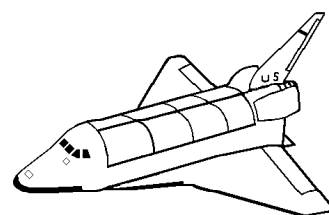


The



SHUTTLE June 1998

The Next NASFA Meeting will be 20 June 1998 at the Madison City Municipal Building

Oyez, Oyez

The next NASFA meeting will be **20 June 1998** at the **regular time** (6P). For the third month we will be in room 130 of the Madison City Municipal Building. We are in the process of making arrangements for this to become our regular meeting location.

The June program is "SF We Know and Love." The after-the-meeting meeting will be at Mike Cothran and Marie McCormack's place.

June C-XVII ConCom Set

The next Con†Stellation XVII Con Committee meeting will be Thursday 18 June 1998 at Marie McCormack and Mike Cothran's place. Call (256) 880-8210 for directions *and* the gate code you'll need to get in. This *is* an eating meeting with the eating starting at 6:30P and the meeting proper thereafter. The food theme is "Venus." (You *do* get the connection, don't you — June...marriage...love...Venus!) Everyone is welcome to attend the eating, the meeting, or both. Department heads are strongly urged to attend at least the actual meeting.

"Saturn" Food Theme Rolls Along at ConCom

The May C-XVII concom food theme of "Saturn" drew quite a few entrants. See if you can match the descriptions of foods below to the earth equivalents.

1. Moons are made of cheese; this dish combined moon stuff with segments of Saturn's rings.
2. An artist's conception of Saturn as rendered in plant material by Saturn's finest artist, Gog Ebbleton.
3. These Saturnian rings were especially appealing.
4. The Keep Saturn Clean committee keeps the rings flat and round by removing material from stray orbits and encasing it in impure carbon material imported all the way from Io. So rare it is used for money.
5. A platter of special Prometheus Fire of the Gods Avian Bits.
6. A Saturn Ring smorgasbord.
7. Representing the myriad moons of Saturn, these juicy ovoids delight the taste buds.
8. Jovian probes, these time traveled from April to May to check out NASFAns.

(continued on page 2)

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Deadline for the July 1998 issue of *The NASFA Shuttle* is Friday, 3 July 1998.

9. Titan's most popular topping, it is served as a dipping sauce at ceremonial dinners.
 10. A profile of Saturn in all her splendor, this dish proved to have two layers.

- a. Onion rings
- b. Grapes
- c. Meatloaf with mashed potatoes
- d. Macaroni and cheese
- e. Hot wings
- f. Chocolate fondue
- g. Oreos
- h. Asparagus
- i. Veggie tray
- j. Deli tray with bagels



You can find out how well you did on this quiz by checking the answers hidden on page 5.

NASFA Calendar

JUNE

- 01 BD: Glenn Valentine.
- 04-07 Horror Writers of America Annual Meeting and Stoker Awards — New York NY.
- 05-07 Tachy9Con — Orlando FL.
- 05-07 Jurassicon — Atlanta GA. **CANCELLED.**
- 11 BD: Rhett Mitchell.
- 12-14 DeepSouthCon 36 — Birmingham AL.
- 14 Flag Day.
- 18 Con†Stellation XVII ConCom Meeting at Mike Cothran and Marie McCormack's place.
- 20* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program — at the Madison City Municipal Building. ATMM at Mike Cothran and Marie McCormack's place.
- 21 Father's Day.
- 26-28 Conestoga '98 — Tulsa OK.

JULY

- 04 Independence Day.
- 05 BD: Deb Stone.
- 03-05 Gaylaxicon 8 — Troy MI.
- 04 BD: United States of America.
- 10-12 ReaderCon 10 — Westborough (Boston) MA.
- 18* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program — at the Madison City Municipal Building. ATMM location TBD.
- 24 BD: Jay Johns.
- 29 BD: Mark Paulk.
- 31-02 RiverCon XXIII — Louisville KY.

AUGUST

- 05-09 Buccaneer, the 56th World Science Fiction Convention — Baltimore MD.
- 08 BD: Jim Woosley.
- 14 BD: Edward Kenny.
- 15* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program — at the Madison City Municipal Building. ATMM location TBD.
- 19 BD: Arianne Mitchell.
- 21 BD: Deborah Denton.
- 28-30 ArmadilloCon 20 — Austin TX.

SEPTEMBER

- 03-06 Dragon*Con 1998 — Atlanta GA.
- 07 Labor Day.
- 11 BD: Ray Pietruszka.
- 19* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program — at the Madison City Municipal Building.
- 21 Rosh Hashanah.
- 26 Jenna Victoria Stone.
- 30 Yom Kippur.

OoO

The North Alabama Science Fiction Association meets on the third Saturday of each month. (Unless there is a large nearby convention being held that weekend — in which case we usually hold the meeting on the second or fourth weekend.) We are currently looking for a regular meeting location. The Executive Committee meeting (if scheduled) is held at 5P. The business meeting is held at 6P. The program begins at 7P. Anyone is welcome to attend any of the meetings. There is usually an after-the-meeting meeting with directions available at the program.

May Minutes

by Samuel A. Smith, May-Bee

The May meeting of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association was called to order on May 16, 1998 in Room 130 in the Madison City Municipal Building at 6:17P by President Anita Eisenberg.

OLD BUSINESS

We hear that A/C a runnin'!

NEW BUSINESS

Anita's necklace does not spell anything (well, Pat asked!). We can schedule Room 130 in the Madison City Municipal Building for the rest of the year if we want. We will need to tell them our meeting days in advance. Our regular meeting days for the rest of the year are: June 20th, July 18th, August 15th, September 19th, October 17th, November 21st, and December 19th. From the information we have on hand now, it appears that none of these dates conflict with any upcoming conventions in the area. Our meeting on January 16th, 1999 will conflict with the currently announced date for Chattoon, however.

After some discussion, a motion was made to not reschedule any of our regular meetings for the rest of the year, and to sign up for Room 130 in the Madison City Municipal Building through the end of the year. The motion was seconded, voted, and passed, with two people voting twice.

Randy Cleary brought pictures of the Ren Faire, and of a still life he did for his mother.

CONVENTION BUSINESS

We have received a request from VirtualCon 1 for a link from our web page to theirs. (The link was put up on Monday, May 18th.)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37P. The program was the "Fannish Family Feud" survey. (An electronic version of the survey was posted on Con†Stellation's web site, at < <http://www.hsv.tis.net/~constell/constell/fffq.html> >, also on the aforementioned May 18th. Visit the site, take the survey, and send it in!) The After-The-Meeting Meeting was the annual Cinco de Mayo party, held at Nancy Cucci and Ray Pietruszka's place, just a short distance away from the Madison City Municipal Building. (Thanks Nancy and Ray!)

Straying from the Path

A BOOK REVIEW
by Anita Eisenberg

Dinner at Deviant's Palace by Tim Powers, ISBN 0-441-14879-4, ACE, 1985, paperback, 294pp

Dinner at Deviant's Palace takes place in post-apocalyptic Los Angeles one generation after the bombs fell. If you think of Ellay as the land of the freaks and the home of the depraved just wait, you ain't seen nothin' yet. Tim Powers goes over the top and around the bend on this one.

Greg Rivas is a professional musician and, as the most famous pelican player in Ellay, he lives a comfortable life. His past life, first as a member of the mysterious Jaybush Cult then as a redeemer-for-hire (rescuing and deprogramming Jaybirds), had been firmly placed behind him — or so he thought.

Urania Barrows is the daughter of the obscenely wealthy Irwin Barrows (distiller of Barrows Currency Brandy) and was Greg's first love. Greg has been haunted by memories of her for thirteen years. It was because of his public humiliation at her seventeenth birthday party that he ran away to join the Jaybush Cult at the tender age of eighteen. When Urania disappears into the Cult, her father hires the best redeemer money can buy, Greg Rivas. Greg reluctantly comes out of retirement to take the case but only because he has never gotten over Urania.

What follows is a long, strange, trip into the bowels of a Hell that only Tim Powers could envision. Greg must go deeper into the Jaybush Cult than he has ever been before in order to save his lost love. His quest for Urania takes Greg from Ellay to a Jaybush encampment, then to Jaybush's Holy City, and finally to Venice Beach and the lair of the monster Norton Jaybush — Deviant's Palace. Along the way he encounters a veritable laundry list of creeps, freaks, weirdo's, lunatics, scumbags, and the occasional kind soul.

Dinner at Deviant's Palace is a circus of the bizarre. To say "here there be monsters" would be an understatement. Here we have glassy-eyed, seductive, mind-manipulating cult recruiters that would make Moses David and the Children of God green with envy. Homicidal priests, hemogoblins, white birdy-girl slavers, bikers (on bicycles), trash heaps (former cultists — part human and part mechanical, constructed from human odds and ends and mechanical spare parts), pocalocas (female cultists brain-fried beyond all hope of redemption who hate music), and the Beast Himself — Norton Jaybush, a star-traveling, soul-eating, psychic parasite of epic proportions. But wait, there are good guys too! Sister Windchime, Dr. Dendro, and Lisz, the proverbial prostitute-with-a-heart-of-gold, show up and what started as a quest to save Greg's lost love ends as a desperate gamble to save the world. There is not much more to ask for from a writer, along the lines of plot, subplot, characterization, theme, and counter theme, than this.

I loved this book! It's a down-and-dirty damn good read. *Dinner at Deviant's Palace* grabs you by the throat and doesn't let go. It made me think about things, like how intense feelings are when you are a teenager, about the difference between misty memory and reality. It made me think about my First Love; I thought I would die when he broke up with me and always had a soft spot in my heart for him. When we crossed paths again fifteen years later I was appalled at the drug and alcohol addicted wreck he had become. This book reminded me of the Rolling Stones song, "You can't always get what you want, but, sometimes you get what you need."

Short Subject

A BOOK REVIEW
by Mike Kennedy

Komarr by Lois McMaster Bujold, ISBN 0-671-87877-8, Baen Books, 1998, hardback, \$22.00, 311pp

The saga of Miles Vorkosigan is one of the most popular in contemporary science fiction. *Komarr*, which is at least the twelfth book set in this universe, is almost certainly destined to continue the popularity of its predecessors. (A few of the books cover events starting before Miles' birth.)

Even though I have missed several of the more recent books in the series, and even though his situation has changed considerably, I found myself right at home with Miles. He is about 30 years old in this book and no longer in the military (the lingering effects of injuries received in earlier books precluded continuing that career). His life, indeed, has taken a left turn and he is now an Imperial Auditor — one of the few people empowered to act more-or-less independently as the eyes, ears, and (when necessary) voice of the Barrayaran Emperor in investigating any matter.

The matter at hand is a recent accident that has severely damaged an orbital mirror designed to increase the sunlight falling on the planet Komarr (one of the planets in Barrayar's pocket empire) as part of a long-term terraforming project. Were the deaths and damage accidental or part of a plot? If a plot, by whom and for what purpose? Miles and his fellow Auditor, Professor Vorthys, are assigned to unravel that mystery — or at least to act as the Emperor's eyes and ears while the thinly-spread local branch of Barrayar's Imperial Security and Komarr's planetary forces investigate.

If you've never read any of the prior works, you can surely still guess that Miles and the Professor get deeply involved in guiding the investigation. And you can almost as surely guess that there is more involved than initially meets the eye — even the Eye of the Emperor.

Lord Auditor Vorthys has a niece, Ekaterin Vorsoisson, on Komarr. Both she and her husband Tien figure prominently in the book. One glance at the Gary Ruddell cover gives you the idea that Miles falls in love (again) in this book. The first sentence of the second chapter makes it plain who that love interest will be — though she is fairly oblivious to Miles' feelings until the end of the book.

The plot behind the destruction of the mirror (did you *really* ever believe it was an accident?) has several twists and turns which Bujold navigates us through with aplomb. While the book is quite a satisfying read, I found myself bemused afterwards by one aspect — an aspect more of the series as a whole than of the book itself.

Miles Vorkosigan, and indeed all Barrayarans, belong to a basically feudal system. Individuals owe their allegiance only to their Count and the Counts only to the Emperor. Well, male individuals in any case. Married women, at least in theory, owe their allegiance to their husband while unmarried women owe theirs to their father or other senior male relative. While that is no longer strictly true in practice by the time Miles is born, and even less so by the time of this book, it is still the official theory. In fact, the tension between the theory and practice of the husband-wife relationship is integral to the character of Ekaterin Vorsoisson and creeps into Miles' inner dialogue on more than one occasion.

Feudal societies are a staple of fantasy books, but are

rather rarer in contemporary science fiction. We are perhaps too used to thinking of fantasy in terms of the past — including past political and social structures. Science fiction, on the other hand, is “supposed” to reflect the future. Retro structures like feudalism are “obviously” not part of the future, are they? And when such societies exist in science fiction, their members are more likely to be the antagonists than the protagonists.

How, then, is the fictional feudal society surrounding Miles Vorkosigan so popular? How do feudal lords get to be the good guys? I suspect the answer is in Bujold’s depiction of Miles and many of the secondary characters as such likeable people. Their nobility is more in their character than in their inherited titles. Miles being such an unlikely hero, with his stunted stature and physical frailties, may also help the reader identify with him.

In fact, Miles is (in some ways) very much in the pattern of that staple of heroic fiction — the competent man. While often identified strongly with science fiction (and in particular with Heinlein’s fiction), the competent man character is also prominent elsewhere. Not long after finishing *Komarr* I was thinking about writing this article and was suddenly struck by the similarities between the competent man character in science fiction and some of Ayn Rand’s protagonists —

particularly in *Atlas Shrugged*. (Okay, so it was morning and I was in the shower, still struggling to become fully awake. Even in more sober retrospect, however, I still like the comparison.)

Having missed several books, I think I am a fair judge of how well *Komarr* fares as a stand-alone book. Some of the deep background in Miles character may not be evident from this one book, but Bujold does an excellent job of working in essential elements of that background without spending long stretches simply recapitulating the previous books. I would say that *Komarr* is easily strong enough to stand on its own. If you read *Komarr* and become interested in reading more, there is a handy chart in the back of the book listing the books in order within the internal timeline of this universe. (This is not the same as the order in which the books were written or published.)

And for Miles’ future? One suspects that his budding love interest will carry forward. Miles is, after all, 30 and appears to be thinking about “settling down.” But I wouldn’t worry too much about married life (if that should come to pass) stopping his adventures. Miles is like the concept of a strange attractor in chaos theory. No matter where things start out, they seem to make their way toward him in the end.

The 1997 Nebula Awards Weekend

by Steve Carper

There are a few perks of being an sf writer. They may be years coming, or even decades, but every once in a while, you may get places ordinary folks aren’t privileged to go. Like starting a tour of the linear accelerator at Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL) in front of the “All Tours Must End Here” sign. You probably have never seen an uninterrupted half-mile long corridor before. (How long is it? It is literally longer than you can see from the middle.) This corridor lies five long flights of steps above the accelerator itself (which means that four stories worth of shielding isn’t enough; hmm), an integral part of a nearly unbelievable maze of precision engineering that chops particle beams into waves, compresses them, moves them, drops them down five stories into the accelerator’s continuous stream where they can be pushed and prodded with alternating bursts of polarity to velocities up to 90% of the speed of light, arriving at their half-mile distant target with pinpoint accuracy. The tour then retired to the auditorium for talks on quantum cryptography, nervous net robotics, and atomic Mars rockets. The lab pales beside the unearthly, or at least unRochesterly, beauty of the mesas, canyons, arroyos, extinct volcanoes, and sheer scrub land that lie between Los Alamos and Santa Fe, but it was most gorgeously tech heaven, even for writer types.

Why Santa Fe? SFWA held its annual Nebula Awards weekend there this year. Santa Fe is a haven for the rich, the very rich, and the government. Nobody else can afford to take advantage of what it has to offer. We walked into one gallery (you are told, repeatedly, that Santa Fe and Taos between them have more galleries than does Paris, and after walking the mile length of Canyon Road, which features nothing but galleries on each side, interspersed with restaurants offering \$14 taco plates — for lunch, you can easily believe it) and saw a magnificent larger-than-life-sized statue of four South American Indian women by the Latin-American artist Zuniga. It had just that week been sold for \$750,000. The gallery next door

was featuring an exhibition by Matta, the Chilean surrealist. His work was far more affordable. Why, you would have to buy two or three of his pieces to shell out three quarters of a mil. (Hint, after viewing Matta: Buy Zuniga anyway.) Next door the other way was a gallery selling Dezo Hoffman photographs of the Beatles’ first studio session. Down the street was a shop selling meteorites. (They are heavier than they look. More expensive, too.) Linda walked into Vivi’s of Santa Fe, wearing a jacket by one of the designer weavers that they feature, and walked out with several more. (These are also more expensive than they look. Heavier, too.)

The Native American influence is everywhere in New Mexico as well. We caught the grand entrance at the world’s largest powwow. We strolled the length of the trail at Petroglyph National Monument outside Albuquerque and climbed the canyon walls at Bandolier National Monument to view the cliff dwellings that the Anasazi mysteriously left behind there. (You may read that the Anasazi are extinct. Don’t believe a word of it. There are 19 Pueblo Indian reservations in New Mexico and every one of them is Anasazi in heritage.) In addition to ubiquitous casinos, the tribes have banded together to run the Hotel Santa Fe, certainly the only hotel in the world to offer the Picarus Pueblo channel in lieu of MTV. (How Indian was it? The main course at the Nebula Banquet was buffalo.)

You can’t have a Nebula weekend in New Mexico without honoring Jack Williamson, and he was suitably feted at a reception given at Los Alamos’ Bradbury Science Museum. (As must be explained to every first time visitor, it is not named for Ray Bradbury, but for Norris Bradbury, LANL director after Robert Oppenheimer.) Williamson was carried into the New Mexico territory on a blanket on a horse ridden by his homesteading father. He grew up in a wooden shack. He also invented the term “genetic engineering.” How old is Williamson? His career is about as long as the entire life of Poul

Anderson. In a lovely bit of symmetry, Anderson introduced Williamson at Bradbury, and Williamson the next night at the Nebulas introduced Anderson, who was being given this year's Grandmaster award.

There were other speakers at the Banquet, including the witty and polished Michael Cassutt (who has written for *Beverly Hills 90210*; oh yeah, and for Deke Slayton) as toastmaster and some computer game guy as keynote speaker. The game guy wanted to proselytize interactivity in writing for computers. A fine concept, although he began by telling the room that writers shouldn't fear computers. (As James Alan Gardner, a regular at the now-defunct *Contradiction*, as well as a Nebula nominee for a fine novelette, later said, "I wrote my first story on a mainframe.") He went on in this vein for 40 minutes. I managed to get the entire *SFWA Bulletin* read. Linda played Hangman with the woman next to her. Most of the people at the farther tables drifted out to the bar. Gardner Dozois inadvertently caused the largest, if muffled, laugh of a very funny evening when he walked in, realized in mid-stride that the game guy was still speaking, and turned to walk right back out again. I was later told authoritatively that this guy did not even rank in the top three of bad Nebula keynote speakers. Something to remember for next year.

Nelson Bond was the writer emeritus of the evening. (How old was he? He was over 40 when his first major short-story collection, *The Thirty-First of February*, was published. In 1949.) I gave him the hardback and paperback Gnome Press versions of this collection to autograph, and got a terrific Marty-Greenberg-is-a-crook anecdote in return. (Martin Greenberg was the force behind Gnome Press, one of the first and most important publishers to put science fiction into hardcover and make it as semi-respectable as it is today. He was so big a crook that the present-day anthologist Martin Henry Greenberg has to continually flaunt his middle name to prevent older writers from coming up and beating him senseless.) Bond told me that a friend of his had mentioned one day in the early 50s that he had a copy of the paperback version of the book. "What paperback version?" asked Bond. Seems that Greenberg had printed up several thousand copies in paperback, as the Korean War being on at the time made such an Armed Services edition profitable. Without mentioning to Bond that he had done so, Bond did eventually get royalties and all the leftover copies of the book, which he gave away to friends and anybody who

asked. (My copy cost me \$100; it is the only one I have ever seen.)

Finally the Nebulas. We were sitting at the same table as writer Geoff Landis (who is also part of the Mars Pathfinder team) and *SF Age* editor Scott Edelman. They tried to handicap the awards at five bucks a throw by announcing who they thought would (not should) win. Each named a completely different slate of four authors. Each was wrong every single time. (Ah, to be an insider.)

Even I thought they were nuts. The novelette winner absolutely had to be Rochester's own ex, Nancy Kress, who had the story of the year in her "The Flowers of Aulit Prison." It did win. (How good is it? It also won the Sturgeon Award as short fiction of the year.) Jane Yolen, who has just published her 200th book and is a former SFWA president to boot, took Short Story for "Sister Emily's Lighthouse." Jerry Olton, if you wanted to psyche out the room, should have unquestionably been the favorite for novella. A story about the ghost of Neil Armstrong taking a Saturn V to the moon to revive the space program? I mean, come on. Anyway, "Abandon in Place" dutifully won. And in an upset so truly unexpected that she struggled to hold back her tears when her name was read, Vonda McIntyre won the novel award for *The Moon and the Sun*.

Cassutt came up with the best line of the night when he said that those who did not get awards were not losers, but "differently victorious." The differently victorious get a certificate for their walls; it is hard to say whether this is better or worse than the miniature rocket lapel pins that Hugo losers get. Anyway, this year's ballot had a plenitude of first-time nominees who were thrilled just to be there. (Bill Johnson, the only writer in SFWA taller than John Kessel, both of whom were yet others of Kress' novelette victims, mused that maybe this meant he had better write a story oftener than every two years.) Nelson Bond, who had been to exactly two sf cons ever, stayed up in the lobby until three a.m. talking, thrilled to be surrounded by sf professionals for perhaps the first time in his life. There are a few perks of being an sf writer. Other sf writers are one of the biggest.

[This article was written for the newsletter of a sf group in Rochester, was relayed to the *Shuttle* by Lin Cochran, and is reprinted her by permission of the author. -ED]

(1-2 ? 3-4 5-6 7-8 9-10 11-12)

A Worldcon at Walt Disney World?

by Mike Kennedy

When I first heard that the Boston bid for the 2001 Worldcon was moving their bid site to Orlando, specifically to a site within the Walt Disney World properties, it briefly crossed my mind that it was a joke. When I heard the details regarding the outrageous room rates being quoted by Boston hotels I fully understood why they were forced to this somewhat drastic course.

A family vacation, from which I have just returned, gave me the opportunity to check out the proposed site — the Swan and Dolphin hotels — and report on them. I must point out that I have no particular axe to grind regarding the 2001 race between Philadelphia and Boston/Orlando. I would gladly have written a report on the Philly facilities if such a chance had arisen.

As the Boston/Orlando publicity has pointed out, the

Swan and Dolphin are on Disney property but are not run by WDW itself. I was pleasantly surprised to find that neither of the hotels is particularly "Disneyfied." There is Disney merchandise in the shops, but that's true of a lot of places in Orlando. The only particular signs of Disney presence in the public spaces are, er, some of the signs — both those pointing to various Disney transportation and those that say "cast members only please" instead of "staff only." The decor of the hotels is certainly fantasy oriented, but not Disney fantasy.

The Swan is the smaller of the two hotels with around 750 guest rooms while the Dolphin has about 1500. Between the two hotels there are almost 200 suites ranging from a "junior suite" (two connecting rooms, one with a Murphy bed) to some really grand ones with over 1000 square feet. Neither hotel is very high rise (at around 10 or 12 stories) and seem to have a

fairly good elevator system. I had a window of only a few hours to check things out so I didn't get to look at any of the sleeping rooms or suites, but the helpful sales staff (who supplied me with full layouts of both hotels) would have been happy to show me around if I had more time. I did, however, manage to see almost all the function and public spaces in both hotels.

If Boston/Orlando should win the bid I suspect that most of the large functions would be in the Dolphin which has three large floors of function space. The lower floor has an exhibit hall that is probably big enough to hold the dealers room and the art show (it's just over 51,000 square feet). When I saw it, one part was not in use and looked pretty drab — bare concrete floors, block walls, etc. The other part was in use and was "decorated" at least to the extent of having a thin green carpet, tables, and all the trappings of the function going on. It looked considerably better though I doubt the carpet did much to cushion that floor.

The upper floor has two large dividable ballrooms of almost 20,000 and 35,000 square feet that can be combined with a corridor to become one T-shaped room of almost 56,000 square feet. That should be more than adequate for the really big functions. (The hotel rates their combined capacity at 6800 seats theater style.)

The middle level, which connects with the hotel lobby, consists of over 2 dozen rooms from 680 to over 2300 square feet and could be home to many small- and mid-sized programs. The major flaw in the Dolphin's meeting space is getting between floors, especially to the lower floor. The three meeting floors have only one elevator for handicapped access. The major ways of getting from floor to floor are stairs and escalators. There are several sets of stairs and two sets of escalators between the lobby and upper levels but only one major set of stairs and escalators between the lobby and lower levels. (The layout shows another set of escalators coming down in the exhibit hall itself rather than the pre-function area — these might or might not be usable.)

Knowing that dealers (particularly) would be interested, I tried to check out the access for unloading. The Dolphin has a loading dock wide enough for three tractor-trailer trucks. The area, however, was too busy for me to check out thoroughly so I don't know how good access would be to unload smaller vehicles.

Like the Dolphin, the Swan's main function space is in a wing separate from their sleeping rooms. Their ballroom, which divides in half or into up to 10 various sized pieces, totals over 22,000 square feet. There are over a dozen smaller rooms which can be combined into various sizes as small as about 500 square feet and as large as about 2600 square feet. There are also seven more small function rooms on one of the sleeping floors.

The public areas at the Dolphin are much more conducive to mingling than those at the Swan. For instance, the Dolphin's main lobby has 8 conversation areas with comfortable couches and chairs. (Though you might be hard pressed to have much of a conversation at the one with a piano if that instrument was in use.) There are smaller seating areas hidden in various places that could lend themselves to more private conversations. One of the nicer public spaces shared by the two hotels is a pocket-sized private beach with a small but fun-looking kids play set.

The biggest single drawback I saw to a convention at the Swan and Dolphin was the hotel restaurant prices. There are well over a dozen restaurants and lounges between the two hotels. I tried to get a peek at the menu of all of them but just did not have time to cover them all. I *did* get a good sample,

though and the cheapest prices I saw were burgers and sandwiches in the \$6–\$8 range. Typical entrée prices seemed to be \$12–\$20, with some items running considerably higher. The only breakfast prices I saw was a breakfast buffet for \$12.50 (\$6.95 child) and a continental breakfast buffet for \$8.95 (\$4.95 child). Walking anywhere further than the extensive (and thankfully free) parking lot or the Disney-themed miniature golf course across the road is probably out of the question — WDW is laid out with generous spaces between the elements. The nearest non-Disney restaurants (and a grocery store) are about a 15 minute drive away with many others located from there on out.

All in all the facility should work quite nicely for a Worldcon. And if you want to ignore Disney (and the other Orlando-area attractions) you should be able to do so without having them thrust in your face.

At Liberty

LibertyCon 12 was held 22–24 May 1998 near Chattanooga TN. Literary GoH was Lois McMaster Bujold; Artist GoH, Lubov; Special Guest, Wendy Webb; and MC, Wilson "Bob" Tucker. This review was compiled by Pat Brooks from a telephone interview with Marie McCormack and Mike Cothran.

Reportedly, about 300 attendees had a fun filled weekend at LibertyCon. In addition to the main guests, Sharon Green, James P. Hogan, Les Johnson, Kevin Ward, C. S. Williams, and Charles Fontenay attended. David B. Coe from Sewanee TN was also there. Tor published his first book, *Children of Amarid*, in hardback and it is now out in paperback. Congratulations!

LibertyCon was in a new facility this year. A huge patio facilitated much smoffing and provided smokers a place to practice their smoke rings. While the staff was able to provide video room programing on the hotel's cable system, and the outdoor pool was enjoyed by many, some of the programing activities were awkward to get to. Although there was no stage, the masquerade was beamed right into your own private hotel room.

Dealers alley had quite a good variety of merchandise to choose from. The same could be said of the art show. The hotel had facilities which allowed the convention staff to present a very fine art show that made attendees wish their pockets were of the "bottomless well" variety. LibertyCon continued their banquet tradition and this year the theme seemed to be fried seafood. Several people complained that they ate too much.

Les Johnson presented a panel on his experience with Hollywood. He was the science advisor for the *Lost In Space* movie. He denied all responsibility for the Jupiter II's travels through the sun or the grand finale "let's go through the middle of the planet" scene.

Perhaps the highlight of the programing schedule was a reading by Lois McMaster Bujold. Her next working Miles Vorkosigan title is *Imperial Wedding* where Mark returns. Can you say "Butterbugs"? She will be working on a new fantasy next, letting Miles percolate on the back burner for the next 18 months or so.

LibertyCon was the site of Philadelphia and Boston Worldcon bid parties on Saturday night. The Philadelphia party boasted a Ben Franklin look-alike and raffled off a Hershey chocolate computer. It was won by NASFA's Randy

Cleary.

Con†Stellation's room party ran Saturday night from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. amid twinkling lights and frozen daiquiris. Unfortunately the air conditioner had a hard time keeping up

with all the warm bodies packed into the room. To those who endured the heat, thank you for the seventy-one new Fan Family Feud questionnaires you filled out. Glad you dropped by. Check us out in Birmingham at DeepSouthCon.

Off the Deep End

by Mike Kennedy

DeepSouthCon 36/B'hamacon 4 was held at the downtown Birmingham AL Ramada Inn & Suites 12–14 June 1998. Listed guests included Guest of Honor Michael Bishop, Toast-Master Wilson “Bob” Tucker, Fan Guests of Honor Buck and Juanita Coulson, and Artist Guests of Honor David and Lori Deitrick. I'm sure to leave out many other notable professionals present but I'll mention the ones I remember seeing quickly — Toni Weisskopf, David Weber, and Jerry Page. The program book mentions almost 10 more not on this list. Judging by badge numbers, about 350 people made this DSC noticeably larger than the last few I've been to.

DSC 36 was not a heavily programmed con, but neither was it a relaxicon — at least by my standards. They ran basically one track, with a few additional items (e.g., autograph sessions) running in prime-time Saturday. That track was full, however, starting at 5P Friday (before many of the attendees were there) and at 10A Saturday (before many of the attendees were awake). Because it was a DSC, most of the Sunday program centered around business. The annual Southern Fandom Confederation (SFC) business meeting started at 10A, followed by the site selection vote for DSC 38 (in 2000) and Closing Ceremonies including a number of presentations. I'll leave you hanging for a while to hear the various results.

Due to preparations for and running of two (count 'em *two*) parties, I didn't make it to as many programs as I would have liked. I did get to the Art Auction, the Masquerade, all of the Sunday items mentioned above, and I even stuck my head in for a while at the dance. (No, I didn't dance — that would not have been a pleasant sight for anyone present — but I enjoyed the eclectic mix of music and Pat got in one dance before sitting out to spare her back.)

The Masquerade had nine entries ranging from the — well perhaps not sublime but pretty darn good — to the — well, not ridiculous but intentionally warped. Seriously, all of the entries were entertaining. Some of them were really good costumes and others depended more on one good idea/joke or on presentation. All the entries were given some sort of award — a practice of which I do not approve. However, the participants were each good enough in their own way that perhaps the judges can be forgiven. The committee did make one minor faux pas in announcing Best in Show before second and third place. I will do it in the “correct” order. Third place went to Sue Thorn, who also won Best Skit, as “Susie Sparkle.” Second place went to masquerade novice Adrian Washburn, who also won Most Humorous for “A Pylon Warrior.” Donna Tucker won Best Recreation and Best in Show as “Ambassador Delenn” from *Babylon 5*.

DSC hasn't been the single focal point of southern convention fandom for some time, but it is still a very important gathering, top heavy on big-name southern fans. One of the hallmarks of DSC is the announcement of the Rebel, Phoenix, and Rubble awards — two of these fan awards. The Rebel is for service to Southern fandom by a fan. This year two were given, to Tom Feller (outgoing SFC president) and Wilson “Bob”

Tucker. Each of them received a very nice sword. (The physical forms of the Rebel and Phoenix awards vary from year to year.) The Phoenix is for service to Southern fandom by a professional. This year the award went to David Weber. The award was a very nice stained glass display piece by Birmingham's Debbie Rowan.

The Rubble is not awarded by DSC but is administered informally (primarily by Gary Robe) and is annually presented at DSC. While the Rebel and Phoenix are for those that have done the most *for* Southern fandom, the Rubble is for those that have done the most *to* Southern fandom. This year the past Rubble winners (many of whom were present at the con) carried out a conspiracy and elected Gary Robe himself without his knowledge. Gary received the traditional Krystal happy meal and engraved Krystal ash tray. It should be noted that this award is (usually) given in a good natured fashion — including this year.

The SFC business meeting was particularly interesting this year. A proposal was put forth for SFC to officially endorse the Boston for Orlando in 2001 Worldcon bid since it could be considered a Southern Worldcon bid. After considerable discussion, the proposal was defeated by a wide margin. The sense of the group seemed to be that whether this was a Southern bid or not was ambiguous. In addition to some housekeeping items (a minor wording change to the SFC editorial policy, some monetary appropriations, etc.) there were a few other items of interesting business. One particularly interesting to me as a NASFAn was that Huntsville's Sam Smith was acclaimed a “Saint” for his work on putting the SFC Handbook on the World Wide Web. Of wider interest was the election of officers. Treasurer Judy Bemis and Vice President Bill Francis stood for reelection and were swept back into office. Secretary Tim Gatewood and President Tom Feller chose not to run again. Several people were nominated for Secretary. Tom Feller and Naomi Fisher declined nomination. Irv Koch withdrew his nomination in favor of Huntsville's Pat Molloy who is the new Secretary. Birmingham's Julie Wall let herself be cornered and is the new SFC President.

The standing events — the art show, dealers room, and con suite — each had a number of fine points. Pat and I had just gotten back from a major Orlando vacation so money was too short to make many dealers or artists happy. That's a pity since the dual dealers rooms had 16 dealers (about 25–30 tables) with a good range of stuff, including collectable hardbacks, paperbacks, jewelry, t-shirts, sf and media collectibles, weapons, and a range of “new age” merchandise. Pat picked up one paperback. The art show had about 40–50 panels and a modest selection of 3-D art and prints. Almost all the art was appealing and Pat and I were lucky enough to get three pieces at very low prices. I think this may be the only con I've attended with a separate pocket program for the con suite. Special events included a meet-the-guests ice cream social Friday evening, Klingon night on Saturday, and a very successful Sunday breakfast sponsored by (shameless plug) Con†Stellation.

In addition to the con suite festivities, the party scene was quite crowded. There were three parties Friday night including (second shameless plug) one by Con†Stellation, a DSC 38 bid party for Son of BeachCon on Jekyll Island GA, and a Zielke Associates party. At least three parties, including a Chattacon party, a Southern Fandom Press Alliance party, and one which escapes me took place Saturday afternoon. Three more parties took place Saturday evening, a reprise of the Jekyll Island DSC bid party and Worldcon bid parties for Boston in Orlando and Philadelphia. The Zielke Associates and Chattacon parties split a “best party” award from the committee — though my own biased view is that Con†Stellation should have been a contender.

You might guess that Son of BeachCon was running unopposed for DSC 38 and did indeed win for the 2000 DeepSouthCon.

This hotel has been used for various other Birmingham fcs, though it was operating under different management and a different name then. I had hopes that the facility (which has excellent function space) would be a good one for this con. The con committee obviously thought so, too. But in the time since the hotel was selected things have reportedly changed for the worst. The committee did a very good job under adverse circumstances but the hotel certainly let them down. The air conditioning was not up to rather modest summer heat — it was often no cooler inside the hotel than outside. The elevators broke down at least twice (once trapping some of the belly dancers and a pregnant woman) and vibrated a lot when they did work. Most people had no or insufficient towels in their room. The public bathrooms were not serviced and were often out of toilet tissue. Half of the electrical outlets in the art show were not working. All but one or two of the electrical outlets in the con suite died early Saturday and were never turned back on. (This adversely affected some of the food the con suite staff had planned.) As I said, the committee coped but I hope they never go back to that hotel again.

DSC 37 will be held in conjunction with Crescent City Con in New Orleans LA 31 July – 2 August 1999. Check out their web site at < <http://www.fatsnake.com/cc/index.html> > for more information. DSC 38 will be 19–21 May 2000 at Jekyll Island GA. Write Son of BeachCon, P. O. Box 1271, Brunswick GA 31521-1271 or call Bill Francis at (912) 638-1486 for more information. I’ll see you at both of them.

Letters of Comment

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

Harry Warner, Jr
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown MD 21740

15 May 1998

On the 55th anniversary of my first day on the job as a full-time newspaper reporter, I can state firmly that I’m glad I’m writing a loc instead of a news story on May 15. Specifically, a loc about the May *Shuttle*.

I had an upset stomach in the middle of this week. The after-effects made it unwise for me to read about the Jovian food. I’ll know better if you publish the results of the Saturn edibles.

The CostumeCon review introduced me to facets of civilization that I’d never before known about. I still am not certain

what shamrock weaving may be, nor do I understand what a computer does when it dinkers. Maybe it’s just as well, because I am not sure I’m old enough to hear the full facts in the cases.

The PartheCon review is also productive of new knowledge, this time about fandom’s Charles Dickens. He should start negotiations with some book publisher or other about the assignment to write a new conclusion onto *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. It would differ from all the others that have been published by legitimately listing Charles Dickens as the author. (For the record, I don’t think Edwin Drood was murdered. The original Charles Dickens loved to bring back into his stories characters who had been reported dead. I think he ran away because he thought he would be blamed for the death of whoever it was who was found in that lime pit.)

Darrell Richardson isn’t a priest as Carlo DeShouten thinks. He is a minister in a Protestant denomination.

Marcia Illingworth’s complaints about England’s health system are similar to others I’ve read. Hagerstown has just acquired a maverick doctor who is ignoring all the health insurance systems, federal and HMO and so on. He invites anyone who needs a doctor to come to his office without an appointment, and he makes house calls when needed. I don’t think there has been a physician advertising those two things in Hagerstown for at least a quarter-century. The catch is that he won’t get involved in any insurance that the patient may have. I gather from a newspaper article that he charges \$65 a visit and will accept payments on the installment plan if necessary.

An area resident drowned just the other day in a creek near Hagerstown. He was fishing, his dog was with him, the dog jumped into the water and got carried away, the man tried to rescue him, and that was the end of both. Authorities had been warning for weeks against boating or swimming in this area’s running waters because they’re high and fast as a result of extremely heavy precipitation since the first of the year, and yet there are rescues needed from time to time of people who went boating and overturned.

There’s no difficulty about when an abortion is an abortion. From the instant the sperm and the egg merge, a new human life has been created. If it’s destroyed within a few hours by a morning-after pill or killed in the third trimester by a “partial birth” procedure, it’s an abortion. If “sentience” in its dictionary definition were considered as a factor in the abortion issue, it would be legal to kill an adult who is asleep or under anesthetic.

[While I won’t shy away from printing opinions from my loccers on almost any subject, I hope we don’t get bogged down in a protracted discussion about abortion. Feelings on that subject run particularly deep and positions are generally very polarized so that I doubt anyone would change their mind in even the slightest extent from something read in these pages. For now I’ll move to lighter subjects. Yes, Harry, you can find the Saturn food “quiz” elsewhere in this issue. As I write this reply, no one has told me they came up with all the right answers from last month’s list. Maybe they’re just shy. -ED]

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

Buck Coulson
2677W-500N
Hartford City IN 47348

17 May 1998

I agree fully with Anita Eisenberg’s review of *The Stress*

of *Her Regard*. Tim Powers is one of the two or three best fantasy writers of today. All of his books are good, though his most recent, being the sequel of two previous unconnected novels, isn't as good as most.

One former priest goes to Rivercons regularly, Carlo. He began going when he was a priest, but eventually resigned from the service, got married, and is raising show dogs.

Since I have never been to a rock concert and never intend to be, I can hardly argue about them.

Marcia is right that going out onto thin ice to rescue a dog is very stupid. Dogs can swim quite well, even if their only stroke is the "dog-paddle."

I offered to write something about Poul Anderson for Lan? I thought after over 40 years in fandom that I knew better than to do that...

Doubleday did come up with the Hall of Fame idea almost 30 years ago, but it was just for stories; one thick volume of short stories and two of "novellas," which were mostly novellettes.

Juanita claims I think like a dog, Sheryl, but only a few fans have called me one — usually prefixed by "dirty."

Actually, the first "Star Trek" tv show was premiered at TriCon, the Cleveland Worldcon, and the fans loved it. Not because it was so marvelous, but that it was so much better than any other visual stf of the time. "Time Tunnel" was premiered at the same con, and got booted. Roddenberry was a bit nervous about facing a fan audience, and apologized for the show's shortcomings more than he bragged about it, and seemed quite gratified by the favorable response. Fans also got royal treatment when visiting the set during the early years, or at least Juanita, Bruce, and I certainly did. (Of course, we went with Kay Anderson, who was doing articles about various tv shows and personalities at the time, which might have helped.) Juanita and I didn't think the original "Lost In Space" tv show had much originality and have avoided it ever since.

Enough. Maybe you can hand me the next *Shuttle* at DeepSouthCon, though if you do I'll probably mislay it before getting home.

[Pat also speaks well of Tim Power's work — if I ever have time to actually *read* anything I'll have to try him out. Perhaps

my nature is not trusting enough, but somehow I find it difficult to take seriously a "Hall of Fame" selected by a publisher who is in the business of selling a book with those stories in it. Would they select a story that, for one reason or another, they could not get the rights to publish? Would they select a story that, though seminal, was dated and "out of fashion" at the moment? Would they select a story that they didn't have room for in the book? I don't *think* so. This is not to say that a publisher cannot play a major role — for instance in sponsoring an award — just so long as they don't have any particular say in the administration of the award or in who is selected. -ED]

POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC-POC

Sheryl Birkhead
23629 Woodfield Road
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22 May 1998

I'm curious to see the answers to the food descriptions. I thought it would be obvious (and maybe it will be *after* I see the answers!)

Congratulations to Pat on the costume — I've thought about it before (I figure that *can* be the epitome of anonymity — sorta) — but that's it, so far.

I'll leave the tirade on BSE (aka mad cow disease) to others.

I *used* to read most (all?) of the nominations in fiction except for novels by buying 2 books — *The Best of* (Terry Carr then Silverberg, I think) and the Dozois collection. The Dozois has gotten to expensive and not as "inclusive" — I guess people's tastes are broader now.

The recent *Knarley Knews* has a long, medically fact-filled letter from Lan — hope things are still improving.

[The answers for each month's food "quiz" appears that same month, Sheryl — the May answers were on page 4. I'm hurriedly editing the letters over two weeks after we received yours, Sheryl. I just got back from an almost two week long family vacation and have only a couple of days before leaving for DeepSouthCon. We haven't heard from Lan this month (unless the letter was lost by our house sitter). -ED]



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Con†Stellation XVII: Hydra

9–11 October 1998

Guest of Honor: Mike Resnick

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Con†Stellation XVII: Hydra

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