



SITHFACTS 2025

"WE HAD SNOW EARLY THIS MONTH" DECEMBER HOLIDAY ISSUE



2024 WORLD FANTASY WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The World Fantasy Awards winners for works published in 2024 were presented during the 2025 World Fantasy Convention, held October 30-November 2 in Brighton, UK.

The Life Achievement Awards, presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field, went to Juliet Marillier and Michael Whelan.

The World Fantasy Awards winners are: **BEST NOVEL:** *The Tainted Cup* by Robert Jackson Bennett, **BEST NOVELLA:** *Yoke of Stars* by R.B. Lemberg, **BEST SHORT FICTION:** "Raptor" by Maura McHugh, **BEST ANTHOLOGY:** *Heartwood* edited by Dan Coxon, **BEST COLLECTION:** *A Sunny Place for Shady People* by Mariana Enríquez, translated by Megan McDowell. **BEST ARTIST:** Liv Rainey-Smith, **SPECIAL AWARD – PROFESSIONAL:** Sydney Paige Guerrero, Gabriela Lee & Anna Felicia Sanchez, for *Mapping New Stars: A Sourcebook on Philippine Speculative Fiction*, and **SPECIAL AWARD – NON-PROFESSIONAL:** Steve J Shaw, for Black Shuck Books

This year's judges were James Brogden, Jessica Day George, Lee Murray, Jonathan Oliver, and Molly Tanzer.

2025 GOODREADS CHOICE WINNERS

Winners of the 17th annual Goodreads Choice Awards, chosen by users of the site, were announced December 4. There are several winners of genre interest across various categories.

ROMANTASY: *Onyx Storm* by Rebecca Yarros

FANTASY: *Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil* by V.E. Schwab (also nominated were *Brigands & Breadknives* by Travis Baldree, *Wind and Truth: Stormlight Archive #5* by Brandon Sanderson, and *Hemlock & Silver* by T. Kingfisher)

SCIENCE FICTION: *The Compound* by Aisling Rawle (also nominated were *When the Moon Hits Your Eye* and *The Shattering Peace*, both by John Scalzi)

HORROR: *Witchcraft for Wayward Girls* by Grady

Hendrix (also nominated were *The Buffalo Hunter Hunter* by Stephen Graham Jones, *Never Flinch* by Stephen King, and *Lucky Day* by Chuck Tingle)

YOUNG ADULT FANTASY & SCI-FI: *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins

HISTORY & BIOGRAPHY: *How to Kill a Witch: The Patriarchy's Guide to Silencing Women* by Claire Mitchell and Zoe Venditozzi.

Goodreads reported over 7.5 million votes were cast, up from the roughly 6.2 million votes cast in 2024, and the 5.8 million votes cast in 2022 and 2023.

JEMISIN NAMED SFWA GRAND MASTER

The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA) has named N.K. Jemisin the 42nd recipient of the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award, reported Locusmag.com in mid-November.

SFWA President Kate Ristau said, "Jemisin is a celebrated speculative fiction author with multiple Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Awards. A MacArthur fellow, she impacted an entire generation of new writers with her groundbreaking work. Her career has had an unbelievable impact on the direction of speculative fiction and on how we imagine what SFF can do. I am happy to acknowledge her work, even as she continues to write us into the future. I cannot imagine a better Grand Master to solidify our next 60 years at SFWA."

Jemisin stated, "I'm honored and excited to be joining your ranks. If you've read my work, you know how I feel about the power of stories to make change. So many of the previous Grandmasters wrote stories that changed my life. I am truly flattered to be among them now. I feel like 'standing on the shoulders of giants' can be overused, but to be a SFWA Grandmaster, becoming part of a tradition that includes Ursula K. LeGuin, Connie Willis, Sam-

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Our Holiday Party & Potluck. Plus the 3-D version of *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*.
- **January 9, 2026:** Our Annual Group Book Discussion! What did you read in 2025 & would recommend? Or warn us about?
- **February 13:** Program unknown. Plus the Valentine *ASFacts* (Deadline 5:30 pm Sun, Feb 8).
- **March 13:** Club Auction with Bob Vardeman, Patricia Rogers, Jessica Coyle, Mandy Self, Geneva Schult... 2-5 donations welcome, plus cash!
- **April 17 - A Week Late:** Also unknown. *ASFacts*!

Darth Vader, guest editor. Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Send Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Darth Vader's Phone: c/o (505) 266-8905. E-mail: cwraig@nmia.com. *SITHFACTS* printed each December. *ASFacts* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. **NEXT DEADLINE:** Sunday, February 8, 2026. **Club Officers:** Jessica Coyle & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Eric Klammer, Moderator. Tanley McMullan, alternator. Kris Kringler & Rudolph the Reindeer, Holiday Hosts. **Bubonicon 57 Chair:** Craig W. Chrissinger.

uel R Delaney, Peter S. Beagle, Nalo Hopkinson, and both of you...there's just no other way to say it.

"And as much as I appreciate this honor in itself, I appreciate becoming part of SFWA's wider mission," Jemisin continued. "In recent years, it's becoming very clear that no one's looking out for us but us – labor violations, predatory contracts, private equity, and the Cthulhu-ass horror of AI...if you're a writer, you know it's bad out there. The fight is worth it, and we will win, but goddamn, you know? And in an age where fewer and fewer people are standing up for artists, SFWA – an organization which works hard for its members and even extends information and aid to writers who aren't members yet – feels more necessary than ever. I am delighted to be next year's Grandmaster. Keep fighting. See you soon."

Previously honored SFWA Grand Masters include Nicola Griffith, Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K. Le Guin, Isaac Asimov, and others, going back to 1974. The award was presented at Quasar, "a special continuation of the 2025 Nebula Awards Conference," held November 15-16.

CARY-HIROYUKI TAGAWA DIES

by Garth Franklin, darkhorizons.com 12/4/2025

Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, the highly prolific Japanese-born, American-trained actor with a face seen in many films of the 1990s and 2000s, died December 4 in Santa Barbara, CA, from complications from a stroke. He was 75 year old.

Tagawa is arguably best known as the evil sorcerer Shang Tsung in Paul W.S. Anderson's 1995 film adaptation of the *Mortal Kombat* game franchise. He reprised the role in the 1997 sequel and various webisodes and games.

His very first role was an uncredited swordsman in John Carpenter's *Big Trouble in Little China* before he first broke through in Bernardo Bertolucci's 1987 Oscar Best Picture-winner *The Last Emperor* as Chang, the emperor's driver.

A string of films followed, the actor often cast as either a villain or a good guy with potentially questionable motives. Noted roles included that of Eddie Sakamura in the adaptation of Michael Crichton's novel *Rising Sun*, as a Yakuza boss in *Showdown in Little Tokyo*, as a Hong Kong agent in the Bond film *License to Kill*, the attack-planning Minoru Genda in *Pearl Harbor*, as the ape General Krull in Tim Burton's *Planet of the Apes*, and as the pirate Kabai Sengh in *The Phantom*.

He also played Master Roshi in *Elektra*, David Deyo in *John Carpenter's Vampires*, business mogul David Chan in *The Art of War*, the Baron in *Memoirs of a Geisha*, Zenhichi Miyamoto in *Snow Falling on Cedars*, Sanga in *Kickboxer 2*, Heihachi Mishima in *Tekken*, Shōgun Tsunayoshi Tokugawa in *47 Ronin*, as villager Hashi in *Kubo and the Two Strings*, had a brief cameo in Ivan Reitman's comedy *Twins*, and a small role in Michael Mann's *L.A. Takedown*.

He also had a prolific TV resume. He was part of the main cast of Amazon's *The Man in the High Castle* in the role of trade minister Nobusuke Tagomi, and had multi-episode arcs on *Miami Vice*, *Nash Bridges*, *Space Rang-*

ers, Revenge and Netflix's *Lost in Space*. His last credited role was as Master Eiji in the acclaimed *Blue Eye Samurai* series.

He also guest-starred on almost every late 1980s and 1990s series you could think of, along with a resurgence in the 2010s. Shows including *Mission: Impossible*, *MacGyver*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Baywatch*, *Jake and the Fatman*, *Babylon 5*, *Alien Nation*, *Moonlighting*, *Knots Landing*, *Superboy*, *Renegade*, *Cybill*, *Nash Bridges*, *Stargate SG-1*, *Walker*, *Texas Ranger*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, *Heroes*, *Hawaii Five-0*, *The Librarians*, *Teen Wolf*, *Grimm*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Star Wars: Rebels*, *NCIS: LA*, and *DuckTales*.

Tagawa is survived by three children, Calen, Brynne and Cana; and his two grandchildren, River and Thea Clayton.

2025 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS WINNERS

Winners for the National Book Awards (NBA) were announced at the 76th National Book Awards Ceremony on November 19, reports Locusmag.com. Genre authors and works in categories with winners of interest include:

FICTION: *The True True Story of Raja the Gullible (and His Mother)* by Rabih Alameddine, NONFICTION: *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This* by Omar El Akkad, and YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE: *The Teacher of Nomad Land: A World War II Story* by Daniel Nayeri.

The judges for the Fiction award were Rumaan Alam (chair), Debra Magpie Earling, Attica Locke, Elizabeth McCracken, and Cody Morrison. Judges for the Nonfiction award were Heather Kathleen Moody Hall, Tiya Miles (chair), Raj Patel, Cristina Rivera Garza, and Eli Saslow. Judges for the Young People's Literature award were Cathy Berner, David Bowles (chair), candice iloh, Jung Kim, and Maulik Pancholy.

The Poetry and Translated Literature winners were also announced, and Lifetime Achievement recipients Roxane Gay and George Saunders were previously announced.

ARTIST DREW STRUZAN DIES

Artist Drew Struzan died October 13, reported Locusmag.com. He had Alzheimer's disease, and was 78 years old.

Struzan was born March 18, 1947, in Oregon City, OR. He attended the ArtCenter College of Design, graduated, and traveled to Los Angeles CA to illustrate album covers for musical artists including the Beach Boys and Bee Gees. He began work in movie advertisements in the 1970s and found acclaim for his 1978 *Star Wars* poster, after which he went on to make posters for numerous films. He made the cover art for many tie-in books, primarily for the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* franchises but also for *Blade Runner* (1982), *Return to Oz* (1985), *Back to the Future* (1985), and *Stephen King's The Mist* (2007). Struzan was nominated multiple times for a Chesley Award in Lifetime Artistic Achievement, and he was in-

ducted into the Society of Illustrators Hall of Fame in 2020. He is survived by his wife, son, and grandchildren.

SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, December 15, inside Flying Star Cafe on Juan Tabo Blvd NE (just north of Montgomery) to discuss *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* by Gene Wolfe. The group then meets January 19, 2026, to talk about *The Affair of the Mysterious Letter* by Alexis Hall at either Flying Star Café or the 66 Diner (Central Avenue near I-25).

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the 3rd Monday each month. Books are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on them at Page One Books. For more info: Leah at msransom@hotmail.com or Craig at 505-266-8905.

KS ROBINSON ARCHIVE TO HUNTINGTON

The Huntington has acquired the personal library and papers of Kim Stanley Robinson, including drafts of novels, annotated works, photographs, and more, reported Locusmag.com in late October. All told, The Huntington describes the collection as “50 linear feet of papers, photographs, and manuscripts as well as thousands of digital files.” The Huntington stated that their goal is to make the material available to researchers by 2027. Robinson said the acquisition was a “deep pleasure... I’ve known The Huntington as the home of the Octavia E. Butler papers, and I’m proud to have mine join hers there.”

Karen R. Lawrence, president of The Huntington said, “The Huntington’s acquisition of Robinson’s archive and library expands our capacity to connect literature with pressing questions facing society today. Robinson’s unflinching fiction urges us to judge our present actions ‘from the angle of the future,’ as one of his characters puts it. The Huntington’s wide-ranging collections and support for advanced research will enable scholars to see Robinson’s work within both its literary traditions and cultural impact.”

JUNE LOCKHART PASSES AWAY

June Lockhart, who was best known for her motherly TV roles on *Lassie* and *Lost in Space*, died October 23 of natural causes at her home in Santa Monica, CA. She was 100 years old.

Bill Mummy, who played her character's son on *Lost in Space*, remembered her fondly in a social media post: "A one of a kind, talented, nurturing, adventurous, and non-compromising Lady. She did it her way. June will always be one of my very favorite moms."

Born June 25, 1925, in New York City, Lockhart was the daughter of Gene and Kathleen Lockhart, both of whom were actors. Her film debut came alongside her parents in the 1938 adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* – her parents played Mr. and Mrs. Cratchit, while she played their daughter, Belinda. Another early role came on Broadway, where she won the 1948 Special Tony Award

for Outstanding Performance by a Newcomer for her part in *For Love or Money*. Her other early films included a small role in *Meet Me in St. Louis* and a prescient turn in the 1945 feature *Son of Lassie*. It was only 13 years before she returned to the world of *Lassie*, this time on the small screen.

Lockhart joined the cast of *Lassie* in 1958, and the role on the popular TV show established her as a mother figure to a generation of viewers. She played Ruth Martin, adoptive mom to Timmy in the classic boy-and-his-dog show. After the Martin family was written out of the show in 1964, she went straight into another hit, *Lost in Space* (1965-68), a semi-spoof sci-fi series aimed mostly at children and inspired by *The Swiss Family Robinson*, the 19th-century novel by Johann David Wyss. Lockhart and Guy Williams portrayed Maureen and John Robinson, two scientists exploring alien planets. Lockhart had to spend most of her time deftly trying to survive special effects. As the series continued, the narrative became less and less about this Swiss Family Robinson in space and more about the Robinsons’ young son Will (Bill Mummy) and his friendship with a robot, and the cowardly villain Dr Zachary Smith (Jonathan Harris). By the time *Lost in Space* was cancelled after three seasons, Lockhart was all but typecast as a mom, and she moved into another mother figure role in the last two seasons of *Petticoat Junction*.

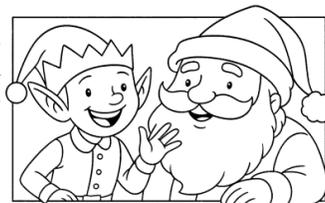
In the years after her best-known shows, Lockhart was frequently seen on TV, with notable guest spots on shows including *Falcon Crest*, *Murder, She Wrote*, *Full House*, *Babylon 5*, *Roseanne*, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, and *Grey's Anatomy*. In 1998, she had a small role as Principal Cartwright in the big-screen adaptation of *Lost in Space*, and in the 21st century Netflix reboot, she had a cameo as the voice of Alpha Control.

In 2013, Lockhart was honored by NASA with the Exceptional Public Achievement Medal for inspiring the public toward space exploration. Lockhart was thrilled with the award, having already been a longtime supporter of NASA and its astronauts. She attended many NASA launches and sometimes worked with the astronauts.

Paying tribute to Lockhart, Jon Provost, who played her TV son on *Lassie*, said in a Facebook post, "She truly was my second mother. I remember some advice June gave me early on. We were on the set and I was misbehaving a bit, being a little mischievous. June took me aside, and very firmly explained to me that we were professionals and that we had a job to do. She told me that I was a young boy playing a young boy, but that one day I would be an adult, playing an adult like her. June was a true professional, with a kind heart and an open mind."

Among her few later feature films was the fantasy, *Troll* (1986) in which she portrayed a witch, with her own daughter, Anne Lockhart, playing her younger self.

In 1951 she married John Maloney, a doctor and former Navy physician. In addition to Anne, they had another daughter, June. That marriage ended in divorce, as did her second, to John Lindsay, an architect. She is survived by her daughters and four grandchildren.



SITHFACTS, December 2025

ORIGINAL CUT OF *STAR WARS* IN 2027

by Germain Lussier, gizmodo.com 12/5/2025

A day *Star Wars* fans never thought would happen is finally happening. Lucasfilm and Disney are rereleasing the original version of *Star Wars* in theaters for its 50th anniversary. It'll happen on February 17, 2027, and io9 has confirmed with Lucasfilm that it is, in fact, the original theatrical cut of the movie.

Earlier this year, the studio announced it would be bringing *Star Wars*, later titled *Star Wars: A New Hope*, back to theaters to celebrate its massive anniversary, but there was the big question of what version? Would it be the Special Edition that had become the standard over the past 30 years? The version with Greedo shooting first, Jabba the Hutt, and rings around the Death Star?

Now, we know that the answer is "No." This will be "a newly restored version of the classic *Star Wars* (1977) theatrical release" that will play in theaters for a limited time. And, according to other reports, it'll even be released in IMAX, though Lucasfilm has yet to confirm that.

Back in 1997, when George Lucas remastered and tinkered with the original trilogy with the Special Editions, those became the only versions that Lucasfilm would release. That meant in theaters, on streaming, on DVD, all that stuff. As a result, copies of the original film—with Han shooting first, no Jabba, etc – became rather rare. Last year, though, Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy attended a screening of one of those prints, giving the event an official seal of approval. And now we know why.

The re-release was also originally supposed to come out on April 30, 2027, which would've put it just a few weeks ahead of the new *Star Wars* film, *Star Wars: Starfighter*. Now, there's some more space and, earlier in the year, less competition. You can imagine it's going to be a hot ticket to see *Star Wars* in theaters again, the way it was meant to be seen, and the way we haven't been able to see it in a long time. Expect to learn more about this re-release next year as things get closer.

BUBONICON 57 HAS HOTEL CONTRACT

Bubonicon has a hotel contract for 2026 with the ABQ Marriott Uptown, signed by all parties just before Thanksgiving. As a result, weekend passes for Bubonicon 57 will go on sale the weekend of the January 2026 ABQ SF Society meeting. Per the norm of the last few years, we will be keeping an eye on Covid, Flu & RSV numbers. Sleeping rooms during the August 21-23, 2026, convention will be \$159.00 per night.

Special guests for Bubonicon 57 are Patricia Briggs, Martha Wells, Toastmaster is Travis Baldree, and Jon Sanchez is Guest Artist. Con chair is Craig Chrissinger, with Jessica Coyle and Mandy Self again acting as assistant chairs.

Perry & Terri Rodent want to remind fans to have a great winter holiday season – stay safe and be well. Updates will be posted on www.bubonicon.com, of course, and in this newsletter.

REVIEW ROUND-UP

Love Bites: Tails from the Alpha Art Gallery 1 by Cynthia St. Aubin, 2025 Tor, pb \$18.99, 304 pages.

Review by Jessica Coyle

Love Bites is the first supernatural mystery in a series by Cynthia St. Aubin from Tor; the first five books in the series have been previously self-published. Hanna Harvey, a recently divorced art history grad, is in desperate need of a job to support herself and her three cats. She lands a job at an art gallery as the assistant to the owner, Mark Abernathy. Hanna quickly realizes that there is something mysterious about both the gallery and the handsome gallery owner.

When Mark's girlfriend turns up murdered, he becomes the lead suspect, and homicide detective James Morrison warns Hanna that she could be next.

I really loved *Love Bites*. Hanna is a fun and funny protagonist, and I thought St. Aubin did a really good job writing her as a person who is trying to start her life over from scratch. I also enjoyed the crazy cast of artists from the gallery; they add a lot of color to the story. I am really looking forward to reading more in this series.

How To Train Your Dragon (Live Action), June 2025 Dreamworks/Universal, 125 minutes.

Review by Becky C. Davis

I went to a showing of the new *How to Train Your Dragon* up at the Flix Brewhouse at Indian School & Tramway in July (yeah, it has already gone to streaming and DVD by this point).

The CGI/live action version is the same script as the original animated version. The music score is the same (I really liked the music for the flying scenes). Some people will complain that the dragon characters were not enhanced with more grit or wildness and instead were just plunked from the animated version into the live action version. The dragons, naturally, did not get a vote on this issue.

Overall, the scenery and staging were darker. That is, in the forest scenes and house scenes around Hiccup and the human actors, the viewer could not see strong details of trees, bushes, household furnishings or marauding Vikings. That is true for a real Icelandic or Faro Islands Middle Ages house or forest, but it is very annoying to a viewer used to the bright details of modern cinema. As a result, the climactic battle between the Vikings and the monster dragon Red Death was very murky, except for the arial scenes with Hiccup, Toothless and Red Death.

Three points of difference between the animated and live action versions. The credits for animators and CGI artists was longer than the list of credits for stunt players (and that list was long). The live-action version did not include scenes of sheep dumping – so funny in the animated version, but not possible in the live action version. And Ruffnut in the live action version was definitely not the same kind of character as in the animated version, despite the dialog.

Overall, I enjoyed the live-action version about as well as I enjoyed the earlier animated version. I would probably seek out the animated version first just so I could voyeuristically re-experience the momentary thrill of riding a dragon.

***Brigands & Breadknives: Legends & Lattes 3* by Travis Baldree, 2025 Tor, hc \$28.99, 336 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Brigands & Breadknives is the much anticipated third book in Travis Baldree's *Legends & Lattes* series. The story follows the character of Fern, the rattkin bookseller from *Bookshops & Bonedust*. Feeling unmoored in her life, she sells her bookstore and moves with her gryphet Potroast to Thune to open a new store next door to her friend Viv's coffee shop. Fern hopes that the change of venue will solve all of her problems but it does not. One night, she goes out, gets drunk, and accidentally falls asleep in the back of a stranger's wagon. When she awakens the next day, she discovers that she is far from Thune and that the wagon belongs to Astryx One-Ear the legendary mercenary elf.

Astryx is accompanied by her prisoner Zyll the Goblin, who she is taking in to collect a bounty. Because of her mission, Astryx refuses to return Fern to Thune. Instead Fern must accompany them until they reach a town large enough for her to hire transport back to Thune. As their journey continues, Fern begins to feel a sense of purpose that she has not had in a long time even as she experiences immense guilt about abandoning Viv, Potroast, and her life in Thune.

Brigands & Breadknives is an excellent addition to the *Legends & Lattes* series. Viv, the protagonist of the last two books, is not the focus of this story, but I really enjoyed learning more about Fern and watching her come into her own. I also really enjoyed the supporting character of Zyll, who kept surprising me at every turn. If you are looking for something fun, cozy, and adventurous to read, I cannot recommend the *Legends & Lattes* series enough.

***Glass Houses* by Madeline Ashby, 2024 Tor, hc \$27.99, 272 pages.**

Review by David Paterick

Glass Houses is a near future thriller. It starts when an automated airplane crashes on a deserted island. The passengers are returning home from a meeting where the company, Wuv, owned by one of the main characters, Sumter, just sold their company to a large corporation at a huge profit. Their technology allows people to read other people's true emotional state with a set of high-tech contact lens. They find a large cube, glass house that will only open doors for men.

Half of the story is about the group trying to find a way off the island as members keep mysteriously disappearing or dying. The other half of the story centers around Kristen and how she came to be an important employee of Wuz and Sumter's right-hand person. The chapters alternate between the two storylines until they meet with everybody boarding the plane.

The book moves along at a brisk pace and the author throws in several surprises along the way that I didn't see coming but seem obvious once revealed. The ending is satisfactory but potentially sets this book up as the first in a series. Recommended. Seems perfect for a Netflix series.

***The Staircase in the Woods* by Chuck Wendig, 2025 Del Rey, hc \$30.00, 400 pages.**

Review by Craig W. Chrissinger

Chuck Wendig has come up with a new way to portray a haunted house with shifting rooms in *The Staircase in the Woods*. Twenty years ago, five high school friends – a broad spectrum reminiscent of *The Breakfast Club* – went

on a camping trip to blow off steam. And in the middle of the forest, they found a mysterious staircase leading to nowhere.

Then Matty decides to walk up these odd stairs, seemingly steps into nothingness and is gone. The staircase disappears before the others can follow. What do they do now since they are bonded by an oath to protect one another no matter what? Some become self-destructive, others focus on their bodies or jobs to avoid thinking about that bizarre camping trip.

Now the staircase has reappeared. The group is brought back together to find the lost boy – and face the evil, haunted house that lies beyond the staircase, hidden from our world.

Wendig's characters are interesting, and his plot is fast and full of horrific visions. The idea of taking the phenomenon of lone staircases in the wilderness that survive the fall of their houses is unique. What follows is a creepy surprise. If you enjoy horror, I would recommend *The Staircase in the Woods*.

***The Enchanted Greenhouse* by Sarah Beth Durst, 2025 Bramble/Tor, hc \$29.99, 384 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

The Enchanted Greenhouse is the stand-alone novel by Sarah Beth Durst that is set in the same world as NYT Bestseller *The Spellshop*. The story follows Terlu Perna, a librarian in the Great Library of Alyssium who is turned into a statue as punishment for using magic to create a sentient spider plant. The next thing she knows she's waking up outside in the snow on a mostly uninhabited island. She stumbles upon a magical greenhouse that is made up of hundreds of rooms with a wide variety of plants.

She is taken in by the greenhouse's lone gardener, Yarrow. Yarrow is grumpy to have another person on the island, but he begrudgingly gives Terlu clothes, food, and a place to sleep. Terlu quickly realizes that the work of the greenhouse is too much for one person, and, when it becomes apparent that the greenhouse's magic is failing, she tries to use its creator's documents to figure out how to save it.

The Enchanted Greenhouse is a good follow up to Durst's massively popular *The Spellshop*. The story is predictable and definitely follows the cozy fantasy formula, but the characters are interesting and the writing is excellent. If you enjoy the cozy fantasy genre, I definitely recommend this book.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS —

APRIL 2025: TREK XENOZOLOGY 101

A group of 30 people were present for Troy Stull's encore presentation of "Xenozoology 101: Animals of the *Star Trek* Galaxy," which he gave at Bubonicon 55 in 2024. We also learned that club member George Bates had fallen earlier in April and broken his hip.

Star Trek animals included the Sehlat of Vulcan, the Klingon's Targ, the Ceti Eel of Ceti Alpha V, the Tribble, the Mugato, Data's cat Spot, the Blue Whales seen in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, the Bunnicorn seen in *Star Trek: Picard*, the space-fairing sentient Gomtuu, and the Gekli. Also mentioned was the space dog from "The Intruder Within" episode, though its species is never named.

MAY 2025: URSULA VERNON VISIT

Twenty-nine people were on hand for Ursula Vernon's fist visit to the club as a NM resident. She commented, "It's not as exciting being an author in New Mexico as other places since there are so many here."

Vernon said she became an artist first because she went to college, and then she became a children's author. She has three books out this year: *Hemlock & Silver*, *What Stalks the Deep* (both horror novellas) and *Snake-Eater* (evil Roadrunner god).

"This is what I do for a living," she stated. "It's cool, and it's an indoor job with no heaving lifting."

Vernon then read from a *Star Wars*-inspired story that started with a retired Sith and Jedi solving crimes. "They became an angel and a devil retired in a small village, and then I saw *Good Omens* on TV. But I kept writing, and the book should be out next year. It has no title yet, which is one of the things my editor keeps asking about. Maybe *Father Hartley Is Dead?*"

Asked about potatoes, she responded, "They are a perfect food. The Incas had hundreds of varieties and colors. They're just neat."

Finishing up, she noted that Kevin (Sonney) gets to read her writing, but often before the effort is done. "About sixty-five or seventy-five percent of the way in, I often start doubting myself. I feel like a fake that will bring shame on my family. And then I get over that, and people like the books."

JUNE 2025: SUMMER FILM TIME

George Bates returned to the group, bringing a green-painted ceramic pig bank with him. A total of 28 people attended the annual Summer Film meeting, starting with "Steal Wool," a cartoon with Sam the Sheepdog and Ralph the Wolf.

The group then watched the low-budget 1964 B&W summer-themed *The Horror of Party Beach*. What kills the goofy monsters? Sodium! (But they came from sea water. The chemistry hurts Brenda Cole's brain.) Also, we noted that girls are killed by smearing chocolate syrup on them.

JULY 2025: MARSH ON MARTIAN CHRONICLES

Engineer Christopher Marsh did a presentation for 31 people on Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* for its 75th publishing anniversary.

Marsh started by saying Mars is named after the Roman God of War (Ares in Greek), and that its orbital period is 23 months. Its thin atmosphere is mostly made up of CO². In 1894, Percival Lowell reported seeing canals on Mars, and using the Hohmann Transfer Orbit - the most efficient method - still would take nine months to reach the planet from Earth.

Bradbury, born in August 1920, became a full-time writer at the age of 24, and *The Martian Chronicles* was published in 1950. Bradbury's works have been adapted into comics, radio plays, TV shows, movies, and theater plays.

"The book really is a collection of 26 stories. The first story, 'Rocket Summer,' is a short vignette of a rocket launch on a cold winter day in Ohio in 1999. The first real story is 'Ylla,' in which a Martian woman receives the telepathic impressions of the first human space traveler."

Set in August 2001, "The Green Morning" tells of an astronaut planting trees to increase oxygen, and a mature forest grows overnight. "This is an example of the idea of ter-

raforming, proposed by New Mexico's Jack Williamson in 1942."

Marsh stated, "Since 1950, Mars has been found to have an atmosphere that is only one percent oxygen, and temps at night can go down to 100 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. The science in the book was mostly wrong, even for 1950."

Patricia Rogers noted, "Ray often called himself a humanist. The people are the important part."

Talking about the 1979 TV mini-series of Bradbury's Mars book, noted, "They tried to treat it as hard sci-fi and it came out pretty bad."

Attendees and Marsh then debated whether someone should update the book and correct the science.

AUGUST 2025: B'CON PREVIEW & GAMES

Craig Chrissinger and Jessica Coyle gave a preview of Bubonic 56 to 32 people, including the programming schedule, the t-shirt art and this year's tote bags.

And then attendees played games at different tables, including Ransom Notes, Doctor Who Fluxx, Pass the Pigs, and Crossword Cubes.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

• IT'S KIND OF BEEN A BUSY COUPLE OF MONTHS... We drove up to Denver for Milehicon at their new hotel, got plenty of books signed by co-GoHs Gail Carriger and Wen Spencer, were on some panel discussions, hung out with lots of Colorado friends, had breakfast with Connie & Courtney Willis, watched part of the trippy *Return To Oz*, and even managed to shop at Twist & Shout before heading home. And Jessica entered the Costume Contest as Nadja from *What We Do in the Shadows*, and won a prize. We also helped out with last weekend's Can't Stop The Serenity charity event - the first since 2019. It was a little stressful for the crew getting set up in 50 minutes, but it seems to have been successful at Flix Brewhouse, and it was fun to see the 2005 *Serenity* film again on a big screen. Plus, of course, Craig worked more \$1.00 Comic (Insanity) Saturdays at Don's, which were successful and fun, if tiring. Oh, and our neighbors' young son and his pal managed to put a golf ball through the side window in our bedroom while we were working Small Business Saturday. It was an accident and the window pane was easily replaced in an hour during Albuquerque's first snow day. Still, kind of bizarre and unexpected!

• WE ENJOYED SEEING *Zootopia 2* with the Willis clan over Thanksgiving; and have been enjoying our usual sitcoms and such on TV. Also finally watching *Resident Alien*, which is a treat.

• YOU KNOW MY POLITICS, so I'll just say that I haven't been happy with some of the current administration's odd decisions on things like Federal holidays and national parks, the demolition of the East Wing, the loosening of environmental protections, the lack of science in vaccination and research guidelines, revenge declarations against some cities and states, and the verbal attacks on legitimate journalists. I have a degree in journalism, so that really irks me.

• IT'S NOW 45 YEARS since John Lennon's senseless murder, and we couldn't afford tickets to see Paul McCartney. And I soon will be at the age when I ask, "Will you still need me? Will you still feed me?" (Thank you, Beatles). As always, John reminds us, "All We Are Saying Is Give Peace A Chance," "All You Need Is Love," and "Imagine all the people, Livin' life in peace."

• HAPPY HOLIDAYS! Try to enjoy your Christmas, Hanukkah, Midwinter, Kwanzaa, Boxing Day, and/or New Year's. The future, especially for 2026, is unknown. Anything could happen...

• THANK YOU to Bill Mc, David P, Becky D & Jessica C for contributions this time. See you in February. Be well, stay safe, keep strong. -- CWC

