

NASFA Shuttle

July 2019

Calendar

July 20 at 14:00: NASFA Picnic

August 17 at 18:00: NASFA Meeting

October 18-20: Not-a-Con

Picnic

Picnic starts at 2pm

Country Inn & Suites
101 Westchester Drive
Madison, AL 35758
256-325-0007

Madison Blvd near Ollies/Captain D's

FYI - no alcohol, no grills (bring food pre-cooked). Also, no pool (only if you reserve a room).

There is room for cards, we have the room till ~9PM.

Not-a-Con Hotel

Make your reservations at:

<https://tinyurl.com/Not-a-Con-2019>

NASFA Minutes

By Judy Smith.

Gavel and Crickets:

Meeting called to order June 15, 2019 at 6:11:03

Crickets chirped – all hail the cricket overlords!

Old Business:

Dues are due – the magic envelope was being checked

Checked Shuttle – Amazing Stories deadline is here, if you want in get with Doug. [Too late now. We've got ours.] So far it is Doug, Bruce and Jim

Dr Who roast was. . . pathetic, a train wreck, other not flattering words.

New Business:

Filthy Pierre had wrong dates for Not-A-Con. Sam will send a Not-A-Con correction. Filthy Pierre also said he doesn't need the shuttle any longer but thanked us for the great calendar we had for all those years

Picnic is TBD for time/place, check the next shuttle/website. An email will also be sent to the normal mailing list.

Not-A-Con:

There will be a con! [Not.]

Make your hotel reservations as soon as you can.

The con-chairs will meet soon to do more planning.

Sam moved (many seconded) the meeting to be adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 6:19:03

Administrivia

The NASFA Shuttle is the newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association, Inc. This is the June 2019 edition (Volume 39, Number 7). NASFA Officers for 2019: President Mary Lampert; Vice President Doug Lampert; Secretary Steve Sloan; Treasurer Sam Smith; Program Director "JudySue Thornsmythe"; Publicity Director Sam Smith.

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Additional Adminstrivia

If you are not interested in continuing to receive this newsletter, either due to the decreased focus on general fanish activities and professional awards and activities or for some other reason. You can inform us at NASFA, Inc., P.O. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815-4857 or you can try emailing nasfa.shuttle@con-stellation.org and hoping that Sam has gotten around to shifting the forwarding to my actual email.

Space Killing Review (1 of 2)

What I Did on My DSC Vacation... by Samuel A. Smith, tall guy, funny hat

So, this year DSC 57 was being held in conjunction with ConCarolinas 2019, in Charlotte NC.

I decided to drive my shiny red Chevy Volt from Huntsville to the con.

Immediately, it was obvious that getting up at 3:30am to be on the road by 5:30am was a non-starter. So I left late, after dinner Thursday night, to spend the night in a hotel in Dalton GA. I will spare the details, but in short, it was not a happy start to the trip (rain, bedbugs, ick). The next morning I took off from Dalton early, had lunch in South Carolina at a very nice sports bar named "J. Peters", and got to the convention hotel around 3:00pm, as planned.

Things were looking better. I checked in to the hotel, got my badge for the con, got the lay of the land, had dinner at "City BBQ" (located in the Boardwalk just behind the hotel), had red velvet cake at the hotel, and crashed. So much for the 8:00pm "You Believe What?" panel.

Here's the layout of the con: The hotel lobby is on the second floor, and the first floor immediately below is where most of the function space is. The corridors from the hotel elevators back to the function space were lined with tables on both sides with vendors selling everything genre-related that you could imagine: authors selling their books, gamers selling games, conventions selling memberships, all sorts of things. *And* there was a dealers room where it was all happening all over again.

The Art Show was on the small side, upstairs on the lobby level, in the back of a function room that was also used for programming. Gaming was somewhere in the hotel (I never did see it).

As best as I can tell, there wasn't a Con Suite.

I got up the next morning, feeling much better after 14 hours of sleep, and started the day with the "Baen Books Traveling Roadshow", presented by Tony Daniel (do you have to be named Toni/Tony to work at Baen?). The way the program book was structured I didn't realize until well after it had started that it was a two hour panel - which was alright since I didn't have anything immediately after that I wanted to see, but it did compress my lunch plans and force me into Chick-fil-a afterwards.

As usual, the Baen panel was lots of fun, lots of books given away and seeing the art work for the upcoming books. Since David Weber was there, and had a book coming out with Jacob Holo ("The Gordian Protocol"), there was a *lot* of Weber Madness.

Since I hadn't really bumped into anyone I knew (and subsequently there was nobody to play cards with), Saturday was just one panel after another.

Next up was "A Conversation with: Tory Belleci". I was really looking forward to this, since I was amused by the fact that Tory received top billing as the con's Science Guest of Honor, and Tory delivered in style. The theme of his talk was "Why I Should Be Dead", and he backed it up with lots of video clips of him doing stupid/dangerous stuff (as usual, there was the disclaimer "Don't try this at home"). Interestingly, despite all of the injuries he sustained on Mythbusters, he only went to the E.R. once.

Tory had a table in the dealers room, so I got to talk with him for a bit later on. He's actually a nice guy in person, just like he appears to be on television. I complimented him on it. He was amused.

Next was "A Conversation with: David Weber". More Weber Madness. He spoke on his influences, why he does so many collaborations, why his older brother mike should be dead, and more.

After Weber Madness was the Charity Auction and Deep South Con Awards. The auction was done right, with numbered paddles for the bidders and run by the con's MC. The con's treasurer was there with an iPad, recording everything as the auction went along, and they were about to announce the amount of money raised for the charity as soon as the auction was over.

Of course, I was there for the Deep South Con awards, which occurred one hour and twenty minutes into the auction. The Rebel co-winners were Ron McClung and Jeff Smith, of MACE. The Rubble winner was Ron

McClung. There was some confusion over the fact that Ron McClung won both the Rebel and the Rubble, and I didn't get it straight in my head until the DSC meeting the next day. (At one point I thought the announced winner was Rodney Clone.)

Let's see. Next up was more with Tory Belleci. I arrived late, and when I got there he was showing a blooper reel with lots of explosions. Tory sure knows his audience.

After that was the Weird Science panel, featuring, well, Weird Science. Then I went to get dinner.

I ate at the Boardwalk again, this time at Tijuana Flats. Tijuana Flats is a Tex-Mex place that it turned out I had eaten at before, down in Melbourne FL. Tijuana Flats has what you'd expect - giant burritos, lots of other Mexican-ish stuff, but their claim to fame is there hot sauce bar. 30 or so different sauces ranging from "wimpy" to "death wish". I had "wimpy" sauce with my burrito.

Back to the con!

The DSC Hearts tournament was scheduled to begin at 8:30pm. I was there. About ten minutes after it was due to start another girl showed up. I declared myself the winner since I got there first and there weren't enough to actually play.

From the disappointment of the Hearts tournament I went to the "Ask A Mad Scientist" panel. Actual scientists (and engineers) being asked questions about how to take over the world. Unfortunately, most of their ideas involved killing off most of the world and ruling the scattered remains of what was left. Interestingly, everyone's ideas involved abusing something from their field of expertise. And nobody's idea was "turn off GPS" (which was my idea).

Bed.

I got up in time Sunday morning to pack and load the car in time to go to the "They Did What?" panel. It turns out that the ancients had more technology up their togas than most of us know about: batteries, digital computers, color changing glass - all sorts of stuff.

Lunch was at, you guessed it, the Boardwalk again, this time at "Boardwalk Bill's", a very nice sports bar which makes a very nice fish sandwich.

The convention was basically out of function space by now, so the DSC business meeting, and the SFC business meeting, were held in the hotel's restaurant (which wasn't open for lunch on Sunday).

The DSC business meeting wasn't until 1:00pm, which I was very thankful for. Usually the business meetings are held early in the morning, while everybody is tired and trying to get checked out of the hotel. I certainly hope that this is a trend which will continue!

As usual, site selection for DSC 59 was the main order of business. There was only one bidder, ConGregarate in (or near) Greensboro NC, so that's where the 2021 DSC will be held.

The DSC business meeting also had some business carried over from the previous DSC - an amendment to the DSC Bylaws. (An amendment to the DSC Bylaws requires approval at two successive DSC business meetings to go into effect.) The amendment in question was to create a 100 mile exclusion zone similar to the exclusion zone used for WorldCon, with the exception that the exclusion zone would not be in effect if there was only one DSC bid.

Much discussion ensued, but with a fairly light turnout for the DSC business meeting, it was eventually decided to postpone the final vote on this amendment until DSC 58, next year at CONtraflow 10 in New Orleans.

The SFC business meeting was held immediately after the DSC business meeting. (Have I mentioned that I really like this idea of having the business meetings after hotel checkout time is over?)

The main order of business for the SFC business meeting was the replacement of Tom Feller as the SFC secretary. Tom has been the SFC secretary for *20 years*, but has finally decided that it was time to move on. Tom did an excellent job as the SFC secretary, it will be a challenge for his replacement, Jimmy Liang, to fill Tom's shoes.

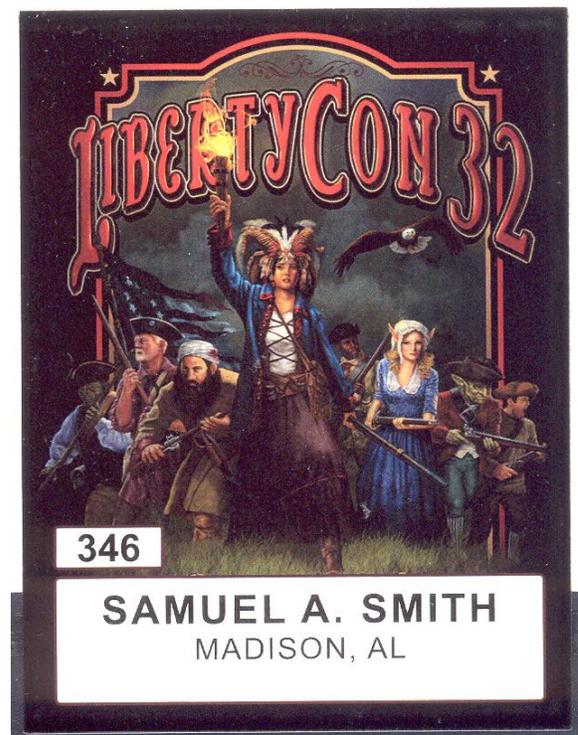
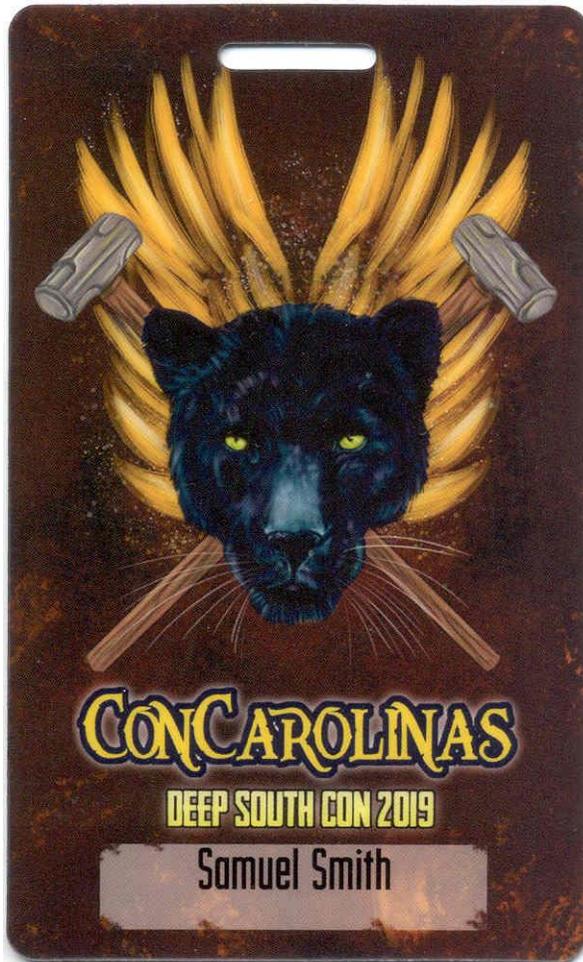
In other news, the remaining SFC officers were re-elected for another term in office.

An amendment to the SFC Bylaws was proposed, to add wording to the end of section 1(a) as follows: "The SFC has been and always shall be a non-discriminatory organization." The rationale being that the SFC is a heavily Southern-themed organization, and in the current political climate perhaps we should be a bit more proactive about avoiding any potential misunderstandings.

Unlike the DSC Bylaws, amendments to the SFC Bylaws can be made, voted on, and take effect immediately, but once again the feeling of the members present at the meeting was that the turnout was fairly light, so the final vote on this amendment was also postponed until the SFC business meeting at DSC 58.

And after this, I had to leave. I had an eight-hour drive ahead of me to get home, and I wanted to get home before midnight. So I left.

And that's what I did on my DSC vacation. Fini.



Space Killing Review (2 of 2)

LibertyCon 32 by Samuel A. Smith

LibertyCon 32 has come and gone, the first LibertyCon without Uncle Timmy. Life goes on, and so does LibertyCon, and so far, nothing much seems to have changed. This is a Good Thing(TM). Brandy and her crew did an excellent job, carrying on the traditions and the atmosphere of LibertyCon created and sustained over the last 32 years.

Here's how it went for us:

We left Huntsville a little before Noon on Friday, planning on getting to the hotel around the 3 o'clock check-in time. Judy and myself and Jenny in one car, Shelly and Jon and George and Calvin in the other car. We had just about the full crew, and we were staying in the Staybridge Inn right next to the convention center and the Marriott where LibertyCon was held.

And then we got to Gurley.

And then the air conditioning in Shelly's car went out.

Oh no, we're not traveling in 95-plus degree heat with a three year old and a six month old in a car with no air conditioning. Not in the 21st century. So we swapped things around and Jon and I took Shelly's car back to Huntsville to the mechanic while the rest of them went back to our house to get the spare car.

We left Huntsville a little before 2 o'clock on Friday, planning on getting to the hotel around 5 o'clock. This time we made it. We missed Opening Ceremonies. Drat!

We were in time for "Balloons of Doom." Yay!

Balloons of Doom ended at seven, which was six our time, so it was time for dinner. Which became a problem - where did we want to go, and what did we want to eat? Nobody could decide. Thankfully, the ConSuite came to our rescue!

LibertyCon has a reputation for one of the best ConSuites around, and deservedly so. Every time I went there looking for "real food", hot dogs appeared (real enough, eh?). Everytime I went there, period, there were sandwiches out, and mini Moon Pies, and fruit, and jellies, and snack cakes, and, and, and...

So we ate dinner in the ConSuite, and we stuffed ourselves. And then we went back to our hotel and took a nap.

The spades tournament was at ten, and we had signed up even before collecting our badges as Registration. We got there just as the table assignments were being made, and found that the fire alarm had gone off in the Marriott while we were back in our hotel. Fortunately, it was a false alarm, but the Marriott has 16 floors, so the people upstairs in the ConSuite (on the 16th floor, natch) were not happy about having to walk down the stairs when the alarm went off.

Which is all appropro of nothing, except while we were in the spades tournament we got a text from Shelly that the fire alarm had gone off in *our* hotel, and she and Jon and the kids were out on the sidewalk. I still have no idea why our fire alarm went off.

Judy and Jenny and I all advanced to the second round of the spades tournament, and then it was eleven p.m.

Eleven p.m. is when the Uncle Timmy tribute was held. In main programming (a.k.a. "the big room"). It was packed. We took turns telling "Uncle Timmy" stories. I had a silly little story I could have told, but there was no shortage of stories then, so I'll tell it to you now:

Back in 2016, in Huntsville we held Con*Stellation: Mensa. Now "Mensa" means "Table". It's a pretty boring little constellation in the southern sky, just four dim stars in a rough keystone shape. What do you do with a small table? You play cards!

So, at the masquerade that year we preformed a small skit. Myself, Doug Lampert, Mary Lampert, and Robin Ray participated. I was the Pointy-Haired Boss, Mary was in a very nice regency dress playing Lucrezia Borgia, Doug was in a black cape playing Hastur, and I forget who Robin was playing.

We were all sitting around a card table in Hades playing Killer Cutthroat Spades. Suddenly, from the back of the room, a voice calls out: "Hastur! Hastur! Hastur!" Hastur, of course, being summoned, must leave. He resisted the summoning as hard as he could until the hand was over, throwing down his last few remaining cards and yelling "Claim!" as he was spirited away. We scored the hand, and then sat around looking at each other...

"Well, now what?"

"I don't know. When will he be back?"

"No telling."

"Well, who's evil enough to come down here and play with us?"

A moment passes. We look at each other, smile and nod. We bow our heads...

"Timmy! Timmy! Timmy!" we chant.

Uncle Timmy pops up out of the audience, and runs up on the stage. He cuts the cards, and says "Deal!"

Such was the reputation of Uncle Timmy Bolgeo.

Saturday came, and there was an early panel I wanted to go to, Les Johnson's "Space Update" at ten a.m. Lots of interesting stuff, but since I keep up with that sort of stuff, there was nothing that was especially new to me. However, there was something I knew about that Les hadn't heard of that I was able to add to the panel:

Les had a slide about the number of FRBs that had been found last year. FRBs are "Fast Radio Bursts". Only a few FRBs repeat. Most are one time events, making it difficult to determine their exact origin in the sky. They last at most a few milliseconds, and in that time will give off as much energy as the Sun does in a century. You don't want to be standing too close to one when it goes off. Nobody knows what causes them, but we're getting better at detecting them.

The week before LibertyCon a group of astronomers had detected a FRB and were able to respond quickly enough to locate its source. It came from the edge of a galaxy several billion light years away. The fact that it came from the

edge and not the center is significant. The center is where the black hole is, so you'd expect there'd be enough energy there to power the thing, even if you don't know what it is. Coming from the edge of the galaxy just adds to the mystery. (And that's all I remember about it.)

Lunch was in the ConSuite. (Hot dogs!)

After that I went to the "Understanding the Two Slit Experiment" panel presented by Hans Schantz, who I was surprised to find out works at "Geeks and Nerds" here in Huntsville.

The two slit experiment is a classic experiment in quantum physics which basically shows that everything at a fundamental level is a wave. Or is it?

The classical interpretation of quantum physics is called the "Copenhagen Interpretation." In the Copenhagen interpretation, every fundamental particle is a wave until an "observation" causes the waveform to collapse and it becomes a particle. (All very hand-wavy, and I'm not doing it justice here. Please forgive me, physicists in the audience.) However, there is a discounted theory that might be making a comeback called "Pilot Wave Theory." In pilot wave theory, particles are particles and forces are waves. Things make more intuitive sense, but classically pilot wave theory cannot explain the two slit experiment. Recently however, some people have taken a fresh look at pilot wave theory, and perhaps it can. I was surprised that the point of this talk was that pilot wave theory might be right after all!

After the talk on the two slit experiment came the "Baen Traveling Road Show and Prize Patrol". The Baen slide show is always loads of fun. They give away books and show the unencumbered cover art and book covers for upcoming titles. This talk was no exception, but I had to leave early because...

The second round of the spades tournament was at 3 o'clock.

I won the second round with a come from behind nil bid to win the game, and then it was on to the third and final round. In the final round it was myself, Mark Paulk, Jenny Leach, and Gary Shelton. (Wait, Mark and Gary were the tournament's organizers?!?) Sadly, I came in third in this game, and Gary Shelton won the tournament.

Judy, meanwhile, having been knocked out of the tournament in the second round, was able to go to a panel called "Learning to See", presented by Jonna Haydn. Jonna's a costumer, and according to what I was told, the panel was mainly about how to examine a picture of a costume (painting, comic book, or actual photo) and "deconstruct" it to see how to make that costume for yourself. Or, how to recognize that that costume is impossible to make because it violates the laws of physics! Fun stuff.

Dinner was a short walk away, at the City Café Diner. The City Café Diner here in Huntsville is an offshoot of the ones in Chattanooga, and the basic principle is the same: Here's a meal that's Too Much Food. Would you like a huge dessert with that?

More napping in the hotel room afterwards (I definitely needed that!). I was up and out in time for what I call the "Jim Beall Hat Trick."

I've been to three conventions this year: MidSouthCon, DeepSouthCon, and LibertyCon. Jim Beall (a retired nuclear engineer) was on panels at all three.

This panel was titled "Art in Science or the Science in Art?" Jim was the moderator, and Melissa Gay and three other artists (whose names I didn't get) were the panelists. The schtick was "here's a picture of a thing that's not immediately recognizable - is it Science, or is it Art (or perhaps, is it both?)."

Some of the pictures were of things such as the cutting head of a tunnel boring machine (looked like a giant button) and a teardrop magnified a zillion times (looked like a crystal). Fun and interesting.

After that, at eleven p.m. was the "Mad Scientist Roundtable", a traditional panel with an accidental genesis in a poolside discussion between Les Johnson and James P. Hogan at a LibertyCon long, long ago.

Here, the gig is a bunch of engineer and scientists up front, and Les brings up a topic that's been in the news recently, and we get to hear various people's take on the topic. For example, there was a murder solved recently because the perpetrator had left DNA at the scene. He wasn't in any police database, but the police took his DNA to one of the companies that does DNA testing to tell you about your ancestry and with their help they found the man's relatives. Narrowed down to a single family of individuals, the crime was solved fairly easily. Do you want to submit your DNA to a company that does that? If so, why?

Fascinating stuff, and suddenly two hours had gone by and it was time for bed.

Sunday we packed up, loaded up the cars, and parked up in the parking garage.

More Balloons of Doom at eleven. When I got there, there was a poor girl captured in a veritable cage of balloons. It was made to represent zombie hunting gear (you could tell by the balloon zombie head hanging from her balloon zombie hunting belt). After that was finished, there were a couple of quick balloon TARDISEs, and then it was time for lunch.

Lunch was in the ConSuite again. (More hot dogs!)

At 1 o'clock I went to the "Celebrity Jeopardy" panel with Fritz. He had a do-it-yourself electronic Jeopardy game, with all of the proper music and sound effects, and had loaded it with his own custom questions. I think he thought his questions were easy, but at one point all of the panelists had negative scores. At the end, only two of the panelists were in plus figures. The game also seemed to be unforgiving when it came to mistakes. Every now and then Fritz would press the wrong button, citing somebody as "correct" or "incorrect" when the opposite was true, and it appeared to be impossible to correct the error.

At 2 o'clock I went to the "Zombie Dice" game with Fritz. I lost.

Then we played "Cthulhu Dice" and I won.

Then we played "Cthulhu Dice" again and I lost. I went insane.

Stop.

Finally it was time for Closing Ceremonies a.k.a. Let's Bitch at Brandy. Unhappily, for me at least, there was too much bitch and not enough closing. (I was tired and ready to go home. Shelly and Jon and the kids had already left.)

After about an hour, just as Judy and Jenny and I were getting ready to give up and sneak out, Brandy called a halt to the bitch session to make announcements for the coming year. At last, some action! Here are the stats for next year's LibertyCon:

The dates will be 12-14 June 2020.

Memberships will go on sale on Saturday, 13 July 2019 at 8:00a.m. ET.

Literary GoH: Patricia Briggs

Artist GoH: John Kovalic

Science GoH: Arthur M. "Art" Dula

Special GoH: Doc Osborne

MC: Seanan McGuire

And with that, we came home.

My 2020 Campaign Speech (Part 3 of 8)

I completely failed to work on this until one day after it should have gone into the mail.

Fortunately, there's nothing urgent that needs to go out in the shuttle like a change in meeting time and location. Gee, it would be bad if the shuttle needed to go out in a timely manner for an announcement of that sort, but instead went out late because you elected someone stunningly irresponsible to be in charge.

Electing someone like that would make you morons.

But, not as moronic as if you reelect me in 2020. Remember, vote for the Not Doug candidate in 2020!

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«Name»

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