

Degler! #4

Degler! [New Series #4] is published 18 March 2005 for Lunacon '05 by Andy Porter, 55 Pineapple St. #3J, Brooklyn NY 11201, <aporter55@gmail.com>. First published in 1964 for apa-F, *D!* became the newszine *S.F. Weekly* and then appeared every so often over the passing decades, about 300 issues, all together. This zine supports Suzle for TAFF, Joe Siclari for DUFF, and John Bangsund for getting better. This issue's type is likely to be smaller; get your own magnifiers!

I [Barely] Remember Lunacon

I barely remember the first Lunacon I ever went to. I think it was in 1961, which means, unlike other cons I've been writing up, that it's been more than 40 years since my first. I believe it was held in a one room second floor meeting hall just below 14th Street on Fifth Avenue in NYC. You walked up a rickety staircase, and there you were. There was a table where they held panels at the front of the room, chairs divided by a center aisle, and tables in the back where they took registration money and Belle Dietz sold cupcakes. No artshow, no dealers, all held for several hours on a Saturday afternoon. So no hotel, no room parties. About 65 or 70 people there.

I think I've missed only one Lunacon in all those years, in the mid 1970's. The nice thing for me about Lunacon is that, as an Honorary lifetime member, I get a free membership. This despite having resigned from the club in the early 1990's. I've since mellowed. Besides, I got this spiffy little glass statuette which is on display at the entrance to my living room.

And speaking of Lunacon, one person who should certainly be considered for Fan GoH is none other than founding member Frank Dietz, who you can find most Lunacons in the Dealers' Room, selling used paperbacks. Frank was not only there for the founding of this con and the Lunarians, but hosted the meetings for a couple of decades with two different wives, first Belle and then Anne, on Walton Avenue and 176th Street in the Bronx (where the Lunarians met and played hearts, surrounded by the trappings of Station Luna, home of the largest reel-to-reel tape recorder I've ever seen and its unfinished mural of a rocket taking off from the Moon), and then later in Oradell, NJ. If Frank's here, get him to show you the Hannes Bok artwork he has tattooed on his arm.

Jack Chalker Was No Mirage

I wrote this for the Lunacon Program Book. Alas, I'm on three panels here, all about dead friends. I think I need a button that says, "I talk about dead people," sigh...

Although it's not remembered now, four decades ago Jack Chalker had a major influence on New York fandom. Not because he showed up at every meeting of the Lunarians, driving up in his diesel-fueled Mercedes Benz from his home in Maryland—that came later, in the 1970's and 80's—but because he'd been actively involved in the four-way race to hold the 1967 World SF Convention.

The bidders were Baltimore, Boston, New York City and Syracuse; the voting took place in 1966, at Tricon in Cleveland, Ohio. And although I'd always been appreciative of Jack's publication of his fanzine *Mirage*, this was a serious fannish war, with the winner getting the spoils: the right to hold the worldcon. We were all young (I was still in my late teens) and a little bit mad, and the race was in deadly earnest.

The fact that New York City won—we unleashed our Secret Weapon at the voting, a seconding speech by Harlan Ellison—turned out not to be so wonderful after all. A year of strenuous work on the convention ended with a worldcon where all the elevator operators walked off the job, Sam Moskowitz monopolized the banquet and Lester del Rey's speaking time with an

interminable joke whose punchline involved excrement, and the Scientologists held a function because the hotel's sales people didn't know the difference between SF and Scientology.

Jack probably had the last laugh at the time, because he and his Baltimore bidding buddies started Balticon, which endures to this day. The first Balticon was held at one of the Baltimore bid's hotels, the Emerson, which incidentally was torn down a few years later. The best thing about the early Balticons was that they were held in the worst neighborhood in Baltimore, an area called The Block, notorious for cheap strip clubs, bars selling rotgut whiskey, and an excess of pornographic bookstores.

In other words, the fans loved it. The conventions were pretty good, too.

Later, Jack went from publishing the fanzine *Mirage* to publishing real books with his Mirage Press, including *The Conan Reader*, *The Conan Swordbook* and *The Conan Grimoire*, 1971's *A Guide to Middle Earth* by Robert Foster, and eventually three editions of Chalker and Mark Owings's *The Science Fantasy Publishers*, plus a couple of dozen others.

By the mid 1970's, Jack's days as an active small press publisher were drawing to a close, and the final act in his evolution was taking center stage. That's the part of his life Jack is mostly known for now: as a professional SF writer. Who knew that Jack had it in him to be a successful midlist author of popular SF novels and series? Certainly not me. This last and most successful stage began with *A Jungle of Stars* in 1976 and continued with a host of novels, many in series including the *Well World*, *Quintara Marathon*, *Soul Rider*, and *Changewinds* series of novels, plus stand-alone works.

Now Jack is gone, and I'll miss him, not least for our shared interest in car ferries, and our intertwined earlier years when fans were, indeed, slans.

Terrorist, Moi?

I recently closed down my Bank of Scotland chequing account, opened when I was publishing *Algol/Starship* and then *SF Chronicle*, and Ethel Lindsay was my UK Agent. Having the account made it so much easier to pay British contributors and engage in international money laundering. Well, cleaning and pressing, anyway. Alas, I received a letter from BoS which talked about an effort, "as part of the fight against crime and terrorism...to reconfirm the identity of our existing customers."

I sent BoS all sorts of stuff, including notarized bank statements and my passport and the like, but they insisted on such easily available things (but only if you live in the UK) as my "Current full UK Driving Licence or Full or Provisional Photo Card; Current Year Council Tax Bill; Local Council Rent Card, Inland Revenue Document; EU Member State ID Card; Firearms Certificate; Inland Revenue Tax Notification (within past 12 months); Armed Forces ID Card; Police Warrant Card," etc. The best part was that "copies must be endorsed as being a 'certified copy of original' by a lawyer, banker, authorised financial intermediary, MCCB regulated mortgages broker, accountant, teacher, doctor, minister of religion or post master/sub master." Minister of religion? The account is closed, my unused checks discarded. At least I've still got the account in, umm, well...

Michigan, Midwestcon, Manchester

My trips this year will be to Ypsilanti, Michigan in June for my brother's 64th birthday followed by Midwestcon 56 Sharonville Ohio, and then the big one, a 24 day trip to Glasgow for the worldcon, with two weeks of being a tourist in Cheshire and the area around Manchester, England. I hope to stay on a farm and be guided about by Roy Gray, whom I first met when I attended a British Eastercon in Manchester last century. We've been corresponding and attending West End shows together in London when I was there, and Broadway shows in NYC when he was here, with his wife Irene (who is not a fan but tolerates Roy and his SFnal friends). The Glasgow worldcon will be preceded by a one day trip to Carnoustie, Scotland, to see where Ethel Lindsay is buried, and to meet her cousin Alison Paterson.

Most of my previous trips to the UK were in colder weather, for instance in October for World Fantasy- and British Fantasy-Cons; the only time I've been there when a coat wasn't needed was following the 1990 worldcon in The Hague. I expect to see lots more people about—Cornwall, for instance, is empty in October—and am alas paying lots more for the airfare there.

Random Factors: Letters

Eric Lindsay

<fijagh@ericlindsay.com>

Thanks for *Degler!* #3, and your PhilCon memories. When I was last in San Francisco, Mike McInerney (he of the bathtub) was kind enough to take me around for the day. He showed me the steepest street, and much else. (Later I was shown a different steeper steepest street).

Like you, I am attempting to remove stuff from this apartment. I have about 37 bookcases in one room. I grant they are small bookcases, and often stacked three high, but still...I actually do have gaps on many of the shelves now. I have been giving books to a bookseller at the markets for about three years now, usually 7 books a week. I didn't bring any of my particle board bookcases with me when I moved; all the bookcases are ones I built myself from radiata pine.

Good luck with the cleanup.

J.B. Post

<jbpost@netreach.net>

Sorry to have missed you at PhilCon: I banged my knee and didn't get in on Friday night and took the granddaughters to see a stage performance of *The Wizard of Oz* on Saturday, but did get to the Saturday parties and a few events on Sunday.

Gee, your memories of PhilCon (are we the only ones who haven't converted to "Philcon"?) bring back my own. My very first one was when I had first moved to Philadelphia in 1961. That Friday was my birthday and I had just gotten my draft notice. Tom Purdom was just back from the Army and he told me what was ahead of me was worse than death. Other than that, our memories mesh in matters of locations and what was at the Kolchaks'. I think Forrie was at that one, though it might have been one after I got back from the Army, and we talked about how some HPL stuff could be made into movies. Real ancient history.

[The weird thing is that I didn't get to Philcon after all. I went down on Thursday, intent on being a tourist. But a tooth started bothering me that afternoon and I ended up checking out at 4am, took a 5am train home, got back to Brooklyn by 8am, and was having a root canal by 9:30am. Also, I didn't know that Aldiss was not GoH until I got there (I actually brought some books to be signed). -AP]

Ed Meskys

<edmeskys@localnet.com>

RR 2, Box 63, 322 Whittier Hwy
Center Harbor NH 03226-9708

I enjoy your reminiscences of your early days in fandom. This fall will mark my 50th anniversary in fandom. Reading Rog Phillips' fan column in a Ray Palmer prozine, I almost attended Clevention in 1955. I sent \$1 for them to airmail me info before I left on a vacation with my parents, but the 4 PRs they sent arrived after we left. I had talked my

parents into returning home via Cleveland but when we called neighbors about a week before the con they said I had received a letter saying I had to register for college just before Labor Day, cutting the trip short.

I then wrote Rog asking him whether NY had gotten the 56 Worldcon, and asking for a contact in NY fandom. He sent me Ron Smith's address, and Ron sent me an invitation to a meeting of the NY SF Circle. My first meeting was in November or December on a Sunday at a bar on 3rd Ave near 16 St. The meeting was in a back room and I remember Sandy Cutrell singing Tom Lehrer songs at a piano. This was the last meeting in that hall; the next month meetings switched to Riverside Dive. There they continued until the one after Newyorkon, when the inhabitants kicked us out and resigned from office.

The club shrank from 50 attendees a month to under a dozen and petered out over the next two years. I made very few meetings because academic year 1956-57 I was carrying 23 credits, 14 of them in advanced physics and math. Meanwhile the Dietzes, Moskowitz, Raybin, Taurasi, Kyle and a few others started the Lunarians as an invitational club. Harvey Segal invited me to a meeting but homework kept me from attending, and I did not get invited again. I finally attended meetings when I moved to California in 1962 and NH in 1966 and could attend as an out-of-town guest. Soon after I moved to NH I became a regular member and remained so for several years until marriage, blindness, loss of job, and other matters almost fufiated me until I became very active again around 1980.

Philcon was my first outside of metropolitan NY con (except for the 1960 worldcon, Pittcon). People spoke of them and I faunched to go while I was in college, but they came just before mid-terms. Finally when I entered graduate school in 1958, where there were no mid-terms, I attended every year until I moved to California in 1962. Thus 1961 was my last one until a carload of us drove down from NH in 1981.

I don't remember the name of the hotel but assume it was the Sheraton; a modern looking building, a slab like the UN building, over the Suburban Railroad Station. I remember the miles of underground passages with stores going for blocks around the hotel. I think Philcons were one day only, on Saturday, then, so we went home Sunday morning. I do remember the parties at Harriet's. I guess we came in Friday, attended the party, and then were ready for the con to start Saturday morning.

At this time I went to a few meetings of the PSFS with two friends, Matt Chlupsa who never got deeply into fandom tho he did make two worldcons and a few regionals, now totally out of fandom, and Carl Fredericks, he of the bagpipes, now an *Analog* author.

Late March/Some April Birthdays

David Lasser, 3/20/02; Don Miller, 3/20/33; Pamela Sargent, 3/20/48; Don Markstein, 3/21/47; Sue-Rae Rosenfeld, 3/21/52; Teresa Nielsen Hayden, 3/21/56; Raymond Z. Gallun, 3/22/10; Ethel Lindsay, 3/23/21; Keith Kato, 3/23/50; Maureen Kincaid Speller, 3/23/59; Andy Porter, 3/24/46; Jacqueline Lichtenberg, 3/25/42; G. Harry Stine, 3/26/28; David Lake, 3/26/29; Dick Schultz, 3/26/38; Rachel Holmen, 3/26/45; Gary Mattingly, 3/26/52; Colette Reap, 3/26/54; John Hertz, 3/27/49; Kevin Anderson, 3/27/62; A. Bertram Chandler, 3/28/12; Davey Snyder, 3/28/58; Bob Buechley, 3/29; Art Henderson, 3/29/42; Chad Oliver, 3/30/28; Dennis Etchison, 3/30/43; Fred Whitledge, 3/31/15; John Jakes, 3/31/32; Janice Gelb, Scott Edelman, 3/31/55; David Bratman, 3/31/57.

Anne McCaffrey, 4/1/26; Samuel Delany, 4/1/42; Redd Boggs, 4/2/21; Elliot Shorter, 4/2/39; Peter Haining, 4/2/40; Joan Vinge, Teny Zuber, 4/2/48; Noel Loomis, 4/3/05; Ted Atwood, 4/4/43; Robert Bloch, 4/5/17; Al Halevy, 4/5/31; Sherry Gottlieb, 4/6; Henry Kuttner, 4/7/15; James White, 4/7/28; Marty Cantor, 4/7/35; Susan Petrey, 4/7/45; S.P. Meek, 4/8/1894; E.J. "Ted" Carnell, 4/8/12; Bill Benthake, 4/8/18...

Pdf edition by Bill Burns for efanazines.com, April 2006