



## Smofcon 3 Report

Smofcon 3, the convention for con runners, was held on December 5-7, 1986, at the Lowell, Massachusetts, Hilton. The topic for this year's meeting was "Brainstorming the Worldcon." About 100 people attended. Although about half were from Massachusetts, there was a good showing of people from the Central and Western regions, including contingents from California (Mike Glycer), Arizona (Terry Gish), Louisiana (John Guidry), Columbus (Bob Hillis and Liz Gross), Toronto (Mike Wallis, Lloyd and Yvonne Penny, and David Hurst), Minnesota (Joyce Scrivner and Mark Richards), and Kentucky (Scott and Jane Dennis). The east coast was represented by fans from Connecticut (Michael Whelan and Audrey Price), New York (Ben Yalow, Gary Farber, Moshe Feder, Robert Sacks, and others), Philadelphia (Gary Feldbaum), Delaware (Steve Whitmore), and Maryland (Mike Walsh, Peggy Rae Pavlat, Joe Mayhew, and others), as well as many from Massachusetts.

Much to everyone's surprise, three different groups expressed a willingness to host Smofcon 4: Phoenix, Columbus, and Washington, D.C. By mutual discussion among the volunteers, Columbus was selected for next year. Smofcon 4 will be held in Columbus, Ohio, on November 20-22, 1987. For information write to: FANACO, INC., c/o Liz Gross, 376 Colonial Ave., Worthington, OH 43085.

### The Game

Friday night arrivals were greeted with an opulent con suite, run by Cindy Gold, which was highlighted by four different flavors of chocolate fondue with assorted fruits and goodies to dip.

Later in the evening came the debut of the con-runner's role-playing game "If I Ran the ~~700~~ . . . Con." The game was designed to be both an ice-breaker and also something to get people thinking about some of the perennial con-running problems in a humorous setting. (Joe Mayhew referred to it as a consciousness-raising technique.) It's not clear how many consciousnesses were raised, but there certainly was a lot of hilarity.

First, three teams (known as con committees) were selected by leaders from each region: Mike Walsh for the East, John Guidry for the Central, and Mike Glycer for the West. Game officials were Chip Hitchcock as the SMOF (who read the game scenarios), Alexis Layton as the Independent Accountant (who kept track of the score), and Tony Lewis as Murphy (the element of chance). Murphy was aided in his job by a spinner in the form of a day-glo propeller beanie created by Pam Fremon.

The game took the committees through three phases: bidding, planning, and at-con. For each turn, the committee chose a chairman and also drew a scenario to play. Scenarios, which were written by a number of contributors, included such titles as:

#### Bidding:

- Choosing the Bid Committee
- GoH Choice
- Booze
- Pre-Supporting Memberships

#### Planning:

- Masquerade Length
- The Big Premiere
- The "Relationship"
- Kids' Programming
- Ups and Downs (Elevator Management)
- The Contract

#### At-Con:

- Turning the Tables (No-show Hucksters)
- The Lady and the Snake
- The Ice
- Keep on Truckin' (Logistics)

As each situation was read, the chairman would be given a number of options to select from. The committee could be consulted, but the chairman had to make the final decision. In some cases, the next situation was a direct result of the chairman's choice, but in most cases, Murphy was also consulted. Murphy would spin the spinner and the SMOF would select the next situation according to that result. As the situations progressed, the team would win or lose *Financial* points (representing money), *People* points (representing staff effort), and *Goodwill* points (representing the reaction of fandom and others whose cooperation is needed by the committee).

Many of the scenarios covered more than one phase. For example, a decision made in the planning phase might have results later in the game during the at-con phase. Murphy played a role here, in deciding when each team would have to deal with the consequences of its earlier decisions. Murphy's favorite line began, "Remember when you decided to . . . ?"

The total game consists of 43 scenarios, and in about 2 hours of play we managed to go through only about 2/3 of them. After the game (which was won by the Central team), each member was given a printed copy of the full game to take home with them. A number of people indicated that they planned to play the game with their local groups.

(There are a few extra copies of the game available for \$5 (plus \$1 for postage and handling) from the New England Science Fiction Association, Box G, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139.)

### The Brainstorming Sessions

The meat of Smofcon was scheduled for Saturday — a series of brainstorming sessions covering areas that were perceived to be major unsolved problems in the state of the art of Worldcon-running. Sign-up sheets were posted in the con suite Friday night and Saturday morning, and the opportunity was provided to add new topics to those that had been suggested by the committee.

After coffee and bagels in the con suite Saturday morning, some time was set aside to get people into the proper frame of mind for brainstorming. The committee had prepared a number of outrageous statements about Worldcons that they distributed to volunteers in the audience. Each volunteer was invited to stand up and spend a few minutes advocating the outrageous statement that he had drawn. This was followed by a few minutes of audience interaction.

The purpose of this exercise was to stimulate people's creativity, and to try to get them to be open to new and different ideas. This worked fairly well, especially in the audience interaction portion. The planners had expected the audience to try to shoot down the ideas, but instead people got into the spirit of the game and came up with additional supporting reasons why the ideas actually made a lot of sense.

Here are a few of the ideas and arguments that came up. (Remember that the people stuck with defending these statements don't necessarily agree with them.)

Tony Lewis presented the idea that the Worldcon should be open only to "true fans." He conceded that things probably wouldn't be run very smoothly, but think about all the fun people would have complaining about the con committee!

Ben Yalow argued that there should be one fee that covered everything, including hotel rooms, food, travel, etc. He thought this could include the Hucksters' room (the hucksters could assemble random piles of merchandise worth so many dollars), but admitted that there might be trouble in the Art Show ("it's hard to find a \$20 Whelan").

Steve Whitmore drew the idea that the Worldcon should be open only to delegates from clubs, thus assuring equal representation from all fan groups.

Jim Hudson led a lively discussion on the virtues of presenting the Hugos at 10 am on Friday. It would kick off the convention, reduce tension for the nominees, assure good press coverage early, and would free up the evenings for parties!

Bob Hillis proposed required attendance at the GoH speech and the Hugos, which would give Ops something to do — they could serve as hall monitors.

Mike DiGenio advocated running the Worldcon as a giant outdoor campout. This would eliminate elevator problems and would lead to a better geographic distribution, since we wouldn't be limited to cities with lots of hotel space.

Robert Sacks drew the statement that pros should be banned from the Worldcon — it should be for fans only. He pointed out that this would lead to shorter Hugo ceremonies, and would not necessarily impact the program.

Robert Colby (chair of the upcoming Readercon) appropriately drew the statement that a literacy test be required for membership. This discussion didn't get too crazy because everybody thought it was a good idea!

At this point, Priscilla Pollner and Laurie Mann were asked to say a few words about how to conduct brainstorming sessions. The main point was that the goal is to get the ideas flowing, so we should not attempt to criticize ideas but should just try to get them written down. Each group would be asked to finish by prioritizing their thoughts and presenting the most important ideas to the whole group during the afternoon session.

Now that we were all fired up, we went off to brainstorm in earnest. There were two sets of brainstorming sessions, one before lunch and one just after lunch. Each session consisted of about 10 people, a leader, and a notetaker, and lasted about 45 minutes. We hope that a

full transcript of the sessions will be available to the participants sometime soon (availability will be announced in a later issue of *The Mad 3 Party*), but in the meantime, these are my (sketchy) notes of the summing-up sessions. (The ideas expressed here are summaries of the brainstorming sessions; they do not necessarily represent the views of the majority of the Smofcon attendees or of the Noreascon Three committee.)

A session on how to handle **fringe fandoms** listed some of the things to consider. Who participates in this fandom? Are they regular fans who also attend the rest of the Worldcon, or people who come just to participate in this area? What are the requirements of the group — do they just need a room, or do they need equipment, money, or organizational skills? Also, what type of people are attracted? Do they quietly do their own thing, or do they disrupt the rest of the convention? The options for dealing with them are to do it as part of the convention, contain them in their own area, or to completely ban the activity. Remember that if you do support a fringe activity, you can also use the opportunity to try to convert these fringe fans into real fans.

There were two sessions on the Art Show — one on **how to make the Art Show better** and one on how to make the Art Show easier. The first session concluded that Worldcon art shows feel too big mainly because there is so much low-quality art randomly mixed in with the good art. They suggested a sort of grading system where the best stuff would be hung at the front. This might be accomplished by jurying the show, or by charging more for the good panels. Comments on this idea pointed out that jurying is a lot of work, and that charging more would only work for some artists (other good artists might choose the cheaper panels and count on their fans finding them at the back).

The group suggested that Worldcons try to rent professional hangings, at least for the quality part of the show, or allow the artists to supply their own hangings.

They suggested also trying to grade the auctions, either by eliminating cheap stuff from auctions by, for example, requiring different numbers of bids for different price ranges, or by having separate auctions for different price ranges.

The audience did not completely agree with these suggestions. There were two main counter-arguments voiced. One was the large amount of effort these proposals would require. The second was the desire to continue to support lower-priced and beginning artists, both as the source of future good art, and as an outlet for those buyers who can't afford the more expensive works.

There was general agreement on two other statements: that artists should be treated as pros and should appear on non-art program at the Worldcon, and that art should be left on exhibit at the show as long as possible.

The second art show session was on **making the Art Show easier**. It considered ways to minimize the movement of pieces, such as having a video auction or requiring a minimum value to go to auction. Another idea was a fixed selling price for low-price pieces.

The artists would like to have secure storage for their portfolios, and the buyers would like to be able to buy packing materials. To make things easier for buyers of 3-

D art, the art show might require the artist to supply a suitable box with each piece. Not accepting mailed-in artwork could save a lot of effort.

Because of the different services desired by amateurs and professionals, perhaps the professionals should be split into a separate show? (Others thought that this would be more work.) As they were running out of time, they got into a discussion of the mechanics of running the show, such as using bar codes for artwork, or using 4-part bid sheets to take the place of some of the other paperwork.

The next topic was **how to make a large Worldcon feel small**. The goal is to have a more intimate convention where each person feels that he is surrounded by friends. One idea was to establish a shared theme, but this is difficult to implement, and may be more apparent to neos. Another approach is to start with small things and work up. Consider physical space. Try to provide a comfortable lobby or other small spaces for people to sit and talk. Try to make people feel welcome, and use large name tags so people can meet each other. Make sure communications flow with newsletters and information areas.

One group talked about how to make the **"Meet the Pros"** function work better. They pointed out that it should be made to work for the pros as well as the fans — it should be more fun. There should be chairs and tables, and no loud music. The committee could provide something for people to do, such as a game. One idea was to have smaller parties throughout the con, by topics, such as hard science, sword and sorcery, etc. Pros should be identified somehow — be creative (sashes, plumes, etc.). Their badges should be large enough so that people don't have to get embarrassingly close before finding out who they are. Consider using mug shots. Try using roving hosts to introduce people.

The function of the **Operations** area was considered. Operations should be a communications center. Paperwork should be kept to a minimum. Ops should respond to requests, but shouldn't decide what should be done. The ops room should be open 24 hours a day. It should not be off limits to committee and staff, but should encourage interaction. Jobs and goals should be written down and distributed. Ops should interface with the hotel. The ideal ops person should be diplomatic, low-key, clear-headed, unexcitable. There should be a separate office to handle other functions after they have been closed down (such as Registration). There was no consensus on what Operations should be called: Operations, Services, C&C (for Communications and Coordination), and other names were suggested.

The next group considered the question, "Do some of the areas get **all of the good people**?" The answer was, no area ever has enough good people, and the group went on to suggest strategies for increasing staff help for all areas. Good people observed working at one convention should be identified and invited to work on others. The committee should teach area heads not to take their helpers for granted, but to make their volunteers feel needed and loved.

Another group attacked the subject of the Worldcon **Masquerade**. They generally agreed it was too long, and should be limited in some way. Methods for restricting entries included: require costumers to pre-register, require them to portray literary characters only, don't allow presentations, don't allow props (which often take a long time to get on and off stage), charge an entry fee in labor-hours (that is, ask entrants to spend some time helping with the convention), just have hall costumes, have some sort of advance jurying to limit entries, allow only past award winners to enter, or hold a pre-judging at the Worldcon. Ideas were presented for using the judging period to do something useful, such as presenting the hall costumes, or presenting the Masters competitors. We can affect what types of costumes get entered by publishing the judging criteria well in advance and by selecting judges who will enforce the criteria. Judging could be speeded up by limiting the number of awards. Some more creative ideas included distributing the Masquerade among multiple events (some felt that this would be even more work), having a static costume display on dummies, or not having a live audience at all and just doing a video masquerade. (Some felt that video technology was not of high enough quality to effectively portray the costumes in detail.)

**Special-area registration** was the next topic. Should all members register in a central location, or should several areas, such as hucksters, art show, and program, have their own separate registration areas? Centralized registration can make it difficult for artists and dealers to get into their areas to get set up (but this can be dealt with by a pre-con mailing to those classes, or by giving them day badges to get them by until they have time to register). Distributed registration has problems with record-keeping, having people's packets in the right place if they qualify for multiple areas, having members of a family group registering in different places, etc. Could have a central location, with separate lines for the specialized groups. Computers might help, but they are riskier.

And, in fact, the next topic was **computerized registration**. The group first listed the problems with computerized registration, such as the need for expensive equipment, including the logistics and security problems involved in moving the equipment in. Unless the system were carefully designed, failure could be catastrophic. Computers may not really save time, since it might take longer to enter names and printer badges on-line. What computerized registration could do is to provide services that we can't get easily with manual registration. It could support distributed registration (there could be many registration locations without having to have people pre-assigned to one specific one), message systems, and easily-produced at-con membership lists. One major comment: whether computerized or manual, registration should always open one hour earlier than advertised, to prevent lines from building up.

The next group asked the question, "**how many tracks of programming should there be?**" Things to consider when deciding whether to include any particular track is whether it's expected, what facilities it requires, who is interested in it, what is its entertainment value, what is its educational value, and how much work is it to

run? The group placed things in the following five categories: 1) You'd be lynched if you didn't have it: movies, Art Show, Hugos, WSFS Business Meeting, main program, hucksters, Masquerade, GoH event, autograph sessions. 2) Many people want it: video, con suite, fan programming, kids' programming, exhibits. 3) A vocal minority want it: Japanese cartoons, filking, L5/space programming, fanzine programming, discussion groups, workshops, Meet the Authors party, Regency dance. 4) Nice to have, but not essential: gaming, academic programming, science programming, exhibits, banquet, reality/horror track. 5) Should be discouraged: role-playing games at the convention. (Needless to say, this categorization inspired much debate among the audience as to which areas should go into which categories.)

The next topic was how to handle a **geographically-dispersed committee**. (Also known as a geographically-disturbed committee.) Pick the areas to be run by out-of-town people so that they can reasonably be separated from other activities. Even so, plan on having a local liaison person for each major out-of-town area head. A good mail room is essential so that everyone gets their correspondence in a timely manner. Hold committee meetings at major regionals throughout the country — personal contact is important. Consider reimbursing travel expenses for major staff to attend key local meetings and view the facilities. Publish a newsletter and/or a committee APA. Explore the use of electronic mail. Recognize the fact that people from other areas will have different styles of working. Try to tolerate the differences when they don't matter, and try to teach them your style when it does matter. If people have been informed about the total picture, they are more likely to be cooperative if you have to ask them to do something differently.

Another group considered the question of **how the Worldcon committee should be structured**. They advised having clerical support for each of the managers. Some areas are natural for organization by project teams, others are not. Considering relations between areas, no areas can be outside the law — they are not personal empires. The committee needs to be able to remove people who are not performing well. The committee should establish goals, resources, basic philosophies. Areas should report up and across (i.e., areas should talk to each other, even if they report to different divisions/departments).

Many of the problems of a Worldcon are due to the fact that each Worldcon is a one-shot — there is not much time to train people and build teams. "Because we have not built in trust, we build in structures." That is, we establish bureaucracy and paperwork to try to keep control of things because each committee is new and hasn't had experience in working together. The committee should keep people informed. The upper level should concentrate on the product, not details of the process.

The final topic was **how to prevent committee burnout?** The first idea was "don't put on the convention." Failing that, provide services for the staff, such as a committee den and extended babysitting hours. Substitute money for work where possible: hire people to staff registration, hire a paid office staff, etc. Raise membership rates if necessary to do this. Many people do not have the skills needed for management, so it would help

to train people about management, delegation, time management, etc. Learn people's limitations by working together ahead of time where possible. Have deputy staff for support so no one has to work ridiculously long hours. Limit beepers and ability to beep. Make time for silliness. Provide the staff with an after-convention membership refund. Write thank-you letters.

### The Parties

The Saturday night surprise entertainment turned out to be a series of hack bid parties spread through the various rooms making up the con suite. The main room hosted a **Woodstockcon** party, with many of the themes seen at other Woodstockcon parties: "Big Bill" Perkins as DJ playing music of the 60's, black light posters, brownies, jelly beans, etc. A new Woodstockcon Progress Report announced: *This is so heavy. We lost the '86 bid. It was such a bummer, but, I like to think we learned something. So, like, we'll go on. As we hinted, we are now a bid for the next major east coast convention. . . So, stay cool. If you want to join the con-com (that's like the con commune), contact any of the members or me — even though I'm considered the Head of the bid, we're all equal. Andi Shechter, 14 Remington St. #303, Cambridge, MA 02138.*

The **Wonderland** party featured Sue Lichauco in her "Alice" costume and various munchies labeled "Eat me."

**King Kon** was a bid for a con in Debbie King's swimming pool (a traditional site of mid-summer NESFA meetings); it used plastic pool toy decorations and featured standard cookout fare.

**State College in '89**, from the fen who brought us the Johnstown in '83 bid, claimed to have the finest facilities of any bid: the whole Penn State University campus. Their bid flyer read: *State College is dead center (that's Dead Center) Pennsylvania, equally inaccessible from all directions. Everything will have to be trucked in over the mountains from civilization, but we'll manage.*

**Econocon** — the generic convention — promised individual pricing of each convention event, so that you only have to pay for what you actually attend. To keep costs down, instead of bid flyers, there was a hand-written wall poster listing the committee's plans for each area. Certain traditional areas (babysitting, for example) were not planned, since, as the committee put it, "you couldn't pay us to do it."

The con suite also included an adult babysitting area, complete with lots of toys to play with. Sometime about midnight, Ben Yalow turned up in the babysitting area dressed as a Good Humor man, complete with coin changer, and handed out ice cream goodies.

In the face of all this, Mike Glyer, who reportedly had come prepared to hold a LA in '90 party, apparently decided that it would be superfluous.

### The Roundtable Discussions

At the end of Saturday's session, the agenda called for the attendees to decide what they wanted to do on Sunday. The decision was made to hold two roundtable discussions that everyone interested could attend, one on the Art Show (in the morning) and one on the Masquerade (in the afternoon). Each roundtable lasted about 2 hours, and was attended by about 30-40 people. In parallel with the

roundtables, two smaller workshops were held. The morning workshop concerned training helpers, and the afternoon one was for people involved in producing printed materials.

The Art Show panel was headed by Joe Mayhew, and covered many of the points that had been discussed the previous day, and also the points included in a handout that Joe had brought to the con (which is reprinted below).

The Masquerade roundtable also repeated the discussion of the previous day in more depth. Some time was spent exploring what really makes the Masquerade take so long. The conclusion was that it's not so much the time that people spend on stage, as the gaps in between. It was felt that the audience would not really mind seeing a lot of costumes, even some of poorer quality, if they were presented quickly, one right after the other. So the discussion went on to: What takes all the time? Sometimes it's just poor planning and confusion, sometimes it's the next group being slow to get onstage or the previous group being slow to get offstage (the latter being inevitable if you have a long runway), sometimes it's due to technical foulups. Usually it's a combination of all of these, with many short delays adding up to hours over the course of the Masquerade.

The conclusion was that Masquerade directors should try to get really aggressive about keeping things moving. If necessary, the technical options should be simplified, and this would also reduce the need for skilled labor. At the same time, the audience would like to see the costumes better. The solution to this depends on the particular facility being used.

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### What Goes Wrong With the Worldcon Art Show Over and Over — *Joe Mayhew's Opinion*

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**1. The Art Show is usually below the departmental level.** Because it does not report directly to the Chair, its needs must be combined by procrustean methods with those of unrelated activities and the attention to administrative detail is not given as the function is not viewed as major. The vast amount of money, expensive personal property, volunteer staff, hotel facilities, fan interest, and real responsibility, should indicate that the art show is worthy of separate consideration, not as a part of "exhibits," "fixed functions," or some other gerrymander.

**2. The Art Show Director tries to run the Worldcon show the way he runs his local show.** Actually, most small, regional shows are bungled but the waste of man-hours, economic chaos, poor communications and casual planning can be compensated for on-site by a team of familiar faces who pitch in and make it work, despite the system. This is possible because the shows are small and the staff is familiar with the local customs. But the Worldcon differs in that there are so many other activities going on, that many of the local regulars will be recruited for other things, and the crew must be made up from people all over the country who work by different systems (which usually conflict). Thus greater detail in staff planning needs to be done. Specific job descriptions, hour

schedules, etc. need to be prepared.

**3. The rules are made up in a vacuum.** The paperwork, fees structure, auction procedures and times have been painful for the artists and fans alike because the means of communicating needs haven't been developed. ASFA has had little to offer by way of sound and responsible advice because it has had too many dreams and goals. The ASFA guidelines in no place suggest that an artist can improve his lot in the shows by helping run them. The shows, even the Worldcon, are planned and run by volunteers. ASFA cannot succeed in improving the Worldcon, or any other art show, until its leadership learns more about the administrative realities of the shows. It cannot help solve any of the problems until it understands why they occur and what is possible in the real circumstances. Fiats and Ukases from on high will be ignored, but collaboration would be welcomed from any legitimate group which can present the artists' needs, viewpoints, and offer a resource of on-site help.

The Worldcon art show is principally an exhibit, that is, programming. It has large, ponderous moving parts which need careful attention in great detail so that they don't fall apart. It needs an internally coherent administrative structure and should report directly to the chair (in effect, the art show is a con-within-the-con) because of the immense responsibilities involved in it. Every year Worldcon committees and their art show directors reinvent the wheel, and it usually results in a trapezoid or some other form which is difficult to roll. Perhaps it is time to document and discuss what is actually going on. Some committees seem to view the art show as a specialized dealer room, a sort of vast garage sale. While the sales opportunity helps to draw both sellers and buyers, the art show is still primarily *programming*. It is there for fans to enjoy, for the artists to present themselves to their public, and to celebrate what is good about the visual aspect of the field of science fiction and fantasy.



## MCFI Meeting

Wednesday, October 15, 1986, at the NESFA Clubhouse, Somerville, Mass.

*[When reading minutes of our meetings, please bear in mind that none of our decisions are cast in concrete. If you wish to comment on any of the decisions reported herein, please do so. We will always be willing to reconsider an action if new points are brought to our attention. —LT]*

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 pm.

**Chairman's Report:** Mark Olson said that we were going to try something new starting with this meeting: we will have round-table discussions after meetings (assuming the meetings end early enough). After this meeting, the topic will be Smofcon. After the December meeting, the topic will be the structure of the convention.

Mark then went on to describe Ann Broomhead's idea for budgeting. In 6 months we want to have a working budget. However, we will not have any area or division heads by that time. The solution is to have people who won't be working in those areas prepare a budget for the area. This has the added advantage that they will have no motivation to pad the budget. After the budget is prepared, we can all criticize it. Talk to Mark if you want to work on a particular area — this is open to interested non-members, also. We're aiming for completion in early summer.

Mark then raised Don Eastlake's idea about trading ads with other Worldcons and perhaps with the NASFiC. There was much discussion of the details, but the idea was finally approved. Jim Mann will write to the Worldcons and the NASFiC.

**Timeline Committee:** Mark said that the last Timeline meeting talked about ideas with long lead times. [There was a list in the October *Mad 3 Party*.] He is looking for volunteers to start work on each of them.

**Meeting Schedule:** The next meeting will be on December 10 at 7:30 pm. The meeting after that will be on January 21.

**APA:89:** Andi Shechter, a non-member who has contributed to the apa, commented on our current policy of not distributing the apa to non-members. She understands that we want to keep control of the apa, and don't want people publicizing our ideas when they are in half-baked form. However, this still makes it difficult for her to contribute. She doesn't know if she is repeating what has already been said, nor does she know if people reply to her.

Jim M. said that he will be excerpting comments to those who don't receive the apa and giving it to them. Leslie pointed out that she is trying to have *TM3P* serve as a forum for interested non-members, and plans to run a lot of the interesting stuff from the apa, even some of it that is still not fully baked.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ann had a series of reports bringing us through September. Our cash balance is \$38,627.57.

Mark said that in 1980, after N2 showed a profit, the committee tried to find out about extraordinary personal bidding expenses so that they could be reimbursed from the surplus. If you have such expenses at this time, save your records. You're more likely to be able to find them now than in 3 years.

Ann asked if we'd sold our last T-shirt and license plate. Mark said we have about 3 T-shirts and a license plate left (there may be more). Anything left will be turned over to NESFA for them to sell.

Ann said we'd received a \$250 donation for the Constellation bail-out. This is awkward since the bail-out has been completed and the creditors have all signed off. We'll have to figure out what to do. However, people should be discouraged from contributing more.

Dave Cantor said he'd actually received the check. The woman who gave it wants the name of her company (a book store) published as having helped. Mark suggested in a press release. Don suggested reenabling the Worldcon Emergency Fund. Priscilla Pollner suggested giving it to Clarion [joke — ask your local smof for the reference].

**Annual Elections:** Leslie Turek took the chair for the elections. (Actually, the chair moved to Leslie, since she didn't leave her seat.)

Mark Olson was nominated for Chairman, and elected by acclamation. Ann Broomhead was nominated for Chairman, and elected by acclamation. The smooth flow of events was interrupted when Laurie Mann, attempting to save her husband from a fate worse than death, nominated Claire Anderson for Secretary. Jim M. seconded, but was not heard by the chair. Claire seemed unwilling to be NESFA clerk and MCFI secretary at the same time (funny thing). Tony nominated Jim M. and Mark seconded. Jim M. was elected by acclamation. [Nice try anyway, Laurie.]

**Preregistration:** Sharon Sbarsky said she'd entered voters 'A' through 'R' (about 1000). She then scheduled a proofing session. We're receiving about 1 membership a day.

[Movement at the back of the room, around a TV brought by Ellen Franklin, indicated that the 7th game of the American League Championship series, Boston vs. California, had started.]

**Guests of Honor:** Jim M. reported that he'd written and was waiting for reply. As soon as we hear, he'll let everyone know.

Jim M. and Jill Eastlake have written to a number of members of the Stranger Club. Chan Davis has replied, and will come. Ben Yalow noted that it is called the Stranger Club (no 's'); members can be called the Strangers. George Flynn suggested a note in PR1 on this.

**Smofcon:** Mark said that we now have 67 paid members and 6 who haven't paid but who are certainly coming. We have members from around the country, though we are weak on the DC area.

Leslie asked that those who have incipient game scenarios should get them to her. A group will sit down and critique them/flesh them out. See Leslie if you are interested in helping with this.

Mark said he wanted to get out a PR for Smofcon by the end of the month. He also said that Dalroy Ward had suggested including a roster in the membership packet. Greg Thokar asked if we need permission. Bill Perkins said we should just say in the Progress Report: "We're going to put everyone's names on a roster. If you don't want to be included, tell us."

Finally, Mark reported that Cindy Gold's plans for the Con Suite are as grandiose as we'd hoped.

**Sales/Membership:** This committee is now dissolved. Membership is now handled by preregistration, and we don't have anything left to sell. [Debbie King got a round of applause for all her work over the last few years.]

**Progress Reports:** Greg reported that PR 0.5 will go to press within a week of our knowing about our GoH. For PR 1, he is gathering info. He's talked to a couple of our guests. Art Widner is doing a write-up on the Strangers.

Priscilla reminded Greg to add new agents. She also asked if PR 0.5 would be in a different color to distinguish it from PR 0. Greg said the cheapest option here would be to print it on a different color paper.

Laurie asked why we are bothering to mail it. Greg said members get all publications. Rick Katze said that it is also a good "bounce" test to see which of our addresses are good. It will be cheaper than PR 1.

Mark said we'll also need a flyer at some point. Greg said that he was planning to print enough copies of PR 0.5 to act as a flyer at Boskone. We can work on a flyer after Boskone.

Mark asked how the artwork is coming. Greg has a couple of pieces; others are commissioned. Mark asked about using different pieces of art for PR 0.5, to emphasize that it is different. Greg said that it might be hard to find other pieces that reduce as well.

**Noreascon Three BS Sessions:** Tony Lewis described his proposal from the last apa. The BS sessions are to allow us to talk to people we don't normally talk to. They 1) can give us some ideas of what people want, and 2) can get us more volunteers. Ben said that, from the point of view of someone who gets ambushed at cons more than anyone else, this is good because it can limit the times when we become targets. Also, the flaming of many people can be stopped by talking to them.

Mark said that they won't always be in this format. For example, if we're invited to do a presentation at a con, the BS sessions may actually be a question-and-answer program item.

Leslie said that, when N2 won, we got a lot of letters from people with ideas, etc. This isn't happening so much this time. She's curious about what people out there are thinking. Rick said that this may be because we've done it and thus people know where we're coming from. Leslie thought it might be because two new Worldcons were chosen in the same year, so New Orleans is probably getting most of the attention.

Mark said that he wasn't hearing anyone who had problems with the concept. George said he didn't as long as running the sessions is on a volunteer basis and people aren't required to do so. Mark said that it will only be

done by those who want to and then only on an occasional basis. Not everyone can handle themselves in an open format like this would be. Priscilla emphasized that we need someone who is willing to say "I don't know."

Tony volunteered for Philcon, and asked for money to buy munchies. Mark said OK, \$20, charge to miscellaneous.

Leslie asked those who hold sessions to report on them in the apa. George reminded people to bring their little green books.

[Laurie, using hand signals, informed the secretary that the Red Sox were winning, 1-0.]

**Membership Rates:** Mark referred people to the membership rate options on page 6 of the last apa. These were:

- \$50 from Worldcon '87 to Worldcon '88
- \$60 from Worldcon '87 to Worldcon '88
- \$50 from Worldcon '87 to Boskone '88

Mark liked the third option: keep the \$50 rate at least until Boskone. Ellen also liked option 3. Ben said that 3 is the best of the three listed. However, do we have to set rates now? Can we defer until we get a better feel for what the Hynes will cost? Mark said not for PR 1, and PR 2 (June '87) would be too late if we want to raise rates at the Worldcon.

Ben disagreed — people expect rates to go up at Worldcon. If we don't vary from what people expect, two months is plenty of warning. Besides, unlike other Worldcons, we should get a June PR out by July and maybe even in June. Leslie agreed with Ben. We have methods other than PRs to publicize things: the Press Releases, for example. We don't have any budget yet, and we need one before we set rates. The reasons for setting rates are not compelling. Tony agreed.

Al Kent asked when the Hynes will set rates. Joe Rico explained that they keep putting it off. It probably won't be until next year. Mike liked option 2. He may be paranoid, but the Hynes will probably be unreasonable. Don likes option 1.

Mark asked if we want to set rates tonight. The vote was many to 2 against setting rates at this time.

[Laurie signalled that the Red Sox were now ahead 3-0. Priscilla complained about all this hand signalling, and asked if this was going into the apa. Jim M. said that of course it was.]

**Computer Committee:** Jim M. reported that we were in the process of buying a Macintosh Plus with Pagemaker software, a hard disk, an Imagewriter, and other associated software. We are essentially on budget. The software was a bit more than we anticipated, but the hardware was a bit less. The Mac will live with Greg until PR 1 goes to press. It will then move to the NESFA Clubhouse.

Jim M. also reported that the committee was looking at small copiers. The committee looked at our copying needs and has decided that it is not cost-effective to buy a copier to meet our big copying needs. The committee is therefore looking into a personal copier for small copying runs, to copy mail, checks, etc. It is also looking into ways to assure that the copier is not used for big copying jobs, including apa copying, etc.



The committee will have a solid recommendation in December, but anticipate a cost of around \$1000 to \$1200.

**Ben's Fan History Proposal:** Ben has talked to Gary Farber about his proposal in the last apa. It would be a bibliography of secondary source materials of fan-historical interest. It would not be a fan encyclopedia (which L.A.Con claims they are doing). It will be a good way to tell people where to start looking for information.

Ben proposed that we authorize this idea in principle, and that we ask Gary Farber to prepare a more specific proposal.

Mark said that it wouldn't be fancy, and would be similar to NESFA's Cordwainer Smith Concordance, the cost of which was under \$1000.

Various people called for it to be mimeoed or [shudder] dittoed. Suford suggested that it include 1 page of mimeo and 1 page of ditto. Rick suggested typesetting, followed by mimeo.

Sharon raised a separate proposal: Charlie Brown has said that Julius Schwartz has pictures from the 1939 Worldcon. Could we do a memory book? Ben said that L.A.Con has already authorized money for this.

Tony moved that we approve, in principle, Ben's proposal. This was passed with no objections.

Mark said that he'd like to see us do small, useful projects like this. George suggested that we talk to LA about the '39 memory book, to verify that they are doing it [they are]. Ann said that Glenn Axelrod had found tapes from N2, which we could put on line.

[Laurie motioned that the Red Sox just got a hit.]

**Computer Bulletin Board Proposal:** James Turner said that he was the sys-op of a number of nationwide SF round tables. He is also connected to SF Lovers. He volunteered to handle incoming/outgoing electronic mail for us.

Mark said that James can get comments and pass them along to us. For outgoing, we can send them to James. James noted that Atlanta did this and that Phoenix is doing this. Mark asked for a write-up for PR#1.

Ben said that the non-commercial sources (I-net) are the most fruitful. But we have to be careful. Incoming is a good idea, but outgoing could be trouble. E-mail is much riskier in terms of flame wars, and outgoing mail must be screened. Mark noted that the paper path before outgoing mail reaches James would help prevent this. James noted that he wouldn't be responding himself, except for simple info requests (our address, our rates, etc.).

Mark asked if there were any objections. There were none and the motion was passed.

The meeting adjourned. The secretary was so anxious to see the game that he neglected to note the exact time but it was at about 9:15.

## Brainstorming Session at Philcon

November 15, 1986

The first in what is hoped to be a long series of Noreascon 3 BS sessions was held from 10 pm Saturday to 1 am Sunday at Philcon. Tony Lewis acted as moderator and note taker. For most of the meeting there were about 20-25 people present. These are just a few of the more interesting points taken from four pages of notes. Remember that these are the comments from the participants at the session; sometimes not all the participants agreed.

[In speaking about the art show] Please leave major procedural experimentation to smaller regional cons. For the Worldcon, basically stick with something tested and known to work. [However, as Joe Mayhew points out in his article, methods that work at small conventions don't always work at Worldcons. Sometimes the larger size and different focus of a Worldcon force a different approach. The key is to think any changes through very carefully before implementing them.]

Some people do not like the (perceived) large percentage of items Not For Sale or at very high prices. On the other hand, it was pointed out that artists need to display good work at a large number of conventions in order to display their work to art editors, publishers, fans, and other potential buyers. They cannot turn out huge amounts of work and retain high quality.

Spread out and mix the better artists among the others. Don't clump them and don't have all the "good" artists clustered around the entrance to the show. [This also disagrees with one of the conclusions of the Smofcon Art Show Round Table. Interesting.]

There was general agreement that having the Hugos on Saturday night and the Masquerade later on was desirable.

Have an extra fee to enter the Masquerade.

There should be no at-con registration. All masqueraders must register in advance.

Have the judges spend some time in deciding. Make the awards presentation the next day as part of the program.

Eliminate all judging and prizes at the Masquerade; let the people compete because they enjoy doing it.

Let groups other than the convention give awards — film studios, comics, Burroughs Bibliophiles, L-5, etc.

The program should unite the Worldcon, not divide it.

Not all items need to be the nominal one-hour length. Different lengths can be chosen to match the material and the presumed draw of the speaker.

Attendance at many items is based upon personalities. People have requested listings sorted by person so they know where their favorite will be.

End the split between pro and fan panels. Deliberately set up panels with overlapping participants.

Write to all the regional conventions asking for a copy of the program along with whatever comments can be made about popularity of items, what worked, what didn't, who is a good speaker, who isn't, etc.

## Excerpts from APA:89

November 22, 1986

Because of the limited time available at full committee meetings, many ideas are first presented and discussed in the committee APA before coming to final discussion and vote at a meeting. There is usually one APA distribution in the interval between meetings, containing minutes, committee reports, and whatever else members submit.

These excerpts from APA:89 come with two reminders. First, unless otherwise noted, these are the personal opinions of the individual contributor, not official committee policy. Second, as with all topics discussed in these pages, please feel free to send us your comments.

In the following excerpts, italics indicate direct quotes, regular type means the comments have been paraphrased or added by the editor.

### Budgeting (Mark Olson)

*We have a basic problem: N3 needs to develop a budget which is good enough that we can begin planning. It would be very nice if we could do this in time for our next decision on rates (next spring, before the earliest possible change in rates (which is just after worldcon) so we can publicize it). Ideally, the budget would be built up from budgets developed by the areas and divisions. Of course, this isn't possible, since a comprehensive set of division heads is 6-8 months off and a nearly full set of area heads is probably a year to a year and a half off. We can't wait that long.*

*Neither do we want to get a small group of people together to work out a budget for the whole con. This would probably produce a usable budget, but it necessarily would not involve the committee very much. It's remarkably hard to modify a completed budget.*

*The idea of the budget master is to begin N3's budgeting process with involvement of as many people — both inside and outside the committee — as possible. Additionally, by asking people to budget areas they do not plan to work on, we spread the knowledge and experience around and we probably lessen the temptation to pad budgets.*

*As I envisage it, the budget master for each area would try to draw up his vision of that area: what the area does and how it does it. This is not necessarily a very complicated or drawn-out procedure. For one thing, in many cases it will be sufficient to use Boskone as an example and just draw attention to differences (size, scope, etc.) between your view of the N3 area and what you've seen at Boskone.*

*The next step is to try to put some numbers to it. This may well mean inventing some numbers (a politer term is "estimating some numbers"). That's all right, just as long as the numbers which you've invented are labeled as such.*

*Finally (or, perhaps, initially) you talk to people. But-hole people who have worked on the area you are budgeting, preferably at Worldcons, and ask them what they think. Ask them for help.*

*At the end, we will come up with many little reports with rough budgets for many areas. We'll publish them and then dissect them. From those rough budgets, we'll draw up a more uniform budget which we'll use as the basis of our planning.*

*My schedule is fairly long-range. We don't want to interfere too much with Boskone. I hope that people will sign up for an area or two before Boskone so they can keep an eye out at Boskone for how that area works. I'd like to see the preliminary budgets published in April, and I'll probably organize some sort of review in May. With a little luck, we'll have a full preliminary budget for an early June meeting at which we can set rates.*

*It's important to realize that this is only an initial planning budget. One of the first things that a newly-appointed area head will be expected to do is, in conjunction with their division head, come up with a revised budget for their area. Of course, the initial budget will be quite influential — revised budgets which differ markedly from the initial budget will inevitably come under greater scrutiny than budgets which don't.*

[Any potential Noreascon 3 staff members who would like to volunteer to work on this budget-planning process are invited to write and volunteer. Tell us what area or areas you are interested in working on and we'll get back to you with an assignment. If you haven't worked with us before, you should also mention something about your experience, groups you have worked with in the past, etc. This is a project which doesn't require that you be local in order to participate effectively. — LT ]

### Hynes Auditorium (Joe Rico)

*In a conversation with Darrell Baker, of the Hynes sales office, I mentioned the desire of everyone that we get some hard data not only on rental rates but also on associated costs of Hynes use.*

*He said we should know by early '87 what the real opening price of the Hynes will be. I mentioned that in the old Hynes, the associated costs (like guards) could be 100% or more of the rental for a user. Baker said that that type of outrageous pricing was exactly what the Hynes was attempting to avoid in the future.*

*The implication I get is that the Hynes will cost in total about 150% of the rental (i.e., rental rate plus associated costs). Stay tuned for more details.*

### Andre Norton as GoH (Priscilla Pollner)

*I'm really very very pleased that Andre Norton will actually be ours! Norton gives a certain thematic structure to N3 that seems to be exactly what we want: on the order of "How did we get here?", i.e., as individual fans (quietly reading away our childhood, often with Norton as our early friend), as a fannish subculture (50 years), sf through the years, science through the years, fandom through the years. . . . Maybe I'm just getting old and maudlin, but I think Norton is perfect.*

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## MCFI Meeting

Wednesday, December 10, 1986, at the NESFA Clubhouse, Somerville, Mass.

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The meeting was called to order at 7:35.

**Chairman's Report:** Mark Olson said that we still need more people interested in budgeting areas of N3. This is important. Every future budget will use the ones prepared at this time as the starting point. We need people to create first drafts for us to tear apart. You can guess, as long as you tell us your assumptions. For example, he prepared one for Hucksters' room, assuming 300 tables, etc. Two people can work on the same area independently if they'd like. We'll need a first draft by March or April.

Mark is also still looking for people to work on the long-lead-time ideas proposed by the Timeline Committee (this list was in the last issue of *TM3P*). He has volunteers for about 1/3 of them so far.

Mark also wanted to know if people were interested in reviving the idea of having one person collect money and go out and buy calzones or whatever for those who want to eat at the Clubhouse before the meeting starts. See him if you are interested.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ann Broomhead was sick. There wasn't anything significant to report.

**Secretary's Report:** Jim Mann reminded everyone that the copy count is 42 and that you can make your own copies. However, do not pay to have this done and then charge MCFI, since we can do it cheaper. Also, if only one or two people out of a large apa copy their own stuff, he may opt to reproduce their pages anyway to avoid the hassle of collating just for the sake of a couple of pages. If a reasonable percentage of people copy their own stuff, we will continue to collate the apa.

Jim also reminded people that he is trying to keep a master file of our important correspondence. If you write to someone on our behalf, give him a copy for the files. Also, if you phone someone on our behalf, write a memo to files.

**Preregistration:** Sharon Sbarsky said that as of yesterday we had 1553 members. Coupons are getting used. Only 162 presupporters have joined but not converted.

**Guests of Honor:** Jim M. said that Ian and Betty Balantine have confirmed that they will be our Guests of Honor along with Andre Norton. He's talked with Ian several times and he's very enthusiastic. Ian already has ideas of what he wants to do.

Mark emphasized that we do not have a Writer GoH and an Editor GoH. We have two Pro GoHs (one of whom happens to be a pair). They will get equal billing. PRs and flyers will alternate who gets top billing. Similarly, we have one Fan GoH: the Stranger Club.

**Press Release:** George Flynn said that the Press Release is next in line, now that he's finished proofing the latest NESFA book (several times), the NESFA '86 Index, etc. Mark asked George to mention Smofcon in the Press Release.

**Smofcon:** Things were vaguely near budget. We may need money to publish proceedings. Aron Insinga is going to transcribe the notes. These will then be looked at/edited by either the person who ran the session or the person who took notes. Andi Shechter asked when this would happen; sooner is better since we'll remember more details that way. Mark reported that Aron said that he wouldn't finish until after the holidays.

George asked what the attendance was. Mark said 97-101 (there were a couple of day memberships).

Mark also said that there were about 40 games left. We should keep them in print, and should offer them to NESFA to sell, splitting the proceeds 50/50. Ben said that they'll have a large market. Out-of-towners were taking them back to play with their committees. Mark said that George was talking about an expansion set. George suggested getting it reviewed; Don D'Amassa in *SFC* might. There were no objections to offering the game to NESFA as described above. [Later that week, this was also agreed to by NESFA.]

**Boskone Membership Tables:** Sharon said that she'd received a letter from Jim Hudson, Boskone's Worldcon liaison, offering us a table. It will be in the hallway outside the Art Show/Hucksters' room. This way, we can remain open after AS/H closes. Everyone should volunteer for about an hour. The sign-up sheet will be in Services, starting on Thursday night.

There are 500 receipts left from Atlanta. This was deemed sufficient. Al Kent said that Ann has lots of old receipt books if we need more.

**Philcon BS Session:** Tony Lewis said that the forthcoming APA:89 will report on the BS session at Philcon. It took about 3 hours. There were few parties at Philcon, so it worked. He was under budget by about \$4 (he spent about \$16). The attendees discussed Art Show, Masquerade, and Program. At future cons, we should try doing it in the afternoon, and look into doing it in a small program room. We may also want to restrict some people, since certain people did a lot of the talking. Sharon suggested that those who want to run one in the future should show up for one. Mark said that at Boskone there will be a couple in discussion-group format. Priscilla Pollner commended Tony on the good minutes he kept.

**Boskone Party:** Jim M. read a report from Laurie Mann. Last year, MCFI ran a very successful party at Boskone. We should do this again next year. Laurie volunteered to run the party, and requested a budget of \$70 to buy party supplies with. She pointed out that the Sunday night of Boskone is the last night before N3 membership rates go up.

Laurie also asked Joe Rico to ask Don Lawrence if the Sheraton could give us a 3-room hospitality suite for Sunday night. If the Sheraton is unable or unwilling to give us a suite for Sunday night, we should consider either asking Boskone if we could "borrow" a suite or a function room for that night, or allocating the additional money needed to rent a suite for the night.

Priscilla thought that it was a good idea. Mark said that he wanted to settle now what we do if we can't get a free suite. Dave Cantor said that, although it was a good idea, we may be burned out Sunday night at Boskone and not have the energy to run a party. Jim M. disagreed.

saying that we weren't burned out last year. Rick Katze said that he thought it was a good idea: we have a reputation for being stuffy, and this kind of thing helps disperse that.

Ben said that clearly this is something we should do, even if we have to pay. Al asked if \$70 was enough, and Mark pointed out that we would get a lot of party seed from Boskone, just like any other open party. Pat Vandenberg moved that we set aside \$350 for the suite: Susan Hammond seconded.

Mark Norton asked what type of party we wanted to throw, and reminded people that Boxboro fandom was having a Dead Dinosaur party. Would we like to merge? Priscilla said that the Boxboro party has the wrong atmosphere for what we want. Jim M. agreed, and said that the parties should be separate. Having two Sunday night parties is a good thing, and will alleviate crowding in both. Al suggested that we get nearby suites, perhaps upstairs of one another. Mark Norton said that he wasn't sure about that, since Boxboro may have to put in noise complaints about us. Jane Wagner asked if our alcohol policy was in force, and pointed out that Boxboro serves beer. Chip Hitchcock said that cons like Midwestcon were an exception, and that in general we did not serve alcohol.

Andi Shechter then asked if we wanted to combine with the Woodstockcon party. Pam Fremon said that she likes separate parties. Jim M. said that he doesn't like the Woodstock parties (since he doesn't like 60s "music" or the 60s in general) and that he would probably not come if we combined. He agreed with Pam: we should run separate parties.

\$420 for a Boskone party was allocated with no objections. Also no objections to Laurie talking to Boxboro and Andi to coordinate with their parties.

**General Boskone:** Mark summed up what we were doing at Boskone: Memberships, BS Session, the Party. Monty Wells added that we should do a presentation on the Hynes, overlooking the Hynes site. Jane Wagner asked if it was too early to put up a Gopher sign-up sheet. Mark said it was; we would do so the following year. Rick said that we have to emphasize to people that we aren't appointing anyone yet. Mark summarized our volunteer policy. Jim M. reminded people that they should tell him when people volunteer. He's keeping a database and is sending postcards to the volunteers.

Bill Perkins reminded those interested in a room block at Boskone to talk to him.

**Publications:** Mark said that there would be a flyer mailing the following week at the Mega-Collation (a combined pre-Christmas collation and mailing of Instant Message, APA:NESFA, Boskone Progress Reports, and Noreascon flyers). Greg Thokar said that PR 0.5 would be the same as PR 0, with a few minor changes (such as GoH). He said that we are also doing ads for Nolacon and Conspiracy. Mark said that our ad trades went well. He also said that Sharon is working on a letter to go out with the PR 0.5s that are going to presupporters and voters.

Greg said that we'll be slipping PR 1 by about a month. We still hope to have it for Boskone. We're missing about 5 writeups, from people outside of the committee. C.J. Cherryh is writing something on Norton; Fred Pohl will probably write something on the Ballan-

tines. Greg hopes to have a dummy of PR 1 in about 2 weeks.

Greg also said that he had a PR 1 work session. He said that his modem had died, and that he had borrowed Don Eastlake's acoustic coupler. It worked, but was a bit noisy. Susan, Pam, and Sharon helped.

We have received lots of ads for PR 1, including Conspiracy, LA, maybe Holland, ArmadilloCon, Orlando, and Ron Ontell.

**Hotel:** Mark said that the Marriott doesn't want to give us half the hotel as a room block. Don and Joe Rico weren't there yet, so we deferred further hotel discussion until one or the other would arrive. Chip said that the Marriott would be more reasonable if we wanted the whole hotel, which we could probably use.

A bit later, Don said that he hadn't gotten any more details from the Marriott.

**Computer and Gadgets Committee:** Jim M. said that the committee had finished looking at small copiers. Essentially, small copiers come in two flavors, those that are cheap to buy but somewhat expensive to run (Canon) and those that are somewhat more expensive to buy but cheaper to run (Sharp). The latter is also a bit cheaper to repair in the case of major problems (scratched drum). The price difference we're talking about is \$800 vs \$1200 and about 1-2 cents a copy.

In analyzing our copying costs (remember, we're only talking about incidental copying, not large numbers of copies) we have opted for the cheaper-to-buy Canon. (A sale on toner cartridges at Staples makes this even more attractive.) We'd like to allocate \$800 to buy the best Canon we can get for that price in the next month. We'll be watching sales, since sometimes you can get a two-steps-better model for the same price as the scaled-down model in a sale. We do know that, even without a sale, we can get a good machine at Staples for \$800.

We'd also like to allocate \$100 additional, in case a Sharp or whatever comes on sale for about \$900. We haven't seen any this cheap so we probably won't spend this \$100. However, the extra hundred would be worth it if we could find one, since it would save operating expenses. We'd also like to allocate \$200 for supplies (toner, paper, etc.).

In summary, Jim said they wanted to allocate \$1100.

Al asked how much a scratched drum would cost. Jim said about \$200. Susan H. added that, for the kinds of things we'll be copying, we can ignore minor drum scratches.

Sharon asked how long does it take to make a copy? Jim M. said he didn't have a figure on this, but that it should be fast enough for our needs. Mark and Ben both came up with figures of around 8 copies per minute. Ben said another advantage of the Canon is that, other than the drum, the things that can break are all in a replaceable cartridge.

Pat asked about the lifetime. Jim M. said that this wasn't a concern, since it was more than sufficient to last us up into the final couple of months. Plans for the last few months and at con still call for a larger, probably rented, machine. Mark Norton said that the Canons are good for about 100,000 copies.

Alex Layton asked about the shelf life of the toner. Jim said that it was long enough, and we were only buying a year or two's supply.

Paula asked if Canons will still be around in two years. Mark pointed out that there are 100,000 of them out there, so they will continue to be supported.

The \$1100 was approved with no objections.

Jim M. said that Mark also asked the Computer and Gadget Committee to look into buying a waxer, though it is Mark himself who has done almost all the work here. A waxer, for those who don't know, is a machine that puts hot wax on the backs of sheets to be pasted up. It would significantly simplify and speed up both MCFI's and NESFA's paste-up operations. We could also use it at con, in conjunction with the Mac, to make signs.

Jim requested \$650, the cost of a new one. We will, however, over the next month, look for a used one to see if we can save some money.

Sue advocated a Sharex (?) brand waxer. Monty said we should allocate an extra \$50, so we could afford a top-of-the-line model. Leslie asked why a 9-inch model wouldn't work. Mark said that it makes paper jams/crinkling less likely. He talked to Krissy, who said that we need a 12-inch waxer for the kinds of things we're doing. The 9-inch models are intended for narrow columns (newspapers, for example). Alex asked about other things we also need, such as glass rollers. Monty said they may come with the waxer.

Pam asked if MCFI has talked about the money needed to build a copier/computer/equipment area in the clubhouse. Mark explained that NESFA will do this for MCFI as part of our tenancy agreement. He explained current plans for setting up a partition in the back room.

There were no objections to allocating \$700 for the waxer.

Jim M. said that Greg has been using his personal modem with the Mac, to enable him to read in things typed elsewhere. This modem just died. A new modem can be purchased for about \$200. We'd therefore like to allocate \$200 to buy one. (This is a recent development, and we haven't had time to look for the best prices. We will, so the actual price could be a bit less, though it also could be a bit more.)

Priscilla asked where the modem will live. Jim said at the clubhouse. Mark said that it is part of the computer. Jane asked if the same modem can be used for both the Mac and the IBM-clones. Don said it can, given the correct cable. Al asked if it is worth fixing Greg's old modem. Greg said he is now looking into the cost. Peter Grace asked if we'd looked into a 2400-baud modem. Don said the price is about double. Paula Lieberman said that \$200 is a bit much, and that she's seen ads for cheaper ones for the IBM. Don said that the lower prices are for internal modems.

\$200 was allocated, by a vote of many to Paula.

Pam will be using the Mac at Boskone to produce *Hel-muth* (the daily newsletter). It will be available for use when Pam isn't using it. Likewise, the copier will be available for use at Boskone.

The purchase of our next computer, the prereg AT, probably won't happen until after Boskone. Remember: the XT Sharon is now using is the general-purpose machine that will move to the clubhouse early next year. At that time, we'll also move the Mac and the NESFA computer. NESFA has looked into methods for making these somewhat inaccessible to passers-by and invisible from the outside.

We adjourned sometime around 9:00.

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## Discussion on Committee Organization

December 10, 1986

[An open discussion on the structure of the Noreascon 3 committee was held following the MCFI meeting on December 10. This report is a condensed version of notes written up by Pam Fremon.]

Mark Olson opened the session by summarizing Jim Hudson's discussion on Noreascon 3 structure in the October APA:89 (and in *TM3P* 15). Jim H. had said that in comparison to N2, fewer of the people available now were qualified to be division heads, and more were qualified to be area heads. He suggested using a "Chairman's Staff," which pre-con would be like an academic Visiting Committee which would review and critique the plans of each area, and at-con would take on the role of chairman's clones. The chairman's staff would be the prime troubleshooters at-con; something usually done by Ops.

Mark then asked Leslie Turek to summarize her response to Jim's discussion in the same apa. Leslie said that she basically agreed with Jim, but that she felt the chairman's staff should function more as staff than as clones. She also felt that their pre-con role should be less adversarial than a "visiting committee," and more as a source of help and advice for the division and area heads.

There was some discussion of whether the division heads could fill this staff role. It was pointed out that division heads are mainly concerned with the operation of their division; the chairman's staff would be thinking globally. The two areas require different skills. Some people wouldn't want the day-to-day hassle of line management required of a division head. At the con, the division heads should remain free of other responsibilities so they can help out if any of their areas have problems.

Some people suggested that there should also be sub-division heads, because some of the divisions might contain a large number of areas. Others felt this would create too much overhead and tie up too many people in management positions. The right internal structure might depend on the circumstances of the particular division.

A number of people mentioned the need for good communications; both down through the division heads to the area heads, and between the area heads — even when across division boundaries.

Leslie felt that we should try to foster some commitment to the goals of the over-all convention, rather than encouraging a narrow commitment to a particular area. Budgets should have a convention-wide consistency, rather than giving each area a pot of money and letting them decide independently how to spend it.

There was discussion of the skills required for Chairman's Staff. It would require people familiar with the entire con workings who could make reasonable judgments. This would require their being in touch with the con planning in the final year.

There was some discussion of how the Chairman's Staff differs from the traditional Ops area. It was pointed out that many questions come to Ops that Ops cannot answer, because the Ops people are generally not included heavily in convention planning. Andi Shechter said many people like to work Ops precisely because they *don't* like the planning stage, preferring the at-con hands-on work. The Ops staff should serve as information carriers and problem finders, but the chairman's staff should have the background to be more effective as problem solvers.

Dalroy Ward pointed out that the chairman's staff will have to start working on the con much earlier — unlike Ops, they can't walk in two days before the con and start. Leslie said that they will have to be people with whom Mark is comfortable working. They should probably be recruited, rather than asking generally for volunteers.

Mark asked how many people are we talking about? The answer seemed to be three to five. Perhaps two staff people could be teamed with two traditional Ops people.

Rick Katze wondered if a large group (division heads plus staff) would cause at-con meetings to last two to three hours. (Twelve people  $\times$  ten minutes each equals 120 minutes.) Leslie said that N2 at-con meetings, held over lunch, were usually quite short. Not everyone spoke; only exceptions were reported. Most decisions had already been made and just needed ratification and dissemination. Time was allowed for sharing amusing stories to aid morale.

Mark said we need to have the structure settled by mid- to late summer, including the outline and who the division heads are. How will we get there?

It was agreed that it was a chicken-and-egg problem, since the people available will determine the division structure to some extent. Leslie said a lot of people don't know what a division head's job involves, since Boskone doesn't use it. Ben Yalow said it's hard for a division head to learn that he's a piece of the overhead and doesn't *do* anything. Also, many people are reluctant to ask directly for a job.

It was agreed that although we shouldn't rule out the possibility, we must recognize that having out-of-town division heads would be a major impediment to smooth communications. Out-of-towners would have to visit the area several times a year, and would have to find a local clone who knows the way they think. It is inevitable, however, that we will have out-of-town area heads. Dalroy suggested that we consider having more weekend meetings so out-of-towners can more easily attend them. Tony Lewis has suggested having a few weekend retreats.

Andi suggested having people each make a list of ten people who they think would make good division heads and give it to Mark in confidence. Mark endorsed this idea, and requested people to do so.

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## News Release / December 14, 1986

by George Flynn

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This is the second in a series of occasional news releases from Noreascon Three, the 47th World Science Fiction Convention, to be held in Boston, Mass., on August 31–September 4, 1989.

\* \* \*

**Pro Guests of Honor:** Noreascon Three is happy to announce its Professional Guests of Honor. In order of confirmation (see below), they are:

Andre Norton

Ian and Betty Ballantine

Andre Norton should need no introduction, having been a pillar of the SF field for well over 30 years. She is the author of close to 100 books, and her juveniles in particular introduced many readers to science fiction. We are delighted that she has agreed to accept this honor.

Ian and Betty Ballantine are pivotal figures in the history of science fiction publishing. Among many achievements, probably most significant was their founding of both Bantam Books and Ballantine Books, two of the most important SF paperback houses. As one of our committee put it, "Without Andre Norton half of us wouldn't be reading SF; and without the Ballantines half of what we've read wouldn't have been published."

(Our apologies for the lateness of this announcement, which we had hoped to make much earlier. But we were waiting for confirmation of our guests' acceptance, and it seems the letter to the Ballantines got lost in the mail. . . .)

**Fan Guests of Honor:** As announced in our Progress Report 0, Noreascon Three's Fan Guests of Honor will be the members of the Stranger Club, the first SF club in the Boston area. Thus far we have heard from the following members, all of whom hope to attend:

Louis Russell Chauvenet	Harry Stubbs
Chan Davis	R. D. Swisher
Timothy Orrok	Art Widner

**Membership Figures:** As of December 10, Noreascon Three has a total of 1541 members (1022 Attending, 519 Supporting) and 12 Children's Admissions.

**Publications:** A flyer updating Progress Report 0 (with new information on Guests of Honor, advertising rates, etc.) is being mailed this week to all of our members and presupporters. Progress Report 1 (magazine-sized) is in preparation, and should be out in early February if all the material comes in on time.

Meanwhile, *The Mad 3 Party* continues to appear, on such a regular (bimonthly) schedule that some of the information in this news release has already appeared in it.

**Personnel:** The committee's officers (Mark Olson, Chairman; Ann Broomhead, Treasurer; Jim Mann, Secretary) were re-elected by acclamation at the annual meeting in October. The following appointments have been made:

Australian Agent	Carey Handfield
United Kingdom Agent	Colin Fine
Member of WSFS Mark Registration and Protection Committee	Donald Eastlake

**Smofcon:** 99 people attended Smofcon 3, the more-or-less-annual conference on SF convention management, which was held Dec. 5-7 in Lowell, Mass., under the auspices of Mass. Convention Fandom Inc. (the organizing body of Noreascon Three). Numerous brainstorming sessions and general discussions were held (we hope to publish the proceedings at some later date), huge quantities of chocolate were consumed, and the convention-running game "If I Ran the ~~Zoo~~ . . . Con" was premiered to general hilarity. A silly but productive time seems to have been had by all.

Smofcon 4 will be held in Columbus, Ohio, on Nov. 20-22, 1987. For information write to: FANACO, INC., c/o Liz Gross, 376 Colonial Ave., Worthington, OH 43085.

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## Excerpts from APA:89

January 14, 1987

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### Market Research (Jim Hudson)

Say Boskone has 3,000 preregistered. Randomly select 5-10% and send them a letter precon offering \$10 if they fill out and send us a questionnaire and hour-by-hour diary of the convention. Consider doing this for the same percentage of at-the-doors, if you really want a full sample. This might cost us \$2000, given likely response rates, 90% of it in checks written post-con. More if we repeat at Brighton.

What's it get us? Like all market research, it basically tests how well we understand our market (the attendees), and the needs of that market should affect our allocation of resources. For example, we'll get an idea of how concentrated our members are on a single activity (for example, working, games, films, etc.) vs. how dispersed they are. We'll know whether "Everybody goes to the art show" or the hucksters' room. There is information we'll get which has been unavailable to conventions to date, and it's relatively easy to get. I think this would be a good way to spend some of our money.

### Hucksters' Room (Jim Hudson and Ellen Franklin)

Why do we provide furniture? Tradition, or is there a real reason? The standard trade show sells floor space, and lets the buyer or an exhibit company do the customizing (tables, chairs, carpets, partitions, etc.)

A standard trade show sells 8'x10' or (less commonly now) 10'x10' spaces. The exhibitors do the finishing, often buying services (power, etc.) and items from an exhibit company. As an exhibitor, you get a list of the options, check off the things you want, send in a check (we don't have to handle those), and then the materials are provided.

Compared to our providing standard furniture for everybody, and charging for it, those providing their own materials (bookshelves, for example) would save. Those

buying from the exhibit company might break even or pay more.

One argument against this idea is "design standards." At this point, Worldcon shows look like something between a flea market and a crafts show, with a few good-looking booths and a lot of weak display. Over time, convincing the hucksters to do their own furnishing will help the quality, but we run the risk of more uglies than usual — picnic tables and the like. We could set some show standards (height, strength of tables, etc.) if we want, but I'm not sure it would be worth the bother.

Anyway, I think we should sell floor space and let the interested parties (dealers and exhibit suppliers) worry about what goes in those spaces.

### The Art Show (Jim Hudson)

I heard a lot of support at Smofcon for various Art Show refinements. The goals are the same as ever: maximum opportunities to view art, particularly the best art, and to buy it (which helps both artists and buyers). And we want to do this with minimum work.

So what did I hear that's different? First, and most important, dissatisfaction with having to search through miles of art to find the "good stuff" whether as a viewer or a buyer. Even if we keep an "open to all" philosophy, we need to solve this for a Worldcon show.

Second, I heard comments that the really troublesome labor problems were the artist-setup crunch and the closeout-sales-auction crunch. Hangings setup and tear-down came a distant third, largely because it happens when more people and time are available.

Third, I heard talk about whom the art show should report to, whether it should make money, where to get competent leaders, various parochial discussions of recruitment ("give the art show workers perks to compete better with the other areas for volunteers"), location of key staff, and the like. I see these as being issues in convention management, having nothing specifically to do with the art show and applying equally to other large areas. I won't deal with them any further in this contribution.

Finally, there was much discussion about dealing with artists — from attitudes of the Program organizers to simple hassle reduction in bringing in art. Those are all useful, but not my major interest here.

So, let's consider how to make the Art Show better and simpler. Here's a proposal:

1. Split the Show into 2 parts: A **juried** section (maybe 20%) containing the Hugo nominees and others who we accept; and an **open admission** section (the rest). The juried section would be:

- segregated
- with commercial hangings and lighting
- and a higher fee, though perhaps free for Hugo nominees.

Jurying would be done by a select group of judges (i.e., us) based on applications by the artists. We'd probably take the 10+ Hugo nominees (pro and fan) and about 30 other artists, and maximum space for an artist might be the same in both parts of the show or higher in the juried. We'd jury early enough to handle fees, etc. pre-

con. though it would increase pre-con work. Say, an application deadline of March 1, 1989.

What does this gain us? A way for the viewers with limited time to see the best the field has to offer, while keeping the opportunity for the full range of artists to be in the show. I think the gains are easily worth the obvious hassles.

2. Split the sales procedure: I'd use the "traditional" written bid, closeout, and auction procedure for the juried show, probably with a lower count to auction (5 bids?) because of the expected higher average prices and smaller show (1/2 of a Boskone, in that part). I wouldn't even move pieces to auction. Since they'd be in a small part of the show, video could be used as a reminder, reducing effort and risk of damage. If you did closeout at 6 on Sunday and had the auction Monday at 11, you could even play the auction "catalog" on the video program Sunday night and Monday morning.

But I'd be radical for the open admission show. All pieces would be priced, and you could buy a piece at any time after the show opened (though not remove it until pickup time). This spreads sales for 80% of the show over the whole convention and, as described below, separates purchase from moving the art, one reason for the large sales areas we have required in the past. Essentially, 1-2 people at a time with cash registers could do most of sales, and that's much simpler to organize and staff than the massive short-term requirements we have now.

3. Now for the Paperwork: Consider a 4-part good NCR bidsheet. The piece information would be similar to the current system, for both parts of the show. The artist would hang the work, price it, and attach the bid sheets. We would remove Set A to serve as "Master sheets" and Set B to serve as the artist's receipt.

For the juried show, bidders would bid on sets C/D (D should be card stock to make this easy). After closeout, when they want to pay, they go to the piece, get part C (or maybe both C/D) and take it to the cashier. The cashier uses a cash register to enter the piece number, the buyer number, and the price, and generates a tape with the total for all pieces. We have the internal tapes for cashing out the cashiers and our records, or the same in electronic form if possible. Thus, no tally sheets. The receipt tape is the buyer's record and is used for checking out the pieces at pickup time. We keep the bidsheet copies as our record of sales.

The checkout person worrying about art makes sure that the receipt with bidder number matches the number on the piece and the remaining bidsheet copy, and keeps the bidsheet to show that the piece was removed (signed by buyer, probably). Artist checkout is just done the same way, with copy D signed by the artist at the checker.

The same procedure works for the open show, except that the purchase can be made at any time and we'll have to be able to assign buyer numbers at the cashiers (in slow periods, at least): you mark copies C/D of the bidsheet with your name, take copy C to the cashier, and trade it and money for a receipt tape. When checkout occurs, you collect your pieces, your receipt tape(s) have

the piece and bidder information on them, and those get compared with the remaining bidsheets and back-of-piece numbers to get you signed out.

For early removal, or pickup without receipt, there will be methods, but they will cost time for those who need these services. This is as it should be.

Basically, I have 4 principles here:

- Segregation by quality
- Distribution of sales over the length of the show
- Simplified paperwork
- Minimum movement of the art once hung (i.e., no movement by us)

I think they'd result in a better show with fewer at-con management hassles and considerably fewer staff required (2/3 - 3/4 of the standard). I'd expect a lot of heated comment from artists and buyers if we went this way, and I'd want to test the paperwork idea at a Boskone show, but I think the approach hits a good balance among the interests of the attendee, buyer, artist, and concom.

### The Masquerade (Jim Hudson)

It seems to me that there are two major contributors to the length of the Masquerade — the costume show time (number of costumes × time per costume) and the judging period. I'll talk about the former below, when I'm discussing the quality of the show. Here, let me talk about the real time waster — judging. The current judging system requires a committee to talk about the costumes and agree, and this can take a long time. More important, it takes an undefined amount of time, which is unacceptable.

I have two radical alternatives. The first and simplest is what I call the "dog show" model. We have, at this point, 12 (2 × 3 × 2) categories of costumes (for fun, call them breeds):

- Group or individual
- Master, Journeyman, or Novice
- General or Recreation

The set of awards is also limited: we will only choose a winner and honorable mentions for each breed, and then a best of show.

This model has 1 judge for each breed. Judge A only looks at Novice Recreation Individuals, Judge B at Novice General Individuals, etc. Each judge keeps, at all times, the top three costumes in the breed: X is better than Y is better than Z is better than (the rest). This is easy enough to do, particularly if we have an assistant providing Polaroids as reminders, and give them sheets on the costumes as they are presented. At the end of the presentations, we know the First and 2 HM's for each breed, and can call them up without any wait for more judging.

First, we call up all the firsts for each breed. The judges have preferential ballots for choosing Best of Show, and they fill them in. Then, while those ballots are being counted by our staff, we leave the firsts at backstage and bring the HM's up to get their awards and back off. By the time that is done, we will have counted up and selected 3rd, 2nd, and Best of Show and the MC can give those awards. Net result: no more than 5 minutes judging delay.



You miss some things, unless you make them either side awards or new breeds: most humorous, best workmanship, etc. You may also have an easy category because of few entries (novice group general), and the "First" there could be weaker than others. But the approach is an efficient one for choosing the best in each category and the best overall. This is a radical change, but one that would work.

Now for a less radical version, the "Olympic judging." This is not as efficient as the above, but should reduce overhead time for judging to 15 minutes as worst, basically by limiting their choices.

1. Choose judges willing to work, in advance and at con.
2. Give awards in categories (First, HM, etc.) but not with funny names or any distinction (i.e., no "Most Humorous," only an unallocated First).
3. Try to minimize the number of breeds.
4. Decide what qualities interest us (Truth, Beauty, etc.) and design and test (using past masquerade videos) a first-pass weighting scheme. This will not be easy, but should be possible. Within a category, we probably use something like 10 = best you've ever seen, 1 = hopeless.
5. Provide the scoring procedures to the costumers in advance.
6. Provide the scoring procedures and past videos to the judges in advance and get each to score at least one past masquerade. This will help them set their bounds, and be consistent through all costumes.
7. At con, do this again, using a video they haven't had. Go through the full process, to get them working together.
8. At the masquerade, have each judge score a blank form for each costume. Have three scorers:

- 1- The collector collects the forms from each judge after a costume is scored and numbers them with the costume number.
- 2- The recorder takes a Polaroid of each costume and keeps them sorted by costume number to go with the Masquerade program.
- 3- The data clerk uses a portable PC with a spreadsheet, set up in advance to convert the detail into weighted scores by judge and category and overall, and to sort those top to bottom.

With all data entry and computation in real time (easy), you get the scores by the time the judges exit. At that point, you limit the discussion to the following:

- 1- Is the one scored "Best of Show" really it, or should one of the nearby ones get that award?
- 2- Should some Firsts be switched to HM or vice versa?
- 3- Should one or more of the nearby also-rans be made HM?

You use the computed scores as a first pass, and make marginal changes from that point, rather than starting the discussion when the judges exit. I've worked with this sort of system, and it's quick. We definitely don't want numerical scores with no human intervention, but we can do a lot with using numbers to assist us.

Limiting the number of costumes:

It seems to me that we are willing to accept 120-150 minutes of costumes, to get a 3-hour show with either of the above judging systems. I think we should time some past videos to see the distribution of presentation times and the amount of waste time between costumes. We should be able to get enough under various strict and open "presentation" rules to see what the net effect of those rules is on total length. But I'm assuming that we will decide that our show should be limited to something like 60-75 costumes. We would like them to be the highest quality 60-75 we can get from our population of costumers.

There are a lot of ways we can try to do this. For example, the best argument I've heard in favor of requiring pre-con registration is that it will get the best quality because those costumers will be doing preparations and will know in advance. I'm not sure about the correlation, so this seems pretty dumb to me: I'd rather try to control for quality directly.

Obviously, you can promote quality through education (panels, etc.), but some fans have undeserved chutzpah and will enter the masquerade anyway, leading to 4,000 people watching dreck. That's not acceptable.

So I'm back to my earlier proposal with variations. I think we should jury the show: you get in by

1. Being a "master"
2. Submitting great slides pre-con, so we let you in
3. Entering the open masquerade and "graduating"

[Jim's earlier masquerade discussion proposed a daytime open masquerade in a smaller hall and with limited technical or lighting support, for those costumes that did not qualify for the main evening event. The winners of this open masquerade would be eligible to enter the main evening masquerade.]

The only people who have extra time in costumes are those in category 3, and that should be no more than 10-20 costumes. We have an open masquerade for the masquerade fans, and a juried show for the general fans. There are a lot of pre-con details, such as:

- Writing to all the Masters we can locate, giving them a drop-dead date for getting in automatically as a "master." This gives us a count of the number of such costumes.
- Timing of slide submissions and notifications, so we can use the count of masters to decide how many to accept at that point.
- Number we decide is the right maximum.
- How we can staff the "open" masquerade, though I'd assume limited technical options there.
- The continuing issues of rehearsals, tech rehearsals, and use of the hall for the masquerade.
- etc.

I'd do a bunch of other things, if possible: I'd love to post 8x10 glossies of the winning costumes, which is probably workable only if we either have the Masquerade Friday or bring a portable color lab on-site. I'd schedule the show to minimize time-in-costume (a good idea that's worth continuing). I'd put it Sunday night, etc. Overall, though, I have 3 goals for our Masquerade compared to

past ones:

- I'd make it open to all
- But make the part with the big audience limited to 60-70 high-quality costumes with reasonable presentation times
- And greatly shorten the judging step so the whole show is under 3 hours.

### Special Exhibits (Mark Olson)

The long lead time for Noreascon 3 gives us a chance to do things that don't seem to work at Boskone. For example:

- I had wanted to do an exhibit for my Boskone on how a book gets published, with graphics and samples of manuscripts, etc. At N3 this might fit in very well with the Ballantines.

- For some time I've wanted to see an exhibit of NES-FA Press's publications — over the years it's amounted to quite an impressive collection. In fact, an exhibit which includes a number of the other older fannish small presses (Mirage, Advent, ??) would be great.

- Jill Eastlake came up with an idea of creating a section of one of Bloch's worlds for my Boskone. Time (and a lack of any readily identifiable worlds connected with Bloch) made that impossible, but N3 is a different matter. Andre Norton has some of the best-known worlds around. We could have an exhibit of art connected with Norton (cover paintings, etc.). We could see if we could get a definitive bibliography of her work published, perhaps with some critical writings. How about a concordance? There must be some good costumes from her worlds — perhaps a costume exhibit like at N2, but specialized for Andre Norton?

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## Letters

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### Whither the Worldcon?

- Neil Rest, Chicago IL:

Wonderful exposition [on bidding finances]. Yes, if table stakes were lower than a couple years' income, there might well have been a challenge to Boston in '89.

While the elements of ego-boo in Worldconning are much the same, the staggering costs of bidding are directly related to the immense size of the Worldcon, and the stunning proliferation of locals. While there are important consequences, the costs of bidding aren't a first cause.

Using the important definition of Science Fiction as what's on the shelf in the store under the sign that says "science fiction" (that is, a marketing category, the sense in which Gernsback "invented" it), the burgeoning popularity of science fiction is very largely the addition of new subcategories of merchandise. There's been a tremendous amount of beating around the bush on the issue of these new things to be fanatic about. The seventeenth-century-circus tendency obviously has limits, even if it's not clear how close to them we are. Besides tending toward collapse, it produces the factory outlet of escapism where as many huckster tables are selling chocolates as books (not many). Facing, and trying to deal with, the fact that what used to be the dog has become the tail (commercial-

ly, at least), and talking about reading, immediately is branded "elitism."

I strongly feel that the question is not whether fandom and cons will change, but how, and with what premeditation and control. Will 'trufen' abandon the current con circuit for smaller, less-publicized cons? Will someone create a Worldcon bid explicitly oriented primarily toward the printed word? Will some maniac administer a literacy test for admission? [See page 3!] Will the whole thing get desultory argument until some sharpie makes two million dollars off a Worldcon, laughs at us, and screams?

"Science fiction" has had a lot of new kinds of merchandise added. "Fandom" now includes the enthusiastic consumers of that merchandise. I don't know if "reading" fandom has the cohesion to deal with the situation, but the choice is between dealing with it or being steam-rollered by it.

I was delighted with the quality of some of the discussion of issues Bermuda Triangle was able to provoke. I'll certainly keep loccing TM3P, if only with routine curmudgeonry, as long as you can keep this conversation going.

The question of what is a science fiction convention, and what is it for, has to be answered all over again.

May you collect this year on the dues you paid last year.

- Garth Spencer, Victoria BC:

[Garth is editor of *The Maple Leaf Rag*, 1296 Richardson St., Victoria BC Canada V8V 3E1]

I was very interested to receive *The Mad 3 Party*. Perhaps in no other area besides Worldcon-bidding and -running does fan activity demand so much scrupulous attention and financial control. I'm happy to see this documented — I've been concerned for some time to find out how some fans do things effectively.

The next *Maple Leaf Rag* carries an article by one Michael Skeet of Toronto, reacting mainly to the rumors of a Toronto bid, and generally to the problems of bidding for, let alone running, a Worldcon.

I live in a city of 170,000 people, on an island, serviced by ferry lines and one airport. I think that severely limits both the possible size of the local fan community, and the possible size of any local con. Hotels here are not particularly set up for 5-10,000-member conventions. Yet four years ago, some mediafen proposed to put on a convention of up to 2,500 people in two hotels in Victoria. That may sound feasible out there but it didn't out here. Ever since the fiasco, I've been trying to get people to examine their resources, both in capital and experience, measure them against what their objectives are, etc., etc. — through MLR.

I wonder sometimes if a newsletter can do this job (raising fan consciousness). It's taken me three years to figure out that maybe my circulation level is a factor. Has your experience been more encouraging? I hope so.

I've put your zine on a list I maintain of newsletters that look at conrunning. After three years of asking, your zine is one of the first sources I've obtained that give some notion of where cons get their capital . . . let alone how to manage it. (There seems to be a conspiracy afoot to withhold commonsense information from publication, at

least in Canada. Or maybe I make people think I'm psychic. Lloyd Penney has given you more facts about the TO and Winnipeg bids, for instance, than I've received from him — and he's one of my more productive correspondents!

One commonsense bit of information that I haven't seen printed is: what is a Worldcon for? Yeah, I know, a con is for fans to meet each other and to meet pros, but . . . at 8,000-member attendances??! I suspect Worldcons are for fans who like to attend BIG events. (Cons in Canada run to 300–600 members, and no higher than about 800.) Alternatively, why run a Worldcon? I suspect there are rewards in it, for some kinds of people. I didn't see Lloyd Penney, or the editor, ask whether such people exist in Toronto or Winnipeg.

Also, from the last File 770, I get the impression that the rewards of attending/running a Worldcon aren't the rewards attendant upon a "normal" con; that Worldcon-running specifically has rewards attendant upon the contiguity the concom enjoys with members of other Worldcon committees — a contiguity that the Aussiecon committee could not enjoy. This would not be a problem for a Canadian Worldcon committee, if they are put in touch with the relevant community in the States — and that is not a foregone conclusion; I put it to you that most Canadian fans are out of touch. [Joke]

I raise these points because I haven't seen them raised elsewhere, for Worldcon bids generally, or Canadian bids specifically; and they bear closely on whether a Worldcon is well planned and executed for its purposes.

Finally, if (as you suggest) a Worldcon has other functions besides generating money, I'm afraid that they haven't gotten into print; and I don't believe Worldcons are actually meant to burn out fan communities, as I gather they tend to do, in practice. It's my understanding that Toronto fandom got burned out by at least one of the Torcons (in 1973).

Maybe it's obvious that I raise such questions 1) because I haven't been to any Worldcons (Did someone say "parochial"? I thought someone would), and 2) because I was attached to the Mylescon group. I suppose everyone's gotten the point that Mylescon was trying to convey — Worldcons are ridiculously large, from one vantage point. From what little I've read, Worldcons combine features of rock concerts, twelve-ring circuses, arms bazaars, Old Home Week with the Hell's Angels (teenybopper division), county fairs rolled up and held indoors, Playboy mansion house parties, the Japanese invasion of Singapore, and every existentialist play ever produced. [Other Joke] I had enough of that in high school.

Be that as it may, however; your history of the Boston in '89 bid seems to show me that Worldcons require an extreme of care, and afford a lot of lessons for similar events of any size. So I look forward to seeing more issues of The Mad 3 Party. Maybe you will enjoy to see Maple Leaf Rag, when it finally arrives (this January's issue is going to be seriously late). Maybe my irrelevant questions about the whole purpose of Worldcons will provide some innocent merriment. And maybe the horse will learn to sing.

[Neil and Garth both ask questions about the Worldcon that don't have simple answers, although that's not to say we haven't thought about them a lot.

Back in the days when SF didn't have the legitimacy it enjoys (?) today, and when Worldcons drew less than 1000 people, the Worldcon really was a "gathering of the clan" — the once-in-a-year time when all the fans who could afford it got together in one place to celebrate our love for science fiction. As SF started to be accepted, and the Worldcon started getting larger, our first feeling may have been one of vindication (maybe we weren't so crazy after all if all these other people agree with us), and pleasure that we could share our enthusiasm with others (the missionary effect).

Then the Worldcons started getting uncomfortably large, but what options did we have? Passing judgment on any sector of fandom as "unworthy" to participate in the Worldcon just doesn't come naturally to people who, not so many years ago, were considered to be outcasts themselves.

Boskone has been dealing with this same issue. In some sense it is easier for a local con to set a more limited focus as, unlike a Worldcon, it doesn't have the same sort of responsibility to fandom as a whole. But in the debates on eliminating this or that "fringe" area from Boskone, we keep discovering that many of the people who participate in that area are members of the club — "real" fans who do other things as well. (We have met the enemy and they are us.) So what's to be done?

As to why we run these things, that's another question that has a lot of answers. In fact, reading the history of our bid in the last issue inspired Priscilla Pollner to list some of them in her last apa contribution. Here are a few: "because it's there," "it feels good to do something well," "egoboo," "the desire to *not* allow others to mess it up," "curiosity regarding trying out new ideas," "the challenge," not to mention "it feels so good when it's over." I would add a couple of my own motivations, "personal growth (learning how to do new things)," and "fellowship with the committee." So I don't think there's any one "type" of person that Worldcon-running appeals to — many people could find one or more of these rewards in the process. (Whether they decide it's worth the effort required is another story.)

Garth asks if a newsletter can raise fannish consciousness. Obviously I believe that it can have some effect, or I wouldn't be doing this. Fannish consciousness has a lot of inertia, and I don't expect that any one individual can turn it in an entirely new direction. But I think that lots of little pushes can have some influence.

I have two goals with *The Mad 3 Party*. The first is to make Noreascon 3 better, both by getting input from the members into our decision process, and by explaining these processes so that public opinion will support our decisions. The second is to illuminate this approach to con-running (both the specifics and the process itself) so that other cons and Worldcons might benefit from it.

Of course circulation matters — not only how many, but who. In that, I am lucky to be supported by an organization, since we can afford to send free copies to influential people such as fanzine editors, Worldcon bids and committees, etc. I'm hoping that a lot of these peo-

ple are reading it, but I don't really know for sure.

Another element of importance may be humor. A lot of these details are pretty boring in themselves, unless you're fanatic about the subject. I think the most effective approach is to leaven the material with some lighter touches, to make it more interesting reading. Mike Glycer is a master at this, which is one reason why *File 770* is so widely read. — LT ]

### Worldcon Guests

- Lloyd Penney, Toronto Ontario:

*Announcing your guests right after you win can be iffy, especially if your announced guest dies or leaves the field in the intervening years. Also, your announced guest may lose popularity in those years. Give the people who will be coming to your con something to look forward to by announcing at the previous year's Worldcon who your guests are. Then again, your guest might also be approached by another Worldcon, and when the potential guest has to refuse, the secret's out.*

[My proposal was to defer even asking the guest until shortly before you plan to announce. That way, the guest would not have to worry about keeping a secret. — LT ]

### Membership Numbers

- In the last issue, Lloyd Penny commented on the fact that ConFederation assigned their Canadian members a block of numbers starting with 2018, regardless of the fact that many Canadian members joined early. Sharon Sbar-sky responds:

*As Noreascon Three's PreRegistration person, and in helping with the ballot counting, I was given ConFederation membership lists by name and number. I discovered that the initial batch of numbers were in zipcode order. They probably didn't "number" people until they did their first mailing or got their computer set up. The first sort they did was probably on zipcode, so that was how the numbers came out.*

*The following is how I assigned membership numbers for Noreascon 3: I reserved 12 numbers for Guests of Honor (not knowing how many Strangers we would get). The next 30 were randomly given (drawn out of the Mad Hatter's hat) to the MCFI committee members. Next*

*came all the Friends who had joined, in reverse alphabetic order. After that, it got more complicated. Voters who were Presupporters or Preopposers were in the next batch, followed by the rest of the voters, each batch in reverse alphabetic order. The non-voters were likewise divided into two batches, with the Presupporters and Preopposers first. The numbers were initially assigned in the beginning of November; members who joined since then were given numbers in order.*

### The Game

- Nancy Atherton, Hallandale FL:

*Thank you for sending me The Game! So overjoyed and enraptured am I that I burned two batches of Christmas cookies last night whilst perusing it for the first time. Could not put it down!!! A bestseller if I ever saw one! Congratulations!*

*To comment on the authenticity of the situations is probably superfluous by now, but I especially love those in which any choice you make loses points. I could feel my little heart piping, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" whenever I hit one of those, while my stomach tied itself into those old, familiar knots.*

*Maybe the most beautiful thing about The Game is the way it keeps generating ideas after it's over. My mind was racing with "What-if's" after my first run-through and if that happened to me, with my limited experience. I can only imagine the scenarios it prompted in more fertile memories. I think that's what you hoped for, that The Game would be a beginning rather than an end in itself; a way of getting people to see Worldcons as a complete, connected process, with long-range causes and effects, in which ya gotta spend something to get something. If that's true, congrats again, because in my humble estimation, you've achieved that goal with humor and wisdom and grace rather than a baseball bat.*

[We've also heard that "The Game" was played extensively on the West Coast and in Texas over the holidays, and that some of the Texas fans have experimented with putting together a computer variant of it. I have to admit that I'm thrilled by the enthusiastic response! — LT ]

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*The Mad 3 Party #16*

Massachusetts Convention Fandom, Inc.

Box 46, MIT Branch PO

Cambridge MA 02139

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