



# THE F.A.C.T. SHEET

Feb. 2007

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

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### ALL F.A.C.T. MEMBERS WANTED AT ANNUAL MEETING!

**WHEN:** Sunday, March 11, 2 PM

**WHERE:** Carver Branch of Austin Public  
Library (1161 Angelina Street)

**AGENDA:** Includes election of new Board  
Members.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

## CAST YOUR VOTE!

The agenda of the March 11 meeting will include the election of FACT's 2007-2008 Board Members. FACT members are asked to:

- 1. Familiarize yourself with eligible members.** The list of eligible FACT members below lists all members of the organization who are eligible to serve on the 2007-2008 Board of Directors. If you are on this list, please consider serving FACT on the 2007-2008 Board!
- 2. Read the bylaws.** Additionally, you can read the Bylaws of the Fandom Association of Central Texas. Understanding FACT's purposes and goals can help you evaluate candidates and also, if you are eligible, to decide if you are willing to be a 2007-2008 FACT Board Member. The Bylaws were included in last month's newsletter, or you can read them online at: [www.fact.org/docs/Bylaws\\_2004.pdf](http://www.fact.org/docs/Bylaws_2004.pdf)
- 3. Use the ballot.** Included in this issue of *The FACT Sheet* is the ballot for use at the Annual

Meeting on March 11. It may be mailed in, given to a proxy, or carried to the meeting. If you don't plan to attend the meeting, please do mail in your ballot.

**Eligible FACT Members:** According to FACT President Brian Price, the following members are eligible to serve FACT on its Board of Directors: Aaron Allston, Kimm Antell, Renee Babcock, Kurt Baty, Tina L. Bertucci, Elizabeth Burton, A.T. Campbell III, Paul Carillo, Joi Chevalier, Shane Cook, Earl Cooley, Scott A. Cupp, Tom Davidson, Clifton Davis, Madeleine Reardon Dimond, Fred Duarte Jr., Sara Felix, John K. Gibbons, Lisa Greene, Becky Matthews Haynie, Debbie Hodgkinson, Jeffery D. Hurst, Jennifer Juday, Sandra P. Kayser, Katharine Eliska Kimbriel, Pat McGehearty, Karen Meschke, John F. Moore, Thomas R. Morin, Jr., Bill Parker, Spike Parsons, Angela Price, Brian Price, Kat Richardson, Carrie Richerson, Sonia Santana, Ed Scarborough, Charles Siros, Nina Siros, Willie Siros, Wendy Snyder, Judith P. Strange, J.P. Sugarbroad, Robert R. Taylor, Dan Thompson, Julia Thompson, C. Dan Tolliver, Kenneth Tolliver, Melissa Tolliver, Melissa Tyler, Dennis Virzi, Pat Virzi, Susan Wade, Lynn Ward, Ben Yalow, Kim Zrubeck, Scott Zrubeck.

**Current Candidates:** F.A.C.T. members who plan to run for the board currently are: **Elizabeth Burton, Jennifer Juday, Brian Price, Charles C. Siros,** and **J.P. Sugarbroad.**

**Elizabeth Burton** says, "As a board member for several years and the current board secretary, I've been privileged to be a part of an increasingly active organization. I hope to be able to continue as a contributing member of the board, and encourage anyone who qualifies to join us. I've served on committees for ArmadilloCon and coordinated final registration for World Fantasy 2006, and have been the FACT registrar as well as 'secretary.' "

**Jennifer Juday:** "I have enjoyed serving as editor of *The FACT Sheet*. I would be delighted to continue."

## GOING TO AGGIECON?

AggieCon will happen the weekend of March 22-25. We need some volunteers to sit at the F.A.C.T./ArmadilloCon table at AggieCon. You will

be placed right next to Adventures in Crime and Space, so there will always be someone nearby to help you with questions if needed. Even an hour would help us out a great deal, as it gives our long-term volunteers a chance to take a break. If you are interested, please contact **Willie Siros**: [acs@crimeandspace.com](mailto:acs@crimeandspace.com).

## ARMADILLOCON 29 REGISTRATION OPEN

Register now for the low, low advance rate of **just \$25 until March 25**. You can register online by going to the spiffy new web page at [www.fact.org/dillo](http://www.fact.org/dillo). As usual, ArmadilloCon will offer a fabulous set of guests: GoH Louise Marley; Artist GoH Gary Lippincott; Editor GoH Sharyn November; Fan GoH Patty Wells; Toastmaster Howard Waldrop.

## TOM MORIN, RIP

-- Submitted by *Kimm Antell*

It is with a heavy heart that I have to report that FACT has lost another faithful member. Tom Morin died on Tuesday, February 20, 2007, in Alamo, TX. They had a small service and then he was cremated.

Tom's mother and father lived in Alamo and I know he enjoyed visiting them. The last time I spoke with Tom was before World Fantasy. He and I were walking back to the convention after eating at Ruby Tuesdays. He was telling me about Alamo and about his father, who has been sick for some time.

Tom was a wonderful man. He was extremely quiet, but a wonderful listener. I always enjoyed talking to him and he helped me through my first Bruce Sterling party, as I only knew four people there, and the other three were either being social butterflies or stalking women. Tom was nice enough to sit there and talk to me so I didn't feel like such a heel. He told me wonderful stories about his great-aunt who had just passed away.

He was an intelligent man who loved to read and embraced the sci-fi part of his soul. He had a great deal of pride about his work with The Robot Group and he was always excited to be with them at local conventions. I will miss seeing him at FACT events and hope that he will be with us in spirit at every ArmadilloCon in the future. Please keep him in your thoughts.

## SMOFCON REPORT

-- Submitted by *Mona Martinez*

SMOFcon 24 was held the first weekend of this past December in Kansas City, Missouri. SMOFcon,

for those of you that have not come across it, is a convention aimed at the people who plan science fiction conventions on a national and international level. I thought it would be an interesting con, and I was right! It was fascinating -- so much to learn, so many people to talk to, and great panels to attend.

For some, SMOFcon 24 was a time to renew contacts or catch up on news. For me, it was a learning experience. I found the panels informative and educational. Some of the panels I enjoyed most were: "Communicating, Assumptions, and Expectations," "Dealing with Distributed Authority," and "Managing Difficult People." The main theme in all these panels was communication. The panelists made it clear that communication can make or break a con. I hope I absorbed enough to avoid the mistakes they so vividly described as I work on future cons we hold here in south and central Texas.

There are a couple of highlights that will stand out in my memory for a long while. I've been to two WorldCons and at one point, while socializing, I got to sit with the chair of each and tell them what a great time I had. My favorite memory is that of the moment when those of us from Texas stood up to announce our WorldCon bid. There were over a dozen of us. The other SMOFs were impressed that we were so well represented. I was told later that when we stood, gasps could be heard throughout the room at our number. It was great to be part of the Texas group and knowing we had such an impact.

I loved the Hotel Phillips. Being there made me feel like I was on a Frank Capra movie set. I sure learned a lot! See you at 2007's SMOFcon!

*To find out more about SMOFcon 25, go to [www.noreascon.org/smofcon](http://www.noreascon.org/smofcon).*

## 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 [jjuday@yahoo.com](mailto:jjuday@yahoo.com).*

## FACT MEMBER NEWS

FACT members with recent or upcoming birthdays include: **Brian Price** (Feb. 6), **Ben Yalow** (Feb. 9), **Dave Sorgen** (Feb. 28), **Debbie Hodgkinson** (Mar. 1), **Shane Cook** (Mar. 12), **Scott A. Cupp** (Mar. 17), and **A.T. Campbell, III** (March 25).

## AUTHOR NEWS

Locus just released its recommended reading list for 2006. "The Heart" by **Neal Barrett Jr.** is the sole recommendation from WFC anthology **Cross Plains Universe**. Other recommendations with Texas ties include: novels *Trial of Flowers* by **Jay**

**Lake**, *The Vengeance of Rome* by **Michael Moorcock**, and *Soldier of Sidon* by **Gene Wolfe**; collections *The Ocean and All Its Devices* by **William Browning Spencer** and *Visionary in Residence* by **Bruce Sterling**; anthology *Polyphony 6* edited by **Deborah Layne** and **Jay Lake**; nonfiction *Cover Story* by **John Picacio** and *Blood and Thunder* by **Mark Finn**; novella "The Voyage of Night Shining White" by **Chris Roberson**; and short fiction "Blackburn and the Blade" by **Bradley Denton**, "The American Dead" by **Jay Lake**, "With By Good Intentions" by **Carrie Richerson**, and "Sob in the Silence" by **Gene Wolfe**. You can read the complete list at [www.tiny.cc/locus](http://www.tiny.cc/locus).

**Rachel Caine** fell and seriously fractured her arm on February 8. A friend is posting updates on Rachel's blog, the Weather Report: [rachelcaine.livejournal.com](http://rachelcaine.livejournal.com).

Margery Ruth Morgenstern Krueger, who wrote under the name **Jayge Carr**, died Wednesday, December 20, 2006. She was 66. You can view and sign the online guest book at [obit.harrellfuneralhomes.com](http://obit.harrellfuneralhomes.com). **Martha Wells** posted a note about the influence that Krueger's book *Leviathan's Deep* had been on her own writing (see [www.tiny.cc/wells](http://www.tiny.cc/wells)). You can also read the SFWA obituary at [www.tiny.cc/carr](http://www.tiny.cc/carr).

*Blood and Thunder* by **Mark Finn** got a mention in the *Wall Street Journal*. Read the editorial "From Pen to Sword" online at: [www.tiny.cc/Conan](http://www.tiny.cc/Conan). *Blood and Thunder* also, as noted above, made the Locus list of recommended readings from 2006.

**Kim Harrison** will appear at BookPeople on Thursday, March 29, at 7 PM to promote *For a Few Demons More*. You can read a free excerpt on her website: [www.kimharrison.net](http://www.kimharrison.net).

**Jay Lake** has a new piece, "Trinity," in the February 1 issue of *Lone Star Stories*. Read it at [literary.erictmarin.com](http://literary.erictmarin.com).

**Sharon Lee** and **Steven Miller** continue to publish a new Liaden novel online as a serial. Chapter Five of *Fledgling* goes live on February 26.

The World Horror Convention 2007 has announced that **Joe R. Lansdale** has been voted the winner of the 2007 World Grand Master Award. Find out more at [www.whc2007.org](http://www.whc2007.org) or read Bill Crider's article detailing Lansdale's accomplishments at [www.tiny.cc/lansdale](http://www.tiny.cc/lansdale).

**Joe Lansdale** will appear at BookPeople on Tuesday March 13, at 7 PM, to promote *Lost Echoes*.

**Elizabeth Moon's** new novel, *Command Decision*, will be released on February 27. She will

give a reading, talk and signing at BookPeople on Saturday, March 17, at 3 PM. *Engaging the Enemy* will be released in paperback this month as well.

"Brilliance," a short story by Austin resident **Jessica Reisman**, was recently had a short story posted at RevolutionSF. You may have read her story "Two Hearts in Zamora" in *Cross Plains Universe*. To read "Brilliance," go to [www.tiny.cc/brilliance](http://www.tiny.cc/brilliance). To learn more about Reisman, visit her website: [www.storyrain.com](http://www.storyrain.com).

FACT member **Hunter Taylor** is about to have her first novel published. BeWrite Books will release *Insatiate Archer* on March 15. Taylor describes the novel as "a story of high adventure and cruel truths, in the most harsh of times." *Insatiate Archer* will be available from [www.bewrite.net](http://www.bewrite.net) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). To read an excerpt or get more information, go to [www.tiny.cc/archer753](http://www.tiny.cc/archer753).

The February, 2007, issue of *The Internet Review of Science Fiction* includes the essay "Dodos, Woolly Mammoths, and Other Erudite Obsessions in the Fiction of **Howard Waldrop**" by **Robert Bee**. Go to [www.irosf.com](http://www.irosf.com) to read the article.

**Martha Wells** has a new novel coming out in March: *Stargate Atlantis: Entanglement*. She will have Gilead and Ilias stories in the next three issues of *Black Gate Magazine*: "Reflections" in #10, "Holy Places" in #11, and "Houses of the Dead" in #12. Also, RevolutionSF continues to republish her novel *The Element of Fire*. They are up to Chapter Four. Catch up at [www.tiny.cc/element](http://www.tiny.cc/element).

## AWARDS

The **2006 Preliminary Nebula Award® Ballot** has been published on the SFWA website. A number of luminaries who visited Austin for World Fantasy are in this year's list. See it at [www.tiny.cc/Nebula2006](http://www.tiny.cc/Nebula2006). The Awards will be announced at the Nebula Awards® Banquet to be held at the New York Marriott Financial Center May 11-13, 2007.

And on the subject of the Nebula Awards®, did you know that **Fictionwise eBooks** is offering some of the nominated works for free? Offerings so far are: "Helen Remembers the Stork Club" by **Esther M. Friesner**, "Echo" by Elizabeth Hand, "Do Neanderthals Know?" by Robert J. Howe, "Journey into the Kingdom" by **M. Rickert**, and "Walpurgis Afternoon" by **Delia Sherman**. A new item from the 2006 ballot is being added each week.

The Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films has announced the nominations for its annual **Saturn Awards**. Nominees include: *Superman Returns* (10 nominations), *X-Men: The Last Stand* (6 nominations), *Pan's Labyrinth* (6 nominations), *Casino Royale*, *Mission Impossible III*, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead*

*Man's Chest*, and *Stranger Than Fiction*. Television nominees include *Lost*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and *Heroes*. For details, go to [www.saturnawards.org](http://www.saturnawards.org).

SF editor **Beth Meacham** won this year's Skylark award. The Edward E. Smith Memorial Award for Imaginative Fiction (the Skylark) is presented annually by the New England Science Fiction Association to some person, who, in the opinion of the membership, has contributed significantly to science fiction, both through work in the field and by exemplifying the personal qualities which made the late "Doc" Smith well-loved by those who knew him. Meacham lives in Arizona and is an editor for Tor Books. To learn more about her work, go to [www.tiny.cc/beth762](http://www.tiny.cc/beth762).

The **Bedlam Bards**, a band that got its start playing around Austin, was honored at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Renaissance Festival Music Awards. See [www.tiny.cc/bards](http://www.tiny.cc/bards) for details. Their album *On the Drift: Music Inspired by Firefly and Serenity*, which contains songs first performed on Firefly nights at SpiderHouse, topped CDBaby's Celtic charts for 2006: [www.tiny.cc/cdbaby](http://www.tiny.cc/cdbaby).

## MEDIA NEWS

On February 6, 2007, Lionsgate Entertainment released a special 25th Anniversary DVD of *The Last Unicorn*, the animated classic based on the novel by **Peter Beagle**. This new edition has been digitally remastered, has 5.1 audio, is wide screen instead of full screen, and comes with special features, including a video interview with Peter Beagle. Lionsgate has a special agreement with Conlan Press regarding sales of the DVD. More than half of each copy purchased direct from Conlan will go straight to Peter Beagle and his projects. If you plan to buy this DVD, consider buying it from Conlan, as Beagle will get nothing from copies sold through any other outlet. Conlan is also working to support Beagle in getting paid for work he did on the script for the animated version of *The Lord of the Rings*. Read about both efforts at: [www.conlanpress.com/youcanhelp](http://www.conlanpress.com/youcanhelp).

HBO has acquired the rights to turn **George R.R. Martin's** best-selling fantasy series "A Song of Fire & Ice" into a dramatic series. Read the details at [www.tiny.cc/fireandice](http://www.tiny.cc/fireandice).

Mark your calendars! **Free Comic Book Day** will be celebrated on May 5, 2007. Free Comic Book Day is a single day when participating comic book shops across North America and around the world are giving away comic books absolutely free to anyone who comes into their stores. For more information, see [www.freecomicbookday.com](http://www.freecomicbookday.com).

## OPEN TO SUBMISSIONS

The **Marion Zimmer Bradley Literary Works Trust** has just signed a contract with Norilana Books, an independent publishing company founded

in 2006 by Vera Nazarian, for *Sword & Sorceress* 22. The book will be published in trade paperback format, and the expected publication date is November 2007. The deadline for submissions is April 20, 2007. For details, go to: [www.mzbworks.com](http://www.mzbworks.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FACT MEETINGS & GATHERINGS

- March 5, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *Lady of Mazes* by Karl Schroeder
- March 10, 6-8 PM: **Gaming** at Brian Price's house. For details: [tbrianp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tbrianp@sbcglobal.net)
- March 11, 2-4 PM, Austin Public Library, Carver Branch (1161 Angelina St.): **FACT Annual Meeting**
- March 20, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *Recursion* by Tony Ballantyne

### OTHER READING GROUPS

- March 14, 7 PM, Flight Path: Dark Forces Reading Group will discuss *Darker Than You Think* by Jack Williamson
- March 19, 7 PM, Bookpeople: The Ludicrous Speed Book Group will discuss *Nightwatch* by Sergei Lukyanenko

### THE MOVIES

- Feb. 27, 9:45 PM: *TMNT 2: Secret of the Ooze* Pizza Party
- Alamo Drafthouse: *Terror Thursdays* Series, **FREE** shows at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Downtown.
  - Mar. 1, 11:59 PM: *The Wraith*
  - Mar. 8, 11:59 PM: *The Beast Must Die*
  - Mar. 15 - No Terror Thursday film due to SXSW
  - Mar. 22, 11:59 PM: *The Alien Factor*
  - Mar. 29, 11:59 PM: *The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin*
- March 4, 7 - 10 PM, SpiderHouse Café (2908 Fruth): *Austin Browncoats Get Together*: Episode viewing, food gobbling and beverage quaffing. Possible filk and fanvids. Projector starts running at 8 PM.
- Mar. 10, 11:55 PM: *Buffy's Ten-Year Anniversary*
- Mar. 19, 9:45 PM: *8-BIT: A Film About Art and Video Games*
- Mar. 20, 7 PM: *Transformers: The Movie* (the original)
- Mar. 28, 9:45 PM: *Transformers: The Movie* (the original)

### CONVENTIONS & THE LIKE

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

- Mar. 3: **STAPLE! The Independent Media Expo**, Red Oak Ballroom, Austin, TX: An event to

promote independent creative media: comics, art, animation, and self-published literature.  
[staple-austin.org](http://staple-austin.org)

- Mar. 10-Apr. 8 (weekends): **Excalibur Fantasy Faire**, held near Lockhart.  
[www.worldofavalon.com](http://www.worldofavalon.com)
- Mar. 16-18: **AllCon 2007**, Crown Plaza Hotel North Dallas, Dallas, TX. Arts and fan con.  
Registration currently \$25 for a 3-day pass.  
[www.all-con.org](http://www.all-con.org)
- Mar. 22-25: **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; Writer GoH Gene Wolfe. \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door.  
[aggiecon.tamu.edu](http://aggiecon.tamu.edu)
- Mar. 23-25: **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. \$40 until Mar. 1, \$45 thereafter.  
[www.midsouthcon.org](http://www.midsouthcon.org)
- Jun. 1-3: **A-Kon**, Adam's Mark Hotel, Dallas, TX. Guests include: Vic Mignogna, Spike Spencer, Steve Bennet, Billy Tucci, Jake Tarbox, Scott Ramsoomair, Howard Tayler, Wendy Powell, Kyle Herbert, Brian Glass. Memberships currently \$35.  
[www.a-kon.com](http://www.a-kon.com)
- Jun. 22-24: **ApolloCon 2007**, DoubleTree Hotel Houston Intercontinental Airport, Houston, TX. GoH: C.S. Friedman, Editor GoH David G. Hartwell, Fan GoH A.T. Campbell, III. Membership \$30 until May 1.  
[www.apollocon.org](http://www.apollocon.org)
- Jul. 28-30: **Conestoga**, Radisson Tulsa, Tulsa, OK. Literary SFF con. GoH Laurell K. Hamilton; Artist GoH John Picacio; Toastmaster Elizabeth Moon; Fan GoHs Richard and Michelle Zellich; Special 1632 GoH Eric Flint.  
[www.sftulsa.org/conestoga](http://www.sftulsa.org/conestoga)
- Aug. 10-12: **ArmadilloCon 29**. Literary SFF con. GoH Louise Marley; Artists GoH Gary Lippincott; Editor GoH Sharyn November; Fan GoH Patty Wells; Toastmaster Howard Waldrop.

## READING GROUP REPORT

By A. T. Campbell, III (Jan. 9) & Elze Hamilton (Jan. 23)

### JANUARY 9: CROSS PLAINS UNIVERSE EDITED BY SCOTT A. CUPP & JOE R. LANSDALE

Six people gathered at Charles and Willie's home for this meeting. Our topic was *Cross Plains Universe*, an anthology of stories that honor the work of Robert E. Howard. All of the authors in the book are Texans. The book was co-published by

F.A.C.T. and MonkeyBrain Books and was released at the 2006 World Fantasy Convention here in Austin. All of us had read Robert E. Howard before, and most had read at least some of the authors whose work appears here.

The stories in the book mostly fell into a few categories: Heroic Fantasy, Westerns, and stories featuring Robert E. Howard himself. We were surprised that there were no stories about boxers or sailors, who were featured prominently in Howard's fiction.

Three stories by relatively little-known authors were mentioned favorably by everyone at the meeting. "A Penny a Word" by Rick Klaw and Paul O. Miles is a clever secret history about the publishers of Howard's work. "The Toughest Jew in the West" by Lawrence Person intricately weaves diverse elements including Western fiction, martial arts, golems, and religion into a wonderful and humorous whole. Melissa Mia Hall's "The Sea of Grass on the Day of Wings," a beautifully written tale of Robert E. Howard's last day on Earth, would not surprise us if nominated for a major award.

We liked several other stories. Jayme Lynn Blaschke's "Prince Koindrindra Escapes" is a fun twist on King Kong, with perhaps the most tenuous connection to the anthology's theme. "The Jewel of Leystall" by Chris Roberson feels like an authentic REH-style fantasy adventure. We had fun with Jessica Reisman's young adult fantasy "Two Hearts in Zamora." Chris Nakashima-Brown's "The Bunker of the Tikriti" is a clever and effective modern-day retelling of REH's classic "Tower of the Elephant." "Boomtown Bandits" by L. J. Washburn is a fun mystery set in Cross Plains, where Robert E. Howard himself gets to play detective.

Some of the better stories in the book were written by well-established writers. Neal Barrett, Jr.'s "The Heart" is a wondrous Texas tall tale that ranks among his best work. Scott A. Cupp's "One Fang" is a delightful and well-told Western horror story. And Michael Moorcock's "The Roaming Forest" is an imaginative heroic fantasy that reads like a great lost REH story.

Every story in the book had its admirers. We felt this was a strong anthology, and we offer kudos to the editors for their hard work and good taste.

At the end of the meeting, two people who had not read the book arrived to join us for dinner. We had a nice meal at Hyde Park Grill South.

### JANUARY 23: ACCELERANDO BY CHARLES STROSS

Everybody in the reading group had read at least some part of *Accelerando*. About two thirds of the people finished it. Others were planning to finish it. Everybody had read Charles Stross before.

The common opinion is that *Accelerando* is too discontinuous to be called a novel. The stories that make up *Accelerando* revolve around the same set of characters, but there is no plot arch to unify them. Some readers didn't like this. Others found unexpected advantages in this structure: it made the novel as a whole not predictable. One reader said, "You had no idea where Stross was going [with the story]. It was not predictable. It was a slow read, because you didn't want to flip to the end. It wouldn't make any sense. It's not like it all comes together." This unpredictability may naturally follow from the fact that the overarching narrative of *Accelerando* is, in the words of one reader, a narrative of ideas. It had hardly anything to do with any of the characters. And because of that, some readers thought the "infodumps" -- the passages in bold print where the technological revolution taking places in the Solar system is recapped in a format of a popular science essay -- were some of the most interesting passages in the book, and contained the most beautiful writing.

Yet everyone agreed that the characterization in *Accelerando* was nowhere near as good as in Charles Stross' some other work. One reader said it was a sad comment that by far the best character in some of the later stories was Aineko, the AI cat.

But the mediocre characterization is more than compensated by the innovative ideas, which *Accelerando* is chock full of. These are the examples of ideas that impressed readers the most:

-- Charles Stross' portrayal of the technological Singularity. A reader said: "He's taken a good swing at the issue that a couple of other writers have taken a stab at. There's a running debate among writers and readers whether it's possible to write about the Singularity. Vernor Vinge explored many different ways we can postulate the possibility of Singularity, and then write around it, as in *Marooned in Realtime*, where some people stepped out for lunch and weren't there when it happened. Some other people have tried writing about posthuman cultures living on the edge of transcendency. Karl Schroeder has taken a stab at it a couple of times. Some of Stross' other works were about humans living in a shadow of transcendency. This was writing from the experience of the people who lived through it, not from the innermost core -- you can't really write that story, but about humans who lived more or less human lives in the shadow of that event."

-- Stross comes up with an answer to the Fermi paradox. If alien civilizations are out there, how come we haven't seen signs of any? In *Accelerando*, as humankind goes through Singularity and converts the Solar system into computronium, they discover that if they were to travel in space, they wouldn't have enough bandwidth. So they stay where they are.

-- On a lesser scale, people were amused by Stross's lawyer humor. One reader commented, "I thought one little detail was really wonderful: when Amber was a queen of her little piece of rock around Jupiter, and her legal system required combat to solve lawsuits. And Pierre was, thank God, I don't know any martial arts! We're gonna upload some martial arts thing and kill each other. And she said, no. You get to choose the weapon, and the weapon I want you to choose is some kind of economic profit-making scheme! I thought it was a cute point." Stross provides similarly humorous treatment of various today's annoyances, such as spam, pyramid schemes, and the IRS. Another person said: "[Stross] really must have a thing against taxes, because the IRS agent, Manfred's wife, is the most horrible human being, the worst character I had run into in a long time. There's nothing good about her, except that she's good at her job." Pamela's character must be memorable indeed, because another reader said she asked Stross (when he was in Austin for ArmadilloCon) "if his portrait of Pamela was how he saw the U.S. and the American people. At that time America was engaging in activities sort of like Pamela was: if you don't give it to me, I'll take it!" But Stross said, no, that wasn't what Pamela was supposed to represent.

Some people thought that parts of Stross' futuristic vision were too sketchy. Especially *Economics 2.0*, which, many readers agreed, was explained in no more than a hand-waving fashion.

Everybody acknowledged that this book is not for mass audiences. "It definitely is rapture of the nerds." "You have to have a background in science fiction to understand it. Mainstream book clubs shouldn't read it. Stross is not pandering. Well, he's pandering to a geek audience. If you're not reading science fiction and you're not getting any of this, he doesn't care." "It's definitely written for an SF computer nerd, specifically, a computer science SF nerd. Ninety percent of the references he makes are computer science references that's he's playing around with."

Somebody also observed that despite being set in the future, *Accelerando* is very closely tied to today's technological and pop-culture landscape: "I'm not sure you can understand if you don't read Dilbert and Slashdot. I'm not sure if a bright person who's not from that community would understand it." That's not a good thing, as it unnecessarily narrows down the audience that might be able to enjoy it otherwise. For the same reason the book may not age well, as the Dilbert references may be obsolete twenty years from now.

# FACT BOARD MINUTES

By Elizabeth Burton

## 2006 ANNUAL MEETING

President William Siros called the annual meeting of the Fandom Association of Central Texas to order at 2:57 p.m., 12 March 2006, at the Doubletree Hotel, 6505 IH-35 North, Austin, Texas, United States 78752-4346, after determining the presence of a quorum of 19 members present plus 16 proxies.

Present, in addition to Mr. Siros, were FACT members Ed Scarborough, Sonia Santana, Brian Price, Charles Siros, Renee Babcock, Kimm Antell, and Elizabeth Burton, Robert Reedy, Judith Ward, Lynn Ward, Angela Price, Tom Davidson, Kurt Baty, Dan Tolliver, Wendy Spencer and Tom Morin; and guest Sabrina Ballard.

Former FACT Board Secretary Dan Tolliver submitted revised set of minutes for the 2005 annual meeting, which were reviewed. Renee Babcock noted CD amount should be corrected to \$15,000, not \$1500. Brian Price advised "Ms. Siros" should be corrected to "Mr. Siros." Judith Ward had a question regarding the election, as she was unclear regarding Mr. Siros's status. Mr. Tolliver advised he would list the names of attendees missing from the version submitted as soon as he locates the video camera to review. There being no further discussion, additions or corrections, it was moved by Ed Scarborough and seconded by Brian Price the minutes be approved as revised. Ayes: 19, Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0.

Mr. Siros reported that he feels FACT had "a pretty good year," noting that the membership has grown, and that the organization has engaged in a wider variety of social activities with the help of the social director and others. He stated he believes that in the coming year the group should do more activities in San Antonio and other places so more people can participate.

Judith Ward noted she had not received information regarding San Antonio activities, as she is apparently not subscribed to the FACT listserv. Mr. Charles Siros requested she provide him with her email address so that omission can be corrected.

Mr. William Siros continued, stating that members were more visible at state and national activities so others are aware of a broader range of the membership. He cited the retreat for the board, the budget development, and noted that business operations have improved. He stated he would like to see a more activist president in the coming year, especially one able to do grants, as the organization needs to look for additional revenue streams, particularly for outreach. "Those are sorts of things

that as we build in the future would be more helpful," he said.

Outgoing Board Chair's Report: Renee Babcock stated she would like to thank the board and officers this year because it was a busy year. She noted that, while the organization didn't hit the stated membership goal of 100, enough new members joined to make up for loss of old members by attrition and increase the total. She said she felt the board did a good job of reporting to the membership regarding trips; that the board made a budget and stuck with it, and in many cases came in under so it was a good year financially. She agreed that there is a need to do more outreach. She cited the SF/F screenplay award at Austin Film Festival and a cable channel interview with Elizabeth Moon as examples of what has been done; noted the upcoming World Fantasy Convention and FACT presence at Robert E. Howard Days and various conventions. She also noted the board of directors had an excellent planning meeting/orientation in May 2005 where they outlined goals for year. "It was kind of an intense afternoon but I enjoyed it," she said.

Ms. Babcock then listed considerations the new board needs to address, including a better solution for storage; increasing outreach in the community; the need to get more members actively participating, rather than relying on the same small group, as it makes for a stronger organization when the membership is involved. She also cited the need to continue offering opportunity for membership development; a study regarding purchase of liability insurance, and the need to move the accounts to a new bank, as there are ongoing issues with the current provider with credit card receipts not coming in and high fees when balances drop.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### TREASURER

Treasurer Kimm Antell noted that she was unable to provide opening balance figures for the past year but that activity on the accounts was as follows:

#### FACT

Reporting Period: 3/18/05-3/7/06

Credit: \$1,312.70

Debit: \$8,839.10

Gross: -\$7526.40

Balance as of 2/28/06: \$9,142.11

#### Armadillocon 27

Reporting Period: 4/20/05-11/29/05

Credit: \$21,315.40  
Debit: \$24,185.45  
Gross: -\$2,870.05  
Balance as of 2/28/06: \$4,756.13

### **World Fantasy Convention 2006**

Reporting Period: 4/23/05-3/9/06  
Credit: \$34,752.88  
Debit: \$13,804.34  
Gross: \$20,948.54  
Balance as of 2/28/06: \$16,729.26

Mr. William Siros noted that such negative balances are standard.

### **INFORMATION SERVICES**

Mr. Charles Siros reported that the organizations domains had been moved to a better hosting service, allowing for a broader range of utilities. Ms. Antell noted that he had also made the necessary improvements to make the site compliant with industry standards.

### **REGISTRAR**

Ms. Sonia Santana reported total membership had increased to 93 members by the end of the year.

### **SOCIAL DIRECTOR**

Mr. Ed Scarborough noted the expansion of the range of group activities, including movie and sports event outings and adult gaming. He cited need to develop more activities that are accessible to all members.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Mr. Robert Reedy advised he went \$228 over budget, mostly for postage for the FACT Sheet, and that he was willing to continue producing the newsletter if needed. The president and several other board members praised Mr. Reedy's work, noting he had needed to learn the job on the fly.

### **ARMADILLOCON 27**

Ms. Babcock, the co-chair, noted the event had an international flavor with guests from Scotland, Australia and Canada. She noted the new location received excellent reviews. There was one minor snag when the records from the Hilton needed to obtain a line of credit were lost, but Mr. Tolliver saved the day by locating an invoice.

### **ARMADILLOCON 28**

Ms. Antell noted that members are beginning to register and that activity is picking up speed. Kurt Baty suggested taking an ad in the LA WorldCon progress report suggesting people come here on their way there, as the convention is two weeks after ours.

### **WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION**

Co-chair Babcock reported that progress is proceeding smoothly, with the next round of PR due out in the next two weeks. She said the committee had been asked to send out two nominating ballots instead of one to allow people to make more nominations. She also noted a dire need for volunteers.

### **READING GROUP**

President Siros expressed his thanks to Jeff Hurst and Judy Strange for taking over operations of the group.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

President Siros noted that the change of official address hasn't been filed with the Texas Secretary of State and that the name of the registered agent is also incorrect. The decision was made at the 2005 annual meeting to move the official address to that of Karen Meschke.

Ms. Antell stated this needs to be seen to in the next two months, and Mr. Tolliver noted that the wording in the minutes did not reflect actual address but rather "at the home of Karen Meschke," so that if Ms. Meschke moves the address does as well.

Mr. Tolliver then moved to change the official address of FACT to 12917 Candlestick Place, Austin TX; the motion was seconded by Ms. Babcock. It was then asked whether Ms. Meschke should be listed as the registered agent. Mr. Tolliver so amended his motion, which was then seconded by Mr. Charles Siros. There being no further discussion, the vote was called; Ayes-19, Nays-0, no abstentions.

Mr. Tolliver then noted there had been a change in the laws governing non-profit organizations, and that the organization needs to decide how the change is to be handled. Ms. Babcock suggested the bylaws committee should investigate the matter and make recommendation to the new board.

Ms. Antell reiterated that it is vital the organization get more people actively involved.

There being no other business, President Siros opened the election for the new board of directors. Those who had declared their intent to run were: Sonia Santana, Judith Ward, Elizabeth Burton, Renee Babcock and JP Sugarbroad. Mr. Siros advised that two more seats needed to be filled and called for nominations. Brian Price and Charles Siros stated they would serve if elected; Fred Duarte stated he would serve but might not have time.

The meeting recessed at 4:05 p.m. to allow for the counting of ballots. Elected to the board were: Sonia Santana, Judith Ward, William Siros, Brian Price, Elizabeth Burton, JP Sugarbroad, and Renee Babcock.

All business being concluded, the president expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who had worked for and with the organization over the preceding year and adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

## THE FANDOM ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL TEXAS, INC.

The Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc. (FACT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit literary/ educational corporation.

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## HOW TO JOIN FACT

Join us! FACT membership benefits include regular issues of *The F.A.C.T. Sheet* and the opportunity to participate in many social events. To become a member, please send membership dues to the FACT mailing address or go to [www.fact.org](http://www.fact.org) and select "Join FACT."

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.

## ABOUT THE FACT SHEET

**Editor** Jennifer Juday

### Contact Information

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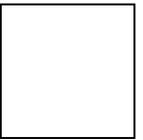
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The F.A.C.T. Sheet  
The Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc.  
PO Box 26442  
Austin, TX 78755



**First Class Mail**

**FACT 2007 BOARD ELECTION**  
**BALLOT ENCLOSED**

**Please respond TODAY if you will not be attending the meeting in person!**

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**ALSO INCLUDED: Ballot & Envelope for Casting  
Your Vote for 2007-2008 Board Members.**

If you don't plan to attend the Annual Meeting, please either assign a proxy or mail in your ballot.



**F.A.C.T. ANNUAL MEETING**

**WHEN:** Sunday, March 11, 2 PM

**WHERE:** Carver Branch of the Austin Public Library (1161 Angelina Street)

**AGENDA:** Includes election of new Board Members. See article for details.

**IF YOU DON'T PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING, PLEASE EITHER ASSIGN A PROXY OR MAIL IN YOUR BALLOT TODAY!**