

ASFACTS 2012

SPOOKTACULAR OCTOBER EDITION

BUBONICON FRIENDS AMONG 2012 HUGO AWARD WINNERS

Winners for the Hugo Awards and for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer were announced at a ceremony September 2 during Chicon 7, the 70th World Science Fiction Convention, held in Chicago, Illinois, August 30-September 3. Among the winners were Bubonicon friends Ursula Vernon, George RR Martin and John Picacio. A full list of winners follows:

Novel: *Among Others* by Jo Walton, **Novella:** “The Man Who Bridged the Mist” by Kij Johnson, **Novellette:** “Six Months, Three Days” by Charlie Jane Anders, **Short Story:** “The Paper Menagerie” by Ken Liu, **Related Work:** *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, Third Edition* edited by John Clute, David Langford, Peter Nicholls & Graham Sleight, **Graphic Story:** *Digger* by Ursula Vernon.

Dramatic Presentation – Long Form: *Game of Thrones: Season 1* (George RR Martin), **Dramatic Presentation – Short Form:** *Doctor Who: “The Doctor’s Wife”* (Neil Gaiman), **Editor – Long Form:** Betsy Wollheim, **Editor – Short Form:** Sheila Williams

Professional Artist: John Picacio, **Semiprozine:** *Locus*, **Fanzine:** *SF Signal*, **Fancast:** *SF Squeecast*, **Fan Writer:** Jim C. Hines, and **Fan Artist:** Maurine Starkey.

The **John W. Campbell Award** for Best New Writer went to E. Lily Yu, and the **Big Heart Award** went to Juanita Coulson.

HARRY HARRISON DIES

SFWA Grand Master Harry Harrison died August 15 in Crowborough, Uckfield, East Sussex. He was 87 years old, reported *Locus Online* mid-August.

Harrison is best known for his SF crime series the *Stainless Steel Rat*, featuring con man and thief Slippery Jim diGriz. Other important works include his story of over-population *Make Room! Make Room!*, the basis of famous SF film *Soylent Green*; the *Deathworld* series; the *Eden* series; and *A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!*

Henry Maxwell Dempsey was born March 12, 1925,

in Stamford CT; his father changed his last name to Harrison soon after the birth. Harrison attended art schools in New York, and worked as a commercial artist before turning to fiction, selling first story “Rock Diver” in 1951. He went on to become a prolific author and editor, producing scores of novels, stories and anthologies over the next six decades.

Harrison helped shape the SF field in the ’60s and ’70s through his collaborations with Brian Aldiss, including SF criticism magazine *SF Horizons*, which ran for two issues in 1965, and their influential *Best SF* anthology series, which ran from 1968-1975. Harrison was inducted into the SF Hall of Fame in 2004, and received the SFWA Grand Master Award in 2009. He is survived by his two children.

LONDON WINS 2014 WORLDCON, CITIES BATTLE FOR NASFI

London won its bid to host the 2014 World Science Fiction Convention in voting held at Chicon Labor Day weekend. The 72nd Worldcon – LonCon 3 – will be held

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Lindskold Visit & Club Elections Tonight!**
Jane Lindskold talks about *Fire Season* (her collaboration with David Weber) and other projects. Plus, Three Offices need to be filled for Nov 2012-Oct 2013, and the “challenge ingredient” for December chosen (see below). Voting rules apply, based on attendance and dues paid to date.
- **November 9:** Loretta Hall gives an encore presentation of her Bubonicon talk on New Mexico’s contributions to the space program.
- **December 14:** The 8th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off, and short SF-oriented holiday films. Plus, the annual issue of *SITHFACTS* will be distributed (deadline Sunday, Dec 9). Please help us clean up our room at the end of the evening!
- **January 11, 2013:** Perhaps a club discussion of what members read and enjoyed in 2012...
- **February 8:** 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: cwraig@nmia.com. *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. *SITHFACTS* out each December. **NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, Dec 9.**
Club Officers: Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Jessica L. Coyle, Moderator. Randi Hewett, Alternator. Jack Skeleton, Halloween Advisor. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Craig Chrissinger & Kristen Dorland (505) 459-8734.

August 14-18, 2014, at the International Convention Centre at the ExCeL London exhibition centre in London's Docklands. Their bid received 864 of 870 votes cast.

Guests of Honor are Iain M. Banks, John Clute, Chris Foss, Malcolm Edwards, Jeanne Gomoll, Robin Hobb and Bryan Talbot.

Currently, an attending membership is \$160.

Because the 2014 Worldcon will be held outside of North America, a NASFiC (North American Science Fiction Convention) will be held that same year. Currently bidding to host the 2014 NASFiC are Phoenix, AZ, and Detroit, MI. The Phoenix bid, to be run by Leprecon Inc, is proposed for July 31-August 3, 2014 (the same weekend as Bubonicon 46). The Detroit bid, headed up by Tammy Coxen (former ConFusion chair), is proposed for July 17-20, 2014.

Due to the conflict with the Phoenix dates, Bubonicon's co-chairs have thrown their support behind the Detroit bid – and will host both a fan table and two hours in the con suite at Milehicon 44 in Denver, CO.

WORLD FANTASY FINALISTS NAMED

The World Fantasy Awards ballot for works in 2011 was released August 8, announced Locus Online. The awards will be presented in Toronto, Canada during the World Fantasy Convention, November 1-4, 2012. The Lifetime Achievement Awards, presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field, will go this year to Alan Garner and George RR Martin, and were announced earlier in August.

The World Fantasy Awards finalists are:

Novel: *Those Across the River* by Christopher Buehlman, *11/22/63* by Stephen King,

A Dance with Dragons by George RR Martin, *Osama* by Lavie Tidhar, and *Among Others* by Jo Walton.

Novella: "Near Zennor" by Elizabeth Hand, "A Small Price to Pay for Birdsong" by K.J. Parker, "Alice Through the Plastic Sheet" by Robert Shearman, "Rose Street Attractors" by Lucius Shepard, and *Silently and Very Fast* by Catherynne M. Valente.

Short Story: "X for Demetrius" by Steve Duffy, "Younger Women" by Karen Joy Fowler, "The Paper Menagerie" by Ken Liu, "A Journey of Only Two Paces" by Tim Powers, and "The Cartographer Wasps and the Anarchist Bees" by E. Lily Yu.

Anthology: *Blood and Other Cravings* edited by Ellen Datlow, *A Book of Horrors* edited by Stephen Jones, *The Thackery T. Lampshead Cabinet of Curiosities* edited by Ann & Jeff VanderMeer, *The Weird* edited by Ann & Jeff VanderMeer, and *Gutshot* edited by Conrad Williams.

Collection: *Bluegrass Symphony* by Lisa L. Hannett, *Two Worlds and In Between* by Caitlin R. Kiernan, *After*

the Apocalypse by Maureen F. McHugh, *Mrs. Midnight and Other Stories* by Reggie Oliver, and *The Bible Repairman and Other Stories* by Tim Powers.

Artist: John Coulthart, Julie Dillon, Jon Foster, Kathleen Jennings and John Picacio.

Special Award Professional: John Joseph Adams for editing, Jo Fletcher for editing, Eric Lane for publishing in translation, Brett Alexander Savory & Sandra Kasturi for ChiZine Publications, and Jeff VanderMeer & S.J. Chambers for *The Steampunk Bible*.

Special Award Non-Professional: Kate Baker, Neil Clarke, Cheryl Morgan & Sean Wallace for *Clarksword*, Cat Rambo for *Fantasy*, Raymond Russell & Rosalie Parker for Tartarus Press, Charles Tan for Bibliophile Stalker blog, and Mark Valentin for *Wormwood*.

LA NAMES INTERSECTION AFTER BRADBURY

The intersection of Fifth and Flower streets in Downtown Los Angeles will be renamed Ray Bradbury Square, thanks to a vote by the City Council on September 18. Bradbury was known to frequent nearby Clifton's Cafeteria, and had written on the public typewriters in the Central Library, where he also spent several days a week reading everything he could, according to his daughter. The motion was introduced by councilman Jose Huizar, who said Bradbury had been "part of the fabric of the city of L.A."

BABYLON 5'S MICHAEL O'HARE DIES

Actor Michael O'Hare died September 28 at the age of 60, five days after he suffered a heart attack.

O'Hare is best known for playing Commander Jeffrey Sinclair on the sci-fi series *Babylon 5*. He led the crew of the titular space station for the show's first season, then left in what series creator J. Michael Straczynski described as a "mutual" and "amicable" split. Though he was replaced as commander of the station by Bruce Boxleitner's Capt. John Sheridan, Sinclair still had an important role to play in the series, and O'Hare appeared briefly in both seasons two and three of the show to wrap up his character's storyline.

His other TV credits include *Law & Order*, *L.A. Law*, *One Life to Live*, and *Trapper John, M.D.* A Chicago native, O'Hare earned notoriety in the theater before moving into television. He starred as Col. Jessup in the original production of Aaron Sorkin's stage play *A Few Good Men*, a role Jack Nicholson would later play on screen.

Straczynski announced the news on Facebook, calling O'Hare's sudden passing "a terrible loss."

"I regret that I must convey the sad news that Michael O'Hare passed away today," Straczynski posted September 28. "He suffered a heart attack on Sunday

(September 23) and was in a coma until his passing this afternoon. This is a terrible loss for all *B5* fans and everyone involved with the show wishes to convey their condolences to the O'Hare family. He was an amazing man."

O'Hare is the fourth member of *Babylon 5*'s main cast to pass away since the series ended. Richard Biggs, who played Dr. Stephen Franklin throughout the show's run, died in 2004. Andreas Katsulas, who starred as G'Kar, died in 2006. And Jeff Conaway, who played security officer Zack Allan, passed away last year. With O'Hare's passing, Straczynski mused on his Facebook page about a *B5* reunion in the great beyond: "I can only assume from all this that someone in the afterlife has begun pre-production on a *Babylon 5* movie."

SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, October 15, at Page One Bookstore to discuss *Coyote* by Allen Steele. The group then meets November 19 to talk about *Diamond Age* by Neal Stephenson.

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 25 at Bubonicon 44 at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown Hotel in Albuquerque, NM, Green Slime Mistress Jessica L. Coyle (with assistance from sock puppets) presented the following with recognition of their wretchedness in the last 12 months:

Film: *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance* (little substance and makes the first film look like Shakespeare, a waste of time & money, Nicholas Cage's delivery is over-the-top)

Television: *The River* (more hokey and boring than thrilling, too deadly serious and wants too much to be the next *Lost*)

SyFy Movie: *Piranhaconda* (Ridiculous fluff with horrible special effects and porn actresses)

SF Novel: *Tribulations* by Ken Shufeldt (you'll have the urge to gnaw off your own arm)

Book Cover Art: *Young Flandry* by Poul Anderson (Baen reprint – when did Pohl start writing soft-core porn? The cover is just plain bad)

Video Game: *Mass Effect 3* ending (ambiguous, lack of



player choice, irreversible tragedy)

Toy: *Transformers/Star Wars* crossover (impossible instructions, silly & frustrating)

MARTIN REJECTED GAIMAN YEARS AGO

When you're successful, you get a lot of pitches from other people who want to be successful. *A Song of Ice and Fire* author George R.R. Martin has been selling books for decades, so it's no surprise he's been approached by lots of folks wanting to get in on the action. Apparently, one of those wannabe writers was a young Neil Gaiman, according to Blastr in early October.

In an interview with MTV, Martin revealed that back in the mid-to-late '80s he was approached at a convention by a "skinny British kid dressed all in black" who had an idea for a character to introduce in Martin's successful shared universe anthology *Wild Cards*. The kid didn't have many credits to his name, so Martin blew him off at the time.

Might have been a bad idea.

Turns out that young man was eventual author and comic guru Neil Gaiman, who pitched an idea about a character who lives in dreams ... which would eventually become his wildly successful *Sandman* comics.

In addition to *Sandman*, Gaiman would go on to write several successful sci-fi and fantasy novels, including *Stardust* and *American Gods*.

To his credit, Martin admits he made a mistake back then. "Things have changed since then and I would love to have Neil Gaiman writing for *Wild Cards* and I do rather regret blowing him off at that San Diego Comic Con," Martin said in the interview.

GREEN MILE'S STAR DIES

(CNN) -- Michael Clarke Duncan, nominated for an Academy Award for his role in the 1999 film *The Green Mile*, died the morning of September 3, according to a representative for his family.

Duncan "suffered a myocardial infarction on July 13 and never fully recovered," a written statement from Joy Fehily said.

Clarke died at a Los Angeles hospital where he had been since having the heart attack more than seven weeks ago. According to *TMZ*, it was Duncan's girlfriend Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth, a reality star and former contestant on *The Apprentice*, who had acted quickly and provided lifesaving efforts when he had the heart attack.

Most recently he was on the Fox TV series, *The Finder*. According to *Entertainment Weekly*, the TV series was canceled in May.

A towering and hulking figure, the 6-foot-5-inch Duncan also was known for his deep voice. A Chicago native, Duncan went to college at Alcorn State University

in Mississippi with plans to major in communications, but he dropped out and moved home.

In 1990, he moved to Los Angeles, where he worked as a bodyguard then got a part in a commercial as a drill sergeant. More roles followed – often ones that depended more on his 315-pound frame than his acting ability. He was a guard in *Back in Business*, a bouncer in *A Night at the Roxbury*, a bouncer for 2 Live Crew in *The Players Club*, and a bouncer at a bar in the Warren Beatty film *Bulworth*.

In 1998, he landed his first significant movie part, playing Bear in the film *Armageddon*, where a crew of drillers from an oil rig save the Earth from an asteroid. He also appeared in the genre films *The Scorpion King*, *Daredevil*, *The Island* and *Sin City*; as well as doing voice work in *Kung Fu Panda* and *Brother Bear*.

Armageddon was the beginning of his friendship with Bruce Willis. They appeared in four films together. And it was Willis who called *The Green Mile* director Frank Darabont to put in a good word for Duncan.

In the Oscar-nominated film, Duncan played John Coffey, the huge black man wrongly convicted in a Louisiana town for the rapes and murders of two white girls. Coffey has supernatural powers, though; his hands can heal, even bring back the dead. A microcosm of faith, Coffey is a messenger of hope and lost hope who develops a relationship with Tom Hanks' character, a guard named Paul Edgecomb.

In 2008, he appeared as "Mr. Colt" in the second-season premiere of *Chuck*, "Chuck Versus the First Date" and as a guest star on two episodes of *Two and a Half Men*. Most notably, in April 2011, Duncan guest starred on an episode of TV series *Bones* as Leo Knox which, in 2012, led to Duncan receiving his first starring role as the same character in the spinoff series *The Finder*.

During the week of May 14, 2012, Duncan appeared on *The Late, Late Show with Craig Ferguson* as a guest, when the show was taping for a week in Scotland. Duncan was one of the show's most frequent guests, appearing a total of 18 times. The day after Duncan's death, Ferguson began his show with a special tribute to him.

According to the Internet Movie Database, Duncan had two completed projects that have yet to be released on a nationwide basis. He is slated to appear in *The Challenger*, a boxing movie written and directed by Kent Moran. He will also appear in the Robert Townsend film, *In the Hive*, about an alternative school for boys who have been kicked out of other schools.

MILEHICON PREPARES FOR 44TH CELEBRATION

Milehicon, Colorado's longest-running SF convention, will celebrate its 44th incarnation October 19-21 with a "Steampunk" 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 Cherie Priest, C.J. Henderson and Steven Brust. Artist Guest is Stephen Hickman, and Toastmaster is Stephen Graham Jones.

Other guests that New Mexicans may recognize include Daniel Abraham, Paolo Bacigalupi, Doug Beason, Carol Berg, Craig Chrissinger, Fred Cleaver, Daniel and David Dvorkin, Cynthia Felice, Warren Hammond, Kevin & Randi Hewett, Bradley Lyau, Charles & Tauni Orndorff, Melinda Snodgrass, Jeanne Stein, Robert Stikman, John Stith, James Van Pelt, Carrie Vaughn and Connie Willis.

Programming starts at 3 pm Friday, which some offered items as a panel on the 10 SF movies every fan should see, a steampunk-themed Improvocation, the Milehicon Mix, Munch & Mingle, the Critter Floatilla Race, mask workshops, "Love & Sex Lives of the Victorians: The Pajama Panel," and late-night readings.

Saturday is full of events, such as the con suite coffeeklatsch sponsored by Who Else Books, costuming demos, hours with Priest and Hickman, an introduction to podcasting, the Hewetts' Stop That Apocalypse game show, science presentations, the Costume Masquerade, the Turkey Readoff, a Slash Reading Circle and the Literacy Auction. Sunday offers up such sport as the Critter Crunch, the GoH remarks, the art auction, SF Name That Tune, Closing Ceremonies and the Dead Dog.

Memberships are \$46 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.

CHUCK CREATORS RETURN TO TV

Chris Fedak and Josh Schwartz made a geek favorite with their beloved but ratings-challenged series *Chuck*, and now they hope lightning can strike twice on the small screen. *Chuck* fans, rejoice, noted Blastr in early October – the boys behind the *Intersect* are coming back to TV.

Fedak and Schwartz hope to bring that *Chuck* charm to a new series based on the sci-fi fantasy book trilogy *Midnighters*, written by Scott Westerfeld.

Here's the official synopsis, via *Deadline*: "[A] drama centered on a small group of people all born at the stroke of midnight who have access to the 25th hour of the day."

Fedak is writing the pilot, with Schwartz attached to produce, and the series has a script commitment from Warner Bros.

Still no word on what network it could wind up at, but with Warner Bros. involved, The CW is an option.



BUBONICON 44 BREAKS RECORDS, NEW VENUE WORKS WELL

With 834 attendees, Bubonicon 44 was the largest fan-run New Mexico convention to date (an impressive 112 people larger than 2011). With increased attendance and frugal spending due to unknown factors in changing venues, 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 Mayan Punk.

In the end, Bubonicon 44 donated a record \$3,500 to non-profit organizations. The Williamson Library Collection at Eastern NM University and the local Roadrunner Food Bank were given \$1,500 each, while \$500 was donated to New Mexico PBS to help with programming costs.

Bubonicon 44 saw four new participants in programming – Loretta Hall, T. Jackson King, Caroline Spector and Gabi Stevens; plus appearances from Warren Hammond and Albuquerque Mayor Richard Barry (as he walked across the convention's Marriott space).

Well-received programming included the 9th Annual Afternoon Tea (coordinated by Pati Nagle and the Tea Society), the Sunday Auction, George RR Martin & Brandon Sanderson's readings, Worst Panel Ever, the Genre State of Hollywood, the Star Trek vs Firefly Cap'n's debate, Jane Lindskold's writing workshop, Ursula Vernon's slide show, the Costume Contest and Green Slime Awards, Opening Ceremonies, the Cartoon Apocalypse discussion, and the Guest of Honor presentation.

The Art Show had 41 artists displaying their wares with sales of \$9,162, setting a new record. The Art Show sold 46.4 percent of all artwork on display. The Sunday Auction was up from 2011 with total sales of \$2,390 (*Froomb* went for just \$35). Of that, 68 percent of that money went to Bubonicon. The Charity Auction on Friday was up from 2011, raising \$1,705 (also donated was \$60 from pre-con sales and various individuals).

So, no matter what the continuing world economic situation, Bubonicon 44 was a success. The 1st year at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown went much smoother than expected for the venue change. And it turned out that a large percentage of the hotel staff are closet fans!

COSTUME CONTEST AWARDS: Best of Show went to Taking of Heart (Jackie & Ken Coombes), Best Workmanship was the Versailles Philharmonic Quintet (Suzanne Shelton, Dee Skinner, Lesley Judd, Breanne Ammons & Regina Chavez), Best Presentation went to Minions of Minimal Budget (Jack Boubelik, Bethany Virgil & Dakota Poore), Best Youth Costume was Young Turanga Leela (Scarlet Abraham), Best Mayan-Punk Theme went to Ancient Alien Mayan Apocalypse

(Valeria Webb), Best Original was Blue Screen of Death (Harriet Engle), Best Recreation went to Dr. Sheldon Cooper (Matthew Mishalak), Best Judges' Bribe was You Will Be Assimilated (Julie Heffernan), and the Judges' Shout-Out went to Popples of the Apocalypse (Jessica Coyle, Kristen Dorland, Christie Jury & Danielle Pollock). Honorable Mentions went to Discord (Emily Strasser), Sex in the Dirt (Lillian Hoines), Battletorn Neverland (Nate May, Krystin Edlinger, Chris Fowler & Anna Nichols), and Galactic Corporate Empress (Diane Gray).

ART SHOW AWARDS: Professional to Sarah Clemens, Amateur to Derek Smith, Student to Andrew Wacks, and Beast of Show (con theme) to Alan F. Beck.

All in all, the con went very well 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, confirmed as the Bubonicon 45 co-chairs at the September ASFS meeting.

BUBONICON 45 will be held August 23-25, 2013, at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown (Louisiana & I-40), with Guests of Honor Tim Powers & Brent Weeks, Toastmistress Diana Rowland, and Guest Artist Alan F. Beck. Rooms are \$99 single-double, \$109 triple-quad. Yes, the same rates as in 2012. Plus plenty of restaurants within walking distance, and easy access to the interstate!

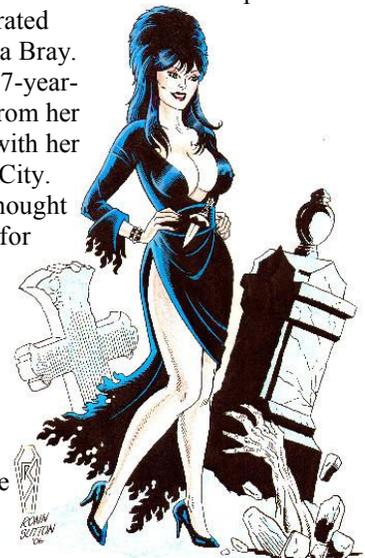
Good luck to the 2013 team during their second year at the Marriott (suggestions/program ideas are being taken now at bubonicon@gmail.com). And the Austin, TX Worldcon actually starts four days after Bubonicon 45 ends – yes, on the traditional Labor Day weekend.

BOOK REVIEW ROUND-UP

***The Diviners* by Libba Bray, 2012 Little Brown Books for Young Readers, hc \$19.99, 592 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

The Diviners is the first book in a new paranormal historical trilogy by decorated Young Adult author Libba Bray. Set in the Roaring '20s, 17-year-old Evie O'Neill is sent from her home in disgrace to live with her Uncle Will in New York City. Evie is thrilled with the thought of living in NYC, except for the fact that her Uncle is curator of The Museum of American Folklore, Superstition, and the Occult – also known as "The Museum of the Creepy Crawlies." Evie quickly falls into a routine where she works at the



Museum by day, and sneaks out to go to speakeasies and parties with her friends that she makes at her Uncle's apartment building.

Things change when Evie becomes entangled in a series of occult-based murders. The police are baffled, and, since he is an expert on the occult, they ask Uncle Will for help. It turns out that Evie has a secret talent that gets both her and her friends pulled into the very center of the search for the serial killer.

As a long-time fan of Libba Bray's ever since her first release (*A Great and Terrible Beauty*), I was definitely looking forward to this book. *The Diviners* is an excellent read, and will especially be enjoyed by those who enjoyed Bray's *Gemma Doyle* trilogy. I especially liked several of the secondary characters, including Evie's showgirl friend Theta and her boyfriend Memphis. It looks as if the next two books will expand on the lives of some of these characters, and I cannot wait to read them.

***The Lost Stars: Tarnished Knight* by Jack Campbell, 2012 Ace Books, hc \$26.95, 400 pages.**

Review by Terry Mulcahy

This story of *The Lost Fleet* universe is told entirely as perceived by peoples of the Syndicate Worlds as they deal with the defeat and disintegration of their empire.

Jack Campbell (John G. Hemry) is one hell of a storyteller. *Tarnished Knight* is space opera spun by a master of military science fiction, author of series such as: *Stark's War*, *Paul Sinclair* (JAG in space) and *The Lost Fleet*. He himself is a retired naval officer, and since he knows military discipline well, he can posit the question: what happens when a totalitarian military regime crumbles under its own oppression, and citizens who know no other system must not only rid themselves of the old order, but find their way alone in a remote star system? After centuries in which democracy has been lost in time, and replaced by the Syndicate, a corporate structure run by ruthless CEO despots, the people of this Orwellian society must figure out not only how to eliminate an oppressive secret police, but how to survive when they are threatened by remnants of the empire and an invading alien race that has beaten the empire's defenses.

Campbell's characters are sexy, and multidimensional, with conflicting motivations of self preservation and hatred of the back-stabbing society that is all they've ever known. They don't trust each other, even in bed, but they suspect that the old system of spies, assassins, secrets and duplicitous self interest is not going to be enough to save them, especially since it failed the Syndicate.

The pacing of the story is quick (I could hardly put it down) and only flags at the end after multiple military campaigns converge, and Campbell ties up loose ends, setting us up for the next book in this new series. For those who have read the other novels in *The Lost Fleet* series, the events of *The Lost Stars: Tarnished Knight* take place between those of *The Lost Fleet: Beyond the Frontier: Dreadnaught* and *The Lost Fleet: Beyond the Frontier: Invincible*.

***Tales of the Dragon's Bard, Book 1: Eventide* by Tracy & Laura Hickman, 2012 Shadow Mountain, hc \$23.99.**

Review by Grant Kuck

Once upon a time in a far away land I used to host a weekday radio program called *Eventide*. When given the opportunity to review a book of the same name, I thought, "Why not? I already like the title." And any book with a fire-breathing dragon, a centaur farmer, a blacksmith dwarf, plenty of gnomes, boat loads of river fairies and lots of pixies can't be all bad.

A traveling bard ends up in a dragon's den. To preserve his life he tells story after story like Scheherazade in the "Tales from the Arabian Nights." Unfortunately Edvard the Just reaches an end to all the tales he knows. Fortunately Khrag, the dragon wants more. And so a deal is forged between the two. Khrag will leave the villages alone if Edvard will return every midsummer with more stories.

And so it is that Edvard visits Eventide where he is arrested for suspicious activities and annoying behavior. As a result Edvard meets a young man named Jarod Klum who is in love with Caprice Morgan. She is one of three women responsible for keeping a wishing well full of wishes. However the well is broken and wishes put into it don't turn out quite the way anyone expects them too. Eventide also has a cursed sundial, a haunted manor, and a tannery run mostly by gnomes. Two of town's squares are even lit by pixies incarcerated in the streetlamps.

Most of the plot has to do with Jarod trying to win the affections of Caprice. However there are many other people in Eventide and their lives are interlinked with each other. There is a Fairy who is the town gossip; a Highwayman named Dirk Gallowglass; Merinda Oakman, a kind hearted Milliner (hat maker); and Father Patrion, a priest who worships a goddess that nobody else believes in.

Both the setting and the characters combine to make this a charming story. I enjoyed picking it up nightly to see what happened next and I was disappointed when I had to put it down and go to sleep. If this book were a restaurant, it would not rate 5 stars – where I might go once or twice a year. It is more like a little out-of-the-way restaurant where the food is fabulous and the prices reasonable. When I find a treasure like that, I'll be back again and again. That's the way I feel about *Eventide*. It is not the most magnificent book of the year and it is not written by the next J.R.R. Tolkien, but it is an absolutely wonderful book to enjoy on a nightly basis (or anytime you like to read). Thank you Tracy and Laura Hickman!

***Bowl of Heaven* by Gregory Benford & Larry Niven, 2012 Tor, hc \$25.99, 416 pages.**

Review by Becky Davis

Imagine a galactically sized wok with a hole exactly in its bottom center. It holds .08 Earth-normal gravity at the rim, down to .1G at its center hole. It spins in a stable, centrifugal orbit around an F9 red star. This star is being goosed from behind by one million-plus shaped mirrors which focus the star's light and energy back at it to a point directly above the hole in the bowl. This generates a furi-

ous, tuned, plasma jet ejected through the hole, driving the star and its bowl through empty space toward?

Gregory Benford and Larry Niven are not telling us yet. Instead, in *Bowl of Heaven*, they tell us the story of the starship, Sunseeker, a ramscoop ship with several hundred cryogenic colonists who are bound for a faraway habitable planet: Glory.

Two centuries into this trip, the ship's AIs wake up a watch team, the Wickramsings, and the ship's biologist, Cliff Kammash. Two odd problems require this. The ramscoop engine is only working at .081 light-speed efficiency instead of .095. The cryotrip to Glory will take 550 years, not the 500 years predicated on their supply of air, water and food. The second, larger problem is that the ship is closing on this huge, bowl-like artifact, apparently driving toward their same planet. Narrow band microwave signals are coming from the bowl. Is there intelligent life inside this artifact? The ship's Captain Redwing and Beth Marble, a biologist and ramscoop pilot, are awakened to help deal with the problems. Numerous calculations and arguments finally boil down the choices. Awaken 6 more specialists, fly Sunseeker to the Bowl (up through the plasma ejecta coming out the hole in the bottom, in fact), and land a shuttle in the Bowl to try to trade with the natives.

Benford hands off development to Larry Niven – critter-maker extraordinaire. The Bowl is managed by The Folk; dinosaur-like Astronomers, bird-like Savants, Packmistresses (the system is matriarchal) and the “Adopted” – alien species plucked from their worlds and modified emotionally and physically for work in the Bowl of Heaven.

The humans do land, don't like their reception committee, get split up in two groups, escape, and have many perils and close calls across this immense, unique world.

At the end of this volume, Cliff, Beth, and their teams have confounded and peeved the Astronomers. And they have started an insurrection with the help of one species – the Sil (think upright, very clever cheetahs). In *Shipstar*, the next planned volume, we will find out whether Memor, the Astute Astronomer, can “adopt” and alter the insurgent Sil and these new monkey-like aliens into the Bowl's suffocating, stable and structured society and ecology. The future of the Folk depends on that success.

***Niceville* by Carsten Stroud, 2012 Knopf, hc \$26.95, 400 pages.**

Review by Leah Ransom WARNING - SPOILERS

The back cover of this book reads: “[*Niceville* is] a sleepy Southern hamlet [with a] darkness festering below the town's pleasant exterior.”

Niceville is a real place – it is in the South and it does have a mysterious past. It is in Northwest Florida, not central Georgia. It's not haunted by vigilante specters set on revenge, but it is inhabited by some pretty creepy characters—many of whom are mostly harmless. I know about the real Niceville because I grew up there – it was my home for a LONG time before providence smiled on me and I landed in New Mexico.

As I said, this book is set in central Georgia and it re-

volves around a mis-named little town called “Niceville.” People have been mysteriously disappearing from Niceville for almost 100 years. The story opens when a little boy disappears into thin air right off the street. He is the adopted son of an upstanding Niceville couple (who commit suicide when the boy disappears) and the godson of Nick, a policeman, and his wife Kate, a lawyer. The boy mysteriously re-appears in the town crypt that has been locked for 80 years. Nick and Kate set out to solve this mystery and to find the boy's biological family – only to discover he has none.

At the turn of the 20th century, a young girl gets pregnant by the town degenerate. When she fights for her reputation, she's put in the county nut-house that is almost as bad a London's Bedlam. She has a child, dies, and starts making people disappear – and guess what – they're all related to the jerk who got her pregnant.

Niceville has a lot of fun twists and you keep wondering how Carsten Stroud is going to tie it all together. Each chapter takes you further along the story of the residents of Niceville and the history of the area. We learn about a wife-beating computer nerd, a pedophilic father, a bank-robbing private-eye, a cop-killing deputy sheriff, a hot-headed security company owner, a Chinese industrial spy and a very mysterious crater at the top of the bluff overlooking the town. Believe it or not, all of these very disparate elements get folded neatly into a very satisfying tale of mystery and intrigue (yes, I realize I used the word “mystery” nine times in this review – that's because it really is a MYSTERY story – with ghosts.)

The book ends with Nick and Kate adopting the “boy from nowhere” and wondering what will happen now that he has been invited into their home. Sound like sequel material to me. The book is an easy and intriguing read. It is dotted with funny dialogue and humorous situations, which offer some much needed comic relief, otherwise dark elements would take over and the book would be a drain on the nerves. On the Roses and Clothespins scale (5 Roses is EXCELLENT – 5 Clothespins is TERRIBLE), this book gets 3 Roses. I highly recommend this mystery-ghost story.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS — **FEBRUARY 2012: DARYNDA JONES**

Thirty-four people attended to get to know Portales author Darynda Jones better, and hear her talk about her 3rd Charley Davidson novel. “These books don't fit the romance genre at all, and I get emails telling me that all the time,” she said. “They're actually paranormal mysteries, and closer to urban fantasy. Originally, it was a three-book deal, but I've sold five more. And I have a three-book YA series as well.”

Since Jones does not feel comfortable reading out loud, Craig Chrissinger and Jessica Coyle did a dramatic reading from the first chapter of *Third Grave Dead Ahead*.

Asked about the origins of the series, she said, “I wanted something different, and that's how I decided to do a Grim Reaper story. *First Grave on the Right* was my third manuscript. My first novel attempt was a historical romance,

the second was Young Adult. I stole some of *First Grave's* stuff from that YA, which was a mistake because now the YA has sold. So, I had to rethink the whole YA project!

"My YA, *Death and the Girl Next Door*, is basically one girl's life irrevocably changed when the Angel of Death comes to her hometown. It's teenage angst magnified."

She finished by saying that *First Grave on the Right* was optioned by CBS for a possible TV series before the book even came out.

MARCH: MELINDA SNODGRASS VISITS

Thirty-three people were present for Melinda Snodgrass' talk about her latest projects. She noted she was tired because of riding in a horse show that weekend, "The weather is nuts, and the horses are acting crazy."

"I'm editing *Lowball*, the next *Wild Cards* novel," she stated. "Michael Cassutt had to jump in to help out when another writer dropped out. And I sent in the outline for the *Wild Cards* movie a couple of weeks ago. I'm waiting to hear back, and then go to script or not."

Talking about her upcoming urban fantasy, *This Case Is Gonna Kill Me*, she said, "Urban fantasy is commercial, but most have a female protagonist with a tramp stamp who kicks ass. I wondered, what about regular people in an UF world? In my world, vampires are attracted to law firms. The first book is about a dispute over the will of the leader of a Blackwater operation. The protagonist is a young woman, but I wanted to do something different. In this world, there are no female vampires or werewolves. She's working at a vampire law firm, unknowingly carrying a predator parasite, and attracting chaos."

Snodgrass then read a section of the novel in which Linnet Ellery is working late in her office on a case (instead of being out on a date) when she's attacked by a werewolf.

She said she decided to use the pseudonym Phillipa Bornikova on the Linnet novel because "I'm taking a lesson from Daniel Abraham. I'm using Bornikova to start a brand for urban fantasy. I picked this particular name since it puts these books close to Jim Butcher."

Snodgrass is working on a third *Edge* novel, and hoping there is enough audience interest for Tor to pick it up.

Asked about a magazine article on the recent *John Carter* (of Mars) film, she stated, "Back in the mid-'90s, George RR Martin and I were approached about doing *A Princess of Mars* for Disney. I did most of a draft script, and it was a dream come true for me because the Burroughs book was the first SF I read by myself. It was very frustrating to read the previous nine versions. We were almost done with our draft when there was a huge fight at Disney, and we were one of the casualties. I really wanted to write that script because I loved that book so much. So, I'm ambivalent about this *John Carter* movie that got made, and kind of bitter."

Finally, Snodgrass commented that she would like to write a space opera some day. "I actually have this whole universe planned out. Two stories have been published so far, and the third will be in *Dangerous Women*, edited by Gardner Dozois and George. I would like to follow one character from the age of 18 going to space academy until he's an old man."

APRIL: THE ANNUAL CLUB AUCTION

A large crowd of 47 people were on hand for the annual ASFS auction to benefit the club, presided over by author Robert Vardeman. The auction took in \$284.50 total.

Among the more interesting or high-bid items were a World of *H.R. Puff 'n' Stuff* button \$2, Metal bugs \$7, UFO light covers \$6, three Mannequin heads \$9, a Cane with skull topper \$55, *Turmoil in the Toy Box* and an "evil" My Little Pony figure \$10, Gnome figures \$11, Bob Eggleton original art \$30, Leaf wind chime \$5, a Bag of fanzines \$10, *The Steampunk Bible* \$11, and a Voodoo gift basket \$1.

MAY: APOCALYPTIC FILM NIGHT

Curious about what might be screened, 36 people viewed two shorts and a feature film based around Bubonic's "End of the World" theme. Shorts shown were the classic *Duck and Cover* (with a turtle) and the Bugs Bunny/Wile Coyote cartoon, *Operation: Rabbit*.

And then the main feature was revealed! Yes, a true apocalyptic turkey — *Damnation Alley*, based loosely on the late Roger Zelazny's novel. In the cheesy 1977 flick, five survivors of a nuclear wipeout travel cross-country in their super futuristic van in search of civilization. Watch out for the killer cockroaches and giant scorpions! The film stars Jan-Michael Vincent, George Peppard, Paul Winfield and Jackie Earle Haley. The audience groaned in appropriate places, and made up their own jokes.

JUNE: RICHARD PECK & ACE PREVIEW

The double-program meeting drew 38 people to hear about former UNM president Richard E. Peck's new story collection and about the 2nd Albuquerque Comic Expo June 8-10.

Peck, who visited ASFS in February 2008 to talk about his pre-collegiate SF writing experiences, began, "I'm now 76 years old, so it's nice to see people only half my age here. When I was younger, I was a member of the Philadelphia SF Society, which included Darrell Schweitzer, Gardner Dozois and Jack Chalker. One year, the World SF Society had an annual meeting and I got John Jakes and L. Sprague De Camp together. So, Brak the Barbarian and Conan together!"

He also taught a SF class at Temple University. "I gave them a writing assignment and said that all you need is an idea. So, I said, 'The Titanic didn't hit the iceberg — the iceberg hit the Titanic. So, go type!' I wrote a story myself, and it became my first published effort."

Peck noted that he wasn't keeping up with the SF field. "My son grew into SF, and I gave him my book collection recently. He just got promoted to the position of high technician of NASA. It's gratifying because SF became science fact the day Apollo 11 landed on the Moon."

For *Vintage SF*, his collection of published stories, he found 21 stories that appeared in pulp magazines. "I picked out the 15 least embarrassing tales," he remarked. "I've been told I wrote early slipstream — mainstream with SF or Fantasy elements. My last thriller novel, Schmidt's Mill, is best described as Gringo magic realism, and I had fun with it."

Peck then read one of his short stories from the collection, "Take A Number."

Following a short break, Greg Derrick and Craig Butler

gave a short preview of ACE 2012, talked about some of the guests and highlights, answered questions, and remarked that they still were open to any volunteer workers.

JULY: IAN TREGILLIS DROPS IN

Forty-nine people came out at the height of summer to hear Ian Tregillis talk about his new novel, *The Coldest War*, and other ongoing projects.

Asked about the cover art change on *Bitter Seeds* between the hardcover and the new paperback edition, he replied, "They changed it because they felt the hardback art wasn't giving enough genre clues."

Tregillis said the third novel, *Necessary Evil*, will come out in both the USA and the UK the same day April 2013. The paperback of *Bitter Seeds* includes an excerpt from *Coldest War* plus a short Milkweed story written for Tor.com.

"*Necessary Evil* starts five minutes after the end of *The Coldest War*," he stated. "A lot of stuff that was set up in *Bitter Seeds* is explained in *The Coldest War*. In *Bitter*, Marsh and Gretel are on stage, and she's putting out all her pieces. In *Coldest*, Marsh is figuring out her plan."

Tregillis revealed that he has sold another novel to Tor, *Something More Than Night*, a fantasy murder mystery inspired by Raymond Chandler and Phillip Marlowe. That probably will be out in 2014. "That was my fun thing," he said. "I'm excited about it. It's very different with a very different style. It's a tribute to noir fiction of the '30s and '40s with angels and dead bodies."

He then read from the first chapter of *The Coldest War*, in which Gretel and Klaus are escaping from a Russian prison. Tregillis also read from chapter 17 of *Something More* — a monologue from shabby Fallen Angel Bayliss, who talks like a 1930s detective.

Asked what's next for him, Tregillis commented, "I'm just noodling around and thinking about a new trilogy that's unconnected with these first four books I've written."

LAST CALL AT ED'S ATOMIC BAR

by Patricia Rogers, 9/25/2012

Finally, I have what I need to build my own Sputnik.

Upon a fine fall morning last weekend, I headed north to Los Alamos to attend the going-out-of-business sale at The Black Hole. For the last 40-plus years this has been the go-to place for collectors of Cold War junk. I've always loved to take my astronomy/science/science fiction friends there when they came visiting, to watch their eyes widen with wonder at the seemingly unending array of outdated atomic lab equipment. To quote Howard Carter: here there were "Wonderful Things."

As I drove through the New Mexico landscape, the classical station started playing Gustav Holst's orchestral envisioning of *The Planets*. That was the perfect soundtrack for my journey. The forceful beat of Mars made me drive faster. Appropriately, I got to the curviest of mountain roads by the time Venus was playing and was happy to slow down to her lilting score. I passed the sign stating "Welcome to Los Alamos - Where discoveries are made." Good - I was hoping for a day of discoveries.

How many trips had I made up here? Would there be anything left? Ed died in 2009, and the last time I saw him

was summer of 2008. Ed Grothus was a character in the best way. Interesting, passionate, did things his way, didn't care if people thought he was crazy, and wanted to make a stand on what he believed. Ed believed in peace. After 20 years working for Los Alamos National Labs, he left because he no longer wanted to be part of the war machine. He acquired an old Piggly Wiggly grocery store and started filling every inch of it with outdated equipment that the Lab sold off as salvage. Ed didn't really like to sell his treasures. They were HIS treasures. The tag line for the store became "The Black Hole - Everything goes in and nothing comes out." But, he would occasionally let something go for a price. He made enough over the years to have two huge white granite obelisks on black marble bases, carved in China and shipped to Los Alamos. These modern-day Rosetta stones had a history lesson, and a warning, in 15 languages, about the awesome destructive power of the atom. They chronicled that this force of nature had been unlocked in this very location and tested for the first time only a few hours down the road. Ed proudly showed me these Obelisks the last time I saw him at The Black Hole. Sadly, the final resting place of these monuments is still in question.

I arrived at the sale just as they were opening at 10 am. Thirty, maybe 40, cars lined the roadside. I parked and hiked up the hill. It was crowded like a good party, enough folks to make it festive but still plenty of room to move around. As I walked through the front doors, the smell of old military equipment assailed my senses and made me smile. I don't know if this "science" odor comes from grease covering hundreds of gears, glass tubes that have heated up a 1000 times, steel etched with a million bolts of electricity, or something in the fine machining of metal — but it is an odor I have experienced several times over the years. Once in the depths of a decommissioned missile silo in the Arizona desert, in a WWII radar array station on the high plains of Colorado, and at NASA in the control rooms of Cape Canaveral and Huntsville. I wonder: Is this how Frankenstein's lab smelled when he was using lightning to reanimate flesh? Maybe so.

Surprisingly the store was very much the same as I had last seen it several years before. Some drawers and cases had been emptied out, but its labyrinthine floor plan was still packed to the ceiling with government surplus. Where to start? Ed's family had opened more store rooms than I had ever seen before, but they had not yet turned on all the lights. I caught glimpses of people stumbling around large sharp objects in the dark while holding tiny key chain flashlights. Maybe I should have brought a ball of thread to find my way back out of the Minotaur's lair.

First I found a large coil of wire with a tiny nozzle on one end, which I promptly put on my arm as a bracelet. I picked up a few more things and realized it was going to be hard to carry much through the aisles full of people and stuff. Next, I spotted a head-size chunk of machined steel that looked like Gort's head from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. I think it was once a chamber for cryogenics experiments and now it is going to be my Robot Master head. My load was already heavy. High up on the Vacuum Pump Shelf I noticed a machine that had to have been designed by Dr. Seuss. An art deco snail with gears, metal hoses, and a clear glass chamber on top. Wow! How Beautiful! And, extremely heavy. I needed a new plan. First, I ditched a few things, then headed up with my steampunk thingamajig and asked if they had a

place we could stash our treasures. Ed's daughter, who was running the sale, pointed me towards a Holding Area out front complete with boxes and markers. Oh, Thank goodness! I carefully marked a box and filled it with my finds.

Since I was now outside, I decided to check out the acre of Atomic Lab dross left in the open air to rust. Metal desks, varieties of file cabinets, barrels, bowling balls made into huge tinker toy atoms, and a semi-trailer full of books! I climbed into the dark truck packed deep with boxes. In the very back a few folks with flashlights were systemically working their way towards the front, box by box. I figured it would take them several days before they saw light of day -- unless they were buried an avalanche of books first. Most of the boxes were filled with textbooks from the 1970s. One box showed some promise with a handwritten label saying "NASA Briefs." I moved boxes around like building blocks until I could reach my prize. Textbooks. Sigh. Wait, there was still one ancient NASA text inside. Score! For the better part of an hour, I randomly poked around and opened dusty boxes. In my tome excavations, I noticed that behind the boxes were reams of paper. Several were 1940s rag stock still wrapped in brown paper with labels from some Washington DC supplier. I grabbed several of those just because you never know when you will need 1940s paper.

Dripping with sweat and covered in dust, I decided to head back into the main store. On my way, I encountered one of Ed's sons. I asked him about the "Special Trailer" in which Ed had stored artifacts he thought were historically significant to the atomic era, and if any of those items were for sale. Ed's son quietly said "No, none of that stuff is for sale." Then in a sad aside he confided, "Not that it matters anymore, I think we have had a break-in." Oh Damn, I blurted out. Then added how sorry I was to hear this, and hoped Karma would catch up with the culprits. Jerks.

Once again into the breach, I headed toward the back-rooms where the large materials and equipment were stored. Thankfully the lights were now on, and I saw a couple working away at unrolling an 8ft-wide spool of Mylar. There was enough Mylar here for the artist Christo to wrap a bridge. Hummm...I started thinking - "One day I may want to turn the house into a space ship...maybe I should get some, too." At that moment another shopper asked the couple what they were going to do with all that Mylar. The man stopped unrolling, shrugged, and answered in a thick Russian accent, "I don't know. We are like magpies and this is shiny." Good answer! I moved on without acquiring any shiny sheets of my own.

I rooted out a few more handfuls -- old camera parts, an electronic tube still in its 1942 box, some small machined parts, some aluminum equipment labels that I wanted to make necklaces out of -- and headed toward the check-out counter. I thought my two boxes of treasures might cost \$100. Ed's daughter looked them over and asked for \$15. Woo-Hoo! Next I borrowed a shopping cart and rolled my gems to the car.

Since I had to take the cart back up the hill, I figured, well, just one more pass through the store couldn't hurt. Right?

Entering the labyrinth again, I found rooms that I had never seen before. Like secret passageways in a castle that you could only reach from one angle. Here was Ed's library, a dark room lit only with one bare bulb that left huge sections

wanting for light. I could tell one wall was all LPs but it was too dark to see what was there.

On my - final - way out, I went by a shelf I had passed a dozen times that day. It was located on the main aisle used to get to the back of the store. On it were things that looked like giant-sized drink koozies quilted out of silver cloth. I stopped to wonder about their purpose. Higher up was a silver machined metal half sphere, with ceramic plugs coming out the top complete with cloth electric cords. I reached up for it and blew off some dust. The inside was lined with cushioned heat resistant fabric. A dozen science fiction movies flashed through my mind, all involving a mad scientist keeping a disembodied head alive with a contraption that looked very much like this. I instantly put it on my head like a huge hat. It must have worked as a brain booster because I clearly saw why I needed two of these half spheres. I frantically scanned the shelves for another. There was only one more, on the very top shelf. I stretched, pulled it down, and quickly mated the two together into a perfect Sputnik or Atomic Bomb-like sphere. IT WAS MAGNIFICENT! Grinning ear to ear and with my new baby cradled in my arms, I headed back up to check out. People stopped me along the way saying things like, "I like your taste" and "Wow, that is cool." Ed's daughter charged me \$10 per half sphere. On my way back to the car, folks asked to take photos and honked their car horns as I paraded down the road with my shiny catch.

I thought about the Russian's "magpie" comment and about Ed Grothus. Ed could see it, so could all the happy folks shopping around me at The Black Hole. These things weren't just shiny. They were extra-special because -- they were shiny with science.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

EEEK! OUT OF TIME & SPACE! No one should be surprised.

MILEHICON 44 is next weekend. Looking forward to it, and a little extra time in Denver. We'll be busy with a Bubonicon fan table and hosting the con suite for two hours. Plus I am on the Turkey Readoff, Slash Readings and SF Name That Tune. Still, it will be good to see Cherie Priest, Connie Willis, Carrie Vaughn and our various Colorado fan friends.

Okay, I gotta say that I thought *Dark Knight Rises* was a satisfying and appropriate ending to Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy. I know others have qualms, but I liked all the cast (especially Anne Hathaway and Joseph Gordon-Levitt) and the situation in Gotham City set up by Bane. Also, I really enjoyed the animated *ParaNorman* and *Hotel Transylvania*. The new *Frankenweenie* is quirky and has entertaining moments, but I think I like Burton's live-action short better. Still, worth seeing.

I enjoyed Ian Tregillis' *The Coldest War* (good action and a powerful ending), Phillipa Bornikova's *This Case Is Gonna Kill Me* ("Snodgrass light," fun and a fast read), and Carrie Vaughn's *Kitty Steals the Show* (set in London & a quick, fun read). And good to reread Tim Powers' *Three Days To Never*.

There are days when I think I'm still recovering from Bubonicon 44 and trying to catch up on sleep. It went incredibly well with all the challenges of a new venue, and it never felt crowded at the Marriott despite the 112-people growth.

THANKS TO Patricia Rogers, Jessica Coyle, Terry Mulcahy, Grant Kuck, Becky Davis and Leah Ransom for contributions. More needed in December, as usual!

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