

NOTES TOWARD MARITIMES FANHISTORY

By Garth Spencer

NOTICE: a fanhistory article like this is in the nature of a draft; comments and corrections are expected and encouraged.

ALSO NOTICE: This is the draft I recently submitted to Dale Speirs for publication in his fanzine /Opuntia/.

(This draft dated January 1996)

Contacts between any two Canadian fan groups used to be intermittent. They have remained so between the Maritimes and the rest of Canadian fandom, so the following is just a first run at compiling some history of Maritimes fandom.

To provide some local orientation: Wayne Chisholm, until recently a Halifax resident and congoer, describes the population centre around Halifax as a gathering of 200,000 people. The conventions in the area draw a few hundred people each. Acadia University (appearing later in this fanhistory) is about an hour's drive away from Halifax in the Annapolis Valley. Boston, one of the nearest American population centres, is about 14 to 18 hours' drive away. Toronto is more like 24 hours' drive.

Eofandom

Harry Calnek published some fanzines (Canadian Capers in 1953 and 1954, Fie in 1954 and 1955) from Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia. From 1956 to the early 1960s, Georgina Ellis of Calgary (later Georgie Clarke, "Duchess of Canadian Fandom") edited fanzines and traded writings and drawings with Harry Calnek.

Information is lacking, as yet, on Maritime fandom from the 1960s until the 1980s. A little information is available about SF and fantasy writers and publishers in the Maritimes; several SF publications appeared from the area (small magazines and occasional SF or fantasy titles). Some of the regional SF writers include Augustine Funnell, Lesley Choyce (Pottersfield Press), Spider Robinson (who relocated to Nova Scotia from New York and has since moved to Vancouver), and Charles Saunders (formerly of Ottawa).

Halcon 1 must have been held in 1978; Halcon 2 in 1979, and thus Halcon 3 in 1980. Such evidence as is available indicates that Halcon was consistently held at St. Mary's University, the small downtown university in Halifax, until Halcon 5.

Here is what Linda Frum's Guide to Canadian Universities says about St. Mary's:

To the extent that St. Mary's is known for anything besides athletics and partying, it is known for its dedication to undergraduate teaching, and for

fostering a feeling of community. Over 40 percent of the 3,000 students live in residence. Apply early. There are simply no vacant apartments in Halifax, and anyway, students in residence have the most fun. ... (Linda Frum, *Linda Frum's Guide to Canadian Universities*, (Linda Frum, *Linda Frum's Guide to Key Porter Books*, 1987)

Atlantic SF

John Bell, of whom we will hear more later, edited the *Atlantic SF Chronology* in 1980. At this time he was involved with Halcon; later, he became known for editing SF anthologies.

The Award that Wouldn't Die

In late 1979, apparently, four English teachers in Halifax (John Bell, Bob Atkinson, George Allanson and Sheldon Goldman) decided to start an annual Canadian SF and Fantasy Award. As he wrote later, Bob Atkinson had discussed such an award with John Bell "as a sort of Canadian Hugo equivalent ... John [Bell] and I" (Bob Atkinson wrote, much later) "have researched and/or taught the subject for many years, and felt it was time Canada got such an award. After much discussion with people in Halifax and *across the country*" (my emphasis), the first CSFFA was presented at Halcon 3, in 1980, by Spider Robinson to A.E. van Vogt, for "lifetime achievements".

Mr. Robinson has won awards for novels such as *Telepath*, *Stardancer* and *Mindkiller*. A.E. van Vogt, born in Manitoba, wrote and published over 600,000 words of SF for the American market, while living in Toronto, before moving to the States in 1944. The award was a \$500 statuette by a local sculptor, Mike Spencer.

The intention was that the award would be given by some hosting Canadian convention, and this function would rotate among a number of Canadian conventions. Atkinson wrote that eligibility requirements, and an administration plan were finalized in September and October of 1979, and in January to February of 1980, it was decided that the Award should move between the major regional SF cons in Canada: Halcon, Boréal, Maplecon, NonCon and V-Con. Atkinson also writes that telephone contacts were made with organizers of all these cons except Boréal, and agreements for 81 through 83 made with V-Con, NonCon and Maplecon; and that the next three sites were announced at Halcon 3.

After the summer of 1980, Bob Atkinson writes, he moved away from fan activities and, by December 1980, John Bell had taken over Halcon and the CSFFA. Mr. Bell wrote out "Notes on the Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award" and sent it to "many fan leaders across the country".

[March '80]: There [was] some discussion about setting up a National Committee for the Award ... Things were going so smoothly, however, that a Committee didn't seem necessary. (This was, in retrospect, a mistake; the early Hugo organizers made the same one. (Bob Atkinson, in *Maple Leaf Rag* 12, March 1985)

Unclear on the Concept

The first notice many of us had of Halifax fandom, I think, in New Canadian Fandom. Halcon 4 was held March 6-8, 1981 at St. Mary's University. Rick Leblanc of Edmonton mentioned:

- registration opened half an hour late
- registration had no concept of one-day memberships
- Halcon asked \$7 for admission "and 3 movies" (?)
- program books were sold for an additional fee
- no nametag holders were provided
- reportedly Halcon expected a membership of 1000, and the LeBlancs' membership number were 728 and 729, but they never saw more than about 150 people
- The admission fee, the LeBlancs discovered, only entitled them to one panel; they had to argue to get into Barry Longyear's writing workshop without getting their single panel option punched out.

We did get to see one panel and got our cards dutifully punched. 'The Crisis in Planetary Morale,' with Barry Longyear, Ben Bova and moderator Spider Robinson. Another late starter, due to a wait for ice water which arrived un-iced in a coffee pot with a bag of canned pop. (I hope I got the look on Bova's face as he reached down to the floor for the bag. I was snapping away like mad before they took my camera away.) An excellent panel tho' Barry barely got a word in edgewise. Bova gave the chilled audience (the lecture theatre was freezing) what they didn't want to hear namely that there are intelligent people out there in the real world who care about the space program but haven't the time of day for either Star Trek or SF. Stunned silence. Then a few feeble protests that Bova simply threw out as absurd. Great fun.

No one could find the consuite because they didn't have one!

Student services had a cart with coffee and sandwiches, etc., outside the registration area. A niceplace to lie back on the comfy plywood seats and converse with friendly people. Except the friendly people were standing up. Keep moving, no loitering please!

There were an awful lot of staff badges; like about a third of the people I see. A lot of these were Security. A whole lot. Don't walk towards that door, you aren't allowed in. OK, yes sir; when did Halifax get the Gestapo?

The autograph session was way off the beaten path, almost hidden in a nook. ...

About 80% of the con seemed to be pre-pubescent.

We saw Spider for one panel and then he disappeared again into the mists of Nova Scotia. Difficult to say why, as we couldn't stay long enough to find out where anybody hung out, if such a place existed. ...

The war-gamers and comics people had a good time it seemed.

The huckster's room was small but included old & new books, art, games, comics, etc. It passed inspection.

The video room was popular and crowded with a seating capacity of 80. Ok! (New Canadian Fandom #1, April-May 1981)

Naturally, some discussion had to follow in NCF's letter column. John Bell sent the following letter:

As reported in NCF #1, Halcon 4 was held at St. Mary's University ... Membership this year was 525, down from last year, but more than sufficient to meet the con operating expenses of \$6279.16.

Contrary to the negative impression conveyed by Rick LeBlanc's one-sided and flippant piece in NCF, Halcon 4 was largely a success. There were, naturally, some problems but most of these were attributable to the fact that this years con was a transitional one, involving both a move to new facilities and the formation of a new steering committee.

I should, however, address some of Rick's

innumerable complaints. Firstly, he objected to the con membership price structure. HalCon 3's options may seem anomalous to some fans but they are intended to both give members some choice as to the degree of their involvement in the con and generate sufficient revenue to pay for what is becoming an increasingly expensive gathering. Movies figure prominently simply because all feedback we have solicited indicates that the vast majority of our members are not fans and would much rather watch THEM! (than panels) ...

Rick also complained about having to pay for a programme book. As he may have noticed, our programmes provide members with a substantial and attractive con souvenir ... For those who didn't want a book, we provided a free 4-page flyer with all the essential information.

The con suite that we didn't have was located in the Lord Nelson Hotel and was packed with pros, con volunteers, and fans. (John Bell, New Canadian Fandom #2/3, Sept. 81)

Robert Runté, editor of NCF, pointed out that such comment as he received on Halcon 4 was universally negative. Linda Ross-Mansfield, then in Oromocto, N.B., agreed with Rick's report ("Batting a thousand, guys, all baaad"). Jan Howard Finder suggested the Halifax fans try to attend another con "to see what a real con is like."

What seems to have happened is a sort of cultural clash: people working on Halcon seem to have quite innocently worked up their own policies and expectations, out of touch with mainstream fandom, while any fans outside of Halifax had some different realm norms they applied to conventions.

For example, the con suite was nowhere mentioned in the program book. Closed parties for "pros, con volunteers, and (invited) fans" are held, "but this does not constitute a con suite in the accepted manner. If convention funds are paying for this party, why isn't it mentioned in the program book where those who are funding it can find out about it?"

Robert was shocked by Halcon's charging for the program book.

This 'substantial and attractive con souvenir' consists of 4 sheets of double-sided photocopy folded in half to make a 16 page booklet, of which 6 pages are paid advertising. In contrast, at the Seattle con two weeks later the program book was over 40 pages (full 8 x 11) on slick 60 lb paper, with full-colour front and back

covers, B&W photos of every guest of note ... and it was FREE! I don't know what the standards are on the East coast ... I'm sorry, John, but this is the worst program book I have ever seen, and I have never been to a con where they charged for the program book ... (Robert A. Runté, New Canadian Fandom #2/3, Sept. 81)

Robert also pointed out this was the only con to charge members by the film. "To see one panel you had to pay for 3 movies (whether you went to them or not), 4 panels required you to pay for 6 movies, and so on.

On the face of it, the concom seemed to out-of-towners not to have thought out their purpose for holding Halcon: You state that 'the vast majority of our members are not fans,' but if a con isn't for fans, why the hell are you and the other 40 ('labour of love') committee members killing yourselves to have it? What's the point of a con if not to listen to the pros? To party? But the con suite is in another facility and not announced to the members at large. What's the point of holding a 'huge' con if all the fans who attend come away disappointed? To make lots of money so you can have an even larger number of nonfans next year? I sincerely believe that you and the other members have lost sight of the real purpose of a con, which is to be a gathering of fans, run by fans for fans. You seem to have reduced HalCon to a purely commercial venture, where if anything, the fans work for and subsidize the nonfan movie-goers. What's the point of it? What do you and the other Halifax fans get out of it? I'm afraid I just don't see it. (Robert A. Runté, New Canadian Fandom 2/3, Sept. 81)

Halcon 5

Halcon 5 was held March 5-7, 1982 at ProGoH was Spider and Jeanne Robinson, Toastmaster was Theodore Sturgeon, and Con Chair was one D. Slater.

Marc G=82rin-LaJoie reported, "the weekend was very much an overall success as far as I was concerned. With the exception of a few challenging screwups, I had a pretty good time ..."

Finding someone who knew what was happening ("or what to do about it") was a problem. MLG suggested that as most concommers were new this year, and the chair landed a job just two or three weeks earlier, it can't have helped co-ordination. "An understudy would help next time."

Programming suffered. MGL described how he had volunteered to do a videotape panel on the SCA, but until the day of his panel did not know that it consisted of himself and one

enthusiastic but totally inexperienced partner, and no VCR materialized.
The con hotel was separate from the con facilities at the University.

So much is to the bad. To the good,
The people involved did listen to last year's criticisms and acted accordingly. The fee structure was more in keeping with conventional practice, and the con handbook and badge holders were included in the very reasonable admission price. Nor was there an overwhelming feeling of over-zealous security ... There seemed to be no problems with fans being allowed to just sit and bag wherever they wanted to. ... "The film program consisted of, among other things, some really 'bad' stuff (Battle Beyond the Stars) and some silent classics (Phantom of the Opera). Now people at this con really know how to appreciate this stuff. Since there is no sound track to the silents, those in attendance took great delight in providing their own. ... "Halcon bills itself as a small/medium regional. I think it is more of a medium/large local. There didn't seem to be many people from far outside, though I could be wrong. But that 'local' or family feeling is possibly what I found most endearing. It wasn't exactly a relaxicon, but I had a much quieter, and more pleasant time than I have had at other cons. ... Just a lot of SF/comics fans who were fun to be with. (New Canadian Fandom #6, "Jan. 1983")

Halcon 6

Halcon 6, according to the advertising, was to be held March 4-6, 1983. ProGoH: Robert Asprin; TM: Galad Elflandsson; FanGoH: Bob Atkinson (advertised as Halcon's founder); Special Guests: Lynn Abbey and M.A. Bramstrup. Con Chair: Bobbi Slater. A new feature advertised was a costume ball. The site was given as St. Mary's University, while the con hotel was the Holiday Inn (38/night single/double). (New Canadian Fandom #6, "Jan. 1983")

I later learned that Mary Ann Bramstrup was a doctor and author in the Maritimes, and became a regular Halcon/Novacon supporter.

The trail of correspondence now picks up in Maple Leaf Rag, which took up the national-newsline function from NCF in 1983. It developed very quickly that far more news was forthcoming from (and about) Western than Eastern Canadian fandom.

Subsequent Maritime fan news was sporadic. (Come to think of it, so was CSFFA news in general.) Once Maple Leaf Rag received a long, detailed letter from Bob Atkinson, filling in all the gaps in my CSFFA chronology. Once there was a really long letter to Maple Leaf Rag from Anne

Marie Feetham about local fandom and the convention scene. Just two contacts in three and a half years of fanpubbing; odd.

Return of The Award That Wouldn't Die

Communications to and from the Maritimes about the CSFFA Awards seem to have been sporadic.to continue)

In accordance with the rotation, V-Con bestowed the 1981 CSFFA. The chair, Fran Skene, wrote in 1985 that the first she ever heard of the award was in Bob Atkinson's long letter, telling her more-or-less out of the blue that V-Con 9 had the honour to host the CSFFA. Fran wasn't impressed with what amounted to an edict directing V-Con to spend \$500 on a trophy.

When it came NonCon's turn to bestow the award in 1982, it seemed to Bob Atkinson that Robert Runté changed the eligibility rule to Canadian CITIZENS ONLY. Spider Robinson, then living in Halifax, wrote at length to NCF when he thought Robert Runté arbitrarily changed CSFFA eligibility rules. Runté wrote later that Atkinson's account "does not entirely jibe with my own view.

While bracing myself for a storm of protest over the exclusion of fans and/or a fan category from the CSFFA, and another possible fight over the inclusion of non-writers; while continuing to fight the intense apathy and ignorance of Canadian fans who didn't believe there were more than two writers in the country worthy of the award; while fighting a losing battle with a number of American fans who saw the CSFFA as an affront to American SF, motherhood and apple pie; while trying to convince various local cons that they really did want to hold a "Convention" and come up with the extra cash for the award; and while trying to generally revive an award apparently abandoned by its founders, I was shocked to discover that the major controversy that arose was over the world `citizen' on the ballot."

(Bob Atkinson, in Maple Leaf Rag 12, March 1985)

(Robert Runté, "CSFFA Meets NonCon", May 1985)

Some more confusion arose after Maplecon hosted Convention in 1983. John Bell and Bob Atkinson attended, and the original eligibility rule was upheld by ballot. But they met with two people who said they were involved with Boréal 84. (One was Joel Champetier, then living in LaSalle, Que.) Then, in January 1984, Bob Atkinson was told that Boréal 1984 was cancelled, and he couldn't get in touch with Joel Champetier. Well after the damage was done, Elisabeth Vonarburg indicated in MLR that Boréal was held; Luc Pomerleau indicated that the 1984 committee decided it was not practical to hold Convention as well as Boréal.

It would be interesting to find out who failed to get back to Bob Atkinson and why. (Elisabeth Vonarburg, Maple Leaf Rag #10, Dec. 1984) (Luc Pomerleau, Maple Leaf Rag #11 & #14, Jan. & May, 1985)

Halcon 8

Halcon 8 (as announced in Maple Leaf Rag 10) was held March 22-24, 1985 at the Hotel Nova Scotia. GoHs were to be Philip Jos=82 Farmer (Toastmaster), Jack Chalker (ProGoH) and Greg Hagglund, a Dorsai Irregular from Toronto, as FanGoH. In January 1985, Heather Bruton wrote in Maple Leaf Rag 11 that Farmer had to pull out as TM due to a serious operation. Halcon 8 was to award the 1985 CSFFAs; the ballots appeared in January 1985. By Maple Leaf Rag 14 it developed that author M.A. Bramstrup was going to be TM.

(The Dorsai Irregulars were a group of costuming/gaming fans interested by the Dorsai (interstellar mercenary) characters created by Gordon R. Dickson. They were also interested in volunteering as a group for convention security purposes. Unfortunately they gained a reputation for strongarming convention-goers rather than simply checking badges at doors.)

Also, for a change, out-of-towners received some news of club and apa activity, wargaming field trips and SCA club and apa activity, warga (Anne Marie Feetham & Heather Bruton, Maple Leaf Rag ##10-14)

Bob Atkinson wrote Maple Leaf Rag to say that Halcon 8 (1985) was to bestow the award for works in 1984 and 1983. With this administration, Atkinson wrote, he felt the awards were back on track. The CSFFA nomination ballot listed one Anne Marie Feetham as the CSFFA administrator, and the Halcon SF Society was operating as the de facto CSFFA committee.

At that time, Anne-Marie Feetham was administering the award for Halcon 8:

Yes, Garth, there is a Convention this year, and if anyone tries to take the CSFFA away from us, it will be over our dead bodies. Perhaps you can tell I am a little het-up over this subject?

[I replied:] ((I can tell you're operating on strange input: where did you get the idea anybody was out to take the CSFFA away from you?)) (Maple Leaf Rag #10, December 1984)

Halcon 8 awarded the 1983/4 CSFFA to Eileen Kernaghan of Burnaby, B.C., for *Songs from the Drowned Lands* (a fantasy novel). Her CSFFA award trophy also took the form of a Mike Spencer cast-metal sculpture.

Later that year, Maple Leaf Rag 18 (Oct. 85) featured notes from a Halcon 9 progress report. This reported that Halcon 8 drew 860 fans, the largest Halcon attendance ever; the hotel site

proved to have advantages over St. Mary's U, where Halcon had been held since 79 (Halcon 2); and special guests included Eva Whitley, Charles Saunders, and Spider and Jeanne Robinson.

The programming was superb. Highlights were the costume contest (remember the Cape Breton Barbarians?) the artshow and auction, the SCA demo debut, and the chocolate symposium. ... Other items of interest were the banquet, with Greg's demonstration of the Flat Universe Theory, the dealer's room, and the games rooms. They say we'll even have a games room with air in it next year!! (Halcon 9 progress report) (Maple Leaf Rag 19, November 1985)

Halcon 9 also indicated they were to occupy three floors of the Hotel Nova Scotian in March 1986.

Interlude

After Maple Leaf Rag folded in 1987, the next Canadian newszine was Michael Skeet's MLR, from Toronto. MLR 3 (Jan-Feb 88) ran news that the McDougalls (former editors of MARAPA) had moved to Toronto, and MARAPA was now being edited by Charles Gregory. Gregory wrote to invite contributors to MARAPA and concluded, "We'd be glad to hear from you."

Michael Skeet then wrote (starting to sound a lot like I used to, in Maple Leaf Rag):

This paper would be glad to hear from any Maritime fan. Our attempts to mail MLR 1 and 2 to Maritimers met with complete indifference ... everything sent out came back marked `moved, left no forwarding address.' (Michael Skeet, MLR 3, Jan-Feb 88)

As it worked out, Charles Gregory didn't respond to queries. (The July 1995 issue of The New Moon Directory, a listing of current APAs, indicates that MARAPA has folded.)

Piecing Things Together

In the next issue, MLR mentioned that Halcon was "for all intents and purposes dead." Kevin Holden, formerly of Fredericton, reported it was "more or less officially dead."

David "Murdoch" Malinski (a peripatetic reservist, now in West Winnipeg) was later kind enough to confirm that Halcon 10 (1987) was the last Halcon. The room parties and costume contest apparently got out of hand, with police and dogs and all sorts.

Wayne Chisholm, who was another member, reports the last Halcon got a lot of members in their late teens. One apparently freaked out on something Saturday night, while in one of the

elevators near the 12th floor (nowhere near the con); of the nevertheless, when the cops came, the con took the brunt of the hotel's reaction.

The surviving local cons rule that beach-legal costumes are mandatory. (Murdoch notes that he has his information second- hand.)

New Maritimes Fandom

In the aftermath of Halcon 10 appeared several SFoid clubs and three cons. Halcon is survived by Novacon (held the first weekend in November.) Wayne Chisholm roughly estimates Novacon's attendance at between 400 and 500 people.

In Murdoch's contributions I found a couple of committee newsletters. One of them lists things called "COMSTAAR.east, Metro Science Fiction Society, Wolfcon and a new one British Martian Expedentairy (sic) Recruitment Society". I'd like to ask about the Society Act/tax status of the Maritime cons, as several seem related to local clubs and zines by title.

There are also the following cons:

Communicon (held mid-August at Acadia University), and Wolfcon (first weekend in March). Communicon, as far as Wayne knows, started up around 1989 or 90.

Wolfcon has carried on for some 5 years by now. Founded in 1988 at Acadia University, Wolfcon enjoyed a lower overhead for function space at the university, but the attitudes of some faculty encouraged a move to the nearby (and picturesque) Old Orchard Inn. The Old Orchard affords more function space anyway. According to Murdoch, this is the direct successor to Halcon. Chisholm estimates Wolfcon's attendance at anywhere from 250 to 450. They offered information phone lines. (Instead of a chair, NovaCon and WolfCon seem to have a "Con Coordinator".)

There was also apparently one small con held in Amherst, Nova Scotia, about an hour away from the NB border; it was not financially successful, so it was not held again.

Someone operating through the Wolfcon address produced The Seeress, a double-sided newsletter profiling some Eastern Canadian (mainly Maritime) fan news. From internal evidence I take it this was produced in May to June of 1991; there are headlines saying "NOVACON Gearing up for #3" and "WolfCon IV in the Black Again". Outgoing Novacon concommers listed are Max Chavin and David Hobson. Incoming Con Coordinator named was Kevin Crawley; incoming NovaCon Society chairperson was one Mike Reid.

Novacon 3 (Nov. 8-10, 1991) drew 178 members, counting 38-40 day memberships, when 200 were needed for breakeven.

The Seeress report on Wolfcon IV (in March 91, I take it) was positive. The only details were about things being too easy, they "even had enough volunteers", and the following year's coordinator "even got some money in the accounts to get things rolling"??

Among the papers Murdoch gave me was a flyer saying Wolfcon V was held March 6-8, 1992 at the Wandlyn Inn, Kentville, N.S. Special Guest was Guy Gavriel Kay. The "Financial Coordinator" for the past three years has been Todd Saulnier. This year's committee included Keith Blackmore, games; Bruce McInnis, security chief; Susan Pfeiffer, Artshow and Costume Contest. Kelly Johnson provided art and Sean D. Smith the text and layout for the flyer. A T-shirt log and short story contest were featured. Todd Saulnier was Con Coordinator this year. Memberships were \$10 to Sept. 30/91, \$15 to Mar. 1/92, \$20 at the door; day passes were \$8 (Fri), \$12 (Sat) and \$8 (Sun).

Apparently, to judge from the flyer, it was a big deal that this year they concentrated the whole con in the one site and booked the whole hotel (72 rooms). The flyer included a reasonably informed return card ("mail-in sheet") on which you could specify how many "tickets" you wanted, a hotel room, in which zone (quiet or party) and for which night(s), order a con T-shirt and indicate where you'd like to volunteer.

Warp, the Montreal fanzine, noted briefly that other guests included:

Chris Claremont, N.S. horror writer Steve Vernon, N.B. SF writer Anne Bramstrup, and muppeteer Terry Angus. The pan-galactic gargle blasters ("made with real dry ice") whipped up by the staff of the Old Orchard Inn, site of the con, were a hit with everyone. Looks like WolfCon VI will be a go, about the same time next year and at the Old Orchard again. (Warp #6:3, autumn 1992)

One or more of the Wolfcon members worked up "The Atlantic Census of Science Fiction & Fantasy", a double-sided questionnaire sheet meant to obtain a profile of Wolfcon attendees, their activities and interests.

When Karl Johanson and John Herbert (in Victoria) started up Under the Ozone Hole, they listed among other Canadian cons "Communication 2," to be held August 14-16, 1992 at Acadia University, in Wolfville, N.S.

Under the Ozone Hole #2 (Nov. 92) listed Novacon 92 as scheduled for Nov. 6-8, 1992 in Dartmouth, N.S. Dave Duncan was advertised as GoH. Other Maritime cons listed for '93 included Wolfcon VI, March 5-7 at the Old Richard Inn in Wolfville, N.S., with Gordon R. Dickson.

That issue also reviewed Stoneknives & Bearskins (from USS Omega in Saint John, NB), and described it as a "long-running Trekzine" and "always entertaining."

Trek Kon 2 was held April 9 in the Metro Halifax area.

Kingcon (founded 1992 in Fredericton, 5 hours away from Halifax) is usually held in July or August, and is apparently the only con in New Brunswick. About 50 to 75 Halifen might show up at Kingcon. Wayne Chisholm says this is a growing con which enjoys good reports.

Kingcon briefly surfaced in GENIE's conventions-and- conrunning topic area, in 1993. The following request was posted on a GENIE newsgroup and forwarded to me by one of my friends:

"I am one of the organizers for Kingcon, a small convention being held this summer in Saint John, New Brunswick (Canada). I am looking for ideas and a basis for comparison with other cons. Kingcon's expected attendance is only 4-600, with a budget that might not even qualify to be called a shoestring. What I am looking for are budgeting and fundraising ideas. I am also interested in getting a copy of your programming, and perhaps even a listing of contacts for special guests. This information would be used by Kingcon and also be made available for any other convention that asked for it."

Atlantic SF (Again)

Pottersfield Press, Lesley Choyce's small press in Porters Lake, published another SF anthology in 1992: *Ark of Ice: Canadian Futurefiction*. Edited by Choyce himself, this featured a collection of stories by familiar Canadian names =FE Phyllis Gotlieb, Monica Hughes, Jean-Louis Trudel, H.A. Hargreaves, Candace Jane Dorsey, John Bell, Spider Robinson, W.P. Kinsella, Margaret Atwood, et al.

Clubs in 1992

In 1992 there was a zine called *Phanfare* being edited by one Judy C. Gates in Wolfville; This is now defunct, but afforded some idea of the range of interest groups in the Maritimes in 1992. Two are described below: the Fantasy Field Trip Society, and the Metro SF Society (MiSFitS).

The Fantasy Field Trip Society play live fantasy role-playing in the Halifax area, which apparently is a lot of fun. About 70 to 100 members; probably the most active and energetic group, in Wayne's opinion. There was a short-lived splinter group, but after a while the FFTS reabsorbed the Valley FFTS.

Wayne describes The Metro SF Society as a relaxed fan group.

One of the features of Novacon in '93 was "Wolvenwood", apparently an elvish-theme medieval court.

Cons in 1993

I am told that the Maritime convention committees operate as separate organizations from the clubs, though memberships overlap and different groups are represented. The regional conventions, according to Wayne Chisholm, are pretty much alike, and bitch panels amount to a series of "could we add this?/do this better?" suggestions.

Cubcon, an exclusively gaming con, was held Jan. 22-23/93 in the Michener Lounge of the SUB at Acadia University, Wolfville, NS. This was a 24+ hr gaming con, as mentioned in the Sep. 92 Wolfcon 6 newsletter.

By January 1993, it was announced that Canvention 13 would be held at Wolfcon 6 in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in 1993. John Mansfield reported:

They expect over 500 attending and have booked the entire Old Orchard Inn and nearby The Sleep for overflow. They have also released price lists for the program book, newsletter (PRs) and dealers' tables. ... (Con-TRACT 5:1, Jan-Feb. 1993)

Unfortunately the Aurora ballots enclosed with Con-TRACT 5:1 were due back by Jan. 15th, the same month as the newsletter came out.

As John later reported on Wolfcon VI/Canvention 13:

A very enjoyable convention in a remote site. Attendance & break even was ca. 350. Four tracks of programming was very adventurous and as a result, there was always something interesting going on. The motel had little convention space so many rooms were stripped of beds and were actually quite acceptable. The art auction went quite well and good money was spent on pieces that I have not seen outside the province, but should. The climax of the con was a medieval banquet held during the famous 'storm of the century'. The food was excellent and the location was both rustic & romantic. A fitting ending to a wonderful series of conventions. The local fans have found themselves a splendid style of con.

Canvention was well represented with quite a little programming, and nominees were seen from Western Canada, Ontario and the Maritimes. The awards were handed out during an excellent bilingual ceremony in the same location as the dinner... (Con-TRACT 5:3, May-June 1993)

Wolfcon is on sabbatical in 1994. Wolfcon 7 was held May 17- 20, 1995 at the Old Orchard Inn.

Wolfzine, the fanzine of the Wolfcon society, is/was a fantasy/SF fictionzine published twice a year; subscriptions \$6/4.

Clubs

Wayne Chisholm reports that the Fantasy Field Trip Society (his own club) numbers about 70 to 100 people, performing live fantasy role playing games in the area. This large and enthusiastic club appears at most regional conventions and is often asked to perform demonstrations and provide displays.

The Metro SF Society is a relaxed, social, low-pressure kind of club, and provides good support to regional conventions.

The three regional SCA groups are popular and participate in each other's activities. Maritime SCA members go to the "S&M" War in Maine and represent the East Kingdom at Pennsic. They also provide good regional con support, especially in Halifax.

Conclusions

It might appear from the foregoing that the fan groups in the Maritimes are a little isolated. As Wayne Chisholm reported it, while the fans and congoers ranged in age from early teens to their 40s, the majority of them were in their college years. As far as personal contact goes, they didn't lack the desire, only the ability to go as far as, say Boston (a good 14 to 16 hours' drive away). Some Maritime fans will usually appear at Ad Astra, about 24 hours' drive away (one lady won two costume awards), but out-of-region congoing is not a frequent activity.

Until Wayne Chisholm confirmed this, I only suspected it, based on the way Halcon was run (presumably until it was reviewed out of town). For comparison, here is the general North American definition of SF convention membership:

... A lot depends on your charging the right amount for admission to the convention. Admission is usually called "membership" since a membership is usually not sales taxable and admission usually is. Con admittance is not strictly a "ticket" since it also entitles you to publications and other benefits of a "membership organization". (Bruce Farr, "Steps In Starting a Media Convention", Con Games #4, Nov. 1987)

As far as contact by mail goes, I am told that few fanzines and little news of out-of-town conventions reach Maritime fans. I found it difficult to cover Maritimes fandom; Michael Skeet also found it difficult. In trying to research this article I sent a mailout in 1993 to Kevin Crawley, Communicon, Novacon and Wolfcon, inviting their input to make up this article. It elicited no response. In fact my letter to Communicon was returned as undeliverable. Dale Speirs reports that none of his letters have been answered.

Wayne Chisholm says the high turnover rate in the college-based clubs means addresses and contacts are obsolete well within a couple of years. Their study work load entirely aside, I

suspect the interactive, communicating concept of fandom seems to be lacking. (Wayne points out that this isn't particularly a Maritime problem, he lucked into contact with the local clubs when he moved to Vancouver; there was no communication base. Clint Budd remarked on the same thing, when he sought to contact BCSFA.)

As Wayne sees it, the makeup of a Maritime convention's "Board of Directors" varies quickly from year to year, and anything that one BoD knows is not passed on to the next. No-one is certain to be in the same position even two years running. In his experience, Halcon sent little or no advertising outside the city. For that matter there was no CSFFA advertising at Halcon 8. There was little mention of older fans or SF pros, apart from Spider Robinson or Mary Ann Bramstrup.

There was some CSFFA advertising at Wolfcon, but nothing about the flyers/posters involved or informed passersby, such as himself. Although Wolfcon gave notice of the Auroras a year in advance, there was no explanation of the award at the convention; and when he was informed that an area of the con was dedicated for the Aurora awards, he had the impression that it was cordoned off.

None of which fully explains some things. From talking with Wayne I understood that the high turnover in Maritimes fandom is not related to the average college age of the fans; there are any number of thirty something members, appearing on concoms from one year to the next, and with more stable addresses.

I still don't know why Maritime fans fail to answer letters ... unless (as Wayne says) most of their energy and attention is devoted to conventions, or gaming, or anything besides writing and fanpublishing. My best guess is that, quite honestly, Maritime fans have worked up their own models of what to do in their fandom, and have never been exposed to the fanzine, fanpubbing, fannish model of fandom. Nor, I suspect, would it greatly interest them now.

In this respect, despite being isolated, Maritime fandom is entirely in step with contemporary fandom.