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Fiction Society, Inc.
(a non-profit corporation)
P. O. Box 11743
Phoenix, AZ 85061

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

DECEMBER, 1987 ISSUE

Non-Profit Org.
Postage Paid
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Phoenix, AZ

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MAW 4TH QUARTER, 1987

NUTS 'N' BOLTS: "Writing in Somebody Else's Universe"

by Jennifer Roberson

Many fans who want someday to write professionally start out making up stories about favorite characters from TV show, movies and books. One of the most commonly asked questions at "breaking into writing" panels is whether this practice is good or bad. Some pros argue for it, others against, claiming that writing in someone else's universe hinders creativity.

Some argue in favor because any type of writing helps hone technique and create an appetite for improvement. Conquering the blank page isn't always easy, and anything that helps should be applauded. But, by the same token, it's easy for a newer author to get trapped in a world of someone else's making. It's a familiar place inhabited by very familiar characters, and it saves the new writer the time and trouble of creating his own people or developing interesting settings. It's all been done for him: an "off the rack" universe.

On the plus side, this ready-made world allows the writer the chance to experiment with technique. Because he's so familiar with the world and characters, he's more confident about his ability, and this comes across in the writing. He tries some new twists on old themes. Puts his protagonist in the sort of jeopardy no one else has done. Explores the personal things never brought up before. All of this expands the writer's grasp of his craft and allows him the chance to grow without feeling threatened.

However, carried to an extreme it can be detrimental to a career, if a career is what's desired. For one, work based on copyrighted material can never be published, except in rare cases such as MZB's fan-oriented Darkover anthologies. Authors get extremely upset when others try to cash in on their own creations. Robert Adams tells a story about a diehard fan who rewrote one of the Horseclans books, changed the names but little else, sent it in to Signet in hopes of selling it as his own original work. Needless to say, Adams was less than pleased and the Signet legal staff had a discussion with this fan; he learned his lesson the hard way. So, while in the normal course of events fan writing isn't generally considered plagiaristic, it's wise to be aware of the pitfalls yawning if it gets out of hand.

If you're having a wonderful time with Kirk and Spock and all the others and don't care about getting published, there's no law against writing stories so long as you don't try to sell them. But if you'd really like to become a professional, remember that while time spent on pre-existing people and worlds isn't really wasted, as it is time that could otherwise be spent on creating your own Darkover, Enterprise or Pern.

Editors treasure originality. Pastiches are no longer in vogue. If you truly want to get published, you'd do better to start working on your own world/people/plots, refining everything until it's professional enough to stand on its own without benefit of existing media. Then perhaps your published trilogy/series can become the treasure vault of inspiration that causes others to love your world and people enough to want to write about them.

CONVENTION NOTES

CASFS makes no representations about conventions listed (except for their own conventions, CopperCon 8, Fan Gatherings, and 1988 SmofCon) other than simply providing a listing service. Please note that many conventions have arranged with Endless Universe Bookstore in Mesa, One Book Store in Tempe, and Stalking Moon Book Store in Glendale to sell their memberships.

LepreCon 14 - April 1-3, 1988 (Friday to Sunday) at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix, Arizona. Memberships are \$17 through 12/31/87, \$20 through 3-15-88, and \$25 at the door. Contact P. O. Box 26665, Tempe, Arizona 85282 or call (602) 839-2543. Guests are artist Alan Gutierrez, author Steven Barnes, and Norwescon organizer and fan Richard Wright.

Westercon 41 - July 1-4, 1988 (Friday to Monday) at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix, Arizona. Memberships are \$40 until 1-1-88, then \$45. Supporting \$10.00 at all times. Write for table information. Contact Westercon 41, P. O. Box 26665, Tempe, Arizona 85282 or call (602) 839-2543 for further information. Guests of honour are author Robert Silverberg, fan Craig Miller, and artist Real Musgrave.

CopperCon 8 - September 8-11, 1988 (Thursday night to Sunday) at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix, Arizona. Memberships are \$15 to 4-30-88, \$20 to 8-31-88, \$25 at door. Contact P. O. Box 27201, Tempe, Arizona 85282 or call (602) 838-6873 after 6pm. Guests of honour are author Robert Vardeman and fan and TEXAS SF INQUIRER editor Pat Mueller.

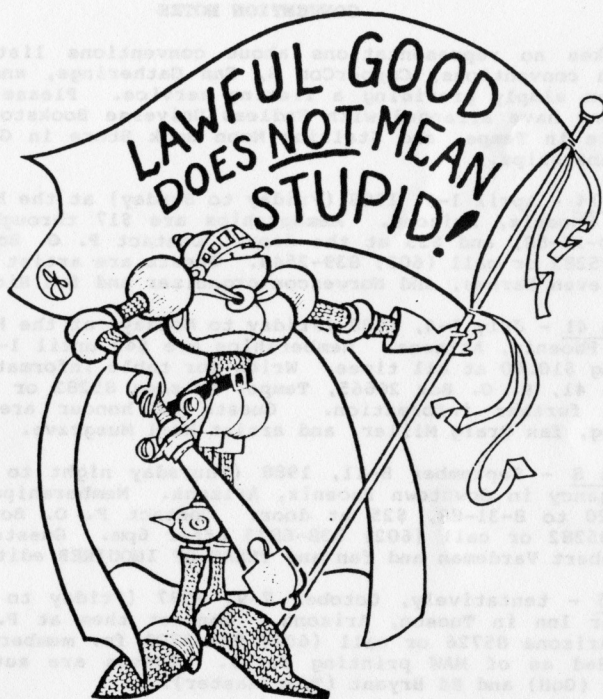
TusCon 15 - tentatively, October 7-9, 1987 (Friday to Sunday) at the Ambassador Inn in Tucson, Arizona. Contact them at P. O. Box 26822, Tucson, Arizona 85726 or call (602) 881-3709 for membership rates (not yet decided as of MAW printing date). Guests are author Stephen R. Donaldson (GoH) and Ed Bryant (Toastmaster).

1988 SMOFCon - December 8-10, 1988 (Friday to Sunday) at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix, Arizona. This is the annual national convention on conducting sf/fantasy conventions. Includes workshops, publications, and panels on con conducting techniques. Membership is \$30 to 3-31-88, \$35 to 10-1-88, and \$40 thereafter. Rooms are \$60. Contact P. O. Box 27201, Tempe, Arizona 85282 or call (602) 968-5673.

NOLACON II, 46th World SF Convention - September 1-5, 1988 at the Sheraton Hotel, Marriott Hotel, and Rivergate Convention Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. Attending memberships are \$60 to the end of the year. Supporting \$30. Contact P. O. Box 8010, New Orleans, LA 70192. Guests are editor and author Donald A. Wollheim, fan Roger Sims, and Toastmaster Mike Resnick.

NOREASCON 3, 47th World SF Convention - Aug. 31-Sept. 3, 1989 at the Sheraton Boston, Backbay Hilton, and Hynes Convention Center in Boston, Massachusetts. Attending membership \$50 to 9-7-87 then higher, Supporting \$20. Contact Box 46, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139. Guests are author Andre Norton, Publishers Ian and Betty Ballantine, and The Stranger Club (Louis Russell Chauvenet, Chan Davis, G. Timothy Orrok, Harry Clement Stubbs, Robert D. Swisher, and Art Widner).

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FAN GATHERING ELEVEN

by Ozzie

Will be held December 18-20, 1987 (starting around 6 pm on Friday) at the Ambassador Inn at 4727 E. Thomas Road in Phoenix. Each room has a kitchenette and room rates are \$28 for single/double. This Fan Gathering is being sponsored by the Phoenix Japanimation Society.

We'll be using the same function space as was used for CopperCon 7. This will be a Christmas Party atmosphere...it'll be larger than the prior Fan Gathering, but smaller than the last relaxacon-style CopperCon.

We plan a video room and a con suite/dealers' room/party room/game room/etc. as was done at CopperCon 7. We suggest a gag gift for placing under the tree (drop one off when you come in and pick one up when you leave).

There will be both seasonal and non-seasonal games (both wargaming and social-type), good food, and a chance to meet other fen. As usual, membership is \$5.00. For more information, contact Mike Duckett at (602) 849-9515 or Tom Perry at (602) 996-2196.



EDITORIAL POSITION

This is the first issue of a revised format for **MAW**. Due to the high cost of producing the old format (\$2,000 per year), we're changing to two versions - this shorter one will go out 3-4 times per year and will go out to everyone receiving the old version. We wanted to keep in touch with everyone, but had to reduce costs...this seemed to be the best way.

The second version will be produced 1-2 months after each issue of **MAW**. The first issue (we've not yet named this new publication) will go out to CASFS members and those who work on most Arizona conventions. Please let us know if you want to be on the list. It will include everything in the old **MAW** format, plus a lot more.

MAW is the Newsletter of the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society (CASFS), a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. It is being published quarterly. Circulation is approximately 1800 households, mainly to members of all yearly-held Arizona conventions (including CopperCon, a convention sponsored by CASFS) and members of CASFS.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

SF/F oriented organizations are welcome to send info. to our P. O. box for listing! **Important!!!!** If you want to continue to be listed, please correspond with updated club information at least twice a year. This keeps your listing current and lets us know you still exist.

When contacting a Club or Con, please send a SASE (Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope) for return reply!

Dimensional Masque: a non-profit organization founded in 1985 to provide a forum at science fiction conventions for creative fans to meet, produce, and show original film or video productions. Contact Richard Rouse and Elinor Mavor at (602) 941-0349 or write 7015 E. Pasadena Ave., Scottsdale, Arizona 85253.

United Federation of Phoenix: the Phoenix area Star Trek Club. Meets every two weeks at various locations around the Phoenix area. For information, write P. O. Box 37224, Phoenix, Arizona 85069 or call Jim Strait at (602) 242-9203.

The Lion Legion: Phoenix area team for Sabratract International, the battlefield sport. For more information, contact Kevin Hedgpeth at 246-0199 or write to 4231 N. 31st Ave, Phoenix, Arizona 85017.

LepreCon, Inc.: one of the two Phoenix area corporations that puts on yearly conventions. For more information, write P. O. Box 26665, Tempe, Arizona 85282 or call Eric Hanson at (602) 838-6873.

Role Players and Wargamers, Inc.: otherwise known as RAW Games. Wargaming (board gaming) and fantasy club. Contact 8159 West Weldon, Phoenix, Arizona 85033.

Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society, Inc.: the non-profit corporation that puts on CopperCon conventions, the 1987 NASFIC, Fan Gatherings, and does MAW and CON GAMES newsletters. Best described as SF/F generalists with a strong bent towards literary SF/F. Meets at 8 pm on the last Friday of each month at the Cafe Casino on the SW corner of 24th. Street and Camelback Road. Write P. O. Box 11743, Phoenix, Arizona 85061 or call Bruce Farr at (602) 968-5673 and Doug Cosper at (602) 849-3338.

Phoenix Japanimation Society: local chapter of japanimation/general animation oriented fans - meets monthly. Membership is free, though optional monthly newsletter is \$5/year or \$.50/month. Call Tom Perry at (602) 996-2196 or write P. O. Box 5189, Glendale, Arizona 85312.

Southern Arizona Science Fiction & Fantasy Association: the Tucson-area SF&F generalists, involved with the yearly TusCon convention. Contact Charles Englestead, 5645 N. Maria Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85704 or call (602) 881-3709 (Cristi Simila) for more information.

Society for Creative Anachonisms (Tucson): or how to get in touch with your past. Contact SCA Inc. DBA Tir Ysgithr, Box 43335, Tucson, Arizona 85733.

National Space Society (National): successor to L-5 Society. Contact 922 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20003 or call (202) 543-1900.

NSS/L-5 Society (Phoenix chapter): Currently meeting at ASU - call for exact meeting location. Write Phoenix L-5, Box 271, Tempe, Arizona 85281 or call Tripp Armstrong at (602) 945-5523 for more info.

The Phoenix Fantasy Film Society: film society for classic SF&F film. Membership is \$25.00, lifetime. PFFS also rents projectors, films, and video tapes. Contact PFFS, Box 30423, Phoenix, Arizona 85067.

Igen Weyr: a Phoenix-area local club based on the Dragonrider books by Anne McCaffrey. For more information, call Kim Farr at (602) 968-5673 or write 3411 S. Margo Drive, Tempe, Arizona 85282. Publisher of fanzine, Weyr Notes.

T.A.R.D.I.S.: (The Arizona Regional Doctor [Who] Interest Society) Dr. Who fan club of Phoenix. Memberships are \$18.00 for first year. Membership includes a monthly newsletter, business cards, TARDIS key, and quarterly publications. They meet every two weeks at various locations around the valley. Contact Belle at T.A.R.D.I.S. at Box 63191, Phoenix, Arizona 85026.

CompuShop Forum/DEBUG Computer Users Group: SF/Fantasy discussion group including SF directory, reviews, etc. Computer board set up at 745-1889...set up own password with board and leave message in public area for D&D group. Space available for groups with membership in DEBUG (\$10/year for each group or discussion leader). Contact Fred Runk at 4817 E. 26th Street, Tucson, Arizona 85711 or call 747-9096.

Starbase Tucson: Star Trek club for people whose interests include sf, role-playing games, Dr. Who, media sf, computers, sca, filking etc. Contact K'Shona Jackson, Diplomatic Liaison Officer, 7948 E. Winnepeg Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85730 or call 885-5778.

SIG on The Source Information Network: (run by Flying Buffalo Games). For wargamers, role-playing games, & SF and fantasy fans. There you will find: an extensive list of game and SF conventions from around the country, news and new releases from game companies, role playing and other games, and a bulletin board where you can leave messages for other games. From Command Level on The Source, just type FLBUFSIG. The SIG is run by Flying Buffalo Inc., makers of NUCLEAR WAR and TUNNELS & TROLLS games. For more info, call 602-945-6917 or write P.O. Box 1467, Scottsdale, Arizona 85282 (Flying Buffalo, Rick Loomis, SIG Operator).

Doctor Who Information Network: a multi-national Doctor Who club. Includes a bi-monthly newsletter ENLIGHTENMENT, membership card, convention and series news, pen pal, and classified services. Memberships are \$8 per year. Contact DWIN, P. O. Box 912, Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2N9, Canada.

Southwest Costumers Guild: a Phoenix area branch chapter of the International Costumers' Guild, based in Maryland. Dedicated to exploring, teaching, researching and enjoying all aspects of costuming. Dues are \$12.00 per year (which includes \$6.00 International dues). For more information, call Pati Cook at (602) 973-8611 between 3 and 6pm.

M.A.G.I.C. (Manga/Animation/Gaming International Circle): Besides what's in the title, this club deals with art, costuming, cultural exchange and play-by-mail gaming. The group run as a structured anarchy. Their newsletter is called "Through the Mirror" and should be out at the end of May, 1987. Contact 22804 W. Hilton, Buckeye, Arizona 85326.

Blake's Several - fan club dedicated to promotion of the Blake's 7 tv show and bringing together fans of the show. Contact Blake's Several, P. O. Box 1766, Bellaire, Texas 77401. Membership are \$7.00 per year.

Myth Adventures Fan Club - based on the MYTH ADVENTURES novels by Robert Aspin. Membership is \$6 for one year, \$13 for two years. A year equals four issues of the MYTHINFORMATION newsletter (editor is Kevin Standlee). Contact MYTHINFORMATION, P. O. Box 95, Sutter, California 95982.

Spotlight Starman - fans in the U.S. and Canada who are working to get more STARMAN tv episodes produced. Contact Chris Menefee at 600 Water St. SW #8-14, Washington, D.C. 20024 or call (202) 488-7479.

International Brotherhood of Jedi Knights - Star Wars club, of which the local group is the Tatooine Outpost. No membership dues for the Outpost, but the I.B.O.J.K. has annual dues of \$5.00. Contact Lilly at 956-3568 or Patty at 220-4416 for more information or write 3111 North 34th Place, Phoenix, Arizona 85018.

CENTRAL ARIZONA SPECULATIVE FICTION SOCIETY, INC.

What **REALLY** is behind putting on a convention? What are the funds raised by a convention used for? Does everyone **REEEEEEEAALLY** smear each other all over with lime jello at CASFS meetings? Why not attend a meeting and find out!

We're the sponsor of MAW, CON GAMES, Fan Gatherings, the 1987 North American Science Fiction Convention (CactusCon), and the annual CopperCon convention. CASFS, also known as "Melvyn", usually meets at the Cafe Casino at 24th. Street and Camelback (Southwest corner) on the last Friday of each month at 8 pm. We are a charitable, IRS-recognized non-profit corporation that exists to further science fiction, fantasy, and science fields in Arizona. We'd like to see you involved, too!

THE NEXT MEETING OF CASFS will take place on Saturday, December 19, 1987 at 8 pm at the Fan Gathering at the Ambassador Inn, 4727 E. Thomas Road in Phoenix. Inquire at the second-floor meeting rooms regarding the exact meeting location.

Everyone is invited to attend two meetings prior to becoming a member. Membership rates are \$12 per year (plus initial \$3 application fee), or slightly more if paid quarterly or semi-annually. Membership rates are prorated for the amount of the year remaining. For more information, call Bruce Farr at (602) 968-5673. BYOLJello.

