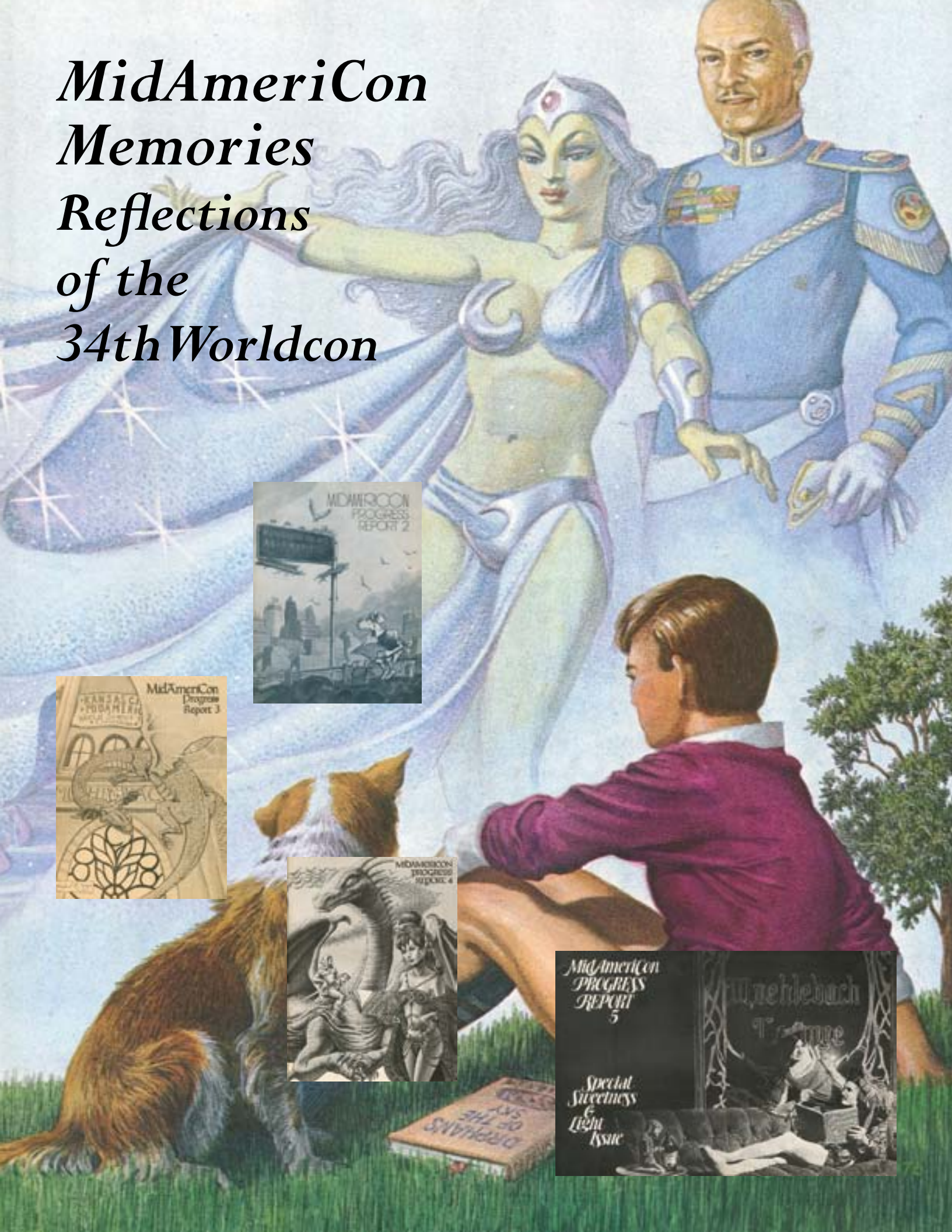


MidAmeriCon Memories Reflections of the 34th Worldcon





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This section of Progress Report 1 provides a look back at the first MidAmeriCon in 1976. We have reprinted some of the articles included in their progress reports with intros and footnotes from MidAmeriCon Chairman Ken Keller. Also included are photos taken that weekend and a reprint of a Star Wars ad placed in MidAmeriCon's publications. We hope you enjoy this blast from the past as we step into the future.

Tomorrow is now.

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Ken Keller, Chair of MidAmeriCon
(Credit: Fred A Levy Haskell)



In addition to your name badge, MidAmeriCon gave members hospital bracelets to deter counterfeit badges

Publication Notes

MidAmeriCon II has been thinking long and hard about how progress reports can take a step forward. Our paper format has a b/w printed interior to help ensure that costs are kept low. For full color interiors, please check us out online at <http://midamericon2.org/>

For more information see the 2015 side of this progress report.



Photos taken at MidAmeriCon
(Credit: Fred A Levy Haskell)



How the Grinch Stole Worldcon

In which Bill “The Galactic” Fesselmeyer takes potshots at Practically Everybody

INTRODUCTION BY KEN KELLER

Rereading the late Bill Fesselmeyer’s “How the GRINCH Stole Worldcon,” I was struck by how witty and clever it still is today. That’s always the hallmark of great pieces of fannish writing. They withstand the test of time, well beyond the era that produced them. It’s been 40 years since GRINCH first appeared in MidAmeriCon’s Progress Report #2 (1975).

By the very early 1970s, the World Science Fiction Society (WSFS) Constitution was being routinely modified every year by motion and vote at the Worldcon business meeting. These changes often fostered debate and confusion, sometimes creating loopholes. This process continued well after Discon II, where Kansas City had won its bid to host the 1976 Worldcon.

During an early MidAmeriCon comcom meeting, held downtown at our hotel the Radisson Muehlebach, I began what I thought would be a proforma discussion: under which version of the WSFS Constitution should MAC choose to operate? I was expecting a quick slam-dunk decision on this from the 25 to 30 comcom members present. To me, Discon II’s revised constitution seemed the logical choice. Fans being fans, however, what ensued was anything but slam-dunk. Bill Fesselmeyer pointed out what I had also realized: under the current WSFS rules we actually had several options. He elaborated, and soon the discussion became so convoluted that meeting chair John Taylor banged his gavel, tabling further discussion. He then proposed and had approved a motion appointing Fesselmeyer a one-man committee to sort out all the relevant facts for the next comcom meeting. Fesselmeyer complied, ably sorting the wheat from the chaff, coming fully prepared the next month. A short, timed debate then followed. I then moved the motion and a vote was taken. MAC adopted Discon II’s revised constitution as our own.

Bill’s imagination, however, didn’t stop after that comcom meeting. His fannish research had fueled a pervasive train a thought that he just couldn’t shake. Driven by a wild surmise, Bill took his clever notions to the limit, writing what became one of the great fannish parodies, this one about MidAmeriCon and Worldcon business meetings. It was then published in our 2nd progress report. Since then, over the years, GRINCH has been reprinted several times in fanzines. It’s also been reprinted in the anthologies *Alternate Worldcons* (1994) and *Again, Alternate Worldcons* (1996), both edited by Mike Resnick.

And now, once again, it’s back home in a generational MidAmeriCon II progress report. My my, what goes around certainly comes around!

REPORT OF THE SPECULATIVE FICTION RESEARCH SOCIETY TO THE 10th WORLD SPECULATIVE FICTION CONFAB ON THE SUBJECT OF ADOPTING A CONSTITUTION

The sudden demise of “fandom,” the predecessor of the enthusiast state so many years ago, can be traced directly to the Constitution of the World Science Fiction Society—or rather to the

multitude of mutually contradictory and ambiguous constitutions adopted. In fact, one of the few coherent stories that comes down to us from the even fewer survivors of that period immediately before “All Fandom Was Plunged Into War”¹ is the rather bizarre episode of the mail ballot that never got mailed.

In order to explain the various crises caused by the constitution it is necessary to understand that, although most of

the time there were three current constitutions in effect, there was never a constitution to which a convention committee could be bound.

This sad state of affairs arose because a convention site was chosen two years before it was held. The convention committee was supposedly bound only by the rules in effect when they made their bid. However, in the same year they won the right to host a “world-con,” a

How the Grinch Stole Worldcon (continued)

new constitution—or parts thereof—would be adopted. Also, the next year, at the intervening convention, still another would be adopted, superseding all previous constitutions. By the time the convention was held there were three different constitutions in effect.²

It was not uncommon for a provision to be voted in one year and immediately voted out the next—before it ever became operative in the third year. (Convention committees in the first and second years following would declare that the rule was adopted after they won their bids so they were, therefore, not bound to obey it as they had pledged to uphold only the constitution in effect when they won.) If, however, a committee liked something in the new constitution that was contrary to the constitution in effect when they won, they would merely declare that, as long as it had been approved anyway, the fans were entitled to have their legally voted wishes carried out at the earliest opportunity.

The converse was also true—if a procedure was out, the committee could still use it, claiming that it was permissible when they won the bid.³

Eventually this state of affairs became so chaotic convention committees were using parts of all three (or four) pertinent constitutions they liked, and refusing to be bound by portions they didn't. Toward the end, one committee simply declared that the three constitutions in effect had mutually conflicting provisions, so they had no other choice but to use their own best judgment. They then proceeded to do all sorts of things not provided for in any of the constitutions—and several that were prohibited by at least two of them.⁴

Keeping in mind, then, this system of constitutional anarchy, this is the story of the mail ballot that was never mailed—and how it led to the GRINCH stealing worldcon.

In 1974, at Discon II in Washington D.C., a Kansas City group won the right to host the worldcon in 1976. They, however, were bidding under the constitution adopted the year before in Toronto. At the Discon II business session a constitutional amendment was adopted to the effect that any future “perfected proposals” approved at a business meeting had to then be submitted for ratification to the membership of the next following convention. It also specified that this was to be done by mail, and that the next following committee was responsible for counting the ballots before such proposals could become effective.

It may be noted that a small group of people rammed this amendment through the poorly attended business meeting by a vote of 32-22.⁵ This amendment was apparently motivated by the fact that the next convention was to be held in Australia, thus out of the reach (and control) of most U.S. fans who could not afford to attend in person.

The Australians, by every account nice people and well-liked by all, were not slow to see that this move was directed at them, and decided to use the new constitution adopted at Discon II. Accordingly, they sent the amendments approved at their business meeting to MAC (Kansas City apparently did not make a pleasing acronym, so it was called MidAmeriCon, or MAC) to be ratified by mail ballot.⁶ MAC promptly shipped them back, saying the rule was not in effect when it had bid, and it

had no intention of conducting such a mail ballot.

Furthermore, MAC informed Aussiecon, it wouldn't consider approval by the Aussiecon business meeting enough for adoption; the constitution the Australians elected to use clearly stated that a mail ballot had to be conducted for ratification. It was also their opinion that Aussiecon was incompetent to run their own mail ballot as the constitution stated that the next committee had that responsibility. The only concrete suggestion they had was that Aussiecon pass the mail ballot on to the 1977 convention. The 1977 committee would be obligated by the Discon II rules as those were the rules in effect when that committee bid, and that no changes could be allowed until the Aussiecon ballots could be mailed for ratification.

The Aussies thought this was pretty silly, but consented to do so in order to fulfill their obligations under the constitution they had chosen.

The problem came when the business meeting at MAC⁷ repealed the mail ballot requirement.

The 1977 committee had grudgingly accepted the ballots for ratification, but delayed mailing them until the last possible moment.⁸ The 1977 Hugo ballots were not mailed until after MAC; the 1977 committee decided (following fannish tradition) to abandon the Discon II constitution and adopt the MAC constitution; they returned the ballot to Aussiecon.

In a desperate gamble the Aussiecon committee forwarded their amendments to the winning committee (1978) at MAC, only to have them returned with a



"I have wrought my simple plan
If I give one hour of joy
To the boy who's half a man,
Or the man who's half a boy."

--Arthur Conan Doyle's preface to "The Lost World"

STAR WARS, a live-action space adventure-fantasy, involves the search for a kidnapped rebel Princess, and a confrontation with the dark forces of an evil space empire.

Through thousands of light-years come the unusual exploits of hero Luke Skywalker and his friends, flesh-and-blood space pilots and mechanical robots, as they battle numerous villains and creatures in a massive Galactic Civil War. This story has no relationship to Earth time or space. It takes place in other solar systems in another galaxy and could be in the future, the past, or the present.

Young Luke Skywalker is accompanied by his robot companions R2-D2 and C-3PO; the tough starpilot Han Solo; the seven-foot, fur-covered Wookiee, Chewbacca; and the venerable old warrior, Ben Kenobi.

Three different worlds become settings for the series of colorful adventures and thrills. They travel from the large arid planet of Tatooine to the huge man-made planet destroyer, Death Star, and finally arrive on the dense jungle-covered fourth moon of Yavin.

Director-writer George Lucas has created a majestic visual experience of extraordinary worlds. The Panavision Technicolor motion picture is produced by Gary Kurtz for Twentieth Century-Fox release and was made on locations in Tunisia and at EMI Elstree and Shepperton Studios, London, over a 17-week schedule.

Lucas and Kurtz, the successful duo of AMERICAN GRAFFITI, have acquired an outstanding production team, including production designer John Barry of A CLOCKWORK ORANGE fame and director of photography Gil Taylor of Alfred Hitchcock's FRENZY and Twentieth Century-Fox's new hit, THE OMEN.

John Stears, production special effects supervisor in London and Academy Award winner for the James Bond film, THUNDERBALL, designed the robots, land vehicles and planned the explosions. At a hidden warehouse in the United States, special effects miniaturist John Dykstra will take full advantage of some new advances in computer-controlled stop-motion animation. Matte artist Peter Ellenshaw, Jr., carries on a great family tradition of a relatively unknown motion picture art form.

Other important production members include make-up expert Stuart Freeborn who designed and made the ape costumes for 2001 and editors Marcia Lucas and Richard Chew. Ms. Lucas was an Academy Award nominee for her work on AMERICAN GRAFFITI and Richard Chew was a nominee for an Academy Award for his work on ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST.

STAR WARS stars Sir Alec Guinness as Ben Kenobi, Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, Harrison Ford as Han Solo, Carrie Fisher as Princess Leia Organa, and Peter Cushing as Governor Moff Tarkin.

STAR WARS will be introduced prior to the film through other forms of media. The novelization of STAR WARS by George Lucas will appear in December from Ballantine Books. Other Ballantine books will follow, including a sequel by science-fiction writer Alan Dean Foster, a book on the making of STAR WARS, and a volume of production illustrations on the film.

In March, Marvel Comics will begin a series of six monthly comic books based on the story of the film. Writer-editor Roy Thomas and artist Howard Chaykin will translate the film to illustrated pages in one of the most unique renditions of film to comics in Marvel history.

How the Grinch Stole Worldcon (continued)

note to the effect that, as the mail ballot had been repealed, they were not going to waste time and money on two-year-old amendments that had already been superseded by the MAC constitution under which *they* had elected to operate.

At this point the Australians, in disgust, put all the profits from Aussiecon into a trust fund. The purpose of the fund was to send the ballots to every World Science Fiction Convention Committee in perpetuity until one of them consented to mail it. The second generation of Trust Fund Administrators is still mailing them out, year after year, to each succeeding World Speculative Fiction Confab Board of Governors, apparently believing them to be the heirs to the Worldcons.

That is why today the mere mention of how the mail ballot counting is coming will send old-time spec-fic enthusiasts into fits of laughter. BOGs of Confabs refuse to waste their time and money on such an antiquated mail ballot—besides, it has become somewhat of a enthusiast tradition: no winning BOG feels official until it gets the ballots from the Australian solicitors.⁹

This, then, was the state of affairs before “all fandom was plunged into war,” a war which achieved almost 100% casualties, either through “fatiation” or “gafiation.”¹⁰ Because of the state of confusion regarding the WSFS constitution, one committee was actually able to “steal” the Worldcon—the GRINCH (GR and Island, Nebraska, Chonvention).¹¹

In a situation reminiscent of the episode of the mail ballot, a bid was won by a foreign city—Vienna (AustraCon)—and, not being entirely void of learning capacity, the WSFS readopted the

Discon II constitution during the same con at which the Vienna bid won—thus binding the committee winning after AustraCon to actually mail the AustraCon ballots. (Vienna had promised in advance to use the Discon II constitution were it adopted.)

GRINCH won the next year and, of course, having bid under the Discon II rules, could be held to them. AustraCon could not abolish the mail ballot without using the mail ballot, so everything looked rosy.

The Austrians made one mistake, however. They held the business and site selection meetings conjointly. The GRINCH, quoting articles 3:01 and 4:01 of the Discon II constitution¹² declared that, as the site selection was part of the business meeting, the winning city, Newark, had to be ratified by mail balloting of the GRINCH members.¹³

An Austrian court held that “Moved—Newark hold the Worldcon in. . .” was indeed a perfected proposal and must be submitted to the GRINCH members. The court also prohibited AustraCon from disbursing funds to Newark until after the mail ballot.

There was already considerable ill feeling between the GRINCH committee and the Newark committee, and this is the act that “plunged all fandom into war.” At that time a very large number of people were involved in a culty sub-movement centered around a television show Lost in Space. Thusiasts of straight spec-fic felt these so-called “spacies” were not interested in the rest of the spec-fic genre or in the convention as a whole, but were coming to the Worldcons in such numbers as to make the cons overcrowded and unmanageable.¹⁴

The GRINCH committee shared this feeling and had already stated there would be no spacie programming allowed at their convention. Needless to say, this announcement had crystallized resentment among the species, or “spacetics,” as they preferred to call themselves, who had put together the Newark bid and had won. It is obvious that very few species had bought memberships to GRINCH which, although not excluding them, had little to attract those not interested in mainstream spec-fic. They were then faced with the fact that anti-spacies would have the right and power to ratify or reject the Newark bid. Species immediately began joining GRINCH (and at a substantially higher price because of an escalating schedule of rates). In fact, they mounted such a campaign to save Newark it is estimated that in one month they doubled the total membership, and quadrupled the treasury.

GRINCH infuriated the species by the simple tactic of delaying the registration of all these new members until after the mail ballot was rushed out, returned, and counted. It was a rare spacie, indeed, who was allowed to vote on the Newark question.

A U.S. Federal Court declared that there was nothing in the constitution that required the GRINCH committee to register people promptly, and that sending out the mail ballot was allowed by the Discon II constitution.

More than a little annoyed at the personal harassment (not to mention the lawsuits) directed their way by the species, GRINCH refused to refund any membership fees. Furthermore, when it found that several species had

How the Grinch Stole Worldcon (continued)

stopped payment on their checks, they prosecuted. Courts at all levels held that they had every right to do so. There are legends of convicted spacies publishing “fanzines” from their cells.

The Austrian court was persuaded to turn over the funds which would have gone to the winning bidder under section 3:05 of the Discon II constitution.¹⁵ An appeal by Newark was unsuccessful.

Newark next got a “show cause” order why GRINCH should not poll the Society by mail. GRINCH had it quashed with a two-fold defense: first, that GRINCH was then only a couple of months away and there was no time, and second, that a lot of their time was being taken up answering Newark’s other lawsuits. The court agreed that time indeed did not allow and that the GRINCH committee should (under the rules of the constitution) decide what to do about the next year’s convention.

Of course, it decided that GRINCH II was in order and immediately booked a hotel—but not as large as the one they were using for GRINCH I. Then they announced that, based on advance registration for GRINCH I (over half of which were spacies who had bought supporting memberships in an effort to save Newark), the facilities were not large enough to host a convention with unlimited attendance. They chose to limit it, with the exception of those who had already bought full memberships to GRINCH II, to “By Invitation Only.”

After another trip to court, it was decided that, as GRINCH I had the responsibility for throwing the disrupted convention, the committee could not be reasonably expected to choose a site outside its own area, and that they

had made a binding contract with the hotel. The courts also held that a suit to prohibit GRINCH II from being “By Invitation Only” was without merit as virtually all conventions operated under such an arrangement.

While most of these actions were still in court, GRINCH I took place. Almost no spacie sympathizers attended and, as a result, the GRINCH business session passed a completely new constitution. The new constitution did away with the geographical rotation plan for Worldcon sites; abandoned the mail ballot for site selection; decreed that the site selection would be one year before the convention was held¹⁶; and did away with the mail ratification of the actions of business meetings.

As was to be expected—because of the extremely large spacie membership in GRINCH I—the site selected for the next convention after GRINCH II was for another spacie bid: this time in Los Angeles (LosTCon). The mail ballot ran 14 to 1 in favor of the Los Angeles site. However, GRINCH I followed the lead of AustraCon and held the site selection and business meetings jointly—which gave them the right to have LosTCon ratified by the membership of GRINCH II.

As the membership of GRINCH II was “By Invitation Only”—plus those who had bought memberships at GRINCH I (which included only a handful of spacies)—all the amendments were ratified, with the exception, to the surprise of absolutely no one, of LosTCon. This again threw the responsibility of arranging the next Worldcon onto the shoulders of the surviving committee: GRINCH II. As the mail ballot had not been sent out until the last possible moment,

and had not been counted until late in the summer, the Federal Court once again ruled that time did not allow for the polling of the Society, and that the surviving committee should make the decision.

GRINCH II chose to make the constitution adopted at GRINCH I effective immediately, as per article 4:01¹⁷ of the Discon II constitution, and announced that elections would be held at GRINCH II to see where the next Worldcon site would be.

To back up for a moment, another significant event took place which was, as the old expression goes, “the last straw” in the demise of fandom. At the same time GRINCH I was being held in Grand Island the spacies, to protest what they considered to be high-handed treatment by the GRINCH committee, organized a “RumpCon” in Newark. Some rather nasty things were said about GRINCH at RumpCon, both by the committee as a whole and by individual members. Some of these remarks were printed in the daily convention publication in a sort of inquiring reporter column.

As a result, the GRINCH committee sued the RumpCon committee, the authors of the remarks, and every registered member of RumpCon for libel and slander. The courts held that, as an unincorporated body, the members of RumpCon were individually and collectively liable for damages, which was assessed at a very modest \$1,000 a head. However, the membership of RumpCon was slightly more than 20,000, which brought the total value of the judgment to more than twenty million dollars! The amazing part is that GRINCH did collect 15 million dollars.¹⁸ The other five million was used as bargaining power against the other attendees, who had

to sign an agreement never to write, publish, sell, or attend anything having to do with Lost in Space again. This fafiated almost the entire spacie movement, and did fafiate every publishing spacie, leaving the remainder of the cult with no means of contact.¹⁹

At GRINCH II even those spacies who had bought full memberships at GRINCH I, and were eligible to attend, did not show up. As a result the membership consisted almost entirely of those who had received invitations. GRINCH I passed on all its surplus funds (which exceeded 15 million dollars, as the committee members magnanimously donated their shares of the damage settlement to the convention). It is said that GRINCH II was the most lavish Worldcon ever. The sole surviving member that we have been able to locate, one Bob Tucker, whenever asked about the GRINCH II strategy, will only make an arcane gesture and chant, “Smooooooth!”

At the site selection meeting, a surprise bid (although apparently known of by all the invited members) was made for Venezuela by a group that did not appear and who would identify itself only as “The Masters of Secret Fandom, Inc.” The Venezuela bid won rather handily, and shocked the attendees by naming fifty professional guests of honor and two hundred fan guests of honor—for whom all expenses would be paid.

Of course, they had known in advance that the GRINCH II committee would pass on their surplus funds, which after convention expenses still totaled almost 15 million dollars. The MoSF announced that MatildaCon²⁰ was to be by invitation only, as was GRINCH II. It later turned up in an examination of

the incorporation papers of the Masters of Secret Fandom, Inc. that those august personages were none other than the GRINCH committee members.

The Masters of Secret Fandom, living up to their name, chose not to reveal even which city in Venezuela MatildaCon was to be held. They claimed that it was nobody’s business but the members—and they would be told when they received their invitations.

The next year, known invitees to MatildaCon were asked where the next convention would be held. Their answers should by now be predictable: “If you are invited, you will be told.”

MatildaCon was the last of the recorded Worldcons—after it, none was ever announced again. There were rumors that it had been dissolved, and there were rumors that it was still being held annually, but only invited members knew where—and they had to take a vow of secrecy or they would never be invited to another. In fact, there is a enthusiast legend that the Masters of Secret Fandom still exist today, keeping an eye on us to see how we develop, and in the meantime are still holding the World Science Fiction Convention annually.²¹

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen of the 10th World Speculative Fiction Confab, the SFRS recommends that no constitution more complex than the one submitted should be adopted, for fear that the enthusiast state, like all of fandom before it, be plunged into war.

Respectfully submitted,

E. E. “Doc” Seuss
(Chairman of the committee to consider adopting a constitution.)

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION FOR THE WORLD SPECULATIVE FICTION SOCIETY

Article I Do good.
Article II Avoid evil.
Article III Throw a confab.

FOOTNOTES

1. It is odd how they all used the exact same phrase.
2. Plus, in some aspects, such as financial reporting after the convention, they might be affected by anything passed at their own convention, bringing the total number of operative constitutions up to four.
3. This was, of course, all perfectly legal.
4. One committee, for example, awarded itself the Hugo for best “fanzine” in the previous year for its own Progress Reports.
5. This amendment ironically provided that no longer could a small group of people ram an amendment through a poorly attended business meeting.
6. Aussiecon had printed the ballots at their own expense, even.
7. MAC was still operating under rules not requiring a mail ballot to amend the constitution.
8. (4:01) Such perfected proposals, if approved by a majority of those present, shall be submitted by mail ballot to the entire membership of the Society by the next following committee, no later than the nomination ballot for Hugo awards, for ratification or rejection by a majority of those voting.

How the Grinch Stole Worldcon (continued)

9. Perhaps similar to the tradition the World-cons had of passing the gavel.

10. FAFIA: Forced away from it all; GAFIA: Getting away from it all.

11. CHonvention is sic; fans would often put an H in an inappropriate place, such as chonvention or “can of bheer”—in a moment of levity, the SFRS voted to consider sticking an H in a can of beer worse than sticking in a straw.

12. (3:01) The Society shall choose the location of the Convention to be held two years hence at a meeting held at an advertised time during each World Science Fiction Convention. (4:01) The Society shall conduct business at a meeting held at an advertised time during each World Science Fiction Convention.

13. See footnote 8.

14. It was said that some species would travel half way across the country to see an episode for the 123rd time.

15. With sites being selected two years in advance, there are therefore at least two Convention Committees in existence. If one should become unable to perform its duties, the surviving Convention Committee shall determine what to do, by mail poll of the Society if there is time for one, or by decision of the Committee if there is not.

16. Instead of two years with another convention intervening.

17. “If ratified, the amendment shall

take effect at the end of the next convention, unless the Committee of that Convention (which is administering this mail ballot) chooses to make it effective when the vote is tallied.”

18. They settled with the insurance company of the studio that produced *Lost in Space*. According to SFRS investigation of old TV Guides, the program had been off the air for years, although a Saturday morning cartoon version was still on. That studio was foolish enough to have purchased a membership to RumpCon.

19. Stories have come down to us that some of the species switched their allegiance to another defunct TV show called *Star Trek*.— Thusiasts find this too incredible to take seriously.

20. There never has been an adequate translation of that name into mundane, but one thusiast reports that there was a folk song popular in the 1950s and 60s to which the chorus went: “Matilda she take de money and run Venezuela!” If this is the reference for MatildaCon the MoSF were indeed adding insult to injury.

21. There is some slight proof that this might be true—Bob Tucker, last known survivor of GRINCH II, disappears for about a week every year around Labor Day and will say nothing about where he has been other than “Smooooooth!” Also, one thusiast who reprinted part of the libelous comments from

RumpCon received a letter shortly thereafter saying that to knowingly repeat libel is libel, so desist or else. Interestingly enough, it was signed “The Masters of Secret Fandom” and was on paper that bore the “GRINCH XIX, The 75th World Science Fiction Convention” letterhead. Although it may have been a hoax, the thusiast desisted.



A PROPOSED CONSTITUTION FOR WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS

BY BOB TUCKER

INTRODUCTION BY KEN KELLER

When not writing professional mystery and science fiction under his “Wilson Tucker” byline, Bob Tucker pursued a parallel passion which spanned more than a half-century. He became one of science fiction fandom’s best known fan writers, fan editors, and convention personalities. The “fannish pro” label certainly applied to Bob and his long career.

In science fiction fandom’s published histories, Bob is credited with introducing *humor* into 1930s fandom’s often “sercon” (i.e., serious and constructive) young and frequently humorless sub-culture. Using his natural affinity for wit, satire, and parody, his writing was frequently published in the era’s hectographed and mimeographed fan magazines, including his own. These low-circulation efforts were referred to as “fanmags,” sometimes being abbreviated in print as just “fmz,” and were the life-blood of science fiction’s slowly growing pocket universe. (In fandom’s evolving fanspeak nomenclature, the term “fanzine” was not coined until 1940.)

Forty years ago, MidAmeriCon’s toastmaster Bob Tucker read Bill Fesselmeyer’s essay “How the GRINCH Stole Worldcon” with a good deal of amusement when it first appeared in MAC’s Progress Report #2. Being mentioned in it only spurred on Bob’s imagination, honed to a fine edge by decades of fannish writing. Inspired by its tongue-in-cheek bravado, Bob went on to compose a similar though shorter take on the frequently beset and ever-changing World Science Fiction Society Constitution, offering a completely new take on it, Tucker-style, for MAC members to ponder. This first appeared in MidAmeriCon’s Progress Report #3 (1975).

In 2006 Bob passed away at age 91. The WSFS Constitution, through the annual WSFS business meetings, is still beset with changes every year, forty years after Tucker first set his humorous brickbats to paper. Reading it again carefully, I wonder... was Bob Tucker’s real intention so many years ago to actually show science fiction fandom a way out from under Worldcon’s unending *Robert’s Rules of Order*-governed tyranny? Read on, MidAmeriCon II member, it’s never too late for us to implement Tucker’s diabolical plan!

Preamble: We, the victimized science fiction fans of the United States and its many Colonies around the world, in order to form a more perfect series of conventions, establish justice for the downtrodden fan, insure the privacy of room parties, provide for the common thirst, defend ourselves against hucksterism, promote the welfare of the sponsoring committees and their groupies, and secure the blessings of hedonism to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and impose this constitution on the backs of future committees and their heirs or assigns.

Article One: All previous and now-existing world convention constitutions shall be abolished, together with their Societies, and no provision of them shall be binding upon the present. Objectors to this Article shall suffer the penalties of defenestration.

Article Two: The general purpose of a world convention shall be to gather together in one place, or two hotels and a municipal auditorium¹ if that is not possible, all those rugged individualists who do not read science fiction but who pay lip service to it by: publishing illegible fan journals, composing pseudo-

science stories, collecting garish cover art and lesser illustrations, trading comic books, selling back-issues and scarce books at astronomical prices, stealing artifacts they cannot afford, praising shoddy anti-science films, encouraging infantile television programs, criticizing unread novels, toadying to ego-swollen authors, and by exhibiting themselves in public places as slave girls, belly dancers, bug-eyed monsters, mutants, off-worlders, belligerent apes, pointy-eared aliens, rocket jockeys, mythical magicians, errant knights, slans, mad scientists, faery queens, and Ming the Merciless.

Article Three: Yang the Nauseating² is.

Article Four: Every world convention committee shall schedule a business meeting, and publicize the time and place of that meeting before the final session of the closing day, but said meeting need not be held in the same city where the convention is meeting. The convention committee may, at its discretion, impose a head-tax on those attending the business meeting.

Article Five, Section 1: World conventions shall be held annually, or more often when practicable, anywhere within the geographical confines of the forty-eight continental States; except, that they may be held in either of the two remaining States, or in the Colonies overseas, when the sponsoring bodies at those foreign locations provide free transportation to and from a United States coastal port; and further, when the sponsoring bodies at those foreign locations persuade the current sitting committee to allow their bid to be debated in open meeting. For such purposes of persuasion, guile, threats, and bribery may be deemed permissible behavior.

Section 2: There shall be no particular order of progression from one convention site to the next³, and any sponsoring body at any city within the geographical confines of the forty-eight continental States may bid for a convention at any time of their choosing, providing only that they notify the chairing officer of the business meeting before the close of that meeting, and before the results of the balloting, if any, are announced.

When the sponsoring bodies at foreign locations make such bids, the Colonies of Great Britain and Australia shall enjoy preference and priority; providing, persuasion provided to the sitting

committee as outlined above shall have been paid in United States currency.

Article Six: George Scithers⁴ shall be parliamentarian in perpetuity of the business meetings, or longer if he chooses.

Article Seven: All sums of money obtained by and from the membership fees, auctions, art shows, huckster tables, program sales, head-taxes, fines, duties, and imposts of every nature shall remain the sole property of the sponsoring committee; and further, their unpaid debts remaining after the close of the convention shall not be due, but shall be binding on the next committee.

Article Eight: All program offerings including workshops, panels, special meetings, dinners, speeches, movies, chalk talks, award ceremonies, auctions, demonstrations of magic and legerdemain, guest appearances, costume extravaganzas, television and film previews, seminars, juggling exhibitions, debates, business sessions, bidding and balloting, cockfights, dancing, honorary teas, dum-dums, club meetings, art shows, body-painting, light shows, huckstering, opening and closing ceremonies, meet the author parties, tightrope walking, duelling, autographing sessions, genre lunches, banquet, Hugos, Elmers, lectures, slide shows, filk singing, parachute drops, and trivia quizzes may be omitted from the program at the discretion of the sponsoring committee; except, that one orgy per night shall be mandatory. Film and television cameramen shall be barred from these last activities.

Article Nine: Inasmuch as these Articles are deemed enough in themselves, and this Constitution held as a perfected whole, any and all Amendments are prohibited.

FOOTNOTES

1. MidAmeriCon's programming was held in its two main hotels, the Radisson Muehlebach and nearby Phillips House. Two of its larger evening events were held in the nearby Music Hall in Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium.
2. The name that the late fantasy and science fiction writer Robert Lynn Aspelin adopted for his activities in both the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) and in science fiction fandom.
3. During the original MidAmeriCon era, a Worldcon bid city had to fall within three defined North American geographic zones that rotated east, midwest, and west, the cycle then repeating. Overseas Worldcon bids were allowed during any year, regardless of the rotation zone. This 1975 essay offers proof-positive that Bob Tucker was the first fan to propose dropping the three-zone bidding rotation system decades before this action was finally adopted for Worldcons by a vote of The World Science Fiction Society (WSFS).
4. For many years, the late George Scithers was not only a well-known fan, but a Hugo Award-winning fanzine editor, a Worldcon chair (1962), a small press book publisher (Owlswick Press), and a frequent Worldcon business meeting parliamentarian; he once again served in that capacity in 1976 at MidAmeriCon. Scithers was also a twice Hugo Award-winning professional editor (*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine*), a twice World Fantasy Award-winning professional editor (*Weird Tales* magazine and for Life Achievement), and a professional book anthologist.

Photos from Big MAC

David Dyer-Bennet



Photos from Big MAC (continued)



Photos from Big MAC (continued)

