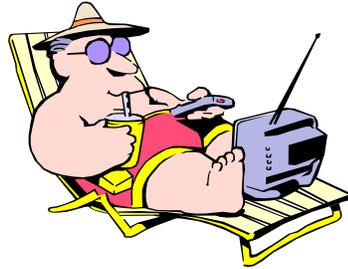




# ASFACTS 2025

## JULY "FIREWORKS & RAIN" SUMMER ISSUE



### 2025 LOCUS AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The Locus Science Fiction Foundation announced the winners in each category of the 2025 Locus Awards on June 21, during the Locus Awards Weekend. Authors Sarah Gailey and Tochi Onyebuchi were Guests of Honor, with Featured Local Author Kemi Ashing-Giwa and Featured Local Artist Stephanie Law. Additional weekend events included readings and panels with leading authors, plus program items including a limited-seating workshop with Henry Lien and a catered reception.

SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL: *The Man Who Saw Seconds* by Alexander Boldizar, FANTASY NOVEL: *A Sorceress Comes to Call* by T. Kingfisher, HORROR NOVEL: *Bury Your Gays* by Chuck Tingle, YOUNG ADULT NOVEL: *Moonstorm* by Yoon Ha Lee, FIRST NOVEL: *Someone You Can Build a Nest In* by John Wiswell,

NOVELLA: *What Feasts at Night* by T. Kingfisher, NOVELETTE: "By Salt, By Sea, By Light of Stars" by Premea Mohamed, SHORT STORY: "Why Don't We Just Kill the Kid in the Omelas Hole" by Isabel J. Kim, ANTHOLOGY: *The Black Girl Survives in This One* edited by Desiree S. Evans & Saracia J. Fennell, COLLECTION: *Lake of Souls* by Ann Leckie,

MAGAZINE: *Clarkesworld*, PUBLISHER: Subterranean Press (Tor Publishing recused itself from this category), EDITOR: Neil Clarke, ARTIST: Charles Vess, NON-FICTION: *Afro-Centered Futurisms in Our Speculative Fiction* edited by Eugen Bacon, ILLUSTRATED AND ART BOOK: *The Last Unicorn* by Peter S. Beagle, art by Tom Kidd, and SPECIAL AWARD 2025 – CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN GENRE: Ignyte Awards.

### ROGERS/DENNING TO HOST PRE-CON PARTY

Patricia Rogers & Scott Denning are upholding a local fannish tradition by hosting the Bubonicon 56 Pre-Con Party 7:30-10:30 pm Thursday, August 21, at their home in Bernalillo – located at 909 Highway 313.

The easiest way to get there is north on I-25 to exit 242 east (Rio Rancho's backdoor and the road to Cuba).

At Highway 313 (N. Camino del Pueblo just past Walgreens), turn right to head north. You will pass Bernalillo High School and the closed Country Store on your right. Look for a cow crossing sign and Mile Marker 9. The house – with a mummy on the gate – is on the west side of the road. Please park your car on the shoulder of Highway 313 or in the mowed field to the north.

In addition to socializing, attendees can help assemble the membership packets, & check out the 2025 t-shirt with artwork by John Sumrow.

Please bring snacks & drinks to share. Also welcome: plates, napkins, cups and ice. As with any hosted party, please keep the house clean and in good shape!

### 2024 NEBULA AWARDS WINNERS

On June 7, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA) announced the winners for the 2024 Nebula Awards in Kansas City.

The Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award was presented to Nicola Griffith. The Infinity Award was presented to Frank Herbert. Eugen Bacon received the

### UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight, July 11:** Engineer Chris Marsh examines 75 Years of Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles*.
- **August 8:** Bubonicon 56 schedule preview, and board & card games. Please bring a game to play!
- **August 15:** Bubonicon 56 Gofer Organizing Meeting in the Adult Education Room.
- **September 12:** Bubonicon 56 report and a presentation by Loretta Hall on fires in space.
- **October 10:** Benjamin Radford talks about "The Truth Behind *The Entity* (the film)." Plus Club Officer Elections & the Halloween *ASFACTS*.
- **November 14:** Unknown! We're working on it.
- **December 12:** Holiday Party Gathering with Potluck! With Film Shorts, and maybe a Cook-Off. Plus the annual issue of *SithFacts*.

**Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Darth Vader, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to** — 2018 Cardenas Dr NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110. Phone: (505) 266-8905. E-mail: cwrcraig@nmia.com. *ASFACTS* published February, April/May, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. *SITHFACTS* out each December. **NEXT DEADLINE: Sunday, October 5.**  
**Club Officers:** Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Eric Klammer, Moderator. Tanley McMullan, Alternator. Perry Rodent, con mascot. **B'con Con Chair:** Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award “for distinguished contributions to the science fiction and fantasy community” and C.J. Lavigne received the Kevin O’Donnell, Jr. Service to SFWA Award for “a volunteer of SFWA who best exemplifies the ideal of service.” Isis Asare was announced as the new SFWA Executive Director, and Russell Davis as Operations Director.

NOVEL: *Someone You Can Build a Nest In* by John Wiswell, NOVELLA: *The Dragonfly Gambit* by A.D. Sui, NOVELETTE: “Negative Scholarship on the Fifth State of Being” by A.W. Prihandita, SHORT STORY: “Why Don’t We Just Kill the Kid in the Omelas Hole” by Isabel J. Kim, ANDRE NORTON AWARD: *The Young Necromancer’s Guide to Ghosts* by Vanessa Ricci-Thode, RAY BRADBURY AWARD: *Dune: Part Two*, and GAME WRITING: *A Death in Hyperspace*.

Winners were announced at the 2025 Nebula Conference and Awards, held June 5-8 in Kansas City, MO. For more, see the SFWA website. The 2026 Nebula Conference will happen in Chicago.

## PETER DAVID PASSES AWAY

Author Peter David – Bubonic 42 Guest of Honor – died May 24 after a series of health issues including kidney failure and multiple strokes. He was 68 years old. David is best known for his comics writing, including his award-winning run on *The Incredible Hulk*, but he also wrote many fiction series, standalone novels, and media tie-ins.

Peter Allen David was born September 23, 1956, in Fort Meade, MD. He graduated from New York University with a BA in journalism, and covered the World Science Fiction Convention in 1974 as his first professional assignment. He met his first wife at a *Star Trek* convention and married in 1977, having three daughters; the two later divorced in 1998.

While initially he sought a career in writing, and his short story “Alternate Genesis” (1980) was released in *Asimov’s*, he soon pivoted to book publishing, working in sales for Playboy Paperbacks and later at Marvel Comics. New Spider-Man editor Jim Owsley purchased multiple stories from David for *The Spectacular Spider-Man*, and in 1987 David picked up *The Incredible Hulk*, starting a 12-year run that earned him an Eisner Award for Best Writer/Artist Team in 1992. In 2001, David married Kathleen O’Shea and had a daughter in 2002; the family lived in Suffolk County, NY, near his favorite local comics shop, Fourth World Comics. He continued to write comics on several series and developed his career as a novelist at the same time.

In the genre, David’s earlier series included two sci-fi action-adventure sequences, *Photon* and *Psi-Man*, starting in 1987 and 1990 respectively, both under the name David Peters. He wrote over 50 works in the *Star Trek* universe as early as *Strike Zone* (1989) and as recently as *The Returned* (2015), winning a Prometheus Award for *Star Trek #57: The Rift* (1992) and a Golden Duck award for middle-grade *Star Fleet Academy: Wolf’s First Adventure* (1994). He wrote several works in the Marvel metaverse; a series about Johnston McCulley’s character Zorro; sev-

eral film tie-ins; video game tie-ins for *Halo* and *Fable*; and TV series tie-ins for *Babylon 5* and *Battlestar Galactica*; among others.

Many of his standalone novels play on existing stories and tropes, including reverse werewolf story *Howling Mad* (1989); tabloids-inspired Arthurian fantasy *The Camelot Papers* (2011); *Artful* (2014), a vampire-themed story in the world of *Oliver Twist*; and *Robyne of Sherwood* (2024), a Robin Hood retelling. David wrote the *Sir Apropos of Nothing* series, including *Sir Apropos of Nothing* (2001), *The Woad to Wuin* (2002), *Tong Lashing* (2003), and *Pyramid Schemes* (2016). He wrote the *Hidden Earth Chronicles*, including *Darkness of the Light* (2007), *Heights of the Depths* (2012), and *Order of the Chaos* (2018), as well as the standalone vampire urban fantasy novel *Pulling Up Stakes* (2012). He also wrote *Mascot to the Rescue!*, a 2008 book for young readers, with Colleen Doran.

David wrote for several television series and video games. He wrote two scripts for *Babylon 5* (the second-season episodes “Soul Mates” and “There All the Honor Lies”), and the episode “Ruling from the Tomb” for its sequel series, *Crusade*. With actor/writer Bill Mumy, he was co-creator of the television series *Space Cases*, which ran for two seasons on Nickelodeon.

David wrote and co-produced several films for Full Moon Entertainment including *Trancers 4*, *Trancers 5*, *Oblivion*, and *Oblivion 2: Backlash*. He made cameo appearances in some of the films as well and was briefly signed to their unrealized Silver Moon Comics line.

David wrote “In Charm’s Way”, an episode of *Ben 10: Alien Force*. The script was recorded in early 2009, and the episode premiered November 13, 2009. He later wrote three episodes of the sequel series *Ben 10: Ultimate Alien*, the first of which, “Reflected Glory”, premiered October 15, 2010.

David wrote the script for the Xbox 360 video game *Shadow Complex*, which debuted in August 2009.

He is survived by wife Kathleen and four daughters.

## 2025 STURGEON AWARD FINALISTS

The finalists for the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for the best short science fiction story were announced in late May by the Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction:

“Rachel Is at a Protest” by Esther Alter, “To Eat Your Own Head” by Nkone Chaka, “Swarm X1048 – Ethological Field Report: Canis Lupus Familiaris, ‘6’” by F.E. Choe, “Judas Iscariot Didn’t Kill Himself: A Story in Fragments” by James S.A. Corey, “Hello! Hello! Hello!” by Fiona Jones, “Why Don’t We Just Kill the Kid in the Omelas Hole” by Isabel J. Kim, “Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!” by TJ Klune, “Evan: A Remainder” by Jordan Kurella, “The Carcosa Pattern” by Conrad Loyer, and “We Will Teach You How to Read | We Will Teach You How to Read” by Caroline M. Yoachim.

The Sturgeon Award was established in 1987 by James Gunn and the heirs of Theodore Sturgeon, including his partner Jayne Engelhart Tannehill and Sturgeon’s children. The winner, who will be announced later this

summer, will receive a cash prize as guest of honor at the fourth annual Sturgeon Symposium, October 9-10.

## HELP NEEDED AT BUBONICON

It's true! Volunteers or "gofers" are needed to help out at Bubonicon 56 the weekend of August 22-24 at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown. We're looking for people who can donate four, seven or even 12 hours of their time during the con to help things run smoothly and give committee workers much needed breaks from time to time.

It should be noted that gofers will not be handling money – that's for the Bubonicon staff. We especially need people to check badges/wristbands at doors to meeting rooms, the gaming space and the con suite this year.

Volunteer workers will be in drawings for various goodies liked bookstore gift certificates, restaurant gift certificates, Guild Cinema passes, signed books, toys, genre t-shirts, and more!

The Volunteers (Gofers) Organizational Meeting will take place 7:30 pm Friday, August 15, in the Adult Education Room of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, 5301 Ponderosa Ave NE (between San Mateo and San Pedro, south of Montgomery – park on the backside of the building, and follow the sidewalk to the East-side door). All attending volunteer workers at this meeting will receive some kind of appreciation gift.

If you're willing to help us out, please email coordinator Suzanne Busch at [volunteers@bubonicon.com](mailto:volunteers@bubonicon.com).

## AL SARRANTONIO DIES

Author and editor Al Sarrantonio died January 27. He was 72 years old, and was best known for his horror and SF novels and anthologies, it was announced mid-June.

Albert A. Sarrantonio was born May 25, 1952, in New York City. He received a BA in English from Manhattan College in 1974.

His first writing in genre, "Ahead of the Joneses" (1979), was published in *Asimov's*, and he produced over 70 works of short fiction in the following decades. "Richard's Head" (1991) was a Stoker Award finalist. Some of his short work was collected in *Toybox* (1999), *Hornets and Others* (2004), *A Little Yellow Book of Favored Stories* (2004), and *Halloween and Other Seasons* (2008).

His first novel was 1985's *The Worms*, a Gothic eco-horror story. Most of his standalone novels were also horror, including *Totentanz* (1985), *Campbell Wood* (1986), *The Boy with Penny Eyes* (1987), *Moonbane* (1989), *October* (1990), *House Haunted* (1991), *Skeletons* (1992), and *Underground* (2015).

After several standalone novels, Sarrantonio went on to write multiple fiction series. *The Five Worlds Saga*, including *Exile* (1996), *Journey* (1997), and *Return* (1998), is a political science fiction series set across the solar system in the far future. *The Masters of Mars* series, a planetary romance, includes *Haydn of Mars* (2005), *Sebastian of Mars* (2005), and *Queen of Mars* (2006). He also wrote an acclaimed horror series, *The Orangefield Cycle*, including *Orangefield* (2002), *Hallows Eve* (2004),

*Horrorween* (2006), and *Halloweenland* (2007).

In addition to his work as a fiction writer, he edited influential anthologies, including *999: New Tales of Horror and Suspense* (1999), a Stoker Award winner. *Stories: All-New Tales* (2010, with Neil Gaiman) won a Shirley Jackson Award.

He is survived by his wife and two sons.

## 2024 STOKER AWARDS NAMED

The Horror Writers Association (HWA) announced the winners of the 2024 Bram Stoker Awards at a June 14 awards banquet during StokerCon 2025, June 12-15 in Stamford, CT.

NOVEL: *The Haunting of Velkwood* by Gwendolyn Kiste, FIRST NOVEL: *The Eyes Are the Best Part* by Monika Kim, MIDDLE GRADE NOVEL (TIE): *There's Something Sinister in Center Field* by Robert P. Ottone and *The Creeping of Dogwood House* by Eden Royce, YOUNG ADULT NOVEL: *Clown in a Cornfield 3: The Church of Frendo* by Adam Cesare, LONG FICTION: *Coup de Grâce* by Sofia Ajram, SHORT FICTION: "Versus Versus" by Laird Barron, FICTION COLLECTION: *Love is a Crematorium and Other Tales* by Mercedes M. Yardley, ANTHOLOGY: *Discontinue If Death Ensues: Tales from the Tipping Point* edited by Carol Gyzander & Anna Taborska,

LONG NON-FICTION: *Horror for Weenies: Everything You Need to Know About the Films You're Too Scared to Watch* by Emily C. Hughes, SHORT NON-FICTION: "Blacks in Film and Cultivated Bias" by Lisa Wood, POETRY: *Mexicans on the Moon: Speculative Poetry from a Possible Future* by Pedro Iniguez, GRAPHIC NOVEL: *H.P. Lovecraft's The Call of Cthulhu* by Gou Tanabe, and SCREENPLAY: *The Substance* by Coralie Fargeat.

As previously announced, Mocha Memoirs is the recipient of the Specialty Press Award, the Richard Laymon President's Award went to Maxwell I. Gold, Jonathan Lees won the Karen Lansdale Silver Hammer Award, Gretchen McNeil was named Mentor of the Year Award, and this year's Lifetime Achievement Award winners were David Cronenberg and Del & Sue Howison.

## GENRE BOOKS STILL DISCUSSED

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, July 21, at Cocina Azul, 4243 Montgomery Blvd NE (west of San Mateo) - to discuss *The Reformatory* by Tananarive Due. The group then recommends 2-4 books read in the last year but not in group August 18 at Cocina Azul.

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 Shop-



ping Center. For more info, contact Leah at [mrsansom@hotmail.com](mailto:mrsansom@hotmail.com) or Craig at 505-266-8905.

## **BARRY B. LONGYEAR DIES**

Author Barry B. Longyear died May 6 at the Maine Health Franklin Hospital in Farmington, ME. He was 82 years old, and the first writer to win a Hugo, a Nebula, and a Campbell Award in the same year, and has been nominated for multiple Hugo, Prometheus, and Locus Awards.

Barry Brookes Longyear was born May 12, 1942, in Harrisburg, PA, and attended Staunton Military Academy in Virginia. He married his wife Regina in 1967 and they settled in Maine, where they ran a printing company for several years before he sold it to start writing full-time. In 1981 he went to St. Mary's Hospital to recover from a substance use disorder, and a year later founded Dragon Slayers, a Narcotics Anonymous group which he helped run for decades.

Longyear's writing career began in late 1978 with "The Tryouts," published in *Asimov's* and establishing the Quadrants Universe. That was later collected with other stories in *Circus World* (1981), which has since been nominated for several Prometheus Hall of Fame Awards. Other notable stories include "Homecoming" (1979) and "Savage Planet" (1980), which were nominated for Hugo Awards, and his novella "Enemy Mine" (1979), which won Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Awards in 1980. That same year he won the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer. "Enemy Mine" launched a series including *The Tomorrow Testament* (1983) and *The Last Enemy* (1997), and was adapted as a feature film in 1985.

Other books include *Sea of Glass* (1987), *Naked Came the Robot* (1988), *The God Box* (1989), *The Homecoming* (1989), and *Infinity Hold* (1989), which he later continued as a series with *Kill All the Lawyers* (2002) and *Keep the Law* (2002). He wrote the Jagers and Shad short stories, collected as *Jagers & Shad: ABC Is for Artificial Beings Crimes* (2011). Most recently he wrote the seven-volume series *The War Whisperer*, winning a Prometheus Award for the fifth, *The Hook* (2021).

He is survived by his wife, his sister Jannettja, his nieces and nephews, and more.

## **GUNN HAS SUPERMAN LIGHTBULB MOMENT**

by Germain Lussier, [gizmodo.com](http://gizmodo.com) 07/03/2025

James Gunn sure loves animals. We see this every week on social media as the DC Studios president posts photos of his pets but also in his filmmaking. It was famously the idea of bringing a raccoon to life that gave Gunn the confidence to tackle *Guardians of the Galaxy* for Marvel. And, with his upcoming film *Superman*, he found inspiration in a very similar way.

"It was just difficult to figure out where I was going to come from with *Superman*," Gunn said. "And I think that it really started with my dog in a lot of ways. The idea of putting in Krypto, I think, was the fun part for me, because that was something that we hadn't really seen in a *Superman* movie."

Once Gunn had the idea to include the superpowered canine, which has existed in DC Comics for 70 years, everything clicked. "We're always coming in [to Superman] on the spaceship crash lands, and then we see his whole family, and we've seen the beginning a bunch of times," Gunn said. "But this is not that. We've even seen a lot of stories that are after he's married and what that life is like. But I wanted to see him in a different piece of his life, and I also wanted to bring the joy that I felt reading DC Comics as a kid into the movie, and entering DC Comics and seeing it wasn't only Superman and his parents and the farm and other people. It was flying dogs and kaiju and robots and monsters and magic and sorcery and all these other things. And I wanted to bring that magical world to movies."

Which all becomes possible when you realize that Superman, in this universe and film, has a dog. *Superman* opens in theaters July 11.

## **X-FILES COMPOSER SNOW DIES**

by Justin Carter, [gizmodo.com](http://gizmodo.com) 07/05/2025

Mark Snow, the composer for a number of TV shows including *The X-Files* and its spinoff series *Millennium*, passed away July 4, according to *Variety*. He was 78 years old.

Born August 26, 1946, as Martin Fulterman, Snow began his career working with other composers to do background music for the 1975-1976 series *The Rockies* and 1976's *The Boy in the Plastic Bubble*. Over the decades, his career spanned television (*Blue Bloods*, *Peewee's Playhouse*), film (*Jake Speed*, *Disturbing Behavior*), and even video games (*Urban Assault*, *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*). His genre-specific credits include DC shows *Birds of Prey* and the first six seasons of *Smallville*. His final project was the 2020 X-Men film *New Mutants*.

When it comes to *The X-Files*, Snow was friends with the show's executive producer R.W. Goodwin, who repeatedly advocated for Snow to series creator Chris Carter. He was brought on after three auditions, and the show's second episode "Deep Throat" marked his debut as a solo act and introduced his theme song. At the time, the theme – whose whistle effect was inspired by The Smiths' "How Soon is Now?" – was second in the charts for weeks in the UK and France.

During the show's initial run, Snow was nominated and won several awards for his compositions in general and for specific episodes like "Paper Hearts" and its initial series finale, "The Truth." Between that and his other work, he was a 15-time Emmy nominee throughout his career and won the ASCAP Golden Note award in 2005 for "his unprecedented success as one of the most versatile and popular composers in television and film."

Sean Callery, composer of Fox's *24*, remembered Snow for "giving the most inspiring and intelligent feedback when listening to the work of other young artists (myself included)," he told *Variety*. "His limitless talent and boundless creativity was matched only by the generosity he bestowed upon other composers who sought his guidance. He combined his decades of experience with

the encouragement that composers cultivate: to trust in themselves, embrace their own unique voice, and learn to rely on their own instincts. And he did so with a humor and self-deprecation that made his wisdom all the more enduring.”

Snow is survived by his wife Glynnis, and their daughters and grandchildren.

## **ON THE CONVENTION FRONT:** **BUBONICON 55 JUST SIX WEEKS AWAY**

by **Craig Chrissinger, con chair**

Bubonicon, New Mexico’s annual science fiction convention, celebrates its 56th edition August 22-24 at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, 2101 Louisiana Blvd NE (at I-40). More than 40 authors, artists, scientists & fans will be participating in programming.

This year’s convention features special guest talent from Florida, Georgia, and New Mexico. Guests of Honor for Bubonicon 55 are Florida novelist Joe Haldeman and Georgia writer Delilah S. Dawson; Guest Artist is John Sumrow of Albuquerque; and Toastmaster Jeffe Kennedy from Santa Fe.

Dr. J.L. Doty of Tucson, AZ, is giving the feature science talk Friday of the convention on “Orbital Mechanics of Our Solar System: Or, Why Don't All The Planets Crash Into Each Other.”

We also are happy to have with us (among others) John Barnes, Jeff Benham, Lou J. Berger, Jon Black, Ness Brown, Aaron Campbell (Saturday-only), Michael Cassutt, Peri Charlifou, Yvonne Coats, Dale Ray Deforest, Stephen R. Donaldson (Saturday-only), Cynthia Felice, Gordon Garb, Josh Gentry, David “Star Trek” Gerrold, Loretta Hall, Brian D. Hinson, Reese Hogan, Betsy James, Darynda Jones (Friday & Saturday-only), Carolyn Kay, Chaz Kemp, Dr. Kathy Kitts, Mary Robinette Kowal, Jane Lindskold, George RR Martin (Saturday-only), Arkady Martine, Wil McCarthy, Rae Oestreich, Benjamin Radford, M.T. Reiten, Rebecca Roanhorse (Tentative: Saturday-only), Diana Rowland, Joan Spicci Saberhagen, Jon Sanchez, Vivian Shaw, Sherwood Smith, Melinda M. Snodgrass, Kevin Sonney, Jim Sorenson, S.M. Stirling, John E. Stith, David Lee Summers, Lauren C. Teffeu, Ian Tregillis, Tiffany Trent, Jess Tucker, Sarena Ulibarri, Robert E. Vardeman, Ursula Vernon, and Connie & Courtney Willis.

At least \$500 from Friday’s charity auction and a portion of any Bubonicon 56 profits will benefit the ENMU Williamson Library Collection, Roadrunner Food Bank, World Food Kitchen, American Red Cross, and possibly NM PBS.

Bubonicon 56 opens with Pre-Registered check-in 1:00-2:30 pm Friday the 22nd, with regular registration open at 3:00 pm; and goes almost nonstop through 5 pm that Sunday. The first programming is at 4 pm, the same time the Art Show opens. The Con Suite and Gaming open at 5 pm.

The theme for the weekend is “Mages and Mad Scientists.” The five tracks of programming at the Marriott should be fairly full (we’re working on the tentative schedule now), so don’t be surprised if you’re torn be-

tween attending two or three panels/readings at a time! And by the way, we again are using Santa Fe for the con office, so smaller program will be in the Library Room (next to the Art Show).

Two Programming Notes – Kevin Sonney will serve as Master of Ceremonies for the Costume Contest at 7:15 pm Saturday; with Jessica Coyle hosting the Green Slime Awards at halftime. Geneva Schult is organizing the costuming event, and has judges lined up. And the Charity Auction on Friday remains at the earlier time of 9:10 pm.

Don’t forget about the hospitality suite – located on the Top Floor. The Con Suite will be serving individually wrapped snack items and canned drinks, and patrons will place orders at a counter. A Sunday Afternoon Tea will be held at 2:00-3:20 pm, currently with 10 participants assisting.

Gaming takes place in the large room by the Art Show and also on the 2nd Floor. The Dealers Room, which is full for 2025, is the same size as last year and includes a “Community Table.”

Art Show rules/forms are now online as a downloadable .zip file on the Bubonicon website. With the Silent Auction happening again, bidding on pieces goes until 12 Noon Sunday (unless you claim the Quick Sale Price). Plan ahead if you really want a specific art piece!

There will be a Dead Dog (post-con gathering) 7:30-11:30 pm in the hospitality suite, hosted by Eric Klammer, Mark Gillespie, Geneva Schult and Michelle Melendez. Again, mostly single-serve items will be on hand.

We need volunteer workers (gofers in con speak) to help us throughout the weekend (see separate blurb earlier in this newsletter). If you can help, please email Suzanne Busch at [volunteers@bubonicon.com](mailto:volunteers@bubonicon.com), and/or come to the meeting Friday, August 15, in the Adult Education Room of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church on Ponderosa NE (home of ASFS).

Passes for the whole weekend are \$48 if purchased by August 8. After that, you’ll have to wait to pay \$55 at the door. Daily memberships are \$20 Friday, \$32 Saturday and \$15 Sunday. Youths 13-19 years old are \$28 for the whole weekend. Children under 13 years are free when accompanied by an adult.

There are two ways to pay: Send payment with the registration form to arrive by August 8 to Bubonicon Inc at 933 San Mateo Blvd NE, Suite 500-208, Albuquerque, NM 87108; or use your PayPal account/Credit Card on our website (make sure to include all names for passes).

The Bubonicon special \$159 room rate (single-quad occupancy) is only guaranteed through 10:00 pm Friday, August 8, so get your reservation now at 800-228-9290.

Info is available from [www.bubonicon.com](http://www.bubonicon.com), by email at [bubonicon@gmail.com](mailto:bubonicon@gmail.com) or by calling our Google voicemail at (505) 559-0931.

## **BOOK REVIEWS ROUND-UP**

*Necrobane: The Warden Series Book 2* by Daniel M. Ford, 2025 Tor Books, tp \$19.99, 308 pages.

Review by Becky C. Davis

Aelis de Leni um Tirraival, somewhat royal, a recent Warden graduate of a college of magic called the Lyceum, has compelled friends to follow her on a quest IN MIDWIN-

TER to undo a big mistake. Young Warden that she is, she foolishly opened a crypt, at the request of one of her teachers, and let loose malevolent re-animated skeletons on to the land and people she is charged to protect.

In this YA feudal fantasy, where everything is Done The Hard Way (except magic), Aelis has been sent as Warden/surgeon/chemist/teacher to a peasant community called Lone Pine. Her friends are her lover, Maurenia, half-elf and former soldier; Timmuk, dwarf and trader; and Tunbridge, big half-orc (with tusks), shape-shifter and savvy woodsman.

The true re-animator of the dead is Dalius Enthall de Marganis um Malgren, a former teacher who used to occupy a fortress north of Aelis' tower in Lone Pine, before Aelis killed him in Book One of this trilogy. The fortress fell to ruin, holding magic tokens and much wealth. En route to the fortress, Aelis and friends encounter a woodshade, Rhunival, who hosts them in his long house. He gives Aelis a special key to unlock the fortress, provided she returns a talisman. The friends do, after battling many animated skeletons, and Rhunival ensorcelles Maurenia to be bound in his place to the land and the long house.

Aelis and her remaining companions slog south to Lone Pine, knowing something is still wrong in the land. This is proven when Aelis finally finds the re-animated spirit and skeleton of Dalius in a tower some miles from Lone Pine. She kills his malevolent spirit, again, with another talisman and frees the land. Now she must magically unbind Maruenia from Rhunival's house.

Daniel M. Ford packs a lot of magic, fantasy and medieval knowledge into this book. Women and girls can govern, rule and have non-standard occupations like Warden, soldier or sailor. He has fun with the names of incantations, like Death's Cold Shield, Ongoing Rupture, The Lash, Clean Fingers, The Sheath and Necrobane's Hand. While the principal characters follow Aelis' lead, they often tell her she is crazy, headstrong, or just plain wrong about something. But they support her because she often doubts herself and her talents. Ford also does not overburden the reader with Aelis' contact with her lover.

The world-building is solid RPG feudal, the magic concocted is all Ford's inventions, and the characters are sympathetic enough that one wants all the good guys to succeed and all the bad guys to fail.

*Warden Book 2, Necrobane*, is a comfortable read, though a little edgy for a YA category because of the lesbian content. Enjoy.

**Advocate: *The Warden Series Book 3* by Daniel M. Ford, 2025 Tor Books, tp \$19.99, 368 pages.**

**Review by Becky C. Davis**

Aelis di Lenti unTirraval, Warden of Lone Pine, has been ordered by the Magisters at the Lyceum College to come stand as advocate (defender) to an old Archmagister/mentor, Barden Jacques ("meaner than a caged badger"). She also has a commitment to release her lover, half-elf Maurenia Angra, from the forest glen where she is bound.

She travels to the university town of Lascenise to take up her first duty. To try to acquit Barden Jacques of murder of a wizard. She quickly learns that the crime, though real, is a cover for a larger conspiracy of Archmagisters to take over her world. She must make pact with a gnome thief, the elf Warden who accompanied her to Lascenise and a former lover who is a conjurer. She must gain a lawyer for

Jacques, unhide the names and faces of the Shadow Congress of the Lyceum, locate missing magical artifacts, and avoid getting killed by a cabal known as the Hidden Skulls or by her elf Warden colleague, Amadin.

By magic, curses, strange bargains, swordplay and sheer dogged work she frees Barden Jacques, reveals part of the Shadow Congress, saves her di Lenti sister from death, and in a twist, frees Maurenia from her binding in the forest glen. In another twist, she must join the Shadow Congress to unmask all of the Archmagisters involved in the conspiracy.

Daniel M. Ford's world is richer in this novel, the characters more layered and complex. It is still a medieval world, but one can almost smell the sewers, look askance at thieves and neer-do-wells skulking by and enjoy the wealth of sights and sounds at a royal party. He also still likes his special names for spells: Djagenmar's Fire Drake, Isriny's Life-Finding Spell and Leonhid's Fast Fester, to name a few.

Once again, he gives acknowledgement and credit to his editor cats as well as his human editors and draft readers. YA, feudal fantasy, LGBTQ-themed.

***Tea You at the Altar: Tomes & Tea Book 3* by Rebecca Thorne, 2025 Bramble, tp \$19.99, 336 pages.**

**Review by Danielle and Arthur Maurici-Pollock**

Kianthe, Mage of Ages, and Reyna, former queens-guard and bad-ass swordwoman ran, off together to open a book and tea shop in *Can't Spell Treason Without Tea* and sailed the Nacean River, dealing with dastardly pirates, in the follow-up *A Pirate's Life for Tea*. Now, in this third installment of Rebecca Thorne's *Tomes & Tea* series, the two women are finally planning their coup...we mean, their wedding. Well, both.

The plan is for the pair's impending nuptials to also serve as a trap to take down the vicious Queen Tilaine, Reyna's former boss, and put a less-murderous monarch on the throne. But between the coup and the wedding plans, the pair will also have to deal with family drama, dragons on the roof, some raucous wedding guests, and an heir-apparent who wants no part of being queen. The ultimate solution might threaten the pair's cozy life together in Tawney. Assuming, that is, they live long enough to make it through the vows.

This is yet another fine installment in the series and example of cozy fantasy. It is not a stand-alone work, but those who've enjoyed Kianthe and Reyna's previous adventures will find more of the same elements that made those fun, including a cast of colorful small-town personalities, some horrible puns, magical pet antics, and a keen grasp of fantasy tropes and how to employ them.

This latest novel does up the stakes, and there can be some tone whiplash, particularly toward the end, between the wacky wedding shenanigans and the darker court intrigue. Overall, we found this therapeutically entertaining, especially for anyone who's ever planned a wedding. A fourth and final installment of the series is planned for later in 2025, and we can't wait to see what comes next.

***Harmattan Season* by Tochi Onyebuchi, 2025 Tor Books, hc \$27.99, 240 pages.**

**Reviewed by David Paterick**

When I first saw the title, I was thinking it was a mash up of harm and Manhattan and I was expecting a New

York city setting. Turns out that Harmattan season is dry and dusty period in West Africa that occurs from late November to mid-March. A time or country is never mentioned in the book, but by context, the story takes place in a west African country sometime in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Our protagonist is Boubacar who is a chercher - paid to hunt for lost people, some taken, some not wanting to be found. He is half French and African and a former member of the French army which all play into the story.

One night a wounded woman bangs on Boubacar's door and asks him to hide her. The only possible place in his unfurnished one-room apartment is in a tiny closet. The police come looking for her, but upon searching his apartment she is gone. Thus begins the first of many mysteries. A day or so later Boubacar comes upon a crowd and discovers they are looking at the woman. She is dead and floating in the air surrounded by her blood. Boubacar sets out to find who killed her and made her float. To tell any more about the plot would ruin many surprises. I thoroughly enjoyed the novel and highly recommend it. I will definitely be reading Tochi Onyebuchi's earlier novels.

One note, I read an advanced copy. I hope the published version of *Harmattan Season* has a glossary. There are several African words that I think in context I understand what they mean, but there were a few that could have gone a couple of ways and still made sense within the story. It would be nice to know if I was actually right.

***A Conventional Boy* by Charles Stross, 2025 Tordotcom, hc \$28.99, 224 pages. Review by Geneva Schult**

*A Conventional Boy* is the 13th installment in Charles Stross's snarky, multiple Hugo Award-winning *Laundry Files* series, which explores a British intelligence agency navigating a Cthulhu Mythos-inspired world. The series blends humor with horror - the lovechild of Terry Pratchett and H.P. Lovecraft.

The series often addresses serious topics such as math, politics, and how computer programs can summon demons. *A Conventional Boy* invokes the real-life Satanic Panic of the 1980s. Our protagonist, Derek Reilly, faces the absurdity of being institutionalized due to his interests in tabletop role-playing games during this moral panic.

Derek, diagnosed with autism, was institutionalized at age 14 as a potential "evil wizard" amid the hysteria surrounding Dungeons & Dragons (if you are neurodivergent, you will appreciate Derek immensely). After spending forty years at Camp Sunshine, a deprogramming facility, Derek has crafted a set of D&D dice from magic-soaked materials gathered from around the camp. The dice allow him to accomplish such feats as designing D&D campaigns whose backstories match highly classified Laundry code-word files, and correctly guessing eight-digit serial numbers to enable his escape. All to attend a local gaming convention, which he heard about since he is a trustee at the camp and writes an inmate newsletter using newspapers from the outside.

At the convention, he encounters cultists that have wandered in from a much more likely source of Satanic power in the real world: corporate marketing culture. With his RPG-by-mail followers, he uncovers a cultist plot to summon a minor god, leading to chaos and the attention of the Laundry. The corporation and employee descriptions are hilariously satirical and you will be highly amused.

While the author has suggested *A Conventional Boy*

can be read as a standalone novella, it is rich with references to earlier books in the series. I would not recommend reading this by itself. The only negative thing I have to say is that the climax is overly optimistic.

[I found out through an online comment that Charles Stross knows his D&D. Even better, he's the source of the original monsters and classes of Death Knights, Illithids, and Githyanki. And the Slaadi. Baldur's Gate 3 allows one to play as a Githyanki. This is real Nerd Cred].

So if you have read the previous *Laundry Files* books, I recommend this one. Otherwise, go back to book one, *The Atrocity Archives* and begin the fun!

***Explorer: Anthanian Imperative book 1* by Roger Floyd, 2024 Roger Floyd, tp \$25.00, 380 pages.**

**Review by Arthur Maurici-Pollock**

*Explorer* is the first book in ASFS member Roger Floyd's *Anthanian Imperative* trilogy where the Anthanian race begins their first exploration of a potential planet to flee to with the impending death of their own. But this planet is not what they expect - with water falling from the sky, predators lurking in unexpected places, and terrain much different than what they're used to on their own planet, the ten members of the team of explorers are facing more than they had bargained for. As their exploration continues, it begins to feel like the planet itself is against them, and they must decide what their recommendation is when they return to Anthanos.

The premise of the *Anthanian Imperative* is a fascinating one. The planet of Anthanos's sun is dying and will take their planet with it, leaving the people there to face the difficult prospect of finding somewhere else to live. This first book follows a team of explorers as they visit the first option, a planet not unlike our own, to try to determine if it is suitable for colonization. I found myself very invested in the decisions this team made and what information they would bring back to Anthanos and how their fellow Anthanians would react to what was found on "the Blue Planet."

While I was intrigued by the premise, I did find myself frustrated with some parts of the book. The biggest one was that the exploration team was made up of only sets of couples. At first, I assumed this was because it was an Ark ship and they would be attempting to populate the planet, but then the characters talked about going back to Anthanos, so with that not being the case I was confused as to why that was the choice those in charge had made. Particularly when it turned out the first and second in command were married to each other. I also felt like this was more Lilea's story than anyone else - she's the first POV character we see and we spend most of the story in her point of view - so when the POV would shift to another character, it felt a little jarring.

Overall, I am definitely invested in the plight of the Anthanians and am intrigued to see what is coming next as they continue their hunt for a suitable new home. I look forward to seeing what's next on their journey as the trilogy continues.

## ***ASFS MEETING REPORTS —*** **JANUARY 2025: BOOK REPORTS**

The beginning of 2025 saw 25 people gather to discuss books read in 2024, whether good or bad. A book title

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mentioned by more than one person has an asterisk.

Among reading materials named were *Thornhedge* by T. Kingfisher, *The Road to Roswell\** by Connie Willis, *Bury Your Gays* by Chuck Tingle, *The Ministry of Time* by Kaliana Bradley, *A Song for a New Day* by Sarah Pinsker, *Starter Villain* by John Scalzi, *The Deed of Paksenarrion* by Elizabeth Moon, *The Pot Thief* series by J. Michael Orenduff, *Star Trek: The Enterprise Incident* by Robert Vardeman, *The Reanimator's Remains* by Kara Jorgensen, *I Was a Teenage Slasher* by Stephen Graham Jones, *Alice in Borderland* (manga) series by Haro Aso, *Mister Magic* by Kiersten White, *Bored Gay Werewolf* by Tony Santorella, *Hocus Pocus* by Paul Kieve, *It Came from the Closet* by Joe Vallese, *Even Though I Knew the End* by C.L. Polk,

*The First Geeks* by Orty Ortwein, *Ed Wood's Warm Angora Wishes* by Brad A. Braddock, *Solaris* by Stanislaw Lem, *Annihilation* by Jeff Vandermeer, *Star King* by Jack Vance, *Decluttering at the Speed of Life* by Dana K. White, *The Space Between Worlds* by Micaiah Johnson, *The Spare Man* by Mary Robinette Kowal, *The Survivors Club* by Ben Sherwood, *The Mercy of Gods* by James S.A. Corey, *Calico* by Lee Goldberg, *Sherlock Holmes and the Telegram from Hell* by Nicholas Meyer, news articles, comic books, *The Genius Plague* by David Walton, *Murder Theory* by Andrew Mayne, *Sinister Magic* by Lindsay Buroker, *An Inheritance of Magic* by Benedict Jacka, *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* by Becky Chambers, *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate, *The Buntline Special* by Mike Resnick, *America the Fearful* by Benjamin Radford, *Lord Quillifer* by Walter Jon Williams, *The Weird* edited by Jeff & Ann Vandermeer, *Crossbone* by Kimberly Vale, *Barbary Station* by R.E. Stearns, *Sky's End* by Marc Gregson, *Delta-V* by Daniel Suarez, *Somewhere Beyond the Sea* by T.J. Klune, *The Brides of High Hill* by Nghi Vo, and *Zatanna: The Jewel of Gravesend* by Alys Arden.

IN CLUB NEWS, Roger Floyd announced his first book, *Explorer*, is out. And Troy Stull announced that the USS White Sands was sponsoring an after-party for the ABQ Comic Con on Saturday, January 18, at Nexus Brewery.

## FEB 2025: GUTHRIE ON AUDIOBOOKS

Author Brian Guthrie talked to 23 people about his experience with turning his two novels into audiobooks.

He noted that *Rise*, his first book, was nominated for a Dragon Award, but lost to *The Expanse*. "If you're going to lose, it might as well be to a juggernaut like *The Expanse*. *Rise* is more than 16 hours on audio, but *Fall*, the second book, is just 13 hours."

Guthrie said that when it came to Audible, he got lucky. "Audible wanted a second book before they would commit. I totally lucked out because the narrator did *Rise* like a space western, and we decided it works."

For *Fall*, the producer contacted Guthrie about who he wanted to voice it. "We had ten auditions from women, and it was hard to choose," he commented. "We eliminated one woman immediately because her voice was the wrong genre. But deciding between the other nine was difficult. Everyone had different strengths, and it came down to two.

"Not everyone is the right fit for a role," he continued. "We met with our chosen narrator, and gave her a pronunciation guide and character notes. You need to know who the characters are and where they're going. Also, listening

to the auditions, I had to pay attention to how people speak, pronounce words, and make sounds. If there's something wrong and no one tells them, then it ends up not sounding professional."

When Guthrie began writing, he tutored under Tracy Hickman, who wanted to encourage new writers.

After he played the first part of Audible's *Rise*, he gave a little background on his *Future Worlds* universe. "In my world, I eliminated paper and trees. So people wonder what paper is for. I also had to figure out how to describe trees to someone who had never seen one."

Finishing up, Guthrie said he is not a pantsner when writing. "As I am writing, I know I may have to change a scene or how something works."

## EDITOR NOTES THAT FIT THIS SPACE

- **CLUB SHOUT-OUTS:** Welcome back GEORGE BATES, who fell and broke his hip in early April. He made it out to the June club meeting! And condolences to ERIC KLAMMER, whose mother passed away mid-June...

- **MORE THAN HALF OF 2024** is over now. Sometimes, it seems like that happened in the wink of an eye, and other times it seems like five years. It does seem odd that we're in July already. The fireworks on the 4th felt like being caught in a warzone. Luckily, while New Mexico has had some wildfires, we've also had strong monsoon rains (which brought flooding to burn scars). Crossing fingers!

- **NOW IS THE TIME** to stay strong, and support each other. Politics are really ugly, and I believe the just-passed "Big Beautiful Bill" is a betrayal of the American public. It cuts food assistance, denies medical care to many (especially in NM), and even cuts college grants. Meanwhile, corporations and the rich get tax breaks, public lands are threatened, and the military & ICE get more money. There are better ways to deal with our national debt, to be fair to all citizens, and to treat individuals with dignity and respect. With that in mind, groups like the Roadrunner Food Bank, The Storehouse, Meals on Wheels, and even PBS and NPR are going to need our support.

- **WITH SUMMER RERUNS HERE**, we caught up on the 2nd season of *The Last of Us*, and the 4th season of *Hacks*. Now we're watching *Poker Face* on Peacock. Also enjoying random episodes of *Mystery Science Theater 3000* on the Shout TV app. We plan to watch the 2nd season of *Star Wars: Andor*, the documentary *My Mom Jayne* (Mansfield), *Sinners*, and *They Call Her Death*. Plus, of course, the various Green Slime film and TV show nominees (oh joy).

- **HAVE SEVERAL BOOKS** to review. Maybe next time?

- **LOOKING FORWARD TO** seeing Weird Al Yankovic in Rio Rancho in early September, working and attending the 3rd MORGUE & KRYPT HORRORFEST September 26-28 at Isleta Resort & Casino (Tom Atkins, Nick Castle, P.J. Soles, Vinegar Syndrome booth, Nancy Loomis), Milehicon 57 on Halloween weekend in Denver (Gail Carriger, Wen Spencer, Connie Willis), and comedian/actor Tim Meadows in Albuquerque in late November.

- **HARD TO BELIEVE BUBONICON 56** will be here in just six weeks as of this ASFS meeting. Yikes! Still so much to do to get ready - and at the convention itself. Thus, volunteers are always welcome! It should be a good convention.

- **OUT OF ROOM!** Many thanks to David P, Becky D, Danielle M-P and Arthur M-P for reviews. Next *ASFacts* will be in October - Submissions needed by Sunday, Oct 5! Be well & see you next month at Bubonicon 56. -- Craig C