

# ASFACTS 2023

FEBRUARY "WHERE'S WINTER & SNOW" ISSUE

## ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP PLANNED FOR THURS-FRI, APRIL 13-14

The 46th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship is scheduled for Thursday-Friday, April 13 & 14, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales. Special guest is Arkady Martine of New Mexico, with Colorado's Connie Willis as Mistress of Ceremonies. Friday events will include a reading by Martine, a luncheon, a gaming session, and various afternoon panel discussions (including one on scholars studying sci-fi and fantasy) in Golden Student Success Center and Library.

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 2022 Lectureship was in-person after virtual events in 2020 and 2021. The theme of this year's Lectureship is "Climates of Empire."

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.

Martine is a speculative fiction writer and, as Dr. Anna Linden Weller, a historian of the Byzantine Empire and a city planner. Under both names, she writes about border politics, narrative and rhetoric, risk communication, and the edges of the world. She currently is a policy advisor for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, where she works on climate change mitigation, energy grid modernization, and resiliency planning. Her debut novel, *A Memory Called Empire*, won the 2020 Hugo Award for Best Novel, and its sequel, *A Desolation Called Peace*, won the 2022 Hugo Award in the same category. Arkady grew up in New York City, and after some time in Turkey, Canada, Sweden, and Baltimore, now lives in Santa Fe with her wife, the author Vivian Shaw.

"We are excited to have everyone back in Portales once again for what promises to be a very engaging Lectureship," says Lectureship chair David Sweeten. "Our Guest of Honor will be now two-time Hugo Award-

winning Arkady Martine, and we're excited to hear more about her work and how that intersects with our other guests."

On Friday, April 14, Martine will give a Guest of Honor address after an introduction by Willis at a luncheon 12:00 pm in the Campus Union Ballroom, with seating starting at 11:45 am. Luncheon cost is \$12.00 with reservations needed by April 6.

Thursday's afternoon programming includes an in-person CSI Presentation by Cordelia Willis, Opening Ceremonies at 5:30 pm followed by Student Sci-Fi Short Film screenings, and a student sci-fi art display (which will open at 5:00 pm).

The Lectureship finishes up Saturday morning with a Creative Writing Workshop led by Connie Willis.

Other confirmed participants so far include Reese Hogan, Darynda Jones, Jeffe Kennedy, Emily Mah, Lauren C. Teffeau, Ian Tregillis, Walter Jon Williams, and Courtney Willis.

Updates at [enmu.edu](http://enmu.edu) or [david.sweeten@enmu.edu](mailto:david.sweeten@enmu.edu).

## SUZY MCKEE CHARNAS DIES

from Locus Magazine & ABQ Sources

SF writer Suzy McKee Charnas died January 2 in Albuquerque from a massive heart attack. She was 83 years old, and best known for her ambitious works that explored gender, sexuality, and feminist issues.

Her sister, Liza McKee, who had moved in with her approximately seven months before, posted on Facebook January 4, "My sister, Suzy (who I live with), died of a massive heart attack on Monday morning in the house, with me with her holding her and six paramedics in 5

### UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** The Club Auction! Bob Vardeman & Patricia Rogers auction off donated items to benefit ASFS. Cash/check only.
- **March 10:** ABQ author Lynn Barker talks about her time in Hollywood and the short novel she co-wrote with Trek's D.C. Fontana.
- **March 31:** Bubonicon 55 Guest Nominations...
- **April 21 - One Week Late:** Nothing confirmed.
- **May 12:** Working on a guest speaker. Plus the Spring issue of *ASFACTS* (deadline May 8).
- **June 9:** Possibly Summer Movie Time...

Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Darth Vader, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Contact: (505) 266-8905 or via [cwcraig@nmia.com](mailto:cwcraig@nmia.com). *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for ABQ SF Society, *SITHFACTS* each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Monday, April 17.

**Club Officers:** Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Troy Stull, Moderator. Mike McCommas, Alternator. Cupid, holiday host. **Bubonicon Chair:** Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

minutes, but she was already gone. I am devastated, scared, shaky - everything that comes with this. I will miss her always for the rest of my life. We had wonderful hysterical laughing fits every day or night, and loved each other more than I can say.”

Suzy McKee was born October 22, 1939, in New York City. She attended Barnard College, where she studied economic history, and then served in the Peace Corps for two years in West Africa before getting a master’s degree in teaching at NYU and working as a curriculum writer. She married lawyer Stephen Charnas in 1968, and they relocated to New Mexico around 1970, where she spent the rest of her life, occasionally teaching but mainly writing full-time. She has also taught at writing workshops, including Clarion and Clarion West.

Her writing career began with the Holdfast Chronicles, starting with *Walk to the End of the World* (1974) and continuing with *Motherlines* (1978), *The Furies* (1994), and Tiptree Award winner *The Conqueror’s Child* (1999). They are set in a future world devastated by wars in which most men had died, but a few still held power in a small patch of livable earth where women struggled as slaves. Ultimately, the women take power themselves, corralling the few remaining men for reproductive purposes. The series ends with the women building a utopian society, and the difficulties of maintaining it.

*The Vampire Tapestry* is perhaps her most successful book, published in 1980. A collection of linked stories, it recounts the life and thoughts of a vampire anthropologist whose experiences, in the end, lie within the human range. The third of the linked vampire stories, “Unicorn Tapestry” won the 1980 Nebula award. It was translated into French, German, Dutch, and Greek, and she later revised it for theatrical productions and a movie script.

The Sorcery Hall trilogy – *The Bronze King* (1985), *The Silver Glove* (1988) and *The Golden Thread* (1989) – features juvenile protagonists banded together to protect mundane reality from the malefic otherworld.

Standalones include *Dorothea Dreams* (1986, a ghost story in which Albuquerque intersects with Revolutionary France), *The Kingdom of Kevin Malone* (1993), *Strange Seas* (2002), and *The Ruby Tear* (1997, written as Rebecca Brand).

She also was an accomplished short fiction writer. In addition to the Nebula for “Unicorn Tapestry,” her feminist werewolf story “Boobs” (1989) won a Hugo Award. Some of her stories were collected in *Moonstone and Tiger Eye* (1991), *Music of the Night* (2001), and *Stagestruck Vampires & Other Phantasms* (2004). She also wrote a memoir, *My Father’s Ghost: The Return of my Old Man and Other Second Chances* (2002).

In 1999, Charnas told Joan Gordon in an interview for *Science Fiction Studies*, “When I was a little kid, my dad was an illustrator for Wonder Books [picture books for children], and he used to stalk around the house asking where his ‘dummies’ were – the blank books, maybe eight folded pages sewn together, that he used to lay out his preliminary sketches for a story – because I’d snagged them and was drawing my own pictures and

stories into them. The book I have on my shelf that he did pictures for, *The Shy Little Horse*, was published in 1947, and it was, I believe, the last one he did. That would make me six to eight years old when I wrote in his dummies.”

On the SFWA website, an in memoriam post states, “Charnas was known for her bold writing, her tenacity to hold to her storylines amidst pressure, her direct teachings about the realities of the industry, and her joy for laughter and life. Originally from New York City, where she also studied, she lived and wrote from New Mexico for over 60 years. Her work was also influenced by her time in Nigeria.”

Jane Lindskold reminisced, “Suzy was known to smoke cigars. She loved her husband, whom she called ‘Stevie.’ I’m going to miss hearing her cut to the heart of a matter with a brief profanity, and dive ahead to extrapolate.”

Mary Anne Mohanraj remembered, “Suzy wasn’t one to paper over the hard bits; her own work was full of unflinching truths. I love so many of her titles. Everything I’ve read of hers, I’ve loved, and at this point, I think I may have read it all. Suzy was a delight to listen to, and I was very happy to be the young grasshopper, sitting at her feet and soaking up whatever wisdom I could. Her writing helped make a better world for that child and so many others – what more can any of us ask of our lives?”

Yvonne Coats recalled, “I will miss her biting wit and incisive comments on books, life and people. It always felt like a gift when Suzy sat down for a long conversation. I’ll miss having her in the world.”

And Stephen Donaldson noted, “She’ll be missed. We didn’t seek each other out, but I was always glad to spend time with her. *Dorothea Dreams* was my personal favorite of her books.”

Charnas participated in many Bubonicon events over the years, and also talked to various New Mexico science fiction clubs.

Her husband predeceased her in 2018. She is survived by her sister, Liza; plus stepchildren and grandchildren.

## LOCUS 2022 RECOMMENDED READING LIST

It’s time for *Locus Magazine*’s annual list of reading recommendations. Published in *Locus Magazine*’s February 2023 issue, the list is assembled by Locus editors, columnists, outside reviewers, and other professionals and well-known critics of genre fiction and non-fiction. They looked at 982 titles from 2022 in short fiction and long fiction. The final recommendations, trimmed down to a somewhat reasonable-length list, are their best recommendations for readers’ consideration.

Of interest to Bubonicon and New Mexico fans are:

SF NOVELS: *The Spare Man* by Mary Robinette Kowal, *The Kaiju Preservation Society* by John Scalzi, and *Imperium Restored* by Walter Jon Williams. FANTASY NOVELS: *Age of Ash* by Daniel Abraham, *Nettle & Bone* by T. Kingfisher (Ursula Vernon), and *Fevered*

*Star* by Rebecca Roanhorse. HORROR NOVELS: *What Moves the Dead* by T. Kingfisher.

REPRINT ANTHOLOGIES: *The Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy 2022* edited by Rebecca Roanhorse and John Joseph Adams. NOVELLAS: *A Prayer for the Crown Shy* by Becky Chambers, and *Tread of Angels* by Rebecca Roanhorse. NOVELETTES: “The Difference Between Love and Time” by Catherynne M. Valente.

## BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, February 20, at Jason’s Deli (northwest corner of Louisiana & America’s Parkway NE – across the street from Bubonicon’s Marriott Hotel) to discuss *Eon* by Greg Bear. The group then focuses on *Wyrd Sisters: Discworld* by Terry Pratchett on Monday, March 20, and *The Kaiju Preservation Society* by John Scalzi on Monday, April 17 – both months 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 [msransom@hotmail.com](mailto:msransom@hotmail.com) or Craig at 266-8905.

## AUTHOR/ARTIST RAY NELSON DIES

SF writer and illustrator Ray Nelson, 91, died November 30, 2022 in El Cerrito, CA (but the information did not become available to [locusmag.com](http://locusmag.com) until late January). He was a prolific author of SF and mystery fiction and longtime member of fandom.

Radell Faraday Nelson was born October 31, 1931, in Schenectady, New York. He became involved in fandom as a teenager in Cadillac MI. He claimed to have invented the propeller beanie in 1947, and popularized the headgear as a symbol of science fiction in his cartoons. Nelson attended the University of Chicago and then spent four years studying in Paris, where he met many literary luminaries of the time, including Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Beat writers, Burroughs and Ginsberg among them. While living in Paris, he assisted Michael Moorcock in smuggling banned Henry



Art: Ray Nelson

Miller books out of France. Nelson was married four times, to Lisa Mulligan, Perdita Lilly, Kirsten Enge, and Helene Knox; the latter survives him, along with a son from his marriage to Enge.

His first work of genre interest was “Turn Off the Sky” in *F&SF* (1963). Story “Eight O’Clock in the Morning” (1963) was later adapted as John Carpenter’s film *They Live* (1988). Debut novel *The Ganymede Takeover*, a collaboration with Philip K. Dick, appeared in 1967, and was followed by *Blake’s Progress* (1975). The Beggars duology is *Then Beggars Could Ride* (1976) and *The Revolt of the Unemployables* (1978). *The Prometheus Man: A Nrobook* (1982) received a Philip K. Dick Award special citation. Other novels include *The Ecolog* (1977, as R. Faraday Nelson) and *Virtual Zen* (1996). He wrote *Dimension of Horror* (1979) under house name Jeffrey Lord.

He was a prolific fan artist, producing work from the 1940s, was a Retro Hugo finalist for Best Fan Artist in 2001, and won a Rotsler Award for his illustrations in 2003. He was presented with the Fanzine Activity Achievement Award in 2014, and was inducted into the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 2019.

## SCALZI WINS HEINLEIN AWARD

John Scalzi is the winner of the 2023 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](http://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 26, 2023. Scalzi “will participate in the Balticon program across Memorial Day Weekend.”

## 2023 CHENGDU WORLDCON HAS DELAY AND VENUE CHANGE

Chengdu Worldcon 2023, the 81st World Science Fiction Convention, to be held in Chengdu, China, has announced a delay and a new convention hotel and venue:

“Chengdu Worldcon 2023... will be held on October 18-22, 2023 (5 days in total), at the Chengdu Science Fiction Museum in Jingrong Lake, Pidu District, Chengdu. Sheraton Chengdu Pidu and Wyndham Grand Chengdu will be the new convention headquarter hotels for the accommodation.”

The original dates were August 23-29. The museum venue appears to be under construction with plans to be completed later this year.

The convention also announced that Hugo Awards nominations would open soon and remain open until the end of April 2023.

## PK DICK AWARD 2023 FINALISTS

The 2023 Philip K. Dick Award finalists were announced mid-January: *Arboreality* by Rebecca Campbell, *Widowland* by C.J. Carey, *Ymir* by Rich Larson, *January Fifteenth* by Rachel Swirsky, *The Legacy of Molly Southbourne* by Tade Thompson, and *The Extractionist* by Kimberly Unger.

The award is presented annually to a distinguished work of science fiction originally published in paperback form in the United States. The award is sponsored by the Philip K. Dick Trust and the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, and the ceremony is sponsored by the Northwest Science Fiction Society. This year's judges are Michael Cassutt (chair), Matthew Goodwin, Stina Leicht, and E. Catherine Tobler.

The winner and any special citations will be announced April 7 at Norwescon 45, in SeaTac, WA.

## 2022 GOODREADS CHOICE AWARDS

Winners of the 2022 Goodreads Choice Awards for the "best books of 2022," as chosen by users of the site, were announced December 8. There are several winners of genre interest.

BEST FICTION: *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin. BEST SCIENCE FICTION: *Sea of Tranquility* by Emily St. John Mandel (also nominated were *Leviathan Falls* by James S.A. Corey and *The Kaiju Preservation Society* by John Scalzi). BEST FANTASY: *House of Sky and Breath* by Sarah J. Maas (also nominated was *Nettle & Bone* by T. Kingfisher). BEST ROMANCE: *Book Lovers* by Emily Henry.

BEST HORROR: *Hidden Pictures* by Jason Rekulak (also nominated was *What Moves the Dead* by T. Kingfisher), BEST YOUNG ADULT FICTION: *The Final Gambit* by Jennifer Lynn Barnes. BEST YOUNG ADULT FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION: *Gallant* by V.E. Schwab. GRAPHIC NOVELS & COMICS: *Heartstopper Volume 4* by Alice Oseman.

Goodreads reported 5,779,854 votes cast, up from 4,756,261 votes in 2021 and 5,674,480 in 2020. For a full list of categories and nominees, see the official website.

## MANDALORIAN ON REGULAR TV ONE FEBRUARY NIGHT ONLY

by Germain Lussier, [gizmodo.com](http://gizmodo.com) 2-6-23

*The Mandalorian*, the show that helped launch an entire streaming service, is coming off Disney+ for one night only. With the third season of the hit Star Wars show quickly approaching, the very first episode of the show will make its broadcast debut, airing February 24 on ABC, Freeform, and FX.

So, if you're a person who doesn't subscribe to Disney+, or who hasn't gone to a friend's house who has Disney+, and has no idea who "Baby Yoda" is... well, in a few short weeks, you can find out. Spoiler alert: the character debuts at the end of the episode that's airing: "Chapter 1: The Mandalorian."

This broadcast debut is happening to ramp up some easy promotion for *The Mandalorian* season three, which debuts on Disney+ the following week, March 1. The 41-minute episode will air from 8-9 p.m. so expect some commercials, one of which you have to imagine will be for season three.

Either way, it might be fun to go back and revisit the first episode of the show now, just to think about the many, many ways it has impacted not just *Star Wars*, but pop culture in general. For *Star Wars*, the show fulfilled a years-long ambition by creator George Lucas to bring his franchise to live-action television, and it gave fans a new place to discover the stories they know and love. In fact, right now, *Star Wars* certainly is a brand more tied to streaming than it is to theatrical movies. Since the last movie, 2019's *The Rise of Skywalker*, Disney+ has debuted four live-action shows and multiple animated series. By the time there's another movie (which is maybe 2025), there are likely to be at least two to three more series.

Culturally, from the moment he popped up on screen, the character referred to as "Baby Yoda," real name Grogu, instantly became an icon. He even was a balloon in Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. There are few characters in pop culture as a whole, let alone just *Star Wars*, as recognizable or popular.

And all of it began on November 12, 2019, with the launch of Disney+ and the series' first episode – which, in a few weeks' time, will make its debut on broadcast TV.

## LEGENDS OF TOMORROW RETURN ON THE FLASH

by Rob Bricken, [gizmodo.com](http://gizmodo.com) 2-6-23

While a lot of familiar faces are returning for *The Flash*'s ninth season, it won't just be the friends and family members of the Iris West clan. Showrunner Eric Wallace has revealed that the fan-favorite *Legends of Tomorrow* cast will make an appearance, almost certainly for the final time.

While this is wonderful news, it is somewhat bittersweet. Wallace said that he had hoped to spend two episodes of *The Flash* wrapping up *Legends*' storyline – the show ended with everyone stuck in 1916 and arrested by the time police – but since *Flash*'s ninth season was limited to 13 episodes, his original plan was scuttled. As he told the Nerds of Color podcast:

"My original concept was to have at least one – if not a two-parter – that wrapped up *Legends of Tomorrow*. And you know, there will be a little crossover we get them back, we get them out of time jail, all these good things, Booster Gold, etc. etc. When we found out we



only have 13 episodes, that was no longer possible. We barely have enough time to wrap up things with Barry and Iris' upcoming family..."

We have no idea how the *Legends* will make their appearance, or why, or what state they'll be in (the assumption being that Barry won't be wasting time rescuing them from time jail). But no matter what, it'll be great to see them again one last time. When *The Flash* ends later this year, so will the Arrowverse.

Meanwhile, James Gunn recently promised to *Variety* that *Superman & Lois* will continue for "one to two more seasons" at the CW since "everybody likes it." However, neither Gunn nor co-studio head Peter Safran offered a comment regarding the future of *Gotham Knights*.

## BORG QUEEN WERSCHING DIES

Actress Annie Wersching, best known for playing FBI agent Renee Walker in the series *24*, providing the voice for Tess in the video game *The Last of Us*, and playing the Borg Queen on *Star Trek: Picard*, died January 29. She was 45 years old.

Wersching passed away in Los Angeles following a battle with cancer, her publicist told The Associated Press. The type of cancer was not specified.

Neil Druckmann, who created *The Last of Us*, wrote on Twitter that "We just lost a beautiful artist and human being. My heart is shattered. Thoughts are with her loved ones."

Actor Abigail Spencer, who appeared with Wersching on the sci-fi series *Timeless*, tweeted, "We love you Annie Wersching. You will be deeply missed."

In *The Rookie*, she played serial killer Rosalind Dyer, who enjoyed teasing and tormenting Officer John Nolan, played by Nathan Fillion. Wersching earlier appeared in three episodes of *Castle*, which also starred Fillion. The February 14 episode of *The Rookie* will be dedicated to her memory.

Born on March 28, 1977, and raised in St. Louis, MO, Wersching appeared on dozens of television shows over the course of her two-decade career.

Her first credit was in *Star Trek: Enterprise*, and she would go on to have recurring roles in the seventh and eighth seasons of *24*, *Bosch*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Marvel's Runaways*, *Angel*, *Supernatural*, *Charmed*, *Exstant*, *Major Crimes*, *Revolution*, and, most recently, in the second season of *Star Trek: Picard*.

She also provided the voice and motion capture performance for Tess for popular video game *The Last of Us*.

In an interview on the Paramount+ show *The Ready Room*, Wersching described playing the Borg Queen as "certainly a little intimidating." She noted that she had familiarized herself with the role and those who had previously played it before going forward with her own interpretation and performance. "It's such an iconic role," she said. "I'm incredibly excited to have everyone see."

Wersching was diagnosed with cancer in 2020 and continued working. She's survived by her husband, actor Stephen Full, and three sons. A GoFundMe page has been set up to support the family.

## BUBONICON 54 PLANNING BEGINS

by Craig W. Chrissinger, con chair

We're six weeks into 2023 now, and planning for Bubonicon 54 is just beginning. We should be live and in-person unless something climatic happens in just about 6 ½ months. A hotel contract was signed at the end of December, so three-day passes went on sale January 15.

Weekend Passes currently are \$40.00, and they go up April 22 to \$48 each, remaining so through August 11. 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 54 is planned for August 25-27 (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 New Mexico Comic Expo (which may affect attendance) and a week before DragonCon in Atlanta. The Marriott is offering sleeping rooms at \$149 single-quad occupancy, with free WiFi in sleeping rooms. Reservations are needed by August 4 (take note – it's earlier than usual). 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 Rebecca Roanhorse, Carrie Vaughn, Ursula Vernon & Kevin Sonney, and artist Rachael Mayo. We're expecting many con regulars, of course. And I'm happy and proud to say that Mandy Self and Jessica Coyle again are serving as assistant chairs.

We're asking for all Fan Programming proposals/requests for time & space to be submitted by the end of Sunday, April 30, 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, the costume contest, fan/video programming, and kids programming. We would like to keep the Charity Auction, mass autographing and Costume Contest at the earlier times we tried out last year. And the Bubonicon 54 theme will be chosen at the end of this month.

COVID/RSV SAFETY: More than six months out, it's impossible to know what will be going on with air-borne viruses in late summer. We will make any decision on masking and/or proof of vaccination in July. Even if eve-

rything looks good, we still will recommend masks while inside as many of us have suffered from “con crud” over the years.

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, and NM PBS (possibly the International Red Cross as well).

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 probably are \$120 with a weekend pass, and \$155 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 Luke DeProst at [dealers@bubonicon.com](mailto:dealers@bubonicon.com).

Meanwhile, Kathy K. Kubica and her staff are gearing up for the 2023 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 large-envelope paid SASE (\$1.20) to the San Mateo address. Info is available from [artshow@bubonicon.com](mailto:artshow@bubonicon.com).

More general info is available from the website: [www.bubonicon.com](http://www.bubonicon.com), by writing to the San Mateo address, by calling our Google Phone (voicemail) at 505-559-0931, and by emailing us at [bubonicon@gmail.com](mailto:bubonicon@gmail.com).

## BOOK REVIEW CORNER

***Wild Massive* by Scotto Moore, 2023 Tordotcom, hc \$29.99, 496 pages.**

**Review by Becky Davis**

On first illusion, *Wild Massive* reads as though Scotto Moore took a drug-laced ride up a tall Seattle elevator, stopping at several vacant or construction floors before he got to his editor’s office, and hatched the idea for this book. But that is illusion.

In reality, according to his Acknowledgments page, the world-building has been percolating in his brain for 10 years during his tenure with Seattle theater and a web comic he developed. It is wild world-building.

Imagine a multiverse of worlds (quite a few like North America) bisected by a giant building of 500,000 floors, containing four elevators operated by helpful AI “cloudlets.” These let humans off at entertainment floors running an entertainment serial called *Storm and Desire*, managed by corporations that best resemble a mash-up of Disneyworld, Disneyland and the *Dr. Strange* world of mages within the Marvel universe. There is an additional force across the floors/worlds known as “Association” of which senior human members (and not so human members) want to own and control the people of the human living lands. Most of all, they want to control the wizards and sorcerers, the “Shai-Manank” of the 490,500<sup>th</sup> floor who previously escaped from the Association.

Dropped into this brew is the heroine of this story,

Carissa, the sole survivor of “The Brilliant”, a sect of mages notable for their multiple magical skills. She has lived in an elevator (somehow not of the usual four) as a maintenance tech, assisted by a helpful cloudlet AI, for 10 of the 20 years she has hidden from the Association. Dropped onto her elevator is a Shai Manank shapeshifter who quickly upends her calm life and forces both to run from the Association and Wild Massive (the Disneyworld corporation) which seek to kill them.

The scope of this novel is too big to describe in a simple review. There is a large cast of characters. Enough to make Tolstoy proud. All principal characters seem to have immortality in which to wage their battles.

The last third of the book carries the reader through a gigantic battle among the Association, Wild Massive (Disneyworld), Wild Massive Prime (Disneyland) and the Shai-Manank mages (*Dr. Strange*/Marvel) across multiple floors/worlds. There are Muses who write *Storm and Desire* scripts, AIs (one of “computonium”) who are indestructible, implacable admirals and Parliament heads, and simple folk with a gift or two who move the plot along.

There are clichés here too, or should I say brass gongs, such as the aforementioned “computonium.” Moore switches from third-person narrative to first-person narrative for one character. That is jarring. One character’s threat to several enemies: “Don’t move or the treaty gets it!” (Does anyone not remember Cleavon Little shouting a similar challenge in *Blazing Saddles*?) At several points in the novel Moore jumps from the present to the past of a character to flesh out motives and emotional state. That’s confusing to readers. A big brass gong for me was the cover showing a broken highway overpass above a desolate wasteland. It very strongly resembles the broken overpass of the Antelope Valley Freeway after the 1994 Northridge earthquake, with artistic enhancements. However, this graphic does not enhance or give a clue about the novel.

The novel is complex. There are comic moments in the book as well as somewhat depressing moments. If the reader does not mind the swings from third-person to first-person, and then to third-person past and back again, as well as enough novel concepts to fuel three books in this multiverse, then go read it.

In my mind, the clichés outlasted the novel ideas and action. I will gift this to a reader with a more flexible imagination than mine.

***Arch-Conspirator* by Veronica Roth, 2023 Tor Books, hc \$19.99, 128 pages.**

**Review by Jessica Coyle**

*Arch-Conspirator* is the first novella of three coming from Tor Books by Veronica Roth, author of the YA *Divergent* series. The story is a science fiction retelling of the story of Antigone from the ancient Greek play by Sophocles. It is set in a future dystopia where the planet has been turned into a wasteland, and everyone lives in one remaining city. The Archive preserves the future of humanity by storing the genes of everyone that has died and using them to create new life. Anyone who is born

through natural means, like Antigone and her siblings, are cursed to an early death due to some unspecified human mutation, and therefore is treated like a pariah by the rest of society. They are grudgingly accepted into this world as the children of Oedipus and Jocasta, the rulers of the city.

When her Uncle Kreon stages a coup that leads to the deaths of her parents and then her brothers, Antigone must use all of the resources at her disposal to try and survive by any means necessary. Will her uncle allow her to live, or will he arrange her death by having her banished on a one-way mission to space in an attempt to summon help to save the rest of humanity from their blighted planet?

Roth's novella is a fast paced and engaging story. For those who know the story of *Antigone*, there are no surprises in the story, but it is interesting to see how the author weaves the elements into her futuristic dystopian landscape. My one complaint is that I wish the story were a bit expanded so that she could have done some more world building as the glimpse Roth gives the reader of Antigone's world are interesting and made me want to know more. I enjoyed this novella very much, and am looking forward to see what Roth's next novella from Tor looks like.

***A Taste of Gold and Iron* by Alexandra Rowland, 2022 Tordotcom, hc \$27.99, 468 pages.**

**Review by Roberta Johnson**

Prince Kadou is next in line for the throne of the prosperous country Arast. Far from enjoying the thought of inheriting, Kadou loves his older sister the sultan, is terrified of inheriting power, and suffers from debilitating anxiety and panic attacks. The fear-creature in his head has been especially bad since his sister became pregnant by a sinister foreign princeling who inconveniently refuses to go home. But now Sis has been safely delivered of a healthy baby, Kadou is one step further from the throne and you'd think he could relax.

Unfortunately, Kadou has confided his mistrust of the baby's body-father to the wrong person – his trusted guard and sometime lover. A very large misunderstanding ensues, leading to disaster, scandal and the deaths of several guards, not to mention horses. The guard's career is ruined and Kadou is disgraced and perilously close to being exiled. His only hope for redemption might come in investigating a recent burglary.

Enter Evemer, highly educated and trained newly graduated member of the honor guard that serves the royal family. Kadou is in need of a new guard, and Evemer is horrified to find himself appointed, because no one is more judgmental than a 19-year-old idealist who's just discovered his idol has feet of clay. He is willing to lay down his life defending the prince – he just wishes the man was worth the sacrifice.

Panic and self-loathing aren't making the prince behave better – for one thing, he's trying to drown the fear-creature in alcohol. His disapproving guard is getting ready to die for his country, when he's surprised to find the prince saving his life. Next time he'll save the prince.

Eventually they may lose count, as the two of them begin a friendship and eventually a romance, in the process solving a crime and uncovering at least one conspiracy.

This excellent fantasy romance/adventure features action, magic, numismatics, economics, fashion, treachery, love, and political intrigue; it's peopled with lively characters who are capable of real growth, as well as out-right villains. It's technically a queer romance, but the author has imagined a society that can accept people wherever they happen to land on a spectrum. And the dialogue is sometimes hilarious. This one's definitely a keeper, and I will be checking out Rowland's other works.

## ***ASFS MEETING REPORTS —*** **OCT 2022: CRUMPLER & MARS**

Thirty-two people heard Dr. Larry S. Crumpler talk about his 2021 non-fiction book, *Missions to Mars: A New Era of Rover and Spacecraft Discovery on the Red Planet*. Crumpler said the concept of the book came from realizing he had been “through all the missions and explorations, so I had insights and stories of NASA's projects.”

Starting with the Red Planet's history, Crumpler said that in the 1830s, people barely could see the details of Mars, and even in 1962 the U.S. Air Force had lots of unknown dark blotches on their maps. Mariner 9 in 1971 revealed much more detail, and Viking in 1976 showed details including craters, canyons and giant mountains. “Mars keeps teaching us lessons and not to assume,” he observed.

When Mariner 9 revealed craters, people reacted, “Oh, it's just the Moon,” and not the living planet of science fiction. Crumpler compared Mars to Coyote of Native American mythology, but not as a trickster - more of a mischievous grandfather there to help people learn something.

The first Mars Exploration Rovers - Spirit and Opportunity - ran 2004-2018. The mission team learned how to drive and not get stuck, and saw global dust storms.

“Mars and New Mexico are very similar,” observed Crumpler. “They share general characteristics like lightning, dust, shadow selfies, dust devils, gypsum veins, and desert varnish. In fact, a piece of New Mexico basalt is on Mars - it's on Curiosity as a calibrating target after a global search for a material tough enough to work on Mars.”

Perseverance landed in 2021 in a field area in a river delta inside Jezero Crater. It is studying geology, astrobiology (an area of interest suitable for life), and sample caching to prepare for mankind. The helicopter on Perseverance - Ingenuity - has flown 33 flights as of October 2022. And Perseverance now has an auto-driving feature.

Asked about the future, Crumpler said humans are going to Mars, maybe in 2050 or so. “The real issue for humans on Mars is the dust. It might itch quite a bit on skin when moisture goes up because it has lots of sulfates.”

**CLUB BUSINESS:** In elections, Troy Stull was chosen as Moderator, Mike McCommas was re-elected as Alternator, and Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle remain as co-Executive Secretaries. For December's holiday party, the group chose “chocolate” as the challenge ingredient.

## Nov 2022: X MINUS ONE VIDEOS

Electrical engineer Christopher Marsh did a presentation for 32 people on *X Minus One*, a radio program from the 1950s. Marsh said the program was a revival of NBC's *Dimension X* (1950-51), and the first 15 episodes were new versions of *Dimension X* shows.

Marsh has animated two episodes from the audio recordings. He said he was inspired by the *Doctor Who* episodes where the video was destroyed but the audio survived.

He then showed "A Pail of Air" by Fritz Leiber, which appeared in the December 1951 issue of *Galaxy Magazine*. That was followed by "A Gun for Dinosaur" by L. Sprague de Camp, part of the author's *Rivers of Time* series. It originally appeared in the March 1956 issue of *Galaxy Magazine*, and is the story of four men who travel into the past to hunt dinosaurs.

Asked how long the video productions took, Marsh replied, "The first one took a couple of months. The second was a little faster because I was more used to the technology. The hardest part is making people walk normal. Walking is tough."

Finishing the evening, Marsh said he is looking at a few other *X Minus One* stories to animate.

## DEC 2022: DESSERTS & FILMS

Thirty-Four people came together to watch various comedic film shorts and film trailers, and to judge the 18th ASFS Holiday Cook-Off by tasting many food samples with *chocolate* as the "challenge ingredient."

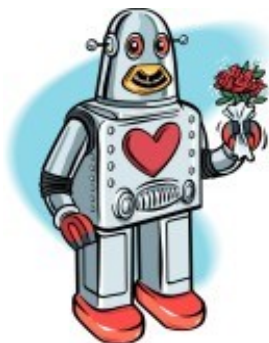
Shown during the evening were *Simon's Cat* episodes, the Minion Christmas Song, *Fraggles* and *Muppets* music videos, a segment of a *Big Bang Theory* Christmas episode, Jimmy Fallon & Dolly Parton's Christmas music video, trailers for upcoming films, *Glove & Boots* episodes, music segments from *The Tonight Show*, Weird Al and *MST3K* music segments, a *Looney Tunes* cartoon with Bugs & Daffy, and a spoof segment from James Cordon's show.

In the Dessert Cook-Off, there were 15 entries from Alan Kroll, Robbyn Selters, Rebecca Hewett, Troy Stull, Marian Skupski, Patricia Rogers, Al Kulp, Rick Walter & Barbara Bryant, Mark Gillespie, Roberta Johnson, Geneva Schult, and A. Nony Mouse.

BEST USE OF THEME went to Patricia Rogers' "Rudolph's Nose Brownies," BEST OF SHOW went to Rebecca Hewett's "New Mexico Oreos," RUNNER-UP went to Troy Stull's "Bison Chili," and HONORABLE MENTION went to Marian Skupski's "Chocolate Babka."

Also of note were Geneva Schult's "Ferrero Rocher Deep-Fried Pumpkin Hazelnut Ravioli" and Mark Gillespie's "Cookie Crinkles."

THANK YOU RECOGNITION



for assistance in setting up and/or cleaning up goes to Geneva Schult, Troy Stull, Roberta Johnson, Patricia Rogers, Mike McCommas, Becky Davis, Eric Klammer, and Serge Broom (and if we missed anyone else, many apologies). It all was much appreciated!

## EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

• WE HAVE A NEW KITTEN in our house, and it's been interesting watching him explore his world and try to understand how things work. It's a whole new perspective on life and the house and play. Found in the parking lot of Ski Santa Fe, he came into our lives on December 20. We named him Gizmo since *Gremlins* is a Christmas movie (plus we're fond of how Nandor calls his familiar "Gizmo" instead of Guillermo on *What We Do in the Shadows*). Jessica and I went 6 1/2 months without a furry friend. We hadn't planned on a kitten (just 7-8 weeks old when found), but he has stolen our hearts. Of course, he also is getting bigger and figuring out he can jump to higher surfaces now. So, no Funko Pop figure, writing pen or any small object is safe now. A spray bottle is out as we try to break him of clawing/climbing furniture. Thank goodness he's so cute, likes to talk, and has such a loud purr!

• HARD TO BELIEVE Covid hit the world three years ago and even slowed down now, it still affects us all. Top that off this year with RSV and a hard-hitting Flu. Yay, winter - what there has been of it (not much snow here, and mostly above-average temps). So far, Jessica and I still have avoided being sick with the modern plague, but we were hit by a strong head cold around New Year's. Of course, it's also hard to comprehend Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine a little more than a year ago. They're still standing strong even in bitter cold with little food. We salute those valiant, brave people.

• JESSICA & I WENT to COSine in Colorado Springs with Lauren Teffeau in mid-January. Everyone was masked, but it still was more relaxed than last year. This small con was at a new hotel, so there was the usual learning curve involved with a new venue. We were happy to see Connie & Courtney Willis, Arlen Feldman, Rose Beetem, Nina & Ron Else, and other Colorado buddies. Jessica entered some crochet crafts into the Art Show (and made sales) and interviewed Author Guest Martha Wells. We both did programming, and had fun with the trivia game Friday night. It was a nice and fun weekend. And once again, 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.

• WE ENJOYED *Wednesday* on Netflix; *Welcome to Chippendales* on Hulu; *She-Hulk*, *Star Wars: Andor*, and *The Guardians of the Galaxy Holiday Special* (sweet & funny) on Disney+; and are now liking *Velma* on HBO Max. Finally watched *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* and it's fine. Not the best Marvel film ever, but it hits the marks and has the sad misfortune of having to deal with actor Chadwick Boseman's death. We did like *Three Thousand Years of Longing* from George Miller. Nicely done. Still want to see *The Menu*, *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania*, and *Black Adam*.

• ALMOST OUT OF ROOM. Happy Valentine's Day & Happy St. Patrick's Day. As always, more stuff is needed next issue (Mon, April 17 deadline). Thank you to Becky D, Roberta J and Jessica C for their contributions. - Craig C