



## SPOOKY & STILL WARM PANDEMIC OCTOBER EDITION

# ASFACTS 2020



## 2020 HUGO WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Winners for the Hugo Awards, the Lodestar for Best Young Adult Book, and the Astounding Award for Best New Writer were announced by CoNZealand, the 78th Worldcon, on August 1, during an online ceremony. There are several Bubonicon guests and New Mexico authors among the winners.

NOVEL: *A Memory Called Empire* by Arkady Martine (Santa Fe), NOVELLA: *This Is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar & Max Gladstone, NOVELETTE: "Emergency Skin" by N.K. Jemisin, SHORT STORY: "As the Last I May Know" by S.L. Huang, BOOK SERIES: *The Expanse* by James S.A. Corey (Albuquerque), RELATED WORK: "2019 John W. Campbell Award Acceptance Speech" by Jeannette Ng at Dublin 2019: An Irish Worldcon, GRAPHIC STORY OR COMIC: *LaGuardia* by Nnedi Okorafor and illustrated by Tana Ford.

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, LONG FORM: *Good Omens*, DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, SHORT FORM: *The Good Place*: "The Answer", EDITOR, SHORT FORM: Ellen Datlow, EDITOR, LONG FORM: Navah Wolfe, PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: John Picacio (Bubonicon), SEMIPROZINE: *Uncanny*, FANZINE: *The Book Smugglers*, FANCAST: *Our Opinions Are Correct*, FAN WRITER: Bogi Takács, FAN ARTIST: Elise Matthesen, LODESTAR FOR BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK (Not a Hugo): *Catfishing on CatNet* by Naomi Kritzer, and ASTOUNDING AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER (Not a Hugo): R.F. Kuang.

## ASFS CLUB OFFICERS RETAINED, AND ANNUAL DUES EXTENDED

With the ABQ SF Society unable to meet in-person during the current pandemic, an inquiry was sent out to regular club attendees in regards to the annual club officer elections which usually happen in October. Nineteen people responded to the email, with 94.7% saying to retain the current slate of ASFS officers.

As such, club officers for 2021 remain as Harriet Engle as Moderator, Grant Kuck as Alternator, and Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle as co-Executive Secretaries.

Meanwhile, everyone who had paid annual dues has had their membership extended six months (so far). Since Virtual Gatherings cost the club no money, there is no

need for dues at this point in time – especially with money in our bagged coffers from the club auction back in February.

In early March, we had prepaid St. Andrew Presbyterian Church for four club meetings and three Bubonicon gatherings. The church has record of those payments, and we will work with them once physical meetings can happen again.

The club newsletter – *ASFacts* (which you are viewing right now) - still is being produced on its February, April, July, October & December schedule. A PDF file of the issue is emailed to those who have contributed material, are named in the issue (club reports) or who directly have expressed interest. The issues also are posted on the Bubonicon website for viewing or downloading.

## 2020 WORLD FANTASY FINALISTS

The World Fantasy Awards ballot for works published in 2019 were announced July 27. The awards will be presented during the virtual World Fantasy 2020 convention, scheduled for October 29-November 1.

The Life Achievement Awards, presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field, will go to Karen Joy Fowler and Rowena Morrill.

The World Fantasy Awards finalists are:

NOVEL: *Queen of the Conquered* by Kacen Callen-

## UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **October 9 (Virtual):** Investigator Benjamin Radford talks on "Tracking the Lizard Man."
- **November 13:** A group movie viewing via Zoom, this time focusing on alien invasion.
- **December 11:** Our Holiday Social, but Virtual this year. Perhaps folks can show off their PANdemic foods (made in pans) and favorite/special holiday decorations. Maybe we will share a few shorts/cartoons at end. Plus, the annual issue of *SITHFACTS* (deadline 6 pm Mon, Dec 7).
- **January 8, 2021:** Club reports/discussion on what members read in 2020... Virtual? Maybe!
- **February 12, 2021:** Totally unknown for now. At least Valentine's ASFacts will be published.

**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: Mon, Dec 7.** **Club Officers:** Jessica Coyle & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Harriet Engle, Moderator. Grant Kuck, Alternator. HAL 9000, Advisor. Jack Skellington, Pumpkin King. **Bubonicon Chair:** Craig Chrissinger, google voice (505) 559-0931. www.bubonicon.com

der, *The Ten Thousand Doors of January* by Alix E. Harrow, *The Raven Tower* by Ann Leckie, *Gideon the Ninth* by Tamsyn Muir, and *The Memory Police* by Yoko Ogawa.

NOVELLA: “The Butcher’s Table” by Nathan Ballingrud, *Desdemona and the Deep* by C.S.E. Cooney, *In an Absent Dream* by Seanan McGuire, *The Deep* by Rivers Solomon with Daveed Diggs, William Hutson & Jonathan Snipes, and *Silver in the Wood* by Emily Tesh.

SHORT FICTION: “For He Can Creep” by Siobhan Carroll, “Read After Burning” by Maria Dahvana Headley, “The Blur in the Corner of Your Eye” by Sarah Pinsker, “Blood Is Another Word for Hunger” by Rivers Solomon, “Postlude to the Afternoon of a Faun” by Jerome Stueart, and “Everyone Knows That They’re Dead. Do You?” by Genevieve Valentine.

ANTHOLOGY: *Echoes: The Saga Anthology of Ghost Stories* edited by Ellen Datlow, *The Outcast Hours* edited by Mahvesh Murad & Jared Shurin, *The Mythic Dream* edited by Dominik Parisien & Navah Wolfe, *New Suns: Original Speculative Fiction by People of Color* edited by Nisi Shawl, and *The Big Book of Classic Fantasy* edited by Ann VanderMeer & Jeff VanderMeer.

COLLECTION: *Homesick* by Nino Cipri, *Song for the Unraveling of the World* by Brian Evenson, *Unforeseen* by Molly Gloss, *A Lush and Seething Hell* by John Horner Jacobs, and *Sooner or Later Everything Falls into the Sea* by Sarah Pinsker.

ARTIST: Tommy Arnold, Galen Dara, Julie Dillon, Wendy Froud, and Kathleen Jennings.

SPECIAL AWARD - PROFESSIONAL: C.C. Finlay for *F&SF* editing, Leslie Klinger for *The New Annotated H.P. Lovecraft: Beyond Arkham*, Ellen Oh for *We Need Diverse Books*, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas for *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*, and Sheree Renée Thomas for contributions to the genre.

SPECIAL AWARD - NON-PROFESSIONAL: Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Laura E. Goodin & Esko Suoranta for *Fafnir: Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*, Michael Kelly for *Undertow Publications* and *The Year’s Best Weird Fiction* series, Jonathan Strahan & Gary K. Wolfe for *The Coode Street* Podcast, Lynne M. Thomas & Michael Damian Thomas for *Uncanny*, and Terri Windling for *Myth & Moor*.

This year’s judges are Gwenda Bond, Galen Dara, Michael Kelly, Victor LaValle, and Adam Roberts.

## AUTHOR TERRY GOODKIND DIES

by Andrew Liptak, Tor.com

Fantasy author Terry Goodkind, known for his long-running *The Sword of Truth* series, died September 17 at the age of 72. His agent confirmed his passing to Tor Books and Tor.com.

Born January 11, 1948, in Omaha, NE, Goodkind

lived in Maine with his wife, Jeri, before they settled near Lake Las Vegas, NV. He first established a career as a woodworker and artist, before eventually writing his first novel, *Wizard’s First Rule*, in 1994. The novel follows Richard Cypher, a woodland guide in a magical world, who learns that he’s a long-sought-after First Wizard, and that he has a destiny to save the world.

The novel kicked off Goodkind’s long-running *Sword of Truth* series, which eventually numbered 21 installments, the most recent of which, *Heart of Black Ice*, was published in January of this year. In 2019, he launched a series, *The Children of D’Hara*, also set in the same world, publishing five installments between April 2019 and June 2020.

In 2008, *Evil Dead* and *Spider-Man* director Sam Raimi and ABC Studios picked up the rights to adapt *The Sword of Truth* series as a TV show, which debuted in November 2008 as *Legend of the Seeker*. The first season covered the events of the first novel, while a second adapted its sequel, *Stone of Tears*. The series was canceled in 2010, and efforts to bring the series to another network didn’t pan out.

On his official Facebook page, Goodkind’s representatives posted a short remembrance: “It is impossible to put into few words just how amazing of a man, a husband, a writer, a friend, and a human, Terry Goodkind truly was. He is already desperately missed. We are forever grateful for him having shared his life’s work with all of us, as he was always grateful to be held in our hearts.”

## JEMISIN WINS GENIUS GRANT

N.K. Jemisin is one of 21 MacArthur Foundation Fellows selected for 2020. Each “genius grant” recipient receives a no-strings-attached “stipend of \$625,000... paid out in equal quarterly installments over five years.”

On the MacArthur Foundation’s website, it states, “Jemisin is broadening the spectrum of participants in speculative fiction’s creation and surrounding fandom through her published works as well as her world-building workshops, frequent interviews, and active presence on social media. While engaging readers with grippingly paced narratives, Jemisin demonstrates how the speculative mode enables us to contemplate the ecological crises and social inequalities of our contemporary moment and to consider how societies formed along fault lines might build themselves anew.”

Fellows are chosen by “a constantly changing pool of invited external nominators chosen from as broad a range of fields and areas of interest as possible” and a selection committee. Final decisions are made by the president and board of directors. “Nominators, evaluators, and selectors all serve anonymously and their correspondence is kept confidential.”

Jemisin received a BS from Tulane University in 1994, and a ME.d from the University of Maryland in

1997. Her ambitious three-book series, *The Broken Earth Trilogy*, was completed in 2017 and each volume won the Hugo Award for Best Novel. Her other books include *The Inheritance Trilogy* and *The Dreamblood Duology*, the story collection *How Long 'Til Black Future Month*, and the comic book series, *Far Sector*, for DC Comics.

Previous winners of genre interest include writers Octavia E. Butler, Junot Díaz, Virginia Hamilton, Jonathan Lethem, Kelly Link, Karen Russell, George Saunders, Jesmyn Ward, and author/artist David Macaulay.

## 2020 DRAGON AWARDS WINNERS

Dragon Con announced the winners of the 2020 Dragon Awards in an online ceremony on September 6. Among the winners are some Bubonicon guests.

SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL: *The Last Emperox* by John Scalzi (Bubonicon), FANTASY NOVEL: *The Starless Sea* by Erin Morgenstern, YOUNG ADULT/MIDDLE GRADE NOVEL: *Finch Merlin and the Fount of Youth: Harley Merlin Book 10* by Bella Forrest, MILITARY SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY NOVEL: *Savage Wars* by Jason Anspach & Nick Cole, ALTERNATE HISTORY NOVEL: *Witchy Kingdom* by D.J. Butler,

MEDIA TIE-IN NOVEL: *Firefly: The Ghost Machine* by James Lovegrove, HORROR NOVEL: *The Twisted Ones* by T. Kingfisher (Ursula Vernon, Bubonicon), COMIC BOOK: *Avengers* by Jason Aaron & Ed McGuinness, GRAPHIC NOVEL: *Battlestar Galactica: Counterstrike!* by John Jackson Miller & Daniel HDR, SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY TV SERIES: *The Mandalorian*, and SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY MOVIE: *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*.

Winners in various gaming-related categories were also announced. For more information, see the Dragon Con website.

## SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets virtually 7:30 pm Monday, October 19, in a Zoom Session to discuss *Emperor Mollusk vs the Sinister Brain* by A. Lee Martinez (Bubonicon 52 toastmaster). The group then meets November 16 (virtually again) to talk about *The Collapsing Empire: The Interdependency Book 1* by John Scalzi (Bubonicon 50 co-Guest of Honor).

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the 3rd Monday each month. Books for discussion are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on them at Page One Books. For more info: Leah at [mrsansom@hotmail.com](mailto:mrsansom@hotmail.com) or Craig at 266-8905.



## ATWOOD WINS HOLBROOKE AWARD

Margaret Atwood has won the 2020 Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award, given by the Dayton Literary Peace Prize to “writers whose work uses the power of literature to foster peace, social justice, and global understanding,” it was reported mid-September on [Locusmag.com](http://Locusmag.com).

Sharon Rab, founder and chair of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation, said, “In a career spanning more than half a century, Margaret Atwood continues to remind us that ‘it can’t happen here’ cannot be depended upon; anything can happen anywhere given the right circumstances, and right now, with scorn for democratic institutions on the rise, her lessons are more vital than ever.”

The Dayton Literary Peace Prize gala, originally scheduled for October 2020, has been postponed until 2021. The Holbrooke Award is “named in honor of the celebrated U.S. diplomat who played an instrumental role in negotiating the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords that ended the war in Bosnia.”

## HMH TO DISCONTINUE JJA BOOKS

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) will discontinue science fiction and fantasy imprint John Joseph Adams Books, launched in February 2016, reported [locusmag.com](http://locusmag.com) in early October.

Editor John Joseph Adams says, “We’ve still got several books forthcoming, and those will still be published, but nothing new beyond those, alas. Cheers to all of the authors who went on this ride with me, and to all who bought & read.”

The imprint published work by Bryan Camp, Hugh Howey, Veronica Roth, Molly Tanzer, Jack Skillingstead, and Carrie Vaughn, among others.

The announcement does not impact the *Best American Science Fiction & Fantasy* series of anthologies, edited by Adams, which has 2020 and 2021 volumes forthcoming.

## 2020 BOOKTUBESFF AWARDS WINNERS

The sixth annual BooktubeSFF Awards winners were announced in an online ceremony on August 30, reports [Locusmag.com](http://Locusmag.com). The winners were voted on separately by readers and judges. For categories with differing results, both selections were named as winners. Among the winners are Bubonicon guests and New Mexico authors.

SCIENCE FICTION: *A Memory Called Empire* by Arkady Martine (Santa Fe), FANTASY: *Gods of Jade and Shadow* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, YOUNG ADULT (JUDGES’ VOTE): *The Gilded Wolves* by Roshani Chokshi, YOUNG ADULT (POPULAR VOTE): *Sorcery of Thorns* by Margaret Rogerson, MIDDLE GRADE: *Sal & Gabi Break the Universe* by Carlos Hernandez, DEBUT NOVEL: *A*

*Memory Called Empire* by Arkady Martine (Santa Fe), SHORT WORK (POPULAR VOTE): *To Be Taught, If Fortunate* by Becky Chambers (Bubonicon 2020), and SHORT WORK (JUDGES' VOTE): *This Is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar & Max Gladstone.

Booktube is the segment of YouTube dominated by booklovers who use the platform to discuss and share a love of reading. The BooktubeSFF community are those people within Booktube who focus their reading on SF & Fantasy. Each year the community nominates its favorite works from the previous year in various categories. These are counted and turned into a shortlist. Booktube then runs readalongs and chats about the books before voting on the winners. The awards started in 2015.

## 1945 RETRO HUGO AWARDS WINNERS

Winners of the 1945 Retro Hugo Awards, honoring work from 1944, were announced July 29 by CoNZealand, the 78th Worldcon.

NOVEL: *Shadow Over Mars* by Leigh Brackett (*Startling Stories* Fall '44), NOVELLA: "Killdozer!" by Theodore Sturgeon (*Astounding Science Fiction* 11/44), NOVELETTE: "City" by Clifford D. Simak (*Astounding Science Fiction* 5/44), SHORT STORY: "I, Rocket" by Ray Bradbury (*Amazing Stories* 5/44), SERIES: *Cthulhu Myths* by H.P. Lovecraft, August Derleth, and others, RELATED WORK: "The Science-Fiction Field" by Leigh Brackett (*Writer's Digest* 7/44),

GRAPHIC STORY OR COMIC: *Superman: "The Mysterious Mr. Mxyzptlk"* by Jerry Siegel, Ira Yarbrough, and Joe Shuster (Detective Comics, Inc.), DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, SHORT FORM (TIE): *The Canterville Ghost* and *The Curse of the Cat People*, PROFESSIONAL EDITOR, SHORT FORM: John W. Campbell, Jr., PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Margaret Brundage, FANZINE: *Voice of the Imagination*, and FAN WRITER: Fritz Leiber, Jr.

## GREEN SLIME AWARDS ANNOUNCED

In a ceremony streamed August 29 during Buboni-Virtual Con 2020, Green Slime Mistress Jessica L. Coyle (with assistance from the Slime Time Puppets) presented the following with recognition of their wretchedness in the last 12 months:

TELEVISION: *Warrior Nun* on Netflix (Inconsistent writing, poor pacing, lack of originality, characters are thin archetypes, too much talking & not enough showing.)

TOY: *Trolls World Tour* Giggle and Sing Poppy (Has button on her bottom under a skirt that is supposed to make the doll giggle when she is seated. But the button is inappropriately on the doll's "private area" and causes her to gasp and giggle in a potentially suggestive manner. Hasbro received a petition with 150,000 signatures to pull the doll from store shelves.)

YOUNG ADULT MOVIE: *Artemis Fowl* on Disney+ (A

fantasy flop, script is a jumble of endless exposition and hollow characters, a chaotic mess that forgets to tell a story, 12-year-old Artemis is barely in it. And why, Judi Dench, why?)

ADULT MOVIE: *Cats!*, based on the Broadway Musical (One of the last films released in 2019, possibly at the bottom of films for the decade, Judi Dench deserves better, and James Corden's fat Bustopher Jones bears a resemblance to Mike Myers' reviled *Cat in the Hat*. Attempt to force a linear plot doesn't work, and some actors can't sing and some singers can't act. A complete disaster.)

BIG AWARD: 2020, *Total Suck Year* (The COVID-19 pandemic, science being ignored, social and political injustice, economic and food insecurity, wildfires and drought, climate change, murder hornets, the Great Moth Invasion of Albuquerque, unusually hot temperatures in August, heavy hurricane season, etc.)

MISCELLANEOUS: *Weird Foods of the Pandemic* (Brach's Turkey Dinner Candy Corn [Green beans, roasted turkey, cranberry sauce, ginger-glazed carrot, sweet potato pie & stuffing], Smartfood Cap'n Crunch's Crunch Berries Popcorn Mix, Cheetos Mac 'n Cheese Bold & Cheesy, Cheetos Mac 'n Cheese Flamin' Hot, Cheetos Mac 'n Cheese Cheesy Jalapeño, Kellogg's Mermaid Waffles [Teal color, blue raspberry], Kellogg's Unicorn Waffles [Bright pink color, cotton candy], Kellogg's Birthday Cake Waffles [Yellow cake & rainbow sprinkles], Hostess Twinkie Iced Latte, Hostess Honey Bun Iced Latte [Sweet honey with glazed-icing flavor], Ding Dongs Iced Latte [Chocolate flavors with vanilla], Sno Balls Iced Latte [Twist between chocolate cake and coconut flakes], and Baby Shark Mac & Cheese.)

## SANTA FE HISTORIC DISTRICTS REVIEW DENIES GRRM'S CASTLE

by Daniel J. Chacón, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 9/10/20

Noted author and Santa Fe resident George RR Martin writes about the castles of Westeros in his popular fantasy book series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, but he won't be allowed to build what looks like one at his 4-acre gated compound near Museum Hill.

The city's Historic Districts Review Board late Tuesday shot down a request to grant an exemption that would have allowed Martin to exceed the building height limit in the historic district where he lives.

The request, made by an architectural firm on behalf of Water Gardens Trust, was included with plans to construct a free-standing, seven-sided castle-style library – referred to as the Water Garden Keep – in an undeveloped portion of Martin's property in the 1300 block of Camino Corrales.

"It is a medieval castle, and I don't understand how we could possibly approve it in this style," said board member Frank Katz, who was most critical of the proposed project, at the start of a hearing on the request.

Martin has become a prominent investor in Santa Fe. He acquired and revived the Jean Cocteau Cinema in 2013, where he held screenings of episodes from the HBO series *Game of Thrones*, based on his books. Among other ventures, he has helped launch Meow Wolf's House of Eternal Return, an interactive art installation; has started the Stagecoach Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to boosting the local film and television workforce; and recently became a partner in purchasing the Santa Fe Southern Railway, an excursion train.

The Historic Districts Review Board considered a proposal in January for a similar castle-like structure at Martin's home, which it also denied.

Board members found the project didn't meet the exception criteria for height and style, and also rejected it "on the basis that the proposal at that time was incongruous with the character of the Historic Review District," Lisa Roach, manager of the city's Historic Preservation Division, said at September 8's hearing.

Since then, the architect redesigned the proposed project and submitted a new exception request to the board.

"I think it has been drastically simplified from the last proposal," including the removal of "Gothic Revival design elements," Roach told the board.

Katz disagreed, saying he was "a little dismayed how little it was changed. I mean, there is no doubt in anyone's mind looking at that structure that it's a medieval castle keep."

Neighbors strongly objected to the project, which included a roof deck and a stair and elevator tower.

Mark Graham, who lives directly to the south of the property, said he wouldn't support a height exception - "nor will we support having a castle in the neighborhood. With the notoriety of Mr. Martin and *Game of Thrones*, we absolutely fear that our neighborhood will become the next treasure hunt, that his fans will be looking to find the castle that's in the middle of Santa Fe."

DailyMail.com, which broke the story, reported Martin and his wife had purchased the Camino Corrales property in 2018 for \$3 million.

"We thought it was Winterfell when we first saw the plans," a neighbor joked to DailyMail.com about the castle-style library. "All it's missing is Jon Snow and a couple of dragons."

"George has done a lot for the arts and he's very welcome here. But there is a code in Santa Fe and the buildings have a right to retain a certain historic look," the neighbor said. "If they allow something like this, it will open the floodgates to any rich eccentric that wants to live in a castle with a tower."

The application for a height exception was filed by Alexander Dzurec of the architecture, planning and consulting firm Autotroph Inc., which has an office in Santa Fe. Dzurec declined to comment Wednesday.

On September 8, Dzurec said the proposed library structure is intended to house a "a very sizable collection" of literature and "other collectibles."

Dzurec didn't identify the owners but told the board they're in their late 60s and that one has an illness that left said person in a wheelchair.

"This case, at its core, is about accessibility," he said. "The property is owned by a trust, and our clients are the beneficiaries of the trust and will reside there hopefully for the remainder of their lives. They're an aging couple that both have mobility issues. One of them is essentially down to a wheelchair now, and we don't anticipate that changing any time in the future - and this is about providing safe access to an upper-level deck structure."

A group of more than 40 neighbors signed a letter urging the board to deny the request for an exception.

"Since the meeting of the [board] in January of this year when these exceptions were originally denied, the applicant's architect has made some changes to the original proposal by reducing the height slightly, changing the material to more stucco and less stone as well as changing the shape of the windows and reorienting the large window," neighbors wrote in the letter.

"The fact remains that the proposed building is still a prominent castle in the middle of a residential neighborhood in Santa Fe," the letter continued. "It *WILL BE VISIBLE*."

Guy Gronquist, one of the neighbors who signed the letter, read it to the board and said the architect had gone to "great pains to draw comparisons with existing medieval-style structures in Santa Fe." But those buildings aren't surrounded by houses, he said.

"Attempting to cite a downtown commercial building elevator rooftop access approval as setting precedent for a castle tower elevator rooftop access approval in a residential neighborhood - for the purpose 'of enjoying mountain views' - is like comparing an apple to an orange," he said, reading from the letter. "They are both fruit, but that's where the comparison ends."

## **DAME DIANA RIGG DIES AT 82**

Dame Diana Rigg, famous for roles including Emma Peel in TV series *The Avengers* and Olenna Tyrell in *Game of Thrones*, died September 10 as the result of cancer. She was 82 years old.

Her daughter, actress Rachael Stirling, announced the death, after Riggs was diagnosed in March. "She spent her last months joyfully reflecting on her extraordinary life, full of love, laughter and a deep pride in her profession," Stirling added.

Rigg also played the only woman who became Mrs James Bond. She played Tracy, who married George Lazenby's 007 in the 1969 film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*.

Her other recent roles included the Duchess of Buccleuch in ITV's *Victoria* and Mrs Pumphrey in Channel 5's new adaptation of *All Creatures Great and Small*.

Enid Diana Elizabeth Rigg was born near Doncaster on July 20, 1938. While still a toddler, she travelled to

India, where her father worked as a railway engineer for the Maharaja of Bikaner.

On leaving school in 1955, she trained as an actress at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She made her professional debut in a production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* as part of the 1957 York Festival.

She joined the Royal Shakespeare Company, where she played a number of roles, receiving much praise for her portrayal of Cordelia in a production of *King Lear*.

In 1965, she screen-tested for the part of John Steed's female companion in the TV series *The Avengers* after the departure of Honor Blackman to play Pussy Galore in *Goldfinger*.

Her performance as the cat-suited Emma Peel brought her international fame. The surreal psychedelia of *The Avengers* made it as much a symbol of the Swinging 60s as the Mini and the Beatles.

Sexy, resourceful and self-assured – with a deadly knowledge of self-defense – Rigg's character became an icon for the growing feminist movement. Her action-girl allure, coupled with her husky voice – the result of a cigarette habit – also brought her plenty of male admirers.

She also showed she was capable of taking on the establishment. During the first series, she discovered she was earning less than the cameramen and insisted on more money before making another episode.

But Rigg found the sudden fame as a TV star difficult to cope with. It was partly her resentment at the invasion of her privacy that persuaded her that she would spend only two years with *The Avengers*.

She was also keen to keep her stage career alive. "Some weeks I'd spend four days on the set of *The Avengers* and then head up to Stratford to be Regan in Olivier's *Lear*," she said.

Like Blackman, Rigg moved from the *Avengers* to 007, starring in *Her Majesty's Secret Service* opposite George Lazenby. Rigg became the only Bond girl to get the secret agent to the altar, although the marriage was abruptly cut short when her character was shot dead soon after the wedding.

She starred as Vincent Price's daughter in the camp horror film, *Theatre of Blood*, but soon returned to the stage - nominated for a Tony Award for her performance in *Abelard and Heloise*.

Rigg returned to television, largely in more serious roles than before, among them Clytemnestra, Hedda Gabler, Regan in *King Lear* and Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House*. And although she said that she was not a fan of mysteries herself, she was the host of the PBS series *Mystery!* 1989-2003 and played Gladys Mitchell's unconventional detective Adela Bradley on the BBC series *The Mrs. Bradley Mysteries* from 1998 to 2000.

Of course, Rigg will always be Lady Holiday of 1981's *The Great Muppet Caper*, a haughty haute couture designer. The film follows twins and reporters Kermit the Frog and Fozzie Bear as they travel to London along with photographer Gonzo to file a story on a recent high profile

jewel heist.

However, instead of interviewing the real victim of the crime, Lady Holiday, Kermit mistakes her new receptionist Miss Piggy for the fashion designer. And they embark on an old Hollywood style rom-com.

In 1990, she won a Bafta for the role of an obsessive mother in the BBC drama *Mother Love*. Four years later she won a Tony for best actress in one of her most acclaimed performances, that of the title role of *Medea*.

In the same year, Rigg was named a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

In 2013, she appeared in a *Doctor Who* episode, "The Crimson Horror," which was specially written for her by Mark Gatiss. Her role as the evil Mrs Gillyflower was played alongside her daughter, Rachael Stirling. The Matt Smith/Jenna-Louise Coleman episode aired as part of series 7. It was not the first time mother and daughter had appeared in the same production – that was in the 2000 NBC film *In the Beginning* – but the first time in her career her roots were accessed to find a Doncaster, Yorkshire, accent.

In her 70s, Rigg joined a long list of distinguished British actors who appeared in the HBO fantasy epic *Game of Thrones*, gaining an Emmy nomination. The late star won a new generation of admirers as the scheming Olenna Tyrell, a witty and sarcastic political mastermind popularly known as the Queen of Thorns. Lady Olenna was the paternal grandmother of regular character Margaery Tyrell in the HBO series based on the epic fantasy novels of George RR Martin.

"I wonder if you're the worst person I ever met," Lady Olenna once said to her nemesis Cersei Lannister (Lena Headey). "At a certain age, it's hard to recall."

Her performance was well received by critics and audiences alike, and earned her an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series for the 65th Primetime Emmy Awards in 2013. She reprised her role in season four of *Game of Thrones*, and in July 2014 received another Guest Actress Emmy nomination. In 2015 and 2016, she again reprised the role in seasons five and six in an expanded role from the books. The character was killed off in the seventh season, with Rigg's final performance receiving wide critical acclaim.

She was married twice, first to Israeli artist Menachem Gueffen, from 1973 to 1976, and then to Archie Stirling. The couple divorced in 1990.

In 2017, the 20-a-day smoker found herself seriously ill and undergoing a heart operation. During surgery, Rigg's heart stopped and her life hung by a thread.

Although it was the role of Peel that brought her to public attention, Rigg was successful in casting off the character and carving out a distinguished career as a classical actress.

She never felt the need to return to the cat suit, steadfastly refusing to sign *Avengers* photographs sent to her. Rigg excelled at playing sharp-witted female characters who carried steel fists in velvet gloves.

## MOSLEY GETS FOUNDATION MEDAL

Walter Mosley will receive the National Book Foundation's 2020 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, to be presented by author Edwidge Danticat, reported *Locusmag.com* in early September.

David Steinberger, chair of the NBF Board of Directors, said, "Mosley is a master of craft and narrative, and through his incredibly vibrant and diverse body of work, our literary heritage has truly been enriched. From mysteries to literary fiction to nonfiction, Mosley's talent and memorable characters have captivated readers everywhere, and the Foundation is proud to honor such an illustrious voice whose work will be enjoyed for years to come."

The award was created in 1988 "to recognize a lifetime of literary achievement," and includes a \$10,000 prize and a solid brass medal. Nominations are made by National Book Awards winners, finalists, judges, and other literary professionals, with the final selection made by the National Book Foundation's Board of Directors. Mosley is the 33rd recipient. Previous recipients include Isabel Allende, Ray Bradbury, Stephen King, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Toni Morrison.

## CHICAGO WINS 2022 WORLDCON

CoNZeland Site Selection announced that Chicago has won the site vote and will host the 80th Worldcon, Chicon 8, to be held September 1-5, 2022, winning 517 of the 587 ballots.

The con will take place at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Guests include author guest of honor Charles de Lint, artist guest of honor Floyd Norman, fan guests of honor Edie Stern and Joe Siclari, First Fandom guest of honor Erle Korshack, and toastmasters Annalee Newitz and Charlie Jane Anders. Helen Montgomery is chair.

More information can be found in Progress Report #0 at [www.chicon.org](http://www.chicon.org).

## PANDEMIC PUBLISHING NEWS

A *Publishers Weekly* survey in June revealed that most publishers in New York anticipated bringing employees back after Labor Day, but that's not happening, reported *Locusmag.com* on Labor Day weekend.

Macmillan's offices won't open until January 11, 2021, at the earliest, but some employees will be allowed access to their Manhattan office on a trial basis.

Simon & Schuster's CEO Bob Bakish wrote in a memo that "at this point, we are assuming the majority of employees will not be returning to US offices this year.... Given the continued trajectory of the virus, we believe having fewer people commuting and gathering is best." Hachette Book Group has partially re-opened some of its offices in Boulder, CO, Philadelphia, PA, Boston, MA,

and New, York NY. CEO Michael Pietsch told employees the offices are open "only for people with a strong desire or need to be in the office, and daily attendance in each location is restricted to 10-15 percent of office capacity."

Pietsch says they have no plans for further opening, and that the company's "strong preference is for employees who can work from home to continue to do so, and we will not fully reopen any HBG office until we can do so safely."

Penguin Random House CEO Madeline McIntosh told US employees they should expect to work remotely until "sometimes next year" in a letter sent August 3, 2020:

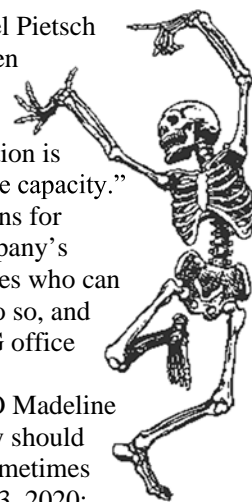
"We will return when it's safe and when it's practical, and not before.... I know this news will settle in complicated ways. Even though you're probably not surprised by the decision, it still may carry an emotional punch. We've all been so hoping that, by now, the virus would be under control and we'd be able to inch closer to our old normal lives." She promises employees will be afforded flexibility "as it relates to both schedules and geography" even post-pandemic. In a recent survey, a majority of employees indicated they are "interested in adjusting their work arrangement when we return, and even long-term post-pandemic, specifically related to how many days they will work in the office."

Sourcebooks is also letting its employees work remotely until January. Those publishers considering bringing back employees at all expect to do so in a phased way, many with extensive new safety protocols in place.

UK bookstore chain W.H. Smith plans to lay off about 1,500 employees as part of a restructuring in response to the financial challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. While sales are improving, they were still down 25% for July, and were down 41% in June, 65% in May, and 71% in April (online sales have been strong and steady). The company expects to report pre-tax losses between £70-75 million for the fiscal year closing at the end of August.

UK chain Waterstones also plans layoffs, with an unknown number of positions being cut at headquarters: "It is with great regret that Waterstones is to make a number of head office redundancies and is currently in consultation with those whose Piccadilly-based roles are affected. These are part of a number of measures undertaken to align the overheads of the business to the level of sales now being achieved." They blame poor sales in physical stores: "Notwithstanding the strong online performance of Waterstones.com, it is necessary to reduce the cost base of the business to reflect the reality of overall trading."

James Daunt is head not only of Waterstones in the UK, but CEO of Barnes & Noble in the US. He took advantage of the mandatory B&N store closures during the pandemic's early days to redesign 350 locations. He'd



planned the renovations anyway, but instead of the two years he'd anticipated, they were finished in under two months: "Every piece of furniture had to be moved. All the shelves were moved." The result "is a substantial and dramatic change" that brightened the décor and rearranged categories. He also downsized, as previously reported, letting go of experienced buyers and cutting the corporate staff in half. Daunt doesn't anticipate many permanent closures, though, and they've even opened new stores (in Sarasota, FL, Schaumburg, IL, and Rockland, MD) this summer.

Creative Artists Agency has laid off 90 agents and executives and nearly 300 support staff (assistants, receptionists, and mailroom workers). This follows salary cuts instituted in April. "With greater visibility into the COVID-19 challenges of fiscal year 2021, we have made the difficult decision to implement workforce reductions, in addition to our ongoing cost-saving measures.... This is a painful and unprecedented moment, and words are insufficient."

There were vast layoffs at DC Comics in August, more directly related to the merger between AT&T and DC parent Time Warner than to the coronavirus, though that played a part. A third of the DC Comics editorial staff were reportedly laid off, including longtime editors and senior executives, editor-in-chief Bob Harras among them. A total of around 600 people were let go at WarnerMedia, and AT&T is reportedly (and somewhat bafflingly) planning to hire a general manager "from the world of esports" to run the comics division. Other elements of the DC empire also suffered heavy cuts, including merchandising division DC Collectibles and the DC Universe video streaming service.

## BUTLER ON BESTSELLER LIST

Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, first published in 1993, appeared on the *New York Times* Best-seller list at #14 on the paperback fiction list for the week ending August 29 (printed September 13, 2020). It was her first appearance on the list. Butler, who died in 2006, was a MacArthur Fellow and winner of numerous literary and genre awards, Locusmag.com reported in early October.

## OLD DRIFT WINS CLARKE AWARD

*The Old Drift* by Namwali Serpell (Hogarth US & UK) won the 34th Arthur C. Clarke Award, announced online. Serpell receives a check for £2,020 and an engraved bookend, reported Locusmag.com in late September.

Other finalists were: *The City in the Middle of the Night* by Charlie Jane Anders, *The Light Brigade* by Kameron Hurley, *A Memory Called Empire* by Arkady Martine, *Cage of Souls* by Adrian Tchaikovsky, and *The*

*Last Astronaut* by David Wellington.

The 2020 judges were Rhian Drinkwater, Stewart Hotston, Farah Mendlesohn, Chris Pak, and Alasdair Stuart, with Andrew M. Butler serving as the non-voting Chair of the Judges.

Serpell is donating the £2,020 prize money to the Louisville Community Bail Fund to help "protestors against Breonna Taylor's state-sanctioned murder."

## IS THERE LIFE IN VENUS CLOUDS?

by Jonathan Amos, BBC Science Correspondent 9/14/20

It's an extraordinary possibility - the idea that living organisms are floating in the clouds of Planet Venus. But this is what astronomers are now considering after detecting a gas in the atmosphere they can't explain.

That gas is phosphine - a molecule made up of one phosphorus atom and three hydrogen atoms.

On Earth, phosphine is associated with life, with microbes living in the guts of animals like penguins, or in oxygen-poor environments such as swamps.

So why is this gas there, 50km up from the planet's surface? Prof Jane Greaves, from Cardiff University, UK and colleagues are asking just this question.

They've published a paper in the journal *Nature Astronomy* detailing their observations of phosphine, as well as the investigations they've made to try to show this molecule could have a natural, non-biological origin.

But for the moment, they're stumped - as they tell the BBC's *Sky At Night* program.

"Through my whole career I have been interested in the search for life elsewhere in the Universe, so I'm just blown away that this is even possible," Prof Greaves said. "But, yes, we are genuinely encouraging other people to tell us what we might have missed. Our paper and data are open access; this is how science works."

What exactly has the team detected? Prof Greaves' team first identified phosphine at Venus using the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope in Hawaii, and then confirmed its presence using the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array in Chile.

Why is this so interesting? Venus is not at the top of the list when thinking of life elsewhere in our Solar System. Compared to Earth, it's a hellhole. With 96% of the atmosphere made up of carbon dioxide, it has experienced a runaway greenhouse effect. Surface temperatures are like those in a pizza oven - over 400C.

Space probes that have landed on the planet have survived just minutes before breaking down. And yet, go 50km up and it's actually "shirtsleeves conditions". So, if there really is life on Venus, this is exactly where we might expect to find it.

Why should we be skeptical? The clouds. They're thick and they're mainly composed (75-95%) of sulphuric acid, which is catastrophic for the cellular structures that make up living organisms on Earth.

Dr William Bains, who's affiliated to the Massachu-





sets Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US, is a biochemist on the team. He's studied various combinations of different compounds expected to be on Venus; he's examined whether volcanoes, lightning and even meteorites could play a role in making PH<sub>3</sub> - and all of the chemical reactions he's investigated, he says, are 10,000 times too weak to produce the amount of phosphine that's been observed.

To survive the sulphuric acid, Dr Bains believes, airborne Venusian microbes would either have to use some unknown, radically different biochemistry, or evolve a kind of armor.

"In principle, a more water-loving life could hide itself away inside a protective shell of some sorts inside the sulphuric acid droplets," he told Sky At Night. "We're talking bacteria surrounding themselves by something tougher than Teflon and completely sealing themselves in. But then how do they eat? How do they exchange gases? It's a real paradox."

What's been the reaction? Cautious and intrigued. The team emphatically is not claiming to have found life on Venus, only that the idea needs to be further explored as scientists also hunt down any overlooked geological or abiotic chemical pathways to phosphine.

Oxford University's Dr Colin Wilson worked on the European Space Agency's Venus Express probe (2006-2014), and is a leading figure in the development of a new mission concept called EnVision. He said Prof Greaves' observations would spur a new wave of research.

"It's really exciting and will lead to new discoveries - even if the original phosphine detection were to turn out to be a spectroscopic misinterpretation, which I don't think it will. I think that life in Venus' clouds today is so unlikely that we'll find other chemical pathways of creating phosphine in the atmosphere - but we'll discover lots of interesting things in this search," he told BBC News.

How can the question be resolved? By sending a probe to investigate specifically the atmosphere of Venus.

The US space agency (Nasa) asked scientists recently to sketch the design for a potential flagship mission in the 2030s. Flagships are the most capable - and most expensive - ventures undertaken by Nasa. This particular concept proposed an aerobot, or instrumented balloon, to travel through the clouds of Venus.

"The Russians did this with their Vega balloon (in 1985)," said team-member Prof Sara Seager from MIT. "It was coated with Teflon to protect it from sulphuric acid and floated around for a couple of days, making measurements.

"We could definitely go make some in-situ measure-

ments. We could concentrate the droplets and measure their properties. We could even bring a microscope along and try to look for life itself."

## **STRANGER THINGS 4 RESUMES**

by Brianna Chambers, WSB-TV 2: Atlanta, 10/03/20

With October underway, the approach of the Halloween holiday means spooky season is underway. And what's spookier than odd and inexplicable things? Netflix's hit show *Stranger Things* paused production earlier on in the coronavirus pandemic, but filming appears to be back in action.

The official Twitter account for the show posted an image October 1 suggesting that the cast and crew had been filming scenes. Text says, "Meanwhile in the upside down..." and features an electronic clapboard with "Roll 9, Scene 8.19, Take 79" and a series of zeroes.

A teaser video posted on the account on Valentine's Day showed the series storyline will expand outside of Hawkins and into Russia.

In another twist, David Harbour returns as Chief Hopper despite indications that he died at season 3's end.

As the season closed, one scene showed Russian soldiers walking past a prisoner's cell in some sort of facility, when one said "No, not the American." At the time, it wasn't clear who they might have been talking about, although fans had their fair share of guesses.

Matt and Ross Duffer, the creators of the series, confirmed in February that *Stranger Things* would return for a fourth season and revealed more details about the mysterious "American," saying:

"We're excited to officially confirm that production on *Stranger Things 4* is now underway — and even more excited to announce the return of Hopper. Although it's not all good news for our 'American'; he is imprisoned far from home in the snowy wasteland of Kamchatka, where he will face dangers both human...and other. Meanwhile, back in the states, a new horror is beginning to surface, something long buried, something that connects everything..."

*Stranger Things 4* originally began shooting back in February in Lithuania was also set to start shooting in New Mexico and Atlanta. It was recently reported that production was to start back up at the end of September, and the Twitter post has validated that claim.

Although filming was at a stand-still, the writing staff did still find ways to be proactive during quarantine, as they actually completed all of the scripts for the season during the shutdown. This represents a change in the show's typical creative process, which has already attracted notice from the show's stars.

The cast and crew, of course, understood that shutting down was the best course of action. But cast member Finn Wolfhard took the news a bit hard since production was moving along well before shooting was halted. Still, his co-star, Joe Keery, believes the delay could be good for

creators Matt and Ross Duffer, as they would have additional time to refine their vision.

That vision is still a bit unclear at this point, given that most plot details have been kept under wraps. Harbour himself has also talked up the season, comparing it to *Indiana Jones* and revealing that we'll learn more about his fan-favorite sheriff.

While a release date for the new season has not yet been announced, the Duffer brothers said fans can expect season four to be the "biggest and most frightening season yet. We cannot wait for everyone to see more. In the meantime, pray for the American."

## **MANDALORIAN SEASON 2 THIS MONTH**

*The Mandalorian* season 2 release date on Disney+ has been confirmed as October 30. Despite the ongoing public health crisis, the second season of the *Star Wars* TV show created by Jon Favreau finished filming before everything shut down earlier this year, reported *techradar.com* in mid-September.

Numerous characters from a galaxy far, far away are set to appear this season, including a key character from *The Clone Wars* animated series and a long-time favorite from the *Star Wars* movies. We expect to learn more about Baby Yoda and his homeworld, too, as well as the mysterious Darksaber revealed in the first season's finale.

While the cast members featured naturally remain tight-lipped about the destinies of their characters, Carl Weathers told EW that we see him [Greef Karga] in a different light and a side of him you didn't see last time." Giancarlo Esposito, likewise, hinted that Moff Gideon "has access to all of this great technology at his fingertips, and he knows how to use it."

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, legendary bounty hunter Boba Fett will appear in *The Mandalorian* season 2, this time played by Temuera Morrison, who previously played Jango Fett in *Episode 2: Attack of the Clones*. It will be a guest-starring role, apparently, but this presumably means Boba Fett has escaped his fate in the Sarlacc Pit in *Return of the Jedi*.

Timothy Olyphant, famous for his roles in *Deadwood* and *Justified*, will also appear in season 2 based on a THR report. According to a report by *Slashfilm*, Olyphant will wear Boba Fett's armor in the second season, but he'll actually be playing a *Star Wars* character called Cobb Vanth. Created for Chuck Wendig's *Aftermath Star Wars* novels, the character is apparently a sheriff-type of a small Tatooine location called Freetown. The books suggested he was wearing Fett's armor, and surely this sets him up for an encounter with the bounty hunter himself.

Rosario Dawson will reportedly play *The Clone Wars* favorite Ahsoka Tano, which mark the character's first appearance in live-action. *Variety*, too, confirmed the report, saying it's a guest-starring role. Dawson exclaimed, "That's not confirmed yet, but when that happens I will be very happy."

*Aliens* and *Terminator*'s Michael Biehn is reportedly part of *The Mandalorian* season 2 cast, too, possibly playing a bounty hunter (via *The Hollywood Reporter*).

Everything about the season 1 finale suggests that *The Mandalorian* season 2 will focus on the search for "the Child" – aka Baby Yoda's – home. During the season 1 finale, the Mandalorian Armorer on Nevarro says that because Baby Yoda is a foundling (and therefore probably not, as previously speculated, a clone), "By creed, it is in your care." She then adds that, "You have no choice, you must reunite it with its own kind."

Unfortunately for Mando, however, the Armorer didn't have any information on where he might find them: "This you must determine," she teases.

In an earnings call, Disney's Bob Iger hinted at more characters being introduced in *The Mandalorian* season 2, with possible spin-offs being set up. He teased it as, "more coming from *The Mandalorian* thereafter, including the possibility of infusing it with more characters and the possibility of taking those characters in their own direction in terms of series."

*The Mandalorian* season 3, too, appears to be in the works already. *Variety* confirmed that Jon Favreau is deep into writing season 3, with Lucasfilm's art department beginning work on the next set of episodes already.

Despite being the creator and main writer of *The Mandalorian* season one, *Iron Man* director Favreau didn't direct a single episode. "I didn't get a chance the last time around because I was doing *Lion King*," Favreau mentioned to EW. "So I'll step in for one of them."

Favreau explained that the show's scope and storytelling remit will expand this time. "The stories become less isolated, yet each episode has its own flavor, and hopefully we're bringing a lot more scope to the show."

Other directors confirmed for season 2 are Peyton Reed (*Ant-Man*) and Robert Rodriguez (*Sin City*). Dave Filoni and Rick Famuyiwa also return to direct from season 1, along with actor Carl Weathers. It's recently been confirmed that Bryce Dallas Howard also will return to direct an episode of *The Mandalorian* season 2.

## **VILLENEUVE'S DUNE MOVED TO 2021**

The spice isn't flowing quite yet. *Collider* is reporting that Denis Villeneuve's adaptation of *Dune* has been postponed to October 2021, making it the latest film to see a delay because of the novel coronavirus pandemic, reported *iO9.Gizmo.com* in early October.

*Dune* has been moved from December 18, 2020, to October 1, 2021, about 10 months after its initially planned release date. This comes after Warner Bros. shifted *Wonder Woman 1984* to December 25, which led to speculation that *Dune* would eventually follow suit.

It's not surprising that *Dune*, based on the groundbreaking sci-fi novel by Frank Herbert, is likely moving its release date, as the entire movie industry has seen countless changes and delays because of the pandemic.

Most recently, MGM chose to delay the release of *No Time to Die* to April 2021, and Robert Zemeckis' *The Witches* was moved from theaters to streaming on HBO Max in time for Halloween. In addition, Cineworld announced that more than 525 of its Regal movie theaters would once again close in the United States, citing a lack of new movies to premiere.

If the reports are correct, *Dune* will now arrive next October, though that could move again because of the ongoing pandemic.

## **GAME OF THRONES PREQUEL CASTS KING VISERYS TARGARYEN**

The website io9.Gizmodo.com is reporting a new, significant update from *House of the Dragon*, HBO's upcoming spinoff series set 300 years before the events of *Game of Thrones*. Out of nowhere in early October, here's a big chunk o' casting news: Paddy Considine is set to play King Viserys Targaryen.

Considine, a veteran character actor and HBO favorite who's currently appearing in *The Third Day* and also had a key role in *The Outsider*, has also popped up in movies like *The Girl With All the Gifts*, *The World's End*, *Hot Fuzz*, and *In America*. News of his casting in *House of the Dragon* comes straight from HBO, which describes the character thusly: "King Viserys Targaryen...was chosen by the lords of Westeros to succeed the Old King, Jaehaerys Targaryen, at the Great Council at Harrenhal. A warm, kind, and decent man, Viserys only wishes to carry forward his grandfather's legacy, but as we've learned from *Game of Thrones*, good men do not necessarily make for great kings."

Considine is the first major casting news for *House of the Dragon*, which will be based on George RR Martin's 2018 book *Fire & Blood*, with House Targaryen – ancestors of the Mother of Dragons herself, Daenerys in *Game of Thrones* – at its center. The series is co-created by Martin and Ryan Condal, with Condal and Emmy-winning *Game of Thrones* director Miguel Sapochnik sharing showrunning duties. *House of the Dragon*'s not slated to hit HBO until 2022.

## **VIKANDER HOPES TO BEGIN NEW TOMB RAIDER NEXT YEAR**

In 2018, Alicia Vikander took a turn as Lara Croft, the explorin', double-gun shootin' video game protagonist turned movie heroine. After that, a sequel was announced, but with the pandemic messing up plans for everything, it's not been clear if or when it would proceed.

In early October, Vikander appeared on *Good Morning America* to discuss her upcoming Amazon film, *The Glorias*, and in doing so she shared a bit of information about the status of the upcoming *Tomb Raider* film, re-

ported io9.Gizmodo.com.

"The plan was for us to start making one this year, of course due to the [pandemic] situation, that's now very different," Vikander said, as transcribed by *Entertainment Weekly*. "We're still in discussions about it, so I hope we can probably get to it next year."

*Tomb Raider 2* originally was slated for March 19, 2021, but currently has no firm release date.

## **STARGIRL GETS SECOND SEASON**

Since it is not known when production can start on *Stargirl* season 2 due the pandemic, the show may be held for a Fall 2021 premiere, as it is not on The CW schedule for January 2021 and the network already has a fairly full roster for mid-season replacement series, including *Supergirl* and *Legends of Tomorrow*. While it might be possible for *Stargirl* season 2 to be rolled out in that time frame, it seems more likely that it will be saved for a big premiere in a prominent time slot in the Fall 2021 line-up, given how popular the series has proven for The CW, reported screenrant.com in mid-August.

*Stargirl* proved so popular that The CW, who originally opted to air it as a summer replacement series along with an edited edition of DC Universe's *Swamp Thing*, arranged to be the sole distributor of the series starting with season 2. This move has worried some fans, who fear it has dealt another blow to the already endangered DC Universe streaming service or that *Stargirl* will see its budget cut. It is too early to tell one way or the other what effect the change in networks may yield, but it should be noted that most agree that *Supergirl*'s jump from CBS to The CW after one season had relatively little effect on the show's quality.

Based on the *Stars and STRIPE* comics of Lee Moder and Geoff Johns (who based the character of Courtney Whitmore on his sister), *Stargirl* told the story of one teenage girl's search for identity as she embraced a long-neglected legacy of heroism. Bucking the deconstructionist bend of shows like *The Boys*, *Stargirl* was earnest and optimistic. This won *Stargirl* the adoration of a loyal audience, earning it a 91% Fresh rating with critics and an 81% positive fan rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

The finale of *Stargirl* season 1 opened many avenues for future storylines. In the wake of the Injustice Society's defeat, Courtney Whitmore's biggest challenge may lie in helping her teammates keep it together in the face of their own traumas.

The fate of the Injustice Society seems equally uncertain. While most of the team died in their battle with *Stargirl* and her allies, The Gambler was able to make his escape. It's unclear if Tigress or Sportsmaster escaped with their lives before Dragon King's mind-control device was blown up, but Shiv was shown to have escaped and to have armed herself with the Eclipso diamond; an artifact of great power from the comics. It seems likely Shiv will try and form her own Society with the other surviv-

ing children of the original Injustice Society members.

The finale also introduced an interesting wild card in the form of The Shade, who was shown to be watching the news of the Injustice Society's defeat and muttering "Oh, Jordan. I told you it was folly," to himself. While not a hero, The Shade did serve a mentor role to the seventh Starman, Jack Knight, in the 1994 *Starman* comic series.

## BUBONI-VIRTUAL CON 2020 GOES WELL

Since a physical convention was not possible this August, a smaller Bubonicon committee created "Buboni-Virtual Con 2020," which ran 10:00 am-7:45 pm Saturday, August 29, on Bubonicon's Facebook page and on YouTube. Three live panels also allowed viewers to sign in to Zoom sessions.

The one-day event, co-managed by Craig Chrissinger, Jessica Coyle and Mandy Self, received coverage from the *Albuquerque Journal*, the *Weekly Alibi*, *ABQ: The Magazine's* weekly email and Page One Books' August email newsletter. During the actual day, posted videos had 35-80 viewers, but there have been many more views of various program events in the past month.

Buboni-Virtual Con 2020 co-Guests of Honor were Becky Chambers and Keith R.A. DeCandido, with Artist Guest Chaz Kemp, and a last-minute surprise Science Guest. There were three pre-recorded readings from DeCandido, Chambers and Connie Willis, plus a live Comics Workshop from 7000 BC, an art demonstration from Peri Charlifu, five panel discussions, the Green Slime Awards, and a live Closing Ceremony.

Bubonicon 2020 donated \$725 to non-profit organizations. The Roadrunner Food Bank received \$190, World Central Kitchen received \$50, No Kid Hungry received \$50, Meals on Wheels received \$50, Direct Relief received \$50, the American Red Cross received \$50, Feeding America received \$50, Gavi: The Vaccine Alliance received \$50, KRQE Masks for Kids received \$25, NAACP Empowerment Programs received \$50, New Mexico PBS received \$60, and the Locus SF Foundation received \$50.

While there was no Art Show, a list of Bubonicon artists with links to their websites was put on the Bubonicon website and posted on the con's Facebook page. That information also was plugged on Twitter and during the "A Style of Your Own: Developing Your Signature Art Style" panel.

There were a few technical issues, but overall it went about as smoothly as possible for a first-time volunteer effort. Mandy Self proved a technical wizard, and even learned on-the-fly some video editing skills. She also was able to wrangle a science talk from the Air Force Research Laboratory and engineer Rachel Delaney.

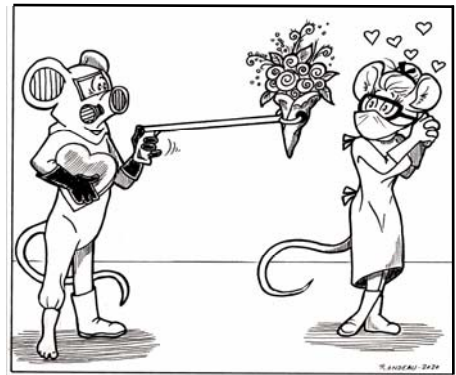
All in all, the con went very well thanks to every individual who pitched in! So, a tip of the con-com's hats to everyone who contributed their time & efforts!

Assuming that a safe and effective vaccine is availa-

ble by the end of January 2021 – and the state's restriction on the maximum size of gatherings increases to at least 500 people – then Bubonicon 52: Take Two should be taking place August 20-22, 2021, at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown (Louisiana & I-40), with Guests of Honor Keith R.A. DeCandido, Toastmaster A. Lee Martinez, and Guest Artist Chaz Kemp. Invitations to a second co-GoH have gone out, and the committee is waiting for responses.

Those 2021 dates are a week early due to the Washington, DC Worldcon being on our usual weekend. And they are a week after the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Mexico Comic Expo.

As usual, suggestions/program ideas for the next Bubonicon are being taken at [bubonicon@gmail.com](mailto:bubonicon@gmail.com).



## LIFE DOESN'T FIND A WAY: *JW: DOMINION MOVES TO 2022*

Don't unearth that amber just yet.

As movie studios shift their 2020 releases into 2021, the films scheduled for 2021 have been slowly moving into 2022. That happened October 5 with films like *The Batman* and now it's happened with the new *Jurassic Park* film, reports [i09.gizmodo.com](http://i09.gizmodo.com).

*Jurassic World: Dominion*, the third film in the new *Jurassic* trilogy, had been scheduled for release June 11, 2021, since 2018. However, it has now been moved to June 10, 2022.

Directed by Colin Trevorrow, *Dominion* was filming before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, shut down for several months, and was one of the first movies back up and filming with new safety protocols.

And then on October 7, Deadline.com reported that Trevorrow had announced on Twitter that *Dominion* will halt for two weeks after some positive COVID tests turned up. "Woke up to the news we had a few positive Coronavirus tests on *Jurassic World: Dominion*. All tested negative shortly after, but due to our safety protocols, we're going to pause for two weeks. Back soon."

Universal weighed in shortly afterward in a statement, "Late last night, we were informed that the *Jurassic World: Dominion* production experienced a small amount of positive tests for COVID-19. Even though subsequent tests proved negative this morning, due to our rigid protocols and to ensure that the safety and well-being of our entire cast and crew is paramount at all times, those who initially tested positive are currently self-isolating, as are those who they have come into contact with. As a result

filming has been temporarily paused and will resume in accordance with established safety guidelines.”

Even with the delay, it certainly seemed like everyone involved was hoping to hit that long-in-place 2021 release date.

But these movie release dates have been falling like dominos. One falls, and then everything after it has to move. This particular move is likely the result of the new James Bond film, *No Time to Die*, moving from November to April 2021. Because of that, Universal moved its tentpole, *Fast and Furious 9*, back from April to May 28, 2021. And since *Jurassic World* is the same studio at *F9*, and coming only a few weeks later, surely Universal didn't want to step on its own toes. Hence the move.

On the plus side, the new release date gave us an awesome new poster. And just look at those names at the top – Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum, Bryce Dallas Howard, Sam Neill, Chris Pratt, BD Wong, Campbell Scott, and others. A thing of beauty. Also this statement from director Trevorrow on Twitter:

“For the past three months, I've worked with an extraordinary cast and crew on a film we can't wait to share with the world. Even though we'll have to wait a bit longer, it will all be worth it. Let's stay healthy and take care of each other until then.”

That's bad news, but don't forget that *Jurassic Park* fans have a very good, very gory new entry into the franchise available right now. It's on Netflix and is called *Jurassic World: Camp Cretaceous*. Yes, it's a cartoon, but it's also made in conjunction with all the new films.

## LATEST WARNER RELEASE SHAKEUPS

by Charles Pulliam-Moore, [io9.gizmodo.com](https://io9.gizmodo.com) 10/06/20

As this absolute dumpster fire of a year draws to a close, it can safely be said that the current hottest trend in Hollywood is studios stepping up to the microphone to state the blindingly obvious: basically all of their projected movie release dates are changing around because the pandemic's brought productions to a halt and it's still unclear when it'll be safe to go to theaters.

By pushing *Dune*'s release date back from December 18 of this year to October 1, 2021, Warner Bros. created something of a problem for itself, as October 1 was originally meant to be the day Matt Reeves' *The Batman* hit theaters. According to the *Hollywood Reporter*, the studio has now resolved to push *The Batman* all the way back to March 4, 2022.

*The Batman* won't be the studio's only comic book movie fans have to wait a bit longer to see than originally anticipated, as *The Flash* has now been bumped to November 4, 2022 (originally June 3, 2022); *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* has been bumped to June 2, 2023 (originally November 4, 2022); and *Black Adam*'s been moved off the calendar entirely. Interestingly, the premiere for Lana Wachowski's upcoming fourth installment in *The Matrix* franchise has been pushed up by a hair to Dec. 22, 2021

from April 1, 2022 – but all this is working on the assumption that things go according to Warner Bros.' carefully laid plans, which might not end up being the case.

Drastic as these delays might seem on paper, they make perfect sense given the degree to which the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the industry to its knees on multiple fronts, and there's no telling if and when things are going to get back to being anything like “normal.”

There isn't really all that much that the studios can do at this point other than to let the public know that these movies are all going to come out...eventually, but much of when these productions can truly kick off at a clip is simply out of the studios' hands.

## STUMPTOWN CANCELED DESPITE RENEWAL DUE TO COVID-19

ABC has canceled *Stumptown* despite previously renewing the show for a second season, reported *Variety* in mid-September after *Deadline.com* broke the news.

According to an individual with knowledge of the situation, due to timing and scheduling needs for the current season that have been impacted by the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, ABC opted not to move forward with the second season as planned. Studio ABC Signature will be shopping the series to other outlets.

Based on the graphic novel series from Oni Press of the same name, *Stumptown* starred Cobie Smulders as Dex Parios – a strong, assertive and sharp-witted veteran with a complicated love life, gambling debt and a brother to take care of in Portland, OR.

The series also starred Jake Johnson as Grey McConnell, Tantoo Cardinal as Sue Lynn Blackbird, Cole Sibus as Ansel Parios, and Adrian Martinez as Tookie, with Camryn Manheim as Lieutenant Cosgrove, and Michael Ealy as Detective Miles Hoffman.

*Stumptown* was created and executive produced by Jason Richman, along with co-showrunner and executive producer Matt Olmstead. Ruben Fleischer and David Bernad, Greg Rucka (author of the graphic novel series), Matthew Southworth and Justin Greenwood (illustrators of the graphic novel series) served as producers.

As a high-end drama, *Stumptown* already was among the most expensive second-year broadcast TV scripted series. Additionally, with elaborate stunts, extensive location shoots and romance, it is the type of series most impacted by COVID-related restrictions, limiting the kind of scenes the show could do and leading to significant budget increases.

One of the most anticipated new series of last season, *Stumptown* quickly developed strong fan following and emerged as a powerhouse in digital and delayed viewing.

The one-hour drama is the latest series to get its renewal reversed as the pandemic continues to wreak havoc on the entertainment industry and physical production. Netflix previously pulled the plug on both *The Society*



and *I Am Not Okay With This* back in August, while the truTV series *I'm Sorry* was also scrapped despite a renewal. Amazon pulled the plug on its *Cortes y Moctezuma* miniseries in early September as production was unable to resume due to COVID-19.

ABC renewed the majority of its scripted lineup back in May while also picking up few new shows for the 2020-2021 season. The David E. Kelley crime drama *Big Sky* has been ordered to series, as has the multi-cam comedy *Call Your Mother* starring Kyra Sedgwick. And in mid-September, the Katey Sagal-led drama *Rebel* was picked up to series.

## FOR REAL, GRR MARTIN IS FINISHING *WINDS OF WINTER*

by Christopher Rosen, Vanity Fair 08/17/20

Not even the Coronavirus pandemic can stop George RR Martin from... announcing his intentions to eventually finish *The Winds of Winter*.

The *Game of Thrones* author revealed in his latest blog post that the long-delayed completion of the next installment in the *Song of Ice and Fire* franchise is now back on his to-do list.

"I am back in my fortress of solitude again, my isolated mountain cabin," Martin wrote on his blog, adding, "which means I am back in Westeros again, once more moving ahead with *WINDS OF WINTER*."

Martin, whose most recent *Song of Ice and Fire* book, *A Dance of Dragons*, came out in 2011, has been living in an "isolated mountain cabin," he wrote, with a revolving staff of assistants.

"My life up here is very boring, it must be said," he wrote. "Truth be told, I hardly can be said to have a life. I have one assistant with me at all times (minions, I call them). The assistants do two-week shifts, and have to stay in quarantine at home before starting a shift. Every morning I wake up and go straight to the computer, where my minion brings me coffee (I am utterly useless and incoherent without my morning coffee) and juice, and sometimes a light breakfast. Then I start to write. Sometimes I stay at it until dark. Other days I break off in late afternoon to answer emails or return urgent phone calls. My assistant brings me food and drink from time to time. When I finally break off for the day, usually around sunset, there's dinner. Then we watch television or screen a movie. The Wi-Fi sucks up on the mountain, though, so the choices are limited. Some nights I read instead. I always read a bit before going to sleep; when a book grabs hold of me, I may read half the night, but that's rare."

Martin added that he has stayed relatively secluded since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, and that "weeks and months go by when I never leave the cabin, or see another human being except whoever is on duty that week. I lose track of what day it is, what week it is, what month it is. The time seems to go by very fast. It is now

August, and I don't know what happened to July."

But, he wrote, the solitude is "good for the writing."

If the famed author's existence sounds a bit spartan, perhaps he has heeded his own previous words. Last year in May, Martin goosed fan interest in the possibility that he would actually complete *The Winds of Winter* – which, lest we forget, is actually planned as the penultimate book in the *Song and Ice and Fire* saga; the seventh and final tome will be called *A Dream of Spring* – by giving himself an ultimatum to have the finished manuscript in his hands by summer 2020. If that didn't happen, he wrote, "You have here my formal written permission to imprison me in a small cabin on White Island, overlooking that lake of sulfuric acid, until I'm done. Just so long as the acrid fumes do not screw up my old DOS word processor, I'll be fine."

Presumably, his current location is low enough on acrid fumes that he should be able to bang out a few chapters before next year.

## LEVIATHAN FALLS IS FINAL BOOK OF *THE EXPANSE* SERIES

During a livestream September 16, Orbit Books officially announced the title and cover for the final installment of James S.A. Corey's science fiction series, *The Expanse: Leviathan Falls*, which will hit stores sometime in 2021, reported Tor.com.

The novel is a long time coming – Corey (the pen name for authors Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck) published the first *Expanse* novel, *Leviathan Wakes*, back in 2011, and followed it up yearly (or nearly so) with new installments: *Caliban's War*, *Abaddon's Gate*, *Cibola Burn*, *Nemesis Games*, *Babylon's Ashes*, *Persepolis Rising*, and *Tiamat's Wrath*. That last novel hit stores last year, and fans have been waiting to find out how the series will come to an end. Now, we'll find out in 2021 with *Leviathan Falls*.

Set in the distant future in an inhabited solar system split between three major factions (Earth, Mars, and the Asteroid Belt / Outer planets), *Leviathan Wakes* follows the crew of an ice hauler – Captain James Holden, XO Naomi Nagata, pilot Alex Kamal, and engineer Amos Burton – after they encounter a ship in distress. A private company unleashes an alien substance known as the Protomolecule, plunging the system's various factions into a major conflict as they vie for power.

The substance is essentially a technology that can replicate itself and manipulate matter, and it eventually links



our solar system to a vast network of other gates and habitable planets, allowing humanity to expand into the galaxy. In the latest pair of novels, Abraham and Franck jump decades into the future, where a lost Martian task force returns – having used the Protomolecule to create some advanced technologies and set up a fascist civilization – and are bent on creating an interstellar empire.

In 2014, the Alcon Entertainment picked up the rights to adapt the series, and broadcast it on the Syfy Channel. The series lasted for three seasons on the network before it was eventually canceled, only to be picked up by Amazon for its streaming video platform, Prime Video. It debuted a fourth season last year, and renewed the show for a fifth season, which has yet to be released.

Orbit didn't release any synopsis for the book, but Abraham and Franck did explain that the novel will provide a definitive ending for the series.

During the livestream, Abraham and Franck answered a handful of reader questions. In addition to *Leviathan Falls*, they plan to have another novella that'll come out after that final book, which will provide a "nice grace note" to some hanging threads from the series. Abraham noted that he's been waiting to write the story for "years."

Franck explained that they don't plan to write any more novels in the world, but that Alcon could always put together another *Expanse*-related project for television.

After *The Expanse*, they do have some other projects in the works: A new, three-book series. They haven't begun working on it just yet, but with *The Expanse* coming to a close, they'll be devoting their attention to that shortly. "It's a very different project [from *The Expanse*]," Abraham said. Where *The Expanse* drew its inspiration from authors like Larry Niven and Alfred Bester, "the new ones will be much more Frank Herbert."

*Leviathan Falls* will hit stores sometime in 2021.

## REVIEWS ROUND-UP

***Firefly: The Ghost Machine (Firefly Book 3)* by James Lovegrove, 2020 Titan Books, hc \$24.95, 336 pages.**

**Review by Craig Chrissinger**

*The Ghost Machine* is the third book that James Lovegrove has done in the *Firefly* universe aboard *Serenity*, and it is obvious from the great job he does with the familiar crew and their dialog that he has a sincere love for the short-lived TV show.

This book is set between the end of the *Firefly* series and the movie *Serenity*, so Inara and Book both have left the ship. Their presence is missed by each of the remaining characters, with engineer Kaylee comparing them to the soul and rudder of the renegade crew.

In this novel, the *Serenity* crew has been hired by Badger to transport a "technical apparatus" from the frontier world of Canterbury, but Captain Malcolm Reynolds gets a bad feeling when he sees the Blue Sun logo on the

object's flightcase – especially with the area around the planet swarming with Alliance spacecraft. After an unintended gun fight and against Mal's wishes, Jayne sneaks the case aboard the ship and hides it in his bunk.

And that's where the mischief begins. The Blue Sun device was created to subdue angry crowds and mobs by causing vivid hallucinations of deep desires. Mal dreams of a life married to Inara and having two kids. Kaylee is working with her father in a booming spacecraft repair shop. Jayne is back on the Cobb homestead with his brother and mother. Wash is at the controls of a fancy cruiser and building a 'verse-spanning business empire with Zoe. And Simon is at his family's mansion with a sane and reasonable River, and secretly dating repair-woman Kaylee.

While their bodies lie in deep catatonic states, *Serenity* is on a crash course with a barren moon; and everybody's daydreams turn into nightmares. Under the influence of a sedative, only River might save them all from a horrible death.

As in *Big Damn Hero* and *The Magnificent Nine*, Lovegrove creates a story that reads and feels like a possible *Firefly* episode. This novel is entertaining and true to the Browncoat universe, and allows the reader to have one more adventure with the *Serenity* crew. For all fans of *Firefly*, *The Ghost Machine* is gorramn shiny!

***Kellogg's Mermaid Waffles: Blue Raspberry, serving size 1 waffle, 6 waffles in box.***

**Review by Dinosaur Jim (Slime Time Puppet Players)**

Right about the time of Buboni-Virtual Con 2020, Kellogg's announced they were producing three flavors of waffles obviously aimed at children. And on description alone, we included them among the Weird Foods of the Pandemic, and gave them a Green Slime Award. Not having tasted them, it might have been a premature opinion. Turns out, it was correct.

The three waffle products are Unicorn Waffles with a "cotton candy" flavor, Birthday Cake Waffles with "yellow cake and rainbow sprinkles," and the breakfast reviewed here – Mermaid Waffles with "blue raspberry" flavor.

The Mermaid Waffles are teal in color – produced from Blue #1 – and are eight-sided and thicker than Kellogg's Eggo waffles. Sadly, if there is raspberry in them, it's such a small amount that the box just lists "natural and artificial flavor." And there's the rub. They just don't really taste like blue raspberry. Also everyone knows, enough food color to produce a teal dough changes its texture, and also its flavor.

The teal waffles will brown on the edges if left in a toaster oven long enough, but still don't seem quite toasted all the way through. Possibly that's because of their thickness.

They also just don't taste like much. I tried them plain – no real raspberry flavor. I tried them with butter. Still nothing. And with a blackberry jam, they just taste

like...jam. The best way to make them okay for a week-end breakfast is to bury them in melted butter, and then top them with any kind of syrup. Maple syrup, raspberry syrup, blueberry syrup – any will do.

Another point against them is the suggested serving size. Kellogg's says one waffle. While that's probably enough for a small child, but a hungry teenager or an adult probably will want two waffles – even though that's more breakfast than two Eggo waffles. So, for a dinosaur like me, that means the box only has three morning meals. With bacon, of course. Gotta have some meat on the side.

The best part of the Mermaid Waffles may be the odd trivia on the back of the box: "Throughout history, sailors often mistook manatees for mermaids. Tales say the aquamarine gems are made from mermaid tears. According to legend, a kiss from a mermaid gives the ability to breathe under water!" The mermaid kisses bit was new to me.

Kellogg's says online that these teal waffles will "help bring warmth and smiles to fast-paced, busy mornings." I beg to differ.

They are pretty disappointing, and the Mermaid Waffles are the only ones I could even consider buying and eating for this review. You're better off sticking with regular Eggo waffles if you want convenience. Or maybe just a bowl of bacon. Dinosaur Jim gives it thumbs down.

***The Last Curtain Call: Haunted Home Renovation Book 8* by Juliet Blackwell, 2020 Berkley, mmpb \$7.99, 336 pages.**

**Review by Jessica Coyle**

*The Last Curtain Call* is the eighth book in Juliet Blackwell's *Haunted Home Renovation* series. These books follow Mel Turner, a historic home renovator who also has the ability to see ghosts. Her work in old homes often gives her the opportunity to right the wrongs against these ghosts while they were among the living.

In this book, Mel's company is bidding to restore the historic Crockett Theatre, a decrepit Art Deco movie house in San Francisco that is known for being haunted. In addition to the ghosts at the theatre, Mel has to deal

with evicting squatters that are living in the building. When one of the squatters is murdered, Mel has to solve this in addition to trying to calm the Crockett's ghosts.

I always enjoy Juliet Blackwell's books, which blend humor with mystery and a lot of heart. Mel Turner is a relatable and well-developed character that the reader feels compelled to root for.



While I feel that Blackwell does an excellent job getting a new reader up to speed at the beginning of this book, I suggest you do yourself a favor and start at the beginning of this lovely series with *If Walls Could Talk*.

## **ASFS MEETING REPORTS — JULY 2020: DARYNDA JONES VIRTUAL**

Nineteen of us came together in a Zoom session to hear Portales author Darynda Jones (delayed from April) talk about her new book, *A Bad Day for Sunshine*, and other projects - plus read a section of the book (with assistance from Craig Chrissinger).

Jones said that *Sunshine Vicram* is planned as a trilogy, and has already been optioned by Hollywood as a potential TV show. "Sunshine is the heroine, and I named her after the brand of a paper pad that was in front of me."

Explaining the origin of the book, she said, "This was going to be more a straight mystery with a touch of paranormal. Basically, it's the *Gilmore Girls* meet *Fargo*. I pretty much made up the pitch on the spot. I kind of made it up as I went, and my editor wanted it to be in New Mexico. I came up with my own town - Del Sol, which is set in the Pecos. I really wanted a quirky town with a mother-daughter relationship and a mystery."

Jones also has two other projects which have been published - one is a *Charley Davidson* novella called *The Graveyard Shift*, which she says is Garrett Swopes' story. And then there's *Betwixt*, the first book in a planned *Betwixt & Between* trilogy. It came out in February as an independent publication and is part of a project of 13 female authors doing paranormal fiction.

"All the books by the 13 authors have older heroines, women in their forties," Jones said. "In mine, a divorcee has inherited a house in Salem, Massachusetts, from a total stranger. It's odd because she lives in Arizona, and has never been to Massachusetts. Well, she finds out she's a witch. I had so much fun writing it, and the book is getting good feedback."

Asked what she's working on now, Jones said she is finishing up book two of *Sunshine Vicram* and the second *Betwixt* novel (*Bewitched*), and then will work on another *Charley Davidson* novella.

She'd also like to write a zombie novel at some point. "I love zombie books and movies," she stated. "I want to write a zombie trilogy. And, yes, it will have romance."

Now that she's done some independent publishing, she's able to compare it to traditional publishing. "I love traditional publishing because they do everything," she said. "But it was interesting learning the Indie process, and I could see my sales numbers in real time. So, now I like both types of publishing."

Jones also enjoys audiobooks, and is hoping both *Betwixt* and *The Graveyard Shift* become available as audiobooks soon.



## AUGUST 2020: VIRTUAL MOVIE VIEWING

Our August meeting saw 20 people in a Zoom session (and 34 views on Facebook) watching a couple of shorts and then a 1950s creature feature movie from YouTube.

We started with the latest trailer for *Bill and Ted Face the Music*, and the Muppets with James Corden singing the Beatles' "With a Little Help from My Friends."

We then watched *The Monster of Piedras Blancas*, a 1959 B&W film about a lighthouse keeper who, concerned for the safety of his teenage daughter, leaves food out for a sea monster that lives in a nearby cave. Of course, it all backfires and townsfolk are killed... The monster was influenced by *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954), which producer Jack Kevan also worked on.

During the film, many people sent pithy, sarcastic and/or observational comments to each other through Zoom Chat (text). It was entertaining, and the best the club do under pandemic circumstances.

## SEPTEMBER 2020: ARLEN FELDMAN'S STORY

For September, we were able to have Arlen Feldman of Colorado Springs do a presentation on collecting/hoarding entitled "Spying on Nixon: Adventures Dealing with a Crazy Relative" on Zoom for 19 people.

Feldman's presentation with plenty of pictures focused on his cousin Stephen (once removed) who lived like a hoarder and collected hundreds of autographs. And, yes, Stephen regularly did go through Richard Nixon's trash.

"All the time I spend telling these stories is payback for dealing with this," said Feldman. "When I was a kid, he brought us stupid toys. So, we liked him even if our parents didn't."

Showing photos of Stephen's house and the collection of stuff, he remarked, "Sadly, I don't have pictures of the basement, which was the worst. It was like the Hoarders show where you have to make your way through a maze of narrow passages."

Feldman said that Stephen thought he could write about his experiences with the former President's trash. "My cousin tried to write a book on what he found in Nixon's trash. Of course, it was rejected by dozens of publishers."

Stephen's collection includes many autographed photos, magazine clippings, letters and envelopes. The bulk have gone to an auction house for potential sale.

## EDITOR NOTES THAT FIT THIS SPACE

• **WHAT A SPOOKY TIME**, and not just because it's October and Halloween is coming. No, it's because the Coronavirus pandemic has now been with us for seven months, and there's no real end in sight. Now even the President, his wife and several others have suffered from the virus. Reality has become more frightening than horror fiction.

New case numbers are going up again, and a safe, effec-

tive and affordable vaccine probably won't be here until sometime next year (as predicted way back in the early days of the plague). Will we be facing shutdown again in New Mexico? It's unknown, but if it happens it will be without Federal relief this time. There have been no stimulus packages or aid from Congress and the White House since August, and we may see no more negotiations until after November's general election. Sigh, c'mon politicians - people are suffering.

This Fall is really weird with no Balloon Fiesta, no physical Milehicon, and Halloween trick-or-treating being discouraged. And then sucky 2020 took Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Eddie Van Halen, Diana Rigg and Johnny Nash from us in a very short period. Seriously, where is the reset button on this year?

▪ **BUBONI-VIRTUAL CON 2020** was a different experience, but worth doing. Glad we could do something for everyone stuck at home. Behind-the-scenes, one day was plenty. Special thanks for Mandy P. Self, who turned out to be a tech wiz with Zoom sessions and video editing. She also made our 2020 Science Talk possible. We're debating right now about a short winter holiday virtual offering.

▪ **TEMPS ARE STILL WARM FOR OCTOBER**, and we desperately need some rain. Meanwhile wildfires continue to burn the West Coast & the Southwest, and hurricanes attack the East Coast. But, you know, there's no climate change. None.

▪ **SEPTEMBER MOSTLY CONSISTED** of helping Jessica with everyday tasks while she recovered from her September 1 carpal tunnel surgery. At first her right hand & wrist were quite swollen, but there's been slow improvement every day. We also were one of the neighborhoods that lost power during the September 8 windstorm. Electricity was out 37 hours, so we used bagged ice to save groceries in the fridge, and used candles & small LED lights to do anything after dark. We'd like to visit the Space Museum in Alamogordo, but are weighing that against the latest COVID-19 spike in cases.

▪ **I'VE BEEN READING** a lot of non-fiction & biographies lately, other than a *Firefly* novel and book group choices. *Vampira: Dark Goddess of Horror* by W. Scott Poole was interesting, though he had to deal with Naila Nurmi being mysterious - and not a lot of verified facts about her life exist. She was friends with James Dean, Marlon Brando and Orson Welles; and she ran a vintage store in West Hollywood after Ed Wood's *Plan Nine from Outer Space*. Poole uses Vampira to explore social & cultural attitudes of the '50s, but often repeats himself. *Step Right Up! I'm Gonna Scare the Pants Off America* by William Castle is a good read, especially when he talks about working with Joan Crawford and Vincent Price; and producing *Rosemary's Baby* for director Roman Polanski. With his gimmicks and ability to talk himself up for projects, he really was kind of like P.T. Barnum.

*The Only Pirate at the Party* by Lindsey Stirling shows the electronic violin player as a real person who is willing to share the good and the bad with readers. She was a nerdy child, she has an eating disorder, she struggles with dating, and she has stayed active in the Mormon faith. I also have skimmed through parts of *Vampira and Her Daughters: Women Horror Movie Hosts* by Robert Michael "Bobb" Cotter. It's amazing how many local TV channels had female horror hosts at one point or another. Some went one season while others were hosting movies and doing skits for years (like Penny Dreadful



on more than 100 cable TV stations in the Northeast). Of course, Elvira is covered as is *USA Up All Night's* Rhonda Shear. And I acquired Victoria Price's book about her father, *Vincent Price: A Daughter's Biography*. The text is fairly small and it's dense with details. I've skimmed it and have learned that Vincent was married three times, his 2nd wife and he were celebrity chefs, and he wasn't happy with the money he made doing the narration for Michael Jackson's "Thriller" - especially when the music video became very popular.

▪ ON TELEVISION, it's mostly been streaming experiences such as Netflix and Disney+. We're watching the reboot of *DuckTales* with David Tennant as Scrooge McDuck (DuckTales! Woo-oo!), and finished all of *Muppets Now*. On Netflix, we watched and enjoyed season 5 of *Lucifer*, and all of *Cursed* season 1. And we're amused by season 6 of *Schitt's Creek* and *The Great British Baking Show*. The CW broadcast *Dead Pixels*, a British sitcom about online gamers, and now is starting *Swamp Thing* from the streaming DC Universe. And CBS has offered up *Star Trek: Discovery* since network TV needs content. The third episode is definitely less grimdark than the first two now that Michael Burnham had joined the *USS Discovery*. Of course, the "Fall" season has been delayed, but we're hoping for the return of some of our favorite shows this month and in early 2021. Again, stupid pandemic. On the other hand, now we have time for *The Umbrella Academy*, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, *The Mandalorian* season 2, *Hap & Leonard*, *The Boys* season 2, and many movies and documentaries. Like we finally watched *Ex Machina*.

▪ PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU VOTE in November's General

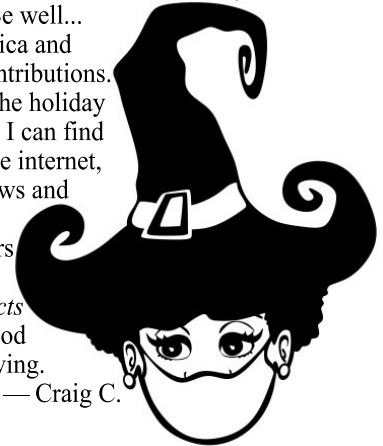
Election! Every American has a right to vote, and this is a crucial Election in the middle of a historic pandemic. Everyone has a voice - and your Vote is Your Voice, no matter your party or political beliefs. Make a plan to vote, whether by mail, at an early voting location, or on November 3rd. Do it!

▪ HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW MANY SONGS have the lyric "shine on" in them? I started thinking about that while listening to Van Halen's "Humans Being" (*Twister* soundtrack) after Eddie died. "Instant Karma (We All Shine On)" by John Lennon, "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" by Pink Floyd, "Shine On" by Humble Pie, "Let It Be" by the Beatles, and even "Midnight Special" by Creedance Clearwater Revival ("shine a light on me"). As Kaylee would say, "Shiny!"

▪ AS ALWAYS, DURING THE PANDEMIC: Wear a mask, wash your hands, maintain social distance, stay home when you can, and keep safe! Be well...

▪ THANK YOU to Jessica and Dinosaur Jim for their contributions. More stuff is needed for the holiday issue in December. Yeah, I can find news bits from all over the internet, but it's nice to have reviews and other musings from club members and other readers of this zine.

See you all for *SithFacts* in two months. Have a good Halloween and Thanksgiving. Take care & stay strong! — Craig C.



---

## Albuquerque SF Society

CLUB ADDRESS: PO Box 37257  
Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257

ASFACTS EDITOR: CRAIG CHRISSINGER  
cwcraig@nmia.com

**DELIVER TO:**