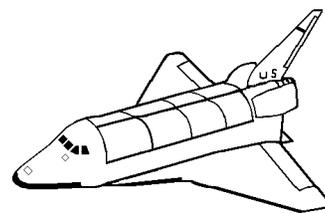


The



SHUTTLE
November 2003

*The Next NASFA Meeting is 15 November
2003 at the Regular Time and Location*

🔔 Oyez, Oyez 🔔

The next **NASFA meeting** will be **15 November 2003** at the **regular time** (6P) and the **regular location**. Call BookMark at 256-881-3910 if you need directions.

The **November program** will be the more-or-less-annual NASFA auction. Be sure to bring donations for the auction and, oh yes, money ;-)

The November **after-the-meeting meeting** will be at Mike Kennedy's house, in honor of various November birthdays.

October Minutes

by Samuel A. Smith, tired (again)

The October meeting of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association was called to order on Saturday, October 18, 2003 in the upstairs meeting room at BookMark at 6:23:48P by President Mary Ortwerth, the gavel, the crickets, and Joshua.

OLD BUSINESS

We still need to decide what to do about the request from
(continued on page 2)

Inside this issue...

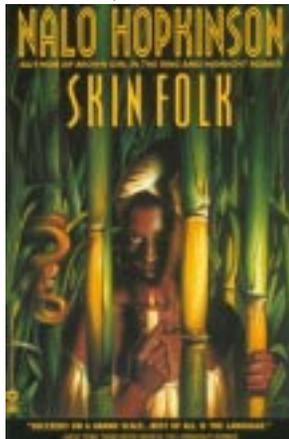
NASFA Calendar	2	Anime at the Huntsville Museum of Art	3
Sunburst Award	3	Book Reviews by Doug Lampert	3
Con+Stellation XXII Review	3	Book Review by Jim Woosley	4
World Fantasy Awards	3	<i>No Need for a Dragon with a Migraine</i> Chapter 10	5

Deadline for the December 2003 issue of *The NASFA Shuttle* is Friday, 5 December 2003.

The regular meeting location is the upstairs meeting room at BookMark on South Memorial Parkway. The Executive Committee meeting (if scheduled) is at 5P. The business meeting is at 6P. The program is at 7P. Anyone is welcome to attend any of the meetings. There is usually an after-the-meeting meeting with directions available at the program.

Sunburst Award

The Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic is given annually to a Canadian writer (Canadian citizen or landed immigrant) for a novel or book-length collection. The award, which includes a cash prize of \$1000 and the Sunburst medallion, went this year to **Nalo Hopkinson** for her story collection *Skin Folk* (Warner Aspect, 2001).



Jurors for the 2003 award were Lesley Choyce, Hiromi Goto, Terence M. Green, Eileen Kernaghan, and Arthur Slade. Jurors for the 2004 award will be Caterina Edwards, Claude Lalumière, Yves Meynard, Lyle Weis, and Michelle Sagara West. Further information and submission guidelines are available at <www.sunburstaward.org>.

Con†Stellation: A Con Review

by David K. Robinson

I recently attended Con†Stellation XXII on October 10–12, 2003. I really enjoyed it! The hotel although small was nice, the only real problem I had was with the door to my hotel room which wasn't working! Other than that it was a nice room!

The general atmosphere was nice; everyone was nice and pleasant. As far as I know everyone behaved themselves. I went to one con years ago (I won't mention where) where the fans (not all of them) really acted up. They were told they could not come back next year. This was several years ago! It was nice to see everyone behave!

The guests Mercedes Lackey and her husband Larry Dixon were unreal. They were really nice! I enjoyed meeting them! I got two free books by them. I took some of my books by them and they autographed them. It was such a thrill!

Also the dance was real fun, though only a few people showed up. I liked the costume contest! It was real fun. I enjoyed the mad libs during judging. I really enjoyed Con†Stellation. I plan to attend next year! Grade B+

World Fantasy Awards

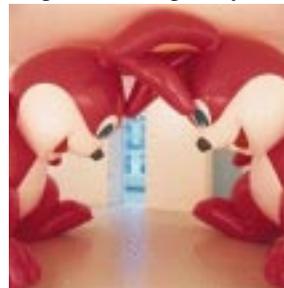
The winners of this year's World Fantasy Awards winners were announced Sunday 2 November, at the 2003 World

Fantasy Convention in Washington DC. Judges this year were Justin Ackroyd, Les Edwards, Laura Anne Gilman, Lawrence Watt-Evans, and Jane Yolen. And the winners were:

Life Achievement (two awards) **Donald M. Grant** and **Lloyd Alexander**
 Novel (tie) *The Facts of Life*, Graham Joyce (Gollancz) and *Ombria in Shadow*, Patricia A. McKillip (Ace)
 Novella **"The Library,"** Zoran Zivkovic (*Leviathan 3*)
 Short Story **"Creation,"** Jeffrey Ford (*F&SF* May 2002)
 Anthology (tie) *The Green Man: Tales from the Mythic Forest*, Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, eds. (Viking) and *Leviathan Three*, Jeff VanderMeer and Forrest Aguirre, eds. (Ministry of Whimsy Press)
 Collection *The Fantasy Writer's Assistant and Other Stories*, Jeffrey Ford (Golden Gryphon Press)
 Artist **Tom Kidd**
 Special Award, Professional **Gordon Van Gelder** (for *F&SF*)
 Special Award, Non-Professional **Jason Williams**, **Jeremy Lassen**, and **Benjamin Cossel** (for Night Shade Books)

Anime Exhibit Visits Huntsville

From now until 4 January 2004, the Huntsville Museum of Art is playing host to a traveling exhibit, My Reality: Contemporary Art and the Culture of Japanese Animation. Local display of the exhibit (originated at the Des Moines Art Center) is sponsored in part by The Women's Guild of The Huntsville



Somehow I Don't Feel Comfortable, 2000
 Momoyo Torimitsu

Museum of Art. The exhibit, which promises to examine how anime has influenced today's artists, includes items from Eastern and Western artists and covers influences going back about four decades — to when anime first came on the scene in Japan. The exhibit fills four of the halls at the museum. Admission to the museum is \$7 for adults (\$3 for children 6–11) with discounts available for members, seniors, students, groups, and evening hours. The museum is located at 300 Church Street, at Big Spring Park. Hours are 1–5P Sunday, 10A–8P Thursday, and 10A–5P other days. You can get more information about the museum by calling 535-4350 (local Huntsville number) or (800) 786-9095. You can also get more information about current exhibits on the web at <www.hsvmuseum.org/Pages/art_on_view.html>.

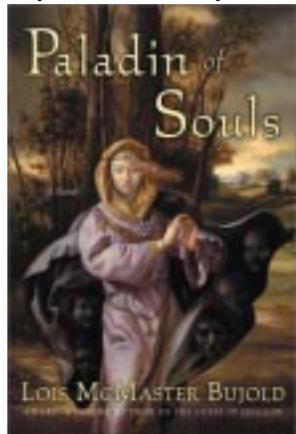
A Tale of Two Books:

Deus ex Protagonists
 Doug Lampert

Paladin of Souls, by Lois McMaster Bujold, Eos, 23 September 2003, hardback, 464pp, ISBN: 0380979020, \$24.95
Dragon Venom, by Lawrence Watt-Evans, Tor, September

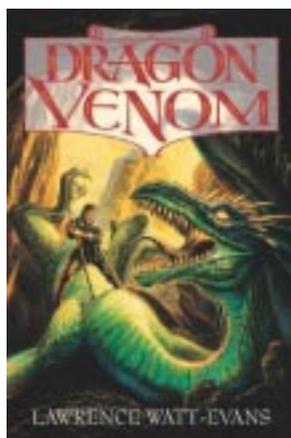
2003, hardback, 480pp, ISBN: 0765302799, \$25.95

Actually the above information already constitutes an adequate pair of book reviews, it tells you what the books are, who wrote them, how to get them, how much they cost, and if you want to buy them (since they are by Bujold and Watt-Evans you do want to buy them). However, in the interest of giving Mike something to publish he does not need to write himself I will try to fill a column or two with additional, unnecessary information.



Both books have a number of common features, both are fantasies set in imaginary worlds where magic and nonhuman powers both exist and interact with mankind, neither is the first book in the setting, both have endings that could be called a Deus ex Machina. And in both cases someone who said this would be wrong, for the same reason.

In a classic Deus ex Machina the stage machinery brings in the Gods in the final act to solve all the problems; and incidentally, to render all the protagonists actions more or less irrelevant; while in both of these books the story being told is of the protagonist that enable the intervention of higher powers to bring about the solution. In both of these books it is quite clear that without the protagonists actions there would have been no solution.



Paladin of Souls is the story of Ista, the mother of one of the major characters in *Curse of Chalion*, and of what happens when she decides to go on a short pilgrimage following the events of that book (cue song about a three-hour tour). Ista, two of her companions on her travels, and a number of other characters had roles in *Curse*, but none of the major characters from *Curse* are on stage for this book. While there are references to events in *Curse* this book would probably stand well on its own.

Dragon Venom is the final book in the trilogy, which started with *Dragon Weather* and continued in *The Dragon Society*; hopefully Watt-Evans will not get in any trouble for writing a trilogy in only three books. The entire trilogy tells the single story of Arlian of the Smoking Mountain and his revenge on various enemies in three books, although both of the first two books end with Arlian making major progress toward his goal rather than on cliffhangers.

Book Review

by Jim Woosley

Star Wars: Shatterpoint, A Clone Wars Novel, by Matthew Stover, Del Rey Books, 3 June 2003, hardback, 416pp, ISBN

0-345-45573-8, \$25.95.

“In my dreams, I always do it right.

“...In the swirl of the Force around me, I could feel the [web of] connections Dooku had forged among Jango and the Trade Federation, the Geonosians... without him to maintain its weave, to repair its flaws and double its thinning strands, the web would rot...”

“When I faced the choice to kill a former Jedi Master, or to save Kenobi and young Skywalker and the Senator... I let the Force choose for me...”

“And so: Dooku escaped.

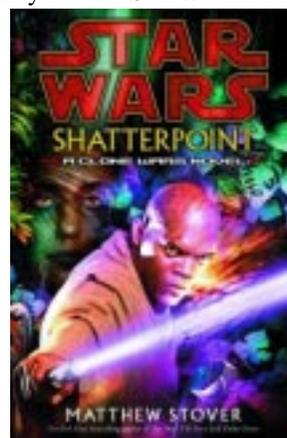
“My nightmare is what I find when I wake up.”

Thus begins (admittedly highly abbreviated) *Shatterpoint*, the first of the series of six novels which forge the connection between *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*, and *Star Wars Episode III*, which scifi.com has recently reported will likely be named *Revenge of the Sith*.

While admittedly I'm not a devout follower of the Star Wars novels, I have read most of those which are tied closely to the movies, together with a smattering of others.

Simply, *Shatterpoint* is probably the best Star Wars novel ever written.

Shatterpoint tells the story of Mace Windu, Jedi Master, between the events of Episodes II and III. The story takes place on his home planet of Haruun Kal, a jungle world that reads like “Doc” Smith’s various jungle planets meets Larry Niven’s world of Plateau. According to legend, Haruun Kal was settled by shipwrecked human Jedi in the years before the Sith Wars; the natives are all strong in the Force, and their survival in a jungle inhabited by Akk Dogs and fever wasps has only been possible because of their adaptation of Force to everyday life of the jungle.



However, the fragile peace of the planet has been shattered by the Trade Federation and their Separatist cohorts, who seek to destroy the natives so that they can harvest the native barks for pharmaceuticals and narcotics. Windu’s former Padawan and protege, Dapa Billaba, has been sent to investigate — and after months of silence, returns an ambiguous message suggesting she has gone native in the most appalling way.

Sent by Master Yoda and Supreme Chancellor Palpatine to investigate, Windu discovers a world of plots within plots, wheels within wheels, enemies with common cause and friends who seek his death or domination. It’s a grisly story, with thousands of victims of these struggles left in pools of their own blood, with messages written in shattered bodies of the opponents, with heroes killed in less than a day by the native insects of the planet, their wounds being bathed to slow down the invasion of deadly fungi that attack hardened steel as if it were flesh, and flesh as if it were fertilizer. It is never to be recommended to the faint hearted.

But it is to be recommended as a strong, compelling story; as the best expression of what it means to be a Jedi. As an exploration of the nature of warfare: how it challenges the spirit, but also how one man can stand by his convictions in the midst of chaos and make a difference.

Dragonwake!

No Need for a Dragon with a Migraine Chapter 10 by PieEyedDragon

PED had been dreaming, among old memories. A voice says “It is appointed to you *once* to die!” He dreams of an elsewhere/when: North Africa, visiting Anak, the outcast giant; not really a *good* fellow, but more-or-less decent and outspoken, having objected to certain policies of the Frost Giant king and been banished for it. Anak was always glad for world news, even if decades out of date. He worried over the wild ways of his still-growing children: the Anakin. The local Afrits and Djinn thought that his half-Jotun youngest son, Goliath, might turn out to be the best of a bad lot.

The dream changes to another time, over in the Sinai: PED looking down and perceiving crowds of nomads and flocks, and a smell of sickness. Something was raised upon a pole: a brazen serpent! Respectfully, PED passed over these easy pickings and hunted elsewhere: Hippopotami in the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

— O — O — O —

PED is annoyed at the sudden cessation of music, though he didn’t remember it beginning. He was still in sensory deprivation, except for the psychic link with Officer Mihoshi. He “reads” her, and understands his situation. All his other powers are blocked.

No, not all. He still commands anything in his stomach, enough to try for a slow thawing.

Strong and weak nuclear forces shift slightly. Two large chunks of Dragonite, most of PEDs hoard, start heating up from fission. PED waits until most of his organs are thawed directly, before restarting his heart to send warming blood to his extremities.

— O — O — O —

The party in Utgard was well under way when Utgard-Loki lifts up the whale-blubber wrapped dragon and swallows it whole. “He’s not so tough!” he laughs, downing a keg of brandy. Later, he seems to be feeling some indigestion. He downs several more kegs and belches loudly.

The druid sniffs, a smell like an alcohol flame and searing fat. The king gets a very pained look and belches again. The entire party goes silent as they see a small flame follow the belch, and a wisp of smoke curls out of the king’s nose. The king’s belly distends, briefly; and he roars now in real pain and horror.

“Wizards and Doctors, attend the King” shouts the druid.

Some drunken giant, under a table, added: “And a midwife too, looks like!”

— O — O — O —

The battle rages for hours. The giants poke, prod, and apply poultices and potions; to no avail. No one dares to pick up a blade and do the obvious. Finally, the huge giant shudders, and goes limp. With a great shove, the dragon’s blood-covered head bursts forth from the torso. His eyes shine like two golden shields; as he finishes swallowing the giant’s heart.

“That’ssssss a Ssssspysssie Meat-a ball!”

There is a moment of silence.

Dragon: Your king wassss a generoussss Hosssst, for hhhe took me to hissss bossssom, giving me all hissss besssst blood! Hhhhow thhhherefffore mussst I repay thhhe ffffrosst giant Hhhhhosssspitality?

Druid: *Kill him!* (But! More and more, the fascination of the eyes of the dragon; paralyzes their limbs!)

Dragon: Whhhho would raiisssse weaponssss againsst thhhe sssson offff your king?

Druid: What mean you, vile wrym?

Dragon: Wassss hhhe not my ffffodder? Did hhhe not bear me in ssssigth off you all?

Druid: He was our King! Biggest! And Strongest!

Dragon: Wasss I not sssstronger? I can alssso be bigger. Muchhh bigger! (Expanding, he summons a wrymhole through to the daylight side of the Earth.)

Troll guard: Run for it! Every Troll for himself!

(The Druid is hastily chanting a protective spell. The dragon reaches forth with his wing-knives to pierce the Jotunn’s earlobes; breaking his concentration.)

“*Let thhhere be light!*”

(The dragon’s eyes shine ever brighter, now; as actual sunlight bursts forth from them. The light strikes many Trolls and Giants, petrifying them. The rest throw down their weapons and shout for mercy.)

“Have done, Oh Mighty Wrym! Spare us, and we shall serve you!”

(The dragon considers this.)

Druid: *No!* Our lord must have the *frost* power!

(The dragon materializes a frozen, lemon icebox pie; and flings it into the Druid’s face.)

Druid: Well, (licking his lips) that will do — for now.

“Ifff you give your oathssss to me, and bind your livessss to my will, thhhhen I sssshall dwell hhhere and be your lord. Ssso long ass it pleassssss me.”

We swear, Your Majesty! Hail, the Lord Dragon! New Jarl of Jotunheim!

“Sssay not sssso. Call me: ‘Your Wrymhhholeynessss’”



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