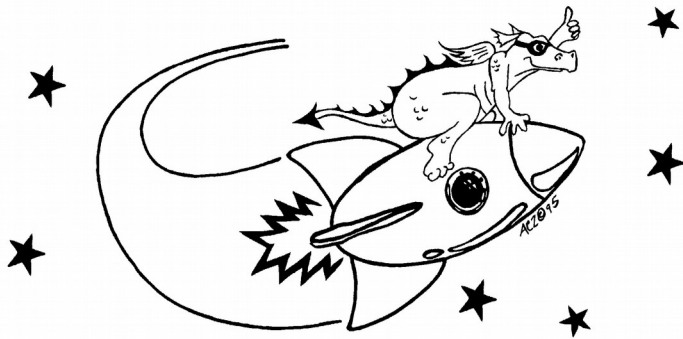


Balticon 54 Rocket Mail

The Vital Newsletter for a Virtual Con



Monday, May 27, 2019 Edition



Today is Towel Day which is celebrated by fans every year on May 25th as a tribute to the author Douglas Adams. Fans carry a towel with them as described in The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. The commemoration was first held May 25, 2001 two weeks after Douglas Adams' death. This is where I normally say don't take the hotel's towels outside the hotel if you decide to borrow one, but this year you can take your virtual towel anywhere you want...



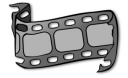
Balticon Program Updates

Dr. Jon Dinman, chair of the cell biology & molecular genetics department at the University of MD, College Park was a scheduled Science Presenter. He was taken to Suburban Hospital and is in their **COVID-19 isolation ward**. He is being given IV fluids and oxygen. He says that he is doing better, but, obviously, things are serious. Jon called COVID-19 "really pernicious".

Balticon staff wished him a speedy recovery and invite him to present at Balticon 55.



Balticon Sunday Night Film Festival Winners



Due to the Virtual nature of the Film Fest this year our normal process of handing out ballots and having the audience vote on the best film was judged impractical. However of the 180 short films submitted these 18 were judged the best by our staff and were run on the Twitch server. In order of presentation they were:

- El Viaje de mi Vida by Andres Camara
- Identity by Panos Pappas and Despina Charalampous
- La Santa by Vega Halen
- Metrocabin by Silvia Otero and Andrés Castro
- Future boyfriend by Ben Rock
- Reboot by Andrei Thutat Ungur
- Seven Seconds by David Bertoni
- Tinder Time by Olga Osorio
- Mechanical Life by Yoshihisa Nakanishi
- Particules by David Brunet
- Capitan Kinesis by Carles Jofre
- X27 by Jose Luis Mora
- The Bridge by Antony Schelts
- N by Jakob von Hieronymus
- God Glitch by Gideon Van Eeden
- Behavior Pattern by Manuel Martin Merino
- Cosas que Pasan by Jesus Loniego
- Washout by Alexandre Masson

Hence, these all were selected for screening from a huge pool of talent.

Note from the UK about VB54

I'd like to send a thank you to the organizers. As somebody from the UK it's unlikely that I will ever get to Balticon in person, and this gave me the con experience without traveling. Thanks again Michael Bernardi

VB54 Fundraising Report

For the record as of 10:30 AM on 5/25/20 the total GoFundMe donations are at \$12,258.00 gifted by the generous fans that are making Virtual Balticon 54 possible. An additional \$625.00 has come into the BSFS paypal account during the GoFundMe campaign by folks who did not want to use GoFundMe and instead used our year round bsfs.org Paypal Donation page <http://www.bsfs.org/donate.htm> link.

The BSFS treasurer reports that “almost” \$2,000.00 was received as checks and or people donating their B54 memberships instead of taking a refund before the start of the con.

Virtual VB54 Attendance

The total unique Virtual Balticon 54 attendance on Zoom for all of Friday was 1343 and on Saturday 2787 and Sunday 2592 people. This does not count folks participating on other platforms such as watching the Twitch or y Tube feeds of the Zoom panels nor Discord and Second Life participation. Discord has 957 registered Balticon users as of today.

Lost and Found

If you lost something in the public function areas of the con this year it was likely an intangible concept as Balticon is virtual this year and our normal lost and found process should not be needed at a virtual con.

News from Around The Con

Art show sales were described as non-existent this year because we did not have art-show sales this year. Last year Balticon 53 had the largest art show in decades and this year thanks to the accursed virus we had the smallest art show and lowest sales at zero in decades.

Dealers room action was very slow because the only dealers room was a list of sales sites for past Balticon dealers to announce where they are selling stuff.

Before the COVID-19 Virus hit we were ahead of the prior year in memberships, hotel rooms and pretty much everything and it looked like we were on track for a great Balticon in 2020 being the largest since Balticon 50. Then the virus forced a shutdown. Execution of the Virtual Balticon 54 was a triumph of spirit during adversity, but we all hope we will be able to have a physical Balticon next year. As President of BSFS I wish to thank all of the volunteers who pivoted from their traditional jobs to make Virtual Balticon happen. We were very lucky that this years con-chair has excellent and extensive computer skills and our tech crew are almost all computer professionals in their real world jobs and were able to make Virtual Balticon happen. This worked out very well this year and we all learned many critical parts about how we can add a streaming service to the physical Balticon to help the SF Fans who can no longer travel participate at the con. .

Rocket Mail Done This Year Still Send News

Year round about once a month BSFS sends out a email with news about Cultural Events around Central Maryland, events happening at the BSFS Building and Balticon updates. If you have news you want to have added, as long as it will be of interest to SF Fans and is not a glaringly over the top self promotion with a spammy tinge then send that item to dale@bsfs.org and we will review and add if appropriate. If you want to get email from our list-serve type news service also send email to dale@bsfs.org letting me know and I will add you to the list by sending an invite you can just click on. (This list is managed by a google server) Otherwise, I hope to see you at the next Balticon on Memorial Day weekend in 2021 or somewhere out there in fandom.