

The WSFA Journal

APRIL 2005

**The Official Newsletter of the Washington Science Fiction Association -
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Please direct all correspondence to editor@wsfa.org. Please put either "for publication" or "not for publication" on the subject line. (It MUST contain one or the other, or else your email may be deleted unread by spam filters.) I can also be reached by snail mail at 220 Cedar Lane #62, Vienna VA 22180-6623 USA.

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New WSFA Journal Feature:

Introducing a new feature: A corrections column, in which the errors in the previous issue are listed. It will start in the next issue.

Yet Another WSFA-run Con:

On the weekend of March 31 - April 2, 2006, WSFA will be hosting SMOScon.

SMOScon isn't for every SMOF. It's only for Secret Masters of SMOFdom -- those of us behind the scenes who keep SMOFcons running smoothly so that SMOFs can give their full attention to SMOFFing.

It's at the Marriott Hilton DC, a magnificent new modernistic baroque soaring labyrinth of a hotel on the shores of the Potomac, overlooking Capitol Hill, adjacent to the Beltway, a short walk from the Georgetown Metro station.

Rooms are a surprisingly affordable \$401 a night, plus taxes, lodging, room service, gratuities, surcharge, corkage, shrinkage, and restocking fees.

SMOScons don't have all the features you'd typically see at SMOFcons. In addition to no dealer room, guest of honor, film program, or art show, there are also no con suites, room parties, or panel discussions.

SMOScon is a male-only con. I attempted to find out whether there will also be a con for Secret *Mistresses* of SMOFdom, but learned that I'd have to undergo years of painful and expensive surgery and hormone treatments before I would be entrusted with that information.

WSFA Press Update:

Ernest Lilley has had so much fun working on his *Future Washington* anthology that he's planning on two companion volumes: *Future Arlington* and *Future Greenbelt*. Dozens more will follow, including *Tysons Corner Yet to Come*, *Silver Summer*, and *Middle-Aged Town Alexandria*. H.P. Lovecraft has promised a story about a new Metro extension, to be called "The Color-out-of-space Line". S.M. Stirling contributed "Beltway in a Sea of Time".

Robert Sawyer's story was rejected due to too many errors. DC doesn't have a CN tower or a parliament. And we're certainly not going to print his story twice, once in English once in French.

We also rejected Arthur C. Clarke's story about DC in the far future year of 2001, on the grounds that 2001 is in the past.

My favorite was the story submitted for *Newer Carrollton*, in which a hotel is protected against flooding by having jets of flame set up to shoot out of the floor to quickly evaporate any water. Of course the hotel guest has to be careful not to pull up on the flame nozzles when there *isn't* a flood...

Other News:

Next year's Gaylaxicon, the first one to be held overseas, has chosen Orson Scott Card as guest of honor. It will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in April of next year.

Exciting New WSFA Contest:

Read this WSFA Journal carefully, and if you find a true statement, you win *one million dollars!* (Hint: That wasn't it.)

First Friday Minutes

Note that there's a [brief summary](#) at the end.

The regular First Friday meeting of the Washington Science Fiction Association was called to order by President Samuel Lubell at 9:16 pm on March 4th, 2005 in the basement of the Gillilands' in Arlington, Virginia, the usual First Friday location.

In attendance were President Samuel Lubell, Vice President Cathy Green, Secretary Keith Lynch, Trustees Barry Newton and Steven Smith, Capclave '05 Chair Michael Walsh, Mike Bartman, Don Bieniewicz, Elaine Brennan, Alexis and Lee Gilliland, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Bill Lawhorn, Ernest Lilley, Nicki and Richard Lynch, Keith Marshall, Walter Miles, Michael Nelson, Judy Newton, Kathi Overton, John Pomeranz, Gayle Surette, Michael Taylor, Elizabeth Twitchell, James Uba, and Houston Westfall. 29 people. Jim Kling and Ivy Yap were marked present, and Duck Dodgers written in, but weren't seen by the secretary.

The president asked the secretary what business had been done at the previous meeting. The secretary replied that the previous meeting was held at the Madigans' on February 18th, and:

- Bob was authorized to set up a CD ladder at the bank of his choice, giving preference to our current bank, with \$5000 of three month, \$5000 of six month, and \$5000 of nine month CDs, each to be reinvested in nine month CDs when they mature. This has since been done.
- It was announced that the two year Capclave contract had been signed, and that there would be a Capclave meeting at Peggy Rae's on the 27th. This meeting has since taken place.

CAPCLAVE PRESENT: Mike Walsh said we have fliers. They were printed at Boskone, and many were distributed there. We held a Capclave meeting on February 27th. Ellen Datlow will attend. Daedalus Books in Columbia, Maryland will post our fliers. There will be a chapbook distributed to all Capclave members, and to noone else, containing two new 10,000 word stories by our guest of honor, Howard Waldrop, with cover art by Carol Emshwiller. Every Capclave member who books two hotel nights will be given their choice of the WSFA Press books *The Edges of Things* by Lewis Shiner and *Home By The Sea* by Pat Cadigan, and an Old Earth Books novel by Patricia Anthony, another past Disclave guest of honor. Mike will approach Tor about their also contributing books for the purpose. Barry will type up a summary of the February 27th Capclave meeting. Mike Nelson said it's not yet possible to reserve a room at the con rate, as the hotel hasn't yet given us a group code. Eric asked about Wonderbooks in Frederick. Mike said BSFS has a mailing list of bookstores, and suggests we emulate that. Ernest said he can get us a discount at Kinkos.

CAPCLAVE FUTURE: Elspeth wasn't present. Mike Walsh said that the date of Capclave '06 may need to slip one weekend forward or back due to a basketball event.

WORLD FANTASY '03: Mike Walsh said dunning letters will be sent to every advertiser who hasn't yet paid. Barry suggested posting their names.

TREASURY: Bob wasn't present. Keith Lynch reported that Bob had informed him on the 27th that we had \$12,103.55 in the main account, \$5,672.75 in the World Fantasy account, and \$15,000 in CDs, totaling \$32,776.30.

SMOFCON '04: Bob wasn't present, so there was no report.

ENTERTAINMENT: Alexis said he Googled for comedy schools in Washington, and found a large number of them, including ones in CATO, the FBI, NORML, the National Press Club, two at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, the Drug Reform Coordinating Network, Justice Department, Washington Post, the Denver Post, elected officials, federal and state, and the White House has a comedy club in the basement. Eric responded that Will Rogers said that when Congress makes a law, it's a joke, and when they make a joke, it's the law.

PUBLICATIONS: Keith Lynch said March WSFA Journals are available, along with various back issues. [19 Marches, 7 Februarys, 2 Januarys, and 3 Novembers were taken by the end of the evening, some for distribution at Lunacon in two weeks.]

BOOK: Ernest said that the Ides of April are the submission deadline. He has seven stories in hand, with five more pending. He has a novella from Cory Doctorow, and short stories from Allen Steele, Barbara Chepaitis, David Brin, Steve Sawicki, Jack McDevitt, and Ed Lerner, who is a local. The Brin story is shared with *Amazing Zeppelin Stories*, the Doctorow story is shared with *Sci Fiction*, all others are original. Stories are still pending from Jerry Pournelle, Joe Haldeman, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Thomas Harlan. He's getting solicitations via his futurewashington.com website.

ACTIVITIES: Lee said the next WETA pledge drive will conflict with Balticon, so she asked them to keep us in mind for next time. We will be getting ten to fifteen free tickets to an advance screening of the new Hitchhiker's Guide movie in DC. If more WSFAns are interested than there are tickets, the tickets will be distributed by lottery. Cathy suggested gladiatorial games. Sam suggested we draw towels from a bag. Barry suggested that 42 would be a more appropriate number of tickets.

OLD BUSINESS:

The president asked John Pomeranz if he had researched our Maryland tax status yet. John hadn't.

The president had bought a condolence card for Jack Chalker's family for everyone to sign. It had also been signed at Boskone.

NEW BUSINESS:

Nicki moved that we contribute to Jack Chalker's medical expenses. The motion was tabled until Mike Walsh can get more information about what is needed, and what the family would prefer money go to. Nicki mentioned that there will be an auction at the con at which Jack Chalker was to have been guest of honor. The president looked for an obituary. The secretary asked which obituary was needed, and said that the *Independent* obituary was reprinted, with permission, in the March *WSFA Journal*. Elizabeth suggested making a donation to BSFS. Bill Lawhorn moved that we keep Nicki's motion tabled until April, since so many WSFA's will miss the Third Friday meeting due to Lunacon. Bill's motion passed by general consensus.

The President asked how many people are going to Lunacon in two weeks. Plenty of people were, but enough weren't that a regular meeting will be held at the usual Third Friday location. Mike Walsh said there will be a WSFA/Capclave table at Lunacon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The secretary made the usual first announcement: Announcements should be submitted in writing, or via the email address on the cover of the *WSFA Journal*, or via the email address on the website. And there's a sign-in sheet circulating. Hugo nominations close in just under a week. They're open not just to Interaction members but also to Noreascon members. There's an Antiquarian Book Fair in Rosslyn tomorrow.

Our hostess, Lee, made the usual second announcement: Use toilet paper, not paper towels, in the toilet, and don't let either of the two cats outside.

The president asked if it was anyone's first, second, or third meeting. It wasn't. [But it was Don Bieniewicz' first meeting in over a decade.]

Cathy announced that Madeleine Yeh's mother had died of pancreatic cancer, and that she was circulating a card for us to sign.

Scott Hofmann is back from Hawaii, and is engaged to Erin Trough.

Kathi will be hosting a discussion of the stories in the March *Asimov's* upstairs after the meeting. She also announced that the cable TV show *Fast Forward* will feature an interview of Neil Gaiman.

Elizabeth wants to buy a 1999 Lexus. She also announced that there's a Capclave LiveJournal, <http://www.livejournal.com/community/capclave/>

Paul has a proposed new Capclave website logo on a USB key. [He showed it to us on Alexis's PC after the meeting.]

Judy saw "the Gates" in Manhattan, and was given a sample of the material, but forgot to bring it to show us.

Mike Walsh said that the Old Earth Books printing of the second edition of Terry Pratchett's *Guilty of Literature* is eligible to be nominated in the "best related book" Hugo category.

The secretary asked that when the meeting is adjourned that he be allowed twenty seconds to finish up and put things away in an orderly fashion.

Lee made the usual final announcement: Chairs are to be moved to the edges of the room after adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 pm. 38 minutes.

The last people left at about 12:20 am.

It was overcast and slightly above freezing. Roads and sidewalks were completely clear of snow and ice, though there was still some snow on grassy areas.

Summary of 3/4/05 meeting:

- Condolence cards for Jack Chalker's family and for Madeleine Yeh (who lost her mother) were circulated and signed.
- Nicki's motion to spend club money on Jack Chalker's medical expenses was tabled until April.
- There will be a WSFA/Capclave table at Lunacon, and a regular WSFA meeting at the Madigans, as plenty of WSFAns will be in each location.
- Some of us will be getting free tickets to *Hitchhiker's Guide*.

Third Friday Minutes

Note that there's a brief summary at the end.

The regular Third Friday meeting of the Washington Science Fiction Association was called to order by Vice President Cathy Green at about 9:15 pm on March 18th, 2005 in the downstairs of the Madigans' in Greenbelt, Maryland, the new usual third Friday location. There was a fire in the room's fireplace.

In attendance were Vice President Cathy Green, Secretary Keith Lynch, Treasurer Bob MacIntosh, all three trustees (Adrienne Ertman, Barry Newton, and Steven Smith), Erica and Lydia Ginter, Andrew (age 4), James, and Tamara Griesel, Eric Jablow, Bob Krovetz, Brian Lewis, Candy and John Madigan, Cat Meier, Judy Newton, Joe Radko, Elizabeth Twitchell, Adele Tyhurst, and Madeleine Yeh. 22 people. Bill Mayhew and William Squire arrived after the meeting. Jim Kling and Ivy Yap were marked present, but weren't seen by the secretary.

The secretary pointed out that we didn't have a quorum, since that requires at least fifteen members. This means we can have committee reports and announcements, but no old or new business. The vice president confirmed this.

The vice president asked the secretary what had happened last time. The secretary replied that our previous meeting was at the Gillilands' on the 4th, and:

- Condolence cards for Jack Chalker's family and for Madeleine Yeh (who lost her mother) were circulated and signed.
- Nicki's motion to spend club money on Jack Chalker's medical expenses was tabled until April.
- There will be a WSFA/Capclave table at Lunacon, and a regular WSFA meeting at the Madigans, as plenty of WSFAns will be in each location.
- Some of us will be getting free tickets to the new *Hitchhiker's Guide* movie. Tickets will be distributed by lottery to WSFA members.
- There will be another Capclave meeting at Peggy Rae's house on Saturday, April 9th.

Elizabeth said 25 free tickets to the new *Hitchhiker's Guide* movie would be distributed by lottery. She also said that more tickets are distributed than there are seats, so we should arrive at least a half hour early. She did not know when or where the showing will be. The people providing the tickets want us to provide *Hitchhiker's Guide* trivia questions. Trivia questions, and queries about the lottery and the showtime should go to Lee Gilliland.

TREASURY: Bob said we have \$20,740.73 in our combined accounts, plus \$15,000 in CDs. He handed the secretary a printout that said:

SMoFCon

Memberships	\$ 6,535.00	
Expenses	\$ 6,369.70	
Food/Drink		\$ 1,678.76
Hotel/Parking		\$ 4,690.94

Net to WSFA \$ 165.30

Capclave 2004

Revenue	\$ 6,999.25	
Memberships		\$ 5,500.00
Day Member.		\$ 50.00
Dealers		\$ 700.00
Art Show		\$ 749.25
Expenses	\$ 13,938.83	
Banking Fees		\$ 32.09
Credit Card Fees		\$ 24.39
Pub. - Postage		\$ 111.00
GOH per diem		\$ 533.20
Rest. Guide		\$ 61.80
Con Suite		\$ 494.63
Program Book		\$ 485.94
Logistics Truck		\$ 190.46
Hotel		\$ 11,252.50
Art Show Exp.		\$ 33.02
Sales Taxes		\$ 36.75
Artist Payout		\$ 683.05
Net loss	\$ (6,939.58)	

CAPCLAVE PAST: Bob MacIntosh said the books were closed. All artists have been paid.

CAPCLAVE PRESENT: No report, as the chair wasn't present.

CAPCLAVE FUTURE: No report, as the chair wasn't present.

SMOFCON '04: Bob MacIntosh said the books were closed.

WORLD FANTASY '03: Bob MacIntosh said money is still owed us.

ENTERTAINMENT: Alexis was at Lunacon, entertaining himself. Brian said the Washington Monument would re-open to the public on April 1st. Bob MacIntosh said the Monument *grounds* would *not* be open to the public. He insisted he wasn't joking. The public will go through a new underground security zone.

FINANCE: Bob MacIntosh said the CDs have been purchased.

PUBLICATIONS: Keith said we have February and March WSFA Journals here, plus one November issue, and that 26 2/3 years of issues are online at wsfa.org. Eric's statement that that was a marathon achievement was greeted with groans. [By the end of the evening, five February and six March issues had been taken. Brian took the one November issue.]

BOOK: Keith read from an email that Ernest Lilley had sent him earlier that day, which said:

From: Ernest Lilley
 To: Samuel Lubell, Keith F. Lynch
 Cc: Drew Bittner, Michael Walsh
 Subject: Future Washington Report for the meeting -
 Date: Fri, 18 Mar 2005 10:50:01 -0500

Sam (Keith cc's for the journal, and could you take a copy in case Sam doesn't get it?),

I won't be able to make it up to MD. Could you report for me on the State of Future Washington?

Things are looking good for the state of Future Washington, at least as far as the anthology goes.

We now have 10 or a hoped for 12 stories from solicited authors, including a chapter from his next part in the Kim Stanley Robinson 40 Days of Rain trilogy, Cory Doctorow's novella Human Readable, which we may get first publication for, and The Day of the RFIDs by Edward M. Lerner.

I've also gotten some unsolicited stories that aren't too bad.

I don't expect to have too much trouble locking down a few more stories in the next month.

I do need contracts for the authors soon if we're actually going to bother, and I'm planning on sending in the manuscript in mid April, so we should brace ourselves for 6-8k of outlay in May.

Can you get some commitments from Mike W. on contracts?

See you at the First Friday meeting.

Ernest Lilley

Home/Office: 703 371 0226
EJ: 757 581 4146
email: elilley@mindspring.com

Cathy asked whether the unsolicited submissions would be used. Keith didn't know. For the benefit of new people Keith explained that this will be an anthology of stories about the future of Washington DC, and will be the first WSFA Press book in over a decade. It will be out this summer. Someone asked if it would be distributed through bookstores. Keith didn't know. Bob MacIntosh said he thought we'd be using Old Earth Books' distribution system, which includes bookstores and amazon.com.

Cathy Green asked the new people to introduce themselves.

Tamara Griesel did so. She said she is not really an ecologist, but plays one on TV. She just moved here two weeks ago from Nebraska, where she was active in Des Moines fandom. She found us via our website.

Jim Griesel, her husband, introduced himself. He's an archivist at the Library of Congress.

Adele Tyhurst, Tamara's mother, introduced herself. She's a nurse, from Kansas City. She moved here to be close to her family. She has a bachelor's degree in art history, and an associate degree in interior design. She used to work at Home Depot, but she makes more money in nursing.

The Griesels' four-year-old son, Andrew, dressed as Spider-Man, was also present.

Joe Radko introduced himself. He grew up in Beltsville, which is very close to the meeting location. Jack Chalker told him about the club, and after ten years he finally got around to showing up.

Bob Krovetz introduced himself.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Candy said the bathroom door has been fixed. If you want sodas she doesn't have, tell her, and she'll get them next time. The dog can be fed anything except chocolate. The white bunny bites.

Elizabeth said that Andre Norton had died.

The secretary said announcements should be submitted in writing, or via the email address on the cover of the WSFA Journal. There's a sign-in sheet circulating. Everyone, new and old, should sign it. You have to attend three meetings

before you can join.

Cathy said Kathi will be continuing her discussions of short stories in the latest issues of *Asimov's* at the next meeting.

Brian moved that we adjourn. Madeleine objected that we can't vote on the motion since we don't have a quorum. She was overruled. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm. 20 minutes.

Several people were still present when the secretary left at midnight.

It was cool and partly cloudy. There was no trace of snow or ice anywhere.

Summary of 3/18/05 meeting:

- There was no quorum, since lots of people were at Lunacon.
- Six new people were at the meeting.
- At First Friday, Nicki's motion to spend club money on Jack Chalker's medical expenses had been tabled until April.
- Some of us will be getting free tickets to the new *Hitchhiker's Guide* movie, to be distributed by lottery.
- There will be another Capclave meeting at Peggy Rae's house on Saturday, April 9th.

April First Friday Minutes

SPLITTING INFINITIVES
IS EASY, MAN...
IN FUCKING INFINITIVES

Note that there's a brief summary at the end.

The regular First Friday meeting of the Washington Science Fiction Association was called to order by President Samuel Lubell at 9:15 pm on April 1st, 2005 in the basement of the Gillilands' in Arlington, Virginia, the usual First Friday location.

In attendance were President Samuel Lubell, Vice President Cathy Green, Secretary Keith Lynch, Treasurer Bob MacIntosh, All three trustees (Adrienne Ertman, Barry Newton, and Steven Smith), Capclave Present Michael Walsh, Capclave Future Elspeth Kovar, Alexis and Lee Gilliland, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Judy Kindell, Bill Lawhorn, Ernest Lilley, Nicki and Richard Lynch, Keith Marshall, Cat Meier, Walter Miles, Michael Nelson, Judy Newton, Kathi Overton, John Pomeranz, Rebecca Prather, Judy and Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Gayle Surette, Michael Taylor, Elizabeth Twitchell, Houston Westfall, and Madeleine Yeh. 35 people. William Squire and Ted White arrived after the meeting. Jim Kling and Ivy Yap were marked present, but weren't seen by the secretary.



The president asked the secretary what business had been done at the previous meeting. The secretary replied that no business had been done at the Madigans' on the 18th, since there was no quorum, but:

- Six new people were at the meeting.
- At First Friday, Nicki's motion to spend club money on Jack Chalker's medical expenses had been tabled until April.
- Some of us will be getting free tickets to the new *Hitchhiker's Guide* movie, to be distributed by lottery.
- There will be another Capclave meeting at Peggy Rae's house on Saturday, April 9th.

Cathy Green asked how it is that the minutes of the April 1st meeting are in the WSFA Journal that was distributed before that meeting. The Secretary responded that strange things sometimes happen this time of year. He suggested that everyone avoid reading the minutes until after the meeting is over. Or if you've already read them, that you do your best to follow the script, so as to avoid paradoxes. If all else fails, at least try not to shoot your grandfather. No good ever comes from that.

CAPCLAVE PRESENT: Mike Walsh reminded us that there will be a Capclave meeting at Peggy Rae's at 2 pm on April 9th. There was also discussion of what to do differently at our table at Balticon, as few memberships were sold at our table at Lunacon.

CAPCLAVE FUTURE: Elspeth had nothing new to announce.

WORLD FANTASY '03: Mike Walsh said we're still awaiting money from advertisers.

TREASURY: Bob said we had \$20,740.73 in the main account, plus \$15,000 in CDs.

SMOFCON '04: The books are closed. We made \$165.30.

PUBLICATIONS: Keith Lynch said April WSFA Journals are available, along with various back issues. He advised everyone not to read the minutes of the April 1st meeting until the meeting ends.

TRUSTEES: The trustees slate for '06 is to keep all the same officers, with two exceptions: Colleen Cahill is nominated as the Capclave '07 chair, and they want to replace the current secretary with Beverly Brandt after what the current secretary did in the April Journal. "The nerve of him, putting words in our mouths," said all three trustees.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The secretary made the usual first announcement: Announcements should be submitted in writing, or via the email address on the cover of the WSFA Journal, or via the email address on the website. And there's a sign-in sheet circulating.

Our hostess, Lee, made the usual second announcement: Use toilet paper, not paper towels, in the toilet, and don't let either of the two cats outside.

The president asked if it was anyone's first, second, or third meeting. It wasn't.

Rebecca had Mensa newsletters. Oddly, they contained reports of a Mensa meeting held later this month. And it was reported in that newsletter that at that Mensa meeting, Rebecca had distributed copies of the April WSFA Journal, mentioning that it contained a report of a WSFA meeting that hadn't yet happened, at which the newsletters reporting that Mensa meeting were distributed. Fortunately for the integrity of the space-time continuum, nobody at WSFA actually took and read her newsletter.

Kathi will be hosting a discussion of the stories in the April *Asimov's* upstairs after the meeting.

The president announced that Lunacon would be held March 18th through 20th. The secretary pointed out that this was in the past. The president responded that he knew that; the announcement was for the benefit of people who will read about it in the minutes, which will be published before the meeting. The secretary said that won't work, as the minutes weren't finished until March 27th. He apologized for not having the minutes done before Lunacon, and said that he'll try to have the April 15th minutes done more quickly, so Sam should be sure to announce Lunacon again then. As he continues to get faster and faster at doing the minutes, he hopes to eventually have the minutes of all our future meetings on our website by 1997, the year our website was established.

Mike Walsh said that the Old Earth Books printing of the second edition of Terry Pratchett's *Guilty of Literature* is eligible to be nominated in the "best related book" Hugo category. He had copies of the Old Earth Books printing of Harlan Ellison's *Last Dangerous Visions* for sale, but nobody was interested.

Lee made the usual final announcement: Chairs are to be moved to the edges of the room after adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 pm. 31 minutes.

The last people left at about 12:10 am.

It was a cold clear day in April.

Summary of 4/1/05 meeting:

- There will be another Capclave meeting at Peggy Rae's house on Saturday, April 9th.
- Some of us will be getting free tickets to *Hitchhiker's Guide*.
- The time-space continuum was irreparably shattered when someone at this meeting foolishly did something different from what I had reported that they had done. All die. Oh, the embarrassment.
- These are not the minutes you are looking for. Try the May issue for a different version of the April 1st minutes. (You knew that already? What tipped you off?)

This Month in History

From the Secretary's Archives

April 1955:

Meetings on 1st and 3rd Sundays at Dot Cole's. Treasury \$37.67. Bob Pavlat read a newspaper article that claimed that lurid SF on TV was responsible for the shortage of scientists. Ted White suggested we hold a two week convention with no program, just drinking. The president criticized the movie "Conquest of Space" for bad science, and suggested seeing "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" instead. E. Murphy asked if we were incorporated yet; the answer was no. The program was a tape recorded lecture on novas and supernovas. 10 & 13 in attendance. The first McDonalds restaurant opens.

April 1965:

Meetings on 1st and 3rd Fridays at Elizabeth Cullen's. 21 & 20 in attendance, including Alexis but nobody else who has been to a meeting in 2005. Treasury \$144.33. Bob Pavlat moved that if fiction is ever published in The WSFA Journal, that the editor be beheaded. The motion passed unanimously. (Sorry, Eric.) Two WSFA's reported that they planned to go to that year's Worldcon, which was in the UK. [A total of 350 people attended that Worldcon. 83 attended 1965's Disclave.]

April 1975:

First Fridays were at the Gillilands, Third Fridays were at the Bergs'. The officers were President Alexis Gilliland, Vice President Jack Chalker, Secretary Betty Berg (Lockwood), Treasurer Bill Berg, Trustees Ron Bounds, Alan Huff, and Mark Owings. Please contact the secretary if you have any other non-Disclave information about WSFA in 1975. South Vietnam surrendered.

April 1985:

First Friday at Balticon, Third Friday at the Olivers'. Attendance wasn't taken. Treasury \$5,795.14. Disclave '85 Chairman Mike Walsh related that the program "would be a little wingy this year, but that it was coming along well." There was no WSFA Journal for March or April. (Or May.)

April 1995:

First and Third Fridays at the Gillilands' and Ginters'. Attendance 49 and 25. Treasury \$6,454.85. James Uba hosted First Friday, as the Gillilands were in Las Vegas. Joe Mayhew reported on which WSFA Journals were missing from our archives. (We're missing some that he had, and we've found some that he hadn't.) Joe Mayhew published two WSFA Journals in April, as he did every month from March '95 through February '96. Tim McVeigh detonated a truck bomb in Oklahoma City.

April 2005:

First and Third Fridays at the Gillilands' and Madigans'. At the April 1st meeting, WSFA Journals were distributed which inadvertently already had minutes of the April 1st meeting, and which also mentioned it in the "This Month in History" column. It was very much like what happened in April 2005.

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. Also, it contains links to more information about the events. This is a regular feature of *The WSFA Journal*.

Wednesday, March 30th: *Cassini* lecture

Dr. Torrence V. Johnson speaks about the *Cassini* results, at the National Air and Space Museum at 8 pm.



April 1 - 3: *Technicon 22*

A convention in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Friday, April 1st: *WSFA First Friday Meeting*

Regular WSFA meeting (at the Gillilands' as usual). Newcomers welcome. Email me for directions.

Friday, April 8th: *Gene Kranz* talk

Gene Kranz, flight director for Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo, speaks at the National Air and Space Museum at 8 pm.

Saturday, April 9th: *Capclave* meeting

There will be a meeting open to anyone interested in working on Capclave, at Peggy Rae's house starting at 2 pm.

April 15 - 18: *Used book sale*

Used book sale at the Stone Ridge School in Bethesda Maryland, near the Medical Center Station on Metro's Red Line.

Friday, April 15th: *WSFA Third Friday Meeting*

Regular WSFA meeting. At the Madigans, as usual. Newcomers welcome.

Tuesday, April 19th: *Don't Panic!*

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy movie opens.

Wednesday, April 20th: *Michelle Feynman* at *Olsson's*

At 7 pm Michelle Feynman, editor and daughter of Richard Feynman, discusses her new book *Perfectly Reasonable Deviations from the Beaten Track: The Letters of Richard P. Feynman*, at Olsson's Books and Records at 2111 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, adjacent to the Courthouse Metro station on the Orange line (use the "Colonial Village" exit).

April 29 - May 1: *Book Sale at Arlington Library*

Used book sale at Arlington Central Public Library.

April 29 - May 1: *Malice Domestic*

A mystery convention in Arlington Virginia.

Friday, April 29th: *Fifth Friday*

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

Friday, May 6th: *WSFA First Friday Meeting*

Regular WSFA meeting (at the Gillilands' as usual). Newcomers welcome. Email me for directions.

Thursday, May 19th: *Revenge of the Sith*

The Star Wars: Episode III movie opens.

Friday, May 20th: WSFA Third Friday Meeting

Regular WSFA meeting. At the Madigans, as usual. Newcomers welcome.

May 27 - 30: Balticon 39

The Baltimore Science Fiction Society (BSFS) brings you another Balticon. At the Wyndham Baltimore one last time before it moves to Hunt Valley.

August 4 - 8: 63rd World SF Convention: Interaction

Glasgow, once more with ceiling.

September 1 - 5: CascadiaCon

The 2005 NASFiC, near Seattle.

October 14 - 16: Capclave 2005

WSFA is putting on a convention! In Silver Spring, MD.

Attendance Report

By Keith Lynch

For the sixth year in a row, here is my annual WSFA meeting attendance report. The information this report is based on comes almost exclusively from the meeting minutes and other information in the WSFA Journal. This information is not always accurate or complete, so please take this report with a grain of NaCl. Some people don't sign in, some arrive after the meeting is over, and some write in fake names or the names of members who aren't present. Lydia has been at nearly all the meetings at the Ginters since she was born, but is only signed in sporadically. Ted White comes to many of the Virginia meetings, but usually arrives after the meeting is over, and doesn't sign in. Bill Squire often arrives very late -- sometimes after midnight.

We now have nearly 27 years of WSFA Journals online (at <http://www.wsfa.org/journal/>), up from 21 years a year ago, and eleven years two years ago, but meeting attendance wasn't consistently taken and recorded in the Journal until 1995. We currently have attendance data from 366 meetings online, 161 of which were at the Gillilands', 102 of which were at the Ginters', 7 at the Madigans', and 96 of which were elsewhere.

Where are the WSFAans of yesteryear?

If I define a "regular" as someone who attends at least a third of the meetings, 1995 had 46 regulars, and 2004/05 has 39. Of the 46 1995 regulars, 32 have attended at least one meeting in 2004/05. This is the same number as last year, but not quite the same people.

The fourteen 1995 regulars who have disappeared entirely (attended no meetings in 2004 or 2005) are Dan Burgess, Steven desJardins, Jim and Terilee Edwards-Hewitt, the late Joe Mayhew, Sam Pierce, Dick Roepke, Rachel Russell, John and Peggy Rae Sapienza, Tom Schaad, Michael Watkins, Miles Weissman, and Ben Zuhl. Last year's "disappeared" 1995 regulars Chris Callahan, Dan Hoey, and Tom Schaad have reappeared, at least briefly, but have been replaced on the missing list by Jim Edwards-Hewitt, Sam Pierce, and T.R. Smith.

That's not to say meetings have become smaller. We just have a slightly different mix of people every year. WSFA no longer has any overlap at all with our pre-1954 attendees. Perhaps WSFA of the 2050s will have no overlap at all with the WSFA of today. (Greetings to the WSFAans of the 2050s, poring over this ancient WSFA Journal, wondering what all the strange people listed in it were like.)

Of the 39 2004/05 regulars, 19 were 1995 regulars (which is actually up by one since last year), six were 1995 irregulars, and 14 are new. The 14 new regulars are Drew Bittner, Adrienne Ertman, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Bill Lawhorn, Ernest Lilley, Keith and Wade Lynch, John Madigan, Cat Meier, Larry Pfeffer, Gayle Surette, and Elizabeth Twitchell. (Actually John Madigan first attended in 1987, but didn't attend any meetings between 1990 and

1997. And Larry Pfeffer is no longer a regular, as he has moved out of the area.)

Of the 39 2004/05 regulars, the median first attendance (i.e. half first attended a WSFA meeting earlier, half later) is 1990.

Of all the people at each of the most recent four meetings (counting just the ones who have been to three or more meetings) the median first attendances were 1989, 1987, 1991, and 1986 respectively.

Here is an attendance grid of people present at WSFA meetings in 2003-2005 to date. V for Gilliland (in Virginia), G for Ginter, C for Capclave, S for SMOFcon, M for Madigan, N for Noreascon, and x for a meeting not held (lowercase if attendance wasn't taken). Only people who have been to three or more meetings during this time are listed. People known by different names at different times are listed under their current name.

A J before the person's name means they've contributed to the WSFA Journal during this period, an L means they're on the WSFA email chat list, an M means they've hosted one or more events to which all WSFA members were invited during this period, and an O means they're currently an officer. A j means they have contributed to the WSFA Journal, but not since 2003 began, an l means they were previously on the WSFA email list but have unsubscribed, an m means they've hosted one or more events to which all WSFA members were invited, but not since 2003 began, and an o means they have been a WSFA officer in the past but aren't currently one. I do not have information on who is a paid member, or on who has attended Capclave, SMOFcon, or WFC. Numerous people who rate one or more of these letters don't show up here because they haven't been to three meetings since 2003 began.

The two digit year before a person's name is when they were first mentioned in the WSFA Journal, or when they first attended a WSFA meeting, whichever happened first. Pre-1978 years should not necessarily be trusted, as our older records have some gaps in them.

		2003												2004												2005			
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	
		VGV	x	VGV	V	VGV	V	G	V	F	G	V	G	V	G	V	G	V	G	V	G	V	G	V	C	V	M	S	M
	81 F.L. Ahsh												*	*								*							
o	87 Covert Beach							*				*												*					
	95 Bernard Bell	*	*																										
	98 Sheri Bell	*					*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*		*		*		*	*	*	*	*		
L	04 Drew Bittner														*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
	01 Elaine Brennan			*							*																*		
	03 Otis Brooks											*	*	*															
JL	94 Colleen Cahill			*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
jLMo	90 Chuck Divine										*			*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
jL O	00 Adrienne Ertman	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
L	03 Stan Field										*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
L	04 Mark Fischer													*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	01 Carolyn Frank					*					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
J Mo	63 A. Gilliland	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
J	67 Charles Gilliland										*			*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
jLMo	86 Lee Gilliland	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
jLMo	84 Erica Ginter	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
M	90 Karl Ginter					*					*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
M	95 Lydia Ginter										*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	96 Marc Gordon		*								*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
JL O	01 Cathy Green	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
J	91 Kindra Gresham										*								*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	04 Paul Haggerty																		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	02 Chris Hayes						*	*															*	*	*	*	*	*	
	97 Shirl Hayes					*	*																*	*	*	*	*	*	
L	04 Bill Herriman													*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
L	04 Karey Herriman													*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
lmo	98 Scott Hofmann	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
jL o	91 Eric Jablow	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
	81 Bill Jensen		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
J o	90 Judy Kindell	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
jL	01 Jim Kling	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
JL O	90 Elspeth Kovar	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
L	01 Bill Lawhorn	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
j	83 Brian Lewis		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
JL	04 Ernest Lilley													*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

[illegible]

A chart of attendance from 1995 through one year ago can be found in last April's WSFA Journal. There's little point in my reprinting it here with one extra year tacked on. There is sporadic attendance information in earlier meeting minutes, and perhaps next year I can extend that chart further back, albeit with some holes in it.

Of the 366 meetings we have reasonably complete attendance data for online, the top ten in attendance are:

298 Alexis Gilliland
277 Bob MacIntosh
242 Steven Smith
236 Michael Walsh
221 George Shaner
220 Joe Mayhew

219 Walter Miles
198 Lee Gilliland
192 Eric Jablow
192 Nicki Lynch
192 Richard Lynch

(That's eleven names, but there was a three-way tie for ninth place.)

Of just the 161 meetings at the Gillilands we have data for:

148 Alexis Gilliland
132 Bob MacIntosh
117 Steven Smith
115 Lee Gilliland
115 George Shaner
114 Michael Walsh
108 Walter Miles
99 Rebecca Prather
96 Nicki Lynch
96 Richard Lynch

Of just the 106 meetings at the Ginters and Madigans we have data for:

101 Erica Ginter
88 Bob MacIntosh
87 Eric Jablow
86 Alexis Gilliland
84 Samuel Lubell
82 Nicki Lynch
81 Richard Lynch
79 George Shaner
78 Michael Taylor
68 Barry Newton
68 Steven Smith

The average attendance of the 161 meetings at the Gillilands' for which we have full attendance data was 36. The median was 34 (i.e. half the meetings were larger, half were smaller). The range was 18 (December 2003) to 69 (December 1978).

The average attendance of the 106 meetings at the Ginters' and Madigans' for which we have full attendance data was 29. The median was also 29. The range was 10 (November 1995, opposite Philcon) to 43 (most recently September 1995).

Looking at just the 7 meetings at the Madigans', the average was 28, and median was 30. The range was 20 (February 2004) to 38 (December 2004).

Considering how much turnover there has been, our meeting sizes have been remarkably stable.

Over the past year, the two meetings of each month each had a median of 15 members in common (15 people who attended one meeting attended the next), and a median of 47 different people total (47 distinct people attended one or both).

Apparently 920 people have been to at least one of the 366 meetings. (Some of the names were probably written in as a prank, or are mis-transcriptions of hard to read written-in names.) 485 of those 920 have only been to one. 435 have been to two or more, 346 to three or more, and 306 to four or more. Of those who have been to at least three, the median attendance was 12. Of the 24 long term regulars (those who have been to at least a third of the 366 meetings) the median attendance is 190, 52% of the meetings. As described above, there's considerable non-overlap between the 1995 regulars and the 2004/05 regulars.

72 people have been to at least one of the six meetings there have been so far in 2005. Just three of us (Cathy Green, Barry Newton, and myself) were at all six.

One more question I attempted to answer is what kind of weighted average of past attendance is most predictive of future attendance? Loosely speaking, what's the effective half-life of a WSFA member? Alternatively, given the information we have, what's the likelihood, for each person, of that person showing up at the next meeting? Which names should go on the limited space on the sign-in sheet, to minimize the number of people who have to write in their names? Obviously, a perfect prediction will never be possible. But just how much better can we do than, say, just looking at the total number of meetings someone attended in the past year, as if someone who attended just the first four and none since were just as likely to be at the next one as someone who attended just the last four and none before? And as if attendance prior to the past year had no predictive value?

I've experimented with several algorithms, and found that the best one is based on Laplace transforms. I'm willing and eager to discuss it with anyone who is interested, which I suspect most of you aren't. The short answer is that assuming WSFA's have a single simple half-life results in poor predictions. How close to correct the attendance in the written-in-advance April 1st minutes is should tell you about how good it is or isn't.

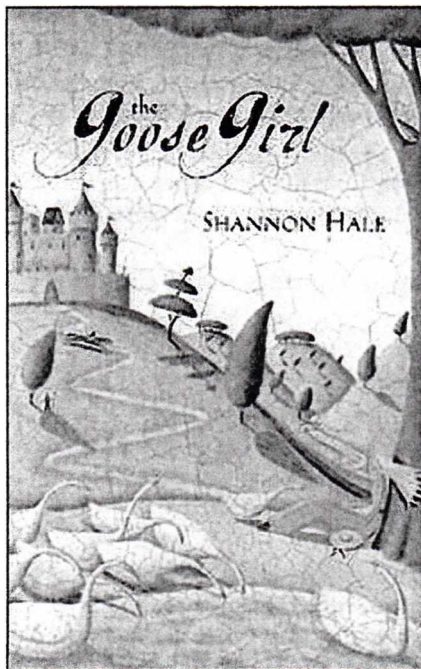
I plan to do this again next year. I am open to suggestions for interesting analyses or charts I can do on these data. I also have (or can easily get) weather information for all meeting dates. Perhaps I should check to see if there are any fen who are less likely (or more likely) to show up during bad weather.

The Goose Girl

by Shannon Hale

New York: Bloomsbury, 2003

A review by Colleen R. Cahill



After reading *Beauty*, Robin McKinley's retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*, I have sought out other retellings of fairy tales. One I have not seen before was a retelling of the Goose Girl, and with Shannon Hale's delightful new version of this story, I need look no further.

The basic story of the princess who becomes a goose girl when a treacherous handmaid takes her place is intact, but expanded and made even more magical. The Crown Princess of Kildenree, Anidori-Kiladra Talianna Isilee is unusual from the start: after she is born, she does not open her eyes for three days until her aunt arrives to sing her stories of magpies and pigeons. Ani, as her aunt calls her, is a quick learner, speaking sentences in the first year and soon shows abilities to learn languages of all sorts, especially of birds. The people of Kildenree are not comfortable with uncommon gifts and while Ani tries to fit in, she finds only Selia, daughter of the Key Mistress, is willing to be her friend.

Ani is constantly training to be the next Queen Kildenree, so it is shock when she is sent to marry the Prince of Bayren and her brother would be King of Kildenree. A dutiful daughter, Ani goes and takes Selia along as her Lady-in-Waiting, but it turns out Selia has other plans. During the long trip to Bayren, a plot hatches: Selia and a few of the guards plan to kill Ani and put Selia in her place as the Kildenreen Princess. A misty night allows Ani to escape, but now she has no place to go. Her family sent her away and she has no proof that she is

the Princess Ani. In a strange country, speaking with a funny accent and having no real skills, Ani is lucky to have the assistance of Gilsa, a woman who lives in the woods, who helps Ani find a position as goose girl to the King.

While the ending of the story is the same, the path that the author takes to get there is intriguing. Ani knows Selia still wants her dead, but she is shocked by the discovery that the former servant would start a war between the two kingdoms to keep her new position. Ani has to find the strength to expose this false princess or many lives, including all of her family, will be lost.

This is a story with a lot of atmosphere, with a dark feel that is realistic. The characters are well drawn and while Selia is full of deep villainy, she is not over the top, as her motivations and methods are logical, if not admirable. The growth of Ani from shy and retiring to a more forthright person is also plausible, without any sudden suspicious shifts in personality.

Ms. Hale's work is a wonderful retelling and addresses the loneliness of being different, be it in speech, manners or a special gift. While aimed at young adult girls, this book is perfect for anyone who enjoys the work that Terry Windling and Ellen Datlow have done with revised fairy tales.

Morrie Went A Courting

By Alexis Gilliland

After his second cup of coffee Morrie sat back, emailed his review of the play we'd just seen to his editor, and closed his laptop computer. "Dating an intellectual isn't all it's cracked up to be," he said by way of apology. "On the other hand, some of us are reputed to be excellent lovers. Would you like a dessert of some sort? The Crème Caramel is first rate here."

I shook my head. "No thanks, the eggs and bacon were all I wanted. What did you think of the argument?"

He refilled his cup, emptying the carafe of coffee. "Amateurish. If you want to throw a pie, it should be a cream pie, not an apple pie with a crust."

"Not that argument. The argument for God creating man."

"Oh?" He took a cautious sip and put his cup down. "It was preachy," he said at last. "The playwright was trying to enlighten his audience instead of entertaining them, and it made the second act seem way too long."

"You are not nearly handsome enough to be so exasperating," I told him. "The argument was that life, and man, were created because they are too complicated to have evolved by accident, and that such creation was necessarily the result of an intelligent design. That argument."

"That argument sounds like intelligence overrating its own importance in the scheme of things, darling," he replied easily. "I would have thought all that interrelated complexity made a strong case for Evolution, with millions of iterations, making small incremental changes, and the changes competing with each other to sort themselves out, so eventually here we are, you and me, debating about how we got here as a prelude to where we're going. The idea that god said: "Let there be life," and there was life, sort of begs the question."

"What do you mean?"

"Two things: First, if you postulate such a god giving such an order, who was it given to, and what was the agency by which that word became reality?"

"An omnipotent and omniscient God wouldn't worry about those details," I said. "He gives the word and the deed is done. What's your other thing?"

"If god was constrained by the laws of the world he had just created, Evolution is the agency by which he would have created life."

"That is just SO untrue." I blurted.

Morrie shook his head. "If I sincerely wanted to take you to bed, I might agree with you, but the lust to argue is stronger than the lust to fornicate."

"I should slap your face."

"Is this the thanks I get for preferring your mind to your body? Earlier this evening you expressed the wish to be taken seriously. Here I am, taking you seriously even though we seem to be in disagreement, and you want to slap my face. If I slyly pretended to come around to your side of the argument, would you reward me with a kiss, or perhaps a little more?"

"You bastard!" I did try to slap his face, but awkwardly since my right hand had to go across my body and he caught it, kissed me on the fingers and let go. He studied me for a moment and smiled.

"Okay. In the first act you will remember, they introduced that old chestnut, the man finding a watch on the beach, which inspires his question: "Where did this watch come from?" The man astutely deduces that there must have been a watchmaker, and by analogy, since he is also on the beach, that *he* must have a Maker as well. Well, there is lots of stuff on the beach, so suppose that he had found an hermit crab, one of those little critters running around in a seashell, what would he have been inspired to deduce *then*? When he asks his question, he deduces that his little crustacean had a mama and a poppa, and lets it go at that without postulating the necessity of a maker of hermit crabs, since the crab, like all living things, is clearly self-replicating.. So what is the difference between the watch and the hermit crab?"

After a moment I conceded the point. "The watch is a man made artifact, while the hermit crab is one of God's creatures."

"Yes, darling, that is precisely right. By comparing egg rolls and eggplants, the faithful make a foolish analogy to assert the existence of god, maker of hermit crabs, human beings and, indeed, all living things. Are you sure you wouldn't like a Crème Caramel?"

"Maybe later. Even so, I would much rather have been created in God's image than be the 50th cousin of a chimpanzee as a result of evolution."

Morrie sort of smiled. "As a critic one must recognize the strength of the aesthetic preferences of the audience, but equally I have no doubt that reaching out to your 50th cousins among god-created humanity would also turn up some pretty revolting specimens, including perhaps Hitler, Stalin, and Osama bin Laden. Also, you are expressing the degree of relatedness rather casually. Evolution suggests that humans and chimpanzees had their last common ancestor maybe three or four million years ago, which is what, a couple of hundred thousand generations? So that humans and chimps are 200,000th cousins, 200,000 times removed, a degree of separation that should satisfy the most fastidious. Nevertheless, human and chimpanzee DNA is 97 or 98 percent identical. Our last common ancestor with the chicken was about 160 million years ago, and human and chicken DNA is still maybe 60 percent identical."

"I don't care. I'd rather be descended from an act of Divine Creation than some evolutionary accident."

"We are all god's children," he said. "And we are also kin to everything that lives, as our mutual digestibility suggests. Chimpanzees, chickens, cauliflower, and all the little microorganisms. Everything."

"Baloney! I don't care. Humans are so complicated that there had to be an intelligent creator. We just didn't happen by random chance."

Morrie finished his coffee. "That was the gist of act two, at any rate. Which led to the climactic revelation in act three that god created the world "recently" by which the author meant ten thousand years ago, give or take a few. Do you agree with that?"

"We-ell, maybe a little... pretty much so... Yes. If the Holy Bible is the word of God, then evolution isn't true. Well, the Bible IS the word of God so evolution just can't have happened."

"What is it in the Bible that you won't let go of?" The bastard grinned. "The question answers itself, darling. If evolution

is right, the conclusion that logically follows from your premise is the promise of life everlasting must be wrong, that Heaven and Hell do not exist."

I nodded my head in grim acknowledgement.

"Only that conclusion does *not* follow. The Bible is not one seamless piece, you know. The Old Testament is different from the New Testament, and the speculation on cosmology is independent of the speculation on the life everlasting. If Darwin had done his work in the first century BC, he would have been embraced as a major prophet, and the book of Genesis might have included the book of Darwin."

I shook my head. "The Bible is the word of God, all of it."

"Well, people believe what they want to believe," Morrie conceded. "There was this poll that showed 67-percent of Americans saying they believe in an afterlife, and 99.7-percent of those believers thought they were going to Heaven. Proof, as if any were needed, that Americans are an optimistic people. Against the fear of death, the theory of Evolution doesn't stand a chance. Even if it's right."

"But it isn't right."

"That is at least debatable, so, in the manner of debaters let us consider the alternative. Your god is the creator of life, including us happy humans. As the play--and perhaps you--conceive him, he is omnipotent, and omniscient?" I nodded. "And just?"

I frowned. "There is injustice in the world, but God is just, at least in Heaven."

"Oh really? Where a just god hands out infinite rewards and punishments for humanity's finite deeds? That doesn't sound very just to me."

"Don't push it, Morrie. It might have been Milton who said: "Do not presume thy God to scan, the proper study of man is man."

He smirked as I played to one of his strengths. "You're paraphrasing Alexander Pope, from "An Essay on Man" actually. So you are saying it is all right for you to embrace an arbitrary and theoretical escape from death which depends on an arbitrary and theoretical god, and wrong for me to examine that arbitrary and theoretical construct of yours?"

I didn't know I could growl. "You leave my God alone."

A shrug. "Okay, darling. May we then consider one of his works?"

"Which one?"

"The work of creating the world--complete with all the specious evidence of great antiquity--just before we humans started to have an historical record. The climax of the third act was that dogmatic moron of a scientist whining that the creationist argument was irrefutable and throwing the pie in despair."

"It is scientifically irrefutable."

Morrie covered his mouth with his hand, but his eyes were laughing. "Well, at least it is non-testable, but it also has a couple of troublesome holes in its logic. Why is "recent" ten thousand years ago, and not the birth of Christ, or the invention of baseball, or something even later? A god capable of creating the world complete with false evidence of Earth's great antiquity, could equally well create a world full of people with consistent memories of what they had been doing before they were created in mid life, so to speak."

"God could have done that, but He didn't. He created the Earth before He inspired His Prophets to create the Bible."

"If we accept for the sake of argument that the world was indeed so created, then a theological problem presents itself. The rejection of Evolution is necessary because the Holy Bible is the word of god and therefore literally true, right?"

"There are some who hold that belief, yes."

"Are you one of them?"

I paused, to order a Creme Caramel from the waiter. It didn't help.

"Are you one of them?" he repeated.

"On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays," I conceded. "And on alternate Sundays. A true believer wouldn't have gone out with you at all."

Morrie looked at his watch. "Saturday has another half hour to go," he said. "So for the time being your position is that god's message in the Bible--the Book of the Word--is true, while the message inscribed in the stones of Earth--the Book of the World, a message suggesting a history of 4.9 billion years--is false?"

I nodded, and he gestured with his hands, coaxing out my reluctant reply. "Yes."

"Very well. Do you think that the Bible, the Book of the Word, and the Earth, the Book of the World were created by the same entity?"

That threw me. "What? What do you mean?"

"The devil is sometimes called the Father of Lies," he replied. "Your assertion that the Earth may be of recent origin is scientifically untestable and therefore can neither be proven nor disproven, but it has this theological difficulty; since the Book of the World is filled with all the lies supporting Evolution, the world might have been created by the devil rather than god. Think about it. By rejecting Evolution in this frivolous manner, you have opened the door to Manicheism on steroids."

Oh my God! It didn't bear thinking about. I finished my dessert and laid the spoon on the plate, "I think, well... I think I'd like a drink."

He paid the check and stood up. "I have some excellent brandy in my apartment if you'd care to come up for a nightcap."

I nodded a bit shakily. I couldn't bear thinking about it, but I couldn't not think about it, either. Setting the Book of the Word against the Book of the World, might defeat evolution, but at a terrible price. The notion that the World had been created by the Devil instead God was downright evil, and could, no, *would* spawn a whole family of the most appalling heresies. Far worse than evolution--the heresy we know and love? A fragment from an earlier argument came to mind: Galileo had been right; maybe Darwin was, too? I didn't want to go any further. I needed to talk it over with the group. Mostly, I needed to get away from this awful discussion right now! "A nightcap would be fine with me, if we can change the subject." All riight! cheered my id. Not to worry, sniffed my super ego, at the first red light tell him you want to go home.

"Of course," replied Morrie oblivious to my internal conflict. "Are you familiar with the theories of the Monk Rasputin? They called him mad, but he was the only one in the court of Tsar Nicholas II who opposed Imperial Russia's entry into World War I."

He opened the door of his car for me. "And what were these theories of his?" I asked as I fastened my seatbelt.

"Rasputin held that the key to salvation was repentance," he said, easing on to the street. "And the key to a proper repentance was that one needed to have something to repent. To achieve salvation, it was necessary to sin with conviction in order repent with wholehearted sincerity. Now since repetition will gradually make *any* repentance pro forma rather than sincere, obtaining divine salvation means it is necessary for one to have an unending supply of fresh sins to repent.

Sort of like pulling tissues from the box.

I could see where this conversation was going to lead us, and was of several minds about it. My super ego wanted to go home, and while it was waiting for the chance to make that thing happen, was fretting that I had chosen to go out on this date without wearing any underpants. My id--which had led me to leave my panties off in the first place--was focused on the promise of some excellent brandy, and hoping that that nice Morrie would make a pass. Meanwhile my ego, which didn't appreciate the hangovers that followed when the id got its way, was thinking that Rasputin's argument should do nicely to immobilize the super ego at the crucial moment, so that no more than a couple of shots of brandy would be necessary to get Morrie's pass into my end zone.

In the event God took the decision out of my hands. We caught green lights all the way to his place, so the chance to tell Morrie to take me home never materialized, and as we entered his apartment, my thought, "God's will be done," was a curious mixture of resignation and delight.

The End

Save Star Trek

Date: Mon, 14 Feb 2005 09:44:17 EST
From: HelenFWard@aol.com
Subject: Save Star Trek - please read!! (not spam)

Hello! My name is Helen Ward and I am an Internet Liaison Officer on behalf of the TrekUnited "Save Star Trek Enterprise" Campaign. I have been nominated to link up with as many Science Fiction societies and other similar bodies as possible, to spread the word on the latest Star Trek news in the States.

Those of you in your group who are Trek fans might already know this if you belong to Trek web sites, so forgive me if this is old news. But it is important that we contact as many fans as possible within the next month.

Why? Well, the latest incarnation of Star Trek, Enterprise, has just been cancelled at the end of its 4th series. In this season, under new creative direction, the true prequel it was meant to be has emerged: amazing, exciting stories concerning Vulcans, Andorians, Romulans, Klingons: you name it, it is there and the fans, and critics, have gone crazy with joy about the direction it has taken.

Unfortunately, the UPN network, who have no love for this show, have undermined it for the last two years, putting it up against its competition, sporting events and given it little publicity, and the ratings have naturally gone down, giving them the excuse they needed to cancel it.

However, there is an unprecedented campaign by the fans under way. All the key Star Trek sites have united under www.trekunited.com, and the ambitious plan is to raise public awareness to the extent that the pressure brings back the series. But the focus of the campaign is on donations from fans, to raise enough money to convince a network to give it the 5th season it deserves.

You would be participating in something historic if you get involved with this. If one million fans from the US and the rest of the world all gave \$36 dollars each, a WHOLE series would be paid for. This is optimistic, perhaps, but even part of this would convince the networks to keep Star Trek alive. Please tell all your members about this, and urge them to donate. If the mission is unsuccessful, all money will be returned minus a small overhead (1-5%). Tell them to tell their friends, their family - anyone who loves Star Trek.

It is not just Enterprise at stake - the whole Star Trek franchise is in jeopardy if we don't act. Sets and actors will be disbanded by the end of March - we need to act now. Donations are to be accepted on the TrekUnited website within the next 24 hours, and can be made very easily using a debit or credit card. Please help save Star Trek!!!

Thanks for listening!

Looking forward to hearing from you. Please let me know if I can give you more information.

Best wishes

Helen

P.S. Full details of the mission, including how it will work legally, can be found at the website.

SMOFcon Time Travel

Here are more of the time travel itineraries from SMOFcon 22, continued from the previous three issues. They were all handwritten, so please forgive any errors of the secretary's in transcription.

Forward into the Past

Time Travel Itinerary

Time Traveler's Name: *Kimm Antell*

Destination:

When: *Hogwarts I*

Where: *Hogsmeade, UK*

Purpose of visit: *Seducing Voldemort & filing a paternity suit in 9 mos.; thus causing him to quit school & get a real job saving James & Lilly*

The greatest sf convention-running challenge at my chosen destination would most likely be: *Trying to get into his pants before he turns me into a toad*

I'd meet that challenge by: *flashing him*

If that approach didn't work, I'd try: *mooning him*

What information, lesson, or artifact could you carry back from your travels that would be of benefit to your fellow convention runners here at SMOFcon? *A copy of marauder's map to would [sic] change for each hotel & members*

Please complete all parts of this itinerary to assure your safe return to SMOFcon 22

Forward into the Past

Time Travel Itinerary

Time Traveler's Name: *Keith Lynch*

Destination:

When: *May 25, 1997 5:10 AM*

Where: *New Carrollton hotel*

Purpose of visit: *Pull the fire alarm*

The greatest sf convention-running challenge at my chosen destination would most likely be: *Prevent a flood*

I'd meet that challenge by: *Pulling the fire alarm*

If that approach didn't work, I'd try: *Going back ten minutes further and trying again*

What information, lesson, or artifact could you carry back from your travels that would be of benefit to your fellow convention runners here at SMOFcon? *Fire sprinklers aren't sex toys!*

Please complete all parts of this itinerary to assure your safe return to SMOFcon 22

Forward into the Past

Time Travel Itinerary

Time Traveler's Name: *Erwin S. (Filthy Pierre) Strauss*

Destination:

When: *DisClave 1997*

Where: *New Carrollton, MD*

Purpose of visit: *TURN OFF THE WATER!!!!*

The greatest sf convention-running challenge at my chosen destination would most likely be: *finding the shut-off valve*

I'd meet that challenge by: *looking in the hotel basement*

If that approach didn't work, I'd try: *looking out by the street*

What information, lesson, or artifact could you carry back from your travels that would be of benefit to your fellow convention runners here at SMOFcon? *The continued existence of DisClave*

Please complete all parts of this itinerary to assure your safe return to SMOFcon 22

Forward into the Past

Time Travel Itinerary

Time Traveler's Name: *Judy*

Destination:

When: *Bucconeer, Baltimore 1998*

Where:

Purpose of visit: *To work a different job!*

The greatest sf convention-running challenge at my chosen destination would most likely be: *choosing a safe job*

I'd meet that challenge by: *not asking Peggy Rae*

If that approach didn't work, I'd try: *just say no*

What information, lesson, or artifact could you carry back from your travels that would be of benefit to your fellow convention runners here at SMOFcon? *lesson not to procrastinate*

Please complete all parts of this itinerary to assure your safe return to SMOFcon 22

Forward into the Past

Time Travel Itinerary

Time Traveler's Name: *Mike Zipser*

Destination:

When: *November 2004*

Where: *Washington DC*

Purpose of visit: *Get a room for Smofcon*

The greatest sf convention-running challenge at my chosen destination would most likely be: *GOH can't make it.*

I'd meet that challenge by: *Finding a new one*

If that approach didn't work, I'd try: *Pick one at random during the con*

What information, lesson, or artifact could you carry back from your travels that would be of benefit to your fellow convention runners here at SMOFcon? *probably nothing*

Please complete all parts of this itinerary to assure your safe return to SMOFcon 22

Forward into the Past

Time Travel Itinerary

Time Traveler's Name: *Mary Morman*

Destination:

When: *now*

Where: *there*

Purpose of visit: *Kent brought me. Masquerade Costume. Ghost of SMOFcon Past*

The greatest sf convention-running challenge at my chosen destination would most likely be: *staying awake*

I'd meet that challenge by: *sleeping*

If that approach didn't work, I'd try: *caffeine*

What information, lesson, or artifact could you carry back from your travels that would be of benefit to your fellow convention runners here at SMOFcon? *3x5 index cards*

Please complete all parts of this itinerary to assure your safe return to SMOFcon 22

Backward into the Future

Time Travel Itinerary

Time Traveler's Name: *Hiroaki Inoue*

Destination:

When: *Nippon 2007*

Where: *Nippon2007 at Yokohama*

Purpose of visit: *seeing the way for con-running successfully in Japan by my own one.*

The greatest sf convention-running challenge at my chosen destination would most likely be: *non good English speaker can hold a huge English-speaking con.*

I'd meet that challenge by: *Me*

If that approach didn't work, I'd try: *Diet*

What information, lesson, or artifact could you carry back from your travels that would be of benefit to your fellow convention runners here at SMOFcon? *Synchronized Judo by All members and participants; v.s. each selves*

Please complete all parts of this itinerary to assure your safe return to SMOFcon 22

SMOFcon Time Travel will be continued next month.

Please remember: The more material you contribute to *The WSFA Journal*, the less room there will be for my own immortal prose. Since I'm sure you all want to see more material from me, please contribute less to *The WSFA Journal*. I feel especially obligated to bump my own text in favor of interlopers when they send in a mini-autobiography, or a review of a book, movie, or convention, so be especially sure not to send me any of those things. If you must send me one, make sure it arrives after April 29th, as that will ensure that at least it won't get into the May issue. An even better approach is to email it to me without putting "for publication" or "not for publication" on the subject line, since that omission is likely to cause your submission to be harmlessly deleted unread. Or, if you use paper mail, insufficient postage or the wrong street address are always a good bet.