

MidFanzine 3 : Impressions



Summer 2004

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Midfan

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Editorial Comments

So here's MidFanzine #3, only, um, nearly a year behind schedule. That's not very common in fannish publishing, is it? :P

Despite the fact that I am not alone, I do apologize that we have not kept up to our intended printing schedule. Midfan hit what our President referred to as the Sophomore Slumps this year, and as for me, well, I found out it really does take a lot of your time to chair a convention – the rumors are true!

I particularly regret not promoting Midwest Construction 3, which is even now happening in Columbus Ohio. But luckily one of the attendees is reading this and thinking about writing a con report. (Yes, you!)

Chairing ConFusion in 2004 was a lot of fun and I am again chairing it in 2005 – I hope to see you all there and perhaps at other Midwest conventions (see the schedule on p 6). With this continued demand on my time, I am for the moment stepping down as MidFanzine Editor. I've been quite pleased by the response to the first two issues of MidFanzine, and am especially tickled to have people both writing and promising me LOCs. Keep them coming!

—Anne KG Murphy

A Note from the President

Is there anyone else reading this who would really like a do-over for this last year?

So many people within our fannish community have had a really rough time of late. Many of us find ourselves out of work, or facing unusual medical problems, or dealing with an extreme amount of stress. Tragedies seem to come at us from every direction, usually we are the least prepared to cope with them. Tempers seem a little shorter, money seems a little tighter, and things just seem to be going more wrong and right.

So the idea of just wiping the slate and starting from scratch seems like a fine idea, right?

Of course not. Wiping the slate clean means losing everything we have learned along the way. It means we might make the same mistakes again, or maybe even worse mistakes, out of ignorance. Things can always be worse than they are now.

So we do what we always do. We pull together as best we can, a family-by-choice, and we look forward. We make our next opportunity to do something our second chance, and we do our best to make it better. We work a little harder, try to listen a little more, and realize that there is very little we cannot accomplish when we pull together. We move forward, not back.

Let's see how we do this year.

Joseph "Uncle Vlad" Stockman
President, Midfan



A Short History of Midfan: From Its Founding Through Midwest Construction 1

By Steven H. Silver

Author's Note. Originally, this was supposed to have run in Midfanzine 1 and the article which ran there, the con report on Midwest Construction 1, was supposed to run in Midfanzine 3. However, I mailed the esteemed editor the wrong file and so they are appearing in reverse order.

With Midwest Construction 1 a part of history, now seems like a good time to look over the first twenty-one months of the history of Midwest Fannish Conventions, Inc., the organization which was initially founded as corporate cover for the convention, but which now is poised to take on a much larger role in Midwestern fandom. If we are successful, future Sam Moskowitzes and Jack Speers will take a look at our early history in light of our future history and make grand pronouncements about what we did and why we did it. I'm here, without any historical context, to say those future histories are bunk and to outline my own goals as Midfan grew.

One of the things you'll notice is that the initial growth of Midfan and Midwest Construction were closely linked.

Earliest Glimmer: December 2000

In December 2000, Erik V. Olson of St. Louis, Missouri, Tammy Coxen of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Steven H Silver of Northbrook, Illinois, all attended their first SMOFcon, held in Cocoa Beach, Florida. After the convention, it was dissected on the SMOFs mailing list¹. Tammy made a comment that although she had a great time at the convention, she felt that it focused a little too much on running a Worldcon, something which she had no interest in doing. Although I had recently worked on a Worldcon, being the programming director for Chicon 2000, I didn't see taking such a large role in another for quite some time and had more of an interest in running local conventions.

I also noticed that very few of the members of SMOFcon 18 came from the Midwest. Of the 125 members, only 13 came from the Midwest, representing Minneapolis, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Lexington, St Louis, Pittsburgh, and Ontario. None of the Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, or Iowa cons were represented and the representatives from St. Louis and Lexington didn't really represent any of the Missouri or Kentucky cons and the Kentuckians were about to move to California, where they eventually ran SMOFcon 20 in San Diego². I found myself wondering if so few Midwesterners came because of the travel involved.

About that time, Erik Olson was in Chicago and we got together for dinner with Randy Kaempfen and Bill and Gretchen Roper. At the time, I had been talking to Bill and a few other people about ways to bring Chicago fandom closer together. It seemed to me that if LA, Boston, Philadelphia and other cities could have an active fandom outside of cons, Chicago should be able to have one also. Tammy's comment caused the wheels to revolve in a different way.

Before dinner, I sent an e-mail off to Erik asking him what he thought of the idea of running a SMOFcon-like event in the Midwest which would focus on running local and regional conventions in the Midwest. Erik liked the idea and suggested that we focus on holding the first convention in 2002. One of the reasons for this was lead time; we figured we would have to sell the idea to a number of Midwestern con runners who had never attended a con-runners' con. Just as importantly, SMOFcon in 2001 was set to be held in York and we didn't want anyone to get the impression that we were trying to run a North American SMOFcon to compete with the real SMOFcon.

¹ To join the SMOFs mailing list, which includes input from con-runners across the country, send an e-mail to SMOFS-subscribe@sflovers.org.

² December 6-8, 2002.

We floated the idea on the SMOFs mailing list to see what kind of reception it would receive. Although there was some positive reception, the comments that stood out were the negative ones. One Midwestern fan didn't really see the point of holding it. Another Midwestern fan accused us of wanting to be big fish in a little pond. Some East Coast fan also questioned the need for a Midwestern con-runners convention and applied the East Coast situation to the Midwest. Erik and I both felt that there were major differences between the two regions because of the spaces between cons. East Coast fans see each other quite a bit more as they travel the circuit. Three hundred miles can incorporate a dozen conventions. In the Midwest, 300 miles can incorporate just your local cons and perhaps one or two others. The exchange got so heated that I called some East Coast fans and explained our reasoning. While they might not have completely agreed with the need after that phone call, they appeared to accept the logic of our arguments.

Laying the Foundation: 2001

Given that Tammy's comments had precipitated the entire venture, I invited her to join Erik and me on the steering committee for what I had begun to refer to by the dismal name Midwest Comcon. With Tammy on board, I began to compile a list of all Midwestern conventions so we could try to select a weekend to hold the convention. Via e-mail, we discussed things we wanted to avoid. Our first priority was to avoid sitting on top of, or immediately prior to, any Midwest convention. Our secondary goal was to avoid Worldcon or SMOFcon and our third goal was to avoid any of the major non-Midwestern conventions (Westercon, Boskone, etc.). We were somewhat astounded to discover that we were limited to a brief period of time in July or September, and July only opened up because of the announcement of the demise of Rivercon.

Erik and I met at O'Hare during one of his many layovers. During this time, we outlined the way we figured the organization would be set up. The initial discussion had a five member Board of Directors, each serving a five year term on a rotational basis. We figured that Tammy, Erik and I would be the first three members, with two more Board members elected at the convention, which would eventually acquire the name Midwest Construction. No more than two board members could live within 100 miles of each other. In addition to an open meeting held at Midwest Construction, we figured another open meeting would be held each year at a different Midwestern convention to be held no closer than 200 miles from the site of Midwest Construction.

Erik pointed out that as long as we were incorporating, we could use the corporate cover for a multitude of purposes. We began to talk long term goals, including hosting a SMOFcon in the Midwest, establishing a floating regional convention, and eventually sponsoring a Worldcon. In addition, Midfan would eventually be able to provide corporate cover to start-up conventions, biddable conventions, and one-shots. We had already indicated that we hoped that Midwest Construction would become an annual affair and Tammy had indicated a willingness to host the second one in Ann Arbor in 2004. We discussed membership in Midfan, figuring that there would be a two tier member system, full members and associate members, the former being members who lived in the Midwest and the latter being comprised of people from outside the Midwest. We weren't sure exactly what the benefits of membership would be, but we figured that there would be some. At this time, the idea of having some sort of club fanzine was first bandied about.

Once we determined that we were doing something which would incorporate more than just Midwest Construction, I began to realize that one of my goals was more than just the convention running aspect. Midfan could be a mechanism for creating ties between the disparate parts of Midwestern fandom. Unfortunately, this concept would come back to haunt Midfan when we got around to writing a constitution. Either I didn't make my intents clear or other members didn't understand them because there was a contingent that viewed Midfan as primarily a con-running organization while I viewed it as an organization which would bring Midwestern fans together, using con-running as one of its methods.

To get things going, Tammy, Erik and I each kicked in \$48 for our annual memberships to Midfan, and proceeded to buy memberships for Midwest Construction, for whenever the first one would happen; the weekend about two weeks after ConJosé began to look like the best contender. While the uncashed checks sat in my house, I filled out paperwork for incorporation in Illinois as a non-profit organization. Because I was handling the financial end, I sort of fell into the position of treasurer. Erik had been keeping notes and was

proclaimed secretary, which left Tammy as the President of Midfan. Illinois law required at least three officers for a corporation, so we were set for that.

According to our filing for incorporation, our purposes were

While I took this to mean that we were going to build bridges across the gaps in Midwestern fandom, apparently this was not as evident as I thought.

While waiting for the state to approve our articles of incorporation, I began the next step of planning for Midwest Construction and looked at a couple of hotels. My goals were to find a hotel that was relatively inexpensive, near good food, and easily accessible for fen who were flying in.

Killing two birds with one stone, I scheduled appointments to see a couple of hotels in Rosemont, Illinois. The first hotel was a possible relocation site for Windycon while the second could be a site for Midwest Construction. I already knew the layout of the Embassy Suites-Rosemont because a Chicon meeting had been held there and I already had a proposal in hand from the Doubletree-Glenview, which had the same layout. Given that these meetings occurred on 11 September 2001, it is somewhat incredible that the meetings not only went ahead, but that the Midfan meeting bore fruit when the Embassy Suites offered us a much better deal than the Doubletree-Glenview.

We looked at a few other hotels while we were at it, but eventually went with the Embassy Suites-Rosemont. It wasn't inexpensive, it wasn't near good food, but airport accessibility was fantastic. One out of three ain't bad. On the other hand, they handled the con perfectly³.

By the time Worldcon rolled around in Philadelphia, we had a weekend and, almost certainly the hotel. Tammy was tapped to run a Midwest Construction party at MilPhil. By all accounts, it was one of the most successful parties of the Worldcon, running through the wee hours of the morning and well into the 5:00 am range. During the party, Tammy and Erik were selling memberships to Midwest Construction, bringing in our first non-board members and our first member from outside the Midwest.

On October 30, 2001, the State of Illinois sent us a letter informing us that we were now a corporation. With letter and tax identification number in hand, I went down to the bank and opened an account for us, using all those wonderful checks I had been sitting on from Worldcon and before.

Now that we had a signed contract, we had to figure out how to get people into the door. As the chair of Midwest Construction, that fell to me. I talked the convention up at the cons I went to and sent flyers to as many Midwestern consoms as I could. I made the conscious decision not to just drop flyers on the flyer table, since we were more targeted than a normal con and didn't want people with no interest in con-running to show up.

Of course, rumors about Midfan and Midwest Construction also started to spring up. I heard reports that some people were referring to the whole thing as Steven's egoboo and, in 2002 when Dina Krause announced a prospective Chicago Worldcon bid, some people began speculating that Midfan was a cover for that bid. In fact, Midfan is not currently affiliated with any Worldcon bid, aside from supporting all of the current Midwest bids in principle⁴.

We also wanted to gain members for Midfan (not necessarily the same thing). We brainstormed a listing of about 30 people we would like to have join Midfan. Although a letter was drafted, we never got it out the door because we were working with crossed signals. I thought Erik was going to mail it out and he thought I had mailed it out. The result being that we didn't gain any members through this project.

³ See "A Short History of Midfan: Midwest Construction 1," in *MidFanzine 1*.

⁴ KC in '06, BidColumbus for '07, St. Louis NASFiC in '07.

Houston, We Have an Organization: 2002

As mentioned above, Dina Krause announced the possibility of a Worldcon bid for Chicago, aiming at 2010⁵. At the same time, Kansas City was running a bid against Los Angeles for 2006. We discussed the situation and decided that at present, Midfan was not in a position to offer any sort of real help for any Worldcon bids. Instead, we could support the bids as individuals, and offer to support the bids in principle as an organization. In the future, perhaps, Midfan will take a more active role in either supporting or running a Worldcon bid.

Mark Herrup came on board as a back-up hotel liaison for Midwest Construction 1 in the first half of 2002, and Pat Sayre McCoy was named to run the hospitality suite at Midwest Construction 1. Pat had run two Windycon green rooms for me, as well as the green room at Chicon 2000, so I knew that we both saw eye to eye on what the hospitality suite for Midwest Construction should be. Both Mark and Pat joined Erik and me when we met with our Sales Manager at the Embassy Suites to select a menu for the banquet we were holding on Saturday night.

We held two meetings at Duckon, in Schaumburg, Illinois in June, 2002. The first was a closed meeting of the Board of Directors. The primary purpose of this meeting was to make sure we had our ducks all aligned. It was at this meeting that Erik suggested that we invite a couple of more members to join. Mark Herrup and Joseph “Uncle Vlad” Stockman would increase the size of our band to five at this meeting. At Erik’s suggestion, we would also implement a rather unique method of voting, which involved pointing at the person who would be required to do work and laughing at them.

The second Duckon meeting was an open meeting, our way of announcing ourselves to the world. A representative from the newly announced BidColumbus committee, Lisa Ragsdale, attended the meeting and we grilled her on the bid’s experience, facilities and plans. Tammy and I had attended numerous Marcons, which is the bid’s home convention, and knew enough about their function space to realize that it could contain a Worldcon. The big facilities question was whether or not they had the hotel space to host one. On the eve of Midwest Construction, I realized that we still didn’t have the long sought after Constitution. Using a variety of sources, I put one together and sent it out to Tammy, Erik, Uncle Vlad, and Mark, asking for comments. The comments I received were that it looked good, generally. We agreed to discuss the by-laws at Midwest Construction and vote on them. Unfortunately, it didn’t quite work out that way and the by-laws were accepted at Midwest Construction with the agreement that we would revisit them. During the course of MWC1, we learned that there were some wild disagreements about what Midfan should be and how it should be organized and those will be discussed in a subsequent chapter of *A Short History of Midfan*.

The initial part of Midfan’s history culminates with the running of Midwest Construction 1 in Rosemont, Illinois during the weekend of September 20-22. I’ve already detailed that in another article and would suggest tracking down a copy of “A Short History of Midfan: Midwest Construction 1” in *MidFanzine 1* to see how successful we were in that first project.

⁵ Now aiming for 2008.

Midwest Convention List

September

- Sept 17-19 **Midwest Construction 3** Columbus, OH
<http://www.Midfan.org/mwc.html>
- Sept 30-Oct 3 **Archon 28** St. Louis, MO Area (IL side of the Mississippi)
<http://www.archonstl.org/28/>

October

- Oct 1-3 **Arcana 34** Saint Paul, MN
<http://pages.prodigy.net/rekal/>
- Oct 1-3 **Context 17** Columbus, OH
<http://www.contextcon.com/contexthome.htm>
- Oct 8-10 **Icon 29** Cedar Rapids, IA
<http://www.mindbridge.org/icon/>
- Oct 22-24 **ConClave 29: Urban Fantasy** Lansing, MI
<http://www.conclavesf.org/>
- Oct 29-31 **Ohio Valley Filk Fest (OVFF) 20** Dublin, OH
<http://www.ovff.org/>

November

- Nov 12-14 **WindyCon 31** Rosemont, IL
<http://www.windycon.org/>
- Nov 12-14 **Fiddler's Green: A Sandman Convention** Minneapolis, MN
<http://www.fiddlersgreencon.org/>
- Nov 26-28 **Chambanacon 34** Springfield, IL
<http://www.chambanacon.org/>

2005

January

- Jan 21-23 **31 Flavors of ConFusion** Detroit, MI
<http://www.stilyagi.org/cons/2005>

February

- Feb 10-13 **Capricon 25: Mad Scientists** Chicago, IL
<http://www.capricon.org/>
- Feb 18-20 **VisionCon 2005** Springfield, MO
<http://www.visioncon.net/>

March

- Mar 4-6 **Marscon: Episode VII** Bloomington, MN
<http://marscon.org/>
- Mar 11-13 **Consecration 1** Chicago, IL
<http://www.consecration-con.org/>
- Mar 18-20 **Millenicon 19** Blue Ash, OH
<http://www.millennicon.org/>

April

- Apr 8-10 **Odessy Con V** Madison, WI
<http://www.venture-1.com/~oddcon/>
- Apr 22-24 **Penguicon** Novi, MI
<http://www.penguicon.org/>
- Apr 30 **Genrecon** Sarnia, ON, Canada
genreconca@yahoo.ca

May

- May 6-8 **To Be Continued, The Musical** Rosemont, IL
<http://www.2becontinued.com/>

If you would like your convention added to this list, email editor@Midfan.org

Reflections on Torcon 3

By Anne KG Murphy

At Torcon I enjoyed meeting a number of people who had written to me, including Lloyd Penney, who is visibly much more energetic yet than he describes himself, and Guy and Rose Marie Lillian. Rose Marie made a particularly strong impression on me as a delightful and interesting person. I spoke to her briefly at both the pre-Hugo reception and the Hugo Losers Party and I hope I might get to know her better in the future.

I was able to attend both those exclusive events due to Cheryl Morgan's generosity –she invited me to accompany her, as I am her proofreader for the Hugo-nominated fanzine, *Emerald City*. Not only did I get to schmooze before and after the event, I also got to sit in the second row at the Hugos themselves, in the Hugo Nominees section. And Cheryl introduced me to China Meville, Nalo Hopkinson, and Neil Gaiman, on whom I'm sure I made no impression as I was too shy to assert myself in their company.

The Hugo Award ceremony made a positive impression on me, though. I had not had the pleasure before of seeing Spider Robinson perform, and rather enjoyed his Paul Simon parody, "50 ways to lose a Hugo". Spider seemed to perceive the SF industry to be in a lull, and urged us all to continue to pursue the dream of a space-faring society and inspiring said society through science fiction. Later in the night Gardner Dozois took part of his moment at the podium to counter the implication of a sparse field, declaring this to be the golden age of science fiction. I don't know about anyone else, but I didn't really believe him. Just a couple months ago I was trying to come up with names of active authors in response to an assertion by old friends that very little good hard science fiction has been written lately. Once I found they had already covered the works of David Weber, Orson Scott Card, Vernor Vinge, and Connie Willis (and that Connie is getting more Fantasy contracts now than Science Fiction ones), I was stuck for suggestions. [Your own suggestions are welcome in the LOC column.]

But that doesn't mean optimism is dead. Quite the contrary. And even if Spider was being political about it, I personally really enjoyed his final speech, in which he read his own description of witnessing a space shuttle launch. I've seen a shuttle launch, and every part of his description of it rang true in my veins. That included both the moment when the base of it is afire and you fear it is lost, and the moment just after, when the world is lit up by the twin engines and, amazingly enough, the shuttle slowly lifts and heads out beyond the sky.

Probably my favorite moment of the con was sitting on a bed Sunday night swapping stories with Neil Rest, Geri Sullivan, and Dean Gahlon. Passing by an open door in the Royal York, I had overheard Neil telling someone that this room was effectively the fanzine room. So once we finished passing out copies of the hoax newsletter π , I went to my room, took off my necklace (it was time to just be a geek), grabbed my copies of MidFanzines 1 and 2, and headed back there. If you see Geri (or anyone else who was at the Saturday and Sunday WSFS Business meetings), ask about the Time Traveling World Science Fiction Convention's financial report. That in itself is a fun story, but I also got to hear how the Time Traveling convention got started, which is also a good story, but told better by someone other than me, so, um ... [that's a hint, guys]. And I relaxed among friends, and felt really happy.

Which is, after all, what this is all about.

And a year has passed, and Noreascon Four has come and gone; Emerald City won a Hugo award and I have gotten to know Neil Gaiman over three different conventions and met several other authors and editors and that was all very exciting, but I still think times like the moment described just above are the core reason we do these things – not for the awards, the egoboo or the glamour of rubbing shoulders with Big Names, but for the magic of swapping our stories with people like us. And as I've been saying in my .sig sometimes of late:

*Running SF conventions is Fun and we do it because the results are Wondrous, Magical, and Good.
(Repeat as necessary. Don't forget to breathe.)*

The Perpetual Registration Database Project

By Joseph "Uncle Vlad" Stockman

A few years back, representatives from the various Chicago-area conventions got together to try something different. We were going to design and implement a single online database that all the conventions could use to maintain the contact information for their convention attendees. It was a good idea that just bogged down and died.

It is time to breathe life back into the plan.

Rather than a technical document (that will come later), this is a conceptual document. I know that this concept has polarized some portions of our membership, and I understand the very legitimate concerns people have voiced about their privacy and the security of their data. This document hopes to address some of those concerns and provide a starting point for further discussion.

If you have any questions about it, or if you want to become involved in the final design and implementation, please feel free to contact me directly.

"How did this idea start?"

Fandom tends to be a fairly mobile group. We move frequently. We change email addresses and phone numbers often. And that makes it difficult for all of the conventions we attend to keep track of us over the years. So when the time comes for a convention mailing, and they have our wrong address, and the progress report is returned or never reaches us, everyone loses.

While in a perfect world everyone would remember to send change of information to each and every convention they attend, it often doesn't happen. Given the overlap in registration of many conventions, a centralized database where individuals could maintain their own contact information and conventions could receive updates right before a major mailing or the event itself.

Conventions save money lost by mailings sent to bad addresses. Attendees have a central place to update their information when it changes. Everyone wins.

"What are you planning to store?"

Each individual account will be assigned a unique ID, which will be randomly selected. In addition, the following will be included in each record:

- Full Name
- Mailing Address
- Phone Numbers
- Email Addresses
- Preferred Badge Name
- Conventions attended (who submitted your name as part of their registration)
- Conventions approved (who has the right to download your information)
- Contact preference (snail mail or email)

That is it. That is all we will store centrally. Individual conventions may store more information in their records, but not in the central system.

"Who has access to my information?"

Well, you will be able to access your own information. Any convention that has submitted your name as part of their upload has the right to download it as part of their update. And you will be able to specify whether or

not conventions that you have not attended have the right to your information. Beyond that, no one has access. This is not a mailing list or fannish directory. It is a database for the specific purpose of making things easier for both conventions and attendees.

"Can I opt out of the database?"

Yes. At any time, you can turn your record off in the database. You can also specify that specific conventions may not download your new information.

"Who is going to maintain the database?"

Midfan. By that, I mean that the active membership will select a committee to oversee the database on a year-to-year basis. The committee will report directly to the officers of Midfan. The data itself will be housed on a secured third-party server. The expenses for all of this will be divided annually among all of the conventions participating in the service.

"How secure is my information?"

As secure as we can make it. All connections will be made across an encrypted connection. The data within the database will most likely be encrypted as well. We are still working out the technical aspects, but please rest assured that your privacy and the security of your data are the priorities here. We will NOT launch this project if we are not satisfied that we are doing everything we can to keep your data safe and secure.

"Who decides which conventions can participate?"

One of the duties of the committee will be to screen conventions. We will set up guidelines for who can participate, and those guidelines will be part of the website for the database. Any convention wanting to participate must sign an agreement in advance to do two things: pay their fair share of the costs, and not use the data for any purpose other than their own convention mailings and their own convention registration.

"How soon do you think this will happen?"

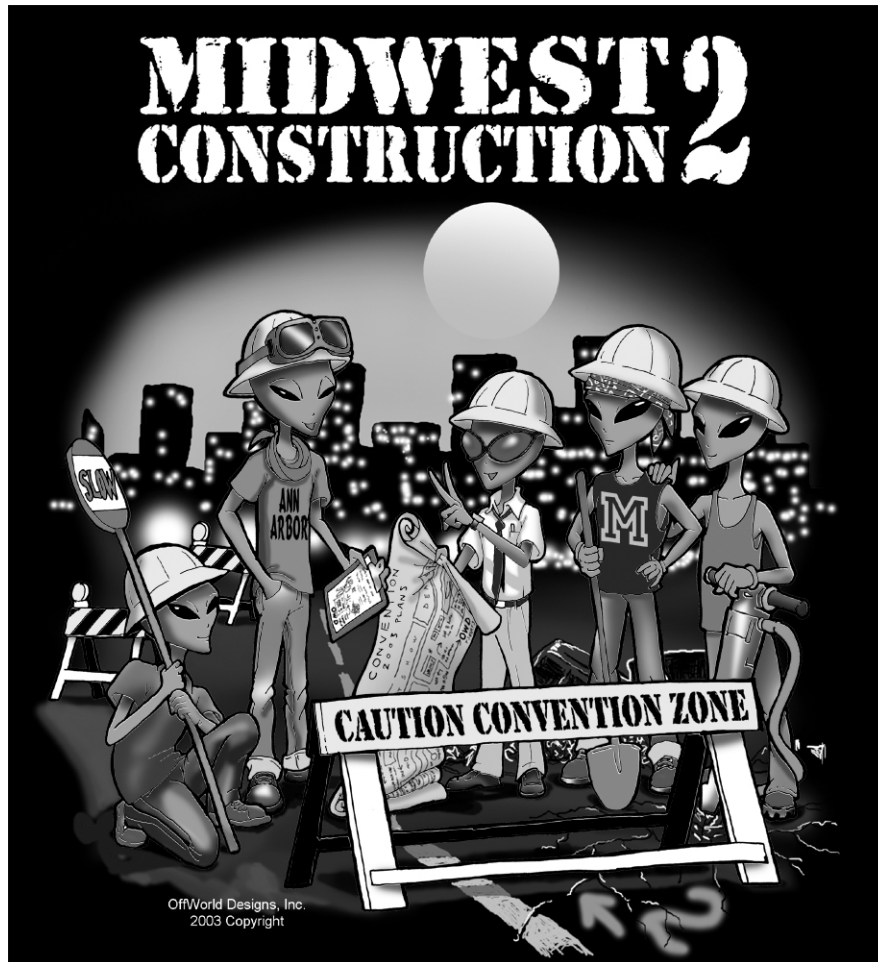
We are hoping to have it ready before the end of the year. However, we are still working on the technical aspects of securing the data. Further announcements will be made on the Midfan site (<http://www.Midfan.org>) as progress is made.

"You realize there are going to be some complaints about Big Brother, right?"

We've heard them all before, and we will continue to listen to them. There are very legitimate questions concerning this, which is why we are putting the idea in front of the membership now, and soliciting those very concerns. If we cannot adequately answer them, we should not be doing this.

In conclusion, I would like to invite anyone interested in helping with this project to contact me directly. I am hoping to have a web page and mailing list for the project up and running by MWC3. If not, you all should know where to find me.

Thank you all for your interest, your comments, and your honesty.



**T-shirt Design By
Ray Van Tilburg**

Midwest Construction 2

By Tammy Coxen

MWC 2 was held September 19-21, 2003 at the Hawthorn Suites in Ann Arbor, MI. Tammy Coxen was Chair. Here we have her Livejournal account of the event, which went quite well. Tammy did a wonderful job despite being extra tired out by her pregnancy. And Liam got in utero smof training! –Ed.

MWC, Day One

The first day of Midwest Construction seemed to go pretty well. It got off to a very rough start, as I couldn't get the printer to work right and had an absolute breakdown and temper tantrum. I woke Eric up from a dead sleep to help out, and he was very understanding and sweet throughout, and made it possible for me to eventually get out of the house (only 2 hours after I had originally planned to...)

Picked Erik V. Olson up at the airport, then went shopping for consuite supplies. We went to Big Ten and got cheese and sausage and microbrew beer and Izze soda and cookies and chocolate. Which all went over fabulously.

A group of 11 of us went off for dinner at Don Carlos. I would have preferred La Fiesta or Sabor Latino, but I figured (correctly) that Don Carlos would be able to seat 11 at 6 pm, and would get us out in time to get back for our 8 pm mixer. The mixer was a little lame, but since I was making it up as I went along, I guess that was to be expected. I didn't bother going to the 9:30 panel on running concomm meetings because I was getting a wonderful (and much needed) massage from Matt.

After that I actually got a second wind, and ended up hanging out chatting (and snacking on awesome cheese) longer than I had planned, and got home a little after midnight. Now I must be off to bed since I need to do this again tomorrow (although hopefully without the angsty morning and temper tantrum).

Oh, a couple of last bits. We have a boardroom that we're using for registration and freebie table, and a suite next door that we're using for the consuite. At the last minute the hotel offered me a second boardroom for free, and we've declared that to be the gaming room. Barb Van Tilberg has her portable DVD player hooked up to the TV in her suite just down the hall, so she's running the video room. Not bad for a convention with all of 35 people...

MWC Day Two

Woke up far too early this morning. Stopped at Hillers to pick up some bagels and muffins for the consuite (the hotel has a breakfast buffet for registered guests, but I figured we should have something for munching and for those who woke up too late). There were already some folks up and having breakfast when I got there, so I enjoyed that. Erik V. Olson made an interesting observation about east coast vs midwest fans. All of the east coast fans sat alone eating their breakfast and reading newspapers while the midwest fans gathered together in chatty little clusters to eat. Hmmm.

I attended zero programming. In the morning Marah and I went off to Busch's and picked up supplies for our picnic lunch. The weather was absolutely lovely - some people were a bit cold and would have appreciated it a couple degrees warmer, but I was standing over the grill cooking burgers and thought it was just fine! We had burgers and sausages and salads and chips and veggies and dip and ice cream cones for dessert. After lunch, Steven Silver ran his trivia for chocolate, and everybody had a good time with that. I was amused by my ability to estimate prices - I asked Steven for \$150 to buy lunch supplies and the bill came to \$152.44.

After lunch I was supposed to be on a panel about negotiating hotel contracts, but I decided to nap in the consuite instead - Ben Yalow is perfectly capable of running that panel by himself, and Dina Krause took over as my stunt double. After a couple hours of dozing I felt okay, helped by a half a glass of Coke to perk me up a bit. Hung around and talked to people, dispensed restaurant advice (rather than create a formal restaurant guide I had various Ann Arbor publications and was the interactive guide). Everybody dispersed to downtown Ann Arbor for dinner - me and Alex and Marah and Ben and Pam and somebody else who I embarrassingly can't remember went to Shehan Shah for Indian.

There were two room parties tonight in addition to the consuite (silly for a 35 person convention, but there were people at them, so that's all good). They both had excellent food, but unfortunately everybody was stuffed from dinner. I think we're having leftovers for lunch tomorrow. Eric was supposed to come out so I could prove to people that I really have a husband (since he doesn't travel to cons with me, people have occasionally doubted his existence), but he moved 5 fishtanks to the new house today and when he got home the couch caught him. Which was fine, because I was ready to come home myself. I have a 10 am Midfan meeting tomorrow morning, so I should get to sleep.

MWC Day Three

For the first time in about 3 1/2 years, I am not chair of any convention. Does this mean I have to give my license plate back?

Slept a little better last night. Got to the hotel in time to catch the last of the buffet breakfast, and then it was time for our Midfan meeting. We took care of a bunch of business very quickly, so it was a good meeting. People went off to the 11 am panel and I looked over all the leftovers from the two parties the night before to determine if we had enough food for lunch. Turns out we did, so we plated up a bunch of stuff and headed back out to the pavilion, since it was another nice day out and the pavilion easily has enough room for everyone. It was nice to not have to do another shopping run. People had been trickling out all morning, so there were somewhat less of us than yesterday. Eric showed up towards the end of lunch so I got to spend a little bit of time with him and prove that he existed, then he was off to work on the house.

After lunch we started cleaning up the consuite. At 3 pm I attended my only program item of the convention, a

British parliamentary style debate on the nature of Green Rooms. It worked reasonably well, but you could tell that everyone was tired. At the end of the panel we had an informal feedback session so that next year's conchair could get some ideas for what people liked and didn't like. MWC3 will be held in Columbus, OH, chaired by Lisa Ragsdale-Garrison.

Then it was back to the consuite to distribute leftovers, clean up, and say goodbyes to the last few stragglers.

It was a good convention - I think people had a lot of fun. And it was a good trial run for me for SMOFcon - I'm running the consuite there and now I know what went over well that I should repeat (must find a bulk source for Izze juices, or at least get Big Ten to give me a discount). Since I know Ann Arbor stores much better than Chicago stores (and we're in Rosemont anyway, not Chicago proper), I'll probably just hit Big Ten for all of my specialty items before I head off to Chicago.

Now, time to find some food.

Attending Members:

Alex von Thorn
Amanda Foubister
Angela Karash
Ann Totusek
Anne K. G. Murphy
Barb Van Tilburg
Ben Yalow
Bob Palmer
Deb Kosiba
Eloise Mason
Erik V. Olson
Gudrun Stockman
Helen Montgomery
Ian E. Stockdale
Jeff Beeler
Jim Mann
Joseph Stockman
Katherine Becker
Kim Williams
Laurie Mann
Lisa Garrison-Ragsdale
M. David Brim
Marah Searle
Mark Herrup
Marnie Gucciard
Matt Ragsdale
Pam Fremon
Phread
Robert Warehall
Ron Oakes
Sharon Sbarsky
Steve Gutterman
Steven H Silver
Tammy Coxen
Dina Krause



Krysta Llyne December
Tracy Worcester

**Couldn't make it to MWC2? Here's the programming that both you and Tammy missed...
She was pregnant. What was your excuse? :-)**

ConChairs on the Spot ConCom Meetings Art Show Options Effective Convention Publicity Finance and Budgeting Negotiating a Killer Contract	"Gophers": getting, keeping, using Organizing Program Planning Lunch and Discussion: The Graying of Fandom At-Con Publications Critique The Great Green Room Debate
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Fannish Apples to Apples

By Steven H Silver

As with all good stories, this one has many beginnings.

It began in February 1999, when Out of the Box Games announced the imminent release of a new game, "Apples to Apples," which would eventually hit the shelves in May of that year.

It began in December 2000, when Tammy Coxen made a comment that led me to come up with the idea for Midfan and Midwest Construction.

It really began in earnest in September 2002, when Midwest Construction 1 was held in Rosemont, Illinois and Halmer Haag taught me (and several others) how to play "Apples to Apples."

It gestated until September 2003, when we were playing the game at Midwest Construction 2 in Ann Arbor, Michigan ("Apples to Apples," the official game of Midwest Construction) and Eloise Beltz-Decker-Mason commented how interesting a fannish version of the game would be.

It exploded on the world, a new-born babe in December 2003 at SMOFcon in Rosemont, Illinois (proving that some things do come full-circle), when Priscilla Olson said, "Sharon, sit next to me and act cuddly."

As might be gleaned from the title, "Apples to Apples" is a game of comparisons. Each player draws seven red cards, each of which contains a noun and a brief description (for instance: Superman - Fictional comic book superhero loved by Lois Lane and Jerry Seinfeld.). One person starts out as the judge, drawing a green adjective card from the pile and reading it, and its three synonyms aloud (for instance: Lucky - fortunate, serendipitous, favored). All the other players place one of their red noun cards which they feel most appropriately matches the adjective face down on the table and the judge then examines them and selects the best match, explaining why each card is being discarded. Whoever's card is declared the winner gets the green card. The first player to collect seven green cards, wins.

As noted above, at Midwest Construction 1 in Rosemont, Illinois, Halmer Haag, a fan from Maryland, brought this game, along with others, to the convention. While some of the games were interesting, like "Plague and Pestilence," they were also out of print. Around 11:00 on Saturday night, however, Halmer pulled out "Apples to Apples" and explained the rules. The game ran until three in the morning with players joining and dropping out. I, meanwhile, was hooked.

One of the aspects of the game which makes it so interesting is the fact that the players have to play to the judge. This means that with the exact same cards played at different times, there would have been a different outcome.

When I got home after the convention, I picked up the game and taught it to my wife, who also decided she liked it, and we quickly converted my entire family, from my four-year-old daughter to my in-laws. I soon discovered that Out of the Box Games had begun producing sheets of blank cards to allow players to make their own cards. I filed the information away for future reference.

In the meantime, in addition to the basic box set, Apples to Apples began to bring out expansions. There were three expansions to the game, plus versions for children and older children. The beauty of the game and the system they used was that cards from all six boxes could be combined together.

At Midwest Construction 2 in Ann Arbor, we again played Apples to Apples. One afternoon, Eloise Mason made a comment about a fannish version of the game. Just as Tammy Coxen's offhand comment about a regional con-runners' convention sparked the creation of Midfan back in 2000, Eloise's comment caused my neurons to misfire in a manner that resulted in Apples to Apples™: The Fannish Edition.

I began immediately, asking people at the con for suggestions about what the cards should feature. When I returned home, I ordered enough blanks to make up a full set of cards for the Fannish Edition. I also requested card suggestions on the SMOFS mailing list and in other places.

It quickly became apparent that the majority of cards I made would be the red noun cards. Most of the adjectives which could be used to describe the fannish community already existed in one or more of the multitude of expansions provided by the good people of Out of the Box Games.



By going to their website, I was able to create cards using a template. I can either keep these cards private or make them public. In any event, they printed cards that matched the cards provided in the actual game.

I tested the game at home one evening with Bill and Gretchen Roper and my wife. We identified some weaknesses in the set and made adjustments accordingly.

The game was rolled out at SMOFcon in Rosemont. Many of the people who played knew the game, but didn't realize that I had created a Fannish edition by combining fannish cards from the published game (Captain Kirk) and the cards I made (SMOFs). In one case, while playing, Priscilla Olson called Sharon Sbarsky over and asked her to act cute. Of course, Priscilla then played the Sharon Sbarsky card, which surprised Sharon.

Throughout the weekend, I would start up a game with two or three people and it would expand to include a dozen or so.

On Sunday of the con there was a running game in the atrium with players and kibitzers changing hourly as people went off to panels and returned.

By any objective look at the game, it was a success. Hal came up to me and commented/complained that this was the first time he had been to a con where he couldn't interest anyone in trying the latest game he discovered. Everyone seemed to enjoy the game and there was the occasional moment when someone would draw themselves or see their card played.

One of the things I had not anticipated was the opportunity for the game to be used to pass along our culture. Frequently enough that it made an impression, someone playing would say "What is this?" There were enough kibitzers around to whisper an explanation of what Twonk's Disease was, who Filthy Pierre is, and why PITA does not refer to bread.



Fannish Red Cards	DeepSouthCon	Isaac Asimov	Prog Ops
AKICIF	Den Haag,	ISFiC	Progress Reports
Alternate History	Netherlands	J. Michael	Propeller Beanies
Anime	Denver, CO	Straczynski	Pros
Anne McCaffrey	Ditto	Jerome Walton	rassef
Ansible	Dorsai Irregulars	Joe Haldeman	Ray Bradbury
Art Show	Dragon*Con	John Norman	Readercon
Arthur C. Clarke	Dripclave	John W. Campbell, Jr.	Registration
Artist GoH	DUFF	Jordin Kare	Ribbons
Atlanta, GA	Eastercon	Kansas City, MO	Robert A. Heinlein
Austin, TX	Eastercon	Kevin Standlee	Robert Silverberg
Australia	Editor GoH	Klingons	Room Packing
Australian Ballot	Egoboo	Larry Smith	Roscoe
Author GoH	Enchanted Duplicator	Laser Books	Rusty Hevelin
Badges	Eye of Argon	LASFS	San Digeo
Baltimore, MD	Fan GoH	LoCs	San Jose, CA
Banned from Argo	Fannish Feuds	Locus	Science GoH
Ben Yalow	Fanzines	Louisville, KY	Seattle, WA
Bheer	FIAWOL	The Masquerade	Secret Staircase
Bid Parties	FIJAGDH	Melbourne, Australia	Seiun Awards
Bill Higgins	File 770	Miami Beach, FL	Sharon Sbarsky
Blog	Filk Music	Midfan	SIGs
Blood Drive	Film Room	Midwest Construction	Site Selection
BNF	Filthy Pierre	Midwestcon	Slan
Board of Directors	First Fandom	Mike Resnick	Slan Shack
Boskone from Hell	Forrest J. Ackerman	Mimosa	SMOFCon
Boston, MA	French Food	Minicon	SMOFs
Bow Tie	“Fringe” Fan	Moderators	Space Allocation
Brighton, UK	Gafiation	Mundanes	Spider Robinson
Bruce Pelz	Gaming	Murphy’s Law	St. Louis, MO
Business Meeting	Gardner Dozois	My Con	Star Trek
Campbell Award	George Lucas	NASFiC	Star Wars
Child Care	Geri Sullivan	Nebula Awards	TAFF
Cincinnati, OH	Ghu	Neil Rest	This Hotel
Clarion West	Ghughle	Neofen	This Room
Con Chair	Glasgow, Scotland	NESFA	Toastmaster
Con Reports	Gophers	NolaCon II	Tor Books
Con Suite	Green Room	Oakland, CA	Toronto, Canada
ConCom	Gregory Benford	The Olson Twins	The Tucker Hotel
Consuite Carpet	Gripe Session	Operations	Tullamore Dew
Convention Center	GT	Orlando, FL	Twonk’s Disease
Convoy	Guests of Honor	Patrick Nielsen	Walt Willis
Corkage Waiver	Harlan Ellison	Hayden	Washington, D.C.
Costumers	Harry Warner, Jr.	Philadelphia, PA	Westercon
Cyberpunk	Heidelberg, Germany	Philcon	Wilson “Bob” Tucker
Dan Gallagher	Hotel Liaison	Phoenix	Wimpy Zone
David Langford	Huckster’s Room	PITA	Winnipeg, Canada
DAW Books	Hugo Awards	Pittsburgh, PA	Wiscon
Dead Dog Party	Hugo Gernsback	Plokta	Worldcon Bid
	Ice Machine	Portland, OR	Worldcon Chair

WSFS	Burger & Fries	Ghosts	Madame Curie
Yngvi	California	Ghosts & Goblins	Mark Twain
York	Calvin & Hobbs	A Giant	Mars
	Camelot	Giant Squid	Math
	Canada	Glazed Donuts	Matzo Balls
Red Cards from Out of the Box Games	Candy	Going To A Movie	Men In Black
	Captain Kirk	Gravity	Mensa High IQ
	Card Games	Halloween	Society
The 1920's	Carl Sagan	Hamburgers	Mickey & Minnie
The 1950's	Challenger Explosion	Harrison Ford	Mickey Mouse
The 1960's	Charging Rhinos	Harry Potter	The Midwest
The 1970's	A Cheap Motel	A Haunted House	Milk & Cookies
The 1980's	Chicago	Hot Chocolate	The Milky Way
The 1990's	Chips & Dip	Hotdogs	Minneapolis & St.
The 21st Century	Chips & Salsa	Hotels & Motels	Paul
Airline Food	Cleveland	Hugs	Monsters
Airplanes	Coffee	The Ice Age	The Moon
Aladdin	Cold Pizza	Indiana Jones	Moon & The Stars
Albert Einstein	Comic Books	Inside The Sun	A Morgue
Alien Abductions	Computer Hackers	Intellectuals	A Mummy
Aliens	Computers	The Internet	My Dad
Americans	Count Dracula	James Bond	My Friends
Amsterdam	Castles	Japan	My Future
Ancient Rome	Cults	Jelly Beans	My Home
Antarctica	Darth Vader	John Glenn	My Job
Arnold	Detroit	Juggling	My Life
Schwarzenegger	Dinosaurs	Jupiter	My Love Life
Atlantis	Disneyland	Jurassic Park	My Memories
Atomic Bombs	Dungeons & Dragons	Keanu Reeves	My Mind
Australian Outback	Dodo Birds	Kilts	My Mom
Bagpipes	Dr. Jekyll & Mr.	A King	My Past
Bates Motel	Hyde	King Arthur	My Personality
Batman	Dragons	King Henry VIII	NASA
Batman & Robin	Duct Tape	King Tut	New Orleans
Beer	The Earth	The Land Of Oz	New York City
Beer & Pretzels	Electricity	Leather	Nuclear Power Plants
Big Bang Theory	The End of the World	Leonardo Da Vinci	Outer Space
The Big Dipper	E-Mail	The Library	Parties
Big Macs	Europe	The Little Mermaid	Peanut Butter
Bigfoot	A Fairy	Lizards	Peanut Butter & Jelly
Black Holes	Fast Food	Local Police	Peter Pan
Board Games	Fat	Loch Ness Monster	Pirates
Body Odor	Festering Wounds	London	Pizza
Body Piercing	First Man On The	Long Hair	Prince Charming
Body Snatchers	Moon	Looking For A Job	Princess & The Pea
Bow & Arrows	Friends & Family	Looney Tunes	The Pyramids
Brains	A Full Moon	Losing Your Job	A Queen
Bugs Bunny	Genetic Engineering	Lox & Bagels	Queen Elizabeth II
Bullwinkle	George & Jane, His	M & M's	Reading & Writing
Bumper Stickers	Wife	Macaroni & Cheese	Reading A Book

Reading A Good Book	Vampires	Ancient	Conceited
The Renaissance	Venus & Mars	Animated	Confused
Rice Krispies Treats	Victorian England	Annoying	Controversial
Robin Hood	Video Games	Appetizing	Cool
Robin Williams	Walt Disney	Armed & Dangerous	Cool & Collected
Robots	Watching TV	Arrogant	Corrupt
Rocket Scientists	Water Guns	Attractive	Cosmic
Salvador Dali	Weapons Dealers	Awesome	Courageous
San Francisco	Weird Al Yankovic	Awful	Cowardly
Saturday Cartoons	Whoopie Goldberg	Awkward	Cozy
Saturn	Will Smith	Bad	Cranky
Scavenger Hunt	William Shakespeare	Bashful	Crazed
Science Fair Projects	Winnie The Pooh	Beautiful	Crazy
Science Fiction	Winning A Trophy	Believable	Creative
Scientists	Witch Hunts	Big	Creepy
Scooby-Doo	Witches	Big & Tall	Creepy & Crawly
Sean Connery	Women	Black & Blue	Crisp
Slasher Films	Writing A Letter	Black & White	Crisp & Delicious
Sleep	Xena, Warrior Princess	Bogus	Cruel & Unusual
Smithsonian Institution	X-Ray Vision	Boisterous	Crunchy
Space & Time	X-Rays	Bold	Cuddly
Spam	Zombies	Boring	Cut & Dried
Spontaneous Combustion	Fannish Green Cards	Brains & Brawn	Cute
Starry Night	Astounding	Brave	Cute & Cuddly
Stars	Discard and Draw	Bright	Dainty
Stephen King	Fannish	Bright & Shining	Dangerous
Steven Spielberg	Fictional	Brilliant	Dark
Stonehenge	Fuggheaded	Brutal	Dashing
Superman	Gafiated	Bumpy	Dazed & Confused
Surfing The Net	Mundane	Busy	Dead
Sushi	Smoffish	Calm	Dead & Gone
Swimming	Thrilling	Careful	Deadly
A Swimming Pool	Tuckerized	Casual	Delicate
Swiss Cheese	Your Worst Card	Charismatic	Delicious
Swiss Chocolate		Charming	Delightful
Tarzan & Jane		Cheerful	Demanding
Teletubbies		Cheesy	Depressing
Television	Green Cards from	Chewy	Desperate
Thomas Edison	Out of the Box	Chunky	Devious
Time Travel	Games	Classic	Dignified
Toys	Absurd	Clean	Dirty
Treasure Hunting	Abundant	Clear	Distinguished
Trekkies	Addictive	Clever	Disturbing
Tyrannosaurus Rex	Adorable	Clueless	Down & Dirty
Unicorns	Aged	Clumsy	Down & Out
The Universe	Amazing	Cold	Dramatic
Vacations	American	Colorful	Dreamy
		Comfortable	Drunk & Disorderly
		Comical	Dull
		Complicated	Dumb & Dumber

Dysfunctional	Frightening	Hot & Cold	Mischievous
Earthy	Funky	Hot & Heavy	Miserable
Easy	Fun	Hot & Muggy	Misunderstood
Eccentric	Funny	Hot & Spicy	Modern
Edgy	Furious	Hot & Sweaty	Mushy
Elitist	Furry	Huge	Mysterious
Emotional	Fuzzy	Humorous	Mystical
Enchanting	Gentle	Icky	Naive
Endangered	Glamorous	Ideal	Nasty
Energetic	Glitzy	Idiotic	Natural
Enjoyable	Global	Important	Naughty & Nice
Enormous	Gloomy	Industrious	Neat
Entertaining	Glorious	Influential	Neglected
Eternal	Good	Innocent	Nerdy
European	Goody-Goody	Insane	New
Evil	Goofy	Inspirational	Nice
Excellent	Gorgeous	Insulting	Noisy
Exciting	Graceful	Intelligent	Normal
Exhausting	Great	Intense	Nutty
Expensive	Grueling	Irresistible	Obnoxious
Explosive	Gruesome	Irritating	Obscene
Exquisite	Grungy	Jolly	Odd
Extreme	Hairy	Juicy	Offensive
Fabulous	Hale & Hearty	Kind	Old
Fake	Handsome	Large	Old & Cranky
Famous	Handy	Lazy	Old & Wise
Fancy	Happy	Lean & Mean	On The Up & Up
Fantastic	Hard	Legendary	Orderly
Fashionable	Hardworking	Lewd & Lascivious	Ordinary
Fast	Harmful	Light	Organic
Fast & Furious	Harsh	Light & Fluffy	Outrageous
Fast & Loose	Haunting	Little	Overwhelming
Fat	Hazardous	Lively	Painful
Fat & Happy	Healthy	Long & Lean	Pathetic
Feminine	Heartless	Loud	Patriotic
Filthy	Heavy	Loud & Clear	Peaceful
Fine	Helpful	Lovable	Perfect
Flaky	High & Dry	Loving	Perverse
Flamboyant	High & Low	Lucky	Philosophical
Flavorful	High & Mighty	Lumpy	Phony
Flawed	Hilarious	Luscious	Plain
Flirtatious	Hit & Miss	Luxurious	Plain & Simple
Foot Loose & Fancy	Honest	Magical	Playful
Free	Honorable	Manly	Plug & Play
Foreign	Hopeless	Masculine	Plump & Tender
Fragile	Horrible	Mean	Popular
Fragrant	Horrifying	Meek	Powerful
Frazzled	Hostile	Meek & Mild	Pretty
Fresh	Hot	Mesmerizing	Prim & Proper
Friendly	Hot & Bothered	Messy	Primitive

Principled	Serious	Spicy	Twisted
Profound	Sexy	Spiritual	Ugly
Proud	Shaggy	Spooky	Unforgettable
Puffy	Shallow	Spunky	Unhappy
Pure	Sharp	Square	Unhealthy
Quick	Shiny	Squeaky Clean	Unnatural
Quick & Dirty	Shocking	Stereotyped	Unreal
Quiet	Short	Stinky	Unscrupulous
Radiant	Short & Stout	Strange	Unusual
Radical	Short & Sweet	Strong	Up & Coming
Rare	Shy	Stunning	Up & Down
Raw	Sick & Tired	Stupid	Useful
Realistic	Sick & Twisted	Sultry	Useless
Refreshing	Sickening	Sweet	Vain
Refined	Silent	Swift	Violent
Relaxed	Silky	Swift & Sure	Virtuous
Relaxing	Silly	Talented	Visionary
Repulsive	Simple	Tall	Warm
Respectable	Skillful	Tame	Warm & Cozy
Responsible	Skinny	Tasty	Warm & Fuzzy
Revolutionary	Slimy	Technological	Wash & Wear
Rich	Slippery	Temperamental	Weak
Ridiculous	Sloppy	Tempting	Weird
Risky	Slow	Tender	Wet
Rough	Slow & Steady	Terrific	Whimsical
Rough & Ready	Sluggish	Thick & Chunky	Wicked
Round	Small	Thin	Wild
Sad	Smart	Timeless	Wild & Wooly
Saintly	Smelly	Tiny	Wired
Sappy	Smooth	Tormenting	Witty
Scary	Smooth & Creamy	Torn & Tattered	Woebegone
Scenic	Snappy	Touch & Go	Wonderful
Secretive	Soft	Touchy-Feely	Worldly
Selfish	Sophisticated	Tough	Young
Sensational	Sour	Trashy	Young & Restless
Senseless	Special	Tried & True	Yucky
Sensitive	Speedy	True & Blue	Zany
Sensual	Spic & Span	Trustworthy	

Can You Help Clarion Survive?

The Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writing Workshop is the best known and most highly regarded science fiction writing workshop in the country. Now in its thirty-seventh year, the Clarion Workshop is discussed frequently in science fiction publications and has national and international visibility. As Kim Stanley Robinson says, Clarion is "an integral part of the American science fiction community."

Recently MSU, Clarion's host university, decided that they could no longer fund costs associated with running the workshop. Lister Matheson, Mary Sheridan, and Amelia Beamer, the Clarion staff, started a fundraising campaign to cover the costs of running the workshop for 2004. Thanks to the immediate and generous outpouring from the science fiction community, there was a very successful Clarion workshop held June 6 to July 16, 2004. Clarion will be held in East Lansing again in 2005.

Conventions Can Do Several Things to Help

- First, make sure that there is a Clarion panel at every convention. Since there are often many Clarion grads and tutors at any Con, this should not be too difficult. A panel raises interest in attending Clarion, provides a forum for interested folk to discuss funding and other ideas, and, if the Con Committee is willing, a donation jar can be set out and the proceeds given to Clarion. These and other donations should be sent to the Clarion Office at MSU: 112 Olds Hall, East Lansing MI 48824.
- Second, you can coordinate auctions and other fundraisers. Clarion may be able to provide signed galleys, various publications, and other auctionable items donated by Clarion grads, tutors, and friends.
- Third, you can provide space in the nonprofit or dealers' room for Clarion staff or friends to set up a table to take donations, sell T-shirts, and give out newsletters and other information.

Clarion asks that Convention committees please get in touch with Clarion staff to coordinate any of these or other events by emailing clarion@msu.edu.

LETTERS OF COMMENT

Marnie Gucciard
fiddich@funevilpeople.org

Anne,

I have just read through MidFanzine 2: Explorations. I enjoyed the publication. This is my first fanzine, so bear with me while I ask what is undoubtedly a very ignorant question: What is the purpose of your fanzine? When I first heard that my membership to Midfan would include a subscription to the fanzine I made an assumption. I assumed that the fanzine would have articles that spoke to running

better conventions in the midwest or to the general content of those conventions: speculative fiction. Yours did. However, I was surprised at the inclusion of the two articles: "Snow" and "This_____Is Chicago"? I mean no insult, they were enjoyable articles. I just wasn't expecting their inclusion as they do not speak to conrunning or speculative fiction.

So, amidst my ignorance and assumptions (and with no intention of offering insult), I return to my question: what is the purpose of fanzines in general and yours in particular?

Curiously,
 Marnie Gucciard

Marnie,

A welcome question and one I am happy to answer. The general purpose of fanzines, as I see it, is to connect the fan community and offer a way for us to share our thoughts and opinions with one another. The purpose of MidFanzine, in particular, is to build the community of Midwest SF fans and to spur communication between different groups of Midwest conrunners. To support both these aims, our plan is that in the fall we have a MidFanzine that is focused on conrunning, and in the spring MidFanzine is a genzine.

A genzine might include art, articles, essays, stories, etc that are SF, are about SF, or about SF fandom. To expand the last possibility, I aim to publish things about what fans do – trips, news, convention reports, etc. – and what fans think and write. The “Snow” and “This_____Is Chicago” articles are examples of that. –Ed.

Lloyd Penney
1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2

September 7, 2003

Dear Anne:

Thank you very much for the second issue of MidFanzine, and it was great to finally meet you at Torcon! It's a shame we can't get together more often, or it takes a Worldcon to gather us together. Let me make some comments about the issue, and then perhaps about Torcon.

Thank you for your own story. More people should have the opportunity to tell their own story of fannish genesis. For many people, fandom consists of lots of acquaintances and not enough friends, separated by too much geography and not enough money.

A little personal news...I do volunteer work for the National Broadcast Reading Service, which provides a cable newsreading service nationwide called VoicePrint for the blind and low-sighted. Another division of NBRS is called AudioVision, which sells movies with

description tracks added. I just recorded my first described movie, a 1949 unremarkable movie called Jigsaw, with Franchot Tone. It provides a little extra cash, and I am hoping to do this with some regularity.

Some local convention information...

April 2-4 Ad Astra XXIII Toronto, ON

www.ad-astra.org

Erik Kauppi's article of a convention's decision hierarchy is handy. The chairman should always be the final arbiter, but as last resort only. Also, the chairman should as informed as possible just in case he's called upon to make a decision.

As I write, MidWest Construction is less than 2 weeks away...have fun, and by all means tell us all what happened in the next issue. I suspect you might get some Toronto attendance in the form of Alex von Thorn and Marah Searle.

Thank you for the information on Jerome Walton. Like Gordon Dickson and A. E. van Vogt, he was born in Canada, but moved away to the US. I'll bet Canadian fan historians probably don't know about his origins. I'll try to let them know.

Torcon 3 was fun...it's good to have a local Worldcon at least once. (I wonder if Detroit con fandom is feeling confident. There's hasn't been a serious bid since the Detroit in '85 NASFiC bid.) It was disorganized in programming and publications, but with one of the best Hugo ceremonies I'd seen in a while, and lots of old friends I hadn't seen in years arriving, I had a great time. However, because many American artists and dealers simply didn't want to cross the border, no matter how easy it had become, the art show and dealers' room were understandably substandard. Still, lots of fun. We assisted the LA folks in securing the 2006 Worldcon, and were more than busy. We look forward to going to Boston next year.

That's all for now...take care, and see you with the next issue. Thinking about coming up to Ad Astra in April?

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

I still have not made it to Ad Astra or Wiscon or, well, darn if there aren't a lot of conventions I've never been to. This year I will make it to ConClave for the

The Day After Shakespeare

By Laura Hewitt

Japanese hana, a very English rain,
French Impressionist colors— did we
ever get around to discussing the Impressionists?

I walk alone, in the ancient tasks,
feeding a mate, watching the skies,
keeping the secret histories;
In the distance, a saber-toothed roar:
Harley, of the stem of Jesse.

I walk alone, I am ancient and the world is newer than I will ever be,
Once upon a time there was a crone and she...

Tempted into rhyme by your odd old-fashioned gallantry.
Retro age, subtle creature.

Walking through rain in a world damp and new
Walking through rain, and I'm thinking of you.