

No. 1

April 2001

SPIRITS OF THINGS PAST

A fanzine of
progress for

ditto 14 & FanHistoriCon 11

Fanzines and fan history? Of course.

The 14th edition of *ditto*, the friendly fanzine fans' convention, will be held in October 2001 at the Tucker Hotel in Bloomington, Ill. This year, *ditto* will be combined with FanHistoriCon for a weekend of festivities fêting fine fannish traditions.

We invite you to join us for discussions of fanzines, fannish history, fandom in general and the best ways to preserve them. Bring us your best zines, your tall tales, your favorite fanecdotes. Bring us your questions about fandom's past and your concerns about its future.

Do good. Avoid evil. Pub your ish.

Spirits of Things Past is published by Dick Smith (rhes@enteract.com) and edited by Leah Zeldes Smith (lazz@enteract.com), 410 W. Willow Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070-1250, +1 (847) 394-1950. ||

Who? Your hosts — *Dick Smith, Leah Zeldes Smith, Wilson “Bob” Tucker, Fern Tucker, Henry Welch and Letha Welch.*
Attending members (so far) — *Bill Bowers, Linda Bushyager, Catherine Crockett, Carolyn Doyle, George Flynn, Teddy Harvia, Colin Hinz, Valli Hoski, Cris Kaden, Neil Kaden, Mary Kay Kare, Hope Leibowitz, Eric Lindsay, Sam Long, Murray Moore, Mark Olson, Priscilla Olson, Dave Rowe, Pat Sims, Roger Sims, Dick Spelman, Keith Stokes, Diana Thayer, Pat Virzi, Bob Webber, Toni Weisskopf, Art Widner ... and **you**, we hope.* (Supporting members — *Harry Andrushak, Moshe Feder, Catherine Mintz, Bobb Waller and Michael Waite.*)

What? A weekend celebrating science-fiction fandom, fanzines and fanhistory.
dittō is a relaxed, friendly convention for fanzine fans, friends of fanzine fans, and people who might like to be friends of fanzine fans.

With the addition of **FanHistoriCon**, which focuses on the history of fandom and the preservation of its artifacts, it will become a little more formal, program-wise, but remain just as friendly.

Anybody who likes to hang out and chat about fandom will enjoy it. (However, if your idea of a good convention requires an art show, a hucksters' room, a film program, a masquerade, a video room, an Internet lounge, dances, a science track, lots of big-name pros, tai chi lessons, weaponry or bondage, this probably isn't your sort of con.)

When? Oct. 12-14, 2001.

Where? Jumer's Chateau, 1601 Jumer Drive, Bloomington, IL 61702-0902, www.jumers.com, +1 (309) 662-2020.

Bloomington is located midway between Chicago and St. Louis, at the junction of Interstates 55, 74 and 39, and Routes 9 and 150. It is accessible by air on American Eagle, Transworld Express, Frontier Airlines, AirTran Airways and Northwest Airlink, as well as by Amtrak rail.

Jumer's is a lovely hotel located across the street from a shopping mall and within walking distance of many restaurants. It features an indoor pool and sauna, free parking and free shuttle service from the Bloomington-Normal airport and train station.

Rooms are \$79 **if reserved by Sept. 20, 2001**; rack rates will apply to rooms booked after that date. If you aren't sure whether or not you'll be able to attend, we advise booking a room just in case. (Please note that while the con suite will be smoke-free, it is on a smoking floor — so if you book a nonsmoking room, you will not be blocked with other con members. The hotel says its smoking rooms aren't too stinky.)

How much? Attending memberships are \$40 through May 31, 2001. A half-price rate applies to fans who can document fanac in 1951 or earlier. Supporting memberships are \$20, and include convention publications.

Make checks payable to Richard Smith and send them to **dittō 14**, c/o Richard Smith, P.O. Box 266, Prospect Heights, IL 60070-0266. (We can also accept credit-card payments via PayPal.com; e-mail rhes@enteract.com for details.)

Programming: We are still working on ideas, especially for the FanHistoriCon end of things. We welcome your suggestions. For ditto, you can expect such traditional items as:

Fanzine Swap Meet and Show-and-Tell: Fanzines. Bring us fanzines. There never seem to be enough fanzines around at these fanzine conventions. Got any really keen old zines? Bring them and show them off. Got some old crudzines? Bring them so we can all have a good laugh. Need to clean out your attic? Bring old zines to sell or trade or give away. Faneds: Bring a sample copy (or more than one) of a fanzine you published -- no matter how long ago -- and be prepared to talk about it. Of course, if anyone's actually gotten around to pubbing anything lately, bring that too.

Auction: Donations are welcomed for an auction to benefit ditto, which is all we're up to organizing. If anyone wants to run a fan fund auction, please let us know.

On-site publishing: We'll have a variety of publishing equipment on hand. Anyone who wants to bring publishing equipment is welcome. Let's try to generate some fanpubbing fever! Fair warning: Everyone will be expected to contribute to a ditto 14 fanzine. In the interests of ending up with something better than the usual convention one-shot, we encourage you to prepare your material ahead of time, but if you don't do so, you'll be handed a ditto master at the door.

ditto 14, October 12-14, 2001, Bloomington, Illinois

Membership Form

Name

Address

City

State/Province

Code

Country

Phone

E-mail

Prices through May 31: \$40 Attending \$20 Fans active since 1951 \$20 Supporting

Make checks payable to Richard Smith and send them to ditto 14,
c/o Richard Smith, P.O. Box 266, Prospect Heights, IL 60070-0266.

I'm not interested in helping at the convention. If someone asks me to haul ice, I'll tell them to go to blazes. (Note: Persons checking this box will be assessed \$5 extra for their memberships. Otherwise, we assume anyone attending a small convention such as this is willing to lend a hand when needed.)

I intend to spend the weekend being a lump. Don't expect me to participate in any programming. (See note above. We expect everyone to participate. If you want passive entertainment, go to Dragoncon.)

I might buy a ditto t-shirt. I'd be interested in size: S M L XL XXL XXXL XXXXL

Here's my idea for programming, or anything else _____

A Tale of Two Conventions

FanHistoriCon

- 1 May 24-26, 1994; Hagerstown, Md.**
Chairmen: Peggy Rae Pavlat,
Joe Siclari and Bruce Pelz;
other attendees: Forry Ackerman,
Don Fitch, Janet Herkart, Paul Herkart,
Dick Lynch, Laurie Mann, Joyce
Scrivner, Dick Smith, Leah Smith, Jack
Speer, Edie Stern and Irwin "Filthy
Pierre" Strauss.
- 2 Dec. 2-4, 1994; Burbank, Calif.**
(at Smofcon 12); Chairman: Bruce Pelz
- 3 June 22-25, 1995; Cincinnati**
(at Midwestcon 46);
Chairmen: Dick and Leah Smith
- 4 January 12-14, 1996; Fort Lauderdale,
Fla.** (at Tropicon XIV);
Chairman: Joe Siclari
- 5 April 5-7, 1996; Minneapolis**
(at Minicon 31);
Chairman: Joyce Scrivner
- 6 February 14-16, 1997; Framingham,
Mass.** (at Boskone 32);
Chairman: Joe Siclari
- 7 July 3-6, 1997; Seattle**
(at Westercon 50);
Chairman: Don Glover the Younger
- 7.5 August 5-9, 1998; Baltimore**
(at Bucconeer); Chairmen: Laurie
Mann, Joyce Scrivner, Mary Tabasko,
Randy Smith and Ann Catelli
- 8 June 25-27, 1999; Cincinnati**
(at Midwestcon 50); Chairmen: Ted
White (who was unable to attend due
to an injury) and Roger and Pat Sims
- 9.5 Sept. 2-6, 1999; Melbourne, Australia**
(at Aussiecon Three);
Chairman: Joyce Scrivner
- 10 Nov. 10-12, 2000; Hollywood Beach,
Fla.** (at TropiCon XIX);
Chairmen: Joe Siclari and Edie Stern
- 10.5 Aug. 30-Sept. 3, 2001; Philadelphia**
(at Millennium Philcon);
Chairman: Priscilla Olson
- 11 Oct. 12-14, 2001; Bloomington, Ill.**
(at ditto 13);
Chairmen: Dick and Leah Smith

ditto

- 1 Sept. 23-25, 1988; Toronto**
Chairmen: Catherine Crockett, Mike
Glicksohn, Alan Rosenthal, Taral and
Bob Webber
- 2 Oct. 13-15, 1989; San Francisco**
Chairmen: Patty Peters and Gary
Mattingly
- 3 Oct. 5-7, 1990; Northbrook, Ill.**
Chairmen: Dick and Leah Smith
- 4 Oct. 18-20, 1991; Virginia Beach, Va.**
Chairmen: Cathy Doyle and
Kip Williams
- 5 Oct. 23-25, 1992; Cincinnati**
(in conjunction with Octocon 29);
Chairmen: Bill Bowers and
Pat and Roger Sims
- 6 (0110) Nov. 19-21, 1993; Cambridge,
Mass.** Chairmen: Bob Webber and
Sarah Prince
- 7 Nov. 18-20, 1994; Ann Arbor, Mich.**
Chairmen: Leslie Smith and Ken
Josenhans
- 8 Nov. 3-5, 1995; Seattle**
Chairmen: Alan Rosenthal and
Janice Murray
- 9 Oct. 25-27, 1996; El Paso, Texas**
Chairmen: Richard Brandt and
Michelle Lyons
- 10 Oct. 24-26, 1997; Cincinnati**
(in conjunction with Octocon 34);
Chairmen: Pat and Roger Sims
- 11 Nov. 6-8, 1998; Newport, R.I.**
Chairmen: Priscilla and Mark Olson,
Bob Webber and George Flynn
- 12 Oct. 29-31, 1999; Minneapolis**
(in conjunction with Millennium
Fallcon); Chairman: Karen Cooper
- 13 Sept. 22-24, 2000; Dallas**
Chairmen: Cris and Neil Kaden
- 14 Oct. 12-14, 2001; Bloomington, Ill.**
(in conjunction with FanHistoriCon 11);
Chairmen: Dick and Leah Smith

Thanks to Ned Brooks, George Flynn, Sarah Prince, Mike Glicksohn and Roger Sims for help with dates.

Bob on Bloomington

The Bloomington-Normal area is best known as the home of that fannish sage, Hoy Ping Pong, but it also has many other fine features, including Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, the Illinois Route 66 Museum/Hall of Fame, the Prairie Aviation Museum, the Miller Park Zoo (Central Illinois' only zoo featuring Sumatran tigers) and the world headquarters of Beer Nuts Inc. (with outlet store and video tour!). Here its most famous fannish son tells its story.

The Prairie Indian Village Without Indians

By **BOB TUCKER**

In the long, long ago, there was a nearby grove where Indians camped, fished and hunted but they soon left after the paleface pioneers arrived and built the first town that eventually would be called Bloomington. The paleface pioneers had a habit of bathing each and every Spring when the weather warmed but the Indians couldn't wait that long. The winter odors drove them away.

Abe Lincoln slept here when he was in town, practiced law and tried cases here, and one day gave a fiery speech about slavery that started him on the long road to the White House. The speech was made in a theater called Majors Hall and in later years became known as the famous “lost speech” because none of the reporters present copied it down. About 45 years ago the city fathers in their infinite wisdom tore down the historic building to make room for a parking lot. So much for Mr. Lincoln and his speech, but before it was all lost in the dustbin of history I put a part of the story into an early book: “The Lincoln Hunters.” (Rinehart, 1958)

On the plus side the city has an aircraft museum that includes a real DC-3 aircraft that still flies. On weekends and in good weather the plane offers visitors a short ride over the city. This particular plane used to fly a regular passenger route for Ozark Airlines. We also have a zoo, a candy factory, an automobile factory, and the home office of the world's largest auto insurance company — but none of them have a historic parking lot or an ancient aircraft.

Leah on Lexicons

A shared vocabulary is one of the things that binds us together as fans — that makes fandom into a subculture, rather than just a collection of hobbyists. We think keeping this special language alive by using it and passing it on to neofen is an important part of preserving fandom.

We welcome your comments, additions and corrections on the terms and definitions in this article (and on the original lexicon in *STET 9*).

Toward a New Fanspeak

By LEAH ZELDES SMITH

When I was putting together the lexicon of fanspeak that appears in the most recent *STET*, I marveled at how much of the fannish vocabulary in use today had been coined before the end of the 1950s, and how little had really been added since Dick Eney pubbed the incredible *Fancy* II in 1959 (coincidentally, the year I was born).

I found about three dozen terms that I thought would not have been understood by fans in the late 1950s. There were also some omissions from *Fancy II* — words that I thought were probably in use by the time it was pubbed even though I couldn't find them listed there. Either they weren't yet in widespread enough use for Eney to consider them, or he simply missed them.

Many of the new terms I found relate to cons; a few others come from the Internet. Not all of them are in widespread use. Below, culled from *STET 9*, is my listing, with definitions and such etymology as I can find, of these “new” terms. You'll see in brackets my notes on whether these are omissions from *Fancy II* or truly new fannish terms.

AKICIF All Knowledge Is Contained In Fandom, a reference to fans' wide-ranging interests and penchant for collecting trivia. Originally, “All knowledge is contained in fanzines.” As initials, the tag first appeared and is used mainly in *rasff*, where it generally indicates that a poster is asking a question that has nothing to do with SF or fandom. *{The initials are clearly post-1950s; the original phrase may have been an aphorism of Charles Burbee's.}*

a.s.b (ā.es.bē) The Usenet newsgroup alt.sex.bondage, and, by extension, anyone who enjoys sado-masochistic sexual games. A small group of fans participating in such at cons unfortunately opened the door to mundane S/M enthusiasts who found our conventions convenient playgrounds, with a devastating effect on at least one East Coast con. *{Since it comes from the Internet, the term obviously post-dates Fancy; it also seems doubtful that such practices had penetrated the predominantly male fandom of the 1950s.}*

bow-tie n. The emblem of the *smof*. New York fan Ben Yalow, a longtime *conrunner*, has always sported one — in lieu, we suppose, of the idiosyncratic headgear that distinguishes certain other fans — and, since the 1970s, it has come symbolize the entire smoffish tribe. (It used to be a bow-tie and briefcase, but since the advent of computers and PDAs, smofs don't carry quite so much paper around, although a briefcase is still handy for carrying the *Holy Floor Plans*.) *{Post-1950s.}*

CFG rules n. The prohibition against the saving of seats at fan gatherings. As practiced for decades by the Cincinnati Fantasy Group, a fan club, CFG rules state that any vacant chair is fair game, even if the previous occupant got up only to get another drink. Taking the chair under such circumstances, a new possessor may triumphantly announce, “CFG rules!” The custom applies at many gatherings far beyond Cincinnati and often when no member of the CFG is actually present. {Probably post-1950s. No present-day CFG member can date the custom definitively, but it seems to go back to the 1960s.}

concom n. (kän'kəm) Convention committee, a group of volunteers who organize a con. {Probably post-1950s. Possibly dating from the 1970s, when the big explosion of conventions occurred.}

conrunner n. (kän'run'ər) 1. British for *smof*. 2. A *concom* member. {Post-1950s.}

conrunning n. (-run'ɪŋ) Serving on a *concom*. —**adj.** Related to organizing cons. {Post-1950s.}

consuite or con suite n. The hospitality suite at a con, where all members are welcome to sit and relax, chat with other fans and help themselves to the provided refreshments.

This is a North American phenomenon; at most overseas cons, the bar provides a similar, if costlier, function. The size of the convention is inversely proportional, usually, to how central the consuite is to the social life of a particular con. At smaller events, everyone hangs out in the consuite; at larger ones, room parties are a more significant social venue. {Probably post-1950s. It's unknown when the consuite itself originated. It clearly didn't exist in 1951, when the Nolacon party in Room 770 created such a stir.}

drobe n. (drōb) An uncomplimentary term for a certain type of attendee at science-fiction conventions, particularly one in costume, who drifts around the venue without interacting with the fans or otherwise participating in the convention.

Observing some of these, clad in ugly, full-body costumes that included full face masks, Michigan fan Larry Tucker once theorized that “They are very lonely people . . . who want to *stay* very lonely people.” A portmanteau of *drone* and *wardrobe*; Chicago's Dick Smith thinks he coined it in the early 1980s. {Post-1950s.}

droog n. (drōōg) One of a group of rowdy, and often drunken and belligerent, attendees at cons. The term comes from Anthony Burgess' 1962 novel, *A Clockwork Orange*, but only came into this use in the 1990s. {Post-1950s.}

DUFF (duf) **n.** A fan fund, a kind of fellowship that subsidizes a fan's trip to a distant con. Some fan funds are special funds got up to bring one well-regarded individual to a particular con. Other annual funds hold elections to select a delegate, who is generally considered to be the representative of one group of fans to another. Winners of such funds are usually well-known fans who have made significant contributions to fandom.

DUFF, founded in 1972, helps bring a fan from Australia or New Zealand to attend a Worldcon or NASFIC in North America and, in alternating years sends a North American to attend the Australian National Convention (or the occasional Australian Worldcon). Lesleigh Luttrell took the first trip, going to Australia in '72. DUFF usually only defrays part of the delegate's expenses. {Post-1950s. The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, of course, existed in 1959, so the concept of a fan fund would have been familiar. It's unclear whether the satirical Mid-Atlantic Fan Fund had yet been created. GUFF, CUFF and all the others followed DUFF, though there were special, one-off funds even before TAFF.}

furry n. A devotee of anthropomorphic cartoon animals, often depicted pornographically. — **adj.** Anything related to such. Fan artists like Taral Wayne, Ken Fletcher and Reed Waller began this movement in the 1980s. {Post-1950s.}

gamer n. (gā'mər) A fan or mundane who regularly participates in war games or role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons and its successors. {Post-1950s. War games of the sort played with little lead figures existed well before the 1950s, and some fans probably played them, but it was D&D, invented in the 1970s, that really brought gaming into fandom.}

ghost n. Someone who attends a con without paying for membership. — **vt.** To so attend a con.

Since the majority of SF (vs. *media*) cons are nonprofit events run entirely by volunteers, this is essentially stealing from other fans. Cons that have a big ghost problem usually have a variety of other problems.

The term dates from the 1980s or '90s. In the 1970s, such fuggheads were called *crashers*. {Post-1950s. It seems likely that the practice itself was rare in a time when cons were few and small and everybody knew everybody else.}

gofer or gopher n. (gō'fūr) A low-level volunteer who helps out at a con, sometimes in exchange for a free membership. — **vi.** To serve in such a capacity.

Gofering is a good way to way to get involved in conrunning and meet people. The term comes from mundane slang, where a gofer is a junior employee who “goes for this” and “goes for that.” {Post-1950s. It probably came into fannish usage with the big convention explosion of the 1970s.}

goh or GoH n. (gō) Guest of Honor. A highly respected fan or pro invited by a con to attend, usually with all expenses paid. While it used to be common to honor the gohs further by having others speak about their works, nowadays they must usually must talk about themselves, and either suffer the extreme of being on panels all day long or not being on the program at all. — **fgoh** fan guest of honor. — **pgoh** pro guest of honor. {The abbreviation seems to be post-1950s, although “guest of honor” was certainly in use early on.}

gongulator n. (gon'gyoo.lā'tər) A kind of newfangled mimeograph that incorporates an e-stenciller, but works — from the users' point of view — like the photocopier it resembles: You put the originals in one end and printed pages come out the other. Advanced models can be interfaced with a computer, so you don't even need an original. Cincinnati's Bill Bowers calls it a “mimeo in a box.” The manufacturers call it a *copy printer* or *digital duplicator*. Several fan clubs own gongulators, but they are as yet too expensive for private fan ownership.

The term was introduced to fandom in a Gestetner demonstration at ditto 3 in Chicago in 1990, where the chairmen, Dick and Leah Zeldes Smith, dubbed Gestetner's model a *gongulator* — a word used by Dick's then boss to describe any complicated piece of machinery.

Kansas City fans Ken Keller and David Sooby provide convincing evidence that the mundane term was *gonculator*, probably coined by the creators of the *Hogan's Heroes* TV series, who used it in Episode 94, “Klink vs. the Gonculator” (in which Sgt. Carter constructs a complicated rabbit trap, a gonculator, which, thanks to Col. Hogan, Col. Klink mistakes for a top secret Allied electronic device). {Post-1950s.}

goths n. Not strictly confined to fandom, a group of (mostly young) people with a penchant for vampires, black clothing, *Sandman* comics and moody music. From *gothic*. {Post-1950s. Mundane goths, per se, seem to date from the 1980s, though similar fads go back at least to the 19th century.}

The Great Spider A fannish ghod who eats the souls of unbelievers when they die, but for his devoted followers eats cars to provide them with parking spaces. Popularized by John Kusske of Minneapolis in the 1960s. {Post-1950s.}

hakosot n. (hä'kō.sōt') An Israeli game played at several Midwestern cons and some Worldcons, typically at 1 a.m. and 1 p.m. Sunday in the *consuite*. The players sit around a table and chant in Hebrew while passing paper cups hand to hand in a complex pattern. Chicago fan Moshe Yudkowski introduced it to fandom in the late 1980s; some vigorous sessions (or weak furnishings) have given hakosot its other name: “Moshe's Famous Table-Busting Game.” *Hakosot* is Hebrew for “the cups.” {Post-1950s.}

Herbie The newest of the major fannish ghods, Herbie Popnecker, The Fat Fury, who disposes of evil-doers by bopping them with lollipops. Based on the *Herbie* comic books, the faith was founded in 1966 by childhood friends of L.A. fan Elst Weinstein, who brought it with him into fandom in the '70s. {Post-1950s.}

Holy Floor Plans Floor plans for the facilities of a proposed Worldcon, as presented during its bid. {Post-1950s. Probably a 1980s introduction.}

jiant n. (jī'ənt) Someone whose activities in a particular area reach heroic proportions. A *publishing jiant* is a very frequent or long-term fanzine publisher, especially one whose zines

are especially large or high-quality. A *traveling jiant* is a fannish jet-setter who frequently attends cons across the country or the world. A Snearyism. {Likely an omission.}

KTF or ktf adj. (kā.tē.ɛf) From “kill the fuckers.” A style of fanzine criticism that takes no prisoners. The term was first popularized in the U.K. in the 1980s. {Post-1950s.}

Langdon chart A chart tracing fannish romantic or sexual alliances, which theoretically could connect nearly all of fandom — especially during the promiscuous 1960s and ’70s. Even then, they were built out of much speculation and innuendo. “Not to mention,” Ted White said, “the fact that there’s sex and there are relationships, and the Chart treats them as the same thing.” Kevin Langdon, then a teen-age protégé of Walter Breen’s, created the first such chart in the 1960s. The LASFS Langdon chart was legendary. {Post-1950s.}

lettercol n. The letter column in a prozine or fanzine. Prozines used to have long ones, and fandom was created in their pages, as people who wrote to the magazines then began to write to each other. This could not happen today, as prozines no longer publish their correspondents’ addresses. Letters are also the mainstay of fanzines, though some faneds are contributing to the death of the form by failing to give addresses or providing only e-mail addresses that are useless for mailing fanzines to. {The word lettercolumn appears in *Fancy II*, but not the shorter version.}

lime Jell-O Every man-fan’s fondest fantasy. Or at least it was Joe Haldeman’s — a bathtub filled with lime Jell-O and nubile ladies. Two femmefen, Avedon Carol and Susan Applegate, made this particular fantasy come true for Joe at Discon 2 in 1974, and lime Jell-O has been the stuff of fannish legend ever since. (Like many fantasies, this one may be better in the imagination than the execution. It’s difficult to get gelatin to gel properly in a bathtub — to do it, you have to use ice, and the substance you wind up with is cold, soupy and slimy all at once.) {Post-1950s.}

literary adj. Fiction in printed form, regardless of its merit as literature. A *literary fan* is one whose preferred form of science fiction is books and magazines, rather than TV shows and movies. See *media*. {Post-1950s, in this sense.}

media n. TV shows and movies. — **adj.** Anything related to such shows. *Media fans* are those who prefer science fiction in this form to that in books, especially those involved in organized fan activity related to a particular show. Some media fans resent being so labeled by *literary* fans. Media fandom began with *Star Trek* in the 1960s. {Post-1950s.}

parasite n. Someone who attends cons for reasons other than to attend the program and socialize with fans. Leah Zeldes Smith first used the term in the 1980s to apply to mundane jewelry hucksters who added cons to their craft-show circuits, and later to formerly fannish hucksters who began to use fandom as a means to a full-time living. After a LoneStarCon 2 panel, “Parasites or Part of Us?” in 1997, the term broadened to include various con goers, from *a.s.b* types to *gamers*, who have no interest in SF or fandom but attend cons because they make convenient playgrounds or profit centers. {Post-1950s.}

pro-sucker n. A sycophant who thinks adulating the pros is the be-all and end-all of fandom, fandom’s equivalent of a groupie. Coined by Priscilla Olson of Boston in the early ’90s. {Post-1950s.}

rasff n. (ras’əf) The Usenet newsgroup rec.arts.sf.fandom, a kind of everlasting online con-cum-electronic apa. {Post-1950s.}

relaxacon n. A con with no formal program, intended as a relaxing weekend of socializing — but which often features plenty of high-powered *smoffing*, too. The oldest and best of these is Midwestcon, which began in 1950 and is held annually in Cincinnati on the last full weekend in June. {Probably an omission, rather than a post-1950s term.}

repro n. Reproduction of paper copies (of a fanzine) by any means. — **vt.** To make copies. {An omission?}

revenant n. A gafiote who has returned to fandom, usually after a considerable time. {It’s unknown when this term was introduced.}

semiprozine n. A type of magazine midway between a fanzine and a prozine. WSFS defines it as any generally available nonprofessional publication devoted to science fiction or fantasy that

has met at least two of the following criteria: an average press run of at least 1,000 copies per issue; paid contributors or staff; provided at least half the income of anyone; contained 15 percent or more of its total space in advertising; or announced itself to be a semiprozine. A term coined in 1982, when the Worldcon business meeting created this Hugo Award category to keep *Locus* from dominating the fanzine Hugo. {*Post-1950s.*}

SFOHA (svō'hä) The Science Fiction Oral History Association, formed by author Lloyd Biggle in the 1970s to preserve the history of science fiction through audio- and videotaped interviews and recording at cons. Though at first mainly pro-oriented, it has since expanded into fannish history, largely due to the efforts of Michigan fans Larry Tucker, Nancy Tucker Shaw and Jean Barnard. SFOHA is perpetually short of volunteers. {*Post-1950s.*}

SFWA (sif'wä) The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, founded in 1965: a support group for pros, which spends as much time arguing about who should be entitled to be a member, what the organization should be called, the criteria for its awards and the duties of its executive director as it does on projects of actual use to its membership. It was originally just the Science Fiction Writers of America, although writers of fantasy were always welcome; "and Fantasy" was explicitly added to the title, but not the initials, in the 1990s. {*Post-1950s.*}

skiffy n. (skif'ē) 1. Sci-fi. Used by speakers who wish to indicate that they are part of the cognoscente and aware of the term *sci-fi's* dubious estimation within fandom. 2. An ironic, affectionate term for the whole field of science fiction. — **adj.** Related to 1 or 2.

This term was spread as a result of the Southern California Institute for Fan Interests' use of this pronunciation for its acronym, and probably dates to the late '70s or early '80s. {*Post-1950s.*}

smof or **SMOF n.** (smäf) 1. Someone involved in the politics of **conrunning** and, especially, WSFS and Worldcons. 2. The movers and shakers of fandom. — **vi.** To talk about con politics or conrunning. **smoffed smoffing** — **vt.** To talk intensely about some aspect of fanac unrelated to cons. "They're smoffing fanzine databases."

From *Secret Master of Fandom*, a phrase possibly inspired by the only SF novel of British writer Gerald Kersh, which was published in the U.S. as *Secret Masters* (1953). It has been attributed to a 1950 article by Bob Tucker, and to a comment by Jack Chalker in the early '60s, and was likely popularized by a skit at Discon I in 1963 that used the phrase. At first, it meant a mysterious character who directed fandom from behind the scenes, but shifted to its present meaning in the 1970s.

Smofcon is an annual con for those interested in conrunning. {*The complete phrase seems to pre-date the publication of Fancy II, and may therefore be an omission, but Chalker claims to have introduced the acronym.*}

smooth or **smoooth** or even **smooooooth vi.** To engage in a drinking ceremony: The leader takes a sip from a bottle of bourbon, puts his hand in the air, and passes it to the next person, who does the same. Everyone keeps his hand raised until the bottle comes back to the leader, who takes another sip, at which time the whole company shouts "Smoooth!" while swinging their arms down in front of them in a wide curve.

Bob Tucker of Illinois is the originator and perennial leader of this ceremony, which he began using at cons in the early 1950s. "I stole the Smooth routine from Red Skelton in a movie," the 1948 MGM musical *Ziegfeld Follies*, he said. "Skelton had only a cameo role; he appeared for about three to five minutes selling 'Guzzlers Gin' in a TV commercial. At the end of the commercial he is half drunk and sitting on the floor; he looks up at the camera, swings his arm and cries, 'Drink Guzzlers Gin — it's smooth!'"

When Tucker isn't present, the ceremony is performed in his honor. The increasingly hard-to-find Beam's Choice bourbon (green label) is the proper Tuckerish tippie, but other beverages can be substituted in an emergency. {*An omission.*}

standlee n. (stand'lē) A unit of measurement, roughly 1 meter, used to indicate the distance of con facilities from each other. Based on the length of the stride of Bay Area fan Kevin Standlee, who so described walking distances in San Francisco during the 1993 Worldcon bid. {*Post-1950s.*}

techie n. (tek'é) 1. A member of General Technics, a loosely organized, largely Midwestern fan club whose members have serious interests in do-it-yourself technology, pyrotechnics and rocketry. By extension, it also refers to anyone with such interests. 2. Among *smofs*, it refers to a con staffer who runs sound, lighting “tech” systems.

Possibly as an outgrowth of fan use, possibly as a separate coinage, the term is becoming popular in mundane use, usually to describe computer technicians, engineers and other technical professionals, resulting in National Techie Day, first celebrated in October 1999. {Post-1950s, though the techie type certainly existed from the very beginnings of fandom.}

thish n. This issue (of a fanzine). {Seems likely to be an omission.}

toc n. (tôk) Table of contents. {An omission?}

trekkie or trekker n. A *media* fan who is primarily into *Star Trek*. The second term is more polite. {Post-1950s.}

the usual n. The means of exchange for which fanzines are available — contributions of articles or artwork, trade copies of others’ fanzines, or locs.

U.K. fan Derek Pickles and his brother-in-law, Stan Thomas, were the first to announce, in the June 1954 issue of *Phantasmagoria*, the three ways of getting their fanzine without paying cash:

1. *No subscriptions are requested, if you send money we won't refuse it, but there is no sub rate.*
2. *You can make sure of receiving future issues, which will appear when we feel like it, by*
 - a. *Writing a letter of comment.*
 - b. *A contribution.*
 - c. *Your magazines.*

This formula quickly spread. It’s unknown, however, who was the first to sum these up in the useful phrase *the usual*. {Likely an omission, though it's unknown when the phrase came into common use.}

WAHF n. (waf) 1. A list of people who sent locs that a fanzine did not print. 2. A loccer so listed. — **vt.** To put on a WAHF list. **WAHFed** An acronym for *We Also Heard From*. {An omission?}

Wimpy Zone Supposedly, the Midwest, which had few strong cities to field Worldcon bids. New York fan Ben Yalow, pontificating at the 1984 WSFS business meeting, uttered this phrase in a discussion of the Worldcon rotation plan, a scheme adopted in 1953 that divided North America into three zones, Eastern, Central and Western, for the purposes of Worldcon parity. (Yalow later denied the statement, but ye editor was there taking notes.) The rotation plan was discarded in 1999 in favor of a 500-mile exclusion zone around the most recent Worldcon, so now there are no zones, wimpy or otherwise. {Post-1950s.}

Widowers A fictional Manchester, England, department store for which ersatz rhyming advertisements became a fad after first appearing in Harry Turner and Eric Needham’s fanzine for the Offtrails Magazine Publishing Association, *Now and Then*, in the mid-1950s. The trend periodically sees a revival.

The best examples of these four-line verses have a completely absurd counterpoint between the first couplet and the product advertised in the last, a rhyme scheme of *abccb*, with an internal rhyme in the third line, and do not rely on a preposition to begin the final line. The example below is by Needham:

*Judas hanged himself from a bough
A curious use for trees. . . .
What use to perish, no more to cherish
WIDOWERS WONDERFUL PEAS*

{An omission.}

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