

May OASFiS Calendar

OASFiS Business Meeting

Sunday, May 11 1:30 PM, Orange Public Library (Downtown Orlando, 101 E. Central Blvd., Orlando, FL 32801, 407-835-7323). Come join us as we discuss the Hugo Short Works (Short stories and novelette).

To contact for more info:
OASFiS Business Meeting 407-823-8715

Media news: The new season of "Dr. Who" is starting next Friday. *Battlestar Galactica* series has started. Colleen brought up the Jane Austen series airing on WMFE on Sundays.

The Nebula and Hugo Award nominations have been announced, so Juan listed them, and noted that the next book discussions are traditionally about the short works and a novel from the nomination list. *Rollback* by Robert Sawyer was briefly discussed (didn't the club read that before?).

Convention:
Guest arrangements set, with David Gerrold the only one still needing a room. The "cheap room rate deadline" is coming up. Pat Simms confirmed that the hotel staff at the Hilton make making reservations very easy.

Art board pickup volunteers and date: Hector is the first volunteer (a sign-up sheet was sent around the room for more, and an email will be sent). The date is set as Wednesday, April 30th, at 6:30 p.m. at Susan Cole's house. Please visit the OASFiS website or email Susan to volunteer.

The Convention press release will be edited and sent out next week. SyFy Portal host Michael Hinaman has started an Internet radio broadcast, and is interested in promoting OASiS, so Juan will check if any guests will agree to a phone-in interview a week in advance to be aired on the show.

A big "thanks" to Patricia for hosting the programming meeting at her house last Saturday! The 1st weekend of May the final program should be out. Juan has a database to assign panel moderators at the touch of a button. Patricia called for volunteers to moderate (pick a panel, any panel).

Badge art: Susan needs a clean copy to use. A black Con t-shirt (like last year) was mentioned, but Pat, Kim and Colleen, among others, hoped for another color – maybe grey? Other colors of shirts may be requested as a special order, probably, but not part of the bulk Con order. Juan will confirm this with the Spivys.

Another Con progress report will be sent next week to remind attendees about better hotel rates, as well as other important information (i.e. the Chili Cookoff).

Arthur noted that any video shots from the Mars Phoenix landing on May 25th will be transmitted after the Con, so regular Video Room programming is planned unless otherwise noted.

OASFiS People

Steve Cole	407-275-5211 stevecole@hotmail.com
Susan Cole	407-275-5211 sacole@mindspring.com
Arthur Dykeman	407-328-9565 adykeman@bellsouth.net
Mike Pilletere	mike-sf@webbedfeet.com
David Ratti	407-282-2468 dratti@eudoramail.com
Juan Sanmiguel	407-823-8715 sanmiguel@earthlink.net
Patricia Wheeler	407-832-1428 pwheeler222@netzero.net

Any of these people can give readers information about the club and its functions. To be included in the list call Juan.

Jay confirmed he is handling guest pick-ups from the airport.

OASiS volunteers: per Pat, volunteers for the most time-intensive areas (Registration, Sales to Members, Art Room, Con Suite, and Operations) are being called for now, for better organization. An email will be sent to regular attendees asking for their help in these areas, and a list was passed around the meeting. Please use the email link from the OASFiS website to express your interest in serving in any of these areas.

Chili Cookoff: Colleen confirmed that last year's was the best ever (Patricia agreed), and having it again during Opening Ceremonies was discussed. Juan will save this question for the next hotel meeting. Colleen, Patricia, and Hector said they would submit entries. (Bonny has said there will be even more awards this year.)

Feedback on OASiS 22: Altamonte Hilton, UCF Holiday Inn, La Quinta at UCF were brought up as possible convention hotels if the contract with our current hotel becomes too expensive. Advance registrations will still be taken at OASiS 21, even if no hotel is confirmed yet.

Book Discussion:
The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula LeGuin was summed up by Patricia as: a classic of literature; an emissary from a galactic convention visits a distant planet cloaked always in winter. The humanoid inhabitants pose a unique problem because their gender changes with circumstances and/or a monthly cycle. She mentioned the use of male articles throughout, and that the emissary still refers to females as "weak." Roger was not much to it, and Dick found it pretty much a trek over ice except for the genetic issue. The book won the Nebula and Hugo Awards in 1969, was ground-breaking at time, and was written for its time, not a future date, was the consensus. Culture is not delved into. Juan mentioned that *Lovers*, written in 1964 by Philip Jose Farmer was also ground-breaking, and that the Yin/yang discussion at end of *Left Hand* and the drawing on the back fly-leaf were interesting. Patricia ultimately found the plot's long

(Continued on page 3)

trek boring, and death of the main character pointless (too staged), even if he was a person-non-grata at home. Many agreed that while the novel is fully gendered, it's unique for having no gender bias.

Future Book Discussions:

May: all Hugo-nominated short story websites (to be sent by Juan)

June: *Yiddish Policemen's Union* by Michael Chabon

July: *Koamrr* by Lois McMaster Bujold, 2008 Worldcon Guest of Honor

Adjourned 3:20 pm, with After-the-meeting meet-up at the Taproom

Award News

Nebula Awards

Presented April 26 in Austin, TX.

(Source Locus)

NOVEL

- *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, Michael Chabon (HarperCollins)

NOVELLA

- "Fountain of Age", Nancy Kress (*Asimov's* Jul 2007)

NOVELETTE

- "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate", Ted Chiang (*F&SF* Sep 2007; Subterranean Press)

SHORT STORY

- "Always", Karen Joy Fowler (*Asimov's* Apr/May 2007)

SCRIPT

- *Pan's Labyrinth*, Guillermo del Toro

ANDRE NORTON AWARD

- *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, J.K. Rowling (Scholastic)

Sidewise Awards

(Source Whatever, John Scalzi's blog)

Best Short Form:

Elizabeth Bear, "Les Innocents/Lumiere" (in *New Amsterdam*, Subterranean Press)

Michael Flynn, "Quaestiones Super Caelo Et Mundo" (in *Analog*, 7/07)

Matthew Johnson, "Public Safety" (in *Asimov's*, 3/07)

Jess Nevins, "An Alternate History of Chinese Science Fiction" (in *No Fear of the Future*, May 17, 2007)

Chris Roberson, "Metal Dragon Year" (in *Interzone*, 12/07)

Kristine Kathryn Rusch, "Recovering Apollo 8" (in *Asimov's*, 2/07)

John Scalzi, "Missives from Possible Futures #1: Alternate History Search Results" (in *Subterranean Magazine*, Winter 2007) (**OASIS guest**)

Best Long Form:

Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union* (HarperCollins)

Robert Conroy, *1945: A Novel* (Ballantine Books)

Mary Gentle, *Ilario* (The Lion's Eye and The Stone Golem) (Eos)

Jay Lake, *Mainspring* (Tor Books)

Sophia McDougall, *Rome Burning* (Orion)

Jo Walton, *Ha'penny* (Tor Books)

The winners will be announced at Denvention 3, in August.

2007 Bram Stoker Award Winners

[presented March 30, 2008]

(source Horror Writer's Association)

Novel: *The Missing* by Sarah Langan

First Novel: *Heart-Shaped Box* by Joe Hill

Long Fiction: *Afterward, There Will Be A Hallway* by Gary Braunbeck

Short Fiction: "The Gentle Brush of Wings" by David Niall Wilson

Fiction Collection: (Tie)

Proverbs for Monsters by Michael A. Arnzen

5 Stories by Peter Straub

Anthology: *Five Strokes to Midnight* edited by Gary Braunbeck and Hank Schwaeble

Nonfiction: *THE CRYPTOEDIA: A Dictionary of the Weird, Strange & Downright Bizarre* by Jonathan Maberry & David F. Kramer

Poetry Collection: (Tie)

Being Full of Light, Insubstantial by Linda Addison

VECTORS: A Week in the Death of a Planet by Charlee Jacob & Marge Simon (**OASIS guest**)

Lifetime Achievement Award: John Carpenter, Robert Weinberg

Richard Laymon President's Award:

Mark Worthen, Stephen Dorato, Christopher Fulbright

The winner of this year's **James Tiptree, Jr. Award**, given to works of SF and fantasy that explore gender roles, is Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army*, published last year in the UK by Faber and Faber, and just published this year in the US by HarperPerennial as *Daughters of the North*.

Rollback

By

Robert Swayer

An alien message is received from the star Sigma Draconis. Canadian SETI researcher Dr. Sarah Halifax is able to decode the message. The message is a moral and ethical questionnaire. A response of one thousand replies to the questionnaire are sent to Sigma Draconis, a star about eighteen light years away. In 2048, a new message is received. This message is encrypted. Cody McGavin, a wealthy industrialist and SETI supporter, believes that Sarah is the key to communication with the Sigma Draconians. Sarah, now eighty-seven, is offered a rollback. Rollback is new rejuvenation procedure that can bring people to the physical age of twenty-five. The process is new and only available to those with huge fortunes like McGavin. McGavin offers the process to Sarah and her husband Don, in order to keep her alive for the next round of alien messages. Don and Sarah agree to take the procedure. Unfortunately the process does not work with Sarah. Sarah must use the time she has left to decrypt the new message. Don has to deal with his new rejuvenated body.

The book starts with the arrival of the second message and flashes back to the arrival of the first message. Don dealing with his new-found youth. Since the process is brand new, there are not many people he can relate to. He is alienated from his friends, and cannot quite connect with the current youth. He is torn by the conflict of being an old man in young man's body. Don will eventually find his place in the world, a place which involves Sarah's work.

This first contact story is different since the aliens are asking for answers to complicated ethical questions, difficult questions of life and death which humanity has been dealing since time immemorial. The message is that there is more to a civilization than technical achievement.

As in previous Sawyer works, there are pop culture references all over the book. The source of these references include *Star Trek*, *Lost in Space*, *Contact* and even *Seinfeld*. This makes the future more believable. It adds an air of authenticity. If we encounter something fantastic, we will no doubt try to make it fit into something we can recognize.

The future is very plausible here. The information age is still commonplace. One interesting innovation is household robots. McGavin's main money makers are robots. One is given to Sarah to assist her getting around. Its the type of machine I think Asimov would have come up with today. It has limited AI and is designed to handle medical emergencies, making it believable.

The source of the conflict in the book is more intellectual and emotional than physical. Sarah is trying to understand the alien messages. Don is trying to adapt in a world not yet ready for him. Both support each other through their conflicts. Sarah and Don show that humanity is ready to meet what the stars have to offer.

Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist

Will Eisner was a true pioneer in comic book field. He set up one of the first studios dedicated to comic book work. He pushed the envelope of what could be done in the medium with his most famous creation, *The Spirit*, in the 1940's. Eisner would do the same thing 30 years later when he wrote and drew the first graphic novel, *Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories*.

This is why Will Eisner is the subject of Andrew D. Cooke's documentary *Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist*. This film was presented at the 2008 Florida Film Festival in Orlando. The film covers Eisner life, starting from his parents' immigrant roots to the publication of his last work *The Plot: The Secret Story of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

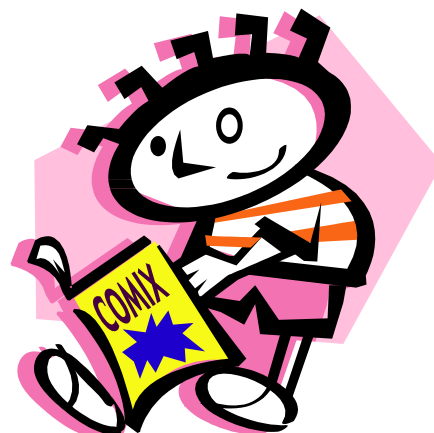
Cooke uses film footage, interviews, and best of all, animations of Eisner's work. Cooke had a made a great find of tape cassettes that Eisner made. The tapes were interviews with Eisner's peers, like Jack Kirby, discussing the early days of the comic industry. Neil Gaiman, Stan Lee, Jerry Robinson, Dennis Kitchen, Jules Pfeiffer and Kurt Vonnegut are contributors to this documentary.

The film does a good job of covering the major phases of Eisner's career: the starting of his first studio, the development of the Spirit, the illustration work he did for the U.S. Army for over 30 years, and his encounter with the underground comic scene at an early 70's convention, which led his to return to the comic field.

Cooke addressed one of the more controversial aspects of Eisner's work, the portrayal of the Spirit's African American sidekick Ebony White. Early depictions of Ebony were very stereotypical, although the character developed over time. Cooke presents this and allowed Eisner and Pfeiffer (one of Eisner's contributing artists to the Spirit) to discuss this.

The only weakness of the film is the stuff Cooke did not have time to include. It would have been great to hear about the time Eisner was asked by a client to create a Superman-like character. When Eisner's client was sued by DC Comics, Eisner testified for DC. Although the story of how *Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories* was created is covered, it is a pity one could not hear the back stories of Eisner's other graphic novels like *Last Day in Vietnam* and *Fagin the Jew*.

What Cooke does show is an epic life. One sees a talented man with humble beginnings, who is able to become one of the founding fathers of an American art form, a man who was never was complacent, and gave his all up to the end.



Hugo Recommendations for Best Dramatic Presentation

As I have been reviewing the Hugo-nominated novels, I decided I will comment on the nominees for Best Dramatic Presentation Long and Short Form. My recommendations will start with my number-five choice and end with my first choice.

Short Form

Torchwood "Captain Jack Harkness": I had really mixed feelings about the series. I felt that in the first couple of episodes, the show runners did things because they could, since they were on a network with fewer restrictions. The latter episodes were somewhat better, particularly "Random Shoes." "Captain Jack Harkness" was the penultimate episode. There was some character development for the main cast. I seem to remember this as just setting up the season finale.

Battlestar Galactica "Razor": This was a special made-for-TV movie dealing with the back story of the Battlestar Pegasus. It shows the harsh decisions made by the Pegasus's commander Helena Cain, and how they affected members of her crew, specifically Lt. Kendra Shaw. Through Shaw's eyes, we see why Cain did what she did at the onset of the Cylon attack. The episode shows how people respond differently to a given crisis, and why sometimes good people may do horrible things. The episode also shows where the line is drawn. This episode did some foreshadowing of Season 4. It was also fun seeing some of the old centurion Cylons (from the original show) and their ships guarding an old base.

Star Trek: New Voyages "World Enough and Time": I saw this in Yokohama on a big screen. It holds up well on a big screen. This episode was written by Marc Scott Zicree (Babylon 5, Sliders, Star Trek: Deepspace Nine) and Michael Reaves (Star Trek: The Next Generation, Gargoyles, Dungeons and Dragons). The team which have been producing the The New Voyages do an excellent job reproducing the sets and equipment of the classic era. They also do a good job telling a character-based story. George Takei gets to show an interesting side of Sulu. There were also good performances by Lia Johnson as Dr. Chandris and Christina Moses as Alana Sulu. I think this series shows that Trek has future if it is produced by the right people.

Doctor Who "Human Nature"/"Family of Blood": Writer Paul Cornell gives us a great Doctor Who story where the Doctor is not really in it for 80% of the time. In order to hide out from hostile aliens, the Doctor becomes human. In this state he does not have any knowledge of his true self. The aliens eventually find him in 1913. David Tennant does a great job playing both John Smith and the Doctor. John Smith, the Doctor's human alter ego, is very unlike the Doctor. Smith is good man of his time. Unfortunately the Doctor is needed to save the day and Smith's existence must end. This is complicated, since Smith has fallen in love. The scene where Martha Jones begs Smith to let Doctor come back is incredible. It is a story where there are no easy solutions.

Doctor Who "Blink": The Doctor spends less time in this story that he does in "Human Nature"/"Family of Blood." Sally

Sparrow must find the cause of mysterious disappearances and an odd message on DVD 'easter eggs.' Steven Moffat, the writer for the episode and two-time Hugo winner, has created one of the scariest monsters on Doctor Who, monsters that can steal the year of one's life, yet they are harmless when looked at. Moffat took a classic idea of quantum mechanics and turned it into a really terrifying threat. Moffat does a good job of keeping this complicated timeline straight.

Long Form

Enchanted: This was a cute idea, having fun with the Disney princess conventions in a nice way. The animation in the beginning was a bit off. The songs were great and Amy Adams, the female lead, was just terrific.

The Golden Compass: This was a faithful adaptation of Philip Pullman's first book. It was probably good that the film ended where it did, since more would have been a downer, and there is no guarantee of a sequel. Director Chris Weitz does an excellent job of bringing Pullman's world to the screen. The technology shown in the film looks right.

Harry Potter and Order of the Phoenix: Again, another good adaptation of an existing work. Director David Yates did a good job picking what to film from a huge book. The cast is excellent, particularly Imelda Staunton as Delores Umbridge. She is very scary. My only complaint is that the floating brains in the Department of Mysteries were not shown. I have always wondered, 'what were those brains doing there?'

Stardust— Again, good choices were made on what to keep and what to change. I wish the tree had been kept that was inspired by Tori Amos. The film does bring the world designed by Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess to life. This shows what can happen when a creator can be brought on as full partner.

Heroes Season One "Genesis": At first, this was going to be last, because on the surface it seems weird giving something written by almost two dozen writers an award. Then I thought about the season, and it does feel like a big story. It is like a novel. The story builds to a big climax. The characters are developed to meet that climax. All these characters have depth. We know what motivates them. The end of season one feels like it is the end of the novel. Granted, it is the first novel of a big series, but I wanted to know what was going to happen. The show explores what makes a hero. It is not just about having power and gifts. It is something deep inside the soul. Each character must decide how to deal with their powers. It is that decision will make them heroes, villains or neutrals.

SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION IN ORLANDO

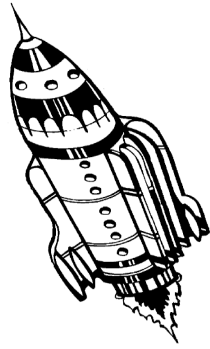
OASIS 21

May 23-25, 2008

Writer Guest of Honor

David Gerrold

*The Martian Child, Star Wolf, The War
Against the Chtorr, Land of the Lost,
Star Trek: The Trouble with Tribbles*



Hotel Information

\$98/night, single-quad
through 4/30/08

Mention OASIS for rate

Sheraton Orlando Downtown
60 South Ivanhoe Blvd
Orlando, FL 32804
407-425-4455

3-Day Memberships:

\$25 until 1/1/08,

\$30 until 4/30/08,

\$35 at the door.

Make checks payable to:

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P.O. Box 592905,
Orlando, FL 32859

Keep tuned to **http://**

www.oasfis.org

for more guest

announcements...

Special Guest Writer

John Scalzi

*Old Man's War, The Ghost Brigades,
The Android's Dream*

Artist Guest of Honor

Paul Vincenti

Award Winning Artist

Filk Guests of Honor

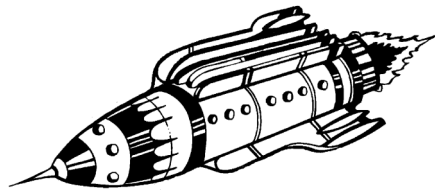
Bill and Brenda

Sutton

Members of the Filk Hall of Fame

Plus the usual suspects...

Gaming by FRAG



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