

Readercon 32 • Quincy MA • July 13-16, 2023

Thursday

08:00 PM

Salon A • **Not Another Space Jesus! The Self-Sacrifice Trope in SFF** • *N. S. Dolkart, Catt Kingsgrave, Yves Meynard, Graham Sleight (M)*

Science fiction and fantasy are riddled with characters sacrificing themselves for the good of the many, be they the main protagonists whose self-sacrificial plans may or may not pan out, or some helpful side character who swoops in at the last minute to Save Us All with an act of suicidal bravery. Why is this trope so popular and what do we get out of it? Is a blood sacrifice really needed to redeem our fantasy worlds? Redeem them of what?

08:00 PM

Salon B • **Speculative Medicine** • *Arula Ratnakar, Anatoly Belilovsky, Allan Dyen-Shapiro (M), Elizabeth Bear, Eric Schaller*

Some science fiction has handheld machines that can uncrack ribs and unburst blood vessels. In the right kind of fantasy, injury can be resolved with literal handwaving. When everything that's imaginable is possible, to what literary ends can writers manipulate the existence and nature of healing tools and practices in their fictions?

08:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Sumiko Saulson** • *Sumiko Saulson*

08:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Ian Muneshwar** • *Ian Muneshwar*

Ian Muneshwar reads his Nebula- and Locus Award-nominated short, "Dick Pig."

08:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Emma J. Gibbon** • *Emma J. Gibbon*

Emma J. Gibbon reads from her short story collection, "Dark Blood Comes from the Feet."

09:00 PM

Salon A • **Worldbuilding: From the Mundane to the Fantastic** • *Shweta Adhyam, Carlos Hernandez, Romie Stott, Thea Prieto (M)*

Some of the most beloved speculative fiction worlds have foundations based in the mundane. Examples include Stephen King's horror fiction, Harry Potter, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, and works by William Gibson. These worlds are both recognizable and Other. What makes them so successful and memorable? Are there similar worlds that tried and failed? What can authors learn from these worlds when creating their own?

09:00 PM

Salon B • **The Trashy and the Sublime: Genre Fiction's Highs and Lows** • *Gillian Daniels (M), Emma J. Gibbon, Rich Horton, Yves Meynard*

Lowbrow fiction can contain sharply-observed descriptions of life and of the triumph of the human spirit, and "highbrow" fiction has been known to contain swashbuckling and attractive characters making out. The line between "trash" and "art" often reflects not just judgments about craft, but also the enforcement of social mores, especially around sexuality. In what ways are these categories illuminating—perhaps despite themselves—and what kind of conversations are they in, or should they be in, with each other?

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09:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: N.S. Dolkart • *N. S. Dolkart***

N.S. Dolkart reads from his MG work in progress, *The Naturalist Society for the Humane Treatment of Monsters*.

09:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Cecilia Tan • *Cecilia Tan***

09:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Sarah Smith • *Sarah Smith***

Friday

11:00 AM

Salon 4 • **Escapism and Allegory in a Pandemic • *Scott Edelman, Stephanie Feldman (M), Sarah Jean Horwitz, John Wiswell***

SF is full of escapism and of allegories, and works sometimes move from one category to the other as time passes. During COVID lockdowns many writers incorporated pandemic themes, using art to process the new situation. Simultaneously, readers pleaded for a break from the pandemic on social media. "No pandemic stories" started to crop up in submissions guidelines from editors who needed more variety. As a reader or writer, did the pandemic change where you fit on the escapism/allegory spectrum?

11:00 AM

Salon 3 • **How We Shape and Reshape Older Works • *Nadia Bulkin, John Clute, Josh Glenn (M), Pat Murphy, Gary Wolfe***

There are many series and works that have left a large cultural impact, and revisiting these works can help us gain a deeper understanding of the story. What can be learned from works that have aged poorly? How do our choices of which ones to showcase and what elements to change in adaptations shape our view of older works? Our panelists will discuss older works' influence on the literary landscape, the innovations they made, and how our perception of them has changed over the years.

11:00 AM

Salon A • **Devils, Aliens, Poets, Oh My! A Speculative Performance • *C. S. E. Cooney, Carlos Hernandez***

Narrative speculative poetry, music from SF concept album-in-the-making "Ballads from a Distant Star," and maybe even a scene or two from a new musical podcast in development "The Devil and Lady Midnight! Let C.S.E. Cooney and Carlos Hernandez (and possibly friends!) entertain you.

11:00 AM

Salon B • **Field Notes from the End of the World: Depictions of Nature in Dystopian Fiction • *Christopher Brown***

This critical survey of depictions of nature in dystopian fiction will explore how the grim landscapes of our classic dystopias often reveal the seeds of greener futures, building on research conducted for *The Secret History of Empty Lots*, a book of narrative nonfiction forthcoming from Timber Press.

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The presentation will focus on a diversity of works, many not normally considered to be concerned with climate, including works from Orwell, LeGuin, Delany, Gibson, Butler, McCarthy and Guest of Honor Jeff VanderMeer.

11:00 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Brian Evenson** • *Brian Evenson*

11:00 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Kenneth Schneyer** • *Kenneth Schneyer*

11:00 AM

Thayer Boardroom • **Open Conversation Space** •

The Sylvanus Thayer Boardroom will remain open during hours not scheduled for activities, so that attendees can have conversations in a separate space accessible to the programming rooms instead of in the hallway outside them.

11:30 AM

Salon C • **Reading: W.B.J. Williams** • *W. B. J. Williams*

11:30 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Zin E. Rocklyn** • *Zin E. Rocklyn*

12:00 PM

Salon 3 • **The Literature of Isolation** • *Melissa Caruso, Michael Cisco (M), Ian Muneshwar, Jeff VanderMeer, Simone Zelitch*

The literature of isolation includes works such as Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Sofia Samatar's "Request for an Extension on the Clarity" (in which the protagonist retreats from an increasingly dystopian earth to a lonely space station with her cat), and Steve Rasnic Tem's "Mummies" in *Reckoning 5*. Panelists will share examples of the speculative writing that helped them survive the loneliness of the pandemic and examine how the literature of isolation has changed, and may continue to change, since.

12:00 PM

Salon A • **The Works of Jeff VanderMeer** • *Brian Evenson (M), Matthew Cheney, Eric Schaller, Thea Prieto*

Called "the weird Thoreau" by *The New Yorker*, Jeff VanderMeer is the author of the NYT-bestselling Southern Reach trilogy, which has been translated into over 35 languages. The first novel, *Annihilation*, won the Nebula Award and Shirley Jackson Award, and was made into a movie by Paramount. Recent works include *Hummingbird Salamander* (a Shirley Jackson Award finalist) and *A Peculiar Peril*, in addition to Theo Ellsworth's graphic novel adaptation of his short story *Secret Life*. *Dead Astronauts*, *Borne* (a finalist for the Arthur C. Clarke Award), and *The Strange Bird*, set in the Borne universe, are being developed for TV by AMC and continue to explore themes related to the environment, animals, and our future. Over a 35-year career, VanderMeer has been a four-time World Fantasy Award winner and 20-time nominee. Please join us in welcoming him to Readercon and exploring his fiction.

12:00 PM

Salon B • **Ask a Necromancer** • *Amanda Downum*

Licensed mortician Amanda Downum hosts this Q&A session about everything death—from the embalming process to modern funeral culture, to the details of decomposition writers are scared to Google.

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12:00 PM

Salon C • **Anders-Newitz Joint Reading** • *Charlie Jane Anders, Annalee Newitz*

12:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Alex Shvartsman** • *Alex Shvartsman*

12:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Christopher M. Cevasco** • *Christopher M. Cevasco*

Christopher M. Cevasco reads from *Beheld: Godiva's Story*.

01:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Alternative Voicing** • *Stephanie Feldman (M), Yves Meynard, Kenneth Schneyer, Thea Prieto*

Everyone is familiar with the standard narrative voices, such as third person omniscient past tense. When does a story demand odd or atypical voicing - future tense narration, second person, fragmentary stories acting in parallax, sudden shifts in narrator or narrative style? What does this voicing add to a story that the more standard voices do not, and how does one prevent such voicing from being simply a showy parlor trick?

01:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Simple Revolutions of Complex Empires** • *Charles Allison, Nadia Bulkin (M), Francesca Forrest, Robert Killheffer*

So many stories about defeating an Empire begin and end with a single revolution, but what about the complexities, messiness, and banality of actual revolutions? What are the pitfalls of excluding factions, budgets, civil wars, and nonviolence, and portraying a simplistic view of imperialism and colonialism? What alternative views of revolution, especially outside of the American rebel myth, are waiting to be centered on the speculative stage? Panelists will discuss the depictions of revolutions in speculative fiction and how they fall short or excel.

01:00 PM

Salon A • **Octavia Butler Finally Has A Cinematic Universe: What's Next?** • *Zin E. Rocklyn, MJ Cunniff, Sumiko Saulson, Nicole D. Sconiers (M)*

The first season of Octavia Butler's "Kindred" aired in December on Hulu/FX. HBO is adapting "Fledgling" for the television screen, and A24 announced in 2021 intentions to adapt "Parable of the Sower" to the big screen. Why are we seeing so much interest in Butler's work more than a decade after her death? What survives in adaptation, and what can we look forward to in the future?

01:00 PM

Salon B • **Encyclopedia of Science Fiction, 4ed.** • *John Clute, Graham Sleight*

The fourth edition of the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction was announced in October 2021 when it moved to a server of its own. John Clute, one of its Editors, and Graham Sleight, Managing Editor, will discuss the new edition, the joys and challenges of maintaining and updating this massive document, and ways to help.

01:00 PM

Salon C • **Cooney and Hernandez Joint Reading** • *C. S. E. Cooney, Carlos Hernandez*

Award-winning writers C. S. E. Cooney and Carlos Hernandez will read from new prose and poetry and/or old favorites and/or anything if you tip well enough.

01:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Ellen Brody** • *Ellen Brody*

Ellen Brody reads an excerpt from "Seeing is Believing" by Memorial Guest of Honor L. A. Banks.

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01:00 PM

Thayer Boardroom • **SF Treasures of the Radium Age** • *Josh Glenn, Annalee Newitz*

Join independent scholar Josh Glenn as he takes us on a journey through the exciting and often overlooked era of Radium Age science fiction. Glenn will bring a selection of carefully curated first and early edition SF novels from 1900–1935, which he will showcase and share with the audience. Along with science fiction author Annalee Newitz, Glenn will delve into the interesting world of Radium Age science fiction and explore its themes, tropes, and lasting impact on the genre.

01:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: F. Brett Cox** • *F. Brett Cox*

02:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Do Short Stories Still Matter?** • *John Chu, Emma J. Gibbon, A. T. Greenblatt (M), Nicole D. Sconiers, Sheila Williams*

Originally the field of Speculative Fiction was driven by short fiction published in monthly magazines. Now the industry focus has turned to long-form novels and serials. Ironically, there is more great short fiction being published than ever before but those stories are chasing a diminishing audience. Has critical attention turned away from reviewing and discussing the short form? What value can short fiction offer different from long-form works? Can we still say that short stories matter?

02:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Digging Up the Roots of Story** • *Ruthanna Emrys, Shariann Lewitt, Benjamin Rosenbaum, Rick Wilber (M), Gregory A. Wilson*

As soon as the first camp fire was lit, stories around it were being told and re-told. Why do we like stories so much? What is it about them intrinsically that captures our attention? Is it biological or cultural? The commercialization and industrialization of story-telling, never mind the issue of AI, how have they helped or hurt how our stories are told? Our panel of distinguished storytellers shall assay the current condition of their profession and profess their hopes and fears for its future.

02:00 PM

Salon A • **The Works of L.A. Banks** • *Justina Ireland, Sumiko Saulson*

L. A. Banks (1959-2011) was the author of the Vampire Huntress Legend series and the Crimson Moon Novels, including *Left for Undead* and *Never Cry Werewolf*. Banks considered herself a shape-shifter, writing romance, women's fiction, crime and suspense, and of course, dark vampire huntress lore. Join us in discussing and celebrating her works.

02:00 PM

Salon B • **A Pediatrician's View on Speculative Disease Control** • *Anatoly Belilovsky*

Recent pandemic outbreaks, and threats of worse to follow, make it seem as though infectious pathogens are reading our post-apocalyptic playbooks and taking notes. Pediatrician and SFF author Anatoly Belilovsky gives details of his experience in staving off the latest viral outbreaks, discusses the ramifications of our public health response (or non-response), and proposes speculative solutions to current and future contagions.

02:00 PM

Salon C • **"Screams from the Dark" Group Reading** • *A. C. Wise, Brian Evenson, Ellen Datlow (M), Gemma Files, Jeffrey Ford*

Ellen Datlow, editor of *Screams From the Dark: 29 Tales of Monsters and the Monstrous*, hosts a group reading with contributors to her recent horror anthology.

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02:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Sarah Jean Horwitz** • *Sarah Jean Horwitz*

Sarah Jean Horwitz reads from her new middle grade fantasy novel, THE DEMON SWORD ASPERIDES, which came out on Tuesday.

02:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Zin E. Rocklyn** • *Zin E. Rocklyn*

02:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: K.M. Szpara** • *K.M. Szpara*

02:00 PM

Thayer Boardroom • **Crowdfunding for Wordsmiths** • *Cecilia Tan*

Cecilia Tan, founder of Circler Press and award-winning writer of crowdfunded fiction, leads a workshop on crowdfunding for small presses and one-shot projects. If you are considering Kickstarting an anthology, funding an online magazine, or seeding a publishing imprint, award, or writers workshop, what do you need to know before embarking on a crowdfunding campaign? Which platforms are best suited to which projects? What common problems do crowdfunders run into, and how are they best avoided? Bring your questions and your notebooks!

02:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Lauren Beukes** • *Lauren Beukes*

03:00 PM

Salon 4 • **How can Short Story Authors Build an Audience?** • *Christopher Mark Rose, F. Brett Cox (M), Katherine Crighton, Scott Edelman, Arley Sorg*

Short stories today are published across a wide variety of media, formats, and imprints. As a result, writers specializing in short stories have difficulty connecting with and building an audience over time. How can you find the people who enjoy your work, and how can they find you in a cost-effective way? We will discuss short story collections, social media, conventions, and other ways of finding and keeping in touch with our favorite short fiction writers.

03:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Everything You Know Is Wrong** • *Karen Heuler, Charlie Jane Anders, James Patrick Kelly, Erin Roberts, Graham Sleight (M)*

Infodumps are good. Cliches communicate better than Proustian prose does. A new writer is best off not knowing the history of science fiction. Join our panelists as they discredit as many nuggets of received wisdom about how prose works as they can fit in 50 minutes.

03:00 PM

Salon A • **Commissioning Your Own Covers** • *Alexander Jablokov (M), Catt Kingsgrave, The joey Zone, Alex Shvartsman*

Publishers rarely let authors determine the cover artist, but if you're self-published, you do. What kind of art should self-publishing authors go for? How much can they expect to pay? What ethical considerations should authors be conscious of when employing professional artists?

03:00 PM

Salon B • **A Feast for the (Virtual) Eyes** • *David G. Shaw*

Visual presentation can be an essential part of eating. Studies have shown that lighting, air temperature, and sound can improve or degrade the quality of a meal. What have restaurants done

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in the past and present to enhance the dining experience? How will immersive realities be used to change how you eat in the future?

03:00 PM

Salon C • **Group Reading: Why Didn't You Just Leave?** • *Nadia Bulkin, Julia Rios*

Editors Julia Rios and Nadia Bulkin will lead a group reading from their forthcoming horror anthology about the reasons people might choose—or be forced—to stay in haunted places.

03:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Elizabeth Hand** • *Elizabeth Hand*

03:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Brian Evenson** • *Brian Evenson*

03:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Justina Ireland** • *Justina Ireland*

03:00 PM

Thayer Boardroom • **Fiber Arts Show-and-Tell** • *Elaine Isaak (M)*

This informal meetup is for fiber artists from beginner to expert as well as curious learners. Show off a finished work or a favorite set of tools. Seek help, encouragement, or validation for a work in progress. Check out other people's creations for information and inspiration—bringing your own is optional. Or simply enjoy some time crafting in congenial company.

03:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Greer Gilman** • *Greer Gilman*

Greer Gilman reads from a work in progress, a third *Cloudish* novel.

04:00 PM

Salon 4 • **The Pyrite Age of Science Fiction** • *Josh Glenn (M), Jeff Hecht, Robert Killheffer, Graham Sleight, Gary Wolfe*

The "golden age of science fiction" is arguably the genre's lowest point: far less culturally relevant than in the days of Bellamy or Wells, extremely exclusionary in its time, economically and critically less successful than later science fiction. What earned it the gold medal title of eras? How are such post-hoc epithets awarded, and are they up for revision?

04:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Cross-Genre Surprise Fiction** • *Zig Zag Claybourne, Ruthanna Emrys, Yves Meynard, Robert V.S. Redick, Kenneth Schneyer (M)*

Readers often feel they know what to expect when they see a rocketship or a unicorn logo adorning a cover or spine, but authors familiar with genre conventions have been known to mix things up, sometimes taking a sharp turn into another genre entirely. What should readers feel when reading works that change genres partway through, such as Tanith Lee's *The Birthgrave* or Rosemary Kirstein's *Steerswoman* series? The panel will consider the uses (and abuses) of cross-genre surprises.

04:00 PM

Salon A • **Nontoxic Masculinity in SFF** • *N. S. Dolkart (M), John Chu, Tom Greene, Foz Meadows, John Wiswell*

There has been much discussion, at Readercon and elsewhere, of toxic masculinity and its effects both in and outside fiction. Far less ink has been spilled on visions for nontoxic masculinities, on presenting attractive alternatives to the overly familiar strain. Can speculative fiction move forward

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from a "pro- versus anti-" conversation and start to render a clear vision of healthy masculinity? If not, why not?

04:00 PM

Salon B • **Dracula Daily: the Unexpected Hit Newsletter of 2022** • *Gwynne Garfinkle, Emma J. Gibbon, Kate Nepveu (M)*

Dracula Daily is a pandemic-born email newsletter that sends out the text of Dracula in real time from May to November. On its second run in 2022, it went viral across multiple social media networks; a forthcoming book includes not only the chronologically-ordered text, but also memes, text responses, and art from hundreds of fans. Panelists will discuss the transformative experience of reading Dracula in real time; the differences in reading along in 2021, 2022, and today; and how other classic literature email newsletters compare.

04:00 PM

Salon C • **Group Reading: Broad Universe** • *LJ Cohen, Randee Dawn, Elaine Isaak*

Broad Universe is an international, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, encouraging, honoring, and celebrating women and historically excluded and marginalized genders writing, editing and publishing in science fiction, fantasy, horror, and other speculative genres.

04:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Jeffrey Ford** • *Jeffrey Ford*

04:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Ellen Datlow** • *Ellen Datlow*

04:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Scott H. Andrews** • *Scott H. Andrews*

04:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Jeff VanderMeer** • *Jeff VanderMeer*

04:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Ann VanderMeer** • *Ann VanderMeer*

04:00 PM

Thayer Boardroom • **Open Conversation Space** •

The Sylvanus Thayer Boardroom will remain open during hours not scheduled for activities, so that attendees can have conversations in a separate space accessible to the programming rooms instead of in the hallway outside them.

04:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Michael Cisco** • *Michael Cisco*

05:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Speculative Fiction's Mommy Issues** • *Lauren Beukes, Zin E. Rocklyn, Melissa Caruso, Ruthanna Emrys (M), Gwynne Garfinkle*

Speculative fiction was for a long time even more male-dominated than publishing as a whole, with maternal characters too often relegated to the role of martyr either literally or figuratively. Yet most people have had much more complicated experiences with their own mothers, and the experience of motherhood is hardly just two-dimensional martyrdom—and some of the field's best works reflect that. Let's talk about some of speculative fiction's mommy issues: bad moms, absent moms, deadbeat moms, mothers as protagonists and as villains.

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05:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Back to the Sequel: The Origins of Sequels, Spin-Offs, and Derivative and Transformative Works** • *Shweta Adhyam, Kate Nepveu (M), Sonja Ryst, Allen Steele*

On Twitter in 2021, in response to a question by Charlie Jane Anders, Jess Nevins discussed the first spinoffs and sequels to novels, in both Europe and China. D Franklin further noted that throughout much of history, the concepts underlying modern understandings of spinoffs and fanfic did not exist. Panelists will delve into these histories and what they say about ideas of authorship, the reasons behind continuations and adaptations of stories, and how both vary across the globe.

05:00 PM

Salon A • **Magical Realities in Historical Fiction** • *Christopher M. Cevalco (M), Gregory Feeley, Shariann Lewitt, W. B. J. Williams, Simone Zelitch*

For much of recorded history, dominant worldviews have included beliefs that modern readers would find fantastical. In fiction, can a literal treatment of period superstitions or religious beliefs be more historically honest than attempting to draw a solid line between mythicism and historicity? Panelists will delve into the interconnected worlds of historical fiction and fantasy literature, focusing on how combined elements of both can create uniquely compelling narratives.

05:00 PM

Salon B • **Ephemera or Artifacts? Fandom History in the Digital Age** • *Inanna Arthen (M), B Diane Martin, Sumiko Saulson, The joey Zone*

In recent years, many conventions have turned away from physical program books, opting for mobile apps or web-based programs. Digital schedules are easier to produce, distribute, and update, but at a cost—they are only as permanent as the servers that house them. How can we intentionally create artifacts that preserve our fandoms' histories and cultures for future generations?

05:00 PM

Salon C • **The Return of New Hampshire Weird** • *Matthew Cheney, Eric Schaller*
Eric Schaller and Matthew Cheney read from their new collections.

05:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Erin Roberts** • *Erin Roberts*

05:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: James Patrick Kelly** • *James Patrick Kelly*

05:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Neil Clarke** • *Neil Clarke*

05:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Josh Glenn** • *Josh Glenn*

05:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Nadia Bulkin** • *Nadia Bulkin*

05:30 PM

Thayer Boardroom • **Alternate Green Room** •

The Sylvanus Thayer boardroom will become the alternate Green Room while the Abigail Adams room is unavailable.

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06:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Billionaires in Science Fiction** • *Christopher Brown, Charlie Jane Anders, Rob Cameron, Sonja Ryst (M)*

Billionaires and the mega-rich are a staple of science fiction, as benevolent saviors, mad inventors, and tyrants. What are we telling readers about extreme wealth and those who wield it? And when tech entrepreneurs cite science fiction as having inspired them, as they frequently do, it raises another question: what are we telling them about themselves?

06:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Fatphobia in SFF** • *Randee Dawn (M), Sumiko Saulson, Susan Stinson, John Wiswell*

Science fiction and fantasy have a dreadful legacy of fatphobia, equating fatness with villainy and sloth, or with a helplessness to be shed along with a character's weight. As Anya Josephs wrote in a 2021 Tor.com article: "Fat protagonists...are still few and far between, and unfortunately many of the portrayals of fat characters fall far short of providing positive representation for the many readers longing for it." Who is doing better, and more importantly, how can the genre world follow their lead?

06:00 PM

Salon A • **The Craft of Reviewing** • *Gillian Daniels, Michael Dirda, Robert Killheffer (M), The joey Zone, Gary Wolfe*

Join experienced reviewers of literature as they discuss what a review is, what reviews aim to accomplish, and how they go about putting them together.

06:00 PM

Salon B • **Reading Audio** • *Melissa Caruso, Michael Cisco, C. S. E. Cooney (M), Julia Rios, Alex Shvartsman*

How does the experience of reading a book differ between listening to audio and looking at text? What kinds of stylistic choices work better in audio or better on paper, and how do writers navigate knowing they're often writing for both at once? And how does a narrator's performance affect the style of the work?

06:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Zig Zag Claybourne** • *Zig Zag Claybourne*

06:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: LJ Cohen** • *LJ Cohen*

LJ Cohen reads from a work in progress, *Litany for a Broken World*.

06:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Thea Prieto** • *Thea Prieto*

06:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Steven Popkes** • *Steven Popkes*

06:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Kate Maruyama** • *Kate Maruyama*

06:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Cecilia Tan** • *Cecilia Tan*

06:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Benjamin Rosenbaum** • *Benjamin Rosenbaum*

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06:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Elaine Isaak** • *Elaine Isaak*

07:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Who Would I Be If I Weren't Me?** • *Lauren Beukes, Matthew Kressel, Julia Rios (M), Michael Swanwick, K.M. Szpara*

SF stories employing clones and parallel universes allow us to explore fundamental questions about what makes up a person. What is the true core of a person's identity and character, and what changes under different circumstances? As an author, what is it like to write many versions of one character, or many different characters that are similar but not fundamentally the same person?

07:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Biology for Speculative Xenobiologists** • *Arula Ratnakar, David DeGraff, Allan Dyen-Shapiro, Andrea Kriz, Eric Schaller (M)*

Aliens from other worlds are often portrayed as humans with a few physical quirks; yet many of the animals who live in our waters, on the ground, or in the sky are weirder than almost anything science fiction authors have imagined. When imagining what's possible in a vast and unfathomable universe, what extremes of difference should writers know exist in their terrestrial backyard?

07:00 PM

Salon A • **The Lure of the Heist** • *Scott H. Andrews (M), Elizabeth Bear, Jeff Hecht, John P. Murphy, Gregory A. Wilson*

Beginning in crime fiction, the heist plot has rapidly spread, spawning *Stainless Steel Rats* in space opera and *Gentleman Bastards* in mannered fantasy. Given its immediate addition of dramatic tension and raised stakes (Will they get in? Will they get caught?), the heist provides narrative advantages to authors in genres from horror to romance. Panelists will unlock the secrets of the heist's versatility and decode its broad appeal. Can they get away with it?

07:00 PM

Salon B • **No Gods, No Masters (of Fine Arts)** • *Andrea Martinez Corbin*

MFAs and multi-week workshops aren't for everyone, or for all stages of writing development. That shouldn't stop any writer from digging into their craft and understanding the long game of their career. In this workshop, learn to identify your passions and interrogate your creative goals, and use those as the foundation to create a framework of study. The workshop will include discussion, and worksheets and resources for participants to take home.

07:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Laurence Raphael Brothers** • *Laurence Raphael Brothers*

07:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Inanna Arthen** • *Inanna Arthen*

07:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: J.S. Breukelaar** • *J.S. Breukelaar*

07:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Kenneth Schneyer** • *Kenneth Schneyer*

07:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Charlie Jane Anders** • *Charlie Jane Anders*

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07:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Annalee Newitz** • *Annalee Newitz*

07:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Gwynne Garfinkle** • *Gwynne Garfinkle*
Gwynne Garfinkle reads from her novel *Can't Find My Way Home* (2022).

07:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Henry Wessells** • *Henry Wessells*

08:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Yves Meynard** • *Yves Meynard*

08:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Michael Swanwick** • *Michael Swanwick*

08:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Elaine Isaak** • *Elaine Isaak*

08:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Sarah Pinsker** • *Sarah Pinsker*

10:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Welcome to Readercon!** • *B Diane Martin*

10:10 PM

Salon 4 • **Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award** • *Rich Horton, Ann VanderMeer (M)*

The **Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award** honors underread science fiction and fantasy authors, with the intention of drawing renewed attention to the winners. The award was created in 2001 by the Cordwainer Smith Foundation in memory of author Cordwainer Smith, and has been awarded at Readercon since 2002.

10:30 PM

Salon 4 • **Meet the Pros(e) Party [NEW FORMAT]** • *Cast of Thousands*

Check out our *New, Experimental* Meet the Pros(e) format! Grab a card and join a handful of authors and attendees at assigned tables in three fifteen-minute chat sessions.

Saturday

10:00 AM

Salon 4 • **Harnessing Chaos: Randomization in Writing** • *Lauren Beukes, PJ Brown, Andrea Martinez Corbin, Kenneth Schneyer (M), W. B. J. Williams*

Writers in the past (and present) have often used randomization to break out of creative ruts and writers' block, whether by responding to a prompt or challenge, rolling a die, drawing tarot cards, throwing the I Ching, or opening a random book to a random page. There are even authors who lean into "channeling," automatic writing, and Ouija, with varying degrees of seriousness. What are the

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ways you use randomization or automation in your writing process? Where do you draw the line? Has it ever felt spooky, or stopped feeling like it was really yours?

10:00 AM

Salon 3 • **Queer Identities as Genres** • *Kit Mayquist, Kate Nepveu*

Genre labels can help audiences find the kind of work they're looking for, set reader expectations going into a work, and situate a work in conversation with other works. People vary widely in how they define genres, how strongly they feel about their definitions, and how important they consider the existence of definitions in the first place. Similar things might be said about gender. How can our understandings of genre illuminate our understandings of gender, and vice versa?

10:00 AM

Salon A • **The Fantasy Fiction of Sylvia Townsend Warner** • *Gwynne Garfinkle, Greer Gilman, Robert Killheffer (M), Sarah Smith, Michael Swanwick*

Sylvia Townsend Warner's first novel, *Lolly Willowes*, was the story of a witch, and her final book, *Kingdoms of Elfin*, collected linked fantasy stories originally published in *The New Yorker*. Though most of her work in between was realist fiction, fantasy often found its way in, particularly with *The Cat's Cradle-Book*. Let's discuss the fantasy aspects of Sylvia Townsend Warner's fiction.

10:00 AM

Salon B • **A Brief History of Mexican SFF** • *Lorena Noriega*

Lorena Noriega, Editor at Editorial La Confianza and Beyond Dimensions, SFF author, translator, and teacher of Spanish for foreigners, presents a brief history of Mexican SFF from the seventeenth century to the present, tracing the influence of European science fiction on Mexican authors and the development of a Mexican SFF "scene."

10:00 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Pat Murphy** • *Pat Murphy*

Pat Murphy reads from *The Adventure of Mary Darling*, a novel that retells the story of Peter Pan from a new point of view.

10:00 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Scott Edelman** • *Scott Edelman*

10:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Sarah Pinsker** • *Sarah Pinsker*

10:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Arley Sorg** • *Arley Sorg*

10:00 AM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Allen Steele** • *Allen Steele*

10:00 AM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Jeffrey Ford** • *Jeffrey Ford*

10:00 AM

Thayer Boardroom • **Open Conversation Space** •

The Sylvanus Thayer Boardroom will remain open during hours not scheduled for activities, so that attendees can have conversations in a separate space accessible to the programming rooms instead of in the hallway outside them.

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10:30 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Jeff VanderMeer** • *Jeff VanderMeer*

10:30 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Simone Zelitch** • *Simone Zelitch*

Simone Zelitch reads from JUDENSTAAT, an alternate history set in a Jewish State carved out of Germany at the end of World War Two.

11:00 AM

Salon 4 • **COVID's Effects on Literary Tone** • *John Clute, Andrea Kriz, Sunny Moraine, Nicole D. Sconiers, Rick Wilber (M)*

Trends in theme and tone are always informed by the realities in which they're being written. Amid a global pandemic, two complementary trends emerged: some writers have embraced chaos, writing even darker stories, while others have leaned into hope, feeling they shouldn't add more darkness to the universe. How do writers make decisions about how they respond to the world, in general and in recent particulars?

11:00 AM

Salon 3 • **DDOS: Distributed Denial of Slush** • *Scott H. Andrews, Neil Clarke, Matthew Kressel, John P. Murphy (M), Sheila Williams*

In February, Clarkesworld closed its submissions for the first time to deal with a new onslaught of chatbot-written stories. As chatbot technology gains the kind of mainstream popularity its creators have long dreamed of, people looking to make easy money have attempted to substitute creative prompting for actual writing, resulting in a swarm of AI-written stories that threatens to make open submissions untenable. How has publishing responded, and how should it?

11:00 AM

Salon A • **Domestic Fabulism** • *Laurence Raphael Brothers, Gillian Daniels (M), Emma J. Gibbon, Greer Gilman, Ian Muneshwar*

In a 2014 essay in *Electric Lit*, Amber Sparks coined the phrase "domestic fabulism" to describe works that "simultaneously distort [...] and reveal [...] the true nature of the home, the family, the place of belonging or, in many cases, not belonging at all," such as Kelly Link's *Magic for Beginners*, Helen Oyeyemi's *Mr. Fox*, and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Panelists will discuss this genre's lineage, how the fantastic interacts with the domestic, and whether stories of claustrophobic domestic anxiety are currently on the rise.

11:00 AM

Salon B • **Machen's Legacy in Modern Horror & Fantasy** • *Michael Cisco, Michael Dirda, Elizabeth Hand, The Joey Zone, Henry Wessells (M)*

Join us as we dig into the lasting impact of Arthur Machen's haunting works on contemporary literature and society. From "The Great God Pan" to "The Hill of Dreams" to "The Bowmen of Mons," Machen's writings have inspired generations of authors and readers alike. In this panel, we'll discuss how his ideas and themes continue to resonate with modern audiences, and examine his ongoing influence on the genre of weird fiction.

11:00 AM

Salon C • **"Mooncalves" Group Reading** • *Adam Golaski, Brian Evenson, Christi Nogle, John W.M. Thompson (M)*

The *Mooncalves* anthology presents 23 stories of original fiction from contemporary writers both established and new, probing the weird borderlands of horror, sci fi, fantasy, and the truly indescribable.

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11:00 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Ruthanna Emrys** • *Ruthanna Emrys*

11:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: C.S.E. Cooney** • *C. S. E. Cooney*

11:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Randee Dawn** • *Randee Dawn*

11:00 AM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Ellen Kushner** • *Ellen Kushner*

11:00 AM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Thea Prieto** • *Thea Prieto*

11:30 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: K.M. Szpara** • *K.M. Szpara*

12:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Big Changes in the Edit** • *Melissa Caruso, Ellen Kushner, Kate Maruyama (M), Jeff VanderMeer, Gregory A. Wilson*

Join a group of authors as they reveal the twists and turns of their creative journeys. In this panel, they'll focus on the ways their books changed while they were writing them—whether through feedback, inspiration, or a sudden plot twist. From initial concepts to final drafts, these writers will share their unique processes, challenges, and triumphs. Discover the fascinating and unpredictable world of writing in this candid and insightful conversation.

12:00 PM

Salon 3 • **History, Queerness and Speculation** • *Inanna Arthen (M), MJ Cunniff, Foz Meadows, Susan Stinson*

Queer people have often had to imagine ourselves into history and sometimes into the present. How does that shape our relationship to research? To taking speculative leaps? What is the power of remaking the stories of past worlds?

12:00 PM

Salon A • **Nostalgia and Inclusivity in the New Sword & Sorcery** • *Shweta Adhyam, Scott H. Andrews (M), Sarah Jean Horwitz, Michael Swanwick*

As Sword & Sorcery experiences a resurgence, many writers, such as those of the New Edge movement, are consciously exploring ways to carry forward what they love about the genre while leaving behind its legacy of sexism, racism, and colonialism. What goes into an effort to celebrate and reinvigorate a genre steeped in nostalgia while making room for the people that genre has pushed down?

12:00 PM

Salon B • **Post-American Futurism** • *Christopher Brown, Zin E. Rocklyn, Karen Heuler, Alexander Jablovkov (M), Leon Perniciaro*

The U.S. was founded in an act of separatism from the British Empire, and over the years the idea of individual states or clusters leaving the Union has appealed to different Americans for different reasons, from white supremacy to liberal frustration to ecological utopianism. Why do so many Americans romanticize the idea of American breakup, and how do speculative fiction books discussing this topic handle it?

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12:00 PM

Salon C • **Fantasy Magazine Group Reading** • *Meg Elison, Gwynne Garfinkle, Arley Sorg (M)*
A group reading from contributors to *Fantasy Magazine*. *Fantasy* is a digital magazine focusing exclusively on the fantasy genre—dark fantasy, contemporary urban tales, surrealism, magical realism, science fantasy, high fantasy, folktales... and anything and everything in between.

12:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: James Patrick Kelly** • *James Patrick Kelly*

12:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Paul Witcover** • *Paul Witcover*

12:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Lauren Beukes** • *Lauren Beukes*

12:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Sarah Pinsker** • *Sarah Pinsker*

01:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Writing Sex Scenes Without Fear** • *Sunny Moraine, Robert V.S. Redick, K.M. Szpara, Cecilia Tan (M)*

Sex scenes can reveal character, advance plot, and illuminate settings at least as well as any other element of a story. Of course we'd never insert such a scene that did no more than let our characters have a bit of fun (or would we?), but sometimes one is really necessary to serve the story as a whole. What strategies and techniques should authors consider when writing a sex scene? What common pitfalls should they avoid?

01:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Ritual as Boundary and Transformation** • *John Clute, C. S. E. Cooney (M), Amanda Downum, Greer Gilman, Erin Roberts*

In the Readercon 31 panel, "Everywhere a Boundary," panelists discussed how boundaries can divide a concrete, present "here" from an imagined, theoretical, or less present "there." A central function of ritual can be to create boundaries, separating between then and now, here and there, orderly and disorderly, appropriate and taboo. This holds true for rituals both secular and religious, such as swearing in witnesses, following rules of order in a meeting, or practicing the personal care routines that create boundaries between different parts of the day. How does ritual perform these functions in SFF? Who is doing interesting work with these concepts?

01:00 PM

Salon A • **How Readercon Gets Made** • *T.X. Watson*

Somehow, hundreds of fandom conventions and conferences get put on every year, mostly by volunteers—it's happened over 30 times for Readercon alone. Yet even people within organizations sometimes wonder how the other parts function, and how a conference like Readercon goes from "we should do this again" to actually happening. This panel is a chance to meet the people who make Readercon happen, and hear about what goes into putting it on.

01:00 PM

Salon B • **Excavating the Slush Pile** • *Scott H. Andrews (M), Neil Clarke, Katherine Crighton, Leon Perniciaro, Alex Shvartsman*

Many small press and magazine publishers rely on volunteer "slush" readers for the first review of submissions. What are best practices for slush reading, and what issues and challenges face these

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volunteer readers? Do "blind" submissions policies help or hinder the #OwnVoices movement? How do slush readers handle controversial or triggering content without excluding marginalized voices? Must a story be appealing to the slush reader in order to earn a second set of eyes, or merely engaging?

01:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Thea Prieto** • *Thea Prieto*

01:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Elizabeth Bear** • *Elizabeth Bear*

01:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Randee Dawn** • *Randee Dawn*

01:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Ellen Datlow** • *Ellen Datlow*

01:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Julia Rios** • *Julia Rios*

02:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Celebration and (Mis)Interpretation** • *PJ Brown, Zin E. Rocklyn, Foz Meadows (M), Romie Stott*

Every now and then a book will explode in popularity among exactly the people its author meant to malign. What does it mean for a work when it is praised for supporting everything it stands against? Are the readers (always or ever) wrong? How do authors navigate acquiring fandoms that they meant to condemn?

02:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Ageism in SFF Publishing** • *Ellen Datlow, Pat Murphy (M), Michael Swanwick, Rick Wilber, Gary Wolfe*

Many authors who could once reliably sell their novels to major publishers have more recently seen book deals dry up. The result is forced retirement for writers who never had any plans to retire, in an industry where retirement was once entirely voluntary and it was possible for someone to continue writing and publishing through their 90's. Are older authors being deliberately pushed aside to make room for the new, or is forced retirement the unhappy result of other changes in the industry?

02:00 PM

Salon A • **The Enduring Legacy of Jules Verne** • *John Clute, Michael Dirda, Sarah Smith, Henry Wessells (M)*

Between 1863 and 1905, Jules Verne wrote fifty-four novels in his Extraordinary Voyages collection including *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *From the Earth to the Moon*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, and *The Mysterious Island*. His style and subject matter helped shape science fiction into the genre we now know, and his amazing tales still delight us today. Join the editors and authors of *Extraordinary Visions*, the first-ever fiction anthology from the North American Jules Verne Society, as they discuss the pioneering author's enduring legacy.

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02:00 PM

Salon B • **Translating from Russian in a Time of War** • *Anatoly Belilovsky, Julia Meitov Hersey, Alex Shvartsman (M)*

The ethics and challenges of translation have always been thorny, but the invasion of Ukraine put a spotlight on how Russian language is used as a tool of politics and colonialism. What does it mean for translators of Russian stories when the language itself—both its use and non-use—has been so thoroughly weaponized? What are some of the challenges of translating Russian in wartime?

02:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Rob Cameron** • *Rob Cameron*

02:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: John P. Murphy** • *John P. Murphy*

02:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Elizabeth Hand** • *Elizabeth Hand*

02:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Sheila Williams** • *Sheila Williams*

02:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Lauren Beukes** • *Lauren Beukes*

02:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Sarah Jean Horwitz** • *Sarah Jean Horwitz*

02:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Gregory A. Wilson** • *Gregory A. Wilson*

Gregory A. Wilson reads from his upcoming novel *Renegade*, which will be published in July.

02:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: John Wiswell** • *John Wiswell*

John Wiswell reads from his forthcoming debut novel, *Someone You Can Build a Nest In*.

03:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Non-Narrative Fiction: Stories Without Stories** • *MJ Cunniff, Rich Horton (M), Sarah Pinsker, Kenneth Schneyer, Nikhil Singh*

Fiction in general has a long tradition of adding verisimilitude by including created documents, but speculative fiction has gone even further to tell stories entirely through footnotes, art gallery exhibit descriptions, FAQs, bibliographies, containment procedures, academic journal articles, technical instructions, posts on wiki talk pages, and more. What are the advantages and disadvantages of storyless storytelling? And how does it differ from epistolary fiction?

03:00 PM

Salon 3 • **History of Readercon** • *B Diane Martin, Scott Edelman, David G. Shaw (M), The joey Zone*
Veteran Readercon participants and organizers will tell stories of Readercon's nearly 40 year history. Learn about the awards and ceremonies that are or have been hosted here, events that have come and gone, clandestine attendance by rockstar authors, and maybe a little bit of drama if the panelists think it wise to share. Come to the first of this potentially annual panel and join the circle of knowledge in this con's legacies and culture.

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03:00 PM

Salon A • **More Than Human: Animals in Speculative Fiction** • *Michael Cisco, Elizabeth Bear, Carlos Hernandez, Leon Perniciaro (M), Susan Stinson*

Stories that move animals close to the center open up valuable perspectives. For instance, using written language for beings without their own written language—at least in ways that humans might recognize—both poses ethical challenges and offers gifts. How do fiction and nonfiction writers who write about animals think about their projects?

03:00 PM

Salon B • **Writing Workshops: The Times, They Are A-Changin'** • *Shweta Adhyam, Kate Maruyama (M), Ian Muneshwar, Rob Cameron, Paul Witcover*

Several well-known workshops focus on science fiction, fantasy, and horror, but the writing workshop community has been undergoing an upheaval as awareness has increased around the history of workshops, the lack of inclusivity, and the often negative experiences of marginalized writers. What changes are the various workshops making? Is a writing workshop the best way to develop your craft? What in-person and online options are available to those interested in taking part?

03:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Gillian Daniels** • *Gillian Daniels*

Gillian Daniels reads the short story, *The One Girl* (Electric Spec, February 2022).

03:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Ellen Kushner** • *Ellen Kushner*

03:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Melissa Caruso** • *Melissa Caruso*

03:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Julia Rios** • *Julia Rios*

03:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Michael Swanwick** • *Michael Swanwick*

03:00 PM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: Rick Wilber** • *Rick Wilber*

03:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Karen Heuler** • *Karen Heuler*

03:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: A.T. Greenblatt** • *A. T. Greenblatt*

04:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Jeff VanderMeer Interview** • *Ann VanderMeer (M), Jeff VanderMeer*

05:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Justina Ireland Interview** • *Justina Ireland, Arley Sorg (M)*

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06:00 PM

Salon A • **Gender Identity in Artificial Intelligences** • *Laurence Raphael Brothers, Elizabeth Bear (M), Charlie Jane Anders, K.M. Szpara*

AIs are a common science fiction trope, and if reports can be believed, a near reality. They have no sex and no body, and yet gender identities are common in writing about AIs. Why? Who decides the identity of an AI? The programmer? The people it interacts with? The AI itself? Does it make any sense to assume that a learning model would maintain a stable gender identity? What does it say about us when we assign genders to our digital assistants, and how do our beliefs and assumptions about both AI and gender impact our storytelling?

06:00 PM

Salon B • **The Works of D.G. Compton** • *F. Brett Cox, Gregory Feeley, Rich Horton (M), Steven Popkes, Paul Witcover*

David Guy Compton is the author of 30 novels and other book-length works, 19 of them under the name D.G. Compton. His science fictional work is known for its near-future settings and heavy focus on character and morality, and its often ambiguous endings. Join us in celebrating the winner of the 2021 Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award and discussing his body of work.

06:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Shweta Adhyam** • *Shweta Adhyam*

Shweta Adhyam reads from her YA fantasy novel, *Dust and Jasmine*.

06:00 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Adam Golaski** • *Adam Golaski*

Adam Golaski read "Distant Signals," a story from the anthology *Mooncalves*.

06:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Anatoly Belilovsky** • *Anatoly Belilovsky*

06:30 PM

Blue Hills • **Reading: J.S. Breukelaar** • *J.S. Breukelaar*

07:00 PM

Salon A • **The City and the Country** • *Gregory Feeley, Annalee Newitz, Leon Perniciaro (M), Rob Cameron, Erin Roberts*

The emergence and predominance of cities in Western culture has been seen variously as a spiritual loss and as humanity's greatest achievement. In speculative fiction, Terri Windling and others have suggested that fantasy's roots lie in oral and rural traditions, while China Miéville and others depict cities as cosmopolitan and innovative, unlike the country. How do these and other city-country narratives inform worldbuilding in current speculative fiction? And how can speculative fiction shape our understandings of the possibilities of city and country life?

07:00 PM

Salon B • **The Pros and Cons of Collaborative Marketing** • *Randee Dawn, Stephanie Feldman (M), Sarah Smith, Rick Wilber*

Beyond writing and reading with others, authors are now banding together for marketing efforts including joint crowd-sourcing, co-managed social media, and collaborative fictional worlds. But we all know one of the worst forms of hell is a group project: contrasting work styles, competition for attention and credit, lack of follow-through from some members. What are some of the pros and cons of banding together with a group of authors for marketing purposes, how is equity ensured, and how does one find (and vet) potential collaborators?

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07:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Andrew F. Sullivan** • *Andrew F. Sullivan*

07:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Matthew Kressel** • *Matthew Kressel*

Matthew Kressel reads from his forthcoming novel, *Space Trucker Jess*.

08:00 PM

Salon 4 • **The Shirley Jackson Awards** •

08:00 PM

Salon A • **Bodice Ripping, Hard Boiling, and Other Improbable Literary Joys** • *Rich Horton, Catt Kingsgrave*

Can you really rip a bodice? (No.) Every genre incorporates a set of assumptions, usually colorful, about how the world works. But how long can Our Hero swash that 2 lb. buckler shield before arm fatigue sets in? Could Dave Bowman make it back into the *Discovery One* without his helmet? Our panel of experts looks at the classic figures, settings, and situations of fantasy and sf to determine such puzzlers as the tensile strength of Rapunzel's hair (or at least a good first-order approximation).

08:00 PM

Salon B • **Writing Pandemics and Other Apocalypses In Light of COVID-19** • *Anatoly Belilovsky, Allan Dyen-Shapiro (M), Shariann Lewitt, Sunny Moraine*

Pandemics, like other apocalypses, have always been here, but the scale of COVID-19 is unmatched in living memory. How has the experience of the last three years affected our understandings of pandemics and apocalypses more generally? What aspects have writers already incorporated in or responded to in fiction, and what aspects do writers predict will shape fiction in the future, perhaps in unexpected ways?

08:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Scott Lynch** • *Scott Lynch*

08:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Sonja Ryst** • *Sonja Ryst*

Sonja Ryst reads from *Writingmythology.com*: Weighty discussions on how spec fic authors might make their stories funny and how women might have more power with five breasts instead of two.

09:00 PM

Salon A • **It's Life, But Not as We Know It** • *Arula Ratnakar, David DeGraff, J.S. Breukelaar, Eric Schaller (M)*

What would life be like if it evolved in a cold ocean beneath an impenetrable shell of ice? Or under an atmosphere whose haze obscured any view of the universe beyond? *Life Beyond Us*, a forthcoming anthology from the European Astrobiology Institute and Laksa Media Groups, explores the biology of outer space. Our panelists, some of whom are contributors, take up the challenge of imagining life under un-Earthly conditions and offer some best guesses as to how finding such otherworldly entities would alter things here on Terra Firma.

09:00 PM

Salon B • **Career Promotion for Pseudonymous Writers** • *Katherine Crichton, Elaine Isaak*

Some writers use pseudonyms to keep their private and public lives separate. Others use them to differentiate their works in different genres. All professional writers need to bring their works to

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the attention of readers, but how should one go about doing that when one can't, or doesn't want to, pin it to one's established name? A conversation with Elaine Isaak (E.C. Ambrose) and Katherine Crichton.

Sunday

10:00 AM

Salon 4 • **Revolutions in Folklore, Myth and Media** • *Charles Allison, Andrea Martinez Corbin (M), J.S. Breukelaar, Sparkymonster*

Revolutions are woven into mythology, myth and media. Gods overthrow other gods, tricksters upset the status quo, and sometimes humankind even kicks over the big celestial chair. We see in our own world how political revolutions are quickly mythologized and then rewritten by successive generations, and indeed many myths may echo historical events. This panel will discuss revolutions in fiction and mythology, and what their perception and depiction says about us.

10:00 AM

Salon 3 • **Space: The Ultimate Locked Room** • *Shweta Adhyam, Katherine Crichton (M), Elizabeth Bear, Robert Killheffer, Sarah Pinsker*

Add "...but in space" to "locked room mystery" and you make the stakes even higher. From Tade Thompson's *Far From the Light of Heaven* to Mur Lafferty's *Station Eternity* to Mary Robinette Kowal's *The Spare Man*, contemporary authors embrace and explore this collision of tropes, but what are the thematic implications?

10:00 AM

Salon A • **The Works of Justina Ireland** • *N. S. Dolkart (M), Cecelia Gray, Eileen Gunn, Kate Nepveu*
Justina Ireland is the New York Times bestselling author of numerous books, including *Dread Nation*, *Deathless Divide*, and the Scott O'Dell Award winning middle-grade, *Ophie's Ghosts*. She is co-author of *She is also the author of numerous Star Wars books and one of the story architects of Star Wars: The High Republic*. Her most recent solo book, *Rust in the Root*, is now available, as is *Chaos & Flame*, a novel co-authored with Tessa Gratton. Please join us in welcoming her to Readercon and exploring her fiction.

10:00 AM

Salon B • **Your Personal Odyssey: An Online Writing Workshop** • *Jeanne Cavelos*

After 26 years, the Odyssey Writing Workshop transformed into Your Personal Odyssey Writing Workshop, an intensive, one-on-one online workshop experience, customized for each student. Odyssey director Jeanne Cavelos describes the new program, her experiences with students over the first year, and the underserved writers now having the opportunity to learn from an intensive, sustained program.

10:00 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Robert V.S. Redick** • *Robert V.S. Redick*

10:00 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: John Chu** • *John Chu*

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10:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Alex Shvartsman** • *Alex Shvartsman*

10:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Amanda Downum** • *Amanda Downum*

10:30 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Yves Meynard** • *Yves Meynard*

10:30 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Jeff Hecht** • *Jeff Hecht*

11:00 AM

Salon 4 • **Writing AI Fiction in the AI Present** • *Laurence Raphael Brothers, Christopher Mark Rose (M), James Patrick Kelly, Andrea Kriz, Benjamin Rosenbaum*

As new AI technologies emerge they imply new speculative trajectories for fictional artificial intelligences. How is the landscape of AI depiction changing in response to technologies like Midjourney and ChatGPT?

11:00 AM

Salon 3 • **So You Want to Be an Editor** • *Ellen Datlow, Leon Perniciaro, Alex Shvartsman, Ann VanderMeer (M)*

What are the hallmarks of a good editor? What strategies and techniques do professional editors use to review a story or poem and help it become its best self? How does one navigate the editor-author relationship from the editorial side? Is there a trick to convincing a publishing team that this book right here is the one the publisher needs? Readercon Special Guest Ann VanderMeer leads this panel discussing the how-tos of professional editing.

11:00 AM

Salon A • **Speculative Memoir** • *Matthew Cheney, Scott Edelman, Greer Gilman, Alexander Jablokov, Henry Wessells (M)*

The two Hav novels by Welsh travel writer Jan Morris, published in a combined volume under the title Hav in 2006, detail the author's experiences in a city state that does not exist. How do such works achieve the effect they do, and how are they like (but also unlike) the memoir-esque frame stories that we are familiar with, from *The Princess Bride* to much of 19th century fiction? How can we carry their legacy forward? Who else is writing this way? Is "speculative memoir" a useful characterization, as opposed to "fake history"?

11:00 AM

Salon B • **Agent Pitch Session: Arley Sorg** • *Arley Sorg*

Arley Sorg is, among many other things, an associate agent at kt literary currently open to new clients. If you would like to pitch him on your work

11:00 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Allan Dyen-Shapiro** • *Allan Dyen-Shapiro*

11:00 AM

Blue Hills • **Reading: Justina Ireland** • *Justina Ireland*

11:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Rick Wilber** • *Rick Wilber*

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11:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: John P. Murphy** • *John P. Murphy*

11:00 AM

Autographs Table • **Autographs: C.S.E. Cooney** • *C. S. E. Cooney*

11:30 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Thomas Waldron** • *Thomas Waldron*

12:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Residence and Proximity to Power** • *Shweta Adhyam, Charles Allison (M), Erin Roberts, Gregory A. Wilson*

Physical proximity to the seats of political power is often used to indicate status, but having just the right amount of distance from the center has become its own kind of status symbol. Living "downtown" can mean high real estate prices and the luxury of walking to shops, while the suburbs afford detached single-family homes and land ownership. What shapes the places close to the "center" - in real life and in fiction - to determine their perceived value?

12:00 PM

Salon 3 • **The Queer Tropes of Speculative Literature** • *Charlie Jane Anders, Kit Mayquist, Annalee Newitz (M), Sparkymonster*

What tropes of queerness are peculiar to speculative literature? How are queer identities and experiences repeatedly represented across works in science fiction, fantasy, and/or horror that are not endemic to other genres of fiction? What tropes are new, emerging, or transforming in the field, and what are their implications and consequences?

12:00 PM

Salon A • **Word Processors Designed for Authors** • *John Chu, LJ Cohen, Alexander Jablovkov (M), Yves Meynard, W. B. J. Williams*

Various word processors state that they are designed for authors, of which Scrivener may be the best-known. Panelists will describe the pros and cons of their favorite program, and dig deep into the nitty-gritty of getting started with that program and the ways it helps them write.

12:00 PM

Salon B • **Celebrating Speller's Editorial Impact on SF/F** • *Graham Sleight, Romie Stott*

As an editor for multiple presses, a prolific critic, and a passionate advocate for the field, Maureen Kincaid Speller was instrumental in promoting and sustaining the speculative fiction scene in the UK and beyond. From her reviews and essays to her convention committee work, she amplified the voices of emerging SF/F authors and encouraged critical discourse. In this panel, we'll explore Speller's influence on the field and discuss the ways her efforts have shaped the world of science fiction and fantasy.

12:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Randee Dawn** • *Randee Dawn*

Randee Dawn reads from her 2022 debut novel *Tune In Tomorrow*, or potentially from its sequel.

12:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: John Wiswell** • *John Wiswell*

12:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Katherine Crichton** • *Katherine Crichton*

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12:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Sunny Moraine** • *Sunny Moraine*

01:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Generative AI Prospects and Perils** • *Tom Greene, John P. Murphy, Benjamin Rosenbaum (M), Sarah Smith*

Over the last few years, the capability of generative AI systems to produce static art, videos, and conversations has increased greatly. However, these increases have not come without a large amount of criticism such as plagiarism and unauthorized use of artists and authors on the internet. Panelists will discuss the current state of generative AI, future prospects, and the serious ethical and practical hazards these systems present.

01:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Representations of Racism in Fantasy** • *Justina Ireland, Leon Perniciaro, Erin Roberts*

Overt clashes of race make frequent appearances in fantasy, whether in allegorical form among fantasy races or more directly in human-to-human interactions. How have the genre's depictions of race and racism changed over the years, and have those changes all been positive? What trends have emerged in depictions of fantasy racism? Have developments in real-world SFF publishing had a noticeable effect on fantasy worlds?

01:00 PM

Salon A • **BookTok and Bookstagram: reading culture on social media** • *Cecelia Gray, MJ Cunniff (M), Elli Peacock, Foz Meadows, Romie Stott*

Recent years have seen an explosion in the influence of social media communities, often made up of hobbyists rather than professionals, in the publishing market. How does influencer marketing affect the industry? How are authors and editors thinking about these communities?

01:00 PM

Salon B • **Lessons from Cyberspace: Virtual Cons** • *Inanna Arthen, N. S. Dolkart, LJ Cohen, Elaine Isaak (M)*

Returning after 3 years without an in-person Readercon, but with a virtual Readercon in between, what have we learned from the virtual versus in-person experience? What's missing when we're not here in person, and what should we make sure not to lose again now that we've had it in a virtual event?

01:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Jeff Hecht** • *Jeff Hecht*

01:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Scott Edelman** • *Scott Edelman*

01:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Eileen Gunn** • *Eileen Gunn*

02:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Fanfic: Progressive, Regressive** • *Catt Kingsgrave, Foz Meadows (M), Sunny Moraine, Cecilia Tan*

Speculative fanfic can go far beyond mainstream speculative fiction in imagining other worlds, other relationships, and other ways of being. But it's written by fallible humans in the here and now, and can just as easily incorporate bigotries and mindsets that we'd rather leave in the past than carry

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into the future. This panel of longtime fanfic writers will explore the nuances of these facets of fanfic and how they parallel mainstream speculative fiction's similar contradictions.

02:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Serial Fiction: Everything Old Is New Again** • *Katherine Crichton, Kate Nepveu (M), Sarah Smith*

Present-day serialized fiction can be found as webnovels in China and on English-language sites like Royal Road; on platforms like Patreon, WattPad, and Inkitt; and as sequential art designed for mobile apps like Webtoon—among many others. Meanwhile, classic fiction is finding new readers through email newsletters like Dracula Daily. What opportunities does the serialized format offer authors and readers? And how has the proliferation of platforms affected authors, readers, and their communities?

02:00 PM

Salon A • **Alternate History of Readercon** • *Kate Maruyama, Julia Rios, Benjamin Rosenbaum, David G. Shaw (M)*

This is the REAL History of Readercon panel. Veteran Readercon participants and writers of fantastical fiction will tell Definitely True Stories about things that Actually Happened in Readercon's nearly 40 year history. Are wizards involved? Time travel? Secret cults to an elder god somewhere under Boston harbor? Come and learn real actual facts that are definitely not being made up on the spot, at this longstanding annual event that already existed and was in no way just invented this year.

02:00 PM

Salon B • **The Real Effects of Fairy Tale Logic** • *Gillian Daniels (M), Tom Greene, Justina Ireland, Eric Schaller*

How do the structural and conceptual elements of fairy tales manifest in realistic fiction? Does the Rule of Threes influence politics? How do the social conventions introduced and to an extent enforced by fairy tales complicate and hinder the ongoing struggle for social, racial and environmental justice, and how are new stories reclaiming and adapting those tools to point more clearly towards positive change?

02:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Rick Wilber** • *Rick Wilber*

02:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Pat Murphy** • *Pat Murphy*

02:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsch: Ruthanna Emrys** • *Ruthanna Emrys*

02:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Leon Perniciaro** •

03:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Readercon 32 Feedback Session** • *N. S. Dolkart, Lori Meltzer, Meryll Gross, T.X. Watson, Thom Jones-Low, T.X. Watson*

Come share your thoughts on what we did well and what we can do better.