



*2010—Winning costume at the 2010 WorldCon*

**Issue Nove - October 2010**

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## Musings from Under the Mountain

I was thinking about bringing you a Novazine from the Land of Oz last month... but it isn't so easy to extract articles from people when you're some hundreds of kilometers away. So I hope you all enjoy this bumper double issue instead.

You'll find that a lot of Novazine Nove is about science fiction conventions—both conventions recently past, and conventions yet to come. I've been to a few of these now—AussieCon 4 was my third WorldCon, and I'm not entirely sure how many NatCons I've been to. Au Contraire was a fine example of a New Zealand NatCon, well-organised, friendly and fun. I will admit to a moment of surprise when I discovered that Sean Williams was the writer of those Astropolis books, mild annoyance when I realized I hadn't brought one for him to sign—and real annoyance when I found none for sale in the Floating Market. That said, I did snaffle some excellent books and board games at the Market, even a couple of Wii games for Paul. And I have to thank the kind lady who was making and giving away lovely SF themed jewelry—I now have a unique and beautiful pendant called “The Habits of Galaxies”. Then, there was Paul's prize for his drawing—one of the new Lego games. The problem became “how are we going to get it all home” and we'll thank Jess for helping solve that one.

As for AussieCon 4, all WorldCons are different—and it's my suspicion that in WorldCons, the bigger the better, and LA Con IV still reigns as my favourite. I've since heard that AussieCon 4 had organisational difficulties—although I didn't see much evidence of that (other than the access problems the day before—and that truly was beyond the Concom's control). I earned my volunteer T-shirt helping with the kids stream – the highlight of which had to be the Lego Daleks. Another highlight was the Star Wars presentation. Loved those light sabres. We actually didn't BUY much stuff... we collected a lot of free books, won a Lego contest, and won a raffle. I will hereby thank the nice ladies from Dorling Kindersley—and I rather think I should review those books too. We were then confronted with another “how are we going to get it all home” issue, which Terri kindly helped with. The masquerade wasn't especially spectacular—it wasn't that much better than Au Contraire's and I can remember better costume parades at more than one New Zealand Natcon. Ah well, time to start thinking about 2020...

Jacqui

## From the Cramped Office

Once more it is time to write another presidential statement, which is something I should have done earlier. But, I'll claim that the excitement of going to Melbourne for the Worldcon was just too much. This is probably a load of old cobblers, but never mind. Anyhow, we have another exciting meeting lined up for y'all. Turn up and be educated.

Talking of education, at the moment, if I look a little stressed, it's because I have been burning the midnight oil writing essays. Not your short undergraduate essays of 2-3000 words, but postgraduate tomes of 5000 words. What was I thinking when I signed up at the beginning of the year? Enough of my worries. The stress has nearly ended, and there is only the dissertation to go, a mere 10,000 words plus footnotes, bibliography et cetera. Back in to it, and enjoy.

Steve Litten



“Mushroom” by Paul Smith

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## Changeless

Gail Carriger

Published by Orbit

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Stephen Litten

**Changeless** is the second in the Alexia Tarabotti series of novels by Gail Carriger. Alexia is now Lady Maccon, and must put up with a stately home full of werewolves returned from the colonies, a husband who is running off on business, and Ivy Hesselpenny who arrives and announces her engagement. London is also suffering from a blight of preternatural activity, something both the vampires and werewolves think Alexia has a hand in. Alexia knows differently. Armed with a new parasol (an unstylish affair but suitable for close combat), she pursues her husband by dirigible to Scotland, alone except for Miss Hesselpenny, Madame Lefoux (a possible French spy), her half sister Felicity, and the trusty Tunstell, one of her husband's pack's servants. But the curse of preternaturalness has beaten them to Scotland, and Alexia and Lord Maccon must solve the problem of not being able to shape change, as well as settle a succession problem within his old pack, without recourse to the supernatural.

Carriger writes with her usual charm and wit. Once more I enjoyed being transported back to slightly different version of London, with its werewolves, ghosts and vampires and just a dash of steampunk. Alexia is a delightful heroine, not easily flustered, and subject to the unwanted attentions of assassins, spies and other ne'er-do-wells. The supernatural beings have their own little cliques, and Alexia fits none of them, even though she is married to a very powerful werewolf. But she is also good friends with a gay vampire, who is absolutely *charming*. For those who like a little bit of manners with their steampunk and fangs, this is the book for you. The book ends with a death and a pregnancy and leads nicely in to the next in the series, **Blameless**. I have a signed copy waiting on the bedside table.



## The Folding Knife

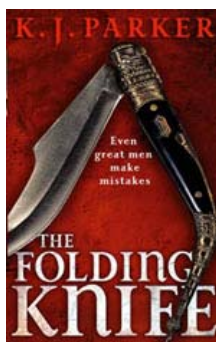
K. J. Parker

Published by Orbit

Reviewed by Stephen Litten

"Even great men make mistakes" proclaims the cover of K. J. Parker's *The Folding Knife*. So true. The story starts with a prologue entitled "Forty Years Later". Basso is riding on the roof of a coach. He has just lost the one possession he's always had, the eponymous folding knife. By inference, he has lost a great deal else besides. Chapter one returns to the "start" of the story, with Basso being born and the gradual linking of his life, his sister's and various other characters along the way.

With that delicious declaration on the cover, I kept wondering what his one mistake was: marrying his idiot wife? Killing his brother-in-law? Marrying his second wife? Basso's father is a politician cum banker-merchant in the Vesani Republic, and aspires to be First Citizen, a position that takes a lot of money to achieve. You have to



spend a lot to bribe rich men to vote for you. Basso senior has one redeeming quality, luck. Basso the son has both luck and brains. He improves the fortunes of first the family bank, then the Vesani Republic. Finally, he leverages it all attempting to grow the Republic into an empire. Most of his choices are explained after they occur, by Basso himself: either explaining it to some idiot relative, or celebrating with his cronies, for want of a better word. His sister becomes his nemesis when he kills in self-defense her husband, caught *in flagrante* with Basso's wife. As this happens early enough in the book, this isn't a spoiler. She even arranges at least two attempts on his life, both nearly successful. But death comes in many forms in the medieval world, and murder is only one of them. Plague, falling trees and cow manure are all agents of death.

This is set in the same world as the *Engineer* trilogy, but miles away from that action. The Vesani Republic is an Italian city state, either Venice or Genoa, and its mundane adventures in a wider world. That Parker doesn't feel the need to introduce magic, demi-humans or other *deus ex machina* makes for a stronger fantasy. Now to hunt down more from this boy. Read.

## First Lord's Fury: Codex Alera Book 6

Jim Butcher,

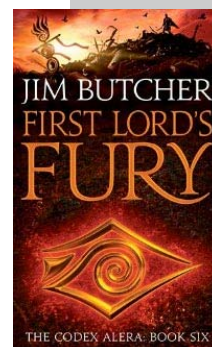
Published by Orbit,

Reviewed by Stephen Litten

Jim Butcher's *First Lord's Fury* completes the Codex Alera, which is a hexology (six-parter). Tavi is now Gaius Octavian Severus, though not First Lord of Alera. That position is currently held by Lord Aquitaine, whose wife is key to the Vord advance through Alera. And while Lord Aquitaine is a good military commander, he lacks the understanding of the Vord necessary to destroy them utterly, or at least in Alera.

Tavi has inherited one fury from his grandfather, the fury that personifies Alera. She is the most powerful of the furies, being an amalgam of a number of local furies, but her form and constant companionship with the previous First Lords has given her some insights into humanity: she has become a useful councilor. The Vord Queen has Lady Aquitaine and later, Lady Isana, Tavi's mother. The Vord Queen has found the humans to be more complex than other species she has eliminated and cannot understand their persistent refusal to be consumed. She starts to behave in a human fashion in order to understand them. This unusual behaviour is comic, sad and alien. Naturally the big showdown comes at the end of the book, where the fate of Alera, the Murat, Icemen and Canim are decided.

Once again Butcher has delivered another ripping yarn. His heroes are constant displays of goodness, with the villains providing the more nuanced behaviour. (But villains always did get the best lines.) While not quite as compelling as the rest in the series, perhaps because Butcher was wrapping it all up, it was a good story, with the reader often wondering how Tavi would solve a particular problem; he now has two choices, use his brain or use his furies. All in all, a satisfying conclusion to a good series. On reflection, I would put the *Codex Alera* series into the "Young Adult" section: a bit tougher than *Harry Potter*, but not as gritty as *The Dresden Files*. Read and enjoy.



**Undead and Unfinished -**

**Undead Book 9**

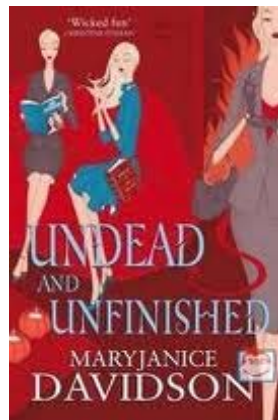
Mary Janice Davidson  
Published by Piatkus  
Supplied by Hachette

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

“I never would have gone to hell in the first place if the Antichrist hadn’t been fluent in Tagalog”. Betsy Taylor returns! The story starts in Bloomingdales, where Betsy and Laura are shopping at the shoe sale. Well Betsy is. Laura still feels bad about flying into a psychopathic rage and nearly killing her sister and I trying to make up for it by bonding with her.

Laura is the Queen of the Vampires sister, a great kid who’s a student at U of M, and also happens to be the Antichrist. Laura and Betsy take a trip to hell and end up taking a trip through time, meeting people that have a connection to those who know Betsy in her current life. The 9<sup>th</sup> book in the Undead series, this book started off light and frothy, reminiscent of the earlier books. There is a summary of events so far in the front of the book for readers unfamiliar with the series. I enjoyed the first half, especially the sacrifice of shoes! The ending was perfect, everyone was happy. Then I read the epilogue. I did not like it. If you like your endings happy and the characters and series to end with a happy note, stop at the ending. Don’t read the epilogue. Not an ending and wrapping up of the series I enjoyed.

This series always has interesting acknowledgments, this one is a separate short story about her assistant and very humorous.



**The Ambassador’s Mission**

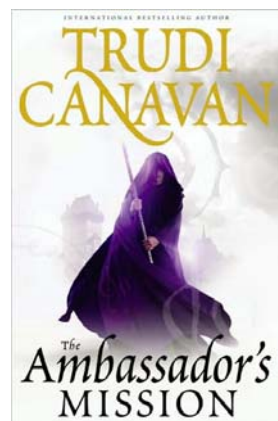
Trudi Canavan  
Published by Orbit  
Supplied by Hachette

Reviewed by Maree Pavletich

This is a carefully crafted sequel to the Black Magician series, set 20 years later.

Lorkin, the son of the Black Magicians Sonea and the late High Lord Akkarin, volunteers as an aid to Lord Dannyl who is now the Guild Ambassador to Sachaka, a land where High Lord Akkarin left some seriously dangerous and unfinished business. When Lorkin is kidnapped Sonea is frantic but constrained by her deal with the Guild in Kyralia. Her old friend Cery needs her help as well, as there is a subplot about a mysterious assassin who kills with magic...

As always this is a well rounded world with a lot more going on under the surface. Excellent classic fantasy with layers, even though it sometimes feels a trifle long. I get the feeling that the publishers were worried the readers would have forgotten all the twists of the politics and magic, not so.



**In Golden Blood**

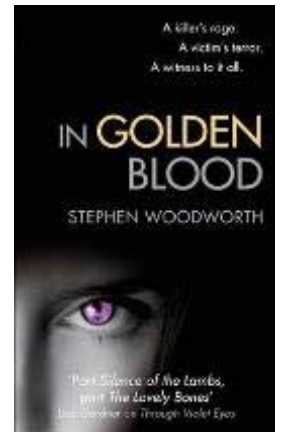
Stephen Woodworth  
Published by Piatkus – an imprint of Little, Brown

Supplied by Hachette

Reviewed by Kevin G Maclean

In my review of "With Red Hands", I speculated that the author might have written himself towards a corner. I am happy to announce that he hadn't. The third book is just as tightly and transparently written as the second, and has enough twists and turns to keep the most avid fan happy. Natalie is still trying to avoid going back to the Corps, and money is getting tight, so she takes on an archaeology project that she normally would have avoided—finding Pizzaro's private treasure cache. Unfortunately, her employers are even nastier than she had feared. Trapped in an isolated camp with no resources but her wits and the Dead, she has to find a way to survive.

This book feels a little more mainstream to me than its predecessors, but that may be the effect of adding a fair amount of physical action into the mix. Certainly, the standard is still high, and the book well worth reading. I still look forward to the next one, dreading the day when I catch up with publication.



**The Reluctant Mage**

By Karen Miller  
Harper Voyager  
Supplied for review by HarperCollins Publishers

Reviewed by Cassie Pearce

*The Reluctant Mage* by Karen Miller is book two in the Fisherman’s Children series. This story was exciting from start to finish, filled to the brim with adventure and excitement.

Rafel left Lur to go to lost Dorana but he has disappeared. The land of Lur is falling apart. The magic weather map has stopped working. Nobody can leave Lur because of Barl’s magic surrounding the sea and land. Rafel’s father Asher lays in a coma and Deenie his sister can sense evil within him which keeps him comatose. Rafel’s mousy sister Deenie must overcome her fears and search for a way out of Lur to find and rescue Rafel. All through Deenie’s life she has never been a powerful mage unlike her Asher her Dad, Dathne her mother and Rafel. She felt her magical power of sensing things was useless.

Deenie accompanied by her childhood friend embark on a journey out of Lur. Two soft pampered girls go up against the world dressed as boys. The weather throws everything it has against them. But worse is yet to come. The dead sorcerer Morg has awoken and holds sway over the land beyond Lur that Deenie has entered.

Deenie must find Rafel, heal Lur and find the power within to battle Morg. Along the way they make friends, battle beasts and find the strength within to endure new and strange trials.



## The Prodigal Mage

By Karen Miller

Harper Voyager

Reviewed by Cassie Pearce

Supplied for review by

HarperCollins Publishers

**The Prodigal Mage** by Karen

Miller is book one in the Fisherman's Children series. I misunderstood and thought this was book one in a NEW series but in fact it is a continuation of the story surrounding Asher the Innocent Mage.

It was difficult to get immersed in this new universe and the story assumed that one had read the previous books. The story didn't seem to pick up until well past halfway and it wasn't overly exciting. It took me ages to read and it wasn't until the last quarter of the book that the story actually picked up and was enjoyable to read. One definitely needs to read the entire series of books in this universe.

In *The Prodigal Mage* the story continues with the life of Asher and his wife Dathne, Rafel and Deenie their children. Is the great hero of the previous books just a normal father and husband now? Does he still have the power to help the new challenges facing the land of Lur? Asher defeated the wicked Wizard Morg and killed him and now Lur is at peace but cut off from the rest of the world by the magic that a previous magician laid down. Every time Asher helps the people of the Lur they resent him and don't appreciate his help.

The native inhabitants, The Olken, of Lur are intolerant of the new comers the Doranen, and visa versa. Rafel feels that he should be allowed to use his magical powers but his Dad won't let him. The Doranen are allowed to use magic that he is forbidden to use. Why is Asher hiding books with magic locks that Rafel feels he should be allowed to access? The ending of this book is a cliff hanger and the reader is in no doubt that a second book needs to be read to complete the tale. Whilst the story was difficult to dive into, the ending was exciting and made the reader want to continue to find out more.

## Undead and Unwelcome:

### Undead Book 8

Mary Janice Davidson

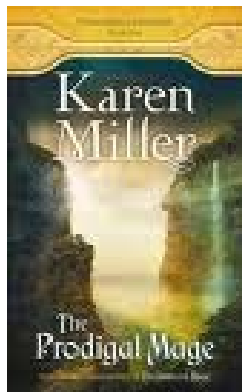
Published by Piatkus

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

Betsy (never Elizabeth) Taylor is a shoe addict, vampire queen and suburban housewife. She's also the foster mother to her baby half-brother, BabyJon, and half-sister to the devil's daughter, Laura. She's going to Cape Cod with her husband, Sinclair, best friend, Jessica, BabyJon, and the body of her werewolf friend Antonia. Betsy promised to return Antonia to her Pack after she died saving Betsy's life.

In Cape Cod they stay with Michael, the leader of the Pack, and meet his young daughter and Heir, Lara. They



appear before the Pack's Council to give a statement about Antonia's death. Betsy wants to avoid a vampire/werewolf war but everything she does seems designed to provoke one, such as goading a werewolf to stake her. All the time, Betsy is getting incomprehensible emails from her friend Marc, who she left to housesit. An army of satanists have surrounded the house in order to worship Laura. They do whatever she says. And Sinclair's vampiric PA, Tina, is missing.....

The 8<sup>th</sup> book in the Undead series, this book is a perfect read for when you want to switch off and escape. Described as Sex in the City with vampires It's fun and frothy. This is a light hearted book about a vampire queen obsessed with Manolo Blahnicks and I want to read the rest of the series now! For those who haven't, there is a summary of events so far in the front of the book.

There are also some really interesting acknowledgments that must have a great story behind them.

## Waking the Witch: Otherworld Book 11

Kelley Armstrong

Published by Orbit

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

After five years of learning the

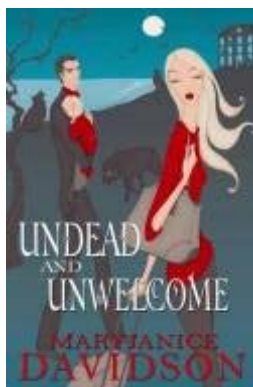
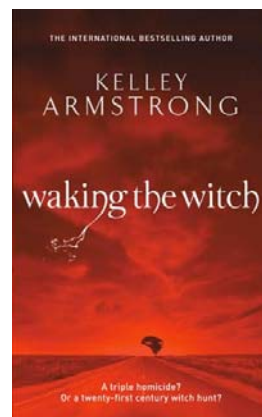
ropes at her foster parents' private investigators firm,

Savannah is finally left in charge when they go on a holiday. The firm deal with matters for the supernatural community and, when given the chance to investigate a murder case that may involve ritual sacrifice, Savannah jumps at the opportunity.

Other people are also investigating the murders – Kayla, the 10 yr old daughter of the first victim and Michael, the police officer brother of the second. Sharing information over dinner with Michael, Savannah learns his sister was in town undercover to investigate a local cult. The married boyfriend of Kayla's mother is a strong candidate for the murders, as is the local cult leader.

Savannah's not convinced though, as there are supernatural elements to the murders and the suspects are human. The daughter of notorious parents, a powerful dark witch and a cutthroat sorcerer, Savannah is a powerful witch who doesn't scare easily. After Michael falls to his death she gets worried enough to call in some backup from Jesse, the telekinetic half demon who gave her the case. With Jesse guarding her back, Savannah can breathe easier as she works to solve the case, while avoiding the witch-hunter stalking her.....

This is the 11<sup>th</sup> book in the Otherworld series and is tightly plotted with interesting twists and turns. Human depravities collide with supernatural evilness in this struggle for the truth, and old enemies return. More background is given on witch-hunters, suggesting they will play a part in the next book. I really enjoyed this book; it kept me guessing and is another exciting read from Kelley Armstrong. I did not see the ending coming and eagerly await the next book to see Savannah's next move.



**Bitten**

*Kelley Armstrong  
Published by Orbit  
Supplied by Hatchette*

*Reviewed by Jan Butterworth*  
Elena Michaels is special, the only female werewolf in the world. She has exiled herself from the pack to live a normal human life in downtown Toronto, with a normal job and a normal boyfriend. Someone is hunting her pack though, leaving freshly killed humans around their property. The local law enforcement thinks the culprits are wild dogs but the pack knows better. They call Elena to return home and help solve the mess. Though reluctant to go home, as that means she'll have to face the former lover who bit her and changed her into a werewolf, Elena needs to protect her pack.



Clayton Davenport is professor of anthropology who looks like a male model. He's also a werewolf known for being a psychopath, and Elena's ex, the one who bit her. They hunt the killers, then flee to Toronto to flush them out. They don't realise the killer has tracked them to the city and things get interesting, especially when Clay meets Elena's human boyfriend.

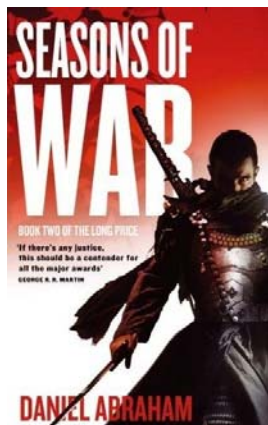
The strong heroines of the Underworld series have always appealed to me, and Elena is someone who doesn't want or need protection. This makes things a little tense with Clay, who considers protecting her to be part of his job. This is a tightly written story with lots of action, some romantic undertones and a few 'oh, I didn't see that coming' moments. I highly recommend this book to paranormal fans who enjoy fast paced plots.

**Seasons of War**

*Book Two of the Long Price  
Daniel Abraham  
Orbit, pp674*

*Reviewed by Jacqui Smith*

We have an even higher page count for the second half of the "Long Price", and it's a hefty tome indeed. This is Books Three and Four, published in the US as the separate volumes "An Autumn War" and "The Price of Spring" back in 2008/9, but in the UK as a single volume. One thing I wish said publishers wouldn't do is to slap a glowing appraisal from another writer, who is known to collaborate with the author in question, right on the front cover. As far as I'm concerned, that's no recommendation.



That said, there is much to commend here. In "An Autumn War", our hero Otah has become Khai Machi, and now the Galts are about to invade. Which wouldn't be much of a problem, except that the Galtic General, Balasar Gice, is a man with a mission. He wants to get rid of the andat, the magical personifications of principle who are the both the Khaiem's weapon of mass destruction, and vital to their economy. Moreover, he is a man with a plan, and he's figured out how to achieve that

objective. With the aid of a renegade poet, he succeeds... and with their deterrent gone, the Cities of the Khaiem topple like dominos before his armies. He kills the poets, and burns their books... It all looks hopeless. And in desperation, Maati, one of the last poets, in the far mountain city of Machi, succeeds in summoning an andat. But it isn't quite bound, and it exacts its price on both the Khaiem and the Galts.

Which brings us to "The Price of Spring" and a truly messy situation for Otah, who is now the only remaining Khai, and Emperor of a very literally dying empire. He tries for a political solution, beginning with marrying his son to the daughter of a senior member of the Galtic council. Meanwhile, Maati has gathered around him a secret school of clever young girls who are developing a new, women's grammar, in the hope of summoning and binding new andat. Naturally, neither of these plans go particularly smoothly, and there is a lot more pain, suffering and death, before a wise and brave young woman brings it all to a satisfactory conclusion, bringing a very literal healing to both nations.

I remember one writer declaiming to us at a convention that classical fantasy was a dying genre, and that the life was now in the offshoot genre of urban fantasy. I'm glad to report that he was wrong. While writers like Daniel Abraham are producing great, well-crafted and innovative work like the "Long Price", fantasy surely has to be one of the liveliest, most creative genres in literature today!

**Night Embrace**

*Sherrilyn Kenyon  
Published by Piatkus  
Supplied by Hatchette*

*Reviewed by Jan Butterworth*

Talon is a Celt warrior cursed by his ancient gods. After his sister was murdered he sold his soul to Artemis. In exchange for vengeance on his tribe he became a Dark-Hunter, fighting Daimons and rescuing the human souls they've captured.



Now assigned to New Orleans, Talon lives in a shack on a bayou surrounded by his pet alligators. As with all Dark-Hunters, Talon is a major hottie, with a penchant for black leather.

Sunshine Runningwolf is a talented artist with a big heart and lousy taste in men. After being rescued by Talon from a Daimon attack, she becomes a pawn in the plot of a Celtic war god and a Greek god, to torment and kill him. She has to save the day, as well as trying to convince the Greek goddess Artemis to return Talon's soul. Luckily her grandmother is even more powerful than the gods.....

The second Dark-Hunter book, this has action, romance and good vs. evil. There are many hints about Acheron's past, leader of the Dark-Hunter's; he is a background figure who appears lot in the book. Talon and Sunshine's story is exciting and well written. It's a bit steamy so parents, be warned before letting your tween read it. One thing that amused me about the Dark-Hunters is that for a secret society that humans can't know about, a lot of people seem to!

# KNIGHT AND DAY

Directed by James Mangold  
Produced by Cathy Konrad  
Todd Garner  
Steve Pink  
Written by Patrick O'Neill  
Starring Tom Cruise  
Cameron Diaz

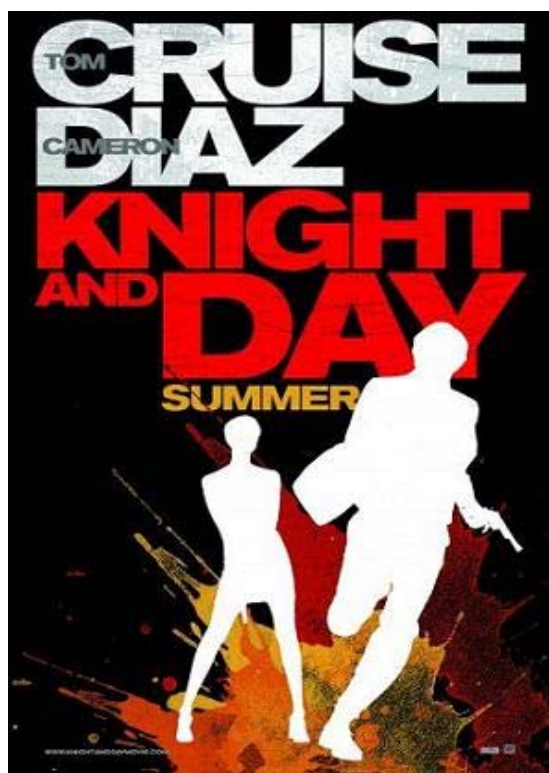
Reviewed by Jon Hardy

Knight and Day is an interesting movie. It's like a James Bond with a little bit of Sci-Fi, which is then mixed in with a love interest and plenty of car chases.

Tom Cruise plays a bit of an oddball character in the style of a Lethal Weapon Mel Gibson. He is annoying, but this is in a good way and is relevant to the style of the story. Not too much can be said about the Cruise character Roy Miller as this would give away the plot and his character's motivations.

In the movie there are lots of explosions and some improbable Hollywood action events which will keep you amused. This makes for a nice dumb fantasy Bond-like movie that does not require you to think too much. You just need sit back and enjoy the pretty locations that range from American to European and more. A nice touch is how the main character is still a bit of a mystery man as you generally only see what happens from June Havens's (Cameron Diaz) point of view.

Nothing is too heavy in this movie; there are just lots of expensive special effects and explosions, some nasty bad guys and a quirky ending.



## THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Directed by Jon Turteltaub  
Produced by Jerry Bruckheimer  
Screenplay by Matt Lopez  
Lawrence Konner  
Story by Doug Miro  
Carlo Bernard  
Starring Matt Lopez  
Nicolas Cage  
Jay Baruchel

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

The regular school holiday "which movie" debate ran into a bit of a road block when the on-line reviews for "Cats & Dogs: the Revenge of Kitty Galore" told me that it was a proper bit of doggy-do. So, after some discussion we went to see "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" instead—and we were not disappointed. At least, I wasn't...

They say there are only seven stories—and this is very definitely one of them. To be precise, it's the one about the old guy with the reluctant student - who then has to find himself and his powers, and goes on to save the world. It's predictable as heck, but it's very, very well done, worth it just for the scene with the magically animated broomsticks. Yes, this is "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" from "Fantasia" writ large and live action. It is pretty lively—the kid loved the car chase, and the dragon was cool, too. Somebody put a bit of thought into how the magic worked for this movie too, and it's clever, invoking mentalism and physics. Some not half bad acting from Nicholas Cage as the crusty old mentor, too. Pity about how it's the old Merlin versus Morgana story though—please could we dig up some other legend, next time? And there is definitely room for a sequel. Mickey's pointy hat says so!

## Au Contraire – A Retrospective

Well, they did it. They said that they were going to run a con that brought back much of the feel of the early conventions and, my gosh, they pulled it off. Some said it could not be done but they did.

There was at least five streams of programming consisting of three main ones and some auxiliary choices. For once I felt I would have to clone myself a few times as there were quite a few interesting options that were alongside each other, and the programming was such that the only breaks I had were the ones scheduled. There was basically something for everyone with topics ranging from costuming through filking and the more serious literary discussions. Many of the programming ideas I don't think had been seen at earlier conventions.

Bringing in the cosplayers sparked some life into the masquerade. Sure, the number of entries were still down on early conventions but the quality of the entrants more than made up for that. It is hoped that this trend continues, injecting new costume ideas, which will encourage hall costumes and more competition entries.

Basically it was a fun convention. My one disappointment was the Carter Observatory trip against the Masquerade but as it turned out, that wasn't the con-com's fault. It was just when Carter's public night was. Also the weather decided to rain nearly all weekend which caused the horsetrekking on Monday to be cancelled. Again, not the con-com's fault.

There may not have been the fannish spontaneity that many of the early conventions had (elevator parties and the Bald Tribble Sanctuary came immediately to mind) but we are all getting older. Met some interesting people. The proximity to the Australian Worldcon meant there were some overseas fen in attendance as well so there were new people to talk to.

But, all in all, a rather interesting and enjoyable convention.



*The Con is Over— and the Concom are Happy!*



*GOH Sean Williams*



*A Random Panel*





# Au Contraire Masquerade



CONVENTIONS

## AussieCon IV The 68<sup>th</sup> World Science Fiction Convention.

Melbourne, Australia – September 2010.

### A Photographer's View.— by Keith Smith

Finally – a Worldcon that we could get to that didn't involve long trips on a plane and lots of airport security. However, I knew it wasn't going to be as big as LACon4 or Denvention, but I'm not sure it was even as big as Aussiecon II. Location-wise there was a lot of walking, especially if you wanted to find real food that wasn't outrageously expensive, but at least it wasn't raining – some of the time.

Again, there was a lot of choices in the programming with several streams and a lot of choice, which was expected. Hardly any hall costumes but having to deal with baggage allowances may have been a factor. Still, the Star Wars group certainly stepped up to the plate and their presentation was fun to watch. Now I just have to figure out how to make light-sabres glow.

Frankly, I was disappointed with the way the Masquerade was run, especially from a photographer standpoint. No provision had been made for a photographer's area, as is done at the USA Worldcons. Flash photography is disallowed during the Masquerade itself (reasonable) which means you have to deal with whatever lighting they use, wind up the sensitivity of the camera, and use a long lens. However, when flash photography was allowed the contestants were up on the stage and the photographers were down in the pit, which meant the angles were wrong as we had to shoot upwards. It was basically paparazzi style shooting (which I dislike) and, if I have anything to do with it, it will not happen for the NZ 2020 bid.

The Huxster's Hall was a lot smaller than the US Cons which, again, wasn't surprising. Getting the trade goods down there would be rather expensive and a lot of the usual traders didn't bother.

All in all, not a bad convention although I got the impression that it was a little ad hoc.

## Just a Moment or Two From a WorldCon...

By Terri Doyle

After the Hugo Awards, another small child dressed in her Sunday best came rushing out and had great fun using the hallway seats as a jungle gym - obviously she had followed her parent's instructions to the letter ("Stay put and stay quiet until it's over."). I was smiling to myself at her enthusiasm - brings back memories - when she turned to me and grinned: her face still covered in the zombie make-up from the kids workshop earlier in the day!

Kids in costumes... Small child wearing Purple People Eater outfit was busy shredding it as she was convinced by parents (a lot of convincing needed) to go onstage at the Masquerade. It held up long enough for the audience to see, but I'm not sure how much the judges saw...

And speaking of the Masquerade, having seen photos from other WorldCons, I was expecting a couple of dozen entries. [And the rest—Ed] Nope. OK, it takes effort and luggage space to bring a costume from the US, but...[You would have expected more from the Australians-Ed].

My favourite Masquerade entry? Cuddly Cthulhu without a doubt! (Although the astronaut would be a close second).

Masquerade MC got himself into a bit of hot water for his comments regarding a certain (now deceased) StarTrek actor, and had to (?) publish an apology in the next con newsletter.



# AussieCon 4 Masquerade



CONVENTIONS

# Some Conventional Advice...

By Chris Kerr

Okay, if I could have your attention please... attention... yes, look this way please... well, here we all are again at another convention, and what a great turnout we have! It's great to see so many people here. Man, this thing just gets better every year, doesn't it? More visitors, more special guests, more competitions, more stalls. This is our best year to date, and we just keep getting stronger.

But you know, what I'm thinking is, maybe we could do things a little differently this year. Establish a couple of, well, you know, guidelines for what goes on here and *just as importantly*, what goes on before you get here. Now, I realise that most of you have been coming here for years. Right from the very first year, some of you. It's great to see you here again each year and I realise you've gotten used to the way things have always worked, but I think that if we pull together and make an effort we can make things even *better*.

So I'd like to make a few suggestions. Well, they're more than suggestions – let's say they're *very strong* suggestions.

First: shower before coming.

It shows a bit of respect for yourself and for others and I think we all – what? No Bob, it won't wash off your protective epidermis. No, it won't. No. Soap doesn't do that. How do I–? Well, because I *use* it, Bob. Every day.

Second: deodorant. A lot of people packed together in one building, a hot day, a lot of excitement... things can get a little, well, *close* in here. Anything we do to lighten the atmosphere, ha ha – what? Yes, alright Bob, you're excused. Yes, I understand you have allergies.

Third: I've heard some of you remarking on how many hot chicks are here this year. It's true, and I think we're very fortunate. Moreover, we're hoping they'll come back again *next* year, so please don't stare at them like you've never seen a girl before. You can stare at the booth babes on the gaming level, that's what they're here for.

Fourth: please don't corner people and lecture them about Yu-Gi-Oh. If they ask you about it, then go ahead, and if you see them in the Yu-Gi-Oh gaming area, you can at least assume they have an interest, but outside – yes, what do you want, Bob? A Blue Eyes White Dragon card? That's great, but put it away until later. No. No, I don't want to

see your collection. No, I probably won't have time later.

Fifth: (and this is mainly for you ladies), can we have less squealing of 'kawaii' around the anime plushie stall and viewing rooms? Or could we at least have it at a normal pitch. You have to remember that voices carry in this place, and people are getting headaches.

Sixth: be careful with the toys. What you have to keep in mind about bey blades is that they have sharp edges, and yo-yos are pretty solid and heavy. They can do some real damage if you don't have your mind on what you're doing. We put them to the side so you can try them without worrying too much about passers-by, but you still need to be careful of no Bob I'm not going to look at your bruise people as they walk by.

Lastly, you may have already heard rumours about it, so I'd like to clarify the incident and keep it from blowing up out of proportion: there was a regrettable event earlier at one of the anime merchandise stands on the top floor. Specifically, the stand selling hentai figurines. I've spoken to the people involved, and the store owner is willing to forget about it, but from now on we're going to ask that store owners keep that kind of merchandise at the *back* of the stand where it can't be handled – oh, you bought them both, Bob? Well that's good, because I don't think anyone else would now, but no, it doesn't really make it okay.

In conclusion, let's make this the best convention ever! Thanks for your time. Don't forget to drop by the best costume competition this afternoon, and one of our guests from *Stargate SG1* will be giving a talk in the auditorium.

...hold on Bob, don't go away yet. I've arranged a special treat just for you. Some of the orcs from *Lord of the Rings* are waiting to meet you in the service area behind the convention centre...

[Please note—this article is mainly about the "Armageddon" Pulp Culture Expos past and future—and "Bob" is NOT a real person, but a compilation of fans we have known, and sometimes wish we hadn't—Ed.]



# How to Get a WorldCon Bid for One Hundred and Thirty Seven Dollars and Change

So it's late Sunday evening on August 29th at the Comatose Cat party at Au Contraire. It's been a great convention, made even better by the presence of many overseas fans who have popped by on their way to the WorldCon in Melbourne.

As is traditional, BASFA (the Bay Area Science Fiction Association, Motto: "We do these things not because they are difficult but because they are weird") is holding a club meeting, because there are three or more members present. I being one of them. Dave Gallaher then mentions that it's traditional to auction off a member of BASFA. Preferably someone with a birthday that day or close... No one? Well how about six months from now?

Well, my birthday is about 6 months from now so I decide to join in the fun and offer myself to be bid on. (Somewhere in here I get made the Ministerial Ambassador to the Land of the Colossal Squid... It's all a bit fuzzy.) Tom Parsons opens the bidding, and then Sean Williams joins in. Oh, so innocently. And the amount rises with other people joining in. And Sean has a somewhat calculated expression on his face. But what could possibly go wrong?

The bidding continues, with other people drop out, leaving Tom and Sean bidding... And then Sean runs out of cash.

So people start handing him cash to keep bidding. And so it goes. Back and forth. Up and down. Sideways and frontways. Eventually Tom runs out of cash, and Sean is left as the winner, holding other people's cash as well as his own. He's then declared the winning bidder, and he turns to me, and in tones of great innocence says "Norman, I want you to run a WorldCon in New Zealand in 2020."

My jaw drops, and before I can express anything beyond astonishment, people are flinging money at me. Literally, flinging money at me.

So what can I say, but "YES!"

And then the power and generosity of fandom comes to the fore. Someone (I believe it was Tom Parsons) suggested the tag line of "New Zealand in 2020 : A Perfect Vision". And René Walling (Canada) is having a brain wave about an eye chart logo. And a bunch of fans have gathered around offering their help. Kurt Baty (USA) offers to get t-shirts made at AussieCon 4. Jannie Shea (USA) is offering her help with art shows and exhibits. Kate Kligman is offering help with the Hugos.

Within two hours, we have a domain and a website thanks to James Shields from Ireland. And in the next few days René has come back with a great fern design for the bid.

By AussieCon 4 Spike (USA) has found a company in Australia that can make 200 badges and get them to us at the convention in time. Kurt and James scour Wellington before they leave for AussieCon and pick up a bunch of decorations for a bid table at AussieCon 4. AussieCon 4 kindly find space for us to have a bid table.

And then at AussieCon 4 so many fans volunteered to sit on the bid table. And also brought typical New Zealand sweets over with them.

We were humbled and grateful that the Texas in 2013 and London in 2014 bids were so welcoming to us, and even invited us to take part in their Friday night bid party. As the designated Russians.

We were moved by the number of people who dropped by the bid table after the Christchurch earthquake to offer their support and sympathies.

And I was exhausted by the end of it. Before Au Contraire I had expected to have a nice quiet WorldCon. Go to some panels. Meet some people. Browse the art show. But no. Instead I was thrust into the hurly burly and exhilaration of starting a WorldCon bid... So I've now had some time to reflect. And here's what I've been thinking.

1. Never trust Sean Williams when he's looking innocent. He may be just remembering a conversation he had with you minutes ago where you unguardedly mentioned your desire to run a WorldCon in New Zealand...
2. Fans are awesome when fired up. Truly unstoppable. Generous. Kind. Ingenious. And quite willing to help push you over a cliff. I'm grabbing hold of them and they're coming over with me.
3. It's going to take a lot of work and support from fandom here in New Zealand and from all over the world to pull off a WorldCon in New Zealand. I'm out there marching in front. But without the band, it's just a silly dance. We need fans to join the band. Then we'll be able to pull off a world class convention.

If you want to support the New Zealand in 2020 bid, then go to <http://www.nzin2020.org/>. Sign up for the newsletter, or Like us with the Facebook link there. We will update you as we have more information. In the mean time, it would be worth practicing for a WorldCon by helping out at your local conventions. Perhaps volunteer to be in charge of one aspect, large or small.

If you really want to learn something there is always SmofCon. In 2010, it's in San Jose, Dec 3rd-5th. You can get more details at <http://http://www.smofcon28.org/>. Anyone want to go as a group? Let's really surprise them and get a bunch of New Zealanders to this SmofCon...



By Norman Cates

# The Sky at Night – October 2010

By Keith Smith

I'm beginning to wonder if I should be writing about various types of clouds instead as many nights have been cloud covered. And if it's not cloud it's all these bright street lights that affect the viewing of the stars. Too much light is being spilled upwards and is wasted. Maybe the new Supercity council will do something about it but, frankly, I don't see it happening.

Still, if you can get away from city lights and there is no moon, then the night sky can be a spectacular sight, no matter what time of the year.

Mercury will be making an appearance as the month rolls on. It's currently very low on the western horizon just after sunset but it's angular separation from the sun is increasing so it will become easier to see.

Venus is also pulling a disappearing act while moving from the evening to the morning sky.

Mars is also very low on the western horizon after sunset.

In contrast, Jupiter is very bright and is high in the north, setting an hour or so after midnight. Meanwhile Saturn is joining Venus in the disappearing act and will be rising in the morning sky later in November.

If you want a challenge and if you have a pair of binoculars, or a small telescope, see if you can find Uranus and Neptune. Uranus is a faint naked eye object and, before it was recognised as a planet it was actually included in earlier star charts as a star. Currently Uranus is located near Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces. Neptune is in Capricorn and you will definitely require binoculars or a telescope to find it. Finder guides for both planets can be found on the Internet. (Such as here from the Royal NZ Astronomical Society: <http://www.rasnz.org.nz/SolarSys/10UranNept.htm>).



runs along the horizon line but, if you've got a really dark sky, and look south, you will see two patches of what looks like clouds but are actually satellite galaxies, being the Lesser and Greater Magellanic Clouds. There are some rather interesting objects in that area. The globular cluster, 47 Tucana, is near the SMC and the LMC contains the Tarantula Nebula.

Because we missed a month or so because of the Worldcon, the three bright stars, which in the Northern Hemisphere know was the Summer Triangle are now already disappearing. These are, with their host constellation in brackets, Vega (Lyrae) Deneb (Cygnus) and Altair (Aquila). From here, both Vega and Deneb are low on the horizon so you really only see the full triangle in September/October and only if you don't have a high northern horizon and the blazing lights of central Auckland City to contend with. The triangle effect is mostly lost down here but I assure you, it is rather noticeable in the USA.

Another object that we would be fighting to see here in South Auckland is the Andromeda Galaxy, also known as M31. It is low on the NE horizon in November but should be in a better position in December. What should be visible, due north in the November evenings is the Square of Pegasus. This consists of four relatively bright stars, three from Pegasus and one from Andromeda. Directly above that, is one of Pisces' fishes.

Finally, Matariki should be starting to appear in the east in the evening sky.

## The Moon:

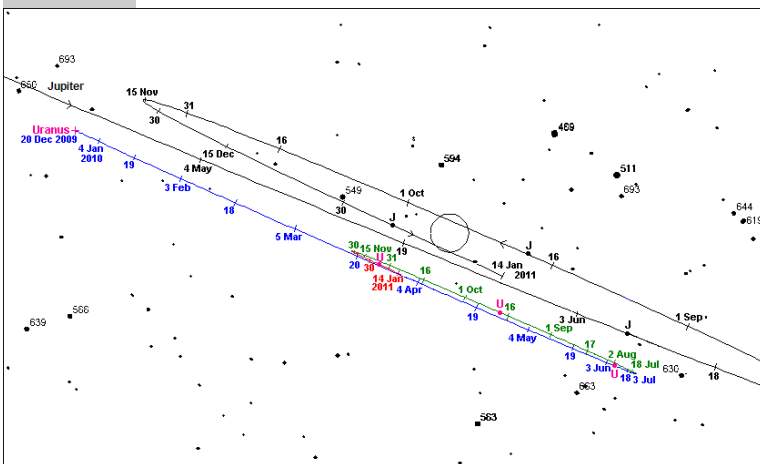
- Full Moon – 23<sup>rd</sup> October
- Last Quarter – 29<sup>th</sup> October
- New Moon – 6<sup>th</sup> November
- First Quarter – 14<sup>th</sup> November
- Full Moon – 22<sup>nd</sup> November
- TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE – 21<sup>st</sup> December

## Meteor Showers:

The Leonids, peaking around the 17<sup>th</sup> November.

More information can be found at:

- <http://www.astronomy.co.nz/pub/home.asp>
- <http://www.astronomy.org.nz/>
- <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/index.html>



The Southern Cross is low on the southern horizon which means the bright star Achernar, which the major axis of the Cross points to, is nearly overhead. The Milky Way

# Obits

(compiled by Jacqui Smith)

August 18

**Robert Gundlach** (aged 84)

American physicist and the inventor of the modern photocopier.

August 24

**Sir Graham Liggins** (aged 84)

New Zealand medical scientist, who pioneered the use of hormone injections to accelerate the lung growth of premature babies. This made it possible for many premature babies with lung problems to survive. (Including my son, Paul-Ed).

September 10

**Edwin Charles Tubb**

(aged 90)

British science fiction author of over 140 novels and 230 short stories and novellas. E.C. Tubb is best known for "The Dumarest Saga".

September 11

**Kevin McCarthy** (aged 96)

American actor, played the lead in "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (1956).

September 22

**Van Snowden** (aged 71)

American puppeteer, best known for performing the title character in "H.R. Pufnstuf" and performing in a number of Sid and Marty Krofft productions. Also performed the Chucky character in the 1988 horror film, "Child's Play", the Crypt Keeper in "Tales from the Crypt".

October 13

**Donald H. Tuck** (aged 87)

Australian science fiction bibliographer. His "Handbook of Science Fiction and Fantasy" was awarded a Special Hugo Award in 1962, while "The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy" won both a 1979 World Fantasy Award and a 1984 Hugo Award. He was the Australian Guest of Honor at Aussiecon I in 1975, but failed to attend the convention.

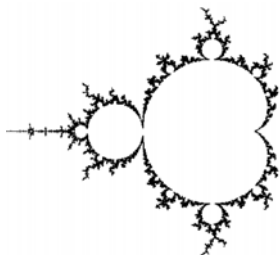
October 14

**Alain Le Bussy** (aged 63)

Belgian SF writer, won the Prix Rosny-Aîné in 1993 for his novel Deltas. Active member of science fiction fandom, creator of the fanzine Xuensè and an organizer of science fiction conventions. In 1995, he was inducted into the European Science Fiction Society Hall of Fame.

**Benoît Mandelbrot** (aged 85)

Polish-born French-American mathematician, pioneer of the study of fractals. He coined the term "fractal" and first described the Mandelbrot set.



## Uncorked by Broderick Wells

### What's my name again?

Hands up everybody who went to Worldcon and bought their allotment of booze. Personally, I was disappointed by the selection available in the Duty Free shops. No absinthe, no slivovitz, and quite a few nasty vodkas. Naturally, I have taken it upon myself to save you from all the cheap and nasty alcohol, and advise you to hand over any single malt whiskies you may have bought for quality inspection.

On a brighter note, I did enjoy the Land of Oz, and almost got a part in a radio play (*Girl Genius and the Revenge of the Weasel Queen*). Missed the audition because I was holding forth on the joys of real beer. I bought a few books too, as it always looks better if one has reading material to while away the hours on the park bench. Some of the larger volumes make for excellent pillows.

I got to watch a few interesting films on the flights there and back. The new *Sherlock Holmes* movie was splendid fun, even if there were a few interruptions due to turbulence. Pity I caught such an early flight, as the trolley dollies didn't offer much to drink. Question, has Air New Zealand joined the Temperance League? My faith was much improved when I got several free glasses of passable red on the way back. I'm sure that's what kept my cold from developing in raging pneumonia. Can't remember what other films I watched on the plane, so they must have been innocuous offerings. Wait a moment; *Prince of Persia* was a pleasing romp with Ben Kingsley doing a suitable villain. Not a stellar film, but at least they threw in a meal and a flight for the price of admission.

Melbourne certainly seemed a nice enough town when I was there, but the weather reminded me too much of Auckland – wet with occasional sun. The fleapit hotel was acceptable, but if I have to stay in another hotel that lets in the likes of me, I don't know what I'll do. Melbourne airport wasn't as exciting as Warsaw's Frederick Chopin international Airport, and nowhere seemed to be pushing decent hot drinks. Very disappointing for the experienced international traveller. On the plus side, there were a number of bid parties offering free drinks of the alcoholic kind. I particularly liked the London 2014 (or was that 2013) party, with free quality single malts. I hope they do the same at the London Worldcon as it surely would be a good reason for attending.

This weekend, I've been delegated to show my face at some do out in Titirangi. The address seems awfully familiar, and I'm wondering – didn't Thorin live there? More news in the next exciting instalment from Broderick Wells, your lush about town.

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# ConText 2011 SF Convention in Auckland

ConText will be held over Queen's Birthday weekend in Auckland, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June. The venue has been changed to the Quality Hotel Barrycourt, 10-20 Gladstone Road, Parnell.

Catherine Asaro, an American author of both science fiction and fantasy novels, will be the GoH. The fan GoH will be Lynelle Howell, editor of Phoenixine and an active Wellington fan. Also attending will be Helen Lowe, the Christchurch based author of the Heir series, of which the first 'The Wall of Night' was released earlier this month. The crew are also in negotiations with other potential guests.

This is a marvellous opportunity for anyone who enjoys science fiction to participate in 4 days of sharing their hobby with other fans. There will be discussion panels, organised gaming, costuming events, the Quiz, a video stream and a chance to buy science fiction related items. The winners of the 2011 Sir Julius Vogel Awards for Excellence in New Zealand Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror will be announced on the Sunday night at the Conjunction Banquet.

Full and day memberships will be available if you wish to attend for one or two days only. Organised events will be going into the early evening. The bar will be open all day until late.

The Barrycourt Hotel is holding a block of rooms for convention attendees. Book directly and quote the reference number 64913 to ensure you receive the rates.

Phone: +64 9 303 3789  
Facsimile: +64 9 377 3309  
<http://www.barrycourt.co.nz/reservations@barrycourt.co.nz>

### Standard King Room

King bed, ensuite bathroom, coffee & tea facilities. LCD TV, DVD, writing desk. Some rooms with amazing city & harbour views. Rate includes car parking & daily newspaper (on request). \$109.00 per night including GST (maximum 2 pax)

### Double Room

1 Queen & 1 Single bed, ensuite bathroom, coffee & tea facilities, private balcony. LCD TV, DVD, writing desk. Some rooms with amazing city & harbour views. Rate includes car parking & daily newspaper (on request). \$129.00 per night including GST (maximum 2 pax)

### 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 None this month due to Labour Day.  
SPACE 7:30pm 5th November  
Martin and Raewyn's in New Windsor  
BOG Saturday 16th August,  
2pm onwards at Louise's.

### Next Meeting:

Wednesday 17 October, 2010  
7:30pm  
Auckland Horticultural Centre,  
990 Great North Road,  
Western Springs  
Topic: RPGs (preceded by quick crew meeting)



## Upcoming Events:

**October 23-25th 2010 Armageddon**  
Auckland Expo - - ASB Showgrounds  
<http://armageddonexpo.com/nz/>

**June 3-6th 2011 Context**  
2011 New Zealand NatCon in Auckland  
[http://context.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://context.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)