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## Editorial Matters

For the second time in three months, I'm writing an editorial without quite knowing what will be in the issue. I'm off to the Frankfurt Book Fair tomorrow and it will be up to Faren, Donna, and Carolyn to put together the news portion of this issue. They even get to pick the color combinations for page 1. In a way, it's appropriate that they get more say on this issue because they no longer work directly for me.

### LOCUS UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

In late August, Locus Publications became Locus Publications, Inc., a California corporation, and I became a company president instead of sole proprietor. I had to fill out all the papers of an employee instead of an owner. I now draw a salary instead of getting what's left over at year's end. Oddly enough, unlike most small corporations, the primary object was not to save money on taxes (I save some, but not really enough for the paperwork and complications involved) but to give Locus a life of its own beyond mine. There is a board of directors which can only advise right now, but will get to pick my successor and help run the magazine in the future. Nevertheless, I seem to have saved money anyway. I rent my house to the corporation, which maintains it and requires me to live there. This month, the city discovered that the corporate sewer needed to be fixed, and an inspection showed that one of the corporate trees was being attacked by pine bore beetles and termites and had to be put to sleep. It was an expensive month for the corporation.

The monthly Locus party, which was supposed to celebrate just the incorporation, turned into a wake for the tree. In the past, it furnished shade, a haven for squirrels and bluejays, and lots of pine needles for sweeping. In the future, it will furnish warmth and light as firewood. But for this year, it lies beneath the porch. Resting.

### CLOSE CALL

We almost had an entirely different lead story this issue. Jim Benford called to tell us that his twin brother Greg was in the hospital in critical condition with massive infections following a burst appendix. The next day would determine whether or not he would

recover. I've written a lot of obituaries of friends, but they've been much older, terminally ill, or in accidents. Here was a close friend who is younger, healthy, and vital. I was in shock. Bob Silverberg came over that afternoon and we got status calls from Jim until Greg's white blood cell count stabilized and he was merely serious, not critical. That evening, Greg himself was coherent enough to call to describe the various tubes stuffed into his body and to spend a half hour on a morphine talking jag. I told him how worried I'd been, and he allowed he'd been scared too. He was gratified to know that I had planned to give him two columns on page 1, but was happy to forego the honor.

### AUSTRALIAN PUBLISHING

Prior to Aussiecon, I spent a week in Sydney talking to Australian book people. I saw Brian Wilder, head of Harper & Row Australia, Harper rep Joy van der Poorten (I stayed with her and her family and wish to thank them for hospitality -- her husband Alf, an old friend, also manned the Locus table at Aussiecon and sold subscriptions with a passion I found awesome); Sue Blackwell of the Australian Book Publishers Association; and John Crane and Karyn Lymbery of Bantam/Corgi Australia. (Actually I saw a lot more of the Bantam staff. I joined them and Lou Aronica for a beach picnic on Botany Bay.) I also saw various bookstore people at Angus & Robertson and at the Penguin bookstore, and visited Shayne McCormick at Galaxy, a specialty bookshop.

The signals I got on Australian publishing were mixed. Sue Blackwell and Brian Wilder are mostly concerned with general publishing. Last year, for the first time, the majority of the books sold in Australia were Australian editions. True, it was mostly small textbooks (large technical books are still mostly imported) and Australiana (the Australians love books about Australia as well as all things Australian), and other non-fiction with a steady sale. It helps that there is no prejudice against trade paperbacks, since imported mass market books are just as expensive. It also helps that the

(Continued on page 50)