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APRIL 1992 MEETING MINUTES

by Loree Cook-Daniels

Since I was ribbed in print last month for writing lengthy meeting notes, I'll shorten this month's.

We came, we talked, we ate, we went home.

OK, OK, maybe you all want a LITTLE more detail.

Everyone who attended the meeting was rewarded with hot-off-the-presses Gaylaxicon

IV Progress Report #2's and LSF Directories. They also heard the following hot gossip:

-- NBC is premiering four SF-related shows in the Fall: "The Island;" "Journey to the Center of the Earth;" "Night-rider 2010;" and "Red Dwarf."

-- The 2-hour "Deep Space 9" pilot is scheduled for August.

-- ST:TNG will (possibly) kill off two key characters on May 22nd.

-- Springfield Mall has a new virtual reality game that you can hook yourself into for a few bucks (sounds like a high-tech version of solo laser-tag).

-- USA Network has bought the SF Channel and has purchased movies from 20th Century Fox, MGM/UA, and Universal.

folder which included: an *Advocate* article on fantasy author Gael Baudino; a *StarLog* with pics from the upcoming *Batman #2*; a full-frontal nude pic of Arnold Schwarzenegger (NOW aren't you sorry you missed the meeting?!); *Washington Post* articles on the late Isaac Asimov; newsletters from other Gaylactic Network clubs; and various other SF mags, articles, and goodies.

We also talked some business. We've signed up for a table at Pride Day. The Baltimore group IS hosting a party at BaltiCon. Carl's rented a room at Disclave that he's offering for the LSF Disclave party; and he's looking to share costs with interested roomies. We're again listed in the Gay Yellow Pages. We don't yet have many ads for the Gaylaxicon program book;

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Carl passed around a fat

IN MEMORIAM



Dr. Isaac Asimov
1920 - 1992

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THE CHANUR SAGA, BY C. J. CHERRYH

(*The Pride of Chanur; Chanur's Venture; The Kif Strike Back; Chanur's Homecoming*)

Reviewed by Loree Cook-Daniels

I'm admitting it up front: this series is as much a political thriller as it is anything else, and that part lost me. There were simply too many double-crossings and wild cards for me to follow. Likewise, I'm sure I was less appreciative of the main "science" part of this series -- the author's descriptions of "jump," or some sort of time-bending, super-speed, interstellar travel -- than other aficionados might be.

What DID fascinate me was the series' sociological aspects. Chanur is a clan of *hani*, a feline-like, one-world race that has been space-faring for only a few generations. A feudal and matriarchal race, the hani seem to have accommodated to the sudden leap into multi-species space with few social adjustments -- until Pyanfar Chanur, captain of a merchant ship.

Pyanfar is not a particularly heroic figure. Although she is highly intelligent, she is very much a creature of her xenophobic and sexist upbringing. It is only through a series of fateful choices -- some made by her and some made by others -- that she becomes someone

who ends up challenging some of her society's most closely-held beliefs. She also becomes a major player in a multi-species power struggle. In both arenas -- sociological and political -- her awareness and acceptance of the impact that her personal choices are having seems to lag behind the choices themselves. In other words, she acts first and recognizes the broader consequences later.

An explicit theme of the saga is that sapient species make choices based on their own logic, which is synergistically linked with their social and physical environment. Those species most able to understand, adapt to, and use other species' logic have the advantage. Pyanfar gradually develops this logical dexterity, in the process becoming an irritating change agent within hani society and an important figure in interspecies politics.

Two other premises of this series deserve special note. Although homosexuality is not mentioned, Cherryh throws sex roles into high relief by making hani females the sexist leaders and hani males the dumb, aggressive, coddled homebodies.

She also describes one species that "phases" through various personalities/genders.

The other aspect I found quite intriguing was the existence of several methane-breathing species who participated in trade (and, possibly, political intrigue) but who were linguistically and logically completely incomprehensible to the oxygen-breathing species. I enjoyed this premise because it emphasized Cherryh's theme of the cultural embeddedness of communication and because it was fun to contemplate how one could trade with someone with whom one cannot communicate.

One caution: this series is NOT a particularly rich fantasy of cat-people. Cherryh's hani communicate through ear movements as much as through language, and (as Carl pointed out to me) their society does echo the structure of lions' prides. But if you're a cat lover wondering what society would be like if cats were in charge, don't look here. Cherryh simply has other things on her mind. DO look here if you're either into political intrigue or you like a sociological/anthropological slant to your SF. $\Lambda\Psi\Phi$

EDITOR'S CORNER

I guess this should actually be called "Editor's Strip!" As you can see, there's lots'a nifty stuff

in this issue. Loree's written the latest in our series of reviews of the books of Tanya Huff. If you count the April minutes, **much**

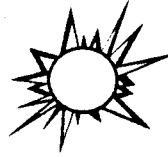
of this issue comes to you courtesy of Loree! Thanks, First Speaker!

--- Carl

GATE OF DARKNESS, CIRCLE OF LIGHT
BY TANYA HUFF



Reviewed by Loree Cook-Daniels



APRIL MINUTES

(continued from page 1)

and it's not clear how many dealers we have. Carl (and Jim Williams) are looking for suggestions on movies to show at Gaylaxicon.

We also discussed the use of first or full names in our newsletter. The Gaylactic Network Newsletter Coordinator (right title?) has been laboriously whiting out last names printed in our newsletter before he copies them and sends them out to the other clubs. This seemed to us both a waste of his energy and an unnecessary re-closeting of those of us who are fully out. We therefore agreed to the following policy:

If you do NOT want your full name sent across the U.S., please list only your first name whenever you submit an article to the newsletter AND let me, Carl, and/or whoever-is-taking-the-minutes know so we can be sure we never accidentally put your full name in one of our club news items.

Now was THAT short enough, guys?!

ΛΨΦ

There's nothing subtle or metaphoric about this book. The plot is explicitly about the fight between good and evil. The representatives of these two sides, the Light Adept and the Dark Adept, are (respectively) 100% good and 100% evil. The human characters who seek to save the world from being consumed by Darkness were selected from the "unlikely heroes" category: a street musician, a bag lady, an over-worked social worker, and a young retarded woman. Much of what happens to them is also predictable: the hero visits his own private hell and comes out "matured," the bag lady knows all, and the mentally handicapped heroine is the one who sees and understands what the others can't.

I was enchanted from page one.

Whether it's the romantic

in me or the storyteller's skill or a combination of both, I can't say. But I really was hooked from the start and hated having to put the book down to tend to other concerns. I especially wanted to find out how Roland would resolve the conflict between his homoerotic feelings with his homophobia, and I was anxious to know what would happen to Rebecca. There was only one part that disappointed me, and that was Roland's descent into Darkness. I didn't understand the mixture of things he met there, and I'm looking forward to asking the author how and why she made those choices.

Gate of Darkness, Circle of Light is a light, fun fantasy. Like a piece of Easter candy, it's not meant as nourishment, just as a sweet indulgence. Enjoy.

ΛΨΦ

IN THE NEWS by Carl Cipra

ORSON SCOTT CARD

According to the March 1992 issue of *Science Fiction Chronicle*, Orson Scott Card was picketed by members of Queer Nation at a bookstore signing. The action apparently took place

at Seattle's University Bookstore in July, 1991, during Card's cross-country tour to promote *Xenofile*; but we're just hearing about it now. Queer Nation's action was sparked by Card's article "A Changed Man: The Hypocrites of Homosexuality,"

which appeared in the Feb. 1990 issue of the Mormon publication *Sunstone*. (You may remember our discussion of Card and his article at an LSF meeting a couple of months ago.)

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TWO CINEMA REVIEWS

by
Joe
Parra



LAWNMOWER MAN (Needs a trim!)

Well, it's Saturday morning and the lawn needs to be mowed. Some people do this themselves, while others hire a professional landscaper to manicure their spot of turf. Of course, in the hands of Stephen King even the most mundane of tasks takes on terrible overtones. Jeff Fahey [in the title role] plays a poor addle-brained dolt who mows lawns, collects comicbooks, plays video games, and is regularly beaten as a penance by the incredible S&M closet-case priest with whom he lives.

Into Fahey's little existence comes Pierce Brosnan, as the ever-popular mad-but-not-evil scientist who, seeing the poor kid's plight, decides to help him. Brosnan does this by means of certain mind-expanding drugs and a machine which (in conjunction with the drugs) expands a subject's mind to unlimited potentials. Ah, but . . . Brosnan works for "The Shop," an organization you might remember from "Firestarter." (In case you don't remember, "The Shop" is the psychic phenomena branch of the CIA and is, of course, evil.) The folks at The Shop get wind of Brosnan's experiments with Fahey and switch his batch of drugs with a much more deadly and potent batch. The results are horrifying, as they turn poor Fahey into the predictable mental monster.

This is not a bad film; but it's not a good one either. It plays like a long, drawn-out "Outer Limits" tale---which means that if it had been 60 minutes long instead of

90, it would have played just fine. Another problem with this type of story is that there are no surprises. To compensate for this, however, the filmmakers have loaded "Lawnmower Man" with super stereotypes and impressive special effects and computer graphics. Considering how rotten most movies-from-Stephen-King-stories are, this one is at least worth a look-see. Who knows? You might expand your mind . . . (Rating: 2 out of a possible 4)

THE SICK AND TWISTED FESTIVAL OF ANIMATION (And they ain't kiddin'!)

HOO BOY! Saturday morning kiddie fare it isn't!! The Festival of Animation has come back into town! Hooray! Oh, no! They saw "Silence of the Lambs"! AIEEEE! On the other hand, for those of us who love sick humor--YAY! For those of you who don't appreciate deprecating and gross humor---stay away in droves!

In an interesting change of pace, the Festival has opted to show the darker side of cartoons. We are treated to an onslaught of madness, horror, sci-fi, and ca-ca. The entries come from Canada, England, Australia, and all over the USA. (All English-speaking countries . . . hmmmm . . .) The humor ranges from the mildly perverse to the hopelessly psychotic. There are roughly 20 cartoons; so it would be impossible to hit them all in this review; but I will endeavor to mention some of the highlight attractions.

The cutest (!) was "No-Neck Joe": five one-minute

cartoons about a little guy with no neck who: #1, foils a vampire because it can't bite him in the neck; #2, can't be hanged; #3, is given a shirt & tie for his birthday; #4, as a sick joke, is constantly tapped from behind and must turn to see who is tapping him. I don't remember what #5 was, but I'm sure it was insane. Another funny one was an animated version of the famous Lenny Bruce routine "Thank You, Masked Man," which did justice to this sick humor classic.

On the other end of the spectrum, there was "Quiet Please!" Billed as the sickest film ever made (no argument!), this has something to offend everyone. From murder to boogers to filthy language, nothing is left sacred. But the one cartoon which best exemplified sickness and twistedness was "Deadsey." "Deadsey" is (I think) the story of a homicidal transsexual; and it could play well with Jean Cocteau's "Blood of the Poet" or Tobe Hooper's "Texas Chainsaw Massacre." The only people who could aptly describe this thing would be Carl Jung or Sigmund Freud. Suffice it to say that "Deadsey" is a narrative series of disturbing images that may offend even the most jaded of people.

There was a bizarre sci-fi feature called "Mutilator," which was sort of a rough-draft Ralph Bakshi-type 'toon. (For those of you who don't know, Bakshi is the guy who did "Fritz the Cat," "Wizards," "Lord of the Rings," etc.) It's a sort of post-apocalyptic "Terminator" cartoon. Another cartoon was "Bladder Trouble" featuring Hal, the Monster from Hell. (Hal is going to eat this poor stick-figure person who pees in Hal's hand. Hal is miffed and eats him anyway, but he gets indigestion.)

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IN THE NEWS

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NEW FOUNDATION BOOK

Alas, the Foundation's Creator is gone. But despair not; the saga of Hari Seldon continues! According to *The Washington Post* (4/7/92), Asimov finished *Forward the Foundation* "a few months ago." Chronologically, the action in *Forward the Foundation* falls between the novel *Prelude to Foundation* and the classic "Foundation Trilogy." In this new book, Asimov returns to his earlier formula of a book of collected stories (rather than a one-novel-per-book format). It tells the story of Hari Seldon as an older man in a series of five "installments," with Seldon being ten years older in each installment. *Forward the Foundation* will be published by Doubleday some time this year. If you want a preview of coming attractions, pick up the April 1992 (15th Anniversary) issue of *Isaac Asimov's Science-Fiction Magazine*---it features the "installment" entitled "Clean the Emperor."

ANOTHER VIEW OF "THE OUTCAST"

And the controversy goes on . . . Here's a cartoon that appeared in the 4/21/92 issue of *The Advocate*.



ΛΨΦ

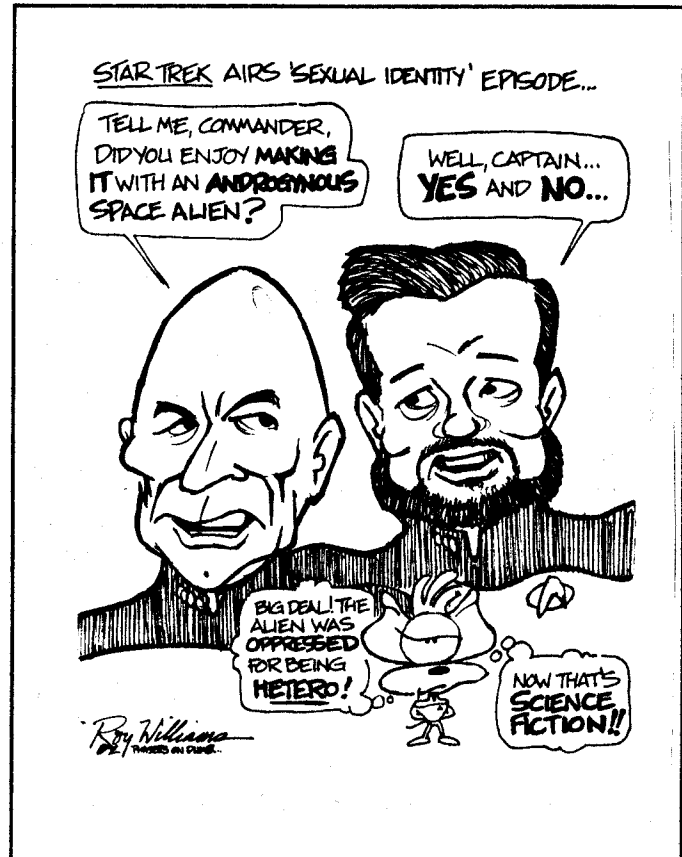
CINEMA REVIEWS

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As you can surmise, the Festival includes something to make just about everyone gag at least once. The quality of animation ranges from Disney to Hanna-Barbera to Matt Groening

to I-think-my-nephew-could'-a-done-this-better. All in all, this was one of the best evenings at the movies I've had in months. It was more fun than kissing Grandpa good-night and having him slip you the tongue. (Rating: 3½ out of 4)

ΛΨΦ



** INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS **

Lambda Sci-Fi is a Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror fan club for Gay people and their friends. Annual membership fees are \$10, for which you will receive this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held at 2:00 PM on **Sunday, May 10th**, at Jim C.'s apartment: 1414 17th St., NW, Apt. 413 (near Dupont Circle). Please bring some munchies or soft drinks if you can. Hope to see you there!

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians is an affiliate of the Gaylactic Network, an international organization for gay people and their friends who are interested in science-fiction and fantasy.



Con Calendar

by Carl, Peter, and Noel



May 23-25, 1992 **DISCLAVE 1992**: Washington Hilton, 1919 Conn. Ave. NW (*New Site!*). Guests of Honor: Pat Cadigan and Tom Kidd. Special Guest: Hal Clement. Cost is \$25 until April 30th (\$30 at the door). Rooms are \$85/night (sgl to quad). To register, make checks payable to "Disclave '92" and send to: Dan Hoey, Registration, Box 677, Washington, DC 20044-0677.

July 3-5, 1992 **CASTLECON 5**: Ramada Renaissance Hotel (Herndon, VA - near Dulles Airport). This con is run by the same folks who run EveCon. Hotel rooms are \$75/night (one bed) and \$85/night (two beds). Pre-registration: \$15 until May 2nd, then \$20 until June 20th (\$25 at the door). Make checks payable to "FanTek" and send to: FanTek, 1607 Thomas Rd., Ft. Washington, MD 20744.

July 17-19, 1992 **GAYLAXICON IV**: Guest Quarters Hotel (Philadelphia, PA). Guest of Honor: Tanya Huff; Artist Guest of Honor: Tristan Alexander. Cost is \$20 through April 30, 1992, \$25 through June 30, 1992, \$30 at the door. Make checks payable to "Gaylaxicon IV" and send to: Gaylaxicon IV, PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044.

August 14-16, 1992 **TREKCON '92**: Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza (Rockville, MD). A Trek/fantasy/sci-fi/media con. Guests: James Doohan ("Scotty"), John deLancie ("Q"), William Campbell ("Trelane"), Robin Curtis ("Saavik"), Marc Okrand (Klingon linguist). Cost: \$32 for weekend pass, \$16 for day pass. Make checks payable to "TrekCon '92" and send to: TrekCon '92, PO Box 211, Burtonville, MD 20866

September 3-7, 1992 **MAGICON**, the 50th World Science Fiction Convention: Orange County Convention and Civic Center and Peabody, Clarion, and Quality Inn Plaza Hotels (Orlando, FL). Guests of Honor: Jack Vance and Vincent DiFate. Cost (attending) is \$95 until March 31, 1992 and \$110 until July 15, 1992. Make checks payable to "MagiCon" and send to: MagiCon, PO Box 621992, Orlando, FL 32862-1992.

September 24-27, 1992 **FIRST DISNEYANA CONVENTION**: Walt Disney World Resort. The first convention to be either sponsored or held by the Walt Disney Co. A special package is being offered that includes four-day/three-night accommodations, a one-day/one-park passport, one night's admission to Pleasure Island, and a special look at Disney animation. For more information, write: Disneyana Convention, P.O. Box 10000, Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830-1000; or call (407)580-7232.

November 13-15, 1992 **PHILCON '92**: The Adam's Mark Hotel (Philadelphia, PA). Principal Speaker: Greg Bear, Guest Artist: Boris Vallejo. Cost is \$20 thru Sept. 15, then \$25 thru Nov. 1, and \$30 after that. Make checks payable to "Philcon '92" and send to: Philcon '92, PO Box 8303, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

November 27-29, 1992 **DARKOVER GRAND COUNCIL MEETING XIV**: Holiday Inn, Timonium (Timonium, MD). Special Guests: Marion Zimmer Bradley (health permitting) and Katherine Kurtz; Artist GoH: Rillan MacDhai. Other Guests: Lisa Barnett, Julia Ecklar, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Diana Paxson, Don Sakers, Melissa Scott, Hannah Shapero. Room rates are \$59/night (up to 4 people). Registration: \$28. Make checks payable to "Armida Council" and send to: Armida Council, P.O. Box 7203, Silver Spring, MD 20907.

September 2-6, 1993 **CONFRANCISCO**, the 51st World Science Fiction Convention: Moscone Convention Center (San Francisco, CA). Guest of Honor: Larry Niven; Artist Guest of Honor: Alicia Austin. Cost (attending) is \$85 after December 31, 1991; and cost will rise appreciably at later dates. Hotels will be announced in upcoming progress reports. Make checks payable to "ConFrancisco" and send to: ConFrancisco Registration, 712 Bancroft Road, Ste. 1993, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.