

# THE WSFA JOURNAL      JULY 2004

## The Official Newsletter of the Washington Science Fiction Association -- ISSN 0894-5411

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### IMPORTANT NOTE: BOTH JULY MEETINGS WILL BE AT THE GILLILANDS'

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### Regime Change

**By Keith F. Lynch**

I am honored that WSFA has chosen me to carry on the tradition of publishing *The WSFA Journal*.

*The WSFA Journal* started 39 years ago, and has varied a lot over the years with the changes in editors. From a 159 page Don Miller issue in 1971 to a one page issue in 1988 edited by Joe Mayhew.

WSFA Journals have contained many different sorts of content. Meeting minutes, reviews of books, movies, conventions, TV shows and websites. Short fiction, cartoons, lists of members' street addresses, phone numbers, and birthdays. WSFA's constitution and bylaws, lists of all SF and fantasy books published in the past month, lists of Hugo and Nebula nominees and winners, obituaries, announcements of upcoming events, convention fliers, reprints of newspaper and magazine articles, a letter to WSFA complaining about Disclave, a letter to WSFA complaining that we printed the complaint letter about Disclave, fanfic, haiku, history, science, and even a new editor introducing himself.

I've only been going to WSFA meetings for about seven years. But if you count convention

attendance, I've been involved with WSFA for over half my life. My first convention was Disclave 1980. I've been WSFA webmaster for four years, and was trustee for the past year.

About half of you have never known *The WSFA Journal* to have any editor but Sam Lubell. He had been editor for eight years, during which he published 92 issues with a total of 1153 pages. But he's actually the 13th editor, and I'm the 14th. The previous editors, in order, were Don Miller, Somtow Sucharitkul, Joe Mayhew, Marianne Petrino-Schaad, Jane Wagner, Rosa Oliver, Beverly Brandt, Ginny McNitt, Erica Ginter, Mary Morman, Rachel Russell, and Lee Strong. (Joe Mayhew had several stints as editor, most recently between Lee Strong and Sam Lubell.) The Journal editor has not always been the club secretary. Indeed, for its first eighteen years the club had a secretary but no Journal.

We've had the Journal since 1965, except for a three year gap from 1975 until 1978 when no Journal was published. We've had a website since 1997. We've had an email chat list since 2002. I'm now in charge of all of them. But they belong to WSFA, not to me. So please tell me what you want out of each of them. And please tell me, politely, if you have a problem with any of them. Thanks.

The most important, if not always the most interesting, part of each Journal is meeting minutes. My intention is to be a little more verbose in the minutes than our previous secretary. I hope this will help make them more interesting. Please tell me if you prefer more succinct minutes, or if you find any errors, omissions, typos, etc. Thank you. I will attempt to always get the minutes onto the website within a few days of each meeting, so that people don't have to wait until the next WSFA Journal comes out to read them.

In keeping with the usual custom, I never refer to myself in the meeting minutes in the first person, but only as "Keith Lynch," "the secretary," "the webmaster," or "publications".

## First Friday Minutes

The regular First Friday WSFA meeting of June 4th, 2004 was called to order at 9:12 pm EDT in the basement of the Gillilands' house, the usual First Friday location, by President Samuel Lubell.

The president asked Secretary Keith F. Lynch if any business had been done at the previous meeting, held at the Madigans' exactly two weeks earlier. Keith responded that he was not yet secretary during that meeting, and that Sam had taken the minutes. Sam then handed Keith his handwritten minutes. After careful study of these minutes the new secretary reported that the previous meeting had been invaded by a headless chicken which ran across Sam's notepaper immediately after crossing an inkpad. Sam then reported that no business had been done.

The treasurer, Bob MacIntosh, was not present, so there was no treasurer's report.

Capclave Present (Lee Gilliland) reported that she had fired the (unnamed) dealer room person, replacing her with Michael J. Walsh. She also reported that we had sold 37 memberships at Balticon the previous weekend, increasing the total from 19 to 56. She thanked Bob for bringing a laptop to Balticon, allowing her to play games while sitting at the Capclave table at that convention.

Capclave Yet to Come (Michael J. Walsh) was not present, nor was Capclave '06 (Elsbeth Kovar).

Smofcon (Michael Nelson) reported that rates increase at the end of June, and that there was a special

discount rate for WSFA members. Lee then pointed out that there is *not* a special discount rate for Capclave for WSFA members.

#### Committees:

Entertainment (Alexis Gilliland) reported that the head of the CIA, George Tenet, had resigned "for sentimental reasons".

Activities (Lee Gilliland) read the following, then handed it to the secretary:

#### Theater Parties

Currently WSFA theater parties are a matter of consensual agreement on three points: The movie, the place, and the time.

The members of the theater party, being a part of this consensus, have the duty to (a) buy their tickets, (b) arrange their transportation, and (c) show up at the movie in a timely fashion.

The failure of a member to buy tickets in a timely manner, or to otherwise miss their rendezvous with the party is somewhat unfortunate, in that the party is diminished and the member misses out on a potentially good time, the best parties always being the ones we don't get to. However, it isn't a catastrophe, nor a disaster, and it is certainly not the fault of the organizer. Any member failing to make the rendezvous should refrain from abusing the organizer for what is their own hapless inadvertency (an expression so much more genteel than "stupid fault"). We trust that future members of WSFA theater parties will keep these points in mind.

She also mentioned that she doesn't know anything about bus schedules, and that someone had unfairly berated her for not knowing what bus to take to see Shrek 2. [The secretary recommends using the interactive Ride Guide at <http://www.wmata.com/>.]



The president told the secretary to put into the minutes that there be no more screaming at Lee. Lee pointed out that she was Capclave Chair, and hence such a rule would be unrealistic. She asked that there be no more screaming at her *about movie parties*.

Sam Lubell suggested a trip to see the new Harry Potter movie. Someone pointed out that it was already open.

Austerity (Eric Jablow) noted the absence of the treasurer, and suggested that every member donate \$100 to the club. He also suggested selling the treasurer's laptop computer. Lee said we should simply see what he has on the laptop.

Committee to Spend Lots of Money on Something Controversial and Incredibly Expensive (John Pomeranz), having been called on for the first time in six years, had nothing to report.

Publications (Keith Lynch) mentioned that half the current members never knew anyone but Sam

Lubell to have been secretary, but that Sam was actually the club's 25th secretary (as far as can be determined from our records), and Keith the 26th. He also reported that he was taking the minutes on blank paper found among WSFA's archives from the 1950s. He held up a packet of paper marked 10¢, and wondered if any investments the club makes this year will be used in another half century. John Pomeranz then criticized the office of the secretary for wasting ten cents on something that the club wouldn't use for half a century. [Had it been invested, by now it would have grown to the point where we could have bought some blank paper or something.]

Richard Lynch pointed out that our web site lists an obituary of Joe Mayhew by Keith Laumer, when it's actually an obituary of Keith Laumer by Joe Mayhew. There was much laughter. [The secretary/webmaster corrected the offending web page later the same night.] Eric pointed out that if you don't attend your friend's funeral, they won't attend yours.

Richard Lynch asked which WSFA Journal we are missing. The secretary responded "February 1989". Richard then asked how he knew that such an issue ever existed, and if it did what were the odds that it would turn up after all this time. Keith responded that missing minutes and lack of mention of its absence implied its existence, that other missing issues had turned up after similar lengths of time, and that he was no longer annoying people by asking about it at every meeting. He gave 50-50 odds of it eventually turning up. Lee asked if Keith had asked Bill Mayhew. The answer was yes, and that Bill Mayhew referred Keith to Evan Phillips, who hasn't yet gotten around to inventorying his WSFA Journals. Richard then handed Keith a copy. [With Wade Lynch's help, Keith had it online and fully indexed two days later.] Wade Lynch suggested it was the February 2005 issue that was missing. Lee Gilliland suggested having Evan bring all his boxes of WSFA Journals to a meeting so that we can go through them there. Someone asked what the most recent missing issue was. Keith said it was whatever Don Miller's last issue was, which he believes to be issue #85 from 1975, and that he wouldn't be ready to put it online for several more months. The president pointed out that Don Miller's issues were thick, and would take a long time to put online.

Judy Scheiner suggested that we have a fan table at the upcoming Worldcon, Noreascon 4. John Pomeranz proposed that we host an opening night activity at that con, perhaps a kazoo band. After some debate, a committee was formed, consisting of Sam Scheiner (who has actual experience as the director of a kazoo band), Lee Gilliland, and John Pomeranz. They agreed to meet upstairs after the regular meeting ended.

(The secretary notes that John Pomeranz is listed in Noreascon 4's Progress Report #6 as "Creative Consultant" in the First Night department, which is headed by Leslie Turek, and is part of the Events division which is headed by Marc Gordon.)

Ernest Lilley moved that this new committee be renamed the kazoo committee. John objected. The president decreed that it will be named the First Night Committee.

Lee Gilliland reported that as far as she knows, meeting locations will not be swapped this summer. The Ginters were not present to be consulted.

No other new business.

The president asked if there were any first, second, or third timers present. If there were, they didn't admit it.

The secretary made the traditional first announcement: Announcements should be in writing or emailed to the handy email address which will be printed on the front cover of the July WSFA Journal after it's too late. Eric asked if the address [secretary\(at\)wsfa.org](mailto:secretary(at)wsfa.org) was valid yet. Keith confirmed that it was, as is [editor\(at\)wsfa.org](mailto:editor(at)wsfa.org), [journal\(at\)wsfa.org](mailto:journal(at)wsfa.org), [kfl\(at\)wsfa.org](mailto:kfl(at)wsfa.org), and over a hundred other email addresses, which is part of the reason he receives so much spam.

Our hostess, Lee Gilliland, made her traditional announcement that paper towels should not be used as a substitute for toilet paper. She also announced that she has an epileptic cat, and that when the meeting is adjourned, chairs should be moved to the back of the room.

Richard Lynch announced a DVD sale at Borders Books. Mad Max and Buckaroo Banzai are \$9.99 each. Cat Meier added that you get 10% off, and an additional 10% is donated to the ALA.

Elizabeth Twitchell has a new job, at the Mortgage Bankers Association ([www.mbaa.org](http://www.mbaa.org)). She thanked us for coming to her three day party at Balticon, but said that next time she'll be hosting a party at home.

Sam Scheiner said that Kim Stanley Robinson will be speaking at the National Science Foundation at Ballston at 1 pm on Wednesday the 16th.

Adrienne Ertman turns 21 next Saturday. Someone warned her that that takes all the fun out of drinking.

Michael Nelson announced that Noreascon 4 had just mailed Progress Report #6, which contains the final Hugo and retro-Hugo ballot. The deadline for voting is July 31st. All Noreascon 4 members, supporting and attending, can vote by mail or online. If they vote online, they need to use the PIN number on their PR#6.

Cathy Green pointed out that Richard and Nicki Lynch are on the ballot for the best fanzine Hugo.

John Pomeranz announced that once again he and his wife Kathi Overton are hosting a Fourth of July party starting at noon on that day at their house in Arlington, also known as the Fabulous Bungalow. He handed out invitations which include his address. (Directions are on WSFA's website.) There will be large amounts of food and drink, water guns and liquid nitrogen ice cream. WSFA members are welcome to bring guests. He wouldn't promise that there would be no kazoos.

Rebecca Prather has Mensa newsletters to give away, and wants a ride to Noreascon.

Keith Lynch reminded everyone to sign in. (Even so, at least three people didn't.)

Cat Meier thanked everyone for attending her party at Balticon.

Sheri Bell announced that she had books for sale for \$1 each, the money to be donated to Capclave.

Kathi Overton had no DVDs of Fast Forward ([fast-forward.tv](http://fast-forward.tv)). Lee Gilliland agreed to give all such DVDs a home. John Pomeranz reminded her to tell us where the show can be seen. (It's still only on cable. It can also be watched over the Internet if you have broadband.)

George Shaner said that Kim Stanley Robinson will be at Bailey's Crossroads Borders Books on the 15th. The secretary responded that this was already on our online calendar of upcoming events (<http://www.wsfa.org/calendar.htm>).

Keith Lynch announced that he had a book from 1902 which lists the June 8, 2004 transit of Venus, and that he'd show it to people after the meeting.

Ernest Lilley asked if the private spaceship launch on June 21st was on our online calendar. The secretary/webmaster responded that it was not in our area. Someone objected that neither was the transit of Venus, and that is listed. Eric Jablow responded that the transit of Venus *is* in our area.

Lee Gilliland said that Ballard and others will be going on a National Geographic expedition to the Titanic.

The meeting was unanimously and noisily adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Attendance: President Samuel Lubell, Vice President Cathy Green, Secretary Keith Lynch, Trustees Adrienne Ertman and Steven Smith, Capclave 2004 Chairfan Lee Gilliland, Sheri Bell, Charles Gilliland, Eric Jablow, Bill Lawhorn, Ernest Lilley, Nicki Lynch, Richard Lynch, Wade Lynch, Keith Marshall (all Keiths and all Lynchs present!), Tom "Darth Vader" McCabe, Cat Meier, Walter Miles, Michael Nelson, Kathi Overton, Larry Pfeffer, John Pomeranz, Rebecca Prather, Judy Scheiner, Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Diana Swiger, Elizabeth Twitchell, and Madeleine Yeh. Someone marked Ivy Yap present, but she was not seen by the secretary, so she is officially deemed to have been Not Present. Ted White arrived after the meeting ended.

The weather was drizzly all evening and all night. The last people left shortly after midnight.

## President's Prattles: Ignorance of Science and Implications for Science Fiction

By Samuel Lubell

Most people know very little about science. In their minds, the line between science and fantasy is very slim. For instance, take astrology. Two-fifths of Americans think it is at least "sort of scientific". Only a slim majority (56 percent) said it was not at all scientific. Despite that poor showing, we did better than the Europeans, only 39% of whom said astrology was not at all scientific. According to Gallup polls, half of Americans believe ESP is real, 42 percent believe in haunted houses (although just 38 percent believe in ghosts, I have no idea what the other four percent think is doing the haunting), 41 percent believe in a devil who sometimes possesses people, 36% believe in telepathy, 33% believe aliens have visited the earth, and 26% believe in witches. Moreover, belief in most of these (except possession by the devil) has increased over the last decade; belief in witches nearly doubled and communication with the dead increased by over 50 percent.

IN SPACE YOUR CELL  
PHONE DOESN'T WORK!

HOUSTON, CAN YOU HEAR  
ME NOW?



(<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/seind04/c7/fig07-09.xls>).

It wouldn't surprise me if much of this population thinks the X-Files are a documentary.

So, while believing in superstition, many people simultaneously know little about science. A majority of Americans (52 percent) but just 41 percent of Europeans think that humans and dinosaurs lived at the same time. Three-fourths of Americans but only two-thirds of Europeans understand that the Earth goes around the sun, although just 54 percent of Americans and 58 percent of Europeans understand that it takes the Earth a year to do so. And only 45 percent of Americans and a third of Europeans understand that lasers do not focus sound waves. Of the 13 questions about science in the study, Americans averaged 8.2 percent correct while Europeans averaged 7.8 percent.

(<http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/srs/seind04/c7/fig07-06.xls>).

This actually explains a lot about science fiction and fantasy. Too many Americans cannot tell the difference. Star Trek can get away with its technobabble because, for many of its viewers, the science is essentially an incantation that doesn't have to make sense. Naturally, if one doesn't understand the science, one won't understand most real science fiction. The quarter of Americans (and third of Europeans) who are still living in the pre-Copernicus age won't really understand a book about traveling to another planet and will have little interest in reading such.

Science fiction (and to a lesser degree fantasy) requires a bit more work of the reader than an adventure story set in the present day. Most science fiction books are a puzzle (which accounts for the overlap with mysteries among readers and writers) in which the reader tries to figure out the rules for the scientific gimmick, magic, or alien culture featured in the book. Those who don't like puzzles, who want everything straightforward, and don't want to work to understand what is going on, will have trouble with much science fiction. (Of course, I mean by this science fiction and fantasy that plays by the rules of science (or a consistent magic system), not an adventure story with just some of the trappings of science fiction.) Unfortunately, that naturally limits the audience and means that science fiction will always stay a small genre compared to more accessible narratives that allow the readers to turn off their brains.

## Upcoming Events

This is excerpted from our online calendar of upcoming events, at <http://www.wsfa.org/calendar.htm>. I recommend you check it frequently, in case of last minute additions or corrections. This will be a regular feature of *The WSFA Journal*.

### Friday, July 2nd: **WSFA First Friday Meeting**

Regular WSFA meeting (at the Gillilands' as usual). Newcomers welcome.

### Sunday, July 4th: **Picnic**

Another traditional Fourth of July picnic at The Fabulous Bungalow in Arlington, starting at noon, to celebrate America's birthday.

### July 9 - 11: **Shore Leave 26**

Annual, fan-run, Star-Trek-focused convention in Hunt Valley, Maryland (outside of Baltimore).

### Monday, July 12th: **Dr. Who viewing**

<http://www.wsfa.org/journal/j04/7/index.htm>

6/27/04

The Northern Virginia Doctor Who Viewing Society will be meeting at the Fairfax Government Center starting at 7 pm.

Friday, July 16th: **WSFA Third Friday Meeting**

Regular WSFA meeting (at the **Gillilands'**, not the **Ginters**). Newcomers welcome.

Friday, July 30th: **Fifth Friday**

WSFA often has a party on months with a fifth Friday. Stay tuned for details.

July 30 - August 1: **Otakon**

A very large anime convention in Baltimore.

Saturday, July 31st: **Hugo award voting deadline**

Hugo and Retro-Hugo award voting deadline. All members of Noreascon 4 are eligible to vote.

Wednesday, August 4th: **China Miéville at Politics & Prose**

China Miéville signs his new book *The Iron Council* at the Politics & Prose Bookstore, 5015 Connecticut Avenue NW, one mile north of the Van Ness Metro station, at 7:00 pm.

September 2 - 6: **62nd World SF Convention: Noreascon 4**

Back to Boston.

October 15 - 17: **Capclave 2004**

WSFA is putting on a convention! At Tysons Corner, VA.

December 3 - 5: **SMOFcon**

WSFA is hosting 2004's SMOFcon, in Washington DC.

December 10 - 12: **Philcon 2004**

The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society (PSFS) brings you another Philcon. In Philadelphia.

## ***The Doomsday Brunette* by John Zakour and Lawrence Ganem**

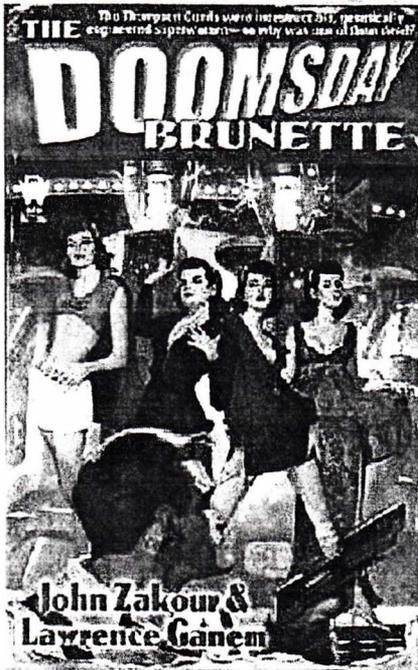
### **A book review by Judy Newton**

Q: What do you get when two cartoonists write a novel? A: a graphic novel without the graphics. Which is to say a book in which the plot and characters are as flat as the paper they're printed on.

Zakour and Ganem have written a hard-boiled detective parody set in the future, allowing them to let their imaginations run wild with techno-gadgets and social trends. They haven't bothered to invent anything new in terms of deviating from the most hackneyed chestnuts of the gumshoe genre (not excepting "the butler did it"); the plot varies not at all from the simplest and most obvious clichés. The two sources of amusement left are the humor, which seldom rises above the sophomoric level, but fitfully induces a snigger or two, and the high-tech whiz-bang.

The plot revolves around four nearly identical bio-engineered sisters, one of whom is the murder victim. The primary suspects are, naturally, her three sisters plus the other members of the household present at the time of a deadly dinner party. These include a set of twin brothers (Sturm und Drang),

in charge of security, a pet gorilla genetically enhanced with speech and a minimal human intelligence level, and an aged butler. All of them turn out to have sufficient motive to want to "off" Foraa. Yes, folks, the sisters are named Ona, Twoa, Threaa and Foraa. Lawrence Welk, phone home.



Since Foraa has been bio-engineered to be "nigh-invulnerable," she survives multiple simultaneous murder attempts. This plot point comes straight out of Christie's *Ten Little Indians*. Of course, if she's so hard to dispatch, the question becomes: how was she killed? The answer is so predictable that I guessed it almost immediately.

But the point of a book like this is not to engage one's intelligence, but to spend a few hours imbibing mind candy. The most engaging character was the holographic projection of a computer persona, which tells you a lot about how believable the other characters are. Almost too late, the book grabs the reader with the climax, involving a wild scene complete with aliens, psionic powers, fantasy creatures, and the near-destruction of the world by a doomsday device.

What this book really needs is pictures. Translated to a visual medium, say a movie or graphic novel, it could be a winner. But for now, two cartoonists shouldn't quit their day jobs.

## Third Friday Minutes

The June 18th 2004 Third Friday regular meeting of the Washington Science Fiction Association was held on the ground floor of the home of the Ginters in Beltsville, Maryland, the usual Third Friday location. The meeting was called to order at 9:20 by president Samuel Lubell.

A number of people arrived part way through the meeting, or after it, due to severe thunderstorms shortly before the meeting, and terrible traffic conditions on the Beltway and I-270.

There was no treasurer's report, as Treasurer Bob MacIntosh was absent all evening.

The president asked Secretary Keith F. Lynch if any business had been done at the previous meeting. Keith replied that a Noreascon 4 first night committee had been formed, consisting of Lee Gilliland, John Pomeranz, and Sam Scheiner.

Capclave '04, Lee Gilliland, reported that the Capclave concomm would hold a meeting immediately after the WSFA meeting was over. She repeated her announcement of the last meeting that the unnamed previous dealer room person had been replaced by Michael J. Walsh. She also reported that she had broken both feet at a recent Titanic auction by falling off her shoes.

Capclave '05, Michael J. Walsh, had had a meeting with the '04 hotel, the Tysons Marriott. He reported that he was looking at other hotels. And that Walter Miles is in charge of programming in '05. Judy Scheiner is helping with the dealer's room this year, and may be in charge of it in '05.

Capclave '06, Elspeth Kovar, asked that people volunteer for different jobs each year. She's also helping '05 find a hotel.

Smofcon: Nobody present had anything to report.

The Entertainment committee, Alexis Gilliland, reported on a very stupid criminal. He tried to shoot his gun into the ceiling of a convenience store to emphasize that he was doing a stickup, but it didn't go off. So he looked into the gun and pulled the trigger a second time. He's up for the Darwin Award.

Publication committee: Samuel Lubell reported that the June WSFA Journal, an extra-long issue, was available, and that this was his last of 92 issues. Someone asked if he's willing to autograph it. He is. Keith Lynch put out an RFP -- a Request For Printer. If anyone has a good quality laser or inkjet printer with a serial or parallel interface (not just USB) that they could loan to WSFA, that would make it easier to produce the Journal. Alexis offered a dot matrix printer. Keith declined. Cathy said she had an Apple StyleWriter 1500, but thought it's probably not compatible. Keith also announced that we now have 23 years of WSFA Journals online, that he's in need of articles, cartoons, etc., for the WSFA Journal, and that there's an attendance sheet for people to sign in on. If you want to see lots of text written by Keith and nobody else, be sure not to submit anything.

Eric Jablow, for the Austerity Committee, suggested that we meet somewhere that's more transit accessible. Erica and Lee both said they weren't moving. (The secretary later emailed transit directions to both regular meeting places to Eric. Both are about a 40 minute walk from Metrorail, and a much shorter walk from Metrobus.)

Erica announced that both July meetings will be at the Gillilands' house. The location of July's Fifth Friday, and of both of August's meetings, is still undecided. (The webmaster had the WSFA website updated with this information before sunrise.) July's Third Friday meeting will feature Alexis only, as Lee will be in Ireland, meeting Alexis's distant relatives, whom neither of them had ever met before. Sam pointed out that Fifth Fridays tend to be smaller, so almost anyone can host one.

Tom Haughey volunteered to host Fifth Friday at his house, but the club turned him down on hearing that he lives in Texas.

Erica noticed that her cat Spike was limping.

New Business:

Sam suggested that information on WSFA should have been available at Balticon. Sam asked about the flier Emily Richter was supposed to be putting together with Alexis's help. (At this time, Emily had not yet arrived at the meeting.)

Lee Gilliland pointed out that there are WSFA business cards available to be given away, located at her house. Erica has them at her house too, and will put them on the table after the meeting.

Tom Haughey said he'd just been to Slanted Fedora, a nearby one-day Star Trek convention, and that there had been no WSFA material there. He suggested we get some to Shore Leave, an annual Star Trek con near Baltimore in July. Lee Gilliland said she'd get fliers to Shore Leave. (It wasn't clear whether she meant WSFA fliers or Capclave fliers.)

Elsbeth said there are two bookstores in Laurel, and one in Wheaton, all of which had Balticon fliers but no WSFA or Capclave fliers. Elsbeth suggested making bookmarks, but not until we have a

Capclave hotel for next year.

Keith Lynch pointed out that there's a Borders Books across the street from this year's Capclave hotel, and suggested that someone approach them about placing Capclave fliers in their store.

Todd Nadenichek said he worked for Borders Books (in Sterling) and had some suggestions. We should talk to the area marketing manager or corporate sales. Lee said he should talk to her after the meeting.

There was lengthy discussion about the Noreascon first night (Thursday, September 2, 2004) activities. Various clubs will provide parades, musicians, and floats. There had been a first night committee meeting immediately after the regular June 4th meeting, and Sam had taken notes. A kazoo band was suggested, perhaps followed by WSFA-labeled kazoos being given away. Madeleine asked how long it takes to learn how to play. Someone answered about five seconds. Erica said she had been a member of a kazoo band in a fireman's parade, and said a drum major was needed, preferably with a plunger to act as a baton. Lee asked if Erica wanted to volunteer. Erica said no.

Sam said that John had suggested a giant cat's cradle, that someone had suggested a human chess game, and that another option, one which fits that Washington theme, was staging debates in which the debaters would pick a science fiction character's name from a hat, and would have to debate as that character would, and other people would try to guess who the character was. Elspeth pointed out it might be too noisy for debates. Someone suggested placing Lee Gilliland in a dunking booth. Elspeth said no, it should be SF pros and past Worldcon chairs. Erica suggested a ring toss game using a model of the Washington Monument. Someone suggested using Hugos instead, and pointed out that Alexis had a bunch. Someone else suggested Hugo bowling. Alexis objected to the use of his Hugos. Someone volunteered everyone who was in the kitchen. Someone then told the people in the kitchen that they had been volunteered, at which point the people in the kitchen immediately came out and joined the meeting.

Cathy Green said we might not have room for a dunking booth, and suggested picking people up by their ankles and dunking their heads into buckets. Lee then volunteered Cathy for this "honor" since Cathy's small. Richard Lynch asked why we wanted to do something related to water, after what happened to us. Eric replied that it was what we're best known for. Tom Haughey suggested suspending water balloons over people, and bursting them randomly, one at a time. Alexis suggested we have John Pomeranz make liquid nitrogen ice cream, with WSFA buying a couple gallons of liquid nitrogen. (John was not present.) Sam confirmed that John will be at Noreascon. Lee suggested John make whiskey ice cream. Alexis said it tastes terrible. Lee said people will try it anyway. Alexis responded that they're fools.

(The secretary notes that John Pomeranz is listed in Noreascon 4's Progress Report #6 as "Creative Consultant" in the First Night department, which is headed by Leslie Turek, and is part of the Events division which is headed by Marc Gordon.)

Sam Lubell said we have to focus. Alexis suggested tabling the discussion. Elspeth suggested having a meeting on the topic after the WSFA meeting. Lee objected that she'll be holding her Capclave meeting then. Sam said we tried holding a post-meeting meeting about the first night activities last time, and it didn't work. He made a motion that "WSFA participate in the first night at Worldcon activities". Elspeth amended the motion that anyone who votes in favor of the motion has to seriously consider helping. Cathy said they should be people planning on attending. Elspeth said not

necessarily, as they could do work beforehand. Richard pointed out that we've had a hard time even manning a table at recent Worldcons. Cathy said novelty value, plus the fact that it's only for one night. Elspeth asked if the first night was Thursday or Friday. Sam answered he was pretty sure it was Thursday. Elspeth asked people to raise their hands if they would be at Noreascon on Thursday, and were "willing and able to do this sort of thing". Keith Lynch objected that whether they're willing and able to help depends on what we end up doing. The motion, that "WSFA participate in the first night activities, with a booth or game or something to be decided after", with Elspeth's amendment, that people voting in favor have to "seriously consider working", was voted. Six in favor, six against. The president ruled the motion doesn't carry, but could be brought up again at a future meeting. (There are four more WSFA meetings before Noreascon.) Elspeth tried to suggest that we finance John's production of liquid nitrogen ice cream, but inadvertently said "nitroglycerin ice cream" instead, and was drowned out by laughter. After Lee rephrased it, Elspeth agreed that that was what she meant to say. Sam said he would propose this to John.

Barry Newton moved that the club spend up to \$250 on a printer and supplies for producing the WSFA Journal. The motion was argued down, since unused printers owned by members are likely to turn up.

Sam asked if this was anyone's first meeting. Todd Nadenichek said it was. He met WSFA members at the Kim Stanley Robinson reading at Bailey's Crossroads Borders Books last Tuesday, June 15th, and was talked into coming. He will be moving to Ohio in three weeks. Nobody admitted to it being their second or third meeting.

Alexis said he thought Tom Haughey was new. Tom said he had been a member in the 1960s, and had attended a meeting last year, but can't drop in very often since he lives in Texas.

#### Announcements:

The secretary made the traditional first announcement: Announcements should ideally be given in writing or via email, since even though the secretary writes everything down, and is using a tape recorder, and has an excellent memory, mistakes can happen. Especially when several people are talking at once, hint hint. He also announced that he had an announcement to pass on from a Foreign Agent: Peggy Rae Sapienza is representing the Japan in '07 Worldcon bid, and is hosting a reception for four Japanese fans who are visiting the US. It will be in her home in Silver Spring from 5 to 9 pm on Tuesday June 29th. This event will double as a housewarming party, even though she's lived there for a while, and as her 60th birthday party. No presents please. Keith has been encouraging her to post her announcement on the email list. If she does not, he will.

Sam added that there's also a student contest meeting and mailing at Peggy Rae's house tomorrow at 2 pm.

Our hostess, Erica Ginter, asked that new people read the house rules, all but one of which she said were based on actual events.

Madeleine Yeh is selling books from a box in the living room, proceeds to benefit WSFA's austerity fund. \$1 for a hardback, 25¢ for a paperback.

Lee Gilliland repeated her earlier announcements, since more people had arrived, and also said she got seven or eight things at the Titanic auction, including the bars off the Bounty. When she

mentioned breaking her feet, Sam asked if that made her the last person to be injured by the Titanic. She said no, since there will be later Titanic auctions.

Tom Haughey complained that it was not one mile from the King Street Metro station to Olsson's books in Old Town Alexandria, but more like two miles, despite what it says on our online calendar of upcoming events. Elizabeth pointed out that there's a DASH shuttle bus he can take. Our webmaster will correct this the next time he lists an event that's at that store.

Michael J. Walsh announced that he had no books. He did have some "virtual books": images of covers of upcoming books. For Noreascon 4 he will have *Waystation* and *City* by Clifford Simak, *Davy* and *A Mirror for Observers* by Edgar Pangborn, and *Terry Pratchett: Guilty of Literature*. A bookstore without *Waystation* is a sad bookstore. He had a first draft of some cover art, which he found at Boskone, which he said is good even though the artist didn't read the book.

Someone added that a library without *Waystation* is a sad library.

The secretary reiterated that there's a sign-in sheet, and everyone who hasn't already signed in should sign in. (He later noticed that Barry Newton signed in twice.)

Barry announced that Fahrenheit 9/11 will be showing starting on June 25th, and that we should see it. Elizabeth added that her brother is in it.

Elspeth said she had bursitis in her hip, and that's why she's using a cane. She then quickly pointed out to the secretary that that didn't need to be written down. "Too late" Keith said. Someone pointed out that a cane can also be used as a club.

The meeting was noisily adjourned at 10:07 pm.

There were still a few people present when the secretary left 1:40 am, after a Capclave Future meeting consisting of Mike Walsh, Elspeth, Walter Miles, and others, which ran from 12:30 to 1:30.

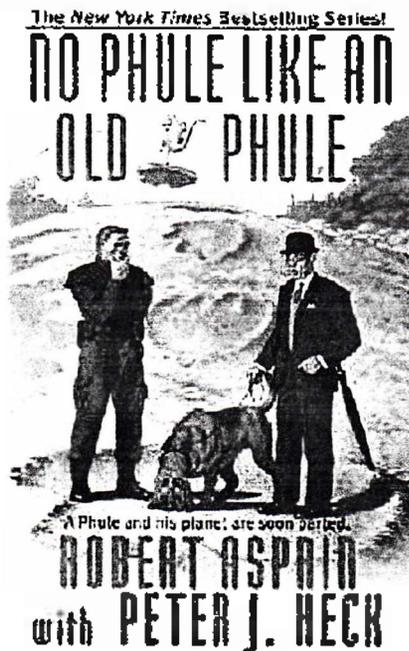
Attending (or arriving after the meeting) were President Samuel Lubell, Vice President Cathy Green, Secretary Keith Lynch, Trustees Adrienne Ertman, Barry Newton, and Steven Smith, 2004 Chair Lee Gilliland, 2005 Chair Michael Walsh, 2006 Chair Elspeth Kovar, and Chuck Divine, Carolyn Frank, Alexis Gilliland, Erica Ginter, Karl Ginter, Lydia Ginter, Tom Haughey, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Jim Kling, Bill Lawhorn, Nicki Lynch, Richard Lynch, Wade Lynch, Keith Marshall, Kit Mason, Cat Meier, Walter Miles, Todd Nadenichek, Judy Newton, Larry Pfeffer, Evan Phillips, Emily Richter, George Shaner, William Squire, Diana Swiger, Elizabeth Twitchell, and Madeleine Yeh. Someone checked off Ivy Yap and wrote in Hunter S. Thompson, but as neither were seen by the secretary, they are deemed to have been officially Not There.

## ***No Phule Like an Old Phule* by Robert Asprin and Peter J. Heck**

**Review by Cathy Green**

Willard Phule a/k/a Captain Jester and the men and women of Omega Company are back for another misadventure. I feel I need to disclose up front that I have not read any of the other books in the Phule

series (the DC Public Library didn't have them and I was too cheap to buy them solely for the purpose of writing this review). Therefore, I am not able to say whether this book is better or worse than the others in the series.



A lack of familiarity with the series should not impede anyone's ability to enjoy this book, which works fine as a stand-alone novel. The tone of the book can best be described as a combination of F Troop and Sgt. Bilko in space. There's even a bit of Jeeves and Wooster thrown into the mix in the relationship between Willard Phule and his butler.

The book opens with the chaplain asking two of the men in Omega Company to spy on the Zenobian locals to determine just how the local legend of L'Vizz relates to the doctrine of the Church of the King. Meanwhile, Captain Phule is asked to host a group of big game hunters and must also cope with the arrival of the militant environmental agency, the Alliance Ecological Interplanetary Observation Union (the AEIOU) and Barky the Environmental Wonder Dog, who takes an instant dislike to just about everyone in Omega Company. While Capt. Phule has his hands full attempting to make both the hunters and the AEIOU happy while making sure the two groups never run into each other, the book also follows Omega Company's newest recruit through his misadventures in boot

camp. Meanwhile, back on Lorelei, Phule's father is making life difficult for the management of the Fat Chance Casino (owned by Omega Company, of course). Phule's father is determined to prove that his son is a bad businessman who does not know how to run a casino. Phule and his casino managers set up a scheme to prove otherwise. Naturally, things do not go as planned. However, at the end of the day despite the various mishaps, pretty much everyone lives happily ever after, except the bad guys. And Elvis makes an appearance.

Many of the characters' names are bad puns, such as Euston O'Better, and anyone even remotely familiar with the standard tropes of military life from movies and television will easily recognize the various characters and their place in the story. This is the book equivalent of a popcorn movie. *No Phule Like an Old Phule* is a fun breezy read and should be a pleasant way to kill a couple of hours this summer while at the beach or by the pool.

## *Julia and the Dream Maker*

by P. J. Fischer

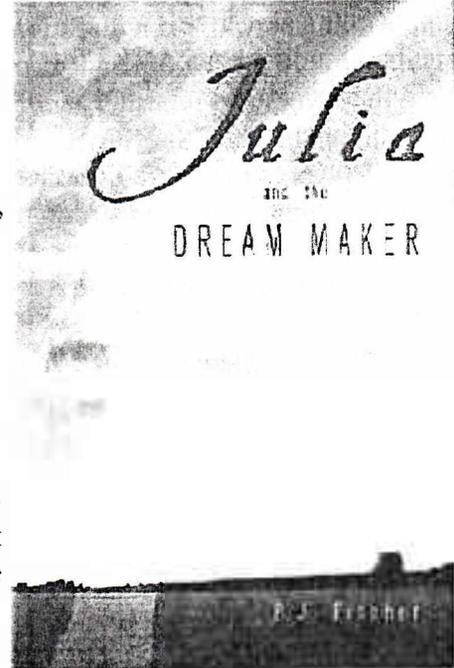
New York: Traitor Dachshund Books, 2003

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

We are told, never judge a book by its cover: that should also go for its title. When I heard of *Julia and the Dream Maker*, my first thought was the book was a young adult novel, on the level with the Harry Potter books. My second thought was it was a romance fantasy: wrong again. It is science fiction, for how else can you describe a book that starts with trial overseen by a holographic judge,

with an AI defense lawyer and a case determining if a new species has been created?

Steven is a Ph.D. student in biology getting ready to defend his dissertation. Graduate students are often short of cash, as is Steven, who is living with Eli, his girlfriend, and Bennie, another graduate student. Even though they pooled their resources, research is costly and soon they need money to finish the school year. Using Bennie's previous success with a virtual computer toy, the trio decides to create a virtual rabbit, but this time uses holographic technology and also makes the toy touchable. And as all seeds do, this idea grew and grew ... and grew, until it was no longer a toy, but something both wonderful and frightening.



This plot is no more straightforward than the title. Steven is more than your average graduate student. He is recognized by his peers as a genius, but one who is erratic and noted for his willingness to argue and break the rules. This reputation, combined with the vast computer resources he is using to create the virtual toy attracts the attention of various people, from fellow students to others who fear this new technology. Eli already has her Ph.D. in biology and while she trusts Steven and Bennie, she is not sure what is happening with the experiments, which seem to be gaining independence from their makers.

Earlier I called this a science fiction work and it does have many of the hallmarks of that genre. Fischer uses science set in the near future, but there are also elements of something more, although how they fit in is not always perfectly clear. This adds mystery to the story and an aura of the supernatural. The story is authentic in its academic setting, with all the bickering and jealousy you would expect. Emotions are key, making this not just a story of science, but of relationships, those between father and son, between friends and between lovers. This makes the characters not only believable, but well rounded. While it is easy to see Steven, Eli or Bennie in a sympathetic light, their flaws show through and none, not even the genius Steven, are without their doubts or foibles.

This is the first book in a series, with the second title due out later in 2004. Currently you will have to search a bit for the title, but in September, it will be available in bookstores. No matter how you get it, give this new writer a try; you will find *Julia and the Dream Maker* more than the title implies.

## Three Lectures and a Transit

Attended and reported by Keith Lynch

There was a recent set of four related free lectures at the Air & Space Museum, sponsored by Ball Aerospace and Technologies Corp. All were on the theme of discovering earth-like planets around other stars. I went to the last three.

Over the past few years, numerous planets have been discovered around other stars. All of them are very massive and in very close orbits, making them completely unsuitable for life as we know it. That is because with current techniques, those are the only kinds of planets that *can* be detected.

On April 14th, Dr. William C. Danchi spoke on using space-based infrared interferometry to detect  
<http://www.wsfa.org/journal/j04/7/index.htm>

6/27/04

earthlike planets around other stars. The idea is to use two parallel telescopes such that the light from the star they're looking at is 180° out of phase, and all cancels out. Light from planets near the star, being in a slightly different direction from the telescopes, would not quite all cancel out. Infrared is used rather than visible light for two reasons. Reason one is that it's not quite possible to cancel out *all* the light from the central star, since it's a disk rather than a point, and the central star is only a few million times brighter than any nearby earthlike planets in infrared. It's a few *billion* times brighter than such planets in visible light. Reason two is that planetary atmospheres have absorption lines in the infrared which can tell astronomers what the atmosphere is made of. If a planet with an oxygen atmosphere is found, that's strong evidence of life. Or at least that people could live there, if they can find some way to get there.

There's a good chance that such an interferometer will be launched within a few years.

This lecture was also attended by WSFA's Ernest Lilley, who insisted on photographing me talking with the speaker.

Prior to the lecture there was a free showing of *Space Station 3D*, a 3D Imax film, shot at the International Space Station by the astronauts.

The second lecture I attended, on May 12th, was *Astrobiology of the Early Earth and its Life*, by Dr. Bruce Runnegar. This wasn't the first time I had seen a chart of earth's past, of course. And I'm accustomed to seeing the entire Age of Man squished into the rightmost fraction of an inch. But this was perhaps the first time I've seen the entire Age of Multicellular Life (Phanerozoic Eon) squished into the rightmost margin. The four eons are the Hadean, in which the earth was characterized by constant bombardment by space rocks, with no stable atmosphere or oceans, and with no life, the Archæan, characterized by an oxygen-free atmosphere, no ozone layer, oceans rich in iron, and primitive single-celled life, the Proterozoic, characterized by an oxygen atmosphere, an ozone layer, oceans rich in sulfur but still mostly oxygen-free like a eutrophic swamp, advanced single-celled life, and a series of extreme ice ages in which earth froze right down to the equator alternating with hot ages in which temperatures even at the poles were comparable to the hottest it ever gets anywhere today, and finally the Phanerozoic, characterized by oxygen-rich oceans, a relatively stable climate where the temperature seldom drops below -50 C or rises above +50 C, and of course modern multicellular life such as trilobites, oak trees, dinosaurs, cicadas, fish, cats, potatoes, and WSFA members. No, he didn't say what comes next.

(The Hadean, Archæan, and Proterozoic are sometimes lumped together as the Precambrian or Cryptozoic.)

He also showed a chart depicting the evolutionary tree of life. It looked quite unfamiliar to me, as I couldn't find any plants or animals on it, just various kinds of bacteria and other single-celled forms. No doubt plants, animals, and fungi are one of the special cases for one particular type of protozoan, but I don't know which one offhand.

He also spoke on how all this applies to life elsewhere in the universe, and to the atmospheres of extrasolar planets. But he has far more information on life on earth than on life elsewhere, so he spoke more on it.

Prior to the lecture there was a free showing of *Infinity Express*, a planetarium show. This lecture, unlike the others, was shown in the museum's planetarium rather than in its Imax theater.

The lecture was also attended by WSFAns Barry and Judy Newton.

The final lecture, on the evening of June 7th, was on the Kepler mission, by Dr. William Borucki. The Kepler mission is a planned earth satellite which will repeatedly very precisely measure the brightness of a vast number of sunlike stars. When a planet passes in front of one of these stars, it will get very slightly dimmer for the several hours the transit takes, and will then return to its normal brightness. This should give a different brightness curve than brightness variations due to sunspots or flares.

If we happen to be in the ecliptic plane of such a planet, we will see a transit once every time that planet goes around its sun. Unfortunately, in the vast majority of cases we will not be in the planet's ecliptic plane, and will never see a transit. So this technique can only be expected to find any planets when applied to a vast number of stars.

The speaker confirmed that it is not a coincidence that this transit-related lecture was scheduled for the night before the first transit of Venus in 122 years.

WSFAn Rebecca Prather also attended the lecture.

Prior to the lecture there was another free showing of *Space Station 3D*.

It was announced that after the talk, a small telescope would be set up right outside the museum. People took turns looking at Jupiter and its moons through the telescope. Planets such as Jupiter, unlike comets, nebulas, and galaxies, can be seen just fine from within brightly lit cities. The people with the telescope announced that they'd be set up for viewing the Venus transit tomorrow morning at sunrise, on the mall near the entrance to the Smithsonian Metro station.

So I checked Metro's website to see when the first train of the morning was. That's not a train I've ever taken before, as I am *not* a morning person.

Metro's website said that the system opens at 5:30 am. So I got to the Dunn Loring station at 5:27, to find it already open and a train just pulling in. I arrived at Smithsonian, which is on the same line, at 6:00, and walked out onto the mall. The sun was just barely peeking between the trees.

I found the group with the telescope about 50 yards to the west, still waiting for the sunrise. They relocated after I pointed out to them that from where they were the sun was behind the Natural History Museum dome.

At first we couldn't see anything through either of the two telescopes, since the sun was dim and orange, and the telescopes' filters were meant for the sun at its brightest. One of the people there claimed he could see the transit by staring directly at the sun, but I couldn't see it that way.

I noticed that the filters eliminate light by reflecting it, rather than absorbing it. This strikes me as a better plan, since a filter that absorbs sunlight will get warm, and that will cause blurring of the image.

People are creatures of habit. The owner of one of the telescopes installed a sun shield on it. There's no point in such a shield unless you're trying to look at something dim when something brighter is

elsewhere in the sky.

Finally we got a good view. The image looked too perfect, like a crude computer simulation of a transit. The sun was a perfectly round perfectly uniform disk against a perfectly dark background. Venus was a much smaller perfectly round perfectly uniform perfectly dark disk. The only way it could have looked more artificial would be if Venus was in the exact center. When we first saw it it was already quite near the edge. Even at the middle of the transit, which was before sunrise in America, Venus was not particularly close to the center. (Which is just as well, since that means we'll get another transit in just eight more years. A transit through the middle of the sun would mean we'd get only one transit, then no more for over a century.)

About six people were there. We took turns watching it in the two telescopes, and in one small pair of binoculars. Occasionally a jogger would stop and accept the invitation to take a look.

I had brought my hundred year old astronomy book that listed the June 8th 2004 transit, and showed it to people. One person had a copy of the following 1882 William Harkness quote, and read it:

"There will be no other transits of Venus till the twenty-first century of our era has dawned upon the earth, and the June flowers are blooming in 2004. When the last transit occurred the intellectual world was awakening from the slumber of ages, and that wondrous scientific activity, which has led to our present advanced knowledge, was just beginning. What will be the state of science when the next transit season arrives God only knows. Not even our children's children will live to take part in the astronomy of that day."

After about an hour, Venus started to exit the sun's disk, as the sun hovered over the Capitol dome. A few minutes later, the last tiny notch in the edge of the sun disappeared. Clouds moved in just moments later. The telescopes were put away in a van that had been parked -- quite illegally -- right in the middle of the mall, and everyone drifted away.

## **Conterpoint 2004**

**Attended and reported by Keith Lynch**

In mid-June I went to Conterpoint 2004, a filk convention in Rockville. Conterpoint doesn't happen every year. The last one was three years ago, at the same time of year, in the same hotel. (I also attended the last one, and wrote it up in the July 2001 WSFA Journal.)

It was a small convention, with only about 80 people. But some of them had come from as far away as England.

The theme of the convention was "bugs," in honor of the 17-year cicadas. Cicadas were pictured on the front of the program book, and on the con t-shirt. There was a contest for the best new song about bugs, which Mike Stein won, with "Cicadas in Love". The party at the end of the con was called the "dead cicada party".

The con was toward the end of the cicadas' appearance, however. I caught a few live cicadas to show folks from out of town. But they didn't get to see just how amazingly numerous those bugs had been a

few weeks earlier. Also, male cicadas were extremely scarce by then, so most of them didn't get to hear what the bugs sound like, since the females are silent.

My cicadas were a big hit with the several children at the con. After I showed them how to find cicadas of their own, they found one with pale blue eyes, similar to one I had found a few weeks earlier. (Nearly all brood X cicadas have red eyes.)

Those insects really inspire me to think about the meaning of life, and of success. Are the cicadas more successful than our species? At the end of May, there were more adult cicadas living in Maryland and Virginia than there had been people living anywhere in the world, ever.

But now every single one of those cicadas is dead.

But those large friendly bugs will be back, as bright eyed ~~and bushy-tailed~~ as ever, in May of 2021. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for Cicadas: The Next Generation.

The hotel was a half hour walk from Metro. I arrived Friday afternoon and helped with setup, which consisted mostly of moving in and assembling professional audio equipment, of stringing audio cables around the hotel, and of collating the program books.

Unlike last time, all of the program items consisted of music. None consisted of talk about music.

WSFAn Diana Swiger was there, but only on Sunday. Richard Eney, a former WSFAn, was there all weekend.

On Friday evening, I got to be the shabbos goy in the con suite, since I was one of the few people present who wasn't Jewish. In other words, I did tasks that orthodox Jews are forbidden from doing on the sabbath, or from asking other Jews to do for them.

For most of the con, the dealer room only contained one dealer. He sold filk CDs, filk fanzines, and costumes. He kept unusual hours. This was the first time I'd seen a dealer room that was still open after midnight.

In addition to the regular filk room, there was a "No yakking" filk room. Most people weren't clear on what this meant, and the room got little use.

Music from the regular filk room was piped into the con suite, one flight up, using a cable flung over the balcony.

There was also a children's room. It had the TV set going. Surprisingly, much of the time it wasn't showing children's shows, but Reagan's funeral. Nobody was paying any attention to it. Even more surprisingly, the next time I happened by, it was showing a rerun of Johnson's funeral. Were they showing the complete set of presidents' funerals? And if so, were they showing them in reverse order of death date, or of inauguration date?

I caught the last train home Friday night, and returned to the con around noon Saturday. I had stupidly left my umbrella on the subway when I went to the con on Friday, but on my way home I found an umbrella someone else had stupidly left on the subway, so no harm done.

Instead of returning home Saturday night, or sharing a room with someone, I stayed up all night chatting with various people, mostly with J. Spencer Love and Eyal Mozes. We talked about everything from math and philosophy to politics and computers.

Capclave fliers appeared on the flier table sometime Saturday afternoon.

Unlike last time, the piano in the lobby was in tune, and got some use. People had lots of guitars, and a few harps, flutes, harmonicas, and electric organs. Most simply sang. Or, like me, sat quietly while others sang or played.

There was one room party on Saturday night. It was someone's birthday party, and there was ice cream.

The "dead cicada party" was still going strong when I left to catch the last train on Sunday night. On my way out I rescued the Capclave fliers that hadn't been taken.

Please also read my report on the previous Conterpoint, which can be read online at <http://www.wsfa.org/journal/j01/7/index.htm#tfzrocf>. Much of what I said about that con was true of this one as well, especially the description of the hotel and its location.

## **This Month in History**

### **From the Secretary's Archives**

#### **Ten years ago:**

At the July 1st meeting, editor Lee Strong handed out the "Virtual April/May 1994" WSFA Journal. For the next year's Disclave, Joe Mayhew reminded Dan Hoey of the New Carrollton hotel. Covert Beach stated that it is even more of a dump than before. Lee Gilliland, Vice Chairfan of the Entertainment Committee, reported watching 15 minutes of television not covering the O.J. Simpson trial. The club applauded the seemingly impossible feat. At the July 15th meeting, Alexis Gilliland, Chairfan of the Entertainment Committee, announced, "To celebrate the 25th Anniversary of humanity's landing on Luna, Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 will impact on Jupiter." John Ellis is currently directing and editing the science fiction film *Twilight of the Dogs*, which features a number of WSFAans in various roles. There will be a Baltimore in '98 Worldcon Bid Committee meeting. Bob MacIntosh reported \$2736.20 in the treasury.

#### **Twenty years ago:**

At the July 6th meeting at Olivers', the treasury stood at \$4,513.92. Lee Smoire related that the June Fifth Friday Party held at the Banana Republic in Baltimore was a success and everyone had a good time. Peggy Rae Pavlat noted a newspaper article by Jack Anderson concerning President Reagan's interest in starting a space program for today's youth. The July 20th meeting was at Unicon.

#### **Thirty years ago:**

At the July 5th meeting, the treasury stood at \$537.51, plus \$85.97 in the Odyssey Fund. *WSFA*

*Journal #80* is "in the folder". *Son of the WSFA Journal* "has been changed by Bill Hixon who is doing the next issues of it." Jack Chalker reminded the club that starting in 1962, the club had always published a small ad in the Worldcon program book. The motion to carry on this tradition was passed unanimously. (Later that summer we hosted the Worldcon. We haven't hosted it since.) At the July 19th meeting Ron moved that we buy a \$600 Space War video game machine, motion passed. 28 people present including Barry and Judy Newton, but no other 2004 members.

### **Forty years ago:**

At the Friday July 3rd meeting eight people were present, none of them 2004 members. Treasury \$84.15. Bob Pavlat is to be sent 100 five cent postage stamps as a gift from WSFA. At the July 18th (typo for Friday the 17th?) meeting, 12 people were present. Joe Mayhew moved that the club start a magazine. Motion passed. The name "Philosophical Dissertations on Abstruse Phenomena" was suggested. (The first issue of *The WSFA Journal* was dated the following March.)

### **Fifty years ago:**

Sunday, July 4th: Seven people present. No quorum. Sunday, July 18th: 9 people present. No quorum. Program: Nelson Grigg's tape recorded interview of Ted Sturgeon. The most recent Treasurer's report was "about 80 dollars".

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Thanks to the Nippon in '07 bid for permission to include the graphic at the end of this issue, which appeared at Balticon. It had no caption. Perhaps it's called Magicicada Septendecim vs. Gojira Horribilis. Or, more colloquially, Cicada vs. Godzilla. Or East meets West.

It's not quite as absurd as it looks if you keep in mind that the total mass of all the recent cicadas greatly exceed that of Godzilla. (Ignoring the fact that fictional creatures have no mass, strictly speaking.)

I promise that the next issue of *The WSFA Journal* will be 100% Cicada free. In addition to the two new regular features, I will have articles about the WSFA email lists and about PRSFS (another SF club in the area), there will be a review of Michael A. Stackpole's *The Grand Crusade* by Colleen, a report on the launch of Spaceship One by Ernest Lilley who was there, and I should have some material by Lee Strong, and more cartoons by Alexis. I will probably have an article about the Cassini space probe to Saturn. By the time you read this, we'll know whether it successfully entered Saturn orbit on June 30th. (If it didn't, there's little point in my writing about it.)

More contributions are needed. Anything which you think would be of interest to other WSFA members, except sports scores, criticism of WSFA members, current American politics, or copyrighted material for which you don't have the copyright owner's permission. Keep those cards and letters coming.

