



ASFACTS 2026

MAY "STAR WARS & WACKY WEATHER" ISSUE

2026 LOCUS AWARDS TOP FINALISTS

In mid-April, the top 10 finalists in each of the Locus Awards categories were announced reported Locusmag.com, based on voting by readers during February and March on an open public ballot.

The Locus Awards winners will be announced May 30, during the in-person Locus Awards Ceremony, held in Berkeley, California. Masters of Ceremonies are Sarah Gailey and Maggie Tokuda-Hall, and Guests of Honor include Tananarive Due, Stephen Graham Jones, and Nnedi Okorafor, and featured local artist Alyssa Winans. Along with a catered reception and awards banquet, additional events include virtual author readings, a limited seating literary salon, panels with leading authors, and more.

For the first time, this year's ceremony will be held in partnership with the Bay Area Book Festival, a centerpiece event for the Bay Area celebrating the literary arts, under the festival's 2026 theme "Writing the Future." The 12th annual festival is presenting more than 120 first-rate live conversations with 200 acclaimed and emerging authors across multiple stages, covering genres including science fiction, speculative fiction, horror, literary fiction, fantasy, romantasy, romance, thriller, and queer literature.

The top ten awards finalists in categories where there is someone connected to Bubonicon and/or New Mexico are:

SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL: *The Folded Sky* by Elizabeth Bear, *Picks & Shovels* by Cory Doctorow, *Notes from a Regicide* by Isaac Fellman, *When We Were Real* by Daryl Gregory, *All That We See or Seem* by Ken Liu, *Where the Axe Is Buried* by Ray Nayler, *Slow Gods* by Claire North, *Death of the Author* by Nnedi Okorafor, *The Shattering Peace* by John Scalzi, and *Shroud* by Adrian Tchaikovsky.

FANTASY NOVEL: *The Devils* by Joe Abercrombie, *The Tomb of Dragons* by Katherine Addison, *Lessons in Magic and Disaster* by Charlie Jane Anders, *A Drop of Corruption* by Robert Jackson Bennett, *The Everlasting* by Alix E. Harrow, *The Raven Scholar* by Antonia Hodgson, *Hemlock & Silver* by T. Kingfisher, *Katabasis* by R.F. Kuang, *The Incandescent* by Emily Tesh, and *Queen Demon* by Martha Wells.

HORROR NOVEL: *The Possession of Alba Diaz* by Isabel Cañas, *Spread Me* by Sarah Gailey, *King Sorrow* by Joe Hill, *The Buffalo Hunter Hunter* by Stephen Graham Jones, *The Library at Hellebore* by Cassandra Khaw, *Never Flinch* by Stephen King, *The Bewitching* by Silvia

Moreno-Garcia, *It Was Her House First* by Cherie Priest, *The Crimson Road* by A.G. Slatter, and *The Staircase in the Woods* by Chuck Wendig.

NOVELLA: *The Orb of Cairado* by Katherine Addison, *The River Has Roots* by Amal El-Mohtar, *What Stalks the Deep* by T. Kingfisher, *Cinder House* by Freya Marske, *Automatic Noodle* by Annalee Newitz, *Making History* by K.J. Parker, *Psychopomp & Circumstance* by Eden Royce, *Lives of Bitter Rain* by Adrian Tchaikovsky, *A Mouthful of Dust* by Nghi Vo, and *Murder by Memory* by Olivia Waite.

NOVELLETTE: "The Witch and the Wyrn" by Elizabeth Bear, "Barnacle" by Kate Elliott, "Uncertain Sons" by Thomas Ha, "We Begin Where Infinity Ends" by Somto Ihezue, "The Tin Man's Ghost" by Ray Nayler, "The Millay Illusion" by Sarah Pinsker, "When He Calls Your Name" by Catherynne M. Valente, "The Twenty-One Second God" by Peter Watts, "Wolf Moon, Antler Moon" by A.C. Wise, and "Phantom View" by John Wiswell.

SHORT STORY: "Secret Night" by Nathan Ballingrud, "In the Halls of the Makeshift King" by Tobias S. Buckell, "In My Country" by Thomas Ha, "Wire Mother" by Isabel J. Kim, "The Shape of Stones" by Hildur Knútsdóttir, "Courtney Lovecraft's Book of the Dead" by Sam J. Miller, "Because I Held His Name Like a Key" by Aimee Ogden, "Landline" by Kelly Robson, "Missing Helen" by Tia Tashiro, and "Woolly" by Carrie Vaughn.

EDITOR: John Joseph Adams, Scott H. Andrews, Neil Clarke, Ellen Datlow, Dave Ring, Jonathan Strahan, Bogi Takács, Wendy N. Wagner, Fran Wilde & Julian Yap, and Sheila Williams.

ARTIST: Brom, Rovina Cai, Galen Dara, Bob Eggleton, Kathleen Jennings, Alan Lee, John Picacio, Shaun Tan, Charles Vess, and Michael Whelan.

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Civilian scientist Matthew Fetrow gives a presentation on space, space business & New Mexico.
- **June 12:** Our Annual Summer Movie Night. Title of the film to be announced. Plus a cartoon!
- **June 26:** Bubonicon Open Financial Meeting.
- **July 10:** A visit from Santa Fe author Rebecca Roanhorse. Plus the Summer issue of *ASFACTS*.
- **August 7 (one week early):** Bubonicon 57 Preview + Some Gaming Fun.
- **August 14:** Bubonicon 57 Gofer Meeting.
- **September 11:** Bubonicon 57 and Other Fall Convention Reports.
- **October 9:** A Visit from Benjamin Radford and Club Elections. Plus the Halloween *ASFACTS*.

Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Darth Vader, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to — 2018 Cardenas Dr NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110. Contact: (505) 266-8905 or via cwraig@nmia.com. ASFACTS published February, April/May, July & October for ABQ SF Society, SithFacts each December. Next Deadline: 3 pm Sunday, July 5. 2026 Club Officers: Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Eric Klammer, Moderator. Danielle & Arthur Maurici-Pollock, co-Alternator. Happy Mother's Day. **Bubonicon Chair:** Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

ZELAZNY WINS INFINITY AWARD

New Mexico's Roger Zelazny (1937-1995) has been named the recipient of the fourth Infinity Award, it was announced mid-April.

The award was created by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA) to posthumously "highlight the life and work of creators who achieved a distinct and tremendous legacy in science fiction and fantasy. Although they are no longer with us to celebrate this honor, these writers helped to lay the foundation for today's science fiction, fantasy, and related genres."

SFWA President Kate Ristau said, "One of my first deep dives into science fiction was the *Chronicles of Amber*. Zelazny drew me right into the story with his world-building and world-breaking. Characters could manipulate their reality, walking between worlds, and they didn't always make the decisions you wanted. There were heart-breaking moments and series-wide challenges that were epic and unforgettable; they lingered with you. Zelazny's impact lingers on with us, shaping how we think about multiverses and how we create characters that are complicated, nuanced, and sometimes deeply flawed. I am honored to present him with this year's Infinity Award."

Zelazny will be honored during the Nebula Awards Ceremony on June 6 in Chicago, IL.

2026 HUGO AWARDS FINALISTS

Finalists for the Hugo Awards, the Lodestar Award for Best Young Adult Book, and the Astounding Award for Best New Writer were announced in late April by LAcon V, the 84th World Science Fiction Convention, reported Locusmag.com. Awards will be presented in Los Angeles at Worldcon on August 30. Categories with someone connected to Bubonicon and/or New Mexico are listed below:

BEST NOVEL: *A Drop of Corruption* by Robert Jackson Bennett, *The Everlasting* by Alix E. Harrow, *The Raven Scholar* by Antonia Hodgson, *Death of the Author* by Nnedi Okorafor, *Shroud* by Adrian Tchaikovsky, and *The Incandescent* by Emily Tesh. **BEST NOVELLA:** *The River Has Roots* by Amal El-Mohtar, *What Stalks the Deep* by T. Kingfisher, *Cinder House* by Freya Marske, *Automatic Noodle* by Annalee Newitz, *The Summer War* by Naomi Novik, and *Murder by Memory* by Olivia Waite. **BEST NOVELETTE:** "Kaiju Agonistes" by Scott Lynch, "Never Eaten Vegetables" by H.H. Pak, "The Millay Illusion" by Sarah Pinsker, "The Girl That My Mother Is Leaving Me For" by Cameron Reed, "When He Calls Your Name" by Catherynne M. Valente, and "Rapport: Friendship, Solidarity, Communion, Empathy" by Martha Wells.

BEST SERIES: *The Chronicles of Osreth* by Katherine Addison, *White Space* by Elizabeth Bear, *Emily Wilde* by Heather Fawcett, *The Craft Wars* by Max Gladstone, *October Daye* by Seanan McGuire, and *Old Man's War* by John Scalzi.

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, LONG FORM: *Andor Season 2*, *Frankenstein*, *KPop Demon Hunters*, *Mickey 17*, *Sinners*, and *Superman*. **BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, SHORT FORM:** *Doctor Who: "The Story & the Engine"*, *Murderbot: "All Systems Red"*, *Murderbot: "The Perime-*

ter", *Pluribus: "We Is Us"*, *Severance: "Cold Harbor"*, and *The Wheel of Time: "The Road to the Spear."*

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: Lulu Chen, Kelly Chong, Dave Kellett, Tran Nguyen, John Picacio, and Tom Roberts. **BEST SEMIPROZINE:** *Escape Pod* edited by Mur Lafferty and Valerie Valdes, *khōrēō* by team khōrēō, *On Spec* published by Copper Pig Writers' Society, *Strange Horizons* edited by the Strange Horizons Editorial Collective, *The Deadlands* published by Sean Markey, and *Uncanny* published and edited by Michael Damian Thomas. **BEST FANCAST:** *A Meal of Thorns* presented by Jake Casella Brookins, *Eating the Fantastic* hosted by Scott Edelman, *Hugo, Girl!* presented by Kevin Anderson, Lori Anderson, Amy Salley & Haley Zapal, *Octothorpe* presented by John Coxon, Liz Batty & Alison Scott, *The Coode Street Podcast* presented by Jonathan Strahan & Gary K. Wolfe, and *Worldbuilding for Masochists* presented by Natania Barron, Marshall Ryan Maresca & Cass Morris.

LODESTAR AWARD FOR BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK [NOT A HUGO AWARD]: *Among Ghosts* by Rachel Hartman, *Coffeeshop in an Alternate Universe* by C.B. Lee, *Holy Terrors* by Margaret Owen, *Oathbound* by Tracy Deonn, *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins, and *They Bloom at Night* by Trang Thanh Tran.

BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, May 18, in the back room of the 66 Diner, 1405 Central Ave NE (between I-25 and University Blvd) to discuss *When the Moon Hits Your Eye* by John Scalzi. The group then focuses on *Doomsday Book* by Connie Willis on Monday, June 15 at either the 66 Diner or Flying Star Café (on Juan Tabo).

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, Mountain Run Shopping Center. For info, contact Leah at mrsransom@hotmail.com or Craig 505-266-8905.

ARTIST MICHAEL HAGUE DIES

Fantasy illustrator Michael Hague died March 10 in Colorado Springs, CO. He was 77 years old, reports Locusmag.com.

Michael Riley Hague was born September 8, 1948, in Los Angeles, CA. He attended the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. He illustrated for numerous books, many of them classics, including L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* (1982), C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (1983), J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1984), J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1987), Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1988), *The Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde* (1993), Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (2012), and many others.

He also edited several anthologies, including *The Book of Dragons* (1995), *The Book of Fairies* (2000), *The Book of Fairy Poetry* (2004), and *The Book of Wizards* (2008), as well as *The Book of Ghosts* (2009) with his son, Devon Hague. In 2008, he published graphic novel *In the Small*.

He is survived by his wife Kathleen and children.

2026 PROMETHEUS FINALISTS

The Libertarian Futurist Society (LFS) announced the five finalists for the Best Novel category of the Prometheus Awards in late April reported Locusmag.com, honoring “thematically pro-liberty” works published in 2025:

Storm-Dragon by Dave Freer, *War By Other Means* by Karl K. Gallagher, *No Man’s Land Volumes 1-3* by Sarah A. Hoyt, *A Kiss for Damocles* by J. Kenton Pierce, and *Powerless* by Harry Turtledove.

All members of the Libertarian Futurist Society are eligible to vote. The award will be presented during an online ceremony “tentatively planned for mid-August.”

The Hall of Fame Award finalists for the Prometheus Hall of Fame Award for Best Classic Fiction are *The Star Dwellers* by James Blish, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, *That Hideous Strength* by C.S. Lewis, *Salt* by Adam Roberts, and *Singularity Sky* by Charles Stross.

Nominees considered may be in a narrative or dramatic form and “must explore themes relevant to libertarianism and must be science fiction, fantasy, or related genres.”

WRITER/PRODUCER ROB GRANT DIES

SF writer and TV producer Rob Grant died February 25. He was 70 years old, reported Locusmag.com.

Robert Grant was born September 25, 1955, in Lancashire, England. He attended Liverpool University and wrote for BBC radio. He co-wrote with Doug Naylor the TV series *Red Dwarf* and several tie-in works of fiction, including *Infinity Welcomes Careful Drivers* (1989), *Better Than Life* (1990), and script collection *Primordial Soup* (1993), under the name Grant Naylor. He wrote *Red Dwarf* novel *Backwards* (1996) solo.

He also wrote *Colony* (2000), *Incompetence* (2003), and *Fat* (2006). With Andrew Marshall, he wrote *The Quanderhorn Xperimentations* (2018), alongside an episodic radio work. A forthcoming *Red Dwarf* prequel novel, *Red Dwarf: Titan*, was announced shortly before his death.

2025 NEBULA AWARDS BALLOT

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA) released the finalists for the 2025 Nebula Awards in mid-March, reported Locusmag.com.

NOVEL: *When We Were Real* by Daryl Gregory, *The Buffalo Hunter Hunter* by Stephen Graham Jones, *Katabasis* by R.F. Kuang, *Death of the Author* by Nnedi Okorafor, *The Incandescent* by Emily Tesh, *Sour Cherry* by Natalia Theodoridou, and *Wearing the Lion* by John Wiswell. NOVELLA: *Disgraced Return of the Kap’s Needle* by Renan Bernardo, *The River Has Roots* by Amal El-Mohtar, *The Death of Mountains* by Jordan Kurella, *Automatic Noodle* by Annalee Newitz, *But Not Too Bold* by Hache Pueyo, and “Descent” by Wole Talabi.

NOVELETTE: “Our Echoes Drifting Through the Marsh” by Marie Croke, “Uncertain Sons” by Thomas Ha, “We Begin Where Infinity Ends” by Somto Ihezue, *The Name Ziya* by Wen-Yi Lee, “Never Eaten Vegetables” by H.H. Pak, and “The Life and Times of Alavira the Great as Written by Titos Pavlou and Reviewed by Two Lifelong

Friends” by Eugenia Triantafyllou. SHORT STORY: “Through the Machine” by P.A. Cornell, “Six People to Revise You” by J.R. Dawson, “In My Country” by Thomas Ha, “The Tawlish Island Songbook of the Dead” by E.M. Linden, “Because I Held His Name Like a Key” by Aimee Ogden, and “Laser Eyes Ain’t Everything” by Effie Seiberg.

POETRY: “Though You Always Are” by Linda D. Addison & Jamal Hodge, “They Said Robots Are” by Casey Aimer, “The World To Come” by Jennifer Hudak, “The Mourning Robot” by Angela Liu, “Care for Lightning” by Mari Ness, and “To Be the Change” by Nico Martinez Nocito. ANDRE NORTON AWARD: *The Tower* by David Anaxagoras & narrated by Christopher Gebauer, *Gemini Rising* by Jonathan Brazee, *Wishing Well, Wishing Well* by Jubilee Cho, *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins, *Into the Wild Magic* by Michelle Knudsen, and *Goblin Girl* by K.A. Mielke.

COMICS: *Second Shift* by Kit Anderson, *Carmilla Volume 3: The Eternal* by Amy Chu, *Helen of Wyndhorn* by Tom King, *Fishflies* by Jeff Lemire, *Mary Shelley’s School for Monsters: The Killing Stone* by Jessica Maison, *Strange Bedfellows* by Ariel Slamet Ries, *The Flip Side* by Jason Walz, and *The Stoneshore Register* by G. Willow Wilson. RAY BRADBURY AWARD: *KPop Demon Hunters*, *Murderbot Season One*, *Pluribus Season One*, *Severance: “Chikhai Bardo,” Sinners*, and *Superman*. GAME WRITING: *Blue Prince*, *Clair Obscur: Expedition 33*, *Dispatch*, *Hades II*, *Hollow Knight: Silksong*, and *Spire, Surge, and Sea*.

Winners will be announced at the 2026 Nebula Conference and Awards, to be held June 3-7 in Chicago, IL, and virtually online.

M.R. HILDEBRAND DIES

Writer and organizer M.R. “Hilde” Hildebrand died in her home in Glendale AZ on March 4, 2026, after entering home hospice care for rheumatoid arthritis in 2025. She was 80 years old.

Hildebrand was born in 1946. In the 1970s, she became an active member, organizer, and host in Phoenix, AZ fandom, working to help with conventions including Leprecon, Coppercon, and the 1978 Worldcon. She ran staff lounges and a book-selling service at various conventions. In the 1980s and ‘90s, she often was a vendor at Bubenicon.

In 1988, she published short fiction piece “Dance of the Healer” in *Sword and Sorceress V*.

She is survived by her husband Bruce Arthurs and son.

WEIR WINS HEINLEIN AWARD

Andy Weir, author of *Project Hail Mary* and *The Martian*, was announced in mid-February as the winner of the 2026 Robert A. Heinlein Award, given for “outstanding published works in science fiction and technical writings that inspire the human exploration of space.”

“This award is in recognition of Mr. Weir’s novels which have blended the best elements of science fact with the aspirations of traditional science fiction with a flare for engaging a new generation of readers.”

The Heinlein Award has been given since 2003, and is administered by the Baltimore Science Fiction Society. 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 60 this May 22-25 in Baltimore, MD. Weir “will appear at the opening ceremonies by remote live video due to prior commitment preventing in-person attendance.”

DAN SIMMONS PASSES AWAY

Dan Simmons, award-winning author of 31 novels and short story collections, passed away on February 21 in Longmont, CO. He was 77 years old.

Many of his books won honors ranging from the Hugo Award, science fiction’s most prestigious award, to two World Fantasy Awards, three Bram Stoker Awards for horror, a dozen Locus Awards, and the Shirley Jackson Award. His titles have been translated into at least 20 languages and published in 28 foreign countries.

Simmons defied literary norms by writing across genres and defying pressure to conform to formulaic novels. He wrote groundbreaking work in historical fiction, horror, hard-boiled crime, and speculative fiction and explored topics ranging from Ernest Hemingway’s World War II Cuban spy ring to mountain climbing in the Himalayas. In 2018, his novel *The Terror* (2007) was adapted as a ten-part AMC series.

Daniel Joseph Simmons was born April 4, 1948, in Peoria, IL. Many of his childhood experiences found their way into his horror fiction. He graduated from Wabash College with an English degree and earned a graduate degree in education from Washington University in St. Louis.

He taught sixth grade until his debut novel, *Song of Kali*, won the 1986 World Fantasy Award. In 1987 he left teaching to become a full-time author, launching an illustrious career that included the *Hyperion Quartet*, *Carrión Comfort*, *Summer of Night*, *Ilium*, and *Olympos*. Of all his awards, the most meaningful was an honorary doctorate from Wabash College, a place that changed his life and set him on a path towards a life well lived.

He is survived by his wife Karen, daughter Jane, and grandchildren Milo and Lucia Glenn.

2026 AUDIE AWARDS WINNERS

In early March, The Audio Publishers Association (APA) announced the winners of the 2026 Audie Awards, “recognizing distinction in audiobooks and spoken-word entertainment,” reported Locusmag.com. Books and authors of genre interest among categories with winning titles of interest include:

AUDIOBOOK OF THE YEAR: *Sunrise on the Reaping* by Suzanne Collins, narrated by Jefferson White. SCIENCE FICTION: *Simultaneous* by Eric Heisserer, narrated by Marin Ireland, Ray Porter & Stephanie Sheh. FANTASY: *Anima Rising* by Christopher Moore, narrated by Mary Jane Wells. HORROR: *The Buffalo Hunter Hunter* by Stephen Graham Jones, narrated by Shane Ghostkeeper, Marin Ire-

land & Owen Teale.

BEST FICTION NARRATOR: Kristin Atherton for *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon. NEW VOICE AWARD: JUDGES CATEGORY: Gem Carmella for *THE RIVER HAS ROOTS* by Amal El-Mohtar. PRODUCTION & SOUND DESIGN: *Dragon Day* by Bob Proehl, narrated by Hayley Atwell, Michael Chiklis, Aldis Hodge, Greta Lee, Jimmi Simpson, and a full cast.

LITERARY FICTION & CLASSICS: *The Director* by Daniel Kehlmann, narrated by Nicholas Boulton. YOUNG ADULT: *Under the Same Stars* by Libba Bray, narrated by Major Curda, January LaVoy & Jeremy Carlisle Parker. YOUNG LISTENERS: *Secrets of the Purple Pearl* by Kate McKinnon, narrated by Emily Lynne & Kate McKinnon. SPANISH-LANGUAGE: *Apocalipsis Z – El principio del fin* by Manel Loureiro, narrated by Marta Barriuso, Mercedes Castro, Rosalía Castro, Manuel Chacón, Maggie Civantos, Manuel de Andrés, José María de Tavira, Oscar Goikoetxea, Oleg Kricunova, Sabela Mascuñana, Daniel Méndez, Peter Nikolas, David García Palencia & Javier Rey.

Winners were announced at the Audie Awards Gala on March 2 in New York. For more information, including the complete list of winners, see the Audie Awards website.

BUFFY'S NICHOLAS BRENDON DIES

by Mikey O'Connell, *The Hollywood Reporter* 3/20/26

Nicholas Brendon, the actor best known for playing lovable underdog Xander Harris on all seven seasons of the TV series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, died March 20 of natural causes. He was 54 years old.

His family announced news of Brendon’s death in a statement shared with *The Hollywood Reporter*: “We are heartbroken to share the passing of our brother and son, Nicholas Brendon. He passed in his sleep of natural causes. Most people know Nicky for his work as an actor and for the characters he brought to life over the years. In recent years Nicky has found his passion in painting and art. Nicky loved to share his enthusiastic talent with his family, friends and fans. He was passionate, sensitive, and endlessly driven to create.”

Brendon had revealed in 2023 that he had suffered a heart attack and had been diagnosed with a congenital heart defect. He also had cauda equina syndrome, which led to several spinal surgeries.

Though *Buffy* was arguably the highlight of Brendon’s acting career, he appeared in film and television roles until as recently as 2021. During breaks from *Buffy*, he starred in genre movies with titles like *Demon Island* and *Unholy*.

In 2000, he starred alongside Lauren Ambrose and Amy Adams in Sundance entry *Psycho Beach Party*. An adaptation of drag artist Charles Busch’s off-Broadway spoof of 1960s beach movies, it went on to achieve cult status.

His most prominent other TV credits included a recurring stint on *Criminal Minds* and a one-season Fox sitcom *Kitchen Confidential* – an adaptation of Anthony Bourdain’s memoir of the same name that paired Brendon with Bradley Cooper.

Born in 1971 in Los Angeles as Nicholas Brendon Schultz, he originally wanted to become a professional baseball player. He then decided to pursue acting in an effort to manage his stutter, a disorder he’d later champion

as a spokesperson for the Stuttering Foundation of America during the peak of *Buffy*'s popularity.

Xander Harris was, not unlike Adam Brody's Seth Cohen on *The O.C.*, a character that helped shift the portrayal of the "nerd" in American popular culture.

Starting in his 30s, Brendon suffered public struggles with substance abuse and mental illness. He was arrested multiple times and, starting in 2010, faced charges including felony vandalism, resisting or obstructing officers, criminal mischief and felony corporal injury to a spouse. The latter, his most notable, ended in a plea deal that included three years' probation. Throughout these troubles, he would issue statements of apology and even appeared on an episode of *Dr. Phil* to detail his issues with alcohol and his mental health struggles.

Those in Brendon's orbit were said to have been optimistic about his recent outlook and attitude and had been hopeful that he'd finally turned a corner.

Among those survived by Brendon is his identical twin brother, Kelly Donovan. They were born three minutes apart and, despite the fact that Donovan never earnestly pursued acting, the two appeared alongside each other on two episodes of *Buffy*. That includes 2000's "The Replacement," in which Xander is split into two individuals – one with all of his good qualities (Donovan) and one with all of his faults (Brendon).

BUBONICON 57 HAS THEME, DEALERS

by Craig W. Chrissinger, con chair

The first full week of May is here, and Bubonicon 57 has a Theme for 2026 - it's "Androids & Robots and Droids, Oh A.I." because they are all over science fiction – from Philip K. Dick's replicants to Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics, from *Star Trek*'s Data to *The Terminator*'s Skynet, from Martha Wells' *Murderbot* to Arthur C. Clarke's HAL 9000, from *Colossus* by Dennis Feltham Jones to Jack Williamson's *Humanoids*... And it turns out that 2026 is supposed to be the year of the "AI Agent."

Weekend Passes for adults are \$48.00 through August 7, and then are \$55.00 at the door. Youths, ages 13-19, are \$29.00. Those can be purchased at club meetings – or by mail (with the PDF form) to "Bubonicon Inc" at 933 San Mateo Blvd NE, Suite 500-208, Albuquerque, NM 87108; or by paying online with a credit card.

Bubonicon 57 is August 21-23 (one weekend early) at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, 2101 Louisiana Blvd NE, just north of I-40. The Marriott is offering sleeping rooms at \$159 single-quad occupancy, with free WiFi in sleeping rooms. Reservations are needed by Friday, August 7, at 1-800-228-9290 or through an online link.

We've had some folks confirm their participation already! In addition to special guests Patricia Briggs, Martha Wells, Travis Baldree, and artist Jon Sanchez, we are expecting John Barnes, Peri Charlifou, Mark Fenton, Gordon Garb, Henry Herz, Betsy James, Darynda Jones, T. Kingfisher/Ursula Vernon, Kathy Kittts, Jane Lindskold, Marie Parks, Benjamin Radford, Melinda M. Snodgrass, Kevin Sonney, David Lee Summers, Lauren C. Teffeau, Ian Tregillis, Sarena Ulibarri, Robert E. Vardeman, and Connie & Courtney Willis. More will be coming, of course. With the Worldcon in Los Angeles just four days after us, we're checking on who can make it to Albuquerque!

We're asking for all Fan Programming proposals/requests for time & space to be submitted by the end of Friday, June 5, so we have time for any questions or clarifications before we build the tentative schedule.

The big thing this year is we are mirror flipping Main Programming & Secondary Programming with the Dealers Room (now Salons A-E). And the Con Office is moving to the Library Room, leaving Carlsbad for programming.

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, the American Red Cross, and NM PBS. Others may be added.

Dealers' space applications went live April 22. The rates are \$150 with a weekend pass, and \$190 with two. Maximum of two spaces per dealer, with spaces not considered sold until payment & contract are received. At the moment, we have Who Else Books, Making Medieval Modern, Beastly Books, Ashelon Publishing, Unseen Gallery, Hadrosaur Productions, and CAT's Creations. For info, contact Luke DeProst at dealers@bubonicon.com.

Meanwhile, Kathy K. Kubica, Kevin Hewett and their staff are gearing up for the 2026 Art Show. As usual, art show packets will be available online at the beginning of July. We don't mail out packets, but if you don't have internet access we can take care of you. 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 — SEPT 2025: CON REPORT & LORETTA HALL

Thirty-Four people were in attendance for the Bubonicon 56 report and a presentation on fire in space from Loretta Hall. Craig Chrissinger reported that the 2025 convention had 781 people in attendance and was in the black.

Loretta Hall noted in her introduction that she searched for movies with fire in space, and only found one - *Gravity* (2013). "But the fire around Sandra Bullock doesn't act like fire would in micro-gravity."

She said the Apollo 1 fire was tragic, especially with one hundred percent flammable coolant. Apollo 13 showed fire could happen in space. And on the Mir Space Station in 1997, a Russian cosmonaut saw a flame just before the alarm sounded and the cabin filled with smoke. The fire burnt itself out in 14 minutes when the fuel source was exhausted, and cosmonauts had to wear respirators for a couple of days afterward because of smoke particles floating in the station.

Hall said that experiments on fire's nature and behavior were done on Salyut, Mir, the space shuttle, parabolic airplane flights, the International Space Station, and the Cygnus cargo vehicle.

"Fire is a chemical reaction that requires heat, oxygen and fuel in the right proportions," she said. "In space, there is no air movement like on Earth where heated air rises and cooler air comes from beneath. On Earth, flames extend upward as hot air rises. But in micro-gravity, flame is more

rounded and cooler, burning blue. And electrical fires behave much differently in space.”

Detection issues are more difficult in space, she noted. There often is overheating and smoldering, but not flames. Smoke hovers in non-ventilated areas, and smoke particle sizes can vary.

“Using a fire extinguisher in micro-gravity can be tricky,” Hall reported. To extinguish, astronauts have to turn off the ventilation to affected module, remove electricity from affected hardware, try using a fire extinguisher, and powering down the module.

“Fire in a space station most likely would be a slow burn that would fill it with thick smoke,” she concluded. “Scientists still are trying to understand the mechanics of fire’s behavior in space.”

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

***Snake-Eater* by T. Kingfisher, 2025 47North, tp \$16.99, 271 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Snake-Eater is the latest horror novel from T. Kingfisher. The novel follows Selena, who, after the death of her mother, runs away from her life in the city to join her aunt in the desert town of Quartz Creek. She arrives in the town with a small suitcase and her dog Copper only to discover that her aunt has passed away. The mayor of the town invites her to stay in her aunt’s house until she saves up enough money to afford a train ticket back to the city. Selena makes friends with her neighbor, Grandma Billy, who helps her find ways to earn money and introduces her to the Quartz Creek community, including Father Aguirre, the town priest who runs the town’s weekly community dinners.

The longer Selena stays in Quartz Creek, the more she begins to notice something magical about the town and its inhabitants. Odd things start to happen to Selena during the nights at her aunt’s house, she begins to suspect that her aunt may have run afoul of one of the area’s more magical residents. When roadrunners begin trying to break into her house, Selena and Grandma Billy suspect that Selena’s aunt may have angered Snake-Eater, the local roadrunner god. They enlist Father Aguirre to help them confront the god and figure out what is going on.

I have been waiting for this book ever since I heard the author discuss the concept of an angry roadrunner god out for revenge, and *Snake-Eater* does not disappoint. Selena is a well-developed main character and I found her journey to find herself very believable. I also liked the quirky setting and people, especially Grandma Billy. At its core, this book is a story about found family and building a community, and I highly recommend it to those that enjoy books with quirk, humor, and heart.

***Nobody’s Baby: Dorothy Gentleman Book 2* by Olivia Waite, 2026 Tordotcom, hc \$24.99, 144 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Nobody’s Baby is the second in Olivia Waite’s space mystery novellas that focus on Dorothy Gentelman, ship detective aboard the generation ship Fairweather. When an infant is left at Dorothy’s nephew’s door, Dorothy investigates not only where the baby came from but how he even exists as all the people on the Fairweather are on birth control for the duration of their trip. Dorothy is forced to join

forces with her rival Detective Leloup to find the parents and how the baby came about. Their investigation leads them to Flora Tilburn, who is genetically the baby’s mother, but has no memory of being pregnant or giving birth. As Dorothy and Leloup work to discover the baby’s origins, the case becomes more and more complicated, especially as Dorothy’s nephew and his partner fall in love with the infant.

Waite’s book is an excellent addition to Tordotcom’s line of novellas. Waite creates a mystery with so many twists and turns that it kept me guessing right up until the end. I highly recommend both of Waite’s novellas in this series. Also, I encourage everyone to look into Tordotcom’s line of novellas as they are publishing a wide range of some of the most interesting genre fiction coming out today.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Wild Wild West Steampunk Convention is turned out to pasture. For 14 years, the largest Steampunk Convention in the Southwest entertained and spread its culture. 2026 was its last gathering in the Tucson Westward Look Resort and Spa. The Owners retired from rising venue costs.

I met participants from faraway Canada & Hawaii; people traveling days to get to this 3-day convention. Tea Dueling, Teapot Racing and Fashion Shows were crowd pleasers.

Panels like Short Films, History and authors Q & A’s were my favorites.

Steampunk has guidelines primarily for its literature, movies and TV— basically SF & Fantasy set in the past between Age of Enlightenment and the Atomic Age. [best movie— *The Prestige* & best books— *Going Postal* by Terry Pratchett, *Diamond Age* by Neal Stephenson]

Music, games and cosplay are rules-light – basically whatever a steampunk likes.

Hundreds enjoyed this convention, hopefully we can keep steampunk alive in the Southwest.

-- Morgan Davis, 505 Steampunk Society

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

- THE SPRING WEATHER IS DRUNK! First, it was 90 degrees in early March, and then May required a jacket the first weekend (and Denver is getting snow). But this weekend we go back to 88F. Sigh, make up your mind, goofy climate-changed weather!

- WE WENT TO THE WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP, and had a nice time. Gave GoH Ursula Vernon a ride to and from Portales, and I wrote up a report for *Locus Magazine* (already posted on their website). Two days after we got home, I started getting one of the worst head colds I’ve had in years! It was so bad with coughs, a runny nose and sneezing that I took a Covid test just to be safe (it was negative). Took me 10 days to shake it off. Yikes! No fun.

- MAY THE 4TH BE WITH YOU - Hope you all had a good *Star Wars* Day. Jessica and I were at the Guild Cinema giving away door prizes at two screenings of *Star Wars 1: The Phantom Menace*. We also got to book signing events for Lauren C. Teffeau, T. Kingfisher, and Mary Robinette Kowal & Marie Parks. We also enjoyed seeing Tim Meadows’ stand-up comedy recently, and are looking forward to seeing Seth Meyers’ stand-up routine.

- GET OUT & VOTE in the Primaries. Stay strong, be safe, keep vaccinated, visit a friend, see a movie at a theater, and read a book.

- I BELIEVE I’M CHANGING THE SPRING *ASFACTS* to May. April is just too difficult with the Williamson Lectureship (and *Locus* writing). Thanks to Jessica for book reviews and Morgan for the letter to the editor. Stuff is needed for the July issue. - Craig C