



ASFACTS 2012

FEBRUARY "LIFE'S A HAPPY SONG" LOVE ISSUE

will present a workshop for young writers 10:00 am-Noon at the Portales Public Library

The High Plains Film Festival, held the same weekend, will have a filmmaking workshop 1:00 pm Saturday, and then screenings of competition films 3:00-5:00 pm in Buchanan Hall (ENMU's Music Building). The screenings are free and open to the public.

ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 30

The 36th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship will be held Friday, March 30, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. This year's theme is "Urban Fantasy." Special guests are Daniel Abraham and Carrie Vaughn, with Connie Willis serving as Mistress of Ceremonies. Friday events include informal Q&A sessions, a luncheon and various panel discussions.

A campus tradition since 1977, the Williamson Lectureship annually draws well-known authors to visit the ENMU campus and discuss the interactions of science and the humanities.

The Lectureship honors Williamson, long-time science-fiction author and professor of English who passed away in 2006. Williamson's novella, "The Ultimate Earth," captured a Hugo Award in 2001, and his last novel, *The Stonehenge Gate*, was released in 2005.

The Lectureship starts informally on March 29 when Abraham, Vaughn and Willis read at 6:00 pm in the Jack Williamson Liberal Arts Building.

On Friday, March 30, informal readings and Q&A sessions with participants are scheduled 9:00-11:00 am in the Campus Union. The luncheon then takes place 11:30 am in the Campus Union Ballroom, and costs a mere \$10.00 (payable at the door). Reservations are needed, however, by Tuesday, March 27. Call Patrice Caldwell at (505) 562-2315 or email her at Patrice.Caldwell@enmu.edu.

Panel discussions happen 3:00-6:00 pm in the Williamson Special Collections area of Golden Library, and are free of charge. Expected panel topics include Young Writers, Young Readers, Short Attention Span Topics, SF/Fantasy in Film and TV, New Directions in SF/Fantasy, and What Are *The* SF Classics.

On Saturday, March 31, Willis and Steven Gould

WILLIS TO BE SFWA GRAND MASTER

The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America named Connie Willis in mid-January as the recipient of the 2011 Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award. Willis has written 15 novels and many short stories; and has previously won seven Nebulas, 11 Hugos, and four Locus Awards, among others. Willis is also beloved in the field for her generosity and sense of humor.

The award, given for "lifetime achievement in science fiction and/or fantasy," will be presented at the 47th Annual Nebula Awards Weekend in Arlington, VA, May 17-20. Previous recipients of the award include such luminaries as Ursula K. LeGuin, Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Anne McCaffrey and Joe Haldeman.

Walter Jon Williams is Toastmaster (he also will conduct a half-day Writers Workshop, emphasizing structure and plotting, on Friday morning.), while Mike Fincke is the Keynote Speaker. The Mass Autographing Session on Friday, May 18th will be followed by a reception to honor the Nebula Award nominees and other honorees.

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** A visit from award-winning author Darynda Jones, plus the release of this *ASFact*s...
- **March 9:** A visit from Melinda Snodgrass on her forthcoming urban fantasy novels, and an update on the potential *Wild Cards* movie.
- **April 13:** Time for the traditional ASFS Auction with author Robert Vardeman at the helm. Please look for 2-6 items to donate for the club's cause, and some cash to spend. Also, the Spring issue of *ASFact*s will be out (deadline Sun, April 8).
- **May 11:** Tentatively, a visit from Ian Tregillis.
- **June 8:** Date may change! Program unknown. Perhaps a China slide show? ACE preview?

Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Darth Vader, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Contact: (505) 266-8905 or via cwraig@nmia.com. *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. *SITHFACTS* out each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, April 8.
Club Officers: Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Jessica Coyle, Moderator. Randi Hewett, Alternator. Cupid, Holiday Host. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Kristen Dorland (505) 459-8734 & Craig Chrissinger.

CENTURY'S BEST VAMPIRE NOMINEES

In memoriam of the 100th anniversary of Bram Stoker's death, the Horror Writers Association (HWA) is presenting the Bram Stoker Vampire Novel of the Century Award for the vampire novel that has had the greatest impact on the horror genre since the publication of *Dracula* in 1897. Nominees, chosen by a jury of scholars and writers – and announced mid-January – are:

The Soft Whisper of the Dead by Charles L. Grant (1983), *Salem's Lot* by Stephen King (1975), *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson (1954), *Anno Dracula* by Kim Newman (1992), *Interview with the Vampire* by Anne Rice (1976), and *Hotel Transylvania* by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (1978).

To be considered, eligible works had to have been published in English between 1912 and 2011. The winning work will be announced at the World Horror Convention in Salt Lake City on March 31.

BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Tuesday, February 21 (due to the Presidents' Day holiday), in the gift area of Page One to discuss *The Bone Key* by Sarah Monette (Prime Books). The group then focuses on *The Man in the High Castle* by Philip K. Dick on Monday, March 19.

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

GEORGE RR MARTIN NAMED USA TODAY'S AUTHOR OF YEAR

George R.R. Martin has been named *USA Today's* 2011 Author of the Year, Locus Online announced December 29, 2011. The honor comes, in no small part, thanks to the increase in popularity of his *Song of Ice and Fire* series after the HBO series *Game of Thrones*. The books, already hits, have skyrocketed to bestseller fame thanks to the HBO publicity; his latest installment, *A Dance With Dragons*, hit number one on the *USA Today* list (a first for Martin).

ARTIST DARRELL K. SWEET DIES

Artist Darrell K. Sweet died December 5, 2011, according to Locus Online. He was 77 years old.

Sweet's first illustrations were for Ballantine Books

in 1975, and when the Del Rey imprint was formed in 1977, he produced many of their covers. Since then he has created illustrations for most of the major SF publishers, including Berkeley, Ace and Tor. He is perhaps now best known for his illustrations of Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series, but he also produced memorable covers for Stephen R. Donaldson's *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*, the *Xanth* series by Piers Anthony; and novels by Jack L. Chalker, Terry Brooks, L.E. Modesitt, Jr. and many others.

Sweet was born in 1934 in New Brunswick, NJ, and graduated from Syracuse University in 1956 with a degree in fine arts. He already had a reputation as a painter of animals, still lifes, and pastoral scenes when he started illustrating SF. He was nominated for a professional artist Hugo in 1983, and was a Chesley Award finalist many times.

THRONES 2ND SEASON IN APRIL

For some, it may seem like it's been forever since someone lost their head on *Game of Thrones*. Luckily, HBO finally announced in mid-January that their Emmy-winning hit series will return for its second season on Sunday, April 1. Like the first season, season two will have 10 episodes.

It was previously announced that season two would be based on the second book in George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire," *A Clash of Kings*. That means plenty of treachery and turmoil as the battle for control of the Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms continues.

Returning cast members include Emilia Clarke, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Emmy winner Peter Dinklage, Michelle Fairley, Lena Headey and Kit Harington.

SMITH WON'T MATCH BAKER'S WHO RECORD

Matt Smith may be throwing us all into a tizzy as to how much longer he plans to stay on as the 11th Doctor on *Doctor Who*, but there's one thing the actor is certain of: It's that he doesn't plan to stay as long as the former Fourth Doctor, Tom Baker, reported Blastr in late January.

When Matt Smith became Doctor Eleven in 2009, he also became the youngest actor ever to take on the heavy mantle of the beloved Time Lord, at age 26. So you'd think he could stay on for a dozen years or so, right?

Nope. Although Smith's often said he loves to play the Mad Man in a Big Blue Box, he doesn't seem to plan to stay on for very much longer.

"I just sort of take each year as it comes, really.

We've got all the rest of this year to get through, and then we'll just sit down and review it from there and see where it goes," Matt Smith said. "But I love playing the part, and I love working with [writer] Steven Moffat."

So how long will he actually stay? Smith doesn't seem know for sure, but he won't stay on *Doctor Who* as long as Baker, who played Doctor number four for seven years, from 1974 to 1981. With his endlessly long multi-colored scarf and his love of jelly babies, the fourth Doctor went on to become one of the most beloved Doctors of all time.

"I think there will need to be a younger, cooler person than me – or maybe an older, cooler person, who knows?" said Smith. "But I don't think I'll be doing it as long as Mr. Baker."

So it looks like Tom Baker's seven-year record on *Doctor Who* won't be eclipsed by Matt Smith.

2012 CRAWFORD AWARD ANNOUNCED

Genevieve Valentine was named winner of the 2012 William L. Crawford Fantasy Award in late January for her 2011 novel *Mechanique: A Tale of the Circus Tre-saulti*.

The award, which includes a cash prize, is presented annually at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, and is designated for an exceptionally promising writer whose first fantasy book was published the preceding year. Prior winners include Jonathan Lethem, Charles de Lint, Greer Gilman, Judith Tarr, Kij Johnson, Joe Hill, M. Rickert, Daryl Gregory, Christopher Barzak, Jedediah Berry and, last year, Karen Lord.

The nominators for this year's award also shortlisted Erin Morgenstern for *The Night Circus*, Téa Obreht for *The Tiger's Wife*, Stina Leicht for *Of Blood and Honey*, and Ransom Riggs for *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*. Those participating in the selection included Stacie Hanes, Niall Harrison, Ellen Klages, Kelly Link, Cheryl Morgan, Graham Sleight and Paul Witcover.

The 2012 International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts will take place March 21-25 in Orlando FL.

RESPONSE TO FINAL CHUCK POLLED; FEDAK & BALDWIN TALK

NBC's *Chuck* signed off with a two-hour, two-episode finale that brought in the highest ratings of the season for the series, and the reviews were mostly pretty good.

Blastr, the Syfy's website reported January 30 on fans' responses to the final double-length *Chuck* episode. Some felt the finale, "Chuck Versus Sarah" and "Chuck

Versus The Goodbye," was emotional, with a final scene that was "incredibly poignant and touching" and that "overflowed with love, heart, and soul" thanks to a trip down memory lane that paid "homage to the early days of *Chuck*."

Others believe *Chuck*'s big finale was "by no stretch" a great finale. Bad guy Quinn existed only to move the plot along, with Sarah's memory-loss plot leaving a lot to be desired. In the end the finale was "full of plot holes." However, even those unhappy with elements of the finale thanked the cast and crew, because for five years *Chuck* "touched, tickled, and entertained us."

It was one long roller coaster of a ride for fans of NBC's *Chuck*, the perennial bubble show that managed to survive through five seasons and 91 episodes. However, January 27 marked the end of *Chuck*, and co-creator and executive producer Chris Fedak and actor Adam Baldwin promised the finale was going to be big and satisfying.

"Everything is at stake. It's like all of our characters are at a crossroad, and it's going to be interesting to see how it all falls out. But it's definitely the biggest thing we've ever done on the *Chuck* show," said Fedak during a conference call January 27 with Baldwin, who plays John Casey.

This season, Chuck and Sarah started their own spy firm, a faulty Intersect caused problems for Morgan and Sarah, and Casey got a major love interest in the form of Gertrude Verbanski (aka Carrie-Anne Moss).

As for tough guy Casey, "there's some resolution there with his relationships that comes into play, which I found very heartwarming and dangerous at the same time," said Baldwin. "So I appreciate it, but that was the thing about Casey. The biggest challenge for Chris and the writers was to keep him dangerous while at the same time being lovable. They walked that fine line."

The other fine line the writers walked dealt with *Chuck*'s constant struggle to stay on the air, and their habit of creating season finales that teased what a new season might offer ... if they managed to get picked up. "All the finales that we've built, therefore, we were hoping to come back. And so we wrote them in such a way that they implied a big new season coming next year or in a few weeks," Fedak told Blastr.

"And this time we knew that this was going to be our final episode," he added. "When NBC picked us up, they were very clear that this was going to be a 13-episode run and that this would be our final season. So when we started working on the finale, when we were writing it, it was much more like 'This will be the final chapter.' This will be the final moment of this show, and we need to resolve these stories that we've been working on for five seasons now. And the finale isn't so much a finale just for season five. It's a finale to five seasons of the show. So it's definitely different."



TV's Chuck & Sarah

© 2012 NBC

As far as the filming of the big finale, "there were a lot of tears, a lot of emotion. I didn't cry, but I watched a lot of other of the younger people cry, being the cold-hearted bastard that I am," joked Baldwin. "It was uplifting and bitter-

sweet, and yet it was a sense of accomplishment, because we had, against all odds, persevered and been lucky enough and had the good graces of the network and the sponsors to keep us going. That was the sense on the set day in and day out, was just that we made it five years when we didn't even think we were going to make it past the first season, let alone get picked up as a pilot. So while there were a lot of tears, they were tears of accomplishment and of a job well done."

Baldwin elaborated on how he feels about saying goodbye to John Casey. "Well, I think it's fair to say that while I will miss Casey, he was a fully developed character that got five whole seasons and 91 episodes to arc through. So, again, I go back to the sense of accomplishment with him. So I would say that while I will miss it, I won't miss it as much as other characters that have been short-circuited I would have liked to explored further."

As for Fedak, he wouldn't have minded exploring what it would have been like to have *Chuck* be "a giant successful blockbuster show. If we had the opportunity, it could have been easier for us. If we had like a giant rating and it was always obvious that we were going to be coming back for another season—there's benefits to that that we were never really allowed to enjoy in regard to how the show worked," said Fedak.

Baldwin commented, "What I take away from *Chuck*, first of all, a five-year run on any show these days is a true blessing, and to have been able to go through it with people who are nice and creative and funny and hard-working and just lovable. I mean, we're gypsies, really, in this business – we're circus players – and we travel from town to town, it seems like, and we travel from family to family on different projects. So to land on one for five years has been a joy, and it's sad to see it go. But at least we have those five years together, and we appreciated it while it was happening. So I just feel blessed and honored to have been a part of it."

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BUBONICON 44 WANTS INPUT, RATES GO UP THIS MONTH

by Craig Chrissinger, con co-chair

We're a month and some odd days into 2012 now, believe it or not, and the Bubonicon 44 train is warming up! Three-Day Passes are \$35 each through Saturday, Feb 25, and then they go up to \$38 Feb 26-May 12. They can be purchased in person at club meetings – or by mailing payment (with the PDF pre-registration form from the website) to "Bubonicon Inc" at PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176.

Bubonicon 44 takes place, of course, August 24-26 (before the Chicago Worldcon) at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, 2101 Louisiana Blvd NE, just north of I-40. Our new hotel is offering sleeping rooms at \$99 single-double occupancy, \$109 for triple-quad. Reservations are needed by August 13. That's 1-800-228-9290. Remember to tell them you're with Bubonicon. And just like in the past, all Room Parties must be on a designated floor, with the hotel and con-com being informed of such at least four days in advance. You can request the "party" floor, a quiet floor, or state you have no preference.

In addition to special guests Brandon Sanderson, Michael Cassutt and artist Ursula Vernon, we're expecting (not all confirmed) such con regulars as Robert Vardeman, Jane Lindskold, Harry O. Morris, Pati Nagle, Melinda Snodgrass, Walter Jon Williams, S.M. Stirling, Victor Milan, John Jos. Miller, Carrie Vaughn, Scott Phillips, Laura J. Mixon, George RR Martin, Connie Willis, Daniel Abraham, Darynda Jones and Andy Kuhn, among others. All subject to change and travel plans, of course.

The con-com is working on panel topics right now (panel topics, event ideas and proposals are welcome by Friday, Feb 17), and sending out invitations to potential participants late March/early April. We're asking for all Fan Programming proposals and preliminary requests for time/space to be submitted by April 22 (Earth Day) so we have time for any questions or clarifications before we build the tentative schedule.

Some planned programming includes the Green Slime Awards, the mass autographing session, the usual two auctions, filking, a game show, the costume contest, films, and fan/video programming. Plus, hopefully, the continuation of the Kids programming two-hour block (Jessica can use volunteer assistants).

Pati Nagle needs to check the size of our hospitality space before she can commit to an Authors Sunday Afternoon Tea, so stay tuned for an announcement. And Victor Milan probably will be, once again, the Master of Ceremonies for the Costume Contest on Saturday.

The theme for Bubonicon 44 is "Mayan-Punk" or

“The End of the World” due to the Mayan calendar prophecy that everything will change/end in December 2012. In keeping with tradition and to honor the memory of NM’s own Pioneer Author, we plan to make a financial donation to the (Jack) Williamson SF Library Collection at Eastern NM University, and also to the local Roadrunner Food Bank. A third non-profit organization also might be benefited, but that’s currently unknown.

Dealers’ spaces are \$85 with one membership, and \$120 with two. Since we only have 28 spaces total, there is a maximum of two spaces per dealer. Also, spaces are not considered sold until payment is received and a contract is signed. For more Dealer info, please email Caci Gallop at bubonicon@gmail.com. A countdown of tables remaining is posted on the website.

Meanwhile, Roslee Orndorff and Meg Malins are gearing up for the 2012 Art Show. As usual, art show packets will be available online early May. We don’t plan to mail out packets, but if you don’t have internet access we can take care of you. If that’s the case, please send a two-ounce paid SASE to the PO Box. Info is available from Roslee at BubonicRose@hotmail.com.

More general information is available from Kristen at 459-8734 (prefers text), Craig at 266-8905, the PO Box, Mike McCommas’ maintained website: www.bubonicon.com, and via email at bubonicon@gmail.com.

ACE INVADERS ALBUQUERQUE AGAIN

The 2nd Albuquerque Comic Expo (ACE) takes place June 8-10, 2011, at the Albuq Convention Center downtown. Special Guests are Kevin Smith, Jason Mewes and Stan Lee. They also have announced participants Kevin Sorbo, Adam Baldwin, Jewel Staite, Jim Kelly, Ben Templesmith, Lloyd Kaufman, Peter Mayhew, Melinda Snodgrass, Andy Kuhn, Aaron Campbell, Scott Phillips, Larry Welz, Joe Jusko, Robert Vardeman, James O’Barr, Victor Milan & more.

Just like last year, a relationship between Bubonicon and ACE exists with links to each other’s websites and a planned exchange of program book ads. We also encourage ASFS members to volunteer at ACE for a shift.

Their website notes: “We plan to have a larger show this year, with a focus on events and programming. We want everyone out there to have the best possible time at ACE, so we’re working in as many panels, workshops, seminars, screenings, and other cool things as we can into the show! Thank you so much for checking us out, and we’ll see you in June!”

Smith and Mewes will be broadcasting *Jay and Silent Bob*



Get Old LIVE at the Kiva Auditorium on Saturday, June 9. A separate ticket is required to attend this special show from the legendary writer, director and actor responsible for *Clerks*, *Mallrats*, *Chasing Amy* and many other films.

The show floor will be open 2:00-8:00 pm on Friday, 10:00 am-7:00 pm Saturday, and 10:00 am-6:00 pm Sunday. They also plan panels and other events running the entire time, and some that go on after hours, too. A three-day ticket currently is \$35.00 and up. Dailies are \$15.00 for either Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Info at www.abqcomicexpo.com. You also can write to the ACE folks at: Albuquerque Comic Expo, PO Box 27504, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7504.

BOOK REVIEW ROUND-UP

***Emperor Mollusk versus the Sinister Brain* by A. Lee Martinez, 2012 Orbit, hc \$19.99, 304 pages (to be released March 5).** Review by Danielle Pollock

Emperor Mollusk, tentacled Neptunian, scientific genius, and semi-retired ex-warlord of Earth, has gone for years without a real challenge from any of the many less-brilliant denizens of the solar system. So when he receives a report that his life is in danger, he’s not overly concerned. Until, that is, he meets his new enemy, the one being who it turns out just may be capable of defeating him: an entity known only as the Sinister Brain.

Now, accompanied by his pet carnivorous ultrapede, Snarg, and his temporary bodyguard Zala – a member of the Venusian Imperial Protectorate who’s only keeping Mollusk alive until he can be tried for crimes on Venus that include accidentally feeding their queen to sand scrakts – the Emperor finds he needs to come out of retirement, get dressed in his best (and deadliest) exoskeletons, and figure out the Brain’s evil plan before it destroys the people of Earth, people who Mollusk has genuinely grown to like in his years as their overlord.

Emperor Mollusk versus the Sinister Brain is everything you might expect from A. Lee Martinez, author of *Gil’s All-Fright Diner*, *Too Many Curses*, and *Divine Misfortune* at his wackiest, writing a protagonist who’s the sort of guy who likes to build death rays in his spare time for fun.

So come join Mollusk’s crew as they meet the inhabitants of Dinosaur Island (the inevitable result of nuclear testing in the Bermuda Triangle), fight the radioactive brain of Marie Curie, find out how often problems with advanced technology really can be solved by reversing the polarity, and just maybe save the world.

***A Beautiful Friendship* by David Weber, 2011 Baen Books, hc \$18.99, 368 pages.** Review by Kevin Hewett

First, if the title – *A Beautiful Friendship* – sounds familiar, it should. This book is an expansion of a previously published short story originally published in the anthology *More Than Honor* (Baen 1998). Marketed as a YA novel, the book details the story of the first encounter between the

treecats and humans. The 11-year old protagonist, Stephanie Harrington, meets her treecat Lionheart (aka Climbs Quickly) during the long winter on Sphinx while confined to the freehold. As the secret friendship between her and Lionheart evolves, she learns much about treecat society and how they can fit into the evolving human society of the Star Kingdom of Manticore. Recommended reading for fans of David Weber's "Honorverse" and for young adolescents.

***Third Grave Dead Ahead* by Darynda Jones, St. Martin's Press 2012, hc \$23.99, 320 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

The third installment of NM native Darynda Jones' series follows P.I. and Grim Reaper Charley Davidson on a missing persons case. Dr. Nathan Yost contacts Charley to search for his missing wife Teresa, but Charley suspects the doctor is involved in her disappearance. As Charley contacts friends and family about Teresa's disappearance, she realizes just how much care the doctor has taken to alienate his wife from them.

While she is working on this case, Charley is also suffering from extreme sleep deprivation as she attempts to keep Reyes, her sometimes boyfriend (and the Son of Satan), from entering her dreams. She thinks she is physically safe from Reyes because he is back in jail, but she soon discovers just how wrong this assumption is.

Jones' latest novel, *Third Grave Dead Ahead*, is as full of mystery and action as the previous two Charley Davidson books, and just as wickedly funny. This series is a great read for those who enjoy their paranormal romance mixed with thrilling suspense. For those who have not read the previous installments, Jones does a good job explaining the necessary background in the first chapter. Still, I would recommend starting at the beginning. All three books are worth reading.

***Wolf's Cross* by S. Andrew Swann, 2010 Bantam Spectra, tp \$15.00, 336 pages.**

Review by Tanley McMullan

And they called it puppy love.

Furry critters, lots of blood, gore, and sex and for the romantics, love. All this is set in a world of swords and sorcery, and medieval castles in S. Andrew Swann's *Wolf's Cross*. The main characters are two puppies, ok, werewolves, (sigh, I like puppies better) and some hot headed church people.

In the words of the immortal Roy Tackett, the purpose of a review is to tell the reader whether or not the book is any damn good to read. How should I know?! I don't know anyone's taste. What I do know is that I enjoyed this book.

In most past books of adventure, the girl would hang back and let the male do the fighting, while she looked scared and yelled "Eek, a monster." I'm glad that the times have changed to the point that girls now do more, and this girl kicked ass. She's pretty good for a main character. There were no pictures, but I would bet she made a cute wolf. Did I mention I like wolves?

If you like puppies, you might like this book. If you don't like puppies, then you're in luck because this is about wolves. Same difference really. They're sooo cute!

This book is second in a series, but reads as a stand-alone book. That's great for those that don't have the first

book.

I wonder what life would be like if we had werewolves here. I would have to pet them.

***A Rising Thunder* by David Weber, 2012 Baen Books, hc \$26.00, 464 pages (to be released March 6).**

Review by Kevin Hewett

A Rising Thunder, the newest novel in the "Honorverse," focuses on the growing tension between the Star Kingdom Empire of Manticore and the Solarian League. Although minor military clashes have already occurred, the Manticoran leadership still wants to avoid all out war. Unfortunately, the unelected bureaucrats who actually rule the Solarian League are outraged at the uppity "neo-barbs" who dare to challenge the League and seek a military solution. But, the League's military, despite being the largest in human space, is vastly outclassed by the modern, battle-tested Manticoran navy. Thus the latest attempt to coerce Manticore by the League ends in another military disaster with more than one million casualties. Furthermore, Manticore responds with economic blockade of the wormhole network resulting in a quickly escalating depression among the core League worlds. The second half of the book focuses on the constitutional crisis enveloping the League and foreshadows the dissolution and probable defeat of the League – which fans will have to wait until the next novel.

***Other Kingdoms* by Richard Matheson, 2011 Tor Books, tp \$14.99, 320 pages.**

Review by Danielle Pollock

Richard Matheson – author of such classics as *I Am Legend*, *Somewhere in Time* and *What Dreams May Come* – is back with a sort-of fairy tale in *Other Kingdoms*. It's 1982, and 82-year-old Alex White, who has, for the past several years, built a successful career as a horror novelist under the pen name Arthur Black, is revisiting memories of his youth, and the fantastical events he experienced during and following his time as a soldier in the Great War.

In the trenches, 18-year-old Alex befriends an odd Englishman named Harold Lightfoot. Following a skirmish in which Lightfoot is killed and Alex wounded, Alex discovers a mysterious lump of gold in his bag, presumably left to him by Lightfoot. With his newly inherited small fortune, Alex decides that, rather than return to America and his abusive father, he will settle and recover in Lightfoot's hometown, the village of Gatfort.

But all is not as it seems in this quaint English village. Something mysterious and possibly deadly haunts the woods. Then there is Alex's growing attraction to the red-haired widow Magda, who everyone in town knows to be a witch.

The trouble really begins, however, when Alex ventures into the woods against advice and meets a beautiful woman named Ruthana...and her homicidal brother, Gilly. It's a love triangle we know Alex survives, but possibly not with his sanity intact.

This is a fine story, and Matheson successfully juggles what is almost three points of view: young Alex, elderly Alex, and Alex's Arthur Black persona, a master of purple prose who breaks into the narrative occasionally to comment on some particularly well-turned phrase.

It's not Matheson at his best - at times, the novel suffers from being too predictable - but it's well done enough to appeal to long-time readers, and fans of dark fantasy.

***Carnelians (Saga of the Skolian Empire)* by Catherine Asaro, 2011 Baen Books, hc \$25.00, 384 pages.**

Review by Kevin Hewett

The newest novel in Catherine Asaro's "Skolian Empire" series, *Carnelians* is the direct sequel to *Diamond Star* (Baen 2009). It focuses on the social upheaval caused by the unauthorized release of the song "Carnelians Finale" which details the atrocities of the Eubian Empire against the citizens of the Skolian Imperialate. The political intrigue amongst the rulers of the two empires and the unrest amongst their general populations threaten to derail a proposed peace summit and ignite a galactic conflagration. Fans of the series will certainly enjoy this novel. Others will want to read *Diamond Star* first.

***Late Eclipses (October Daye, Book 4)* by Seanan McGuire, 2011 DAW Books, mmpb \$7.99, 400 pages.**

Review by Serge Mailloux

I just finished Seanan McGuire's *Late Eclipses*, her 4th novel about San Francisco's half-Fae private investigator October Daye. Things are not improving for her. Sure, Toby has gotten used to sharing her apartment with May, the Fetch who's supposed to be present when she dies. When Toby is summoned to the Court of the Bay Area's secret Queen of Mists though, she knows it can't be good, what with the Queen hating her guts, and when the latter 'promotes' her to Countess of Goldengreen, she's sure it's a poison present. Literal poisoning then comes up when Toby's friends, starting with Lily the Undine whose domain lies hidden in the Golden Gate Park's Japanese Tea Garden, become seriously sick, and suspicions point toward Toby, thanks to someone who had been responsible for her sleeping with the fish for fourteen years. Add to that questions about Toby's origins, about which the Luidaeg - one of King Oberon's Firstborn Children and a cranky friend of hers - won't help with answers.

"Sorry," said the Luidaeg, unapologetically.

I took a deep breath, and asked the one thing I really wanted to know: "Luidaeg, why did my mother lie to me?"

"Fuck, Toby, you just can't ask the easy ones, can you?" The question had the bitter lilt of the rhetorical; she didn't really expect an answer, and I didn't give one. Sighing, the Luidaeg said, "She lied because she was trying to save you."

Yes. Recommended. Very much so.

***One Salt Sea (October Daye, Book 5)* by Seanan McGuire, DAW Books, mmpb \$7.99, 368 pages.**

Review by Serge Mailloux

One Salt Sea is Seanan McGuire's 5th novel about San Francisco's half-Fae private investigator October Daye. Not only is her apartment threatening to turn into something that'd make Mrs. Madrigal proud, but she's now also the Countess of Goldengreen, a place that straddles our world and the Summer Lands. It's all quite a responsibility, but nothing like what comes crashing down when San Fran-

cisco's Queen of the Mists announces that the Sea's Queen has declared war. The latter's two sons have disappeared and October sees no way to prevent the war other than to volunteer and find who really is behind this. She'd have done it anyway because that's who she is, but the stakes become very personal when her long-estranged human daughter is also abducted, and when she finds out that what's going on is the result of her one big failure years before. As Shakespeare is quoted saying at the beginning:

"As many arrows, loosed several ways, come
to one mark;

As many ways meet in one town;

As many streams meet in one salt sea;

So many a thousand actions, one afoot, end in
one purpose."

That novel is going on my list of Hugo nominees.

COSINE 2012 REPORT

Go North Young Fen

A Con Report By Craig Chrissinger

Our decision to attend COSine for the first time was all based on the weather, and thus a last-minute decision. If we couldn't get through the Raton Pass, there would be no convention in Colorado Springs for us. Instead, it was a smooth five-hour drive both ways January 27-29. We wanted to go to this small con because of GoH Charles Stross, plus the chance to visit with author Connie Willis, and fans Rose Beetem, Tim Simpson and Kaia Gavere.

We arrived at the Crowne Plaza Hotel about 3:30 pm Friday, January 27, unloaded the car, and wandered upstairs to get registered. Jessica asked their average attendance, and was informed they had more than 200 people for the first time in 2011 - and were expecting 250 this year.

Tim, Jessica and I visited the combined dealers room/art show in a room behind registration. We looked at items for sale and at artwork, and visited with Nina & Ron Else.

At 6:00 pm, we attended Charles Stross' reading in the Board Room, which seemed small for a GoH appearance - but it fit everyone who showed up. Stross read from *The Apocalypse Codex*, the 4th Laundry novel, to be released this July. "It's a secret branch of British Intelligence that deals with Lovecraftian horrors," explained Stross. Asked about future Laundry novels, Stross said there will be more, but that he can't write them back-to-back. "There definitely will not be more than nine books in any of my series," he stated. He also is working on a sequel to *Saturn's Children*, and a Laundry short story about unicorns as alien parasites.

After Stross' reading, we went across the hallway to the con suite for the Ice Cream Social. There I talked to John Stith, Wil McCarthy, and con chair Joe Sokola.

Connie Willis' 8:00 reading was standing-room only. She talked about finding out she's this year's Nebula Grandmaster. "I am not a grand mistress," she said. "I'm extremely proud of the honor, and I thank everyone who has said I'm too young to receive the award."

Connie read from a short story in progress about a haunted bookstore, and from the non-fiction book she wants to do on romantic comedies. She's also working on a new

novel, but it's not the UFO book as expected because of the movie *Paul*. Instead, she's begun work on a romantic comedy novel about telepathy, and brain surgery that can create empathy and a connection between people.

Our evening ended fairly early with a trip to 7-Eleven for an ATM for Tim and taquitos for me (Tim & Jessica had had Tim's chicken soup earlier). We sat around our room, watched a repeat of *The Big Bang Theory* and went to sleep.

Saturday, Jessica and I had a fun, conversation-filled breakfast with Connie & Courtney Willis and two other fans. We got upstairs for most of Stross' GoH Interview at 10:00 am, and were joined by Kaia and Rose, who had driven from Denver that morning. Stross said *Saturn's Children* "has fun ideas, but it was a pain in the ass to write." He said that short stories are not good for money, but are for "advertising, trying new ideas, and getting faster feedback." He also is working on a collaboration with Cory Doctorow.

Next up, the panel "Where Worlds Collide: the Art of Writing Parallel and Alternative Timelines" had Willis, Stross, John Stith, Carol Berg and Peter Wacks. "The appeal of writing time travel is immense," commented Willis. "It's fun to think about what might have been. But it's also about regret - wishing we had done something more or different."

We left the hotel and COSine for lunch at Chipotle's, a visit to Penzey's Spices, and a trip downtown to Poor Richard's Bookstore and Toy Store. It was nice weather for strolling, except for a cool wind - and we enjoyed browsing.

We arrived back at the hotel for "The Worst Science Fiction Panel Ever," which was interesting. Panelists told of bad experiences while pre-planned "actors" interrupted the proceedings. Would it work at Bubonicon, we wondered. Jessica even asked Connie about it, so don't be surprised if this panel shows up with "plants" in the B'con audience.

COSine does their mass autographing Saturday evening in combination with a book raffle (tickets were sold Friday and Saturday). Someone, Jessica and I won a pile of books! And then we went through Stross' line several times to get books signed for Albuquerque fans, Page One Bookstore and ourselves. Plus we had a few books for Willis, Carol Berg, Ed Bryant and Kevin J. Anderson.

Several of us then hung out in the 4th floor lobby and visited. Tim, Kaia, Rose, Dave, Arlan, Anna, Jessica and I chatted about food allergies, museum shows and oddities, urinals as art, current movies, Swedish Chef porn, the American *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* film vs the Swedish version, snack foods as dinner, and small children who live under the hotel and only come up at night to crowd the Jacuzzi (and thus prevent fans from actually sitting in hot water as a group). It was one of those silly and serious free-flowing exchange of ideas and bad jokes.

We headed to the 3rd floor for the "Changing the Speed of Light" panel where Courtney Willis talked about how light does change speed when it passes through a medium. Apparently, there's been some evidence of some sub-atomic particles traveling faster than light in water. Wil McCarthy spoke about the speed of light around a black hole, and how the math says going through the event horizon could allow travel through time and space.



Asked how to test that theory, McCarthy replied, "Oh, I'm not going to test it."

Neutrinos changing flavors and mass? Some possibly traveling faster than light in space? And Higg's Boson particles could transfer mass? I'm not sure I understood half of what was said. My brain wanted to explode. Ouch!

After the panel, Rose, Tim, Kaia, Jessica and I hung out in our room talking more until we all got sleepy.

Sunday, we planned to eat breakfast and then start the drive back to Albuquerque, but we ended up staying extra. At breakfast, Rose presented a radio-controlled rat for donation to Bubonicon. Kaia and I ate the buffet while Jessica drank tea and nibbled at a sausage patty and a bacon slice, and Tim drank his sparkling water.

After packing up cars, we four roommates (Tim & Kaia, Jessica & I) stopped by the dealers room/art show one more time, and then went to the "Evolution of Female Characters" panel, which was mildly heated at times - mostly because of one fan in the audience. Stross commented, "SF readership is 50-60% female, so I would be a fool to ignore at least half of my potential audience."

Michelle Brothers joked, "I'm a fragile flower of femininity...and I'll shoot anyone who says different."

For Jessica and I, the final program we attended was the "UFOs in Fact & Fiction" panel, which was fun. Panelists talked about their favorite first-contact stories, and about reported UFO sightings. Willis asked, "Why would they come here? The logic has always bothered me." An audience member replied, "They come here for the cows!"

"If you write a first-contact story, you have to think about a spin on why they've come here," said Willis. "I wrote a story where the aliens are here because Earth has the perfect conditions for eclipses." And then she told the story of Jack Williamson and Fred Pohl racing from Portales to Roswell to find the Roswell Incident really was a weather balloon used to observe Russian nuclear testing.

And then it was time to make our good-byes and do the I-25 south drive. We ate late lunches in the car, and only stopped in Raton for gas. We got home about 6:20 pm.

Was COSine worth attending? It was for us because of Charles Stross and seeing friends. Will we go again? Really depends on their GoH - and that January weather. This year, both factors worked. And it was kind of fun taking notes to write a con trip report for the first time in many years!

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

Basically, not much room here. But I did write a con report! I really wanted to write something instead of just editing, and making minor revisions to news bits.

Bubonicon plans progress, and we just met with the folks of ACE. Be sure to go to their con June 8-10 downtown. Should be a good time again. Also worth checking out - the Williamson Lectureship March 29-30 in Portales.

I miss *Chuck* already, and wasn't completely happy with the series' ending. Waiting for *Community* to come back! And looking forward to *The Avengers* and *Men in Black 3*.

See you all in these pages in two months (deadline Sunday, April 8). Happy Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day. Beware the Ides of March and such.

—Craig C.