



ASFACTS 2024

MARCH "BONUS ST. PATRICK'S" ISSUE

ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP ADDS AUTHOR, REVEALS APRIL PLANS

John Stith of Colorado has been added as a participant at the 47th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship to be held Thursday-Saturday, April 11-13, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales. Special guest is Martha Wells of Texas, with Colorado's Connie Willis as Mistress of Ceremonies.

Wells has been an SF/F writer since her first fantasy novel was published in 1993, and her work includes *The Books of the Raksura* series, the *Ile-Rien* series, *The Murderbot Diaries* series, and other fantasy novels, most recently *Witch King*. She has won Nebula Awards, Hugo Awards, Locus Awards, and a Dragon Award.

"We're very excited to hold the 47th Annual Williamson Lectureship this April and are especially pleased to welcome Martha Wells to the event," says Lectureship organizer David Sweeten. "We are very much looking forward to what Wells has to say about her books, her experience in the publishing industry, and having the *Murderbot Diaries* being developed into a television series. I am excited to say that this year has multiple events to feature the work of authors, scholars in speculative fiction, and ENMU students."

Other confirmed participants include Darynda Jones, Jeffe Kennedy, Arkady Martine, Kelly Robson, Vivian Shaw, Lauren C. Teffeau, Ian Tregillis, Sarena Ulibarri, Walter Jon Williams, Cordelia Willis and Courtney Willis.

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 theme of this year's Lectureship is "Oh, The (In)Humanity."

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.

Programming on Thursday, April 11, includes Cordelia Willis giving a forensic talk at 3:00 pm, and an Opening Event 5:00-7:00 pm in the Greyhound Lounge with activities run by student organizations (including the History Guild doing a presentation on Jack Williamson, the Clayhounds [ENMU ceramics club] bringing sci-fi themed pottery and paint-and-takes, and more).

On Friday, April 12, the day begins with an academic

panel at 8:30 am, followed by Wells' Guest of Honor reading at 10:00 am, both in the Zia Room of the Campus Union Building. The Keynote Lunch starts at 12:00 pm with remarks from Connie Willis, a keynote address from Martha Wells, and sci-fi/fantasy trivia. The luncheon will be catered by ENMU's Culinary Arts program. Seating starts at 11:30 am, and the luncheon cost is \$15.00 with reservations needed by March 31 to David.sweeten@enmu.edu.

At 1:30 pm, there will be a tour of the Special Collections Library, including Williamson's office and the Science Fiction Special Collection. At the same time, there will be a board game session. Panel discussions take place 3:00-6:30 pm.

The Lectureship finishes up Saturday morning with another academic panel at 8:30 am and a Creative Writing Workshop led by Connie Willis.

NESFA AWARDS ANNOUNCED

John Scalzi is the recipient of the 2023 Edward E. Smith Memorial Award for Imaginative Fiction (aka the Skylark Award), and Ellen Kushner & Delia Sherman are the winners of the 2024 award, reported Locusmag.com in mid-February. The awards were presented by the New England Science Fiction Association (NESFA) at Boskone 61, held February 9-11 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

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** The Club Auction with Bob Vardeman & Patricia Rogers as your auctioneers. Bidding in 50 cent-increments to \$5.00, then whole dollars only. Cash/Check only! Plus this bonus edition of *ASFACTS* since February's issue was so small...
- **March 22:** Bubonicon 56 Guest Nominations...
- **April 19 - One Week Late:** Jim Greenhouse, Space Science director at the NM Museum of Natural History & Science, talks on Solar Eclipses.
- **May 10:** Artist Jeff Benham of 7000 BC talks on "How Comics Animate Culture." Plus the Spring issue of *ASFACTS* (deadline May 6).
- **June 14:** A visit from an author or our Summer Movie Night.
- **July 12:** Our Summer Movie or a visit from an author. Plus the Summer issue of *ASFACTS*.

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, April/May, July & October for ABQ SF Society, *SITHFACTS* each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Monday, May 6.
2024 Club Officers: Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Eric Klammer, Moderator. Marian Skupski, Alternator. Cupid, holiday host. **Bubonicon Chair:** Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

‘Doc’ Smith well-loved by those who knew him.”

Alex Dos Diaz won the Jack Gaughan Award for Best Emerging Artist.

For more information and a list of past recipients, see the NESFA website.

BRIAN STABLEFORD PASSES AWAY

Author, academic, critic, editor, and translator Brian Stableford died February 24 after a long illness. He was 75 years old, reports Locusmag.com. He was married twice and is survived by his son Leo and daughter Kathy.

Brian Michael Stableford was born July 25, 1948, in Shipley, Yorkshire, England. He attended the University of York, getting a degree in biology, followed by a doctorate in sociology; his doctoral thesis was *The Sociology of Science Fiction*. He taught sociology at the University of Reading from 1977-1988, then switched to writing full time. A highly prolific writer, he produced more than 90 novels, at least 23 collections of short fiction, and 32 non-fiction books, translations of hundreds of French works, plus numerous essays on the field, introductions, and many reviews, most appearing in scholarly journals. His extensive short fiction output includes many stories appearing in *Asimov's* and *Interzone*. Early works appeared as by Brian M. Stableford; later he dropped the middle initial; pseudonyms included Francis Amery, Olympe Chambrienne, and Brian Craig.

His fiction ran from fantasy to SF and horror, often mixing the genres. His first professional sale was far-future science fantasy “Beyond Time’s Aegis” (*Science Fantasy* 1965, writing with Craig A. Mackintosh as Brian Craig), which became part of fixup novel *Firefly* (1994). His first published novel, *Cradle of the Sun* (1969), was in a similar vein. He shifted to SF in the 1970s, with notable series including the *Grainger* (or *Hooded Swan*) series and the *Dedalus Mission* series; he then concentrated on academic work in the 1980s. His fiction output increased in the late 1980s, including a number of tie-ins in the *Warhammer* gaming series, writing as Brian Craig. He wrote a number of horror novels, starting with 1988 SF vampire novel *The Empire of Fear*, set in an alternate world where vampires are scientifically explained, and the *David Lyddyard* trilogy. Later, an interest on biotechnology, in particular genetic engineering, provided the impetus for non-fiction book *The Third Millennium: A History of the World AD 2000-3000* (1985) co-authored by David Langford, and Stableford’s Biotech Revolution sequence, including

Emortality series of six novels, and seven related collections.

Awards include a BSFA Award for story “The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires”, which was also one of his two *Interzone* Readers Poll wins, with “The Magic Bullet”; an Eaton Award for non



-fiction Scientific Romance in Britain: 1890-1950; a SFRA Pilgrim Award for lifetime contribution to SF and fantasy scholarship; an IAFA Award for Distinguished Scholarship; and a SF&F Translation Award (special award).

2023 LA TIMES BOOK PRIZE FINALISTS

Finalists were announced February 23 for the 2023 *Los Angeles Times* Book Prizes, reports Locusmag.com. Categories and works of genre interest follow:

SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY, AND SPECULATIVE FICTION: *The Reformatory* by Tananarive Due, *Whalefall* by Daniel Kraus, *Lone Women* by Victor LaValle, *The Fragile Threads of Power* by V.E. Schwab, and *Jewel Box: Stories* by E. Lily Yu.

FICTION: *Same Bed Different Dreams* by Ed Park, and *Gone Wolf* by Amber McBride.

GRAPHIC NOVELS/COMICS: *CODA* by Simon Spurrier, and *Social Fiction* by Chantal Montellier.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: *A City on Mars: Can We Settle Space, Should We Settle Space, and Have We Really Thought This Through?* By Kelly Weinersmith and Zach Weinersmith.

Winners will be honored at the *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books, in a ceremony to be held April 19 at USC in Los Angeles, CA.

AUTHOR STEVE MILLER DIES

Author Steve Miller, best known for the *Liaden Universe* series co-written with wife Sharon Lee, died suddenly on February 20, as reported by Lee on Facebook. He was 73 years old.

Steven Richard Miller was born July 31, 1950, in Baltimore, MD. He attended the University of Maryland, where he worked on the college newspaper and founded the science fiction club. He was the curator of the UMBC Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery’s SF research collection, served in the Baltimore Science Fiction Society, and was active in fandom. He married fan Sue Nice in 1975, divorcing in 1979. He married Sharon Lee in 1980. In 1988, they moved to Maine, where they lived for the rest of his life.

Miller attended the Clarion West Writers Workshop in 1973. He began publishing SF with “Shalgriel” in 1976, and his first collaboration with Lee was “The Naming of Kinzel: The Foolish” (1984). They collaborated on scores of books and stories together, mostly in the space opera *Liaden Universe*, beginning with *Agent of Change* (1988) and *Carpe Diem* (1989); there are over 20 novels and numerous collections in the Universe, most recently 2023’s *Salvage Right*.

They also co-wrote *The Tomorrow Log* (2003); the Great Migration Duology: *Crystal Soldier* (2005) and *Crystal Dragon* (2006); the Fey Duology: *Duainfey* (2008) and *Longeye* (2009); the Theo Waitley series: *Fledgling* (2009), *Saltation* (2010), and *Ghost Ship* (2011); and *Sword of Orion* (2005).

Lee & Miller jointly won the Skylark Award for contributions to SF in 2012.

DOHERTY WINS HEINLEIN AWARD

Tor Books founder Tom Doherty is the winner of the 2024 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 early March. This award is “in recognition of Mr. Doherty’s work in bringing the inspiring books of hundreds of authors writing about our future in Space to public awareness.”

The selection committee consists of science fiction writers and was founded by Dr. Yoji Kondo, a long-time friend of Robert and Virginia Heinlein. Winners 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, 2024. Doherty “will participate in the Balticon program across Memorial Day Weekend.”

COOPER NAMED GRAND MASTER, HOSEK WINS SERVICE AWARD

In early February, the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA) named Susan Cooper the 40th recipient of the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award, reports Locusmag.com.

SFWA President Jeffe Kennedy said, “Susan Cooper possesses the rare gift of being able to write for young people with a resonance that endures all through their adult lives. I feel as if *The Dark Is Rising* books have always been a part of my life. I memorized poems and passages from those books, which I can still recite today. When I first began writing fantasy of my own, I slipped in images and names from her stories in homage and celebration. It’s truly a great honor for me to name Susan Cooper as the 2024 Grand Master, a writer so foundational to the fantasy genre, for both readers and readers who became writers.”

And then on February 12, SFWA announced that the late James Hosek (October 13, 1964-December 3, 2023) is the winner of the 2024 Kevin O’Donnell, Jr. Service to SFWA Award. The award is presented to “a volunteer of SFWA who best exemplifies the ideal of service to the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.”

Deputy Executive Director Terra LeMay said, “It is often the case that SFWA’s programs are driven by volunteers who serve countless hours behind the scenes, and this is certainly true of our Nebula Awards, which depend on the tireless work of the Nebula Awards Commissioner (NAC). Elucidating the positive qualities that made Jim Hosek the perfect NAC – he was hard-working, ethical, level-headed, kind, scrupulously fair, and so much more... – would take far more space than I’ve been granted here. I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with him and glad we were able to notify him of his selection for this award before his passing. He was one of SFWA’s very best.”



Cooper and Hosek will be honored during the weekend of June 6-9 at the 59th Nebula Awards Ceremony in Pasadena, CA.

CHRISTOPHER PRIEST PASSES AWAY

Author, editor, and scholar Christopher Priest died of cancer February 2 in Rothesay on the Isle of Bute in Scotland. He was 80 years old. He was a major figure in the SF field, famed for his ambitious fiction and erudite criticism and non-fiction, reports Locusmag.com.

Christopher Mackenzie Priest was born in Cheadle, Cheshire, England, on July 14, 1943. Priest was married to author Lisa Tuttle from 1981-87, and to writer Leigh Kennedy from 1988-2011. He married his longtime partner, author Nina Allan, in 2023; she survives him.

His first work of SF interest was “The Run” in 1966. Other notable stories include Hugo Award finalists “The Watched” (1978) and “Palely Loitering” (1979). Some of his short work was collected in *Real-Time World* (1974), *An Infinite Summer* (1979), *Ersatz Wines: Instructive Short Stories* (2008), and *Episodes: Short Stories* (2019).

Priest’s debut novel *Indoctrinaire* was published in 1970. Other SF novels include *Fugue for a Darkening Island* (1972) and BSFA Award winner and Hugo Award finalist *Inverted World, A Dream of Wessex* (1977), *The Glamour* (1984), *The Extremes* (1998), *The Quiet Woman* (1990), Arthur C. Clarke Award winner *The Separation* (2002), *An American Story* (2018), *Expect Me Tomorrow* (2022), and *Airside* (2023).

His 1995 novel *The Prestige* was adapted as a feature film by director Christopher Nolan in 2006; Priest wrote about the rather fraught experience in *The Magic: The Story of a Film* (2008).

He was associate editor at *Foundation* from 1974-77, and edited anthologies including *Anticipations* (1978), and *Stars of Albion* (1979, with Robert P. Holdstock).

His non-fiction includes *Your Book of Film-Making* (1974), *Seize the Moment: The Autobiography of Britain’s First Astronaut* (1993, with Helen Sharman), *The Song of the Book* (2000), and “It” *Came from Outer Space: Occasional Pieces 1973-2008* (2009). Priest was nearly finished with a non-fiction book on the works of J.G. Ballard when he died.

BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, March 18, at Jason’s Deli (northwest corner of Louisiana & America’s Parkway NE – across the street from Bubonicon’s Marriott Hotel) to discuss *The Terraformers* by Annalee Newitz. The group then focuses on *This Is How You Lose the Time War* by Amal El-Mohtar on Monday, April 15, again at Jason’s Deli.

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 or Craig at 266-8905.

CARL "CREED" WEATHERS DIES

by Erik Pedersen, Deadline.com 2-2-24

Carl Weathers, who starred as Apollo Creed in the first four *Rocky* films and appeared in *Predator*, *The Mandalorian*, *Happy Gilmore*, *Action Jackson*, *Arrested Development* and dozens of other films and TV shows, died February 1. He was 76 years old.

Born on January 14, 1948, in New Orleans, Weathers appeared in more than 75 films and TV shows during his 50-year screen career. He played Greef Karga, the head of the Bounty Hunters Guild, in nine episodes of the Disney+ *Star Wars* series *The Mandalorian* over its three seasons. The character became close to Pedro Pascal's Mando as the series progressed. Weathers was a 2021 Emmy nominee for the role and also directed a pair of episodes.

Weathers showed off his comedy chops in a memorable arc on *Arrested Development*, playing a version of himself as an ad-hoc acting coach who proudly offered tips on saving money at everything from food buffets to airport rides. He appeared in four episodes across the Emmy-winning series' first four seasons.

He also appeared as Police Chief Hampton Forbes in more than 24 episodes of the 1989-95 TV series *In the Heat of the Night* starring Carroll O'Connor and Howard Rollins. Weathers was a series regular in the seventh and final season and appeared in the post-series telefilms.

Weathers also voiced Combat Carl in the Oscar-winning *Toy Story 4* (2019) after originating the character for the 2013 TV special *Toy Story of Terror*.

Other credits include his 1988 star turn in *Action Jackson*, which earned him an NAACP Image Award nom and came after his role in 1987's *Predator*. In the latter film, Weathers played Al Dillon, a CIA operative and old Vietnam War buddy of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Maj. Alan "Dutch" Schaefer. They are stalked by a mysterious life form that deploys thermo-imaging and cloaking abilities, and it doesn't end well for Dillon.

But Weathers is best known for playing Apollo Creed, the heavyweight champion of the world who gave journeyman Philly boxer Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) a shot at the title in 1976's *Rocky*. Weathers reprised the role in *Rocky II* (1979), which featured a title rematch with Balboa, and 1982's *Rocky III*, where he trained Balboa to fight the brutish Clubber Lang (Mr. T). Creed's final film in the franchise was *Rocky IV* (1985), where he was killed in the ring by chiseled Russian heavyweight Ivan Drago (Dolph Lundgren).

Weathers also had a memorable turn as Derick "Chubbs" Peterson opposite Adam Sandler in *Happy Gilmore*, playing the title character's golf coach. Peterson was a pro golfer who was forced to leave the tour after losing his hand to an alligator; his wooden replacement paw was the source of many gags.

He was badly injured while filming a fall stunt during the *Happy Gilmore* shoot, leading to years of terrible pain. "I didn't know it until years later, but I fractured two vertebrae and osteophytes grew out and connected, and it did a kind of self-fuse in a really bad place," he told *GQ* in a 2020 interview. "There were three or four years there where I was just in excruciating pain."

After playing linebacker at San Diego State Universi-

ty — he gave the 1987 commencement address there — Weathers went undrafted but signed with the Oakland Raiders. He played eight NFL games for Coach John Madden in 1970-71 before joining the B.C. Lions of the Canadian Football League, where he played 1971-73.

He began his screen career during that era with guest shots in such hit TV series as *Good Times*, *Kung Fu*, *S.W.A.T.*, *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *Cannon*. As the decade went on, he appeared in episodes of *Starsky and Hutch*, *Barnaby Jones*, *Switch*, *The Streets of San Francisco* and other popular shows. He returned to his action roots with the late-'90s TV movies *Assault on Devil's Island* and *Assault on Death Mountain*, starring in both opposite Hulk Hogan and Shannon Tweed.

Weathers began amassing film credits in 1975 with a pair of blaxploitation pics, *Bucktown* and *Friday Foster*. His other movie roles included *Semi-Tough* (1977), *Force 10 from Navarone* (1978), *Death Hunt* (1981) and *Hurricane Smith* (1992).

But his career took off in America's bicentennial year when United Artists released *Rocky*, the underdog-boxer drama that would enter the cultural zeitgeist. Weathers was cast as Creed, the beloved, star-spangled and understandably cocky heavyweight champion who sees dollar signs and good publicity by giving a local lug a title shot. Enter Rocky Balboa, who gets the gig in part due to his catchy nickname, "The Italian Stallion."

Weathers also had an emerging career as a TV director. Along with *The Mandalorian*, in the past few years he helmed episodes of *Chicago Med*, *FBI*, *Law & Order*, *The Last O.G.*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *For the People*, *18 Wheels of Justice*, *Strong Medicine* and *Pensacola: Wings of Gold*.

L.A. CONFIRMED AS SOLE BIDDER FOR 2026 WORLDCON SITE

Glasgow 2024 announced in late February that LA in 2026 (Los Angeles) is the only site bid submitted by the filing deadline of February 18, 2024, as required by the WSFS Constitution, reports Locusmag.com. The election to select the site of the 2026 WorldCon will be administered by the Glasgow 2024 WorldCon. The proposed LA convention dates are August 27-31, 2026, at the Anaheim Convention Center and Anaheim Hilton. The bid chair and proposed convention chair is Joyce Lloyd.

From Glasgow 2024: "Worldcon sites are selected two years in advance, by a secret ballot of WSFS members. For this year this includes all full Adult and Young Adult Attending members, Online Members with bundled WSFS Memberships, and WSFS Members of Glasgow 2024. Any group that meets the technical requirements in the WSFS Constitution and files the necessary documents with the administering Worldcon may bid for the right to host a Worldcon."

The 82nd World Science Fiction Convention, Glasgow 2024, will be held in Glasgow, UK August 8-12, 2024. For more information about the convention, including current membership rates, visit glasgow2024.org.



TERRY BISSON DIES

Author Terry Bisson died in the early hours of January 10, reported [Locusmag.com](#). He was 81 years old.

Terry Ballantine Bisson was born February 12, 1942, in Kentucky. After attending Grinnell College in Iowa from 1960-62, and received a bachelor's degree from the University of Louisville in 1964. In 1962, he married Deirde Holst, mother of his two sons and daughter; they divorced in 1966. From 1966-70 he lived in New York with second wife Mary Corey, scripting comics and saucer tales for tabloids and serving as editor of *Web of Horror* and *True Intimate Confessions*. He left the city to join the Red Rockers commune in the Colorado mountains and other communes in the West and South while working as an auto mechanic. He returned to New York in 1976, serving as an editor and copy chief at Berkley and Ace until 1985, when he became a full-time writer.

In the mid-'90s he was a consultant at HarperCollins and Avon, and taught writing at The New School in New York, and at Clarion and Odyssey. He and current wife Judy Jensen (with whom he raised another son and two daughters) moved to the Bay Area in 2002, where he edited the "Outspoken Authors" series for PM Press, and hosted the SF in SF reading series for many years.

First novel *Wyrdmaker* appeared in 1981, followed by World Fantasy finalist *Talking Man* (1986) and *Fire on the Mountain* (1988). Other novels include *Voyage to the Red Planet* (1990), *Pirates of the Universe* (1990), and *Any Day Now* (2012). He completed the late Walter M. Miller, Jr.'s *Saint Leibowitz and the Wild Horse Woman* (1997), and has co-written YA novels with Stephanie Spinner, written children's books about NASCAR racing as "T.B. Calhoun," produced numerous film and TV novelizations and tie-ins, and written non-fiction titles, notably *On A Move: The Story of Mumia Abu-Jamal* (2001).

Bisson rose to prominence in the SF field with Hugo, Sturgeon, Locus, and Nebula Award winning story "Bears Discover Fire" (1990). Other notable short stories include Hugo finalists "The Shadow Knows" (1993), "Dead Man's Curve" (1994), "Get Me to the Church on Time" (1998); Nebula Award nominees "They're Made out of Meat" (1991) and "Necronauts" (1995); Hugo, World Fantasy, and Nebula Award finalist "England Underway" (1993); Nebula Award winner and Hugo and Sturgeon finalist "macs" (1999); and novellas *Dear Abbey* (2003) and *Planet of Mystery* (2008). His short fiction has been collected in *Bears Discover Fire* (1993), *Numbers Don't Lie* (2003), *Greetings & Other Stories* (2005), and *TVA Baby* (2011). *The Left Left Behind* (2009) includes the title story, a play, and an interview and autobiography.

He is survived by partner Judy, his sons and daughters, and many grandchildren. A celebration of his life will take place on April 13 at Diamond Park in Oakland.

CJ LEEDE WINS BUTLER AWARD

Maeve Fly by CJ Leede (Nightfire) won CALIBA's Octavia E. Butler award for best "Sci Fi/Fantasy/Horror," reports [Locusmag.com](#).

California Independent Booksellers Alliance

(CALIBA) honors "the most distinguished books written and illustrated by creators who have made California their home."

The award was presented during a virtual awards ceremony on January 25. For more information, including the full list of awards, see their website.

DAVID SOUL DIES

by The Associated Press, [NPR.org](#) 1-5-24

LONDON — Actor-singer David Soul, a 1970s heart-throb who co-starred as the blond half of the crime-fighting duo *Starsky & Hutch* and topped the music charts with the ballad "Don't Give Up on Us," died January 4. He was 80 years old.

Born David Solberg on August 28, 1943, Soul was a Chicago native whose acting career dated back to the 1960s, when he joined the avant-garde Firehouse Theater in Minnesota. He continued to appear on stage and screen well into the 20th century, but he was best known for his work in the 1970s.

Soul portrayed detective Ken "Hutch" Hutchinson alongside dark-haired Paul Michael Glaser as detective David Starsky in *Starsky & Hutch*, which ran on ABC from 1975 to 1979 and grew so popular it spawned a line of children's toys.

He also had success as a singer, starting in 1976 with "Don't Give Up on Us" and following with such hits as "Going in With My Eyes Open" and "Silver Lady."

Soul first gained national fame in the 1960s appearing on *The Merv Griffin Show* as "The Covered Man," a singer disguised in a stocking cap who shouted out lyrics such as "That is why I hide my face, because a man has to be free."

His other TV credits included early appearances on *Star Trek's* "The Apple," *All in the Family*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Flipper*, *McMillan & Wife*, *Cannon*, and *Gunsmoke*. After these many guest appearances, he landed the role of Joshua Bolt on the television program *Here Come the Brides* with co-stars Robert Brown, Bobby Sherman, and Bridget Hanley. The series was telecast on ABC September 1968 to September 1970.

Soul also starred with James Mason in the 1979 TV miniseries adaptation of Stephen King's *Salem's Lot*, which was edited and released as a theatrical feature film in some countries – and he starred in the short-lived 1983 NBC series *Casablanca*, playing nightclub owner Rick Blaine (the role that was made famous by Humphrey Bogart in the 1942 film).

Soul's movies included *Magnum Force* with Clint Eastwood, *The Hanoi Hilton*, *The Fifth Missile*, and a cameo with Glaser in the 2004 big-screen remake of *Starsky & Hutch*, starring Ben Stiller as Starsky and Owen Wilson as Hutch.

By the 1990s, Soul had moved to Britain, where he performed several stage roles. In 2001, he won a libel case against a journalist who called *The Dead Monkey*, a play that Soul was in, the worst production he had ever seen – without having seen it. He also played the titular talk-show host in *Jerry Springer: The Opera* in London's West End.

Soul was married five times and had five sons and a daughter.

2023 STOKER AWARDS FINAL BALLOT

In late February, the Horror Writers Association (HWA) announced the final ballot for the 2023 Bram Stoker Awards:

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN A NOVEL: *The Reformatory* by Tananarive Due, *How to Sell a Haunted House* by Grady Hendrix, *Don't Fear the Reaper* by Stephen Graham Jones, *Lone Women* by Victor LaValle, and *Black River Orchard* by Chuck Wendig. **SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN A FIRST NOVEL:** *The Daughters of Block Island* by Christa Carmen, *The Spite House* by Johnny Compton, *Everything the Darkness Eats* by Eric LaRocca, *Maeve Fly* by CJ Leede, and *Edenville* by Sam Rebelein.

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN A MIDDLE GRADE NOVEL: *Monster Camp* by Sarah Henning, *Los Monstruos: Felice and the Wailing Woman* by Diana López, *The Nighthouse Keeper* by Lora Senf, *Frances and the Werewolves of the Black Forest* by Refe Tuma, and *What Stays Buried* by Suzanne Young. **SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN A YOUNG ADULT NOVEL:** *Funeral Songs for Dying Girls* by Cherie Dimaline, *Find Him Where You Left Him Dead* by Kristen Simmons, *Harvest House* by Cynthia Leitich Smith, *Camp Damascus* by Chuck Tingle, and *She Is a Haunting* by Trang Thanh Tran.

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN LONG FICTION: “Rumpus Room” by Tananarive Due, *Linghun* by Ai Jiang, *The Salt Grows Heavy* by Cassandra Khaw, *Sleep Alone* by J.A.W. McCarthy, and *Despatches* by Lee Murray. **SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN SHORT FICTION:** “Silk” by L.E. Daniels, “The Sound of Children Screaming” by Rachael K. Jones, “If Someone You Love Has Become a Vurdalak” by Sam J. Miller, “Quondam” by Cindy O’Quinn, and “An Inherited Taste” by Nadine Aurora Tabing.

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN A FICTION COLLECTION: *Blood from the Air* by Gemma Files, *Cold, Black, & Infinite* by Todd Keisling, *Spin a Black Yarn* by Josh Malerman, *The Best of Our Past, the Worst of Our Future* by Christi Nogle, and *Root Rot & Other Grim Tales* by Sarah Read. **SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN AN ANTHOLOGY:** *Shakespeare Unleashed* edited by James Aquilone, *The Drive-In: Multiplex* edited by Christopher Golden & Brian Keene, *Never Whistle at Night: An Indigenous Dark Fiction Anthology* edited by Shane Hawk & Theodore C. Van Alst, Jr., *Out There Screaming* edited by Jordan Peele & John Joseph Adams, and *American Cannibal* edited by Rebecca Rowland.

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN LONG NON-FICTION: *The Black Guy Dies First: Black Horror Cinema from Fodder to Oscar* by Robin R. Means Coleman & Mark H. Harris, *A Vindication of Monsters: Essays on Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley* edited by Claire Fitzpatrick, *101 Horror Books to Read Before You're Murdered* by Sadie Hartmann, *The Art of the Zombie Movie* by Lisa Morton, and *Unquiet Spirits: Essays by Asian Women in Horror* edited by Lee Murray & Angela Yuriko Smith. **SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN SHORT NON-FICTION:** “Words Wielded by Women” by Carina Bissett, “Becoming Ungovernable: Latah, Amok, and Disorder in Indonesia” by Nadia Bulkin, “100 Livers” by K.P. Kulski, “Displaced Spirits” by Lee Murray, and “A Theatre of Ghosts, a Haunted Cin-

ema: The Japanese Gothic as Theatrical Tradition in Guro-zuka” by Kevin Wetmore, Jr.

SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN A GRAPHIC NOVEL: *Ghostlore, Vol. 1* by Cullen Bunn, *Dead Mall* by Adam Cesare, *Carmilla: The First Vampire* by Amy Chu, *Tombs* by Junji Ito, and *H.P. Lovecraft's The Shadow Over Innsmouth* by Gou Tanabe. **SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT IN A SCREENPLAY:** *Black Mirror: “Beyond the Sea,”* *Godzilla Minus One*, *Huesera: The Bone Woman*, *No One Will Save You*, and *When Evil Lurks*.

Winners will be honored at a gala during StokerCon 2024, to be held May 30-June 2 at the San Diego Marriott Mission Valley in San Diego, CA, reports Locusmag.com.

BRIAN LUMLEY HAS DIED

Horror writer Brian Lumley, 86, died January 2, 2024. He was 86 years old. Lumley was best known for his Mythos fiction, and for the bestselling *Necroscope* series, reports Locusmag.com.

Lumley was born December 2, 1937, in County Durham in England, and served in the military police in the British Army for 22 years before retiring in 1980 to write full time.

He published his first story in the late ‘60s, and became known in the ‘70s for his Lovecraftian stories, especially those about character Titus Crow, who also appeared in novels including *The Burrowers Beneath* (1974), *The Transition of Titus Crow* (1975), *In the Moons of Borea* (1979), and *Elysia: The Coming of Cthulhu* (1989).

In 1986 he launched his popular vampire series with *Necroscope* (1982), followed by sequels *Wamphyri!* (1988), *The Source* (1989), *Necroscope IV: Deadspak* (1990), and *Necroscope V: Deadspawn* (1991). The sequence also had spin-offs; the last book in the saga was *The Mobius Murders* in 2013.

Other novels include his debut *Beneath the Moors* (1974), *Khai of Ancient Khem* (1981), *The Return of the Deep Ones* (1984), *Demogorgon* (1987), and titles in the *Psychomech* and *New Adventures in H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands* series.

His short fiction was collected in numerous volumes, among them *The Caller of the Black* (1971), *In His Own Write: Brian Lumley: Necroscribe* (1997), *A Coven of Vampires* (1998), and *Short Tall Tales* (2023).

In 1998, Lumley was made a Grand Master by the World Horror Association. He was active in the Horror Writers Association at the height of his career, and served as president in 1996-97; they presented him with the Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010, the same year he won a World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement.

He is survived by his wife Barbara Ann, daughter Julie, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

PHILIP K. DICK AWARD NOMINEES

The 2024 Philip K. Dick Award finalists were announced January 9, reports Locusmag.com:

Danged Black Thing by Eugen Bacon, *The Museum of Human History* by Rebekah Bergman, *Infinity Gate* by

M.R. Carey, *Wild Spaces* by S.L. Coney, *Where Rivers Go to Die* by Dilman Dila, and *These Burning Stars* by Bethany Jacobs.

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 Nicky Drayden, Gordon Eklund, Christopher V. Rowe, Kali Wallace (chair), and Lisa Yaszek.

The winner and any special citations will be announced March 29 at Norwescon 46 in Seattle, WA.

DAVID J. SKAL PASSES AWAY

Author and critic David J. Skal died January 1 in a car accident in Los Angeles CA. He was 71 years old, reports Locusmag.com.

David John Skal was born June 21, 1952, in Garfield Heights, OH. He attended Ohio University, where he studied journalism and worked as a film critic and editor on the college newspaper, graduating in 1974. He later worked in theater, including with the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco and the Theatre Communications Group of New York.

Skal attended the Clarion Writers Workshop in 1970, while he was still a college student. His first work of genre interest was "Chains" in the *Clarion* anthology (1971). Debut SF novel *Scavengers* appeared in 1980, followed by *When We Were Good* (1981) and *Antibodies* (1988).

As a critic, Skal was an expert in horror cinema, Dracula, and vampires in general. His non-fiction includes Hugo and Stoker Award finalist *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of "Dracula" from Novel to Stage to Screen* (1990); World Fantasy and Stoker Award finalist *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (1993); *Dark Carnival: The Secret World of Tod Browning*, Hollywood's *Master of the Macabre* (1995, with Elias Savada); Stoker Award nominee *V Is for Vampire: An A to Z Guide to Everything Undead* (1996), *Screams of Reason: Mad Science and Modern Culture* (1998); *Romancing the Vampire: Collectors Vault* (2009); Stoker Award finalist *Something in the Blood: The Untold Story of Bram Stoker*, *The Man Who Wrote Dracula* (2016); and *Fright Favorites: 31 Movies to Haunt Your Halloween and Beyond* (2020). Skal frequently contributed film reviews to *F&SF*. He also edited *Vampires: Encounters with the Undead* (2001).

NEUROMANCER FINALLY GETTING LONG-AWAITED ADAPTATION

by Germain Lussier, gizmodo.com 2-28-24

These days, if you're an epic sci-fi story looking to be told, there's only one destination: Apple TV+. From popular novels like *Foundation* and *Silo* to originals like *For All Mankind* and *Severance*, the streamer is a haven for weird, bold sci-fi. Which is why it feels like the perfect, natural home for William Gibson's *Neuromancer*.

The landmark 1984 cyberpunk novel has been on Hol-

lywood's wishlist for decades, with multiple filmmakers attempting to bring it to the big screen. Now, it's coming to a smaller screen, but in a longer format. Graham Roland (*Dark Winds*) and J.D. Dillard (*Devotion*) have teamed up to adapt the novel for Apple TV+, which has given them a 10-episode series order.

"We're incredibly excited to be bringing this iconic property to Apple TV+," Roland and Dillard said in a statement. "Since we became friends nearly 10 years ago, we've looked for something to team up on, so this collaboration marks a dream come true. *Neuromancer* has inspired so much of the science fiction that's come after it and we're looking forward to bringing television audiences into Gibson's definitive 'cyberpunk' world."

That world follows a futuristic hacker on a secret mission against an advanced artificial intelligence. Which, admittedly, sounds kind of familiar, but that's because, as Roland and Dillard said, the novel was so influential. Plus, Gibson followed it up with two sequels – *Count Zero* in 1986 and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* in 1988 – so this could go on for longer than just a season.

It's a pair that feels perfectly up for the challenge, too. In addition to creating *Dark Winds*, Roland was a writer on *Lost* and a writer-producer on *Fringe*. Dillard has written and directed several features, including the criminally underrated genre films *Sleight* and *Sweetheart*. They'll both produce the series with Roland showrunning and Dillard directing at least the pilot.

DAVID DRAKE PASSES AWAY

Author David Drake died December 10, 2023, in Silk Hope, NC, reported Locusmag.com. He was 78 years old. Drake was the author of more than 80 works of SF and fantasy, best known for the *Hammer's Slammer's* series and other works of military SF.

David Allen Drake was born September 24, 1945, in Dubuque, IA. He attended law school at Duke, but his studies were interrupted when he was drafted into the US Army, serving in the 11th Cavalry Regiment in Vietnam and Cambodia from 1969-71. He finished his law degree after his return, and worked as an attorney until becoming a full-time writer in 1981. Drake also co-founded small press Carcosa with Jim Groce and Karl Edward Wagner in 1973; the publisher won a World Fantasy Award in 1976.

His first story of genre interest, "Denkirch", appeared in 1967, but his career took off with debut collection *Hammer's Slammers* (1979). That series continued with *Cross the Stars* (1984), *At Any Price* (1985), *Counting the Cost* (1987), *Rolling Hot* (1989), *The Warrior* (1991), *The Sharp End* (1993), *The Voyage* (1994), and *Paying the Piper* (2002).

He wrote numerous other series as well: The Tom Kelly books, the Northworld series starting with 1990's *Northworld*, and the Reaches sequence starting with 1994's *Igniting the Reaches*. His Lord of the Isles series started with *Lord of the Isles* (1997), and the related Crown of the Isles series began with 2006's *The Fortress of Glass*. He wrote 13 books in the Lt. Leary series, starting with *Lt. Leary, Commanding* (2000) and concluding with *To Clear Away the Shadows* (2019). The Book of the Elements began with *The Legions of Fire* (2010), and the

Time of Heroes series began with *The Spark* in 2017.

Among his numerous standalone books are *The Dragon Lord* (1979), *Birds of Prey*, *Bridgehead* (1986), and YA novel *Patriots* (1996), while his myriad collections include *Time Safari* (1982), *Tyrannosaur* (1994), *From the Heart of Darkness* (1983), *Grimmer than Hell* (2003), and *Balefires* (2007).

With Bill Fawcett, Drake created the Fleet shared world anthologies, with opening anthology *The Fleet* (1988) followed by five further volumes, and the related *Battlestation* series.

He produced many titles in collaboration with other authors, though Drake was careful to note that most were written by his named collaborators from his outlines; those co-authors include Roger MacBride Allen, William C. Dietz, Eric Flint, S.M. Stirling, and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. He also contributed to shared worlds, including *Thieves' World* and *Heroes in Hell*, and edited or co-edited a number of anthologies.

Drake announced his retirement from writing in 2021, explaining that he had ongoing health problems and couldn't "concentrate enough to write a novel."

WILL FORTÉ WEIGHS IN ON CANCELED *COYOTE VS. ACME*

by Keegan Kelly, Cracked.com 3-1-24

When it comes to the comedy tax write-off *Coyote vs. Acme* (partially filmed in Albuquerque), Will Forte has seen the other side of the tunnel – but for the rest of us, that light is still just painted on.

In many ways, it seems like *Coyote vs. Acme* is a lot like Forte. Everyone who's experienced the canned, completed Max comedy has only the most glowing reviews, yet the movers and shakers of show business have, apparently, conspired to keep it from reaching the massive audience it deserves – at least, I assume that's what *Coyote vs. Acme* is like. After all, neither I nor anyone outside a small circle of Hollywood insiders have ever laid eyes on the completed film, and if David Zaslav gets his way, we never will. Back in November, the controversial Warner Bros. Discovery CEO and president decided to cancel the already completed, half-animated, half-live-action Looney Tunes comedy film ordered by his predecessor, Jason Kilar, and recoup \$30 million of the film's estimated \$70 million budget in the form of a tax write-off.

The film's premise is that after every product made by the Acme Corporation has backfired on Wile E. Coyote in his pursuit of the Road Runner, a down-and-out billboard human attorney represents Wile E. in his lawsuit to sue Acme. A growing friendship between Wile E. and his lawyer motivates their determination to win the court case, as it pits them against the intimidating boss of Wile E.'s lawyer's former law firm, who now represents Acme.



Recently, Forte, who co-starred in *Coyote vs. Acme* alongside John Cena, Lana Condor and Wile E. Coyote, finally saw the final cut of the film, and his impression of the project was equally heartfelt and heartbreaking. Forte posted his reaction on Instagram in the form of an open letter to the *Coyote vs. Acme* cast and crew yesterday morning. Here's what he had to say:

"I know that a lot of you haven't gotten a chance to see our movie. And sadly, it's a looking like you never will," Forte began, "When I first heard that our movie was getting 'deleted,' I hadn't seen it yet. So I was thinking what everyone else must have been thinking: this thing must be a hunk of junk.

"But then I saw it," Forte continued. "And it's incredible." Forte described the film as "super funny throughout, visually stunning, sweet, sincere, and emotionally resonant in a very earned way."

Forte says that, upon finishing *Coyote vs. Acme*, he felt profoundly lucky for having taken part in such a project. However, Forte added, "That quickly turned to confusion and frustration. This was the movie they're not going to release?"

Forte then wrote one of the most relatable lines a movie star has ever posted on social media, admitting, "Look, when it comes to Hollywood business stuff, I don't know shit about shit.

"At the end of the day, the people who paid for this movie can obviously do whatever they want with it. It doesn't mean I have to like it (I fucking hate it). Or agree with it. And it doesn't mean that this movie is anything less than magnificent," Forte further expounded, eventually ending the letter with a deeply melancholy, "That's all folks."

Forte's feelings on the matter from his role inside the project echo those of the few outside observers who had the chance to see an early *Coyote vs. Acme* screening before Zaslav decided to toss the completed film into the inescapable, immoral void of his precious tax loophole. When Max first announced that they'd rather skimp on taxes than release *Coyote vs. Acme*, filmmaker Brian Duffield wrote in a since-deleted tweet, "I have seen this movie and it is excellent. It also tested in the high 90s repeatedly. It also had interested buyers. The people working at Warner Bros. are anti-art, and I hope multiple anvils drop on their heads."

Though *Coyote vs. Acme* theoretically isn't completely extinct, Warner Bros. Discovery already wrote off their investment in the film when they closed their books on Q4. Barring some highly illegal leak of the film by some cartoon vigilante, us normal folks' chances of getting a taste of the completed product are about the same as Wile E. Coyote's odds of ever eating some roasted Roadrunner.

BUBONICON 55 HAS THEME

by Craig W. Chrissinger, con chair

The first full week of March is here, and Bubonicon 55 has a Theme! In mid-February, we announced that the 2024 convention has a focus on "Fantasy Wildlife & Animal Companions (Dragons and Unicorns and Griffins, Oh My)."

Examples of such include Smaug in *The Hobbit* by

JRR Tolkien, *Dragonbreath* by Ursula Vernon, *The Ice Dragon* by George RR Martin, *Beastmaster* by Andre Norton, *Dragonriders of Pern* by Anne McCaffrey, *Treecat Wars: Star Kingdom Book 3* by David Weber & Jane Lindskold, “Unicorn Variation” by Roger Zelazny, *Inferno* by Dante, *The Book of Beasts* by T.H. White, *The Kraken Wakes* by John Wyndham, “Jackalope Wives” by Ursula Vernon, *Dragonheart*, *The Last Unicorn*, *Pete’s Dragon*, *Dragonslayer*, *Captain Marvel’s Flerkens*, *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, *Chupacabra vs. the Alamo*, *Jason and the Argonauts*, *Minotaur*, *The Golem*, *Charlie the Unicorn*, *Stardust*, and more.

Weekend Passes for adults remain at \$42.00 through April 25, and then go up \$48 each. At the convention, they will be \$55.00. Youths, ages 13-19, are \$28.00 through August 9. Again, 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 55 will be August 23-25 (our traditional weekend) at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, 2101 Louisiana Blvd NE, just north of I-40. The Marriott is offering sleeping rooms at \$149 single-quad occupancy, with free WiFi in sleeping rooms. Reservations are needed by Monday, August 5, at 1-800-228-9290.

We’ve had some folks confirm their participation already! In addition to special guests Mur Lafferty, TJ Klune, Ursula Vernon & Kevin Sonney, and artist Dale Ray Deforest, we are expecting Lou J. Berger, Brian D. Hinson, Jeffe Kennedy, Jane Lindskold, David Lee Summers, Lauren C. Teffeau, Ian Tregillis, and Sarena Ulibarri. More will be coming, of course.

With the Worldcon in Scotland just 11 days before us, Walter Jon Williams reports he won’t be at Bubonicon this year. We also are checking on George RR Martin (who says “maybe”), Melinda Snodgrass, and Carrie Vaughn.

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

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 American Red Cross and the Albuquerque Public Library Foundation as well).

Dealers’ space applications go live in the last third of April with emails to past dealers, and a link on the website to a google-form survey. The rates *probably* are \$150 with a weekend pass, and \$190 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.

Meanwhile, Kathy K. Kubica and her staff are gearing up for the 2024 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 ad-

dress. 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 505-559-0931, and by emailing us at bubonicon@gmail.com.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS — OCT 2023: BEN RADFORD VISIT

Skeptic researcher Benjamin Radford spoke to 34 people about Superstitions and Friday the 13th. He now has 13 books out, and *America the Fearful* (his latest) won the NM/AZ Book Award.

Looking at Friday the 13th, Radford pondered, “Why Friday? It’s the day Jesus died in the Bible, and the day the great flood started. Twelve is considered the ideal number for months, astrological signs and the days of Christmas. It is considered harmonious and balanced. Thirteen throws everything out of balance. There’s no thirteenth row on airplanes, no thirteenth floor in buildings, there were thirteen total in Jesus’ dinner party, and thirteen in a coven.”

He said it’s just a number and 666 has similar problems. “How is it the number of the Beast?” he asked. “Highway 666 in New Mexico was renamed by the government because people kept stealing the signs. The number eight is considered lucky in some Chinese cultures. And rabbits are considered lucky – such as a rabbit’s foot – but hares are considered unlucky.”

Radford discussed the idea of some superstitions having practical reasons, such as an open umbrella being hard to get through a door and the possible danger of walking under a ladder.

“Superstitions can help people control elements in their lives and deal with the environment or world,” he noted. “Often these rituals cost nothing, but there is a perceived benefit. They are particularly evident in sports to help get an advantage, such as wearing certain clothing over and over. It’s not always testable. In tennis, you never want to step on the lines of the court.

“Superstitions are often based in magical thinking,” Radford continued. “That is showing a fallacy in fault, like ‘if this, then that.’ These beliefs can harm and hurt people in the attitude can be harmful or self-fulfilling. And looking for a scapegoat or The Other can be dangerous.”

Radford said there also often is the notion that bad luck or a curse can be reversed or that there is a cure. One example is that the ‘Evil Eye’ often can be countered by a bracelet, which usually is blue. The mal de ojo bracelet is a traditional talisman meant to protect the wearer, and Radford showed off one.

Asked about his favorite superstition, Radford replied, “All those around mirrors. Obviously breaking them is not good, but there’s also covering mirrors when someone dies so a ghost can’t show up in them. And the Bloody Mary ritual or challenge where she appears in a mirror when her name is chanted repeatedly. *Candyman* is a variation on Bloody Mary.”

CLUB BUSINESS: For 2024, Eric Klammer was elected Moderator, Marian Skupski was chosen as Alternator, and Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle will continue as Co-Executive Secretaries. And for the December holiday gath-

ering, “cheese” was chosen as the challenge ingredient for the cook-off.

IDEAS for Carnival Games as a club meeting also were discussed. Mentioned were Hot Wheels Zombie Bowling, Cornhole, Tracer Guns and Ping-Pong Balls.

NOV 2023: TREGILLIS DOES MATH!

Thirty-two people were present for author/scientist Ian Tregillis’ presentation on “The Math (and Physics) of *Wild Cards*.” Despite involving some higher math, Tregillis said he would try to “keep it light and fun. If you’ve never heard of *Wild Cards*, I’ll explain it in five minutes. On September 15, 1946, xeno-virus Takis-A was unleashed on Earth. It can lay dormant for decades, or it can express itself immediately.

“Of every 100 ‘card turns,’ 90 people die, nine people draw a Joker, and one draws an Ace – which is a superhero,” he continued. “The 90:9:1 rule has been canon since the beginning of the series. I will show that foundation through three axioms and one heresy. In the real world, crypto-jokers have situs inversus where organ placement is reversed.”

Tregillis’ first observation was that crypto-aces and crypto-jokers are a “logical inevitability. For instance, a person has a glow-in-the-dark heart or someone can do telepathy with a narwhale but they don’t live anywhere near an ocean. So, the corollary is that if cryptos exist, the 90:9:1 rule can only apply to known card-turning results. And the second corollary is that if a single 1-D spectrum doesn’t make sense, then *Wild Cards* outcomes must arrive from a multivariate probability distribution, or multiple dice.”

He said his Heresy is “What if Ace and Joker aren’t real categories? What if there is only one category? What if everyone is a Joker-Ace, like Rustbelt (an iron man)?”

Tregillis then showed a 2-D model where “Joker-ness” was on the X axis and “Ace-ness” was on the Y axis, and went through several long strings of math to prove his point. Why? “Because we’ve just reduced all of *Wild Cards* to one line of math.”

Even though the math hurt many of our heads, Tregillis’ talk was interesting and fun.

DEC 2023: DESSERTS & FILMS

Twenty-Seven people came together to watch various comedic film shorts and film trailers, and to judge the 19th ASFS Holiday Cook-Off by tasting many food samples with cheese as the “challenge ingredient.”

Shown during the evening were *Simon’s Cat* episodes, *Muppets* segments, *Glove & Boots* episodes, a Tom & Jerry cartoon, a segment of a *Big Bang Theory* Christmas episode, Jimmy Fallon & Meghan Trainor’s Christmas music video, a Wile E. Coyote & Road Runner cartoon, the “I’m Just Ken” music video from *Barbie*, a Dolly Parton AI parody, a couple of *Sesame Street* segments, Weird Al and *MST3K* music videos, a Jimmy Fallon & Dolly Parton music video, a *Pinky and the Brain* cartoon, a *Looney Tunes* cartoon with Bugs & Daffy, the *Migration* trailer, and a Jimmy Fallon & Paul Rudd music video.

In the Dessert Cook-Off, there were just 7 entries from Geneva Schult, Troy Stull, George Bates, Patricia Rogers,

Brenda Cole, Marian Skupski, and Perry Rodent (Bunbonicon leftovers).

Best Use of Theme went to Patricia Rogers’ “Merry Mac & Cheese,” Best of Show went to Geneva Schult’s “Vegan Cheesy Corn Pudding,” Runner-Up went to Marian Skupski’s “Garlic and Herb Sun Bread,” and Honorable Mention went to Brenda Cole’s “Ranch Cream Cheese Ball.”

Of note were Troy Stull’s “Pork, Pineapple & Mango Chutney” and George Bate’s “Bikini Bottom’s Best.”

THANK YOU RECOGNITION for assistance in setting up and/or cleaning up goes to Geneva Schult, Marian Skupski, Greg Herring, Becky Davis, Eric Klammer, Mark Gillespie, Serge Broom, Mike McCommas, and Troy Stull (and if we missed anyone else, many apologies). It all was much appreciated!

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Thornhedge by T. Kingfisher, 2023 Tor Books, hc \$19.99, 128 pages. Review by Craig Chrissinger

In a retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*, T. Kingfisher asks the question of what if the wall of thorns and brambles is not there to keep people out of a castle but instead to keep something in. Charged with the duty of keeping the princess asleep and people away from her is Toadling, stolen from her family on the day of her birth and taken to grow up in Faerie. And it’s been quite a duty – she’s been at it for a couple of centuries before a knight approaches.

Halim has heard there’s a curse that needs breaking, but it’s a curse that Toadling cast long ago with what little magic she had. And she dare not let him break it.

Thornhedge is an unusual tale, full of heart and darkness, loneliness and redemption. It’s a quick, satisfying read, and very deep for its short length. Recommended.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

- THERE YOU HAVE IT, folks – the promised March issue of *ASFacts* since last month was a single sheet. Lots of deaths, but also awards and events updates. And I even got one book review done at the eleventh hour. Not too shabby.

- JUST LIKE LAST YEAR, there’s a new kitten in our house. Kaylee Coco (yes, Kaylee for *Firefly*, she was called “Coco” at Animal Humane – her full name sounds similar to the *Big Bang Theory* actress) joined our family at the end of January. She’s about 11 months old now, and weighs just over eight pounds. Gizmo and her have a big brother/little sister relationship: they play together and will nap within a foot of each other, but sometimes she just really annoys him. She came from a house with multiple cats and he was alone for 13 months, so he’s getting used to having another cat here. She’s a sweetie, but also a little pushy. Ask Gizmo!

- WE ENJOYED our trip to COSine in Colorado Springs in mid-January (no snow this time), and *Pretty Woman: The Musical* and Renée Elise Goldsberry in concert at Popejoy. I also enjoyed watching *Buckaroo Banzai* at the Guild Cinema as it’s been a long time. On TV, *Quantum Leap* was good, but done for the season. Happy to have *Ghosts*, *Young Sheldon*, *Night Court*, *The Rookie* and more shows back.

- OUT OF ROOM! Happy St. Patrick’s Day. As always, stuff is needed next issue (Mon, May 6 deadline). – Craig C