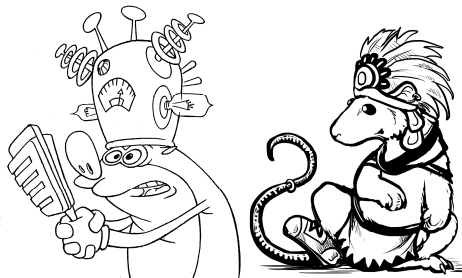




SITHFACTS 2012

MAYAN APOCALYPSE DECEMBER HOLIDAYS ISSUE



BUBONICON 45 Co-GOH AMONG WORLD FANTASY AWARD WINNERS

The World Fantasy Awards winners were announced November 3 at this year's World Fantasy Convention, held November 1-4 in Toronto, Canada. One of this year's winners is Bubonicon 45's co-Guest of Honor Tim Powers. (Lifetime Achievement winners are announced in advance of the event).

The winners are – Novel: *Osama* by Lavie Tidhar, Novella: "A Small Price to Pay for Birdsong" by K.J. Parker, Short Story: "The Paper Menagerie" by Ken Liu, Anthology: *The Weird* edited by Ann & Jeff VanderMeer, Collection: *The Bible Repairman and Other Stories* by Tim Powers, Artist: John Coulthart, Special Award Professional: Eric Lane, for publishing in translation – Dedalus books, and Special Award Non-Professional: Raymond Russell & Rosalie Parker, for Tartarus Press. The World Fantasy Awards Lifetime Achievement Winners for 2012 are Alan Garner and George R.R. Martin. The awards are presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field.

TIME MAGAZINE NAMES 2012'S WORST FILMS

Time Magazine has revealed its 10 worst films of the year – and someone beat out box-office bomb *John Carter* for the top spot, reported Blastr in early December. So which film ranked as the worst of the worst?

The Wachowskis' latest epic, *Cloud Atlas*, which has been called everything from film of the year to a genre-twisting mess, just edged out the Mars-set tale *John Carter* for the top of the 2012 list.

Considering the bashing that *John Carter* has taken

as one of the biggest flops of the year, it's a little surprising that *Time* opted to move the recently released *Cloud Atlas* up. Opinions have been split, sure, but it may be reaching to call it the worst film of the year.

Here's an excerpt from *Time*: "*Cloud Atlas* is so much like the bong-fueled conversations I had in college that I almost ordered a Domino's pizza afterward. The problem is there's no emotional hook in this bloated fantasia of special effects and makeup wizardry; the passion is all in the brute labor of adapting David Mitchell's novel for the screen. Co-directors Andy and Lana Wachowski and Tom Tykwer flit across centuries and genres in a whirlwind of bloody violence and cross-dressing, ethnicity-shifting performances, but there's as much opportunity to get attached to characters as there would be watching people go by on a roller coaster."

But what about *John Carter*? He came in at Number 2, with fellow genre picture *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* sitting nearby at Number 4.

SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, December 17, at Page One Bookstore to discuss 7th *Sigma* by local author Steven Gould.

The group then focuses on *This Case Is Gonna Kill Me* by Philippa Bornikova (Santa Fe's Melinda Snodgrass) on January 21, 2013.

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Comedic holiday film shorts, plus the 8th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off. Prizes! Mirth! Cinnamon!
- **January 11, 2013:** Group Book Discussion! What did you read in 2012 & would recommend?
- **February 8:** Unknown, but we're hoping for an author visit. Plus the Valentine's issue of *ASFacts* (Deadline Sun, Feb 3).
- **March 8:** The Annual Club Auction with Bob Varde-man as your auctioneer. Start looking for stuff to donate to the cause. And save up your pennies...
- **April 5:** Unknown program - meeting is a week early! And *ASFacts* for spring (deadline Sun, March 31).
- **May 3:** Again, unknown - and also a week early!
- **July 12:** A visit from Portales author Darynda Jones, speaking on YA fiction. Plus summer's *ASFacts*.

Darth Vader, guest editor. Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Send Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Darth Vader's Phone: c/o (505) 266-8905. E-mail: cwraig@nmia.com. *SITHFACTS* printed each December. *ASFacts* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, Feb. 3. **Club Officers:** Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Harriet Engle, Moderator. Kennard Wilson, alternator. Kris Kringle, Holiday Host. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Kristen Dorland (505) 459-8734 / Craig Chrissinger.

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the third Monday of each month. Books for discussion are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on the selected novels. For more information, contact Yvonne at ymcpiebald@gmail.com or Craig at 266-8905.

2012 ROMANTIC TIMES RELEASES REVIEWERS' CHOICE NOMINEES

In early November, Romantic Times Book Reviews announced the nominees for their 2012 Reviewers' Choice Awards. There are over a dozen categories of SF/Fantasy/Horror interest, with a few of the most prominent included below. The RT convention and awards ceremony will be held next May.

Science Fiction Novel: *The Hydrogen Sonata* by Iain M. Banks, *The Twelve* by Justin Cronin, *Blackout* by Mira Grant, *Redshirts* by John Scalzi, and *Sorry Please Thank You* by Charles Yu.

Epic Fantasy Novel: *Range of Ghosts* by Elizabeth Bear, *Seven Princes* by John R. Fultz, *King of Thorns* by Mark Lawrence, and *Sharps* by K.J. Parker.

Fantasy Novel: *Ironskin* by Tina Connolly, *The Shadowed Sun* by N.K. Jemisin, *Glamour in Glass* by Mary Robinette Kowal, *Cast in Peril* by Michelle Sagara, and *All Spell Breaks Loose* by Lisa Shearin.

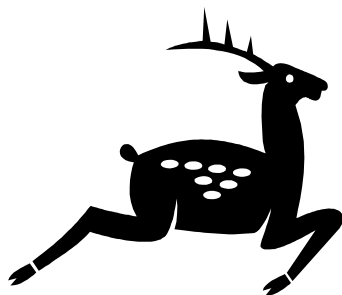
Urban Fantasy Novel: *White Horse* by Alex Adams, *The Isis Collar* by Cat Adams, *Thirteen* by Kelley Armstrong, *Summoning the Night* by Jenn Bennett, *Fair Game* by Patricia Briggs, and *Blue-Blooded Vamp* by Jaye Wells.

Urban Fantasy Protagonist: *Endgame* by Ann Aguirre, *Alien Diplomacy* by Gini Koch, *Shadow Heir* by Richelle Mead, *Tempest's Fury* by Nicole Peeler, and *Even White Trash Zombies Get the Blues* by Diana Rowland.

Young Adult Urban Fantasy/Paranormal Novel: *Every Other Day* by Jennifer Lynn Barnes, *Loss* by Jackie Morse Kessler, *Carnival of Souls* by Melissa Marr, *Fated* by Alyson Noël, *Destined* by Aprilynne Pike, *The Raven Boys* by Maggie Stiefvater, and *Days of Blood and Starlight* by Laini Taylor.

Young Adult Fantasy/Futuristic/Science Fiction Novel: *Onyx* by Jennifer L. Armentrout, *Bitterblue* by Kristin Cashore, *Tempest* by Julie Cross, *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer, *Unraveling* by Elizabeth Norris, and *Insurgent* by Veronica Roth.

The 2013 RT Book-lovers Convention will take place May 1-5, 2013, at the Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center.



FOREVER WAR GETS FILM WRITER

Ridley Scott is responsible for two of the most important sci-fi films ever made – *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. His return to the *Alien* franchise, *Prometheus*, may have seen a mixed response, but that shouldn't make fans any less excited that the book he most wanted to make a film of has finally found a screenwriter, reported Blastr in late November.

The Forever War, a novel written by Joe Haldeman, is the kind of fiction that practically screams for a film adaptation. It's got space, it's got war, it's got an overwhelming feeling of discontinuity and ennui ... so basically it's right in Scott's sweet spot.

The concept for *The Forever War* is basically a SF take on the Vietnam War. In this case, it centers on one soldier, William Mandella, who is part of an elite fighting force pitted against the alien Taurans. He's conscripted into war against his will, but somehow winds up being the longest living soldier. That long life is extended by time dilation. Mandella lives to see not only the very change of the evolution of the human race, but also the full result of an unnecessary war.

It's pretty grim, but thankfully they've found a writer who seems spot-on for the task. D.W. Harper has just come off a Tom Cruise picture, *All You Need Is Kill*, which also centers on a soldier who has to deal with the passage of time in an abnormal way.

DISNEY BUYS LUCASFILM FOR \$4 BILLION

by Michael Cieply, New York Times 10-30-12

The Walt Disney Company, in a move that gives it a commanding position in the realm of fantasy movies, said October 30 it had agreed to acquire Lucasfilm Ltd. from its founder, George Lucas, for \$4.05 billion in stock and cash.

The sale provides a corporate home for a private company that grew from Lucas' hugely successful *Star Wars* series, and became an enduring force in creating effects-driven science fiction entertainment for large and small screens. Lucas, who is 68 years old, had already announced he would step down from day-to-day operation of the company.

In a hastily convened conference call with investors that afternoon, Robert A. Iger, Disney's chief executive, said the company plans to release a seventh *Star Wars* feature film in 2015, with new films in the series coming every two or three years after that. Lucas will be a consultant on the film projects, Iger said.

Combined with the purchase of Marvel Entertainment for \$4 billion in 2009 and of Pixar Animation Studios for \$7.4 billion in 2006, the acquisition will help secure the

legacy of Iger as a builder who aggressively expanded the company since taking charge in 2005. Iger is set to step down as chief executive in March of 2015, but will remain with Disney in a lesser role under an employment deal he reached with Disney last year.

“Lucasfilm reflects the extraordinary passion, vision, and storytelling of its founder, George Lucas,” Iger said in a statement.

Jay Rasulo, the company’s chief financial officer, said Disney’s financial calculations in agreeing to the purchase Lucasfilm were driven almost entirely by the potential of the *Star Wars* series, which already has a place in the Disney theme parks. Rasulo said Lucasfilm’s licensing revenue comes mostly from toys and heavily from North America. Disney, he said, is positioned to extend the licensing business to other products and to strengthen it internationally.

The companies said Disney will pay approximately half of the purchase price in cash, and would issue about 40 million shares to cover the balance when the deal closes.

With the acquisition, Disney will acquire Lucasfilm’s live action production business, along with its Industrial Light & Magic effects business, its Skywalker Sound audio operation and its consumer products unit, among other things.

In a statement, Disney said it was particularly pleased to acquire the filmmaking technology that comes with Lucas’ company, and expects “sustained growth” from *Star Wars* and other Lucas properties as they are joined with Disney’s parks and existing entertainment and licensing businesses.

“It’s now time for me to pass *Star Wars* to on to a new generation of filmmakers,” Lucas said in a statement.

Kathleen Kennedy, a long-time associate of Steven Spielberg who recently agreed to become co-chairman of LucasFilm, will now be its president, reporting to Alan F. Horn, the chairman of Disney’s movie studio.

Lucasfilm is based in San Francisco, and now, in combination with Pixar — which operates from across the San Francisco Bay in Emeryville — it gives Disney, which is based in Burbank, a major presence in Northern California.

Along with *Star Wars* and its many iterations on movie screens, in television programming, in video games and elsewhere, Lucas has been a partner in the *Indiana Jones* series, and, occasionally, in an unrelated film, like *Willow*. After the release of the first *Star Wars* film in 1977, Lucas’ Industrial Light & Magic took the lead in developing effects technologies that were used in a generation of science fiction and fantasy films. Eventually, other companies, including Weta Digital, a New Zealand company co-owned by Peter Jackson, challenged its primacy, but never really supplanted it.



WHO ELSE BOOKS SURVIVES STORE CRASH

Word comes down from Denver via Rose Beetem and Facebook that a car collided with the Broadway Book Mall (home of Who Else Books, Bubonicon friend) on Saturday, December 8. Luckily, the damage was not severe, and no one was seriously injured.

From Beetem’s Facebook post: “Things hopefully will be mostly back to normal at the Broadway Book Mall by January. On Saturday, December 8, there was a most unfortunate situation involving a speeding car, a collision and a subsequent impact on the outside to the left of the main entrance. Luckily the car hit brick and was stopped before it could careen *into* the store — which could have been damaging to people as well as the store. Boards are up, the door is again lockable and they are open for holiday business and the prices are always great, so don’t forget to stop in if you have book-lovers on your shopping list! Ron and Nina (Else) are fine, and things are not as bad as they initially sounded... I thought the big plate glass windows had broken but they are fine.”

Reached by email, Nina Else added, “It was very scary. Dean and I saw the car coming, and I didn’t know how far inside it would go. Only injury to us was a slice to Ron’s ear lobe from a piece of flying glass. For some stunning photos, check Dean Wyant’s Facebook page.”

PRATCHETT DAUGHTER WILL INHERIT DISCWORLD

In a November interview with the *New Statesman*, Sir Terry Pratchett discussed his plans to hand the Discworld series over to his daughter, video game writer Rhianna Pratchett, once he’s no longer able to write. Pratchett also acknowledged suffering an atrial fibrillation in the back of a New York taxi early in November, which he survived thanks to CPR performed by his assistant Rob Wilkins. The attack made Pratchett consider the future of his work. Rhianna Pratchett will be a co-writer on the upcoming BBC Discworld series *The Watch*, and will write the Discworld books when Pratchett eventually retires. “The Discworld is safe in my daughter’s hands,” Pratchett said.

SMITH'S DOCTOR LOOKS AT END

With *Doctor Who*'s 50th anniversary fast approaching, many are taking bets as to when Matt Smith will leave the beloved sci-fi series. But hold on to the TARDIS, reported Blastr in early December — because here's what the beloved 11th Doctor has to say about his future on *Who*.

In an interview with Bangshowbiz, Smith said,

"We've got *Doctor Who*'s 50th anniversary coming up in November 2013, and one assumes there'll be another Christmas special after that, and I'd hope to be part of it. I take each year as it comes. All good things come to an end, but my mum is aghast at the thought of me ever not being the Doctor. The show is the star and will continue without me.

"I'm committed to it next year and will sit down with Steven Moffat and see where we go from there. I've no immediate plans to leave. I'm around for a whole year and that's a long time.

"Maybe someone could play the Doctor for seven years like Tom Baker, but... it's 10 months a year."

So at least we know we (most probably) won't be getting a regeneration during the Big 50 Anniversary Bash and that Smith is sticking around for more wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey adventures for at least another year after that.

But then we guess all bets will be off, since Smith doesn't seem to be keen to match Fourth Doctor Tom Baker's seven-year record tenure as the Mad Man in the Big Blue Box. Or is he? In the meanwhile, fans can look forward to more *Doctor Who* adventures in the upcoming X-mas special "The Snowmen."

STORYLINE DISPUTE

MAY DOOM KING FILM

It looks like time travel might not even be enough to save the big-screen adaptation of Stephen King's acclaimed sci-fi novel *11/22/63*, reported Blastr in early December.

Released in 2011, the novel chronicling an everyman's mission through time to prevent the assassination of JFK has been lauded as the best and most intricate King book in decades – and that could be the reason it never makes it in front of a camera.

Writer and director Jonathan Demme has spent the past several months working on the outline for the film, but he told *The Playlist* he's dropped out because he couldn't see eye to eye with King on what to keep and what to cut.

Clocking in at nearly 900 pages, *11/22/63* is a heck of a read, and includes way too much plot to cram into a two-hour movie. Apparently Demme says no one could decide which content was the most important.

"This is a big book, with lots in it," Demme noted. "And I loved certain parts of the book for the film more than Stephen did. We're friends, and I had a lot of fun working on the script, but we were too apart on what we felt should be in and what should be out of the script. I had an option and I let it go. But I hope it's moving forward, I really want to see that movie."

There's always the chance the studio could bring someone else in to work on this one, but it can be hard to

regain that momentum once a film falls off track behind the scenes.

BUBONICON 45 PLANS

START TO ROLL

Co-chairs Kristen Dorland and Craig Chrissinger are more than happy to confirm that Bubonicon 45 will be at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown for a second year. Yes, the August 2013 convention takes place at the Uptown Marriott, at the intersection of I-40 and Louisiana NE. Also next year's sleeping room rates remain the same as in 2012!

Bubonicon 45 takes place August 23-25, 2013, and the Marriott room rate will be \$99 single/double and \$109 triple/quad, with reservations needed by Monday, August 12. We made our room count 2004-2012, so please help us hit our goal of 130 room nights on Friday and Saturday of the con (Thursday & Sunday are considered if we're borderline).

Tim Powers (*The Anubis Gates*, *On Stranger Tides*, *Last Call*, etc) and Brent Weeks (*The Blinding Knife*, *Shadow's Edge*, *The Black Prism*, etc) are our co-Guests of Honor. Guest Artist is Alan F. Beck, who has done rat portraits, plus book and magazine illustrations. And urban fantasy/horror author Diana Rowland (*Touch of the Demon*, *Even White Trash Zombies Get the Blues*) will serve as Toastmistress.

Weekend Passes for Bubonicon 45 are \$35 through Feb. 16. They go to \$38 Feb. 17-May 11, and then to \$40. They may be purchased from "Bubonicon Inc" at club meetings or at PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176 (a registration form will be up before Christmas on the Bubonicon website's home page).

Again, a "youth" is defined as ages 14-17, and youth tickets are \$23 for the weekend. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult, and should not be running around the hotel (especially on different floors) without a parent/guardian nearby. Also, no unaccompanied children will be permitted in the Art Show due to possible mature content.

The con committee especially would like to hear your panel discussion ideas, fan program proposals and convention suggestions by April 21. Adam J. Brown most likely will be presenting another collection of locally made feature films and random shorts. And we're probably moving the Con Suite to the 14th floor and the "party floor" to the 3rd floor. This early in the game, everything else is not confirmed at this time...

We also are looking for volunteers to help out with programming events, running the convention, and checking attendees' badges. Our volunteer "gofers" receive swag before the con, and are in a drawing for prizes during the Bubonicon weekend.

Updates on the con will appear in *ASFacts* issues, on

fliers, or at the official website: www.bubonicon.com. Suggestions, questions and volunteers: Text 459-8734, call 266-8905 (Craig has no text capability), email bubonicon@gmail.com, or send mail to the PO Box.

UPCOMING SIGNINGS, EVENTS & NEWS NOTES

The future is very, very busy – assuming we survive the Mayan Apocalypse on Friday, December 21! Check out these forthcoming events in the Southwest:

+ LOVECRAFT HOLIDAY DOUBLE FEATURE of *The Whisperer in Darkness* and *The Call of Cthulhu* screens 10:15 pm Friday-Saturday, December 21 & 22, at the Guild Cinema, 3405 Central Ave NE. All seats \$8.00, cash only. Bubonicon 45 is a prize co-sponsor. www.guildcinema.com.

+ DISCO CHRISTMAS DOUBLE FEATURE, with *Saturday Night Fever* and *Can't Stop the Music*, screens 7:00 pm Monday-Tuesday, December 24 & 25, at the Guild Cinema. All seats \$7.00, cash only. Escape your family for some Bee Gees music and '70s dancing. www.guildcinema.com.

+ HARRY POTTER MOVIE MARATHON, with two movies per day chronologically, takes place 2:00 & 5:00 pm Wednesday-Saturday, December 26-29, at the KiMo Theater, 419 Central Ave NE. Yes, they are showing *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2001) through *Harry Potter & the Deathly Hallows Part 2* (2011). A double feature each day in this Holiday Family Fun Festival for just \$2.00 a seat! Arrive in a costume based on the Harry Potter series and receive a free popcorn! www.kimotickets.com.

+ BIRDSONG BOOKS IS MOVING! The store will close at their Central & University SE location at the end of December 29 in order to move all their inventory and fixtures. They hope to be re-opened by January 16, 2013, at 526 Washington NE (just barely south of Lomas, same strip mall as the Washington Speedwash). In order to reduce the amount of stuff to be moved, they are having a "Big-Ass Sale" with 20% off Everything through December 29. Volunteer help probably will be needed! www.birdsongusedbooks.com.

+ A MEL BROOKS HAPPY NEW YEAR, with *Blazing Saddles* and *Young Frankenstein*, screens 3:00, 5:00, 7:00 & 9:00 pm Monday-Tuesday, December 31 & January 1, at the Guild Cinema. *Saddles* is the 1st film in this double feature each day, with *Frankenstein* closing out the pair. All seats \$7.00, cash only. www.guildcinema.com.

+ COMING UP AT THE GUILD CINEMA in January-



February 2013: *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924 Douglas Fairbanks), *Watership Down* (1978 animated), *Liar's Autobiography: The Untrue Story of Monty Python's Graham Chapman* (2012 animated), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1990), *John Dies in the End* (2012 punk horror), *Marnie/Vertigo* (1964-1958 Hitchcock), *The 39 Steps/The Secret Agent* (1935-36 Hitchcock), and *The ABCs of Death* (2012 horror anthology). www.guildcinema.com.

+ COSINE 2013 takes place January 25-27 in Colorado Springs at the Crowne Plaza. Guest of Honor is S.M. Stirling. Connie & Courtney Willis also plan to attend. Memberships \$35 to January 13, \$45 at the door. Hotel 800-981-4012. firstfridayfandom.org/cosine.

+ STEVEN GOULD will be at Page One Bookstore 2:30 pm Saturday, January 26, to talk about and sign *Impulse*, his latest Jumper-influenced novel. Page One is located at the southwest corner of Montgomery and Juan Tabo NE.

+ CORY DOCTOROW will be signing *Homeland* (sequel to *Little Brother*) in conjunction with Alamosa Books 6:00 pm Monday, February 11, 2013. The exact location should be known around January 1 as determined by the number of pre-orders received. The ticketed event either will take place at the store at 8810 Holly Ave NE (Paseo Del Norte & Ventura) or at the UNM Continuing Education auditorium (University & Indian School NE). Stay tuned next month for more info!

+ WONDER WOMEN! *The Untold Story of American Superheroines*, part of the NM PBS Community Cinema program, will screen 7:00 pm Wednesday, March 27, at the KiMo Theatre. The film traces the fascinating evolution and legacy of the original comic-book Amazon, Wonder Woman, from her creation in the 1940s to the superhero blockbusters of today. Free general admission! www.kimotickets.com.

+ THE 2013 WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP takes place Friday, April 12, 2013, at Eastern NM University in Portales. Special Guest is Joe Haldeman, with Toastmistress Connie Willis. For info: Patrice.Caldwell@enmu.edu.

+ THE 3RD ALBUQ COMIC EXPO, scheduled for June 21-23, 2013, at the Albuquerque Convention Center, has confirmed special guest Giancarlo Esposito (actor). Plus comics folks such as Andy Kuhn, Katie Cook, Phil Hester, Matt Frank, Joe Jusko and Aaron Campbell. Much more info is forthcoming! www.abqcomicexpo.com.

LONG, STRANGE ROAD: BEING INTERVIEWED BY SHATNER

by Melinda Snodgrass, published online November 7, 2012

(On November 7, I was interviewed by William Shatner for a documentary he is making about *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The documentary hasn't been sold yet, but it will probably air on one of the cable networks.)

Driving back to the condo after finishing my inter-

view with William Shatner, I had this moment of dislocation and disbelief. I remembered being the little girl who first watched the Enterprise sail across my TV screen back in the 1960s. For the first time the pictures in my mind as I read Heinlein and Norton were tangible, something I could see. I fell in love with Kirk and Spock and Bones.

Flash forward to 2012 where I found myself seated across from the only true captain of the Starship Enterprise. I didn't know what to expect when I went in for that interview. I wasn't certain of the focus of the documentary. Truthfully what I expected was a puff piece with softball questions.

I was wrong. Shatner (I suppose I can call him Bill since we bonded over horses but more about that later) was an incisive interviewer with thought provoking and at times uncomfortable questions that stopped me, and had me considering my stances and opinions. What he is creating is almost Shakespearian in scope about power, the loss of power. Vision versus entertainment.

Bill has this voice that is like dark velvet. The depth of the baritone resonance doesn't totally come across when you hear him on film. He is very soft spoken as he sets out these tricky questions. Apparently some of what I had to impart was new information, and I was able to speak to the decency of Maurice Hurley, the man who bought "Measure of a Man," and gave me my start in Hollywood. I was glad for that. I was also able to talk about Michael Wagner, the forgotten man of *Star Trek*. The man who was an executive producer, and in charge of the writers for six short, tumultuous weeks. A man who quit over principle. I hope some of that is in the documentary.

You never know with actors, but it turns out this man is very smart and very thoughtful. I know he was apparently an ego maniac back in the Trek days, but he's sort of a *Star Trek* elder statesman now. He really did put me on the spot a few times because he asks follow up questions. He should handle political debates. :-)

Silly little things from the day. I learned that you can't wear Bare Minerals on camera. There is too much mica in the makeup. My makeup artist wears it in real life, but had to wipe it away and redo my makeup because of the glitter.

After the interview the crew was breaking for lunch, and Bill invited me to stay and join them. I was thrilled to do so. We talked about horses - he owns the top reining horse in the country, and he shows him himself. He talked about the bonding of two living beings. He teased his charming assistant who had no horses when she started to

work for him and now she has two. He invited me to come and see him show his horse. I will be there. I love reining. It's sort of a Western version of



dressage. Oh, and Bill knows all about dressage. He and his wife breed Dobermans. You can tell he's crazy about animals.

Like all successful actors, he is enormously charming with that ability to focus totally on a person. He keeps his eyes locked on yours, but unlike some actors I've known he listens. Intently and with great intensity.

Lunch ended, and he went in for the next interview after bidding farewell and giving me a sincere thank you. I climbed in my car, left The Lot, and started driving back to Woodland Hills. And that's when it struck me — how had the dreaming sci-fi girl ended up a writer? Ended up seated across from a cultural icon. Working on a show with such wide appeal, something that has also been a cultural phenomenon.

It's been a long strange journey, and I'm happy to report it doesn't seem to be over yet. I'm excited to see the next act in the screenplay of my life.

REVIEW ROUND-UP

***The Sum of Her Parts: Tipping Point 3* by Alan Dean Foster, 2012 Del Rey, tp \$15.00, 288 pages.**

Review by Roberta Johnson

Alan Dean Foster is a prolific and well-respected author, notably of the Pip and Flinx adventures. Foster's latest sci-fi adventure, *The Sum of Her Parts*, takes place in a different future, one where technology is available to economically reshape, or meld, the body to any specification. A first basic meld is available to any individual past puberty. More fanciful melds are available to anyone who can pay for them (much like today's medical care), and this intriguing device drives the plot of the entire series.

The concept is after all, fascinating, and Foster indulged his imagination about the wildly specialized shapes humans might choose unfortunately, well past the point of absurdity. Desert workers have their uniforms tattooed on their skin so they don't need clothing. Assassins are reshaped to become better killing machines. Gunhands, check. Speakhands, check. Many of the melds make less sense, and the whimsical shapes Foster dreamed up don't make up for a lack of plot or characterization.

His two protagonists are rather flat, their motives incomprehensible (at least without having read the first two volumes) and not even that interesting. The African setting is much more vividly portrayed.

Our protagonists, Dr. Ingrid Seastrom and her hired companion Whispr (a professional thief who is, of course, in love with her) have found their way to the Namib desert, where Seastrom hopes to find the origin of a mysterious "thread," which she discovered in the course of her work (in a previous novel). We are assured frequently that their search is hopeless, since they are amateurs who are being pursued by professionals. Seastrom is spending her life savings to pursue her quest, though, and money is

always helpful. Moreover, whenever things seem particularly discouraging or deadly, they are frequently aided by third parties who operate on the principle that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

Seastrom is a “Natural”, who has chosen to remain unmelded. Whispr was surgically engineered to be impossibly thin, with concomitant difficulties due to shortened digestive tract and the necessity for nutritional supplements to keep him alive. Supposedly (though incomprehensibly to me) this made him a more successful thief.

Animals can also be reengineered, or “magnified.” This leads us to meerkats, which will appeal to anyone who grew up on Andre Norton. Magnified meerkats, with illegally enhanced intelligence that enables them to escape their research laboratories and make their way home. That intelligence enables them to get rid of some of those hateful humans, though at quite a heavy cost in meerkat lives. Foster attempts not to anthropomorphize the critters, with some success. They certainly are better realized than many other SF beasts, and he was nearly successful in keeping them from being either cute or noble. Obviously I liked the meerkats better than any of the humans.

Fans of Foster’s who read the first two volumes will enjoy this one, which wraps up the series started in *The Human Blend*. Readers who somehow missed the first two novels will be less happy. Too many details of this plot can only be understood by reference to the previous novels. More importantly, the ending disappointed. There is just no way to describe my emotions about the ending of this novel, and the series, without giving it away. Loose ends are neatly wrapped up with a *deus ex machina*. Even the romantic tension between Seastrom and Whispr is eventually resolved, if only by time. Myself, I’d go back to reading about Pip and Flinx.

***Death and the Girl Next Door* by Darynda Jones, 2012 St. Martin’s Griffin, tp \$9.99, 286 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Death and the Girl Next Door is Portales, NM author Darynda Jones’ first foray into the realm of Young Adult Fantasy. Lorelei McAlister lives with her grandparents in the small town of Riley Switch, NM. Her parents disappeared without a trace when she was five. The 10th anniversary of their disappearance is approaching, and her best friends, Brooklyn and Glitch, are trying their best to distract Lorelei from her woes.

Things in Lorelei’s life take a decidedly different turn with Jared Kovach, the mysterious new kid at school, begins to show an interest in her. Strange, unexplainable things begin to happen, and Lorelei begins to wonder who or what Jared really is. With the help of her friends and the school loner, Cameron Lusk, Lorelei goes on a search to discover the truth about Jared, her parents, and even herself.

This paranormal effort is a solid first entry in Jones’ new YA trilogy. Lorelei is a compelling main character, and the mystery at the heart of the book engages the

reader’s interest from beginning to end. While not as funny as Jones’ Charley Davidson series of books, *Death and the Girl Next Door* is definitely worth checking out if you are a fan of her other works.

***City of Dark Magic* by Magnus Flyte, 2012 Penguin, tp \$16.00, 448 pages.**

Review by Joe Walters

City of Dark Magic seemed promising with cover blurbs and lurid copy like “Prague is a threshold – where the fabric of time is thin” and “home to emperors, alchemists, and, it’s even been whispered, portals to hell.”

Sounds great. If only Magnus Flyte’s book had been about all that. Oh, you do see that stuff, but only through the eyes of the protagonist (Sarah) and only while she’s under the influence of a mysterious hallucinogen. Does any of it really happen to her, or is she delusional under the drug’s influence? I’ve read the book and I’m not convinced anything happened at all. She’d hardly be the first to take an unknown drug and meet a historical figure.

One of the characters is referred to on the cover as a “400-year-old dwarf.” Well, there is indeed a dwarf, and he claims to be that old, but there’s no real indication as to whether that’s true. Sarah sees him in one of her drug-addled trips to the past, but this happens after she’s told his “age,” and may just be part of her delusion.

The cover copy touts events like seeking clues in manuscripts of Beethoven, and tantric sex in a fountain. Well, those things do happen. On occasion, Sarah actually glances at Beethoven papers, but other than the revelation that she thinks Beethoven used the same drug she is, ah, experimenting with, we get little out of that. And the fountain scene is brief and devoid of energy. Basically, you’re told in narrative that she had sex in a fountain. There isn’t much more to it than that.

Sorry, but I kept waiting for fantasy or sci-fi elements to show up, and they just weren’t there. This is an oversized representation of a small story that would better fit in young-adult romance than sci-fi.

So what does happen? There is a fascinating opening involving the inexplicable and horrific deaths of several wealthy people, and the reader is left to wonder how this is going to be explained. Sad to say, it’s explained in a throwaway sentence by a minor character halfway through the book, and never mentioned again.

Sarah is assigned to travel to a European castle where several historical documents, including a number of papers by Beethoven, are stored; her purpose is cataloging and researching the Beethoven material. She gets caught up in numerous distracting soap opera subplots, has a number of surprisingly uninteresting sexual encounters, repeatedly finds herself in trouble with the local authorities, takes drugs, explores the past, seeks the Golden Fleece (where did THAT come from?), and really resolves very little of anything. There are many “I’ll explain later” moments, always a weak authorial technique. There is a moment when a corrupt US Senator, who appeared in the book out of left field as suddenly as the Fleece, is seen by drug-influenced Sarah to fall into a portal into, well, we

really don't know what; later, the Senator is indeed missing, so that lends a small amount of credence to Sarah's belief in what she's seen, but that's about it.

In the final chapter, Sarah goes home. The end.

The author, "Magnus Flyte," is a pseudonym (and who would have guessed that?) used by a collaboration of two authors. I hope not to encounter this particular collaboration again, even though on the back cover there is the threat of a sequel.

***The Warlock's Curse* by M.K. Hobson, 2012 Demimonde, tp \$16.95, 398 pages.**

Review by Serge Mailloux

M.K. Hobson has a new novel out – *The Warlock's Curse*. The year is 1910, and young Will Edwards has seen his dream come true. Almost. He's been offered a job in Detroit, to work for Tesla Industries, but his family is inexplicably recalcitrant about this once-in-a-lifetime chance to escape California's Sacramento Valley. That's when Jenny Hansen, a childhood friend, comes back into his life with a plan that will allow her to get her hands on her inheritance before she turns 18, and Will his job for Nikola Tesla himself. They each get their wish, but there is this saying about being careful what you wish for.

Especially when there's still plenty of magic around.

And just because you were born after 1876 and thus unable to tap into the forces of Magic, it does not mean that those forces can't get to you. And the darkest magic isn't necessarily that of Blood.

"Sangrimancy is the only kind of magic where there can be conscious cooperation," Briar said. "In credomancy, one person can't have power unless they fool or manipulate some other person. And that other person can't agree to be fooled, 'cause that would defeat the whole purpose. In animancy, magic is drawn from spirits that don't have any kind of conscious thought ... natural spirits that can't agree nor cooperate, only respond according to their nature."

Recommended? Hell, yes.

***Fourth Grave Beneath My Feet* by Darynda Jones, 2012 St. Martin's Press, hc \$24.99, 320 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

The latest installment in Darynda Jones' Charley Davidson series starts off with Charley in a not-so-great spot in her life. She's lost her office on the top floor of her father's bar, she has no clients (and no money) left, and she is still trying to recover both physically and mentally from the trauma she suffered at the end of the last book. When she is approached by a woman named Harper who claims that she is being stalked and harassed, Charley takes the case out of desperation, even though everyone in Harper's life believes that she is making everything up. Charley quickly becomes convinced that there is definitely something odd going on in Harper's life, especially because Harper's family spends too much time acting as

if nothing is happening and Harper is insane.

Even as she is working on her case, Charley also gets sucked back into the life of Reyes Farrow, sometimes-boyfriend and the Son of Satan. Charley knows Reyes is out of jail, but she hasn't had any contact with him in months. She goes looking for and finds him, and their on-again, off-again relationship heads in a new and interesting direction.

Fourth Grave Beneath My Feet is probably the most serious of Jones' Charley Davidson books. While the tongue-and-cheek humor readers have come to expect is still there, Jones' delves into the ramifications of what Charley suffered at the end of the third book, and it seems to take the story in a slightly different and unexpected direction. By making Charley a much deeper and interestingly flawed character, Jones makes this already delightful series of books even more exciting.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS — **AUGUST: BUBONICON PREVIEW & GAME**

Thirty-eight people were on hand for the Bubonicon 44 preview of the schedule and t-shirt art. In related business, nominees for Bubonicon 45 chair were announced as Harriet Engle, and Craig Chrissinger/Kristen Dorland.

After the con preview, Kevin & Randi Hewett ran rounds of "Stop My Apocalypse" (or "The SyFy Saturday Movie Challenge"), in which odd scenarios must be solved with random objects by contestants. After a scenario is described, each contestant gets one object to use in stopping the apocalypse. They then have one minute each to describe how they'd stop the destruction, with the audience deciding who did the best job.

In one round, Julie Heffernan created "Awesometanium," which became quite popular. In the final round, trans-dimensional sub-atomic particles were disrupting communications and electronics with their civil war. Danielle Pollock had a nuclear submarine, Vic Milan had a slide rule, and Harriet Engle had scuba gear. Creativity & amusement ensued.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

Happy Holidays! Let's hope we all make it through the Mayan Apocalypse December 21, and that the New Year is full of joy, luck and success for everyone. Or lottery winnings...

My left knee has been tender & stiff since Halloween, but is recovering with icing each day and a knee brace. No idea what's up with the knee - it honestly happened overnight. Must be getting kinda old - I turn 51 around Christmas this year.

Milehicon was more energetic this year, and we stayed busy with the Bubonicon 45/Detroit NASFiC Bid fan table and a two-hour party in the con suite. Plus we stayed an extra day to take in the Van Gogh show at DAM. Impressive stuff.

Cherie Priest was a sweetheart when she visited ABQ in November. Also good to see Connie Willis & Darynda Jones around Thanksgiving. I'm really enjoying reading Steven Gould's *7th Sigma*. Finally saw *Looper*, which was very a very cool and interesting time-travel pic. Also enjoyed *Wreck-It Ralph* (amusing & pretty sweet) and *Argo* (very well done).

Thanks for the contributions, kids! Hope to see you all for February 2013's issue. Stay warm & take care - Craig C