



SIGMA

The Official Parsec, Inc. Newsletter



Sigma #478
February 2026

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Cover image: "Setting Sail" by: John R. Muth, 2026.

Want to submit your own photo, art, 3D rendering for use on the cover of Sigma?

Submit files to parsecsigmanews@gmail.com

The four programs under the Parsec Inc., 501(c)(3) organization are:

- [Confluence Conference](#)
- [Monthly Events](#)
- [Parsec Ink Publishing](#) (Triangulation)
- [Word - Write or Die Writing and Critique Group](#)

**Need to mail anything to Parsec, Confluence,
Parsec Ink or Word? The address is:
PO Box 79281
Pittsburgh, PA 15216**



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DEAR FRIENDS OF PARSEC,

This is kind of a light month for the newsletter, and yet it's still over 20 pages. Lighter and yet denser, you could say. I am so grateful for the folks who have stepped up to provide us original, informational content, that isn't just a list of upcoming events. (I do love me a list of upcoming events, and my plan is to eventually have a calendar listing everything going on in one place... see below.) *BUT!* We can always use more. I'll just add this: I have been going through a lot of the old newsletters lately, and there are many people who are still around, and I know you're not any more busy now than you were then, who aren't contributing reviews, commentary, etc. I won't name names – for now – but I may accost you when I see you next in person! I'd love to have more folks getting us back to sharing with each other..

March is Membership Month! Please make sure to renew, or purchase a membership for the first time (or in a long time). The reason(s) to do so are also small, but mighty. First, every membership helps keep the organization going. It pays the bills for the invisible things like hosting, storage, and all that. It helps with putting on the programs like Confluence and the Parsec Picnic and Holiday Party. And much more. Member benefits:

- Free advertising in the Sigma newsletter* for the full membership year!
- \$5 coupon to use at the Parsec table during the Confluence Conference.
- First to receive special announcements regarding upcoming event signups for the Parsec programs. (requires sign up for the member only ParsecTalk.Groups.io)

This year we're also going to be offering an ebook of the winners from the Parsec Short Story contest. The first place winner's story will still be printed in the Confluence Program, but all winners will be published
(cont'd.)



in the ebook! (I personally cannot wait to see how it turns out!)

More information and Membership ideas will be coming in the days/months/years ahead! If you have thoughts, please share them – someone mentioned doing a bake sale related to a membership drive, and while my waistline needs this not, I am willing to hear more...

OH! Saturday, February 21 - Parsec does Poetry. I'm very excited for the guests we have lined up, and I hope you'll come with your own poetry. And just as a sneak peak into the upcoming Parsec monthly events:

- March: Confluence Planning Session
- April: Todd Sanders of The Air and Nothingness Press will join us to talk about his publishing company, but also the board games he designs, his other design work, and just everything that is Todd!
- May: It won't be the fourth, but this is just going to be a "Let's Geek Out" meeting! Come prepared to spread the word on things you love, things others will love, and learn about things you've possibly never heard of!

Speaking of May. Mark your calendars for Parsec's Annual Holiday Party (The Special Edition!) that Greg Armstrong is going to hold in defiance of the last two being snowed out! We need a pun for the Second...

Did I already mention Memberships? Memberships! Okay, I'm done.

Until next time!

John Muth

Sigma Editor, Monthly event officer,
and Parsec, Inc. Board of Directors,
President

PARSEC MONTHLY EVENT

Date: Saturday, February 21.

This will be a Zoom only meeting.

Event 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. (Zoom opens at 12:45 pm)

To Register visit <https://bit.ly/PARSECmonthly>.

****PLEASE NOTE THE NEW ZOOM LINK!
THE OLD LINK WILL NO LONGER WORK!****

Open to the Public.



**Join Parsec for poetry readings from
LUIZA FLYNN-GOODLETT, AMELIA GORMAN,
and BRANDON O'BRIEN.**

Our Program: Join Parsec's monthly event for Poetry month. Our three guests will regale us with genre poetry.

Luiza Flynn-Goodlett is the author of *Mud in Our Mouths* (Northwestern University Press, 2025) and *Look Alive* (Cowles Poetry Book Prize, Southeast Missouri State University Press, 2021).

Amelia Gorman has two Elgin winning chapbooks, *Field Guide to Invasive Species of Minnesota* (Interstellar Flight Press) and *The Worm Sonnets* (Quarter Press).

Brandon O'Brien's debut poetry collection, *Can You Sign My Tentacle?* (Interstellar Flight Press) is the winner of the 2022 Elgin Award.

Bring a friend!

Monthly Event Officer: John Muth



Mark Your Calendars!
In May, PARSEC holds its

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Date: Saturday, May 2.
Location: 2966 Voelkel Avenue,
Dormont, PA 15216
Time: 4 to 10 pm

The last two Parsec Holiday Parties have been snowed out.

To keep this from being a trend, **Greg Armstrong** is going to have another Parsec Holiday Party, only the holiday will be **Star Wars Day**. It is pot luck, so bring and enjoy good food, better conversation, and the best books available!

(May the Fourth [be with You] is a Monday, and no one wants to party on a Monday.)

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR BUY ONE FOR THE FIRST TIME!

Become a Parsec Member today!

Parsec members in 2026 will receive a free ebook of this year's
**Parsec Short Story Contest winners, and enjoy free advertising
in the Sigma Newsletter!**

Your membership dollars allow Parsec to continue offering the
following long list of programs, all of which are open to the public:

Confluence

Parsec Monthly Events

Parsec Ink — Triangulation

Parsec Short Story Contest

Write or Die Writing & Critique Group

Parsec Library

Sigma Newsletter

The Parsec Membership year runs annually from March
1st through the end of February.



**Confluence will be held July 24 through 26, 2026
at the Sheraton Pittsburgh Airport Hotel
1160 Thorn Run Road Extension, PA 15108**

Writing Workshops with Marie Vibbert

Workshop Registration:

- Signup is required. Visit the [WRITING WORKSHOPS](#) page for more info.
- A [Confluence membership](#) is required to attend and register for the workshops. There is no additional cost for the workshops.
- Both workshops are limited to 14 participants! One workshop per person, please!
- Workshops are 2.5 to 3 hours in length.
- Workshops will be held in the Board Room this year!



Hugo and Nebula nominated author Marie Vibbert's short fiction has appeared over 100 times in top magazines like *Nature*, *Analog*, and *Clarkesworld*, and been translated into Czech, Chinese and Vietnamese. Her debut novel, *Galactic Hellcats*, was long listed by the British Science Fiction Award and her work has been called "everything science fiction should be" by the *Oxford Culture Review*. She also writes poetry, comics, and computer games. By day she is a computer programmer in Cleveland, Ohio

Visit <https://confluence-sff.org/> for more information.

Confluence officers: Chair: Kevin M. Hayes. Treasurer: Karen Yun-Lutz.

2026 Guest of Honor **ANDY DUNCAN**



Andy Duncan is a professor of English at Frostburg State University in the western Maryland mountains; a fiction writer whose honors include a Nebula Award, a Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award and three World Fantasy Awards; a journalist since age 17; and a lifelong collector of Fortean.

Writing Exercises **M. Christine Benner Dixon** and Schereéya



2026 Musical Guest **QUICK SAVE**



Quick Save is a six-piece videogame music (VGM) from Baltimore, MD (three in the rhythm section, three in the horn section).

Formed during COVID, the band has been playing the convention scene for five years. They've performed at MAGFest, BitGen Gamer Fest, Setsucon, and the VGM Con Digital Stage, just to name a few.

In their sets (which feature humorous visuals, screaming solos, and more musical memes than you can shake a stick at), they broadly explore VGM using the jazz/fusion spectrum. They pull selections from a variety of games — everything from classic 8 bit favorites to current Steam chart-toppers.

PARSEC PROGRAMS



Parsec Ink

The 2026 Triangulation anthology is edited by Marie Vibbert.

The theme for this year is:

BAD ROMANCE

You know that friend who keeps falling for terrible people? That couple that not only fights all the time but makes each other a worse person, and they keep getting back together?

Send us them.

We want stories or poetry about trashfire, toxic relationships, with a speculative element.

Submissions are now closed.

Looking for a past edition of Triangulation?

Dark Hearts (2025)

Hospitium (2024)

Seven-Day Weekend (2023)

Energy. (2022)

Or find many more of our anthologies on Amazon.

Parsec Ink officers: Chair: Jessica Carver. Treasurer: Greg Clumpner.
Editor: Marie Vibbert.

PARSEC PROGRAMS

Parsec Short Story Contest

2026 Short Story Contest Coordinator: Jamie Lackey

This year's theme is Metamorphosis: Send us your stories of complete transformations, inside and out. Of inevitable moments of sudden, irrevocable change. Of destruction that leads to unexpected growth.

The contest is open to non-professional writers who have not met the eligibility requirements for SFWA Full Membership. Writers meeting the SFWA Associate level of membership are eligible to submit to the contest. Previous first-place winners and current year contest coordinators, readers and judges are ineligible to enter.

Submissions will be open from January 1 through March 31st. You can find out more [on the short story contest's webpage!](#)

Write or Die

A Science Fiction & Fantasy Writing Group



The Write or Die (WorD), Pittsburgh, science fiction, fantasy & horror writing & critique group meets twice every month!

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Tuesday, February 24 at 7:00 pm in the Mt. Lebanon Library, Room A with a Zoom Option available.
- Tuesday, March 10 at 7:00 pm, on Zoom only.

For information on meeting procedures, contact info and how to register, **Visit WorD on the web.**

AUTHOR SEEKING REJECTION

A QUEST, Volume 2

By Timons Esaias

Last month I reported that I was seriously behind in my quest for 300 rejections, because so far I had zero. Well, the editors have awakened to their duty, and my current YTD rejection count is a healthy, ahead-of-the-curve 44. It seems that many of the contests like to announce the losers in January, and so it goes.

There is, however, bad news. Very few of those 44 pieces have been put back in the mail, so I now have fewer than 100 pieces in current submission. I will need to fix that, and then some. I hope to report in March that I have more than 150 pieces in submission.

One of the reasons I set goals for rejections is that it makes me put old stories in the mail, rather than letting them retire gracefully after a few hard knocks. Why is that important? Because rejection isn't only about quality, it's also about what an editor needs for their magazine. Once I wrote a story that was SF, but it had a bleak, downbeat ending. SF doesn't really like downbeat endings. They are often less than 10% of a magazine's TOC. So, despite my critique group telling me it might be the best thing I'd ever written, it got no love. 20 rejections. 10 years on the market. But I sent it out the 21st time, and a pro market took it. The critics liked it, it ended up in three Year's Best anthologies.

This silly game of rejection counting kept me submitting it.

Timons Esaias is a sporadically award-winning satirist, fictionator and poet. His works have appeared in 22 languages, on at least one planet.

He also teaches workshops.



PARSEC MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS



Judith Gallagher shares:

Student Poets Are Invited to Enter LVW's 36th Annual Poetry Contest

Ligonier Valley Writer's Student Poetry Contest is open to all students in grades 4-12 throughout southwestern Pennsylvania. The contest is celebrating its 36th anniversary.

In each of nine categories, first prize earns \$25, second prize \$20, and third prize \$15. For the best of the best in each grade group, the Naccarato Award, each of the three winners will receive \$30. This means there are 30 cash prizes—and no entry fees.

You'll find the entry form at <https://www.lvwonline.org/spcform2026>. Teachers, you may want to send LVW's site to your IT department to make sure it's whitelisted.

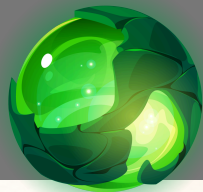
Please pass the link on to any students, parents, or teachers you think might be interested. Homeschoolers are welcome. The deadline is March 11.

You can read previous years' winning poems at the website now. If you're a kid who likes to write, try writing a poem every day for the next week. Then pick the one you like best to revise and submit. To jumpstart your creativity, here are a few prompts. Write a poem about

- any strong emotion
- an animal you love
- a place you hate
- your favorite sport or athlete

Please check www.LVWonline.org or Ligonier Valley Writers' Facebook page for the latest info and date confirmations.

PARSEC MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS



From **Mary Soon Lee:**

Our household had a very sad start to 2026. The vet put our cat Pilot to sleep. He had had a heart attack in January 2024, but managed almost two more good years before growing increasingly unwell. We have since adopted a new cat, a Maine Coon kitten named Amelia, after the pilot Amelia Earhart, as an echo of Pilot's name. Amelia is very sweet and very lively.

On the writing front, I am delighted to report that my poem "What They Didn't Do" won the Asimov's Readers' Award for best poem published in Asimov's Science Fiction in 2024. Staying with Asimov's, there was also a lovely review -- written by Kelly Jennings -- of "The Sign of the Dragon" in their On Books column (this is the second nice review they've given the book).

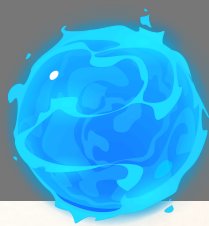
In further good news, my poem "Reaper" has been nominated for the Rhysling Award; the poem first appeared in Strange Horizons. [N.B. Nomination doesn't necessarily mean the poem will appear in the Rhysling anthology -- the nominees will be pared down to a shorter list of finalists.]

I had five poems published:

- Happier Ever After #3 appeared in Uppagus
- "Harbor" and "Mouse Dragon" both appeared in Star*Line
- "To Skeptics" was reprinted in Solstitia (it first appeared in F&SF)
- "Corn Snake #3" appeared in The Oakland Review. The whole issue may be [found online here](#).

A week ago, I ran the latest meeting of the SFWA poetry book club, where we discussed Katherine Quevedo's Elgin-award-winning chapbook, "The

PARSEC MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS



Mary Soon Lee (cont'd.):

Inca Weaver's Tales," a book which was universally liked by the participants. In May 2026, we will discuss ten poems based on Greek/Roman myths. I doubt that all ten poems will be universally liked.

On the reading front, I had an increasingly joyful time reading the five-volume English translation of Meng Xi Shi's wuxia novel, "Peerless" (translated by Faelicy). Set in China during the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE), I appreciated the milieu and style of the story, and relished the interplay between the two central protagonists.

I also re-read two science fiction books that I love, both of which I enjoyed even more than before: "All Systems Red," the first of Martha Wells's Murderbot novellas and "Conflict of Honors," which is part of Sharon Lee + Steve Miller's wonderful Liaden Universe.

Plus I loved E. M. Forster's 1908 non-science fiction novel, "A Room With a View," which has held up very well indeed. On the poetry front, I liked two books: "Poems to See By," a poetry anthology in which 24 poems are illustrated in comic-book style by artist Julian Peters, and Matthew Buckley Smith's collection "Midlife," which contains several standout poems including "Poem Without Metaphors" and "Another Achilles."

As ever, my book reviews may be unearthed at Goodreads.

Your Announcement Could Be Here!

Parsec members never pay for ad space in the monthly Sigma!

Become a Parsec member for only \$30/yr

Email: parsecsigmanews@gmail.com

Unclaimed books in the ****Anthropic AI Class Action Lawsuit****

By: Susan Kaye Quinn

Deadline to file a claim: March 30th

Official Works List Database:

<https://www.anthropiccopyrightsettlement.com/>

*Note: If you're in the database, you can file a claim. If you're not, you can't. It only takes a minute to check the database: **please do!** Filing a claim online is also very easy.*

Friends, there's an alarming number of unclaimed books in the Anthropic AI class action lawsuit.

From the SFWA Anthropic FAQ: "There are 482,460 works in the Works List; so far, the Settlement Administrator has received a total of 56,798 claims for 161,691 works, which is almost exactly one-third of the total. There have only been 86 opt outs covering 208 works."

Almost 2/3 of books are unclaimed.

Claim payout: minimum \$3000 (minus 20% lawyer fees), but could be higher.

I just submitted my 40 claims last weekend, so it's possible people (and publishers) are aware but simply haven't filed their claims yet. But I'm afraid there are a bunch of folks who mistakenly have assumed they cannot file a claim or simply don't know about the settlement! So I'm trying to spread the word: don't assume, just check the database! And tell your friends! I've already had three separate friends who assumed they weren't in the database but it turns out they were: one who had not found their works in the original Atlantic database but they were in the official works database (which is the one that counts); one who was a UK author who assumed they were

disqualified (they were not, doesn't matter where you live); and one who was simply unaware of the whole thing. Each had 2 claims they could file.

To be clear: Anthropic will pay the full \$1.5B settlement regardless of how many claims are filed (unless they go bankrupt when the AI bubble pops!). If fewer claims are filed, then each claim will get more than the minimum. I have 40 claims—it's not in my financial best interest to have more claims filed. But I'm much more concerned that every author who's eligible files a claim—especially in this rough economy, claim money could make a real difference.

(It's also vastly unfair how many authors are excluded from the database—eleven of my own works were stolen but excluded, so I feel that pain. The whole thing is infuriating.)

WHO I THINK MIGHT STILL NEED TO FILE CLAIMS

- fiction & non-fiction authors, especially academic writers
- authors published through a small defunct press
- older authors whose works were written long ago
- authors who moved addresses since registering copyright
- deceased authors who have heirs who could make claims

One friend said his wife's grandfather was an author who passed on his books—they never thought to check, but his books were in the database. Please help me reach out to authors (or their estates) who may be able to file a claim!

Sue

We will publish the art, writing, or reviews and commentary of the Sigma Newsletter readership. Parsec membership is not required. All content must be original to you. We retain the right to refuse anything deemed inappropriate by the Sigma Editorial team.

Reader Content may not be self-promotional in nature, other than providing a link so we can credit you. Please view the [Sigma Advertising](#) page for details on non-member ads and announcements.

Publishing Reader Content is not an approval from the Sigma Editorial team of any art or opinions stated in submitted work.

Send submissions to parsecsigmanews@gmail.com



Stuck in the Venerian Mud Or Awash in the Galactic Tub

By: Joe Coliccio

I know why I like science fiction. Do you know why you do?



BREAKING my EXPOSITION wall

Science fiction, not Fantasy.

If you are looking for a definition, you won't find it here.

I can make a wobbling determination of the boundaries of the sketchy environs in the exploration of a popular genre.

On some days, my views stretch into something that downright mimics fantasy.

On the next, a cosmic, and yes, comic, rush greater than any old "Doc" Smith proclaimed in Arisia or Eddore; or found in the spin of quantum physics; or the warp and woof (bow wow) of our universe, which begins in 1905 with an Einstein bang.

On the following evening, I can't get out of the stone-cold reality of our quotidian, meager examination of our solar system.

I will spare you, at least for the few paragraphs that follow, from a vision of Fafnir, lost kingdoms, eldritch creatures from before time, and an occasional goblin or orc.

I'm talkin' science fiction, here. By that I mean vision.



This may be a better question. Why do you attend Parsec meetings?

I joined a number of years ago, because there wasn't much about science

fiction that wasn't an important part of my being. I was certain I would find camaraderie in the ranks, and I did. My friendships and my family are the reason I am still around and kicking at an idea or two.



BREAKING again

Ten years ago, I gave an Osher Class at Pitt on the "Long History of Science Fiction." I announced to the class (all over 55 because of Osher qualifications) that I was Seventy-One Years Old. Unexpectedly, the assembled codgers cheered. The once-a-week, three-hour, five-week class was a blast. It took maybe 160 to 200 hours of preparation and implementation. The work was exhilarating, but also wore me down to my last nerve synapse.

I went on to make similar presentations for Parsec, Confluence, and Pulp Fest in Columbus, OH. Finally, I made several attempts at multimedia presentations about science fiction structure, history, criticism, and film, and aspects of the "noir" detective genre at the Swissvale Public Library with varying degrees of success. Ten years later, I spend all my time here in my living room with limited mobility and a rollout desk filled with medication, in front of my computer. My human interactions have also sadly become limited. I am taking the advice of C.G. Jung. It is my time for reckoning.



Here's, as they say in the endless ring of B-movie 1970's neo-noir films, I stuff down my gullet, the deal-eo.

I'm in it for the wonder.

Awe can fill in many ways at many times.

On the backyard carpet of the lawn of a summer evening, head grounded by the body of the earth, and view swirling up to the stars, mid paragraph in any great work of fiction.



Another break

Expand your world a little, start with Hugo and Tolstoy and work your way into the magic of Proust, the deep time of Mann, and the marvel of language with Joyce -- Three quarks for Muster Mark. Sample the feasts of our wide world and multiple cultures in your library stacks.



in a simple meal with friends and family,
on the brink of your dreams,
and when it is really clicking in the soul of a work of science fiction.

Sometimes, in the late evening, with some volume of inconsequential lore on my lap, doesn't really matter which, my eyes cross and water a little, the text blurs, in a languorous droop, eyelids grow heavy, close, and I finish the paragraph in another world.

Upon awakening, no matter how hard I try, I can never return to that world. I searched the pages of the book in vain. Nothing ever remains in evidence. Reading is not a passive activity. We create the book as much as we read the book, and the book reads us. Good writers realize it. Great writers actualize it. No writer escapes it.

But I'm also in it for the perspective. There have been a passel of works that have unfrozen my brain, turned me a whiter shade of very cold pale. The ones that come to mind are the works of John Brunner (the so-called Club of Rome Quartet) from *Stand on Zanzibar* to *Shockwave Rider*, Norman Spinrad's *Bug Jack Baron*, almost any of the works of Olaf Stapledon, Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous Visions*, and the seven ground breaking *Wells*. With a few scratches below the surface, I know I will uncover more.

Nothing gives me more comfort than to revisit what, for lack of a better concept, were and should be called juvenile science fiction novels. The books that were served up on the shelves of my elementary school and my high school libraries were made available by the miracle of librarians.

The, let's call them, thirteen (*Starship Troopers* was turned down as number thirteen by Scribner's. It was awarded the Hugo at Pittcon in Pittsburgh, PA at the William Penn Hotel in 1960), written by Robert A Heinlein, the thirty or so commissioned by Winston Press by the most prominent science fiction writers of the forties, fifties and sixties. I have a collection of all. (See the illustration for the thrilling and imaginative endpapers by Alex Schomburg.) Some with clean dust jackets are worth a good deal of money, and some in tattered condition I covet even more. I endlessly read all of them regardless of condition. I collect and experience them for my sanity, for my continuity. My hands may soil and devalue them, but it is my heart, memory, and brain that craves and sustains them.

The wonder. The perspective. The comfort.

These provide a base for all my passions. One of which has been with me since the fourth grade of William Penn School, when I picked up a copy of *The Wonderful Trip to the Mushroom Planet* by Eleanor Cameron and slipped head over rust bucket into this very new and exciting universe.

Joe

Penn Hills, Pa

February 12, 2026, Thursday

PARSEC'S SIGMA SPOTLIGHT

We've run out of submissions. If you want to have your profile shared in the Sigma? All you need to do is complete our [Spotlight Questionnaire](#), and you may be next.

But if you prefer just emailing stuff, feel free to answer the questions below to parsecsigmanews@gmail.com and include a photo of yourself, if you like.

Name?

Where are you from/living currently?

Tell us about yourself.

How long have you been involved with anything Parsec?

What are you reading/watching now?

What is your favorite piece of speculative fiction? And what do you love about it?

A Missed Shot: The Moonshot Museum

By: John R. Muth



Opening in 2022, the Moonshot Museum’s mission is to “inspire people to find their place in the future of human space exploration through innovative exhibitions and programs fueled by science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math.” Visiting for the first time in 2026, I... don’t really get it.

The space is spectacular, laid out with (faux) moon rocks, mid-century modern design straight out of *The Incredibles*, and a never-ending array of touchscreens. But, I didn’t feel inspired. I felt like the introductory video — that showed on an eight-foot tall screen, in a room, probably not deeper than ten feet — was just ten seconds away from asking for an investment. Ultimately, that was kind of what my (and my three fellow attendees’) \$12.50 each, felt like.

The center-point of the museum, including a Jurassic Park-like “ride” of the video presentation screen whirring up to reveal where the real people (no automatons, maybe some spared expense) making the items that will find their way to space, the moon, and possibly beyond, would have probably seemed a little more impressive if it wasn’t empty due to our having visited on the weekend. Still it was cool to see the lab, and the module being constructed. The working model (“working” being a loose term) of a lunar lander in the back corner is the highlight of the museum after the “science aquarium.” But other than, again, a placard that noted some details — and

REVIEWS

maybe it was just speaking true science, so my feeble mind couldn't understand it — the whole thing felt underwhelming.

It's space. It's the moon. It's human innovation and exploration. I'm the nerdy audience who is highly-interested but also completely non-scientifically minded. I'm still awed seeing a helicopter fly overhead. I just didn't feel like the purpose of the museum was to inform. It was to promote Astrobotic — the robotics company working to land future tools and items needed for settling, mining, and inhabiting, the moon. THAT is cool. The interactive tidbits were of moderate interest: a game of constructing rovers that could work on the moon by placing blocks representing needed items — I did the best, and am the most proud of figuring it out! A virtual map with moveable pucks (I originally thought it was an air hockey table) that gave information about locations on the moon. But you had to have a specific puck to activate specific sites, and... sharing isn't my strong suit, so I lost interest quickly. A navigating across the surface of the moon in a rover game, and a scavenger hunt of finding personal details for astronauts by routing around in lockers, all provided, what would seem to be kid-friendly (and the kid in all of us) activities.

I'll finally admit that my visit was possibly skewed from visiting at the same time as a family with three kids. The parents (well, the dad) was stuck on grilling the poor worker (possibly an "intern") on why *we could go to the moon in the 60s but can't easily go back now* and the kids seemed only half-heartedly engaged. But going to the Air and Space Museum in D.C. (or the other one in rural Virginia) is full of history and the excitement of things that could surely leave anyone visiting with some kind of thrill. Maybe my expectations were too high. Maybe calling this a "museum" is a bit misleading. I guess I was hoping for more. I was expecting to be thrilled and awed. Instead, I spent twelve bucks and was worried about whether my having parked in the parking lot outside was going to lead to my car being towed. (It wasn't and parking was not an issue.)

It's certainly worth going to learn about the company sponsoring the museum, but I would suggest tempering expectations to basically revolve around that with anything else you get from it being an added benefit. The main thing being standing next to stuff that's supposed to go to space.

PARSEC EVENT IN FEBRUARY

Help us Plan the Programming for Confluence!

In March, Parsec will be meeting to propose and discuss programming for the 2026 Confluence Conference.



Every year we come together to propose, argue the pros and cons of certain topics, and we may even be visited by a special guest...

This year's Confluence Guest of Honor is Andy Duncan, and while he will not be able to attend this meeting being both far away and on programming at another event, he may pop in to say hi.

Will he or won't he show up? The only way to find out is to be there!

Date: Saturday, March 21st, 2026; Time: 1 to 3:00 pm
(Zoom opens at 12:45 and ends at 3:30 pm.)

Mt. Lebanon Library, Meeting Room A and on Zoom.

Register for the Zoom link.

****Please note this is a new link for 2026!****

Check www.parsec-sff.org for more details.



Thank you to this month's contributors! Thank you to the program officers and Board Of Directors that help keep everything Parsec running smoothly, and especially thank you to the readers who have yet to say anything about the smell of sulphur and dog coming from the refrigerator.

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