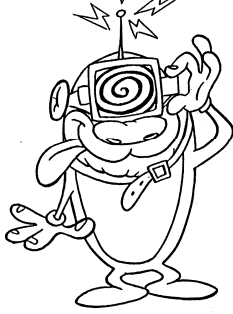




SITHFACTS 2011

"SCIENCE WONDERLAND" DECEMBER HOLIDAYS ISSUE



WILD CARDS HEADED TO BIG SCREEN

by **Borys Kit**, *Hollywood Reporter*, October 28

With author George R.R. Martin's HBO fantasy series *Game of Thrones* one of the hottest things on TV right now, it's fitting that another Martin-penned project has caught Hollywood's eye.

Syfy Films, the theatrical division created in December 2010 as a joint venture between Syfy and Universal Pictures, has acquired the screen rights to *Wild Cards*, a superhero anthology edited, co-created and co-written by Martin.

Melinda Snodgrass, one of the co-creators and co-writers, has been tapped to pen the screenplay for the project, which marks Syfy Films' first acquisition. Martin and Snodgrass will executive produce.

Wild Cards is a series of books and stories set in a shared universe where an alien virus has been unleashed over New York City. Those who survived were turned into either a class of beings named Jokers, mostly deformed creatures, (or more rarely) Aces, who have special powers.

The first book was published in 1987, around the same time as such work as Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* and Alan Moore's *The Watchmen* were being hailed as revolutionizing the comics scene.

The tales, written initially by science fiction and fantasy authors who also included Roger Zelazny and Lewis Shiner, among others, provided an alternate history of Earth and told superhero stories grounded in realism, a strategy that would be emulated in both comics and, later, in movies such as the recent Christopher Nolan-directed *Batman* films.

"We had a love of comics books and superheroes that we grew up on," Martin, who had fan letter published in a Marvel comic in the 1960s, tells *The Holly-*

wood Reporter. "But we approached the material differently. We wanted to do it in a grittier, more adult manner than what we were seeing in the '80s. It's something that many other people have been doing in the decades ever since."

One of the unique aspects of the books (the series has changed publishers several times, it is now on volume 22) is the way the characters evolve. Some age, some marry, some die, new ones are introduced, building a tapestry of stories. Meanwhile, on the author front, the senior generation of writers has made way for new ones such as Paul Cornell (*Doctor Who*) and Carrie Vaughn (the *Kitty Norville* book series). The many creators were one reason why deal-making took months to wrap up before *THR* was able to exclusively report the news of the film project.

Martin says the multiple voices makes the series stand out and allows newer characters to interact with older ones.

"One of the things we have going is the sense of history," he says. "The comics in the mainstream are doing retcons [retroactive continuity] all the time. [Heroes] get married, then one day, the publisher changes his mind, and then they're no longer married. To my mind, it's very frustrating. [Our stories] are in real time. It's a world that is changing in parallel to our own."

"This is, beyond Marvel and DC, really the only universe where you have fully realized, fully integrated

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** Comedic holiday film shorts, plus the 7th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off. Prizes! Bribes! Mint!
- **January 13, 2011:** 2011 Group Book Discussion! What did you read in 2011 & would recommend?
- **February 10:** Visit from Portales urban fantasy/romance author Darynda Jones. Plus the Valentine's issue of *ASFacts* (Deadline Sun, Feb 5).
- **March 9:** Visit from Santa Fe author Melinda Snodgrass on her 2012 urban fantasy & other projects.
- **April 13:** The Annual Club Auction with Bob Varde-man as your auctioneer. Start looking for stuff to donate to the cause. And save up your pennies... Also, *ASFacts* for spring (deadline Sun, April 8).
- **May 11:** Tentatively, Ian Tregillis of Santa Fe will be with us to talk about his 2nd solo novel!

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: cwrcraig@nmia.com. *SITHFACTS* printed each December. *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, Feb. 5. **Club Officers:** Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Jessica Coyle, Moderator. Randi Hewett, alternator. Kris Kringle, Holiday Host. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Kristen Dorland (505) 459-8734 / Craig Chrissinger.

characters that have been built and developed over the course of 25 years," says Gregory Noveck, Syfy Films' senior vp production who joined the division in May and who targeted the books for acquisition. "The trick for us is to find what's the best movie."

Martin is revealing little in the way of which stories or characters will be featured in a film script, but he does say the setting would be contemporary. He also lets slip that The Sleeper, a character who is one of the first to become an Ace and whose power consists of having a new face and ability every time he wakes up from a hibernation-like sleep, would be in the roll call.

Syfy Films, which, like Universal, is owned by NBC Universal, has been tasked to make modest-budgeted movies. *Wild Cards* may sound tentpole-sized, but Noveck says modest budgeted need not mean small in scope, pointing to such movies such as Neill Blomkamp's *District 9*, the Summit thriller *Source Code* and even *Children of Men* as examples of movies telling genre stories on a grand scale but through a tight lens.

Martin says the book series has been optioned before but that this is the biggest step taken so far with *Wild Cards*.

"We hope this is the first of a long presence in film and perhaps even television down the line," he says.

That, of course, will depend on the success of the first film.

ANNE McCAFFREY DIES AT 85

By Margalit Fox, New York Times, November 24

Anne McCaffrey, a science-fiction writer widely known as the Dragon Lady for her best-selling series of young-adult novels, *Dragonriders of Pern*, died November 21 in County Wicklow, Ireland. She was 85.

The cause was a stroke, her publisher, Random House, told The Associated Press. McCaffrey, who had lived in Ireland since the 1970s, died at her home, Dragonhold — so named, she liked to say, because it had been paid for by dragons.

The author of scores of books in a spate of different series, McCaffrey was indisputably best known for *Dragonriders*, written over four decades and comprising more than 20 novels.

That series, which is notable for marrying elements of fantasy to pure science fiction, takes place on the planet Pern, which Earthlings have settled. A utopian idyll at first, Pern has degenerated, after centuries of human habitation, into a tense feudal society.

The greatest threat to Pern is Thread, a type of deadly spore that rains down periodically. To combat these Threadfalls, inhabitants have cultivated a species of large, airborne, telepathic and eminently congenial dragons, whose fiery breath can vanquish the Thread. Throughout the series, McCaffrey's protagonists — of-

ten young women or children — right all manner of galactic wrongs, stalwart paladins astride their soaring scaly steeds.

The series, which began in 1968 with *Dragonflight*, includes *Dragonquest*, *Dragonsong*, *Dragondrums*, *The Masterharper of Pern* and, most recently, *Dragon's Time*, written with her son Todd McCaffrey and published this year.

As a stylist, McCaffrey was not uniformly esteemed. Reviewing *Dragonsdawn* in *The New York Times Book Review* in 1989, Gerald Jonas wrote of her, "Few are better at mixing elements of high fantasy and hard science in a narrative that disarms skepticism by its open embrace of the joys of wish fulfillment," but faulted her "awkward similes" and "formulaic descriptions."

But the immense commercial success of *Dragonriders of Pern* more than outweighed any criticism. The books sold millions of copies and have inspired a cornucopia of Internet fan fiction and scholarly studies.

Her popularity surged with the 1978 publication of *The White Dragon*, which completed her original trilogy begun in the late 1960s. It was her only novel to break onto the *New York Times* best-seller list.

The world of Pern became so all-encompassing to those who entered it that it gave rise to a concordance, *The Dragonlover's Guide to Pern*, by Jody Lynn Nye, with McCaffrey.

Over the last decade as her health faded, she increasingly collaborated with her son Todd, who coauthored five Pern-based novels and wrote three others on his own. The 23rd novel, *Dragon's Time*, was published in June with mother and son sharing the writing credit, while the 24th, *Sky Dragons*, is set for publication next year.

Anne Inez McCaffrey was born in Cambridge, Mass., on April 1, 1926. She earned a bachelor's degree in Slavonic languages and literature from Radcliffe, and trained as an actress and opera singer before her writing life transported her to operatic worlds of another kind.

Her first novel, *Restoree*, was published in 1967. A satirical work of science fiction for adults, it lampooned the genre's portrayal of women as helpless chattel.

The novel's plot, as summarized in the reference work *Authors and Artists for Young Adults*, is set in motion when its strong, savvy heroine, Sara, "is snatched from Central Park by a low flying space ship."

Sara awakens to find herself "restored" — that is, clad in an entirely new body — in a world that combines great technological sophistication with a retrograde social order.

McCaffrey's honors include the two loftiest awards of her genre: a Hugo, which she won in 1968 for her novella "Weyr Search," later incorporated into the *Dragonriders* series; and a Nebula, for the novella

“Dragonriders,” also incorporated into the series.

The Science Fiction Writers of America in 2005 named her the 22nd Grand Master, a now-annual award to living writers of fantasy and science fiction. The Science Fiction Hall of Fame inducted her in 2006.

Her non-Pern books include *The Ship Who Sang*; *PartnerShip*, with Margaret Ball; and *The City Who Fought*, with S. M. Stirling.

McCaffrey’s marriage to Horace Wright Johnson ended in divorce. Besides her son Todd, she is survived by another son, Alec Johnson; a daughter, Georgeanne Kennedy; and grandchildren.

She was the subject of a biography, *Anne McCaffrey: A Life With Dragons*, by Robin Roberts, published in 2007 by the University Press of Mississippi.

McCaffrey, an avocational horse breeder, was often asked, Why dragons? “You can get closer to a dragon than you can to a horse,” she said in an interview with National Public Radio in 2007. “Horses are smart within their own boundaries, but dragons are very smart.”

2011 NM BOOK AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The 5th Annual New Mexico Book Awards, sponsored by the New Mexico Book Co-op, were announced November 18 at the MCM Elegante, and for the first time the two top awards had two ties with very different books. Among the winners was Portales urban fantasy author Darynda Jones. A partial list follows:

Fiction, Romance: *First Grave on the Right* by Darynda Jones; Fiction, Sci Fi & Fantasy: *Daily Flash 2011* by David Corwell (one of Bubonicon’s dealers); and History, New Mexico Subject: *Out of This World: New Mexico & Space Travel* by Loretta Hall.

Hall’s non-fiction book also tied for Best New Mexico Book.

The New Mexico Book Awards is organized by the New Mexico Book Co-op, a not-for-profit organization serving authors and publishers.

DR. HORRIBLE SEQUEL UPDATE

Joss Whedon is a busy guy, reported huffingtonpost.com in mid-November. A writer/director/producer and cult god, the geek icon is shepherding to the big screen one of next year’s most anticipated movies in the Marvel epic *The Avengers*, as well as a *Much Ado About Nothing* adaptation he somehow managed to find time to direct in his down time. But, as geek icon and benevolent leader to a loyal internet following, Whedon has certain commitments that far exceed other Hollywood-centric auteurs, and right now, he has a pressing doctor’s appointment he must keep.

In 2008, Whedon directed the tragic comedy musical web series, *Dr. Horrible’s Sing-Along Blog*. Starring

Neil Patrick Harris as the titular diabolical wimp, it also featured Whedon show veterans Nathan Fillion and Felicia Day in the story of nerdy evil vs. handsome heroics. A cult hit, it has, like everything else on the internet, generated rumors and buzz about a potential sequel, with Whedon and Harris hinting over the past few years that it will, indeed, happen at some point. But when?

Speaking to Yahoo! Movies about the *Avengers*, Whedon punctuated a conversation about the world’s greatest superhero team with a quick update about the world’s nerdiest villain.

“We have been working on that for a while. It’s been hard, because we all have jobs, and some of them are extremely taxing,” he said, alluding to his own film work, Harris’s work on *How I Met Your Mother* and Fillion’s work on *Castle*. “But we have had a vision of the thing for a while, we have been working on it, we have a bunch of songs and a few scenes. We need a little free time and right now that’s plenty hard to come by.”

It’s not the most concrete or promising of updates, but it’s progress; in March of 2010, Harris seemed to have no idea what the future held for the series, beyond a potential hunch on its releasing platform.

“I don’t know what their plans are, but I don’t think it will be on the Internet,” Harris told MTV last year. “I think it will probably be a film. Now we have to figure out everyone’s schedules.”

WORLD FANTASY WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The World Fantasy Awards winners were announced at this year’s World Fantasy Convention, held October 27-30, 2011 in San Diego CA. (Lifetime Achievement winners are announced in advance of the event). Winners are:

Best Novel: *Who Fears Death* by Nnedi Okorafor; Best Novella: “The Maiden Flight of McCauley’s Bellerophon” by Elizabeth Hand; Best Short Fiction: “Fossil-Figures” by Joyce Carol Oates; Best Anthology: *My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me* edited by Kate Bernheimer; Best Collection: *What I Didn’t See and Other Stories* by Karen Joy Fowler

Best Artist: Kinuko Y. Craft; Special Award, Professional: Marc Gascoigne for *Angry Robot*; and Special Award, Non-Professional: Alisa Krasnostein for *Twelfth Planet Press*.

The World Fantasy Awards Lifetime Achievement Winners for 2011 are Peter S. Beagle and Angélica Gorodischer. The awards are presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field.



SF BOOK GROUP READS ON

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets 7:30 pm Monday, December 19, at Page One Bookstore to discuss *A Madness of Angels* by Kate Griffin.

The group then focuses on *The Bone Key* by Sarah Monette on January 16.

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 the selected novels. For more information, contact Yvonne at piebald@juno.com or Craig at 266-8905.

LOCAL WRITER/ILLUSTRATOR DIES

Madge Harrah, who studied playwriting with Rod Stewart and was an early member of Alpha Centura (local Star Trek club), died November 26 at the age of 80 years.

Harrah, winner of 16 national and international writing awards, published five novels for adults, six novels for young readers, and a book of one-act plays. She also published more than 400 short stories and articles in regional and national magazines.

A student of Rod Serling (creator of the *Twilight Zone*), Harrah had many of her plays produced including a radio drama, *The Prize*, which won first place in an international playwriting contest. *The Prize* was produced and broadcast nationally by NBC Radio out of New York as an Easter special in 1983. In addition to being a writer, Madge was a graphic artist and illustrated several books. She also contributed artwork to the *Alpha Centura Communicator* throughout the late 1970s and into the 1980s.

Harrah was born in Lamar, MO, in May 1931. Her mother taught art, English and music and her father taught English and math. They were creative people who encouraged Madge in all her endeavors. Harrah graduated from the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1953, majoring in art and English education, and minoring in music. She married Larry Harrah in 1952, with whom she had gone to high school. He eventually earned his Ph.D. in physical chemistry and did scientific research for the U.S. Air Force in Ohio and at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque.

Her first book was *Teenagers of the Bible* in 1969. In 1997, her novel, *My Brother, My Enemy*, took grand prize in a national competition for best juvenile fiction sponsored by the National Association of Press Women. Her 2004 biography, *Blind Boone, Piano Prodigy*, was named notable social studies trade book for young readers by the National Council of Social Studies.

As a playwright student of Serling, she studied at

Antioch College in Ohio where she placed first in an international radio playwriting competition in 1964. She later won the Grand Prize in an international competition in 1983.

In addition to her writing credits, Harrah wrote lyrics, composed and arranged music for plays, floor routines and radio broadcasts. For more than 30 years, Harrah lectured and taught creative writing seminars to children. She served on the faculty of Highlights for Children Writers' School at Chautauque, NY.

She exhibited paintings in juried shows, illustrated books, composed music, and taught writing classes to people of all ages for over 30 years. In April of 2009, she was presented a Lifetime of Achievement Award by the College of Education, University of Missouri, for "Outstanding Achievement and Meritorious Service."

She is survived by her husband, Larry; their two children, Eric and Meghan; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

PRIEST WINS ENDEAVOUR

Dreadnought by Cherie Priest has won the 13th Endeavour Award, reports Locus Online. The finalists were: *Dreadnought* by Cherie Priest, *A Cup of Normal* by Devon Monk, *The Bards of Bone Plain* by Patricia McKillip, *Black Prism* by Brent Weeks, and *Silver Borne* by Patricia Briggs.

The Endeavour Award is given to a novel or single-author collection written by a Pacific Northwest writer and includes an honorarium of \$1000.00 and an engraved glass plaque. The 2011 judges for the award were editor John Joseph Adams, and writers Bud Sparhawk and Jo Walton. The winner was announced on November 11 at OryCon33 in Portland, OR.

BUBONICON 44 AT NEW HOTEL

Co-chairs Kristen Dorland and Craig Chrissinger are happy that Bubonicon 44 will be at a new hotel location with more space, but sad to be leaving the very supportive Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel.

The site for the August 2012 convention is the Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, at the intersection of I-40 and Louisiana NE. And next year's sleeping room rates are staying the same as at the old location! Of course, Bubonicon 44's special guests have been known for several months. Bubonicon 44 takes place August 24-26.

The Marriott room rate for 2012 will be \$99 single/double and \$109 triple/quad, with reservations needed by Monday, August 13. We made our room count 2004-2011, so please help us hit our goal of 130 room nights on Friday and Saturday of the con (Thursday & Sunday are considered if we're borderline).

Brandon Sanderson of *Mistborn* and *The Wheel of Time*, is our Guest of Honor. Guest Artist is Ursula Vernon, author and book illustrator. And scriptwriter/novelist Michael Cassutt will serve as Toastmaster.

Memberships for Bubonicon 44 are \$35 through Feb. 11. They go to \$38 Feb. 12-May 12, and then to \$40. They may be purchased from the “NMSF Conference” at club meetings or at PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176.

Again, a “youth” is defined as ages 14-17, and youth memberships are \$23 for the weekend. Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult, and should not be running around the hotel (especially on different floors) without a parent/guardian nearby. Also, no unaccompanied children will be permitted in the Art Show due to possible mature content.

The con committee especially would like to hear your panel discussion ideas, fan program proposals and convention suggestions by the end of April. Adam Brown most likely will be presenting another collection of locally made feature films and random shorts. Because of the change in hotels, we are awaiting word on whether an Authors Afternoon Tea is possible in the new space...

We also are looking for volunteers to help out with programming events, running the convention, and checking membership badges. Our volunteer “gofers” receive swag before the con, and are in a drawing for prizes during the Bubonicon weekend.

Updates on the con will appear in *ASFacts* issues, on fliers, or at the official website: www.bubonicon.com. Suggestions, questions and volunteers: Text 459-8734, call 266-8905 (Craig has no text capability), email bubonicon@gmail.com, or send mail to the PO Box.

INVITATION TO ATTEND ASM!

by Joe Walters

Members of ASFS are invited to be our guests at the January meeting of Albuquerque Scale Modelers! That’s right, people still build plastic models. ASM has some of the best modelers in the country, and, as I’m not one of those, I can say that without bragging!

ASM is about the size of ASFS, and also meets monthly. Our members have varied interests, from modeling aircraft to ships to automotive subjects, figures, and more. Some focus on WWII, one member scratchbuilds *incredible* zeppelin models, some only build certain makes of aircraft or figure models, and so on. If it exists, someone will build a model of it! And sometimes, even if it doesn’t...

We are a chapter of IPMS (International Plastic Modelers’ Society), and though we don’t have an annual convention like Bubonicon, we do manage, every few years, to put on a Regional contest called Chile Con. We

did this in 2011, and brought in a few hundred attendees. Roughly 90 modelers competed, entering almost 400 models in competition! Our region comprises New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona (and parts of Texas, essentially the El Paso area). ASM also put on the National competition in 1995, and (don’t tell anyone, as it’s not official yet!) we’re just beginning to look into possibly hosting Nationals again in a few years.

Locally, we often have contests at our meetings, where members can bring their latest builds to compete against each other. These contests often have defined “themes” to add a level of challenge to the games. Traditionally, the theme of our January contest is “Sci-Fi / Fantasy/RealSpace,” and since that would seem to tie in to the interests of some ASFS members, it seems like a good time to invite you to come by and take a look.

We hope you’ll join us! Our meetings start around 7:30 p.m., and we meet the first Friday of every month (January 6 is the date of this meeting) at UNM Continuing Education. We’re usually at the south end. Note that model judging begins at 8:00, so you can’t view the models during that time. Plan accordingly! Normally, members start arriving around 7:00 to mingle and shoot the breeze and set up models before the meeting actually starts.

To check us out from the comfort of your own computer, head for our web site (<http://www.abqscalemodelers.com>). You can find meeting photos, photos of models, and even copies of our monthly newsletter (yours truly, editor). If you go to the Model Pictures page and scroll to the very bottom, you’ll find pictures of models from last January. That’ll give you a good idea of the kind of thing you’ll be seeing. Click on the thumbnails to see the pictures at large size.

It’s possible some of you will find yourselves considering getting into modeling. And it’s possible some ASM members, upon meeting you folks, may find themselves interested in checking out ASFS. This might just benefit both clubs!

Hope to see you there. Thanks!

REVIEW ROUND-UP

Power Play by Ben Bova, 2012 Tor Books, hc \$24.99, 352 pages (to be released January 3, 2012).

Review by Becky Davis

You’ve done novel-by-the-numbers, Ben. Say it ain’t so, Ben.

Power Play is science fiction only if the reader agrees to hang everything on the prop, MHD. That stands for magnetohydrodynamics. Bright physicists and engineers have combined high-sulfur coal and liquid oxygen in a combustion chamber. Then they shoot the resulting ionized plasma jet through a special tube surrounded by a cryogenically cool super magnet to a turbine to produce kilowatts (verily, giga-

watts?) of clean electricity. If you change MHD to “oil” or “solar power” the novel would remain the same. My apologies, Ben, this reads like a Jackie Collins novel.

Dr. Jake Ross is a middling successful (widowed) astronomy professor at a local university (“place” in this novel is rather vague). He is persuaded by his professional mentor, Leverett Caldwell, to meet Frank Tomilson, future Senate bright star. Tomilson needs a science plank (MHD) in his platform and a science advisor (Jake) to explain the science to political donors and skeptical new media. In quick succession, Jake is introduced to attractive Amy Wexler, Tomilson’s political assistant, and glamorous Glynis Colwin, graduate student and assistant to Dr. Arlan Sinclair, the PhD. in charge of the MHD project.

Amy is “cheerleader” pretty, energetic and committed to winning the senate race against old warhorse Senator Leeds. Glynis, the coal mine owner’s daughter, is dark and dedicated to Dr. Sinclair’s opinion that MHD won’t be feasible for at least 10 years. There is Nacho Perez, Sen. Leeds’ shady, Mafia-connected messenger of warnings to Dr. Jake Ross. Mrs. Arlan Sinclair has a gambling addiction, and the good professor has hidden his wife in the small town of Vernon. Jake finds Mrs. Sinclair and her problem, and threatens to expose it to Tomilson.

More novel-by-numbers. There are three murders. The MHD nearly blows up at the “big” rig up in the failing mine town of (wait for it!) Lignite. Senator Leeds tries to bribe innocent Dr. Ross with departmental tenure. Tomilson and Leeds have a stunning (of course) face-off at their political debate. Jake gets the girl, but then he doesn’t, and the now-successful MHD program joins *Senator* Tomilson on his science platform. Where’s the science fiction?

Ben spends a lot of pages describing sleazy politics. He gives the principal female characters enough wardrobe changes to fill Saks Fifth Avenue. He fleshes out the novel with enough cliché characters to give giggles to the writing team of *The Big Bang Theory*. But all that work does not make this novel science fiction.

Put this novel on the shelf with 5-mile-high detonating bomb novels or Jackie Collins revenge-mystery novels. This has science, and it is fiction, but it is really “contemporary thriller.”

***Anna Dressed in Blood* by Kendra Blake, Tor Teen 2011, hc \$17.99, 320 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Cas Lowood is a seventeen-year-old who lives a very unusual life. He and his mother travel around North America so that Cas can kill ghosts that are harming people. He inherited this talent from his father, who was killed while trying to exorcise a ghost when Cas was seven years old. Their latest journey is to Thunder Bay, Ontario. Cas goes there in search of a ghost known as “Anna Dressed in Blood,” who has been haunting the house she lived in since she was killed in 1958. Cas receives a report that Anna has been killing everyone who sets foot into her house, so he decides to go to Thunder Bay and kill her once and for all.

Cas discovers that killing Anna will not be as easy as he imagined. His first encounter with her ends with one person dead and several injured, and Cas soon realizes that Anna is

much more powerful than any ghost he has ever faced. Although he is leery to involve anyone else in defeating Anna, Cas soon finds himself saddled with a cadre of unlikely teammates, including Thomas, a powerful young warlock, and Carmel, the most popular girl at school whose pretty exterior hides a core of steel.

Anna Dressed in Blood is Blake’s debut YA novel, and it is an amazing ride. Part horror novel and part coming-of-age story, it seamlessly blends Cas’ ghost-killing with him finally coming to terms with his father’s death. I highly recommend this novel to anyone who loves both horror and YA.

Z: *Zombie Stories* edited by J.M. Lassen, Night Shade Books 2011, tp \$12.99, 416 pages.

Review by Joe Walters

I jumped on this book when offered, because of the magic word *Anthology*. Several stories by different authors? *Some* of it must be good! Theodore Sturgeon’s Law is certainly in effect here (and if you don’t know Sturgeon’s Law, how can you call yourself a science fiction fan?), but there’s some good among the bad, wheat among the chaff, bits among the kibbles, needles among the haystacks, ones among the zeros... sorry. Have to watch that.

The cover design leaves much to be desired. While we’re not quite in Green Slime territory here, it’s impossible to determine the name of the book from the front cover; it appears to be “Zombie Stories.” There is a nice bit of artwork—a zombie couple—and superimposed over this image is a large black “Z.” There is nothing to indicate that the Z is part of the title. You have to look at the spine to see the full name of the book.

The book could have used another pass by an editor – there are a few irritating errors in typography, and layout here and there. The name of the first story is misspelled in the table of contents and in a copyright acknowledgement section in the back, for example.

And, of course, as the subject matter is zombies, you should be possessed of an appreciation of black humor before digging into this one! Lots of blood and gore here. If you enjoyed the movies *Zombieland* and *Shaun of the Dead*, you’ll be right at home here.

The stories in this book are not related to one another; there are ten stories in the book, and I was quite surprised to learn that all but one had appeared in *previous* zombie anthologies. The subject matter being zombies, there’s something oddly appropriate about that, but if you are an enthusiast who has read other zombie anthologies, you may find a few familiar stories here!

Okay, enough about the anthology! From here, we’ll look at some individual stories.

“Family Business” by Jonathan Maberry leads off, and is the longest story in the book. This one is very engaging, with a powerful ending. We follow 15-year-old Bobby, who is considering following his famous older brother Tim into the family trade of Zombie Bounty Hunter. But Bobby learns that Tim’s work isn’t what he expected.

“The Days of Flaming Motorcycles” by Catherynne M. Valente finds a girl who lives with her zombified father and keeps a journal, observing how he interacts with other zom-

bies and generally being miserable.

"The Barrow Maid" by Christine Morgan is an excellent and bloody tale of Viking vengeance and a cautionary tale warning against the dangers of treason and grave-robbing. It's also a love story.

"The Third Dead Body" by Nina Kiriki Hoffman follows a newly-reanimated zombie who had been a prostitute in life. Having escaped an abusive relationship with her, ah, *business manager* by way of death, she now seeks to return to it.

In "The Skull-Faced Boy" by David Barr Kirtley, two teenage boys are killed in a car crash, only to immediately awaken as zombies. One has a visible injury that accounts for the title. This is a gripping tale!

Five other stories round out this zombie anthology.

***Dreadnaught (The Lost Fleet: Beyond the Frontier)* by Jack Campbell, 2011 Ace, hc \$25.95, 368 pages.**

Review by Serge Mailloux

With last year's *Victorious*, Jack Campbell (aka John G Hemry) ended the story of the Lost Fleet. Not only had Admiral Jack Geary managed to bring the Alliance Fleet back home after it was ambushed by the Syndic Stars, but he had also found out and repelled the real enemy who had secretly ignited the 100-year-long war between the two human factions.

Does this mean that Geary can now take a long deserved rest? In *Dreadnaught*, not only do the Alliance's leaders fear he'll use his military success as an excuse to take over, but there are some in the Fleet who'd be very happy to have him do that. Luckily for them all, Geary has no such ambition, being an honorable man - and literally old-fashioned, having spent the last century in suspended animation. Still his leaders don't trust him so they decide to send him out on a new mission: go thru Syndic space again even though its own central authority is collapsing, and enter alien space to contact the enemy and resolve their differences. One problem is that the Alliance appears to have set the mission to fail. Another problem is that the aliens are rabidly opposed to any contact, which is why they tried to have humans kill each other in the first place. The story ends on a major cliffhanger, with the Fleet stuck in a really bad position after freeing humans who'd been in alien captivity most of their lives.

Geary sighed. "Surely we did the right thing by rescuing them."

"Of course. A cage is a cage is a cage. But freedom will be hard for them to adjust to. What are you going to do with them?" the doctor asked.

"Take them home."

***Grantville Gazette VI* edited by Eric Flint, Baen 2012, hc \$25.00, 448 pages (to be published January 3, 2012).**

Review by Patricia Shaw Mathews

Grantville Gazette VI is the second "Best of the electronic Gazette" collections. Based on Eric Flint's *1632* series, these stories continue the interactions between the downtime 17th Century Germans (and other people) and the uptime 21st Century Americans - who are led by a West Virginia United Mine Workers of America local and were dumped by an Alien Space Bat into the middle of the 30 Years War. You

can imagine the culture clash. Or cross-fertilization. A long series of novels and short stories already have, and it helps to have read at least one. However, the stories can be enjoyed for themselves much of the time.

Some of them, like "Masque," deal mostly with the downtimers. We see Prince Rupert of the Rhine find his political voice, and Ben Jonson as a boring old fart from the 16th Century. "Jenny and the King's Men" is another downtimer story, in the "don't try to cheat fate" mode. The local Powers That Be have learned from uptime history books that the impoverished Jenny, pushed beyond endurance, started a rebellion by throwing a kitchen stool at someone. They send soldiers out to make a pre-emptive arrest, which pushes Jenny beyond endurance, and in desperation, she throws a kitchen stool....

"Bunny B. Goode," another downtimer tale, is also classic Bad Boss story. The aristocratic Don Carlos has imported a pair of Angora rabbits, intending to upgrade the Spanish luxury wool industry, but of course he's above the vulgar details of what's possible. So when Mrs. Bunny escapes into the woods, Don Carlos barks orders and orders punishments in pure pointy-haired boss fashion. Believe it or not, it's a comedy.

So is "Cinco de Mayo," in which the Villareals of Grantsville decide that 17th Century Germany needs a little Mexican flavor, including tacos. And "Feng Shui for the Soul," with dueling charlatans from both eras, and New Age gobbledygook cynically used to save a ruler's life. And "Suite for Four Hands," in which a Grantsville classical pianist introduces the 17th Century to a comprehensive overview of 20th Century popular music. That's right - rock 'n roll, country & western, rap, jazz, be-bop, and everything.

"Suite for Four Hands" is also heartwarming. So is "Ghosts on the Glass." Define vandalism, as opposed to art.

Finally, for the techno-freaks in fandom, are all the stories about inventions, discoveries, and the meshing of downtime craft skills with uptime knowledge. You see, with the resources available, the uptimers have had to go back to 19th Century methods. Or must they? And which set of workers has the better ideas? Friendly competition and some not so friendly, provides the answer in tales like "The Galloping Goose."

The main theme, though, is the way the uptimers and downtimers solve each other's problems, sometimes by their actions, and sometimes just by being there and being who they are. Check out "Birdwatching," for example, and track the introduction of American birds into the German past. Or "Duty Calls."

And for a final laugh, read "Mrs. December." It helps to know who Brillo the Ram is and why he's so important, but it's still funny.

***Star Trek: Cast No Shadow* by James Swallow. Pocket Books 2011, mmpb \$7.99, 368 pages.**

Review by Joe Walters

There are now hundreds of *Star Trek* novels out there, and I confess to having read most of them. Many of them leave a lot to be desired, but once in a while one comes along that really stands out, and in a good way. *Cast No Shadow* is one of these.

It's the story of a traitor, and how she has to deal with the things she has done. The title comes from a Klingon legend about how a traitor casts no shadow (the legend is covered in detail), and this particular traitor's identity was clearly intended by the author to be a surprise reveal, as the name isn't mentioned until a ways into a conversation with a therapist. The folks at Pocket failed to get the point of that, so they put the face of Valeris blatantly on the cover and revealed the name in the intro blurb, but it still works!

Valeris, you may recall, was the Vulcan traitor (played by Kim Cattrall) aboard the Enterprise during *Star Trek 6: The Undiscovered Country*. She aided and abetted a conspiracy to end a peace initiative between the Federation and the Klingon Empire, assisted in the assassination of the Klingon Chancellor, murdered two Enterprise crewmen in cold blood, and helped frame Captain Kirk for the assassination before the plot was exposed, and the day saved once again by Kirk and company.

This book, most of which follows Valeris, takes place seven years later. Kirk is believed to be dead following the events of *Star Trek: Generations*, and Valeris has spent the intervening time serving a life sentence in a Starfleet penal stockade on a remote planet.

A horrific act of terrorism takes place in Klingon space, and a message broadcast by the perpetrators seems to imply the old conspiracy has some surviving members, who are determined to continue their earlier work. As it happens, there are Federation starships in the vicinity of the event, and many Starfleet lives are lost. The Federation gets involved.

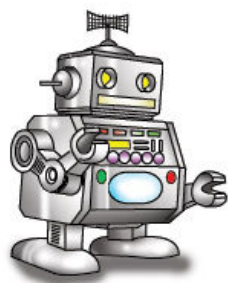
Valeris, as the last surviving member of the conspiracy in Federation space, is taken away from her therapist (to her relief) and conscripted to help investigate. No one trusts her, but she possesses vital knowledge of the conspiracy, and is the only source of any leads that can be found.

Evidence points to a particular Klingon splinter group behind the attack, but there are indications this may be misdirection, that there may be an entirely different group at work here – but who is supplying them with weapons far beyond the capability of any little terrorist cabal to manufacture? The author makes clever use of banned “isolytic weapons,” which we don't see again until *Star Trek: Insurrection*.

A secondary character accompanies Valeris on this mission, and he will be familiar to readers of *Deep Space 9* novels. Commander Elias Vaughn was added to those books to help fill in some of the holes left behind when *DS9* went off the air, with several regular characters departing the station. Here, Vaughn is a young lieutenant with some very hard-line attitudes toward traitors.

The book is solidly entertaining, and I didn't find a boring moment in it. The action starts right away, we spend a little time with one of Kirk's former crewmates, and things build to an explosive conclusion as the terrorists take on the biggest target in the entire Empire.

If you are familiar with *Star Trek 6* and the events therein, I highly recommend this book as a well-plotted and well-executed follow-up to that story.



***A Wrinkle In Time (Time Quintet 1)* by Madeleine L'Engle, Square Fish 2007 reprint (originally published 1962), mmpb \$6.99, 256 pages.**

Review by Becky Davis

You've read the line, “It was a dark and stormy night” in numerous *Peanuts* cartoons. Madeleine L'Engle wrote that line before 1960 to start her Newberry-award book, *A Wrinkle in Time*, part of the “Kairos” framework of fantasy novels. I recalled that Connie Willis regarded this as a seminal novel in developing her writing style when I stumbled across it among some free books at Bubonicon 42.

Okaaay. Fantasy. Juvenile. Petulant self-absorbed rug-rat protagonist. But CONNIE says it is great. I held my literary nose and opened the book with kitchen tongs (I hate rug-rat novels), and read the first line. Whoa! What other now-classic themes are there in this book?

Then I met Charles Wallace Murry, gifted younger brother of Margaret (Meg) Murry, the petulant protagonist. And I met Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who and Mrs. Which, the antecedents of Terry Pratchett's Nanny Ogg, Granny Weatherwax and Magrat Garlick. And, yes, there is a little plot. Find Mr. Murry, the children's father, who has been missing for a year, and bring him home. The witches know where he is, but they need the help of the children to bring him back.

The children and the witches know they have to go on a fantastical journey into an alternate world. Mrs. Whatsit transforms into “a marble white body with powerful flanks [and] a nobly formed torso with a perfection of dignity and virtue. From the shoulders slowly unfurled wings made of rainbows, of light upon waters of poetry.” (I begin to see Connie Willis' interest in this book). This celestial entity carries the children to Camazotz, an alternate realm where they encounter The Man With Red Eyes. Red Eyes has imprisoned Mr. Murry, who arrived due to a “tesseract” transfer, and wants to capture the soul of little Charles Wallace.

L'Engle provides math lessons and a physics question in the middle of her fantasy. There is also her particular Christian cosmology, an entity of Endless Anger and Despair, and poetry. This is heavy stuff for a YA fantasy novel. But L'Engle brings it all off to a happy, family-filled ending.

From what I can tell from my limited searches, there were ten other books in the “Kairos” and “Kronos” series of fantasy novels. Go search for them in magical corners and bookshops rainbowed with fairy dust.

***Mastiff (The Legend of Beka Cooper 3)* by Tamora Pierce, Random House Books for Young Readers 2011, hc \$18.99, 608 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Well-known Young Adult author Tamora Pierce's latest book, *Mastiff*, is the third and final installment in her latest trilogy set in the mythical land of Tortall. It follows Beka Cooper, a young “dog” (police officer) who works in one of Tortall's most dangerous districts. After the royal family's Summer Home is attacked and the young prince kidnapped, Beka, her partner Tunstall, and their hound Achoo are called in to track the prince and his kidnappers. As Tortall's political situation is very precarious, they must travel quickly and secretly so as to not alert those in power to the prince's disappearance.

Fans of Pierce's previous work will take pleasure in the

latest addition to the land of Tortall. Beka Cooper is a smart and take-charge heroine, and the book has plenty of action as Beka and her group desperately try to reclaim the young prince, and bring his kidnappers to justice. My one complaint about *Mastiff* is that the ending has one of the main characters behaving in a way that isn't remotely believable given how Pierce portrayed the person in the previous two novels. Until this point, the book was very enjoyable, and I at least was able to look past this one flaw. I'm disappointed that this will be the last of Pierce's books to feature Beka as she is a fun and likeable character.

ASFS MEETING REPORTS —

OCTOBER: DR. LANE EXPLAINS ALL

Thirty-nine people were on hand for the annual Club Elections, and to listen to Dr. Maria Lane's encore presentation (from *Bubonicon 43*) of "Geographies of Mars," examining how 19th century science saw the Red Planet.

Lane, of the UNM Geography Department, said she was looking at roughly 100 years ago, 1880-1910. While there were no satellites, no probes and no spaceships, a lot of Mars science was going on then. Astronomers and others saw canals in straight lines, so it was assumed that there was intelligent life on Mars.

In a hypothesis on Mars being inhabited, Lowell said that Mars was smaller than Earth and thus cooled faster, so it was ahead of us in terms of planetary evolution. Therefore, any life would have had longer to evolve; and the geometric network of canals proved the existence of powerful technology and global organization on Mars.

Several media outlets took up this hypothesis of Intelligent Life on Mars, but not everyone believed it. In particular, there were other astronomers in competition with Lowell.

One picture Lane brought was of a 1911 edition of *The New York Times* with the headline, "Martians Build Two Im-mense Canals in Two Years."

Today, Lane said, we believe the straight canals were an illusion. Hazy, indistinct images were turned into lines and circles by the human brain. "Mars is far away, their telescopes were small, and the atmosphere interfered," she noted. "The debate about Martians and canals was mainstream for the time. It was not as crazy an idea then as it now seems."

For some at the time, landscape was seen as determining culture and cultural change. So on Mars, deserts had to equal intelligence with the network of lines and canals indicating cultural sophistication. "The assumption immediately was that the lines must be for irrigation," Lane explained. "Irrigation was seen as a critical benchmark for societal advance. All the assumptions were basic to the people of the day. A dying desert planet would have irrigation, of course, for its life to survive."

Lane said that popular audiences helped push those assumptions forward, and it seemed to be universally acknowledged that the Martians must be superior to humans. "This is a super interesting idea," Lane exclaimed. "No where else do we see an assumption that a newly encountered culture is superior to us."

"The British audience looked at the possible superiority with suspicion and dread," she continued. "For example, H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*. The Americans showed much

more enthusiasm, and seemed to accept the power imbalance with the Martians as possible friendly allies. In *A Princess of Mars*, Edgar Rice Burroughs sees Barsoon as a dystopia, and an American hero goes there."

In summing up how theories have changed, Lane said, "Knowledge comes from many different sources, and its production is messy."

CLUB BUSINESS: Kevin Hewett and Craig Chrissinger were re-elected as co-executive secretaries, Jessica Coyle was retained as moderator, Randi Hewett was selected as alternator, and Mint was voted to be the challenge ingredient for the December cook-off (runner-ups were Gluten-Free & Orange).

NOVEMBER: WALTER JON WILLIAMS VISITS

A crowd of 37 people were in attendance to listen as Belen author Walter Jon Williams read from two forthcoming works, answered questions, and generally entertained folks.

Commenting on *The Fourth Wall*, the third book in the Dagmar sequence (to be released next February), Williams said, "This one is even more scary because it deals with cottage cheese wrestling."

Williams read from a part told from the perspective of a former child star who is on appearing on a reality TV show, *Celebrity Pit Fighter*. The "celebrity" enters a fighting arena filled with eight inches of cottage cheese to face another former TV star. They both have had three weeks of martial arts training, but the cottage cheese is a surprise challenge.

Williams also has written a novella focusing on Mark Twain for Subterranean Press as a chapbook, *The Boolean Gate*. "It's one I've had in mind for a long time," he noted.

In the section Williams read, Twain visits Tesla for a medical consultation, and then listens to Tesla's talk of electrifying the Earth.

Since *Deep State* predicted unrest in the Middle East and *The Rift* predicted earthquake damage to a nuclear plant, Williams joked, "People should pay me to write happy stories."

Asked about the future, Williams noted he is "working for George RR Martin right now." That includes a story for the next new volume of *Wild Cards* (for Tor), and a story in the forthcoming Martin/Gardner Dozois anthology *Rogues* (which he compared to the *Warriors* anthology out now).

UPCOMING EVENTS & SHORT NEWS NOTES

+ **JASON & THE ARGONAUTS**, Harryhausen's classic 1963 film inspired by Greek myth, screens 11:00 am & 1:00 pm Saturday & Sunday, December 24-25 at the Guild Cinema. All seats just \$5.00 - cash only. The Guild Cinema is located at 3405 Central Ave NE (Nob Hill area).

+ **MONTY PYTHON'S MEANING OF LIFE** rings in the New Year 4:00, 6:15 & 8:30 pm Saturday & Sunday, December 31-January 1 at the Guild Cinema.

+ **COSINE 2012** is January 27-29 in Colorado Springs at the Crowne Plaza. Guest of Honor is Charles Stross. Also appearing: Connie & Courtney Willis, Carrie Vaughn, John Stith, Sharon Shinn, Wil McCarthy, Sarah Hoyt, Cynthia Felice, Ed Bryant, Carol Berg, Kevin J. Anderson, and artist Bill Hodgson. Panel discussions, art show, book raffle, *Cowboys & Aliens* dance, gaming, videos. Memberships \$40 to January 15, \$45 at door. Hotel 800-981-4012. Info: firstfridayfandom.org/cosine.

+ **JO WALTON** will be at Page One Bookstore Saturday, January 28, most likely in the afternoon, for her fantasy novel, *Among Others*. Page One is located at the southwest corner of Montgomery & Juan Tabo NE.

+ **DARYNDA JONES** will be at Page One Bookstore 4:00 pm Saturday, February 11, for *Third Grave Dead Ahead*, her 3rd Charley Davidson novel.

+ **WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP 2012** takes place Friday, March 30, at Eastern NM University in Portales. Special Guests Daniel Abraham and Carrie Vaughn, with Toastmistress Connie Willis. Luncheon, afternoon panels, library tour. For info: Patrice.Caldwell@enmu.edu.

+ **OWN A PIECE OF MAGIC**, and Help Author/Editor Terri Windling. Windling has given a lot of happiness to fantasy readers, with novels and collections. Now here's your chance to come to her rescue - Windling is facing health and legal issues that have caused her a lot of financial distress, so several authors and creators have donated stuff to be auctioned for her. <http://magick4terri.livejournal.com>.

+ **THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED**, Craig A. Butler's western shot in NM, had its DVD premiere screening last Friday at the KiMo Theatre downtown. It is now available at Wal-Mart, Hastings, NetFlix and Red Box. So, get out there and support a local filmmaker and Bubonicon participant! [The film is very impressive for its budget level, shot mostly at the Bonanza Creek Ranch near Santa Fe.]

+ **THE 2ND ALBUQ COMIC EXPO**, scheduled for June 8-10, 2012, at the Albuquerque Convention Center, has confirmed special guests Kevin Smith and Jason Mewes. Plus local folks such as Andy Kuhn, Melinda Snodgrass, Scott Phillips, Larry Welz and Victor Milan. Much more info to come! www.abqcomicexpo.com.

+ **EMMY-WINNING CHARACTER ACTOR HARRY MORGAN**, who spent 10 years as the fatherly Col. Sherman Potter on TV's *MASH* and appeared in 50 films, died on December 7 at the age of 96 after having pneumonia.

He appeared in mostly supporting roles on the big screen, playing opposite such stars as Henry Fonda, John Wayne, James Garner, Elvis Presley and Dan Aykroyd. On television, he was more the comedic co-star, including roles on *December Bride*, its spin-off *Pete and Gladys*, as Sgt. Joe Friday's loyal partner in later *Dragnet* episodes and on CBS-TV's long-running *MASH* series, for which he earned an Emmy award in 1980.

Genre appearances included *3rd Rock from the Sun*, *The New Twilight Zone*, *The Wild Wild West Revisited*, *The Cat from Outer Space*, *Rod Serling's Night Gallery*, *The Loves of Edgar Allan Poe*, and western classic *High Noon*.

+ **FRED SABERHAGEN'S PAPERS & ROUGH DRAFTS** are going to the Northern Illinois University Libraries, reports Joan Saberhagen. As an early Christmas gift, NIU's Department of Rare Books & Special Collections has acquired the first installment of the papers of Chicago-born author Saberhagen, whose SF works broke new ground.

Lynne M. Thomas, curator of Rare Books for NIU Libraries, said Saberhagen's papers consist of more than 20 boxes of materials and will be the "crown jewel" of the library's science fiction and fantasy collection. The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, a professional organization for authors, designated NIU as a depository in 1979. Collecting archival papers began in earnest in 2005.

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

It's been an interesting couple of months, for sure. Albuquerque has already managed to be cold enough that I'm typing while wearing fingerless gloves (thanks Yvonne), and the bookstore was only open four hours this past Monday (12/5).

And while I successfully fought off the stomach virus that's been going around, I was completely surprised to develop Shingles on the right side of my face the week before Thanksgiving. Three weeks later, the pox spots are mostly gone but there still are visual reminders. Luckily, it's not as communicable as I first had thought, but the attack on a nerve bundle does make for weird phantom pain and itchy spots where nothing is actually happening on my skin.

October's Milehicon 43 was nice, if a little quiet. We enjoyed a lively breakfast with Connie & Courtney Willis; Jessica created a cool leather mask and participated in the Costume Contest; I visited with Gardner Dozois & Connie after opening ceremonies, and came up with a question for Carrie Vaughn's "Midnight Hour" radio-style show; I moderated a panel on Interviewing Skills and assisted with "Name That Tune," and we got to spend quality time with our friends Tim and Kaia. Not a lot of extra time this year outside the con, but we did spend some time with Ron and Nina at their bookstore before the con, and caught up on episodes of *The Big Bang Theory* and *Community* with Tim.

TV Recommended This Time: One of our newest TV faves is *New Girl* on Fox, and we continue to enjoy *Raising Hope*, *Community*, *The Middle*, *Happy Endings*, *How I Met Your Mother* and *Parks & Recreation*. While I wish that *CHUCK* had been given a full season, it is good to have the nerdy spy back. It's going to be interesting to see how they end this final year. And if you haven't watched *COMMUNITY* yet, you owe it to yourself to check it out - they've done paintball episodes referencing *Star Wars*, a claymation Christmas episode, a show revolving around parallel universes, and a Halloween episode of telling scary stories.

At The Movies: My highest recommendations go to *The Muppets* (Jason Segel really understands the heart & soul of Kermit & Company - the film is touching, funny, references earlier works, breaks the 4th wall at times, and has clever songs), *Hugo* (aimed at families, it's a love letter to early films), and *Tucker & Dale vs. Evil* (very funny spoof of killer hillbilly films, comparable to *Shaun of the Dead*, with *Firefly*'s Alan Tudyk & *Reaper*'s Tyler Labine).

On The Bookshelf: I just finished and enjoyed *Leviathan Wakes* by James S.A. Corey (space opera meets hardboiled detective). I also have enjoyed Fred Saberhagen's lyrical vampire tale, *An Old Friend of the Family*, and *Wild Cards: Fort Freak* (with the premiere of Ratboy - thanks, Vic & Ty).

Many Thanks to Jessica C, Becky D, Serge M, Joe W, Patricia M, Joan S, and Bill Mc for submissions! More needed for the Valentine's issue. Hint, hint!

Happy Holidays to all. Hope everyone has a nice time. What will the New Year bring us? Good things? End of the world?

Have fun, stay warm, and see y'all in February. -Craig C.

