

*Today's lesson:
Southern SF Fandom*



A History of Southern SF Fandom

“A History of Southern SF Fandom” is published by M. Lee Rogers, 331 Celestial Lane, Hixson, Tenn. 37343. This publication is a transcript of a presentation given to the 50th Anniversary Deep South Con in Huntsville, Ala. on June 15, 2012. It is intended for reprint in the Southern Fandom Press Alliance and to miscellaneous recipients who may enjoy it. The presentation was aimed at a general audience who might not be familiar with fannish idioms and customs, so it explains some concepts which fans may already know. All photos from the author except as noted. If you do not appear, it means I did not have a photo of you when I prepared the presentation. Your mileage may vary. Cavaet emptor. Publication Date July 15, 2012. This is a Full Court Press publication.

Section 1: Introduction

Thank you for coming today. We’re here to talk about the history of science fiction fandom in the Southeast. It may be an obscure subject, but this convention would not make any sense without it.

We are here to celebrate the many people who have made Southern SF fandom the creature that it has been and is today. It has truly been a “cavalcade of stars” who deserve to be remembered. It is also very important to put these memories in some kind of permanent form before they fade from view. Enough of us have already died that the task has acquired a sense of urgency. So let’s get started.

Traditionally, science fiction fandom has worked under two main philosophies:

- a. Fandom Is A Way of Life (FIAWOL)
- vs.
- b. Fandom Is Just A X—X— Hobby (FIJAGDH)

If you want to look at it through the lens of a catchphrase, we can express this as:

- a. “It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan,” which is a favorite saying from fanzines throughout the years.
- vs.
- b. “Science fiction **IS** the mainstream.”

Now that we have seen the two extremes of how fans view fandom, let's talk about the origin of science fiction as a branch of literature.

Science fiction started after around 1850, depending on what works you define as science fiction (for example, *Frankenstein* usually qualifies; Verne and Wells definitely make it in the door).

Science fiction fandom is clearly a 20th century phenomenon. It started through the letter columns of pulp SF magazines of the early to mid 20th century, especially Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*. And if the name "Hugo" sounds familiar, it should. The annual fan-based awards for science fiction and SF fandom given by the World SF Convention are named for him.

The magazines were an important source of science fiction publishing in their heyday. Most science fiction short stories were first published in the pulps. Many novels were serialized in them as well. The pulps also published lengthy letter columns. The people who wrote letters to the pulps also noticed the other people who wrote letters. Contacts were made and fan groups were born that way.

In the next section, we will briefly mention a few of the early contacts in the South.

Other fans have written about the early years of the history of science fiction fandom, especially here in the U.S. If you develop an interest in SF fandom history, there are a few books and other publications. Some of them include *All Our Yesterdays* by Harry Warner, *The Futurians* by Fred Pohl (one of many major writers who started as fans), and *The Immortal Storm* by Sam Moskowitz, along with fanzines like Rich and Nicki Lynch's *Mimosa*, which is available at <http://www.efanzines.com>.

Other than *Mimosa*, you will not see much mention of Southern SF fandom in these publications. National science fiction fandom did not take much notice of events in the South for many decades. Some would say that it never has. This talk is a first brief step in righting the balance.

Clearly, an hour-long presentation can only list the major highlights of such a culture. It examines the times and people who stood out in those times. It cannot cover everyone. At the end, we will briefly mention people who did not make it into the main body of the talk.

This history is very much a work in progress. I will make mistakes. I will incorporate valid criticism into later editions of this presentation. It is to be hoped that this work is the beginning of a much more extensive effort to save Southern SF fan history before it disappears.

Before everyone starts to snore, let's look at the early years.

This is a scene from a party at Deep South Con 40, also in Huntsville. Do not recognize many of these folks except for the gentlemen in the goatee and mustache, who is Atlanta-area fan Mel Boros. The room party is a hallowed institution in SF fandom. Long may it continue!



Section 2: The Beginnings through the 1950's

Science fiction fandom in the South was a very sporadic thing in these decades. Most science fiction fandom was found in the Northeast and Midwest. Only a few tidbits remain from these years. But they do exist.

The most famous early Southern fan was probably a person named Lee Hoffman. In this time, science fiction fandom was overwhelmingly male. This explains Bob Tucker's shock to discover, as he put it, that Lee was a **girl!** Lee was a very active fan who, even in her later years, published occasional pieces until she passed away a few years ago.



Bob also wrote SF under the name "Wilson Tucker." He was a fixture around fandom for many decades. Because he borrowed a shtick from the comedian Red Skelton, no bottle of Jim Beam could pass by him without a sweep of the right hand and the word, "S-m-o-o-t-h." Bob was also an important fan writer, a part of this culture that we will review later.

Much was written in amateur publications about Lee meeting many famous fans like Tucker at the 1951 World SF Convention in New Orleans. One room party from that convention gave its name to a well-known current fan magazine devoted to news of SF fandom called *File 770*.

Atlanta fandom also had a famous visitor this far back. Arthur C. Clarke visited twice in the early 1950's. Clarke probably visited the first Atlanta club, known as the Atlanta SF Organization or ASFO. He visited a fan named Ian Macauley, who may have influenced Clarke's book *Childhood's End*.

There were others here and there. Look in the Southern Fandom Confederation Handbook. You will see references to *The Southern Star* from Columbia, SC in the early 1940's. This is the only reference to

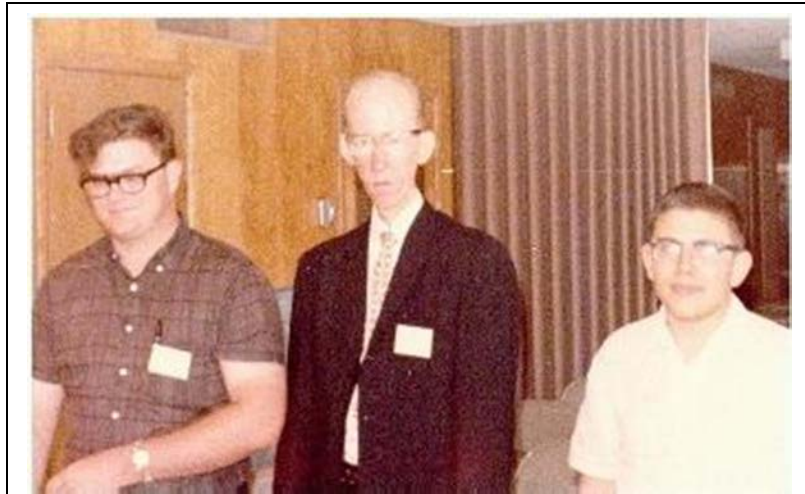
fannish activity in that area; nobody has heard of fandom in that area since. In the late 40's, there was a fan magazine called *Southern Fandom* from Ripley, TN. Again, nothing fannish has been heard from those quarters since.

So in the early years, we had only a few Southern Stars, twinkling briefly before flashing out. But as we moved into the childhood of the Baby Boomer generation, the stars came out in greater numbers. That is the subject of the next section.



New Rebel Award winners Linda Riley Zielke and Bill Zielke at an earlier convention. They won along with brother Bob Zielke and his wife Becky at Deep South Con 50 in 2012. The remaining Rebel Award went to Shelby Vick. The Phoenix Award went to John Ringo while the Rubble Award was given to SFPA Official Editor Bob Jennings. Congrats to all!

Section 3: The 1960's



Al Andrews is in the middle. I think Lon Atkins is on the right. From Deep South Con 3 in 1965. Photo courtesy Ned Brooks.

As far as Deep South Con is concerned, it all started at Dave Hulan's house in the summer of 1963. A year later, it all started at Larry Montgomery's house. Not sure if Al Andrews could attend since he had major health issues. He was important enough to receive the first Rebel Award a year or two later.

There will be plenty of coverage of Deep South Con (DSC) history at this convention, so this presentation will not emphasize it. Suffice it to say that DSC has survived 50 years and the idea still means something to a few of us Old Fharts. Hats off to Toni, the Moon Ladies, and the Huntspatch gang for keeping the tradition alive! ("Huntspatch" is a reference to the old comic strip "L'il Abner," whose hillbilly residents lived in the area of Dogpatch.)



? - Toni Weiskopf - ?

The Moon Ladies before they plotted their evil. Julie Wall, Toni Weiskopf, and Linda Zielke at DSC 31 in Louisville. Photo courtesy Ned Brooks.

Science fiction fandom has usually had three main areas of emphasis: clubs, conventions, and amateur publications. The publications are often known as “fanzines.” They can be about almost anything. In days when fans were few and spread out, they could be an important method for fans to communicate with each other. The quality of writing could be surprisingly high or horribly bad. The better fan writers could end up as professional science fiction writers, though this was certainly not a requirement.

Most of this presentation will emphasize clubs and conventions, since that is where people tended to meet each other. But do not forget about the fanzines and other amateur publications. They were very important in the decades that we are discussing, if less so now.

Southern fandom is starting to become aware of itself as we move into the 1960’s. Let’s look at a few of the people who were part of it.

One of the leading lights of Atlanta fandom moved to Birmingham in 1966: a guy named Julius Henry Reinhardt. We remember him as Hank Reinhardt. Our Chair, Toni Weisskopf, especially remembers him since she married him. Many stories have been told about Hank and his swordplay and generally barbarian behavior. A fair number of them are true.

One of Hank’s many sins against humanity was introducing a certain Birmingham resident to science fiction fandom. This impressionable lad would eventually become a lawyer. He would also start another important piece of Southern science fiction fandom, the Southern Fandom Confederation. His name was Meade H. Frierson III. We will return to his exploits later.

Atlanta fandom hosted one Deep South Con in 1967. Jerry Page chaired the con. He is known in Southern fannish circles as a veteran writer of fantasy. He also worked for *TV Guide* magazine for many years. If memory serves, he wrote many of the local listings that you saw in various editions of the magazine until it became a Quixotic nightmare to keep up with each cable system’s 250 channels.

ASFO 2 started after the premiere of *Star Trek*. People like Glen Brock and Ned Brooks were part of the festivities. Another guy with a bald head and a Czech name became infamous. We'll talk about him in the 70's.

Janie Lamb in Knoxville ran one of the infamous Deep South Cons in 1969. At that convention, a few young whippersnappers dyed the pool red. The problem was that the dye stained the pool concrete and would not come out quickly. The hotel staff was not amused. Janie had political connections. She had to use those connections to cause problems for the hotel management to get them to back off their threats. Janie was also a major player in the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F), founded by the author Damon Knight.

1961 was the first meeting of two key figures in Nashville fandom: Ken Moore and Dan Caldwell. Moore may have been the ugliest Southern fan of all time, which is saying something if you look around the room. We will return to Nashville conventions later.

By the end of the 1960's, Southern SF fandom is slowly coming together and becoming aware of itself. Groups are still small. Only a few conventions have been held during this time. *Star Trek* has popularized science fiction to some degree, but it is still very much a niche taste. The real growth starts in the 1970's.



Nashville-area fans John Hollis, Dan Caldwell, and Ray Jones at a club cookout sometime in the 2000's, also known as "the aughts."

Section 4: The 1970's

At the beginning of the 1970's, Southern fandom had seen very few conventions other than Deep South Con. Now we start to see local conventions and fan clubs. We also see more fan publications, both apa's and stand-alone fanzines.

What is an apa? The initials stand for "amateur press association." As it evolved in SF fandom, it became a cocktail party in print. The idea was simple. A bunch of fans would do a zine. They would send their zines to an administrator, who would put everything together and mail it out to all of the members.

The special trick was that when fans wrote their zines, they would comment on material they had seen in the previous mailing. It became a conversation in slow motion. How slow? Mailings were usually monthly or bimonthly.

The apa became a popular way to stay in touch with fans and exercise the writing gene. In the South, the first important apa was the Southern Fandom Press Alliance or SFPA. It still exists as a print device. Many other apa's have shut down or devolved into E-mail lists or Yahoo! Groups or similar associations.

How did fans publish their amateur zines in the days before copiers and computers? The two main methods were spirit duplicator and mimeograph.

Spirit duplicator was familiar to most Boomers. It was the method used in schools across the land. A master sheet was typed or handwritten. Solid ink would be embossed on the back of the master. The master was then clamped to a drum and pressed into sheets using a turpentine-like solvent. You could get around 100 legible copies before the ink wore away or you got high from the spirit fluid, whichever came first. The primary color of master was purple. One Atlanta-area fan named Daniel Taylor came to be known for his "Dreaded Purple Masters." He now writes and performs sounds effects for the Atlanta Radio Theater Company.

Mimeograph also used a rotary drum pressed against paper, but the principle was different. The mimeograph used a wax stencil covering a nylon mesh. You would normally type with the ribbon disengaged. The key impression would push the wax out of the way. You then had to ink the drum, either before or after you attached the stencil depending on the quality of the machine. Then you clamped the master to the drum and ran the sheets through the machine. The ink would pass through the areas where the wax had been pushed aside. If you had a machine that could be inked while in use, you could get up to around 500 copies before the stencil would deteriorate. It was a messy process, but many churches used mimeos to produce their bulletins and the machines could be found in many businesses.

During the early 70's, fans from the 60's were still contributing; however, some were winding down their activities to make room for a new generation of fans.

Three of the biggest fan centers at the beginning of the decade were New Orleans, Nashville, and Atlanta. By the end of the decade, we could add Louisville, Birmingham, Huntsville, and Chattanooga to the list.



Meade H. Frierson, III

The most important Southern fan of the decade was clearly Meade Frierson. His work in publishing the *Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin* was critical. No other region had anything like it. Fandoms in Boston and Los Angeles had **local** fan clubs, but no other region had such a pronounced self-identity.

Meade tirelessly promoted Southern SF fandom for years out of his own pocket. Meade and wife Penny showed up at Southern conventions as often as possible. He was known for his denim jacket with the special Southern Fandom Confederation logo patch. Now that patch is a matter of controversy because some fans want to ban anything that even suggests Confederate imagery. You can make your own decisions, but I do not know many open racists in this subculture.

Strangely enough, although Meade was from Birmingham, that city did not develop a local annual convention until a few years ago. It hosted some Deep South Cons. My first DSC was in 1977 at the Parliament House Hotel. Meade's lawyering skills were put to the test at that convention when the hotel tried to shaft the con. This does not happen often, but it is hell for a convention committee when it happens. Meade somehow managed to keep the con running despite the hotel's best efforts to shut it down.

Nashville developed an active club which still meets and publishes a monthly newsletter. It got a convention fairly early. The aforementioned Ken Moore borrowed from Coleridge when he named his con Kubla Khan.



How to describe Ken? Bigger than life, for sure. He looked like a demented stork. Tall, gangly, wearing shorts in the middle of winter. Wild long hair. Very geeky glasses. And as the Kubla Khan name hinted, he liked to alter his consciousness as often as possible. In everyday life, Ken built airplanes at a company called Avco in the Nashville suburbs. Ken also collected science fiction art. The recent World SF Convention in Reno had an exhibit of Ken's collection.

My main Kubla Khan memory was watching Harlan Ellison behave himself. This was unusual enough to be noteworthy. Maybe Harlan and Ken saw kindred souls in each

other. Maybe Kelly Freas threatened Harlan with blackmail if he acted up. Probably not.

Eventually the Kubla Khan spirit wound down and Ken shut it down. Dan Caldwell ran a con called Xanadu for a few years. The current Nashville con is called Hypericon. They were all fine cons, but none ever had quite the same *joie de vivre* of the con with the Khandor mascot.

Ken passed away too soon a couple of years ago after altering his consciousness a few too many times. He always asked me to play Rachmaninoff for him, knowing that I had studied piano in college. I never got the chance. Now I never will. He is missed.

New Orleans hosted its first Deep South Con in 1968 (DSC 6). One co-chair passed away recently, a fan named Don Markstein who spent many years in SFPA and was an authority on comics. Don owed me \$5 from the Deep South Con which hosted the collation of the epic 100th issue of SFPA in 1983. Guess I'll never collect, not that I ever expected to. The other co-chair, Rick Norwood, now teaches math at East Tennessee State University and is involved with the bid for Deep South Con 52 along with Gary Robe, the founder of the dreaded Rubble Award and a dead ringer for the political pundit Mort Kondracke.



Gary Robe gives a Rubble Award to Rose-Marie Lillian at DSC 40, probably for marrying Guy and keeping him going.

Back to New Orleans. NoLa also hosted Deep South Cons in 1971, 1973, and 1979. They never put together an annual local con. There were a few one-shot events like NutriaCon.



New Orleans fans Justin Winston (Faruk von Turk) and Annie Hebert Winston.

Many famous names in Southern fandom came from New Orleans. John Guidry, Dennis Dolbear, Justin Winston, Annie Hebert, Linda Krawecke now Pickersgill, Lester Boutillier, and of course, the one, the only Guy Herbert Lillian, III. Much of that fan activity came under the aegis of the group known as The Sons of the Sand. Many stories have been told. Sounds like it was a fun group. The Fancyclopedia

claims that the Sons were a group of “conservative” fans. The stories that I heard never suggested anything conservative about the group. We will look for more information about the Sons for the next edition of this talk.



I had a rather ugly photo of Guy, but decided to run the better one with Meade Frierson. Also notice the Southern Fandom Confederation patches. Would hate to see the patch be banned from fandom in a fit of political over-correctness.

For many years Louisville had a con called Rivercon. The first name in Louisville fandom was Cliff Amos. Another eccentric fellow. Looked a bit like a warlock with long bushy dark hair. I never knew how he earned his living. He appeared on the *Tomorrow* show with Tom Snyder once or twice using the name "Solomon Weir." Snyder did not know what to make of him, either.



Cliff Amos

Cliff Amos was assisted in running Rivercon by a fellow named Shelby Bush. Bush seemed normal, but a local newspaper cartoonist used him as the model for a villain named "Shelby Shrub." He was known to mail lunch meat to people he did not like. But Shelby did write a very funny parody of Larry Niven's *Ringworld* called *Stringworld*.

Rivercon was a straightforward, enjoyable basic con. The highlight was an excursion on the Ohio River on a steamboat known as the *Belle of Louisville*. A few mint juleps and you could truly enjoy watching the police boats go after speeding pleasure craft. Eventually, Steve and Sue Francis

took over Rivercon and managed it until they tired of the job. Louisville also has a long-running club called the Falls of the Ohio SF Association (FOSFA).

Atlanta fandom entered a new phase as new people came to town. This seems appropriate considering how the city turned into a place where everyone came to town from somewhere else. As mentioned earlier, Reinhardt had moved to Birmingham. One old-timer was still around: the bald head with the Czech name of Joe Celko. Joe had acquired a reputation. How much of it was true I do not know. I only know that Joe was where I first heard the phrase, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but whips and chains excite me." He eventually became one of

the world's experts in the SQL database programming language. We will have reason to mention him in the 80's.

Since we are still in the 70's, here are two couples who started their fannish careers in this decade.

The first is a former high school teacher from Rome, GA named Cliff Biggers and his wife Susan. Cliff helped lead Atlanta fandom as the 70's proceeded. This was largely through an apa named Myriad. I believe Don Markstein started it, but it quickly became associated with Atlanta fandom.



mike weber many years ago: The only thing different now is that his hair is white.

The other power couple was Mike Weber and Sue Phillips. They wrote fanzines and apazines, and ran conventions and clubs. They had an apartment off Buford Highway in DeKalb County. Mike was the chair of the Deep South Con in 1982. By this point, the Atlanta club was known as ASFiC (Atlanta SF Club).

An earlier Atlanta Deep South Con was held in 1978. This was at a former hotel called the Riviera Hyatt House near the Brookwood Interchange just north of Midtown. A couple named Rich Garrison and Ginger Kaderabek ran it. It was the only major thing they ever did in fandom.

I remember that Deep South Con for fainting after giving blood at their blood drive. Robert Heinlein started the practice of doing blood drives at science fiction conventions. The trend petered out once people figured out that a science fiction convention may be one of the worst possible

places to give blood when you realize how little sleep the attendees get during the weekend.



Irvin Koch and his briefcase.

Another city that joined the ranks of science fiction fandom in the 70's was my hometown, Chattanooga. This can be attributed to a fan named Irvin Koch. Irv was one of the most polarizing figures in Southern fannish history. I wrote about him for the ConCarolinas program book a couple of years ago. He was a close friend of mine and I will defend him to the end.

Irv could be irascible. But he did not mean to be. He became frustrated when things were not being run properly. This trait caused him to give up his job as an industrial engineer before he had enough investment income to survive. He eventually got a second master's degree in library science but never got much use from it.



Ken Scott, Julia Morgan-Scott, M. Lee Rogers (am I really that ugly?), Irvin Koch, and Kay Pinckney at a restaurant in East Ridge, Tenn.

Irv did it all in science fiction fandom. He ran cons—he started Chattacon, ran a Deep South Con in Chattanooga and a Weapons Con. He published his own fanzine called *Maybe* and many apas. He worked extensively with N3F. You could see him at almost any fan gathering with his briefcase of used books for sale. He did not keep books and zines around for very long because he liked to travel light.

Irv was socially challenged like many of us. But he eventually found a librarian from the South Carolina Pinckney family. They were together a few years until he laid down to take a nap one Saturday morning and never woke up. I still miss him.



Nicki and Rich Lynch with one of their Hugo Awards

Another couple came to Chattanooga in the mid-70's and became major players in U.S. fandom. Rich and Nicki Lynch worked on Chattacons—Rich chaired one in 1980. They published the local clubzine called *Chat* for the Chattanooga SF Association. They eventually bought a mimeograph machine to print their own zines and for

others, including your humble servant.

Rich and Nicki developed an interest in fan history and devoted much space in their fanzine *Mimosa* to the topic. They have earned multiple Hugo Awards for fan writing. While they left Chattanooga and moved to the Washington, D.C. area, they will always be part of Southern fandom and I still consider them friends.



Linda and Tim Bolgeo sitting with Nancy Tabor. Nancy gafiated and moved to Knoxville to work as a newspaper reporter.

We cannot mention Chattanooga fandom without discussing the career of another well-known fan named Tim Bolgeo. Tim took over Chattacon and ran it for a number of years. Eventually he started his own convention called LibertyCon which is still going strong. He has won numerous awards and is known throughout fandom as “Uncle Timmy.”

The last major event of 70’s fandom was NorthAmericon in 1979. It was held to supplement a World SF Con-

vention in Brighton, England. Louisville and Nashville fandoms collaborated on this effort with Cliff Amos chairing the con. They also involved numerous Southern fans in the effort. For many of us, this was the first taste of a larger convention (about 2,000 attended). Worldcons were too far away for most Southern fans to go to. This taste led to a desire for more large cons.

And that leads us to the 1980’s.

Section 5: 1980's

Southern SF fandom looks remarkably different at the beginning of the 1980's than ten years earlier.

A number of regional cons have started and are operating successfully, so fans have many more ways to meet each other. Kubla Khan, Rivercon, and Chattacon run along with Deep South Con.

Publishing is continuing. Apa's are booming. Various fans are writing their own zines.

The only thing missing is a Southern World Science Fiction Convention. That is the major story of the 1980's.

Atlanta fandom held a few small regional cons during the first half of the 80's. Some were called ASFiCon after the local club. But a few people thought it was time to look at the big prize.

It was obvious to everybody that Atlanta fandom could not run a Worldcon by itself. Eventually, various bigwigs in Southern fandom came together with a crazy idea for a bid involving all of Southern SF fandom. The Friersons and most of Birmingham fandom joined in. Ken Moore and Cliff Amos lent support, if not in the formal bid.

Cliff Biggers was involved in the early stages but eventually dropped out to run a comic book store. He still runs Dr. No's store in Cobb County and is well known in comics fandom.

The first bid leader was a karate instructor named Randy Satterfield. He had never been heard of before. Bid meetings were held at his studio in Kennesaw. I attended a few of the meetings, but was not impressed and did not join the bid at that time.

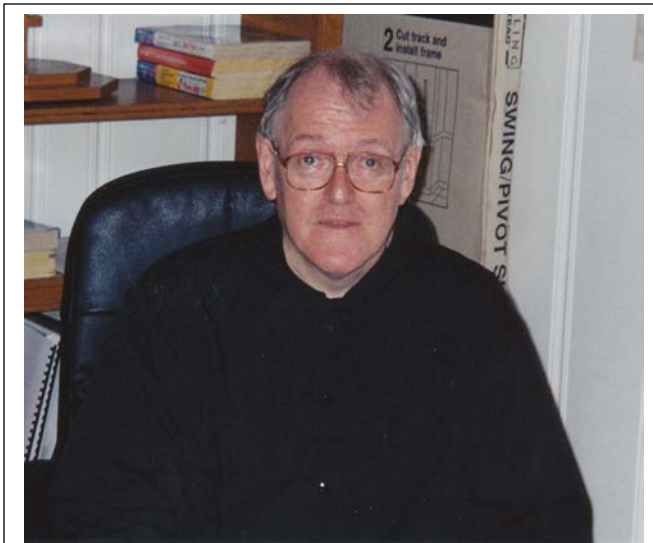
Irvin Koch did most of the legwork to prove that Atlanta had enough hotel space to put on a Worldcon. He proved that you could hold 2½ Worldcons simultaneously. The half was in the suburbs. This should not

have come as a surprise since by the early 80's Atlanta was hosting major conventions all the time.

The bid struggled for a while. Another group of fans thought they could do it better. A rival bid emerged. Joe Celko was one of the leaders. The real power was a rather murky figure who called himself Chauntecleer Michael Smith. Nobody knew his real name. He did not allow pictures to be taken of himself. He worked as a computer consultant. He claimed to be a libertarian, but rumors swirled about various improbable activities.

The largest contribution of the Friersons to the entire effort was to figure out how to merge the two bids. They pulled the necessary strings. Satterfield disappeared, never to be heard from again. Chauntecleer & Co. joined the main bid. Penny Frierson ended up as a co-chair of the bid (and later convention).

Even though the bid was an all-star Southern fandom bid, everyone agreed that somebody needed to be on board from the Atlanta area. There was a guy who had worked as a meeting planner for the Southern Council of Optometry. None of the other organizers wanted the job. This guy was crazy enough to say yes. The result was that Ron Zukowski got the other co-chairman position.



Ron Zukowski, the other Chairman of ConFederation

By the way—in the summer of 1981, some idiot from Chattanooga moved to Atlanta after graduating from college with almost no usable skills. He talked to Penny and Ron at great length at a convention in Huntsville sometime in 1982. The final merger of the bids was announced at the convention and, yes, your humble servant joined the bid at that time.

The opponents were New York City and Philadelphia. New York fandom was more interested in killing each other than bidding for the convention. They thought they should win by divine right. The Philly group was a better outfit and would have put on a fine convention had they won. (Side note: one of their chairs, a lady named Wilma Tucker, ended up working as an executive assistant to Penny at the convention.)



***Blame it all on the ConFederation Executive Committee:
(top) Joe Siclari, Penny Frierson, Jim Gilpatrick, Don Cook
(bottom) Ron Zukowski, M. Lee Rogers (still ugly as sin), Avery Davis***

The Atlanta bid threw parties at conventions around the U.S. and as far away as Australia. The cry rang out: “Peanuts. T-shirts. Pre-supporting memberships.” Multiple blenders were destroyed in the process of making peach daiquiris too numerous to mention. The bid published a fanzine named *South on Peachtree* and numerous print ads. Some of the bidders had come to see this as something of a crusade (cue up *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*) to prove that Southern fandom had come of age and deserved the ultimate prize.

Finally, the bid convinced the rest of fandom that Southern fandom was ready to handle the job. Southern fandom had its Worldcon.

Being all too aware of our Southern roots, we called the convention ConFederation. There were a few other quirks that angered a few fans, like a mascot robot wearing a Johnny Reb cap and a logo that looked a little bit like a Confederate flag but with astronomical stars.

This is not the place to tell all the stories of ConFederation. Next year's Deep South Con in Atlanta will have panels about Atlanta fannish history. Your humble servant has been asked to assemble this programming. That may be the place to talk about some of the strangest shenanigans that some of us had ever been involved with.

Despite severe short staffing, the committee somehow survived and put on a well-regarded World SF Convention. Everyone loved the futuristic Marriott Marquis Hotel. The biggest problems were keeping the elevators running despite massive overcrowding and getting people across Courtland Street between the Marriott Marquis and the Hilton. We had feared weather problems, but most of the weekend was cloudy and a bit on the cool side for Labor Day.

The biggest hassles after the con were getting the artists paid and the \$80,000 surplus. As Chief Financial Officer of the convention, your humble servant can vouch that we never expected that much of a surplus. It all came from at-the-door memberships. We would have found a way to spend most of it at the con had we known it would be there. Our video coordinator would have been much happier.

Some fans thought they had the right to tell the committee how to spend the surplus. The committee disagreed. It ended up being donated to various groups. One couple wanted a slant shack (an apartment or house filled with fans), but the rest of the group agreed it would never work. The controversy helped promote the concept of Worldcons passing along funds to each other.

By this point, I was out of fandom and did not care any more. I burned out after spending a year after the convention handling the clean-up work and compiling the final convention financial report. It was too much work and I was too tired to care.

The other Southern Worldcon was NolaCon II in 1988. The New Orleans contingent took advantage of the site selection voting at ConFederation to bid for their own Worldcon. I do not remember any serious opposition. Most of the reports were not kind. One con report available on the Internet from Evelyn Leeper lists NolaCon II as the second most disorganized Worldcon of the 13 that she had attended. However, I will look for more info from participants and add to the next edition of this talk.

The regional cons continued. Others showed up. Cities such as Biloxi, Little Rock, Memphis, and Huntsville started cons. Even the cave country of Kentucky started an affair called, appropriately enough, Con-Cave. The schedule became quite crowded.

Those of us who worked on ConFederation hoped it would be the first of more Atlanta Worldcons. At the closing ceremonies, I said, "Y'all come back now, y'hear?" There was a bid for a second Atlanta Worldcon for 1995, but it lost to Glasgow, Scotland.

The fans came back, but not to a Worldcon. They came back to an event that ended up dwarfing a Worldcon. In the run-up to ConFederation, a guy named Ed Kramer came to me and tried to buy a roll of tickets to ConFederation. He could not believe that we did not do things that way. He was promoting an affair he called DragonCon. That is one of the stories we will mention in our look at the 90's.

Section 6: 1990 to Present

I was absent from science fiction fandom until the last 4-5 years. We like to use the term “gafia” for “getting away from it all.” The verb is “gafiate.” The noun is “gafiation.” Whatever you want to call it, I had gafiated, split the scene, run like the wind.

I kept in touch with fandom during those years in quiet ways. For example, I went to a couple of room parties at a Deep South Con at the old Quality Inn South in East Ridge, TN, which is now a retirement home. At least the building is still there. Some of the Atlanta DSC sites have been torn down, like the Riviera Hyatt House and the Howell House in Midtown.

Fandom was still active and growing in the 1990’s. In some ways, it was too popular.

Chattacon had some major issues with teens behaving badly. Said issues caused many local hotels to turn away from them. Other cons had similar problems.

DragonCon took off in the 1990’s. It became the cultural phenomenon we know today. Mainstream media covers it. Authors are advised to skip World SF Conventions and attend DragonCon instead. I have passed on attending it. First of all, it’s too frakking big. I do not have the energy to fight crowds of 30,000 to 40,000 people. Also, it is essentially a media con. I do not attend cons with show biz personalities. Traditional SF fandom conventions just feel better. The people are much more interesting to talk to.

Unfortunately, many of today’s traditional cons are copying DragonCon and turning into media cons. A good example is the Deep South Con in 2010, ConCarolinas in Charlotte. They had a show biz guest: Claudia Christian of *Babylon 5*. She turned out to be worth a listen, to my surprise. She is also a writer. The Rebel Award went to the Star Wars storm trooper wannabes. I hated the idea, but our Chair disagreed. *C’est la vie*. It was quite clear that the convention, while a perfectly fine gathering, was not a Deep South Con in any normal sense.

It was that example of Deep South Con turning into a media con that prompted this history.

The biggest story of the period is the dying of traditional SF fandom. Not just Southern fandom, either. The previous generations of traditional fans are passing. Names like Meade Frierson, Ken Moore, Irvin Koch, Dick Spellman, Rusty Hevelin, Don Markstein, Bruce Pelz, Bob Tucker, Larry Propp, and Ross Pavlac—all gone now. And some of us are barely hanging on.

Where are our replacements? Not in traditional SF fandom. They are going to DragonCon and imitators like anime conventions. They watch movies and television. Some of them still read. But traditional SF fandom feels like a wind-up clock that is slowly running down.

Print fandom has evolved dramatically since 1990.

It is much easier to publish now in the computer age. But the advent of the Internet has eliminated many apa's. Why wait 2-3 months for the next installment of the party? An E-mail list provides instantaneous replies. SFPA still exists as a print publication. Myriad gave up a few years ago and is now only an E-mail list with little activity.

Many fanzines are now published and distributed electronically. Much easier and cheaper. But I still feel nostalgia for the days of rubber cement and pasting up articles, or typing mailing comments for an apazine directly onto a mimeograph stencil (better get it right the first time because you will not be able to fix it). Even though I do not fit into fanzine fandom very well (too conservative), I hope it survives in some form. E-mail lists are not the same as actual fanzines.

Since I was not around for most of this part of fannish history, I will have to look for more information in other areas and add it to the next edition of this talk.

Conclusion

For such a relatively small special interest fandom, Southern science fiction fandom has had a lot of people pass through over the years. It is impossible to mention all of these wandering souls. Everyone will have a different list of “the others.”

Will Southern fandom survive? Will it morph into something else, perhaps more visually oriented than before? Will it slowly fade away? As Ron Zukowski would say, “It’s been real.” Thank you for letting me tell you about it.

This history has tried to mention the major names in our piece of the world. In closing, here are a few more names that deserve to be mentioned:

- Lon Atkins
- Judy Bemis & Tony Parker
- Pete Blair (RIP)
- Mel & Phyllis Boros
- Bill Bridget
- Andre Barker Bridget (RIP)
- Warren Buff
- Rusty Burke
- Ron & Lin Butler
- John H. Campbell
- Stven Carlberg (*Hey roomie!*)
- Janet Caruth
- Pamela Lynn Caruthers-Montgomery (RIP)
- Vern Clarke
- Randy Cleary
- Jim Cobb
- Ken Cobb (RIP)
- Nancy Collins
- Don Cook & Samanda Jeude
- Avery Davis
- Rich Dengrove
- Maurine Dorris
- Tom & Anita Feller
- Janice Gelb
- Wade Gilbreath
- Jim Gilpatrick
- Deb Hammer-Johnson
- John R. Hollis
- Dave Hulan
- Janis Johnson
- Ray Jones
- Daniel & Clair Kiernan
- Zanny Leach (RIP)
- Pat & Alex Lucyshyn
- Dave Minch (RIP)
- Pat Molloy & Naomi Fisher
- Larry Montgomery
- Rich Morehouse
- Sandy Paris
- Charlotte Proctor (*Stand, gentlemen!*)
- Mike Reaser
- Dennis & Wanda Reed
- Bill Ritch & Caran Wilbanks
- Ann Robards
- Amy Rutledge (RIP)
- Charles Rutledge
- Rickey Shepherd
- Ruth Shields
- Jake & Nancy Skidmore
- Sam Smith
- Ken & Alice Spivey
- Daniel & Oreta Taylor
- Judy Thomas
- Tola Varnell
- Shelby Vick
- Julie Wall
- Adrian Washburn
- Toni Weisskopf
- George Wells
- Charlie Williams (Knoxville)
- Charlie Williams (Nashville)
- Charlie Williams (Chattanooga)
- James & Linda Young
- Bill & Linda Zielke
- Bob & Becky Zielke



P. L. Caruthers-Montgomery



Mike Kennedy, Huntsville (with Nicki Lynch looking on) at DSC 40



Julie Wall and Tom Feller at an SFC Business Meeting (DSC 40)



Rich Dengrove proves that the propellor beanie is not dead.



Oreta Taylor and Lin Butler at an Atomicon



Amy Rutledge and Daniel Taylor at an Atomicon. We just lost Amy this week. RIP, Amy.



Guy Lillian, Nicki Lynch, Rich Lynch, and Charlotte Proctor at a panel



Sam Smith as the Pointy-Haired Boss



Judy Bemis

– THE END –