



# The WSFA Journal

**November 2009**

Steve Smith, Editor

Comments? Contributions? Contact editor at wsfa dot org

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## Minutes

### First Friday, November 6, 2009

Meeting called to order at 9:13 PM by President Lee Strong. There was no power.

#### Officers:

President: Lee Strong

Vice President: Judy Newton

Secretary: Steve Smith

Treasurer: Tina Abel

WSFA	Citi	\$8,121.84
Capclave	Citi	\$9,117.72

Merchant	Citi	\$1,718.24
CD 1 (Feb)	M&T	\$5,739.95
CD 2 (May)	BB&T	\$6,000.00
Total		\$30,697.75

**Trustees:** Charles Abel, Colleen Cahill, Chris Newman  
Nothing

**Entertivities:** Sam Lubell  
Capclave!

**Publications:** Steve Smith

**Journal:** Steve Smith

There is a preliminary paper journal for September, which has the text of the Bylaws amendments.

**Website:** Paul Haggerty & Gayle Surrette  
Nothing

**WSFA Press:** Ernest Lilly

- We were about \$300 over budget. The overrun was mostly shipping and overruns.
- Income: \$4300 from *Reincarnations*
- We're still 2K away from break-even.
- We also got \$700 for bundles. They were a great success.
- Mike Walsh has our older books.
- What does Harry want done with the extra books? We have a few more copies than the official "limited edition" run of 1000. These are the "overruns" mentioned below.

**Capclave Past:** Bill Lawhorn

- We had a Capclave! Reviews are positive. Guests are happy.
- Attendance was approximately 350 total, with 285 paid, including one-day, and 30 – 40 student/military.
- We should have most of our data together by Third Friday and surely by the First Friday in December.
- Sarah has Capclave Stuff that somebody else needs to take custody of. She needs the trunk of her car for other things.

**Capclave Present:** Gayle Surette

Gail enlightened the club.

She's working on programming ideas. She talked with Ann & Jeff Vandermeer. Our buzz is up! The guests like the idea of a book. Problem is everything Connie has ever done is in print.

There will be Titanic Tea, with a Steampunk theme. *[This is a “tea as if on the ship Titanic”, not a “really, really big tea”. – Editor]*

The workshops were very successful; there will be more of them.

**Capclave Future:** Cathy Green

She's looking at the Crowne Plaza Silver Spring – it's workable but weird. Some of the first and fourth floor function rooms seem to be 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> floor – noneuclidian. The ballroom is nice and big and the handicap access is OK.

New York Comic Con is moving to mid October – we don't want to be up against them. Perhaps we could move the date around if necessary? Note that this might move us out of range of Maryland's Homecoming weekend, which would let us use the Hilton Silver Spring, which would really like us back.

**The Committee to Actually Discuss Science Fiction:** Bill Lawhorn

David Bartell will be at the First Friday meeting in December to read and discuss one of his stories. Elspeth Kovar suggests that we make the business meeting as short as feasible.

**New Finance:** Tina Abel

No meeting needed; the audit is nearly complete. It will be finished before the end of the year.

**Awards:** Colleen Cahill

We gave out an award! The next committee meeting will be on November 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Old business:**

none

**New business:**

Tina reminds us tomorrow is the Uno “dough raiser.” The form to turn in to the restaurant is in the Capclave goodie bag. It's in Bethesda, off Wisconsin.

It runs for the entire day, 11AM – 2AM. Includes bar and carryout. Make sure you give the ticket to the server. Check the receipt to make sure it gets recorded properly.

**New people:**

Caroline Cox Remembers Disclave. She's a friend of Terilee Edwards-Hewett.

Eric Shulman comes w/ Caroline

Sonny saw some random thing online about Capclave.. Craigsist, perhaps?

Rick found us on the Internet by Googling SF of DC area. He was at Capclave.

*[We need to remember to remind folks to sign the attendance sheet. I tend to miss names. – Editor]*

**Announcements:**

- From our hosts, “Welcome!”
- Mike Walsh returns from World Fantasy Con with a big bag of stuff, including a World Fantasy award for his Howard Waldrop collections. (congrats, Mike!) a Hugo, and a dodo.
- Gail Surette was at the book signing for Cake Wrecks, along with Barry and Judy Newton and Caroline Frank. Grand prize went to the Lenin cake.
- Rebecca Prather announced her annual xmas party.



Meeting unanimously adjourned at 10:27 PM.

**Attendance:**

Charles Abel, Christina Abel, Ross Chalmer, Caroline Cox, Paul Haggerty, Bill Lawhorn, Ernest Lilley, H. P. Lovecraft, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Chris Neumann, Barry Newton, Judy Newton, Judy Scheiner, Eric Shulman, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Lee Strong, Gayle Surette, Jennifer Wallace, Sean Wallace, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh.

**Third Friday, November 20, 2009**

Meeting called to order at 9:27 PM by President Lee Strong  
We did not have a quorum.

**Officers:**

President: Lee Strong

Vice President: Judy Newton

Secretary: Steve Smith

Treasurer: Tina Abel

WSFA	Citi	\$10,330.33
Capclave	Citi	\$10,982.19
Merchant	Citi	\$4,288.39
CD 1 (Feb)	M&T	\$5,739.95
CD 2 (May)	BB&T	\$6,000.00

Total		\$37,340.86
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Two credit cards were declined for 2010.

We have to pay \$5 per month for Merchant Account fees, whether we do any business or not.

**Trustees:** Charles Abel, Colleen Cahill, Chris Newman

None except there's an election coming up. If you want to be an officer, talk to a trustee.

**Entertivities:** Sam Lubell

- Charles Abel says The prisoner mini series was very good. Was at AMC.
- John and Candy Madigan are in "A Devils Christmas Carol" at Greenbelt Community Arts Center December 4<sup>th</sup> - 13th. He has flyers.
- Lee Strong says that 2012 is a great disaster movie, but it has too many humans. No dogs were killed on screen.
- Brian Lewis suggests an official group walking tour to look at the Christmas lights on N. Portal Dr. in Silver Spring.

**Publications:** Steve Smith

Journal: Steve Smith

The September Journal is in the hands of the webmasters.

Submit to the WSFA Journal!

Website: Paul Haggerty & Gayle Surrette

The Capclave blog is up and running. Posts are showing up on the WSFA group on Facebook. We're getting links!

WSFA Press: Ernest Lilly

No report. Rumor is that the proceeds (according to Tina) are \$4056.62 (counting checks written) Our gross over \$7500. This is preliminary and does not include latest invoices. There are issues accounting for Paypal and for the WSFA Press bundles. The problem with Paypal is that we can only transfer \$500 per month out, and their calendar is FUBAR.

Books are being sold at Philcon. We're recommending that everybody gets two Turtledoves for xmas.

**Capclave Past:** Bill Lawhorn

"I swear to god I thought turkeys could fly." We still owe the hotel and Erica Ginter. Sarah needs more for the con suite.

We need more info on the Silent Auction.

**Capclave Present:** Gayle Surrette

Meeting, whenever. Brainstorming – (on the) titanic feast, steampunk theme. Ideas, contact to Gail. Things are progressing.

**Capclave Future:** Cathy Green

Not here.

**The Committee to Actually Discuss Science Fiction:** Bill Lawhorn

Not tonight. He does have a copy of *Alphabet Angels*, the story by David Bartell that we'll be discussing next meeting, some time after 10PM. He's posted a PDF onto the Yahoo group.

**New Finance:** Tina Abel

Audit is complete!! Committee members, thank you! Will be released to the membership; precis will be in the Journal.

**Awards:** Colleen Cahill

Needs to meet with new group.

**Old business:**

The Bylaws amendments are still on the table. Since we didn't have a quorum, discussion was postponed until the next meeting. Bill was groped in public, while abstaining.

**New business:**

None.

**New people:**

3<sup>rd</sup>: Todd Daley

Candy & Bill Lawhorn had a conversation through the floor. He complained about not being able to lick his nuts.

**Announcements:**

- The usual. John made steps (for the dog, so she can get up onto the bed) John adds that he plays Tiny Tim in *A Devil's Christmas Carol*.
- Colleen Cahill has piles of books & movies. Please take them.
- Colleen Cahill tells us that on December 1<sup>st</sup>, the “What If ...” lunchtime meeting at the Library of Congress will have Jeff Vandermeer talking about his book on how to be a writer.
- Lee Strong's Burroughs group is moving. They're considering meeting in Shenandoah Caverns.

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 10:20 PM.

**Attendance:**

Charles Abel, Christina Abel, Colleen Cahill, Tad Daley, Carolyn Frank, Paul Haggerty, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Candy Madigan, John Madigan, Sarah Mitchell, Steve Smith, Lee Strong, Gayle Surette. [This is the first meeting in a very long time that Ivy Yap has missed! – Editor]

## Reviews

### Surrogates



Touchstone, 2009

Directed by Jonathan Mostrow 1.0

Reviewed by Lee Strong 3.0

“Life... Only Better” – VSI Corporate Advertising Slogan

In the future, everyone will stay in their homes and deal with the outside world thru the Interne.... I mean, thru their lifelike robotic *surrogates*.

The opening segment of this film skillfully sketches the rise of surrogates as the dominant – indeed almost the sole – means of human interaction fourteen plus years in the future. The action then switches to show the commission of a now rare – and theoretically impossible – double murder. FBI agents Tom Greer and Jennifer Peters (Bruce

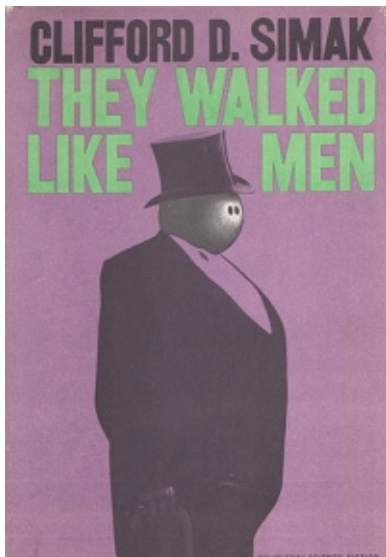
Willis and Radha Mitchell) investigate only to uncover a tangled web of intrigue, exotic weapons, and multiple personalities. The Bureau’s web of spy cameras quickly locates prime suspect Miles Strickland (Jack Noseworthy) but he blasts his pursuers and runs for cover in the low tech enclave of the anti-robotic “Dreads.” Despite superhuman gymnastics, agent Greer is defeated by the followers of The Prophet (Ving Rhames) and forced to confront future life in his own meatbag body. Doublecrosses proliferate rapidly as Greer attempts to solve both the escalating murder case and his martial difficulties with his wife Maggie (Rosamund Pike).

This is a good solid classic science fiction story in which the authors introduce a new technology into society and explore how it affects the human beings who make up that society. The rapid advance of surrogacy to become the almost only means of interaction is improbably rapid but I chalked that up to dramatic license. What is far more interesting is the numerous odd avenues that surrogacy takes in all too human hands including the surprising murder victims. Hint: “What you see is what you get” is emphatically not true in this well thought out film. The repeated discrepancy between the perfect surrogate units and their all too human operators is both amusing and intriguing. Who would *you* be if you could be whoever you want to be? The plot has many twists and turns, all carefully related to the basic technology, all beautifully explored by the camera. The actors are well chosen and bring both life and its opposite to their dual roles.

I rate *Surrogates* as 3.5 stars on the 5 star scale because it has a good solid story that asks some important questions about how science impacts life and humanity. – LS

*[This movie bears an uncanny resemblance to David Brin's "Kiln People". See the September 2003 WSFA Journal for a review, and David's blog for October 19, 2009 for his comments. – Editor]*

## They Walked Like Men



Published by Avon Books

Written by Clifford D. Simak © 1962

Reviewed by Lee Strong

Many years ago, I finished reading all of the science fiction in the Children's Section of the library. So I went over to the Adult Section where I found this gem marked with the rocket and electron rings. It was good then and better this year when I reread it as an adult.

Newspaperman Parker Graves *must* have been drinking. Bowling balls don't roll down the streets of Midwestern US towns on their own. But soon enough, he has more to worry about than hallucinations, namely an economic depression spreading across the planet like wildfire.

Eventually, he, too, is fired without any obvious reason, giving him plenty of time to dig into the mysterious depression. Soon enough, he discovers the real reason: an interstellar invasion by extraterrestrial real estate agents! And there's nothing that humanity can do to stop a takeover that's perfectly legal under our own laws!

This is a good solid novel built on an interesting twist on the old alien invasion theme. While the hero and heroine do get an assist from a friendly alien, they basically have to solve a bizarre mystery by gathering clues and thinking things through. Once they understand the problem, they are still stymied by the invaders' use of human laws to protect the scheme. In the best science fiction problem solving tradition, the resolution depends on the good guys and gals understanding the significance of an odd clue to the invaders' behavior. The characters are well developed and I thought the unusual motivation of the invaders was particularly well done.

*I rate They Walked Like Men as 3.5 stars on the 5 star scale because it builds a solid story on an unusual idea. – LS*

## WSFA History

### Ten Years Ago

#### November 1999

"Be vewwy vewwy quiet. I'm hunting vampiyas. Heh heh heh heh heh."



## **Twenty Years Ago**

### **November 1989**

The Committee to Spend A Lot Of Money on Something Incredibly Controversial and Expensive announced plans to duct tape the San Andreas Fault, giving San Francisco one less thing to worry about.

## **Thirty Years Ago**

### **November 1979**

--the following is reprinted from THE WSFA JOURNAL issue Number One, March 1965. It is a brief history of WSFA up to that date--

The Washington Science Fiction Association was founded in the fall of 1947 (as the Washington Science Fiction Society) by seven attendees at the 1947 Philcon II -Russell Swanson (President), Bob Briggs (Vice-President), Frank Kerkhof (Secretary-Treasurer), R.P. Courtis, Bob Pavlat, and Chick Derry.

The club grew very slowly, gathering a few new members and attracting an occasional guest speaker, including such notables as Willy Ley and Seabury Quinn. Then, the club floundered when President Swanson was discharged from the Army and left D.C. for his home in Haddam, Connecticut, and Frank Kerkhof ended up trying to run the club single-handedly.

Revitalization came shortly afterwards, when in the summer of 1948, the club was reorganized as the Washington Science Fiction Association with a new constitution and an energetic new President - Louis E. Garner, Jr. Bob Briggs again was elected to the office of Vice-President, and Frank Kerkhof to the office of Secretary-Treasurer. The last-named office was split into two, with Roy W. Loan elected to the new post of Secretary.

Meetings were held at the offices of the Association of American Railroads, in the Transportation Building, at 17th and I Streets, N.W., until the fall of 1953. For a year after that, meetings were held in the club's own apartment on O Street, N.W. After the club gave up the apartment, meetings were held successively at the homes of various members, including Dot Cole, Nelson Griggs, and Miss E. Cullen; they have been held at Miss Cullen's since 1956.

In addition to Lou Garner, Association Presidents have included Roy Loan (2 terms) Phil Bridges (2 terms), Bob Briggs, Nelson Griggs, Ted White, Bill Berg, Bob Pavlat (2 terms - one as Vice-President completing a term as President), John Magnus, Dick Eney, Bob Madle, George Scithers (3 terms, one incomplete) and, currently, Banks Mebane.

During its existence the Association has held three formal Conclaves (1950 - Wily Ley, Guest Speaker; 1951 - Sam Moskowitz, Guest Speaker; 1953 - "Proxy"con), a World Convention (Discon, 1963 -Will F. Jenkins, better known as "Murray Leinster", Guest-of-Honor) and several informal (i.e. without programs) conclaves, the Disclaves (usually held annually since 1958).

A club publication, QUANTA, appeared during the early years of the Association, but folded after four issues. More recently, SPECULATIVE REVIEW was sponsored by WSFA. Finally, the publication you are reading, THE WSFA JOURNAL, has assumed the task of publishing the news of the Association

and Association business.

## Letters

### From the Editor

There are a couple of interesting things about the reviews. “They Walked Like Men” is, like all Simak, excellent. Simak was a superb author; possibly the best thing I can say about him is that my favorite story of his is one of the last ones he wrote (*Grotto of the Dancing Deer*). It's proof that some people just keep getting better and better as they get older.

*Surrogates* brings up a couple of points. First is the problem of intellectual property. There was an actual script of *Kiln People* going around, and *Surrogates* bears a distinct similarity to that script. There's little an author can do in these circumstances; the studios have all the money and lawyers. When Art Buchwald sued Paramount Pictures over *Coming to America*, he “won” – but the court awarded him a cut of the “profit” from the film – which according to the Paramount's accounting, was zero. This is ironic, given the studios' jihad against “piracy”, defined as “any use of a movie that they don't get paid for”.

Another point is the shallowness of the movie compared to the novel. Admittedly, you can do a lot more in a 500 page novel than a 90 minute movie. Still, it would be nice to see some exploration of the implications of the technology. “Extreme” sports are a no-brainer in one direction; exploration of the meaning of “consciousness” is another in a different direction. Oh well.

— Steve Smith, Editor, *The WSFA Journal*

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