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Minutes for WSFA Third Friday Meeting, November 16, 2018 in Arlington, Virginia. Recorded by acting secretary Kim Hargan

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 pm by Bob MacIntosh

It was noted that there was no First Friday meeting in November, as the majority of WSFA officers and members were at World Fantasy (which we co-ran with BSFS), and only five members showed up at the Maryland gathering.

Financial report: As of November 1 WSFA has \$\$\$\$ in its accounts, after having paid the hotel bill for Capclave. Capclave ended up XXX. Year over year comparison at this point would be a bit funky because of the timing of the bill payments last year. January 1 will be better for a finalized year over year comparison, which Sam S. predicts will show us ahead over last year.



Report on the World Fantasy convention (which took place in Baltimore) by Bill Lawhorn: World Fantasy (WF) has wrapped. Although they are still paying various bills, the results show that World Fantasy ended in the XXX. Attendance was just under ###, with something like 7 registrations at the door. Attendees were generally happy; there were no particular flame-ups this year. The awards banquet went well, with ### in attendance. The hotel appeared to be quite pleased with WF; WF XXX the hotel's F&B amount. The overall tone was good.

Thanks to everyone who came up and helped. The art show at WF was also a success; most artists were able to sell something. Extra copies of the program books are available to anyone who wants them. There are lots of photos already up from the WF's official photographer. The Tom Kidd artwork on the badges for guests of honor was well received. WF is manageable at a size of ### attendees. Email opening of WF announcements was at XX%, which is an incredible response rate. WSFA will know what our share is after all the bills are paid.

Lessons learned: If we win World Con, we definitely need to have trucks/carts that match the level of the hotel's loading docks. You should have double the staff you think you need, and triple the staff for hospitality.

Sam Scheiner has a Teresa Mather artwork that needs to be delivered to a purchaser in Columbia, Maryland.

Capclave 2019: Today (before the WSFA Third Friday meeting) was the first after the second guest of honor was announced. We already have a few registrations since going on-line. Capclave 2020: We are looking for a new first Guest of Honor; the choice may depend on the eventual level of surplus funds – we might be able to bring in someone from farther afield than usual. Invitations are already being sent out. For dates, the weekend before Columbus Day and the mid-month weekend have both been reserved. This is for scheduling “insurance” – if Baltimore Book Fest or New York Comic Con falls in mid-month, we would be able to take Capclave to the pre-Columbus Day weekend.



Sam Scheiner read a very nice letter from Filthy Pierre on his experience at Capclave 2018. He will be happy to take around any flyers we can send him.

Social media: The dodos stayed in safely during the snow day. They have already tweeted out the opening of registration for 2019. Folks have said nice things about Capclave in social media. There will be a Black Friday tweet and a winter holidays tweet.

The Committee to Discuss Science Fiction will discuss the September-October *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. Next First Friday the committee will discuss the November-December *Asimov's Science Fiction*. Bill reminded us that at the December Third Friday meeting we will have a reading by Sherri Cook Woosley.



Intertivities: The Brown Planetarium is celebrating the connection between science and art on Saturday at 6:30 and 7:30 pm. Weird Al Yankovic will be performing at Wolf Trap on July 16, 2019 with a string orchestra. Tickets have now gone on sale. “Fantasy, Sci-Fi and Humor”, an invitational art exhibit exploring multiple genres is open November 2 to January 15 at the Activity Center at Bohrer Park, 506 S. Frederick Avenue in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Longtime TV memorabilia collector James Comisar is putting 400 props and costumes from “Batman”, “Star Trek” and other shows up for auction. More than 50 lots of “Star Trek”

items are included. The Dawn probe (Vesta and Ceres in the asteroid belt) is now “dead” (out of fuel for maneuvering thrusters to keep the antenna pointed at Earth), as well as the planet-hunting Kepler Space Telescope. Scientists have detected a “super-Earth” (larger than Earth but smaller than Neptune) around Barnard's Star, making it the second closest exoplanet known to science.

Kim Hargan noted that Capclave 2019 is not on the WSFA activities calendar on the WSFA Web site. It was proposed that it be put on immediately.

We will be going back to our regular schedule in December (First Friday in Virginia and Third Friday in Maryland) for the foreseeable future.

The WSFA Press book is at the printer. Paul and Gail have requested a discount from the printers because of their screw-ups.

New Business: Bill Lawhorn stated that as we are pushing schedules for Capclave 2019, it would be good to get the announcements for the WSFA Small Press Award as early as possible. In discussion it was mentioned that the Dublin World Con is likely to close Hugo voting around mid-July, so we could close and be ready for the announcements by the end of July.

No new members were in attendance.

Announcements: Secretary's announcements. Bill Lawhorn has been elected as a co-chair, together with Collette Fozard, of World Con should D.C. win its World Con bid. World Fantasy lost and found: somebody left behind a green plastic half-cup measuring cup. Rodger Burns: BSFS Compton-Crook nominees have been selected and voting for them is now open on-line for members of BSFS. They have a fairly long list this year. You can rank your votes from 1 to 10. Balticon has Charles Vess for artist Guest of Honor next year. Bill has several of the 3D ship table centerpieces from the awards banquet. You can have one for \$20. Bill will bring in any leftover WF bags once the last have been sent out to whoever is yet to receive them. William Goldman, the author of *The Princess Bride*, has passed away.

Motion to adjourn passed. Meeting adjourned at 9:54 pm.



In attendance were Bob MacIntosh, Kim Hargan, Sarah Mitchell, Bill Lawhorn, Ivy Yap, Sam Pierce, Francis Holland, Courtni Y. Burlison, Aaron Pound, Angela Pound, Sophia Pound, Rodger Burns, Elizabeth Twitchell, Apurva Desai, Sam Scheiner, Judy Scheiner, and Madeleine Yeh.

A Visit to a Panel on Writing Science Fiction for Young Adults by Kimberly G. Hargan

Responding to an email to WSFA regarding the announcement of a writing panel to take place in Arlington on January 24, I volunteered to go and see what it was about.

The following is from the email announcement:
Lit Up Presents:
Shut Up and Write!
Setting the Scene . . . in Space!
Writing What You Know When You're Writing SciFi
A panel discussion on writing and young adult fiction

Shut Up and Write! is a bi-monthly writing forum put on by the Arlington Central Library focused on writing for young adults. There were about 15-20 people in attendance, and most of them appeared to be interested in writing (and getting published, of course).



The format was much like a panel discussion at a convention. The moderator for the Shut Up and Write! series is Jon Skovron, a published author and sometime attendee at Capclave. This evening's guests were Pintip Dunn, an author with several YA novels under her belt and a new one recently published, and M.K. England, a librarian who was getting to debut her first novel. Both are resident in the greater Washington, D.C. area (as is Mr. Skovron), and so they were invited to this session.

In general the discussion was on the writing process and on the process of getting published. However, there were some interesting points. First, editors at the companies who published the books by these authors appear to be against including much actual science and technology in YA books, with the result that stories set in space are less prevalent in YA fiction than in science fiction marketed for adults. This may in part be based on the fact that when asked, some teens will say that science fiction is too complicated for their tastes.



The final interesting point was in answer to a question on what makes a YA story. The answer was that YA generally (not always, of course) involves a protagonist on a journey to discover him or herself, often finding that he or she is stronger, smarter, more popular, etc., than he or she thought. Because the journey leads to some form of "enlightenment", the tone (at least by the end) is usually positive and optimistic.

It was a pleasant discussion, mostly on being a writer. I

found there to be little meat on the nuts and bolts of setting out to write YA fiction, other than the one point in the preceding paragraph. As they are local authors in the science fiction genre, I think their participation in Capclave might be worthwhile, so I told them about it and invited them to check out the Web site for further information.

Crystal Pepsi's Membership Questioned



The WSFA Meeting First Friday in December 12/7/18 began with "Alright folks," said President Bob. First Friday in December. The President wishes you happy holidays and thanks for another successful year at WSFA. I hope you continue to put in this commitment. Sam L. read minutes from the last meeting. <Thanks Kim!>

Sam S. gave the financial report \$\$\$\$. People can pay dues for the coming year. Madeleine asked if this could wait until 2019. Sam S said yes. Elizabeth asked if the dues are the same as last year. Yes. She asked if they should be raised to cover insurance. Sam S said no need. President Bob said there is no need to differentiate by source of funds, all is from the regular pot.

There was discussion about the membership of Crystal Pepsi. Sam L said it should be our designated driver since it would never be drunk.

For Capclave Past, Cathy said she needs receipt for rack cards/bookmark art and wants to do an autopsy meeting for people working on the convention on what worked and what didn't. Bill for WFC said nothing has changed. He is waiting for receipts and nothing has changed on Capclave fronts.

Small Press Award plans to have a meeting at Cathy's Dec 30th to discuss if we want to change anything. For WSFA Press, Bill said, a new book came out. Some are going out in the mail. If you ordered a special number, those were set aside. Sam S. says he has a spreadsheet of those who preordered a book with their Capclave membership.



Sarah said dodos are tweeting. They went to Chessiecon and celebrated Hanukkah. WSFA Press book make great gifts. Can pile the dodos up for a dodo-orgy for Saturnalia.

The Committee to talk SF said on the 21st of December, Sherry Cook Woosley is doing a reading from her first book. Talk to Bill about a dinner. Today we will discuss the Nov/Dec Asimovs. For Entertivities, Sam S said Nightflyers is good. Clarion is accepting applications said Sarah. Northwestcon is doing workshops.

Elizabeth said the lander has made it to Mars. No kaboom said Mike.

Old business: Cathy said Steve Stiles needs to be approached about T-shirts. Sam L. said WSFA shirts have been ordered. First person to request the extra extra-large gets it. <sold>

New business: Cathy said in mid 2012, she inherited the holiday card list. It is very outdated. If people want to email Cathy with their address, it will be updated. Bob said make it so.

There were no new people.

Sam S. asked for the person who borrowed his dvds to return them.

Announcements: Bill may have a tweet. Sarah may host a plushy party at Worldcon.



Meeting adjourned at 9:45 at what passes for unanimous.

Attendance: Courtni Y Burleson, N. Barry Carver, Cathy Green, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, David Keener, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Evan Phillips, Aaron & Angela Pound, Judy & Sam Scheiner, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, and Madeleine Yeh.

Review of *Dragon's Code: Anne McCaffrey's Dragonriders of Pern* by Gigi McCaffrey

Reviewed by Sam Lubell



People inherit property from their parents all the time. So it is not surprising that children can similarly inherit fictional property. For instance, Christopher Tolkien has edited his father's drafts into posthumous books. Brian Herbert teamed up with author Kevin J. Anderson to write new Dune books after the death of Frank Herbert. And Gigi McCaffrey's brother Todd collaborated with their mother on additional Dragonriders of Pern novels and also wrote a few solo. Considering this, it may not be surprising that Gigi (Georgeanne Kennedy) would pen her own adventures on her mother's planet of Pern.

Most of *Dragon's Code* is the plot of Anne McCaffrey's *The White Dragon* told from the point of view of Piemur, the former child singer (and friend of Menolly) who appeared in *Dragonsinger* and was the main character of *Dragondrums*. In *Dragon's Code*, Piemur is a spy for the Masterharper, keeping tabs on the

Oldtimers, dragonriders who came from the past to help fight Thread, in the Southern continent. So Piemur reports on conversations between disaffected Oldtimers and wonders why one is so insistent that a picture of a cove include the stars above it (not realizing that the stars are a convenient way for time-traveling dragons to navigate). When an Oldtimer steals a queen dragon egg from Benden Weyr, Piemur does suspect the cove may be used to hide the egg, but it is returned before he can do anything. Piemur also investigates a plot to kill Jaxom, the young Holder of Ruatha hold and rider of the white dragon Ruth and efforts by the kin of lords who want land of their own.

Gigi McCaffrey does a very credible job writing in her mother's voice and the book reads like an Anne McCaffrey novel (which was not always true for the books by her brother Todd). The author echos both the virtues and flaws of her mother's style. The characters are likable, but there is a tendency here to tell rather than show, especially when Piemur reflects on his changes since he lost his singing voice and wonders what he will do with his life.



The real problem with the novel is that *The White Dragon* was already written and seeing the same events from Piemur's perspective does not add much that is new. So this book is really only for those who really like Piemur from the earlier books. I'd be interested to see what Gigi can do with a new adventure.

Capclave 2020 to Double Date?

Before the 12/21/18 WSFA meeting, people talked about the government shutdown. Alright let's get going said prez Bob. This is the last meeting in 2018. Starting at 9:16. Sam L read from the minutes.

Bob said, Mr. Lawhorn, you have a whole bunch of conventions. Cathy not here, send email to her if you want to be on holiday address book. In her role of publicity, she is doing tabling at Farpoint. A membership is available. Bill said also doing a table at Illogicon.

WFC – Books not closed. Talked to Sam S, said likely will close by end of January, waiting for receipts but most big ones are in. Hotel has been paid. Surplus is \$\$\$, our cut is healthy. Which reduces the limits of what Bill can do in 2020. Bob said can't go to hog wild. Bill continued, WFC went well, no major issues or flare ups, people very complimentary. Thanks to those working on it. It was really good until people started talking about LA next year, but not our problem. There was a discussion of diversity. Bob said, not our worry. Bill said WF souvenir books are available. A few bags are left for \$5 donation. Bill said he has a few with me tonight and after we do the mailings for supporting members, we may have about a dozen. Several boxes of books made their way for Capclave.



Capclave 2019, still Bill. First meeting here since July. I'm Capclave chair for 2019 since Sam Pierce could not continue. Rob Sawyer and Martha Wells will be GoH. We will be moving faster on programming since Salid offered to do the program book for free if we can get it to him on time. January will open up suggestions for programs and reaching out to program participants. Idea – Write what you know but what do you know. Interests and hobbies and day job. And a food panel. So things moving along. We have registration up, we will push more on that.

Capclave 2020 nothing to report except surplus from WFC. Bob asked, "Do we have a date?" Bill said we have two dates on reserve. Guest has until Feb to say yes or no. Bob asked, "Now that you have a surplus, have you started talking to past guests?" Bill said that Kate Secor who helped at WFC consignment, who will be doing programming. We will sit down and talk rankings who we invite. And who might be willing/able to come back. Discussion of past guests. Maybe George if the book is out. If bringing back large number of past guests, need GoH wrangler extraordinaire. Anyone who is past chairs, start considering write-ups of the years you chaired, I want a retrospective of past Capclaves in the program book. In 2020, with Worldcon on the other size, people might be more willing to come to Capclave with all the guests. Potential there. Good guests help. And we are known for putting on a great convention. People have a great time. Lots of kudos to those who help put it on. We still need people willing to help in addition to people currently doing it

Talk SF. Sam L. gave schedule. Bill said Diane Peterfreund has story upcoming in F&SF. She might do a reading for us.

Skipping other committees as not here.

Intertivities. Kim said Tor.com is doing newsletter, offering bimonthly newsletter of short fiction. Bill said not a small press.

Social media, Sarah said Dodos are celebrating yule/solstice by attending reading. Celebrating other holidays.

Old business. Sam L. T-shirts are here. See me

New business: None.

Announcements – Mark Roth said happy solstice. 50 years since Apollo 8 lifted off. A billion people watched. Look what we the human race did.

Song circle first Sat in February. More details coming.

Mike has books.

Bill said Bungalow's New Year's Eve party.

Motion to adjourn, 9:42, what passes for unanimous at WSFA.



There was a reading from Sherri Cook Woosley.

Attendance: Courtni Y Bureson, Apurva Desai, Carolyn Frank, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, Beth Jones, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Barry & Judy Newton, Sander Olson, Mark Roth, Steve Smith, Eider Tracy, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Grig Larson, Nicki and Rich Lynch, Sherri Woosley, N. Renee Brown, Day Al-Mohamed.

Let's Talk about the Nebula Finalists for Game Writing By Rodger Burns

This year's Nebula awards include, for the first time, a category specifically for game writing. This is an interesting decision, and likely is if anything overdue; video games are as large a part of modern entertainment as television or film, and are starting to spawn tie-in written novels in the same way that *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* did in previous decades. The announcement on February 20th of the finalists' ballot provides a chance to talk about what's under consideration to win.

God of War is notable as the only 'conventional' release by a major gaming studio on the finalists' ballot. It's certainly worthy of recognition by any measure -- it elegantly melds existing riffs and worldbuilding based on Greek mythology with a new plot and story arc taken from Norse myth, and leverages the full power of PS4 graphics and game processing ability to immerse the player into the game world. That said, it is also a AAA release, and one that the mainstream gaming industry has already showered with their own awards. The Nebula voters may decide that God of War doesn't further need acclaim specifically from SFWA.



Black Mirror: Bandersnatch, meanwhile, is an interesting but arguably flawed choice for the finalists' ballot. Its appearance as a game rather than as a Dramatic Presentation is absolutely appropriate; Black Mirror: Bandersnatch is played and interacted with rather than watched and consumed, with the act of choosing which branch of the story to advance on helping to define not just plot but aspects of characterization and worldbuilding. The problem with honoring Black Mirror: Bandersnatch is that it's distinctly uneven as a game and as a story. Its branching plotlines are jarringly different in tone, narrative weight and coherence, to the point where it's difficult to reconcile them as variations on the same theme absent the explicit fourth-wall-breaking influence of an outside observer coercing the story down first one plot branch, then another. If Black Mirror: Bandersnatch wins the Nebula, it'll arguably be a sign that the SFWA membership is more interested in honoring the medium its story was created in, or the larger Black Mirror franchise, than recognizing excellence within game writing.

Rounding out the ballot are three different interactive-fiction games from the publisher Choice of Games -- The Martian Job, Rent-A-Vice, and Road To Canterbury. Each of these is a variation on the same theme; your protagonist (name, personality traits and key skills mainly chosen by the player as the game progresses, multiple-choice style) enters into an imagined world to overcome a challenge (SFnal criminal heist for The Martian Job, cyberpunk private investigating for Rent-A-Vice, historical adventure and court intrigue for Road to Canterbury) and has the chance to encounter different sideplots, character interactions, et cetera along the way.



The risk here lies in the similarity of the games' structure, which leaves just the worldbuilding and character voice elements to fall back on to distinguish any of the three candidates as deserving to win the Nebula. A ballot that had just one of these three works competing against a more diverse field might actually be more favorable to the Choice of Games studio than the current ballot.

What else could potentially be nominated? There's a wide array of suitable choices; gaming is a thriving industry, with excellent work from both major studios and volunteer hobbyists alike. AAA video game releases such as the alt-history western Red Dead Redemption 2 or the medieval adventure Kingdom Come: Deliverance could be considered; so could works from smaller studios such as Battletech (an excellent CRPG implementation of the board game of the same name) or the puzzle mystery Return of the Obra Dinn. Interactive fiction games such as Alias: The Magpie, Animalia or Ürs could offer a contrast to the plot progression common to Choice of Games's work. And while every finalist on this year's ballot is computer-, console- or Netflix-driven, this doesn't actually seem to be required within the Nebula award rules; a pure board game such as Betrayal Legacy or even Root is probably just as eligible.

The Nebula finalists' ballot for game writing is interesting and informative, though narrower than it could have been and with significant room to grow. It'll be interesting to see what wins in May, what ends up as a finalist on next year's ballot, and how this shapes upcoming game writing, game design and the field of science fiction and fantasy.

