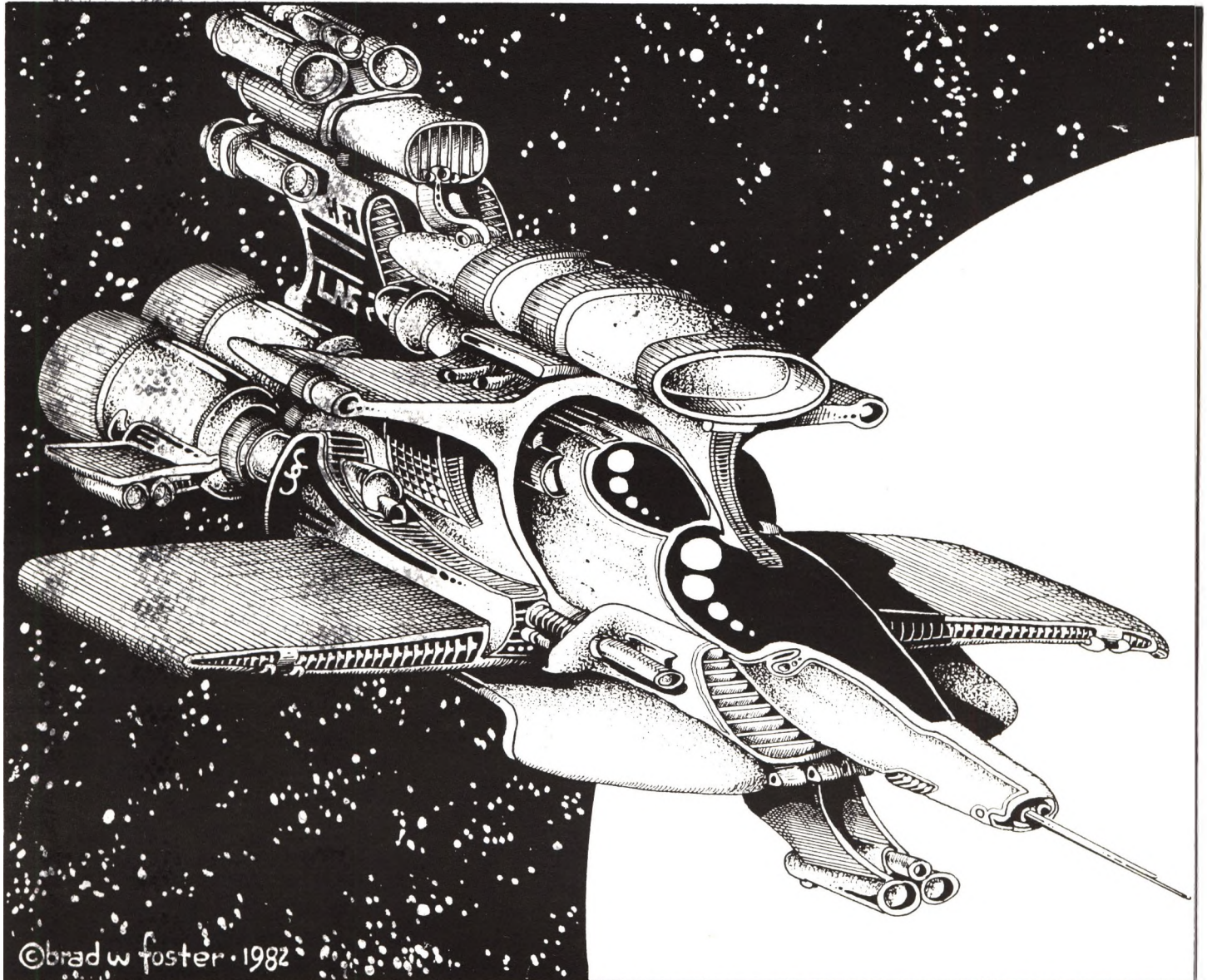


THE

TEXAS SF INQUIRER #29

1988 Nebula Awards

Convention and Book Reviews



and featuring

The

Texas Sci-Fi Enquirer #2

1988 Nebula Awards

The 24th annual Nebula Awards ceremony was held on April 22, 1989, at the Penta Hotel in New York. Approximately 300 people in the publishing industry attended, and reports of the proceedings have been fairly glowing. We at *The Texas SF Inquirer* congratulate all of the nominees for their efforts.

Here we present the winners of the 1988 Nebula Awards. Each category is followed by the other nominees in that category.

Grand Master Award:
Ray Bradbury

Best Novel: *Falling Free* by Lois McMaster Bujold (*Aboriginal SF*, Baen)

Deserted Cities of the Heart by Lewis Shiner (Doubleday/Foundation); *Drowning Towers* by George Turner (Arbor House); *Great Sky River* by Gregory Benford (Bantam/Spectra); *Mona Lisa Overdrive* by William Gibson (Bantam/Spectra);

Red Prophet by Orson Scott Card (Tor); *The Urth of the New Sun* by Gene Wolfe (Tor)

Best Novella: "The Last of the Winnebagos" by Connie Willis (July *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*)

"The Calvin Coolidge Home for Dead Comedians" by Bradley Denton (June *F&SF*); "The Devil's Arithmetic" by Jane Yolen (Viking/Kestrel); "Journals of the Plague Years" by Norman Spinrad (*Full Spectrum*, Doubleday); "The Scalehunter's Beautiful Daughter" by Lucius Shepard (September *Asimov's*, Ziesing Books); "Surfacing" by Walter Jon Williams (April *Asimov's*)

Best Novelette: "Schrödinger's Kitten" by George Alec Effinger (September *Omni*)

"Do Ya, Do Ya Wanna Dance" by Howard Waldrop (August *Asimov's*); "Ginny Sweetlips' Flying Circus" by Neal Barrett, Jr. (February *Asimov's*); "The Hob" by Judith Moffett (May *Asimov's*); "Kirinyaga" by Mike Resnick (November *F&SF*); "Peaches for Mad Molly" by Steven Gould (February *Aboriginal SF*); "Unfinished Portrait of the King of Pain by Van Gogh" by Ian MacDonald (*Empire Dreams*, Bantam/Spectra)

Best Short Story: "Bible Stories for Adults, No. 17: The Deluge" by James Morrow (*Full Spectrum*)

"The Color Winter" by Steven Popkes (August *Asimov's*); "Dead Men on TV" by Pat Murphy (*Full Spectrum*); "The Fort Moxie Branch" by Jack McDevitt (*Full Spectrum*); "Mrs. Shummel Exits a Winner" by John Kessel (June *Asimov's*); "Voices of the Kill" by Thomas M. Disch (*Full Spectrum*)

THE TEXAS SF INQUIRER

Editor: Scott M. Merritt
Asst. Editor/Production: Monica Stephens
Asst. Production: C. Mara Lee

Published by F.A.C.T.,
the Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc.



Contents

1988 Nebula Awards	2
Book Reviews	13
<i>Brothers in Arms</i> (Scott Merritt); <i>The Company Man</i> (SM); <i>Deep Quarry</i> (SM); <i>The Incorporated Knight</i> (SM); <i>The Misenchanted Sword</i> (Richard Tucholka); <i>Stellar Fist</i> (SM); <i>Trader's World</i> (SM); <i>The Rapture Effect</i> (SM); <i>Wild Cards V — Down and Dirty</i> (SM); <i>The Wizard of 4th Street</i> (SM)	
Filk Reviews (Naomi Pardue) ..	14
<i>Echoes on the Wind</i>	
Letters of Comment	15

Norwescon XI Review (Steve Jackson)	10
The Polyhedral Universe (John Manning)	7
SMOFcon V Review (Steve Jackson)	8
The Texas Sci-Fi Enquirer (Staff)	3
Tucker Award Nomination	6
This Issue: <i>Letters of Comment</i> — Beverly Bailey, Alexander Slate, David Thayer.	
Art — Brad Foster (front cover, 3, 4), Brian Gibson (back cover), Alexis Gilliland (5), Sherlock (8, 11, 12), Phil Tortorici (4).	

The Texas SF Inquirer is published ostensibly bimonthly by FACT, the Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit literary and educational organization. All opinions expressed herein are the personal opinions of the contributors and editors, and do not necessarily reflect those of FACT. This issue copyright © 1989 by

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A six-issue subscription is \$6.00; samples are available for \$1.50 or the usual. If you join FACT (\$15/year), a subscription is included with your membership. Send news, reviews, articles, art, fanzines, or letters of comment to *Texas SF Inquirer* c/o FACT, PO Box 9612, Austin, TX 78766.

GREETINGS!

Once again I am putting this thing together at a convention. (I really have to stop doing that - I'll end up with more miles on my computer than on my car...) This month has been really exciting - I've spent more weekends doing F.A.C.T. things than in my own home. My cats get freaked out now whenever they see the convention carryalls come out of the closet-presuming they even made it back there... Galaxy Fair, ABA, Quarterly Meeting/Party, and now NOSF3. When can I rest? Anyway, we've got a lot to cover this issue, so let's get on with it.

CORRECTIONS

If you couldn't tell last month's FS was rushed out and full of errors, then skip this part - I wouldn't want to disillusion you. There were two major name misspellings last month - I misspelled Tom Maddox on page one and got Mary Lou's name completely wrong. The birthday girl was Mary Lou Estrello, not Costello (and no, we're still not telling...). Tom Maddox has two D's, not two X's. Apologies! There were also several mistypings throughout the rag - general apologies on those.

Also, KM would like to apologize for an error in her list of helpers for Galaxy Fair - Casey should have been listed as Casey *Hamilton*, not Casey Means.

SALES TO MEMBERS

Thanks to everyone who helped out at NOSF3. The table was a great success! Naming names-thanks to Fred, Casey Hamilton, Ed Graham, and Lisa Greene.

George Alec Effinger will be autographing Saturday, July 8 at Austin Books (5002 N. Lamar) at 4:00. After dinner, party at William Watson's - 4606 Bull Creek Road. His number is (512) 452-1181. Give him a call for directions or if you'd like to lend him a hand.

ARMADILLOCON

The next ArmadilloCon meeting will be on Saturday, July 8 from 2:00 to 3:30. Meeting place is the usual - 12917 Candlestick Place. August meeting is the 13th and starting with the September 9th meeting, meetings will be

weekly until the big event.

HAPPENINGS;

SAN ANTONIO:

Ursa Major meets the 1st through 3rd Monday of every month at the Blockbuster Video inside the loop on San Pedro. After the meeting, fun & food at the Jim's on Blanco Rd. & 410. they get to Jim's around 9:15. For further information contact the FANAC Director Lynn Garcia. 7226 Blanco Rd. #3301 San Antonio, 78216 (512) 340-2544

Star Trek San Antonio meetings are the 1st Saturday of each month at the Alamo Heights Christian Church. Contact Helen Padgett, 2919 Burnside San Antonio 78209.

In the works:

HOUSTON - Lisa is trying to organize a FACT weekend in Houston for August 5/6. Events would include a visit to the Saturday Morning Breakfast Group, Saturday afternoon at NASA, a party Saturday night, and Sunday at AstroWorld. Call (713) 437-4784 if you are interested in helping out or want more details...

SAN ANTONIO - Judith is putting together a San Antonio weekend for mid-September. She's getting info on the facility at Brook's, and wants to do a trip out to Sea World and an evening on the RiverWalk.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

JUNE 17, 1989

The meeting was called to order at 2:08 pm. Present were Board members Fred Duarte, Karen Meschke, Ed Graham, Judith Ward, Lisa Greene and President Robert Taylor. Also present were various FACT members and friends. Treasurer Bear Philley arrived at 2:45, Board members Steve Jackson arrived at 2:50, Monica Stephens at 3:00.

The first order of business was to approve the minutes of the May Board of Directors meeting. The Secretary apologized for all errors contained in the minutes and noted that amended changes needed to be made. After

much discussion, the changes read as follows: (1) "Monica Stephens was not present in person at the meeting but participated by phone at various times during the meeting", (2) The vote concerning the bagel brunch now is included being "5-0, passed", (3) "Monica was not in favor of combining the bagel brunch and meet the FACT Board", rather than that she was in favor of it. The decision was by general consensus, (4) "Lisa Greene will edit the FACT Sheet for June as a trial run, Monica will review and decide later", (5) the word "apparently" will be struck in reference to Scott Merritt's possession of the fanzine collection: the sentence shall read "Scott has the collection in his possession." After deliberation of the alterations, Ed moved to accept the minutes as amended, Karen seconded, passed 5-0.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Robert has investigated the options of breaking into the CD, which has a current balance of the CD is approximately \$12,000.00. If we were to withdraw \$12,000 it would cost us \$570.00. If we wished to withdraw \$2,000 it would cost us initially \$93.00 but would reduce the income generated monthly from \$100 to \$83.00. A loan of \$2,000 would cost us \$144.00 and would be due when the CD comes up for renewal in January of 1990. We need the actual physical CD for any transaction to take place. The CD should be in the box in Bear's possession.

Gannett Corporation will be donating \$100.00/month as a part of their program supporting their employees who donate their time to non-profit corporations. The first check should be received in early July for April-June, covering the first three months of Robert's 1989 presidency. Checks will then be issued monthly for the rest of Robert's tenure.

Regarding the proposal to offer a monetary reimbursement to members still owed Inquirers, if there are six issues produced through May 1990 of a combination of Inquirers and Nova Express, the cost for total reimbursement is approximately \$758.00. This figure is based on being 6 issues behind on our commitment. The option would be given to members to either accept the amount due or allow their unused subscription to be counted as a donation. This would allow the Inquirer production schedule to

start with a clean slate and eliminate the problem of new members receiving more Inquirers than they have paid for. This was discussed at some length. Ed moved that a notice be published in the next FACT Sheet making the offer to the membership, setting a deadline of October for replies and setting November 1, 1989 as the disbursement date. Lisa Greene seconded. Motion passed, 4-1. Lisa will work with Robert to compose the notice.

Robert is currently working with local writers for continuation of the programs in the Austin Independent School District. He will continue to work with the school system on this project. Robert admitted that more will be accomplished when school returns to normal in September. *Robert Taylor, President*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I talked with Alex Slate last night about editing the Inquirer with Dale Denton; they have discussed it and are more than willing to co-edit. Alex would do layout; Dale would proof and make any changes. Dale would also be in charge of production and distribution. Alex has also talked to Scott Merritt about the availability of art and articles that Monica has in her possession.

I would like to include myself on the FACT account and Karen on the ArmadilloCon account as additional signatories. Robert responded that such action was already in the works, and that we need to remove Mary Helm from the account. Ed made the motion to accept Robert as keeper of the checkbooks, Judith seconded. Passed 5-0.

The chair would like to personally thank Brooks for the use of his home for this meeting and party. *Fred Duarte, Jr., Chairman*

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Updating the SMOF board with current meeting minutes beginning with January, 1989 needs to be completed. The information on FACT is obsolete and needs to be updated. I still need the notebooks containing all the meeting minutes and other material pertaining to the secretaries duties. No correspondence has been received since the previous May

meeting. Judith recommended that the Secretary mail by first class mail the meeting minutes to the Board members and officers. *Karen Meschke, Secretary*

TREASURER'S REPORT

The books are being done on an accrual basis, several checks were found in the box containing all of the financial records. The checks were passed on to Robert for processing.

To date FACT has made a profit of \$9.43. At the end of May we have \$1073.82 in the FACT account and \$767.92 in the ArmadilloCon account. Bear had questions about some checks he needed to assign and requested that all checks written and deposits made be accompanied by breakdowns of their usage to enable him to record them under the proper categories. Checks should have notations on the memo lines and all deposit slips mailed to him. FACT has received \$550.00 worth of membership dues. Sales to members has earned \$1885.00 in sales, resulting in a profit of about \$400.00 so far this year. The CD has earned \$387.00, donations are \$445.00 Bear included a page of 1989 Revenues and a page of 1989 Expenses, he hopes to close 1988 accounts and complete his accounting computer program by the next meeting. It was determined that the NASFIC ballots could be trashed, but the copies of the checks needs to be kept for one more year for auditing purposes. Steve made the motion to commend Bear for his efforts, Ed seconded, Passed 6-0. *Bear Philley, Treasurer*

QUARTERMASTER REPORT

Steve delivered a verbal report for Mike Wright who was unable to attend.

Mike is in the process of collecting serial numbers and cataloging all FACT property. He hopes to start in the next two weeks to centralize in some way, moved out of the various locations where they are physically located. The chain printer is gone. Arrangements still need to be made with NESFA about shipping the large mimeo. *Mike Wright, Quartermaster*

Committee Reports:

ARMADILLOCON XI

Don Ivan Punchatz has accepted our offer as

Artist Guest of Honor for the convention. Several invitations were issued to authors who expressed an interest at ABA. Program book ads were discussed with several publishers, hopefully the program book will again pay for itself this year with advertisements. Requests for bio information have been mailed for each of our guests. The deadline is August 15th. ArmadilloCon will again sponsor a party at the New Orleans Science Fiction and Fantasy convention to be held next weekend. Authors Pat Murphy, Richard Kadrey and senior editor of Signet John Silbersack have confirmed as guests. *Karen Meschke, ArmadilloCon XI Chair*

ARMADILLOCON XII

Ed passed out a report including his revised guest list and a tentative schedule establishing deadlines. He hopes to keep our corporate connections and has been approached by a gaming group in Dallas, "Fantasy Mercenaries", to help conduct gaming at the convention and is taking their offer under advisement. Karen moved to accept Ed's updated proposal for the convention, Judith seconded. Passed 5-0. *Ed Graham, ArmadilloCon XII Chair*

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

Robert has talked with Earl who was unable to attend the meeting and will send his report later. Ed gave a partial report. He needs to receive the update from Robert for the data base to be included with the project. Currently we have approximately 12,000 names in the data base, however most of the records are over two years old. The data base can now be used to generate labels for mailing. Steve presented a proposal for hardware to upgrade the SMOF-BBS. His estimate of cost was \$1800.00, allowing us to purchase an IBM AT clone and the necessary hardware to increase the speed, efficiency, and capacity of the BBS. The upgrade would help bring the board up to current standards and encourage more use. An intense discussion followed concerning the funding for this project. Suggestions were made including solicitation of donations and applying for grant money from the Atlanta WorldCon. Steve moved that the budget include up to \$1800.00 for upgrading the BBS, Monica seconded. The motion did not pass, 2-5.

PUBLICATIONS

There was a misunderstanding concerning Lisa being appointed the FACT Sheet editor; she is now the official FACT Sheet editor. Lisa is going to talk to the FroF Board to see if we can work out a deal to use their bulk mailing permit, enabling her to mail the FACT Sheet directly from Houston. Lisa will also check into prices for printing the FACT sheet in Houston.

Inquirer #29 will go to press tomorrow. Issue #30 will go to the printer either tomorrow or Monday to be started on Tuesday, both will be ready to be mailed on Thursday. Monica will be out of town for the next weekend so it may not be mailed until the first weekend in July.

I have not heard from either Alex Slate or Dale Denton concerning their interest in co-editing the Inquirer. No decision has been made for editor/co-editor of the Inquirer. There was a misunderstanding about who was contacting whom on the Inquirer matters. *Monica Stephens, Publications*

PUBLICITY

Steve is working on the Effinger autographing to be held on July 8th, and had questions concerning the press release which is ready to go on Monday. Karen is going to try to get a photo for him while at NOSF3. *Steve Jackson, Publicity*

SALES TO MEMBERS

ABA was a success. Attending members of FACT had a great time, talking to editors, publishers and standing in line for some wonderful autographings. Next year ABA will be in Las Vegas in June.

Thanks to Galaxy Fair, the FACT table cleared \$77.00 in book profit after paying for the dealer's table, \$50 was earned in T-shirt sales. We received 5 FACT memberships.

The George Alec Effinger autographing will be held on July 8th, at Austin Books from 4-6 pm. He will be signing his new book "A Fire in the Sun".

Fred and I discussed the possibility of bringing Gene Wolfe for a Texas World Tour at ABA with both TOR and with Mr. Wolfe. He expressed a keen interest incoming to

ArmadilloCon, not in an autographing. TOR would not commit to providing financial assistance at this time.

No future plans for any autographing will be considered until later this fall, due to our budget crisis. However, if an event presents itself in such a manner that it can be considered, and donations will support one, it will be deliberated.

SOCIAL DIRECTOR

Thanks go to the County Line for their donation of meat, and to the Old World Bakery. Thanks also to Thelma Moore for bringing it to Brooks'. The Secretary will mail thank you letters to each business for their contributions. Monica was upset about the lack of response she received to help her pull the party together. Only three people contacted her which made it very difficult for her to know how many people were coming and what people could bring. There are no social events planned currently for July. Karen suggested having a party after the Effinger autographing. Karen offered to talk to William Watson about hosting the party at his home. Monica asked for volunteers and ideas for more social activities. *Monica Stephens, Social Director*

Old business:

The 1989 Budget:

Discussion began on previous budgets submitted, the intensive discussion lasting the better part of two hours. Listed below are FACT fiscal income for 1989 and expenses for 1989.

Income;

CD	\$1200
Gannett	900
Sales	800
Membership	750
Rental of Art Flats	50
Sale of Mimeo Equip.	1000
Donations	<u>445</u>
TOTAL	5145

Expenditures;

ADMINISTRATIVE:

Bulk mailing permit	60
stamps	25

letterhead	50
Phone/travel	200
By-laws	50
election bulletin	95
Inquirer reimbursement	300
COMPUTER APPLICATIONS:	
BBS	480
MISCELLANEOUS:	
Sam's card	60
Bagel brunches	100
PUBLICATIONS:	
self inking stamps	30
(6) Inquirers	1945
(4) Nova Express	1125
(11) FACT sheets	215
membership directory	75
misc supplies	200
SALES TO MEMBERS:	
ABA	125
Autographing	800
TREASURER:	
Misc. supplies	60
TOTAL	5995

Deficit of -\$850.00 for 1989 Budget

An emotional discussion revolved around whether we should break into the CD to make up the deficit and finance other projects. Several different scenarios were discussed about how the CD ~~from~~ (wholly or partially).

the details given in the President's ~~Report~~ concerning the various costs and combinations). The crux of the debate revolved around whether we should go on and open the CD now or wait until January when it matures. There was no shortage of ideas on how the money could be utilized. Ed suggested consideration be given to fund-raising projects. Lisa reiterated Willie Siros' suggestion of applying for grants to Atlanta for specific projects. The argument raised concerning fundraising projects was that there is too much fan apathy: the opposition to grants that they may take up to six months to be processed. After a couple of weary hours without any compromise being reached, the consensus of a majority of the Board and attending members was to wait the 6 months until the CD matured and to explore alternative methods of fundraising to cover the deficit and provide capital for other projects. Robert suggested that we solicit proposals from the general membership on how the such money

should be spent. Steve then gave Fred a handwritten list of ideas for ways to spend the money. This opened another round of heated debate. Ed then moved not to decide to break the CD at this point in our budgetary considerations until concrete proposals have been looked over and solicited from the membership. Judith seconded. The motion passed 5-2.

Karen moved to accept the 1989 proposed budget, seconded by Ed. Passed 5-0.

Karen moved to table the issue of pro-rated memberships until Bear has had an opportunity to develop figures. Seconded by Judith. Passed 6-0-1, Steve abstaining.

At this point during the meeting, Directors Steve Jackson and Monica Stephens both offered President Robert Taylor their written resignations from all positions in F.A.C.T. Monica stated her resignation as Publications Chair would become effective following Inquirer issue #31, due to an obligation she felt towards Scott Merritt. She stated she would turn over to Secretary Karen Meschke all other records in her possession before June 23. Ed Graham moved to commend Steve Jackson & Monica Stephens for their past services. Seconded by Lisa Greene. Motion ~~passed~~ unanimously, 5-0.

s" can

For even descriptions were tabled until the August meeting.

New business:

Lisa offered to try to organize a weekend in Houston, including trips to NASA and AstroWorld, probably in August. Lisa suggested that the Board open for applications for Publications Chair.

Judith moved to close the meeting at 7:08 and get on with the party. Lisa seconded. Passed unanimously, 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted, Karen Meschke-Secretary.

(Thanks to all who helped put out the FS this month: Debbie Hodgkinson, Teresa Patterson, Jeff Younker, Becky Lilienfeld, and of course, Karen Meschke. See ya'll next month!)

Fellow FACT Members:

An issue which has been a center of controversy in this organization has been the difficulty regarding the required number of issues of the *Texas SF Inquirer* each member is due per year. For a variety of reasons, the *Inquirer* has not been able to keep up with the 6 issues/year a subscription requires. Attempts have been made to catch up with the backlog, and there has been some progress. But due to complications caused by many members having different amounts of publications owed them, the situation is still a mess. At the Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Directors, June 17, 1989, a vote was taken to offer to those members still owed issues the following options:

1. A member owed *Inquirers* may request a refund equal to the value of the outstanding issues.
2. Members owed issues may consider the amount owed as a donation and their subscription will be counted as current.

In order to expedite the resolution of this problem, a deadline of October 31 has been set as the time after which any amounts due not requested refunded will be considered as donations to the organization. Refund checks will be issued November 1 for those who request their money back. Requests for refunds must be made in writing and submitted to Robert Taylor via the FACT PO Box:

The Fandom Association of Central Texas
P.O. BOX 9612
Austin, Texas 78766

Thank you for your patience regarding this matter - it is our hope that we can begin anew and provide our members with the service that they deserve.

Lisa Greene
Member - FACT Board of Directors

The FACT Sheet
The Fandom Association of
Central Texas PO Box 9612
Austin, Texas 78766

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"Sci-Fi Radio" – New Series to Debut

Sci-Fi Radio, a new series of half-hour radio presentations, is being produced by a Texas group for release in the summer of 1989.

Audio-Visual Associates, in Euless, Texas, received a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to produce the programs. The *Sci-Fi Radio* staff includes Kevin Singer and Ron DiIulio, producers, and John O. Williams, director.

Each program will be a classic work of science fiction, adapted for radio. They will not be readings, but full dramatizations. The finished dramas are planned to be somewhat comparable to the *Star Wars* radio productions or the original BBC *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* presentations. The stories are of varying lengths, from less than a half-hour to a full hour, but they have been combined and divided to produce half-hour episodes.

The first 12 episodes have already been completed; they have been scheduled for National Public Radio release starting July 2, 1989. The series may begin to air weekly on

local public radio stations on that date, or afterward. To find out when *Sci-Fi Radio* will be heard in your area, contact your local NPR station.

The first 12 *Sci-Fi* radio programs will be:

Week 1 — *I'm Scared*

Based on a short story by Jack Finney. A radio show is interrupted by a broadcast from the past, and one man believes that it heralds a far greater disaster . . . a disruption in the flow of time itself.

Week 2 — *Dark Benediction, Part I*

Based on a story by Walter Miller, set in Houston. In the wake of a biological invasion, half the world's population is infected and the other half is terrified. Society is collapsing and mobs rule.

Week 3 — *Dark Benediction, Part II*

Week 4 — *Light of Other Days*

Based on a short story by Bob Shaw. "Slow glass" can trap images for minutes, days, or even years, becoming a 'window to the past.' This is the story of the effect that this invention has on a couple in an unhappy marriage.

and

The Ballad of Lost C'Mell, Part I

Based on what is perhaps the best-known of Cordwainer Smith's "Instrumentality" stories, this is a tale of the far future, when mankind is served by races "uplifted" from animal origins. But the slave races are as intelligent and independent as their masters, and some plan revolt!

Week 5 — *The Ballad of Lost C'Mell, Part II*

Week 6 — *Sales Pitch*

Based on a story by Philip K. Dick, in a future where commer-

cialism has gone out of control and robots are used as door-to-door salesmen.

Week 7 — *Diary of the Rose*

Based on a story by Ursula LeGuin. A doctor uses a form of mechanical telepathy to read the thoughts of a mental patient, and the results threaten her own sanity.

Week 8 — *Frost and Fire, Part I*

Based on a story by Ray Bradbury. A young man tries to escape from a world where the human lifespan has been so speeded up that maturity, old age and death come in only eight days.

Week 9 — *Frost and Fire, Part II*

Week 10 — *The Cold Equations*

Based on the classic short story by Tom Godwin. A pilot on a mercy mission discovers a stowaway — a young girl. But her mass, little as it is, will require the ship to burn extra fuel . . . dooming her, the pilot, and the people the ship was to save. What is the solution?

Week 11 — *Close Encounter with the Deity*

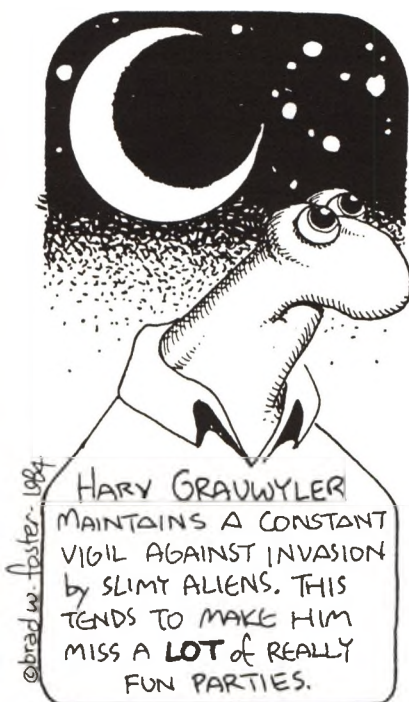
Based on a short story by Michael Bishop. A brilliant scientist journeys to the edge of the universe to see the process of creation firsthand, and discovers a black hole.

and

Sundance, Part I

Based on a story by Robert Silverberg. On a newly discovered world, an American Indian works at his assigned job . . . wiping out the native population of the planet to make room for humanity. The "official position" is that the creatures are merely animals. Is it true? And does it matter?

Week 12 — *Sundance, Part II*



And now, FALSE, the Fandom Association of Lower Somewhere Else,
presents the return of

The Texas Sci-Fi Enquirer

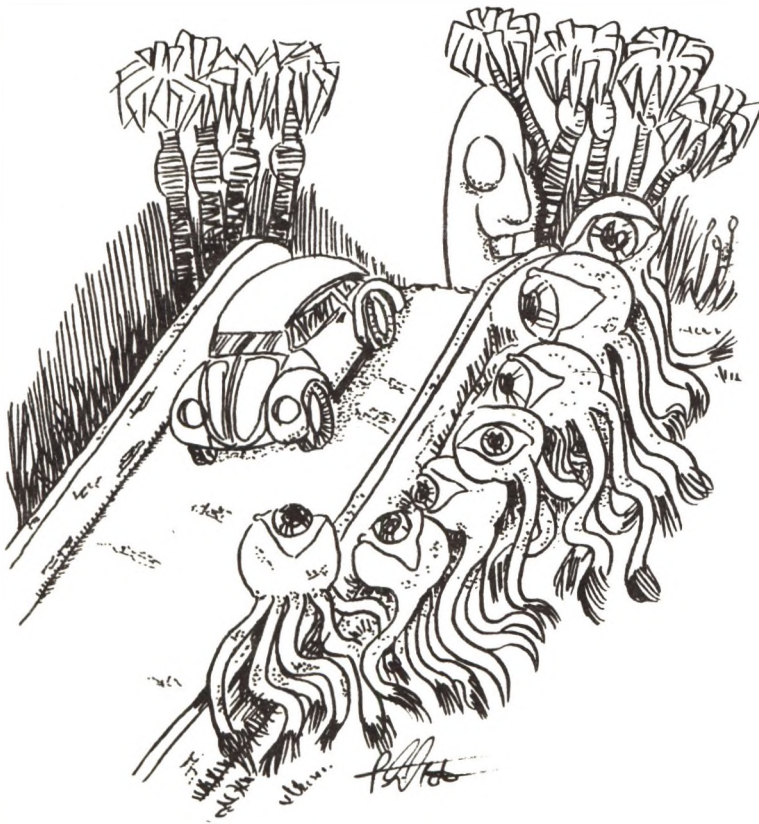
Featuring in this issue:

Anonymous Fan Confesses:

I ENJOYED NOLACON

But I fear for my life if I admit it!

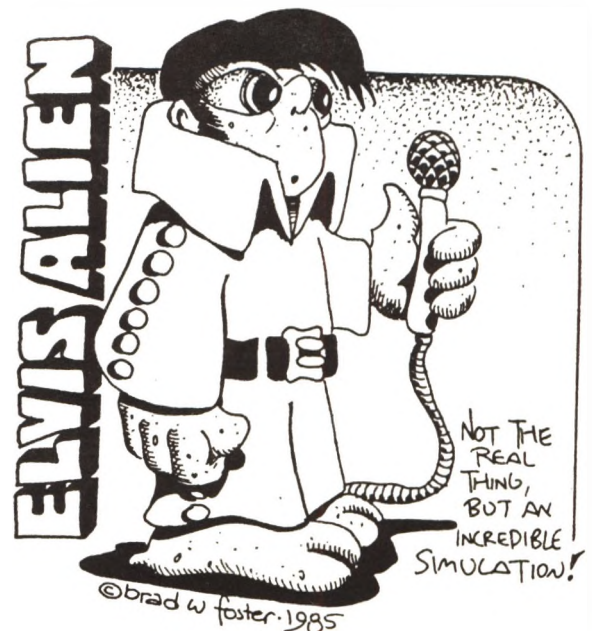
page 23



**I AM
L. RON HUBBARD'S
LOVE CHILD**
*claims dead two-headed
alien psychic Elvis clone*
page 19

Bigfoot Joins FACT
Ghost of Elvis made him do it
page 18

**Elvis Joins Cast of
Next Generation**
It was the logical thing to do
page 33



Giant Face on Mars Commemorates Galactic SF Con

Scientists in white lab coats today announced new findings on the mile-long mountain on Mars carved to resemble a human face.

As you already knew, this mountain, photographed in 1976 by the Viking I spacecraft, is located in the "Cydonia" region of Mars, at 41 degrees north latitude, 9 degrees west longitude. It is accompanied by a "city" complex of regularly placed mountains and pyramids.

After months of intensive effort, weeks of computer time, days of cross-checking and correlation, and hours of heavy drinking, NASA scientists announced the discovery of other parts of what now appears to have been an immense statue of an SF fan.

"Using advanced cyberconfabulation, we have determined that meteor damage has obscured what was originally a stone propeller beanie at the top of the face," stated Professor James Schrick, an image analyst for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory who asked not to be identified.

Apparently the original statue, almost ten miles tall, was hit in the stomach by a meteor and distributed over the Martian landscape. Other human features were discovered scattered over 74 miles of terrain. Features identified include the statue's feet, still visibly encased in sneakers; its left hip, with a "ray gun" in a holster hanging from the belt; and part

of the upper chest, which has several circular brooches attached to it. These brooches have regularly spaced markings on them, which some analysts speculate are the eroded remains of inscriptions. The most spectacular discovered fragments, after the face itself, are the two hands. The left hand is holding a cylinder with a hole in the top, near the side. The right hand is formed into a gesture which, according to Professor Schrick, is "recognized as a good luck sign in several cultures, including North Korean and Pueblo mythology. It represents pleasure and fertility." We cannot reproduce it in a family magazine.

AND WE ACTUALLY
LAID HANDS ON
THAT UFO!



Previously respected scientists have asserted that these clues verify the origin of this immense statue as a commemoration of the first galactic Science Fiction convention, held one-half million years ago. According to linguist Tymis Khern, associated with JPL's effort to unravel this mystery, the name of this first GalactiCon appears to have been Ape-Con. The membership badge for larger races (greater than 40 feet in stature), states Khern, was probably "a large, black monolith, about ten feet tall, with its sides in the ratio 1:4:9.

"They wore it on a chain around their necks. As a novelty, it acted as a solar-powered cassette player. At least one may have been discarded on Earth, another on the Moon."

We will report more on this exciting discovery as events warrant. It may be a while.

COMING OFF WITH
THIS ALIEN WHIPPED
CREAM, HERE!

Elvis Elected to FACT BoD Also Joins *Enquirer* Staff as Assistant Editor

In an unprecedented move, members of FALSE elected Elvis Presley to the Board of Directors.

"So what if he's dead. I don't think he could do a worse job than the current board," says FALSE member Robert Tailer.

"Who cares," says Pat Mower, "They'll just figure out a way to do things the way they want anyway."

In a surprise last-minute move, *TSFE* Editor Scott Merritt threw his support behind Elvis' candidacy. "Elvis is going to be my new assistant editor, channeled through Sam Mize.

This should make the *Enquirer* much more interesting than the dull rag I've been producing for a year."

"I didn't even know he was running" says former FALSE chairman Steve Jackson, "But I'm sure that he'll do a good job."

T U C K E R A W A R D N O M I N A T I O N

A new award was instituted in 1985 to recognize the activities of that heretofore unsung group of people known as SF convention partiers. Every award must, of course, have a nickname; the official nickname of the **Award for Excellence in Science Fiction Convention Partying** is the "Tucker".

The first two years awards were sponsored and administered by the **St. Louis in '88 Worldcon Bid Committee**, and subsequent awards are administered by a related group. The awards will be nominated and voted on by members of **Czarkon 7** (St. Louis' "adult relaxicon"), and the rest of SF party fandom via convention parties and any fanzines or SF Club newsletters willing to reprint this nomination form and/or the final ballot.

There are 3 awards: 1 each for **SF Professional** (writer, editor, or dealer), **SF Artist**, and **SF Fan**. Couples or groups are eligible as a single nominee. Any SF convention partier over the age of 21 is eligible, and nominees need not attend the presenting convention if they win as long as they are willing to have their award accepted by a proxy. Winners are not eligible for re-nomination in any category for a period of 5 years; losing nominees are eligible again the following year. **The 1985 thru 1988 winners were:**

YEAR	Special "Grand Master"	SF Professional	SF Artist	SF Fan
1985	Wilson "Bob" Tucker	Bob Cornett Kevin Randle	David Lee Anderson	Glen Boettcher Nancy Mildebrandt
1986		Glen Cook	Dell Harris	Dick Spelman
1987		Nancy Edwards	Joan Hanke-Woods	Jack Jennings
1988		Ed Bryant	Alexis Gilliland	Ken Moore

The design of the physical award is a full bottle of **Beam's Choice** bourbon mounted on a base; the base has a plaque with the year, award name, and the winner's name. An instant tradition was begun in 1985: the winners received their awards full, but took them home from the convention empty (many self-sacrificing volunteers helped empty the awards).

To nominate someone for a 1989 Tucker Award, write their name (both names for a couple) and address opposite the applicable category on the form below, detach it along the dotted line, and mail it to TUCKER NOMINATIONS, PO Box 1058, St. Louis, MO 63188. Photocopied, hand-printed, or typed equivalents of the nomination form are acceptable. If you don't know a nominee's address, and don't think the Award Committee will either, if possible please include on the back of the form or a separate sheet the name of a prominent SF person (whose address we CAN determine) who may know the nominee and might be able to give us an address. Your own name and address are requested, but not required, to further assist in tracking down unknown-to-us nominees.

IF YOU ARE SENDING MORE THAN ONE NOMINATION FORM IN AN ENVELOPE, PLEASE ENCLOSE A NOTE EXPLAINING THE EXTRA FORM(S); WE ARE TRYING TO AVOID A CYCLE OF BALLOT AND COUNTER-BALLOT STUFFING THAT COULD SPOIL THE FUN.

----- -NOMINATING DEADLINE IS 1 JULY 1989- -----

1989 TUCKER AWARD NOMINATIONS

PRO TUCKER name: _____

 address: _____

ARTIST TUCKER name: _____

 address: _____

FAN TUCKER name: _____

 address: _____

YOUR NAME: _____

 address: _____

Small (\$1 or less) donations will be gratefully accepted to defray award expenses, but ARE NOT REQUIRED in order to nominate or to vote.

The Polyhedral Universe

by John Manning

The *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Players Handbook* Second Edition is on the shelves and is impressive looking. The cover art is similar to that on *Unearthed Arcana*, *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* and other later books. The rules are very well organized, easy to find and easy to understand. The book's arrangement makes a lot of sense, which translates to usability as a reference while playing, something the first edition handbooks lacked. The art within the book is, quite simply, beautiful, although not always relevant to the section. Still, for those who remember the sketch-type artwork in the original, it is a pleasant change.

There are changes. Some character classes have been redefined, some subclasses (such as assassin) eliminated — and reasons for the changes supplied. For example, assassins haven't *really* been eliminated, just redefined. They are no longer a subclass of the Thief. Any character class can be an assassin. However, the role is still better suited to the Thief class because of the bonuses for backstabbing. I use this only as an example, for I happen to *like* playing assassins.

There are quite a few changes, actually. Weapons proficiency is much clearer, as is surprise. THACO (the number needed by a character to hit an armor class 0 opponent or object) is clarified. Races and their interrelationships as well as alignment are much easier for the novice to understand. Hack-and-slash is de-emphasized and roleplaying explained much better. All in all, TSR has a very good product in the Second Edition. If the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and *Monster Compendiums* are as well done, then investment will be well worthwhile.

The book costs \$20.00, which (even with a bookstore discount) may seem steep to those with the original books. TSR admits that this Second Edition is not essential to play and

doesn't *insist* that owners of earlier editions buy one. But if you are a new player, or if you are a seasoned "vet" and your book is showing the wear and tear of years of campaigning, I highly recommend the Second Edition of the *Players Handbook*.

In my last column, I reviewed two board games and stuck pretty much to that type of game as my theme. This time, I'm going to talk about roleplaying games in general, and the Role Playing Games Association in particular.

I will confess, up front, to a vested interest in the RPGA Network. As Regional Director, one of my responsibilities is recruiting new members. However, if I didn't like what the RPGA offers to roleplayers and clubs, I wouldn't have joined in the first place, let alone become a director.

Old-time roleplayers remember the RPGA as an association that sprang from TSR as a sort of club and clearinghouse for players of *AD&D*, *D&D*, *Tunnels & Trolls* and other TSR games. The perception was of an organization designed to promote TSR games and gaming. In the beginning, much of this was probably true.

Times have changed, and so has the RPGA. It is still strongly affiliated with TSR, but no longer is TSR the only emphasis. The scope covers almost all roleplaying games.

New members receive a kit containing a catalog (The Mail Order Hobby Shop), a membership card, a frameable certificate, two RPGA Network stickers, a beautiful membership pin, and a subscription to *Polyhedron*, the RPGA's magazine.

I know. I can hear you already. "Big deal!" At the risk of sounding like a late-night commercial — Wait! There's more!

Within the pages of The Mail Order Hobby Shop are tons of roleplaying games, miniatures, dice,

mapping sheets, other games . . . from companies *other* than TSR. Granted, there's a lot of TSR stuff — it is the parent company, after all. But there is much, much more. And RPGA members get a 10% discount on any product listed. Even better, if a customer, member or not, doesn't find what they want in the catalog, TSR will try to locate it.

RPGA also helps organize TSR's annual gaming convention, GenCon, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They conduct tournaments where both players and judges compete for prizes and points. Many of these tournaments are then made available to gaming coordinators at conventions around the world.

How valuable is this service? Look at it this way. Gaming at the *average* SF convention (as opposed to a gaming con) consists of a few people tucked away in a small room playing games run by whoever felt like doing so. Or game masters or referees might put together adventures with the referee's own (non-standard) variations. In most cases, the adventure has not been tested for balance, fairness or playability.

Now, many of these games are still fun. Most refs put a lot of trouble, time and effort into their adventures. But many of these games lack consistency. Because of this, there's no way to judge the best roleplayer or team or whatever.

RPGA, on the other hand, develops adventures. Some are written by TSR staff people, but many come from RPGA members across the country. Some have appeared in *Dragon* or *Polyhedron*. All have been thoroughly playtested and carefully developed to ensure balance and fairness. Consistent rules interpretation and careful testing ensures that opponents (monsters) or hardware or magic spells are neither too weak nor too strong. The result is a well-organized adventure that will play much the

same no matter who referees the game.

In addition, the RPGA has developed a scoring system that, while maybe not perfect (what in this world is?), is fair and reasonable. What's more, it allows the players to evaluate each other and the referee. These factors are coupled with the referee's evaluation to determine not only first, second and third place, but also who

excelled at rules knowledge, roleplaying, team play, initiative and leadership. Points are then awarded to both players and judges, based upon their performances.

The score sheets are forwarded, after the convention, to RPGA headquarters. Players and judges who are RPGA members have these points added to their master record. Members are ranked according to their

totals — novice, apprentice, master, etc. If the members attend GenCon, they can compete at their level with other players and judges of equal skill and experience.

There's also an element of snob appeal. Two t-shirts can be ordered from The Mail Order Hobby Shop, one for players and one for referees. Each has a listing of the rankings within the RPGA Network. Remember that membership pin I mentioned earlier? Members can place it on their shirt next to their ranking.

By the way, conventions are not the only places members can gain points. If a club has ten or more RPGA members, it can qualify for sanctioning. This enables them to hold tournaments for their members, to playtest new adventures for the RPGA, and a host of other "bennies" that other clubs don't have.

For more on RPGA membership, write to me, John Manning, at P.O. Box 852188, Richardson, TX 75085-2188. I'll be happy to send information to you.

Well, that's about it for this issue. Remember the Fantasy Fairs in Dallas, Houston, Austin and San Antonio; ArmadilloCon in October; DallasCon in June and November; Origins and GenCon this summer and Noreascon (WorldCon) in Boston in September!

Remember . . . keep those dice a-rollin'!



SMOFcon V Review

by Steve Jackson

SMOFcon V was held December 9-11, 1988, at the Hyatt Regency in Phoenix, AZ. It was sponsored by the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society, which puts on CopperCon annually. There were no guests; SMOFcon isn't that kind of convention. The con chair/program head/publications person was Bruce Farr; his program assistants were Jim and Doreen Webbert.

SMOFcon is the major "conven-

tion about conventions." It's a forum in which the con-running SMOFs of North America can get together and discuss what they're doing, and why. The general theme of this SMOFcon was Convention Communications, and the programming generally followed the theme well.

There were about 70 members; the majority were from the East and West Coasts, but others were from all over. Most were names I recognized

from various program books, though I had never actually met many of them.

First Impressions

The con got off to a slow, mellow start, with people congregating in the lobby and the con suite. Conversation rapidly got silly, especially when we noticed the Santa riding up and down on top of the elevator. He was waving

to the crowd, but there was a pelvic thrust in there that would have done Elvis proud.

Fellow newshound Mike Glycer was another early arrival. He joined our group in the lobby, realized he ought to be taking notes, and went off to buy a notebook. Finding how expensive they were, he made do with scratch paper (and got his report out first; see *File 770 #78*).

Programming

The programming had only one track, on the reasonable assumption that one well-planned track would be plenty for a convention like this. An interesting addition, though, was the "continuation room" across the hall from the program room. Those interested in a particular subject could meet there after the panel ended and continue their discussion.

On the whole, this was a good idea, but it meant that any panel following an especially interesting presentation would lose up to 20 people to the continuation.

A few of the program items seemed to draw nearly all the members; others were sadly under-attended, due to the continuation room or the joys of smoffing on the patio. The Sunday morning events were especially neglected.

The "Program Book and Communications Handbook" was a nice three-ring binder containing various articles, many reprints from CASFS's *Con Games* newsletter. All in all, it was a good resource handout, but didn't have a lot to do with the program — nor was it really intended to. It included gems like Ross Pavlac's Nolacon II Programming Operations Manual.

However, all the programming was videotaped by John and Kandy Fong, with the assistance of Jim Cryer, and transcriptions will be published later for members. Copies of the videotapes may be available; for information, contact CASFS, PO Box 27201, Tempe, AZ 85285.

World Champion Con Suite

The con suite, run by Terry Gish with lots of help from lots of pleasant folks, had the most lavish spread I have ever seen. Breakfast in the mornings, cold cuts at lunchtime, everything imaginable in the evenings. It had shrimp, artichoke hearts, mandarin oranges, chocolates of all kinds, liqueurs (provided by ConFrancisco) and beer for drinkers, soft drinks for others. The crowning chutzpah: a program was posted, showing what goodies would be available, when they would appear, and by whom they would be provided!

We set up a computer running the SMOF Game in the con suite, and got lots of good comments — both bug-catches and suggestions for more things to add. There were a lot of ideas for "nightmare" scenarios . . . where things go from bad to worse until you wake up and it was all a dream. For instance, suppose your convention's bank fails. . .

Random Notes

The Nolacon Gripe Session was nominated for the Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation of 1988.

The idea of "pink sheets," daily schedule updates, was discussed at some length. Consensus: a Good Thing for most conventions, especially once the fans get used to looking for them.

Most important unasked question at most registration areas: "Where did you hear about this con?"

Most important omission from most convention flyers: the date the flyer was produced.

Most interesting publicity idea: find which local station runs *Star Trek* and offer to trade advertising with them. They give you voice-overs during the credits, advertising your con. You distribute flyers for them at the con, pushing their programming.

Most underappreciated SMOFcon program item: Sex in Conventions. The Sunday morning curse got this

one. (Well, "intercourse" is a synonym for "communications," isn't it?)

An Evening With the Fanboys

Phoenix has very little to offer in the way of late-night restaurants. Saturday night, about 20 of us went to the one nearby place: an Arizona-Mex restaurant. To our delight, we were not poisoned. (That's not as funny as you think; some Texans who ate in the hotel *did* get food poisoning.)

The conversation started with the question "What would cheap teleportation do to conventions?" The general conclusion was that hotels would survive, just because they have all that function space, and that specialty conventions would thrive. With teleportation, you could easily get 1,000 *Blake's 7* fans together on any given weekend.

Things went downhill from there. Speculations about futuristic penology (a reversible death sentence, because the victim's brain is cryogenically preserved) led by perfectly logical steps to the script for the ultimate B-movie: *Attack of the Freeze-Dried Heads!* Yes, this is *really* why we go to conventions.

Conclusion

Good con. Good committee. Very worthwhile for those interested in con-running, and fun, too.

Next Time

SMOFcon 6 will be held December 8-10, 1989, in Toronto. Memberships will be \$40/\$32 until October 30, and \$50/\$40 at the door. To join, or for more information, write SMOFcon 6, PO Box 186, Station M, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6S 4T3, or phone 416-232-0294 between 7 and 10 p.m. EST.

The committee will include Lloyd Penney (Chairman/Publications), Yvonne Penney (Treasurer/Registration/Hotel Liaison), Paul Valcour (Programming), and Heather Ashby (Hospitality Suite).

Norwescon XI Review

by Steve Jackson

Norwescon XI was held March 23-26, 1989, in Tacoma, Washington. It's a big regional convention; as always, membership estimates are fuzzy, but the numbers I heard were 2,000-2,500.

Guests included Algis Budrys (GoH), David Mattingly (Artist GoH), Dr. Alan E. Nourse (Science GoH), Mike Glyer (Fan GoH), Steven Barnes (Toastmaster), and Avram Davidson (Writer on Wheels GoH). The con chair was Elizabeth Warren.

Budrys and the ebullient Barnes, in particular, were visible throughout the convention. To my frustration, I didn't see Glyer once the whole weekend. It didn't occur to me to ask anyone if he was really there.

First Impressions

I arrived Thursday early afternoon, just as things were beginning to come together. The program book was impressive, which I am told is a Norwescon tradition. Thick, heavy, 8½x11", with a full-color, professional, wrap-around cover. Listings of all program items; photos and bios of all guests, not just the featured ones . . . *dozens* of guests. A complete membership list. Publisher ads, but not too many of them (not like your average Worldcon program book). And lots of full-page blue-and-white reproductions of pieces by the artist guests. I thought this was "padding," but I heard many favorable comments on the art-gallery section. There was also a pocket program, with a printed schedule that was sort of funny . . . Friday the 24th was followed by Saturday the 26th . . .

My first impression in the halls was of the heavy proportion of noisy geeks (leather and duct tape). Norwescon had problems last year with deliberate obnoxiousness from this type. But it was under better control this year (probably due to the con's alcohol-at-parties guidelines). And the proportion diminished as the weekend

went on; Dan Willems theorized that the unemployables all show up on Thursday, having nothing to keep them away.

I only saw one actual "incident" — a sallow-faced twerp in tie-dyed shirt and duct-taped underwear, who spent at least two hours hanging around a Desert Peach display, repeatedly trying to steal the balloons. I heard of other problems, but didn't see them.

The staff was generally helpful, but obviously badly overworked. When I got into the con, nobody in either the Gaming rooms or Operations could tell me where the Gaming head was, and they disagreed on *who* he was; one of the Ops workers brushed it off with "Let it be a challenge to you." (It turned out that "Top staff are all at a banquet.")

After the first few hours, things got better (I *did* find the Gaming head, Craig Bowie, and he was helpful and competent).

Special Events and Displays

There were dances *every night*; these were very popular, and seemed well-planned. Often there was not enough room on the floor to dance! *Rasputin* and *Rocky Horror* were favorites. We know Texas crowds have this much energy; we've seen it at a couple of ArmadilloCon dances. But most Texas dances wind up crippled by ridiculous music choice, bad sound systems, or both. Norwescon did it right, four nights in a row.

The Fannish Olympics were simply indescribable. One thing I like about the West Coast fans is that, as a group, they're not afraid to be silly . . . even the SMOFs. Four stars, guys.

Norwescon had a large *display*

area for fan clubs and other groups. This is a great idea, and one which should be encouraged. There were a number of different media clubs represented, along with the Myth Adventures fan club and some local general fan groups. One *Star Trek* club brought a full-scale transporter booth!

There were also small room displays of various sorts of esoterica, including Weird (but real) Science, fanzines, and New Age crystals and whatnot. Unfortunately, due to lack of space, a lot of programming went into the fanzine room, which short-circuited its real purpose.

At a convention this big, you'll always miss a few things that sound really interesting. As did I. Announced events that caught my eye but I didn't get to visit included:

A phone hookup to Minicon, which happened the same weekend. Seems like a great, friendly idea.

A big Lazer Tag game.

Tai Chi in the mornings, led by Steve Barnes.

A Renaissance betrothal ceremony!

And the masquerade. They have a big one, but I didn't go, and I didn't hear any discussion of it that seemed worth reporting. So it goes.

Bid Parties

Norwescon is a big bid-party con, since it's part of The Circuit. Magicon had a nice party, with good conversation and neat little bookmarks (each with a piece of short-short-short fiction). There were two Westercon bid parties competing for 1991. Sacramento had better food and literature; Vancouver had cider and a much bigger crowd. Looks like either group would put on a good show.

Facilities

The hotel was big, but still too small. Also overwhelmed, I think. It

was full Saturday night, though not Sunday. The Jacuzzi was out of order (they said) — I have heard stories of Northern cons being sabotaged by hotels that *claimed* the hot tub wasn't working, because they didn't want to deal with the fans. Many ice machines were out of order; the one on my floor was broken before Thursday and had not been fixed when I left on Sunday, in spite of several calls to the hotel.

The Green Room was well-organized, and stocked with small munchies and occasional drinks. Last year's Norwescon green room made me a believer in "panel members should meet in advance and talk." This year was as good. But this year, like last year, the Green Room closed down Sunday afternoon "so staffers could go to the banquet." When I asked about this later, one staffer snapped "It's a tradition." My opinion: Damn stupid 'tradition.' If they're going to have panels Sunday (and they do), and if pre-panel discussions are worthwhile (and they are), then the Green Room should be open. And if it *has* to be closed . . . if *nobody* is willing to keep it open . . . then the guests should be *warned* of this, so they don't mill around a locked door, wondering whatthehell is going on! Yes, this happened.

The con suite didn't seem like much of a place to mingle at first — what chairs there were were along the walls. But then I realized that they had set it up with lots of mingling/talking areas close by. People went to the con suite, grabbed food, and did their meeting and talking outside.

"Kidcon II" — a special room for kid programming — seemed to go well. I saw a lot of kids, and examples of their art were displayed on the wall. Among the special kid activities was an Easter Egg hunt!

Unfortunately, babysitting was next to Gaming and right across from Kidcon. Therefore, it was hard to have quiet for the babies. The people in charge of the various conflicting

rooms worked together as well as they could to deal with the problem.

Functions and Events

There was lots and lots of programming, most of it intelligently planned. Unfortunately, some of the descriptions in the program book seemed to have been written by somebody who disapproved of the panel, or (at the very least) had already made up their mind about it. Many of these writeups, though literate, seemed unwarrantedly snide or sarcastic, and probably cut attendance at worthwhile discussions. Some samples:

"The Alien As Messiah." We

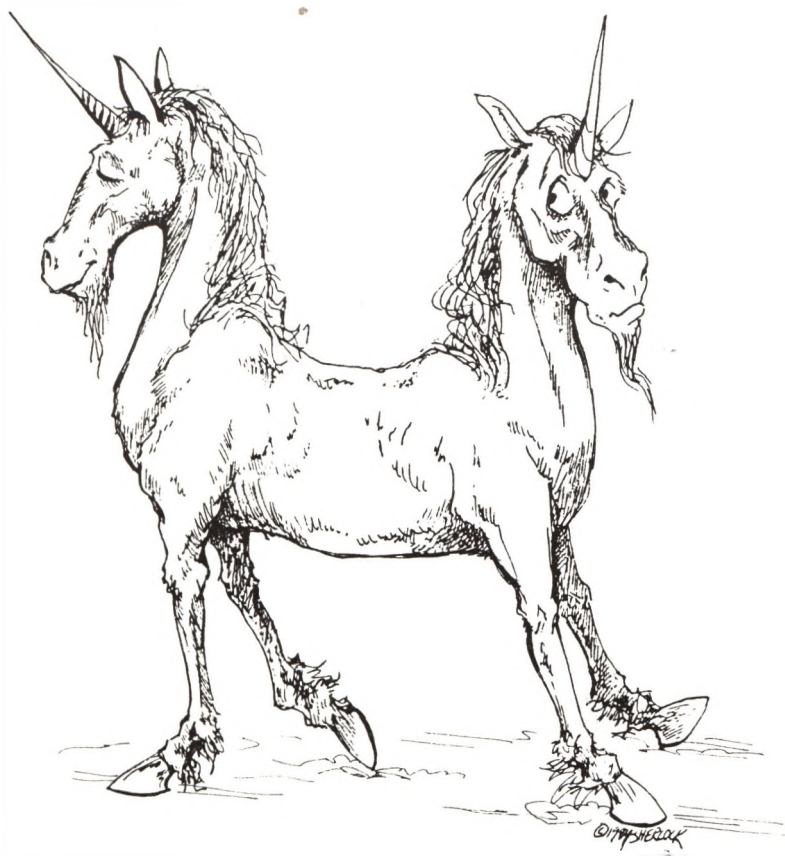
used to worry about aliens "taking over" and enslaving us; now we're ready to worship the first BEM or little green person who gets here. Is this an enlightened attitude, or just another way of escaping responsibility for ourselves?

"Do Robot Fans Attend Dateline Cons?" E-mail and bulletin boards — will they replace conventions? Will real live contact become obsolete as everyone turns on, tunes in and phosphordots out? (This was a good panel anyway, but everyone there took particular exception to the description.)

"Apocalypse Now: Wargames and Other Strategies." A discussion of the role of war and strategy games in society and what their popularity



**MAMAS-DON'T LET YOUR BABIES
GROW UP TO BE COWBOYS**



signifies. Do they encourage the warrior mentality or are they a harmless way to work out aggression? (I was on this one, along with, among others, an ex-Marine and a fan who is a policeman. We had a lot of fun discussing the warrior mentality, not to mention certain other mentalities.)

But all the programming that I attended was worthwhile.

The Gaming area was located in three sleeping rooms. This was a step up from last year — when it was all in *one* sleeping room. They also tried to put some gaming programming in these rooms *while the gaming was going on*. Despite this, a lot of gamers played a lot of games and had a good time. The Norwescon crowd was far more cheerfully tolerant of the cramped situation than a comparable Texas group would have been. Several of the gamers I met turned out to be Silicon Valley engineers or programmers.

The artist's jam (Donna Barr, Jim Groat, others) went so well that they ran out of paper! There was also a Pic-tionary session with most of the same artists taking turns on an overhead projector. Good stuff. Silly.

The autograph session was simply the best I've ever encountered. Having seen this, I can't imagine why anyone would want to do it any other way. Round tables were arranged around the periphery of a large room. Each guest (no more than six to a table, so everyone could face the room) had an assigned seat with a name card. Furthermore, each table had a sign on a 3-foot pole, repeating the names of the guests there. This not only made it easy for fans to find the people they wanted to meet, it also made it easy to tell which guests had skipped the autographing . . .

Seen and Heard

There were a lot of hall costumes — more than you usually see at a Texas con, and fancier. One woman had painted a beautiful butterfly on her face. Her big eyes, blinking out of the wings, made for a very spooky effect.

There was incredible foolishness with weapons policy and peacebonding. A "peace bond" is a device to hold a weapon so that it cannot be

drawn. Somebody here thought that the symbolism of the bond was the important part. So, for example, if someone had a rapier stuck in his belt, they "bonded" it by putting a cable-tie around the grip, even though this in no way kept it from being drawn.

It got sillier. I saw a "monk" stopped by the Peace-Bond Brigade. They would not let him enter the convention until they had rendered his staff safe by putting a cable-tie around one end. But that's not the worst. I also witnessed a convention staffer putting these ersatz "peace bonds" around a woman's crutches — "because they might be used as clubs."

While peace-ties were being put on everything longer than it was wide, at least one car was broken into in the supposedly secure hotel parking lot. Everything was taken.

The first big event of the con was a Heinlein appreciation. An interesting story I heard later in the weekend: RAH wrote and owned the Donna Reed Show!

Final Analysis

An okay convention. Several regulars expressed the feeling that Norwescon is getting tired, and that the local torch has passed to Rustycon. I can't say, having attended only the last two years. Most of these regulars were "party" fans, so it could be just that Rustycon is more party-oriented and Norwescon is becoming more serious.

On the whole, Norwescon had a good, hard-working staff. I think these people are trying to do too much, in too little space, with too few core workers. And still, they're almost succeeding.

If this con was in Texas, or even any neighboring state, I wouldn't miss it. Is it worth crossing the continent for? Well . . . to be honest, not with today's ticket prices. Not unless you're rich. So next time you write to Ronnie Ghu, ask him to lower air fares, or send Norwescon another half-dozen People points.

The Printed Word

The Misenchanted Sword

by Lawrence Watt-Evans

reviewed by Richard Tucholka

There's a war in this magical world and Valder is a scout on the run. He stumbles across an old man and inexorably leads his pursuers to destroy the wizard's hut.

The wizard is not a vindictive man and enchants Valder's sword to help him return to his side of the lines. But there is a serious catch to the old man's magic. The sword, Wirikidor, is slightly misenchanted and must kill if drawn. After the 100th draw, it will turn on its owner. The sword also has a second peculiarity: the owner cannot die until he has killed the set number. This amounts to virtual immortality, except the wielder ages and continues to age.

The war ends and Valder has the dilemma of what to do with his cursed sword. Being a moral man, he attempts to live his life without its use and nearly succeeds. Old and half blind, he discovers the sword must be destroyed or dis-enchanted before he can die.

The Misenchanted Sword is a fun fantasy novel that deserves to be read by any fantasy fan or gamer. If you liked Watt-Evans' other book set on this magical world, *With a Single Spell*, you'll definitely enjoy this. Another in the series will be released soon; the tentative title is *An Unwilling Warlord*.

Wild Cards V — Down and Dirty

edited by George R.R. Martin

reviewed by SM

George Martin & Co. are back for another installment of their shared-world alternate history. In this episode, gang war erupts in Jokertown. We see further development of The Sleeper, Modular Man, Bagabond, and Brennan as well as others from previous volumes.

As befits its title, this volume

paints an accurate picture of a sleazy, slimy society. And while still entertaining, this mirror that Martin and Co. have built leaves one thinking about the meaning of it all. This is the best of the series so far. I just hope that future volumes can regain some of the lightheartedness missing from this volume.

Trader's World

by Charles Sheffield

reviewed by SM

I have to confess that I was disappointed by this. I expect more from Sheffield as a writer than this cliché-ridden post-holocaust story. The world has fragmented after the war and the Traders live up to their name and trade with the various societies. Our hero, an orphan raised by the Traders to become one of them, goes from one contrived situation to another, until the book ends with a whimper instead of a bang. I really tried to like Mikal Asparian, but he just came across as a cardboard character to me. Might be okay for a rainy day if you don't have anything else, but you'd be better off to find a copy of *Sight of Proteus* instead.

The Rapture Effect

by Jeffrey A. Carver

reviewed by SM

Here we have yet another novel of a self-aware computer. This time, it is fighting a war with an alien species in a star system that human colonists are about to enter. There are some fairly innovative concepts here in the interrelation of the humans with this gnostic computer. The characters, alien and human, are believable and empathetic. Carver's story moves so fast that when one is finished, one finds it hard to believe the book is almost 400 pages long. It's not *Stranger in a Strange Land*, as the cover blurb claims, but it comes darn close.

The Incorporated Knight

by L. Sprague & Catherine Crook de Camp

reviewed by SM

This is a most enjoyable fantasy by the de Camps, detailing the (mis)-adventures of Eudoric Dambertson, hero. Although Eudoric comes from a long line of knights, he'd much rather be a tradesman. Nevertheless, he is bright, strong, noble and — most important — incredibly lucky. Thrill to his adventures as he hunts a dragon, stalks a giant spider, seeks a unicorn, and (most dangerous of all) seeks a wife. An enjoyable romp by the de Camps.

The Wizard of 4th Street

by Simon Hawke

reviewed by SM

Here we have a decidedly different after-the-collapse story. In the years after the collapse, energy was short and civilization was crumbling. Enter Merlin, released from his long confinement, who helps civilization recover using magic as the base for a new technology.

The story opens with a pair of bungled attempts to steal a set of precious magical stones. Well, not really bungled — the inept pair meet and do get away with the stones. Wyndrune and Kyra are as charming a pair of rogues as you ever could meet. The progression of adventures the stones lead them into is believable and entertaining. This could be Yermakov's (Hawke's) best book yet.

The Company Man

Joe Clifford Faust

reviewed by SM

Although Joe Faust seems to be specializing in SF mysteries, *The Company Man* is more thriller than mystery. Tautly plotted, we follow the trials and tribulations of Andrew Birch, a top corporate agent, through his assignments and cross and doublecross by the company he works

for. It's a tribute to Faust's growing skill as a writer that we come to like Birch, a man with little or no conscience. This isn't a great read, but it does portray an interesting extrapolation of today's corporate trends.

Deep Quarry

By John E. Stith

reviewed by SM

John Stith is another SF mystery writer. His first two books *Memory Blank* and *Death Tolls* were excellent examples of the genre. His newest book *Deep Quarry* is superficially one of the same.

We start off with private detective Ben "Bug Eye" Takent in his sleazy office, taking a case. Artifacts are being stolen from an archeological site and he is being hired to find out how.

Stith piles on complications and the mystery soon turns into an adventure story in a mysterious alien building, and Takent and company get chased by the mysterious aliens. In a high tension resolution, Stith ties up

all the loose ends in a neat and tidy bundle. This is not as good a read as *Memory Blank*, but it is still a satisfying story told by a more than competent storyteller and is well worth the \$3.50 cover price.

Stellar Fist

by George Proctor

reviewed by SM

This tightly written novel is Proctor's first SF release in several years. *Stellar Fist* is the story of Arianne Pellan, a retired agent of the Galactic Confederation. She is roped into one last mission for the Confederation by her ex-husband Faxon Lorens.

This mission — to negotiate for interplanetary mining rights on the planet Haven — is secondary to her real purpose: to find out who or what mindwiped her brother. We follow her adventures as she uses her wits and psionic abilities to penetrate the secrets of the Havenites, until the book's shocking climax.

This is the most satisfying of

Proctor's SF novels that I've read. Hopefully this will signal his long overdue return to the genre.

Brothers in Arms

by Lois McMaster Bujold

reviewed by SM

Brothers in Arms is finally out. If you can only afford to buy one book this month, this should be it. This is the new *Miles Vorkosigan* adventure and it has everything that we've come to expect from Bujold. It has tight, intricate plotting, with more twists and turns than a C.J. Cherryh novel (in about half the pages). But Bujold doesn't lose sight of characterization, from the minute that Miles and his battered fleet first limp into Earth orbit to discover that the Dendarii Free Mercenary Fleet's pay isn't there.

What, you're still reading this? Forget this, go out and buy the book. Then go out and clear several hours for reading it, because you won't want to put it down.

Filk Reviews

by Naomi Pardue

Echoes on the Wind

by Windbourne

The very pretty, full-color cover on Windbourne's first tape, *Echoes on the Wind*, promises great things. The tape, unfortunately, isn't quite as inspiring, but is still worth a listen.

Windbourne is four California filkers: Katherine Ring, Karen Rogers, Rilla Heslin and Harold Groot. Donna Banzhof also appears, playing some back-up instruments. The tape is subtitled "Folksingers of the Future," and that sums up quite nicely the variety of music on the tape. There are several folk songs (including Stan Rogers' "Giant" and Eric Bogle's "When the Wind Blows"), and a few filk songs (including "Raven Banner"), with the balance being obscure mainstream material. (I think. While the label gives full copyright credits, it does not list authors for all the

songs, so I don't know where they found some of them.)

The overall tone is serious. There are only two humorous songs — Groot's "Vampire Baby Boogie" (one of the best cuts on the tape) and a very nicely done arrangement of "Richter Scale."

Not surprisingly, most of the songs are done in parts. Sometimes the harmony works well, as in an unusual but beautiful rendition of "Lies" by Stan Rogers. Other songs sound strange because of the very different timbres of the singers' voices. At no point do they blend as well as, say, Technical Difficulties is able to do. Instrumental accompaniment is minimal. While there is more than just voice and guitar, Windbourne depends on the vocal tracks to add richness.

The most disappointing cut is

"When the Wind Blows." The unevenness apparent in many of the songs is especially troublesome here. The singers seem to be trying to communicate strong emotion, but they end up sounding only harsh and unpleasant, or thin and breathy.

When *Echoes on the Wind* is good, it is like the little girl with the little curl — very, very good. When it is bad, it is merely disappointing. High points, other than those already mentioned, include "Mists of Time" and "Spirit." I can't help but wonder if some of the songs (especially "When the Wind Blows") could have been improved with a few more "takes."

I look forward to seeing more tapes from Windbourne, because there is a great deal of promise in this first effort. It is a good tape, and maybe next time they will be able to put out a great one.

Letters of Comment

March 6, 1989

Dear Scott,

Hi! Thanks for the latest issue. I really didn't know what I was getting into when I joined FACT last June. But I've been involved with one form of fandom all my life, and I decided what the heck! I'm glad I did.

I'm interested in just about everything in fandom (though *Trek* and Elvis are my first loves. I'm also a horror and one-of-those soap people!). Although I'm a media fan, I am a reader as well. Contrary to popular belief, most media fans I know are intense readers, including the Elvis and soap (*Dark Shadows* as well) fans.

I am also interested in the wonderful, old TV sci-fi and other TV anthologies such as the original *Twilight Zone*, *Alfred Hitchcock*, *Thriller*, etc. I'm afraid we'll never see those glory days again. Perhaps the *Inquirer* could delve into some of the history of these anthologies? And the books that accompany them?

At any rate, thanks for the hard work and trying to bring respectability to fandom.

Live long and prosper,
Beverly Bailey
Dallas, TX

March 8, 1989

Dear Scott —

Your articles in #27 were very interesting. Bill Rotsler makes some good and amusing points in his "rules." Nolacon's masquerade was the first I've ever missed at a con. Its distance from the hotels was the cause. I quite literally missed the bus. I apparently missed quite an experience.

Your letter column seemed odd for a Texas fanzine, featuring the voices of out-of-staters only, albeit widely scattered out-of-staters.

Beast,
David Thayer
7209 Deville Dr.
North Richland Hills, TX
76180-8257

April 12, 1989

Dear Scott,

Ahh, if only *TSFI* came out faster, but I know it's not your fault. I know that many serfen might lambast you for the space "wasted" on gaming and filking, but to counter that, let me congratulate you on what is actually a well-balanced zine for its size. In 14 pages (not counting the front and back covers) are 5-1/4 pages devoted to authors or literary topics (if you count fanzine reviews, which I do), 4 pages of convention stories (both about FACT-sponsored cons), 2 pages of expected contents (an editorial and a page of locs) and only 2-3/4 pages on anything else.

To Ann Miller: Nicely written article. You segue from item to item a lot better than I ever could. The only thing is I think you may have in some respects given A.C. Crispin the touch of death by referring to him/her as a *Star Trek* author. Other than a few "published in media fanzines only" fan writers, I don't know of anyone who is only a "so-and-so" writer. Even more so since A.C. Crispin is obviously not only an *ST* writer, having co-authored the book with Ms. Norton. If Mr./Ms. Crispin is a writer of *ST* plots, he/she isn't an author, but a screenplay writer, a big difference. But, I kvetch. On to other topics.

To Karen Boehler: I think you should have disqualified Dr. Cat since not all of his items were indigenous to Arizona. But it was a funny article nonetheless.

To Cl. Crouch: Some very nice ideas, Connie.

Re "The Polyhedral Universe": This is the one area where there may be justified commentary as to the length. I don't think the calendar is necessary or even apropos, since there is no general calendar in *TSFI*. And realistically, gamers don't need to go to cons to game, they can do that anywhere, any time.

Re "Fanzine Reviews": Scott, do you realize there are reviews here about a year old? I don't think we need three different reviews on the same zine. I think the cause were better served by reviewing more zines.

To Naomi Pardue: Much as I really don't care about filk records or tapes, yours are the best-written reviews in this issue, even better than my own. Very nice!

To Shelley Corzine: Interesting from the articles that you would think Nolacon was a great con. The impression I get is just the opposite. I wasn't able to go, either.

Well, that's long enough. This ought to get your page count up a bit, Scott.

Best,

Alexander R. Slate
1847 Babcock #702
San Antonio, TX 78229

I find that often, gaming is understated in a con's advertising, and gamers may favor a con with something they want to play over one with no gaming. Even with a general calendar — which we do usually have — one for gaming may not be redundant. (On the other hand, separate-interest calendars could take over if we're not careful, so we'll keep that in mind.) I am sure that gamers enjoy meeting people at conventions who share their interests just as much as general SF fans do. And SF fans don't have to attend conventions, either — we could talk to people and listen to music and dress up and watch films just as well in small, informal groups as with lots of other folks . . . but I don't think we'd enjoy it as much.

As to the age of the zine reviews, yes, some of them are old. I thought it would be interesting to see how some of these zines progressed. However, we would prefer to see more, newer reviews. And it sounds like you want to do some. Thanks! — MS

STAR TREK'S

TRIBBLEMANIA

OR
EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT
TRIBBLES, BUT DIDN'T WANT TO ASK!

FOR THOSE WHO DON'T KNOW,
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GUYS WHO DEBUTED ON TV'S
'STAR TREK'. CUTE, CUDDY, AND
ABOUT 6 INCHES LONG, THEY HAVE
ONLY ONE UNDEEMING
FEATURE....



THEY REPRODUCE LIKE
MAD!



OF COURSE, SOME
SPECIES LOOK A
LITTLE DIFFERENT.
FOR EXAMPLE....



HUMANS LOVE 'EM!



HOWEVER, KLINGONS
AREN'T QUITE SO
ENTHUSIASTIC...



AND DEKAU?



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