

readercon 24 program

Unless otherwise noted, all items fill a 60-minute program slot, except for readings, which fill a 30-minute slot.

All items begin 5 minutes after and end 5 minutes before the times given. Participants and attendees are urged to arrive as promptly as possible.

Location Key			
E	Grand Ballroom Salon E (Bookshop)	ME	Maine/Connecticut
F	Grand Ballroom Salon F	NH	New Hampshire/Massachusetts
G	Grand Ballroom Salons G, H, I & J	VT	Vermont
CL	Concierge Lounge (8th Floor)	RI	Rhode Island

thursday

- 8:00 PM F **The Bit I Remember.** *Ellen Brody, Lev Grossman, Rosemary Kirstein, Yoon Ha Lee, Sonya Taaffe (leader), Howard Waldrop.* What do we remember from books read long ago, and why? What makes these glowing moments stick in our heads? And conversely, what falls away only to startle us when we return to the narrative years later?
- 8:00 PM G **The News and the Abstract Truth.** *Robert Killheffer, Adrienne Martini, James Morrow, David G. Shaw (leader), Gayle Surrette.* The controversies surrounding Mike Daisey's *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs* and John D'Agata and Jim Fingal's *The Lifespan of a Fact* arose when art and truth collided. While fiction can play fast and loose with facts in order to tell a compelling story, monologues and essays are held to a higher standard. The authors of these books were surprised by audience reactions to the discovery that their "factual" accounts were fabrications; they claimed that their work was more "beautiful" or "lyrical" than the truth. But which are more important: true words, or beautiful words? Why do some writers think it necessary to take liberties with the truth in order to create great "nonfiction"?
- 8:00 PM ME **Have You Seen Me?: The Absent Children of Urban Fantasy.** *Toni L.P. Kelner, Shira Lipkin (leader), Natalie Luhrs, Veronica Schanoes, Romie Stott.* Real cities are full of children; urban fantasy cities (Bordertown and Sesame Street excepted) appear to be populated almost entirely by adults. In a series of blog posts on the nature of urban fantasy, Kip Manley, working off of Farah Mendlesohn's *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, posited that urban fantasy tends toward "immersive fantasies [hinging] on a rhetoric of ironic mimesis, taking for granted the wonders that distance its world from ours," and leading to a cynicism towards magic. Are children absent from urban fantasy because their innate inclination toward wonder and play would detract from that cynicism? What place might there be for children in this genre, and what are the reasons behind their exclusion?
Suggested by Victoria McManus.
- 8:00 PM RI **Readercon Recent Fiction Book Club: American Elsewhere.** *John Clute, F. Brett Cox (leader), Gemma Files, John E.O. Stevens.* Robert Jackson Bennett's *American Elsewhere* is a complex work that only gradually reveals its speculative nature, blending magic and technology with horror and humor and something like a murder mystery. Along the way it addresses and critiques concepts of normalcy, nostalgia, family (especially interactions between parents and children), home, and the American Dream. We'll examine it in the context of recent works that touch on similar topics, including Catherynne M. Valentine's "Fade to White," Daryl Gregory's *The Devil's Alphabet*, and Bennett's other novels of darkness and strangeness in the American heartland.
- 8:00 PM NH **Reading.** *Jim Freund.* Jim Freund reads the "Buddha and the Executioner" scene from *Lord of Light* by Roger Zelazny.
- 8:00 PM VT **Reading.** *Maria Dahvana Headley.* Maria Dahvana Headley reads the mummy-confectionery-cannibalism story "Bit-U-Men."

thursday

7. 8:30 PM NH **Reading.** *Paul Tremblay.* Paul Tremblay reads selections from an upcoming YA novel, *The Floating Boy and the Girl Who Couldn't Fly*, co-written by Stephen Graham Jones.
8. 8:30 PM VT **Reading.** *Charles Oberndorf.* Charles Oberndorf reads from "The Guest with Two Names and No Home," a time travel story set in the Congo.
9. 9:00 PM F **Apocalypse Then.** *Leah Bobet, Maureen F. McHugh, James Morrow, Romie Stott (moderator), Sabrina Vourvoulias.* In a 2012 interview published in the *Boston Review*, Junot Díaz told Paula Moya, "I always say if people [in the Dominican Republic] know about anything, they know about the end of the world. We are after all the eschaton that divided the Old World from the New." In this sense many worlds have ended, with a bang or a whimper. What can authors of post-apocalyptic stories learn from past apocalypses like the 1994 Rwandan genocide or the fall of Imperial Rome, and why are there so few works that present real-world events in this light?
10. 9:00 PM G **The Nuances of POV.** *John Chu, Eileen Gunn, James Patrick Kelly (moderator), Darrell Schweitzer, John E.O. Stevens.* When writing genre fiction, many authors begin with the approach that first-person point of view (POV) is useful for horror and heroic quests to bring immediacy to the story; third-person is necessary for epic world-building; and second-person is too confusing and best avoided. But POV is not so cut-and-dried. How can we deepen and expand our ideas of what constitutes POV to better understand and apply it in fiction? How can we broaden the discussion of POV to employ a more granular approach?
Suggested by John E.O. Stevens and Meriah Crawford.
11. 9:00 PM ME **The Endangered Alien.** *Andrea Hairston, Robert Killheffer (leader), Alex Dally MacFarlane, Phoebe North, Bud Sparhawk.* Science fiction sometimes becomes enamored of a theme for several years and then nearly abandons it for various reasons: microcosms in the 1920s, psionics or mutants in the 1940s and 1950s, etc. In recent years, aliens seem to have become less common. Novels by Paul McAuley, Kim Stanley Robinson, and Alastair Reynolds, and anthologies like Jonathan Strahan's *Edge of Infinity*, confine their action to the solar system, with little credible possibility for intelligent alien life. The classic alien-as-hideous-enemy and alien-overlord tropes have largely migrated to movies and TV. When aliens do appear, in novels like China Miéville's *Embassytown*, Peter F. Hamilton's *Great North Road*, and Malinda Lo's *Adaptation*, how are authors treating them? What purposes do they serve and what roles do they play?
12. 9:00 PM RI **Write What You Know All Too Well.** *Mike Allen, Gemma Files (leader), Shira Lipkin, Sonya Taaffe.* Gemma Files is currently making the transition from writing a series of novels (the Hexslinger series) to a stand-alone novel (*Experimental Film*), from historical fantasy to contemporary horror, and from something very separate from her life to something that actively riffs off it in a somewhat intimate, vulnerable-making way. She will discuss this process and invite others to talk about similarly intimate work they might have created or experienced.
13. 9:00 PM NH **Reading.** *Rosemary Kirstein.* Rosemary Kirstein reads a work to be determined.
14. 9:00 PM VT **Reading.** *Dennis Danvers.* Dennis Danvers reads from "All the Snake Handlers I Know Are Dead," forthcoming on *Tor.com*.
15. 9:30 PM NH **Reading.** *Sandra Kasturi.* Sandra Kasturi reads from the poetry book *Come Late to the Love of Birds*, and also from *Medusa Gorgon, Lady Detective*.
16. 9:30 PM VT **Reading.** *Ron Drummond.* Ron Drummond reads selections from "The First Woman on Mars," a 9000-word "hybrid transreal fictional essay" published in *White Fungus*.