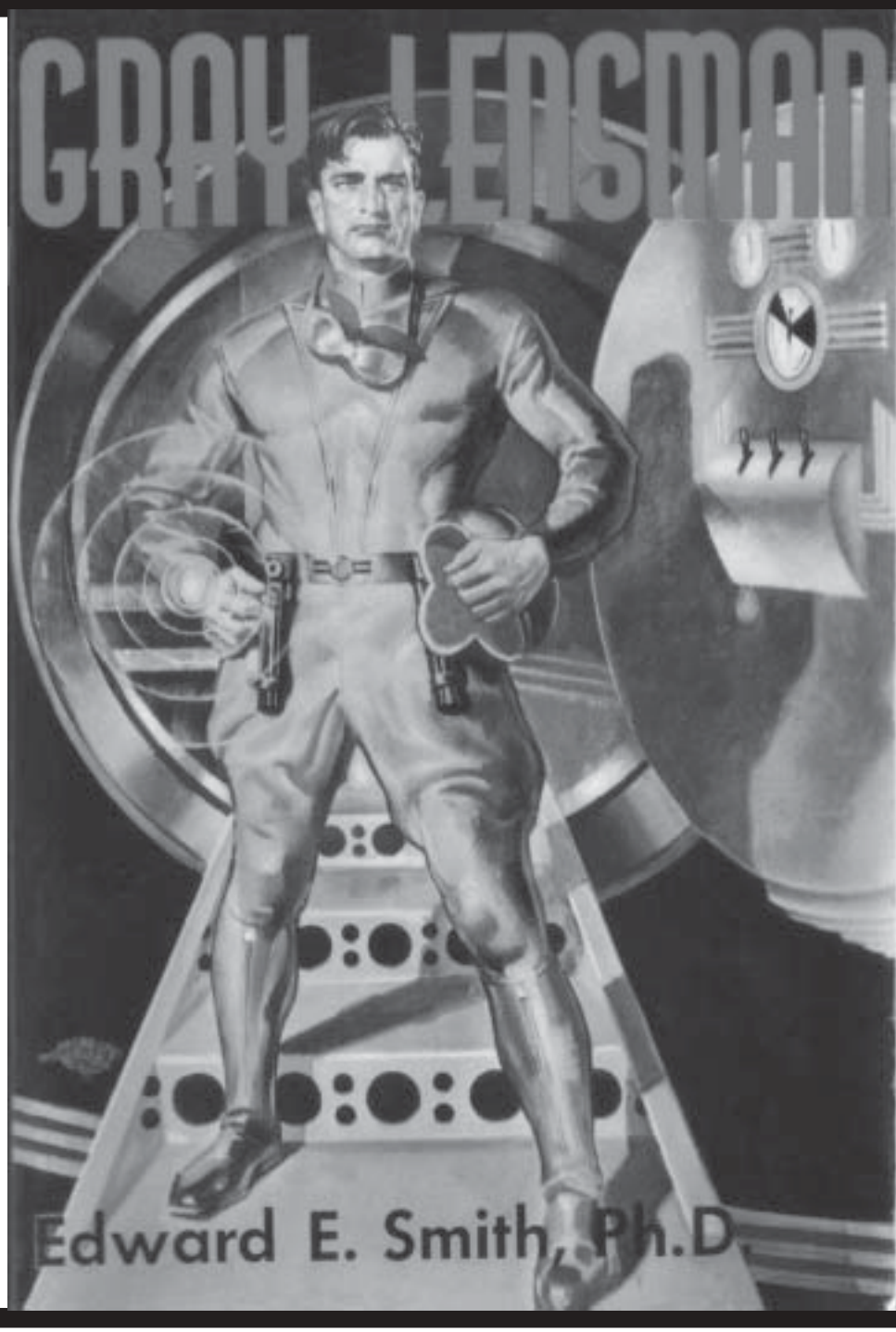
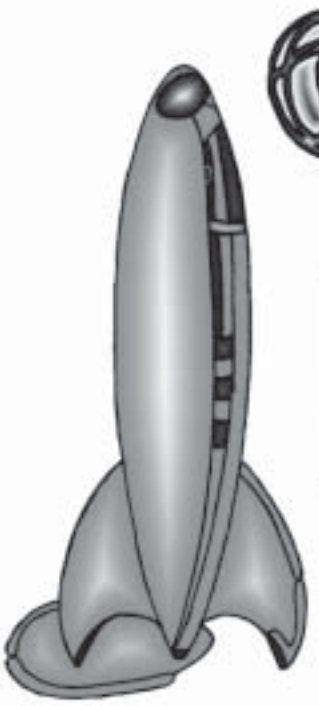
# Noreascon 4




*Progress Report 3* *January 2003*



# INTERACTION

**The 63rd World Science Fiction Convention**
**4 – 8 August 2005**
**Glasgow, United Kingdom**

## GUESTS

Greg Pickersgill  Christopher Priest
Robert Sheckley  Lars-Olov Strandberg
Jane Yolen

Hundreds of Authors, Artists, Editors
Thousands of Fans
Art Show, Dealer Room, Exhibits
All in Scotland's Biggest City

| Membership Type: | Supporting | Attending | Child (7-15 in August 2005) | Infant (0-6 in August 2005) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Membership Rate: | $45 | $115 | $50 | Free |

(Rates valid until 21st April 2003.)


Contact INTERACTION: PO Box 58009, Louisville KY40268-0009 USA
General Enquiries info@interaction.worldcon.org.uk
Membership Enquiries memberships@interaction.worldcon.org.uk
Other Contact Details and Information http://www.interaction.worldcon.org.uk/

# Noreascon 4


**The 62nd World Science Fiction Convention**

## September 2–6, 2004
## Boston, Massachusetts, USA


*Pro Guests of Honor:*

**Terry Pratchett**

**William Tenn**

*Fan Guests of Honor:*

**Jack Speer**

**Peter Weston**

### FACILITIES

Hynes Convention Center
Sheraton Boston Hotel
Boston Marriott Copley Place

### MEMBERSHIP RATES (Through Feb. 28, 2003)

| | |
|---|---|
| Attending membership: | $ 140 |
| Supporting membership: | $ 35 |
| Upgrade existing supporting membership to attending: | $ 105 |
| Child's admission: (12 & under as of Sept. 6, 2004; Child's admission does not include publications or voting rights.) | $ 105 |

Installment plan available; write installments@noreascon.org

### QUESTIONS

To volunteer, write to volunteers@noreascon.org

For information about registration, contact prereg@noreascon.org

To advertise in progress reports, email progress@noreascon.org

For general questions, ask info@noreascon.org

### ADDRESSES

Noreascon Four/MCFI
P.O. Box 1010
Framingham, MA 01701-1010
United States of America

Fax: +1 617.776.3243

Web page:
http://www.noreascon.org

# Noreascon 4 Committee

**Chairman**: Deb Geisler

*Chairman's staff:* Mark L. Olson & Sharon Sbarsky
*Advertising creative:* Geri Sullivan
*Advertising placement:* Janice Gelb
*Boston Fan Group liaison:* Tony Lewis
*Email list moderator:* Pam Fremon
*GoH Liaison Coordinator:* Naomi Fisher
*Hugo Administration:* Rick Katze
*Information triage:* Lis Carey
*Mark Protection Committee Rep.:* George Flynn
*Ordway Exhibit:* Tim Szczesuil
*Publicity/Flyer Distribution:* Ed Dooley & Tim Roberge
*Retrospective Art Exhibit:* Mark Olson
*Staff:* Mike & Beth Zipser
*Site Selection Administrator:* Pat Molloy
*Web Site:* Sharon Sbarsky
*Staff:* Adina Adler
*Secretary:* Ann Broomhead
*Treasurer:* Ted Atwood

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*Convention Services*: Jim Mann

*Computer Wrangler:* Erik Olson
*Decorator Liaison:* Jim Hudson
*Den:* Debbie King
*Fire Marshal Liaison/Safety Officer:* Sam Pierce
*Office:* Larry Gelfand
*Staff:* Pat McMurray, Laura Syms
*Treasury:* Ted Atwood
*Staff*: Dave Cantor, Judy Bemis
*Volunteers:* Melanie Herz
*Staff:* Sharon Pierce, Ken Katz, Susan Vanatta

Events: Marc Gordon

*Anime*: Christine Carpenito, Ed Dooley & Tim Roberge
*First Night:* John Pomeranz
*Hugo Ceremony:* Dalroy Ward, Edie Williams
*Staff:* Craig Miller, Sue Wheeler
*Masquerade:* Richard Hill
*Technical Director:* Paul Kraus

*Exhibits/Fixed Functions*: Laurie Mann

*Staff:* Ann Cecil, Randy Smith
*Art Show:* Gay Ellen Dennett
*Dealers' Room:* Larry Smith and Sally Kobee
*Assistants:* Art & Becky Henderson
*NASA Exhibits Liaison:* Pat Molloy
*Time Line Exhibit*: Joni Dashoff

*Facilities*: Ben Yalow

*Convention Center:* Bobbi Armbruster
*Housing:* Kim Marks Brown

*Member Services*: Elaine Brennan

*Handicapped Services:* Sally Woehrle
*Installment Plan:* Ann Broomhead
*Assistant*: Dale Farmer
*Pre-reg:* Bonnie Atwood

*Program*: Priscilla Olson

*Program Staff:* Adina Adler
*Art Program*: Margaret Organ-Kean
*Chief Geek & Bottle Washer:* Erik Olson
*Comics Program:* Pam Fremon
*Filk:* Spencer Love
*Fan/Fanhistoricon Program:* Edie Stern
*Gaming:* Bill Todd
*Green Room:* Eve Ackerman
*Kaffeeklatsches:* Kathei Logue
*Program Ops:* Janice Gelb

*Publications*: Joe Siclari

*Advertising Sales:* Eve Ackerman, Judy Bemis
*Newsletter:* Steve Davies
*Press relations:* Peggy Rae Sapienza
*Program Book Layout & Design:* Geri Sullivan
*Progress Report Editors:* Joe Siclari & Edie Stern

Noreascon Four is brought to you by Massachusetts Convention Fandom, Inc. (MCFI), a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit corporation. The following are Members of MCFI:

Claire Anderson, Dave Anderson, Bonnie Atwood, Ted Atwood, Judy Bemis, Seth Breidbart, Elaine Brennan, Ann Broomhead, Dave Cantor, Elisabeth Carey, Chris Carpenito, Gay Ellen Dennett, Ed Dooley, Naomi Fisher, George Flynn, Pam Fremon, Deb Geisler, Janice Gelb, Marc Gordon, Lisa Hertel, Melanie Herz, Chip Hitchcock, Saul Jaffe, Rick Katze, Deborah A. King, Alexis Layton, Anthony R. Lewis, Suford Lewis, Paula Lieberman, Jim Mann, Laurie Mann, Patrick Molloy, Mark L. Olson, Priscilla Olson, Kelly S. Persons, Tim Roberge, Ruth Sachter, Sharon Sbarsky, Cris Shuldiner, Joe Siclari, Edie Stern, Tim Szczesuil, Leslie J. Turek, and Ben Yalow.

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# Noreascon 4 Progresses

**From our Chair:**


"It is difficult to say what is impossible," wrote Robert Goddard, "for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and reality of tomorrow."

In 1961, John Kennedy told Americans we were going to go to the moon by the end of the decade. In 1969, I was a twelve-year-old child watching the U.S. space program struggle to a lunar landing, and Goddard was one of my greatest heroes. One of the very first books I ever bought for myself was a study of his life and how he made the impossible come true.

It's all about dreams. A Worldcon is a chance for thousands of people to dream, to imagine, and to talk about might-be and will-be and mightn't-ever-be-but-would-be-cool.

And precisely how do we do that, you might ask. Well, if I knew *precisely* how that was going to happen, planning would be a whole lot easier (and, arguably, less fun). But the general lines are like this: art, literature, talking, music, movies, chatting, games, television, internet, discussions, kaffeeklatsches, costumes, and maybe some more talking. We don't have all of the specific answers nailed down yet.

But we know what some of your questions are (and when/where you can get answers to them):

*How will you get to Worldcon?* In our Progress Report #6 in 2004, we'll talk about the planes/trains/automobiles/blimps/boats options. *Where will you stay?* We'll tell you about making hotel reservations in Progress Report #5 – we have two beautiful hotels, and you'll make your reservations with them, not a housing bureau. *Who will be coming?* Our web site (*see* ***www.noreascon.org***) includes a search function, so you can find old friends who are coming to Boston. Or, of course, you can check the membership lists in these progress reports to see if Rafe Lanzerketter from your third grade class has registered.

*What will you do while you're here?* There are links from our web site to lots of wonderful Boston attractions. Let me tell you about a few:

• if you come to the city in late July 2004, you can watch ~~sausage~~ politics as the Democratic National Convention comes to the Hub.

• exploring the New England coast. Crane's Beach in Ipswich, MA is particularly lovely, or maybe you'll find the end of Cape Cod at Provincetown.

• whale watching. Take a cruise right out of Boston on the Boston Aquarium's whale watch boats.

• history for your edification. The Freedom Trail is marked with red bricks all through the city's sidewalks, and in summer, chalk artists often enliven it with sketches of Revere and redcoats.

• stores to shop. Faneuil Hall Marketplace can be tourist-shopper heaven, or stay closer to the con and window-shop Tiffany's in the Copley Place mall.

• museums to enlighten and amaze. The Science Museum, the Boston Children's Museum, the Gardner Museum, and the Museum of Fine Arts.

• and restaurants and brewpubs to investigate. Don't worry; we'll give you a list!

*What will make the whole experience better for you?* Tell us what you dream about, what your vision is for the Worldcon. Ask questions. The more you ask, the more we find out – it's a very educational experience! Read our Progress Reports (shameless plug), and feel free to send us letters. Our editors know how to deal with LoCs.

In the meantime, we'll continue to work on building Noreascon Four to be a Worldcon we can all enjoy and be proud of. And we'll use the visions and dreams of the SF community to map out the course of the convention.

Because, as Yogi Berra once so eloquently pointed out, "If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else."

*— Deb Geisler*

# We Are the Galactic Patrol!

The Galactic Patrol, Noreascon 4 and Doc Smith Keep All Fandom From Plunging Into War



Why is the Noreascon 4 committee so obsessed with Doc Smith and the Lensman saga? Why is Kimball Kinnison on the cover of this Progress Report? Heck, why are there Boston conventions called Boskone and Arisia?

The simple answer is "because they are fun". The almost-as-simple answer is because they bring us back to the same sense of adventure, and universe ranging possibility that E.E. Smith's intergalactic sagas brought to the SF community back in 1928, with *Skylark of Space*, followed a few years later by his much loved stories of the Galactic Patrol. Doc Smith invented space opera*, the memes of which sit deeply below the skin of trufen everywhere. We all want to be the good guys, blasting evil with our Lens. We want to cruise the spaceways, with never ending revelations of new worlds, new species, new highly intelligent life forms to meet. We want to believe that all sentients are brothers, regardless of how many tentacles they have or what funky air they breathe. The universe should not be malevolent, except occasionally, and problems should be solvable by smart scientists, with hard work, and a little luck.

**Jack Williamson on Doc Smith.**
"Almost forgotten by recent generations, Doc Smith was once the star of American science fiction. Isaac Asimov, in a letter written to me while he was still only a fan, put him at the top. His *Skylark of Space*, written in the teens though not published until 1928, made him the great pioneer of space opera. I remember that my mother read it aloud to the family when it came out, and it was the inspiration for my own early novel, *The Stone from the Green Star*."

Doc Smith was a terrific guy. He was a treasure of the community, gracious and outgoing. Doc had his own Gray Lensman costume much like the cover art, and would wear it at conventions. He was of the community, and engaged in all its pleasures. He wrote — he corresponded — he attended conventions — he dressed up in costume — he talked to fans and pros. He was respected and beloved.

Until Doc Smith started writing, SF was constrained to a smaller scale. We had invasions, and explorations, and more than one hollow earth, but we lacked the limitless void. We don't want to go back.

If you haven't met Clarissa MacDougall or Kimball Kinnison, pick up a copy of *Gray Lensman*. If Doc's prose strikes you as a little dated, pick up something by one of his admirers, like Jack Williamson. And if that's not to your taste, settle back some time and raise a hand in salute to *Star Trek*, or *Farscape*. QX?

So as we planned the bid for Noreascon 4, the Galactic Patrol, the Lensmen, Doc Smith and the entire Space Opera riff came to represent the playful, optimistic, naive yet idealistic part of science fiction that we all fell in love with during our own Golden Ages. It was, to our mind, a perfect theme for the bid. As we plan Noreascon 4, it's still irresistible. We have a lot to celebrate at Noreascon 4. We have great Guests of Honor, a terrific host city, and a long and slightly rakish tradition to uphold. We also remain the children of the lens.

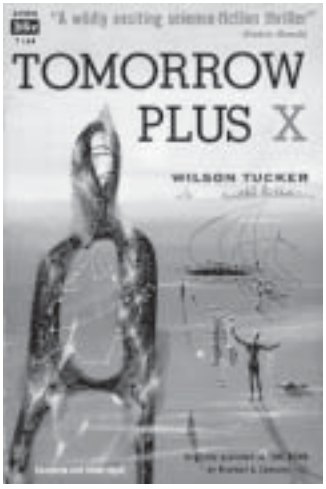
*— Edie Stern*


*Galactic Patrol* and *Gray Lensman* covers used by permision of Michael Walsh and Old Earth Books, the current publisher of the Lensman books, www.oldearthbooks.com

## Noreascon 4 presents. . .

# Art from the Golden Age of SF Illustration

**What was your first introduction to Science Fiction literature?**




It very likely was a striking cover on a book or magazine. At the Worldcon, we celebrate SF in all its aspects, and that most definitely includes the art of SF illustration.

Noreascon 4 plans to present an exhibit of the greatest and most memorable art from the Golden Age of SF illustration, but we'll need your help to do it. We'd like to create an exhibit of 100 or so of the best pieces of SF art from 1950 to 1975. Can you help us select and locate them?

SF art came of age in the early 50s when a new crop of talented artists entered the field at the same time as the SF market exploded. Add to this the introduction of better production techniques which allowed a leap in the reproduction quality of SF cover art, and (arguably) you have a Golden Age of SF illustration. It began in the 50s, and it's still going on today.

Look at the covers of *Astounding*. During the 40s, there were some striking covers, but starting around 1951 or 52 the covers suddenly become classics. For many of us the art of this period defined SF art. Through the 50s, SF art got better and better and by the mid-60s there were artists at work who are every bit the equals of the best of today's masters.

Think of the artists: John Schoenherr, Frank Kelly Freas, Jack Gaughan, Paul Lehr, Ed Emschwiller, Richard Powers, Gray Morrow, Alex Schomberg, H.R. Van Dongen, Frank Frazetta. Masters all — these are the artists that attracted generations of readers and inspired the next generation of writers and artists.


Part of our inspiration for this exhibit is the two brilliant retrospectives we've seen in the past ten years. At MagiCon in 1992, Vincent Di Fate assembled a remarkable art retrospective of fifty pieces covering the entire history of SF art, and at Chicon 2000, Phyllis and Alex Eisenstein presented art from their collection and a number of others to show an extraordinary group of pieces.

We'd like to show 100 or so of the most memorable pieces from 1950 to 1975: the classic covers and interiors that you and every fan will remember when you see them. The problem? To find them and to arrange to borrow them!

Do you own a piece which might be appropriate for the show which you'd be willing to loan? Send us a picture — it doesn't have to be high resolution or anything, just enough so we can know what piece it is. You don't even have to send a picture — just tell us on what book or magazine cover it was used and we'll find it. Tell us who the artist was, how big it is, and where it was published. You can mail the information to our address or email it (digital photos are fine) to: *ArtRetro@Noreascon.org*.


Help us make this one of the highlights of the convention — the kind of exhibit where you can be lost in wonder for hours.

*— Mark Olson*

# Division Reports

### Exhibits – Laurie Mann

In addition to a spectacular Art Show, and an enticing Dealer's Room (start saving now!), we're hoping to have a number of interesting and different standing exhibits to enhance your convention going experience at Noreascon.

First, the art show and dealer's room. We are fortunate to have very experienced folks running these two areas. Our Art Show is being managed by Gay Ellen Dennett, and the Dealer's Room by Larry Smith and Sally Kobee. If you have questions or comments about these two areas, please write to: *artshow@noreascon.org* or to *dealers@noreascon.org*.

We're planning a broad assortment of SF fan/field exhibits, including photo galleries, a history of Worldcons exhibit, Guest of Honor exhibits, a science fiction — science fact timeline, and a special "50 Years of Hugos" exhibit. Pat Malloy, our NASA liaison, is exploring the possibility of getting some materials from NASA for the convention.

One way to bring in specialty items that we could not otherwise afford is through sponsorships. We're working on the sponsorships and some wonderful potential exhibit items. Watch for announcements in future Progress Reports.

Last, but not least, we plan to have a mingling area that recreates a little piece of Ankh-Morpork, complete with a tavern and various Pratchett-esque characters in attendance. (Yes, members of the Assassin's Guild still must adhere to the Weapons Policy.) While we can't promise you rat-on-a-stick, we hope we can convince the convention center that people will eat more than pizza, hot dogs and nachos.

To create a fantastic Ahnk-Morpork, we need people with skills not normally recruited for a typical Worldcon. Specifically, we need a few people with more theatrical skills, including:

set design
set building
character wrangler
characters (from Nanny Ogg to Death and others in between)

We're also looking for a few people who live in the Boston area who would be able to help us locate set flats to borrow between August 1 and September 10, 2004.

So if you're a Discworld fan with theatrical experience (or are just "naturally theatrical"), please contact us and tell us what you'd be interested in doing.

With exhibits, we hope to showcase some of the wide interests and explorations of science fiction and science fiction fandom. Ideas, volunteers, and enthusiasm are welcome. If you have thoughts for exhibits, sponsorships or are interested in helping create Ahnk-Morpork, please write to *exhibits@noreascon.org*.

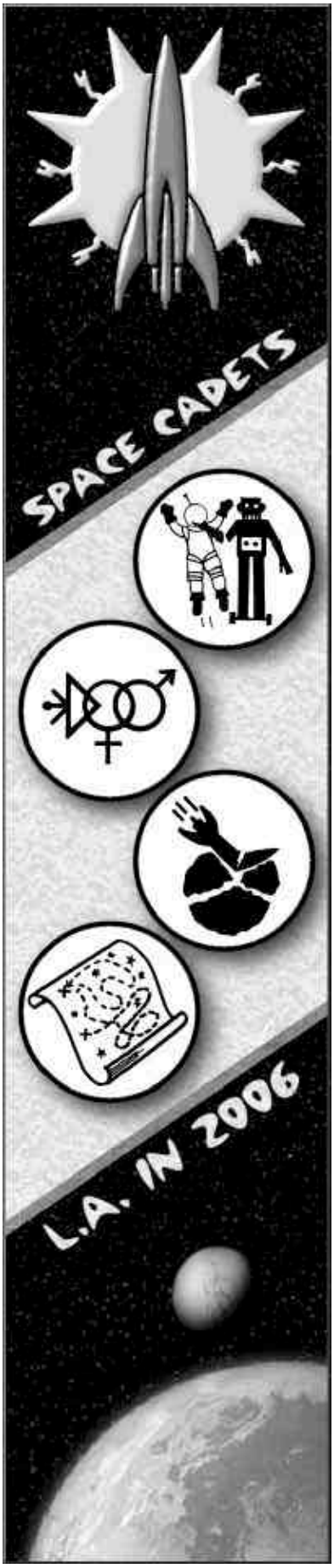
### Events Divsion - Marc Gordon

Events are where the Worldcon community can come together at one time to celebrate science fiction. It's the Hugos, the awards which represent the best in the field. It's the Masquerade, where we create our own worlds. It's the ceremonies where we acknowledge the field, and fandom.

As I write this, there are just over 21 months to go before the start of Noreascon 4, on September 2, 2004. Noreascon 4's events divsion is on schedule to open the convention with First Night, a celebration of fandom and Boston, our host city. We are expanding opening ceremonies to include special exhibits and performances. The director of First Night, John Pomeranz, and Noreascon 4, invite all of the membership to come and meet one another and sample what the Convention and Boston have to offer. If you have ideas of what you would like to see at First Night, please email us at *events@noreascon.org*.

Richard Hill, a Boston costumer, has joined the Noreascon 4 committee to run a world-class masquerade. Richard is one of the most inventive costumers I've seen. The only problem with him running the masquerade is that he isn't going to be able to costume. There will be more details on the rules, stage dimensions and other items of interest in an upcoming Progress Report.

The Hugo Ceremony will be directed by Dalroy Ward and Edie Williams, with Craig Miller. At this time, the absolute best way to help make the 2004 Hugos memorable is go out and read the books, the fanzines, the short stories. Watch the movies and tv shows. Be knowledgeable voters when you nominate for the 2004 Hugos.




# LOS ANGELES IN 2006

## A Bid for the 64th World Science Fiction Convention

**to be held August 24-28, 2006 in Anaheim (L.A. Area), California**

- The **Anaheim Convention Center**, and the **Hilton Anaheim** and **Anaheim Marriott** hotels - site of the 1984 and 1996 Worldcons. Locus described them as "An ideal facility for a Worldcon … The best space I've ever seen."
- The proven track record of the **Southern California Institute for Fan Interests** (**SCIFI**), Inc., sponsoring organization of L.A.Con II (1984 Worldcon) and L.A.Con III (1996 Worldcon), ConuCopia (1999 NASFiC), Conosaurus (1989 Westercon), ConoZoic (1994 Westercon), and Conagerie (2002 Westercon)
- **A fabulous location**, right across the street from Disneyland and close to beaches, restaurants and many other popular vacation destinations
- **A convention near the heart of Los Angeles**... the world's largest entertainment industry, home of countless authors, filmmakers, scientists, and other potential guests!

## *JOIN US FOR THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME!*

### MEMBERSHIP RATES

***UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

*Pre-Support $20.00 • Pre-Oppose $40.00*
*Pre-Dither $60.00 • Friends Of The Bid $75.00*

*Checks payable to "SCIFI Inc" in US Funds Only*

***CANADA***

*Pre-Support $30.00 • Pre-Oppose $61.00*
*Pre-Dither $91.00 • Friends Of The Bid $115.00*

*Checks payable to "Lloyd Penney" in Canadian Funds Only*

***UNITED KINGDOM***

*Pre-Support £14.00 • Pre-Oppose £28.00*
*Pre-Dither £41.00 • Friends Of The Bid £52.00*

*Checks payable to "John Harold" in UK Funds Only*
*(Additional Currency Rates are available at our table, our party, or on the Los Angeles in 2006 Bid Website!*

## JOIN THE SPACE CADETS

### LOS ANGELES IN 2006

c/o The Southern California Institute for Fan Interests (SCIFI) Inc.
Post Office Box 8442, Van Nuys, California 91409 USA
Website: www.scifiinc.org • Email: info@scifiinc.org

### Program - Priscilla Olson

It will be big and diverse and interesting and you'll want to see all of it...and you can't. (But we are considering a program item on "Cloning: How to enjoy every bit of a Worldcon.")

OK, maybe we're a little prejudiced; but we've got a bunch of great people working on building the best program we can make!

Even now, we have our spies out at conventions around the world collecting ideas (and we're delving into the past for more!) One thing we're especially interested in putting together is our "Orientation Project" — program ideas especially designed to help relatively new fans get the most out of the Worldcon (just in case the cloning thing isn't ready by 2004).

We'd particularly like to see your ideas about this...please send us your "orientation" thoughts (and other ideas) to *program@noreascon.org*.

Note: We'll begin contacting program participants some time in Fall 2003, so please wait until then to send us any requests for program information. The "rough draft" of our program won't be available until Spring of 2004.

See you in 2004—with bells on!

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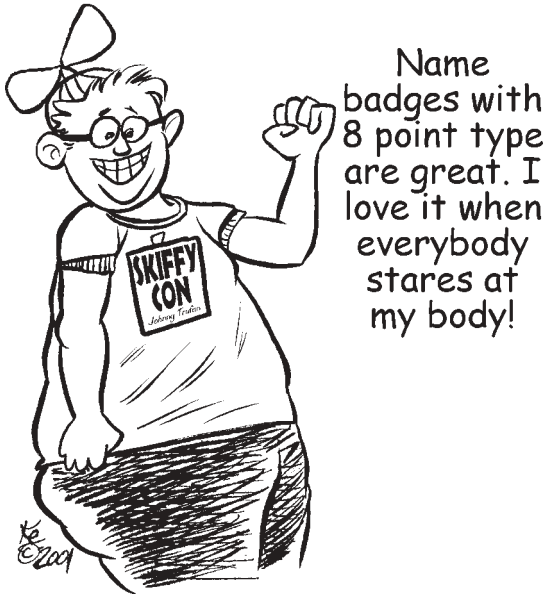
### Member Services - Elaine Brennan

**Membership Installment Plan**

Do you know someone who'd like to become a Noreascon 4 member, but can't pay the entire amount at once? Maybe you're a supporting member that would like to attend, but can't afford the conversion fee right now. The Noreascon 4 installment plan may help. The installment plan lets you lock in the current rate, and pay a little at a time. Here's how it works.

The **Noreascon Four Installment Plan** is relatively simple. In effect, you buy a supporting membership with a $35 payment, and then buy a conversion to attending membership in installments. The total cost of your membership is the price of an attending membership at the time you make your **$35 supporting membership payment**. Payments are currently **$25 per quarter** (the final installment may be different.) Your total cost will ***not*** *increase, even if our rates do, as long as you complete your* payment schedule.




You will receive a reminder one month before each due date. You can pay more than the minimum each quarter, or pay at shorter intervals. If you cannot afford to complete the payments, notify us. We will refund all but the $35 initial payment, and you will be a supporting member.

You cannot transfer the membership to someone else until it is paid in full. You can pay the remaining balance on a membership and then immediately transfer it.

Your $35 supporting membership entitles you to receive each of our progress reports (including Progress Report 1, which earlier members got in January 2002), to nominate works for the Hugo Awards, to vote for the Hugo Awards, and to vote for the site and committee of the 2007 World Science Fiction Convention.

An attending membership costs $140 until March 2003. This entitles you to attend Noreascon 4 in September 2004, plus all the publications and privileges received by a supporting member.

If you have any questions, please email *installments@noreascon.org* and we'll get back to you with the answers. We're sorry, but at this time, Installment Plan payments can not be made via our online store.

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### Convention Services - Jim Mann

**Volunteers**

This is the time of year when one's thoughts turn to sun...sand...mountains...Worldcon volunteering...amusement parks...and Worldcon volunteering!

Making the Worldcon go takes all kinds of talents, and you don't need to have had any previous convention work to be a volunteer. Many people make use of skills they have acquired in life. Others choose to learn new things through convention work. Whatever your aptitude, we can use you!

Use our new handy and dandy electronic form at *www.noreascon.org* to sign up. You can also get a paper form. Write us at *volunteers@noreascon.org* or at Noreascon 4 Volunteers, PO Box 1010, Framingham MA 01701.

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**gosh-wow-boyoboy** (Time) - Symbol of the type of reader who made *Time Magazine* call us the jitterbugs of the pulp magazine field. The expression appears in an allegedly typical letter which they quoted, commenting on *TWS*; probably it was an invention of the reporter who wrote up the New York World Convention. It has become a gag line in fandom.

- from the *Fancyclopedia* by John Bristol Speer, 1944

## Noreascon 4 to Award Retro Hugos for 1953

In addition to the Hugo awards for the year's best in Science Fiction, under certain conditions the WSFS constitution allows a Worldcon to honor exemplary science fiction from the year half a century before that Worldcon. Noreascon 4 will award Retro Hugo's for the year 1953.

The Retro Hugos are not intended to recreate the awards that the membership of a contemporary Worldcon would have voted. Instead they serve to focus us on a small slice of our literature, and thoughtfully consider what we believe to be its best.

The categories are the same as the current Hugos, and all stories originally published in the year 1953 are eligible. We will put lists of eligible stories, novels and films on line, and hope to also have all the covers published in 1953. Representative samples of fanzines will be available for viewing on-line to help educate those of us who weren't active fans at that point.

Not all the material will be on the Noreascon web site, but we will have pointers and links to where the material can be found. FANAC (online at *www.fanac.org*) has graciously volunteered to host some of this material.

While we will attempt to make sure that everything eligible is listed, we know that we are not perfect. If you see that we are missing something in the list, or have not put something on the web site which you feel is Hugo eligible, please e-mail me at *Hugos@Noreascon.org* and I'll respond to you privately. It's our intent that we be inclusive in providing access to material.

Look for more information about the Retro Hugos on the Noreascon 4 web site around February, 2003.

1953 was a good year for science fiction. We hope you enjoy reading and re-reading the stories published that year, exploring the fanzines, and watching the films. An educated voter is more likely to be a thoughtful voter!

— Rick Katze, Hugo Administrator

## Noreascon 4 Financial Report

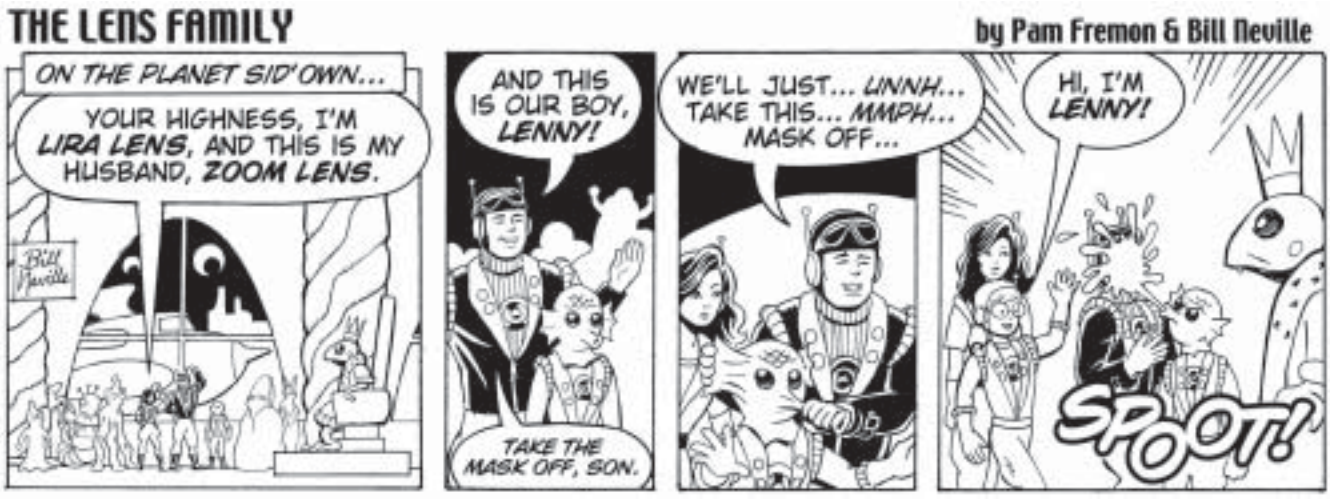
Sept. 2001 through Oct. 2002

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Income** | | |
| N4 Interest | | 1,489 |
| N4 memberships | | 216,850 |
| N4 misc | | 45 |
| N4 t-shirts | | 116 |
| N4 Pr ads | | 550 |
| N4 – Other | | 360 |
| *Total Income* | | *219,410* |
| **Expense** | | |
| N4 Bank Fees | | 3,071 |
| N4 general supplies | | 1,710 |
| *N4 marketing* | | |
| N4 Ads | 1,094 | |
| N4 Flyer mailing | 67 | |
| N4 flyers | 114 | |
| N4 Marketing banners | 415 | |
| N4 parties | 2,157 | |
| N4 Sales to Members | 200 | |
| N4 table expenses | 23 | |
| N4 marketing Other | 150 | |
| Total N4 marketing | | 4,221 |
| N4 miscellaneous | | 32 |
| *N4 Publications* | | |
| N4 progress reports | 8,374 | |
| Total N4 Publications | | 8,374 |
| N4 software | | 713 |
| N4 treasury | | 34 |
| N4 Web fees | | 532 |
| Noreascon 4 - Other | | 56 |
| *Total Expense* | | *18,744* |
| ***Net Income*** | | ***200,667*** |

— Ted Atwood, Treasurer

**space opera** (Tucker) - A hack science-fiction story, a dressed-up western; so called by analogy with "horse opera" for Western bangbangshootemup movies and "soap opera" for radio yellow dramas.

- from the *Fancyclopedia* by John Bristol Speer, 1944




# Kansas City in 2006

## A Bid for the 64th World Science Fiction Convention

## Labor Day Weekend August 31–September 4, 2006

## Some Reasons to Come To Kansas City in 2006

- ***Tradition***. 2006 will mark the 30th anniversary of Kansas City's last Worldcon, MidAmeriCon. Fandom followed the Republican National Convention and the Shriners and outpartied them both. While that kind of challenge can't be guaranteed, we think the time has come to do it again.

- ***Great New Facilities!*** Overland Park's new state-of-the-art convention center includes:
  - 237,000 square feet of function space in the Convention Center

  The attached Sheraton hotel has:
  - 25,000 square feet of function space• ***Corkage and Forkage waived***
  - ***Convention Hotel Room Rates from $65.99 to $99.00 • All hotel and convention center parking will be free***

- ***People.*** Our Bid Committee includes fans from the midwest and throughout the country with experience working local and regional cons, as well as WorldCons. Our local group hosted the Nebula Weekend in 1997 and 2002. ConQuesT (now in its fourth decade) is renowned as one of the finest (and most fun) cons in the midwest. Members of our committee are also part of the group hosting the 2003 World Horror Convention in Kansas City.

- ***Convenience.*** Kansas City is a major transportation hub with easy travel connections and a modern, spacious airport. The convention center is located directly adjacent to a major interstate and is easily accessible from any direction.

- ***Attractions.*** There are many activities awaiting your discovery, including the Kansas City Zoo, the Harry S Truman Library and Museum, the Nelson-Atkins Museum, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, the City Farmer's Market and the Steamboat *Arabia* Museum, Union Station/Science City, the Liberty Memorial, Westport nightclub district, the Toy and Miniature Museum, Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun amusement parks, several riverboat casinos, the world-renowned Country Club Plaza shopping district and much more, all within thirty minutes of the convention center.

The Bid Committee believes we can make Labor Day weekend 2006 one of the most memorable in WorldCon history. We invite you to join us in the effort by presupporting our bid at one of the four levels explicated on the reverse side. Support levels can be upgraded any time prior to the vote. Look our bid tables and for parties sponsored by "The Redheads from Hell" (it's not just a hair color, it's an attitude) at conventions across the country for the next year to sign up. We thank your for your support, and look forward to seeing you in 2006.



***The benefits listed will be received if you vote in Toronto in 2003 and we win.***

**Presupport: $20 US**
**$31 Can, £13, €20, ¥2315**
supporting membership
1/2 credit for conversion

**Preoppose: $25 US**
**$39 Can, £16, €25, ¥2895**
supporting membership
1/2 credit for conversion

**Yardbird: $50 US**
**$77 Can, £32, €50, ¥5788**
attending membership
listing in program book

**Count Basie: $100 US**
**$154 Can, £64, €112, ¥11575**
attending membership
listing in program book; a bid t-shirt & more

*For Up to Date Information on All Aspects of the Bid, see our Website:* **www.midamericon.org**

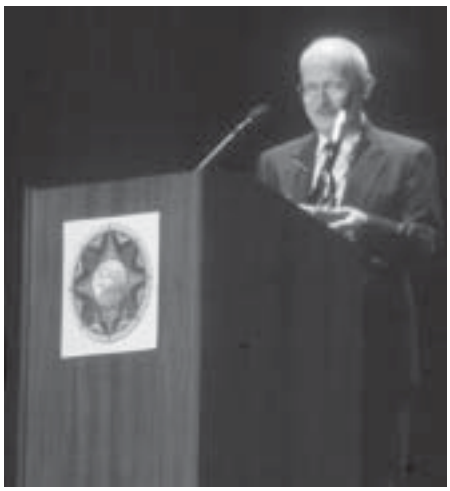
Questions? Comments? Just want to chat? Our email address is: **MidAmeriCon@kc.rr.com**

Make checks (in U.S. funds) payable to Kansas City in 2006 and mail to:
Kansas City 2006, P.O. Box 414175, Kansas City, MO 64141-4175

*Jazz Dragon Logo by Rachael Mayo*

# A Singular Guest of Honor
# Vernor Vinge
## interviewed by Greg Benford

## ConJose: the 60th World Science Fiction Convention - 2002



Vernor Vinge accepting the Hugo Award for Best Novella at ConJose

Transcribed by Edie Stern, with final review by Vernor Vinge and Greg Benford.
*Editorial inserts in italics.*

**Greg Benford**: Good evening. Thanks for coming.

Vernor and I last held the stage a few months ago at our alma mater, UCSD (University of California at San Diego), which had an interesting, strange science fictional profile. For over a 15 year period, four people got doctorates at UCSD. Then of course, they went rapidly downhill — becoming major science fiction writers. [*audience laughter*] I was the first, and after that came the landslide. I got my doctorate in 1967, before most of the people in the room were born and Vernor came next. I met Vernor in graduate school, noticing that there was this guy who had a story in *Analog* who was at UCSD. That was suspicious enough. Then came David Brin, some fairly long time later and the last of the four was Kim Stanley Robinson.

Worldcons have now started to follow the UCSD crowd. I was the Guest of Honor in Australia a few years ago, Greg Bear was the Guest of Honor last year, as you may remember. He is closely associated with UCSD but alas did not get a doctorate, so now he is getting it in the ways of the novelist. He knows more apparently about biology than any biologist. And now Vernor Vinge. Soon enough we'll undoubtedly get Stan Robinson, and David Brin, and then there'll be a boxed set. [*audience laughter*]

The striking thing about this is that it happened in a fifteen year period. The chancellor of the university introduced our panel at UCSD on this, and he said, "Wow, this is a great period. We produced these terrific writers." Then I got up and said, "Yes and you'll notice that it's been more than fifteen years since and you haven't produced another. How come?" Always the diplomat, always the diplomat. Yeah, and then after they'd thrown us out...

Tonight I'm here to talk to my old friend, and fellow once-upon-a-time graduate student. Technically, you're not a man of science — do you agree that mathematics is actually not a science since it is not empirical?

**Vernor Vinge**: It's better.

**Greg Benford**: It's better, like music, right? I wanted to ask you, do you have an explanation for the UCSD phenomena?

**Vernor Vinge**: First of all, I don't think it's statistically as significant as *some* people thought. [*laughter*]. But it is a very good school and at the time we were there, it had just started and so the threshholds between the different departments were low. I can remember when pulsars were first observed, which was when we were in school.

**Greg Benford**: I had already gone.

**Vernor Vinge**: I can remember just going down and talking to the graduate students who were working with that stuff and sitting around and listening to them. I imagine that in a lot of good research schools that would not have been possible, but this was possible at UCSD. I think that that helps. So there is some significance to it, although I'm not convinced of some overwhelming effect that resulted in these writers.

**Greg Benford**: Well, I differ with you on that, but we'll move on. I'm not going to argue statistics with a mathematician, but I might point out that you started out doing useless mathematics. Wasn't that right?

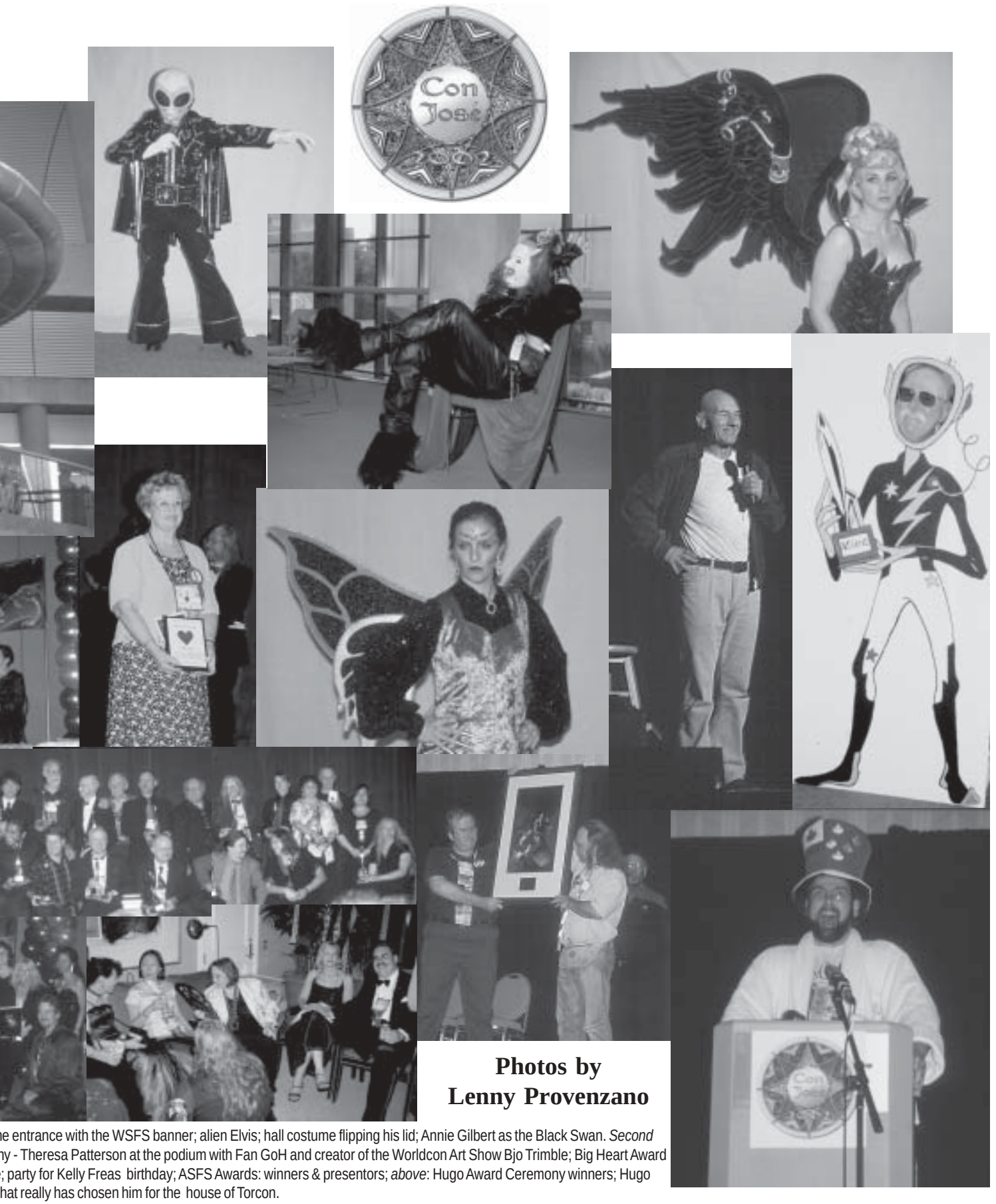
**Vernor Vinge**: *Pure* mathematics [*laughter*]. Pure mathematics is very interesting and I think that mathematics — the great mathematics that includes pure mathematics — comes from and interacts with what's done in the real world. The inspiration that astronomy gave, leading to things like calculus and such, I think those are very important sorts of interactions. The pure stuff that

(continued on page 16)

# ConJose — the 60th World Science Fiction Convention

August 29 to September 2, 2002
San Jose, California


*Top* (l-r): Writer GoH Vernor Vinge with his Best Novella Hugo Award for "Fast Times at Fairmont High"; Artist GoH David Cherry with his daughter; the aliens have landed near th
*row*: Commercial Uses for Outher Space by The Rocket Boys; Fan GoHs John & Bjo Trimble; Blind Justice (Anne Davenport) on the streets of San Jose; ASFA Awards Ceremor
Winner Pat Sims; winged alien entertainer; Patrick Stewart; Joe Grillot as every fan's dream: being a spaceman with a Hugo Award. *Third row*: Alien Entertainers group costume
Losers Party; ConJose co-Chairs Kevin Standlee & Tom Whitmore showing art donated by Bridge Publications; 2003 Worldcon chairman Peter Jarvis screams as he realizes the




**Photos by Lenny Provenzano**

ne entrance with the WSFS banner; alien Elvis; hall costume flipping his lid; Annie Gilbert as the Black Swan. *Second* ny - Theresa Patterson at the podium with Fan GoH and creator of the Worldcon Art Show Bjo Trimble; Big Heart Award ; party for Kelly Freas birthday; ASFS Awards: winners & presentors; *above*: Hugo Award Ceremony winners; Hugo hat really has chosen him for the house of Torcon.

### *What is The Singularity?*

According to Vernor Vinge, "Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended. Is such progress avoidable? If not to be avoided, can events be guided so that we may survive?"

Vinge believes "The acceleration of technological progress has been the central feature of the 20th century...we are on the edge of change comparable to the rise of human life on Earth. The precise cause of this change is the imminent creation by technology of entities with greater than human intelligence. There are several means by which science may achieve this breakthrough (and this is another reason for having confidence that the event will occur):

1. There may be developed computers that are "awake" and superhumanly intelligent. (To date, there has been much controversy as to whether we can create human equivalence in a machine. But if the answer is "yes, we can", then there is little doubt that beings more intelligent can be constructed shortly thereafter.)
2. Large computer networks (and their associated users) may "wake up" as a superhumanly intelligent entity.
3. Computer/human interfaces may become so intimate that users may reasonably be considered superhumanly intelligent.
4. Biological science may provide means to improve natural human intellect."

From: *The Coming Technological Singularity: How to Survive in the Post-Human Era* © 1993 available at *www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/vinge/misc/singularity.html*

(cont. from p. 16)

gets further and further away and doesn't interact at all is in trouble. I mean the mathematics that's not inspired by problems in the real world. In fact, one of the nice things about the computer era we're in now is that in many ways to me it resembles the 15th and the 16th century, the 17th century, where there were problems that came up that gave rise to looking at things in mathematically new ways. Pure math actually benefits from this enormously.

But, I can remember in graduate school having one of my faculty advisors who was discussing the applications of the work that he was talking about. "Sure there are applications. Why, I can name three papers." He named three papers and they were applications (they were pure math papers) because they had used the theorem that he had proven, to prove something else. That was an application. As I say, I don't begrudge that, although I think that the truly most beautiful stuff is inspired by problems and issues in the real world.

**Greg Benford**: So, you don't hold with the platonic view that mathematics arises in that way. Or perhaps you do? I don't know. Are you a Platonist? Now the story can be told.

**Vernor Vinge**: A kind of a Platonist. Not a strong one, but there are things that feel very right. To me, that's not contradictory to the idea that the ideas come from the real world. In other words, you see the shadows on the cave wall, and then you think about what the platonic reality is. So, I'm only agnostic, I would say, on Platonism.

**Greg Benford**: Well, that's safe. [*laughter*]. The interview in the con daily handout has the first piece of an interview with you about the singularity. You knew we were going to get around to the singularity. But I wanted to ask you something of my own interest. That is, you know, the singularity is supposed to arise and it will whisk some of us off to some unfathomable dimension. I'm being a little comical here about it. And I've always wondered if I'm going to be around to see the singularity. Do you think that either of us will? Do you still believe your timetable?

**Vernor Vinge**: Yes. However, I never regarded this as a certainty. I'm just saying this is a likely scenario. I still think it is a likely scenario, and I still think it is a very likely scenario in the time range that I said in the essay in '93.

**Greg Benford**: Was this my lifetime or yours, Vernor?

**Vernor Vinge**: I don't know how long either of us is going to be alive, but it's certainly well within what the present actuary tables would label for people such as us.

**Greg Benford**: Good. How old is your father now, Vernor? [*laughter*] Well, we won't go into that. Wasn't your father an academic?

**Vernor Vinge**: Geographer.

**Greg Benford**: Then the answer is yes. OK. I thought maybe he just did roadmaps. And he was at the University of Michigan?

**Vernor Vinge**: Michigan State. In fact, I was named after my father's thesis advisor.

**Greg Benford**: Was this before or after the thesis? [*laughter*]

**Vernor Vinge**: Ahh, probably before.

**Greg Benford**: Aha. Right, so, what's your middle name?

**Vernor Vinge**: My middle name was botched by the recorder of birth certificates but it was intended to be in honor of Lincoln Steffens.

**Greg Benford**: And so it was?

**Vernor Vinge** It was supposed to be Steffens.

**Greg Benford**: And it is..

**Vernor Vinge**: They got lost and they just misspelled it.

**Greg Benford**: Oh, spelling error on your birth certificate. Not the kind of thing that really you want.

**Vernor Vinge**: Doesn't increase one's faith in the bureaucracy.

**Greg Benford**: No, it doesn't.

**Greg Benford**: I had a question about the singularity though. One of the elements that didn't seem to be in your list of things that are going to bring about the exultation of larks that will be the singularity is a thing that I missed particularly. What do you think about the ability to electronically intervene in our own mental processes, particularly to stimulate the brain in different directions?

# Boskone returns to Boston!

# Boskone 40

Sheraton Boston Hotel • Boston, MA

## February 14–16, 2003

**Registration**

$40 until 1/20/03

Guest of Honor David Brin

Official Artist Jim Burns

Special Guest Charles N. Brown

Featured Filker Clam Chowder

Boskone 40 is a regional science fiction convention brought to you by the New England Science Fiction Association. It will celebrate science fiction and fantasy literature, art, music, gaming, film, and television through extensive programming, special events, amazing dealers room and art show, insightful participants, and some really nifty guests of honor.

This year marks Boskone's return to the city of Boston and the beautiful Sheraton Boston Hotel. Located in the city's busy Copley Square area, the hotel offers wonderful rooms, great beds, and easy access to a wealth of dining and entertainment options.

Sheraton Boston, 39 Dalton Street, Boston, MA 02199, (617) 236-6033 or (800) 325-3535. Make your hotel reservation directly with the hotel by January 24, 2003. Single $119, Double $129, Triple $139, Quad, $149.

Mail convention registrations to:
NESFA/Boskone 40, P.O. Box 809, Framingham, MA 01701
or Fax (credit cards only) to: 617.776.3243
For convention information, email: info@boskone.org; web: www.boskone.org

Or does that fit your category 4 which you said was biological influence on intelligence? I'm thinking about non-biological influence on intelligence.

**Vernor Vinge**: Actually that sounds like straddling my number 3 and my number 4. I don't quite understand what you're saying, but certainly, electromagnetic or other interventions would be a way of doing input and output, and would mean the computer-human interfaces would be a lot easier, and that sort of segues into the notion of intelligence amplification instead of artificial intelligence.

**Greg Benford**: I have two comments about that. One thing is that smart people always emphasize intelligence, but have you noticed that the people with the money don't? They talk about the money. We always emphasize intelligence, but there are other functions of the brain. What about those? Can there be a singularity say, for emotions, instead of intelligence?

**Vernor Vinge**: There could be a singularity for making money. [*laughter*]

**Greg Benford**: So that one guy makes all the money? But that's been done — Bill Gates. [*laughter*]

**Vernor Vinge**: Actually I think Bill Gates is an interesting epitome of an interesting situation. I've heard that in absolute dollars, even if you could correct for inflation, he is richer than the richest Americans in the 19th century. On the other hand, he occupies a far smaller portion of the GDP than the richest Americans of the 19th century.

**Greg Benford**: Than Carnegie did.

**Vernor Vinge**: Yes. And so, the super rich are getting super and super richer, but they are actually a less and less significant part of what's going on. The great creation machine is the very large number of brilliant people who are generating ideas and acting on them. By that I don't mean that intelligence in the narrow sense of maxing an SAT or getting a degree, but I mean problem solving and creativity.

**Greg Benford**: So it doesn't matter that Bill Gates is essentially Alfred E. Neuman with a lot of money?

**Vernor Vinge**: He can have a lot of effect particularly because he is in a situation with a potential for developing the closest interface between the consumer and what a consumer might want to consume. That is a very powerful place. This is balanced to some extent by what I said about the overall economic size of the entire society.

**Greg Benford**: Well, to pursue the analogy, is Microsoft best regarded as a bug or a feature?

**Vernor Vinge**: I am thoroughly in the free software camp and use emacs for my regular word processing. [*audience applause*]

**Greg Benford**: Applause for software. You don't get that a lot.

**Vernor Vinge**: Yes. And I just love the freedom of being able to have control and to know that the software that I have now, if I want to continue to use it, I will be able to continue to use it. (That is, unless the software patent proponents totally succeed with their demands.) But it's also true that the Microsoft people have done a lot of things that made it possible for very large numbers of people who otherwise might not be interested in computers to work with computers. I would be very interested to see in the next few years what sort of competition can be made against that from the free software movement.

**Greg Benford**: The free software movement, yes. Isn't that sort of like the Free Tibet movement?

**Vernor Vinge**: Alas (for Tibet), it has much more potential for success than the Free Tibet movement.

**Greg Benford**: Gee, I think you're probably right. So, do you totally operate in what, a Unix environment?

**Vernor Vinge**: Pretty much. I do have a laptop that runs Microsoft stuff . . .

**Greg Benford**: And you don't use MacIntosh at all

**Vernor Vinge**: . . . I even paid for it.

**Greg Benford**: You don't use Mac at all.

**Vernor Vinge**: I do not. And that's something that could conceivably change depending on the mix of products with OS X and stuff like that.

**Greg Benford**: Right. You tried OS X?

**Vernor Vinge**: I haven't.

**Greg Benford**: I've been running it. It has lots of nice bells and whistles and it's good for photos. And that concludes the serious portion of our programming.

I wanted to ask you why did you resign your professorship and turn exclusively to writing and have you found that you're getting any more writing done? [*laughter*]

**Vernor Vinge**: A question that I am afraid I'll be asked more than once in the next three or four days.

**Greg Benford**: If you answer it now, they won't ask any more.

**Vernor Vinge**: The people in here may not ask. First of all, I did not resign, I retired. You're looking at a *Professor Emeritus* here.

**Greg Benford**: Yes, yes, I could tell. [*audience applause*]

**Vernor Vinge**: That's what you call keeping your day job so long that they let you go away from it and they still pay you.

**Greg Benford**: How many years were you a Professor?

**Vernor Vinge**: Twenty-eight years, but I actually was away on leave for some of those years. So I certainly took to heart the notion about keeping your day job, and I enjoyed the teaching. University teaching, if you're in an area that you like, which I was, is one of the nicest jobs that a person of bright normal intelligence can have. It really was a great job. I always have wondered how much that affected my writing career. The one theory is that "the story is good because you let it rattle around for seven

years, Vernor." Ok, well that means that if I retire to write full time, you're either going to see a horrible book every year, or you're going to see seven years pass before a good book comes out. That's one of the most negative interpretations of what the psychological model is. My hope is that I have improved as a writer, and having more time as I have now, I will be able to use that improved writing ability to turn out good things at a faster rate. [*audience applause*]. I just signed a seven book contract with Tor: four books that are out of print that they will bring back into print, and the other three are supposed to be new books. I still owe them a book, so that's four new books that I owe them. The first of those I hope to be a novel length expansion of *Fast Times at Fairmont High*, and there may be some Zones novels in the other ones.

**Greg Benford**: How many of these books have you finished?

**Vernor Vinge**: Just the four out-of-print books.

**Greg Benford**: Oh, of course. You know, I hadn't until now, realized that I've actually been a professor longer than you have.

**Vernor Vinge**: Well, how many years before me did you graduate?

**Greg Benford**: When did you graduate?

**Vernor Vinge**: '72.

**Greg Benford**: '72. I got my doctorate in '67.

**Vernor Vinge**: So I'd suspect you've been teaching longer than me.

**Greg Benford**: But I spent four years at Livermore doing research and then went to University of California at Irvine. But I'm still professing. As you said, it's not actually like having a real job, you know. You just talk for a living. I mean, come on. But I agree with what you said, that you can let ideas percolate. Although, actually I've written a whole lot more novels than you have, haven't I?

**Vernor Vinge**: I don't know. [*laughter, catcalls*]

**Greg Benford**: Touché. But you're a mathematician. You're supposed to be able to count.

**Vernor Vinge**: There's this cliché about mathematicians — that mathematicians can't do arithmetic. I'm sure everybody has heard that. It's probably not true. It's just that this mathematician can't do arithmetic.

**Greg Benford**: They do it base 12, don't they? I know you can do arithmetic. The thing I've always wondered is why did you gravitate in the direction of essentially the computer end of mathematics. What was the title of your thesis? I wanted to savor that again for a moment.

**Vernor Vinge**: Extremal problems in $E^p$ spaces.

**Greg Benford**: See, just like that.

**Vernor Vinge**: If you're outside the field of pure mathematics, my thesis area and Mr. Kaczynski's thesis area are almost the same. In fact, I was interviewed by *Rolling Stone* several years ago (and this did not make it into the interview), but the parting question was "Hey, this guy Kaczynski that they just caught, you know, I heard he has a Ph.D. in math, and I have a question. Do you think there's any connection between homicidal mania and getting a Ph.D. in math?" I said, "Oh, no. In fact my Ph.D. thesis area is an area extremely close to Kaczynski, and some of my best friends are in that area, and we're very nice people".

**Greg Benford**: (menacingly) And don't you forget it. Actually I have a story about the gentleman. When the photo came out, here's the Unibomber, I recognized him instantly because I had seen him in the audience of a series of public talks I gave.

**Vernor Vinge**: More than one? He was in more than one audience?

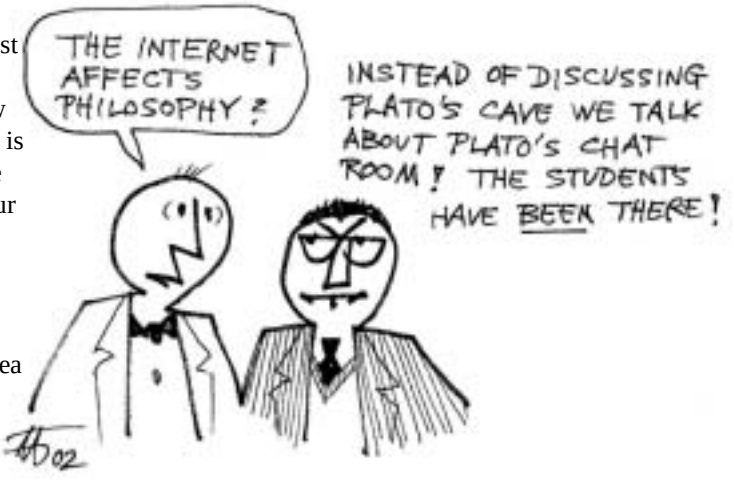
**Greg Benford**: I gave a two talk series, two separate evenings, and each evening, I saw this rapt fanatic face in the audience of about 500 people, and he was so focused on me that I remembered it years later. I saw it in the newspaper and I thought well, I'm not going to say anything about it. Three weeks later came a visit from the FBI. He had a list. You remember. He had a list, and he had been conning for the list at UCI. I was not on the list; I was disappointed. [*laughter*] But a good friend of mine was on the list, and he too had been giving a public lecture series at the same time. So, my advice is not to give public lectures.

**Vernor Vinge**: So where do you think you are tonight Greg?

**Greg Benford**: Alpha Centauri, really.

**Greg Benford**: The striking thing to me about mathematics is that it excites so much irrational thought. That's counterintuitive, I know, to a mathematician, but the strongly held positions in mathematics...well, you've seen mathematicians foam at the mouth and chew the rug just as often as I have, haven't you.

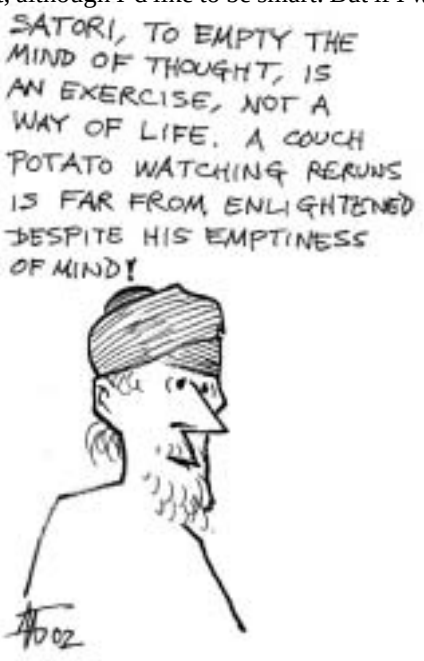
**Vernor Vinge**: No. But it is very interesting how mathematicians strive for a certain amount of precision. And it's true that when you're still in the state of using the stuff, before you get there, you run into people who really have no idea what they're doing. Oliver Heaviside, an



engineer in the 19th century, solved all these differential equations and he couldn't explain "properly" how he did it. Mathematicians did not approve. Now, normally, this might not have come up, but in the case of the stuff he was talking about, he could demonstrate he was right. "This is a solution to this differential equation. Blap. There it is". So they could not dismiss him as a crank, but they could mock him. "You idiot. You can't even explain what you're doing." And he said "a man does not have to understand how he digests food in order to enjoy a good meal." As a matter of fact, there is now strict math for what he had invented. But the theory folks lagged, and so I think you very frequently see people doing something really hard, you have no definitions for it. And you aren't sure quite what you're doing, and you feel your way, and you know the field has really gotten to a certain point when you can start saying rigorous things.

A famous mathematician, named Jean Dieudonné, was at San Diego State for a semester or two, and one of his points was that geniuses don't need calculus. If you look at classical problems that calculus can be used to solve, if you were smart enough, you could solve them. Even before calculus was invented. You know, like Archimedes. Really, Dieudonné went on to say, calculus was invented so your average joe could solve problems that otherwise you'd have to be really damn smart to solve. And the part of that I don't agree with, is that a really smart person who has tools like calculus has an added leg up.

I think he made an exteremely important point, and one that I think a lot of mathematicians don't really focus on, but I was always conscious of it, even though I didn't formulate it that way, because one of the reasons I got into math was I wanted to be able to solve problems that I couldn't solve otherwise. I didn't care about being smart about it, although I'd like to be smart. But if I wasn't smart,




I still wanted to be able to solve hard problems. And I have interacted with people who have not been mathematically trained, but they're as bright as I am, and looking at them solve mathematical problems I can see they're expending 10 times the mental horsepower that I have to expend to solve the same problem. I can solve some math problems, using the routine tools that I know, without really thinking about them very hard. I just start at the beginning, and then keep moving along, and I know that I'll get to the end and it'll be OK. And these other poor people, who haven't learned the tricks, they're operating at IQ 150, you know, to do the same thing. So I heartily recommend math, even for us who don't have the notion that we're mathematical geniuses, because what it does do for you is that it puts you in an entirely different camp in terms of what you can do.

**Greg Benford**: That's a good point. Actually, the genius of science I think, is that it allows second rate people like me (maybe third rate!), to make a contribution. That's really the point. You don't need just six geniuses and that's it. There are a lot of people who do the lesser tasks and who need these throwaway tools like calculus invented by Isaac Newton just on an afternoon to do things. And that's why this great trick, which is only about 300 years old, has been so powerful — it lets somewhat smart, but not brilliant people, like me, do something that really is new. You can actually discover something! Here are these great tools lying around; all you have to do is learn how to use them. That's been a great liberation. There are whole societies who don't have this mechanism in place. But let's not talk about Islam.

**Greg Benford**: What do you think about the future evolution of world culture. You speak for the rationalist, scientific agenda. Do you think it's got a future?

**Vernor Vinge**: I think there's a good chance. It's interesting to think about what the chances are of things turning out well. I would like to believe that looking at the sweep of history we see things getting better and better and better. And they really have in some sort of group sense. I think there are reasons for being optimistic in those ways. We have mastered the notion of positive sum games — ways that everyone can win if they behave in certain ways, and that more and more people know that. That has an enormous and positive momentum. OK, so that's the argument for the historical inevitability of freedom and technology making everything go right.

On the other hand, we only have one example to look at. And you can turn it around and I think S.M. Stirling's stories, and I'm not sure how — I don't intend to put words into his mouth — this is a case of a naive reader making his interpretations of it — but, for all we know our progress has been an accident and that there are other ways that it could go.

**Greg Benford**: That what's been an accident?

**Vernor Vinge**: The fact that it looks like progress has made things get to be better and better. A particular narrow example of that can be found by looking at the 20th century. There was this policy called "Mutually Assured Destruction". We survived and had no general nuclear war. How likely is it that a civilization would get through that? Well, having looked at how many wars started accidentally in the time before M.A.D., I think a person could make an argument that we went through a narrow bottleneck, that the odds were very high that we weren't going to get through it.

On the other hand, many people are in a position now, where they say, "Ah, look that all works out ok. M.A.D. for a short period of 30 or 40 years, you know, it's a transition. Isn't nice that it turned out to be safe."

We don't know that it's safe, we don't know that the situation we're in now is safe. We really don't know how safe the universe as a whole is, except that we keep finding punctuation marks in that history. So, the one thing I feel quite strongly about, is that since the universe may be a very dangerous place, our only hope for having a good chance for coming out OK is to be thoughtful and friendly toward technology.

**Greg Benford**: Let me give you the counterexample. There was a time less than a thousand years ago when the great scientific world power, the people doing the innovation, held sway in the dominant culture at least of the west, for about 150 years. And then the scientific condition in that culture was eradicated by fundamentalists in a period of only one generation. I'm talking here about Islam. Islam once had the best mathematicians and the best scientists in the world. Ptolemy, etc. And it got wiped out completely by a cultural change. How come that can't happen to us?

**Vernor Vinge**: What's the ordering here? I mean, under Islam, science flourished...

**Greg Benford**: And then it was wiped out by the fundamentalists. The universities were closed, or some were converted into purely rhetorical bodies, not exploratory and scientific bodies. The rise and the fall occurred in less than two centuries. So that's a model of a time when the scientific culture was really making gains and then got wiped out.

**Vernor Vinge:** In fact, I said that we only have one experiment here and you're saying actually, in a way, if you could tease the threads apart, we may have more than one experiment.

**Greg Benford**: Yes

**Vernor Vinge**: That's interesting. I think that would certainly be a legimate historical investigation to take that as one's point when looking at history. We don't have many worlds to study, but if we were very, very clever we might be able to run something like controlled experiments in a *post hoc* sense.

**Greg Benford**: Yeah. I find the Islamic record really chilling, because it's an example of how cultural change can wipe out what appears to be a very real cultural advance simply by essentially badmouthing the products of your opponents. They were able to silence the scientific ccommunity. I've often wondered if that could happen to this scientific community or do you think we're too powerful now?

**Vernor Vinge:** Oh, I think there are ways that things could get very rough. One is if we get scared enough by the people that are playing zero and negative sum games. Then we are reduced to playing zero and negative sum games — that is games where if one side wins a little bit, the other side has to lose an equal amount, or maybe lose a lot more. Any time that a civilization is in that sort of a situation, it seems to me that the momentum that I was talking about goes away. And you will get winners and losers, but you don't get any overall improvement of the mean. In a way, the scariest thing to me about terrorism is that it actually has the potential of taking away from us our greatest advantage, and that is our ability to trust in others and use that trust to make everybody richer and therefore advance the overall agenda.

**Greg Benford**: That's interesting. Has it ever occurred to you that perhaps the singularity will lead to all the scientfic rational people departing, leaving behind all the others?

**Vernor Vinge:** That would be an interesting scenario to write up as a story.

**Greg Benford**: I'm suggesting one of those novels that you owe Tor Books.

**Vernor Vinge:** If I do it, I will mention you, without any payment, in the forward.

**Greg Benford**: I understand; you're retired. (*laughter*) So do you think that it's possible that basically all the smart guys could skip town and leave behind all the, I don't know, vegetarians or something? [*laughter*]. Not that vegetarians aren't smart guys — just picking some special interest group.

**Vernor Vinge:** In a way, the singularity is automatically something like that. We may very well get in a situation where everybody can become a lot smarter. Then almost by definition, we have the scenario that you described. Now, it's a little bit different than the scenario you first described, which I took to mean that the people who stayed behind were behaving in mean spirited ways.
**Greg Benford**: That too, of course.
**Vernor Vinge**: That's a slightly different thing.
**Greg Benford**: The point I was sort of edging up on, is that maybe the singularity is going to represent the departure of all the high IQ in the human race, and it will be a Darwinian selection principle.
**Vernor Vinge**: I suspect there are high IQ people who for philosophical reasons would eschew the idea of becoming still smarter. That would be a faction that would...
**Greg Benford**: The faction of the smart people that don't want to get smarter.
**Vernor Vinge**: Yes.
**Greg Benford**: And how many people are there like that here tonight? [*laughter*]
**Vernor Vinge**: Ah. It wouldn't be phrased quite that way. Depending on how it happens; suppose it happens by intelligence amplification and hook up. How many people want to surrender to the brute soulless machine? I think a person can be smart and have an excellent education and say, "You can do it Greg, as long as you go somewhere else, but I'm not going to do something foolish like that". I'm speaking hypothetically — I'm not saying I feel that way.
**Greg Benford**: Your description begins to sound suspiciously like a bad episode about the Borg, actually.
**Vernor Vinge**: And to me the situation is not truly Borglike, but certainly that argument could be raised by the opponent forces. The scenario you're talking about where some of the smart people do it, and they leave, actually that's very benign. It's sort of live and let live.
**Greg Benford**: It frees up all those nice houses on the hill, or what?
**Vernor Vinge**: Right. In a sense, everybody wins in that situation. The people who stay behind are doing it, presumably, for reasoned philosophical notions. The people who go... actually I suspect there are places in the universe that are much more congenial to high technology than where we're sitting now.
**Greg Benford**: Really? Where?
**Vernor Vinge**: It depends on kind of what infrastructure you have. In the simplest case, consider the 1950's Campbellian view of asteroid belt civilizations, where you can do truly large engineering projects, and dump truly large amounts of energy without having problems. You have a whole new ceiling of where your environmental problems kick in. That's a very small example. A more extreme example is if you buy into the dragon's egg stuff of Bob Forward. Dragon's Egg, the notion that there may be places in the universe where it is much easier to do things like thinking fast. We have seen historically, and this is Vernor's parlour geography at work here, that users of different levels of technology regard different areas as benign and beneficial. You have the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys at the beginning of agriculture, and then you have Northern Europe, which doesn't look very attractive. If you're at a sufficiently high level of technology, it and even the colder parts of North America actually work out quite well, so I think it's very plausible that for very high technology, it would be in places that contemporary humans do not regard as prime real estate.
**Greg Benford**: So if the asteroid belts turned out to be the place for big projects and everything, and all the smart people go there...but aren't they all going to talk like Jerry Pournelle?
**Vernor Vinge**: Even as a child, I think I realized that interstellar civilizations were probably a post human enterprise. And now I'm afraid that interplanetary civilizations are a posthuman event, so if Jerry is out there he will be superior enough that you won't have to worry about being irritated by what he has to say. I think that actually the enthusiasm of Jerry Pournelle in his writing about space is very well taken. It doesn't save the human race, but it helps us avoid the possibility of human extinction. If the singularity comes along I think that Jerry would be one of the first to take advantage of it to improve.
**Greg Benford**: That's what I think. People who value being smart will want to be smarter, and people who don't will stay behind and inherit the earth. There was something in the Bible about that, except I don't think it mentioned Jerry by name. [*laughter*].

**Vernor Vinge:** Hans Moravec has used that scenario in almost exactly that way — it seems to me that's a very benign situation where everyone comes away from it feeling comfortable. And there would probably be people that would stay behind on the earth, that over a period of time say, "well, we'll take a crack at going out and playing hardball with people that have substantially improved means."
**Greg Benford**: Really smart people who nonetheless are still not apparently not sending us any radio messages.
**Vernor Vinge**: Ah. In fact I think the Fermi paradox — you know 'where is everybody?' — is so interesting. We are getting astronomy technology now that's good enough that we're getting bounds on what could really be there, and to me it is complementary to the singularity issues. My version of the singularity is you have this "unknowability". Certainly we're not seeing evidence of technology that we recognize out there.

It really is interesting to see how this silence in the sky combined with improved astronomical technology has affected science fiction and space opera. And it seems to me that every hard science fiction writer, or writer who is writing seriously about space adventure has had to address this. There's about six or seven, well, as many

approaches as there are writers who are seriously doing it (that means more than six or seven of course). There are many major categories of approaches to this. You in your *Sky River* novels, you had an approach to this. I had it in the *Zones*. There are what I call the clockstarter scenarios where you say that actually why it's quiet right now is there was a major disaster that shut everybody down. And the nice thing about that, if you're going to write stories, is that it does an end run around one of the most difficult things of stories, and that is to have synchronized the short period of time where everyone's tech is recognizable.
**Greg Benford**: Yeah.
**Vernor Vinge**: In this clockstarter scenario, it means over the next thousand years, we move into an era, where in the nearby thousand light years or so, you begin to see civilizations light up and there's a number of very good science fiction novels that have come out recently with that as an underlying thesis.
**Greg Benford**: Name one.
**Vernor Vinge**: *Permanence* by Karl Schroeder, and Alistair Reynolds stories like "Chasm City".
**Greg Benford**: Right. An astrophysicist. He was here at this convention I believe. Is he here in the audience? *(Pause)* Too bad. His name was mentioned. Ah...Doesn't happen every day. I agree with that. I am working with the SETI Foundation, and I point out that we actually aren't doing any surveys beyond 200 light years.
**Vernor Vinge**: I think that depends on what a person means by doing a survey.
**Greg Benford**: I mean designated targets looked at more than once.
**Vernor Vinge**: There's lots of stuff that's putting limits on things, or upper limits on things. One interesting sort of counter to that is that for very good reasons, astrophysicists will do anything to explain mysteries in a non-artifact way.
**Greg Benford**: Exactly.
**Vernor Vinge**: The only way they would ever explain a mystery as an artifact is if it looks like an artifact we could know how to make.
**Greg Benford**: Yes. The history of pulsars. I talked to Tony Hewish and Martin Ryle who got the Nobel prize for that, because as you know, pulsars were discovered actually by Joceyln Bell. [*Editor's Note: Jocelyn Bell, working under Tony Hewish, detected the first four pulsars. When the Nobel was awarded to Hewish and Ryle, public controversy ensued. Sir Fred Hoyle argued that Bell should have shared the prize.*] I asked them how long they had delayed publication of the paper because they really thought that its most probable explanation was an alien signal, and they said about a month — until they saw that the pulsars were spinning down. Therefore they were not artifically maintained at a constant frequency but were slowly winding down. That convinced them it was a natural explanation and then they sent the paper to *Nature.* That's the truth of the matter. At least, I got that story from both of the guys so I think it's true. Let me point out though that no one has ever carried out a beacon seeking strategy.
**Vernor Vinge:** What do you mean, a beacon?
**Greg Benford**: A beacon. Looking for a really big, bright signal occasionally occuring at great distances, like thousands of light years. My particular pet thing is toward the galactic center, which I think is the best place to look. No one's ever done it. And yet the stars at the galactic center of our type, the G stars, are now starting to leave the main sequence, because some of those stars have been there now for 10 billion years. If there's a civilization that arose there and was permanent and could get rich, then that's the place to look. It's also of course, the highest density of stars in the galaxy and you're looking along the line of sight through the whole galaxy. So my point is actually I don't regard the Fermi paradox of "how come they haven't visited the earth" to be different from the paradox of "we haven't heard", because largely, I think we haven't listened. On the other hand, we have explored the earth pretty well.
**Vernor Vinge**: To me the next twenty years of astronomy, singularity issues aside, are just going to be so fascinating, because we're moving into an era where we can survey enormous numbers of stars on a close enough scale to detect large planets.
**Greg Benford**: Large planets. Jovians.
**Vernor Vinge** Right. And of course on smaller scales, for a smaller percentage, to do other things. So we're beginning to look at things not just casually, but we're looking at everything, out to larger and larger distances.
**Greg Benford**: Yes. Right, actually within 20 years, it's quite plausible, in fact, less than 20, to be able to see the ozone line in atmospheres within several hundred lightyears. If you see that line next to a star you don't have to directly detect the planet. That's going to be striking, because that's a big clear signature. So you're right, we're systematically looking. There're going to be a lot of surprises. Look, the hot Jovians were a real surpirse to everybody, and who knows what that means.

**Greg Benford**: I wondered if you would care to give us a rough prediction of when you think we might expect to detect, any kind of signal from any kind of extraterrestrial civilization that we could identify as artificial. Any ideas?
**Vernor Vinge**: I personally feel that that's harder to make any estimate on than talking about the singularity happening here on earth. We know a lot more about what's going on down here.
**Greg Benford**: You said you wanted hard questions.
**Vernor Vinge:** I really have no idea. To me, there are such plausible explanations for the interstellar situation that would explain things in entirely different ways.To me, in fact, one of the marvellous things about the next twenty

years is that it's possible we'll reach some conclusions. If the results are negative of course that doesn't really prove much, but it supplies limits that are so low that there will begin to be some conclusions written.

I had a story in the restaurant guide that everybody got, and the thesis of the story is, hey, there is no one else anywhere. There's been other stories like that, but if you think about that, and if we discovered that, it really changes the way you look at science fiction, and perhaps the way you look at the universe. The characters in this story had a relatively bizarre view of the universe, but it started out with "this is our cookie, and we're going to crumble it the way we wish."

**Greg Benford**: Tomorrow there's a panel I think I'm on called "Rare Earth" based on this book that came out a couple years ago that maintained maybe we really are unusual and the rest of the galaxy is dead. Do you have an opinion about that?

**Vernor Vinge:** In the near term, again, I'm just totally blank on that, but we're almost to the point where we can do statistics that might mean something on the hot Jovians. And that would be very interesting. If looking at it more and more carefully we find the hot Jovians are not just observational favoritism, that would be very unnerving and meaningful.

**Greg Benford**: All those nasty gas giants hugging up close to the star, and occupying the habitable zones so nice little earths can't get a start is really a horrifying vision, unless of course, you start to count the moons of the hot Jovians.

**Vernor Vinge**: Yes. Except the evolutionary history of these hot Jovian systems looks pretty unpleasant. Getting back to pure mathematics, or semi-pure mathematics...

**Greg Benford**: Boy, you dodged that one fast.

**Vernor Vinge**: I said I didn't know. But getting back to almost pure mathematics, one of the great mathematical problems of the 19th century was proving something that everybody knew, and that was, that in the long term the solar system was a stable, dynamical system. The bright boys invented all sorts of mathematics trying to prove that, and they were never able to prove it. I believe that if that question were raised now, among dynamicists, they would say what makes you think it's stable?

**Greg Benford**: Yes, in fact some is demonstrably not.

**Greg Benford**: Why are we so good at mathematics anyway? Why has evolution made us this smart when it's not obvious that we needed this stuff to hunt down game in the veldt. In other words, explain yourself please.

**Vernor Vinge**: I don't think we're that good at math.

**Greg Benford**: You don't think we're that good?

**Vernor Vinge**: No, I think that's just the anthropic principle at work there, that makes us think we're that good at it. We don't have anything to compare to.

**Greg Benford**: Elephants can count. That's about it.

**Vernor Vinge**: And mathematics is actually such a thin veneer in terms of our capability. Most of our intelligence is not in that at all. It's just very artificial things sneaking across the top of the neo-cortex.

**Greg Benford**: It's true, but why are we so good at it?

**Vernor Vinge**: I don't think we have any evidence that we're any good at it. There are all sorts of problems you can point to that we can't do, that are certainly very easy problems to describe.

**Greg Benford**: Oh, you mean like the Riemann hypothesis.

**Vernor Vinge**: Yes, but I mean there are ones even simpler to state than that, that until recently...

**Greg Benford**: That was actually a joke Vernor.

**Vernor Vinge**: Oh...[*audience laughter*]

**Greg Benford**: The Riemann hypothesis is not easy to state, but it's one of the classic problems of mathematics. It's the kind of problem that only a mathematician would think of, as opposed to say, the four color problem, or something like that.

**Vernor Vinge**: Or Fermat's last ...

**Greg Benford**: Or Fermat's last theorem, which I always thought was a joke, actually. I had a theory that Fermat actually didn't have any proof; he just wrote this note; he said I'm going to get famous one way or the other.

**Vernor Vinge**: Yeah. "These margins are just too damn narrow, or my floppy isn't big enough for the proof."

**Greg Benford**: I have this great novel, but I don't have a piece of paper. How many people in the audience have actually spent some time trying to solve Fermat's last? *(pause)* Me too. I spent about three days, gave up, changed majors. [*audience laughter*]

**Vernor Vinge**: That's why we're so damn good at math?

**Greg Benford**: That's why we're so damn good at math. Well, look, we beat the chimpanzees. And we can prove it.We're not the one in the cages, you know.

**Vernor Vinge:** Chrysanthemum

**Greg Benford**: Good idea. I think it would be a good idea to open up a few salient questions from the audience to badger Vernor before we call it an evening. [*applause*]

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**Great Stationery Duel** - Originally, a contest between Speer and Wilson in which each was to use a different letterhead or type of stationery in each regular letter, and the first who gave out would lose. They developed specialized kleptomaniac traits. Quite a code of rules was worked out, defining what a different type of stationery is, and forbidding the purchase of stationery simply for dueling purposes. Frequently they used different types of envelopes as well as letterheads. Some time after correspondence with Wilson ceased, Speer was challenged by Warner and the duel resumed. It's typical of a sort of whimsy very common in fankind.

- from the *Fancyclopedia* by John Bristol Speer, 1944

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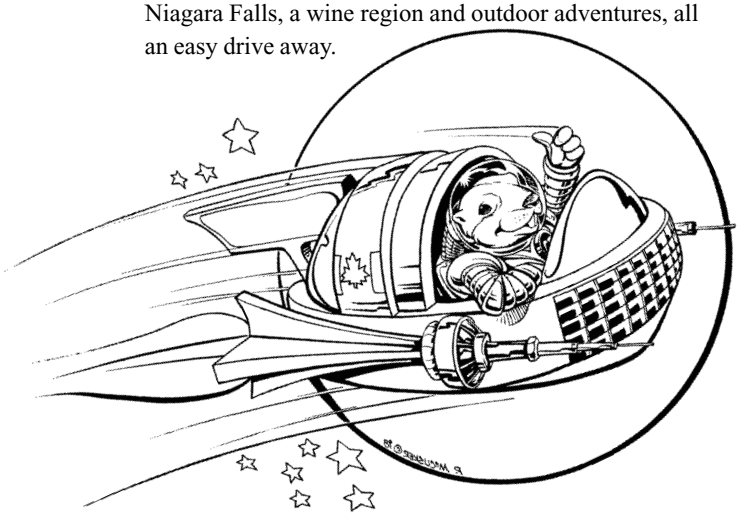

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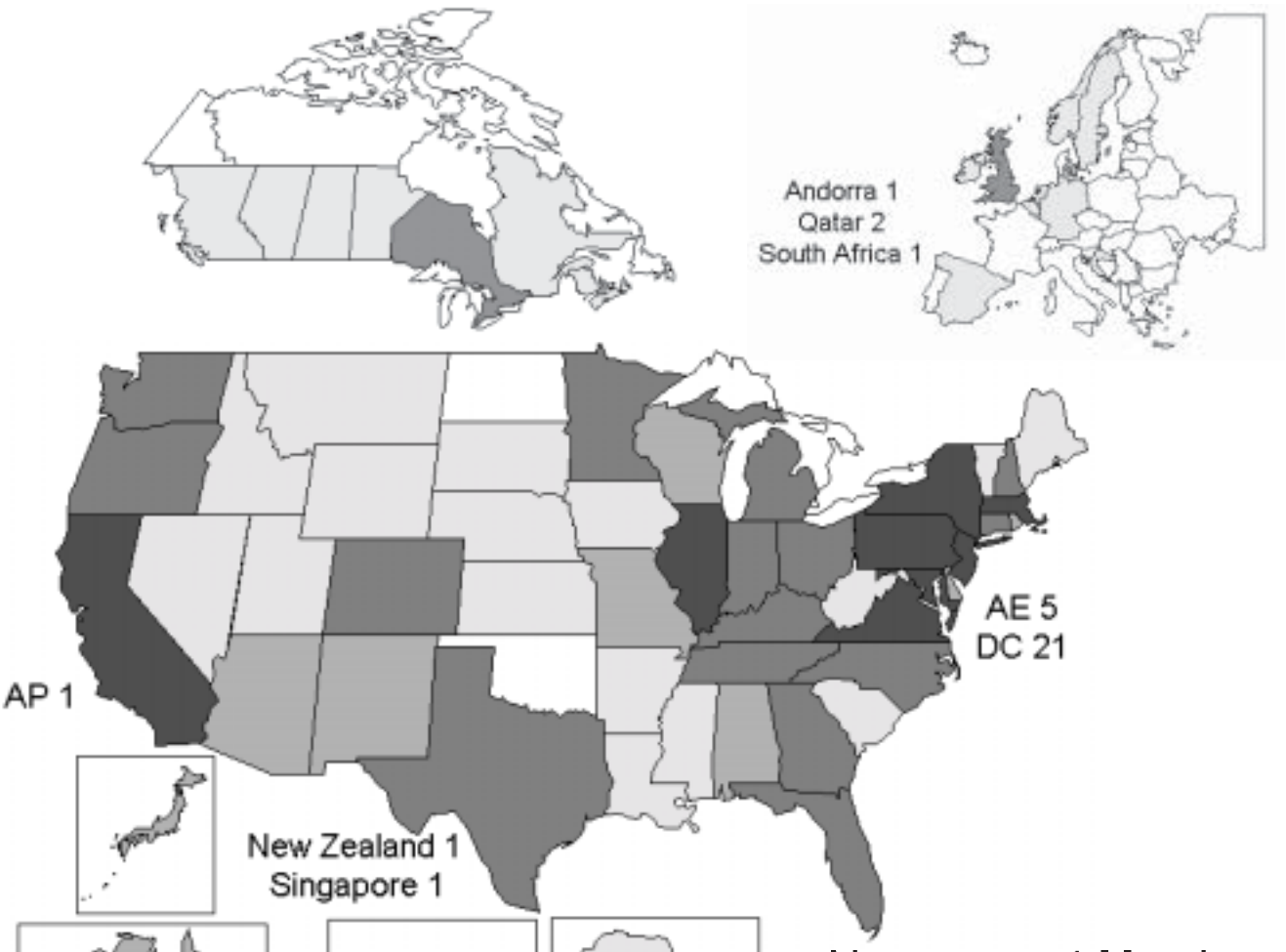


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2852 A Stuart W. Wells III
2700 A Brent Whitaker
2701 A Wayne Wilkening
2853 A Kim Williams
2854 S Larissa Williams
2855 A Walter Jon Williams
2856 A Steven J. Willis

2659 S Linda Winks
2660 S Nick Winks
2702 A JoAnn Wood
2857 A Joyce Yasner
2661 A Karen Yost
2858 A Brian Youmans
2859 S Erik A. Zea

2860 A Joel T. Zecher
2861 A Linda M. Zecher
2703 A Jody Zolli

## Progress Reports Schedule & Advertising Rates

| PR | Size | Ad copy due | Pub. date |
|---|---|---|---|
| #4 | Magazine | 05/15/2003 | 7/03 |
| #5 | Newsletter | 11/01/2003 | 12/03 |
| #6 | Magazine | 02/15/2004 | 4/04 |
| #7 | Newsletter | 07/20/2004 | 8/04 |

Rates are applicable for Progress Report #4. Initial mailed circulation of PR #4 will be 3,500+ with 2-3 readers per issue, approx. 6,000 copies will be published and will also be on the web. Ads can be accepted hardcopy, or in electronic format (TIF or EPS files). Electronic format preferred.

| Size | Image Area | Pro Rate | Fan Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Full page | 7½" x 10" (A) | $300 | $125 |
| Half Page | 7½" x 4¾" (B) | $200 | $85 |
| | 3½" x 10" (C) | $200 | $85 |
| Quarter Page | 3½" x 4¾" (D) | $125 | $55 |
| | 7½" x 2¼" (E) | $125 | $55 |

Payment must accompany ad copy. 10% discount for those who contract & buy four or more ads.

Please write with requests for special processing (include a full description of what is desired). Information on availability and costs will be sent to you as soon as possible. For information, contact *progressreport@noreascon.org*


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