



ASFACTS 2011

SPOOKTACULAR OCTOBER EDITION

WILLIS AMONG HUGO WINNERS

Winners for the Hugo Awards and for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer were announced at a ceremony August 27 during Renovation, the 69th World Science Fiction Convention, held in Reno, NV. Bubonicon friend Connie Willis received her third honor of the year for her time-travel novel that was split in two.

A list of winners follows:

Novel: *Blackout/All Clear* by Connie Willis, Novella: *The Lifecycle of Software Objects* by Ted Chiang, Novelette: "The Emperor of Mars" by Allen M. Steele, Short Story: "For Want of a Nail" by Mary Robinette Kowal, Related Work: *Chicks Dig Time Lords: A Celebration of Doctor Who by the Women Who Love It* edited by Lynne M. Thomas & Tara O'Shea, Graphic Story: *Girl Genius Volume 10: Agatha Heterodyne and the Guardian Muse* by Phil & Kaja Foglio.

Dramatic Presentation – Long Form: *Inception*, Dramatic Presentation – Short Form: *Doctor Who*, "The Pandorica Opens/The Big Bang," Professional Editor – Long Form: Lou Anders, Professional Editor – Short Form: Sheila Williams, Professional Artist: Shaun Tan.

Semiprozine: *Clarkesworld*, Fanzine: *The Drink Tank*, Fan Writer: Claire Brialey, Fan Artist: Brad W. Foster, and John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Lev Grossman.

The Big Heart Award went to Gay Haldeman.

TEXAS WINS 2013 WORLDCON

Texas won its bid to host the 2013 World Science Fiction Convention in voting held at Renovation in mid-August. The 71st Worldcon – LoneStarCon 3 – will be held August 29-September 2, 2013, at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center in San Antonio, TX. They received 694 of 760 votes cast.

Guests of Honor include Ellen Datlow, James Gunn, Norman Spinrad, Darrell K. Sweet, and Willie Siro; with Paul Cornell as toastmaster; and Leslie Fish and Joe R. Lansdale as special guests.

Currently, an attending membership is \$160.

ED BRYANT HOME SAFE AFTER BECOMING ILL AT BUBONICON

Colorado author Ed Bryant ended up in the hospital after becoming ill during his visit to Bubonicon 43 August 26-28. What first was thought to be food poisoning turned out to be much more serious.

Bryant checked into a Colorado hospital on August 28, the day after his 66th birthday, with gastro-paresis, which affects the throat, the stomach and the digestive process. Bryant reported online that he spent eight days total in the Intensive Care Unit.

He was transferred out of intensive care on September 4, and according to author Melanie Tem, "his heart and kidneys appear to be OK." Bryant spent a few more days in general care at the hospital, followed by several days of additional recovery at the Tems' house.

In an email, Bryant said, "My decision to come to Bubonicon was pretty much last minute, prompted by Lou Berger's generous offer of a ride, but more especially by the thought that I could spend some quality time with quite a lot of *Wild Carders* and talk about the

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Club Elections & Mars Talk Tonight!** Dr. Maria Lane of UNM's geography department gives an encore presentation of her Mars talk from Bubonicon 43. Plus, Three Offices need to be filled for Nov 2011-Oct 2012, and the "challenge ingredient" for December chosen (see below). Voting rules apply, based on attendance and dues paid to date.
- **November 11:** A visit from NM author Walter Jon Williams on his latest projects and books.
- **December 9:** The 7th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off, and short SF-oriented holiday films. Plus, the annual issue of *SITHFACTS* will be distributed (deadline Sunday, Dec 4). Please help us clean up our room at the end of the evening!
- **January 13, 2012:** Perhaps a club discussion of what members read and enjoyed in 2011...
- **February 10:** Unknown this far out. We do know there will be a Valentine issue of *ASFACTS*.

Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. **Darth Vader**, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Phone: (505) 266-8905. E-mail: cwrcraig@nmia.com. *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. *SITHFACTS* out each December. **NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, Dec 4.** **Club Officers:** Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Jessica L. Coyle, Moderator. Harriet Engle, Alternator. Jack Skeleton, Halloween Advisor. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Craig Chrissinger & Kristen Dorland (505) 459-8734.

next book. I even brought with me my old Sewer Jack tour jacket. Things started going south in Las Vegas, NM, when we stopped for a quick lunch, and I ordered a big bowl of green chili chicken stew. I was already starting to slip out of healthful parameters, but the soup didn't help. Hence the thought of food poisoning, which didn't turn out to be the diagnosis.

"I went to opening ceremonies. All in all, I spent about two hours at the con. Got to see George RR Martin and Melinda Snodgrass, Walter Jon Williams, Steve Stirling, Gail and John Miller. Saw Vic Milan in the audience but didn't get to speak to him. Ty Franck and Carrie Vaughn and George I'd gotten to spend some great time with a few weeks before in Denver. And it was an absolute pleasure finally to meet Paul Cornell."

Things deteriorated quickly for Bryant, and dinner at a nearby Mexican restaurant Friday of Bubonicon 43 did not help. After that dinner, he went back to his room at the Sheraton Airport Hotel and did not move for the rest of the convention. "I should have gone to an ER," Bryant wrote. "I thought I could ride it out. We westerners are never more stupid than when we think we know what we're doing. I got sicker on Saturday. It was absolutely the worst birthday of my life."

On August 28, Bryant's friends drove him to Denver in the back of their van. Bryant decided it was best to get back home as he was worried about the possibility of "getting out of a distant hospital alone and stranded."

He noted, "I've been a type-1 diabetic for 43 years. Evidently I had a fun bout with gastro-paresis – where your GI system shuts down, 'vapor locks,' if you will. And the GI guy found something totally unsuspected. My esophagus has evidently been eroding away for years, with lots of scar tissue."

Now back home, Bryant told his friends, "I'm trying to get strength built back up, work with a liquid/soft foods diet, let my esophagus heal, and take exquisite care to keep my blood sugar under control."

An auction will be held October 23 at Milehicon 43 to raise funds to help with Bryant's medical bills. More details and updates on his situation, can be found at the Friends of Ed Bryant Facebook page.

SARA DOUGLASS PASSES AWAY

Australian author Sara Warneke, 54, who wrote bestselling fantasy novels as Sara Douglass, died September 26 of cancer, reported Locus Online in late September.

Warneke was born June 2, 1957, in Penola, Australia. She began publishing in 1995 with *BattleAxe*, and wrote more than 20 books, notably Aurealis Award-winners *Starman* (1996), *Enchanter* (1996), and *The Wounded Hawk* (2001), as well as the *Wayfarer Redemption* series, the *Crucible* trilogy, and the *Darkglass*

Mountain series. She lived in Tasmania, and was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2008. Although she underwent treatment, it returned in 2010.

SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group focuses on Albuquerque authors the next two months! The group first meets 7:30 pm Monday, October 17, at Page One to discuss *An Old Friend of the Family* by the late Fred Saberhagen. The group then focuses November 21 on the space opera *Leviathan Wakes* by James S.A. Corey (Daniel Abraham & Ty Franck).

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the 3rd Monday of each month. Books for discussion are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on them. For more info, contact Yvonne at piebald@juno.com or Craig at 266-8905.

GREEN SLIME AWARDS HANDED OUT

In a ceremony August 28 at Bubonicon 43 at the Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel in Albuquerque, NM, first-time Green Slime Mistress Jessica L. Coyle presented the following with recognition of their wretchedness in the last 12 months:

Adult Film: *Skyline* (boring alien-invasion film, an epic "fan film")

Teen Film: *Red Riding Hood* (deadly serious but so preposterous)

Media Trends: CGI/Live-Action Films, like *The Smurfs* (stop raping my childhood)

Television: *Camelot* (on Starz - looks cheap, underimagined, even nudity can't help)

SyFy Movie: *Mega Python vs. Gatoroid* (atrocious film with sloppy spfx, but it does have an epic cat fight between '80s teen pop stars Tiffany and Debbie Gibson)

SF Novel: *Death Most Definite* by Trent Jamieson (boringly blah with weak execution)

Book Cover Art: *Love & Rockets* anthology (everything wrong about it; tacky, just awful)

Toy: Web Battlers Whippin' Web-Chuk Spider-Man (another "mature" disaster)

WILLIS WINS 2011 HEINLEIN AWARD

Connie Willis has won the 2011 Robert A. Heinlein Award, given for outstanding published works in science fiction and technical writings that inspire the human exploration of space, Locus Online reported in mid-September. Winners are chosen by a committee of SF authors chaired by Dr. Yoji Kondo, and receive a plaque, a sterling silver medallion, and two lapel pins, all featuring the likeness of Robert A. Heinlein.

GEORGE RR MARTIN "MILLIONAIRE"

Amazon.com announced in mid-September that George R.R. Martin has sold over a million Kindle e-books.

Martin said, "Groucho Marx once said, 'I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member,' but even Groucho might have made an exception for the Kindle Million Club. It's a real thrill to be inducted into this one."

Martin has been writing professionally since 1971. He is the eleventh author to sell over a million copies, joining writers including James Patterson, Suzanne Collins and Charlaine Harris.

KING HATCHES *SHINING* 2

It's been 34 years since Stephen King published *The Shining*, the haunted-hotel story that remains among his most iconic novels. It took three and a half decades, but King officially announced a sequel to the book in late September that will feature a grown-up version of his boy hero, Danny Torrance.

King made the official announcement via his website September 26, after a weekend appearance at George Mason University during which he both discussed his ideas for *Dr. Sleep*, and read an excerpt from it. *Dr. Sleep*'s plot includes a traveling group of vampires called The Tribe.

King has been publicly toying with the idea since 2009, even going so far as to offer a poll on his website at one point asking readers what he should work on next, with *Dr. Sleep* as one of the choices. The book will revisit the haunted child with psychic powers, Danny Torrance, who is now an emotionally scarred adult working at a hospice, and pit him against "The Tribe" mentioned in the announcement. King spoke more about the concept during his GMU appearance:

"This is an idea that I've had for some time. I wrote a novel in the '70s called *The Shining*... I always wondered what happened to that kid, Danny Torrance, when he grew up... and this story started to form. The book isn't finished yet, it's called *Dr. Sleep*. This kinda goes back to: What's the worst thing you can think of? I knew that there were bad people in this story that were like vampires, only that what they sucked out was not blood, but psychic energy from special people like Danny Torrance. And I came to realize that these people were called The Tribe and that they move around a lot. Their leader is a woman called Rose [unintelligible] they all have these kinda pirate names, because pirates are sort of what they are."

No word yet on when we might see this book. King has a new time-travel novel, *11/22/63*, out in November,

and a companion novel to his *Dark Tower* series (*The Wind Through the Keyhole*) on its way next spring, so it could be late next year or sometime in 2013.

MILEHICON PREPARES FOR 43RD CELEBRATION

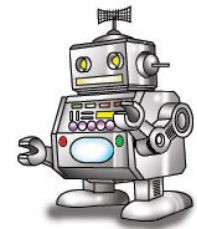
Milehicon, Colorado's longest-running SF convention, will celebrate its 43rd incarnation October 21-23 with a "Robots" theme at Denver's Hyatt Regency-Tech Center on East Tufts Avenue near the southern end of the Mile High City. This year's Guests of Honor are authors Vernor Vinge, Glen Cook and editor Gardner Dozois. Artist Guest is Theresa Mather, and Toastmaster is Mario Acevedo.

Other guests that New Mexicans may recognize include Kevin J. Anderson, Paolo Bacigalupi, Doug Beason, David Boop, Craig Chrissinger, Fred Cleaver, Daniel and David Dvorkin, Cynthia Felice, Warren Hammond, Bradley Lyau, Charles & Tauni Orndorff, Jeanne Stein, Robert Stikmanz, John Stith, David Lee Summers, James Van Pelt, Carrie Vaughn and Connie Willis.

Programming starts at 3 pm Friday, which some offered items as a panel on world building, a robot-themed Improvocation, the Milehicon Mix, Munch & Mingle, the Critter Floatilla Race, mask workshops, "Carrie and The Midnight Hour," and late-night readings.

Saturday is full of events, such as the con suite coffeeklatsch sponsored by Who Else Books, costuming demos, performances by Serpentmoon, a panel on podcasting basics, Name That Tune, science presentations, the Costume Masquerade, the Turkey Readoff, and the Literacy Auction. Sunday offers up such sport as the Critter Crunch, the GoH remarks, the art auction, Closing Ceremonies and the Dead Dog.

Memberships are \$45 at the door for all three days, with daily rates also offered. The Hyatt Regency is offering rooms at \$89 single/double and \$124 triple. More information can be found at www.milehicon.org. Hotel reservations 303-779-1234.



NPR RELEASES TOP 100 SF LIST

In early August, National Public Radio released the results of this year's annual readers' survey. They invited listeners to choose their favorite SF and fantasy novels (excluding YA, horror, and paranormal romances). More than 5,000 people submitted nominations to produce a list of 237 nominees, and over 60,000 votes

were cast to create a list of the "Top 100 Science-Fiction, Fantasy Books." The top ten results are:

1. *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien
 2. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams
 3. *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card
 4. *The Dune Chronicles* by Frank Herbert
 5. *A Song of Ice and Fire* series by George R.R. Martin
 6. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell
 7. *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
 8. *The Foundation* trilogy by Isaac Asimov
 9. *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
 10. *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman
- The full titles list can be found on the NPR website.

GAME OF THRONES WINS EMMY AWARDS

Game of Thrones didn't win Outstanding Drama Series or most of the other 13 nominations it received at the 63rd Primetime Emmy Awards in mid-September. But standout Peter Dinklage, who plays the clever dwarf Tyrion Lannister in HBO's *Thrones*, did snag a well-deserved Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series.

The other big winner was Jim Parsons, who won his second Emmy in a row for his portrayal of super nerd Sheldon on CBS's *The Big Bang Theory*.

Game of Thrones also won Outstanding Main Title Design at the Emmys' Creative Arts Awards, which were announced on Sept. 10. Other Creative winners included Comedy Central's *Futurama* as Outstanding Animated Program and Outstanding Voice-Over Performance for Maurice LaMarche as Lrrr and Orson Welles. And AMC's *The Walking Dead* appropriately won Outstanding Prosthetic Makeup.

The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences awarded the 2010-2011 Primetime Emmys for programs and individual achievements on September 18 from the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles.

TUDYK'S VIEWS ON SERENITY SEQUEL

It's been nine years since Joss Whedon's *Firefly* first aired and six since the cinematic extension, *Serenity*, hit screens, and the fan hunger for more Tales from the Verse has never waned. Luckily, *Serenity*'s laconic pilot knows where he'd want to see a sequel go, and who should be the focus.

In an interview with blastr.com in late September to promote his upcoming horror comedy *Tucker & Dale vs. Evil*, Tudyk acknowledged that he and the rest of the *Firefly/Serenity* crew are getting a little long in the tooth to make a prequel and, given the fatal events that tran-

spired in *Serenity*, a sequel wouldn't feature ... um, everyone. But he did have an idea or two:

"This is how I see it happening, and this is just all out of my head, please do not put this on anyone else 'cause I've gotten in trouble in the past but I see Nathan Fillion in another 10 years, teaming up with Joss Whedon and doing something where he brings back Mal...

"Mal living on some planet alone, he's shunned everyone and everybody and something happens that draws him back in to do it. I absolutely know that Nathan would be up for it, I know Joss Whedon would be up for it."

ELLISON SUES IN TIME

Award-winning science fiction godfather Harlan Ellison is suing Fox to prevent the release of Andrew Niccol's sci-fi thriller *In Time*, claiming that too much is too similar to his own "Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman."

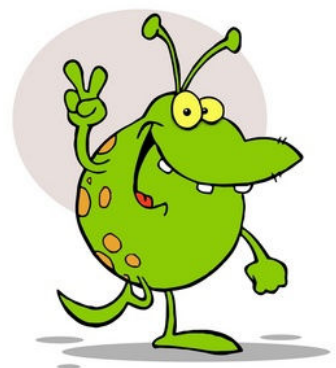
And Ellison doesn't just want to get paid for what he sees as copyright infringement – he wants to stop *In Time*'s October 28 release and force New Regency and Fox (the producer and distributor, respectively) to burn every copy of the film, reporter blastr.com in mid-September.

In a complaint filed September 14, Ellison claims that Niccol's film is based on his 1965 work, itself "one of the most famous and widely published science fiction short stories of all time." And, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*, the suit claims that both stories are about "a dystopian corporate future in which everyone is allotted a specific amount of time to live." In both works, a government authority known as a "Timekeeper" tracks the precise amount of time each citizen has left...

The complaint goes on to list similarities in the features of the universe as well as the plot surfaces – the manipulation of time an individual can live, the type of death experienced by those whose time runs out, rebellion by story protagonists, and so forth.

Ellison has reportedly been fending off Hollywood interest in "Repent, Harlequin" for years but recently allowed "a third party" to adapt it into screenplay form, hoping to sell it – and *In Time* jeopardizes that potential.

Most copyright infringement lawsuits get dismissed from court, but given Ellison's standing, the pervasiveness of the work itself, and the fact that Ellison has sued on similar grounds before with positive results – *The*



Terminator was given a "with acknowledgement to the works of Harlan Ellison" credit after the author sued, claiming that James Cameron ripped off Ellison's *Outer Limits* episodes "Soldier" and "Demon With a Glass Hand" – it's entirely possible this won't go away anytime soon.

BUBONICON 43 BREAKS RECORDS, PERFORMANCE VERY SUCCESSFUL

With 722 memberships, Bubonicon 43 was the largest fan-run New Mexico convention to date (an impressive 79 people larger than 2010). With increased attendance and frugal spending, this year's convention easily added to the nest egg and various improvements/new equipment are planned. It was, simply, a major success! Indeed, people seem to really like Steampunk.

In the end, Bubonicon 43 donated a record \$3,000 to non-profit organizations. The Williamson Library Collection at Eastern NM University and the local Road-runner Food Bank were given \$1,200 each, while \$600 was donated to the American Red Cross to assist with various disaster reliefs.

Bubonicon 43 saw three new participants in programming – Ty Franck, Darynda Jones and Sam Sykes; plus appearances from Diana Gabaldon, Ed Bryant, and Great Britain's Paul Cornell.

Well-received programming included the 8th Annual Authors Afternoon Tea (coordinated by Pati Nagle, Jane Lindskold and Joan Saberhagen, with several assistants), the Chapa'ai of Fortune game (run by the Orndorffs of Colorado Springs), the John Picacio-George RR Martin conversation, Picacio's slide show, Martin's interview of Stephen Leigh for the GoH presentation, the Costume Contest, Connie Willis' irony talk, the Steampunk definition panel, the Green Slime Awards, and the Alien Archaeology panel.

The Art Show had 44 artists displaying their wares with sales of \$7,560. It wasn't a record, but the show had respectful sales with 36% of all items sold. The Sunday Auction was up from 2010 with total sales of \$1,419 (*Froomb* went for just \$30). Of that, 74 percent of that money went to Bubonicon. The Charity Auction on Friday was up from 2010, raising \$1,154 (also donated was \$61 from pre-con sales and various individuals).

So, no matter what the world economic situation, Bubonicon 43 was a success. The 8th year at the Sheraton Airport was much easier than during last year's major renovation construction.

COSTUME CONTEST AWARDS: Best of Show went to Sir Reginald Blethly-Smythe (Steve Sutherland), Best Workmanship was the Whimsical Menagerie (Cindy Iacovetto), Best Presentation went to Black Swan (Megan Pribyl), Best Youth Costume was the Daughters

of Holmes & Watson (Erica Phillippe & Madison Martin), Best Steampunk Theme went to Aggressive Cryptozoology (Ken & Jackie Coombes), Most Humorous was the Editor From Hell (Patricia Rogers & Scott Phillips), Most Animal Magnetism went to Reign of the Pig (Quillon Campbell & Keara Skye), Best Cheese Appeal was Elmyra, Mistress of the Dim (Jessica Coyle), Up-and-Coming: Costume Con 31 Award went to the Adventuresses (Glenda Wright & Roxanne Bernstein), and Best Group Presentation was "Is There a Doctor in the House" (Eddie Dethlefs, Doug Bruch, Alan Krajcich, Michelle Watkins & Michael Bernstein). Honorable Mentions went to Dr. Hugo Strange (Steven Riley), the Industrial Fairy (Alex Smith), the Birds (Shannon Jay) and Creed of the Seamstress (Paula Bauman).

ART SHOW AWARDS: Professional to John Picacio, Amateur to Derek Smith, Student to Leia Roach, and Beast of Show (con theme) to Kerry Maffeo.

All in all, the con went very well and very smoothly thanks to every individual who pitched in! So, a tip of the con-com's hats to everyone who contributed their time & efforts!

Finally, congratulations to Kristen Dorland and Craig Chrissinger, who were confirmed as the Bubonicon 44 co-chairs in August.

BUBONICON 44 will be held August 24-26, 2012, at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown (Louisiana & I-40), with Guest of Honor Brandon Sanderson, Toastmaster Michael Cassutt, and Guest Artist Ursula Vernon. Rooms are \$99 single-double, \$109 triple-quad. Much more space at a reasonable rate for the amount of room the convention is gaining. Plenty of restaurants within walking distance, and easy access to the interstate!

Good luck to the 2012 team during their first year at the new hotel (suggestions/program ideas are being taken now at bubonicon@gmail.com). And the Chicago Worldcon actually starts four days after Bubonicon 44 ends – yep, the traditional Labor Day weekend.

SHUTTLE LAUNCH!

ENDEAVOR'S LAST FLIGHT, MAY 2011

by Kathy Hedges

In the end, the shuttle rose into the air on a tower of flame, and the roar of rocket engines swept over us. It was, as advertised, a spectacular launch. However, getting there was half the fun.

Walter Jon Williams and I got invited to STS-134, the last launch of the space shuttle *Endeavor*, because of an email correspondence that had grown up between him and astronaut Mike Fincke. Fincke is a regular reader of Walter's books, and a couple of years ago, they had a video phone call while Fincke was on the International Space Station (ISS). Since then, they've been in email

correspondence, and that resulted in Fincke sending us invitations to watch the shuttle launch from the VIP area at Cape Canaveral.

In case you haven't been following this, the shuttle program has wound down. After 30 years of shuttle launches, and now that the ISS is pretty much complete, the shuttles are retired. Soyuz will still take passengers up to the ISS, and the United States will start looking to private companies to carry people into space. At the time of writing, there is only one launch remaining in the shuttle program.

So Walter and I decided we really had to see this launch, even though it meant traveling to Cape Canaveral, FL, and running the risk that the launch would be scrubbed at the last moment. But planning for it wasn't easy. The launch was originally set for July 2010, then for November, then for February 2011, then – finally – this April. For months, we had to avoid committing to things that might interfere with potential launch dates.

As the day grew closer, we finally booked airline tickets, although Walter took care to get the kind that would allow us to change the date if need be. The day before we left, Walter realized he had never swung by the Automobile Association to pick up a map and guidebook, because the trip had always seemed so iffy to us.

Nevertheless, there we were, on April 27, heading for Florida, where, two days later, the shuttle was scheduled to launch. We arrived at the Albuquerque airport in our Florida clothes to find a stiff wind blowing in chilly temperatures. Once we got through the outdoor check-in and got indoors, our day started to look much better. We flew to Houston and changed to a plane that would stop in Nashville and finally take us to Orlando.

Fortunately, we did not know that April 27 would become notorious as the day when swarms of tornadoes would ravage the southeastern United States and kill over 300 people.

Admittedly, things were a bit bumpy, landing in Nashville. The pilot announced, to passengers from Texas and New Mexico, that all that wet stuff coming out of the Nashville skies was called “rain.” On the way from Nashville to Orlando, it was obvious we were passing over a huge storm system, and one that had tall towers of cloud standing above the main cloud bank in spots, evidently over powerful storms below. But it wasn't till we saw the news reports the next morning that we had any idea we had managed to jump over one of the most deadly tornado swarms in U.S. history.

We were staying in Orlando, which has heaps of hotel rooms and is only 40-some miles from Cape Canaveral. Thursday, April 28, was our dry run to the Cape, to check in at Kennedy Space Center, get our VIP badges, and see some exhibits. Cape Canaveral is surrounded by acres and acres of wildlife preserves, wetlands, nature reserves, and otherwise undeveloped land.

Kennedy Space Center is getting to look more and

more like a history museum. They have the original control rooms for the Mercury program and the Apollo-Saturn program preserved. (If the Gemini control room is there, we didn't stumble across it.) In both cases, there was a very well-staged recreation of an event, with overhead screens showing the engineers in their white shirts and neckties counting down to Alan Shepherd's launch or sweating while Neal Armstrong landed the LEM on the Moon. There were also displays to put the moon program in the cultural and historic context of the 1960s. Most of the visitors to KSC were born long after the moon program was over.

In the late afternoon, we drove to nearby Cocoa Beach, where Mike Fincke's family and friends were having a “launch party” to celebrate his (supposed) launch the next day. Since all the astronauts on the mission were in quarantine, Fincke himself was represented by a life-sized cardboard photo. However, Mike's wife, Renita, was present in person, and was a bundle of energy. Since Mike himself was one of nine children and Renita came from a large East Indian family, this family gathering was not small. They had rented a pavilion at a local hotel, and we estimated there were about 200 people present. (Not all the Indian relatives had sprung for plane tickets to attend the event).

After a fajita buffet, we were treated to a slide show of Mike and his family and some brief tributes by friends and a fellow astronaut. Table centerpieces were cardboard cut-outs of the space shuttle. Walter presented Renita with two of his books, autographed for herself and Mike. I have a photo of them on my cell phone – ask me to see it sometime!

Friday morning, we arose and prepared for another drive from Orlando to the Cape, this time for the launch itself. The news reports were full of the royal wedding in Britain, which had just happened that morning. The other big news story was that thousands of people were expected to converge on Cape Canaveral for the *Endeavor* launch.

The launch wasn't supposed to be till mid-afternoon, and as we were arriving at KSC in mid-morning, we were surprised to see a lot of cars going in the other direction. The guard at the gate said something in a Southern accent that we couldn't quite make out about “48-hour turn-around.” We said “Yes, yes” like old pros at launch-watching. When we actually arrived at KSC, we found out that the launch had been scrubbed, and the soonest it could be re-scheduled was at least 48 hours later, because the launch staff had to go home, rest, and come back to work fresh.

As long as we were there, we decided to stay at KSC and see the few exhibits we hadn't seen the day before. We overheard other families making plans to go home, because dad had to go to work on Monday, and they couldn't hang out any longer. Our return flight wasn't till Tuesday, May 3, so we decided to hang around



and see what developed.

What developed was that the launch was postponed for two weeks because there was an equipment malfunction that had to be corrected, tested, and double-checked. On Saturday, we drove to St. Augustine,

stayed two nights at a beach-front hotel, toured historic parts of the city, and headed back to Orlando, to fly back to New Mexico. I should mention that the weather in Florida was perfect while we were there: temperatures in the seventies and eighties, moderate humidity, pleasant ocean water temperatures. Our friends in New Mexico were alternately freezing and battling windstorms.

But we did face the question as to whether we should buy still more plane tickets to take yet another trip to Florida. We asked ourselves the question, “Ten years from now, will we remember that we saved money, or that we saw the shuttle take off?” The answer was obvious, and Walter booked us the next set of plane flights.

This time, it was to be a drive-by launch-watching. We flew to Florida on Sunday, May 15 and flew back on Tuesday, May 17, and there had darn-well better be a launch in-between.

The launch was scheduled much earlier in the morning this time. We got to KSC before dawn, after five hours of sleep. We sat on bleachers, looking across a lagoon to the launch pad, where *Endeavor* was poised to go. Large screens in front of us gave a countdown and showed video of the astronauts climbing on board.

Meanwhile, the lagoon in front of us reflected the clouds as they turned pink with sunrise. Egrets skimmed the surface, and flocks of pelicans arced past. Merry fish leaped out of the water. Alligators cruised quietly by, looking for the merry fish. We never would have seen that lovely sunrise if we hadn’t gone out for the launch.

When it came, the launch was 20 seconds of glorious flame before the shuttle was lost in the clouds. The wave of sound washed over us. Far above, a plane passenger snapped a shot out of the plane window of the shuttle as it punched up through the clouds and arced through the sky. That person, who happened to be in the right place at the right time, got a better view than we had, for all our planning.

Nevertheless, we were glad we saw the launch, and we thoroughly enjoyed Florida. Thanks to advice from Patricia Rogers as to where to go and what to see and eat, we had a wonderful time.

Next time, book a flight that will be overhead when a spaceship or rocket launches, and see it from there!

MEDIA CON REPORT

STAR TREK LAS VEGAS 2011

by Joe Walters

My wife, Linda, and I attend the big *Trek* convention put on by Creation Entertainment in Las Vegas every year, and we always have a great time! This year was no different.

The convention took place August 11-14, and was in a new venue this year. Previously, this convention had always been held at the Las Vegas Hilton, former home of the attraction known as *Star Trek: The Experience*. With the closing of the Experience a few years back, we really had no incentive to go there; indeed, there were good reasons not to! This convention has been growing year by year and was starting to strain the capacities of the Hilton, which itself is getting a bit dilapidated as time passes. (Creation claims that this year’s Vegas convention was the largest *Star Trek* convention there has ever been, and I have no reason to doubt this though I haven’t seen any actual numbers yet.)

This year the convention was held at the Rio Hotel & Casino, a large and modern facility with plenty of space for this convention (indeed, there was a second unrelated convention going on at the Rio at the same time!). The Rio featured a substantially larger Main Events room than the Hilton, and the Dealer Room was at least as large as its predecessor. Rooms used for alternate programming were for the most part adequate, but there’s additional space available which I expect the folks at Creation will utilize next year for some events.

There was a vast array of guest stars at this convention. Creation claims over 70, but I’m not sure what counts as a guest star... I think there were about 45 to 50 “on-stage” guests (including the entire surviving cast of the original series), but there were also several actors and other luminaries – not all of them from *Star Trek* – who operated autograph booths in the Dealer Room, so they probably counted them in the total. Fine.

Most of the guest stars were easily accessible at various times during the con; some, like the really major luminaries (Sir Patrick Stewart, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, etc.) limited that access to autograph and photo sessions, for which you had to pay, but many were approachable after initial lines had died down. Indeed, for much of the con, stars like Jonathan Frakes, Brent Spiner, and John DeLancie, among others, spent time at tables in the Dealer room and you could just walk up and strike up a conversation. Considering the several thousand people in attendance, this was a bit unexpected!

Arriving at the registration booth the night before the con officially started, the staff quickly and efficiently took care of a ticketing snafu for us (like, our tickets had never arrived in the mail!), and we went into the huge Dealer Room for preview night. Good heavens, it seems

that there are many items available for purchase that might be of interest to science fiction fans! And though this is a specifically *Star Trek* convention, there are of course numerous non-*Trek* items and guests visible in various places around the convention.

The first full day of the convention started for us with a '60s *Trek* panel, featuring three very memorable guest stars from the original series: Lee Meriwether, Yvonne Craig, and Clint Howard. Meriwether answered questions about her role as Losira on *Trek*, as well as about her roles on *Time Tunnel* and as Catwoman in the Adam West *Batman* movie. Craig, who had played an insane green Orion woman on *Trek*, is best known as Batgirl, and still looks great. Clint Howard, brother of Ron, was fascinating and had many unique show business stories to tell.

Later, we enjoyed the performance of two actors from *Star Trek: Enterprise*: Dominic Keating and Connor Trinneer. Keating is quite a maniac, and holds nothing back. He's always at his best when he's on stage paired with someone else to play off of. Trinneer answered questions about *Trek* and his later role on *Star-gate: Atlantis*.

Day two included a panel of *DS9* actors: Jeffrey Combs (Weyoun and Brunt), Nicole de Boer (Dax), Vaughn Armstrong (several aliens), Chase Masterson (Leeta), Casey Biggs (Damar), Max Grodenchik (Rom), and Armin Shimerman (Quark). This was fast-paced and very fun.

Walter Koenig came on next, and spoke at length of his experiences as Chekov, as well as his time playing Bester on *Babylon 5* and the fact he's finally going to get his star on Hollywood Boulevard – the last of the original *Trek* cast to be so recognized. And having seen Mr. Koenig at these conventions many, many times, I think this is the first time that a fan did NOT ask him how it was possible for Khan to recognize Chekov in the movie when Chekov didn't appear in the TV episode that introduced Khan. Maybe everyone's finally figured out that this isn't a new question.

Tim Russ (*Voyager*'s Tuvok) was next, followed by Rene Auberjonois and Nana Visitor (Odo and Kira from *DS9*). Nana mentioned in passing that she's no longer living in New Mexico – she had settled in Corrales while filming the 2000s cable series *Wildfire*, and the Land of Enchantment did its magic on her and she stayed a while! She's back in the LA area now.

Next up was Jonathan Frakes, who pretty well filled the room. This guy just doesn't follow the rules. He came out and talked a bit on stage, giving the convention staff hell because Riker's picture wasn't on the convention banner and program cover, but Data's was! "I outranked him!" When he started taking questions, he began wandering around the room, moving out into the audience conversing with random audience members and generally causing headaches among the convention staff.

The folks in the back part of the room were very appreciative of this, as was everyone as he returned to the stage area, only to lie down on the stage as he continued taking questions. He's a real ball of energy, and well worth going to see.

Then came the *Star Trek* Rat Pack show, a musical set performed by most of the folks from the *DS9* panel mentioned above. They did several numbers but with modified lyrics that really clicked with this audience. Hearing Max Grodenchik singing a well-known Tony Bennett piece but with the heartfelt lyrics, "I left my (brother) Quark... and Captain Sisko," left me in respiratory distress, I was laughing so hard. This sort of thing can be done badly, but these guys get it, and really did it right. A grand time was had by all present!

Day three was the LONG day. It started at 9:30 am for us, and ended near midnight. We started with a panel of *Next Gen* actors, including Denise Crosby (Tasha Yar), Suzie Plakson (K'Ehleyr & Dr. Selar), and John DeLancie (Q). There were a lot of interesting behind the scenes stories here, and one surprising revelation: during the time the series was on the air, it was often mentioned that Bing Crosby was Denise Crosby's grandfather; they got a goodly bit of publicity out of that little item at the time, but it wasn't until this convention that Linda and I learned that she had never met the man. Denise was a byproduct of Bing's first marriage, and after he had moved on he apparently never sought any further contact with his first family. I find it astounding that a person could have grandchildren and never bother to even meet them, despite living in the same town, and having the means and then some.

Next was the Klingon Summit, as four well-known Klingon actors came up onstage – in full costume and in character! We spent an hour with Gowron and Martok (two chancellors of the Empire), and the Duras sisters Lursa and Betor. It was a really fun time! They called up everyone in the audience who was in Klingon costume, so we had a stage full of Klingons, singing Klingon opera, telling war stories, and Martok even spotted a convention attendee dressed as a tribble and chased him around the room for a while. This was great fun!

Terry Farrell (Jadzia Dax from *DS9*) did a solo appearance onstage next, followed by Brent Spiner (Data), who made a strong appeal to the convention staff to feature only his picture on next year's banner art; someone must have told him of Jonathan Frakes's reaction the day before.

Kate Mulgrew (Captain Janeway) came out and talked about *Voyager*, her time on stage, and her new series on Cartoon Network's Adult Swim segment, called *NTSF:SD:SUV::* (National Terrorism Strike Force: San Diego: Sport Utility Vehicle:: - don't forget the two colons at the end). This is a spoof of the police procedurals all over network television, and it is quite funny and the cast is clearly having a lot of fun with it.

Episodes are only 15 minutes long, and are worth catching. A few familiar faces show up in guest roles, too.

Mulgrew also mentioned that she had just returned from Vancouver, where she had filmed a four-episode arc on *Warehouse 13*. Later, during the Q&A session, a heckler with a baseball cap pulled down over his eyes began telling her some odd story about chickens chewing his arm off, and she finally figured she was being pranked; she went to him and yanked his cap off, revealing the wearer to be Eddie McClintock, star of *Warehouse 13*. What he was doing at a *Trek* convention, I cannot guess!

A Paramount merchandising drone came out next, and gave a presentation on toys and other tie-in products forthcoming in the *Trek* world. Most notable is a Klingon version of Monopoly, which was being hyped throughout the con. Fortunately, you don't have to read the Klingon language to play it (but it helps!).

Next up was a major event of the convention: Leonard Nimoy in his final Vegas con appearance. He's retiring from conventions as of this year, and his final con appearance ever will be in October at a Creation Con in Chicago. He announced he was doing this last year, but he seems to really mean it this time – he took no questions, but spent his entire hour giving a prepared presentation on his life and career, including showing some slides of never-before-seen photos from *Trek* and other series he had done. He became very emotional at the end, as he thanked the fans for the many years of support and good wishes.

He really filled the Main Events room. Linda and I estimated there were close to 5,000 chairs in that room, and they were nearly all filled.

Moments after his presentation ended, Linda and I found ourselves unexpectedly in his presence as the con staff stopped traffic in the hallway where we were approaching, to allow Nimoy to leave without having to work his way across a flood of convention-goers. He passed right in front of me, inches away, so I had to say something. I simply said, "Thank you, Mr. Nimoy." He said, "You're welcome," and went on his way. A memorable final encounter with the man, and I didn't have to pay an extra \$75 to get it!

This was the day of the most attendees in costume, as the costume competition was scheduled for that night. Cleverly, they picked this day to attempt to break the Guinness record for most *Star Trek* costumes in one place at the same time. They did this last year, setting the record at 543. Later that year, DragonCon in Atlanta broke that record with 571, and then FedCon in Germany broke it again, setting the bar at 691. They'll have to work harder now: we hit a total of 1,040, including Linda dressed as Dr. Miranda Jones – sensor net, goggles, and all. They're planning to do it again next year. Be warned: they have standards! A Starfleet pullover with jeans and sneakers will not get you in, as many dis-

appointed fans learned to their distress. You gotta have a full costume! The Guinness drone there knew his stuff: "Okay, you're an Andorian, come in; you're Lt. Ilia, come in; Harry Mudd and women, come in; you with the blue jeans – sorry!"

The first evening event in the Main Events room was something really special. Jeffrey Combs is a versatile actor, having played the Ferengi bureaucrat Blunt on *DS9* for years before most of us realized he was also playing the evil Weyoun at the same time. He also played Shran, the Andorian, on *Star Trek: Enterprise*, and has appeared in several other roles on other series. Of late, he's been touring in a one-man show about Edgar Allen Poe, much in the vein of Hal Holbrook's well-known Mark Twain gig. Combs performed this entire professional show for us, and at no extra charge! It was amazing to see an actor of his caliber really cut loose and show what he could do. And now there is no further reason for anyone to ever again narrate "The Raven." It's been done to perfection.

Now moving further into the evening, we had the amazing costume competition. This had been getting a bit tedious, often lasting several hours as costume after costume paraded onto the stage, so this year they introduced a "pre-judging competition," allowing them to eliminate scores of folks in slacks and Starfleet pull-overs, and narrow the competition down to a couple dozen of the best attempts. There were Orion slave girls, *DS9* baseball team members, Harry Mudd and his women, a Vulcan ambassador in an incredible set of robes, an extremely tricked-out Borg drone (he won), and many more. One fellow came dressed as Khan, as he first appeared in *Star Trek II* – covered head to toe and wearing goggles – then peeled off layers to reveal Khan underneath, and he looked great. There were two young ladies who were wearing standard Starfleet uniforms from the *Next Gen* era, but they were covered with sparkly glitter and blinking LED lights. We couldn't figure out what they were supposed to be, and neither could the MC, so he asked them. "We're beaming up!" Of course! Suddenly, it was perfect!

The real late-night event for us started at 11:00 and ran about an hour, as James Darren sang for us, with a live band accompanying. Darren has been an actor and singer for a long time – he was in the *Gidget* movies, he was in the *Time Tunnel*, and he played lounge singer Vic Fontaine on *DS9* – so it was great to see a real longtime Vegas pro doing his real act. He was close to the Sinatras (he is godfather to some of Nancy's children), and maintains a healthy respect for the old Vegas and the Way Things Were Done.

Sunday featured the biggest draw: Sir Patrick Stewart, William Shatner, and Kate Mulgrew together onstage. They each got some solo time, then came together for a mass Q&A session. The Main Events room was filled to the gills; all the chairs were full and people were

standing around the walls and in the back. I have to believe there were over 5,000 people in there. Remember, *Star Trek* has been off the air for the better part of a decade! Apparently, there's still some interest in it.

Stewart was first, and was his usual charming self. He did have to deal with a heckler at one point, as Brent Spiner made his way to the mike; using a strong county-bumpkin voice, he asked "Lord Stewart" if he still got to "live with the Queen...Victoria?" As his segment neared its end, Stewart was asked about the knighthood ceremony. He said it was a bit daunting to meet the Queen in this situation, and mentioned that he was allowed to bring some family and friends, and among them was one of his early English teachers – the first man to get him to read Shakespeare. I would bet that fellow was proud of that item on his résumé!

At that moment, Shatner and Mulgrew came on-stage, and the three enjoyed a lengthy group hug while waiting for the crowd's reaction to subside. When it did, Shatner remarked that he had enjoyed the hug, as it gave him the opportunity to grab Mulgrew's ass. He proclaimed it a nice one. Mulgrew took it as a compliment, most graciously. Shatner asked, "So what were we talking about?" Stewart answered, "We were talking about the Queen." Shatner replied, "I wonder what the Queen's ass feels like?" It took minutes for the laughter to die out, while Stewart looked properly horrified.

The three of them were quite animated and had a lot of fun answering questions from fans and each other. This was easily one of the high points of the show.

Following that act, John Cho and George Takei, the two Sulus, came on together and answered questions and generally had a good time discussing their different takes on the character and, of course, there was the usual political bit from George.

Next was an actor I'd never seen in person before, and I was really looking forward to his presentation. David Warner interviewed by one of the convention organizers. Warner appeared in two *Trek* movies, most notably as Chancellor Gorkon in *ST6*, and was an evil Cardassian in a *Next Gen* episode. You'll also remember him as Mr. Lovejoy, Billy Zane's assistant in *Titanic*. He's been around. Jack the Ripper in *Time After Time*, Sark in *Tron*, and many more. He was a classy guy, and told amazing stories about movies and the stage. He had spent time with the Royal Shakespeare Company long ago, and mentioned that late in his time with that group, he noticed a young up-and-comer named Patrick Stewart, and figured that guy would do well.

Nichelle Nichols finished the evening and the convention for us, and she was as gracious and queenly as ever. She sang a bit, answered questions, expressed political outrage, and generally had a good time.

As did we! There were late-night parties every night, but we skipped them this year. They tend to be attached to the higher-level reserved-seat ticket holders,

and we went with the bottom-level reserved seat section this year (and incredibly, still ended up in the seventh row on inside aisle seats), so weren't able to attend those. We enjoyed them back when *Star Trek: The Experience* was open, as the parties included unlimited access to the rides and attractions, but now it's just not the same. There were also some open parties and such, but we elected to go get some rest before starting the next day. Must be getting old!

Events we missed included several more panels (you can't hit them all), David Gerrold's Writer's Workshop (and his presentation on the animated *Trek* series and his hosted showing of "Blood and Fire," a next-gen script he wrote long ago which was finally filmed recently by the *Star Trek Phase II* people), genre auctions, the "Resistance is Futile Champagne Bingo Bash" (we attended that once a few years back – the prizes were excellent, but the event was very pricy and there were far more attendees than prize packages), Karaoke Night (I make a habit of missing out on Karaoke nights wherever and whenever, thank you), the various breakfasts and lunches with the stars, a presentation on the Hubble Space Telescope, makeup demos from a longtime Klingon makeup pro, Leonard Nimoy's photography seminar, a "Stump the Experts" trivia competition, autograph sessions and photo-ops (we happen to have virtually everyone's autograph from over the years; Linda only got one this year, John Cho – Sulu from the recent *Trek* movie), and much more.

William Shatner was all over the convention. Not having enough to do, he's now hosting a new documentary-style TV series called *Fan Addicts*, where episodes will look at various gatherings and activities carried out by fans of various subjects. He started with us, and was often seen moving about the convention with his film crew, wearing a white topper I can only call the Shat Hat. Busy guy!

Interesting note: The Rio is the home venue of magicians Penn & Teller, but they apparently were out of town during this time, as their box office was always closed when we walked past. I had thought that they might pop out for a surprise cameo during some event; it seems like their style. Perhaps next year!

We always stay a few days after the con to recuperate and relax, and we understand it is possible to find something to do in Las Vegas when there isn't a *Star Trek* convention going. This is a fun con, particularly if you're familiar with Creation and the pros and cons thereof, and know how to make your way through one of their productions. If you like the idea of seeing a LOT of guests, the opportunity to get many autographs, and the huge Dealer room, I highly recommend attending this convention.



BOOK REVIEW ROUND-UP

***Star Wars: Choices of One* by Timothy Zahn, LucasBooks 2011, hc \$27.00, 384 pages.**

Review by Becky Davis

"The choices of one shape the future of all – Jedi saying." So says Timothy Zahn as he starts this new episode sandwiched between the events of *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. If you like battles, weapons, descriptions of weapons and Han Solo doing improbable actions with weapons, add *Choices of One* to your *Star Wars* collection.

Mara Jade, the Emperor's Hand, and some renegade Stormtroopers known as "The Hand of Judgment" are perhaps the most interesting characters in the book. Jade is a Jedi Knight, and a one-person Court of Justice (judge, jury, and if need be, executioner) of those rumored to be corrupt or advancing their own interests over those of the Empire. Zahn makes the Empire look good in this book. The Hand of Judgment, 5 "former" Imperial Stormtroopers, have decided the Imperium moves too slowly on some issues of corruption, treason and tyranny. They have taken to solving issues on their own.

Zahn deftly maneuvers all the familiar *Star Wars* characters – Han, Leia, Luke and Chewbacca – as well as a small army of other characters to the dual planets of Poln Major and Poln Minor for lots of action. On Poln Major, the local Governor, Bidor Ferroz, offers weapons storage and hiding space on the smaller mining world of Poln Minor to the Rebel Alliance. Or does he? There is a shadowy alien warlord out in the Unknown Regions named Nusoesva. He wants a fighting base on Poln Major. Or does he? There is the mysterious Lord Odo on the Imperial Star Destroyer Chimaera who commands the ship's crew to go to the Poln worlds. What does he want?

The Alliance members find more than they expect in the mining tunnels of Poln Minor. Mara Jade and the Hand of Judgment find almost more than they can handle on Poln Major. Our *Star Wars* heroes have their hands full avoiding both Empire and local mercenary traitors. And the shadowy figures of Nusoesva and Lord Odo are revealed against a newer hero, Senior Captain Thrawn, who will appear again in *Star Wars: Heir to the Empire*.

***The Girl of Fire and Thorns* by Rae Carson, Greenwillow Press 2011, hc \$17.99, 432 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Rae Carson's first novel, *The Girl of Fire and Thorns*, is an enjoyable YA fantasy. Sixteen-year-old Elisa, princess of Orovalle, is being married off to King Alejandro de Vega of Joya d'Arena, whom she has never met. Elisa is considered a sacred person because she is the carrier of the Godstone, which means that she is expected to perform a great service for humanity. Elisa's life has been so sheltered that she is a very shy and unsure of how to handle herself outside of her father's castle. She is thrust out into the world with only her two ladies-in-waiting as reminders of her old life.

The journey to Joya d'Arena is difficult for Elisa, and she finds life there fraught with political tension. She is forced to hide both that she has the Godstone and that she is

the wife of King Alejandro. She becomes aware that Joya d'Arena is on the edge of war with their neighbors the Inviernos, and that her new husband is willing to sacrifice his people to protect himself and the capital city. Elisa has to decide if her destiny is to join the rebels who want to fight to protect themselves or to stay loyal to her husband.

Carson's writing is gripping from the very beginning. The novel is fast-paced and holds the reader's attention throughout. I do feel that the book went off-kilter slightly at the end, but that is probably due to Carson's inexperience as a novelist. *The Girl of Fire and Thorns* is the first in a proposed trilogy, and the ending definitely left me waiting to discover what happens in the second book.

***Wayfinder: Worldwalker Duology 2* by C.E. Murphy, Del Rey 2011, tp \$15.00, 352 pages.**

Review by Doranna Durgin

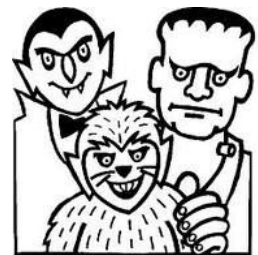
I find myself inclined to start this review with a disclaimer: In general, I really enjoy Catie Murphy's work. Not only that, I think she is Cool People, and she likes my Connerly Beagle. So, I am not exactly unbiased. (And that would be the reason I leapt to my feet when the book was offered for reading/review at the June ASFS meeting.)

So there's your background. Not a professional objective reviewer, me.

Wayfinder is the second book of a duology, and it unapologetically fails to stand on its own. You can follow the action if you pick it up without reading *Truthseeker* (I chose to read them in order), but you really won't have all the pieces. Lara (of Boston) has learned that her quirky and in some ways debilitating ability to discern truth makes her a rare mortal Truthseeker. Dafydd of Annwyn has been hanging out in our world for a hundred years or so, hunting just such a person. What starts as a journey to find the assassin of Dafydd's brother turns into a quest to reunite a broken land.

This is the first Murphy I've read that doesn't involve a purely urban setting, which is where she truly shines – but then, I have some catching up to do, so maybe I've missed something. This series is set both in our world and in Barrowlands/Annwyn/ fairyland (take your pick). In *Wayfinder*, while the urban setting is as sharp as ever, in Annwyn the notes aren't quite as clear. The fairyland characters are a little more predictable than the mortal (although the plotting, never), and there's the faint undertone of things being made up as they go, as opposed to the feel of a good firm magical foundation. Some readers may enjoy that; I prefer a greater sense of grounding.

I love the way Murphy uses music to convey the sense of what Lara experiences with her Truthseeking, and I love her touch with the (mortal!) characters. They're real, they do things for their own reasons, and they complicate things just by being true to themselves. On the other hand, Lara tends to go through her character growth by authorial fiat – we don't see it happen so much as we're told it's happening. The Annwyn characters, while every bit as true to themselves, also make you wonder how beings so conniving, self-centered, and egotistical have managed to



survive as long as they have – and how Dafydd ever emerged from that lot as the compassionate being he is.

Both books together are a good fast read, and my reader-self was happy to be immersed in Murphy's worlds. However, my reader-self also was greedily wallowing in the expression of Lara's magic and in the characters, and was willing to look the other way with regards to a less clearly portrayed fairyland. Those who aren't as readily lured by the former elements may find themselves more impatient with the fairyland sections. So the duology is a bit of a mixed review for me, but in the end, the strengths trump the weaker bits; the duology left me a happy reader. Either way, Murphy is still an "auto-read" for me!

***The Unremembered: The Vault of Heaven 1* by Peter Orullian, Tor 2011, hc \$27.99, 672 pages.**

Review by Grant Kuck

Picking up *The Unremembered* by Peter Orullian, I found a quote on the front cover by Terry Brooks, who called it a "complex tale of magic and destiny that won't disappoint its readers." On the back cover Piers Anthony says that it is "one huge, powerful, compelling, hard hitting story" and a "major fantasy adventure." With three other authors singing its praises how could I go wrong?

Orullian's first book is a good fantasy. It begins with a small cast of characters: Tahn Junell, his sister Wendra, and their friends, Sutter Te Polis and Braethen Posian. They live in the Hollows, a small village, next door to where the gods have imprisoned one of their own (along with all his evil creations) behind a magic veil. Unfortunately the veil is weakening and evil is breaking out.

To save our heroes and heroine, Orullian introduces two more characters, Vendanj from the feared order of the Sheason and a beautiful woman named Mira of the legendary Far. They escape the Hollows to face Velle, Bar'dyn, a Je'holta cloud and "walkers" not to mention the League of Civility. Eventually they get separated and the rest you'll just have to read about. Orullian does a good job of switching from one group of characters to another group throughout the story. It's hard to put the book down.

However, *The Unremembered* is not without its flaws, one of which is Tahn. There's something special about him, but after 669 pages I knew little more than I did at the start. Maybe Orullian is waiting for the sequel, *The Vault of Heaven*, to reveal more. I just hope I don't have to read so much next time for so little reward in the end.

Orullian also creates a rather dismal world and I can't help wonder (with the exception of the Hollows) if there is any place really worth saving? In the largest city, "Recityv," Sheasons are not allowed to use their abilities and because one did to save the life of a young girl he is imprisoned in a dungeon for life. There are cities controlled by the League of Civility, which could give lessons to the Gestapo. There is also the Scar and the tract of Desolation. And the Widows' Village, while not evil, is a dismal, spartan place where no one ever smiles.

Some of the names in the story also gave me difficulties. For example, during a council of the gods they banish one of their members named Maldaea. He is given the name, "Quietus" and the word "Quiet" becomes synonymous with

evil. I really wish Orullian would have found another name for evil. I enjoy quiet. Every time I read Quietus, Quiet, or Quietgiven I am pulled out of the story like a sleeper is ripped from his dreams by a clanging alarm clock. This may not be a problem for Anthony, Brooks or the other authors, but I do not like anything that pulls me out of the story.

All in all, *The Unremembered* is a good fantasy. It's not the best book I've read this year but it is far, far from being the worst. My opinion obviously sets me at odds with Ed Greenwood who says it "is great fantasy" and magnificent!" while Kevin J. Anderson, Anthony, Brooks and Anne Perry agree. But then I'm just a reader.

***Wisdom's Kiss* by Catherine Gilbert Murdock, Houghton Mifflin Books for Children 2011, hc \$16.99, 304 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Wisdom's Kiss is the latest YA novel by Catherine Gilbert Murdock, whose other titles include *Princess Ben* and the award-winning *Dairy Queen*. The story is told from the point of view of several different characters, and is written in the form of letters, diaries/memoirs, and even a play. The main characters are Trudy, a tavern maid with an unknown past; Tips, a childhood friend of Trudy's who leaves their village to become a traveling performer; and Wisdom, also known as Dizzy, a princess who is traveling from Montagne to be married to the Duke of Farina.

The book is full of many plots and sub-plots, but it mainly follows Trudy's search to find out about where her mother came from and who her father is, Dizzy's attempts to escape the life of being a princess, for which she is completely unsuited, and the attempts of Farina to take over the rule of Montagne.

Personally, I found Murdock's writing style hard to follow in this book. The writing jumps between five different points-of-view, and the unusual writing formats become a little confusing. The story is interesting enough that I finished it, but I do not know that I would recommend *Wisdom's Kiss* to others.

***Dreamsnake* by Vonda McIntyre, Bantam Spectra 1994 (reprint), mmpb, 320 pages.**

Review by Patricia Shaw Mathews

Dreamsnake, an old novel, is as fresh as it always was. It's high-concept hard SF, hard enough to scratch diamonds unless you dismiss the biosciences as magic. The idea of healing with bioengineered snakes that produce designer drugs on order - in a culture that may not be able to produce hypodermic needles in mass quantities for lack of resources and factories - is startling and logical at the same time.

It's partly an old-fashioned post-toastie, but the after-WWIII setting is background, not the main point. However, the postwar world is one with no easy answers. Everything is a tradeoff. The process that immunizes healers against snake venom also leaves them with hyperactive immune systems, hence sterile and very vulnerable to auto-immune diseases. A hard and isolated life leads to ignorance and fear; an easy affluent life, to easy contempt for the maimed and wounded. The low-hanging fruit was all picked before the war, and resources are scarce indeed. Scavenging is an accepted and sometimes profitable occupation, and there is a great, if un-

spoken, concern with keeping the birth rate down. And the greatest virtue is simply to keep on keeping on.

And yet it's a hopeful book. The characters are likeable, by and large. There seems to be a cooperative spirit among the people of this post-cataclysmic world, or at least certain shared cultural dictates which everybody but the bad guys and the people of the locked and fortified underhill City accept. Snake in particular is a memorable character.

McIntyre's classic is highly recommended as a reread.

***Hard Magic: Book 1 of the Grimnoir Chronicles* by Larry Correia, Baen 2011, tp \$15.00, 423 pages.**

Review by Sheldon Leonard in his gangster persona (as channeled by Becky Davis)

Tha author of *Hard Magic* has a good premise in dis series, although the *Wild Cards* guys might wanna call a local mob fer a "hit" on that Larry Correia. Dis has a lotta tough guys doin' magical stuff an' destroyin' parts of someplace called "Mar Pacifica," Tunguska, Russia, an' a coupula armored blimps over the Pacific in da early 1930s. Wow!

But I don'ta know. He loads in so many magicals, monsters, bad Japs and really bloody fight scenes that all that stuff kinda weighs down the story and the characters. Were I to be still a working "heavy," I might should consider sidin' wid the Chicago Mob an' gettin' some of dees characters for myself. As long as da author gives me the iron he does in da book, I'd be okay wid dis scenario. I mean, parts of da book reads like some Chicago gun shop catalog!

That Jake Sullivan is a nice character, not too complex, and certainly a Heavy! Coulda used him in a coupla flicks I was in. I really like that dish, Delilah. Smart, strong and complex. Too bad Correia bumped her off. He shoulda kept her and that Tokugawa around for more mystery and intrigue insteada that creepy Harkeness an' a coupla other stiff ones.

My only complaint, dis guy, Baen, an' his "awesome crew" dat Correia mentions, dey should be hung by their editorial digits fer the mistakes they left in da book. Harkeness is "Hakeness" on his picture! Puleeeze! An' der was one sentence, can't find it now, dat I read three times an' still cannot understand it.

So, dat's my piece on dis book. I'm bettin' the next one is better. But I'd watch out fer those *Wild Cards* players.

***Blood Rights: House of Comarré* by Kristen Painter, Orbit 2011, mmpb \$7.99, 432 pages.**

Review by Julie Heffernan

Blood Rights is a book that tries too hard. Not only do you have a vampire murder mystery but also a layered, twisted world full of shape-shifters, fallen angels, hybrids, witches, near-immortal humans and ghosts. And all this happening in middle of...Florida.

Our heroine is a human with a golden butterfly tattoo who regularly gives her blood to vampires. However, she is also a vampire assassin who takes refuge with a ruggedly handsome (but cursed) lower-class vampire.

Kristen Painter's book is the first in a trilogy. I hope the next books bring resolution to the plot instead of just packing in dozens of paranormal elements.



***City of Ice: City Trilogy 2* by Lawrence Yep, Starscape 2011, hc \$17.99, 365 pages.**

Review by Joe Walters

As so often happens with ASFS review books, *City of Ice* is book two of a trilogy. It turns out you don't absolutely have to read book one to know what's going on, as there is a brief recap in the first chapter. Nonetheless, I decided to be thorough and made use of our library system to acquire *City of Fire*, and read it first. I got to know the characters and learned the details of what had transpired before. Book one mainly takes place around Hawaii, while book two moves to the Arctic.

I am grateful to the author for providing something of tremendous value: a pronunciation guide, just before the first chapter! This is enormously helpful, as there are many names in this book that would otherwise be hard to figure out. The author has made extensive use of southern Pacific and arctic mythology, and there's a short segment in the back concerning his research, which is quite interesting.

The story is suited for pre-teens and perhaps early teens. It's too advanced for very early readers, but nowhere near as mature as, say, the Harry Potter books. Goosebumps-level, perhaps.

The story takes place in 1941, but on an alternate version of this world where science and technology exist side-by-side with magic. Our main character is a young teen girl named Scirye (pronounced Skeer-yay, thank you very much), who is a daughter of the ruler of a fictional land. While visiting San Francisco as part of a touring exhibition of historical artifacts from her homeland, her family and guards are the victims of a sudden and vicious attack, which leaves her sister and many others dead.

An artifact is stolen during the attack, and we discover that the Bad Guy (a Mr. Roland) is attempting to acquire all the pieces of an ancient weapon—disassembled and scattered around the world long ago so it could never be used again—so he can reassemble it and become powerful and rule the world and all that.

Scirye and some new friends decide to chase after the bad guy, and go on a lengthy and dangerous quest to stop him before it's too late. The adults, meanwhile, basically stand around and do nothing. An adult reader might find the storyline from here a bit tedious. The characters seem to go through a process over and over. I confess I went into "skim mode" for a while in the second half of the book, but I expect members of the video game generation will eat it up.

There are many talking animals, magical creatures, shape-shifting dragons, and the like throughout this story. Scirye even has a cutesy companion, a "lap griffin" who is cute, flies about, speaks imperiously, and often displays previously-unknown magical abilities that fit the needs of the situation. And he's cute.

Still, it's not a bad story, and if you have a youngster of the right age I'd certainly recommend seeking out book one and see if the kid gets hooked on it! Absolutely I would have loved this book at age 10. In my fifties, well, I don't find myself heavily motivated to seek out book three (*City of the Dead*) when it appears, but if I happen across it in the library I'll probably pick it up just to find out how things work out.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS —

JULY 2011: GAME SHOW FUN

Forty people attended to play two games of Transwarp Trivia, a SF variation on Jeopardy with randomly arranged clues in various categories. IN THE FIRST GAME, the Klingons won with 2,200 points. The Klingons were Brad Lyau, J. Kriss White and Duke McMullan. Their opponents were Why Is Everyone Looking at Me (Danielle Pollock, Shannon Jay and Amy Mathis) and the Pastafarians (Harriet Engle, Dan Cooper and Miguel Jaime). Kevin Hewett played referee while Jessica Coyle took the Vanna White position.

IN THE SECOND GAME, Serge's Angels won with 3,520 points. Serge's Angels were Serge Mailloux, Kathy K. Kubica and Patricia Rogers. Their opponents were Ginger Snaps (Michelle Foley, Roslee Orndorff and Morgan Gangwere) and the Big Bang Theory (Tom Sittler, Jessica Coyle and Julie Heffernan. Randi Hewett played referee, while Kevin Hewett took the "Vance" White position.

AUGUST: BUBONICON STEAMPUNK PREVIEW

Thirty-nine people were present for the preview of Bubonicon 43's programming schedule and the t-shirt/tote bag artwork, followed by a short convention business segment, and then Victor Milan on his various writing projects.

B43: Craig Chrissinger went over the con schedule, the t-shirt artwork, art demos at B43, and con suite sponsors.

FUTURE CON BUSINESS: Kristen Dorland & Chrissinger were confirmed as co-chairs for Bubonicon 44 in 2012.

MILAN: Victor Milan explained that in summer 2002, he decided he wanted to do something to take himself out of obscurity." And thus *Dinosaur Lords* was born, with Milan outlining the story on his birthday in August 2002.

"The more fun I have writing a book, the more fun people have reading it," he said. "What do I like best? Dinosaurs, guns and naked women. Big animals are easy targets for guns, so it's dinosaurs, swords and mostly naked women."

For the last several years, Milan mostly wrote in the *Deathlands*, *Outlanders* and *Rogue Angel* series. Last spring, he did a zombie plague *Deathlands*. "I turned it in two weeks before I went into the hospital," he said. "Apparently I did a good job despite being deathly ill - the editor really liked it."

Milan said that since the hospital, he's rewritten and edited *Dinosaur Lords*. He finished it early this year, and a lunch between Tom Doherty, George RR Martin and his agent resulted in Doherty looking at the first 10 pages. Tor plans a beginning of 2013 release after a rewrite polish.

"I've put everything I had into this son of a bitch, and I think I've succeeded," Milan stated. "It's a damn good book, and it's damn entertaining. I'm still trying to come up with a capsule description of the story. It's complex with knights riding dinosaurs, zombies, and a soulless army."

The second book, *Dinosaur Princes*, is due to Tor next May, while the third book is *Dinosaur Kings*.

"ASFS and you all have been my backers and friends for a long time, so you are part of these books," Milan concluded. "Now I'm asking for your help in spreading the word. Visit my website and send others to victormilan.com."

SEPTEMBER: CONVENTION REPORTS

Despite being in a smaller room, 41 people heard how Bubonicon 43 did (see separate piece in this issue), listened to Reno Worldcon reports, and were introduced to the idea of an eventual limit on how big Bubonicon should be.

RENO WORLDCON: Kevin Hewett reported that 4,000 people attended, and that there were 27 entrants in the costume contest. "One of my favorites was the 'Night at the Sci-Fi Museum'," he said. Serge Mailloux remarked, "It was like the '60s with smoking and the bubble hair-dos."

Patricia Rogers noted, "The Hugos were boring and they went on forever. Bob Silverberg did a long, pointless monologue to make fun of such. Parts of that were funny. I was very impressed by George (RR Martin). Before his panels, he would greet people coming in. Parris and he had a large wedding ceremony in Reno. Parris and her bridesmaids wore steampunk-themed outfits. The party afterward was *Game of Thrones* themed. The bacon-beef pie was fabulous!"

Hewett commented, "I could have spent a fortune in the dealers room. They had a lot of older, collectible books. One memorable panel I saw was on gambling and Connie Willis was on it. She said she wasn't sure why. They told people how not to gamble, and how to make money."

Pam Matthews enjoyed the *Girl Genius* Ball. "It was fun, and they had belly dancers during the breaks," she said. "Phil and Kaja Foglio wandered around it. Dr. Demento was at the con, and did three or four shows. He was really good."

Patricia S. Mathews commented, "I liked that Lois McMaster Bujold was given a large enough room to fit all her numerous fans. And that was quite enjoyable. Lois also greeted everyone personally, just like George."

Hewett summed up the experience, "The Reno Worldcon was a lot of fun, and it was obvious that Reno was happy to have us there. They're having economic problems, and a lot of small places were boarded up. Spokane announced a bid for 2015, and Kansas City is bidding for 2016."

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

EEK! OUT OF TIME, OUT OF ROOM! Again, of course.

MILEHICON 43 is next weekend. Looking forward to it, though a shorter trip. I'm pretty busy on Saturday with Name That Tune, the Turkey Read-Off, the Literacy Auction, and a panel. But we'll have some time to visit our Colorado friends.

Finally saw *Cars 2*, and it's fun enough. *Real Steel* is much better than expected with an actual father-son bonding story in the middle. The NM-lensed *Cowboys & Aliens* was fun, and the remake of *Fright Night* is worth seeing... Glad *Chuck* is starting up soon, but sad it's the last season!

I enjoyed M.K. Hobson's *The Native Star* well enough, and *Fort Freak: Wild Cards 21* is quite good, hard to put down, and fun. Go Ratboy & Flipper!

Good signings at Page One for *Fort Freak*, Carrie Vaughn/Steven Gould, and Darynda Jones. THANKS, FOLKS!

Big changes for Bubonicon in 2012 and we'll need your help figuring out the new hotel. Not to mention looking at the future, and deciding just how big we want our SF con to get.

THANKS TO Kathy Hedges, Joe Walters, Jessica Coyle, Becky Davis, Julie Heffernan, Doranna Durgin, Grant Kuck and Pat S. Mathews for contributions. More needed in December!

Happy Halloween & Thanksgiving! Out of room, Craig C.