

WATCH

**the
GAMES**



WATCH THE SKIES

CITY OF PEARL

By Karen Traviss

Shan Franklin is a woman with a job, one that's been forced upon her unwillingly. She's driven by a suppressed briefing of information that only appears as she needs it into a complex situation involving alien contact, a lost human colony and the possibility of an organism that might create invulnerability and immortality. Too familiar with the nature of human greed and untrustworthiness, Shan becomes the unlikely guardian of the status quo, trying to balance out the desires of the scientists who desperately want at the ecosphere around them and the alien wess'har who will do anything to protect the fragile world. Everyone has an agenda, including the alien issenj who are working with the humans back on the homeworld, lured by the technology of instant Communication. With all of these interests in conflict Shan finds the one person she can trust is the most alien perspective of all, Aras, the wess'har transformed by the parasite c'naatat, immortal and outcast. Can she learn find the way to navigate the narrow path that will bring everyone alive out of the impending conflict? Over complicated, overtooled? Or brilliant character developed story? You tell us what you think, tonight...

-Here again is another example of the artwork of Eric Hardenbrook gracing the newsletter's cover

-November's book is *Uplift War* by David Brinn

Please feel free to submit your own prose as well as artwork. To submit keep the following guidelines in mind: Fiction/nonfiction should be 5000 words or less any .txt format on disc or email submissions preferred due to my inherently slow typing speed. {ironmind42@gmail.com}

THE PRINTED WORLD

-Have we met the next Douglas Adams already? Adams' widow, Jane Belson has approached Artemis Fowl author Eoin Colfer with a proposition to write a 6th book the to the *Hitchhiker's Guide* series. Adams is know to be somewhat unhappy with the ending of the 5th book and considered a further volume before his unexpected demise in 2001 due to a heart attack. The next installment will be entitled And Another Thing... and is due out next October put out by Penguin Books. Colfer says of the opportunity that it is "like being given the super power of your choice."

-Here are the winners of the British Fantasy Awards :

Novel (The August Derleth Award):

The Grin of the Dark by Ramsey Campbell

Novella: *The Scalding Rooms* by Conrad Williams

Short Fiction: "My Stone Desire" by Joel Lane

Collection: *Old Devil Moon* by Christopher Fowler

Anthology: *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror 18*
by Stephen Jones

-This year's Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic goes to Nalo Hopkinson's fantasy novel

The New Moon's Arms

-Anne McCaffrey has bowed out of her spot at Albacon, Albany, New York due to health concerns, but her son Todd will continue to attend as the Guest of Honor.

-Neil Gaiman is taking a slightly different approach to touring with his latest, *Graveyard Book*. At each signing, Gaiman is reading a different chapter and the experience is being video taped. The entirety will then be posted upon his blog.

-Robert Sawyer's novel *Flashforward's* rights have been purchased by ABC TV for development into a series. Writers David S. Goyer and Brannon Braga have already scripted the pilot. Sawyer will serve as a consultant on the pilot, currently in preproduction, as well as additional episodes. Sawyer will also author one of the first season episodes.



-Ridley Scott may finally be getting what he wants after a 20 year hiatus– the rights to make the movie for Joe Haldeman's *Forever War*. Rights complications stopped Scott from his desire to follow *Bladerunner* and *Alien* with the big screen version of the classic book.

-Kurt Williams, director of *the Hulk* wanted something a little extra for the Blu-ray DVD release of the film so a new sequence was shot featuring David Banner in the arctic. Banner tries to end it all and instead transforms. There are rumors that this new portion, shot in Bella Coola, Canada also contains a cameo of another Marvel super hero, possibly Captain America, but Williams is being very close mouthed about the whole affair.

-In order to promote the Blu-ray release of the latest *Indiana Jones* movie, various retailers are looking at add-ons to the DVD such as a steel case from FYE, or a Lego mini poster & a Lego replica of the original poster from Sears or Kmart. Perhaps if Target is your destination you may find an exclusive 80 page book of making of pictures, lithographs from Circuit City and finally from Best Buy a gift set with a replica crystal skull. Are all of these add-ons going to help overcome the lack of praise from pundits about the movie?

-Pros and Cons of *Watchmen*: while Alan Moore has asked to have his name removed from the upcoming film, artist Dave Gibbons is taking a more positive view. He states that while Moore has nothing specific against the film, that his experiences with *V for Vendetta* have convinced him to make the request. Gibbons on the other hand feels that he may have always had a different view of things since he was asked to create the visual end of things. While he admits that it is impossible to create an exact version of the book, Gibbons says that Zak Snyder has, "has taken it by the scruff of the neck and turned it into a really good movie."

-Tim Burton is heading back into the spotlight with a new version of *Alice in Wonderland* starring Mia Wasikowska, Johnny Depp and Ann Hathaway. The film will be a mixture of live action and performance capture technology. Mia will star as Alice, Depp as the Mad Hatter and Hathaway as the White Queen.

-Apparently Bill Murray got a little more than he bargained for in his recent role as the Mayor of *the City of Ember*, who eats a great deal of sardines– over and over during filming– more than Murray planned on.

-Vis back and ABC is fronting it. The 80's series about alien invasion is set to begin a cycle of rebirth at the hands of its former executive producer Scott Peters. Peters has the new adaptation set to open once again with the massive alien invasion fleet darkening the skies of earth's cities.

-Recently released on DVD is the family flavor of the Doctor Who franchise : *the Sarah Jane Chronicles*. The set comprises al 10 episodes of the first Series. The second series of twelve episodes has just recently premiered in England.

-With the heroes developing their own movies, Marvel's cartoon division's latest creation is *the Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes*. The 26 episodes are set for a release some time in 2011.

-The AMC is taking on the ambitious task of creating a miniseries based off of Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars*. AMC is also in the process of creating a new version of *the Prisoner* starring Ian McKellan and Jim Caviezel.

-Due to good ratings and public acceptance, Fox has ordered a full season of its new paranormal show *The Fringe*.

-What's coming your way from the SciFi channel in terms of more movie dreck? *How about: Hellhounds, Rise of the Gargoyle, Alien Western, Carney* and *Sand Serpents*. All of these promise to be just as fine as the enviable *Mansquito*...

-*Sanctuary*, the new series on SciFi channel, keeps its star, Amanda Tapping very busy. When she's not dealing with representations of various mythical beauty and being shot in green screen, Tapping is responsible for executive production of the show. Tapping also could be called upon the fill in if the principal photographer were to call in sick. Tapping also finished out her shooting for *Stargate: Atlantis* and has been approached about reprising her role in another *Stargate SG-1* direct to DVD movie, by which point *Atlantis* will be filming the first of its direct to DVD movies too.

-Set 51 years before the events of *Battlestar Galactica*, *Caprica* is now wavering on the cusp of being either a 2 hour movie or a lead in pilot for a TV series. Mark Stern, the SciFi Channel's Executive Vice President said that Skiffy would accept the delivery of the movie and then make their determination.

-Could there be more than many? Rumors are starting about yet another *Highlander* film, this time starring Kevin McKidd.

-Morgan Freeman has always been behind a big screen adaptation of the Arthur C. Clarke book *Rendezvous with Rama*, but David Fincher, who was the most recent directorial candidate, believes the project is dead. Citing Freedman's poor health and lack of a script, Fincher said that after 8 years of attempts, the project remains dead.

What's Your Top 5?

During recent conversation a gap between certain generations of science fiction fans was noted. This brought me back around to an opportunity I had to become an ambassador for science fiction. I love science fiction and leapt at the chance...

When my mother told me that her book of the month club steadfastly refused to read anything from the science fiction genre, my immediate reaction was to become defensive of my favorite genre. How could any book club worthy of the name deny such a massive portion of today's literature? Science fiction book sales can't hold a candle to romance, but don't they know that science fiction stories are the basis for 4 of the top 5 grossing movies of all time? How could anyone deny such a pervasive part of society, not just literature?

The more I pondered this, the clearer the answer became.

Today's society has attached a stigma to the terminology "science fiction". Say those two words and the image conjured is that of an overweight middle aged man with an ill fitting 60's style space uniform, and badly done prosthetic ears, quoting Gene Rodenberry.

"This is not my science fiction!" the voice inside me hollered.

Then it hit me. That *is* science fiction from my mother's generation. If it's what my mother identifies with, then it's likely the same image is shared among her contemporaries.

My big chance! After stating my personal disbelief, I was granted an opportunity to defend the faith! I was challenged to put forth a list of science fiction novels for the next selection of the book club.

I made an extremely short list based on the requirements that the selections are stand-alone novels, and represent the best science fiction has to offer. I attempted to cover a broad selection, as many people do not differentiate between science fiction, fantasy, or modern stories of the fantastic. I tried to avoid any stories that took too much of the current dark, nihilistic view of society that is the popular trend. My hope was to allow them to enjoy a forward looking, insightful and entertaining story.

The five titles I picked were:

1. The Hobbit
2. Fahrenheit 451
3. Neverwhere
4. Starship Troopers
5. Storm Front

What would your five picks for introducing the non-fan be?

(by Eric Hardenbrook)

David Louis Edeleman

David was born in Birmingham, Alabama but grew up in Orange County, California. He attended the John Hopkins Writing Seminars to study with such authors as Madison Smartt Bell, Edna O'Brien, and Stephen Dixon. Currently living outside of Washington, D.C., David is a writer, blogger and web programmer. His first novel *Infoquake* has sent ripples through the science fiction community much as its name implies. The novel was a finalist for the 2008 John W. Campbell award and was named by Barnes & Noble as named as the top SF novel for 2006. *Multireal* the second book in series was released by Pyr books in July and author Peter Watts called it, "A thoroughly successful hybrid of *Neuromancer* and Wall Street."

David also has worked on the websites of the FBI, Rolls Royce and The US Army. He's directed the marketing departments of biometrics and e-commerce companies as well as taught programming to the US Senate and the World Bank. David has written articles for the Baltimore Sun and the Washington Post. Currently he is at work on the next novel in the series *Geosynchron*.

The *Jump 225* series, which begins with *Infoquake* follows the rise of bio/logic programmer Natch who lets nothing stand in the way of his ambition. This natural programmer and status climber will do anything to claw his way to the top. But there are others who are watching Natch and will use him as a tool to advance their agendas which could alter the very nature of humanity's future. Margaret Surina has developed a software that could alter the very nature of ordinary life, but she cannot bring *Multireal* to the masses. She finds an apt tool in Natch. But who is using who? For there are plenty of other alternative forces at work who want to control *Multireal*. But Natch there is only one choice - forward and anyone in his way had better move or be run down.

Karen Traviss

Karen has had a well rounded career who various high points have allowed her a unique viewpoint that she uses in creating fiction. She's been a defense correspondent, a newspaper and television journalist, a press officer for the police, an advertising copywriter and a journalism lecturer. She's also served in the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service and with the Territorial Army. Currently she is a political public relations manager. Originally from Portsmouth, UK she now lives in Devizes in Wiltshire. Her work has appeared in Asimov's, On Spec., and Realms of Fantasy and she is a graduate of the Clarion science fiction and fantasy workshop. She currently has 5 books in the series that began with *City of Pearl*, also *Crossing the Line*, *The World Before*, *Matriarch* and *Judge*. The series looks at military elements, police elements and journalism elements, obviously playing to the strengths of her former employment. It also features several species of unique aliens that all have diverse agendas. Into all of this is thrust Shan Franklin, the one good woman who has the moral backbone to stand up for what is right despite the potential costs to herself. The other key figure is Aras, the alien wess'har who has given everything of himself to protect his own species and the defenseless bezer'nj and made himself into an outcast. Together they struggle against the conflicting interests of humans and aliens. But Karen has not just limited herself to this series. She also writes for the Star Wars genre. Her *Republic Commando* series is currently three books. She has written for the Legacy of the Force line and just recently produced the novelization for the animated movie *Clone Wars*.

She cites a BBC serialization of Fred Hoyle's *A for Andromeda* as an early indicator of her interest in SF. Karen says that seeing the movie of *2001* made her take the leap from reading SF to wanting to write it. She is a big fan of Harry Harrison, especially *Bill the Galactic Hero* and fulfilled a life long dream by appearing with him on a panel at Worldcon. Heinlein, Blish, Clarke and Asimov were other childhood favorites.

Tillyer's News from the High Frontier

-Are you depressed? Are you an astronaut? We've got what you need-

Researchers working with the space agency are looking for volunteers to serve as test subjects as they work to develop a program designed to help astronauts on long term missions deal with depression. The interactive computer program is built around various problem solving behaviors which are shown to have a beneficial effect on depressed persons. The program is a survey of questions designed to guide the astronaut through a series of audio and video clips to aid them. While it is tailored to the needs of the space program, the feeling is that it could easily be adapted for the general public.

-Japan's desire to ride into space- The concept of a space elevator is not a new one and while there are a number of technologies that are still not complete to allow the actual construction, Japan has begun the process of working towards its creation. Since the country is well known for its precision engineering and standards of material production, as well as its large industrial base, leaders are gaining in confidence that this maybe the spot to start lifting the cable. But the cable itself is the problem. Current carbon nanotubes are simply not yet strong enough, needing to increase in tensile strength by a factor of four. One innovative idea that the Japanese are considering is the transmission of electricity through a separate cable, since carbon nanotube's are excellent conductors. Japan is hosting a conference in November, to allow them to draw up plans for the elevator. The 22,000 mile long cables would allow the ascent to orbit without the expensive expenditure of fuel making possible construction in space, space tourism and possibly even the offloading of nuclear waste.

-Things in reverse- So why is the European Space Agency's Venus Express satellite scanning the earth looking for signs of life and evidence of habitability? So that as we turn our gaze outwards using ever more power full telescopes, that we will recognize the potential as seen on distant worlds. From its orbit around Venus, the satellite is focused on earth which due to the size of the image, less than that of a pixel. This means that no surface details are visible. So far items such as water and molecular oxygen are visible, scientists are also on the look out for the "red edge" the signal which could indicate presence of photosynthetic processes. The scientists are also interested in any differences views of ocean only versus the image over a landmass.

STEAMPUNK

WHERE DID THIS COUNTER CULTURE COME FROM? AND IS IT REALLY COUNTER CULTURE? PEOPLE ARE GOING GOGGLE HAPPY AND WHY? IF YOU GO TO BRASSGOGGLES THE UK SITE, YOU CAN GET A GLIMPSE OF A PECULIAR STYLE THAT IS CREEPING INTO THE SIGHT OF THE TYPICAL PERSON. IT SEEMS A SORT OF WANT OR DESIRE FOR COMPLICATED ITEMS BUT FROM A SIMPLER TIME. GONE IS THE SLEEK GLOSSY LOOK WITH SOLID STATE PARTS. RATHER THE BRASS GEARING, THE CLUNK OF PISTON DRIVEN MACHINERY AND LARGER THAN LIFE CONSTRUCTION IS MAKING A COME BACK IN THE LAND THAT BIRTHED ONE OF ITS PRIME INSPIRATIONS, JULES VERNE. FRANCE IS THE HAPPY HOME OF A SUBWAY STATION, THE ARTS AND METIERS METRO STATION, THAT IS LAID OUT IN ITS INTERIOR AS IF THE WAITING PASSENGERS WERE WITHIN THE BELLY OF THE NAUTILUS, CRADLED IN ITS BURNISHED BRASS WITH PORTHOLES HERE AND THERE. AN ART CIRCUS, THE MACHINES DE L'ILE, BUILD GIGANTIC STEAM POWERED COLOSSI, LIKE AN ELEPHANT THAT STANDS TWO STORIES TALL HAS ITS OWN VIEWING DECK, AND TRUMPETS HUGE GOUTS OF WATER AND STEAM. THEY ARE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR A BOAT SHAPED LIKE A MANTA RAY, A SUBMERSIBLE LIKE A SQUID AND PIRATE SHIP SHAPED LIKE AN ANGLER FISH.

THERE'S A DESIRE FOR AIRSHIPS WITH WINGS RATHER THAN THE PERSONALIZED FLYING CAR. IT'S A REACTION TO THE IDEA THAT EVERYTHING NEEDS TO BE STAMPED OUT IN QUANTITY RATHER THAN LOVINGLY EMBELLISHED IN A RICH FASHION. BUT STEAMPUNK ALSO HAS ART AND MUSIC AS WELL SUCH AS THE VERNIAN PROCESS AND ABNEY PARK. IN TUNE WITH THE IDEA OF EMBELLISHMENT, DATAMANCER REDOES COMPUTERS IN THE STEAM PUNK STYLE REBUILDING A LAPTOP INTO A BEAUTIFULLY GEAR COVERED WOODEN BOX WITH LEATHER WRIST REST INLAIS ALL OPENED WITH A OLD KEY. THERE ARE SCANNERS BOUND INTO A LEATHER BOOKS. STEAMPUNK WHILE IT IS ATTRIBUTED TO WILLIAM GIBSON AND BRUCE STERLING'S *THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE* HAS OUT GROWN ITS LITERARY BOUNDARIES TO BECOME AS STYLE. BUT IT IS NOT BOUNDED BY THE IDEAS OF A PURELY VICTORIAN NATURE AS EVIDENCED BY THE PRESENCE OF RAYGUNS, BUT ADAPTS THEM INTO ITSELF AND REDECORATES THEM IN A MORE SUMPTUOUS FASHION. VIVA LA GOGGLES!