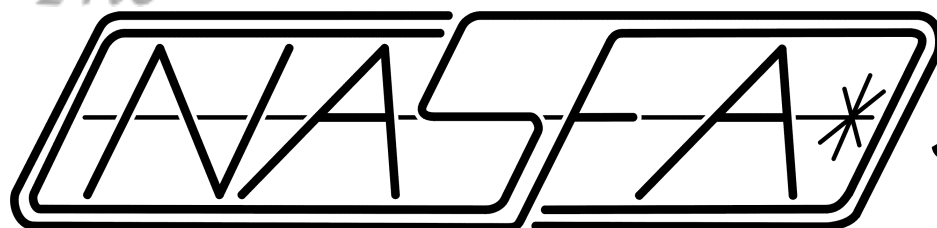


The



Shuttle
July 2009

The Next NASFA Meeting is 18 July 2009 at
the Regular Time and New Regular Location

Con†Stellation XXVIII Concom Meetings Sunday 19
July and Sunday 2 August, 2P, Mike Kennedy's House

▲ Oyez, Oyez ▲

The next **NASFA Meeting** is Saturday **18 July 2009** at the **regular time** (6P) and the **new regular location**. Meetings are at the Renasant Bank's Community Room, 4245 Balmoral Drive in south Huntsville. Exit the Parkway at Airport Road; head east one short block to Balmoral Drive; turn left (north) for less than a block. The bank is on the right, just past Logan's Roadhouse restaurant. Enter at the front door of the bank; turn right to the end of a short hallway.

PROGRAM

The July program will be a talk by local sf author Stephanie Osborn <www.sff.net/people/steph-osborn> about her novels *Burnout* and *The Y Factor*, as well as writing in general. Note: We ask that all attendees be respectful of our presenters by holding their questions and comments until the end of the presentation.

ATMMs

The July After-The-Meeting Meeting will be at Peggy Patrick's house — 120 Darlington Road NE. See the map and directions at right. If you get lost on the day, call Peggy's home phone at 256-533-9558.

We need ATMM volunteers for most future months, though we have a probable location for August.

CONCOM MEETINGS

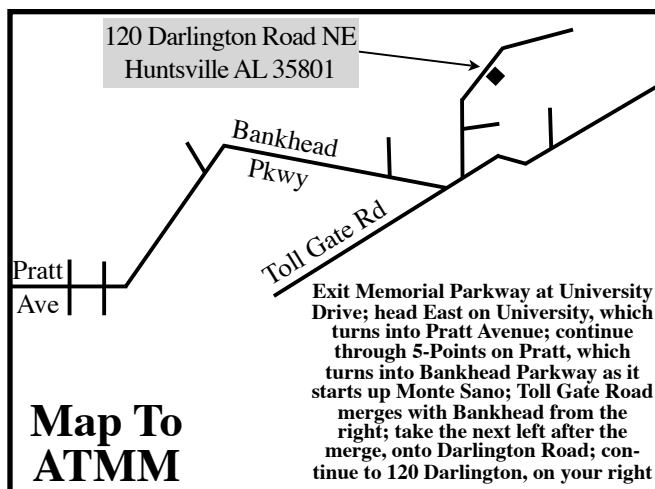
The first July Concom Meeting for Con†Stellation XXVIII will be Sunday 5 July (long past by the time this sees print) at 2P at Mike Kennedy's house — 7907 Charlotte Drive SW in Huntsville. The second July Concom Meeting is Sunday 19

July, again at Mike Kennedy's house. A full calendar of Concom Meetings for the year is included in the NASFA Calendar.

WORLDCON REPORTER (STILL) NEEDED

Your editor won't be going to Worldcon this year so the *Shuttle* is seeking an onsite reporter for the annual Worldcon issue. Most of the just-the-facts stuff can be gleaned from the web (Anticipation's official site, various blogs, etc.) but nothing substitutes for firsthand impressions.

So, if you're going to Montreal and are willing to write a few hundred words about your experience, please contact us at <nasfa.shuttle@con-stellation.org>; or just buttonhole Mike Kennedy when you see him.



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Deadline for the August issue of *The NASFA Shuttle* is Friday, 31 July 2009

And while you're considering this, it's highly likely that we'll also need an on-the-spot reporter for the 2010 Worldcon in Australia — so we'd be glad to take volunteers for that position, too!

NASFA CALENDAR ONLINE

NASFA has an online calendar on Google. Interested parties can check the calendar online, but you can also subscribe to the calendar and have your Outlook, iCal, BlackBerry, or other calendar automatically updated as events (Club Meetings, Concom Meetings, local sf/f events) are added or changed. Contact Bill S. for details.

PED RETURNS — AND REACHES AN END

After last month's recap, PieEyedDragon resumes his latest tale... and gets to an interim conclusion. The end of the second part of *No Need for a Ring* appears in this issue. The tale will resume in a near future issue with the first chapter of the third part — *The Thing Goes South*.

June Minutes

by Steve Sloan, Secretary

The June meeting of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association was called to order on Saturday, June 20, 2009 in the Renasant Bank meeting room at 6:08:40P by Vice President Mike Kennedy. President Mary Lampert and the crickets did not attend.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

CON BUSINESS

The next con committee (concom) meeting will be held Sunday, July 5th, at 2P at Mike K.'s house. Please come, because Con†Stellation: Vulpecula is just three months away. There will be a second July concom on July 19th.

A couple of new, recently added "also attendings" will be listed in the concom minutes.

Sam had to change Mike K.'s work email address on both mailing lists to his new address.

Bill is shifting our web hosting to another company's servers. He'll need to recreate the NASFA and Concom mailing lists after the switch.

Sam bought more Popeye's gift certificates for the Dead Dog Party. [Actually, I think they're going to use them during the con itself. -ED]

The Deep needs fresh Con†Stellation flyers, which Anita will deliver.

Sam has updated the mass mailing database.

Doug reported that the next Con†Stellation (2010) has guests Wen Spenser and Vincent DiFate confirmed. Doug is looking for more guest suggestions. Anita suggested inviting Charlaire Harris. They've had no luck with contacting Jim Butcher as a possible guest — he referred them to his publicist. An email to the publicist fell into a black hole.

There was a digression on Zimbabwean money. It is interesting but effectively worthless, so we are planning to give it out as prizes at a Con†Stellation game.

Bill asked if we want to make bookmarks like the ones we printed for last year's con. It's probably too late to advertise for this con.

NEW BUSINESS

Sam read some spammish emails. He got a press release on the Scribblers' Retreat writing conference on St. Simons Island, an Antellus Publishing ad, and a reminder to meet graphic novelist Gareth Hinds at an event at Athens-Limestone Public

Library on June 13th.

Mike showed a DVD from "a couple of insane people" who want to bid for and run a DeepSouthCon (the 50th DSC) in Huntsville in 2012 — Julie Wall and Toni Weisskopf, two of the Moon Princesses. This bid will be independent of NASFA or Con†Stellation. They made the video specifically for NASFA, because they couldn't be at the meeting in person.

A caption on the video specifically asked us not to put it on YouTube. Sam moved that we put the video on YouTube. Bill seconded, but the chair didn't recognize the motion.

Sam asked who's paying for this. Mike K. spoke to them very briefly about how they plan to finance it, and they told him NASFA won't be, but other than that, anything they told him about the details were told in confidence.

They intend to hold a kickoff party at LibertyCon. The vote for location of DSC 50 will be next year, in late May or early June. [That's ConCarolinas, in Charlotte NC, 4-6 June. -ED]

Mike K. is not fishing for any sort of vote of support from the club. The Moon Princesses mostly want to gauge if there is any hostility to the idea here. The general consensus is that there is no one opposed to it.

Mike C. suggested that the club send them a "get well" card.

If they win the bid, and Doug ends up being Con†Stellation con chair in 2012, Con†Stellation will be a relaxacon if it's not a combined con. [Um, it won't be combined in any case as the bid is completely independent of Con†Stellation and NASFA. -ED]

Doug moved that the secretary draft a letter saying they should have their heads examined. Anita seconded. Doug amended the motion, requiring that the letter include the phrase "oh, you poor dears." In the vote, only two opposed, so the motion carried.

Adam suggested including an address to their video on YouTube. It doesn't have to be real.

Mike K. moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:44:45P.

The program was a presentation by David Hitt, writer for NASA and co-author of *Homesteading Space: The Skylab Story*. Russell McNutt hosted the After-the-Meeting Meeting/pool party at his house.

NASFA Calendar

JULY

- 01 Canada Day.
- 02 BD: Deb Stone.
- 02 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: *Anubis Gates*, Tim Powers, 6P.
- 03 Independence Day (Observed).
- 04 Independence Day.
- 05 Con†Stellation XXVIII Concom Meeting, 2P, Mike Kennedy's house.
- 10-12 LibertyCon 22 — Chattanooga TN.
- 10-12 Shore Leave 31 — Baltimore MD.
- 10-12 Creation Twi/Tour — Atlanta GA.
- 17-19 BabelCon — Baton Rouge LA.
- 18* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at Renasant Bank. Program: Stephanie Osborn. ATMM: Peggy Patrick's house.
- 18-19 SurpriseCon! — Atlanta GA.
- 19 Con†Stellation XXVIII Concom Meeting, 2P, Mike Kennedy's house.
- 24 BD: Jay Johns.
- 24-26 PersaCon — Decatur AL.

- AUGUST**
- 02 Con†Stellation XXVIII Concom Meeting, 2P, Mike Kennedy's house.
- 06 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: *1984*, George Orwell, 6P.
- 06-09 Starfleet International — Greensboro NC.
- 06-10 Anticipation, 67th World Science Fiction Convention — Montreal QC.
- 08 BD: Jim Woosley.
- 12 BD: Sue Thorn.
- 13-16 Game Fest South — Chattanooga TN.
- 14 BD: Edward Kenny.
- 15* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at Renaissance Bank. Program: TBD. ATMM: TBD.
- 16 Con†Stellation XXVIII Concom Meeting, 2P, Mike Kennedy's house.
- 21 BD: Deborah Denton.
- 22 First day of Ramadan.
- 23 Atlanta Comic Convention — Atlanta GA.
- 27-29 Animation Attack! — Atlanta GA.

03 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: TBD; 6P.
03 BD: David K. Robinson.
04-07 Dragon*Con — Atlanta GA.
04-07 Mephit Furmeet — Memphis TN.
06 Con+Stellation XXVIII Concom Meeting, 2P, Mike
Kennedy's house.
07 Labor Day.
09 BD: Mike Cothran.
11 BD: Ray Pietruszka.
11-13 OutSideCon — Burns TN.
12* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at Re-
nasant Bank. Program: TBD. ATMM: TBD. **NOTE:**
Changed from the usual weekend to avoid conflict with
Con+Stellation.
12 BD: Pat Butler.
13 Grandparents Day.
17 Con+Stellation XXVIII Concom Meeting, at the con
hotel.
17 Citizenship Day.
18-20 Con+Stellation XXVIII — Huntsville AL.
25-27 GameCon Memphis — Memphis TN.
26 BD: Jenna Victoria Stone.
28 Yom Kippur.

01 Bailey Cove Library Book Discussion: TBD; 6P.
02-04 Archon — St. Louis MO.
02-04 GMX — Nashville TN.
12 Columbus Day (Traditional & Observed).
15 BD: Robert Buelow.
16-18 Capclave — Rockville MC (Washington DC area).
17* NASFA Meeting — 6P Business, 7P Program, at Re-
nant Bank. Program: Les Johnson. ATMM: TBD.
17-18 Nashville Comic and Horror Festival — Nashville TN.
23-25 Necronomicon '09 — St. Petersburg FL.
24 United Nations Day.
25 BD: Marie McCormack.
29-01 World Fantasy Convention 2009 — San Jose CA.
30-01 Hurricane Who — Orlando FL.
31 Halloween.

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.) As of April 2009, **the regular meeting location was changed** to the Community Room at the Balmoral branch of Renasant Bank (off Airport Road, near the 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.

Kenneth “Khen” Moore — a longtime fixture in Southern fandom — died peacefully in his sleep Tuesday 30 June 2009. His health had been declining for about two years since an aorta repair.

Ken was a convention fan (founder and chair of the late Kubla Khan, chair/co-chair of two DSCs), club fan (founding member and ex-president of the Nashville Science Fiction Club), a genre art collector of great renown (and runner of convention art shows), swill master (a drink remembered either fondly or with great disdain by all who partook ;-), and winner of both the Rebel Award (1974) and the Ruble Award (1991).



a 1000-watt smile and tell them "Good bash!"

Khen, along with his then-wife Lou, was Fan Guest of Honor at Con†Stellation I (yes, One!) in July 1982. It was a well-deserved honor those 27 years ago and certainly not the only time he was so honored — including at least one Deep-SouthCon. Khen meant a lot to me personally, too. He was one of the first Big Name Fans who had any idea who I was and his generosity of spirit in welcoming new fans was inspiring. All us remaining old-timers in Southern Fandom owe him a lot — and our descendants in fandom will too, whether they know it or not.

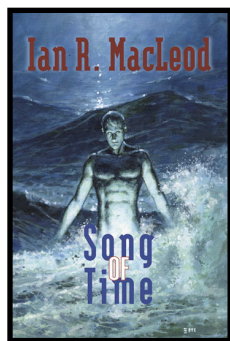
Ken's funeral was Sunday 5 July and was attended by many of his fannish friends. Though work, family, and other commitments kept me from making the trek to Nashville, I was certainly there in spirit. A two-night wake was also held the next weekend at LibertyCon, with many additional friends in attendance. He will be missed by me, by all of those who attended each event, and by many more.



Awards Roundup

STURGEON AND CAMPBELL WINNERS

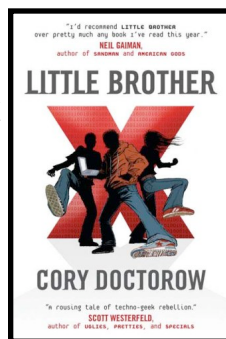
Winners of the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award and the John W. Campbell Memorial Award have been announced by the University of Kansas and the J. Wayne and Elsie M. Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction <www2.ku.edu/~sfcenter> at the Campbell Conference in Lawrence KS. The



Little Brother, Cory Doctorow (Tor) and **Song of Time**, Ian MacLeod (PS Publishing).

Sturgeon, a juried award for English-language short sf, went to **James Alan Gardner** for “**The Ray Gun: A Love Story**,”

(Asimov’s, February 2008). The Campbell, a juried award for English-language novel-length sf, resulted in a tie this year, with the prizes going to



2009 STOKER AWARDS

Winners of the latest Bram Stoker Awards (for horror fiction and related works) were announced at the 2009 Stoker Awards Weekend, 12–14 June in Burbank CA. The peer-voted Stokers — presented by the Horror Writer’s Association <www.horror.org> — are styled as for superior achievement as opposed to “best” in a category. Eligibility rules include first publication in English during the preceding calendar year. The winners are:

Novel..... *Duma Key*, Stephen King
First Novel..... *The Gentling Box*, Lisa Mannetti
Long Fiction..... *Miranda*, John R. Little
Short Fiction..... “*The Lost*,” Sarah Langan
Fiction Collection..... *Just After Sunset*, Stephen King
Anthology..... *Unspeakable Horror*, Vince A. Liaguno and Chad Helder, eds.

Nonfiction..... *A Hallowe’en Anthology*, Lisa Morton
Poetry Collection.... *The Nightmare Collection*, Bruce Boston

Several previously-announced awards were also presented: **Specialty Press Award** to **Bloodletting Press**, **Silver Hammer Award** to **Sephora Giron**, **Richard Laymon President’s Award** to **John R. Little**, and **Lifetime Achievement Awards** to both **Chelsea Quinn Yarbro** and **F. Paul Wilson**.

SEIUN AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Winners of the 2009 Seiun Awards — sometimes referred to as the Japanese Hugos — were announced recently at T-Con 2009 in Japan. You can see the full list of winners (in Japanese) at <www.sf-fan.gr.jp/awards/2009result.html> and in English on many blogs and secondary sites including wikipedia. Awards for the two translated categories are usually represented at the Worldcon. Those two winners were:

Foreign Novel..... *Spin*, Robert Charles Wilson, translated by Mogi Takeshi

Foreign Story..... “*The Merchant and the Alchemist’s Gate*,” Ted Chiang, translated by Nozomi Ohmori

EDGE HILL PRIZE

British sf author Chris Beckett has walked away with the prestigious mainstream Edge Hill Prize (honoring a single-author short fiction collection), Winning volume *The Turing Test* was



published by Elastic Press, a UK-based small/specialty press which went out of business earlier this year. The £5,000 prize is something of a big deal, but so is an sf collection beating out collections by several big-name mainstream writers.

LOCUS AWARDS

Winners of this year’s Locus Awards (popular-voted awards sponsored by *Locus Magazine*) were announced 27 June 2009 in Seattle WA. The winners are:

Science Fiction Novel..... *Anathem*, Neal Stephenson
Fantasy Novel..... *Lavinia*, Ursula K. Le Guin
First Novel..... *Singularity’s Ring*,

Paul Melko

Young-Adult Book..... *The Graveyard Book*, Neil Gaiman

Novella.... “*Pretty Monsters*,” Kelly Link

Novelette... “*Pump Six*,” Paolo Bacigalupi

Short Story..... “*Exhalation*,” Ted Chiang

Anthology..... *The Year’s Best Science*

Fiction: Twenty-Fifth Annual

Collection, Gardner Dozois, ed.

Collection.... *Pump Six and Other Stories*,

Paolo Bacigalupi

Nonfiction/Art Book..... *P. Craig Russell, Coraline:*

The Graphic Novel, Neil Gaiman, adapted and illustrated by

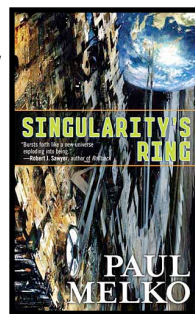
P. Craig Russell

Editor..... *Ellen Datlow*

Artist..... *Michael Whelan*

Magazine..... *F&SF*

Publisher..... *Tor*



ENDEAVOUR AWARD NOMS

Nominees for the Endeavour Award <www.osfci.org/endeavour> — for a sf or fantasy book written by a Pacific Northwest author or authors — have been announced for award-year 2008. The award is named for H.M. Bark *Endeavour*, the ship of Northwest explorer Capt. James Cook.

The award is announced and presented at OryCon <www.orycon.org>, to be held in Portland OR. The award is accompanied by a grant of \$1,000. The judges for 2009 are Joe Haldeman, John Helfers, and Sarah Zettel. The nominees are:

Ill Met in the Arena, Dave Duncan
A World Too Near: Book Two of the Entire and the Rose, Kay Kenyon

Space Magic, David D. Levine

Long Walks, Last Flights and Other Stories, Ken Scholes

Anathem, Neal Stephenson



CHESLEY AWARDS NOMS

Nominees have been announced for the 2009 Chesley Awards (for genre art and related work in 2008). These peer awards are sponsored by the Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists <www.asfa-art.org>. The awards are named to honor astronomical artist Chesley Bonestell after his death in 1986. The awards are usually presented annually at Worldcon. By category the nominees are:

ASFA Paperback Cover Noms

Dan Dos Santos for *Cry Wolf*, Patricia Briggs

Michael Komarck for *Dragonforge*, James

Maxey

Todd Lockwood for *The Stormcaller*, Tom

Lloyd

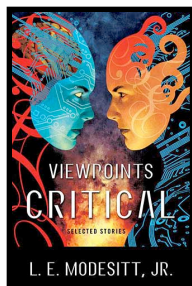
John Picacio for *Fast Forward 2*, Lou Anders, ed.



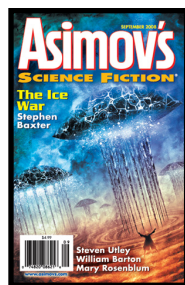
J.P. Targete for *The Turtle Moves! Discworld's Story Unauthorized*, Lawrence Watt Evans
 Paul Youll for *Hell and Earth*, Elizabeth Bear

ASFA Hardback Cover Noms

Dan Dos Santos for *Stalking the Vampire: A Fable of Tonight*, Mike Resnick
 Scott Fischer for *An Evil Guest*, Gene Wolfe
 Donato Giancola for *A Book of Wizards*, Marvin Kaye, ed.
 Stephen Hickman for *Ghost Quartet*, Marvin Kaye, ed.
 Todd Lockwood for *Quofum*, Alan Dean Foster
 Stephan Martiniere for *The Dragons of Babel*, Michael Swanwick
 John Picacio for *Viewpoints Critical: Selected Stories*, L.E. Modesitt Jr.



ASFA Magazine Cover Noms



Bob Eggleton for *Asimov's*, August 2008
 David A. Hardy for *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, June 2008
 Maurizio Manzieri for *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, April 2008
 Matts Minnhagen for *Clarksword*, April 2008
 John Picacio for *Asimov's*, September 2008

ASFA 3-D Art Noms

Brian Chan for *Wall-E* (Origami)
 Akihito Ikeda for *Heart of Art* (Mixed)
 Laura Reynolds for *The Mushroom Gatherer* (Mixed)
 Forest Rogers for *Dark Harpy* (Polyclay, Copper Foil, and Gold Leaf)
 Vincent Villafranca for *Otherworldly Procession* (Bronze)

ASFA Interior Illo Noms

Donato Giancola for *The Wraith*, J. Robert Lennon
 Alan Lee for *Tales from the Perilous Realm*, J.R.R. Tolkien
 John Picacio for *Elric: The Stealer of Souls*, Michael Moorcock
 Adam Rex for *Frankenstein Takes the Cake*, Adam Rex
 Shaun Tan for *Tales from Outer Suburbia*, Shaun Tan



ASFA Unpublished Color Noms

Julie Bell for *The Wave in Her Heart* (Oil)
 Simon Dominic for *The Gift* (Digital)
 Donato Giancola for *Progeny* (Oil)
 Omar Rayyan for *Gizmo* (Watercolor)
 Raoul Vitale for *Lorca's Cave* (Oil)
 Michael Whelan for *The Seawall* (Acrylic)

ASFA Unpublished Monochrome Noms

A.L. Ashbaugh for *Counterfeit* (Graphite)
 Simon Dominic for *Kraken* (Digital)
 Rebecca Guay for *Gwenevere* (Pencil)
 James Jean for *Hare* (Oil)
 Kate Leberherz-Gelinas for *Chiroptera* (Pencil)

ASFA Product Illo Noms

Volkan Baga for *The Name of the Rose* box art and promotional art for the game
 James Christensen for *False Magic* LE Canvas Print
 Dan Dos Santos for promotional art for *Hellboy 2*
 Patrick Jones for *Cyber Angel* poster
 Justin Sweet for concept art for *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*

ASFA Game Illo Noms

Volkan Baga for *Stoic Angel*, Magic Card: Shards of Alara
 Tom Fleming for *Firestorm*, VS System
 Michael Komarck for *Angelic Benediction*, Magic Card: Shards of Alara
 David Palumbo for *Cancel*, Magic Card: Shards of Alara
 Matt Stewart for *Invincible Hymn*, Magic Card: Shards of Alara

ASFA Art Director Noms

Matt Adelsperger for *Wizards of the Coast*
 Scott Allie for *Dark Horse Comics*
 Lou Anders for *Pyr Books*
 Irene Gallo for *Tor*
 Jeremy Jarvis for *Wizards of the Coast*
 William Schafer for *Subterranean Press*
 David Stevenson for *Del Rey*

ASFA Artistic Achievement Noms

Julie Bell
 Roger Dean
 Dan Dos Santos
 James Jean
 Stephan Martiniere
 Shaun Tan

One Mud Hole — Two Big Frauds

No Need for a Ring — Chapter 27
 by PieEyedDragon

[Editor's Note: This is the eleventh chapter in the second part of the NNFA trilogy — *The Two Hairy Towers* — and is thus numbered as Chapter 11 in some places. The *Shuttle* is serializing the entire tale and chooses to use the alternate sequential chapter numbering system.]

Radagast: Well, I've learned all I can from here. It's almost sunset. Time to move in closer.

[The tree shimmers and fades away, leaving a middle sized Man in robes of varying shades of brown. He holds an ornate staff in his left hand.]

Here, I'll carry one of these baskets. Shall we go?

Orophin: Are you mad? She never said she wouldn't kill you!

Radagast: I am convinced that I am quite safe, as unlikely as that would seem.

[Together, they walk back up beside the Stair Falls, and on toward the mountain.]

— O — O — O —

[The dragon is normal size once more. It spews a stream of water upon the blank rock wall, between the replanted trees.]

PED: Well, this is a novelty! People approaching such as me usually do so softly, softly on tippy-toe. That is, of course, if they are not being dragged, kicking and screaming.

(To the man in brown) Hello, food!

Radagast: (Staring down intently at the scales on the dragon's legs, and toes, and the silvery ring around the smallest claw) Hello yourself, fraud!

PED: Now, *that's* a name I haven't been called lately! As for names; I can guess *your* name; and I believe you have heard mine!

Radagast: You've been very busy! This place looks a little more like it used to!

PED: Is it any of your business what I do? Do not meddle in the affairs of dragons, for you are crunchy and...

Radagast: ... And I've heard that old joke, before. Orophin says you intend to enter Moria.

PED: So?

Radagast: Then why all this work? You could have gone thru the pass to the east gate, which is wide open.

PED: As any rabbit could tell you, a back door can be a life-saver. A mansion with two doors is also harder to besiege. Do you have any more impertinent questions?

Radagast: Yes. What would a dragon do if it came upon a little blind boy, adrift all alone in a small boat?

PED: (Slowly) It would... depend upon the dragon.

Radagast: There are only one or two things that would generally be expected. However, a raven saw you do something so very *unexpected* that it verges upon insanity to even *think* about believing it!

PED: People believe what they choose to believe — often at odds with what their senses report. Now, here you are, betting your life on the report of a bird-brain! That does not seem like wisdom.

Radagast: *Wisdom*... is my business. I believe what I see. I have, from time to time, been able to study many creatures — even dragons. I know what beasts they were made from. I know *who* made them: Morgoth; once of the Valar. He let his power pass into his evil creations, though he could not truly create — only twist. One of the Valar he was most especially cautious about was *Ulmo*, Lord of Waters. Morgoth therefore had very little to do with water, or the creatures of water. He would *not* have made a *water*-dragon! Nor would he have made *any* dragon by using a... turtle?

PED: (Changing to start speaking softly in the Valinorean tongue, and lowering her head to the level of the wizard; though he carefully avoids looking into her eyes): Aiwendil, Bird-Lover, you have been walking around pretending to be a *man* for — longer than I have been in existence. You are therefore a big fraud, yourself. Have you found that Yavanna's *gardens* need tending here, too? Is there any news of Alatar and Palando, the Blue Wizards?

Radagast: *gasps* (In the same language, haltingly) Soooo! Much becomes clearer; since you know my proper name, *and* this tongue!

PED: I received a rapid course of instruction in this and other needful things. Why do you avoid my eyes?

Radagast: The lesson of Glaurung and Turin... should not be casually set aside.

PED: I understand, and do not mind the caution. I do have power in my gaze, sometimes, though different from that. You look upon the Sickle of the Valar!

Radagast: That is a group of bright stars in the north; hard beside the... Great Worm.

PED: And the twain share a yellow star. The Mariner was sent thence to return with... me.

— O — O — O —

A ship, not tall, though higher than high;
Still needs a star for to steer it by.
A spot of cream in the northern sky;
Set course: the Mote in the Dragon's Eye!
To the Starless Void now make your turn.
Raise sails in the dark. Home shrinks astern.
Mountains, and seas; all Arda be gone!
A gold star draws the Mariner on.

— O — O — O —

Radagast: There is no word of the other Istari. What shall this Sickle reap? Why do you travel with a pair of Palantiri and a small box?

PED: At the prayer of an aged Dwarf, the chief bane of his

kind: dragons. I have need of the Stones of Annúminas and Amon Sûl for now. The box I shall eventually deliver to... it's proper owners.

Radagast: Do you know what the box contains?

PED: No. But for safekeeping I have re-swallowed it and the Stones. (Facing now the mountain wall, the dragon exhales a little mist, then lightly touches the stone and speaks the ancient spell of revealment that Gandalf had uttered at this spot over a century before; but nothing happens!)

Radagast: Missed a bit, did you?

PED: The spell was properly invoked; the signs should be glowing.

Radagast: They respond to moonlight. It is three weeks past Midsummer and the full moon has not yet cleared the mountains to shine upon that spot. You must wait a while.

PED: Absurdly simple. But, I need to be moving on. I choose *not* to wait! I hear Rúmil returning, with horses.

(The dragon straightens up and raises her wings high.)

PED: *Wings over the world!*

(At the invocation, the immaterial sails manifest along the raised wings, and extend high and wide. They catch the rays of the rising moon and focus them upon the rock. Soon, the outlines of silver trees, anvil, crown, and stars begin to glow.)

Radagast: Those words, I have heard before!

PED: (Singing an unfamiliar song in an ancient elven tongue)

"The sorrow of the Elves

Is they dare not touch a friend!

For touching brings a change

That magic cannot mend!"

(When the word "friend" (mellon) is spoken, the ancient stone doors begin to swing open.)

(The dragon walks sedately through the doors to the base of the broad stairway. Turning, it considers the doorway. There is no living memory of the word of closing. The dragon had learned of the Gates of Dawn and the Door of Night. The very secret *word* that opened one would, when reversed, open the other. Magic has a certain symmetry, so...)

PED: *Taking a deep breath* *Noll(h)em!*

(The great doors slowly close between the dragon and the others.)

Orophin: What was all that she said? I did not understand.

Radagast: Quite a lot, Orophin. Wizard business, to put it very simply.

Here Endeth The Two Hairy Towers This Tale continues in The Thing Goes South

[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?)]

[Mercedes Lackey wrote "Arafel's Lament," a part of which appears here.]



Breaking News (Sort Of)

A bid to bring DeepSouthCon 50 to Huntsville AL was kicked off at LibertyCon 22 in Chattanooga TN with a party Saturday 11 July. Well, it's not really quite *breaking* news since the word was already out on the web before LibertyCon, but this made it official.

The bid is promoted by a pan-Southern committee, headed by the Moon Princesses (Julie Wall of Birmingham AL, Linda Zielke of Chattanooga TN, and Toni Weisskopf of Athens GA) but with folks from many other areas — including Huntsville.

The vote selecting the DSC 50 site will take place at DSC 48, to be held 4–6 June 2010 in conjunction with ConCarolinas 2010 in North Carolina. The Huntsville-for-DSC-50 bid is accepting presupposing memberships and encouraging people to take the trip to Charlotte NC to vote — you must be at the Business Meeting at DSC to vote in the site selection race.

The Dragon's Business

While at LibertyCon your editor was asked to use the *Shuttle* to pass along a message:

“Thanks to Master Filker Tom Smith: who inscribed a copy of *A Dragon's Lullaby* to the Pie-Eyed Dragon.

“Transport will be arranged when practical.

“(s)Puck, Speaking for the Dragon”



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