



The WSFA Journal

Summer 2011



Photo credit: Lawrence Person

Bacon Wrapped Dodos for Scalzi

The WSFA May 6th, 2011 meeting began at 9:16 when Steve walked in, making quorum. Veep Sam S. presided. Treasurer Steve reported that our finances are ahead of the federal government. We don't have to vote to raise our debt limit. He has emailed the treasurer's report. Paid Carrie Vaughn and

both artists. Cat Valente was paid six weeks ago. Activity includes paying the artists for the book covers, and paying Carrie Vaughn.

WSFA Press is on track. Gayle said that they have table of contents from Carrie Vaughn. We should have the Valente story soon, but no one is worried because she writes like that. She showed sample art last meeting and hopes to have a mockup soon. Book presales are online; she is adding presales information to the 2 page flyer for Capclave. Members can preorder the books, see Paul. We will be selling WSFA press books at Neb weekend.

Cathy for Capclave Present said we have the books for GoH. We are on track with 86 members which is the same place as last year. We'll have a big push at Balticon. She has a schedule for signups to volunteer. Colleen will be there with a duck pond. Sit at the table. We get a decent number of members, between 40 - 60, so this is important for us. She is working on administrative details with the GoHs. She would be happy to have more volunteers. Sarah is doing something special with costumes for the Dodos at Balticon, stop at the table. Sam L. designed new flyer and is doing a library sign. We are doing more link swaps. We now have a twitter feed. The Dodo is tweeting. <The only dodo on Twitter willing to admit it!> See Sarah. All dodo tweets will be stored at LoC <On Colleen's computer?>. We have a new table banner made of vinyl with the dodo logo. Press release was sent out and SF Signal.com put it up.

George for Capclave Future said that he emailed it to Scalzi who put it up on his blog, see what response we get from that. Prez Judy took over the meeting and said she saw the mention on the blog. Very favorable. Mike Walsh said there were many comments saying I'm so there. Sam S. said there were two boxes of Scalzi's book Fuzzy Nation at the Nebs for signing. Cathy suggested taking a photo of Scalzi with the dodos. Colleen said put some bacon on the dodos and he'll be there. <Hmmm, bacon-wrapped dodos?> Nothing will make you more popular than taping bacon to a cat.

The Committee to Talk SF will discuss the Vaughn and Valente stories.

Colleen for the small press literary award said that the group has been reading submissions. Paul said put up 12 stories. Total count is nebulous (no, that's different). We have 66 stories but are checking 14 more to see if they are small press. This will be a new high number of submissions. Stories are interesting. Much death and destruction. Colleen said she had to take a valium. Someone asked how many will be submitted to the club. It depends on how good they are. We will make a decision by June. Members will have about 2 months to read them. Cathy said, "We need the time because life happens and we don't want people to skim them in one night." Colleen said, "We will have the stories after Balticon." Gayle said, "Once we decide on the stories we will put them up in pdfs, can do them in other formats like kindle." Cathy said, "One of the selling points is that the stories are anonymous, just judged on literary merit. You might have read a few, but don't tell people and don't try to google it." Colleen said that starting the next meeting in June, the committee will be bugging people to read and vote. Cathy said she is offering bribes. At 70% will make fudge, at 80% will make chocolate cheesecake, at 90% will make both, if get 99% will make cheesecake and individual bags of fudge. <omit>



Someone mentioned the Thor movie. Sam L. suggested field trip. Sam S. asked people to find a place and put it up on our email list. Bad jokes about being hammered were made. Someone started singing "If I had hammer." Judy banged on hers.

Old business: Meeting move for the Nebs. New business: Cathy said, "At the Nebs I had offered to bake and am now running the Triptree bake sale. Bring baked goods to the meeting on Friday."

Here for first meeting: Hyan, found about meeting from a friend. Haven't been reading much lately, last thing was book



three of *Wheel of Time*. Stopped there. Enjoys SF/Fan TV, upset by end of *Galactica*. Now seeing *Lost*. Big *Star Wars* geek. Like it when stuff gets blown up, especially planets. Patrick found out about WSFA from Meetup. Invited to this meeting from two Meetup groups. Favorite books include *Angry Candy* <She doesn't seem angry>, *Hyperion*. For TV, he likes *Farscape*, *The Prisoner*, like to mix them up and listen to techno music. Haven't read much recent that he likes. Mark said, we can recommend stuff. Patrick said he cried at *Twilight*... because it was so bad. He writes vampire porn but doesn't read it, writes it with a blindfold on. And *Dr. Who*, followed all 12 incarnations, made it through Pertwee. Misses black and white. Third meeting: Another person Kim said she's been to more than 2 WSFA meetings but lives in South Dakota so isn't going to join, as it is a little far. Used to live in Montgomery.

Jim Thomas has missed about 250 meetings. Has not been here for at last 10 years (but has come to a few Capclaves). Joined club in early 1972, some time ago. Stopped coming when the poker games faded away. Judy suggested reviving the poker group. Someone said we have at least four players here. Jim said since those days Texas hold-em has become the game of choice. Jim said he authored the WSFA Rules [to Poker].

Announcements: Bill said will be a Capclave twitter, has photo of Dodos Easter greeting.

Gayle: If don't send it to webmaster, won't know what to post. Email it to us, don't just tell us.

Anything of relevance, submit. Mike has box of books. Steve: election limited to paid members. Has a list of 213 communists in the state department and 35 paid up members. Mark asked, "What's the overlap?" Motion to adjourn. Unanimously adjourned at 10 o'clock.

Attendance: Colleen Cahill, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Elspeth Kovar, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Barry & Judy Newton, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Gayle Surette, Meagan Voss, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Kim Euker, Patrick Scaffido, Hyan Yung Lee, Jim Thomas

Election: President: Barry Newton; Vice President: Sam Scheiner; Secretary: Sam Lubell; Treasurer: Steve Smith; Trustees: Cathy Green, Brian Lewis, Bob MacIntosh; Small Press: Cathy Green, Gayle Surette, Meagen Voss (Mike Walsh had been on the trustees slate but stepped down). Capclave 2013 Chair: Michael Walsh. Immediately after the election, Mike announced that "with the understanding that Capclave 2013 will *probably* be sometime in October (but not too near World Fantasy) and located probably in the DC suburbs of Maryland" his editor GoH will be Sharyn November.

If Star Trek Was a Current TV Show

The original Star Trek began boldly going where no man has gone before in September of 1966, 45 years ago. In honor of its anniversary, The WSFA Journal asks, what if Star Trek Was a Current TV Show

1. The *Enterprise* would be a Russian ship as America has cancelled its space program
2. It would be filmed in Canada to save money, so Kirk would be born in Canada instead of Iowa
3. The ship would have seat belts and air bags (no, not Shatner)
4. The episode with the faces white on one side black on the other would be replaced by white / Hispanic
5. To get the younger audience, the Federation would turn over a state of the art starship to a bunch of cadets
6. The future's communicators would be at least as powerful as current smartphones
7. Science would still be ignored but the treknobabble would sound much cooler with words like nanotechnology
8. Scenes would be much shorter with more quick cuts
9. With CGI, the Klingons would look more like aliens and less like Asians
10. Plot and characterization would be dropped even more to fit in more fight scenes
11. Episodes would be run in random order with the pilot shown last
12. When it is cancelled, even the fans can't save it



WSFA Takes Over the Nebs (for about 15 minutes!)

The May 20th WSFA meeting took place not at the usual location but at the site for Nebula Awards. Vice President Sam S. called the meeting to order at 8 pm. The club waived the minutes. We have money. Cathy explained about Capclave. It is on track to make money. We will have a table at Balticon and Worldcon in Reno. Future guests were named. Colleen explained about the short story contest. 76 stories had been received and committee will cut them to five to ten. Winners will be announced at Capclave. Bill said we need to get information to people he met here at others. Mike Walsh announced guests for 2013. Fan guest Steve Stiles and writer guest George Martin have a common ex-wife. Sam S. explained about WSFA and where we meet.

No old business. No new business.

New people. Jimmy Rogers started reading again after college. Lives in College Park. Richard Cumberlin lives in Bethesda. Johnny le writes fantasy and a tiny bit of SF. Neil Ottenstein went to WSFA for half a dozen meetings many years ago. Went to all Capclaves and Disclaves since 1985.

Announcements. Emily said the Discworld convention is coming to Madison, Wisconsin in July. Terry Pratchett hopes to be there pending his health. Nadcon.org. Neil Gaiman is speaking at the National Press Club on June 23rd. It is halfway to being sold out. WSFA is taking pictures of authors with Capclave's Dodo mascot. Meeting adjourned 8:14.

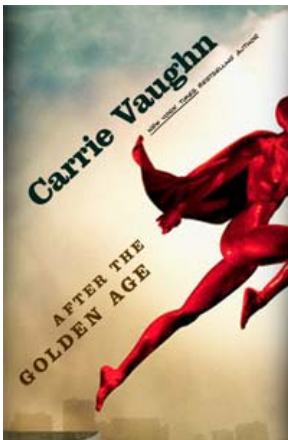
Attendance: Colleen Cahill, Cathy Green, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Judy and Sam Scheiner, Meagen Voss, Ivy Yap, Jimmy Rogers, Emily Whitten, Dr. Darth Dodo, Neil Ottenstein, Richard Cumberlin, and Johnny le.

Mini Reviews

By Samuel Lubell

Cold Magic by Kate Elliott. Fantasy. 544 pages. Book one in the Spiritwalker series. I liked her Jaran series a lot. This was not as good but still readable. *Cold Magic* is set in an alternate Victorian era, with some steampunk traits. The heroine, Catherine, is surprised to find out that the aunt and uncle who raised her had a deal with the Cold Mages that forces her to marry one of them. Part of the problem is that the Cold Mage is a fairly unlikeable character at first (we later find out he's trying to play a part as he wasn't born into the Cold Mages). But I liked the direction the book was going before he appears and wrenches it off into a different direction.

The Demolished Man by Alfred Bester. SF Classic. 256 pages. Re-read. A classic about a murderer in a society of telepaths. This still reads remarkably fresh even though it was written in the 1950s (a couple people in my book group said they felt women's roles were very limited in the book and had to be reminded about when it was written.)



After the Golden Age by Carrie Vaughn. Science Fiction. 304 pages. This is essentially a comic book in novel form. It is narrated by the daughter of two super-powered heroes who feels she has disappointed them because she doesn't have powers and is an accountant. So, she doesn't have a good relationship with her parents, and, when going through teenage rebellion, actually joined their archenemy. But when bad guys keep kidnapping her to distract the heroes, she starts investigating what is going on and the mayor's secret connections to the archenemy. It's lots of fun for those who remember comic books.

Blackveil by Kristin Britain. Fourth book in the Green Rider series. Epic Fantasy. Hardback 663 pages. I don't know why, but I love this series, but this book didn't seem as good as the others. The main character, Karigan, is a Green Rider, part of a troop of King's messengers/problem solvers each of whom has a brooch that activates a magical power. This book is about an expedition into the

mysterious Blackveil forest to try to find the lost city of the Eletians (a mystical race, several of whose descendants are on the expedition). But there is traitor on the mission with secret orders to eliminate Karigan.

Agent of Change by Sharon Lee & Steve Miller. SF/Action. Liaden series. ACE. This is the first of the Liaden novels (although it is hard to tell as the books are not numbered). The old story of boy meets girl is reshaped as the boy is a spy for interplanetary traders with an implanted computer that calculates the odds of surviving his every action and the girl is an ex-mercenary with a price on her head.

How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe by Charles Yu. I couldn't tell if this was a humor book whose editor told the author to add more pathos or a very sad drama about a man unable to come to terms with his past whose editor said to make it funny. Either way, there are two styles here that don't mesh. Time travel is both a reality in the book and a metaphor. And the book itself is in the book.

The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth by Alexandra Robbins. Nonfiction. 448 pages. Author investigates high school popularity and cliques by looking at several non-populars and one cheerleader type. Robbins focuses on what she calls quirk theory that the very same characteristics that make these people outsiders are those that make them succeed later in life, complete with quotes from many creative types about how they were outsiders in school. (Except that this is all anecdotal, one could probably find many cheerleader/football players who were just as successful). But looking at students while still in school as this volume does cannot prove in theory. Still, this is a fascinating look at outsiders in school culture and even the populars don't have real friends they can trust. There are actually a couple of twists here. For the first couple of chapters, Robbins hides the fact that the character labeled the Weird Girl is actually a teacher, not a student, which lets her make comments about how the teachers are as cliquish as the students. Also, in the second half of the book, Robbins breaks her observer role and change one thing about their lives. Curiously, it is the popular girl who is most successful at breaking down the clique boundaries and becoming friendlier. Anyone who was a geek in high school should read this book.

Beer Bad?

The WSFA First Friday meeting in June (6/3/2011) opened with President Barry Newton saying, "Okay troops, we have a quorum and a start time at the same time. 21:16 military time. I guess we're more or less in order." Sam read the minutes from the Nebula meeting which were accepted as read. President Judy was going to have a handing of the gavel. Sam L showed new journal and thanked those who did articles. Steve said we have a couple of dollars left. He just transferred \$ (not included in this report) from PayPal main account to Capclave account representing people who paid for Capclave memberships and dealer's table via Paypal. Sam S. said there were a number of credit card transactions. Steve said will dig through credit card website, about as pleasant as minor dental work.

Trustees have nothing to report. The new officers are in place. Cathy for Entertivities said the end of this month is the Smithsonian folklife festival, so if people wanted to do something in the weekend of June 25, she'll check the website. See which one people are most interested in seeing. Sam S. had said the X-Men movie had good reviews. Mark said once he moved, he is planning on doing a regular house filk, in Montgomery county near Kensington, near Viers Mill and Randolph. WSFA Press: Ernest is no longer in charge. Paul said there was \$ in WSFA Press sales from Nebs and Balticon, plus \$ promised and checks not in. Sam S. said this explains some of the credit cards stuff. We sold 50 more *Future Washingtons* to Diamond. There are only 18 trades and 6 hardcovers remaining. WSFA Press committee is discussing 2012 possibilities. Paul said all websites save one are up and running, WSFA Press site was damaged while making changes but will fix. The Small Press committee said they will have final list by end of the weekend and will let the club know the nominees. The committee is going through 76 stories to whittle them down to 5 – 10. All stories had their names removed for anonymous judging.

Capclave 2011 is chugging around. We sold 17 memberships at Balticon plus some book preorders and one membership sold tonight. Next big push is at the Reno Worldcon. We want people to commit to the table. If everyone from WSFA does an hour a day it won't ruin anyone's convention. The Worldcon is a real opportunity to sell memberships. We've been aggressive. We don't have huge publicity budget so we have been going to conventions and have a presence and hand out rack cards. We have a list of 60 colleges in the area and will send out to English and Creative Writing departments, calling for base newsletters. We're pretty happy with publicity. Both GoH mentioned it on websites and twitter. Sam got us into Montgomery Libraries. Sarah said Cat Valente was at Wiscon and must have plugged Capclave there since a few Wiscon members signed on. Sarah said she's just the opposable thumbs for the Dodos on the twitter account. George for 2012 has nothing to say, will survive. GoHs are John Scalzi and Nick Mamatas. 2013 Mike Walsh announced his fan guest is artist Steve Stiles (Hugo nominated), editor guest is Sharon November, and author guest, returning after three decades to a WSFA convention, is George R.R. Martin. There was speculation about what to do if he agrees to a GoH book. We could do the whole series in one volume, in large print. <but is there enough paper on the planet?> Cathy suggested the haiku version. Committee to talk SF announced an August reading by Alethea Kontis for First Friday in August. She is very animated so will be a good reading.



No old business. For new business, Judy S said the club has been paying for sodas, she suggested having the club pay for the beer as well. This would be about \$10 - \$12 here. Not sure about Candy. Ernest said if people would bring beer, that would work. A few members raised reasons why the club shouldn't be providing alcohol. Judy said that was okay. Ernest suggested having the club recognize that the Scheiners have been paying. Cathy said that we started putting out a hat when the club was in austerity, put out a hat. People should remember donation jar is there for a reason. Ernest suggested the club paying \$100 to our hosts in recognition of beer they've contributed. And from this point forward the hosts will not be providing beer but people can bring their own. No one was opposed. There was one abstaining. Ernest said, "I've seen you drink plenty." Bill said, "Not here." Motion passed unanimously with one abstention. No other new business.

New people: Jimmy Rogers was at the Nebulas meeting. He lives in College Park, enjoys SF. Sam Hogan was here for his first meeting. Much Sam foolery ensued. He was at Balticon. Also here was Michelle Muriend, a friend and co-worker of Bill.

Announcements: Tom Woldering went to a class by Michael Dobson who worked for TSR and said he used to be a member of WSFA in the 1970s. He wrote two alternate history books. Mike Walsh, in October, will reprint *Pavanne* by Keith Roberts. Steve Smith said that the Delphi Quaker meeting is having its annual strawberry festivals tomorrow. Ernest announced the \$100 motion should be \$101 for 101 bottles of beer. Sam L. said the Smithsonian folk festival was this weekend. Madeleine said the textile museum doing exhibits.

Attendance: Drew Bittner, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Charity Helton, Bill Lawhorn, Ernest Lilley, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Barry Newton, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Gayle Surrette, Meagen Voss, Michael Walsh, Thomas Woldering, Ivy Yap, and Madeleine Yeh. New attendees were Sam Hogan, Michelle Muriend, and Jimmy Rogers.

DC Reboots

In September, DC (the government that is) completely reboots its lineup, with everything restarting from the beginning as if it took place in the present. Here's the current list of its books:



Washington in Action – Unlike the other books that take place in the present day, this one takes place five years in the past with Washington just becoming commander of the American forces against the British. Lots of fighting in the revolution, with Washington in short sleeves and jeans.

The Prez – Washington in the present day as our first president, establishing traditions.

Justice – Chief Justice John Marshall solving cases and making law from the bench

TJ – Thomas Jefferson as he reacts to the doings of the Federalists, represents the U.S. in France, and ignores the rights of his slaves

The Congress League – The first Congress debates the bill of rights

The Adams Family <title in litigation> – The adventures of Sam Adams, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams

All Contest Stories Written By George RR Martin

The June Third Friday, June 17, 2011 was called to order with a mighty “Yo!” from President Barry Newton. Sam L. read last month’s minutes. Steve said the club had money. Voices in the meeting yelled “We can retire!”, “Retire the debt!” and “Let’s have a Worldcon!” Calls for retiring debt. Trustees had nothing to say. For Entertivities, Sam L. read information about the play, “Who Killed Captain Kirk?” Interested members are to meet afterwards to arrange a time. Someone asked about the Fourth of July party at John and Kathi. It is on. The WSFA Press website was down briefly for technical reasons, due to an incompatible theme but is back up now. All WSFA Press books are up for sale on Amazon. Can pre-order the new books only if member of Capclave. There is a special pre-at con rate. Paul said we only have 6 hardcover and 17 trade *Future Washingtons* in inventory. “They are no longer in our basement.” Barry said, “They’re rare, we should raise the price.” Paul said he made lots of updates to Capclave page today with all the new updates. Gayle said, “If any links are broken, let us know.” Jokes were made about needing a crystal ball. Colleen said Facebook is pretty stable which led to talk about privacy on Facebook.

Capclave present; Things moving apace. Sold 17 memberships at Balticon. We are on track compared to past years. Cathy said she would have liked to have sold 30 memberships but 20 is average. The next big clump is in September for people who don’t want to pay at the door. We will have a table at Worldcon to build awareness. On our tiny publicity budget, there is only so much you can do. We do program book ad swaps and send flyers but some local people still say they didn’t know there was a DC convention. Plan on getting more bookmarks to distribute at book stores. Colleen said, “Nebula gave us extras so we can have real books in the book bag.” Mike Walsh is doing contacts to get more freebees. Barry explained about Capclave. Cathy said no need to panic. Crystal Paul will run filking to bring it back. Discussion of stuffed monkeys.



Future: George doesn’t have much to report. John Scalzi will be author GoH; Nick Mamatas will be editor GoH. This year’s convention will be a trial run for next year. Capclave Far Future said nothing has changed. Vote Steve Stiles for Hugo. He has been up 10 times and deserves it. Steve is retitling George’s work *A Throne of Dodos*. George said Nick is up for Hugo too; keep him in mind when you vote. Hugo deadline is July 31st.

For the WSFA Small Press award for best short story from a small press, the committee started with 76 stories. They whittled this down to six, just 90 pages. They were read by the committee with the publisher and author removed. The stories are available for paid WSFA members to read and vote; contact Paul if you don’t remember the site password or if new. You can download in pdf and this weekend in Kindle and epub. Rank the stories 1 – 6 (1 is best). You have until July 31st which gives you six weeks to do it. 90 pages total, that’s it. If don’t read and vote, Colleen will cry (awww). If 70% vote Cathy will make fudge, 80% chocolate cheesecake. 85% both. 90% cake for club and individual packets of fudge for all voters. <omit> Voting is by the honor system. Don’t look the

stories up on the internet. Vote by which one you think best, not which one was written by George RR Martin. Actually all 76 were. That's why the book was delayed.

Old Business: Cathy said she looked up the folklife festival. Said what the topics are. She asked if people were interested in going July 2nd or 3rd. Brian suggested doing this online.

New business: Fifth Friday party. Pass. Sam suggested getting T-shirts. Eva suggested Balticon. Gayle 4imprint. Someone suggested College Park. T-shirt. Sam said probably would cost \$15 – 20. Eva suggested a pirate trip on the Baltimore River. People said dress up as pirates and ninjas. She will bring it up on the WSFA forum. This would cost \$20 a head. If we get 40 people, we can rent the whole ship and bring alcohol. Maybe co-do it with BSFS. One club could be pirates and one ninja. Bob said, "A Scottish Ninja, I don't think so."

Here for their first meetings was Matt, a friend of Shirl. Kenneth said he has been in fandom for a bit, 20 years, mostly with Fantek. Someone asked him about Bruce. "Bruce is Bruce. He has his own sailboat. 8 or 9 years ago Bruce decided money is useful, so he looked in the paper and saw jobs for networking requiring Microsoft certification. So he went to the Borders bookstore and read them there. Passed on second try. Now he is head of security for a large company." Kenneth found out about us from Meetup. Trin, a friend of the Madigans, is Virtual Candy for the evening. Jimmy is here for his third meeting.

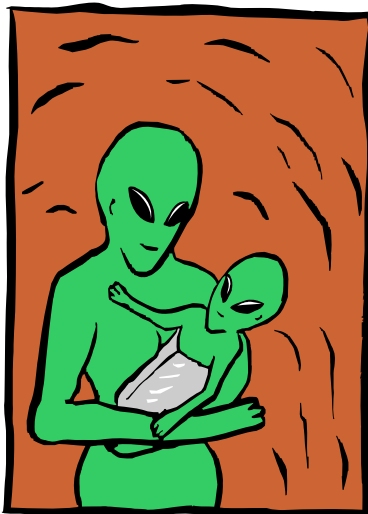
Announcements: Gayle, reading the Internet, noticed a solar decathlon at the mall. Videos of houses. Colleen said the Library of Congress "What If" programs has found a new person to run it. This Tuesday is Mindy Klasky. Colleen will email. These are noon lunchtime meetings. Brian was surprised to discover Sony took over Capitol One bank. Erica said the SuperFresh grocery on Cherry Hill is becoming a ShopRite so having a half off sale. 40% off weird lightbulbs. Mike Walsh has books for sale. Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 10:04.

Attendance: Colleen Cahill, Erica Ginter, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Charity Helton, Brian Lewis, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Barry Newton, Judy Newton, Evan Phillips, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Bill Squire, Gayle Surette, Mike Taylor, Meagen Voss, Michael Walsh, Eva Whitley, Thomas Woldering, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Shirl Phelps. New people were: Trin Hess, Ian Holder, Jim Rogers, Matt Liverotte, Kenneth Adams, and Richard Hess.

Alien Infertility in Science Fiction

Part I

By Victor Grech, Consultant Pediatrician (Cardiology) and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Malta; Clare Thake-Vassallo, Senior Lecturer, Translation and Interpreting Studies, University of Malta; and Ivan Callus, Associate Professor and Head, English Language Dept., University of Malta.



Introduction

Alien infertility has been a frequent theme in science fiction (SF), as a novum with which authors challenge us with fresh concepts, or as an allegory for the human condition. Humanity is often implicated in these stories, either as a helper, or as an antagonist or simply as an observer.

Virtually every significant scientific advance, medical progress included, gives rise to a new challenge for moral philosophy. Thus, while modern medical techniques have greatly enlarged and refined humanity's choices, decision-making by individuals becomes progressively more problematic, and these apparent paradoxes are all potential grist to the SF author's mill, particularly with the tension of further complicating factors that appear to be logical prefigurations stemming from current medical techniques. This is particularly evident in the field of infertility, a branch in medicine that is traditionally dealt with by specialists in obstetrics and gynecology.

Some definitional considerations would be appropriate at this stage, and the International Council on Infertility Information Dissemination (INCIID) considers a couple to be infertile (or subfertile) if they have not conceived after a year of unprotected intercourse in women under 35 years of age, or after six months in women over 35 years of age, and in women who are incapable of carrying a pregnancy to term.¹ Medically, infertility is subdivided into two broad types: secondary infertility is the inability to have a child after having conceived at least once, while primary infertility is the inability to ever conceive.²

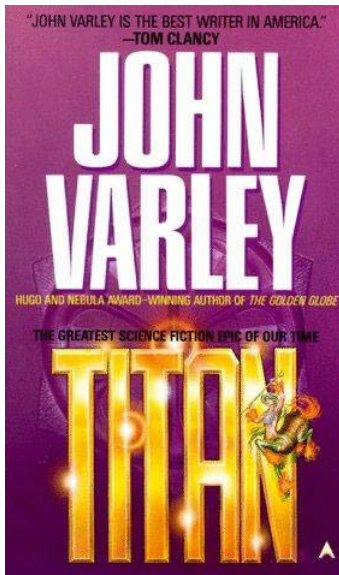
The difference between infertility and sterility is that a sterile individual is unable to contribute to the conception of a child at all, whereas an infertile individual can potentially contribute toward a successful pregnancy but is prevented from doing so by one or more physical or psychological factors. For the purposes of this paper, the terms will be used loosely and occasionally interchangeably since the intersection will invoke any aspect that leads to reduced fertility and not just to outright sterility.

Infertility may arise from a multitude of causes and is not an uncommon problem. It is estimated that about 10% of couples in the developed world experience infertility, and that this number rises up to 30% in developing countries where sexually transmitted diseases are more rampant due to lack of prevention (contraception and education) and treatment. In the 1960s, syphilis and gonorrhea were the only significant sexually transmitted diseases and were easily treated with penicillin. Today there are over twenty known diseases with an estimated twelve million newly infected individuals each year, and over half of these infections occur in persons under the age of twenty-five, with increasing rates of antibiotic resistance. These diseases damage the reproductive organs of both sexes, sometimes irreparably, with a resulting loss of fertility that may be permanent.³ Moreover, both sexes in developing countries are exposed to higher levels of dietary and environmental toxins, including cigarette smoke, than populations in developed countries, and such toxins are known to depress fertility due to their deleterious effects on gametes.⁴

The paper will attempt to review all aspects of alien infertility in SF, and will relate these sub-tropes to real-life parallels, where available. An interdisciplinary flavour is inevitable as the author is a medical doctor.

Narratives

Varley's *Gaea* trilogy 'constructs a supreme cyborg in his arch-feminist exploration of Gaea, a mad goddess-planet-trickster-old woman-technological device on whose surface an extraordinary array of post-cyborg symbioses are spawned'.⁵ Gaea is a sentient, massive (1300 km in diameter) hollow satellite whose internal surface is inhabited, and contains dozens of separate and different ecologies in her various sections.⁶ Virtually all of her internal machinery is organic, slowly wearing out and malfunctioning. Gaea is half-demented and has gold-like powers to design, engineer and create animals and intelligent beings in her interior and toward the end of the trilogy, Gaea's



¹ The International Council on Infertility Information Dissemination, *General Infertility FAQs* (INCIID: 2010) <<http://www.inciid.org/faq.php?cat=mindbody&id=1>> [Accessed 09/11/2010].

² Ibid.

³ The Alan Guttmacher Institute, *Why is Teenage Pregnancy Declining? The Roles of Abstinence, Sexual Activity and Contraceptive Use* (New York: The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1999).

⁴ M. F. Vine and others, 'Cigarette Smoking and Sperm Density: a Meta-Analysis' *Fertility and Sterility*, 61 (1994), 35-43 and Z. Kmietowicz, 'Smoking is Causing Impotence, Miscarriages, and Infertility', *British Medical Journal*, 328, (2004), 364, and J. R. Di Franza and R.A. Lew, 'Effect of Maternal Cigarette Smoking on Pregnancy Complications and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome', *The Journal of Family Practice*, 40 (1995), 385-94.

⁵ Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 179.

⁶ John Varley, *Titan* (London: Futura, 1979).

dementia progresses to the point where her physical manifestation (a giant woman) frequently gives birth to chaotically formed creatures that are usually sterile.⁷ In one of her more lucid states, Gaea creates two intelligent species, a centauroid race and a flying species resembling biblical angels. These two species are imbued with an irrational hatred toward each other for the sole purpose of studying war, a concept Gaea discovered from human television broadcasts. Two female astronauts who find themselves involuntarily impregnated by Gaea in *Titan* (1979) persuade the centauroids to perform abortions.⁸

The protagonist also finds that Gaea has imposed fertility control on the centauroids through her, in that her salivary glands secrete a chemical that the centauroid eggs need prior to fertilisation.⁹ Incidentally, the centauroids have genitalia between both anterior and posterior limbs and are able to have sex with humans using the anterior set of genitalia, a deliberate Gaeian design. However, such unions are logically infertile.

As in *Invaders from the Rings*, the invasion of Earth is provoked by infertility in the Gerry Anderson 1970s series *UFO*, except that, on this occasion, it is alien infertility that prompts this aggression.¹⁰ The reasons for the alien abduction of humans is uncertain but we are told that the aliens are a dying race because of hereditary sterility due to extremely low sperm counts, an oxymoron at face value but potentially true in that an advantageous recessive gene that causes sterility if inherited homozygously would accumulate very quickly in a small population pool.¹¹ In the case of the aliens in *UFO*, having such a recessive gene would not render any of the two parents sterile but a quarter of their offspring would be, and half of their offspring would be carriers. Being a carrier may imbue the aliens with some unknown survival advantage.

Sickle cell anemia is one such example where the inheritance of one copy of the gene from one parent confers increased resistance to malaria while the inheritance of both genes from the parents, resulting in the homozygous form, is devastating.

Infertility has also been depicted as a warfare stratagem used by aliens against humanity. For example, in *The Hollow Men* (1998), men become sterile if they leave the area around an English town, and this is found to be an undesired side effect of an alien mutation intended to liberate the alleged untapped psychic potential of the human mind, enabling aliens to make slaves of humanity.¹² And in Roddenberry's TV series *Earth: Final Conflict* (1997),¹³ aliens deposit implants into human brains in order to enslave humanity and to help produce human-alien hybrids that will solve the problem of their own infertility.

Alien infertility leading to warfare is also seen in *Hunter's Moon* (1985) on the extra-solar planet Medea. There are two intelligent species native to Medea: fuxes and balloons. Fuxes are six to eight legged creatures that resemble a cross between a fox and a centaur while the balloons are literally balloons filled with hydrogen for buoyancy. The two species coexist peacefully and when balloons die, they drift to the ground and decompose or are eaten by fuxes. However, in a circumscribed area of Medea, the balloons change this behaviour pattern, allowing themselves to drift off and die elsewhere. Shortly afterwards, the fuxes experience an increased incidence of miscarriages and infertility and blame this on the balloons' new and unnatural behaviour. The fuxes therefore launch a war of extermination against the balloons and feel vindicated when they discover that fuxes that eat balloons subsequently give birth successfully. The human colonists discover that balloons concentrate manganese, a trace element that is vital for the fuxes' fertility, and the humans therefore abort the war by providing the fuxes with manganese themselves.¹⁴

⁷ John Varley, *Demon* (New York: Berkley, 1984).

⁸ Varley, *Titan*.

⁹ John Varley, *Wizard* (New York: Berkley, 1980).

¹⁰ For a review of the series, see Chris Bentley, *The Complete Book of Gerry Anderson's UFO* (Surrey: Reynolds & Hearn, 2003).

¹¹ See D. S. Pouniotis and others, 'Malaria Parasite Interactions with the Human Host', *Journal of Postgraduate Medicine*, 50 (2004), 30-4.

¹² Keith Topping and Martin Day, *Doctor Who: The Hollow* (London: BBC Books, 1998).

¹³ Gene Roddenberry and others, *Earth: Final Conflict*, CTV, October 1997-May 2002.

¹⁴ Poul Anderson, 'Hunter's Moon', in *Medea - Harlan's World*, ed. by Ellison.

There is a human parallel here in that deficiency in vitamins or trace elements may well result in morbidity and mortality in the developing human fetus. Probably the most well-known and preventable cause of foetal malformation in humans is folic acid deficiency which predisposes to neural tube defects such as spina bifida.¹⁵

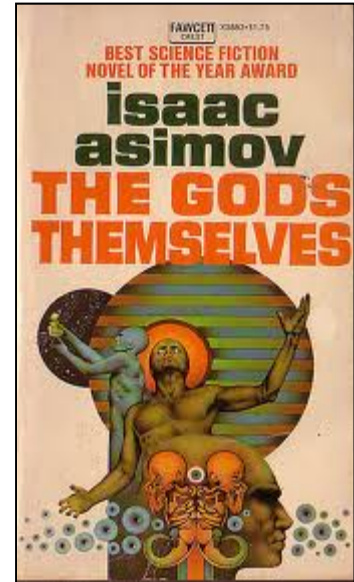
Alien infertility that prompts a stealthy attack on Earth and humanity is seen in Asimov's *The Gods Themselves* (1984). The alien inhabitants of a planet in a parallel universe are trisexual and the sexual act requires the absorption of energy from sunlight. However, the aliens' sun is waning, and the aliens therefore manipulate the transfer of energy from this, our universe, to theirs, a process that will eventually lead to the explosion of our sun.¹⁶ An interesting twist on trisexuality is depicted in *Cluster* (1977) when the protagonist accidentally crosses a boundary zone that is meant to be a buffer between the three genders of an alien species since the simultaneous physical presence of all three sexes causes an overpowering mating urge, an act that automatically results in reproduction.¹⁷

Aliens disastrously attempt to heal another alien species' infertility in White's *The Genocidal Healer* (1992),¹⁸ a *Sector General* story¹⁹ that deals with a species that is struck by an epidemic, sexually transmitted disease that causes general debilitation of the host and is also passed on to the offspring at conception or at birth. The series concerns a gigantic, 384-level hospital located in deep space, specifically designed to treat a wide variety of alien life forms and to house its equally diverse staff, with the ability to duplicate the living conditions for any species, and to reproduce suitable environments for previously unknown alien species. The series spans twelve books over four decades and stories revolve around exotic alien diseases: their aetiology, diagnosis and cure.

Diseases that are sexually transmitted, and are also transmitted vertically, are well known and documented. A classic example is HIV – the virus responsible for AIDS – which is spread by sexual contact or sharing needles or syringes with someone who is infected, or by the transfusion of unscreened blood or blood products. Babies born to HIV-infected mothers may become infected before or during birth, or through breast-feeding after birth.²⁰

The disease depicted in this story also weakens the endocrinological system which is vital for reproduction in almost all animal species, and also causes delayed puberty, postponing the age at which individuals become fertile. The aliens therefore fight each other in hand-to-hand pitched battles in order to arouse passion, emotions and energy to a sufficient degree so as to allow mating to take place, implying gamete preparation stimulated by the sexual act, a feature that is also common to certain Earth fauna and perhaps the most well described species is the common rabbit.²¹ Because of their declining population levels, the aliens all move to large cities in the tropics so as to conserve resources.

To Be Continued. Next Issue – Trek!



¹⁵ K. M. Laurence and others, 'Double-Blind Randomised Controlled Trial of Folate Treatment Before Conception to Prevent Recurrence of Neural-Tube Defects', *British Medical Journal*, 282 (1981), 1509-11.

¹⁶ Isaac Asimov, *The Gods Themselves* (New York: Del Rey Books, 1984).

¹⁷ Piers Anthony *Cluster* (New York: Avon, 1977).

¹⁸ James White, *The Genocidal Healer* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992).

¹⁹ James White, *Hospital Station* (New York: Ballantine, 1962) was the first in the series.

²⁰ C. Thorne and M. L. Newell, 'Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV Infection', *Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases*, 17 (2004), 247-52.

²¹ See M. L. Centeno and others, 'Expression of Alpha4 and Alpha7 Nicotinic Receptors in the Brainstem of Female Rabbits After Coitus', *Brain Research*, 101 (2004), 1-12.

Shirts and Cards

The July 1st, meeting was called to order at 9:13 by President Barry Newton. Lance Oszko renewed his membership so we were just at quorum. “What trouble can we get into?” speculated Judy S. Barry said the Hugo voting packet is a lot to read in a month. There was talk of which novels to read. Sam plugged the *WSFA Journal* (but not as a nominee). Steve announced the budget (plus \$20 from Lance). “Let’s throw a convention,” said Brian. Prez Barry found his hat from last month. No other officer reports.

Entertivities. Sam asked who was interested in seeing the play, “Who Killed Captain Kirk?” <Several of us wound up going and having a fun time.> Kathi invited everyone here, including new folk, to her Fourth of July party <ditto>. Vegetarians <but not humanitarians> should bring their own food. Starts around noon. She picked up the liquid nitrogen. There will be a living model solar system with Pluto included.

WSFA Press no updates. Capclave 2011 had nothing new. There will be a big push at Renovation, where we have a fan table. Capclave has 130 members. We’re giving a fan table to the Burroughs’ group. Question of story. 2012 had nothing to report. George said that both of his GoHs are up for Hugos this year so vote early and often. Mike for 2013 said “Nope, no changes.” Bill, for the Committee to Talk SF, said he hadn’t read the stories so will do it next time. Gayle said “WSFA Press is back and running. We are still working on it.” Haven’t put the new WSFA logo on the site yet. Need to go back to original file and make it transparent. Not as simple as would like. But it will be done. If you want something up on the calendar, please send it to them.



Old business. Sam L. volunteered his place for Fifth Friday. <A lot of people came and had fun and munchies.> Sam talked about doing a WSFA t-shirt. People suggested yellow shirts made people look jaundiced, and maybe put the WSFA name on the back. Steve suggested talking to the artist. How much would it be to do front and back? For new business, Cathy said, “Four years ago Elspeth did business cards for Capclave which the club reimbursed. Let’s do it again. Gayle designed card advertising three Capclaves on one side and WSFA, WSFA Press, and Small Press Award on the other side.” Gayle said she checked two places, \$82 for 5,000. It may be cheaper with a coupon. VistaPrint is cheaper for single sided but will take more research on two sides. Cathy made motion to do business cards not to exceed \$100. Judy asked if that much text will be readable. Cathy said small but readable. Barry pointed out the text doesn’t say what Capclave is, but Gayle showed where it says “science fiction convention.” Cathy wants to have the cards for Reno. No one opposed the motion. Bill abstained. No more new business.

Kenneth Adams was here for his second meeting. He found us through MeetUp. He is not a stranger to fandom as he was with Fantek for a while.

Announcements: Sam S announced he has a new book, *The Theory of Ecology*. It only took four years (It took the publisher 15 months to get it in print from the time he sent it in.) This is from the University of Chicago Press. This is his seventh book. Kathi said the Friends of Arlington Planetarium met its goal. An anonymous donor gave them \$50,000 so they will be able to stay open for children and public and get upgraded. Once the upgrade is done, WSFA should do field trip. Paul said anyone needing a login and password to vote on the Small Press Award should see him. We have until the end of the month as it closes midnight at end of July 31. Drew said Martin H. Greenberg passed away. He edited a billion anthologies. Jim Butcher will sign August 1st at Barnes and Noble Tyson Corner at 7:00. Steve brought his salsa llaja! He warned it was hot. “By my standards mild, other people not.” Lance said the Navy is doing a proof of concept nuclear reactor. It is severely underfunded. It needs a push to fulfill intent of pushing a nuclear aircraft carrier. No gamma rays. Robert Bussard was doing this. The project was originally in Manassas, Virginia. Neil Gaiman did signing at National Press Club. One person had Neil Gaiman sign his ereader and Gaiman did and did a doodle on the back.

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:51.

Attendance: Drew Bittner, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Barry, Judy & Meridel Newton, Kathi Overton, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Gayle Surrette, Sean Wallace, Lance Oszko, Ivy Yap, Kenneth Adams, and Mike Walsh (late?)

Deadline is Rapidly Approaching

Barry Newton called the 7/15/2011 Third Friday meeting to order at 21:18. Sam L. did the minutes. Barry asked if the Madigans want to do something similar to what we did with the Scheiners in terms of reimbursing them for beer. John was busy playing with their dog. President had nothing to report. Sam L. said to submit to the Journal. Treasurer Steve said we had money. Brian asked him to be more specific. Trustees have nothing to report.

For Intertivities, Sam L. spoke going to see *Who Killed Captain Kirk?* at the Fringe Festival. <In the version we saw, it was everybody, as the actors showed all the endings>. Brian recommended seeing *Harry Potter* in 3D. WSFA press and website were not here, but Capclave twitter and blog are active. MeetUp is up to 90 people. One new person is here (Peter) so it is still working.

Capclave present, Cathy said "Things are moving smoothly. We are where we should be for memberships. Let's see how Reno goes." Gayle is doing business cards. There is a Capclave meeting her place next Sunday the 24th at 1 pm. "There is no need to panic, wait a couple of weeks." People said that panicking is a requirement of being chair. George had nothing to report. Nothing for 2013. Guest's show nominated for several Emmy awards. Mac said he was surprised academy paid enough attention. Committee to talk SF - Small press award stories will be discussed. Sarah has printouts so people can read them now. For the literary awards, deadline is rapidly approaching as it is the end of the month.

Old business: Sam brought up the shirts and told prices. And people wanted to see colors. So Sam will post link to site. Bob asked Candy if she and John were spending money on beer. John said \$8 for a six-pack. People don't drink a huge amount. A new person asked if money in the till was covering beer. Candy said no, it covers snacks. Barry said Scheiners got tired of paying and the club reimbursed them for the beer. The new policy is now bringing your own. Candy said she is perfectly happy to let people bring their own. She is not opposed to saving money. We didn't have beer at all until somebody (Barry) asked why don't we have beer, are you opposed to beer? Erica said as a long-time member of club <and former hostess> she remembers we didn't have beer at all. A discussion on liability ensued. Steve said will have a talk with insurance man. See what's there. Barry said, "In the meantime there is no need for the Madigans to buy beer." Barry said brought his own and extra. There is beer in the cooler.

New business: None

New person: Peter, found us on MeetUp. He went looking for people with similar interests. He has been in the area for three years. Walter and Laura are here for the first meeting in a while.

Announcements: Carolyn was at capitol fringe this evening for free comedy. The festival goes on this weekend through the following. Can get discounts with their fringe button. Laura moved and has new job p/t Phoenix Pick, an SF imprint of Arch Manor Press. Husband has job with State Department.

Meeting adjourned unanimously at 21:51.

