



**Little Geyser at Reconnaissance**

*(Photo by Keith Smith)*

**Issue XLVII - May/June 2015**

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# Musings from Under the Mountain

I think an explanation is in order....

Around this time last year, I was complaining bitterly around the poor quality of stories, especially short stories, in the Hugo ballot. I stated that in my opinion the only way to fix it was for more people to vote—and for more people to nominate stories that were hopefully more award-worthy. I went on to point out that the \$US40 cost of a supporting membership to the WorldCon was well worth it in terms of the value of the nominated works in e-book form that you would receive. And of course, you would get to vote on the Hugos.

What I didn't know at the time, is that I was by no means the only one to make these suggestions—and not the first either. I had not heard of the Sad Puppies, never mind Rabid Puppies, nor Puppy-Kickers. I did not know that there had been moves afoot to revitalise the Hugos for at least two years, instigated primarily by authors Brad Torgersen and Larry Correia. They called themselves the "Sad Puppies" for reasons I have yet to determine, and all they asked was for more people to get involved in the Hugo Award process. They made suggestions certainly, but they did not break the rules in any way. It was all about recognising quality of writing and breadth of imagination, which together make for superior science fiction and fantasy.

However, this was seen in some quarters as an attack by conservatives (white American males, you know) on minorities, ethnic and otherwise. Having misinterpreted what it was all about, the self-styled defenders of said minorities got out their soapboxes and started firing back. It got nasty.

Then the notoriously reactionary Christian Beale (who calls himself "Vox Day") published his own "slate" of recommended works, and founded what he called the "Rabid Puppies". This did not help. It got nastier.

You can see where all this was heading, can't you? A huge flame war erupted all over those corners of the internet frequented by science fiction writers and fans. Eventually, and predictably, it was a Puppy Kicker who stooped to the point of invoking Godwin's Law. A senior editor at Tor Books, who really should have known better, said this on her facebook page: "There are two extreme right-wing to neo-nazi groups, called the Sad Puppies and Rabid Puppies respectively, that are calling for the end of social justice in science fiction and fantasy. They are unrepentantly racist, misogynist, and homophobic." Yup, she used the "N" word.

Enough of that. If you want more of the gory details, you can find them here: <http://www.contrapositivediary.com/?p=3432>

However. Said editor went on to say: "A noisy few but they've been able to.... elect a slate of bad-to-reprehensible works on this year's Hugo ballot."

Is this a true statement? Let's have a look. Here are the best novel nominations:

*Ancillary Sword* by Ann Leckie

*The Dark Between the Stars* by Kevin J. Anderson

*The Goblin Emperor* by Katherine Addison

*The Three-Body Problem* by Cixin Liu, translated by Ken Liu

*Skin Game* by Jim Butcher

Now there are three things I immediately noticed in that list. 1) Two of five works are by women; 2) One is by a Chinese SF writer; 3) Two are by well-known authors, and part of popular series works. This is interesting, because it appears that in this category at least, the objective of letting the readers have their say may be succeeding. And the list would appear to be reasonably representative of science fiction writers in general.

I don't think many people care what a writer's sexual orientation, gender, political opinion, religion or race happens to be; it's whether or not they can actually write a good story that matters where writing awards are concerned. (Although I admit to a personal distaste for foul language and lurid sex scenes that did have some effect on my choices in the graphic novel section this year.)

Down to the short end, and the short stories. I've read all that were submitted, and I printed out the two I liked best to present at the July BOOK meeting for all to consider. These were:

*On A Spiritual Plain* by Lou Antonelli

*A Single Samurai* by Steven Diamond

I won't say which the members preferred, but I can safely tell you that both stories were considered excellent, and certainly not either bad or reprehensible. So, what I think we're seeing is actually an improvement on last year's ballot, and one can only hope that this trend continues—without all the nasty ranting and name-calling if such a thing is at all possible.

And I'll end as I began, by encouraging anyone who has the time and inclination for a bit of reading, and means to read e-books (which will be pretty well anyone who is reading this) to sign up as a supporting member for the 2016 WorldCon, which will be MidAmeriCon II in Kansas City (<http://midamericon2.org/>). This will allow you to participate in the Hugos; for you to nominate the works you have enjoyed the most this year, and should they survive the nomination process, you will be able to vote for them too. You'll also get your money's worth in e-books! And you'll be supporting the WorldCon. It's all good!

Jacqui Smith,

Editor and President, Stella Nova.

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## In Memory of Sir Christopher, Here is Lee Quiz:

(Yes, that's a very bad pun, and here is the quiz I made for the July club meeting. Answers on page 9).

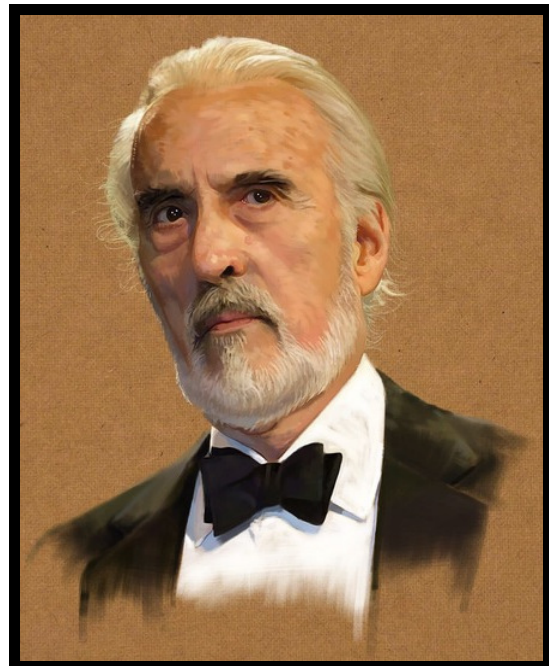
- Christopher Lee was born on May 27, 1922, in which of these countries?
  - England
  - Italy
  - Scotland
  - Switzerland
- Lee worked in military intelligence during World War Two. In which of the armed services did he serve?
  - Air Force
  - Army
  - Marines
  - Navy
- Early in his career, Lee was told that he was "too tall to be an actor." How tall was he?
  - 6' 0"
  - 6' 3"
  - 6' 5"
  - 6' 10"
- Lee rose to fame working with Hammer Studios, beginning in 1957. What role did he have in his first Hammer movie?
  - Dracula
  - Frankenstein
  - Frankenstein's Monster
  - Wolfman
- In which 1962 Sherlock Holmes movie did Lee actually play Holmes?
  - The Hound of the Baskervilles
  - The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes
  - Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace
  - The Puzzle of the Red Orchid
- Lee played Scaramanga in which Bond movie?
  - Dr. No
  - Goldfinger
  - The Man with the Golden Gun
  - You Only Live Twice
- Lee considered his most significant role to be the title character in which 1998 historical movie?
  - Casanova
  - Gandhi
  - Jinnah
  - Lincoln
- In which Star Wars movie did Lee first appear as Count Dooku?
  - Attack of the Clones
  - Phantom Menace
  - Revenge of the Sith
  - The Clone Wars
- Among Lee's most famous roles was one of his last. Which character did Lee play in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and in the *Hobbit* trilogy?
  - Elrond
  - Gandalf
  - Radagast
  - Saruman

10. In 2010, Lee released his first complete heavy metal album. It was titled after which European monarch, from whom Lee could trace his descent through his mother?

- Charlemagne
- Henry the Eighth
- Louis the Sun King
- Peter the Great

Since I've never really liked horror movies, I suspect the first time I saw Christopher Lee on the big screen was as the suave Bond villain Francisco Scaramanga in the James Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974). I do remember seeing him in the British horror film *The Wicker Man* (1973), but that was definitely on the small screen (and gave me nightmares—remind me why I don't like horror movies). Curiously enough, this film was considered by Sir Christopher to be his best. And, of course, in later years, I've seen him perform as the villainous Count Dooku in the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy (2002 and 2005), and as Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy (2001–2003) and in *The Hobbit* film trilogy (2012–2014). Unlike any other member of the cast, he actually met J.R.R. Tolkien—who suggested he might like to play Gandalf some day...

Lee didn't always play the villain. He believed his best performance to be that of Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah in the biopic *Jinnah* (1998). But it was certainly for depicting villains that he was best known, and he had the commanding height, saturnine looks, and deep voice that suited him well for such roles. The role that made him famous was undoubtedly that of Count Dracula in a sequence of Hammer Horror films. I'm not sure if I've seen any of them., but I'm sure that those who enjoy horror movies would recommend them as being classics of the genre. Farewell, Sir Christopher; the world has lost a good man who was great at showing us what evil looks like.



by  
Jacqui  
Smith

# PATRICK MACNEE

Now here's a weird thing... If you check the obits, you'll see that Sir Christopher Lee and Patrick MacNee both died in June 2015. If you look closer, you'll see they were both 93 years old—in fact MacNee was the elder by four months. What isn't there, is the curious fact that they also attended the same school, Summer Fields School, a preparatory school in Oxford. They acted in school plays together, and according to Lee, at that age, "the laurels deservedly went to Patrick MacNee." MacNee went on to Eton, and was later expelled (for selling pornography and bookmaking), whilst Lee missed out on a scholarship and went to Wellington College instead.

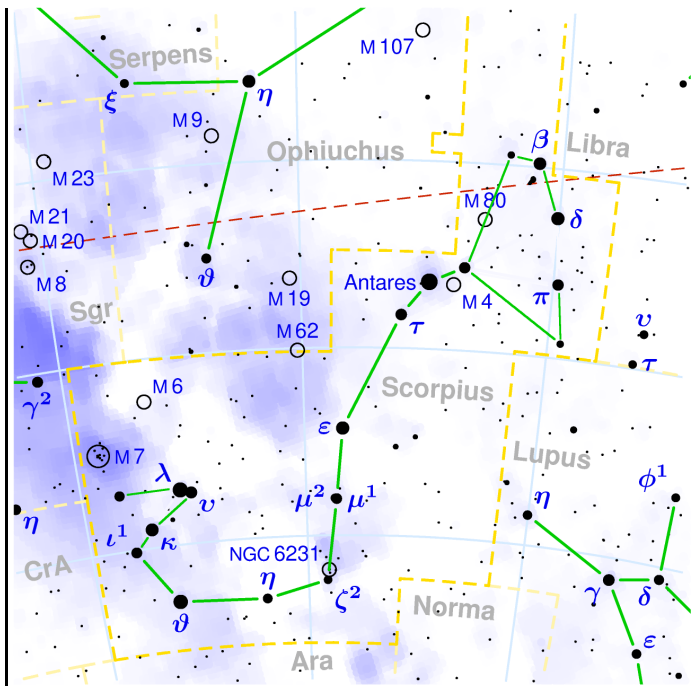
They both fought in WW2—MacNee was a lieutenant in the Navy (he might well have been killed had it not been for a fortuitous case of bronchitis), whereas Lee was in the RAF, and was eventually tasked with helping to track down Nazi war criminals.

Later, they acted together more than once. Macnee played Watson to Lee as Holmes twice, first in *Incident at Victoria Falls* (1991) and then in *Sherlock Holmes and the Leading Lady* (1992). Macnee played Holmes in another TV film, *The Hound of London* (1993), becoming one of only a very small number of actors to have portrayed both Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson on screen. They also both played opposite Roger Moore's James Bond, but where Lee was the villain Scaramanga in the James Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun*, Macnee was Bond's ally, Sir Godfrey Tibbett, in *A View to A Kill*.

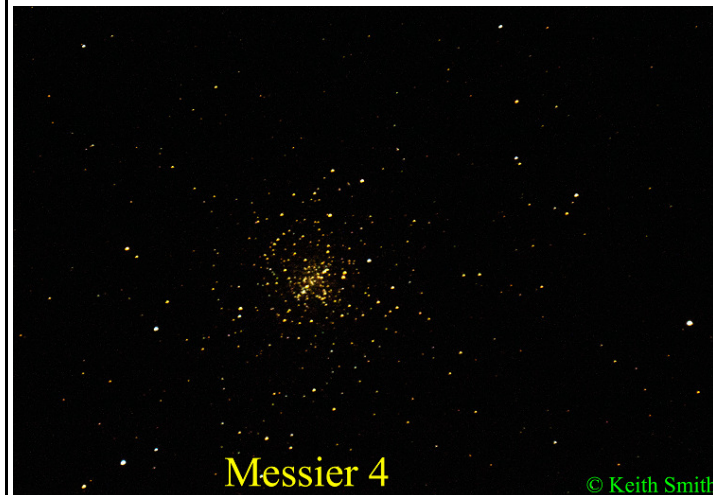
And just as Lee had Dracula, Macnee had his own signature role, that of the redoubtable John Steed in the British TV series, *The Avengers* (1961-1969). (By the way, that predates Stan Lee's comic-book *Avengers* by two years.) I've no idea when I first saw *The Avengers*, I was too young to have been permitted to stay up late enough to see it until nearly the end of its run. But I do remember the iconic image of Steed, with his broly and bowler hat, driving off in the sunset. And while the series certainly didn't start out as science fiction; as it developed, it became increasingly quirky and touched more and more on science fiction themes. Which is, of course, an excellent reason for remembering him here.



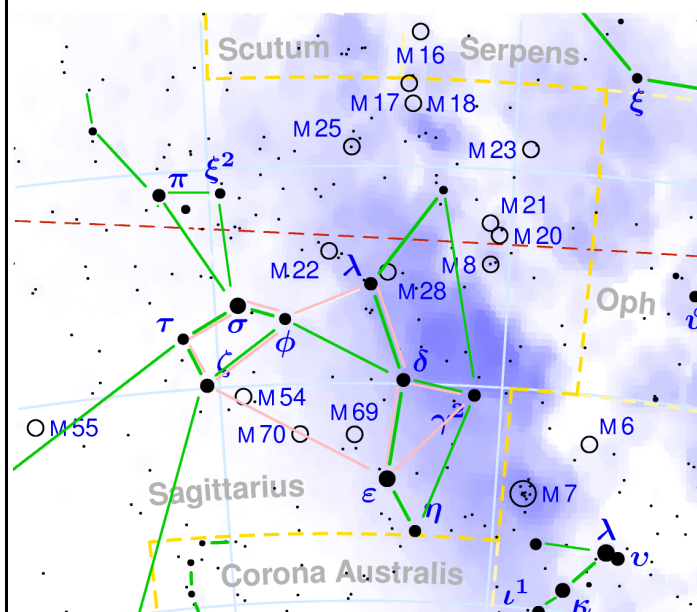
Photos by Keith Smith



Scorpius



Sagittarius



# The Sky at Night September 2015

The Autumn constellations, along with their collection of galaxies, are sinking lower in the west as the evening goes on. But rising to take their place are the Winter constellations: Scorpius, Ophiuchus, and Sagittarius. The Milky Way flows through this part of the sky before continuing on through Centaurus, Crux, and Carina. Many objects can be observed in this area, even with ordinary binoculars, mostly being open star clusters, globular star clusters and areas of nebulosity. The Milky Way itself is brighter around here, and wider, because we are looking towards the centre of the galaxy. At this time of year many astrophotographers brave the icy cold nights to capture the panorama of the Milky Way arcing from horizon to horizon, showing all the dust lanes, and the Galactic Core high in the sky.

The constellation of Scorpius is prominent overhead. It is known to the Maori as Manaiaakalani, the 'Fish Hook of Maui', and it certainly looks like it has hooked the Milky Way. Near the hook, one can see what looks like two fuzzy objects with the naked eye, but binoculars reveal to be two open star clusters. The larger is M7, otherwise known as Ptolemy's Cluster, and the other is M6, or the Butterfly Cluster. These are young stars that have been born from the same patch of nebulosity and are currently travelling together. Eventually they will drift apart and go their own ways.

Moving up the curve of stars that form the hook, one will eventually reach the bright red star, Antares. Halfway to the next star and offset a bit is another fuzzy little blob which is Messier 4. It is also a cluster of stars but a completely different type than M6 and M7. M4 is outside our galaxy and is a tight concentration of stars that get more and more tightly packed towards the centre. This is a globular cluster, one of many orbiting our galaxy, and the gravity of the globular cluster is strong enough to keep all those stars in the cluster. Most of those stars there are old and red. Between Antares and the bright star in the left claw is another globular cluster, M80.

Because we're looking towards the centre of the galaxy, we will see a lot of globular clusters in this region. It was mapping the locations of them that led Harlow Shapley, in 1918, to conclude our sun wasn't near the centre of the galaxy as was believed. Another interesting object in Scorpius is NGC 6231, another open cluster, sometimes referred to as the Northern Jewel Box.

Shift over towards Sagittarius and we're looking into the Milky Way and towards the Galactic Centre. Some people see this constellation as a Teapot so I've drawn the constellation both ways. The green lines are how the constellations are drawn according to H.A. Rey, and I've added pink lines to show the teapot shape.

Sagittarius contains many nebulae, quite a few which can easily be seen in binoculars. The largest is the Lagoon Nebula (M8), Nearby is the Trifid Nebula (M20), so called because dark clouds divide the nebula into three parts. Most of it is pink, but there is a blue, reflection, nebula next to it, lit up by the central star. An open

cluster (M21) is located not far away. Nearby NGC6559 is another star forming region. M20, M8 and NGC6559 are sometimes known as the Sagittarius Triplet. A little further along is the Swan Nebula (M17) which looks more like a check mark (it's also known as the Omega Nebula).

M24, the Sagittarius Star Cloud, has other objects embedded in it. Sagittarius also has a large collection of globular clusters: M22, M28 and NGC 6638 are clustered together. Along the bottom of the teapot are M54, M70 and M69. M22 and M28 are located just above the teapot lid. M55 and M75 are also globular clusters, but there is also the open cluster M25, and the local group galaxy NGC6822 (otherwise known as Barnard's Galaxy).



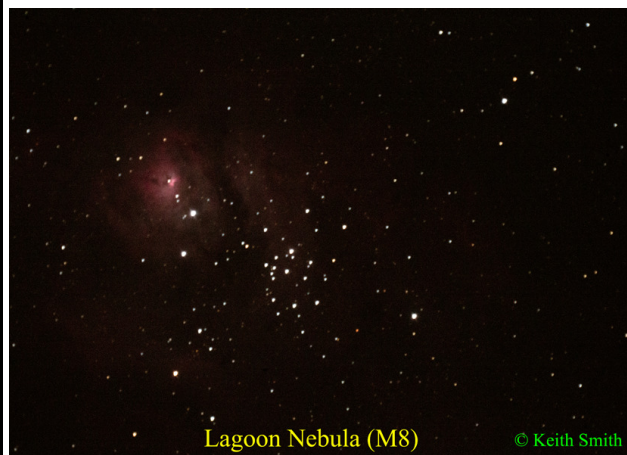
Ptolemy Cluster (M7)

© Keith Smith



Lagoon Nebula (M8) - T1

© Keith Smith



Lagoon Nebula (M8)

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by  
Keith  
Smith

Nearby Ophiuchus also contains a lot of star clusters, including the globular clusters M9, M10, M12, M14, M19, M62 and M107; the open clusters IC 4665, NGC 6633, and the nebulas IC 4603 and IC 4604. The dark nebula Barnard 68 is also in this constellation as well as the Rho Orphiuchi molecular cloud complex.

The constellation Serpens has been split in two parts, being the head and the tail of the serpent. They are separated by Ophiuchus. The head half, Serpens Caput contains the globular M5 and, since the Milky Way doesn't get in the way, some faint extra-galactic objects can be seen such as Hoag's Object (a ring galaxy that requires a large telescope to see), Arp 220 (two galaxies in the process of colliding) and Seyfert's Sextet (a grouping of six galaxies). Conversely, the tail half, Serpens Cauda, lies within the Milky Way and its most notable objects are the Eagle Nebula and its associated cluster (M16). This is where the Pillars of Creation are located, made famous by the Hubble Space Telescope. Between Scorpius and Centaurus is the constellation of Lupus the Wolf.

Globular Clusters seems to be a recurring theme in this article so I'll mention one more – make that two as Omega Centaurus (NGC 5139) is still high in the sky. Look down a bit further and find the constellation of Pavo the Peacock. In it is the third brightest globular cluster, known as the Pavo Globular or NGC 6752. Like Omega Centaurus and 47 Tucanae, it can just be made out with the naked eye from a Dark Sky site.

Finally, we may as well catch up with a couple of galaxies that are still high in the sky; the Southern Pinwheel (M83), a face-on barred spiral galaxy in the constellation of Hydra, and the Sombrero Galaxy (M104), in Virgo, in the area near Corvus. Centaurus A (NGC 5128) is also worth a revisit, as is the Jewel Box (NGC 4755) in Crux.

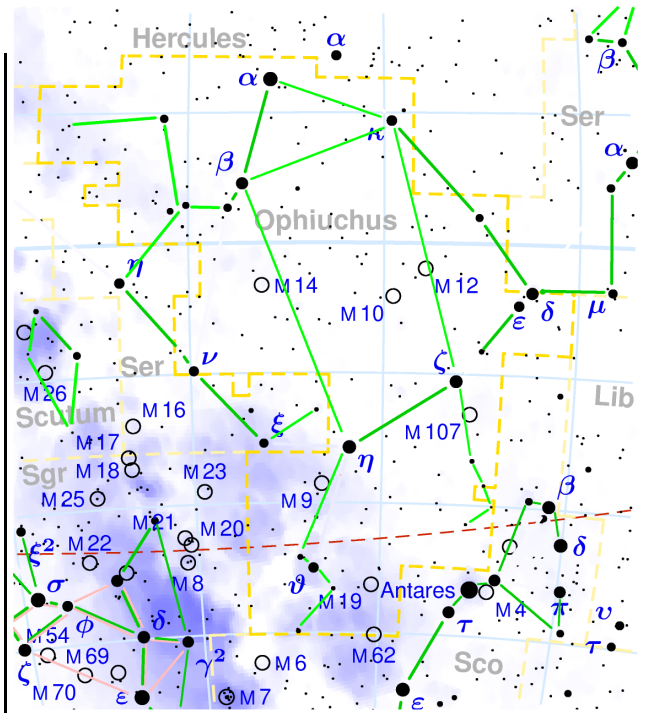
So, to conclude, there is a wealth of objects to search for in the Winter Skies. So grab your binoculars, brave the cold and don't forget to look up. Maps and pictures to go with this article can be found at: <https://goo.gl/photos/bpob3ivRTr1y3Gr57> If you want to revisit the Autumn sky maps and pictures, they are located at: <https://goo.gl/photos/MoiG1Bxw2NgPyA53A>

Planetary wise, it's not long into the evening when we lose Jupiter and Venus. They put on an interesting show in July when they appeared to be very close together in the sky. Saturn starts the evening high up in the sky near the head of Scorpius. Mercury starts to appear in the evening twilight and Mars is still hiding behind the sun. You might have been lucky and seen Mercury and Jupiter close together (the width of the moon) on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August. Mercury reached its highest in the evening sky on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September.

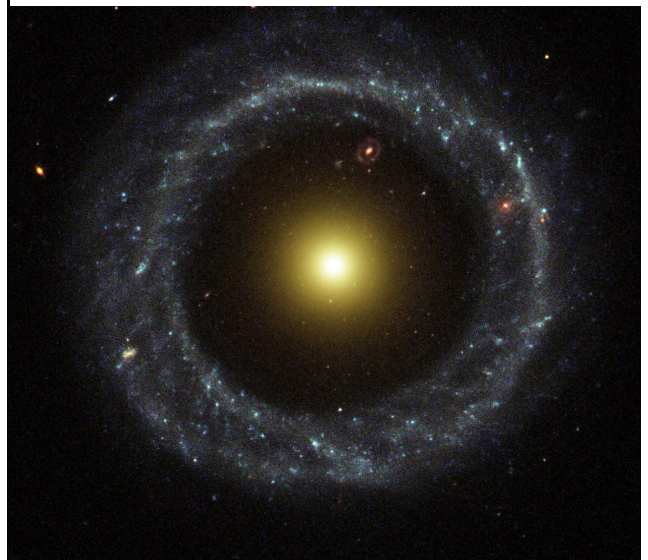
**The Moon in September 2015:**

- Last Quarter—5<sup>th</sup> September
- New Moon—13<sup>th</sup> September
- First Quarter—21<sup>st</sup> September
- Full Moon—28<sup>th</sup> September

Don't forget that Daylight Saving starts on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September!



*Ophiuchus.*



*Hoag's Object (Hubble Space Telescope)*



*Sombrero Galaxy (Hubble Space Telescope)*

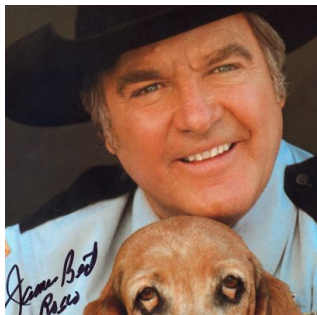
# Obituaries

April 5

**Louis Miles Muggleton**, (aged 92), South African-born British Ionospheric Physicist and Electrical Engineer. Building on the work of Sir Edward Appleton in 1975 Muggleton's seminal work provided the international standard ITU model of radio wave absorption and reflection of the Heaviside layer (or E-layer) of the Ionosphere.

April 6

**James Best**, (aged 88), American actor, who in six decades of television was best known for his starring role as bumbling Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane in the CBS television series *The Dukes of Hazzard*. He also worked as an acting coach, artist, college professor, and musician.



April 7

**Patrick H. Adkins**, (aged 67), American fantasy author and editor best known for his mythological fantasies, including the "Titan" series. In addition to his writing he worked as "a bookseller, small press publisher, 'slush pile' reader for *Galaxy* magazine, medical and technical editor and writer, freelance writer, story doctor, ghost writer, editor-in-chief of a multimedia publishing company, and software expert." Together with fellow science fiction fan John H. Guidry he launched the "Tarzana Project" to print the unpublished and uncollected works of Edgar Rice Burroughs under the imprint of Guidry & Adkins.

**Stan Freberg**, (aged 88),

American author, recording artist, animation voice actor, comedian, radio personality, puppeteer and advertising creative director, whose career began in 1944. His best-known works include "St. George and the Dragonet", his role on the television series *Time for Beany*, and as a voice actor for *Looney Toons*.

April 9

**Alexander Dalgarno**, (aged 87) British astro physicist who was a Phillips Professor of Astronomy at Harvard University. Known as the "father of molecular astrophysics", Dalgarno was also a physicist at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and was formerly the editor of the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*. Dalgarno was cited in the Nebula Award winning novel *The Quantum Rose* by Catherine Asaro, a science-fiction novel based on Asaro's doctoral work while she was a PhD student with Dalgarno.

April 13

**Rex Robinson**, (aged 89), British actor who appeared in three *Doctor Who* serials directed by Lennie Mayne. He played Dr. Tyler in *The Three Doctors*, Gebek in *The Monster of Peladon*, and Dr. Carter in *The Hand of Fear*.

**Herb Trimpe**, (aged 75), American comic book artist and occasional writer, best known as the seminal 1970s artist on *The Incredible Hulk* and as the first artist to draw for publication the character Wolverine, who later became a breakout star of the *X-Men*.

April 19

**Betty Willis**, (aged 91), American graphic designer, best known for having been the designer of the "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" sign, which she never copy-righted, helping to modern Las Vegas' visual image.



April 27

**Andrew Lesnie**, (aged 59), Australian cinematographer, best known as the cinematographer for *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003) and its prequel *The Hobbit* trilogy (2012–2014), both directed by New Zealand director Peter Jackson. He received the Academy Award for Best Cinematography for his work on *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* in 2002.

April 30

**Nigel Terry**, (aged 69), English stage and film actor probably best known by film audiences for his portrayal of King Arthur in John Boorman's *Excalibur* (1981). He had a long career in classical theatre and in television, appearing as General Cobb in the *Doctor Who* episode *The Doctor's Daughter* and as Gabriel Piton in *Highlander: The Series*, among others.



May 1

**Dave Goldberg**, (aged 47), American executive, founder of LAUNCH Media and the CEO of SurveyMonkey. He died following a fall from a treadmill—proof that exercise isn't always a good thing.

**Grace Lee Whitney**, (aged 85),

American actress and singer, known to fans for her role as Yeoman Janice Rand in the original *Star Trek* television series. She appeared in eight of the first thirteen episodes, after which she was released from contract (there were two blondes, the other one was engaged to the producer and it was the sixties).

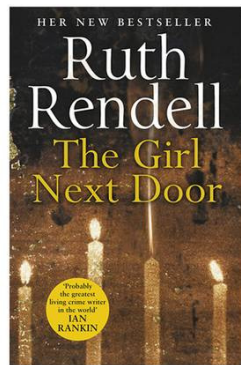


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Compiled  
by  
Jacqui  
Smith

May 2

**Ruth Rendell**, (aged 85), English English author of thrillers and psychological murder mysteries. Her best-known creation, Chief Inspector Wexford, was the hero of many popular police stories, some of them successfully adapted for TV. She was created a life peer as Baroness Rendell of Babergh in 1997. Baroness Rendell received many awards, including the Silver, Gold, and Cartier Diamond Daggers from the Crime Writers' Association, three Edgars from the Mystery Writers of America, The Arts Council National Book Awards, and The Sunday Times Literary Award.



May 4

**Ann Barr**, (aged 85), British journalist and writer who coined the terms Sloane Ranger and Foodie, back in the early 1980s.

May 5

**Oscar Holderer**, (aged 95), American engineer who worked for Von Braun in Nazi Germany during World War II before being taken to the United States and working in the Apollo space program. Holderer's area of expertise was aerodynamics. He personally brought America's first rocket wind tunnel from Germany and set it up for early testing. He designed the wind tunnel used for Saturn V testing and oversaw the tunnel's construction at the Marshall Space Flight Center—and it is still in use.

May 15

**John Stephenson**, (aged 91), American actor, noted for voice-over roles, especially in Hanna-Barbera cartoons. He was the voice Mr. Slate, Fred Flintstone's hard-edged boss at Slate Rock and Gravel Company, and many other guest characters on that show. He was also the voice of Cogswell Cogs' Mr. Cogswell on *The Jetsons*, and numerous other characters on many other shows.

May 18

**Raymond Gosling**, (aged 88), British scientist who deduced the structure of DNA with Maurice Wilkins and Rosalind Franklin at King's College, London. (You thought that was Watson & Crick? Reality is a bit more complicated...).

May 19

**Dale D. Myers**, (aged 93), American aerospace engineer who was Deputy Administrator of NASA, between 1986 and 1989, and earlier was involved in the Apollo program.



May 20

**Mary Ellen Trainor**, (aged 62), American actress best remembered as Dr. Stephanie Woods (an LAPD psychiatrist) in the *Lethal Weapon* films and as Irene Walsh (Mikey and Brand's mom) in *The Goonies*. She also appeared as Officer Reese in *Back to the Future II*.

May 22

**Terry Sue-Patt**, (aged 50), British actor, best known for playing Benny Green in the BBC series *Grange Hill* (1978–1982).

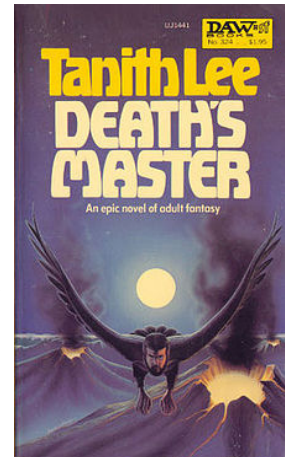


May 23

**John Forbes Nash, Jr.**, (aged 86), American mathematician with fundamental contributions in game theory, differential geometry, and partial differential equations, laureate of the Nobel Prize in Economics (1994). He was the subject of the novel and movie *A Beautiful Mind*.

May 24

**Tanith Lee**, (aged 67), British writer of science fiction, horror, and fantasy. She was the author of over 90 novels and 300 short stories and many poems. She also wrote two episodes of the BBC science fiction series *Blake's 7*. She was the first woman to win the British Fantasy Award best novel award for her adult fantasy novel *Death's Master* (1980).



May 28

**Johnny Keating**, (aged 87), Scottish musician, songwriter and arranger. His "Theme from Z-Cars" was adopted by Everton as their theme song. Additionally he composed the scores for the films *Hotel* (1967), *Robbery* (1967), and *Innocent Bystanders* (1972).

June 1

**Katherine Chappell**, (aged 29), American visual effects editor who worked on *Game of Thrones*, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* and *Godzilla* among others. She was visiting Johannesburg's Lion Park when a lion lunged through the window of her vehicle, which she had opened to lean out and take photographs, against park rules, and bit her fatally on the neck.

June 5

**Jane Briggs Hart**, (aged 93), American aviator, member of the Mercury 13, and widow of the late Senator Philip A. Hart. Hart earned her first pilot's license during World War II, and later became the first licensed female helicopter pilot in Michigan.



June 11

**Ron Moody**, (aged 91)

British actor, best known for his Golden Globe-winning and Oscar-nominated performance as Fagin in *Oliver!* He portrayed Merlin the wizard in two Disney films, *Unidentified Flying Oddball* and *A Kid in King Arthur's Court*. And he played Prime Minister Rupert Mountjoy in *The Mouse on the Moon*.



June 7

**Sir Christopher Lee**, (aged 93),

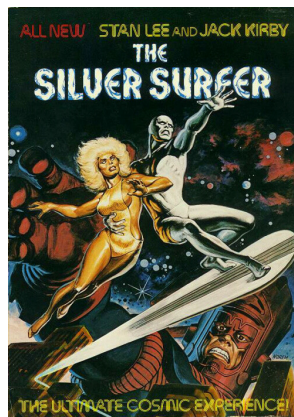
English actor, singer, author, and World War II veteran. He initially portrayed villains and became best known for his role as Count Dracula in a sequence of Hammer Horror films. His other film roles include Francisco Scaramanga in the James Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974), Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy (2001–2003) and *The Hobbit* film trilogy (2012–2014), and Count Dooku in the final two films of the *Star Wars* prequel trilogy (2002 and 2005).



June 19

**Earl Norem**, 91,

American comic book artist primarily known for his painted covers for men's-adventure magazines published by Martin Goodman's Magazine Management Company and for Goodman's line of black-and-white comics magazines affiliated with his Marvel Comics division. He worked on such Marvel Comics projects as *Savage Sword of Conan*, *He-Man* and the *Masters of the Universe Magazine*, *The Silver Surfer*, and storybooks featuring *Spider-Man* and the *Fantastic Four*.



June 20

**JoAnn Dean Killingsworth**, (aged 91),

American actress, dancer and professional figure skater. Dean became the first person to portray Snow White at Disneyland upon the theme park's opening on July 17, 1955. Since Dean's debut in 1955, more than a hundred actresses have played Snow White at Disneyland.

June 22

**James Horner**, (aged 61),

American composer, conductor and orchestrator of film scores. He was known for the integration of choral and electronic elements in many of his film scores, and for his frequent use of motifs associated with Celtic music. He won two academy awards for *Titanic*, and was nominated for the scores for *Aliens*, *Apollo 13*, *Braveheart* and *Avatar*.

June 25

**Patrick Macnee**, (aged 93),

English-American actor, best known for his role as the secret agent John Steed in the British television series *The Avengers*. Later, he played Sir Godfrey Tibbett opposite Roger Moore in the James Bond film *A View to a Kill* (1985), and played the villainous Count Iblis and voiced the Cylons's Imperious Leader in *Battlestar Galactica*. He was one of a very small number of actors to have portrayed both Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson on screen; he played Watson three times: once alongside Roger Moore's Sherlock Holmes in a TV film, *Sherlock Holmes in New York* (1976), and twice with Christopher Lee, first in *Incident at Victoria Falls* (1991) and then in *Sherlock Holmes and the Leading Lady* (1992). He played Holmes in another TV film, *The Hound of London* (1993).



June 30

**Leonard Starr**, 89,

American cartoonist, comic book artist, and advertising artist, who created the newspaper comic strip *On Stage* and reviving *Little Orphan Annie*. He wrote the bible for the animated television show *ThunderCats*, and acted as the story editor and head writer. He eventually wrote 23 episodes for the *ThunderCats* series.



**Christopher Lee Quiz Answers:**

1. A England
2. A Air Force
3. C 6' 5"
4. C Frankenstein's Monster
5. C Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace
6. C The Man with the Golden Gun
7. C Jinnah
8. A Attack of the Clones
9. D Saruman
7. A Charlemagne

We had our first BOG in a long, long time at Jan's last Saturday, and it went well enough that I'm feeling inspired to write about what we played. I'll admit that for our table at least, it was more COG than BOG—all three are card-based games, with no board in sight, but that's quite common these days.



**Raid the Pantry**

Designed by: Amanda Milne & Julia Schiller  
 Published by: SchilMil Games, 2012  
 # Players: 3-6  
 Playing time: 30 minutes  
 Ages: 8 and up

This is essentially a game about collecting the ingredient cards needed to create recipes. So the basic mechanic is rummy in the kitchen, with action cards to make things interesting. It was very easy to set up, easy to pick up (we only missed one important rule about replacing recipe cards once recipes are completed) and packing it up took no time at all.

The game design is simple and elegant—the cards are well-chosen and nicely presented, with actual photographs of ingredients and completed dishes. No actual culinary knowledge is required, and the gastronomically ignorant might learn a thing or two! It's not complex, and the cooking theme guarantees appeal to families—everyone from primary school kids to grandmas can play. As an added bonus, it's from local developers SchilMil Games, so you'd be supporting the NZ gaming industry.

**Munchkin: Pathfinder**

Designed by: Andrew Hackard, Steve Jackson  
 Artist: John Kovalic  
 Publisher: Steve Jackson Games, 2013  
 # Players: 3-6  
 Playing time: 60 minutes  
 Ages: 12 and up

They tell me that you either love Munchkin or you hate it—and as it happened it was an instant hit with the people at our table, who hadn't played any of these three games before.

Munchkin is a card game broadly based on the mechanic of role-playing games—open the door,

kill the monster, grab the treasure, go up a level. Whoever gets to level ten first wins the game. There is a large element of luck in this game—my son won the Auckland championship at Battlecry when he was eleven—and the game is officially for ages 12 and up! So, if you don't like that element of luck, and you don't have a sufficiently warped sense of humour you probably won't like Munchkin. But, it was that luck element that made this the game we played most as a family, because it created a more level playing field, for adults and children to enjoy together.

There are many variants of Munchkin, and Munchkin: Pathfinder is one of the newest, incorporating elements from the Pathfinder role-playing game—which means factions, and goblins, lots of goblins.



**Star Fluxx**

Designed by: Andrew Looney  
 Published by: Looney Labs  
 # Players: 2-6  
 Playing time: 10 minutes  
 Ages: 8 and up

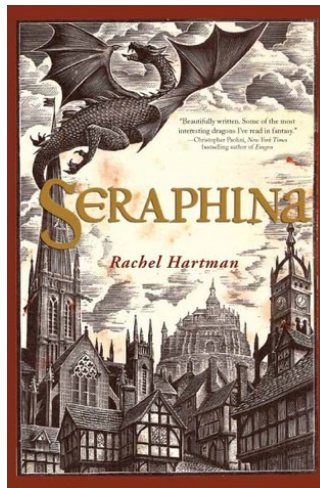
Star Fluxx is from the Fluxx family of card games, which all start out with one basic rule, which is: Draw 1, Play 1. This is continually modified as play progresses, until one player or another achieves the current goal. Play is generally fast, furious and fun. Adding to the enjoyment is the humour in the cards themselves, this set having a sci-fi theme. It's a quick and easy-to-learn game, the only proviso being that people do have to be able to read. Find a theme that you like, from Monty Python to Pirates and have a go. This is another game that families can enjoy together, and is even easier to pack into the luggage.



**Seraphina**

by Rachel Hartmann  
Published by Corgi  
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith  
Dragons, medieval music, intrigue, a feisty female protagonist, an author who has an obvious love of language... and dragons. What is not to like? I have to say that I immensely enjoyed reading Seraphina, and I consider it to be one of the best-constructed fantasies I've read in recent years. And it has some of the most interesting dragons I have ever come across... Dragons who can take human form, but when they do so must control their emotions (just like Vulcans, yes). Seraphina is a talented musician and assistant to the court composer in the land of Goredd. When a royal Prince, Rufus, is killed while hunting in a manner that implicates a dragon (okay, his head was bitten off), the fragile peace between humans and dragons is endangered. The questions are, who killed him, and why? And who benefits from the threat of war? Seraphina is caught up in all of this, and her secret heritage may well be revealed in the process of discovering the truth.

This novel has an elegant plot, a well-developed setting, interesting characters, and Hartmann's gift for lyrical prose just adds the icing to a very tasty read. I heartily recommend it.



**Black Dagger Brotherhood #12:**

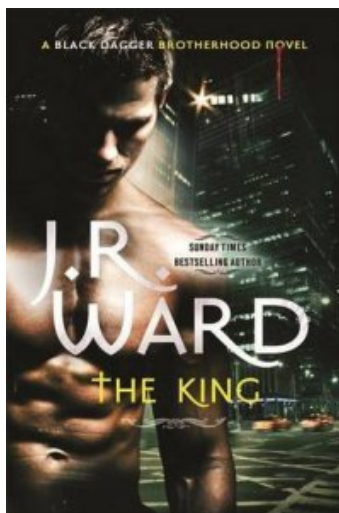
**The King  
by JR Ward**

Published by Piatkus  
Books  
Purchased at Book  
Depository UK  
Reviewed by Jan  
Butterworth

After centuries of ignoring his kingship, Wrath has finally accepted the crown and is ruling the vampire society. The threat from the Band of Bastards is still there though, and has glymera support, as they want a ruler who embraces the old traditions of aristocracy. The war with the lessening society rages on and they need new fighters.

Beth wants Wrath's young and is unprepared for his response, or the distance it puts between them. Xcor is the leader of the Band of Bastards and one of the leaders in the plot to take down the King. But he's fallen for the Chosen Layla, who is pregnant with Qhuinn's young. Layla has unexplainable feelings for Xcor and has to keep her relationship with him secret.

Trez is trying to get away from his future, which is to be the mate and sex slave of the next Queen of the Shadows.



Hiding out with the BDB, he falls for the Chosen Selena and his brother will do anything to help him escape his fate. Assail feels compelled to help Sola, the burglar who was paid to spy on him.

The plot is very involved, with multiple storylines and recurring characters, and it would help if you'd read the previous in the BDB series. The main story was Wrath and Beth and it was refreshing to read their HEA wasn't all sunshine and roses and see how they dealt with challenges.

I don't like Assail, and he and Sola seem a bit pointless, I'm not sure why their story is being told. I swing between not liking Xcor and feeling sorry for him, I think Layla's made a huge mistake though. I like Trez and Selena and hope they get their HEA, their story is the next book. I loved when Wrath met his subjects! Hopefully we'll see more of Paradise in later books. And there are Lassiter scenes!

A must read for BDB fans!

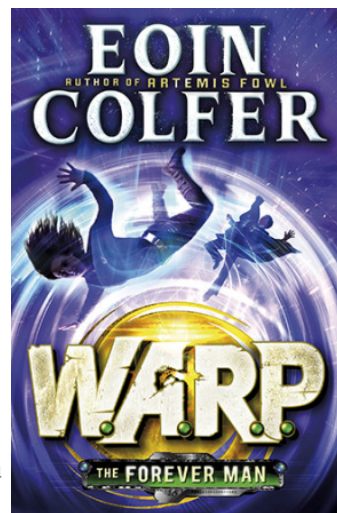
**WARP Book 3:  
The Forever  
Man**

by Eoin Colfer  
Published by Puffin  
Supplied by Penguin  
Random House NZ  
Reviewed by Jacqui  
Smith

I enjoyed Colfer's Artemis Fowl stories (Yes, I know they're fairy stories, they're written for kids, and you know perfectly well that I don't care, because they're that good), so I thought I might try this.

Unfortunately it's the third book of a trilogy – which rather threw me in the deep end of the wormhole, but Colfer was clever enough to include a brief "Need to Know" introduction, which explains the background. And a bizarre background it is. WARP stands for Witness Anonymous Relocation Programme, which is what you think it is... and not. Because Professor Charles Smart figured out how to mess with quantum physics to create wormholes into the past – and when the FBI found out about it they decided to use it to stash important witnesses back in history. But Professor Smart didn't really understand what he was doing, nor does anyone else, and now he's gone missing... And then there's the unpredictable weird stuff that keeps happening to people who pass through the wormhole. You can see the potential for trouble. And then, Colfer throws in a couple of clever kids to save the world from a psychotic Victorian villain, who has been let loose to cause havoc across history.

As you might imagine, this book is a whole lot of fun. Colfer has a seriously warped sense of humour, and a talent for action. The youthful lead characters here are well-crafted (and more sympathetic than Artemis Fowl ever was). The villain is an absolute nutter, no bones about it. As for how it all works out in the end... very clever, Mr Colfer.



## The Mapmaker Chronicles: Prisoner of the Black Hawk

by A.L. Tait

Published by Lothian

Supplied by Hachette NZ

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

As readers may have noticed, I have a certain fondness for a good map. So, when I saw a young adult fantasy series called “The Mapmaker Chronicles”, I rather thought that it might be of interest. And I have to say that Australian writer Alison Tait has done a pretty fine job of creating a novel twist on the sailing ship story. He’s wisely taken it fully to a fantasy world, so it’s quite clear that his map is not our map. But sadly, there are no maps in the book. I do think the story could have been greatly enhanced by the inclusion of maps detailing the progress of the *Libertas* and her crew. The background is a race to map the world, with the central character being a young map-maker aboard one of the ships. There is a prize for each captain, and Captain Zain is sailing for his freedom. Which is ironic when our young hero, Quinn the map-maker, is captured by Gelynions, and caged below decks... and then they are attacked by pirates! It’s all a lot of fun, and I’m sure this series would be greatly enjoyed by older boys, in particular.



## The Dead Lands

by Benjamin Percy

Published by Hodder & Stoughton

Supplied by Hachette NZ

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

The apocalypse is a popular theme at present, especially in video games, and the title is enough to tell you that this is yet another addition to that canon. But there are thankfully no zombies in the Dead Lands; although there are plenty of monsters, some of them human, some not. The scenario is that an influenza pandemic starting in the US led to mass hysteria, followed by a misguided attempt to stop the spread of disease by dropping nuclear weapons on big cities, resulting in widespread fallout and rampant mutation. Our heroes begin in a place called the Sanctuary, a fortified settlement in the ruins of St. Louis, where people believe themselves to be the last bastion of humanity. Only the water is running out, and food is becoming scarce and heavily rationed. So, Lewis the museum curator and Clark the ranger plan to escape and find a better place – and Lewis feels something calling him west.



So, this is essentially a post-apocalyptic re-telling of the westward journey of the explorers Lewis and Clark. Now

the closest I’ve ever got to the Corps of Discovery would be the odd documentary on the History Channel, or my *Lewis & Clark Cookbook* that I bought at one of the Smithsonian Museums (I tend to collect unusual and historic cookery books). So, it’s very hard for me to comment on how well this story echoes theirs, which is sad because it appears to be an important element (it is worth noting that in the novel, Clark is a girl, and she makes a truly feisty heroine, whereas Lewis is a nerdy guy). And I must again complain about a lack of map – for those of us unfamiliar with US geography this means we tend to get a bit lost.

Unusually, the novel is told exclusively in the present tense, which usually annoys me, but here it is consistent, and adds an immediacy to the prose which serves quite well. I did feel that the narrative sped up a bit too much towards the end, where it really needed a bit more space, but the characters are strong enough and interesting, and the plot is solid. If it reminded me a little of John Wyndham’s *Chrysalids*; that might well be a bonus. Although I am still left wondering what happened to the rest of the world....

## Robot Overlords

by Mark Stay

Published by Gollancz

Supplied by Hachette NZ

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

Okay, I haven’t seen the movie, and I doubt that any of you have either, because somebody made the mistake of releasing this independent British kids SF movie in Britain the same weekend as Cinderella and Spongebob.



It didn’t have a hope, which is a pity, because the premise is solid, and the story as presented in this novelisation is better than most. I do think it could have done with a stronger title, especially for the movie – the tag line “Robots Never Lie” might have worked better. The scenario is that the Earth has been invaded by robots intent on subjugating humanity in order to mine people for any useful data they might have. The war was over quickly and now everybody is confined to their homes, aside from the Volunteer Corps, humans who have chosen to cooperate with the robots. Obedience is enforced by means of implants which track people and blow them up if they are caught by the robots breaking their rules. So, how do a bunch of kids get the upper hand in a situation like this? Very carefully... and with two particular strokes of plain unpredictable luck, the first of which gives them a way to disable their implants, and as for the second... That would be giving away a bit too much. Put it this way - I found it rather more believable than the ending of *Independence Day*.

It was a bit British – I couldn’t help wondering how the Robots’ strictures would have worked in other parts of the world. And the primary villain is a Geography teacher turned quisling who felt straight out of Doctor Who. Which was another thing. I kept expecting the TARDIS to suddenly materialise... But enough of that. It’s not great, but it’s a pretty good read, better than you might expect. I’d definitely recommend this story to teenagers, especially if they have an interest in robotics.

## The Long Utopia

by Terry Pratchett & Stephen Baxter  
Published by Doubleday  
Supplied by Random House NZ

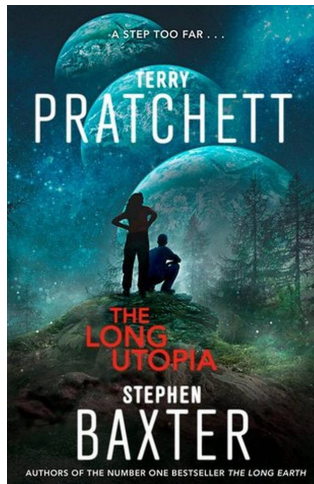
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith  
Having begun by opening the way to the Long Earth, destroying much of the world we know by blowing up the Yellowstone supervolcano, and going on to explore the long Mars, you had to wonder what Pratchett and Baxter were going to do next with their gigantic imaginary playground. The Long Earth is, for those who haven't encountered it before, their take on the many Earths hypothesis, only they've gone for empty worlds as opposed to alternate histories. And Pratchett and Baxter have had a lot of fun creating some interesting characters and then letting them loose to explore the possibilities. Not to mention potatoes...

What they decided to do in the Long Utopia was to send some of their major characters out to New Springfield on Earth West 1,217,756, there to begin home-steading. Only, it's not so simple, and by a very long coincidence (or not at all by chance) that world has intersected something very nasty, very invasive, and potentially able to destroy all of the many Earths and with them all of humanity if it is allowed to spread. Somehow it must be stopped, and to save the worlds, sacrifices must be made. There is much that is great and grand about the Long Earth. The characters are well-crafted, and the writing is excellent. But there is something missing. It feels like two great writers at play, wondering what they should do next, with no real objective other than exploration. Will there be any resolution to all of their assorted plot-lines? Well, there is one last long earth novel to come.

## Fury of Aces 3: Onyx Javelin

by Steve Wheeler  
Published by Harper Voyager

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith  
We met Steve Wheeler at Reconnaissance (the 2015 National SF&F Convention), and he proved to be a very interesting person, with an unusual approach to military SF – he makes detailed models of the craft in his books, and photographs them, often in natural landscapes. Then he employs them in his writing. When he told me to go ahead and read this, the third book in his SF series, without having read the other two, I took him at his word. Now, I'm not so sure that was a good idea. It was fine for the first few chapters, populated mainly by new characters, but as more and more older characters were introduced who had been developed in the previous books, I found myself



floundering. There are a lot of characters here, in at least three main casts; the people of the distant human colony Storfisk, the crew of the carrier *Haast*, and the crew of *Basalt*.

It's a complex universe, too. Humanity is divided into several major factions, disputes are settled by war games, and who knows who's doing what to whom... Then there are these vicious aliens called Urchins, who are in conflict with humanity, along with their inscrutable octopoid masters. And then are ACEs, Artificially Created Entities, often cybernetically enhanced, and in humanoid, animal or more exotic forms – yes, we can have dragons! One clever idea is the use of soul-savers – which allow characters to survive certain death, and be reincarnated immediately into a mechanical chassis or grow a new biological body. This feature, together with the range of possible character types and factions, and the great depth of detail, would make Wheeler's universe an excellent setting for role-playing games.

The plot focuses on events on the Storfisk colony world, and its invasion by some very nasty alien predators. There's plenty of action, a dose of mystery, and some scenes of truly memorable beauty, amid a great deal of carnage and destruction. I have to admit that I found Wheeler's prose a bit awkward at times, forcing me to stop reading while I figured out what he was saying, thus breaking the flow. And I would like to have seen a bit more of the titular Onyx Javelin.

Steve Wheeler might not be the most elegant of writers, but he is a wonderful imagineer. The depth and detail of his future galaxy is truly impressive. And I'm thinking that I was right, and this really was the novel that should have received the 2015 Sir Julius Vogel award.

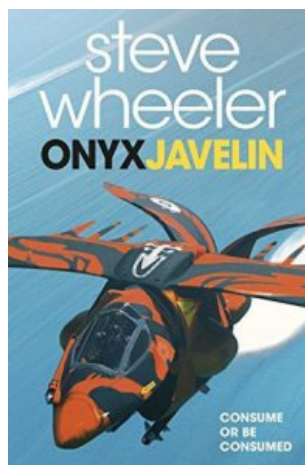
## The Mad Apprentice

by Django Wexler  
Published by Corgi Children's  
Supplied by Penguin Random House NZ  
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

This is one of those children's books that is eminently suitable for adult readers of fantasy. It is the sequel to "The Forbidden Library" and in my opinion, is quite probably the better book – certainly in terms of structure, and is possibly even more imaginative.

One of the old Readers, Esau-of-the-Waters, is dead, something which simply does not happen naturally. Murder is suspected, and the likely culprit is his apprentice, Jacob. As is the custom, a group of other apprentices are sent to Esau's realm to find out what happened and to bring Jacob to justice. Alice isn't entirely unhappy about being included, since she might find clues as to what happened to her lost father. But it soon becomes evident that something in Esau's realm is intent on killing the apprentices. Don't ask me why, but I was reminded of *Elder Scrolls: Oblivion*. Got to be all those towers. And as for the apprentice, yes, it does appear he is indeed quite mad.

I would not give this book to a child prone to nightmares, there is too much here to feed bad dreams, but otherwise it's a great read for fantasy-lovers of all ages.





Where: Wellington  
 When : Queens Birthday Weekend  
 3-5th June, 2016  
 Venue: CQ Hotel in Cuba Street

**Guests of Honour:  
 Stephanie Paul**

Twenty-six years experience in the entertainment industry has given Stephanie many strings to her bow. As an actor she has been seen in 4 Super Bowl commercials to date and over 200 more commercials world wide. She has a film and television career to boot and is most well known for her feature film role as "Madame President" in the scifi comedy international cult classic "Iron Sky", gearing up for its sequel with her in 2016 (see the trailer here). Behind the scenes in production Stephanie has worked in many departments and held positions such as Associate Agent, Producer, Director, and Writer.



Stephanie's personal website is:  
[www.stephaniepaul.net](http://www.stephaniepaul.net).

**AJ Fitzwater**

AJ Fitzwater is a human-suit wearing dragon from Christchurch, New Zealand, who won the Sir Julius Vogel Awards 2015 for Best New Talent, and attended the six week Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers Workshop at University of California San Diego in 2014.



**Charity:**

To be Announced

**Website:**

<http://ac2016.cons.nz/index.php>

**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 28th October, 7:30pm Venue TBA

**SPACE**

Friday 2nd October, 7:30pm Venue TBA

**Next Quarterly Meeting:**

Wednesday 16th September 2015, 7:30 pm  
 Auckland Horticultural Centre,  
 990 Great North Road,



**Upcoming Events:**

**October 23-26th 2015**

**Armageddon Auckland 2015**

ASB Showgrounds

**June 3-5th 2016**

**AU CONTRAIRE 2016**

37th New Zealand National SF Convention

<http://ac2016.cons.nz/index.php>