

## Fancestral Recall: The Fan Gallery (Full transcript, unedited)

by Chaz Boston Baden & Warren Buff

*Warren Buff recently sat down with Chaz Boston Baden to discuss the history of the Fan Gallery. The Gallery currently has around 450 fan portraits in it and continues to grow. Most of the photos date from 1997 on, with a few archival photos that have made their way into the collection. The Gallery is frequently exhibited at Worldcons (when held in the United States) and NASFiC.*

**WB:** Alright, this is Warren Buff with Chaz Boston Baden, and we are going to talk about the origins of the Fan Gallery.

**CBB:** I'm Chaz Baden, I'm one of the custodians of the Fan Gallery which was originated under the care of Bruce Pelz. He turned it over to me before he passed away. And the way Bruce Pelz explained it is that for many years a bunch of fans had been talking about the Christine Velada Pro Photo Gallery which, at the time, was a bunch of black-and-white portraits of professional science fiction writers which has been exhibited at Worldcon for quite a few years. And from time to time at various bull sessions at Worldcons and SMOFcons and so forth some of the prominent fans would talk about how there really should be a Fan Gallery and people would agree, "Yeah, you know there really should be." "Yeah, I think you're right." Bruce Pelz was one of them, Geri Sullivan was another.

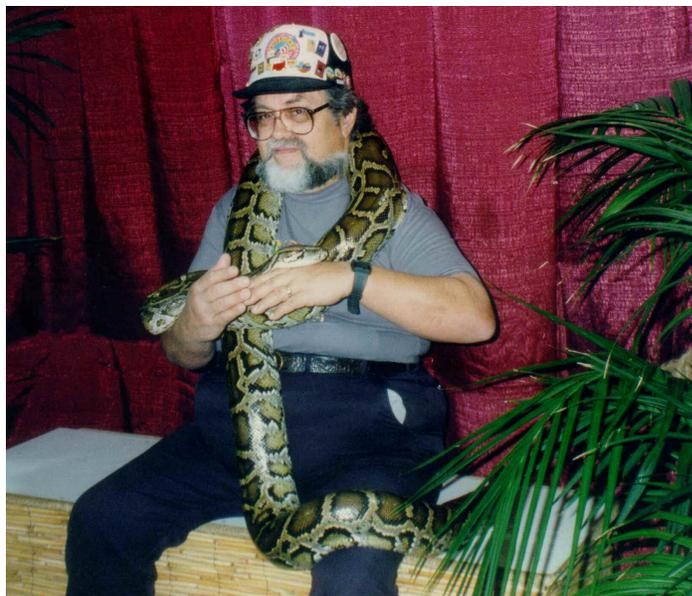
And it stayed as "this is a good idea somebody should do someday" for quite some time until Geri Sullivan was invited to be the Loscon Fan Guest of Honor and Bruce Pelz was her GoH liaison from the LA side. And Bruce Pelz asked, "What can we do to make your experience in LA the best we can?" And Geri said, and I quote, "I like surprises," which for me ranks right up there with "Here, watch this... hold my beer..." as famous last words. But that's what she said, "I like surprises."

So Bruce Pelz got ahold of Mark Olson in Boston and David Dyer-Bennet in Minneapolis and Stan Burns, the usual photographer at many LA cons to round up a bunch of pictures of big-name fans and whoever turns up at club meetings—which, there's a lot of overlap—and made sure to say, "David, make sure you get a shot of Geri Sullivan," because she was in Minneapolis at the time. So these three photogra-

phers and a couple other sources collected a bunch of photos and we presented this at Loscon when Geri was Guest of Honor and she came and there was a surprise because the Fan Gallery had become a dream given form. Since then it's settled down into a general aspirational goal of these are fans that should be known outside of their region for their contributions to fandom.

We have a couple of categories we call the "Core Collection". So we want to include the Worldcon and NASFiC chairs, the Worldcon and NASFiC Fan Guests of Honor, fanish Hugo winners, and Fan Fund winners. And related to that, we may want to look at fan nominees and other prominent things but what we're looking for is a contribution to fandom that is consistent, sustained, and long-term and preferably wide in scope and the point to the Core Collection is somebody else is already selected by giving them the Fan Fund, by giving them the chairmanship—a number of people already said, "Yes, these are some of our prominent fans."

And what remains is figuring out who else to put in so over time we want to get more of the multiple Pegasus winners for filk music, we want to get more of the Fan Hugo nominees, we want to figure out who are the people who have not just been keeping a seat warm for twenty years but have been making things happen, have been contributing to fandom, writing letters, fan artists, all of the people that help make fandom what it is in ways that you should, you probably want to hear about these people, even if you are not from around here.



*The original curator of the Fan Photo Gallery, Bruce Pelz.  
Photo courtesy of the Fan Photo Gallery.*

Now, our selection for photos is we try to make this a collection of color photos in contrast with the black and white exhibit that Christine Velada did of all the professionals. It tends towards the candid as opposed to hers are more portrait studios. But the key is that we want these to be photos you can recognize people by, so sort of a rogue's gallery. In the case of our more inactive fans, the dead ones mostly, we're looking for photos that either you would recognize them if they rose from the dead and talked to you or how we want to remember them. So what they looked like in their prime or how we last saw them, are both fair candidates for the passed-on members.

An example would be Lee Hoffman, who was a great fanzine fan and she was active right up till the end. She was participating in *Science-Fiction-Five-Yearly* for example.

**WB:** Right.

**CBB:** But for her photo we have an old black-and-white photo when she was a young woman in fandom, shaking things up and writing fanzines.

So that's basically the exhibit, there's over three hundred photos in the collection. We don't always show all of them. There's not always room, we... some of the fans that have kind of... we thought they were going places but they haven't really done anything in the last twenty years, maybe we're not going to show them as much, but people who made significant contributions... I mean Bob Shaw and Bob Tucker are going to be in this exhibit as long as we have it. Lee Hoffman, I mean she's here to stay. That's about it.

**WB:** I see you've got signs up this weekend, encouraging folks to get their picture taken to be added.

**CBB:** Well, that's Tammy's project. That's part of what NASFiC is doing. On a related note, I have my own personal website called Hazel's Picture Gallery, and you can go to shotbyabear.com and get to that, you can go to scifiinc.net to find the Fan Gallery and these are two completely different photo projects but I will sometimes draw from my personal collection, to make sure I have a shot.

What we have right here is a work-in-progress situation because a bunch of the framed photos have gone missing, so I'm slowly trying to replace them and so right now half the exhibit is printouts. They'll get replaced as I buy more frames and frame them and deal with all that work in maintaining it.

But what Tammy and Detcon1 are trying to do is to encourage people to consider themselves as part of the face of fandom and to get photos and to get snapshots. And so we've set aside ten panels, ten of these two-foot-wide grid walls for the ad hoc photos that we're hoping to collect over the weekend. But that's a separate project, from what we're doing with the permanent Fan Gallery collection. Now maybe we'll get photos and learn oh yeah, actually that person's been making things happen in Detroit or the Upper Peninsula. Maybe there's fandom in the UP, I don't know, could be, probably. Who are the people who've been quietly making things happen in Wisconsin? I don't know. I'd like to find out. I'm trying to take pictures of everybody I meet and have a conversation with because I may need that photo when I learn more about what they do; right now they're just someone I've met.

**WB:** Alright. Thank you!

*You can hear the entire interview on Fancyclopedia at <http://fancyclopedia.wdfiles.com/local-files/fan-photo-gallery/fan%20photo%20gallery.mp3>. You can also visit the Gallery's website at <http://www.scifiinc.net/scifiinc/gallery/>. *



*Lee Hoffman. Photo by George Young.  
Courtesy of the Fan Photo Gallery.*