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The Science of Santa From the Internet

It is the job of scientists to investigate myths and legends in light of scientific fact. In the process they may encounter some unpleasant truths. In that spirit, here are the results of the first scientific investigation into the Santa legend.

1) No known species of reindeer can fly. But there are 300,000 species of living organisms that have never been scrutinized by science. While most of these are weird South American insects and microscopic germs, science cannot completely rule out flying reindeer. Are they really any weirder than hummingbirds?

2) Census figures indicate approximately two billion children (defined as persons under 18) in the world. However, since Santa doesn't make deliveries to non-Christian children (except perhaps secular children in Santa-believing countries), that reduces the workload down to approximately 15% of the total, roughly 378 million. Assuming an average (census) rate of 3.5 children per household, that's 91.8 million homes.

3) If Santa is smart and travels east to west to take advantage of time zones, he has 31 hours of Christmas to deliver presents. This works out to 822.6 visits per second. So, for each house, Santa has 1/1000th of a second to park the reindeer, waddle out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, deposit presents under the tree, cram the cookies down his gullet and wash it down with milk, climb up the chimney, get back into the sleigh and move on to the next house. Assuming that each of these 91.8 million stops are evenly distributed around the earth (which, of course, we know to be false but make the math possible), we are now talking about .78 miles per household, a total trip of 75-1/2 million miles, not counting stops to do what most of us must do at least once every 31 hours, plus feeding etc.



This means that Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second, 3,000 times the speed of sound. For purposes of

comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second - a conventional reindeer can run, tops, 15 miles per hour.

4) The payload on the sleigh adds another interesting element. Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium-sized Lego set (2 pounds), the sleigh is carrying 321,300 tons, not counting Santa, who is invariably depicted as overweight. On land, conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. Even granting that "flying reindeer" could pull TEN TIMES the normal amount, Santa cannot do the job with eight, or even nine. He would need 214,200 reindeer. This increases the payload - not even counting the weight of the sleigh - to 353,430 tons. This is four times the weight of the Queen Elizabeth (the ship, not the person!)



5) 353,000 tons traveling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance - this will heat the reindeer up in the same fashion as spacecrafts re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb 14.3 QUINTILLION joules of energy. Per second. Each. In short, they will burst into flame almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them, and create deafening sonic booms in their wake.

The entire reindeer team will be vaporized within 4.26 thousandths of a second. Santa, meanwhile, will be subjected to centrifugal forces 17,500.06 times greater than gravity. A 250-pound Santa (which seems ludicrously slim) would be pinned to the back of his sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds of force.

In conclusion - If Santa ever DID deliver presents on Christmas Eve,

he's dead now. Sorry, Virginia.

Pledge Drive at WSFA

Alexis called the first Friday meeting to order and asked us to give Bob MacIntosh, as senior officer present, our attention. Bob said that the meeting was called to order at 9:15. For old business, Sam reminded the Austerity committee that it was to think up ideas to make money. Also some masochist (i.e. Sam) had volunteered to be Capclave 2003 chair. Treasury reported that a contribution from an unnamed source (not Lee this time) gave \$100 to WSFA, pushing the treasury to \$291.06.

The Committees reported. Alexis for the Entertainment Committee said he had, "Inferences from known facts. Bin Ladin had an order of battle. Three squads went off as scheduled. The fifth squad had its plane cancelled and the fourth squad was under strength. My theory is that its missing members were in the airport watching TV, decided that they hadn't signed up for this and left."

Lee Gilliland for trustees said, "As you remember, Joe wanted us to try to elect a chair two years in advance. So the trustees nominate Samuel Lubell for 2003 and yours truly for 04." Bob said that Capclave 01 is still wrapping things up. As soon as he finishes, he will turn over funds to Mike [to pay for memberships of volunteers and staff]. Anything left goes to WSFA. Mike reported that, "The first weekend in October is Albacon. So we're doing the second weekend, Columbus Day. If we can't get it, we'll try the third weekend. I gave Elspeth the names of ten hotels with 200+ rooms and enough function space. We have this year's hotel as a fall back.



Lee for the Activities Committee said, "I have a list of those who signed up for Harry Potter, sorry, it's been a long week, for Monsters Inc. this Saturday, 7-7:15 at the Skyline theater tomorrow. Anyone who wants to arrange Harry Potter can do so. Lord of the Rings is next time." Alexis said, "Harry Potter meets Lord of the Rings."

Eric, for the Austerity Committee said, "Bring money, bring food. For a \$20 pledge you get a picture of one of Erica's cats. For \$100 you get the cat itself." Someone yelled, "Does Erica know about this?" She does now!

For new business Mike said that November has five Fridays but no one volunteered to host. Announcements: Bob had to help bury a 28-year-old nephew killed in a car accident after spending ten years fighting a brain tumor. Rebecca Prather said that a Mensa gathering in Dulles is paying \$69 a night. Colleen is getting married, official date is Dec 15. The meeting unanimously adjourned 9:45.

Attendance: Sec. Samuel Lubell, Treas. Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Lee Gilliland, Trust Eric Jablow, Trust Nicki Lynch, 2002 Chair Mike Nelson, Thierry Barston, Colleen "the Librarian" Cahill, Adrienne Ertman, Skel Eton, Alexis Gilliland, Cathy Green, Sally Hand, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Jim Kling, H.P. Lovecraft, Will Ludwigsen, Keith Lynch, Richard Lynch, Walter Miles, Barry and Judy Newton, Kathi Overton, Harry Potter (by proxy only, owl notes not allowed), Rebecca Prather, Judy and Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steven Smith, Andrew Williams, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Suzanne (Cat Toy) Hediger, Victoria (witch) Smith, Art (workaholic) Coleman, and "Boots".

How to Smuggle an Under-aged WSFA into a Bar By WSFA's Monsters Inc. Viewing Party

- Step 1: Go see a children's film. The under-aged WSFA will seem older by contrast**
- Step 2: Judicious application of make-up-hey it works in Hollywood**
- Step 3: A red coat to blind the eyes so no one looks too closely**
- Step 4: A brown beret (but avoid green berets if going to a Mexican place) for the distinguished European look**



Step 5: Pick a bar and grill that lets anyone in without checking, just to stay legal about the whole thing.

**World Fantasy Convention 2003
By Michael Walsh**

The good news is that we got the convention. And the bad news is . . . well, you know the joke.

The WFC Board, meeting in Montreal, granted WSFA the right to hold the WFC. There was a condition: that the emphasis of the convention be on the "darker stuff." So I said: sure.

After the convention, there has been a "free and frank" discussion (as they would say at the State Department) regarding the qualities (or lack thereof; the word "suck" was used) of various writers.

I am pleased to announce that Brian Lumley has agreed (gleefully I should add) to be a Guest of Honor. Brian is one of the last remaining August Derleth/Arkham House authors who has never been honored. I've met him at a number of these things over the . . . decades . . . and he has been unfailingly pleasant. Before becoming a full-time writer he was with the Royal Military Police and saw service at the Berlin Wall and was Quartermaster of Edinburgh Castle.

As for other Guests, there will probably be at least one other writer as GoH. Plus a Publisher GoH and Toastmaster. The selection of Artist GoH is still being worked on, a list of possible candidates is being discussed on the Board list. We'll see.

And finally, the bid owes its success to the hotel negotiations of Elspeth (said one Board member: "Boy, you really stuck it to the hotel with *that* clause.") and to the online proposal designed by Mike "Mr. Seahunt" Nelson. A very big tip o' the hat to them.

Due to my travels, I won't be able to attend either 1st or 3rd Friday meetings. I may be at the New Year's Eve Party, if not, see you next year!



**Breast Plate
by Cecil Washington**

Two strong, white haired, human-sized elves were waiting on the edge where an ever-green forest met a horizon of grassy, rolling hills. Their steeds were fairly well armored while they wore thick animal skins as armor, cloak and clothing. The elder of the two warriors, Hakan, held a large sack in his hand that held a bulky, metal breast plate inside. The armor was rumored to be made by metal known only to the gods.

Freyvid, the younger of the two, addressed Hakan. "Why did we travel all this way in order to give a wizard some old rusted armor? If it is magical, shouldn't we keep it for our own clan?"

Hakan shook his head. "Boy, you know nothing of commerce, do you? The Moor is paying us a huge some of money for this breast plate-- all the gold we can carry, plus two horses. That is more money than either of us have ever seen fighting off barbarians and creatures in the north. We'll have

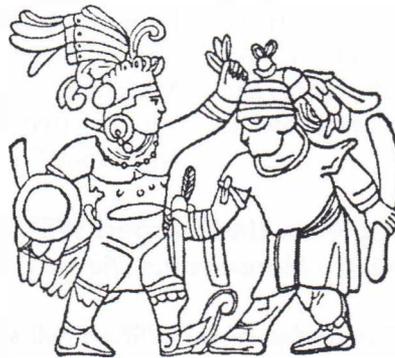
more land and more women than we will know what to do with!"

"We've been traveling for over a month to get here, and now we've been sleeping under a tree for two days. I'm starting to think that this whole thing was some sick trick!"

"You have no patience, do you?" Hakan said. "Of course not. You're still young." He reached inside the chest of his outfit and pulled out a large diamond. "You see this? See it? I keep this close to my heart so that no thief or fighter will run me through and take it."

Freyvid's eyes widened. "How? Where did you--?"

"I got this from the wizard," Hakan bragged. "He offered me a commission in his army and even said he could set me up with a wife from one of his commoners. But I was young then, just like you, and in need of too much excitement. Nowadays, I would



go back, but my heart is too elven for me to live in some soft, Moorish city as an officer."

Freyvid laughed. "I doubt that any woman could settle you down, as long as you've been a fighter."

Suddenly the elves' attention was caught by clamor of distant galloping. They turned their gaze and saw a lone hooded figure riding towards them on horseback. The rider was wearing a large, crimson cloak.

Both men noticed that the rider was of smaller stature than they. The two of them smiled evilly.

"If this idiot is merely passing through, instead of representing the Moor, we can rob him and make a few more extra coins for our trouble," laughed Freyvid.

"Or," Hakan said, "if it's a woman, we may be able to have ourselves a little fun."

The hooded one slowed the steed as they approached Freyvid and Hakan.

"Greetings, traveler," Hakan began with his right hand on his sword-hilt. "Are you merely passing through, or do you have business with us?"

The traveler appeared to take no notice of the subtle gesture. "Perhaps a bit of both," called a young female voice from beneath the hood. "Wizard Obatala has sent me with some unfortunate news."

"What?" Freyvid said. "What's going on? Where's our gold?"

"Well," the woman laughed, "that's the problem. A dragon has flown down from the mountaintops in search of food and amusement. It's been ravaging a few of the rural villages. We have a couple of towns in the province that are full of scared, homeless citizens. Obatala has used much of his available resources to fund the rebuilding of the homes and feed the displaced. Therefore, he is not able to send the full payment for the armor right now. He offers instead two sacks of gold each for you to take and leave now. Or, if you choose to accompany

me back to the village, he says he'll split half of the dragon's treasure with you as soon as it is slain."

"So when will this beast be dead?" Hakan asked.

"We expect the creature to be killed by the end of the week," the cloaked woman answered. "Sir Obi, Gob the Dwoor and the wizard are hunting down the creature now. They've already wounded it in a battle outside Mauria, our capital city. It will be a few days march with you two on foot, but I think it will be worth your patience."

Freyvid walked over to the woman and tugged on her cloak. "So, tell me, Mistress, what are you hiding under this cloak? Are you some kind of demon?"

"No," she replied. "I just don't like a lot of attention." She moved the horse away from him.

Hakan walked over to her right side. "Relax, girl, relax. We won't hurt you. Tell me, what's your

name?" He ran his hand across her leg.

The woman leaped off the horse. "My name is Tamika," she said as she removed her hood, revealing the face of a breathtaking young black woman. "Tamika Mauria, daughter of Obatala the Wizard, and his chief warlord."

Hakan laughed. "Hah! Well, your father is a fool to send such a pretty dark girl like yourself out here alone to meet a couple of wild elves. Because warrior or no warrior, I think the boy here and I can pretty much take what we want."

Tamika looked over her shoulder. "I am not alone," she smirked.

Hakan and Freyvid looked off in the distance. A large grey wolf was running towards them.

"Your dog will be of no good to you," Hakan smirked. "Freyvid and I will eat it after we're done with you."

"You're a fool to try to take the daughter of Obatala!" Tamika yelled.



Freyvid squinted his eyes at her. "His power does not extend into our land. Besides, who is to say that we're going to let you live long enough to warn him!"

The wolf was running closer to them.

Tamika yelled over her shoulder. "Stay back, Akinwolf! I don't need your help here. These two are mine."

The wolf stopped as if it understood. It sat on its hind legs and watched.

Hakan grimaced. "If you cooperate, this can go easy."

The elves went for her. Tamika threw off her cloak over Freyvid's head and drew her curved sword. She put the blade to Hakan's throat before he could unsheathe his weapon. Freyvid threw the cloak off, drew a knife and charged her. She knocked him to the ground with a well placed side kick to the stomach.

She turned her back to Freyvid and held the sword to Hakan's neck. "Still think messing with me is a good idea, elf?"

Hakan backed away. "You're a fool! You turned your back to a fallen elf!"

Tamika heard Freyvid jump up and charge her. She waited until the last moment, then moved from his line of attack. Without even looking at him, she turned to her right and decapitated him with a blind horizontal swing of her blade. She moved so fast that Freyvid's eyes were still open when his bodiless head hit the ground.

The wolf made a curious sound that Hakan could have sworn was laughter. "What are you? No woman can fight like that!"

"No woman you've known, fool!" Tamika laughed.

Hakan looked her head to toe. She was a strong looking but feminine dark brown woman who was dressed in light chainmail that still showed her physique. Although he could tell that she had some fight in her, her smaller bones and size clearly showed him that she would not be a match for his superior strength.

The wind blew Hakan's air as he talked. "I can take

you, girl. I have many years under my belt as a fighter. Your youth breeds impatience!"

Tamika stared at him. "Your experience breeds overconfidence."

She leaped at Hakan within a blink of an eye. He managed to parry many of her blows, but was not able to get a counter attack off in time. He kicked her in the stomach twice and made two unsuccessful attempts at beheading her. Tamika sliced him across his left leg and chest before performing an aerial circular kick to the side of his head. The kick slammed Hakan's head down on his left shoulder, causing him to drop his weapon and wobble in a daze. Blood oozed from his mouth. His eyes rolled up into his head. Then, Tamika decided to finish him by running the blade through his heart. The elf hit the ground with a large thud.

Akinwolf trotted over to her, looking down at the bodies of her dead opponents. It then looked up at her and gave a human-like smile. Then, it spoke. "I guess you really didn't need my help, huh Tamika?"

"What, Akin? What is it?" she answered.

"You're bleeding, woman!" Akin told her. Tamika held her hand to her neck and chuckled. "It's only a scratch on the side of my neck, dog."

Akin stepped back from her, shook its head. In two seconds, he transformed into the shape of a tall, muscular, young black man wearing a feathered head-wrap, necklace and skirt-- his human form. "I told you not to call me a dog when I'm in one of my animal forms."

Tamika walked over to him and kissed him on the lips. She laid her hands on his strong, dark shoulders. "That Great Spirit of yours certainly picked the right animals for you to change into. Wolf-- because you a dog like most men, and Hawk-- because you're flighty."

She ran her hand on the side of his face. "So what are we going to do now?"

Akin chuckled. "I guess we'd better bury these guys and tell your father that you literally had to sever

his contract with the elves."



Fanzine Reviews

By Ted White

ARGENTUS (Steven H Silver, 707 Sapling Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015-3969; e-mail to shsilver@sfsite.com; available for \$3.00 or "the usual" – letters of comment, contributions of material or fanzines sent in trade)

Steven H (no period) Silver is a young up-and-comer who has, he tells us, a three-book contract (for anthologies of authors' first stories) with DAW Books, and who has campaigned vigorously for a Fan Writer Hugo for a couple of years now. He started planning *Argentus* #1 more than a year ago, originally hoping to publish it in 2000 and then scheduling it for May, 2001. It finally appeared in late September.

"Initially, I had viewed *Argentus* as having a specific theme: 'Origins, Beginnings and Geneses,' as it was my first issue," Silver tells us in his editorial, "The Mine." "This theme quickly fell by the wayside as I decided to get articles which were interesting in and of themselves, rather than because they fit a specific theme. The only article which survives from that period is Pat Sayre McCoy's memoir of her first professional sale ["Winter Roses' Bloom"] ... The only theme remaining in this issue is the final, mock section, which is made up of several reviews of science fiction films. I commissioned film reviewers to select a science fiction novel or story which they would like to see made into a movie. They could cast and staff the film however they chose, giving it the type of budget they wanted and then write a review of the final product. None of these films has been made, nor are plans in the works to make these specific films. I hope you enjoy their efforts."



What Silver has produced for *Argentus*' maiden voyage is a rather earnest attempt at the sort of "sercon" fanzine better exemplified by *Nova Express*. The lead article is David Truesdale's "Thoughts on the State of Short Science Fiction," which turns out to be only part one of an extended series and deals, somewhat unsatisfactorily, with the present state of the surviving prozines. Pat McCoy's piece describes, a bit breathlessly, how she came up with and sold her first story. Rich Horton describes what it was like to be a contestant on *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Michael A. Andaluz's "Dumpster Diving and Conspiracy Theory" is a tease: he thinks up a scheme which strikes him as clever and tells us he intends to execute it "next week." Silver offers a last-minute page of thoughts on September 11th.

Tom Whitmore, the chair of the forthcoming Worldcon, ConJose, gives us a dense four paragraphs entitled "Do We Know the Way to ConJose?" without telling us any facts about the convention (date, location, address to join) at all. Erik V. Olson's "The Five Throated Voice of Ghu" is a heavily footnoted piece about a trip to Kennedy Space Center. Silver plugs Midwest Construction, a con-runner's con for the Wimpy Zone. Mike Resnick has produced an annotated list of "The Best African Movies" which is both more comprehensive and better thought-out than one might expect. The issue concludes with six "mock" reviews of never-made SF movies, followed by a two-page rundown of the issue's contributors. That's a lot of wordage, some of it serious in tone and some of it lighter. Not all of the pieces are successful, but none is a complete waste of space.

Physically, *Argentus*' 40 pages are photo-copied (and occasionally creased by the copier) from double-columned computer-set type. The layouts are dull and unimaginative and every page without exception has an obtrusive running head of swords and the *Argentus* logo which Silver has promised to banish from #2. In sum, like many first issues, this one has flaws of both conception and execution, but holds promise for future improvement.

The Ultimate Horror

11/16 Third Friday. The other officers came in late. Judy banged and Bob yelled, "Meeting time" quieting the WSFA hordes. "Okay," said Prez Judy, "It's 9:16." Lee added, "We're late." Sam said, "At last meeting it was determined that there were five Fridays but no one volunteered." Hearing that Scott Hofmann volunteered, for which WSFA thanks him. "Also, we have an election."

Eric said, "Trustees report that there will be an election for 2003 and 2004 Capclave chairs. Sam Lubell and Lee Gilliland respectively. People can be nominated from the floor." Bob reported a treasury of \$291.60, oh yeah! Someone said, "We're still in the triple figures." Bob replied, "Only thanks to an anonymous donor." Erica for the Austerity Committee said it has Jelly Bellies in a vending machine. Someone thought they were supposed to be Harry Potter Every Flavor beans.

Alexis reported that the Entertainment Committee went to see Harry Potter. "I hadn't read the book but the wife's read it back and forth. All the kids quieted down when the main film started." Lee, for the Activities Committee prefaced her report by saying that she had been complemented for the con suite at Capclave and wanted to thank Erica for her help. "The club say Monsters, Inc. Then we smuggled Adrienne into a bar by making her look older. For Lord of the Rings, I have three dates." Sam P asked, "What does your husband think of your three dates?" Lee continued, "He's open minded. We had complaints that the last few movie parties were in Virginia, so any suggestions for the next place, one near a metro?" Rockville was suggested but the group settled on Union Station.

Capclave Past (Bob) said, "I just have to find how much we can get back from Bucconeer for the credit cards." Sam P complained, "It sounds like the Bucconeer people are down on the job." Someone said, "I'll tell Peggy Rae you said that." But Sam P said, "She heard me, she's right over there."

Mike W said, "Over Halloween, the WFC decided to stick it to us, so we get to host WFC 2003 Halloween. Because of infighting they insist that the GoH be horror related." Horrors! yelled the club. Bob said, "The ultimate horror is the Congress of the US." Mike continued, "When two authors were named, others on the board said, 'They suck'. Early

next year we'll try to settle things." He has a print out of what happened at the last WFC. Erica described working with a person who became a horror author. Her skin chilled retroactively.

Eric for the austerity committee said that they have a fund raiser with the Jelly Bellies but no fabulous ideas for further fundraisers. I think the swimsuit issue is going on." Sam said, "I'll do it if enough people send pictures." Colleen said, "I think John Pomeranz has cornered the market on spandex." Bob said, "But it won't make money." Steve said, "I think the people pictured would buy up all the copies to get rid of them!" Mike W. said, "Hey, we'll sell out." Judy almost collapsed coughing and laughing. Someone asked, "Would any TV show show us?" Lee said, "Maybe Fast Forward."

New Business. Fifth Friday at Scott Hofmann's. New Year's is at the Pomeranzs. Erica gave us a lecture about how to recycle and told us not to disappoint Lydia, who sorts the cans, by putting garbage into recycling. Steve said that the Austerity Committee should post web cams of the meeting.

Colleen got married but had a problem since her husband didn't have his driver's license. He had his birth certificate which DMV would accept but the marriage bureau won't. You can't get married without being blessed by the DMV. Meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:53

The election was called at 9:56. Get in the room or get nominated. Sam Lubell was elected 2003 chair by acclamation as there were no other nominations. Lee Gilliland was elected 2004 chair by acclamation as there were no other nominations.

Attendance: Pres. Judy Kindell, VP Sam Pierce, Sec. Samuel Lubell, Treas Bob MacIntosh, Trust Lee Gilliland, Trust. Eric Jablow, Trust. Nicki Lynch, Bernard Bell, Sheri Bell, Thierry Barston, Colleen Cahill, Adrienne Ertman, Alexis Gilliland, Erica and Karl Ginter, Sally Hand, Scott Hofmann, Ron Kean, Liza Kessler, Will Ludwigsen, Keith Lynch, Richard Lynch, Keith Marshall, Evan Phillips, Steven Smith, Michael Taylor, Michael Walsh, Andrew Williams, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Zabeth Gallagher, Cat Meier, John Sapienza, Peggy Rae Sapienza, and Diane Swiggart.

The Friendly Skies

By Lee Strong

A business executive rushed up to the shuttle ticket counter, handbag in hand, and gushed, "I need to get to Los Angeles *right now!* Can I catch the next flight?!" He panted from the exertion, trying to catch his breath.

The shuttle sales associate smiled brightly, "Certainly, sir. You have almost twenty minutes before the shuttle leaves. May I have your identification card, please?"

The executive pawed it out of his wallet and passed it over. The associate swiped it thru her scanner and handed it back. "Not a problem, sir. You'll be boarding United flight 9119 thru gate 23." The executive breathed a sigh of relief. The associate asked, "Now, sir, do you want to fly American Plan or European Plan?"

The executive paled. After a deep breath, he squeaked, "American Plan, please."

The associate was already clicking away on her keyboard. After a few seconds, her smile faltered momentarily and her brow furrowed. "Sir, I'm very sorry, but you're not eligible to fly American Plan. You'll have to fly European Plan. That will be"

The executive blanched, "I can't afford to fly European! The whole concept of flying European versus flying American is stupid! There's never even *been* a hijacking of an aerospace shuttle. There haven't even been any hijackings of *airplanes* for *years* and *years!* Please let me fly American!" His tone was urgent, but the volume was low enough. The last thing in the world he wanted was to attract a sky marshal's attention.

The associate was firm. "I'm very sorry, sir. It's not a question of money. Your credit rating is fine. You can easily afford to fly European Plan. Here's the problem." She tapped the repeater screen facing the (potential) passenger, her fingernail drumming on an icon blinking on and off, "HGS (%): 08." She continued, "The reason why there haven't been any aerospace shuttle hijackings is because we take proper security precautions. Now, the European Plan fare"

The executive didn't hear her. He stared furiously at the blinking score but it refused to change to an acceptable "60." He turned back to the associate, speaking icily, "Young lady. It's not about money. I *personally* can't afford to fly European."

"Sir," the associate was as polite as she could be under the circumstances. "I'm very sorry, But You Are Not Eligible To Fly American Plan. You must either fly European Plan or take surface transportation. United Aerospace Lines can recommend several ocean carriers with a variety of accommodations...."

"Let me think this over," scowled the frustrated executive.

"Certainly, sir." The smiling associate turned to the last customer in line, a stereotypical Texican in full cowboy regalia. "May I help you, sir?"

"Sure can, little lady. I'd like to catch the rocketplane to Los Angeles. Next flight if possible."

"Certainly, sir. You'll be boarding United flight 9119 thru gate 23. You have almost fifteen minutes before departure. Now, sir, do you want to fly American Plan or European Plan?"

The Texican grinned. "American Plan, of course."

The associate looked at her screen, double checking the key factors out loud. "Credit rating: Yes. Handgun Score: 96 percent..?" Her voice trailed off in amazement. "You really hit the bulls eye... what, forty eight times out of fifty?"

"Sure do, little lady. What's left of it. This ain't no sissy gun." He pulled a fifty caliber Colt revolver out of his holster and offered it to her butt first.



The associate shook her head, and pulled herself together, resuming her professional smile. "Thank you, sir. United Aerospace Lines offers a discount to all passengers with Handgun Scores above ninety five percent. Would you like a free upgrade to First Class?"

"Sure would, little lady. Much obligated." He touched his hat before reholstering the gun. They exchanged telephone numbers before the Texican swaggered down the jet way to his right.

Meanwhile, the executive had been thinking things over. He could not afford not to be in Los Angeles this time tomorrow. A holophone interview just wouldn't be good enough. He stepped meekly back up to the counter.

"Young lady, I'm sorry about being rude a minute ago. I would like to fly to Los Angeles on the next shuttle... European Plan."

"Certainly, sir. You still have twelve minutes before departure. I'll go ahead and debit your credit card account. Please step to the left side of the jet way and check your bag and clothes with the steward."

Letter from Rebecca Prather

First Oct. Fri. minutes on page 2 of Nov. WSFA Journal. Strange white car is a Chrysler PT Cruiser.

The weekend Mensa Regional gathering was mentioned because they have a rate of \$69 for S/D/T/Q and no charge for function space at the Dulles Hyatt Hotel. I feel that WSFA should look into getting a comparable deal.

I'd like to encourage WSFA attendance at my occasional Mensa parties.

Coonan Speaks In Library

Kathleen Ann Goonan, author of Queen City Jazz and Crescent City Rhapsody will speak on "The Biological Century and the Future of Science Fiction" at the Library of Congress, Madison Building, LM-G45 (next to the Snack Bar), at 12:10 pm. on Thursday Dec. 13.



Report on Fifth Friday

By Keith Lynch

The November Fifth Friday party was held at Scott Hofmann's 6th floor apartment in Arlington. 16 people attended, which is a near record for a fifth Friday. Almost everyone arrived by Metro.

I arrived on foot, due to the beautiful weather for this time of year. It was in the 70s outside. It had rained earlier, so the air was very clean. While walking there, I watched the moon slowly pass in front of Saturn, a rare occultation.

Scott lives in a supposedly secure building. While trying to figure out how to get him to "buzz me in" using the console provided for that purpose, someone left the building, so I walked in while the door was open. I don't think there's much real security there. And I'm curious how anyone is

supposed to get in during a power outage. At least it should cut down some on annoying salesmen and missionaries.

He had moved in only three months earlier, and the building itself didn't seem to be much older than that. Everything was remarkably clean and pristine. There were plenty of refreshments, solid and liquid. Scott had his windows open due to the nice weather.

Sally Hand announced that she won't be moving to North Carolina any time soon after all. WSFA will have the pleasure of her company for a while longer.

Scott noticed that his TiVo was recording a TV show. He had no idea which show, and

explained that the thing gradually learns one's preferences, and records programs that it thinks its owner would be interested in seeing.

There was supposedly a cat somewhere in the small apartment, but nobody saw it. So we had to play with the cat toys by ourselves.

I announced that Michael Walsh had emailed me that Brian Lumley, a British horror and fantasy author, will be a guest of honor for the 2003 World Fantasy Convention, which WSFA is putting on. There will be additional guests of honor, to be named later. Brian Lumley's web page is <http://www.brianlumley.com/>.

Lee Gilliland told the Disclave 1997 story to new attendee Jenny Lobb. I noticed that Scott's apartment is equipped with fire sprinklers.

Lee also suggested I put an organ donation form on our web site. I agreed to do so if nobody objects.

There was discussion of George Harrison's recent death, and of what the Beatles meant to us, and of mentions of the Beatles in science fiction.

Almost everyone left at the same time, shortly after midnight, and walked together to the nearby Virginia Square Metro station.

In 2002 there will be fifth Fridays in March, May, August, and November. The August fifth Friday conflicts with the Worldcon, but the May fifth Friday does not conflict with Balticon.



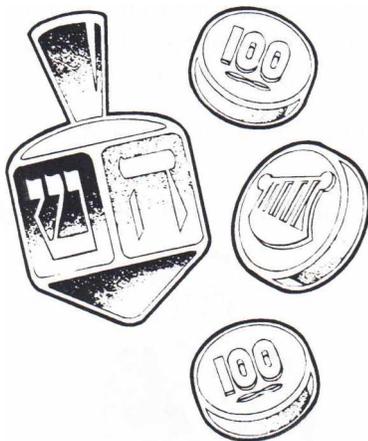
Latkes Substitute



It was Chanukah and the Jews in town feared not being able to make any latkes because they had run out of flour. So they called on Rudi, their Rabbi to help solve the problem. He said, "Don't worry. You can substitute matzo meal for the flour and the latkes will be just as delicious!"

Sheila looks to her husband and says, "Morty...you think it'll work?"

"Of course!" replied her husband. "As everybody knows...Rudolph, the Reb, knows grain, dear!"



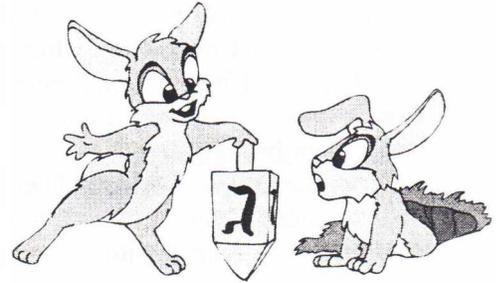
Treasurer's Report By Bob MacIntosh

September				
Expenses:	First Friday	\$25	Income:	Dues
	(Brian Lewis)	\$10.00		
	Journal	\$39.17		
Total		\$64.17		
October				
Expenses:	First Friday	\$25	Income:	Dues (Wayne & Joanna
	Dionne)	\$20.00		
	Journal	\$31.61		
Total		\$56.61		

How to Annoy Santa Claus from the Internet via Lee Gilliland

1. Instead of milk and cookies, leave him a salad, and a note explaining that you think he could stand to lose a few pounds.
2. While he's in the house, go find his sleigh and write him a speeding ticket.

3. Send a petition demanding that Santa end his exploitation of the elves and demanding that he prove that no toys left in your house were constructed using slave labor
4. Leave him a note, explaining that you've gone away for the holidays. Ask him to water your plants.
5. While he's in the house, replace all his reindeer with exact replicas. Then wait and see what happens when he tries to get them to fly.
6. Rig a motion detector alarm and aim it at the chimney (bonus: attach a tape player to play Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer.)
7. Dress up like the Easter Bunny. Wait for Santa to come and then say, "This neighborhood ain't big enough for the both of us."
8. Build an army of mean-looking snowmen on the roof, holding signs that say "We hate Christmas," and "Go away Santa."
9. Leave an official looking letter informing Mr. Claus that you've changed religions and have now served him with a restraining order forbidding him to enter your residence.
10. Leave a note by the telephone, telling Santa that Mrs. Claus called and wanted to remind him to pick up some milk and a loaf of bread on his way home.
11. While he's in the house, find the sleigh and sit in it. As soon as he comes back and sees you, tell him that he shouldn't have missed that last payment, and take off.



12. Keep a roaring fire in your chimney all night and padlock all the windows. Then dare him to get in. If he does, cover the top of the chimney with barbed wire while he's in the house.
13. Leave a plate filled with cookies and a glass of milk out, with a note that says, "For The Tooth Fairy".
14. Take everything out of your house as if was just been robbed. When Santa arrives, show up dressed like a policeman and say, "Well, well. They always return to the scene of the crime."
15. Inform Santa that Jews get presents for all eight nights of Chanukah so, to be fair, he now has to make deliveries for seven more nights.
16. Leave out a copy of your Christmas list with last-minute changes and corrections including at least one impossible to get at last minute item
17. Leave Santa a note, explaining that you've moved. Include a map with unclear and hard-to-read directions to your new house.
18. Leave out a Santa suit, with a dry-cleaning bill.
19. Paint "hoof-prints" all over your face and clothes. While he's in the house, go out on the roof. When he comes back up, act like you've been "trampled." Threaten to sue.
20. Leave lots of hunting trophies and guns out where Santa's sure to see them. Go outside, yell, "Ooh! Look! A deer! And he's got a red nose!" and fire a gun.

