



# SITHFACTS 2020

## "STILL DEALING WITH THE PANDEMIC" DECEMBER ISSUE



### 2019 WORLD FANTASY WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The World Fantasy Awards winners for works published in 2019 were announced during the virtual World Fantasy 2020 (WFC) convention, held October 29-November 1, reported Locusmag.com.

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

The World Fantasy Awards winners are:

BEST NOVEL: *Queen of the Conquered* by Kacen Callender, BEST NOVELLA: *Silver in the Wood* by Emily Tesh, BEST SHORT FICTION: "Read After Burning" by Maria Dahvana Headley, BEST ANTHOLOGY: *New Suns: Original Speculative Fiction by People of Color* edited by Nisi Shawl, BEST COLLECTION: *Song for the Unraveling of the World* by Brian Evenson, BEST ARTIST: Kathleen Jennings, SPECIAL AWARD – PROFESSIONAL: Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, for *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*, and SPECIAL AWARD – NON-PROFESSIONAL: Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Laura E. Goodin & Esko Suoranta, for *Fafnir: Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*.

This year's judges were Gwenda Bond, Galen Dara, Michael Kelly, Victor LaValle, and Adam Roberts. For more information, see the WFC website.

### ASFS MEMBER LUNDGREN DIES

Vincent Lundgren, longtime member of the Albuquerque Science Fiction Society and Bubonicon attendee, died on November 9 after a blood clot entered his lungs. He was 49 years old.

His death was unexpected since he biked everywhere and seemed in better shape than most of his family, brother

Chad Lundgren, former editor of *ASFACTS*, reports. "According to Vincent's landlord (and friend) Frank, Vincent felt anxious and called 911 late Saturday, November 7. He collapsed and had to be put on a gurney.

"While on the gurney, Frank assured him he would lock up his apartment, and Vincent asked him to shut a window too – which if you know Vincent, is very like him," continued Chad. "He'd want the apartment to be securely locked. That may be the last thing he ever said, as the hospital said he did not have a pulse for around an hour, until he was put on life support."

According to doctors at the hospital, a blood clot lodged in Vincent's lungs, preventing his heart from beating. Vincent never regained consciousness. All tests showed no sign of brain activity, and he was legally declared dead on November 9. Per Vincent's wishes, one of his kidneys was donated.

Vincent was a staunch atheist who "treated everyone fairly," said Chad. "He had high-functioning autism and a job he enjoyed, working in IT at LifeROOTS – an organization that helps people with disabilities."

Born June 9, 1971, Vincent enjoyed science fiction, computers and computer games. At ASFS meetings, which may be the only in-person group to which he belonged, he often sat against the back wall with his bicycle. In virtual meetings this summer and fall, Vincent often forwarded links to websites that related to that month's topic or talk, and offered technical advice to those having issues with Zoom.

Another thing Chad remembers about Vincent was his "near eidetic memory for places. I mentioned going to a fellow fan's house for a movie screening and when he

### UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **December 11:** *Virtual Holiday Show & Tell* of PAN-demic foods, treasured decorations, and holiday outfits. Plus socializing and some film shorts.
- **January 8, 2021:** Virtual Group Book Discussion! What did you read in 2020 & would recommend?
- **February 12:** Unknown program at virtual meeting. Plus *ASFACTS* (Deadline Monday, Feb 8).
- **March 12:** Unknown, probably virtual. Possibly a guest presentation.
- **April 9:** Probably still virtual. Maybe a movie? For sure, the Spring *ASFACTS* (deadline Mon, April 5).
- **May 14:** Again, unknown. Maybe in-person?

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**Club Officers:** Jessica Coyle & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Harriet Engle, Moderator. Grant Kuck, alternator. Kris Kringle & Rudolph the Reindeer, Holiday Hosts. **Bubonicon 52: Take Two Chair:** Craig W. Chrissinger.

heard the address, he said, 'Oh yeah, that's an odd block, there is a police officer three doors down, and around the corner there's a couple that both work for the Sheriff's office.' When I went there, he was right."

He also enjoyed hiking, often in the Sandia Mountains. Since Vincent found cremation "logical," his ashes will be scattered in the mountains once the COVID-19 situation is better. Chad notes that with the worsening numbers of cases, the family decided to postpone the ceremony. "Certainly, if Vincent were alive, he would question traveling at this time," said Chad. "According to Frank, he lectured people on the bus without masks, which I find easy to believe."

Vincent was an advocate of the International Dark-Sky Association, "even paying for a light shade for his apartment porch light out of his own pocket," said Chad. In lieu of flowers, the family is instead suggesting people make a donation at [https://darksky.salsalabs.org/tribute\\_pmt\\_form/index.html](https://darksky.salsalabs.org/tribute_pmt_form/index.html).

Vincent is survived by father Steven; siblings Chad (and sister-in-law Karen), Nate, Isaac, Jeff, and Beverly (with brother-in-law Derek); as well as nieces Matilda, Joy and Bet, and nephew William.

## HOPKINSON NAMED 2021 GRAND MASTER

The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) has named Nalo Hopkinson the 37th recipient of the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award, reported [Locusmag.com](https://locusmag.com) at the beginning of December.

SFWA president Mary Robinette Kowal said, "I have loved Nalo Hopkinson's work since 1999 when I discovered her through the short story "Precious" in a Datlow/Windling anthology *Silver Birch, Blood Moon*. Each new piece continues to delight me and stretch me as a reader and makes me bolder as a writer.

"Naming Nalo as Grand Master recognizes not only her phenomenal writing but also her work as an educator who has shaped so many of the rising stars of modern SFF," Kowal continued.

Hopkinson, born in December 1960, is a Jamaican-born Canadian speculative fiction writer and editor. Since 2013, she has lived and taught in Riverside, CA. Her novels (*Brown Girl in the Ring, Midnight Robber, The Salt Roads, The New Moon's Arms*) and short stories such as those in her collection *Skin Folk* often draw on Caribbean history and language, and its traditions of oral and written storytelling.

The Grand Master Award, given for "lifetime achievement in science fiction and/or fantasy," will be presented at the virtual SFWA Nebula Conference to be held June 4-6, 2021. For more, see the SFWA website.



## SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, December 21, virtually in a Zoom chat session to discuss *Trail of Lightning: The Sixth World Book 1* by New Mexico's Rebecca Roanhorse. The group then meets virtually January 18, 2021, to talk about *The Sky Is Yours* by Chandler Klang Smith.

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

## GOODREADS NAMES BEST OF 2020

Winners of the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Goodreads Choice Awards for the "best books of 2020," as chosen by users of the site, were announced December 8. These are the only major book awards decided by readers. There are several categories of genre interest:

FICTION: *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig (a wildly inventive blend of literary and speculative fiction in which each book in a library represents a different path your life could have taken.),

FANTASY: *House of Earth and Blood* by Sarah J. Maas (an introduction to her new Crescent City series, in which complex heroine Bryce Quinlan and fallen angel Hunt Athalar track a lethal demon) [*Black Sun* by NM's Rebecca Roanhorse also was nominated.],

SCIENCE FICTION: *To Sleep in a Sea of Stars* by Christopher Paolini (a sustained gaze into the future of humankind in which scientist Kira Navárez is scouting an as-yet-uncolonized planet and discovers an alien relic that will change the fate of Earth and its colonies),

HORROR: *Mexican Gothic* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia (a pitch-perfect Gothic horror story in the old-school mode, but with contemporary perspectives on race and colonialism),

HUMOR: *Strange Planet* by Nathan W. Pyle (featuring blue aliens who think and act just like us humans, but with a hilarious kind of specificity),

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: *A Life on Our Planet: My Witness Statement and a Vision for the Future* by David Attenborough (part testimony, part memoir, and part urgent call to arms),

GRAPHIC NOVELS & COMICS: *Heartstopper: Volume Three* by Alice Oseman (continuing love story of Charlie and Nick, now open & out, and ready to meet the world),

YOUNG ADULT FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION: *The Queen of Nothing* by Holly Black (final installment in Black's wildly popular series reveals the ultimate fate of Jude, exiled mortal Queen of Faerie, and a girl with extremely interesting problems),

MIDDLE GRADE & CHILDREN'S: *The Tower of Nero: The Trials of Apollo Book 5* by Rick Riordan (the final adventure of the Greek god Apollo, incarnated on Earth as hapless teenager Lester Papadopoulos),

PICTURE BOOKS: *Antiracist Baby* by Ibram X. Kendi (innovative picture book dedicated to creating a more equitable future for everyone).

Goodreads reports 5.67 million votes cast this year. For more information, and all winners and nominees go to [www.goodreads.com/choiceawards](http://www.goodreads.com/choiceawards).

## SF AUTHOR BOVA DIES AT 88

Scientist, Hugo Award winner, prolific science fiction author/editor, and Bubonicon 38 Guest of Honor Ben Bova passed away November 29, due to complications from COVID-19 and a stroke. He was 88 years old, reported Tor.com.

Word of Bova's passing first came from Kathryn Brusco, who posted on Twitter, "My Uncle Ben...by marriage...science fiction icon, author, adventure lover, story teller, futurist, and my son's namesake, Ben Bova, has passed away this morning from COVID-19 related pneumonia and a stroke. Needless to say, he will be missed terribly by us and the world."

Born November 8, 1932, in Philadelphia, PA, Bova brought experience to the science fiction genre that few authors could match: he worked as a technical editor for Project Vanguard, the first effort on the part of the U.S. to launch a satellite into space in 1958. Bova went on to work as a science writer for Avco Everett Research Laboratory, which built the heat shields for the Apollo 11 module, putting man on the Moon and ensuring that science fiction would continue to increasingly define the future.

It was around that time that Bova began writing and publishing science fiction. He published his first novel, *The Star Conquerors*, in 1959, and followed up with dozens of others in the following years, as well as numerous short stories that appeared in publications such as *Amazing Stories*, *Analog Science Fact and Fiction*, *Galaxy Magazine*, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and others.

In 1971, he took over the helm of *Analog* following the death of its long-running editor, John W. Campbell Jr. — a huge task, given Campbell's influence on the genre to that point. According to the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, Bova doubled down on the publication's tendencies towards technological realism and Hard SF, "but considerably broadened its horizons." While there, he published notable stories such as Joe Haldeman's *Hero* (which became *The Forever War*), and earned the Hugo Award for Best Editor for numerous consecutive years before stepping down in 1977. From there, he became the first editor of *Omni Magazine* until 1982, and consulted on television shows such as *The Starlost* and *Land of the Lost*.

Bova's best-known works involved plausible sciences about humanity's expansion into the universe, looking at how we might adapt to live in space with novels such as 1992's *Mars*, about the first human expedition to the red planet. He followed that novel up with additional installments, forming the *Grand Tour* series, which explored all of the solar system's major bodies. The latest installment, *Uranus*, was published in July, and was scheduled to be the first of a trilogy. The second installment, *Neptune*, is scheduled for release next year.

The *ESF* notes that "the straightforwardness of Bova's agenda for humanity may mark him as a figure from an earlier era; but the arguments he laces into sometimes overloaded storylines are arguments it is important, perhaps absolutely vital, to make."

Bova attended Temple University in Philadelphia, where he met Rosa Cucinotta; they married in 1953 and had a son and a daughter before divorcing in 1974. That year he married Barbara Berson Rose, who predeceased him in 2009. He married Rashida Loya in 2013; she survives him.

He graduated from Temple with a journalism degree in 1954, earned a master's in communications from the State University of New York at Albany, and a doctorate in education from California Coast University in 1996.

Bova worked as a newspaper reporter before becoming a technical editor and science writer for the Project Vanguard satellite launch program in the '50s. He worked for Avco Everett Research Laboratory during their studies of lasers and fluid dynamics in the '60s and early '70s before taking over at *Analog*.

He was president of SFWA from 1990-92 and served on the board of governors of the National Space Society, eventually becoming president emeritus. He taught at Harvard University and at the Hayden Planetarium, and often appeared as a guest scientist on prominent programs including *Good Morning America* and *The Today Show*. He won a Skylark Award in 1974, a Robert A. Heinlein Award from the Heinlein Society in 2008, and a First Fandom Hall of Fame Award in 2016.

## WASHINGTON POST NAMES BEST 2020 SF/FANTASY/HORROR

*The Washington Post* has released its list of the best science fiction, fantasy and horror books of 2020, as chosen by Silvia Moreno-Garcia and Lavie Tidhar, reported Locusmag.com on November 30.

Books listed are *Tender Is the Flesh* by Agustina Bazterrica, translated by Sarah Moses, *The Order of the Pure Moon Reflected in Water* by Zen Cho, *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones, *War of the Maps* by Paul McAuley, and *The Silence of the Wilting Skin* by Tlotlo Tsamaase.

Silvia Moreno-Garcia is the author of *Mexican Goth-*

ic, *Gods of Jade and Shadow* and *Signal to Noise*. Lavie Tidhar is the author of several novels, including *The Violent Century*, *A Man Lies Dreaming*, *Central Station* and, most recently, *By Force Alone*.

## NM NATURAL HISTORY SCIENTIST TO BE ON MARS ROVER TEAM

On November 23, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science (MNHS) announced that Dr. Larry Crumpler, museum geologist and Bubonicon 40 science guest, was among 13 scientists recently selected by NASA to the science team of the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover mission.

The new mission scientists will perform scientific investigations as part of the team operating the Perseverance rover when it lands next February 18. Crumpler, a volcanology and space sciences researcher, was selected after a national and international search for science participants for the upcoming mission to the Red Planet.

In his new role as a science team member on Perseverance, Crumpler continues his rover-related Mars research. Crumpler previously spent 15 years as a scientist on the Spirit and Opportunity missions, where MNHS was one of only two museums nationwide to be a part of the mission. In his new role on the Perseverance team, he will be documenting the geology along the rover's path, much like a geologist does in the field. He will be making use of most of the instruments on the Perseverance rover to facilitate the investigation, including the SuperCam built by a team at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

"The Spirit and Opportunity rovers confirmed the presence of water in the past on Mars and the fact that the planet has complex geology that is similar in many ways to New Mexico," said Crumpler. "Now we are going to Mars to look for evidence of past life. So the Space Sciences department at the Museum will now encompass some aspects of the Museum's other specialty - fossils. We will be looking for microfossils or other evidence of past microbial life - in this case, on Mars instead of in New Mexico."

One of Crumpler's tasks on the mission will include evaluating the use of the new helicopter "Ingenuity" for geologic research along the rover's traverse in its landing site, the Jezero Crater. Crumpler had been a science team member on the development of the proposed Mars helicopter "Scout" in 2014, which was adopted as a technology experiment on the Perseverance mission.

Perseverance will land at the site of an ancient Martian river delta. The mission goals include a search for evidence for past microbial life preserved in the sediments.



## NEW YORK TIMES NAMES 100 NOTABLE BOOKS FOR 2020

The editors of *The New York Times Book Review* have selected 100 Notable Books of 2020, reported Locusmag.com on November 23. Among the books are the following titles of genre interest:

*The Death of Jesus* by J.M. Coetzee, *The Death of Vivek Oji* by Akwaeke Emezi, *Red Pill* by Hari Kunzru, *A Children's Bible* by Lydia Millet, *Tokyo Ueno Station* by Yu Miri, translated by Morgan Giles, *Earthlings* by Sayaka Murata, translated by Ginny Tapley Takemori, *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* by Cho Nam-Joo, translated by Jamie Chang, *Little Eyes* by Samanta Schweblin, translated by Megan McDowell, *Sharks in the Time of Saviors* by Kawai Strong Washburn, *Memorial* by Bryan Washington, and *How Much of These Hills Is Gold* by C Pam Zhang.

*A Children's Bible* by Lydia Millet also is among their ten best books of the year. For more information, see *The New York Times* website.

## RACHEL CAINE DIES

Author Roxanne Longstreet Conrad, who wrote as Rachel Caine, died November 1 of cancer shortly after entering hospice care, reported Locusmag.com. She was 58 years old.

Caine was a prolific author of more than 50 books, best known for the *Morganville Vampires* series and the *Weather Warden* universe. And she was co-Guest of Honor at Bubonicon 48 in 2016.

Roxanne Longstreet was born April 27, 1962, at White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico, and grew up in West Texas. She went to Texas Tech University, graduating with an accounting degree and a minor in music in 1995, and worked as a professional musician and in corporate communications.

She was a professional musician who played with notable musicians including Henry Mancini, Peter Nero, and John Williams. She was also an avid movie buff and TV watcher and said she "prefers a good stout Guinness to wimpy American beers."

In 1999, Conrad became employed in corporate communications as a web designer, editor, corporate communications manager, and finally as director of corporate communications for a large multinational company. She took an eight-month hiatus for most of 2008 to meet pressing deadlines, and retired from her position in 2010.

She met her husband, the artist Cat Conrad, at a convention in 1991. In 2010, she became a full-time writer. She lived in north Texas with her husband, and did most of her writing at home and on the road during appearances. In 2018, she was diagnosed with soft tissue carcinoma.

Her debut novel was *Stormriders* in 1990, tie-in fic-



tion for the *Shadow World* roleplaying game, published as Roxanne Longstreet (later reprinted under the name Ian Hammel). Other novels as Longstreet include *The Undead* (1993), *Red Angel* (1994), *Cold Kiss* (1995), and *Slow Burn* (1996). As Roxanne Conrad, she published *Copper Moon* (1997), *Bridge of Shadows* (1998), and *Exile, Texas* (2003).

She began using the Rachel Caine pseudonym for her *Weather Warden* universe, starting with *Ill Wind* in 2003 and including *Heat Stroke*, *Chill Factor*, *Windfall*, *Firestorm*, *Thin Air*, *Gale Force*, *Cape Storm*, and *Total Eclipse* in 2010. A 10th volume, *Red Hot Rain*, was planned, but unfinished due to health problems. The spin-off *Outcast Season* series began in 2009 with *Undone*, and was followed by *Unknown*, *Unseen*, and *Unbroken*. Other adult series under the Caine name are the *Red Letter Days* books (2005-2006): *Devil's Bargain* and *Devil's Due*, and the *Revivalist* series: 2011's *Working Stiff*, *Two Weeks' Notice*, and *Terminated* in 2013.

Her popular *Morganville Vampires* YA fantasy series started in 2006 with *Glass Houses*, and includes *The Dead Girls' Dance*, *Midnight Alley*, *Feast of Fools*, *Lord of Misrule*, *Carpe Corpus*, *Fade Out*, *Kiss of Death*, *Ghost Town*, *Bite Club*, *Last Breath*, *Black Dawn*, *Bitter Blood*, *Fall of Night*, and *Daylighters* in 2013. The *Great Library* series, begun in 2015, is *Ink and Bone*, *Paper and Fire*, *Ash and Quill*, *Smoke and Iron*, and *Sword and Pen* in 2019. With Ann Aguirre she wrote YA novels *Honor Among Thieves* in 2018, *Honor Bound*, and this year's *Honor Lost*. She also wrote standalone Shakespearean YA *Prince of Shadows* in 2014.

Caine also wrote thrillers, notably several volumes in the *Stillhouse Lake* series, an intense thrillers about Gwen Proctor, the ex-wife of an infamous serial killer who is constantly on guard for her kids against Internet trolls and real-life stalkers. The fifth volume, *Heartbreak Bay*, will be published in March 2021. The first book, *Stillhouse Lake*, was one of five finalists for the IATWA Thriller Awards in 2018.

Caine also did tie-in fiction, including a *Stargate* novel under the name Julie Fortune. She was a prolific author of short fiction, with work in numerous anthologies, and co-edited *Chicks Kick Butt* in 2011 with Kerrie L. Hughes.

She is survived by her husband.

## GAIMAN WINS FORRY AWARD

The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS) has selected Neil Gaiman as this year's recipient of the Forry Award for lifetime achievement in the SF field, reported [Locusmag.com](http://Locusmag.com) in late October.

The award, named for Forrest J Ackerman and given annually since 1966, is normally given at Loscon, held at the Marriott Los Angeles Airport Hotel. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Loscon 47 has been delayed until November 26-28, 2021.

## THOMAS NAMED NEW *F&SF* EDITOR

Sheree Renée Thomas will be the new editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* starting with the March/April 2021 issue, replacing current editor C.C. Finlay, who is stepping down to devote more time to his writing. Gordon Van Gelder remains as publisher. Thomas will be the tenth editor in *F&SF*'s history, which is currently in its 71st year of publication, reported [Locusmag.com](http://Locusmag.com) in early November.

To prepare for the transition, *F&SF* closed to submissions in October 2020, and plans to reopen in January 2021. For more information, see the *F&SF* website.

## DAVID PROWSE, ORIGINAL VADER, DIES

London (CNN) – British actor David Prowse, who played Darth Vader in the original *Star Wars* trilogy, died November 28, from complications of COVID-19 at a hospital in London, England. He was 85 years old.

Prowse died after a short illness, according to his agent Thomas Bowington. CNN reported in 2018 that Prowse was being treated for prostate cancer.

"It's with great regret and heart-wrenching sadness for us and millions of fans around the world, to announce that our client DAVE PROWSE M.B.E. has passed away at the age of 85," Bowington Management said on Twitter November 29.

"May the force be with him, always!" his former agent, Thomas Bowington, said in a statement to the BBC. "Though famous for playing many monsters – for myself, and all who knew Dave and worked with him, he was a hero in our lives."

Prowse wore the black suit and helmet to play Darth Vader, but it was the actor James Earl Jones who provided the character's voice. Prowse's West Country English accent was thought to be unsuitable for the part.

But it was his role as the "Green Cross Code Man" from a British road safety campaign that Prowse said he was most proud of. He was awarded an MBE – a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire – in 2000 for that role.

American actor Mark Hamill – who played Darth Vader's son, Luke Skywalker, alongside Prowse – sent his condolences in a tweet. "So sad to hear David Prowse has passed. He was a kind man & much more than Darth Vader," he wrote. "Actor-Husband-Father-Member of the Order of the British Empire-3 time British Weightlifting Champion & Safety Icon the Green Cross



Code Man. He loved his fans as much as they loved him. #RIP"

Prowse was born into a working class family on July 1, 1935, and grew up in a council estate in Southmead, in southwestern England. He gained a scholarship to attend Bristol Grammar School.

He had a passion for bodybuilding and was crowned British Weightlifting Champion several times in the 1960s. He became lifelong friends with actors Arnold Schwarzenegger in his weightlifting years, according to website IMDb.

His broad physique and towering figure helped land him roles as monsters and villains in TV shows and films. He played the monster in *The Horror of Frankenstein* in 1970, the same role in Hammer's *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* in 1974, and a bearded torturer in *Carry on Henry* in 1971. That same year he made an appearance as a bodyguard in Stanley Kubrick's dystopian film *A Clockwork Orange* in 1971.

He played a circus strongman in *Vampire Circus* (1972), a Minotaur in the *Doctor Who* serial "The Time Monster" (also 1972), and an android named Coppin in *The Tomorrow People* in 1973. He appeared in an episode of *Space: 1999*, "The Beta Cloud," right before he was cast as Darth Vader. Around that time, he appeared as the Black Knight in the Terry Gilliam film *Jabberwocky* and was supposed to play Minotaur (a magical bronze automaton created by a sorceress) in *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977), but the part went to Peter Mayhew instead, who later played Chewbacca in *Star Wars*.

Prowse would play Darth Vader in all three of the original *Star Wars* films, in 1977, 1980 and 1983.

Health and fitness remained an interest for Prowse, who helped to train Christopher Reeve for the lead role in *Superman* (1978) after lobbying for the part himself. In a television interview, he related how his response to being told "we've found our Superman" was "Thank you very much." Only then was he told that Reeve had been chosen for the role and he was to only be a trainer. He also trained Cary Elwes for his role as Westley in *The Princess Bride*, and wrote a book called *Fitness is Fun*.

He published an autobiography, *Straight from the Force's Mouth*, in 2011, and in 2015, he starred in a documentary concerning his role as Darth Vader, entitled *I Am Your Father*.

Prowse was married in 1963 to Norma Scammell and was the father of three children. He was a prominent supporter of Bristol Rugby Club, and has lived in south London since 1963.

## 2020 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS WINNERS

Winners of the National Book Awards (NBA) in the Fiction, Young People's Literature, and Translated Literature categories were announced November 18, 2020 in a virtual ceremony, reported Locusmag.com.

*Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu won the Fiction

category. *King and the Dragonflies* by Kacen Callender won the Young People's Literature category. *Tokyo Ueno Station* by Yu Miri, translated by Morgan Giles, won the Translated Literature category.

Winners for non-fiction and poetry were also announced.

388 books were submitted for the Fiction category, 130 books for Translated Literature, and 311 books for Young People's Literature. The 2020 Fiction judges were Roxane Gay (chair), Cristina Henríquez, Laird Hunt, Rebecca Makkai, and Keaton Patterson. The Translated Literature judges were Heather Cleary, John Darnielle, Anne Ishii, Brad Johnson, and Dinaw Mengestu (chair). The Young People's Literature judges were Randy Ribay, Neal Shusterman, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, Joan Trygg (chair), and Colleen AF Venable.

Each of the category winners receive \$10,000 and a bronze sculpture.

For more information, including the complete lists of winners, see the National Book Foundation site.

## MIDDLE-EARTH ESSAYS TO BE RELEASED

by Beth Elderkin, io9.gizmodo.com 11-30-2020

It's counted as one of the biggest debates among *Lord of the Rings* fans: Who can grow a beard? Well, J.R.R. Tolkien himself has the answer in a previously unpublished essay expanding the world of Middle-earth, part of a new collection of works that's set to come out next year.

As reported by the *Guardian*, HarperCollins is getting ready to release a new collection of previously unpublished Tolkien essays called *The Nature of Middle-earth*, edited by Tolkien expert and head of the Elvish Linguistic Fellowship Carl F. Hostetter. The release has been authorized by the Tolkien estate, which took over Tolkien's collection following the retirement of its previous caretaker, Christopher Tolkien, who died earlier this year.

This collection of writings, which were drafted later in Tolkien's life, explores the world of Middle-earth and divulges some of its secrets. Topics include: Elvish immortality and reincarnation, the geography of the kingdom of Gondor, and the long-standing question of who can grow a beard in Middle-earth. HarperCollins' deputy publishing director Chris Smith called the collection a "treasure trove" for Tolkien fans and scholars.

"For him, Middle-earth was part of an entire world to be explored," Smith said. "The writings in *The Nature of Middle-earth* reveal the journeys that he took as he sought to better understand his unique creation."

*The Nature of Middle-earth* comes as Tolkien's world anticipates yet another resurgence; Amazon Studios is working on a new *Lord of the Rings* series, which saw some production delays because of the Coronavirus pandemic. *The Nature of Middle-earth* is set to come out in summer 2021.

## TEST PILOT CHUCK YEAGER DIES

GRASS VALLEY, Calif. (AP) – Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Charles “Chuck” Yeager, the World War II fighter pilot ace and quintessential test pilot who showed he had the “right stuff” when in 1947 he became the first person to fly faster than sound, died December 7. He was 97 years old.

His wife, Victoria Yeager, tweeted, “It is w/ profound sorrow, I must tell you that my life love General Chuck Yeager passed just before 9 pm ET. An incredible life well lived, America’s greatest Pilot, & a legacy of strength, adventure, & patriotism will be remembered forever.”

Yeager’s death is “a tremendous loss to our nation,” NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in a statement. “Gen. Yeager’s pioneering and innovative spirit advanced America’s abilities in the sky and set our nation’s dreams soaring into the jet age and the space age. He said, ‘You don’t concentrate on risks. You concentrate on results. No risk is too great to prevent the necessary job from getting done.’”

Yeager, from a small town in West Virginia, flew for more than 60 years, including piloting an F-15 to near 1,000 mph at Edwards in October 2002 at age 79.

“Living to a ripe old age is not an end in itself. The trick is to enjoy the years remaining,” he wrote in *Yeager: An Autobiography*. “I haven’t yet done everything, but by the time I’m finished, I won’t have missed much. If I auger in (crash) tomorrow, it won’t be with a frown on my face. I’ve had a ball.”

On Oct. 14, 1947, Yeager, then a 24-year-old captain, pushed an orange, bullet-shaped Bell X-1 rocket plane past 660 mph to break the sound barrier, at the time a daunting aviation milestone.

The modest Yeager said in 1947 he could have gone even faster if the plane had carried more fuel. He said the ride “was nice, just like riding fast in a car.”

His exploits were told in Tom Wolfe’s book *The Right Stuff*, and in the 1983 film it inspired.

Yeager was born Feb. 23, 1923, in Myra, a tiny community on the Mud River deep in an Appalachian hollow about 40 miles southwest of Charleston. The family later moved to Hamlin, the county seat. His father was an oil and gas driller and a farmer.

“What really strikes me looking over all those years is how lucky I was, how lucky, for example, to have been born in 1923 and not 1963 so that I came of age just as aviation itself was entering the modern era,” Yeager said in a December 1985 speech at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. “I was just a lucky kid who caught the right ride.”

Yeager enlisted in the Army Air Corps after graduating from high school in 1941. He later regretted that his lack of a college education prevented him from becoming an astronaut. He started off as an aircraft mechanic and,

despite becoming severely airsick during his first airplane ride, signed up for a program that allowed enlisted men to become pilots.

Yeager shot down 13 German planes on 64 missions during World War II, including five on a single mission. He was shot down over German-held France but escaped with the help of French partisans. After World War II, he became a test pilot at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio.

Among the flights he made after breaking the sound barrier was one on Dec. 12, 1953, when he flew an X-1A to a record of more than 1,600 mph.

Yeager was awarded the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, the Air Medal and the Purple Heart. President Harry S. Truman awarded him the Collier air trophy in December 1948 for his breaking the sound barrier. He also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1985.

Yeager retired from the Air Force in 1975 and moved to a ranch in Cedar Ridge in Northern California where he continued working as a consultant to the Air Force and Northrop Corp. and became well known to younger generations as a television pitchman for automotive parts and heat pumps.

He married Glennis Dickhouse of Oroville, California, on Feb. 26, 1945. She died of ovarian cancer in December 1990. They had four children: Donald, Michael, Sharon and Susan. Yeager married Victoria Scott D’Angelo in 2003.

## TIME MAGAZINE NAMES 100 MUST-READ BOOKS OF 2020

*Time Magazine* released a list of 100 Must-Read Books of 2020 in early November, reported [Locusmag.com](https://www.locusmag.com). The list includes many of genre interest:

*Leave the World Behind* by Rumaan Alam, *Followers* by Megan Angelo, *We Ride Upon Sticks* by Quan Barry, *Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke, *Agency* by William Gibson, *The City We Became* by N.K. Jemisin, *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones, *The Glass Hotel* by Emily St. John Mandel, *Migrations* by Charlotte McConaghy, *A Children’s Bible* by Lydia Millet, *Tokyo Ueno Station* by Yu Miri, *Earthlings* by Sayaka Murata, *Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982* by Cho Nam-Joo, and *I Hold a Wolf by the Ears* by Laura van den Berg.

For the full list, see *Time*’s website.

## VIDEO GAME HUGO ANNOUNCED

DisCon III, the 79th Worldcon, will include a “Best Video Game” category in the 2021 Hugo Awards, reported [Locusmag.com](https://www.locusmag.com) in late November.

DisCon III co-chair Colette Fozard said, “Since early 2020, many of us have spent more time gaming than we

ever expected. This award will offer fans an opportunity to celebrate the games that have been meaningful, joyful, and exceptional over this past year. Video games draw from the same deeply creative well that has fed science fiction and fantasy writing and art for so many years. This innovative and interactive genre has brought us new ways of story-telling as well as new stories to tell and we are glad to honor them."

The Best Video Game special category is for 2021 only, though the "Hugo Study Committee is also considering Best Game or Interactive Experience as a potential permanent category." DisCon III will be held August 25-29, 2021, in Washington, D.C.

## ARTIST RICHARD CORBEN DIES

by Brian Cronin, [cbr.com](http://cbr.com) 12-10-2020

Richard Corben, one of the most accomplished horror and fantasy comic book artists of the 20th Century, passed away on December 2 after heart surgery announced his wife. He was 80 years old.

Best known for his work on the sci-fi/fantasy comic book magazine *Heavy Metal*, Corben's many accolades during his long career in comics include being inducted into the Will Eisner Hall of Fame in 2012 and recently becoming one of the very few American comic book creators to win the prestigious Grand Prix de la ville d'Angoulême, awarded by the Angoulême International Comics Festival (the second-largest comic book festival in Europe). Corben was the president of the 2019 Angoulême Festival.

Corben began his career as an animator and in fact, one of his earliest short films, *Den*, would later become probably his most famous comic book creation, as well. Corben then began working in the burgeoning underground comix scene of the late 1960s/early 1970s, back when the prevalence of head shops (stores that primarily sold drug paraphernalia) in the United States made selling indie comix an actual sustainable career as an artist.

When the Supreme Court ruled in 1973 that local communities could set their own standards for obscenity, head shops went out of business all over the country, decimating the underground comix industry. Luckily for

Corben, he had set such a high standard of quality that he was quickly picked up by Warren Publishing, one of the mainstream horror comic book magazines of the time.

In 1975, Moebius, Druillet, and Jean-Pierre Dionnet started the French horror/fantasy/sci-fi comic book magazine, *Métal Hurlant*. Corben was very interested in working with those comic book legends on the magazine and he sent them samples right away and he was soon working on *Métal Hurlant* and then its American counterpart, *Heavy Metal*.

During this period, Corben also drew one of the earliest graphic novels actually pitched as a "graphic novel," the 1975 Robert E. Howard sword and sorcery adaptation, *Bloodstar*.

Corben brought his earlier concept, *Den* with him to *Heavy Metal*. *Den* was about a scrawny young man who is transported to Neverwhere, a world that is sort of a mixture of all of the iconic fictional universes (think Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age combined with horror universes, as well). *Den* becomes a muscle-bound warrior and has all sorts of over-the-top adventures against horrific monsters while having erotic dalliances with many buxom nude women. In the world of Richard Corben, everything was done to the extreme, from sex to horror, he was the living epitome of *This Is Spinal Tap*'s volume dials that "go up to eleven."

In 1986, Corben started his own publishing company, Fantagor Pres, where he continued to put out new *Den* material, as well as the acclaimed *Rip in Time* series with writer Bruce Jones. In 1988, Corben also illustrated *Vic and Blood: The Chronicles of a Boy and His Dog*, working with Harlan Ellison in a continuation of Ellison's iconic "Boy and His Dog" series.

For the general public, one of Corben's most iconic pieces is probably his cover art to the 1977 Meat Loaf/Jim Steinman album, *Bat Out of Hell*, one of the best-selling albums in history (selling over 43 million copies to date).

Corben, though, was never one to rest on his laurels. He continued to produce horror and fantasy artwork well into the 21st Century, including a long stint at Marvel in the 2000s drawing a number of Marvel MAX miniseries, starring iconic characters like Punisher, Luke Cage and Ghost Rider.

In 2008, Corben drew the *Hellboy* miniseries, *The Crooked Man*, written by *Hellboy* creator, Mike Mignola. The work helped to show Corben's brilliance to a whole new generation, with the series winning multiple Eisner Awards for its disturbing horror imagery. He did a few more highly-acclaimed *Hellboy* series.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Madonna "Dona" Corben.





## SFWA & FOSTER CLAIM DISNEY WITHHOLDING MONEY

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) and author Alan Dean Foster held a press conference November 18, claiming that Disney has been withholding payment for Foster's work on *Star Wars* and *Alien* novelizations, reported [Locusmag.com](http://Locusmag.com).

According to their press release, "Foster was originally contracted to write the *Alien* novelizations by Titan Books, and the *Star Wars* novelizations by Lucasfilm. Both companies regularly paid his royalties. When The Walt Disney Company acquired the rights to these novelizations in 2015, the payments stopped although the books continue to be sold. Disney continues to get money for the books. Alan Dean Foster, and possibly other authors with similar contracts, have not been paid."

Foster brought the issue to SFWA's grievance committee last year. SFWA president Mary Robinette Kowal stated: "In my decade with the organization, the fact that we are forced to present this publicly is unprecedented. So too, are the problems. The simple problem is that we have a writer who is not being paid. The larger problem has the potential to affect every writer. Disney's argument is that they have purchased the rights but not the obligations of the contract. In other words, they believe they have the right to publish work, but are not obligated to pay the writer no matter what the contract says. If we let this stand, it could set precedent to fundamentally alter the way copyright and contracts operate in the United States. All a publisher would have to do to break a contract would be to sell it to a sibling company."

"If they are doing this to Alan Dean Foster, one of the great science fiction writers of our time, then what are they doing to the younger writers who do not know that a contract is a contract?" Kowal continued.

## MAD MAX'S IMMORTAN JOE DIES

Hugh Keays-Byrne, the Anglo-Australian actor behind Immortan Joe in 2015's *Mad Max: Fury Road*, died December 1 during a hospital stay, according to his friend and former movie director Brian Trenchard-Smith. He was 73 years old.

A rep for Keays-Byrne confirmed that he died peacefully and that his family requests privacy at this time, reported [ew.com](http://ew.com).

Trenchard-Smith helmed Keays-Byrne in films like 1975's *The Dragon Flies*, aka *The Man From Hong Kong*. Afterwards, the actor became "a good friend" to him and wife Margaret for 46 years, as the filmmaker wrote in a Facebook post on Wednesday. "We spent many happy Sunday mornings with him, his partner Christina, and a group of fellow actors and artists (the Macao Light Company) at the house they shared in Centennial Park," he

wrote.

Trenchard-Smith mentioned the "innate sense of humor" Keays-Byrne brought with him to every production. "Hugh had a generous heart, offering a helping hand to people in need, or a place to stay to a homeless teenager. He cared about social justice and preserving the environment long before these issues became fashionable," Trenchard-Smith continued. "His life was governed by his sense of the oneness of humanity. We will miss his example and his friendship."

No other information on his death was given.

Keays-Byrne's *Mad Max* legacy extends beyond *Fury Road* – about 36 years before that when he debuted in the film series' first movie in 1979 as Toecutter, the main antagonist as the head of a motorcycle gang terrorizing the outback.

On returning for *Fury Road* as the raging tyrannical lord of his Citadel, he told *The New York Times* earlier this year, "It was a wonderful thing to feel everyone around me crashing about in their costumes and absolutely living it."

Miller recalled in a 2015 interview with *USA Today* that he brought Keays-Byrne back partly because an early print of the first *Mad Max* had a bad American dub of the actor's voice. "I always felt so guilty about that," Miller said. "I thought I had to make up for it in some way."

"It's a sad day to have to say goodbye to The Toecutter and Immortan Joe," filmmaker Edgar Wright tweeted. "RIP Hugh Keays-Byrne, who played indelible baddies in the first and last *Mad Max* films – 36 years apart."

Born May 18, 1947, in Srinagar, Keays-Byrne and his British parents moved to England when he was child. He began his career as a stage actor, joining the Royal Shakespeare Company in productions of *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Tempest*, and more. His television career began in 1967 with *Bellbird* and *Boy Meets Girl*, and his film roles kicked off with 1974's *Stone*.

Keays-Byrne would later appear in as Mr. Stubb in 1998's *Moby Dick*, the character Grunchlk in episodes of *Farscape*, and in a minor role for 2011's *Sleeping Beauty*. *Mad Max: Fury Road* was his final film role.

## DIRECTOR JENKINS TALKS ABOUT WW84 CHRISTMAS RELEASE VIA STREAMING

by Germain Lussier, [io9.gizmodo.com](http://io9.gizmodo.com) 12-07-2020

Patty Jenkins finished *Wonder Woman 1984* before the world changed. The writer-director had completed work on the highly anticipated superhero sequel in early March, before COVID-19 forced most of the world into a lockdown. Then everything went quiet.

"I just cooked and cleaned all year, and no one has seen it until now," Jenkins told a group of journalists, including io9, via Zoom the first week of December. "It's been so surreal because you worked so, so hard and then all of a

sudden you're just, like, popped right out to a world as if it never existed."

She's talking, of course, about the fact that *Wonder Woman 1984* originally was supposed to be out last year. Then it got moved to June. Then to August, October, and at last December – when it will finally be getting a controversial release simultaneously both in theaters and streaming on HBO Max. It's not what she wanted, but Jenkins has begun to see a positive to the situation.

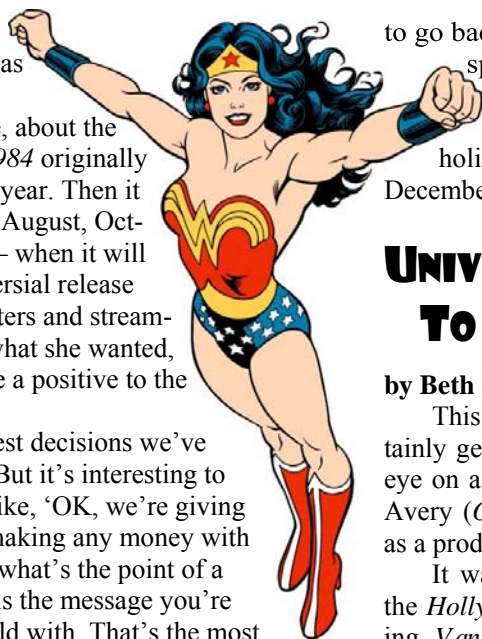
"It was one of the hardest decisions we've ever made," Jenkins said. "But it's interesting to actually sit there and face, like, 'OK, we're giving up the money. You're not making any money with your film.' But the truth is, what's the point of a film? The point of the film is the message you're trying to connect to the world with. That's the most important thing. So in that way, when this idea was presented, I was like, 'Oh, my God, this is the moment.' This is the moment where this thing we have can become something to give, and a better thing, and try to be about hope."

*Wonder Woman 1984* is not simply *Wonder Woman 2* – in fact, its cast and crew are hesitant to even see it as a direct sequel. There are new faces, friend and foe alike, for Diana and Steve to meet, new struggles for our heroine to face. Above all, what *Wonder Woman 1984* hopes to bring to the table by taking us back to the excesses of '80s America is something the first movie could only deal with in broader strokes: a more pointed insight into how the more things have changed since 1984, the more things have stayed very much the same.

"[What] I loved about the first movie [was] where you could talk about current day, but use the metaphor of another time to detach it from everybody getting particular about the details," Jenkins said of the choice to move Diana's next journey into the '80s. "I thought that was so cool about 1917, 1918, where you could say, yes, 'We're talking about war, mankind's mechanization of war, the way we make our choices,' without anybody getting literal and without having to make up a war with much less weight. I think the same thing is true about the '80s. We're talking about mankind at their worst, most excessive, and their greatest, most grand and opulent, and artistically [doing] some incredible, creative things."

Jenkins has long been a strong proponent of the theatrical experience, but she said when the idea of a Christmas at-home release came up, it just was too perfect to ignore. And she can go back to advocating for theatrical releases another time.

"I love Christmas and the fact that we get to play in people's houses on Christmas Day is like a great honor of my life. Really. Truly," she said. "I never thought I'd say that about streaming over theatrical and I'm going



to go back to my old ways down the road. But this is a special year. So to give people the film in any way they can is really awesome."

*Wonder Woman 1984* is basically Patty Jenkins' holiday gift to the world, and we can all unwrap it on December 25.

## UNIVERSAL'S *VAN HELSING* TO STAB VAMPIRES ONCE AGAIN

by Beth Elderkin, [io9.gizmodo.com](https://io9.gizmodo.com) 12-1-2020

This character may not be undead, but they're certainly getting another life. Universal Pictures has cast its eye on a new *Van Helsing* adaptation, directed by Julius Avery (*Overlord*) with *Aquaman*'s James Wan on board as a producer.

It was first reported by *Deadline* and confirmed by the *Hollywood Reporter* that Universal Pictures was adding *Van Helsing*, the story of the legendary vampire hunter who went stake-to-heart with Dracula in Bram Stoker's iconic tale, to its slate of upcoming monster movies. This comes on the heels of Blumhouse's *The Invisible Man* starring Elisabeth Moss, which reignited Universal's monster franchise earlier this year after the failure of its own Dark Universe.

*Van Helsing* is the latest in a string of approved monster movies for Universal, which abandoned its interconnected universe in favor of smaller, standalone films that use the studio's classic horror characters. We've got Scarlett Johansson on board to possibly star in *Bride of Frankenstein* and Ryan Gosling is tapped to be the next Wolfman. In addition, there's Paul Feig's upcoming monster comedy *Dark Army*, a "Monster Mash" movie musical, and Lord and Miller's "modern-day, tongue-in-cheek thriller" with ties to the monster world starring Channing Tatum. Funny enough, Tatum was previously poised to play Van Helsing back in 2017 – it's unclear whether that could happen now, given how he's now attached to another Universal project.

As far as what we can expect from this version of *Van Helsing*, *Deadline* reports that it could be a darker, more violent interpretation of the character than what we got in 2004's movie starring Hugh Jackman.

## DR WHO'S HOLIDAY SPECIAL TO MARK FINAL EPISODE FOR 2 COMPANIONS

by Beth Elderkin, [io9.gizmodo.com](https://io9.gizmodo.com) 11-30-2020

The Fab Four are no more. *Doctor Who* stars Tosin Cole and Bradley Walsh – who've played companions Ryan and Graham for the past two seasons – have confirmed that they're set to depart the TARDIS after the upcoming New Year's holiday special.

In an interview with BBC Studios, Cole and Walsh revealed that "Revolution of the Daleks" will be their fi-

nal episode of *Doctor Who*, confirming a long-standing rumor that two of Jodie Whittaker's three companions would be leaving the series – leaving only Mandip Gill, who plays Yaz.

Walsh called their final turn as Doctor Who companions “sad and poignant,” with both actors noting how much they’ve loved being a part of the iconic sci-fi series – especially since their time on the series featured the first female Doctor. Cole, in particular, noted how much he’ll miss the fandom.

“It’s been an honor to work on such a cultural institution with fans across the world. The people like me on the screen come and go, but it’s the people behind the scenes and the fans that will always be there keeping the *Doctor Who* world alive and exciting,” he said.

Whittaker also confirmed the news, saying she was “devastated” to lose Cole and Walsh as costars: “On a personal note, absolutely devastated. Both of them had to carry me to my trailer. I haven’t cried like that for such a long time. Brad couldn’t cope with it at all. Tosin was like, ‘I really can’t cope with you getting this upset.’”

As of now, it’s unclear whether *Doctor Who* will return to its more traditional pattern of “one Doctor, one companion,” or if new cast members will be added to the series. But for now, it will be a sad but sweet goodbye to one of the show’s greatest father-son teams. *Doctor Who*’s “Revolution of the Daleks” arrives on January 1, 2021. In addition, the series is entering production for its 13th season, which is set to have eight episodes.

## 007'S SEAN CONNERY DIES AT 90

by Richard Natale, *Variety* 10-31-2020

Sean Connery, the Scottish-born actor who rocketed to fame as James Bond and became one of the franchise's most popular and enduring international stars, died on October 31. He was 90 years old.

Connery, long regarded as one of the best actors to have portrayed the iconic spy, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2000 and marked his 90th birthday in August. His death was confirmed by his family, who said that the actor “died peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family” in the Bahamas.

Connery was an audience favorite for more than 40 years and one of the screen's most reliable and distinctive leading men. The actor was recently voted the best James Bond actor in an August *Radio Times* poll in Britain.

*Bond* producers Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli said he “was and shall always be remembered as the original James Bond whose indelible entrance into cinema history began when he announced those unforgettable words, ‘The name’s Bond... James Bond.’”

However, Connery – who made his debut in the first Bond film, *Dr. No* in 1962 – also transcended Ian Fleming's sexy Agent 007, and went on to distinguish himself with a long and mature career in such films as *The Wind and the Lion* (1975), *The Man Who Would Be King*

(1975) and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* in 1989.

His turn as a tough Irish cop in Depression-era Chicago in Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables* in 1987 brought him a supporting actor Oscar.

In his early career, his physique was his main asset as he modeled and picked up acting jobs where he could. In 1956, he landed the role of a battered prizefighter in the BBC production of *Requiem for a Heavyweight*. Good notices brought him to the attention of the entertainment community, and his first film was *No Road Back*, a B crime movie in 1956. And then 1962's *Dr. No*, the first of the *Bond* films, made him an international star.

His stature grew with the ever more popular sequels *From Russia With Love*, *Goldfinger* and *Thunderball*, which arrived over the next four years. After 1967's *You Only Live Twice*, he left the *Bond* franchise, but he was coaxed back for 1971's *Diamonds Are Forever*. With that, he left Bond behind – though money would tempt him back once last time in 1983 for *Never Say Never Again*.

He took a major misstep with sci-fi film *Zardoz*, and his career seemed to be foundering.

But he bounced back in 1974 with a supporting role in *Murder on the Orient Express* and in 1976's *Robin and Marian* opposite Audrey Hepburn, which was embraced by critics. The film cemented Connery's reputation as a versatile, serious screen actor.

In the late 1970s, there were more missteps such as *Meteor*, but he scored in Terry Gilliam's *Time Bandits*. It wasn't until after his last *Bond* film that his standing as a box office star caught up to his critical reputation, thanks mostly to two huge worldwide hits: *Highlander* and *The Name of the Rose*.

He won a BAFTA best actor award for *Name of the Rose*, and pairing Connery and Harrison Ford as father and son in the third *Indiana Jones* film was inspired. Meanwhile, *The Hunt for Red October*, in which Connery played a defecting Soviet sub captain, was a major hit in 1990.

By the 1990s, he was so popular that his uncredited cameo as King Richard in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* came as one of the film's highlights. He was still a force to contend with in the foreign market, as *Highlander 2*, *Medicine Man*, *Rising Sun*, *Just Cause* and *First Knight* proved over the next several years.

One setback was a bout with throat cancer in the early 1990s, but Connery rebounded with a burst of activity. He starred with Nicolas Cage in 1996 actioner *The Rock*, playing a character that drew more than a little on his history as James Bond. In 2000, he essayed a very different role and received positive reviews for *Finding Forrester*, playing a reclusive writer who bonds with a young black basketball player who's an aspiring scribe himself.

Nevertheless, he continued with action roles well after his 70th birthday, playing the legendary adventurer Allan Quatermain in 2003's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (based on a graphic novel). He announced his retirement in 2005. He voiced a *James Bond* videogame the same year, and subsequently did other voice acting.

Thomas Sean Connery was born of Irish ancestry in the slums of Edinburgh on August 25, 1930. Poverty robbed him of an education, and by his teens he'd left school and was working as an unskilled laborer. At 17, he was drafted into the Royal Navy, but he was discharged three years later due to a serious case of ulcers.

He returned to Edinburgh and worked a variety of jobs. After moving to London, he learned of an opening in the chorus of *South Pacific*. He took a crash dancing and singing course and, surprisingly, landed the role, in which he stayed for 18 months.

Connery was devoted to his native Scotland and used his stature to press for the re-establishment of a Scottish parliament. When the body reconvened in 1999, 296 years after its last meeting, Connery addressed the first session, where he was greeted with a thunderous ovation. The next year, when he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II – an honor he called “one of the proudest days of my life” – he asked that the investiture be performed in Edinburgh.

Connery published his autobiography, *Being a Scot*, co-written with Murray Grigor, in 2008. Besides his knighthood and Academy Award, he received the Kennedy Center Honors in 1999 and the American Film Institute's lifetime achievement award in 2006.

Connery is survived by his second wife, painter Micheline Roquebrune, whom he married in 1975; his son by first wife Diane Cilento, actor Jason Connery; and a grandson from Jason's marriage to actress Mia Sara.

According to his family, there will be a “private ceremony followed by a memorial yet to be planned once the virus has ended.”

## **MAD MAX PREQUEL NAMES CAST**

by Nick Romano, ew.com 10-13-2020

The *Mad Max: Fury Road* prequel is going fast-and-*Furiosa*. Warner Bros. has officially tapped *The Queen's Gambit* actress Anya Taylor-Joy to portray a younger version of Charlize Theron's character in *Furiosa*. The studio also has cast *Avengers* star Chris Hemsworth and *Watchmen* Emmy winner Yahya Abdul-Mateen II in roles.

George Miller will direct and produce *Furiosa* alongside Doug Mitchell, and co-wrote the script with Nico Lathouris.

The filmmaker previously explained that, while writing the script for *Fury Road*, he wrote extensive back-grounds for the characters, including *Furiosa* and what life in The Green Place was like. Talk of a potential prequel go back years and Miller told *The New York Times* that, after he finishes *Three Thousand Years of Longing*, “hopefully everything settles down with the pandemic, we'll see what the world allows us to do with *Furiosa*.”

Taylor-Joy was recently seen in *The New Mutants*, an *X-Men* film she shot in 2017 but hit theaters this past August. She also filmed roles in Edgar Wright's *Last Night in Soho* and Robert Eggers' *The Northman*.

Abdul-Mateen is coming off of his Emmy win for

*Watchmen*, in which he played Doctor Manhattan on the HBO series. He'll also appear in *Candyman* (delayed due to the pandemic) and *The Matrix 4*. Hemsworth, meanwhile, will return to his Thor character for *Thor: Love and Thunder*, as well as his *Extraction* role for Netflix.

*Mad Max: Fury Road*, which hit theaters in 2015, starred Tom Hardy as Max Rockatansky opposite Theron's *Furiosa*. The film won eight Academy Awards.

Theron opened up to *The Hollywood Reporter* in early July about hearing the news of director George Miller eyeing *The Witch's* Taylor-Joy, among others, to portray the vehicular warrior in her younger years.

“It's a tough one to swallow,” she said. “Listen, I fully respect George, if not more so in the aftermath of making *Fury Road* with him. He's a master, and I wish him nothing but the best. Yeah, it's a little heartbreaking, for sure. I really love that character [*Furiosa*], and I'm so grateful that I had a small part in creating her. She will forever be someone I think of and reflect on fondly. Obviously, I would love to see that story continue, and if [Miller] feels like he has to go about it this way, then I trust him in that manner.”

Miller told *The Times* he once thought of using CG technology to de-age Theron for the planned prequel movie, but came to the conclusion that, “despite the valiant attempts on *The Irishman*, I think there's still an uncanny valley. Everyone is on the verge of solving it, particular Japanese videogame designers, but there's still a pretty wide valley, I believe.”

## **B'CON 52: TAKE TWO HAS NEW CO-GOII, KEEPS EYE ON THE FUTURE OF COVID**

Rae Carson of Arizona has been confirmed as co-Guest of Honor for Bubonicon 52: Take Two, which should be held August 20-22, 2021, in Albuquerque. Carson replaces Becky Chambers who was unable to commit as a special guest in 2021 (when 2020 went virtual).

Carson, born in 1973, is primarily a Young Adult fantasy writer. Her debut novel, *The Girl of Fire and Thorns*, was published in 2011, and was a finalist for the William C. Morris YA Award and the Andre Norton Award. It was selected as 2012 Top Ten Best Fiction for Young Adults by Young Adult Library Services Association. She also has written several tie-ins for *Star Wars*.

Her works include *The Empire of Dreams*, *The Rise of Skywalker* novelization, *Crown of Empires*, *The Gold Seer Trilogy*, “The Shadow Cats, a The Girl of Fire and Thorns story,” “Badass Moms in the Zombie Apocalypse,” *Star Wars: Most Wanted*, “Omega Ship,” and “The Red One” in *Star Wars: From a Certain Point of View*.

She reports her next novel will be released in Fall 2021, and that it “was inspired by someone telling me I should never begin a story with someone waking up. So of course that's how it starts.”

Carson is married to science fiction writer C. C. Fin-

lay, who very recently stepped down as editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*.

Other special guests for Bubonicon 52: Take Two are Keith R.A. DeCandido as co-GoH, A. Lee Martinez as Toastmaster, and Chaz Kemp of Colorado as Guest Artist. Con chair is Craig Chrissinger, with Jessica Coyle and Mandy Self acting as assistant chairs.



Of course, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that caused Bubonicon 52 to be postponed to August 2021. And now there is a possibility that Bubonicon again will not be a physical in-person convention in the New Year.

Some scientists think that large mass gatherings may be possible by Summer 2021, but a lot depends on the timing and availability of vaccines to most Americans plus state restrictions on people gathering together.

With that in mind, weekend passes for Bubonicon 52: Take Two will not go on sale until late February or even mid-March as the Bubonicon Inc Board monitors the reality of the situation.

Perry & Terri Rodent want to remind fans that we are all in this together. Please stay safe, wear those masks, wash your hands, and be well. And cross your fingers for August 2021!

Updates will be posted on [www.bubonicon.com](http://www.bubonicon.com), of course, and in this newsletter.

## REVIEW ROUND-UP

***A Deadly Education: The Scholomance Book 1* by Naomi Novik, 2020 Del Ray, hc \$28.00, 336 pages.**

**Review by Jessica Coyle**

*A Deadly Education* is the first book in a new series by Naomi Novik, the author of *Uprooted* and *Spinning Silver*. The novel follows Galadriel, a student at the Scholomance, a brutal school to train high school-aged wizards so that they learn how to defeat evil creatures and survive in the world. Galadriel, a third-year student who constantly fights her dark affinities and the school's attempts to turn her evil, is a loner. All the other students at the school avoid her because of her reputation for dabbling in the dark arts. When Orion Lake, her class' golden boy who excels in killing the evil creatures who try to feed on students constantly, saves her life for the second time, things begin to change for Galadriel. Orion tries to befriend her, and soon the entire school is gossiping that the two of them are dating.

As Galadriel struggles with going from being a pariah to the center of attention, she is also trying to discover why the school seems to be infested with even more deadly crea-

tures than usual. As the end of the school year and the fourth-year students' graduation ceremony approaches, it becomes apparent that if they don't do something drastic that none of the students may survive.

As someone who has greatly enjoyed Novik's previous works, I was very excited to receive this book. *A Deadly Education* is a phenomenal read. Novik's take on the wizarding school story is dramatically different from what has come before. She builds a completely convincing world and populates it with unique and interesting characters. I really love Galadriel, a girl who has been told so many times in her life that she evil that she decides to let everyone believe she is while she works to be as good as possible. The secondary characters like Orion, the golden boy who turns out to not have as many friends as one would think, and Galadriel's eventual friends are all fully fleshed out and interesting characters. I highly recommend this novel.

***Betwixt: Betwixt & Between Book 1 and Bewitched: Betwixt & Between Book 2* by Darynda Jones, 2020 DaryndaJones.com, tp \$11.99 and \$12.99, 254 and 272 pages.**

**Review by Craig W. Chrissinger**

*Betwixt* and *Bewitched* are the first two books in a new trilogy from Darynda Jones that tell the story of Defiance Dayne, who surprisingly has been bequeathed an old house in Salem by a complete stranger. Or so she thinks at first. Turns out that Ruthie Goode was the grandmother she never knew, and "Dephne" is a very unusual, powerful witch.

Along for her adventures are Annette Osmund, her bestie – the kind of friend with whom Defiance can trade jokes and insults about celibacy - and Roane Wildes, the hot journeyman always in a kilt. Plus Percival (her house), her two dads, Ink the cat, and various neighbors.

As Defiance explores her powers, she is drawn into helping the townsfolk with small mysteries such as where a wedding ring has ended up, and larger mysteries that are life-threatening. And then there's the problem of other witches who might stop at nothing to steal Defiance's immense power, which would come at the price of her death.

Jones has crafted a charming and entertaining circle of both environment and circle of friends. Both books are fast reads and very satisfying. A sexual chemistry exists between Defiance and Roane, which adds an erotic note without distracting from the overall story.

Both books are very enjoyable, and I look forward to the third book coming out in February 2021. I'm invested in the characters and want to see how Defiance's tale ends for this trilogy. (*Betwixt & Between* books are available on Amazon and also at Page One Books.)

***Over the Woodward Wall* by A. Deborah Baker (Seanan McGuire), 2020 Tor, hc \$17.99, 208 pages.**

**Review by Jessica Coyle**

*Over the Woodward Wall* is a YA fantasy novel by Seanan McGuire writing as A. Deborah Baker. This book is a loose companion to McGuire's *Middlegame* (it is often referenced in *Middlegame* as the main characters' favorite book). The story follows two children, Zib and Avery, who climb over a stone wall on their way to school and fall into



the Up-and-Under. The Up-and-Under is an impossible land full of mystery and adventure. The children must embark on a journey to the Impossible City to see the Queen of Wands so that they can go home. Along the way, the children befriend a Crow Girl, several owls, and a water nymph who help them overcome many dangers and obstacles.

*Over the Woodward Wall* is a blend of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Alice in Wonderland* through the lens of Seanan McGuire. It is by turns both magical and creepy. Avery and Zib are both fully developed characters who, while complete opposites, learn how to work together and help each other as the story goes on. If you enjoy magical children's fantasies, I recommend this book.

***Firefly: Generations* by Tim Lebbon, 2020 Titan Books, hc \$24.95, 288 pages. Review by Craig W. Chrissinger**

*Generations* is the fourth *Firefly* novel from Titan Books, and brings another story of the crew of the *Serenity* to readers that easily can be pictured as an episode of the beloved, cancelled space-western TV series.

Set between the TV show and movie, Tim Lebbon's adventure starts with a mysterious and undecipherable old map that Captain Malcolm Reynolds wins in a card game on an Outer Rim moon. The first hint that the map might be trouble is when an Alliance mercenary confronts our big damn heroes for its possession. A fight ensues.

When Malcolm, Kaylee, Zoe and Jayne return to the ship, it's River Tam who is able to interpret the map. It points to the hidden location of an Ark, one of the legendary giant generation ships that brought humans from Earth-That-Was to the 'Verse.

The salvage and antiquarian potentials are incredibly tempting to Reynold's crew. But the question is why the map is so difficult to interpret – and also why the Alliance doesn't seem to be aware of the generation ship's existence.

It's a trap, of course. As they approach the aged ship, it becomes obvious it isn't quite dead. Someone lured them to the ship – someone who can call to River across a vast distance. Turns out that River is not the first super-soldier the Alliance tried to create, and there's a reason her powerful ancestor has been locked up far away from all else.

Lebbon captures the essence of the *Serenity* characters very well, and this exploration of the Alliance's experiments fits very naturally into the *Firefly* universe. It's a fun peek at how humans traveled to the Alliance worlds, and there's some nice action sequences here. A good media tie-in novel worth reading. Recommended.

***A Case of Cat and Mouse: Magical Cat Mystery 12* by Sofie Kelly, 2020 Berkley, hc \$26.00, 295 pages. Review by Jessica Coyle**

*A Case of Cat and Mouse* is the 12th book in Sofie Kelley's ever-popular Magical Cat Mystery series, which focuses on librarian Kathleen Paulson and Owen and Hercules, her two cats with special magical powers, in Mayville Heights, MN. To be quite honest, the plot of these books isn't even the point. This one focuses on a baking competition that is happening in town that is epically similar to the massively popular *Great British Baking Show*.

But, to be brutally honest, if you read this cozy mystery series, it is not really for the solving of the mystery. It is for the winning Kathleen Paulson and the wonderful citizens of Mayville Heights that appear in each of these books. Sofie Kelley's world is so well-developed, and all of the characters are so enjoyable, that these books are like an amazing snack that you just cannot stop eating.

***Firefly: Watch How I Soar* (graphic novel) edited by Sierra Hahn, 2020 Boom! Studios, hc \$19.99, 128 pages. Review by Craig W. Chrissinger**

*Watch How I Soar* is an original graphic novel written by five authors, focusing on Hoban "Wash" Washburne, Hawaiian shirt-wearing pilot of the Firefly-class spaceship *Serenity*. Each of the six stories here explores an element of Wash's life that flashes through his mind as he realizes he's about to die (as seen in the movie, *Serenity*). As Wash said in the film, "I am a leaf on the wind; watch how I soar."

The stories range from learning to fly a ship and getting his first dinosaurs from his father, to meeting Zoe and becoming her husband; and from a gone-bad smuggling voyage with Malcolm Reynolds, to an imagined future in which he lives and gets to help Zoe raise their child.

The stories here give insight into Wash, his hobbies, his loves and his motivations. They feel right for Joss Whedon's character. The artwork varies to a degree, but the book is entertaining and a fast read. It's worth reading.

## ***ASFS MEETING REPORTS —*** **OCTOBER 2020: RADFORD TALK**

Benjamin Radford made his annual visit, though virtually, for 28 people to talk about "Tracking the Lizard Man," a strange 1998 incident in a butterbean field in a spooky area of South Carolina. "Near the small town of Bishopville, a man saw the 'Lizard Man' at 2:00 am," Radford said. "Most other reports are not from first-hand eyewitnesses but instead reports of damaged, mangled metal attributed after the fact to the Lizard Man. He's known for chewing on cars."

Radford said relatively little critical scrutiny has been brought to bear on the original and best-known sighting, that of Chris Davis. "Davis said something more than seven foot tall stood across a field from his car where he had a flat tire. He jumped in his car, and drove away. When Chris got home, his father saw the side mirror was twisted, and there were deep scratches and some denting to the car's roof."

Davis did not report the incident to authorities for two or three weeks, and there is no record of him mentioning the encounter to friends or co-workers. And yet TV shows from *Good Morning America* to the *Oprah Winfrey Show* called, and newspapers and magazine clamored for a story. In the months following Davis' eyewitness story in the media, 50,000 people visited Bishopville. Davis' story was endorsed by the local sheriff, and some sources claim he was administered a polygraph test and passed.

"What did he see?" asked Radford. "It's a fair question. In all these cases, the first conclusion is that a creature exists. But for the sake of science, what are other explana-

tions? It could be a hoax. His story is cinematic, gripping and scary. Maybe he was in a minor accident and used this outlandish story to cover it up. Plus the details of the story changed several times in the months and years following. But I'm willing to give him the benefit of the doubt."

"You still can buy Lizard Man swag, such as Lizard Man Butterbeans in packets, and t-shirts," Radford continued. "After 31 years, it's impossible to know what, if anything, Davis saw, but a seven-foot-tall Lizard Man is among the least-likely explanations. Most likely, the Lizard Man never existed in the first place. A mythology was created."

Radford gave the most likely explanation, which involves a farmer in the bean field and low-hanging tree branches. The complete story is in *Fortean Times* #333, published in November 2015, and on episode 16 of Radford's Podcast, *Squaring the Strange*, from July 27, 2017. He also was interviewed for episode two of season three of *William Shatner's Weird or What* on SyFy.

Asked what's next, Radford said his new book, *Big-If True: Adventures in Oddity*, came out the first week of October. It's a compilation of 70 or so of his columns from the *Skeptical Inquirer*. And he's doing research into COVID conspiracy theories right now.

## NOVEMBER: MOVIE TIME - ZONTAR

Twenty-five people braved the virtual elements to watch *Zontar, the Thing from Venus* - a 1967 made-for-TV film of alien invasion. Wikipedia notes, "At a dinner party with their wives, NASA scientist Dr. Keith Ritchie (Tony Huston) reveals to his colleague Dr. Curt Taylor (John Agar) that he has secretly been in communication with an alien from Venus named Zontar, who he claims is coming to Earth to solve all the world's problems. However, as soon as Zontar arrives on Earth via a fallen laser satellite, it quickly becomes obvious that the three-eyed, bat-winged, skeletal black creature has a hidden agenda."

Yes, it's about as bad as it sounds, and many of us decided the minions Zontar uses to infect people and control their minds look like flying (rock) lobsters! Some actors read their lines incredibly badly, and some scenes were framed in a boring or stilted manner. Not to mention how Patricia De Laney as Martha tried an odd accent, sometimes calling the alien "Zon-tah," "Zontag," or "Zontath."

Before the feature film, we watched two Muppet shorts - with Muppet Labs and then with the Swedish Chef.

Also, club members shared news about themselves. Valerie Kokenge reported she now has two part-time jobs; Daniel Hay had just finished his first week as circulation supervisory and librarian in Hendersonville, NC; Amy Mathis told everyone she got married about four months ago; and Brenda Cole announced she had been published in *New Mexico Remembers 9/11* (other ASFS-associated folks in the book include Roger Floyd and Loretta Hall).

## EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

• OH, MY GOD, WE'VE NICKNAMED THIS THE "DEATH ISSUE" because of the number of people who have passed away from October 6 to December 12. It's incredibly said that we lost

two Bubonicon Guests of Honor in November (Rachel Caine and Ben Bova), plus ASFS member Vincent Lundgren - who had been on the October Zoom meeting and asked a couple of questions to Benjamin Radford. Plus, of course, Eddie Van Halen and Johnny Nash on October 6, artist Richard Corben on December 2, singer Charlie Pride on December 12, various actors including 007 Sean Connery, and even Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on September 29.

• THAT'S MOSTLY TO SAY THAT 2020 SUCKS! Yeah, we have had the COVID-19 pandemic for 10 out of 12 months - and now more deaths in the United States than in World War II - but we also had social injustice and inappropriate police behavior, food insecurity, wildfires burning up Western states, hurricanes slamming into the East Coast, a tension-filled Election and alarming aftermath, Congress refusing to provide additional Pandemic Relief to thousands of hungry and unemployed citizens - and let's face the facts, a giant man-baby who won't accept that he lost. So, he's polluting our democracy and throwing dangerous suspicion on this country's election process. We will pay for these conspiracy theories, falsehoods, and near calls for violence and denial of facts for decades. Really sad.

So, thank ghu 2020 is almost over. We don't know what 2021 will bring, what the Federal Government will be able to accomplish under a new administration, how much longer we'll all have to wear masks and social distance, and how many months it will take to vaccinate a majority of all Americans. But we can hope for a better & brighter New Year! Will we have an in-person Bubonicon in August 2021? Hard to say. We'll just have to wait and see, stay strong, be vigilant, and do our best.

• DURING NM'S TWO-WEEK "RESET," I started going through clippings for Bubonicon, ASFS, NM authors and such again in an attempt to get things organized better and taking up less space. Found some really old newspaper bits on Bubonicon 10 and such. And in putting away old issues of *ASFacts*, I discovered I've been editing this newsletter since 2000. Good lord, that's 21 years at this point! Not sure how I've done that many. I guess just doing it one issue at a time.

And, as always, I'm hoping that ASFS members and other readers can contribute more to this clubzine. It would be nice to see other points of view in the book reviews, and we'd kill for a nice con report or summary of an author talk... *Hint, hint, hint!*

• VERY ODD NOT TO HAVE gone to Milehicon in October, or had Connie & Courtney Willis (and Denver friends) down for Thanksgiving. Jessica and I did "go" to a few of Milehicon 52's virtual events (she entered the costume contest), and we watched several events on the MSTie Turkey Day Meet Up over Thanksgiving weekend - such as Q&A sessions with Mary Jo Pehl and Joel Hodgson, Trace Beaulieu and Frank Conniff, Jonah Ray, Manos' Jackey Jones. In *RiffTrax* Trivia, our team came in 2nd place, and I won a couple of random drawings! Deana, who lives in Colorado Springs, did a bang-up job of organizing this *MST3K* virtual meet-up weekend.

• ENTERTAINMENT-WISE, happy to have *Young Sheldon*, *Big Sky*, *The Goldbergs*, *American Housewife*, *Star Trek: Discovery*, and *Svengoolie* to watch on TV. We're keeping up on *The Mandalorian*'s great 2nd season, and have started the reboot of *Animaniacs*. Also watched *Bill & Ted Face the Music* (decent ending and sweet), most of this year's *MST3K Turkey Day Marathon* & a lot of the *Great British Baking Show*. We're looking forward to *Mulan*, *Soul*, *WandaVision*, and eventually *Wonder Woman 1984*. And I've started reading Rebecca Roanhorse's *Black Sun*, and have Ernie Cline's *Ready Player Two* next.

• THANKS to Jessica for her reviews & Deb N for the news tip! See you all in February. Happy Holidays! Stay safe—*Craig*



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

*Have a great  
Hanukkah,  
Christmas and/or  
Kwanzaa...*

**AND MAY WE  
ALL HAVE A  
WONDERFUL  
NEW YEAR!**

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