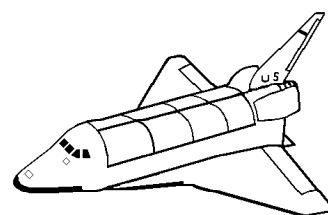


The



SHUTTLE  
February 1999

*The Next NASFA Meeting will be 20 February 1999 at the Regular Time and Location*

### Oyez, Oyez

The next NASFA meeting will be **20 February 1999** at the **regular time** (6P) and the **regular location** (room 130 of the Madison City Municipal Building).

The February program is the more-or-less annual **club auction**. Check the article at right for details. The February after-the-meeting meeting will be the annual Aquarius birthday party at Nancy Cucci and Ray Pietruszka's house.

### Con Chair Election Set

Have you ever wanted to wield unlimited power? Have you ever wished you could select your favorite pros and fans to be convention guests? Are you truly and abidingly nuts?

An election to select the con chair(s) for the 2000 Con†Stellation will take place at the February NASFA meeting. Be there to either put the best face on your candidacy, or to prevent some idiot from nominating you.

### NASFA Auction in February

The the more-or-less annual **club auction** is set for the February club meeting. Be sure to bring both auctionable items (your duplicate books and the like are nice — major appliances are always appreciated ;-)) and cash to buy the stuff other people bring!

### RIP: Suburban

After many years of faithful service, both at Con†Stellation and elsewhere, Mike Kennedy's Suburban finally bit the big one Wednesday 10 February 1999. There will be a commemorative moment of silence at the February NASFA meeting.

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**Deadline for the March 1999 issue of *The NASFA Shuttle* is Friday, 5 March 1999.**



# Come Chatt with Me

by Mike Kennedy

Chattacon XXIV took place 15–17 January 1999 at the Clarion Hotel in Chattanooga TN. Invited guests included Guests of Honor John Barnes and Barbara Hambly, AGoH Bob Eggleton, Special Guest Bruce Sterling, Toastmistress Wendy Webb, and Regional AGoH Diana Sharples. I spent so much time in my room (it's not as bad as that sounds — see below) that I didn't see any of the guests except Bob Eggleton. I understand that Mr. Sterling was not able to attend, though at this late date I forget why. Chattacon is by far the largest of the three annual cons in the Chattanooga area, but I don't have any official attendance figures. I did hear reports citing figures of up to 1500. I know I saw badges numbered in the 1300s.

Chattacon has been in the Clarion for the last several years. This hotel is really undersized for a con this large, though the committee managed to use the space cleverly. The event that suffers the most is the masquerade, more about that later. The overall space situation was improved this year, as the hotel has opened up a sub-basement that was used for the con suite, gaming, video, and more.

It has been a couple of years since I made a Chattacon. It's a shame to miss a con so close to home (Chattanooga is only 2 hours or less from here) but there are only so many dollars and so many vacation hours to go around. I won't be going to Worldcon this year which should enable me to make several more regional cons. Since I was hoping to go anyway, the prospect of being able to throw room parties both for our annual Huntsville con, Con†Stellation, and for Huntsville's bid for the 2001 DeepSouthCon tipped the scales and I decided to go for it.

Of course, hosting two room parties meant I didn't have as much time to enjoy the con as I would have liked. I did as much preparation before leaving Huntsville as I could but relatively few other NASFAns were attending so I had little help setting up for, running, and cleaning up from the parties. (Thanks loads, though, to Randy Cleary, to Jack Lundy, and especially to Birmingham's Sue Thorn for the help they rendered — and I'm probably forgetting someone for which I apologize.) Both parties were fairly successful, with the Con†Stellation party on Friday evening being especially so. (We were one of only 2 or 3 parties that evening.) The DSC bid party attracted significantly fewer people, both because of the hours and because there were many more parties Saturday. I chose to do it in the late afternoon and early evening so I could attend the masquerade, which was scheduled for late that evening.

While my party schedule prevented me from really getting to any programming, I did make it to most of the other areas of the con. The dealers room and art show split the largest function space at the Clarion, the Chattanooga Ballroom. The dealers got the lion's share of this space, but the art show was far from tiny. It was, in fact, an excellent show. Given the current depleted state of my art collection, there were several pieces I was tempted to buy. Unfortunately, given the current depleted state of my wallet — and given the fact that I would not be able to attend the art auction — I had to restrain myself from bidding on anything that already had bids. I did pick up one nice Randy Cleary that will go on the walls as soon as I can afford to have it framed. Chattacon is large enough that they run a print shop in a separate location from the art show. While this may be considered good in that it puts more of a spotlight on the hanging art (including a generous representation of

originals), the location of the print shop (on the hotel's third floor) and a relative lack of promotion by the con made it too much of a stepchild. Still, given their space limitations I'm not sure what else the con could have done. I don't know how the committee would rank their sales, but from the number of pre-auction bids I saw, and from second-hand reports of some to the bidding at the auction, it sounded pretty good for the artists.

The dealers room was well over twice the size of the art show, and seemed to be perpetually busy. The one dealer I asked about sales, though, said that his sales were off sharply from last year. He sells collectible books which, I'm afraid, is not the primary market for the majority of people attending this con. (Chattacon has some reputation for having a rowdy young element — a situation that they have been trying to address. It seemed to me that they had some success in that this year.) I didn't count the tables myself, but looking at a list of dealers it is obvious that they had over 50 tables and almost 30 different dealers. The range of merchandise was as varied as you might expect from any major sf con with at least half a dozen booksellers, plus collectibles, art, comics, jewelry, weapons, t-shirts, and more in evidence.

As I mentioned above, the hotel has opened up a sub-basement level for function space since last year. So the con suite, among many other things, was on sub-level B this year. While there appeared to be more than enough space, this posed two problems. The first was access. The hotel has only two elevators and on sub-level B the elevator lobby is very small. Plus it doubled as a main corridor from the beer serving area of the con suite (always one of the most crowded areas at Chattacon) to the gaming area. The stairs were, all in all, a much more desirable option for accessing this level but many people either can't or won't use them. By the end of a loooooong weekend even the spryest young fan can have trouble dragging themselves up the 40 or so steps from level B to the first floor. The second problem was the lack of ambience in a concrete-block-wall and concrete-slab-floor basement. The con attempted to address this by putting up decorations, though the choice of obscenely-bright yellow (including the dreaded smiley faces) for the coke-serving and seating area was, in my mind, questionable. I stayed away from these, especially in the mornings. (I have never been able to face such numbingly-cheerful colors in the morning.) There were other, smaller, rooms devoted to additional con suite area, but they seemed to go pretty much unused.

Gaming was also located on sub-level B, though in the case of the Live-Action Role Playing it is probably more accurate to say that it was headquartered there. Gaming is a major force at Chattacon and that part of the the hotel seemed to be jumping every time I was down there (with the exception of early Friday afternoon when many people had not arrived yet). The number of LARPs scheduled was staggering. No fewer than seven *different* LARPs were listed in the program book, though I have no way of knowing how many more (or less) than this actually took place. The program book also listed several other game tournaments and demos (mostly collectible card games) plus areas set aside for computer gaming. The video room was also on this level, but since I never set foot in the room I don't have any idea how big it was or how well attended the movies were.

The only programming event I managed to attend was the masquerade, which used all of the area set aside for programming — combining the Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia Rooms. Combined, these rooms are a bit smaller than the portion of the Chattanooga Ballroom used for the art show.

Though I had to stand in a long line to get into the show, I managed to end up with an excellent seat. (Strangely, this same thing happened the last time I went to Chattacon, though the circumstances were quite different.) There were a dozen or so entries, most of whom had some level of merit. Somehow, for me, most of the entries didn't quite jell, however. Most of the time the problem was in the presentation rather than the costume itself. There were, however, notable exceptions. Probably the most effective presentation was the fellow who did Beetlejuice, from the movie of the same name. He got the whole audience involved and a significant portion of it (along with some of the judges) in a conga line weaving through the crowded aisles. The Best in Show award (which included a cash payment) went to what was undoubtedly the best costume, Delenn from *Babylon 5*. Her presentation was simple, but effective enough to carry the day. The masquerade was strictly SRO (in fact, it looked like the committee left off several rows of chairs they could have put in order to make

more standing room). I don't think many people were actually turned away, probably because most people attending the con *knew* that the masquerade would be crowded and some of them stayed away who might otherwise have attended.

I can't begin to wrap up this review without mentioning my eternal thanks to Mike Dillson and Zanny Leach. Due to problems in my personal life that started around the time I should have been planning for the trip, I had let planning slip much later than I should have. Mike and Zanny were very helpful in getting me set up to go to the con and have a place to do the room parties, and were equally helpful at the con.

Chattacon XXV is scheduled for 14-16 January 2000. Scheduled guests include Guests of Honor Tara Harper and Melissa Scott, AGoH Nicholas Jainschigg, Special Guest Michael Stackpole, Toastmaster Charles L. Grant, and Regional AGoH Kenneth Waters. Additional info can be found at < <http://www.chattacon.org> > or by writing Chattacon XXV, P. O. Box 23908, Chattanooga TN 37422-3908.

## Letters of Comment

EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC

Anita Eisenberg  
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16 January 1999

[This was sent in reply to Harry Warner's letter in the January issue. -ED]

Me and Mike in Washington DC, the mind boggles. I can't speak for Mike but I know I wouldn't last a week. With the dirt they could dig up on me, "Yes, I inhaled... frequently," would be the least of my problems. At least I'm not that fond of cigars though I do confess to being rather partial to Altoids.

[Hey, I don't know about you, Anita, but I *might* be able to pass muster with the public — not that I'd *want* to mind you. We've already survived (albeit barely) one divorced President (though he was safely remarried when elected). And my radical student past is both far in the past and wasn't really very radical anyway. All in all, I don't think politics is for me. -ED]

LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC

Harry Warner, Jr.  
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19 January 1999

The January *Shuttle* arrived today in the midst of five or six fanzines, after a considerable drought of the species in my mailbox since the holidays began. I actually made some progress since Christmas on reducing the backlog of locs owed.

Practically everyone seems to feel as Randy does about the Hubbard new writers' volumes. But I wonder if there has been any follow-up survey on how many new writers represented in these books have gone on to make additional sales to science fiction markets.

Something strange happened after I wrote in that loc

published in this issue about my headphones that turned into tomahawks. A day or so later, I found it necessary to keep both hands on the earpieces and press them tightly against my ears in order to prevent the sharp top portion from making me ineligible for haircuts in the future. And behold, I heard for the first time in many years high frequency notes that my gradual hearing loss had obscured. I have no idea why this should happen unless the nearly airtight condition of both ears somehow strengthened those high frequencies to such an extent that I couldn't help but hear them.

It runs in my mind that the worldcon rotation system was worked out because of worry that one part of the nation (California or the East Coast, mostly) might capture the event for many years in succession. Membership in the worldcon is influenced by where it's held with extra-heavy numbers of eligible voters from the general area of the site. It was conceivable that this could cause it to rotate uninterruptedly for years between Los Angeles and San Francisco, or between New York City and Philadelphia.

I hope Sheryl escaped the ice storm that hit Maryland last week. Some thousands of people in the Washington suburban area still haven't gotten back the power they lost four or five days ago. Weirdly, the ice storm that caused power lines to break and trees to topple against them did absolutely nothing in the Hagerstown area to such facilities. The ice didn't stick to wires or branches or anything except the ground. But it turned out to be the most melt-resistant ice I can remember. We've had three straight days of sunshine and temperatures in the mid and upper 40s, and most of the three-inch layer of ice on the ground is still there, as slippery as ever.

[Ice storms are no stranger here in the Tennessee Valley — we seem to get at least one a year. It often amuses local residents when some region in more northern climes gets the occasional coating of ice since that shuts things down *so* much more efficiently than snow. I'm afraid I'll have to be on the sidelines while the future of the Worldcon rotation system is decided. I voted against the amendment that received first passage in Baltimore. I won't be at Melbourne this year when it comes up for ratification, but my guess is that the vote will be close,

whichever way it goes. -ED]

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Carlo R. DeShouten  
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22 January 1999

Greetings. Though I'm sure ol' Mike did his report on Chattacon, here is my report on [...] how I see it. (Or not.) Anyway.

I arrived at the hotel Friday night and I bunked with the H.A.M.S.T.E.R. crew (same as last year). And also to my surprise some people from Ragnarok and Roll [were] there (also from Huntsville) so it was going to be exciting.

The convention was jammed packed as usual. The dealer's and art room was usually impressive (and big) and the con suite, well... it was a little better despite being crowded. But it still needs to be improved. Also the dance was [...] down below the basement. The ceiling was so low you can't pick anyone up.

I played with the usual group Ragnarok and Roll and I was a member of Toxic Spleen though there was five LARP games at the convention, some of them die down quickly or stagger on. Ours was [?] big time. However we kicked ass at the dance which I'll explain later on.

The masquerade contest: I did my Tribute to the Dead although Ms Sue Thorn messed me up and she knows I was mad at her and she was deeply ashamed. Fortunately I forgave her and plus I won for Greatful comedy which was good. Just wait until LibertyCon or Con†Stellation. (HAHAHAHAHA!!!)

Other costumers: Pinky and the Brain doing the Time Warp, two Darth Vaders (in separate acts), The Crow, Delenn from *Babylon 5* (who won for Best of Show), a belly dancer, an exotic dancer, and Beetlejuice (who not only handed out Gummy Worms but also had every one (including the audience) do the Calypso). And I have to admit this was the best masquerade contest I've seen in years.

The dance: our air band Toxic Spleen performed and while [we] were doing Metallica and Ron Zombie [...] lots of people were headbanging, moshing, yelling, and ladies clinging on to us. And everyone loved me. I'm told we were the extreme hit of the dance. Unfortunately our drummer betray[ed] and shot us (we kick[ed] his ass later) then Evil Aliens tried to eliminate us. Don't worry, Toxic Spleen will have our revenge!!

Well I had 3 hours worth of sleep (each night) and I met a young con fan, which I met him 10 years ago while he was helping me doing my Ozzie Osbourne meets Roger Rabbit at Con†Stellation when he was 6. Now for the first time we meet in person. He's 16, gets in a lot of trouble, he's now taller (1 inch from me) and plays guitar (and juggles) and he freaked out when I mention[ed] who I was. (Cheers Brian!) And it was great to see him. That's about it.

[Sounds like you had a great con, Carlo. If things go as planned

(that is, if my nagging back pain allows me to sit up long enough) I will indeed have a Chattacon review in this issue. -ED]

EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC

George "Lan" Laskowski  
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5 February 1999

Thanks for continuing to send me copies of the *NASFA Shuttle*. I keep trying to stay in sync with the publishing schedule, but sometimes my school and medical schedules interfere. I had an appointment this week (Feb 1) and another next week (Feb 8), and probably surgery scheduled for soon after — it's for a hernia, nothing to do with the cancer.

I'm still working on the Poul Anderson issue of *Lan's Lantern*. I am at the final formatting and art insertion stage, so I hope to get it out very soon. You'll be getting a copy, of course.

When the L. Ron Hubbard Foundation started the "Writers of the Future" awards, I was extremely skeptical because of the association with Scientology. However, in the years it has been going on, I have seen some very good stories and writers come from the contest, and so am inclined now to be in favor of it. Anything that encourages good writing, particularly in the SF/Fantasy fields deserves support. The review of the newest collection indicates that the contest continues to go strong, and I hope the literature continues to improve as well.

I hope that Sheryl Birkhead's house-hunting goes well. I enjoy her art and the brief but engaging notes she drops to faneds and fanzines. I too have a few Phil Tortorici cartoons in my files. Strange and talented person, he. Shortly after Magicon in 1993 he dropped out of fandom, and I have not heard much about him since. Hope your search for him is successful.

Gotta run. Take care.

[I'll look forward to the Poul Anderson issue you mention, Lan. Many people expressed the type of skepticism you mention — and some expressed outright hostility — when the WOTF contest was first announced. As Harry intimates, above, it is still not completely clear how many new careers have been launched. If even one has, then the contest might be considered "successful" in that respect. But, even if no major writers are discovered, the anthologies themselves represent some type of success. The next public Scientology-related debate may turn out to be the John Travolta-helmed film to be adapted from Hubbard's *Battlefield Earth*. I've already seen news stories with denials of any Scientology connection — and indeed there may be none — but I suspect some controversy may keep recurring. As for Phil Tortorici, I sent two issues with personal notes written on them, but got no response. I either have an address for the wrong Phil Tortorici or he has chosen not respond which is, of course, entirely his right. So I guess I'll give up — though I will continue to use whatever art I might have in inventory. -ED]



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