

The WSFA Journal

SEPTEMBER 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 Please put either "for publication" or "not for publication" on the subject line.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.

The past thirty years of WSFA Journals are online at <http://www.wsfa.org/>. The minutes of the latest meeting are also online there if it's been more than a few days since that meeting.

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News from the Worldcon

This year's Worldcon, the 63rd, was held in Glasgow, Scotland, from August 4th through 8th. Many past and present WSFA members were present, including (to the best of the editor's knowledge) Covert Beach, Sheri Bell, Angela and Gerald Blackwell, Kent Bloom, Elaine Brennan, Chris Callahan, Steven Chalker, Art "Boots" Coleman, Scott Dennis, Jim and Terilee Edwards-Hewitt, Marc Gordon, Jack Heneghen, Tracy Henry, Bill Jensen, Judy Kindell, Elspeth Kovar, Perrienne Lurie, Brad Lyau, Nicki and Richard Lynch, Bob MacIntosh, Winton Matthews, Mary Morman, Michael Nelson, Barry, Judy, and Meridel Newton, Kathi Overton, Aly and Paul Parsons, Sam Pierce, John Pomeranz, Dick Roepke, Kathy and Leo Sands, John and Peggy Rae Sapienza, Tom Schaad, Judy and Sam Scheiner, T.R. Smith, Victoria Smith, Erwin "Filthy Pierre" Strauss, Michael Walsh, Eva Whitley, Martin Morse Wooster, and Beth and Mike Zipser.

Hugo awards:

- Best Novel: *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* by Susanna Clarke
- Best Novella: "The Concrete Jungle" by Charles Stross
- Best Novelette: "The Faery Handbag" by Kelly Link
- Best Short Story: "Travels with My Cats" by Mike Resnick
- Best Related Book: *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*
- Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: *The Incredibles*
- Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form: "33" - *Battlestar Galactica*
- Best Professional Editor: Ellen Datlow
- Best Professional Artist: Jim Burns
- Best Semiprozine: *Ansible*
- Best Fanzine: *Plokta*
- Best Fan Writer: David Langford
- Best Fan Artist: Sue Mason
- Best Web Site: SciFiction (www.scifi.com/scifiction)

Chesley Awards:

- Best Hardback Cover Illustration: Rick Berry, Tony DiTerlizzi, and Donato Giancola (three-way tie)
- Best Paperback Cover Illustration: John Picacio
- Best Magazine Cover Illustrations: Omar Rayyan
- Best Interior Illustration: Charles Vess
- Best Color Work - Unpublished: Marc Fishman
- Best Monochrome Work - Unpublished: Robert Elneskog
- Best Three-Dimensional Art: Lawrence Northey
- Best Gaming-Related Illustration: Mark Zug
- Best Product Illustration: Dean Morrissey
- Best Art Director: Irene Gallo
- Contribution to ASFA: Kat Angeli
- Artistic Achievement: Omar Rayyan

Prometheus Awards:

- Neal Stephenson's *The System of the World*
- Hall of Fame Award: A.E. van Vogt's *The Weapon Shops of Isher*
- Special awards: *The Probability Broach: The Graphic Novel*, written by L. Neil Smith and illustrated by Scott Bieser and two anthologies edited by Mark Tier and Martin H. Greenberg, *Give Me Liberty* and *Visions of Liberty*.

Other awards:

- John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Elizabeth Bear
- Special Interaction Committee Award: David Pringle
- Sidewise Awards: Philip Roth's novel *The Plot Against America* and Warren Ellis' graphic novel *The Ministry of Space*.

The Seiun Awards for SF in Japanese translation were not awarded at the Worldcon; they will be awarded at the NASFiC.

The proposal to split the "Best Editor" Hugo Award category into separate categories for magazine editors and book editors passed. If ratified by next year's Worldcon in California, the awards in 2007 will have two best editor categories.

For the first time ever, there was no Worldcon site selection at the Worldcon. This is because voting has moved from three years in advance to two years in advance. The location of the 2008 Worldcon will be voted on at the 2006 Worldcon in California. Members of Interaction can vote in this site selection next year by mail. (People who are members of both the 2005 and 2006 Worldcons still only get one vote in the site selection, however.)

Worldcon bids:

- Chicago is bidding for 2008. <http://www.chicagoworldcon7.org/>
- Columbus is bidding for 2008. <http://www.bidcolumbus.org/>
- Denver is bidding for 2008. <http://www.denver2008.com/>

2008 will be voted on at the 2006 Worldcon near Los Angeles.

- Kansas City is bidding for 2009. <http://www.midamericon.org/kc2009/>
- Montreal is bidding for 2009. <http://www.anticipationsf.ca/>

2009 will be voted on at the 2007 Worldcon in Japan.

Australia is bidding for 2010. <http://www.australia2010.org/>

Washington DC is bidding for 2011. <http://www.dcin2011.org/>

Minneapolis is bidding for 1973. <http://worldcon.org/bids/bid1973mpls.html>

NASFiC bids:

St. Louis is bidding for the 2007 NASFiC, which will be voted on at the 2005 NASFiC, CascadiaCon, which is near Seattle. Their bid page is <http://www.stlf.org/archon/nasfic/>.

The location of the 2007 NASFiC will be voted on at the 2005 NASFiC, which will be held September 1st through 5th near Seattle. Only St. Louis is on the ballot. There was an Ocean City bid, but it seems to be defunct.

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 Vice President Cathy Green at 9:17 pm on August 5th, 2005, in the downstairs of the Gillilands', at 4030 8th Street South in Arlington, Virginia, the usual First Friday location.

In attendance were Vice President Cathy Green, Secretary Keith Lynch, Trustees Lee Gilliland and Ernest Lilley, Mike Bartman, Drew and Katherine Bittner, Chuck Divine, Adrienne Ertman, Alexis Gilliland, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Bill Lawhorn, Don Lundry, Rebecca Prather, George Shaner, Steven Smith, Gayle Surrence, Michael Taylor, Elizabeth Twitchell, and Madeleine Yeh. 22 people. Ted White arrived after the meeting ended. Jim Kling and Ivy Yap were marked present, but weren't seen by the secretary.

The vice president asked the secretary to summarize the previous quasi-meeting, which took place on Friday, July 15th, at Gayle and Paul's in Brandywine, Maryland. He said:

- Only 11 people showed up, so we didn't get a quorum and no business was done. This was probably due to the confluence of Confluence, the remote and novel location, the rain and fog, single-tracking on Metro, and single-laning on the Wilson bridge.
- The Capclave website was almost ready for cutover from wsfa.org to globat.com. This was completed the following day.
- Capclave was stalled at 180 members, with an ominously low number of hotel room night reservations. Recent email from Elspeth has said the hotel room situation has improved somewhat.

DATA
PIRATE

1000/00/0
ME HEARTIES!



TREASURY: No report, as the treasurer wasn't present.

CAPCLAVES PRESENT, FUTURE, AND FAR FUTURE: No report, as the chairfen weren't present.

ENTERTAINMENT:

Alexis read, "Kopi Luwak is a fine Sumatran coffee, much valued in Japan, made from beans gathered from the dung of *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, the common palm civet, which comes out at night to select the finest, ripest coffee cherries. It eats them, it digests the pulp, it digests the mucilage, it digests all the protective layers, but not the hard beans." Someone mentioned that this was the most expensive coffee in the world. Chuck asked if a chromosome test had been done to see if the Japanese are really fully human.

Alexis then read from a letter he got. "It is a thousand thousand years into the future. Our world has changed. It is a world of super-science, high technology, and magical wonders. There are super-immortal and immortal humans who have power beyond mortal men. This world evil immortal beings, quiet with good immortal (emortal) humans because the latter wants to keep the former from enslaving mankind with by controlling man with evil immortal powers. This is the world of the muffins, little blue-headed humans whom many evil immortals hate and want to destroy. This is their story, once in a coming time in new America." [The transcript is approximate, as the secretary never saw the letter, and Alexis was frequently drowned out by laughter and comments.] Cathy asked if the blue-headed beings were smurfs. Paul moved that "we accept the evil overlords if they will kill this author." Adrienne moved that we "take the author to College Park for a week." Both motions failed for lack of a second.

PUBLICATIONS:

The secretary said that July and August WSFA Journals are available, and the last 30 years of issues are available online at wsfa.org. The August issue contains two reviews of MacLeod novels. [By the end of the evening 5 Augusts and 2 Julys had been taken.]

The Capclave '05 website has migrated to globat.com, and is working smoothly. The Capclave '06 and '07 websites have yet to move. The president asked if those had any contents yet. The secretary replied yes, for instance staff positions for '07 were announced several meetings ago, and can only be found by hunting through old meeting minutes; the Capclave '07 website is the obvious place to store that information.

BOOK:

Ernest said publication of the *Future Washington* anthology has slipped to October. The cover and dust-jacket have been completed. He posted one at the front of the room, and gave another to Keith for proofreading. He said the color wasn't quite right -- there was too much purple in the sky due to the RGB to CMYK conversion, and the artist would attempt to fix this. The book will go to the printer on Monday. Copies of the fully executed contracts have gone to all the authors in the continental US via certified mail. Adrienne had us applaud Ernest for his work on the book.

ACTIVITIES: Lee said a remake of King Kong was coming up in December, one which is very faithful to the original movie. She said some people had complained about the xenophobia. Ernest asked if that was fear of warrior women. [The pun doesn't work very well in writing, since I have to choose one spelling or the other. Sorry.] Eric said the movie shouldn't have been remade.

OLD AND NEW BUSINESS: None.

NEW TRADITION (as it was once called): Nobody remembered to ask if it was anyone's first, second, or third meeting, but according to our records it was Katherine Bittner's second meeting, and also Don Lundry's second meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The secretary announced that a sign-in sheet was circulating. The sign-in sheet has a new feature: Anyone who has been to fewer than 10 meetings has their number of meetings listed next to their name, for ease in determining who is eligible to join. He also said announcements should ideally be submitted in writing, or via email. He read the following letter which Steve Smith had forwarded to the chat list a few hours earlier:

From: Dale Arnold
To: BWSMOF

Several BWSMOF folks asked me about the memorial service over the weekend at Shore Leave, hence I am sending this paragraph I sent to the info@balticon list out to you all to make sure everyone who wants it is informed. Details in the text are from an email by Marty.

Bobby Gear Memorial Service:

Bobby Gear, a tireless worker at the Balticon Masquerade green room and manager of the BSFS Young Writers contest, passed away June 25th, 2005, from complications of pancreatic cancer. We will all miss Bobby's contribution to local SF fandom. A memorial service has now been scheduled as a celebration of Bobby's life, to be held on Saturday, August 6th, 2005, from 7:00 to 11:00 PM in The Great Room at Historic Savage Mill, 8600 Foundry Street, Savage, Maryland 20763.

For people attending from out of town there will be a special rate from Courtyard by Marriott, Columbia, 8910 Stanford Boulevard, Columbia, Maryland 21045. Ask for Patricia Jarava 410-290-0002 extension 625 and tell her you are there for Bobby Gear's celebration to get the rate.

He added that the email would be available for people to look at after the meeting. Keith also said that President Sam Lubell had emailed that he wouldn't be at this meeting since his mother is gravely ill, and he wants to spend as much time as possible with her.

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

She then said she was leaving Alexis in January.

After a pause, she continued, for 21 days, when she'll be going on a special tour of the tombs in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt, with Zahi Hawass and Kent Weeks as guides, sponsored by the Theban Mapping Project. She got one of just 23 slots. Alexis will host January's First Friday alone, so we should be sure not to make a mess, since he won't vacuum. Alexis said you don't know that he won't vacuum. Mike Bartman said that he (Mike) had vacuumed twice so far this year.

Ernest will be a bachelor from Labor Day through New Years', as his wife will be away in naval command training.

Chuck Divine is now the vice chair of the Baltimore section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. He is now friends with an intelligent, beautiful, tall, blonde, Volvo-station-wagon-driving American Indian from Alaska.

Elizabeth is getting a new car tomorrow, since her old car died in Arlington Cemetery. Her new vehicle is a gold-colored 2000 Mazda Millennium from Landmark Honda.

George moved last week, but is still in Arlington.

Rebecca had thumbnail photos on the wall, and asked for email addresses from anyone whose photos appeared there whom she hadn't emailed their photo to. She touted the Hexagoners, a group that does musical spoofs about Washington, which will be doing free performances at Lubber Run Park on August 12th and at Mason District Park on August 21st. Their usual performances cost \$20, and are at a place downtown with worse acoustics. Lee warned people to bring insecticide.

Madeleine showed an eye-of-Sauron pendant she had made.

Ernest asked how many of us had not yet read *Half-Blood Prince*. Most of us raised our hands. Some didn't even know that it was the latest Harry Potter novel.

Our hostess, Lee, made the usual final announcement: Move chairs to the edges of the room after adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 pm. 27 minutes.

The last people left at 11:30 pm.

It was warm, damp, and threatening to rain all evening, with thunder and lightning, but no actual rain.

Summary of 8/5/05 meeting:

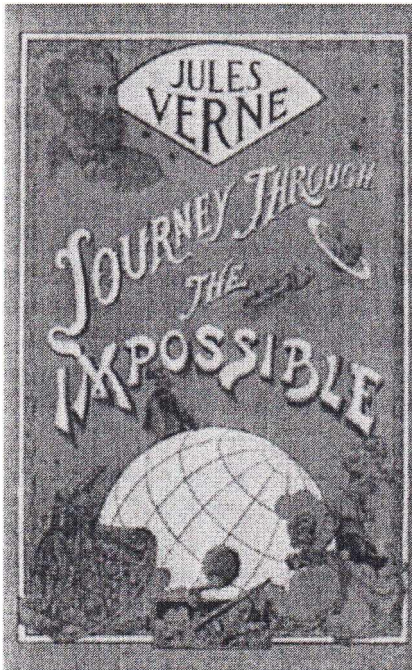
- Many key people were away at the Worldcon.
- No business was done.
- The Capclave '05 website has moved to globat.com.
- *Future Washington* has slipped to October.

Journey Through the Impossible

by Jules Verne

New York : Prometheus Books, 2003

A Review by Colleen R. Cahill



In the United States, Jules Verne is well known for his stories of adventure and science, but fewer are aware that he was also successful in the theater. In fact, Verne's original dream was to be a playwright and he wrote many plays before he gained fame as a novelist. His wealth came not only from being an author but from very profitable productions of his plays. Now English readers can enjoy one of Verne's most successful plays with the publication of *Journey Through the Impossible*.

First performed in 1882, *Journey Through the Impossible* is a combination of ideas and characters from Verne's previously published novels and short stories, focusing mostly on *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, and *From the Earth to the Moon*. This is not a re-telling of those stories, but more a blending that is tempered with many other Verne works. The play centers around George Hatteras, son of the explorer Captain Hatteras (from Verne's polar expedition novel, *Voyages and Adventures of Captain Hatteras*). George is tormented by desires to go "Still farther!" and see what no man has seen. His fiancée Eva and her mother bring in Doctor Ox to try and cure these obsessions, but the doctor has other plans, mostly involving getting rid of George and winning Eva for himself. In an attempt to break George's fragile mind, he produces a magic potion that allows the young man to travel to the center of the earth, the depths of the oceans and to the planet Altor. But George is not without protectors: Eva and Mr. Tartelet, a friend and frustrated dancing instructor, join him in these journeys to exotic locations. Before the explorers leave, they meet Master Volsius, an extraordinary organist who appears later in the guise of Professor Lidenbrock, Captain Nemo, and Michel Ardan, all of

whom attempt to counter the evil influences of Doctor Ox and show George the costs of his insane desires.

At the time this play was produced, it was a huge success, not just because of Verne's reputation as a writer, but because it was an extravaganza, full of theatrical magic, music and dance. It can be compared to a movie blockbuster of today, one with lots of neat special effects. Keeping this in mind, the reader will realize that is not intended to be a stage production of one of Verne's novels. In his fiction, Verne concentrated on what was possible, and his books were *Extraordinary Voyages*; this play moves into the unbelievable, using more magic than science. It also has more humor than many of Verne's books, with Mr. Tartelet and Axel Valdemar, a Danish fortune-seeker, providing many moments of comic relief throughout the play. While readers of Verne's novels will see the differences between those works and this drama, they will also recognize the ingenuity and complex story that are hallmarks of Verne's creations.

Even though it was a successful production in both Paris and New York, the text for this play soon became lost and was only rediscovered in 1978 in the archives of the Censorship Office of the French Third Republic. Published in French in 1981, it gave Verne scholars the first look at this work which previously could only be studied through its reviews. The Prometheus Books edition is not only the first English translation, but also the first complete publication of *Journey Through the*

Impossible, as the French edition mistakenly omitted a short section in Act II, Scene 2. The inclusion of a very well written introduction by Jean-Michel Margot helped me more fully appreciate the importance and complexity of this work, as did the text of two reviews from 1882.

This is a work for Verne aficionados, theater buffs or just those who enjoy a good story. Take a *Journey Through the Impossible* and you might see another side of the "Father of Science Fiction."

This Month in History

From the Secretary's Archives

September 1995:

First and Third Friday Meetings at the Gillilands' and Ginters', with 44 and 43 people present. Treasury \$7,822.11. Two WSFA Journals, eight and twelve pages, were published in September. (Two issues were published almost every month from early 1995 through mid-1996, ending only when editor Joe Mayhew had a heart attack.) Evan Phillips announced that he planned to put back issues of *The WSFA Journal* on CD. (Our website was still two years in the future.) It was announced that Baltimore had won the 1998 Worldcon bid.

September 1985:

First Friday at the Gillilands', with 47 people; Third Friday at the Olivers', with 34. Treasury \$3,643.73, plus \$7,600 still in the Disclave '85 account. We would have to pay taxes for our past three years' income, but we had a tax lawyer looking into how we can become tax exempt. It was announced that next year's Disclave guest of honor, William Gibson, had just won the best novel Hugo for *Neuromancer*. The Gillilands celebrated their 26th anniversary. The September *WSFA Journal*, published by Ginny McNitt, was just four pages and consisted entirely of the minutes of the previous four meetings. The TV series *Steven Spielberg's Amazing Stories* premiered.

September 1975:

The TV series *Space 1999* premiered. No WSFA Journal (that I can find a copy of, anyway) was published between December 1974 and September 1978, nor do I have any other non-Disclave WSFA information from most of that time. Anyone with such information please contact me.

September 1965:

Meetings on First and Third Friday at Elizabeth Cullen's in Washington, DC, with 18 and 25 people present -- no quorum first Friday. Treasury \$91.25. Attendees included no current members except Alexis Gilliland. Don Miller published three WSFA Journals in September: issues 7, 8, and 9, totaling 28 pages. They included book reviews, reports of cons including the recent London Worldcon, upcoming events, an obituary of E.E. "Doc" Smith, our constitution, and the fact that Ted White was engaged. The print run was 77. (As of 2005, the print run is 42.) The TV series *Lost in Space* premiered; **Danger Will Robinson!**

September 1955:

Meeting on the Third Sunday at Dot Cole's in Arlington, with 13 people present. Treasury \$64.60. Ted White took office as president, having been elected in May. He suggested dues be reduced to a dollar per quarter year once the treasury reaches \$100; no action was taken. Vice President Bob Pavlat was appointed Sergeant at Arms. Trustee Joe Vallin suggested the club should have a phone book listing; he was appointed to look into it. There's no record of a First Sunday meeting, perhaps because that year's Worldcon, in Cleveland, was going on then -- the only Worldcon ever held in the US in a year ending with 5.

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, including directions to our meeting places.

September 1 - 5: CascadiaCon

The 2005 NASFiC, near Seattle.

Thursday, September 1st: DC Transhumanist Dinner

7 pm at Hamburger Hamlet in Crystal City.

Friday, September 2nd: WSFA First Friday Meeting

Regular WSFA meeting. At the Gillilands', as usual. Newcomers welcome.

Tuesday, September 13th: Terry Pratchett at Olsson's

At 7 pm Terry Pratchett will be signing 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).

Friday, September 16th: WSFA Third Friday Meeting

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

Saturday, September 24th: National Book Festival

Hosted by First Lady Laura Bush and the Library of Congress, on the mall between 7th and 14th streets, in Washington DC, from 10 am until 5 pm. Free event. There will be a Fiction & Fantasy Pavilion.

Sunday, September 25th: Life Extension Society Meeting

The local cryonics and life extension group will hold an open meeting at 1 PM at Mark Mugler's home, 48 Adams St. NW, Washington DC.

Friday, September 30th: Fifth Friday

WSFA often has a party on months with a fifth Friday. This month it will probably be a theater party in conjunction with the release of *Serenity*, and may be the following day. Check our website for details.

Friday, October 7th: WSFA First Friday Meeting

Regular WSFA meeting. At the Gillilands', as usual. Newcomers welcome.

October 14 - 16: Capclave 2005

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

Friday, October 21st: WSFA Third Friday Meeting

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

Thursday, October 27th: Octavia Butler at Busboys & Poets

At 6:30 pm Octavia Butler will be reading from and signing her new book, *The Fledgling*, at Busboys & Poets, 14th and V NW, 2 blocks from the U Street/Cardozo Metro station on the Green Line.

December 9 - 11: Philcon 2005

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

May 26 - 29: Balticon 40

The Baltimore Science Fiction Society (BSFS) brings you another Balticon. At the Hunt Valley Marriott.

August 23 - 27: 64th World SF Convention: L.A.con IV

Anaheim California, same place as the 1996 Worldcon and the 1999 NASFiC.

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 President Samuel Lubell at 9:16 pm on August 19th, 2005, in the downstairs of the Madigans', at 102 Julian Court, Greenbelt, Maryland, the usual third Friday location.

In attendance were President Samuel Lubell, Vice President Cathy Green, Secretary Keith Lynch, Trustees Lee Gilliland and Barry Newton, Mike Bartman, Adrienne Ertman, Carolyn Frank, Alexis Gilliland, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Eric Jablow, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Nicki and Richard Lynch, Candy and John Madigan, Walter Miles, Judy Newton, George Shaner, Steven Smith, William Squire, Gayle Surrence, Michael Taylor, Elizabeth Twitchell, and Madeleine Yeh. 27 people. Jim Kling and Ivy Yap were marked present, but weren't seen by the secretary.

The president asked the secretary to summarize the previous meeting. He said the last meeting was at the Gillilands' on August 5th, and:

- Many key people were away at the Worldcon.
- No business was done.
- It was announced that the Capclave '05 website had moved from wsfa.org to globat.com.
- It was announced that publication of the *Future Washington* anthology, which had previously slipped from July to August, had slipped to October.

TREASURY: No report, as the treasurer wasn't present and hadn't emailed anyone. Barry said the treasurer was on a whiskey tour.

CAPCLAVE PRESENT:

The chairfan, Michael J. Walsh, wasn't present. Cathy said that Elspeth had said that we're close to meeting our hotel room block.

Sam had fliers, and said we should plaster libraries and bookstores with them. Carolyn said she had done so with the libraries in Silver Spring, Wheaton, and White Oak, but wasn't allowed to do so at Borders Books, at least not the one in Silver Spring, the closest bookstore to our con hotel. Madeleine suggested we avoid using that bookstore. Madeleine suggested we all go to that bookstore and say we are "just looking."

Barry said we had 192 members, not counting several who signed up at the Worldcon. Paul said we'd get more at the door. Sam said that's dependent on people knowing about the con, so pick up fliers.

Nicki asked about the National Book Festival next month. Sam said they didn't have a place for fliers last year. Cathy asked if Sam had talked to Jim Kling about CascadiaCon, which is this year's NASFiC, near Seattle over Labor Day weekend. He hadn't, but will. Keith asked about Otakon, a large anime convention this weekend in Baltimore. Judy said that Meridel was there, but didn't bring fliers. She said there is probably little overlap between their membership and our target audience.

CAPCLAVE FUTURE: No report. The chairfan, Elspeth Kovar, wasn't present. [Two days after the meeting she emailed that we have a weekend: October 20-22, 2006.]

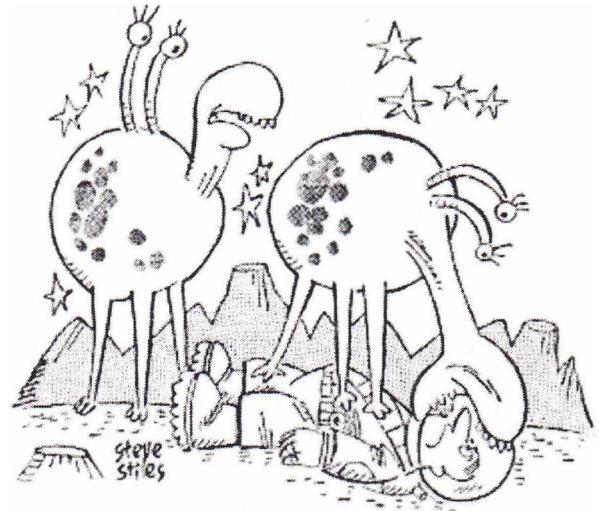
CAPCLAVE FAR FUTURE: No report. The chairfan, Colleen Cahill, wasn't present.

ENTERTAINMENT:

Alexis said he had entertained us several times with stupid criminal stories, so now he would entertain us with a stupid policeman story:

Police Officer Wendell Cunningham does off-duty work with a radar gun on Branch Avenue, writing tickets for two years until he ticketed Assistant Chief Willie Dandridge, who flashed his lights and refused to turn over his ID after being stopped.

Internal Affairs recommended Dandridge be cited for conduct unbecoming of a police officer, and Cunningham got a letter of



"Good Grief. Frnbg, that's no way to ask for foreign aid!"

prejudice in the case, essentially ordering him to cease and desist.

A little background: Cunningham had ticketed Dandridge a year earlier, when Dandridge had stopped & turned over ID. His failure to cut his fellow cop some slack -- a don't do it again warning -- led to the current fiasco.

ACTIVITIES: There was strong interest in a *Serenity* movie party. The movie, which is based on the short-lived *Firefly* TV series on Fox, opens on September 30th. No free tickets were available. Adrienne said this was because there's been enough buzz that they don't need publicity from us.

PUBLICATIONS: The secretary said that July and August WSFA Journals were available. [By the end of the evening 6 Augusts, 3 Julys, and 1 June had been taken.] Also, there's a sign-in sheet circulating.

BOOK: *Future Washington* Editor Ernest Lilley wasn't present. Gayle said the anthology was at the printers, and would be available the first week of October, but only if they get paid, which they haven't been yet. Someone suggested a release party at Capclave.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Keith said there's a Fifth Friday next month. Adrienne suggested that since that's the opening night for *Serenity*, we make that our Fifth Friday event. Lee said she'd probably announce which theater at the next meeting. Some or all theaters may already be sold out, and we may have to switch to Saturday. Mike suggested the Regal theater in Rockville, and said it's only a block and half from Metro. Adrienne suggested the Uptown. Brian said there's no parking at the Uptown.

Sam asked if we want to do something in conjunction with the National Book Festival. Cathy said there are only two SF authors, Neil Gaiman and George R.R. Martin, and that neither of them were likely to go out to dinner with us. Keith said the "Science Fiction & Fantasy" pavilion has been replaced with a "Fiction & Fantasy" pavilion. Nicki said we don't need them, we can go out by ourselves. Sam said that doesn't need as much advanced planning. Lee and several others disagreed with Sam.

NEW TRADITION (as it was once called): Nobody asked if it was anyone's first, second, or third meeting, since it was obvious that there were no new faces in the room.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The secretary made the usual first announcement: Announcements should ideally be submitted in writing, or via email. He thanked Brian for already submitting his announcements in writing. Submissions are needed for the WSFA Journal: Reports of Worldcon and other cons, reviews of books and movies, fannish autobiographies, and pretty much anything else. Lee asked what if you're not submissive. Sam answered "Then you get to dominate the issue."

Candy, our hostess, made several announcements: You can feed the dog anything except chocolate. The white bunny bites. There's a new lost & found basket under the food table upstairs. She did good business selling clothes to naked people at the Pagan events Free Spirit and Starwood. After 36 years of sewing, she finally sewed through her finger. Lee asked "how many stitches?"

Brian had several announcements: He has joined Weight Watchers, and has lost six pounds. The Pentagon City Mall has an Apple store and a Sony store. The next nearest Sony store is in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Next weekend is the Digital Expo from Channel 4. The Maryland Renaissance Festival begins next Saturday, the 27th, and runs Saturdays and Sundays until mid-October, and also runs on Labor Day Monday.

Richard has leftover newsletters from the Worldcon, but doesn't have a complete print run. Paul said they're also on the web.

Sam's mother died.

Cathy is an aunt. Brian said the great thing about being an aunt is that aunts get to go home.

Barry had received the following email from former WSFA's Lee Smoire. He read from it and handed it to the secretary.

Travel agency books space holidays * NEWS.com.au

BREAKING NEWS 24/7

From correspondents in Tokyo

19-08-2005

From: Agence France-Presse

WITH Japanese tourists already travelling all over planet Earth, the nation's leading travel agency has said it will blast off into a new market - space.

JTB Corp. said it has set up an exclusive sales agreement for the Japanese market with US firm Space Adventures to send the country's most adventurous tourists into orbit.

A JTB spokeswoman said details would be announced later but the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* said the one-week space junket would cost each traveller 2.2 billion yen, or about \$US20 million (\$26.6m).

The package includes a trip on a Russian *Soyuz* rocket to visit the International Space Station after more than six months of training at Russia's Gagarin center for cosmonauts, the newspaper said.

For those with a little less cash on hand, an alternate trip lasting between four and six days would take the tourist 100km into space for a taste of zero gravity.

The discount package would cost 11.2 million yen, or \$US102,000 (\$135,575), and could start as soon as 2007, the report said.

Space Adventures made history in 2001 by sending the first non-professional astronaut, US businessman Dennis Tito, into space on a Russian rocket.

The following year, South African Mark Shuttleworth blasted off, also after forking over \$US20 million.

The firm last week announced an offer to send tourists around the moon, perhaps as soon as 2008, for a cool \$US100 million (\$133m).

Space Adventures opened an office in Tokyo in May, saying it had received thousands of inquiries from aspiring space tourists in the world's second largest economy.

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Nicki said four cities in Scotland were vying to be Scotty's home town. Aberdeen won, as Scotty once made a reference to being an Aberdeen pub crawler. Eric said the wrong engineer from Redmond died.

Audienne is going to visit New York City. Also, she has a temporary job as a lawyer's assistant.

Madeleine had "ugly chicken" chili. She couldn't find any dodo in her supermarket, so she had to use turkey.

Brian Lewis's [something] group is going to take all of the recipes from all of the Gathers they've had for the past 25 years, and put them all into a cookbook. They meet in a state park outside Pittsburgh.

Eric had a math journal with a cover picture of a Poincaré disk made of chocolate, produced using an ink jet printer that prints dark chocolate onto light chocolate. Brian said he should talk to John Pomeranz, as John is in charge of chocolate.

Elizabeth has a new car. She's selling her old one, a 1992 Lexus GS 300, for \$800. It needs work. Mike Bartman suggested donating it to NPR, and deducting \$6000 to \$8000 from taxes. Elizabeth said that's no longer possible, as tax laws have been changed.

Scott said the inner loop of the Beltway was closed due to a multiple truck accident just south of Kenilworth Avenue. Paul added that there was glass on the outer loop, as well, from the same accident. Elizabeth added that there was a game tonight at FedEx Field.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:47 pm. 31 minutes.

The last people left at about midnight.

It was warm and very damp. It had been drizzling most of the day, but stopped about an hour before the meeting.

Summary of 8/19/05 meeting:

- *Future Washington* needs money from our treasurer.
- No business was done.
- There is interest in a Fifth Friday *Serenity* viewing next month.
- Sam's mother died, Cathy is an aunt, and Elizabeth has a new car and is trying to sell the old one.

WSFA's Bylaws

Because it's been a while since these have been printed in a WSFA Journal. Besides, we needed something to fill this space.

ARTICLE I

Purposes and Limits

- A. The purposes of the Washington Science Fiction Association, Inc. (hereinafter "WSFA") are:
 1. To promote knowledge of and interest in the science fiction genre in all its forms, including (but not limited to) literature, art, theater, film and television.
 2. To sponsor and promote events and conventions to increase interest in and awareness of science fiction, in particular to plan, organize, and conduct an annual science fiction convention in the Washington, DC area (hereinafter, "the Convention").
 3. To engage in other activities to promote social welfare as permitted by section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.
- B. WSFA shall be limited to doing only those acts permitted by its Articles of Incorporation and by the Non-Stock Corporation Law under which it is incorporated (hereinafter "the Act"), and by section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE II

Membership and Dues

- A. Membership
 1. All persons who are members in good standing of WSFA on December 31 of the prior year are eligible to be members. Other persons are eligible for membership if they attend three meetings, are sponsored by three existing members, are approved by one (1) Trustee, and pay the annual dues.
 2. Members in good standing shall have the right to attend and participate in all meetings of the membership, hold office and vote.
- B. Dues
 1. Dues shall be set for each year by December 31 of the previous year.
 2. Dues shall be due as of the first regular meeting in January.
 3. Dues may be paid in advance.
 4. Any member must pay the full year's dues regardless of the date of payment.

5. Any member who is delinquent in his dues for an entire year shall be dropped from the membership list.
 6. All life memberships awarded prior to December 31, 1985 shall retain all rights and privileges of members in perpetuity. Life members shall pay no dues, and no new life members shall be designated.
 7. WSFA may issue annual membership cards to its paid-up members.
- C. Revocation of Membership
1. A petition to revoke any membership may be presented in writing at any regular meeting.
 2. It must state the grounds and be signed by at least fifteen (15) members and be communicated to the member concerned at least ten (10) days before the presentation of the petition for action.
 3. If the petition is approved by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at the second meeting vote to revoke the membership, it is revoked.
 4. The revoked member's dues shall be prorated and the appropriate portion shall be refunded.
- D. Voting
1. A quorum shall consist of fifteen (15) members which includes two (2) officers of the Board of Directors. Such a quorum must be present at any meeting at which a vote is taken.
 2. There shall be no absentee or proxy voting.

ARTICLE III

Board of Directors

- A. Except where specifically allocated elsewhere in these bylaws, conduct of WSFA's affairs is controlled by its Board of Directors which shall consist of the following officers:
- a. President;
 - b. Vice President;
 - c. Secretary;
 - d. Treasurer;
 - e. Three (3) Trustees;
 - f. The Chairman of the Convention for the current year; and
 - g. The Chairmen of the Convention for any future year or years.
- B. Elections
1. All elections shall be supervised by the Trustees Committee. Any Trustee who is running for office shall appoint a counter for that office who is acceptable to the other two (2) Trustees.
 2. The election of all Directors (except the Chairman of the Convention) shall take place during the first regular meeting in May. Those elected at that meeting shall assume their offices at the first regular meeting in June.
 3. The Trustees shall receive seconded nominations from the floor and shall announce all candidates in order nominated.
 4. All elections, except the election of the Trustees, shall be counted by the "Australian" ballot.
 5. The election of the Trustees shall proceed as follows:
 - a. The Trustees Committee shall accept nominations for all three (3) Trustee positions.
 - b. A ballot shall be cast and counted by the "Australian" ballot.
 - c. After one Trustee has been selected in this fashion, the ballots shall again be counted by the "Australian" ballot except that the candidate who has been selected as Trustee in the previous count shall be treated as having been eliminated from the balloting.
 - d. After a second Trustee has been selected in this fashion, the ballots shall again be counted by the "Australian" ballot except that the candidates who have been selected as Trustees in the previous counts shall be treated as having been eliminated from the balloting.
 The Trustees Committee shall announce the winners of the three (3) ballots as the newly elected Trustees.
 6. The order of nomination and election shall be:
 - a. President;
 - b. Vice President;
 - c. Secretary;
 - d. Treasurer; and
 - e. Trustees.
- C. The Vice President shall succeed to the Presidency in the event the President cannot fulfill his term.
- D. Any other vacancies occurring on the Board shall be filled by a by-election. Those so elected shall serve for the remainder of the term of the officer replaced.



E. Removal of Officers

1. A petition for the removal of a member of the Board may be presented to the Board in writing at any time.
2. Such petitions must state the grounds for removal and must be signed by at least fifteen (15) members.
3. If the other members of the Board unanimously agree that the removal is justified, they shall suspend the officer and appoint a temporary replacement.
4. Such action and the grounds for it shall be mailed to all members.
5. At the first regular meeting held at least ten (10) days after such notice, removal from the Board shall become permanent if approved by a three-quarters (3/4) majority of the members voting.
6. Any office so vacated shall be filled as prescribed in Article II, section D.

ARTICLE IV**Officers**

A. The President shall:

1. Preside at all meetings.
2. Exercise general supervision over the properties and activities of WSFA.
3. Appoint members to committees.
4. When he or she wishes to participate in debate, yield the chair to (a) the Vice President, or (b) another member.

B. The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President during the absence of the President.

C. The Secretary shall:

1. Keep the minutes of all meetings of the club.
2. Be Custodian of all club records and archives.

D. The Treasurer shall:

1. Receive all WSFA funds and maintain them in an account separate from his own.
2. Maintain the official membership list.
3. Pay out funds only when approved by the board or the membership by vote.
4. Submit his records for audit whenever requested by the Board or by a petition of one-third (1/3) of the membership.

E. The Trustees shall serve on the Trustees Committee.

F. The Chairman of the Convention for each year shall:

1. Be elected by members at a regular meeting designated by the membership.
2. Be authorized to transact all necessary business and set necessary rules pertaining to the Convention for that year and to appoint all its officers.

ARTICLE V**Committees**

A. The standing committees of the Board of Directors shall be:

1. Trustee Committee;
2. Entertainment Committee; and
3. Publications Committee.

B. The Trustee Committee shall:

1. Consist of the three (3) Trustees.
2. Vote on all applications for membership.
3. Supervise all elections.
4. Prepare a slate of nominations for all club offices scheduled to be voted upon.
5. Announce that slate at the regular meeting just previous to that of the election.

C. The Publications Committee shall:

1. Consist of the Secretary, serving as chairman ex-officio, and other members who shall be appointed by the President and may be removed by the unanimous vote of the Trustees.
2. Have jurisdiction over all publications sponsored by WSFA, including THE WSFA JOURNAL.
3. THE WSFA JOURNAL shall be scheduled for monthly publication and shall include the Secretary's minutes, committee reports and other records and information pertaining to club business as well as other suitable material of interest to the membership. Material specifically critical of any club member shall be submitted to the publications committee for approval before being published. The Editor of the JOURNAL shall be selected by the Secretary with the advise and consent of the Committee, and may be removed from office by the

Secretary, or, after the intention to do so is publicly announced at a prior meeting, by a majority of those voting.

4. The existence of THE WSFA JOURNAL shall not preclude other publications being sponsored by WSFA, but none shall be sponsored without the consent of the Publications Committee. Such publications need not be governed by the rules which apply to the official publication.
- D. Special committees shall be formed by the President at such times as deemed necessary.
- E. None of the committees shall have the full authority of the Board to conduct activities unless authorized as provided by Maryland law.
- F. Appointed WSFA officials may be removed by those who appoint them, by a simple majority vote of the voting WSFA membership at the business meeting following the introduction of a resolution for that purpose, or by a unanimous vote of the WSFA Trustees.

ARTICLE VI

Meetings

- A. Schedule of Meetings
 1. WSFA's regular meetings shall occur on the first and third Fridays of each month.
 2. Special meetings can be called by the President.
- B. The place and time for the next meeting shall be designated by the Chair before the meeting adjourns.
- C. The order of business of all regular meetings shall be:
 1. Call to order
 2. Reading of previous minutes.
 3. Reports of officers.
 4. Reports of committees.
 5. Old business.
 6. New Business.
 7. Announcements.
 8. Adjournment.

ARTICLE VII

Additional Procedures

All procedural questions not covered by the Articles and Bylaws shall be decided by reference to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, 75th Anniversary Edition (1951).

ARTICLE VIII

Indemnification of Officers

- A. Liability and Indemnification of Officers
 1. WSFA shall indemnify every officer of WSFA, or member of a committee, against any and all expenses, including counsel fees, reasonably incurred by or imposed upon any officer or committee member in connection with any action, suit or other proceeding, including the settlement of any such suit or proceeding if approved by then Board of Directors to which he may be made a party by reason of being or having been a WSFA officer or committee member, whether or not that person is an officer or committee member at the time such expenses are incurred.
 2. The officers and committee members shall have no personal liability with respect to any contract or other commitment made by them, in good faith, on behalf of WSFA that they are duly authorized to make, and WSFA shall indemnify them and forever hold each such officer or committee member free and harmless against any and all liability to others on account of any such contract or commitment.
 3. Any right to indemnification provided for herein shall not be exclusive of any other rights to which any officer or committee member of WSFA, or former officer or committee member of WSFA, may be entitled.
 4. The officers and committee members shall be liable to WSFA for any negligence, willful misconduct, or actions committed in bad faith, but shall not be liable for mistakes of judgment if made in good faith.
- B. Actions by Officers

1. The officers shall exercise their powers and duties in good faith to promote the interests of WSFA.
2. No contract or other transaction between WSFA and one or more of its officers, or between WSFA and any corporation, firm or association in which one or more of the officers are Board Members or officers, or are pecuniarily or otherwise interested, is either void or voidable because such officer or officers are present at the meeting of the Board of Directors, or any committee, which authorizes or approves the contract or other transaction, if the following conditions are met:
 - a. The fact of the common Board Membership, office or interest is disclosed or known to the Board of Directors, noted in the minutes, and the Board authorizes, approves or ratifies such contract or other transaction in good faith by a vote sufficient for the purpose; and
 - b. The interested officer abstains from the vote in which the contract or other transaction is authorized, approved or ratified; and
 - c. The contract or other transaction is commercially reasonable to WSFA at the time it is authorized, approved, ratified or executed.
- C. The Board of Directors is authorized to obtain in its discretion liability insurance for officers.

ARTICLE IX

Amendment of Bylaws

- A. Any proposed amendment must be signed by at least fifteen (15) members and be submitted in writing at a regular meeting.
- B. Such proposals must be read at that meeting.
- C. A vote shall be taken at the next regular meeting after the proposal is submitted and read.
- D. Passage shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those members voting.

ARTICLE X

Miscellaneous

- A. These Bylaws are subordinate and subject to all provisions of the Articles of Incorporation and the Act. All of the terms hereof, except where clearly repugnant to the context, shall have the same meaning as in the Act. In the event of any conflict between these Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation, the provision of the Articles of Incorporation shall control; in the event of any conflict between these Bylaws and the applicable sections of the Act, the provisions of the Act control.
- B. In the event any provision or provisions of these Bylaws shall be determined to be invalid, void or unenforceable, such determination shall not render invalid, void or unenforceable any other provisions hereof which can be given effect.
- C. No restriction, condition, obligation or provisions of these Bylaws shall be deemed to have been abrogated or waived by reason of any failure or failures to enforce the same.
- D. Whenever in these Bylaws the context so requires, the singular number shall include the plural and the converse; and the use of any gender shall be deemed to include all genders.

Is Science Unlikely?

By Keith Lynch

S.M. Stirling, the author of numerous SF novels including the Draka series and the *Island in the Sea of Time* series, believes that a scientific revolution is extraordinarily unlikely. If you could rewind and replay history (which he often does in his novels), in the overwhelming majority of cases no such revolution will ever take place.

You just go 'round and 'round in circles, looking for the Philosopher's Stone and grinding up mummy-dust and spinning epicycles and crystal spheres in the heavens.

It happened in our world only due to an extremely unlikely confluence of circumstances.

This is certainly one way to explain the Fermi paradox: Yes, the galaxy is teeming with civilizations, but they're all medieval,

and will remain so forever.

Look at explanations of the way the natural world works before the Scientific Revolution. With some very minor exceptions, they didn't improve *at all* from Sumeria to the Renaissance.

Paracelsus was as pig-ignorant as the Babylonians, ...

Others have argued that he's mistaken, and that pre-modern progress was real. This invariably degenerates into arguments about who knows more about history.

Some have argued that science is so *obvious* that any civilization is *certain* to come up with it. This has two obvious counterarguments, both of which he has used: It's obvious to us only because we were born and raised in it, and if it's so obvious why did no previous civilization come up with it?

Here I'll take a different approach, one which I haven't seen anyone else try.

Given that a scientific revolution *did* happen a few centuries ago, what should we expect to have found when we looked back on our species' past if Stirling was right?

Our species is amazingly robust and diverse. Even before the scientific revolution, we lived on every continent except Antarctica. We lived in caves, on remote islands, on mountains far from any ocean, on coasts, in the tropics, and in the arctic. We ate every sort of plant and animal matter, including exclusively vegetarian and exclusively meat diets. Only in the most unusual and marginal circumstances has a population ever died out except due to invasion by another group of people.

What could wipe out such a species? Certainly various technological disasters might do so. But those aren't an issue before a scientific revolution. Pre-history is replete with natural disasters which have wiped out vast numbers of species. The best known are the K-T boundary in which the dinosaurs died out, and the far greater Permian extinction. Without a doubt if a K-T-sized asteroid or comet were to strike earth, or if the level of oxygen in the atmosphere were to double or halve, billions of people would die. But not everyone. People living in caves wouldn't be killed when the sky turns incandescent, setting everything on fire that can burn. People adapted to living in the Andes or the Himalayas could survive a drop in oxygen levels by moving to lower altitudes. People living far from any ocean are immune to tsunamis. People living in tents aren't bothered by earthquakes. People living in tropics aren't bothered by ice ages. Hurricanes and tornadoes are always localized phenomena.

Certainly larger disasters can be imagined. There can always be a larger asteroid. Or a nearby gamma ray burster. But there doesn't seem to have been anything in at least the past half-billion years which would have wiped us out. And there's nothing special, or unusually dangerous, about the time we live in. Indeed, the solar system has never been safer, as the number of rogue asteroids and comets has gradually decreased through the ages.

Resource depletion isn't an issue, any more than it is for any other animal species. Everything essential to human life is endlessly naturally recycled on our planet, for so long as the sun shall shine.

In about 500 million years, the sun will start to gradually become hotter. Either the CO₂ in the atmosphere will decrease to compensate, in which case photosynthesis will become impossible, and plants will go extinct, immediately followed by animals and people, or else there will be a runaway greenhouse effect in which all the oceans will boil away, and Earth will become just like Venus. In the absence of advanced technology, it will be the end of our species.

If a scientific revolution is extraordinarily unlikely, and one occurs, there's no reason to expect it to happen very near the beginning of our species' life. What we'd almost certainly find once it happened and once the sciences of archaeology and palaeontology were developed, was a record of pre-scientific civilizations, similar to Rome, Byzantium, Greece, Egypt, China, Persia, Babylon, and the Aztecs, stretching back, not for a few tens of centuries, as we've found, but for millions and



millions of centuries.

It's quite a vision: empires, kingdoms, khanates, shogunates, etc., stretching back for æons. Each patch of land may have consecutively been part of many tens of thousands of civilizations, each lasting at least as long as the whole of our western civilization. While fragments of writing on stone or on baked clay tablets might survive for millions of centuries, it's doubtful that we could read any but the most recent few dozen centuries of it, as there would be no continuity. Our Rosetta stone only bridges at most 40 or 50 centuries. It would be too much to ask for an unbroken bridge of successively older Rosetta stones linking earlier and earlier languages, going back millions of centuries. Known history, at any one time, would necessarily encompass only the most recent few thousand years. And there'd be no way to tell whether a myth was based on historical events of ten thousand years ago, or of ten million, or was totally fictional, or how distorted it had become in the retelling. (H. Beam Piper's "Omnilingual" scenario only works between two scientific civilizations.)

That is certainly not anything like what archæologists and palæontologists discovered in our own timeline. Writing only goes back a few thousand years, and our species is not enormously older. Go back even a single million years, and you find a world without mind, inhabited only by a wide variety of unreasoning beasts.

I therefore conclude that a scientific revolution happened almost as soon as it could, given the natural conservatism of most pre-scientific societies, and their grinding poverty, low literacy rates, superstition, lack of communication, and restrictions on free thought.

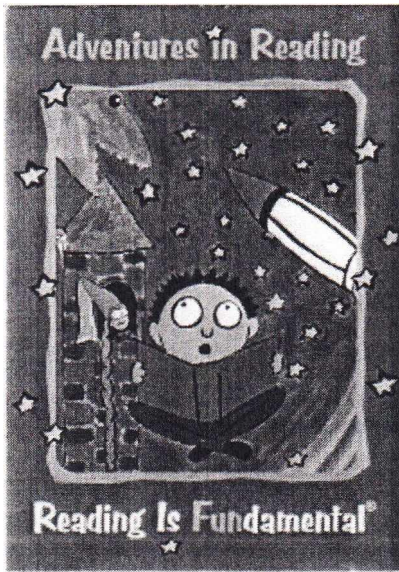
I can think of several possible counterarguments:

- Perhaps there's some resource that's not necessary for human life, but is necessary for a scientific revolution, that would have been exhausted within a few thousand years. Perhaps, but I can't think of any such resource.
- Perhaps our species' mental flexibility would gradually become less, making new ideas less and less likely as the ages go by. This smacks of the old discredited notion of "racial senescence". There's no evidence for it, and no plausible mechanism.
- Perhaps our species would become more specialized, until we could only live in certain narrow ecological niches, making extinction due to natural disaster more and more likely. I doubt this, because people were already living in a very wide variety of niches, so selective pressure would preserve our lack of specialization.
- Perhaps our species would have splintered into several different species, each specialized for the niche they live in, and each thus independently more vulnerable to extinction. People have always traveled long distances and interbred on a geologically short timescale, and this would continue to prevent our species from fragmenting.
- Perhaps another species would have developed intelligence, and then outcompeted ours. This development is necessarily slow, and would be noticed and stopped long before it became a threat. And even if it did happen -- even if it did happen *repeatedly* -- that just replaces "mankind" with "intelligent life" in my argument. Why, once a scientific revolution happened, wasn't there a history of intelligent life on our planet going back many millions of years?
- Perhaps a worldwide totalitarian empire which outlaws some prerequisite of science will form, and never fall. There's no record in history of any social organization lasting more than two or three thousand years, and very few examples of any lasting even one thousand. Over long timescales societies are totally fluid. Neither is there any record of any worldwide organization, much less an absolute one, before the scientific revolution.
- Alien invasion. If there are a billion civilizations in our galaxy, whichever one first has a scientific revolution is likely to take over the whole galaxy. One of them has to be first, and it happens to be us. This is a variant of the "we're the elder race" explanation of the Fermi paradox. The problem with that argument is that many billions of second-generation stars in our galaxy are billions of years older than the sun, so we're very unlikely to be first at anything unless we're utterly unique in some important way.
- A technological disaster wipes us out. Perhaps advanced technology doesn't require science, but just takes longer without science. In some cases, maybe, but only by making many incremental changes. People would have time to adapt to pathogens that were gradually bred to be more contagious and deadlier. And there doesn't seem to be any incremental route to nuclear weapons; if you don't know exactly what you're doing, you're never going to make one. (Yes, I read that Robert Forward novel that implies otherwise. I'm not convinced.) I'm open to suggestions for other plausible techno-disasters that don't require science, but until I hear one...
- Remarkable coincidence. This can't be ruled out. For instance the Washington DC area's two worst disasters in the last half of the 20th century happened during the same half hour, but were completely unrelated. (A plane crash and a subway crash, both at about 4 pm on January 13, 1982.) A half hour is to a half century just about what recorded history is to geological time. So it *can* happen. It just isn't very likely.

I plan to inform Mr. Stirling of this article, and invite him to respond. I will print any response in an upcoming WSFA Journal. Responses from others are also encouraged, of course.

Letters to WSFA

[The first was a postcard; all others were emails.]



Artwork by Alejandro Moreno, age 14, Washington, DC, Winner of the 2002 RIF National Poster Contest

Dear Washington Science Fiction Association:

Thank you so much for your recent gift to Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF). Your thoughtful contribution, in memory of Bobby Gear, will help RIF continue its mission to inspire a lifelong love of reading in America's most vulnerable children.

With much appreciation,
Rose B. Dean
Director, Donor Relations

This card acknowledges a voluntary contribution to Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. RIF is a tax-exempt organization, a status accorded under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. RIF did not provide any goods or services for this gift.

Please be sure to visit our website at www.rif.org for fun games and the latest news about RIF.

Date: Fri, 19 Aug 2005 02:02:03 EDT
From: NPollotta@aol.com
Subject: "Damned Nation" Nick Pollotta

Greetings folks,

Well, my new Fantasy/Humor novel has just been released, and I wondered if you would like to receive a PDF review copy?

Synopsis: "Damned Nation" Set during the early days of the Civil War, a dark thing is stalking the fiery chaos of the battlefields and killing soldiers from both the North and the South.

Desperate to stop the hellish murders before they become public knowledge, President Lincoln and President Davis each send a special agent to track down the grotesque fiend. The Union sends US Marshall J.P. Withers, and the Confederacy sends Lt. Major Logan Randall.

However, the battlefield deaths are only the beginning of the mounting slaughter, and this quickly proves to be more than any one man can handle. Reluctantly, the two special agents must join forces to stand against an unstoppable foe who is invulnerable to Holy Water, wooden stakes, swords, guns, cannons....

The novel has already been sent to ATS Press in Moscow to be translated into Russian.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes to all,

Nick Pollotta

www.NickPollotta.com
HUNTER/KILLER - Jan. 2004, **BLOODFIRE** - Jan. 2004

THAT DARN SQUID GOD! - March 2004,
BUREAU 13: JUDGMENT NIGHT - April 2004
STOLEN ARROWS - April 2004, **BUREAU 13: DOOMSDAY EXAM** - April 2004
TEQUILA MOCKINGBIRD May 2004, **BUREAU 13: FULL MOONSTER** - July 2004
THE CHAMELEON FACTOR - Dec. 2004, **DAMNED NATION** - Aug 2005
SHATTERZONE - Oct. 2005, **BUREAU 13 RPG SOURCEBOOK** - Nov. 2005
SKYHAMMER - Dec. 2005, **PERDITION VALLEY** - Feb. 2006
NEUTRON DAWN - April 2006, **UPLINK** - Oct. 2007

Date: Sun, 21 Aug 2005 22:50:36 +0300
From: <brucelin@ariakalsan.com>
Subject: Aria Kalsan Science Fiction Internet Event Invitation

Hello,

I would like to invite your group to the "Beyond the World" Internet Event taking place September 18, 2005. This event is being held by Foursided MFNA Publishing Company for its Aria Kalsan Anthology science fiction novels.

We would very much like for your group to attend this wonderful event. In addition, we would like to offer your group some type of discount or special offer on Aria Kalsan merchandise during this event.

Please contact us to work out the offer, and if you have any questions or concerns.

Additional information on Aria Kalsan can be found at www.ariakalsan.com

I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Thank you,

Bruce Lin
Foursided MFNA
Aria Kalsan
brucelin@ariakalsan.com

About Foursided MFNA -- Aria Kalsan Anthology: Foursided MFNA
Publishes the Aria Kalsan Anthology - an intriguing allegorical tale that examines the social and political issues affecting our modern world.

From: "James R Brown" <thesociologist@earthlink.net>
Subject: PRESS RELEASE: NEW E-BOOK: INTELLIGENCE REPORTS FROM EARTH
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2005 23:41:55 -0500

August 8, 2005

THE SOCIOLOGY CENTER PUBLISHING DIVISION
ANNOUNCES A NEW GENRE OF SCIENCE FICTION
INTELLIGENCE REPORTS FROM EARTH
by
James Roger Brown
WHY ARE THEY HERE?
THE MOST DANGEROUS SCIENCE FICTION EVER WRITTEN!
SUDDENLY
EVERYTHING YOU KNOW MAKES SENSE

A COLD CHILL RUNS DOWN YOUR SPINE
 YOUR HEAR SOMEONE SCREAMING
 THE VOICE SOUNDS FAMILIAR
 THEN YOU REMEMBER
 IT'S YOURS!

"We are the generation who will end the destruction and suffering inflicted upon Civilized Facets across the expanse of space our citizens occupy.

It is easy to forget the reason we are here in the routine of daily operations.

We should remember now."

(Excerpt from the war speech of Element One, Set of Element Ones announcing commencement of ENEMIES OF LIFE CONTAINMENT.)

ORDER YOUR COPY OF INTELLIGENCE REPORTS FROM EARTH TODAY!

From

<http://www.thesociologycenter.com/OrderPublications.html#INTELLIGENCE01>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Roger Brown is one of only two sociologist with a specialization in the sociology of intelligence operations. He is also author of *The Holographic Paradigm Theory of Social Processes* which uses neural structures as the unit of analysis for social processes; the Congressional Evidence Book *Organized Crime Methods and Procedures Integrated into the Child Protection Mental Health and Social Work Systems*; and adapted declassified CIA analysis methodology for analyzing child abuse allegations evidence in the manual *THE CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATION INVESTIGATION INSTRUMENT: PAIRED CONTRADICTORY HYPOTHESES TESTING MATRIX*. He was born in Ashland, Kentucky in 1948.

Content list of INTELLIGENCE REPORTS FROM EARTH:

SEIZED DOCUMENT 1

SURFACE AGENT ORIENTATION MANUAL

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CIVILIZED FACETS PLANETARY INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AND ADVANCE ENEMIES OF LIFE CONTAINMENT OPERATIONS

SEIZED DOCUMENT 2

TRANSCRIPT: Element One, Set of Element Ones (EOSEO) interview of sole known Interlink with the First Facet

SEIZED DOCUMENT 3

EXCERPT FROM DAILY ELEMENT ONE LOG

Element One, Set of Element Ones

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW OF INTERLINK WITH THE FIRST FACET

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REPLY TO INQUIRY FROM ELEMENT ONE, SET OF ELEMENT ONES

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

QUARANTINE VIOLATION INCIDENT 1142097

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PRIORITY ALERT TO ELEMENT ONE, SET OF ELEMENT ONES

CONTENT: FINAL REJECTION OF OFFER FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CIVILIZED FACETS

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL FACETS

SEIZED DOCUMENT 7

PRIORITY DIRECTIVE TO ELEMENT ONE, ALL SETS

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Director

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Date: Sun, 28 Aug 2005 07:17:10 -0400

Subject: Aboriginal Sci Fi

From: Cynthia Shelton <cynxing@cynxing.com>

FYI to Sci Fi lovers everywhere, the motherlode of Aboriginal Sci Fi back issues is on ebay right now. Item number: 6974540938

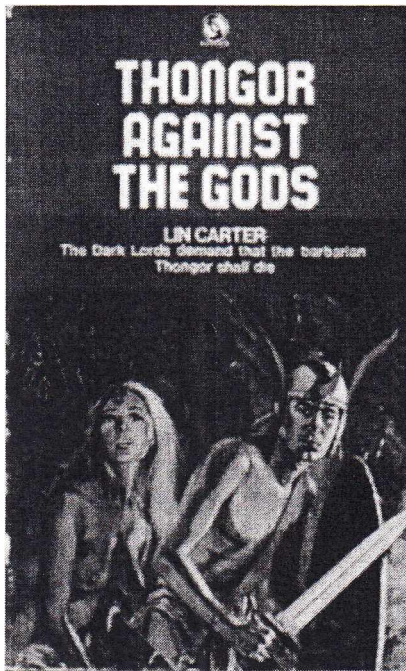
Live long and prosper,
CS

Thongor Against the Gods

By Lin Carter

New York: Warner Books/Paperback Library, 1967, 1979

Reviewed by Lee Strong



[Editor's note: Lee Strong has resigned from WSFA, and prefers that no WSFA member except Sam Lubell contact him for any reason. However, he has not rescinded his permission to print the material he had previously submitted to the WSFA Journal.]

This chapter in the mighty epic of Thongor, Lord of Lost Lemuria, is heroic fantasy from the pen of Lin Carter. As heroic fantasy goes, it's not bad, but certainly not that heroic.

In successive novels, Thongor has hacked his way to the throne of Patanga and two other cities mostly by disposing of various evil Druids from their sinister temples. Here, his enemies congregate in blood-soaked Tsargol and hatch a plot to kidnap his wife and infant son. The scheme goes awry and the kidnapper flees across the face of the mythical continent hotly pursued by the barbarian king.

As a long time Burroughsian, I found Mr. Carter's combination of Conan the Barbarian and John Carter, Sword of Theosophy, an adequate if not tremendous hero. This is the fourth book in this series and Mr. C's creativity is wearing a bit thin, not to mention things like character development. When you solve problems by hitting them with a stick, you don't have to have much of a personality. Still, Mr. C's vivid powers of description and arcane knowledge of oriental literature yield a satisfying tale of blood and thunder.

I rate *Thongor Against the Gods* as **½ on the five star scale. -- LS

Corrections

In the hardcopy (but not the online) copies of the August Journal, the bottom of the Steve Stiles cartoon on page 10, and of the photo of Scotty on page 19, were somehow cut off. The table of contents gives the wrong page number for the Alexis Gilliland story; it starts on page 19, not 20. Also, in the hardcopy edition that story's title isn't centered properly.

To make the number of pages come out even, I once again bumped my Einstein article to next month.

The deadline for the October issue is Fifth Friday, the 30th. Earlier if possible. As always, I eagerly solicit material: Fannish autobiographies, reviews of books (old or new), movies (likewise), TV shows, conventions, or talks. Reports on new scientific discoveries. Letters of comment. Cartoons. Nearly anything except current American politics.