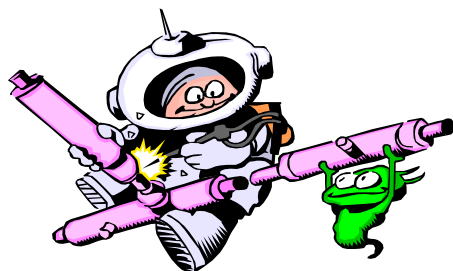




# **SITHFACTS 2016**

## **A "GOOD TIDINGS FOR MR. GRINCH" DECEMBER ISSUE**



### **GOODREADS NAMES BEST OF 2016**

Winners of the 2016 Goodreads Choice awards for the "best books of 2016," as chosen by users of the site, were announced November 28. There are several categories of genre interest:

Best Science Fiction: *Morning Star: Red Rising Book 3* by Pierce Brown, Best Fantasy: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child: Parts One & Two* by J.K. Rowling, John Tiffany and Jack Thorne, Best Horror: *The Fireman* by Joe Hill, Best Mystery & Thriller: *End of Watch: Bill Hodges Book 3* by Stephen King, Best History & Biography: *Leonard: My Fifty-Year Friendship with a Remarkable Man* by William Shatner (with David Fisher), Best Young Adult Fantasy & Science Fiction: *A Court of Mist and Fury: A Court of Thorns & Roses Book 2* by Sarah J. Maas, Best Middle Grade & Children's: *The Hidden Oracle: The Trials of Apollo Book 1* by Rick Riordan, Best Graphic Novels & Comics: *Adulthood is a Myth (Sarah's Scribbles #1)* by Sarah Andersen, and Best Debut Goodreads Author: Alwyn Hamilton for *Rebel of the Sands*.

Goodreads reports 3,564,131 total votes cast.

### **WORLD FANTASY WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

The World Fantasy Awards winners for works published in 2015 were announced during the World Fantasy Convention on October 29 at the Hyatt Regency in Columbus OH. The Lifetime Achievement Awards, presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field, went to David G. Hartwell and Andrzej Sapkowski.

The World Fantasy Awards winners are:

Novel: *The Chimes* by Anna Smaill, Long Fiction: *The Unlicensed Magician* by Kelly Barnhill, Short Fiction: "Hungry Daughters of Starving Mothers" by Alyssa

Wong, Anthology: *She Walks in Shadows* edited by Silvia Moreno-Garcia & Paula R. Stiles, Collection: *Bone Swans* by C.S.E. Cooney, Artist: Galen Dara, Special Award, Professional: Stephen Jones for *The Art of Horror*, and Special Award, Nonprofessional: John O'Neill for *Black Gate*.

### **YOLEN NAMED SFWA GRAND MASTER**

The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) have named Jane Yolen the 33rd recipient of the Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award, reported Locus Online at the end of November. SFWA president Cat Rambo said Yolen "epitomizes what a Grand Master should be. Her close to 300 hundred books, multiple awards, and overall high standard of prose and storytelling make her one of the treasures of fantasy and science fiction."

The award, given for "lifetime achievement in science fiction and/or fantasy," will be presented at the SFWA Nebula Conference held May 18-21, 2017, at the Pittsburgh Marriott Center in Pittsburgh, PA.

### **STEPHEN KING CHAIR ENDOWED**

The University of Maine in Orono has endowed the Stephen E. King Chair in Literature to honor horror author Stephen King, who graduated from the university in 1970, reported Locus Online in late October.

The professorship will "support a faculty position in the Department of English in honor of King's 'substantial

### **UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS**

- **Tonight:** Comedic holiday film shorts, plus the 12th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off. Prizes! Mirth! *Star Trek!*
- **January 13, 2017:** Group Book Discussion! What did you read in 2016 & would recommend?
- **February 10:** A talk from a scientist or author, we hope. Plus *ASFacts* (Deadline Mon, Feb 6).
- **March 10:** The Annual Club Auction with Bob Vardeman as your auctioneer. Start looking for stuff to donate to the cause. And save up your pennies...
- **April 21:** Unknown program - meeting is a week late. It's *ASFacts* for spring (deadline Mon, April 17).
- **May 12:** Again, unknown. Possibly film previews.

**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 Albuq SF Society. NEXT DEADLINE: Mon, Feb. 6. **Club Officers:** Jessica Coyle & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Geneva Schult, Moderator. Julie Heffernan, alternator. Kris Kringel & Rudolph the Reindeer, Holiday Hosts. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Caci Cooper & Craig Chrissinger.

body of work and creative impact” and is partially funded by a \$1 million endowment from the Harold Alfond Foundation. The University of Maine is now accepting applications for the five-year renewable appointment, which will begin in August 2017.

## SHERI S. TEPPER DIES

Author Sheri S. Tepper died October 22, 2016, near Santa Fe, at the age of 87 years old. Tepper was a prolific author of SF, best known for her feminist and ecological themes, with major titles including *The Gate to Women's Country* in 1988 and *Grass* in 1989.

She was born Shirley Stewart Douglas on July 16, 1929, near Littleton, CO. She married for the first time at 20 and had two children, but divorced in her late twenties, and spent ten years as a single mother working various jobs, including a clerical position with international relief agency CARE.

In the late '60s she married Gene Tepper. From 1962-86 she worked at Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood in Colorado, eventually rising to executive director. She left that position to become a full-time writer, and for many years ran a guest ranch near Santa Fe. Although she was in New Mexico for about 20 years, she was somewhat known as a recluse and rarely seen in the science fiction fannish world.

Her first publications were poems and children's stories in the early '60s under the name Sheri S. Eberhart, including poem "Lullaby, 1990" in the December 1963 *Galaxy*. She then took a long break from writing, returning in the '80s. The first SF novel she wrote, standalone *The Revenants*, appeared in 1984, but her first published books were in the True Game series: *King's Blood Four* (1983), *Necromancer Nine* and *Wizard's Eleven*. She wrote two other trilogies in that world: *The Song of Mavin Manyshaped*, *The Flight of Mavin Manyshaped* and *The Search of Mavin Manyshaped*; and *Jinian Footseer*, *Der-vish Daughter* and *Jinian Star-Eye*.

The Marianne trilogy is *Marianne, the Magus and the Manticore*, *Marianne, the Madame and the Momentary Gods* and *Marianne, the Matchbox and the Malachite Mouse*. The Ettison series has *Blood Heritage* and *The Bones*. *The Awakeners* was first published in two volumes as *Northshore* and *Southshore*. The Marjorie Westriding/Arbai series includes *Grass*, *Raising the Stones* and *Side-show*. The Plague of Angels series is *A Plague of Angels*, *The Waters Rising* and *Fish Tales* (published in 2014), the latter also connected to the True Games world.

She wrote many standalone novels, including *The Revenants*, *After Long Silence*, Locus Award-winner *Beauty* in 1991, *Shadow's End*, *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, *The Family Tree*, *Six Moon Dance*, *Singer from the Sea*, *The Fresco*, *The Visitor*, *The Companions* and *The Margarets*. She wrote horror under the name E.E. Horlak, and mysteries as A.J. Orde and B.J. Oliphant.

Many of Tepper's novels were shortlisted for major awards, including the Clarke, the Tiptree, the Hugo, and the Campbell Memorial Award. Though she wrote short fiction only rarely, her novella "The Gardener" was a World Fantasy Award finalist. She received a World Fantasy life achievement award in 2015.

## ANALOG & ASIMOV'S GO BIMONTHLY

SF magazines *Analog* and *Asimov's* are switching to a bimonthly schedule beginning in January 2017, reported Locus Online mid-November. Both currently publish ten issues per year, with eight regular issues and two "double" issues.

*Asimov's* editor Sheila Williams explains in a forthcoming editorial that the magazines will now publish "six 208-page double issues" per year, a 16-page increase over current double issues. She expects the change will allow her to publish more novellas and a higher percentage of original cover art. Despite the change in publication schedule, she says readers "will receive the same number of pages of fiction as in the past," and subscribers will "receive the same number of issue months" they purchased. Publishing bimonthly will allow them "to hold the current subscription prices a bit longer." Both periodicals are published by Dell Magazines.

## SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, December 19, at Jason's Deli (northwest corner of Louisiana & America's Parkway NE – across the street from Bubonicon's Marriott Hotel) to discuss *The Fifth Season* by N.K. Jemisin (which won a Hugo Award this past August). The group then meets January 16, 2017, to talk about *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson (probably at Jason's Deli again).

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the 3rd Monday each month. Books for discussion are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on them at Page One Books. For more info: Leah at [skycaptain1883@yahoo.com](mailto:skycaptain1883@yahoo.com) or Craig at 266-8905.



## ED GORMAN PASSES AWAY

Author and editor Ed Gorman died October 14 at the age of 74 years old. He was diagnosed with incurable cancer in 2002. Gorman was best known as a crime and horror writer and anthologist, and also wrote SF.

He published dozens of books, beginning with novel *Rough Cut* in 1984. Most of his works of genre interest were published pseudonymously. As Daniel Ransom he wrote many horror and SF titles, including *Daddy's Little Girl* in 1985, *The Babysitter*, *Nightmare Child*, *The Fugitive Stars* and *Zone Soldiers*. Under the name Richard Driscoll, he and Kevin D. Randle co-wrote the SF Star Precinct trilogy, beginning with *Star Precinct* in 1992. The majority of books appearing under Gorman's own byline were crime and mystery, notably the Robert Payne series, the Sam McCaine series, the Jack Dwyer series and the Dev Conrad series. He also wrote Westerns.

Gorman wrote short fiction in various genres as well. The 2002 collection *The Dark Fantastic* was a Stoker Award finalist, and *Cages* was a Stoker finalist and won an International Horror Guild Award. He founded magazine *Mystery Scene* in 1985, and served as editor until 2002. Gorman was a prolific anthologist who edited many volumes of SF, horror and crime, often in collaboration with Martin H. Greenberg and others.

Edward Joseph Gorman was born November 2, 1941, in Cedar Rapids IA. He attended Coe College in Iowa from 1962-65 and worked in advertising and public relations for more than 20 years, becoming a full-time writer in 1989. He received a life achievement award from the Private Eye Writers of America in 2011.

## C. TOLKIEN TO RECEIVE BODLEY MEDAL

Christopher Tolkien will receive the 2017 Bodley Medal, awarded by the Bodleian Libraries at Oxford University, reported Locus Online at the beginning of November. The original medal was created in 1646 to honor Sir Thomas Bodley, who rebuilt the first public library at Oxford. Since 2002, replicas have been awarded to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the worlds of literature, culture, science, and communication.

Tolkien is being recognized in part for his work editing the unpublished texts of his father, J.R.R. Tolkien. The Tolkien Archive has been housed at the Bodleian Libraries since 1973.

## FIREFLY'S RON GLASS DIES

EVANSVILLE, Ind (USA Today) - Actor Ron Glass, who broke into theater while a student at the University of Evansville and later starred in the TV series *Barney Miller* and *Firefly*, died November 25 of respiratory failure. He was 71 years old.

"Ron was a private, gentle and caring man," said agent Jeffrey Leavett, a longtime friend of the actor. "He was an absolute delight to watch on screen. Words cannot adequately express my sorrow."

Glass was a cast member on *Barney Miller* during the show's entire run 1975-1982. On the show, which was set in a New York Police Department station in Greenwich Village, he played Ron Harris, an intellectual, fashionable detective who also dabbled as an author. In 1982, the role earned Glass an Emmy nomination in the Supporting Actor category.

On the 2002 science-fiction series *Firefly* and its sequel movie, *Serenity*, Glass played Derrial Book, a shepherd and the frequent giver of spiritual advice.

Glass had numerous other acting credits, with his most recent appearances coming on *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *Agents of SHIELD* (in 2014 as Dr. Streiten) the 1980s reboot of *The Twilight Zone*, *Star Trek: Voyager* and a voice on *Rugrats*, according to his IMBD.com profile. He appeared on two episodes of *Friends* in 1999. Before his breakout *Barney Miller* role, Glass had guest roles on *Sanford & Son*, *All in the Family*, *The Bob Newhart Show* and *Hawaii Five-O* in the early 1970s.

The Evansville native graduated from the University of Evansville with a double major in drama and literature. He had served as a member of the university's board of trustees since 2008.

Long involved in philanthropy in Evansville, he was chairman of the Evansville African American Museum national capital campaign and was a recipient of a key to the city.

Alan Tudyk, who played Wash on *Firefly*, tweeted: "Ron Glass was one of the greatest actors to work with. His laugh was beyond infectious and his generosity was ever present."

Lu Porter, director of the Evansville African American Museum, said Glass took great interest in the museum and stopped by often when he was in town. Several artifacts from his acting career, including a police badge from *Barney Miller*, are on display there.

"Loved him. He was an awesome man," Porter said. "We had a fun, fun time. I'm going to miss that going forward."

Glass told the *Courier & Press* in 2007 that when he started at Evansville, he aspired to be a teacher. But when he took a class in oral interpretation, a teacher named Dudley Thomas encouraged him to try out for a play, and his interest in acting blossomed. After graduation, he made his stage debut at Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis before moving to Los Angeles.

Glass was active in community efforts in Los Angeles as well. He was chairman of the board of the Al Wooten, Jr. Heritage Center, a Los Angeles-based organization dedicated to empowering the growth of young people in the community in crisis.

Information on funeral services and survivors was not immediately available.

## FLORENCE “BRADY” HENDERSON DIES

(CNN) She was one of America's moms, a television icon that endured through generations. Florence Henderson, who played Carol Brady on *The Brady Bunch*, died November 24 from heart failure. She was 82 years old.

Her death was unexpected. Henderson had not been sick, her manager, Kayla Pressman, said. Just a few days earlier, Henderson had attended a taping of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* to cheer on Maureen McCormick, who played her TV daughter Marcia Brady.

"We are all in a state of shock," said Pressman, who spoke with the actress the day before her death. Henderson died in a Los Angeles hospital, surrounded by family and friends.

Henderson played Carol Brady from 1969 to 1974 on *The Brady Bunch*, a show that became a huge hit in syndication. *The Brady Bunch* was the story of "a lovely lady" and a man named Brady, a widow and widower with three children each.

Even 40 years later, parts of the show are still staples of pop culture: The upbeat theme song and Rubik's cube-style opening, "Marcia, Marcia, Marcia," the football moment and of course, Henderson herself – with her big blue eyes and signature blonde coiffure.

Her former castmates expressed their shock and grief at her passing. "Florence Henderson was a dear friend for so very many years & in my <3 forever. Love & hugs to her family. I'll miss u dearly #RIPFlorence," tweeted Maureen McCormick.

Barry Williams, who played Greg Brady, told CNN's Brooke Baldwin that people ask him whether Henderson was really that nice, really that giving, really that maternal. Yes, he said. "She took what she did very, very seriously," Williams said. "She was very gracious, always. She was an inspiration with how to conduct yourself in public as a famous person. She was so kind and would always take time. I want to remind people that – and there are many of us that will miss her – that she was a genuine person."

Henderson's life story wasn't as ideal as the one she was a part of on TV. She grew up poor in Indiana, with an alcoholic father and a mother who left when she was 12 years old. She was a talented singer, and would use her voice to entertain the family and help make ends meet.

"I don't ever remember not singing. And I would sing and pass the hat, and I would sing for groceries," she told the Archive of American Television in 1999. Her big break came in 1951 when she was offered a starring role in the musical *Oklahoma!* Her voice carried her to a successful Broadway career, and eventually she began landing high-profile television gigs.

In 1959, she was on set as an NBC *Today* Girl, and in 1962, she became the first woman to guest host the *Tonight Show*.

Henderson married her first husband, Ira Bernstein, in

1955, and had her first child, Barbara, in 1956. The fact that she was a young wife and mother helped her bring the role of Carol Brady to life. "I understood kids. I was close to them," she said in the 1999 AAT interview. "I was the only one on the set who was married."

When *The Brady Bunch* ended, Henderson continued to be a figure on screen and on the stage. She stuck with her musical career for a while, reviving her role as Annie Oakley in *Annie Get Your Gun* in 1981. And, of course, she brought back Carol Brady for numerous *Brady Bunch* spinoffs and specials.

As the decades passed, she continued to be a presence through cameos and guest appearances. She showed up on *Murder She Wrote*, *The Love Boat*, *Ellen*, *Roseanne*, *30 Rock*, and curiously, as a guest host on *WWE Raw* in 2010.

She dabbled in movies, appearing in *The Brady Bunch Movie* and most recently, *50 Shades of Black*. She also had a fondness for game show appearances, delighting audiences on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, *The \$100,000 Pyramid* and *Dancing with the Stars*.

Stars from all genres paused their Thanksgiving festivities to honor their colleague and friend. "It was a true honor to have known and worked with her," wrote Al Yankovic, whom Henderson appeared with in one of his music spoof videos.

"Heartbroken," wrote *Dancing with the Stars* host Tom Bergeron. "I'll miss you, my friend."



## WESTWORLD NOT BACK UNTIL 2018

It's a good thing the season one finale of *Westworld* left so many things for viewers to discuss. They're going to be waiting a long time for it to return.

Series executive producer Jonathan Nolan confirmed to *The Hollywood Reporter* in early December what many other outlets had already assumed. The hit show won't be back until 2018.

Nolan said, "Definitely not coming back until 2018. Look, we said to the network very early that *Westworld* was a different kind of show, having gone through the experience of making the pilot. *Game of Thrones* is incredibly ambitious, and that was part of the reason we knew we wanted to make this show with HBO. *Game of Thrones* kind of has written the book on production value for television, and how to make something that has all the scope and scale of cinema for a TV show. They also have an advantage of having [George R.R. Martin's] amazing books, or had it for the first six seasons, which gives you a leg up. I still don't know how they turn those seasons around in a year. It's astonishing. But we knew for ourselves that going forward, the production is enormously



challenging and ambitious, and so is the writing. So we said very early on that we wouldn't be able to turn this around every year, and knowing full well that that's been a time-honored tradition in television. But in film, my other life, on the *Batman* movies, the best we could do is turn another one around in three years. I really feel like we're splitting the difference here."

But what will that second season hold? Who'll be back? What will be different? Everyone just will have to wait until 2018...

## BUBONICON 49 PLANS BEGIN

Co-chairs Caci Cooper and Craig Chrissinger can confirm that Bubonicon 49 will be at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown – with rooms once again at \$99.00 per night, single-quad. And just like in 2016, WiFi access is complimentary in these private sleeping rooms!

Bubonicon 49 is August 25-27, 2017 – the normal weekend – 12 days after the Helsinki Worldcon. Hotel room reservations are needed by Monday, August 14.

C.J. Cherryh (*Downbelow Station*, *Foreigner*, *Pride of Chanur*, etc) and Sherwood Smith (*Crown Duel*, *Inda*, *King's Shield*, *Banner of the Damned*, etc) are our co-Guests of Honor. Guest Artist is Elizabeth Leggett, Hugo Award-winning illustrator and painter. And Ursula Vernon (*Dragonbreath*, *Hamster Princess*, "Jackalope Wives," *Digger*, etc) serves as Toastmaster.

Weekend Passes for Bubonicon 49 are \$35 through March 25. They go to \$40 March 26-August 5, and then to \$45 at the Door. They may be purchased from "Bubonicon Inc" at club meetings or at 933 San Mateo Blvd NE, Ste 500-208, Albuquerque, NM 87108 (a registration form is available on the Bubonicon website. A shopping cart for credit card payments is up now).

Again, a "youth" is defined as ages 14-17, and youth tickets are \$23 for the weekend. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult, and should not be running around the hotel without a parent/guardian nearby.

The con committee especially would like to hear your panel discussion ideas, fan program proposals and convention suggestions BY SATURDAY, APRIL 29. This early in the game, not much is confirmed yet...

We also need volunteers to help out with programming events, run the convention, and check attendees' badges. Our volunteer "gofers" receive swag before the con, and are in a drawing for prizes during the Bubonicon weekend (plus a pizza party).

Updates on the con will be in *ASFacts*, on fliers, or at [www.bubonicon.com](http://www.bubonicon.com). Suggestions, questions and volunteers: 559-0931 or 266-8905, email [bubonicon@gmail.com](mailto:bubonicon@gmail.com), or write to the San Mateo address..



## REVIEW ROUND-UP

***Death's Bright Day* by David Drake, 2016 Baen Books, hc \$26.00, 307 pages. Review by Roberta Johnson**

The *Republic of Cinnabar Navy* series reminds me of Patrick O'Brian's historical series, with its definitely nautical flavor. Crew climbs the riggings of spaceships in the Matrix, much as other riggers climbed the riggings of sailing ships on Old Earth. And like the popular ideas we have of those sailors, this crew works, drinks, brawls, rollicks, and sometimes sings sea chanteys.

Commander Daniel Leary and his crew are soldiers, warriors (and sometimes assassins) all. They all live with the knowledge of their own mortality; in fact, much of Drake's characters are revealed in their private musings on the topic. Fortunately the crew of the Princess Cecile are the best at what they do, and they are ably aided by Adele, Lady Mundy, Daniel's best friend, Hogg, his faithful servant, and Tovera, that unrepentant killer who adopted Adela in place of a conscience. Miranda, Daniel's new bride, also reveals herself to be a worthy partner in their enterprise, even if her role will be mostly staying at home and waiting.

Daniel and his Sissies have been rising in the world due to their skills and adventures, chronicled in this popular RCN series by David Drake. The reward for a job well done is of course another job, as in *Death's Bright Day*, 11<sup>th</sup> in the series.

We open with Daniel and Miranda, his bride of five minutes, heading for their wedding reception, slated to be the biggest social event/party ever. Daniel is next interrupted in the midst of a hearty drinking bout with old friends by a meeting with a superior, bearing an offer of political power, with the implication that this is not an offer he will be allowed to refuse. Daniel being deathly allergic to politics, he may have to fight his way out and make a run for it.

And that's just the opening salvo. Daniel and his Sissies are sent to a distant system, where they are assigned to defeat a rebellion which just might be backed by their own ruler, Guarantor Porra. Assassination attempts, spies, pirates, dizzying political intrigue – there's something for everyone. Along with plenty of the space action Drake is so good at. And did I mention there are pirates?

Fellowship, death, loyalty and bravery – Drake writes entertaining space opera, but he has some very serious points to make about war, its challenges and its effects.

***Icon* by Genevieve Valentine, 2016 Saga Press, hc \$24.99, 336 pages. Review by Jessica Coyle**

Genevieve Valentine's *Icon* is the sequel to 2015's near-future political thriller *Persona*. Valentine picks up a year after the events in *Persona*, with Suyana Sapaki, the International Assembly representative for the United Amazonia Rainforest Confederation, experiencing an unexpected level of popularity and power. She's also trying to keep the secrets behind her assassination attempt and her involvement in Chordata, a radical environmental group, from leaking to the press. She is also still being followed



by journalist Daniel Park, who has been willing to hide her secrets, but at what price to himself?

As Suyana sets to embark on a good will tour of the United Amazonia Rainforest Confederation with her boyfriend, she is approached by Chordata with her hardest assignment yet. Unsure of what to do or who she can trust, Suyana must decide

for the first time in her life what she wants for herself.

Valentine's *The Persona Sequence* is an interesting take on how politics is going to grow and change as the world merges into a more centralized government. I personally like the idea of politicians becoming the level of celebrities that film/TV/sports stars are today, and how that affects their ability to get things done. I have really enjoyed this series so far, and would recommend that anyone interested in the topic start with the first book, *Persona*.

***A Conversation In Blood* by Paul S. Kemp, 2017 Del Rey, hc \$27.00, 272 pages. (To Be Released January 24, 2017.)**

**Review by Becky C. Davis**

Paul Kemp has 24 novels and story collections to his credit, three *Star Wars* novels among them. So how does he fare with a story of combat-linked companions? Meh.

*A Conversation In Blood* is the third adventure of diminutive Nix the sword wielder and Egil of great size, and the two heavy hammers. It seems constructed to resemble the adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser of Fritz Leiber's *Lankhmar* world. It does not succeed in my mind. Kemp's dialog is variously turgid, predictable or forced. The world-building though respectable, is a depressing derivative of Leiber's Nehwon and Terry Pratchett's Ankh-Morpork on his Discworld. Dur Follin lacks most of the clever sub-characters of Pratchett's Ankh-Morpork.

At the start of this tale of Nix and Egil, the characters die. In the prologue to this tale, their loyal friend Jyme occupies the Fulcrum (of Time?) while incanting phrases of the Great Spell of Creation. He moves the two heroes to a new version of their world where they are whole and alive. But something follows them. The Afterbirth.

Egil and Nix own a tavern in the medieval town of Dur Follin where they do most of their wenching, drinking and sleeping. They have loyal friends and a smart and beautiful tavern keeper. Nix has stolen, and has hidden, several golden discs with archaic writing on them. Nix wants to get rich from selling the plates, but he has questions. What are the plates? That question provides the duo with several slashing and thrashing adventures with a wizard named Kerfallen (the short dumpy one) and Rusk, Eighth Blade and top of the Thieves' Guild (the tall, austere and sneaky one). Who would pay the highest price for the plates? That answer gets complicated because both wizard and thief declare that the plates must not be used, thus limiting the price to be paid to Nix.

The companions do combat with members of the Thieves' Guild who want to steal the plates, wizards with

diabolical mechanical assistants, and ultimately again, with the Afterbirth. This is a horrible amalgam of man, misshapen body parts and implacable will which wants the Great Spell of the plates to help return it/him to the oblivion from which it was born.

As in the prologue, at the end (there are three endings) Nix and Egil are dying under the fists of the undying Afterbirth, when Jyme steps in to be the hero. By chanting phrases on the golden plates, he transports Nix and Egil to yet another version of Dur Follin. Here they will begin their fourth adventure.

I must amend my earlier statement about Kemp's world. I enjoyed the sub-characters of Kerfallen the Wizard, Rusk the head Thief, and Mamabird, the pair's mother-surrogate. I did not enjoy Nix or Egil. Boring. I also did not like Kemp's clumsy adjustments of curse words used by the characters. But if you start with the first book, *The Hammer and the Blade*, and progress through the second, *A Discourse in Steel*, you should be wrapped enough in Kemp's medieval world to enjoy book three.

There is one final quibble. The cover art is inadequate for the plot of the fantasy. The cover designer wanted a visual magnet to attract (mostly?) young male readers. The word "Blood" is exaggerated. Egil, his distended muscles, tendons and hammers are displayed in a threatening way. The predominant color of the cover is blood-red. But the design leaves out Nix, the Afterbirth, and the golden plates. It does not reveal the story in any way.

There was more miss than hit here. In my opinion.

***Crosstalk* by Connie Willis, 2016 Del Rey, hc \$28.00, 512 pages.**

**Review by Craig W. Chrissinger**

Connie Willis' first full-length novel in six years is an enjoyable look at telepathy and the problems that would result, but it really is more of a romantic comedy with SF elements (and social satire). That's not a complaint, more of an observation that *Crosstalk* is "Willis light" for lack of a better term. Those who want the seriousness of *The Doomsday Book* may be disappointed while those who enjoyed *To Say Nothing of the Dog* and Willis' lighter novellas/Christmas stories will be pleased.

In the near future, an outpatient procedure has been developed to better link couples on an emotional level - they are able to "feel" each others' emotions. Briddey Flannigan's boyfriend Trent has proposed to her and asks that they get the EED surgery before they set a wedding date. To avoid gossip, they try to keep their plans secret from their colleagues at a high-tech communications company and from her intrusive Irish-American family.

However, after the surgery, Briddey begins to hear the thoughts of someone - but not her fiancé. Instead, she's in telepathic communication with CB, a nerdy engineer who works in an odd room in the basement

How and why this contact has happened is the mystery of *Crosstalk*. To a lesser degree, so is Trent's true motivation for having the surgery with Briddey. And, of course, would a telepath go insane with all the surrounding voices?

Willis is examining the bombardment of communication we receive every day through computers, phones, TV, social media, texting and tweeting, newspapers, co-

workers, the radio, neighbors, and on and on. It's a concern today of how much might be too much.

There are moments of quirky comedy, witty repartee and a growing romance, but readers shouldn't forget the sharp and thoughtful critique of our current society. Luckily, Willis is adept at managing a warmhearted plot and delightful main characters while also leaving something for people to think about.

*Crosstalk* may be "Willis light," but it is well worth reading and there is social commentary in it. Yes, it's a long novel, but definitely recommended. I enjoyed it just as much as other Willis novels and her shorter fiction.

## **ASFS MEETING REPORTS — JUNE 2016: KUCK ON MOONSTONES**

ASFS member Grant Kuck, who also is a member of the ABQ Gem & Mineral Club, spoke about "Moonstone Madness" to 34 people in attendance. His talk had several humorous credits during the intro and a couple of advertisements (including artificial fruit-flavored *Moonstone Cereal* from 1976) during the middle of the presentation. Kuck started his talk by asking what are moonstones, and mentioned *The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins. There also is a moonstone in a *Nancy Drew* title, and Moonstone is a character in Marvel Comics.

He said moonstones are not found on the Moon – there are moon stones (two words), which are moon rocks. Moon rocks on Earth come from samples collected on Apollo missions, three Soviet unmanned probes, and as Lunar meteorites knocked to Earth. Moon rocks are considered priceless. Former president Bill Clinton has a moon rock, and there are moon rocks at the Johnson Center in Houston and at the White Sands facility in Las Cruces.

Moonstones are part of the Feldspar family, Kuck said, one of the most common minerals. Moonstone is semi-transparent to translucent, made of alkali or potassium feldspar. It contains sodium and potassium - the two feldspars mixed together make an actual Moonstone. Moonstones tend to be sodium rich and potassium poor, or sodium poor and potassium rich.

Kuck said that 12 countries have most of the Moonstones on Earth. New Mexico has six locations with Moonstone deposits, including Robb Canyon near San Lorenzo.

He started collecting rocks when he lived in Michigan, but didn't find much. "I have fun on these rock-finding trips," he said. "It's treasure hunting. And I enjoy being outdoors, and I like taking photos."

To finish out the evening, Kuck drew 10 random numbers to give away rock samples to people in the audience, and Tanley McMullan received a Moonstone.

## **JULY 2016: SUMMER MOVIE TIME**

Thirty-six people were on hand for a sea-related SF film and cartoon shorts. First up, we watched *Tom & Jerry* in "Cat and Mermouse," *Shaun the Sheep* in "Shaun Encounters," and *Merry Melodies* "Duck Amuck."

The film for the evening was 1957's *The Monster That Challenged the World*, a B&W creature-feature directed by Arnold Laven. In the film, an earthquake doesn't just shake up Southern California - it awakens a nest of monsters (giant bloodthirsty sea mollusks) lurking in the Salton Sea. When these creatures move on to land in search of wider hunting grounds, they are challenged by a crew of intrepid scientists (including Hans Conried and Audrey Dalton) and Lt. Cmdr John Twillinger (Tim Holt).

## **AUGUST 2016: CON PREVIEW/ELECTION**

A large audience of 62 people attended for the Bubonicon 48 preview of the schedule and t-shirt art, to cast ballots for the election of the Bubonicon 49 con chair(s), and to play games.

The 2017 con chair election was held after candidates Kevin Hewett and Caci Cooper (representing Craig Chrissinger and herself) gave short speeches. Ballots were counted, and Caci Cooper/Craig Chrissinger were announced as the Bubonicon 49 co-chairs.

Second up for the evening, the t-shirt art for Bubonicon 48 by Artist Guest Lee Moyer was revealed, followed by a presentation on the weekend schedule.

Finally, about 22 people stayed to play games and converse. Cards Against Humanity, Exploding Kittens and one other (unseen) game were played.

## **SEPTEMBER 2016: CON REPORTS**

Forty-five people came to hear how Bubonicon 48 had done, and to hear travel reports on the Kansas City Worldcon and Atlanta's Dragoncon.

First, Craig Chrissinger and Caci Cooper gave a report on Bubonicon 48 with visual aids, and read comments from attendees and the suggestion box. They also announced that Elizabeth Leggett would be Bubonicon 49's Artist Guest, and that Joe Lane, Ann Sasahara and Lori Jansen were retiring from the Con Suite staff (and thus applications for the B49 Con Suite manager were being accepted at [bubonicon@gmail.com](mailto:bubonicon@gmail.com) until Tues, January 3).

Next, Ron & Tara Oakes, and Al Hohrman and Diane Dunlap talked about their experiences at the Kansas City Worldcon, held the week before Bubonicon 48. Ron commented, "The dealers were good, and the Art Show was decent. I think the quality of art at Bubonicon may have been higher. I went to all the Business Meetings as a volunteer on audio-visual needs."

Tara said, "Yes, Bubonicon's Art Show probably had higher quality. My only problem with Worldcon's Art Show was that it shared space with the charity auction. Well, the only way to get into the Art Show during the auction was to go around to the back side, but there were no signs directing the way."

Al noted that room parties were held in the convention center because the hotels could not get waivers - a fact that Ron said the con committee knew two years ago during negotiations. "There was a lot of construction going on in Kansas City, mostly on the sidewalks," Al commented.



"The Hugo ceremony went well," said Ron. "So did the Retro Hugo ceremony. Sadly, there weren't that many representatives to accept the Retro Hugo Awards. For instance, no one was there to pick up Isaac Asimov's award."

Tara said she wanted barbecue, but "no good restaurants stayed open in the evening downtown. There was one place close by, but we were told that it wasn't any good."

On programming, Ron went to a panel on audiobooks that included Mary Robinette Kowal, "which was good."

Al said that he mostly went to "hard science panels, and they were really, really good. They had three astronauts and some actual rocket scientists. Some of the stuff presented was incredible. And they were all well attended. We also went to the Costume Contest, and that seemed to go well. The chairs were really tight in the space, and it went as long as usual. We watched the Hugos from the Con Suite, which was more comfortable."

And Diane noted that the Con Suite "did not have much food, and they only had water most of the time. For a while, the only food was being bought by the Con Suite staff themselves."

To close the evening, Mandy Self talked about her Dragoncon experience this year. "It was extended to another building this year, so it's up to seven buildings," she noted. "The vendors area was expanded, and there were a lot of vendors there. Caitlin and my goal was to stalk Charlie Cox of *Daredevil*. We went to his presentations, and got his autographed photo. And we got our photo taken with Charlie. He gives very, very good hugs. And this year, they started broadcasting the Costume Parade to try to cut down on the crowds."

Dragoncon had somewhere around 55 tracks of programming, Mandy said. "I went to the 'History of Star Trek Fan Fiction' panel, which was very interesting. There were a lot of great costumes this year, and I took a lot of photos - even if I didn't understand the references."

Mandy finished by showing off some of her purchases, including a leather Hawkeye mask and a wooden Loki staff. "I'm retiring my Nova helmet because it got broken this year," she said.

## **EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE**

- MIXED EMOTIONS these past two months. December 8, of course, is the 36th anniversary of John Lennon's murder. I've noted before it always makes me a little sad. "All you need is love," "And so this is Christmas, and what have you done," and "Give peace a chance" go through my head. Especially this year with the political atmosphere. I try not to talk politics here, but we are in for a very weird and potentially scary four years in the United States of America.

I'd like to think that we of Science Fiction will remember that our fandom has been fairly open over the years to those considered different. We all have been considered different at some point in our lives. We like to think we are open to new ideas and different viewpoints. Well, now is the time to BE open & to listen. Take a moment to offer support and aid to anyone being harassed, suppressed or bullied. We are all human beings who deserve respect and kindness. Hate crimes and hurtful comments are on the increase. We must watch each others' backs, and rise above any crap that may come.

- I ALSO FOUND OUT my ankle and knee problems in October probably were due to a gout attack. Yay! That has added to my mixed emotions. Being in pain is tiring, and makes you cranky. Once I had a diagnosis, I was given oral steroids, then had an injection in my right knee after x-rays, and also had my blood pressure medicine changed.

I'm trying to drink more water, and watch my diet even more than before. So far, no more flare-ups. Now to keep being good, and to cross my fingers. The pain and my swollen ankle did mean we missed Milehicon this year, and I was sad about that. Sigh. My birthday is just before Christmas and to misquote Sammy Hagar, "I can't be 55!" And so it goes. Right?

- I WAS LUCKY enough to see John Cleese & Eric Idle during their comedy tour stop in ABQ. They put on a wonderful, funny and even touching show, going through how they first met, how Monty Python came together, the TV show and the movies, and what has happened since then. Idle sang several songs, and they performed sketches from their college review show and showed favorite clips throughout the years.

It also was very nice to see Connie & Courtney Willis around Thanksgiving for a signing at Page One Books and to see Disney's *Moana* (which is a lot of fun). I've also seen and enjoyed *Arrival* (interesting story, smart script, good acting), *Doctor Strange* (cool visuals, good story and cast), *Fantastic Beasts & Where To Find Them* (my fave Potter-related film to date), and *La La Land* (beautiful film, nice musical numbers). Really looking forward to *Rogue One: A Star Wars Tale* and *Passengers*. Crossing my fingers on those...

- JOIN US at *Phantasm* at the Guild Cinema next weekend! Bubonicon 49 is a door prize sponsor. Thus the lit'l flier reproduction down below!

- THAT'S A (holiday) wrap. Thanks to Roberta, Jessica & Becky for contributions! And to Tim & Kaia for visiting & for my *Svengoolie* art. See you all for February 2017's issue. Stay warm & take care.- Craig C

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