

# READERCON 29



POCKET PROGRAM GUIDE

# READERCON 29



Guest of Honor  
**Ken Liu**



Guest of Honor  
**Nisi Shawl**



Memorial Guest of Honor  
**E. Nesbit**

And celebrating the 2017 Cordwainer Smith Award winner:  
**Seabury Quinn**

## PROGRAM GUIDE

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.

Please note that the final schedule may have changed since this guide was printed. Please check the program grid or the online listing for the most up-to-date information. See <http://readercon.org/program>

We will be providing **communication access real-time translation** (CART) support for some Saturday afternoon and evening program items, including the Guest of Honor interviews. These are marked in the guide with CART after the title.

A map is printed in the back of this booklet.

# THURSDAY

8:00 PM

Salon 5 • **Writers Who Edit, Editors Who Write** • *Mike Allen, Scott Edelman, John Edward Lawson, Mimi Mondal, Julia Rios, Sabrina Vourvoulias*

Those who edit as a full-time job rarely do much writing on the side, but many full-time writers bolster their incomes through editing. Why does this equation seem to function better in one direction than the other? How do writers who edit avoid the pitfalls experienced by editors who write? What can be done to address an ever-widening taste gap, and the tendency to self-edit into the ground?

Salon 6 • **The England That Never Was** • *John Clute, Gillian Daniels, Tom Greene, Elizabeth Hand, Emily Lavin Leverett*

Sherwood Smith once referred to the “Regency England” of romance novels as a shared fantasy world. Many elements of English history, culture, and folklore have been turned into tropes and clichés, creating a broader shared world of which many works partake. What challenges do these whimsical, romantic images of England present to writers who strive for authenticity and historical accuracy? And how do we consider questions of cultural appropriation around a nation that aggressively exported much of its culture?

Salon C • **Human Labor in the Late 21st Century** • *Inanna Arthen, Robyn Bennis, Rob Cameron, John Chu, Natalie Luhrs*

Automation is predicted to eliminate millions of jobs in the next several decades. Indentured servitude is making a comeback in the trucking and cruise ship industries. Numerous national and global factors will reshape workforces. A pandemic that targets working-age people could change everything; so could a large country implementing universal basic income. Our panelists will imagine what human labor might look like in the next 100 years, and what stories can be told about those laborers and their work.

Blue Hills • **Complicating the Redemption Narrative** • *Gemma Files*, **Sally Wiener Grotta**, *Hillary Monahan*, *Tracy Townsend*, *Gregory A. Wilson*

Some antagonists and wrongdoers are given texture and context until they come all the way around to being understandable and sympathetic, perhaps culminating in a heroic or tragic death. Others are evil forever. Which types (and demographics) of villains are allowed to have redemption arcs? How do these stories reflect and shape this cultural moment of moral upheaval? Can alternative reconciliation models such as restorative justice be used to transform the redemption narrative?

Salon A • **Reading: Anatoly Belilovsky**

Salon B • **Reading: Karen Heuler**

**8:30 PM**

Salon A • **Reading: Kathy Kitts**

Salon B • **Reading: John Langan**

**9:00 PM**

Salon 5 • **Old Hollywood in Recent Speculative Fiction** • *Randee Dawn*, *Heath Miller*, *Nikhil Singh*, *Sonya Taaffe*, *Terence Taylor*  
 Tim Powers's *Medusa's Web*, Catherynne M. Valente's *Radiance*, and Lara Elena Donnelly's *Armistice* all draw on images of vintage Hollywood in very different ways, both honoring and criticizing a crucial era in the making of media that shaped a generation. What brings that era to the front of our awareness now? Is the fantastical reworking of old Hollywood linked in some way to recent criticisms of racism, sexism, and harassment in present-day Hollywood?

Salon 6 • **Living in Material Worlds, Part 1: Fabric Goods in Fictional Settings** • *Tom Greene*, *Elaine Isaak*, *Victoria Janssen*, *Natalie Luhrs*, *Sarah Smith*

In many postapocalyptic landscapes and colony worlds, everyone has clothing but no one ever talks about where it came from. Who

wove the cloth for that shirt, and who designed the pattern and cut and sewed it? What do station inhabitants feed their fabricators? This panel will dig into the influence of material culture on worldbuilding, and may also explore dye, fiber, and fabric in handicrafts, art, communication systems, and more.

Salon C • **What Comes After Late Capitalism?** • *Robyn Bennis, Christopher Brown, Alexander Jablov, Romie Stott, T.X. Watson*

The current American economic climate is often referred to as “late capitalism,” suggesting that capitalism as we know it is on its way out and will soon be transformed beyond recognition or replaced altogether. What can futurists and fabulists imagine for how that might happen, and what might take its place? How would postcapitalism look not only in fiction but in our lives, transforming publishing, reading, and conventions?

Blue Hills • **Defying the Pigeonhole** • *Ellen Datlow, Michael Dirda, Stephanie Feldman, Marissa Lingen, Chandler Klang Smith*

This panel of readers will celebrate favorite authors who can't be contained by a single genre—some exploring multiple genres within one work, some dipping in and out of them throughout their careers—and talk about the ways they break free of expectations to soar.

Salon A • **Reading: Noah Beit-Aharon**

Salon B • **Reading: F. Brett Cox**

9:30 PM

Salon A • **Reading: Lauren Roy**

Salon B • **Reading: Scott Edelman**

# FRIDAY

**Registration:** 10 AM to 9 PM

**Information:** 10 AM to 9 PM

**Con Suite:** 10 AM to midnight

**Bookshop:** 3 PM to 7 PM

10:00 AM

Salon 5 • **Rethinking the Dangerous Victim** • *Noah Beit-Aharon, Tom Greene, Gianni Kuznia, Marissa Lingen, Walt Williams*

Many SF stories hinge on distress calls that turn out to be scams. In the real world, under 10% of felony reports are false; the number is even lower for false reports of general distress. Why do we return to the dangerous victim story—the story in which the person who claims to need help is not only lying but actively malicious—again and again? What exciting adventure stories can we tell about helping those who are genuinely in need?

Salon 6 • **Living in Material Worlds, Part 2: What Do Clothes Convey?** • *J.R. Dawson, Samuel R. Delany, Greer Gilman, Elaine Isaak, Victoria Janssen, Emily Lavin Leverett*

Having examined where clothing comes from and what it says about a culture, this panel will move on to discussing what an individual character's clothing conveys about gender, class, wealth, affiliation, ability, access to materials and craftsmanship, and much more.

Salon C • **I Love It! Now Rewrite It** • *Liz Gorinsky, Carlos Hernandez, Kathy Kitts, Mark Oshiro, Dianna Sanchez*

An agent or publisher accepting a book is just the first step in a lengthy editorial process, one that often involves extensive rewrites. The book that comes out the other end may only barely resemble that early draft. This panel will share stories of characters, chapters, and scenes left on the cutting room floor, and discuss how agents and editors can both see the promise in a work and envision its substantial transformation.

Blue Hills • **The Works of Seabury Quinn** • *Robert Killheffer, John Langan, Jess Nevins*

Seabury Quinn (1889–1969) was an American pulp magazine author, most famous for his stories of the occult detective Jules de Grandin, published in *Weird Tales*. Come learn more about the current holder of the Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award and his contribution to weird fiction beyond the de Grandin mysteries.

Salon A • **Reading: Robyn Bennis**

Salon B • **Reading: Inanna Arthen**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Yoon Ha Lee

Elizabeth Hand

**Autographs** • James Morrow

10:30 AM

Salon A • **Reading: Auston Habershaw**

Salon B • **Reading: Terri Bruce**

11:00 AM

Salon 5 • **Gamification of Story Development** • *Liz Gorinsky, Auston Habershaw, Carlos Hernandez, Bart Leib, Lauren Roy, Gregory A. Wilson*

Story-focused games can be useful tools for authors. What happens when a writer draws up a character sheet for their protagonist and lets someone else play it out? Which gaming systems are best suited to developing stories? How can games support writing without creating chaos?

Salon 6 • **Group Reading: Headley, Loory, and (in Spirit) Ford** • *Maria Dahvana Headley, Ben Loory*

Maria Dahvana Headley and Ben Loory will read from their own work, and then present a new story by Jeffrey Ford (who unfortunately is unable to appear).

Salon C • **Past Predictions of Future Food** • *John Chu, B. Diane Martin, David G. Shaw, Romie Stott, Catherynne M. Valente, Francesco Verso*

Writers of the early and middle 20th century loved predicting the comestibles of the future: food pills, soylent, Soma, and more. This panel will pull out some favorite examples of predictions that came true and didn't, and look at how SFnal predictions of future food have changed over the last 100 years.

Blue Hills • **Being Alien** • *Layla Al-Bedawi, Gwendolyn Clare, David DeGraff, Samuel R. Delany, Sally Wiener Grotta*

Being alien often relates to the preconceptions and points of reference that make the borderlands among people so dangerous, unpredictable, and exciting. This panel will explore what it is to be "alien" and various works that have used otherworldly creatures or non-humans in ways to get readers thinking about the nature of being human.

Salon A • **Reading: Michael Cisco**

Salon B • **Reading: Nicole Kornher-Stace**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Jack Haringa

Nicholas Kaufmann

**Autographs** • Max Gladstone

Ken Liu

11:30 AM

Salon A • **Reading: Elaine Isaak**

Salon B • **Reading: José Pablo Iriarte and Benjamin C. Kinney**

12:00 PM

Salon 5 • **The Book as Object** • *Liz Gorinsky, Yanni Kuznia, Kip Manley, Eric Schaller, T.X. Watson, The joey Zone*

Many readers savor the design, art, type, and even smell of books. One unexpected side effect of the digital reading revolution is that some publishers are putting new effort into making printed books more beautiful, believing that anyone who still reads in print cherishes the



book as a sensory object. What books have designs that significantly enhance the experience of reading them? How can a book's design complement its text?

**Salon 6 • Consent Culture in Fiction •** *KT Bryski, Teri Clarke, Maria Dahvana Headley, Hillary Monahan, Victoria Sandbrook*

In the context of ongoing extensive discussions of consent and harassment within creative communities, this panel will discuss how to integrate consent into creative works. How do writers approach consent culture within worldbuilding? What different kinds of consent can be represented? How do writers balance advocating for consent with honest depictions of nonconsensual situations?

**Salon C • Anti-Worldbuilding • Holly Walrath**

Holly Walrath will present an alternative worldbuilding method called worldconjuring. Drawing on inspiration from fairy tales and ancient myths, worldconjuring creates liminal space or gaps in the world that the reader may fill in with their own imagination. Participants will explore contemporary authors who are using this method in short fiction and novels to create immersive worlds without the use of complex worldbuilding such as language creation or magic mechanics, and will get started worldconjuring with some creative prompts.

**Blue Hills • How I Wrote *Anger Is a Gift* • Mark Oshiro**

Mark Oshiro's riveting debut YA novel features Moss Jeffries, a nerd with panic attacks, who becomes an unwilling community rallying point after one fateful night. Join Mark as he discusses how the book came to be.

**Salon A • Reading: Martin Cahill**

**Salon B • Reading: Malka Older**

**Seven Masts • Kaffeeklatsch •** *KJ Kabza*

*James Morrow*

**Autographs •** *Auston Habershaw*

*Torger Vedeler*

12:30 PM

Salon A • **Reading: Catherynne M. Valente**

Salon B • **Reading: Sonya Taaffe**

1:00 PM

Salon 5 • **Reading and Life Stages, Part 1: 30s and 40s** • *Danielle Friedman, KJ Kabza, Bart Leib, Natalie Luhrs, **Kate Nepveu**, Veronica Schanoes*

Our notion of who readers are is often built on the image of readers in their teens and 20s, but as people age, their reading habits change. In this intimate and personal two-part panel, panelists will discuss their age-related shifts in reading speed and ability to focus, time for reading, interest in reading, book acquisition and deacquisition, use of print, digital, and audio books, and other related topics. Part 1: readers in their 30s and 40s.

Salon 6 • **In Memoriam: Ursula K. Le Guin** • *Lila Garrott, **Kenneth Schneyer**, Sonya Taaffe, Torger Vedeler, Holly Walrath*

Ursula K. Le Guin (1929–2018) was a powerhouse in American literature for over 50 years. She won countless awards, including the SFWA Grand Master Award and World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement. Her Hainish sequence, Earthsea novels, and Orsinia stories remain benchmarks of speculative fiction. Her feminist and utopian visions influenced generations, as did her essays, criticism, and educational writing. We were thrilled to make her a guest of honor at Readercon 7. Join us in celebrating her life and work.

Salon C • **Understanding Neuroscience** • ***Benjamin C. Kinney***

Benjamin C. Kinney helps writers understand how to think about the brain. How can one make sense of something so complex, and extract stories that are coherent, plausible, and free from the clichés of the past fifty years?

Blue Hills • **Whose Story?** • ***Graham Sleight***

What's the dividing line between SF of the "Golden Age" and work being published now? How does science fiction square telling a story

and showing you a world? How does the “science” element of science fiction coexist with the unreliability of human perceptions? Graham Sleight has a theory about these questions, taking in works by Octavia Butler, Samuel R Delany, William Gibson, N.K. Jemisin, M. John Harrison, Robert Heinlein, Ursula K. Le Guin, and even some authors whose names fall in the second half of the alphabet.

**Salon A • Group Reading: Broad Universe Rapid Fire Reading •**  
*Terri Bruce, LJ Cohen, Randee Dawn, Sally Wiener Grotta, Elaine Isaak, Emily Lavin Leverett, Dianna Sanchez, Sarah Smith, Tracy Townsend*

Broad Universe is a collective of women and female-identifying authors of science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

**Salon B • Reading: Michael J. DeLuca**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Anatoly Belilovsky  
Ken Liu

**Autographs** • Mimi Mondal  
Gemma Files

1:30 PM

**Salon B • Reading: Ellen Brody**

2:00 PM

**Salon 5 • Character Identity and Story Shape •** *Scott H. Andrews, John Chu, Gemma Files, Kate Nepveu*

Writers trying to subvert stereotypes will sometimes take a common story shape—the quest adventure, the mystery investigation—and give it an uncommon protagonist. But once the protagonist changes, the story also has to change. How can writers integrate a character’s identity into the very fabric of a story? If one begins by wanting to write a certain type of character, how does that influence the choice or creation of a setting, a plot, and a supporting cast?

**Salon 6 • Welcome to Readercon •** *Rose Fox, Sioban Krzywicki, Emily Wagner*

New to Readercon? Not new, but curious about what might be different this year? Thinking about volunteering? Our program chair and

other Readercon regulars will give you some peeks behind the scenes and suggestions about all the cool not-to-miss stuff. We're nice. Come hang out.

Salon C • **In Memoriam: Gardner Dozois** • *Scott Edelman, Gregory Feeley, Shawna McCarthy, Henry Wessells, Sheila Williams*

Gardner Dozois (1947–2018) was a towering figure in the field. He won 15 Hugo Awards for his editorial work, which included 20 years as editor of *Asimov's* and 40 years of editing annual surveys of SF and fantasy as well as other anthologies. Less celebrated, but also excellent, were his short fiction and novels. We were honored to make him a guest of honor at Readercon 22. Join us in celebrating his life and work.

Blue Hills • **Recent Nonfiction Book Club: *Four Futures: Life After Capitalism*** • *Inanna Arthen, Rob Cameron, David DeGraff, Robert Killheffer*

Peter Frase argues that increasing automation and a growing scarcity of resources, thanks to climate change, will bring it all tumbling down. In *Four Futures*, Frase imagines how this post-capitalist world might look, deploying the tools of both social science and speculative fiction to explore what communism, rentism, socialism, and exterminism might actually entail. Join us for a discussion of this book.

Salon A • **Group Reading: *The New American Bizarrie*** • *Christa Carmen, C.S.E. Cooney, Carlos Hernandez, Julia Rios, Patty Templeton, Jessica Wick*

From gothic to gilded, from Latinx SF to weird Americana, from the Icarus-altitudes of the surreal to the depths of the dark fantastic, readers C.S.E. Cooney, Julia Rios, Carlos Hernandez, Jessica P. Wick, Patty Templeton, and Christa Carmen will regale listeners with a glorious gallimaufry of contemporary speculative fiction.

Salon B • **Reading: Veronica Schanoes**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Fran Wilde

Elsa Sjunneson-Henry

**Autographs** • Mark Oshiro

Catherynne M. Valente

2:30 PM

Salon B • **Reading: Shannon Chakraborty and Shveta Thakrar**

3:00 PM

Salon 5 • **On Dislike: Between Meh and Rage** • *J.R. Dawson, Auston Habershaw, KJ Kabza, Lauren Roy, Graham Sleight*

Writers know that reading widely is vitally important for a multitude of reasons, including learning from great books and learning what *not* to do from poor ones. But what can writers get out of books they feel indifferent to? Or should they just DNF and move on?

Salon 6 • **La Sagrada Chingonez: The Sacred Badassery of Latinx Speculative Fiction** • *Pablo Defendini, José Pablo Iriarte, Malka Older, Julia Rios, Sabrina Vourvoulias*

David Bowles once dubbed Sabrina Vourvoulias one of a number of “sacerdotisas de la sagrada chingonez” (priestesses of the sacred badassery). The term implies a religion of dogged persistence, of speaking up and out, of fucking with the status quo/system/hegemony, of acknowledging the vastness of Latinx badassery and reveling in it. This panel will bring together some of the practitioners of la sagrada chingonez to talk about what 2018 holds for Latinx writers and readers of speculative works.

Salon C • **The Works of Ken Liu** • *Anatoly Belilovsky, Kenneth Schneyer, Francesco Verso, Fran Wilde, Gary K. Wolfe*

Ken Liu is a lawyer and a programmer, but he is best known as an author and translator of speculative fiction. He has won the Nebula, Hugo, and World Fantasy awards for his shorter fiction, and his debut

novel, *The Grace of Kings* (2015), won the Locus Best First Novel award and was a Nebula finalist. He has translated numerous literary and genre works from Chinese to English. His translation of Liu Cixin's *The Three-Body Problem* won the Hugo Award for Best Novel in 2015; it was the first translated novel ever to receive that honor. He also edited the first English-language anthology of contemporary Chinese science fiction, *Invisible Planets* (2016). Join us as we welcome this rising star of speculative fiction to Readercon and celebrate his work.

Blue Hills • **How I Wrote *Space Opera*** • *Catherynne M. Valente*  
*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* meets the joy and glamour of Eurovision in Catherynne M. Valente's science fiction spectacle, in which sentient races compete for glory in a galactic musical contest and the stakes are as high as the fate of planet Earth. Valente will discuss how she wrote and sold her latest work.

Salon A • **Group Reading: *Reckoning 2*** • *Jess Barber, Michael J. DeLuca, Marissa Lingen*

Contributors to *Reckoning 2*, the second annual nonprofit journal of creative writing on environmental justice, read from their work.

Salon B • **Reading: Elizabeth Hand**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Samuel R. Delany  
 John Langan

**3:30 PM**

Salon B • **Reading: Torger Vedeler**

**4:00 PM**

Salon 5 • **The Bureaucracy of Fantasy** • *Phenderson Djéli Clark, Alexander Jablovkov, Victoria Sandbrook, Kenneth Schneyer, John Wiswell*  
 Authors such as Daniel Abraham, Max Gladstone, and Ken Liu have received attention for incorporating bureaucratic concepts into their fantasy works, but fantasy frequently has bureaucratic underpinnings that escape notice because they're so familiar: the nuances of who inherits a title or a throne, the specific wording of a prophecy, detailed contracts with demons. Why do some bureaucracies feel more incon-

gruous in fantastical contexts than others? What are some tricks for making dry, nitpicky topics exciting and comprehensible?

Salon 6 • **Fire the Canon** • *John Clute, Jess Nevins, Graham Sleight, Tracy Townsend, Gary K. Wolfe*

So much great speculative fiction is being produced every year—more than any one person can read. The differences among the annual award shortlists show how hard it is to achieve consensus about the best works of the year, let alone those that will be considered classics in the years to come. The “canonization” process has also frequently favored certain demographics over others. Given all this, what value—if any—remains in the concept of the speculative fiction canon?

Salon C • **A Survey of African Speculative Fiction** • *Nikhil Singh*

Nikhil Singh will survey African speculative fiction from a literary and historical perspective, examining it in relation to Western narratives. For example, interest in alien abduction and visitation is common in many parts of Africa, but handled differently than in Western literature and discussion. This talk may also touch on shamanistic aspects of fabulist work, the popularity of genre fiction in the diaspora, and more.

Blue Hills • **Futures That Feel like Home** • *J.R. Dawson, Francesca Forrest, José Pablo Iriarte, Matthew Kressel, Kate Nepveu*

Our panelists will discuss the fictional futures they find most appealing and would be happy to live in (maybe with some caveats). Does the work that depicts these futures provide a path or hints as to how humans might get there? What makes these futures worth rooting for and aspiring to?

Salon A • **Speculative Poetry Deathmatch!** • *Erik Amundsen, Anatoly Belilovsky, C.S.E. Cooney, John Edward Lawson, Romie Stott, Sonya Taaffe, Holly Walrath*

This entertaining and interactive panel on science fiction, fantasy, and horror poetry will teach attendees a little about speculative poetry. Poets will read some of their works and then participate in a lyrical death match in which audience members decide which poet walks away with a tin foil crown and bragging rights.

Salon B • **Reading: Fran Wilde**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • *Francesco Verso*  
*Ellen Datlow*

**Autographs** • *Dianna Sanchez*  
*James Patrick Kelly*

4:30 PM

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

5:00 PM

Salon 5 • **Reclaiming Stories of Victimized Women** • *Nadia Bulkin, Teri Clarke, Victoria Janssen, Hillary Monahan, Elsa Sjunneson-Henry*

After reading Theodora Goss's *The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter* and Catherynne M. Valente's *The Refrigerator Monologues*, Amal El-Mohtar tweeted, "Please please let these books usher in a new era of books in which women claim the fuck out of popular stories where they're victimized." Are we seeing other signs of such an era on the horizon? Which stories are the ripest for this sort of reclamation?

Salon 6 • **The Eternal Appeal of the Dragon** • *Randee Dawn, Nicholas Kaufmann, Miriam Newman, Chandler Klang Smith, Gregory A. Wilson*

Dragon mythology continues to resonate for modern readers and authors. Dragons are often heroes, companions, romantic interests, sages, and mentors as well as forces of great destruction. How have stories about dragons changed over time, and what drives that change? What is it about dragons that has such enduring appeal?

Salon C • **The Works of Nisi Shawl** • *Samuel R. Delany, Kate Nepveu, Terence Taylor*

Nisi Shawl has worked a warehouse job, has sold structural steel and aluminum, and has been in a band. Most notably, she writes. Her short story collection, *Filter House*, was a finalist for the World Fantasy Award



and was one of two winners of the Tiptree Award as well one of Publishers Weekly's Best Books of 2008. Her debut novel, *Everfair*, was a finalist for the Nebula Award. She is also a noted lecturer and teacher on speculative fiction, gender, and race, and *Writing the Other*, which she coauthored with Cynthia Ward, remains essential reading for all writers. We are overjoyed to welcome her to Readercon and to celebrate her work.

**Blue Hills • Recent Fiction Book Club: *The Familiar (so far)* • Gregory Feeley**

Volume five of Mark Z. Danielewski's *The Familiar* brings "season one" of his ambitious 27-volume project to a close, with nine major plot lines (and numerous, still-mysterious lesser ones) and a complex intersection of graphics with words. Danielewski's work—which seems to be science fiction, fantasy, or both—has grown steadily larger in scope. With volume six scheduled to appear this summer, book club participants will look at the series as it stands today, and speculate on where it is going.

**Salon A • Group Reading: *The Word Count Live* • Eden Baylee, Cameron Garriepy, Jack Gwaltney, Maria Haskins, M.J. King, Bill Kirton, John McCaffrey, Walt Williams, R.B. Wood**

Members of the Word Count, a group that creates and reads flash fiction around a bimonthly theme, do a live version of their podcast.

**Salon B • Reading: Ken Liu**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Max Gladstone  
Jeff Hecht

**Autographs** • Paul Levinson

**6:00 PM**

**Salon 5 • How Science Informs Fantasy** • Gwendolyn Clare, David DeGraff, Jeff Hecht, John P. Murphy, Tamara Vardomskaya

Many fantasy writers have real science in their stories, including biology, economics, and physics. Sometimes science informs magical or fantastical elements; other times it exists alongside them, as in works by GOH Ken Liu and Fran Wilde that deal with complicated engineering.

Our panel of writers and technical experts will discuss fantasy that uses science to its advantage and share some scientific breakthroughs that fantasy writers should be aware of.

**Salon 6 • Nesbit and Eager: Works in Conversation •** *Lila Garrott, Marissa Lingen, Julia Rios, Veronica Schanoes, Nisi Shawl*

Edward Eager deliberately modeled his work on M.G. E. Nesbit's; to what extent did he perpetuate her politics, including her socialism? How do her early-20th-century English work and his mid-20th-century American work encapsulate and challenge the attitudes of their times and places?

**Salon C • Witches in Legend and Folklore •** *Inanna Arthen, Sara Cleto, Dianna Sanchez, Shveta Thakrar, Brittany Warman*

Why are witches such polarizing figures, both fascinating and repelling their neighbors? Why do they make such powerful symbols and captivating characters? Sara Cleto and Brittany Warman will examine witches through the lens of folklore studies, introducing a few traditional witch legends and exploring some of the ways that witches have been conceptualized, and then open the floor for a discussion of what witches mean to the panelists and audience.

**Blue Hills • Scouting Global Speculative Stories •** *Anatoly Belilovsky, Neil Clarke, Liz Gorinsky, Mimi Mondal, Alex Shvartsman, Francesco Verso*

Magazine and book editors will discuss how they scout and promote authors from outside the U.S. and U.K., sharing their expertise and best practices. How can writers and editors make the best use of resources such as Lavie Tidhar's *WorldSF* Blog and Rachel Cordasco's *IF in Translation* site? What would make it easier to find, publish, and publicize world speculative fiction?

**Salon A • Group Reading: Stonecoast MFA •** *Peter Adrian Behravesh, KT Bryski, J.R. Dawson, Julie C. Day, Emlyn Dornemann, James Patrick Kelly, Erin Roberts*

Stonecoast graduates and faculty reunite to read brief excerpts from work they've written since graduating their MFA program, and to celebrate Stonecoast and life after the MFA.

Salon B • **Reading: Yoon Ha Lee**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • *Rosemary Kirstein*  
*Henry Wessells*

**Autographs** • *LJ Cohen*  
*KJ Kabza*

6:30 PM

Salon B • **Reading: Paul Levinson**

7:00 PM

Salon 5 • **From *What Mad Universe to Radiance: The Livable Solar System*** • *Andrea Corbin, Jeff Hecht, Kathy Kitts, Sioban Krzywicki, Catherynne M. Valente*

The notion of the other planets in the solar system being habitable by humans and/or inhabited by aliens held appeal long after it was known that this wasn't the case. How do we tell these stories and why? Is reimagining the physics and reality of our own solar system easier than FTL? Or is there a romance about it that is lost in the reality of our universe?

Salon 6 • **Afrofuturism... and Beyond!** • *Rob Cameron, Phenderson Djèlí Clark, Nisi Shawl, Romie Stott, Terence Taylor*

The term *afrofuturism* implies hope that the future of Africans and Afro-Diasporans is brighter than the present—but bright futures are not always evenly distributed. What does a brighter future look like in Nigeria, Martinique, or the American South? How do afrofuturists imagine the transformation or perpetuation of oppression and power structures, including for women, queer and trans people, and disabled people? This panel discusses the recent work of afrofuturists who are imagining what comes after the future.

Salon C • **The Works of E. Nesbit** • *Greer Gilman, Barbara Krasnoff, John Langan, Henry Wessells, The joey Zone*

E. Nesbit (1858–1924) was a giant of children's literature. She was the first modern writer of literature for children, writing or collaborating on over 60 books, and was the most influential author on the genre

in the 20th century. *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*, *Five Children and It*, *The Enchanted Castle*, *The House of Arden*, and her many other fantastical works for children are still read and loved today. Nesbit also wrote romance novels, a fantasy (*Dormant*), and an underrated and overlooked set of horror stories. She was a writer of great range and inventiveness, and a witty and intelligent stylist. Please join us in celebrating her life and work.

Blue Hills • **Born Sexy Yesterday** • *Gillian Daniels*, *Tom Greene*, *Natalie Luhrs*, *Rachel Pollack*, *Sonya Taaffe*

While analyzing SF/F films such as *Splash* and *The Fifth Element*, the Pop Culture Detective Agency coined the term “born sexy yesterday” to describe setups in which an ordinary guy is treated as incredibly attractive and interesting by a physically mature but intellectually and sexually naive woman. The trope intersects with colonialist narratives, the fetishization of childlike women, and male fears of comparison and rejection. This panel will look at how “born sexy yesterday” is depicted and sometimes undermined in speculative literature.

Salon A • **Reading: Elsa Sjunneson-Henry**

Salon B • **Reading: Stephanie Feldman**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • *Robyn Bennis*  
*Paul Levinson*

**7:30 PM**

Salon A • **Reading: John P. Murphy**

Salon B • **Reading: Rosemary Kirstein**

**8:00 PM**

Salon 5 • **The Ethics of Alternate History** • *Gwendolyn Clare*, *Phenderson Djèlí Clark*, *Gregory Feeley*, *Sioban Krzywicki*, *Mimi Mondal*, *Jess Nevins*

When history is changed, it is changed for everyone. Ethically tricky alternate history situations include changing history that’s not the writer’s own and positing changes that would have a disproportionate effect on the lives of marginalized people. What responsibilities

do writers have as they choose a divergence point and decide how the divergence might play out?

Salon 6 • **Feminist Socialism in Fantastika** • *Gwynne Garfinkle, Robert Killheffer, Marissa Lingen, Veronica Schanoes, Tamara Var-domskaya*

MGOH E. Nesbit was a noted feminist and socialist. In her honor, this panel will celebrate classic and recent speculative works that challenge readers to imagine worlds and futures of gender and class equality, and explore how those concepts have changed through the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Salon C • **Dorothy Dunnett, Literary Legend** • *Lila Garrott, Alexander Jablov, Victoria Janssen, Kate Nepveu, Nisi Shawl*

Alaya Dawn Johnson called Dorothy Dunnett “the literary equivalent of the Velvet Underground”: not many people read her, but everyone who did wrote a book. A painter, researcher, and opera lover, she wrote what she wanted to read: epic historical drama. Come learn what our panelists and many other writers learned from Dunnett.

Blue Hills • **The End of Modernity** • *Judith Berman, Susan Jane Bigelow, F. Brett Cox, Chris Gerwel, Jack Haringa*

In William Gibson’s novel *Virtual Light*, the sociologist Yamazaki observes that a traffic bridge is evolving into a community of homes and shops and thinks, “Modernity was ending.” The social features we call “modern” have only existed for about two centuries. How often does science fiction acknowledge that modernity may end? What are the tropes of modernity? What might replace modernity that would be neither a utopia or dystopia, but something on a different worldbuilding axis altogether?

Salon A • **Reading: Henry Wessells**

Salon B • **Reading: Nikhil Singh**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • *Terence Taylor*

8:30 PM

Salon A • **Reading: Kip Manley**

Salon B • **Reading: Sally Wiener Grotta**

9:00 PM

Salon C • **Women Physicians Writing Speculative Fiction • Joseph DiZoglio**

Joseph DiZoglio Jr. will survey the niche community of women physicians who write speculative fiction. These writers all have a shared experience of practicing medicine and imagining futures where women are central figures in medical narratives. Most are absent from the traditionally cited canon of physician authors. This talk draws on a year of ongoing reading, interviews, and other research DiZoglio has done while attending the Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

Blue Hills • **Radical Elders** • *Elizabeth Hand, James Patrick Kelly, Rosemary Kirstein, Barbara Krasnoff, Sabrina Vourvoulias*

On the page, as in GOH Nisi Shawl's *Everfair*, and in real life, as in the careers of authors such as Ursula K. Le Guin, elders are speaking their minds and upsetting the status quo. How can age intersect with radicalism and pioneering thought? How is the cognitive estrangement of aging relevant to speculative fiction and fannish communities, and what's the best way of acknowledging that relevance?

Salon A • **Reading: Carlos Hernandez**

Salon B • **Reading: J.R. Dawson**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • *Rose Fox*

*Dianna Sanchez*

9:30 PM

Salon A • **Reading: Kenneth Schneyer**

Salon B • **Reading: Chandler Klang Smith**

## EVENING PROGRAMMING

10:00 PM

### Salon 5 • **The Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Awards**

The Smith Award, honoring a writer worthy of being rediscovered by today's readers, is selected annually by a panel of judges that includes Readercon 4 GOH Barry N. Malzberg. Past winners include Olaf Stapledon, R.A. Lafferty, Edgar Pangborn, Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore, Leigh Brackett, William Hope Hodgson, Daniel F. Galouye, Stanley G. Weinbaum, A. Merritt, Katherine MacLean, and Judith Merril.

10:30 PM

### Salon 5 • **Meet the Pros(e) Party**

Each writer at the party has selected a short, pithy quotation from their own work and is armed with a sheet of 30 printed labels, the quote replicated on each. As attendees mingle, the request "May I have a sticker?" provides a convenient icebreaker for tongue-tied fans approaching the pros whose work they love. Rearrange stickers to make a poem or statement, wear them as decoration, or simply enjoy the opportunity to meet and chat with your favorite writers.

11:30 PM

### Salon 5 • **Eighties and Nineties Dance**

Dance the night away with your fellow readers at our fabulous dance, featuring your favorite top hits and obscure tracks from the 1980s and 1990s!

FRIDAY

# SATURDAY

**Registration:** 9 AM to 6 PM

**Information:** 9 AM to 6 PM

**Con Suite:** 8:30 AM to midnight

**Bookshop:** 10 AM to 6 PM

**Bake Sale:** 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM (or until sold out)

**Blood Drive:** 9 AM to 2:30 PM

Sign up to donate on Friday and Saturday near the Information desk.

10:00 AM

Salon 5 • **Defying Colonial Notions of Authenticity** • *Phenderson Djèlí Clark, Pablo Defendini, José Pablo Iriarte, Darcie Little Badger, Ken Liu*

In an interview for the blog *Dive into Worldbuilding*, GOH Ken Liu discussed specifically wanting to go outside Western expectations in writing a fantasy novel that uses Chinese foundational narratives without writing a “magical China” novel, which he says often leads to problematic and Orientalist misunderstandings. On Tor.com, Tochi Onyebuchi says GOH Nisi Shawl’s novel *Everfair* is an Afrofuturistic masterpiece even though it is historical fiction. How do these and other narratives point the way toward decolonizing the future by challenging and complicating conceptions of the past?

Salon 6 • **Reading and Life Stages, Part 2: 50+** • *Inanna Arthen, Judith Berman, Michael Dirda, Paul Levinson, Kathryn Morrow*

Our notion of who readers are is often built on the image of readers in their teens and 20s, but as people age, their reading habits change. In this intimate and personal two-part panel, panelists will discuss their age-related shifts in reading speed and ability to focus, time for reading, interest in reading, book acquisition and deacquisition, use of print, digital, and audio books, and other related topics. Part 2: readers 50 and over.



Salon C • **Exoplanets: The Cutting Edge** • *Kathy Kitts*

Kathy Kitts, a former planetarium director and NASA Genesis Discovery Mission team member, will highlight the newest techniques for finding exoplanets, the Kepler and K2 extended mission results, and new details on the Trappist System.

Blue Hills • **Imagination All Compact** • *Mike Allen, Sara Cleto, C.S.E. Cooney, Carlos Hernandez, Sandi Leibowitz, Brittany Warman*  
(2 hour block) Speculative poets perform their work.

Salon A • **Reading: Matthew Kressel**

Salon B • **Reading: Samuel R. Delany**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • *Scott Edelman*

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • *Victoria Janssen*

**10:30 AM**

Salon A • **Reading: Dianna Sanchez**

Salon B • **Reading: John Chu**

**11:00 AM**

Salon 5 • **The Tradition of the Trickster** • *S.A. Chakraborty, Gillian Daniels, Michael Dirda, Nikhil Singh, Kestrell Verlager*

Trickster characters populate myth, religion, and fiction. These characters can take many roles, sometimes guiding and transforming, sometimes deceiving with intent to distract, damage, or destroy. How do tricksters influence storytelling and societies? What do they tell characters (and readers, and writers) about themselves and possible ways of navigating through the world?

Salon 6 • **In Memoriam: Kit Reed** • *F. Brett Cox, Ben Loory, Gordon Van Gelder, Sheila Williams, Gary K. Wolfe*

Kit Reed (1932–2017) wrote magnificently unclassifiable fiction, referring to herself as “transgenred.” Over six decades, she produced an incredible body of work, including SF, fantasy, horror, mystery, suspense, literary, and boundary-breaking novels and stories. She was a frequent Readercon panelist, noted for her generosity and wit, and we were delighted to make her a guest of honor at Readercon 25. Join us in celebrating her life and work.

Salon C • **Worldbuilding Governments** • *Susan Jane Bigelow*

This workshop, led by Susan Jane Bigelow, will focus on how governments work, what they have looked like historically, and how they appear in speculative literature from the Lord of the Rings trilogy to the Vorkosigan Saga. So-called “ideal” forms of government and their drawbacks will be discussed. By the end of the workshop, each participant will have created an outline of a fictional government.

Salon A • **Group Reading: Tabula Rasa** • *Randee Dawn, Sally Wiener Grotta, Barbara Krasnoff, Terence Taylor*

Tabula Rasa is a Brooklyn-based writers group.

Salon B • **Reading: Max Gladstone**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • James Patrick Kelly  
John Clute

**Autographs** • Samuel R. Delany

11:30 AM

Salon B • **Reading: Maria Dahvana Headley**

12:00 PM

Salon 5 • **Mental Illness in Horror** • *Erik Amundsen, Nadia Bulkin, Teri Clarke, Hillary Monahan, James Morrow, Terence Taylor*

In June 2017, author Magen Cubed tweeted a detailed examination of mental illness tropes in horror, positing that representation has mostly been “schlocky [and] careless.” Sometimes mental illness creates a terrifying threat or antagonist; it can also influence settings such as hospitals and institutions. Cubed puts forth that both of these portrayals demonize mental illness. If horror writers begin to look at people with mental illness as actual people with their own possible heroic arcs, what kind of portrayals might be created instead?

Salon 6 • **How We Edited the Translation of *The Three-Body Problem* and Other Works (CART)** • *Liz Gorinsky, Ken Liu*

Discussions of translation often omit the crucial stages of editing a translated book and preparing it for publication. GOH Ken Liu and Liz Gorinsky will lead a discussion on the publication and editing

process of translated fiction, primarily centered around Liu's translations of Liu Cixin's *The Three-Body Problem* and *Death's End* and the anthology *Invisible Planets*.

Salon C • **They Said It Couldn't Be Done** • *B. Diane Martin, David G. Shaw, Fran Wilde*

David Shaw, B. Diane Martin, and Fran Wilde discuss the latest in food science. Edible examples will be provided.

Blue Hills • **Italian SF: Glorious Past, Unknown Futures** • *Maria Dahvana Headley, Robert Killheffer, Francesco Verso*

From the otherworldly voyage depicted in Dante's *Divina Commedia* and the early modern utopias by Giordano Bruno and Tommaso Campanella, up through the proto-SF of Primo Levi and the imaginary fiction of Tommaso Landolfi and Italo Calvino, Italy has always been a cradle of fantastic literature. This panel will discuss the winners of the Urania Award (Italy's most prestigious SF Award), authors published by major Italian presses, and Italian speculative fiction exploring bioethical issues, AI, transhuman and posthuman perspectives, and environmental concerns.

Salon A • **Reading: Christopher Brown**

Salon B • **Reading: James Patrick Kelly**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Navah Wolfe  
Nisi Shawl

Autograph Table • **Autographs** • Ellen Datlow  
Elizabeth Bear

**12:30 PM**

Salon A • **Reading: Sabrina Vourvoulias**

Salon B • **Reading: Mark Oshiro**

**1:00 PM**

Salon 5 • **Finding Fairy Tales** • *Sara Cleto, Michael Dirda, Auston Habershaw, Karen Heuler, Brittany Warman*

Did Charles Dickens write a Little Red Riding Hood novel? Is *Jurassic Park* a take on *Sleeping Beauty*? Our panelists will embark on a fairy tale hunt, finding them in unexpected (and perhaps unjustified) places.

**Salon 6 • Lethe and Mnemosyne: Memory as Plot Device (CART)** • *Elizabeth Bear, LJ Cohen, Benjamin C. Kinney, Yves Meynard, Tamara Vardomskaya*

Authors use amnesia and other types of lost and regained memory to reveal information to the reader as it's revealed to or remembered by the protagonist. How does this type of narrative function? How does it change if a person's memory can be stored externally, warped, or erased through technology or magic? This panel will explore works that make use of memory and examine its connections to other stories of what's lost and found.

**Salon C • BARCC Workshop: Becoming Active Bystanders**

*(2 hour block)* A bystander is a person who observes unacceptable behavior. It might be something serious or minor, one-time or repeated, but the bystander knows that the behavior is unacceptable or likely to make a bad situation worse. An active bystander takes steps that can make a positive difference in that situation. This class covers the basics of active bystander action and strategies, with opportunity for discussion and practice. Training provided by the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center.

**Blue Hills • 21st-Century Serials** • *Pablo Defendini, Max Gladstone, Kip Manley, Kathryn Morrow, Sarah Smith*

Serials were hugely popular from the Victorian age through the pulp era, and they're having a resurgence now. Fireside and Tor.com are publishing serialized novels and novellas alongside short stories. SerialBox produces serials with a writer's room approach borrowed from television. Meanwhile, comics are trending the other way, with short arcs and graphic novels in ascendance. Is serial fiction a throwback, the wave of the future, or both? How do serials shift the writer's process and the reader's experience?

**Salon A • Group Reading: Brooklyn Speculative Fiction Writers** • *Marcy Arlin, Rob Cameron, Teri Clarke, Randee Dawn, Brad Parks, Ted Rabinowitz, Sam Schreiber, Marcus Tsong*

Members of the Brooklyn Speculative Fiction Writer who have been published in the past year read from their work.

Salon B • **Reading: Nisi Shawl**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Yanni Kuznia

Maria Dahvana Headley

**Autographs** • Christopher Brown

Rosemary Kirstein

2:00 PM

Salon 5 • **A Thing with Feathers: Avian Imagery in Speculative Fiction (CART)** • *Scott H. Andrews, C.S.E. Cooney, Ellen Datlow, Nisi Shawl, Catherynne M. Valente*

Works such as *The Traitor Baru Cormorant*, *Cormorant Run*, *Blackbirds*, Rose Lemberg's Birdverse stories, and the *Black Feathers* anthology use the imagery, characterization, presence, and beauty of birds to explore issues of environmentalism, social violence, and empathy with the other. How have birds come to be a metaphor for our human failings and strivings? How is the reality of avian life and biology transformed into speculative narrative?

Salon 6 • **Alternatives to Romance (CART)** • *KT Bryski, Elaine Isaak, Nicole Kornher-Stace, John P. Murphy, Patty Templeton*

A love interest or romantic subplot can add depth to a character or complexity to an otherwise straightforward story, but it doesn't always make sense to have one. When a story doesn't focus on romance to start with, what problems do writers try to solve by introducing romantic elements, and what are other ways of solving those problems?

Blue Hills • **Crime and Punishment** • *Christopher Brown, Nadia Bulkin, Chris Gerwel, Scott Lynch, Tamara Vardomskaya*

How does speculative fiction line up with changing beliefs and studies about the criminal justice system, the prison-industrial complex, recidivism, and the nature of the so-called criminal? This panel will discuss both classics and new works that reflect the anxieties of their eras around crime, imprisonment, and capital punishment, and those that imagine and explore alternatives.

Salon A • **Group Reading: *Kaleidocast*** • Mike Allen, Marcy Arlin, Rob Cameron, S.A. Chakraborty, Phenderson Djèlí Clark, Danielle Friedman, Carlos Hernandez, Barbara Krasnoff, Brad Parks, Jessica Plumbley, Ted Rabinowitz, David Mercurio Rivera, Eric Rosenfield, Sam Schreiber, Michael Wells, Zak Zyz

Authors featured on season two of the *Kaleidocast* podcast read from their latest work.

Salon B • **Reading: Nicholas Kaufmann**

Seven Masts • **Kaffeeklatsch** • Sheila Williams  
Terri Bruce

**Autographs** • Yoon Ha Lee  
Fran Wilde

2:30 PM

Salon B • **Reading: Lila Garrott**

3:00 PM

Salon 5 • **BTAIQ: Writing the “Lowercase Letters” (CART)** • Robyn Bennis, Steve Berman, Miriam Newman, Rachel Pollack, **Julia Rios**  
Lesbian and gay works tend to get a lot of the attention, leaving the rest of QUILTBAG behind. At Readercon 26, a panel discussed good and bad examples of bisexual, trans and agender, asexual and aromantic, intersex, queer, and questioning characters in speculative fiction, and explored some of the problematic tropes that tend to be attached to such characters. This update will cover exciting new works, terminology, and trends in queer speculative fiction that focuses on the “lowercase letters.”

Salon 6 • **A Well Regulated Magic, Being Necessary to the Security of a Free State (CART)** • **Susan Jane Bigelow**, Phenderson Djèlí Clark, Chris Gerwel, Max Gladstone, Lauren Roy

On the Montreal Science Fiction and Fantasy Association blog, Danny Sichel suggested using the term *municipal fantasy* to describe works in which magic is integrated into a modern setting, to the point of being «an issue of public policy.» What practical, political, and ethical concerns

can be explored in municipal fantasy? How do municipal fantasy works address the ownership and regulation of magic? Is magic a good or a service, a weapon or a commodity, a utility or a monopoly?

**Salon C • Recognizing Languages • John O'Neil**

Linguist John O'Neil will explain how to recognize many different languages in writing, and provide a cheat sheet for attendees.

**Blue Hills • The Possibilities and Perils of Comedy • Martin Cahill, James Morrow, Eric Schaller, Alex Shvartsman, Chandler Klang Smith, Torger Vedeler**

Even the saddest and scariest fiction can contain elements of comedy or humor. It must be handled well, no matter the seriousness or frivolity of the work, or it can destroy the story. What does humor bring to the reader's experience of a work? How can a dash of humor add to or detract from otherwise non-comedic works? Comedy is hard; is it worth the effort?

**Salon A • Reading: C.S.E. Cooney**

**Salon B • Reading: John Edward Lawson**

**Seven Masts • Kaffeeklatsch • Catherynne M. Valente  
Mark Oshiro**

**Autographs • Nisi Shawl**

Maria Dahvana Headley

**3:30 PM**

**Salon A • Reading: John Wiswell**

**Salon B • Reading: Vinnie Tesla**

**4:00 PM**

**Salon 5 • Ken Liu Interviewed by John P. Murphy (CART)**

**5:00 PM**

**Salon 5 • Nisi Shawl Interviewed by Bill Campbell (CART)**

6:00 PM

Salon C • **New Frontiers in Fairy Tale Adaptation** • *Sara Cleto, Rachel Pollack, Veronica Schanoes, Shveta Thakrar, Brittany Warman*  
Fairy tale adaptations continue to flourish in a wide variety of media including novels, poetry, film, television, and comics. In this panel, a fairy tale scholars and creative writers who have adapted fairy tale material will explore the innovative directions of recent work. How are artists putting the fairy tale to new uses? What contemporary work best exemplifies the potential of the form? Where can we go next?

Blue Hills • **Grief, Loneliness, and Alienation in Speculative Fiction** • *Layla Al-Bedawi, Nadia Bulkin, J.R. Dawson, José Pablo Iriarte, Julia Rios*

Characters from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to GOH Ken Liu's *The Paper Managerie* grapple with deep feelings of grief, loneliness, and alienation that are manifested, amplified, or healed through speculative elements. What gives a particular actualized metaphor its power to convey these emotions? How do we approach these stories as readers?

7:00 PM

Salon C • **The Interstellar Scout** • *David DeGraff*

In October 2017, asteroid hunters in Hawaii found an object with a very unusual property. When they calculated its orbit, they found that it was not in a closed orbit bound to the sun, but in an open orbit making a single pass through our neighborhood. David DeGraff will discuss what was learned about this interstellar interloper, and whether it could be an alien artifact or generation ship.

Blue Hills • **Interactive Fiction for Reluctant Readers** • *Erik Amundsen, Jim Freund, Yoon Ha Lee, John P. Murphy, Gregory A. Wilson*  
Interactive fiction is one way to engage new and reluctant readers of a digital generation. This panel will discuss the benefits of reader participation and how authors and game developers use the concept of participation to make reading more appealing.



## EVENING PROGRAMMING

8:00 PM

### Salon C • **A Most Readerconnish Miscellany**

An evening of SFnal hilarity!

## SUNDAY

**Registration:** Sunday 9 AM to 1 PM

**Information:** Sunday 9 AM to 1 PM

**Con Suite:** Sunday 8:30 AM to 3 PM

**Bookshop:** Sunday 10 AM to 2:00 PM

10:00 AM

### Salon 5 • **The Glamour of Grammar** • *Greer Gilman, Jack Haringa, Emily Lavin Leverett, John O'Neil, Tamara Vardomskaya*

Grammar has strict rules that don't always make sense. It can change the meaning of a word, it's different in different places, and some people seem to be naturally better at understanding it. In other words, it's a lot like magic. This panel of grammar fiends will discuss the storytelling possibilities of real and fanciful grammar, odd corners of the grammarian's world, clever uses of grammar in speculative fiction, grammar as magic, and the grammarian as hero.

### Salon 6 • **Curses! Worldbuilding Through Expletives** • *S.A. Chakraborty, Samuel R. Delany, Yves Meynard, Sarah Smith, Vinnie Tesla*

The deep cultural roots of many expletives makes them perfect vehicles for worldbuilding. This panel will explore what characters' curses and exclamations say about them and the world they live in, with considerations of best practices for expletive use in historical, future, and fantastical settings.

Salon C • **All About the Odyssey Writing Workshop** • *Jeanne Cavelos*

Odyssey Workshop director Jeanne Cavelos will describe the intensive six-week program for writers of fantasy, science fiction, and horror held each summer in Manchester, N.H. Guest lecturers will share their thoughts and experiences at the workshop, and current students and graduates will add their own perspectives. Topics include the structure of the program, the work required, common struggles of writers, and the pros and cons of workshops.

Blue Hills • **Writing About Research and Discovery** • *Judith Berman, Jeff Hecht, Kathy Kitts, Darcie Little Badger, Eric Schaller*

Science fiction frequently features scientists and academics who are doing and publishing original research—and sometimes gets it hilariously wrong. Panelists who have done original academic and scientific research will explain how to accurately represent researchers and their processes and challenges.

Salon A • **Reading: Layla Al-Bedawi**

Salon B • **Reading: Barbara Krasnoff**

**10:30 AM**

Salon A • **Reading: Gwendolyn Clare**

Salon B • **Reading: Marissa Lingen**

**11:00 AM**

Salon 5 • **The Shirley Jackson Awards** • *Nadia Bulkin, Ellen Datlow, David Demchuk, Kathleen Kayembe, Michael Kelly, Ken Liu, James Morrow, Nisi Shawl, Justin Steele*

In recognition of the legacy of Shirley Jackson's writing, and with permission of the author's estate, the Shirley Jackson Awards have been established for outstanding achievement in the literature of psychological suspense, horror, and the dark fantastic. Jackson (1916–1965) wrote classic novels such as *The Haunting of Hill House* and *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, as well as one of the most famous short stories in the English language, "The Lottery." Her work continues to

be a major influence on writers of every kind. The awards given in her name have been voted upon by a jury of professional writers, editors, critics, and academics, with input from a board of advisors, for the best work published in the calendar year of 2017 in the following categories: Novel, Novella, Novelette, Short Story, Single-Author Collection, and Edited Anthology.

12:00 PM

Salon 5 • **It Takes a Village to Raise a Protagonist** • *Andrea Corbin, Scott Lynch, Nisi Shawl, Graham Sleight, John Wiswell*

Conflicts in speculative fiction often tend toward hyperindividualist solutions, but there are other ways to build those stories. Gene Roddenberry and Ray Bradbury both often wrote stories of cooperation in which the community is the protagonist. In Cory Doctorow's books, long sequences are devoted to the process of achieving consensus. What other stories center collaboration and cooperation, and what are some best practices for writers who want to explore these types of stories?

Salon 6 • **How Horror Stories End** • *Ellen Datlow, Jack Haringa, Nicholas Kaufmann, Jess Nevins, Elsa Sjunneson-Henry*

The reader's expectation of a horror story's ending—or anxiety over the question of how it will end—significantly shapes the experience of the story. Which horror stories require cathartic happy endings, and which are satisfying even when evil wins? If the reader likes everything about a horror story but the ending, does that spoil the story or just lead to fix-it fanfic? What moral messages are sent by a horror story's ending?

Salon C • **Speculative Fiction in Audio: What's Working and Why** • *John Chu, James Patrick Kelly, Benjamin C. Kinney, Heath Miller, Victoria Sandbrook*

In 2017, 60 million people tuned in to podcasts, and episodes of *Welcome to Night Vale* had already been downloaded over 170 million times. Audiobook sales are skyrocketing. Podcast production value and diversity in formats and voices are improving daily. This panel will discuss the radio dramas, short story podcasts, serials, audiobooks,

and other listenable forms of speculative fiction, and how they're influencing storytelling.

Blue Hills • **Solarpunk for Everyone** • *Michael J. DeLuca, Tom Greene, Marissa Lingen, Darcie Little Badger, T.X. Watson*

Solarpunk has become established as a progressive, proactive, optimistic, climate-aware, politically aware field of speculative fiction. As solarpunk authors imagine the future, how can they make sure that future includes everyone? How can solarpunk develop and showcase remedies not only the climatological errors of the present and past but the social flaws of oppression, bias, and exclusion?

Salon A • **Reading: Gemma Files**

Salon B • **Reading: Gillian Daniels**

12:30 PM

Salon A • **Reading: Greer Gilman**

Salon B • **Reading: KJ Kabza**

1:00 PM

Salon 5 • **Speculative Economics** • *Michael Cisco, Michael J. DeLuca, Sioban Krzywicki, John O'Neil, Malka Older*

Many theoretical economic systems have been proposed by economists, academics, and writers. Some of those cross the line—if there is a line—from theoretical economics into speculative economics. What are some of the more interesting and entertaining possible economic systems that could form the basis of speculative stories, from utopian SF to dystopias and horror? What makes a depiction of a fictional economic system feel plausible?

Salon 6 • **Our Bodies, Our Elves: Sexual Awakenings in Epic Fantasy** • *Noah Beit-Aharon, Steve Berman, Josh Jasper, Marissa Lingen, Sonya Taaffe*

Starting in the later 20th century, the bildungsromans of epic fantasy began to include sexual awakenings. Some are raunchy, some are awkward, and almost all are self-directed; the wise elders of the genre are mysteriously silent on this crucial topic. When authors can imagine

elves and dragons, why is it so hard to also imagine decent fantastical sex ed? How do today's writers and readers approach this aspect of adolescent self-discovery stories?

Salon C • **A Compassionate Approach to Writer's Block** • *Rose Fox*

There's a pervasive notion that anyone with writer's block is lazy, insufficiently motivated, or not a real writer—and that notion is wrong. In this practical and compassionate talk, Rose Fox will share targeted techniques for identifying and addressing different types of writer's block, and will show blocked writers how to begin healing their relationships with their writing.

Blue Hills • **Making Books Accessible for Visually Impaired Readers** • *Pablo Defendini, Jim Freund, Sarah Smith, Kestrell Verlager*  
Braille, large print, and talking editions were once the only options for visually impaired readers, and often targeted to the elderly or totally blind. Recently, big spikes in the availability of e-books and fully produced audiobooks have made books more accessible to other visually impaired readers. What tools do publishers have for making their books accessible? How can authors write and promote their books with visually impaired and blind readers in mind?

Salon A • **Reading: LJ Cohen**

Salon B • **Reading: Alex Shvartsman**

1:30 PM

Salon A • **Reading: Mimi Mondal**

Salon B • **Reading: Elizabeth Bear**

2:00 PM

Salon 5 • **Researching the Other** • *Rose Fox, Darcie Little Badger, Mimi Mondal, Nisi Shawl, Kestrell Verlager*

With *Writing the Other*, GOH Nisi Shawl and Cynthia Ward established that writers have permission to write what they don't know, as long as

they do it with forethought and care. But when is it enough to check out a library book, and when is it time to hire a sensitivity reader? This panel will go beyond 101 to discuss the different types of research required by different aspects of writing outside of one's experiences.

**Salon C • A History of African Horror Literature in the 20th Century • Jess Nevins**

African horror literature is largely ignored or at best an afterthought in Western reference works on horror literature, but there was a wealth of it throughout the 20th century, with some fascinating works that modern audiences would love if they only knew about them. Jess Nevins will give a historical overview, touching on the most important countries, authors, and works.

**Blue Hills • WWI in History and Speculative Fiction • Sioban Krzywicki**

This year is the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, the end of WWI, which arguably shaped the modern world more than any other event of the 20th century. Sioban Krzywicki will talk about the history of WWI, the alternate history possibilities, the speculative fiction that came before and after, and the ways it shaped the world and literature.

Salon A • **Reading: Scott Lynch**

Salon B • **Reading: James Morrow**

**2:30 PM**

Salon A • **Reading: Victoria Sandbrook**

Salon B • **Reading: Gwynne Garfinkle**

**3:00 PM**

**Salon 5 • Readercon 29 Feedback Session • Rose Fox, Sioban Krzywicki, B. Diane Martin, Emily Wagner**

Come tell the Readercon concomm and hotel staff what worked well at this year's convention and what can be improved next year.



## **VOLUNTEER AND EARN EXCLUSIVE READERCON STUFF!**

**Readercon is entirely volunteer-run.** Our volunteers help with Registration and Information, keep an eye on the programming, staff the Con Suite, and do about a million more things both before and during the con. If interested, go

to Information—the person there will know what to do. It's fun, you'll meet new people, and you can earn Readercon incentives that are available to volunteers only. There are cumulative volunteer awards of Readercon-branded items for volunteering for 3 hours and 6 hours, and a free membership to next year's Readercon is earned when you work 8 or more hours. *Tote bag is for illustration only; current volunteer rewards may differ*

## Hours

**Registration:** Friday 10 AM to 9 PM;  
Saturday 9 AM to 6 PM;  
Sunday 9 AM to 1 PM

**Information:** Friday 10 AM to 9 PM;  
Saturday 9 AM to 6 PM;  
Sunday 9 AM to 1 PM

**Con Suite:** Friday 10 AM to midnight;  
Saturday 8:30 AM to midnight;  
Sunday 8:30 AM to 3 PM

**Bookshop:** Friday 3 PM to 7 PM;  
Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM;  
Sunday 10 AM to 2:00 PM

**Bake Sale:** Saturday 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM  
(or until sold out)

**Blood Drive:** Saturday 9 AM to 2:30 PM  
*Sign up to donate on Friday and  
Saturday near the Information desk.*

Our Code of Conduct is printed in the Souvenir Book, or you can always find the it at [readercon.org/CoC](http://readercon.org/CoC).

Call (617) 315-8739 to reach Readercon's safety team any time during the convention. You can also send email, either during or after the convention, to [safety@readercon.org](mailto:safety@readercon.org).

For more on Readercon's safety policies and procedures, please see [readercon.org/safety](http://readercon.org/safety).



PRESIDENT'S BALLROOM

Quiet Room  
MERRYMOUNT

Staff Den  
WOLLASTON

Bookshop  
Salon 4

Main Program  
Salon 5

Main Program  
Salon 6

Autographs

Blood Drive

Information



Parking Garage

Registration

SYLVANIUS  
THAYER  
BOARDROOM

Green Room

ABIGAIL  
ADAMS

Con Suite

8th Floor Presidential Suite (Room 863)

Gender Neutral Bathrooms

Hotel Registration

Elevators

Hotel Restaurant

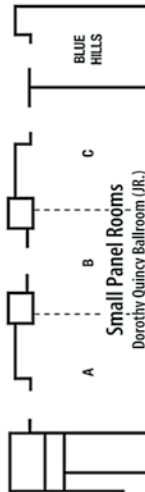
Gender Neutral Bathroom  
(located in Hotel Gym)



Kaffeeklatsches

7 Masts

Here there be dragons  
(bathrooms)



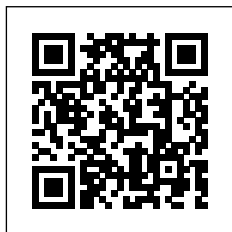
OUTDOOR TERRACE

# READERCON 29 MAP

Please note that we have a new room for kaffeeklatsches - 7 Masts!

**Want to use the mobile guide?**

Scan this QR code with your  
smartphone's barcode app



(or go to <http://readercon.net/guide/guide.htm> )