



# THE F.A.C.T. SHEET

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

April 2007

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## PASSING OF LIFETIME FACT MEMBER LISA GREENE

Submitted by Willie Siros

Lisa Greene, longtime FACT member and housemate of Willie and Chuck Siros, died on April 19 of respiratory failure that resulted from her long fight with breast cancer. Lisa was a Lifetime FACT Member, a former member of the FACT board, and a former editor of *The FACT Sheet*. She also served on the ALAMO and SCIFI Boards. She entered our circle from Houston fandom and Bill Parker's STAFF organization. She worked on LoneStar Con 1 (1985 NASFiC) and was Bid Party Coordinator for the LoneStarCon 2 (1997 WorldCon). She was majority owner of Adventures in Crime & Space.

Before returning to Austin, she spent a decade or so in Hollywood following her dream of working in the film industry and joined LA fandom before she moved on to standard poodle fandom.

Lisa's sister Renee Mathew says Lisa was cremated. There will be no funeral and there will be a family interment at the crypt in Houston.

The family is tentatively planning a memorial service in Austin in a few weeks. Willie Siros will inform everyone as plans are finalized. The family will let him know when they pick a charity.

Chuck and Willie are planning a slide show for Lisa and encourage people who wish to pass along

testaments to be read at the event to send them to Willie so he can pass them along to Lisa's sister. Any pictures people have of Lisa through the years would be much appreciated. Please send Willie Siros copies for inclusion in the slide show.

Jedi Master is now Chuck's problem and Flynn (her beautiful dog) will be returning to California.

Lisa had a good life and will be missed. Thanks for your prayers and kind thoughts. As the late Kurt Vonnegut reminded us, "So it goes."

## YOU'RE INVITED!

**All FACT members are invited  
to all of these events!**

May 7, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group, Fledgling** by Octavia E. Butler. Details: reading@fact.org

May 12, 6 PM: **Gaming** at Brian Price's house. For details: tbrianp@sbcglobal.net

May 13, 2-4 PM, Austin Public Library, Carver Branch (1161 Angelina St.): **FACT Board Meeting**

May 19, 11 AM: **Mailing Party** Help get the ArmadilloCon mailing out the door. Details: r.babcock@mail.utexas.edu

May 22, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group, I Hope the World Can Take It** by Austin writer Artemus Shelton

Jun. 16, 11AM-3 PM: **FACT's Annual Boat Trip** Pencil this onto your calendar now. Details to follow.

## ARMADILLOCON 29 NEEDS YOU!

All FACT members are invited to help make ArmadilloCon happen! If you are interested in helping, contact Chair Renee Babcock at r.babcock@mail.utexas.edu.

The preparations include a **mass mail out** that will be on Saturday May 19, beginning at 11AM, so please put that date on your calendar.

## JOHN MOORE TO HOST PUBLICATION PARTY!

FACT member John Moore's new book, *A Fate Worse than Dragons*, comes out April 25<sup>th</sup>. John is

throwing a party, a champagne brunch, on Sunday, May 6th, starting at 12:00 noon. All FACT members are invited, so if you find yourself in the Houston, stop in. You can find John at: 7906 Glover Street, Houston, TX 77012-3620, ph. 713-644-0472.

## SIGNINGS IN HOUSTON & AUSTIN THIS WEEK

Murder by the Book and Katy Budget Books are hosting several large signings in the Houston area this weekend (April 27-28). Authors you can meet, greet and get a signature from will include Jim Butcher, Rachel Caine, MaryJanice Davidson, and Charlaire Harris. For details, go to [www.murderbooks.com](http://www.murderbooks.com).

Chris Roberson, the author of the mass market paperback *X-Men: The Return* will be at Austin Books and Comics from 5 to 7pm on Saturday, April 28, signing copies of this newest book.

## SUPPORT FACT WHEN YOU BUY GROCERIES

Do you have a Randall's Remarkable Card? If so, please consider making FACT one of the charities that benefits from your grocery shopping through the Randall's Good Neighbor Program. You can have up to three charities linked to your Randall's card. You can pick up the form at the courtesy booth or you can download it online at and turn it in the next time you are at the store. The form is available at [tinyurl.com/2stt7l](http://tinyurl.com/2stt7l).

## VOTE FOR WF AWARDS

The ballot for the 2007 World Fantasy Awards has been posted. Go to [www.lastsfa.org/wfc2007](http://www.lastsfa.org/wfc2007) to download a ballot.

## ARMADILLOCON 28 PODCASTS AVAILABLE

In celebration of the 2006 World Fantasy Convention in Austin and all the hooplah surrounding Robert E. Howard, RevolutionSF presented a series of related readings recorded during last year's ArmadilloCon. RevolutionSF Radio has posted podcasts of the material. These include readings by Mark Finn, Rick Klaw, Paul O. Miles, Chris Nakashima-Brown, Nicole Kimberling, and Patrice Sarath. To listen to them, go to: [tinyurl.com/23ffds](http://tinyurl.com/23ffds).

## PULITZER AWARD FOR BRADBURY

The Pulitzer Awards this year include a special citation to Ray Bradbury for his "distinguished, prolific and deeply influential career as an unmatched author of science fiction and fantasy." Read more at [tinyurl.com/2q435e](http://tinyurl.com/2q435e). Bradbury wrote

the foreword for an upcoming Reading Group selection, *The Last Mimzy*.

## ARMADILLOCON 29 PANELISTS

ArmadilloCon 29 already has 39 wonderful panelists confirmed! In addition to our special guests (Author GoH Louise Marley, Editor GoH Sharyn November, Fan GoH Patty Wells, Toastmaster Howard Waldrop, and Artist GoH Gary Lippincott), you can look forward to seeing the following people on panels:

- Elizabeth Burton
- Rachel Caine
- Matt Cardin
- Bill Crider
- Scott A. Cupp
- Gail Dayton
- Bradley Denton
- Lillian Stewart Carl
- Rhonda Eudaly
- Sara Felix
- John K. Gibbons
- Julie Kenner
- Katharine Eliska Kimbriel
- Ellen Klages
- Rick Klaw
- Jay Lake
- Joe R. Lansdale
- Alexis Glynn Latner
- Maureen McHugh
- Jim Mann
- Laurie Mann
- Karen Meschke
- John Moore
- Chris Nakashima-Brown
- Jess Nevins
- Gloria Oliver
- Aaron de Orive
- Bill Parker
- Lawrence Person
- John Picacio
- Cat Rambo
- Jessica Reisman
- Carrie Richerson
- Chris Roberson
- Josh Rountree
- Patrice E. Sarath
- Rie Sheridan
- Sharon Shinn
- Debbie Lynn Smith
- Kathryn Sullivan
- Shanna Swendson
- Matt Taggart
- Mikal Trimm
- Martha Wells
- K.D. Wentworth
- Wendy Wheeler
- Jo Whitemore
- Steve Wilson

## HUGO NOMINATIONS

Note that an error was made in the original list of nominees in the category Best Dramatic Presentation Long Form. We show the corrected list here. If you have any questions about the error, see the press release at [tinyurl.com/2td9s3](http://tinyurl.com/2td9s3).

Also note that several guests and participants of ArmadilloCon (past and present) have made this year's list! Those names are noted with bold type in the list below.

## NOVEL

- Michael F. Flynn, *Eifelheim* (Tor)
- Naomi Novik, *His Majesty's Dragon* (Del Rey; also, *Voyager*, 1/06, as *Temeraire*)
- Charles Stross**, *Glasshouse* (Ace)
- Vernor Vinge**, *Rainbows End* (Tor)
- Peter Watts, *Blindsight* (Tor)

## NOVELLA

"The Walls of the Universe" by Paul Melko (*Asimov's*, April/May 2006)

"A Billion Eyes" by Robert Reed (*Asimov's*, October/November 2006)

"Inclination" by William Shunn (*Asimov's*, April/May 2006)

"Lord Weary's Empire" by Michael Swanwick (*Asimov's*, December 2006)

*Julian: A Christmas Story* by Robert Charles Wilson (PS Publishing)

## NOVELETTE

"Yellow Card Man" by Paolo Bacigalupi (*Asimov's*, December 2006)

"Dawn, and Sunset, and the Colours of the Earth" by Michael F. Flynn (*Asimov's*, December 2006)

"The Djinn's Wife" by Ian McDonald (*Asimov's*, July 2006)

🇺🇸 "All the Things You Are" by **Mike Resnick** (*Jim Baen's Universe*, October 2006)

"Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter" by Geoff Ryman (*F&SF*, October/November 2006)

## SHORT STORY

🇺🇸 "How to Talk to Girls at Parties" by **Neil Gaiman** (*Fragile Things*, William Morrow)

"Kin" by Bruce McAllister (*Asimov's*, February 2006)

"Impossible Dreams" by Timothy Pratt (*Asimov's*, July 2006)

"Eight Episodes" by Robert Reed (*Asimov's*, June 2006)

"The House Beyond Your Sky" by Benjamin Rosenbaum (*Strange Horizons*, September 2006)

## RELATED BOOK

Samuel R. Delany, *About Writing: Seven Essays, Four Letters, and Five Interviews* (Wesleyan University Press)

Joseph T. Major, *Heinlein's Children: The Juveniles* (Advent: Publishing)

Julie Phillips, *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon* (St. Martin's Press)

🇺🇸 **John Picacio**, *Cover Story: The Art of John Picacio* (MonkeyBrain Books, which is run by **Chris Roberson** and Allison Baker)

🇺🇸 **Mike Resnick** & Joe Siclari, eds., *Worldcon Guest of Honor Speeches* (ISFiC Press)

## DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, LONG FORM

*The list here reflects the correction to this category announced on April 1.*

*Children of Men*. Screenplay by Alfonso Cuarón and Timothy J. Sexton. Directed by Alfonso Cuarón. (Universal Pictures)

*Pan's Labyrinth*. Screenplay by Guillermo del Toro. Directed by Guillermo del Toro. (Picturehouse)

*The Prestige*. Screenplay by Jonathan Nolan and Christopher Nolan. Directed by Christopher Nolan. (Warner Brothers / Touchstone Pictures)

*A Scanner Darkly*. Screenplay by Richard Linklater. Directed by Richard Linklater. (Warner Independent Pictures)

*V for Vendetta*. Screenplay by David Lloyd. Directed by James McTeigue. (Warner Brothers)

## DRAMATIC PRESENTATION, SHORT FORM

*Battlestar Galactica*, "Downloaded." Writers Bradley Thompson and David Weddle. Directed by Jeff Woolnough. (NBC Universal/British Sky)

*Doctor Who*, "Army of Ghosts" and "Doomsday." Written by Russell T. Davies. Directed by Graeme Harper. (BBC Wales/BBC1)

*Doctor Who*, "Girl in the Fireplace." Written by Steven Moffat. Directed by Euros Lyn. (BBC Wales/BBC1)

*Doctor Who*, "School Reunion." Written by Toby Whithouse. Directed by James Hawes. (BBC Wales/BBC1)

*Stargate SG-1*, "200." Written by Brad Wright, Robert C. Cooper, Joseph Mallozzi, Paul Mullie, Carl Binder, Martin Gero, and Alan McCullough. Directed by Martin Wood. (Double Secret Productions/NBC Universal)

## EDITOR, LONG FORM

Lou Anders (Pyr)

James Patrick Baen (Baen Books)

Ginjer Buchanan (Ace Books/Roc)

🇺🇸 **David G. Hartwell** (Tor Books)

🇺🇸 **Patrick Nielsen Hayden** (Tor Books)

## EDITOR, SHORT FORM

🇺🇸 **Gardner Dozois** (*The Year's Best Science Fiction*)

🇺🇸 **David G. Hartwell** (*Year's Best SF / The New York Review of Science Fiction*)

🇺🇸 **Stanley Schmidt** (*Analog*)

🇺🇸 **Gordon Van Gelder** (*Fantasy and Science Fiction*)

🇺🇸 **Sheila Williams** (*Asimov's*)

## PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

🇺🇸 **Bob Eggleton**

Donato Giancola

Stephan Martiniere

🇺🇸 **John Jude Palencar**

🇺🇸 **John Picacio**

## SEMIPROZINE

*Ansible*, ed. Dave Langford

*Interzone*, ed. Andy Cox

*Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, ed. Gavin J. Grant & Kelly Link  
*Locus*, ed. Charles N. Brown, Kirsten Gong-Wong, & Liza Groen Trombi  
🇺🇸 *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, ed. Kathryn Cramer, **David G. Hartwell**, & Kevin J. Maroney

## FANZINE

*Banana Wings*, ed. Claire Brialey & Mark Plummer  
*Challenger*, ed. Guy Lillian III  
*The Drink Tank*, ed. Christopher J. Garcia  
*Plokta*, ed. Alison Scott, Steve Davies, & Mike Scott  
*Science-Fiction Five-Yearly*, ed. Lee Hoffman, Geri Sullivan, & Randy Byers

## FAN WRITER

Chris Garcia  
John Hertz  
Dave Langford  
John Scalzi  
Steven H. Silver

## FAN ARTIST

🇺🇸 **Brad W. Foster**  
🇺🇸 **Teddy Harvia**  
Sue Mason  
Steve Stiles  
Frank Wu

## JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD NOMINATIONS

Scott Lynch  
Sarah Monette  
Naomi Novik  
Brandon Sanderson  
Lawrence M. Schoen

## 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 [publications@fact.org](mailto:publications@fact.org).*

## FACT MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

FACT members with recent or upcoming birthdays include **Fred Kellam** (April 11), **Sara Felix** (May 17), **Karen Meschke** (May 18) and **John Gibbons** (May 27).

## AUTHOR & PUBLISHER NEWS

According to *The New York Times*, **Michael Bishop**, a former Guest of Honor at ArmadilloCon, lost a son in the Virginia Tech shootings.

**Jayme Lynn Blaschke** attended AggieCon and posted a write-up on his blog that mentions several

FACT members, with pictures of **A.T. Campbell III** and **Willie Siros**. Read the write-up at [tinyurl.com/2l9scc](http://tinyurl.com/2l9scc).

*Analog* published an obituary for Texas writer **Jayge Carr**. You can read it at [tinyurl.com/39qmea](http://tinyurl.com/39qmea).

Deep Shag Records has announced the upcoming release of a new **Harlan Ellison** recording. *On The Road With Ellison Volume Three* features an exclusive new essay. Material includes "the matter of Harlan time-traveling to his youth, getting fired from Disney on the first day, and why did he drop that chandelier on those people?" The CD comes out on May 8. You can preorder it at [www.deepshag.com](http://www.deepshag.com).

**Alexis Glynn Latner's** first novel, *Hurricane Moon*, is due out from Pyr in July. Many of you will know Alexis as a longtime regular at ArmadilloCon. You might also have heard her read at World Fantasy. *Publishers Weekly* has given *Hurricane Moon* a positive review. Read this first review at [tinyurl.com/24frw4](http://tinyurl.com/24frw4).

You can also check out **Alexis Glynn Latner's** writing at No Fear of the Future, a blog she now contributes to: [nofearofthefuture.blogspot.com](http://nofearofthefuture.blogspot.com). Other contributors to this blog include **Zoran Živković**, **Jess Nevins**, **Stephen Dedman**, **Chris Nakashima-Brown** and **Jayme Lynn Blaschke**.

**Meisha Merlin**, an excellent small publisher of FSF, is closing its doors. The notice on their website cites struggles with distribution.

San Antonio writer **Rick Riordan**, author of the Percy Jackson series for children and the Tres Navarre series for adults, will soon be touring to promote *The Titan's Curse* (*Percy Jackson and the Olympians Book 3*). The hardcover is available on Amazon for preorder. The release date is May 1. BookPeople is hosting a Launch Party on May 1 (party begins at 6 PM; Rick arrives at 7 PM). He'll also drop by the Brodie Lane Barnes and Noble sometime that day to sign their stock. He'll appear at Murder by the Book in Houston on May 2 (7:30 PM) and at the Blue Willow Bookshop, also in Houston, on May 3 (5:30 PM). For details on these and many other events, see his online calendar at [tinyurl.com/2ep8yq](http://tinyurl.com/2ep8yq).

A "new" book by **J.R.R. Tolkein** was recently published. Tolkien's son and literary executor **Christopher Tolkein**, now in his eighties, constructed *The Children of Hurin* from his father's manuscripts, and said he tried to do so "without any editorial invention." The new book features illustrations by Oscar-winner **Alan Lee**.

A very positive review of **Howard Waldrop's** *Things Will Never Be the Same* and *Howard Who?* was published in the *Washington Post* and reprinted in *The Austin American Statesman*. You can read it online at: [tinyurl.com/24eyad](http://tinyurl.com/24eyad). Waldrop will be

Toastmaster at this year's ArmadilloCon. If you do not know his work, either of these collections would be an excellent introduction.

Austin writer **Don Webb** has a story in the May issue of *Fantasy and Science Fiction*. "The Great White Bed" is a great short read. If you miss getting a copy at the newsstands, you can get an online copy at Fictionwise or at Audible.com.

**Martha Wells**, who was ArmadilloCon GoH in 2002, has stories coming out in *Black Gate* 10, 11, and 12. All three are early prequels to *The Wizard Hunters*, about Giliead and Ilias. Per the editor of *Black Gate* (quoted on Martha's website), "*Black Gate* 10 has been printed and is now off to the distributor. It should be appearing in retail outlets like Barnes & Noble, Walden's Books, Borders, and other book stores within the next week or two. Keep your eyes sharp!" ActuSF has posted an interview with Wells that you can read at [tinyurl.com/2bxcqb](http://tinyurl.com/2bxcqb). Finally, Wells has confirmed on her website that she will be appearing at ArmadilloCon 29.

**Martha Wells** lost her father on April 18. He was 87, and they had been expecting it for a while.

The April 2007 issue of *Fantasy and Science Fiction* features a special **Gene Wolfe** section. While the issue has already left newsstands, you can read some of the material for free at [www.sfsite.com](http://www.sfsite.com).

## MEDIA NEWS

The ashes of **James Doohan**, who played Scotty on the original *Star Trek* TV series, will be launched into space later this month, along with those of Mercury astronaut **Gordon Cooper** and about 200 others. This has been arranged by Celestis, a Texas company that contracts with rocket firms to send cremated remains into space. For additional details, see [tinyurl.com/29ufdf](http://tinyurl.com/29ufdf).

The new computer game **Command & Conquer: 3: Tiberium Wars** features an impressive set of SF actors: **Tricia Helfer**, **Billy Dee Williams**, **Michael Ironside**, **Josh Holloway**, **Grace Park**, **Ivana Bozilovic**, **Shanon Cook**, **John Huck**, **Shauntay Hinton**, and **Joe Kucan**. For details, see [tinyurl.com/2a7cun](http://tinyurl.com/2a7cun). Download a demo at [tinyurl.com/yplfmw](http://tinyurl.com/yplfmw).

Austin fantasy artist **Anthony Ocean** has posted several new pieces on his website, including a large Darth Vader piece ([tinyurl.com/ywx6dx](http://tinyurl.com/ywx6dx)). He also now has t-shirts for sale ([tinyurl.com/2b5cwm](http://tinyurl.com/2b5cwm)).

Limited edition **Serenity** blueprints went on sale in April. To order or even just admire, go to [tinyurl.com/2vd9tw](http://tinyurl.com/2vd9tw).

**Amanda Tapping** of *Stargate* fame is starring in *Sanctuary*, a professionally produced web-based series. *Sanctuary* will be launching soon (spring 2007). For details, go to [www.sanctuaryforall.com](http://www.sanctuaryforall.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FACT MEETINGS & GATHERINGS

- May 7, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *The Last Mimzy* by Henry Kuttner. Details: **FACT Reading Group**, *Fledgling* by Octavia E. Butler. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- May 12, 6 PM: **Gaming** at Brian Price's house. For details: [tbrianp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tbrianp@sbcglobal.net)
- May 13, 2-4 PM: **FACT Board Meeting**
- May 22, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *I Hope the World Can Take It* by Artemus Shelton. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- June 4, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *The Last Mimzy* by Henry Kuttner. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- June 19, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *Rainbows End* by Vernor Vinge. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- July 2, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *1632* by Eric Flint. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- July 17, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *When Gravity Fails* by George Alec Effinger. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- August 6, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *The Last Witchfinder* by James Morrow. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- Jun. 16, 11AM-3 PM: **FACT's Annual Boat Trip**  
Pencil this onto your calendar now. Details to follow.

### OTHER READING GROUPS

- May 9, 7 PM, Flight Path: The Dark Forces Reading Group will discuss *The Amber Spyglass* by Philip Pullman
- May 21, 7 PM, Bookpeople: The Ludicrous Speed Book Group will discuss *Light* by M. John Harrison

### MOVIES & TV

- Alamo Drafthouse: *Terror Thursdays* Series, **FREE** shows at Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Downtown.
- Apr. 26, 11:59 PM: *Terrorvision*
- May 3, 11:59 PM: *Invasion of the Bee Girls*
- May 10, 11:59 PM: *The Stepfather*
- Apr. 27, 7 & 10 PM, Alamo Drafthouse Cinema Downtown: *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome*
- May 3, 11:55 PM, Alamo Drafthouse Cinema South Lamar, Village: *Spider-Man 3* (many more shows to follow) *Opening week tickets on sale now.*
- May 19, 7 & 9:45 PM: *Japanese Spiderman - in Foleyvision*, with Foley Artist Fred Newman
- May 6, 7 - 10 PM: *Austin Browncoats Get Together: SpiderHouse Café* (2908 Fruth). Episode viewing, food gobbling and beverage quaffing. Possible filk and fanvids. Projector starts running at 8 PM.

## CONVENTIONS & THE LIKE

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

- Apr. 27-29: **Anime Matsuri**, George R. Brown Convention Center and the Hilton Americas Hotel, Houston, TX. Anime con.  
[www.animematsuri.com](http://www.animematsuri.com)
- Jun. 1-3: **A-Kon**, Adam's Mark Hotel, Dallas, TX. Guests include: Vic Mignogna, Spike Spencer, Steve Bennet, Billy Tucci, Jake Tarbox, Scott Ramsomair, Howard Tayler, Wendy Powell, Kyle Herbert, Brian Glass.  
[www.a-kon.com](http://www.a-kon.com)
- Jun. 8-10: **SoonerCon**, Biltmore Hotel, Oklahoma City, OK. GoH Stephen R. Donaldson, Artist GoH Keith Birdsong, Toastmaster Selena Rosen. FACT member Katharine Eliska Kimbriel will be a guest as well. Memberships \$25 until May 31.  
[www.soonercon.com](http://www.soonercon.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. Memberships \$25 through June 1.  
[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.  
[www.armadillocon.org](http://www.armadillocon.org)
- Aug. 24-26: **Bubonicon 39**, Wyndham Airport Hotel, Albuquerque, NM. Literary SFF con. GoH Vernor Vinge; Toastmistress Jane Lindskold; Artist GoH William Stout; Auctioneer Robert E. Vardeman. Memberships \$30 through May 4.  
[www.bubonicon.com](http://www.bubonicon.com)
- Sept. 21-23: **FenCon IV**, Crowne Plaza North Dallas, Addison, TX. SFF & Filk Con. Music GoH Tom Smith; Fen GoH Kathleen Sloan; Artist GoH David Mattingly; Special Guest: Toni Weiskopf.  
[www.fencon.org](http://www.fencon.org)

## READING GROUP REPORT

Submitted by Elze Hamilton

### MAR. 5: *LADY OF THE MAZES* BY KARL SCHROEDER

On March 5, 2007, the FACT reading group discussed *Lady of the Mazes* by Karl Schroeder. Everybody who was present at the discussion had read Karl Schroeder before. All but one person had read at least some part of this book. Only four people (out of eight) finished it. Most of the others were planning to finish. One person who did not even attempt to read this book justified her decision with one word: *Ventus*. Despite agreement that *Lady of the Mazes* was better than *Ventus* (Karl Schroeder's first novel), the group's opinions of *Lady of the Mazes* ranged from lukewarm approval to outright disappointment.

While some people thought Schroeder's world building seemed interesting at first, while the story centered on Teven Coronal, later in the book both the world building and the plot faltered. A few people gave the author credit for developing something rarely seen in SF, countless overlapping virtual realities with no "baseline reality," but others thought his descriptive powers were not up to par to this undoubtedly difficult task. One reader found the portrayal of virtual reality unconvincing: "The fundamental idea of multiple overlapping realities was such a cool idea, and yet he didn't entirely convince me that in his version of it, it makes sense. There were so many questions about, what if there are physical obstacles from one reality imposing on another reality? And he kind of danced it around it a little bit about having software impose a compatible obstacle, or even suppress your awareness of the motions you made to walk around something, to make you feel that you're walking in a straight line, but he didn't quite convince me that it would work." At the same time he acknowledged that Karl Schroeder's attempt at depicting virtual reality was more ambitious than what most writers had done before.

Another reader was even less impressed. "I see mundaneness everywhere, and I don't think that's what he intends to describe," he said. He thought Schroeder could have built a much more impressive world given the technology available in this world. He quotes examples of technological blunders in the book that one does not expect from a writer of hard science fiction. Case in point: "[In the scene where they are traveling in space], they spin up to get half the g, and they are looking out with the telescope. What's wrong with that scene?" he asked. "They are spinning like hell! You need to spin really fast to create an artificial gravity of half g." If they tried to look out the window while spinning this fast, they would see nothing but a blur. Another group

member countered that the telescope output was edited by the virtual reality software (called *inscape* in the book) to eliminate the blur, making it look as if there was no spinning.

So there's an interesting dilemma. Too much reality-editing technology can, at best, make the world described in a science fiction book look mundane, and at worst, mistakenly imply that the author doesn't understand science. There's a fine line between giving your characters full control over the reality they experience, and shielding them from experiencing anything unusual, which would defeat the point of writing science fiction in the first place. The group for the large part seemed to think that Schroeder does not walk this line very well. This was the main source of dissatisfaction for some of the readers. When the virtual reality started to fall apart, it promised some interesting developments as the characters would be forced to deal with the raw, unedited world.

But it didn't happen. A reader said: "It starts out, we are in the virtual reality world and something weird starts happening. From the title *Lady of Mazes*, I expected a series of puzzles to unravel. As the virtual reality world kind of fell apart, I thought, this was going to get interesting. And when they say, we're going to reinvent science, I thought, cool! And reinventing science is, you are in a house and put a sign on the house of your destination, and throw yourself off the cliff, that's reinvention of science?"

He was talking about a scene that exemplifies the low-tech feel of the book, unexpected for a hard science fiction novel. The three main characters launch themselves into space by getting into a house and throwing that house off of a cliff -- or, to be exact, off the edge of their world. The destination sign is the way to communicate their destination to the forces / mechanisms that run the set of artificial habitats floating in space, known as *coronals*. The forces read the sign and deliver the house to the right habitat. The same reader went on to say, "They go around the ringworld, and they find nothing? OK, so let's go to Jupiter. And there are more virtual reality people! I wanted not the virtual reality people, I wanted the real world stuff! I was hoping I'd find people dealing with real science, real world stuff, but no."

The group was also unanimous in the opinion that the middle third of the book was poorly plotted; the narrative meandered and snarled. A reader said: "When [the characters] got to the Archipelago, it's like [the author] didn't know what to do. It kind of really slowed down, bogged down the whole thing."

Somebody was also disappointed that the psychological suspense in the book does not get satisfactorily resolved. A reader said: "there was this psychological suspense about why [Livia] reacted in certain ways, and what really happened

back at the time of the accident. That scene should have been extremely intense, it should have been the point of the book, and it just didn't have the payoff it should have had."

I wasn't convinced by the characters' personal motivations, or even by the philosophical conclusions they arrive at in the course of the novel. First, there is this intriguing notion of "tech locks," which was one of the concepts that made me *want* to like this book, even though I was eventually unable to. The idea is that when we are choosing technologies we use, we are choosing our values. "Tech locks" are technological limitations, restrictions that prevent the society from using certain technologies. Those restrictions are self-imposed by the society. One of the main characters thinks society should not censor itself by dismissing entire classes of technologies; he thinks humans can't live authentic lives without complete technological freedom. Then the world they live in comes under attack from a superhuman power that wants to destroy the tech locks. The book does not make it clear why it wanted that -- maybe just for the sake of an experiment? Then it turns out there are not just one, but two superhuman / transcendent entities warring against one another, even though both of them want to destroy the tech locks. The main characters, who started out on a mission together to find help for their home world, split up and align themselves with one power or the other for no good reasons. Their choices don't seem to be dictated by their personalities. Once they started making arbitrary choices, I stopped caring about what was happening to them.

So what did people like about *Lady of the Mazes*, if anything? They gave Karl Schroeder points for trying. Few writers try to create a virtual reality world as complex as this one, or an interesting mix of human and post human societies. It was also acknowledged that Schroeder's writing has improved since *Ventus*. This was followed by a meta-discussion of why did *Lady of the Mazes* get all the rave reviews from a bunch of science fiction luminaries such as Charles Stross and Vernor Vinge. Those reviews were what made some hard SF fans in the group want to read this book in the first place, only to be disappointed. It was suggested that since these authors explore similar topics, such as singularity and post-humanism, and they all write works that are heavy on ideas but a bit weak on characterization, it is conceivable that they overlooked mediocre storytelling in favor of the ideas.

## **MAR. 20: RECURSION BY TONY BALLANTYNE**

Eleven people attended the discussion of Tony Ballantyne's *Recursion*. Nobody had read a novel by Ballantyne before, because this is his first. Everybody in the group started the book. About half



the people finished it. Some of the rest were planning to finish, but a couple of people were so disappointed by the beginning that they put the book aside.

*Recursion* consists of three storylines, set at different times in the future. In the storyline set in the most distant future, a human and a robot fight Van Neumann Machines (VNM's), self-reproducing assemblers that threaten to overtake the whole universe by converting all matter to VNM's. This storyline is introduced first, and unfortunately most readers found it rather boring, which discouraged their continued reading.

The protagonist of this storyline, Herb, is a self-centered young man from a privileged background, with more money than common sense. It would seem such a person would have enough foibles to make him a vivid character, but most readers found him dull. It may have to do with the fact that instead of actively seeking solutions, he kind of just goes along for the ride. Not that he wanted anything more to begin with: the only reason he goes on a mission to save the universe was because he is blackmailed into doing that by the robot Robert. Robert is immensely smarter than Herb, and has all sorts of information Herb does not. As a result, Herb ends up being hardly more than a puppet for Robert, who drags him off, kicking and screaming, on a series of nauseatingly scary adventures. Robert keeps him clueless about his plans until the very end, where Herb is supposed to play a critical part. Since Herb was, albeit unwillingly, hardly more than a passive observer throughout his adventures, the readers did not find him interesting. To quote one reader, "Herb's only real emotion was wetting his pants."

The protagonist of the second storyline, Constantine, was found to be on the average more interesting. His most intriguing aspect was his four personalities, voices in his head that bickered among themselves and gave him advice.

However, most people found the third storyline and set of characters most interesting. This story is about a woman named Eva and her friends, fellow inmates of a psychiatric hospital. Readers thought Eva was the most credible of the three protagonists, and admired the way the author got into Eva's head. Some thought Ballantyne's skill in creating Eva showed he could have done a better job with the other two protagonists. The portrayal of the society Eva lived in -- one reader described it as a "nanny-socialist state run amuck, making sure that all needs are met, whether you want them to be met or not," was found compelling as well.

The premise of *Recursion*-- the fight against self-replicating machines that are taking over the universe -- was judged by various readers to be

(1) a bit of a stretch;

(2) a cliché, made worse because Ballantyne

(2.1) didn't add much new to it,

(2.2) spent too much time explaining what Van Neumann machines are, given that a fairly high percentage of the readership was familiar with this concept from other science fiction works.

Regarding point (1), two readers could not take seriously the premise that there could be a society with no safeguards against someone accidentally launching a plague of self-assembling machines, or "gray goo." At the very least a runaway gray goo problem would have happened much sooner and on a much bigger scale, they thought. That wasn't the only concept in *Recursion* people found hard to accept. The idea that an AI tests its behavior against the "crazy" people, and it bases its decisions regarding the future of humanity on reactions of the inmates of a mental asylum -- that idea was not found credible by some people. A reader said, "The whole concept of testing against the extremes and basing your decision on the extreme... it's not why you do testing. [...] You use extremes to determine the middle to where you should stay, you don't use extremes to base your decision on."

But not everybody was disappointed in *Recursion*. One person said he liked it because "it was different. When I was reading it, I really couldn't tell what was going to happen 50 pages from now. This book constantly kept me guessing."

The people who liked it, although they were in the minority, enjoyed the puzzle aspect of *Recursion*. By showing parts of the puzzle from different times and places, Ballantyne provided just enough clues for the reader to speculate what's going on, but not so many as to be predictable.

Another aspect that appealed to some was the paranoia that pervaded the lives of the characters. Somebody said the paranoia reminded him of some of Philip K. Dick's work. "This was a stronger novel than Dick's *A Scanner Darkly*. This was on par with Dick's better novels like *Ubik*," he said. Paranoia in *Recursion* is fueled by the fact that the human protagonists are dealing with AI's of superior intellect, the motivations of which they can't possibly fathom. They can only acknowledge, as they do eventually, that they'll never know if they are on the "good" or "bad" side, or whether the "good" and "bad" sides even exist. I thought that was a realistic view of the situation on behalf of the author.

## **FACT BOARD MINUTES**

*Submitted by Elizabeth Burton*

### **MARCH 2007**

The monthly meeting of the newly elected board of directors for the Fandom Association of Central Texas was called to order by Board Chair Brian Price



at the Carver Branch of the Austin Public Library, 1161 Angelina St., Austin, Texas, United States of America, at 4:20 p.m. Present in addition to the chair were Directors Aaron Allston, Elizabeth Burton, Jennifer Juday, Brian Price, Charles Siros, J. P. Sugarbroad and C. Dan Tolliver and FACT members Lynn Ward, Saralou Cooper, Karen Meschke, Angela Price, Kimm Carrillo, A.T. Campbell III, William Siros, Kurt Baty, and Renee Babcock.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The minutes for the February meeting having been previously approved, the board proceeded to the election of officers. On the nomination of Mr. C. Siros and Mr. Sugarbroad, Mr. Price was approved by acclamation as chairman. Nominated by Mr. Tolliver and Mr. Sugarbroad, Mr. W. Siros agreed to accept the position and was named president of FACT by acclamation. Mr. Sugarbroad placed his name in nomination for the office of treasurer, seconded by Ms. Burton, and was approved by acclamation. Mr. Sugarbroad then nominated Ms. Burton as secretary, seconded by Mr. C. Siros. Ms. Burton was approved by acclamation.

For the office of social director, Mr. W. Siros advised Ed Scarbrough had stated he would be willing to consider the position and, on inquiry, placed his name in nomination. Ms. Cooper offered the name of Lynn Ward in nomination as well. The board discussed the advantages of having social directors in both Austin and San Antonio, after which Mr. Allston seconded both nominations. The nominations were approved by acclamation, with the caveat that Mr. Scarbrough does, in fact, agree to accept.

Ms. Cooper placed her name in nomination for the office of registrar, seconded by Ms. Juday. There being no objection, she was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Sugarbroad nominated Mr. C. Siros for the position of MIS manager, seconded by Mr. Allston; Mr. Price nominated Mrs. Carrillo, seconded by Ms. Burton. Following a paper ballot, Mrs. Carrillo was elected MIS director by 4 votes to 2. Mr. Price took the opportunity to thank Mr. Siros for his previous service in that position, stating he felt Mr. Siros could use a break.

There being no other nominees, Mr. Tolliver agreed to continue as FACT historian.

Mr. Sugarbroad requested Ms. Juday continue as publications manager, provided she felt able to do so. His nomination was seconded by Mr. Price and accepted by Ms. Juday, who as approved by acclamation.

Ms. Joi Chevalier, who had reportedly expressed interest in the new office of Public Relations Liaison, was nominated by Mr. Sugarbroad, seconded by Ms.

Juday. Pending her acceptance, her nomination was approved by acclamation.

Ms. Juday nominated Mona Lisa Martinez to continue in the new office of Convention Event Coordinator, seconded by Mr. Sugarbroad. Approved by acclamation.

Mr. Allston then suggested a new position of quartermaster be created to delegate responsibility for the storage lockers and inventory in order to prevent the sort of confusion that recently arose, seconded by Mr. Sugarbroad. The motion being unanimously approved by the board, they then nominated Mr. C. Siros for the position, which was also approved.

Ms. Juday then moved and Mr. Sugarbroad seconded that all current committee chairpersons be reaffirmed, which was unanimously approved.

### **VERIFICATION OF MEETING TIME AND PLACE**

Mr. Sugarbroad moved that the monthly meetings of the board be held at the Carver Branch on the second Sunday of the month at 2 p.m., seconded by Ms. Juday. Approved by acclamation.

It was then noted that the April meeting will fall on Easter Sunday, and it was questioned whether the library facility will be open. A call to the desk confirmed it would not be. Mr. Price suggested that, given the difficulty of rescheduling to another date for a number of reasons, the meeting be held at his home.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Signature Cards:** The board authorized Mr. Sugarbroad to proceed with obtaining the new signature cards for the standing accounts.

**2. Boat Trip:** Mr. Sugarbroad moved Ms. Babcock be authorized to make the required deposit to obtain the discount on the fee for the annual boat trip, seconded by Mr. Allston. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3. Eeyore's Birthday Party Grants:** Tabled

**4. Instacon:** Ms. Babcock requested a scholarship as Mr. Baty would like the chairs for all major conventions to attend. Mr. Baty advised there will be a session where chairs of conventions will be able to try and persuade people to volunteer to assist. Mr. C. Siros moved that FACT reimburse Ms. Babcock for travel expenses and hotel for Instacon. Mr. Sugarbroad recommended she be made a grant of \$200. Mr. Allston amended that motion to \$300, seconded by Ms. Juday. 5 ayes, 1 nay, 1 abstention.

There ensued a discussion of applying the additional funds previously approved by the board for this purpose. Mr. Sugarbroad suggested designating a coordinator to consider applications and determine grantees and moved to offer three

\$150 scholarships, seconded by Mr. C. Siros. 5 ayes, 1 nay, 1 abstention.

Ms. Juday then moved Mr. Sugarbrood be designated coordinator, seconded by Mr. Allston. 6 ayes, 1 abstention.

**5. Tax Exemption:** Ms. Burton requested permission to seek tax exemption from Office Depot. Her request was approved by President W. Siros.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Utility Cart Modifications:** Mr. Baty advised some modification is needed on the utility carts so they can be used on standard loading ramps. The matter was referred to the quartermaster.

**2. Board Retreat:** Ms. Babcock recommended the new board consider holding a retreat, as this proved to be a valuable resource to the previous board. The matter was tabled.

There being no other business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

0000

## **FEBRUARY 2007**

The monthly meeting of the board of directors for the Fandom Association of Central Texas was called to order by FACT President Brian Price at the Carver Branch of the Austin Public Library, 1161 Angelina St., Austin, Texas, United States of America, at 2:13 p.m. on 11 February 2007. Present Directors A. T. Campbell, Sonia Santana, Elizabeth Burton, William Siros and JP Sugarbrood, FACT Treasurer Kimm Antell-Carrillo, MIS Manager Charles Siros, and FACT members Mona Lisa Martinez and Kurt Baty. Publications Manager Jennifer Juday arrived at 2:21, and member Spike Parsons at 2:40.

The secretary presented the minutes of the January meeting. There being no additions, clarifications or corrections, the minutes were declared approved by acclamation.

## **OFFICER REPORTS**

### **CHAIR**

The chairperson not being present, there was no report.

### **PRESIDENT**

Nothing in particular to report

### **TREASURER**

Ms. Antell Carrillo reported that as of 1/31/2007 the account balances were: ArmadilloCon: \$2,770.66; FACT: \$17,066.38; World Fantasy: \$13,563.22.

ArmadilloCon credits outstanding: \$493.69, debits: \$1,010, fees paid: \$30.10. FACT credits outstanding: \$0.00, debits: \$95.00, fees paid: \$132.44; World Fantasy credits outstanding: \$0.00, debits: \$6047.78, fees paid: \$308.40.

Ms. Carillo noted that \$12,000+ in credit card receipts was deposited to the World Fantasy account from the FACT account on 10 February and that \$300 included in the fees for that account were for a returned check.

## **SECRETARY**

The secretary noted that she had submitted her intent to run for the board for another term to the FACT Sheet. Ms. Burton inquired of the board whether it was customary to provide copies of the minutes for annual meeting attendees and was advised to prepare 25-30 copies of both the 2006 annual meeting minutes and the February board minutes.

## **SOCIAL DIRECTOR**

Mr. Sugarbrood noted that personal business had interfered with his planning any specific outings or events.

## **REGISTRAR**

Ms. Santana reported that with renewals the membership remains steady at 103 members. She also requested advice regarding disposition of long-expired memberships. Mr. Charles Siros inquired what was done with information of lapsed members and was advised the database had a worksheet specifically for that purpose. Ms. Santana will update the active membership list by moving the lapsed ones to that worksheet.

## **HISTORIAN**

The historian was not present but submitted a report via email. Mr. Tolliver advised he had intended to attend Corflu but was unable to do so, but did participate in several email discussions held by the board. He also notified the board regarding the Science Fiction and Fantasy Research database hosted by Texas A&M.

## **MIS**

Work is in progress updating the website. Mr. C. Siros also reported having provided Mr. Campbell with information regarding the capabilities and services of the hosting service.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Ms. Juday reported that the January issue containing the bylaws had been sent and that the February edition is nearing completion. The January issue has been archived on the FACT website.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **ARMADILLOCON 28**

Convention Treasurer Karen Meschke advised she still lacked final financial data for the event and

thanked the board for their patience for the delays caused by this and major personal troubles. She noted the copy of the billing she received from the hotel was in fact for 2005. She contacted them and expects to receive the correct one on 11 February. She has also requested the FACT treasurer provide her with convention bank statements to assist her in reconciling her records. She concluded by saying she hopes to have the final accounting for the March board/annual meeting.

#### **ARMADILLOCON 29**

Ms. Babcock advised via email her intent to change the charity to Allen Babcock Dog and Cat Rescue, Inc.



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

The Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc. (F.A.C.T.) 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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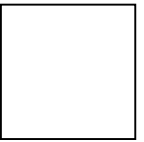
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The F.A.C.T. Sheet  
The Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc.  
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## First Class Mail

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### YOU'RE INVITED!

*All FACT members are invited  
to all of these events!*

- May 7, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *Fledgling* by Octavia E. Butler. Details: [reading@fact.org](mailto:reading@fact.org)
- May 12, 6 PM: **Gaming** at Brian Price's house. For details: [tbrianp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tbrianp@sbcglobal.net)
- May 13, 2-4 PM, Austin Public Library, Carver Branch (1161 Angelina St.): **FACT Board Meeting**
- May 19, 11 AM: **Mailing Party** Help get the ArmadilloCon mailing out the door. Details: [r.babcock@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:r.babcock@mail.utexas.edu)
- May 22, 7 PM: **FACT Reading Group**, *I Hope the World Can Take It* by Austin writer Artemus Shelton
- Jun. 16, 11AM-3 PM: **FACT's Annual Boat Trip** Pencil this onto your calendar now. Details to follow.