



Maree and Matt at the Masquerade

*(Photo by Keith Smith)*

**Issue XXXVII - July 2013**

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## Musings from Under the Mountain

It's just over a week now until we leave for parts more summery and I must say I'm looking forward to it. Because for August it's exceedingly cold... even with the heat exchanger running. Hopefully it'll be a bit warmer for the club meeting next week.

For those of you who don't know, we're heading off to the US for the San Antonio WorldCon, and thence to the UK and Europe. I plan to set up a blog of one sort or another, so I can keep you all apprised of our adventures. Which might get interesting when it gets a bit foreign. As in French and Italian... and while my high school education bequeathed me a passing (as in School Certificate) knowledge of French, my Italian is limited to M&M—menus and musical terms.

Which reminds me... one day on the way to school I found myself stuck behind a slow-moving people carrier. I laughed out loud when I saw the model name was "Largo". Somebody should tell manufacturers that they really should check the meanings of the words they stick on their cars.

We did our voting for the Hugos a couple of weeks ago. Even Paul had a say this time, at least in the categories he was interested in, the ever-popular dramatic presentations. In a choice between *The Hobbit* and *The Hunger Games* which would be your pick? Which of three 2012 Doctor Who episodes nominated was the best? Of that, more later... If there was a category for video games, I'm sure he'd vote for *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*. We've both been playing way too much Elder Scrolls this year, and now he's gone and nicked my *Oblivion* disk. Doh!

Of course, we've already had our own Sir Julius Vogel Awards, and I must congratulate my dear Keith for getting one—he was most surprised and very pleased with himself. We'd also like to congratulate all those other winners. A full listing is posted later this issue.

Jacqui Smith, Editor

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## The Future of Fandom

As I write these words, it's not long after the successful conclusion of AuContraire 2. Attendance was good at around two hundred attendees, including a reasonably strong contingent from overseas, and, perhaps the best cause for optimism, a strong turnout of youthful fans.

Although it's great to see the natcons still doing well, perhaps it's what's going on in the time between cons that we need to focus on. The greying of fandom is, to some extent at least, a reflection of the changing demographics of the whole western world; the baby boomer generation is heading toward retirement age, and is also the generation that's had fewer babies than any previously; sf fans, along with everybody else, is part of that generation that's getting old together.

Nonetheless, the smaller generation coming through after the baby boomers also includes many young fans, or at least prospective fans. The LARPer and Cosplayers are out there, as well as the high numbers who regularly turn out to the Armageddon expos.

The disconnect at the moment appears to be between the younger fans who are getting involved in these scenes, and the older fans who are still staying with the established clubs and societies. The fact that young fans are turning up for the natcons in reasonable numbers is a significant factor, but the old established fans need to talk more to the younger generation about the sf club scene. (Time for a mea culpa here; I can't deny that I'm guilty of dropping the ball by failing to speak out to publicise Stella Nova at AuContraire 2. Still, Jacqui did step into the breach and give a spiel about the club at the masquerade, so we didn't fly entirely underneath the radar.)

So, as the younger fans are out there, and are aware of the natcons, it's reasonable to assume that we need to contact the younger generation to publicise the club, and not just at the natcons as they happen. All club members would be advised to monitor the scene, and attend events that younger fans are attending, and talk to them, both about Stella Nova and the fact that ConClave 2 will be taking place in Auckland next year. Sometimes even people we might not identify as fans will come along to sf and fantasy events; a Wellington-based non-fan friend of mine signed up for AuContraire 2 to see what the conventions are like, and enjoyed the experience.

If we're going to successfully bring younger fans into the fold, then word of mouth is certainly an important starting point. Perhaps the club needs to adopt the reverse of the cardinal rule of Fight Club, and make it the first rule of Stella Nova to tell everybody about Stella Nova!

Alan Parker, President, Stella Nova





*Opening Ceremony  
"You vill open zis  
convention!"*



*Guest of Honour  
Jennifer Fallon*



*Fan Guest of Honour  
Anna Klein*



*Pictures  
from a  
Masquerade*



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## Sir Julius Vogel Award Results 2013

### Professional Awards

#### Best Novel:

*Queen of Iron Years*

by Lyn McConchie and Sharman Horwood

#### Best Youth Novel:

*The Prince of Soul and the Lighthouse*

by Frederik Brounéus

#### Best Novella/Novellette:

*Flight 404* by Simon Petrie

#### Best Short Story:

*Hope is the Thing with Feathers* by Lee Murray

#### Best Collected Work:

*Mansfield with Monsters* by Matt and Debbie Cowens

#### Best Professional Artwork:

Les Petersen for the *Cover of Light Touch Paper, Stand Clear*, edited by Edwina Harvey and Simon Petrie

#### Best Dramatic Presentation:

*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*

Peter Jackson, Philippa Boyens, Fran Walsh

#### Best Professional Production/Publication:

*The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey: Chronicles – Art and Design* by Daniel Falconer

### Fan Awards

#### Fan Publication:

*Phoenixine*

#### Fan Writing:

John Toon

#### Fan Artwork:

Keith Smith

#### Best Fan Production:

AetherCon, Wellington October 2012.  
by Mallery Henderson

### Special Award Results

#### Best New Talent:

Matt and Debbie Cowens

#### Services To Fandom:

Annette Bergner

#### Services To Science Fiction, Fantasy And Horror:

Stephen Minchin



Keith  
with his  
SJV for fan  
artwork

## 2013 Hugos Quiz

A quick quiz about some very up-to-date SF, that being the nominees for this year's Hugos.

- Among the nominees for best novel is "Captain Vorpatril's Alliance". Who is the author?
  - John Scalzi
  - Kim Stanley Robinson
  - Lois McMaster Bujold
  - Saladin Ahmed
- "San Diego 2014: The Last Stand of the California Browncoats" by Mira Grant is nominated for Best Novella. "Browncoats" are fans of which TV series?
  - Babylon 5*
  - Blake's 7*
  - Farscape*
  - Firefly*
- Among the nominees for Best Novellette is a Pat Cadigan story called "The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for ....." Which word completes the title?
  - Coffee
  - Pizza
  - Risotto
  - Sushi
- Who declined to be nominated in the Best Graphic Story category in 2012 after winning the first three times in a row that category existed?
  - Bryan Talbot for *Grandville Bête Noire*
  - Howard Taylor for *Schlock Mercenary*
  - Joe Hill for *Locke & Key*
  - Phil Foglio for *Girl Genius*
- Brandon Sanderson was nominated in both the Best Novella and Best Related Work categories. Which work is up for Best Novella?
  - Armored*
  - The Emperor's Soul*
  - Legion*
  - Writing Excuses Season Seven*
- Also nominated in the Best Related Work is *Chicks Unravel Time*. This debates the role of women in which TV series?
  - Continuum*
  - Doctor Who*
  - Fringe*
  - Terra Nova*
- Which of these 2012 movies was NOT nominated in the Best Dramatic Presentation (Long Form) category?
  - The Avengers*
  - The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*
  - The Hunger Games*
  - The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*
- The following TV episodes are all nominated in the Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form) category. Which is NOT an episode of *Doctor Who*?
  - The Angels take Manhattan*
  - Asylum of the Daleks*
  - Letters of Transit*
  - The Snowmen*



# The Sky at Night September 2013

By the time you read this, we're going to be in the Northern Hemisphere. So it will be goodbye to the Southern Cross, the Magellanic Clouds and objects like Omega Centaurus and the Tarantula Nebula and it's hello to Ursa Major and Minor, Cassiopeia, the Andromeda Galaxy and M13.

Unlike the South Celestial Pole which isn't marked by a bright star, the Northern Celestial Pole is marked by the bright star Polaris. It also has its pointers, to help find it, being the right hand edge of the Plough (assuming it's right way up and below the Pole Star). Continuing the line onwards you find the distinctive 'W' or 'M' shape of Cassiopeia. The Plough looks like .. well a plough and is part of Ursa Major – the blade of the Plough being the saddle and the handle extending up the Bear's neck to its nose. One of the stars in the handle is actually a naked eye double, Alcor and Mizar, and that pair used to be used as an eye test in medieval times. I think I'd fail it but going to give it a go.

The Andromeda Galaxy (M31) will be much higher in the northern sky than it is here. In Auckland, it is still rather close to the northern horizon at its highest whereas from the North it is a clear naked eye object, probably the most distant thing one can see with the unaided eye. Another naked eye object is the globular cluster M13 in Hercules and is the third brightest globular in the sky, after Omega Centauri and 47 Tucanae. One does need a clear dark sky to see it. I really hope I get one in England although, knowing my luck sometimes, and what I've heard about the reputation of English weather, all I'm going to see is cloud. Just like here really.

No matter where you are though, the planets are still in the same place. Venus shines brightly in the western sky and Saturn still dominates the evening. Jupiter and Mars are getting higher in the morning sky before dawn. Mercury starts the month hiding near the sun but appears low in the evening sky as the month goes on, reaching its highest in early October.

I'm hoping to get photos of the northern sky, clouds willing. Another thing I'm hoping to do soon is to get photos through the Zeiss telescope at Stardome. I've been learning to operate it. It weighs two tonnes and can sometimes be awkward to get in the right position but I'm getting there.

Need more practice moving it. Unfortunately entries for the Harry Williams Astrophotography competition are due soon so I better have a look at what I've already got.

Happy sky viewing.  
Keith



*The Andromeda Galaxy*

#### Phases of the Moon (September):

New Moon—5<sup>th</sup> September  
First Quarter—13<sup>th</sup> September  
Full Moon—19<sup>th</sup> September  
Last Quarter—27<sup>th</sup> September

#### Phases of the Moon (October):

New Moon—5<sup>th</sup> October  
First Quarter—12<sup>th</sup> October  
Full Moon—19<sup>th</sup> October  
Last Quarter—27<sup>th</sup> October



# O B I T S Obituaries

June 13

**Kenji Utsumi**, (aged 75), Japanese voice actor best known as the voice of Alex Louis Armstrong in *Fullmetal Alchemist* and as Shenlong in the *Dragon Ball* series.

June 19

**James Gandolfini**, (aged 51), American actor best known as Tony Soprano in *The Sopranos*, gaining numerous Emmy awards for the role, and as the voice of the impulsive Wild Thing Carol in *Where the Wild Things Are*.

**John Hughes**, (aged 78), Welsh ceramicist, creator and designer of an on-going series of collectible caricature figures known as Groggs, made from a type of clay known as grog.



June 19

**Kim Thompson**, (aged 56), American comic book editor, translator, and publisher, best known as vice president and co-publisher of Seattle-based Fantagraphics Books. Along with co-publisher Gary Groth, Thompson used his position to further the cause of alternative comics in the American market and to bring the work of European cartoonists to American readers, including such titles Peter Bagge's *Hate*, Chris Ware's *Acme Novelty Library*, Joe Sacco's *Palestine*, Stan Sakai's *Usagi Yojimbo*, Linda Medley's *Castle Waiting*, and anthologies like *Critters* and *Zero Zero*.

**Slim Whitman**, (aged 90), American country singer-songwriter whose version of *Indian Love Call* was used as the mortal weakness of a host of invading space aliens in *Mars Attacks!*, the 1996 comedy SF movie by Tim Burton. His 1955 hit single *Rose Marie* held the Guinness World Record for the longest time at number one on the UK Singles Chart for 36 years.



June 21

**James P. Gordon**, (aged 85), American physicist known for his work in the fields of optics and quantum electronics. His contributions include the design, analysis and construction of the first maser in 1954 as a doctoral student at Columbia University under the supervision of C. H. Townes, development of the quantal equivalent of Shannon's information capacity formula in 1962, development of the theory for the diffusion of atoms in an optical trap in 1980, and the discovery of what is now known as the Gordon-Haus effect in soliton transmission, with H. A. Haus, in 1986.

June 23

**Richard Matheson**, (aged 87), American author and screenwriter, primarily in the fantasy, horror, and science fiction genres. He may be most famous as the author of *I Am Legend*, a 1954 horror novel that has been adapted for the screen three times. He wrote the Star Trek episode *The Enemy Within*, numerous episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, several movie scripts and many other works. He received the World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement in 1984 and the Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Horror Writers Association in 1991. The Science Fiction Hall of Fame inducted him in 2010.



June 24

**Mick Aston**, (aged 66), British archaeologist who helped popularise the discipline amongst the British public by appearing as the resident academic on the Channel 4 television series *Time Team* from 1994 to 2011.

June 25

**Lau Kar-leung**, (aged 76), Hong Kong-based Chinese actor, filmmaker, choreographer and martial artist. Lau is best known for the films he made in the 1970s and 1980s for the Shaw Brothers Studio. One of his most famous works is *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin* which starred Gordon Liu, as well as *Drunken Master II* which starred Jackie Chan.

June 29

**Sarah Guyard-Guillot**, (aged 31), French acrobat and aerialist who fell to her death during a performance of the Cirque du Soleil show *Kà*. Her harness apparently slipped free from its safety wire, causing her to fall into a pit, out of the audience's view—it was the first on-stage death in Cirque du Soleil's thirty-year history.

July 1

**Charles Foley**, (aged 82), American toy and board game inventor, co-inventor of the game *Twister*, with Neil W. Rabens. He received only 2.5% royalties for three years from Milton Bradley, which amounted to about \$27,000.



July 2

**Douglas Engelbart**, (aged 88), American engineer and inventor, and an early computer and Internet pioneer. He is best known for his work on the challenges of human-computer interaction, particularly while at his Augmentation Research Center Lab in SRI International, resulting in the invention of the computer mouse, and the development of hypertext, networked computers, and precursors to graphical user interfaces.



Compiled  
by  
Jacqui  
Smith

July 3

**Frank Morriss**, (aged 85), American film editor, was a film and television editor with more than fifty film and television program credits dating from 1968. He was nominated twice for the Academy Award for Film Editing; for *Blue Thunder* (1983, with Edward M. Abrams) and for *Romancing the Stone* (1984, with Donn Cambern).

July 5

**Douglas Dayton**, (aged 88), American businessman and philanthropist who helped establish Target Corporation and served as the company's first president.

July 6

**John Chun**, (aged 84), North Korean-born American car designer who designed the Shelby Mustang GT350 and GT500 models, as well as the Shelby AC Cobra, released between 1967 and 1969. He also re-designed the Cobra logo still used by the Shelby line today. He later worked as a consultant for Hyundai during the launch of its first car lines. After moving to Minnesota in the early 1970s, he oversaw the design and creation of a new line of toy cars for Tonka Toys.

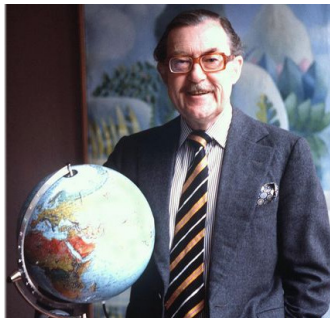


July 9

**Masao Yoshida**, (aged 58), Japanese power executive, chief of the Fukushima nuclear plant during the 2011 tsunami meltdown, where he played a critical role by disobeying corporate headquarter orders to stop using seawater to cool the reactors. This decision to use seawater arguably prevented a much greater disaster—the massive influx of seawater was probably the only thing that stopped the cores from exploding!

July 12

**Alan Whicker**, (aged 87), British journalist and broadcaster whose career spanned almost 60 years, during which he presented the documentary television programme *Whicker's World* for over 30 years.

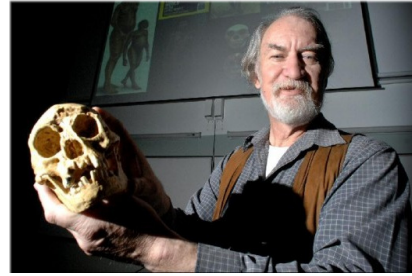


July 19

**Mel Smith**, (aged 60), English comedian, writer, film director, producer and actor, best known for his work on the sketch comedy shows *Not the Nine O'Clock News* and *Alas Smith and Jones* along with his comedy partner Griff Rhys Jones.

July 23

**Mike Morwood**, (aged 62), Auckland-born Australian archaeologist, best known for discovering *Homo floresiensis* (the Flores hobbit), in the limestone cave of Liang Bua, on the Indonesian island of Flores in 2003.



July 25

**Barnaby Jack**, (aged 35), New Zealand hacker, programmer and computer security professional, noted for his presentation at the Black Hat computer security conference in 2010, during which he exploited two ATMs and made them dispense fake paper currency on the stage. Among his other most notable works were the exploitation of various medical devices, including pacemakers and insulin pumps.

July 27

**Pete Tunstall**, (aged 94), British Squadron Leader in the Royal Air Force during World War II and as a POW was held prisoner at Colditz Castle. He holds the 'record' for the most time spent by an Allied POW in solitary confinement. He was taught that if he was captured, "Your first duty was to try to escape. Your second duty was to be as big a bloody nuisance as possible to the enemy." And that's what he set out to do.

July 31

**Michael Ansara**, (aged 91), Syrian-born American stage, screen, and voice actor best known for his portrayal of Cochise in the American TV series *Broken Arrow*, Killer Kane in *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, Commander Kang on three different *Star Trek* television series, the Technomage Elric in *Babylon 5* and providing the voice for Mr. Freeze in *Batman: The Animated Series* and several of its spin-offs.



## Farewell Dan McCarthy

We regret to inform readers of the death of long-time Dunedin fan Dan McCarthy. He had a quirky sense of humour and an unusually perceptive way of looking at the world. He was always good company, lots of fun to be with. He was a keen supporter of the creation of SFFANZ and of the Sir Julius Vogel Awards. In 1997 he was the Fan Guest of Honour at the NZ national convention, Conspiracy, in Wellington. He will be missed.

*Dan McCarthy at HalleyCon in 1986*





Directed by Gore Verbinski  
 Produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, Gore Verbinski  
 Screenplay by Justin Haythe, Ted Elliott, Terry Rossio  
 Story by Ted Elliott, Terry Rossio, Justin Haythe  
 Based on Lone Ranger by Fran Striker  
 George W. Trendle  
 Starring Johnny Depp, Armie Hammer  
 William Fichtner, Tom Wilkinson  
 Reviewed by Maree Pavletich

*Ware: Spoilers*

As a three part miniseries this would have been just the right pace and length. As a movie it tried to cram too much in, with no regard for a linear narrative style. The device of an aged Tonto relating the tale to a wide-eyed kid, DID NOT WORK. What might have saved it was if the kid had been called by his mother at the end, turned away then turned back to find the Indian was just made of wood. But no.

The movie rambled on and on, taking forever before we came to the slow realisation that this was a greedy white man caper, who just wanted to mine silver and damn any indigenous population. There was a slight hint that the mine may be haunted, which made us think that perhaps the silver was irradiated and that would have built to a nice spooky, Sierra Madre, dramatic twist, but no.

Also I think that the PTSD, that Tonto was obviously suffering from, was oddly handled. Yes, he was asked to show the nice men where the source of the river was in return for a pocket watch. But a child could have had NO idea that those men would massacre the whole village just to protect the secret of the source of the silver. So the

dramatic "He sold out his tribe" business was a bit OTT. And the baddie brothers; they have been working toward getting all this silver mined in secret for years. So how and why would one brother become a railway baron while the other becomes Jesse James?

And don't get me started on the horse. OK, if you are going to introduce a horse as a Spirit animal then go for it. Don't just have a couple of special effects and leave it at that. And why would you call your horse "Silver" if the silver had been the source of all the misery in your first case? Parallels to *Serenity Valley*, without the irony. This was a movie that wasn't bad, well-acted, beautiful photography BUT I kept waiting for some other dimension to appear. A truly spooky and guiding spirit horse. Either more comedy or drama. A twist at the end where it was all just an over imaginative boy's dream - funnily enough that would have made more sense and I'm not a Vincent Ward fan.

In the end the movie didn't know where it wanted to go and tried to be all things to all people, and we all know how that turns out.

**Quiz Answers:**

1. C. Lois McMaster Bujold
2. D. *Firefly*
3. D. Sushi
4. D. Phil Foglio for *Girl Genius*
5. B. *The Emperor's Soul*
6. B. *Doctor Who*
7. D. *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*
8. C. *Letters of Transit*

**Watch the Skies:**

**Daniel X**

by James Patterson  
 and Ned Rust  
 Published by Arrow  
 Supplied by Random House  
 Review by Maree Pavletich



Teen alien and alien hunter, Daniel X, finds something "fishy" going on in the small town of Holliswood. But the residents can't remember anything to do with aliens. In fact when they see them the minute they turn away they forget.

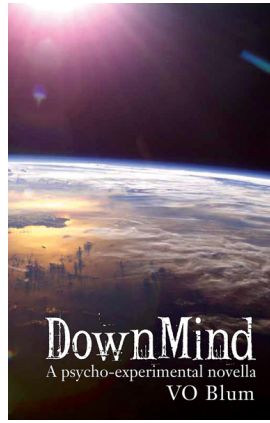
Alien Outlaw Number 5 has taken control of the residents' minds through their electronic devices. Any TV, ipad, cell phone or video game is used for a game called "entertainment." The only trouble is contestants end up as goo.

It's up to Daniel and friends to do what they do best save the world while wise-cracking about it. As a subplot Daniel proves you can be an alien with really cool powers but still be clueless when it comes to a teenage crush.



**DownMind**

by VO Blum  
Published by Steam Press  
Supplied by Steam Press  
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith



This wasn't an easy read, and it isn't going to be an easy review. The idea that one person could somehow control the mood of the world is an unsettling, and dare I say, a depressing one. The idea is that certain extremely rare individuals unconsciously project what the writer terms "t-waves" – creating a contagious despair across the human population. Oh, and interacting with the physical world in odd ways, doing peculiar things to wooden panelling. Which brings our hero into the tale, a botanic chemist from New Zealand named Foster Castle, who is called in to investigate a piece of oddly degraded wood that was formerly part of the wall of a mental hospital in Boston. He digs into the database and finds a similar specimen in Rio... and so it begins. All this set in a 2025 where things are (predictably) falling apart around the edges. So, it's proper SF that takes a serious view of the future, something we don't see nearly enough of these days.

I found Blum's vision of a decaying future entirely credible, although the concept of the DownMind was a bit too unbelievable for me (and a bit too New Ageist, especially when the residents of a Coromandel retreat get involved). His attention to detail is excellent, and he has certainly done an impressive amount of research. I suspect that his forays into religion and politics are likely to be unwelcome in certain dinner party conversations, and if you're easily offended by such things this is not the book for you. That said, he gave me an idea or two to think over... and that's what this novella is really about. Read it for the ideas, some of them will blow your mind!

**Dark Heavens**

by Kylie Chan  
Published by Harper Voyager  
Supplied by Harper Collins NZ  
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

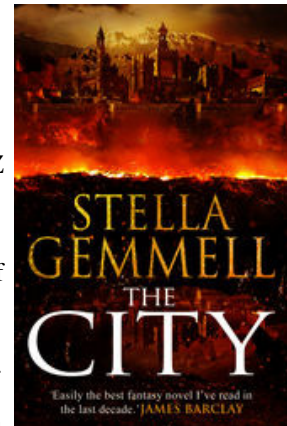


Now this really is a brick; 900+ pages, 6cm thick, and weighing in at nearly a kilo. But then it is an entire trilogy in one volume (and these days, if the physical size is too much, there's always the e-book). Chan gives us urban fantasy with an oriental twist, what you might call Fu Fantasy. The cover is somewhat misleading because the central character is actually an Australian woman, working as an early childhood teacher in Hong Kong. She quits working for the kindergarten and becomes a full-time nanny when the woman running the kindergartens begins asking too many questions about the father of the child she's been looking after. Of course, he is far more than just another wealthy Chinese businessman. He's a turtle... and he's the Lord of the Northern Heavens. It's true that Chinese mythology lends itself to this kind

of treatment, and has been doing so for centuries in the traditional wuxia – what you might call martial arts fairy tales. This book is then the literary equivalent of fusion cuisine, the blending of western urban fantasy with modern wuxia – sort of Nalini Singh meets Jet Li. Now, there are plenty of critics who deride fusion cuisine, and I'm sure that Kylie Chan's work has its detractors, but it's quite evident that she's researched both the background and the setting. Her writing is still somewhat in need of a good editing; "White Tiger" was her first book and it shows. And be warned that some people find our heroine irritating; too slow to figure out what's going on, and too quick in developing her skills. I found it to be a lightweight and entertaining trilogy, with lots of high-kicking chi-flinging martial arts battles. Perhaps too many... it got a bit samey after a while. The bad guys are primarily the demons of Chinese myth, the kind that dissolve into black goo when thumped hard enough. Which is a pleasant change from vampires and zombies. The largely unresolved sexual tension is for once given some rationale for its lack of resolution. And truth is, I looked at the size of the volume, and initially decided I'd read it as three separate novels. But I got to the end of book one, and just kept going... and that is as good a recommendation as any.

**The City**

by Stella Gemmell  
Published by Bantam  
Supplied by Random House NZ  
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith



I haven't read any of James Barclay's books, and frankly, if he thinks this is the "the best fantasy novel... in the last decade" I doubt that I'll bother. I was not impressed to see his name in the acknowledgements at the end of the book either—his comment on the front is not likely to be unbiased. There's no doubt that Stella Gemmell is a fine writer in parts, giving us evocative descriptions and strong characters. It's when it comes to stringing the pats into a novel that things fall apart. Very literally. There's little continuity here, events occur randomly in space and time, so that the whole thing simply doesn't make sense. It might have helped if there was a time and place header at the beginning of each chapter. Or a map. Or even a listing of dramatis personae. But there are none of these aids to the reader. And so the book is crippled.

The other issue I have is the logistical problem of maintaining a city under siege for centuries. There's a reason why sieges worked in history—it's because people starve when their city runs out of food. Battlefields do not make good farmland. Now, in a high magic environment where mages can turn any organic matter into food you might get away with it, but this is a low magic fantasy with the only sorcerous effects being the longevity and psychic powers of the Emperor and the other Serafiim. And while an editor might have been able to fix the novel's other problems, the background of the City at endless war with its neighbours is too central to the book. I was curious enough to finish it, and I have to admit that it did become more coherent towards the end, but....

**NOS4R2**

by Joe Hill  
 Published by Gollancz  
 Supplied by Hachette NZ  
 Reviewed by Jacqui Smith



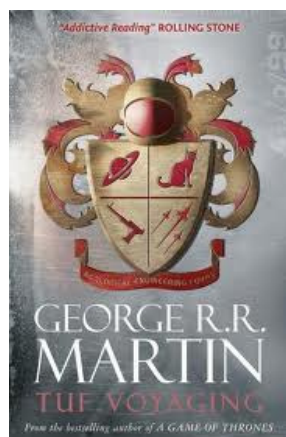
I have to admit that what attracted me to NOS4R2 was the clever title, the brilliant cover design, and the fact that Joe Hill is the son of the notable writer Steven King. I knew it would be modern horror, and the line between modern horror and urban fantasy is a bit fuzzy, isn't it? I discovered that it's not so much a matter of content, so much as the writer's intent. Joe Hill is trying to be unsettling, unnerving, to shock the reader. And to a large extent, he succeeds.

The fantasy element here is the inscapes, the territories of the mind, and the means to get there. In urban fantasy these would be dreams, strange and bizarre – here they are nightmares, strange and bizarre; and out to eat you, body and soul! Vic McQueen as a young girl discovers a talent for finding things, for creating a literal bridge between here and wherever the missing thing is found. As a teenager, she makes the mistake of looking for trouble, and finds it, in the form of the vampiric Charlie Manx. She's rescued by the man who will become the father of her child, Lou Carmody, who is a geek, a comics fan, and let's face it, the only major character in the novel I actually liked! From that point, it becomes a down hill ride for Vic, down into alcoholism and insanity, her talent sending her crazy. And the phone calls from dead children don't help. They have a child, and after the car NOS4R2 and Charlie Manx come back from the dead they come looking for the boy. And find him... And so, Vic must re-discover her talent in order to rescue her own.

So far so good. I'm not going to dispute Hill's writing skill, he's learned his letters literally at the feet of a master. I will, however, criticize the truly excessive use of foul language, which I found off-putting, to the extent that I was starting to agree with the villain on the subject of the heroine's mouth! Don't read this book to children, don't read it at Christmas – and I so do NOT want to see the movie.

**Tuf Voyaging**

by George R.R. Martin  
 Published by Gollancz  
 Supplied by Hachette NZ  
 Reviewed by Jacqui Smith



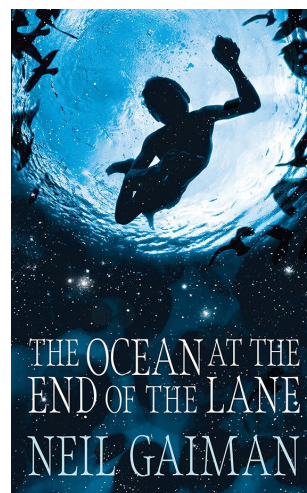
Now, we all know that George R.R. Martin has made himself a bestseller with the "Song of Ice and Fire", the series of fantasy bricks that spawned the TV series "Game of Thrones". I'm not a big fan of fantasy bricks, and I failed to

get anywhere with the "Song of Ice and Fire", but one of the consequences of getting to be a big name author is that publishers will re-print an author's earlier books, and in the case of "Tuf Voyaging" this is a very good thing!

First, it's an excellent read, a well-constructed fix-up of a series of short stories first published in the 70's and 80's – but not at all dated. Second, it's proper SF, something I'm not seeing nearly enough of. Third, it's a novel with an environmental message that really needs saying again – primarily that humans must control population growth before we destroy both our environment and each other. This told with a dark sardonic humour and a cool central character that loves cats. What more could you ask for? I'm fairly certain I've read this book before, years ago, but it's as fresh today; it certainly bears re-reading and I heartily recommend it.

**The Ocean at the End of the Lane**

by Neil Gaiman  
 Published by Headline  
 Supplied by Hachette NZ  
 Reviewed by Jacqui Smith



I was taken back to childhood in this novel – though not my childhood, except... It did remind me just a bit of Madeleine L'Engle's classic science fantasy "A Wrinkle in Time", which was one of my favourite books as a child, and I suppose that the comparison is inescapable. Both novels have child protagonists, both feature trios of strange ancient women, and both involve travelling to strange places – though Gaiman's novel takes us even further than L'Engle's, to realms outside of space and time. And I don't doubt that this novel will also take its place among the classics of fantasy literature. It's quite beautiful, a book which can be read upon many levels like the very best of poetry. There are oceanic depths here, and I'm not just talking about the pond that is an ocean that goes deeper than imagination.

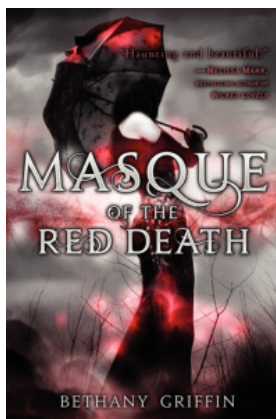
That said, I'm not sure whether it's a book for adults about childhood, or a book for children about adulthood, and I'm not sure that that really matters (except possibly to booksellers and librarians). It is told from the point of view of an adult remembering events from his childhood, and I hope that doesn't put the teachers of literature off using this novel in their classes, because I can see how much many young people would gain from reading and studying it. Expect there to be awards. I'm not going to go any further into what the novel is about; this is a book that needs to be experienced, and I suggest you go now, and find a copy so you CAN experience it. Do NOT wait for the movie... (There is one planned).





## The Masque of the Red Death

by *Bethany Griffin*  
Published by *Indigo*  
Supplied by *Hachette NZ*  
Reviewed by *Jan Butterworth*



A devastating plague has swept through the city leaving scores dead; no one can survive catching it. Araby Worth's father is a scientist dedicated to finding a cure, though it's too late for his son. Lost in grief, Araby only has the nights to look forward to when she goes dancing in the Debauchery Club till dawn. She meets two very different boys there who distract and intrigue her. Will is the gorgeous and enigmatic proprietor of the club, while Elliot is her best friend's brother and a romantic poet who is also hiding secrets.

Set in a world where Victorian morals coexist with air ships and clockwork body parts, this is an entertaining read with a strong plot and engaging characters. Not normally a steampunk fan, I was drawn into Araby's world and was compelled to keep reading as I had to find out what happened next. A really engaging story aimed at teens, this is grown up enough to appeal to adults as well. I look forward to *Dance of the Red Death* and returning to Araby's world.

## Felix and the Red Rats

by *James Norcliffe*  
Published by *Longacre*  
Supplied by *Random House NZ*  
Reviewed by *Simon Litten*



*Felix and the Red Rats* is the latest children's novel from James Norcliffe and a ripping wee yarn, rather a ripping two yarns, it is too.

This book comprises the story of David, his Uncle Felix and some rats under the care of David's brother that have turned a bright tomato red. Within the book is a story being read by David but written by Uncle Felix about his first adventure in the fantasy land of Axillaris.

David's story is a mystery tale – just why are rats and then cats turning red – without murders but with a very grumpy elder brother. Felix's tale is a contest between greed and rightful inheritance played out around a most puzzling brain teaser problem – because to get her inheritance the not-quite-imprisoned princess must first solve a riddle, and to get it wrong would pass her inheritance to her greedy uncle.

James Norcliffe has set the tones of the two stories at the appropriate pitch, with fully realised characters and plots in both tales; and at the end very fittingly ties them

together in the final chapter.

*Felix and the Red Rats* was a real pleasure to read. Strongly recommended. I liked the puzzle too; took me a while to solve it.

## Itch Rocks

by *Simon Mayo*  
Published by *Doubleday*  
Supplied by *Random House NZ*  
Reviewed by *Maree Pavletich*

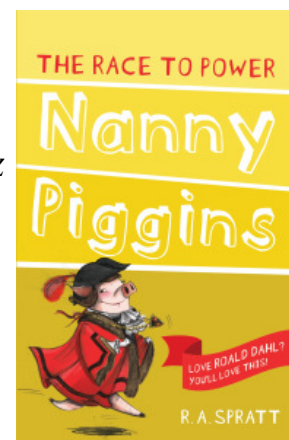


This is a sequel to *Itch* and you really have to have read the first to fully appreciate this one. In a way it is a bit of a re-tread as *Itchingham Lofte* finds himself facing the same type of villains, for the same reasons all over again. *Itch* collects elements and was given a rock, a perfectly ordinary looking rock. But it turned out to be a new element, one that could solve the world energy crisis and also be massively destructive at the same time.

It is a bit of a stretch for the government to not take control of the rocks from the outset and leave it up to *Itch* and his little sister *Chloe* and his ever loving best mate and cousin, *Jack* to save the day but well, refer to *Enid Blyton's Secret Seven* for a precedent.

## The Race To Power: Nanny Piggins Bk 8

by *R A Spratt*  
*Random House*  
Supplied by *Random House NZ*  
Reviewed by *Jan Butterworth*



*Nanny Piggins* is the world's greatest flying pig with an insatiable appetite for cakes and sweets. Having left the circus where she used to get shot out of cannons, she now works as a nanny. Her charges are the delightful *Green* children, who have a vile man as a father. When *Mr Green* decides to run for mayor, *Nanny Piggins* stands in opposition with a platform of Liberty, Equality, and Cake!

This is part of a series but can be read as a standalone as enough detail is given to make it easy to understand the world and the recurring characters. This was my first time reading from the series and I really enjoyed it. The plot was light-hearted, the writing fun, and I got invested in the story and its outcome. There are many other delightful characters; *Boris* who is a 10ft tall Russian bear and *Nanny Piggins* brother, a petty school principal, hygiene obsessed rival nanny.

An enjoyable children's story, it will also delight adults and is a great book for parents to read at bed time.

# Conclave 2014

## 35th NZ National SF&F Convention

### CONCLAVE 2 UPDATE

**Where:** Auckland  
**When :** 24th to 27th of July 2014  
 (ANZAC weekend—  
 middle weekend of school holidays)  
**Venue:** TBA

**Fan Guest of Honour:** Paul Scoones

Paul Scoones is a professional writer and a fan. He works on the BBC's *Doctor Who* DVDs, documenting behind-the-scenes information for the production subtitles features. Paul's work appears as on *The Awakening*, *Frontios*, *Planet of Fire*,



*Dragonfire*, *Scream of the Shalka*, and the 'special edition' reissues of *Resurrection of the Daleks*, *The Caves of Androzani* and *Vengeance on Varos*. As well as researching the television series, Paul has also made a detailed study of the early history of *Doctor Who* in comic strips. He has written a book on the subject, *The Comic Strip Companion: 1964-1979*, released in 2012 by Telos Publishing. Paul helped discover a film of a lost *Doctor Who* episode, *The Lion* (episode 1 of *The Crusade*) and arranged its return to the BBC in 1999. As a fan, Paul established and edited the internationally acclaimed and award-winning *Doctor Who* fanzine *Time Space Visualiser*, producing most of the title's 76 issues and additional specials. Paul lives in Auckland, New Zealand, with his wife Rochelle and their three cats. When he isn't writing he helps Rochelle run Retrospace ([www.retrospace.co.nz](http://www.retrospace.co.nz)), a science fiction collectibles store based in Takapuna, Auckland. He can be found online at [www.paulscoones.com](http://www.paulscoones.com).

**Charity:**

Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust  
[rescuehelicopter.org.nz/](http://rescuehelicopter.org.nz/)



**AUCKLAND RESCUE  
 HELICOPTER TRUST**

### CONTACTS

**Stella Nova Wiki:**

[http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

**Nova Zine Back Issues:**

<http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/StellaNova:Novazine-new>

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**This Month:**

**BOOK** Monday July 22nd  
 (at Chez Smith)

**SPACE** To be Announced

**Next Quarterly Meeting:**

Wednesday 17th July 2013, 7:30 pm  
 Auckland Horticultural Centre,  
 990 Great North Road,  
 Western Springs



### Upcoming Events:

April 24-27th 2014

**Conclave 2**

35th New Zealand National SF Convention

<http://www.conclave2.sf.org.nz>