



LAMBDA SCI-FI

DC Area Bi/Gay/Lesbian Science Fiction Association

P.O. BOX 10087 * Silver Spring, MD 20914 * (301) 445-5650

Second Meeting Minutes

by Loree Cook-Daniels

April 22, 1990

Present: Carl Cipra, Loree Cook-Daniels, Marcelle Cook-Daniels, Peter Knapp, Al Weiner, Mark Wilcox.

We began by again discussing whether or not to affiliate with the Gaylactic Network. Loree clarified that the By-Laws we had distributed were NOT the By-Laws of the Gaylactic Network; that the only things we would be agreeing to if we joined were the principles listed on the one-page flyer. However, affiliation might mean additional things such as agreeing not to have alcohol at our events (apparently so as not to exclude anyone under age 21). This latter prohibition may only apply if we bill the event in such a way that it is linked to the Gaylactic Network (hence the suggestion that we have a two-part name, with the latter part being "lose-able" if need be). We came up with a list of additional questions to ask of the Gaylactic Network, and both Loree and Carl said they would try to get answers.

We also discussed the name. Al had suggested Lambda Sci-Fi for the newsletter, and we agreed to adopt that name for the group. If we affiliate with the Gaylactic Network, we will do something like Lambda Sci-Fi: The D.C.-Area Gaylaxians.

Carl circulated information on several upcoming conventions, including Disclave in our area over Memorial Day weekend. Address for information and/or registration:

Disclave '90
c/o Covert Beach
1200 Waynewood Blvd.
Alexandria, VA 22306

We also decided to get a booth at Pride Day. Carl donated \$20 of the \$35 fee; the other \$15 is yet to be collected. Al said he had spent about \$50 on the last newsletter. Since we have not yet decided on dues or other fund-raising methods, we agreed to keep receipts and figure out how to reimburse later.

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The Smithsonian Dinosaurs

by Carl Cipra

Where's Professor George Edward Challenger when you need him? There are dinosaurs in our nation's capital! They're as big as life and just as noisy! Don't worry though; Washington isn't really "The Land That Time Forgot;" it's just the latest venue for a truly wonderful display of robotic dinosaurs.

From April 12th to September 3rd, the Museum of Natural History is hosting an exhibit entitled "Dinamation's Dinosaurs, Alive and in Color." The stars of this exhibit are eighteen full-sized, animated robotic dinosaurs. There's also a sail-backed Dimetrodon in the "Dino Den" ("kids' room") with its mechanical innards exposed, so that you can appreciate the sheer technology of it all.

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The Book Corner

by Carl Cipra

Cowboy Feng's Space Bar and Grille by Steven Brust
(Ace Books).

Let me start off by saying that Steven Brust is one of my favorite authors. He has written some of my favorite books: To Reign in Hell and the "Mad Taltos series" (Taltos, Yendi, Teckla, Jherreg).

Unfortunately, I didn't find Cowboy Feng's to be anywhere near as good as these. It could't match Brust's ironic exploration of Biblical archetypes in To Reign in Hell; and it couldn't match the criminal underworld adventures and wry humor of the "Mad Taltos series."

I must admit that at least some of my disappointment probably stems from the fact that I was hoping for a take-off on Spider Robinson's Callahan's Crosstime Saloon. The title, the blurb on the back cover, and the opening scenes all seem to point that way: it initially seems to be the story of an Irish folk band that becomes caught up in a dimension-hopping bar.

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Minutes - cont'd.

Lambda Rising had been contacted by Al and Loree regarding possible discounts. They offer discounts only if we were all to buy copies of one title (similar to book discussion groups). However, Deacon Maccubbin is very supportive and would like to help the group if he can. We decided to offer to distribute their flyers at our Pride Day booth if they can arrange for any local Sci Fi authors to do readings/signings there.

For publicity for the group we decided to keep trying to think of additional ways to distribute the newsletter; for Al and Carl to do a one-page flyer we can use; and to continue putting calendar listings in the Blade and Crescent.

A suggestion was made that we subscribe to various magazines and assign people to report on what's in them. No action was taken on this suggestion.

Pressing business completed, we spent more than an hour discussing books, movies, T.V. shows, and the personal lives of anyone and everyone we could think of who are in any way related to science fiction and fantasy. You had to be there! Hope you will be next time, which will be: Sunday, May 13th at 2:00 p.m. at Al Weiner's house.

Dinosaurs - cont'd.

Out in the central rotunda, there's even a life-sized (big as a Subaru), though non-animate Tyrannosaurus rex head. It'll give you second thoughts (if you ever had any) about wanting to visit a time when carnivores that big were running around loose!

This exhibit is a dream come true for all those kids (like me!) who have always been fascinated by these long-extinct creatures. Despite all the fantasy and futuristic technology, however, there is an oh-so-modern economic reality to the exhibit: an admission charge (\$4.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children under 12). Well, I don't suppose these babies came cheap. After all, there's no Detroit assembly line churning out robotic dinosaurs!

"Dinamation's Dinosaurs" is accompanied by a second, less realistic, less technologically-oriented exhibit entitled "Twentieth Century Dinosaurs." This exhibit features garishly-painted, life-sized dinosaur "skeletons" created by sculptor Jim Gary from automobile parts, steel girders, etc. It runs from April 12th to August 10th.

Book Review - cont'd.

I should have realized that an author as imaginative as Brust wouldn't settle for a simple pastiche of another author's ideas. The story in Cowboy Feng's is very much more convoluted and involved than the stories in Callahan's.

Throughout the story, Brust has drawn on his own experiences in folk-singing (and filking?) to provide a touch of realism to his characters. (He's even included some of his own lyrics!)

Cowboy Feng's definitely has a message for our community, however. The vehicle for this message is something called "Hag's disease," an unspecified, horrible, incurable viral disease that seems to be the scourge of humanity's instellar civilization. There are numerous hints of the paranoia and mis-information that seem to surround "Hag's disease;" and the parallels to the current AIDS epidemic and its effects on twentieth-century society are obvious. Finally, Brust delivers a firm (if heavy-handed) indictment of the lengths to which some hard-liners will go to destroy a disease by destroying the victims of that disease.

To repeat myself, it's not that I consider Cowboy Feng's to be a "bad" book; it's just that I don't think it measures up to his other works. Read them all yourself, and see if you don't agree.

The next meeting of the group will be on Sunday May 13 at 2 PM. Call (301) 445-5650 for details/directions. If anybody can offer a ride to/from Walter Reed NW D.C. and/or Silver Spring Metro, please let us know.