



# ASFACTS 2015

## FEBRUARY "FRIDAY THE 13TH" VALENTINE ISSUE



### ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 10

The 39th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship will be held Friday, April 10, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. Special guests are Colorado's Paolo Bacigalupi and Mistress of Ceremonies Connie Willis. Friday events include Bacigalupi's reading, a luncheon and various panel discussions.

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.

Bacigalupi is the author of *The Windup Girl*, which won the 2010 Hugo, Compton Crook, Nebula, Locus and John W. Campbell Memorial Awards. *Windup Girl* also was named as one of the Top 10 Books of 2009 by *Time Magazine*. His other novels include *Ship Breaker*, *The Drowned Cities*, *Zombie Baseball Beatdown* and *The Doubt Factory*. His short fiction has been collected in *Pump Six and Other Stories*. He lives in western Colorado with his wife and son.

The Lectureship formally opens Thursday, April 9, with *Readings with Writers* 6:00 pm in Room 112 of the Jack Williamson Liberal Arts Building. This reading event showcases Jack's friends and fellow authors from across the state.

On Friday, Bacigalupi reads and answers questions 9:30-11:00 am in Room 112 of the JWLA Building. The luncheon, hosted by Willis with a keynote address from Bacigalupi, takes place 11:45 am in the Zia Room of the Campus Union. The Luncheon cost is \$10.00 (payable at the door). Books will be available for purchase and autographing by writers in attendance. Reservations are needed by Monday, April 6. Call Patrice Caldwell at (575) 562-2315 or email her at [Patrice.Caldwell@enmu.edu](mailto:Patrice.Caldwell@enmu.edu).

Panel discussions happen 3:00-6:00 pm in the Wil-

liamson Special Collections area of Golden Library, and are free of charge. These panels are sure to provide a wide range of topics and free-wheeling discussion between panelists and audience.

On Saturday, April 11, a Writers Workshop for young writers is planned 10:00 am-Noon at the Portales Public Library. Arrangements are being finalized, and reservations are required.

Stay tuned for more details.

### NEW GRRM PRODUCTION TO SCREEN

by Don Kaye, [Blastr.com](http://Blastr.com), 2-2-2015

Most fans of SF and fantasy literature know that George RR Martin has been selling fiction professionally since 1970, but there is probably a large body of newer fans out there who aren't aware of much beyond *A Song of Ice and Fire* (or just know Martin as one of the many executive producer names flashed across the screen on *Game of Thrones* every week).

Well, one filmmaker, at least, is trying to change that. According to the *Hollywood Reporter*, German director Constantin Werner is prepping a film called *In The Lost Lands*, an adaptation of three of Martin's short stories for which Werner has also written the screenplay.

The German-Canadian production is close to landing Milla Jovovich in the lead role, while Justin Chatwin from 2005's *War of the Worlds* is already signed up.

### UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Portales author Darynda Jones talks on Story Openings and Hooking the Reader...
- **March 13:** 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 17:** Meeting 1 Week Late - Devin O'Leary of the *Weekly Alibi* looks at film trailers for this summer's genre releases! Also, the Spring issue of *ASFACTS* will be out (deadline Sun, April 12).
- **May 8:** Program is unknown at the moment.
- **June 12:** Again, program is unknown.

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](mailto:cwcraig@nmia.com). *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for the Albuq SF Society. *SITHFACTS* out each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, April 12.

**Club Officers:** Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Geneva Schult, Moderator. Patricia Rogers, Alternator. Cupid, Holiday Host. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Caci Cooper & Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

## JE SUIS CHARLIE

The three stories are described as such by the company handling the film, Myriad:

In one thread, the desperate queen of a city built into a towering mountain hires the sorceress Gray Alys (Jovovich) to travel into the ghostly wasteland called the Lost Lands, to obtain the gift of shape shifting into a werewolf, but she doesn't realize that the fulfillment of her wish will come at a terrible price.

Meanwhile, warrior girl Sharra must fight a dragon that serves as the gatekeeper of seven worlds to reunite with her lost lover Kaydar. During this quest she meets the mysterious lord of a deserted castle, Laren Dorr, who seduces her so completely that she forgets her quest and stays with him, unaware that he is the real gatekeeper.

And in the futuristic tale "Bitterblooms," a young barbarian girl gets spellbound by a lonely witch in a spacecraft, who shows her beauty and love, which turns out to be a net of lies and deceit.

Very little of Martin's work has been adapted for either film or TV outside of *A Song of Ice and Fire*; his 1979 story "Sandkings" was adapted twice for the latter-era versions of *The Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone*, while his 1980 novella "Nightflyers" was made into a low-budget 1987 film.

## SFWA ALLOWS SELF-PUBBED AUTHORS

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America have approved a change to its bylaws that will allow self-publishing and small-press credits to qualify writers for active and associate memberships, reported Locus Online in early February. SFWA members voted on the issue, with a third of voting members taking part, and they favored loosening membership standards by more than six to one.

The membership requirements still are based on income, but SFWA is "now allowing a combination of advances and income earned in a 12-month period to rise to the qualifying amounts." The standards are "\$3,000 for novel, or a total of 10,000 words of short fiction paid at 6 cents a word for Active membership. A single story of at least 1,000 words paid at 6 cents a word will be required for Associate membership. Affiliate, Estate, and Institutional membership requirements remain unchanged."

SFWA president Steven Gould stated, "Writers write.

Professional writers get paid a decent amount for what they write. For the past five years it's been apparent that there are ways to earn that decent amount that were not being covered by our previous qualification standards. Though these changes took a substantial amount of time, I'm grateful to everyone who worked toward this end."



## McDEVITT WINS 2015 HEINLEIN AWARD

Jack McDevitt, *Bubonicon 31* GoH, is the winner of the 2015 Robert A. Heinlein Award, given for "outstanding published works in science fiction and technical writings that inspire the human exploration of space," recognizing his body of work including over 21 novels and 81 short stories, Locus Online reported in late 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 22, 2015 during the opening ceremonies of Balticon 49.

## BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, February 16, in the side room of Pacific Paradise, northeast corner of San Pedro & Candelaria NE, to discuss *Dragonflight: Pern Book 1* by Anne McCaffrey. The group then focuses on *The Cassandra Project* by Jack McDevitt & Mike Resnick on Monday, March 16 – probably at Pacific Paradise again.

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 at Page One Books in the Mountain Run Shopping Center. For more information, contact Leah at [skycaptain1883@yahoo.com](mailto:skycaptain1883@yahoo.com) or Craig at 266-8905.

## EDITOR ALICE K. TURNER DIES

Editor Alice K. Turner died January 16 of antibiotic-resistant pneumonia, reports Locus Online. She was 75 years old.

Born 1939, Turner was the legendary fiction editor at *Playboy*, one of the most prestigious and highest-paying markets for short fiction, from 1980-2000. During her tenure, Turner published work by Terry Bisson, Ursula K. Le Guin, Robert Silverberg and Dan Simmons, among other notable SF writers. Turner also helped nurture new writers, teaching at both Clarion and Clarion West.

She edited both *Playboy Stories: The Best of Forty Years of Short Fiction* (1994) and *The Playboy Book of Science Fiction* (1998). She co-edited *Snake's Hands: A Chapbook About the Fiction of John Crowley* with Michael Andre-Driussi (2001; expanded as *Snake's Hands: The Fiction of John Crowley* in 2003), and her shorter critical essays appeared in *Asimov's*, *The New York Review of Science Fiction* and *Locus*. She also wrote *The History of Hell* (1993), an expansive survey of how artists, authors, and theologians have discussed and depicted Hell.

## 2014 PHILIP K. DICK AWARD NOMINEES

The 2014 Philip K. Dick Award nominees have been announced, reported Locus Online in early January:

*Elysium* by Jennifer Marie Brissett, *The Bullet-Catcher's Daughter* by Rod Duncan, *The Book of the Un-named Midwife* by Meg Elison, *Memory of Water* by Emmi Itäranta, *Maplecroft: The Borden Dispatches* by Cherie Priest, and *Reach for Infinity* edited by Jonathan Strahan.

The award is presented annually to a distinguished work of science fiction originally published in paperback form in the United States.

The winner and any special citations will be announced on Friday, April 3, at Norwescon 38 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Seattle Airport, SeaTac, WA.

## ALL-FEMALE GHOSTBUSTERS CAST TO STAR IN JULY 2016 REBOOT

by Elana Goodwin, Uloop Entertainment News, 2-4-2015

“Who you gonna call?” When it came to casting for a *Ghostbusters* reboot, director Paul Feig recently revealed in a tweet that four women got the call to star in the movie: Kristen Wiig, Melissa McCarthy, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones.

All four women have proven themselves to be funny ladies, with Wiig, McKinnon and Jones all having been or currently part of the *Saturday Night Live* cast of players.

Wiig was on *SNL* for seven years before leaving in 2014, and McKinnon's been on the show since 2012, while Jones just joined the *SNL* cast in 2014. Original *Ghostbusters* Dan Aykroyd and Bill Murray also used to be on *SNL*, years ago.

McCarthy's also got serious comedy chops, as she demonstrated in *The Heat* and in the 2011 hit movie *Bridesmaids*, which was co-written by and starred Wiig, and was directed by Feig. McCarthy also stars in the comedy *Spy*, which will hit theaters this May and was directed and written by Feig as well.

The original *Ghostbusters* movie came out in June 1984 and starred Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis, Ernie Hudson and Sigourney Weaver. The movie was nominated for two Oscars, including Best Music, Original Song for “Ghostbusters.”

The sequel, aptly titled *Ghostbusters II*, was released in 1989 and continued following the four parapsychologists and their adventures with the paranormal.

Though the first *Ghostbusters* was released more than 30 years ago, it's still heralded as a classic. On Rotten Tomatoes, the film received a 97 percent approval rating, with the critic consensus calling the film an “infectiously fun blend of special effects and comedy, with Bill Murray's hilarious deadpan performance leading a cast of great comic turns.”

A reboot of the franchise has been in the works for a while, with the original stars set to reprise their roles and original director Ivan Reitman to direct the third installment. Ramis, Aykroyd, and Hudson had all agreed to star in a reboot, but Murray didn't want to get involved in a *Ghostbusters 3*.

When Ramis died last year, Reitman bowed out and Feig took over the project. It was then the idea of casting all-female stars in the reboot was first discussed.

In late January, Aykroyd praised the casting decision of McCarthy, Wiig, Jones, and McKinnon in a statement to *The Hollywood Reporter*, calling the four actresses the “most magnificent women in comedy.”

When Murray was asked about the reboot at the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival, he actually suggested McCarthy (whom he co-starred with in *St. Vincent*) and Wiig be considered for the next generation *Ghostbusters*.

However, while Aykroyd and Murray were thrilled about the all-female cast reboot of the franchise, Ernie Hudson originally wasn't so on board.

He initially tweeted “no comment” when the idea was first being tossed around a few months ago. But recently, when *The Wrap* reached out to him, Hudson actually changed his mind and responded: “Four fiercely funny, foxy females busting ghosts ... phenomenal.”

But even though original *Ghostbusters* Aykroyd, Murray, and Hudson have given their approval, there has still been a number of people who have expressed their unhappiness with the all-female cast. The sexist backlash was demonstrated by numerous Twitter users, including Donald Trump.

Regardless of how people feel about the reboot, a female-centric *Ghostbusters* is noteworthy. By signing off on this girl power reboot, Sony, and in a broader sense, Hollywood, show that they have faith an all female cast in a famously male-starring movie franchise can be just as (if not more) successful as its predecessor.

An all-female reboot will also bring a new energy and creativity to the franchise, in addition to new characters. Plus, the women cast in the movie are all funny as hell in their own rights and are sure to bring some serious comedy to the film.

Production on the new *Ghostbusters* is set to start this summer with the reboot slated to hit theaters on July 22, 2016. So mark your calendars and get ready for (“who you gonna call?”) “Ghostbusters!”

## RUMOR OF THE DAY: *STAR TREK 3* LOOKING FOR 'BRYAN CRANSTON' VILLAIN (+ BONES' EX-WIFE)

by Nathalie Caron, Blastr.com. 2-3-2015

We don't know much yet about *Star Trek 3* – besides the fact that it'll now be co-written by *Star Trek*'s very own Scotty, actor Simon Pegg – but there's a rumor float-

ing around about what sort of villain they're apparently looking for.

*Film Divider* is reporting (and this is still strictly in the rumor phase, so have your grains of salt handy) that the major villain role will be a man, and that they want him to be "Bryan Cranston-like." They also claim that the *Breaking Bad* actor has spoken to Paramount about taking up the role, but no word on any result. Nothing is known about *Star Trek 3*'s hypothetical Big Bad and whether he'll be someone completely new or plucked from a long-line of established *Trek* characters.

The site also claims that there will be three major female roles to be filled: One a Federation starship captain who is being set up as being Capt. Kirk's (Chris Pine) match, and a second the president of the United Federation of Planets. The third one is apparently Bones' (Karl Urban) ex-wife. Again, there's no word whether our good doctor's former squeeze will be Pamela Branch or Jocelyn Treadaway. She could also simply be a brand-new character. But this could mean Bones will have a bit more to do than simply standing around saying, "Damn it, man, I'm a doctor, not a [insert whatever you want here]."

The site doesn't exactly say where they got the info from, nor exactly reference any source ... anonymous or otherwise, so just remember to take this as a RUMOR, even if it's a fascinating one.

## **BABYLON 5 CREATOR TO WRITE THE RED MARS SERIES**

Hard sci-fi fans got very excited back in September when it was announced that Kim Stanley Robinson's beloved Mars trilogy was being adapted for Spike TV, as *Red Mars*, under the guidance of *Game of Thrones* producer Vince Gerardis. It's one of the most acclaimed sci-fi series of the past 20 years, it's got plenty of long-form potential, and Robinson himself is on board as a consultant, so it's easy to see why many of us can't wait to see if the show materializes, reported *Blastr.com* late January.

What wasn't announced at the time was when we'd see the show, who'd star in it or who'd take on writing and directing duties. Now *Deadline* reports that at least one of those questions has been answered: *Red Mars* will be written by *Babylon 5* creator and comics writer J. Michael Straczynski.

Over the past few years, Straczynski's spent a lot of his time working in comics, reviving his "Joe's Comics" imprint at Image Comics and scripting titles like *Ten Grand*, *Sidekick* and *Dream Police*. He's also about to launch *Sense8*, a new Netflix series he co-wrote with Andy and Lana Wachowski, but despite decades of prolific output in film, TV, comics and prose, many sci-fi fans still know him best for *Babylon 5*. Though it might seem a bit crude by modern production standards, the series is still remembered fondly for its world-building, long-form storytelling, seasons-long character arcs, intri-

cate planning and use of CGI, and even if you're not a fan, it's inarguably the work that cemented Straczynski into the history of sci-fi storytelling.

Now he's heading back to TV with another long-form story that features years of plot and dozens of characters. We don't yet know whether he'll just be working on the pilot or sticking around for the entire series, but *Red Mars* seems like a good fit for many of Straczynski's particular storytelling skills.

*Red Mars* doesn't have a release date yet, but *Deadline's* report notes that Spike has the series on "fast-track development."

## **BUBONICON 47 WANTS INPUT**

by Craig Chrissinger, con co-chair

We're a month and a half into 2015 now, believe it or not, and Bubonicon 47 is just over six months away! Three-Day Passes go up February 15 to \$38 each, and remain so through May 16 (and then \$40 May 17-August 8). 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, or by paying online with a credit card.

Bubonicon 47 takes place August 28-30 (our traditional weekend) after the Spokane 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 4th year, the Marriott is offering sleeping rooms at \$99 single-quad occupancy, but now with free WiFi in sleeping rooms. Reservations are needed by August 17. 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 Catherynne M. Valente, Tamora Pierce, Mary Robinette Kowal and artist Ruth Sanderson, we're expecting such con regulars as Robert Vardeman, Jane Lindskold, Darynda Jones, Victor Milan, David Lee Summers, Walter Jon Williams and Jeffe Kennedy, among others. All subject to change and travel plans, of course.

The con-com has to come up with at least 32 possible panel topics this month, and then we will send out invitations to potential participants in mid-March. We're asking for all Fan Programming proposals and preliminary requests for time/space to be submitted by Monday, April 20, 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). And Victor Milan probably will be, once again, the Master of Ceremonies for the Costume Contest on Saturday.

The theme for Bubonicon 47 is “Women of Wonder,” celebrating pioneering female authors and characters. 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 by early March! The rates are \$85 with a weekend pass, and \$120 with two. Since we only have 29 total spaces for sale, there is a maximum of two spaces per dealer, and spaces are not considered sold until payment and a signed contract are received. For more Dealer info, please email Dan Cooper at [dealers@bubonicon.com](mailto:dealers@bubonicon.com) (or [bubonicon@gmail.com](mailto:bubonicon@gmail.com)).

Meanwhile, Roslee Orndorff and Meg Malins are gearing up for the 2015 Art Show. As usual, art show packets will be available online early May. We don’t plan to mail out packets, but if you don’t have internet access we can take care of you. If that’s the case, please send a two-ounce paid SASE to the PO Box. Info is available from Roslee at [artshow@bubonicon.com](mailto:artshow@bubonicon.com).

More general info is available from Craig at 266-8905, our Google Phone at 559-0931, the PO Box, Charlie Fitch & Mike McCommas’ maintained website: [www.bubonicon.com](http://www.bubonicon.com), and at [bubonicon@gmail.com](mailto:bubonicon@gmail.com).

## BOOK REVIEW CORNER

***The Galaxy Game* by Karen Lord, Del Rey 2015, tp \$15.00, 320 pages.** Review by Fred Aiken

I found *The Galaxy Game* neither to be character-driven nor plot-driven. This book was the worse book of the 24+ books that I read in 2014. I did get a feeling of euphoria when I finished the book after fighting my way through it.

The prologue was poorly written and did not make sense until several chapters later. The opening (prologue and chapter one) read more like literary fiction than genre fiction as the writer seemed to want to impress me, the reader, with the depth of her vocabulary. The story opens with three friends at a special school, one of whom drops off the story until the end. There was no adventure or compelling plot to the book, making it read more like a coming-of-age story. There were several first-person scenes in which it was difficult to tell the identity of the speaker. In one, I found that the person that I thought was the POV character in that scene was not. That pulled me from the story. I do not lay the entire problem at the feet of the author. I did not think that the book was properly edited.

This book is definitely not a Hugo or Nebula contender. If I would be rating this book, I would give it two

stars, which is being quite generous. If I were to grade it as a teacher, I would assign it a grade of C-.

***Golden Son: Red Rising Book 2* by Pierce Brown, Del Rey 2015, hc \$25.00, 448 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

*Golden Son* is the second book in Pierce Brown’s *Red Rising* YA trilogy. It picks up the story of Darrow, a low-caste Red who is genetically modified to pass as a member of the ruling Gold caste, quite a bit from where we left him. After winning his year at the Academy, he was sponsored by the Arch Governor of Mars to attend further training to become a military ship commander. The book opens with Darrow on the brink of defeating his final enemy and becoming the highest graduate in his class when everything goes horribly wrong. He is so shamed by the incident that it seems as if his whole standing in the Gold community will be thrown into doubt.

Darrow must use everything he has learned as both a Red and a Gold to regain his place, and to use that place to help the Resistance demolish the caste system. He is forced to make deals and promises that go against what he believes for the greater good, and he may lose everyone who is important to him in the process.

While *Golden Son* gets off to a slow start, it becomes more interesting as the reader begins to see the tightrope that Darrow is walking between his loyalty to the Resistance and his friends among the Gold caste. He must constantly evaluate everyone and every move he makes so that he doesn’t destroy a movement that is beginning to rest more and more on his shoulders. While I do feel that *Golden Son* suffered a bit for being the middle book in a trilogy, it was a satisfying follow-up. I am looking forward to the final book in the trilogy.

***The Just City* by Jo Walton, Tor Books 2015, hc \$25.99, 368 pages.** Review by Jessica Coyle

*The Just City* is the latest book by Hugo and Nebula Award-winning author Jo Walton. The book explores what would happen if people tried to create the Just City as outlined in Plato’s *Republic*. The Goddess Athena decides to run this experiment by recruiting teachers and buying slave children from throughout time, and settling them on an island in the distant past. They are provided with robots to do all of the manual labor, which leaves them open to spend their days studying as Plato would have wanted.

Apollo hears of his sister’s experiment, and decides to be reincarnated so he can be one of the children who is brought to the City. He hides his identity from both the teachers and the fellow students so that he can discover what it is like to live life as a mortal.

Things in the City seem to be going according to plan for several years until Sokrates arrives. His view of the City and its general philosophies cause the children to start questioning their way of life. Will he destroy everything that Athena and the teachers have tried to build?

*The Just City* is definitely a fantasy for those who are interested in philosophy and its ramifications on the real world. Walton brings many ideas, such as the concept of

free will and autonomy, to the forefront for her characters to explore. One example I found fascinating is her use of the robots – and how the philosophers relate to them as the City seems to change them. *The Just City* is an incredibly well-written and thought-provoking read.

***Burning Paradise* by Robert Charles Wilson, Tor 2014 (reissue), mmpb \$8.99, 426 pages.**

**Review by Craig W. Chrissinger**

Robert Charles Wilson always has unique ideas in his novels, and *Burning Paradise* is no exception. Eighteen-year-old Cassie Iverson has grown up in a world where there's been no outright war since the Great Armistice of 1914. There are border skirmishes and such, but nothing bigger. Poverty is down and prosperity is on the increase in her 2014. Yet, Cassie knows the world isn't what it appears. Her parents were part of a secret group who discovered that since the dawn of radio and TV communications, human progress has been controlled by an extraterrestrial entity in orbit around Earth. But why? And why were members of the secret group killed for their knowledge when Cassie was very young?

Wilson creates an interesting alien that is malign without being malevolent. It raises philosophical questions about the nature of evil, and whether psychological manipulation is acceptable if it results in peace.

*Burning Paradise* is a quick, good read. It is not without a few flaws (mostly in characterization), but better than a lot of stuff out there. Worth reading, especially for anyone who has enjoyed Wilson's other books.

## **ASFS MEETING REPORTS — JULY 2014: B'CON PREVIEW & SF OUTBURST**

Forty-two people visited St. Andrew Presbyterian Church to get a preview of Bubonicon 46's program schedule and Darla Hallmark's artwork for the t-shirts. Craig Chrissinger and Caci Cooper also answered some questions from the audience.

After that preview, two teams competed in a game of SF Outburst. Phred's Philibusters, consisting of Kennard Wilson, Duke McMullan, Amy Mathis and Mandy Pietruszewski, took on the Wamprats, consisting of Geneva Schult, Tom Sittler, Charlie Fitch and Meg Olsen. In a 10-round game, judged by Kevin Hewett and Julie Hefernan, Phred's Philibusters defeated the Wamprats 76 to 72. Craig Chrissinger played the game show host.

## **AUGUST: LATE SUMMER FILMS**

With Bubonicon 46 three weeks earlier than usual, the August 2014 club meeting was held a week late as a low-key gathering of film screenings. Thirty-two people were on hand for "Salt Water Tabby" with Tom & Jerry, "Fast and Furry-ous" with the Roadrunner & Coyote, "Muscle Beach Tom" again with Tom & Jerry, and the main feature, *The Giant Claw* (a true cheesy classic).

## **SEPTEMBER: CONVENTION REPORTS**

Thirty-four attendees listened to the Bubonicon 46 summary report from Caci Cooper & Craig Chrissinger (smaller than usual because of the early dates, good to have Ernie Cline and Stephen R. Donaldson at the con, still financially successful), and then heard comments on the London Worldcon & Atlanta's DragonCon.

Kevin Hewett reported that there were more than 7,500 warm bodies on-site in London, making it the largest Worldcon in decades. "It was never too full, except if a panel was in a small room," he noted.

Randi Hewett said, "They had a reading track, a costuming track, a YA track, an art track, a film track and more. The guy who built the virtual-presence robot for the *Big Bang Theory* provided a robot so a Canadian fan could virtually attend panels, the Hugo ceremony and so on."

Kevin said that the London Worldcon worked with the British Film Institute and the BBC for the film track. "They showed an early Michael Caine TV movie to a standing-room only crowd of 350," he told the ASFS audience. "It was an alternate history about Churchill's successor suing for peace with the Nazis. They also had a panel on what films and shows disappeared from the BBC vaults over time."

Patricia Rogers remarked that she "really liked the 1939 Retro-Hugos. They had a swing jazz band in full tuxedos. Mary Robinette Kowal was in a silk dress she made, and she was gorgeous. And they had a dance afterward. They had a lot of fun with it."

Randi said the Costume Contest had 29 entrees, which "all really pushed their creativity. It was fun and entertaining. I was a den mother, and the Best of Show was in my den. And Kevin and I won a Hallway Costume award for the costumes we wore at Bubonicon."

Kevin said the Dealers Room was dangerous, and that he easily could have spent \$10,000 if he weren't on a plane to come home. Patricia revealed that she purchased "a signed photo of Diana Riggs and a 1942 British comic strip that has meteorites and Cthulhu-like pseudo-pods. It was a great Dealers Room. There was a lot of *Doctor Who* stuff – toys, shirts, 2 TARDISEs, even a Tiki Dalek. And the food court was good, too."

Randi added, "There were lots of book dealers with unique and very cool books. There was even a dealer with a giant pile of Tribbles. So, I had to take a photo of Kevin in his *Star Trek* red shirt with the purring Tribbles."

Patricia did a bit of tourist sight-seeing, and said the two best things about Britain outside the convention were "the rebuilt Globe Theatre, which is gorgeous, and the Mudlarking Society picking up stuff from the beaches of the Thames River at low tide."

Kevin and Randi continued on to the EuroCon in Dublin, Ireland, after London. "It was 1,000 people," noted Randi. "We watched the premiere of the new *Doctor Who* in a room with 350 people."

And of EuroCon, Kevin reported, "There was lots of

drinking. Charles Stross brought his Hugo, and drank enough that he allowed people to fondle his award. There were a lot of interesting panels. It was all panels – no gaming or costume contest. There was a small Ar Show and a Dealers Room.”

THEN Mandy Pietruszewski spoke about the 2014 DragonCon: “This was my 7th year, and it was very crowded. I spent most of my time on the book and comics tracks, so I avoided most of the crowds though I stood in line for Jim Butcher’s urban fantasy panel. I spent part of the weekend stalking two Marvel writers from panel-to-panel. I went to the Comic-to-Stage Costume Contest. I met three of my online friends in real life for the first time. That was fun. It didn’t rain this year, which was nice.”

## OCTOBER: MONSTERS IN COMICS

Jeff Benham of 7000BC spoke to 37 people about “Monsters in Comics,” and what has changed over the years in comic books.

“There a lot of different ways to look at when comics began,” he stated. “You can point to cave paintings if you want. I choose to start with Goya in 1799. And then around 1900, we start to see comics as we think of them now, such as *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. The comics were only in newspapers at this point.

“In the ‘20s and ‘30s, we have the pulps with science fiction, fantasy and horror,” he continued. “They figured out they could put these things in comics, like *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon*. These had a ‘monster of the week’ to keep the readers coming back. And then *Famous Funnies: A Carnival of Comics* came out. The first issue sold half a million copies around 1933. Max Gaines came up with the idea of a collection of comics.”

Benham said that the first superhero was Superman, introduced in *Action Comics* #1 in 1939. “Mostly, he fought thugs and the Mob, and caught women who fell off cliffs,” he noted. “Then during World War II, superheroes started fighting Nazis and the Japanese. Even Clark Kent tried to enlist, but he failed the vision test. The first super villain may have been the Insect Master as he faced Superman. After WWII, super villains mostly were silly or light – the Beard Brigade, gorillas, circus freaks and such.”

Comics changed in the 1950s when Bill Gaines came to EC Comics. “He started a whole line of horror books,” said Benham. “Stuff like *Tales from the Crypt* and *Shock Suspense Stories*. EC also put out *MAD Magazine*. Of course, after the McCarthy hearings, publishers created the Comics Code Authority, and monsters were pretty much banned. The only monsters were pretty much in adaptations of classic literature – *Frankenstein* and the like.”

Benham then covered the beginnings of Manga in Japan, starting with *Astro Boy*, while some US publishers began to realize they could sneak in monsters in a *Twilight-Zone* way if they were careful.

“In the 1960s, Marvel started adding character issues and problems to their superheroes in comics like the *Fan-*

*tastic Four*, *Iron Man*, *Spider-Man* and the *Hulk*. Three stories I want to focus on are ‘The Coming of Galactus,’ where a horrific character is doing horrific things with no ill will; ‘The Death of Gwen Stacy’ in *Spider-Man* #121 when the Green Goblin throws her off a bridge and for the first time a major character we knew and loved dies; and in 1970, the Department of Health came to Marvel asking for comics to show drugs are bad. So, *Spider-Man* #96 had no Comics Code stamp as it was decided *Spider-Man* was popular enough that everyone was willing to take a chance. This three-issue arc was very popular.

“As a result, publishers re-examined the Code and decided to get rid of the ban on monsters,” Benham continued. “*The Tomb of Dracula* showed stories from his point-of-view, which was a first. Other monsters showed up in comics such as *House of Mystery*, *Ghost Rider*, *Creepy*, *Eerie* and *Vampirella*.”

By the 1980s, he said, comics were dealing with environmental issues, the nature of ourselves, revenge and redemption. “Then came *The Crow*, *Constantine*, *Hellboy* and *Maus*. In the *Watchmen*, superheroes are questionable. And Japanese Manga often have a spiritual edge to them or spirit monsters. In America, in the 1990s and 2000s, comics were trying different takes on older themes, mythologies and storylines – things like *Thirty Days of Night*, *Concrete*, *Arkham Asylum*, *Sandman*, *Black Hole*, *Creature Tech*, *I Kill Giants* and *Planetary*.”

Finishing up, Benham said he is working on a graphic novel about Autism and special education. And then he wants to do a comic on technology in a post-space age.

**CLUB BUSINESS:** In elections for 2015 officers, Geneva Schult was selected as Moderator, Patricia Rogers was named Alternator, and Craig Chrissinger & Kevin Hewett were re-elected as co-Executive Secretaries. For the December Dessert Cook-Off, attendees decided to go with a Theme rather than a Challenge Ingredient. “*B’ Movies*” was chosen as the December 2014 Theme.

## NOVEMBER: SPACE PIONEERS SPEAK

Forty-four attendees came to hear local space historian Loretta Hall talk about the research she did for her newest non-fiction effort, *Space Pioneers: In Their Own Words*, and the behind-the-scenes stories she discovered.

Hall said that early on, NASA had considered Eskimos or Tibetans as astronaut candidates because of their smaller size, but they finally decided on test pilots.

The Mercury-Atlas rockets had a 40 percent failure rate in two years of testing. During the Gemini program, turnaround became quite fast – almost like “running an airline,” said one person. As the head of mission control, Gene Krantz has several quotes in the book.

Hall covered the Apollo 1 disaster, and then Apollo 7, which was the first manned orbital flight of the vehicle. Apollo 8 was the first mission planned to orbit the Moon, while Apollo 10 flew to the Moon, tested a LEM approach landing and then re-attached it to the Command Module

before it was jettisoned toward the Sun. Of course, Apollo 11 landed on the Moon – but barely before LEM fuel ran out. Finally, Apollo 17 was the final voyage to the Moon in December 1972.

“I hope people don’t give up on the space program,” commented Hall. She said that most of the quoted material in her book came from oral history transcripts at the NM Space Museum, but she did get to interview six people with follow-up questions.

Hall finished by noting we may end up with political motivation to go to Mars as China is getting ready to go to the Moon, and “they aren’t exactly our best friends.”

## DECEMBER 2014: SHORT FILMS & DESSERTS

Thirty-eight people came to watch comedic holiday film shorts, and to judge the 10th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off by tasting many delightful food samples.

As has become the norm, St. Andrew’s space was split between the movie area and dessert tables. Shown during the evening were music videos (*Regeneration Carol*, *All About That Base*, Jimmy Fallon’s *Let It Go*, *Word Crimes*, *Tacky*, *Lame Claim To Fame*, *The Empire is Coming To Town*), two *Penguins of Madagascar* episodes (“Antics on Ice” and “Snowmageddon”), a Wil Wheaton *Game of Thrones* opening credits parody, two *Glove & Boots* episodes (“Christmas Album” and “Christmas Gremlin”), a *Simon’s Cat* Christmas short, two Cookie Monster parodies (“The Spy Who Dunked Cookies” and “Star S’Mores”), the *Black Adder Christmas Carol*, and trailers for *Minions*, *Grumpy Cat’s Christmas Movie*, *Star Wars 7: The Force Awakens*, and *Mad Max: Fury Road*.

In the Dessert Cook-Off with a “B” Movie Theme, there were 14 entries from 14 people – Kathy Kubica, Jessica Coyle, Patricia Rogers, Grant Kuck, Julie Heffernan, Roberta Johnson, Geneva Schult, Kevin & Randi Hewett, Al Kulp, Amy Mathis, Charlie & Zach Fitch, and Leah Ransom.

Best Overall went to Leah Ransom’s Pitted Dates with Dinosaur Bacon – Very Paleo (from *One Million Years BC*), the Runner-Up to Geneva Schult’s Ambrosia: *Food of the Gods*, and Honorable Mention to Patricia Rogers’ Abby Normal (*Young Frankenstein*). In the Theme Category, Kathy Kubica took the prize for her Marzipan Attacks (*Mars Attacks*) treats.

A few desserts deserve note for their creativity – Julie Heffernan’s Bees! (*Terror Out of the Sky*) were very cute, the Hewetts’ Joel & Mike’s Ham-It-Up and Cheesy Movie Plate had skewers with a different *MST3K* movie title and mini-synopsis on each one, Jessica Coyle’s Tarantula Spider Eggs came with their own protective giant spider, and Grant Kuck’s Crème de Blob definitely captured the texture and look of the infamous B-movie monster.

## EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

IT’S BEEN a trying couple of months for journalists and writers, and now bookstores. Of course, Islamic extremists killed 12 people in Paris in early January in an attack on a satirical newspaper. And then our own *Albuquerque Journal*’s website was hacked by a different extremist group. And on Sunday, Feb 1, someone threw a rock through one of the large front windows at Page One Bookstore. Are these all connected? Probably not Page One’s window. Nevertheless, it is a stressful and challenging time. And no one should back down. “Je suis Charlie,” indeed.

On my own personal writing front, I’m waiting right now to find out whether I will be covering the Williamson Lectureship again for *Locus Magazine*. And, of course, I’m still hoping to be able to cover some film shoot or review a book for some magazine or newspaper or website.

RUMOR FRONT: Looks like the Albuquerque Comic Expo might be dead - well, at least their website has been down for a while, and no one has heard any plans. (However, it is a Fact that there is a *BELEN* Comic Con, being put on by Jim Burleson of the ABQ Comic Con, in connection with a Balloon Rally and Film Festival March 14-16. Seems like a very odd and weird location, especially since the ABQ Comic Con was just mid-January.)

SPEAKING OF the ABQ Comic Con, Jessica and I just went on Sunday. We were happy to listen to William Shatner speak - kind of “Uncle Bill’s Storytime Hour” - and visit with Sergio Aragones (always a nice guy), Cynthia Pickett and Claudia Christian, but we weren’t that impressed with the overall con, room layouts, and such. More programming & a printed schedule would be nice.

We’re looking at the Denver Comic Con over Memorial Day weekend with Jewel Staite, Cary Elwes, Alan Tudyk, comic writer Jimmy Palmiotti and artist Amanda Conner. We’re sure other people will go to the Phoenix Comic Con the next weekend!

MEANWHILE, BUBONICON 46 is coming up. We’re sponsoring a screening of *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* at the Guild Cinema in early May to benefit our fave indie theater and the Albuquerque Public Library Foundation. Lobo Anime & Bubonicon will bring the door prizes, and Jon Sanchez is doing a special limited-edition poster! We’ll also continue to be a prize sponsor for genre films...

And it’s Green Slime research time. Jessica and I have seen *Seventh Son*, *Dracula Untold* and *Jupiter Ascending*. Sad to say, none of them is a clear Green Slime winner - just not that bad, really. Not genre, but maybe *50 Shades of Grey*?

I HAVE ENJOYED reading *Burning Paradise* by Robert Charles Wilson, several stories in the *Rogues* anthology; plus comic books *Harley Quinn* by Palmiotti and Conner, *Lady Killer* (from Dark Horse) by Joelle Jones & Jamie S. Rich, and Marvel’s *Unbeatable Squirrel Girl* by Ryan North; and viewing such TV shows as *Agent Carter*, *The Goldbergs*, *Castle*, *The Middle*, *The Big Bang Theory* and *Svengoolie*. We cut our cable and are amazed at how many channels we get over the air. Antenna-TV just started showing episodes of *Doogie Howser, MD*, and *Small Wonder*. *Small Wonder* hurts my head. Really, really hurts it. “She’s fantastic, made of plastic.” OMG. The pain, the pain.

CONGRATS to Daniel Abraham, James S.A. Corey, Jane Lindskold & George RR Martin for making *Locus Magazine*’s Recommended Reading List for 2014. Very cool, folks!

THANKS TO Fred A. and Jessica for their book reviews! This newsletter needs more contributions. C’mon, folks, where’s the love? (Cheap reference to Valentine’s Day there - ha ha.)

HOPE TO SEE YOU all in these pages in two months (deadline for submissions is Sun, April 12). Happy Valentine’s Day and St. Patrick’s Day. Beware the Ides of March & such. – Craig C.