

# The Drink Tank Issue 94

## This Were WorldCons



### The Drink TanCon



FEATURING

TED WHITE ON NYCON 3

JOHN PURCELL ON MIDAMERICON

MARK PLUMMER ON CONSPIRACY

JAMES BACON ON INTERSECTION

CHRIS GARCIA ON CON JOSE

AND SHORT COMMENTS FROM JOHN  
PAUL GARCIA

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That right there is Forry Ackerman. Everytime I've seen his name in a programme book, it's always had the same note: Fan Since Day One. And he was the first to wear a costume to a convention, in fact it's the very costume you see him wearing there. There's a lot of Forry in WorldCon, even today, so, I've

chosen to lead off with his image for this: The WorldCon issue of The Drink Tank.

We've got five articles from Five Different WorldCons. First, We're having our good buddy Ted White telling us about the WorldCon he chaired. Steven H. Silver ran programming at Chicon and shares his story with us. Mark Plummer and James Bacon brings us the tales of two Bloody British WorldCons and John Purcell gives us his take on the Big MAC. I also give a touch of on Con Jose: The 60th WorldCon in my hometown of San Jose.

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### **NyCon 3**

by

**Ted White: Chairman of NyCon 3**

NyCon3 was held in 1967 and was the third (and, thus far, the last) Worldcon hosted by New York City. There are a lot of implications in that sentence.

To begin with, the first Worldcon was in New York City, in (very) loose conjunction with the World's Fair -- which is how a relatively small American national convention became known as the "World" SF Convention. New York City fandom had a reputation for disputatiousness and factionalism, and the Exclusion Act whereby Sam Moskowitz and his buddies in New Fandom barred other New York fans like Don Wollheim from the convention certainly did nothing to dispel that reputation. It got the Worldcon off on the wrong foot, and it helped cement the bad odor in which the rest of fandom held NYC fandom.

The second NYC Worldcon was held in 1956.

It was a decent enough convention, but it is best remembered for new levels of disputation -- lawsuits and bad debts and bad blood were that convention's legacy. You see, the committee of that convention set in place an ongoing corporation to oversee the Worldcon, the World SF Society, Inc. This was actually a good idea at root -- Worldcons were starting to handle Real Money and legal protections needed to be put into place -- but the actual personnel running WSFS Inc. were power-hungry fans with personal axes to be ground, and all too quickly two officers of WSFS Inc. were suing the third officer, who counter-sued, and All Fandom Was Plunged Into Dispute. The lawsuits were headline news in fandom in 1958, and when the Chair of the 1958 Worldcon (Solacon) announced that the convention was not being held under the legal umbrella of WSFS Inc. the convention hall erupted into applause and cheers. Fandom had had enough of WSFS Inc. (although its descendent is still around today) -- and by extension, of NYC fandom and NYC Worldcons.

I moved to New York City in 1959, a year in which a number of prominent NYC fans (friends of mine) in turned moved to the West Coast -- mostly to the Bay Area. Within a few years NYC fandom had undergone a transformation as a variety of us transplanted to New York formed a new fanclub in 1960, the Fanoclats. The Fanoclats were formed in reaction against "traditional" NYC fanclubs. We were primarily "fannish" (fanzine) fans, although a number of us were also beginning professional careers in SF as well. We didn't like the way NYC fanclubs had traditionally been formed and run. We abolished officers, business meetings, dues, and all the other formalistic and petty-power-seeking structures so beloved by NYC fanclubs. We made acceptance by the club the only criterion for membership. The Fanoclats were all *friends*.

In November, 1964 a half dozen or so of us went down to Philadelphia in my Greenbriar van for that year's Philcon, an annual regional con which is among the oldest. At that con we learned that Jack Chalker was leading a bid for Baltimore for the 1967 Worldcon. We talked about that on our drive back to New York City.

"Jack Chalker!" someone said (it might have been me). None of us had a good opinion of Jack, whose professional career lay a good ten years ahead (and which did not change my opinion), and we were aghast at the notion of him putting on a Worldcon.

“I mean, hell!” Dave Van Arnam said. “*We* could put on a better Worldcon.”

Conversation stopped dead. My van hurtled north on the New Jersey Turnpike as we all contemplated the implications of that statement.

“*We could* put on a better Worldcon,” someone said, musingly. “Yeah,” someone else said, maybe Mike McInerney.

“Well, why the hell not?” I asked. “Why don’t the Fanoclasts bid for 1967?”

That opened the door. Immediately ideas began flowing as we thought of all the things we thought should be changed to improve the Worldcon. Before we’d gotten back to New York City, we were full of positive energy -- no longer the negative reaction against Chalker bidding, but positive ideas for a better Worldcon -- and we’d put together the bidding committee, which Dave Van Arnam and I co-chaired.

It was an uphill fight all the way. A bid -- *any* bid -- from New York City was anathema to fandom then. Memories of the last NYC Worldcon and the resulting unpleasantness and lawsuits were less than a decade old. That convention had been a “fusion” bid, one which united several antagonistic fanclubs and their leaders -- the only way then seen to present a NYC bid, since in previous years there had been competing bids from different NYC fanclubs, which, amid campaign bad-mouthing, had cancelled each other out.

Ours would not be a “united” bid, but a Fanoclasts bid. We wanted and needed no help from the Lunarians, ESFA, or any other NYC-area clubs. But that opened a different can of worms -- namely, my reputation in fandom.

I had a decent rep in fandom. I was known as the publisher of a succession of good fanzines (STELLAR, VOID, GAMBIT, MINAC), and as an upcoming fanwriter whose work was always in demand. But I was also known as someone who spoke his mind on issues -- indeed, as someone who might well say publicly what others were saying privately -- and thus sometimes at the center of controversies.

In 1964, in fact, I was a Major Player (via MINAC, the fanzine I was doing with Les Gerber) in the Boondoggle -- the exclusion of a major fan from that year’s Worldcon -- which I strongly protested.

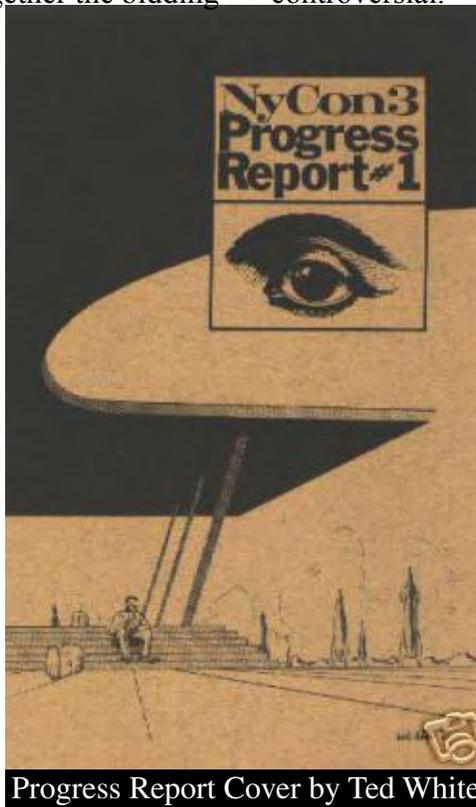
In the wake of the 1959 TAFF race (in which Bjo ran against Terry Carr, splitting the fannish vote and allowing Don Ford to win), my support for Terry Carr (I was his chief nominator) caused Bjo’s minions in LA to start a series of rumors against me. These had grown into a Ted White Legend which was passed on to new LASFans and caused me intermittent problems for the next ten years or more.

And in 1964 I was still the defendant in a \$75,000 libel suit Sam Moskowitz had pressured his wife, Christine, into filing against me in 1961 (she dropped it before it went to court). So I was “controversial.” That created another obstacle for our bid.

Our response to this issue was to confront it head-on. We made no bones about the fact that we had “public relations” problems to be overcome. So we began to mount a vigorous campaign.

Keep in mind that fandom was smaller then. Worldcons usually averaged around 500 attendees -- 1,000 was the biggest any had been. The majority of the site-voters actually knew us personally, or at least knew *of* us. Bid campaigning usually consisted of a few ads in the Program Book of the Worldcon at which the vote would be held, a party or two at that Worldcon, and some bid-presentation speeches.

We had two years -- 1965 and 1966 -- in which to campaign before presenting our bid at the 1966 Worldcon in Cleveland. We mounted two “Fanoclast Treks” in those two years. Each “Trek” took us first to Midwestcon (the last weekend of June) and then to the Westercon (July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend). In 1965 we packed six of us in my Greenbriar van to make the drive, first to Cincinnati and then to Long Beach, California. We threw bidding parties at both regional cons. In 1966 there were too many of us for my van, so we rented an AMC Ambassador for the overflow. Lee Hoffman joined us for the 1966 “Trek,” which went from Cincinnati to



Progress Report Cover by Ted White

San Diego, with stops after San Diego in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. We had rented the extra car on a weekly, no-mileage basis. When we turned it in two weeks later it had over 6,000 additional miles on it.

We also created more bidding materials than any previous bid. We had not only three-inch buttons with black print ("New York in '67") on a yellow background, we had small yellow shopping bags with the same message passed out at registration at the 1966 Worldcon. These bags (meant to hold convention materials conveniently) each came with a copy of *NyCon Comics*. This was a half-sized (folded letter-size) pamphlet which contained a full story in comics form by Jack Gaughan. Jack (a Fanoclast) had always claimed utter disdain for the comics medium, but he volunteered to do what turned out to be a very Kurtzmanesque strip, displaying a deft hand for continuity and proving Jack *could* have had a good career in comics -- had he wished for it.

And, of course, Harlan Ellison gave our bidding presentation speech. We won out over Baltimore, Boston and Syracuse.

Having won our battle for the bid, we then had only a Worldcon to put on.

It astonishes me to see modern Worldcons with staffs numbering in the hundreds. Our Worldcon was *much* smaller (1,800 members) and had only one track of programming, but we did it all with less than a dozen people. Dave Van Arnam and I (co-chairs of the con) did about 75% of the pre-convention work (secretary Andy Porter and treasurer John Boardman did the other 25%). We did the Progress Reports, the Hugo ballots, the membership cards -- all that kind of thing. I designed and edited the Program Book as a "memory book" with articles and an art portfolio. I did all the program planning and contacting myself.

We had a number of ideas about changing the programming.

Typically, then as now, most program items were panels of four to six people, usually dominated by one or two participants, and slackly focused. I thought this format was boring and led to boring panels all too often. So I initiated the Dialogues.

Virtually *all* the programming at NyCon3 was in the form I called "Dialogues." This meant only two people on a program item. The actual format was flexible: one person could interview the other, or two people could dialogue either convivially or as antagonists arguing two sides of an issue.

The idea came off very well. One highlight was the dialogue between Samuel Delany and Roger Zelazny -- the two hottest new writers in the field in 1967. (The only person who has complained about

this pairing is Mike Resnick, who called it, disparagingly, "fannish." \*Sigh\*...)

The idea of having programs with only two participants went over very well, because it *worked*. The programs were far better focused and much more interesting for both the participants and the audience. But, curiously, no subsequent Worldcon continued with Dialogues. With one or two (well-received) exceptions over the years, the Dialogues disappeared as if they'd never been.

Why? I wish I knew. Every time I've mentioned the idea to a "programming chair" of a Worldcon I've been told, "But I thought those things didn't work. *Everybody* says they were a failure." Where this canard began I don't know. It's flatly false, but widely believed -- even by those whom I've corrected.

Another change we wanted to make was to the Hugos. And this one was a 50% success.

At that time the Hugo Awards had at least a half dozen categories, all but one of them professional. The sole exception was the Best Fanzine award. This struck us as unbalanced. Worldcons were in the '60s still put on primarily by fans, for fans. Why,



then, wasn't fan achievement recognized on the same level as professional achievement? Why weren't there more fan Hugos?

So we proposed two new Hugo categories: Best Fan Writer and Best Fan Artist. These we presented at our awards ceremony, and at the business meeting (which I presided over) they were adopted as ongoing Hugo categories. So far, so good (I thought; since then I've modified my thinking on fan awards).

Our Fan Guest of Honor at NyCon3 was Bob Tucker, a man long overdue then for such an honor. Bob single-handedly created "fannishness" and fan humor in the mid-'30s with his pseudonymous creation, Hoy Ping Pong. We thought it fitting to rename the fan Hugos, in honor of Bob's creation, as the Pongs. The Hugos would still apply to the pro awards (in actuality the Science Fiction Achievement Awards; "Hugo" is a nickname, like "Oscar"), but the Fan Achievement Awards would be called the Pongs.

And when we floated this idea, the shit hit the fans -- specifically a couple of fans whose fanzines were nominated for Hugos. They were incensed. They had what I call "Hugo lust." They wanted the *same award* Heinlein had gotten -- nothing less. Getting an identical rocket called a "Pong" didn't work for them. *Everything* was in the name. They felt no honor in a Pong, and they rose up angrily against the name.

I was astonished. Where was their sense of fannishness, of *history*, ferghodsake? Why did a name without pretensions so upset them? It dawned on me then that some fans had entirely the wrong attitude about fandom and fannish accomplishments. And that they saw themselves and their hobby as equal to importance to the best SF of the year -- but *only* if they could win a *Hugo*. They made a lot of noise when they threw their kicking and screaming fits. I thought they deeply embarrassed themselves -- but they won.

So at the same business meeting that ratified the two new fan award categories, they were officially adopted *as Hugos*.

The Hugos also prompted an exchange of correspondence between me and Gene Roddenberry. Gene wanted a Hugo for *Star Trek*. He all but *demand*ed one. Specifically, he did not want any competition from movies -- which he wanted to be moved to a separate category -- and when our ballot was released he was very annoyed that three *Star Trek* episodes were in competition not only with each other but with a couple of movies. I expect that when one of



My Favorite Bob Tucker Photo (1976)

those episodes won the Hugo he was mollified. (Our correspondence has been published in one or more books on Roddenberry and *Star Trek*, but never with my permission nor with any compensation -- not even a published copy.)

NyCon3 was the first "modern" Worldcon, the first to have an attendance significantly over 1,000. It marked a turning point away from the smaller, more comfortable Worldcons which had preceded it over the previous nearly-thirty years. Within a few years Worldcons would have several thousand attendees, membership fees ten to twenty times larger than ours, vast "con-running" staffs, and a whole breed of "fans" for whom fandom means only running conventions.

So why hasn't there been another Worldcon held in New York City since 1967 -- after three in the Worldcon's first thirty years? Why none in the nearly forty years since then?

Well, I haven't lived in NYC since 1970, so I can't speak for current-day NYC fandom. But there really isn't much of a coherent NYC fandom any more -- not even a disputatious NYC fandom. The Fanoclasts petered out in the '70s, and there are no remaining strong or fannish clubs. But that's not the real reason there hasn't been another NYC Worldcon.

The real reason is that New York City is a lousy place to hold a Worldcon now. The hotels are mostly third-world in quality -- tiny rooms in old buildings, with loud street noises in the wee early hours -- and overpriced.

The city is tied up in bondage by unions. To book a live band in a hotel room means dealing with union rules about how many musicians are required by

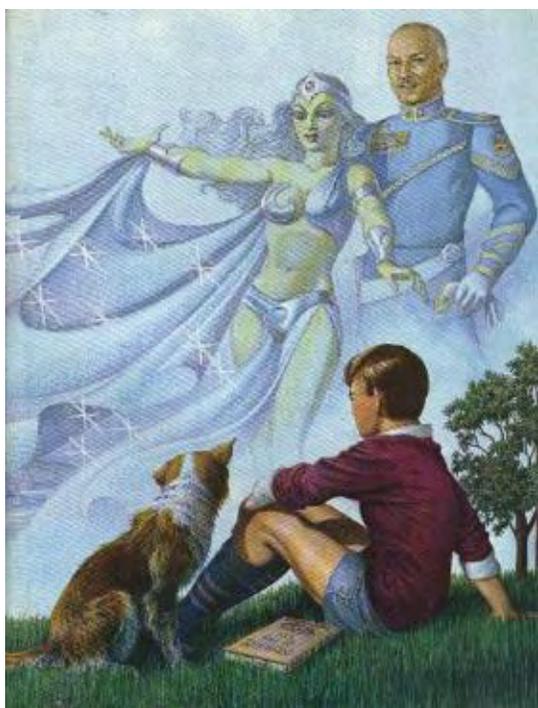
the room's size (you may book a five-piece rock band, but you'll pay the union for up to twenty "phantom" musicians). To show a movie means hiring a union projectionist, at union rates and for union hours -- and maybe paying for "phantom" projectionists as well. Etc. And I doubt any combination of NYC hotels could successfully handle a modern-sized Worldcon.

We bumped up against those union rules in 1967. We had no live music, and showing *Star Trek* episodes created problems. And ours was, by modern standards, a *little* Worldcon.

But I still take pride in the NyCon3. We didn't lose money, and we put on a good convention. A half dozen fans put on a good Worldcon.

--Ted White

**Chris: I wasn't at NyCon, but I remember folks talking about it at BayCon the next year. I wish I'd been there: it sounded like a hoot - John Garcia**



MidAmericon Programme Book

**Super-Size That Big MAC For Me, Please  
by John Purcell  
Photos and scans from the  
MidAmericanCon Fan Photo Archive**

MidAmeriCon. The 34<sup>th</sup> science fiction world convention held in Kansas City, Missouri - collect the whole series! --was my first WorldCon. Ah, the memories. The mammaries, too, and I'll get to those

eventually. MidAmeriCon was held over September 1-6, 1976, and I had only three years of Minicons and assorted regional conventions under my belt before tackling Big Mac. Even so, it was a lot of fun to attend and I had a grand old time.

From the beginning it was called Big Mac, and for good reason. The convention committee was so spooked by Discon II's WorldCon attendance problems - which was the first 3,000+ attending member convention (3,587, according to the website <http://worldcon.org/wclist.html>) - that the MidAmeriCon committee decided to implement "brilliant innovation after brilliant innovation, such as fandom had never seen before" (Mike Resnick, "Worldcon Memories (Part 4)", *Mimosa* #25). The innovation to avoid non-paying gate-crashing fans was giving all paying attendees a hospital bracelet in addition to their regular ID badge. It sort of worked: Mike Resnick wrote in his *Mimosa* #25 article that some enterprising fans went to a local hospital and located a little old lady who liked "sci-fi" and got her into every worldcon function, including the Hugo Award ceremony and the masquerade. Never doubt the ingenuity of science fiction fans to usually rise up to thwart any challenge. For the most part, though, the hospital wristband idea worked very well.

The major innovations of MAC were the hardcover program book - still the only one ever produced - and the closed-circuit television, which broadcast some major panels, the guest of honor speeches, the production of a *LONG* play based on the work of Cordwainer Smith, "Sails of Moonlight, Eyes of Dust" (which was mercilessly panned and parodied by much of fandom at the time), and the masquerade into every room of the Hotel Muehlebach. The program book - a work of art with an incredible wrap-around cover by Fan Guest of Honor George Barr - was primarily the brain-child of the late Tom Reamy, one of the main players on the Con Committee, and I hate to relay the information that I have long since misplaced my copy. You'd think I would have taken great care in keeping it, but I suspect that my mother and father threw it out with the stacks of comic books, baseball cards, and fanzines that I kept at home until that fateful Fall of 1984, when my folks packed to move down to Sun City, Arizona. Oh, how I wish I had a time machine handy...

But back to MidAmeriCon. Other innovations were the "sliding" membership rate that rose as the Labor Day weekend approached to the "outrageous" at-the-door fee of \$50; the con committee, in an attempt

to deter fringe fans, deliberately had no programming related to *Star Trek*, *Planet of the Apes*, or SCA; there were no all-night movies; and publicity was kept low-profile in the local media and throughout the science fiction field. Even so, attendance (according to chairman Ken Keller) was 3,014; total registration was 4,200.

On a programming side-note, since I mentioned “fringe fans” in the preceding paragraph, the daily one-shot, *The Bullsheet*, had this interesting tid-bit:

“Remember the *Star Wars* display. Production paintings, and sketches, as well as props, costumes, and photographs from *Star Wars* are on display in room 364. On Saturday the room will be open from noon to 9:00 PM. At 1:30 in the Imperial Ballroom *Star Wars* producer Gary Kurtz and actor Mike (sic) Hamill (he plays lead Luke Skywalker) will answer questions after a special slide presentation on the film.” (quoted from Thomas Atkinson’s website)

Rather interesting in retrospect, isn’t it? Very funny, too; the next day’s *Bullsheet* corrected Hamill’s first name to “Mark.” Of such little things are great trivia questions made.

It is an understatement to say that I had a ball at my first WorldCon. Consider the people who were the main guests: the Professional Guest of Honor was Robert A. Heinlein; Fan GoH was George Barr; and the Toastmaster was the inestimable Bob Tucker. I never got around to getting Heinlein’s autograph, but I did contribute to the blood drive that he sponsored and urged fans to donate. One major convention highlight was the RAH Blood Donor Reception, which I passed on due to the high numbers. By having this reception, Mr. Heinlein encouraged fans to donate blood, gave them special pins, and autographed copies of his books. From the folks I knew who went to this event, my trepidation was justified: the room was crowded and the book-signing was ill-managed for the numbers, so I didn’t feel badly about missing out.

Heinlein was also at the center of one of fandom’s most embarrassing moments, and it wasn’t really his fault. During his guest of honor speech, which rambled and wound around almost incomprehensibly, some fans became disgruntled and bored, so they *booed* and *heckled* RAH from the safety of the darkened balcony. This surprised me to no end. Even if his speech *was* long and rambling – Heinlein was soon to undergo surgery to remove a blockage to his brain, and later admitted to being “mentally impaired at the time” of his speech (Resnick) – this kind of behavior seemed

very disrespectful of one of science fiction’s true literary giants. Even now, 30 years later, the memory makes me shake my head in wonderment.

While on the subject of Heinlein, I also remember his wearing Patia von Sternberg’s bra as an epaulet on his shoulders.

Yes, you read that right. See, Patia was a fan who was also a professional stripper, so she was hired to come out during the intermission of the masquerade – broadcast hotel-wide, I should remind you – and perform her routine, stripping down to g-string and pasties in less than five minutes. After draping her bra across Heinlein’s shoulders – he was seated next to the stage – Patia learned that she still had another 20 minutes to kill (Resnick). So on she danced, twirling ribbons round and round, did some suitably acrobatic maneuvers, and eventually the masquerade resumed. I was up in my room watching all this on closed circuit television with a couple other fans (Dennis Jarog and Barney Neufeld), and it needs to be mentioned here that the broadcast was in black-and-white with the picture quality being a wee bit on the grainy side. Still, the novelty of being able to actually *see* the costumes was nice without having to worry about my view being obstructed. Hats off to the memory of Scott Imes and the fans who helped him make this happen.

A couple other things bear mentioning here. Big MAC was the first major appearance of *Duck’s Breath Mystery Theatre Troupe*, which included Phil Foglio and a bunch of other fans whose names escape me now, which performed a wonderfully screwy bit called “Gonad the Barbarian.” The troupe was still going strong well into the 90s, to the best of my knowledge. At one point I even had a cassette of one of their performances at a Minicon.

Also, MidAmerCon was the first time there was a Fan Cabaret, where talented and not-so-talented fans



could do a poetry or fiction reading, play guitar and sing, or do stand-up routines. The best of the bunch by far was the Chicago Semi-Pro Musica, composed of Phyllis Eisenstein, Bob and Anne Passovoy, and Ross Pavlac, which performed a fannish version of Ernst Toch's *Geographical Fugue*. Truly inspired and funny, it began with a resoundingly emphatic "RIVERCON! And the pro guest of honor and the dull, boring speeches and the ..." and so forth with simply *tons* of fannish references. Once they got into the contrapuntal sections, I don't know how they kept it together and refrained from bursting out laughing. More than anything, I sat there entertained and stunned. It was totally Great Stuph.

The thirty years that separate me



now from then have failed to diminish my memories of MidAmeriCon. I had a wonderful time making new friends, getting together again with folks that I had known for a few years already, bought books and comics in the huckster room, picked up a bunch of fanzines, and contributed to the daily *Bullsheet* put out by the con. Then there were the non-programmed items that I remember so well: the midnight skinny-dipping, smoothing, getting blotto, getting laid... Well, actually, the last one never materialized.

No matter. By all definitions, I had a great time at MidAmeriCon. Not bad for my first WorldCon, and it made me look forward to my second, IguanaCon, two years down the road in Phoenix.

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### **Brighton Rock: my first Worldcon (Brighton, UK, 1987) by Mark Plummer with photos from Meerkat Meade**

At the time I told people that I'd chosen to go to the 1987 Worldcon because it had better bands than the Reading Festival. A rather glib response really, as I was hardly a Reading regular and Worldcon represented a tremendous financial investment if it was *just* to see another Hawkwind show. So why did I go? If I'm honest, I was seduced by the bigger-and-better argument: that the biggest British convention ever must be the best British convention ever, a once-in-a-decade opportunity... once-in-a-lifetime even because I'd been in fandom for a couple of years, was 23 years old and I just didn't think more than about three months ahead at any given time. I certainly wasn't envisaging that I'd still be going to conventions five or ten or, umm, nineteen years later.

I had a few preconceptions as I'd been to some conventions before and so had a rough idea of the template; the Worldcon would, presumably, be like that only more of it, and with more Americans. The latter weren't much of an attraction really. Sorry, I now know this is grossly unfair, but at the time I knew no American fans and was content to stereotype the entire population of the United States based on the tourists I'd seen around London. Thus I expected the overseas contingent at Worldcon to consist of

loud overweight men called Elmer wearing checked trousers and carrying cameras with eighteen-inch telescopic lenses. Not that my fellow British fans represented much of an attraction either. No, I would be going to the convention with a bunch of my friends, most of whom have now severed what limited fannish contacts they ever had, and we'd be using the event as a backdrop for our own party. I mean, why would we want to socialise with those 'trufans' with their beards and their weird little 'fanzines'? After all, they were *really old*. Some of them were *over 30*.

As an aside, though, I should say that we -- my friends and I -- actually invented fanzines at the 1987 Worldcon, sitting on Brighton beach one night. Really, straight up. Don't let anybody tell you differently.

Brighton is on the south coast of England and the convention was spread out amongst various venues along its sea-front. The focal point was the conference centre and, next to it, the Metropole Hotel, but nobody I knew was staying at any of the posh central locations. Rather we were scattered amongst a selection of smaller hotels, bed-and-breakfasts and student flats, often several miles from the heart of the action. This was of course long before mobile phones, and it quickly became apparent that we needed a static point where we could find people we knew amongst the vast hoard of checked-trousered Elmers. Thus our convention HQ became the cavernous dealers' room.

I should explain here that we were ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy Appreciation Society. There were, I suppose, twenty or more of us at the Worldcon, ranging in age from mid-teens up to mid-twenties with token venerable veteran John Philpott who was *really old* but we put up with him anyway. Many are long gone now to who-knows-where; others I see occasionally in a non-fannish context; and a few are still active around fandom, some of those within ZZ9 itself. And one of them's sitting just over *there* on the sofa, reading, while I'm typing this.

And ZZ9 had a sales table, punting newsletters, T-shirts and assorted bits of what we might term tat. Oh, and rock. We had ZZ9 rock, boxes of it (because if you're getting it custom-made -- as we were -- there was a minimum order). Do I need to explain rock? It's a hard mint-flavoured candy, sold in thin sticks about ten inches long and traditionally found at seaside resorts like, well, Brighton. Wouldn't it be a clever wheeze, we thought, to make special ZZ9 rock for a Brighton Worldcon? No, it wouldn't. Because, for a start, it had never occurred to us that previous Brighton conventions had already tried the idea so it wasn't that much of a novelty. And, more problematically, the overseas fans didn't buy it because they didn't know what it was. We should give free samples, somebody said. After that the overseas fans still didn't buy it because they knew what it was like. ZZ9 rock was a staple of convention dealers' rooms for years afterwards.

We also had Beeblebears, two-headed three-armed teddy bears styled after Zaphod Beeblebrox. Very popular, they were; we had, I think, fifty made for the convention and sold the lot. In fact I remember -- don't I? -- selling The Last Ever Beeblebear. There will never be any more of these made, I said, an anecdote I tirelessly wheel out to ZZ9 merchandising officers who are still selling Beeblebears nineteen years later.

That was our daytime anchor, the dealers'

room. And when it shut -- the bar!

The fan room bar specifically, although that was rather because it was convenient and not because it was a 'fan room' which was after all the province of those bearded over-30 Real Fans. I was making this point on a panel at last year's Worldcon while Lilian Edwards -- who I'd by implication placed in the hirsute geriatric category -- kept trying to point out that she was in fact less than two years older than me (I don't recall her specifically denying the beard, but maybe she thought that spoke for itself). I wouldn't dispute that -- I don't for one minute think Lilian was lying about her age -- but all I can say is that we saw the fannish world as an us-and-them back in 1987, and most of you were them.

Now here's my problem with the 1987 Worldcon, because while I hold all sorts of fond memories of the convention I also see it as a lost opportunity when it comes to the bearded over-30s (and Lilian Edwards). I look back on it now, at some of the photos in Rob Hansen's CD archive and in contemporary fanzine accounts, and I think, bloody hell, Steve Stiles was there, and so was Andy Hooper, and Spike, and Irwin Hirsh and... and... and they were all over there, in the bearded over-30s corner, resolutely ignored by us because what could we possibly have had in common with old folks like them? I can't entirely explain this now -- believe me, I've tried, in conversations with Greg Pickersgill, many *many* times -- but at the time it made sense.

What's particularly odd, though -- and here's where my old ZZ9 acquaintances who are still around will probably accuse me of trying to deny my roots -- is that I do genuinely believe that I was actually in sympathy with that kind of fannish fandom right from the start. An enduring memory of the 1987 Worldcon is a spat over a programme item called 'Why Have the Americans Hijacked the Worldcon?' I did and do genuinely believe that this was an example of using a controversial title as a hook, but some American fans decided it was a real slight: participants withdrew,

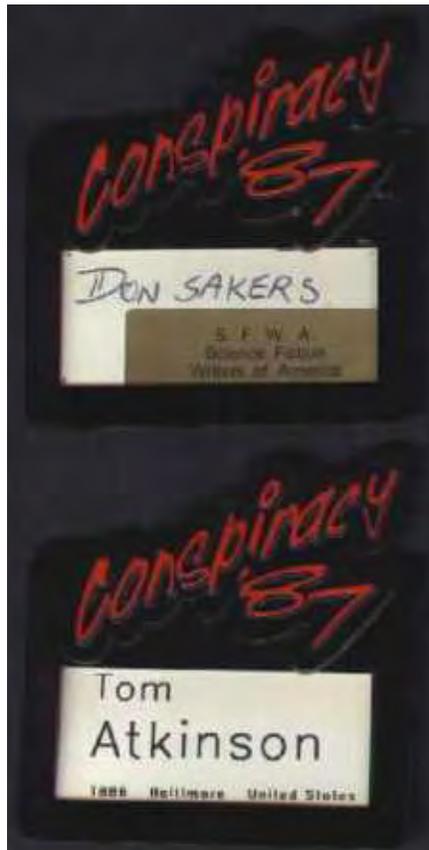


and the case was batted back and forth across the pages of the newsletter *Plot*. While I don't suppose this was the intent, the whole episode gave me a sense that There's Something Going On Around Here, that feeling so common in early fan contact where you can comprehend enough of what's going on to know that you don't understand it, but you know that you *want* to, and want to be a part of this community.

I now seem to be saying more about my nearly-twenty-years-ago attitude towards fandom than the Worldcon. OK, so what did I do on Brighton sea-front in the summer of 1987? Well, our semi-detached status meant that we were spared much of the background politicking that probably characterised the convention for many more experienced fans; I don't think any of us was aware of the issue around the New Era sponsorship, for instance. The problems with the Metropole were a little less transparent: I remember being refused entry to the hotel, along with a fairly substantial pack of other fans, on grounds that they'd be breaching fire safety limits if they let us in. Rebellious souls that we were, we broke in through the car park.

When I was able to get in to the convention I did all the usual things that you do, especially as a first timer. I went to the masquerade and the Hugos, of course. The former was impressive in some respects and dull in others, and it only now occurs to me that I haven't been to a Worldcon masquerade since. The latter was a little more incomprehensible: what on earth is a 'novella' anyway, and why are we giving awards to fans? Do they, in some way, like sf more than anybody else, or are they just better at liking it?

The Hugos had their dull moments too, but I still go to Hugo ceremonies, and these days can even muster opinions about some of the categories



and actually get excited on the rare occasions when the electorate get it right.

Those were the biggies, but I also went to quite a few panels, and saw Ken Livingstone (now mayor of London) interviewed by Ian Watson. And there were parties too, especially as we were young and poor enough to want to take advantage of the free drinks which is why we liked the Dutch lot so much. Oh, and I nearly forgot: I went to see Hawkwind play.

And when it was over, after the best part of a week in Brighton, we all went home. Worldcon done. We knew, of course, that there would be another in New Orleans the following year, and another somewhere else in the US the year after that, but it didn't occur to any of us that these were events we might

be able to attend. I think a few of us thought that we might go to the Dutch Worldcon although that was *three years* away, a whole lifetime nearly. So pretty much that was it, Worldcon done, tick. A once-in-a-lifetime experience.

I've now been to seven once-in-a-lifetime experiences, in three different continents and five different countries. Who'da thunk it back in 1987?

But most of all I, umm, started reading sf. That may sound odd, I know, but I'd come to ZZ9 in particular and fandom in general as a social group. I read some sf and fantasy in a fairly casual way, but was really pretty ignorant of the field. If I have an enduring personal legacy from that Worldcon, it's that I left with the sense that maybe I should read some more of this stuff. One day I might be prepared to sit back and concede that I have indeed now Caught Up. One day. And one day I'd like to go back and do the 1987 Worldcon all over again.

---Mark Plummer

**I don't remember much about LACon now. A lot of that point I lost when I got hit. I do remember that you were running around like a vilde chaye, talking to random people. I remember that we found Bjo in the hall and I introduced her to you as 'The Woman who saved Star Trek.' and you said 'Thank You Very Much'.**

**I remember Night on Bald Mountain in the Masquerade and going to Disneyland. You gotta remember to do that this year- John Garcia, April 4th, 2006**

**53rd World Science Fiction Convention**  
**24 - 28 August 1995, Scottish Exhibition Centre, Glasgow**  
**GOHS: Samuel R. Delany, Gerry Anderson, (fan) Vince Clarke, (filk) Bob Kanefsky**

**Interaction the 1995 Worldcon.**

I had thought I might be able to write some sort of professional and coherent report about Intersection, but now as I read it I realise it was just one huge non-stop continuous socialising and drinking and cavorting monster of boisterousness.

Jesus it was mental!

It was definitely an experience.

I set out with a crowd of fellow Irish Science Fiction fans, from Dublin to Glasgow. We had opted for the rail and ferry route and it wasn't too expensive and flights were exorbitant. I was 21 and had been to a couple of English conventions at this stage, and knew there would be some people from Inconceivable and zz9 at the con. The amount of Irish people going over was good about 20 in total, and a brace of us took the train and ferry together.

My main mission was to help with the Eurocon bid, that Octocon, the national Irish SF convention was making for 2007. I had agreed to man the fan table and had Irish posters and loads of tourist information along with information about Sproutlore, the now-official Robert Rankin Fanclub which I was running and the current Octocon, which was on in October, and of which I was a committee member.

The trip was lively, we played games of Magic, a card game of sorts, with a hint of strategy, and it was good fun all round as we casually drank. I was sharing a room with James Peart and he was flying, being a barrister and all, time was a commodity to him and he had opted for this route.

We arrived in Glasgow on the Wednesday evening, that's about the only day where I am certain I know what I actually did. We immediately went to the convention centre, the SECC, by Taxi to set up the Octocon stall, get our registrations and what not. It was an awesomely humongous place, nothing could have prepared me for it as I had yet to see the Birmingham NEC and the closest thing we



have in Ireland is the Victorian-built Royal Dublin Show, which pales into comparison.

We picked up memberships and the big packages. I looked through the convention read-me, which was so beautifully presented along with the huge convention souvenir book, and went in search of the fan area.

It turned up in a corner of what, eight years later, I was to learn was Hall 4. This vast aerospace hanger was the venue for a variety of different items. The Fan area was one corner, the furthest, dankest corner, and I wandered

over to the deserted spot. I could see dealers the other side of a partition beavering away and I wondered what to do with the small bunch of Irishness that I had brought along.

I wandered about and found a table manned by a nice fellow by the name of Andy who allowed me to store my stuff below. He then started emptying cartons of condoms onto the table and he explained it was the safer sex table and he was in some sort of Gay and Lesbian SF group, all of which I noted with a sense of aplomb and I discreetly pocketed some johnnies. I gandered about a bit longer, returned and met with the rest in the lobby.

I found out I shouldn't have been in there at all, but smiled my way around harsher remonstrations and blagged that I had arranged to leave stuff with Andy, which sorta got me away scotch free.

I met James Peart (pearto). We had some drinks in the main concourse of the SECC and then the various Irish split our separate ways. In the meantime, I had impressed my own peer group by greeting many people whom I had gotten to know at my previous UK conventions. Pearto and I went back to our hotel. I can no longer remember the name, but it was a block of a building, the lower floors weren't the hotel and you went up a lift to the reception, bar and breakfast area. Further up still were our rooms. We dumped our bags in the room and decided to have a few drinks in the bar, then began our encounter.

A group of English guys were in the bar. Initially they were standoffish, I assumed they were business types, and we got on well enough with them. They soon learned we were Irish people, and all was good. We were invited back to one of their rooms

when the bar closed, whereupon some really good scotch was offered. We were chilling out relaxed and they seemed to be enjoying our company until one of the blokes broke down in tears, some sort of stress and pressure release. It appeared that we were the first people this group had socialised with for some time. I was a bit worried, but Pearto a Criminal Barrister and a man of much intelligence read the situation, G-Men.

They were an undercover Inland Revenue team, VAT men as they said. ID was produced, in case we thought they were lying. They allowed their guard down and showed us suits worth more than a couple of months pay. They were on a major operation and had been posed as business people for some time, living off as much expenses as they needed, and now here were two 'other' people who they could genuinely socialise with. Eventually we bid them adieu and went to bed.

Not what I had expected.

The next morning Pearto got me up in time for breakfast and we enjoyed it greatly,

Nothing like the buffet breakfast. I stocked up on rasher sambos and had enough to last me through the day, something I went on to do every day. Even Pearto helped with the concealment.

We decided to walk to the convention and as we went, we passed one of Iain Banks fabled *Espedair Street* unfinished walkways. We stood and looked at it. At one stage I was offered loads of free books, I was totally taken aback by all the stuff. I then chilled out for a bit and had a look through the con programme after setting up the Irish fan table, couldn't believe how many programme items were going on. I had brought a flag and found, as I wandered about, a long piece of wood about 20feet long I attached it to the table and secured a flag to the top of this pole. It was near a vent of some sort so it flew nicely.

It was quiet as everything and everyone was seemingly still gearing up. I met some friends I knew from my first UK convention, Incon II: Inconceivable. These guys I had met and some of them had been to Octocon. In this batch of UK people were names that would always be remembered me included Stef, Anne Stokes, Jim De Liscard, Mieke, I think Alison was there along with Jess and Chris, but I cant be sure. They were all helping with ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, the Hitchhikers Guide to The Galaxy Appreciation societies table, known as Zed, Zed, Nine. They were a great bunch and I chatted with them and found out what was good to go to.



Anyhow, a lot of Thursday, apart from being at the Fan Table for the Euro-Octocon bid, I am not sure exactly what I did. I remember meeting many people, being introduced to publishers (I was young and enthusiastic and, at that stage, running Sproutlore and being editor of *The Brentford Mercury* obviously had some sort of collateral as a potential reviewer), today I am still on the mailing list of a couple of marketing types, after all this time, not that I get books, just brochures.

I remember being invited to a book launch that evening which was across the corridor, and I was again meeting editorial and marketing types, all ladies, who seemed to enjoy my Irish accent and the way I bounded about, I suppose...not that I was paying too much attention.

And so onto the evening activities, and here it gets blurry. I have gone looking for a programme book to see if I could work out exactly what was when, but its all melded into five mental nights of debauchery and fun.

The first night I *remember* we were in the Forte Crest Hotel. Strangely I had to meet someone there this year in Glasgow, and it's very similar to how I remember it. I remember that it was the night that the cons were bidding for Worldcon, and there was Boston and Baltimore and I think some other place all handing out free booze, a gift if ever there was one.

So there I was, I had my Irish friends and some friends I had made at previous cons, who were all there, plus new friends I had already made thanks to these and I knew a few people, so Mick and meself decided to queue up for a drink at the Boston Table. Now, they were handing out beer, these nice eastern seaboard characters, and we got to the top of the Q and Mick said, '*are you only serving beer?*', and so they did. and Mick said, '*can I have a southern comfort*

*and Ice please*, and they gave him one. and he said, *'can I have one for the wife please'*, and he pointed at Phil(omena) and they gave him a second, and I said *Can I have the same please*, and they gave me two too.

We poured in lemonade much to people's disgust but this was great, and we chatted and laughed and there was a bit of boisterous behaviour but not too much.

After a few more runs, Boston was running out of the hard stuff so, I went to see what the boys from Baltimore had on offer.

I got to the table and asked what was on, and this fellow all bedecked in wonderful pirate gear and with two huge long moustaches sorta growing from the corners of his lips said it was Rum and Coke, and did I have a glass. I didn't, so I went a got a pint glass and jumped the Q. He was cool with that, but he was surprised I had such a big glass, and he put a whole load of rum in, then a fist of ice and then some coke. He was older than me and we chatted despite the Q. His name was Grinner, and I asked why, and he said 'cause he was always grinning and to prove it he gave a big Grin. I returned the pleasantry. I would love today to meet Grinner again. So he advised in a big brother sorta way that I should drink about a quarter of the glass and come back and get a top up. Off I went back to my Irish friends who were intermingled with the ZZ9 crowd.

I offered my pint glass around as people were surprised to see me on the cokes and everyone enjoyed a swig of run and coke. After about 20 minutes I wandered back up to Grinner and asked for another. He was rather taken aback, but could see I was very sober, so served me again. After another such refilling a few of us went up to the Cabin Bar.

Now the Cabin Bar was halfway between the function space, which was the ground floor on one side of the building, and the reception that was the first floor or ground floor on the other side, as the building



was on a sloppy big hill.

### **The Cabin Bar.**

I reacquainted myself with Billy, met his porkchop side-burned friend Trevor and met a dashing gentleman from 'the Republic of Texas' a man called Randy Sheppard. It was a small bar. One side were cubicles with seats and chairs therein like a dinner, but higher walled with a long bar on the other side. There was a very small wooden floored area at the entrance, where earlier there was some piping or dancing, and then at the other end were windows at odd angles out into the real world.

This was a great spot I felt and soon we were drinking and chatting as only fen can in bars. Soon it was midnight and I knew that the bid parties were wrapping up at some stage, so I asked what time the bar closes. You can imagine my surprise when I was told it didn't. I also asked would there be an issue with bringing a drink up from the party downstairs and the concept that corkage had been paid and that would be fine was explained to me. Then I was told by some one arriving that the bid parties were closing, I immediately ran back to the function space, on my toes, blasting past people like a man possessed.

I barged past a Gopher, who told me the room was closed. I shouted in at Grinner, who gave me a wave, sufficient for me to sneer at the gopher and walk by. Jesus I was cockily confident and I gasped at Grinner: *'can I have some booze...'*

He wasn't in charge, but they had cases and

cases of Rum. I explained I was going to be up a while and that beer costs money and that I could do with some of his free Rum. He hadn't anything to put Rum into, the glass shortage earlier now heightened in my mind. I looked about, ran across the room and found a number of Pitchers and dumped their watery contents behind a table and ran back, 'THEEESSSEE?' Grinner was unsure, but he then took his time and gave me pitchers of Rum, with a couple of cubes of Ice and a dash of coke on top. I promised I would share it, there was so much.

I returned triumphantly back to the Cabin Bar, feted when the pitchers of rum were seen by all, and became the Rum God all night as I doled out measures as required by all, in return a coke or two was bought for me and I had mixers!

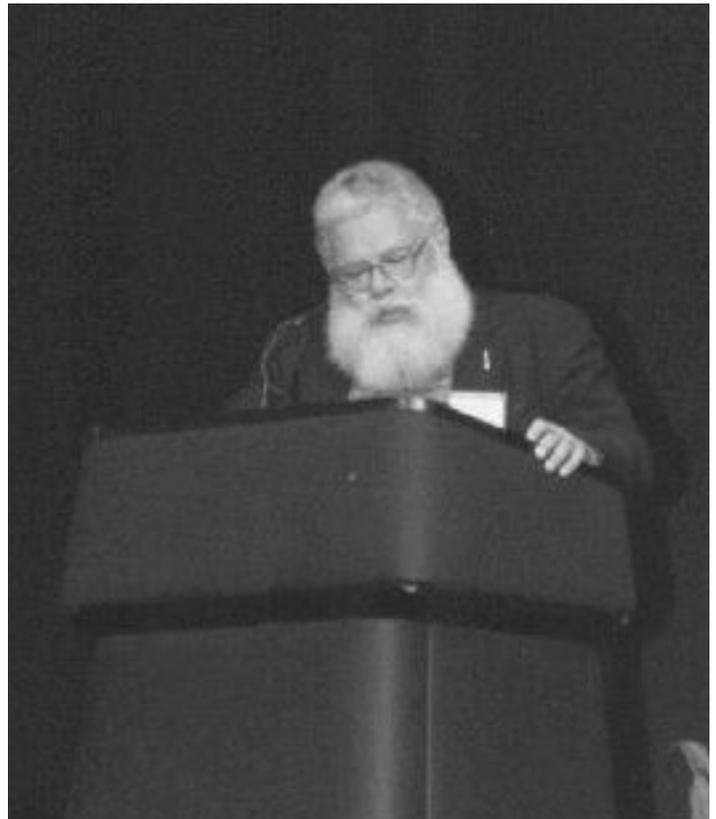
The night was excellent as usual there was much toot and bollix taled, and we had a great time. As it went by people left and wandered off to bed. I then found out that Billy was staying in the same hotel as Pearto and myself; Pearto who had a beer with us had departed. Randy though, bedecked in his Texan Flag Bow Tie and Cummerbund stayed the distance as did a group of hardcore heavy drinkers. The laugh was mighty, the bar staff tremendously friendly, and as the rum ran out, we could see daylight slicing through the windows. Billy and myself decided to head back to the Hotel, it was now 7am.

Staggering back at dawn, arm in arm, meandering our way back to the hotel, it seemed like Glasgow was a mountainous terrain, falling into rooms at eight in the morning, and this is where James Peart, Ireland's most prolific Worldcon attendee comes in.

*'So I am fast asleep and I am disturbed by this tremendous crashing and banging as James comes into the room, and falls into a sitting position on his bed, then his torso shudders backwards, he lies spread out on the bed and he starts snoring, instantly. It was eight o'clock anyhow, so I got up, had a shower, got dressed, The alarm went off as I had set it which slightly jars James a bit and then said to him, 'hey James, get up, the con starts in an hour' and this creature rises like a Frankenstein, slowly rising, groaning and making unnatural noises, he gets up, has a shower, and we got breakfast. Then we went back to the con, he had about 10 minutes of sleep.'*

During the Day it was Irish Fan Table and eating and wandering and chatting.

Was it the next night that it was lifts and



Fireworks.

I remember the fireworks; I was in a bar and Mick found me and explained that time was of the essence. We went in search of a view, myself and my great friend, and we found a load of function rooms on the top floor of the hotel he was staying in, again the Forte Crest. We found many darkened rooms and armed with some beers and some thing to smoke, we watched the fireworks. It was really very impressive, standing in the dark, so high up. We were then interrupted by a bunch of Americans who first off turned on the light. We gave them looks and they turned it off, then they joined us against the wall of windows as Mick and meself went 'jaysus'. 'fucking hell', 'that's grea', 'wow' our fellow con goers insisted on going 'ooooohhh' or 'aaahhhh' in a synchronised manner. They informed us this is the done thing, and that we should join in. We gave them looks and we walked out and went back to the bar.

This hotel had nice lifts and there were bunch of us in there. I remembered the Blues Brothers, and started to hum the *Girl from Ipanema* and so did the whole lift and as we went up and down, the doors opened and the fans would either baulk or join us. Soon the lift was jam packed and the sounds of *Ipanema* were drifting up and down the shaft as we hurried to our nowhere destination, playing the lift floor buttons like a spastic pianist. It was tremendous

laugh and it only paused momentarily when a hotel manager joined us. She was surprised we went quiet and slowly I started to hum and then someone else did and when she left we were dooing and daahing the song in full gusto. She just smiled as she walked off.

Then there was the night that we went to the Central Hotel. This wasn't quite so good as the selection of booze was mostly Russian Vodkas, being younger I had little appreciation for these hard drinks and good folks, and I was also a bit wary of the Russians, perestroika may have kicked in, but the Vision of an evil Soviet Army parachuting across Europe and the knowledge that Long John tactical Nukes were ranged eastward was always close to my mind. It was a youth thing. I had visited East Berlin in 1990 and the soldiers and oppression will never leave my mind, soviet fucks, of course back then I was much more sure about things, but was wrong none the less.

Anyhow, the Central didn't have the buzz that the Forte Crest possessed, and it was an early night. I found myself into bed at about 2am and got some decent sleep. The fact that I had had ten minutes sleep in the previous forty two hours didn't seem to affect me too badly.

I went to a programme item, one of two that I went to. Despite the fact that I had studiously gone through the programme and circled everything I had wanted to see, so far after a number of days I had socialised like some sort of speed freak, hunting out friends to make and know.

The programme item in question was about Scots Gael, and of course being fluent in Irish or

Gaelic or Gaelige, depending on where you're from, I was keen to attend and listen in, as I might actually know something about the subject.

I enjoyed it, as the similarity between the two languages would be the same as American English and English English, but as usual when it came to actually formulate the language in an academic manner, it all goes to shit and the spelling and wordage and grammar was nothing like anything I knew. I would have had a better chance understanding Welsh.

I, at one stage, tried to say something but the academic type was more interested in something else, and swept aside my comment like a piece of useless dust. Of course I didn't mind really, I barely noticed, such was my attitude towards the scorn that I was used to receiving from older more straight and stringent fans, especially those from home.

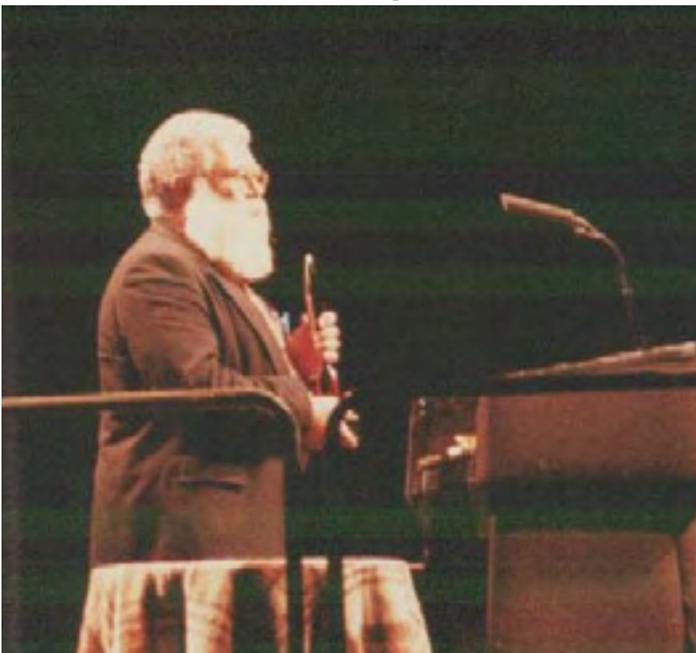
The other panel I went to was the ultra-exciting and riveting European science fiction meeting. Jesus, I nearly wanted to slit me wrists, but of course, I was there along with other Irish Fans to try and win the Eurocon moniker for Octocon in 2007. I was at that stage on my second Octocon committee, as I was asked onto the committee when I was 18 and although I didn't realise it, within a few months I would be co-chair of the National Irish Science Fiction Convention for 2006. I was only 21.

We won the bid, mostly because Robert Elliot came in and gave a speech; he went on to chair the convention, well to be the chair of the convention for two years. Of course I joined the committee shortly after the win. I had already taken nearly 100 pre-supporting memberships, although that was nearly everyone who wandered anywhere near the fan area. I was persuasive and it was very quiet over in that corner! So we had flyers ready to convert members and get supporting memberships in should we win.

I ended up resigning from that committee within a matter of months. Everyone wondered why. People joined the committee after I left and it was nearly two years later that people at last worked out why I had left the committee and that I wasn't being frivolous, I knew political gamesmanship and a lie when I could see it. The con itself was a huge success thanks to the efforts of those who were on the committee at the time.

A strange and slightly bitter memory for me, winning that bid. So much effort to be stolen away from me.

I met Andy at some stage that gleefully told me



that he was now a Delaney's Child. He told me this was some sorta club they had set up to bring all the Gay and Lesbian SF fans together under one banner. I was pleased for him. He then reported on how the Club he was part of had been out clubbing and the local Gay bars had special things on, like guys dressed as superman, music from SF movies coming on when they arrived. He seemed so happy and I was chuffed for him.

## **Back to The Cabin Bar**

So somewhere along the way, Baltimore won the bid for the Worldcon sometime in the future. I really wasn't paying any attention down the back and way too busy looking at skirts and drinking to worry, but this meant most importantly was that there would be more Rum and Coke.

Now, we were at the party and the rum and coke was ably flowing. Grinner who had remembered me was looking after me and I had a couple of pints of the stuff and I went up to the Cabin Bar. There were a good crowd of English fans therein and I remember an incident that was quite hedonistic.

I remember many of my friends were drinking in this cubicle and there was a lady there, not someone I knew or many others did, and she was friendly with one of the chaps who was there. Anyhow, slowly but surely some kissing between these pair, which was meant to be discreet turned into heavy petting and then slowly some of us started to leave. Then with some aplomb our friend eventually indicates that he wants to have some privacy, so we all leave and I remember someone standing guard, it could have been Jason, as he may not have done a runner without paying for his tables at that stage or it could have been Noel who wasn't going to do a runner at all. I knew the bad ones you know.

Anyhow, after good while with a discreet policing of anyone going near the cubicle, the lady of mention exited looking rather flushed and went off into the night. Back upstairs, she was a fan after all and our friend emerged triumphant and relieved of any

built up tension. Only at a con.

Again the booze flowed well this night and there were many more people I knew about all laughing, playacting, horse playing and generally having lots of boisterous fun without damaging anyone...too seriously. I had obviously left a mark and again I acquired some Rum to last us into the night. We were chatting and drinking and I had drinks bought for me and it was wonderful, like I had a huge bunch of older brothers looking out for me, who would wink and nod when we saw a chick, and I suppose there were many a girl in our group too. It was great fun and again it was an early morning stagger back to our hotel, but this time I got a few hours sleep.

I remember the last night as 'this was terrific fun'. I hadn't volunteered or anything at the convention but there was a Gopher 'Thank You' party which had benefited from all the left over bid booze. Of course, not being a gopher of any sort, I was not allowed to enter.

I found an Irish Fan who not only was a gopher but had worked up the ladder to be the Gopher Mom Pet or something like that. He had about eight ribbons, at this stage I knew I would never be allowed past the bouncer gophers to the party displaying that many ribbons, as I had naively thought they would surely know me. Now I know it wouldn't have made a bit of difference. So I fashioned a method to have most

of the ribbons in my pocket and waved the sole gopher ribbon as I walked in and I found some others who had blagged their way into the party. They were Cabin Bar Boozers and ZZ9'ers. I drank heartily and I remember at one stage having a fight with the floor, but that's OK...perhaps I was drunk.

I have no idea what happened that night.

Then too soon it was time to go home, and I bid farewell to many fans and a number of pros that I knew from Octocon. I had bundles of business cards, I still have them. Fans who had their own made, Randy's with his legal symbols, publishers who wanted to tout books, transworld people



who were keen to get free PR for Robert Rankin and a variety of other fans. It was great.

I took home many books. I seemed to accumulate loads of free stuff, not as much as Pearto, though he has this adage that you should take one of everything and then study it later when you are relaxed less you miss out on something. He was totally taken with Worldcon and has been to every one of them since. I had many zines, none of which were fanzines

rather they were all zines of clubs or one sheets produced by people I know and which we all wouldn't admit were fanzines, rather something different that stuck their fingers up at the wispy beards.

We again went home on the train and Ferry and it was a grand trip home. I had arranged a few days off and slept for about 2 days when I got home.

It was terrific.

**The fun thing about WorldCons is watching the people. You see every kind of freak walking the halls and you realise that you're one of them, that your kind of freak is in there too. That's why I went and that's why I'm so angry I won't make it to another- John Garcia**

### **Bob Eggleton Under Glass by Steven H Silver**

Prior to Chicon 2000, on one of the many walk throughs of the much maligned (and sometimes rightfully so) Hyatt Regency Chicago, I noticed a small glassed in room used for a display on tourism in Chicago. Visible from the landing between elevators and at the start of the hallway down to some of the programming rooms, the space struck me as a perfect place for...something.

I was planning to run programming at Chicon 2000, which would be only my second Worldcon (the first had been in Baltimore in 1998). In walking around the hotel and trying to lay claim to physical space, I was also trying to come up with unique uses for that space in an attempt to create different types of programming.

Some of those ideas worked well, others worked less well and in 2006, I still find myself receiving flak for a few of them.

I decided panels would run 75 minutes with a 15 minute "passing period" between them. I also decided that all panelists should be told that if there was nothing left to say after an hour, they should end it then. This seems to have worked out well.

One idea I wanted to try was to have a series of intimate discussions between two individuals with no fixed subject. This worked quite well for a talk between Campbell nominee Kristine Smith and agent Joshua Bilmes, David Feintuch and L. Warren Douglas, or even Gregory Benford and John Cramer. It didn't work as well for Robert Silverberg and Joe Haldeman. My problem was that I was thinking of all four events in the same way, as intimate conversations, ignoring the inherent draw of the last two men.

A similar idea which was less controversial,

but which I don't think worked as well, was a series of five "audience participation" panels. The idea behind these was that the title would present a topic, there would be a moderator, but it would be entirely audience participation. In some of the cases it did work well, in others, I wasn't able to adequately get the idea across to all the moderators.

A more controversial idea, which worked well, but I still hear about it, was my decision to start programming at 8:30 in the morning. The first slot was lightly scheduled (Friday included "Great Unsung SF Films," "Estate Planning for Authors and Artists," "Friends of Bill W.," "Tai Chi," and the WSFS Business Meeting.

The Business Meeting, which was approved by the WSFS Liaison, caused the biggest stir at the con and we managed to move all the meetings after the first one to later times. The BM also passed a motion to encourage Worldcons not to schedule the BM before 10:00 AM.

As for the other 8:30 items, I had complaints that they were too early and nobody would come. Room counts of panels scheduled for 8:30 showed them to be as full, if not more full, than items held in the same rooms later in the day. Clearly, there was an audience for early panels. I also tried very carefully only to schedule people for those panels who agreed to be on 8:30 panels and made sure the Green Room would be open early enough for them to have a bite to eat and get coffee.

The other complaint about those items was that people wanted to attend them, but they were too early. My philosophy in programming Chicon 2000 was that at any given time people would look at the schedule and think "I can hear panel A, attend signing B, see exhibit C, or eat lunch." It is a matter of

making decisions and setting priorities. If attending parties is more important than attending an 8:30 panel for one person, it isn't a problem for me. There will be someone else who decides getting up early is worthwhile and will do that instead of attending parties until 3:00 in the morning.

To my mind, the 8:30 panels were a success. Yes, some people were upset, but the panels were full and therefore demonstrated that there is an audience who appreciates early morning items. I'd do it again at a Worldcon (not at a regional or local), although it isn't my call since I won't be running programming at any future worldcons and can't speak in this regard for any of them.

Another mistake I made, and possibly the biggest one, had to do with audio taping the panels. I forgot to include a release form for the panelists. At least one panelist approached the company doing the taping and arranged to get free copies of all the panels she was on in return for agreeing to let him tape her. In a few cases, panelists objected to being taped, in which case we just didn't tape those panels.

Our original intention was to tape all of the panels at Chicon, over a thousand of them. As the con approached, we weren't sure if we could get the necessary microphones in all the rooms and we cut down on the total number of panels to be taped. A week before the con, we determined it would be possible to tape everything, unfortunately, by that time, the company we had contracted with couldn't supply the necessary man-power. The result was that we were able to tape 106 panels, about 160 hours of panels.

In December, after the convention, Chicon donated a set of the tapes to WSFS. As I write this article, I'm also in the process of converting the tapes to mp3s for donation to SFOHA, the Science Fiction Oral History Association.

Other space issues involved the ever popular room too small to hold the audience problem. This manifested itself in the Silverberg-Haldeman talk mentioned above, but also in the case of a late night talk given by SciFi Channel. They had told me only that they needed an internet connection (which they wound up not needing) and not telling me they would be giving things away. Since there was only one room with an internet connection, I was limited as to where I could put them and it was a room much too small. When the issue came up, we were able to move them down to one of the ballrooms, although we were later



dinged by the unions for moving equipment without them, despite there being no union workers available at the time.

Finally, well, not quite finally, was a problem I had with programming that had little to do with my own initiatives. I had a problem with other staff members taking space which had been allocated to me and giving it back to the hotel. This happened before the convention with the room used for Kaffeeklatsches, which resulted in a decrease of the number of Kaffeeklatsches (on the other hand, when we were able to squeeze in a second Kaffeeklatsch for Terry Pratchett, he agreed to make it for Gophers only).

The more embarrassing incident was the discovery that we had given back a couple of rooms to the Fairmont earlier than we were supposed to for them to use for a wedding. This happened at the worst possible time for me. I had scheduled a panel entitled "What Makes Bad Programming?" for Sunday afternoon in a fit of bad judgment. I realized that worst case scenario was having all the panelists simply say, "This convention is an example." Nevertheless, I thought it made a good panel. At the last minute, I allowed myself to be talked into sitting on the panel.

Midway through the panel, my radio chirped. We lost two rooms in the Fairmont and had two panels

in search of a room. I managed to find one room in the Fairmont and offered two suggestions: We could combine the two panels, “Are Villains Necessary?” and “Building a Strong, Sympathetic Heroine,” which I thought could create a new, and rather bizarrely interesting panel, or we could cancel one of the items, although since both had a good turnout, it wasn’t clear which should be canceled.

The panelists came up with a third alternative: Villains could be on one side of the room and Heroines on the other. The room was large enough to accommodate people, although the acoustics were such that occasionally the room acted like a whisper chamber and the comments made on one side could clearly be heard as if coming from the other.

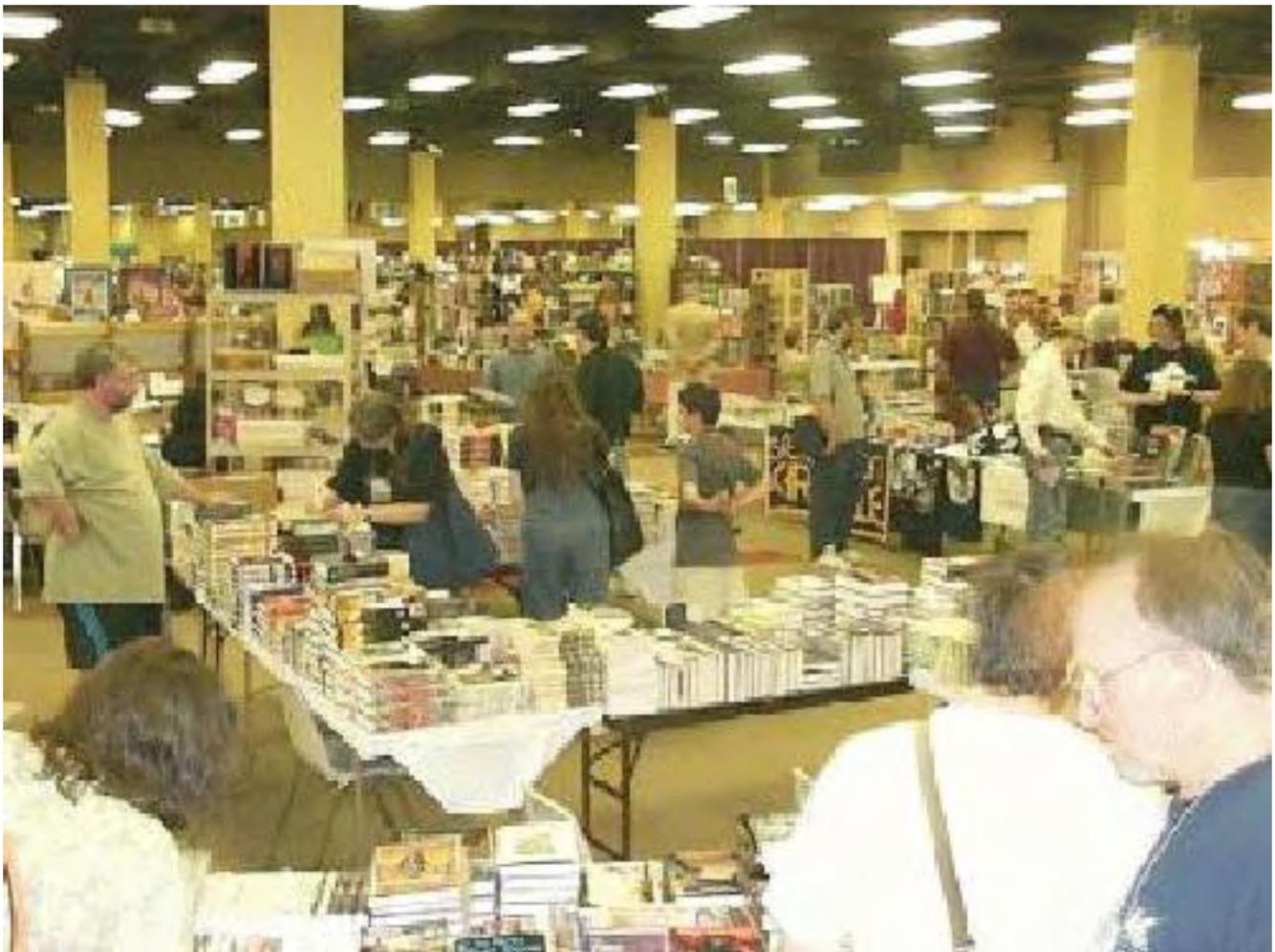
So, what did I wind up doing with the glassed in area? On Friday, we ran a session called “Book to Costume to Paint.” California costumer Joy Day found a description of a costume from Jack Vance and created a costume based on it. We made a blow up of the description and put it in the window. Joy modeled the costume while Bob Eggleton painted a portrait of her, which appears on the back cover of the Chicon 2000 Souvenir book.

On Saturday, we set Bob and an easel up in the space, making sure to leave the sliding glass door open, and let him go hog-wild, painting whatever he wanted to paint. As he painted, people could gather around to watch for a while and ask him questions. Every time I walked by the room, there was a crowd gathered, standing, sitting, watching.

I mentioned above that I would not be running programming at a Worldcon again. The reason is quite simple. My wife asked me not to. I told her I wouldn’t and further explained that if I did, I would also give her a divorce and she would get full custody of the children...and the book collection.

Over all, I’m very pleased with the way programming went, although it was much more work than I had anticipated. Three days after Chicon, while sitting at dinner with my wife and three year old daughter, my daughter looked at us both, raised her arms, and announced exultantly, “Chicon is over!” About six months later, she told me she wanted to go back to Chicon. When I asked why, she responded, “The people.”

A fan in the making.



## And Now...Chris Garcia on Con Jose- the 2002 WorldCon in San Jose

I realise now that I've never actually written about my only WorldCon experience since returning to fandom. It's hard to believe that such an important event in my fannish life has been so sadly overlooked. If it hadn't have been for Con Jose, I wouldn't be doing a fanzine...or at least I probably wouldn't be doing a fanzine.

I came back around in 2000 when Kathryn Daugherty invited me to be on programming at Bay-Con. I did pretty well and the next year I got another invite. I met some very nice folks at BayCon 2001, like Frank Wu and Ken Wharton, and figured I'd do OK going to a WorldCon where I could meet more fun people. I paid the money, at that time about 20% of a paycheck and nearly 50% of my monthly rent, and I waited.

And waited.

I remember getting there early on the first day, Thursday, and trying to register.

"Sorry, we can't get to you now." I was told by a woman who I now know was Sharon Sbarsky. I figured, 'OK, there's always a problem or two to work out' and I wandered the city for an hour or so, got some lunch, visited a friend or two who lived downtown. I had managed to run into a few fans I recognised and bummed around with them, going to dinner with them every night of the con. Frank Wu and pals had some good people they'd eat with: I got to meet Cory Doctorow and some guy named Gardner. It was a fun time.

The rest of the con? A blur. They had a couple of panels on computer history including bringing in Steve Wozniak, Jeff Raskin (inventor of the Mac) and Lee Felsenstein (the inventor of just about everything else). I did a panel with Lee and Linux evangelist Eric Raymond and Cliff Stoll, the man who personifies Mad Scientist more than anyone else I've ever met. It was a fun panel and I thought it was great.

I was on ten separate panels, including running one of the game shows (I did pretty well) and embar-

assing myself in Star Trek Trivia. It was a blast. I did panels with Larry Niven, Vernor Vinge, it was where I met Kevin Roche for the first time, where I first did a panel with Hugh Daniel, P.J. Hodgell, David Brin, and a bunch of others. With all the time I spent in the Green Room, I got to meet Richard and Nikki Lynch, the legendary Fred Pohl, the wonderful Jack Chalker, and a few others who were all very kind.

I remember that was where I first encountered CheapAss Games by playing in a Live Action version of Kill Dr. Lucky. It was awesome and I remember the girl who was running the event was drop-dead cute with these giant Rivethead boots that I just couldn't keep my eyes off of. Dr. Lucky was plenty good and quite entertaining.

It was at Con Jose that I first saw Nth Degree.

It's a zine that I've written for off and on since late 2002. That was my first location for fannish writing...even though the first thing I ever had them use was a fiction piece. I did game reviews and con reviews over the years. It's a fun zine that I enjoy to this day. If it hadn't been for Nth Degree, I'd never have started down the path that would lead me to eFanzines.com and Jan Stinson's Peregrine Nations, nor to LoCing eI nor towards the beast known as...The Drink Tank.

Sadly, I feel like I wasted a lot of Con Jose. I wasn't well-known in community yet, so I only knew locals and the few fans I met when I gave them a tour of my work. I remember Neil Rest was in that group. I'm betting John Purcell knows him.

If Con Jose had been 2005 instead of 2002, it would have been a much different experience. I would have been able to saddle up and ride high, talking to folks from around the world who I'd read and enjoyed. I did talk to Richard Lynch about his Outline of the 1960s, but I'd rather have been able to recognise people who were even more active in the fanzine world. It wasn't a bad time, no it was a great time, but it would have been even greater if I hadn't been as green as the grass.





**Letter Graded Mail  
sent to [garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:garcia@computerhistory.org)  
by my Gentle Readers**

***Let the fun begin with Eric Mayer!!!***

Chris,

I think you've got it wrong. You're not going to be at the Worldcon, you're going to \*be\* the Worldcon. How many panels can one man be on?

***I've done 15 at one three day con before, so I'm used to running from panel to panel***

What's really frightening is that, from what I know, you're actually qualified to speak on all the topics. Believe it or not, I was once on two panels at a mystery con. It was a one day event - 9 am to 4 pm and I was on a morning and an afternoon panel. Just about killed me. I'm sure it was worse for the poor suckers who had to try to decipher my convoluted mumblings.

***I always end up researching one or two of my topics and then completely abandoning my train of thought once I get to the dais. You did a couple of panels at a Mystery Con? I'm shocked!***

Heck, I'm even a second rater as a loccer. With this LoC I won't have written even half the LoCs John Purcell owns up to - and never mind Lloyd Penney. However, like those two I also organize and save my puny

output. What I do is compose my letters in my tabbed KeyNote organizer, then copy them to my mail program. I write my blogs and most of my comments on other people's blogs the same way, so I have all that material in different files, stored in KeyNote. It's a useful source of ideas -- "free" because mostly inspired by other folks. I figure I can expand something from a LoC into a blog, for instance. My last eAPA zine was a conglomeration of comments I'd left on blogs. (Seemed weird, didn't it?) But there's virtually no readership overlap with these things.

***I Must not be a real LetterHack then since I don't file my LoCs. They're all on my email still, but as has been proven, that's not entirely safe since messages get deleted by our security system once in a while.***

Enjoyed the revelations about Crowley. Recently I read *The Magician*, by W. Somerset Maugham. The novel's Oliver Haddo is a caricature of Aleister Crowley. He's quite a character too, a magician attempting to create life and with more than a little Svengali in him. A seriously creepy book. Not what you'd expect from Mr. Maugham.

***I've owned *The Magician* for a few years now and never read. In fact, I've never read any Maugham at all!***

Walking to Yankee stadium in the thirties...amazing. (When I was in NY in the seventies you wuldn't have wanted to walk there) When I lived in Rochester I used to walk down to Red Wing stadium (Triple A) That was a good fifteen minute walk. Summer nights, when the wind was right, you could tell when something exciting was going on at the stadium. The crowd sounded like distant thunder.

***I could walk to Fenway when I lived in Boston. Boston is one of those cities where they built an entertainment district around a ballpark that used to be in the middle of a meat packing district.***

93,  
Eric

**93/93, Eric!**

**And Now...Lloyd Penney!**

Dear Chris:

It's back to the multi-issue loc format...when you put out issues of your zine four days apart, that's what you get. Here's some comments on issues 92 and 93 of The Drink Tank.

**Well, I did have a long break between 91 and 92, so four days between 93 and 94 seems downright restrained!**

92...Hey, Frank, you got that right...what the whole world needs is for the Bush regime to try to find an honourable way out, and seeing that this corrupt government is intellectually and morally bankrupt, it will be up to his successor to arrive at some sort of solution. But enough politics... VietNam is in the minds of so many people as symbol of a war America is more and more likely not to win. Idiots like Jerry Falwell, who seems to want Armageddon any minute now, is calling this conflict World War III, and seeing the so-called parallels in Revelations. You want the end of the world, Jerry? Lead the way...

**Remember, Jerry Falwell is my fourth-cousin...even though I totally agree he's pretty much evil.**

Only in writing and movies are there white hats and black hats. When it comes to bin Laden and Cheney, there are no white hats, just awfully dark grey ones.

**During my Friday night date, The New Girl and I went to a coffee place and a guy came up and started babbling about the whole Israel-Lebanon conflict. Now, he was Persian and oddly turned out to be a strong supporter of Israel. That's pretty darn rare, but he also made some very weak generalizations about Islam that were rather annoying. It was the last thing I was hoping for: a political/religious debate in the middle of my date.**

Chris...everyone's got their limit. You might not think so, but you are going to burn out, or at least totally discharge your creative batteries. Slow down for a while,

and catch your breath. I have to do that every so often, or I start thinking about gafiation, and vegging on the couch.

**I spent all day Saturday on the couch, which was nice. Then I had dinner with Frank Wu and as soon as I got home, I zipped off three things. I think it's working in isolation, without human fannish contact, that makes me stress. After a con, I can write and write for days since I've had myself recharged.**

Cheryl Morgan, IMHO, had gotten a poor rap from a lot of fanzine fans who thought she wasn't carrying through on their definition of a fanzine. I respect their views, but I thought you could put anything you wanted in your fanzine, and leave out what you didn't want. Emerald City may not have had a local, but I still corresponded with Cheryl in loc format, and we'd chat back and forth. Every issue of EC got a letter from me since around issue 56. She didn't make many friends with her review of Torcon 3, but she was spot on, and we discussed what happened via private e-mail. Based on her weblog, Cheryl will carry on for another issue, and then shut the whole thing down, blog and all. She is angry and bitter over rumours and accusations, and I don't blame her for that, but there's also the practical aspect to it...the zine (fan or semi-pro) was taking up a lot of her time, time she needed to devote to making a living. I understand that completely.





***Yeah, she got a bum rap. I'm hoping that she'll take a little time away and then come back to writing for those of us who need her most!***

Man, that Chris Garcia is a pompous blowhard. I'd sure like to take him down a peg. I'm gonna let him run for TAFF unopposed so he'll see how much work this fan fund is! BWAHAHAHAHAHA! (Ooo! That's evil!)

***I'm certain if we unmasked you we'd discover that you are actually the villainous Dr. James Moriarty!***

Single issue locs from me being unfannish? Hey, freaking the mundanes comes with the territory, but if you've got something that freaks out the fans, run with it. John Purcell will be happy with this loc, I can tell...

***Hey, when you have a type of something named after you, you've gotta expect us FanEds to expect it from ya!***

Hey, SaBean...Chris has written so much about you and Judith and M, it's like you're the best friends we've never met. Sounds like you're living in a true home of love, seeing it patched up any problems between you and your sister. The root of it all is everyone living there, and forming a family. Chris, you must wish you were there, or least has a portal you could walk through to visit regularly.

***Yeah, I talked to Judith on Friday. She's going to be in Santa Barbara scouting places during the WorldCon period so she might try to make a trip down for a day or two. If she does, I'll be***

***introducing her all around.***

Hey, you've been ahead of your time with your idea of the light tower. When I was in high school back in the mid-70s, I decided I didn't want to carry my books in my arms, and decided to use my old Scout backpack to carry them to high school and back. I got laughed at a lot, and got asked if I was going camping, but I didn't care. Some people even saw how smart that idea was, and started doing the same thing. Today, how many kids carry their school books and stuff in backpacks? All of them.

***Whoa...You're THAT Lloyd Penney?***

93...Hey, it's a grown-up version of Atomic Betty! It's my favorite cartoon these days, and I know I'm not alone.

***I'm another fan of AB, right here!***

I'm on two panels since they approached me fairly late, but I'll be there to do it. I'll be in the audience in several of your panels, at least. Hey, if I have nothing to add, I can always heckle. I intend to be as visible as I can in fanzine programming.

***I've cross-checked and I think I might be able to make it to one of the panels you're on. The only problem with being tightly scheduled is you don't get to go to as many panels as you like and still have time to do things like eating. I've gotta make some time to hang with Vegas Fandom for instance.***

The OTO seems to have been the fully little cult of Hollywood way back then. It's faded, and Scientology seems to have moved in. The idea of the cult in Hollywood is fairly transparent as a ploy to look interesting and mysterious, and get a little more publicity. I'm not impressed.

***That's certainly true. Scientology has made a lot more money than the OTO ever made off of their marks.***

I've been in Philadelphia only once (for the 2001 Worldcon), and even I know that it's provolone cheese on a cheesesteak. How on earth did Cheez-Whiz get into the equation? Is Cheez-Whiz actually a food? ***See, you understand! The battle on this front has not yet fully begun. I've been told a Cheesesteak jihad is about to begin***

Hi, John...I actually have the last seven years' worth of locs I've written on my hard drive. I figured putting them on a LiveJournal would make my work a little more visible, and give some people an idea of what it is I do.

***I'm sure that someone, somewhere, thinks that you're a computer programme designed to LoC so that FanEds won't give up putting out zines. Wait...that's what I'm supposed to be!***

Nope, I think EmCit is gone for good. I don't know what Cheryl's going to do for SF fun, and I'm not sure she knows, either. She's put out the word not to send her books any more, so no more reviews. I think time will fix these problems, and I think she'll be back, as soon as she figures out what she wants to do.

***I'm trying to convince her to write her annual WorldCon reports for me, but she's doing the LACon IV report for the last issue of EmCit and she's not going to Japan, so there'll be a wait.***

Two issues, two pages...not bad at all. It's Friday, so we have some Worldcon preps for tomorrow, and then I have a conference assignment for Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Pool party on the Saturday after, and then, we hit the skies for LA. See you in about a week or so!

***Exceptional! To think I'll finally get a chance to meet the Master of the LoC in less than 10 days!***

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

***Thanks much, Lloyd!***

***Now, from the UK...Peter "The Reason I'm Running for TAFF" Sullivan!***

I have been very quiet on the LoCs front for the past month or two, but I am trying to get caught up with most of the fanzines I receive. Of course, with The Drink Tank, this would involve a long, rambling Lloyd Penney-style LoC covering anything up to two dozen issues, so I'll just pick up with the last few issues instead.

***Yeah, the Drink Tank would be difficult to try and catch up on more than say a couple of weeks. I was wonderin' where***



***you'd gone off to!***

#91 - Interesting piece on the William Desmond Taylor murder - I'd heard of this, but mainly from the point of view of Mabel Normand and the damage that it caused her career. (One of my favourite stage musicals is Mack and Mabel.)

***I've never even heard of Mack and Mabel. I really wanna see it now that I know it exists. There's not a lot of Mabel Normand love around and a play is the thing!***

As far as the TAFF race goes, I don't think that there's an absolute rule about what happens if there is only one declared candidate by the deadline. There is a general presumption that "travesty" races (1 candidate vs. Hold Over Funds) are a bad idea, but the usual solution in the past appears to have been to extend the nominations deadline.

And any decisions taken by the TAFF Administrators on this sort of thing seem to have been done after full discussion with the affected candidates - certainly based on what gets reported in the various TAFF newsletters on [www.taff.org.uk](http://www.taff.org.uk)

***It's an interesting problem and one that I can't find a precedent for in the history of TAFF. I'm sure someone'll pop up at WorldCon.***

But I don't think that there's any need to start worrying yet, or start preparing "straw man" candidacies. It's worth remembering that we are still fairly early on in the nominations cycle - nominations normally seem to have a tendency to emerge just before the deadline. Your own candidacy is clearly an exception to this general rule (for all the good reasons we've discussed - basically around getting name recognition for a candidate who is less of a BNF than normal), but I would be surprised if there wasn't at least one or two other names in the frame by the time nominations close.

**True, I've got an uphill battle for recognition (the fact that most of my stuff is electronic probably doesn't help either) but I think I'll do OK...even if a 500 Pound Gorilla enters the race.**

#92 - The origins of the 20% rule are based on specific events from the 1980s, but regardless of the history, I think it's a good rule. If the purpose of TAFF is to make links between North American and European fandom, then I don't think that it's unreasonable to expect at least 20% "name recognition" on both sides of the Atlantic. The only case where the 20% rule might 'get in the way' is if there were a large number of good candidates - some of the early TAFF races had up to 8 candidates. Of course, I'm not aware of any case since it's introduction that the 20% would actually have made a difference to the final winner. More typically, it seems to just shorten the count by immediately removing candidates who would have been eliminated by the alternative vote mechanism fairly soon afterwards anyway. **I think the 20% rule makes sense unless we have another race like the one in the 1950s with Forry adn Dave Kyle and the rest of them. That must have been a nightmare for the administrator.**

Oh, and although you're hardly likely to forget to mention it at least somewhere in your own fanzine, Chris for TAFF!

**You are preachin' to the choir, Peter! As a World-Class Media Whore, It hardly goes without a mention.**

**So, that's the WorldCon issue. I'd like to say thanks to Ted, Mark, James, John, and Steven for their wonderful articles. I'd also like to thank my Pops for the time he spent looking over the various articles and writing notes before he kicked off. In fact, we're having his memorial tonight with the Church he volunteered at and my Sister and ton of homeless folks are going to be there. Should be interesting.**

**As for the next few issues, here's what's gonna go down. Issue 95 will pop up after WorldCon, probably around Sept. 1st. Then I'll probably do one every other week until Issue 99. That's gonna be a special one, one that I'm not gonna give away quite yet, and then there'll be a break so I can gather the Issue 100 articles. That's probably be out around the middle of October, if I have my thinking right.**

**That's gonna be the next few months, since pretty much right after WorldCon is when TAFF balloting starts. I'm sure that'll take up a lot of time.**

**And that's that. I want to also thank Tom Atkinson and Don Sakers, the good people at MidAmeriCon's Photo archive and FANAC.org, as well as Kim-Bunni, Lester\_Whitt, Frank Wu, Ted White and Morgana SilverDollar for the art.**



Hey: The Drink Tank is brought to you by Christopher J. Garcia and posted to eFanzines.com by the legendary Bill Burns. We'll be at WorldCon, so if you're making the trip to Anaheim, drop me a line at [garcia@computerhistory.org](mailto:garcia@computerhistory.org) and I'll make sure to run into ya at least once and give you a Fanzinista and a Chris for TAFF ribbon. Also, if you're going to be there, write a report! I'll use it, and I know SF/SF would use it in a heartbeat!