

Attachment 970619a

To The Minn-Stf Board Meeting Minutes

(from the Meeting of 19 June 1997)

...being a continuation of the discussion that took place on the Minicon Mailing List (Minicon-L@mnstf.org) that was passed on to the Board in Attachment 970417a—see there for details of the original “thought experiment” which is being discussed. Having given the Board a printout of the first part of the discussion, I feel it’s only fair to pass on the rest. Maybe the Board will even want to discuss it or something once they have time to “digest” it. Or not. Whatever. In any case, please note that it is in the nature of communication on an e-mail list to be a bit over-quoted and redundant, so I’ve done some light editing of some of the messages. I have done this without, I hope, altering the meaning any messages in any significant way. Finally, I’ve tried to follow all the various threads of this e-conversation as they developed, and I apologize if I missed any.... — falh

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 1997 12:43:06 +0000
From: “DreamPark” <dreamprk@minn.net> (Sharon Kahn)
Subject: Re: Submitted for your consideration...

>>Fred writes (eyes wide and earnest)...
>>>What if Minicon eliminates any event/function which in and of
>>>itself is sufficient to cause a “go/no go” decision among a
>>>significant proportion of the people who attend that event/
>>>function?
>>
>>Ever thought of running for president, Fred?
>President of what?
>
>Nope, actually....
>
>(And what’s this “eyes wide and earnest” thing? And who’s
>“Earnest”? Stop calling me “Shirley”! Erm....)
>
>>You’ve already got a good handle on how to put together a party
>>platform.
>
>Huh whaaa....?

Am I giving you too much credit for subtlety? You just proposed that we could make the convention smaller by eliminating everything that anybody cares deeply about, thus reducing it to something with the “one-size-fits-all” blandness of a major party political platform.

I assumed that you meant this sarcastically. Surely you weren’t serious?

— sharon

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 1997 17:17:03 -0500
From: Fred A Levy Haskell <falh@maroon.tc.umn.edu>
Subject: Re: Submitted for your consideration...

At 7:43 AM -0500 4/19/97, DreamPark (Sharon) wrote:

[Deleted: The quotation of everything from the above message. — falh]

No, I meant it seriously, and I don’t =think= I’m all that subtle.

I think you misread/misinterpreted it.

I proposed that we could make the convention smaller by eliminating those things which are attended by a significant proportion of people who don’t care about =anything= the convention has to offer other than that =single= thing. At least, that’s what I thought I was proposing.

To go back to my original “in other words” example, if it appeared that a significant number of the people attending the Minneapolis in ’73 Suite didn’t care whether there was programming or a con suite or a masquerade or a drum jam or whatever else that officially goes on at a Minicon, but =only= cared whether there was a Minneapolis in ’73 Suite, then perhaps it is inappropriate to have said suite. This is trying to sort for people who are interested in =Minicon= and not just some single event within or facet of Minicon.

Is this any clearer?

Do you still think this is a bad idea, or one that could only be put forth in jest or something?

Fred A. Levy Haskell | “If the [television] craze continues...we are
falh@maroon.tc.umn.edu | destined to have a nation of morons.”
—Daniel L. Marsb, June 1950

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 1997 23:22:56 +0000
From: “DreamPark” <dreamprk@minn.net> (Sharon Kahn)
Subject: Re: Submitted for your consideration...

[Deleted: The quotation of everything from the above message. — falh]

Yes.

— sharon

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 1997 19:57:29 -0400 (EDT)
From: SSKYLARKER@aol.com (Laramie Sasseville)
Subject: Re: Submitted for your consideration...

In a message dated 97-04-19 18:17:29 EDT, you write:

>This is trying to sort for people who are interested in =Minicon= and
>not just some single event within or facet of Minicon.

>
>Is this any clearer?

>
>Do you still think this is a bad idea, or one that could only be put
>forth in jest or something?

This idea is clear to me, and I think it would have some virtue as an experiment, but as I said before, I don’t think you’d find ANY activity that wasn’t of go/no-go importance to one or more people.

- Laramie

(Continued On Next Page)

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 1997 22:49:50 -0500 (CDT)
From: pddb@gw.ddb.com (Pamela Dean Dyer-Bennet)
Subject: Fred's proposal

[Deleted: Pamela quotes the core two paragraphs from my message (dated 19 April 1997 17:17:03 -0500), above. — falh]

I'd like to draw a distinction between a particular thing's being the only reason for somebody to go to Minicon, and that thing's being the reason somebody can make Minicon work for him- or herself. For example, this year I think Child Care was that second thing for Joel Rosenberg. He didn't only care that there be Child Care, it wasn't his only interest in Minicon, but without it he couldn't make Minicon work for him. Similarly, Minicon has become so huge and horrible for me over the past six or eight years that, if both Minneapolis in '73 and the Green Room in more or less its present configuration were removed, I might not be able to make Minicon work for me, because there would be nowhere for me to retreat to. I'd still care about other aspects of Minicon, notably Programming, music, finding and seeing my friends, and the con suite if it were bearable, but I might not be able to check them out because I'd be overwhelmed by crowds and strangers.

There are alternatives, and if both my retreats were removed I'd probably try at least one Minicon without them and see how I did, but I wouldn't like it at all. But it's not the case that I only care about Minneapolis in '73 and the Green Room.

Does this make any sense?

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 02:20:16 -0500 (CDT)
From: Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

On Sat, 19 Apr 1997 pddb@gw.ddb.com wrote:

>I'd like to draw a distinction between a particular thing's being the
>only reason for somebody to go to Minicon, and that thing's being
>the reason somebody can make Minicon work for him- or herself.
>For example, this year I think Child Care was that second thing for
>Joel Rosenberg. He didn't only care

Yup. IMO, I wouldn't feel good about cutting Child Care (for example) because then I'd feel oddly like Ronald Reagan or something (not a kink that suits my personal taste, thanks.)

In other words: while taking away childcare would reduce the Minicon Population, and relieve my ears of the sound of crying (which does grate sometimes, but I think children are beautiful so I put up with it) - it doesn't solve the "problem" for me. More on the "problem" later...

>has become so huge and horrible for me over the past six or eight
>years that, if both Minneapolis in '73 and the Green Room in more
>or less its present configuration were removed, I might not be able
>to make Minicon work for me, because there would be nowhere for
>me to retreat to. I'd still care about other aspects of Minicon, notably
>Programming, music, finding and seeing my friends, and the con
>suite if it were bearable, but I might not be able to check them out
>because I'd be overwhelmed by crowds and strangers.

Yup, again.

For me, the "problem" with the size of Minicon obviously isn't that it isn't "like the good ol days" - I haven't been around long enough to call -any- time in my life, "like the good old days" really.

The "problem" as I see it could be boiled down to this: A lack of respect for fandom; and a lack of respect for people.

My experience with Mpls in '73 is they have a respect for people. People tell me -I- don't have respect for fandom (I read too much cyberpunk and don't read newsgroups, I think) so I don't think I'm qualified to point fingers.

During M31 I had to use my cane, to walk around. Walking through the consuite got boring after a while, because I kept having to shout "excuse me!" and people kept shouting back "go home" occasionally with a "cripple" thrown in.

Now, I aint oppressed by this, or even offended. I'm used to it: most people don't understand that even a 26 yr old needs a little help now and then. What occurred to me, though, was this: People in the consuite were 'inconvenienced' by anything that kept them from Their Personal Good Time.

I sat in the Mpls in '73 suite and was not once glared at for needing to sit down. I sat in the green room and munched on food when I could bring myself to fight crowds -and- back pain to see if there was gorp available.

Personally, I'd love to cut down on the "partying" aspect of the consuite. There are many fine parties going on elsewhere at the convention. I'd like to see the consuite be a place for everyone to relax, not just drunks.

>There are alternatives, and if both my retreats were removed I'd
>probably try at least one Minicon without them and see how I did,
>but I wouldn't like it at all. But it's not the case that I only care
>about Minneapolis in '73 and the Green Room.

It's my hope that I'll be able to help guide the consuite back to a place of "retreat." Don't know if it can be done, but if it can, I'm sure gonna help. :)

>Does this make any sense?

Sure does, to me. I lucked out and had a retreat right next to the consuite (locked supply rooms are a good thing.) But even that will be going away next year. So I may join you in the green room. q:-)

Shahn

Just a little boy, trying to be a man.
Shahn D. Dickson shahn@wavetech.net

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 11:07:31 -0500
From: Joel Rosenberg <joelr@kami.com>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

At 10:49 PM 4/19/97 -0500, pddb@gw.ddb.com wrote:
>

>Does this make any sense?

I think that all makes a lot of sense.

Fred's proposal is, IMHO a very useful thought experiment and not a baby policy, and it (if implemented by the Exec as a guideline for What to Cut) would be useful in a philosophical although not legalistic sense.

I think there are some people who would get sufficiently pissed off and go away if Mpls in '73 were to be canned — not because Mpls in '73 is the one thing they come to Minicon for, but because they would get sufficiently pissed off and go away if Mpls in '73 were canned. But I think that Mpls in '73, and they, should stay.

I hope that some people would get sufficiently pissed off and go away if the drum jam were cancelled (and, as long as I'm on the subject: while I trust Neil to exercise good judgment in such things, the discussion of ad hoc dispersal or redirection of the drum jammers makes me nervous — remind me to tell the story of the hunters, the farmer, and the mule sometime) and I think that would be great: I'd love it if they would go away in a huff, or better yet, a minute and a huff.

What differentiates the two for me isn't just that on one hand, I spend time in Mpls in '73, and on the other don't wish to have a vast and noxious sea of socially-challenged and/or rhythmically- and socially-challenged assholes perform a social and aural version of a drive-by-shooting from a car that's up on cinderblocks —

— although that is, certainly, part of it.

Ob, my friend, it's not what they take away from you that counts. It's what you do with what you have left.

- Hubert Humphrey

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 13:27:29 -0400 (EDT)
From: SSKYLARKER@aol.com (Laramie Sasseville)
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

In a message dated 97-04-20 03:22:32 EDT, you (Shahn David Dickson) write:

>My experience with Mpls in '73 is they have a respect for people.
>People tell me -I- don't have respect for fandom (I read too much
>cyberpunk and don't read newsgroups, I think) so I don't think I'm
>qualified to point fingers.
>
>During M31 I had to use my cane, to walk around. Walking through
>the consuite got boring after a while, because I kept having to shout
>"excuse me!" and people kept shouting back "go home"
>occasionally with a "cripple" thrown in.

I'm shocked. Perhaps it would be sufficient to solve the dilemma at hand if we simply instituted a rule allowing the convention to rescind memberships for cause of excessive bad manners. To be fair, this could be modulated by some due process or trial.

- Laramie

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 12:30:40 -0500 (CDT)
From: Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

On Sun, 20 Apr 1997 SSKYLARKER@aol.com wrote:

>I'm shocked.

I'm not.

>Perhaps it would be sufficient to solve the dilemma at hand if we
>simply instituted a rule allowing the convention to rescind
>memberships for cause of excessive bad manners. To be fair, this
>could be modulated by some due process or trial.

That's silly. Minicon now becomes a court system? Naw... I just move my cane swiftly if I hear someone being mean. Turn around, "Oh, damn, I meant to go -this- way. Oh! Did I hit you? I'm sorry!"

Really. I think trying to smooth out traffic flow will be the biggest help. We're working on that. I also think that the consuite has possibly outgrown the area...

Shahn

*Just a little boy, trying to be a man.
Shahn D. Dickson shahn@wavetech.net*

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 13:43:30 -0400 (EDT)
From: SSKYLARKER@aol.com (Laramie Sasseville)
Subject: Re: "Community," the Sleepytime Tea of Argument

In a message dated 97-04-20 00:52:04 EDT, you, Michael Rawdon write:

>2) An effort *can* be made to try to gauge *who* will be hurt by a
> change, however. It seems likely that you/we want to effect
> changes that *least* impact the committee and the population of
> Mnstf. (I say this as someone who is a member of neither august
> body. :-)

This question may be key. After reading Shahn David Dickson's comments about being jeered at as a cripple it comes to me that my idealistic vision of Fandom has never included people who would behave so badly as that. I've always sensed that True Fandom included a sensibility of respect for the understanding of Sentient beings, and that personal attacks on such superficial bases as physical appearance were essentially contrary to that sensibility.

Maybe the convention wouldn't seem so overlarge if there were ways that we could encourage that attitude of mutual respect and considerate manners among the membership - Perhaps we could exercise some deliberate discrimination in any reductions of size, by un-inviting those who make their presence sufficiently obnoxious to others.

- Laramie

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 14:17:44 -0500
From: Joel Rosenberg <joelr@kami.com>
Subject: Re: "Community," the Sleepytime Tea of Argument

At 01:43 PM 4/20/97 -0400, SSKYLARKER@aol.com wrote:

>In a message dated 97-04-20 00:52:04 EDT, you, Michael Rawdon
>write:
>
>>2) An effort *can* be made to try to gauge *who* will be hurt by a
>> change, however. It seems likely that you/we want to effect
>> changes that *least* impact the committee and the population of
>> Mnstf. (I say this as someone who is a member of neither august
>> body. :-)

>
>This question may be key. After reading Shahn David Dickson's
>comments about being jeered at as a cripple it comes to me that my
>idealistic vision of Fandom has never included people who would
>behave so badly as that.

There is no lower limit (or upper limit, for that matter) of social skills in order to be part of fandom. That is one of fandom's great virtues and weaknesses.

*Philosophy teaches us to bear with equanimity the misfortunes of others.
Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)*

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 17:32:46 -0400 (EDT)
From: Kevin Nickerson <nicker@msen.com>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

Shahn:

>Really. I think trying to smooth out traffic flow will be the biggest
>help. We're working on that. I also think that the consuite has
>possibly outgrown the area...

Heh, the consuite outgrew the current area before it was ever put there. I'm still hoping it gets moved poolside.

Kevin

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 17:58:27 -0400 (EDT)
From: SSKYLARKER@aol.com (Laramie Sasseville)
Subject: Re: "Community," the Sleepytime Tea of Argument

In a message dated 97-04-20 15:18:54 EDT, you (Joel Rosenberg) write:

Laramie:

>This question may be key. After reading Shahn David Dickson's
>comments about being jeered at as a cripple it comes to me that my
>idealistic vision of Fandom has never included people who would
>behave so badly as that.

>

Joel:

>There is no lower limit (or upper limit, for that matter) of social
>skills in order to be part of fandom. That is one of fandom's great
>virtues and weaknesses.

Are you suggesting that we should have no standards of behavior whatsoever? Is there a better basis for deciding who should and should not be encouraged to attend Minicon than how tolerable an individual's behavior is toward others?

- Laramie

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 17:03:28 -0500
From: Joel Rosenberg <joelr@kami.com>
Subject: Re: "Community," the Sleepytime Tea of Argument

At 05:58 PM 4/20/97 -0400, you wrote:

>In a message dated 97-04-20 15:18:54 EDT, you (Joel Rosenberg) write:
>[Deleted: Complete requote as above. —fall]

>Are you suggesting that we should have no standards of behavior
>whatsoever?

Nope. And I don't have the foggiest why you're (at least affecting) inferring that I suggested any such thing, no matter who you do or don't mean by "we".

*INCONGRUITY: That which doesn't fit, as a shark that won't stay dead in a teacup.
— Robert Lee Thurston*

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 1997 18:06:37 -0400 (EDT)
From: SSKYLARKER@aol.com (Laramie Sasseville)
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

In a message dated 97-04-20 13:44:40 EDT, you write:

>That's silly. Minicon now becomes a court system? Naw... I just
>move my cane swiftly if I hear someone being mean. Turn around,
>"Oh, damn, I meant to go -this- way. Oh! Did I hit you? I'm sorry!"

I don't think it's silly. The reaction you propose can escalate matters into outright brawls.

>Really. I think trying to smooth out traffic flow will be the biggest
>help. We're working on that. I also think that the consuite has
>possibly outgrown the area...

And I don't think better traffic control can take the place of better manners. People can choose to react to slow-downs in any number of ways, including good humored fellowship with others caught in the same pickle.

I think that a lot of the dissatisfaction that has been expressed over the size of Minicon may have something to do with the breakdown in civility that has accompanied some of that growth.

- Laramie

Date: 21 Apr 1997 01:03:27 -0000
From: David Dyer-Bennet <ddb@gw.ddb.com>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net> writes on 20 April 1997 at 12:30:40 -0500

>On Sun, 20 Apr 1997 SSKYLARKER@aol.com wrote:
>
>>I'm shocked.
>
>I'm not.

But you *should* be. Or, at least, you should not have *had* to get over being shocked. This sort of behavior simply should not occur, anywhere, and people who do it are not welcome at my party. Have you considered beating them with your cane? <grin>

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 00:04:52 -0500 (CDT)
From: Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

On 21 Apr 1997, David Dyer-Bennet wrote:

>But you *should* be. Or, at least, you should not have *had* to get
>over being shocked. This sort of behavior simply should not occur,
>anywhere, and people who do it are not welcome at my party. Have
>you considered beating them with your cane? <grin>

I'm not shocked because worse happens elsewhere. But you learn to live with it, because I can't run around educating every asshole on the bus who kicks my cane.

And I don't actually beat with my cane (well, not the one I walk with) but I do bump people with my cane. It isn't hard, but it's more of a nuisance than I would have been if they'd just been polite.

Shahn

—
Just a little boy, trying to be a man.
Shahn D. Dickson shahn@wavetech.net

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 20:33:22 -0400
From: Patrick Nielsen Hayden <pnh@tor.com>
Subject: Jeering at cripples

The reason Shahn David Dickson's story is so shocking is that it brings home something many of us have dimly suspected — that Minicon's size and diversity have gone from being a source of

strength to being a source of danger. People who will taunt someone for needing a cane are people who will do worse things when the lights go out.

I'm on record as having praised Minicon as "the only 3500-person three-ring-circus SF con where that's a virtue rather than a drawback." But reading Shahn's story, it occurs to me that my Minicon is generally a very privileged experience — I'm a pro, a program participant, and a friend of a lot of major fans and pros in the Twin Cities. So I'm cocooned away from most of this sort of thing.

And yet, the fact is, wandering through that open con suite area during this past Minicon, there were times when I didn't feel terribly safe. Pace Joel, we aren't talking about the extreme end of typical fannish social maladaptation here; we are talking about boisterous shitheadedness more like spring break in Ft. Lauderdale. And, really, that's new.

I've argued, on this very list, against a "get rid of the riffraff" approach to fixing Minicon. But the fact is, if your efforts are resulting in a con suite in which people feel comfortable acting this way, you are doing something very wrong indeed. And you do need to ask yourselves why dozens, if not hundreds, of extremely smart and talented fans are working year round to organize what a large number of attendees are using as nothing more than a big frat party.

—
Patrick Nielsen Hayden : pnh@tor.com

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 21:17:30 GMT
From: cyohtee@tezcat.com (Cyohtee)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

Out of the ether Patrick Nielsen Hayden <pnh@tor.com> rose up and issued forth:

>The reason Shahn David Dickson's story is so shocking is that it
>brings home something many of us have dimly suspected — that
>Minicon's size and diversity have gone from being a source of
>strength to being a source of danger. People who will taunt
>someone for needing a cane are people who will do worse things
>when the lights go out.

I too was distressed when I read this. I seem to remember a lot of people arguing in various forums about how much more "tolerant" we in the Fannish Community are supposed to be of others tastes, appearances, etc.. Then we hear about people at Minicon doing just the opposite.

>I'm on record as having praised Minicon as "the only 3500-person
>three-ring-circus SF con where that's a virtue rather than a
>drawback." But reading Shahn's story, it occurs to me that my
>Minicon is generally a very privileged experience — I'm a pro, a
>program participant, and a friend of a lot of major fans and pros in
>the Twin Cities. So I'm cocooned away from most of this sort of
>thing.

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>And yet, the fact is, wandering through that open con suite area
>during this past Minicon, there were times when I didn't feel terribly
>safe. Pace Joel, we aren't talking about the extreme end of typical
>fannish social maladaptation here; we are talking about boisterous
>shitheadedness more like spring break in Ft. Lauderdale. And, really,
>that's new.

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>I've argued, on this very list, against a "get rid of the riffraff"
>approach to fixing Minicon. But the fact is, if your efforts are
>resulting in a con suite in which people feel comfortable acting this
>way, you are doing something very wrong indeed. And you do need
>to ask yourselves why dozens, if not hundreds, of extremely smart
>and talented fans are working year round to organize what a large
>number of attendees are using as nothing more than a big frat party.

I still question whether removing things like the Masquerade or Drum Jam would cause the people we are talking about here from attending. These seem more the type who are coming for the alcohol than other items.

If we are willing to do things that some members are going to object to anyway in an attempt to do something about the number of attendees, perhaps we might just want to bite the bullet and take a few years off from serving Alcohol. If the booze is not relatively available, then the ones who come *just* for the "\$30 - all you can drink all weekend" aspect will cease to attend.

I know, a "dry" Minicon was tried before and a lot of members complained, but the people who are attending Minicon for the sake of attending Minicon would still come, and eventually we could start serving Alcohol again.

Well, just an idea, feel free to toss it around for a bit and see what happens.

*Rev. Cyobtee cyobtee at tezcat dot com <http://www.tezcat.com/~cyobtee>
Emperor of the Barbarian Wine & Cheese Society
"You truly can't go home again, but you CAN shop there." - Martin Blank*

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 21:12:34 -0600
From: gfs@toad-hall.com (Geri Sullivan)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

At 8:33 PM 4/21/97, Patrick Nielsen Hayden wrote:

>The reason Shahn David Dickson's story is so shocking is that it
>brings home something many of us have dimly suspected — that
>Minicon's size and diversity have gone from being a source of
>strength to being a source of danger. People who will taunt
>someone for needing a cane are people who will do worse things
>when the lights go out.

>
>I'm on record as having praised Minicon as "the only 3500-person
>three-ring-circus SF con where that's a virtue rather than a
>drawback." But reading Shahn's story, it occurs to me that my
>Minicon is generally a very privileged experience — I'm a pro, a
>program participant, and a friend of a lot of major fans and pros in
>the Twin Cities. So I'm cocooned away from most of this sort of
>thing.

I was similarly cocooned for years by the Minneapolis '73 suite and my other convention activities, but the general environment at Minicon exceeded my personal tolerance of toxicity in 1996, a year Patrick wasn't at Minicon. It had been getting slowly worse for several years before that.

This year, the general environment was *much, much* more mellow and comfortable for me, and for most people I talked to. I spent a lot more time in the consuite — it *wasn't* a late-night drunken/zombie wasteland like it was in 1996. Walking through the halls of the Raddish by myself late night last year had all the comfort levels of walking over to my local SuperAmerica alone at night — and I don't do that anymore. Haven't for years. The ever-present harrassment and overall threatening environment stopped such excursions. Just as the toxic environment and burnout led me to seriously consider not going to Minicon 32.

Last August, at the Los Angeles Worldcon, I came to the surprising awareness that *it* was a lot more fannish and comfortable than Minicon 31, or any Minicon of recent history. It was such a pleasant contrast to walk through the long corridors of the Hilton late at night. One night I'd forgotten my concealing bag and walked through the halls by myself, clearly holding 2 cash boxes. My "shit-sensors" were turned to high to avoid any trouble I might encounter. At no time did I feel in the least bit threatened or intimidated; I saw nothing but friendly faces.

This year's Minicon was a welcome relief compared to my traditional Raddison wanderings in recent years. Of course, that comparative comfort level still included incidents like the harassment Shahn David Dickson reported, and bartending conditions that led Matthew Sparby to write:

: I don't mind the abuse myself, really, but if these people were
: assholes in the bar, chances are they were assholes outside of the
: bar as well... diminishing the enjoyment of others. If the bar has a

: clear policy on 'cutting people off' and communicated it to the
: volunteers it would be fine, the way it was, I didn't know about any
: rules so I couldn't enforce them.

I also stood witness to an ugly situation outside the main stage entrance. A man apparently had been following a woman against her wishes for quite some time. It had escalated to an unacceptable level of verbal assault — I heard her clearly demand, "leave me alone; stop following me." The guy responded with a verbal rampage that told me he wasn't respecting her message. My usual troubleshooting skills they didn't lend themselves well to the situation. All those messages on rasff about avoiding any physical touch are unfortunately right on. I damn near got myself slugged for lightly (very lightly) touching the outside of the guy's arm (after we'd exchanged a few words), and I got more than enough of his verbal assault in the process. But I did help enough to gain the woman's thanks, and I also hooked her up with Operations in case she found herself in need of additional help. So much for simply leaving the music party to get a copy of Idea and the first edition of the BBT from my room in the other tower.

How many similar "isolated incidents" were there at our friendly, mellow Minicon?

>And yet, the fact is, wandering through that open con suite area
>during this past Minicon, there were times when I didn't feel terribly
>safe. Pace Joel, we aren't talking about the extreme end of typical
>fannish social maladaptation here; we are talking about boisterous
>shitheadedness more like spring break in Ft. Lauderdale. And, really,
>that's new.

New to you, Patrick. It's ugly, isn't it? The bartenders have been dealing with this shit for *years* — since Minicon 25 and before. It's the main reason Minicon went dry for a year. It's why most of the people you know steer clear of the consuite. And this kind of unacceptable behavior has spread to the rest of the convention at varying levels each and every year since you started coming to Minicon. The general mood and tone really was bunches better this year. I hope it's a trend that continues. I hope Minicon decides to strongly discourage the unacceptable behavior it's chosen to tolerate for so many years that people think it's how the convention is supposed to be and defend it as such. "I don't mind the abuse." Coping mechanisms such as the Minneapolis '73 suite *aren't* enough. All they do is enable some fans to survive or otherwise ignore the toxic, ugly side of Minicon.

I know that I've "made magic" at most all of these Minicons, and that my efforts have added to the joy and fun a significant minority of the membership had at those conventions. Over the years, the Minicon committee has strongly supported most of my efforts to make this sort of magic. But I've found myself wondering if I'm really helping the convention, or if I'm merely one of the many enablers who allow the toxic conditions to continue. That's why I took a so-called year off. I'm currently looking forward to helping create some new one-time magic at Minicon 33. I'm also looking forward to seeing the results of the Minicon magic other people work so hard to create. But creating magic is easy compared to solving the very real problems of Minicon. We're good at creating magic. We're not so good at dealing with tough issues, as everyone on this list has already seen.

>I've argued, on this very list, against a "get rid of the riffraff"
>approach to fixing Minicon. But the fact is, if your efforts are
>resulting in a con suite in which people feel comfortable acting this
>way, you are doing something very wrong indeed. And you do need
>to ask yourselves why dozens, if not hundreds, of extremely smart
>and talented fans are working year round to organize what a large
>number of attendees are using as nothing more than a big frat party.

The traditional reaction to this is to discount any and all allegations that it's "a large number of attendees" who treat the convention as a frat party. Any suggestions on how to measure the real size of the problem? Or how to make it go away without causing even more grievous damage to the Minicon you know and love? I suggested pulling badges and a specialized team of troubleshooters in the bar. Minicon has traditionally been delightfully cautious about pulling badges, and for several good reasons. But Minicon's traditional civility

has taken a huge hit over several years. It make take an all-out rescue mission to restore it.

Thank you for your comments on this, Patrick. I hope you find the consuite to be a much more comfortable place to party in the traditional fannish sense — to relax, talk, enjoy refreshments, and make music — to see your friends and meet new ones. I hope that comfort seeps out into *all* of Minicon 33. Most of all, I hope the Minicon committee takes action to make it so.

Geri

"Another glorious Sierra day in which one seems to be dissolved and absorbed and sent pulsing onward we know not where. Life seems neither long nor short, and we take no more heed to save time or make haste that do the trees and stars. This is true freedom, a good practical sort of immortality." — John Muir, 1869

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 22:26:43 -0500
From: Jim Rittenhouse <ursine@primenet.com>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

At 09:17 PM 4/21/97 GMT, Cyohtee wrote:

>If we are willing to do things that some members are going to object
>to anyway in an attempt to do something about the number of
>attendees, perhaps we might just want to bite the bullet and take a
>few years off from serving Alcohol. If the booze is not relatively
>available, then the ones who come *just* for the "\$30 - all you can
>drink all weekend" aspect will cease to attend.
>

>I know, a "dry" Minicon was tried before and a lot of members
>complained, but the people who are attending Minicon for the sake
>of attending Minicon would still come, and eventually we could start
>serving Alcohol again.

Yes, and what do you do about the parties that are still serving alcohol?

Jim Rittenhouse (ursine@primenet.com)
<http://www.primenet.com/~ursine>
<http://www.primenet.com/~ursine/pod.html> - POINT OF DIVERGENCE,
the Alternate History APA.

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 21:49:27 GMT
From: cyohtee@tezcat.com (Cyohtee)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

Out of the ether Jim Rittenhouse <ursine@primenet.com> rose up and issued forth:

[Requote of Jim's quote of Cyohtee (At 09:17 PM 4/21/97 GMT, Cyohtee wrote, see above message) is deleted. — falh]

>Yes, and what do you do about the parties that are still serving
>alcohol?

Depends on the parties. I know they would not enjoy MY parties, as I cut off people who have had too much to drink, so they couldn't get sh*tfaced in MY room. Most party throwers at conventions in general that I have dealt with are usually willing to police themselves when asked nicely. The ones that don't can be shut down through the usual channels, and not allowed to have Cabanas the next year.

Rev. Cyohtee cyobtee at tezcat dot com <http://www.tezcat.com/~cyobtee>
Emperor of the Barbarian Wine & Cheese Society
"You truly can't go home again, but you CAN shop there." - Martin Blank

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 22:30:48 -0500 (CDT)
From: Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

On Mon, 21 Apr 1997, Cyohtee wrote:

>If we are willing to do things that some members are going to object
>to anyway in an attempt to do something about the number of
>attendees, perhaps we might just want to bite the bullet and take a
>few years off from serving Alcohol. If the booze is not relatively

>available, then the ones who come *just* for the "\$30 - all you can
>drink all weekend" aspect will cease to attend.

There are a couple problems that I see with this.

It's my belief that of people don't have alcohol provided for them, they'll bring their own. If this happens, we won't be sure that some folks are only drinking cider or summit. Poepole will start making their own blog in their rooms, and we won't be able to even THINK about regulating consumption.

Also, trying to keep a lid on underage drinking wil become virtually impossible. Right now, the bar uses different cups form the pop machines. So we know -mostly- who is consuming beer and who isn't.

I'm in favor of providing alcohol. I'm also in favor of closing the bar at, say, 1am. Or only having a certain number of kegs (about enough to last until 1 or so) and just closing when it's done. No reason why we can't be hospitable. I don't see why we need All the Beer You Can Drink until 3 in the morning. IMO, that's not a convention. It's a frat party.

But unless someone's going to volunteer to check everyone's drink for alcohol content, simply not serving alcohol is not going to keep it out of the con. Harsh truth.

But it's odd, I hid form most of the "prime time" consuite activities. And I worked there.

Shahn

—
Just a little boy, trying to be a man.
Shahn D. Dickson shahn@wavetech.net

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 22:04:03 GMT
From: cyohtee@tezcat.com (Cyohtee)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

Out of the ether Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net> rose up and issued forth:

>On Mon, 21 Apr 1997, Cyohtee wrote:

[Deleted: The quotation of the paragraph just quoted in the above message. — falh]

>There are a couple problems that I see with this.

Ok,

>It's my belief that of people don't have alcohol provided for them,
>they'll bring their own. If this happens, we won't be sure that some
>folks are only drinking cider or summit. Poepole will start making
>their own blog in their rooms, and we won't be able to even THINK
>about regulating consumption.

Um, and this is different now how? A lot of folks DO make their own. The ones who are coming for the all you can drink aspect will not bring their own, cause they can drink their own at home and not have to spend their money on a registration.

>Also, trying to keep a lid on underage drinking wil become virtually
>impossible. Right now, the bar uses different cups form the pop
>machines. So we know -mostly- who is consuming beer and who
>isn't.

Excuse me? Are you implying that underage drinkers are getting Minicon Supplied Alcohol NOW?!? How do you figure that NOT serving alcohol will make it EASIER for underage drinkers to find alcohol??

And why is it that other conventions that *are* dry don't have this problem? If they can't get alcohol when Minicon supplies it, they will no more be able to get it if Minicon *doesn't* supply it, and the "Frat Party Mentality" ones won't either.

>I'm in favor of providing alcohol. I'm also in favor of closing the bar
>at, say, 1am. Or only having a certain number of kegs (about

>enough to last until 1 or so) and just closing when it's done. No
>reason why we can't be hospitable. I don't see why we need all the
>Beer You Can Drink until 3 in the morning. IMO, that's not a
>convention. It's a frat party.

Sigh, I'm sorry, but 2 hours at the end of the night will make no real
difference. Plus NOT serving alcohol greatly reduces Minicon's
liability for what the Drunks do.

>But unless someone's going to volunteer to check everyone's drink
>for alcohol content, simply not serving alcohol is not going to keep
>it out of the con. Harsh truth.

Nobody said it would be kept out of the con, since at the very least
the Hotel Bar is still going to be open, and we are NOT talking about
abolishing private parties. We *are* talking about making it more
difficult for the obnoxious drunks to get all the free booze they can
guzzle.

*Rev. Cyobtee cyobtee at tezcat dot com http://www.tezcat.com/~cyobtee
Emperor of the Barbarian Wine & Cheese Society
"You truly can't go home again, but you CAN shop there." - Martin Blank*

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 23:12:28 -0500 (CDT)
From: Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

Hm. Obviously I don't understand the ways of the consuite then.

Underage drinking will always happen. By regulating what cups
alcohol is consumed from, we can make an attempt at keeping the
number of underage drinkers to a minimum. It's simple: someone
holding a beer cup looks young, card them. I did it this year.

Obviously it doesn't do a 100% job.

But my main point is, I don't think a dry minicon will be a sober
minicon. And I would have to advocate for a 100% dry minicon: If the
consuite goes dry then the rest of it does. That's where my vote
would go.

But I don't think it will help. But I'm just a youngster, what do I
know?

I know that the jerks who were rude to me got more rude as the
night went on. So yes, if the bar closed at 1am, by 3am people might
stop being stupid toward others, rather than at 5am.

Shahn

*Just a little boy, trying to be a man.
Shahn D. Dickson shahn@wavetech.net*

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 00:25:31 -0500
From: "Martin Schafer" <schafer@minn.net>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

>From: SSKYLARKER@aol.com (Laramie Sasseville)
>

>In a message dated 97-04-20 03:22:32 EDT, you (Shahn David
>Dickson) write:

>
>>My experience with Mpls in '73 is they have a respect for people.
>>People tell me -I- don't have respect for fandom (I read too much
>>cyberpunk and don't read newsgroups, I think) so I don't think I'm
>>qualified to point fingers.

>>
>>During M31 I had to use my cane, to walk around. Walking
>>through the consuite got boring after a while, because I kept
>>having to shout "excuse me!" and people kept shouting back "go
>>home" occasionally with a "cripple" thrown in.
>

>I'm shocked. Perhaps it would be sufficient to solve the dilemma at
>hand if we simply instituted a rule allowing the convention to
>rescind memberships for cause of excessive bad manners. To be fair,
>this could be modulated by some due process or trial.

While there is no official policy on excessive bad manners, if I saw
that behavior as a troubleshooter or exec I might well assume they
were drunk and disorderly, pull their badges, and let them ask nicely
for them the next morning.

Martin

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 00:43:12 -0500
From: "Martin Schafer" <schafer@minn.net>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

>From: Geri Sullivan <gfs@toad-hall.com>
>

>>New to you, Patrick. It's ugly, isn't it? The bartenders have been
>>dealing with this shit for *years* — since Minicon 25 and before.
>>It's the main reason Minicon went dry for a year.

While I agree with much of the rest of what you're saying this is false.
To the best of my knowledge, no one who worked parties or did
bartending the previous year supported the idea of going dry.

I've always been pretty critical of that decision, but maybe it's time to
think about it again.

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 00:45:44 -0500
From: "Martin Schafer" <schafer@minn.net>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

>From: Jim Rittenhouse <ursine@primenet.com>

*[Requote of Jim's quote of Cyobtee (At 00:17 PM 4/21/97 GMT, Cyobtee wrote, see
above) is deleted. — falh]*

>>Yes, and what do you do about the parties that are still serving
>>alcohol?

Nothing. In terms of sheer mass of alcohol the 30 kegs the con suite
goes through dwarfs whatever people bring in to private parties.

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 02:06:54 -0600
From: gfs@toad-hall.com (Geri Sullivan)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

At 12:43 AM 4/22/97, Martin Schafer wrote:

>
>>>From: Geri Sullivan <gfs@toad-hall.com>
>>>
>>>New to you, Patrick. It's ugly, isn't it? The bartenders have been
>>>dealing with this shit for *years* — since Minicon 25 and before.
>>>It's the main reason Minicon went dry for a year.

>>>
>>>While I agree with much of the rest of what you're saying this is
>>>>false. To the best of my knowledge, no one who worked parties or
>>>did bartending the previous year supported the idea of going dry.

I'm sorry; I didn't write as clearly as I intended. It wasn't parties or
the bartenders who said "we don't want to deal with this." It's my
impression that the concho chose to go dry (in the consuite)
specifically in response to the increasing frat boy party animal
atmosphere at Minicon and especially in the Minicon consuite. It was
the majority of the committee present at the time of the vote who
used this reasoning, not the people in charge of the department or
the ones serving the alcohol.

I hope this clarifies what I meant to say in the first place.

>>I've always been pretty critical of that decision, but maybe it's time
>>to think about it again.

I was critical of the decision then, and I'm critical about it now. I'd
much rather see us deal with the specific unacceptable behaviors
rather than cut off the many hospitable people who come to Minicon
and enjoy our consuite. I seem to have seen many of them there this
year. I was even one myself, especially Monday night.

Then again, we have example after example within Minn-stf of
people who withdraw from problems rather than deal with them. I'm

guilty myself; how long has it been since there was a Minn-stf meeting at Toad Hall? While the specific reason varies host by host, many people have stopped hosting meetings. Other people have quit their volunteer jobs, because it's easier to quit than to address and deal with the issues at hand.

But I'm heartened that we keep trying.

Geri

"Another glorious Sierra day in which one seems to be dissolved and absorbed and sent pulsing onward we know not where. Life seems neither long nor short, and we take no more heed to save time or make haste that do the trees and stars. This is true freedom, a good practical sort of immortality." — John Muir, 1869

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 02:07:01 -0600
From: Leslie Powell <vagabond@solon.com> (by way of gfs@toad-hall.com Geri Sullivan)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

I'm sorry to reply to only you, Geri, but seeing as how I'm only semi-computer literate, I was wondering if you could pass on the message to the rest of the minicon-l list, if you don't mind. Next time, I'll try to figure out how to do it on my own. BTW, wonderful post.

Holy Ground, Highlander!
The Art of Getting Along at Minicon
by Leslie Powell

The one thing that binds us all at Minicon is our love for science fiction and/or fantasy, which may or may not extend to the fannish community. Either way, for many of us, there is a peace of mind that can be gained from the situation of being surrounded on all sides by kindred spirits who understand our foibles, or don't mind if we want to wear goofy costumes or read strange books or sing silly songs.

In short, we all bring something to Minicon. And what tarnishes the image of this event more than anything is the bad politics that can sometimes seep their way into things.

Therefore, in order to create more tranquility, we must consider Minicon to be, more or less, a holy ground where all fans are welcome and are considered to have something to contribute. Here is a list of things to keep in mind when attending to make Minicon a more comfortable place for everyone:

- 1.) If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all. Or at least wait until certain parties are out of earshot. And remember that nasty things you say about others reflect on you even more so.
- 2.) Minicon is not your own private playground. Just because you don't personally care for someone doesn't mean they don't have a right to be there. Remember: You're probably on someone's s—t list as well.
- 3.) We are all grownups. Or, better yet, for those of us who aren't, remember what you first learned in the sandbox: share, be nice, and don't throw things. Especially fits.
- 4.) Please try to refrain from catty remarks, tripping people in the hallways, spreading nasty rumors, believing the worst about anyone, etc.
- 5.) If you're stuck working with someone you don't like, don't ruin Minicon because of your own little jihad.
- 6.) If all else fails, stay clear of those who you don't like.

Oh, and BTW, would it be redundant or bad to have a Quiet Consuite for those of us who like to sit down and talk with fellow fen without shouting and feeling claustrophobic... or whatever that phobia is where you don't like crowds very much.

Leslie
Editor of Fandom Stranger
vagabond@solon.com

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 08:58:08 -0500
From: Joel Rosenberg <joelr@kami.com>
Subject: Re: Fred's proposal

At 12:25 AM 4/22/97 -0500, Martin Schafer wrote:

>While there is no official policy on excessive bad manners, if I saw
>that behavior as a troubleshooter or exec I might well assume they
>were drunk and disorderly, pull their badges, and let them ask
>nicey for them the next morning.

[Joel's complete requote of Martin's complete quote of Laramie's message of Sunday, April 20, 1997 12:27 PM has been deleted. — falh]

This is yet another example of why the return of Troubleshooters (probably in parallel with the Rangers) is a good idea. A Troubleshooter can be trusted to pull a badge, if appropriate; a Ranger can be trusted to call in a report, regardless.

*GULLIBILITY: Truthfully answering the question, 'How are You?'
— Robert Lee Thurston*

Date: 22 Apr 1997 17:19:24 -0000
From: David Dyer-Bennet <ddb@gw.ddb.com>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

cyohtee@tezcet.com <cyohtee@tezcet.com> writes on 21 April 1997 at 21:17:30 GMT

>I know, a "dry" Minicon was tried before and a lot of members
>complained, but the people who are attending Minicon for the sake
>of attending Minicon would still come, and eventually we could start
>serving Alcohol again.

I have no really strong feelings against not serving beer for a year or two *myself* — I'm not a beer drinker, it's no skin off my back. But in the interests of historical accuracy, it was a lot worse than "a lot of members complained". There are long-time committee members and friends who still don't speak to each other because of it. There are former long-time committee members who haven't been seen since that year. It was *very* traumatic for the committee.

Date: 22 Apr 1997 17:23:10 -0000
From: David Dyer-Bennet <ddb@gw.ddb.com>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

Shahn David Dickson <shahn@wavetech.net> writes on 21 April 1997 at 22:30:48 -0500

>I'm in favor of providing alcohol. I'm also in favor of closing the bar
>at, say, 1am. Or only having a certain number of kegs (about
>enough to last until 1 or so) and just closing when it's done. No
>reason why we can't be hospitable. I don't see why we need All the
>Beer You Can Drink until 3 in the morning. IMO, that's not a
>convention. It's a frat party.

Although it hasn't happened in the con suite on Friday and Saturday in recent years, the music parties really do need beer until 3 in the morning, or 5, or whatever. Singing is thirsty work. And that's just the sort of activity I *want* to get back into the con suite. Maybe things are bad enough that the best we can do is stop serving early, but it's not a very good solution. The problem isn't how long, it's how much, which mostly translates to who.

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 12:57:05 -0500
From: Joel Rosenberg <joelr@kami.com>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

Ditto what Patrick and DDB said. (And I've been using the term "ditto" since before Rush Limbaugh was on his first wife, so there.)

The problem isn't people drinking; it's people behaving badly without risk. It *should* be a risky thing to do, in terms of social sanctions, to jeer at somebody for needing a cane. Somebody who would do something so boorish and ill-mannered should be worried that that would get him kicked out of the party.

But it won't.

There is no minimum standard of social grace — or bathing habits, for that matter — for admission into fandom. But there certainly can be standards for not getting kicked out of Minicon. I think there should be standards — and, in practice, there are many that can be enforced, given (here I go again) the will to do it.

Doing that would make Minicon much less of an Animal-House-style-frat-party-with-a-New-Age twist, but that wouldn't bother me none.

EXUBERANCE: Faith that reduces impossibility.
— Robert Lee Thurston

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 19:48:13 +0000
From: "DreamPark" <dreampk@minn.net> (Sharon Kahn)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

[Please note—For whatever reason, I apparently did not receive the message(s) being referenced here. So I can't print them for you. Sorry. — falh]

Shaun clarifies...

>Part of my job as a first-time attendee? This was M31 - it was my first
>con at all, I was still trying to acclimate! I didn't know if the party
>was more important than my cane or what.

Oh, sorry. I thought you were a bartender. Let me rephrase. It was part of the bartender's job to cut off people who were being obnoxious and call in outside help if necessary to explain to them that their behavior was not acceptable. However, the bartender probably didn't know that.

>>From what I'd been told of Minicon, I thought the party was more
>>important.

Exactly. Unfortunately, a lot of people have been getting that impression.

— sharon

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 1997 13:52:49 -0400 (EDT)
From: Nimshubur@aol.com (Doug Wickstrom)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

In a message dated 97-04-22 14:00:36 EDT, you write:

>The problem isn't people drinking; it's people behaving badly
>without risk. It *should* be a risky thing to do, in terms of social
>sanctions, to jeer at somebody for needing a cane. Somebody who
>would do something so boorish and ill-mannered should be worried
>that that would get him kicked out of the party.

>
>But it won't.
>

>There is no minimum standard of social grace — or bathing habits,
>for that matter — for admission into fandom. But there certainly can
>be standards for not getting kicked out of Minicon. I think there
>should be standards — and, in practice, there are many that can be
>enforced, given (here I go again) the will to do it.

So. How about we set up a "Loonie Court." Sheesh, it even has an SFnal precedent. Empower Troubleshooters to round up the witnesses, hold a quick kangaroo court, and if such is warranted, 'liminate the offender out the nearest airlock (ejected by Radisson Security). Pull the badge, no appeal, and bar the guilty from Minicon for a year or two. Make attendance at Minicon conditional on agreeing to the procedure should you be accused. It's just a thought, and maybe a throwaway one, but what the heck. It's our party, our rules, right?

*doug wickstrom
nimshubur@aol.com
"Jerks are like vampires: You hold up a mirror, they see nothing."*
— Dale Dauten

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 1997 13:14:26 -0500
From: Joel Rosenberg <joelr@kami.com>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

At 01:52 PM 4/23/97 -0400, you wrote:

[Joel here quotes the entire above message from doug wickstrom (Nimshubur@aol.com), dated as shown. I have deleted this quote. — falh]

You won't get any argument from me; sounds entirely workable, assuming that we're talking Troubleshooters and not Rangers.

But if it happens, I bet there'll be howls the moment the PR announcing it comes out.

BIBLE AND KORAN: Books which millions of Cbristians and Moslems accept as blasphemies. — Robert Lee Thurston

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 1997 18:22:52 -0400 (EDT)
From: SSKYLARKER@aol.com (Laramie Sasseville)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

In a message dated 97-04-23 17:06:23 EDT, you write:

>So. How about we set up a "Loonie Court." Sheesh, it even has an
>SFnal precedent. Empower Troubleshooters to round up the
>witnesses, hold a quick kangaroo court, and if such is warranted,
>'liminate the offender out the nearest airlock (ejected by Radisson
>Security). Pull the badge, no appeal, and bar the guilty from Minicon
>for a year or two. Make attendance at Minicon conditional on
>agreeing to the procedure should you be accused. It's just a thought,
>and maybe a throwaway one, but what the heck. It's our party, our
>rules, right?
>
>doug wickstrom

I like it. Remember the ad hoc juries and judges recruited in 'The Moon is a Harsh Mistress?' A minimum of muss and fuss, the jerks get called on their misdeeds and standards are maintained.

- Laramie

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 1997 19:13:57 -0400 (EDT)
From: Kevin Nickerson <nicker@msen.com>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

doug wickstrom offers:

>So. How about we set up a "Loonie Court." Sheesh, it even has an
>SFnal precedent. Empower Troubleshooters to round up the
>witnesses, hold a quick kangaroo court, and if such is warranted,
>'liminate the offender out the nearest airlock (ejected by Radisson
>Security). Pull the badge, no appeal, and bar the guilty from Minicon
>for a year or two.

I may be the lone dissent, but I don't feel that Kangaroo Courts, aka vigilante justice has any place in a civilized society. It would drag Minicon down to the level we are aborting.

Kevin

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 1997 19:23:20 -0400 (EDT)
From: Kevin Nickerson <nicker@msen.com>
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

I said:

>It would drag Minicon down to the level we are aborting.

Bah, don't run the spell check on auto. The word is Abhor

Kevin

(Continued On Next Page)

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 1997 21:02:22 -0600
From: gfs@toad-hall.com (Geri Sullivan)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

At 7:23 PM 4/23/97, Kevin Nickerson wrote:

>I said:
>
>>It would drag Minicon down to the level we are aborting.
>
>Bah, don't run the spell check on auto. The word is Abhor

Heck, I think both words fit the context, and given the level of emotion and the bloody messes we're anticipating, I think the "mistake" is rather a better choice.

However, you're not alone on concerns about kangaroo courts. I agree, 'though I still think a special troubleshooting team could do an awfully lot of good to restore order and justice, and that might strike you as being too much like the vigilante concept.

Geri

"Another glorious Sierra day in which one seems to be dissolved and absorbed and sent pulsing onward we know not where. Life seems neither long nor short, and we take no more heed to save time or make haste that do the trees and stars. This is true freedom, a good practical sort of immortality." — John Muir, 1869

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 1997 16:22:08 -0400 (EDT)
From: Nimshubur@aol.com (Doug Wickstrom)
Subject: Re: Jeering at cripples

In a message dated 97-04-23 21:34:36 EDT, Laramie (sskylarker@aol.com) writes:

>In a message dated 97-04-23 17:06:23 EDT, you write:

[He requotes Laramie's quote of his "Loonie Court" idea. *snip* — fall]

>I like it. Remember the ad hoc juries and judges recruited in "The >Moon is a Harsh Mistress?" A minimum of muss and fuss, the jerks >get called on their misdeeds and standards are maintained.

You caught me. That's exactly where I got it. True fen will know and understand.

*doug wickstrom
nimshubur@aol.com*

They that give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. - Ben Franklin, patriot and rebel rouser

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 1997 16:03:50 -0600
From: gfs@toad-hall.com (Geri Sullivan)
Subject: Re: Submitted for your consideration...

At 5:22 PM 4/19/97, DreamPark wrote:

>
>>At 7:43 AM -0500 4/19/97, DreamPark (Sharon) wrote:
>>>
>>>>>Fred writes (eyes wide and earnest)...
>>>>>>What if Minicon eliminates any event/function which in and
>>>>>>of itself is sufficient to cause a "go/no go" decision among a
>>>>>>significant proportion of the people who attend that event/
>>>>>>function?

<snip>

>>>Am I giving you too much credit for subtlety? You just proposed
>>>that we could make the convention smaller by eliminating
>>>everything that anybody cares deeply about, thus reducing it to
>>>something with the "one-size-fits-all" blandness of a major party
>>>political platform.

I've snipped Fred's response, and Sharon's brief reply to that.

Are people responding perhaps seeing "significant proportion" in different ways? Sharon, you say that Fred's suggesting we eliminate

everything that *anybody* cares deeply about. That's not how I read his comments. He suggested we consider eliminating those areas where too many people cared only for that one activity.

To also reply to Pamela's separate comment, it's fine if Minneapolis in '73 serves as an "escape hole" for *some* of the people coming to Minicon. It's fine if a handful of people say, "if you cut Minneapolis in '73, I won't (or won't be able to) come to Minicon any more. But if 1/2, or 3/4 of the people coming to Minneapolis in '73 were to say that, well, I'd wonder whether Minneapolis in '73 was contributing to the good of the whole convention, or whether it was simply prolonging the agony, misleading us into thinking we've "fixed" something that remains broken.

There will always be some activities that rock people's socks more than others but we're talking about a major regional, not a special interest convention. If one single thing is so important that it's a make-or-break item for lots and lots of people participating in it, then I don't think Minicon is the best place for that to be happening. Every activity at Minicon will always be make-or-break to *some* people. That's where all the passion and spice comes in. But if one specific area is all people really care about, we wind up with fiefdoms. We wind up with people on the committee working for the good of their department without consideration for or understanding of the convention as a whole. And that leads to an ever-smaller pool of talented exec candidates.

I agree with Neil Rest (I think) and others who don't necessarily want to be bound by the results, but think the exercise of identifying what areas are "make or breakers" could prove useful.

Please note, I'm suggesting this from the perspective of convention members. There's a separate set of "make or break" functions for convention organization. (If you don't have anybody taking care of the treasury, you don't have a viable convention. Ditto hotel relations and a few other key areas.)

Geri

Geri Sullivan / gfs@toad-hall.com

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"What if the bokey pokey really is what it's all about?" — anon

