

Potlatch 12

Progress Report 1

February 21 to 23, 2003

Ramada Plaza Hotel, San Francisco

www.potlatch-sf.org

Let's Talk

Karen Schaffer, Potlatch 12 Chair

What makes a great con? For me, it's the talking: great panels and great conversations. And the not-so-hidden subtext of Potlatch is "Let's talk." Let's talk about books, let's talk about ideas, let's talk about society, let's talk about that last panel. We talk in the programming room, we talk in the halls, we talk at dinner, we talk in the consuite. Cogitamus ergo festivamus!¹

Potlatch is one of my favorite conventions. The programming is carefully designed to bring forward interesting ideas and people who really want to talk about them. Never, never, will you hear those fateful words, "I don't know why I'm on this panel." Potlatch panelists want to be up there, they have something to say, and they want to hear what the audience has to say too. We've even been transcribing Potlatch panels for reference and posterity. See our website, www.potlatch-sf.org – look under 'Lit Links' for transcripts from past con panels.

Our book of honor this year, *The Rediscovery of Man*, by Cordwainer Smith,

¹ We think, therefore we party! This charming slogan was used for the late, lamented ReinConations back when I lived in Minneapolis, and it captures my feelings about the best part of fandom.

is a storehouse of beautiful writing and vast vision, sure to inspire many conversations. The story titles alone are tantalizingly poetic: "Alpha Ralpa Boulevard," "The Ballad of Lost C'mell," and "The Dead Lady of Clown Town," to name a few. NESFA Press is offering Potlatch members a discount on the book; see the Book of Honor column for details.

At Bay Area Potlatches, we feature periods for *Algonquins*, opportunities for small-scale programming by anyone and everyone. They can be organized around a specific item of interest (e.g., a current book/movie/TV show), a hot topic (e-books), an activity (touring bead shops in San Francisco), or simply an impromptu continuation of an exciting panel discussion. The semi-formal nature of *Algonquins* encourages people to mix who might otherwise not. Be sure to check out the *Algonquin* board or consider proposing one yourself.

I hope to see you all at Potlatch this year. It's going to be great. If I don't know you, please do come up and introduce yourself. And let's talk!

Book of Honor

Lisa Hirsch

I'm pretty sure the first Cordwainer Smith I read was "Scanners Live in Vain," his most famous and anthologized story. Thirty years or so later, I can't remember how long it took me to ferret out

whichever of his stories were then in print, though I know I was always especially happy to stumble across one I hadn't read yet. I do recall how thrilled I was to discover Norstrilia a few years later. "My gosh! He wrote a novel!" That battered, many-times-reread paperback is still in my collection. And I feel as if I've been waiting thirty years to have a good talk about him.

It's therefore a special pleasure to me that The Rediscovery of Man is the Potlatch 12 Book of Honor. Smith doesn't have the name recognition with the general public that Asimov, Heinlein, and Clarke have. He has always seemed to be something a connoisseur's writer, or perhaps a writer's writer. This might be because his output was small and mostly short stories, or it might be because of his distinctive style and the weird worlds he created.

The titles are small marvels all by themselves: "Golden the Ship Was-Oh! Oh! Oh!", "Mother Hitton's Littul Kittons," "Think Blue, Count Two," "The Colonel Came Back From the Nothing-at-All;" and the character names sing: Lord Jestocost, C'Mell, Lord Sto Odin, E'telekeli, Lord Starmount, the Hechizera of Gonfalon.

His themes provide enough discussion hooks for four conventions. He dealt with genetic engineering and what it means to be human, the relationship between humans and animals, class struggle, the relationship between humans and technology, and the ways that technology can make us more or less human. The stories were all conceived as part of a whole and take place in a single, fully-imagined universe.

If you haven't read Smith, I envy you the experience of discovering him for the first time. If you're returning to an old friend, as I am, I join you in relishing his prose again. In any event, I hope you'll come to Potlatch and participate in that conversation I've been waiting for.

Special Offer for Potlatch Members

You can get a 20% discount on *The Rediscovery of Man* ...if you order directly

from the publisher, NESFA Press, and you tell them that you're a member of Potlatch. Postage is \$3 to U.S. addresses. NESFA Press accepts checks, Visa, and MasterCard.

NESFA Press
PO Box 809
Framingham, MA 01701

Mark Olson of NESFA Press has this to say:

NESFA Press is one of the main activities of the New England Science Fiction Association, a 35-year-old SF club in the Boston area. It's an all-volunteer operation run by fans—we do the typesetting, editing, and sales work ourselves. Our marketing philosophy is to print the stuff we want to read (and can't find elsewhere) and hope others share our interests.

We print mainly short fiction, reprint single-author collections, and try to keep all our books in print at least as long as they sell. Lately, we've been publishing a half-dozen new books each year. See our web site at www.nesfa.org/press. We're always interested in suggestions for new projects or corrections to existing books; just send to us at press@nesfa.org.

Publications

Lisa Hirsch

We send out Potlatch 12 Progress Reports either as plain text email or on paper. If you would like to change formats, please send a note to registration@potlatch-sf.org. You can also view them on our Web site (www.potlatch-sf.org) as HTML or PDF.

Programming

Janet Lafler

The core of the Potlatch programming philosophy is inclusion. We want to see everyone involved and having fun. We have no star system. No individual is on more than one panel. And over the years we've explored many ways to stimulate and encourage audience participation. We

also have a tradition of small, impromptu program items (in the Bay Area we call them Algonquins), in which members initiate discussions, games, walking tours, demos, and other strange and wonderful activities.

One of the great pleasures of a small convention is that it's possible during the course of the weekend to talk to every member and to see and do almost everything on offer. Potlatch, as befits a small convention, features a single track of programming. A surprising number of people manage to make it to every panel, so we have generous lunch and dinner breaks to help people pace themselves. At the same time, we like to take into account the various metabolic tolerances of our members. Our Sunday morning panel at Potlatch 10 was well-received and clearly deserves to be repeated; we may also add a 50-minute early-bird panel on Saturday morning. Night owls, too, will find plenty to do: readings and Algonquins (not to mention parties), and something special in our main programming space on Saturday night.

Nothing is so good that you can't make it better. Each year we try to take a look at what's worked in the past and what we'd like to improve. My goals for Potlatch 12 programming include:

1. More new voices. Our Potlatch regulars are an amazing group of people, but without getting new folks involved in programming, we'll go stale. I want to see first-time Potlatch panelists on every panel.
2. Enlivening impromptu programming (Algonquins). This is one of our favorite Potlatch features. There's an open slot on the committee for someone who wants to take charge of figuring out ways to inspire and encourage this type of programming at the con.
3. A commitment to ringleading. One of Potlatch's programming innovations was that each panel be instigated, developed, and brought to fruition by a ringleader. This system ensures that panels are well thought out beforehand. I want to

strengthen this process by identifying ringleaders early and involving them in brainstorming and program development.

4. Exploring new programming formats. Panels aren't the only way to have large group discussions!

Finally, the programming process needs your input and your energy. Our first brainstorming session for program ideas will be after WorldCon, probably in late September. In the meantime, if you have an idea, we want to hear it. If you're interested in ringleading, please let us know. (And if you've never ring-led a panel before, so much the better!)

Treasurer Change

We are sorry to be saying good-bye to our registrar/treasurer Mary Kay Kare—Seattle, be nice to Mary Kay! But we are happy to welcome her replacement, Lyn Paleo, who was registrar/treasurer for Potlatch 7. Please note that registrations should now be sent to Lyn at:

Potlatch 12
6405 Regent St
Oakland, CA 94618

If you have an old flyer, please try to remember to use this new address instead of the one printed on it. Thanks!

A Note from the Consuite

Ruth Lafler

What do fans like to do besides talk? Eat!

And where can you do both? The Potlatch consuite.

Morning, noon, or night, we'll be there. Come join us for the best in food and conversation.

Dealers' Room

Dave Clark

Potlatch 12 will have a dealers' room. If you're interested in selling at Potlatch, please contact Dave Clark at dealers@potlatch-sf.org.

Clarion West Scholarship Auction

Kate Bachus

The scholarship auction at Potlatch is Clarion West's main fundraiser, your big chance to benefit future writers while benefiting yourself as well.

If you have cool objects suitable for auction that you'd like to donate to a tax-deductible science fiction cause, please send 'em along. And if you have no objects you want to donate nor objects you'd like to buy but would still like to do something to help Clarion West, we'll cheerfully accept monetary donations, which are tax-deductible as well.

For further info, contact Kate Bachus at auction@potlatch-sf.org.

Writers Workshop

Zed Lopez

Potlatch 12 will host a Clarion-style writers workshop. In small groups led by a professional writer or editor, workshop participants will critique each other, and receive critiques of their own stories. Whether you're interested in sampling a small taste of what a Clarion workshop is like, seeking advice with a particularly troublesome story, or just want to hone your craft, this is a fantastic learning opportunity. Everyone is welcome.

Participants will submit manuscripts of their stories in advance of the con; there will be a small fee to cover postage (last year it was \$5). Each group's manuscripts will be mailed to all members of the group in time for everyone to read them and prepare their critiques before the con. The exact details will be published later.

Please be clear that the workshop is not on a drop-in basis: you will need to submit a story by early January 2003, and participating in the workshop also means taking responsibility for critiquing the other participants' stories.

If you have any questions, please e-mail workshop@potlatch-sf.org.

Hotel Information

Debbie Notkin and Guy Thomas

The Ramada Plaza Hotel, in San Francisco's Civic Center neighborhood, was the host to Potlatch 10 in 2001; most people who attended that convention are looking forward to going back in 2003. The Ramada remains probably the most elegant hotel ever to host a Potlatch: it's more beautiful than its pictures, which you can find at www.ramadaplazasf.com.

The sumptuous (and reasonably spacious) Governor's Suite will once more be home to our consuite.

The hotel entrance is about twenty steps from a BART station, in a mixed neighborhood where fast food joints and Chinese steam-table havens rub elbows with City Hall, the Opera House, and some of the city's most elegant restaurants. The San Francisco Public Library is directly across the street.

The room rate is \$99.00, a reduction from two years ago and still an astonishing bargain for San Francisco. The programming space has its own private mezzanine, which served us very well last year for tea and some programming. The dealers' room opens directly onto the mezzanine, for a free flow of traffic among convention activities.

Information about the food service and other details will be in future PRs.

Meanwhile, reserve your room now; we'd hate to fill our room block and have to send you to the unprepossessing Holiday Inn around the corner:

The Ramada Plaza Hotel
1231 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 626-8000
toll-free reservations (888) 298-2054

Be sure to mention Potlatch 12 when you register.

The Concom

Chair	Karen Schaffer	chair@potlatch-sf.org
Treasurer	Lyn Paleo	treasurer@potlatch-sf.org
Registration	Cynthia Gonsalves & Lyn Paleo	registration@potlatch-sf.org
Hotel Liaison	Guy Thomas & Debbie Notkin	hotel@potlatch-sf.org
Publications	Lisa Hirsch	pubs@potlatch-sf.org
Publicity	Linda McAllister & Lenny Bailes	publicity@potlatch-sf.org
Website	Ellen Siegel & Lenny Bailes	website@potlatch-sf.org
Consuite	Ruth Lafler	consuite@potlatch-sf.org
Programming	Janet Lafler	programming@potlatch-sf.org
Auction	Kate Bachus	auction@potlatch-sf.org
Tiptree Bake Sale & Afternoon Tea	Ruth Leibig	bakesale@potlatch-sf.org
Writers Workshop	Zed Lopez	workshop@potlatch-sf.org
Dealers' Room	Dave Clark	dealers@potlatch-sf.org
Minister Without Portfolio	Matt Austern	austern@well.com

Potlatch 12 Members

Matt Austern	Mary Kay Kare	Debbie Notkin
Freddie Baer	Jordin Kare	Lyn Paleo
Allen Baum	Kristin King	D. Potter
Jack Bell	Janet Lafler	Anita Rowland
Holly Bell	Ruth Leibig	Ruth Sachter
Alan Bostick	David Levine	Kate Schaefer
Amy Carpenter	John Lorentz	Karen Schaffer
Lise Eisenberg	Marci Malinowycz	Ellen Siegel
Doug Faunt	Stef Maruch	Kevin Standlee
Moshe Feder	Aahz Maruch	Ian Stockdale
Cynthia Gonsalves	Linda McAllister	Mike Ward
Glenn Hackney	Rich McAllister	Donya Hazard White
Ian Hagemann	Luke McGuff	Tom Whitmore
Jane Hawkins	Deidre Saoirse Moen	Art Widner
Denys Howard	Cheryl Morgan	Kate Yule

Registration Form

Please complete a separate registration form for each person who is attending Potlatch.

\$35 through Oct. 31, 2002 \$20 youths 11-17
 \$40 Nov. 1, 2002 to Feb. 8, 2003 \$10 supporting
 \$45 at the door free for children 10 and under

Please make checks payable to Clarion West/Potlatch 12.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____ (optional)

I also want to:

volunteer participate in the program participate in writers Workshop

To reduce our printing and mailing costs, we are sending progress reports (and possibly a few other Potlatch announcements) by e-mail. We will not share your e-mail address with any organizations other than Clarion West and future Potlatch concoms. If you want to receive paper copies of progress reports, check here: _____

Please send checks and registration forms to: Potlatch 12
6405 Regent St.
Oakland CA 94618

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