



SITHFACTS 2024

"WE HAD SNOW LAST MONTH" DECEMBER HOLIDAY ISSUE



2023 WORLD FANTASY WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The World Fantasy Awards winners for works published in 2023 were presented October 20 during the 2024 World Fantasy Convention, held in Niagara Falls, NY.

The Life Achievement Awards, presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field, went to Ginjer Buchanan and Jo Fletcher, reported *Locusmag.com*.

The World Fantasy Awards winners are:

BEST NOVEL: *The Reformatory* by Tananarive Due, **BEST NOVELLA:** "Half the House Is Haunted" by Josh Malerman, **BEST SHORT FICTION:** "Silk and Cotton and Linen and Blood" by Nghi Vo, **BEST ANTHOLOGY:** *The Book of Witches* edited by Jonathan Strahan, **BEST COLLECTION:** *No One Will Come Back for Us and Other Stories* by Premea Mohamed, **BEST ARTIST:** Audrey Benjaminsen, **SPECIAL AWARD - PROFESSIONAL:** Liza Groen Trombi for *Locus*, and **SPECIAL AWARD - NON-PROFESSIONAL:** Lynne M. Thomas & Michael Damian Thomas for *Uncanny*.

This year's judges were Douglas A. Anderson, Stephanie Feldman, Pat Murphy, Thomas Olde Heuvelt, and Angela Slatter. For more information, see the WFC website.

2024 GOODREADS CHOICE WINNERS

Winners of the 16th annual Goodreads Choice Awards, chosen by users of the site, were announced December 5. There are several winners of genre interest across various categories.

ROMANTASY: *House of Flame and Shadow* by Sarah J. Maas

FANTASY: *Somewhere Beyond the Sea* by T.J. Klune (also nominated was *A Sorceress Comes to Call* by T. Kingfisher)

SCIENCE FICTION: *The Ministry of Time* by Kaliane Bradley (also nominated was *The Mercy of Gods: The Captive's War 1* by James S.A. Corey)

HORROR: *You Like It Darker* by Stephen King (also

nominated were *What Feasts at Night: Sworn Soldier 2* by T. Kingfisher and *I Was a Teenage Slasher* by Stephen Graham Jones)

YOUNG ADULT FANTASY: *Ruthless Vows* by Rebecca Ross.

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

TRENT ZELAZNY PASSES AWAY

Trent Zelazny, Santa Fe author and son of Roger Zelazny, died November 28 – Thanksgiving – of a stroke with acute liver failure. He had turned 48 years old that day.

According to a post by his sister, Shannon Zelazny, on Facebook, "This past September, he had a cerebellar stroke which took away his ability to walk. Fortunately, his personality and memory remained intact, and he could still speak and eat. He was still 'my brother' and was making remarkable progress learning how to walk again. \

"Unfortunately, he was struck down again with the separate condition of acute liver failure," she continued. "He went to the hospital (November 27 evening), and (on Thanksgiving), when he should've been blowing out the candles on his birthday cake, he made his way out of this world."

He was an on-and-off martial artist since the age of 5, having studied multiple styles including Taekwondo, Tang Soo Do, Aikido, Iron Shirt, Iron Palm, Judo, and investigated Wing Chun and Jeet Kune Do.

Zelazny moved to Florida, then took some time away from writing, having developed severe alcoholism, as well as having lost his fiancée to suicide. He then attempted suicide himself, but survived, about which he repeatedly said he was grateful. In a later interview, he reported "a lot of hard work and the support of family and

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Our Holiday Gathering with a Potluck "Cook-Off." Plus socializing & video/cartoon shorts.
- **January 10, 2025:** Our Annual Group Book Discussion! What did you read in 2024 & would recommend? Or warn us about?
- **February 14:** Program unknown. Plus the Valentine *ASFacts* (Deadline 6 pm Sun, Feb 9).
- **March 14:** Club Auction with Bob Vardeman, Patricia Rogers, Jessica Coyle, Geneva Schult... 2-5 donations welcome, plus cash!
- **April 4 - A Week Early:** Also unknown. *ASFacts!*

Darth Vader, guest editor. Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Send Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Darth Vader's Phone: c/o (505) 266-8905. E-mail: cwraig@nmia.com. *SITHFACTS* printed each December. *ASFacts* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque Society. **NEXT DEADLINE:** Sunday, February 9, 2025.

Club Officers: Jessica Coyle & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Eric Klammer, Moderator. Marian Skupski, alternator. Kris Kringle & Rudolph the Reindeer, Holiday Hosts. **Bubonicon 56 Chair:** Craig W. Chrissinger.

friends...and rehab" helped him through this difficult time.

Trent was an author of crime, horror, and fantastical fiction. Zelazny started his writing career in 1999 with two short stories, "Hope Is an Inanimate Desire" and "Harold Asher and His Vomiting Dogs," followed by additional stories through the early 2000s. His story "Lovely Day for Beating an Old Guy," published in the Brian Knight-edited anthology *Random Acts of Weirdness* (2002), was the first piece to attract attention. His 2009 short story "The House of Happy Mayhem" received honorable mention for Ellen Datlow's "Best Horror of the Year" award.

Zelazny sold novel *Destination Unknown* in 2008, though it did not see release until 2011; his first published book was the short story collection *The Day the Leash Gave Way and Other Stories* (2009). The book was reissued by Black Curtain Press in 2014 with two additional stories and an introduction by the author.

Following a hiatus, he returned to writing in 2011 with the novella *Fractal Despondency*, followed the same year by *Shadowboxer*, *To Sleep Gently*, and *A Crack in Melancholy Time* and his earlier novel *Destination Unknown*. *To Sleep Gently* received the 2012 Nightmare Award.

Zelazny's first play, *Not Any Little Girl*, premiered in Santa Fe, New Mexico in late April 2012. It later became an Australian bestseller. Other plays followed, also performed in Santa Fe. A film buff, he contributed to the Jean Cocteau Cinema, George RR Martin's independent movie theater in Santa Fe, for which he wrote "Previews." Martin and he co-produced *Godson*, a musical theater play written by Zelazny's late father.

2012 also saw the release of the short story "Black Whispers" in the Richard Salter-edited shared world anthology *World's Collider*, the novella *Butterfly Potion*, and the novel *Too Late to Call Texas*, which was praised by fellow writer Neil Gaiman. Gaiman called Zelazny a "powerful and good writer," and "[s]omeone who's been through hell and come out, I hope, the other side." The novel was reissued in September 2013 with a new cover and an introduction by Billie Sue Mosiman.

Among Zelazny's later writings were the novelette *People Person* (2013), considered by many to be his best work to date, and the novel *Voicelless* (2014).

He also edited anthologies *Mirages: Tales from Authors of the Macabre* (2012), and *Dames, Booze, Guns & Gumshoes* (2013), a collection of classic crime tales; and co-edited *Shadows and Reflections: A Tribute to Roger Zelazny* with long-time friend Warren Lapine.

Zelazny cited his biggest influences as those from the pulp era – David Goodis, Cornell Woolrich, and Jim Thompson, as well as Joe R. Lansdale, Stephen King, Robert Bloch, Dean Koontz, and Donald E. Westlake, his father, Roger Zelazny, and several of the existentialists, most notably Søren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre. He also commonly acknowledged Jane Lindskold as his greatest mentor.

He had a son from a previous marriage, Corwin Random Zelazny (born 1996), who is named after characters from his father's classic *The Chronicles of Amber* series.

HBO CHIEF RESPONDS TO MARTIN'S DIGS AT *HOUSE OF THE DRAGON*

by Ryan Coleman, ew.com 11/12/2024

The landlord of the *House of the Dragon* has spoken.

HBO chief Casey Bloys addressed the network's creative partnership with best-selling fantasy author George RR Martin on November 12, weeks after the *Game of Thrones* mastermind wrote and quickly deleted a blog post that questioned some of the decision making on the show's high-profile spinoff.

"We love George, obviously," Bloys told reporters during a 2025 preview event. "George and *Game of Thrones* really changed the course of HBO, had a huge impact on it, so I want him to be happy. He's very important to me, to us."

But, he added, "When we put shows together, we're in a marriage together, and marriages can be difficult. Especially when [*House of the Dragon* showrunner Ryan Condal] is making creative decisions adapting work, it can be fraught, and like any marriage, sometimes it gets rocky. Would I prefer that everybody get along and it goes well? Of course, but it's a creative process. It's always going to have its bumps, and it's to be expected."

A spokesperson for Martin didn't immediately respond to *Entertainment Weekly's* request for comment on Bloys' remarks.

Back in September, Martin expressed concern on his blog about the potential "butterfly effect" that could result from *House of the Dragon* departing from his source material, the 2018 book *Fire & Blood*. The week before, he had also signaled that he intended to publish his thoughts on "everything that's gone wrong with *House of the Dragon*." But he never went through with the latter post, and deleted the "butterfly effect" post shortly after publication.

An HBO spokesperson said at the time, "There are few greater fans of George RR Martin and his book *Fire & Blood* than the creative team on *House of the Dragon*, both in production and at HBO. Commonly, when adapting a book for the screen, with its own format and limitations, the showrunner ultimately is required to make difficult choices about the characters and stories the audience will follow."

The statement also expressed hope that "the millions of fans the series" would be happy with what Condal and his team have cooking for season 3.

Over the years Martin has been measured but not totally silent about his issues with how his books have been translated to the screen. In 2022 he told the *New York Times* that he grew estranged from *Game of the Thrones* and "was pretty much out of the loop" by the latter seasons, despite being an executive producer and writing several major episodes.

He has also penned blog posts critical of GOT and spoken in interviews about what he thinks went right and what he thinks went wrong.

But as Bloys' comments underscored, HBO and Martin don't appear to be headed for a split anytime soon.

There are multiple *Game of Thrones* spinoff projects in the works, including a movie that's in the early stages of development.

Discussing the movie project, Bloys said Tuesday, "I think it could be fun and interesting. That's the point of development: You see, is there a story that's worthy of being in theaters and a big spectacle? I think it would be fun."

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY BEST BOOKS 2024

In early November, *Publishers Weekly* announced its list of the best books of 2024, divided into 13 categories, reported *Locusmag.com*.

The Book of Love by Kelly Link and *James* by Percival Everett were on the overall Top 10 list.

The best books in the SF/FANTASY/HORROR category are: *Memorials* by Richard Chizmar, *Metal from Heaven* by August Clarke, *Midnight Rooms* by Donya Coles, *The Mercy of Gods* by James S.A. Corey, *The Full Moon Coffee Shop* by Mai Mochizuki, translated by Jesse Kirkwood, *Moon of the Turning Leaves* by Waubgeshig Rice, and *The City in Glass* by Nghi Vo.

Titles and authors of genre interest in other categories follow.

FICTION: *A Sunny Place for Shady People* by Mariana Enriquez, translated by Megan McDowell, *Pink Slime* by Fernanda Trias, translated by Heather Cleary, and *Praise-worthy* by Alexis Wright.

MYSTERY/THRILLER: *Lost Man's Lane* by Scott Carson.

ROMANCE: *The Ornithologist's Field Guide to Love* by India Holton, and *A Novel Love Story* by Ashley Poston.

YOUNG ADULT: *Icarus* by K. Ancrum, *Songlight* by Moira Buffini, and *The Dividing Sky* by Jill Tew.

MIDDLE GRADE: *Carnival Chaos* by Tracey Baptiste, *Sylvia Doe and the 100-Year Flood* by Robert Beatty, *Island of Whispers* by Frances Hardinge, and *Impossible Creatures* by Katherine Rundell.

For more information, including the complete list, see the *PW* website.

SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, December 16, inside Flying Star Cafe on Juan Tabo Blvd NE (just north of Montgomery) to discuss *Gate Crashers* by Patrick S. Tomlinson. The group then meets January 20, 2025, to talk about *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury at one of three places – Flying Star Café, Slice & Dice Pizzeria (Wyoming & Menaul NE), or Chili's Grill (Menaul & Louisiana NE).

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 mrsansom@hotmail.com or Craig at 266-8905.



WILD CARDS TO APPEAR IN AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHYSICS

by Ian Tregillis, 11/23/2024

Here's something unusual but, I hope, also amusing.

My last several blog posts for the *Wild Cards* website documented the step-by-step development of silly, yet increasingly sophisticated, mathematical models for distilling the fundamental premise of *Wild Cards* into a concise, self-consistent physics framework. (Laying aside the unanswerable question of how any virus, extraterrestrial or otherwise, could imbue people with a panoply of physics-abusing powers.)

The work eventually reached a level where instead of writing another stupid blog post, it was worth attempting to turn the whole thing into a serious physics research article. I pitched this notion to George RR Martin and Melinda Snodgrass back in March.

I'm pleased to say that "Ergodic Lagrangian Mechanics in a Superhero Universe," by I. L. Tregillis & George RR Martin, has been accepted for publication in *American Journal of Physics*. I like to believe that when it's published in early 2025, it will be the most unique publication to fall under the *Wild Cards* umbrella.

A few points of interest:

AJP ultimately accepts for publication only one in seven submitted manuscripts, so this is a noteworthy achievement. Not to put too fine a point on it, this was a hell of a lot of work (which, admittedly, I voluntarily took upon myself for no good reason whatsoever). It was an audacious long shot, so I admit feeling pleased to have pulled it off.

AJP is a peer-reviewed physics journal focused on education and pedagogy at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The paper in question frames the whimsical question of wild card viral outcomes as the basis of an extended exercise in open-ended model development intended for advanced undergraduate physics majors with a strong math background.

AJP uses a double-blind peer-reviewing system, meaning that not only did I receive anonymized peer review reports from three separate referees (academics and researchers), but also the referees themselves received an anonymized version of the manuscript. In other words, George's presence as a co-author had no bearing on acceptance of the paper. George merits co-authorship in very much the same way that project managers who fund my real research merit inclusion on my real scientific papers.

The paper will be published open-access, so anybody will be able to read it on the *AJP* website or download the PDF.

The American Institute of Physics, the parent organization that publishes *AJP*, is keen on this paper and plans to issue a press release when it comes out. I will be interviewed by the AIP media relations team in the near future. Depending on how that evolves, the media relations team at my own employer might get involved, too. (I sort of hope not, honestly.)

The paper treats the subject seriously. But I also have

a far more casual (math-light, meme-heavy) presentation that walks a lay-audience through the same steps of model development, from first principles to the final result, in an hour. I've given that presentation to the ABQ SF Society and at Bubonicon. (I was also asked to present the talk at MileHiCon last month, but nobody showed up for it.) It's very well-received and people seem to enjoy it quite a bit. Local *Wild Carders* who haven't taken the trouble have missed out.

2024 WORD OF THE YEAR

Collins Dictionary in the UK has released its "Word of the Year" winner and shortlist for 2024, reported *Locusmag.com* in early December. The list include "romantasy," defined as "a literary genre that combines romantic fiction with fantasy." The overall word of the year is "brat," in the sense of someone with a "confident, independent and hedonistic attitude," as popularized by singer/songwriter Charli XCX's album *Brat*.

Other words on the list include "supermajor-ity," "yapping," "delulu," "brainrot," "rawdogg-ing," and "anti-tourism." Collins managing director Alex Beercroft said, "With many of this year's notable words being popularized by gen-erations Z and Alpha, we can confidently say this is the most 'brat' word of the year list ever."

TERI GARR DIES AT 79

by Victoria Edel, *People.com* 10/29/2024

Teri Garr died October 29 as the result of multiple sclerosis. She was 79 years old.

Garr acted widely in film and television, with over 140 credits. She was most famous for her comedic work in movies like 1974's *Young Frankenstein* and 1982's *Tootsie*, for which she was nominated for an Academy Award. In 2002, Garr revealed that she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

Garr died "surrounded by family and friends," publicist Heidi Schaeffer said.

Garr was born in Ohio in 1944. Both her parents worked in show business: Her father was a vaudeville performer, while her mother was a Rockette who eventually worked in costume production. The family, which also included her two older brothers, moved to New Jersey before settling in Los Angeles. Garr's father died when she was 11.

Garr started training as a dancer, with an emphasis on ballet. She dropped out of college to move to New York to focus on acting, where she studied at the Actors Studio and the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute.

Her earliest projects allowed her to use her dancing skills. She appeared in six movies starring Elvis Presley, including 1964's *Viva Las Vegas*. She also appeared on TV variety shows as a dancer.

Her first speaking role came in The Monkees 1968 film *Head*. It was written by Jack Nicholson, whom she'd met in acting class. That same year, she appeared in an episode of *Star Trek*, "Assignment: Earth," which was her first major speaking role. She also became a regular on *The Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour* in 1972.

Soon Garr began to find major success. In 1974, she appeared in Francis Ford Coppola's thriller *The Conversation*. That same year, she starred in the Mel Brooks horror comedy *Young Frankenstein* as Inga, Dr. Frankenstein's assistant – a role she secured with some help from her mom.

"My mother was the wardrobe woman on *Young Frankenstein*," she told PBS in 2012. "I asked her if they'd finished casting, and she said she didn't know." Garr asked her agent to get her an audition, and after four rounds of auditions, she was cast. "It was unbelievable."

Three years later, she starred in Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, which let her flex her dramatic skills. Then in 1982, she starred alongside Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie*. Film critic Pauline Kael called Garr "the funniest neurotic dizzy dame on the screen." She received an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actress for the film, but lost to her *Tootsie* costar Jessica Lange.

Garr's other major film roles at the time included 1981's *One From the Heart*, 1983's *Mr. Mom*, 1985's *After Hours* and 1992's *Mom and Dad Save the World*.

On television, she appeared on shows like *McCloud*, *M*A*S*H*, *The Bob Newhart Show*, *The Odd Couple*, *Maude* and *Barnaby Jones*. She hosted *Saturday Night Live* three times, in 1980, 1983 and 1985. Garr was a frequent guest on both *The Tonight Show* Starring Johnny Carson and *Late Night with David Letterman*.

Later roles for Garr included parts in *Casper Meets Wendy*, the *Designing Women* spinoff series *Women of the House*, *Dick* and *Ghost World*. She also appeared on *Friends* as Phoebe's birth mother.

Garr revealed in 2002 that during the 1990s she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She first began noticing symptoms while filming *One From the Heart* and *Tootsie*.

She released a memoir, *Speedbumps: Flooring It Through Hollywood*, in 2006, where she opened up about her illness. "MS is a sneaky disease," she wrote in an excerpt published by *People Magazine*. "Like some of my boyfriends, it has a tendency to show up at the most awkward times and then disappear entirely. It would take over 20 years for doctors to figure out what was wrong. Sometimes they mentioned MS, but all the tests came back clear. Then the symptoms would fade away and I'd forget about it, sort of."

Garr became a national ambassador for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and national chair for the Society's Women Against MS program. She retired from acting in 2011.

Garr married John O'Neil in 1993. They adopted daughter Molly. The couple split in 1996. She is survived by daughter Molly O'Neil, 30, and grandson Tyryn, 6.

WASHINGTON POST'S BEST 2024 SFF

The *Washington Post* included numerous genre works on their Best of the Year lists.

The Science Fiction and Fantasy list featured 11 titles chosen by their critic Charlie Jane Anders:

The Fox Wife by Yangsze Choo, *Metal From Heaven*

by August Clarke, *Annie Bot* by Sierra Greer, *The Wings Upon Her Back* by Samantha Mills, *The Butcher of the Forest* by Premez Mohamed, *The Tusks of Extinction* by Ray Naylor, *The Mars House* by Natasha Pulley, *The Practice, the Horizon, and the Chain* by Sofia Samatar, *Ninetails* by Sally Wen Mao, *Ours* by Phillip B. Williams, and *Someone You Can Build a Nest In* by John Wiswell.

NEW POETRY & COMICS NEBULA AWARDS

In late November, the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers Association (SFWA) announced the addition of Poetry and Comics categories to the Nebula Awards, reported [Locusmag.com](#)

Award eligibility begins in January 2025, and the first awards for the new categories will be presented at the 2026 Nebula Awards Ceremony.

In other news, SFWA is hiring for a full time position of Office Assistant, and a contract position of Nebula Awards Project Manager. They're also looking for members for the Hiring and Fundraising Committees.

KING HAS NEW BOOK: *NEVER FLINCH*

by Maureen Lee Lenker, [ew.com 11/18/2024](#)

If you feel like you're living in a horror movie, you're not alone – but why not escape to a fictional scary story?

Stephen King has long been the master of horror, and he returns with another terrifying read, *Never Flinch*, which will hit shelves on May 27, 2025. *Entertainment Weekly* can report the novel is told from the perspective of the mysterious Trig, a man with vengeance on his mind.

Never Flinch features intertwining storylines — one about a killer on a diabolical revenge mission and another about a vigilante stalking a feminist celebrity speaker. The novel features a host of familiar characters, including King's beloved Holly Gibney and gospel singer Sista Bessie, as well as riveting new faces that include a villain addicted to murder.

"When the Buckeye City Police Department receives a disturbing letter from a person threatening to 'kill thirteen innocents and one guilty' in 'an act of atonement for the needless death of an innocent man,' Detective Izzy Jaynes has no idea what to think," reads the book's description. "Are fourteen citizens about to be slaughtered in an unhinged act of retribution? As the investigation unfolds, Izzy realizes that the letter writer is deadly serious, and she turns to her friend Holly Gibney for help.

"Meanwhile, controversial and outspoken women's rights activist Kate McKay is embarking on a multi-state lecture tour, drawing packed venues of both fans and detractors," it continues. "Someone who vehemently opposes Kate's message of female empowerment is targeting her and disrupting her events. At first, no one is hurt, but the stalker is growing bolder, and Holly is hired to be Kate's bodyguard — a challenging task with a headstrong employer and a determined adversary driven by wrath and his belief in his own righteousness."

Eventually, the twin narratives converge, resulting in a spectacular, chilling climax.

BURTON GETS HUMANITIES MEDAL

Actor and literacy advocate LeVar Burton was one of 19 recipients of the National Humanities Medals, reports [Locusmag.com](#). The 2022 and 2023 medals were presented by President Biden on October 21 in a private ceremony at the White House.

The recipients include writers, historians, educators, and filmmakers. Presentation of the medals was followed by a reception "with remarks by President Biden, First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, National Endowment for the Arts Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD, and National Endowment for the Humanities Chair Shelly C. Lowe (Navajo)."

Lowe said, "The National Humanities Medal recipients have enriched our world through writing that moves and inspires us; scholarship that enlarges our understanding of the past; and through their dedication to educating, informing, and giving voice to communities and histories often overlooked."

The Medals honor "an individual or organization whose work has deepened the nation's understanding of the human experience, broadened citizens' engagement with history or literature, or helped preserve and expand Americans' access to cultural resources." They are given by the National Endowment for the Humanities in conjunction with the National Medals of Arts.

Burton is best known for his role as Kunta Kinte in the TV series *Roots* (1977) and his portrayal of Geordi La Forge on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994), and as host of children's program *Reading Rainbow* (1983-2006), instilling a love of literature into generations of young readers. From 2017 to 2024 he hosted popular podcast *LeVar Burton Reads*, featuring stories by writers including Ray Bradbury, Octavia E. Butler, Stephen King, and Nnedi Okorafor, among many others.

TIM SULLIVAN DIES

Author, actor, critic, and filmmaker Tim Sullivan died November 10 in hospice care in Newport News, VA. He was 76 years old.

Timothy Robert Sullivan was born June 9, 1948, in Bangor, ME. He studied literature and got his degree at Florida Atlantic University, and spent time in Philadelphia, Washington DC, and Southern California.

He began publishing SF with "Tachyon Rage" in 1977 (as Timothy Robert Sullivan). "Zeke" (1981) was a Nebula Awards finalist.

His first novels were tie-ins to the *V* sci-fi TV miniseries, beginning with *V: The Florida Project* (1985); he wrote seven installments in all. First original novel *Destiny's End* appeared in 1988. Other works include *The Parasite War* (1989), *The Martian Viking* (1991), and *Lords of Creation* (1992), and installments in the *Mutants Amok* series with David Bischoff (under the name Mark Grant). He also edited anthologies *Tropical Chills* (1988) and *Cold Shocks* (1991). He was a book reviewer for the *Washington Post* and an awards judge as well.

Sullivan was well known as an actor in low-budget SF and horror movies, including *Twilight of the Dogs* (1995), which he co-wrote. He wrote and directed

Vampyre Femmes (1999), and had roles in *Eyes of the Werewolf* (1999), *The Mark of Dracula* (2000), *Hollywood Mortuary* (2000) and *Deadly Scavengers* (2001), frequently collaborating with director Ron Ford.

For more, see his entry in the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction.

ALASKAN BOOK BAN UNCONSTITUTIONAL

In an October victory for freedom-to-read activists, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District in Alaska has agreed to pay \$89,000 for indiscriminately removing 56 books from library shelves, reported Locusmag.com in early November.

In November of 2023, the American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska, the Northern Justice Project, and eight local plaintiffs filed a suit against the district for the removal of these books from school libraries without due process. However, the district maintains that each book was reviewed carefully before banning and that their decisions were sound. The books are to be returned to school libraries.

Titles removed included Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, and many books that included or centered on LGBTQ+ characters. The removal of these titles was referred to by Federal Judge Sharon Gleason as a "suppression of ideas."

GREG HILDEBRANDT DIES

Artist Greg Hildebrandt died October 31, reported Locusmag.com. He was 85 years old.

He frequently collaborated with his identical twin brother Tim (1939-2006) as "The Brothers Hildebrandt," achieving fame for their illustrations of works by J.R.R. Tolkien, frequently featured in calendars. They also illustrated a 1975 edition of Tolkien's *Smith of Wootton Major and Farmer Giles of Ham*.

Gregory J. Hildebrandt was born January 23, 1939, in Detroit, MI. Both Hildebrandts joined the Army Reserve after high school, then attended art school briefly before dropping out to become working artists. They worked on animated and documentary films and illustrated children's books before moving to their popular calendar work in the 1970s. The success of those projects led them to thriving careers as cover artists, illustrating works by Terry Brooks, Lester del Rey, Anne McCaffrey, and more. They also painted movie posters, including for *Star Wars* and the 1978 animated version of *The Lord of the Rings*. Their illustrated novel *Urshurak* (1979), co-written with Jerry Nichols, showcased their own ideas for a fantasy film.

The brothers began to pursue separate careers in the 1980s, with Greg mostly illustrating children's books, before collaborating again in the 1990s for Marvel and DC comics and more cover art. After Tim's death in 2006, Greg largely retired from making art.

Some of his work is collected in *The Art of the Brothers Hildebrandt* (1979), *30 Years of Magic: Greg Hildebrandt II* (1993), *Star Wars: The Art of the Brothers Hildebrandt* (1997), and *Greg and Tim Hildebrandt: The Tolkien Years* (2001).

ZEMECKIS SAYS *ROGER RABBIT 2* WILL NEVER HAPPEN

by Ryan Coleman, ew.com 11/01/2024

Fans of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* know that Jessica Rabbit isn't bad – she's "just drawn that way." But according to director Robert Zemeckis, the hit movie will never get a sequel because its animated femme fatale is simply too risqué.

On a recent episode of the Happy Sad Confused podcast, Zemeckis lamented, "There's a good script [for a sequel] at Disney, but here's the thing: The current Disney would never make *Roger Rabbit* today. They can't make a movie with Jessica in it." He added that the sequel script, which was penned by original *Roger Rabbit* writers Peter S. Seamen and Jeffrey Price, "isn't ever going to see the light of day, as good as it is."

If it sounds implausible that Disney would hold up a no-brainer follow-up to a box office smash, Zemeckis offered this: "I mean, look what they did to Jessica at the theme park. They trussed her up in a trench coat, you know."

If anyone would know the chances of another *Roger Rabbit* film getting the green light, it would seem to be Zemeckis, who managed to get the genre-bending, form-exploding original a PG rating in 1988, despite its copious amounts of eyebrow-raising content.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit is based on the 1981 novel *Who Censored Roger Rabbit*, and tells the story across live action and animation of Eddie Valiant (Bob Hoskins), a private eye with a grudge against toons (animated beings) who must nevertheless work to get the titular Roger Rabbit (voiced by Charles Fleischer) exonerated for a murder he didn't commit. One of the film's standout characters is the seductive Jessica Rabbit, a provocatively dressed, Veronica Lake-esque lounge singer breathily voiced by Kathleen Turner.

Zemeckis elaborated on the miraculous timing that allowed *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* to go forward in the first place. "We were able to make it right at the time when Disney was ready to rebuild itself," he said. "We were there when that new regime came in, and they were full of energy, and they wanted to do it. I kept saying, and I sincerely say this, I do believe this, 'I'm making *Roger Rabbit* the way I believe Walt Disney would have made it.' The reason I say that is because Walt Disney never made any of his movies for children. He always made them for adults. And that's what I decided to do with *Roger Rabbit*."

Rather than trying to temper the film's racier elements, Zemeckis embraced them. And he knew before the film was even released that this gamble would pay off. "One time we did a test preview with just moms and kids," he recalled. "I was terrified because these kids were like 5, 6 years old. They absolutely were riveted to the movie. And I realized that the thing is, kids get everything. They understand. They get it. Walt Disney never talked down to children in his movies. He treated the kids like they were adults."

Speculation about a *Roger Rabbit* sequel has swirled

for years. J.J. Abrams has talked about being approached by Steven Spielberg (whose Amblin Entertainment co-produced the first film) in 1989 to write a sequel. "I actually have some storyboards for a *Roger Rabbit* short," Abrams said. "Honestly, we never really got to that phase [where it got serious]. We were writing an outline, but it honestly went away before it was anything. This was a long time ago. Zemeckis probably would've been a producer on it."

Then there was the intended prequel film *Roger Rabbit II: The Toon Platoon*, which entered development the same year but died in 1990. *Toon Platoon* would have set Roger in the early 1940s attempting to track down his real parents, only to get side-tracked fighting Nazis in World War II.

In 2016, Zemeckis called Seaman and Price's sequel script "magnificent," explaining that it follows Roger and Jessica "into the next few years of period film, moving on from film noir to the world of the 1950s." Acknowledging Hoskins' death in 2014, Zemeckis conceded that "it would be very hard to do, but we would do a digital Bob Hoskins." But even then, he noted that "the current corporate Disney culture has no interest in *Roger*, and they certainly don't like Jessica at all."

STRANGER THINGS 5 SETS PREMIERE DATE

by Meaghan Darwish, [tvinsider.com](https://www.tvinsider.com) 11/06/2024

Stranger Things Season 5 will officially arrive in 2025. Netflix unveiled that the global mega-hit will drop its eight-episode final season in the upcoming year, nearly 10 years after it debuted in 2016.

The news comes timed to *Stranger Things* Day, which commemorates November 6, 1983, the date Will Byers (Noah Schnapp) went missing in the Upside Down after being kidnapped by a Demogorgon. The date also marks the introduction of Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown), an extremely powerful young girl who teams up with Will's friends Mike (Finn Wolfhard), Dustin (Gaten Matarazzo), and Lucas (Caleb McLaughlin) to find him.

The series, a love letter to '80s classic genre films, has captured the attention of millions, as strange events unfold in the fictional Midwestern town of Hawkins, Indiana. In addition to Season 5's premiere announcement, Netflix also unveiled the titles for all eight episodes of the forthcoming final chapter.

Among the installments are: Episode 1 "The Crawl," Episode 2 "The Vanishing of..." Episode 3 "The Turnbow Trap," Episode 4 "Sorcerer," Episode 5 "Shock Jock," Episode 6 "Escape from Camazotz," Episode 7 "The Bridge," and Episode 8 "The Rightside Up."

Brown, Wolfhard, Matarazzo, McLaughlin, and Schnapp will all be back for the final chapter alongside Winona Ryder, David Harbour, Joe Keery, Natalia Dyer, Charlie Heaton, Sadie Sink, Maya Hawke, and more. Season 5 will also see the addition of *The Terminator* franchise's Linda Hamilton in a new role.

While loglines for the episodes remain unknown, there's a lot to be theorized from the revealing titles. Additionally, an exact premiere date or month has yet to be announced. While fans await more news on Season 5,

they can also anticipate the expansion of the *Stranger Things* universe, including the stage production of *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*, coming to Broadway in 2025 and currently playing on London's West End. An animated spinoff series is also on the horizon.

BUBONICON 56 CLOSE TO HOTEL CONTRACT

While Bubonicon is close to having a hotel contract, not all parties have signed it as of deadline, December 8. Thus weekend passes for Bubonicon 56 will not go on sale until early January 2025. Per the norm of the last few years, we will be keeping an eye on Covid, Flu & RSV numbers. Most likely, the August 22-24, 2025 convention will be confirmed to be at the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown. Sleeping rooms will go up to \$159.00 per night.

Special guests for Bubonicon 56 are Delilah S. Dawson and Joe Haldeman, Toastmaster is Jeffe Kennedy, and John Sumrow is Guest Artist. Con chair is Craig Chrissinger, with Jessica Coyle and Mandy Self again acting as assistant chairs.

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

REVIEW ROUND-UP

Somewhere Beyond the Sea by TJ Klune, 2024 Tor, hc \$28.99, 400 pages.
Review by Jessica Coyle

Somewhere Beyond the Sea by TJ Klune is the much-anticipated follow up to Klune's massive bestseller *The House in the Cerulean Sea*. The story picks up with orphanage Headmaster Arthur Parnassus and the love of his life, former Department in Charge of Magical Youth (DICOMY) caseworker Linus Baker, living a happy and fulfilling life with the six magical children in their care. Arthur is summoned from their island to the city to testify about his past with the Departments in Charge of Magical Youth and Adults before a government tribunal. The fallout from this deposition leads to the DICOMY sending another caseworker to the island to investigate the school and decide if the children can stay in Arthur and Linus' care. There is also the added complication of an undocumented young Yeti joining the orphanage that Arthur and Linus must protect from DICOMY discovery.

Somewhere Beyond the Sea is an absolute delight of a novel. The world that TJ Klune has created is just a lovely place to spend some time. The care that the book's found family and their friends show each other makes this book a wonderful escape from daily life. I highly recommend this book.

The Drowning House by Cherie Priest, 2024 Poisoned Pen Press, tp \$16.99, 432 pages.

Review by Jessica Coyle

The Drowning House is the latest gothic mystery novel from award-winning author Cherie Priest (*The Clockwork Century* series). The story follows childhood friends Melissa and Leo who have grown apart as their lives have gone in very different. Their only remaining connection is through Simon Culpepper, the boy who brought them together as

children. When Simon disappears in the aftermath of a terrible storm, his friends return to the isolated island where they spent their childhood summers. The only clue they find to Simon's disappearance is a sinister house washed up on the beach outside his home. The more Melissa and Leo learn about the mysterious house and its connection to Simon's family, the more they realize it is the linchpin for everything that they are trying to solve.

Priest is one of my favorite speculative fiction authors, and *The Drowning House* is an excellent addition to her bibliography. Melissa and Leo are both well-developed characters whose foibles and views of the past drive the story. Simon Culpepper, their missing friend, is equally well-developed even in his absence. The book's mystery drives the story forward with an ever-increasing low level of horror that Priest is known for in her Gothic novels. I highly recommend this book to those who enjoy mysteries, gothic horror, and her other books.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS —

AUGUST 2024: B'CON SNEAK & TEFFEAU

A group of 33 people were present for the Bubonicon 55 preview, and a visit from local author Lauren C. Tefteau on her forthcoming novella, *A Hunger With No Name*.

Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle showed the programming schedule and the t-shirt art to everyone. Craig noted that there would be a Community Table in the Dealers Room; and that Michael Cassutt, Liz Danforth and Walter Jon Williams had been added to the weekend.

Lauren C. Tefteau said that she now has 20 short stories published, and noted, "I kind of found my way into climate fiction, solar punk and such."

Her novella is coming out in September from the University of Tampa Press, which is developing a publishing program aimed at the intersection of speculative fiction and literacy. "Mine is their second novella," she said. "It's been a great experience, and I'm glad this story found a home."

Tefteau then read from the beginning of the novella.

"It's an environmental fantasy, really more science fiction because there's no magic in the world," she stated. "But there is mythology. It's a low-tech world after a civilization collapse. The mythology is based in archetypes and fables that teach lessons."

Asked about the nature of the world, Tefteau said, "There is tension between magic and technology, and culture based on existence and survival versus a culture of exploitation. I've described it as an echo version of *Metropolis* set in a desert."

Before closing, Tefteau said she also has a short story in the August 11 online publication, *Sunday Morning Transport* - and will have a fantasy story coming out in *Sun Rising*.

SEPTEMBER 2024: B'CON 55 REPORT

Thirty-three people listened as Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle gave a report on Bubonicon 55. The 2024 convention had 751 people (more than in 2022 and 2023), raised the most money ever for charities in Friday's auction, and had a "profit" of approximately \$4,300-\$4,600. In response to an annual comment in the suggestion box for "Belly dancers with snakes," someone joked, "Belly dancers with swords, or belly-dancing Sasquatch with a snake."

No one present at the meeting had gone to the Scottish Worldcon or DragonCon this year.

OCTOBER 2024: RADFORD & ELECTIONS

Skeptic Benjamin Radford did a presentation on "Sinister Syringes: A History of Needle Spiking Panics" to 27 people, "I'm probably one of five people in the world who can speak on the history of needle spiking as it's such a niche subject."

In late 2021, a panic swept through the United Kingdom over a rise in "needle spiking" that put women on high alert. Police in Nottinghamshire reported 15 such incidents, and the *New York Times* called it "a new king of assault" on October 22 that year. Radford joked the early suspect he obviously thought of was the character Pinhead.

"Scarelore started as people took to social media to warn others about the danger," he said. "In recent years, TikTok and Twitter hosted viral videos spreading rumors about dangers and threats - particularly targeted at women and children."

As news and social media spread scary stories, police investigated. No other offenses were linked to being injected. There also were protests and petitions demanding the needle jabbers be stopped, even going to British Parliament.

"Panics spur mysteries," Radford said. "Who was doing it and why? What drugs were being used? And most importantly why was no one being caught or arrested?"

Experts agreed that drink spiking was an unrelated but real problem, that it was possible a few incidents did happen, and that a phobia around needles exists for some people.

Eventually reported attacks in the UK waned, even as needle spiking jumped to the United States and France.

"The rash of incidents was not without precedent," he noted. "In 1989, dozens of women in New York City claimed to have been attacked with needles while in public. Of course, in the 1980s, there was fear of AIDS and how it spread. The assumption that the New York City attackers were African-American is not a coincidence - it fit preconceived notions of criminality. Similarly in the UK, the assumption the club attackers were male also fit preconceived notions of threat."

In conclusion, Radford said, "The rumors turned out to be false, yet frightened millions of people. The needle spikers will return. Nobody may be stalking public places, but fear of 'the other' always exists."

CLUB BUSINESS: In elections for 2025 officers, Eric Klammer was re-elected as Moderator, Tanley McMullan was selected as Alternator, and Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle were re-elected as Co-Executive Secretaries. And for the December Holiday Party, everyone decided to do a "normal" potluck with a sign-up sheet at the November meeting.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

- WELL, IT'S BEEN AN "INTERESTING" COUPLE OF MONTHS... We got to Milehicon for the first time since 2019, and visited the Maurice Sendak exhibition at DAM and the new location of Who Else Books; we enjoyed seeing Colin Hay and Men at Work in Santa Fe the day after we got back from Denver; and like a lot of Americans we were stunned by the Election (and depressed) the first week of November. Luckily our cats, Gizmo and Kaylee, seem to be just fine, and we can report *Moana 2* is fun, entertaining and has good songs.

- HAPPY HOLIDAYS! Try to enjoy your Christmas, Hanukkah, Midwinter, Kwanzaa, Boxing Day, and/or New Year's. Who knows what will happen in 2025, and with the Middle East and Ukraine.

- IT'S NOW 44 YEARS since John Lennon's murder and his loss still is felt. And I soon will be 63 years old. "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)," "All You Need Is Love," and "Give Peace A Chance."

- See you in February. Be well, stay safe, keep strong. -- CWC