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LoneStar Con 3

(Photo by Keith Smith)

Issue XXXVIII - Oct 2013

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Musings from Under the Mountain

Well, we're back... It was a very long holiday, and quite an experience—or more accurately a succession of experiences that ticked a number of items off the bucket list. It was probably too long for our son Paul, who was really aching to get home to his friends.

But right now I'd like to look at events quite early in our holiday, and to talk about conventions in general and the WorldCon in particular. At previous WorldCons Paul had been a child and we'd been happily entertained in the children's room. Now, at fifteen, he was too old for the kids program (or so he felt) and too young for the adult programming. He was bored... and I could see his point. So many panel discussions, and not a lot else. Even I was finding many of the panels a bit tedious, especially those where the chair chose to actively discourage questions from the audience. Is it just me that prefers to ask a question in context, rather than leaving it until the end? So what did I enjoy most? Three things. First, there was an impromptu "Just a Minute" organised by Paul Cornell on the first evening, featuring Connie Willis and others. It was hilarious. Second, was the trivia game, "Trivia for Chocolate" that I tried out at the club meeting and I think you rather liked that idea too. Third, was the room parties, featuring an interesting range of free food and drink, but more importantly, good conversation. Now, what is quite evident is that these are all interactive events on some level. And that brings me to the point of this ramble.

If middle-aged adults like us are bored by the kind of events we are holding at our conventions (and dare I say it, at our club meetings), I can guarantee that younger people will be less than interested! And they'll vote with their feet. So, what can we do? Well, we're looking at the programme for Conclave II and we're planning to have less panels, less talking heads, and more interactive events. If there are things which work, please tell me so we can include them. We have to make this fun, interesting and exciting. Oh, and I'm sure we can find room for a session of "Just a Minute"!

Jacqui Smith, Editor

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Generational Changes

I'm writing this column just after Labour Weekend. This year, it was dominated by two different, but maybe not unrelated events: the passing, at the still-early age of seventy-one, of Lou Reed, and the Armageddon pulp culture expo.

The news media has already provided a number of obituaries for Lou Reed, so I don't need to rehash his life and influence on contemporary music, most notably with the Velvet Underground in the late sixties. Although his profile was never high (with the possible exception of his biggest hit from the early Seventies, 'Walk On The Wild Side') he influenced the style of many rock-and-rollers of the baby boomer generation, and guaranteed himself an important niche in popular culture.

His passing is a reminder that the baby boomers are getting older, and society and culture never stays still. I've already alluded to the western world's changing demographic and the relationship between older and younger fandom in my previous column, and I'm not going to repeat myself. Still, the question of generational change remains pertinent. So, what does this have to do with Armageddon? When I went along to the expo on Monday, crowds were heavy, and Bill reported that, after being static for several years, attendance numbers have been increasing recently, and reached a record high at this year's event. Although, being a commercial exposition, Armageddon is a different type of event from more purely fannish endeavours such as the Natcons, it's still encouraging to see a market, particularly amongst younger fans, for events that deal with imaginative fiction.

The thought that occurred to me while I was at Armageddon was that the younger generation who are attending such events wouldn't have come to SF and fantasy from nowhere; although they aren't necessarily high profile in society at large, earlier generations have had their creative voices in imaginative fiction, who have introduced many of the SF and fantasy tropes that occur in modern manifestations of fandom. In the same way that Lou Reed's life and work has had an extensive, although low-profile, influence on contemporary music, many creative individuals, even if now largely forgotten, have exercised a similar influence in expanding imaginative fiction from the tiny publishing ghetto of the pulp magazines of the 1930's to the large and diverse field we know today. Despite the aging of the baby boomers, our generation has established its mark on the history of popular culture in general, and of SF and fantasy in particular. As with everything else in society, fandom won't stand still, but the numbers of younger fans showing up for events such as Armageddon indicates that the legacy of older fans will still endure, and fandom will survive, and maybe even thrive, in some form in the decades to come. Perhaps we older fans can rest assured that the future is in safe hands after all!

Alan Parker, President, Stella Nova

Opening Ceremony



Guests of Honour



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Exhibition Hall



Talks and Panels



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*Pictures
from a
Masquerade*



Hugos—Brandon Sanderson with two of 'em

Closing Ceremony



The Sky at Night December 2013

Even though it was cloudy most of the time we were in England (sound familiar?), we did get a few clear nights which fortunately occurred while we were staying in a small town called Shepton Mallet, in Somerset. Three clear nights out of eight wasn't bad. I was going to take the photos in the lane near the boarding house where we were staying until a friendly local suggested I go down that way and onto a public walkway that went through a local farm. Definitely darker out there, but I had to be careful where I stepped.



arrival of Comet Ison (C/2012 S1). Some people have been claiming it's Nibiru (again), or some sort of object that has already zapped Mars, is currently affecting the Sun, and will be zapping us with a very strong magnetic field as it swings by on the way out. Where do they get this stuff from? What are they smoking (or drinking)? Is there a best selling science fiction novel in all this?

Comets are really just lumps of ice and rock. They begin somewhere in the outer solar system, in the Oort Cloud or the Kuiper Belt, that are perturbed by the gravity of a passing larger object and sent hurtling into the inner solar system on highly elongated elliptical orbits. Most take thousands of years to do one orbit, but some have been yanked by Jupiter into much

shorter orbits. These comets are known as 'periodic comets'. The most famous is Halley's Comet which comes around every 76 years. As the first comet known to be periodic its full name is 1P/Halley. The second one, 2P/Encke, with the shortest known period at only three years, is currently a bright binocular object low in the eastern sky, just before sunrise. Ison's full name marks the year of discovery, which half month in the year, and the order of discovery.



Being halfway around the world and in the wrong hemisphere definitely made the night sky look different. The Southern Cross was gone and constellations that are low on the northern horizon here were the other way up and higher in the sky. The northern sky there was dominated by the Big and Little Dipper, plus the 'W' of Cassiopeia. I wasn't completely lost as I do have a rough idea of what can be seen around the North Celestial Pole. In the popular astronomical news, there is the pending



by
Keith
Smith



Comet 51 Ison
Canary Islands 2 High Mag
Nov 7th, 2013 09:27:01 UTC
Taken by Keith Smith



The half month is designated by a letter of the alphabet (except I and Z) thus January is A/B, February is C/D etc. Ison was the first comet discovered in the latter half of September 2012 (the 21st) which is why it has the letter S. It was given the name of the organisation that discovered it—the International Scientific Optical Network. The prefix C stands for Comet but other prefixes are used such as 'P' for periodic (before it gets assigned a number once it makes a second pass and the periodicity is confirmed), 'D' for destroyed, 'X' for lost and 'A' if the comet turns out to be an asteroid.

Ison passed close to Mars on the 1st of October, will sweep around the sun on the 28th of November and, assuming it survives that, makes its closest approach (0.42AU) to Earth on the 26th December. On the way out, it'll be heading more north making it a more northern hemisphere object as it goes. Some people claim it will be a very bright comet, but as far as I'm concerned, it's going to be 'wait and see'. David H. Levy, co-discoverer of Comet Shoemaker-Levy, said "Comets are like cats. They have tails and they do precisely what they want". Try predicting what your average cat is going to do and you'll see what he meant. Comet Ison isn't the only one that comet watchers are keeping an eye on. C/2013 R1 Lovejoy has also been getting brighter lately but won't get to naked eye visibility. Small telescopes or binoculars may see it. Just like Ison, it is heading for northern skies after it goes around the sun on Christmas Day.

So, what else can we expect to see in the Night Sky? Planetary wise, we've got Venus in the western sky in the evening and Jupiter dominates the morning sky. By the start of next month it rises around midnight, and earlier



Comet Lovejoy (C2013 R1)
Canary Islands 2 Wide Field
Nov 6th, 2013 05:20:29 UTC
Taken by Keith Smith



as the month progresses, being visible in mid evening by the end of it. Mars and Saturn rise later, Mars first in the wee small hours and Saturn an hour or so before dawn.

The northern sky is dominated by the Great Square of Pegasus and you may be able to just make out a small smudge low in the north, if it's not drowned out by light pollution, which is the Andromeda Galaxy (M31). Taurus (containing Matariki), followed by Orion, is rising in the east while Scorpio and Sagittarius are setting. The Milky Way straddles the horizon so we're looking at right angles to the galactic plane. Both Magellanic Clouds are high in the south as is the bright star Achernar. Canopus is low in the east, with Sirius lower still.

Phases of the Moon (November):

Full Moon—17th November
Last Quarter—25th November

Phases of the Moon (December):

New Moon—3rd December
First Quarter—10th December
Full Moon—17th December
Last Quarter—26th December

COOKS IN SPACE!

by Jacqui

I thought you might like to see the recipe for the unusual Nutella cake I brought to SPACE at Teri's. It's from Jo Seagar's latest cookbook title, *A Bit of What You Fancy*. I received a review copy thanks to Random House NZ shortly after getting back from holiday, and I've found it a fun book of interesting recipes I can happily recommend as ones you'd actually use. I'm going to enjoy working through it – there's a lot more recipes I plan to try!

Nutella Chocolate Hazelnut Cake

300g Nutella
3 eggs
1 cup self-raising flour

Preheat the oven to 180 °C. Line a 20 cm cake pan with baking paper (Jo uses a round tin, but I prefer square tins for cakes to take). Beat together the eggs and Nutella, and then fold in the flour. Pour into the prepared tin, and bake for 25-30 minutes.

Frosting:

1/2 icing sugar
2 tbspcocoa
100g Nutella
250g cream cheese
1/2 cup chopped roasted hazelnuts
Sift the icing sugar and cocoa together into a bowl, and beat in the Nutella and cream cheese. Spread onto the cake and sprinkle over the hazelnuts (I used Halloween themed sprinkles instead).



by
Keith
Smith

Obituaries

August 2

Patricia Anthony, (aged 66), American science fiction and slipstream author who published her first science fiction novel in 1992 with *Cold Allies*, about the arrival of extraterrestrials in the midst of a 21st-century Third World War. This was followed by *Brother Termite*, *Conscience of the Beagle*, *The Happy Policeman*, *Cradle of Splendor*, and *God's Fires*, each of which combined science fiction plots with other genres in unconventional ways.

August 4

John Billingham, (aged 83), British-born American space scientist who was a former director of the SETI Program Office and former director of the Life Sciences Division at the NASA Ames Research Center.

August 7

Margaret Pellegrini, (aged 89), American actress, one of three surviving “munchkins” from “The Wizard of Oz”.



August 8

Derek Hockridge, (aged 79), British actor and translator, one of the co-translators who interpreted Asterix into English (without losing any of the jokes).



Barbara Mertz, (aged 85), American author, who wrote under her own name (two non-fiction works on Ancient Egypt) as well as under the pseudonyms Elizabeth Peters (the long-running Amelia Peabody series featuring the eponymous Egyptologist sleuth and other mystery series) and Barbara Michaels (gothic and supernatural thrillers). She won numerous awards and nominations in the mystery genre.



John Rankine, (aged 94), British science fiction author, who wrote books as John Rankine and Douglas R. Mason, including a number of spin-off novels in the *Space: 1999* universe.

August 14

Mark Sutton, (aged 42), British stuntman, parachutist who played James Bond in 2012 Summer Olympics opening ceremony. He died in a wingsuit flying accident near Les Grandes Oتانes in Switzerland.



August 19

Stephenie McMillan, (aged 71), British set decorator who designed the sets for all the Harry Potter movies, for which she was nominated for several Oscars and BAFTAs. She won an Oscar for “The English Patient”.



August 21

C. Gordon Fullerton, (aged 76), United States Air Force colonel, USAF and NASA astronaut, and research pilot at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Facility. His assignments included a variety of flight research and support activities piloting NASA's B-52 launch aircraft, the Boeing 747 Shuttle Carrier Aircraft (SCA), and other multi-engine and high performance aircraft. Fullerton. He logged more than 380 hours in space flight, was a NASA astronaut from September 1969 and flew on STS-3 and STS-51-F.

August 23

Gilbert Taylor, (aged 99), British cinematographer who was Director of Photography for numerous movies including “Star Wars”, “The Omen”, “Dr. Strangelove”, and “Flash Gordon”, as well as a number of episodes of the British TV series “The Avengers”.

August 25

William Froug, (aged 91), Highly influential American Emmy Award-winning television writer and producer involved with such shows as “Bewitched”, “The Twilight Zone”, and “Gilligan's Island”. Later, he taught screenwriting at UCLA, and literally wrote the book on the subject, authoring textbooks widely used in film schools around the world.

August 29

Bruce C. Murray, (aged 81), American planetary scientist. He was a director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory from 1976 to 1982 and co-founder of The Planetary Society. Among other achievements, he saved the Galileo mission to Jupiter from the budget axe.



August 30

Sir David Frost, (aged 74), British journalist, comedian, writer, media personality and television host. He was best known for interviewing Prime Ministers and Presidents, in particular Richard Nixon. He was host of *That Was The Week That Was* from 1962-63—one of its last and most memorable episodes went out on 23 November 1963, the day after the assassination of President Kennedy, and just five hours after the very first episode of *Doctor Who!*



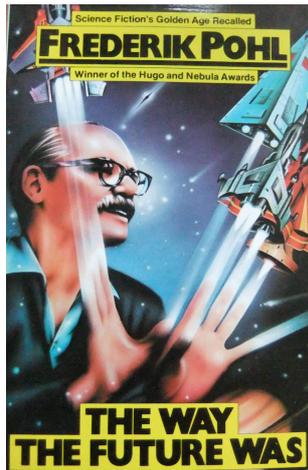
Compiled by Jacqui Smith



September 1
Ken Wallis, (aged 97), British aviator, engineer, and inventor. During the Second World War, Wallis served in the Royal Air Force and flew 28 bomber missions over Germany; after the war, he moved on to research and development, before

retiring in 1964. He later became one of the leading exponents of autogyros and earned 34 world records, still holding eight of them at the time of his death in 2013—he was the oldest pilot to set a world flight record, at the age of 89. Wallis worked as Sean Connery's stunt pilot in the 1967 James Bond film *You Only Live Twice*, where he flew one of his WA-116s named Little Nellie.

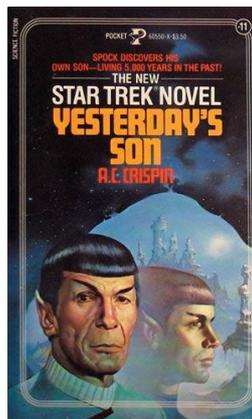
September 2
Frederik Pohl, (aged 93), American science fiction writer, editor and fan, whose career spanned more than seventy-five years—from his first published work, the 1937 poem *Elegy to a Dead Satellite: Luna*, to the 2011 novel *All the Lives He Led* and articles and essays published in 2012. His 1977 novel *Gateway* won the Hugo, Nebula, Locus and Campbell awards. He won four Hugo and three Nebula Awards, most recently the Hugo Award for Best Fan Writer in 2010, for his blog, *The Way the Future Blogs*. We learned of his death just after the closing ceremony at LoneStar Con 3, and fans were plainly saddened to hear it.



September 3
Donald Featherstone, (aged 95), British wargamer, and author of more than forty books on wargaming and military history. In 1966, he organised the first UK wargames convention.

September 5
Rochus Misch, (aged 96), German SS non-commissioned officer, who served as one of Hitler's bodyguards and couriers from 1940-45, and was the last survivor of the Führerbunker.

September 6
Ann C. Crispin, (aged 63), American science fiction author, primarily known for tie-in novels, such as "The Han Solo Trilogy" for Star Wars and "Yesterday's Son" and "Sarek" in the Star Trek universe. She also wrote an original series called "Starbridge", and was active in the SFWA.



Bill Wallis, (aged 76), British character actor, who among many roles, appeared in "Blackadder", and in "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy", originating the roles of Mr. Prosser and Prostetnic Vogon Jeltz.



September 11
Albert Jones, (aged 93), New Zealand amateur astronomer and a prolific observer of variable stars and comets. In 1963 he became the sixth astronomer in history to make 100,000 observations of variable stars and by 2004 he made more than 500,000 observations. In 1946 he discovered the comet C/1946 P1 (Jones) and in 2000 he co-discovered, together with Japanese astronomer Syogo Utsunomiya the comet C/2000 W1 (Utsunomiya-Jones), becoming the oldest comet discoverer. In 1987 he co-discovered the supernova SN 1987A in the Large Magellanic Cloud, which appeared to be the brightest naked-eye supernova explosion in the last 300 years.

September 12
Ray Dolby, (aged 80), American audio engineer and inventor of the noise reduction system known as Dolby NR. He was also a co-inventor of video tape recording while at Ampex. He was the founder of Dolby Laboratories and a billionaire.

September 16
Joan Hanke-Woods, (aged 67) American science fiction artist and fan. She won the Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist in 1986, after having been nominated for the award every year since 1980. She also worked professionally, illustrating works by Philip José Farmer, Michael Resnick, Theodore Sturgeon, and A. E. van Vogt, among others.



September 18
Stephen Malawista, (aged 79) American medical researcher and Professor of medicine within the rheumatology department of Yale University. [Malawista is credited as the co-discover of Lyme disease and led the research team which identified the disease.

September 19
Robert Barnard, (aged 76) English critic, lecturer, and crime writer of over 40 novels, awarded the Cartier Diamond Dagger in 2003 by the Crime Writers Association for a lifetime of achievement. As Bernard Bastable He published two standalone novels and two alternate history books starring Wolfgang Mozart as an elderly detective.

September 22
Gary Brandner, (aged 80) American horror author best known for his werewolf themed trilogy of novels, *The Howling*, which was loosely adapted into the movie of that name.

O B I T S

Compiled
by
Jacqui
Smith

Lockwood & Co. Book One The Screaming Staircase

by Jonathan Stroud

Published by Random House

Supplied by Random House NZ

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

Rapier-wielding teenage ghostbusters! Isn't that enough? (Well, it was too much for the American reviewer who thought rapier sounded too much like rape!) But, I suppose you're going to want a proper review. Firstly, Stroud comes up with an elegant excuse for teenagers being the protagonists of a mystery thriller, and getting themselves into life-threatening situations. They're young enough to see, hear and otherwise sense the presence of 'Visitors' otherwise known as ghosts, and old enough to be able to do something about it. Such as find the source, the object or location through which the ghost enters the world and neutralise it. Secondly, he can write exciting, funny, scary and evocative prose; the sort that draws you in and makes you want to keep reading. It's a tad formal, almost Victorian in tone, which had me confused as to when the novel was meant to be set. I was also left wondering just how old the personnel of Lockwood & Co. actually are, which may be a deliberate ploy on the part of the author, in order to broaden his potential audience. Certainly I'd be happy to give this book to any child from about twelve years of age who was looking for a good scary ghost story, but have caution with younger ones or sensitive children, you might well give them nightmares. Oh, and it's a fun read for adults, too.

(PS. In the process of finding an image for this review, I came upon the wikipedia page for the book, and it appears that there is a film in the offing—from the people who gave us "Despicable Me", and with a release date late 2014. Apparently the movie moguls are looking for another "Harry Potter").



Legion and the Emperor's Soul

by Brandon Sanderson

Published by Gollancz

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

Now, as I have stated elsewhere, electronic publishing is bringing about resurgence in the publication of novellas and novelettes. So what do print publishers do? The obvious is to gather up multiple stories and publish them as a single volume. These two novellas have nothing obvious in common except they're both by Brandon Sanderson; they're not even in the same genre (which may present a problem for some librarians). "Legion" is a science fiction story about a man with multiple personalities and a device for taking pictures of the past. It's beautifully



conceived, with a fascinating protagonist and very clever in the way that it satisfies the reader while leaving its central question unanswered. The "Emperor's Soul" is the fantasy tale that won the Best Novella at this year's Hugo Awards. Given that I voted for it, you may safely conclude that I liked it, at least better than the other nominees. It focuses on a novel form of magic, that of Forging, which involves rewriting the past so as to alter the present. The problem is that the Emperor has been not entirely successfully assassinated, and while his body has been healed, his mind is gone. It is up to Shai, imprisoned for attempting to replace the Moon Sceptre with a forgery, to Forge the Emperor's soul before the end of the hundred days of mourning for his wife. And there you have it, two novellas bound to together not by anything so obvious as setting or character, but by the way in which they both explore the nature of art, of time, and of the human condition.

On the Steel Breeze

by Alastair Reynolds

Published by Gollancz

Supplied by Hatchette NZ

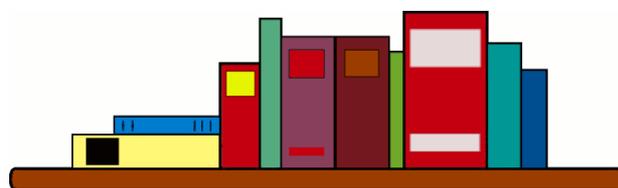
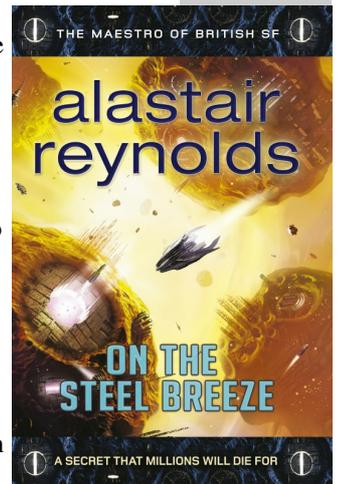
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

It's not often you come across pure hard science fiction these days, but Reynold's "Poseidon's Children" trilogy definitely qualifies. Though I have to say that I had no

idea at the time that I was reading the middle volume of a trilogy; although there were references to past events, and the story plainly isn't over by the end, this is a novel complete in itself. Set some hundreds of years in the future; it is the story of one woman, Chiku Akinya who has split herself into three... Chiku Red to go chasing after her great-grandmother who'd set out for interstellar space years before; Chiku Green to join the fleet of holoships heading at relativistic speeds towards 61 Virginis, where an Earth-like planet named Crucible carries mysterious evidence of extra-terrestrial intelligence in the form of the mysterious Mandela, a structure visible across the light-years;

and Chiku Yellow who remains on Earth. Of course, it's not that simple. For one thing, Chiku Red is missing, and for another, there's this small matter of slowing down those holoships. More importantly, their objective may not be entirely what they think it is...

It comes down to a familiar theme in science fiction, the conflict between biological intelligence and machine intelligence, but Reynolds has a whole new take on the struggle and on its resolution. This is a lengthy but engrossing novel, and although it could be tightened up in places and the ending is a bit abrupt, it's well worth reading. It has to be said though, that Reynolds has a thing about elephants.



Redshirts

by John Scalzi

Published by TOR

Supplied by Publisher for

Hugo Awards Voting Packet

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

As a preface to this review, I will point out that if you are happy to read books in electronic form, it might well pay you to sign up as a supporting member of the WorldCon. You'll get five each of novels, novellas and so on, delivered to you in your voting packet. They've all got through the Hugo nomination process, which means they've been chosen by fans as the best of the previous year's SF&F. And, of course, you'll get to vote on the Hugos. What more can you ask for? As it happens, I voted for "Redshirts" and it did in fact win the Hugo for Best Novel. However, I will admit that I hadn't actually had time to read the whole thing before voting – just the first chapter or so. That was enough to convince me that this was the deserving novel - clever, funny and a witty satire on a certain TV space opera. But, as I read further, I realised that it's a whole lot more than that. It's about the relationship between reality and fiction, and puts a whole new and decidedly science fictional twist on breaking the fourth wall. Yes, at times it does seem a bit contrived, and as if Scalzi is trying just a bit too hard, but he can be forgiven for that in the sheer exuberance of writing something innovative. And unlikely to be ever copied.

The Wind City

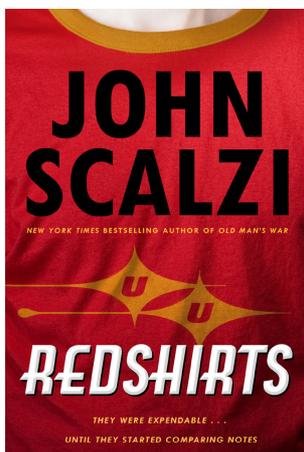
by Summer Wigmore

Published by Steam Press

Supplied by Steam Press

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

"Once Upon a Time" in Wellington... Actually its more "Lost Girl" in Wellington, since the urban fantasy elements here are the fairy folk of Maori mythology. They even have their own café! I'd been wondering when somebody was going to write an urban fantasy based around our very own mythical creatures and here it is. And it's a whole lot of fun. Wise-cracking main characters, one of whom is quite plainly off his rocker, and a keen sense of humour help a lot, as does the setting, firmly in the Wellington we know quite well (I'm no expert, Aucklander that I am). There are cracks though... some characters' actions that simply did not make sense, in the context of what they could know at that point. The phrase "non sequitor" comes to mind. But I can ignore that in the carefree delight of imagining taniwha and patupaiarehe in the context of modern day Aotearoa. Oh, and Maui, let's not forget him, up to his tricks again. The presence of urban sprites made me wonder if Wigmore



has come across the "Shadowrun" role-playing game. The human people were interesting, too... although I was a bit disappointed in the mad one, who was punished, but never brought to any real repentance or healing, which made the ending somewhat unsatisfying. I also found the use of bad language a bit jarring and frequently unnecessary. On balance, this book makes a good start to what will, no doubt, be a fine writing career, and I look forward to seeing what Summer does next.

The Coldest War

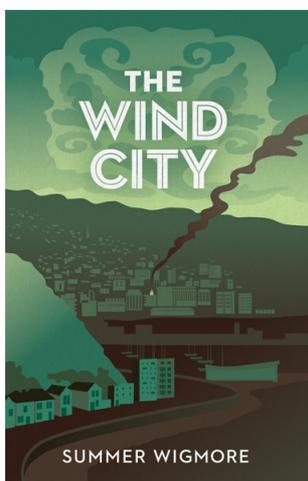
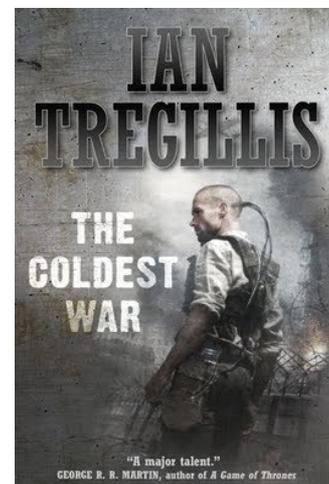
by Ian Tregillis

Published by Orbit

Supplied by Hachette NZ

Reviewed by Steven Litten

This is the second of the Milkweed trilogy (or Milkweed Triptych as the publisher prefers). It's approximately 20 years since the War ended. Stalin's armies made it further west, thanks to the eidolons, and Paris is a divided city. Britain is slowly sinking into decay, and is home to Reinhardt, and eventually Gretel and Klaus who manage to escape from their own little Gulag. William Beauclerk has escaped from the self-loathing he ended Bitter Seeds on and has acquired a wife, Gwendolyn. Raybould Marsh has a son to replace the lost daughter, but the boy is a broken vessel and has wrecked the Marshes' marriage. Marsh is sinking faster than Britain when news of Gretel and Klaus's escape reaches what used to be Milkweed. As with Bitter Seeds, The Coldest War changes perspective every few pages. This helps link the various threads. Gretel and Klaus surviving in Britain. Reinhardt attempting to make a battery so as to use his talent. Marsh recovering some purpose as he is recalled to Milkweed, and Will's fall from grace as his treason is discovered. This may be the second of a trilogy, and usually they're the weak link, but I preferred this volume to the first book. Whatever it was that didn't work in the first does here. It is as though Tregillis had to write the first in order to get warmed up. The action flows. The Soviet villains are mostly off camera, lurking menacingly in the shadows as villains should. Soviet Willenskrafte agents can use more than one talent, and have modern equipment. And the real monsters, the eidolons, only appear briefly. Marsh is no longer the all brawn action hero, although he still tends to think with his body. Reinhardt may hunger for revenge for a long dead Reich, Klaus has matured. He can almost contemplate a life not serving a state. The key figure of Gretel is as enigmatic as ever. Her talent, clairvoyance, is the McGuffin for the whole story, and we finally learn what she is plotting at the end of The Coldest War. It is so simple (and obvious if you sit and think about it) that if volume three, Necessary Evil, is half as good as the Coldest War it shock be a cracking good read. Tregillis annoyed me with Bitter Seeds but all is forgiven as he has repaid the debt with interest.



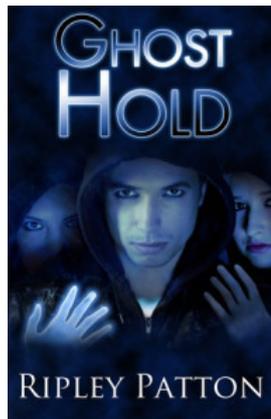
Ghost Hold: The PSS Chronicles# 2

by Ripley Patton

Published by Ripley Patton

Supplied by the author

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth



Olivia Black is headed to Indiana with Marcus and the team (and oddly Passion) to rescue the next name on the list of kids with PSS – Samantha James. Only there's a problem, Sam belongs to a cult of PSS worshippers and has no wish to be rescued. Olivia and Passion must go undercover at Sam's school to try to get closer to Sam and her inner circle. They then go on a wild ride with the cult, secret ceremonies, lies, deception, and betrayal. Another great read with a fast-moving plot and lots of action. The different manifestations of PSS are fascinating – I never would have guessed the blood one. It was good to learn more about Passion; she's an interesting character once her protective shields are dropped. Marcus really annoyed me with his keep-truths-from-Olivia attitude. I liked when she got sick of it and dumped him, but refusing to leave the river at the end – show some self-preservation! Sam's informing to her dad about those with PSS was a bit creepy – her telling him everything. About that anyway. Some very interesting revelations happened – about Kaylee, one of the names on the list and who gave the team a warning. It had a very dramatic cliff-hanger ending and I can't wait to read the next and find out what happens and how Olivia rescues herself.

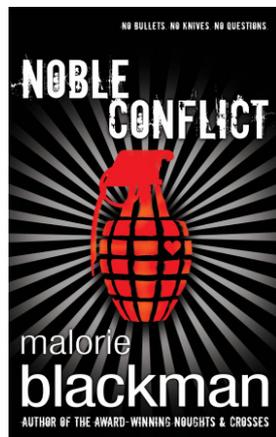
Noble Conflict

by Malorie Blackman

Published by Doubleday

Supplied by Random House NZ

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth



Kaspar is a Guardian – pat of an elite peacekeeping force that protects the city and maintains the peace. The guardians are humane and do not fight to kill, using blasters to knock their enemies unconscious and locking them up. There is a bloodthirsty, viscous band of rebels who want to destroy the peace and take over the city. At his graduation ceremony where he became an official Guardian. An attack is launched by the rebels and he meets a beautiful one – Rhea. As Kaspar examines the attacks he begins to see a pattern forming and thinks he can predict attacks. He digs deeper into the city's history, helped by Sam – a cute librarian at the Guardian headquarters. As he finds out information, he begins to question what he's been told his whole life. Rhea comes to him in dreams and he meets her again, learning more truths about his world. Then the unthinkable happens and his world is shaken to its core.... A really enjoyable story, this book has a tight plot, plenty of action, and likeable characters. You can feel Kaspar's

emotions – pride, grief, puzzlement, horror, and then understanding. It was interesting to find out why the rebels prefer suicide over capture and a little scary to see how the truth can be remade.

There's a really good lesson here to not just blindly accept what you've been told but to question things. I'm really looking forward to the next in the trilogy.

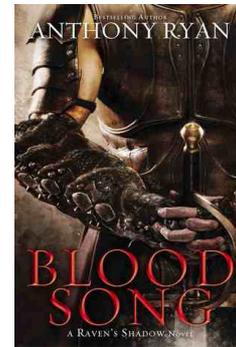
Blood Song

by Anthony Ryan

Published by Orbit

Supplied by Hachette NZ

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth



A scribe opens the book journeying on a ship while recording the story of "The Hope Killer". The Hope was the popular heir to the Emperor's throne, much loved by his people until he was slain in battle. As "The Hope Killer" tells his story to the scribe, we see it in flashbacks.

Vaelin Al Sorna was a young boy when his mother died and he was not close to his father, the King's Battle Lord. One day his father takes him to an imposing guarded gate and leaves, having given him to the Sixth Order, soldier who are defenders of the faith. The Order takes in boys to train as soldiers and Vaelin grows up there with his brothers. The trainees take tests every year pass to the next level of training or die trying.

Michael J Sullivan recommended this book so I had to read it and it was well worth the time it took. A very large book, the story tells the story of how a boy became a legend. The plot is strong, with many twists and turns and 'of course' moments. The characters are engaging and there is a loyal dog – aw... The ending had some interesting revelations and I look to continuing The Hope Killer's journey. I highly recommend this book if you enjoy epic fantasy

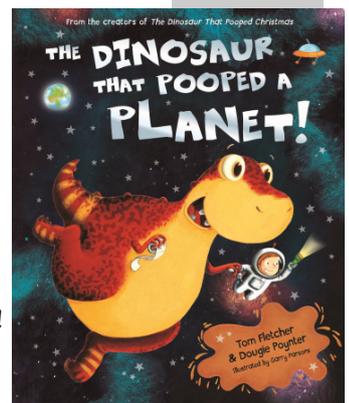
The Dinosaur That Pooped A Planet

by Tom Fletcher & Dougie Poynter

Published by Red Fox

Supplied by Random House New Zealand

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth



The Dinosaur That Pooped Christmas is back! Danny and his dinosaur liked to have fun but were bored one day as they had no games. They decided to go to the Space Museum to have a look around and accidentally launched themselves into space! They were enjoying the trip until they realised they had no lunch. Then, well, dinosaurs need to be fed regularly....

A brilliant sequel that carries on the humorous tale of Danny and his dinosaur. The verses that tell the story paint an amusing story and are have a good rhythm when read aloud. The illustrations are rich and colourful, they are full of detail and fun to look at.

This book was read and promptly taken to Kindy to be read by the teacher during storytime. A great favourite to be read at bedtime, the mother is grateful it still appeals to her and she hasn't resorted to hiding it!

Conclave 2014

35th NZ National SF&F Convention

CONCLAVE 2 UPDATE

Where: Auckland

When : 24th to 27th of July 2014
(ANZAC weekend—
middle weekend of school holidays)

Venue: The Surrey Hotel,
465 Great North Road, Grey Lynn

Guest of Honour: Dave Freer

Dave Freer is an ex-South African ichthyologist turned author because he'd heard the spelling requirements were simpler. They lied. He now lives on Flinders Island in the Bass Strait (between Tasmania and Australia) with his wife and chief proof reader, Barbara, two dogs and three cats. He blames his history of extraordinary spelling on an Old English Sheepdog nose, or on the cats on his lap. He has written some 15 novels for Baen Books, co-authoring some with Eric Flint and Mercedes Lackey, some of which ended up on best-seller lists. He's also written two YA novels for Pyr Books and published a slew of shorter fiction. He was also the artistic director for JBU. He can be found online at www.davefreer.com



Guest of Honour: Paul Scoones

Paul is a professional writer and a fan. He works on the BBC's *Doctor Who* DVDs, adding behind-the-scenes information for the special features. Paul has studied the early history of *Doctor Who* in comic strips, and has written a book on the subject, *The Comic Strip Companion: 1964-1979*. Paul lives in Auckland, New Zealand, with his wife Rochelle and their three cats. When he isn't writing he helps Rochelle run Retrospace, a SF collectibles store in Takapuna, Auckland. He can be found online at www.paulscoones.com.



Charity:

Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust
rescuehelicopter.org.nz/



AUCKLAND RESCUE
HELICOPTER TRUST

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This Month:

BOOK Monday November 25th
(at Chez Smith)

SPACE Friday December 6th
(at Chez Smith)

Next Quarterly Meeting:

Wednesday 18th December 2013, 7:30 pm
Auckland Horticultural Centre,
990 Great North Road,
Western Springs



Upcoming Events:

July 12-14th 2013

Au Contraire 2013

34th New Zealand National SF Convention
<http://www.aucontraire.org.nz/index.php>

April 24-27th 2014

Conclave 2

35th New Zealand National SF Convention
<http://conclave2.aucontraire.org.nz/>