



A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This was hard year with a some bright spots. Here is the Worldcon report. One of the bright spots for this year.

We also have a review of the new show *The Orville*. by Tom Reed.

Next month's issue will have some end of the year lists. We will find out what was big in science fiction and fantasy books and films. There might be some reviews.

Happy Holidays.

Events

Tallahassee Comic Con

December 2-3

Tallahassee Automobile Musuem

6800 Mahan Drive

Tallahassee, FL 32308

Guests: Larry Hama (Writer *GI Joe* comic)

Erick Avari (Actor)

and many more

\$30 for 3 days at the door precon,

\$20 for one day Sat/Sun

tallahasseecomicon.org



Comic Book Connection

December 9-10

Comfort Suites

1202 Avenida Central

Lady Lake/The Villages, FL 32159

\$10 or less for 1 Day \$15 for 2 Day

www.thecomikbookconnection.com

Toracon

December 9

Sarasota School of Arts and Sciences

717 Central Ave,

Sarasota FL 34236

\$5 for Students, \$7 for Adults

www.ssastoracon.net/

Holiday Matsuri

December 15-17

Orlando World Center Marriott

8701 World Center Dr,

Orlando, FL 32821

\$57.02 pre con 3 days

\$48.47 for Saturday pre con

\$37.92 for Friday and Sunday pre con

Guests: Christina Vee (voice actor)

Fred Tatasciore (voice actor)

J. Michael Tatum (voice actor)

and others

holidaymatsuri.com

Tampa Anime Day

December 30

Embassy Suites Tampa—Brandon

10220 Palm River Road

Tampa, FL, 33619

\$4 for admission

www.tampa.animeday.net

December OASFiS Calendar

Holiday Party and Elections

Sunday December 10, 2017 12:30PM at Juan Sanmiguel's House, 1421 Pon Pon Court Orlando, FL 32825 (email Juan at sanmiguel@earthlink.net for more detailed directions).

Sci Fi Light

Taking Break for the Holidays!!!

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

OASFiS People

Steve Cole	stevepcole@hotmail.com
Susan Cole	407-275-5211
	sacole@mindspring.com
Arthur Dykeman	407-328-9565
	adykeman@bellsouth.net
Steve Grant	352 241 0670
	stevegrant@embarqmail.com
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
	pwheeler11@cfl.rr.com

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

November 12, 2017

Officers: Juan Sanmiguel, Peggy Stubblefield,
Members: Steve Cole, Arthur Dykeman, Rocio Flores, Ken Konkol, Pat Sims, Roger Sims
Guest: Jeanne Levinson, Harry Parkhurst, Larry Wolfe

Pat and Roger brought some books for the club.

Arthur discussed the new developments with new Doctor in *Doctor Who*.

Juan told Larry that the Hulk in the new Thor movie was not a spoiler since he was in the teasers and trailers.

Juan discussed his used book sales at Necronomicon. The signed Timothy Zahn books he bought in Helsinki sold well. He also sold a few Baen books. All profits will go to the club. Juan wanted to thank David Lussier who covered his table when Juan participated in the Necronomicon Trivia contest.

Since there were new members attending, Peggy said all the members should introduce themselves.

Peggy read out the Treasurer Report. She gave us a brief explanation on the current tax situation. We got some letters from the state about taxes owed. Peggy will look into that. We still have not heard from the IRS.

Peggy looked into a restaurant for the club holiday party, but it was too expensive so Juan volunteered his house. The party will be on December 10.

Juan nominated himself and Tom Reed for President and Vice-President. Ken Konkol nominated himself as treasurer. We still need a secretary and treasurer. Peggy will be treasurer until all the issues are wrapped up.

We discussed 501.3c issues. We need justification to eb 510.3c organization. We will need accounting help with getting 501.3c status.

Juan talked about a new con: OrlandoCon. It is a Doctor Who-focused media con.

Culture Consumed
Juan recommended *Thor:Ragnarok*, *Dirk Gently Holistic Detective Agency* (TV Show on BBC America) and *PRT Native Voices* (a series of one act plays by local playwrights).

Arthur recommends *Orville*. He also reminded us that *Marvel's Agents of SHIELD* starts on December 2.

Juan explained that both Orville and Star Trek Discovery were given a second season.

Doctor Who is still on Retro TV but the local affiliate is not on the air. *Doctor Who* is on the BritBox streaming service. This includes episode reconstructions (this is using audio and still pictures to reconstruct episodes that were erased in the late 1970s and early 80s).

Spectrum is showing European mysteries on channel 460.

Steve recommended *An Alchemy of Masques and Mirrors* (magic punk) by Curtis Craddock, *The Name of the Wind* by Patrick Rothuss, and *Providence* by Ann Leckie.

We discussed the pros and cons of Goodreads, the reviewing web site.

Book Discussion
We are Legion (We are Bob) by Dennis E. Taylor was the book. Juan did a quick plot summary. Bob is a successful software engineer who paid for a service for reviving one in the future after death. Bob dies in a car accident and comes back as a software recreation? in the future. The US has become a theocracy. Bob is tasked to pilot an interstellar probe. He has the resources to make other probes and to make software copies of himself. Bob and his copies explore nearby solar systems and find out what is happening on Earth.

Peggy explained the idea of making copies of one's software.

She gave more details on the plot about Bob's copies. There are three books in the series. Rocio was halfway through and found it relatable and exciting.

At the January meeting Juan will discuss The Best Books of 2017. At the February meeting we will discuss the works of this year's Worldcon Guests of Honor, Spider Robinson and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15PM

World Fantasy Awards

(source *Locus* website)

The World Fantasy Awards winners for works published in 2016 were announced during the World Fantasy Convention, held November 2-5, 2017 at the Wyndham Riverwalk in San Antonio TX. The Lifetime Achievement Awards, presented annually to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the fantasy field, went to Terry Brooks and Marina Warner.

Best Novel

The Sudden Appearance of Hope, Claire North (Redhook; Orbit UK)

Best Long Fiction

The Dream-Quest of Vellitt Boe, Kij Johnson (Tor.com Publishing)

Best Short Fiction

"Das Steingeschöpf", G.V. Anderson (*Strange Horizons* 12/12/16)

Best Anthology

Dreaming in the Dark, Jack Dann, ed. (PS Australia)

Best Collection

A Natural History of Hell, Jeffrey Ford (Small Beer)

Best Artist

Jeffrey Alan Love

Special Award, Professional

Michael Levy & Farah Mendlesohn, for *Children's Fantasy Literature: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press)

Special Award, Non-Professional

Neile Graham, for fostering excellence in the genre through her role as Workshop Director, Clarion West



Letters of Comment

1706-24 Eva Rd.
Etobicoke, ON
CANADA M9C 2B2

November 5, 2017

Dear OASFiSians:

It's been crazy times here for me, and I have fallen behind in commenting on the Event Horizon for the past three issues. Time to get caught up!

357...In many ways, I wish I'd been able to go to the Finnish Worldcon, but in other ways, I am glad I don't go to Worldcon any more. When I first started, they were in expensive, and now, they are simply unaffordable. I must virtually attend by reading all the trip reports.

My loc...as an example of cons changing, we went to a steampunk convention in Detroit last year, and we had a wonderful time. Our local SF con is Ad Astra, and we've been going for the past 35 years. Ad Astra moved its date to the same weekend as the steampunk con. Guess which one we're going to? The steampunk con. The local con has changed so much, and the steampunk con is what we like now.

358...You've all had to deal with some pretty bad storms. We hope everyone is safe and dry. As I write, there's a big storm hitting Toronto, so it's quite wet and cold.

I never did meet Len Wein, but Jerry Pournelle, I met as far back as 1982, right after he'd started his stellar SF writing career. I know he is much missed in the Los Angeles area.

359...Hope everyone had a great Hallowe'en! We didn't find any parties, but we did go to a 1920s-style speakeasy, celebrating the launch of a new mystery series on CBC called Frankie Drake Mysteries. It does look pretty good, and it starts tomorrow night as I write.

We wanted to see *Blade Runner 2049*, but it is already out of the theatres here. We will have to wait for the DVD, if such a thing exists any more. We have been watching *Star Trek: Discovery*, and it has been a difficult, but rewarding watch. We are very fortunate that while you have to subscribe to actually watch, it we get it on the Space channel, which for us is basic cable. We did see a bit of *The Orville*, and it just didn't appeal to us.

Good to see a NASFiC report, but given the weather, it will be a very long time before there'll be another SF convention on that island. Heck of a way to get renovations... I gather attendance was about 200?

Time to go...thunderstorms are in the forecast for this evening, and I don't want to be online when I hear the thunder. Take care, all, and see you with the next issue.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Worldcon 75

Worldcon 75, the 75th World Science Fiction Convention, took place on August 9 – 13, 2017, in Helsinki, Finland. The whole convention was in the Helsinki Expo and Convention Center. The Holiday Inn Messukeskus was the social gathering place. The guests of honor were John-Henri Holmberg, Nalo Hopkinson, Kjell Lindgren, Johanna Sinisalo, Ian Stewart, Clare Wendling, and Walter Jon Williams. Karen Lord was the toastmistress. Clare Wendling could not attend the convention due to illness. Jukka Halme was the convention chair.

There was an overcrowding problem at first. Panel rooms filled up rather quickly. The convention decided to limit the sales of day memberships and get more space from the convention center. It worked and people were able to get to their panels.

Karen Lord hosted the opening ceremonies. It was a story read by Lord with images on screen about the seasons and Finnish legends. There were dancers and singers that performed during parts of the story. Con Chair Jukka Halme participated in one of the sketches, formally opened the con, and welcomed the members. After a choir performance of Finnish Christmas music, Lord introduced the Guests of Honor, John Purcell (Transatlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) delegate), and Donna Maree Hanson (Going Under Fan Fund (GUFF) delegate). They all made brief statements. John-Henri Holmberg said his first Worldcon was in 1967 and met famous fan Forry Ackerman. Johanna Sinisalo attended the Worldcon in 1987 in Brighton. She remembered having a good time, but never imagined having a Worldcon in Finland. Nalo Hopkinson's first Worldcon was during her first book tour in 1998. She is honored and learned six Finnish words. Walter Jon Williams first Worldcon was in 1978. Even though there were problems at that con, he enjoyed himself. Williams was happy to be here since his family was from Finland. This was Ian Stewart's first trip to Finland and was also enjoying himself. John Purcell's first Worldcon was in 1976 and was enjoying his TAFF trip. Donna Maree Hanson spoke to the audience in Finnish. The opening ceremony story continued after Guest of Honor presentation. After the story was over, Halme hoped the audience enjoyed the opening ceremony presentation. He introduced Mikka Votilla who organized the opening ceremony. Halme is a proud Helsinki native and never imagined having a Worldcon in his hometown. He thanked Emil Aro, the bid chair who made the convention happen. He thanked former co-chairs Saija Aro and Crystal Huff. Halme announced the names of distinguished staff members and gave them an award. Halme asked con members to please look out for outstanding work from con staff so con leadership can recognize them later. Lord told the members to go out and enjoy themselves.

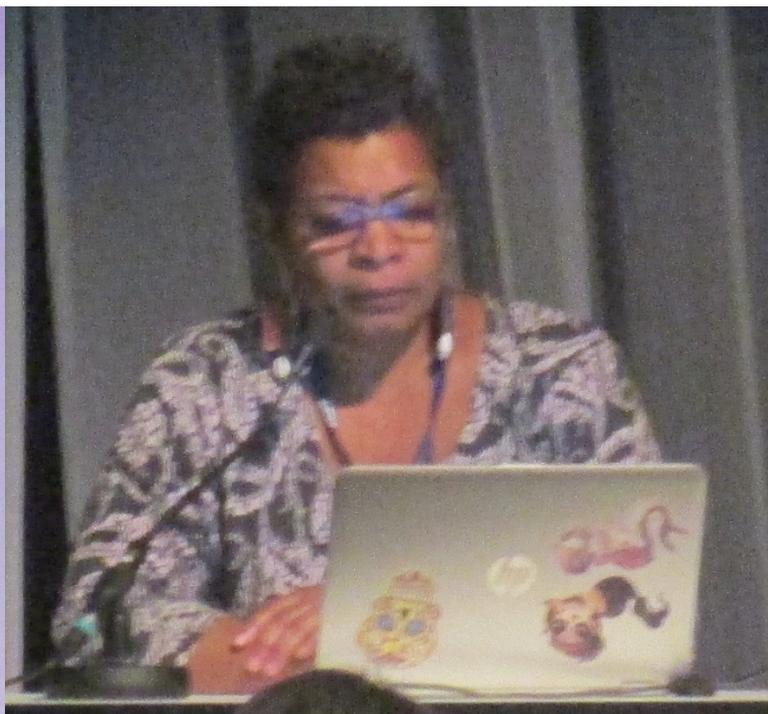
Todd Allis, Dakkar, Nojay, Ada Palmer (moderator (m)), Ciaran Roberts, and Sakuya discussed **Anime and Manga for SF/F Fans**. Palmer asked the panel what Science Fiction/Fantasy topics does anime and magna do well. Allis and Roberts said transhumanism and cited *Ghost in the Shell*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, and *Time of Eve* as examples. Dakker felt anime like *Denno Coil* focus on the social consequences of Science Fiction ideas. *Denno Coil* considered the effects of augmented reality on society. Nojay noted the manga *The Record of Yokohama Shopping Trip* explores ecological problems. Sakuya said anime handles disabilities well and cited *Blackjack* as an example of this. Palmer asked the panel for anime and manga they

would recommend to Science Fiction/Fantasy fans. The panel recommended *FLCL*, *Samurai Seven* (a SF take on Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*), *Gangkoutsu* (a SF take on *The Count of Monte Cristo*), *Nausicaa and the Valley of the Wind* (manga), *Stein's Gate*, *Purgatory*, *Haibane Renmei* (aka *Charcoal Feathers Federation*), *Pluto*, *Excel Road*, *Tiger and Bunny*, *Gundam 00*, *Cowboy Bebop*, *Space Brothers*, *Planetes* and *Flip Flappers*. Palmer then asked the panel for works they would not recommend to non-anime and magna fans. Reasons for this could be they were too steeped in traditional anime tropes or Japanese culture and people not familiar with the medium would not easily understand the work. The panel mentioned *Elven Lied*, *xxxHolic*, *hack* series, *She the Final Weapon*, *Orion*, *Magical Girl Lyrical Nanoha*, *Monogatori*, *Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*, and *Higurashi When They Cry*. Palmer then asked the audience for recommendations. These included *Legends of the Galactic Heroes*, *Wolf's Reign*, *Wolf and Spice*, *Penguin Drum*, and *Infinite Ryvius*. The panelists made one last round of recommendations. They mentioned *12 Kingdoms*, *Martian Successor Nadesico*, *Ancient Magus Bride*, *Dorohedoro*, *Phoenix*, and *Ooku*.

J. Robert Tupasala interviewed Nalo Hopkinson. Hopkinson's father was a teacher and helped her with Chaucer. She got into SF and Fantasy at a young age. Hopkinson's mother was a librarian, so she would go to the library after school. There she would read the SF section. Some of the books she read were *Gulliver's Travels*, *Welcome to the Monkey House*, "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin", and *The Andromeda Strain*. She went to Canada in her 20s and started to look for other writers of color. There were not many at that time, but now there many writers from the Caribbean. Both Hopkinson and Karen Lord have put together anthologies with Caribbean writers. When she worked in a library, she found a copy of Samuel R. Delany's *Stars in My Pockets Like Grains of Sand*. It was like lightning bolt seeing Delany's picture in the book. She told this to Delany years later and Delany said he never got to have that experience. Hopkinson then found Charles Saunders, Tananarive Due, and Steven Barnes. Hopkinson went to Clarion (a SF Writer's Workshop). Her teachers there were Samuel R. Delany, Joe Haldeman, Karen Joy Fowler, Nancy Kress, Pat Murphy, and Tim Powers. She started work on a novel and then stopped and started another. Hopkinson then participated in a novel writing contest. She submitted the first two chapters of the second novel. This got the publishers running the contest interested and she finished the book in two months. Hopkinson later found out she attention deficit disorder (ADD) and fibromyalgia which makes writing a challenge. She won the contest, went back to finish her first novel, and got an agent. Plot is difficult for Hopkinson, so she works on characters and ideas first. *Brown Girl in the Ring*, her first published novel, is set in the future and uses cultural influences from the Caribbean. Her second novel, *Midnight Robber*, is set on planet colonized by Caribbeans and use their language for technical words. *The Salt Roads* dealt with the African Diaspora. It was set in three-time periods and looked at trying to make a place for yourself. Hopkinson has published two short story collections. She is working on a graphic novel and wrote the narrative for a video game. *Sister Mine* won the Andre Norton award for best Young Adult (YA) novel. Hopkinson did not plan the book to be a YA novel since there was material she thought par-

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Worldcon 75 - Guests of Honor



Clockwise, Left to right
Karen Lord, Nalo Hopkinson, Johanna Sinisalo, Dr. Kjell Lindgren,
Walter Jon Williams, John-Henri Holmberg,, Ian Stewart



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ents might object to. She edited several anthologies including *Whispers from the Cotton Tree Root: Caribbean Fabulist Fiction*, *Mojo: Conjure Stories*, and *People of Color Destroy Science Fiction*. She has taught at Clarion and wrote short fiction afterward. She has started two new novels. An audience member asked Hopkinson how she copes with ADD. She said she throws herself at the computer and has low goals for daily word output.

Walter Jon Williams did a presentation on his family. All his grandparents were Finnish. Williams opened the presentation with a picture of him wearing a space helmet and flight suit when he was a boy. The helmet was merchandise from the television show *Men in Space*. The show was based on rocket pioneer Willie Ley's ideas about space flight. Williams is still willing to go into space in a government or private spaceship. Williams was born in Minnesota which is a lot like Finland. Both have similar weather and glaciers influenced the local geography. Finns like his family were looking for a utopia. Williams' paternal grandfather left Finland to avoid joining the Russian Army. His grandfather went to Canada where he got the last name Williams when he started working at a lumberjack camp. The owner of the company was Welsh, so when signing the work papers, he gave the grandfather a Welsh sounding name. Eventually Williams' grandfather moved to northern Minnesota and got a farm. A train company sold the land to him with a stipulation they owned the mineral rights. There was a lot of iron ore in the area and the train company wanted to keep the iron. His grandfather helped build roads in the area, and there was even a road named after him. He also drove the school sleigh, ran liquor from Canada during prohibition, and sold an herbal VD cure. His maternal grandparents came from a very strict religious family. They had no formal education. They had also bought a farm in Minnesota. Williams maternal grandfather, a carpenter, died when his mother was 9. Williams' mother was the youngest in her family. She got an education and teaching job thanks to a New Deal program. Williams' father went to high school, but could not afford college. A New Deal program could cover the tuition but not the books and Williams' father could not pay for the books. Williams father became a road gang foreman. At this job Williams's father met another foreman, future SF writer Gordon Dickson. The area where Williams family lived had an active Finnish community. There were Finnish newspapers and radio stations. They formed co-op stores to protect the food. Land of Lakes started out as one of these co-ops. Williams' father enlisted in Army during World War II despite his grandfather's objections. He became an ambulance driver in Europe and was everywhere they needed an ambulance. After the war his father married, and got a college education. Williams' mother continued teaching until Williams was born. Minnesota was a utopia for the white middle class after World War II. The economy was good and Williams was able to get a good education. Williams grew up in Duluth, MN. Duluth had a harbor famous for shipping iron ore, the first commercial airline anywhere, a Japanese garden, and a large varied population though all blonde. One Finnish American contribution was the creation of Saint Urho. This saint drove the grasshoppers from Finland which saved the Finnish wine industry. Saint Urho day is March 16, the day before Saint Patrick. There is a lot drinking on Saint Urho day. Williams has a great extended family, some of whom inspired his women characters. Williams moved to New Mexico. The world he grew up in is no more. The iron business

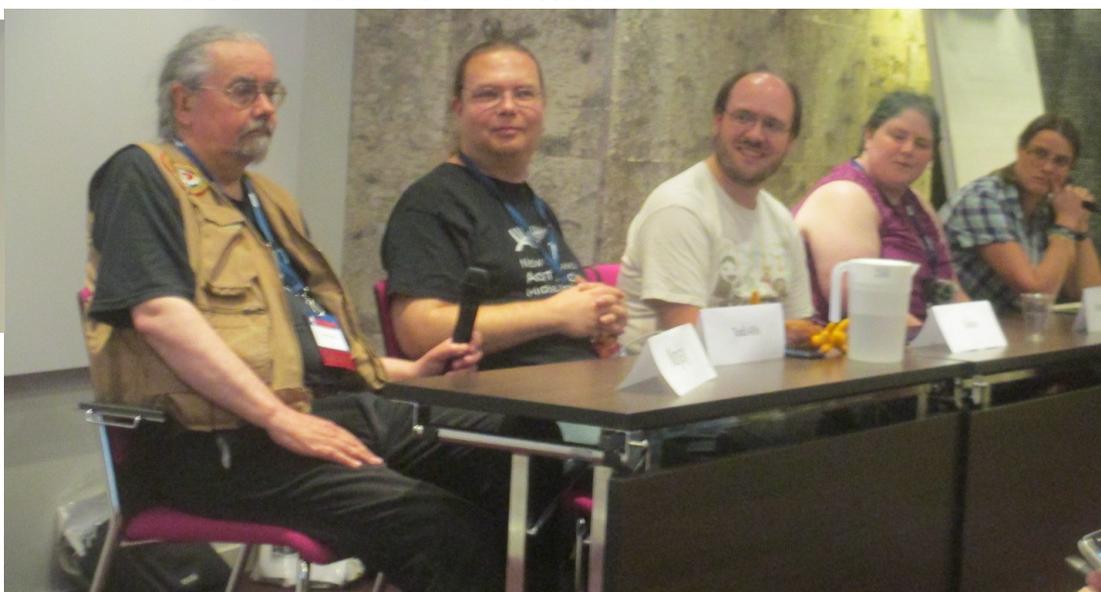
moved and most of the Duluth he remembers is gone. The utopia the Finns wanted to create is scattered all over the country. His cousins are doing well in other part of the US. Williams' parents spoke Finnish at home but did not pass it on to their children. Williams taught himself how to write and later went to Clarion. He founded and works at Taos Toolbox, a writer's workshop.

Jeff VanderMeer interviewed Johanna Sinisalo. VanderMeer gave an overview of Sinisalo's career which includes writing, editing, and advising on television and film projects. She states Finns love nature as long nature knows its place. Finns will become a hysterical if a snake or bear wanders near their home. Sinisalo's perspective is that no species should dominate another and cooperation should be the goal. She is interested in how animals are intelligent without having human intelligence. She sees the divide between human and animals thinning. Her works about societal structures and how they affect people on the macro and micro level. All fiction is political on some level. In her work, Sinisalo tries to put information in bits and pieces and lets the reader to put them together. She did this in her novel *Troll: A Love Story*. Because of her novel, some believed the trolls were real. VanderMeer asked her why did Finland embrace Weird literature. She explained that some Finnish writers were not comfortable with being associate with Science Fiction. This was because of preconceived notions of the genre. They felt Weird was a better term and easier to market. VanderMeer and Sinisalo read an excerpt (in their own language) from her novel *Birdbrain*. VanderMeer asked if the translators did a good job. Sinisalo said they did and she is active in translations. She learns from them particularly the parts that are not clear in the other language. VanderMeer asked about her childhood. Sinisalo's father was in the Air Force and grew up near a forest. She was always comfortable with nature. Sinisalo read from an early age and encouraged to read by her father. At 5, she realized people created books, people paid writers, and books were in her future. She has no defining moment of being a writer. VanderMeer gave her two names of writers and asked Sinisalo which one was better. She chose Margaret Atwood over James Tiptree Jr. She felt Atwood was better writer, but she chose Ursula K. LeGuin over Atwood. LeGuin was the first writer to deal with gender issues. Sinisalo has worked on the script for a sequel to *Iron Sky*, and is currently working on 2 long novels.

Tiffiani Angus, Paul Carlson, Elizabeth Hand, Kameron Hurley, and Nina Niskanen (m) were **Building Resistance**. The panel asked if a lone charismatic figure leading the resistance works in real life. Hand says people want them and it is possible on the local level. A group fought a power company that was indiscriminately chopping trees to put in new power lines in Maine. The group was able to make the company change how they installed the lines. Hurley who researched resistance movements in South Africa discussed Nelson Mandella. He became a symbol being in prison and brought people together. His wife Winnie did a lot of the work fighting apartheid. Power comes from the ground up. The idea of the great man or woman happens later, movements start with a small group of people. Social media can help organize such movements. In Hurley's books, she uses multiple points of view to convey the idea that many people make a revolution not just one powerful person. *The Hunger Game* books showed that revolutions start when the people are no longer afraid of the government. Resistance movements are

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Worldcon 75 - Panels



By Row and Left to Right.

Anime and Magna for SF/F fans: Ada Palmer (m), Nojay, Todd Allis, Dakkar, Ciaran Roberts, and Sakuya

Building Resistance: Paul Carlson, Tiffani Angus, Elizabeth Hand, Kameron Hurley, and Nina Niskanen

Fandom Keeps Young at Heart: Robert Silverberg, Gay Haldeman, Liisa Rantalaiho and Janice Gelb



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complicated and can make mistakes. The film *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* showed the good and bad of a rebellion. Bad things are done by both sides. The panel suggested not to demonize the other side when writing resistance stories. One should try to understand the other side. Ranting against the other side does not help. Face to face dealings with people who disagree is more effective. If you give people concrete examples of how certain policies can hurt you, it can be very effective in changing opinions. It is difficult for some people to empathize with others. A lot of fiction prefers clear cut divisions among people and the difference can be complex. The LGBTQ movement became a very successful movement because they were able to humanize the struggle and had clear goals. They offered a better future on the other side of the conflict. Some think empathy as a zero-sum game. Empathy for others does not take something from you. The panel advise to fight if people try to change you. One should call out people who are being offensive. You can ask them why the offensive remark they made is funny or appropriate and that can shut them down. The panel stated things will get better, advised to get involved with local government, believe in people, and be skeptical and not cynical.

Nalo Hopkinson read from the novels she is working on. She read from *Blackhearted Man* (provisional title). Set in 16th century, the book is about a group of former slaves making a community on an island. After the reading Hopkinson described the challenges in writing. Once she was writing a novel and could not find an ending. She sent the novel to a friend, who pointed out that Hopkinson finished the novel on page 394 and started a new story. She then read from *Duppy Jacket* (provisional title). Duppy is a Caribbean word for ghost and jacket is Caribbean slang for an illegitimate child. The novel is set in 19th century Jamaica. During this time Jamaica had a World's Fair that was crowdsourced. This World's Fair led to Jamaica becoming a tourist destination. After the reading there was a Q&A. Someone asked what books of hers should they read first. She recommended *Brown Girl in the Ring* and her short story collections. She said one of her collections was a homage to Cordwainer Smith. She encouraged people to read Samuel R. Delany's challenging novel *Dhalgren*, the works of Sofia Samatar, and the graphic novel *Rabbi's Cat* by Joann Sfar. Hopkinson has no idea when the novels she read will come out. She has no publisher right now and is still working on the books.

Karen Lord hosted the Hugos. Darth Finn introduced her and warned the audience they had pronounced kiitos (the Finnish word for thank you) for the last time. There was a living room set with a couch, chairs, and a bookshelf with the finalists works displayed. Lord welcomed the Hugo finalists and told them to enjoy the ceremony honoring them. Hugo Administrator Nicholas Whyte read out some statistics including this year's voting ranked third in Hugo history with over 3,000 votes. Whyte introduced Finnish artist Eeva Jokinen, the designer of this year's Hugo base and the award itself. Walter Day, video game historian and producer of Science Fiction trading cards, presented the Worldcon a certificate from the Guinness Book of World Records certifying that the Hugos are the longest running science fiction award in history. The ceremony also covered the Big Heart Award, First Fandom Award, Sam Moskowitz Award, and Seiun Award (Japan). Presenters came from all over the world and they included John Purcell (TAFF delegate), Donna Maree Hanson (GUFF

delegate), Xia Jia, Tanya Tynjälä, Nikhil Singh, Sibel Kekilli, Jyrki J.J. Kasvi, and the Slaski Klub Fantasyki Silesian (Polish SF club). Vince Doherty introduced the In-Memoriam presentation. One interesting note about the In-Memoriam presentation and listing in the con book. The writers of con book and the presentation listed Adam West connection to our community as Batman instead of actor and that felt appropriate. *Arrival* (a film based on Ted Chiang's "The Story of Your Life") won the Best Dramatic Presentation-Long Form. The screenwriter of *Arrival* sent a speech read by Vice Chair Collete Fozard. The screenwriter said if it was not for the Hugos, he might have not read Ted Chiang's short story collection. The writer's involvement with *Arrival* started with the words "Hugo winning author". Ursula Vernon won for her novelette "The Tomato Thief". After thanking *Apex* magazine and her family, she went on a detailed description on whale fall (whales dying and their bodies sinking in the ocean) and its impact on the ecosystem. She asked the audience "Isn't that cool?" and they agreed. N.K. Jemisin won for her novel *The Obelisk Gate*. This makes her the third writer to win two Hugos for novel consecutively (the first two were Orson Scott Card and Lois McMaster Bujold). Karen Lord read Jemisin's speech. Jemisin thanked the Worldcon members and thanked the people who help her get through a difficult time. She was pleased that the book which focused on community won the award.

Bellis interviewed John-Henri Holmberg. Holmberg talked about stories he liked as a boy. He remembered a story where pirates shanghaied a space crew and due to time dilation effects they kidnapped the crew for life. There was a Poul Anderson story about a group of space wanderers who settle down on a planet and later go back to the stars again. Those stories gave him a sense of wonder. Holmberg's ambitions in the Science Fiction publishing was to have fun, make money, and introduce people to stories he liked. He was the first Swedish publisher of LeGuin, Delaney, Tiptree, and Russ. Holmberg is responsible for publishing 1200 works and he was proud of what he published. Holmberg enjoyed to write non-fiction like his essay on Robert Heinlein. Holmberg tried to write a thesis on Science Fiction. The thesis was to trace 5 original themes in H.G. Wells works and how other writers used those themes in their work. One of Holmberg's professors said SF is not literature. He tried to pursue this thesis at other universities and none of them accepted it. He left academia as a result. Holmberg meet Harlan Ellison at his first Worldcon in 1967. Five years later Ellison contacted Holmberg. He needed Swedish pornography for an article he was writing. Holmberg mailed the material to Ellison but it took months to get to him. Holmberg thinks people opened the package on the way and that caused the delay. Holmberg published some of Ellison's stories and met Ellison at a Swedish book fair. The Russian Ambassador to Sweden was at the same book fair. The Ambassador's wife was a big fan of writer of Barbara Cartland. Cartland's author picture usually included her dog. Ellison convincingly told the ambassador's wife the dog wrote the books. Jack Vance once took Holmberg to a great restaurant. It was a 4-hour drive to get there. It supposedly had a fabulous view and Vance wanted to show it to Holmberg. They got there and food was great, but there was fog and it ruined the view. Holmberg knew a Swedish writer who lived in Florida and did not know he lived near a beach until Holmberg visited him.

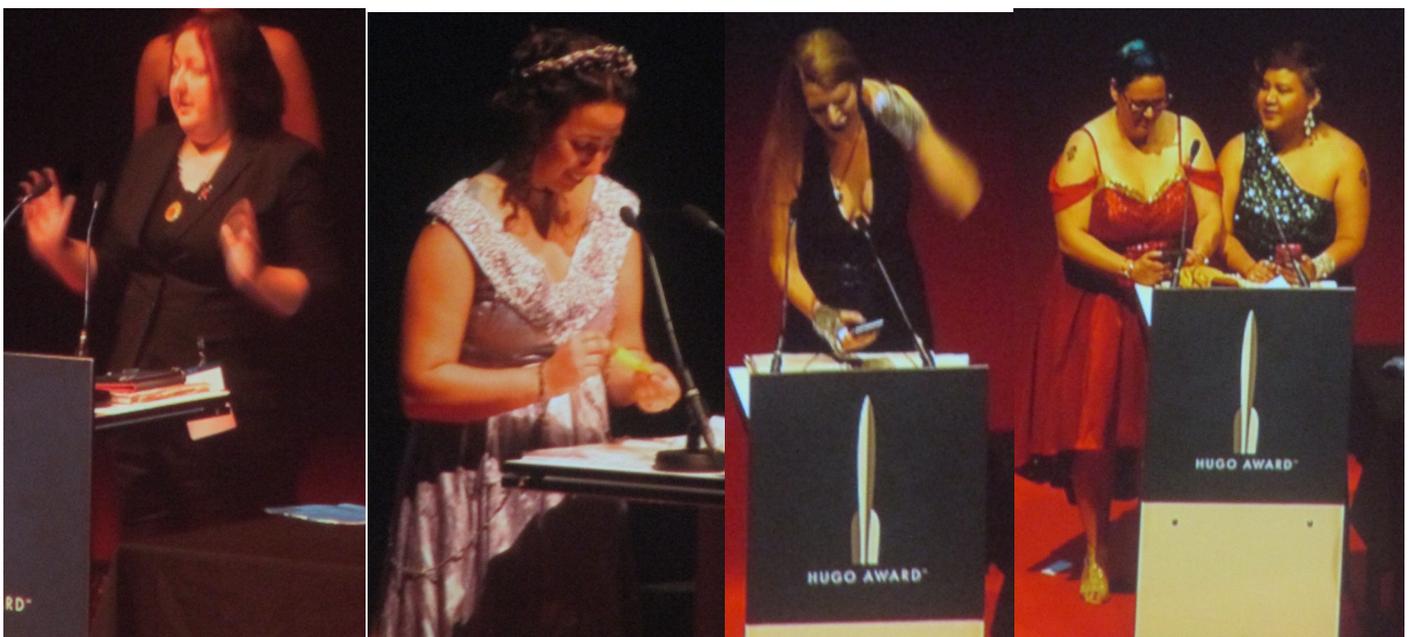
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Worldcon 75 - Hugo Awards



By Row, Left to right

First Row: Walter Day and Hugo Administrator Nicholas Whyte, Peter and Emma Newman winners of Best Fancast for *Tea and Jeopardy*, Ira and Susan two of editors of the Best Fanzine winner *Lady Business*,
 Second Row: Ursula Vernon winner for Best Novelette for “The Tomato Thief”, Amal El-Mohtar winner of Best Short Story for “Seasons of Glass and Iron”, Liz Gorinsky winner Best Editor (Long Form), Michi Trota and Julia Rios two of the editors of *Uncanny* the Best Semiprozine



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Someone asked Holmberg if he ever met Alcie Sheldon aka James Tiptree Jr. He never did but the revelation of her identity shocked the community. Brian Aldiss in his history of the field *Billion Year Spree*, stated that all best new writers were women except for James Tiptree Jr. Everyone knew it was an alias since there was no James Tiptree Jr. in any US phone directory. Women thought Tiptree was sensitive. People at that time thought you could identify the writer gender by their writing. Holmberg did a fanzine in his teens. He drew the pictures and tried to translate a Ray Bradbury short story. He sent it to 5 friends and got some nice letters back. The local SF club invited him to meetings as a result.

Anne Charnock, Annalee Newitz (m), Robert Silverberg, Ian Stewart, and Alex Wenie looked at **Science Fiction Gone Wrong**. This would cover things that failed in the story but the story was good. Stewart pointed out a math error in Carl Sagan's *Contact*. In the story there is a message found in π . π is mathematical not physical in a nature. It is the circumference of a circle divided by its diameter. It would be hard to embed a message there. It is a small flaw. Silverberg explained *The First and Last Men* by Olaf Stapledon. It is a novel that covers 2 billion of evolution and humanity changes 18 times. The book came out in 1930. Stapledon thought France would conquer Europe in near future. Humanity would discover gene editing 40 million years in the future. A publisher reissued the book in 1950s without the first six chapters because they were out of date. Later editions put the chapters back in. Newitz considered the *At the Mountains of Madness* by H.P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft introduced the shoggoths, blobs that can make or do anything. Newitz felt the Shoggoths deserve their own story or that *At the Mountains of Madness* would be better from their point of view. In the 1980s, Charnock thought Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* was implausible. She thought it was unlikely an established democracy would regress and take people's rights away. Now the current American government is trying to take away women's rights. Wenie did not believe the mood device in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* was plausible. The device could change one's mood after entering a code for the desired mood. Wenie also pointed out that Deckard had an infinity key that could open any door. He uses it once and never speaks of it again. The panelists looked at a pattern of things go wrong in stories. They noted that dynamic systems like planet orbits are sometimes wrong. Larry Niven wrote a sequel to *Ringworld* to correct an error in the first book. There was discussion whether the tripods in *The War of the Worlds* could walk. The Martians should have known about the bacteria that defeated them. Charnock noted that stories rarely deal with pregnancy and when they do it seems unchanged after centuries of progress. Silverberg is glad none of his works came up in the discussion. When Silverberg does time travel he makes the technology fantastical to avoid close analysis. Silverberg noted Isaac Asimov admitted that he made a mistake in his classic story "Nightfall". He corrected it 48 years later. One needs to choose which impossibilities to put in their stories. Newitz wondered if the ansible, LeGuin's faster than light communicator is the key to interstellar travel. Transportation rather than communication may be more important.

Anna Bark Perssom (m), Nalo Hopkinson, Caroline Mullen, and Alexandra Pierce discussed the work of Octavia Butler. Pierce did a collection of essays on Butler. Hopkinson read

all her books as they came out and Butler died before a planned book tour they were going to do together. Mullen re-read all of Butler's books and says *Parable of the Talents* influenced her life. The anthology *Octavia's Brood* are stories by social activists who use Science Fiction to imagine a better world. People are discovering Butler's work all the time. Perssom said the work still holds up and mentioned there is a scholarship to Clarion in Butler's name. Mullen liked Butler for her feelings and ideas. Her favorites are *Kindred*, *Parable of the Talents*, and *Fledgling*. Butler's themes were about the role of power, reconciliation, forming families, obtaining agency, and learning to live with one another. Hopkinson felt Butler did not advocate fixing humans, but to learn to be ourselves. Butler did not do much short fiction and only had one short story collection, *Bloodchild*. The title story of that collection dealt with the ideas of family and making hard choices. Ava DuVernay, director of *Selma*, *13th*, and *A Wrinkle in Time*, will adapt Butler's *Dawn* series for television. Damian Duffy and John Jennings did a graphic novel of *Kindred*. Pierce explained Butler's use of horror. Butler used the tropes of horror, but subverts them to tell her story. Butler's winning the MacArthur award helped legitimize Science Fiction and she used the money to buy her mother a house. Mullen remembered when Butler was guest at Eastercon, the British national convention, where her autograph was very long.

Johanna Sinisalo described her work on the film *Iron Sky* and its sequel. There was a member of the production team with her (I could not get his name and the program did not list it). Sinisalo wrote the book adaptation of the film and co-wrote the script. In 2005 the film's production team made a film called *Star Wreck*, a parody of *Star Trek* and space opera in general. The film was a feature with special effects that they made in a basement. It cost about €15-17,000 and took seven years to make. It was the first feature film made on the Internet and the second crowdfunded film. The group who made *Star Wreck* wanted to be filmmakers but they did not know what to do next. One of them read a book about UFOs and got the idea of Nazis on the dark side of the Moon. They thought it was a good idea but not a serious one. Sinisalo came to help them with a script but their ideas were not good. Then they told her about the Nazis on the moon and she was engaged and saw tremendous potential in the idea. The production of *Iron Sky* was difficult. It took a long time to write the script and floods and blizzards interfered with production. The film opened at the Berlin film festival. Many were surprised that the festival organizers could show the film because of Germany's strict anti-Nazi laws. Since the film was a work of art it was not a problem. Sinisalo had a free hand in writing book. In the book she looks at life for the lunar colonists. The new film is *Iron Sky 2: The Coming Race*. The film is set 20 years in the future and features the children of the lead characters of the first film. *Iron Sky 2* will get a theatrical release in Finland and Germany, the filmmakers are not sure where else. Sinisalo will write the book for the new film.

There were 26 entries in this year's Masquerade. Karen Lord was the master of ceremonies. The acapella group (which includes writer Ada Palmer) Sassafras performed between presentation and awards. Mika Sarjanen won Honorable Mention for Proper Inflation (Novice) for *Hero of Heroes*. Florida costumer Anne Davenport won Honorable Mention for Best Prop (Open) for *Louhi and the Sampo*. Teemu Lähteenmäki won Honorable

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Worldcon 75 - Hall Costumes



Clockwise and Left to right
 Dream from Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*, The Queen from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Walt Disney), Dana Scully from *The X-Files*, Ace from Classic *Doctor Who*, Rick Sanchez from *Rick and Morty*, General Leia Organa-Sol and Rey from *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, Kochi Hirose and Mikitaka Hazekura from *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Diamond is Unbreakable*, Josuke Higashikata and Okuyasu Nijimura from *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Diamond is Unbreakable*, Orko from *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, Dazzler from Marvel Comics, Ahoka Tanno from *Star Wars: Clone Wars* and *Star Wars: Rebels*



(Continued from page 10)

Mention for Spit and Polish (Novice) *Cylon Cenurion from Battlestar Galactica*. Kerttu Vähänen won Best Recreation for *Doctor Strange from the Marvel Universe*. Lassi Arto won Best in Class (Novice) for *Skelator from He Man and the Masters of the Universe*. Michelle “Miki” Dennis won Best In Class (Open) for both Workmanship and Presentation for *Tuonetar*. Leena Peippo won Best in Show Workmanship for *Dwalin the Dwarf from The Hobbit*. Olivia won Best in Show Presentation for when *Halley Came Back to Jackson 1910*. Pictures of all the costumes can be found at convention website at www.worldcon.fi/publications.

Karen Babcock, Lynn Gold, Hans Person (m), and Ben Yalow described the **Crisis for Con-Runners**. Yalow has been to 35 conventions in a busy year. His busiest weekend was doing three conventions, one in New Zealand, one in Los Angeles, and one in New York. He got an extra day that weekend due to the travel and Labor Day. The panel asked for their worst crisis. A guest dying at or before the convention. Noted writer John Brunner died at Intersection, the 1995 Worldcon. The convention staff announced his death at the Hugo ceremony. The convention did announcement with care so it would be respectful, but not depress the con. Worldcon guests have a higher probability of dying. Worldcon Guests of Honor must have a long distinguish career as a pro or fan. People who have a long distinguish career are older. At LA Con IV, the 2006 Worldcon, two Guests of Honor, Howard DeVore and Frankie Thomas died before the convention. The Reno in 2011 Worldcon bid asked *Locus* editor and publisher Charles Brown to be a guest of honor should they win their bid. He accepted but died before the site selection vote. The Reno bid won and decided to list Brown as guest of honor and pay to tribute to him at the convention. Gold mentioned that Bruce Pelz died before the Westercon he was going to chair. Yalow followed by saying the Confrancisco lost two chairs before the con. Yalow and Gold discussed a Westercon that ran into problems. The hotel liaison was not speaking to the con chair due to personal differences. The hotel liaison did things that the convention committee did not know about. The hotel liaison signed the hotel contract. This became a problem since a con goer died because of alcohol given to him at the con. The family tried to sue and the hotel liaison was in trouble since their name was on the contract. The liaison also promised the hotel that the con members would eat at the expensive hotel restaurant. The hotel got more staff and food for the convention. There were cheaper restaurants nearby, so no one went to the hotel restaurant. The hotel thought the con suite was at fault for the low attendance at the restaurant and had it shut down. It was a mess for the convention to deal with this. Babcock discussed working on convention publications. One should check on the technology available and make sure that all parties concerned are using or can interact with publication software. She advised to prepare the programming as soon as possible so there is time to edit the publications and send it to the printers. Gold had to take over the con book at the last minute once. She advised that key con positions have backup people in case something happens to primary person. At a con Yalow chaired, there was a blizzard right before the con. Yalow contacted the printer and asked if the con books would be ready for the convention. The printer said they would be if he could find his plant. The blizzard had buried his plant with snow. Babcock stated the bigger the con the earlier it needs to be at the printer. Gold said people still need hardcopies of program books since there are some people who do

not have smart phones. Someone asked the panel was what was weirdest new rule they had come up with. Yalow said no coat hangers on the sprinklers. This was because at a one convention some non-members participated in bondage related activities in their hotel room. This include suspending a body on a sprinkler. Sprinklers cannot hold the weight of a body and they have water behind them. As a result, the sprinkler broke and the hotel flooded. Yalow talked about two times the fire alarm started a fire due to their design and circumstance. At one Eastercon there was problems with gangs of thieves. Gold explained how the role-playing game “If I Ran the Zoo” helped the Baycon committee prepare for the convention. The game provides a framework for dealing with problems. Yalow advised for con runners to think on their feet and know what resources they have available. One hotel shut down the elevators during a convention. A member of the con was an insurance adjuster for the hotel. They were able to raise the hotel’s insurance rate because of the shutdown. There was one convention that expected 6,000 people and got 14,000. Convention guests Isaac Asimov and David Gerrold walked the lines and talked to people waiting in line.

Janice Gelb, Gay Haldeman, Liisa Rantatalaiho (m), and Robert Silverberg explained how **Fandom Keeps You Young at Heart!** Gelb has worked in several areas of con running. Haldeman work also worked on many conventions before her husband Joe became a pro. Worldcon 75 is Robert Silverberg’s 64th Worldcon, and has already bought a membership to the 2019 Worldcon in Dublin. He started out as a fan but quickly became a professional writer. Right now, he has a few peers left in the field. All the panelists have friends from the younger generations. Haldeman says this one of the ways fandom keeps oneself young. Silverberg and Haldeman noted the changes in demographics at conventions. At Silverberg’s first Worldcon, there were only two single women and all the other women were the wives of writers. Haldeman remembered all the attention she got at her first convention in 1963. Silverberg noted that the barrier between fans and pros were not as distinct at past conventions. Fans and pros would interact at parties and other events. Haldeman points out there are more people going to conventions that make such interaction rare. Gelb said that more writers are coming outside from fandom than they did in the past. Silverberg still interacts with fans at local clubs and through amateur press association. There is no local club where Haldeman lives but if there was they would be members. Gelb also interacts with local fan organizations and keeps in touch with people with Facebook. Gelb explained that technology has made working on cons easier. When she started they had make expensive long-distance phone calls for convention planning. People now communicate by email. This is one of the few times that Gelb is not on Worldcon staff. Silverberg thanked fans for their efforts in convention running. Haldeman talked about how her sister found convention programming mentally stimulating. Silverberg says writer need to keep up with the world to write convincing futures and convention program items helps with this. Gelb pointed out there are many ways for fans to express themselves now. They can be costumers or cosplayers, make their own films, or produce a fanzine or blog. An audience member described fandom as an international community. Haldeman agreed and talked about the time her husband got sick in Cincinnati during a trip. The local fan group helped them during this time. Gelb stated how fandom

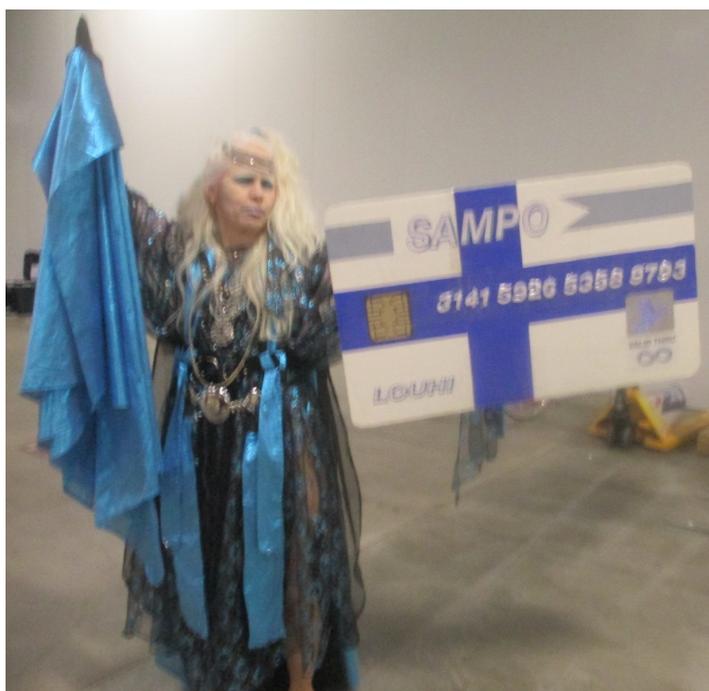
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Worldcon 75 - Masquerade



Starting from the upper left and going clockwise.

Michelle "Miki" Dennis Best In Class (Open) for both Workmanship and Presentation for *Tuonetar* , . Lassi Arto won Best in Class (Novice) for *Skelator from He Man and the Masters of the Universe* , . Teemu Lähteenmäki Honorable Mention for Spit and Polish (Novice) *Cylon Cenurion from Battlestar Galactica* , . Kerttu Vähänen Best Recreation for *Doctor Strange from the Marvel Universe*, Mika Sarjanen Honorable Mention for Proper Inflation (Novice) for *Hero of Heroes* , Leena Peippo Best in Show Workmanship for *Dwalin the Dwarf from The Hobbit* , Anne Davenport Honorable Mention for Best Prop (Open) for *Louhi and the Sampo*



(Continued from page 12)

encourages travel. She thanked the Finnish fans for putting on a great convention and attracting young fans.

Helen Barford, Jyrki Kasvi (m), Melinda Snodgrass and Shimo Sutila fought in ***Babylon 5 vs. Star Trek – Fight!*** Snodgrass had worked on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, but did not see *Babylon 5*. The *Babylon 5* and *Star Trek: Deepspace Nine* came out at the same time and were set on space stations. Snodgrass said that *Star Trek: Deepspace Nine* producer Ira Steven Behr wanted to get away from a starship. He considered setting a show at Starfleet Academy or Starfleet Headquarters. Barford reminded people that *Babylon 5* creator Joe Michael Straczynski had plotted the whole series before production. She went on to say Straczynski did try to sell the idea to Paramount first. Kasyi asked who had the better space battles. *Star Trek* tends to bend the laws of physics with its space battles. *Babylon 5* battles were in all three dimensions and tried to have plausible technology. Sometimes if the space battles are too accurate they will be boring. Kasvi asked who had better special effects. *Babylon 5* was the first show to use computer generated effects for its space scenes and they were mind blowing at the time. Snodgrass said effects will not replace story or character relationships. Kasvi asked about the shows' fashions. The original *Next Generation* costumes were uncomfortable. Costumes are critical. *The Next Generation* considered getting James Earl Jones for a guest appearance. What stopped that was imagining him in the original *Next Generation* uniform. The *Star Trek* uniforms improved as time went on. *Star Trek* uniforms did not have pockets but *Babylon 5* uniforms did. *Babylon 5* showed bathrooms in space, unlike *Star Trek*. The panel talked about the commanders. A panelist described a game called Shatner. One yells "Shatner" and everyone stops and overacts whatever they are doing. Sheridan, *Babylon 5*'s commander, did long speeches to explore politics. The actors on both shows are friendly to fans. Next the panel looked at the episodes that won Hugos. Barford said *Babylon 5*'s "Shattered Dreams" was a gut punch and thought *Star Trek*'s "City on the Edge of Forever" was heart breaking. Snodgrass explained that other writers worked on "City on the Edge of Forever" and *Star Trek* story editor D.C. Fontana wrote the final script. Actor Walter Koenig worked on both shows. He was adorable as Chekov on *Star Trek*, but was the menacing and nuanced villain Bester on *Babylon 5*. The audience decided that *Babylon 5* won the fight.

Karen Lord hosted the Closing Ceremonies. It was a packed room. Lord sadly began closing the first Nordic Worldcon. She complemented the convention staff and praised for solving problems. Lord thanked the con for letting her be Toastmistress. Astronaut Kjell Lindgren came up to stage. The convention overwhelmed him. He explained that Science Fiction provides the goal posts for NASA. NASA astronauts and scientist find inspiration in the field. The con chair, vice chairs, and guests of honor came to the stage. The guest of honor thanked the convention and the con staff gave them gifts. Lord read some statistics. Worldcon 75 was the second largest Worldcon of all time. There were over 7,000 members on site representing 60 countries. There were 2,000 first time Worldcon members. Lord then announced the art show winners. There was a slide of the convention narrated by Lord. Lord then thanked the convention photographers and congratulated Dublin for winning the bid to host the 2019 Worldcon. The con chair and vice chairs thanked the con committee and

staff. They also recognized outstanding members of the staff. Kevin Roche, chair of Worldcon 76, came up and showed a video of San Jose. Roche asked his team to stand up. Most of them were wearing green bowling shirts with Worldcon 76 insignia. Roche described the local weather (dry heat and cool breeze at night) and named the guests of honor. Worldcon 75 Con Chair Jukka Halme then ended the con.

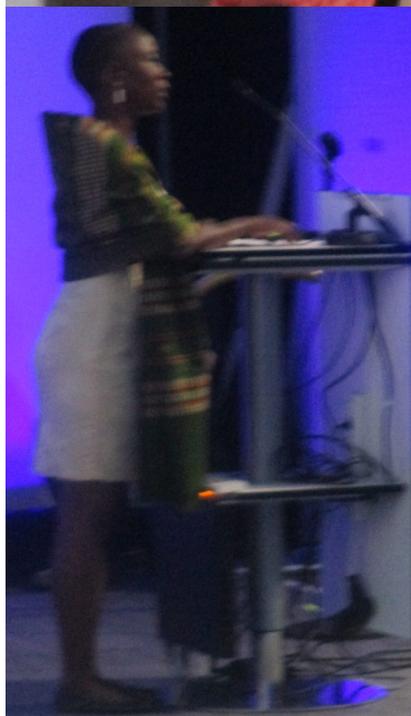
I did two panels at the convention. John Clute, Fred Lerner, Sokkeli (m), and I explained **Reviewing 101**. We discussed the ins and outs of reviewing. It was a bit intimidating sharing the dais with John Clute, one of the most famous reviewers and critics in the field. My final statement was if you want to do review something just do it. Kristoffer Lawson, Fiona Moore (m), Tony Pi, Kathryn Sullivan, and I looked at the **Future of Doctor Who**. The panel was looking forward to Jodie Whitaker becoming the first woman Doctor. There was a fan who was distraught because the Doctor was the only reliable man in her life and the show was taking that away from her. Moore, our moderator, handled the situation delicately and addressed the fan's concerns. Although the panel believed the Doctor could be any gender or race, they still believed a British actor should play the part.

There was a lot more going on at the convention. Before the con there was a get together at a karaoke bar. Many fans sang songs during the evening. There was a class on traditional Finnish dances. The dealers room had a whole lot of interesting items such as toys and art. There was a yard sale of old books, DVDs, and CDs donated to the con. I bought a stack of Timothy Zahn books and a Poul Anderson novel. The art show had a video display. It showed a slide show of the art of many artists. The exhibit hall had some great pictures describing media Science Fiction throughout the decades. The popular and now Hugo Winning podcast *Tea and Jeopardy* did a live show with George R.R. Martin as the guest. Show host Emma Newman described all of Martin's achievements except *Game of Thrones*. The group Clipping performed their Hugo finalist album *Splendor and Misery*. There were 3 Stroll With the Stars at the con. I went to the first one with Walter Jon Williams and had a great walk around the area. I got to meet podcaster, blogger, and editor Alexandria Pierce. Two years ago, I mailed her a copy of *The Moon is Harsh Mistress*. It took 2 years for Pierce to read *Stranger in a Strange Land* because she only had access to a library copy. On her podcast, *Galactic Suburbia* she said this and expressed an interest in reading *The Moon is Harsh Mistress*. I emailed her and offered in the interest of American-Australian relations to send a copy of the book for her to review. This was the first time we saw each other since I sent the book. Ana Grilo and Thea James of *The Book Smugglers* had a get together for fans of their website and Grilo's podcast *The Fangirl Happy Hour*.

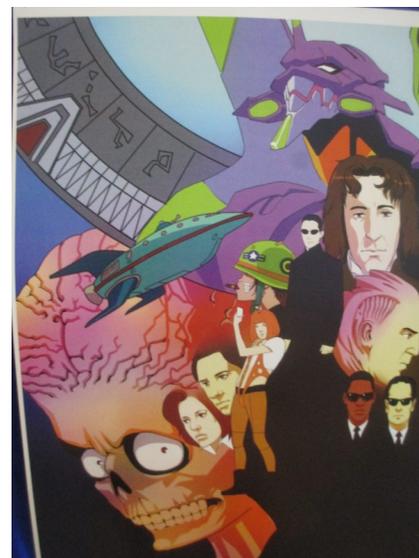
As always, there are people who helped make Worldcon a great experience. Thanks to Pablo Vasquez who gave me a NASFiC Hero ribbon. Thanks to Sanna Lopperi for letting me work at registration. Thanks to Debi Chowdhury for letting me work at Masquerade. Thanks to the Masquerade staff and contestants, it was fun helping you. Thanks to my fellow volunteers. Thanks to the members of OASFiS, Stone Hill, SFSFS and WSFA who came. Thanks to Jay Eichelberger for doing me a big favor. Thanks to Fiona Moore who did a great job moderating the **Doctor Who** panel. Thanks to my fellow panelists, I hope we learned from each other. Thanks to the usual suspects, the Worldcon at-

(Continued on page 16)

Worldcon 75 - Around the Con



Clockwise starting on the top row
Emma Newman and George R.R. Martin
at the live taping of the *Tea and Jeopardy*
podcast, The media SF of the 1990s,
some goof holding a Hugo, Clipping
performing their Hugo finalist album
Splendor and Misery, Karen Lord
at Closing Ceremonies



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tendees who always make the convention fun this includes Tom Galloway, Shaun Duke, and Liz. Thanks to the Exotics, my 1999 Australian tour group: it was a great dinner. Thanks to John Purcell who took my Hugo picture this year. Thanks to the people who read my blog entries on my trip. Thanks to Patty Russell for her encouragement. And thanks always thanks to Dave Plesic.

See you all next year in San Jose.



The Orville and My Dilemma by Tom Reed

The opinions expressed are solely those of Tom Reed, and to find anyone else who shares those opinions, you might need to look under a rock.

Required disclaimer for honesty; I dislike Seth McFarlane. I was upset with the hit show he created, **Family Guy**. It went for cheap laughs, and its characters were never consistent except they always acted like cretins. Meg Griffin, a nice and relatively normal character, was mocked because she was nice and normal. I wrote a web article that said it would be more honest if Meg was killed off and her body dumped in a ravine, and no one would mention her again. That would fulfill McFarlane's obvious desires.

His other animated shows, **American Dad** and **The Cleveland Show**, didn't have the obvious cretin factor of **Family Guy**, but they were bad spoofs of right-wing CIA agents and black sitcoms. They didn't have the success of **Family Guy** and didn't deserve it.

I saw McFarlane live at a San Diego Comic-Con several years ago, during the Lucasfilm presentation. The panel was almost entirely about the toys and tie-ins Lucasfilm was doing; McFarlane was the only guest providing...um, entertainment. He showed scenes from "Blue Harvest," his fully authorized parody of **Star Wars Episode 4: A New Hope**. That's right, the parody with Han Solo (played by Peter Griffin) and Luke (played by his son Chris) in the middle of a TIE fighter battle, where Han says "Great, kid. Don't get *penis-y*." The fans laughed. I didn't.

When McFarlane appeared on talk shows like Jimmy Kimmel's, he gave the impression of a slimy character hanging around the Los Angeles bus station, dressed in a black leather jacket, looking for young girls hoping to get an acting job. "Hey, baby, you have talent. I can make you a star!" That image didn't change with his ham-handed hosting of the Oscar telecast.

Now, this is where my dilemma comes into play. McFarlane's new show on Fox, **The Orville**, is a very, very good science fiction show. Not a full-blown comedy, and not a copy of the movie **Galaxy Quest**.

The difference is that McFarlane really likes **Star Trek**. The opening sequence of the first episode is modeled on the space dock scene from **Star Trek: The Motion Picture**. The uniforms, the command structure, everything is very Trek. Here's the big difference; it isn't Gene Roddenberry's Trek.

Wacky-Doodle

Let me explain. At the last OASIS, in Arthur's video room, I ran a documentary film called **William Shatner Presents: Chaos on the Bridge**. It described the in-fighting and problems during the first year of **Star Trek: The Next Generation**. And big problems arose from Gene Roddenberry's concept of the ideal society. The production personnel described his philosophy as "wacky-doodle."

Roddenberry's characters were all idealists. They disagree, but only slightly. They believe in the Prime Directive. They believe in Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combination. They never go on a drunken bender (not with that lily-livered synthehol) or betray each other or undermine their rival's careers. That niceness eliminated any potential for dramatic conflict, the basis of every good story.

But **The Orville** has conflict. The characters talk like people you know, quipping and snarking at one another. They aren't very idealistic. In the first scene of the first episode, Captain Ed Mercer (McFarlane) comes home to his wife Commander Kelly Grayson (Adrienne Palicki). She's in bed with a blue-skinned alien. He is shaken, and divorces her. When Mercer gets his first command, he finds out his ex-wife Grayson has been assigned as his executive officer. And throughout the episode, and occasionally thereafter, he snipes and grouses at her for that infidelity.

Trek shows had a reputation for social commentary, but that was mostly an illusion. When Trek writer David Gerrold wanted to write a story involving two men in a relationship, Roddenberry agreed at first...and then disparaged Gerrold and ruined his reputation as a reliable series writer.

Whenever Trek talked about social problems, there was always a feel-good solution, one that never challenged the assumptions of the Trek universe or ours. It was always a wacky-doodle solution.

The second episode of **The Orville** talked about gender in a way Trek never did. Lt. Commander Bortus (Peter Macon), whose species is all male, has just laid and hatched an egg, but the infant turns out to be female. He immediately tries to arrange a sex change to make her male, so she would be "normal." In our world, when LGBT people are under attack, by people who want to enforce traditional standards of sexuality, this was a risky story – in a show that was pitched to America as a silly sci-fi comedy.

And there wasn't a feel-good solution. The baby had the gender reassignment surgery. The one positive element was that Bortus

and his male mate strengthened their relationship because of this conflict. This was taken seriously. This was not a *Family Guy* episode.

Fries with your franchise?

I haven't seen *Star Trek: Discovery*, which is only available on CBS's pay-for-streaming network. I know many fans have been disappointed in it. But I don't need to see it, since my disappointment with Trek started long before that. I gave up on *Deep Space Nine* and *Enterprise* early; the shows had nothing that interested me. They looked like every other Trek series, and even if they did have good new actors (Scott Bakula comes to mind) they were the same old stock characters and plots.

After the introduction of *Deep Space Nine*, fans and the press started talking about *Star Trek* movies and TV shows as part of a "franchise." McDonald's is also a franchise. Its products are the same all over the country, with only occasional variations like the infrequent revival of the McRib or the Shamrock Shake.

Is it really good to model a film series on a burger? McFarlane's could have copied Trek precisely, but he made changes that are thoughtful. His starship is smaller (no 430 crew

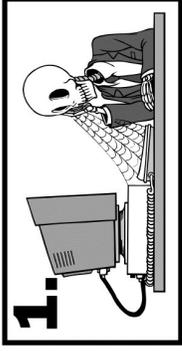
people, only about 100 as evidenced by the first episode). There's almost no space battles. The crew are not stoic Federation officers; they play practical jokes on one another (one practical joke being the removal of a crew member's leg). And no teleporters; you have to fly down to the planet, remember where you parked your shuttle, and hope the natives can't hot-wire it.

Finally, I have to mention something involving sex...sorry, folks. In episode 5, Captain Mercer is in bed with a woman. Most TV shows put semi-nude actors in extensive body makeup to make them look physically perfect. But here, the actress's bare arm and shoulder shows mottling and freckles, like we real people have. McFarlane, playing Mercer, also looks human, not like a romance novel's cover art. They are more like real people. And that's what makes *The Orville* exceptional, and the one Seth McFarlane series I can recommend. He realized a fact that much of Hollywood hasn't yet absorbed. In a time when CGI makes any kind of visual image possible, the real essence of science fiction – of any kind of fiction – are the characters, dialog and story.

It's a dilemma for me to say that McFarlane has produced a great show. But he has.



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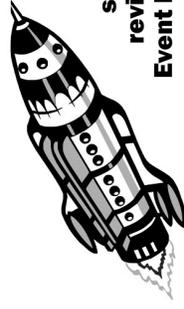


2.

Start doing exciting things yourself, and meet new friends "in the flesh" with OASFIS!

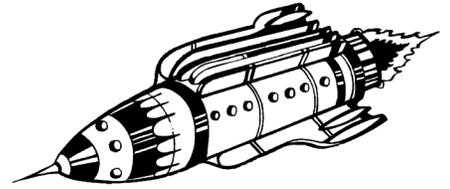


We're OASFIS - the Orlando Area Science Fiction Society. We enjoy and promote science fiction, fantasy, horror, books, movies, TV series, costuming, gaming - every part of the most imaginative hobby in existence. Of all the conventions in Central Florida, only our **OASIS conventions** are operated *by* fans, *for* fans, and not for profit...bringing affordable fun that speaks to *your* interests. Bring your unique fan interests to life and share them with Florida's fan community. We work with other fan organizations to bring our mutual passions to life. Visit our monthly meetings...and help shape fandom's future by joining OASFIS. Individual and family memberships are available. If you're tired of just sitting, you're welcome at OASFIS...no bones about it!



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OASFIS
PO Box 323
Goldenrod, FL 32733-0323