

The Minn-Stf Board Meeting Minutes for the Meeting of 18 September 1997, at the home of Eileen Lufkin

Attending: Margo Bratton, Dean Gahlon, Polly Peterson, Martin Schafer, and Geri Sullivan (all Minn-Stf Board Members; except for Martin and Geri, who had rôles beyond simply "Board Member." Martin was wearing three hats: Minn-Stf Board Member, Member of the Minicon 33 Exec Committee, and Member of the Exec Selection Committee. Geri was wearing two hats: Minn-Stf Board Member and Member of the High Resolutionary Council); Fred A. Levy Haskell (wearing three hats: Official Happy Deadwood, Recording Secretary, and Member of the High Resolutionary Council); Erik Baker and Victor Raymond (wearing two hats each: Member of the Minicon 33 Exec Committee and Member of the Exec Selection Committee); Kay Drache*, Cat Ocel, and Glenn Tenhoff (wearing one hat each: Member of the Exec Selection Committee); Steven Brust*, Karen Cooper, David Dyer-Bennet*, Beth Friedman, Susan Levy Haskell, and Lydia Nickerson (wearing one hat each: Member of the High Resolutionary Council); Don Bailey, Karen Johnson, and Laurel Krahn* (hatless); and Gavriella Levy Haskell (cute kid; no hat). Eileen Lufkin (Our Gracious Hostess, also without hat) was in and out, as usual, but I don't think she said anything this time.... (Oh yeah—regardless of headgear, we were all there as Interested Parties as well. Would you expect any less?)

Not Attending: Um... ah... er... I guess everybody else *didn't* attend, eh?

We managed to cause the meeting to Come to Order about five minutes earlier than usual—around 7:25 PM. Whee whoop!

Designated Quotes:

"I like most of you as individuals, but as a group you're all a bunch of buttheads."

—Jeff Berry, 14 September 1997.

"If you're going to serve carp, you need a lot of anchovies."

—Martin Schafer, 18 September 1997

Agenda

- 1) By-Laws.
- 2) Not-A-ReinCONation Update.
- 3) Mpls in '73 Party at LoneStarCon Report & A Recommendation.
- 4) Surveys Update.
- 5) Exec Selection Committee Report and Recommendation for Minicon 34 (1999).

*For the sake of completeness, please note that Kay, Steven, David, and Laurel all have Minn-Stf Officer hats but weren't wearing them this evening: Kay Drache is Corresponding Secretary, Steven K.Z. Brust is Executive Vice President, David Dyer-Bennet is *EINBLATT* Editor, and Laurel Krahn is Vice President/Data Processing (VPDP). In addition, many, if not all, of the people attending this meeting have various other past, present, and future Minicon hats in various shapes, colours, and sizes; not to mention all their other non-Minn-Stf and non-Minicon hats. Had we the mind to, we could easily have opened a haberdashery, don'tchaknow. Where was I, Jon?



Business

1) By-Laws.

Martin: I think we should make the time-critical change [to Paragraph 2 (Meetings of Members), Section 6 (voting eligibility), Subsection d (concom meetings)] and leave the rest for later.

Geri: I have a comment to pass along. I'm personally in favor of making the change now, but Gypsy pointed out that the timing might be perceived unfavorably by some members of the Minicon Committee. I want the Board to hear that concern.

Martin: Well, we can wait until next year. Or we can just do it.

Polly: We have pretty good documentation in the Board Minutes that show we've been discussing this for months and just haven't gotten around to it in the press of other business.

Somebody (Dean?): Let's Just Do It.

The Board Gets Off the Dime:

 *Paragraph 2 (Meetings of Members), Section 6 (voting eligibility), Subsection d of the Minn-Stf By-Laws is hereby changed to read:*

- d) General convention committee meetings, except that general convention meetings cannot count for more than four (4) of the seven (7) required to vote.

2) Not-A-ReinCONation Update.

Geri: David Emerson is preparing a flyer that we expect will go out with the October *EINBLATT*. The flyer will also go out to every member of ReinCONations past that Steve Glennon can dig out of the records from the last couple of years, although those addresses may leave a little something to be desired. I will also have a supply of flyers to give to people.

NOTE: Geri then gave the schedule as it then stood and as she remembered it. Since Not-A-ReinCONation is now over there wouldn't be much point in leaving these details in, especially since timebinders can turn to Attachment 970918a, "Re: Not-A-ReinCONation," for a more complete run-down of the same information. I might mention that it appeared to me that Not-A-ReinCONation was a smashing success. It was certainly one of the best not-a-conventions I've attended in quite some time. —fallh

3) Mpls in '73 Party at LoneStarCon Report & A Recommendation

Geri: Doug Friauf turned in his receipts from the Minneapolis in '73 party at LoneStarCon. We'd started out with a \$300 budget, then reduced it to \$150 when the Minicon 32 financial difficulties became known.

Doug spent \$113 on the party—I turned over the receipts to Julie for reimbursement last night. He said it was a good party, and that there were very few leftovers. The main reason it came in so much under budget was that Matt and Deb Hisle (the people in whose suite it was held) didn't ask for any reimbursement toward party costs. One night the suite hosted a wedding reception for Bob and Sunshine (Katz) Weissinger, another night the BDSM party, with Minneapolis in '73 following on the third.

On the bottom of Doug's note that accompanies the receipts, he signed "Doug Friauf, Rolling Ambassador of Minneapolis in '73." I'd like the Board to make that title official in addition to thanking Doug for his on-going support of the bid.

The Board Speaks with the Voice of the Turtle:

 **YES! Doug Friauf is hereby Anointed “Rolling Ambassador of Minneapolis in ’73.”
THANK YOU, DOUG!**

Geri: I’ll notify Doug.

NOTE: Is there an Official List of Official Minn-Stf Officers Officially being kept somewhere Official? Should I be doing that? Kay? And what about the job-displacement program in the City of the Future? —falh

4) Surveys Update.

Geri: I have about 50, and I think Dean said he has about 10 more. I gave some pages of names from the mailing list to the people who volunteered last time to make calls—I have 2 pages of names left.

Fred: I’ve been typing up and entering the returned surveys, and I recently sent email to everyone from whom I hadn’t seen a survey and for whom I had e-addresses, reminding them to fill out the survey. This included, by the way, some of the Board members. (If that isn’t too broad a HINT.)

Steve: I just realized I was confused. Would board members... would the current members of the Board of Directors raise their hands? [*Board Members complied.*]

Fred: It’s *you*, Steve. [*NOTE: This was kind of like a joke, only different... —falh*]

Geri: Hmmm. Would all past Board of Directors members raise *their* hands? [*They also complied.*]

Geri: I’m planning to take copies to the Minn-Stf meeting Saturday at Carol and Jonathan’s. I don’t think I can say anything useful about the responses yet—it’s a lot to digest.

Fred: I was reading them as I typed them up, so I’ve seen most of them. This afternoon I tried to go back and do some analysis, just out of curiosity, and I nearly went cross-eyed trying to integrate it...

Dean: From reading the written responses, I’ll have to say there’s a range of opinions.

Bing-Bong

Geri: That’s probably the pizza I ordered. I’m paying for it, but if anybody wants to chip in, that’d be fine.

Kay: What should people do if they don’t have a survey form?

Geri: They can respond electronically via the Minn-Stf web page: <http://www.mnstf.org/survey>. Or they can talk to Geri or Dean, both of whom have extra printed copies.

Geri: There’s a pepperoni and a veggie. Help yourself.

Martin: [*mumbledee mumbledee*] crust of the pizza.

Victor: For a minute there, I thought I heard you say “carp” instead of “crust.”

Fred: If you use carp instead of crust for your pizza, do you need more or fewer anchovies?

Dean: “I spell my name: ‘Danger!’”

Martin: If you’re going to serve carp, you need a lot of anchovies.

NOTE: There ensued a seemingly interminable round of “fish” puns before we once again settled down to eat and conduct business. —falh

5) Exec Selection Committee Report and Recommendation for Minicon 34 (1999).

Kay: We considered a total of six proposals:

- 1) Continuity.
- 2) High Resolution.
- 3) Split Convention.
- 4) Glenn's "Kill It."
- 5) Martin's Rewrite.
- 6) Cat's Melded.
- 7) Fred's *CrAzY* "Give it to Nokomis."

We want to thank the High Resolutionaries. Because of their efforts and this process, a lot of things came up that really need to be discussed. The amount of energy and work and thought by everyone who's been involved is amazing. Thank you. We want to make it official that we appreciate everybody's efforts.

Some comments:

- Glenn's "Drop It" is always on the table.
- We talked about the Split Convention and ruled it out.
- We weeded out Fred's *CrAzY* "Give it to Nokomis" Proposal partly because there's too little time; plus we didn't really like it.
- The original High Resolution proposal wouldn't fly. We could not recommend it.

This left us with the Continuity Proposal, Martin's Revision, and Cat's Melded.

Our recommendations are:

- 1) There should be an Exec Committee rather than a Strong Chairman.
- 2) That Exec Committee should consist of Martin, Victor, and Eric; and two other people to be named later.
- 3) We're asking that Exec Committee to meld all the proposals.

Martin: Speaking for the "Continuity Proposal" group, we've certainly been intending to steal large chunks out of the other two.

Kay: We also believe there needs to be a long-range focus for Minicon; it can't keep changing every year. We recommend that you create a committee, with Don Bailey as the chair, consisting of the Minn-Stf Presidents from the past few years, plus maybe some other people if you wish. This committee should create a vision statement out of Minn-Stf for Minicon. *That has to happen.*

Other comments/observations:

- We flop from year to year.
- The current bid process doesn't work very well. It certainly doesn't lead to continuity.
- Our message to the Board is: Minn-Stf is broken. Fix it.
- If the underlying issues are not dealt with, they'll be back every year.

Geri: First, a quick "thank you" from the Board.

I have a personal observation. The Exec Selection Committee did an astonishing amount of work and had a large number of meetings. In some years, the Exec Selection process was just abandoned, so I really appreciate that you all saw this one through.

The thing I take the most heart out of is that we've been talking to each other and even laughing every once in a while, even though we've had some major disagreements.

Now, I noticed you didn't mention the focus statement. Can you address that?

Kay: We want the Minn-Stf Presidents Focus Committee to consider it, as well as Don's. The Focus Committee needs to:

- Ask people to submit their names if they're willing to serve.
- Create a vision statement, taking into consideration all the background of this process.
- Develop a long-range focus process for Minicon. The focus needs to come from *Minn-Stf*.

The Board notes that the Exec Selection Committee worked very hard and deserves an enormous:



Dean: I remember what it was like working through this process in previous years, so I have a feeling for what the Exec Selection Committee was going through. So I want to give you a *very* big thanks!

Geri: I have some specific questions. What about Glenn's "Drop It" proposal—why did you say "no" to that?

Glenn (clarifies): My proposal was that Minicon 33 should be the last Minicon.

Geri: ...why is that not the best option?

The Exec Selection Committee: Everybody individually believes we *can* run a successful convention.

Geri: You said, "the original High Resolution proposal wouldn't fly." What does *that* mean?

Kay: Well, there were a number of things:

- 1) Implementation. We didn't like the "strong chair" model.
- 2) There were the nebulous issues of buy-in and trust.
- 3) Although it was not intentional, the original language with the print/media filter clearly upset many people on the committee. It would therefore be difficult for everyone to work together.

Geri: What we heard from people on the Minicon 33 committee on Sunday was a lot of long-term resentment, not necessarily current stuff.

Kay: The "trust" issue is still not resolved.

Martin: There a bunch of people who feel like they've been treated as second class citizens for ages.

Geri: The other big questions are:

- Who is in the pool of names the "Martin, Victor, and Eric" Exec Committee are going to draw their other two members from?
- It seemed like the 16 of us on the various proposal committees and the Exec Selection Committee had been making a good deal of progress toward common ground. Was it Sunday's concom meeting that made the Exec Selection Committee decide this approach—working together to find the common ground—could not work?

Kay: We really didn't like the "strong Chair" model. We also wondered how an Executive Council would work—for example, who selects Department Heads? My personal feeling is that when you look at Martin's Rewrite and the Continuity Proposal, they are so alike as to not make much difference, except for the deliberate sizing down and no media/literary split. It's back to the "trust" issue—Martin's Rewrite was seen as too close to the High Resolution Proposal by the concom. I'm not in position to speak to what

the High Resolutionaries want to do. Do they want to work with the Exec? I see lots of room for everybody to work together.

Steve: I'd like to *applaud* the Exec Selection Committee for saying Minicon is broken and change has to take place. I regret their decision—their recommendation—not to fix it. But it was a worthwhile exercise.

The Exec Selection Committee Objects: We didn't *say* that Minicon is broken.

Steve: Maybe you didn't say it in so many words, but I *heard* it. Oh, okay—I applaud the Exec Selection Committee's *recognition* that Minicon is broken. How's that?

Board: Are we going to have a special meeting? What will we [the Board] do? The Board wants to meet to discuss this. We will have a private special meeting in the next week. We will try to decide within 2 weeks.

Margo: Board itself needs to get together to discuss this whole thing. We need to do that before we know what we're going to do.

~~~~~ We Take a Break ~~~~~

Geri: Quotes Ben Yalow as saying: "There are no low-risk choices." She agrees with Ben on this. "Who owns Minicon?" This seems like a good question for Board. "One thing that seems to be pretty clear is that there is a consensus that Minicon, as it currently exists, is broken." [At this point, Geri handed out some email messages from Ben Yalow and reads some parts of the messages. See Attachment 970918b, "Some thoughts on Minicon—the various proposals" and "Re: Paths & Outcomes."] [Geri then read from Kurt Griesemer's message; see Attachment 970918c, "Re: In Response."]

Kay: I'd've been so much happier if the High Resolutionaries were willing to make a 35-person, 3-year commitment.

The High Resolutionary Council: Weren't you reading our proposal? We're absolutely willing to make a long-term commitment, and we have easily that many people willing to commit with us.

Geri: Don, would you please run the comments round? I'm getting burned out from having to balance and juggle my hats.

Don: The rules are: we'll go once around room, in order, with a time limit of a minute or so. Then I'll look for hands, giving priority to Board Members.

Fred: Demands the floor as Official Happy Deadwood and oldest living... erm... longest-term Minn-Stf Member at meeting. He asks others to take notes for him, and gives an impassioned speech (speaking only for himself) which is easily misinterpreted. [Kay's notes say: "Longest term MNSTF member. Greatest loyalty is to MNSTF. Committee is not loyal to MNSTF. So MNSTF SHOULD GET OUT of running the con. One way or another. Nokomis. Glenn's. Sep, inc." Karen's notes say: "Fred speaks—oldest-term member. Greatest loyalty to club. Club is hated minority to concom. Get the hell out. Let people who love it do it. He is prepared to do what he must." Since I did such a bad job of explaining myself, and since it's been long enough that I have no hope of remembering anything close to my actual words, please refer to Attachment 970918d, "Communication," which is a copy of the email I sent to the Board the next day explaining what I really meant to say. Or something. —falh]

Karen: I'm speaking for myself, to the Board, about responsibility and Minicon. Part of being in the High Resolutionary group has meant looking at Minicon closely. I was on the concom in years past—I how it worked. I am of the opinion the con will melt down *soon*. When that happens, the Board of Directors will be in the position of having to pick up the pieces. I said to Geri a while ago, "If the con melts down, the

members of the Board of Directors are going to have to pay those bills out of their own pockets.” Geri said, “We’ll pass the hat.” But I’m telling you here and now: if the Board can’t support a cut-down, I won’t help pick up the pieces later. I’ve told and told and told you folks it’s stupid to continue the way we’ve been going. It may be the “mother” in me that makes me put it this way, but this is how I feel. This is important.

Geri: Speaking for all the Resolutionaries, we want to make clear to everybody that we’ve made changes to our proposal and our offer is still out there. We’re willing to work with the Board and move in a productive fashion. We will *not* agree to something simply for the purpose of getting the convention—either we agree and it’s *real*, or we won’t agree.

Laurel: Pass.

DD-B: It’s been a lot of fun. We’ve worked with a lot of people and spent a lot of time. The Exec Selection Committee needs to use their best judgement. Similarly, the Board needs to use *their* best judgement. Gosh, there’s lots of uncertainty about the future. Everyone in this room agrees that each and every course is risky. Only shutting down has no risks.

Fred: Wrong! Shutting down has risks, too.

DD-B: Having said all that, I’m hurt that the best judgement of Exec Selection Committee is that the kind of objections that have come from the current concom should be weighed more heavily than the things said by Geri, Lydia, Susan, Fred, Beth, Liz, Karen, Steven, Alice, and me. Somehow, our opinions aren’t as convincing despite the last five years of history. I find this unpleasant and disappointing.

Don: Susan will speak “out of turn,” since she has to take Gavi home.

Susan: I believe the Exec Selection Committee has not addressed any of the issues of the non-viability of Minicon raised in the High Resolution Proposal. I have not heard any substantive attempts to respond, short of “we think it’s possible.” I want to stress to the Board that I would consider and I believe that any independent arbiter would consider acceptance of the Exec Selection Committee-supported proposal to be financially irresponsible. As I’ve stated before, I believe this is catastrophic lack of oversight on the Board’s part. If the Board approves a recommendation other than: 1) the High Resolution Proposal as written, 2) stop running Minicon, or 3) otherwise unencumber itself of running the convention, I’ll resign from Minn-Stf. I will also recommend that any Board members who are concerned about the financial oversight resign, as that’s the only thing that’ll help them from being personally responsible should Minn-Stf find itself in the hole. I will look into the personal liability of Board Members and email you what I find out. [See Attachment 970918e, “Board responsibility” and “Clarification of Board responsibilities.”]

Victor:

- 1) I have to second what Susan said. If you accept the notion that all the options are high risk, you have to reduce your responsibility.
- 2) If we can’t get enough people behind any proposal, it doesn’t matter which one you pick. I don’t have a fixed number of people in mind, but it’s both quantitative and qualitative. I don’t think any proposal has enough support.
- 3) I dug up something I wrote in October 1992. I have read and reread the document. It boils down to: be nice; include people; and do the right thing—*whatever* that is. I want a Minicon that works for Minn-Stf. [See Attachment 970918f, “Some Notes for the Board About Minicon—October 7th, 1992.”]
- 4) Finally, I’d like to thank people for coming.

Geri: Who would be the other Exec members under your proposal? Or when will you know?

Victor: I have a list, but it's old, not recent.

Geri: Who's been asked?

Victor: Kelly O'Donoghue has agreed to serve, but we haven't made any final decisions. [*Victor distributes list to Board.*]

Cat: I haven't worked with this list. I haven't seen it before.

Lydy: I learned a bunch of different things over the course of this process:

- 1) The negative reaction to the High Resolution proposal is pretty consistent on people's first reading. But when they go back, we can get through to them. This is not to say there weren't good and unexpected people who looked at it and immediately said, "Yeah! Wow!" The lesson to me is that we really *can* communicate this message: I'm looking for my family, and my family reads; I'm looking for people who live their life thinking. We got through to some people. We can get through to others. We need to earn it, to work at it, to have that cycle of going back and back and back over things. We need to say, "You're upset," and be understanding. It's a difficult message to convey, but it *is* communicable.
- 2) I had my heart torn from me by the current concom; particularly because some people on the committee believe the group is not responsible for the safety of the members of Minicon. This *appalls* me.
- 3) You don't have any buy-in, and this concerns me. This committee doesn't stand behind *anything*. It's glazed over the pain. People just rise up through the ranks regardless of their competence—it seems there's no screw-up too big to ignore. People will talk about focus and will say it's okay, but will than just do whatever they're going to do. And the response seems to be, "Well, they're mostly getting the work done, so it's okay." But you've got a committee that hates each other. One advantage of the High Resolution proposal is that at least we're all pointing our guns in same direction, and not at each other. Currently you've got rampant empire building—we can't sustain that.
- 4) A scary part to me is that there are *good people* on "the other side."

Margo: You see people on "the other side"—you see a division.

Lydy: I didn't put them there. *They* put *me* on "the other side." I've been stunned by people who are reacting as if we're trying to steal and kill their children. I was prepared for a reaction, but I was unprepared for people who are unwilling to listen.

Geri: Some of what perpetuates the division is a problem with the use of language. If we say "we don't care about your TV habits," it tends to communicate the "don't care" part—it negates the interests of others, even if that's not what we mean by it. What we need to say is "we're focusing on readers" and not get bogged down in the side-issues.

Beth: Karen and David and Lydy have said pretty much what I'd say. I've been saying that Minicon is in trouble for 10 years. I've been saying it so long that people don't even hear what I say any more. Any meeting when you can describe... when Martin can describe Sunday's meeting as "productive," we are so far apart I'm not sure if any meeting of minds is possible. I thought it was awful—it really demonstrates the Minn-Stf/Minicon split. I once thought it was amusing that the tail was wagging the dog. Now it's only depressing and frightening. Perhaps we need to cut the con loose.

When I heard that Minicon 32 had lost money, I offered a loan to Minn-Stf out of my personal savings. I now withdraw that loan offer. I don't see that anything has changed between last year and this year. I think we've got lip-service to change with no actual intent.

Polly: I'm listening.

Erik: I'm not ready to speak.

Cat: I don't agree with Susan that the Exec Selection Committee never looked at the points raised by the High Resolutionaries—we addressed the six problems we listed and agreed on. My “melded” proposal looks at them. I question, as does Margo, whether selecting for readers is building fences. For myself, I very strongly would like to see a rotating continuous Exec. We're divided as to solutions that will provide that. What will make or break Minicon is purely budget oversight and volunteers. The focal points will require work.

Another idea I brought up last night would be to look at Department Heads as if they were an Executive Council. A strong chair should not make day-to-day decisions, the Department Heads should. Take a list of 9 or 10 most critical departments—their Heads would meet with the Exec to form policy. DD-B's living room worked the last Minicon he chaired. Make more policy decision with the Department Heads. I don't believe the “strong chair” model can work. There's nobody you'd trust in that position. Finally, I can't accept the media vs. literature split. Glenn doesn't read for pleasure. The High Resolution Proposal excludes him.

Fred: Minn-Stf is hated by the current concom. That excludes *me!*

Kay: I agree with Susan that our recommendation should have included the need for financial oversight. The key issues are a budget and the “people thing.” We need buy-in to continuity for budget and so on. We need to do a better job of using people. My gut feeling is... I've been upset about this for years. I can't handle it. I've taken myself off the Board and the Exec because of the stress. I'm in favor of Glenn's “Drop It” proposal. The ten of you aren't enough to run the convention. You know, I was talking with somebody the other day who suggested hiring somebody to make sure something will go with Minicon. He thought maybe we could get someone for around \$20K.

I'd rather not have a convention than have a convention that melts down.

At the concom meeting, Jeff, though he was abrasive and sending mixed messages, expressed a point of view that may be valid—it's clearly that of others as well:

“I like most of you as individuals, but as a group you're all a bunch of buttheads.”

—Jeff Berry, 14 September 1997.

Steve: I made my comment earlier.

Dean: I'm mostly listening.

I have, a comment, however, about Susan's comments: The fiduciary responsibility of the Board is a data point. I'm not sure I believe we must fold or cancel—we must do what we see as best, *whatever* that is.

Margo: I'm hearing a lot of emotional responses. People feel that somebody has stuck them “outside,” whether that “somebody” is the “Gang of Ten,” the Exec Selection Committee, or the current Minicon Committee. Unfortunately we're supposed to be fans together. We need to pool our experience so we work together. Personally, I don't feel “outside”—I don't feel outside of the “Gang of Ten,” the Committee, or the Board. I think what we may be lacking is ability to let the other person know we feel their feeling of feeling outside.

Laurel: I do translating between factions. You're all the same group. I was a media fan. I also read. Not that much, maybe, but I don't get booted out of the Fourth Street Fantasy Convention. I did a kind of casual survey of conversations at Fourth Street—they were about everything you could possibly imagine. We all have a lot more in common than we have differences.

But we've lost our sense of community. At the first bunch of Minicons I went to, we all got along. "We're different, but we care about each other." If someone tripped and fell, we would go to help. *The caring is not there any more!* Worse, some of the people now at Minicon scare me. We all *know* Minicon is broken. We've got volunteers... I sent a message to Minicon-L today that talked about reasons to volunteer. Fit your talents and skills into the convention. Do it because you love it and because it's fun. [See Attachment 970918g, "Volunteering (was Re: In response)."] The feeling I get in last 10 years is... I don't hear a lot of people saying they're having fun any more. *Volunteer because it's fun.*

It seems that too many people work on Minicon because:

- They were talked into it,
- They feel they have to come to the rescue of the convention, or
- They feel responsible—they have the feeling that no one else will do it.

If we don't have enough bodies for the right places, it's time to shut it down. It's hard to say. But it gets hard to see people hurt and upset, too. I don't like to have to have my defenses up at Minicon. I want to be able to find people who read and hang out. It's a mind set. I understand that some people are feeling excluded, but we want people who are "Space Aliens." Unfortunately, there's no way to tell. Maybe if we did a focused Minicon... but no bouncers at the door.

Steve: Cat hit it on the nose: what do we do about Glenn?

Karen: The focus is Science Fiction *and* Science Fiction Fandom. Glenn's a "Space Alien."

Don:

- 1) It's my observation that the Exec Selection Committee did an awful lot of work, but they didn't get the job done. I recommend the Board not accept the recommendation until they find out who the other people who would be on their Exec are.
- 2) We're still in middle of developing our focus. Don't run away. We need to explore our options, especially the idea of having the concom incorporate and be given Minicon.
- 3) I liked the concom meeting—I was proud of everyone for sharing their feelings. I thought it was positive—it got us to share about what we care about. We got through to each other. Lots of people were angry; there was also lots of pain and worry. "Gut stuff" came out.
- 4) I thought I had a point 4.... Oh yeah, it was going to be the "incorporation" idea, but I already mentioned that in point 2.
- 5) We need to communicate an awful lot more. Department Heads don't say "good job" often enough. *That's important.*
- 6) Forgiveness. We have to do a better job of forgiving people when they make mistakes. Let me explain my feelings on forgiveness. People screw up. They have to admit they screwed up. The group then says, "Okay, we accept you back." Accepting them back doesn't mean throwing them back in to the exact same situation, where they're likely to screw up again—but give them something else to do. But *do* accept them back.
- 7) The proposal to give Minicon to the U.S.S. Nokomis is interesting and insidious. They would discover, as others have before them, the Great Lesson: there's always an "in" crowd and an "out" crowd.

- 8) There's *always* a faction who want to run a big convention. What's driving us apart are different feelings about what's important. "Quality" is also a faction.
- 9) It's time to *tell*, not *ask*, people what their budgets are for Minicon 33.
- 10) Whether there's a Chair, an Exec, or something else, the "model" is immaterial. What's important is getting the *right people*. With the right people, either works. The advantage of the "Exec" model is it spreads the stress around.
- 11) I'm tempted to give Myers-Briggs to all Minicon attendees to sort out who gets along.
- 12) I sent something to the Board bounce [see Attachment 970918h, "Minicon Focus ideas"]. It's a different attack at trying to come up with a vision. It's a *concept document*—so don't pay attention to its details (they're just quick examples). Maybe we should hand this to a bunch of groups to see how they fill it out. The Board could then merge it and give it to the Minicon committee. This would give detailed instructions on what Minicon should be.

Martin: First of all.... In some sense I can't claim this since Cat claimed Glenn is not a reader, but... I believe with exception of him, there was not a person in the committee room Sunday who doesn't read. I didn't hear, "you're a reader, go away." What I heard was a lot of people who are "Space Aliens" but either came first though media or aren't willing to make a distinction between print and non-print, saying "Why focus only on books?" Saying, "We think we've been treated badly for years because you think we're not fans." And I'm not sure that I understand why we can't say, "First rate, intellectually challenging programming and we don't care if it's about books as long as it's about SF or fandom."

I thought the meeting was far less negative than I thought it was going to be. I expected far worse reactions. That's part of why I've been so uncomfortable. It also made me unhappy that you [the High Resolutionaries] were all shocked. There was a set of interactions that would go: you would say, "We've talked to people and they like it," and Victor would say, "The people I've talked to hate it." It's like you assumed Victor was lying. Then you saw in the meeting that Victor wasn't lying about that. I had the impression that when you were saying you talked to people, you would have talked to some of the concom. I'm unhappy that you didn't reach out to them.

DD-B: We did talk to some of them. Many of the people we talked to weren't at the meeting on Sunday.

Martin: I am...

As Geri mentioned early on, until near the end of the Exec Selection Committee meeting last night, I thought we'd have to say we're still in the middle of the process—that the Exec Selection Committee work was not done.

The Board has to decide on a multi-year plan.

My personal view is I think we made the recommendation we did because we were desperate to make a recommendation, to say *something*, rather than saying "we can't decide."

Cat: I wasn't desperate.

Kay: I was.

Steve: I'll be desperate *for* you, Cat.

Martin: The level of reaction at the meeting means to me that with in-person work you could get buy-in. Scott was saying—

Kay: Scott Imes called [a person] to find out what she thought of Sunday's meeting. She was nervous going in, but she came out of it with many of her fears allayed.

Martin: I find that amazing, and an indication that buy-in is not impossible.

Dean: About “Reader vs. Glenn,” let me try to do a translation: What the High Resolutionaries are saying is, “Reading is an indicator of ‘Space Alien.’” What gets heard is, “If you don’t read, you’re shit.” That’s probably a message that’s hard to get across in the form it’s meant.

Margo: Minicon has become a place where people come who don’t care about SF—they come to get drunk. We have the most trouble with these folks.

Some Number of People: Disagree with some aspect(s) of this assessment.

Martin: Running the convention needs to get simpler and needs to be more fun. I know some of you feel deeply that size, in and of itself, must change. That the convention needs to get smaller. But the whole issue of not feeling safe is tied up in the 10 – 100 people who are friends of friends of friends.

Steve: No. The problem is they *don’t* stand out like sore thumbs.

Margo: There is a large crossover between people who can be perceived as dangerous and those who come to drink and party.

Fred: I never realized people perceived me as **DANGEROUS!**

Geri: Thank you, Don, for running the “comments” part of meeting.

I had a phone conversation with Jonathan Adams the other day. These are the notes I took on what he said: “I’ve given up on Minicon. I suggest we: 1) minimize labor, 2) run it as a money-maker only, and/or 3) walk away and start a new convention. I say that as an engineer—I’d rather build something than maintain it.”

To me, one of the great.... Whatever direction Minicon goes, I want it to be a happy, healthy convention that is building new stuff.

I have an observation. We’ve been saying that the overlap between the Minicon Committee and Minn-Stf is small. It ain’t that small. We have more overlap than we’re recognizing.

I’m really glad to hear the variety of perspectives people came out of Sunday’s meeting with.

I think I need to explain something. The High Resolutionary Council have been saying they know they’re going to get heat and can take it. But we were stunned by the reactions at Sunday’s Minicon Committee meeting. So how can Martin believe us when we say we’re prepared to take the heat?

Related to that, I’m concerned that we did the concom a disservice by dumping a piece of this on them without perspective or preparation. We scared them.

Finally, I want to say there has been magic *every* Minicon.

NOTE: Please see Attachment 970918i, Other Messages Sent to the “Board Bounce” for other messages sent to the Board in the last month.

Geri: Now I’m talking to Erik. I’m impressed with the way the Minicon 33 proposal has been filled in. But I’m deeply afraid of—you’re doing your damndest, but the results are still insufficient and scary to me. For example, the proposal talked about the committee getting some social time as well as meeting time, so Polly brought corn to the meeting. But there was no picnic. There seem to be severe departmental problems. For example, Volunteers... Pubs... Greg Johnson has quit—which... okay, people quit, but *how* people leave is significant... Ops think they’re doing a good job, but people with viewpoints as diverse as Geri and Alera (and her “circle”) *all* think there’s a problem there.

I’m specifically deeply concerned about the budget. Glenn has budgets back from Registration, Ops, Dark Star, and Mpls in ’73; but budgets for Parties and Hotel, for example, still haven’t come back.

Erik: Parties is partly my fault. Gypsy's been trying to get in touch with me to find out what we bought last year, and I haven't had time to get back to him.

Kay: The Board is going to have to follow up on the Exec Selection Committee's recommendation. You can:

- 1) Accept our recommendation (which course I would personally agree with, yet it sometimes makes me sad as well).
- 2) Choose another proposal.
- 3) Make Exec Selection Committee meet more. *Please* don't do that...

Geri: The Board needs to work on process things. Gypsy and Tesla are working on a document... I have a question for the Minicon 33 Exec. You guys are heroes for trying. I'm concerned we're killing our heroes. I'm concerned. Please reassure me.

Martin: I can't reassure you. Give us... if we have not made significant progress in the next two months, I'll agree completely.

Erik: Ditto.

Geri: Can we come up with some measurable goal posts to evaluate where we're at?

Erik: PR1 let us know that pubs needs a lot more help.

Geri: Generally, what shape is Minicon 33 in?

Erik: Poor shape. I'd almost say extremely poor shape. It started out well but we've fallen down this summer. I blame the Exec Selection process for making a bad situation worse. I would like to think that Martin, Victor, and I all know what the problems with Minicon 33 are and we're ready to work on them. I can't allay your fears now. But we will get back on track.

Geri: I would like to know who the other two people you're proposing to add to the Exec would be.

Martin: How about if the board tells us that this will be our direction, subject to getting you names to approve by some specific date?

Erik: Names. Victor and Martin came up with a list, I agree with it.

Geri: What do you expect for measurable progress on Minicon 33?

Erik:

- PR1 in the mail by October 15.
- By end of October, I would like to have firm grasp on where all the budget will be going. The whole range of financial concerns. I'm talking about a firm grasp on budget—not necessarily all the paper in final shape.

Dean: The Board would rather have publications late than have them have to be reprinted.

Don: I recommend:

- 1) You pick a date for when PR1 will be ready for proofreading. Then if this date slips, you have an early warning of trouble.
- 2) The Treasurer has been saying "tell me what you're going to be spending." At this point can you *tell* people what they're allowed to spend instead of saying that.

Martin: A side note is that all departments have at least been given the message: "do it below this number."

Geri: I want milestones. Can we have an actual Volunteers Head by end of October?

Martin: Yes.

Geri: What's the deadline for getting a confirmed Author GoH?

Martin: Any time right up to the convention.

Preliminary Agenda for Next Time

Ⓜ Minicon, Minicon, Minicon.

Ⓜ Postage Meter Costs.

Next meeting: 16 October 1997 at Eileen's.

Meeting adjourned at 10:32 pm.

Submitted so late I'm almost embarrassed to admit it, by

*Fred A. Levy Haskell
Official Happy Deadwood &
Recording Secretary, Minn=Stf*