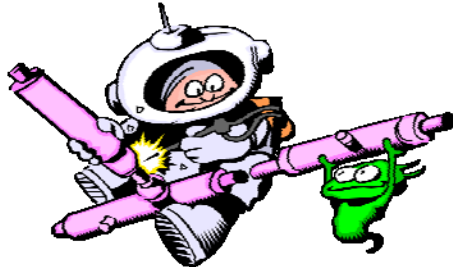




# SITHFACTS 2018

## "MR. GRINCH LEARNS TO LOVE THE HOLIDAYS" DECEMBER ISSUE



### 2017 WORLD FANTASY WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The winners for the 2018 World Fantasy Awards were announced November 3 in an awards ceremony at the World Fantasy Convention in Baltimore, MD. The convention's theme was "Port in a Storm," and included a celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Charles de Lint and Elizabeth Wollheim were honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards.

To be eligible, all nominated material must have been published in 2017 or have a 2017 cover date. Nominations came from two sources. Members of the current convention as well as the previous two were able to vote two nominations onto the final ballot. The remaining nominations came from the panel of judges. Judges this year were David Anthony Durham, Christopher Golden, Juliet E. McKenna, Charles Vess, and Kaaron Warren.

A list of winners follows:

NOVEL (Tie): *The Changeling* by Victor LaValle and *Jade City* by Fonda Lee, LONG FICTION: *Passing Strange* by Ellen Klages, SHORT FICTION: "The Birding: A Fairy Tale" by Natalia Theodoridou, ANTHOLOGY: *The New Voices of Fantasy* edited by Peter S. Beagle and Jacob Weisman, COLLECTION: *The Emerald Circus* by Jane Yolen, and Artist: Gregory Manchess.

SPECIAL AWARD – PROFESSIONAL: Harry Brockway, Patrick McGrath, and Danel Olson for Writing Madness, SPECIAL AWARD – NON-PROFESSIONAL: Justina Ireland and Troy L. Wiggins, for *FIYAH: Magazine of Black Speculative Fiction*, and LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS: Charles de Lint and Elizabeth Wollheim.

### GOODREADS NAMES BEST OF 2018

Winners of the 2018 Goodreads Choice awards for the "best books of 2018," as chosen by users of the site, were announced December 4. These are the only major

book awards decided by readers. There are several categories of genre interest:

SCIENCE FICTION: *Vengeful* by V.E. Schwab (James S.A. Corey's *Persepolis Rising* was a nominee, as was John Scalzi's *Head On* and Mary Robinette Kowal's *The Calculating Stars*), FANTASY: *Circe* by Madeline Miller, HORROR: *Elevation* by Stephen King, MYSTERY AND THRILLER: *The Outsider* by Stephen King, HISTORY & BIOGRAPHY: *The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers* by Maxwell King (*Fly Girls* and *Rocket Men* also were nominated), SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: *The Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs: A New History of a Lost World* by Stephen Brusatte, YOUNG ADULT FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION: *Kingdom of Ash* by Sarah J. Maas, MIDDLE GRADE & CHILDREN'S: *The Burning Maze: The Trials of Apollo Book 3* by Rick Riordan, and DEBUT AUTHOR: *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi.

Goodreads reports 5.02 million total votes cast.

### MARVEL'S STAN LEE DIES AT 95

by Mike Barnes, *The Hollywood Reporter*

Stan Lee, the legendary writer, editor and publisher of Marvel Comics whose fantabulous but flawed creations made him a real-life superhero to comic book lovers everywhere, died November 12. He was 95 years old.

Lee, who began in the business in 1939 and created or co-created Black Panther, Spider-Man, the X-Men, the Mighty Thor, Iron Man, the Fantastic Four, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil and Ant-Man, among countless other characters, died early in the morning at Cedars-Sinai

### UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Comedic holiday film shorts, plus the 14th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off. Prizes! Mirth! A *Vampire's Feast* is here!
- **January 11, 2019:** Group Book Discussion! What did you read in 2018 & would recommend?
- **February 8:** The Annual Club Auction with Bob Vardeman & Patricia Rogers as your auctioneers. Start looking for stuff to donate - and save up your \$\$\$... Plus *ASFacts* (Deadline Monday, Feb 4).
- **March 8:** UNM neurobiologist Russell Morton talks about zombies and their behaviors.
- **April 12:** Unknown (SF Trailer Park?) Definitely *ASFacts* for spring (deadline Monday, April 8).

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Medical Center in Los Angeles, a source told *The Hollywood Reporter*.

On his own and through his work with frequent artist-writer collaborators Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko (who died in July) and others, Lee catapulted Marvel from a tiny venture into the world's No. 1 publisher of comic books and, later, a multimedia giant.

In 2009, The Walt Disney Co. bought Marvel Entertainment for \$4 billion, and most of the top-grossing superhero films of all time – led by *Avengers: Infinity War*'s \$2.05 billion worldwide take earlier this year – have featured Marvel characters.

Beginning in the 1960s, the irrepressible and feisty Lee punched up his Marvel superheroes with personality, not just power. Until then, comic book headliners like those of DC Comics were square and well-adjusted, but his heroes had human foibles and hang-ups; Peter Parker/Spider-Man, for example, fretted about his dandruff and was confused about dating. The evildoers were a mess of psychological complexity.

"His stories taught me that even superheroes like Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk have ego deficiencies and girl problems and do not live in their macho fantasies 24 hours a day," Gene Simmons of Kiss said in a 1979 interview. "Through the honesty of guys like Spider-Man, I learned about the shades of gray in human nature."

The Manhattan-born Lee wrote, art-directed and edited most of Marvel's series and newspaper strips. He also penned a monthly comics column, "Stan's Soapbox," signing off with his signature phrase, "Excelsior!"

His way of doing things was to brainstorm with an artist, then write a synopsis. After the artist drew the story panels, Lee filled in the word balloons and captions. The process became known as "The Marvel Method."

Lee collaborated with artist-writer Kirby on the Fantastic Four, Hulk, Iron Man, Thor, Silver Surfer and X-Men. With artist-writer Ditko he created Spider-Man and the surgeon Doctor Strange, and with artist Bill Everett came up with the blind superhero Daredevil.

In the 1970s, Lee importantly helped push the boundaries on censorship in comics, delving into serious and topical subject matter in a medium that had become mindless, kid-friendly entertainment.

In 1954, the publication of psychologist Frederic Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* had spurred calls for the government to regulate violence, sex, drug use, questioning of public authority figures, etc., in the comics as a way to curtail "juvenile delinquency." Wary publishers headed that off by forming the Comics Code Authority, a self-censoring body that wound up neutering adult interest in comics and stereotyping the medium as one only kids would enjoy.

Lee scripted banal scenarios with characters like Nellie the Nurse and Tessie the Typist, but in 1971, he inserted an anti-drug storyline into *The Amazing Spider-Man* in which Peter Parker's best friend Harry Osborn popped

pills. Those issues, which did not carry the CCA "seal of approval" on the covers, became extremely popular, and later, the organization relaxed some of its guidelines.

Born Stanley Martin Lieber on December 28, 1922, he grew up poor in Washington Heights, where his father, a Romanian immigrant, was a dress-cutter. A lover of adventure books and Errol Flynn movies, Lee graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School, joined the WPA Federal Theatre Project, where he appeared in a few stage shows, and wrote obituaries.

In 1939, Lee got a job as a gofer for \$8 a week at Marvel predecessor Timely Comics. Two years later, for Kirby and Joe Simon's *Captain America* No. 3, he wrote a two-page story titled "The Traitor's Revenge!" that was used as text filler. He used the pen name Stan Lee.

He was named interim editor at 19 by publisher Martin Goodman when the previous editor quit. In 1942, he enlisted in the Army and served in the Signal Corps, where he wrote manuals and training films with a group that included Oscar-winner Frank Capra, Pulitzer-winner William Saroyan and Theodor Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss). After the war, he returned to the publisher and served as the editor for decades.

Following DC Comics' lead with the *Justice League*, Lee and Kirby in November 1961 launched their own superhero team, the Fantastic Four, for the newly renamed Marvel Comics, and Hulk, Spider-Man, Doctor Strange, Daredevil and X-Men soon followed. *The Avengers* launched as its own title in September 1963.

In 1972, Lee was named publisher and relinquished the Marvel editorial reins to spend all his time promoting the company. He moved to Los Angeles in 1980 to set up an animation studio and to build relationships in Hollywood.

Survivors include a daughter, J.C., and younger brother Larry Lieber, a writer and artist for Marvel. Another daughter, Jan, died in infancy. His wife, Joan, was a hat model whom he married in 1947.

Like Alfred Hitchcock before him, the never-bashful Lee appeared in cameos in the Marvel movies, shown avoiding falling concrete, watering his lawn, delivering the mail, crashing a wedding, working security, etc.

In *Spider-Man 3* (2007), he chats with Tobey Maguire's Peter Parker as they stop on a Times Square street to read news that the web-slinger will soon receive the key to the city. "You know," he says, "I guess one person can make a difference ... 'nuff said."

## **WILD CARDS COMING TO HULU**

by Germain Lussier, November 13, 2018 - [io9.com](http://io9.com)

Most people know George RR Martin for his *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, better known as *Game of Thrones*. But that's just one of the author's universes. Another that he curates and edits is about to get the same treatment from another major provider. And it stars superheroes.

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Hulu is near a deal to secure the rights to the *Wild Cards* franchise, which has been around since 1987 and contains 27 books (and counting). It's "a shared universe of anthologies, mosaic novels and stand-alone stories written by a collection of authors and edited by Martin and co-editor Melinda Snodgrass."

In the world of *Wild Cards*, a deadly virus was spread across the world in 1946. Most people died but those who survived either mutated or magically had superpowers. Now, decades later, the virus still exists and manifests itself later in life. So people don't know if they are going to become the jokers, and mutate – or become the aces with super powers.

Syfy Films bought the rights to the franchise back in 2011 (the same year *Game of Thrones* debuted on HBO) hoping to make a movie. Five years later, when that didn't happen, Universal Cable Productions took over with an eye on making multiple TV shows set in the universe. That's what's happening now. Plus, it sounds like Hulu wants this to be a multimedia franchise—a big name series to compete with Netflix's upcoming *Chronicles of Narnia* content and Amazon's *Lord of the Rings* content.

This is a franchise that, over 30 years, has developed a whole legion of fans and creators. That alone makes it a world well-worth adapting into live action.

## SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, December 17, at Jason's Deli (northwest corner of Louisiana & America's Parkway NE – across the street from Bubonicon's Marriott Hotel) to discuss *Altered Carbon* by Richard K. Morgan. The group then meets January 21, 2019, to talk about *The Killing Moon* by N.K. Jemisin (at Jason's Deli again).

Meetings of D&D are open to all readers on the 3rd Monday of 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 mrsansom@hotmail.com or Craig at 266-8905.

## WILLIAM GOLDMAN DIES

Novelist, playwright, and screenwriter William Goldman died November 16 of colon cancer in Manhattan, reported Locus Online. He was 87 years old.

Goldman is best known in SF circles for his novel *The Princess Bride* (released in 1973), and for writing the script for the classic 1979 film adaptation. Other novels of genre interest include *Control* and *The Silent Gondoliers*. He is widely famous for his Academy Award-winning screenplays like *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) and *All the President's Men*, but also wrote films of SF interest including *The Stepford Wives* (based on the Ira Levin novel) and Stephen King adaptations *Misery*,

*Hearts in Atlantis*, and *Dreamcatcher*; he was reportedly a script doctor for King adaptation *Dolores Claiborne* as well. He wrote an unproduced adaptation of *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes in 1964, and a short-lived Broadway adaptation of *Misery* that opened in 2015.

Goldman was born August 12, 1931, in Highland Park, IL, and attended Oberlin College before getting his master's degree at Columbia in 1956. Debut novel *The Temple of Gold* appeared in 1957, and after publishing a few novels, he was approached by actor Cliff Robertson about writing an adaptation of *Flowers for Algernon*. Though the script was rejected, it gave Goldman an opportunity to learn the form, and he sold his first original screenplay, for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, for a then-record \$400,000 in the late '60s. He wrote the script while teaching creative writing at Princeton.

Despite his Hollywood success, Goldman considered himself a novelist first, and wrote more than 20 books, as well as memoirs, notably *Adventures in the Screen Trade: A Personal View of Hollywood and Screenwriting* (1983).

Goldman was married to Ilene Jones for 30 years; they divorced in 1991. He is survived by daughter Jenny Goldman and a grandson, and was predeceased by daughter Susanna in 2015.

## TREK ANIMATED SERIES ON WAY FROM RICK & MORTY WRITER

CBS All Access has quickly learned that *Star Trek* is their cash cow, with *Discovery*, *Short Treks*, and a new Patrick Stewart-led *TNG* sequel series on the way. Now, the network is taking another leap into the final frontier with a brand new *Star Trek* animated comedy series – reported Comet-TV Signal in late October.

The new series, *Star Trek: Below Decks*, is created by *Rick and Morty*'s head writer/executive producer, Mike McMahan. The series, which will be both the first All Access animated series and the first animated *Star Trek* series since 1973's *Star Trek: The Animated Series*, will be an adult-aimed comedy focusing on the "support crew serving on one of Starfleet's least important ships," according to Deadline.

Alex Kurtzman, who is shepherding the *Star Trek* universe for CBS, is set to be one of the new series' executive producers alongside McMahan. "Mike won our hearts with his first sentence: 'I want to do a show about the people who put the yellow cartridge in the food replicator so a banana can come out the other end,'" Kurtzman told Deadline. "His cat's name is Riker. His son's name is Sagan. The man is committed. He's brilliantly funny and knows every inch of every *Trek* episode, and that's his secret sauce: he writes with the pure, joyful heart of a true fan. As we broaden the world of *Trek* to fans of all ages, we're so excited to include Mike's extraordinary voice."

McMahan certainly has the chops to pull off his ambi-



tious series. As head writer on *Rick and Morty*, McMahan is overseeing arguably the funniest and best science-fiction material currently on television – and being an extremely knowledgeable Trekkie doesn't hurt, either. He already writes for All Access' short-form series *Short Treks*, and he previously wrote a book based on fake TNG episodes called *Star Trek: The Next Generation: Warped: An Engaging Guide to the Never-Aired 8th Season*.

No word yet on when the new series will air.

## LIU WINS SERVICE AWARD

Cixin Liu was presented with the Imagination in Service to Society award during the Arthur C. Clarke "Unleash Imagination" awards ceremony and dinner, November 8, 2018, at the Sidney Harman Hall in Washington, DC, reported Locus Online. The Arthur C. Clarke Foundation also presented its Lifetime Achievement award to Irwin Jacobs and the Innovator award to Jill Tarter.

## FLASH GORDON REMAKE COMING FROM OVERLORD DIRECTOR

by Johnny Brayson, Comet-TV Signal, Nov 1, 2018

Nothing screams delicious sci-fi cheese quite like *Flash Gordon*, but unfortunately, we've been denied a new big screen adaptation of the star-wandering hero for nearly 40 years. But now it looks as though we'll finally be returning to the planet Mongo, as the upcoming *Flash Gordon* reboot film has just found its writer/director.

Julius Avery, who most recently helmed the J.J. Abrams-produced WWII zombie flick *Overlord*, has been tapped by Fox to both write and direct a new *Flash Gordon* movie, according to *Deadline*. The project has been in the works for some time, with *Kingsman* director Matthew Vaughn originally attached to direct. But Vaughn dropped out years ago after *Guardians of the Galaxy* was released, as that film was too close to what he was hoping to do with *Flash*. Now, after a long period where it looked like the film was scrapped, *Flash Gordon* is now moving ahead at light speed (Vaughn is still producing the film).

Avery grew up a big fan of *Flash Gordon* comics, and the studio loved his pitch for a film adaptation. *Flash Gordon*, of course, started out as a comic strip way back in 1934 before moving into radio shows, film serials, various TV series, and that ultra-campy 1980 feature film, so there's a chance

Avery's pitch harkens back to the franchise's origins. The last *Flash* adaptation of note was the short-lived live-

action series that aired on Syfy a decade ago. That show lasted just one season and was largely panned, so here's hoping the next iteration of the athlete-turned-space adventurer fares better. Gordon lives!

## RAY HARRYHAUSEN DESIGNS TO BE USED IN NEW FILM

by Johnny Brayson, Comet-TV Signal, Oct 29, 2018

Nobody made monster movies quite like Ray Harryhausen. The trailblazer revolutionized special effects in movies, and was responsible for crafting the creatures in classic films like *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, *Jason and the Argonauts*, and *Clash of the Titans*. He passed away in 2013, leaving behind loads of unused creature designs that never saw the light of day. But that will soon change with a new movie based on his work.

The Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation has announced that they're partnering with Morningside Productions on a new film that will feature some of Harryhausen's unproduced creature designs in the hopes of capturing some of that old Dynamation magic. The film, called *Force of the Trojans*, is based on an old screenplay written by the late Beverley Cross, who also penned a number of Harryhausen's most memorable films.

"*Force of the Trojans* will embody the spirit of the original Harryhausen films with all the fun, vibrant action, epic scope and dedication to craftsmanship that has made Ray Harryhausen's films timeless," the Foundation's trustee, John Walsh, said in a statement on Facebook. "Unlike other revisits to the fantasy adventure genre, *Force of the Trojans* will bring together stop-motion animation with the photo-real world of CGI, marking the first time that a monster battle will mix both techniques on screen in a major motion picture. In homage to a bygone era, this film will bring both worlds crashing together. For the first time, we can put on screen sequences that were not possible for Ray due to the limitations of special effects photography at the time."

## iZOMBIE GETS 5TH SEASON

It looked likely for a while that *iZombie* would become another victim of this year's TV cull before The CW renewed it for a fifth season, reported [digitalspy.com](#).

Loosely based on the comic-book series of the same name, Rob Thomas and Diane Ruggiero-Wright's crime procedural with literal brains has taken a bold leap in season four following the season three finale that saw the existence of zombies revealed to the world.

Fans had only a few days to celebrate the fact that *iZombie* was coming back before The CW confirmed that season five will be the final season.

But before you set up any angry petitions, co-creator Rob Thomas had hinted before the renewal that they just

needed one more season to "get to the end of our story," so at least the show will get to end how they want, much like fellow CW show *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*.

We can expect all of the main stars back in season five after they survived season four with all their organs intact. So that's Rose McIver (Liv Moore), Malcolm Goodwin (Clive Babineaux), Rahul Kohli (Ravi Chakrabarti), Robert Buckley (Major Lilywhite), David Anders (Blaine McDonough) and Aly Michalka (Peyton Charles).

It's also likely we'll see Bryce Hodgson back as Blaine's right-hand zombie Don E, but say goodbye to Daniel Bonjour as Liv's zombie boyfriend Levon Patch and Jason Dohring as Fillmore-Graves leader Chase Graves as they both got their heads crushed in the season four finale.

The CW has already confirmed that it's holding season five until midseason, which means we won't be seeing it this year. So our best guess is a similar premiere date of late February, but there hasn't been anything confirmed yet. We'd expect there to be 13 episodes like every season other than season two, which ran for 19 episodes.

Following a time jump, season four started with Seattle becoming the walled city of New Seattle as the US government contained the zombie outbreak.

Alongside the usual 'brain of the week' murders, it also saw Liv become the underground leader Renegade after the previous leader was brutally executed, smuggling sick humans into New Seattle and scratching them to save them so they can start a new life as a zombie.

As for what we can expect in the final season, Thomas told TVLine that the fate of Major and Liv's relationship will be resolved. "I don't know what that resolution will be yet, but it will feel resolved. And that was always one of those things that you're going to hold in your back pocket until your final season and figure it out then."

"I think we're going to give some sort of answer to the fate of zombie kind. And again, I do not know what that answer will be, but we won't do the *Sopranos* ending. It won't just be like you're watching the show and then someone just hits stop in a random place. And I say that actually really liking the *Sopranos* ending, but I suspect that we're going to get more resolution than that."

## ROSWELL NM GETS 2019 REBOOT

With the CW's *Roswell* reboot set for takeoff on Tuesday, January 15, the network is giving viewers a fresh look at the upcoming *Roswell, New Mexico* with a new trailer. Based on Melinda Metz's book *Roswell High*, the series is executive produced by Carina Adly MacKenzie (*The Originals*), Chris Hollier (*Once Upon A Time*), Julie Plec (*The Vampire Diaries*), Darryl Frank and Justin Falvey (*The Americans*), Lawrence Bender (*Pulp Fiction*), and Kevin Kelly Brown (*Roswell*).

In The CW's new series *Roswell, New Mexico*, more than maybe anywhere else on Earth, Roswell, NM, is

ground zero for those who seek proof that aliens exist, reported [bleedingcool.com](http://bleedingcool.com) in early December.

Roswell native Liz Ortecho (Jeanine Mason) left it all behind 10 years ago after the death of her beloved older sister Rosa. But after the government cuts funding on her biomedical research, she reluctantly returns to her tourist-trap hometown to move back in with her father. When Liz arrives, she reconnects with Max Evans (Nathan Parsons), her teenage crush, who is now a Roswell police officer. Their chemistry is instantly electric. But Liz soon discovers a shocking truth: Max is an alien who has kept his unearthly abilities hidden his entire life, along with those of his otherworldly sister, Isobel (Lily Cowles), and their friend Michael (Michael Vlamis).

As the two grow closer after a decade apart, Liz finds it difficult to keep the truth from her best friend, Maria De Luca (Heather Hemmens), and her trusting high school ex, Dr. Kyle Valenti (Michael Trevino). Also hiding their extraterrestrial origins are Isobel and Michael, with Isobel not even revealing the truth to her husband, Noah Bracken (Karan Oberoi), and Michael keeping his identity hidden beneath a bad-boy exterior of hard living.

Meanwhile, Master Sergeant Jesse Manes (Trevor St. John) spearheads a long-standing government conspiracy – unbeknownst to his son, Alex Manes (Tyler Blackburn), who has recently returned from service overseas with emotional and physical injuries. The politics of fear and hatred that run rampant in Roswell threaten to expose Max and his family and could endanger his deepening romance with Liz...as well as their lives.

## REVIEW ROUND-UP

**Rewrite: *Loops in the Timescape (Timescape Book 2)* by Gregory Benford, 2019 Saga Press, hc \$27.99, 368 pages. (Available January 15, 2019)**

**Review by Charles Pearson**

*Rewrite* is about a middle-aged professor who dies in a traffic accident and suddenly discovers he's a teenager again. He now has the chance to relive his life. Eventually, he meets others with similar experiences.

Although the concept is not new (think Grimwood's *Replay* or even the film, *Groundhog Day*), the novel goes beyond its predecessors by examining how this "reliving life" process works. The book does drag a bit at the beginning, and the ending is unsatisfactory. But it is a good read (most of Gregory Benford's novels are).

***The Fated Sky* by Mary Robinette Kowal, 2018 Tor Books, tp \$15.99, 384 pages.**

**Review by Jessica Coyle**

*The Fated Sky* is the second book in Mary Robinette Kowal's *Lady Astronaut* series. The series follows pilot and International Aerospace Coalition Calculator Elma York as she becomes one of the first women accepted into Astronaut training.

At the start of *The Fated Sky*, Elma is working as a pilot ferrying IAC employees between Earth and the IAC's space station. She is happy working as an astronaut, but she

misses the challenges and discoveries of working on new and unexplored projects. When she is assigned to the mission team that will be traveling to Mars to determine its habitability for colonization, Elma is excited for the challenges but frustrated with the fact that one of her best friends is bumped from the mission to make room for her.

Elma discovers that there are even more challenges than she expected as she struggles to assimilate into a team that includes her nemesis Parker as the team lead. She also confronts the racism that exists on Earth in the 1960s as she tries to get her African-American team members treated as equals during their journey to an unknown world.

I thoroughly enjoyed *The Fated Sky*, which definitely needs to be read as a duology with the series' previous book, *The Calculating Stars*. The team's voyage to Mars is an excellent way for Kowal to explore the issues of racism and female inequality in early 1960s culture in a small and intimate setting. The characters' were well-rounded, and I particularly enjoyed the relationship between Elma and Parker and how it changed as the book progressed. As a huge fan of Kowal's work, I highly recommend this series.

***Uncompromising Honor: Honor Harrington Book 19* by David Weber, Baen 2018, hc \$28.00, 784 pages.**

**Review by Kenneth Gurney**

After a six year wait, David Weber returns his attention to Honor Harrington and delivers book 19 in the series for our pleasure. *Uncompromising Honor* comes in at 784 pages in the hardcover edition.

The Royal Manticore navy continues its war with the Solarian League, because the League's leaders, the Mandarins, continue to manufacture reasons for a war and atrocities, even as their Navy's losses mount and the League's economy crumbles.

I looked forward to this book hoping Weber returned to his earlier good writing, because I like the character he created in Honor Harrington, especially in the first seven books of the series. Sorry to report Honor appears on about 70 pages of the book. Mostly the story covers the boundless two dimensional stupidity and arrogance of the Mandarins and some space navy heroism by other Manticore personnel.

Weber really needs a firm editor to reduce the number of blathering pages his bloated stories of the last decade contain that do little to advance the plot or develop the characters. If you, like me, choose to take the plunge, you will probably skim at least two-thirds of the book as I did.

I hoped for some closure with Honor's story. Nope. The Mesa issues are left unresolved after a fantastical body count is left in orbit as space debris.

***Trail of Lightning: The Sixth World Book 1* by Rebecca Roanhorse, 2018 Saga Press, tp \$16.99, 304 pages.**

**Review by Craig W. Chrissinger**

In Rebecca Roanhorse's debut novel, *Trail of Lightning*, there's been a climate apocalypse which leaves most of the world drowned under water. Luckily, most of New Mexico and the Diné (Navajo) reservation have survived. The Diné have walled off their lands, and gods and mon-

sters of legend walk the earth. (In Navajo/Diné legend the flood that comes brings in end of the fifth world and the start of the sixth.)

Maggie Hoskie is not only a Diné monster hunter, but also a reluctant hero and supernaturally gifted. She's both feared and reluctantly accepted by people, and lives alone. When Maggie is hired by a small town to find a missing girl, she discovers the monster responsible is a lot scarier than anything she's seen before. Bad magic looks to be involved.

And so she is pushed to enlist the aid of Kai Arviso, an unconventional medicine man. Together, they travel across the reservation, looking for clues in ancient legends and deteriorating technology, trading favors with a Trickster, and battling dark witchcraft. The truth behind the killings will cause her to search her past and trust others around her in order to survive.

What's unique about this post-apocalyptic urban fantasy is the world mythos Roanhorse uses. It's an indigenous folklore and mythology that we have not seen much of before now. There's strong world building here (I especially enjoyed the mentions of what has happened to Albuquerque), and well-rounded characters. Especially Maggie, who could have been just a kickass heroine, but is so much more because of her personal journey. In fact, all the characters are fully developed people that can be enjoyed by readers of all races, for they are human and facing universal challenges and emotions. They should appeal to all.

Roanhorse has had one heck of a year with winning both a Hugo and Nebula Award for a short story, which can be a lot of pressure for an author. This debut novel shows that she can handle the longer-length format as well. It's a great start to her career, and I can't wait to read the second book in the series. Very entertaining, interesting, and well-told. Well done.

## ***ASFS MEETING REPORTS —*** **MAY 2018: ERIC VELHAGEN**

Thirty-four people were on hand for a visit from Albuquerque artist Eric Velhagen, who was Bubonicon 50's Artist Guest. "I've always done artwork," he said. "When I was five or six, I came inside our house and started flipping through an issue of *Playboy*. My dad didn't know what to do, so he watched me until I stopped on a page. I was staring at it. He got up to see what I was looking at so hard. Well, I had stopped on a drawing of a dragon. I was fascinated by it. So, the draw of fantasy art bit me hard."

Velhagen did construction for a number of years, and also lived in Taos at one point. It was when he moved back to Albuquerque that he decided to submit to *Spectrum 17*, and his work was accepted. Soon after, he went to a convention where Michael Whelan and Boris appeared. And that "pretty much was my start."

He then showed off many art pieces, including peaceful ducks on a lake oblivious to dragons above, Gollum crossing a river, a Nazgul, mermaids jumping in waves with a great white shark, a dragon on a castle tower, a

Balrog, Jon Snow and Ghost, images from the 2018 *Song of Ice and Fire* calendar, and others.

"I often do a painting more than once," Velhagen said. "I don't plan to have the first one become a slow disaster, but it happens and I often can't fix it. So, that draft becomes a study. And I really enjoy painting water because we don't have much in New Mexico. I also like it because water catches movement."

Addressing his assignment to do the 2018 George RR Martin-based calendar, he stated, "The art director called me and said there's good news and bad news. The good news was that they wanted me to do the calendar, and they told me that George really liked my art. The bad news was that they needed 12 paintings in less than two months. So, that worked out as four and a half days per piece. It was a fun project, even though the time was very short."

Velhagen told the group that he did a lot of storyboarding for commercials when he was in advertising, and that he's been in three shows in the Haven Gallery in New York – a location that specializes in fantasy art.

Asked about his influences, he said, "I really like Frazetta, Boris, and the Brothers Hildebrandt, and some Michael Whelan. But Frazetta was my first influence."

## JUNE 2018: BRENDA DRAKE

When local YA paranormal/fantasy author Brenda Drake came to visit, 42 club members were on hand to hear her talk about current books and future projects. Her current novels include the *Library Jumpers* trilogy, and three books in the *Fated* series (with *Seeking Fate* out in September) – about a girl who can change a person's fate by touching a Tarot card.

Coming up are *Thunderstruck*, with "Thor in high school," and *Analise Rising*, which is "*The Da Vinci Code* meets *American Gods* for young adults" (due out in January 2019). "Gods from all sorts of different mythologies show up."

Drake said her first story was written for her grandmother when she was a girl. About 10 years ago, she started writing again. "I was always attracted to science fiction and fantasy," she said. "I was lucky enough to get my first book published, and they wanted more. I was sad when I finished the last *Library Jumpers* novel because I had been in that world for so long. It was weird to be done with it, and move into a different universe."

She then read from *Assassin of Truths*, the third *Library Jumpers* novel – a chapter with a fighting scene and a chase.

"With YA, you can do whatever you want now," she said. "But you have to consider the reading level. I don't have sex scenes, and I try to watch the bad language."

Asked about her writing process, Drake responded, "I find I have to plot things out, or I can get lost. But it's more a graph for me. I don't break it down by chapter. I kind of leave things loose and see what happens. I will know I want certain things and actions, but I leave it loose. The first things that influenced me were *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*."

She said she also is writing a YA that's more tradition-

al fantasy, "kind of a YA *Ladyhawke*."

Drake summed up the visit by saying, "I like writing for kids. That's where my passion is. I wanted to do YA from the start, and haven't really wanted to do adult fiction. I've been around kids a lot – mine, plus nieces and nephews. And I read with them all the time, especially during summer."

## JULY '18: SUMMER MOVIE NIGHT

Forty-one fans came to watch this year's Summer Movie and some cartoon shorts. During club announcements, it was mentioned that Catherine Johnson of *Hidden Figures* will turn 100 on August 26.

First up were Bugs Bunny in "Bugs Bunny Rides Again" (with Yosemite Sam in the Old West), and Bugs Bunny and Wile E. Coyote in "To Hare Is Human."

In keeping with a desert theme, the evening's main feature was *The Giant Gila Monster*, made in 1959 in Texas by director Ray Kellogg. For some reason, a giant lizard terrorizes a small town in Texas, especially its teenagers! We in the audience clapped along when the lead (teenage) hero sang "Laugh, Children, Laugh" to his young sister. A good time was had by all (except for the poor reptile who was barbecued at the end by an exploding hot rod)...

## AUGUST: B50 PREVIEW & TEFFEAU

Thirty-six people were in attendance to see a preview of Bubonicon 50's schedule and such; and then listen to local author Lauren C. Teffeau talk about her first science fiction novel, *Implanted*.

First up, Caci Cooper and Craig Chrissinger went through the highlights of the Bubonicon 50 program schedule, and showed off the t-shirt artwork by Eric Velhagen and the back cover art by Lee Moyer.

And then Teffeau talked about how she got into writing, and about the new book. "When I moved to New Mexico, I had time on my hands, so I started writing. Then I had a baby, and now a science fiction book."

She then read from chapter two of *Implanted*.

"I wrote this book before the baby, and then revised it after she was born," Teffeau said. "And then I went through six months of submissions before it was purchased. So, the whole process took about a year and a half, but it was spread out."

*Implanted* was sold as a stand-alone, but Angry Robot has asked her about the possibility of a sequel. "So, now I'm working on a sequel," she said. "Another book is with my agent, and I have a proposal in for two more books in the *Implanted* series. I'm also working on more short fiction."

Asked about how she describes the novel, she replied, "I like cyberpunk



quite a bit. My book is cyberpunk, but probably more hopeful than others. Some people call it cyberpunk, some call it dystopian – but I say it has some hope to it. Things are crappy and they live in domed cities, but they are trying to repair the environment.”

## SEPTEMBER: REPORTS ON 2 CONS

A crowd of 47 people were on hand to listen to reports on Bubonicon 50 and the San Jose Worldcon.

Caci Cooper and Craig Chrissinger went over how Bubonicon 50 went, including attendance of 805 people, and the giving away of \$2,500 to four charities/non-profit groups. Attendance was up, and extra expenses had the convention just about breaking even.

Then Kevin Hewett, Ron Oakes and Kennard Wilson talked about their experiences at the San Jose Worldcon the weekend before Bubonicon. About 5,500 people attended, which is about average for Worldcons on the US west coast, said Oakes.

“It was my first time going to one, and it was a bit overwhelming,” said Wilson. “I was five blocks from the convention center, so I got to see some of downtown San Jose. There’s a lot more walking than at Bubonicon. Luckily the weather in San Jose was nice and pleasant.

“There were too many panels to choose from at times,” Wilson continued. “It was amazing. The one I remember was on Monday morning, which was a presentation on the economics of terraforming a planet. I found it fascinating.”

Oakes said there were 300-400 panels, in fact, and about 500 participants.

The con suite, located on the 3rd floor of the San Jose Marriott was “pretty good,” said Hewett. “But the art show was disappointing. Bubonicon had better quality. For some reason, their Art Show organizer decided to not accept credit cards. They just took cash and checks. The size of the show space was downsized before the con.”

Wilson was amazed by the dealers room, and Hewett agreed it was huge.

“I went to the Locus party since they loaned us items for exhibits, and I made it to the Dead Dog,” said Hewett.

Summing up his experience, Hewett remarked, “I’m looking forward to Dublin next year. If you haven’t been to a Worldcon, try to get to one. There are interesting people, and something for everyone.”

## WILLIS ON ENDINGS AT MILEHICON

At Milehicon 50 this past October in Denver, award-winning author Connie Willis of Colorado gave a talk on story/book endings. She said that an ending should do three important things - 1. Fulfill the contract with the reader, 2. Show how a character has changed and/or show the climax, and 3. Tie up loose ends.

She also talked about bad endings. “These include Deus Ex Machina where the ending has to be brought about by the characters, it was all a dream or experiment, the conflict is not resolved, nothing happens, the reader doesn’t understand what happened, the reader doesn’t understand what the characters did, questions are not an-

swered, the wrong ending is presented, and the rules are changed at the last minute. Well, the rules are the rules.”

Good endings can use a couple of different techniques, she said. “There’s framing, where the beginning and the end of the story are at the same point. This encloses the world. And there’s the tieback, which is similar to the running gag. It uses the same line at the beginning and again at the end.”

She summed up good endings as “enclosing the story and improving it.”

## EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

• ARE WE LIVING IN A DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI WORLD? I try to keep real-world politics out of this clubzine (mostly), but I find myself shaking my head and sighing almost every day. Compassion, rationalism, and humanism sometimes seem to be strangers in a strange land. And I find myself, a person who always wanted to write, in an odd place. My college degree is in journalism, and I have written for local newspapers and national magazines. And now this profession is being attacked and called “an enemy of the people.” Where does that leave us if the press cannot do its job? What is “fake news”? And Finland wants to know when you last vacuumed your forest floor?

Let’s try to find some Christmas spirit, and some joy in the world. SF fandom needs to remain open to different people and views, and continue to listen. As I said the last two years, take a moment to offer support/aid to anyone being harassed, suppressed or bullied. We are all human beings who deserve respect & kindness. *Keep watching each others’ backs.*

• WENT TO MILEHICON 50, hosted the con suite for Bubonicon 51 (we won an award, even though our pizza order was lost), participated on two fan programs, and helped in the literacy auction. Had a couple of meals with Lauren C. Tefteau and Emily Mah, who are good company. Of course, it was good to see Connie & Courtney Willis, Rose Beetem, Nina & Ron Else, Tim Simpson & Kaia Gavere, Carrie Vaughn, Jane Lindskold, Bob Vardeman, and many others. We also got to Pumpkin Nights after the con, which was very cool. So many pumpkins.

• ALSO WAS NICE to see Connie, Courtney & Cordelia Willis around Thanksgiving for a signing at Page One Books and to see Disney’s *Ralph Breaks the Internet* (cute, sweet & funny). I’ve also seen & enjoyed *First Man* (interesting look at Neil Armstrong’s career), *On the Basis of Sex* (RBG’s early legal days), and *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Good film, great Queen music). The new animated version of *The Grinch* is pretty good and has some really funny parts, even if it isn’t really necessary. I also saw *Mortal Engines*, and it’s cheesy fun adventure - not horrible, but not the best. *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* is confusing, shortchanges its characters, and ends on a bummed cliffhanger. Crossing fingers for *Aquaman*, *Welcome to Marwen*, *Mary Poppins Returns*, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, and *Captain Marvel*.

• TV HAS BEEN PRETTY GOOD so far this season. Enjoying the reboot of *Charmed*, plus *Supergirl*, *The Gifted*, *The Good Place*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *Young Sheldon*, *The Rookie* and various sitcoms. Waiting for the return of *The Oracle* (the best *Trek* on TV), the newest season of *MST3K*, and *iZombie*. Not sure what to think of the reboot of *Roswell* that arrives soon.

Maybe time for a book. Reading Morgan’s *Altered Carbon* right now. Not sure what to read next. Lots of choices...

• THAT’S ALL. Thanks to Jessica, Charles & Kenneth for reviews! See you in two months. Happy New Year! - Craig C