



# THE F.A.C.T. SHEET

Nov. 2006

A monthly publication of the Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc.

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*Please pardon the late arrival of this month's issue of the FACT Sheet. World Fantasy and the gathering of material about it delayed things. We'll be back to a more usual schedule for the next issue!*

## FACT MEMBER BIRTHDAY

17 Sonia Santana

## NEW SAN ANTONIO SFF GROUP

FACT member **Mona Martinez** has founded a new SF group. See the website of the brand new San Antonio Science Fiction & Fantasy Association at [www.sasffa.org](http://www.sasffa.org).

## R.I.P. JOHN M. FORD

Author John M. Ford passed away on September 25, 2006. His admirers included Robert Jordan, who called "the best writer in America - bar none" and Neal Gaiman, who called him "my best critic ... the best writer I ever knew." Those quotes come from coverage of his eulogy in the *Pioneer Press*: [www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/15868982.htm](http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/15868982.htm)

Will Shetterly recently posted Ford's story "Driving North" on his Captain Confederacy website: [captainconfederacy.blogspot.com/2006/11/driving-north.html](http://captainconfederacy.blogspot.com/2006/11/driving-north.html). (Reminder: Shetterly will be at ConDFW in February.)

## R.I.P. JACK WILLIAMSON

Jack Williamson passed away on November 10, 2006. A memorial service will take place on

Thursday, November 16, 2006, at 2:00 p.m. on the campus of Eastern New Mexico University in the Campus Union Building ballroom.

Mr. Williamson had a long and distinguished career in science fiction. His first story, "The Metal Man," was published in 1928. He published 55 novels, the most recent being *Stonehenge Gate* (2005). In 1975, he was named a Grand Master of Science Fiction in 1975, only the second person to be so honored. He joined the English faculty at Eastern New Mexico University on 1960. The ENMU library includes the Jack Williamson Science Fiction Library, currently consisting of 13,000 volumes.

SciFi.com published an interview with him: [www.scifi.com/sfw/issue284/interview.html](http://www.scifi.com/sfw/issue284/interview.html)

The family has asked that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to:

The Jack and Blanche Williamson Scholarship Fund  
ENMU Foundation  
Eastern New Mexico University  
Station #8  
Portales NM 88130

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The **FACT Holiday Party** will be held on Saturday, December 9 at 6 PM. It will include a gift exchange (Chinese Auction), food (BYOB) and of course excellent company. Location: 3601 Malone Dr (Ed & Sam's house). Contact the Social Director ([social@fact.org](mailto:social@fact.org)) with any questions.

## FACTOIDS & FRIENDS

*This column is for news about FACT members, their friends, Texas writers, and important events in the SF&F community. If you have any such news, please contact the F.A.C.T. Sheet Editor at the address on page 7.*  
Author News

*Cross Plains Universe: Texans Celebrate Robert E. Howard*, which debuted at the World Fantasy Convention, got a great review on [revolutionsf.com](http://revolutionsf.com).

*The Element of Fire*, the hard-to-find first novel by Texas fantasy writer **Martha Wells**, is available again, in two ways. It is being serialized on the RevolutionSF web site. Chapters of *The Element of Fire* are being posted at the rate of about one per week, with Chapter 4 having gone up on November 1. Go to [revolutionsf.com](http://revolutionsf.com) to find it. Also, a revised edition is now available for purchase as a paperback or download at: [www.lulu.com/content/476533](http://www.lulu.com/content/476533). Ms. Wells was a guest at ArmadilloCon this year.

The cover for **Alexis Glynn Latner's** soon-to-be published *Hurricane Moon* is available for viewing on the Pyr Blog. Artist Brian W. Dow did a great job. Mr. Dow says of the book that, "the book really is amazing. Lots of detail and layers of characterization. Great human dilemmas. A complete joy to illustrate." See for yourself: [pyrsf.blogspot.com/2006/10/for-your-viewing-pleasure-hurricane.html](http://pyrsf.blogspot.com/2006/10/for-your-viewing-pleasure-hurricane.html) Editor Lou Anders also mentions the release date – July, 2007. The cover painting was also on display at World Fantasy, where it looked even better.

**James P. Hogan**, who was a guest at ArmadilloCon 28, has a new book out in mass-market paperback. *Mission to Minerva*, the fifth in the Giants series that began with *Inherit the Stars*, came out in October, 2006. It features cover art by Bob Eggleton. Mr. Hogan has another relatively recent mass market paperback called *Kicking the Sacred Cow*, a book of essays that came out in July.

**Maureen McHugh** is moving to Austin! I heard this from booksellers at World Fantasy, and confirmed it on her blog, *No Fear of Falling*. Her blog is great fun to read, and the November 11 entry includes pictures of the new place in Austin: [maureenmcq.blogspot.com](http://maureenmcq.blogspot.com). This may be as a good excuse as any to pick up a copy of *Mothers and Other Monsters*, her 2005 short story collection, if you have not already done so.

**Bill Crider's** blog entries on ArmadilloCon include a series of very short video interviews with **Neal Barrett, Jr.**, **Joe Lansdale**, **Julie Cozened**, **Jaime Lynn Blacken**, **John Picasso**, **Mark Finn**, and **Rick Claw**. See the links at the right, lower corner of this page: [billcrider.blogspot.com/2006/08/from-armadillocon-bill-crider.html](http://billcrider.blogspot.com/2006/08/from-armadillocon-bill-crider.html)

## MOVIES

Watch for two Stargate SG-1 movies in the fall of 2007. One will tie up loose ends from the finale, and the other will involve time travel. For details, see: [community.tvguide.com/thread.jspa?threadID=700008699](http://community.tvguide.com/thread.jspa?threadID=700008699)

## TELEVISION

A trailer has been released for *Starhyke*, a new British SF comedy from director Andrew Dymond. The show stars Claudia Christian (*Babylon 5*) and Jeremy Bulloch (*Star Wars*). See the trailer at [www.starhyke.com](http://www.starhyke.com). No word yet on a release date or network. Viewing the trailer will help them sell the show, so if you are interested, please visit the site, download the trailer, and consider rating it.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FACT MEETINGS & GATHERINGS

November 21, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group:** *The Big Over Easy* by Jasper Fforde

December 5, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group:** *Mindswap* by Robert Shekley

December 9, 6 PM: **FACT Holiday Party:** Will include gift exchange (Chinese Auction), camaraderie, and food. BYOB. Location: 3601 Malone Dr (Ed & Sam's house). Contact the Social Director ([social@fact.org](mailto:social@fact.org)) with any questions.

December 10, 2-4 PM, Austin Public Library, Carver Branch (1161 Angelina St.): **Board Meeting**

December 19, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group:** *Bad Prince Charlie* by John Moore

### OTHER READING GROUPS

December 13, 7 PM, Flight Path: Dark Forces Reading Group will discuss *Perfume* by Patrick Suskind

December 18, 7 PM, Bookpeople: The Ludicrous Speed Book Group will discuss *Altered Carbon* by Richard Morgan. Note that you get 10% off reading group titles if you join this group.

### THE MOVIES

November 25, 10:30 AM, Alamo Drafthouse Downtown: *Lord of the Rings*. 12 hour Hobbit Feast event features 35 mm extended versions of the first two films, theatrical release of the third, with optional 7 meals (first breakfast, second breakfast, etc.)

November 26, 7 PM, Alamo Drafthouse Downtown: *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* Pizza Party

### CONVENTIONS

*Here are details on conventions that FACT members, associates, and Favorite Authors will attend.*

- Dec. 1-3, 2006: **SMOFcon 24**, The Hotel Phillips, Kansas City, MO: aimed at the people who plan SF conventions on a national and international level.  
[www.midamericon.org/smofcon/index.htm](http://www.midamericon.org/smofcon/index.htm)
- Feb. 2-4, 2007: **Ikkicon**, The Woodward Hotel & Conference Center, Austin, TX. Japanese animation and pop culture. Memberships \$30 until December 1.  
[www.ikkicon.com](http://www.ikkicon.com)
- Feb. 9-11, 2007: **CorFlu**, DoubleTree Hotel, Austin, TX. Fanzine fan convention. Membership currently \$50.  
[www.corflu.org](http://www.corflu.org)
- Feb. 23-25, 2007: **ConDFW VI**, Radisson Hotel Dallas North, Richardson, TX. Guests: Harry Turtledove, Emma Bull, Will Shetterley, Bob Eggleton.  
[www.condfw.org](http://www.condfw.org)
- Mar. 22-25, 2007: **AggieCon 38**, Texas A&M Memorial Student Center. Comic Artist GoH James O'Barr; Artists GoH Ruth Thompson; Major Guest Jana Oliver; Voice Actors Tiffany Grant & George Manley  
[aggiecon.tamu.edu](http://aggiecon.tamu.edu)
- Mar. 23-25, 2007: **MidSouthCon 24**, Holiday Inn Select, Memphis TN. GoH: Terry Pratchett; Artist GoH Don Maitz; Comics GoH Mark Waid; Media GoH Bill Blair: Special Guest: Janny Wurts.  
[www.midsouthcon.org](http://www.midsouthcon.org)
- Aug. 10-12, 2007: **ArmadilloCon 29**, Austin

## NOTES FROM WORLD FANTASY

### IT'S NOT A CLICHÉ...YET

Friday, 10- 11 AM  
 Panelists: Cook, C.N. Douglas, Flint, Gill, Modesitt (moderator)  
*Notes from Elze Hamilton*

**Several panelists** observed that some of the most influential writers become the victims of their own influence, in the sense that the tropes they bring into mass consciousness over time become clichés.

**Diana Gill.** "When students first read Shakespeare, they go, 'OMG, he's using all those clichés!' Yeah, but they weren't clichés when he wrote it."

**Glen Cook** has heard a young man say: "Tolkien was good, but very slow, and a complete derivative of Terry Brooks."

The moderator **L. E. Modesitt** asked the panelists what fantasy cliché annoys them the most. This is what they had to say:

**Eric Flint.** That's easy. Elves. I hate them. I always hated them. If they are so damn perfect, why are they dying out? (as in J.R. R. Tolkien's works.) He says there are elf-people and dwarf-people, and he calls himself a dwarf person.

**L. E. Modesitt.** I'm somewhat prejudiced against dragons. Also, as an economist, I can't figure out any culture in which dragons would work economically and energy-wise. They are so damn big! Anything that big would require a huge amount of energy. Besides, to support themselves on their wings they would have to have wings half a mile span, or else to be made of balsa wood.

**Glen Cook.** One thing that irritated me was unicorns. Virgin-loving unicorns. The only time I used unicorns, they were carnivorous pack animals. Kind of like wolverines on steroids. If they saw a virgin, there would be nothing left of her.

### CURB YOUR HOUND OF EVIL: FINDING THE DARK WOODS IN AN URBAN WORLD

Friday, 1:30 – 2:30 PM  
 Panelists: Coe, Hobb, T.S. Jones, Lindskold (moderator), Link  
*Notes from Elze Hamilton*

In this panel, people had a straight-faced debate of why fairies still live in the middle ages, and why have they not evolved into modernity along with the humans.

**Kelly Link:** One, fairies are allergic to iron, which makes building things complicated. Another reason is that fairies are not fond of our technology. Traditional fairies don't make things. They steal things from people.

**Jane Lindskold:** Time flows differently in the fairyland. So it would take them a very long time to catch up with our world.

**A person in the audience:** And their magic may eliminate a need for technology.

### THE GOD OR THE MACHINE?

Saturday, 1:30 – 2:30 PM  
 Panelists: Chiang, Marley, Stackpole, W.J. Williams, Young (moderator)  
*Notes from Elze Hamilton*

To address the rather vague topic of this panel ("When do "scientific" worldview elements move a concept out of fantasy?"), moderator **Janine Young** illustrated it with this example. "If science is indistinguishable from magic, like Harry Potter's cloak of invisibility, does that mean that when we read Harry Potter in the future, we will see his cloak of invisibility as a science fictional element in the story? If an invisibility cloak becomes possible, does the story move out of the realm of fantasy into science fiction?"

(At the time of the WFC, it had been recently in the news that some scientists had created a prototype of a cloak of invisibility.)

**Ted Chiang.** I disagree with Clarke's often quoted law ("Any advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic"). I think Clarke's law is either wrong or very misleading. One of the differences between magic and technology is that technology over time becomes cheaper, egalitarian, accessible to the masses. In Harry Potter, as I understand it, the general populus, muggles, are not capable of performing magic, and there's no indication that there will ever be. It's not a question of magical devices becoming cheaper one day. They will be forever out of reach of most people in the Harry Potter universe. [Unlike the real cloaks of invisibility: while prohibitively expensive at first, at some point they would become affordable to the masses. Just like we all own devices that have laser beams, such as CD players.] And that's what distinguishes magic from technology.

### **FORGOTTEN MASTERS: READINGS FROM THE DEEP DARK PAST**

Saturday, 3:30 – 4:30 PM

Panelists: Hartwell, Nevins, Park (moderator), Strauss

*Notes from Jennifer Juday*

Panelists started off by answering the question of why one would go looking for forgotten literature.

**Hartwell:** Second-rate literature tells us a lot about an era.

**Ness.** It has intrinsic merit, an example being *Varney the Vampire*.

**Strauss.** It's useful to me as a writer.

**Hartwell.** Arguably until the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, all literature was fantastic. You began seeing self consciously fantastical literature. One type was works that look back to Greek myths, Arthurian literature, etc. A second type is precursors to

modern literature (Dracula, Frankenstein, etc.) The triumph of modernist theory eliminated fantasy from high art in the early twentieth century.

**Hartwell** cited *The Elves* by Ludwig Teague, translated by Carlyle in the nineteenth century as an important work. Poe read it. It was "okay" for adults to read German tales, art tales.

**Nevins.** Another forgotten work masterpiece is "The New Mother" by Lucy Clifford. He also cited *The Darkling Plain* and *The Story of the Glittering Plain* by William Morris. Sarah Orne Jewett was doing great, magical work at the turn of the century.

**Strauss.** From a writer's perspective, I go back to find source materials – fairy tales, myths, legends. Andrew Lang's fairy tales were the ones she read. I read to avoid being derivative.

**Park.** *The Worm Ouroboros* was a favorite when I was a kid. It was written in the medieval style. The strongest fantasy books uncover anxieties that are new. For example – bad blood in *Dracula*.

**Hartwell.** Vampires were bad until the 1970s, except for those in *Dark Shadows*. In the 1970s, around 1975, vampires started being written about as other, as sexually dangerous. Charnas, Rice, Yarbro, etc. **I've always thought that Richard Nixon was a vampire.** Hartwell then referenced a picture of Nixon and Elvis Presley.

**Nevins.** Referred us again to one of his favorites -- *Varney the Vampire*, a penny dreadful from 1847 by James Malcolm Rymer.

**Strauss.** The kind of shift that happened in vampire fiction is rare. Why do some shifts work and some fail? For example, *Nosferatu* offered a subhuman vampire. That shift went nowhere.

**Hartwell.** Theorists such as Julie Kristeva suggest that material that is powerful deals with something on the edge of repression.

**Nevins** discussed nineteenth century commercial fiction . By the 80s and 90s, the style was very readable. FitzJames O'Brien had a prose style that prefigured the modern prose style.

**Hartwell.** The fantasies of Ambrose Bierce are the greatest horror between Poe and Lovecraft. He also recommended "The Little Room" by Madeline Yale and the fantasies of FitzJames O'Brien.

**Strauss.** Looking at what survives, it seemed to Strauss that what survives is accidental. Books that should be better known include: Jane Gaskell's "The Serpent."

We were referred to HorrorMasters.com, which has 2,500 PDFs, including some of those recommended.

**Hartwell.** There are not really many forgotten masterpieces. He suggested that one might be Chet Williamson's *Ash Wednesday*. It was published in the late 1980s, and is excellent.

### **FANTASY IS FUNDAMENTAL: YOUNG ADULT FANTASY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Sunday, 11 AM – 12 NOON

Panelists: Black, de Lint, Freitag (moderator), Goldblatt, M.L. Williams

*Notes from Elze Hamilton*

There was much talk about how Young Adult literature is getting more and more risqué and exploring topics that used to be considered inappropriate for teens. This is what **Holly Black** had to say about it. It's been said there are two things you can't do in Young Adult literature: boring and bestiality. And every time she quotes it, the entire room immediately starts coming up with titles of YA books that have bestiality in them.

### **WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE EXPLAIN THIS BOOK?**

Sunday, 3:30 – 4:30 PM

Panelists: Anders, Bey, Dedman, Groell, November (moderator)

*Notes from Elze Hamilton*

The panelists and audience come up with examples of books and movies they could not understand without some explanation.

**Lou Anders.** [I saw the] movie *Primer*, about kids that invent time travel in a storage facility. I watched it and could not understand it. I called Chris Roberson. He said, "Oh, I called Ted Chiang, he explained it to me! It's a sophisticated way to look at time travel [that Hollywood usually doesn't do]". But is it a good narrative if you have to call Ted Chiang to explain it?

**A woman in the audience.** Somebody explain *Cloud Atlas* to me.

**Someone from the audience replies:** Ask Ted Chiang!

This became a running joke in this panel. Requests for explanations were met with, "Ask Ted Chiang!" Too bad Ted Chiang wasn't in the audience.

To strike a balance between being challenging the readers, and not being so hard to understand that they give up, a writer may want to follow this advice from editor **Anne Groell**. "I don't like books that are stupid or pointless," says Anne Groell, "or don't have anything to say, but on the other hand, I don't like to feel that I'm stupid. The best books or movies are the ones where you don't have to work very hard, but you figure out something, and it gives you a sense of accomplishment! I'm clever, I noticed something!" She said the movie *Memento* is an example of such a story: it makes you work to understand it, and makes you feel accomplished in the end for figuring it out.

**Stephen Dedman** put it more succinctly: "It's better (as a reader) to feel a little dumb than to feel that the writer thinks you are dumb."

### **FANTASY ROUNDUP: SHOULD READS OF THE LAST YEAR**

Friday 2:30-3:30 PM

Panelists: Susan Allison, Alan Beatts (moderator), Charles N. Brown, Ellen Datlow, Jo Fletcher

*Transcribed by A. T. Campbell, III*

*The Blade Itself* by Joe Abercrombie

*The Line Between* by Peter S. Beagle

*Blood and Iron* by Elizabeth Bear

*Eros Interruptus* by P. D. Cacek

*Can't Catch Me and Other Twice Told Tales* by Michael Cadnum

*Touch the Dark* by Karen Chance

*A Cruel Wind* by Glen Cook

*The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror: 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Collection* edited by Ellen Datlow, Kelly Link, and Gavid J. Grant

*Skinny Dipping in the Lake of the Dead* by Alan DeNiro

*Basic Black* by Terry Dowling

*Land of Mist and Snow* by Debra Doyle and James MacDonald

*The Empire of Ice Cream* by Jeffrey Ford

*The James Tiptree Anthology 2* edited by Karen Joy Fowler, Pat Murphy, Debbie Notkin, and Jeffrey D. Smith

*Anansi Boys* by Neil Gaiman

*Saffron and Brimstone* by Elizabeth Hand

*Heart-Shaped Box* by Joe Hill

*American Morons* by Glen Hirshberg  
*The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror* edited by Stephen Jones  
*In the Eye of Heaven* by David Keck  
*Red Spikes* by Margo Lanagan  
*The Lost District* by Joel Lane  
*The Stormcaller* by Tom Lloyd  
*Night Watch* by Sergei Lukyanenko  
*The Lies of Locke Lamora* by Scott Lynch  
*The House of Storms* by Ian R. MacLeod  
*The White Darkness* by Geraldine McCaughrean  
*Un Lun Dun* by China Miéville  
*The Virtu* by Sarah Monette  
*The Last Witchfinder* by James Morrow  
*Firebirds Rising* edited by Sharyn November  
*His Majesty's Dragon* by Naomi Novik  
 "Landfill" by Joyce Carol Oates (*The New Yorker*, October 2006)  
*Unbecoming and Other Tales of Horror* by Mike O'Driscoll  
*The Tourmaline* by Paul Park  
*James Tiptree Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon* by Julie Phillips  
*Cover Story* by John Picacio  
*Three Days to Never* by Tim Powers  
*Greywalker* by Kat Richardson  
*Map of Dreams* by M. Rickert  
*Mommy?* by Maurice Sendak  
*Other Edens* by S. P. Somtow  
*Agog! Ripping Reads* edited by Cat Sparks  
*The Jennifer Morgue* by Charles Stross  
*Kitty and the Midnight Hour* by Carrie Vaughan  
*Things Will Never be the Same* by Howard Waldrop  
*The Unblemished* by Conrad Williams  
*Soldier of Sidon* by Gene Wolfe  
*Strange Birds* by Gene Wolfe

## READING GROUP REPORT

By A. T. Campbell, III & Elze Hamilton

### OCTOBER 3: A SCANNER DARKLY BY PHILIP K. DICK

By Elze Hamilton

On October 3, 2006 the FACT reading group discussed *A Scanner Darkly* by Philip K. Dick. Of 6 people who attended the discussion, only 2 people finished reading, or rather re-reading it. Some others had read it long ago when it first came out. One reader commented that he enjoyed *A Scanner Darkly* back then, but it didn't seem as good the second time around. This change in perspective was attributed to the reader's head being in a different place than it was a couple of decades ago.

Two readers said they liked this book because they like books about paranoia. One reader could really relate to the paranoia, experienced by the protagonist; in her view, paranoia was inseparable from the 1965-75 drug era that she thought Philip Dick portrayed so well. Paranoia pervaded her childhood in the 50s (House Un-American Activities Committee); she was also forced to go to a very strict fundamentalist church and could not speak to anyone forthrightly about her concerns. Every idea in her head had to be kept hidden from adults. So she said she could relate quite well to the paranoia the protagonist is experiencing. One thing she found missing in the book's portrayal of the drug subculture of the 60s was the musical motif. This time period was intensely focused on music, but there's no mention of music in the book. However, Philip K. Dick captured a lot of the realities of the drug era really well. As an example, she said, "there were people who were a little on the speed-freaky edge, who would really start motor mouthing, and you have big chunky paragraphs full of blathering on and on, which was really typical of some people."

Another member of the group disliked this book for pretty much the same reasons that caused the previously mentioned reader to relate well to it. He said, "I found this book difficult to read. It was dealing with a culture that's completely not optimistic, and so nothing good was going to happen in the book. It was very depressing. The book has occasional humor in it, for example, the story about the older brother who was a bug. Philip Dick does a good job of getting into people's heads, but I did not want to get into these people's heads. I could not sympathize with them. I didn't want to think like them." That's despite the fact that he liked some of Philip K. Dick's earlier books like *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* As far as portrayal of a split personality, there have been better books on that, too, in his opinion.

The group universally agreed that *A Scanner Darkly* is not a science fiction book, and that it was chosen for reading only because it was written by an author who is known for writing science fiction. There are a few science fictional elements in this book but they don't lead anywhere. Regardless, I personally found this book a very engaging read. The depiction of paranoia the three roommates go through is really fascinating. And I liked how it demonstrated the ultimate ironic consequences of the war on drugs. It would be hard to illustrate these statements without revealing significant plot details, so here is a link to my full review. It contains spoilers.

[www.geekitude.com/gl/public\\_html/article.php?story=20061017142201739](http://www.geekitude.com/gl/public_html/article.php?story=20061017142201739)

## **OCTOBER 17: HOWARD WHO? BY HOWARD WALDROP**

*By A. T. Campbell, III*

Nine people gathered at A. T.'s house in north Austin for this meeting. Our topic was *Howard Who?*, the recent 20th anniversary edition of local author Howard Waldrop's first collection. Six of us had read Waldrop before, and four had heard him read his work aloud at ArmadilloCon. Seven of us read this book for the discussion.

The book contains Waldrop's best-known early story, "The Ugly Chickens," which is about a graduate student's search for a fowl that had been thought extinct. We found this story to be surreal, unusual, and memorable, with the most classic SF story structure in the book. The researcher and the people he interrogates are realistic characters. The information about the "extinct" bird is presented painlessly. Most of us found this to be among our favorite stories. One member suggested that we also should read Avram Davidson's "The Odd Old Bird," which covers similar territory well.

We liked "Green Brother" and "Mary Margaret Road-Grader," two stories with Native American themes. Both stories had clever ideas, were well told, and were just the right length.

The strongest reactions were elicited by "Horror ,We Got," a Holocaust conspiracy story with time travel elements. Many people used the word "uncomfortable" in describing their reading experience. The author achieved his intended results too well here. When a few of us who'd read this book over a decade ago noted that we'd forgotten the story in the meantime, the others in the group felt relieved. They want this story gone from their heads.

Other stories in the book explored ideas alternate history, alternate science, vampires, cowboys, music, and Sumo wrestling.

The final story in the collection is one of its best, "Heirs of the Perisphere." It explores the post apocalyptic adventures of animatronic characters from a theme park. A couple of people commented that this resonates with the work of Waldrop's friend Chad Oliver.

We found that a few of the stories contained so many obscure (to us) cultural and historical references that footnotes would have been a huge help in understanding them. "God's Hooks!" in particular went over all our heads. Some of us

felt that the unconventional structure of some of these tales (particularly "Ike at the Mike") did not technically qualify them even as stories.

We had an interesting time wrapping up the discussion of the book as a whole. We liked the clear prose style and strong Southern voice, and we appreciated the many places this book took us. We did not find any unifying themes. Most of the stories could be called surreal. We felt that many of the stories contained enough fresh ideas to make ten or more stories. And these stories were so dense that it was hard to read several of them in one sitting.

We didn't feel comfortable calling Howard Waldrop a science fiction or fantasy author, and decided that he is a Southern fabulist. We disagreed about how the stories in this book fit within Howard's body of work. Some of us feel these stories are his early accessible best stuff, and others feel that these works that have been surpassed by the stories he wrote later as his craft matured.

After the meeting, several of us had a nice dinner at Pok-E-Joe's.

## **FACT BOARD MINUTES**

*By Elizabeth Burton*

### **SEPTEMBER 2006**

The monthly meeting of the board of directors for the Fandom Association of Central Texas was called to order by Board Chair Renee Babcock on Sunday, 10 September, at the Carver Branch of the Austin Public Library, 1161 Angelina St., Austin, Texas 78702, United States of America at 2:10 p.m. Present in addition to Ms. Babcock were Directors JP Sugarbrood, A. T. Campbell III, Brian Price and Elizabeth Burton; members Angela Price of Austin and Mona Martinez of San Antonio and prospective member Jessica Price. Director William Siros and MIS Manager Charles Siros arrived at 2:21 p.m.

Secretary Elizabeth Burton presented the minutes of the August meeting. Ms. Babcock noted the time the meeting was called to order should read 2: 06 rather than 3:06 p.m. There being no additions, clarifications or corrections, the minutes were accepted as corrected.

### **OFFICER REPORTS**

#### **CHAIR**

Ms. Babcock reported she attended ArmadilloCon 28, which was fun. She noted Toastmaster Esther Friesner phoned her early Friday to advise she was not coming, but an excellent substitute

was found. She noted her move to her new apartment is completed. She advised she had received a phone call from a friend of Robert Reedy advising he was in the hospital to have his foot amputated. She stated she believed he was at S. Austin Hospital but said she will check to be sure, as she is certain he will welcome visitors once he's out of ICU. She also noted that she has opened our own PO box.

### **PRESIDENT**

Mr. Price stated that he hadn't done much that was FACT-related recently, although he and Angela stopped at ArmadilloCon briefly. He noted that Miss Jessica had arrived and sleeps six hours a night. He added he had noticed in the previous month's minutes there was a new member, whom he believes is a friend of his; he will be talking to him about becoming more involved.

### **TREASURER**

- Ms. Babcock read the treasurer's report into the minutes. As of 31 August 2006, Ms. Antell reported the account balances are as follows: ArmadilloCon, \$6,532; World Fantasy, \$60,802.73; FACT, \$10,967.74. She noted there was a total credit of \$12,325.05 and the WFC account and debits of \$3090.32. Ms. Antell also reported several debits to the FACT account totaling \$477.
- Ms. Antell noted that the August account balance for ArmadilloCon showed insufficient funds to cover the outstanding hotel bill, as it doesn't reflect an outstanding check in the amount of \$1,000. Ms. Babcock questioned whether that balance reflected all income from post-convention activities, such as payment from program book advertisers still outstanding. Mr. Campbell advised convention treasurer Karen Meschke had not yet requested a list of those advertisers, so the balance as reported may not included all outstanding payables. If the balances are correct, funds will need to be transferred from the FACT account to cover the hotel bill and provide operating funds for ArmadilloCon 29.
- Mr. William Siros advised the board should request a full report of the ArmadilloCon finances from Ms. Meschke.
- It was moved by Mr. Sugarbroad and seconded by Mr. W. Siros that Ms. Babcock and/or Mr. Price be authorized to transfer funds from the FACT account to the ArmadilloCon account as needed to cover the hotel bill. There being no objection, the motion was stated to be approved.

### **SECRETARY**

Ms. Burton reported she had attended ArmadilloCon and had an excellent time. She noted her attempts to date to contact the History Center regarding reserving room space for the annual meeting have not been successful. Ms. Babcock suggested waiting until early October, when the fiscal year begins, as they may be more available then.

### **SOCIAL DIRECTOR**

Mr. Sugarbroad reported that he became surrogate director for open gaming at ArmadilloCon. He state he had a very good time and looks forward to next year. He advised he had looked into scheduling an outing to see Superman Returns at the Bullock Museum and should have information within the next week or so. He will post an invitation to the FACT mailing list, adding that the event will most likely be on a weekend. Mr. W. Siros reported a lovely birthday party over Labor Day weekend.

### **REGISTRAR**

In the absence of the registrar, there was no report.

### **HISTORIAN**

Mr. Tolliver reported via email that he attended ArmadilloCon and transported decorations for the con suite. He also took a number of photographs. He advised he also assisted Ms. Babcock in moving her cat condo to her new place of residence and attended a WFC meeting.

### **INIS**

- Mr. C. Siros reported progress is being made on various website projects. He noted he has some things to do for interim newsletter editor Jennifer Juday that are newsletter-related. He stated he has received a recent list from registrar Sonia Santana of all members she has listed as current with email addresses and will update the FACT list for future distribution of the newsletter. Ms. Babcock suggested sending a link through the e-mail instead of the actual file, and then set the newsletter for download. The Board consensus was that this was a better option, not least because it eliminates the necessity for separate archiving.
- Mr. Siros also noted that after the recent WFC meeting he and others had discussed the purchase of an LCD projector for use by the organization, so he will look into the cost of such a unit. Mr. Sugarbroad noted one can rent on a per-use basis as well but Ms. Babcock advised past experience has been renting actually is just as expensive as



buying one. Mr. Sugarbrood then suggested the hotel liaison check with the hotel to compare the cost of rental for the weekend to make cost comparison. Mr. Campbell pointed out the equipment would likely be used more often if it were available, thus pro-rating the cost. Mr. C. Siros added FACT could also offer to rent it to other conventions. He stated he will do price comparisons on two sizes. Ms. Martinez suggested he check Conn's website at the end of the month, as they offer at very competitive prices at that time in order to clear inventory.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

*The FACT Sheet* was distributed. Much praise was given for the content and layout. Mr. W. Siros noted Ms. Juday appears to be having fun collecting news items of interest. Mr. Sugarbrood moved the board commend her for the excellence of her work on the newsletter, seconded by Mr. Price, who advised he was particularly pleased to see Jessica prominently displayed on the first page.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **ARMADILLOCON 28**

Kimm Antell reported that attendance at the convention was low, as had been expected, but that the event was well received by everyone. She did note some issues arose that will need to be addressed before future conventions and cited the need for a breakdown meeting, possibly in early October. She also noted that the hotel bill, in the amount of \$7,000, was still outstanding.

### **ARMADILLOCON 29**

Ms. Babcock stated she believed about 40 memberships were sold at ArmadilloCon 28. She advised she has not had an opportunity to invite any other guests than those already confirmed because most of her time has been taken up with WFC. She stated she has confirmed Howard Waldrop will be Toastmaster following her invitation to him at this year's convention. She noted that Ms. Antell made a flyer for her to send to Fencon. She also advised she felt there was a need to raise the \$500 limit on the Paypal account, but that doing so requires either a credit card or a Social Security number. The board discussed the feasibility of simply obtaining a business credit card, since the bank paperwork is already available. Ms. Babcock said she has discussed scheduling a breakdown meeting with Ms. Antell, as she needs information for her own benefit. Mr. Campbell

inquired if the slender balance in the ArmadilloCon account would affect her choices for guest slots, to which she replied in the negative.

## **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION**

- Ms. Babcock noted that the event is really coming up fast. There were 785 members as listed as of 8/5, but she said she believed that should be as of 9/5, and that between 5-10 per day continue to come in that she knows of. She advised the banquet reservation information is on the website so those are starting to sell.
- A concern arose regarding ongoing problems with committee members who aren't able to apply sufficient time and diligence to the workload. Mr. Campbell noted FACT has a convention oversight committee comprised of past con chairs and asked if there was need to call a meeting. Mr. Sugarbrood suggested that was an appropriate place to refer the issue to. Mr. W. Siros also suggested appointing a convention secretary to handle email that could be answered with stock responses for general issues, with those involving more complex responses then forwarded to the appropriate program director.
- Mr. Sugarbrood moved to transfer the issue to the oversight committee, in hopes they could suggest a process or individuals to deal with the situation. If they can't address it before the next board meeting, it will return to the board for further consideration. Mr. W. Siros noted he is the current chairman of the committee, so he can call a meeting. He reiterated his suggestion to determine if there is someone who's available to monitor the email, making sure they know enough to do the triage so that things that don't need direct input from a chair are dealt with and items that should be directed to another department are.
- Ms. Babcock reported the convention committee had a tasting for the banquet, and noted the food is really good. The price of \$50 being charged to attend the event will cover all the ones being given away, and she expects 300-400 will attend. She noted there may be higher attendance than usual because it's on Saturday night rather than Sunday, but maximum seating is 400. Mr. W. Siros suggested advising people of that limit might encourage them to register early.

## **READING GROUP**

Mr. Campbell noted that on the Wednesday before ArmadilloCon the reading group took Julie

Czerneda and James Hogan to dinner, and that they had an excellent turnout. He advised it appears various people will be taking notes of the meetings for inclusion in the newsletter. He said he is trying to add new meeting places into the rotation and will be adding his house next in N. Austin. Book selections are done through the end of the year.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Corflu:** Pat Virzi reported she needs the FACT membership list. Ms. Babcock will email Ms. Santana to request she send it to her.

**2. Stepp Donation:** Mr. Price reported none of the items in the collection were sold at ArmadilloCon because the evaluation isn't complete. Ms. Babcock suggested selling it on eBay, but Mr. W. Siros advised that involved a tremendous amount of work.

**3. Signature Cards:** Mr. Sugarbroad said he didn't have the new list of signatories and requested Ms. Babcock send it to him via email. Ms. Babcock pointed out that there is only one difference from the previous list, which is that Mr. Price is being substituted for the late Judith Ward.

**4. Fan Antonio:** Ms. Martinez reported this project is something Ursa Major, of which she is the current president, do want to do but that the group needs to reorganize following Ms. Ward's death. She advised that she wants to work on building their membership, to which end she was provided with some names of San Antonio-based FACT members by members of the board. She stated she expects to begin sending a representative to future FACT board meetings.

**5. Writer's League of Texas:** Ms. Burton stated that the individual she has been communicating with appears to have difficulties scheduling attendance at a board meeting. She advised she would try to get their office staffer involved.

In conjunction with this report, Mr. C. Siros advised he had spoken to the individual with grant-writing experience and she is willing to work with the board but needs specifics. He suggested one good first project is to locate funds that could be used to cover travel and lodging costs for convention guests, which she will begin researching on our behalf. He also suggested we need to begin communicating with the Hogg Foundation, which has finding grant money for organizations as its purpose. However, someone has to be willing to commit

the time to act as liaison. Ms. Martinez volunteered.

**1. Directory:** tabled

**2. Alamo Drafthouse Downtown Assistance:** tabled

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Fencon:** Ms. Babcock advised she would like to have a room party. Ms. Martinez stated she would love to organize it for Saturday night.

**2. SMofCon:** Ms. Babcock reminded the board we have approved \$1500 for scholarships. The meeting is scheduled for December in Kansas City, so we need to implement a call for applications to attend. Ms. Martinez said she would be interested, adding that her costs to attend would be minimal as she has vouchers for travel. Ms. Babcock advised the call for applicants needs to go to both the email list and the FACT Sheet.

**3. Hotel Contract:** Ms. Babcock noted our contract with Doubletree ends next year, so we need to set up a committee to negotiate for an extension. She advised we already have an option to extend for two years. Mr. Campbell asked how much we are paying them compared to previously, to which Ms. Babcock replied the costs are much the same. She also suggested we look at holding the convention the third weekend of August in '08 to give people some space after Denver WorldCon. The board named Mr. Sugarbroad, Mr. Price, Mr. C. Siros, and Fred Duarte to the requested committee.

There being no other business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

## **THE FANDOM ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL TEXAS, INC.**

The Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc. (FACT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational corporation dedicated to the promotion of science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction. FACT sponsors many activities aimed towards furthering the cause of literacy and the enjoyment of the genres, including ArmadilloCon, an annual literary conference.

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*How to Join FACT*

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The basic F.A.C.T. membership is \$21.00 per year. F.A.C.T. also has "special" classes of memberships. These memberships also run for the calendar year (12 months) from the date dues are received and come with some bonuses, in addition to the dividends of a regular membership.

- **Basic** (\$21.00) receives *The F.A.C.T. Sheet*
- **Sponsor** (\$50.00), in addition to the above, receives a F.A.C.T. shirt and button.
- **Patron** (\$150.00), in addition to the above, is entitled to a Convention Pass
- **Benefactor** (\$300.00) receives all of the above plus a F.A.C.T. mug.

## THE FACT SHEET

**Editor** Jennifer Juday

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## First Class Mail

### CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS

#### November

- 1 Zenna Henderson (*The People stories*),  
Gordon R. Dickson (*Dorsai!*), Mark Budz  
(*Clade*)
- 2 Lois McMaster Bujold (*Miles Vorkosigam*  
series)
- 6 Catherine Asaro (*Skolian Empire* series)
- 7 R.A. Lafferty (*Past Master*), Guy Gavriel  
Kay (assisted Christopher Tolkien in  
editing *The Silmarillion*), Linda Nagata  
(*Memory*)
- 8 Bram Stoker (*Dracula*), Ben Bova  
(editor of *Analog Science Fiction* and  
*Omni Magazine*), Edward Gibson  
(*Astronaut*, *Skylab 4*)
- 10 Neil Gaiman (*The Sandman &*  
*Neverwhere*)
- 11 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., (*Cat's Cradle*)
- 12 Michael Bishop (*No Enemy But Time*),  
Michael Capobianco (*White Light*)
- 13 Brenda Clough (*Doors of Death and*  
*Life*), Stephen Baxter (*The Time Ships*)
- 15 J.G. Ballard (*The Atrocity Exhibition*,  
*Crash*), Ruth Berman (story in *Star*  
*Trek: The New Voyages*)
- 16 Robin McKinley (*Beauty*)
- 17 Raymond F. Jones (*This Island Earth*),  
Rebecca Moesta Anderson (*Star Wars*  
novels), Christopher Paolini (*Eragon*)
- 18 Alan Shepard (*Mercury-Redstone 3*,  
*Apollo 14*), Margaret Atwood (*The*  
*Handmaid's Tale*), Alan Dean Foster (*Pip*  
and *Flinx* series), Michael Swanwick  
(*Stations of the Tide*), Doug Fratz

- 19 (Hugo-nominee for editing *Thrust*), Alan  
Moore (*V for Vendetta*)
- 21 Suzette Haden Elgin (*Native Tongue*)
- 21 Vincent di Fate (*The Science Fiction Art*  
*of Vincent di Fate*), Lisa Goldstein (*The*  
*Dream Years*)
- 23 Steven Brust (*Vlad Taltos* series)
- 24 Forrest J. Ackerman (short stories,  
cameo in the *Thriller* video), Spider  
Robinson (*Stardance*)
- 25 Poul Anderson (*Fire Time*)
- 26 Frederick Pohl (*Gateway*), Tracy  
Hickman (co-author of *Dark Sword*  
trilogy), Michael A. Stackpole  
(*BattleTech* series), Steve MacDonald  
(folk musician)
- 27 L. Sprague de Camp (editor and writer  
of *Conan* novels)
- 28 David Zindell (*The EA Cycle*)
- 29 C.S. Lewis (*Chronicles of Narnia*),  
Madeleine L'Engle (*Kairos* series, incl. *A*  
*Wrinkle in Time*)
- 30 Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*)

