

THE F.A.C.T. SHEET

July 2009

A monthly publication of the Fandom Association of Central Texas, Inc. ©2009

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings, and thanks to all who sent content for this month's *FACT Sheet*. It's hot outside! Stay in and read books, or go out and watch movies. Either way, *FACT Sheet* wants your mini-reviews. Really. Send 200 words or less about what you're reading and watching to factsheetgirl@yahoo.com. Don't make me beg, y'all...—Roxanne Bogucka

UPCOMING FACT EVENTS

Sat., July 11, 1:00 PM, FACT Board of Directors meeting, Carver Library, 1161 Angelina Street, Austin TX

The monthly meeting of the FACT board of directors is open to all FACT members and other individuals who have business to discuss.

Sun., July 19, Fundraiser and Auction for Aaron Allston's medical bills

North Reading Group:

Tues., July 21, 7:00 PM, [Milwood Library](#)
[The Jennifer Morgue](#) by Charles Stross

South Reading Group:

Wed., July 15, 7:00 PM, [Pleasant Hill Library](#)
The Strain by Guillermo del Toro & Chuck Hogan

NEWSY BITS

Fundraiser for Aaron Allston's Medical Bills

A fundraiser and auction to benefit the Aaron Allston Donation Fund will be held on Sunday, July 19, from 1-5 p.m. at Arbor A in San Gabriel Park, 445 E. Morrow, Georgetown, TX.

The Aaron Allston Donation Fund is a medical fund established by his friends to help Mr. Allston, an internationally known science fiction writer and author of several Star Wars novels, with large medical expenses recently incurred as a result of emergency bypass surgery. Mr. Allston is a long-time resident of Central Texas.

The event sponsor is the Fandom Association of Central Texas. FACT is seeking donations of food and other items from local businesses for the event. We anticipate attendance of approximately 100+ people, and are actively promoting to the media. To discuss making a contribution, please contact Wendy Snyder, FACT Events Manager, at <mailto:social@fact.org> or phone Elizabeth Burton, FACT board secretary, at 512-402-5298.

Stuff About JOE LANSDALE!

The *Texas Observer*, Factsheetgirl's former employer, blogs about Lansdale's book *Vanilla Ride* at

http://www.texasobserver.org/texasbound/comments/hap_and_leonard_ride_again_-_When:18:47:53Z

The *Observer* profiled Lansdale in March of this year. Please see

<http://www.texasobserver.org/article.php?aid=2981>

Also, [Rick Klaw reviewed *Vanilla Ride*](#) for the San Antonio Current.

Stuff About MARTHA WELLS!

See the interview from last month at

<http://renam2.blogspot.com/2009/06/interview-martha-wells.html>

We've Got Mail!

"[Theater of the Midnight Sun](#)" podcasts

Hello F.A.C.T.,

My name's Michael McGee, and I just finished producing a brand new series of full-cast sci-fi and fantasy radio theater shows called "The Theater Of The Midnight Sun" (www.theaterofthemidnightsun.com).

"The Theater of the Midnight Sun" is essentially a collection of short stories and novellas produced as radio plays (each episode lasting about 30 minutes—complete with music and sound effects), and I wanted to invite your group and all your friends to hear the programs and to let me know what you think. All the shows are free, btw, and can be downloaded as podcasts to your iPod or computer.

The literary agency I'm with (the same company that represents Ursula K. Le Guin, Ted Chiang, and Anne McCaffrey) is currently sending some of my stories and books around to publishers and magazines and we thought these radio shows might be a good way to raise awareness about the tales.

The shows are a little more like *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (though not as fantastical) than old-time radio theater. In fact, the whole idea was to kind of reinvent the form a little for this new century.

Now, since I don't have any big PR firm to advertise these programs, nor any connections to newspapers or any other media outlet, I thought I would contact you myself and ask that if you and your group get a chance, to please take a listen, and if you like them, please spread the word and tell all your friends and other sci-fi fans.

The shows are available for free download on iTunes and at the Theater of the Midnight Sun web site. Five stories were aired this season (numbering 17 episodes in all), and they've been getting some very lovely and enthusiastic reviews on iTunes, but unfortunately very few people know about them, so that's why I decided to write. I've included a brief summary of each tale at the end of this e-mail.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. I hope you like the shows.

All the best!

Michael McGee

iTunes link:

<http://ax.itunes.apple.com/WebObject...=303475138>

RSS podcast feed:

<http://www.theaterofthemidnightsun.com/TOTMS.rss>

This season's Theater of the Midnight Sun stories include...

BIG BUSINESS

When the Devil drops by to convince a regular Joe to "sell his soul," the young man—familiar with the tired-old Faust routine—suggests a different sort of deal.

UNIFORM

A sci-fi thriller about a carbon-dating lab in Istanbul that uncovers a tiny object that's impossibly old—so old, in fact, and so unusual, it could spell the end of life as we know it.

LEFT FIELD

A humorous sci-fi tale about an irresponsible ne'er-do-well playboy who gets caught in a love affair he could have never imagined, and one that may put an end to his womanizing ways in the most permanent manner possible.

GOODBYE, CRUEL WORLD

The tale of a whacked-out world that takes its fantasy and fairy tales just a little too seriously, much to the dismay of a sawed-off grouch who decides there's only one way to return the world to normal—bump off Santa Claus, the real one.

BLUEBIRDS AND DEAD CANARIES

A mystery (set in the very near future) about a reluctant detective who, in investigating a series of bizarre occurrences, finds himself facing a nightmare of questions about self, identity, and free will that will change his life—and everyone's—forever.

New Pubs: *Icarus*

From [the website](#)—

"Icarus is the first magazine devoted to gay-themed speculative fiction and writing - from fantasy to horror to science fiction, and all the weird tales that fall between the cracks. Our first issue features short stories by Jeff Mann,

Joel D. Lane, Jameson Currier and Tom Cardamone; interviews with Dan Stone and graphic artist Peter Grahame; poetry by Lawrence M. Schoen; plus book reviews, an article about the Gaylactic Network, and brief happenings in gay publishing. Icarus is published by Lethe Press.”

Stuff About MOVIES!

July 1—*Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*

July 10—*Moon*

July 15—*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*

July 24—*G-Force*

[John Scalzi Rates SciFi Movies by Their EXPLOSIONS!](#)

The Immortality Factor

“Science fiction author Ben Bova’s B-Four Productions and Red Giant Media will join forces "to develop Bova’s The Immortality Factor for feature adaptation," according to *Variety*. The book, "published by Tor in April, is the uncut version of Bova’s 1996 thriller *Brothers*." Kevin Fox will write the screenplay.”—Source: ShelfAWARENESS, June 9, 2009.

Stuff About CONVENTIONS!

August 6-10: **AnticipationSF: the 67th World Science Fiction Convention**, Palais des congrès de Montréal, Montréal, Québec, Canada. Registration \$210

<http://www.anticipationsf.ca/English/Home>

August 14-16: **ArmadilloCon 31**, Doubletree Hotel North. Preregistration \$35

<http://www.fact.org/dillo>

August 28-30: **Bubonicon 41**, Sheraton Airport Hotel, Albuquerque, NM. Preregistration \$36

<http://bubonicon.com>

CON REPORTS

InstaCon 2009, A.T. Campbell

I attended InstaCon, a symposium for Texas con-runners, on April 18, 2009. I’d been assigned to participate in two panels, both as moderator. I prepared write-ups for each of these panels in advance, which were printed in the conference proceedings. Those write-ups are attached. I also participated in a teamwork

exercise, *SF Pictionary*, where I produced the clues and served as judge.

I arrived at the convention at 9:15 on Saturday morning, picked up my registration materials, and attended a presentation by Houston Fan Brent Morgan: *Comprehension Convention Engine (CCE) on Microsoft Live*. Morgan presented software he’d developed to assist in many areas of running a convention. The primary focus of this software is to aid in the task of programming a convention: assigning people to panels, assigning panels to rooms, communication with program participants, and various reports to be used in publications. The software requires Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office. So far it seems to have been used by only one convention, Conestoga in Tulsa, for the past two years. The software seems interesting, has some nice features, but has some significant missing functionality. It is almost complete print-oriented, with no reports suitable to be posted on a convention’s website. And it does not produce any concise print reports suitable for a traditional short pocket program.

Next was my first panel, *Technology: Threat or Menace*. I was moderator, and the other panelists were Houston fans Jonathan Guthrie and Brent Morgan. We provided an overview of technology currently in use at conventions (for publications, communication, presentations, and more) and talked a bit about possible directions for new technology in the future. We had lively audience participation, and the room was filled with people with strong ideas about technology (All Microsoft! All Adobe! All Open Source! Web 2.0! etc.) The discussion of technology to be used in the future was interesting. More than one person came up with the idea of putting RFID chips on the participants’ badges.

Afterward was a short lunch break. The rain was pouring hard outside, so I (and most of the rest of the con) ate in the con suite. Con suite organizers Chuck Coshow and Valerie Villareal provided a nice selection of food.

The next item I attended was the *Con Suite Roundtable*, led by Chuck Coshow in a room adjacent to the con suite. Many good ideas

were presented on budgeting, planning the food selection, and efficient and cost-effective shopping.

At 3 PM was my next panel, *The Great Balancing Act: Programming for SFF Cons*. I was moderator, and the other panelist was Houston fan Katy Pace. We had a good discussion of all aspects of programming: inviting participants, gathering ideas, assigning people to program items, communication with the participants, interactions with the rest of the con, and schedule adjustments during the con. We had good questions from the audience, and a couple of programming veterans offered informative anecdotes.

For the next programming session I spent a little time in the panel *Bodycount: How Many Fans Does it Take to Run a Con?* I also visited the convention art show (in Kurt Baty's room) and networked with area fans in the con suite.

During the dinner break, I ate at Blue Nile Ethiopian restaurant with several fans from Houston (Mark Hall, Kim Kofmel, Katy Pace, Keri Bas, Mari Ferguson) and Dallas (Russ Miller, Meredith Hines).

Next was *SF Pictionary*. Kim Kofmel was MC, and I was judge. We had excellent participation. I provided the clues, which all had something to do with Texas science fiction. Among the harder ones to guess were InstaCon and *Carpe Demon: Adventures of a Demon-Hunting Soccer Mom*.

At this point, programming for the day was complete. I went to the con suite and talked with other fans for a bit, and then left the con. Thanks to FACT for providing financial assistance in attending this convention. I was active in the program, and got a lot out the event.

READING GROUP REPORTS

April 9: *Go-Go Girls of the Apocalypse* by Victor Gischler

Nine people attended this discussion at A. T.'s house. Our topic was *Go-Girl Girls of the Apocalypse*, the first speculative fiction novel by established mystery writer Victor Gischler.

One of us had read Gischler's work before.

All of us started the book, and six finished it. We thought this book had several clever ideas about what might happen after society falls. One reader felt the lap dances and beer drinking at the end of the world were believable. Another liked the names for generic liquor. Several of us liked the scenes of Prius racing in the mountains. The franchise apocalypse stores were entertaining. And most of us were amused by the references to Jane Fonda and Ted Turner.

We all thought the author's prose style was easy to read. One member said she plans to read Gischler's mysteries because she liked the style so much. Another complained that the book was written at too young of a reading level.

There were complaints. One person did not believe this book's scenario where people ran out of bullets before condoms in rural Tennessee. Others felt the ending was too downbeat. And many of us felt this story compared unfavorably to earlier books and movies that handled similar material, including *Through Darkest America*, *Postman*, and *Mad Max*.

At the end of the meeting, two members of the group compared their recently-acquired Kindles. Afterward, several of us had a nice dinner at Mongolian Grille.

May 19: *The King of Elfland's Daughter* by Lord Dunsany

Eleven of us gathered at the Milwood Library for this meeting. Our topic was *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, a classic fantasy novel first published in 1924. Five of us had read Lord Dunsany before. Ten of us started the book, and eight finished it.

One reader said that this book starts like a fairy tale but has surprising depth. He could easily see why it is considered a classic.

Another commented that the book pulled together various tropes and goes through several myth cycles.

There are several wonderful scenes. The witch forging a sword feels like science fiction. The attack on the unicorn is impressive. We loved

the walk through the forest and the battle to remove magic from trees.

The author handles religion and myth well. One reader appreciated the religious element of the story, which came to the forefront when the prince married the elf. Another felt the author's understanding of fairy and elf mythology seems true.

There are many topical references. The book seems to be making fun of Tennyson. There is clever satire on the Catholic Church. One person commented that World War I seems to be a strong influence on the story.

We talked a lot about the author's writing style. Several said that it reads like an oral history. One person said the writing is poetic, lyrical, and beautiful. We liked the asides, and phrases like "the lands we know". Dunsany imparts a sense of wonder without giving great detail. One reader commented that it was unusual to read a novel with such little dialog, which creates a distance from the characters. Another liked the vivid imagery, particularly of the boundaries between worlds. One person read aloud some of his favorite paragraphs. Another simply stated that she felt this lyrical language was the way high fantasy should sound.

One reader liked the moral conundrums at the end of the book. He commented that the book's anecdote about a unicorn horn being given as a gift to the Pope is historically accurate.

There were some complaints. One reader simply felt that it was not a compelling story. Others felt that the author kept the reader at such a distance from the characters that it was hard to become emotionally invested.

At the end of the meeting, several people said that if more fantasy were like this, they would read more of it. After the meeting, many of us had a nice dinner at Opal Divine's.

—A.T. Campbell III

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE FANDOM ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL TEXAS

The monthly meeting of the board of directors

for the Fandom Association of Central Texas was called to order on Saturday, May 9, 2009, by Board Chair Jonathan Miles at the Carver Branch of the Austin Public Library, 1161 Angelina St., Austin, Texas, at 1:00 p.m. Present in addition to the chair were Directors Elizabeth Burton, Brian Price, Charles Siros, William Siros and C. Dan Tolliver, FACT President Karen Meschke, FACT Officers Eric Hollas and Jennifer Juday and FACT member Wendy Snyder.

The secretary presented the minutes of the April meeting. There being no additions or corrections, it was moved by Mr. Price, seconded by Mr. C. Siros they be accepted as presented. In the absence of objection, Mr. Miles declared the motion passed by acclamation.

CORRESPONDENCE:

OFFICER REPORTS

CHAIR

★ Mr. Miles reported his only activities were involved with ArmadilloCon.

PRESIDENT

★ Ms. Meschke said she attended InstaCon, and that the North reading group is going well. She attended the Nebula Award presentation in Los Angeles and spoke to several writers there, suggesting they come for ArmadilloCon. While there, she also attend the *LA Times* Book Festival, despite parking difficulties.

VICE-PRESIDENT

★ Mr. Price advised he will be attending the new *Star Trek* movie and reported having read an account of Aaron Allston's heart problem on Mr. Allston's blog. Mr. W. Siros suggested he post a link to the FACT list, as Mr. Allston is a FACT member and others may be interested.

TREASURER

★ Ms. Moul, who could not attend because of illness, reported by email that as of 4/30/2009 the FACT account balance was: \$16,341.60, with no pending deposits and outstanding debits of \$500.00, for a reconciled balance of \$15,841.60.

★ Ms. Babcock reported that as of 4/30/2009 the ArmadilloCon account

balance was: \$4,270.99. There are three outstanding checks totaling \$655.91, which includes two outstanding checks from AC 30. She will be re-issuing another check to Stina Leicht for \$74.91, Sara Felix cashed her check, and she has no information on J. Monteith to know why her check for \$119, or how to contact her. She has written a check for \$462 to buy stamps for the mass mailout, and has one check from FACT to deposit, for a reconciled balance of \$3615.08. She also noted she will be invoicing FACT for our share of the mass mailing expenses.

SECRETARY

★ Ms. Burton confessed she had been remiss in completing the minutes for April in time to complete the changes in the check signature policy and the updated signature cards.

REGISTRAR

★ Mr. Hollas reported there are currently 60 active members, 21 expired memberships and 77 inactive members. Twelve postcards were sent to those with expiring or recently expired memberships, with a result of six memberships being renewed.

★ He noted that, based on the response, contacting expiring members is working well. He said he needs to confer with A. T. Campbell III to determine who needs to be on the FACT mailing list, which of those eligible wants to be on and ensure only those wishing to be there are included. Mr. Miles suggested having a means of contact in case those who opt out might wish to change their mind.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES MANAGER

★ Ms. Babcock submitted her resignation from the position, citing press of work and other issues. Wendy Snyder advised she would be willing to assume the office, which was gratefully accepted.

HISTORIAN

★ Mr. Tolliver advised he attended Conestoga with Penny Griffin from San Antonio, where he had fun and it was clear those in charge knew what they were doing.

He noted he is being encouraged to better organize the archives.

MIS

★ Mr. Hollas noted Mr. Campbell has made him a co-owner of the FACT list to facilitate his organizing the mailing list. Mr. C. Siros noted Mr. Campbell needs to set up online storage for the FACT archives.

PUBLICATIONS

★ Ms. Juday advised she has been engaged in developing materials for ArmadilloCon.

QUARTERMASTER

★ Mr. C. Siros advised that the renewal for the storage unit should be arriving.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ArmadilloCon

★ Ms. Antell submitted a copy of the minutes of the most recent committee meeting. She noted there are now 60 members, 10 artists have accepted, and things are moving along. The date for the mass mailing has been set, and she will hold a meeting then.

Hotel Committee

★ Mr. C. Siros advised the contract with the Hilton for the next two years is signed, and that he is looking forward to working with them. He reported discussing developing some kind of food-utilizing function, such as a banquet for 2012, as should Worldcon be local in 2013. ArmadilloCon may be a relaxacon that year.

Bylaws Committee

★ There has been no need for the committee to meet.

Membership Committee

★ Ms. Burton apologized for her laxity in achieving something and said she will seek to schedule a meeting within the next two weeks.

Reading Groups

★ The North Group continues to thrive; however, progress attracting attendance for the South Group remains elusive.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Party Materiel** The party materials have been cataloged, and an inventory provided, including a list of items that should be there and aren't. Mr. C. Siros suggested having a party box that's entirely separate from items used in the con suite. Mr. W. Siros suggested posting a request to the FACT list asking if anyone knows the whereabouts of the missing banners. Ms. Burton suggested developing a checklist for tracking. Mr. Miles requested an estimate of how much money is needed to restock the necessities, adding we will need to replace the banners if they can't be located. Various individuals noted they had extraneous items suitable to replace those missing. Ms. Burton moved to authorize Mr. C. Siros to expend \$50 for purchase of basic supplies to replenish inventory for the party box, seconded by Mr. Tolliver. Ayes: 4, Nays: 0, Abstain: 1.

2. **Signature Policy and Cards:** Ms. Burton advised she and Ms. Moul will go to the bank as soon as possible to complete the change in signature policy and obtain new signature cards.

3. **Mass Mailing:** Ms. Burton inquired whether anyone had verified that the FACT flyers were or would be printed, and advised it would be wise to contact Ms. Juday and do that.

4. **SMOFCon Scholarships:** Ms. Meschke inquired regarding the status of the memberships purchased by FACT. Ms. Burton replied they will be made available to interested members either via scholarship applications or as reduced rate purchases for board members.

website. Mr. Tolliver advised he was in favor of this, and Mr. Miles requested a link to same be provided for the FACT website. It was moved by Mr. W. Siros, seconded by Mr. Price that the material be provided. Ayes: 4; Nays: 0; Abstain: 0.

2. **ArmadilloCon 32 Bids:** Ms. Burton advised that now a hotel contract is in place she will reissue the request for bids. Mr. Tolliver noted that the link that is supposed to go to the ArmadilloCon website currently goes instead to the sample bid materials and should be corrected.

3. **Social Events:** Mr. C. Siros noted that FACT social events are intended to attract members to participate but also to advance our mission. He suggested that as there will be no boat trip this year some literature-related event would be appropriate. Wendy Snyder advised she would be willing to assume the office of social events manager, and he and others can make suggestions as to what kinds of events should be investigated.

4. **Aaron Allston:** Mr. Price explained that longtime FACT member Aaron Allston recently had a heart attack while on book tour. Friends of Mr. Allston have set up a fund to help with his medical bills, as he has no insurance, and he inquired whether FACT would be able to donate to the fund. Ms. Burton suggested a fundraiser would be an excellent choice for the June event, and would be within our purview. It was agreed, and Ms. Snyder was requested to initiate planning for the event.

There being no other business before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **ALAMO Request for InstaCon archives:** Ms. Meschke requested use of InstaCon archives from past FACT-sponsored events on behalf of ALAMO for posting in the ALAMO database on their