

SIGMA

The Newsletter of PARSEC May 2017 Issue 374

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AH Multimedia, HA Multimedia

In America, we often have the illusion of things working rather than the certainty. Like those drink carriers the attendant at a fast food restaurant hands out the kiosk window. If you manage to squeeze the galloping mess through your auto window which requires the dexterity of a three card monte dealer, you get the prize of soaking your passenger seat (Three slopping large colas and one thimbleful water. Burgers, chicken fingers, and fries in a paper bag in ominous swelling fills the middle.) with heavy calories.

And then there is the terrible illusion of a multimedia publication. Like Sigma. The Newsletter of Parsec. Turns out there are multiple platforms. Mac OS X cats and CA landmarks, et al. Windows in its horrifying profusions. IOS on pad, pod, and phone. Android with more of the same. Linux with a Torvalds of flavors. And a sinful few of you using DOS with Quarterdeck Windows and Unix with, nothing but the text, ma'am. No, you cannot read Sigma in Vi.

Further, it turns out there are all manner of newsletter making apps with proprietary methods of dealing video, image and audio files. I long ago settled on InDesign, but even though it is widely accepted in the publishing biz, it has more than a few challenges regarding multimedia. I just spent a weekend crying over twelve meager pages and wishing for a snout full of some that wonderful Pittsburgh rye.

Because

It also turns out there are any number of applications that can read an Interactive InDesign file. All have varying degrees of success. Why not, say some of you, just use HTML5/CSS and deal with it. For the same reason that I don't program apps in AppleScript or Python or Ruby on Rails or Swift or Pascal or Fortran, Visual Basic, or C++. I know this will sound lame to the cognizanti out there, even though HTML5 is a relatively benign programming environment, I want to create multimedia not code it. And HTML persents a whole lot of resistance to publising anything but web pages.

I conclude I am stuck.

I've poked around some and am staying square in the Adobe sphere.

So, help me out here. This month's Sigma will be available in several formats. The black and white print edition will always go out. Ten pages or less long because of postal rates and with as little pictorial black ink as possible because of ridiculous printer ink pricing. The pdf with pretensions of interactivity will be emailed as well. Also, there will be a iBook edition, which pretty completely accepts InDesign's ideas of media and animation. And the Adobe solution, Online Publishing, which will appear as a URL link.

If you feel so moved, drop me an email at Sigma@parsec-sff.org. Tell me what you think. I know the iBook Sigma is robust on MacOS and IOS, but fails with many other ebook readers. How does it do with Chrome and Android and Windows? The options are limited in almost every direction. Oh, by all means write your EMAC's or Vi experience.

I am also certain media and animation will improve in a short few years. We don't have a staff of cracked reporters. The cash available is close to nonexistent. We would like to see Sigma grow and become more attractive. We realize it is not just the glitz, but the content as well. If you'd like to help with writing or producing or coding, or those things we cannot envision, Larry and I are here to work with you.

Thanks

PARSEC OFFICERS
President Joe Coluccio
Vice President: Bonnie Funk
Secretary: William Hall
Treasurer: Greg Armstrong
Commentator: Michelle Gonzalez

April 2017 Minutes



President Joe was ill and Diane Turnshek led the meeting. Barton Paul Levenson's "The Argo Incident" is now available from Amazon. Galaxy's Edge has accepted a story of Eric Leif Davin's. You can contact fgraham@kent.edu to receive the polymath essays, or Meridian Passages, of professor of physics and astronomy Francis Graham. (I've been receiving them for several years now.) A recommendation was made for novelist Katherine Neville, in particular I think her "A Calculated Risk." I for one enjoy Neville's "The Eight" as a kind of obsessive adventurous ode to chess. Greg Armstrong alerted us to Parsec library books such as Kenneth Bulmer's "City Under the Sea" and Fred Saberhagen's "Shiva in Steel." Greg also said

we have \$2239. Panel ideas for Confluence can still be submitted to parsec-sff.org. Ex-President Kevin Hayes assures us that Confluence has Airport Sheraton booking for 2018 and 2019 as well. Barb Carlson says we'll have a costume contest. Eric Davin noted how watching "Jeopardy" reminded him of coincidences in historical dates, such as the Battle of Brandywine occurring on 9-11 (in 1777) and the Alamo siege occurring on 3/6/36 (1836).

Our topic was "Life in Space," in particular the Intel Design Challenge issued to eight universities to invent a device to assist astronauts during long stays in space. Our own CMU was up against the University of Texas, Austin and Arizona State University. Texas offered a handy retractable blade and Arizona offered easy handling of a laptop in zero-g. CMU won, however, with a muscle-training exoskeleton named Muscle Maximus, designed to fight muscle atrophy. Present for our meeting were CMU team members Cecilia Ferrando, Deepshikha Acharya, and Vishaal Dhamotharan, while Eugene Wu and Kevin Wang appeared in their video. The Muscle Maximus provides steady resistance for the knees, elbows, shoulders, and upper back. Greg Armstrong joked that Hewlett-Packard and Intel were surely shocked that CMU offered something that contained no electronics.

We concluded with news that Mary Soon Lee has officially become a US citizen. She read us three poems, of which I found "Boatman" quite scenic.

Our headcount reached 25.

Secretary Bill Hall

March For Science Pittsburgh 22 April 2017

Like the commandeered Klingon starship in Star Trek IV it was mammoth and yet invisible, earning only a sliver of a comment in a Post-Gazette article on the national march, and yet we who went down to the Cathedral of Learning that Earth Day will testify to it. Hearing about the national March on Science, I tracked down the Pittsburgh chapter. I hadn't been an activist since Hands Across America, yet I found this peculiarly motivating. Friends of mine are scientists, so it seemed right and proper for us non-specialists to show some support, and I signed on.

The day began clammy and chilly but that burned off before noon. The University of Pittsburgh and the local police gave excellent non-obtrusive support as we sectioned off that stretch of Bigelow beside the Cathedral between Forbes and Fifth. Several booths got set up, one featuring our own Diane Turnshek and the campaign against light pollution. I think I was inspired most by the multitude and diversity of signs. Though this Pittsburgh effort strove to be non-political, a few signs "went there." I was most impressed by a large picture of our President with the words "Now I'm become President, the Destroyer of Knowledge," a truly nerdish reference to Oppenheimer at Alamogordo thinking on the Bhagavad-Gita. Most, however, remained tightly focused. "Ignorance is not bliss." "Mad scientist? You bet!" Twice I saw "Science is like magic but real." There was "Hail Sagan," and then there was "God for Science." Some were hardcore, as with "STEMinist" (for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and "What do we want? Evidence! When do we want it? After peer review!" Ecology was represented: "Go frack yourself," "May the forest be with you," and a couple of instances of "There is no Planet B." I appreciated the distinction of "Art Historians for Science" and the local flavor of "Here We Go, Science, Here We Go."

At noon we got some business straight and soon went on a march around the Cathedral. One Laura Horowitz led the front line in clapping to the beat of our band. I could not help but turn around to check out our crowd. Formidable. More on that later.

We had good speakers on topics ranging from Rachel Carson to Alzheimer's research. (In keeping with the non-political tone, we did not have Mayor Peduto speak – but he was there.) A couple of speeches even got into the nitty-gritty of philosophy, and I think that's when I realized just how extraordinary this was. This march was truly unique. Scientists rarely march, usually against nuclear war. This was scientist and layman both standing up for the power of mind – and among them at least five fellow Parseckians who I could pick out.

In the United States alone well over a hundred thousand marched. Pittsburgh was estimated at five thousand, perhaps more. You consider that ten thousand marched in Philadelphia and London and that is not shabby. I am a fairweather sports fan, and when the Steelers win a Super Bowl I cheer, and when the Penguins win a Stanley Cup I cheer, and when the Pirates make any progress at all, I appreciate it. I am rarely as proud of Pittsburgh as I was that day.

The introverts are in the streets. These are truly strange times indeed. Watch out.

Bill Hall

President's Column

For a number reasons, I have been reviewing the science fiction films of the 1950s. In almost every case I slip into a state of mind, a mystical miasma, that is akin to, if not, in reality, time travel. I, Joe, sit here and now, comfortable at my desk, lights dim, hand poised on the start-film spacebar of my computer keyboard, and begin a process to slip into "initial viewing" Joe, whose brain is far more supple and innocent. My body reclined in my swivel office chair, his sprawled mid-row in a semi-darkened theater, M&M peanuts, check, popcorn, check, wet sweet drink, check, anticipating the

miracle of previews of coming attractions.

And there are so many attractions to come. I do my best to hide the future spoilers from the two-way with my earlier self. So many giant radiated insects, so many hideous creatures with accretions in the most disgusting parts of their bodies, so many gorgeous women scientists who are far brighter than their male stalwart counterparts, so many splendid stock footage hydrogen blasts, and especially so many trips to interplanetary, and a couple to interstellar, space. No matter that they call it between galaxies in the movie. Slurp.

I find there is an actual merge with all the earlier "mees" who have watched these science fiction extravaganzas at different times in the timeline I recognize as my life. We work together as the drama unfolds on the screen. So much I didn't know then, so much I don't understand now. Did you remember that the Crab Monsters who attack on a teensy Pacific atoll (more than likely Santa Catalina Island. Hey, if it worked for Gilligan...) could not only think and strategize, but they could read the minds, control, and assimilate the stranded military and scientific crew? That the crab monsters may have been better beings than the humans? Did you remember that the arc of the story of the Creature from the Black Lagoon over three movies in as many years is a dark tale of condemnation concerning the mad unethical meddling that humans can produce in the name of a superior knowledge? A horrifying picture, not of the creature, but of us. Did you know Klaatu came only a mere 250 million miles

to visit us? How parochial. From some close spot in our solar system? Past the orbit of Mars, yet short of Jupiter? The lost planet which exploded and spewed the asteroid belt? Famous and bogus as Atlantis.

The theater goes dead dark. There is a cartoon as good as any fantasy novel I have ever read. Then there is a chapterplay serial, usually chapter three or four, much as I would like, I am unable to attend the theater in sequential weeks. I smirk. I have all the chapters digitally available to me. I lament their watching now because the hero appears to me less thrilling than an episode of an afternoon soap and the perils pale in comparison to a midnight walk in my backyard.

Commando Cody or some Atom Spy Catchers. Flash and Buck. Smilin' Jack and Tailspin Tommy. The descendants of Zorro. One Saturday afternoon a bonus, Clayton Moore playing an imperiled "Mountie." Will he survive that bi-winged crash into the side of the canyon wall? I care not, for I can see, at long last, the Lone Ranger unmasked. Who, by the way, jumped with his parachute one demisemiquaver before disaster. Da!

A pause. A theremin. A credit roll. Film One of the Science Fiction Double Feature. What horrors are revealed? What wonders are in store. An abundant experience of joy in the face of myriad terrors.

A small, terrified girl in a tattered dress walking in the desert, alone, holding her damaged doll. Eyes wide

O, you bloodsucking, not of this earth, Davanans.

A cranking short circuit trip on a saucer to Metaluna.

Lo, there is one bigass grasshopper scaling a skyscraper in Chicago. Louis Sullivan?

And, sweet Jaysus, It, who came from outer space, just dropped in for repairs to their meteoric spacecraft.

Ghosts pastnowfuture sit on my shoulder and whisper.

Quick Info on the Nebula Conference

Thursday, May 18-Sunday, May 21, 2017

Marriott City Center, Pittsburgh



SFWA members and other individuals who are interested in science fiction and fantasy are welcome to attend SFWA's Nebula Conference. People who purchase memberships for the Nebula Conference may participate in workshops, programming and special events throughout the weekend. You do not need to be a member of SFWA to buy a membership for the Nebula Conference; all are welcome. You can buy Nebula Conference memberships and Nebula Award Banquet tickets at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-sfw-nebula-conference-tickets-27153384504>

Focusing on three tracks relevant to professionals in the genre, attendees will be able to choose from career management, professional development, and expert knowledge panels and workshops. Nebula Conference members will be able to meet with major industry vendors throughout the weekend. 2016 vendors included: Amazon, Patreon, Kickstarter, Draft-2-Digital & Kobo. Our "Ask an Expert" sessions provides an opportunity to talk with industry professionals on a wide range of relevant topics.

The conference will also feature the prestigious Nebula Awards Banquet and Ceremony along with receptions honoring SFWA's newest Grand Master and the Nebula Award nominees.

This conference is fully accessible and we will strive to make this event comfortable, safe, and engaging for all attendees.

The Nebula Conference will open up its Friday night Mass Autographing (May 19, 8pm-10pm, Grand Ballroom of the Marriott City Center Pittsburgh) to the public. We expect between 50 and 90 writers to be autographing that evening. People can bring books to be autographed (some writers may have a three book autograph limit depending on lines) or can buy books at the SFWA Book Store which will be open during the Mass Autographing.

SFWA's newest Grandmaster Jane Yolen and Solstice winner Toni Weisskopf will attend.

Nominees who plan to attend include Charlie Jane Anders, S.B. Divya, Kij Johnson, Barbara Krasnoff, William Ledbetter, David D. Levine, Seanan McGuire, John P. Murphy, A. Merc Rustad, Jason Sanford, Bonnie Jo Stufflebeam, Fran Wilde, Alyssa Wong and Caroline M. Yoachim

Other writers who plan to attend include: Kate Baker, Jennifer Brozek, Michael Capobianco, Curtis Chen, Kenneth Chiacchia, Brenda Clough, Julie Czerneda, Andy Duncan, Scott Edelman, Timons Esaias, Susan Forest, Laura Anne Gilman, Joe Haldeman, Erin M. Hartshorn, Larry Ivkovich, Matthew Johnson, James Kelly, Mary Robinette Kowal, Geoffrey Landis, Mary Soon Lee, Terra LeMay, Michael Martinez, Joseph Newcomer, Jody Lynn Nye, Sara Pinsker, Cat Rambo, Kelly Robson, Stanley Schmidt, Lawrence M. Schoen, Bud Sparhawk, Steven H Silver, Jamie Stefko, Shanna Swendsen, Lynne Thomas, Mark Tiedemann, Diane Turnshek and Mary Turzillo.

For more information on the Nebula Conference see: <http://nebulas.sfw.org/nebula-conference/> Saturday night's Nebula Award Ceremony will be Webcast, check the Website for more information.

Artist of the Month

James Gurney



An American artist, paleoartist, and writer, James Gurney (born 1958) is best known for his illustrated book series, *Dinotopia*. He has painted more than 70 covers for fantasy and science fiction paperbacks, and created several stamp designs for the US Postal Service, including the 1996 release, *The World of Dinosaurs*, in 1996.



While working on assignments for *National Geographic Magazine* on archaeological reconstructions of ancient civilizations, Gurney became inspired to illustrate what would become his *Dinotopia* universe. He has won numerous accolades for his work including the Hugo, World Fantasy, Chesley, Spectrum, and Colorado Children's Book awards.

In 2014, the dinosaur *Torvosaurus Gurneyi*, discovered in Portugal and one of the largest Jurassic era predators, was named in Gurney's honor.



-Larry Ivkovich



Parsec Meeting Schedule
Saturday, May 13, 2017

Technology in Literature & Popular Culture

presented by
Charles Lanigan

The evolving depiction of science and technology in writing by Jules Verne, H.G. Wells and Arthur C. Clarke (author of 2001: A Space Odyssey) — up through films like Bladerunner and The Matrix.

Chuck Lanigan earned his Master's Degree in Educational Communication from the University of Pittsburgh. In addition to writing for Western Pennsylvania History Magazine, CIO and the Pittsburgh City Paper, he has taught at the University of Pittsburgh College of Business Administration (CBA), Katz Business School Center for Executive Education (CEE), Penn State University Outreach and Carnegie Mellon University.



Squirrel Hill Branch of the Carnegie Library
Room B - Next to the Rear Entrance
1:30 - 4:30 PM
Come in and introduce yourself
The room is open at noon.

Confluence

Aug 4-6, 2017

SHERATON PITTSBURGH AIRPORT HOTEL

www.confluence-sff.org

CONFLUENCE IS . . .

❖Panels ❖Readings ❖Music Concerts ❖Writing exercises ❖Dealers Room ❖Science Presentations
❖Writing Workshops ❖Filk ❖Literary Beer Author Discussions ❖Art Show
❖Beer Tasting ❖Con Suite ❖Kaffeeklatsches ❖Art Demos
❖Cosplay and More!❖

Guests of Honor:

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Confluence is Pittsburgh's longest running literary conference with a focus on science fiction, fantasy and horror. Confluence is host to many award-winning authors, editors, artists and song-writers who gather for three full days and hold panel discussions, concerts and talks. Confluence is a unique opportunity for attendees to meet and personally chat with the writers and artists who create the SF/F/H culture today, and are shaping the movement of science fiction and fantasy in the future.



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Program Participants include but are not limited to: Danielle Ackley-McPhail, J.D. Barker, Eric Beebe, Ken Chiacchia, Lawrence C. Connolly, Timons Esaias, Susan Hanniford Crowley, Eric Davin, Susan Dexter, Chet Gottfried, J.L. Gribble, Elektra Hammond, Walter Hunt, Alan Irvine, Al Katerinsky, Herb Kauderer, Bill Keith, Brian Koscienski, Jamie Lackey, Mary Soon Lee, Barton Levenson, Tim Liebe, Brea Ludwigson, Mike McPhail, Christie Meierz, Heidi Ruby Miller, Jason Jack Miller, Charles Oberndorf, Andi O'Connor, Christopher Pisano, A.M. Rycroft, Darrell Schweitzer, Lucy Snyder, Bud Sparhawk, John Alfred Taylor, Lawrence Watt-Evans, Christopher Weuve, Jeff Young, The Blibbering Humdingers, Cheshire Moon, Lauren Cox, Egomyth, Harold Feld, Zoe Gray, Marc Grossman, Judi Miller, and Tianna and the Cliffhangers.



CONFLUENCE, PO Box 3681, PGH, PA 15230-3681

Confluence is presented by **PARSEC**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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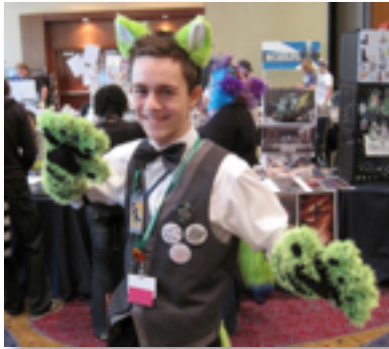


New Costplay/Costume Contest at Confluence 2017!

From Furry



To not-so furry



To not furry at all



Our contest is open to any and all interested in dressing as your favorite ... whatever. Or coming up with something new. Categories and rules will be announced as finalized. We expect to get a judge or two experienced in Cosplay Costumes as well as those who are official "Costumers".

Prizes will be awarded and photos are encouraged! We intend to have fun. Join us!

PARSEC Smile at Amazon

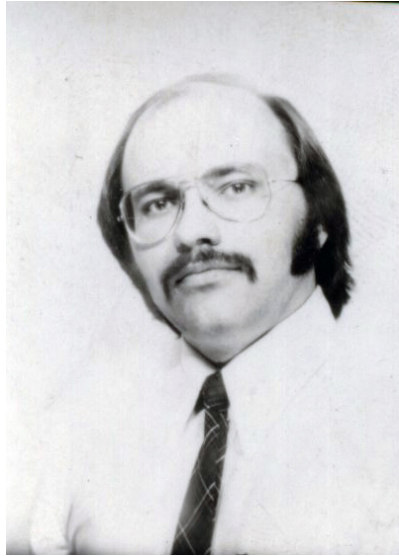
Parsec, a non-profit organization is a member of the Amazon Smile Program.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates to your favorite charitable organization. Go to smile.amazon.com from a web browser. Then select a charitable organization (PARSEC Location: Pittsburgh, PA | Year Founded: 2007) to receive donations.

In the future go to the smile.amazon.com page when you shop and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to Parsec.

We appreciate your help.

Brief Bio - Eric Leif Davin



Leslie F. Stone, (1905-1991):

Born in Philadelphia, Stone's family moved to Virginia when she was eight. She began selling fairy tales to newspapers at age 15. Perhaps for this reason she studied journalism in school. She was married to William Silberberg from 1927 until his death in 1957. They had two sons. In the late 1940s they moved to Kensington, Maryland, where she became a prize-winning ceramicist and gardener. In the 1960s she worked at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda.

Along with Clare Winger Harris, Stone was one of the first women writers to appear in the science fiction magazines, debuting in 1929. Her science fiction was most popular in the Thirties. She also published two SF novels. In addition to her science fiction, she published fantasy fiction in *Weird Tales* between 1935-38. Her last story appeared in 1951.



“Jan Struther” (Joyce Anstruther Placzek), (1901-1953): Born in London, she became a well-known English author of poems, sketches, short stories, and novels. She married Adolf Kurt Placzek in 1948. Damon Knight recalled an early 1940s Pocket Books party honoring her in the penthouse of the RCA Building, to which Futurian Donald Wollheim had given him and fellow Futurian Johnny Michel tickets. Michel was an alcoholic and became “an ugly drunk” when drinking. He drank at the party and insulted Struther before tipping over the party cake.

Her most successful creation was “Mrs. Miniver,” a typical middle-class English housewife whose activities were first told in stories published in *The Times* (of London), before appearing in book form as *Mrs. Miniver* (1939). Director William Wyler’s 1942 film of the same title is considered a classic depiction of British homefront fortitude during the World War II Blitz. It won the Best Actress Oscar for star Greer Garson, as well as Oscars for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Supporting Actress, and Best Screenplay. The 1950 sequel, *The Miniver Story*, told of Mrs. Miniver’s brave struggle against cancer. The author herself died of cancer in New York at age 52 not long after the publication of her story, “The Ugly Sister” (1952) in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.



PARSEC
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Dues: Full Membership \$15
Associate Membership \$3 (with full member in the same household)
PARSEC is Pittsburgh’s premiere organization of science fiction, fantasy and horror. We sponsor an annual conference, workshops for young writers, lectures, and other events that promote a love of the written word and a passion for speculative fiction. Our members include writers, teachers and fans. PARSEC is a 501c3 non-profit corporation.

Beebe and Louis Barron - Electronic Tonalities



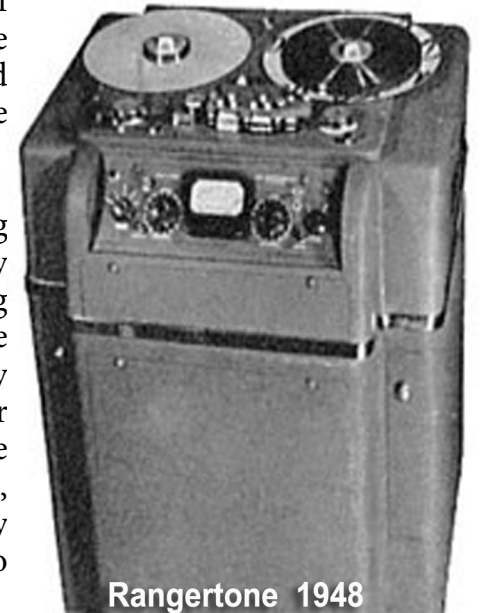
I'm the first to admit that not every film remake is an unmitigated disaster. However, even the best of them are unnecessary. This is especially true in the face of a possible remake of *Forbidden Planet*. An original screenplay, special effects that won the 29th Academy Awards, entry into the Library of Congress National Film Registry, and a controversial, original music score. I believe we should pass legislation to ban the remaking of such a film. Okay, that's a little "over the top." Instead, I will just wish that the folks in the juggernaut film industry will decide to create something remarkable as *Forbidden Planet* instead of rehashing and squeezing the remaining moisture out of the dry ground that has been covered time and again and better. For those of you ticking off on your pinkie and ready to argue that some of the significant new efforts like "Arrival" are

outstanding. I know. I applaud. By way of argument, I will mention the myriad horror of special effects only disasters, remade for digital advancement, out of this world and yet grounded in an imagination blessed by digital games that long for the holodeck. No más.

I often listen to podcasts that concern themselves with science fiction. A few weeks ago I listened to one that considered *Forbidden Planet*. The hosts were effusive about the movie but felt they could not relate to the film score. The New York Times described it as an "accompaniment of interstellar gulps and burbles" which pretty much described what the podcasters experienced. 'What?' Cried my interconnecting brain filled with "electronic tonalities," were they listening to? I love John Williams. Jerry Goldsmith, Elmer Bernstein (A very special place in my heart for Bernard Hermann) et. al. as much as the next geek. Have all their CDs tattooed on my chest. 'But,' I further thought, 'this is science fiction, the literature of cognition AND estrangement.' Could the podcasters (a surprise) and the New York Times (no shock) not recognize the leitmotif and structure of a fully blown musical score for the bleeps, burbles, and blurps?

With that off my chest, please let me reveal the subject of this article, Bebe and Louis Barron, who created the score for *Forbidden Planet* in 1956 with the experimental aid of electronic oscillators, a spring reverberator, and a tape recorder.

In 1947 Bebe and Louis Barron received a wedding gift. A wire recorder manufactured in Germany. They messed around with it. Changing the speed, playing things backward. It was interesting but unwieldy. While living in San Francisco, they contacted the company Stancil-Hoffman and ordered a recorder made to their specifications. The Barrons supplemented their income with a series of recorded readings by avant-garde writers, Henry Miller, Aldous Huxley and Anais Nin. They moved to New York City and set up a recording studio on 8th Street.



Anais Nin suggested they visit a place called "The Artist's Club" where they fell in with the likes of John Cage and later Edgar Varese.

In 1956 the Barrons crashed an art gallery show where Dore Schary, the head of MGM, attended. They approached him and discussed their music. Oh, by the way, Schary had a \$2,000,000.00 science fiction film called *Forbidden Planet* that required a score. He invited them to Hollywood. They were sent home with a 16mm work print of the movie. The score they created could not be called music because of a contract with the musicians union. As a result, the score for *Forbidden Planet* was not considered for an Academy Award. Dore Schary suggested the name "Electronic Tonalities." In three months the Barrons created both the basis for electronic music and the "Electronic Tonalities" of *Forbidden Planet*.

Wendy Carlos, of "Switched on Bach" fame, says of the *Forbidden Planet* score, "Not only were the timbres and effects the Barrons invented highly unusual and dramatically effective, but they were put together so damned musically, too."

The score is wonderful music to my ears. My eleven-year-old ears, in the dark, five rows back in the Oaks Theater in Oakmont, became, as Jimi Hendrix might say, "experienced." From the beginning when Cruiser C57D approaches Altair IV, to Cookie having Robby make up gallons of pure "Kansas City Bourbon, to the power of the monster that can rip a nightmare and a human to shreds to the quiet ending when Altair IV explodes and swells the vestiges of Morbius and his Krell into oblivion. All satisfying like the abiding music of the spheres which carries us to Altair in the first place. And every place.

JK



Photos from Parsec Meeting April 2017



The Japanese Legend Of The Utsuro-Bune

Folklore or Close Encounter of the Third Kind?

Utsuro-bune refers to an unknown object (“hollow ship”), which allegedly washed ashore in 1803 on the eastern coast of Japan. Accounts of the tale appear in three 19th Century Japanese texts: “Toen shōsetsu” (1825), “Hyōryū kishū” (1835), and “Ume-no-chiri” (1844). One account describes the craft as being made of wood, metal, and glass, the interior decorated with symbols of an indecipherable language.

According to the legend, a strange-looking young woman was aboard the craft, carrying with her a mysterious-looking box. After trying unsuccessfully to communicate with the locals (she could not speak Japanese but, again, some unknown language), she returned to her vessel and drifted out to sea.

The “Legend of the Hollow Boat” has become part of Japanese folklore but modern ufologists have also taken an interest, claiming the incident could be an early case of contact with a UFO and its extraterrestrial passenger.

Some of this conjecture is based on the similarities between the drawings of the vessel from the Edo period and modern descriptions of flying saucers. Also, the symbols inside the craft have been suggested by some to be similar to symbols found at Rendlesham Forest in England.

The Rendlesham Forest Incident in 1980 is often referred to as “Britain’s Roswell.”

Utsuro-bune have become popular motifs in [manga](#) and [anime](#).



–Larry Ivkovich

Sigma Writers Wanted

It's time to tell
us what you
THINK

We are looking for
a few good Fen!

Sure, you're sitting on your pale blue-gray yoga mat meditating about all the great things you like to say about some subject or other. Buzzing with a bee in your bonnet about the dumb way everyone manipulates time travel tales since H.G. Wells. Flaming in aggravation because Nicolas the Grecius, a buddy of Aristotle, who peripatetically wove tales about lower middle earth way before Tolkien, is virtually unknown after 300 BC.

Well, just grab a pencil, Underwood Studio 44, or a Zagg wireless Bluetooth and happily scribble, punch holes with the small o, or click your way to an article that we will happily place from your posterior to our posterity in Sigma.

Submit all articles to sigma@parsec-sff.org.

Give your name. Word count if you got it. Almost any grammar is, obviously, accepted. Almost any typeface is acceptable We look forward to hearing from you. Honest! - Eds