

Firecracker

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NEWS

The NTXB Facebook group is going to have a name change soon, to better distinguish it from our sister group, DFW Burners. This change will not affect your current group membership, and you should still be able to find us by searching Facebook if you decide to join later. An announcement with the new name will be sent out next issue.

The Grimm Cryogen effigy proposal was chosen as this year's effigy and the Aeolian Temple project was also approved! You can check out the rough sketches of the Aeolian Temple that were submitted with the proposal in the web-based-graphical version of this Firecracker on the official NTXB website. If you want to see The Grimm Cryogen, you're just gonna have to come home and see it for yourself!

Sci-fi Short Story #1

Reality Overflow, by Charles Dahlkoetter

It was a blow to the ego to discover you've been living in a computer simulation, sure, but to a gifted hacker it also opened up some interesting possibilities.

Trissa followed a lot of scientific discoveries floating through the media, but lately what had caught her attention were experiments on the smallest of scales, where physics did strange things. It seemed odd that some things almost didn't know what they were until you looked at them. Am I a particle or a wave? Am I over here or in this position, with this spin? It was like we'd reached the limits of our resolution, and things only lost their ambiguity when we focused on them, like a video game loading the terrain just as you came across it.

To a hacker, the most important thing about any program is its vulnerabilities, often created by forcing something unexpected to happen. You pop open the code by dividing by zero, causing a bug; kind of like when Doctor Who asks a robot an impossible question in order to overload its logic circuits.

Trissa found her bug while messing around with a high-end laser cutter at the local Makerlab. If she'd had less curiosity than sense when it came to this equipment it probably wouldn't have happened, but when an idea caught her attention she had the tendency to clamp onto it like a vise. This particular idea involved reflecting the laser so that it ended up trapped in an endless back and forth. This probably voided the warranty, but it was late at night, no one was around, and Trissa just wanted to see what would happen.

What happened didn't make sense.

When Trissa began decreasing the distance of the two mirrors, rigged up to her 3D printer motors and laptop, she caught a flicker out of the corner of her eye. It took her another ten minutes to find that exact spot, but what she found was more than a flicker. The beam of light suddenly became a dashed line. Light, no light, light again, no light. Her console's load sensor display exploded in ones and zeros. Trissa stared dumbfounded.

Could that be a message? A code? Binary?

"I wonder if I can interact with it," she said to herself.

The ones and zeros suddenly stopped scrolling by, disappeared, and were replaced by a line of text.

PLEASE DO NOT ALTER THE CODE.

Trissa smiled. "Sorry, I'm in charge of my own experience now."

Sci-fi Short Story #2

Long Way Back Home, by Earl Davis

The door was terrifying.

It was taller and wider than it needed to be. A red dusting of corrosion on the surface, aided by the glow of led light from above, gave it the appearance of being hazy like it was constantly in motion. Janel, the youngest in my orientation class, told me that if I put my hand near it I'd feel the pulse from the portal being generated inside.

I tried picturing it in my mind, space twisting and pushing then tearing outward. It was the ultimate violation of physical law, and proof of our god-like hubris, but that portal was our only hope.

The automatic warning claxons sounded, pulling me from my imaginings. It wouldn't be long. I didn't want to step through it. I didn't want to leave everything and everyone, but there was no stopping that now. I'd already said my good-byes.

Human scientists had seen the Cataclysm coming around 10,000 earth years ago. Two large comets collided, and disrupted the gravitational balance of a central star system. It caused a chain reaction like dropping a lit weld-torch in a room full of explosives. Over the course of a millennium, we built large ships, evacuated our planets and ran.

It was around 3000 years post-exodus, when Jarl Captainson discovered that we weren't moving fast enough. The Cataclysm was accelerating, and our ships were already pushing the laws of physics as far as we could. Human-kind was doomed.

At 8538 post-exodus, Niala Xin appeared before the Navigator's Council with a solution. We could time-travel, she said. It had been tried before, but always unsuccessfully. She said that we'd failed because we'd always tried to twist and tear space-time as if it were a piece of paper. The solution was to create a temporal vacuum by manipulating tachyons in a closed space. The inherent pressure of time itself would press against the space-time barrier trying to fill that vacuum, and would tear open a hole through which we could travel.

There was a catch, though. There's always a catch.

We couldn't change the past. Not that we weren't allowed to, but that we couldn't in any meaningful way. Time would protect itself. Kill a world leader to prevent tragedy, and another would step up. Save a life and someone else would die to keep the timeline balanced. Even the Cataclysm was inevitable.

The best we would get was to live out our lives. We could love and laugh and have children without the fear that they would be the last of our line. Humanity's future was in our past.

So I found myself stepping through my portal. Due to instability, only one person was allowed through each opening and this was mine. I took a deep breath and stepped through.

Disoriented doesn't seem like strong enough a word. I was lost. A thousand bright lights pierced my eyes. A heavy thumping in the air rattled my bones and threatened to shatter my ears. The heat of a nearby flame licked my skin, burning me.

Pain was good though. Pain meant I was alive. I cackled with glee.

I was home.

Did you know that Myschievia has Art Grants?

That means that if you have a cool idea for an art project, performance art, science experiment, or any other visual, interactive slice of awesomeness... YOU can apply for an Art Grant! All you do is fill out the Art Grant Application (takes a

bit of time, so look it over in advance). Shave your pet alligator or run around a burning carnival while the Art Committee processes all the applications, and then, if your project is one of the selected projects, you will get cash money to help you complete your vision!

AWESOME? YUP! But that is how much we love you and ART! Applications close on August 1st. You can find out the details of the application [by clicking here](#).

If you have any questions between now and then regarding the application, the art grant committee, or anything, really, reach out to Heather Marnell, Art Lead for Myschievia 2015, at art-lead-2015@ntxb.org.

Um... hey... shouldn't we start talking about tickets or something?

ok, FINE! geez... here's what we know so far:

Round 1 Ticket Sales begin July 15 and end when they are gone.

Round 2 Ticket Sales begin September 15 and end when they are gone.

Art Tickets: \$85

Regular Adult Tickets (13 and up): \$65

Child Tickets (ages 3-12): \$35

Baby Tickets (under 3 is free but we need their names): \$0

More info will be located on the official NTXB website as it becomes available.

You can check for updates [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the Firecracker?

A periodically pushed-out publication pertaining to public propaganda about Myschievia penned by people who purposefully provide their time. (it's a volunteer gazette, ya'll)

I have an idea for an article/announcement/short story/art work to put in the Firecracker, may I submit it for consideration?

YES! YES! By the old gods and the new, YES! Please send them to: thentxbfirecracker@gmail.com

But I have others questions about other stuff!

You can find the graphical version of the latest Firecracker, as well as info about the NTXB, Myschievia, Volunteering, and Ticket info on our website at ntxb.org