



CONVOCATION

CHICON 16 # 18th - 20th July 1997 # New Hall, Cambridge



Programme Book

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome aboard this year's Unicon and RPG con combination weekend. For your comfort and amusement, the convention has been provided with a wide range of leisure facilities. Debates, discussions and talks will be going on in the main programme room, while informal sessions are to be held in the workshop. A wide variety of RPGs can be played in the Games Room, while books, artwork and other goods are to be found in the Dealers' Room. A bar service will be available, well, in the bar. In the unlikely event of the convention coming down over water, life jackets are under the seat in front of you, or you can simply avoid the fish pond. Your convention committee are here to help and assist you. I'm Kari and together with Rhodri, Michael, Phil and Sue, I hope that you will enjoy your con with us this weekend. I'd like to give especial thanks to our Guest of Honour, Steven Brust; to our special guests James Wallis and Andrew Rilstone; to all our programme participants and helpers; to New Hall and its staff; and to all our members for coming. Thank you and have a good convention.

Before setting out on this convention, attendees are advised to read the instructions which you will find in your programme book in front of you.

STOP PRESS

Convocation are proud to announce that

Richard Lambert

Co-designer of *Once Upon A Time*
will also be present as a special guest

Kari

Credits

Cover and interior artwork:	Sue Mason
Steven Brust interview:	Christopher Jorgensen
Guest biographies:	Andrew Rilstone and James Wallis
Other contents:	The committee, variously

The committee would also like to thank Patrick Nielsen Hayden (Tor books) and Alan Glover (Chaosium) for their generous donations of books to be auctioned for the *Adron's Disaster Relief Fund*.

© Contributors 1997

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation, no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

Information

Meals and Bar Times

Breakfast	8:30 – 9:30
Main Bar	12 – 2pm 6pm – 11pm
Real Ale Bar	2pm until late

Rolls will be available in the bar from noon until 2pm. Food and drink may not be taken into programme rooms, the dealer's room or the games room.

Dealers Room Times

Saturday	10am – 3pm 4pm – 6pm
Sunday	10am – 3:30pm

Gate Hours

The main door will be locked at 11pm. If you will be returning to the main college after this, please notify the Porters, who will give you an access code or swipe card.

Smoking Policy

No smoking in programme rooms, dealers' room or games room. Smoking is allowed in the bar, on the walkway and in bedrooms.

Weapons Policy

Weapons may only be worn as part of a costume during the party, and must be peace-bonded at all times. Any weapon used irresponsibly may be confiscated for the duration of the convention.

The Care & Feeding of Resident US High School Students

We are sharing the site with a party of 16-year-old American students. Please do not buy for or give to them alcoholic drinks as they are underage.

Signs, Notices and Posters

Signs and notices may only be put up on designated notice boards. Any sign found elsewhere will be reunited with its owner using an industrial stapler.

The Committee

Postmodernist Theory tells us that a text reveals more about its author than the subject. As an experiment in narrative therefore, we present the committee biographies of Rhodri James (well it's his fault for missing a crucial meeting....)

Rhodri by Karl

I have to be nice about Rhodri. He is the only person who ever wrote a song just for me, a deed which increases in stature when you realise that he can sing and I can't. Born — and remaining — a Herefordshire Welshman, he has a wholly desirable (from my point of view) interest in Welsh history as well as a laudable awareness of the sheer awkwardness of the subject (and of those who study it). On top of this, he cheerfully agreed to be railroaded onto the Convocation committee, and never minds being made to watch hour after hour of Hong Kong action comedies, even ones about football. Buy him a cider and tell him I told you to.

Rhodri by Phil

Rhodri's characters always are, characters that is. Whether pyromaniac thugs or debonair swashbucklers they always make their mark. They are some of the most stubborn, opinionated, and downright bloody-minded individuals to cross a referee's path, ruining plots through callous common sense or inconvenient principles. Fortunately they are also unfortunate. Very unfortunate.

Rhodri's player, on the other hand, clearly likes those systems where you take obscure disadvantages and buy every skill based on the same stat in order to minimax things. This means Rhodri is clearly unbalanced and shouldn't have been allowed. Fortunately he is also unfortunate.

Rhodri by Mike

Rhodri James does not exist. No one could possibly be as active as the alleged Rhodri in gaming, filking, fanzines, conrunning and other fannish activities, so he is clearly a myth. This convention therefore has no programme book, as the non-existent Rhodri is editing it, and I really have no idea why I'm bothering to write this bio. So I'll stop.

Rhodri by Sue

Rhodri, beard, glasses, pleasant, easy going, perpetually late, computer bod, lives in Cambridge... Sounds like the generic fan... But boy, what a singing voice.

Rhodri by Rhodri

Well, they've said it all, haven't they? At least this has the handy side-effect that I don't have to write anything myself.

Programme: Friday

	Main	Workshop
18:30	Opening Ceremony	
19:00	Playing Me, Playing You	Open for gaming
20:00	Narrative Voice in Different Cultures	
21:00	Patrick Tilley Ate My Shoelaces	
22:00	Story-telling	

Main Programme Room

18.30: Opening Ceremony

19.00: Playing Me, Playing You

Agony uncles John Dallman, Phil Masters, James Wallis and (in his first public appearance) Dr Plokta further complicate your embarrassing role-playing problems.

20.00: Narrative Voice in Different Cultures

Kari, Steven Brust, Karen Kelly and Jo Walton discuss cultural and social differences in story-telling around the world.

21.00: Patrick Tilley Ate my Shoelaces

John Richards, Pat McMurray, Phil Nanson and Helen Steele recount great conrunning disasters.

22.00: Story-telling

Kari and Tom Nanson lead a round-robin story-telling.

Workshop Room

19.00: Open for gaming

Programme: Saturday

	Main	Workshop
11:00	John Richards Rants	Juggling
12:00	The State of the RPG Industry	
13:00	Somewhere in the Middle Ceremony	Forgotten Futures
14:00	So You Fancy Yourself as a Referee?	
15:00	GoH Speech	
16:00	Social Darwinism in Babylon 5	Open for gaming
17:00	Narrative and Plot in Different Fictive Modes	
18:00	Auction	
19:00	Retelling and Evoking Myth	
20:00	Grand Colloquium of Chronomancers and Cosmic Caravaneers (in the bar)	

Main Programme Room

11.00: John Richards Rants

British fandom's rant-meister struts his stuff.

12.00: The State of the RPG Industry

An open discussion led by James Wallis

13.00: Somewhere in the Middle Ceremony:

Rhodri James presents the Unicon and RPG bid sessions, or "What are we going to do now?" sessions if no bids materialise.

14.00: So You Fancy Yourself as a Referee?

Michael Abbott puts hand-picked contestants through their paces.

15.00: GoH speech

Steven Brust's guest of honour speech — British premiere.

16.00: Social Darwinism in Babylon 5

Pat McMurray, Andrew Adams and others

17.00: Narrative and Plot in Different Fictive Modes

Alex Stewart, Colin Greenland, Caroline Mullan and Tom Nanson debate story-telling in written, visual and oral forms.

18.00: Auction

The Plokta cabal can and will sell anything and anyone. Bring your wallet, your chequebook and the deeds to your house. All proceeds to the Adron's Disaster Relief Fund in aid of Steven Brust's air fare.

19.00: Retelling and Evoking Myth

Phil Nanson, Steven Brust, Andrew Rilstone and Mike Whitaker disturb the dust of archetypes past.

20.00 onwards: Grand Colloquium of Chronomancers and Cosmic Caravaneers

Party, party, party... in the bar.

Workshop Room

11.00: Juggling

Steven Cain displays his balls.

13.00: Forgotten Futures

Marcus Rowland presents his shareware RPG system, as recently featured in *Arcane*.

16.00: Open for gaming

Programme: Sunday

	Math	Workshop
11:00	Role-Playing Games: Pretentious or Pretending?	
12:00	The People's Revolutionary Committee (Role-Playing Subcommittee (Firing Squad Detail))	Signing Session: Steven Brust
13:00	Taming Characters	
14:00	University Challenge	Ars Magica
15:00	Twice Upon A Time	
16:00	The Perils and Plusses of Game Based Fiction	
17:00	Closing Ceremony	

Main Programme Room

11.00: Role-playing games: Pretentious or Pretending?

Andrew Rilstone talks about improvisation and spontaneity in role-playing games.

12.00: The People's Revolutionary Committee (Role-Playing Subcommittee (Firing Squad Detail))

Commissar James Wallis denounces the counter-revolutionary scum of the role-playing industry; sentence will be swiftly executed.

13.00: Taming Characters

Our expert panellists — Phil Masters, Steven Brust, Michael Cule, Jo Walton and Jaine Weddell — reveal the true meaning of author/referee domination. Bring your own whip.

14.00: University Challenge

Roger “Bamber Paxman” Robinson grills the expert teams from the College of Dragon Mages and the Second Foundation.

15.00: Twice Upon a Time

Our special guests Andrew Rilstone and James Wallis perform for your delectation and delight.

16.00: The Perils and Plusses of Game Based Fiction

Sue Mason, Steven Brust, Lianne Norman and Alex Stewart explore the interactions between gaming and writing.

17.00: Closing Ceremony

So long, and thanks for all the fish — and leave them in the pond where you found them.

Workshop Room

12.00: Signing session — Steven Brust

14.00: Ars Magica

Helen Steele demonstrates version 4 of the *Ars Magica* RPG system.

Where To Eat

Cambridge is well provided with restaurants — far more than we can list here. There are several within 5–10 minutes walk of New Hall, while the town centre — 15–25 minutes walk — offers many more. Here are a few suggestions.

On Castle Hill

- Pubs:** **Sir Isaac Newton** and **The Castle Inn** both do bar meals and snacks.
- Mexican:** **Zaks** (tel 301547) tends to be bland rather than fiery.
- Indian:** **The Maharajah** (358399) is a bit more expensive, but does some rather nice curries with fruit.
- The Curry Centre** (363666) is solid and dependable.
- The Star of India Tandoori** (312569) is the only Tandoori of the set, on the site of the much-lamented Waffles café.

Town Centre

The Varsity	St Andrews St	356060	Greek Cypriot, good value.
L'Armandier	39A Burleigh St	518322	French regional, excellent food.
Tai Cheun	12 St Johns St	358287	Chinese — reservations necessary for large parties.
Shao Tao	72 Regent St	353942	Chinese famous for its good menu and assertive waiters.
Pizza Express	7a Jesus Lane	342033	Dine in the elegance of the former exclusive (Public School only) Pitt Club.
The Gardenia	Rose Crescent	566826	Excellent value Greek restaurant.
Don Pasquale	12a Market Hill	350106	Italian.
Footlights	Grafton Centre	323434	Tex-Mexican, famous cocktails.

And many, many more.

The Grand Colloquium of Chronomancers and Cosmic Caravaneers

Through the wastes of time, across the mountains of memory, by yak and camel, flivver and ornithopter they come. Some have travelled for aeons, some for seconds. Some have twisted in from dimensions unknown to man, some have just popped in off the street. But all have been drawn to this place, to this time.

Why? Who knows the plots that will be hatched, the deals that will be struck. As Ming Dynasty guardsmen buy rice cookers and wizards sell perpetual motion machines to tourists, other more sinister transactions take place. Two shadowy figures trade blood samples, a wriggling sack is passed by an Illithid to a Dragaeran. It squeaks as he bundles it away.

Ah, the marvels that will be seen, the wonders to behold! And you, yes you, can attend this miraculous gathering. So come along, come in disguise or reveal your true nature to the worlds; lurk in corners or chant psalms to the skies; but come, come to the colloquium.

Thank you sir, thank you kindly. It's a bargain you won't regret. Just break the seal....

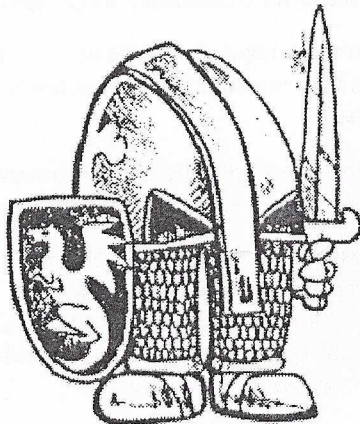
The Adron's Disaster Relief Fund

Convocation has established a separate fund to help to defray the expense for a small con to bring a guest from the US. There will be an auction during the convention to raise money for the fund. Donations are also welcome. Please give generously. Remember, if you leave the con still in the possession of any cash, we have failed.

Cuest Biographies:

Andrew Rilstone

Andrew Rilstone is a writer, games-inventor, editor and unrecognised genius. His credits include 13 issues of *Aslan*, 4 issues of *Interactive Fantasy*, *Once Upon a Time*, *Apocrypha Now* and *The Dying of the Light* (for *Warhammer RPG*) and a regular column in *Arcane* magazine. He is 31, single, lives in Bristol and does not own a Magic deck.



In 1972 Andrew read a re-print of Kirby's '*Mighty Thor*' comic strip, which transformed him into life-long fantasy fan. In 1977 (in between seeing *Star Wars* and totally failing to notice Punk) the same comic-book carried an advert for something called 'Dungeon Sandragons', which transformed him into a gamer. The moral would appear to be, don't let your children read tacky American comics. He recalls the remainder of his adolescence as a confused haze of masked swordsman, gun-toting Imperium scouts, polyhedral dice and hex paper.

He first came to international prominence at Sussex University, where he launched a fanzine named '*Aslan*' which pioneered, proselytised and pontificated about systems play, freeform games, story-telling, and other vaguely avant-garde approaches to RPGs. Among the community of disaffected intellectuals which rallied around this radical journal were James Wallis and Richard Lambert. The three collaborated in the creation of '*Once Upon a Time*' a story telling card game published by Atlas Games.

Andrew made several attempts to sell-out, first freelancing for Wayne's fondly remembered prozine '*Games Master International*' and then for '*Games Man*' magazine, of which he was subsequently appointed editor. His period at the helm of this redoubtable title, which lasted nearly a fortnight, is widely regarded as the magazine's best period, even though he did not succeed in completing a single issue before the publisher went bankrupt.

In 1994, he and James Wallis launched the semi-professional journal '*Interactive Fantasy*' which set out to provide a forum for the critical and theoretical discussion of RPGs. It's first issue blazoned the question 'Role-playing: Toy, tool or artform' across the cover. Despite printing very long articles which contained words like 'deconstruction', 'Platonic thought experiment' and 'facilitate', the question was never satisfactorily resolved....

Combining the sublime with the ridiculous, or vice versa, he was Project Manager at Hogshead Publishing, overseeing the *Apocrypha Now* and *Dying of the Light* supplements for *Warhammer RPG*. He also wrote large chunks of the latter.

He also wrote regularly for the recently defunct *Arcane* magazine, where his regular column has been described by readers as 'obnoxious' 'irritating' and 'completely pointless'.

After decades of sporadic unemployment, he has recently found someone who will pay him a regular salary as a computer games designer.

When asked to explain his philosophy of RPGs, Andrew said: 'When I was a kid, I played space men, or knights in armour. Now I'm grown up, I still want to play space men and knights in armour. But I want to use my knowledge of physics and medieval history and English literature to make sure its the best damned game of knights in armour any kid has ever played.'

Quest Biographies: James Wallis

James Wallis runs Hogshead Publishing, the largest roleplaying producer in the United Kingdom. He set up the company in 1994, originally to publish new games and the magazine *"Interactive Fantasy"* (co-founded with Andrew Rilstone, who now owns it), but market forces and lack of time mean that the company now concentrates on *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. It may eventually produce a RPG of its own, and figs might ply.

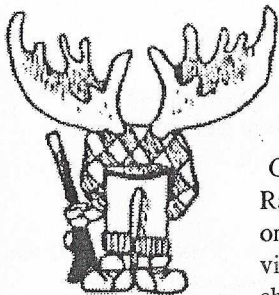
James started gaming at the age of 14, and began his publishing career six months later with the lamentable fanzine *WEREMAN*, a publication so awful that he will pay good money for any copies you may have, so he can destroy them. From there it was the usual route of freelancing for *White Dwarf*, *Adventurer* and the other gaming rags that proliferated in the 1980s, and from there into the industry itself, via two supplements for Palladium Books. He refuses to be embarrassed by this.

He has had nine books published, with titles as diverse as *"The Ren & Stimpy Show Happy! Happy! Joy! Joy! Book"* (with Marc Gascoigne) and *"Fortean Times Weird Year 1996"* (with Joe McNally), and has freelanced for more magazines than he cares to remember. He was also one-third of the development team of the story-telling card-game *"Once Upon A Time"* (Atlas Games, 1993, 1996), and has been vainly trying to create a sequel based on ghost stories ever since, under the working title *"It Was A Dark And Stormy Night"*.

At present he is gainfully employed by John Brown Publishing, where he works on the recently launched magazine *BIZARRE*. Hogshead consumes almost all of the rest of his time, but he is also currently working on some short fiction for Games Workshop, a dummy for a forthcoming non-gaming magazine, and supplying quotes for his girlfriend to use in her articles for Harpers & Queen.

Subjects about which he can become dangerously boring if given an opportunity: Empire of the Petal Throne; German board-games; the decline of the British RPG industry; why Games Workshop are actually good people; the films of Michael Powell and Emerich Pressburger, Hal Hartley and Jan Svankmeier; the OuLiPo

literary movement of the 1960s and 1970s with particular reference to Georges Perec; why there are no good vegetarian restaurants in London; Situationist theory; art forgery and Hans Van Meeghern; academic theories of role-playing; Neville Brody's contributions to typography; Andy Goldsworthy; Thomas Pynchon; the crime fiction of Derek Raymond; and how to get freelancers to deliver manuscripts on time. He prefers coffee to tea, dogs to cats, PCs to Macs, vinyl to CDs, friends to family, Jung to Freud, and ship to shore. His favourite colour is unclear.



Steven Brust Interview

The following interview with Steven Brust was conducted over dinner on 11 April 1997, and is reproduced by kind permission of the interviewer, Christopher Jorgensen.

Me: Test, test, test, testing on the table. Test test.

SKZB: We could do that, but it would be wrong.

Me: First of all, who designed the hat?

SKZB: Ken Wilson of Excalibur Leather. He's out of Los Angeles, but he does Renaissance festivals, and he sells bunches of hats. In addition he does custom work, very good custom work. We sat down and had a nice chat about what would be the just exactly perfect hat for me.

Me: He do the tool work on the side?

SKZB: Yep.

Me: Does it snow in the Empire?

SKZB: Oh yes. Not around Adrilankha, but there are places, yes indeed, where it snows. I try not to write about them, because I don't want to dwell on it for much the same reason there are no mosquitoes in my world. There are things I don't wish to think about and dwell on.

Me: We've talked before about Megan Lindholm. You've written the book *Gypsy* with her, and you've just finished a book with Emma Bull. Would you compare these two experiences?

SKZB: They were both fun. The biggest difference was that Emma and I lived in the same city, so the feedback was more immediate. They were both really really good, and they both kicked my tail. They made me take off and got me excited. In a certain extent the thing about a collaboration, at least the way I work it, is it's cheating because the bad parts you don't have to write. The parts were you're dragging and you're not really sure what's going on... you just skip those. That's the point where you turn it over to your collaborator who writes something that gets you all excited. It worked that way with both Megan and Emma.

Me: Do you have any future plans for collaborations?

SKZB: No plans, but neither of these were planned. They just happened, so I can conceive of something else happening. Roger Zelazny and I were talking before he died... that would have been more fun than I can even think about.

Me: Who do you read?

[at this point the author gives me a look, assumes a far-away tone of voice, and I get the impression that the list is longer than we have time for, but he does mention some]

SKZB: Will Shetterly, Jane Yolen, Pamela Dean, Gene Wolfe, Tim Powers, Patrick O'Brian... I guess that will do for starts.

Me: Mostly fantasy then, and a historical fiction. Tim Powers is science fiction.

SKZB: Science fiction, fantasy, whatever takes his bizarre strange twisted interest.

Me: You said *Dragon* will be your next book. How many do you plan total? Do you know?

SKZB: I think plan is too strong a word, vague intention would be closer. And that would be nineteen. One for each house, the first one called *Taltos*, and a last one called *The Last Contract*. I don't call it a plan because even if I live long enough to write them I might lose interest, and I hope that if I stop being interested, I'll stop writing. If it comes up we'll see. If I don't feel like writing more Vlad books, and somebody waves a whole bunch of money under my nose then I'll find out how I jump. I'd like to think that when I'm not excited about it anymore, I'll stop.

Me: I know *Cowboy Feng's* and *To Reign in Hell* are out of print, but out of all your works which do you consider the weakest?

SKZB: *Yendi* is weakest. *Feng* had some real problems, but I think *Yendi* is my weakest.

Me: Why would you say that?

SKZB: Because there's absolutely nothing in it except a story, and if you're going to do that it's got to be a real kick-ass story, and not one that's kind of okay. *Feng* I am not happy with, but at least I was attempting something difficult. *Yendi* I didn't challenge myself. I had just finished *To Reign in Hell*, and decided to treat myself to another Vlad story. At that point I had no idea clue I was going to be writing a series, but I was so burned out from *To Reign in Hell*, and it was such a relief and pleasure to get back inside Vlad's head that it just sort of carried all the way through the story, and as a result, I not only didn't push myself, but I didn't examine what I was doing closely enough. So it doesn't really do much. I'd like to have it over, I'd like to take another shot at it. It would be completely different. Which is not to say it's awful or anything. In terms of a fun read it is probably better than *Feng's*, but for me it's less satisfying. I don't like it, I don't like what I did, and I wish I'd tried something harder.

Me: *Cowboy Feng's* reminded me of Spider Robinson.

SKZB: [*gets slightly angry*] Yeah, people tell me that. I think because there's a bar in it.

Me: I think there's more than that.

SKZB: Like what?

Me: How about the title? *Cowboy Feng's Space Bar & Grill... Callahan's Crosstime Saloon*.

SKZB: Yeah, like I said, there's a bar in it.

Me: The main characters are into the same style of music. The Stonebender character of Robinson's is a narrator/musician, your narrator is a musician. There's the whole time

travel aspect.

SKZB: Yeah, but I don't bring anyone back from the dead. In my books when people die they stay that way. At least in that book.

[appetizers arrive]

SKZB: Thank you. That's one hell of an onion.

Me: You have any plans for writing more science fiction in the future?

SKZB: I didn't exactly plan that one. It just sort of happened. Some friends of mine were tripping. One friend in particular was tripping, and I was straight. They were in the other room watching a TV show about Irish ghosts. So this friend came in and said, "You have to entertain me. They're all watching a TV show about Irish ghosts, and they all look like geeks," the ghosts. So I wrote the first several pages of *Cowboy Feng's* to entertain her, while she was tripping, and it sort of grew. So I never planned it.

Me: Let's clarify one thing. Have you ever planned anything?

SKZB: No. Well... no. Do I ever plan anything? Well, in a sense that, now that I've decided to write another novel in the Khaavren romances, I know bits of what's going to happen in it, bits and pieces here and there. And I have even planned out everything in a book. *Brokedown Palace*. I had an incredibly detailed plot outline before I ever started with that one. It needed it.

Me: Do you consider it part of the Vlad books [for continuity] or are you not going to hold yourself to it, as far as the Vlad books go?

SKZB: I don't hold myself to anything in any of them. If I ever have to make a choice between breaking continuity and telling a good story, I'll tell the story and to hell with continuity. I hope I don't have make that choice, because if I do, it means I fucked up somewhere. Insofar as there is a common background it is part of it, and I have ideas on how it fits in.

Me: It took me a long time to appreciate *Brokedown Palace*. I think I read it when I was too young. I read it when it came out, and I had to figure out how to read it.

SKZB: It's your basic combination of traditional Hungarian folktales and Grateful Dead song lyrics.

Me: How much of the Vlad books do you consider biographical? How much of yourself goes into Vlad?

SKZB: That's a real good question. It gets into how I work in a certain way. Initially a great deal on me went into Vlad, not as I am, but as in a certain sense I wish I were. That is how he started. Wish fulfilment. I've said this to somewhere before, and I don't remember where. Wish fulfilment is a good place to start, as long as you don't stop there. You have to then turn around and examine it, and since then that's what I've been doing. I started out, at the very beginning of the first book with a wish fulfilment idea of "I wish I was someone who could command respect and fear in people," because I'm a wimp. Once establishing that [wish fulfilment, not being a wimp] you spend the rest of

the time examining it and following up consequences, and that's pretty much where the Vlad books have gone. That explains the path of the books. Is anyone else going to be eating this Paul Bunyan Onion?

Me: What do you think of the moral evolution of Vlad? He's definitely not the character he started out as.

SKZB: Obviously I'm pleased with it, or I wouldn't have done it. If he didn't change I'd have gotten bored with him.

Me: And you readers would have.

SKZB: Very possibly. Just somebody who every book goes out and kills someone, and that's it... it'd start to get old.

Me: When you write your non-Vlad books is there more enjoyment, or is it the other way around?

SKZB: Neither reliably. Way back when, for a brief time, the intention was to make every other book a challenge, write a Vlad book for fun and relaxation, and then write something that would challenge me. That went out the window just about as soon as I formulated it. It didn't happen that way. I ended up writing... it never turned out to be that simple and straight forward. I'd would find myself in a project that ended up being a challenge that I hadn't expected. I would end up with a project that I'd thought was going to really push myself and be difficult, but turned out to write itself. It was sort of a noble intention that never went anywhere.

Me: Your latest work, *Freedom & Necessity*, I would consider your most challenging, at least as a reader. It requires the reader to know a lot. There are so many references to people, places, and events, you almost have to be a history major.

SKZB: Insofar as that is true, it failed. In a sense I don't want to challenge my readers that way. I don't want to require them to know things. I want them to get additional rewards if they happen to know them. I want it to be anyone who knows about Hegelian philosophy will get that much more out of the book, but anyone who doesn't can still enjoy reading it. That's what I shoot for.

Me: What about the Victorian style of this book and the romances?

SKZB: I've heard this about the romances too. The Khaavren romances weren't written for people who are reading as fast as they can in order to get the story out of it. Those people ought not to be reading those books. They won't like it. People who enjoy a finely turned phrase, will enjoy the books insofar as I've succeeded in finely turning the phrase, and those people will of course clobber me all the harder if I fail. So there you have it.

Me: At what point in your writing were you able to say, "That's it, this is what I'm going to do?"

SKZB: It was while I was working on *Brokedown Palace*. I was in progress on it, and was a programmer at the time, doing systems work on PDP11s. More and more of my

thinking and energy was into writing, and less was into programming, so I'd go into work and all I would think about was what I wanted to write, and I couldn't get anything done, which would piss me off so much when I'd go home I couldn't get any writing done. It seemed to be a really good time to stop, and I had a contract, and was able to get a contract on another book, and I took the jump off the cliff. So far it's been a very pleasant ride. The ground is getting closer, but it's still been a pleasant ride. It's been financially iffy at best, which is not to complain, as I've really enjoyed it.

[dinner arrives, we take a break to consume prime rib and wine]

SKZB: So anyway, to make a long story short, I did three to five for violation of the man act. Sorry, never mind.

Me: A lot of people only know you as an author, why don't you talk about your involvement in the music scene.

SKZB: My music is pretty much strictly amateur. Yeah I've got one CD out, but it's something I did 'cause I felt like it. It's not burning up any airwaves. I play guitar and banjo some. Dumbek is probably my best instrument. I play traps... adequately, barely. A dumbek is a middle eastern percussion instrument, and it's the instrument I am closest to actually being competent at. I have a belly dance troupe I work with, and also a folk rock band where I play dumbek at the Renaissance Festival.

Me: Under the name Morrigan?

SKZB: M-O-double R-I-G-A-N spells Morrigan, da da.

Me: You went to the recent Minicon?

SKZB: I did indeed. I was there.

Me: As a featured author?

SKZB: No, I'd say I was there as a non-featured author. I was there as an author because they didn't charge me to get in. But I was not terribly featured. I was on a couple of panels. One of the horde of authors. A number of authors show up at Minicon.

Me: What kind of panels?

SKZB: There was one that was sort of interesting. It was on growing up in an environment of science fiction fans, and what's that's like. I didn't, but my kids have. Most of the others I didn't go to. They did horrible things like scheduling me for 11 in the morning. They put me on one panel that was about *Star Trek*, so I thought I would skip that. They put me on another that I actually went to that ended up being a bunch of people telling gaming stories... people talking fantasy role playing games. I don't know why I was on that, but it was brutal. Mostly what I did was play a lot of poker there, and did a fair bit of music just sitting around with friends swapping tale. That was most of it.

Me: Your role playing anecdote reminds me of a couple things might not embarrass you, but you no longer promote. You had at one time a "Choose Your Own Adventure" style book out there based on the Jhereg books.

SKZB: Oh yeah that's right, that came out. I didn't have any part of that. I didn't write it. Someone wanted me to sell my soul for \$10, 000, and I declined, but I did sell 20% for \$5,000, and gave someone else permission to write it. I needed the money. Further upon it say it naught.

Me: What did you think of the final product, or does it need to be said?

SKZB: You know one of the nicest things about this room is how perpendicular the walls are. Have you noticed that?

Me: We can move on.

SKZB: Yeah, let's. Speaking of Minicon, let me go back to it for a second, because I left out the high point of Minicon. There was one that was really really fun. Do you know who Judi Donaghy is?

Me: Sounds familiar, but no.

SKZB: She sings for the Wolverines. The Local Big Band. Jazz. She's also done some coffee house work, and for awhile I was working with her at Jitters. For about eighteen months if I remember right. We put on a show at Minicon, just a kind of one hour she sang and played guitar I backed her up with a drum. It was just a blast. It was what we used to Jitters. We had such good time. I think that was the high point of the convention for me.

Me: You want me to stay away from the other thing?

SKZB: No go ahead. What else were you going to ask about?

Me: Jhereg the graphic novel.

SKZB: Oh. I didn't think it was all that good, but I don't know enough about comics to have an informed opinion. Interestingly enough my impression was that problem the writer ran into was trying to leave too much in, not cutting enough. It had to be cut down, and there were a lot of clean cuts he didn't make, where he'd leave pieces of things in so they were kind of dangling and didn't make a lot of sense. But that's a vague impression off one reading and I'd probably didn't do it justice. Because as I say I don't know enough about comic books to....

Me: Also it was confined to one thin graphic novel, and the books are so complex that I don't see how it could have been done. You do know people who know things about comics though.

SKZB: But I had no control over that, it was some packager that put it together, and again offered me some amount of money.

Me: Another percent of your soul?

SKZB: Yeah, something like that. I got a check. I think the whole thing's in receivership now. I didn't have any say in it. I was told they found an artist that was really good, and so on and so forth. That's what they said to me.

Me: Were you happy with the art?

SKZB: Not terribly, but again it's not something I'm comfortable judging. That's just my own opinion.

Me: It had some glaring errors in it. They had Morrolan with a goatee.

SKZB: I know, I noticed that. A lot of it was really stupid, okay? You're right. Wasn't Aliera in a tutu or something? Whatever guys!

Me: So that's something you never intend to repeat again?

SKZB: Oh, I don't know. Who knows? I mean if Neil Gaiman came up to me and said, "Gee, Steve, I'd really love to do a comic version of one of your novels," what am I going say, "No?"

Me: Get Dave McKean to do the covers.

SKZB: Yeah, get Dave McKean to do the art, and we are so there!

Me: The novels, "*Gypsy*," "*The Sun, The Moon, & The Stars*," and "*Agyar*," take place in Lakota, do you have any plans for future novels set there?

SKZB: No plans, but I've got the place in mind, and I keep learning about it, so it's there if I ever need it. I can go back see what's going on there.

Me: Anything else in the boiler besides Dragon?

SKZB: I'm actually seven chapters into *Paths of the Dead*, which is the first volume of the *Viscount of Adrilankha*, which is third novel of the Khaavren romances, but I've stalled on it, so I've set it aside. I expect when I finish *Dragon* I will go back to it.

Me: That book has been listed in Books In Print for over a year now.

SKZB: I know. That was an error on someone's part. I'm not sure who, but basically it's been listed in Books In Print since it was supposed to be out according to my contract.

Me: Ouch!

SKZB: Yeah. Yes it certainly should exist, 'cause I'd agreed to have finished it long ago. I wrote *Freedom & Necessity* instead, then went through a long period of having trouble writing. I can't dignify it with a name, like writer's block. It wasn't really like I conceive writer's block to be. It was just that I was having trouble drumming up the enthusiasm for a while... for a long time.

Me: How would you say that varies from writer's block?

SKZB: My impression of writer's block is that it's much more frustrating. You want to write, but you just can't find the next word. At least from talking to people that's what it seems like, and this wasn't like that at all. It was more a lethargy.

Me: What's the longest period of time you've gone without writing.

SKZB: Eighteen months, when I quit smoking once. That was very frustrating, very difficult, but after eighteen months I went out and bought a pack of cigarettes, and wrote two chapters that day.

Me: Think there's a causality relationship there?

SKZB: Oh I don't see why one would think that. I'm sure it was coincidence.

Me: Let me go back to an earlier question. We mentioned some authors you admire like Megan Lindholm. Do you find a lot of time to read then?

SKZB: My favorite way of working involves having a novel sitting next to me, having a novel, and one or more research books sitting there. I will play some solitaire, and I will read some of my novel, and I will write some, and read some more, play some more solitaire, and write some, drink gallons of coffee, smoke a lot cigarettes, and that's how I like to work.

Me: I'm surprised you get anything written.

SKZB: Why?

Me: I play solitaire, I look up, and it's four in the morning.

SKZB: Oh, I see what you mean. The version I play is a peculiar variation of Cancelled, in which you win one out of three times, and if I am writing and playing solitaire, if I win I must write at least one sentence, that's the rule. And I can't cheat, because I am certain that if I cheat in solitaire I will have cheated in the book, but I'm not superstitious.

Me: As far as *To Reign in Hell* goes, how do you feel about that book no longer being in print?

[Steven starts to cough]

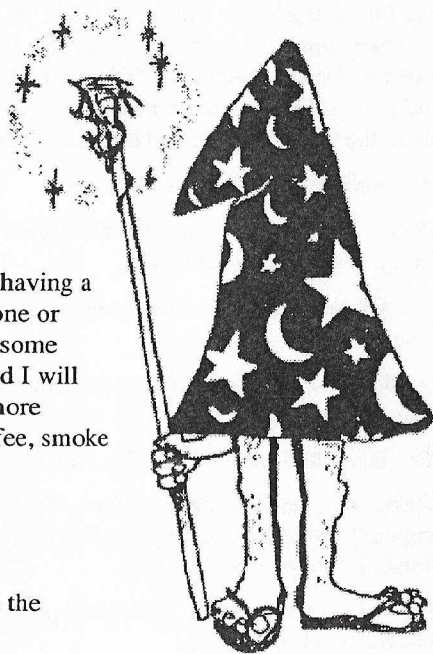
SKZB: Excuse me....

Me: And the author dies in front of me....

SKZB: Yes, I feel the need to cough. I get about one note a week via email about that, and actually we're talking to Tor about bringing it back to print. It's also unique in that it's the only book I have where I don't like the cover, and it's a fine piece of art. If I'd written a book called *Dragon Riders of Heaven* it would be the perfect cover for it, but as it is it doesn't at all capture... I don't think that cover will appeal to the sort of person who will like the book.

Me: You didn't like it because it didn't seem to fit the story?

SKZB: In my opinion the first task of the cover artist is to produce an attractive painting, secondly, to do a painting that will appeal to the person who will like the book. That's



why I say I've been so incredibly lucky with cover art all along, because except for that one I think that's true with all of them. Even *Cowboy Feng*, which several people have said they don't like, I do. I believe, and I may be wrong, that the kind of person who looks at that cover and says, "Oh that looks cool," that person's probably gone the book, and you can't ask for more than that. The idea of whether the character on the cover looks the way I've described that character....

Me: Such as in the Vlad books?

SKZB: Yeah, that's pointless. Who cares? Obviously some people do, but I sure don't. That just doesn't matter to me.

Me: On the Vlad covers the Jhereg goes from being something that can ride on the shoulder to....

SKZB: Right, and none of them look the way I envision them. Tough. That's not the point.

Me: Does the Jhereg on your hat look anything like what you envision?

SKZB: Yes, yes, as a matter of fact. That is the official approved Loiosh. Conceived originally by Adrian Thomly, also know as Adrian Morgan, then interpreted by Kathy Marshal, then by John Shogren.

Me: *Athyra* was the Vlad book I had problems with, because I missed the witty banter between Vlad and Loiosh.

SKZB: When I wrote *Phoenix*, which is the one before that, I'd thought that I was done. I'd thought I was either going to not write anymore Vlad books, or at least take a break before writing more. Then this idea hit, this image of Vlad wearing a poncho, smoking a cheroot, walking into a bar, while the music goes [*makes rising crashing music sound*]. And that image wouldn't go away, I had to write it, and I couldn't do it in first person. This was the Clint Eastwood version, and it had to have a certain amount of distance to get the feel right. Also I don't want readers thinking they know what to expect.

Me: People get upset when it comes to what order to read your books.

SKZB: I want each book to stand on its own, to not require any other to be readable. I know I failed with *Teckla*. I don't think *Teckla* works just by itself.

Me: You think *Orca* does?

SKZB: Moreso. I don't really feel I'm in a position to judge whether they succeeded, but I'm pretty sure *Teckla* failed, and maybe some of the other have to. *Teckla*, actually, overall, I'm very happy with. It's the one a lot of people hate. Sorry.

Me: Because of?

SKZB: Well, it's a bit depressing... between Vlad and Cawti.

Me: Some of the criticism has been of the politics. The whole "power to the people" thing.

SKZB: Those readers can deal with that. Sorry, that was background that was necessary

background. It's not a political book. *To Reign in Hell* was a political book, *Brokedown Palace* is political book, none of the others really are. Put it this way, anybody whose politics opinions are swayed by reading one of my novels is not someone I want on my side, okay?

Me: In *Orca* you had Sethra turn out to be Kiera. In a way it cheapens the books by taking two characters and reduces them to one cool character, so you've lost a character people care about, whether or not she continues to masquerade as Kiera. And this is seen by some to be too big of a bomb for the end of the book.

SKZB: He he.

Me: You have any opinions on this?

SKZB: I never have opinions on people who don't like something about my books. What am I supposed to say, "No you're wrong. In fact you liked it." What am I supposed to say?

Me: And it's second-guessing your work.

SKZB: I can say that succeeded insofar as if I were the reader I would have liked it. If other people didn't they have different tastes than me, and there's not a lot I can do about that. The thing I fall back on, and I think I said this at the reading, what I always fall back on in which way to jump, what to do next, how to approach something, is if I were the reader what would I like? That can fail in that I attempt something that I don't succeed in bringing off, or it can fail in that I brought it off, but your tastes don't agree with mine, you would have liked something else. *Cowboy Feng* is a case where I didn't bring it off, I didn't pull off what I was attempting. *Orca* is a case where if they didn't like it, it was because their tastes don't match mine, and really nothing to say to that, except, "Okay, sorry."

Me: I'm jumping around quite a bit.

SKZB: That's okay. That's how I write.

Me: The night of the Boiled in Lead show, I told you one of the reasons I moved to Minneapolis was your book *The Sun, The Moon, & The Stars*, and you told me that it didn't take place here, at least in your mind. In my mind it will continue to take place here.

SKZB: And it can, because this is the city I know best. Yes I call the city Lakota, but in feel, in a lot of ways, it has got to be Minneapolis. I know this city, this is my home, I know it as well as anyone knows any city, so of course the feel, and the texture, the flavor is going to be Minneapolis. You can't help it.

Me: Then why place it in an imaginary place?

SKZB: Because right around the time I was writing that Emma was working on *War for the Oaks*, which is set in Minneapolis, and two Minneapolis writers writing about Minneapolis would be silly. Minneapolis is a character in her book, and I just needed a place to tell my story.

Me: *Agyar* also takes place in Lakota, and one reader posted some problems with this books to the internet. He sees Jack *Agyar* as....

SKZB: He's not a very nice guy.

Me: I was going to say wimpy.

SKZB: Wimpy? Wimpy? Wimpy! [*Brust proceeds to say this louder and louder for some time*] Wimpy!

Me: Well, what I think was meant by that, to put words in his mouth, as you say in *Freedom & Necessity* to, "Misquote the people who are misquoting you," is that it takes so long for Jack to decide to stand up for himself.

SKZB: Oh, I see. Oh, okay. He just need to read the book is all. It's very clear what's going on. *Agyar* is not able to. He is being controlled.

Me: Even down to his mind-set?

SKZB: Yes, in particular what is controlled is his mind-set. Until he realizes that there is the option of escape, that it is a possibility. He accepts it because he has no choice but to accept it, he doesn't know there is any way not to accept it. That's the rules he's playing under. It's like you're playing five card draw, and you go, "Ah, goddamn, that's it. I can only draw one card. Yeah, I could make a really good hand out of this if I could draw three, but the rules say I can only draw one under these conditions," well there you are, that's the rules. You're stuck with the rules. And then somebody says, "wait a minute, you can draw up to five," and then he goes, "Holy shit, well, give me three then," or something like that. And then he goes, "Ah, I've a possibility here," and then his attitude changes.

Me: Did you have any reluctance in ending this book the way you did? You do leave it open enough to continue with, but obviously not with Jack.

SKZB: Not with *Agyar*. He came down with a case of death. I could go earlier, or I could go with Susan. The kick to that book is everyone is immortal.

Me: You could go with Tracy.

SKZB: The werewolf?

Me: The one Jack writes the letter to.

SKZB: That would be the werewolf.

Me: Is *Agyar* done?

SKZB: I don't have any intention of doing more, but it could happen. Werewolves never appealed to me the way vampires did. For a long time I thought I'd never write a vampire novel, because Chelsea Quinn Yarbrow did what I'd like to do in *Hotel Transylvania*. I read that and went, "Oh well, I guess I'm not going to be writing a vampire novel...been done!" Then the idea for *Agyar* came up and bit me, so I suppose a werewolf novel could, but it just doesn't have any appeal for me. In large part *Agyar* is an investigation of immortality. You've got the ghost, you've got Susan's friend Vivian,

who is being kept alive in that Susan keeps quoting things she says. Even Don Swagart has a project named after him. Everybody in the book is in some way immortal.

Me: Or seeking it?

SKZB: No, has achieved it. You have the couple who has the family, which is having immortality.

Me: Obviously you think about these things even more than your readers.

SKZB: I hope so, I should. I'm very happy with that book. There's a lot going on there. I pulled it off to my satisfaction.

Me: I could forward the post about Jack to you.

SKZB: Thanks, but I don't need to hear people say why they don't like my books. I can't stop someone from doing so, except to my face, but in a public forum someone saying, "Here are the problems I found with this book," is eminently reasonable. That's what a forum like that is for, so people can make comments like that. So as long as it isn't addressed directly to me, I don't criticize it. I can't stop it, but I don't like it. It makes me feel bad.

Me: Is your son Corwin named after the Zelazny character?

SKZB: That's where the idea came from, yes. It's a lot of things. One was we just liked the name, and it wouldn't have occurred to us if we hadn't read the Amber books. And yes, it was a bit of homage to Roger. At least in part, yes.

Me: I've met someone who named their child Elric from the Moorcock books obviously.

SKZB: Good lord!

[waitress brings the bill]

SKZB: We could do that, but it would be wrong.

Me: What's that?

SKZB: Aren't you familiar with Watergate? Just have to say that into a recorder every now and then.

Me: I made sure I put it out on the table, instead of keeping it in my pocket, like a Big Brother device.

SKZB: I think it's important that there be seven minutes missing from it at some point, but we'll worry about that later.

[shocks me by taking hat off briefly]

Me: I don't think I've ever seen you without your hat, even in a photo.

SKZB: Nor are you likely too.

Me: I just did! I was amazed. I expected to see that you were bald from the eyebrows back.

SKZB: I am starting to develop a bald spot, but I take pride in the fact that I was wearing the hat before I got the bald spot. I pulled this hat out of the box, after a long wait, five or sixth months, put it on my head, looked in the mirror, and I said, "This is never leaving my head. This is my hat, end of discussion." Which is no longer true, as I have a Stetson I wear when playing poker.

Me: Do you do any fencing, sword work?

SKZB: I have, but not lately. I blew my knee out in Karate. I've studied saber and stage combat.

Me: I've done Epee.

SKZB: You look like an Epee fencer.

Me: I'm too big to do foil.

SKZB: Besides, I don't like foil. If I were taller I'd do Epee, but I like the flash of saber. Besides, I'm Hungarian, which means I'm obligated to do saber. Hungarians have the reputation of being great saber fencers, deserved or not.

Me: I've read acknowledgments to your father for answering obscure Hungarian questions, is your whole family involved in heritage?

SKZB: Nope, just me. My dad was born in Budapest, in 1919. My Grandfather left in 1921, when Hortney came to power, because my grandfather had been involved in the Hungarian revolution. When the fascist came to power he felt leaving might be a good move. Dad was funny, he was an internationalist, with a little trace of half-humorous Hungarian nationalism that would come out every once in awhile. In other words, most of the time it didn't matter, but then in 1964, I remember as a young child, Hungary placed 4th in the Olympics, in overall medal standings, in the summer Olympics in Tokyo. Dad was just delighted. Little things like that. I picked it up from him, and then carried it much further than he ever did.

Me: You've referred to him in the past tense.

SKZB: Yeah, I lost my father in '91. I miss him very much. We were a very close family.

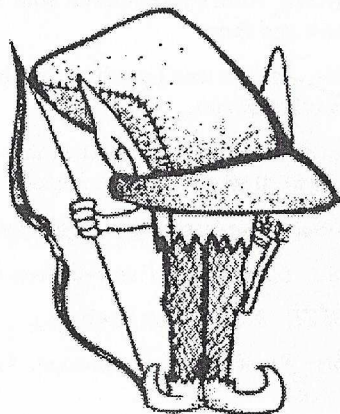
Me: Is there anything you'd like to talk about? Anything I've missed?

SKZB: No, I don't think so.

Me: I always ask that question, but no one ever....

SKZB: No, and no one ever is going to have an answer, but you should keep asking, because it's a good question. You should always ask that, because the one time you don't, someone will have wished you had.

Me: Thank you for this opportunity.



The Unicon Charter

Insofar as it has been deemed necessary to perpetuate the Unicon series of science fiction conventions the following regulations are presented to distinguish these conventions from similar events:

1. They shall bear the name *Unicon* and have a consecutive numbering or year suffix as all or part of their title.
2. They shall be held in residential establishments of higher education, and shall use the accommodation and facilities there provided.
3. The site of the convention shall be decided at the previous Unicon in a properly conducted business session or, failing this, by the Unicon steering committee.

a) **Bidding Session**

i) All potential bidding committees who have made their presence known shall be invited to present their bid for a period not exceeding one half hour, except where only one bid exists in which case the time limit shall be set by the current Unicon.

ii) Voting will be carried out by any reasonable means determined by the current Unicon committee.

b) **Steering Committee**

i) This shall be responsible for the maintenance and amendment of this charter, the administration of excess funds should no convention win the bidding ceremony, and shall act as arbitrator should disputes concerning Unicon arise.

ii) Each past and present Unicon committee shall nominate one member of the steering committee.

iii) The acting chairperson of the steering committee shall be the member nominated by the current Unicon and his functions will include: notifying steering committee members of transferring of excess funds from his convention, notifying all potential convention bids of these regulations, and providing for each member of the steering committee and for both the treasurer and chairperson of the next Unicon an accurate statement of accounts for his convention.

iv) The voting membership of the steering committee shall be the nominees of the last seven Unicons. A quorum shall consist of four voting members, and decisions shall be taken by a majority of voting members, whether or not present at the voting meeting. Meetings of the steering committee shall be notified at least one month in advance to all members of the steering committee, whether or not they are voting members. A meeting shall be held at Unicon and a written undertaking required by clause 7 shall be the notice of this meeting.

4. The surplus funds from a Unicon shall be disposed of as follows:

a) Where the sum does not exceed £200 the surplus shall be passed within a reasonable time to the convention that wins the bidding ceremony.

b) Where the sum exceeds £200, 50% or £200 (whichever is the greater) shall be passed on as in 4(a) and the remainder disposed of as the convention committee sees fit in a manner to benefit fandom, subject to the approval of the steering committee.

c) Where no convention bid has been successfully made for the coming year the surplus funds shall be passed to the steering committee within a reasonable time.

5. The convention shall be insured:

a) Against loss of, or damage to, its property and that for which it is legally responsible, including building, machinery, plant, fixture and fittings provided to it by the property owners or management of the venue for the purpose of the convention.

b) Against loss resulting from cancellation, curtailment, postponement or abandonment in whole or in part of the convention, the non-appearance of a principal speaker or failure of the convention to vacate the premises at the end of its tenancy.

c) So as to be indemnified for all sums which the committee shall be legally liable for arising from bodily injury and property damage to employees and general public arising out of an occurrence in connection with the convention.

6. The convention committee shall undertake:

a) To be liable for any deficit arising from their own convention.

b) To cover any debts occurring in connection with any past Unicon which no longer holds funds, providing such debts do not exceed the value of the funds passed to them by the previous Unicon or by the steering committee.

7. The convention Committee shall agree to abide by the regulations present in this document and shall send a written letter undertaking to this effect (signed at minimum by the chairperson, secretary and treasurer, or the equivalent posts) to each member of the steering committee. Ambiguities and disputes arising from these regulations shall be settled by the steering committee in the light of common sense and with a view to the continuity of the Unicon series.

Past Unicons

Year	Name	Place	Guests
1980	Unicon 80	Keele	Harry Harrison
1981	Unicon 2	Keele	John Sladek
1982	Unicon 3	Keele	Richard Cowper
1983	Unicon 4	Essex	Ian Watson
1984	Oxcon	St Catherine's College, Oxford	Brian Aldiss
1985	Camcon	New Hall, Cambridge	John Christopher
1986	Consept	Guildford	Tanith Lee
1987	Connote8	New Hall, Cambridge	Geraldine Harris, Diana Wynne Jones
1988	Wincon	King Alfred's, Winchester	Patrick Tilley, Geoff Ryman, Michael de Larrabetti
1989	uNIcon	Queen's, Belfast	Harry Harrison, Terry Pratchett, James White, Will Simpson, Ian McDonald, Iain Thomas
1990	Uniconze	New Hall, Cambridge	Barrington J Bayley, Lionel Fanthorpe, Dave Langford, Bill Sanderson, Ian Watson
1991	Mabinogicon	UCNW Bangor	Anne McCaffrey, Gael Baudino, Stephen Gregory
1992	Scone	Glasgow	Iain Banks
1993	Lunicon	Leeds	Roger Zelazny, Colin Greenland, Michael Scott Rohan, Jack Cohen
1994	BAcon	New Hall, Cambridge	Geoff Ryman, Simon Ings
1997	Convocation	New Hall, Cambridge	Steven Brust, James Wallis Andrew Rilstone

British Roleplaying Society Constitution

1. The British Roleplaying Society shall be an unincorporated members society open to all persons interested in role-playing games and related matters. Its principal objective shall be to hold role-playing games conventions, at whatever times and places are selected by the membership of the society. This consists of everyone who has purchased attending or supporting membership of the previous or next convention. The conventions shall be residential, based around games players and fans, rather than commercial.

The society's committee shall consist of a chairman, a secretary, a membership officer, and representatives of past conventions. The chairman, secretary and membership officer are elected as part of a convention election. One representative is nominated by the organisation of each past convention, who serves until four conventions have taken place since their election. Ambiguities and disputes arising from these regulations shall be settled by the steering committee in the light of common sense and with a view to the continuation of the society and its conventions.

2. Groups of people wishing to hold a convention shall submit themselves for election at a general meeting. If elected they shall nominate three of their number to serve as chairman, secretary and membership officer of the society.

If no convention is elected at a general meeting, the society's committee are mandated to take action to organise a convention, or to hold another General Meeting to elect a convention.

3. The General Meeting

A general meeting shall be held at each convention, and shall be open to all members of the convention, with a quorum of twelve. The meeting has the following powers.

- i) To elect groups to hold conventions or to elect "no convention".
- ii) To change this constitution, with a two-thirds majority.
- iii) To override decisions of the society's committee, with a two-thirds majority.
- iv) To close down the society.

If the society's committee decide that members may have difficulty in attending the convention, it may arrange for postal voting for any or all motions.

4. Duties of Convention Committees

The group organising each convention shall undertake, as a condition of their election, to:

- i) Abide by this constitution.
- ii) Cover any debts arising from their own convention.
- iii) Cover any debts occurring in connection with any previous conventions, providing such debts do not exceed the value of the funds passed to them by the previous convention or by the society's committee.

- iv) Provide copies of the constitution to any interested party.
- v) Maintain financial records for their convention and to provide a full set to interested parties, within three months of the end of their convention.

5. Surplus Funds

It is not the objective of conventions to make profits, but any surplus which does arise shall be disposed of as follows:

- a) Where the sum does not exceed £400 the surplus shall be passed to the following convention.
 - b) Where the sum exceeds £400, 50% or £400 (whichever is the greater) shall be passed to the following convention and the remainder shall be retained by the convention committee to be disposed of as they see fit.
 - c) If no following convention has been elected the funds shall be passed to the society's committee for use in organising a convention.
6. Each convention shall be insured:
- a) Against loss of, or damage to, its property and that for which it is legally responsible, including building, machinery, plant, fixtures and fittings provided to it by the property owners or management of the venue for the purpose of the convention.
 - b) Against loss resulting from cancellation, curtailment, postponement or abandonment in whole or in part of the convention, the non-appearance of a principal speaker or failure of the convention to vacate the premises at the end of its tenancy.
 - c) So as to be indemnified for all sums which the committee shall be legally liable for arising from bodily injury and property damage to employees and general public arising out of an occurrence in connection with the convention.

Dast British Roleplaying Society Conventions

Year	Name	Place	Guests
1990	Conjunction	New Hall, Cambridge	Greg Stafford
1992	Contraption	UEA, Norwich	Steve Jackson
1993	Stocontrent	Keele	none
1996	Contraptions	Moat House, Northampton	Steve Jackson
1997	Convocation	New Hall, Cambridge	Steven Brust, Andrew Rilstone, James Wallis

Convocation Membership List

Michael Abbott	Tim Evans	Bernard Peek
Andrew Adams	David Finch	Mark Plummer
Brian Ameringen	Susan Francis	Ceri Pritchard
Sion Arrowsmith	Gwen Funnell	Matthew Reid
Volker Bach	Colin Greenland	Andrew Rilstone
Derek Barns	Kay Hancox	Roger Robinson
Square Bear	Bridget Hardcastle	Marcus Rowland
Austin Benson	Jasper Hedger	Mike Scott
Simon Bisson	Valerie Housden	Alison Scott
Paul Blackwell	Rhodri James	Ken Slater
Simon Bradshaw	Jenny	Chris Southern
Mary Branscombe	Sue Jones	Jenny Southern
Claire Brialey	Kari	Helen Steele
Steven Brust	Karen Kelly	Alex Stewart
Roger Burton West	Richard Kettlewell	Michael Stone
Steven Cain	Richard Lambert	Rae Streets
Eddie Cochrane	Sue Mason	Marcus Streets
Liz Cooper	Phil Masters	Neil Taylor
Robert Coward	Rory McLean	Graham Taylor
Cardinal Cox	Alex McLintock	Sheila Thomas
John Cox	Pat McMurray	Larry van der Putte
Diana Cox	Tim Morley	James Wallis
Michael Cule	Caroline Mullan	Huw Walters
John Dallman	Phil Nanson	Jo Walton
Steve Davies	Tom Nanson	Peter Wareham
Giulia de Cesare	Nojay	Jaine Weddell
Paul Dormer	Lisanne Norman	Dave Weddell
Bob Dowling	Emmet O'Brien	Janet Wilkins
Sue Edwards	John Oram	Caroline Wilson
Tim Ellis	Chris O'Shea	Anne Wilson

