

WSFA JOURNAL

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015

First Friday November 6

Attendance:

Sam Lubell, Bob MacIntosh, Sam and Judy Scheiner, Rodger Burns, Frances Holland, Aaron and Angela Pound, M Greg Key, Deidre Dykes, George Shaner, Elizabeth Twitchell, Leo Espinoza, Ivy Yap, David Keener, Kim Hargen, Madeleine Yeh

In the absence of Cathy, Sam L. took the notes.

Bob Macintosh called to order at 9:15. Everyone at WFC. Treasurer said \$48,775.85 and year over year \$1,959.85. Can't tell if we made a surplus at Capclave.

Capclave Past – Sam L. said positives outnumbered negative. Don't have final numbers yet. Reg down a bit from last year, Sam S. said bump from George year has stabilized.

Cap Present not here. Has a contract to look at said Bob
Cap Future got a new job.

Sam S. the other convention involved in, is WFC, done in conjunction with BSFS. Unofficial word is that they will approve us for 2018. Announcement by the end of the weekend. Will be in Baltimore at the new Balticon hotel.

Sam L. read from WSFA's mail, 2 books for review

SFWA's emergency medical fund sent a letter thanking us from Cat Rambo. \$588.10.

No trustees.

Webmaster and WSFA Press not here.

Talk SF – Ted White expressed interest in Analog, only one person here reads it.

New business – Sam S Inspired by Chilean SF talk at Capclave, like to propose a new award. In spirit of recognizing fiction that is ignored, proposed a prize for short fiction in other languages. Bob suggested a committee, talk to Colleen, Paul/Gayle. Our Chilean representative Leo Espinoza is going back but offered to help if he can. Sam S. said the fiction would have to be translated in order for us to judge it. Talked to Jim and Kathy Morrow, they thought it a great idea. Kathy

offered to help. Require the stories to be translated would keep the numbers down. Judy said we have enough trouble getting club members to read stories in English. Sam S said would make it a juried award. We could tap into our SFWA friends. Sam L said there was an award for sf in translation but it ran out of funds. Sam S. said it would help further WSFA's reputation as a literary club. Bob said it should go to committee. Sam L, said you do not need a quorum to make a committee. First time – Deidre. A Web copywriter and an author. Had a few short pieces published. Heard about us at Capclave. Heard about Capclave from writer's group. Greg Key is here for second meeting. Is in Annadale. Elizabeth has giant bag of books to give away from last year's WFC. Leo from Chile thanked us. Said will try to recreate sf clubs in his country. Meeting weakly adjourned at 9:40.

WSFA Third Friday meeting 11/2015

The Third Friday meeting of the Washington Science Fiction Association called to order at 9:15 pm by President Robert MacIntosh. As the Secretary and Acting Secretary were absent the reading of the minutes was waived.

No treasurer's report [NFP approx \$40,000 based on report from First Friday]

Capclave past: Bill from the hotel arrived and is waiting for chair Sam Lubell to approve and treasurer Sam Scheiner to send the check. [NFP the con lost \$1700 due to GoH expenses and fewer at the door memberships] There will be a full report in December.

Capclave present: Chair Paul Haggerty sent hotel contract to advisors for comment and received feedback. Based on feedback he will contact the hotel for clarification on some paragraphs. He will also contact the hotel to discuss accessibility issues. Ideas are flowing to programming via email. The substitute secretary promised to send silly ideas.

Capclave future: The search for Guests of Honor continues

Capclave 2020 committee: Capclave 2020 committee chair developed a way to raise money for Capclave 2020. WSFA and The Baltimore Science Fiction Society will co-host the 2018 World Fantasy Convention in the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel aka the Balticon hotel. The convention website will be up once

the Harassment and Accessibility policies are in place and staff list are available. Memberships will be sold after the 2016 World Fantasy Convention in Columbus, Ohio. [NFP Go Blue! Beat Ohio] Co chair Bill Lawhorn announced one Special Guest Michael J. Walsh. The chairs are open to suggestions, but have no particular Guests of Honor in mind. More details will be announced, stay tuned. The hotel also has excellent gumbo.

Back to Capclave 2020 Lawhorn saw many previous Guests of Honor at World Fantasy Convention and all seemed amenable to returning to Capclave if their schedules allow. The committee needs to speak with the treasurer regarding budget and other financial issues.

Trustees have no report.

Website has no report, Meet up still up, and twitter has tweets.

WSFA Press reports books are selling [NFP \$8,000 so far very brief account]

Entertivities: Mockingjay 2 the last Hunger Games movie is out, and Chessie con is next weekend.

No old business and no new business.

Steve Zeve attended his 2nd meeting. He is the treasurer of BSFS and involved with Balticon.

Barry Newton made some observations about a NPR promotion discussing hotel room availability during a blizzard in Denver.

We made the usual announcement on Candy's behalf, we forgot to do it before the announcements.

The cookies were made with egg nog and very delicious.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 pm

Present:

Barry Newton, Michael Ikeda, Bob MacIntosh, Courtney Burleson, Frances E Holland, Carolyn Frank, Sarah Mitchell, Bill Lawhorn, Paul Haggarty, Erica

Ginter, Elizabeth Twitchell

[NFP I didn't have a sign in sheet so I sent around an attendance sheet, some people left before signing so it's probably not 100% accurate. Was a light meeting.]

First Friday WSFA Meeting 12/4/2015

George Shaner presided as many officers were at SMOFCON. The First Friday meeting in December was called to order at 9:12 with Sam L. serving as secretary. Sam S. read minutes. Sam S. gave treasurer's report. As of December 2015, \$48,966.55 with a year-over-year of -\$3,077.28. We are still in the black. New year's dues will be due. Will start taking today.

Capclave Past reported total registration of 440, paid registration 368, warm bodies 413. There was a net deficit of \$1,742.66. Paid membership was down and hotel bill up. Sam S. suggested cutting hotel costs. Membership has stabilized so need to push it up. Mike said that Tim Powers will be guest of honor at Readercon so can recruit there. Capclave present not here. Sam said we can reduce costs, maybe cut the cake. Far future was not here.

No publications.

2929 Committee, Sarah said WSFA/BSFS doing joint World Fantasy so that can help pay for inviting past GoHs. Mike Walsh will be special guest of honor at the World Fantasy.

Internet not here. Twitter is full of tweets and cat photos.

WSFA Press said books make wonderful gifts.

Entertivities said Star Wars film coming out.

Talk SF said they will talk over a rather lackluster issue of F&SF this month and do Asimov's next month.

No old business.

New business. Sam L. suggested looking at bylaws. George said he had been supposed to do this but is in government so hadn't gotten to it. Sam L. said he would look into it and come up with something.

Elizabeth walked in and said she has nothing to say for Capclave Future or meetup.

Small press award. Committee needs to meet to discuss procedures. They will schedule a meeting soon.

Committee to have award for foreign fiction still looking into things.

Adjourned 9:32

Attendance: George Shaner, Sarah Mitchell, Ivy Yap, Mark Roth, Rodger Burns, Sue Nemeth, David Keener, Sam Lubell, Frances Holland, Courtni Y Burleson, Ken Byrer, Eugenia Martin, Kimberly Hargan, Michael Walsh, Madeleine Yeh, Elizabeth Twitchell.

Third Friday December minutes

Attendance: Courtni Burleson, Rodger Burns, Carolyn Frank, Cathy Green, Frances Holland, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Nicki Lynch, Rich Lynch, Bob MacIntosh, Sarah Mitchell, Barry Newton, Judy Newton, Kimberly Hargan, Carole Brealester, Mike Taylor, Jim Thomas, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh

Meeting called to order at 9:15pm by Bob MacIntosh. Previous meeting's minutes read. Capclave Present was not present. Capclave Past noted the need to check with the treasurer to make sure all bills settled. Capclave Future was not present. Capclave 2020/WFC 2018 talked a bit about his plans and starting to establish committee members and talking to hotels and potential guests. WSFA Website and WSFA Press were not present. Small Press Award Committee will be meeting Sunday the 20th at Sarah and Bill's. Entertivities noted that Star Wars The Force Awakens had opened and Dr Who Christmas special was coming up. The Expanse on SyFy was also mentioned. Committee to Actually Discuss SF announced that the January 2016 Asimov's would be the discussed at First Friday in January.

Old Business - old records need to be gone over to make sure the by-laws are fully up to date. Sam and Cathy (current and former secretary will arrange to get to gather to go over the 4 boxes of hard copy records. Dues are due. Sam S. proposed a foreign fiction award and is currently a committee of one to look into viability. New business - possibility of a 3 way consultation with BWAWA and BSFS with John Pomeranz's firm on certain issues. John has indicated that his firm can do engagement letters that make sure that more than one client involved will not waive confidentiality. Approval was given for secretary to pursue it. No one was there for their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd meeting.

Announcements - secretary and host announcements were made. Erica made a white fruit cake from the Lady Bird Johnson recipe. Mik Walsh was selling books and noted that Hateful8 would be opening at Arundel Mills in 70mm and was 3

hours long.

Meeting adjourned at 10:04pm

A Review of
Reason for Existence
by
Richard Botelho

Reviewed by Kimberly G. Hargan

Quick recommendation: Life is short – go do something with a friend, see a movie, read some other book, but stay away from this one. Botelho could have used at least a Fiction Writing 101 course before putting together this book. It is hackneyed, cliched and the plot, such as it is, is merely a skeletal framework for some New Age maanderings on the connection between consciousness and the world. He whips out a deus ex machina to save the world and put all the worms back in the can. Oh, and in the end, love is the answer.

So, the setup: The story is told in the first person by David Jordan, an alien who is resident in California as undercover representative of The Council (a benevolent group something like Star Trek’s Federation of Planets, but as the story is set in 2017, we Terrans don’t know about it yet). Botelho should not have gone with an omniscient first person perspective, as it allows him to write in an almost continuous series of info dumps, putting this book in the “tell rather than show” category. Jordan (and that might actually be his “real” name, as Botelho either can’t be bothered to make up alien names, or we are only shown the cover names for all aliens in the story) is the omniscient narrator because not only is he a secret alien, but he is also a highly successful businessman and consultant with contacts all around the world, including the current Secretary General of UN, whom Jordan “just happens” to have gone to college with in the early days of his assignment on Earth. In essence, Jordan is in the center of things. Oh, and there is a “bad guy” species of aliens, but even they are covered by the omniscient viewpoint because The Council managed to plant a biochip transmitter in the head of the group leader, so Jordan can sit back in his office and literally watch the bad guys plotting. A little bit of tension is introduced by the fact that this biochip is on its last legs and probably won’t last too much longer, but it certainly lasts long enough to completely reveal the bad guys’ plotting.

One point on the aliens: much as in Star Trek (the original series), apparently there are at least two species out there (Jordan’s and the bad guys) who can pass for human without any surgery, hologrammic disguises or whatever. Jordan does have one giveaway if people are looking for it – his eyes have golden flecks in them, which stand out more under stronger illumination.

The obvious crisis: the People's Republic of China has begun to more actively throw its weight around, which makes many of its neighbors amenable to follow the lead of the United States in the creation of the Greater Asian Trade and Defense Pact (GATDP), a NATO-like organization which China correctly sees as an effort to "contain" it, as NATO was created to "contain" the Soviet Union. Unfortunately for the world, China is said to have a Chinese Hitler at the helm and he is prepared to push the world into war, even nuclear war, to resist the containment of China. This obvious crisis is reported in "news extracts" at the beginning of each chapter. The narrator is himself not involved in these events, such as the invasion and conquest of Taiwan before the U.S. fleet has time to get there and prevent that action.

The problem with this from The Council's point of view is that Earth is a life-bearing planet. Such planets are precious, and the general public consensus among the spacefaring civilization of the galaxy is that planets with naturally-evolved life are too precious to allow their natives to destroy it (and themselves, of course) in a nuclear war. The Council authorizes increased UFO activity over the world's nuclear bases (without actually announcing themselves to the Earth's population) in the hope that this will cause Earthpeople to rethink their course. If it appears that we don't get the hint and start pressing launch buttons, The Council has an intervention protocol (CX) that will prevent the nuclear exchange. Jordan tells us that he is concerned about that, because essentially that requires The Council to reveal itself prematurely to Earthlings and take us under "protective custody" to keep us from harming ourselves. Such interventions on other worlds appear to have irreparably damaged "the innocence" (the cultural and spiritual self-esteem) of the "protectees", so Jordan and his crew are really hoping to avoid this necessity.

The hidden crisis: Although The Council otherwise has a non-intervention policy (much like the Federation's Prime Directive in Star Trek), there are species out there who have not joined The Council or signed its protocols, which can make them a threat to worlds like ours where the dominant species hasn't yet qualified for inclusion in the galactic civilization. Such are the Illick, who evolved from their homeworld's variant of primates (mandrill baboons, actually) into a race of Nazi jerks. This makes them hate us for a number of reasons, among which are: we would be direct competitors "out there" with them, we show a capacity for rapid development which outpaces theirs (knocking them out of the position of galactic Wunderkinder), and so on. If they can covertly get us to start a biological war with each other, which either destroys us or leaves the survivors ruined, The Council wouldn't intervene (as the rest of Earth's life would not be destroyed), leaving our world as easy pickings for the Illick. The Illick are almost cartoon characters – the only thing they didn't do was twirl their handlebar moustaches like

Snidely Whiplash. If we take the “ck” in Illick as representing the single phoneme “k”, then Illick is a simple anagram for “I kill”. Their home planet is Illicia, obviously calling to mind the word “illicit”. The Illick names are fairly ludicrous: Eric Waller, Anthony Rembacule, Chris. Their hoodwinked human henchmen aren’t much better: the Illick are working with a terrorist-supplying illegal-arms-trading group from Turkmenistan that goes under the name Carte Blanche; their leader is named Joseph Turner Abrille. (Having myself served in Kazakhstan, Russia, Armenia and the former Office of Caucasian and Central Asian Affairs as a U.S. diplomat, it was painfully clear to me that Botelho put no effort whatsoever in trying to figure out what an actual Turkmen name would look like.) Carte Blanche is providing ten Soviet era bioweapons for the Illick plot.

This book’s reason for existing: Jordan made his fortune in business using advanced statistical algorithms from his home world to predict trends and cash in on them. This has also put him in demand as a consultant for other people’s business using his algorithms. Years previously, as part of his global wheeling and dealing, he tried to put together an institute that would improve human harmony. The idea got laughed down, but Jordan’s reputation for having tried remains. Now a mysterious group from Miami, Florida (thereinafter simply referred to as Miami) sends a letter to the UN Secretary General containing impossible-to-come-by information on the SecGen (as a mark of their seriousness) and the recommendation that Jordan, based on his reputation for the type of institute he tried to set up, should go do lengthy interviews of three people about the future of humanity. Jordan then goes hopping about the world to do this, accompanied by increasing hints that Miami is capable of some serious stringpulling.

His first interview is with a historian and economist at UC Berkeley who is famous for working on global-level conflict resolution. Her hypothesis is that mankind is essentially doomed, because the evolutionary drive for survival (involving competition over scarce resources) always leads to conflict, and as the development of weapons has escalated, so has the possibility for the consequences of escalating conflict. Before leaving, the historian states that she has cancer, but would still like to see the world saved for the sake of her son. Jordan takes her hand and heals her through the power of the One (although he doesn’t tell her – she’ll figure out that she is on the mend through future medical exams). Jordan’s second interview is with a physicist at Oxford University. The physicist’s hypothesis is that entropy (all systems trend toward chaos) also applies in international relations and human affairs. Therefore thermodynamics predicts a catastrophic breakdown (such as is occurring in the background to Jordan’s travels). Jordan is then sent to a private estate in Argentina to meet with a philosopher of technology, who is now looking more toward spiritualism due to

her disenchantment with the tendency of human intelligence to mix explosively with technology. She is described as perhaps the smartest person in human history, an incredibly sexy woman of over 60 years of age; and she hits on Jordan towards the end of the interview. She sees the inequality of wealth distribution as the foundation of modern conflicts (whether within or between nations); during the conversation she quotes Hardin, the Gaia Hypothesis, Teilhard de Chardin, Maslow as well as some fictional others in deducing that man's divided spirit prevents him from avoiding conflict, and technology only fans the flames. But if we could just give up anthropocentrism, then we could unify the spirit of man and technology would be an unalloyed benefit for a unified mankind.

Jordan works with the Argentine genius to determine where the Illick and Carte Blanche are going to place the bioweapons for maximum fatalities and political effect. (She had done a previous analysis for NATO on the "most effective" places for terrorists to set off nuclear weapons if they ever got their hands on a bunch.) Jordan presents the list to the UN Secretary General and tells him to use the newly developed American city-level detector-scanners (by golly, there are exactly ten in the world so far) to locate the bioweapons so that they can be neutralized. Jordan is thereupon summoned to Miami, where he meets the head of the organization, who is interested in recruiting him into the group. Miami was organized after the use of nuclear weapons in World War II, because of the realization that mankind had now produced a weapons technology that could never be permitted to be used again. Part of the deal was a pledge from the leaders of nuclear nations, as well as their chiefs of national security, to agree to follow Miami's directions. If a leader refused, there was a coup, and if both the leader and the chief of security both refused, apparently there were assassinations (for the good of humanity and just to let future leaders know that Miami was truly serious). The leader of Miami congratulates Jordan on successfully thwarting the bioweapons plot, but reveals that even if he had failed, nowhere near as many people as feared would have been killed, since Miami had gotten to the weapons years ago and seen to it that the virulence of the disease agents had been denatured. Once Jordan agrees to affiliate himself with Miami, the leader hands him a list of single-use telephone numbers and a code word, which the UN SecGen can use to get everyone to back off. Once the UN Sec Gen uses the list, everything goes back to the way it was: China uninvades Taiwan, Thailand, and South Korea; Pakistan and India back off (although the leaders of Pakistan apparently need to be "removed", as they had been brainwashed by allies of the Illicks to play an incendiary part in their plot).

Jordan has a human girlfriend who is a journalist. He is exploring the concept of love with her, as that is one of the basic emotions that his species eliminated or suppressed to survive their species-level crises way back before they

went into space. In the opening scene Jordan has a psychic premonition (his connection with the One is strong) of some horrible personal catastrophe. Comments are tossed off along the way about how terrible it can be to lose the one you love. And then, as the Illick Eric Waller is leaving Earth, his plot foiled, he gets off a parting shot at Jordan – the plane on which the journalist girlfriend is returning from China crashes in the Pacific Ocean from a “terrorist” attack. Jordan nearly loses his mind from the losses (this was what the premonition was about). He gets a final “message” from her that he should (eventually) heal and love again, but he swears that he is never going to do that, as there is no way that he is going to let himself be vulnerable to such pain again. Nevertheless, he recognizes love as a superior aspect of humanity, and will continue his assignment on Earth, where he will continue to love his girlfriend in memory.

The Reviewer’s Conclusion: Richard Botelho drags in a number of science fiction and thriller novel tropes, but they are only a sketchy background to a “talking heads” novel. It is certainly not a thriller – although the world is spiraling towards destruction, the protagonist is not personally battling the evildoers, and is in fact never in any personal danger and knows it (if people do start pushing nuclear buttons, The Council will step in with CX and put a stop to it). The situations are barely credible, and the characters are little more than cardboard. There is no “thriller” style excitement for the reader, but you might like it if you are into New Age, hand-wavy discussions of the basics of mankind’s nature, what’s wrong with it, and how the brain and consciousness need to evolve in order to save us from ourselves.

A TOAST TO THOSE WHO'VE GONE

PEGGY RAE SAPIENZA (1944-2015)

Peggy Rae Spienza passed away on March 22, 2015 due to complications from heart valve replacement surgery. She was 70 years old. She is survived by her second husband, John T. Sapienza, Jr. and her son and daughter, Missy Koslosky and Eric Pavlat, and 8 grandchildren.

She was a long time WSFAn and local area fan. She also served as eminence grise for WSFA's convention Capclave, often acting as GOH liaison and organizing the pre-con GOH dinner.

Peggy Rae, born Peggy Rae McKnight, grew up in the Philadelphia area and was a second generation fan. Her father, Jack McKnight, mother, Buddie McKnight Evans, and step-mother, Ann Newell McKnight, were involved in the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, and her step-father, Bill Evans, was active in the Washington Science Fiction Association. Her father was known for having made the first Hugo Awards in 1953. Growing up in Philadelphia fandom, in the late 1950s she served as Secretary and Vice President of PSFS. She published a fanzine called Etwas starting in 1960.

Peggy Rae McKnight met Washington-area fanzine and convention fan Bob Pavlat at her first Worldcon, Pittcon, in 1960. They married in 1964. In 1983, the couple received fandom's Big Heart Award. That same year Bob passed away. In 1999, Peggy Rae married John T. Sapienza, Jr., a government attorney and longtime fan.

Origins of the expression "I mowed Peggy Rae's lawn" - Some of the planning for Noreascon 3 took place at her house, she explained during a 2012 interview, and a friend arrived early before a meeting while Peggy Rae was gardening and offered to help. In a kind of Tom Sawyeresque moment, others came by and joined in the gardening. Peggy Rae was known for finding you a task or job to volunteer for that you had not previously realized you wanted. She was also very good about seeking out new people at conventions and making sure they got introduced to other people.

Peggy Rae was instrumental in supporting the 2007 Japanese Worldcon as their North American Agent, and chaired SFWA's Nebula Awards Weekend in 2010, 2011 and 2012. She co-chaired the 2014 World Fantasy Convention and the 1998 WorldCon, Buconeer. She also served as Vice Chair and then Acting Chair of the 1993 Worldcon, ConFrancisco, and chaired two Smofcons (1992, 2004) and a Disclave (1991). She was the Fan GOH at the 2012 Worldcon. For many years Peggy Rae was a key planner and motivator in the effort to preserve fanhistory. The Society for the Preservation of the History of Science Fiction Fandom, AKA the Timebinders, was formed at FanHistoriCon I in May 1994 in Hagerstown, Maryland, convened by Peggy Rae, Bruce Pelz, and Joe Siclari to gather fans of different fannish generations together to discuss the best ideas. At the time of her death, Peggy Rae was active in the Baltimore Washington Area Worldcon Association which was part of the DC17 Worldcon Bid.

In her non-fannish life, Peggy Rae worked 16 years as a contractor for the Department of Labor (OSHA) in Washington, D.C. in UNIX systems support, retiring in 2000. She was also active in the League of Women Voters of Prince

George's County. She graduated summa cum laude from the University of Maryland with a B.A. in Economics, and was a long time legislative assistant to State Delegate Frank Pesci. Peggy Rae was a tireless volunteer for a wide variety of causes including the Prince George's County Community Mental Health Advisory Board, the Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church, and the Maryland State Board of Elections. Her family suggests that those who wish may make tax-deductible donations to the Peggy Rae and John Sapienza Scholarship Fund, College of Behavioral & Social Sciences, University of Maryland College Park Foundation, Inc., 4603 Calvert Road, College Park MD 20740.

JOHN MADIGAN

Jonh Madigan, WSFA and long time co-host with wife Candy Madigan of WSFA 3rd Friday meetings died January 9th at age 55, finally losing his more than a year long fight with brain cancer (glioblastoma).

John was originally from Niagara Falls, NY and moved to Greenbelt, MD in 1997 and married Candy Madigan in 1999. He earned an associate's degree in computer programming at Corning Community College. He was an early developer of geographic information systems and other computerized data management systems. He was part of a team that worked tirelessly during the week of the Haiti earthquake of 2010 to map the devastated areas of the country in order to help support disaster relief and rescue efforts.

In addition to his love of SF/F, John was known for his love of drumming circles and nature, and his healing hands. John was a great believer in and practitioner of touch healing. As chronicled in his online journal, John was a practitioner of what could be called psychic healing and his descriptions of his focus on self healing certainly contributed to his being able to leave the hospital much faster than his doctors expected after the initial surgery and to having a year before the cancer recurred and ultimately killed him, a much longer survival period than most people with glioblastomas. Additionally, despite undergoing chemotherapy, which can be very unpleasant, John continued to be a gracious and friendly host of WSFA meetings, and even when the tumor recurred and caused aphasia and limited his mobility, John continued to enjoy the company of WSFAs and sharing his home during WSFA meetings, holding court from his hospital bed throne.

In addition to Candy and Kindra, John is survived by his mother Janet, his brother Michael, his sisters Katherine, Patricia, Rosemary and Ann, and numerous nieces

and nephews.