



ASFACTS 2022

FEBRUARY/MARCH COMBO "UNMASKING" ISSUE

ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP PLANNED IN-PERSON FRI, APRIL 8

The 46th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship is scheduled to be in-person Friday, April 8, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales. Special guest is Walter Jon Williams, with Colorado's Connie Willis as Mistress of Ceremonies. Friday events should include a luncheon, gaming in Golden Student Success Center and Library, and various afternoon panel discussions.

A campus tradition since 1977, the Lectureship annually draws well-known authors to visit ENMU and discuss the interactions of science and the humanities. The 2020 and 2021 Lectureships were done virtually online.

The theme of this year's Lectureship is "Speculative Fiction: Never the Same Story Twice."

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

Williams of Belen won Nebula Awards for novelette "Daddy's World" in 2000, and for novella "The Green Leopard Plague" in 2004. Williams was born in Duluth, MN, and graduated from the University of New Mexico, where he received his BA degree in 1975. In 2006, Williams founded the Taos Toolbox, a two-week writer's workshop for fantasy and science fiction writers. His novels include *Hardwired* in 1986, Nebula-nominee *Metropolitan*, the *Dread Empire's Fall* series, *This Is Not a Game*, *Quillifer*, *Days of Atonement*, *Implied Spaces*, *Star Wars: The New Jedi Order: Destiny's Way*, and *Voice of the Whirlwind*. He also has been one of the major contributors to the *Wild Cards* universe. Previously he wrote nautical adventure fiction under the name Jon Williams, in particular, *Privateers and Gentlemen* (1981-1984), a series of historical novels set during the age of sail.

"We are planning on an in-person event but are keeping a close eye on infection rates in the area and are ready to reevaluate as necessary," says Lectureship chair David Sweeten. "We will have panels plotted around the theme, panels on writing, a Thursday night retrospective

discussion of Walter's long and interesting career, readings from Walter and hopefully our other guest authors, and smaller events such as a gaming component and trivia. We are also planning on having a hybrid component, even with an in-person event, that will allow those not able to attend physically to stream the panels and ask questions."

On Friday, April 8, Williams should be giving a Guest of Honor address after an introduction by Willis at a luncheon 11:30 am in the Campus Union Ballroom. In the past the Luncheon cost was \$10.00 (payable at the door).

So far, other participants are Reese Hogan, Darynda Jones, Jeffe Kennedy, Emily Mah, Patricia Rogers, and Joan Saberhagen.

For Lectureship updates, visit my.enmu.edu/web/jack-williamson-lectureship/2020-lectureship or email David.Sweeten@enmu.edu.

JOHN JOS. MILLER DIES

by Craig W. Chrissinger

Albuquerque's John Jos. Miller died early morning January 5 at his home. He was 67 years old. Miller was best known for his work in the long-running *Wild Cards* shared universe series of original anthologies and novels, edited by George RR Martin.

John Joseph Miller (who also wrote as John Miller, J.J. Miller, and John J. Miller) was born March 28, 1954, in central New York. He started reading the works of Edgar Rice Burrows in his childhood and soon became a dedicated fan of science fiction, comic books and movies.

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **February 11:** We did a Virtual movie viewing via Zoom of 1954's *The Snow Creature*.
- **March 11:** The Club Auction returns! Patricia Rogers & Craig Chrissinger auction off donated items to benefit ASFS. Cash/check only.
- **April 1 - One Week Early:** Jane Lindskold visits to talk about her three releases from Baen in 2022.
- **April 22:** Bubonicon 54 Guest Nominations...
- **May 13:** Working on a science speaker. Plus the Spring issue of *ASFACTS* (deadline May 9).
- **June 10:** Biographer Brian Jay Jones and puppeteer Michael McCormick talk Henson & Lucas.

Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Darth Vader, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Contact: (505) 266-8905 or via cwcraig@nmia.com. *ASFACTS* published February, March, April, May, July & October for ABQ SF Society, *SITHFACTS* each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Mon, May 9.
Club Officers: Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Harriet Engle, Moderator. Mike McCommas, Alternator. Cupid, holiday host. **B'con Con Chair:** Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

He attended the State University of New York, graduating in 1976 with a B.A. in anthropology. He then moved to Albuquerque to pursue a graduate degree in archaeology at the University of New Mexico. He worked as a field archaeologist in England, New York, Colorado and New Mexico. He met his wife Gail Gerstner-Miller on a New York archaeological project in 1977, and they were married the following year.

While early attempts at publishing science fiction stories of his own were met with a succession of failures, Miller continued writing while in graduate school and finally had a story, "Wonders of the Gods," published in the last issue of *Fantastic Science Fiction* (October 1980). In 1981, he had a poem published in issue 16 of *Nyctalops*, a Cthulhu Mythos fanzine edited by Albuquerque artist Harry O. Morris.

He was a founding member of the Wild Cards Consortium, contributing to 20 volumes of the shared-world anthology/mosaic novel series. In "Comes a Hunter" in *Wild Cards 1* (1987) he introduced iconic characters Daniel "Yeoman" Brennan, the yen archer, and Chrysalis with her transparent skin. In *Joker Moon: Wild Cards 29* (2021), Miller was responsible for finishing and revising Victor Milan's story, "Fatal Error." *Dead Man's Hand: Wild Cards 7* (1990), was co-written with George RR Martin. *Death Draws Five: Wild Cards 17* (2006) originally was released by iBooks about a week before the company closed down, and only a few hundred copies were distributed. It was reissued by Tor Books in November 2021.

On January 15, *Wild Cards* editor Martin posted on his blog: "John loved the world and its characters, and his creativity was boundless. John probably created more characters and wrote more stories than any of the other forty-plus writers who have contributed to *Wild Cards* over the decades, and gave us so many memorable moments... Part of me does not really believe he's gone... John was one of the good ones. A good writer, a good guy, a good friend. *Wild Cards*, and the world, will not be the same without him."

Other novels include *First Power Play: Buck Rogers Inner Planets Trilogy Book 1* (1990); *Dinosaur Samurai: Ray Bradbury Presents Book 3* (1993) and *Dinosaur Empire: Ray Bradbury Presents Book 5* (1995), both co-written with Stephen Leigh; *Witchblade: A Terrible Beauty* (2002); *Shades of Night, Falling: The Twilight Zone Book 1* (2003); and forthcoming graphic novel *Wild Cards: Ante Up!*, co-written with Kevin Andrew Murphy. Under the pseudonym of Jack Arnett, he wrote *Death Force: Books of Justice Volume 3* (1990).

Miller contributed short fiction to several anthologies and magazines, including *A Very Large Array: New Mexico Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1987), *The Williamson Effect* (1996), *Lord of the Fantastic: Stories in Honor of Roger Zelazny* (1998), *Shelf Life: Fantastic Stories Celebrating Bookstores* (2002), *Transformers: Legends* (2004), *The Change: Tales of Downfall and Rebirth*

(2015), *DreamForge Magazine #4* (2019), and a final story about Negro league pitcher and Hall of Famer Satchel Paige in *DreamForge #9* (2022). Miller also co-wrote *Wild Cards II* (1990) for Epic Comics, four issues of *Hellhound, The Redemption Quest* (1993-1994) for Epic Comics, and adapted George R. R. Martin's *In the House of the Worm* (2014) in four issues for Avatar Press.

Miller published non-fiction and essays in *Firsts: The Book Collector's Magazine*, *Baseball Digest*, *Tropical Fish Hobbyist*, *Beyond the Wall: Exploring George R. R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire* (2012), Society of American Baseball Research publications, Wildcardsworld.com and several hundred posts to Cheesemagnet.com. At Bubonicon, he moderated a "Cheese Magnet" panel on bad movies for many years.

He also wrote *GURPS Supers: Wild Cards* (1989), a supplement for the GURPS role-playing system; and two Wild Cards world books and histories from Green Ronin, *Mutants & Masterminds: Wild Cards* (2008) and *Mutants & Masterminds: Wild Cards - Aces and Jokers* (2010).

For the past decade or so, he was writing an original novel, a period horror/SF tale tentatively called *Black Train Coming*. Sadly, he never finished it, though he had labored on it a long time. Miller also was a long-time member of the Critical Mass critique group.

Miller served as secretary of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America for two years, 1996 to 1998. He also was a Fellow of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR), and was an authority on America's Negro league baseball of the 20th Century. He was also a longtime fan of the New York Mets baseball team. When he was younger, Miller played softball, racquetball, and handball.

He was a collector of books, comic books, baseball cards, coins, movie paraphernalia, and more. He loved bad movies and rock music, especially the Grateful Dead. He traveled to Mexico twice for Dead concerts with Gail, Martin, and Parris McBride. He also loved animals, having tropical fish, poison arrow frogs, lizards, dogs, and cats as pets over the years.

Miller is survived by his wife, Gail Gerstner-Miller, various in-laws, and many *Wild Cards* friends and authors.

2021 WORLDCON WINNERS NAMED

Winners for the Hugo Awards, the Astounding Award for Best New Writer, the Lodestar Award for Best Young Adult Book, and Fan Awards were announced by DisCon III, the 79th World Science Fiction Convention in Washington, DC. The Hugo Ceremony took place December 18, 2021.

BEST NOVEL: *Network Effect* by Martha Wells, BEST NOVELLA: *The Empress of Salt and Fortune* by Nghi Vo, BEST NOVELETTE: "Two Truths and a Lie" by Sarah Pinsker, BEST SHORT STORY: "Metal Like Blood in the Dark"

by T. Kingfisher (Ursula Vernon), BEST SERIES: *The Murderbot Diaries* by Martha Wells, BEST RELATED WORK: *Beowulf* by Maria Dahvana Headley, BEST GRAPHIC STORY OR COMIC: *Parable of the Sower: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* by Octavia E. Butler and adapted by Damian Duffy, BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, LONG FORM: *The Old Guard*, BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, SHORT FORM: *The Good Place*: "Whenever You're Ready,"

BEST EDITOR, SHORT FORM: Ellen Datlow, BEST EDITOR, LONG FORM: Diana M. Pho, BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Rovina Cai, BEST SEMIPROZINE: *FIYAH*, BEST FANZINE: *nerds of a feather, flock together*, BEST FANCAST: *The Coode Street Podcast*, BEST FAN WRITER: Elsa Sjunneson, BEST FAN ARTIST: Sara Felix, BEST VIDEO GAME: *Hades*,

LODESTAR AWARD FOR BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK (Not a Hugo): *A Wizard's Guide to Defensive Baking* by T. Kingfisher, ASTOUNDING AWARD FOR BEST NEW WRITER (Not a Hugo): Emily Tesh.

And several awards for services to SF fandom were presented during the Discon III opening ceremonies, held December 15:

FIRST FANDOM HALL OF FAME AWARD: William F. Nolan, FIRST FANDOM POSTHUMOUS HALL OF FAME AWARD: Richard & Pat Lupoff, SAM MOSKOWITZ ARCHIVE AWARD: Kevin L. Cook, and the DAVID A. KYLE BIG HEART AWARD: Linda Deneroff.

Though William F. Nolan died in July 2021, he was notified of his award beforehand, and provided an acceptance speech read by John Pomeranz during the ceremony.

7000 BC AWARDED GRANT

7000 BC has been awarded a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the New Mexico Humanities Council. The money supports the weekly comic book workshops that they've offered since the pandemic began, as well as a week-long intensive for teachers on comics in education.

"We're incredibly grateful for this grant, and the opportunity to bring comics education to a wider audience," said Jeff Benham, 7000 BC's Education Coordinator.

The group reports that *Between The Panels*, their



weekly virtual workshops, have borne that out. Designed to empower anyone to tell their own story in word and image, participants have come with broad interests, such as a therapist and an accountant seeking

to use comics in their professions.

7000 BC has taught comics and watched the field grow for nearly 20 years. From Charlie Brown trying to kick a football to learning to administer first aid, 7000 BC believes comics have evolved into an essential social and professional tool.

"Students today are emerging into a world where comics are a ubiquitous form of communication," notes Benham. "The ability to fluently 'speak' that language can give students a unique advantage."

The teachers' intensive echoes this belief. The professional development course, for middle and high school teachers, is something 7000 BC has been working towards for years. In it, language arts and social studies teachers will explore the use of comics and visual literacy in the classroom. By week's end they will develop a complete lesson plan, create lesson examples for students, and wield a well-loaded visual literacy toolbox.

According to Benham, "this grant is allowing that toolbox to pass on to the next generation of comics creators."

For more information on all of these events, visit www.7000bc.org.

BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, March 21, at Jason's Deli (northwest corner of Louisiana & America's Parkway NE – across the street from Bubonicon's Marriott Hotel) to discuss *Chilling Effect* by Valerie Valdes. The group then focuses on *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig on Monday, April 18 – most likely at Jason's Deli again.

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the third Monday of each month. Books for discussion are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on selected novels at Page One Books in the Mountain Run Shopping Center. For more info, contact Leah at [mrsranson@hotmail.com](mailto:mrsransom@hotmail.com) or Craig at 266-8905.

WILD CARDS COMING TO MARVEL IN NEW CORNELL MINI-SERIES

by Marvel.com, 2-18-2022

Marvel fans will get a chance to enter George RR Martin's beloved *Wild Cards* universe this June!

For the first time in comic book form, witness the very beginning of the *Wild Cards* mythos with an adaptation of the very first stories in the original 1987 *Wild Cards* novel. Based on stories by Harold Waldrop, Roger Zelazny and series master-mind and editor, George RR Martin, *Wild Cards* is a fascinating saga set in a whole new world reshaped by the emergence of superpowers. The limited series, titled *The Drawing of Cards*, is done by a team of comic superstars, writer Paul Cornell and

artist Mike Hawthorne – with cover art from Steve Morris – and serves as a perfect entry point for *Wild Cards* newcomers and a must-have new reimagining for aficionados!

Spanning more than 25 novels, 20 short stories, and written by more than 40 authors over three decades, the *Wild Cards* series tells the story of an alternate history where Earth is home to super-powered individuals. When a human is infected with the alien “Wild Card” virus, the odds are that they will be killed... which is referred to as “drawing the black queen.” Of those that survive, the bulk of them become “jokers,” left with some strange mutated form. A lucky few are called “aces,” those gifted with super powers they can put to use towards heroic goals... or villainous ones.

“*Wild Cards* is still a unique take on super heroes, a creation story that’s influenced everything since, but still maintains its power,” Cornell said. “It’s an honor and a pleasure to bring all these wonderful stories to their natural home at Marvel, and I hope to give George, Melinda and the rest of the Wild Cards Collective the credit they deserve for making the super hero myth new again. Plus: just look at that art!”

Martin added, “As my fans may already know, the Wild Cards World holds a special place in my heart, so to have the privilege of announcing that an industry titan like Marvel is going to produce the narrative from the beginning as a comic book brings me no end of joy.”

Relive the epic stories of *Wild Cards* or visit this incredible world for the very first time when *Wild Cards: The Drawing of Cards* #1 hits stands on June 1.

CHINA TO HOST WORLDCON 2023, ORLANDO MAKES NASFiC BID

Chengdu, China’s bid to host the 2023 Worldcon was successful, with 2,006 votes received in favor out of 2,915 valid votes. The opposing bid for Winnipeg, Canada received 807 votes. Other votes included seven for the withdrawn Memphis, TN bid, 75 “no preference,” and various write-in choices.

The 81st World Science Fiction Convention will be held August 23-29, 2023, in Chengdu, China. Announced guests of honor include Liu Cixin, Sergey Lukianenko, and Robert J. Sawyer.

Meanwhile, Orlando has announced its bid for the 2023 North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC), a convention held in years when Worldcon takes place outside North America.

The organizers say, “We’re focusing on the same area the 1992 Orlando Worldcon, Magi-Con, used. There are multiple hotels there that can hold a larger-than-average NASFiC, and the Orange County Convention Center.”



2022 NEBULAS GO VIRTUAL

The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America events team has announced that their 2022 Nebula Conference will be entirely virtual, with no in-person component, reports locusmag.com. The SFWA email explains that:

“For the third year in a row, the Nebula Conference will be held entirely online! Why yes, you can attend from anywhere on Earth (or in the galaxy). The conference will be held May 19–22, 2022.

“We had hoped to hold a hybrid conference this year both online and in Los Angeles, but the Board has voted to postpone the in-person component until next year. This is largely because of the continuing challenges and difficulties of managing COVID-19 safety. We have been monitoring the situation throughout the year, and wanted to make sure we could provide the safest possible environment for everyone when we decide to return to in-person events.

“Postponing meeting in person has the additional bonus of giving the SFWA Events Team more time to develop standards of excellence for running a hybrid conference, just as we did when delivering the first Nebula Conference Online in 2020.

“But enough about next year! Dial your time machines back to the present, where we hope you’ll join us for another weekend full of panels focused on careers in short and long-format prose, games, comics, and the many expanding categories of professional speculative fiction writers.

“Registration will be opening very soon. We look forward to greeting familiar faces and new passengers for the 2022 voyage of the Airship Nebula! For questions, contact events@sfgwa.org.”

2021 LOCUS RECOMMENDED READING LIST RELEASED

The annual *Locus* Recommended Reading List was published in the magazine’s February 2022 issue, and was assembled by *Locus* editors, columnists, outside reviewers, and other professionals and well-known critics of genre fiction and non-fiction.

“This year we considered over 900 titles between short fiction and long fiction. The final recommendations, combined and trimmed to a somewhat reasonable-length list, are our best recommendations for your consideration. We know there will be titles you loved that do not appear here; it happens every year. Any one of our recommending group would have put forward a different exact list, but this is the combined sum of opinions, assessed with great affection and care for the field,” reports locusmag.com

Authors/Publications with connections to New Mexi-

co and/or Bubonicon are listed below.

NOVELS – SCIENCE FICTION: *The Galaxy, and the Ground Within* by Becky Chambers, *Leviathan Falls* by James S.A. Corey, and *A Desolation Called Peace* by Arkady Martine.

NOVELS – FANTASY: *Paladin's Strength* by T. Kingfisher (Ursula Vernon), and *Grave Reservations* by Cherie Priest.

NOVELS – HORROR: *Moon Lake* by Joe R. Lansdale.

COLLECTIONS: *The Best of Walter Jon Williams* by Walter Jon Williams.

ILLUSTRATED AND ART BOOKS: *The Art of Neil Gaiman & Charles Vess' Stardust* by Charles Vess.

NOVELLAS: *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* by Becky Chambers, and *Comfort Me With Apples* by Catherynne M. Valente.

NOVELETTES: "L'Esprit de L'Escalier" by Catherynne M. Valente.

SHORT STORIES: "The Sin of America" by Catherynne M. Valente (Uncanny 3-4/21)

GERROLD WINS HEINLEIN AWARD

David Gerrold is the winner of the 2022 Robert A. Heinlein Award, given for "outstanding published works in science fiction and technical writings that inspire the human exploration of space," reported locusmag.com in late January. Winners are chosen by a committee of SF authors chaired by Michael F. Flynn, and receive a certificate plaque, a sterling silver medallion, and two lapel pins, all featuring the likeness of Robert A. Heinlein.

The award will be presented at Balticon in Maryland on May 27, where Gerrold is invited to be a "headlining guest."

KOWAL WINS SKYLARK

Mary Robinette Kowal is the recipient of the 2022 Edward E. Smith Memorial Award for Imaginative Fiction (AKA the Skylark Award), reports locusmag.com. The award was presented by the New England Science Fiction Association (NESFA) at Boskone 59, held February 18-20 in Boston.

The Skylark is given to "some person, who, in the opinion of the membership, has contributed significantly to science fiction, both through work in the field and by exemplifying the personal qualities which made the late 'Doc' Smith well-loved by those who knew him."

The Jack Gaughan Award for Best Emerging Artist was not presented this year. Information via File770.

ANNE RICE PASSES AWAY

Author Anne Rice died December 12, 2021, of complications from a stroke in Rancho Mirage, CA, reports locusmag.com. She was 80 years old. Rice was best

known for her bestselling Vampire Chronicles series.

Howard Allen Frances O'Brien was born October 4, 1941, in New Orleans, LA; she was named after her father, but took on the nickname Anne as a child. She grew up in New Orleans, but moved to Texas with her mother as a teenager after her father died, and met future husband Stan Rice in high school there. She briefly attended Texas Woman's University before moving to San Francisco. She married Rice in 1961 and they settled in the Bay Area, where she studied political science at San Francisco State University; she later earned a master's in literature there. They had a daughter who died in 1972 at age five; Rice said the tragedy prompted her to explore her feelings in writing. Son Christopher was born in 1978. Rice lived in the Bay Area and Southern California for much of her life, but maintained ties to her native New Orleans.

She launched her career with British Fantasy Award finalist *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) and World Fantasy Award-nominated sequel *The Vampire Lestat* (1985), beginning the Vampire Chronicles series; the most recent volume was *Blood Communion: A Tale of Prince Lestat* (2018). The novels were hugely influential in the field of vampire literature and spawned multiple film adaptations, including the acclaimed *Interview with a Vampire* (1994). Her Mayfair Witches series began with Locus Award winner *The Witching Hour* (1990) and continued with *Lasher* (1993) and *Taltos* (1994). Other novels of interest are *The Mummy; Or, Ramses the Damned* (1989) and sequel *Ramses the Damned: The Passion of Cleopatra* (2017), the latter co-written with her son, and the Wolf Gift Chronicles: *The Wolf Gift* (2012) and *The Wolves of Midwinter* (2013). Notable standalones include *Servant of Bones* (1996) and *Violin* (1997).

Rice was an important writer of erotic literature, particularly the Beauty sequence (as A.N. Roqueland), beginning with *The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty* (1983), a twist on the fairy tale, and *Exit to Eden* (1985, as Anne Rampling). She also wrote historical fiction, Christian novels, and a memoir, *Called Out of Darkness: A Spiritual Confession* (2008).

Rice received a Grandmaster Award from the World Horror Convention in 1994, and a Bram Stoker Award for life achievement in 2004. She was predeceased by her husband, poet Stan Rice, in 2002, and is survived by son Christopher.

FABERGÉ GRRM DRAGON EGG

Famed jeweler Fabergé has shared images of a "commemorative egg object" inspired by the dragon eggs in George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones*, reported locusmag.com in late February. The egg will go on tour when the spin-off series *House of the Dragon* launches later this year, and has already been sold for \$2.2 million to an anonymous buyer in the US. The egg, with a shell of white gold covered in thousands of jewels including diamonds, sapphires, moonstones, and rubies, was created by

hand over nine months by artist Paul Jones and his team. It opens to reveal golden blades and more jewels, with a pear-cut ruby topped by a removable golden crown.

The egg was first shown on December 10 at a private event in Beverly Hills, CA, attended by *Game of Thrones* costume designer Michele Clapton, who helped create the egg's design, along with Liisa Tallgren of Fabergé.

IVAN REITMAN OF *GHOSTBUSTERS* DIES

by Lindsey Bahr, AP News

Ivan Reitman, the influential filmmaker and producer behind many of the most beloved comedies of the late 20th century, from *Animal House* to *Ghostbusters*, died February 12. He was 75 years old.

Reitman died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Montecito, CA, his family told The Associated Press.

"Our family is grieving the unexpected loss of a husband, father, and grandfather who taught us to always seek the magic in life," children Jason Reitman, Catherine Reitman and Caroline Reitman said in a joint statement. "We take comfort that his work as a filmmaker brought laughter and happiness to countless others around the world. While we mourn privately, we hope those who knew him through his films will remember him always."

Known for bawdy comedies that caught the spirit of their time, Reitman's big break came with the raucous, college fraternity sendup *National Lampoon's Animal House*, which he produced. He directed Bill Murray in his first starring role in the summer camp flick *Meatballs*, and then again in 1981's *Stripes*, but his most significant success came with 1984's *Ghostbusters*.

Not only did the irreverent supernatural comedy starring Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis, Ernie Hudson, Sigourney Weaver and Rick Moranis gross nearly \$300 million worldwide, it earned two Oscar nominations, spawned a veritable franchise, including spinoffs, television shows and a new movie, *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, that opened this last year. His son, filmmaker Jason Reitman directed.

Paul Feig, who directed the 2016 reboot of *Ghostbusters* tweeted that he was in shock. "I had the honor of working so closely with Ivan and it was always such a learning experience," Feig wrote. "He directed some of my favorite comedies of all time. All of us in comedy owe him so very much."

Among other notable films he directed are *Twins*, *Kindergarten Cop*, *Dave*, *Junior* and 1998's *Six Days, Seven Nights*. He also produced *Beethoven*, *Old School* and *EuroTrip*, and many others, including his son's Oscar-nominated film *Up in the Air*.

He was born in Komárno, Czechoslovakia, in 1946 where his father owned the country's biggest vinegar factory. His mother had survived Auschwitz and his father was in the resistance. When the communists began imprisoning capitalists after the war, the Reitmans decided

to escape, when Ivan Reitman was only 4. They traveled in the nailed-down hold of a barge headed for Vienna.

"I remember flashes of scenes," Reitman told the AP in 1979. "Later they told me about how they gave me a couple of sleeping pills so I wouldn't make any noise. I was so knocked out that I slept with my eyes open. My parents were afraid I was dead."

The Reitmans joined a relative in Toronto, where Ivan displayed his show biz inclinations: starting a puppet theater, entertaining at summer camps, playing coffee houses with a folk music group. He studied music and drama at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, and began making movie shorts.

With friends and \$12,000, Reitman made a nine-day movie, *Cannibal Girls*, which American International agreed to release. He produced on a \$500 budget a weekly TV revue, *Greed*, with Dan Aykroyd, and became associated with the Lampoon group in its off-Broadway revue that featured John Belushi, Gilda Radner and Murray. That soon led to *Animal House*.

Reitman seized the moment after *Animal House*'s massive success and raised money to direct *Meatballs*, which would be tamer than the hard-R *Animal House*.

He handpicked Murray to star, which would prove to be a significant break for the comedian, but Ramis later said that Reitman didn't know if Murray would actually show up until the first day of the shoot. But it was the beginning of a fruitful and long-running partnership that would produce the war comedy *Stripes* and *Ghostbusters*.

Reitman also put Schwarzenegger in his first major comedy, opposite Danny DeVito in *Twins* – partially filmed in New Mexico. There was such uncertainty around it that all forfeited their fees for a share of the profits, which would prove to be a lucrative deal when the film earned \$216 million against an \$18 million production budget. In Sept. 2021, it was announced that a sequel, *Triplets* was in the works with Reitman directing his original cast, plus Tracy Morgan as their long lost brother.

By the time 1990's *Kindergarten Cop* came around, Reitman had established himself as the most successful comedy director in history. Though not even being the father of three children could have prepared him for the arduous task of directing 30 children between the ages of 4 and 7 in the Schwarzenegger comedy.

The political comedy *Dave*, starring Kevin Kline as an ordinary man who has to double for the US President, provided a bit of a departure for Reitman. Roger Ebert wrote at the time that "The movie is more proof that it isn't what you do, it's how you do it: Ivan Reitman's direction and Gary Ross' screenplay use intelligence and warmhearted sentiment to make *Dave* into wonderful lighthearted entertainment."

Reitman slowed down as a director after *Six Days*,



Seven Nights, the 1998 adventure comedy with Harrison Ford and Anne Heche — only four films would follow: *Evolution*, *My Super Ex-Girlfriend*, *No Strings Attached* and *Draft Day*, from 2014.

But he continued producing. His company, the Montecito Picture Co., produced Todd Phillips' first movie, *Road Trip*. And with *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, even found himself on the press circuit with his son, providing emotional moments for both with the passing of the baton. Jason Reitman, who was only seven when the original came out, included some nods to his father's films like *Beethoven* and *Cannibal Girls in Afterlife*.

"Directing *Ghostbusters Afterlife* was completely intimidating," Jason Reitman said last year. "I was lucky enough to do it sitting next to my dad."

When asked why the 1984 film continued to fascinate, Reitman told the AP that it was hard to define. "I always had a sort of sincere approach to the comedy," he said. "I took it seriously even though, it was a horror movie and a comedy, I felt you had to sort of deal with it in a kind of realistic and honest way."

He always took comedy and the power of laughter seriously.

"The great cliché is about how damn tough comedy is. But of course, nobody really gives that any respect," he told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2000. "It's such a visceral thing, laughing. So getting to the point where you can get an audience of 600 people laughing is really precise and intricate work. ... My sense is we're laughing at the same things we've always laughed at, but the language of the filmmaker and the performer shifts."

RON GOULART DIES

Writer Ron Goulart died January 14, reported locusmag.com. He was 89 years old. Goulart was a prolific author in multiple genres, producing more than 180 titles in his long career.

Ronald Joseph Goulart was born January 13, 1933, in Berkeley, CA, and worked in advertising after college. His first SF story, "Letters to the Editor", appeared in 1952, and he published a number of stories before debut novel *The Sword Swallower* in 1968, first of his Barnum System spare operas, which also include 1970's *The Fire-Eater* and *Everybody Comes to Cosmo's* in 1988. That universe includes numerous sub-series, among them the Star Hawk novels, *Empire 99* (1980) and *The Cyborg King* (1981), based the *Star Hawk* newspaper strip Goulart wrote with artist Gil Kane.

Other series include the Fragmented America books, starting with *After Things Fell Apart* (1970); the Wild Talents books, launched with *A Talent for the Invisible* (1973); the Odd Jobs series, beginning with collection with *Odd Job #101 and Other Future Crimes and Intrigues* (1974); the Gypsy novels, starting with *Quest of the Gypsy* (1976); the Skyrocket Steele sequence, starting with *Skyrocket Steele* (1980); and the Harry Challenge novels,

begun with *The Prisoner of Blackwood Castle* (1984). He also wrote numerous standalones.

Goulart was a well-known author of comic and other media tie-ins, including for *Vampirella*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *The Phantom*, and *Flash Gordon*. With actor William Shatner, he co-wrote nine novels in the Tek series, beginning with *TekWar* (1989). He wrote numerous mystery novels, including a series featuring Groucho Marx, and was nominated for Edgar Awards. He wrote non-fiction books about pulp magazines, comic strips, comic books, and detective novels, among other subjects.

Goulart was a Nebula Awards finalist for "Calling Dr. Clockwork" (1965). Some of his short work is collected in *What's Become of Screwloose? and Other Inquiries* (1971), *Broke Down Engine and Other Troubles with Machines* (1971), *Nutzenbolts and More Troubles with Machines* (1975), and *Skyrocket Steele Conquers the Universe and Other Media Tales* (1990).

Goulart also wrote under many pseudonyms, especially in the '70s and '80s, including Chad Calhoun, R.T. Edwards, Ian R. Jamieson, Josephine Kains, Jillian Kearny, Howard Lee, Zeke Masters, Frank S. Shawn, and Joseph Silva, as well as house names.

BOMB-SNIFFING RAT DIES

From The Washington Post, 1-21-2022

The explosives-sniffing African giant pouched rat Magawa – holder of a Guinness World Record for the most land mines determined by that species – died in retirement in January. He was 8 years old.

Magawa, who was born in Tanzania, was trained in that East African country to detect explosives. At the age of 3, he moved to Siem Reap in Cambodia's northwest, where he helped clear more than 2.4 million square feet of land over the next half decade. (The Southeast Asian country is one of the world's most dangerous for land mines and explosives because of the Vietnam War and its own bloody 20th-century civil conflict.)

Apopo, the nonprofit that trained the rat, said Magawa had detected 71 land mines and 38 items of unexploded ordnance as of June 2021, when he retired. In September 2020, Magawa was awarded a gold medal for bravery by a British charity – an honor that had previously gone only to dogs.

Magawa celebrated his 8th birthday in November and spent most of his last week in his "usual enthusiasm," Apopo said in a January 11 statement. He slowed down, napped more and showed less interest in eating before dying "peacefully."

2021 GOODREADS CHOICE AWARDS

Winners of the 2021 Goodreads Choice Awards for the "best books of 2021," as chosen by users of the site, were announced December 9, 2021. There are several winners of genre interest.

BEST FANTASY: *A Court of Silver Flames* by Sarah J. Maas, BEST SCIENCE FICTION: *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir, BEST HORROR: *The Final Girl Support Group* by Grady Hendrix, BEST YOUNG ADULT FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION: *Rule of Wolves* by Leigh Bardugo, BEST MIDDLE GRADE & CHILDREN'S: *Daughter of the Deep* by Rick Riordan, BEST HUMOR: *Broken* by Jenny Lawson, and BEST GRAPHIC NOVEL & COMICS: *Lore Olympus* by Rachel Smythe.

Goodreads reported 4.75 million votes cast, down from 5.67 million in 2020 and up from 4.65 million in 2019. For the full list of categories and nominees, see www.goodreads.com.

DAVE WOLVERTON PASSES AWAY

Writer Dave Wolverton, who also wrote as David Farland, died January 14 in St. George, UT after suffering a severe head injury falling down the stairs the previous day. He was 64 years old.

He was best known for his Runelords series, written as David Farland: *The Sum of All Men* (1998; published in the US as *The Runelords*), *Brotherhood of the Wolf* (1999), *Wizardborn* (2000), *The Lair of Bones* (2003), *Sons of the Oak* (2006), *Worldbinder* (2007), *The Wyrmling Horde* (2008), and *Chaosbound* (2009). A final volume, *A Tale of Tales*, was reportedly in the works.

As Wolverton, he began publishing SF with "The Sky Is an Open Highway" (1985). "After a Lean Winter" (1986) was a Nebula Awards finalist. He won the Writers of the Future competition for "On My Way to Paradise" (1986), later expanded as debut novel *On My Way to Paradise* (1989), a finalist for the Philip K. Dick Award. He followed that with the Anee series, *Serpent Catch* (1991) and *Path of the Hero* (1993). He reworked the series as *Spirit Walker* (2014), *Serpent Catch* (2014), and *Path of the Crushed Heart* (2014) under the Farland name. Other Farland titles include *The Golden Queen* (1994) and sequels *Beyond the Gate* (1995) and *Lords of the Seventh Swarm* (1997), plus historical *Company of Angels* (2009) and YA thriller *Nightingale* (2012).

From the late '90s, he mainly wrote fantasy as Farland and numerous *Star Wars* tie-ins (among other media-related works) as Wolverton. His best known media work, *Star Wars: The Courtship of Princess Leia*, was released in 1994.

Wolverton was deeply involved with the Writers of the Future competition, ever since taking over some of A.J. Budrys's duties in 1991. He co-edited *Writers of the Future Volume VIII* (1992) with Budrys, and edited the subsequent volumes, through number 37. He also wrote *A Very Strange Trip* (1999), a collaboration with L. Ron Hubbard based on the late author's notes.

John David Wolverton was born May 15, 1957, in Springfield, OR. He taught creative writing at Brigham Young University, where he hosted writing workshops. He also wrote for games and worked in the film industry. He is survived by his wife and son.

ARTIST ACHILLEOS PASSES AWAY

Artist Chris Achilleos died December 6, 2021, reports locusmag.com. He was 74 years old. The prolific illustrator was known for his cover art, film designs, movie posters, and album covers, among other work.

Christos Achilléos was born in 1947 in Famagusta, Cyprus. At age 12 he moved to the UK, where he attended the Hornsey College of Art, graduating in 1969. He got his start painting book covers, including for Edgar Rice Burroughs novels and *Doctor Who* tie-ins, and later illustrated books for numerous SF and fantasy authors (including Albuquerque author Robert E. Vardeman), as well as *Star Trek* novels. He rose to prominence as an illustrator for his erotic paintings in Mayfair starting in the early '70s, and his first collection, *Beauty and the Beast* (1978), featured such images. In the late '70s and '80s he began illustrating games and album covers and doing design work for films, including *Heavy Metal* (1980) and *Willow* (1986), plus movie posters for features, among them *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Supergirl* (1984).

Some of his art was collected in *Sirens* (1986), *Medusa* (1988), *Amazona* (2004), and *Kklak!: The Doctor Who Art of Chris Achilleos* (2021). He also produced series of fantasy trading cards and sold original paintings.

TEXAS FAN WILLIE SIROS DIES

Fan, conrunner, and bookseller Willie Siros died January 5, reported locusmag.com. He was 69 years old.

William Siros was born August 1952 in El Paso, TX. He earned a BA in political science in 1974, and briefly attended graduate school for political theory. He began attending conventions in 1974, and chaired early Texas SF conventions Solarcon I and II (1975 and 1976). He produced a fanzine, *Cambion*, around the same time. Siros co-founded the Fandom Association of Central Texas and the associated convention ArmadilloCon, chairing the first three events and co-chairing ArmadilloCon 15. He led the 1985 NASFiC bid for Austin TX and chaired the resulting LoneStarCon.

Siros was a para-librarian at the University of Texas



ASFACTS, February/March 2022

Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, where he developed their SF collection. As a bookseller, he ran Adventures in Crime and Space as a brick-and-mortar store in Austin until 2002 and later as a virtual shop.

A familiar face at conventions, Siros was a guest of honor at Norwescon XV (1992), ArmadilloCon 25 (2003), and LoneStarCon III, the 71st World Science Fiction Convention in 2013.

How *ROGERS: THE MUSICAL* IN *HAWKEYE* CAME TO BE

by Emily Aslanian, tvinsider.com, 12-11-2021

“Save the city, help us win. Save us all from the state we’re in...”

The *Avengers*-themed musical within Disney+’s latest Marvel series *Hawkeye* may not be a full-fledged show, but at least viewers have gotten one epic number – “Save the City” – to jam out to. The fictional *Rogers: The Musical* number was written by Tony Award-winning *Hairspray* duo Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman (also known for their songwriting on short-lived NBC dramedy *Smash*), and though leading hero Clint Barton/Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) wasn’t too pleased with it, it’s an unsurprisingly catchy tune!

Is that morsel all we’ll get of the Marvel musical moment? How did it all happen? Below, Shaiman and Wittman answer our burning questions.

Emily Aslanian: How did writing a piece of *Rogers: The Musical* line up with how you approach your other projects?

Scott Wittman: Well, the way we write a song is always the same, that doesn’t change. The Marvel Universe was so much fun to work in because it has this kind of sly sense of humor that we can all appreciate. On top of that, it was written at the height of the pandemic, so there was this sense of – for New Yorkers anyway, we were in a very dark place then – this kind of wishing that maybe the Avengers would come and take COVID away. It all kind of led into what the song became.

Marc Shaiman: Yeah, and as with any project, you know what your assignment is and what the parameters were, and Marvel certainly knew what they wanted. They were open to anything that we ended up writing, but I believe that they did say it should be the Battle of New

York. We all agreed that would be a great Act One closer to the musical.

Wittman: They also wanted Ant-Man in it, so that was fun.

Shaiman: That’s their perfect kind of humor. Whenever there’s a movie or a musical or something, there’s always something that’s a little wrong, or the truth is stretched. Or someone on the creative team was like, ‘I wish Ant-Man was in this!’ So there it was...

Wittman: [“Save the City”] had to serve two masters, as well. It had to be entertaining and a good song, but also make Clint uncomfortable.

Aslanian: What other song angles did you play around with before landing on what we saw onscreen?

Shaiman: The truth is – this is not normal – this was our first idea. Scott said, ‘Shouldn’t it be like ‘save the city’?’ So, we wrote the song that was really at that point just New Yorkers singing to the Avengers, ‘Please come and help us.’ We only wrote the first verse and chorus and knew let’s not go any further, let’s send this in to see if they like it.

Wittman: Make sure it’s the right direction.

Shaiman: And that was also when Adam Pascal [*Rent*] became part of it. Normally, I’ll sing the first demo and just tell everyone, ‘Please imagine someone really singing this well.’ But this had notes in it that I knew that I couldn’t even screech – it would really ruin their impression of the song. So, I texted Adam Pascal out of the blue, got his number from a friend who had worked with him, and was like ‘Hi, it’s Marc and Scott. We wrote *Hairspray* and some other things. Would you want to sing the vocal on a demo for an *Avengers* musical?’ And he wrote back right away, ‘Yes, yes!’ He has a teenage son, so he was like, ‘I’ll be the greatest dad ever.’ Not many people can sing like him.

Ty Taylor is the other singer on the main part of the first third. And then Rory Donovan is supplying the voice of Captain America. He’s a phenomenal singer on Broadway who can just belt out that high B and hang onto it. He did it take after take. We recorded, because of COVID... the singers were in New York and the performers were in Atlanta. We couldn’t combine... [but] we all had a great time. And then we had to hang onto this secret for half a year!

Aslanian: You’re almost lucky – in Marvel time, that’s really not that long.

Wittman: I thought that!

Shaiman: I don’t know how they do it. I remember at a certain point, I had so put it out of my mind I almost forgot! And then that first trailer got released and the reaction to the few seconds in it was so fantastically over the top. I have to admit, I watched all those reaction videos, and it was just so much fun to see people’s expressions when it gets to that shot of everyone turning and dancing in that jazz-hand style. It’s really been hysterical and it’s been great to see the reaction.

Aslanian: And aside from that first episode scene,



there are billboards and commercials advertising the show within the show all over the place in the background. It almost seems like they're taunting us. Will we get to see any more of *Rogers: The Musical* or did you just write the one song?

Wittman: They work in mysterious ways in the Marvel Universe, so I don't know!

Aslanian: Well, I sure hope so. In seeing this, a lot of folks are asking why there isn't a Marvel musical aside from *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*? Would you two ever try to do a full-fledged non-parody Marvel musical?

Shaiman: We would love to. There's so much material, we could write a billion musicals.

Wittman: It almost should be an opera, it's almost more like Wagner.

Shaiman: Could you imagine? It would be so much fun. Maybe it'll end up at the Met. We'll see what happens.

Aslanian: Are you two working on anything right now? What do you have coming up?

Wittman: Yeah, we have a musical of the movie *Some Like It Hot*, it'll be on Broadway next Fall. A year from now.

Shaiman: And we're gonna put Ant-Man in it!

STAR TREK CAST SURPRISED BY 4TH FILM ANNOUNCEMENT

J.J. Abrams sure is a master at shock and awe.

The producer, who helmed the *Star Trek* reboot in 2009 with a prequel film, announced during the Paramount Investor Day on February 15 that a fourth *Star Trek* film with the original cast will soon start production, reports indiewire.com.

"We are thrilled to say that we are hard at work on a new *Star Trek* film that will be shooting by the end of the year that will be featuring our original cast," Abrams said. "We're thrilled about this film, we have a bunch of other stories that we're talking about that we think will be really exciting, so can't wait for you to see what we're cooking up. But until then, live long and prosper."

The only issue? Per *The Hollywood Reporter*, representatives for stars Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Simon Pegg, Karl Urban, Zoe Saldana, and John Cho were "not aware that an announcement for another film was coming" featuring the aforementioned actors.

Pine reportedly is the first to enter early negotiations, with the fourth film centering around his Captain Kirk character.

Star Trek 4 is eyeing a December 22, 2023, theatrical release, with *WandaVision* director Matt Shakman attached to the project. The script is still "being worked on," according to *THR*, with no official greenlight or budget established. According to Digital Spy, the screenplay will be written by Josh Friedman and Cameron Squires, based on an earlier draft by Lindsey Beer and

Geneva Robertson.

The initial plan for a fourth *Star Trek* installment was stalled in 2018 due to contract issues and budget disputes with Pine and Chris Hemsworth, who was slated to play Captain Kirk's father. There were once three *Star Trek* follow-up features in development, including one by Quentin Tarantino that included time travel and "gangster" storylines.

Now, *THR* writes, "Industry insiders say that Paramount let go of negotiating leverage in order to have a key chess piece as it courts Wall Street investors," so sky's seemingly the limit for any *Star Trek* budgets. The third film, *Star Trek Beyond*, grossed only \$343 million worldwide with a budget of \$190 million, the lowest box office return out of the trilogy.

The *Star Trek* universe has been alive and well, thanks to CBS All Access series *Discovery* and *Picard*, plus adult animated series *Lower Decks* and Nickelodeon's kid-oriented *Prodigy*.

BRIE LARSON OPENS UP ABOUT CAPTAIN MARVEL SEQUEL

by Bollywood Hungama News Network, 2-22-2022

Oscar-winning actor Brie Larson, who plays Captain Marvel/Carol Danvers in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, recently revealed her first reaction to the crazy script for the upcoming *Captain Marvel* sequel, *The Marvels*, which premieres on February 17, 2023.

In a recent interview with *Uproxx*, the Captain Marvel star answered questions about her upcoming role in *The Marvels* and shared her impressions about the crazy plot of the upcoming sequel while leaving out any new details. The 32-year-old actress also talked about her experience with the film's director Nia DaCosta while praising the filmmaker's talent. "I feel it's like, I wish I could talk about it. I can talk about my feelings around it. I can say that I can't say enough about how incredible our director, Nia DaCosta, is and what an honor it was to work with her, what an immense talent she is, how much I just feel like she's the future.

"And I could also say that, when I read the script for the first time, I couldn't believe what I was reading. I was like, this is bonkers," she added. "And it's the thing that I love about Marvel, is that they continue to reinvent. They continue to do the thing that you just would never think would be possible in these films. And they're not afraid to go there."

Further revealing her excitement about the sequel film being a delight to the fans, Brie Larson says, "So I'm super excited about what we did. I think there are some huge personal achievements of mine that I'm really excited about sharing, but you know, it's fun to have a bit of a secret. And it's fun to know that, when this film comes out, people are going to be delighted. And I get to keep that to myself for a little bit longer."

Captain Marvel's sequel film *The Marvels* stars Brie Larson, who reprises her role as Carol Danvers/Captain Marvel, *WandaVision* breakout star Teyonah Parris as Monica Rambeau and MCU newcomer Iman Vellani as Kamala Khan/Ms. Marvel, who is set to debut later this year Disney+ series *Ms. Marvel*. Samuel L. Jackson is also set to return as Nick Fury.

The sequel is penned by Megan McDonnell with Nia DaCosta (*Candyman*) directing. Additional cast also includes actress Zawe Ashton (*Velvet Buzzsaw*) as the sequel's antagonist and South Korean actor Park Seo Joon in an undisclosed role.

BUBONICON 53 PLANNED AS IN-PERSON

by Craig W. Chrissinger, con chair

We're 10 weeks into 2022 now, believe it or not, and Omicron COVID numbers have come way down. So, we're planning for Bubonicon 53 to be live and in-person in slightly more than 5 ½ months! Three-Day Passes currently are \$36.00, and they go up April 21 to \$42 each, remaining so through August 12. They can be purchased in person at club meetings – or by mailing payment (with the PDF pre-registration form from the website) to “Bubonicon Inc” at 933 San Mateo Blvd NE, Suite 500-208, Albuquerque, NM 87108; or by paying online with a credit card.

Bubonicon 53 is planned for August 26-28 (our traditional weekend) at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, 2101 Louisiana Blvd NE, just north of I-40 – enter from the America's Parkway loop road. This year, we are two weeks after the 3rd New Mexico Comic Expo (which may affect attendance) and a week before the Chicago Worldcon. The Marriott is offering sleeping rooms at \$105 single-quad occupancy, with free WiFi in sleeping rooms. Reservations are needed by August 15. That's 1-800-228-9290. Remember to tell them you're with Bubonicon.

And just like in the past, we're keeping all Room Parties on one designated floor – the 3rd Floor again – with the hotel and your con chair being informed of such at least four days in advance. You can request the “party” floor, a quiet floor, or state you have no preference.

Our special guests this year are Rae Carson, Keith R.A. DeCandido, A. Lee Martinez, and artist Chaz Kemp. We're expecting many con regulars, of course. And I'm happy and proud to say that Mandy Self and Jessica Coyle are serving as assistant chairs this year.

We're asking for all Fan Programming proposals/requests for time & space to be submitted by the end of Sunday, May 1, so we have time for any questions or clarifications before we build the tentative schedule.

Some planned programming includes the Green Slime Awards, the mass autographing session, the usual two auctions, at least one game show, the costume contest, films, fan/video programming, and kids programming. We are considering starting programming 30 minutes earlier on Friday so that the Charity Auction and

other late-night programming can start sooner.

The theme for Bubonicon 53 is “AFTER THE PLAGUE YEARS (Plagues and Pandemics in SF/F).” Influenced by the last couple of “special” years, Bubonicon looks at how disease, illness & alien viruses are portrayed in SF/Fantasy/Horror. Think *Earth Abides* by George Stewart, *Doomsday Book* by Connie Willis, *The Andromeda Strain* by Michael Crichton, and films like *12 Monkeys*, *Outbreak*, and *Children of Men*...

COVID SAFETY: Though we haven't decided yet – and are watching what happens with Coronavirus late Spring and into Summer – we will create a mask mandate if we feel it is necessary. And we may require Proof of Vaccination or a Negative Test to attend Bubonicon 53. If nothing else, we will be highly recommending the wearing of masks when possible.

In keeping with tradition and to honor the memory of NM's own Pioneer Author, we plan to make financial donations, at least, to the (Jack) Williamson SF Library Collection at Eastern NM University – plus the Roadrunner Food Bank, World Central Kitchen or the International Red Cross, and NM PBS.

Dealers' space applications go live toward the end of April with emails to past dealers, and a link on the website to a google-form survey. The rates are \$100 with a weekend pass, and \$130 with two. There is a maximum of two spaces per dealer, and spaces are not considered sold until payment and a signed contract are received. For more Dealer info, please email Kennard Wilson at dealers@bubonicon.com.

Meanwhile, Kathy K. Kubica and her staff are gearing up for the 2022 Art Show. As usual, art show packets will be available online at the beginning of July. We don't plan to mail out packets, but if you don't have internet access we can take care of you. If that's the case, please send a two-ounce paid SASE (78¢) to the San Mateo address. Info is available from artshow@bubonicon.com.

More general info is available from the website: www.bubonicon.com, by writing to the San Mateo address, by calling our Google Phone (voicemail) at 559-0931, and by emailing us at bubonicon@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Until the Last of Me: Take Them to the Stars Book 2 by Sylvain Neuvel, 2022Tordotcom, hc \$26.99, 304 pages.

Review by Craig W. Chrissinger

Until the Last of Me is the sequel to last year's *A History of What Comes Next*. This second book in Sylvain Neuvel's *Take Them to the Stars* trilogy continues the story of the Kibsu, who subtly help mankind toward space travel, and the Radi Kibsi, ruthless enemy trackers who want to stop them.

The First Rule for the Kibsu has always been “Always run, never fight.” But in 1968 Mia and Lola are the 100th generation and Mia finds she can get the first humans into space. But she can't take them to the stars. At least not yet.

The Radi Kibsi are fast on her heels, and the future of her race and the planet Earth are at stake.

Both parties are trying to solve a mysterious message left on an ancient bow by one of the early Kibsu on Earth. Against all advice and rules, Mia decides to stand her ground and face the violent trackers. While she feels like following physical instincts, Samael is using more logic and emotional psychology than the Radi Kibsi have used in the past. What might happen when both aliens use different strategies and face each other?

Until the Last of Me is a fast-paced first-contact thriller with clever historical references told mostly in first-person from both Mia and Samael. From the beginning of this book, the action and their engaging accounts keep the story interesting. I am looking forward to seeing how Neuvel finishes off the series. Recommended.

***Comfort Me With Apples* by Catherynne M. Valente, 2022 Tordotcom, hc \$17.99, 112 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Comfort Me With Apples is Catherynne M. Valente's latest novella from the consistently good line of published novellas from Tordotcom. This is Valente's first foray writing in the Mystery Thriller genre, although the story definitely has the fantasy/mythology connections that Valente is known for in much of her work. The story follows the story of Sophia, who lives in the Stepford-like community of Arcadia Gardens with her mysterious and often-gone husband. Sophia begins to find odd things in and about her house that make her begin to question her perfect life. The more she investigates, the more she discovers that her life may be a sham.

As a fan of Valente's short fiction, such as the Hugo- and Nebula-nominated *Six-Gun Snow White* and *Silently and Very Fast*, I was excited to read *Comfort Me With Apples*. The novella did not disappoint. I felt Valente handled the mystery at the core of the story very well, dangling clues in a way that is not always obvious but that becomes apparent at the end of the story. Valente's prose is always beautiful, and I feel like some of her best work is at the novella-length because the page constraint forces her to keep things both poetic and moving forward. I highly recommend the novella, and won't be surprised if it shows up on the Hugo and Nebula ballots for this year.

***The Ministry for the Future* by Kim Stanley Robinson, 2021 Orbit (reprint), tp \$17.99, 576 pages.**

Review by Steve Henrichs

Ordinary characters facing extraordinary challenges, both ecological and personal, has been a consistent theme in Kim Stanley Robinson's fiction. In *The Ministry for the Future*, the characters are garden-variety bureaucrats, and the challenge is to find a way out of the climate crisis. Robinson's response to that challenge is not so much a definitive answer as a plausible alternative.

The story starts in 2025, with a massive heat wave in India that kills twenty million people. In the aftermath, India unilaterally begins a massive geoengineering project to lower global temperatures dropping sulfur dioxide into the upper atmosphere. This violates an international agree-

ment to make no atmospheric interventions without consultation and agreement, and a political crisis follows on top of the ecological one.

The rest of the story follows Mary Murphy, the Irish-born, fortyish head of the titular UN agency, as she navigates everything from political foot-dragging to outright sabotage on the way to crafting a path to a workable future for the entire planet. A subplot of an unlikely friendship between Murphy and a deeply traumatized survivor of the heat wave forms a spine for the remainder of the story, which is hopeful without being Hollywood.

The dramatic structure is itself on the adventurous side, with individual chapters anything from meeting notes to a riddle to conventional drama, etc. Also, expect a lot of Robinson's usual hard-core science.

The crux of the story, as in much of Robinson's fiction, is that there is in fact a climate crisis, and that ordinary people, from the man on the street to bureaucrats tasked with managing global problems, are up to the task of solving it. Robinson has always taken the "science" in science fiction seriously, and the current novel is no exception. He's also a terrific storyteller, and the characters and plot are three-dimensional and engaging.

Ultimately, though, whether the story succeeds or not is a question that can only be answered by each reader.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS — **DEC 2021: DESSERTS & FILMS**

Twenty-Eight people came together in-person to watch various comedic film shorts and film trailers, and to judge the 16th ASFS Holiday Cook-Off by tasting many individually wrapped food samples.

We set up St. Andrew's space a bit different, but still split between the movie area and dessert tables. Shown during the evening were Muppets music videos & advertising appearances (for Geico, "Count Me In," "Mr. Blue Sky," a Zoom video call, and "Movin' Right Along to 2021"), seven *Simon's Cat* episodes ("House Guest," "Hounded," "Purrfect Storm," "Paws for Thought," "Bugged," "Little Angel" and "The Monster Returns"), music videos by the Minions, Elvira, Girls5Eva and Jimmy Fallon, Weird Al Yankovic, and Post Modern Jukebox, a *MST3K* Christmas segment, two *RiffTrax* shorts, Two *Big Bang Theory* segments ("Amy's Victorian Christmas" and "Penny's Gift to Sheldon"), three *Saturday Night Live* sketches ("Children's Clothing ad," "Baby Yoda commentary" and "Star Trek Spinoff"), three cartoon segments (Bugs Bunny and Animaniacs), and the *League of Super Pets* trailer.

In the Dessert Cook-Off with "Post-Apocalyptic Snacks" (Pre-Packaged Individual Commercial Food) as the Theme, there were 12 entries from Patricia Rogers, Leigh Fanning, Robbyn Selters, Grant Kuck, Al Kulp, Becky Davis, Roberta Johnson, Dawn Barela, Mike McCommas, Brenda Cole, Jessica Coyle, and Anonymous.

BEST USE OF THEME went to Leigh Fanning's "Post-Apocalypse Garden" (various seeds to plant), and BEST PRESENTATION went to Patricia Rogers' "Songs for the

Apocalypse: Sweating the Expiration Blues” (Tillamook cheese, applesauce and Vienna sausages).

Also of note were Robbyn Selters’ “Insurance Policy #1 and #2” (Hostess Twinkies and Zingers) and Grant Kuck’s “Post-Apologetic Food” (Haagen-Dazs ice cream bars).

THANK YOU RECOGNITION for assistance in setting up/cleaning up goes to Geneva Schult, Luke DeProst, Roberta Johnson, Mike McCommas, Becky Davis, Grant Kuck, and Patricia Rogers. (And if we missed anyone else, apologies.)

JAN 2022: BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

The beginning of 2022 meant a huge rise in COVID Omicron numbers, so we went back to meeting online. Just 17 people showed up on Zoom to discuss books read in 2021, whether good or bad. New Mexico, Colorado, Texas and Oregon were represented by the folks who took part. A book title mentioned by more than one person is indicated by an asterisk.

Among reading materials named were *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* by Becky Chambers, *Kitty’s Mix-Tape* by Carrie Vaughn, *Firefly: Carnival* by Una McCormack, *Wild Cards: Death Draws Five* by John Jos. Miller, *Grave Reservations** by Cherie Priest, *Synchronized Sorcery* by Juliet Blackwell, *How To Marry a Werewolf: Claw & Courtship* by Gail Carriger, *Beguiled: Betwixt & Between 3* by Darynda Jones, *The Last Graduate: Scholomance 2** by Naomi Novik, *Calculated Risks: InCryptid* by Seanan McGuire, *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir, *An Ancient Peace* by Tanya Huff, *Forget the Alamo* by Bryan Burroughs (“too dense”), *Witness for the Dead* by Katherine Addison, *Leviathan Falls: The Expanse 9** by James S.A. Corey, *The Ministry for the Future** by Kim Stanley Robinson, *Mockingbird* by Walter Tevis, *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig, *The Steps of the Sun* by Walter Tevis (“disappointing”), meditative/spiritual books, *Shelter in This Place: Meditations on 2020* edited by Meg Riley,

The Hero’s Journey by Joseph Campbell, Jane Ann Krentz/Jane Castle *Arcane Society* books, fan fiction, non-fiction and news articles, *Midnight Riot** by Ben Aaronovitch, *The Weird of Hali* books by John Michael Greer, *Equal Rites* by Terry Pratchett, *Five Decembers* by James Kestrel, *Boundless: The Lost Fleet: Outlands* by Jack Campbell, *Kent Family Chronicles* by John Jakes, *State of Terror* by Louise Penny and Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Eifelheim* by Michael Flynn, *Moon Over Soho* and *Whispers Under Ground* by Ben Aaronovitch, Document 6744 Manual for 2021 Taxes, *Year of the Demon* and *Daughter of the Sword* by Steve Bein, *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens, *Termination Shock* by Neal Stephenson, *The Fifth Season* by N.K. Jemisin, the *Foreigner* series by C.J. Cherryh, *Song of Spider-Man: The Inside Story* by Glen Berger, *Ink & Sigil* by Kevin Hearne, *Star Wars: Heir of the Empire* and *Star Wars: Dark Force Rising* by Timothy Zahn, *Where’s My Guitar? An Inside Story of British Rock and Roll* by Bernie Marsden, short story anthologies, and *Strip Mauled* edited by Esther Friesner.

FEB 2022: VIRTUAL MOVIE NIGHT

Just 19 people were on hand for a Virtual Movie Night on Zoom. We had some technical difficulties, possibly with internet speed. Often people had no audio or choppy sound.

We slugged our way through the *Peacemaker* opening credit sequence, the latest *Moon Knight* trailer, and *Bina 48 Meets Bina Rothblatt* (Creepy! Robots want to take us over!). And then we watched 1954’s *The Snow Creature*, in which a Yeti is captured in the Himalayas (after lots of rock climbing and tent camping) and transported to Los Angeles, where the beast escapes from its telephone booth-sized freezer (slinking through the same 50 feet of sewer tunnels over and over). It was not a good film, but comments on Zoom Chat were snarky, clever and funny.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

- THIS *ASFacts* marks two years of the pandemic. And finally we are seeing COVID cases and hospitalizations go down, mostly due to vaccinations and continued masking. We will never return to the “normal” of the past (“the before times”) because too much has changed socially and politically. We are a different people now, and each week brings challenges to our move toward a “New Normal.” Where will we be in another year? Hard to tell. Depends on whether there is another dramatic Coronavirus variant, what curveballs Climate Change brings, and how Humanity is doing with each other. Let’s face it: 2022 is not that impressive so far. Especially with many deaths in the SF field, hate crimes and political divide, and now Russia illegally invading Ukraine. So, be kind to each other, and stay safe. Be patient, be respectful.

- AT LEAST BUBONICON 2022 will be live and in-person, as far as we know. We’ve started selling passes, and are moving forward with plans.

- JESSICA & I DID GO to COSine in Colorado Springs in mid-January. Everyone was masked, and we ate in our hotel room. It was a little weird, but we were happy to see Connie & Courtney Willis, and many of our Colorado buddies. Sadly, one person came down with COVID Saturday of the con so the con-com had to send out an alert. Jessica and I were fine, but two Denver regulars came down with the modern plague. We saw some snow on the way up, but it didn’t stick to the roads or cars until after we were at the hotel. It was our first in-person convention experience in two years!

- LAST MOVIE we saw in a big theater was *Spider-Man: No Way Home* in December, which we enjoyed. Also saw *The Dark Crystal*, *Last Night in Soho* and *Pee-Wee’s Big Adventure* at the smaller Guild Cinema. On TV, we really like *Ghosts* on CBS, *The Rookie* on ABC; and we enjoyed *Hawkeye* and *The Book of Boba Fett* on Disney+ and *Peacemaker* on HBO Max. And we’re watching the new season of *Mare of Winesap*. And continuing to watch *MST3K*’s The Mads in their monthly livestream riffings of movies. We are happy to support Trace & Frank in their endeavors.

- ALMOST OUT OF ROOM. Happy Valentine’s Day & Happy St. Patrick’s Day. As always, more stuff is needed next issue (Mon, May 9 deadline). Thank you to Steve H, George B and Jessica C for their contributions. - Craig C

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