

Chairman's report

'Everyone's doing fine ... I don't plan to make any big changes, but I have a few small things...'

By DAVID SILVER

They taught me, one hot, muggy summer forty years ago at Ft. Benning, down in Georgia, a place where they try, without spoiling them, to turn perfectly good soldiers into "ninety-day wonders," that the first thing you tell the unfortunates you'll be ordered to lead if you ever manage to survive and receive a gold bar, is this: "I've only been around a short time, but I can see everyone's doing a fine job, and I'm honored to be assigned to lead you. I'll try to do as well as the man I am replacing. I don't plan any immediate or big changes. Just keep doing the same fine job and, from time-to-time, I'll have a few small things I might want to see done, after I talk them over with the NCOs ..."

It worked then; probably it'll work again, so here it comes:

Torcon3: An Analysis of Achievement:

I am going to refer quite a bit in this column about The Heinlein Society's achievements at this year's World SF Con, Torcon3, because they demonstrate the accomplishment of the vital goals we set for ourselves in attending SF conventions, since our efforts first began with Philadelphia in August 2001, a little more than two years ago.

The important point to remember is this: Due to dedicated efforts by many Heinlein Society members, those who attended and those who didn't, we went into Torcon3 with 192 registered members and came out with 245 — an increase in more than 25 percent. It is the largest single bump in membership we've ever had in such a short period of time!

Our goal has always been to increase membership enough to Pay the Debt we owe Forward to new generations of Robert Heinlein's readers — and to all of each of our societies. Only by recruiting new members — and with other efforts including fundraising — we can spread our influence



David Silver was elected president of The Heinlein Society after the Society's meeting held in conjunction with Torcon3 in September.

sufficiently to do the things we decided were necessary when we formed and joined this Society.

What was done for membership recruitment at Toronto, Canada, can realistically be done at any and every other convention — science fiction, fantasy or related — that our members can attend.

Torcon3 reported 3,645 members attended the five-day event. Our 53 new members is less than two percent of that. But there are eighty-one SF and related conventions named in Locus Magazine's on-line partial listing for next year. They take place all over the world. Some are smaller, some few are larger; most are probably in the 1,000-attendee range.

See, <http://www.locusmag.com/Conventions.html>

If we could recruit just one percent of the people who attend those conventions next year, our membership would increase five-fold. We should.

We could. How?

In the past two issues of this quarterly newsletter we've emphasized attendance at SF cons to increase membership, support our blood drive programs, and to form a base for future fundraising and other efforts. We've learned a few good lessons — that work for us — to increase our membership and help pay the debt forward. Every SF-related convention is different, sometimes quite different; and the major thing to remember is to maintain the flexibility necessary to achieve our goals. A lot of lead time to and patience working with volunteer convention staff also helps.

A Few New Things to Expect:

Between now and the end of this year we are finally going to put together in CD-ROM form the "membership kit" we've been promising from our website for more than a year. It'll contain what each of us need to know to organize an effective

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