

CHICON 2000

the 58th Worldecon

Progress Report 2

June 1998



BUCCONEER

The 56th World Science Fiction Convention

Baltimore, Maryland USA

WANTED

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The Queen of Fenzance (a.k.a. Shirley Avery) and the Pirate Captain (a.k.a. Peggy Rae Pavlat) are wanted for shanghaiing fans for Worldcon duty.

Beware if you should ever encounter these dreaded pirates and they say, "Oh, I think I might have a little job for you."

Guests of Honor

C.J. Cherryh
Milton A. Rothman
Stanley Schmidt
Michael Whelan

J. Michael Straczynski, Special Guest
Charles Sheffield, Toastmaster

August 5 - 9, 1998

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Fax: +1-301-474-8237

Membership Rates

	10/1/97 - 6/15/98	At The Door
Supporting:	\$30 (£22)	\$30
Attending:	\$130 (£94)	\$165
Children's:	\$65 (£47)	\$85
(4 to 12 years old on August 5, 1998)		

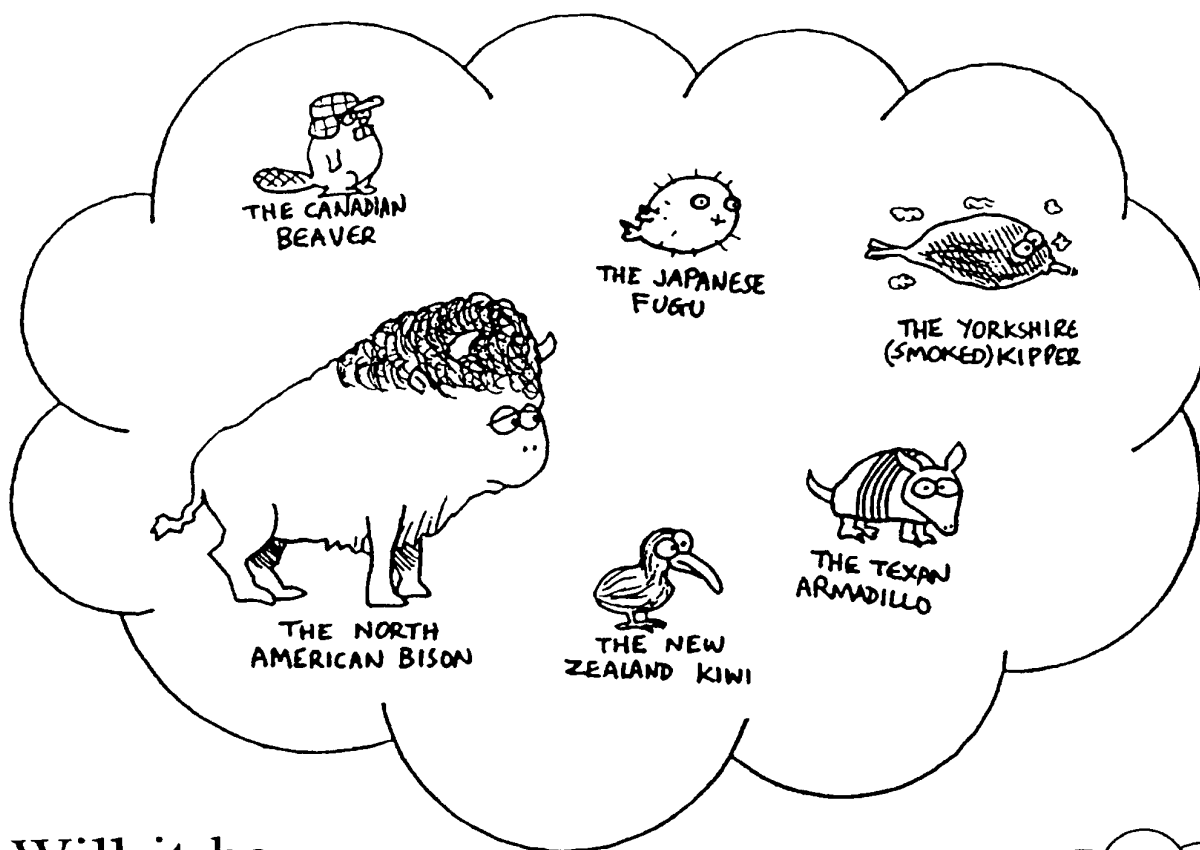
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Will it be
stranger than your imagination?

Guests of Honour: **Gregory Benford**
Bruce Gillespie
and in Honour of **George Turner**

Melbourne Convention Centre

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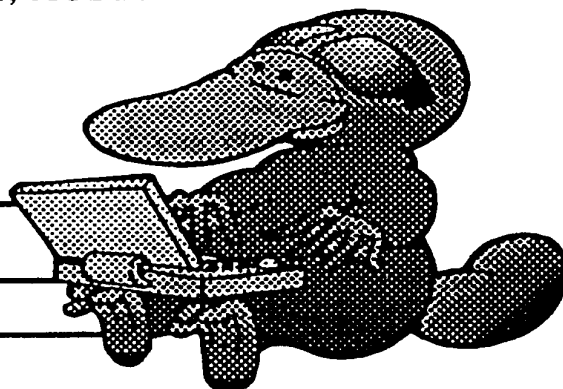
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Aussiecon

T • H • R • E • E

57th World Science Fiction Convention

2nd - 6th September 1999



Notes From Da Chairman

When Worldcons moved to a three-year lead time, a tradition began that is now firmly entrenched: Progress Report Number Two has no progress to report.

For some cons (no names will be mentioned here, but you know who you were), that was because nothing much happened between the first flurry of activity and the point, a year or so later, when the chairman looked at the calendar and exclaimed, “Hey, guys, we’ve gotta put on a Worldcon!” For others, though, the absence of news merely reflected the fact that many of the tasks involved in convention running do not make interesting spectator sports. That is especially true of much of the early work.

Chicon believes in adhering to fannish traditions. Therefore, this is likely to be one of our thinner PR’s. Nevertheless, we really have been doing things that will (we hope) bear fruit in the form of a smooth-running and enjoyable convention two-plus years from now.

Organization. Our Table of Organization is gradually taking shape. There are many ways to arrange the various parts of a Worldcon. What will work best depends on many factors: the interests and talents of committee members, local custom, the experience of recent Worldcons and much more. Barring cataclysmic rethinking, Chicon 2000 will group its activities under eleven “divisions”, each with subsidiary departments. In alphabetical order –

The Administration Division will be responsible for processing mail, maintaining our archives, facilitating internal communications, arranging insurance, soliciting corporate sponsorships and, as the con approaches, organizing the procurement of equipment and supplies.

The Condiments Division will run the less formal side of the convention, including the con suite, film and video programs, gaming, the internet lounge and a few surprises.

The Convention Services Division will supervise operations at the convention (all of the *really* boring, but absolutely essential stuff), including logistics, communications, security, sign-making and the

assignment of volunteers.

The Events Division will present the Hugo Award Ceremony, the costume exhibition (to which the misnomer “Masquerade” is indelibly attached) and other extraordinarily big program items. It will also coordinate some smaller events, such as theatrical and musical presentations.

The Exhibits Division will oversee the Art Show, Dealers’ Room and Fixed Exhibits area.

The FIAWOL Division will concentrate on those activities that make a Worldcon a Worldcon, both literally (the three mandatory functions of the WSFS business meeting, Hugo Award balloting and site selection for the year 2003) and figuratively (fan history, liaison with clubs, conventions and fan funds, the fanzine lounge, etc.).

The Facilities Division will convey our needs to our hotels, and vice versa.

The Finance Division will take care of the money. ‘Nuff said.

The Member Services Division deals with convention registration and the special needs of members of the con, including child care, handicapped access and information.

The Program Division is, of course, the heart of the convention. It is fashionable in some circles to scoff at programming, but the central reason for holding science fiction conventions is to give members the opportunity to widen and deepen their understanding and appreciation of all aspects of science fiction and related fields, from classic works of literature to the latest developments in science and technology.

The Publications Division brings you this and our other Progress Reports, as well as at-con publications (the program book and pocket program) and the souvenir book featuring our guests of honor. It also handles publicity, press relations and the like.

Outside this structure are a few positions, such as the budget director and guest of honor liaison, who report directly to the chairman and associate chairmen.

...continued on page 6

Budgeting. Worldcon budgeting is notoriously difficult, due to the fact that major financial commitments must be made fairly early, but the data for accurate revenue forecasting arrives fairly late. Hence, very few Worldcons have hit the target of having *neither* an embarrassing surplus *nor* a disastrous deficit. We are just starting to refine our budget and are trying to devise ways to match income and outgo more closely than in the past. You can help by persuading your friends to join early (when rates are lower, too) rather than procrastinate.

Hotels. As I write this, we have signed contracts with two of our three hotels (the Hyatt Regency and the Fairmont). The third contract should be in final form within a couple of weeks. One lesson that we have learned from another Worldcon's problems is that room blocks should be too big rather than too small. Therefore, our block for the core nights is over 2,500 rooms, with generous allotments for fans who arrive early or stay late. A consequence of this strategy is that we risk having to pay substantial facilities fees if room pickups aren't up to expectations. Happily, because we don't have to pay charges to a convention center, we can face that prospect, if not with equanimity, at least without stark terror.

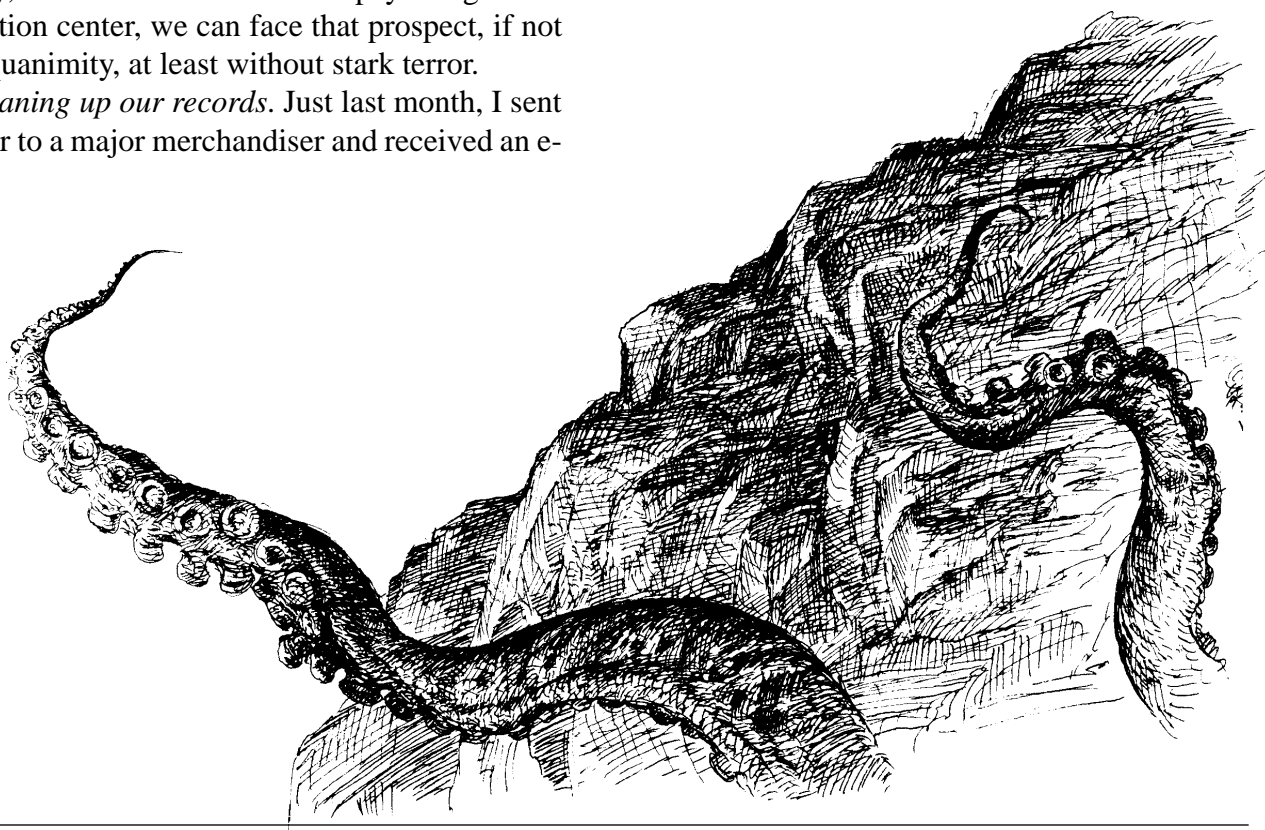
Cleaning up our records. Just last month, I sent an order to a major merchandiser and received an e-

mailed acknowledgement stating that the item would be shipped within two business days. Two weeks later, I followed up and learned that the seller had no record of my order and couldn't have shipped when promised, because what I wanted wasn't in stock.

If large businesses can suffer snafus like that, so can Chicon, which relies on part-time volunteers for everything that it does. So far, we have had problems with only a minute percentage of registrations, but "minute" is higher than zero. Some of the problems, unfortunately, date back as far as LoneStarCon. We fully expect to have everything in good order by the end of August but would appreciate assistance. If you know that your own membership has a problem – for instance, if you are shown as a supporting member despite having converted to attending, if your check hasn't cleared or if your credit card charge has never shown up on your statement – please let us know. It's better to deal with anomalies now than on the opening day of the con.

Per aspera,

Tom Veal Chairman, Chicon 2000 



Da Toastmaster Guest of Honor Harry Turtledove

interview with
Jeremy Bloom



If you've been to a WorldCon in the past decade, you've seen Harry Turtledove. Surpassingly tall and gangly, with a high balding pate and bushy beard, you might mistake him for a sci-fi Byzantine monk. Which is somewhat appropriate, in that he holds a doctorate in Byzantine history. We spoke to him in his tastefully cluttered living room of his small house in Canoga Park, in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles. Actually, the house would be a fairly good size if it was just him and all the books, but when you add in his wife (mystery writer Laura Frankos) and daughters Allison, Rachel, and Rebecca, it makes for crowding. Buy more of his books so he can move into a bigger place...

JB: You've been coming to WorldCons for years, and writing for years, but serving as Toastmaster for Chicon 2K will be your first major role at one...

Harry: And god knows why. I'm not funny. I'll have to get up in front of thousands of people and tell them I'm not a funny guy. I can make puns; I guess if I do that they either won't notice, or will lynch me.

JB: It sounds like you're looking forward to this.

Harry: Oh, I am. I ran into Bob Eggleton in the art show last year in San Antonio. This was Saturday... we're friends, he's illustrated a couple of my books, we've known each other for a while. Believe it or not, I used to have hair as long as his. When I had hair. It's been a while. So Bob came running back, and asked me, "Can you keep a secret?" I said, "Yeah..." and he said, "I'm artist guest at the Chicago WorldCon!" and I said, "Cool! I'm toastmaster!" And we high-fived each other right there in the art show!

Laura: They looked like little boys on a playground. It was priceless.

Harry: and then Sunday night the toast puns started. About making rye jokes and being half-baked... It's going to be great fun. And it's an excuse to buy a tux. If you think I look Rabinic now, you should see me in a black tux.

JB: You've had a prolific year. How many books are out so far this year, four?

Harry: Let's see. There's been *Fox and Empire*, an adventure fantasy, the fourth in the series of Garen the Fox; *Between the Rivers* is a stand-alone fantasy set right at the beginning of civilization with gods and demons being objectively real. It's great fun, and borrows some of its ideas from Julian

Jaynes' *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. *How Few Remain*, an alternate history set in 1881, in which the south won the Civil War in 1862, is out in paperback, but that was last year's hardback. *Great War: American Front* is just out, set in that same universe, in 1914 with W.W.I breaking out on both sides of the Atlantic, with Great Britain and France being allied with the Confederate States and Canada and the US being allied with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

JB: You are pretty much the Dean of alternate history writers. How did that happen?

Harry: When I was 14 or 15 years old, I found a copy of L. Sprague de Camp's *Lest Darkness Fall* in a second-hand bookstore. I read it, and thought "This is so cool," and starting trying to find out what Sprague was making up and what was real. I was hooked. I got into Cal Tech [engineering], flunked out most ingloriously at the end of my freshman year, spent a year at Cal State LA getting my GPA up to the point where it was visible to the naked eye – and visible to the naked eye of my draft board, which was a relevant consideration then – went to UCLA and earned a doctorate in Byzantine History. I'm unemployable, how are you? If it hadn't been for Sprague I wouldn't have the degree I have – I wouldn't have gotten interested in Byzantine history any OTHER way. I wouldn't have written a lot of what I've written, because I wouldn't know the things I happen to know. I wouldn't have met Laura, because I happened to meet her when I was teaching at UCLA. So I wouldn't have the children I have, clearly. Other than that it hasn't changed my life at all

JB: Blame it all on de Camp.

Harry: I do. He knows. I don't know whether he's pleased or appalled, but he knows. I never really intended to write *Guns of the South*. It was an accident. I'm friends with and correspond with – and am going to collaborate with, on a fantasy novel – Judith Tarr. And Judy was complaining one day that the cover art on an upcoming novel of hers was "as anachronistic as Robert E. Lee holding an Uzi." I looked at that line in her letter and I thought "I can do something with that." And when I wrote her back I asked, "Who would want to give Robert E. Lee an Uzi? Time traveling South Africans, maybe? If I

...continued on page 8

...continued from page 7

write it, I'll give you an acknowledgment."

JB: And then ten years later...?

Harry: A year and a half. I was finishing a two-novel contract. And having done all the research for *Guns of the South*, I thought I could use it productively for other things, too. And so, here we are. Three novels later, the third just out. And three more are finished and waiting to be published.

JB: But some have argued that alternate history isn't properly science fiction at all.

Harry: The way I do it, I use the standard SF technique. Because one of the things SF does is postulate: if we changed this, what happens next? Most of those changes are set in the present and then you examine the future, or set in the future and then you examine the farther future. I say, all right, what if we make that change and set it in the past? With as rigorous an extrapolation as I can make. I suspect part of it is "write what you know", because one of the things I learned how to do was lots of historical research. That may be why we have a lot of alternate histories these days – a lot of escaped academics, like me, trying to write SF. I've written SF that's not alternate history; I've written fairly hard SF, fantasy – historically-based fantasy, high fantasy, funny fantasy. I hope it's funny fantasy, anyway. This hasn't seemed to confuse my fans.

JB: Why has there been such a fascination with the Civil War as a setting for alternate history?

Harry: For me, two reasons. There is a general fascination with that period because it's a key period in the history of the United States. We are what we are now, for better and for worse, because of what happened during those four crowded years. And if things had happened differently, things would be different.

JB: Of course, there's no question about your World War series [in which W.W.II is interrupted by an invasion of earth by aliens who call themselves "The Race", forcing an alliance of Hitler, Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt to save humanity] being SF. But how much did your studies of the late Roman Empire influence the way you shaped The Race and their empire?

Harry: Probably not at the conscious level. But subconsciously... I wouldn't be surprised.

JB: It was an interesting change to see your Race: an intensely conservative land-based empire that frowns on innovation in anything smaller than glacial time-scales. So often we presume that spacefaring races will be just like us: technology junkies inventing something new every other week, and conquering new frontiers whenever we find them.

Harry: But it doesn't have to be that way. The thing is - unless you believe the Roswell stuff, which I don't, we don't have any experience with other spacefaring races.

JB: It has been said that the film "Independence Day" was basically your World War books brought up to modern day.

Harry: Aliens invading is not a new concept, and I don't take credit for it, for heaven's sake. It's *War of the Worlds* I started thinking about the World War books back in the '70s,

and didn't write them back then for two reasons. One, I didn't know enough. And two, I knew I wasn't the writer yet I needed to be to undertake the project. And while I was gathering research and thinking about things I wanted to do in the mid '80s, of course, Niven and Pournell came out with *Footfall*. And I wanted to punt them, because they closed off several things that would have been cool to do. For example, if they have a brain trust of SF writers in theirs, and you have a brain trust of SF writers in yours.... you know.

JB: Do you read any non-SF alternate history?

Harry: There's not a whole lot of non-SF. Sobol's *For Want of a Nail*, which is enormous fun.

JB: My introduction to the genre was, as a child, reading McKinley Cantor's *If the South Had Won the Civil War*.

Harry: I was in junior high when I read that. I don't... think it had enormous influence. I certainly remember it from that day to this, and that's a long time ago.

JB: How about historical novels?

Harry: Sprague de Camp, of course. Mary Renault was the best in the business. If Plato had written in English, he would have written the way Mary Renault writes. I wish I could write like that, but my head's not wired that way. My favorites are *Last of the Wine* and *Mask of Apollo*.

JB: What about Gore Vidal's historicals?

Harry: I liked *Julian* very much. The American ones are good. The other ones, where he goes back to the ancient stuff, I don't think are as good, because the attitudes of his characters are too modern. And the really scary one is *Messiah*. That'll make the hair stand up on the back of your neck.

JB: What's coming up?

Harry: I've just sold to Tor a major new fantasy series, sort of high-tech fantasy about 1930s or '40s technological level set on an imagined world with technology achieved through magical means. If you can imagine *The Winds of War* set as a fantasy novel, something like that. I'll be interested in seeing what people think of it.

JB: Any more historical novels in the works?

Harry: In August, a straight historical novel, *Justinian* about the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II who ruled at the end of the 7th century and then again at the beginning of the 8th century, and had a very adventurous career, to put it mildly. In 705 he raised a rebellion and came back; as they were sailing across the black sea this storm blew up and one of his henchmen says, "Lord, if God spares you, promise you'll have mercy on your enemies." Justinian says, "If I have mercy on even one of them, may God drown me now!" And the storm STOPPED.

JB: If that wasn't historically true, you couldn't make something like that up.

Harry: Fiction has to be plausible. All history has to do is happen.

JB: I understand you are doing that as H. Turtleaub. Why is that?

Harry: The things you have to worry about as a writer these days. It's not going to sell nearly as well as the alternate

histories, and this way it won't go down as being written by 'Turtledove' in the chain store computers [in which case they would order fewer of his next book]. That's the only reason.

JB: You've focused pretty much on the US and on Rome/Byzantium. How about other settings?

Harry: I don't know enough. I've been reading Ssu-Ma Ch'ien's Chinese history lately. I know history in the west on the level of personalities. China I know on the level of dynasties, if that. It's much more demanding.

JB: How about Biblical?

Harry: Not really. It's either been done to death, or you're competing against the real text of the Bible, and I hope I'm smart enough to know when I'm fighting out of my weight. It's funny. I've done Roman stuff and Greek stuff; I've studied Christian theology, as part of that historical context, much better than I've studied my own [Jewish, although not particularly active].

JB: You have a long association with WorldCons. Your daughter Allison was born the day the 1984 LA WorldCon opened...

Laura: Allison was actually due 15 days before. I had been telling him ...

Harry: I was just starting to sell regularly then.

Laura: And for the first time since the beginning of his career there was a WorldCon right here in our own back yard. I told him, "Don't worry, the baby will be born, my folks are here, you go down, you'll meet people, this'll be good, this is important." And then she didn't come. And didn't come. And didn't come. And it was one of the hottest Augusts on record, and we didn't have air conditioning, and I was dying... And she finally decided to show up the day the WorldCon opened. I think she did it on purpose, because ever since then she gets to celebrate her birthday at WorldCon and she thinks this is a kick... she loves celebrating her birthday out of state, out of country. She's very mad at the Baltimore folks, since she doesn't get to do it this year.

Harry: We started taking them to Loscon back when Rachel was just a baby, when Rebecca wasn't even born yet. The first time we took the whole gang was to Boston in '89 when Allison turned five.

JB: Not only do you have three daughters, but between Laura and her brother [Steve Frankos] you have quite a few literary lights in the family. Is this a good thing?

Harry: It's a wonderful thing. Laura and I are each other's first readers and biggest fans. And we encourage our daughters to write. This is a wonderful way to make a living if you can do it. The potential is there for them.

Laura: All three of them have already won awards or prizes or contests for writing.

Harry: Whether that translates into selling is another question. But you want to strangle people who start selling at 13, anyway....

JB: Speaking of awards, I see you've got your Hugo there behind you.

Harry: I remember walking around at Winnipeg feeling as if someone had hit me with one of Larry Niven's tasps. My entire pleasure center had been jolted all at once!

JB: But why isn't it on the mantle? [It's on a dusty stereo speaker, next to the lamp, the telescope, and an Archie McPhee mug full of pens.]

Harry: This is earthquake country. We're two and a half miles from the Northridge epicenter. Heavy pointy things don't go on the mantle.

JB: But you're also close to the epicenter of the film industry. Has there been any interest in any of your books from that quarter?

Harry: Hollywood so far has left me severely alone. If I had to make a guess, I'd say it's because the idea of alternate history is very hard to get across to a mass audience.

JB: But there was some talk of your doing a story for Sliders?

Harry: They approached me. I was very flattered. But I'm working on two or three things at once; I just don't have time to do it.

JB: And how about forthcoming convention appearances?

Harry: Baltimore, of course. But these days I try to limit it. I did ten of them in '95 and I just went batshit. That was crazy. Everybody that asked me, I said yes. I was all over the place. So at this point my only plans are Rivercon 22 in Louisville and BucConeer. ➤



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MORE INFORMATION VISIT [HTTP://WWW.AUSSIECON3.WORLDCON.ORG/](http://WWW.AUSSIECON3.WORLDCON.ORG/)

We Will Have a Dealers' Room!

by Larry Smith

We expect to have the usual wide variety of goodies available to please your tastes. It's much too early for most of the details to have jelled, but the dealers will occupy much the same space as they did at the last two Chicago WorldCons. Those of you who wish to know more about reserving space, please read on.

Site: Some portion of Wacker Hall (the same space used at C4 and C5).

Size: Until a new set of drawings are completed and some questions about access are resolved, the room will contain 200 to 225 tables and no (zero) booths. Each table will be 8 by 2.5 feet (96 by 30 inches) and will come with two (2) chairs.

Applications: Will be mailed to all those who send in a request for information and will be available from me at Bucconeer and during the fall convention season. The application form will include instructions for calculating the amount you need to pay. Completed applications **MUST** be accompanied by a check made payable to 'Chicon 2000' and must be **MAILED** to :

Larry Smith
Chicon 2000 Dealers' Room Manager
3824 Patricia DriveUpper
Arlington OH 43220-4913

Do NOT send mail that must be signed for! Applications will NOT be accepted during Bucconeer – I will be far too busy there to remember what I did with them.

Jury: Due to the anticipated size of the room and the expected interest, senior management of Chicon 2000 will jury the room. I suspect I will have far more than enough applications to fill 200 tables by the end of 1998; a limited waiting list will then be established.

Limits: If you request more than three (3) tables, you **MUST** explain how you intend to use the space. Please understand that we can grant very few dealers four or five tables, so plan accordingly.

Notice: I won't have time to keep track of all of you

dealers. If you move, **YOU** are responsible for telling me in a timely manner. Unless the USPS returns your mail to me within a month, I assume you got it. Keep your own copies of all Chicon correspondence. If you need an acknowledgement that I got your application, send along an SASE. The more complete your forms are, the quicker we will be able to consider you for inclusion in the room. Since I need 'footprints' of all transactions in the Dealers' Room, *only US mail contacts count*: e-mail and phone are nice and quick, but neither of them leave an audit trail to prove they existed.

Memberships: Are **NEVER** included in the final price of a table, but will be **REQUIRED** of all dealers and of each member of their staffs. Contact the Chicon 2000 PO Box directly for membership info and rates and remember - they only get more costly later! 🦋



— — Announcement — —

MEMBERSHIP RATES ARE GOING UP!

“Just in time” is a popular management theory, but it doesn’t work with Worldcons. If you, your family or your friends haven’t yet bought attending memberships, you can only lose money by waiting. Here are the details:

Effective September 1, 1998, the price of an attending membership in Chicon 2000 will rise to \$135.00 for residents of North America. We will temporarily (until May 1, 1999, or thereabouts) keep the \$125.00 rate for bona fide residents of other continents, who have had fewer opportunities to join.

Also on September 1st, all special discounts (except for our Chicago in 2000 trading card deal) will expire for North Americans. Until then, anyone who cast a site selection ballot at LoneStarCon can upgrade to attending membership for only \$40.00 (\$25.00 if you were also a Chicago in 2000 presupporter), and Chicago in 2000 presupporters who didn’t vote can buy attending memberships for \$115.00. Again, bona fide non-North Americans will not be affected at this time.

Chicago in 2000 presupporters who voted on site selection and present 20 different Chicago in 2000 trading cards will still qualify for free conversion to

attending membership. We probably won’t keep this offer open forever, but realize that cards can be elusive critters that take a while to roust from their hiding places around the house. 🦎



Time Line for Future Progress Reports

- Progress Report 3 to be issued in February 1999, deadline 31, Dec, 1998
- Progress Report 4 to be issued in August 1999, deadline 30, Jun, 1999
- Progress Report 5 to be issued in January 2000, deadline 30, Nov, 1999
- Progress Report 6 to be issued in April 2000, deadline 29, Feb, 2000
- Progress Report 7 to be issued in July 2000, deadline 30, May, 2000

A note about the Progress Reports and the web site. All of the articles printed in the PRs will be incorporated into the web site under the appropriate department headings. We also have the complete original text of each PR available on, line in a plain ascii text file, but please remember that older PRs may contain out-of-date information. 🦎

Godzilla: The Review

by Bob Eggleton

Okay, I saw it. Five times in fact. I was even at Madison Square Garden for the premiere... so in the most unbiased of ways, I will review the film featuring My Favorite Lizard.

The credit sequence was absolutely stunning, and outright creepy. The following scene with the destruction of a Japanese fishing trawler was a terrific tip of the hat to the Japanese Kaiju films on which GODZILLA was based but, it was over too soon. To understand GODZILLA one must first appreciate the original GOJIRA (1954, seen in the states in 1956 with Raymond Burr spliced in as GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS), as many bits and pieces were remade from that film into this new film. One major difference: Godzilla's origin. In the original, he is mysterious, as Dr. Yamane explains "A cross between land and sea animals of the middle Jurassic age", and later explained in 1991's GODZILLA VS KING GHIDORAH as evolving from a "Godzillasaurus" a newly discovered theropod, related to a Tyrant dinosaur, but much, much larger and made gargantuan by hydrogen bomb tests. This mystery, so well kept sustained in the original GOJIRA, is what the stuff of myth becomes for all Godzilla fans. In the Tristar version, this mystery is too vividly explained: he's a mutated Marine Iguana. And a big science gaff here... this Godzilla is made by French nuclear experiments in 1968 in French Polynesia. Marine Iguanas are peculiar only to Galapagos Island! In fact, all of the lizards in the credit sequence are not even found near the site of these tests. Later, Godzilla stomps around on what are clearly back legs of a Theropod dinosaur-not even RELATED to an Iguana or any lizard.

The cast is well... beside the point. Who could not be a second banana to Godzilla? And the result is that the film FLIES along when Godzilla is on screen, and comes to a dead stop when he leaves. So, Godzilla should've been more present even when not on camera. The other problem was that Godzilla is treated so matter of factly... "yes, there is a dinosaur loose in New York City".

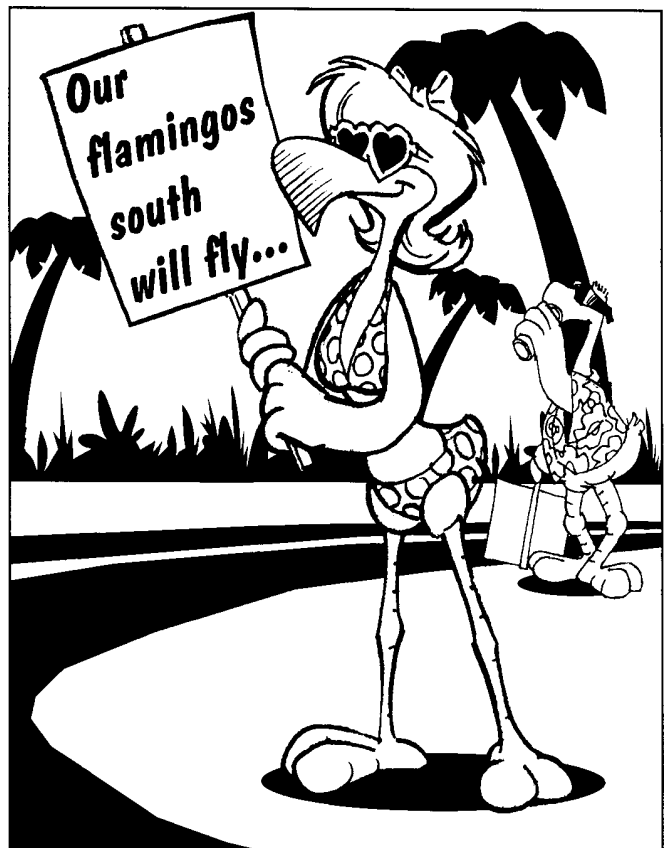
The point of view was also a little confusing: clearly, Godzilla is not a deliberate killer. He's just looking for a place to nest. When he sinks a ship it's because the ship(s) has his favorite meal: fish. The humans simply get in the way. And when he plods into NYC we are cheering him: he is us, our Id, our alter ego lost in a world of postmodernism... just plowing through the bullshit... er buildings. When Matthew Broderick encounters his great grin literally face to face... we are now loving this great monster and feeling compassion as we would for any lost animal. Even the David Arnold score drove home this point.

Almost every authority character is totally unlikeable. The mayor, his aide, any of the military guys are well portrayed as bozos. So when Godzilla, just trying to enjoy a meal of fish, is

attacked by the military, the crowd is on its feet when he lashes out and destroys several attack helicopters. We created Godzilla from our own arrogance about atomic energy and the pathetic idea that we are masters of nature on this planet... how dare we attack our own just deserts? I only wish those bozos hadn't had the last laugh...

I don't know about you, but I cheered the destruction of the sub, the helicopters and when Godzilla flambéd the tanks and humvees. So much authority and so little time.

Yet, then, the view is twisted again... when Godzilla's cache of eggs are found, our "heroes" must destroy them all and, I for one, was not cheering. And the cab chase with Godzilla in pursuit: he shoulda eaten the damn cab, and left New York. The end. But no, he's lured onto the Brooklyn bridge, and as if from that other great Monster Movie, King Kong, we see this great wonder, this child of our own ignorance, trapped in the tangle of the bridge being destroyed like a rabid animal. And when those military boneheads, self consumed politicians, newspeople and others cheer to the news of "Godzilla Defeated!" I could only say "The bastards won... this time". And seeing the lone egg hatch and out pops a new Godzilla... *haha... you bastard humans are in for it next time.* And I WILL be cheering. ↩



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SF: Proudly Pop Culture

by Bob Eggleton

Recently, I have been seeing more and more of “factioning” in SF... that is people who seem to be swearing by books and dislike media, comics, gaming cards and other forms the imagination takes...

I like movies AND I like books. I like comics, fantasy, horror, the occult and aspects of the paranormal. And I proudly watch TV. Yet more and more movies get vilified by the literary side... I have seen a host of entertaining films, many of which end up trashed by some member of the literary intelligencia.

Ben Bova, our Writer GoH correctly stated recently that “movies were made to sell tickets”, with some disdain. As if we should expect more. And Ben is RIGHT. Hollywood loves to make thrill rides that sell tickets and make money. Most authors love to write BOOKS that sell and make them money. Artists like to paint pictures (sometimes for the covers to those author’s books and sell the book!) that sell. It’s all pop culture, this thing we call SF. Whether we are remembered in a 100 years, only time will tell. You can’t plan that. It is said “Time can make a legend out of nothing”. In fact, I think I said it.

Whether SF is taken seriously as art, literature or history... so what? The point is to have fun doing it. Salvadore Dali did his classic “Persistence of Memory” based on his love of his favorite cheese. A lot of “art” people were shocked by this. So what??? Room temperature cheese can look a lot like a melting clock. The meaning comes from the perspective of the viewer, what the viewer reads into what may just be ambiguous thoughts to the creator of the book/art/movie.

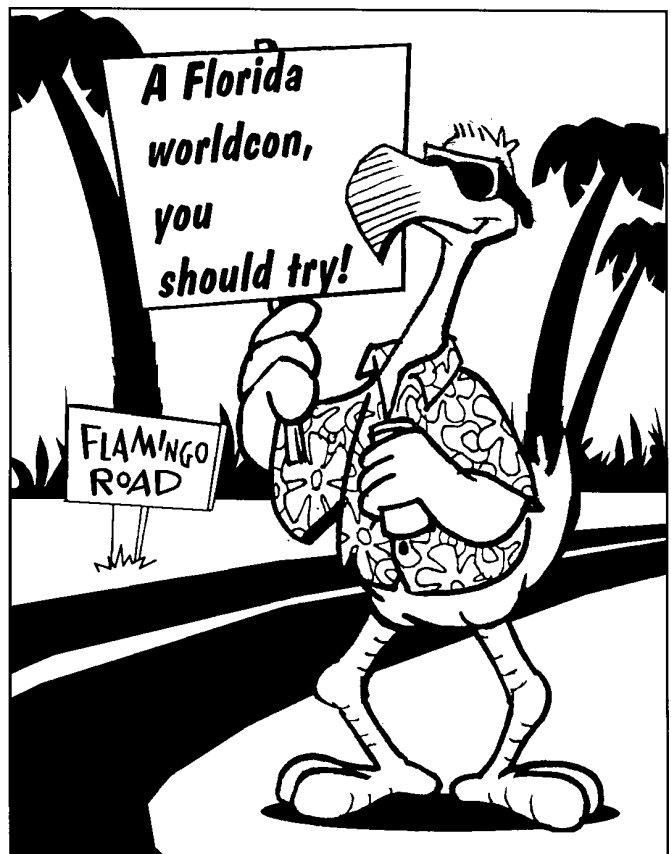
People often ask me about my fetishes for GODZILLA and the 70’s group ABBA and other oddities... I don’t have to have a reason or a meaning. I just like them. If you want me to invent one, I will. In my upcoming BOOK OF THE SEA MONSTERS, I have been asked if I believe in sea monsters, Nessie, et al... whether I do or not (I’m not telling) doesn’t take away from the fact I had a GOOD time doing it. Screw the critics. Those that

can’t do, criticize, so I say.

When you read a book, it is a private thing. It’s you and the book and how you interpret things. And you can speed read, or like me, take weeks and weeks to REALLY read the book. Movies are a different thing; they are an entertainment experience. We have two hours (or sometimes of late, three hours) to drop in and experience a film. Whether you come out having found the meaning of life or just had a fun trip... is up to you. You have time to think and, after you have thought so hard, maybe you want to take a break from thinking: watch STARSHIP TROOPERS – it’s FUN. (Okay, okay, it AIN’T the book... but you can’t have it all!)

So, I suggest, LIGHTEN up. Life’s too short to be too intense!!!

The Year 2000 is coming – let’s party like it’s 1999! 🐦





Facilities

by Dina S. Krause

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- Voice Mail in every guest room
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- Business Center

The Hyatt Regency, Chicago

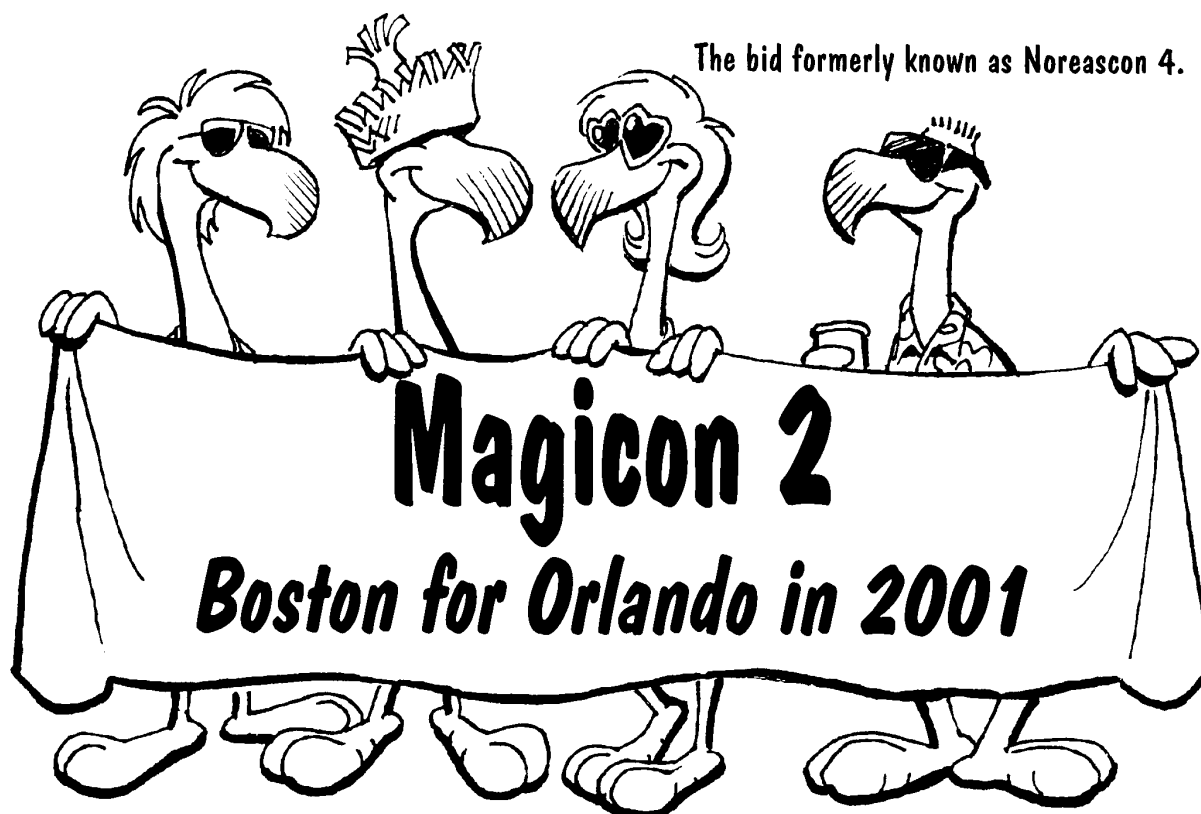
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Magicon 2: Boston for Orlando in 2001

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Da Mob: the Unfathomables

Please note that it's still early and positions, titles and duties are subject to change. Without notice. Send in your volunteer application and fannish resumé so we can assimilate you. You can see that we have a number of places open, so step forth before we have to go raid the graveyard again! (vote early and vote often!)

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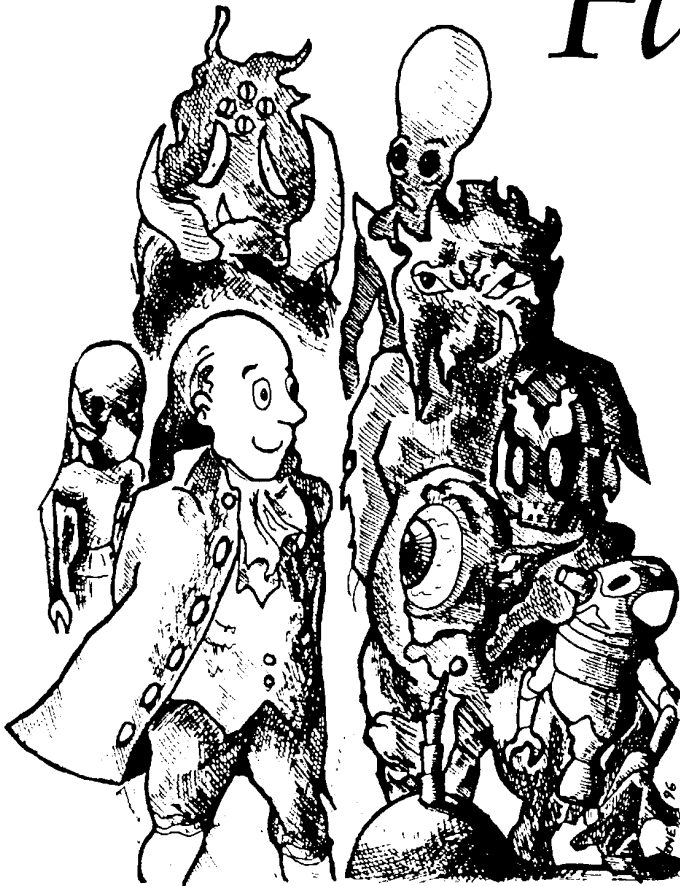
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315,000	51,275
D	Hemispheres...
125,120	55,933
Marriott	Swan B.R.
38,500	22,582

Public Space

Grand Hall	7 Foyers
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(includes Marriott)	
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- The Phlash visitor loop bus goes to hotels, restaurants, museums and historic sites for just \$3.00 a day

Delicious Food

- Directly under the Pennsylvania Convention Center is the Reading Terminal Market. This 100-year-old farmers market has a wealth of Amish vendors with goods ranging from farm produce to free-range geese. The market also includes ethnic eateries and groceries from Middle-Eastern to Cajun and is a great place to buy regular groceries, party food and snacks.
- Right out the door of the Convention Center is Chinatown. Sixteen square blocks of restaurants serving authentic Chinese food from dim sum to Peking duck.
- Nearby is every kind of ethnic and American restaurant, up to five-star quality, all within easy walking distance. And don't forget Philly brewpubs, cheesesteaks, hoagies and soft pretzels!

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- Philadelphia Zoo, America's first zoo
- New Jersey State Aquarium
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
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Regional Attractions

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- Amusement Parks: Great Adventure, Hershey Park, Sesame Place and the Piers at Wildwood
- Tubing on the Delaware River

Fan Friendly



Letters from Chicago

Part Two: Grant Park and the Museum Campus

May 1998

Dear Harry,

As you may know, the official motto of the City of Chicago is *urbs in horto*, which means city in a garden. The name came about, in part, because of the Burnham plan, developed by Daniel Burnham, a Chicago architect who devised a systematic way of laying out the city following the Chicago Fire of 1871. Part of Burnham's plan was to ensure that no Chicagoan lived more than walking distance from a park. I would like to describe to you the *urbs circum hortum*, the city around a garden, in particular around Grant Park, which is within walking distance of the Chicon 2000 hotels.

On April 29, 1844, when the City of Chicago was only 11 years old, Lake Park was dedicated on landfill. On October 9, 1901, it was renamed in honor of Galena, Illinois native, Civil War General and US president U.S. Grant. City ordinance prohibits building in Grant Park and has withstood several attempts at construction over the past century and a half. Grant Park is perhaps most famous as the scene of clashes between Chicago Police and demonstrators during the Democratic National Convention in 1968. More recently, it has been used for some of Chicago's biggest festivals, such as Taste of Chicago, the Chicago Jazz Festival, the Chicago Blues Festival, and Venetian Night. Many of these events take place at the Petrillo Band Shell and are sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Special Events.

Located in the middle of Grant Park is Buckingham Fountain, one of the world's largest fountains. A gift to the city from Kate Sturges Buckingham in memory of her brother Clarence Buckingham, the fountain was dedicated in 1927. Its design is based on Latona Basin Fountain at Versailles. The fountain operates between May 1 and October 1 each year with water shows every two hours and light shows nightly between 9 and 11.

On the western edge of Grant Park is the Art

Institute of Chicago, one of the premier art museums and schools in the country. The Art Institute first opened as the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts in 1879 at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Van Buren Street. In 1891, the Interstate Industrial Building, a Victorian Convention and Exhibition Hall, was razed to make way for the new home of the Art Institute, renamed in 1882. The new building was finished in time for the World's Columbian Exposition. The Art Institute is most well known for its collection of impressionist art, which includes such masterpieces as Georges Seurat's "A Sunday on La Grande Jatte-1884" as well as such twentieth century American masterpieces as Grant Wood's "American Gothic" and Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks." However, the institute has much more than paintings. In the basement you can see the Thorne Rooms, exact miniatures demonstrating American and European architectural and furniture styles. On the main floor is the George F. Harding collection of arms and armor reflecting armaments throughout the Medieval period.

The Art Institute's famous western entrance on Michigan Avenue is guarded by two bronze lions created by Edward L. Kemeys. When a Chicago sports team makes the playoffs, the lions are frequently dressed in that team's uniform. However, the lesser known eastern entrance is well worth a visit. Just inside the eastern doors is a reconstruction of the trading room of the old Chicago Stock Exchange. Designed by Louis Sullivan in 1894, the Exchange was torn down in 1972. Salvaged portions of the original room were brought to the Art Institute and reconstructed. Leaving the Art Institute through the east doors, facing Grant Park and Lake Michigan, you pass by the Goodman Theatre, located inside the same building as the Art Institute. At the end of the driveway is the Stock Exchange entrance, the only other piece of this Chicago landmark salvaged

...continued on page 23

by preservationists.

Across Michigan Avenue from Grant Park are a few locations I would like to talk about. Located across the street from the Art Institute at 78 S. Michigan Avenue is the Chicago Cultural Center. Built in 1897, this building served as Chicago's first main library, which was moved a couple blocks southwest to the Harold Washington Library in 1990. The first floor contains displays showcasing local artists as well as the Museum of Broadcast Communications. Not only does the MBC house the original Charlie McCarthy, but it also includes a room which allows visitors to make news videos with themselves. The second floor contains the Grand Army of the Republic Room, an ornate ballroom originally used as a meeting place for veterans of the Civil War. In addition to a few restaurants, the Cultural Center has a standing exhibit of Chicago architectural photography and a wide variety of rotating exhibits.

At 224 S. Michigan, the Chicago Architecture Foundation offers walking and bus tours of Chicago landmarks. Tours can range from a two hour walking tour of Marshall Field's State Street Store to a three-hour lakefront bike tour. In addition to tours, the museum contains rotating and traveling exhibits specific to Chicago architectural history and presents a series of free lunchtime lectures.

Another architectural museum just north of the Chicago Architecture Foundation, is the recently established Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design at 6 N. Michigan Avenue. In addition to architecture, the Athenaeum focuses on industrial and graphic design with an extensive photographic and video archive.

A little farther south, at 618 S. Michigan Avenue, is the Spertus Museum of Judaica. This museum, in the same building as Spertus College, has a large collection of Jewish religious, artistic and cultural artifacts. In the basement, children can re-create a biblical archaeological dig. The Museum also contains a permanent exhibition on the Holocaust and frequently houses traveling exhibits, such as the recently completed "Let There Be Laughter! Jewish Humor in America."

At the south end of Grant Park is the museum campus, made up of three of Chicago's world class museums, the Field Museum of Natural History, the

John G. Shedd Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium.

The Field Museum of Natural History dates back to the World's Columbian Exhibition when it was located in Jackson Park as the Columbian Museum of Chicago on September 16, 1893. In 1905, to honor the museum's first major benefactor, it was renamed in honor of Marshall Field. The museum moved to its present location in 1921. The core of the museum collection is formed from items which were exhibited during the 1892 World's Columbian Exhibition. In 1924, the museum acquired the lions of Tsavo, about whom the 1997 film "The Ghost and the Darkness" was made. In 1997, the museum gained the most complete *T. rex* skeleton ever found, known as Sue. Over the next few years, there will be an ongoing exhibit as the museum staff prepares the skeleton for display with the rest of the museum's dinosaurs. The museum contains an extensive collection of Egyptian artifacts in a display which has recently undergone a renovation. It also has one of the few preserved coelocanth on exhibit.

Across from the Field is the John G. Shedd Aquarium, which opened on May 30, 1930. Six years earlier, John Graves Shedd bequeathed \$2 million to build what was at the time the largest aquarium in the world. Originally the museum consisted of six galleries and a tropical swamp exhibit. The six galleries represent different habitats, allowing the visitor to see various fish who would reside in relatively close proximity to each other. In 1971, the swamp was replaced by a Caribbean Coral Reef Exhibit. The most recent addition occurred in 1991, when the Shedd opened its Oceanarium overlooking Lake Michigan. The Oceanarium is home to beluga whales, dolphins, otters and penguins. Among the Shedd's other interesting denizens is an alligator turtle which moves about once an hour.

Sticking out into Lake Michigan at the eastern end of Solidarity Drive, (the name inspired, in part, by nearby statues of Nicholas Copernicus and Thaddeusz Kosciuszko) is the Adler Planetarium, which opened on May 12, 1930. At the time, the entrance was through the beveled glass doors on the third floor and the visitor was greeted by plaques representing the planets, which were already outdated

...continued on page 25

Australia 4		KY	27	A2834	Edward Bell	A2787	Brenda Harman
Belgium 1		LA	18	A2778	Elizabeth S. Bishop	A2788	Wil Harnan
Canada	66	MA	86	C2779	Linda Margaret Bishop	A2749	Marlene Harris
Denmark 1		MD	66	A2777	Rendal S. Bishop	A2750	John Hauwiller
England 4		ME	3	A2760	Robert G. Blair	A2754	Jan Hise
Germany 6		MI	74	K2842	Larry Blake	A2753	Tom Hise
Ireland	1	MN	38	C2593	Ben Brin	A2762	Jim Hudson
Isreal	1	MO	31	A2489	Steven Brinich	A2847	Jeff Hurst
Japan	4	MS	8	A2811	Charles N. Brown	A2806	Robert Jordan
Mexico	1	NC	9	A2801	Mike Bubacz	C2769	Gwen Karpierz
Northern Ireland	1	NE	9	A2800	Oleta Bubacz	A2824	Brian Kindregan
Norway	2	NH	10	A2765	Gary Bunting	A2823	Chiyo Kindregan
Oman	1	NJ	45	S2816	Nomi Burstein	A2742	Joshua Koppel
Qatar	2	NM	12	A2833	Janet F. Caires-Lesgold	A2741	Tracy Forgie Koppel
Russia	2	NV	2	A2808	Jane Castonguay	A2839	Doris A. Kugler
Scotland 1		NY	97	A2807	Tom Castonguay	A2786	Thomas A. Kugler
Spain	1	OH	56	A2803	Craig W. Chrissinger	A2799	Dorothy M. Kurtz
Sweden	1	OK	13	A2820	Kenneth Collins	A2764	Katherine E. Lane
The Netherlands	3	OR	15	S2843	Karen L. Connell	S2840	Patrick S. Lasswell
United Kingdom	20	PA	41	A2789	Kathy Corcoran	S2814	Rena Leith
		RI	8	A2761	Judy J. Decker	S2813	Rena Leith
AL 15		SC	4	C2815	Timmy DeMarco	A2284	Dorrie Lent
AP 3		TN	25	S2793	John Derikx	A2283	Nancy J. Lent
AR 1		TX	87	S2835	Apurva Desai	A2832	Jacob J. Lesgold
AZ 28		UT	6	S2836	Albert Dobrovitz	A2810	Locus Publications
CA 257		VA	41	A2812	Dorcy	A2773	Daniel Louie
CO 31		VT	1	A2759	Wendy Edeiken	A2783	Endicott Lovell
CT 18		WA	43	A2758	Yale F. Edeiken	C2784	James Lovell
DC 5		WI	54	S2849	Ed Finkelstein	A2782	Susan E. Lovell
FL 37				A2746	John A. Fritz	A2740	Sherrie Ludwig
GA 22				C2838	Jimmy Gabriel	S2796	J. R. Madden
HI 1				A2795	Denise A. Gendron	A2790	David Manship
IA 12		A2791	Martin Abela	S2848	Paul J. Giguere	A2831	Leigh Markosky
ID 4		A2702	Loretta Akers	A2774	Bill Gober	A2763	Diane Martin
IL 294		A2767	Jens H. Altmann	A2755	Ken Grimes	A2752	Patricia Sayre McCoy
IN 36		A2781	Ari	A2744	Mark Gums	A2804	Harriet W. McDougal
KS 5		S2802	Mark Bartlett	A2745	Mary Gums	A2780	Jack McGillis
		A2844	Howard G. Beatman				



*If only I
had up-
graded my
membership
when I had
the chance!*

A2821 Nina McLaughlin
A2748 Daryl McLaurine
S2606 Wes Meier
S2747 Melanie S. Miller-Silver
C2770 Jennifer Minnis
A2809 Jason Mohyla
A2845 Catie Patch
A2792 Paul Pence
A2776 Lisa Penfold
S2837 Selina Phanara
A2766 James Pilvinis
A2841 George W. Price
A2805 Guest of I. Purdy
A2785 Virginia R. Reed
A2819 Jack Rosenstein
A2647 Edward Rutkowski
A2703 Marguerite Rutkowski
A2794 Jeffrey Sanden
A2490 Mary Sayer
A2756 Linda Schiffer
A2757 Michael S. Schiffer
A2768 Jennifer Skwarski
A2846 Judy Strange
A2771 Alan R. Tegen
A2772 Penny M. Tegen
A2822 Dick Trezza
A2830 Jim Turner
A2825 R-Lauraine Tutihasi
A2775 Sandra M. Ulbrich
A2699 Bonnie Vitti
A2818 Bruce Worthel
A2817 Barbara G. Young



Chicago at night

...continued from page 23

when the museum opened. They didn't (and still don't) include Pluto, discovered only three months earlier. The Adler Planetarium has a two part skyshow, which begins in the first floor theater and moves, halfway through, to the skydome, with a Zeiss Mark VI planetarium projector. The first floor also is home to the Robert S. Adler Hall of Space Exploration. This exhibit area contains a 1,015 pound meteorite from the Barringer Crater, a 4-billion year old lunar rock, and other artifacts from NASA's history. The second floor exhibits feature navigation, stargazing and telescoping. Some of the special exhibits include a direct link to the Apache Point Observatory in New Mexico and the telescope used by Sir William Herschel to discover Uranus in 1781. In addition to the skydome, the third floor contains exhibits on astronomical equipment through the ages and African-American astronomer Benjamin Banneker. In February 1998, ground was broken for a 60,000 square foot expansion, creating two new floors. This expansion is scheduled to open in January 1999, so you'll be able to enjoy it when you come to visit.

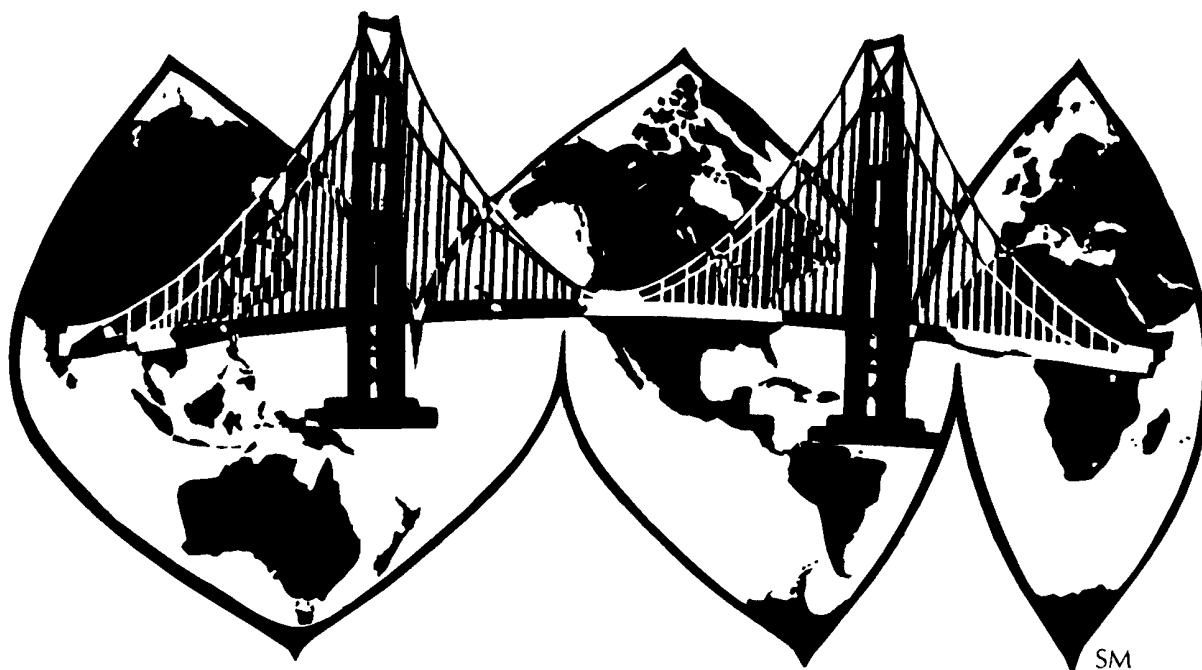
Just to the south of the Adler Planetarium is Northerly Island. Originally a landfill island built for the 1932 Century of Progress Exhibition, the area was leveled after the World's Fair was over to make way for an airport, Merrill C. Meigs Field. The airport opened on December 10, 1948 and became the country's busiest single-strip airport by 1955. The current air traffic tower was built in 1952 and the terminal was dedicated in 1961. In 1995, the Mayor's office recommended closing Meigs Field and turning Northerly Island into an additional 75 acres of lakefront park.

Of course, this, and my other letters, can all be found at <http://www.sfsite.com/~silverag/letters.html>.

Sincerely,

Steven 

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The Ideal Art Auction

a meditation by
E. Michael Blake

Many Midwestern auctions share a particular style and are established as centerpiece Saturday-night events at their cons. The author has distilled what works in Midwestern auctions, and why, into the following guide, which outlines the principles and politics that will underlie Chicon 2000's art auction (with such adaptations as are needed for the greater size of a worldcon art show) offered here for comments and so that anybody else can use it, at any other convention.

Hi. My name is Mike, and I've been involved with art auctions at science fiction conventions for almost twenty years as an auctioneer, an art buyer, a spectator, and an exhibitor. I've observed enough to assemble my model for the Ideal Auction.

And so it begins. The doors of the function room open, and we stroll in with dozens of our fellow fen. The room itself is not especially large, but it has enough room to seat everyone comfortably and allow good views of the art. The display area is along one of the long walls of the rectangular room, so that nobody is terribly far from the display area. The chairs have been set so that any piece of art can be brought close to everyone by a runner with a simple trip from one side of the display area to the other, and then down the center aisle. The room is at a comfortable temperature, and art show personnel now dial down the thermostat to cope with the heat that will presently be generated by the bodies and lights. Art is already present in the display area, on an arrangement of risers, tables, and chairs that makes it visible to the audience even while auctioneers, runners, and others drift around in front of it. Each piece of art is at or above head level, but can easily be reached when the time comes for it to be sold.

The auction takes place on Saturday night, after everyone has returned from dinner excursions but before the parties ramp up. I do not designate one specific start time as Ideal, though a time somewhere between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. would seem to come closest to meeting the criterion in the previous sentence. What is *essential* for that time to be ideal, however, is that it be the exact time published in the program book and/or pocket program. Also—forgive me if by inference I let slip a glimpse of a past horror story—all of the published materials on when the auc-

tion begins (program book, pocket program, posters in the art show, hotel schedule boards, etc.) must agree. [Ed. note: at a worldcon of course, Saturday night is still mid-convention, and auctions are held on later days.]

We all settle onto our chairs, confident that we won't be missing anything vital, because this convention has not scheduled major event programming or films during the auction. We also know where we stand in the contest about to begin, because the art show—in keeping with the published schedule—stayed open after the end of the last Saturday afternoon panels and programming events. We had time to adjust our tactics as needed, making final bids just before art show personnel cleared everyone out and closed the show. We also know how many bids it took for a piece to get to the auction, because we can trust the art show staff not to change the criteria after closing the show, and increase (or reduce) the number of pieces in the auction by lowering (or raising) the number of bids needed for a piece to get to auction. (Okay, that has only happened once, and it may never happen again, but *I don't want anyone to think that such a thing would be a good idea.*)

The staff has a list of all of the pieces in the art show that received written bids. The list can be on paper or computer screen or both, backed by a simple, cheap database program, so that fen who weren't in the art show at closing time can find out if a certain piece is in the auction, or if it sold on the bid sheet without going to auction. Also, the auctioneers can refer to the list to see whether it is necessary to spread certain artists' work through the night, for the sake of variety (ditto the balance of flat art, 3-D, wearables, etc.). The table staffers can also answer questions on when payment can be made and art picked up.

On the other side of the display area is seating for runners and auctioneers, and such libations as they require to facilitate execution of their tasks. The availability of this refuge keeps the display area itself clear and prevents distractions when art is being run.

The space behind the display area is staffed by clemmerers (a term based on the late Curt Clemmer, who performed this service for many years at conventions in the Chicago area and elsewhere). When an auc-

tioneer pulls a piece from the display area to begin its auction, a clemmerer will move new art into the vacated space, so that plenty of art will always be in view. Tables have been provided behind the display area to accommodate all of the art to be auctioned. Other art show workers are ready to return sold pieces to the art show, for later payment and pickup. They all handle the art carefully, and are alert to potential problems for runners, such as paintings with loose matting or sculpture of extreme fragility. They would never dream, for example, of leaning an unframed illustration board against a wall in front of a heating duct.

The auction has a plenitude of competent, experienced auctioneers and runners—so many, in fact, that the auctioneers group themselves into teams of three, with each team to work for one hour and then hand off to the next team. An auction can also work well with two or four auctioneers, but three turns out to be the Ideal number for the tasks at hand. While Auctioneer A auctions a piece, Auctioneer B selects a piece and recruits a runner, and Auctioneer C gets whatever breather is necessary, and is available to hear special requests from bidders and con staffers (delivered and dispatched *very quietly*). As for the runners, they can choose to work in shifts also, or stick to a rotation of everyone for the whole auction; whatever suits their legs. In this respect, runners usually don't pose a problem; for whatever reason, only auctioneers suffer from the tendency to mill around, get in the way, and distract from the art being run.

We also observe that persons of both genders will be auctioning, and persons of both genders will be running. Surely we would never see a situation in which the men do all the talking and the women do all the shlepping, oh heavens no.

The festivities begin with a brief welcome by the chief auctioneer and a brief recitation of the rules of engagement. She tells us that only voice bids will be accepted, in whole dollar amounts, in increments of at least five dollars for any bidding beyond \$100. She points out that the taking of photography of any kind, with or without flash, is forbidden, and that anyone who wants to

...continued on page 29

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take pictures of art should make separate arrangements with artists; anything else is theft. She cites the acceptable means of payment and the times and place for art pickup. As for the procedural specifics, any number of systems can work well, but in this particular Ideal Auction, the art show staff has chosen the following:

- 1) When the auction begins on a piece, the auctioneer hands the bid sheet—a self-carboning manifold with at least two copies—to a bid sheet runner.
- 2) The bid sheet runner takes the bid sheet to the staff table and hands it to one of the staffers.
- 3) The auction proceeds, and when the art is sold, the winning bidder raises his/her hand and calls out name, badge number, or some other unique identifier.
- 4) A table staffer writes on the bid sheet that unique identifier, and the amount of money for which the piece sold.
- 5) The table staffer separates the manifold and hands the bottom copy of the marked-up bid sheet to a bid sheet runner.
- 6) The bid sheet runner takes the bottom copy of the bid sheet to the winning bidder—confirming, if necessary, the unique identifier.
- 7) Later, the winning bidder uses the bid sheet copy to claim the art, and the staff uses its copy to confirm the claim and demand the appropriate payment.

Before the auction begins, the winners of the art show awards are announced. Awards are almost always a component of a good art show, as their very existence lures in art and artists that might not otherwise have graced this convention. This in turn, over time, draws in tasteful and solvent art buyers, which over more time spirals us all into a win-win situation. Some awards offer cash; others offer exposure, which can be far more valuable if the panel of judges includes influential employees of book publishers, “graphic novel” publishers, gaming card manufacturers, animation studios, etc.

Runners bring out the winning works for viewing, when their awards are announced. Those winning artists who are present are called up to receive their awards, backed by appreciative applause. Then, once the winning works have been given their due, they are returned whence they came. Any piece that received enough bids to make the auction is kept in the display area. Any piece that did not receive enough bids—for whatever reason, such as a minimum so high that the art was essentially not for sale—is returned to the art show, and picked up later either by the artist (if there were no bids) or by the winning bidder (if there were bids,

but not enough for the piece to be auctioned) Auctioning a piece simply because it won an award would break the compact that exists between an art show staff and art buyers, which is simply this: a piece goes to auction with X bids, and does not go to auction with X minus 1 bids or fewer.

As far as an auction is concerned, an award should change nothing. Buyers might be more inclined to bid higher on an award-winning piece, and an auctioneer would be remiss not to encourage such behavior, but only if the piece were in the auction anyway. Consider the following scenario. It is 5:59 p.m., and the art show closes at 6:00. Three bids are required to send a piece to the auction, and a certain painting has only one bid so far, at the minimum of \$20. Joe Bidder plays the art show tactical game properly: he goes to that piece, which he really wants, and puts in a second bid of \$50. His knock-out bid appears to work, because when the show closes he sees nobody else putting on a third bid. Content, Joe Bidder makes his plans for the evening, knowing that he need not attend the art auction. After closing, the art show staff puts the awards on the works that won them, and—in keeping with a tradition that has somehow never been written down or made known to people in general—starts hauling all of the award-winning works into the room where the auction will be held. That night, the piece that Joe Bidder thought he had bought for \$50 becomes a bit more appealing to the people who attend the auction, and it sells for \$51. The next morning, Joe Bidder presents himself at the art show and is told, in effect, “The good news is that you have excellent taste that puts you ahead of your time. The bad news is that the painting was auctioned last night to somebody else.”

There might be a way to make this work, but I very much doubt it. Is it possible to make sure that everyone who sets foot in the art show knows that it takes X bids to auction, unless a piece wins an award, which you might not know before the show closes, so you better go the auction no matter what, and *caveat emptor*? The real merit of an award is in exposure and public approbation, and if the award-winning work doesn’t sell, the artist should at least be encouraged enough to have prints made for later sale elsewhere. To sum up: auctioning award-winners that didn’t get enough bids to be auctioned would never happen in an Ideal Auction.

One of the auctioneers not currently on duty takes up a position at the back of the room to serve as a backup bid-spotter. Even in this room, and with this crew, it is possible that a bid from a soft-voiced person at

a remote location might not be heard by the auctioneer. When that happens, the bid-spotter waves to get the auctioneer’s attention and points in the direction of the unheard bid, all in silence. The auctioneer then asks for the bid to be spoken again, and the bidder responds. This time, the bid joins the flow of the auction. (I just recently learned of the bid-spotter idea, from Van Siegling. Bid-spotters have since been employed, to good effect, at two cons where I’ve auctioned art.)

The runners have already received their assignments, either to run the art itself or to move bid sheets. This may seem like a very narrow division of labor, but if each task is left up to who ever happens to be available at the time, things would at least slow down, and at worst lead to a mistake in the bid-sheet paper trail. As a piece is auctioned, the runner first traces the route mentioned above, in a walk slow enough to give everyone a clear enough look for identification of the piece. On the more interesting or sought-after pieces, there are calls of “Runner!” from the audience, and such calls are encouraged. The runner, however, completes one full circuit of the route before responding to any of the calls. Then, the runner brings the piece to callers for longer looks, remaining in open aisles and not trying to walk between close-set rows of chairs. Then, as the bidding progresses to the hardy few who really want the piece, the runner takes it in turn to each of these bidders within reason. The runner is deft and prompt, but does not endanger self, others, or art by shuttling between bidders at a dead run.

There are also some charity items in our Ideal Auction, to support a variety of immensely worthy fannish and SF-related activities. The Ideal Auction welcomes this—to a limited extent. This is, after all, principally an art auction, and we do not wish to bore or distract the audience. The Ideal Auction operates on a rough ten-to-one rule: one charity item for every ten pieces of art. If there are too many charity items to be accommodated this way, the concomm should give serious thought to scheduling a separate charity auction. The Ideal Auction also groups all of the charity items into two or three time blocks, and the charity items are sold by auctioneers specifically assigned to the task. This raises a bit more interest in the charity items, and gives art bidders a chance to take a break or two to pick up art they’ve already bought. The runners can also get a break here, because many charity items need not be run; anyone who wants to authenticate the signature on a galley proof can walk

...continued on page 30

up to the front and do so.

The auction proceeds smoothly, with each auctioneer team handing off to the next. Around halfway through, a clemmerer puts up for viewing the piece decided in advance by the auctioneers to be the strongest bidding prospect—a piece which, by its obvious quality and the bids already made on it, should lead to the largest sale of the show. This piece, of course, will be held for the very end, to maintain spectator interest.

Now, there can be different schools of thought on this point, and I won't maintain it as an essential component of the Ideal Auction, but if people are going to hang around for three hours or so, they probably want to see a serious firefight at the finish. It's an open question, though, whether this is the best policy for the artists. On the upside: if the audience is aware that there will be a spending war at the end, more people hang around, and are at least present to try for impulse buys—potentially forcing up sale prices. The audience is aware, of course, because at least one auctioneer will have called attention to this stunning piece and made it clear that it'll be around until the bitter end. (Yes, I'm usually the auctioneer who does this. Why pass up a chance for cheap dramatics?) The case for the contrary is this: if a number of people know that they'll have to do their biggest spending at the end, they might shy away from bidding on anything else, to save their money—so, at the end, let's say that six people can spend \$500 or more on the last piece, and maybe the winning bidder gets it for \$1000, but another \$2500 leaves the room unspent, in the checkbooks of the other five bidders.

Each auctioneer has his or her own style and approach, but abides by the rules of proper comportment, which in more or less chronological order are the following:

1) Have the piece in the runner's hands before saying word one. The runner's moves are on the critical path, and the sooner the runner begins, the better the chances of giving everyone a good look *and* keeping the auction moving.

2) Try to know something about the piece, the artist, the medium, or the style, and preferably all of the above. An ideal auctioneer not only enjoys spending time in the art show, looking at the displayed work and chatting up artists, but knows this to be an obligation of the office.

3) Conduct that crowd-pleasing auctioneer banter and japery only *before* the bidding begins. It's fine to crack jokes, sustain running gags, threaten to make a certain runner carry a piece of etched slate, etc., because

this makes it easier for the audience to sit there for hours on end. But one must have a sense of proportion. A rough time line of things to issue from an auctioneer's mouth: joke; bid sheet info (w/artist or work info, if appropriate); early bid taking (in which the auctioneer says as little as possible and listens for numbers); late bid taking (if it gets down to two people, with gaps between bids, auctioneer can joke once again, but only to abet the process of getting the most money out of the sale).

4) Speak clearly, in both voice and meaning. If someone bids "twenty", don't just say "twenty" back, say something like "I have twenty," preferably with a look at the bidder to show that he or she is acknowledged. If you want to encourage movement to a higher amount, say "do I hear thirty?" Don't just say a vaguely interrogative "thirty", or the bidders might think that's already been bid. This might inadvertently push someone to a higher bid than otherwise intended, but it's at least as likely to make everyone stop bidding—and then, surprise, it turns out that nobody ever bid thirty. Also, when possible, if you get simultaneous bids at the same amount (say, forty), accept all of them, and say, "I've got two (three, four, a bunch of) forties. Break it." This isn't a gamble. If two or more people are bidding forty right on top of one another, at least one of them will pony up at least forty-one.

5) You're not selling tobacco, horses, or cars confiscated from drug lords. We're taking voice bids here. We have to be able to hear them.

6) Sometimes, despite great promise on the bid sheet, terrific execution by the artist, and extra tidbits of erudition by the auctioneer, there just aren't any more bids, and a piece sells on the bid sheet. That happens. Don't take it personally, and *don't go into overdrive*, standing there repeating into a vacuum, "Do I hear thirty-six? Come on, it's a great piece."

7) Listen, always listen. Even frantic bouts of bidding settle down eventually, leading to a clear transition from early bidding to late bidding. When it comes down to two combatants (invariably on opposite sides of the room, the bane of all runners), give them a chance to keep things going, but start counting down. It's customary to announce "Going once . . . going twice . . . going three times . . ." before declaring sold. This is more than enough time for a fence-sitter to decide how far the funds will stretch. Expect to have several countdowns interrupted—that's fine, as long as the bidding remains active, and it's the accepted fodder of late-bidding auctioneer jokes (Jack Benny takes, etc.).

8) *Never* insult an artist or a bidder by rip-

ping a piece in the auction. The most graceful way out is to play it straight—just read the bid sheet info, take bids, close the sale, and move on. One small exception to this—once you know, and are known to, the artist involved—is to razz aspects of the artist that do not reflect negatively on the artist's work. A number of artists have been good sports about this over the years, and some even thrive on it, but we've all got parties to get to, so at least say something original.

9) Don't hog all the good stuff. Spread yourself out by doing 3-D and flat, large and small, derivative and innovative, big-name and newcomer, heavily-bid and barely-in-the-auction. The way you get asked to do this again is to do the best job overall for the show and for all of the artists.

10) Don't interrupt while someone else is auctioning, unless you can throw in a tart one-liner without drowning out bids (beginners should wait a *long* time before trying this). Don't harass, insult, or make light of your runner, who is doing his or her job by moving the art around the room silently. Limit your libations to the non-alcoholic, during and immediately before the auction. Don't shill—if you want a piece, by all means bid, but don't try to force a price up artificially, because that will make the real bidders *very angry*. Don't auction or run a piece on which you will be bidding (yes, painfully obvious, but still . . .). If you make a mistake (as with incorrect hearing of a bid), try to rectify it at once. And remember that you're not here to impress people with your wit, your looks, your clothes, or your dulcet tones. You're here to sell art.

This is the Ideal Auction, and everyone involved is above reproach. Bidders who fall just short of getting certain pieces are introduced to the artists involved (or their agents) and encouraged to commission new works—an especially good income source for jewelers, sculptors, and others who work in 3-D. Artists, in tutorials and jam sessions earlier in the convention, pass along their expertise to newcomers. Agents and publishers confer on new projects, to help keep the artists' rent money coming in. Con attendees looking for unique gifts snap up goodies in the print shop. And the personnel of the Ideal Auction—auctioneers, runners, clemmerers, and table-sitters—bring in the maximum revenue while averaging about two minutes of auctioning time per piece. It's been a fine Ideal Auction, and we stroll out satisfied, and eager for the next SF convention art show. 🐉

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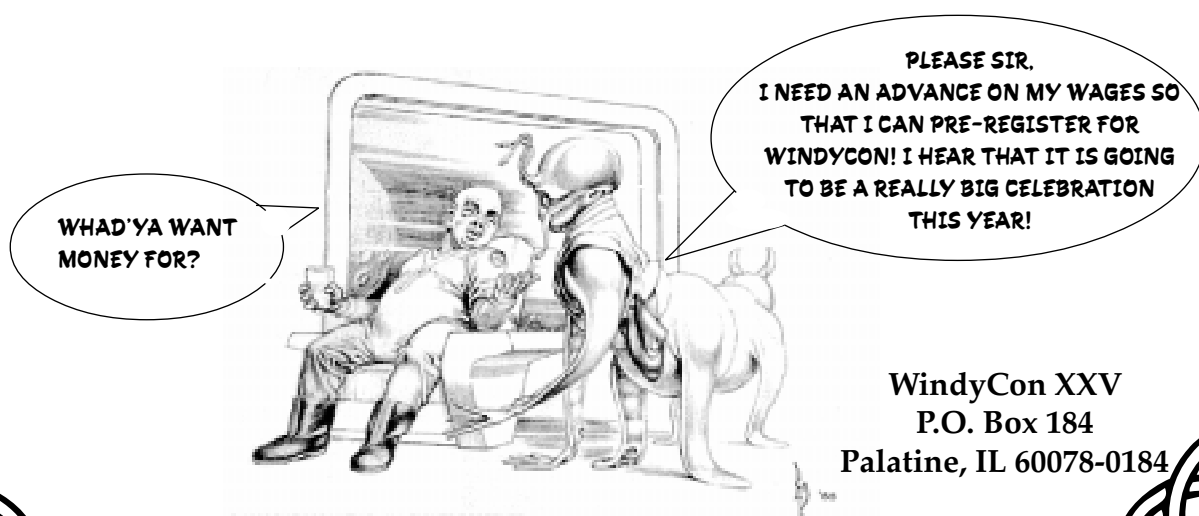
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