

The WSFA Journal July/Aug 2019



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Fiyah, Zambia, and Other Made-Up Words

Alright folks said President Bob. This is the post-fourth of July (7/5/19) WSFA meeting. Yawn.

Sam L. summed up minutes. Treasurer up \$\$\$.

Capclave Present. Bill said, We got the contract for Capclave 2020 and submitted it to the hotel, so now we have a hotel and date. I will let Collette know that George is interested in same weekend third weekend after Columbus Day. For Capclave 19 the Dodos have started tweeting fun facts about our guests. Martha Wells' first sf convention was Armadillo four when she was still in high school. Rob Sawyer went to university with Tanya Huff. Membership is up to 143 members, about where we should be. Drum up more business. Table at Shore Leave. Martha Wells will be in Dublin for Worldcon so we will do a photo with her. Program is progressing. The survey is out and ## people responded. Catherine Asaro is moving to NY in September so will not be able to come. People need to take bookmarks and rack cards. Hand them out. Both Rob and Martha are interested and excited. Sam S will be getting flight information from Rob soon. He wants to know which airport is best. We are still on track to hit our publishing deadline with the understanding that things can change. We brought up the idea of using big foyer area for mass signing. It depends on if it is available. So won't know where put the AV equipment until a month out. If you haven't got your room please get it. If we get 110% of room block \$\$\$.



Capclave 2020 is progressing on things. Nothing new other than the contract. We do have the foyer worked in. Breakfast with GoH and staff on Sat morning. Breakfast and mass signing will be in the foyer so we can have the bigger room free. Bill asked Kathi if will do AV for Capclave 2020. She said yes, but remind me. Make it easier for people to do signing. Won't have to turn over the big room.

George for 2021. Not too much to talk about. Talking to Bill and Collette, want same weekend. Do have decision on programming, if want to combine it with 1632 mini-convention. Can't assume. This is safest thing to do. Who knows who will want to come just three months after Worldcon. <Discussion of local people>. Sam S asked about doing a relaxicon. Mark recommended 1632 minicon to draw people. George continued, I have thoughts but need to start. Rodger said 1632 people are comfortable with having other guests and not taking over the whole convention. George said, staff is an issue so wouldn't mind them doing as much as can. Little as possible. I will contact 1632 people.

Paul – Website. Wsfa.org is back on line. A lot of the harder hand coded needs to be redone. Mark said having problems with the calendar. Discussion of what happened. Sam L. offered to update the info. Cybersecurity in the 21st century.

WSFA Press has had several sales. New book isn't selling because we missed Capclave and World Fantasy. Bob asked about plans for 2020. Paul said no firm plans, but we have a possibility.

Social media. Fun facts. Sign up for twitter and like. Comment. Dodos are extolling virtues of space cake at the fourth of July.

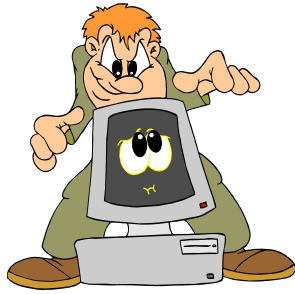
Entertivities. Pluto TV is a streaming service said Kim, on 14 platforms. In mid-June they added a Dr Who channel. He now has seen all the doctors. Kathi said Channel 4 in UK will be streaming the entire Apollo 11 mission in real time.



Small Press Award, xx voted. Deadline is August 11th. 14/36. We need to double that to get fudge. Vote. Paul cannot comment. Talk SF – will discuss the books up for the Hugos.

No old business.

New business. Bill said, *Fiyah's* editor Troy Wiggins will be gathering their staff for an event/party to celebrate their World Fantasy win and Hugo nomination. They have the money for travel and transportation; they are fundraising to pay for staff and hotel. This will be in Atlanta. They offer sponsor recognition on merchandise and in October issue of the magazine. Bill made a motion for WSFA to donate \$\$ from the World Fantasy money. Since Troy is a guest of honor, this would fall under advertising. He would ask to print out *FIYAH* copies to give out at Capclave. *Fiyah* is a literary magazine specific to African-American authors. Won World Fantasy for best related. We would get some recognition. Elizabeth asked if could tweet about Capclave. Bill said Troy has tweeted from his own account. We could ask. There was no discussion. George said he has spent \$\$ on worse thing. Question called. No one opposed, no abstentions.

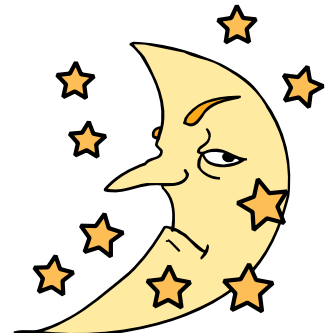


Sam L. suggested giving Eric Glassner a password to our website so he can teach us Zambia and do the scheduling for Capclave. The password would not give access to financial info but would allow access to all our WSFA family of websites. Ellen Montgomery said she considers him family, dated her daughter. He is very concerned about security and won't be a problem. George asked about Zambia. Rodger said he trusts Eric. And Zambia is best open source supported software for scheduling conventions and doesn't have the problem of outdated PHP. Kathi asked if it is better than competing software. Paul said he thinks will be the best choice. Bill said it will be much easier to do the programming and won't have to send a survey. Someone asked what Eric would get. Rodger said multiple Capclave memberships. No one opposed, no abstentions. Sam L will send Paul contact info.

At a meeting for first time: Ellen Montgomery, runs accessibility for Balticon. Moved in with Mark. <And coming to WSFA is the price you pay.>

Announcements. Bill said there is a rapidly approaching event in Dublin. He has ballots. Paul has eggs. Kathi thanked everyone at WSFA who came to her Fourth of July party. Arlington Planetarium July 20th will celebrate the moon landing. Lots of shows, storm troopers. Fixed the AC. Mike Walsh said he will be having a heart stress test with a visit to a cardiologist right after going to Readercon.

Meeting adjourned unanimously at 10:03.



Attendance: Courtni Y Bursleson, Rodger Burns, Paul Haggerty, Kimberly Hargan, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sarah Mitchell, Kathi Overton, Aaron & Angela Pound, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Elizabeth Twitchell, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, and Ellen Montgomery.

What Happened To the Supervillians?

By Mark Roth

I've written a short story where one of the premises is that real superheroes would not, as Tom Smith sings, "be out bashin' baddies in their BVDs". What just struck me is that some of the supervillains have become far more believable. The best example is, of course, Lex Luthor. Look at the Lex of the comics in the seventies and eighties, and the first Superman movie: he keeps looking for ways to make money fast and gain his own superpowers, including an Iron-man style power suit.



Then came the DC Crisis on Infinite Earths (in the 1985 comics). In the aftermath, Lex was none of that. Instead, he was a billionaire, who hired people to do things, or made them do things. The way he used his all-female direct support staff showed just how evil he was.

So, why did the superheroes never make that jump?

I can only assume that, even though several times over the decades the comics realized that most of their audience were no longer early teens, and went to serious stories... then back to bashing. This makes a fun, brainless movie, but any real thought makes so much of it absurd. The most obvious example of this would be Green Lantern. He's still going around creating giant green fists with his power ring. At least to me, the most obvious thing in the world for him to do would be something along the lines of "Oh, here come some baddies," and the next thing baddies know, they're completely surrounded by a force field... and can't breathe, pass out, and our hero can use the ring to disarm and bind them, and hand them to the authorities.

Another example would be the Batman. He's supposed to be brilliant, and a billionaire, and yet doesn't seem to have any way to track his villains' movements of money, or hiring people, the way Holmes did with the Baker Street Irregulars. Instead, he has to do everything himself, and then go bash the baddies.



The superheroes just don't do much in the way of actual teamwork. Maybe there should be one who does hire those newly come into superpowers, or who want to be a costumed hero, and train them... then let *them* go out and bash the baddies.

Perhaps it's time for low and mid-level heroes who work for the "superheroes" to have their chance in the sun.

Dodos are Dodoing Secret Plans

Bob banged the gavel, starting the 7-19-19 WSFA Meeting. "Aright we're going to start this thing. This is the 50th anniversary of the moon landing. It's 9:15." Madeleine said, "They proved the moon is not made of green cheese." <Then what kind of cheese is it made of?>

Sam L read minutes.

Bill for Capclave 2019. Followup needs to be done with programming. I've not heard about Eric uploading Zambia. Needs to do soon. Will talk to David Keener about Workshops. Sarah



and I sat the Capclave table at Blertcon; people took flyers. NO memberships were sold at Shore Leave (but we did sell two books). Fun facts continue. Posted last week's on Facebook. Not as much traction as I'd like. People need to like the messages. We have ### members, up three. Bob said he reminded several dealers, getting close. Usual gang of idiots. Need to follow up with Stacy and Shirt about the con suite. Things are progressing. Want more members. Cathy and I need to talk about flyer.

Capclave 2020, Bill continued... "Two weeks ago, I did the \$\$ support for Fiyah meetup which has funded. Meet and Greet. We received a few items for Capclave. I've also talked to Troy. If people have ereaders we could put out copies. The systems are not set up to print pdfs well, but I can get us some kindle versions we could put for people to look at. I'll be looking into large formats prints of covers. No new guests to report, I'll try to corner a few more at Worldcon. George did ask me about talking to Eric for 1632 minicon. It is on the agenda for this weekend." Eric Flint's health was discussed. "They want to keep 1632 minicon going even if Eric cannot do it. And we do have several nearby people in it. We've had 7 or 8 of the people who work in the universe. Having been in Utah and Columbus, they're okay to come back to East Coast. "



Small press award committee. Bob asked about numbers. Carolyn said she didn't have updates. Social media. Pedro went to Blertcon said Sarah, and handed out ribbons. Shuffling. Fun Facts. Dodos are dodoing. Secret plans that cannot be revealed. So secret they don't even know they are doing yet. Things added. Sam L. promised a WSFA dim sum trip to new restaurant. Seats 400, enough for the whole Capclave convention.

Updated Attendance list.

Talk SF. Retro Hugos. Back to regular schedule next month.



Intertivities: Lots of celebration of the moon landing. Kathi took pictures of the Moon rocket superimposed on the Washington monument (see cover). Kim told story about getting moon rock for display in a Denmark museum. Færø Islands Rubber gloves. Sam L asked Kim to send the info. I'm not even going to try to spell it. <everyone laughed>. See following story.

No old business. Bill asked about the insurance. Bob said will have to ask Sam. Mad asked about treasury. Sam L. reported first Friday amount.

New business. Sam L. said there is fifth Friday next month, August. Bob said Labor Day weekend.

Bill said, talked to Judy Scheiner. There will be a Capclave meeting before First Friday in September 6th. At 7ish. Also in October.

Mike Walsh said trip to cardiologist. Had bronchitis that was cured but left with breathing problems. EKG was normal, Stress test in September. But packing books to a con is already a stress test.

Meeting adjourned 9:45.

Attendance: Cathy Green, Kimberly Hargan, Michael Ikeda, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Candy Madigan, Sarah Mitchell, Mike Taylor, Deidre Tracy, Michael Walsh, Eva Whitley, Ivy Yap, and Madeleine Yeh.

An Apollo 15 Moon Rock in the Færø Islands

By Kimberly G. Hargan

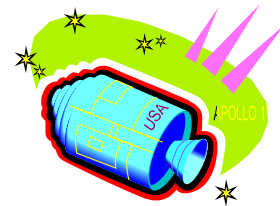
The U.S. government has a program, originally carried out by USIA (the U.S. Information Agency) and then continued in the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs after USIA was absorbed into State, called the International Visitor Program (IVP). An IVP brings a group of up to eight specialists to the USA to see how Americans do whatever it is they are interested in. Sometimes you get a mixed group, coming from a crazy range of countries, sometimes you get a group from countries that speak the same language (like Spanish or Arabic) and sometimes you get a group from just one country.



In the mid-1980's there was an IV group from Denmark consisting of mayors of middling large towns (not village sized, but definitely not metropolises either) who went on a program to see how Americans managed their towns. The program started (as all IVPs do) with a couple of days of orientation and theoretical discussions in Washington, D.C., and then continued with travel to various regions of the USA to meet with and see town managements in action with their own eyes.

One of the mayors came from the town of Klaksvik, the second largest town (after the capital Tórshavn) in Færøerne, which translates as the Sheep Islands. (In fact, to say the Færø Islands comes out to the Sheep Island Islands). Færøerne are a small group of islands in the North Atlantic about halfway between Norway and Iceland, belonging to the Kingdom of Denmark. The mayor of Klaksvik fell head over heels in love with the USA and the way we do things on his IVP trip.

Now we come to 1988. Klaksvik was going to celebrate its 80th anniversary in August of that year, and the mayor was crazy to get some kind of WOW exhibition from the USA. He actually asked if the town could somehow borrow one of the returned Apollo program capsules, either from NASA or maybe the one that was on display at the Smithsonian (which he may have seen on his trip). What he got was the junior USIS (USIA overseas) officer (me) from the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, with a space-themed exhibition. The exhibition consisted of two books on the U.S. space program from the USIS library (which people could leaf through on a table for that purpose), a free-standing poster show (of sixteen or eighteen posters) of the future of man in space (with heavy emphasis on the U.S. space program), a scale model of the space shuttle (which was still a new thing then) that stood some eight or ten feet tall, and the crème-de-la-crème, a section of a moon rock returned by the Apollo 15 mission. This was back in the day when NASA stilled loaned out such rocks for exhibiting as an international goodwill measure.



The sample was an eighth section – it had three cut faces at right angles and a rough, original surface, all in all about the size of my fist or a bit smaller. Looking at the cut faces, I have the impression that it was a piece of lunar breccia, a composite of dust, sand and small gravel stuck together in a rock. Now, moon rocks are worth many times their weight in gold, and not just because of their current scarcity. One important consideration was that, even if now it could be used for display, at any moment in the future it could be called back into NASA to undergo experimental examination to answer a question that occurred to NASA scientists. To avoid contamination while they were away from NASA the rocks were sealed in lucite pyramids. The lucite was clear as glass, and as the bottom of the pyramid sat on a base that provided fluorescent illumination, the inner faces reflected the light onto the rock sample, giving a beautiful, totally even lighting of the surfaces.

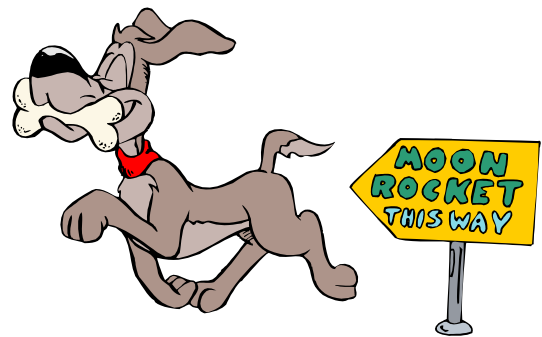
Now we come to the fun part. The two books went into my luggage, and we arranged to send the display base for the pyramid, the poster show and the shuttle model via commercial shipping. The moon rock, however, was a special case. For one thing, it needed to be hand carried by a U.S. government official (me in this case). The problem with that is that of course I had to bring it onto the airplane with me, which brings us to a core issue. One way to examine the crystalline structure of minerals is a process called X-ray crystallography, in which the diffraction pattern of a powerful beam of X-rays fired through the sample reveals the internal structure of the mineral. However, the beaming of X-rays that powerful can actually change the structure of the crystal matrix once you're done, so you can only do it once. (You can still do other things with it, like grinding it up to determine its chemical composition, but the X-ray examination is one and done.) Therefore the moon rock could not be X-rayed (at airport security, for example) without destroying its value for one type of future research. On top of that, the surface of the lucite pyramid could eventually become clouded by contact with the acids and oils from human skin, which could etch the surface over time, so we weren't allowed to touch that directly either. The pyramid was inserted point down into the extruded foam interior of a shiny little gold-toned carrying case, like a cube ten inches all ways with a handle on top.

So, to get to Færøerne you have to fly. I went to the airport, put my carry-on bag through the X-ray scanner, and told the two security officers that I had a NASA moon rock that could not be X-rayed. I opened the case for them, showing the bottom of the pyramid. In spite of my diplomatic passport, the security officers said they needed to see all of the inside of the carrying case, so could I please take the contents out? Well, we figured this was coming, so we had bought a brand new pair of yellow latex kitchen gloves to keep me from touching the lucite surface. I pulled the yellow gloves out of my pocket, put them on and reached in to take the pyramid out. The two officers' eyes got about as big around as they could go and they simultaneously took one big step back, like the contents might be something scary. I explained about skin contact not being allowed, and held the pyramid aside as they looked into the reverse-pyramid hollow inside the carrying case.

I'm not sure what things they are worried about people smuggling into Færøerne, but there was a customs inspection at Vága Floghavn (Airport) outside of Tórshavn, which included X-raying of incoming passengers' luggage. I explained once again about the prohibition on X-raying the moon rock. Here the customs officers had heard about the cool stuff Klaksvik was getting for its anniversary celebration from the USA, so they were quite curious to see it. They thought the big yellow gloves were pretty funny. Klaksvik had sent a high school teacher to pick up me and the moon rock, and the customs officers asked him to take a picture of them together with me and the rock. So there is a picture of me dressed in a suit and tie and wearing the big yellow gloves, holding up the pyramid at about shoulder level, resting on one yellow-gloved hand, with a customs officer on either side of me, all three of us grinning like idiots.



When there weren't events going on (musical performances; the traditional Færøese chain dance that pulls in dancers until the room can no longer contain the circle, and then the circle warps and



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We had sent requirements for displaying a moon rock well ahead of time, and when I got to Klaksvik I saw that they had been followed scrupulously. They had cleared out the town council meeting room and given it over for all the space displays. In the center of the council room they had erected a pillar, a bit above waist height, with a glass display case on top, allowing people to walk around and examine the rock from all 360 degrees. They had run a power line up through the pillar inside the display case for the illuminated base to plug into. It was great.

wrinkles so instead of a circle you get this denser configuration with dancers from another part of the line whizzing past in the opposite direction a foot or two from your face; official dinners and the like), I sat behind the table with the books and talked to the steady stream of visitors. (I think that as an official American visitor who spoke Danish, I was almost as much an attraction as the other stuff in the exhibition, but less impressive than the moon rock.) When I was away at an event, Klaksvik's police officer (I get the impression he was the only one) provided security for the rock. The requirements for the loan of a moon rock included locking it up securely at night, so they gave me the combination to the vault that contained the municipal records (just around the corner of a corridor from the town council room) so that I could take the pyramid out of the display case and lock it up at the end of the day. At one point, while the display was still open in the early evening but the town hall had otherwise closed, one of the town clerks who had worked late came up to me and asked me to open the vault so she could put some files away in their appropriate places, as she didn't rate knowing the combination.

There you have my adventure with the Apollo 15 moon rock in Klaksvik in the summer of 1988. There are a lot of other fun things I could tell you about this trip, but I think this has already gone on quite long enough.

Carolyn's Trip to Australia Part IV

Thursday February 21 from Kangaroo Island to Melbourne

Another day of getting up at 6 AM and packing, but then I got to go stuff myself at the breakfast buffet before the Skylink coach came to pick me up at 7:50 AM. This coach deposited the group of us next to the "Self Service" van, and we loaded on our suitcases. We went inside the terminal to obtain our ferry passes, and then boarded the 8:30 ferry. This ferry was late getting to Penneshaw, took more time as each tractor-trailer, truck and car had to swing around and back into the ferry, and was 20+ minutes late in departing. I sat up in the front again and got to watch the vehicle loading and then the sailors untying and storing the ropes so the ferry could cast off.



The water was calm and the 45-minute ferry ride was enjoyable. At Cape Jervis, we self-transferred our luggage from the self-service van onto a large coach and climbed in for the hour and a half trip back to the Adelaide bus station. This time we had a trainee bus driver, who knew how to drive a bus but did not know the route. I learned that although Skylink is a private guided tour service, they have an agreement with the local governments in the little towns along the peninsula to provide public transit services at select bus stops all the way into Adelaide.

We eventually made it to the Adelaide bus station a half hour late, but Skylink had alerted the transfer company, so those of us who were headed to the airport had taxis waiting for us. The airport was only ten minutes away and I still had several hours to wait before my 3 PM flight. The Adelaide airport is quite small, on a part with Myrtle Beach, and my choices for lunch were either Hungry Jacks (the Australian version of Burger King) or a small Italian coffee/deli. I voted for the Italian deli and enjoyed some sort of a chicken, cheese and tomato grilled sandwich. With little else to do, I sat and worked on writing up my journal articles about Kangaroo Island.

I boarded the airplane, a 737, from the rear as I was sitting towards the back of the plane. This meant no jetway, instead I got to walk down a set of stairs, walk along a set of road cones, and up a set of metal stairs to an exit door at the rear of the plane. Since the weather was still rather sunny and warm, this was



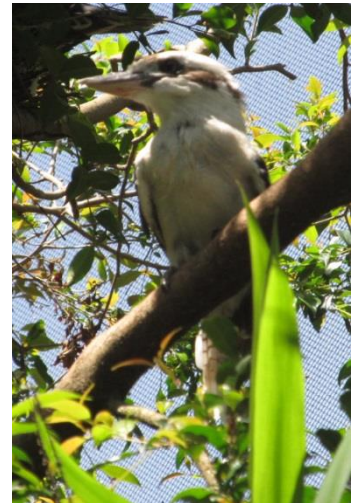
no issue, and the plane certainly got boarded twice as fast. With some indeterminate mechanical repairs of something the pilot said they would not need to use, we were late taking off, and remained late arriving an hour and a half later in Melbourne.

As my transfer to my hotel was due to depart at 5:30 PM, I raced to get to the carousel, collect my luggage and roll it through 2 terminals to locate the shuttle booth. I found the booth, they printed out my transfer pass, and then armed with 8 x 10 glossy photographs attempted to explain how to locate the shuttle stop. Due to extensive remodeling of the airport and revamping of the roadways, only 2 exits allowed a pedestrian to cross the roadways, and they had 4 separate parallel roadways, each dedicated to a different type of vehicle. I was told to only cross two roadways and then look for blue signed awnings that were

behind me and to the right. After only a few wrong turns, I did lurch upon the correct spot, and it was 5:30. Only to be told by the folks who had already found the spot that the 5:30 transfer van had gone MIA and now all of us were to catch the 6 PM one. So we stood in the late afternoon sun and waited.

Around 6:05 a transfer van did show up, disembarked its passengers and loaded us up. The van held 16 passengers and it was full. It was air conditioned and we all sat ready to go. The driver however went off to the side, sat on a bench and stared at his phone for the next 15 minutes. Eventually he got up, got in the driver's seat, and we got going, smack into Melbourne's rush hour. I was nearly the last person dropped off, at the Melbourne Short Stay. This turned out to be a 47-story high apartment tower, and my place was on the 33rd floor.

When checking in, I asked all my now standard questions: what is the wi-fi password, how does one get laundry soap powder, and where is the location of the nearest grocery store. I dropped off my luggage, located and quieted some persistent beeping (it was the under counter dishwasher) and took off for the Coles supermarket 3 blocks away. This was a huge store, located beneath the major Southern Cross train station, and it included a liquor store. I wandered around and found a local Sauvignon Blanc on sale for \$5! I learned that in order to purchase liquor you needed to prove your age with either an Australian driver's license or a passport, so I was fine but many of the young men about were not. I also purchased some passion fruit yogurt, white peaches, passion fruits and lychee nuts for breakfasts for the next four days, and a Tasmanian salmon salad for dinner. But by the time I returned to my place and gotten unpacked, it was after 10 and I went to bed.



Friday February 22 in Melbourne

As I awoke before the alarm was scheduled to go off at 6 AM, I decided to get up and get going anyway. I enjoyed my breakfast of passion fruit yogurt, a white peach, 3 lychee nuts and a passion fruit. In this Melbourne Short Stay apartment, they provided a full set of dishes and cooking materials, including a very sharp chef's knife and cutting board so I was able to cut open the passion fruit and lychees. I made my calls to reconfirm my trips for the next two days and was ready to head the door by a little after 8 AM.

I headed over to the Queen Victoria Market, a huge combination of urban farmers market, local shops and tourist market. I had printed out a self-guided history tour and spent the next hour or so following it around and buying myself souvenirs (fridge magnets and earrings). I noticed that kangaroo meat looks just like any cut of beef, that apparently female pork bellies and other female pork products have a higher premium (though I have no idea why), and that the northern Italians certainly have more imaginative names and cuts of meat than these Australians (I had learned in Adelaide that this area also was heavily settled by Protestant Germans fleeing Germany, so maybe that is why).

By 10:30, I found my way over to the meeting place for the Free Walking Tour. Since more than sixty folks showed up, they divided the group into 3 parts. My group of 20 was led by Astrid, a native, who is blessed



with a good loud voice and the techniques of keeping the group together and on the move. Along with the architecture, we learned a good deal of Melbourne history.

Melbourne was not part of the convict settlement, it only had free settlers. In 1851, they managed to separate themselves from Sydney and New South Wales, and then one month later they had a huge gold rush (much bigger than either California or Alaska). So, they went crazy building all sorts of Victorian structures and gilding everything on the inside with local gold. Until of course the gold rush petered out and the early 1890s recession brought it all to a close.

She led us around for 2 hours, before a short break. And then showed us modern Melbourne. In the 1990s, in an effort to revive the city, the city council encouraged muralists to paint the walls in the small lanes, and cafes to set up shop in them as well. We got to enjoy some very polished art and lots of graffiti on these byways, some of which were only 4 feet wide.

She ended the 3-hour tour near the city's river, the Yarra. I took the second half of my chicken, avocado and rocket sandwich (I had bought in a food court during the break in the Walk) and sat in the shade of a tree on the side of the river, near the boathouse. It was a beautiful sunny low 70s day, but it was a workday Friday, so no one was out on the river except for some tour boats. According to our guide, Melbourne



residents had dumped everything in the river, fouling it to the point of extremely noxious smells. During the past 20 years they have been cleaning it up, but she said that no one would want to swim in it yet. I sat there enjoying the day until two black swans came walking up; they wanted to nibble at the grass on which I had been sitting. As they looked nasty, I decided it was time to get up and get going.

The formal park in which I was sitting, Alexandra Gardens, had lovely flowering plantings so I wandered about and found a gorgeous floral clock.

Then I headed back across the bridge into the CBD and headed for the Victoria Parliament Building. Australia is a federation of 7 states, New South Wales where Sydney is the capital, is the oldest and most populous due to Sydney have 5+ million people. Victoria, where Melbourne is the capital, is the next largest with a population of just under 5 million, but it is growing far faster than any other part of Australia. The city seems to have cranes all over and they seem to like skyscrapers, although the tallest now is only 88 stories (the hotel I am in is 47 stories -- I am on the 33rd floor).

Back in the 1850s they set up a bi-cameral legislature for their State, modeled on the British Houses of Parliament. Of course, with no lords, they just have a legislative chamber of 88 and a council of 40. Since this was amid the gold rush, they started to build a gorgeous building and got most of it built before the money ran out. The two legislative chambers are gorgeous, with gold inlay on the walls and ceilings, and with huge crystal chandeliers. The main antechamber has a fabulous mosaic floor done by the same folks who did the mosaics that I saw in Northern Italy back in September. However, that is as far as they got; they were supposed to have a huge dome gilded inside and out, but that did not happen.

I walked back across the city to my hotel and stumbled across Hardware Lane, a two-block street that has several of the restaurants that I had identified as having seafood and/or kangaroo located on it. After coming back, leaving my purchases and freshening up, I headed back out for dinner. At the Grill Steak and Seafood restaurant, I dined on kangaroo -- tastes like London broil. In fact, if no one said it was kangaroo, I would have thought I was eating a tender, thinly sliced medium rare London broil. It came with green beans and roasted new potatoes, in a balsamic sauce. To accompany it, I enjoyed a Yarra Valley pinot noir.



I walked back to the hotel to work on updating my journal until 8:30 PM. Then I headed back out and down King Street to the bridge crossing the Yarra River. On the bridge, facing the Crown Casino Resort on the opposite bank, I waited for 9 PM, when they lit five pillars with bursts of gas fueled fire for the next 3 or 4 minutes. The base pillars were 20+ feet high and the bursts of gas fire went another 20+ feet into the sky. It was rather amazing to watch.

Saturday February 23 at Phillips Island for the Penguin Parade

As the tour to the Penguin Parade departed at 10:50 AM (and was to last to midnight), I slept in to 7 AM. I got myself together and breakfasted on the passion fruit yogurt, a white peach, a passion fruit, and 3 lychee nuts that I had purchased when I came into the city. I spent the morning catching up on my journals about Kangaroo Island. I ventured out on my balcony, but I was not excited to be on the 33rd floor and only took a few photos, both outwards and downwards, before retreating. The day started cloudy, but the clouds were gone by 10 AM and the temperature stayed in the low 70s.

At 10:30 AM I headed to the lift and then walked the few blocks to the designated waiting area. I met another couple who were also traveling with my travel agent, About Australia. They are from Wyoming and she spent her time complaining about everything. A small tour bus picked us up and then dropped the bus load off at another location to board the 24-seat mini bus that was to be our vehicle for the day. As the bus was already mostly full, I ended up in the single seat on the left over the rear wheel well; which was not too bad. As the bus was completely full, others ended up on the back bench with no real view, and they were most unhappy.

The bus drove south and west of the city for an hour and a half to Phillips Island. This is an agricultural area, mostly cows and horses, with an occasional kangaroo. We stopped at the Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park for lunch and a walk through the zoo. For lunch, they provided a beef and a chicken sausage, topped with fried onions and a tasty tomato chutney, potato salad (which I avoided), and a mesclun salad.



The small zoo only included Australian animals. The wombat was asleep on his back inside his barrel, so my photo only included the lower half of his stomach and stubby legs. They had several different types of cockatoos, mostly older birds who had outlived their owners. The spotted quoll (Australia's wild cat) slept in a corner and I only got to see the bits that showed when he turned over. Of course, they had koalas (\$20 for a photo with; I passed) and kangaroos and wallabies to feed. Their dingoes were walking around, as were the emus. Lots of Cape Barron Geese were just walking around their outdoor pond area. Most of the other animals were sleeping so I only saw the hind foot of a Tasmanian Devil.



Then we drove to another smaller island, Churchill Island to visit a historic farm. We learned how to crack a whip (for driving sheep), watched a sheep dog at work, and watched a sheep shearer explain his profession and shear a sheep. We headed off to the Koala Conservation Station and walked several 10-foot-high boardwalks to view yet more koalas.

We drove to the far western end of the island to the Nobbies and Seal Rock Center. Here we could peer through binoculars to see a furred seal breeding area, see little penguin burrows, and an ocean blow hole in action. Under the boardwalk we spotted a few baby Little (formerly known as fairy) Penguins. For dinner, I bought myself some fish and chips, served piping hot, and a glass of Purple Hen Sauvignon Blanc (only beer selections were Corona and such).

Finally, around 7 PM, we arrived at the Penguin Parade. Penguin boxes under the edge of the visitors' center with clear tops

enabled us to see both molting penguins, who mostly looked very fat, fluffy and unhappy, and baby penguins awaiting their parents return with dinner. They had a number of informative exhibits about penguins as well as a penguin themed gift shop. I wandered down the boardwalk taking photos of baby penguins and swamp wallabies (who ignored each other).

At 8 PM, ten folks including me met up with our ranger for our ranger guided tour. Our park ranger outfitted each person with a pair of head phones, a transmitter to pick up her talk, and a pair of medium size binoculars. Then we headed down the boardwalk, listening to her explanations of what we were and were about to see. When we got to the beach, we sat in the front row of a special set of bleachers and waited for the little penguins to come ashore.

It was full dark, when at 8:50 PM the first group of maybe 70 little penguins appeared out of the surf. They lined up and walked along the sand next to a set of rock boulders until they had to scurry across a bit of sand before the edge of the small dune plant covered hillside. There was a bit of a wait as apparently, they needed to catch their breath before starting the trek up the hillside. In a few minutes another group of roughly the same size came ashore and started their trek. As some of the penguins had bulked up on fish in preparation for the next 17+ days on shore molting and regrowing sea worthy feathers, they tended to stumble over their own feet and belly flop onto the sand. It was adorable. With the binoculars I could see them in great detail.

The stars were out, and I spotted Orion, much more visible and brighter than in DC. I asked the ranger to point out the Southern Cross, which she did. It was 4 very pale stars, especially next to bright Orion -- not very remarkable at all.

After several hundred penguins had come ashore, we walked back up the part of the board walk designated for special groups, alongside the penguins who had worn a path on either side of the boardwalk. We could see the baby penguins come out and call for their parents, and even try to get other adults to feed them -- the non-parents refused. All penguins were quite vocal and social. We then got to watch them cross a gutter and head up a blacktop pathway towards their home burrows further up the hill. As the bulk of the penguins had headed home, we handed back our borrowed equipment and headed back to our bus. Luckily two folks from Houston who had been on my bus also took advantage of the ranger program, and we all worked together to find our way back.



Probably more than a thousand people in a wide variety of vehicles from 50+ person coaches to hundreds of cars came to see more than 700 (of the 5000+ who live and breed in the area according to our ranger) little penguins walk home from the ocean. Two park rangers count the number of returning penguins each evening -- the lowest number was 8 in a deep fog and the highest was more than 4000. The little penguins are now considered only endangered but having made the area into a national park in the 1970s, the number of little penguins has been increasing. The piece of ocean is the Bass Strait, which divides Tasmania from mainland Australia.



Once the sun set the temperature dropped into the low 60s and a stiff ongoing warm wind continued to blow. When we got back to the bus, the driver/guide offered us hot tea or coffee (I produced one of my own peppermint tea bags) and enjoyed the warmth. Then we sat back for the two-hour ride back to Melbourne in the dark, while listening to Stevie Nicks, the Beatles and other 60s/70s soft rock, the background music provided on every single bus transfer or tour on this trip.

When the bus got back to Melbourne just before midnight, it promptly ran into a traffic jam. This was Saturday night and we were going through the nightclub and bar area of town. Eventually we got dropped off 2 blocks from the hotel. I did make it to bed before 12:30 AM, but it was a long, though highly enjoyable, day.

A Visual-Audio Mixup - WSFA Sees What George Hears

The 8-2-19 meeting began with, “Alright It’s 10 after nine,” said VP George. Shaner. “We’re having a meeting.” A discussion about quorum broke out. “Called to order this first Friday in August.” Kim said, “I’ll take a pizza.”

Sam S. said the stress test is in two years. That’s for Bill, said Mike Walsh. Treasurer reported \$\$\$.

Capclave present Sam S. said registration proceeding on pace. We have ### people after picking up 13 people in July. Capclave near future, no one was here. Capclave Far Future chair George said, “A lot is premature. Be nice to confirm that we are running a Worldcon. I have contacted Eric Flint’s liaison who will talk to Eric and we’ll see what I will hear.”



Publications, no new book. Small Press Award deadline the 11th. Online presence up.

Intertivities. Zenlizard said Montgomery Faire starting Sunday the 11th. Smithsonian book festivals. Get tickets in advance. Talk SF reported on upcoming discussions.

No old business. No new business. Fred Bauer said he hasn’t been here since it was at the Gillilands. Ellen Montgomery is here for the second time.

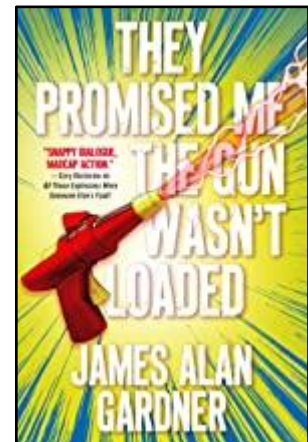
Announcements: None sent.

Attendance: Courtni Y. Burlison, Rick Ellrod, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, David Keener, Sam Lubell, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, Elizabeth Twitchell, Ivy Yap, Sam Hogan, Ellen Montgomery, Fred Bauer, Stephen Brinch, and Crystal Paul.

*Review of **They Promised Me the Gun Wasn’t Loaded** by James Alan Gardner* Reviewed By Sam Lubell

They Promised Me the Gun Wasn’t Loaded is the sequel to *All Those Explosions Were Someone Else’s Fault*. In this universe the superrich can pay to be transformed into immortal vampires, werewolves, and other Darklings. In a reaction, the Light has empowered regular people to be Sparks, essentially superheroes. But, not all Sparks are heroes. Some are supergenius inventors who lose sight of the greater good while others are anti-heroes who ignore the law in pursuit of their own ends.

Unlike the first book, which focused on four roommates who become Sparks, this book focuses on only one of the four, Jools. Before Jools gained superpowers as the Spark called Ninety-Nine, she was a screw-up on academic probation for being more interested in drinking and hockey than school. Now she has the power to equal the best human at anything. She’s the equal of the smartest, the strongest, the fastest etc. She also has mental access to the equivalent of Wikipedia. And she discovers in this book that she also has Mad Genius inventing skills. But this does not change her personality except that she notes she is doing something stupid when she goes ahead and does it anyway.



In this book, Jools allows herself to become a pawn of a Darkling for a single action (in return for her agreeing to break a link between one of her roommates and a different Darkling). As a result, she winds up a captive of Robin Hood (or rather a Spark that has assumed that identity) and his Merry Men. Once they discover she has powers too, she is forced to join them in a raid to capture a Mad Genius weapon, under a new identity. (One of the powers of Sparks is that when they wear a mask, no one (and no technology) can discover their true identity.)

The book has lots of action and good characterization especially when Jools starts worrying about becoming a Mad Genius. I think it works better than the first book because the author was focused on just one character (instead of four co-equal leads) and the worldbuilding had already been established.

A Convention Where Less Is More

The 8-16-19 Worldcon weekend WSFA meeting began when VP in charge George Shaner called the third Friday in August meeting to order.

Sam L read minutes. Let's hold a Worldcon said someone.

Cap Future not here. Present not here. Far Future has not heard back from Eric Flint about hosting the 1632 minicon. Someone suggested that this be a relaxacon [since it will be taking place just a couple of months after many WSFAans are involved in running the DC Worldcon. George objected. Don't want to lose momentum. It will be a convention where less is more. Be nice to turn over half the con to Eric's band. Small Press Award. Cathy will try to contact the authors about coming to Capclave said Carolyn. Release should go out in a week.

INtertivities. Kim said Hole in the Wall books will be closing August 31. George said he was just there a couple of weeks ago. Sam Lubell gave the schedule for the committee to Talk SF.

Mark Roth party, <location>.

New Business. Rodger said the WSFA Journal is in need of wider audience. We should do more to make it available to members of the club and other sf organizations. Use it to promote the club. Consider ways to make it more available to other clubs. Kim asked about it sending it to anyone at Capclave. Rodger said needs to be opt in. Rodger said if it is distributed more widely, it would be more worth writing for it. George said there should be a sign in box at Capclave. Mark said should send it to other clubs.



Sam L asked if Rodger would be willing to handle the distribution. Rodger said making hardcopies would be a club decision. On table for future discussion. Should talk to other clubs.

Sam L said he could email the lists. Carolyn suggested doing a link. That would work better.

Rodger said basic metrics for how many times the Journal has been downloaded.

Kim said click to open.

Steve said people throw out any pdfs.

Carolyn said should talk to Paul. Security issues. George said publications should be involved. Carolyn said should be publications committee to work it out. Sam said be careful not too much work for the secretary.

Carolyn said we need to discuss this more. Motion to table discussion for next meeting passed.

No new people.

Announcement: Mike Ikeda National Book Festival Augst 31st. Scalzi, Anders, others. Next week Maryland RenFaire starts. Sept 21 Smithsonian museum day. Kim said con in Arlington for hookups. Steampunk in Frederick. Eva Whitely got a job at CareFirst as tech writer. Meeting adjourned at 9:37 unanimously.

Attendance: Rodger Burns, Jon Clark, Carolyn Frank, Kimberly Hargan, Frances Holland, Michael Ikeda, Beth Jones, Sam Lubell, Sander Olson, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Mike Taylor, and Eva Whitley.

In Memoriam - Geoff "inControl" Robinson

By Rodger Burns

On the morning of July 22, I learned that Geoff "inControl" Robinson had died from a sudden illness, at the age of 33.

This was someone I'd never met. I only learned his real name from the obituary announcements. But I knew his Internet handle and his work -- the video streams he'd created of his playing Starcraft II, the popular science-fiction computer game, and his commentary of professional gamers competing against one another in online game tournaments. And the various expressions of sympathy and memorial from other commentators, streamers and pro gamers were all too natural for me to empathize with.

And so I'm left now to reflect on the strange irony inherent in the Internet and science fiction making my world so broad, so effortlessly, that this news can make the world seem smaller.

Rest in peace, guy.

