

# The WSFA Journal

August  
**July 2001**

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## The Millennium Philcon®

August 30, 2001 - September 3, 2001

Philadelphia, PA

59th World Science Fiction Convention

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Treasurer's Report

## President Thwarts Coup Attempt

The 7/6 First Friday in July meeting began with VP Sam Pierce banging the gavel. "It's getting warm in here." Lee G. suggested opening a window. "I'm not on the facilities committee," he retorted. "Well, at approximately 14 minutes after the hour let's convene."

There was no old business. The Veep called on the treasurer. Just then President Judy launched her counterattack, sending in the tanks and quickly recapturing the Presidential palace, stopping on for a beer. Her vice-president, his takeover plans thwarted, said, "If I hadn't started, you never would have come." As the president regained the support of the populace, and the gavel, Sam Pierce moved aside.

Picking up from where the meeting left off prior to the restoration, Judy called on the treasurer. "We're sinking slowly into the East," Mike Nelson complained, "This isn't a Larry Niven novel." Lee Strong, said, "Madam President, I request a report from the treasurer." Bob said, "\$944.58 and sinking fast."

Sam Pierce <laying the groundwork for his next coup?> asked, "When will the insurance bill come?" Bob said, "Insurance will be six big ones and it can come at any time. My lovely assistant has a handout to show how bad things are." Elspeth passed out handouts.

"First page shows annual deficit. Not much you can do without the insurance. No hotel will take you. The second page is Capclave costs, we have 98 members so are almost 100 members short of breaking even. Also, last time we checked with the hotel, two weeks ago, there are only three hotel rooms booked."

Various WSFans protested, saying they had registered. Sam P. said, "We need to

get a list from the hotel." Elspeth said, "If anyone has booked rooms, email me the confirmation number." Bob said, "I'm harping on room nights because we got a special deal with the function space costing \$900 that normally goes for \$1,400." Walter asked if this meant the price would go up. "No," Bob replied. "We have a contract for this year, but if we want to continue we need to not mess this up. Don't play this lightly. We're talking about the future of WSFA as far as con running goes."

Elspeth said, "We can drop the insurance if we don't have conventions and drop the Journal, but then we are just a group to run parties."

Alexis said, "I don't think we need to worry about this. The convention may go well, then after the convention we can see how it goes. We can go with the flow." Elspeth said, "We're a start-up convention, we need to get more members. If we want to be able to plan a convention, we need to get more people." Walter asked, "Might the membership curve be different for a convention right after WorldCon?" Bob answered, "We're not sure. We don't know."

Someone asked, "What about advertising at MilPhil and Shore Leave?" Alexis said, "You can't force people to come. To some extent you need to see if it will be a viable convention. No one is twisting anyone's hands." Bob asked that people post flyers in bookstores and libraries. Elspeth organized flyer distribution at conventions. Eric volunteered to do drops at Dream Wizards and Barbarian book stores.

Keith commented that our rates go up right before MilPhil so not much incentive for them to register. He suggested a special



MilPhil rate. Bob said, he hadn't but would consider anything.

Eric said that he had bought a membership but wasn't on the official list. Steve remembered that there was a competition between Eric and Judy for who would have the first membership.

Lee G. asked experienced con-goers for their reactions. Bob said that fandom waits for the last minute historically, but what concerns him is whether Mike would be in any condition to talk to the hotel. Walter asked how many room nights were needed. Bob said, "100 nights, but if we can get 35 people for both nights the hotel should be happy." Elspeth said, "I have to disagree. No hotel would talk to us. Not a lot of people here can do other than get room nights in. Just talk to people. We have to treat this as a start-up convention. This is what we did in 98. No one talked about the convention much and we lost our hotel because we didn't have room nights." Sam P. objected to this version of history, "The hotel sabotaged us. Their room reservation people were saying that no rooms were available." Elspeth said, "Not just official publicity." Judy said, "Talk to your friends." Sam said, "And if you haven't signed up for Capclave do so tonight."

Bob said, "We're past the point of no return. We have to hold it."

Keith said that Steve Brinich has volunteered to do filking.

Mike said, "Capclave Future is hoping there will be a Capclave Pleasant."

Alexis for the Entertainment Committee reported that a Japanese man doubled the world hot-dog eating record, consuming 50 hot dogs in 12 minutes. He weighs 131 pounds, before eating the dogs. The event held since 1916 in Coney Island. Steve said that he saw this on TV, "and it was as awe-inspiring as you think." Bob asked if they had a play by play and color commentator. Steve said yes. Bob said,

"Heimlich was standing behind the door, waiting to be called."

Lee for the activities committee had a list of movies and wanted to see who was interested in doing theater parties. "Alexis, you get to be first." He glances at it and passes it to the next person, "Alexis! Take that back!" A club member went, "It's gonna be a long night."

There was no old or new business. Elspeth announced that she's divorced. She celebrated by, "almost burning my house down." Deadline for Hugos moved to July 18<sup>th</sup>, *Calculating God* came out in paperback. Richard and Nicki had to get a new car since the old one was fried by their car repair shop. Brad had "Good news, I have a job; bad news, it is 2000 miles away." Mike sympathized, "What a commute!" Brad continued, "It's in Albuquerque," Eric warned him, "Don't make a wrong turn there." The Air and Space Museum is doing summer sf movies but can only get tickets the day of the show. Will Levitson has a new story published. Alexis announced that his stepson Jim proposed to his girlfriend. The movie, "The Dish" is playing at the Greenbelt theater. The meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:55.

Attendance. Pres. Judy Kindell, VP Sam Pierce, Sec. Sam Lubell, Treas and 2001 Chair Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Lee Gilliland, Trust Eric Jablow, Trust Nicki Lynch, 2002 Chair Mike Nelson. All officers present. Bernard Bell, Sheri Bell, Alexis Gilliland, Cathy Green, Sally Hand, Scott Hofmann, Ron Kean, Elspeth Kovar, Will Ludwigsen, Bradford Lyau, Keith Lynch, Richard Lynch, Walter Miles, Dick Roepke, George Shaner, Steven Smith, Victoria Smith, Lee Strong, Mike Walsh, Andrew Williams, Madeleine Yeh.

#### WSFA Annual Budget

First Friday Meetings	\$300
WSFA Journal	\$360
Insurance	\$600

Web Address	\$35	WSFA Memberships	\$500
Total Annual Expenses	\$1,295	Annual Deficit	(\$795)

### WSFA SCREENINGS

Lee Gilliland is looking into getting together some theater parties for the following movies. If interested, please contact her at 703-920-6087. new stuff added) Dec. 21

Ghosts of Mars - Aug 17  
 Elvira's Haunted Hills - Halloween or thereabouts  
 Monsters, Inc. - Nov. 2  
 Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone - Nov. 16  
 Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius. - Dec 21  
 Lord of the Rings - Dec 21  
 Time Machine (Reissue,



Please note that theatre parties will not necessarily be on the premiere date, but is dependent on when Lee can get the most people together. If you are not sure whether you want to see a movie, Lee suggests [www.movies-trailers.com](http://www.movies-trailers.com) for taking a quick look at the movie in question - or just for fun, they've got EVERYTHING in there.

### The Ego of Michael Swanwick (and Other Writers) Transcribed by Samuel Lubell

Readercon is known for its wonderful panels, which are the main activity of the convention (there also was one party for Boston in 2004, an auction, and the annual Kirk Poland bad prose contest). One of the most interesting was a panel on Egocentrism and Creativity which was based on a remark by Michael Swanwick at a previous Readercon, saying that, with the possible exception of Gene Wolfe, he was the best writer in the room. The panelists were John Crowley (JC), James Patrick Kelly (moderator)(JPK), Ellen Kushner (EK), Barry Malzberg (BM), Michael Swanwick (MS), and Cecilia Tan (CT). This transcription is based on my hurried notes as the panel was conducted and is certainly not completely accurate.

JPK: I want to start by asking Michael, since he is the inspiration for the panel, if he has

any regrets about the statement he made at Readercon I.

MS: No regrets. Everyone else was being modest and I got a big laugh. When talking to an audience modesty doesn't play well. If you tell an audience that this book isn't great but is pretty good, then they hear the 'not great' and believe you. When I was a new writer, modest in the presence of giants, Jack Dann told me to never criticize yourself. That is what other people are for. And I have found no shortage of people willing to assume this role.

JPK: Who says they are the greatest writer here? <MS, JC, and CT raise their hands>

EK: It's a guy thing. How many women in the audience feel comfortable saying they are the greatest? <Some hands go up>



JPK: Okay boys. Let's beat them. <More hands go up>

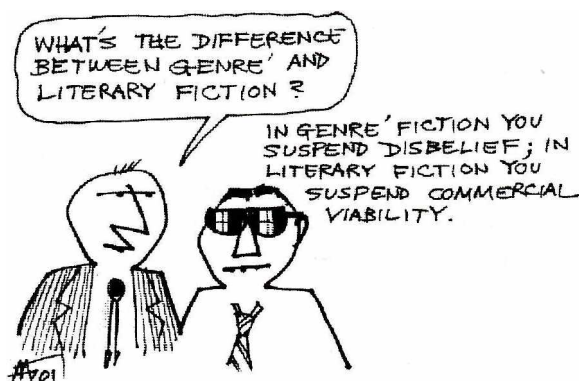
CT: Is it possible for someone to write the best book who isn't the best author?

MS: Could name Wolfe or Delaney or R.A. Lafferty. You don't want to beat Wolfe; you just want him to move over. To be a great writer you have to respect good writing. It is hard to be a good writer, inspiring to something you know in your heart no one can aspire to such godhood so you need false ego or would give up.

JPK: But this panel is about saying it. Use a superlative is not saying one of many good authors. Do others feel that is destructive to do the superlative?

JC: It is the egotism of writers to think of themselves not merely the best but the only. Martin Ames said novelists pretend to be realistic but have an inner egomaniac who thinks all contemporaries are worse. You open up a paper and do not understand why the paper isn't all about you. You need this ego, 'I am a genius,' but also the flip-side, vulnerability, seeking the fetal position after a bad review.

JPK: A writer goes through the manic



depressive stages. I have to wait to be posthumous to be famous.

JC: Is it because there is no objective judgment in writing. A racecar driver either wins, loses, or hits the wall.

MS: A monster ego. I can't be the only one who sometimes says, suppose I have no talent.

CT: Or think that I have used up all my bullets. See the editor sometimes says you are the greatest and at other times you have to scramble to get attention so you need to know yourself.

MS: A classic example of a monster ego was Isaac Asimov but he stopped writing sf for many years because he didn't want to compete with newer writers but counted his opus numbers. He couldn't convince himself of his merits but piled up the numbers compulsively. He once said that when he wrote the one or two stories of merit he was writing above his capabilities.

JC: I remember writing my first novel when it seemed to be that I was answering philosophical problems that had stumped mankind for generations. I was surprising myself. Then no one wanted to publish it.

JPK: Ego at start

BM: I thought that I was the greatest writer of my generation and was delighted to take the \$750 for an Ace Triple because I knew my true greatness would shine through. I believed this. I was insane. I had an exchange with Asimov when *Engines of the Night* came out. I said you are beyond me. He said his work was ephemeral and would be forgotten and yours is eternal. I thought him insane. The ego was all an act. He was really fragile. Writing is a performance, easily crushed.

JPK: Did reality check change work?

BM: Doctors say to lose weight, eat slowly. I knew it well by early to mid 70s but it took sensibilities a while to catch up. I wrote novels and stories, still putting out the stuff. In 1976 I wrote a review about Ballard's *Atrocity Exposition* saying the writing was so beautiful that the book was affirmative

despite the message. About 5 to 6 years ago I got a solution—a respectful silence. It worked for JD Slinger. It is better than having people say, 'Oh what an old hack.'

EK: It is feeling that you are a giant in a field of pygmies. Back when I was an editor seeing bad stuff come in, I lost the vision that writers need to have that writing is the best thing to do. I came through spades of saying that writing is no challenge because I can do better than the stories I was seeing. When I read a good book it makes me feel that I am in a race. Otherwise I think all this is crap.

JC: Gene Wyce <sp> thought of herself as a small stream feeding a bigger pool. Is that a comfort or not? When I started at Yale, a student asked 'Why do I write?' I said that I write to achieve immortal fame.

MS: I see it as a body of water. I want to create great bodies of literature. Wouldn't it be great to be Homer? When I'm dead, the memory of me will not be very interesting but I hope someone will be reading my books for the next thousand years. I want to create something better than me. Wouldn't have a wanna-be writer with talent and modesty who got published.

JPK: Make it the best genre. Fight to make sf interesting or move out of genre.

CT: I had to start my own pond. I didn't fit into cannon of sf, its rules and regulations. To make my work I had to self-publish. People saw it and then I got published outside. I'm still the preeminent figure in my own little pond, if my work lives on beyond next year. My egocentrism shows in my journal; I expect people to read it 100 years from now.

MS: Dear biographer, this is important. I think I did put in false statements.

EK: You owe it to art to make the best use of talent but whether you see success is a crapshoot. There is a Jewish story, God doesn't ask why you couldn't be a better Moses but why you weren't a better you. All

the genius stuff gets washed out, why couldn't you be a better you.

MS: People take the finest food and wine, leave sh!t and piss, so want to leave the world something better.

EK: But if all your work burned up, writing it still was important.

JPK: When you start out, you are not a great author.

EK: I was <And if *Swordpoint* was her first book, than she is right>

JPK: Okay, start great and get higher, when do you reach a point where you say best?

JC: In *Little Big* I noticed that a writer's last book is not necessary best.

CT: Not just writer, in publishing sometimes after your first published novel is good, a publisher is willing to print your trunk novels.

JPK: Competition with your younger self.

BM: Think of the major composers. They got better and better. With a few exceptions, they consistently improved. But this isn't true of writers. How many got better and better? Only PK Dick and Nabokov.

JPK: Many figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lewis, Faulkner, Hemingway.

JC: But most were alcoholics.

EK: The more you write, the more good and bad you produce. The author of the *Secret Garden* and *Little Lord Fauntleroy* wrote two perfect books but had to crank out hundreds. You see them in used bookstores, buy them, and then are disappointed.

MS: But if you gave her a genius grant to write only four books, she'd write the wrong four.

Audience: How about fame and glory in this world. <He told a story about a writer in a restaurant who was disappointed that no one recognized him even though he was wearing his con badge with his name.>

JC: Why was he wearing it outside the convention? He deserved to be disappointed.

MS: After you take the nametag off, you are semi-autonomous. After Monday morning, I'm going to let all the fuss [he was GOH] go away. You wouldn't want to live that way all the time.

EK: Leon Garfield did his own ending to Dickens' *Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The playwright's friends tell him that his play is as good as Hamlet. They leave and he sighs, 'It's not as great as Lear.'

Audience: Do you get a kick by attention of fans at cons?

All: Of course.

JC: Writers at best when by themselves so when we have our heads down it is because we are uncomfortable and can't deal with the world; don't know how to be in the world. Some in business can be urbane and witty like Michael Swanwick.

MS: Recognize that these are not your fans but fans of a literature that include your books.

JC: Fans come up and say you are one of my two favorite writers and you think to yourself, 'two?'

Audience: Is your stuff your favorite because you are writing to your taste in fiction? If so, the delusion is one of thinking that sufficient numbers would have that taste. No one may agree with you because you are writing to a narrow definition of what a book would be.

EK: But in the back of your mind is the idea that you can be the greatest, so no matter how much success you get, it is not enough. In my 20s my girlfriends and I realized that we were no longer geeks so why not successful;

because we had the illusion that to be successful everyone in the room needs to want you. But that's an illusion and to realize that is helpful.

Audience: Kafka told a friend to burn his work.

JC: He didn't mean it and Max knew it. Ego masks fear. Kafka just had it inverted. Kafka chose to write in German instead of Yiddish or <XX> because more people read it.

MS: No auto mechanic would say destroy my unfinished auto parts.

Audience: What about photos of writers to give to hotel staff.

EK: Baseball cards! <Someone in audience told her that Chicon had already done that.>

Audience: <Unheard Question>

MS: I have known people who stopped writing because they let their internal critics criticize work before finished. Of course it is not perfect; it's unfinished. This is a form of ego. I knew an actor who couldn't make it because he had too much ego and was not

willing to take a change to be humiliated. Someone in the audience is taking notes and these words will come back and haunt me. <He noticed me! Ego-boo.>

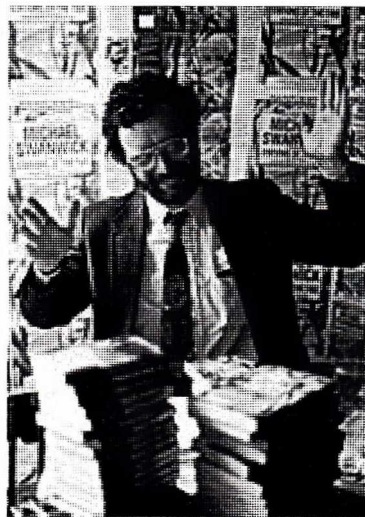
CT: There is an intersection between being self-conscious and too self-conscious. You have to retain some conscious in order to act. Writing is the same. You have to have that nerve, the ego riding on the shoulder.

JC: The pour it out and hack it around is hard to read. I work sentence by sentence.

JPK: Last words?

EK: Draw Antonio draw

JPK: Thank you for the honor of moderating the greatest panel ever.



## FANZINES

By Ted White

Fanzines are a basic part of science fiction fandom, having been in existence as long as fandom itself. All fanzines are published as a hobby and lose money. Their editors appreciate money to defray their expenses and sometimes list single-copy or subscription prices, but they appreciate even more your written response – a Letter of Comment, or LoC. Feedback – better known in fandom as “egoboo” – is what fanzine publishing is all about. Check out the fanzine below and broaden your participation in fandom.



WABE (Jae Leslie Adams, 621 Spruce St., Madison WI 53715; Bill Bodden, P.O.Box 762, Madison WI 53701-0762; Tracy Benton, 108 Grand Canyon Drive, Madison WI 53705; available for trades, contributions, letters of comment – “the usual” – or “editorial whim; no price given but you could try a begging letter or an email to [jaeleslie@aol.com](mailto:jaeleslie@aol.com), [billzilla@mailbag.com](mailto:billzilla@mailbag.com) or [Benton@uwalumni.com](mailto:Benton@uwalumni.com))

*Wabe* is a fanzine with three editors (all of whom live in Madison, Wisconsin), and a loose, informal approach reminiscent of the fanzines of several decades ago. But despite the warmth and informality, this is a neatly designed and attractively laid-out fanzine (the work of Jae Leslie Adams, a calligrapher whose work adorns the back cover). Its text is produced on a computer, printed out, and the art is pasted in. Then it's electrostenciled and cleanly mimeographed on white paper.

The third issue, the most recent, is dated March. Its cover, by Stu Shiffman, “Three Faneds in Search of a Focus,” renders the three editors in cartoon form with some acuity. The 22-page issue presents three editorials (placed at the front, in the middle and at the end) and six articles – all thematically concerned with travel on one level or another.

There's travel in the mundane world – Pat Hario's “Schooner Women” describes a

voyage on a 101-foot sailing ship with a crew composed exclusively of women and tells of how the experience changed her life. And there's travel among fans – Jae Leslie Adams' “A Passion for Travel” details her experiences in Britain last November, centering on her stay with John and Eve Harvey in their village home. Maybe because I too have visited with and enjoyed the Harveys' hospitality, I particularly liked that piece. Jae has the ability to describe things well: “I had only just mastered getting into the left side of a vehicle as a passenger, so now simply getting used to being on what still seemed the wrong side of the road, with the faster passing lanes on the right, and so forth, made it an exciting trip for me, and roundabouts were still nerve-rackingly exotic.”

Scattered through the issue are six “The 22 Second Fanzine Reviews” – short, solid, one-paragraph reviews of six fanzines by the three editors, which appear boxed as page-enders. A clever idea, nicely done. The issue is finished off with a four-page letter column, the letters divided into topics. The lead topic is the e-zines vs. paper fanzines controversy.

This situation arises from the increasing expense of mailing physical copies of fanzines to a mailing list of 100 to 500 people (the typical fanzine's circulation falls within these numbers). The alternative is to post fanzines by e-mail, or put them up on a website. And there are other choices in format and presentation. Because most of fandom's e-zines are done by fans who *like* paper fanzines – they like holding them, turning the pages, perhaps check-marking an engaging topic for response – they are being produced in a PDF format which allows the editor to control the appearance and design of the end-product when it is printed out by a recipient (except, of course, for paper color). This situation continues to evolve, but probably points the way toward fanzines' future.



## Logic By Lee Strong

The laboratory door burst open just as a dozen monkeys jammed the open window trying to escape. Even with their head start, they might have been recaptured if a balding human hadn't blocked the guards' oncoming rush, flailing his arms to occupy the maximum amount of space. One guard skidded on the floor, trying to stop short but failing. He slammed into the intruder, knocking them both down. The other guard managed to leap over the tangle, his own arms windmilling as he tried to keep his balance and catch a fast disappearing anthropoid tail at the same time. He stayed upright by the painful expedient of encountering a sink with his lower torso.

The guard on the floor screamed at the interloper, "You idiot! What do you think you're doing?!"

The intruder glared triumphantly, "I've freed those Simian-Africans you were holding as slaves! No more slavery of other species in the name of 'medical research'! Equal rights for all species! 'A boy is a dog is a pig is a rat!' And a Simian-African is a human!"



The guard on the floor shouted back, "Well, Mr. Equal Rights, those monkeys cost Johns Hopkins Laboratories about \$10,000 each. That's coming out of your hide!"

The other guard stood up from the sink slowly and said in a funny voice, "Wolf. Stop shouting and arrest the man for theft. We've got to get after those monkeys before they get onto the streets." He slowly reached up and started to close the window. He paused momentarily and pushed it open again. "They might come back once they get a taste of local traffic."

Wolf levered himself upright, and commanded, "All right, Mr. Rights. Get up. You're not hurt that bad. And you *are* under arrest for theft, breaking and entering, and endangering animals' welfare. Additional charges may be added later."

The charges seemed to incense the protester. "'Endangering animals' welfare'? You're the one endangering those Simians' lives with your torture and slavery in the guise of inhumane and pointless 'research!' I refuse to go!"

Wolf reached down and yanked the intruder upright. He snarled, "Wrong answer, Mr. Rights! First, animal experimentation is neither inhumane nor pointless. It added an average of 12 years to human lifespans in the 20th Century alone. Second, you *are* going to jail. Now, you have the right to remain silent..."

"I waive my Miranda rights!" shouted the protestor. "Take me to prison! I Have A Statement To Make!"

"Well, that saved us a half an hour," commented the second guard in a more normal tone of voice. "Come on, Wolf. We need to take this man to the guardhouse so we can chase down those monkeys."

Wolf was struck with inspiration. He half walked, half carried the protestor across the room, yanked a large cage door open, and thrust the man inside. He slammed the door shut with a satisfied smirk. "Wrong answer, Howell. Mr. Rights can spend the night right here in the gorilla cage. It'll keep him nice and safe while we look for the monkeys."

The protestor looked around the cage frantically and sagged in relief when he found that he was the only occupant of the large cage. While he was searching for other primates, Wolf dug a chain and padlock out of a nearby drawer and double locked the cage. There was no point in taking chances that a human could pick a gorillaproof lock.

The intruder was back on his feet as soon as the second lock clicked shut. "Hey! You can't do this to me! I have a right to be imprisoned in a real people jail!"

"Wrong answer, Mister Rights!" snapped Wolf. "Your logic is backwards. The Federal Animal Welfare Act *requires* John Hopkins to house potentially dangerous animals in cages. Since you clearly broke the law and endangered others, and since you claim that you as a human have no special rights, then you are obviously a potentially dangerous animal to be housed in a cage!" He jammed both fists into his hips and grinned satanically, teeth gleaming.

While Wolf and the protestor were arguing, Howell went over to another cabinet and got out a bag of Monkey Chow and a bowl. He filled the bowl with water and put both in the gorilla cage where the human could see them when he calmed down. Howell straightened up, and commanded, "Wolf. The prisoner is secure. We're going to chase down those monkeys.

"Now."

Wolf glanced at his partner, and complied meekly. They closed the door behind them on their prisoner's sputtering.

As they loped down the corridor, Howell's voice was quite but penetrating, "Wolf. You can't lose your temper like that. You were this close to losing us the arrest and you your job." He held two fingers almost touching. "As it is, we're going to explain the gorilla cage as a temporary measure. *Not* poetic justice."

Wolf looked at his partner sheepishly. "You're right, you're right. Sorry, Howell. That guy just got my goat. Arguing animal rights with *me*! If humans hadn't experimented on animals, they couldn't have created *us*!"

## Hotel Unlikely to be in the Path of Any Rioting

### Minutes by Cathy Green

At 9:24pm, the July Third Friday meeting was called to order. Cathy Green volunteered to take the minutes. <Thanks Cathy!> Treasurer's Report: we have \$343.58. We spent \$611 on an insurance policy. The personal property tax form will be filed.

The entertainment committee was at a convention.

Capclave Present: Concern was expressed regarding the viability of Capclave Future and WSFA e.g. is WSFA going to be a Con holding club or just a social gathering. This year's Capclave must be successful or it will be very difficult to run a con next year with the club's resources or lack thereof. If the convention is not successful (i.e. does not turn a profit) we would need

contributions of around \$5,000 ahead of time to run the con the next year.

For this year's con to break even, we need 275 members. So far we have 103. Obviously to have seed money for next year and to keep up the insurance policy we need to do much better. We need to do publicity now and approximately one month before the con. We will have a table at WorldCon. People should sign up for timeslots to staff the table.

We will have a selection from the World of Wonder collection on display at the con.

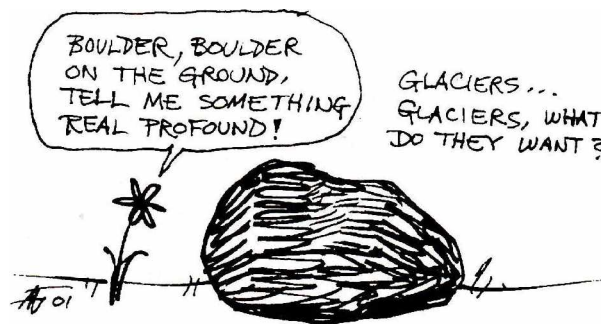
Capclave future had nothing to report.

Old Business:

As you know, we are bidding to host the World Fantasy Con in '03. If you want to see the bid, please go to [www.seahunt.org/wfc](http://www.seahunt.org/wfc)

New Business:

The meeting dates in August are being



switched due to the Ginter migration to the beach. The first Friday meeting in August will be at the Ginter's in MD and the 3d Friday meeting will be at the Gilliland's in VA.

We will file the personal property tax form. Guess what: we don't have any.

Announcements: The usual announcement was made regarding emailing Sam if you want your announcement in the journal. Of course, since Sam wasn't there, the announcement was not delivered with his usual style and flair. The Virginia Scottish Games are being held next weekend at the Episcopal high school. Erica announced that Kurt Freiburger and Nancy Loomis will not be going to WorldCon after all, so please contact them if you want two memberships at \$100 each. Erica also asked people to please be careful and not break her recently purchased dinosaur.

Brad announced that this was his last meeting as he is moving to New Mexico on Wednesday. Keith announced that the Hugo voting deadline had been extended to Wednesday July 25 due to problems with the online voting. If you voted online, you may want to follow up with a hard copy vote, since large numbers of email votes apparently vanished.

Sally Hand made the suggestion that perhaps a Capclave flyer should be posted in the libraries at GW and Georgetown. Someone else responded that this would be a case of the person suggesting it volunteering to do it. Sally, a librarian, indicated that she had no objection to a busman's holiday.

Someone pointed out that Capclave is scheduled for the same weekend as the IMF. Fortunately, the hotel is unlikely to be in the path of any rioting. However, plugging the possibility of taking in DC tourist attraction to Capclave attendees may not be such a great idea.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55pm. Attendance: Ms. President Judy, Bob MacIntosh, Eric Jablow, Nicki Lynch, Mike Nelson, Bernie Bell, Sheri Bell, Adrienne Ertman, Erica Ginter (like she wouldn't be), Karl Ginter, Cathy Green, Sally Hand, Ron Kean, Liza Kessler, Elspeth Kovar, Will Ludwigsen, Keith Lynch, Dick Lynch, Keith Marshall, Walter Miles, Barry & Judy Newton, Dick Roepke & Chris Callahan, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Andrew Williams, Ivy Yap, John and Peggy Rae Sapienza.

## WSFAN Reviews

### ***Wing Commander: False Colors***

Written by William R. Forstchen and William H. Keith

Riverdale, NY: Baen, 2001

Reviewed by Lee Strong

"Patience, my foot! I want to kill something!"

This legendary motto applies to all three sides of the interstellar war depicted in this latest work by one of my favorite military SF authors. It's the aftermath of a bloody war between humans and the Cat-like Kilrathi aliens, and some people just don't know when to quit. When one group of humans discovers an abandoned Kilrathi spacecraft carrier, they move in to salvage it, but run out of time when

a Cat governor decides to promote himself to Emperor at their expense. The situation is complicated by multiple human and alien factions pursuing their own agendas.

Forstchen is a solid writer with a firm grasp of history and military science, which lends a welcome air of authenticity to his story. His characters (many of them continuing from previous novels and movies set in the same universe) are realistic and well drawn. Their concerns (psychological, military and economic) seem all too real even if they do live 600 years in the future. The action is well paced, and the climax properly foreshadowed without being obvious. If there are problems with *False Colors*, the plot seems somewhat formulaic rather than fresh, and a newcomer to

this series may have some trouble entering a well established universe. Still, a good crackling read which many can enjoy.

I rate *Wing Commander: False Colors* as a solid "C" on the high school A-F scale. -- LS



**A.I.: Artificial Intelligence(PRIVATE)**  
Reviewed by Lee Strong

It's easier to be weird than good, and this film proves it.

*A.I.* starts well and ends well, but there's a lot of razzle dazzle in the middle that hurts a good solid concept. The film is the posthumous collaboration between Stanley Kubrick and Steven Spielberg. Perhaps we should have stuck with one director and one vision. As it is, at least three films co-exist uneasily under one title.

The high tech concept here is the portrayal of a robot boy capable of human emotions and its struggle to "find himself" as a unique being. It is adopted by a childless human couple and has to learn to be human. So far so good. The trouble begins when a near-tragedy causes the human "mother" to abandon her "child" to its fate. Suddenly the whole picture changes from an examination of the meaning of love to a frenzied cyberpunk hayride complete with redneck robot smashing, cybersex, and drowned Manhattan. Then, the plot shifts again with alien intervention following a convenient but unexplained end of humanity. There is a continuing plot thread tying this all together but the constant battering by shifting plot twists and bad science left me exhausted rather than satisfied.

I rate *A.I.* as a "D" on the high school A-F scale. -- LS

## ***Atlantis, the Lost Empire***

Reviewed by Lee Strong

Well, I'm a fool for anything having to do with Atlantis, and this marvelous film shows why. Done right, Atlantis is *really* fun.

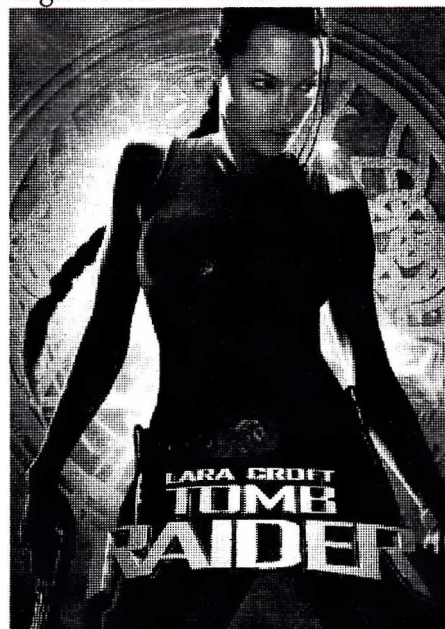
This animated epic opens with the destruction of the legendary island continent and then jumps forward to 1914 when mild mannered Milo Thatch yearns to rediscover its lost technology. With the help of a delightful crew of eccentrics, he travels ever onward via ship, sub, mole machine, and foot, only to discover *the Heart of Atlantis!*

I enjoyed the *heck* out of this film. It's *fun!* The animated stars show real character development, the scenery is gorgeous and the action truly apocalyptic in the classic Disney style. In the best science fiction tradition, the outcome depends on the hero's ability to analyze strange technology and culture, and to rise above himself. Not bad for a "kids' show."

O.K. It *is* oriented toward younger people, but that never stopped a true fan! More serious are the curiously distorted human figures and well worn semi-magical crystal technology. But, hey!, this is a modern myth.

Go see this movie. "Atlantis is waiting."

I rate *Atlantis, the Lost Empire* as a "B" on the high school A-F scale. -- LS





***Lara Croft, Tomb Raider***

Reviewed by Lee Strong

This movie is rather less than the sum of its parts. All the pieces seem to fit, but, somehow, it doesn't quite jell as a truly enjoyable film.

Lara is easily recognizable as a modern, distaff Indiana Jones searching for pieces of a magic triangle that could potentially control time itself. Naturally, the evil Nazis... pardon me, the evil Illuminati are also searching for it (and Lara) in various exotic locales across the globe. There's even an insipid Belloq clone to take up space. Will Lara find the clock before time runs out? And, will anyone care?

Technically, this film has what it takes to deliver bang for the buck. There's a plot that makes sense on its own terms, characters with personalities and dreams, and lots of slambang action. And yet... Somehow, Lara, the Illuminati and the whole adventure seem as two dimensional as their video game origin. Game over, and I'm glad it's over.

I rate *Lara Croft, Tomb Raider* as a "C-" on the high school A-F scale. -- LS

***The Spheres of Heaven***

by Charles Sheffield

Baen, 2001

A review by Colleen R. Cahill

Stories of humans quarantined by superior alien races is not new to science fiction. More than one novel has confined us to a limited amount of space so our deficiencies do not contaminate the rest of the universe. Charles Sheffield's newest work, *The Spheres of Heaven* explores this theme with a mix of science and surprises. Three advanced alien races who abhor killing intelligent life, even in self defense, find humans too violent. But even humans prove useful when a unique situation arises.

After twenty years, mankind gets a new chance to explore beyond the solar system due to the discovery of an interstellar Link in an uninhabitable section of the galaxy. It's recent appearance is a mystery and it becomes more

mysterious when two alien ships with their crews disappear there without a trace. The aliens decide to send a third ship, just to be sure that the last two did not disappear due to accidents. This time, however, a human crew will be sent, one that can handle the stress of possible hostile peoples. To tempt the humans on this potential suicide mission, the aliens agree to raise the quarantine on space travel ... IF the person of their choice agrees to go.

The aliens realize that they cannot send just anyone, as they must send a human they trust to follow their rules. They demand Chan Dalton, whose dealings with the aliens have earned their respect: they refuse to talk to any other human. Chan knows that Earth authorities secretly sent a third ship to the Link and it has also vanished. Still, the one-time space explorer and now second-in-command of Earth's largest slum realizes he has better chance of survival on this mission than facing the corporate powers on Earth who surely kill him if he does not agree to go. He asks for ten days to gather his own crew of six specialists. Specialists with interesting skills: a con-man, magician, poet and language expert, weapons master, someone who talks to animals and gadgeteer. This list that makes me think more of a fantasy adventure than a science fiction novel. To top off the crew, Chan is saddled with a alien-hating general and a skinny blonde scientist, both appointed by Earth and both of whom disapprove of Chan and his crew.

While Chan is searching and recruiting, we discover that the human ship is intact, with the crew alive and confused. They find themselves on a bewildering planet, where they Linked directly underwater. Link technology makes it impossible to appear in an area where matter exists and this is the first of several mysteries that face the crew. As this section unfolds, it is quickly revealed that the three person crew is not the crack team the Earth authorities thought they were sending, but instead consists of a rich man of no real talent, his beautiful slave and one untrained but knowledgeable crewman. The latter, Bony Rombelle, has to deal with the fact that he is in

a space ship that is underwater, a state it was never designed for, and that the water is denser than that on Earth. As he explores the new world, more scientific oddities arise.

Sheffield has written a work that is intriguing and paradoxical, with a mix of science, politics, and humor. He is successful in melding them in a imaginative and exciting way. The interactions between humans and aliens is believable and the way Chan and others deal with the "no violence" rule adds spice to the story. The inventiveness of the characters, the interesting science, and the feeling of fun make this a rewarding book to read.

### Inversions

By Iain M. Banks

Reviewed by Samuel Lubell

*Inversions* belongs to the very small group of fantasies without any real magic or perhaps to the far future without any science (although there is one brief episode that might be due to magic or perhaps to super science or something else, readers never find out what is really going on unless they are very familiar with Banks' other books.) It breaks another rule as well, usually when there are two plotlines, they meet in the middle somewhere, here, except for a brief reference to something in the other plotline (and hints in stories one character tells) the two may as well be

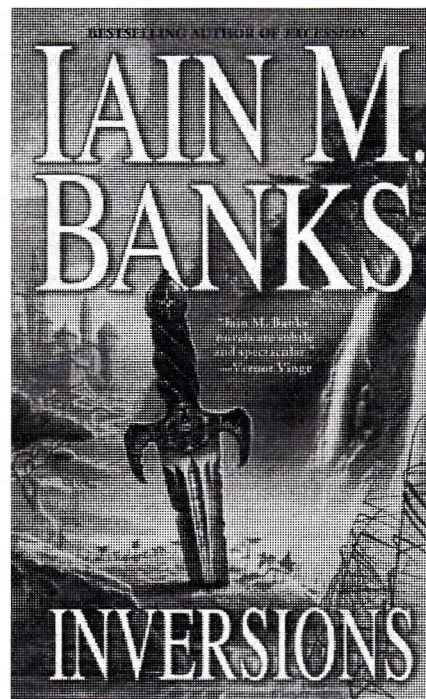
completely separate books. Despite this oddity, both plotlines are intriguing and the stories highly entertaining.

The first plotline is the story of a female doctor's apprentice, in a medievalish city-state (on some other world/fantasy land), who spies on the doctor (and also falls in love with her.) The doctor cares for the king but has enemies in the court who do not think a woman should have this position and/or think she is a spy because she is a foreigner. They're right, but not in the way they think.

The second plotline is that of the chief bodyguard to a Protector General who had overthrown the emperor. Although highly suspicious of virtually everyone, he slowly develops a relationship with one of the Protector's harem who saved the Protector from

an assassin at the cost of her arm. He too is a foreigner and he tells stories to the Protector's son which create the possible link between the two plotlines, if the two characters in the stories are himself and the Doctor. We never learn this for *certain* and this subtlety is part of the fun.

Banks is one of the great stylists in the field (and has had a thriving career as a mainstream author as Iain 'No M' Banks). Here his writing dazzles even without far-future robot brains or globs of magic. Here the sense of wonder is in the background and the descriptions, not bolts of magefire or laser blasts.



### Treasurer's Report

Holy moly, we spent money. Paid out: First Friday \$25.00, WSFA Journal \$63.62, Insurance \$611.00.

Dues collected: Sally Hand, Dick Roepke and Chris Callahan for a total of \$30.00. That leaves us with a balance of a mere \$343.58. (alms! alms for the poor?)