



Progress Report One

March 2004

Moving Forward: A Message from the Chair

By Michael Nelson
FenCon Committee Chair

It is hard to believe that we are only six months away from FenCon. The Committee has accomplished much in the past year since we began working on FenCon, and there is still much to do. This Progress Report will update you on our activities and plans.

Guests:

As you already know, FenCon is a literary and filk convention with over twenty guests. We wanted to open the first FenCon with a big name Guest of Honor, so we contacted renowned SF writer Larry Niven who quickly and graciously accepted our invitation. Mr. Niven's honors and awards are numerous including both the Hugo and the Nebula. One of the questions we are frequently receiving is 'How did you guys get Larry Niven?' The answer is simple, "We asked him!" The FenCon Committee is very honored to have Mr. Niven as Guest of Honor.

Our Toastmistress, Elizabeth Moon, was a finalist for the Nebula and the Arthur C. Clarke Award and has been a Hugo nominee. We also have numerous local and out of town authors as guests including Pat Anthony, Rachel Caine, P. N. Elrod, Rhonda Eudaly, Melanie Fletcher, Glenda C. Finkelstein, Beverly A.

Hale, Gloria Oliver, Dusty Rainbolt, and Jeff Turner. FenCon is pleased to have the publisher Ben Bella Books as a guest as well.

The other component of FenCon is Filk. There has not been a North Texas convention with a strong filk focus, and FenCon is striving to fill that niche. Again, we wanted a big name filk guest. Michael Longcor as our Filk Guest of Honor certainly fits that description. He has won numerous filking awards including the 2003 Pegasus Award for Best Filk Performer, and filk fans are very excited that he will be at the first FenCon. Our other filk guests include Jeff and Maya Bohnhoff, Margaret Middleton, Carla Ulbrich (who has been featured on Dr. Demento), and Windbourne.

Some of our guests wear multiple hats such as Maya Bohnhoff and Lee Martindale who write as well as filk. Teresa Patterson is a triple threat as a literary, filk, and art guest.

Our other art guests are Cat Conrad and Joy Marie Ledet.

Our "Fen" Guest of Honor is Jim Murray. Mr. Murray is a Big Name Fan from the Kansas City area who is well known throughout the region as a 'wild and crazy guy' and one of the 'worst dressed sentient beings.' He was a major organizer of the KC bid to host the 2006 WorldCon and was heartbroken when they lost by

fewer than 100 votes to LA. I'm sure he will have plenty of stories about his experiences.

We are also planning some real science discussions, and Ron DiIulio, a Solar System Ambassador representing NASA, will host a panel.

We are hoping to announce additional guests in the near future, but don't want to say anything until all the details are worked out.

Hotel:

FenCon will take place at the Holiday Inn Select North Dallas located at 2645 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75234. The hotel has been recently remodeled and looks great! The convention area is spacious, and the restaurant makes incredible food. Trust me, I've tried it! Also, they have free parking, a fitness center, a full bar, and an indoor pool! All of the public areas are non-smoking.

Hopefully, a lot of you are planning to stay at the hotel. The more hotel guests, the more room nights for which we will receive credit, and the easier it will be to pay for the convention space. So please consider staying at our fine hotel. The room rates are \$69 for a regular (single through quad) and \$79 on the concierge level (single through quad). This is a great rate, and you'll have a place to store your stuff. If

you want to stay for our late night programming or room parties, you won't have to drive home. Just go to your room and rest up for the next exciting day at FenCon. Reserve your room at 972-243-3363 and be sure to ask for the FenCon rate!

Volunteers:

FenCon is a fan-run convention. We will have volunteers from ORAC, a local fan club that is the primary sponsor of FenCon, but we will need all the help we can get. If you are interested, or know someone who is, please send an email to volunteers@fencon.org.

Dealers:

What is a convention without a Dealer Room? FenCon's Dealer Room contains 31 tables, and all of them have been sold! The hucksters will be selling all sorts of merchandise from books to jewelry to gizmos to clothing to knives and swords. The FenCon Dealer list can be viewed at www.fencon.org/dealers.html.

Programming:

Part of FenCon's Opening Ceremony will be a concert by our filk guests. Numerous filk concerts are planned.

We have several ideas for programming. Some of these were suggested via our online questionnaire and at room parties. Topics range from screenwriting to research to a panel suggested by Mr. Niven: 'This is not your father's science fiction.' The panels have not been finalized, but we are striving to make them exciting and interesting to FenCon members. If you have any good ideas of your own, please send them to us at info@fencon.org.

Gaming:

A roomy area for open gaming will be available. This portion of FenCon is still being planned. Please send inquiries to gaming@fencon.org.

Cabaret:

The FenCon Cabaret (costume contest) will be held Saturday night. We believe that this will be a lot of fun, and the organizer has had a lot of experience in the costuming area. So put together your best outfit, work up a routine if you want and show us your stuff. If you are interested in participating, please email cabaret@fencon.org.

Video Room:

The Video Room is being planned as a showcase for movies and television shows that are not readily available to the general public but would be of great interest to FenCon members. Suggestions can be emailed to video@fencon.org.

Program Book:

In order to make it really special, the FenCon program book will contain short works from some of our guests as well as biographies, local information, and other useful or interesting information about FenCon and what will be going on the weekend of the show. These contributions from our guests could be an old work that has not been seen in a while or a preview of an upcoming book or an original short story that was written just for us. The FenCon program book will be distributed to all attendees with a weekend membership. If you wish to advertise your convention or business in the FenCon program book, or for more details about the program book, please contact us at publications@fencon.org.

Memberships:

We have a great looking convention planned, but it is all for nothing unless we have people there. If you are wondering what you can do to help make this a great convention, the answer is simple: bring a friend to the con! The more people that show up, the more fun we will all have, so please help spread the news about FenCon. Currently the most important task for the Convention Committee is getting memberships. We believe that FenCon is shaping up to be a great con, and we want lots people to attend and enjoy!

Membership rates are \$20 U.S. until March 31, 2004, \$25 until June 30, 2004 and \$30 until August 30, 2004. The rate at the door is \$35.

You can purchase your membership online at www.fencon.org/memberships.html or fill out the form at www.fencon.org/memberform.html, print it, and mail the form and your check to FenCon at the address listed on the form.

Contact:

Please email questions or suggestions to info@fencon.org.

Thank you for your time and support. We are looking forward to seeing you at FenCon!



The FenCon Room party at ConDFW was a great success and was attended by many con goers. Most even stayed after we ran out of beer!

The Story So Far: The Birth of FenCon

Who are we? Why are we here? Normally these are questions best left to philosophers, theologians, or the late Douglas Adams. For us, however, this should provide some definite answers.

In 2000, Tim Miller and Ed Dravecky looked at the state of fannish conventions in North Texas and found them wanting. The last SF convention in Dallas had been Stellar Occasion 5 in 1998. Sure, there was Project A-Kon for anime fans and Sci-Fi Expo for toy collectors and media SF autograph hounds but nothing for literary SF fans closer than Austin. This just would not do.

So Tim and Ed began to search for the perfect hotel and the perfect date. Visits were made, calendars consulted, and a plan to present to other fans drawn up—just in time to see ConDFW announce their first convention for 2002. All that work and they got the literary SF convention they wanted, albeit one run by other people, so the plans went on the shelf.

After the first ConDFW, members of ORAC, a local SF fan group, had so much fun they wanted to do a convention of their own, only in the fall. The idea was that a metroplex of six million people could have two conventions with different styles and fans could double their fun. Ed and Tim, both ORAC members, dusted off their plans and once again set them in motion.

Most of 2002 was spent visiting more hotels, making discreet inquiries about guests, and planning for the public announcement in 2003. We secured permission for the name we wanted (FenCon) from the British fans who had used it in the early 1980s and we were set.

With the pieces in place, we celebrated our launch with a room party at ConDFW II in February 2003. We handed out flyers, served

snacks and beer. We were 21 months away from the start of FenCon and all we were lacking was a hotel, a guest of honor and a date. No big. We still signed up our first Friend of the Fen member: Joseph Abbot.

Our confidence boosted by the room party success, we contacted the one person at the top of our Dream Guest List: Larry Niven. And he said YES!

So now all we needed was a hotel. But we'd found the perfect hotel already, hadn't we? Yup. What we had not found was the perfect hotel contract. Then we got an e-mail from another hotel asking if they could serve us in the future. We

made a few visits and found we now had the perfect hotel in the perfect location at a price we could afford. A contract was signed and the Holiday Inn Select North Dallas became our home for 2004.

So now we're just over six months out and everything is in place. We've got a stunning guest lineup, a great hotel in a great place, and our programming and dealer areas are all set. All we need are more members to hit our target of 300. Tell all your friends and be sure to point out the price increase at the end of March.

So now you know who we are and why we're here.

FenCon Makes a Splash at ConDFW

FenCon Committee members and several guests were at ConDFW III, the other Dallas-area literary SF Convention, last month. We all had a great time, and if you didn't go be sure to check them out next year.

It was a very successful weekend for FenCon. Our biggest news is that our dealer's room is now sold out! Mike Nelson sold our last table on the Sunday afternoon of ConDFW. This is a great accomplishment as FenCon is still six months away. This leaves the committee more time to work on bringing additional guests to the con and to deal with the challenge of programming our weekend's activity and coming up with interesting and exciting ideas for panel discussions.

On Saturday night we hosted a room party to promote FenCon and to give away beer! Several of the local writers that are attending FenCon stopped by including Gloria Oliver who was kind enough to help out and manned the soft drink and beer coolers for most of the night.

Our friends from IHOD (the Intergalactic House of Daleks) stopped by with a special mechanical visitor,

“Joe Dalek,” a full size replica of the infamous *Doctor Who* baddies. Joe made the rounds of the convention floor (be sure to ask P.N. Elrod about her Dalek encounter) before heading up to the room party where attendees got a chance to look at him up close, pose for pictures, and ask builders Barry Whitewater, Jim Mahaffey and Tim Miller questions like “just how did you make that thing?”

It was great to get to meet everyone that stopped by, and put some names to faces.

We sold several memberships and handed out more than 200 fliers to people interested in attending or being guests at FenCon 2004.

Look for us at the following conventions where we will be throwing room parties and selling memberships to FenCon 2004!

Roc Kon in Little Rock June 11 - 13

ApolloCon in Houston June 25 - 26

Conestoga in Tulsa July 16 - 18

ArmadilloCon in Austin Aug. 13 - 15

**You'll never see any
of our guests doing a
Priceline commercial.**

[You're Welcome]

Join us for **FENCON**, a Literary Science-Fiction and Filk convention, this **September 24, 25 and 26 in Dallas, Texas.**

To register or for more information go to www.fencon.org

Guest of Honor Larry Niven

Filk Guest of Honor

Fen Guest of Honor

Toastmistress

Michael Longcor

Jim Murray

Elizabeth Moon

Check out www.fencon.org for a complete list of guests and activities



Of the Fen. By the Fen. and For the Fen.



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