

It's a jungle out there...



Westercon 55: Conagerie

Progress Report 1

FROM THE RINGMASTER

"Conagerie" came from the fact that a number of the local con-running fans have animal totems for one reason or another. The Chair has been an Elephant for decades. The Treasurer is a Springbok, Facilities Head is an Owl, and there's a Lyon as Co-Head of Programming. (We've got a few others around, but I haven't figured out what to do with them as Committee yet.) In addition, as the motto says, "It's a Jungle Out There!" -- but In Here we intend to present you with an entertaining show.

We haven't had any trouble with the animals so far, but the guy who owned our Big Top gave us a scare in October. Translation: the LAX Wyndham was sold. (Boo!) But our contract has carried over to the new owners and rates, etc. are still the same for Westercon 55. (Yeah!)

The new owners have changed the hotel to a Radisson, and closed the joint from October 2000 until May 2001 to do extensive upgrades. Fortunately, those changes do not affect the function space, so we can go right ahead and plan what to put where and when. When they open up again we'll take our tape measures and diagrams and go check things out again. (Any committee that trusts its first-time hotel to have accurate diagrams is asking for trouble.)

This hotel has had the worst case of Identity Crisis I've ever run into. In 1972, it was the International Hotel, and we ran a Worldcon (LACon) there. In 1980 it was a Hyatt and we ran Westercon 33 there. Then it became a Wyndham, and now it's a Radisson. I suspect that if we go back again in another eight or ten years it'll be something else.

In any case, relations with the LAX Radisson are in the capable hands of Bobbi Armbruster, which means I don't worry about anything regarding facilities until she tells me to. And you shouldn't, either.

As often, a first Progress Report is mostly to let you know we're still alive and haven't forgotten about you. We are, and we haven't.

If your friends haven't joined yet, we suggest, as usual, that Early is better -- and definitely cheaper -- than Later. Pass The Word, please.

And if you know of any worthwhile additions to the Show, please let the appropriate department know. (And oh yes: we probably already



COMMITTEE LIST

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Bruce Pelz
Chair and Ringmaster



Author Guest of Honor Harry Turtledove

Harry Turtledove is tall and gangly, with a high balding pate and bushy beard. Seeing him at a convention, you might mistake him for a sci-fi Byzantine monk.

JB: You are pretty much the Dean of alternate history writers. How did that happen?

Harry: When I was 14 or 15 years old, I found a copy of L. Sprague De Kamp's *Lost Darkness Fall* in a second-hand bookstore. I read it, and thought "This is so cool," and starting trying to find out what Sprague was making up and what was real. I was hooked.

I got into Cal Tech, flunked out most ingloriously at the end of my freshman year, spent a year at Cal State LA getting my GPA up to the point where it was visible to the naked eye - and visible to the draft board, which was a relevant consideration then - went to UCLA and earned a doctorate in Byzantine History. I'm unemployed, how are you?

If it hadn't been for Sprague, I wouldn't have the degree I have - I wouldn't have gotten interested in Byzantine history any OTHER way. I wouldn't have written a lot of what I've written, because I wouldn't know the things I happen to know. I wouldn't have met Laura [Frankos—his wife], because I happened to meet her when I was teaching at UCLA. So I wouldn't have the children I have, clearly. Other than that it hasn't changed my life at all.

JB: What else pulled you into writing alternate history?

Harry: I never really intended to write *Guns of the South*. It was an accident. I'm friends with Judith Tarr. And Judy was complaining one day that the cover art on an upcoming novel of hers was 'as anachronistic as Robert E. Lee holding an Uzi.'

I looked at that line in her letter, and I thought "I can do something with that." And when I wrote her back, I asked, "Who would want to give Robert E. Lee and Uzi? Time traveling South Africans, maybe?"

JB: And then ten years later...?

Harry: A year and a half. I was finishing a two-novel contract. And having done all the research for *Guns of the South*, I thought I could use it productively for other things, too. And so, here we are.

JB: Some have argued that alternate history isn't properly science fiction.

Harry: I use the standard SF technique. One of the things SF does is postulate: if

we changed this, what happens next? Most of those changes are set in the present and then you examine the future, or set in the future and then you examine the farther future. I say, "all right, what if we make that change and set it in the past?" with as rigorous an extrapolation as I can make. I suspect part of it is "write what you know," because one of the things I learned how to do was lots of historical research. That may be why we have a lot of alternate histories these days - a lot of escaped academics, like me, trying to write SF. I've written SF that's not alternate history; I've written fairly hard SF, fantasy - historically-based fantasy, high fantasy, funny fantasy. I hope it's funny fantasy, anyway.

JB: Why has there been such a fascination with the Civil War as a setting for alternate history?

Harry: There is a general fascination with that period because it's a key period in the history of the United States. We are what we are now, for better and for worse, because of what happened during those four crowded years. And if things had happened differently, things would be different.

JB: Of course, there's no question about your World War series [in which WWII is interrupted by an invasion of aliens who call themselves "The Race," forcing an alliance of Axis and Allies to save humanity] being SF. But how much did your studies of the late Roman Empire influence the way you shaped The Race and their empire?

Harry: Probably not at the conscious level. But subconsciously... I wouldn't be surprised.

JB: It was an interesting change to see your Race: an intensely conservative land-based empire that frowns on innovation in anything smaller than glacial time-scales. So often we presume that spacefaring races will be just like us: technology junkies inventing something new every other week.

Harry: But it doesn't have to be that way. The thing is - unless you believe the Roswell stuff, which I don't, we don't have any experience with other spacefaring races.

JB: It has been said that the film *Independence Day* was basically your World War books brought up to modern day.

Harry: Aliens invading is not a new concept, and I don't take credit for it, for heaven's sake. It's *War of the Worlds*. I started thinking about the World War books back in the '70s, and didn't write them back then for two reasons. One, I didn't know enough. And two, I knew I wasn't the writer yet I needed to be to undertake the project. And while I

was gathering research and thinking about things I wanted to do in the mid '80s, of course, Niven and Pournelle came out with *Footfall*. And I wanted to punt them, because they closed off several things that would have been cool to do. For example, if they have a brain trust of SF writers in theirs, and you have a brain trust of SF writers in yours.... you know.

JB: What other alternate history do you read? Any non-SF?

Harry: There's not a whole lot of non-SF. Sobol's *For Want of a Nail*, which is enormous fun.

JB: How about historical novels?

Harry: Sprague De Kamp, of course. Mary Renault was the best in the business. If Plato had written in English, he would have written the way Mary Renault writes. I wish I could write like that, but my head's not wired that way. My favorites are *Last of the Wine* and *Mask or Apollo*.

JB: I understand you sometimes write as H. Turtletaub. Why is that?

Harry: The things you have to worry about as a writer these days. It's not going to sell nearly as well as the alternate histories, and this way it won't go down as being written by 'Turtledove' in the chain store computers [in which case they would order fewer of his next book]. That's the only reason.

JB: You've focused pretty much on the US and on Rome/Byzantium. How about other settings?

Harry: I don't know enough. I've been reading Su Ma Chen's *Chinese History* lately. I know history in the west on the level of personalities. China I know on the level of dynasties, if that. It's much more demanding.

JB: Not only do you have three daughters, but between Laura and her brother, Steve Frankos, you have quite a few literary lights in the family. Is this a good thing?

Harry: It's a wonderful thing. Laura and I are each other's first readers and biggest fans. And we encourage our daughters to write. This is a wonderful way to make a living if you can do it. The potential is there for them.

JB: I see you've got your Hugo there behind you.

Harry: I remember walking around at Winnipeg feeling as if someone had hit me with one of Larry Niven's tasps. My entire pleasure center had been jolted all at once!

This article was condensed from Jeremy Bloom's interview with Harry Turtledove for last year's Chicon.



MEMBERSHIP LIST as of 01/25/01

247	A	Aahz		256	A	Chapman, John	🐾	233	A	Hales, Dale
12	A	Achorn, Brett		257	A	Chapman, Judith		85	A	Hallman, Stacey
248	A	Adams, Pam	🐾	39	A	Childress, Sandra	🐾	266	A	Hanna, Michael
13	A	Allis, Todd		268	A	Clark, Andrew		86	A	Harrigan, Harold
260	K	Anderson, Meaghan	🐾	41	A	Clark, David		88	A	Harrigan, Lisa Deutsch
240	A	Andrews, John C.		42	A	Cluney, Rachel		87	A	Harrigan III, Harold
14	S	Armbruster, Bobbi		43	A	Cohen, Sandy	🐾	291	A	Herbig, Charles
230	A	Attwood, John	🐾	44	S	Connors, Patrick	🐾	89	A	Hertz, John
249	A	Austin, Alicia		287	A	Cookson, Robin E.	🐾	90	A	Hiatt, David
251	A	Austin, Edwin	🐾	45	A	Cratz, Tony		91	A	Hiatt, Kim
15	A	Baden, Chaz Boston		46	A	Crosby, Colleen		267	A	Higuchi, Carol
16	A	Barber, Rebecca		47	A	Crosby, Shawn	🐾	289	A	Hikida, Susan
234	A	Bard, Barry	🐾	293	A	Ctein,	🐾	92	S	Hildreth, Dianna
17	A	Beckstead, Catherine		48	A	Dashoff, Joni Brill		93	A	Hitchcock, Louise
18	A	Beckstead, Scott		49	A	Dashoff, Todd		94	A	Hobbs, Harold
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19	A	Bemis, Judith		51	A	Daugherty, Kathryn		221	A	Howard, Geri
20	A	Benoun, Sherri	🐾	53	S	Daverin, Bob		235	A	Howard, Michelle
21	A	Benoun, Tony		52	S	Daverin, Brenda		96	S	Howell, Dave
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22	A	Berven, Leroy		54	A	Dazzo, Genny		98	S	Hungerford III, David
23	A	Berven, Susan J.		229	A	Deneroff, Linda		99	S	Hunt, Marjorie
24	A	Beslanwitch, Frances	🐾	55	A	Dennis, Jane	🐾	290	A	Hunter, Anastasia
25	A	Beslanwitch, John		56	A	Dennis, Scott		100	A	Irwin, Mark
252	A	Bilan, Greg		57	A	Dickinson, Julie		101	A	Jaffe, Saul
26	A	Bliss, David	🐾	58	A	Domitz, Laura	🐾	102	A	Jewell, Mary Jane
27	A	Bloom, Kent		59	A	Donahue, Michael		232	A	Johnson, Thalia
253	A	Bloom, Michael		259	A	Dougherty, Bronwyn		103	A	Kahn-Landan, Michele
28	S	Bollerud, R. Merrill	🐾	258	A	Dougherty, Greg	🐾	104	A	Kare, Jordin
29	A	Boston, Lynn		60	A	Duarte, Fred	🐾	105	A	Kare, Mary Kay
30	S	Boucher, Stephen	🐾	292	A	Durbin, Sandra	🐾	106	A	Katze, Rick
31	A	Bourget, Robbie		61	A	Edison, Laurie		7	G	King, Tappan
32	A	Bradley, Amy		62	A	Eide, Phyllis		217	A	King, Terry
33	A	Bradley, John M.	🐾	261	A	Ellern, William B.	🐾	107	A	Klein-Lebbink, Elizabeth
34	A	Breidbart, Seth		63	S	Elliott, Diane		269	A	Kravitz, Marian
35	A	Briggs, James	🐾	294	A	Feldbaum, Gary	🐾	111	A	LaPierre, Lori
121	A	Briskman, Darin		227	A	Finder, Jan Howard	🐾	112	A	LaPierre, Robert
36	K	Brown, Grant	🐾	262	A	Fisher, Glen	🐾	108	A	Ladue, Ruth Anne
37	A	Brown, Jordan		40	A	Forty, Steve		109	A	Landan, Stephen
38	A	Brown, Kimberlee M.	🐾	64	A	Fox, Crickett		110	A	Landry, Bridget
295	A	Burdick, Tim		223	A	Fox, Shawwna	🐾	114	A	Larson, Blars
254	A	Burns, Stan		65	A	Frankos, Laura		115	A	Lawrence, Pat
228	A	Cantor, Marty	🐾	66	A	Frazer, Cynthia	🐾	116	A	Lazar, Judy
255	A	Carpenter, Amy		67	A	Frazer, Donald	🐾	117	A	Leibig, Ruth
9	G	Carr, Carol	🐾	68	A	Freas, Frank Kelly		270	A	Lembke, Karl
11	G	Chamberlain, Joy-Lynd	🐾	263	A	Freeman, H. Denise	🐾	271	A	Libis, Steven
10	G	Chamberlain, Ross		296	A	Fulford, Lily		8	G	Lichtman, Robert
				69	A	Gallaher, David		272	A	Linneman, Mark A.
				70	A	Galt, John		118	A	Lorentz, John
				71	A	Gelb, Janice	🐾	119	A	Lyon, Shaun
				72	A	George, H. Jeffery		216	A	Majerrs, Laura
				73	A	Gish, Glennadine		245	A	Mann, Bhroan
				74	A	Gish, Ray		120	A	Marble, Beth
				288	A	Glazer, Glenn	🐾	122	A	Marble, Chris
				75	S	Glener, Scott		123	S	Martin, Sue
				76	A	Glyer, Mike		124	A	Mason, Michael
				77	A	Goddin, Jean		125	A	Matheny, Charles
				264	A	Gold, Barry	🐾	126	A	McAllister, Linda
				265	A	Gold, Lee		127	A	McAllister, Rich
				78	A	Gold, Lynn		128	S	McCoy, Sean
				79	A	Gonsalves, Cynthia	🐾	129	A	McGuire, Christian
				80	A	Gottlieb, Shayin		130	S	McGuire, LeAnna
				113	A	Gray, Vickie	🐾	6	G	Meacham, Beth
				81	A	Green, Ed	🐾	131	A	Melder, Zane
				243	A	Green, Lisa		132	A	Meschke, Karen
				82	S	Greene, Edith		133	A	Metz, Paul
				83	S	Greene, Robert	🐾	134	A	Metz, Stevie
				84	S	Gregory, Hugh S.		135	A	Miller, Craig
								239	K	Minne, Ariel
								237	A	Minne, Jacob



- 236 A Minne, Joe
- 238 A Minne, Wendi
- 136 S Moen, Rick
- 137 A Moffatt, June
- 138 A Moffatt, Len
- 224 A Morgan, Cheryl
- 139 A Morman, Mary
- 273 A Morrel, Anne C.
- 140 A Mortensen, Liz
- 141 S Moseley, Craig
- 274 A Mueller, Robert
- 142 A Nakashima, Lex
- 275 A Neuman, Sasa
- 143 A Niven, Fuzzy Pink
- 144 S Niven, Larry
- 145 A Norton, Scott
- 147 A O'Halloran, Christina
- 148 A O'Halloran, John
- 151 A O'Neill, Brian
- 146 S Ogasawara, Cheryl
- 149 A Olson, Mark
- 150 A Olson, Priscilla
- 152 A Ontell, Ron
- 153 A Ontell, Val
- 276 A Orrock, Alec
- 154 A Parker, Tony
- 155 A Patten, Frederick
- 156 A Pearce, J.W.
- 157 S Pearce, Joe
- 158 A Pearce, M.A.
- 159 A Pelz, Bruce
- 160 A Pelz, Elayne
- 161 A Peshek, Jo
- 162 S Phillips, Eileen
- 219 A Poliner, Elyat
- 220 A Poliner, Mark
- 163 S Rankin, Nora
- 164 S Reade, James
- 165 A Robinett, Linda
- 166 A Rodriguez, Maria
- 167 S Rood, Dave
- 225 A Rosen, Andrew
- 226 A Rosen, Marjorie
- 168 A Ruff, John
- 169 A Ruff, Susan
- 170 A Sachter, Ruth
- 246 A Salo, Paula
- 171 A Sanders, D.F.
- 172 S Saoirse, Deirdre
- 173 A Sapienza, John
- 174 A Sapienza, Peggy Rae
- 175 A Savitzky, Emerald
- 176 A Savitzky, Karen
- 177 A Savitzky, Kathryn
- 178 A Savitzky, Stephen
- 179 A Sbarsky, Sharon
- 180 A Schoenhuth, Spring
- 181 S Schumacher, Nicholas
- 182 A Scott, Eric
- 183 A Scott, Jerome
- 277 A Shaw, Jerry
- 231 A Sheets, Elisa
- 184 A Shipman, Linda
- 278 A Shocklee, Mark
- 185 S Siladi, Michael
- 186 A Smith, Hank
- 279 A Smith, Nick
- 187 A Smith, Sean
- 188 A Smith, Vicki
- 189 A Standlee, Kevin
- 190 A Stelnicki, J.A.
- 280 A Stevens, Milt
- 218 A Steward, Joan
- 191 A Stockdale, Ian

Key to membership list

A = Attending
 S = Supporting—see back page
 G = Guest
 K = Kid

- 281 A Stone, Willard
- 192 S Strait, Jim
- 193 A Sullivan, Geri
- 194 A Swaty, Gary
- 195 S Talbott, Deborah 'Gus'
- 196 S Talbott, J.B.
- 197 A Thagard, Sherilynn
- 198 A Thomson, Becky
- 199 A Tibbetts, Jennifer
- 200 S Tien, Jerry
- 244 A Truong, Quan
- 3 G Turtledove, Alison
- 1 G Turtledove, Harry
- 4 G Turtledove, Rachel
- 5 G Turtledove, Rebecca
- 201 A Tutihasi, R. Laurraine
- 202 S Unferth, Ken
- 203 S Uttke, Susan
- 282 A Van Took, Fang A.
- 204 A Veal, Tom
- 205 S Wadsworth, Terry
- 206 A Walker, Gail
- 207 A Wallentinson, Denise
- 242 A Ward, Anthony D.
- 208 A Weasner, Michael
- 209 S Wells, Catherine
- 210 A Whiteside, Lee
- 241 A Whitmore, Tom
- 211 A Willmoth, Mike
- 283 A Wilson, Marie Ellen
- 284 A Wilson, Thomas Luke
- 212 A Woehrlie, Sally
- 285 A Wolfman, Noel
- 213 A Yalow, Ben
- 286 A Yeager, Kathryn

INFORMATION

ART SHOW

Rules and entry forms for the Art Show are not available yet. If you wish to receive this information when it's ready, and think you aren't already on the Art Show mailing list, please send your name and address to the Art Show at the Westercon address or e-mail information to me at FuzzyNiven@aol.com.

DEALERS

For information on the Dealers' Room, please write for information:

Westercon 55
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Our Progress Report advertising rates are:

- \$45 for a full page
- \$25 for a 1/2 page
- \$15 for a 1/4 page

The deadline for advertising in Progress Report 2 is August 31, 2001.

Write to Colleen Crosby at colleen-c@usa.net for more details.

HOTEL



Rooms at the Los Angeles Airport Radisson (nee Windham) hotel will be:

- \$99 + tax for single/double/triple/
quad rooms.
- \$125 + tax for suites.

A hotel card will be sent in a future Progress Report.



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Author Guest of Honor: Harry Turtledove  Editor Guest of Honor: Beth Meacham
Fan Guest of Honor: Robert Lichtman  Artist Guest of Honor: Ross Chamberlain

Westercon 55
SCIFI, Inc.
P.O. Box 8442
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Westercon 55: Conagerie

at the Los Angeles Airport Radisson (Wyndham) Hotel

July 4 - 7, 2002

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