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the 58th Worldcon

Progress Report 6
April 2000



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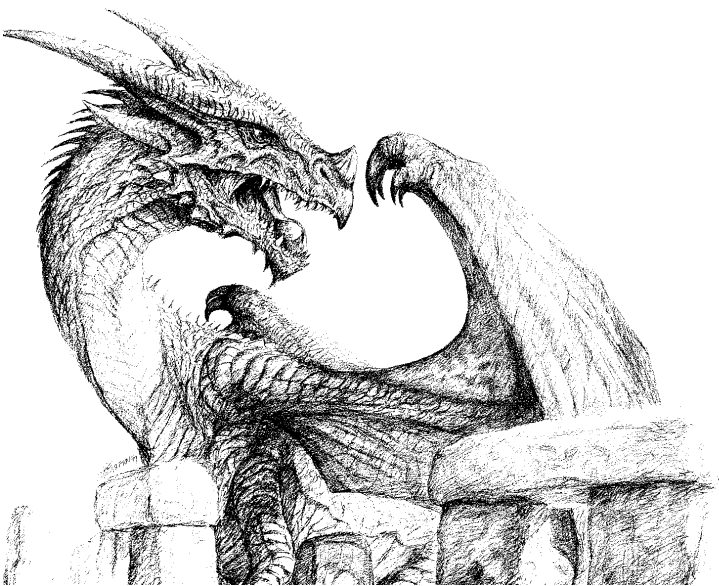
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In spite of late hours and bleary eyes, the editor is afraid that her obligatory mistake count is not going to be made for this issue. I hereby appologize to the Goddess.



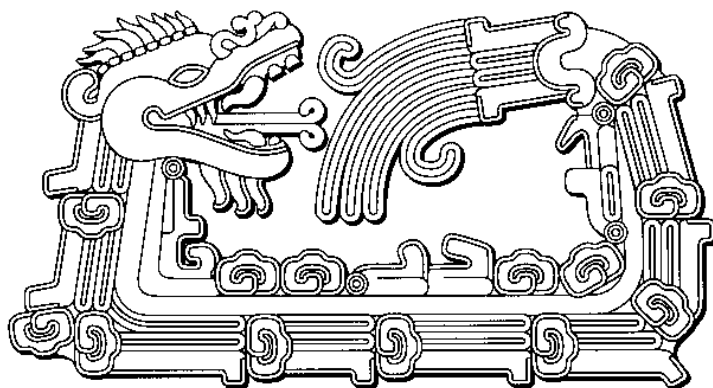
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The Well-Foreseen Emergency

Thoughts of Chairman Tom

The following story is true, or so I am assured by someone who wouldn't lie to me without a solid monetary motive:

The chairman of (Name Withheld By Request) Con was determined that his convention was going to be trouble-free, with every conceivable contingency foreseen and incorporated into a Master Plan.

From the day of his appointment, he mentally walked step-by-step through all phases of the proceedings, pondering what might go wrong. What if the printer didn't deliver the pocket program until Saturday afternoon? What if there were no chairs for the Masquerade audience? What if the hotel's fire alarm system proved defective and emitted false alarms? What if rather overzealous fen pounded the marble table in the con suite in a vigorous game of hakosot? What if rather peculiar fen tried to hang heavy objects from the fire sprinklers in their hotel rooms? What if. . .

And for every "what if", he devised a response that would forestall or minimize disruption to the con. Having done that, he devoted endless concom meetings to reviewing both the potential crises and their solutions, then to investigating the ways in which the solutions could fail and erupt into new crises, then to preparing the next tier of responses.

Month after month, the Master Plan grew more vast and more ramified and more polished. At last, the convention arrived, and there was no possibility of failure. No problem had not been foreseen.

Except, that is, the problem of a chairman who had worked himself into a state of nervous collapse and couldn't even show up at opening ceremonies.

The moral that this chairman has drawn from that one's fate is that hypothetical emergencies can do as much damage as real ones, at least to



the immoderate hypothesizer. Perhaps it is best to look upon coping with the unanticipated as part of the excitement and challenge (*les mots justes?*) of organizing the World Science Fiction Convention.

That doesn't mean, of course, that one should maximize one's fun by decreasing one's anticipation to zero. After all, a few crises in every Worldcon's life come as no surprise. They will, in fact, defeat any and all efforts to prevent their arrival, so one may as well be ready.

The most inevitable of these is the Budget Crunch. Not fewer than five months, nor more than nine, before the doors open, every Worldcon committee looks at its reasonably expected revenue, compares that sum to its absolutely essential minimum expenditures, and concludes that bankruptcy is inescapable unless the latter are drastically cut.

Chicon arrived at that moment in mid-February, when the chairman added up all of the divisions' budget requests and observed that they totaled twice what Bucconeer, the last U.S. Worldcon, had spent. Naturally, we hope to have a very good convention, but it won't be twice as good as Bucconeer; and, if it were, we couldn't afford it.

Since this particular crisis was so utterly predictable, it didn't provide the same stimulation as some that past Worldcons have delighted in. How fondly I recall MagiCon, which, as of two days before Worldcon Thursday, had a fully computerized registration system totally devoid of software. And none of us who labored on Bucconeer will ever forget the first thrilling intimation of the abysmal incompetence of the housing bureau (a failed biotech startup looking for a new line of work) whose "services" had been imposed upon us.

...continued on page 7

Ah, those were the days! Chicon has been comparatively boring. True, hotel reservations gave us a flutter of happy anxiety (particularly when we learned that the first version of the reservation form had the rates at one of the hotels wrong), and we basked momentarily in the decorator's first price quote for chair rentals (\$42 per, and we'd asked for 500!). But those pleasures rapidly faded. Hotel booking problems have barely risen into double figures (though that's more than there ought to be). The decorator cut the chair price to five bucks. A host of other promising catastrophes failed to pan out.

I was, however, talking about money, wasn't I? Here, too, I have the sinking feeling that Chicon won't experience the delights of insolvency (much though we'd like to give you 110 percent of the con that you've paid for). The Green Room won't really need \$10,000 for program participants' coffee and Danish. We'll get the Guests of Honor to Chicago for less than a total of \$22,000. The Program Book will pay for itself with advertising revenue (rate cards available from publications@chicon.org). In the end, we won't find ways to outspend any previous Worldcon by two-to-one. Sigh.

Once projected costs are reduced to some approximation of reality, though, we still will face the part of this predicted, foreseen emergency for which none of our predecessors has found a workable remedy. To illustrate, let me draw once again on the history of MagiCon.

A week before the convention, despite frantic cost cutting, MagiCon was in the red. A week after, it had one of the larger surpluses of any Worldcon, because close to a thousand people bought memberships at the door. In a way, that was wonderful, in the sense that having too much leftover cash is one of life's more endurable misfortunes. But "misfortune" was an apt term. Had MagiCon been able to know that it would receive its at-the-door windfall, it could have done much to make the con more enjoyable for its members. As it was, after everything feasible had been done to upgrade the cuisine in the con suite (well, not everything - my caviar budget was rejected out of hand), the remaining cash might as well have been safely banked on Callisto.

MagiCon's dilemma wasn't unique. Every recent Worldcon has asked itself, Shall we spend only funds that we know we have, risking a useless surplus; or shall we count on the last minute rain of manna? Only once in living memory has a concom chosen the bold alternative, and that turned out to be the one year when the at-the-door take fell below rational expectations.

As for Chicon, we will probably be prudent and timid, while trying to ameliorate our plight in two ways. First, we will maintain a "wish list" of useful, con-enhancing expenditures that can be added on short notice (and we welcome suggestions for what those might be).

Second, we would like to entice those fen who are inclined to put off buying memberships into joining early rather than late. As announced elsewhere in this Progress Report, our membership rate will remain at \$150 until mail-in registration closes on July 15th. The at-the-door rate will then be \$195. That is a steep differential, but the hope is that no one will choose to pay it. Our preference is to know in July how much we can budget, rather than scramble to match outgo to income in September.

And now let me go back to planning. What if the Big Bar at the Hyatt doesn't stock enough beer over Labor Day Weekend?

So, what you're saying is that when I took a left after Pluto, I should have hooked a right..?



Fan Gots Interview: Bob and Anne Passovoy

by Bill Roper

Warning: this interview contains lies, damned lies, and howling fannish lies. Buried somewhere within are nuggets of truth. Your mission is to find them.

Bill Roper: We're very fortunate to have Bob and Anne Passovoy as our Fan Guests of Honor at Chicon 2000. They've been fixtures on the Chicago fannish scene for more than a quarter of a century now or some four fannish generations by my count. Is that about right?

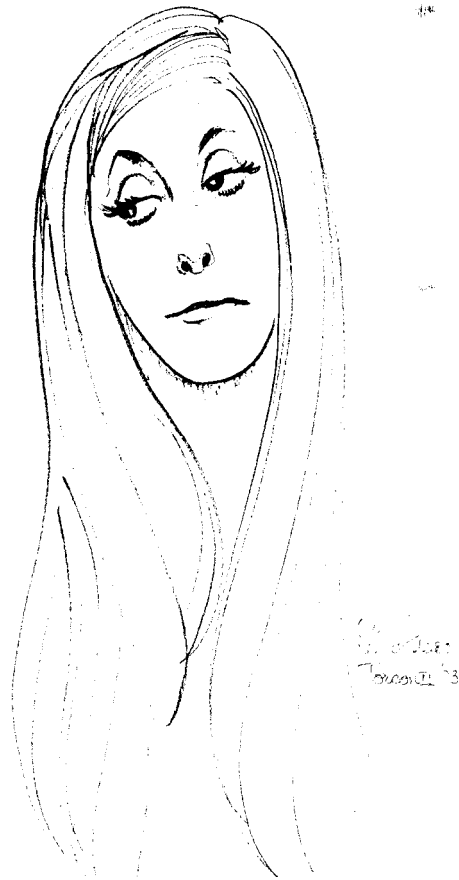
Bob: You could say the same thing about a toilet.

Anne: I don't know any of these people. Judge, I never saw —

Bob: Actually, a fannish generation is about four to six years depending on whether they went to college, whether they learned how to read or whether they got into fandom through media. So if you figure from 1971 to 2000, that's something like four to seven fannish generations. Of course, we weren't fixtures then.



Art Work by Frank Kelly Freas, 1973



Art Work by Frank Kelly Freas, 1973

Anne: Speak for yourself. I was filking way back when.

Bob: That's true. You were in fandom long before anyone believed I existed.

Bill: Also true, but why don't we save that story for the bio in the Program Book — since I've already written that section?

Bob: Anne was actually filking before we recognized it as filk. Back when we were in college there was a real greasy spoon cafe down in Champaign the E-lite.

Anne: Right.

Bob: You could get away with just about anything there.

Anne: It was off-campus.

Bob: Back then it was mostly Allan Sherman songs.

Anne: I was just learning to play the guitar back then.

Bob: The very earliest beginnings of "Your Mother Swims After Troopships" were in the E-lite Cafe.

Anne: I don't remember that.

Bob: Oh, yes.

Anne: Your memory is much better than mine.

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CONVERGENCE

JULY 7, 8, 9, 2000

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...continued from page 8

Bob. That's because I make most of it up. When did you first run into Juanita?

Anne. I'm not sure. That was back when singing wasn't thought much of at conventions because cons were for talking and singing interfered with the talking. There had been a whole bunch of people doing it at one time, but all of them had dropped out except for Juanita. We started singing together and then more people started. Then for a long time you'd find a room to sing in and try not to attract too much attention.

Bob. The whole thing with closed-door vs. open-door filks.

Anne. You either had a choice of being out in public and annoying the concom or hiding in someone's room and annoying the fans who were trying to find the filk.

Bob. Filking didn't really become respectable until MidAmericon.

Bill. That was where I met you. I'd convoyed across Missouri with the Coulsons to my first science-fiction convention. I didn't know that many people there and I wandered into a room with Juanita and Anne singing. I thought this was a wonderful thing. But then again, I didn't know that many people to talk to.

Bob. We have pictures.

Bill. I'll withdraw the comment. You know, this has been a rather disjointed interview so far.

Bob. It's still searching for a theme. You could go rip heads off teddy bears for awhile.

Gretchen Roper. About now, Diane is reading this and wondering where the real interview is.

Bill. Other than filk, how is fandom different now than when you got in it?

Bob. It's bigger. It's younger. It's noisier.

Anne. Lots more people who came in through media.

Bob. A lot fewer readers. That's really the dividing line between the people who we came in with and the people we see at conventions now. You have to understand that I'm a convention fan. I started out as a closet fan. Reading, not really realizing what a fan was, but cutting my teeth on Leinster, Norton, Heinlein and not knowing what a convention was. I got introduced to conventions in 1971 at a Worldcon and short circuited the progression that previous fannish generations had considered the norm. That's closet fan, because you were reviled for reading that crazy Buck Rogers stuff by your peers and parents. Then you get to corresponding fan, where you sent letters and fanzines to people that you met through the letter columns. Then you went to convention fandom to meet the people that you've been corresponding with face-to-face. My genera-

tion was the first to really short circuit the process, getting into convention fandom and bypassing the correspondence stage. We were just ahead of the big influx of media fans. Star Trek was just getting started when we were in college. So it's all Bjo Trimble's fault.

Bill. For organizing the effort to keep Star Trek on the air.

Bob. They used to have TV rooms at the Illini Union.

Anne. One TV for each channel. Except when Star Trek was on. Then all of the rooms were Star Trek and they were packed.

Bob. So Bjo saved Star Trek and suddenly there was this whole other route into fandom. Honest to God science fiction with blasters and ray guns. And the ones who could read eventually moved on to other stuff. Really, if you want to look at the cause of the size of modern fandom, you have to look first at media as being one of the big driving forces, because you started with Star Trek, which was the first modern science fiction series on television.

Bill. Now is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Bob. It certainly has supported a huge number of science fiction conventions. In the Midwest, prior to Star Trek, there really wasn't much going on. Don Blyly had just started the P-Cons, which were small. The Chambanacons didn't start until later. There was Midwestcon which was a relaxacon. There were Octacons.

Anne. Which were pretty much by invitation only.

Bob. And Minicon up in Minneapolis. The convention community in the Midwest at that time was almost entirely APA or fanzine driven. Everyone had their own fanzine then.

Anne. Or was contributing to an APA which produced a really big fanzine that way.

Bob. Then in the early seventies travel became easier.

Anne. I can still remember what a difficult time it was to get from Champaign to Chicago before the interstate highways were completed.

Bob. Poky two-lane highways through little towns.

Anne. I had an incredibly boring experience driving that stretch once. I've carried a club in the car ever since and haven't had a lick of trouble since then.

Bob. It's out in the car now.

Anne. It's a sawed-off baseball bat.

Bob. We call it Irwin.

Bill. Wait a minute! I'm assuming there's a story there.

Anne. I'm assuming that Diane is still looking for the real interview.

Bob. Right.

Anne. We have to make do with the memories we still have.

continued on page 10...

Bob. Most of them get better every time we tell them. Hanging around Bob Asprin tends to drift you in that direction.

Bill. And the story behind Irwin is?

Bob. That's a feeble attempt to try to regain control of the interview.

Bill. It's the only hope I've got.

Bob. I don't know if we should let you put the full story of Irwin in here. Nobody knows who sawed Courtney's boat, so why should anyone know about Irwin?

Bill. Because we've been talking about it for nearly a solid page!

Anne. Suffice it to say that Irwin has stayed in the car and I have taken up knitting. Which was really neat the last time we flew because I expected to have to fight with airport security as I carried all these needles and scissors. Instead they waved the harmless little old lady on through while they X-rayed the rivets on Bob's jeans.

Bill. Speaking of Bob's genes, you have one of the major broods of second-generation fans in Chicago. What was it like, being parents in fandom?

Bob. Hard work, but worth it.

Anne. Remember that time when we went up to Minicon with Robin and the water was so bad she couldn't drink her formula and it gave her diaper rash?

Bob. We were fan guests of honor at a convention somewhere — Michigan, I think. We brought Robin and I think she was six weeks old. Quite young. Certainly pre-mobile. She rode throughout the convention in a sack on my belly. So talk about second generation fans, there she was being fan guest of honor. But there weren't kids around then.

Anne. It was later that a lot of the convention-running fans started having small children. And then they started having baby-sitting. I remember Iguanacon had baby-sitting and they got about 40 hours of work out of each of us because we had a place to park the kid. Robin took one look at this incredible room full of toys and said, "Bye, Mom. Bye, Dad. Don't hurry."

Bob. There's not that much of a qualitative difference between one kid, two kids, and three kids.

Anne. By Chicon, we had the super baby-sitter, Katrina.

Bob. In a lot of ways, we found it cheaper to bring along a baby-sitter for the duration of the convention. We'd park the kids in baby-sitting from time to time to let Katrina enjoy the convention, but she'd make sure the kids got fed.

Anne. We were fan guests of honor at a convention once where they handed us a schedule and had booked us for about eighteen hours straight. We looked at it and smiled sweetly at them and asked,

"Who's going to feed the kids?" The fan guest of honor liaison looked at us, looked at the schedule, looked at the three kids and said, "Oops. Car's double parked." Then she vanished for the duration of the convention.

Bob. Eventually, they found a gopher of appropriate age to walk the kids to McDonald's.

Bill. Recognizing that it might be best to go to the source on this, so how did the kids take to growing up in fandom?

Anne. They loved it.

Bob. The neatest thing was just the unlooked-for educational aspects.

Anne. After you went to the convention, there'd be a few days of quiet while they assimilated all of this new information. Then there'd be this huge cognitive leap and their vocabularies would triple, even after you cleaned them up. They learned whole worlds of inappropriate behavior not to emulate, just by watching. And children watch very intently.

Bob. Not to smoke. Not to drink. Snogging to excess. It's easily connected with the physical wreck they saw the next day, so the issue of actions and consequences was right there to be learned in a milieu which offered no direct personal threat. I'm really grateful to fandom for providing that environment that allowed the kids to pick up those life lessons in a place that was always safe.

Anne. They had friends from all over the country.

Bob. They could be in a strange city and know that there would be somebody that you could trust 100% as a refuge — as long as you knew where the Hucksters' Room was.

Anne. The kids reach a stage of maturity where you can trust them with their own room key and they won't let anyone in without a password. You'd introduce them to their Uncle Hassan or their Auntie Blade and let them know that if they were in trouble they could go to them.

Bob. Being at conventions with the kids got them reading very early. It expanded their vocabularies way beyond the norm. And it got them very flexible socially so they could interact with their peers. The whole issue of a color issue or a race issue just wasn't there. It made getting along in real life easier. Of course, the hard part came when you went back to real life and the kids tried to explain what they'd done that weekend and no one in Mundania would believe them.

Gretchen. It's hard enough for an adult to do it.

Bob. Robin and Gillian say there are drawbacks. Their major complaint is that all of their best friends, for a while, were their parents' best friends. They complain of being incredibly spoiled, because the grazing fields of boys their own age are flat, boring, and unimaginative.

Anne. Robin came home from school complaining that all of the boys are hard of thinking.

Bob. She said they couldn't think without moving their lips.

Bill. That's sad.

Anne. I think she got that from Terry Pratchett.

Bob. Robin will steal a good line.

Bill. Most fans will.

Bob. Chris hasn't had that problem because there are enough — as he puts it — major babes in fandom of his age to make his life rather more complicated than it needs to be.

Anne. It's very funny to watch a kid try to hide under a bed that's flat on the floor.

Bob. Fanning with kids is expensive, but it's worthwhile — not because it lets you go on fanning, but because of the advantages it gives to your kids. It's a little disconcerting when you get a congratulatory gift on the birth of your child consisting of disposable diapers, each of which has been decorated by a different fannish artist. We still have the diapers.

Bill. Unused, I pray.

Bob. Yes. It's dangerous to know artists. I broke my leg one summer playing softball and wound up in a full-leg cast. Then I went up to WilCon. Every artist who was there ended up adding something to the cast. So when I finally showed up at the orthopedic surgeon six weeks later, I told them that they weren't taking that cast off in their usual way. They were cutting it down the side and I was taking it with me.

Bill. Of course, other than filking, the thing you're best known for in fandom is working for the artists running art auctions. I suppose they owed you some sketches.

Bob. I hadn't thought about it that way.

Anne. I suppose a number of old scores got settled that way.

Bob. It's surprising how much of this turns out to be one Trimble's fault or another, because I was taught how to auction by John Trimble.

Anne. So it's all his fault.

Bob. That part at least. The rest of it really just developed from an absolute inability to hold still, a natural bent for stand up and improv comedy, and just the fun of doing it and teaching it. The whole idea of the Midwestern school of auctioneering hadn't occurred to me until the last Chicon. At Chicon IV, I tried to get as many people together from as many schools of auctioneering as I could find. There was an Eastern auction, and a Southern auction, and only one auction with Midwesterners. It was me, and Larry, and I forget who else. We really hadn't started accumulating the terrific crew of auctioneers that we have now. But after that, it

just took off. Everyone wanted to play. It certainly is a lot of fun.

Bill. It's been very successful. The WindyCon art auction is the highlight of Saturday evening, even for people who aren't coming to buy art, but for the entertainment.

Bob. And the entertainment itself sells additional art that wouldn't normally get sold.

Bill. Oh, my God. I have seven pages of unsaved text! Hang on. (Pause) Ok, go ahead.

Bob. For Chicon V, we did straight Midwestern. The whole business of the dress code was part of the entertainment.

Anne. It was really a reaction against the cavalier treatment the art was getting at some of the shows.

Bob. I remember at Noreascon, the auctioneer put out 20 gorgeous Kelly Freas cover proofs. He said, "We'll just set the price at 25 dollars a piece. If you want one, come up and pay for it." I was a neo then, but I knew that this was an auction and that just wasn't right.

Anne. The idea was to put in the effort to make the artist some extra bucks, then to get the artist paid in that calendar year. He'd go out and tell his friends and we'd get a better art show.

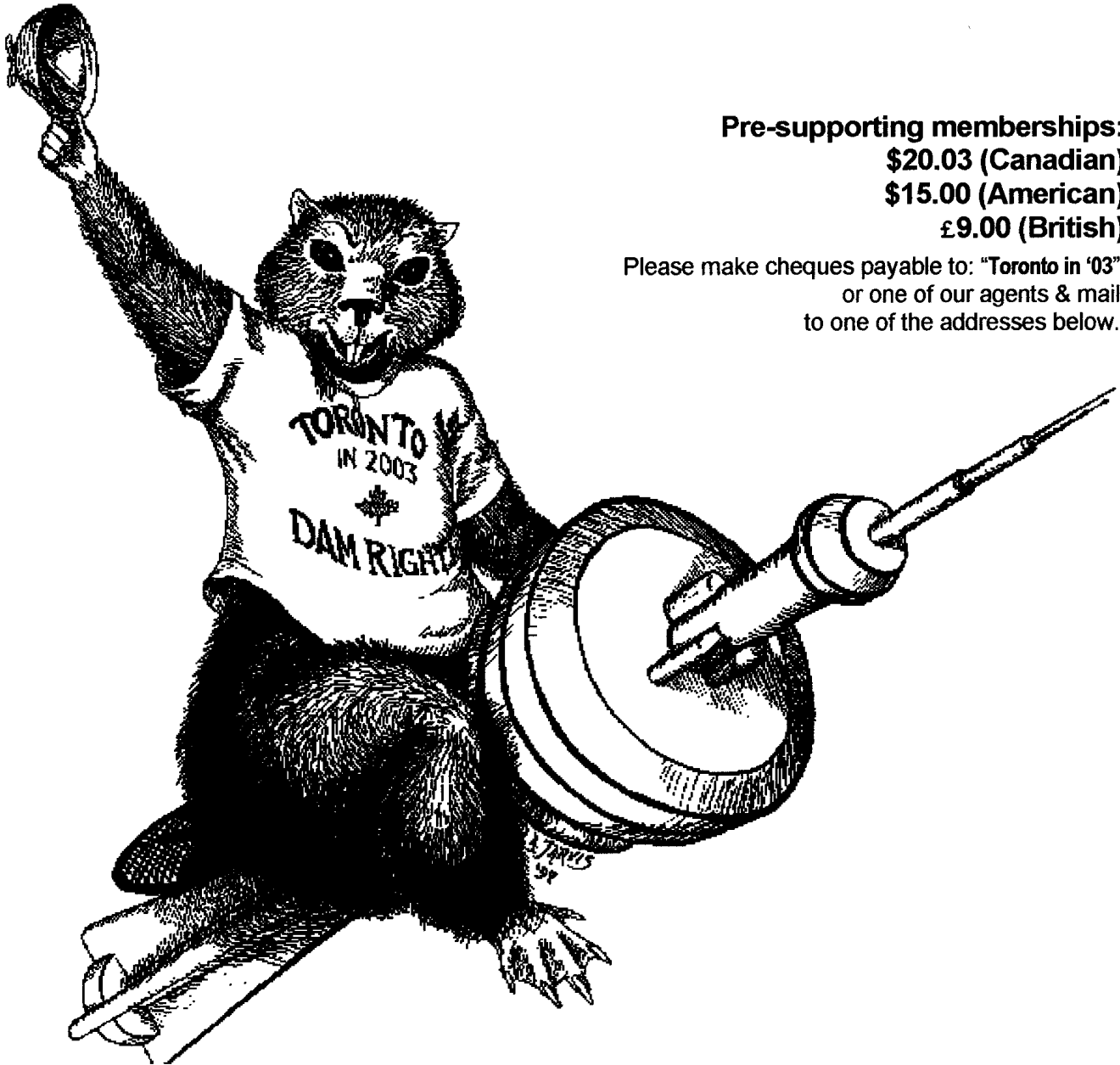
Bob. The rest of it is just the fun of teaching. You'll see auctioneers who'll talk about how much art they've sold and how much a piece went for. I get to go to conventions and see an auctioneer around the Midwest or elsewhere in the country who I've trained and I look at her and I can say, "Damn, she's good!" That's where the real egoboo is at.

Bill. And maybe that's a good note to end on. It's been great talking to you and I'm looking forward to working with you at Chicon.

[Ok, Bill. That's fine. Now, where's the real interview?]
Bill Roper, roper@xnet.com



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More 2003 Reasons to visit Toronto & Southern Ontario:

#114 Niagara Escarpment (a UN designated World Biosphere like the Galapagos Islands & Serengeti National Park)
#41 Roy Thompson Hall, #1295 Toronto Islands, #253 The Beaches, #1467 Canada's Wonderland Amusement Park
#6 Canadian Banks can handle currency exchanges quickly and easily, #235 The CN Tower, #1381 GO Transit,
#145 Black Creek Pioneer Village, #195 4,000 - 6,000 meals served per day at the Royal York, #676 Clean Subways
#11 over 2,000,000 sq. feet of meeting & convention space. #75 World's most ethnically & culturally diverse city

Daily Newsletter

by Chaz Boston Baden,
newszine@chicon.org

If you have something for the morning issue, get it to us the night before.

If you plan to throw a party, tell us as soon as you can. You could write to newszine@chicon.org right now, in fact. We understand you won't know your room number until you check in, but we can be sure you're listed in the Party List if you tell us about it early. (If you tell us whose name the room will be under, we may even be able to find out the room number on our own.)

The Daily Newsletter will appear at least twice a day through the last morning of the convention. (Probably at least three times a day.)

The morning edition will be on the stands before daytime programming begins, and the evening edition will be on the stands before evening programming begins. There will be "extra" issues as well, in the middle of the day or night. The newszine will have program updates, party listings, and anything else that seems to be worth printing.

There will be several **News Boards** positioned throughout the convention. A few will be in each hotel, near the Con Suite, Art Show, Dealers Room, Information, Registration, and so on. On each rack is a space for each issue of the newszine, so if you miss issue #2 you can go back and get it. If you see an empty space on one board, check the others, or try back later.

If you have a digital camera and would like to

take pictures to be considered for the newszine, please bring it to the convention, along with your driver software and cables if needed. (If you bring your own computer

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to the computer, just hand us diskettes and captions.) Stop by the News Desk early in the convention so we can set things up (if necessary) and make sure you're equipped to take notes. If you take a picture of someone, write down their names! We don't intend to print pictures without proper captions. (And if they don't want their picture taken, don't ambush them.)

What You MUST Do

by Randy Kaempfen

- If you want child care, you **MUST** sign up in advance. State regulations limit the number of children per provider, so we must know how many providers to hire and we can not overload them at the last minute.
- If you are handicapped and need to rent a scooter, you **MUST** let us know in advance. We need to reserve this equipment and have the specific number of scooters needed.
- If you are hearing impaired and would like a sign language interpreter at specific events, we **MUST** know in advance that you are coming and get some idea of your program interests. This will allow us to get enough interpreters and attempt to schedule them as efficiently as possible.
- If you have any other special needs or requests, you **MUST** let us know in advance. There are many things we can do to try to accommodate you, but we must have advance notice and time to work on them.

The Galactic Patrol:

protectors of fandom, fun, and flaming laser death.

**Presupporting
members
\$12**

**Intergalactic
friends
\$75**



We Want YOU!

(To come to Boston in 2004)

Worldcon-proven, convenient, connected facilities.

Our facilities were home to Noreascon 2 in 1980 and Noreascon 3 in 1989, but this time, there's a bonus: the Sheraton Boston Hotel & Towers and the Hynes Convention Center combination will also include the Copley Marriott hotel, providing sufficient hotel rooms, function space, meeting rooms, and exhibit halls for the whole Worldcon: and it's all connected!

Walk from your room in the Marriott or Sheraton to our beautiful convention center in air-conditioned comfort. With more than half a million square feet of meeting and function space in the combined facilities, we can choose the perfect configuration for an easy, comfortable and convenient Worldcon experience.