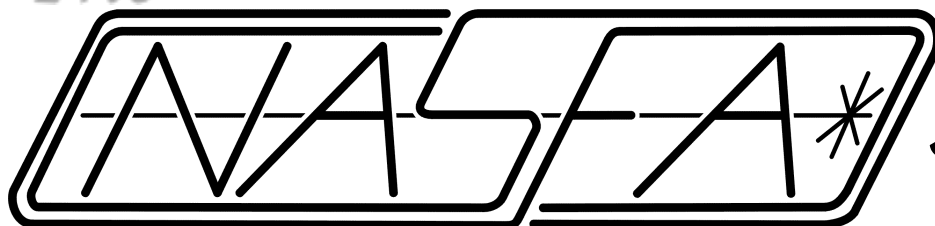


The



Shuttle

May 2008

The Next NASFA Meeting will be 17 May 2008,
Not at the Regular Time or Location —
The More-or-Less Annual NASFA Picnic Will be Held
in Lieu of the Meeting; 2:00P at Doug & Mary's House

There will be a Concom Meeting at Mary &
Doug's House, 7:30P, Thursday 15 May 2008

Oyez, Oyez

The next NASFA Meeting will be the More-or-Less Annual
NASFA Cookout/Picnic on Saturday 17 May 2008. Needless
to say it will not be at the regular time or location. Mary and
Doug Lampert will host the picnic at their house, 127 Autumn
Glaze Drive, Meridianville AL. Meridianville is in the far
north of the Huntsville metro area. Head north on the Parkway,
past all the construction for the new north overpasses, past
Normal (Alabama A&M), past the Huntsville city limits. Once
you get back into civilization (well, Meridianville, anyway)
turn left (west) at Monroe Road. There'll be a Windmill Bever-
ages on your right and newly-installed traffic light at the inter-
section. About 1 mile down Monroe turn left (south) on Bea-
consfield Drive. Take the first (and only) right (west) off Bea-
consfield onto Chinaberry Lane. Take the first right (north)
onto Autumn Glaze. The house is on the right (east), several
houses before the cul-de-sac. On the day, call their home phone
(256-829-9195) for directions.

Future NASFA meetings will be back at the regular time
(6P) and the regular location (BookMark, 11220-J South
Memorial Parkway — at the corner of the Parkway and Mead-
owbrook Drive).

PROGRAM & ATMM

Due to the cookout/picnic, there will be no Program or
After-the-Meeting Meeting in May.

FUTURE ATMMs

Russell McNutt has offered to host the June, July, and
August ATMMs at his house (and pool). Since no one else has
spoken up with another offer, it seems likely that's what we'll
do those three months.

CONCOM MEETING

There will be a concom meeting at Doug and Mary's house
(127 Autumn Glaze Drive in Meridianville, see directions at
left) at 7:30P Thursday 15 May 2008.

SHUTTLE TRANSITION PLANS

The computer hardware problem noted in last month's
Shuttle has been solved, allowing (among other things) a
rescue of the Shuttle mailing list (yay!). However, your
editor plans to take advantage of all the work done to put
out last month's issue on different (newer) hardware and
software and continue a long-term transition with an eye
to shuffling all Shuttle production off of the older equip-
ment.

The fit and finish of the Shuttle will doubtless suffer a bit
from this transition until all issues can be addressed. We ask
your forbearance during the transition.

Table with 2 columns: Item and Page Number. Includes 'Inside this issue...', 'Locus Awards "Nominees" Announced', 'Awards Roundup', 'No Need for a Ring - Chapter 22', and 'Letters of Comment'.

April Minutes

by Steve Sloan, Secretary

The April meeting of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association was called to order on Saturday, April 19, 2008 in the BookMark meeting room at 6:15:25P by President Mary Lampert.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

According to Anita, there will be Con+Stellation T-shirts.

Maria spoke to many authors at MidSouthCon, and got their contact information. She also spoke to Funny Music Project, a group that creates parody music. She spoke to a whole bunch of people who said that if they're invited to Con+Stellation, they'll come.

We had a new attendee, Gene [Chapman], along with local author William Drinkard.

Doug suggested that we skip the spammish emails this month, but he struck out. So, Mike K. read the following spammish emails into the minutes, but at least he abbreviated them pretty heavily: Shelby Vick has a new update at *Planetary Stories*, and he was also advertising "The Wrath of Con," a science fiction convention and film festival in Panama City Beach FL. We got a copy of the One-Shot that was put together by Toni Weisskopf and others at DeepSouthCon, which included an (intentionally) upside-down Randy Cleary cover illustration.

Mike C. complained about an M&M's commercial, where a peanut M&M character gets eaten by squirrels on television. Have they crossed the line? A few puns inevitably sprouted.

Guy Lillian wrote to the club, notifying us that his fanzine, *Challenger 27*, is up for a Hugo, and asked the NASFA membership to check it out.

CONVENTION BUSINESS

We have a hotel contract signed for this year's Con+Stellation. We have the same guests we had last month. William Drinkard, Lou Anders, and Les Johnson are on the "Also Attending" list. Sara Hoyt won't be able to make it.

We still need a dealer's room head and a hotel liaison. Mike Stone is willing to run registration.

Speaking of Mike Stone, he and his family are just fine after their house was hit by an F0 tornado. Fortunately, there wasn't much damage to their house, but there was some damage to the carport and the roof.

Con+Stellation will be held at the same hotel as usual, the Holiday Inn Express on University Drive.

Another concom meeting will be held the Thursday before the next club meeting.

The next NASFA meeting will be the picnic at Doug and Mary's house. 2P is the official start time, but if you want to arrive earlier, you'll be draf... uh, expected to help set up.

Next year's Con+Stellation will be September 18-20, 2009. By moving the con away from October, we can get contracts more than six months ahead of time. Another month than October means we won't need to wait to settle a date with the hotel until after the A&M Homecoming is announced. There are several reasons to have the con on the next-to-last weekend in September. The last weekend of September is Big Spring Jam, a very bad time to hold any other events in Huntsville. November weekends would push us too close to Thanksgiving. The only likely conflict for the weekend we've chosen will be Atlanta Weekend Atlanta, because they're holding AWA on that weekend this year. If we went a week earlier, that would put the

con only one week after Dragon Con, which is also bad.

We will soon have an invitation outstanding for 2009 Guest of Honor, but Mike K. would rather wait to announce who it is until after the invitation has been accepted or declined.

During the meeting with the hotel, the next-to-last weekend of September, 2010 was also discussed, and the hotel is willing to commit to that weekend, but no NASFA people at the meeting technically had the authority to commit to it.

Mike C. moved to elect a con chair for 2010, so someone could commit to that date. According to Mike K., the club sponsors the con, so the club as a whole is perfectly capable of committing to a date. There will be out clauses in the contract in case the hotel needs to back out, and we can negotiate for proper out clauses for NASFA, as well.

Scheduling the date for a con as far in advance as possible gives us more time to invite guests, fish for dealers, etc. Mike C. noted that certain guests, like David Brin or Greg Benford for example, require a good bit of advance notice.

Doug moved that we commit the club to schedule the 2010 convention (Con+Stellation 29) for September 17-19, 2010, and authorize Mike and/or Sam to negotiate a contract with the hotel for that date. Anita seconded the motion. Only Doug cast an opposing vote, so the motion carried.

During a silly digression, we discussed an old plan to buy a defunct old motel for the sole purpose of holding Con+Stellations. Alternatively, we could hold Brick-Con, where every guest brings a brick to build a facility to hold a con.

Doug moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39:23P.

The program was a talk by local author William H. Drinkard. He has recently published his first novel, *Elom*, and he spoke about some of his inspirations for the book. Mike Kennedy hosted the After-the-Meeting Meeting at his house. We're happy that Mr. Drinkard was able to join us for the ATMM as well.

NASFA Calendar

MAY

- 01 BD: Russell McNutt.
- 01 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: Probability Moon, Nancy Kress; 6P.
- 02-04 Starfleet Region 1 Summit — Pigeon Forge TN.
- 02-04 Galaxy of Stars — Jackson MS.
- 03 BD: Martha Knowles.
- 11 Mothers' Day.
- 14 BD: Debbie Hughes.
- 16-18 Mobicon XI — Mobile AL.
- 16 BD: Linda Bolgeo.
- 17* NASFA Meeting — 2P, More-or-Less Annual NASFA Cookout/Picnic, at Mary and Doug Lampert's house. Program and ATMM: None, due to picnic.
- 17 Armed Forces Day.
- 19 BD: David O. Miller.
- 20 BD: Mike Glicksohn.
- 23-25 Rocket City FurMeet — Huntsville AL.
- 23-25 Oasis 21 — Orlando FL.
- 23-25 ConQuest 39 — Kansas City MO.
- 23-26 Timegate: Regenerations — Atlanta GA.
- 26 Memorial Day (Observed).
- 27 BD: Kathy Paulk.
- 30 Memorial Day (Traditional).
- 30-01 ConCarolinas — Charlotte NC.
- 30-01 A-Kon — Dallas TX.

JUNE

- 01 BD: Glenn Valentine.
- 01 Comic Fan Appreciation Show — Nashville TN.
- 02 BD: Lloyd Penney.
- 05 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: *The Wizard Hunters*, Martha Wells; 6P.
- 06–08 OMG!con 2008 — Paducah KY.
- 06–08 Sci Fi Summer Con — Atlanta GA.
- 13 BD: Bill S.
- 14 Flag Day.
- 15 Fathers' Day.
- 17 BD: Jeff Freeman.
- 20 First Day of Summer.
- 20 BD: PieEyedDragon.
- 21* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at BookMark. Program: TBD. ATMM: Russell McNutt's house (subject to change).
- 27–29 Hypericon 4 — Nashville TN.
- 27–29 PersaCon 2008 — Huntsville AL.
- 27–29 ApolloCon 2008 — Houston TX.

JULY

- 01 Canada Day.
- 02 BD: Deb Stone.
- 03–06 Play On Con — Birmingham AL.
- 04 Independence Day.
- 10 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: *Lord Foul's Bane*, Stephen Donaldson; 6P.
- 11–13 LibertyCon 21 — Chattanooga TN.
- 13 Atlanta Comic Convention — Atlanta GA.
- 19* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at BookMark. Program: TBD. ATMM: Russell McNutt's house (subject to change).
- 24 BD: Jay Johns.
- 25–27 Trinoc*coN 9 — Durham NC.
- 27 Parents' Day.
- 29 BD: Mark Paulk.

AUGUST

- 06–10 Denvention 3 (66th World Science Fiction Convention) — Denver CO.
- 07 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: *Dead Until Dark*, Charlaine Harris; 6P.
- 08 BD: Jim Woosley.
- 12 BD: Sue Thorn.
- 14 BD: Edward Kenny.
- 15–17 Armadillocon 30 — Austin TX.
- 16* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at BookMark. Program: TBD. ATMM: Russell McNutt's house (subject to change).
- 19 BD: Khen Moore.
- 21 BD: Deborah Denton.
- 29–31 Mephit FurMeet — Memphis TN.
- 29–01 Dragon*Con 2008 — Atlanta GA.

OoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOoOo

The North Alabama Science Fiction Association meets on the third Saturday of each month. (Unless there is a large nearby convention being held that weekend — in which case we often move the meeting to the second or fourth weekend.) The regular meeting location is the 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.

Nebula Awards Announced

The 2007 Nebula (and related) Awards were announced and presented during the 2008 Nebula Awards Weekend, held 25–27 April 2008 in Austin TX. The ceremony, held Saturday evening 26 April, included presentation of the previously announced Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award (to Michael Moorcock) and SFWA Service Awards (to Melisa Michaels and Graham P. Collins).

The Nebula Awards are perhaps the premier peer-voted awards in the sf/f community. The winners are:

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

Novella “Fountain of Age,” Nancy Kress (*Asimov's* July 2007)

Novellette..... “The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate,” Ted Chiang (*F&SF* September 2007; Subterranean Press)

Short Story..... “Always,” Karen Joy Fowler (*Asimov's* April/May 2007)

Script..... *Pan's Labyrinth*, Guillermo del Toro
Andre Norton Award (for Young Adult SF/F)... *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, J. K. Rowling (Scholastic)



Nebula Awards (above); Nominees and Acceptors (below)



Locus Awards Finalists

Locus has posted the “finalists” for the Locus Awards. Actually, the results are fully determined, but *Locus* releases the top five finishers ahead of the actual awards. Voting for the awards is open to the public, using a longlist compiled by the *Locus* editorial staff. Awards will be announced and presented at the Locus Awards Ceremony in Seattle on 21 June 2008.

LOCUS AWARDS SF NOVEL NOMS

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

Spook Country, William Gibson (Putnam; Viking UK)

The Accidental Time Machine, Joe Haldeman (Ace)

Brasyl, Ian McDonald (Pyr)

Halting State, Charles Stross (Ace; Orbit UK)

LOCUS AWARDS FANTASY NOVEL NOMS

Territory, Emma Bull (Tor)
Endless Things, John Crowley (Small Beer Press; Overlook)
Ysabel, Guy Gavriel Kay (Viking Canada; Roc)
Making Money, Terry Pratchett (Doubleday UK; HarperCollins)
Pirate Freedom, Gene Wolfe (Tor)

LOCUS AWARDS YOUNG ADULT BOOK NOMS

The H-Bomb Girl, Stephen Baxter (Faber & Faber)
Magic's Child, Justine Larbalestier (Razorbill)
Powers, Ursula K. Le Guin (Harcourt; Gollancz)
Un Lun Dun, China Miéville (Ballantine Del Rey; Macmillan UK)
Extras, Scott Westerfeld (Simon Pulse; Simon & Schuster UK)

LOCUS AWARDS FIRST NOVEL NOMS

One for Sorrow, Christopher Barzak (Bantam Spectra)
City of Bones, Cassandra Clare (Simon & Schuster/McElderry)
Heart-Shaped Box, Joe Hill (Morrow; Gollancz)
The Name of the Wind, Patrick Rothfuss (DAW; Gollancz)
Flora Segunda, Ysabeau S. Wilce (Harcourt)

LOCUS AWARDS NOVELLA NOMS

"After the Siege," Cory Doctorow (*The Infinite Matrix*, January 2007)
"Stars Seen through Stone," Lucius Shepard (*F&SF*, July 2007)
"Muse of Fire," Dan Simmons (*The New Space Opera*)
"All Seated on the Ground," Connie Willis (*Asimov's*, December 2007)
"Memorare," Gene Wolfe (*F&SF*, April 2007)

LOCUS AWARDS NOVELETTE NOMS

"We Never Talk About My Brother," Peter S. Beagle (*Orson Scott Card's Intergalactic Medicine Show*, June 2007)
"The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate," Ted Chiang (*F&SF*, September 2007)
"Dark Integers," Greg Egan (*Asimov's*, October/November 2007)
"The Witch's Headstone," Neil Gaiman (*Wizards*)
"Trunk and Disorderly," Charles Stross (*Asimov's*, January 2007)

LOCUS AWARDS SHORT STORY NOMS

"Last Contact," Stephen Baxter (*The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction*)
"The Last and Only, or, Mr. Moscovitz Becomes French," Peter S. Beagle (*Eclipse One*)
"Tideline," Elizabeth Bear (*Asimov's*, April/May 2007)
"Who's Afraid of Wolf 359?," Ken MacLeod (*The New Space Opera*)
"A Small Room in Koboldtown," Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's*, April/May 2007)

LOCUS AWARDS COLLECTION NOMS

Overclocked, Cory Doctorow (Thunder's Mouth)
The Dog Said Bow-Wow, Michael Swanwick (Tachyon)
The Jack Vance Treasury, Jack Vance (Subterranean)
Things Will Never Be the Same, Howard Waldrop (Old Earth)
The Winds of Marble Arch and Other Stories, Connie Willis (Subterranean)

LOCUS AWARDS ANTHOLOGY NOMS

The Year's Best Fantasy & Horror 2007: Twentieth Annual Collection, Ellen Datlow, Kelly Link, and Gavin J. Grant, eds. (St. Martin's)
The Coyote Road, Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, eds. (Viking)
The Year's Best Science Fiction: Twenty-Fourth Annual Collection, Gardner Dozois, ed. (St. Martin's)
The New Space Opera, Gardner Dozois and Jonathan Strahan, eds. (Eos)
The Best of Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet, Kelly Link and Gavin J. Grant, eds. (Ballantine Del Rey)

LOCUS AWARDS NONFICTION NOMS

Gateways to Forever: The Story of the Science-Fiction Magazines from 1970 to 1980, Mike Ashley (Liverpool University Press)
Breakfast in the Ruins, Barry N. Malzberg (Baen)
Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction, Jeff Prucher, ed. (Oxford University Press)
The Country You Have Never Seen, Joanna Russ (Liverpool University Press)
Shadows of the New Sun: Wolfe on Writing/Writers on Wolfe, Peter Wright (Liverpool University Press)

LOCUS AWARDS ART BOOK NOMS

Dreamscape: The Best of Imaginary Realism, Claus Brusen and Marcel Salome, eds. (SalBru)
Spectrum 14: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art, Cathy Fenner and Arnie Fenner, eds. (Underwood)
Emshwiller: Infinity x Two, Luis Ortiz, ed. (Nonstop Press)
The Arrival, Shaun Tan (Lothian 2006; Scholastic)
Mervyn Peake: The Man and His Art, compiled by Sebastian Peake and Alison Eldred; G. Peter Winnington, ed. (Peter Owen)

LOCUS AWARDS EDITOR NOMS

Ellen Datlow
Gardner Dozois
David G. Hartwell
Patrick Nielsen Hayden
Gordon Van Gelder

LOCUS AWARDS MAGAZINE NOMS

Analog
Asimov's
F&SF
Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet
Subterranean

LOCUS AWARDS PUBLISHER NOMS

Baen
Bantam Spectra
Night Shade Books
Subterranean Press
Tor

LOCUS AWARDS ARTIST NOMS

Stephan Martiniere
John Picacio
Shaun Tan
Charles Vess
Michael Whelan

Awards Roundup

CLARKE AWARD

The winner of this year's Arthur C. Clarke Award <www.clarkeaward.com> has been announced. The Clarke Award (originally established with a grant from Sir Arthur C. Clarke) is a juried award for the best science fiction novel whose UK first edition was published in the previous calendar year. The announcement was made at a ceremony Wednesday 30 April 2008, held in conjunction with the opening of this year's Sci-Fi-London Film Festival. The award is currently administered by the Serendip Foundation. The winner is **Black Man, Richard Morgan** (Gollancz), which was published in the US as *Thirteen* (Del Rey).

SCHWARTZ AWARDS

The Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Awards <www.ontarioartsfoundation.on.ca/Page1307.aspx> are Cana-

dian mainstream book awards for both Children's Picture Book and Young Adult/Middle Reader categories. This year's YA/MR winner (which includes a cash award of \$CDN6,000) is **Kenneth Oppel** for his fantasy novel *Darkwing*. The awards were announced 6 May 2008.

The awards are administered by several groups. The Canadian Booksellers Association select the shortlist of books. The Ontario Arts Council selects a school (this year the Ryerson Community School) and two juries of children (five each from grades 3 & 4 and grades 7 & 8). The children on the two juries select the Picture Book and YA winners respectively. The Ontario Arts Foundation and the Ruth Schwartz Foundation also administer aspects of the awards.

BAFTA CYMRU and BAFTA AWARDS

This year's British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Cymru (Welsh) Awards <www.bafta-cymru.org.uk/english/index.php> were presented at a ceremony held at the Wales Millennium Centre on Sunday 27 April 2008. Three genre TV series won awards, with the big winner (by far) being *Doctor Who*, which took honors for Best Drama Series, Screenwriter, Director, Director of Photography (Drama), Sound, and Make-Up. *Who* spinoff *Torchwood* took the Best Costume category. The Best Children's Programme nod went to *Young Dracula*.

Meanwhile, in the "main" BAFTA TV Awards <www.bafta.org>, presented 20 April 2008, genre shows did poorly, turning up a win — for *Heroes* — only in the Best International Show category.

FAAN AWARDS

Winners of the FAAn Awards were announced, and the awards presented, at Corflu 25 <www.corflu.org> (aka Corflu Silver), held in Las Vegas 25–28 April 2008. The FAAn awards are voted on by sf fans before and at the annual Corflu, a convention focusing on fanzine writing. In addition to the FAAn Awards themselves, an unrelated **Special Certificate** was awarded to **Bill** and **Roxie Mills** for their services to the Virtual Corflu Chatroom. This year's FAAn Award winners are:

Best Fanzine.....*Prolapse*
Best Fan Artist.....**Dan Steffan**
Best Fan Writer.....**Arnie Katz**
Best Letterhack (the Harry Warner Memorial Award).....
Robert Lichtman
Best New Fan.....**John Coxon**
Best Fan Website.....**eFanzines**
Number One Fan Face.....**Arnie Katz**
SIDEWISE AWARDS NOMS

The Sidewise Awards <www.uchronia.net/sidewise> are juried awards that annually honor the best alternate history fiction in Short Form and Long Form categories. The jury is comprised of Stephen Baxter, Nicholas Gevers, Evelyn Leeper, Jim Rittenhouse, Stuart Shiffman, Kurt Sidaway, and Steven Silver. The winners will be announced at Denvention 3.

Sidewise Short Form Noms

"Les Innocents/Lumiere," Elizabeth Bear (*New Amsterdam*, Subterranean Press)
 "Quaestiones Super Caelo Et Mundo," Michael Flynn (*Analog*, July 2007)
 "Public Safety," Matthew Johnson (*Asimov's*, March 2007)
 "An Alternate History of Chinese Science Fiction," Jess Nevins (*No Fear of the Future*, 17 May 2007)
 "Metal Dragon Year," Chris Roberson (*Interzone*, December 2007)
 "Recovering Apollo 8," Kristine Kathryn Rusch (*Asimov's*, February 2007)
 "Missives from Possible Futures #1: Alternate History Search Results," John Scalzi (*Subterranean Magazine*, Winter 2007)

Sidewise Long Form Noms

The Yiddish Policemen's Union, Michael Chabon (HarperCollins)
1945: A Novel, Robert Conroy (Ballantine Books)
Ilario (comprising *The Lion's Eye* and *The Stone Golem*), Mary Gentle (Eos)
Mainspring, Jay Lake (Tor Books)
Rome Burning, Sophia McDougall (Orion)
Ha'penny, Jo Walton (Tor Books)

COMPTON CROOK NOMS

Nominees for this year's Compton Crook Award <www.bsfs.org/bsfscnu.htm> have been announced. The award, sponsored by the members of the Baltimore Science Fiction Society, Inc. and presented at Balticon <www.balticon.org> (on Memorial Day weekend), is for the best first novel of the year written by a single author in the genres of sf, fantasy, or horror. The award includes \$1000 and Guest of Honor treatment for two years at Balticon (the first to receive the award and the second to help present it). The nominees are:

The Blade Itself, Joe Abercrombie (Pyr)
The Outback Stars, Sandra McDonald (Tor)
The Name of the Wind, Patrick Rothfuss (DAW)
Magic Lost, Trouble Found, Lisa Shearin (Ace)
One Jump Ahead, Mark Van Name (Baen)

TIPTREE AWARD

The James Tiptree, Jr. Award <www.tiptree.org> is juried given annually for science fiction or fantasy literature that expands or explores the understanding of gender. The award was presented 25 May 2008 at WisCon in Madison WI. The winner of the Tiptree Award receives \$1000, an original artwork created specifically for the winning novel or story, and chocolate. The jurors were Charlie Anders, Gwenda Bond (chair), Meghan McCarron, Geoff Ryman, and Sheree Renee Thomas. In addition to the winner, the jury compiles an Honor List of other works that they find interesting, relevant to the award, and worthy of note. The winner is *The Carhullan Army*, **Sarah Hall**.

Tiptree Award Honor List

"Dangerous Space," Kelley Eskridge, (*Dangerous Space*, Aqueduct Press, 2007)
Water Logic, Laurie Marks (Small Beer Press, 2007)
Empress of Mijak and The Riven Kingdom, Karen Miller (HarperCollins, Australia, 2007)
The Shadow Speaker, Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu (Hyperion, 2007)
Interfictions, Delia Sherman and Theodora Goss, eds. (Interstitial Arts Foundation/Small Beer Press, 2007)
Glasshouse, Charles Stross (Ace, 2006)
The Margarets, Sheri S. Tepper (Harper Collins 2007)
Y: The Last Man, written by Brian K. Vaughan, art by Pia Guerra (DC/Vertigo Comics, 2002–2008)
Flora Segunda, Ysabeau Wilce (Harcourt, 2007)

Run Silent... Run Deep The Thing Goes South

No Need for a Ring — Chapter 22
 by PieEyedDragon

[Editor's Note: This is the sixth chapter in the second part of the NNFAr trilogy — *The Two Hairy Towers* — and is thus numbered as Chapter 6 in some places. The *Shuttle* is serializing the entire tale and chooses to use the alternate sequential chapter numbering system.]

Before dawn of March 30th, I take my leave of my giant host. I first go back east to the area of tumbled rocks. It was, as I suspected, the tailings from a dwarf mine. This one was also a coal mine, though the seams were not as broad as those further south. Still, there was plenty enough of flammable gas and carbon powder for my purpose. I choose an ignition area deep inside, to avoid undue attention, and station myself in a side-passage. With gas flowing up from below and air coming in from the main entrance, I imbibe a full measure of flame. There are only slight rumblings to indicate anything happening under the mountain.

I wait until evening and then set off west to the sea. From here I start swimming northeast. I have chosen to make a furtive, critical side trip before heading south. 150 miles later, on April 2, I wait in the deeps near the northwest spur of the Cape of Forochel and wait for night to pass and the sun to reach high noon. I dare not go out into the, still ice-covered, bay at night. Hishaukah might happen near and detect the glow of me under the dark ice. High noon should provide enough ice glare that nothing can see me from above, as well as giving me some light by which to navigate the undersea canyons.

The time comes. I dash out to the wreck site and locate the rotting crates of the Palantíri. I quickly grab the smaller, Stone of Annúminas and the larger Stone of Amon Sûl, and immediately head for the deeps northwest at full speed. There seemed to be some other relics of the old King and his party, but I dared not linger. When I had gone a considerable distance I slowed down and turned southwest toward the seaward shore of the cape. I swallow the smaller stone and gaze into the larger: scanning the surface of the bay and surrounding lands and the skies above. Satisfied, I begin moving southeastward toward my nominal lair, feeding as I go.

— O — O — O —

On April 8, after sunset, I come ashore at the foot of Mount Dolmed. The goblins see the new dragon coming up out of the sea once more.

Balúk: Hail, Servant of Darkness. What news?

PED: The fishing has been very good.

— O — O — O —

I spend a few days amongst my useless hoard before setting out to sea once more. I follow the shore south for a few miles and then return to land. It is time to stretch my legs for a while. I begin loping along the moist sand and soon I break into a gallop; running at about 70 miles per hour. I alternate this with swimming and feeding. I fly low across the Strait of Lhûn to reach Harlindon and continue generally southward for many days, passing within sight of the peaks of the southern Blue Mountains. I cross the mouth of the Brandywine to enter Minhiriath and go thru the forested cape at Eryn Vorn. Eventually I reach the Greyflood. This river is currently living up to it's name in full measure. The sun is shining here, but wind and clouds indicate the possibility of yet more rain upstream. The flood waters carry all manner of floating logs and bodies of small animals. Birds are clustering around sheep and goats. I see a small boat of apparent human manufacture making slow rotations in the current. A black bird is perched on the point of the bow. Something small is hanging over the stern. I bring up the Palantír to make a closer observation from shore. The object is a hand. The stone reveals a small boy lying in the boat. His clothing is wet and his lips are cracked. A tin cup rests near a fishwell amidships, which seems to yet be half full of water. His breathing is slow. His eyelids open halfway from time to time, revealing milky white, blind, eyes. There are oarlocks on the gunwales but no oars. The black bird, a raven, watches him.

I am in a quandary. This is not my mission, and I have not yet taken up what is to be my life's work. Notwithstanding,

there is no question what Mother would do. I take to the sea, transferring the Stone to my rear claws, and swim out.

When I reach the boat, I quietly raise up my head behind the raven.

PED: Do I know you?

raven: (exploding into panicked flight) Know You! (and grabs for altitude)

The boy is semiconscious. I probe his thoughts; they are mostly of scents, textures, words and sounds. His family had been fleeing the rising waters. His widowed mother slipped when getting out of the boat and it had spun away from the others, to be carried along by the rushing river in the rain. Days ago.

I swim around and catch a twenty pound sea bass. Splitting it neatly, I proceed to broil it with focussed sunlight; and I place it into the boat where the boy, smelling food, will soon lay his hand on it. When he does so he finds it hot but begins pulling off fragments and stuffing them into his mouth, being careful of bones. I place the Palantír in the bow. The raven circles, not too closely. The bow rope is trailing in the water. I carefully grasp it in my mouth and, swimming under the surface, I tow the little boat back up into the river and upstream. The raven follows for the rest of the day; then it departs in a straight line: northwest.

At morning and evening, for three days, I scan the banks and the route upstream, watchful for people and especially for any searchers. I am ten miles above the ruins of Lond Daer before I sight any (in the Palantír). Once within a few miles, I tangle the rope most carefully in a stout snag, retrieve the Stone, and sit on the bottom of the river, just under the boat. I make sure that it does not suddenly come loose.

Two men in a canoe, very excited, bump up against the boat. The boy hugs them and begins chattering about his "unexpected journey." They all laugh. The men discuss where to go next and agree that another mile downstream they will best be able to strike the old road south of the river. Then to begin the long march home. One considers the fish remnants with a puzzled frown.

Man: Salt water bass, sixty miles from the sea, and *cooked!* Who put this here for you? Elves?

Boy: It never said it's name, but it smelled like fish. It took it's big smooth ball and left before you found me.

Other: All's well as ends Better! And here's another tale of unexpected luck of widow's sons!

— O — O — O —

Now that this matter seems well in hand. I continue solo upstream, like a spawning salmon.

[Some of the above beings and situations have been suggested by the works of J. R. R. Tolkien (But you already knew that, didn't you?)]

Letters of Comment

EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC

PieEyedDragon
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27 March 2008

Lady Sheryl: Middle-earth is about ?? light-years away from here; in the direction of the Toucan (Southern Hemisphere). Their northern constellations look very much like ours. "Orion" (Menelvagor), too, is much the same.

They *do* have an extra star between "Ursa Major" (The Sickie) and "Draco" (Glaurung). Some here call it "Sol."

"The Shoe That Walked By Itself" was on course for, yes,

this planet.

John, the giant, was in the position of being a “Kaspar Hauser.” (Puck says that is the term, but he is not completely trustworthy. Always the Trickster!)

Heinlein pointed out that no one questions where a stray cat comes from. The phenomenon is not limited to humans. Charles de Lint says that “John Windle” is currently of human size and, in several ways, not like he used to be.

Will I write more about John? De Lint may have something to say about that. As Conan’s old wizard friend would say: “But *that is another story!*”

[This email was, um, misplaced for a while, but it still answers questions raised in earlier *Shuttles*, so I’m running it now. PED redacted the distance from Middle-earth to here. -ED]

LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC-LOC

Sheryl Birkhead
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Gaithersburg MD 20882

4 April 2008

First off, congratulations to all the Hugo nominees. I have not really had a chance to look at the complete listing — you know, Internet and all that. Ah, the daydreams of winning the lottery and being able to afford all the nice new toys and the high-end technology gadgets... but back to reality.

Aside from more (rather unique) computer problems, things muddle along as predicted. Spring is here, despite the sleet and spitting snow this afternoon. The neighbors, apparently, ran out their 6-months contract with one realtor and two days later another For Sale sign went up with another realtor. I never saw anyone there walking through, but I *did* see what was being asked. Half of this week’s editorial comments in the local paper were “discussing” the huge increase in assessment and property taxes — should be interesting when the new bills come out in a few months. We’ll see.

The newer Apple laptops run at least \$1000 and then there is a problem with compatibility with the desktop — so as long as I can get *anything* to happen, I stick with what I have. The laptop weighs a *lot* and is thick as well. Someday...

Just saw *I am Legend* — from my Netflix list — enjoyable, but had the feel of “classic” to it. I am told that the DVD has alternative ending(s?), but that was not on what came from Netflix. So, I have seen just about all the movies nominated for the long form.

I surprised myself and actually broke down and bought *The Last Mimzy* — guess I liked it a lot more than I thought.

I have the converter box coupons in hand (they are actually thick plastic cards — similar to credit cards) now to find the funds... If I buy the cheap box it will not allow analog signal[s] to pass through — as I understand it that means I would not have any channel until after the conversion date in 2009. Three models (on the list I got with my coupons) on the coupon approved list have the analog signal pass through. Now I need to find at least one of them and see what it will cost. I had hoped to use the tax rebate to cover the conversion boxes, but according to the fine print on the IRS’ website I do not qualify. I thought that as long as you even filed, you’d get money. Not so. You have to have made at least \$3000 in *earned* income. So, kinda out of luck unless there is some other loophole I can use. Oh well — easy almost come, easier go!

In the fan funds it is a mixed blessing when I see that I like all the nominees. On one hand any of the herd is a good choice, but on the other hand it means that all the rest who do

not win are *also* worthy of winning. Ah, but I guess that is what next year is for!

Lately I’ve seen some fan using their own printed stamps — just saw an envelope from John Hertz while I was at the Lynchs — a nifty propeller beanie. Maybe I ought to look into seeing how that is actually done. I’ll bet it requires software that is only PC compatible. Really quite colorful and appropriate. I think fans might be very creative in their stamp design!

That’s about it — still need to fire up the fireplace to take off the chill — while I watch a few catch-up tapes... Thanks...

[Remember, *INAL* (much less a *tax* attorney), but there are a few loopholes in the Earned Income requirement for the “economic stimulus” payments. I believe they count stuff like certain Social Security, railroad retirement, and veterans benefits toward the income requirement. But I imagine you used the online calculator <www.irs.gov/app/espcc>, which presumably gives a definitive answer. As for the digital TV converter boxes, you may not want or need the analog passthrough. First, many (probably most) TV stations are already broadcasting in digital as well as their analog signals. (The 2009 deadline is for cutting off the analog broadcasts, not for starting the digital ones.) Second, there may be no strong reason to hook up the converter box full time. You could check it out with whatever stations in your area are broadcasting in digital, then take it back out of the loop until you’re ready to fully cut over. Of course, if some of your local stations have not started digital broadcasting yet and some have, you might want to be able to watch the (converted-to-analog) digital channels as well as the stations that are still analog only. In Huntsville all the strictly local stations have been broadcasting in digital for quite some time — some of them for years. A couple of the low-power stations outside of Huntsville proper are still analog only. If I used an antenna (which I don’t) and if I cared about those low-power stations (which I don’t) and if I wanted to watch the (converted-to-analog) digital local stations, then I’d want to use a passthrough converter box (or some other setup, like a splitter-and-switch). By the way, you might want to check if any of your local stations are broadcasting a second (or third, or...) digital channel. At least three of our local TV stations do so. One of those is carried on the cable service I subscribe to (though I seldom watch it). The others (mainly all-weather broadcasts) are not carried on my cable. For the Hugos, I’m nearly finished reading all the novel nominees. I strongly suspect that finishing the last one won’t change my preferential order, but I hope to be able to finish it (and much or all of the short fiction) before I have to register my votes. -ED]

EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC-EMOC

PieEyedDragon
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1 May 2008

You weren’t taking proper care of your Gremlins, hmm? They bite. Imagine buying a lot of stamps and then losing the mailing list.

[Actually, I don’t have to *imagine* “buying a lot of stamps and then losing the mailing list” — and fortunately neither do I have to imagine recovering that mailing list, albeit after significant *sturm und drang*. I guess the gremlins were placated when I made the second special trip to buy a (fortunately inexpensive) part; or maybe it was the seemingly-endless web searches and multiple, mostly-futile attempts at diagnostics that eventually satisfied them. -ED]



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