials, priced everything, even figured out techniques for putting up vast quantities of walls. We did the best we could without actually doing it. Our living room is not large enough to raise more than 3 sheets at a time and not to the wind.

The only other item still to try was to make a site for a rocket to crash out-of-control into Sector General. If James could write it into one of his stories, we should be able to do it too.

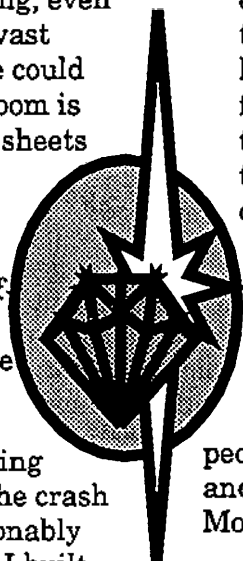
Sarah and I spent the last month putting together a collapsible rocket ship for the crash — one that could be shipped in a reasonably small package to California. Dan and I built an umbrella-type frame and Sarah built a raised pilot's window out of more foamboard. She purchased some silver lame material to wrap the frame. And we were ready to launch. Almost forgot, we had an alien head that would be the pilot.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

It was August, and for a birthday present, I found out all sorts of news. Our materials had to meet California Fire Codes and our foamboard supplier did not make it. I got the layout for the Exhibits area in the convention center — there wasn't a single two-sided corridor.

We were relegated to backdrop material — a fancy form of pipe and drape. And it was now about 700 running feet. It was a bit depressing. Edie and I had tickets to fly to San Francisco on the 23rd. I had 14 days to find substitute materials in California from Florida.

I spent several days trying to find a local (Los Angeles) supplier for a gray fire-resistant foamboard. It didn't seem to exist. Finally, on August 14, I threw myself at the mercy of one supplier and begged for help. Superior Specialties gave me two choices — have gray foamboard chemically treated or cover it in a flame-resistant material. He checked for me and the chemical treatment was extremely



expensive and no one could guarantee that it would be done in time. Superior had the material to cover to cover the foamboard, a fire-resistant taffeta but they didn't do it and we didn't have the time at con. He gave me a couple of contractors who might be able to do the work. Luckily, he also gave me the best price we had found yet on the foamboard. Even less than Mike's price. So I had some money to spend on labor. I called several contractors but it was Friday afternoon in LA — people must go home early. I left messages and hoped someone would get them before Monday.

Debra Cabrera did. She called me Saturday night. I explained our situation. She assured me that she had run into this before while working on conventions. Debra made several useful suggestions and said she had the next week free and could do the job for us — cutting and stapling large rolls of fire-resistant vinyl taffeta to 4x8 sheets of foamboard, 225 sheets. The numbers don't match because we had added some for hotels space and wastage and extra areas. A good thing too because Gary had an extra wall he wanted covered when we got there.

We made the arrangements and I called her just about every day up to the convention. All was going well until the Tuesday before the con. The covering team was running into a problem because some of the taffeta was tearing when they stretched it over the foamboard. I had asked her for a morning delivery and it would not arrive until 2:00 PM. Actually, that wasn't too bad because I had given us some time and hadn't told people to show up until 1:00 PM to work.

Edie and I drove up to the Marriott about 12:30 PM. Got our room and called Mel, Mike and Judi. We all went over to the convention center to await the delivery and scout out the terrain. We still needed some materials, so Logistics, er, Mike Drawdy along with Mel left to get them. Edie and Judi and I prepared a

work area and waited for the delivery. We found the LASFS junk; brought in my tools and medical paraphernalia and waited for the delivery. We sorted everything out and I tried to call Debra and we waited for the delivery. Did I mention that there was no air conditioning in the convention center during set-up? It was hot! We sweated and waited for the delivery.

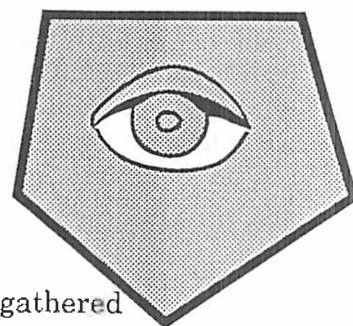
I had told Gary and John Lorentz, head of Volunteers, that I would need several teams of willing workers to install all this. John had been sending people over from about 3:00 PM. I was able to use some but had to tell the others to come back later. Luckily all but one did. We discovered a pair of really excellent suckers helpers, Susan Uttke and Sharon Pierce, who worked long hours and helped during the entire con. And the other volunteers really did the work necessary to put all this up — virtually in one day because we had to do most of it on Wednesday before the con.

The union crew was working overtime but even they were getting ready to leave when our long-awaited truck arrived. We unloaded the nine big boxes of the foam board and the other materials about 6:00 PM. We could only work until 9:00 PM when the center closed. Mel and Mike hadn't come back with the rest of the construction materials.

As we unpacked the foamboard, we got our first idea about how the walls would look. The taffeta was stretched tightly over board and stapled on the back. It had a metallic sheen and the light pattern on it gave the look of stressed metal. Debra and her crew had done a good job. One of the last minute additions was a box of 3 inch wide chrome tape to bind the pieces together. This gave a nice feel to the set-up because it really did look metallic.

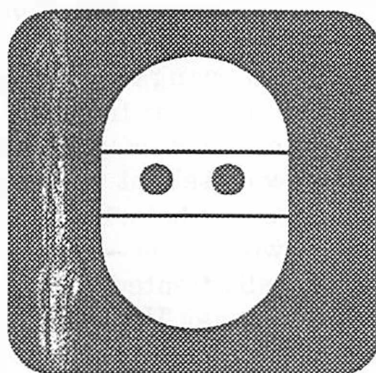
I scavenged up some duct tape and turned few pieces of wood into a cutting platform and we started to work. Edie led the first construction team with Sharon and Susan. Earlier, Judi had started working on cutting porthole materials. I took a cutting tool and started

putting porthole sized openings in the wall panels. Mike and Mel showed up shortly. They had to try several places and got a bit lost on the return.



Mike relieved me and I gathered some more volunteers. As soon as we had enough, we started working with 4-man teams (half were women). Mike led the next team and Susan the third. As you might imagine, the carefully thought out construction techniques that we came up across the country didn't fill the bill. Well, they did work, but they turned out not to be the most efficient method to raise the walls.

Our basic technique turned out to be to install one panel at a time, with 2 people working on the front and two on the back. The back team with one person on a ladder would bind the two panels together with duct tape. The front team would take the chrome tape and carefully bind the front so it did not wrinkle handing the last bit of tape to the person on the ladder who then bound the panel to the pipe that would be supporting it. Construction of the walls went very quickly at that point but the night was over by nine. So we broke up, went to dinner and crashed. But not before I got a sacred promise from each and every one that they would return as early as they could on Wednesday morning. We started at 9:00 AM. By 11, we had enough volunteers to have the three construction crews plus four on the porthole team and me running around in circles.



Really, it only looked like circles. There were rectangles and polygons and polytetrahedons.

The volunteers kept coming by and soon I was able to set up two, then three teams of "decorators". These went out armed with a utility knife, a roll of the ubiquitous duct tape and some of the junk. They were told to turn the walls into techno-trinkets. And they did. We had everything from thermostats to large screen televisions to play with and so we were as happy as three-year-olds with crayons. By the time the Decorators were done, we had an artists gallery in the lobby, gadgetry on all the walls, keyboard switches all over and even some warning panels that when fans, of course, ignored them were informed that they were infected with strange alien spores. This was the fun part.

By late afternoon, the wall construction crews had succeeded grandly — nearly 200 panels had been raised. So then I gave them something else to do. We had cases of cardboard tubes, bright yellow, in 1 inch and 3 inch diameters. They started to put these on the walls along with a variety of plastic and aluminum cylinders as atmospheric and chemical pipes. We even had a variety of radioactive and biohazard and other warning stickers that I had done before we left.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

I mentioned that Sarah Clemens was an artist. I didn't tell you that she is a medical illustrator for attorneys. On the side she illustrated some wounded and diseased aliens. (Sector General type aliens not south Florida typealiens.) We had Sarah's medical gallery hung on one of the walls, as well.



Bobbi also told me that she wanted us to extend the paneling theme to the entrances of the different areas that were being done in the hotels. About 4 PM Wednesday, I went with one of the union contractors to the hotels to arrange for them to install pipe at the various room entrances. It took us a couple of hours to find and measure all the areas. Then on Thursday morning they set up the pipe and I sent Mike's team to the hotels to raise the walls. Unfortunately, no one had bothered to tell the rest of the con that we were doing this. In some places, there were bulletin boards and in some places the person running the room said that they didn't want "that stuff" at their door. But the team worked through it all; put the panels up in as many places as possible and we were mostly finished by the opening surge at 12 Noon.

Mostly, I say.

We still had to build a rocket and a crash the spaceship and a medical emergency with Chief Diagnostician White. But (with apologies to Paul Harvey):

"That's the rest of the story."

