

MIDFANZINE 2: EXPLORATIONS



SPRING 2003

(SORRY WE'RE LATE)

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MidFanzine 2: Explorations

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Editorial Comments

Reading RB Cleary's initial introduction of himself in SFCB, I thought "I should do that for Midfanzine. After all, not everyone knows me." Mine will sound a slightly different tone than his, for I did not have the "life just got so much better now that I'm no longer all alone" reaction when I got involved with fandom. I mean, I've been surrounded by weird people like me all my life. After all, I was born and raised in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

I was not the first kid in the old neighborhood to have a stuffed Ewok – I got Wicket after discovering how Erin's was soft and fuzzy and fun to throw up in the air and catch (and I still sleep with him sometimes). My best friend and I had a very elaborate elementary school fantasy about a society that lived in the clouds, in which we were princesses who had pet pegacorns (a unicorn pegasus cross). We had a reputation for talking to trees and sang "we are weird people, yes we are!" with pride. When we went to different junior high schools I had very little trouble hooking up with a crowd of people just as strange.

My mom had an Edgar Rice Burroughs collection and she also favored Ray Bradbury and Anne McCaffrey. I took Science Fiction Literature at Community High School and two years later turned around and taught it: a book a week all semester except Christmas break, when we read the whole Amber series. At the Dawn Treader Bookshop, they paid me (in books or cash) to put SF on the shelves.

In 1992 at my first SF convention, I was very excited to meet Orson Scott Card but didn't meet many other new people. I had fun staying up all night singing with Bobo (back when he was a Ghod), but Bobo was already a friend of mine, part of the gang from back home. I was president of the SF club for a bit at Grinnell College, but I didn't *really* hook up with organized fandom until I got involved with running Minicon in 1997. And that, dear readers, is when my life got truly complicated and difficult.

It was a hard, transitional time to get involved with Minicon. And starting a Master's degree while picking up a time-intensive conrunning hobby was a challenge. But a lot of why it was a complicated and difficult thing for me was that I was working with people who really impressed the heck out of me who had very solid ideas about how to do things well. Things that I wanted to be a part of. It was one of those crucible types of experiences, and I think I've come out the other end with a very different perspective of myself.

I've now run Information, Publications, and Programming, and staffed Registration and Hospitality. This year I'm Chairing my first convention, ConFusion. I know first-hand how much I will depend on knowledge from those who have done this before me. I'm editing MidFanzine because I know gaining that type of knowledge and perspective is best done through interaction with people like you. I hope you enjoy this issue and I look forward to reading your comments.

--Anne



MidFannish News

Michigan's Ken MacGregor reports that he and his wife Liz are continuing to flourish in St. Louis, MO, where Liz is now about 2/3s of the way through law school. Ken's acting career is also making impressive headway. He recently finished two indie films and is also appearing regularly on stage with the sketch comedy group The NonProphets (<http://www.nonprophets.com>). Liz is working for the Federal Public Defender's office in Detroit this summer.

MarsDust

Local startup MarsDust seems to be hitting its stride. They've been up and running for a year and continue to carry fiction, reviews, and very interesting interviews, so check them out at <http://www.marsdust.com>.

The Darrell Award

Greg Bridges <3bridges@charter.net> asks that people let him and the rest of the Darrell Award nominating committee know if you read an SF or Fantasy story set in the Greater Memphis Area or with a strong connection to it, or written by an author living in that area. Anyone may nominate. There are three categories: short story, novel, and other works. There is also a new Hall of Fame category for an author with a previous body of work. Greg can send you a nominating form or you can get forms and further information at the MemphisSF Yahoo group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MemphisSF/>) or at the Darrell Award website, <http://darrellawards.org>

The Darrell Award is given by the Memphis Science Fiction Association every March at Midsouthcon. There is no actual cash award although for the last 3 years of the award a \$10 gold has been incorporated into the design of the award. (Greg comments, "We recognize the importance of having something to fall back on in times of need and a \$10 gold piece is worth about \$30 when chiseled off the award.")

The TransAtlantic and Down Under Fan Funds

The TAFF and DUFF races both concluded in February. Randy Byers is the new North American TAFF delegate and attended the 2003 Eastercon, April 18-21, in Hinckley, Leicestershire. Guy and Rosy Lillian are the new North American DUFF

delegates. They attended the Australian National Science Fiction Convention April 17-21 in Perth. We look forward to all of their trip reports.

Don't forget that both the TAFF and DUFF funds accept donations year-round. For more information, <http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF-Archives/Taff/Index.html> or <http://home.pacbell.net/jgelb/duff2k.html>.

SMOFcon 21!

SMOFcon 21, the convention dedicated to the conrunner, will make a stop in the commercial heart of the Midwest. Well, not really, but it is near the airport. SMOFcon 21 will be held on December 5-7, 2003 in the Embassy Suites O'Hare in Rosemont, IL, which lies between Chicago, IL, and Chicago, IL. (Seriously. Look at a map.) There will be a fair number of us there on the nights of the 4th and 7th, so come early and stay late.

Memberships are currently \$55, and will go up later. Memberships can be sent to SMOFcon 21, 707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969. It is preferable for checks to be sent payable to Midfan, with SMOFcon written on the comment line.

Hotel rates are \$105 for singles to \$135 for quads, with a real hot breakfast and complimentary happy hour included. Rooms can be booked online or by phone at 1-888-476-7366 (mention SMOFcon). For hotel, membership lists, and other information, see the SMOFcon 21 website at <http://www.midfan.org/Smofcon.html>, or send email to info@midfan.org for more details.

Finally, if there are any program items you'd like to see, drop us a line. We can't promise anything, but we'll definitely listen.

Hope to see you there!

Erik V. Olson, Chair

This _____ Is Chicago

By Erica Stephan

There are three L stops named "Chicago" within Chicago's train system. When the train pulls up to the platform at any of them a precorded male voice intones, "This... Is Chicago" in a calm, reasonable, informative manner. I'm always left with a faint expectation in the back of my mind that at the next stop I'll hear, a la Soul Coughing, "This... Is Not Chicago." Alas, it has yet to happen.

I like the el, which is good, since I seem to end up spending a lot of time on it. Today I went to the Dale Chihuly exhibition at the Garfield Park Conservatory. The conservatory is one of those lovely, anomalous legacies of the City Beautiful mindset in the early 20th century. Sometime in the 20s it was decided that having a tropical conservatory in the midst of five of Chicago's major parks would lead to general civic edification. Now an enormous greenhouse filled with stilt palms and antheriums is not the sort of thing you can gradually neglect, let run down, divert funds from, etc, as might normally happen to a park in a poor part of town. Either you're taking meticulous care of the place or all the plants die. Thus, in the middle of one of the worst neighborhoods in Chicago, a place that looks more or less as if a hurricane had come through the week before and leveled half the houses, there's a foofy, fancy, glass-and-white-steel celebration of exotic horticulture.

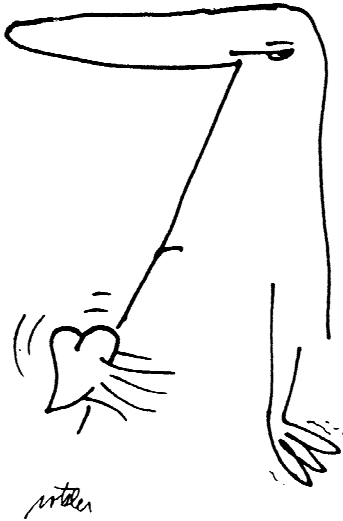
I have no idea how often folks from the neighborhood actually visit the place. But about a year ago, the Chicago Parks people had the bright idea of inviting famous Seattle glass artist Dale Chihuly to do an installation in the conservatory (glass building... glass art... get it?) This means that for the past few months there's been this mob of artsy white people taking the el out to Garfield park to see the exhibit.

Artsy white person that I am, I saw the exhibit. It was neat (spirally stalky blue-and-orange forms echoing the antheriums, warped saucerish pink and red bowls among the flatter foliage, orbs floating in the lagoon), and a big hit with the crowds of kids. Then I decided to take a brief -very brief- walk through the neighborhood.

I was curious, since for the past week I've been temping at a very cool organization called Neighborhood Housing Services whose mission is to facilitate low-income people owning and restoring houses in their neighborhoods. Well, I'd been preparing spray-mounted photos of Garfield Park all week and wanted to see what it was like in person.

The streetscape radiated bleakness - every other lot was a vacant, scorched lawn. About 30 seconds after I left the conservatory a cop pulled me over and asked if I was all right and if I knew where I was going. I said "oh yes" confidently as I could see there was awkwardness and a lecture coming otherwise, then finished up my 2-minute tour. Ah, racial profiling in action...

(Originally written in March of 2002.)



WRITER WATCHING SOMEONE
WHO IS THINKING OF
BUYING ONE OF HIS BOOKS

Midwest Convention List for the Next Half Year

August

Aug 8-10 **ConGlomeration** Louisville, KY
<http://members.iglou.com/shadowr/conglomeration.htm>

Aug 28-
 Sept 1 **Worldcon: Torcon 3** Toronto, Canada
<http://www.torcon3.on.ca/>

September

Sept 12-14 **JVL-Con V** Janesville, WI
<http://www.si-fi-nut.com/jvl-con.html>

Sept 19-21 **Midwest Construction 2** Ann Arbor, MI
<http://www.midfan.org/mwc.html>

Sept 26-28 **To Be CONtinued** Merrville, IN
<http://www.2becontinued.com/>

October

Oct 2-5 **Archon 27** St. Louis, MO Area (IL side of the Mississippi)
<http://www.stlf.org/archon/27/>

Oct 3-5 **Context XVI** Columbus, OH
<http://www.contextcon.com/contexthome.htm>

Oct 10-12 **Icon 28** Cedar Rapids, IA
<http://www.mindbridge.org/icon/>

Oct 17-19 **ConClave 28** Lansing, MI
<http://www.conclavesf.org/>

Oct 24-26 **Ohio Valley Filk Fest (OVFF) 19** Dublin, OH
<http://www.ovff.org/>

November

Nov 7-9 **WindyCon XXX** Schaumburg, IL
<http://www.windycon.org/>

December

Dec 6-8 **SMOFcon 21** Rosemont, IL
<http://www.midfan.org/Smofcon.html>

2004

January

Jan 23-25 **ConFusion XXX: Maximus Conventionus** Detroit, MI
<http://www.stilyagi.org/cons/2004>

Jan 29 – Feb 1 **Sensawondah Capricon** Chicago, IL
<http://www.capricon.org/>

February

Con Petrol Kansas City, MO
<http://www.sff.net/people/sfreader/czarkon.htm>

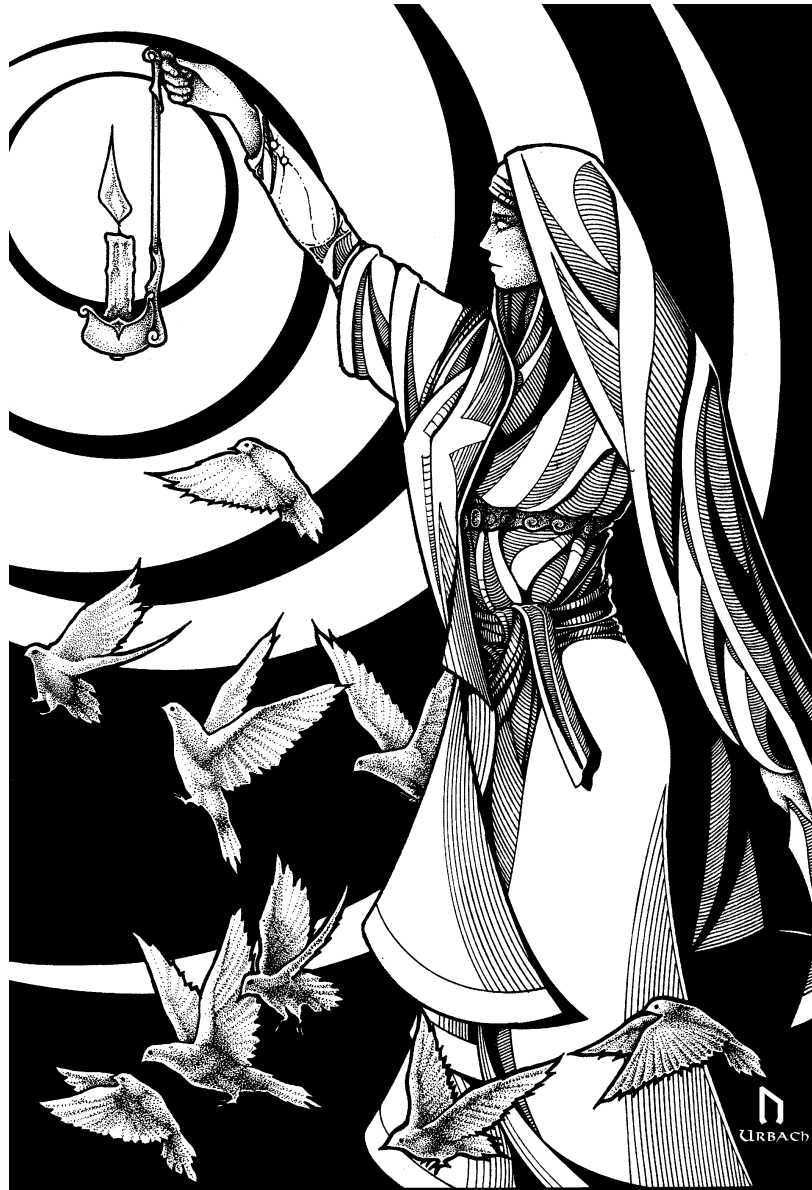
Feb 20-22 **VisionCon 2004** Springfield, MO
<http://www.visioncon.net/>

March

Mar 5-7 **Marscon 2004: Let's Play Doctor** Bloomington, MN
<http://marscon.org/>

Mar 19-21 **Millenicon 18** Springdale, OH
<http://www.millennicon.org/>

If you would like your convention added to this list, contact Anne at editor@midfan.org



And Then I May Go

Come quickly, if I'm going to live —
Come racing to my side.
Come share with me your secret thoughts
Or make of me your bride.

Then later, if I'm going to die,
Come slowly, if you must.
You needn't race for one last word
With ashes in your dust.

If there are things you'd like to say
Or gifts we both might give
Then say them now or bring them by
Come quick — if I'm to live.

Anne KG Murphy

FunZines

You know you've entered fanzine fandom when you start receiving wonderful things in the mail. Both in trade for Midfanzine and, gosh, just because I asked, I received a number of interesting reads that I'd like to mention.

The Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin,

Volume 8 numbers 1 and 2.

Edited by R.B. Cleary, 138 Bibb Dr., Madison, AL 35758-1064 rbcleary@bellsouth.net.

I thoroughly enjoyed Randy's first and second issues as editor of the *Bulletin*. The copyeditor in me was amused to note that despite the "Top Ten Ways to Remember T.K.F.W.R." article, the SFC membership list in the same issue still had Toni Weisskopf Reinhardt's name as "Toni Weisskopf". But that's really of little moment.

SFFF #3

Mike McInerney, 83 Shakespeare St., Daly City, CA 94014-1053 elandem@worldnet.att.net.

Mike handed me this in the fan lounge at ConJosé. I enjoyed reading the articles and the multitude of LOCs. All this in a simple two-column format that demonstrates that good content doesn't need fancy dressing to carry it.

Nonstop Fun is Hard on the Heart #6

Edited by dwain Kaiser, P.O. Box 1074, Claremont CA 91711 dkaiser@hotmail.com.

79 pages of interesting articles and illos, with a color cover. Very impressive and appreciated.

DerogatoryReference 100

Arthur D. Hlavaty, 206 Valentine St, Yonkers, NY 107-1814 hlavaty@panix.com.

Commentary on various topics by Arthur (perzine).

A Mimosa Fanthology, a.k.a. Mimosa 28

Edited by Nicki and Rich Lynch, P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885, USA.

fiawol@cpcug.org, <http://www.jophan.org/mimosa/>
This is a collection of articles from the first 16 issues of *Mimosa*. Sadly, I'm meeting this fannish landmark just as it prepares to accept its historical marker. Rich and Nicki announced in the intro their intention to stop publishing the 'zine after two more issues. I was very impressed by all the fabulous fannish artwork and particularly enjoyed "My First Orgy" by Steve Stiles.

Thanks to all the editors who dropped something in the mail. I look forward to what I might receive next.



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Avoiding At-Con Problems — Planning Communication and Problem Response

By Erik Kauppi

We have had some near-disasters at previous cons. I thought a lot about how to prevent and deal with these at-the-con problems. My idea is that it is very important for some things to be clear to everybody in advance.

These can be generally summed up as:

- Who is responsible for what.
- What to do in an emergency.
- How not to make small problems into big problems.

Who is On Deck?

There must be a designated responsible person available ("on deck wearing a beeper or whatever. Do not assume that the nearest gopt responsible person. But Ops will always know how to reach the Pe need their sleep just like normal people. As long as they make sure that a designated person is "on deck" they should be able to sleep un-interrupted.

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Make a phone list, either in advance or Friday, and distribute it to ConCom. Include numbers for Ops, Housekeeping, Hotel Security, Green Room, Gopher Hole, Consuite, etc. Also include room/phone numbers for Conchair, Ops people, Treasurer, some other concom. Include beeper numbers if used. DON'T post this list in a public place.

Dealing with the Conchair:

The Conchair's job is handling issues that affect more than one department, or the whole con. The Conchair will support you and back you up on any reasonable thing you do in your department. In return you will support her and back her up on her decisions.

Surprise!

Conchairs do not like surprises. Let the Conchair know how things are going. If you have a problem or need help, discuss it with the Conchair early, so s/he can help you resolve it.

What any Concom Member Should Handle Him/Herself

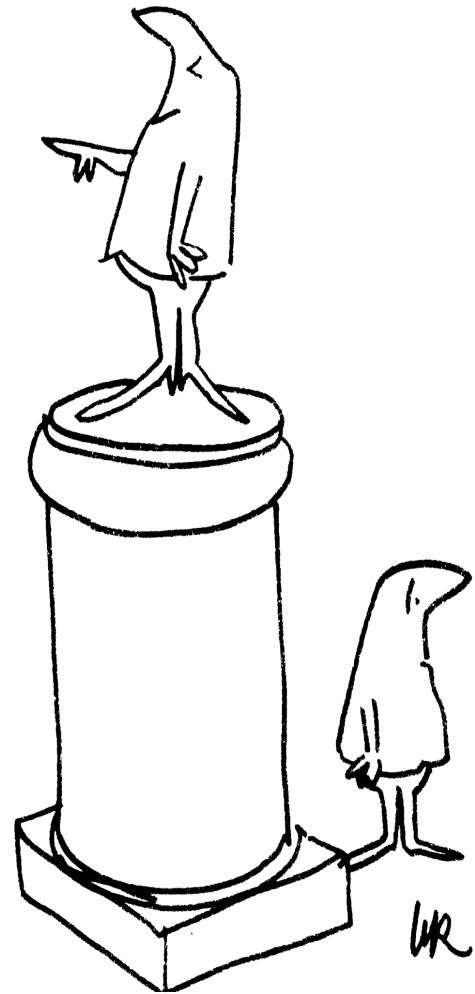
If something is in your department, you know what should be done, and you have whatever is needed, then just do it. You don't have to ask permission.

What types of things must be brought to the Conchair (or designated alternate) for resolution:

1. Situations where someone (a GOH, a fan, hotel, etc.) is unhappy with what you want to do. In this situation it is the Conchair's job to hear the whole story, calm things down, and work out a compromise, or explain to the upset person why we have to do it your way. Basically the Conchair should back you up and help you settle the problem.
2. When you have a problem with another department, or with the hotel, and have not been able to resolve it one-on-one.
3. When you see a problem in some other department, and that department head isn't there or can't deal with it.
4. Hotel issues, unless they're really routine.

Serious Emergencies

In a real life-threatening emergency, do whatever you can. Be sure to get help from Ops and from the Hotel right away. If appropriate, call 911, then call Ops.



Emergencies (not life threatening)

1. Call Ops
2. With the Conchair, or whoever is "on deck", figure out what is the best thing to do.
3. DON'T get the hotel staff involved until the Conchair or "person on deck" has decided that's appropriate.

Unruly or "Problem" People

- Get Ops involved.
- Don't handle it yourself, don't make decisions without Ops or the Conchair.
- Should we get the hotel involved? Ops or Conchair make this decision.
- Sending people around to look for the person may be good, but MAKE SURE those people know to just locate the person, then call Ops.
- Don't make it a mob scene.
- Figure out who will handle the person when found. Conchair or "person on deck" plus hotel security? Handle the person in private if possible.

Things NOT To Do:

1. Don't have a big long argument with someone, even if you are right. If you can't work it out, "elevate the issue" to the Conchair, and do it in private.
2. Don't jump in and change things in someone else's department.
3. Don't take a problem to the hotel staff if we can resolve it ourselves.

An Example of What Not To Do:

At the dance, a Concom member noticed an underage person drinking and being drunk. She should have brought this problem to the Dance Department head, or the person on deck at Ops, or the Conchair. Instead, she brought it to the hotel staff. This started a major confrontation with hotel security and the hotel manager. They were NOT pleased with the Con, and almost shut the dance down. The Conchair and Ops didn't even know about the situation until it was too late.



MIDWEST CONSTRUCTION 2

Midwest Fannish Conventions, Inc. (Midfan) will be hosting another Midwest Construction this year — a conrunning convention focused on Midwestern local and regional conventions. Last year's MWC in Chicago was a smashing success; 67 conrunners from throughout the Midwest and beyond gathered to learn from one another. Midwest Construction 2 will be September 19-21, 2003 in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the Hawthorn Suites (call 734-327-0011 for reservations).

Ann Arbor is a great town to visit, with lots of bookstores and fun places to eat, and our Saturday evening downtown dinner excursion will give you a chance to explore both. The consuite will be amply stocked, including excellent bread, cheese and other goodies from Zingermans — widely considered to be the best deli outside NYC.

Our plans include regular panels on a variety of conrunning topics, along with roundtables and small group workshops. And of course lots of time for informal networking and conversation. Ideas and suggestions for particular topics are most welcome. If you have any questions or suggestions, please email me at mwc@midfan.org.

A full membership is \$45 until September 1, when the at-the-door rate of \$60 will apply. Please send pre-registrations to Midwest Construction 2 c/o Midwest Fannish Conventions, Inc, 707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969. Register early, register often, and tell all of your conrunning friends to do the same! A registration form and complete hotel details can be found at <http://www.midfan.org/mwc.html>.

See you in September!

Tammy Coxen, ConChair, Midwest Construction 2



Having grown up in Southern California, I initially thought snow was a myth; I was told that it actually snowed once, in the early 1950s, but it had already melted away by the time I got suitably dressed and ran outside to play in it. I heard they had a sale on sleds that lasted 20 minutes.

Eventually, starting with the three winter months I spent learning to be a supply specialist at Amarillo AFB, Texas, I discovered that there really was such a thing as snow, literally and truly.

In fact, the first time I went home on leave, I discovered that they even really did have snow in Southern California – and in fact had had it even while I'd been living there. While it's true that, after I entered the Air Force, I never returned to live in Southern California (I went back to attend a few conventions), and could easily list a number of things I Really Don't Miss in not living in Southern California (smog being at or near the top of that list), I really >did< appreciate and admire the way they handle snow in Southern California. So much so that I've been an advocate of handing it the same way over here on the right coast ever since. Not that anyone listens to me, but at least I have tried.

Basically, the admirable way they handle snow in Southern California is this: They keep the snow in the mountains. The people in Southern California who actually >like< the snow go to the mountains and have snow pretty much to their heart's desire; the people in Southern California who >do not< like snow stay down in the valleys. It's a very simple, equitable and fair system, and as far as I can see it accommodates every taste. It's much better than, say, the way they handle snow in New York City – i.e., pushing it back and forth across the streets until it turns grayish black.

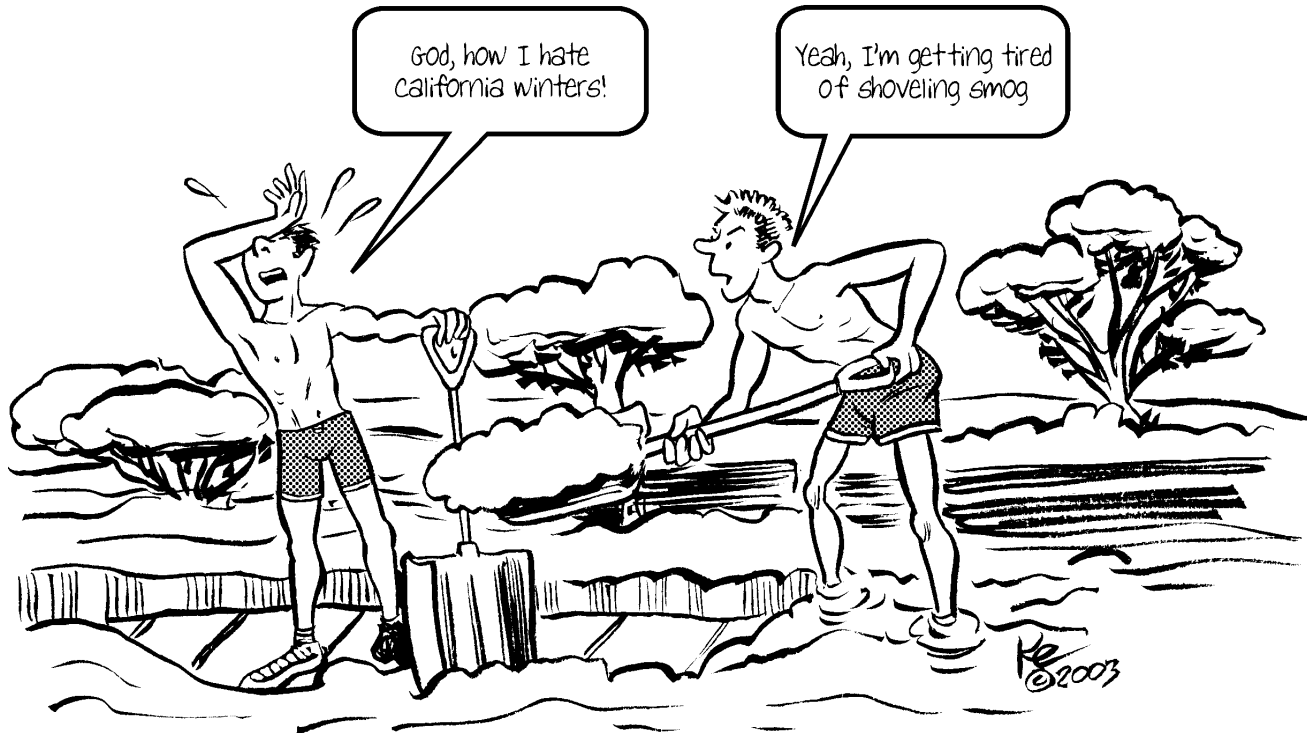
I really can't blame the people who've paid no attention to my advocacy of the California System, however. The problem, of course, is that we don't actually have any mountains out here on the right coast to keep our snow in – just these little "foothills" called the Adirondacks and the Blue Ridge. So we have to let the snow get down in the valleys, too.

Unlike those folks up around the Great Lakes, however — Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan and a few

others — we only get lightly dusted with the stuff, and then not every winter. Boston and New York generally manage to slog through it but any time we get, down here in the Washington, DC, area, what would be considered an "average" winter day in one of the Great Lakes states, everything closes down: the schools, the government, the malls. People are encouraged to take "sick" days rather than brave the elements.

And thus, the vast majority of drivers here don't know how to drive in the snow. Not all, just the vast majority. What that means is that even the people who >do< know how to drive in the snow around here take their lives in their hands when they drive in the snow, since they're at the mercy of all the others who >don't< know how to drive in the snow.

Snow. Don't even let me get started.



A Brief Look at the Extraordinary Career of Jerome Walton

By Steven H Silver

"I yearn to reach the stars, for my destiny, nay, the destiny of all mankind, lies not on this ball of dust, but among those brilliant, sparkling notes. It is only by attaining the stars that the human race will achieve immortality."

--Jerome Walton
"Thrill Within My Grasp" 1937

Looking back on the golden age of science fiction, there are some names which everyone can call to mind. Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, A.E. van Vogt, L. Sprague de Camp, and Jerome Walton. Jerome Walton? How did he get in there?

For those who don't know, Jerome Walton published at least one story in each issue of *Astounding* between January 1935 with the publication of "The Green Death" and April 1957 when he suddenly disappeared following the appearance of "The Lost Planet." Shortly before his disappearance, John W. Campbell, Jr. commented, "Jerome Walton is the Iron Horse of science fiction. His by-line should read 'Lou Gehrig'."

According to biographical notes that appeared in the magazines, Walton was born in 1914 in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. While a boy, his family moved to the United States and Walton became a U.S. citizen. He received a bachelor's degree in radio engineering from Washington University. In January 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Despite seeing combat throughout the Pacific, Walton managed to continue submitting stories to the pulps which were still being published. Following the war, Walton settled first in Moscow, Idaho, where he founded a writing group which would eventually become the "Moscow Moffia." By 1950, Walton was living in Madison, Wisconsin. In 1956, Walton moved to Waltham, Massachusetts, his last known address.

Walton was among a select few whose career managed to successfully make the transition from F. Orlin Tremaine to John W. Campbell. In fact, Walton's career blossomed under Campbell and in 1955, his novelette "Looking Backwards and Forwards from the Middle of the Century" lost the Hugo to Walter M. Miller's "The Darfstellar" by only three votes.

During his reign as *Astounding's* most prolific author, Walton, under either his real name or a pseudonym, topped the *Astounding* reader's poll a truly astounding 54 times. Although mostly forgotten today, many science fiction authors have pointed to Walton as the source of their inspiration to enter the field. Even when his science was shoddy, Walton managed to convey the sensawunder that is so important to science fiction.

"The gravel of the Sea of Dreams crunched under Commander Smith's boots as he became the first man to step on the moon. A brilliant, full earth shone overhead, giving him a clear view of America. He saluted his country and raised the star-spangled banner on his rocket's antenna."

--"The Race is Won," 1937

Walton's earliest works, from "The Green Death" to "Raiders from Beyond Antarres" (1938) were derivative space operas, similar to, but lesser in quality than, the works of E.E. "Doc" Smith, Edmond Hamilton and Ray Cummings. All of his works, with one exception, were science fiction. The only time he strayed from the genre was the publication in *Unknown* in 1939 of the story "Rats in the Belfry." Although Campbell loved the stories and it received excellent comments, Walton is known to have viewed it as the worst thing he had ever written.

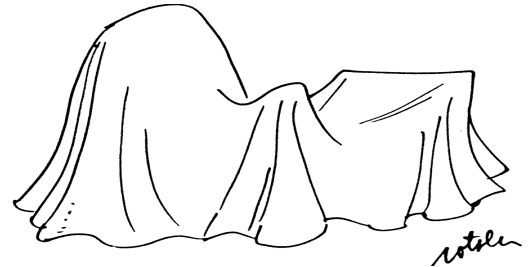
Walton really came into his own with the September 1938 publication of "Ice and Sleet," in *Amazing Stories*, ironically under the pseudonym "Walford L. Pickering." This tale, set in the Arctic, introduced realistic descriptions to Walton's work. According to a blurb written by *Amazing* editor T. O'Connor Sloane, "Pickering [Walton] traveled throughout northern Green Land (sic) to research this story." While Sloane's claim is patently false, the details in the work indicate that Walton did research into Arctic conditions.

Once Walton broke through the realism gap, his stories became more and more realistic. Whether or not Walton actually acquired a Ph.D. in physics while in Madison, as fannish historian Sam Moskowitz implied, is unknown. What is known is that his stories could inspire readers to discover how much of his science was accurate and how much was invented. Following "Ice and Sleet," nearly everything in his stories was possible using the scientific theories of the time.

"Although the Moon's gravity made him want to hop around like a human kangaroo, Eric Simpson shuffled carefully, hardly letting his feet leave the lunar soil. In his hand, he carefully clenched his prospector's pick, aware that the slightest mishap could mean the end of his life."

--"Mining the Moon," 1947

The six years Walton lived in Wisconsin were the pinnacle of his career. It was during this time that he published his only novel and came close to winning the Hugo Award. His appearance in Madison led to the



MYSTERY WRITER

rumor that he was going to begin a writer's workshop at the University of Wisconsin. Other stories said he hoped to start a Midwestern version of his famed writers' group. Although neither of these came to fruition, more than a decade later, Damon Knight cited these rumors as an inspiration for the Milford Conference which eventually led to Clarion.

In fact, his move to Wisconsin heralded a new found reclusivity. Clifford Simak wrote of a trip to Madison in the mid-50's in which he tried to meet with Walton to propose a collaborative effort. Upon arriving at the address he had garnered from Campbell, Simak discovered a deserted house, which Walton apparently used only as a mail drop. No amount of research could turn up an address or phone number for the author. Simak went on to shelve the project for a few years before writing "Here Gather the Stars" on his own.

No explanation was ever given for Walton's eventual disappearance from the pages of *Astounding*, but after "The Lost Planet," Walton is not known to have published any more science fiction. His total output is limited to 312 short stories, 286 of which appeared in *Astounding*, and a single novel, *The Way the World Begins*, published in 1954 by Doubleday.

In *The Founders of the Future*, science fiction historian Robert Rede claimed that Walton was killed in a car accident in early 1957 and that his last four stories were published posthumously. Rede points to police records from Waltham, Massachusetts, where Walton was living at the time. However, Moskowitz claims that he spoke to Walton in 1962. According to Moskowitz's story, Walton turned his back on writing science fiction to take a job working for the government, first on the Dyna-Soar project and later on Mercury.

In any event, Walton's life, or death, after 1957 is not important to the enjoyment of the fiction he wrote before. A quick perusal of any of his stories demonstrates that he was ahead of his time in almost all areas. Stylistically, the best of his writing could give Gene Wolfe a run for his money.

Walton tossed out ideas that were later picked up and expanded upon by other authors. In *The Trillion Year Spree*, Brian W. Aldiss pointed out that a single Jerome Walton story, the novella "Wishing I Was Here," (1956) inspired such disparate works as Poul Anderson's "The Longest Voyage," Robert Heinlein's *I Will Fear No Evil* and James Tiptree, Jr's "Happiness Is a Warm Spaceship."

Unfortunately, and surprisingly, none of Walton's short stories have been anthologized in the past twenty years. The science fiction field is in danger of losing its memory of one of the greatest authors who ever allowed himself to look towards the future. With luck, a publisher will collect some of Walton's greatest stories and rescue him from the oblivion toward which he appears headed.

Recommended list of Jerome Walton's stories (and good luck finding them).

- "Alone Among the Planets" 1957
- "A Darkling Upon the Shore" 1945
- "Ice and Sleet" 1938
- "Keeping Up with the Joneses" 1951
- "Last Flight from Armageddon" 1952
- "Looking Backwards and Forwards from the Middle of the Century" 1955
- "The Lost Planet" 1957
- "The Menace from Gamma Scorpii" 1954
- "Mining the Moon" 1947
- "Never on a Tuesday" 1943
- "The Race is Won" 1937
- "Ravagers of the Outer Planets" 1946
- "Spaceship" 1936
- "Who Speaks for the Bourbells?" 1949
- "Wishing I Was Here" 1956

LETTERS OF COMMENT

Nicki and Rich Lynch

P.O. Box 3120, Gaithersburg, MD 20885, USA.

Thanks for letting us see your first issue! A very fine effort, much better than the first fanzine we published back in the late 1970s. R+N

Guy H. Lillian III

P.O. Box 53092, New Orleans, LA 70153-3092

12/13/02

Hi Anne-

Here you send me a nice fanzine and I reply with cynical political tripe – so I'll do better tonight and get a copy of the next, or last, *Challenger* to you. I do hope you vote in the DUFF race, though.

A quick gaze-through of *Midfanzine #1* shows that it's tough to organize a convention, but fun to read about it. I'll write a real LOC later – and a review for the next *Challenger* "Zine Dump".

Hope to see you at Torcon & in the meantime, Merry Christmas!

Guy Lillian

[I have to admit I did not vote in the DUFF race, but I did put the ballots and the info you and Mike McInerney sent me out at ConFusion, both in the ConSuite and on the Giveaway table. Congrats to you and Rosy and hope you had a great time!]

Erik Kauppi

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Anne -

I enjoyed your first ish of MidFanzine, and I wish you continued success. We all learn a lot running cons, even if what we learn is "what not to do". But too often we are not good at passing that information on to other cons and to our own successors.

/rant mode on/

Each conchair should require a detailed "after action report" or "things gone right / things gone wrong" from each department. And do one herself. These should be collected and saved and copies distributed to future concons. But I know of no cons nor chairs that follow through on this consistently, including myself.

/rant mode off/

If MidFanzine can do some of that knowledge propagating, and do it in a fun way so it actually happens, that's great!

Here is one small contribution from me, I wrote this the second year I was conchair of Confusion. It has been modified and distributed to several concons since. [*see page 7*]

Erik

Ben Yalow

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February 25, 2003

All in all, a very good first issue. Lots of good articles, even ones that I disagree with.

And I do disagree with some of the key underlying premises in Alex von Thorn's article, if I understand them correctly. And the key to why is found in the first paragraph of the "Make People Happy" section.

He says:

Here's a trick that I use: "This department is an elite team. We are specially chosen to complete this task, and the entire convention would fail without us...."

And that conveys a message that the team/task is distinct from the convention as a whole, and that you're optimizing for the success of the team/task. And that's wrong — it leads to compartmentalization, and to group loyalty to the team instead of the convention as a whole. And resources need to be optimized for the convention to succeed, not for any department to succeed. In general, in a resource-limited environment such as most conventions, you don't want departments to be perfect — the extra resources needed to go from 99% to 100% are so great that the convention, as a whole, is better off using those to move some other department from 70% to 90%, for example.

The convention is what counts. Departments/divisions don't. And people need to think globally, not locally — it doesn't matter how well a department does or doesn't do, so long as the convention succeeds.

And, while many of the other points are good

ones, the local/global question is one that causes problems in far too many situations.

End of rant.

And thanks again for the fanzine, and good luck with issue 2.

Ben

Lloyd Penney

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March 18, 2003

Dear Anne:

Thank you for this first issue of MidFanzine. When I opened the envelope, I gave it a cursory read, and thought, this is all smart, smart, smart. Common sense in a fannish endeavor where sometimes it isn't all that common. I hope I can add to this long-overdue zine. Now for some comments...

Finding volunteers...find them, keep them happy, don't piss them off. Always good sense. I used to be involved in convention management a lot more than I am now, and I always tried to give the people who volunteered a stake in the success of the convention. I trusted them to do the job, and do it the way they thought it should be done, and rarely was my trust misplaced. (If their area of the convention didn't work right, we supplied them with some fresh ideas, and let them try again the next year. If it was still unsuccessful, we'd find another place on the committee for them. Their desire to help was more valuable than the help itself.) Volunteers must feel they are working for themselves and the greater good of a successful convention. Also, you must do what you can with all volunteers, for they will volunteer only once. If they are rejected, or feel that way, they will never come back. They'll do something else with another group, or give up on the idea of helping.

(I'm not sure if I would attend Midwest Construction, seeing our careers are winding down...we attended two Smofcons in the 80s, and I chaired Smofcon 9 in 1989, in the dead of a very snowy Toronto winter, much like the one now ending. Still, I'd like information about MC2 in Ann Arbor.)

When I was the chairman of Ad Astra in 1993, the bulk of the committee came to me to ask me to do something...fire two people. One gave people a horrible impression at registration ("What do you WANT?!!!!"), and the other, in charge of guest liaison, gave the committee the creeps by bragging

about his travels and relative wealth. I shared the opinions of the committee, but I had to decide if getting rid of them would help or hurt the convention...I fired them both the same night, and it was one of the toughest things I had to do. But, their replacements greatly improved the situation at registration and guest liaison, and the departure of the two had no negative repercussions on the convention, so in the long run, there were no regrets on my part. The needs of the committee greatly outweighed the needs of the few or the one, shall we say?

Before bidding with the Torcon committee, Yvonne and I ran a number of room parties at Worldcons in the 80s and 90s called the Slightly Higher in Canada party, which were often one of the better attended single-night parties. (Slightly Higher in Canada referred to the higher price of books in Canada, not to mention the alcohol content in the beer...) Tammy Coxen's article brings back some good memories of those events because we followed her recommendations.

1. We often had plenty of help with setup, especially with people supplying beer and other drinkables. When they were asked if they'd help out, saying that it was a Canadian party for all at Worldcon, they were willing to help...I gave them a stake in the success of the party.

2. We greeted people at the door, and even though we weren't bidding for anything, we gave them stickers for their badges. When they asked what we were bidding for (only Worldcon parties had stickers), we said we bid...you welcome!, and that broke the ice for many. A sticker with no obligation attached was a new thing. The little things, like stickers, pins, ribbons, freebies, etc., mean so much.

3. What did we do that was different? We went ultra-Canadian, with flags, t-shirts, and more. We were hosers. We catered to every silly stereotype we could think of. We had fun, and so did our attendees.

4. What did we serve that was different? Microbrewery beer, and lots of it. Fancy labels, and none of it familiar, which piqued the interests of those so-called connoisseurs of good brews. We often served homemade cookies, or homemade chili, or a Canadian candy Americans had never seen before.

5. Presentation? We've always had enough equipment to outfit a con suite or two, so we would bring along a compact box of vital equipment if we were flying, or if we were driving, we'd bring boxes and tubs of the equipment we needed. Bowls, trays, utensils, cleaning supplies...we operated with a list of equipment that had taken us about ten years to hone into perfection, and it is the memory we don't have when it comes to getting ready for such an event.

6. Critical mass? We never had to worry about it. When we placed signs on the wall, we listed one vital ingredient to the success of our parties...Canadian beer. If you serve it, they will come.

7. Traffic flow...If there was another room we could use, we'd move excess furniture from our room into the other. I've always used signs to direct people to the sales table, the horizontal refrigerator in the bathroom, and the smoking area, just to name a few.

After many years of con suites, green rooms, room parties and parties at home, Yvonne and I had the experience and equipment to stage the three final room parties for Torcon 3 in Chicago. And, we're still proud of them. Our helpers made it happen, the committee got the word out and handed out lots of giveaways, and we got the votes we needed to win. I would like to think that those years of staging very beery Canadian parties helped pave the way for the Worldcons in Winnipeg in 1994 and Toronto this year.

Our current activities...this coming weekend is Ad Astra 2003, and we are helping out with the LA in 2006 Worldcon bid room party. The weekend after is FilKONTario 13, and we are supplying the con suite equipment, even if we're no longer running the con suite. Our long-term plans are to help out with the 2004 Bouchercon, which will be in Toronto, and the 2006 Gaylaxicon, also in Toronto. After that, we plan to bid adieu to convention operations, a 24-year career for each of us. We've done our bit...as much as we've enjoyed helping out, it is time to do something else.

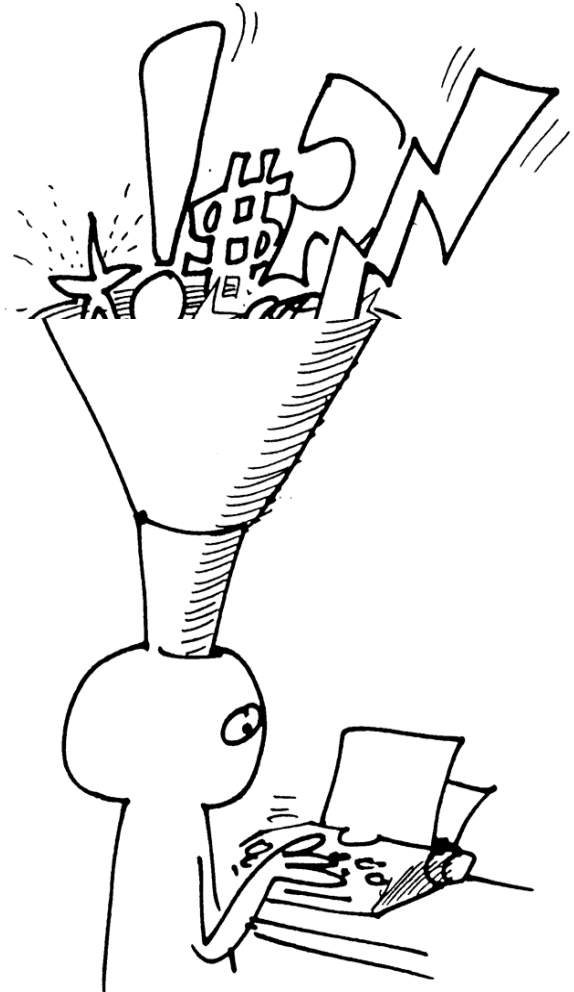
A topic for discussion for a future issue...the 2007 Worldcon race. So many Worldcon smofs have put forth their support for the Japanese bid, happy that the Japanese fans are confident enough to finally bid. Yet, for the majority of voters, Japan is unaffordable. Columbus is affordable, but others say that they will stage a media SF-heavy Worldcon. Both are relatively new and inexperienced. The exotic versus the affordable, the literary versus the media, the foreign versus the domestic...who will win the 2007 Worldcon?

Many thanks, Anne, for a fine fanzine. I'm looking forward to the next issue, which should be available RSN. If you can think of an article I might be able to write, please be my assignment editor, and I'll see what I can do for you. Take care, and see you next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

We Also Heard From...

Tracy Hite - starsongky@yahoo.com – who took *MidFanzine #1* to the December LexFA meeting to share. Tracy commented, "I'm not involved with conventions much myself, but I do work with a mostly volunteer organization so I found the article on keeping volunteers happy really useful!"



NEW WRITER

Recurrence

By Laura Hewitt

You know that dream?

You know, the science-fiction one. Where you have been given a bi-cornate uterus, and your ovaries stuffed with millions of redundant-data engineered unicellular genotypes, and eventually you will allow yourself to give birth, every month, to the hermaphroditic parents of two more species to colonize a terraformed planet, becoming the Supreme Justice of Clarke's law, a living ark of a new covenant, the Isis throne to the Osiris cycles of a new earth, Moses' cradle among the bulrushes? Where every cell your skin sheds will grow to be a new plant, a colony of microorganisms? You should be a little grossed out, but it all feels perfectly natural — perfectly wonderful, perfectly blissful. And you smile benignly, fat with life, floating among millions of spilled-salt, throbbing stars, and press your forehead against the viewport, reaching tender fingertips to that blue-white saltwater opal that calls you to your mutual destiny? And you know that, whenever you have that other dream from now on, that other dream where you haven't really graduated and can't find the final exam for the course you'd never been to even once that semester, you'll smile serenely at the principal and say, "I'm sorry I didn't learn what I came here to learn, but it's not what I need to know. Excuse me, I have a world to populate." And you look...

You know that dream?

The dream of anticipating cats?

How do you have it again?

How do you have it again?