



ASFACTS 2025

KIND OF WARM FOR FEBRUARY ISSUE



LOCUS 2024 RECOMMENDED READING LIST

It's time for *Locus Magazine*'s annual list of reading recommendations. Published in *Locus Magazine*'s February 2025 issue, the list is assembled by *Locus* editors, columnists, outside reviewers, and other professionals and well-known critics of genre fiction and non-fiction.

Of interest to Bubonicon and Southwest fans are:

SF NOVELS: *The Mercy of Gods* by James S.A. Corey, and *Space Oddity* by Catherynne M. Valente. FANTASY NOVELS: *Navola* by Paolo Bacigalupi, *A Sorceress Comes to Call* by T. Kingfisher (Ursula Vernon), and *Somewhere Beyond the Sea* by T.J. Klune. HORROR NOVELS: *The Angel of Indian Lake* by Stephen Graham Jones. YOUNG ADULT NOVELS: *Sheine Lende* by Darcie Little Badger.

NON-FICTION: *Star Trek: Open a Channel* by Nana Visitor. ILLUSTRATED & ART BOOKS: *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* by Susanna Clarke, illustrated by Charles Vess.

NOVELLAS: *What Feasts at Night* by T. Kingfisher.

NOVELETTES: "Reduce! Reuse! Recycle!" by T.J. Klune.

SHORT STORIES: "Judas Iscariot Didn't Kill Himself: A Story in Fragments" by James S.A. Corey, "Spread the Word" by Delilah S. Dawson, "Parthenogenesis" by Stephen Graham Jones, "Three Faces of a Beheading" by Arkady Martine, "Median" by Kelly Robson, and "The Empty Ones" by Vivian Shaw.

ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP PLANNED FOR THURS-SAT, APRIL 10-12

The 48th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship is scheduled for Thursday-Saturday, April 10-12, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales. Special guest is Darcie Little Badger of Texas, with Colorado's Connie Willis as Mistress of Ceremonies.

A campus tradition since 1977, the Lectureship annually draws well-known authors to visit ENMU and discuss the interactions of science and the humanities. The theme of this year's Lectureship is "Worlds Beyond."

Williamson, long-time SF author and professor of English passed away in 2006. Williamson's novella, "The Ultimate Earth," won a 2001 Hugo Award, and his last novel, *The Stonehenge Gate*, was released in 2005.

Little Badger, born in 1987, is a writer and Earth scientist. She is a member of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas. She earned a PhD. in oceanography at Texas A&M University, writing her dissertation on the genomics of *Karenia brevis*, a species of plankton that causes toxic red

tide - receiving a Ford Dissertation Fellowship and TAMU's Chapman Award for Graduate Student Research.

Her novels include *Elatsoe* (2020), *A Snake Falls to Earth*, and *Sheine Lende*. Her short fiction has appeared in *Strange Horizons*, *Fantasy Magazine*, *Mythic Delirium*, and *The Dark Magazine*, among others.

Other participants confirmed so far include Darynda Jones, Arkady Martine, Diana Rowland, Vivian Shaw, Melinda M. Snodgrass, John Stith, Lauren C. Tefteau, Ian Tregillis, Sarena Ulibarri, Walter Jon Williams, Cordelia Willis and Courtney Willis.

Cordelia Willis opens the Lectureship festivities with a forensic talk on Thursday, April 10. That will be followed by a Carnival Cantina with student organizations.

On Friday, April 11, Little Badger will give a Guest of Honor address after an introduction by Willis at a Luncheon in the Campus Union Ballroom, with seating starting at 11:30 am. The Luncheon cost is yet to be determined.

The Lectureship finishes up Saturday morning with a Creative Writing Workshop led by Connie Willis.

Updates at enmu.edu or david.sweeten@enmu.edu.

NM'S T. JACKSON KING DIES

NM writer T. Jackson King died December 3, 2024, in Santa Fe. He was 76 years old, reported Locusmag.com.

Thomas Jackson King, Jr. was born May 24, 1948, in Houston, TX. He was a journalist, activist, and archaeologist.

King started his writing career as an anti-war journalist, publishing the first English-language underground newspaper in Japan, and organizing protests against the US War in Vietnam in Japan, Tennessee, and Washington, DC. A lifelong SF reader, and compelled by a need to write the stories in his head, he began to write fiction at 38, with his first novel *Retread Shop* appearing in 1988. His *Vigilante*

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Local author Brian Guthrie talks about bringing *Fall: Future Worlds 2* to Audible.
- **March 14:** The Club Auction with Bob Vardeman & Patricia Rogers as your auctioneers. Look for 2-7 donations, plus quarters and dollar bills.
- **April 4 - One Week Early:** Hoping for a science talk... Plus the Spring issue of *ASFACTS*.
- **April 25:** Bubonicon 57 Guest Nominations...
- **May 9:** Program unknown at press time...
- **June 13:** Again, program unknown. Maybe our Summer Movie Night?

Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. **Darth Vader**, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Contact: (505) 266-8905 or via cwcraig@nmia.com. *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for ABQ SF Society, *SITHFACTS* each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Sunday, March 30.
2025 Club Officers: Craig Chrissinger & Jessica Coyle, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Eric Klammer, Moderator. Tanley McMullan, Alternator. Cupid, holiday host. **Bubonicon Chair:** Craig Chrissinger (505) 559-0931.

series began with *Star Vigilante* (2012) and continued with *Nebula Vigilante* (2013), *Galactic Vigilante* (2013), and *Anarchate Vigilante* (2014). The Aliens series includes *Earth vs. Aliens* (2014), *Humans vs. Aliens* (2015), *Freedom vs. Aliens* (2015), and *Aliens vs. Humans* (2015). YA novel *Little Brother's World* (2010) was followed by sequel *Genocide Illegal* (2015). Standalones include *The Gaeen Enchantment* (2012), *Galactic Avatar* (2013), *Star of Islam* (2013), and *The Memory Singer* (2014). He co-wrote 1996's *Starbridge: Ancestor's World* with Ann Crispin.

Some of his stories were collected in *Judgment Day and Other Dreams* (2009), and his poetry in *Mother Earth's Stretch Marks* (2009).

King served as election committee chair for the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Association, and wrote articles for *The SFWA Bulletin* and *SFWA Handbook*. He also was a juror for the Philip K. Dick Award in 1996. He created and moderated Shoptalk, a group where SF/F writers could share details of contracts and royalty statements.

Kevin J. Anderson, Colorado author and Bubonicon 25 co-GoH, recalls, "Early in my career Tom King was a great friend and information resource... We learned a lot of the business together. He always believed in his work, but with the vagaries of the publishing world, he dropped out of sight. I was very happy to receive a surprise email from him a decade ago to let me know he was back and happily publishing his own work as an indie author. Tom never stopped writing, even with a recent spate of health issues. Alas, we'll never get to read his next novel."

King was a Bubonicon participant 2012-2018. For more, see King's entry in the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, and his memorial at the SFWA website.

DEPT OF ED DISMISSES "BOOK BANS"

Signaling a change in policy under the Trump administration, the Department of Education announced sweeping changes to its policies regarding school libraries and local book removals, likely to impact genre books and young readership, reported *Locusmag.com* in late January.

The DOE's Office for Civil Rights has dismissed 11 complaints "related to 'book bans'" and has rescinded guidance for navigating book removal in the context of civil rights laws. Additionally, the Office for Civil Rights will no longer employ a "book ban coordinator" to investigate instances of challenged books for civil rights compliance.

These new efforts were announced January 24, via a DOE press release entitled "U.S. Department of Education Ends Biden's Book Ban Hoax." The press release asserts that the Biden Administration "amplified [a] false narrative" that students' rights were being infringed by the removal of challenged and difficult materials.

The release states, "Attorneys quickly confirmed that books are not being 'banned,' but that school districts, in consultation with parents and community stakeholders, have established commonsense processes by which to evaluate and remove age-inappropriate materials."

The DOE's shift takes place against a context of sustained, large-scale challenges to library materials from parents and activist groups, largely from the period after 2020. PEN America, for instance, has reported 15,940 instances of book bans across 415 school districts since July 2021,

though PEN's data has been contested by conservative researchers. Books featuring themes of sex, gender, and race have been particularly challenged; in 2023, the *Washington Post* analyzed book-removal petitions and found that 61% were challenged on the basis of "sexual" content.

On January 24, Authors Against Book Bans issued a response to the DOE's claims. The response criticizes the press release as a "distortion of the intended work of the [Office of Civil Rights]" and of its duty to protect "civil rights and students' freedoms in our nation's schools." Authors Against Book Bans, established in 2024, has 3,800 members, including genre figures like Dhonielle Clayton, Lev Grossman, Emily St. John Mandel, V.E. Schwab, and Maggie Tokuda-Hall, among others.

In a larger genre context, works of fantasy, science fiction, and horror have been frequently impacted by the petitions and removals over the past four years. Entries from Sarah J. Maas's *A Court of Thrones and Roses* romantasy series frequently rank amongst the most-banned books, as does Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, historically a target of book banning efforts, has also been challenged anew.

Several authors in the genre community have responded publicly to book bans and attempts. Last year, Atwood responded with an essay "Go Ahead and Ban My Book," in which she argued that the bans would only draw attention to controversial works. Cory Doctorow speculated that the new norm of challenging children's books has encouraged a form of "middleman censorship," in which publishers and librarians are made preemptively self-censor in ways similar to the midcentury "Comics code" era.

According to PEN, Stephen King books have been "banned" a total of 173 times during the 2023-2024 school year; King, in response to a sweeping Florida ban that included many of his horror novels, tweeted, "Florida has banned 23 of my books. What the f[***]?"

BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, February 17, at Flying Star Café on Juan Tabo NE (just north of Montgomery) to discuss *How To Become the Dark Lord and Die Trying* by Django Wexler. The group then focuses on *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler on Monday, March 17 at either Flying Star Café, Cocina Azul, or Slice & Dice Pizzeria.

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the third Monday of each month. Books for discussion are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on selected novels at Page One Books, Mountain Run Shopping Center. For info, contact Leah at msransom@hotmail.com or Craig 505-266-8905.

DIRECTOR DAVID LYNCH DIES

by Jake Coyle, AP News 1-16-2025

David Lynch, the filmmaker celebrated for his uniquely dark and dreamlike vision in such movies as *Blue Velvet* and *Mulholland Drive* and the TV series *Twin Peaks*, died January 16, just days before his 79th birthday.

The cause of death was cardiac arrest due to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Last summer, Lynch had

revealed that he was diagnosed with emphysema and would not be leaving his home because of fears of contracting the coronavirus or “even a cold.”

Lynch broke through in the 1970s with the surreal *Eraserhead* and rarely failed to startle and inspire audiences, peers and critics in the following decades. His notable releases ranged from the neo-noir *Mulholland Drive* to the skewed gothic of *Blue Velvet* to the eclectic and eccentric *Twin Peaks*, which won three Golden Globes, two Emmys and even a Grammy for its theme music.

“*Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive* and *The Elephant Man* defined him as a singular, visionary dreamer who directed films that felt handmade,” director Steven Spielberg said. Spielberg noted that he had cast Lynch as director John Ford in his 2022 film *The Fabelmans*.

Lynch, who was married four times and had four children, never won a competitive Academy Award. He received nominations for directing *The Elephant Man*, *Blue Velvet* and *Mulholland Drive* and, in 2019, was presented an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement.

Actors regularly appearing in his movies included Kyle McLachlan, Laura Dern, Naomi Watts and Richard Farnsworth. McLachlan, who starred in *Dune*, *Blue Velvet* and *Twin Peaks*, said Lynch “was in touch with something the rest of us wish we could get to.”

Lynch was a Missoula, Montana, native who moved around often with his family as a child and would feel most at home away from the classroom, free to explore his fascination with the world. Lynch’s mother was an English teacher and his father a research scientist with the U.S. Agriculture Department. He was raised in the Pacific Northwest before the family settled in Virginia.

“David’s always had a cheerful disposition and sunny personality, but he’s always been attracted to dark things,” a childhood friend is quoted as saying in *Room to Dream*, a 2018 book by Lynch and Kristine McKenna. “That’s one of the mysteries of David.”

He had an early gift for visual arts and a passion for travel and discovery. He dropped out of several colleges before enrolling in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, beginning a decade-long apprenticeship as a maker of short movies. He was working as a printmaker in 1966 when he made his first film, a four-minute short named “Six Men Getting Sick (Six Times).” That and other work landed Lynch a place at the American Film Institute.

There, he began working on what would become his 1977 feature debut, *Eraserhead*. The film, featuring Jack Nance with high-rising hair to rival the Bride of Frankenstein, took four years to make and debuted in theaters at midnight. It took nearly as long to develop a cult following and the interest of Hollywood. Stanley Kubrick became an advocate and George Lucas approached him about directing a *Star Wars* film. Another fan was Mel Brooks, who produced Lynch’s next movie, *The Elephant Man*.

The Elephant Man, about Joseph Merrick, a severely deformed man who became a circus attraction in 19th century Europe, earned eight Oscar nominations. Producer Dino De Laurentiis then hired Lynch to direct a big-budget adaptation of Frank Herbert’s *Dune*. The film was a flop with critics and audiences – Lynch described producers’ trims and tweaks in post-production as “a nightmare” – but, still, it became a cult film over the years.

After that came 1986’s *Blue Velvet*, starring Isabella

Rossellini, Dennis Hopper, Laura Dern and McLachlan. Kicked off by the Bobby Vinton song, the detective story that twists its way to Hopper’s oxygen-mask maniac, peeled back the superficial veneer of Reagan-era America.

In 1990, Lynch debuted both the Palme d’Or-winning *Wild at Heart*, with Nicolas Cage and Dern, and the radical TV series *Twin Peaks*. The surreal show, about the mysterious death of high-schooler Laura Palmer, was a sensation, earning five Emmy nominations for its first season.

Twin Peaks, which Lynch created with writer Mark Frost, remains one of the most enigmatic and singularly director-driven series to ever find a wide American audience on television. It clung to Lynch, too, who returned to it with the 1992 prequel *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* and a 2017 limited series for Showtime.

After the nocturnal noir *Lost Highway* (1997) and the comparatively simple road movie *The Straight Story*, starring Richard Farnsworth as a 73-year-old man who travels cross country by lawn mower, Lynch directed his last masterpiece, 2001’s *Mulholland Drive*. The film, starring Laura Elena Harring and Naomi Watts as young actors in Hollywood, was assembled out of a failed TV pilot. But that restructuring only enhanced the movie’s intoxicating puzzle of a doppelganger murder mystery.

In 2005’s *Lynch On Lynch*, edited by Chris Rodley, Lynch addressed some of the mysteries at the heart of his work. “The more you throw black into a color, the more dreamy it gets. It’s like a little egress. You can go into it, and because it keeps on continuing to be dark, the mind kicks in, and a lot of things that are going on in there become manifest. And you start seeing what you’re afraid of. You start seeing what you love. It becomes like a dream.”

DIAMOND COMICS DECLARES BANKRUPTCY

Diamond Comic Distributors filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in US court in January 2025, reported *Locusmag.com* in mid-January. They have secured \$41 million in financing from JP Morgan Chase bank to “fund post-petition operating expenses and ensure adequate working capital to meet its obligations to associates and suppliers.”

A letter to distributors from president Chuck Parker says, “Diamond has made the difficult but necessary decision to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. This step is intended to stabilize our financial foundation and protect our business. This decision was not made lightly, and I understand that this news may be as difficult to hear as it is for me to share... Chapter 11 will provide us with the opportunity to restructure and address our financial obligations.”

Diamond has been a major distributor of comics (and other publications) for 40 years. They also distribute books through their Book Distributors arm.

BUBONICON 56 PLANNING BEGINS

by Craig W. Chrissinger, con chair

We’re seven weeks into 2025 now, and planning for Bubonicon 56 has just begun. A hotel contract was signed in December, so three-day passes went on sale January 17.

Weekend Passes currently are \$43.00, and they go up April 20 to \$48 each. They can be purchased in person at club meetings; by mailing payment with the PDF registra-

tion form to “Bubonicon Inc” at 933 San Mateo Blvd NE, Ste 500-208, 87108; or by paying online with a credit card.

Bubonicon 56 is August 24-26 at the ABQ Marriott Uptown, Louisiana Blvd NE at I-40. This year, we are five days after the Seattle Worldcon and a week before Dragon-Con in Atlanta. The Marriott is offering sleeping rooms at \$159 single-quad, with free WiFi in sleeping rooms. Reservations are needed by August 8. That’s 1-800-228-9290.

Our special guests this year are Joe Haldeman, Delilah S. Dawson, Jeffe Kennedy, and artist John Sumrow. We’re expecting many con regulars), and Mandy Self and Jessica Coyle again are assistant chairs.

We’re asking for all Fan Programming proposals to be submitted by the end of Thursday, May 1. Some planned programming includes the Green Slime Awards, the mass autographing session, the usual two auctions, the costume contest, fan/video programming, and kids programming.

More info to come in the next few months!

REVIEW ROUND-UP

***Wooing the Witch Queen* by Stephanie Burgis, 2025 Bramble, tp \$19.99, 284 pages. Review by Marian Skupski**

Wooing the Witch Queen is a ‘romantasy’ set in a Victorian/Edwardian world with magic, magical beings, and evil witch queens that are actually good (not evil).

The back story in *Wooing the Witch Queen* is that Queen Saskia took the throne from her uncle who had murdered her parents and usurped the throne. After murdering her parents, he kept her prisoner until she escaped. After escaping, Queen Saskia was sheltered by a troll and ogre who become her loyal retainers when she becomes queen.

Felix, the Archduke of Estarion lost his parents as a teenager, and has been dominated by his regent, Count von Hertzendorff, who never surrendered power after Felix came of age. His regent became his father-in-law and continued to rule the archduchy in Felix’s name well after Felix should have become ruler. There are hints that both his parents and wife were murdered, but never clear evidence either way.

Felix runs away from his archduchy and ends up at Saskia’s castle, where he is mistaken for a dark wizard and hired as Saskia’s new librarian. Felix finds that his classical education has prepared him wonderfully for this job and dives into the work with great enthusiasm and skill. Along the way, he discovers that trolls, goblins, and ogres are actually sentient and good people to work with, unlike what is taught about them in Estarion.

Saskia has formed an alliance with two other witch queens, becoming the Queens of Villainy. While the male rulers of other countries see them as villainous, they are really just protecting their countries and the people in them, and ensuring that no (male) rivals try to take over.

There are many obstacles and adventures, but after a mid-winter party and interference from a goddess, Felix and Saskia acknowledge they have fallen in love. Felix admits who he is to Saskia, and they turn the tables on Count von Hertzendorff when he tries to invade Saskia’s queendom.

This was an enjoyable book. The characters are well formed, and there is much humor mixed in with the adventure and romance. It’s clear from early on that the goddess is causing mischief and has set things up to engender the conclusion that she wants.

I recommend *Wooing the Witch Queen* to anyone who is looking for a light ready that combines fantasy with romance. The book includes a teaser for the second book in the series,

and it looks like there will be a book for the romancing of each of the queens of villainy.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS — Nov 2024: ARTISTS SANCHEZ & MONTOYA

A group of 33 people were present as artists Jon Sanchez and Jeremy Montoya, who won the “Beast of Show” award at Bubonicon 55, talked about their art and screenprinting.

Jeremy, who grew up in Grants and attended college in Portales, said his father was a sign painter and acrylics artist. Sanchez noted that he has been drawing all his life and went to NM State University for graphic arts and screenprinting.

“I had a friend who did gig work for bands in El Paso,” Sanchez noted. “And Jeremy and I met while we both were working at the *Albuquerque Journal*.”

Montoya said, “Doing art and posters for bands was both fun and hard. Every band manager wants a different deal. For one band, I had to make 20 posters for just them - and then I had to put up posters at music stores through town, and take pictures of them to prove I posted them. To top it off, they made us sell the posters outside the Sunshine.”

Sanchez said he treats printing like a “coloring book. I have to think about how colors combine. Black usually comes last.”

In addition to showing several images of original movie art posters they have done, Sanchez played a short video of the process to create a *Creepshow* poster for the Guild Cinema.

“I did some illustrations for a book called *The Talking Lizard* (New Mexico’s Magic & Mystery) by Nasario Garcia in 2014,” said Montoya. “And I currently work for the Department of Energy doing safety instructions.”

Sanchez commented, “I did critiques in college, and they were brutal. We had one guy faint and several people cry. Jeremy and I have been doing posters here since 2008. And the pencil work still comes first.”

They finished by revealing that Montoya is creating a *Sin City* poster for a January Guild Cinema screening while Sanchez next is doing a 3-D poster for *Creature from the Black Lagoon*.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

- HARD TO BELIEVE WE’VE HAD TWO THUNDERCATS running around our house for a year now! Gizmo & Kaylee definitely act like siblings at times, but they also play & sleep together.

- WE HAD A NICE TIME at COSine in Colorado Springs rooming with Lauren C. Teffeau in January. Saw some snow Saturday, Jessica sold craft art, we played trivia, and had breakfast with Connie & Courtney Willis and Rose Beetem. Jessica and I helped Arlen, Anna, Dany & Karen with con stuff, and Lauren & I ate In-and-Out Burgers at the start of the drive home.

- ENJOYED seeing SF horror comedy *Y2K* at the Guild Cinema, and *Hit Man* on Netflix. Hoping to see *The Substance* soon. Glad to have *The Rookie* back. I am reading *Service Model* by Adrian Tchaikovsky and enjoying it so far. And Jon Sanchez’s *Creature from the Black Lagoon* original poster art is awesome!

- THE FIRST 22 DAYS of Trump’s 2nd term have been really rough with crazed statements, illegal executive orders, and several threats - even to allies. Not to mention Elon Musk doing almost whatever he pleases. I especially am angry about the pro-book ban stance, the banning of words, threatening PBS and the Department of Education, pardoning even the most violent January 6th offenders, downplaying pollution and climate change, and trying to erase transgenders & drag shows. Heck, Canada, Greenland (Denmark) and the Palestinians are mad at us. Hang in there everyone. Stay strong, stand tall. Remember: Amidah!

- THIS ISSUE is appropriately short for the shortest month. Submissions needed & welcomed for April. Take care. -Craig C.