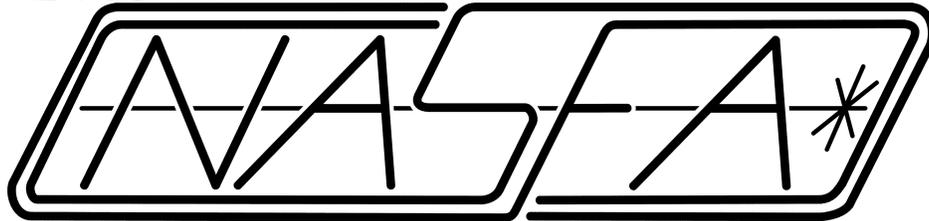


The



# Shuttle

March 2015

## The Next NASFA Meeting is 6:30P Saturday 28 March 2015 at the Regular Location

Concom: 3P Saturday 28 March 2015, at the Church

### ¡ Oyez, Oyez ¡

The next **NASFA Meeting** will be **6:30P Saturday 28 March 2015**. Note that this is a **week later than normal** to accommodate MidSouthCon. The meeting will be at the regular meeting location—the Madison campus of Willowbrook Baptist Church (old Wilson Lumber Company building) at **7105 Highway 72W** (aka University Drive). Please see the map at right if you need help finding it.

**PLEASE NOTE** that per a vote at the October 2014 meeting, the start of the Business Meeting has changed from 6P to 6:30P. Programs are still scheduled to start at 7P.

#### MARCH PROGRAM

The March program will be a talk by indie game developer Jeff Hester of Five Fans Productions <fivefans.net>. Their fantasy-puzzle-adventure game, Fliggles, is available as a “freemium” iOS app for the iPhone and iPad.



#### MARCH ATMM

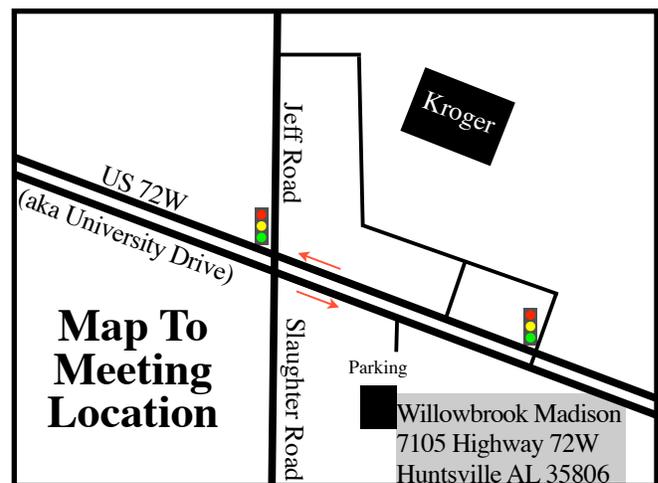
The March After-The-Meeting Meeting will be hosted at the church by Maria and Adam Grim. The usual rules will apply—that is, please bring food to share and your favorite drink. Also, please stay to help clean up. We need to be good guests and leave things at least as clean as we found them.

#### CONCOM MEETING

The next Con†Stellation XXXIII Concom Meeting will be at

3P on 28 March 2015—the same day as this month’s club meeting. It will be held at the same place as the club meeting, Willowbrook Baptist Church. There will be a dinner break between the Concom Meeting and the NASFA Business Meeting.

The intent going forward is for the concom to meet on club meeting days, at least until we get close enough to the con to require going to two meetings a month. Stay tuned, though, and consider all meeting dates past February as tentative until confirmed.



## Continuing Our 35<sup>th</sup> Year of Publication

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**Deadline for the April 2015 issue of The NASFA Shuttle is Wednesday 1 April 2015**

### CHANGING SHUTTLE DEADLINES

The latest tweak to the *NASFA Shuttle* schedule shifted the usual repro date somewhat to the right (roughly the weekend before each meeting) but much of each issue will need to be put to bed as much as two weeks before the monthly meeting.

Please check the deadline below the Table of Contents *each month* to submit news, reviews, LoCs, or other material. We will generally need to enforce that deadline strictly.

### FUTURE PROGRAMS AND ATMMs

Future programs for 2015 are TBD at press time. We need ATMM volunteers all remaining months in 2015 except April.

### FUTURE CLUB MEETING DATES

After this month, all but one remaining 2015 NASFA meeting dates are currently scheduled on the normal 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday. The July 2015 meeting has been shifted to the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday (25 July) to avoid a conflict with Con Kasterborous.

### JOINING THE NASFA EMAIL LIST

All NASFANs who have email are urged to join the NASFA email list, which you can do online at <tinyurl.com/NASFAEmail>. The list is usually low traffic, though the rate is rather variable. Generally the list is limited to announcements about club activities plus the occasional message of general interest to north-Alabama sf/f/h/etc. fans. Non NASFANs are both *encouraged* and *welcomed* to join the list, but please only do so if you're interested in the above restricted topics.

### NASFA CALENDAR ONLINE

NASFA has an online calendar on Google. Interested parties can check the calendar online, but you can also subscribe to it and have your Outlook, iCal, BlackBerry, or other calendar automatically updated as events (Club Meetings, Concom Meetings, local sf/f/h/etc. events) are added or changed. You can view the calendar online at <tinyurl.com/NASFACal>.

## News & Info

### HUGO NOMS TO BE ANNOUNCED 4 APRIL

Nominations for the 2015 Hugo Awards closed 10 March 2015. Finalists will be announced 4 April 2015 (PDT) at 4 simultaneous conventions around the world and will be simulcast online. The conventions include:

- Norwescon (Seattle WA) 12:00 PDT, 4 April
- Minicon (Minneapolis MN) 14:00 CDT 4 April
- Eastercon (UK) 20:00 BST 4 April
- New Zealand Natcon 07:00 NZST 5 April

Online coverage will be via UStream <www.ustream.tv/channel/worldcon1>, starting at noon PDT.

### WORLDCON NEO SPECIAL GUEST

Sasquan <sasquan.org>, the 2015 Worldcon, has announced that Dr. Kjell Lindgren will be a Special Guest—while serving as Flight Engineer onboard the International Space Station. His programming schedule has not yet been announced.

### DUBLIN WORLDCON BID TO ADJUST RATES

The Dublin in 2019 Worldcon bid <dublin2019.com> will be adjusting many of their presupporting rates on 31 March 2015 (though many dollar-denominated rates will be unchanged). All types of bid memberships are available denominated in \$US, €, and £. At least part of the motivation for the rate adjustments is substantial changes in exchange rates. They are also adding a Young Adult Friend pre supporter rate.

The dollar-denominated rates will be:

Pre Supporting .....	\$20
Backer (formerly Pre-Opposing) .....	\$45
YA Friend.....	\$65

Friend.....	\$130 (\$109 through 30 May 2015)
Super Friend .....	\$270

### NOMINEES SOUGHT: MUNSEY & HEVELIN AWARDS

Administrators have asked for nominations from “[a]ll members of the pulp community” for the 2015 Munsey Award and the 2015 Rusty Hevelin Service Award. The Munsey is for “an individual who has given of himself or herself for the betterment of the pulp community.” The Hevelin is for “persons who have worked long and hard for the pulp community with little thought for individual recognition.”

To nominate someone for either award, send the name and a brief description of why you feel that person should be honored either by snailmail (c/o Mike Chomko, 2217 W. Fairview Street, Allentown PA 18104-6542) or email (<mike@pulpfest.com>). The juried awards will be presented at Pulpfest 2015 <tinyurl.com/PulpFest2015>, to be held 13–16 August 2015 at the Hyatt Regency Columbus in Columbus OH.

## February Minutes

by Steve Sloan

The February meeting of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association was called to order on Saturday, February 21, 2015, in the Madison satellite location of Willowbrook Baptist Church at 6:36:04P by President Mary Lampert. Doug moved to adjourn before the crickets started, but there was no second. Mike K. moved to ignore Doug the rest of the night, with no second.

### OLD BUSINESS

2015 NASFA dues are due. Treasurer Sam reported that everyone in the room had paid.

### NEW BUSINESS

We still hadn't selected a 2016 Con†Stellation con chair. Someone suggested Ray, but Ray said if we nominated him, we would lose out on cheesecake. There was a digression about whether there is a cheese constellation. Doug nominated Jim right when Jim walked in the door with his hand raised, and Sam seconded. Jim replied, “If I were you, I wouldn't.”

### CON BUSINESS

Shelly, Con†Stellation 2015 co-con chair, reported that they were working hard at finding guests.

Sam moved to adjourn at 6:47:38P, and Judy seconded.

January's program was a science fiction version of *Wheel of Fortune*. Adam and Maria Grim hosted the After the Meeting Meeting at the meeting location.

## NASFA Calendar

### MARCH

- 02 BD: Ronnie Lajoie.
- 02 Read Across America Day.
- 05 Purim.
- 06–08 Gnome Con 4—Savannah GA.
- 06–08 The Vampire Diaries—Atlanta GA.
- 07 Cardboard\*Con—Atlanta GA.
- 07 Athens Anime Academy—Athens GA.
- 08 Día Internacional de la Mujer.
- 08 Daylight Saving Time begins.
- 09 BD: Tracey Kennedy.
- 10 BD: Kerry Gilley.
- 13–15 Con GT—Clarksville TN.



campus of Willowbrook Baptist Church, (old Wilson Lumber Company building)—7105 Highway 72W. The Executive Committee meeting (if scheduled) is before the business meeting. The business meeting is at 6:30P. 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.

## Awards Roundup

### SWFA NAMES NIVEN GRAND MASTER

The Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America <sfwa.org> has announced that **Larry Niven** has been selected for the **Damon Knight Memorial Grand Master Award**. The award is for “contributions to the field of science fiction and fantasy.” The press release notes that “In addition to his contributions to the genre, Niven has influenced the fields of space exploration and technology.”

The award will be presented at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Nebula Awards Weekend, to be held at 4–7 June 2015 at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago IL.

### WHS NAMES NOLAN GRAND MASTER

The World Horror Society (parent organization of the World Horror Convention <www.worldhorrorconvention.com>) has announced that **William F. Nolan** has been selected as a **WHS Grand Master**. The award “recognizes significant achievement by a professional in the horror field.”

The award will be presented at World Horror Con 25 <www.whc2015.org>, to be held 7–10 May 2015 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis in Atlanta GA. The convention is being held in conjunction with the Horror Writers Association, so the Bram Stoker Awards will also be presented that weekend.

### JIM BAEN MEMORIAL SHORT STORY AWARD

The winner and runners up have been announced for the 2015 Jim Baen Memorial Award <www.baen.com/baenmemorialaward.asp> (for short stories “Set in a Positive Future of Space Exploration”)

**Grand Prize** .....“We Fly,” K.B. Rylander  
**First Runner Up** .....“A Metal Box Floating Between the Stars,”  
 Jamie Lackey

**Second Runner Up**.....“Boomerang Zone,” Robert Dawson

The award will be presented during the International Space Development Conference <isdc.nss.org>, to be held 20–24 May 2015 at the Hyatt Regency Toronto in Toronto ON. The winning story will be published on the Baen website.



### HWA AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The Horror Writers Association <horror.org> has announced the winners of several service and related awards. The awards will be presented at World Horror Con 25 <www.whc2015.org>, to be held 7–10 May 2015 at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis in Atlanta GA. The awards announced include:

**Lifetime Achievement Awards**.....**Jack Ketchum** and **Tanith Lee**

**Silver Hammer Award** (service by an HWA volunteer) ...**Rena Mason**

**Specialty Press Award** .....**ChiZine Publications**

**Richard Laymon President’s Award for Service** .....**Doug Murano, Tom Calen, and Brock Cooper**

### KITSCHIES AWARDS

Winners of the 2014 Kitschies Awards <www.thekitschies.com> (for “the year’s most progressive, intelligent, and enter-

taining works that contain elements of the speculative or fantastic”) were announced at a 4 March 2015 ceremony in London. The winners are:

**Red Tentacle** (Novel) .....**Grasshopper Jungle**,  
 Andrew Smith (Electric Monkey)

**Golden Tentacle** (Debut Novel) .....**Viper Wine**,  
 Hermione Eyre (Jonathan Cape)

**Inky Tentacle** (Cover Art).....**Tigerman**, cover by  
 Glenn O’Neill (William Heinemann)

**Invisible Tentacle** (Natively Digital Fiction).....**Kentucky  
 Route Zero, Act III**, Cardboard Computer

### YA BOOK PRIZE

A new award—the **YA Book Prize** <www.thebookseller.com/ya-book-prize>—for UK and Irish Young Adult books is sponsored by trade magazine *The Bookseller*. The inaugural winner is dystopian fantasy *Only Ever Yours*, Louise O’Neill (Quercus). Several other books of genre interest made the shortlist. The prize included a £2000 cash award.

### SATURN AWARD NOMS

Nominees were recently announced for the 2015 Saturn Awards <www.saturnawards.org> (sponsored by the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films “to honor and recognize the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror films”). The list of over 3 dozen categories (in Film, TV, Home Entertainment, and Live Stage categories) is too long to print in the *Shuttle*—but a full list can be found on their website.



### LAMBDA AWARDS NOMS

Finalists for the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Lambda Literary Awards <www.lambdaliterary.org> (for achievement in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [...] writing) have been announced. There are about two dozen categories, only one of which has direct genre ties (though there are numerous books of genre interest in other categories). The nominees in the LGBT SF/F/Horror category are:



*Bitter Waters*, Chaz Brenchley (Lethe Press)  
*FutureDyke*, Lea Daley (Bella Books)  
*Child of a Hidden Sea*, A.M. Dellamonica (Tor Books)  
*Skin Deep Magic*, Craig Laurance Gidney (Rebel Satori Press)  
*Full Fathom Five*, Max Gladstone (Tor Books)  
*Afterparty*, Daryl Gregory (Tor Books)  
*Butcher’s Road*, Lee Thomas (Lethe Press)

### URSA MAJOR NOMS CLOSED, VOTING OPENS

Nominations have been announced for the 2014 Anthropomorphic Literature and Arts Awards (aka the Ursa Major Awards <www.ursamajorawards.org>) and voting has opened. The full list of 11 categories is a bit too long to print in the *Shuttle* but is available on the website—along with voting directions—at <www.ursamajorawards.org/voting2014>.



Voting closes 15 April 2015. The winners will be announced at Morphicon 2015 <www.morphicon.org>, to be held 30 April–3 May 2015 at the Columbus-Worthington Holiday Inn in Columbus OH.

### PEN/FAULKNER HAS GENRE NOMINEE

The 2015 slate of finalists for the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction <www.penfaulkner.org> (for “the year’s best works of fiction by living American citizens”) includes one item of genre note— *Station Eleven*, Emily St. John Mandel (Knopf).

The winner will be announced 7 April 2015. The award ceremony will be held 2 May 2015 at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC.



ogy of *Dark Fiction*)

“The Floating Girls: A Documentary,” Damien Angelica Walters (*Jamais Vu* #3)

#### SCREENPLAY STOKER NOMS

*The Walking Dead*: “The Grove,” Scott M. Gimple

*The Babadook*, Jennifer Kent

*Penny Dreadful*: “Séance,” John Logan

*Doctor Who*: “Listen,” Steven Moffat

*American Horror Story: Coven*: “The Magical Delights of Stevie Nicks,” James Wong

#### ANTHOLOGY STOKER NOMS

*Qualia Nous*, Michael Bailey, ed. (Written Backwards)

*A Darke Phantastique*, Jason V Brock, ed. (Cycatrix)

*Fearful Symmetries*, Ellen Datlow, ed. (ChiZine)

*Burnt Tongues*, Chuck Palahniuk, Richard Thomas, and Dennis Widmyer, eds. (Medallion)

*Limbus, Inc., Book II*, Brett J. Talley, ed. (JournalStone)

#### FICTION COLLECTION STOKER NOMS

*After the People Lights Have Gone Off*, Stephen Graham Jones (Dark House)

*Little by Little*, John R. Little (Bad Moon)

*Gifts for the One Who Comes After*, Helen Marshall (ChiZine)

*Soft Apocalypses*, Lucy Snyder (Raw Dog Screaming)

*The End in All Beginnings*, John F.D. Taff (Grey Matter)

#### NON-FICTION STOKER NOMS

*Disorders of Magnitude*, Jason V Brock (Rowman & Littlefield)

*Lovecraft and a World in Transition*, S.T. Joshi (Hippocampus)

*The New Annotated H.P. Lovecraft*, Leslie S. Klinger (Liveright)

*Horror 101: The Way Forward*, Joe Mynhardt and Emma Audsley (Crystal Lake)

*Shooting Yourself in the Head For Fun and Profit: A Writer's Survival Guide*, Lucy Snyder (Post Mortem)

#### POETRY COLLECTION STOKER NOMS

*Fearworms: Selected Poems*, Robert Payne Cabeen (Fanboy Comics)

*Venus Intervention*, Corrinne De Winter and Alessandro Manzetti (Kipple Officina Libraria)

*Forgiving Judas*, Tom Piccirilli (Crossroad)

*Sweet Poison*, Marge Simon and Mary Turzillo (Dark Renaissance)

*Mourning Jewelry*, Stephanie Wytovich (Raw Dog Screaming)

*Jack and the Sleeping Giant*, Scott Gustafson

*Radiant State*, Jeffrey Alan Love

*The Giants are Coming*, Petar Meseldzija

cover for *Dune* by Frank Herbert, Sam Weber

#### COMICS SPECTRUM NOMS

*Castle in the Stars*, Alex Alice

*Bernadette*, page 1, Audrey Benjaminsen

*Rebels*, Tula Lotay

*The Beast*, David Palumbo

*Rebel Angels*, James Turner

#### CONCEPT ART SPECTRUM NOMS

*Fairy 3*, Audrey Benjaminsen

*The Parade*, Sung Choi

*Wonders: Gate of Luxor*, Te Hu

*Meeting*, Kellan Jett

*The Good Dog*, Allen Williams

#### DIMENSIONAL SPECTRUM NOMS

*The Mudpuppy*, Dan Chudzinski

*Gallevarbe: Death's Siren*, Mark Newman

*Venetian Harpy: Thousandfurs*, Forest Rogers

*Dragon vs. Raptors*, David Silva

*A Bird From His Brim Will Guide Your Last Breath*, Dug Stanat

#### EDITORIAL SPECTRUM NOMS

*Critical Education*, Sam Bosma

*This Circle: Walking Into the Wind*, Jensine Eckwall

*Gland Monster*, Edward Kinsella III

*Cocoon*, Victo Ngai

*A Distressed Damsel*, Tran Nguyen

#### INSTITUTIONAL SPECTRUM NOMS

*Rikshaw Pass*, Ed Binkley

*Bad Seed*, Laurie Brom

*Fake It*, Rovina Cai

*Skyrim*, Jeffrey Alan Love

*The Child Sleeps*, Jessica Shirley

#### UNPUBLISHED SPECTRUM NOMS

*Beowulf: Mother*, Paul Bonner

*Descent from Caradhras*, Donato Giancola

*Time and Chance*, Rebecca Leveille Guay

*A Night at the Races*, Omar Rayyan

*Momentum*, Cynthia Sheppard

## Spectrum Awards Nominations

Nominations for the Spectrum 22 Awards <www.spectrumfantasticart.com> have been announced by Flesk Publications, publisher of *Spectrum 22: The Best In Contemporary Fantastic Art*. The juried awards will be announced at the Spectrum Fantastic Art Live 4 <spectrumfantasticartlive.com>, to be held 22–24 May 2015 at the Bartle Hall Convention Center in Kansas City MO.

In addition to the categories below, a Grand Master Award will be announced. By category, the nominees are:

#### ADVERTISING SPECTRUM NOMS

*Murder on the Orient Express*, Johnny Dombrowski

*Vernacchio*, Edward Kinsella III

*The Cloisters*, Victo Ngai

*Tokyo Night Show*, Yuko Shimizu

*Barbarians: Faust*, Taylor Wessling

#### BOOK SPECTRUM NOMS

*Taking Flight*, Dan dos Santos

## Trolling Along

No Need for a Questing Beast—Chapter 12

by PieEyedDragon

[Editor's Note: PieEyedDragon's adventures in Middle-Earth will resume in these pages later. In the meantime, we take you to another time and location. PED spends somewhat less time “on camera” in this adventure, but still plays a major part.]

Lighter by several hundredweight of used fish. I pause by a series of small structures scattered around. This place has no end of hospitality! It seems that an army of wizards has dropped dead here recently. Several of them have tasteful markers, like: “Colin Creavey, why did you have to be so brave? Your brother, Dennis.” I drink in the residual mana left lying around by quite a lot of wizards and witches. Then, proceed down to the lake and slip into the water. Before starting my search, I wriggle toward the mouth of the forest river, and look up at the squid. It is turning gray. Live and let live. I expel a torrent of bubbly water over the main body and thicker appendages. I enter the trees to one side and make a circle with my body around the area of the squiddly arbournaut. Closing the circle of my body, I direct my attention on the squid and com-

*mand* “Go Home! And no ink!”. It gradually descends from the trees, squirming down the river under my tail, and so out into the deeper waters.

I follow more slowly down to the shallows and sand bars. The damage and exertions of the past weeks are beginning to take their toll on me. I must try to at least locate my next objective.

Moving just offshore, I turn to the left and start slowly swimming parallel to the bank. Head down, I closely examine the lake bottom as I glide along. It will take days before my search spiral will have made complete coverage of the entire lake. But, that is not much to one who spent five millennia covering the entire surface of the planet.

There are thick beds of light green weeds here, about two feet tall, waving in the gentle currents as I make my first circuit of the lake and start spiraling inward. A bedrock extrusion adjacent to the castle sports a large crystal portal. I look down through it into a room with high-backed upholstered chairs and couches, green draperies and serpent banners. There is even a fireplace, currently unlit. Two brownies, polishing the mantelpiece and dusting the skulls, look up as my shadow dims the light. Their mouths fall open and we stare at each other for a moment. I wink, and move on. The resident fish and less mundane creatures attempt to hide in the weeds and any convenient holes and crevasses. Sometimes this results in a small fish, avoiding the very large predator, swimming too near the jaws or claws of another predator not nearly so large. It’s a fish-eat-fish world.

The bottom rises up and dips down. I encounter wide stretches of black mud, mainly below the local thermocline where the oxygen concentration is very poor and putrefaction products are more concentrated. There is a lot less trash down here than would be seen in most other lakes of this size. Perhaps the mer-folk have a formal treaty with the humans, or perhaps they just flung such offal back onto the shore until folks got the idea.

I had mostly completed my survey of the lake bottom when I came upon a large rock jutting up a little way out of the mud. It had a flattish top and nearly smooth sides. Someone had made paintings and drawings on this: images of mer-people with spears, and something with tentacles. Squid, octopus, nautiloid, or something more exotic; I could not determine. I take note of the rock and continue the survey.

Eventually, my narrowing course brings me back to the village. It is quite near the center of the lake but not in the deepest part. Above the thermocline, it would have enough dissolved oxygen to continually support active gilled creatures. There is very little light here (in daytime), but apparently enough so that patches of algae and gardens of weeds can also survive. I consider more closely the large merman statue near the village center. It is crude enough that I cannot with certainty identify it as a representation of Poseidon, or one of his children, or even one of the Titans that preceded him. It was certainly not made with tools, at least not in the water; though magic would have fewer but different restrictions in that area. I return to the rock and examine the paintings more closely. The mer-folk depicted there do not seem to be quite the same species as the locals. I scrape at bare patches on the top and sides and observe them with my various senses. I ascertain that there is a slight trace of Pixie dust in the rock. Eureka!

I do a bit of hunting now; catching several fish and eating them quickly. Not too much, others hunt here, too. I now rise slowly back to the surface and look around. It is around midday. There are several people wandering around with various instruments, tools, bags, carts, wagons, and what-not. There are

also scaffolds up on one section of the castle walls, and folk (some rather short) are hoisting or levitating blocks of stone and fitting them into damaged sections. There seems to be a great deal of post-fitting work, involving trowels, sledges, wands and plenty of arm-waving. Someone seemingly sets off a lot of fireworks with aerial detonations. Everyone stops what they are doing, turns toward the lake and looks... at me. I look back for a while and then swim tiredly toward the forest edge. There are centaurs there, looking at me too. I nod at them, and some hesitantly wave back.

— O — O — O —

Hagrid: (Waving from the bank where I saw him before. There is a palomino centaur with him.) Hey! Over here!

PED: (Swimming over near the beach) Hello, professor Hagrid. Not tea time yet already?

Hagrid: No, but some frens o’ mine (and some not-so-friends) ud lak ter have a chat. This here’s perfesser Firenze. He’s one o’ tha Divination teachers here.

PED: How do you do, professor Firenze. (Switching to Atlantean) What do the stars say?

Firenze: (in roughly the same tongue) Change is coming. But the mid-day sun hides the stars at the moment.

PED: Change is the only constant. And it is the atmosphere that hides the stars by scattering light. Above the atmosphere, the starshine is bright and usually steady; apart from variable stars and eclipsing binaries.

Firenze: Have you, then, observed the stars from such a lofty vantage?

PED: Yes, several times.

Hagrid: Wha’ are you two sayin’ ta each other?

PED: (In English) Oh, just discussing the stars... in Atlantean. The Centaur’s usage of the old language has drifted somewhat. That is only to be expected.

(A very wide but short man comes puffing up toward us.)

Hagrid: Perfessor Slughorn, we wasna’ expectin’ ye back before the new term.

Slughorn: (Puff, puff) I just *had* to come see this marvel! Barnabas Cuffe came over last night with Miss Skeeter to ask my advice about this... fantastic treasure.

Hagrid: Now, don’ ya go tryin’ ter get a coupla gallons o’ dragon blood! PED, this is Perfessor Horace Slughorn, our Potions Master.

PED: I’m pleased to meet you, Professor. Please stop trying to compute my net worth piecemeal. I am more valuable to mankind alive and ready to fight.

Slughorn: And do you really know stuff from thousands of years ago?

PED: Yes, as well as many things much more recent; but far, far away.

Slughorn: I’m suddenly craving an apple pie. Something around here sure smells like cinnamon. Could I, ah, ask you a few professional questions?

PED: Tell me some of them.

(Slughorn rattles off several, then thinks of a few more.)

PED: Most of those, I can answer. Are you willing to trade for them.

Slughorn: What would you want? Gold?

PED: Such treasures are a prison, making captives of the holders. I can get such when I have need, though my chief requirement is fish that I catch myself. Information is lighter and much more valuable, and would be an exchange of like kind.

Slughorn: What sort of information?

PED: The sort you would dispense in your normal teaching: knowledge of more recent magical practices.

Slughorn: Perhaps we could arrange mutual tutoring ses-

sions.

PED: Time, however, is always precious. I am well versed in techniques of rapidly exchanging information mind-to-mind.

Slughorn: Legilimency? That is tricky and not always reliable.

PED: No, such is like looking through very muddy water, at evening, to count grains of sand. My technique is clear, quick and painless. I offer this, if you will dare, but do not insist.

Slughorn: I don't suppose you've done this with anyone lately. The world would surely have heard about it.

PED: Well, I've been mostly out of sight of people, by design. The last time I did this with a human being, let me see; that was 1895 in South Africa. I was introduced to a three-year-old English boy who asked to hear a story. As I was telling him a rather long tale, he became sleepy; so I gently pushed the whole thing into his mind. He obviously remembered for, decades later; he wrote and published it in a series of fantasy novels.

Slughorn: Did that not bother you? Who was he?

PED: No. I freely entertained a human child with a tale that was partly a first hand account of one of my earlier journeys. Most of the rest was from other's tales. The lad's name was John Tolkien. He later became a muggle professor.

Slughorn: (Thinking it over—should Slytherin House have the honor to be the first to seize such a unique and incredibly profitable opportunity? Was there not a great Serpent blazoned upon their banner?) All right, I'll try it. What shall I do?

PED: "If you wish to be wise, come and search into the dragon's eyes."

(After quoting the song, I open wide my blue-in-blue eyes and stare at Professor Slughorn, whose gaze locks with mine. After a few seconds, the transfer is complete.)

Hagrid: Perffessor, are ye all righ'?

Slughorn: Glorious... wonderful... the depths! Yes, Hagrid, I am more than fine; and no, I have not been confunded. This is incredible! I shall have to start writing this down. Egad! I can write a whole book!

PED: Thank you too, Professor, for your own fascinating information. I see you took a much more active part in the so-called second world war than did I.

Slughorn: International rules thankfully kept us from having to engage the German wizards directly. We did our part in defending the United Kingdom. What were you doing then, and why do you say "so-called"?

PED: According to the information stored in my memories; it was, at least, the fourth world war; possibly a greater number. For centuries I had been on duty as a guardian of a minor Shinto shrine in the southern portion of the main Japanese island, Honshu. As a protector of mankind, I could not attack anyone on either side. I did have the dubious experience of being close enough to Hiroshima to perceive the flash and boom of the first fission bomb used by modern humans in warfare.

Hagrid, I need to sleep for a few days, preferably on land. Is there somewhere relatively out of the way here for me to do that?

Hagrid: Ha! I knows jus tha place!

(He leads the way down a gentle slope between the forest edge and a well-used road to a large gate in the outer encircling wall. I examine the gate. There are figures of winged boars thereon, and a Latin motto: *Draco Dormiens Nunquam Titilandus*).

PED: "Never Tickle a Sleeping Dragon"! Yes, this should do. There is a thicket to one side and scrubby trees on the other. Once settled in, I will go into *mime* mode in case any satellite cameras get lucky.

Hagrid: "Mime" did ya say?

PED: Protective coloration, camouflage; I blend in with my surroundings.

Hagrid: Oh! Well, muggles an' their cameras don' rightly see wha's here.

— O — O — O —

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

## Letters of Comment

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Lloyd Penney  
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4 March 2015

Many thanks for the February *Shuttle*, and I will work harder to make the deadline this time around.

Another round of awards... Yvonne and I just nominated for the Aurora Awards, and voted for the FAAn Awards and TAFF. Fingers crossed that I might be considered for a FAAn. We no longer have a franchise to vote on the Hugos, which is fine with me. If people are looking at the Montreal bid for 2017, I was recently invited to join that bid's Facebook page.

I am interested in a Montreal bid only because it is doable and affordable, and also drivable. We could even take the train. We have made a big decision, and have set the summer of 2016 as the time we will be going to London for a couple of weeks, and I have to say that for us right now, it's more important than a potential Worldcon.

The rest was read and enjoyed, but I think I shall have to leave it here. Winter storms here have knocked out our electricity a few times this winter, and the last was last night. I worry about the computer, and what else even a minor blackout will do to a home full of electronics.

Many thanks for all this, take care, and see you with the next issue.

[Huntsville's spate of winter weather (about which more in the reply to Sheryl's LoC) caused small scattered power outages, but none at my house. On the other hand, my laptop took a \$300 trip to the shop *without* having any such stress on it. Regarding the FAAn awards, I would think you're certainly one obvious choice in the Letterhack category. Their one-stage 5-4-3-2-1 weighted voting system makes it hard to predict the rankings for even very popular choices. (For instance, a person ranked 5<sup>th</sup> on *every* ballot can lose badly to someone who appears on only a minority of the ballots, but is ranked higher when they do appear.) -ED]

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Sheryl Birkhead  
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5 March 2015

Ah, bracing for more snow today—with any luck this will be the last of the winter storms and March will, eventually, go out like a lamb! One can but hope. I placed an order with a manu-

facturer for one bag of prescription cat food and it is due to show up today or tomorrow. That means I have to get the driveway clear, etc.—even though this is a residential area and there aren't any sidewalks. So, it looks as if I'll be working every few hours until it is over (current estimate 8-10" —we'll see, or shovel at the very least!). Such fun. Took a look at the forecasts and see that you are all having fun down there too—State Of Emergency declared—please let this be the last snow of the season!

It has been a while since I used drafting pens—but I thought my gift to me from my tax refund would be to buy another small set of them and see about using them again. Uh, remember the new roof? Well, I have to repay the money that was borrowed to cover that—and the part left over for my wild fling boils down to \$14. So much for that idea—but at least I can pay off the bills I have. Necessity is the mother of... and I am a packrat. So, I rooted around the desk where I have miscellaneous art stuff and—found a whole passel of Rapidographs. Unfortunately, I apparently kept buying replacements and kept the old ones—so I have no real memory of why there are so many duplicates. Right now most of them were not put away properly and the ink—over the mumble mumble years has dried—so I have them soaking in warm soapy water (fingers crossed) until I can get some of the proper cleaning solution. Ah, this is too close to work.

(Agh—the snow is heavy and wet and clogs things up... already tired after the first clean-up and it is almost time for the next one to keep ahead of the buildup.)

Well, time got away from me and now it is tomorrow. The

driveway is still covered in about 1½" of ice and it still needs to be worked with—not going to be fun, so I had better just get this printed and promise to do better. I have no idea if the mail will be picked up—but I will have done my part and gotten it to the mailbox!

In case you are keeping track (doubt it but...) lastish avoided the dreaded bodybag by a cat's whisker. Only the first sheet got mangled and only along the right edge. The staple hung in there like a champ and the whole thing was delivered in toto—but it was close!

It would appear that I have added close to 10" of snow—now to go deal with the ice. Sorry this is little more than a note, but...

[Postal bodybags happen, unfortunately. We got one copy of the February issue back in such a wrapper with a note that the address was insufficient to deliver it. Well... that was because part of the back cover and a narrow strip right through the address label were torn away. Huntsville had frozen precip three consecutive weeks (each on Wednesday/Thursday)—which is very unusual for us. The middle week saw over 8" of snow which is the second snowiest day ever for Huntspatch. The third week was mostly an ice event but fortunately sleet rather than freezing rain—a lot easier on the trees and power lines. I had people over on Saturday afternoon after the sleet in the wee hours of Thursday morning, and had to route people away from the front door (which faces north) because the walkway and steps were still hazardous even after days of above-freezing temps. And, no, households here don't all keep bags of salt on hand. -ED]



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The NASFA Shuttle is the newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association, Inc. This is the March 2015 edition (Volume 35, Number 3). NASFA Officers for 2015: President Mary Lampert; Vice President Mike Kennedy; Secretary Steve Sloan; Treasurer Sam Smith; Program Director "JudySue Thornsmythe"; Publicity Director Jenna Stone. Shuttle Editor Mike Kennedy.  
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