PARSEC, Pittsburgh's premier 501(c)(3) SF/F/H organization Sigma newsletter includes updates and announcements from all the Parsec programs; Monthly Meetings, Confluence, Parsec Ink's Triangulation anthology, Short Story Contest and the Write or Die (WorD) writing and critique group.

PARSEC 501(c)(3) ORGANIZATION NEWS

You may have noticed that the Parsec main website is showing a "We'll be back soon!" banner in place of the website, or perhaps you've noticed the Confluence site seems a bit glitchy. We found some bugs in the system (nothing to worry about!) and we're working with a new website IT person to flush them out and update the system and all the websites. Until the updates are completed, please use this LINK to sign up for or renew your annual Parsec Membership. We apologize for the inconvenience and hope to have this resolved by the end of the week.

Are you a current Parsec member? Parsec members in good standing are welcome to attend the quarterly Board of Directors meetings. The next meeting will be held on Sunday Feb 18 at 11am. If you would like to attend, please contact the BOD treasurer at treasurer@parsec-sff.org for the Zoom meeting link. Member voices matter! We hope to see you there.

2024 Parsec Short Story Contest:

The contest theme is "AI mythology." The contest closes to submissions on March 21, 2024. Visit the website for full submission requirements and the link to the submittable.
MONTHLY MEETING

-Please note the venue change for February-

The Parsec Monthly Meeting will take place on Saturday, Feb 17, 2024, on Zoom only! Social starts at 12:30pm with the official meeting starting at 1:00 pm. Register for the Zoom meeting by using the direct Zoom Registration link.

Our guest this month is Herb Kauderer!

Sat Feb 17th at 12:30pm

Herb Kauderer is an associate professor of English at Hilbert College near Buffalo, NY. He holds a PhD in Popular Literature from the University at Buffalo (2018), an MFA in Creative Writing from Goddard College (2007), and five other college degrees. He is the author of four books and fifteen chapbooks of poetry.

Herb will introduce us to his writing, his involvement with the Society for Creative Anachronism, and share some of his genre poetry with us.

Following Herb's presentation and Q&A, we will set aside time for members who have brought their own poems to share them with us. Parsec's own resident poet Mary Soon Lee has also been invited to read one or two of her works.

Register for Zoom
Mark your calendar for the March 16th Monthly Meeting!

Richard Kadrey, author of the Sandman Slim series and 2024 Confluence Guest of Honor will be joining us in-person for our annual Confluence programming topic meeting. Richard has agreed to do a reading for us and throw some panel topic ideas in the mix. Throw on your thinking cap and bring your own panel topic suggestions to the March meeting!

This meeting will be held at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library, in meeting room A.

CONFLUENCE-SFF.ORG

Get in on the limited time, Early Bird Pricing for Confluence 2024 and save some $$!
Offer ends Feb 29!

Visit Confluence
Richard Kadrey is the New York Times bestselling author of the Sandman Slim supernatural noir series. Sandman Slim was included in Amazon’s “100 Science Fiction & Fantasy Books to Read in a Lifetime,” and is in development as a feature film. Some of Kadrey's other books include King Bullet, The Grand Dark, Butcher Bird, and The Dead Take the A Train (with Cassandra Khaw). He’s written for film and comics, including Heavy Metal, Lucifer, and Hellblazer. Kadrey also makes music with his band, A Demon in Fun City.
Our Featured Music Guest will be Bonnie Gordon

Bonnie Gordon is a voiceover actress, singer, songwriter, & entertainer (not to mention a huge nerd!) based in Los Angeles, California.

As a voice actress, Bonnie is known for voicing such characters as: the Ship Computer in Star Trek: Prodigy; Rainbow Mika in Street Fighter V; Silque in Fire Emblem Echoes: Shadows of Valentia & Fire Emblem Heroes; Eva in Code Vein; Bico in Muhyo & Roji’s Bureau of Supernatural Investigation; multiple recurring characters on 2 seasons of Cartoon Network’s Mighty Magiswords; and many many more!

Have you seen the music performers that W. Randy Hoffman has lined up for Confluence?
If not, head on over to the website to see all the awesome musicians that are scheduled to perform. I'm looking forward to seeing many of these concerts over the Confluence weekend.

**UPDATE!** Randy writes: In addition to the previously announced concerts, Confluence 2024 will feature concerts by Dream Quaffle (wizard rock) and Steamcordia (steampunk) With performance ASL by Judi Miller for select concerts.

Confluence has the Players Patchwork: Confused Greenies returning for a new performance on Saturday evening! Watch the Confluence website for updates on their play.

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**PARSEC INK: TRIANGULATION**

The annual Triangulation anthology is closing to submissions on Feb 29th! The 2024 theme is "Hospitium." Head to the website to read the submission requirements!
CHAIRPERSON'S COLUMN

Five Cool Ways Humans Go Extinct

(Adapted from a Script for The DreamForge Channel)

by Scot Noel

At least eight human species have gone extinct before us: Homo habilis, erectus, heidelbergensis, neanderthalensis, rhodesiensis, floresiensis, luzonensis, naledi, and the Denisovans. When will it be our turn?

Modern humans, that is “Homo sapiens” seems to have been around for about 315,000 years, with some of the oldest remains uncovered in 2017 in Morocco. Meanwhile, our cousin species, the Neanderthals, have been found to have existed for about 350,000 years.

So, as a mammal and a human species, natural evidence suggests we have somewhere between 35,000 and 685,000 years to go!

Of course, we have big brains and big bombs, and you might not be mistaken to think that, when it comes to Homo sapiens, all previous rules are out the window. Unlike every other species on Earth, even our extinct cousins, I’m pretty sure we get to pick our own fate. Let’s take a look at 5 possible extinctions, ones that aren’t quite the end of everything.

Extinction One – Genetic Modifications

On December 8, 2023 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the world’s first CRISPR/Cas9 gene-editing therapy. The treatment, called Casgevy, targets sickle cell disease by helping patients produce healthy hemoglobin. Another gene editing therapy for children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy was approved earlier in the year.

If you’re reading this, you probably have a basic idea of CRISPR genome editing technology. It is a method for altering the DNA of organisms in a precise and targeted manner. It uses a system originally found in bacteria, which includes a molecule called CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) and a protein like Cas9.

Read the full article on the Parsec website blog

MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

From Susan Kay Quinn

I had two short stories published in January. One was a reprint of Seven Sisters, originally published in Grist’s Imagine 2200 collection, now in the 2022 Best of Utopian Fiction anthology. That little story about a solarpunk tea farm has gotten around!

The second story, It’s in the Blood, was published by Reckoning, an environmental justice zine. Reckoning is a non-profit that publishes all their works free-to-read online, and they’re releasing one piece from Reckoning 8 approximately every week — mine doesn’t get posted to the website until July! But you can purchase the Reckoning 8 anthology and read it now. The collection has amazing
visceral stories about the political aspects of environmental justice, which can get pretty dark, but my story is one of the more hopeful ones, in keeping with my general trend of writing solutions-based stories about the near future climate crisis.

Donald Firesmith reports:

My most recent novel, Hell Holes: A Slave's Revenge is now a finalist in the Cygnus Science Fiction Book Contest.

From the desk of Mary Soon Lee

One of the poems from How to Navigate Our Universe has been nominated for the Rhysling Award. N.B. Under the new system, nomination doesn't necessarily mean the poem will appear in the Rhysling anthology -- the nominees will be pared down to a shorter list of finalists. Here is the poem in question....

How to Help Hubble
--In memory of Edwin Hubble [November 20, 1889 - September 28, 1953]

Fetch him offerings
of mice, lizards, birds,
a dragonfly for his amusement.

Sprawl atop his papers
to prevent him pondering
pointless extraplanetary topics.

Sleep at the foot of his bed,
except that one last time
when you curl beside him.

After he has receded,
too far, too fast to follow,
watch for him at the window.

I've also had two new poems published: What Giants Read (http://strangehorizons.com/poe...) in Strange Horizons and "The Blackthorn" in Dreams and Nightmares.
The Monthly Meeting program is in need of a secretary to take notes during the meetings and then provide them to the newsletter editor. If you or someone you know is willing to take notes and provide them to the editor, please let Scot Noel, Jane Noel or Kevin M. Hayes know during the upcoming meeting.

Thank you to this month's contributors!
Editor, Karen Yun-Lutz

Send your monthly news, updates, articles and announcements to newsletter@parsec-sff.org.
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The four programs under the Parsec Inc., 501(c)(3) organization, are, the annual Confluence conference, the Monthly Meetings, Parsec Ink publishing and the Workshop program which includes the WorD writing and critique group.

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