



Number 38

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— Special Sigh of Relief Issue —

PRE-CON

- 2 MCFI Meeting / August 16, 1989
- 4 Pre-Con Madness
- 6 Noreascon Nightmares

AT-CON

- 6 Noreascon 3 Gripe Session

POST-CON

- 8 Thoughts on Noreascon 3
by Mark Olson
- 15 Films and Technology
by Jim Hudson
- 17 MCFI Meeting / October 11, 1989
- 18 Smofcon 6 Reports
by Mark Olson and Pam Fremon
- 20 MCFI Meeting / December 13, 1989
- 21 Letters

Little-known Noreascon facts Ellen Franklin registered 6.8 miles on her pedometer while doing convention setup from 8am to 5pm on Thursday.

The Mad 3 Party — more than you ever wanted to know about running a Worldcon — is published by Noreascon 3, Box 46, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge MA 02139. Editor and source of all uncredited writing: Leslie Turek. Copying last issue and this issue by Chip Hitchcock. Logo by Wendy Snow-Lang.

We are not accepting any new subscriptions; this is probably the last issue.

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Well, it's over and we've emerged intact and (relatively) unscathed. A few things came out worse than we hoped, but many things worked out better than we deserved. A lot of people worked very hard, and a great number of people had a lot of fun.

A Worldcon is one of the few things in this world that take several years of preparation, but happen in less than a week. (Things that are similar include political campaigns and the Olympics.) In general, our planning paid off. Most of the things that could be planned in advance were, and most of the time spent problem-solving at the convention was for things that couldn't reasonably be foreseen. Even better, most of the time spent problem-solving at the convention involved people doing productive things, rather than running around in circles trying to figure out who was in charge or what the situation was.

I'd like to give my personal thanks to everyone who helped at the convention, but most especially to Mark and the division heads, all of whom stuck it out to the end (although I think every one of us was sorely tempted to quit at one time or another through the three years). We can all look back and feel good about a job well done.

Of course, following any sort of maximum effort comes the reaction. In my case, as with Noreascon Two, I find that I have a complete aversion to doing anything fannish, and probably will have for quite a while until I recover from the convention. That doesn't mean I didn't enjoy doing it; it just means that I've used up my yearly quota for fannish activities for the next several years. But before I completely gafiate, I'm churning up one last burst of fannish enthusiasm to produce this issue of *The Mad 3 Party*.

This issue will have an assortment of odds and ends that seem appropriate to wrap up the convention. The main reason I'm publishing it is to distribute the articles by Mark Olson and Jim Hudson on various things that happened at the con and how they might have been done better (or at least differently). I've written an article about some of the hectic activities during the last few weeks before the con. There are notes from the at-con gripe session, minutes of MCFI meetings, and let's not forget the Noreascon nightmares that I requested in issue 37.

Looking to the future, Mark Olson and Pam Fremon report on Smofcon 6, held in Toronto in early December. Pam's report includes a detailed discussion of the Worldcon bid presentations given there.

It's been great publishing this zine, but now it's time for new Worldcons and new and enthusiastic committees. Have fun, everyone!

— Leslie Turek

MCFI Meeting

Date: August 16, 1989

Notes by: Jim Mann

The meeting was called to order at 8:09 pm.

Mark Olson said that we weren't going to have the traditional reports from the various divisions today. Instead, he wanted to bring us up to date on an infinity of little issues.

First of all, he assured everyone that things were going extremely well. Things have started to come together.

Budget: The budget is in good shape. Many costs were lower than anticipated, so he was able to allocate money to some places that needed it.

Mark noted some points in the budget handout. Certain things have been brought together under areas: for example, all electricity has been brought together under Facilities. Only telephones have been distributed, and this is an historical accident.

We're trying to go into the convention with no budgeted surplus. We do have \$20,000 contingency. We have to continue to think about where we can spend money if we find we have excess on Friday.

Equipment Czars: Mark said that we have czars responsible for various types of equipment:

Phones:	Facilities Division
Electricity:	Dale Farmer
ARA:	Ellen and Don
Technical:	Rob Spence

MACs and Copiers: Mark said that we're trying to rent 2-3 Macs, 5 laser printers, and some number of small copiers. For the latter, if we can't find them to rent, we'll buy more.

Petty Cash/Money at N3: Mark said that there will be a petty-cash box in the Office. We should be able to cash checks for the committee. In general, MCFI and NESFA sales may also be able to do so, if they know you.

If you need a check written by N3, try to let Treasury know in advance. Ann Broomhead said Treasury will be open from 9 am to 10 pm at con.

Mark said not to send gophers to pick up checks. Also, money can be authorized by a) the person responsible for a budget or b) the division head.

People who are taking in cash at the convention should already have talked to Treasury. Otherwise, talk to them now.

The Office and Facilities Ops: Laurie Mann said "Hi, we're from the Office and we're here to help you." The Office is here to support the rest of the convention. It will have:

- Office supplies
- Ribbons
- Copies of convention publications
- Beeper lists
- Keys
- Copies of facility resumes, contracts, etc.

- Message boards
- Mail boxes
- Computers and printers

Ellen Franklin reminded everyone to check for messages and mail during the convention.

Laurie also described the "back office" (room 201 in the Hynes). It will be a quiet place to escape to.

Debbie King reminded everyone that if they need office supplies, they should talk to her. She also said she needs to know who's getting what beeper. Mark said in most cases people would be beeped directly. Debbie said that if anyone wants to restrict access to who has their beeper numbers, they should let her know. Priscilla asked if we can somehow restrict when people will beep us. Mark said yes: it's called an off button, and all beepers have one.

Mark said that during the day the Office will work a lot like Boskone services. It is not where the con is run. The convention is run by the whole committee. He doesn't want to hear people saying, "That's not my problem. That's not my area." Each person's job is to help make the whole convention work.

Mark described Facilities Ops. They will be in charge of guards and the interface to the facilities. At night, they will run the Office, so that, if in the middle of the night the Art Show explodes, they can call Dave and Claire, for example. The Office will be open 24 hours starting on Thursday morning.

Don Eastlake clarified and amplified on a few points. Facilities Ops will primarily worry about crowd control and security. The various facility liaisons will handle things with the facilities. He emphasized that for minor problems areas should talk to the hotel/Hynes directly. All minor requests don't have to go through Facilities.

Mark reminded everyone: help out at NESFA Sales.

Program Booklet: Mark said that the Program Booklet will contain all the stuff we couldn't get in the Souvenir Book. There will be tables and tables of times and places. It should go to press next Monday morning. We'll be printing 10,000 copies.

Work Sessions: Mark said that we've lost our answering service (Ada). First the phone broke. Then came the phone strike, so we couldn't get it fixed. Now Ada is ready to have her baby.

We have a new message on the office phone telling people when they should be able to reach a real person. Please answer the phone if you are here. Write down the message; include date and time. If you aren't sure whose box to put it in, put it in the mailroom's box and Pam Fremon will get it to the right person. Mark said that there should be a work session here almost every night and we could try to move meetings here. Leslie Turek said that it is hard to answer the phone and attend meetings. After some debate, we decided we'd put a message on the MCFI machine, telling people to call the NESFA phone if the tape did not answer their questions.

We still have to work out the schedules for the deliveries of films and Norton books.

WSFS Business Meeting: George Flynn noted that he would be annoyed if anyone on the committee brings up frivolous motions at the business meeting. [He did not, however, define frivolous or tell us how to tell a frivolous motion from a not frivolous one.]

Logistics: Laurie said that Logistics is trying to keep track of what is going to the convention. Fill out your logistics forms. They've started to label boxes using color-coded labels. Bring whatever you can to the clubhouse or directly to the convention. She also reminded everyone about the equipment loan form.

She asked if there are any deliveries Logistics doesn't know about yet. If so, tell them.

Version 5.5 of "Logistics — the Gory Details" appeared in the Services apa. We sent a letter to the Hucksters about move-in.

There is a clipboard near the phone. It lists all the things that have been delivered so far. If something is delivered, list it on the clipboard.

Mark emphasized to everyone that it is their responsibility to look out for their own stuff. Logistics is there to help, not to do your job for you. Make sure everything is in a labeled box. It would also be a good idea to be at the clubhouse when your stuff is loaded on the truck.

Leslie asked where boxes should be put when they are filled/labeled. Laurie said they're looking into that now.

Move-in Schedule: Laurie reviewed the move-in schedule.

Sunday (8/27): Reorganize the clubhouse into areas. Load up the stuff that has to go to the Sheraton office and deliver it to the Sheraton.

Monday morning: Set up office. Make trip to Rhode Island to pick up fountain and mural.

Monday 5pm: First major truck packing. Load at the clubhouse for move into Hynes on Tuesday.

Tuesday 9am: Unload truck into Hall C of the Hynes. Receive delivery of drape, etc. Go to Marlboro to get stuff from Kane Self Storage.

Tuesday 5pm: Load Art Show stuff at the clubhouse. We don't know yet if we can move this right into the Sheraton. [We later found out we could.] The truckload from Maryland also arrives.

We have to move the stuff that gets delivered to the Hynes. The furniture is a big item. We're getting 60 couches, 60 chairs, 60 ottomans. We'll also have 60 boxes of souvenir books and all the program booklets.

Laurie repeated her plea for truck drivers.

Mark reminded everyone not to get started too early. Just because the office is setting up on Monday doesn't mean you have to. He also said that there will be a staff party on Tuesday night.

Gopher Hole: Laurie said that the Gopher Hole has typically been with People Mover. At Noreascon, however, People Mover is going to be out in Hall C — not a good location for a lounge.

Mark said there are three possibilities:

- A room in the Hynes. Costs would be prohibitive.
- As part of the Staff Lounge.
- In a Beacon room in the Sheraton.

Andi Shechter said she has a few misgiving about having the Gopher Hole in the Staff Lounge. The staff would have to stop people from crashing out there, for example.

Jim M. said he'd like to see it in the staff lounge. We already have a separate committee den. We don't need the staff lounge to be yet another level of den.

Susan Hammond said the Staff Lounge already has program participants in it.

Davey Ferree said she wants a place to get away from the con and doesn't want gophers let in.

Laurie reminded everyone that the Commonwealth room is huge. It comfortably held the con suite at 4000-person Boskones.

Leslie said that many people had a deep psychological need to get away. This is what the Den is for. The staff lounge is already too big for this. It's not going to somehow be spoiled by letting the gophers in. It is too big a place for a getaway already.

Rick said that the gophers are helping us. We shouldn't exclude them. Perhaps some people in the room should go back to being gophers for a while, to remind them what it was like. Tony agreed: people can go to the Den if they are looking for a quiet place.

Andi said she wanted to close this off. Her objections were answered. We should allow the gophers in, provided everyone would look toward making sure they don't crash and things run smoothly.

Susan H. said the room can't be divided. She didn't agree to this. The gophers are less of a known group. They have less commitment the con it than we do. She doesn't want them in her Staff Lounge. If the group wants this, she'll do it, but she objects to it.

Beth MacLellan said we have to provide something for the gophers.

Jim M. said that we're not talking about many gophers. Also, many of them have shown commitment to us. A number volunteered two or more years ago.

Don said that the gophers may not want to use our staff lounge, and may prefer a separate gopher hole. Leslie said we'd have to staff two places then, instead of one.

Mark said that most people in the room seemed in favor of combining them. That's what we'll do.

Miscellaneous Awards: Mark asked if anyone knew of any other little awards people are expecting to give out at the con. We'll offer the Prometheus awards people a special-interest-group room.

Sales Items: Ann showed the sales items. There were "oohs" and "aahs," especially over the mugs. We will have to order more of them, based on the number of people in the room who wanted to buy several.

Ribbons: Davey said that the ribbons look good. They will go to the Office on Monday morning. They are sorted by division.

Busing: Mark said that we added \$2,000 to the busing budget. Don said that Pat Vandenberg will meet with the bus company to formalize things. We may add some earlier in the days.

Gulf of Tonkin 3: Rick moved that Mark Olson be invested with the full power to act in behalf of the committee. Jim M. seconded.

We voted. It passed unanimously (giving it the more than 4/5 needed to pass). The meeting then adjourned.

Pre-Con Madness

I want to write a little bit about what things were like the last few weeks before Noreascon 3, because I think it's important to try to give you a bit of the flavor of that time. I think most people who read *M3P* understood that we were pretty busy in the year leading up to the convention, but during that last month we were *really* busy.

Of course, most of the time there were several different things going on in several different locations (or sometimes in the same location — more about that later), so this view is limited to those particular parts of the convention I was involved in. (To convey the true level of madness, I'd need to write about 12 parallel tracks describing the activities of each major division or area that were going on at the same time.)

One area I was involved in was registration preparations, particularly in helping Alexis Layton prepare the registration badges. I had all along been pushing the "mixing area" concept, so I also ended up being the person who maintained the latest version of the ConCourse floor plan on my Macintosh. And of course I continued to edit *M3P*. And I (as well as Jim Hudson, Mark Olson, and a cast of thousands) helped put together the Program Booklet. So bearing these interests in mind, here is my best recollection of the pre-con madness of August.

Registration badge production had been a carefully-orchestrated procedure in which a number of different lines of activity had to be initiated in time for it all to come together for the first big badge-production session on the weekend of August 12–13. In fact, for several weeks my whiteboard at work had been filled up with a PERT chart showing the steps, on which Alex checked off each one as it was completed.

The pieces we needed for the work session were:

- 1) The personalized labels (the hardest part).
- 2) The badge stock: different versions for full memberships, admissions, and the various day memberships.
- 3) Pre-printed laminate.
- 4) Laminating machines.
- 5) Hole punches.
- 6) Pins and clips (not needed for badge production, but needed at the con).

To get the labels in time, Sharon Sparksy needed to enter all the memberships (and transfers) that we had received by the advance registration deadline and produce a disk to transfer the data to Alex's machine. Alex designed some fairly sophisticated software to produce large-print labels. The software made the names as large as they could reasonably be, and made various adjustments if a fannish name needed to be fit, or if the name was too long to fit on the line. Alex also had to find the right-size label stock in large quantities. The last few days before the work session were spent actually printing out the labels from Sharon's disk, carefully checking to make sure they were all registered correctly and re-running the ones that weren't.

Preparing the badge stock involved getting artwork from Merle Insinga, producing the lettering to go over/around it, ordering special colored stock, pasting up

the artwork and lettering in 6-up format, selecting ink colors, and getting everything to the printer in time.

The laminate was printed with "Noreascon 3" in green, with the 3 designed to overlap both the clear laminate and the card stock. This made the badge harder to counterfeited. This also had to be special-ordered well in advance. (This backfired in one way. Alex had carefully pasted up the laminate copy to include both the Noreascon 3 and an oval mark to show where the hole should be punched. For some reason, the manufacturer decided to help us out and delete the hole mark from the printing plate. This caused problems later. . .)

An additional laminating machine had to be ordered to supplement the one being borrowed from NESFA, and we had to arrange to borrow hole punches.

Following the expressed wishes of our members, we arranged to have a choice of both pins and clips for fastening the badges; this was a popular decision.

August 12–13: Registration Badges

On the appointed weekend, we got a batch of people together and started the laborious process of making badges. Take a label; stick it on the badge stock; insert it in a plastic pouch, making sure it's lined up neatly; insert the pouch into a foil-lined holder; insert the whole thing into the laminator; let cool and pull apart; punch; file. Repeat 6000 times.

It took a while to learn the best way to handle the laminating step. In the first place, the holders sent us by the pouch printers were not large enough, so we had to create bigger ones by pasting the ones supplied into manila file folders and cutting them down to size. After a while, they started to crinkle up, so we had to continue making replacement holders. Other things we had to worry about included getting the temperature set right (too hot and the edges disintegrated; too cold and the laminate didn't stick together), and figuring out what was the best direction to insert the pouches through the laminator.

Then there was the problem of getting the holes punched straight. We figured out how to line up the punch by comparing it to the letters making up the "Noreascon 3." Only problem, we had two different-size punches, and each had its own calibration. One person didn't realize this and spent about 2 hours punching slightly off-center holes.

Errors that we detected got thrown into a special pile to be redone later. Every so often two cards stuck together and got laminated into a single pouch. That was a real disaster, because there was no good way to figure out that we had done it.

During the same weekend, several other activities took place at the clubhouse. Ruth Sachter, head of at-con registration, had come up from New York to supervise the badge-making session. So we used the opportunity to work out a registration floor plan. (A last-minute change of location for the registration area gave us much more space than we had been expecting — for no increase in price — but meant that we had to completely re-think our layout. The decorating company had been impatiently awaiting our final plans so they could get their chair/table/drapery supplies ready.) We also planned the registration signs to go with the layout, and made another pass on the ConCourse layout.

We worked on making the "gizmos," the little tags that hung under the badges to identify con committee areas. Alex had arranged to print out labels for all of the areas, and I came up with the idea of cutting apart plastic file folders for the backing. So some of us spent time cutting up file folders and sticking labels on gizmos.

We also made a few generic badges for division heads to hand out in emergencies, plus a form they could use to get registration to make personalized complimentary badges when necessary.

Then there was a test of the at-con software. This involved a series of arcane hardware problems. Alex's badge production software was written in PostScript, but he had run it from a Unix computer to produce the pre-registration badges. For at-con badge production, we would use the same software, but needed to run it from a PC-compatible computer. So we needed to figure out the correct hardware connections and software commands for down-loading PostScript from a PC. This took a while.

Sharon Sbarsky brought in the data entry program she had written for at-con badge production, so we wrote up some rough documentation and turned it over to Cindy Gold who had volunteered to test it. Cindy found a few bugs (which Sharon was able to easily correct) and made a number of suggestions for making the program easier to use. We also started to document each of the other registration jobs, which turned out to be a lot more complicated than one would think, and which would require a whole article in itself to explain in detail.

My notes also say that Registration (in the person of Ruth) conferred by phone with Press (in the person of Richard Brandt), to work out the details of how approved press people would pick up their badges.

They also say we did a *Mad 3 Party* mailing (did we? I forget).

Meanwhile, the program division was conducting their last mailing, containing personalized schedules, to all of the program participants. When they finished that, they went through the completed badges, putting a green sticky dot on those belonging to program participants. This was to remind them to go to the program participant check-in desk at the convention. (Both groups kept eyeing the other to make sure there weren't any un-busy people standing around. Luckily, a number of new people came by to help that weekend!)

Another problem with these all these activities happening at the same time is that we ran out of work tables. This was made even worse when we sent out for food to feed the hungry workers. (Spicy chicken wings on Saturday, and pizza and ice cream on Sunday.)

We hadn't finished by the end of Sunday, but that was okay, because we had a second worksession scheduled for two weeks later.

Week of August 14: Logistics

On Monday night, there was a logistics work session in which we started to label the boxes that would be going to the convention. Various things had already been accumulating in the clubhouse, including exhibit material, books for the readers' room, park benches and chairs, etc.

Jim and Laurie Mann came up with a coding system with colored labels, in which each color corresponded to a truckload, and a designated time for bringing in the materi-

als (since some things were needed earlier than others). This worked out quite well. Things were brought to the clubhouse throughout the next few weeks and appropriately marked. This made it pretty easy to load the trucks when the time came. The only problem was that the clubhouse got pretty crowded in the last few weeks, which made it even harder for the work sessions to fit.

On Tuesday there was an Extravanzas meeting, and on Wednesday there was a full MCFI meeting.

August 19-20: Program Booklet

On this weekend, the major task was preparation of the Program Booklet, although many members of the committee turned up at the clubhouse to conduct other business of various sorts. The scene was pure chaos! Once again, we sent out for food — barbecued ribs one of the days, as I remember.

The Program Booklet was difficult. We needed to do everything at just about the last minute, so we could get the most up-to-date information as possible. And we couldn't predict exactly how long each section would be, so we didn't know how much we would have room for. The way it was organized (if organized was the right word) was to farm out different sections to different people. Then they all came together in one mad production session.

I had ~~gotten stuck with~~ volunteered for:

- Formatting the ConCourse material, which had been written by Peggy Rae and Fred.
- Producing the most recent version of the ConCourse and huckster room floor plans. (While doing this, I also printed out some blown-up versions for bulletin boards.)
- Formatting the artist list, provided by Dave Anderson.
- Entering and formatting the huckster directory, supplied by Cindy Gold.

Luckily, I was down to working at my real job only half time by this point, but it still took several late nights to get all of this done.

Mark and Jim Hudson took care of producing the massive program lists from the Program Division database, and of producing the program-participant cross-reference that was so popular. I believe Jim also did the film guide. Priscilla produced a bunch of specialized program write-ups. Martin Easterbrook, a visitor from England for the month before the con (but who couldn't stay for the con, alas) learned how to use MacDraw and produced most of the maps. Babette Mortell did the restaurant and local services guide. Chip Hitchcock did the personal schedule.

Much of the material got brought to the work session in disk form, and we had several computers running to allow for last-minute editing and reprinting by a team of people including Mark, Priscilla, Jim, Sarah Prince, and others I've lost track of. Of course, there wasn't really time to make any *major* improvements, but we were lucky that everybody came through with what they had promised in substantially usable form.

Meanwhile, Deb Geisler and I ran a sort of control center where we kept track of the latest size estimates for each portion, and worked out the layout of the book by moving 64 yellow stickys around on the wall. As pages were completed, Deb pasted them up on the prepared boards and added page numbers, and I triumphantly

checked them off the list. We were able to fit in just about everything except the artist list.

By the end of the day, time was getting short, so the first two pages of the book got all the little bits that didn't fit anywhere else. We were sorry about the jumbled layout, but we were all just too exhausted to care much. . . . Considering the amount of information we had to include, and the short time to do the work, I'm extremely proud of what we accomplished.

After this, my memory gets hazy. The following weekend, we held the second and final badge-production session, while logistics kicked into full gear to begin moving things to the convention. The rest is history. . .

— LT

Noreascon Nightmares

Last issue, I asked committee members to let me know about any strange nightmares about disasters at Noreascon that they might have before the convention. Here is what they told me:

Deb Notkin dreamed that she was putting on a banquet for 3000 people, and she knew that there would be several cases of fatal food poisoning, but she couldn't warn people about it. Lucky for us, Deb ran the Information Sub-Division and didn't have anything to do with running the N3 banquet!

Nancy Atherton, who put together the History of Fanzines exhibit, must have spent too much time planning the bulletin-board layout. She found herself dreaming that she had been pinned up, arms outstretched, onto one of her own exhibit boards!

Martin Minow's worst nightmare was "nothing interesting happens at the convention." He also dreamt that the entire committee and staff ended up in the hospital on Monday night with "acute adrenalin insufficiency syndrome."

Stu Shiffman's nightmare was of being chased down the halls by hundreds of Ben Yalow clones.

Before the con, *Joe Rico*, Hynes liaison, dreamed that people kept asking him questions about the Hynes that he couldn't answer. After the con, he dreamt that his beeper kept going off for weeks and weeks.

During the convention, several people working in the ConCourse had a waking nightmare: that the smoke produced by the food concession on Sunday afternoon would set off the sprinkler system and destroy the exhibits.

My own nightmare wasn't directly related to the convention. After several late nights, when I started running short of sleep, my body and mind started playing games with each other (my mind trying to get me up and my body wanting to stay soundly asleep). In the dream I remember most vividly, I was driving along the Massachusetts Turnpike in a car full of fans. Suddenly, the car ahead of us was filled with terrorists shooting at us with machine guns. Instead of waking me up, my dream control unit conveniently invented an exit ramp which I drove up. I got to the top of the ramp, shaking with relief at my escape, when I saw the terrorists backing up toward me on the *other* ramp at 60 mph. At that point I gave in and resigned myself to waking up.

— LT

Noreascon 3 Gripe Session

Notes by: Leslie Turek

The Noreascon Three gripe session was held on Monday morning of Noreascon. Mark Olson conducted the session; his comments are preceded by "Mark:"

Traffic directions too difficult to follow in traffic.

Complaint about officious usher at Masquerade.

Should have had list of pros expected to attend in final PR. Mark: SFWA asked us not to do it.

Wanted more detail in PR about what types of program items would exist.

Liked cross-reference of participants in Program Booklet (applause). Mark: the convention is a writhing amoeba — it's hard to pin down the program.

Complaint about business meeting overlapping banquet. Should have listed end time of banquet in PB.

We didn't have enough media programming. Mark: Our primary focus is traditional written sf. We've stated this from the beginning.

Sacks: Thanks committee for WOOF support.

Too many books in dealers' room.

Like idea of food function. Buffet is good idea. Logistics a problem. Set tables with coffee/tea. Draw table numbers at random to get into food line.

Masquerade. Side lighting made it hard to view costumes. Mark: the participants each selected their own lighting.

Media events were in large rooms.

Not enough propeller beanies. Mark: You don't want to hear the whole saga... [We had major supplier problems and were lucky to have any beanies at the con.]

You must mail progress reports alphabetically. She always gets hers late. Mark: We mail them all at once. Arrival unpredictable. Example of general decay of Western society.

Film program did not work well. Mark: Some problems were due to facility. With current emphasis on video, it's harder to rent film equipment and films at reasonable rates. Projectors arrived late, didn't work well. Spent 48 hours trying to repair. Got running Friday. Frank Marshall contributed \$7500 of 35mm equipment. Will be re-running films today.

Will future cons be tempted to do commercial tie-ins? Mark: Yes, we need to watch out for it.

My first con; lotta fun. Not enough non-books in hucksters' room. Aware of events of two years ago, but too much security. Mark: It's in the nature of security guards to look grim. Hynes regulations require that we have guards at each entrance to every large hall when open, etc.

Parties in function rooms. Couldn't you move in sofas? Mark: Supplier wouldn't allow sofas in party rooms due to potential for damage.

Bulk food prices weren't really cheap. Mark: Yup.

High point of banquet was tape from Arthur Clarke. Why not Ellison or Bradbury?

Maybe shift film program to video in future? Mark: De

cided to be 100% legal. could not just bring tapes in. Used Japanimation. Made facilities available. Weren't going to do things here that you could do at home with a \$2 rental.

Closed circuit to hotel room film program.

Will newsletter give Masquerade winners? Mark: Yes, next one.

Couldn't hear panels very well; too few microphones, not used, noisy events next door, doors squeaked.

Movies too close together. Don't put functions next to movies. Panel next to art show too noisy. Mark: Yup.

Message board, party board excellent. Not enough information about them. How did you feel about Hynes? Mark: Too big, but uncrowded. Hynes management seems happy.

Future cons here? Mark: No. NESFA is out of the big con business.

Art Show. Illegal bids were not removed. Staff unpleasant.

People watching films with walkie-talkies chased out member of First Fandom. Mark: Might have been tech crew while working on projectors? No, convention/Hynes security. Mark: We are required to have 4 stationed inside auditorium. We had to pay for them and we didn't like it either.

Too many program tracks. Mark: Program pleased. But I understand your frustration — I didn't see any of it!

There were too many items at 1pm and 2pm and fewer at 6pm. Mark: Participants don't like to work through the supper hour.

List hucksters on bulletin board. Shouldn't divide program rooms. Mark: We didn't have enough small rooms.

Thanks for Voyager fly-by room.

SF bid committee thanks for help for bid parties. Don't schedule ASFA/WSFS and SFWA opposite each other. Mark: We originally staggered them, but organizations requested a change at the last minute.

Was in hotel far from Hynes (Lafayette). Would have been nice to have daytime shuttle as well. Were charged \$20/day "incidental" fee. Mark: Should not have been charged. Public transit has Lafayette stop; faster than buses during daytime traffic.

What is hotel tax? Mark: About 10%. [Actually 9.7%.]

Film program. Should have had a schedule for shorts.

Should be general-purpose bulletin boards scattered around the facilities.

Pocket program too large for pocket. Should separate program from other stuff.

I liked the Pocket Program. Mark: Have you ever seen the compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary? The Pocket Program was supposed to be smaller, but the printer trimmed incorrectly.

Autograph line for Andre Norton should not have allowed repeats.

Liked message boards. Make more people aware of it.

Hard to figure out what cross-reference numbers in program booklet meant. Mark: This was the first edition of a users' guide.

Food facility heavy on saturated fats. Mark: We tried to warn ARA what people would want, but they're not into making money; it's too much trouble.

Best convention I've ever attended (applause) and best-organized registration.

Thank you [to Mark] for being so gracious.

Should be big sign at registration reminding people of stuff.

Should be an advocate for the neofan on the committee.

Commend art show staff for getting lights back on.

Well-run after last year. It was *run!*

Panels ran too late.

Better if everyone on a panel had a mike.

Liked Sheraton system of filling out form while in line [for room registration].

Lot of mikes were too directional. Mark: Could refer that complaint to the Hynes. [Don Eastlake gave out the Hynes address.]

Who was John B. Hynes? Mark: Beats me.

Program was limited to this size by the Olsons' living room wall. The truth will out.

I was stunned by the ConCourse. Mark: Fans deserve enormous credit for making it what it was.

Restaurant guide pretty meager.

Don't allow dealers in autograph sessions. Limit people once through line? Stamp back of badges? Mark: Too much bureaucracy.

Place in program booklet to check off things you want to see.

Need Masquerade photo space. More Masquerade info in program booklet. Daylight lighting never arrived. Mark: I hope we don't pay for it.

Program. Raise tables and chairs on platforms.

Why did you make this such a hard act to follow? (From member of ConFiction committee)

Security person kept making insulting personal comments. Mark: Should have told us at the time so we could have stopped it.

Hotel fouled up their room. Mark: We're generally pleased with Sheraton's behavior after the "Boskone from Hell."

Nice if we could check if pre-registered person had come. Mark: We would have checked if you'd come by reg when not too busy. We hoped to print lists.

Why did they change timing on programs? Mark: Panelists asked for it.

Chalker only person who showed up for Bimbos in Bikinis.

Daily pink sheet worked out very well. Amazed at how few changes were made. Mark: We thought it would be a single sheet each day.

Appreciated pink sheet.

Why not use video screens outside program rooms? Mark: Have you seen the button: "No computers. No point of sale terminals. Electric typewriters maybe"? High-tech stuff breaks. Rather not use at all than be inaccurate. We did post blowups of individual room schedules

and updated them by hand.

Liked horror programming. Wants more. It was mostly on the first day. Mark: Program is like puzzle with interlocking blocks. It's an over-constrained system. Yup, there should be more — 19 tracks is inadequate. (laughter)

Difficult to navigate around. Needed arrows pointing to rooms.

Escalators reversed and kept changing.

Rogues' Gallery? People liked it. How did they select people? Mark: As photographer was able to arrange it. Will be expanded next year. Also other exhibits. Photographer was shooting at-con.

Should have noted which people were actually here. Mark: Sorry we don't have descriptions with all.

Problems with film sound in Ballroom C on Sunday. Mark: Tech problems with Hynes sound system.

Nice to have art show open late one night.

Others liked late-night program.

Liked to see gaming room. Pain to go across street. Mark: Better to have more space there. Also filk could have late hours.

Liked how large areas were laid out. Parties in black hole area. Mark: Had more parties and some program scheduled there but they cancelled.

More maps saying "You Are Here."

Thanks for large badges, location on badge, choice of pins or clips.

Why no synopses in pocket program? Mark: Space. Cost (\$4000-\$5000). Also ran out of energy.

Some titles were too cute to explain topic. Mark: Space limitation on titles.

No good way to communicate with projectionists.

Refused to buy from ARA because of prices. Mark: But banquet was nicely done.

Thoughts on Noreascon Three

by Mark Olson

While things are still fresh in my mind, I'll try and write about how we might have done better. I'm not going to talk personalities or name names: while there were a few people problems here and there, I was very impressed by how responsible everyone was. Nearly everyone lived up to my expectations of them and surprisingly many exceeded them.

The Value of Hindsight

Right from the beginning, let me assure you that I know that this is an exercise in hindsight. One of the ironies of running a Worldcon is that it's so utterly exhausting that nobody wants to run another, but that nobody who hasn't run one has *any* idea of how to do it. (Trust me, N3 was definitely a Learning Experience.) All through the con and since I've kept thinking how much better we could have done things — how much better a Chairman I could have been — if only we/I knew then what we/I know now.

Noreascon Two was, by any standard, one of the most successful Worldcons ever. What we got out of N2 was, more than anything, confidence. Confidence that we as individuals could handle a Worldcon. Confidence that we as a group could put on a Worldcon and still like each other afterward. Confidence that a cooperative approach to running a large convention could work.

I think it made us more willing to experiment, more willing to run an open convention, and more able to solicit and accept help from all over.

Two innovations in particular stand out: *The Mad 3 Party* and the GULP sessions. Both were deliberately developed in response to the challenge of getting a large committee to work as a group.

Committee Organization

What made the convention work was the committee. I don't mean MCFI — the members of MCFI as a group took responsibility for Noreascon Three, but as individuals they had widely varying jobs at the con. What I mean by the committee is the 100 or so people who had significant advance planning responsibility and the 500 or so people who ran it at con.

One of the pleasant surprises of the convention was that most of the committee acted like a team. An endemic problem with Worldcons (and regionals, and nearly everything else) is that people act as though they are responsible only for their area, and have no larger interest in the convention ("It's not my job, man"). We tried to create a style which encouraged the opposite, which encouraged people to look at N3 as their convention which they *as a group* are building and running and to look at their activities from the convention's point of view, not just their area's.

The other half of the idea is that, just as we expect every member of the committee to look out for the convention as a whole, people have to accept that others will be looking at their area. We tried to get people to accept the notion that there are no fiefdoms.

What does this mean? One misunderstanding which seemed particularly prevalent is that the "no fiefdoms" rule must mean that anybody can come in and tell the person in charge of X what to do — that an area head isn't really in charge of his area. Well, I suppose this is true to a certain extent, but it's not really the point. Let me give you an example:

A nameless area head at a nameless convention was criticized about a decision which appeared to the critic to be particularly bizarre (I don't remember what it was, though I was there at the time). The nameless area head's response was (and this is close to a quote) "xxx is my area and I can do with it anything I want. If I chose to burn down the [area's office], it's my decision and you can't stop me."

We wanted none of that, and we got practically none. You need someone in charge of each area and a clear line of authority — if for no other reason than because you need to get decisions made and, once they are made, you want them to be fairly hard to change. If every decision is subject to endless revision, nobody can plan. The way I look at it, at a minimum, every area head should feel obligated to explain the reasoning behind their decisions to anyone who asks. This doesn't mean that any random

person who wants a change should get it, but it most emphatically does mean that they deserve an explanation.

This is a fruitful area for style mismatches.

In the 70's there was a school of programming (software, that is) which preached "egoless programming." The idea was that programmers get their egos so much involved with what they are doing that they can't work with others because any contribution made by another is a direct attack on their work and hence on them. We see this a lot at conventions (the aforementioned nameless area head had a severe ego problem), but I think we managed to minimize it at N3. Relatively few people were more worried about their turf than about getting the job done.

Open Convention

Another decision we made was to have an open convention — to have as few secrets as possible. There's a reason for this (besides a great distaste for foolish secrecy): How can we expect people to make intelligent decisions if they are denied the information they need? (Lest you think this is obvious, let me remind you that there have been conventions where the committee wasn't allowed to see the whole budget (only their area's), or where the staff list was "classified.")

This decision certainly caused us grief on occasion — for example, when we started publicly discussing plans for the Masquerade, large segments of fandom seemed to think we were making irrevocable decisions, rather than exploring possibilities. Instead of working with us to find better solutions, many people just screamed at us and accused us of scurrilous crimes against fandom.

That was a disappointment. The Masquerade is one of the more obviously broken areas at the Worldcon, but fandom's reaction prevented us from doing anything really creative. Suford and Jill spent a lot of time and effort doing damage control which we would rather have spent making it better. We wound up running yet another standard-issue Worldcon Masquerade. (I think the Masquerade as it is now constituted is in decline at the Worldcon — I wonder how much longer it will be before some Worldcon moves it away from the night-time prime billing or drops it altogether? It will be a great pity when that happens.)

Mad Three Party was an integral part of our strategy. We knew that we couldn't distribute the entire committee APA to everyone who wanted it (two reasons: cost and contents. The committee APA was typically 2–4 times as big as *M3P*, and generally contained a lot of half-baked ideas. I fear that the give and take of an APA would not be possible in something so public as *M3P*). Nevertheless, we tried to make sure that everything significant that was in the committee APA was at least excerpted into *M3P*.

The Mad 3 Party was designed to bring closer to us here in Boston the hundreds of people from all over the country who we had to count on to make things work. How can someone from far away come in a couple of days before the con and feel a part of the convention otherwise? How can they come here and make good decisions unless they understand what we are trying to do, why we're trying to do it, and how we approach things?

I have no doubt that running as completely in the open as we could was the right decision — for every problem it

caused us, I think it prevented many more. I'll admit that this may be a very subjective impression, since I'm naturally nosey and curious myself and have nothing but contempt for conventions who make a fetish of secrecy, who try to keep committee lists or budgets secret. (Incidentally, though we always had a policy of making available our budget and timelines, practically no one ever asked for them — probably just knowing they they were available allayed most people's fears.)

GULP

I think that the GULP sessions were integral to N3's successes. (An historical note for those who have forgotten where the term "GULP" came from. When Jim Hudson started them about 18 months before we won the bid, their title was "GULP: what if we win?") The original idea was to start brainstorming the idea of N3. Once we won the bid, we kept right on.

It's hard for a large group of people to plan. MCFI meetings are big enough that successful planning at the meeting is the exception rather than the rule. (Some of our biggest blunders have come from doing detailed planning at MCFI meetings.) The problem is that final plans can't be developed from scratch and approved in a single sitting by 35 people. Since MCFI is the ruling body of N3, any plan approved by the meeting becomes hard to change. This gives an air of finality to the meeting's deliberations and, I think, makes people much less flexible.

The GULP sessions provided a mechanism for anyone who was interested to participate in planning because — by definition — no decisions were ever made there. This meant that people could think and talk and get ideas without worrying that this was their last chance. Frequently, someone who didn't like the consensus at a GULP meeting would have had time to reflect and conclude that things weren't so bad after all by the time the final decision was made. The GULP first, decide later process made that possible. Another advantage was that people who felt inspired by the GULP meeting could then write up their ideas in the APA and get further discussion going.

They didn't make policy, they built consensus. I don't see any other way that we could have effectively involved more people in planning. And if people could not be involved, it's hard for it to be their convention.

A policy of waiting for consensus to develop before making decisions proved very effective. Jim Hudson's running of the GULP meetings usually triggered that consensus. It also helped that we frequently did a good job of deciding when to wait and when to decide.

A challenge for the future is to see how this sort of group approach can be used in operational planning closer to the convention.

ConCourse Layout

Even in some of our most successful areas, such as the ConCourse, in retrospect it's easy to see how we could have done better. To start with, we all underestimated how heavily the main corridor (between the Hall C entrance to the Sheraton and the main entrance to Hall C) would be used — we expected more traffic down the cross-corridors and the side corridor (on the Auditorium side of Hall C). As a consequence, we let the main corridor get cluttered (having the park benches there was nice, but it tended to impede traffic). Also, things off on the

Auditorium side were a bit out of the way.

Perhaps we could have designed more of an X-layout which might have drawn people more into the center of the room. Another thing we might have done (although the Hynes claimed this was not possible) was keep the wall between Hall C and the Auditorium open at one or both ends. This would have encouraged traffic through the center of Hall C. (Also, it was a pain to have to go out into the corridor, down the corridor and then back into the Auditorium.)

A more subtle point: The distinction between the islands and the corridors was less distinct than I had expected — I wonder if a little more structure there would have made the whole area more inviting? I can't say that I can see an easy way to do that, though, given the materials we had to work with.

The performance area in the back of Hall C tended to block off its area, perhaps too effectively. It certainly made the far end of the back of Hall C isolated.

Signs

There weren't enough. In retrospect it was a serious mistake to put signs in the hands of out-of-towners for mostly at-con implementation. I think we had vaguely hoped that people could come in and run off a few signs giving directions and labeling rooms, and that the maps we put in the Program Booklet would do the rest. In fact, the Hynes/Sheraton proved much more confusing for the uninitiated than we imagined. There simply wasn't time to do a proper job of signs once we decided to leave it for at-con.

We should have carefully analyzed the whole sign issue early on. We should have realized that it's important since signs are part of the early contact with a Worldcon which is so important to everything. Early mistakes are much more costly than late ones. Not only do people have less time to fret about late mistakes, but a mistake late in the con — if it's gone well up until then and the vibes are good — will be forgiven. A mistake first thing sets a bad tone for the rest of the weekend. Signs, like Registration, should have been a priority area.

We needed blowups of the maps posted conspicuously around the con (around 30 of them) with "You Are Here" on each. We probably could have done a better job labeling some of the rooms, though I honestly don't think that was a problem.

Incidentally, one argument against making signs an in-town job is that in-towners know too much. The Gripe Session pointed out in a number of cases, our familiarity with the facility led us to think that some things were obvious which were not. An out-of-towner doing signs probably has a better perspective on what our ordinary members (who haven't just spent the last three years immersed in the details of the facility) want to know.

Office, Facility Ops, and Staff Lounge

These areas all worked very very well — in each case I had hopes that they could transcend the limitations I have seen elsewhere, and in each case they succeeded. The problem here was the space given them.

In retrospect, Office/Fac Ops should probably have had a Commonwealth-sized space. They were overcrowded where they were. (On the other hand, their location relative to the rest of the con was excellent.) Staff Lounge

could have managed with 2/3 the space, but I don't know where we would have found such a room.

If I were doing it over again, I think that I would have put Office and Fac Ops in Commonwealth, Staff Lounge in Fairfax, and the Fairfax stuff in Jefferson/Kent. This wouldn't have been ideal either, because Staff Lounge would have been much less central, but it might have been better.

As I said above, I was very pleased by how all three areas worked. The Office/Fac Ops split had its rough edges, but it worked. I think a key point here was that the Office was what people came to first. The traditional Worldcon Ops scheme has the Office completely separate, so people naturally come to Ops first and Ops necessarily winds up taking over a lot of routine functions.

By having the Office be the focal point, we avoided this. Fac Ops was able to keep its focus on what it was there to do.

The Staff Lounge was a quiet, comfortable place to stop and relax. It's a pity that we couldn't have better food and drink there, but it still worked well. Having it centrally located meant that staff actually used it. (That is a feature.)

The original idea of having the Staff Lounge in H300 seemed like a good one (we all bought into it), but experience showed that it would have been a terrible place. H300, while nicely shaped and otherwise wasted, was so far out of the way that I bet 2/3s of the convention's staff never went near it even once in the con. To be sure, if the Staff Lounge had been there more people would have found it, but it would never have been used very much. A pity.

The Hynes 200 Rooms

We didn't do a very good job of using the small rooms on the Hynes's second floor. None were completely unused, but several were definitely underused. I know that I was surprised by how far it was to H201 and H202. (A shortcut from Hall C to H201 would have been nice!)

Our security on H201 and H202 was poor. We were lucky that nothing walked. I'm not sure what we could have done differently since there were so many people working for Extravaganzas. (H201 turned out to be the Extravaganzas Office and quite busy.) It's clear that our idea of using it as a general office was unworkable — it was too far from where other divisions were working.

While they weren't exactly unused, I can't shake the feeling that most of the H200 rooms were wasted.

Party Locations

Putting a few parties on the Hynes's first level was a mistake. Our original plan (which had considerably more going on down there) might have worked, but the fact that we moved all program off of Hynes 1 and that one of the parties scheduled to be there moved to another hotel, made it a dead area. I think it would have been better to have put these parties on the Hynes level 3 and moved some program down to level 1 in the evenings if we needed to. (The main reason we didn't do it is because on 3 we could not give the parties a permanent setup — those rooms were needed for program in the daytime.)

The basic idea of scattering the parties out so as to prevent overload of the Sheraton was sound, and I'm happy with the way that the parties in Sheraton function

space went, but the Hynes parties didn't work out well where they were.

Computer Maven

I was amazed to discover just how much computer gear we used at con (I'm not complaining — it was all quite useful). Besides the obvious (Newsletter), Program made extensive use of computers for planning and for keeping an up-to-date at-con schedule (Ben Yalow and I hope to package the software we used for anyone who is interested), and many other areas used Macs for fast WP. There is no question that having these systems around was very helpful.

The problem we ran into was that about half were rental and half were brought in by various staff, and it was very hard to keep track of what was where and what software was on which system. It settled out eventually, but it took a while, and this meant that things were somewhat chaotic for the first few days.

Eventually, we appointed Larry Gelfand as Computer Maven and had him make sure that everybody was set up and running. (He did things like swap rental hardware around until it all worked; got an extra phone net connector so that we could have the two office Macs on one Laserwriter, etc.) If we'd planned this from the beginning, we could have saved ourselves some grief.

Finances

We were lucky. Nearly every big expense came in lower than we expected.

Part of our problem was that we didn't really believe what the Hynes told us. In 1980, at N2, the Hynes's rental was quite low, but extra charges (not all made clear very much in advance) tripled the rental by the time everything was done. The Hynes told us again and again that they don't do that anymore, but we were unwilling to trust them. (As it turned out, we should have — virtually every charge came in at the low end of their estimated range.)

Hynes space rental. Based on the Hynes's contract and on what paltry bits of information we could get out of their Sales and Marketing staff, we budgeted around \$50,000 for space. (Rental was based on a complicated formula involving "net square feet used" and usage categories and catering issues.) When we got the final bill, it was about \$10K lower than we expected.

Hynes cleaning. Cleaning was another thing that the contract and the Sales/Marketing staff was vague about. (This one particularly worried us since at N2 cleaning was one of the last-minute surprises.) Initially, we budgeted \$17,500, a worst-case figure. In June, Don and I became convinced that we could still be conservative and lower that to \$6000. In the final event, the bill was about \$700.

Guards. We did a lot of worrying about guards costs since both the Sheraton and the Hynes contracts called for much more security than we felt we needed. By a lot of careful work and detailed planning, Don was able to knock \$10–\$20K off the guards budget. More could be done in the Sheraton since it was more flexible. (In general, hotels are a little closer to reality than big monuments like convention centers.)

The Hynes's position was that they demand lots of guards for every event and we were no exception. (This seems universal: our guards count was pretty much the same as it is at most professional meetings I attend.)

Rental Czar

We wound up renting a lot of equipment, particularly high-tech stuff (copiers, Macs, laser printers, PC's, etc.). We should have appointed a rental czar sooner. We ran into several problems:

To start with there are big differences in rental costs from vendor to vendor (at least a factor of 2 or 3). Lots of people rented things for the convention. Some people seemed to make a few calls and then take the lowest quote they got, and wound up paying twice what they would have if they had looked further. It's essential that rentals be sanity-checked to avoid paying outrageous rates. (For example, it's frequently much cheaper to rent a complete backup system from a cheap place than rent equipment with guaranteed service from an expensive place. And besides, who *really* trusts service to be there when you need it on Labor Day weekend?) Calling around until we found a cheap vendor (it typically took 10–12 calls) always resulted in at least a factor of 2 and usually a factor of 3 lower price than median with no noticeable diminution in quality.

Secondly, we wanted to get equipment delivered right to the site as much as possible — Logistics always has too much to do, so we didn't want to make its job harder. This means that any person who is renting something for the con needs to be sensitive to when and where it can be delivered (which loading dock, what hours, etc.). Frequently, Treasury will have to have a check and an insurance certificate ready, too. We discovered that this results in a very nice coordination problem. To begin with, many of the details needed for delivery aren't known when the rental takes place — there has to be follow-up. In general, the person who arranged for the rental isn't involved in the delivery at-con, and unless Logistics (who handled the loading dock) and Office (which handled distribution at-con) knew about the delivery, it would sit in a box until someone came looking for it. (That's if we were lucky — in a few cases nobody knew about a rental and it took days to even find out where it had been stored.)

We should have been much firmer in requiring everybody to log in their deliveries with Logistics. In fact, we probably should have set up someone in Services as Rental Czar in May or June and should have required everyone to keep the Rental Czar fully informed of all rentals and give the Rental Czar copies of all paperwork. (This doesn't mean that the Rental Czar would do all renting — just that there would be a single place which knows what's being rented and knows what there is to know about how to get deliveries, etc.)

Finally, on return, Logistics or Office need to know when and where things are going back. Vendors wander in at random looking for things — it's nice if the Office knows where to send them. Again, having a Rental Czar would have helped a lot.

Film Equipment

One where I'm not sure we could reasonably have done better is in the film equipment. When we priced the usual local distributors of 16 and 35 mm projectors, we were hit by sticker shock — they were much higher than people remembered. Because we felt that we had to make our basic decisions at a time when we were still quite unsure about our budget (it was in May '89 — the final pre-reg surge was still two months off, and there were still major

uncertainties in several other large budget items), we elected to look around for a better price. With considerable effort on the part of our Tech people, we found a plausible supplier for 16's and another for 35's and made our arrangements.

We got pretty much what we bargained for with the 35's, but the 16's were a disaster. Not only was the company a pain to deal with, but the projectors did not meet minimal standards. Our Tech crew spent a couple of sleepless nights trying to cobble together a few working 16's from the junk we got. (Our members saw this in a late start for the Film program and numerous technical glitches in the early days.)

Ultimately, in addition to the Tech crew's sweat, we spent money fixing the problems and wound up pulling a reasonable success out of a disaster through the generosity of Frank Marshall of Amblin and a lot of hard work.

What should we have done? It looks like we might have been better off if we had bit the bullet early on and gone with a reputable local supplier. The problem is that we didn't think we had the money to do this without cutting back elsewhere at the time we would have had to make the decision. Furthermore, we successfully cut corners elsewhere in Tech.

The problem is that doing Tech with first-class equipment is horrendously expensive and that any other approach runs the risk of problems like we had with Films. We were fortunate that we had a highly competent crew — they made up for a lot of equipment shortcomings. A point to note: I doubt that even first-class equipment is good for much without a first-class Tech crew — most of our potential problems were unrelated to equipment quality and were discovered and worked around during Tech's pre-con planning. Had Tech been unwilling or unable to work closely with other areas in planning, these problems would have been discovered only at con.

[See Jim Hudson's article on this topic on page 15.]

Big Tech and Little Tech

Big Tech was part of Extravanganzas and was responsible for Tech on a convention-wide basis. It was put there because Extravanganzas was the consumer of about 80% of the total Tech needs. Little Tech was the name that the Program Technical staff used for themselves.

Our idea was that Big Tech would order equipment for the whole con and that Little Tech would handle A/V operations for Program at-con. We did plan some equipment sharing so that we didn't have to rent enough to handle both Extravanganzas's and Program's peaks separately.

We ran into several problems: To begin with, the general collapse of the film equipment completely absorbed Big Technical's attention. Early in the convention Big Technical didn't manage to provide some services that were needed. (The most embarrassing was a late setup for Super Science Friday which affected, among others, Ben's mother.) Secondly, nobody recognized the amount of effort it would take to shift projectors around and A/V requirements were not taken into account in room scheduling as much as expected size of program. In retrospect, a major chunk of effort went into keeping up with A/V needs. We probably should have accepted size mismatches in order to keep the equipment in one place.

All through our A/V hassles, both Big Tech and Little Tech did extraordinary jobs making things work. "The show must go on."

The Saga of the Art Show

We knew from the beginning that we would need a lot of supplementary lighting to run the Art Show in the Sheraton's Grand and Republic Ballrooms. We didn't expect this to be a special problem since, at Boskone, we have for years routinely put in similar lighting.

From the start of our planning we had been concerned about Boston's fire codes. Since the Coconut Grove nightclub fire many years ago (in which a huge number of people died), Boston has had one of the strictest fire codes in the country and, amazingly enough, it's honestly administered. Since we were borrowing wood and pegboard hangings from Baltimore, we tried to get approval on the material before committing to a layout. We were turned down at about T-8 weeks. (This is absurd since pegboard is routinely used in the exhibit industry.)

After panicking, we submitted a full set of floor plans, with materials list, through the Sheraton's normal channels. This worked — the Fire Marshal made a few perfectly reasonable requests to improve access to emergency exits, handed someone a copy of the code, and that was it.

As Noreascon was moving into the Sheraton (Wednesday morning, as I recall) there was a genuine fire at about 5 am in a room just vacated by a mundane. We later heard that the room's TV set had caught fire. The room was gutted, but no other damage was done. While this turned out not to be a bad omen for fire alarms in general, it may have made the Fire Marshal and the Sheraton extra cautious. (It wouldn't do to have two fires too close together!)

The Art Show hangings at Noreascon were roughly half from NESFA and half from BSFS/WSFA. The NESFA hangings are mostly socketed 1" steel tubes with cloth hangings — our variation of the LASFS/L.A.con II hangings which we first worked with at the Austin NASFiC. They are easy to assemble, flexible, compact to store, and give us large panels. The cloth is fireproof. The lighting is done by putting floodlights on x-shaped trees above each bay. (We used some Dexion — like a large scale Erector set, generically known as "slotted angle" — for the supports, since NESFA had just converted from a large show with Dexion to a smaller show with tubing.) The BSFS/WSFA hangings are 2"x2" wooden posts with bracing rods and 2"x4" pegboard bolted on. We lit them with Dexion x-trees screwed to the uprights.

Because we were in a serious budget crunch in May-July when Art Show layout was being refined (it changed a half dozen times), and because we were having more than the usual trouble getting prices we could trust for electricity from the Sheraton, we decided to try to get by on the cheap. In particular, we ordered only one power box and did our own distribution from it.

Art Show setup began on Wednesday, the hangings were in place by Wednesday night, and artist check-in began on Thursday morning.

The Fire Marshal paid his expected visit around 2 pm, gruffly disapproved of what we were doing, and left us with an brief, intimidating document ordering us not to open the show. It took some time to get all the informa-

tion about what we had to do to get certification to open, and what we needed to do to make the hotel happy. It finally boiled down to the following requirements: We needed to

- (1) Give the fire marshal a certificate of fireproofness for the hangings cloth.
(This was a real problem. The certificates had long since been lost, since Boston had never before required us to have them on site. (Part of the fallout from the fire.))
- (2) Shield all the floodlights with reflectors or cages.
(This was a brand-new regulation. The Marshal wasn't impressed by bulbs' being 8'-9' up, where people would have had to try hard to "accidentally" break them. A real mess — where do you get 160 metal floodlight shields on 4 hours' notice?))
- (3) Replace the zip cord which was used in a few places for distribution with heavy-duty cord (zip cord to a light was OK — a good thing, as all the light sockets came with zip cord built-in).
(We blew it on that one — they were right, we should never have used *any* zip cord for power distribution. Oddly, they didn't object to "heavy-duty" cord the same gauge as the zip cord.)

In addition, the hotel electrician demanded that we put in two more main power drops, eliminating some of our longer ultra-heavy power distribution cables. (This was overcaution on his part. There was nothing significantly unsafe with what we had — especially since all our original distribution happened on a closed balcony or on top of the hangings, while one of his boxes ended up in the middle of the floor.)

We set up several teams to attack the different parts of the problem. Dave and Claire Anderson stuck with the Art Show to keep artist check-in on track. Chip Hitchcock and Frank Richards organized crews to eliminate the zip cord and rearrange the power distribution.

Monty Wells looked into flame-testing the hanging cloth (the alternative to presenting a certificate is to get it re-certified). What they do is apply the flame from a propane torch to the cloth for one minute and then take it away. The cloth must self-extinguish in a certain (short) amount of time. Monty's tests (conducted in a concrete courtyard between the Sheraton and the Prudential Center) proved to us that the cloth was indeed fireproof as we believed, but how to prove it to the Fire Marshal?

Additionally, Chip, Frank, Monty, Gary Feldbaum and several others started calling all over the Boston area, then the rest of New England and New York City, looking for metal shields which we could fit on our existing sockets, or for shielded sockets that could be put up without too much effort — *or* danger to the art that was already hanging! (Not easy, as our sockets had been modified to fit the trees.)

Anton Chernoff, who had run a Boskone Art Show several years previous, vaguely remembered seeing fire certificates in the boxes of old records he still had at home. In spite of living 35 miles away, he made a 3-hour (during rush hour) round-trip and returned with the certificates. Alas, they were manufacturer's certificates. The Fire Marshal wanted to see local certificates. (I don't care if the cloth won't burn in New York, prove that it won't burn *here*. He didn't actually say this, but that was

the gist of it.)

As shops began closing in New England, we began calling further away, finally getting from Tom Whitmore the name of a supply house near San Francisco. Unfortunately, they couldn't get anything out that night even if we wired the money, since they were dealing with eastern manufacturers whose offices were already closed. (We also couldn't wire the money in time; Western Union wouldn't deliver without taking several hours and getting an oath in blood that the supplier was really the person we wanted the money to go to.) Meanwhile, Monty had gone out for a large order of non-zip cord; when he got back that evening, he also had a dozen shielded sockets (all his retailer had in stock). We were crogged to find that these sockets were made in Pawtucket, about 40 miles south of Boston.

By Thursday night we had gotten permission to open with a paid fire detail (one local fireman standing around) and none of our own lights turned on. The Art Show Reception took place under those conditions. Monty and Craig McDonough spent most of that night redoing the wiring.

Of course, we knew that if we weren't *completely* wrapped up by 5 pm Friday, we were dead, since we couldn't count on the Fire Department offices or most vendors being open on Saturday.

On Friday morning, Theresa Renner mentioned that she knew of a fan, Kurt Siegel, from Schenectady, who was a fireman and who was gophering in Registration. She asked him to come up and help us, and for the rest of the crisis, he was our consulting fireman. Probably the most important thing he did was to explain to us just what we were dealing with — what were the real issues and what were peripheral — and just who we needed to talk to to get things done quickly. He also arranged for fire details with the station across Boylston Street from the Hynes, and was on hand in the art show to convince the firemen (who distrust conventions as a matter of course) that there was at least one responsible person working for us.

Friday morning, another Sheraton electrician went out to two suppliers and came back with two different sets of sockets — about 60, overpriced and mostly under-rated for our lights. Meanwhile Chip called the Pawtucket lighting factory, which referred him to a warehouse in Woburn (10 miles north of Boston). The warehouse wouldn't deal directly with end-users. We somehow found a trade retailer in one of the least accessible parts of Boston — they normally dealt with professional electricians, not the public — who was willing to take cash for a large order. Frank took off for Woburn in a large car borrowed from Debbie King's father (mundane, but sucked into the Noreascon treasury by his daughter); Monty went down to the retailer and stood over them until they got someone back from lunch who was authorized to call the wholesaler and tell them to release another 100+ sockets to Frank. (These were plastic sockets with a thread for a separate shield. One of the irritations of this mess was that these sockets, when bought in case lots instead of individual retail displays, were actually cheaper than the sturdier-but-unacceptable ceramic sockets we'd just bought to stretch NESFA's lighting supplies for the larger show.) And in the middle of this the supplier in California called up to say

he'd just discovered a factory in Pawtucket that made just what we needed. . . .

Kurt took Monty's pieces of cloth and walked them through an official fire test (which normally takes a week) at the fire department headquarters a mile south of the hotel. By 4 pm Friday, we had nice little plastic-cased certificates on each set of panels attesting to their incom-bustibility.

Luckily, the mountings for all the new sockets could be adapted to our homemade brackets without taking every-thing down off the trees. Frank Richards and others spent most of the next several hours on the high ends of ladders, replacing sockets one by one and, when necessary, swivel-ing them around until all the artists in a bay accepted that they'd been lit equally. They spent another late night finishing up, and by Saturday morning we were mostly in business (the hotel electrician had arbitrarily redone some of our wiring with one or two lights on a circuit, and it was late afternoon before the loads were finally balanced).

Since the Art Show is so critical to the convention and since good Art Show sales and visibility is so financially important to the artists, we spared nothing in trying to get things up and running. During most of the crisis, we were running more than one parallel approach to each part of the problem. Besides trying to prove by an actual test that the cloth was fireproof, we had people trying to find our original certificates and trying to trace down the manufacturer or a local vendor. Besides getting and in-stalling shields, we were working with the Fire Department to see if we could hire a detail to stand watch whenever we had the unshielded lights on. In general, we threw enough people and money at the problem and tried enough different approaches that we thought we'd probably succeed with one of them in time. (This worked for the Manhattan Project, also.)

I know a bunch of people besides the few I've named did yeoman service. Bob Lidral spent two very long days working to get the most out of the Sheraton (Sheraton management was cooperative once they understood what we wanted and we understood what they could do — this sometimes wasn't easy). Frank, Chip, and Monty all had people working with them. I'm convinced that we couldn't have managed without Kurt Siegel's advice and hard work.

It's hard to say what we could have done better. We might have had no problems if that damn TV hadn't caught fire — our layout was approved, and we were doing nothing we hadn't done with the Fire Marshal's blessing before. Kurt Siegel's assistance showed yet again the value of expert advice. If we had had someone with his knowledge well in advance of the con, we could probably have better understood the risks we were running. We might have known about the rules change and gotten shielded sockets for — at least — the additional lights we needed. Certainly we would have gotten up-to-date and legal certificates for the hanging cloth.

The Stolen Books

During setup one of Noreascon's huckster's cars was broken into and a number of rare books were stolen. The theft was duly reported to the police and the huckster presumably resigned himself to never seeing the books again.

On Friday, a bookstore owner in Cambridge was ap-proached by a party who had several rare books for sale. The clerk was suspicious and temporized, telling the seller that he needed to check with his boss and would he please come back at 5 pm? The clerk then called the police and the police arranged for a detective to be on hand at 5 pm.

At 5, the seller returned and tried to sell the books and was collared — they were indeed about half of the stolen books. While the arrest processing was taking place, *another* person came in offering to sell the other half of the books!

It was almost a happy ending. I don't believe that the huckster got his books back in time for the con — they are evidence.

We understand there were a number of thefts from the Hucksters Room. (Mostly Stephen King books, we hear.) To the best of my knowledge, they are unsolved and likely to remain so.

It's a pity that this happens, but I doubt that we can do much to stop it. I think that the hucksters' ordinary vigilance is pretty effective against shoplifting, but I don't think that anyone can do much against the professionals. I certainly don't want to see the kind of security that they have at antiquarian book fairs.

Club Tables

There was a lot of confusion pre-con when two different areas thought they were handling club and SIG tables. We never did manage to coordinate this, which resulted in our reserving many extra tables. I should have made it clearer to all that SIG programming was the lead area for scheduling club/SIG tables.

Innkeeper

Innkeeper turned out to be much harder than we antici-pated. I still don't see any way we could have gotten around the necessity of doing the hotel assignment job ourselves, but it certainly was a lot of work.

Besides being a real time sink, the Innkeeper system was never able to give us the information we needed to really control our hotel rooms. In particular, it was nearly impossible to answer questions like "How many staff members still don't have rooms?" or "Can we release another 25 rooms from the program participant block?" Because of this, we didn't so much manage rooms as defer managing rooms until events forced us to make a de-cision with too little information.

We could have made it work. At the root of the prob-lem were two mistakes in database design. The earlier mistake (which had lesser repercussions elsewhere) was that we used the membership number as the key into our members database, and that we tried to assign sequential membership numbers. What this meant was that there was no key for anyone who wasn't yet a member. Most of our other databases dealt with non-members: Most pro-gram participants weren't members until long after they had been recruited and — significantly for Innkeeper — many roommates were not members when their reserva-tions came in.

The effect of this was that it was necessarily a hand job to connect the program or Innkeeper databases with Membership. In Program's case, it was done, by hand and taking a lot of time. (And even then it was hard to export a list of Program participants back to Registration.) Given

the database design used by Innkeeper, this was not feasible, so roommates were not really integrated.

What we should have done was had a unique key which was assigned as soon as we heard of someone, with no attempt to code other information into it. (If people felt that a sequential membership number was useful, it could have been assigned. I tend to think it may be worth doing.) Having done this, links between the Membership database, the Program database, and the Innkeeper database could have been largely automated.

The second mistake has to do with database structure, and is too technical to describe here. Essentially, a different way of organizing the Innkeeper data files (similar to that used by the Program database) could have made data entry run about 50% faster.

No Name-the-Whatever Contests!

We had several name-the-thing contests. While they didn't all result in bad names, they reinforced what we already knew: never, never have a contest to get a name for something. It doesn't spark much interest (I think most people are smart enough to realize that there is no substance there), and frequently results in a dumb name.

If you just can't resist having a name-the-whatever contest, at least come up with a tolerable name and have some shill submit it so you can make sure that you will get a winner which won't make people wince every time they hear it.

[Actually, I liked the results of the ConCourse Name-the-Streets contest, which were things like Milky Way, Moebius Strip, Glory Road, and Warp Drive. I think the difference was that people just had to drop a card in a box for that contest, whereas most of the others required that people write a letter. The difficulty of doing that seems to cut down participation amazingly. — LT]

Things That Worked Right

The following are things that worked right which I hope other cons will consider.

- Having no free food in the con suite. (There's no free lunch — it's paid for by the members, anyway.) We got some complaints here, but it worked.
- Having the Hugos on Saturday night. (We took this from Atlanta.) This improved media coverage of the event, among other things.
- Having lots of space. When we made the decision to use as much space as we did, I don't think that any of us anticipated how much better the con would feel when it wasn't crowded.
- The ConCourse. (Of course this is only an option when you have lots of space.)
- We got rid of special area registration. (Everybody (staff, artists, hucksters) got their badges at Registration.) Even Program Participants went to Registration (Program had a special table there). This saved a huge amount of labor and potential for screwups.
- Don't stuff registration packets. Never, Never, Never. Don't even think about it. The labor is horrendous. (Why should I even have to mention this?)
- Computerizing program scheduling was the only way it could have been managed — by the end of the convention our system was considerably better than it started out. (We'll make all our code available as soon as we

have time.)

- The individual schedules for program participants on the backs of their badges were very well received.
- The Program Booklet and the morning pink sheets provided fans with the most accurate program ever (at least since the program grew so big). (By the way, is there any hope that we can put an end to misnomers like "Pocket Program" — it can't be, it's too big — and "Program Book" — when was the last time the Program Book actually contained the program?)
- Large, readable names on the badges. Alex [Layton] spent quite a lot of effort devising a good format and it paid off.
- Put real names on badges and don't let people hide them. I'm convinced that a major contributor to behavior problems is a perception of anonymity. Destroy that perception and behavior improves without strong-arm tactics.

[Another thing that worked right: having a single central distribution point for the daily newsletters, and keeping back issues in print. This worked well; we could hardly keep up with the demand and all of the issues were widely circulated. Unfortunately, our original plans for newsletter reproduction fell through, so some issues were delayed. (The Gestetner salesman who'd agreed to run the newsletter on a new demonstration machine could not attend due to a last-minute personal crisis. The machine was there, but we couldn't get ink supplies for it.) — LT]

Films and Technology

by Jim Hudson

We knew we didn't have anybody arranging projectors who knew anything about film equipment. That was seen as a problem, but we didn't know how much of a problem.

We knew we needed projectors with decent power output to be able to throw 16mm and 35mm images over 100 feet to the screens in the Hynes Ballrooms. (By the way, the scaffolding screens from Major Theater Supply worked beautifully.) We didn't know how much hassle that would be.

We knew there weren't any elevators to the Hynes Ballroom mezzanine. And we knew it would be a pain to get the 35mm projectors there. That got worse.

This report will do some documentation and describe in hindsight what we should have done.

Early Stuff

Our first hint of problems came when we contacted Boston Light and Sound and got estimates for renting systems for Ballrooms B and C. We wanted to rent 16mm in C and 16mm and 35mm in B. The quotes were way beyond our ability to commit at that point, and far out of line with our expectations. They also involved using licensed union projectionists in the 35mm theater. So we decided to look elsewhere for the equipment, and dropped them off the list.

Hindsight. The quotes weren't far off from what we actually paid. And we could have worked with Jeff Walker et al. earlier to describe our trade-offs on equipment quality vs. money. Since BLS was the only truly professional

organization we found with film equipment to rent, we should have come back to them when we knew more. This was our biggest mistake.

16mm Projectors

We knew we needed to run two theaters of 16mm projectors, with throws of about 100 feet. We expected to use both flat lenses and CinemaScope. We also wanted to run some 35mm if possible, particularly for the Hugo nominees. But we didn't know how much.

After much searching, we finally found some projectors at Cinevision in Atlanta. They were able to assemble 5 for us, compared to 2–3 found in the Northeast. Their prices were as unreasonable as the original ones from BLS, but they had the equipment and we had the money then.

Hindsight. We should have known earlier that the prints were supposed to be all flat in the 16mm houses. We should have talked with the studios much earlier, particularly about the equipment. We should have tested the small NESFA 16mm in the Ballroom months before the con. (In the best of worlds, that would have alerted us to the smoked glass and shown us if those projectors were bright enough; in the worst, it would have convinced us that low-power projectors couldn't do the job.) Since we were working on a \$6–\$10,000 rental deal with Cinevision, we should have sent somebody knowledgeable to *look* at the equipment. It was dumb not to invest \$500 in that.

35mm Projectors

We were very late in deciding to use 35mm projectors at all. It didn't happen until early August because of pure money considerations. At that point, our reasonable choices were Cinevision and Carl Zwanzig, and we decided to invest in Carl's fixup of his drive-in surplus projectors.

Hindsight. This seems like a good decision to me. Given our main error of not dealing with BLS, getting some medium-quality 35s available to us, and to fandom at large, is a *good thing*. The biggest problem was that Carl didn't have the scope lenses, and they were supposed to come from Cinevision.

Arrival

The first big hassle was the certificate of insurance for Cinevision. [They refused to turn over the equipment until we could provide the certificate.] This was done wrong at least three times that I know of, and we almost had to give them \$30K as a deposit to hold the equipment. Rick Katze solved this crisis (just in time).

Hindsight. I should have given the insurance more management attention earlier. So should have other people. It wasn't happening well, and this cost us about 16 clock hours on the projectors and about 30 people-hours in other tech areas. We couldn't afford those resources, so we should have fixed this earlier.

Setup

The 35s took more setup than anybody expected. They were critical so they got attention first. And the 16mm units were not "out of the truck, drop into place" items in any sense. Since we didn't get the 35s into the booth until end of day Wednesday, and the 16s didn't get off the truck until mid-Thursday, we weren't able to meet our noon opening schedule.

Hindsight. Better equipment or earlier. Either would have worked. But the combination of equipment that needed tweaking (or rebuilding) and no time to do it in left the program in bad shape on Thursday.

The Windows

The Hynes "Translation Booths" have smoked-glass windows that reduce light throughput by 40%. We didn't know that until Thursday, and didn't fix it until Friday or Saturday morning when the Hynes unscrewed the glass and removed it. Even when I heard about how dark things were and how hard it was to focus (late Thursday night) I just thought it was the equipment. But people were saying we should do anything we had to to get rid of the glass, so I did as ordered. Don Eastlake and Al Kramer (of the Hynes staff) were invaluable here.

Hindsight. I'm not sure *how* we would have identified this in advance. It's just too weird.

Projector Problems

Once the 35mm units were in place, they worked fine. We were missing scope lenses, supposedly arranged with Cinevision, but they worked and we rearranged the schedule to remove the scope, at least initially.

The 16mm units were another story. They were a disaster from the beginning, and we got very little value from them. Others can add their detailed comments on each unit and which circle of hell it came from.

Hindsight. The big mistake was letting *light output* based on power be our single key consideration. Instead, we should have planned our tech around the equipment we could reasonably get. Our projectionists could easily work with Model 300's or their Xenon counterparts, and those are available for rent at reasonable prices. They're also portable, and we could have made the screen sizes and lenses appropriate for their power. Instead we spent lots of money on old fossil projectors that didn't work and took constant babying. Some were great units, but all were problems.

Critical Points and Solutions

We had great stuff on the film program, most of it supplied by the studios. Things like the Academy print (it said "For Academy Screenings Only" on the cans) of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and the special cut of the *Indiana Jones* bloopers. By mid-Friday, it became apparent that we couldn't show it with the quality it deserved. There were brand new issues arising, like Interlok to combine the separate sound and tape tracks on the bloopers. We were out of our depth.

Luckily, the studios came to our rescue. First, by bringing in Larry Shea of Boston Light and Sound to look at our setup and propose solutions. That may have been their biggest contribution. And, second, deciding at the last minute (well, they actually had about 12 minutes to spare) to pay for the right solution. I'm 75% sure we would have done it if Amblin hadn't, but their \$7500 contribution for the BLS equipment made things easy.

That allowed us to pay for good projectionists and a technician from BLS to run the 35mm projectors and to make enough of the 16mm machines work.

"Enough" turned out to be 1. Once the windows were out of the booth, we were able to use the NESFA Model 300 and one rented from Major, and get decent light and

sound in Ballroom C. with stuff that worked and the projectionists understood. We then got big reels from BLS and used the Norelco (nice projector, but too much pain to move) to do full films, bright, without changeovers. Kay's crew did a lot of splicing and desplicing, but it worked.

So by Sunday and Monday, we had the following equipment available and working:

- 2 BLS excellent 35mm projectors in the Auditorium
- 2 Zwanzig good 35mm projectors in Ballroom B
- 1 Cinevision 16mm Norelco big-reel projector in Ballroom B
- 1 NESFA and 1 Major 16mm Model 300 in Ballroom C
- 4 Cinevision unused machines in Ballrooms B and C, some broken

Hindsight. What we should have had, for the whole convention, was:

- open glass in the Ballroom projection booths
- 2 BLS 35mm projectors in Ballroom B through Friday, Auditorium on Saturday, then back to B
- 5-6 Xenon-lamped portable 16mm units in the Ballrooms

That would have cost about \$600/unit for the 16mm projectors, about \$10,000 for the BLS equipment including technician, and under \$2000 for the projectionists for the 35mm. Call it \$15K.

But what we spent was \$6200 at Cinevision, subject to renegotiation, \$3500 with Carl, about \$1000 at Major for parts, etc., \$1000 for projectionists, \$500 for technician, and \$7500 at BLS. That's \$20k, of which \$7500 was paid by the studios. So much aggravation for such a little difference in money, though those figures were way too high for us to commit to before about August 31.

If we'd been perfectly smart and efficient from the beginning, we'd have committed to the right choice on 16mm projectors and the right set of screens (under \$5K), and tested the projectors in the Hynes. We'd have talked to BLS and figured out the right set of 35mm equipment to get for Ballroom B, and asked the studios to pick up the costs. Our exposure would have been under \$7K, including projectionists, which we knew we could afford by early August. And, when we moved to the Auditorium, we'd have increased our costs a bit but our hassle only marginally.

We weren't that smart. We survived this one, and the fans who attended the film program on Friday through Monday saw a great show. Thursday was a disaster, but the recovery was impressive.

[Another comment, from hindsight, was that we should have done a better job of keeping the fans informed of what was going on. Our tech crew was putting in lots of work trying to straighten things out, but the fan trying to watch the film program saw only that the program was behind schedule and films were being projected incorrectly. Someone from Information should have been sent up to the film area to post hourly bulletins on the tech crews' progress and to be available to answer questions. This is where some of ideas about using roving Information crews or Ombudsmen could have been very useful. — LT]

MCFI Meeting

Date: October 11, 1989

Notes by: Jim Mann

It's all over!!! The meeting was called to some semblance of order a bit after 7:30.

Election of Officers: We started with the election of officers. Mark Olson and Jim Mann were re-elected by acclamation. Ann Broomhead wasn't here yet, so we had to wait to elect her by acclamation (which we did about 5 minutes later).

Mark noted that Ben Yalow had lost the right to vote because he had been making his trips to Boston for Division Heads meetings rather than MCFI meetings. We voted many to Paula Lieberman to reinstate this right.

Mark read the *Locus* review of N3, which gushed praise. Jim M. has press clippings from other sources.

Reimbursements: Mark said that about two years ago we decided that reimbursements at con for gophers, committee and staff, and program participants would take precedence over everything but that which we legally owe. These reimbursements are budgeted. We aren't ready to make them yet, but will be soon. He estimated that we have between \$25,000 and \$35,000 after refunds, but several big bills haven't come in yet so we can't be sure.

December 31 is the deadline for submitting expense reports. After that, you may not be reimbursed for your expenses. See Mark if you need an extension.

Mark has the gopher list. We had 117 who worked enough for a reimbursement. He is still working on the staff list. He said that people should tell him about workers, even if they didn't work enough hours for a refund: they should at least get credit in our list. The hours required for gophers was 16; for staff 12. Don't worry if you aren't sure if they worked in other areas in addition to yours. Just submit what you know.

Mark asked the committee to approve going ahead with reimbursements if we aren't hit with any surprises. There were no objections.

He said we have to start thinking about other reimbursement, which we haven't budgeted but which we said (back at the dawn of time) that we would consider after the con. These include:

- Room-nights outside of the Wednesday (or perhaps Tuesday) through Monday period for those whose jobs required them to be there.
- Other expenses (e.g., Ben's and Peggy Rae's travel)
- Travel to Program Frenzy
- Party donations

We need to work out how to do this. Write up what you think for the apa.

More Assorted Stuff: Mark said that Bruce Pelz is putting together a History of the Worldcon exhibit. We're trying to collect material for him. He'd like one of each kind of thing. Tony Lewis said that Joe Siclari is putting together bidding info. Mark asked people to bring back unused N3 stationery, to save us from having to order more.

Video: Jim Hudson explained the video situation: we have 3-camera work from most of the major events. We have 2-camera work from Thursday night. We have a few single-camera shots of individual program items. Mark said we can produce two 3-hour tapes.

Mark proposed that the committee approve going ahead with this and selling the tapes at approximately break-even costs (including both fixed and marginal costs).

There was some discussion on costs. Jim H. said fixed costs can range from a few hundred dollars to much more; marginal costs would be a couple of bucks per tape. Mark said we're probably looking at \$10 per tape. We'd advertise by a bulk mailing to our members. Rick Katze said we can just produce a master, and make others as orders come in. Jim H. said we'd probably produce some in bulk to start, then do as Rick said for subsequent orders. Mark said we'd look to break even over a few months. Suford Lewis is producing tapes, and needs volunteers to look at/log shots.

Rick said that the general consensus is that we do this. Let's empower the officers to look at the first cut and approve the money if it looks good. Jill Eastlake proposed that we allocate \$1000 to fund stage one. This was agreed to with little debate.

Ellen Franklin proposed sending tapes to participants (about 60 total). There was no objection to this.

Jim M. proposed showing the tapes at Boskone. George Flynn said we should also extend this to upcoming Worldcons.

Projectors: Jim H. described the problems with the projectors rented from the Atlanta company. We rented five. 1 to 1.5 were usable, and this with hundreds of fan-hours of labor to make them that way. We want to look into whether there's any possibility of getting back some of the \$6100 we spent. We are in the process of documenting all the details for each projector. Rick summarized our legal options. Rick, Jim H., and Mark will act as steering committee on this.

Yet Again More Stuff: Mark said that sometime between now and the end of the year we'll have a mailing to members who did not attend the con. Sharon Sbarsky said they'll be trying to figure out who was there and who wasn't.

Ann had a preliminary financial report for Claudius (the period around the convention).

Sharon talked about ConFiction mailings. We'll produce labels here, saving us lots on bulk sorting. We voted and there were no objections to our continuing to do the mailings.

Mailing Lists: Jim M. said that we got a letter from Davis Publications asking us if they could buy our mailing list for a one-time mailing to their members. Mark said this is a completely standard thing: they get hard-copy labels for one time use. We put in some ringers to make sure they don't do so again.

Rick thought this was a reasonable thing. They are in the field. Jim M. agreed. While he wouldn't want to give it to people selling unrelated stuff, Davis has stuff that many of our members would be interested in. Those who don't want it can throw it away.

Priscilla Olson thought it was a bad precedent. She doesn't like junk mail. Ben said that, in this particular case, since the publishing industry is a major supporter of SF cons, we should do something nice for them. They've done mailing lists for SF cons before. Jill also doesn't like junk mail: we can't be frivolous with our members' addresses. We also can't make value judgements on what is OK and what isn't. Ellen thought we should support Davis.

Jim H. said we once talked about asking our members if we could use their name on mailing lists like this. We never did, however. Chip Hitchcock thought it was OK as long it was hard copy, not on-line. Andi Shechter objected strongly: it was a violation of people's rights of privacy. Tony said it would be doing a favor for those who have done us favors; we therefore should not do it [joke]. Paula Lieberman was ambivalent. Pam Fremon agreed with Rick and Jim M. This went on for several minutes, before Mark noted that nobody seemed to be changing their opinions. So we voted. It was 13 to 7 in favor of allowing this. Jim H., Rick, and Sharon will further investigate the issues.

Other Stuff (for one last time): Jim M. will accumulate a list of things lost at the con and post it in the clubhouse.

Mark said we have lots of nice group photos of staff for the closing ceremonies slide show. We'd like to make them available at cost to those in the photos.

Don said we're sending plaques to thank the employees of the Sheraton, Hilton, and Hynes.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20.

Smofcon 6 Reports

by Mark Olson and Pam Fremon

Smofcon 6 was held at the Toronto airport HoJo's on 8-10 December 1989. The turnout was around fifty, with groups from Boston, NY, DC, Orlando, Atlanta, Louisville, Phoenix, SF, and Portland in the US, and from all over Canada in attendance.

The program covered a general set of topics including most aspects of convention organization. A nice touch was the use of two rooms with programs in each alternating hours. This eliminated the need for a hot discussion to end just because the next panel was about to begin. (Though if this scheme becomes common, moderators will need to learn how to shut panels down rather than relying on just running out of time.) The program started at 9am (cruel and unusual for most Smofs) and could have done with fewer topics — there was significant overlap between the panels on finance and budgeting and among the panels covering marketing, publicity, and bidding.

The Fannish Inquisition of Worldcon and Smofcon bids was one of the best I've seen. Worldcon bidders from 1993, '94, and '95 gave short (Thank You) presentations and then answered questions from the floor. Perhaps the most interest was generated by the '93 race, where the Hawaii write-in bid (previously dismissed as a hoax, but it looked quite real here) joined San Francisco, Phoenix, and Zagreb. The Hawaii bid appears to be analogous to the Boat bid for '88. According to Scott Dennis, who answered questions on behalf of the absent Lex Nakashi-

ma, Lex is running the bid for facilities on Waikiki beach as a more relaxed alternative to the traditional Worldcon. If it wins, he believes he can attract an experienced committee. He does not intend to chair the convention himself.

Smofcon 6 continued the tradition of a great consuite, a relaxing place for discussion in the evenings. It was stocked with excellent beer (including a pair of superb homebrews) and cheese (and much more). Smoffing went on until at least 3 am. There were no other parties (though NY in '95 hosted a small invitational wine and cheese reception Saturday afternoon by the pool).

Most of the out-of-town fans ate near HoJo's (the area is thick with hotels). The high point occurred Friday night when about 15 of us decided to walk to a highly-recommended Japanese place "just down the road." We arrived at the hotel alleged to contain the restaurant, only to discover that it was about a quarter mile further down the road. We stood in the hotel's parking lot — the frigid arctic winds howling around us — and discussed for fifteen minutes whether we should continue walking, take a taxi, eat right there, go back, or go somewhere else. So much for decisive Smoffish executive ability.

The usual process of osmosis decided that Smofcon 7 will be in Ft. Lauderdale next December hosted by a group largely drawn from the MagiCon committee. It will be in the same hotel as Tropicon, but a week later. Joe Siclari urged Smofs to come down for both and to enjoy the week in between. Portland indicated interest in running the 1991 Smofcon.

— Mark Olson

[Pam Fremon's report on the Smofcon Fannish Inquisition is reprinted from *Instant Message* #470, published by the *New England Science Fiction Association*.]

The Fannish Inquisition is often the most popular program item at Smofcon, the annual convention of convention runners. This year's Smofcon, held December 8–10 in Toronto, had presentations for 8 bids for Worldcons for 1993 through 1995.

The Inquisition was moderated by Ben Yalow. Here are summations of the presentations, and some questions raised.

1993

Ben first held up ConFiction's Progress Report 4 (which most of the audience had not yet seen) and let the audience choose whether to take the '93 bidders in front-to-back or back-to-front order of the appearance of their ads in the PR. (He refused to consider working outwards from the middle.) Back to front won, so the furthest-back ad for the 1993 race was the first presentation.

Zagreb in '93 (presented by Jane Dennis of Paris, KY). Although not on the Zagreb committee, noted Worldcon-watchers Jane and Scott Dennis (publishers of *Jane's Fighting Smofs*) recently returned from a trip to Zagreb, where they saw the facilities Zagreb is using in its bidding. Everything would be wonderfully inexpensive by American standards. The main hotels are not luxurious but are perfectly adequate. Rooms in the principal hotel start at \$25/night (there is also a very classy hotel available with rooms of \$100+/night). All of the facilities are close by. The con committee are experienced con-runners, having worked on many European cons. Most speak English well.

English would likely be the dominant convention language, but not the only one. Everyone was very friendly. They anticipate about 1500 attendees, making it much like Heicon.

Phoenix in '93 (Doreen Webbert, Phoenix). A Worldcon in Phoenix in '93 would not be as uncomfortable as the last one there (IguanaCon, 1978) because the severely-heat-reflecting civic center plaza (known to the locals as the "anvil of God") is having a cooling system installed. They will be using the same facilities as last time. When asked about the strength of a bid that, like San Francisco's, has gone through several chairmen, Doreen said, "Well, we're all still breathing." The chairmanship would be shared by three people: Terry Gish (now Terry Berry), Eric Hanson, and Doreen.

San Francisco in '93 (Terry Biffel, Sacramento). The bid's main hotel, the new San Francisco Marriott, is working with them closely and has made 22 concessions that should be of interest to fans (the complete list is available in the bid's current literature, and in ConFiction's PR #4). Terry enthused, "The hotel practically rolled over and said, 'Go ahead — rape me!'" Their third chairman, Sue Stone, died suddenly in October. The corporation chairman is Mike Wallis. The current secretary-general (equivalent of chairman) is Terry Biffel.

Hawaii in '93 (Scott Dennis). Scott, who is not a member of this committee, had gleaned information from the committee and presented it on their behalf. The facilities would be several Sheratons on the beach — they will use as many as they need. Rates would likely be about \$110/night. Both hotels have plenty of function space. The bid has letters of intent from both hotels, but if by chance something fell through, there are plenty of other hotels in the area that could be used. (This bid was filed with the ConFiction committee just past the ballot deadline, so will not appear on the ballot, but you can legitimately vote for it as a write-in.)

1994

Winnipeg in '94 (Linda Ross-Mansfield, Winnipeg). The main hotel has several hundred rooms, and there is a walkway connection between the main hotel and the convention center. The sleeping rooms and function room facilities are close together — within a 10-minute walk.

Nashville in '94 (Scott Dennis). Scott and Jane are on this bid committee. The venue would be the Opryland Hotel, which is enormous. The hotel is spread out so horizontal distances are long, but as it is only 6 stories high, at most, elevators are not a problem. Except for one out-of-the-way lingerie shop, everything is wheelchair-accessible. All of the function rooms are also in this hotel. The hotel has won the Meetings and Conventions Gold Key award for best convention hotel in the country. In answer to a question, he said he didn't remember hearing any country "muzak" (for those who are not country music fans). Rates are likely to be in the low \$100's; the committee has also, however, arranged a block with a nearby Best Western Motel which will have rates closer to \$40 (\$50?)/night.

1995

Atlanta in '95 (Don Cook, Canton GA). A '95 Worldcon in Atlanta would use the same facilities the '86 Worldcon there did. One would still have to dodge the traffic crossing the street between the two hotels, but being La-

bor Day weekend, the traffic would not be that bad. Jim Gilpatrick is the current bid chairman.

New York in '95 (Seth Breidbart, New York NY). Wearing the bid's orange and blue t-shirt, Seth said vehemently he was not on the committee, since by charter all of the committee members were non-New Yorkers. He was willing to speak for the committee, though. The facilities are fantastic — the Hilton, Sheraton Center, and New York Marriott hotels, located in midtown Manhattan. Bruce Farr noted that Seth, while insisting he was not on the committee, kept mixing the pronouns "I" and "we." "Are you saying 'we' or is there a mouse in your pocket?" "There isn't a mouse in my pocket," said Seth. "I'm just glad to see you." While Noreascon, in preparing its bid questionnaire, had asked the '92 bidders to estimate the number of seats available for meals within a 1-mile radius of the convention, Seth said for New York, the number would be staggering. New York has also the attractions of Broadway and wonderful museums. [I heard that NY had a wine and cheese party at Smofcon — maybe so, but I wasn't invited.]

— Pam Fremon

MCFI Meeting

Date: December 13, 1989
Notes by: Jim Mann

Mark Olson mentioned all the thank-you letters that we reprinted in the last apa [see letter column], and encouraged people to include more in future apas. He also encouraged anyone who sees reviews of N3 to give Jim Mann a copy for the files.

The next meeting will be on January 24, 1990.

Mark reminded everyone that expense reports must be submitted to Ann Broomhead by December 31.

Video: Suford Lewis said that they are going through the tapes. They need help in making logs so they can figure out what they have. Having something ready by Boskone is unlikely. Mark said that this unfortunately shoots the idea of sending information on the availability of the tapes with the membership reimbursements.

Priscilla Olson said she thought all of us would get a look at the material that would be included. Suford said we would, after they've figured out what they have. She said we have footage from all the Extravanzas and from some program items. Ann added that much of this was taken with three cameras, so this adds to the amount of footage that must be sorted through.

Finances: Mark said that the numbers aren't all in yet, but, if the small expenses all come in on target, we're looking at a surplus of about \$70,000 after reimbursements. In January, we will have to decide where normal reimbursements end, since we must give 50% of what's left after normal reimbursements to Holland and Orlando.

Smofcon Game: Someone wants to do a Hypercard version of *If I Ran the Zppp... Con*, but Steve Jackson, who we currently have an agreement with, does not approve this. Steve has been working on a PC version for two years, but doesn't have a marketable version ready yet.

Post-Con Data Entry: Mark asked Sharon Sbarsky where things stood in terms of data entry. Sharon said that she'd been too busy lately to get much done. Mark asked if we should appoint someone else as "Post-Con Registration," since we are getting pressure to get reimbursements out, and we can't really do that until the at-the-doors are entered in the data base. Sharon said she would try to get some stuff done by Sunday (12/17). Mark said he would talk to her then, to decide whether, if she were too busy to finish this, it should be handed over to someone else.

George Flynn asked Sharon if anything had been sent to ConFiction. Sharon said she hadn't sent anything since just before the close of prereg.

Atlanta Projectors: Mark said that nothing has happened yet. Rick Katze and Jim Hudson will talk to work out more details.

Souvenir Book Cover: Greg Thokar said that he had costs for reprinting the cover: 500 would cost \$729; 1000 would cost \$829. In response to a question from Jim M., Mark said that these would be gifts to staff.

Other Stuff: Fred and SuLi Isaacs gave Leslie Turek a plush lobster dressed up as Santa, with the name Sandy Claws.

Leslie reported that Tropicon had t-shirts depicting a flamingo on a platter with an orange in its mouth being carried off by hungry cats.

Mad 3 Party: Leslie said that she is working on the final issue of *Mad 3 Party*. She hopes to finish it over the Christmas holidays.

Program: Priscilla reported that Program had sent out 500 thank-you notes/refund checks. They have about 60 more to go. We've been getting thank-you notes for the refunds.

ConFiction: Mark asked if we had any more ConFiction mailings coming up in the near future. Sharon said that their latest PR was behind schedule, so they decided to mail it directly.

New Staff T-Shirt: Mark said that, if we are in as good shape financially as it appears that we are, he'd like to do a second staff t-shirt. It would feature commissioned art (probably by Merle Insinga) and would be given to all staff. People could also buy extras at cost. If we can think of a good way to do so, he envisions an Alice-related piece of art, surrounded by a wheel listing division names. Your division would be highlighted or at the top or some such. This would make it clear that we were all working on one convention. The back would say "Noreascon 3. Boston 1989 Committee." He pictures the cost as being about \$3000 total (including shipping).

Andi Shechter spoke in favor of the idea as did Tony. Paula Lieberman asked if we were planning a post-con report. Mark said that if his \$70,000 figure was close to right, we had plenty of money for both. George asked that his division not be referred to as the George Division. Several people (actually, Mark and Jim M.) thought George would fit on a t-shirt much more easily than "WSFS and Art Show." There were several suggestions on design. We agreed that Mark should consult with Merle. Mark's motion was approved.

Reprinting Sales Items: Mark proposed printing more tote bags and more pins. Gay Ellen Dennett said we should just reprint one of the pins. Mark said that it

would cost \$500 to reprint pins. At \$3/pin, we'll make most of our money back. Mark said that we would try to make the tote bag a slightly different design: shorter and wider. Priscilla spoke up in favor of the short and wide. Jim H. said it was traditional for the second edition to be somewhat different. Sharon asked if the items would go to NESFA sales. Mark said whatever we couldn't sell quickly would. Reprinting the items was approved.

Smofcon Report: Mark and Pam attended Smofcon in Toronto. [See their reports on page 18.] The high point was the fannish Inquisition, at which Seth Breidbart gave the New York in '95 presentation. Atlanta is not sure whether or not this is a hoax.

For '93, Waikiki is getting support.

Joe Siclari asked if MagiCon could get copies of APA-89 for the year(s) before N3. We approved giving them the open sections.

Reimbursements: Mark said that we have to look at 1) what do we reimburse and 2) what, if any, part of this is "not traditional."

At Smofcon, Mark talked to a number of other conventions about what they reimburse. Most are much more liberal than we are. For example, Phoenix, at their local conventions, gives free rooms to officers, division heads, and area heads (the number of free nights depending upon your level). Atlanta gave free rooms for the whole con to division heads and provided some free room-nights to others based on need and amount of work put in. At Chicon, a reasonably reliable source said they plan to give suites and expenses to the Board of Directors (essentially, the officers and the division heads), others will get rooms, and they'll pour substantial money into the upper-level den.

Mark said he doesn't think we should reimburse anyone for nights on which they'd have normally been in the hotel even if they weren't working. Tony Lewis agreed, saying we should look at reimbursing folks for room nights outside of the normal Worldcon nights. Priscilla said that we have to be careful here though: lots of people came early and/or stayed late for reasons of their own, not to work on the convention. Dave Anderson and Andi said there were people here outside of normal times to work. Andi said we will just have to trust our staff to only ask for times at which they worked.

Jim M. said he basically liked the idea of reimbursing room nights outside of the normal ones except for Tuesday pre-con. Yes, many people stayed on Tuesday to work. However, there were so many of them this could be a budget buster. Mark said we could be talking about \$25,000 here.

Pat said we had early on talked about reimbursing for the costumes and for party expenses. Mark raised Ben and Peggy Rae's travel, and the travel of the 5 or 6 people we asked to come in for the Program Frenzy. Jim H. said there were 4 or 5 people who bought banquet tickets but then got called away to work.

Paula suggested we ask people to propose what we should reimburse, then look at it. Mark said that there was probably no better way to generate bad will than this. Davey Snyder said we could get hotel figures on Tuesday night. Debbie King said we could consider pro-rating Tuesday night, based on how much we thought we could afford for it.

Mark said that we have to work up a proposal for how to handle this. This group is too big to draft one. He doesn't want to do it alone. He proposed that the Board of Directors come up with some guidelines and bring them up at the next meeting. This was approved.

Slides: Jim H. said we have lots of slides. Look at them tonight. Next time we'll look at getting clearances from the photographers.

The open meeting ended at 8:55.

Closed Meeting

The closed meeting started at 9:30. Mark proposed three people for membership: Kelly Persons, Gay Ellen Dennett, and Alexis Layton. Mark wanted to discuss this. Everyone else thought we needed no discussion. Mark gave in. They passed unanimously. We adjourned at 9:31.

Letters

• Ian Ballantine:

Betty and I had a wonderful time as your Guests of Honor at Noreascon III. Every consideration was given us.

I told my doctor, who had had doubts about my going, that being Guest of Honor is by far and away the best treatment one can have for any health problem.

Betty and I wanted to express our profound thanks.

• Elizabeth Moon:

There are far too many of you, and my memory is far too uncertain, to give all the appropriate thanks that should be given. But you did one whale of a good job on this convention, and I had one whale of a good time (even to seeing the literal whales off the coast the day I flew in . . . a special delight).

The only thing wrong with the programming was that I didn't have six or seven clones . . . it was magnificent, and I thoroughly enjoyed the items I was on, and those I got to attend. You did a good job of picking moderators for panels, and somehow you had such neat people on with me that I almost (*almost*) wanted to be in the audience listening instead of talking. (That is an exaggeration. But only a slight one.) I got to meet a lot of people I'd been wanting to meet, and a bunch more I hadn't known I wanted to meet. Elise Krueger was, without question, the best moderator I've *ever* worked with, in any situation . . . but this is best among greats; the others were standouts too. Whoever thought up putting our schedules on the backs of our badges should get a HUGE gold star . . . that was a lot easier than paging through the program every hour or so. (Particularly after someone borrowed mine and didn't give it back for a day.) The Green Room setup was excellent (particularly for those who, like me, are quite allergic to smoke). In fact, everything I saw was organized just enough and not too much . . . activities and people seemed to flow smoothly, but with room and time enough for spontaneity.

Congratulations on a great job . . . thanks for all the hard work you all put in, which made this a very special, very enjoyable convention for me and for thousands of others. May you recover enough to decide to do it again someday. Soon?

• Jack McDevitt:

I wanted to say thanks to you and your colleagues. Noreascon Three was a hell of a party.

And it was nice to get back to Boston after a lot of years. (I was a schoolteacher in Woonsocket, RI during the late '60s.) It made for a time warp effect, which was all that was needed to complete a perfect weekend.

If there were justice, we would give awards to con administrators —

• Patrick Nielsen Hayden:

On behalf of Tor Books, thanks *very* much for an extraordinarily well-run Worldcon, and for all the help and favors — major and incidental — you threw our way.

Clearly, all of you have a lot of work left to do winding up the affairs of the con. We hope that, somewhere in there, all of you find time for some well-deserved rest. You've earned it.

• Devra Kunin:

Now sufficiently recovered to write a note of appreciation for a phenomenally well-run and enjoyable con! You not only hosted a convention large enough to populate a small village, but you also succeeded in giving it a warm, small village atmosphere — and in keeping its thousands of inhabitants busy and entertained for nearly a week! Congratulations on a impressive accomplishment.

Nearly everyone I spoke to at the con — pros, fen, booksellers, publishers — said at some point, "I can't believe how well-organized this thing is!" You may well bask in egoboo (I *love* that word) — your efforts were much appreciated.

• Gregory Benford:

I must express my thanks for the best organized and executed Worldcon I've ever attended. It was admirably smooth, and also imaginative and inventive.

I found the audience the best I can remember for a long, long time. I came late onto a panel in quantum reality, and thought I was in the wrong room because there were far too many people there!

The 50th anniversary brunch was thoroughly professional but carried all the pulpit-pounding community verve I remember from the tribal rites of Worldcons of the 50s and 60s.

All this, in a con center which sometimes seemed like a set for the movie *Batman*. Let's do it again!

• John and Sandra Miesel:

Our heartfelt thanks for a wonderful Worldcon! We enjoyed Noreascon more than any Worldcon since '73. From the painless registration to panels that ran on time, all aspects functioned with the efficiency we expect from the Grenadier Guard of fandom.

In particular, we wish to compliment the daily program book for the amount of data covered and the indices — it resembled the program for a professional conference. And putting personal schedules right on the name badges was nothing short of brilliant! We also appreciated the printed masquerade program and think Sunday night a better time for it.

See you in another nine years?

• Lillian Stewart Carl:

I know you're still comatose from your efforts this last weekend, but when you regain sanity I'd like you to know I've never attended a Worldcon so well run. I realized I was in the presence of a truly superior con when I received my nametag; not only were my name and town spelled right — a feat in itself — but the letters were half an inch high, legible from five feet away! The miniature copy of my program pasted on the back was a marvelous touch, as was the choice of pin or clip.

The programs came and went on time, the Green Room was managed with flair and finesse, and the Con-Course was a truly inspired concept. Y'all (okay, so I speak in dialect) obviously labored long and hard studying the problems experienced by earlier cons and solving them before they arose. I am impressed. If you had anything to do with my room in the Sheraton *not* being on a party floor — thanks.

It was a wonderful convention. If you can bear the thought, please do it again sometime!

The Mad 3 Party #38

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