

ASFACTS 2014

FEBRUARY "LOVE IS THE ALIEN" VALENTINE'S ISSUE

ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 4

The 38th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship will be held Friday, April 4, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. Special guests are Darynda Jones and Arthur M. Dula, with Connie Willis serving as Mistress of Ceremonies. Friday events include informal reading/Q&A sessions, a luncheon and various panel discussions. The theme for the 38th Lectureship is "The Wide World of Speculative Fiction."

In a press release, the Lectureship committee notes, "Speculative fiction, a term attributed to Robert Heinlein in 1941, has come to be used to collectively describe works in the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror. Speculative fiction is also more than the collective title for works of horror, SF, and fantasy. The term also embraces works that don't fit neatly into the separate genres – *Tarzan*, stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Edgar Allen Poe, Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *The Twilight Zone*, tales that have been labeled simply as 'weird' or 'adventure' or 'amazing' because there was no proper place to put them. These are stories on the fringe; they are speculative fiction."

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

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

Jones is the author of the paranormal *Charley Davidson* series (five books so far with three more under contract) and the YA paranormal *Darklight* trilogy. Dula, who graduated from ENMU in 1970, is a space lawyer, a patent attorney, and the literary executor for science fiction author Robert A. Heinlein. He also is chairman and founder of private spaceflight company, Excalibur Almaz.

The Lectureship starts informally on April 3 when Guest of Honor Jones reads at 6:00 pm in the Sandia Room of the Campus Union (as the Jack Williamson Liberal Arts Building is under renovation).

On Friday, informal readings by participants are scheduled 10:00-11:30 am in the Sandia Room, Campus

Union. The luncheon takes place 11:45 am in the Zia Room of the Campus Union, and costs \$10.00 (payable at the door). Book signings and sales follow the luncheon and Lectureship addresses. Reservations are needed by Monday, March 31. 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. Tentative topics are The Art of SF/Fantasy Illustration, Science in Heinlein and Early SF, Short-Attention Span Panel, Advice for Beginning Writers, Young Adult Speculative Fiction, and New Directions in SF/Fantasy Film & Fiction.

On Saturday, April 5, a Writers Workshop for young writers is planned 9:30-11:30 am at the Portales Public Library. Arrangements are being finalized.

Stay tuned for more details.

MARVEL DEVELOPING TWO NEW BILLION-DOLLAR FRANCHISES

by Tim Beyers, Motley Fool online (2-9-2014)

The Marvel movie machine is on the move again. How so? According to recent reports, Walt Disney has commissioned writers for *Thor 3* and is in discussions

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** It's SF OUTBURST in honor of the Olympics & Valentine's Day 2014! Plus this *ASFacts*...
- **March 14:** Time for the traditional ASFS Auction with author Robert Vardeman at the helm. Please look for 2-6 items to donate to the club's cause, and some cash (esp. quarters & dollar bills) to spend.
- **April 11:** Daniel Abraham & Ty Franck talk about their James S.A. Corey *Star Wars* novel and the 4th *Expanse* adventure. Also, the Spring issue of *ASFacts* will be out (deadline Sun, April 6).
- **May 9:** Devin O'Leary of the *Weekly Alibi* looks at trailers for this summer's genre releases!
- **June 13:** Jane Lindskold talks on her new novel, *Artemis Awakening*.
- **July 11:** Bubonicon 46 preview, and hopefully a talk from a local comic artist. And the Summer 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. Contact: (505) 266-8905 or via cwcraig@nmia.com. *ASFacts* published February, April, July & October for the Albuq SF Society. *SITHFACTS* out each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, April 6.
Club Officers: Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Rebecca Hewett, Moderator. Harriet Engle, Alternator. Cupid, Holiday Host. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Caci Cooper & Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

about developing *Captain America 3*.

The timing couldn't be more interesting. First, *Thor: The Dark World* ended a 12-week run in theaters having earned more than \$633 million at the worldwide box office. Not quite *Man of Steel* numbers, but also close enough for Marvel to hire Craig Kyle and Christopher Yost to write a threequel.

Meanwhile, *Variety* reports that Marvel is in early talks with filmmakers Anthony and Joe Russo to make a follow-up to April's *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. Test screenings have apparently performed well enough to get the studio interested. A fresh trailer aired during the Super Bowl had garnered nearly 11.5 million views on YouTube as of February 7.

Signs point to the film performing at least as well as *The Dark World*, which would put Cap on pace to be the third single-character Marvel Studios property to gross at least \$1 billion at the worldwide box office. (*Iron Man* and *Thor* have already passed the threshold.)

Add it up, and there's every reason to believe that Marvel Studios will continue to be a meaningful catalyst for Walt Disney stock in the years to come.

DICAMILLO WINS NEWBERY

Kate DiCamillo's *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures* (published by Candlewick) won the 2014 Newbery Medal, reported Locus Online in late January.

The award is given by the Association for Library Service to Children (a division of the American Library Association) for last year's outstanding American children's book.

The award was announced at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia PA.

BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, February 17, in the back room (pool table area) of Spectator's Pub & Grill, 5850 Eubank Blvd NE in the Mountain Run Shopping Center (in the corner between Page One Bookstore's new location and Smith's Grocery) to discuss *Bowl of Heaven* by Gregory Benford & Larry Niven. The group then focuses on *Agent to the Stars* by John Scalzi on Monday, March 17 – hopefully at Page One Bookstore in Suite B-41 of the Mountain Run Shopping Center. The bookstore currently is only open 10 am-6 pm (hours should expand in the next month).

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 Leah at skycaptain1883@yahoo.com or Craig at 266-8905.



LANDIS WINS 2014 HEINLEIN AWARD

Geoffrey A. Landis is the winner of the 2014 Robert A. Heinlein Award, given for outstanding published works in science fiction and technical writings that inspire the human exploration of space, reported Locus Online in mid-January.

Winners are chosen by a committee of SF authors chaired by Michael F. Flynn, and receive a plaque, a sterling silver medallion, and two lapel pins, all featuring the likeness of Robert A. Heinlein. The award will be presented May 23, 2014, during the opening ceremonies at Balticon 48.

GILLIGAN'S PROFESSOR DIES

Russell Johnson, an actor who made a living by often playing villains in westerns until he was cast as the Professor, the brains of a bunch of sweetly clueless, self-involved, hopelessly naïve island castaways, on the hit sitcom *Gilligan's Island*, died January 16 at his home in Bainbridge Island, Wash. He was 89.

Gilligan's Island, which was seen on CBS 1964-1967, starred Bob Denver as Gilligan, the witless first mate of the S.S. Minnow, a small touring boat that runs aground on an uncharted island after a storm. Besides Gilligan and the Professor, five others were on board: the Skipper (Alan Hale Jr.); Ginger, a va-va-voom movie star (Tina Louise); the snobbish wealthy couple Thurston Howell III (Jim Backus) and his wife, known as Lovey (Natalie Schafer); and Mary Ann, the prototypical girl next door (Dawn Wells).

In the show's first season, Johnson and Wells were left out of the opening credits and their characters were ignored in the theme song, which named the other castaways but dismissed the two of them with the phrase "and the rest." The snub was rectified for the second season, at the same time that the show went from black and white to color.

The Professor was a good-looking but nerdy academic, an exaggerated stereotype of the man of capacious intelligence with little or no social awareness. Occasionally approached romantically by Ginger (and guest stars, including Zsa Zsa Gabor), he remained chaste and unaffected.

But he was pretty much the only character on the show who possessed anything resembling actual knowledge, and he was forever inventing methods to increase the castaways' chance of rescue. Still, among the show's many lapses of logic was the fact – often noted by Johnson in interviews – that although the Professor could build a shortwave radio out of a coconut shell, he couldn't figure out how to patch a hole in a boat hull.

Avid fans are probably the only ones to remember that the character's name was actually Dr. Roy Hinkley, or that his academic résumé was explicitly spelled out.

"Professor, what exactly are your degrees?" Mr. Howell asked once.

"Well," the Professor replied, "I have a B.A. from U.S.C., a B.S. from U.C.L.A., an M.A. from S.M.U. and a Ph.D. from T.C.U."

Mr. Howell clucked in return: "Well, I don't know much about your education, but it sounds like a marvelous recipe for alphabet soup."

Russell David Johnson was born on Nov. 10, 1924, near Wilkes-Barre, Pa., the oldest of six children. His father died when Russell was not yet 10, and his mother sent him and two brothers to Girard College, then a school for poor orphan boys, in Philadelphia, where he finished high school. He served in the Army Air Forces during World War II, receiving a Purple Heart, and after his discharge studied on the G.I. Bill at the Actors' Laboratory in Hollywood.

His first film role was in a 1952 drama about fraternity hazing, *For Men Only*, in which he played a sadistic fraternity leader; that led to a contract with Universal-International, which led to roles in a series of movies, mostly westerns (including *Law and Order*, in which he played Ronald Reagan's no-good brother) and science fiction films, including *It Came From Outer Space* and *This Island Earth*.

Later in the decade he began appearing frequently on television, often in western shows in the role of the black hat, even though he was a poor horseman. (When he played a marshal in the series *Black Saddle*, he suggested to the producer - "semi-seriously," he said in an interview in 2004 - that the character be seen walking his horse into town and that he chase down the bad guys on foot.)

He also appeared in two episodes of *The Twilight Zone* involving time travel. In one, he tries to prevent the assassination of Abraham Lincoln; in the other, about a time machine that accidentally rescues a 19th-century murderer from a hanging, he plays the inventor, a professor.

After *Gilligan's Island*, Johnson made a career guest-starring in other series, including the dramas *Mannix*, *Cannon* and *Lou Grant*, and the comedies *Bosom Buddies* and *The Jeffersons*, usually as an upright character with smarts.

He also reprised the Professor role in the 1970s and 1980s in the cartoon series *The New Adventures of Gilligan* and *Gilligan's Planet*, and in three made-for-television *Gilligan* movies.

Johnson's survivors include his wife, Connie; a daughter, Kim; a stepson, Court Dane; and a grandson. Louise and Wells are now the only surviving *Gilligan's Island* cast members.

P.S. HOFFMAN PASSES AWAY

Philip Seymour Hoffman, Oscar-winning actor, died of a drug overdose on February 2 in his Greenwich Village apartment in New York City, reportedly with a hypo-

dermic needle in his arm and at least 50 bags of heroin and five prescription drugs nearby. He was 46.

Hoffman, born to a judge mother and a Xerox-executive father in Fairport, NY, often poured much of himself into his performances - many of which were deeply unglamorous and even desperate men. Among his roles, Hoffman played a sweetly insecure boom-mic operator in *Boogie Nights*, rock critic Lester Bangs in *Almost Famous*, rich kid playboy Freddie Miles in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and his Oscar-winning performance as writer Truman Capote in *Capote*.

He touched the science fiction world as the villain in *Mission: Impossible 3*, a storm chaser in *Twister*, one of the unique characters of *The Big Lebowski*, a postwar cult leader in *The Master*, and game designer Plutarch Heavensbee in *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* and the forthcoming *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1 & 2* (he had one week of filming left on the second half at the time of his death).

After becoming involved in high school theatrics, he attended New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, graduating with a B.F.A. degree in Drama in 1989.

He is survived by his three children - Cooper, Tallulah and Willa - and girlfriend Mimi O'Donnell, a costume designer.

NEWEST AVENGERS RECRUIT: VISION JOINS AGE OF ULTRON

by Bryan Enk, Yahoo Movies (2-7-2014)

In the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Paul Bettany is ready to show his face. The British thespian who has provided the voice of Tony Stark's droll A.I. sidekick Jarvis in four big-screen Marvel adventures will be taking a more physical form, signing on to play the Vision in *The Avengers: Age of Ultron*, Yahoo Movies has confirmed.

Word that Bettany had been cast in the role as the *Avengers* sequel first came via the U.K.'s Daily Mail, which sussed out the project has been setting up shot at London's Shepperton Studios under the code name "After Party."

The first version of the Vision made his debut during the Golden Age of Comics as an alien from an alternate dimension, created by Jack Kirby and Joe Simon and first appearing in *Marvel Mystery Comics* #13 (Nov. 1940), published by Marvel predecessor Timely Comics.

It's the Silver Age version of the Vision that staked his claim as one of the most popular comic book superheroes of all time. Created by Roy Thomas and John Buscema, the second Vision first appeared in *The Avengers* #57 (Oct. 1968) as an android created by robotic villain Ultron. Originally meant to be a weapon against the good guys, The Vision, aka Victor Shade, ends up joining forces with the Avengers... and eventually marries one of its members, Scarlet Witch.

The Vision's powers include flight, superhuman

strength, self-repair and regeneration, mass control ranging from super-heavy to weightless, solar energy projection, computer/IT interfacing and shooting really badass laser beams. His unique abilities should give Joss Whedon the variation of superpowers he's been hoping for in the Avengers sequel after pointing out that the heroes of the original film all had similar "punchy" powers.

In the comics, the Vision was created by Ultron partly as a means to destroy his creator, Dr. Hank Pym. As that character won't be introduced in the Marvel Cinematic Universe until *Ant-Man* (July 15, 2015), we have a feeling Ultron's and the Vision's origins will be adjusted to involve Stark Enterprises.

Come to think of it... might the Vision of *The Avengers: Age of Ultron* be a physical upgrade of Jarvis himself? They're gonna kind of sound the same, after all. Fans have had a field day trying to figure out when the character would join the team and how the filmmakers would explain his origin: until Bettany's casting was announced, a popular online theory had S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Coulson returning to fighting form as the android hero. (Coulson's seeming resurrection was explained earlier this season on *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*)

Beyond that, we doubt the Vision will get hitched to Scarlet Witch (to be played by Elizabeth Olsen) this early in the game... though you never know what ol' Joss might have up his sleeve. Something tells us that Whedon might not be able to resist any android-human sex jokes for too long.

The Avengers: Age of Ultron will hit theaters on May 1, 2015.

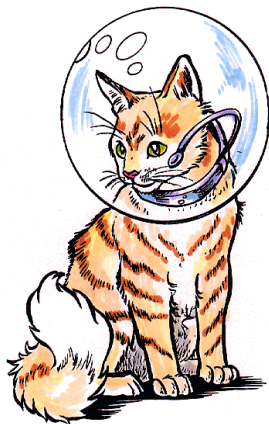
WRITER/ARTIST MARK E. ROGERS DIES

Writer and artist Mark E. Rogers died February 2 of an apparent heart attack while hiking in Death Valley with his family. He was 61, reports Locus Online.

Rogers's novella "The Runestone" was adapted as a film of the same name in 1990. Debut fantasy novel *Zorachus* in 1986 was followed by sequel *The Nightmare of God*. He also wrote the *Blood of the Lamb* series, the *Zancarthus* series, and two standalone novels. He wrote and illustrated several volumes of the *Adventures of Samurai Cat* series beginning in 1980. His art appears in *Nothing But a Smile: The Pinup Art of Mark Rogers* (2003) and *The Art of Fantasy*.

Rogers was born April 19, 1952, in Lawrence Harbor, NJ, and grew up in Point Pleasant Beach. He attended the University of Delaware, graduating in 1974.

Rogers is survived by his wife of 38 years, Kate Rogers; four children; and a grandchild.



FIREFLY PRODUCER TALKS REVIVAL IDEAS

It's been more than a decade since *Firefly* was unceremoniously dumped by Fox after a short debut season, but Joss Whedon's little cowboy sci-fi series is still alive in our hearts and minds. So, what form could a revival take?

Entertainment Weekly, reports SyFy's Blastr in mid-February, sat down with *Firefly* producer Tim Minear to talk about just that topic, who teased that the recent *Arrested Development*/Netflix model could prove the most viable option if Captain Malcolm Reynolds and the gang were to ever, really fly again.

With most of the cast and crew off working on other projects (most notably Nathan Fillion on *Castle*), Minear points out a shorter schedule and miniseries-sized run could best accommodate the varied moving pieces.

"I would never foreclose the possibility [of a revival]," said Minear. "The fact that it was even a feature film after it spectacularly failed on Fox was a miracle. And of course it lives on in other forms. In terms of getting the band back together to make a new adventure, who knows? I would love it. It would be great. But first everybody has their respective projects that limits them from crossing over into other things. It's just trying to coordinate everybody's obligations so they could somehow participate.

"I'm completely talking off the top of my head, but there's a show that's been on for the last couple years that's reinvented the form in terms of the limited series," he continued. "I'm trying to think of the name of that show – Oh yes! *American Horror Story*! It doesn't have to be 13 episodes. Look how *Sherlock* does it... I think a limited series of some kind would work best. Something like that could also work if, say, 20th could partner with Netflix, or another distributor. It would have its home on Fox, of course [then a second window on streaming]. A limited series would do very well, I bet."

Considering the fervent fan love that still exists, and all the new fans that have discovered the series in the years since it went off the air, many fans would have to agree. Though Minear lays out a perfect plan, he's the first to admit that there's not currently any real effort to make a revival happen. According to Minear, the last *Firefly*-related conversation he had came about eight years ago in regards to a potential spin-off. Sadly, he didn't elaborate on what that could've been.

NEAL BARRETT, JR PASSES AWAY

Neal Barrett, Jr, author of acclaimed fantasy *The Hereafter Gang* (1991) and a number of celebrated short stories, among other works, died January 12. He was 84, reported Locus Online mid-January.

Barrett began publishing SF with "To Tell the Truth" in *Galaxy* (1960). His notable short fiction includes

“Perpetuity Blues,” Hugo and Nebula Award finalist “Ginny Sweethips’ Flying Circus” in 1989, Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award finalist “Stairs,” “Cush,” and “Radio Station St. Jack.” His short work has been collected in *Slightly Off Center: Eleven Extraordinarily Exhilarating Tales*, World Fantasy Award finalist *Perpetuity Blues and Other Stories*, *A Different Vintage*, *Way Out There*, and last year’s retrospective, *Other Seasons: The Best of Neal Barrett, Jr.*

His first novel, *Kelwin*, appeared in 1970, followed by *The Gates of Time*, *The Leaves of Time*, *Highwood*, *Stress Pattern*, *The Karma Corps*, *The Hereafter Gang*, *Interstate Dreams*, *PIGGS*, and *Prince of Christler-Coke*. Series work includes the *Aldair* series, the *Through Darkest America* duology, and the *Finn, the Lizard Master* books. He wrote mysteries, *Tom Swift* and *Hardy Boys* novels under house names, and numerous comic and media tie-in novels.

Barrett was born November 3, 1929, in San Antonio, TX, and grew up in Oklahoma City, OK. He was toastmaster at the 1997 Worldcon in San Antonio, and was named Author Emeritus by SFWA in 2010.

CHUCK FANS CAN KEEP WAITING

Ever since NBC’s *Chuck* called it quits in 2012, fans have been clamoring for a movie follow-up to the fan favorite spy-fi series. Well, though it’s still possible, fans should apparently not get their hopes up just yet, reported Syfy’s Blastr in mid-February.

In a chat with *Entertainment Weekly*, series co-creator Josh Schwartz opened up about the show’s enduring legacy and the odds we’ll ever get any more adventures for the Buy More gang. Though he says “never say never” in regards to a continuation, Schwartz seems to think the series finale is a nice bookend for the series.

Though the recent *Veronica Mars* revival has fans jonesing for some more movie spin-offs for cult series, Schwartz notes the difference there is that *Mars* was cut short – meaning the writers really had a reason to do a movie, as a way to wrap-up the lingering plot threads because the story was “not complete.”

Here’s how Schwartz explains it: “We haven’t really [come up with a sequel idea]. We ended the show. We felt really good about where we ended it. Some of the audience wanted a little more closure, but you always wanna leave something left to the imagination of the viewer. We haven’t yet sat down to say, ‘OK, if we were going to really do this, what would it be?’ I think Zach Levi has some ideas and he’s an imaginative guy and a real storyteller...”

“We were very fortunate with *Chuck*,” he continues. “As much as we always felt the end was coming, we did get five seasons of the show and an opportunity to tell a lot of story. So I think for myself and Chris Fedak, I think we’d really wanna make sure we had the right story to tell

and felt like we were doing it because ‘Oh my God this *Chuck* movie is going to be amazing!’ That’s the test. Does it feel like you must do this because the audience is going to love this new take?”

But, what if they did bring the show back? Schwartz jokes a better option might be the Netflix route with a short run of episodes, which Marvel is helping pioneer with a new slate of original programming on the streaming service. He also alludes to the interconnected *Arrested Development* approach, which would tell the story from different perspectives:

“Maybe we’d do it *Avengers* style where you follow Sarah and Chuck on a mission, you’ve got Casey on a mission, you’ve got Jeffster on tour, and then the final season is everyone gets together,” said Schwartz. “[Then Chuck’s mom, played by Linda Hamilton will] come swooping into the Chuck/Sarah storyline. And she can also then cross into the Ellie/Captain Awesome storyline to take care of the kids. The Jeffster would obviously be too racy for networks, so it would have to be Netflix or cable.”

Schwartz is obviously joking, but some fans would kill to watch that *Chuck* miniseries.

BUBONICON 46 WANTS INPUT, EARLY DEADLINES FOR EARLY CON

by Craig Chrissinger, con co-chair

We’re a month and a half into 2014 now, believe it or not, and Bubonicon 46 is already less than six months away! Three-Day Passes went up February 2 to \$38 each, and remain so through April 19 (and then \$40 April 20-July 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 46 takes place August 1-3 (three weeks early because of the London Worldcon) at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, 2101 Louisiana Blvd NE, just north of I-40 – enter from the America’s Parkway loop road. For the 3rd year, the Marriott is offering sleeping rooms at \$99 single-double occupancy, \$109 for triple-quad. Reservations are needed by July 21. That’s 1-800-228-9290. Remember to tell them you’re with Bubonicon. And just like in the past, we’re keeping all Room Parties on one designated floor – this year it’s the 3rd Floor – with Jasmin Noorullah-Wright at the hotel and your con chairs (Caci Cooper and myself) 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 Jack Campbell, Cherie Priest, Steven Gould and artist Darla Hallmark, we’re expecting such con regulars as Robert Vardeman, Adam Jarmon Brown, Darynda Jones, Jane Lindskold, Victor Milan, Pati Nagle, Melinda Snodgrass, David Lee Sum-



mers, Sam Sykes, Ian Tregillis and Walter Jon Williams, among others. All subject to change and travel plans, of course. We already know that George RR Martin and Carrie Vaughn will not be with us as they are leaving the country way in advance of the London Worldcon.

The con-com has already come up with more than 30 possible panel topics, and will send out invitations to potential participants late February/early March. We're asking for all Fan Programming proposals and preliminary requests for time/space to be submitted by Monday, March 31 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, fan/video programming, and hopefully, the continuation of Kids programming (Jessica can use volunteer assistants).

The Tea Society is planning to have another Sunday Afternoon Tea, to be held in three limited-attendance sessions just like last year. Stay tuned for more details. And Victor Milan probably will be, once again, the Master of Ceremonies for the Costume Contest on Saturday.

The theme for Bubonicon 46 is "Sidekicks and Minions." 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 Roadrunner Food Bank, at least.

Dealers' spaces will be on sale soon! The rates are \$85 with one weekend pass, and \$120 with two. Since we only have 29 total spaces for sale, 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 Dan Cooper at dealers@bubonicon.com (or bubonicon@gmail.com). A countdown of tables remaining will be posted on the website.

Meanwhile, Roslee Orndorff and Meg Malins are gearing up for the 2014 Art Show. As usual, art show packets will be available online late April. 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 artshow@bubonicon.com (or BubonicRose@hotmail.com).

More general info is available from Craig at 266-8905, our Google Phone at 559-0931, the PO Box, Mike McCommas' maintained website: www.bubonicon.com, and via email at bubonicon@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

***The Forever Engine* by Frank Chadwick, 2014 Baen Books, tp \$15.00, 352 pages.**

Review by Geneva Schult

I had no idea who author Frank Chadwick was, and then I learned he is apparently the author of over 200 articles, columns and books about military history – and the creator of more than 100 military board and role-playing games, including the “staple steampunk role playing game, *Space: 1889*.” *The Forever Engine* is set in the same universe.

Chadwick really knows his military minutia, and it shows. I loved the Bradburian planet Mars, populated by Martians with organic anti-gravity technology imported to Earth since 1870, that sets the entire “steampunk” genre on its ear – this might be the first “Liftwoodpunk” novel.

This story is gritty and people die, but it is set in a fairly YA storyline. One main character has idiosyncratic social communications described by our hero as having Asperger's. Nice to see Autism Spectrum Disorders being portrayed straight without comic or tragic consequences.

A near-future expert (2018) on ancient Persia, Fargo, is accidentally sent (back in time? alternate universe?) to 1888 (thanks for not sending him back to ancient Persia – that would have been too pat). His mission: to save his future time from destruction before the villain's Forever Engine can be brought to full power. The protagonist explains all the theoretic stuff via his “high school physics knowledge.” Apparently he remembers a lot more from high school than I did. A quick read of an Indiana Jones-type adventure that I recommend. This does *not* end like you think it will.

PS: The protagonist has a dream about the femme fatale as a robot and himself as part robot – that should have been the cover pic! The art did nothing to make me want to read this *however* the story was very well done.

***Fortune's Pawn: Paradox Series 2* by Rachel Bach (aka Rachel Aaron), 2013 Orbit Books, tp \$15.00, 352 pages.**

Review by Becky Davis

Fortune's Pawn is book two of an open-ended series featuring another kick-ass tough heroine. She is a mercenary soldier from a space-faring planet (Paradox) with a feudal-based ruling society.

Devi Morris (27, 5'6” “on a good day”), wants to be a Devastator on the Paradoxian king's elite Home Guard. She likes to fight, and owns her own powered armor suit and arsenal of weapons. A friend knows of her ambition, so he directs her to apply for security detail on a decrepit trader ship run by a mysterious captain, Brian Caldwell. Caldwell hires her, then tests her in several ways to be sure both she and he will survive the freighter's long “trading” trip.

Devi soon learns that Caldwell, a compact man with a military style of command is less trader and more spy. And his crew is unusual. A Xith'cal (near-indestructible reptile

-like alien who likes to eat people) doctor, an Aeon (bird-like) pilot-navigator, a cook who turns out to be more than merely human, a human engineer and Caldwell's near-catatonic "daughter."

Barely two hours out of the first spaceport, Caldwell's "Glorious Fool" is set upon by two ships of the warlike Xith'cal. One Xith'cal (armored scales and lethal claws) can murder an unarmed human in a New York second. Two shiploads of battle-hungry warriors should dispatch the Fool's crew in record time. Instead, Ms. Bach makes sure Devi Morris and her armored co-security mercenary, Jayston Cotter, kill most of the enemy boarding party. Curiously, the remainder of the battle-maddened Xith'cal were killed by a large, armored "something" that moved like a human, but fought faster and more fiercely than the Xith'cal. Mystery #1.

Both the ship and the security officers get their battle wounds repaired, and the ship stutters toward its next trading rendezvous, Mycant. Enroute, Devi tries to seduce the cook, Rupert ("tall, dark and gorgeous"). It is no surprise to the reader when Rupert deflects her advances with disarming excuses, though it is made clear that he likes her. He has also recently killed three of the attacking Xith'cal with Devi's own powered gun. Rupert Charkov is Mystery #2.

On Mycant, mysteries escalate. Radio messages to the captain go unanswered. There are frequent earthquakes around the spaceport. Time clocks do not keep uniform time. Devi searches for Caldwell at his last known site. No captain, but she finds a large, squishy "nothing" which disables her sensors and throws her (in her armor) around like a doll at the wrong end of a child's tantrum. She has a herculean battle with this large thing, is about to die under it, when she is saved (again). How? Her suit's cameras have recorded while she was unconscious. The record raises more questions about Caldwell, the "trader," and Rupert, the "cook." But she must bury these revelations, if she wants to survive her posting on this trading ship that does not really trade.

Rachel Bach's worlds and vision of space are crafted with fine imagination and a practical sense of what should work in space, on powered armor and among radically different sentient species. That said, her world vision, characters and battle sequences are too heroic and a tad too romantic. She is compared to Lois Bujold and Elizabeth Moon, but she does not have Bujold's craft for making scenes believable. Do we really need armored suits that can leap over a 20-foot tree to land on an invisible alien?

Bach's universe has almost too much Clarkian "magic" trying to operate as "tech." The aforementioned powered suits, the amicable relationships among the ship's diverse crew, a convenient memory-erasing telepath, a medical bay that can almost reanimate a corpse. But if the 15 to 20-year-old reader can suspend his/her credulity, he/she can have an excellent time with the Devi Morris series of adventures. Enjoy the fantasy.



***Dreams of the Golden Age* by Carrie Vaughn, 2014 Tor Books, hc \$25.99, 318 pages.**

Review by Craig Chrissinger

Carrie Vaughn returns to the universe she started in *After the Golden Age* with another entertaining and thoughtful look at the superheroes of Commerce City.

This time out, the focus is on teens discovering their powers and how a superhero team might form despite egos, the attraction of the limelight, high school homework and parental restrictions.

Like every teen, Anna has secrets. But what's different is that her father is a telepathic superhero, her mother is a powerful businessperson, and her grandparents were two of the city's most famous superheroes.

Practicing late at night with her friends in different combinations, Anna has no idea her mother, Celia, is keeping tabs on them all - watching for burgeoning powers - and worrying into what trouble her daughter might fall (especially since Anna's power is not evident to most).

Of course, the teens soon stumble onto a new threat to Commerce City, even as they are testing their individual and group abilities. Perhaps the first super villain in quite some time.

Like Vaughn's first *Golden Age* novel, there are other threats and secrets below the surface - and an intriguing look at what family means to multi-generations of superheroes. It's a fascinating realistic look at a comic book world, and just as entertaining and fun as one would expect.

***Lockstep* by Karl Schroeder, 2014 Tor Books, hc \$26.99, 352 pages. [To be published March 25.]**

Review by Julie Heffernan

Lockstep seemed to me like a teen-angst SF space opera taking cues from *Brigadoon*. Karl Schroeder's book has a feel of "hurry up, and wait" - full of action scenes (such as space battles, evading capture, torture, etc) punctuated with lots of sleeping. In this universe, a planet's population will hibernate for decades and then awaken for a few weeks (with the schedule strictly controlled by the ruling family). While they are asleep, robots build great cities, resources are collected, and worlds are terraformed. Non-predictably the teen protagonist is smart, fit, and able to deal remarkably well with accidentally being asleep for 14,000 years.

While the characters were a bit flat, I did enjoy the rich depth of the mechanics of the universe and the philosophy questions people were forced to address due to the passage of time.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS — **OCTOBER 2013: APOCALYPTIC GAME SHOW**

Thirty-eight people were on hand for several rounds of Kevin and Rebecca Hewett's game show, "Stop That Apocalypse!" In all, nine rounds were played with players Danielle Pollock, Mike McCommas, Harriet Engle, Grant Kuck, Bill Pletsch, Roberta Johnson, Fred Ream, Kennard Wilson, Geneva Schult, Maree Olsen, Mandy

Pietruszewski, Kristen Dorland, Patricia Rogers, Craig Chrissinger and Kathy K. Kubica. (Kennard Wilson was “declared” the overall champion for winning four rounds total.)

Because of the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta, everyone had to use the Darth Vader hot air balloon in their solution to stopping a SyFy Channel-like world threat. The challenges included everything from Giant Cows from Area 51 to Giant, Radioactive Prairie Dogs near Portales.

CLUB BUSINESS: In the election for 2014 officers, Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger were re-elected as co-executive secretaries, Rebecca “Randi” Hewett was selected as moderator, and Harriet Engle was chosen as alternator. For the December Dessert Cook-Off, Bacon was voted as the “challenge” ingredient.

NOVEMBER 2013: CHEESY FILMS DISCUSSION

Local authors John Jos. Miller, Victor Milan and Scott Phillips entertained forty-five people with a discussion of cheesy films, and what separates them from “turkeys.”

Milan said a turkey movie is “one so bad that you cannot watch it,” and that cheesy movies can be very entertaining. Milan’s latest projects include a new *Deathlands* novel, *Motherlode*, and a story in S.M. Stirling’s forthcoming *Change* anthology.

“We’re in a golden age of being able to access hundreds of movies,” stated Phillips. He said he is working on a couple of movie projects that he could not talk about, and that his guilty pleasure is CW’s *Arrow*.

Miller said he still is working on his vampire novel, had just been in a story meeting for the next *Wild Cards* novel, and also will be in Stirling’s *Change* anthology. The guilty pleasures he would admit are *The Bowery Boys* movies and *You’ll Find Out*.

Among “cheesy” movies discussed were *Ninja Terminator*, *Forbidden World*, *Galaxy of Terror*, *Troll 2*, *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters*, *Van Helsing*, *John Carter*, *Wild, Wild Planet*, *Krakatit* (1948 Czech film), *Pacific Rim*, *Mongolian Deathworm*, *Plan Nine from Outer Space*, *Teenagers from Outer Space*, *Attack of the Crab Monsters*, *Horror at Party Beach*, *The Monster and the Beach Girls*, *Frankenstein vs. the Space Monster*, *Robot Monster*, *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Flash Gordon*, *Enthiran* (aka *The Robot*, Japanese film), *The Good, the Bad and the Weird*, *Black Dynamite*, *The Thing* (Howard Hawks), *Vampire Circus*, *From Dusk To Dawn*, and *Ship of Monsters*.

Declared “turkeys” were *Doomsday Machine*, *The Avengers* (British spies), *Snakes on a Plane*, *Damnation Alley*, *Hook*, and *Abducted by the Daleks*.

DECEMBER 2013: SHORT FILMS & DESSERTS

Forty-one people came out to watch comedic holiday film shorts, and to help judge the 9th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off by tasting many delightful food samples.

Again, St. Andrew’s space was big enough to allow a

split between the movie area and dessert tables. Shown during the evening were music videos (*My Name is Elmo*, *Trek: TNG’s Make It Snow*, *Spell Block Tango*, *What Does the Fox Say*, *Stonehenge*, *Write Like the Wind*, and *Some Character I Used To Know*), a *Penguins of Madagascar* episode (“Snakehead”), a RiffTrax short, *Muppets: Most Wanted* trailers and “Food Truck Fight,” several episodes of *Simon’s Cat*, a Jim Kimmel skit, the *Rare Exports* short, a *Mystery Science Theater 3000* skit, and a *Big Bang Theory* Christmas episode.

In the Dessert Cook-Off, there were 17 entries from 15 people - Fred & Nan Aiken, Dawn Barela, Celeste Bradley, Jessica Coyle, Harriet Engle, Robert Hoeffler, Roberta Johnson, Kathy K. Kubica, Al Kulp, Joe Lane, Amy Mathis, Patricia Rogers, Geneva Schult and Tom Sittler.

Best Overall went to Amy Mathis’ Banana Pudding, the Runner-Up to Celeste Bradley’s Maple Bacon Nuts, and Third Place to Tom Sittler’s Green Chile Bacon Pecan Pie. In the Bacon Category, Geneva Schult won for her Nuts Over Bacon, and Honorable Mention went to Patricia Rogers’ Bacon Roll-Ups.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

Last February, I produced a column on three non-fiction books and how they made me excited about writing again. And then I covered the Williamson Lectureship for *Locus Magazine* - and not much else happened. I made some inquiries, but my position at Page One is causing a “conflict of interest” for local book reviews - and no one has money for freelancers. So, I let home, work, ASFS, B’con & book group keep me grounded.

This year, I again will cover the Lectureship for *Locus*, and there’s a possibility of selling some old interviews on *Earth 2 & Babylon 5* to a publisher gathering materials for a project (we shall see whether this happens). Beyond that, who knows. It’s food for thought. I will attempt to stay positive & give it my best shot.

Meanwhile, Bubonicon 46 is coming up. We’re sponsoring two Guild Cinema screenings this spring to benefit our fave indie theater and the Albuquerque Public Library Foundation. Come join us for *Mystery Science Theater 3000: The Movie* March 28-29 and *Bill & Ted’s Excellent Adventure* May 23-24. Door prizes & cool posters!

And it’s Green Slime research time. Jessica and I went to see *I, Frankenstein* this week. Pretty darn cheesy, yet it still manages to be pretentious in spots. A definite contender (*Chuck*’s Yvonne Strahovski and Bill Nighy are the best parts). We plan to check out *47 Ronin*, *The Legend of Hercules* and *Transcendence*. On TV, we’ll have to check out *Resurrection*, *The 100* and *Star-Crossed*.

I have enjoyed reading Stephen King’s *Doctor Sleep* and Cherie Priest’s *Those Who Remain There Still*; watching films *Knights of Badassdom*, *How I Live Now*, *Frozen*, *The History of Future Folk*, *Bettie Page Reveals All* and *American Hustle*; and viewing TV shows *Community*, *The Neighbors*, *The Crazy Ones*, *Castle*, *Agents of SHIELD* and *The Goldbergs*.

I am so glad that Page One’s move is done. It was a ton of work! Everyone had war wounds, and I messed up my right elbow again. Now you all can come check us out in the Mountain Run Shopping Center (5850 Eubank NE), open 10 am-6 pm right now.

Thanks to Geneva, Becky & Julie for their book reviews!

See you all in these pages in two months (deadline is Sun, April 6 - send me stuff, please). Happy Valentine’s Day and St. Patrick’s Day. Beware the Ides of March and such. — Craig C.