

The WSFA Journal

The Official Newsletter of the Washington Science Fiction Association

May – June 2006 – ISSN 0894-5411

Ernest Lilley, Editor / Gayle Surrette, Assistant Editor

Email Address: editor@wsfa.org please put "Submission:" at the beginning of the subject line if it is to be considered for publication. Entries not marked this way may not get routed by our automatic filters.

Mailing Address: WSFA Journal, 16440 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613

this and previous issues of the journal may be seen by going to www.wsfa.org

Club Email Groups: wsfa-forum@yahoo.com / wsfa-announcements@yahoo.com

Contents

- **From the Editor**
- **Essays, Letters, and Other Musings**
 - Dodo Bones Photo by Carolyn Frank
- **Book Reviews:**
 - Hal's Worlds
 - Fire and Faith
 - Hellboy: Unnatural Selection
 - The Myriad: Tour of the Merrimack #1
- **Minutes And Reports**
 - First Friday 4/7/06
 - Third Friday 4/21/06
 - First Friday 5/5/06
 - Third Friday 5/19/06
- **Sightings, Events, & Announcements**
 - A Nancy Jane Moore Reading, Jim Baen in the hospital, Upcoming films

From the Editor...

My...that was interesting. My half year term as interim secretary has come to an end, and I now pass the quill to Drew Bittner. I'm leaving the post, and incidentally the area, as my Navy gal is now Captaining a ship home ported in Norfolk, just a few miles down the road. I'm not leaving WSFA (fuggedaboutit), and I'm looking forward to working on some projects from my remote lair. I'm also hoping to pass through the DC region from time to time and catch a meeting here and there...and the odds are very good that the needs

of the Navy will have us back here in a nonce. At most, two nonce.

Ernest Lilley – Dead Duck Editor



Essays, Letters and Other Musings



Dodo Bones Carolyn Frank 2006

The location is the Grant Museum of Zoology & Comparative Anatomy, University College London. It is one of the oldest natural history museums in England and looks like the epitome of a Victorian gentleman collector's place, with glass cabinets crammed together, each filled with multiple skeletons and

or parts. The dodo bones are between a Quagga (type of zebra that went extinct about the same time as the dodo) skeleton and a large penguin skeleton.

Book Reviews:

Hal's Worlds: Stories and Essays in Memory of Hal Clement by Shane Tourtellotte

Wildside Press Paperback: ISBN 0809550733

Review by Colleen Cahill

(excerpted with permission from a longer review posted in the June 2006 issue of SFRevu – www.sfrevu.com)

When a great writer passes on, we all mourn the loss and remember the stories that entertained and inspired us. There is a desire for a memorial and for a writer; the best monument has to be words, both in remembrances and in stories of tribute.

This is just what Hal's Worlds sets out to do: bring together the recollections of Hal Clement's friends and peers along with short fiction that salutes this Grand Master of science fiction, who is often spoken of as a gifted writer, humble gentleman and inspiring teacher.

It should be noted that writing was not the only talent Harry Stubbs had: he also painted under the name of George Richard and the cover of Hal's Worlds is one of this multi-dimensional man's works. Editor Shane Tourtellotte has done a wonderful job of bringing together a work that, along with Hal Clement's writings, gives us an insight into a giving man who was a husband, friend, father, patriot, scientist, writer, and teacher, one who will be missed by those many lives he touched.

Fire and Faith

Written by James Swallow

The Black Library, 2006

Reviewed by Librarian Strong

O.K. This is a nuns with guns novel. I still found it modestly entertaining.

The Sisters of Battle whose faith is here tested under fire are an elite military unit in the Warhammer 40,000 universe set in the eponymous year of 40,000 AD. Said universe is a grim nightmare of unending and generally pointless warfare based on a military miniatures game of the same name. In this unappealing morass, the Sisters manage to strike a more positive note than most of their peers.

Sister Miriya is charged with transporting a super dangerous psyker Torris Vaun to the planet Neva. Naturally things go wrong, the psionic freak escapes, killing a couple of Sisters in the process, and Sister Miriya is on the hook to recapture him. She gains unexpected help when nonviolent Hospitaler Sister Verity joins the fight. Together, they sort thru the nasty, gothic horrors of 40,000 AD's Byzantine society of cyborgs and techno-priests, one step ahead of assassins and traitors. But who is the real traitor and when will s/he strike?

This is no great shakes as a novel but it's not horribly bad either. There's very little character development and the personal revelations are telegraphed well in advance. The plot is mostly military fire and thunder with occasional poisons dripping into women's souls. There is a certain amount of gee whiz interest in the generally unappealing religious Imperium of 40,000 AD. The real strength of this novel is the moral fiber of the nuns who remain true to their higher ideals and fight to excise the cancers from their society despite multiple threats and temptations. They earn no earthly reward from doing so and that makes them admirable in my eyes. And, when all is said and done, it's a lot of fun watching good girls kick bad boys' butts.

I rate Fire and Faith as 2.5 stars on the 5 star scale for an adequate story set in a nasty universe. – LS

Hellboy: Unnatural Selection

Written by Tim Lebbon

Hellboy created by Mike Mignola

Pocket Star Books, 2006

Reviewed by Lee Strong

Ah! One of my favorite fantasy characters... in one of his weaker stories...!

In this effort, Hellboy (the World's Greatest Paranormal Detective) and his teammates at the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defense (BPRD) tackle an outbreak of mythological monsters. In the Hellboy universe, this is nothing particularly unusual but the magnitude of the global outbreak means That All Is Not Right With The World. In fact, it's a plot by a crazed environmentalist-scientist-magician to terrorize world governments into a more Earth friendly lifestyle. Magical means and detective skills

combine as the BPRD agents hunt for the master of dragons and werewolves in the service of Mother Gaia.

This novel contains many elements of the typical Hellboy outing by creator Mike Mignola, but, somehow, they don't quite come together to make a rousing yarn. The story wanders back and forth between the now well established title character and new BPRD agent Abby Paris. As a result, we don't break enough new ground with either character. What can you say about an author who manages to make a demon prince and a recovering werewolf dull? The team is going thru its paces and an excursion into the magical mysteries of Hellboy's universe becomes just another present day fantasy novel.

I rate Hellboy: Unnatural Selection as 2.5 stars on the 5 star scale because of generally weak storytelling undermines a good concept. – LS

The Myriad: Tour of the Merrimack #1

Written by R.M. Meluch

DAW Books, Inc., 2006

Reviewed by Lee Strong

This book starts off as a rather average interstellar military and exploration novel, weakens in the middle, but finishes fairly strongly. Overall, I consider it a rather average interstellar military and exploration novel.

The short version of the story is the United States Spaceship Merrimack poking around the universe looking for trouble. The crew finds plenty of it what with a mix of first contact with one species, an ongoing war with a second species, intramural hostilities with two human nations, some space-time anomalies, and sexual tensions among the all too human crew. The story opens with the crew of the Merrimack exploring a star cluster – The Myriad – while hunting for a voracious interstellar species The Hive, which they fight with energy cannons, leaky force fields, and broadswords. They find a humanoid species that seems to have FTL star flight without having FTL capacities. Duly intrigued, they open communications just as the League of Earth Nations and the Hive arrive to eat their new found friends. Rousing swashbuckling space combat ensues as the crew attempts to unravel the secrets of the Myriad's peculiar local space-time and a mystery older than the universe.

May - June 2006 – ISSN 0894-5411

This novel reads a lot like a pastiche of Star Trek's more unlikely tropes. If Captain Kirk is a pirate misplaced in time, Captain Farragut is a bigger one. Other crew and situations strike me as exaggerated versions of the various Enterprises' counterparts. This is not altogether bad, but you do kind of wonder. The basic set up is fair but the story sags as it slogs forward with clichéd aliens, very clichéd future politics, downright silly future weaponry, and far too many subplots for good storytelling. However, I was pleasantly surprised at the strength of the ending as Mr. Meluch weaves things together and resolves his issues with an intelligent and properly foreshadowed plot twist. So, the first tour of the Merrimack turns out to be an adequate read.

I rate The Myriad: Tour of the Merrimack #1 as a rather average 3.0 stars on the 5 star scale. – LS

WSFA Meeting Minutes

First Friday – April 7, 2006

Location: VA @ The Gilliland's

Started at: 9:15 PM - Ended at: 9:53 PM

Officers: Sam Lubell (President), Cathy Green (Vice President), Robert Macintosh (Treasurer), Ernest Lilley (Secretary)

Trustees: Barry Newton, Elizabeth Twitchell, Lee Gilliland

Members: Colleen Cahill, Alexis Gilliland, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Gayle Surrette, Ivy Yap (Not Seen), Madeline Yeh

Guests: Matthew Appleton (2)

President Sam Lubell called the meeting to order at 9:15 by his watch. The Secretary recapped the minutes of the previous meeting and said minutes were accepted.

Treasurer's Report: \$5141.31 in checking, Insurance Co wants \$500 for our policy. World Fantasy Collection Agency reported that letters had gone out and there had been no response. Ernest suggested that we needed to follow up by phone. A list of debtors is available, but no names. Ernest nominated Rich Lynch to make the calls, and Sam said he'd talk to him.

Capclave Past: Estimated loss is \$2000. Sam read parts of a letter from Howard Waldrop, the GOH. He shouldered the blame for any snafu's associated with the con, as he seems to have a track record of shutting down magazines and unsettling cons. See the letter later in this issue.

Capclave Present: Colleen has taken the reigns for Elspeth while she (EK) moves and recovers. There was a meeting the previous Saturday, at which a timeline was setup. The ducks in this year's duck pond will actually float. A lot of wheels are in motion but there's not a lot that's concrete. Ben Yalow will be assisting with hotel negotiations.

Capclave Future: Colleen also reported on a recent meeting at which hotel issues were discussed. Colleen would like to get a two year contract and would like to know if anyone is thinking of running for 2008 chair, though the election isn't until May.

Publications Committee: The WSFA journal was delayed on account of the Secretary traveling to Malta, then back to DC, then off to Vegas, then back to DC. Sam reported on the Politics & Prose Futurist book group where Future Washington had been the book of the month in April. Authors Nancy Jane Moore and Brenda Clough, who had contributed to the collection attended, and were the first authors that had been at one of the book club meetings. It went very well. Ernest inquired as to the location and quantity of the other WSFA titles, and was told we are out of one and Mike Walsh has the rest. He said that he'd like to have a web page for each and to make them available for sale, possibly with Paul and Gayle handling the distribution.

Rules Committee: No report. Lee Strong was not present.

Entertainment Committee: Alexis regaled us with a tale of a car thief who stole a car in order to make a court appearance. Fortunately (for the forces of law and order) he stole a car with a GPS transmitter and alarm system and was apprehended in the court house parking lot.

Committee to Actually Talk about Science Fiction: Bill Lawhorn invited folks upstairs after the business session to talk about the Asimov's April-May double issue.

Activities Committee: Lee asked who would be interested in going to an X-Men 3 showing, and got a fair showing of hands.

Old Business: Ernest inquired as to the state of our incorporation. John Pomeranz was handling it and was not present.

Drew reported on the attempt to get a group discount to see "Spamalot" but there are no discounts available. The performance will be at the Kennedy Center and tickets should cost about \$90.

New Business: Colleen asked for anyone who wanted their mailing list information updated to let her know.

Nominations for Offices was inquired about by Bill Lawhorn, and Sam briefed the club on procedure.

Search for Intelligent Visitors: None Found

Announcements:

The secretary promised to try and get the announcements right, but reminded the club that email would help in that regard. Lee offered the usual chair and house reminders.

Lee and Alexis will be GOH at Ravencon. Elizabeth Twitchell is still hoping to find someone who needs a ticket as she has an extra.

Lee gave an update on the Man From UNCLE convention she's running next October. It is the first MFU convention in the US in the last 20 yrs.

Colleen mentioned several Library of Congress SF events: See below.

Madeleine Yeh will be performing on Saturday 4/18 with her martial arts group at the DC Cherry Blossom festival.

The student SF contest entries will be read at Peggy Rae's also on Saturday 4/18. Chocolate cheesecake was offered as a bribe.

Bill Lawhorn moved to adjourn...or at least to get the heck out of here...unanimously accepted at 9:53pm

Third Friday – April 21, 2006

Location: MD @ the Madigan's

Begun: 9:15 PM – Adjourned: 9:53 PM

Third Friday's meeting was held at the Madigan's and began at 9:15, by the president's watch.

The treasurer reported \$5141 in checking and that we had a \$500 expenditure for insurance. He reported that he had made world fantasy inquiries but had not gotten back any responses. It was suggested that we find someone to follow up by phone. Sam said he'd look into it.

Capclave Past reported an estimated 2k loss, and Sam read a letter from the GOH Past absolving us of responsibility for anything that went wrong. Colleen is both Capclave present and future for the moment while Elspeth moves. Meetings for both are being held. Hotel price are locked in at last years rates. Communications are imperfect.

Publications reported nothing to report, though Sam reported on the politics and prose reading of Future Washington, which went well and was attended by several authors.

There was no rules committee, but there was a humorous tale from Entertainment, and activities suggested an X-Men viewing.

In old business, Ernest inquired about our incorporation, but there was no one present who could answer the question. Drew reported on the attempt to get a group discount for Spamalot. Forgetabout it.

In New Business, Colleen asked for updates to the contact information to be sent her. Sam pointed out to the trustees that we needed a slate of officers to vote on.

There were no intelligent visitors found. A number of announcements made, and we adjourned at 9:53pm. WSFA standard time.

First Friday – May 5, 2006

Location: VA @ the Gillilands

Begun:: 9:15 PM – Adjourned: 9:53 PM

MiniMinutes:

We met at the Gilliland's on Cinco De Mayo. Bob says we've still 5366 in cash and 15k in CDs in the banko.

Capclave present and future said there were meetings afoot and more news to come. And many a WSFAn knew to duck at many fowl puns, DCin2011 to DCin2012 is slip sliding away And Publications really thought the journal was due any day. Alexis found entertainment in slush, and Activities a musical The Rules committee reported nothing changed from 90-99 Ernest hoped we'd get re-incorporated in good time. Announcements were made, our election was held. The trustee's slate was accepted, their nominees gelled. Sam and Cathy and Bob will stay on, Secretary Drew Bittner will now tag along. Our trustees will be Lees Gilliland and Strong as well as Steve Smith to make up the throng. Capclave 08 (will) by Sam Scheiner be run. And so we adjourned the election now done, Leaving us to ponder ...next year who will run?

Officers: Sam Lubell (President), Cathy Green (Vice President), Ernest Lilley (Secretary), Robert MacIntosh (Treasurer)

Trustees: Lee Gilliland, Barry Newton, Elizabeth Twitchell

Members: Matthew Appleton, Colleen Cahill, Alexis Gilliland, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Bill Lawhorn, Nicki Lynch, Rich Lynch, Rebecca Prather, Jennifer Rosenbaum, Judy Scheiner, Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Gayle Surette, , Madeleine Yeh Ivy Yap (Not Seen)

Visitors: Alex von Thorn

Called to order at 9:15 by Sam's watch. Minutes were read and accepted.

Treasure's Report: \$5366.31 cash on hand plus \$15294.90 in CDs.

Capclave Present (Colleen Cahill standing in) reported that there was a committee meeting at Peggy Rae's the next day and there would probably be a lot to report at the next meeting.

Sam reported that they had sold a membership at Ravencon, and handed out a whole bunch of flyers. Colleen also reported that she has been busy populating her Balticon Duck Pond. Fowl Punishment ensued.

Capclave Future (also Colleen) reported that she needed to make progress with the hotel before having much more to report, and that she has a position open for a PR person.

DCin2011 (Robert MacIntosh) reported that 2012 was a more likely date, as the hotel hasn't been approved yet, let alone built.

Publication Committee reported that the journal was running a bit behind, but that the May journal would be along shortly.

Entertainment Committee (Alexis) shared lurid tales of slush from a writer. With pictures. Why us? We've been known to print short stories in the journal. The Journal editor reminded the throng that the editor reserves the right to reject content if deemed not appropriate. Lee Strong agreed, citing rejections from his term as Secretary.

Activities Committee (Lee Gilliland) asked who was interested in an X-Men III screening, with enthusiastic results. She also noted that there would be a sci-fi themed musical tribute at Wolf Trap on July 7th. Unfortunately it runs against the July First Friday.

Rules Committee (Lee Strong) 1990-1999 journals have been reviewed to see if any substantial rules regarding the management of Capclave were enacted, and found none.

The Committee to Actually Discuss Science Fiction (Bill Lawhorn) said they'd meet after the

Old Business:

Incorporation: Ernest brought up the incorporation question again. It's still in John Pommeranz's court. Ernest passed the torch to Sam to follow up.

New Business: None to mention.

May - June 2006 – ISSN 0894-5411

Search for New Life: Alex von Thorn, who's been to Peggy Rae's house before, attended for his first time.

Announcements: Secretary reminded folks he was recording, and that everything anyone said can and will be used against them in a WSFA Journal. The hostess made house minding mentions.

Lee G reported that she had been called humble in print regarding her GOHness at Ravencon.

Elizabeth Twitchell reported that though she was the owner of the Capclave Live Journal it has languished.

Matthew Appleton reported that the 8th issue of his fanzine Some Fantastic (www.somefantastic.us) was online.

Barry Newton reported that the next day was the next to last day of the DC Flower fest, and also that his daughter Meridel Newton was about to receive her Bachelor's Degree.

Madeleine had started work in the agency Lee Strong works at. Lee was surprised, and concerned, and noted that the agency was hemorrhaging humans as the result of an impending move. Lee made scurrilous comments about the organization management.

Lee Strong showed a copy of a tabloid which proved that the Titanic had never actually sunk. Lee Gilliland, noted Titanic devotee, was intrigued and appalled in turns.

Rebecca Prather had copies of the May Mensa mag.

Ernest Lilley reported that he was starting another online publication, this one called Gumshoe, and reporting on the mystery genre (www.gumshoereview.com). He issued a general call for reviewers.

Election Rules were explained by Lee Gilliland, after which we adjourned (9:42pm)

We reconvened and voted.

The trustee's slate was accepted without change.
The results were:

President: Samuel Lubell. Incumbent (all in favor, no opposed, no abstentions)
Vice President: Cathy Green Incumbent (all in favor, no opposed, no abstentions)
Treasurer: Bob Macintosh, Incumbent (all in favor, no opposed, no abstentions)
Secretary: Drew Bittner, New...though not actually present (all in favor, no opposed, no abstentions)

Trustee nominees: Lee Gilliland, Steve Smith, Lee Strong (by acclimation.)

Capclave 08: Sam Scheiner (by acclimation.)

Again we adjourned.

Third Friday – May 19, 2006

Location: MD @ the Madigan's

Begun: 9:20 PM – Adjourned: 9:58 PM

Officers: Samuel Lubell, Cathy Green, Bob Macintosh, Ernest Lilley, Colleen Cahill
Barry Newton, Elizabeth Twitchell
Members: Matthew Appleton, Mike Bartman, Drew Bittner, Katherine Bittner, Paul Haggerty, Scott Hofmann, Bill Lawhorn, Nicki Lynch, Rich Lynch, Candy Madigan, John Madigan, Judy Newton, Meridel Newton, Ken S. Silberman, Steve Smith, Bill Squire, Gayle Surette, Mike Taylor, Ivy Yap (Not Seen),
Guests: Kindra Gresham

MiniMinutes:

We were well met in Maryland at 9:20pm on May 19th. \$43876.71 was in the bank and our insurance was paid. A World Fantasy debtor promised to make good. No, we don't know who or how much. Capclave present reported on "Budget, Programming, Facilities, Ducks, and Emails." All of which are up in the air, except the ducks which will be in the Baltipond, and the emails which have now been sent. It was noted that; "We need to do a big membership drive at Balticon." "Starting with our own members." Capclave Future is alive and well, but still in the future. Capclave Far Future and DC2012 had no

reports. Entertainment was an amalgam of Politics, Religion, and Flamingos. Publications handed in another \$50 in Future Washington sales and apologized for being late on the current journal. It will now be a May/June issue. Old business discussed the location of the June first Friday meeting, and John Madigan said he could manage it alone. New Business suggested we find some new business. Announcements were made and we adjourned at 9:58pm.

WSFA Meeting

MD 5/19/06

9:20 Begun / 9:58 Adjourned.

Previous meeting and election results were summed up. In verse. Though I forgot to mention Capclave Future. But was corrected.

Treasurer's Report: \$43876.71 insurance was paid for the year. One of the world fantasy debtors threatened to send us a several grand. We're not sure who or how much.

Capclave Present reported in that the budget was not yet ready, a hotel walk was in the offing, and other stuff was happening. Elspeth noted that post cards had gone out to previous attendees. Elspeth is still settling in from her move and getting back up to web speed. Also that a WSFA members should sign up now in support. The fowl plans for Balticon promotion were reviewed. Budget Programming Facilities Ducks Emails. "We need to do a big membership drive at Balticon." "Starting with our own members."

Capclave Future is doing very well, but was looking for a PR person. And a hotel date.

Capclave Far Future and **DC 2012** had no reports.

Entertainment Committee: Candy reported a drive by Flamingoing.

Publications Committee: My dog ate the journal. Mike Bartman suggested more frequent backups. A dual issue was threatened. Drew (sec elect) said he'd be in the Philippines and unable to assume his office in the flesh. Another \$50

from Steve Sawicki was put into the pot for Future Washington.

Old Business: Sam mentioned that he's pushing for us to resolve the incorporation deal before we have to file taxes again.

Candy said that she was going to have a hard time swapping dates and hosting first Friday with the Gilliland's, but John said he could do it. Cookies might not get made.

New Business: Ernest suggested we come up with some.

Announcements;

The meeting was recorded, the white bunny bites. Etc.

Elsbeth told us she'd moved to the same town. Her cat (still not dead) has now discovered the outdoors.

A cheer was raised for Meridel Newton who now has a bachelor's degree in East Asian studies.

The Flamingo drive by was elaborated on.

Future Washington will be reviewed in the September Asimov's.

We adjourned at 9:58

Sightings, Events, & Announcements



Please email upcoming events to editor@wsfa.org with the word "submission" in the subject line for consideration.

Upcoming Events:

June 19th 7-9 PM at Mayorga in Silver Spring: Rapid Fire SF Readings Nance Jane Moore (Future Washington) is reading with 15 other people Monday, June 19 as a fundraiser for the Speculative Literature Foundation

(<http://www.speculativeliterature.org/>) and Strange Horizons online magazine (<http://strangehorizons.com/>). This is a rapid-fire reading -- we'll each be reading for about 3 minutes each. Suggested donation \$5-15 ea. Mayorga is at 8040 Georgia Ave, just north of East-West Highway and a few blocks from the Silver Spring Metro.

Announcement:

6/16 Jim Baen in Hospital after a Stroke

Michael Walsh noted on the WSFA Forum that Jim Baen is in the ICU after a serious stroke. Friends and fans are asked not to send cards or flowers but to send whatever prayers are appropriate to your faith.

Movie Clock: (Source: IMDB)

May 26th: X-Men: The Last Stand - A cure for "mutancy," the resurrection of a lost comrade, and the escalating tensions between mutants and humans threaten to trigger the war to end all wars.

June 2:- District B13 [limited] - Set in the ghettos of Paris in 2010, an undercover cop and ex-thug try to infiltrate a gang in order to defuse a neutron bomb.

June 9th: Cars - En route to a big race, a hot-shot stock-car known as Lightning McQueen gets waylaid in the town of Radiator Springs. During his idle time, McQueen befriends some locals who help him begin to realize that there might be more important things in life than fame and fortune.

June 23: Click - Workaholic architect Michael Newman (Sandler) comes to own a universal remote that allows him to fast-forward and rewind to different parts of his life. But complications arise when the remote starts to overrule his choices.

June 28th: Superman Returns - The Plot: After a mysterious absence of several years, the Man of Steel returns to Metropolis, only to find Lex Luthor is back to his old tricks -- and Lois Lane may have moved on.

June 28th: Who Killed the Electric Car? [LA/NY] - A documentary that investigates the birth and death of the electric car, as well as the

role of renewable energy and sustainable living in the future.

July 7th: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest - When Captain Jack Sparrow (Depp) finds out he owes a blood debt to ghostly Davey Jones, he desperately searches for a way to pay it off, or else face eternal damnation in the afterworld. And he's not above interrupting the wedding plans of Will Turner (Bloom) and Elizabeth Swann (Knightley) to do it.