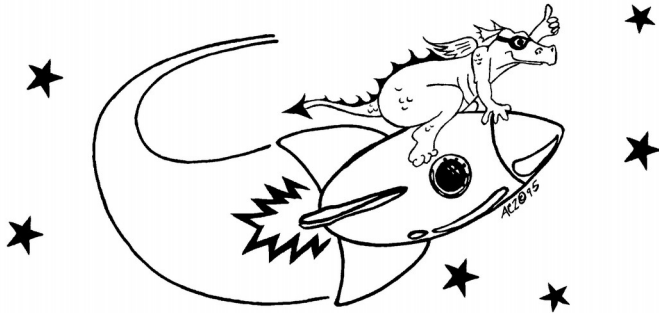


Balticon 55 Rocket Mail

The Vital Newsletter for a Virtual Con



Friday, May 28, 2021 Edition

Balticon Program Updates

Normally at an in person con the Rocketmail newsletter has lots of program updates particularly on Friday due to people missing travel connections and related logistical difficulties. However, with a virtual con travel logistics is less of a problem and the schedule at <https://www.balticon.org/wp55/program-schedule/> is kept updated to the minute making program updates in the Rocketmail less critical. So check the link listed above...

Science Program Updates

Professor **Diana Roman** of the Carnegie Institute for Science was originally scheduled to present on Saturday 11:30 AM in the Science Track. She has agreed to reschedule and start her Science Track presentation at 2:30 PM Friday, so she can accept a last-minute invitation received on Monday May 24th to join a team that will be working in Iceland on the ongoing Geldingadalir eruption. She will be leaving immediately after her Balticon presentation for Reykjavik and will be in the field starting Saturday morning! We anticipate a report on Dr. Roman's new research will be given at Balticon 56 in 2022.

Science Program Presenter **Dr. Gary J. Eden** (scheduled for 7-8 PM, Friday 5/28/21) has just been inducted into the Innovation Hall of Fame (IHOF) for his trendsetting work with optics, lasers and micro-plasma devices. More info visit go.umd.edu/IHOF20. Congratulations!



**Compton Crook
Award Winner**



The Baltimore Science Fiction Society is proud to congratulate Micaiah Johnson as the winner of the 2021 Compton Crook Award for the novel "The Space Between Worlds" published in August 2020 by Del Rey.

**Robert A. Heinlein Award
Balticon News**



BSFS is particularly overjoyed to congratulate science fiction and fantasy author C J Cherryh for winning the 2021 Robert A. Heinlein Award. The award is bestowed for outstanding published works in science fiction and technical writings that inspire the human exploration of space. C J Cherryh will be participating in Virtual Balticon 55. She had previously participated in Balticons 17, 19 and 23 and now adds 55. The Award Committee in this instance recognized C J's body of work, with emphasis on her detailed social science and commercial relationship based stories set in the space station rich Alliance-Union universe.



**BSFS Poetry
Contest Winners**



Congratulations to our 2021 Poetry contest the winners:

1st "It is a Father's Tale" by Eric Nicholson

2nd "Memories of a Mermaid" by Natascha Graham

3rd "Cygnus" by Ryan E. Holman

Honorable Mention "Milicent Patrick Speaks of Monsters" by Laura Shovan

Honorable Mention "The Catty Hours" by Adele Gardner

Read their poetry online at

<http://www.bsfs.org/images/poetry/2021-win.pdf>

At press time still waiting on a pdf of winners to be delivered to be posted to that location...soon will be there.



Virtual Con-Suite News

It was really hard squeezing food and beverages through the monitor to folks last year, so this year the Con-Suite will serve up refreshing program items like book launches and author readings instead. At Balticon we have for years had program items in our con-suite along with snacks and

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beverages for our members, so this is a natural extension into the virtual world. Many of the folks who work on the in-person con-suite are making the virtual one work this year so stop on by and see some of your old friends.

Maryland State Arts Council Bestows Grant on BSFS

The pandemic has damaged many art and cultural institutions in the fair state of Maryland and so the Maryland Legislature created an emergency grant program to assist them. BSFS Treasurer Maria Thompson decided to apply for funds to make up for some of the damage done to BSFS by the pandemic and after reviewing our tale of woe we were chosen for “up to a \$5,000.00 grant” which we have been verbally told will actually be \$5,000.00 in the end. So, you will be seeing the Maryland State Arts Council logo and thank you text of “Balticon is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council” around in a bunch of places for a while. The fact that they accepted a fan run SF Convention into the grant program is really a testament to Maria Thompson’s report writing and accounting and skills (with help from Allison Brown’s grant writing skills) and a watershed in the mainstream culture. When I first started in fandom a SF Con would not stand a chance in Hades of convincing a government committee to give them a grant no matter what was happening in the World. How the times have changed.

Balticon 55 gather.

Balticon 55 is using an online platform known as Gather this year in which the Baltimore Renaissance Harborplace Hotel (which we have recently use for the in-person Balticons) has been rendered in cyberspace and for free anyone can launch an avatar and wander around sort of like at an in-person Balticon. (Thank you to Martin Siemen for programming this hotel layout into Gather.) You can wander into the dealers room and see stuff for sale or into the art show and view items or into the con-suite for a quick meeting with friends. It is so easy to use that in 5 minutes you are moving along... you do want a computer with camera, microphone and speakers because when you get near people/avatars you can open up a window to them and talk through video chat. If you are familiar with the 5th and 6th floors of the Baltimore Renaissance Harborplace Hotel and the rooms layout they are all there. The graphics look a lot like an old video arcade game, but the interface is so very easy to use it is a joy to use. Go to <https://gather.town/app/QqRxv0I4RQIeIYfT/Balticon> and when asked use the password “BookClub“ (without

quotes of course) to get into the Balticon 55 space.

Go-Fund-Me Fundraiser

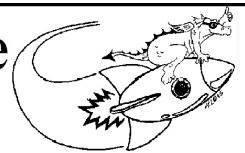
The go-fund-me program is off to a great start with over \$8,500.00 gross raised as of Friday morning. This is gross, not net, as the gifts for various donation levels and shipping cut into net far more than people would expect. Thank you to all of the generous people who are keeping us alive as an organization through this horrible time.

The number of names I have had to add to the memorial plaque at the BSFS Building this last year is equivalent to 5 years of BSFS Members departing this plane of existence in a normal year.. So, please go and get the vaccine and encourage others to do so as I want to see you all at Balticon 56 in person.

**Virtual Con this Year,
Hotel or Bust Next Year !**

Due to the COVID-19 virus we were forced to hold Balticon 54, and now Balticon 55, as virtual online conventions. At this time the CDC rules are being relaxed and hopefully with vaccine flowing we can get back to in-person conventions soon. Given Balticon attracts people of all ages it would be too risky to our membership to hold a physical con at this time even if government orders might allow. It has been a difficult time for everyone, yet the support for BSFS and Balticon from fandom has been awesome and make it so we can hold Balticon next year at the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel.

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