

# *Southern Fandom Confederation Update*

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## **Buff's Broadside**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Southern Fandom Confederation Update*. I hope to use the *Update* to highlight what's exciting and current in Southern Fandom. I'll be trying to publish the material of fanhistorical significance in the *Bulletin* still, while using the *Update* as a faster, cheaper way to disseminate information. The cost of printing a more frequent zine than the SFC bylaws require would be nuts, and I'm just not in a position personally to soak those costs, so I figure this is a better way of serving Southern Fandom.

I will be including art when I have it, so I again encourage you to submit some of that. This issue's cover comes from J. Andrew World. I'll be featuring a Worldcon report from Tom Feller, as well as my own ramblings about what I'm excited about for 2009. Ideally, each issue will feature articles on upcoming Southern conventions, a few reports from folks who went to and enjoyed them in the past few months, and news about SF clubs and zines from around the South. Since we're doing this online, I'm not worried about things like the cost of printing photos, so fire away with those, too. As an experiment, I'll be referring to the South in the broadest possible sense – I'll be including Maryland, DC, West Virginia, and Missouri in addition to the SFC's traditional range. If, somehow, I get folks from Oklahoma or Delaware clamoring to be considered Southern, I'll worry about expanding my focus then.

In the next issue of the *Bulletin*, I'd like to feature interviews with the leaders of the current Worldcon bids. Since I'm running a NASFiC bid, I reckon it's fair to answer the questions myself, too, but I'm calling on my readers to supply the questions so as not to make it a bit of shameless self-promotion. Fire away with those, and I'll begin conducting the interviews in late February.

If you really don't want to be getting this, just send me an email back asking me to stop bothering you with this nonsense.

So, I hope you enjoy this first issue, and mind the dust while I get used to a monthly production schedule.

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### **Denvention 3 Trip Report** by Tom Feller

Anita and I flew Southwest nonstop from Nashville to Denver on Wednesday. It was a smooth two hour flight, and we arrived on time. We took the SuperShuttle to the Sheraton, the official party hotel, and had no trouble checking in. Then we walked over to the convention center, where we found a short line at registration. We spent the rest of the afternoon reviewing the schedule and getting oriented. We found the dealer's room and also spent some time in the fanzine lounge. The convention center had plenty of room, and it was one of the smallest North American Worldcons in decades, so we rarely felt crowded.

In the late afternoon, we attended opening ceremonies, which were immediately followed by the guest of honor reception. There we saw several of our friends and ate enough hors' d'oeuvres to serve as dinner. The entertainment was provided by dancers dressed in costumes from Guest of Honor Lois McMaster-Bujold's Miles Vorkosigan series.

It was raining when we left the convention center that night, and when we discovered that we had left our rain gear at the hotel, we took a taxi. After a brief stop at our room, we figured out how to find the parties, the filking, and the con suite, which were all in the other tower of the Sheraton. Finding the con suite proved to be quite an undertaking, because it was on the "Majestic" level which was three floors below ground level, and you reached it via a confusing series of escalators. We were disappointed to learn that it did not open until 1 PM each day, but we did use it during the evenings. We also attended the filking both before and after visiting the parties during the con.

Speaking of parties, several of them were in the Vail room on the same level as the con suite, but all the rest were on the Sheraton's 22nd floor. You needed a special key to get access to that floor, but there always seemed to be elevator pilots available whenever we wished to go there and it did not seem as if we ever waited in line for an excessive period of time. The leading Wednesday night parties on the 22nd floor were Xerps in 2010 and Reno in 2011, while Chicago in 2012 and the Friendly Texans combined to host a party in the Vail room.

Our routine for the con was to sleep until we woke up and then have coffee in our room while we read the morning paper. On Thursday and Friday, the Sheraton delivered two papers, the USA Today and a local one. On Saturday and Sunday, they just delivered the local one, but since one of them was a Sunday paper, that was fine. After cleaning up, we would go in search of breakfast or just go directly to the convention center and get something to eat there. We also took advantage of the free bus shuttle on the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall.

On Thursday, I attended a panel on E-Books. I was intrigued with the idea of the daily serial in which a short chapter is sent to your cell phone, palm pilot, or personal computer every day. I haven't signed up for any yet, but that concept may be what it takes me to start reading fiction electronically. Then I attended the one on whether blogs

and listservs have replaced fanzines. Not yet, at least according to the panelists. This Worldcon had a filk guest of honor, Kathy Mar, who gave a good concert that evening. We visited the Australia in 2010 in the Vail room that night, and the Xerps, Reno, and Seattle parties on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor.

On Friday, Anita and I were over at the convention center in time to view the *Star Trek New Voyages* episode "World Enough & Time". If you are not familiar with them, these are fan-produced episodes based on the original series and available on the Internet. Their agreement with Paramount is that they may use the name and the characters so long as they do not charge for viewings. This was one of the Hugo nominees and features George Takei as Sulu. We both felt the story was on the level of a first-rate original episode.

That afternoon I attended panels on the original *Star Trek* and music from SF films. In the former, the panelists explained how they discovered the show. In the latter, Victoria Lundy played music from Bernard Herrmann's score for *The Day the Earth Stood Still* on the theremin, the first electronic musical instrument and the one Herrmann used for the film's music. Then I attended Toni Weisskopf's slide show on upcoming Baen releases. We enjoyed the Masquerade that night, especially "Nightmare in Denver", a take-off of *The Nightmare before Christmas*, "Alien Ellie", "Schoolhouse Rock Presents", and "Grave Robbers", but it was only a shadow of the ones from 20 years ago. I guess the costumers go to their own conventions now.

The con provided buses to the convention hotels after the masquerade, but ours was delayed because the driver could not figure out how to work the handicapped access lift. The parties we visited included Seattle, Reno, and Xerps on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor and Montreal/Japan in the Vail Room.

On Saturday, I attended the fan editors panel and then Anita and I joined them for lunch at the Appaloosa Grill. Just before the Hugo Awards, Anita and I attended a showing of the latest *Star Trek Phase II* episode called "Blood and Fire". One of the main characters is Kirk's nephew, who is gay. This is another fan-produced show available for free over the Internet.

We then proceeded to the Hugo Awards and got there just in time for the start. We especially approved of the "In Memoriam" slide show in which they showed the names of people in the field who died in the previous year. Kathy Mar and two other guitarists played "A Healing in this Night" by Bob Franks to accompany the names. The ceremony itself seemed to run quite smoothly. We had no trouble with the bus this night, so we were able to visit Warren's Nasfic bid party as well as the Reno and Seattle ones.

Sunday we did not bother going over to the convention center, although we saw Warren walking in that direction from our hotel window. Instead, we checked out of the Sheraton and attended the ecumenifilk, in which the participants performed songs with a religious theme. Since it was a science fiction convention, naturally someone sang a hymn to Cthulhu.



We stopped off at the con suite for a brief snack before taking the SuperShuttle to the airport. Our flight was on time and we made it home when we were supposed to.

## Looking Forward

Here we are at the dawn of the new year, and I am, late as ever, getting out a zine. I wanted to take the time to let y'all know what I'm looking forward to in 2009. Hopefully, things are looking just as exciting on your end.

The first thing over my horizon is a big fanzine project, namely *Sir Walter's Salon*, the zine that Michael Pederson, Chris Garcia, and I are doing in support of the Raleigh NASFiC bid. The zine will feature all sorts of writing and art from our bid committee, friends, and supporters. We've set the deadline for submissions at January 15<sup>th</sup>, and we're likely to use anything we get (with editorial authority reserved for cases which need it), so this will hopefully be a huge zine. It will be available to our supporters first, and then later made generally available online.

The next thing to look forward to is making my nominations for the Hugos. I'll admit to not having read a great number of books which came out in 2008, so I'm not exactly the best nominator for the fiction categories, but I did greatly enjoy *The Last Centurion* by John Ringo, and thought it to be of Hugo caliber. Plus, John is, as some of you may have noticed, a Southerner, and I thought I'd take some time to call attention to other Southerners who might be eligible for Hugos. First, in the fanzine category, we have the perennially nominated *Challenger*, edited by Guy H. Lillian, III, as well as a couple of other strong choices – John Purcell's *Askance* and "Uncle Timmy" Bolgeo's *Revenge of Hump Day*. All three of these would make fine Hugo nominees. Depending on how you think of zines full of original fiction, you might also want to consider Shelby Vick's *Planetary Stories*. I'm sure there are some Southern zines that I'm not getting, too – I'd love to see that corrected. As for Southern fanwriters, I've not noticed a whole lot of us outside of our own zines. So I'd have to point to Guy and John again (nothing against Timmy, but he doesn't tend to crank out pages of original prose so much as a brief update and editorial – probably the time constraints of running one of the best damned conventions period, for which there is unfortunately no Hugo). You might also want to consider Shelby Vick, who's been doing his share of writing lately, most of which is solidly entertaining. Our fanartists deserve some love, too. Brad Foster continues in top form following his win this year. I haven't seen much of Teddy Harvia's work, but what I've seen was respectable. I continue to enjoy the stylings of my predecessor, Randy Cleary, particularly the program book cover he did for ConCave. Alexis Gilliland continues to bury fandom under waves of his cartoons, and if you'd like to consider Maryland a Southern state (and I do), Sheryl Birkhead has produced a consistent flow of her critter drawings for fanzines near and far, and J. Andrew World has produced some good material, particularly for conventions. We've got plenty of options if we want to show some regional love in the Hugos, although I encourage you to look all over fandom for your nominations, too. There's something else exciting about the Hugos this year. For the first time, Worldcon will be offering a Hugo for Best Graphic Story,

which was voted on at last year's Business Meeting (and needs to be ratified this year). I'm not going to make any specific recommendations for this one, but will note that it's sort of the culmination of a project that started with NOLAcon II, when a "Best Other" category was used to give *Watchmen* a Hugo award.

Speaking of the Hugos, I'm starting a reading group in the Triangle to work through the Hugo-winning novels, in order, and discussing them over beer at a pub here in Raleigh. If you're local enough to make it in one Thursday night a month, you're welcome to join us. Just ask me for the details.

And how could I forget all the excellent conventions I'm planning to attend this year? Not all of them are in the South (I have to support the bid elsewhere, after all), but let's focus on the ones that are.

In January, I'll be returning to the old stand-by, Chattacon. I love Chattacon because it's one of the few places in fandom where my generation are truly active participants right alongside their elders. Chattacon will also feature the first appearance of the Technicolor Fandom Lounge, which is going to be a combination of fanzine lounge and video game room, aimed at getting my generation more engaged with each other, communicating, and aware of what's going on across fandom. I hope to see a lot of you there. Chattacon will be held January 23-25 at the Chattanooga Choo-Choo hotel in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee.

In February, I'll hopefully be attending three Southern conventions: What-The-Hell?!Con, ConNooga, and ConCave. I love WTH?!Con because it's free, and thus full of broke college students. It features some of the better costuming I've seen in NC, loads of video games and anime, a bunch of webcomics, and the Saturday night "geek auction", in which young men are auctioned off for a charity dance. I know it's primarily geared towards young fans, but I encourage anyone nearby with a free day that weekend to stop on in. WTH?!Con is held February 6-8 on the campus of Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. I've yet to attend ConNooga, but I'm looking forward to it. From what I hear, the place is packed with folks my own age, which greatly appeals to me. I'd like to meet more of you, and find a way to help put you in touch. I'm beginning to see that Facebook holds potential for that, and so I'm beginning an experiment. Anyone I meet at one of these conventions who's on Facebook, I will send a message about each further con I'm attending, and hopefully some others in their area. We'll see how large a network we can build this way. I'm figuring that by ConNooga, I'll start to get an idea of whether this is working at all. ConNooga is held February 20-22 in the Chattanooga Choo-Choo, just like Chattacon. There's not much information online about ConCave, and that's intentional – their hotel can't handle any more folks than they already get. It's in Kentucky, in February, and is a great place for both the youth and the elders of Southern Fandom. For more information, you'll have to hunt down contact info for Gary Robe.

In March, I'll be running my first convention, StellarCon 33. I'm obviously a little biased, but I do think it's a good con. I've been going for ten years now, and I have

no intentions of stopping. We're a student-run convention, but use a hotel off-campus (and in another city, no less) and are by no means exclusively run by the students – I've never been a student at UNCG, but after a while, they just kind of accepted me as one of their own. It's a good mix of older and younger fans, literary, gaming, and anime, sercon and fannish. StellarCon will be March 13-15 at the Hotel High Point, in, of all places, High Point, North Carolina.

In April, I'll be attending RavenCon, in Richmond, Virginia. This will be my third time attending, and I'm looking forward to it. They've finally roped me into taking on an actual position on the convention, so I'll be running their auction. What I love about RavenCon is that it's the only place where I can hang out with Northeastern smofs and the Baen's Barflies all in one place. Richmond is becoming a bridge between the Northeast Corridor and Southern Fandoms. I'll be glad to keep going there to meet them all and work to bridge the gap. Ravencon manages a bizarre balance between heavy programming and an atmosphere I'd expect at a relaxacon. If you're in driving range, I'd love to see you there, at the Crowne Plaza West in Richmond Virginia, April 24-26. Oh, and that Saturday's my birthday, so come party with me!

In May, I'll be attending at least two, and perhaps three cons, all in the South. The first possibility is Mobicon, in Mobile, Alabama. That'll be May 15-17, and while I've never been, my friends have given it good reviews. The weekend after that, I'll definitely be at Animazement in Raleigh. While I've never been to an anime con, this one's on my home turf, so it seems like the time to start. It'll also be using the facilities I want to use for the NASFiC we're bidding, so I really ought to be there. There are a ton of other great cons that weekend, several of them in the South, but I'm drawn to this one. This one will be May 22-24 at the Marriott in downtown Raleigh. To close out the month, I'll be at ConCarolinas in Charlotte. They've just moved to a new hotel, the Hilton Charlotte University Place, and I'm looking forward to checking them out. This is the hotel they'll be using for next year's DSC, so I'm definitely looking forward to it. ConCarolinas will be run May 29-31 in Charlotte, NC.

And how could I stop there? I'll just keep my string going into June, when I'll be attending Hypericon, which is hosting the 47<sup>th</sup> Deep South Con. This is a big deal, folks, and an opportunity for the generations to meet again. It's no secret that most of the fans who make a point of coming to Deep South Con have been around fandom for a while. Hypericon, at least based on what I know of it, is a very young convention. And the big advantage there is that we'll have another chance to bring my generation into Southern Fandom. Hypericon being held in Nashville, right at the center of all these cons I'll have attended up to then, certainly can't hurt, either. If you only make it to one Southern con this year, make it DSC. It'll be June 5-7, in Nashville, TN. After a run of four Southern cons, I hope y'all can forgive me a detour for my next one.

But not to worry! July will see me back in action – first at Trinoc\*coN in Raleigh over July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend (at the North Raleigh Hilton in Raleigh, NC), where I'll be hanging out, once again, with North Carolina fans and anyone else who comes along. I'll be working, too, of course. The following weekend, I'll be back in Chattanooga (out in the

suburbs this time) for LibertyCon, which for my money is the finest regional we've got. LibertyCon is my chance to hang out, play cards, and smof with the old guard of Southern Fandom, with very few distractions (aside from some grade A programming). LibertyCon will be July 10-12, at the Comfort Inn & Suites off I-75 in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

August will be the only month of the year that doesn't find me at a convention in the South, but that's because I'll be heading up to Montreal for Worldcon! Anticipation, the 67<sup>th</sup> World Science Fiction Convention, will be held in about half a dozen hotels and a convention center in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, August 6-10. This is the big one, folks. The vote for the NASFiC site selection will be held here, as well as the vote for the 2011 Worldcon, and the presentation of the Hugo Awards. Thousands of fans from all over the world – from at least five continents, so far – will be in attendance. My first Worldcon was in Denver last year, and I was overwhelmed. There was so much to do, so many people I wanted to talk to, that I never even made it to a panel. If you can't make it, you can still become a supporting member, which allows you to vote for the Hugo Awards, as well as (with your site selection voting fee) vote in site selections. And if you do vote, it's the cheapest way to become an attending member of the Worldcon (or NASFiC) that's selected. And since both extant Worldcon bids (for Reno and Seattle) are for US sites, 2011 will be your next opportunity to attend a US Worldcon. Even if you're not up to it this year, consider planning ahead to begin attending Worldcons.

In September, I'll be attending two Southern cons. First, on Labor Day weekend, I'll be at Dragon\*Con in Atlanta. It's huge, and full of young fans. A lot of folks will deride it for the old bad blood between Worldcon and Dragon\*Con, but with Worldcons moving to earlier dates, I doubt that's going to be quite as relevant in the future. My generation seems not to mind, and when we can, why not go to both? And while there are some folks there who fit into the star-struck stereotype who just want to be entertained, there are plenty of active, communicating young fans, too. Come on down and meet them. I'll also be spending the weekend of September 18-20 as FenCon, where I'll be the Fan GoH. This will be my first stint as a guest at a convention, so I'm really looking forward to it. FenCon will be at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Addison, TX (a suburb of Dallas). Again, I haven't been to FenCon before, but a lot of my friends have, and liked it, and FenCon is bidding to host the 49<sup>th</sup> Deep South Con. The vote will have passed by then, but I hope to see some old friends and make new ones there.

My October convention may not count as Southern to some of you – I'll be at Capclave, up in the DC metro. The advantage of Capclave is that it revolves around the most important of strictly literary matters: serious criticism and drinking. It was at Capclave that I was dubbed "Lord Chesterfield" for managing to finish an entire can of that awful brew. The crowd there is of mixed ages, thanks to the strong presence of WSFA. I like this crew, and will use the Mason-Dixon line as an arbitrary boundary to count Capclave as Southern. Capclave will be held October 16-18 at the Hilton Washington DC/Rockville, in Rockville, Maryland.



In November, I'll be going to my favorite gaming con: MACE, in High Point, NC. It's in the same hotel as StellarCon, November 6-8. All manner of games are represented here, on no less than 40 tables of gaming. They even set aside a room for video games. I've been attending MACE almost as long as StellarCon, and wouldn't give up either for anything. I've only missed it once. If you're into gaming of any sort, stop on by and find out what else is out there.

December will find me on my way to Texas for SMOFcon, which is being hosted by ALAMO in Austin, Texas on December 4-6 at the Hilton Garden Inn. At this point, I'll be ready to relax a bit, and a weekend of pure smofing sounds like just the ticket. I'll understand if you think the focus too narrow to be worth your time, but I do recommend attendance to anyone interested in learning more about conrunning.

And on that note, let's close the issue with some art by Mike Moon.

