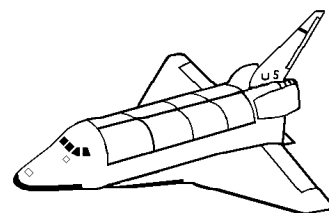


The



SHUTTLE June 2004

The Next NASFA Meeting will be 19 June 2004 at the Regular Time and Location

The Next Con†Stellation ConCom Meeting will be 4 July 2004 at Mike Kennedy's House; Cookout Following

🔔 Oyez, Oyez 🔔

The next **NASFA meeting** will be **19 June 2004** at the **regular time** (6P) and the **regular location**. Call BookMark at 256-881-3910 if you need directions.

The **June program** is TBD at press time. The **June after-the-meeting meeting** will be a pool party at Russell McNutt's house. The usual rules (bring your favorite drink and a food item to share) apply.

The next Con†Stellation XXIII: Delphinus **concom meeting** is scheduled for Sunday 4 July 2004 (2P, Mike Kennedy's house). In honor of the holiday, Mike will be making burned offerings on the grill after the meeting. More details will be emailed later. Future concom meetings are tentatively scheduled for the Sunday after the first Saturday each month.

NASFA Calendar

JUNE

- 01 BD: Glenn Valentine.
- 02 BD: Lloyd Penney.
- 03-06 Mythic Journeys 2004 — Atlanta GA.
- 03-06 SFRA 2004 — Stokie (Chicago) IL.
- 04-06 ConCarolinas 2004 — Charlotte NC.
- 06 Con†Stellation XXIII ConCom Meeting — Mike Kennedy's house.
- 11-13 Roc*Kon — Little Rock AR.
- 11-13 Sci-Fi Summer Con 2004 — Atlanta GA.
- 11-13 DreamCon — Jacksonville FL.
- 14 Flag Day.

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Deadline for the July 2004 issue of *The NASFA Shuttle* is Friday, 2 July 2004.



heard a dozen different critics expounding on it. Most of them gave it a thumbs up (albeit sometimes qualified) but a few really dissed it, saying it doesn't really add anything to the first movie. In some part they're right, but I think they miss the point.

The basic story of *Shrek 2* could be summed up as "Fiona (Cameron Diaz) takes Shrek (Mike Myers) to meet her parents." Now that'd an imposing enough matter even if the King (John Cleese) and Queen (Julie Andrews) already *knew* their daughter was now an ogre — but of course they don't. Other complications are thrown into the mix, including Prince Charming (Rupert Everett) who was "supposed" to marry Princess Fiona, a Fairy Godmother (Jennifer Saunders) who's slipped a cog, and an assassin (Puss in Boots) hired to take Shrek out of the picture. And of course Donkey tags along to provide (as if they needed more) comic relief.

Of course, the movie *does* have lessons to teach — about love, acceptance, inner beauty, etc. — in a low-key, background fashion. These are not significantly different from the first film (hear those critics?) but that takes nothing away either from the lessons themselves or from what I see as the real point of the film — fun.

And the movie is fun on several levels. Kids will enjoy the surface fairy tale and the sight gags. Teens and adults will also enjoy the movie/pop culture references strewn liberally throughout the movie. Everyone should enjoy the wonderful animation. Even the music is good — your aging reviewer found himself wanting to sing along on more than one occasion.

The voice cast does a uniformly good job. Antonio Banderas' Puss in Boots and Eddie Murphy's Donkey have gotten particular acclaim from fans and critics. Joan Rivers turns in a nice cameo (as herself) and Larry King voices a surprising role as the Ugly Stepsister, proprietress of the Poison Apple tavern.

All in all you should really enjoy seeing *Shrek 2*, so go if you haven't already. Highly recommended.

The Fur Flies Again

a Convention Review
by Mike Kennedy

The second Rocket City Fur Meet (RCFM) was held 28–30 May 2004 at the Radisson Suite Hotel in Huntsville AL.

Announced guests were Jim Groat and Tyger Cowboy. Here-with a short review...

Though fur meets are well off my beaten path, I couldn't turn down the chance to go to at least part of one held so close to my house. (The Radisson is on the Parkway, only two lights north of me.) It didn't hurt that some friends were also curious enough to go. I teamed up, as it were, with Karen Hopkins and Gary Shelton and we all bought day memberships for Saturday (more about registration toward the end of this review). A number of other NASFAns also attended at least part of the weekend, including Randy Cleary, Anita Eisenberg, Mia Smith, and probably others I've forgotten.

A furry con is both quite similar to and nothing like the sf cons with which most *Shuttle* readers are familiar. There's programming, a hospitality suite, dealers, an art show, gaming, video, and registration — any of which you might expect to find in one form or another at a general-interest sf convention. The contents of those things are, of course, rather different. For those few of you who may not be familiar with it, furrries occupy a branch of fantasy where all the characters are anthropomorphic animals.

Most of the merchandise in the dealers room was, not surprisingly, oriented toward furry interests and included art, furry-oriented fiction, costuming items, props, and the like. There were also a few general sf books and, perhaps surprisingly, a dealer in scented candles. The art show was small and consisted largely of depictions of furry characters, some in a clearly-demarcated adults-only section.

There were several areas of the convention I didn't visit. I had intended to at least poke my head into the video room but never got around to it. Not being a gamer, I had no particular reason to visit either the computer gaming ("LAN") or conventional gaming rooms. I did see a good bit of activity in the former through the window that was visible across the hotel courtyard.

The hospitality suite was one area that would have been rather familiar to people who've attended sf cons most anywhere in the states. There were various munchies available plus soft drinks, iced tea, and coffee. They did have a slightly different approach to meals than sf cons I've attended, including a massive pizza feed early Saturday afternoon.

RCFM had a single track of programming, and the event room (as they termed it) was used for rehearsals for some of the events as well as the events themselves. I made it to both the fursuit parade and the talent revue. In the former, those attendees who chose to wear full-body costumes (aka fursuits) formed up in the event room, then literally paraded around the hotel. The original plan had been to circle the outside of the hotel but rain intervened and the parade went instead down the stairs and around the corridors of the first floor of the hotel. The fursuiters then posed for pictures outside, under the cover for the hotel entrance. Given the typically muggy spring weather in Huntsville, this was about all the time most of the fursuiters could stand in full costume at one go.

The talent revue was, um, interesting. Most of the entries involved music, either playing an instrument, singing, or performing a skit to canned music. The ability of those who sang was all over the map. Many of the entries that didn't require hands (for playing an instrument, for instance) included at least one person in full or partial costume. A few, however, used puppets — that too is part of furry fandom.

The talent revue also helped point out one example of a dichotomy at the heart of the relationship between furry fandom and more general sf/fantasy fandom. The emcee for

the event was talking up the charity auction that was to take place on Sunday. While mentioning that the charity recipient was to be Parenting Children of Different Species <www.petfinder.org/shelters/pcds.html>, he noted that furry fandom is “an animal-based science fiction” fandom. On the opposite hand, the program book bio of one RCFM staffer noted that “He’s a refugee from [...] sci-fi fandom who prefers hanging out with and talking with intelligent and creative people.” (For a humorous look at the sometimes uneasy relationship among various sf/fantasy fandoms, take a look at <www.brunching.com/geekhierarchy.html> and be sure to follow one of the links to an unabridged version.)

Above, I promised to talk a little about registration. The Radisson is an all-suite hotel and convention reg was held in the rather small front room of one of the suites that was probably the personal room of a staffer. This apparently sufficed for the size of RCFM (130, up from about 80 last year) but would be insufficient if the conventions grows much more. Also, registration was not open continuously during the day nor was there any backup for it. I had dropped by the hotel on the way home from work that Friday to check out the general layout and the one-day rate, but found reg closed for about two hours during the opening ceremony and other events. Reg was *also* closed for two hours for a 12–2 lunch break on Saturday. My party arrived near the beginning of this window and were thus unable to register. The art show was near registration but the staff member there was unaware of any way to work around this — apparently there was no policy in place to handle anyone who might want to register during this time. Fortunately, reg reopened about an hour earlier than the scheduled time. They really *really* need to have some backup if registration is going to be closed this much — and make sure all staffers know about it — lest they drive away potential attendees.

All in all I had a pleasant day at RCFM. While there’s no way I’ll ever be a regular attendee of such events, I could potentially be tempted back for a day membership if it’s as convenient as this year. As of this writing, RCFM’s web site <www.rcfm.net> has preliminary plans for a third installment of the event next year. I’ll keep an eye open.

No Need For Appeals!

No Need for a Dragon with a Migraine — Chapter 15
The Finale
by PieEyedDragon

Bailiff: Oyez! The court of His Wyrmholeyness, Jarl of Utgard is now in session. Anyone having any matter for his attention, draw nigh and ye shall be hoid. So mote it be!

Puck: Greetings Your Wyrmholeyness.

Dragon: What news Old Thing?

Puck: I just returned Officer Mihoshi to her Station. I got out of there before anyone had the chance to review her recordings. Expect company.

Dragon: Thank you. Anything else?

Puck: Its Thor. He expresses a desire to go fishing. He once hooked and lost the Midgard Serpent, and wants to try his luck again. He hopes that you can go with him, but...

Dragon: But what, Old Thing?

Puck: His former attempt involved using an ox head for bait. He now wants to try something bigger. He has in mind that using a very large worm on a ship’s anchor is the way to go. So,

he thinks of you.

Dragon: He wants me to go fishing with him?

Puck: In a manner of speaking... He wants you to be the bait.

Dragon: Do, please, express my regrets. I have a lot of matters to occupy me here.

— O — O — O —

(The druid next appears.)

Dragon: Any luck finding the combo?

Giant: There is no certain answer. The Brownie died with the secret, and no one knows it now, with one possible exception. Anak, the exiled, was familiar with the Brownies and *may* know something.

Dragon: I used to visit Anak. Is he still alive?

Giant: The signs say yes. He is most likely living underwater near the old city of Tyre. He continues to support the descendants of his Philistine allies. The Israelites killed all his sons: Lahmi, Saph, Nordac the six-fingered, Ishbi-benob, and his adopted son, Goliath, the child of Anak’s brother Rapha. His grandchildren help. Anak did not like Utgard-Loki, and the feeling was mutual; but he kept the engines going as long as he could and then drove the brownies to madness in order that the ship would not crash. It was a rough landing.

Dragon: I know somewhat of rough landings. I once told the tale of my recent injuries and crippled space flight. I left out some details. Instead of a single pass through earth’s atmosphere, I made two.

When I emerged from the wormhole, I was well below the ecliptic plane here, and moving at a sharp angle. I was able to adjust my course to eventually make a long, grazing pass over Antarctica and northeast over the South Pacific; dumping velocity while gravity twisted me into a new orbital plane in the direction of the moon. I passed in front of the moon’s path and used my flame again as a retro-rocket, as I skimmed the mountains of the Lunar dark side.

This also let me lose more speed in a reverse gravity assist as I emerged from behind and headed toward Earth again. This time, I was playing catch-up and could subtract all Earth’s orbital velocity, and later the rotational velocity as I made final reentry on the night side. I burned a path east-northeast from the South Atlantic, across Africa, until I slowed enough to land near Borneo. The water impact finished breaking my back and I had to drag myself up the beach.

Giant: Where were you when my people needed a really talented astro-navigator like Fin Fang Foom the Makluan?

Dragon: That long ago, I was just the Mote in God’s Eye (makes a face). Well, I recommend contacting Anak and/or bringing him back.

— O — O — O —

(The next supplicant is a giantess: strongly built, she exudes independence and self-confidence. She does not kneel.)

Dragon: (*This Princess would make a great meal, but she is not a virgin. Darn.*) Welcome back to Utgard, Lady Atali. What is your petition?

Atali: To know my place, and whether I will be let alone, or hunted. You killed my father, who had exiled me. You now wear his crown. If we fight I will give as good as I get. I am of the line of Ymir.

Dragon: I bore your family no ill-will. Your father struck out at me, but did not survive my counter-strike. You, yourself, are free to come and go as you please; so long as you accept my rule, as these have done.

Atali: I cannot, in honor, accept being your vassal.

Dragon: Then, will you accept being my heir?

Atali: What?
 Dragon: I must establish an orderly succession. Having no offspring, I look for someone acceptable to my subjects: you.
 Atali: I... accept.
 Dragon: Then I declare to all here that you are now Crown Princess Atali, heir to the throne of Jotunheim. *Crowd cheers.* I have an official task for you.
 Atali: What, already?
 Dragon: I send you to seek out Anak. Tell him he is no longer exiled and may return as he wishes. Tell him: PED said so. We seek from him clues as to what the brownie's code phrase may be that locked the ports of Naglfar.
 (Atali departs)
 — O — O — O —
 (a week later...)
 Atali: Lord, Anak sends best wishes, but is somewhat frail. He chooses to remain near Syria to pursue his feud. Sifting his memory, he offers some possible phrases and expresses regret that he can send no certain information.
 Dragon: Let us go now and try his suggestions.
 (outside)
 Dragon: First choice: "Shift *this!* Anak Soul-twister!"
 (nothing)
 Dragon: Second choice: "Loki the Seizer... born in a freezer!"
 (nothing)
 Druid: Well, it seems he didn't think quite so badly of *my* father, after all.
 Dragon: What did he say?
 Druid: He would say: "Yngvi is a louse!"
 (*Click... click... click... click click click* and the massive main portal is faintly outlined.)
 Dragon: Since it was *your* father's name, you get to open the door. Then the real work here will begin, restoring main

power and then the tarn-cloaks.
 (Giants, trolls, Brownies, and others gather around, as the great doorway is slowly swung open.)
 Finding himself nearly alone, the dragon whispers to the giantess.
 Dragon: Princess Atali.
 Atali: (also whispers) What?
 Dragon: Have you given thought to *your* heirs? A single point succession is chancy.
 Atali: Why, are you planning to abdicate?
 Dragon: I have a prior commitment that could call me away at any time.
 Atali: I will not accept just anyone as a mate; and *you* are not my type.
 Dragon: In more ways than one. But, I can assist you in having *select* children. While I was guesting in the land of the dead a while back I picked up a few "hitchhikers."
 Atali: Hitchhikers?
 Dragon: Spirits who had once lived, and would be most appreciative of anyone who would give them new bodies.
 Atali: (considers) What were their names?
 Dragon: These two were male: Hoder — god of Winter and Darkness, and his twin Baldur — god of Springtime.
 Atali: A potent pair to be held in *any* hand! No females available, huh?
 Dragon: Well, not from *there*. But I can provide *one* female spirit. A Sorceress who was nicknamed Fabala.
 Atali: I never heard of her. Certainly not one of the Aesir nor Jotuns. A Vanir?
 Dragon: No. Her origin lay... elsewhere. She was very powerful in her own place. She would appreciate having skin and hair color like yours. *Anything* other than green!
 (Dreaming within her "capsule," Elphaba perceives that her bodiless state might soon find an end. She smiles.)



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