

Fourth Street Fantasy Convention

Damon Knight

Kate Wilhelm

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Convention 1995

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FOURTH STREET

July 21-23, 1995

The Committee

Chairman:	Martin Schafer
Art Show:	Cynthia Brust Harry Cooper
Guests:	Jeff McNair
Hotel:	Elizabeth Cooper
Hucksters:	Lisa Freitag
Offog:	Miska <i>der Wunderhund</i>
Parties:	Corwin Brust Frank Runyon
Programming:	Patrick Nielsen Hayden Teresa Nielsen Hayden Steven Brust
Publications:	David Dyer-Bennet
Registration:	Beth Friedman
Treasury:	Martin Schafer



Schedule

Registration

Friday: 4pm to 10pm
Saturday: 10am to 2pm
At other times see Beth Friedman

We will not be selling registrations for the 1996 Fourth Street at this time.

Con Suite

4pm Friday until 8am Monday.

Art Show and Hucksters' Room

St. Paul Ballroom C

Friday 5:00 pm	Open for setup and artist check-in
Friday 7:00 pm to 10:00	Open for viewing and bids
Saturday 11:00 am to 5:00 pm	Open for viewing and bids
Saturday 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm	Final bidding opportunity
Saturday 8:30 pm to 9:00 pm	Sold art may be picked up
Sunday 10:00 am to noon	Buyer and artist pickup
Sunday 3:00 pm	Teardown

Ballroom C will house both the Art Show and the Dealers Room: hours are subject to change—watch for postings at the entrance.

NOTE: Volunteers are welcome and necessary at any time: especially during setup and tear down. Contact Cynthia through the Con Committee, sign up at the Art Show table or just drop in and lend a hand.

New Bidding Rules

This year's art show will include a silent or "Dutch" auction, allowing (we hope) for better scheduling and better buying and selling opportunities. All attending convention members will have the opportunity to submit open, written bids and to "bid up" any previous bid at any time the Art Show is open. Final bids will be

determined promptly at 8:30 pm Saturday, with the highest written bid standing as an offer to buy and legally binding when accepted on behalf of the artist.

1. All bids must include name, room number, or telephone number, and bid amount in whole U.S. dollars. Fourth Street will accept payment by cash or check.
2. Artwork is available for viewing and inspection. All art is sold "as is". (Most artists are good about repairing any damage.) No cameras, bags, foods, drink, or smoke is allowed in the Art Show.
3. Full written rules will be available at the Art Show and will be binding on artists and buyers alike.

Fourth Street

Damon Knight

by Eric M. Heideman

Damon Francis Knight was born September 19, 1922, in Baker, Oregon. As a boy, he was something of a misfit, and at 11, in Hood River, Oregon, he discovered the science fiction pulps, starting with *Amazing Stories*. Like other misfits then and since, he turned to SF with passion, reading all he could find, then corresponding with other fans, and eventually editing his own hektographed fanzine, *Snide*. After high school he attended art school for a year, then in 1941 he accepted an invitation to move to New York City and join the Futurians, a New York fan club that eventually included Frederik Pohl, C.M. Kornbluth, Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Judith Merrill, Virginia Kidd, and Donald A. Wollheim, among other SF giants.

Out east he became an SF illustrator (with indifferent success), did short stints of magazine editing, and worked for the Scott Meredith Literary Agency. Knight made his first sale to a semiprofessional SF magazine in 1940. While his early fiction was unexceptional, by 1950 he had developed a polished style and bitingly ironic vision, and became one of the mainstay writers of H.L. Gold's bright, sassy new magazine, *Galaxy*.

Also during the '50s, Knight and Blish essentially invented informed technical SF criticism. Knight brought to his review essays vast reading both in and out of speculative fiction, uncompromising technical standards (literary *and* scientific), and the saving grace of humor. His *In Search of Wonder* remains the one must-read book for anyone serious about learning how to write about SF. His book on fiction writing in general, *Creating Short Fiction*, is the best and most sensible book about writing that I've encountered.

He moved to Milford, Pennsylvania, and in 1956 helped Blish and Merrill found the annual Milford Science Fiction Writers' Conference. In the late '50s he began translating a number of French SF stories, and became a prolific (and exemplary) editor of SF reprint anthologies, notably *A Century of Science Fiction* and *A Science Fiction Argosy*. In the mid-'60s he began the *Orbit* anthologies of lively, provocative, original SF stories. In 1965 he founded the

Science Fiction Writers of America (SFWA), and served as its first president (1965-67).

His first two marriages ended in divorce; the third, to SF writer and Milford alumnus Kate Wilhelm in 1963, proved the charm. They have four children, one from his previous marriage, two from hers, one together. Wilhelm and Knight were invited to teach at the first Clarion SF Writing Conference in 1968, and they've become the mainstay of Clarion East in Lansing, Michigan, co-teaching the last two weeks of each summer's six-week session.

For some years Knight and Wilhelm have lived in Eugene, Oregon, where he is again concentrating primarily on his own fiction, though he keeps an eye on the SF field through discussions on the Genie and through editing *Monad*, an irregular journal about SF writing.

Editor, anthologist, SFWA founder, translator, critic, teacher, fan: for range of contributions to speculative fiction very few people are in Knight's weight class. In admiring his overall career, it's too easy to overlook the importance of his own fiction. He has tackled most of SF's traditional themes, bringing to each fresh insights and a new approach. (He once wrote that the time travel story was dead, after which he was seized by several time travel story ideas, each involving a new angle.) His SF is usually cautionary in tone; though careful in his scientific details and respectful of the scientific method, he knows that there are more nightmares than wonders in Pandora's Box. Theodore Sturgeon called Knight's prose "always graceful, sometimes powerful, even harsh, sometimes staccato and swift, sometimes lulling and cadenced, always exhibiting that deftness and sureness which assures (the) reader that he is in good hands". Knight's best stories—"Masks", "Be My Guest", "To Serve Man", "The Country of the Kind", and others—are gemlike, and about as close to perfect as stories get.

A Selected Damon Knight Bibliography

Hell's Pavement (novel; alternate title: *Analogue Men*), 1955.

In Search of Wonder: Essays on Modern Science Fiction (criticism), 1956; revised edition, 1967.

A for Anything (novel; alternate title: *The People Maker*), 1959.



Far Out (collection), 1961.
Editor, *A Century of Science Fiction* (anthology), 1962.
In Deep (collection), 1963.
Beyond the Barrier (novel), 1964.
Off Center (collection), 1965.
Mind Switch (novel; alternate title: *The Other Foot*), 1965.
The Rithian Terror (novel), 1965.
Editor and translator, *Thirteen French Science-fiction Stories* (anthology), 1965.
Turning On (collection), 1966.
Editor, *Nebula Award Stories 1965* (anthology), 1966.
Editor, *Orbit 1-21* (original anthologies), 1966-80.
Three Novels (collection), 1967.
Translator, *Ashes, Ashes* (French novel) by René Barjavel, 1967.
World Without Children and The Earth Quarter (collection), 1970.
Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained (biography), 1970.
Essays in four *Clarion* anthologies, 1971-1977.
Editor, *A Science Fiction Argosy* (anthology), 1973.
Editor, *Science Fiction of the Thirties* (anthology), 1975.
"Knight Piece" (autobiography) in *Hell's Cartographers: Some Personal Histories of Science Fiction Writers* (Brian W. Aldiss and Harry Harrison, eds.), 1975.
Editor, *The Best from Orbit: Volumes 1-10*, 1975.
The Best of Damon Knight (collection), 1976.
"Damon Knight Issue", *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, November 1976.
The Futurians (history/memoir), 1977.
Editor, *Westerns of the Forties: Classics from the Great Pulps*, 1977.
Rule Golden and Other Stories (collection), 1979.
The World and Thorinn (novel), 1980.
Better Than One (Noreascon collection; with Kate Wilhelm), 1980.
Creating Short Fiction (handbook), 1981; revised, 1986.
The Man in the Tree (novel), 1984.
Editor, *The Clarion Awards* (anthology), 1984.
Late Knight Edition (NESFA collection), 1985.
CV (novel), 1985.
The Observers (novel; sequel to *CV*), 1988.
God's Nose ("Author's Choice Monthly" collection), 1991.
Rule Golden/Double Meaning (Tor Double), 1991.
A Reasonable World (novel; sequel to *The Observers*), 1991.
One Side Laughing: Stories Unlike Other Stories (collection), 1991.
Editor, *Monad 1-3* (critical journal), 1992-
Why Do Birds (novel), 1992.

Kate Wilhelm

by Eric M. Heideman

Kate Wilhelm was born Katie Meredith in Toledo, Ohio, on June 28, 1928. At 18, she married Joseph Wilhelm instead of starting college; she had a son at 21 and another son at 25. Living in Louisville, Kentucky, with a husband who never read anything, she checked eight books a week out of the public library, science fiction along with everything else. In 1956 she wrote a science fiction story, rented a typewriter to type it out, and mailed it to *Astounding*. The check from John W. Campbell let her buy the typewriter. She wrote more short stories, then started writing novels without giving up short stories. She divorced in 1962, moved to Milford, Pennsylvania, and married Damon Knight in 1963.

Knight and Wilhelm have been co-instructors at annual SF workshops for over 30 years, first at the Milford Conference and later at Clarion. Robin Wilson has written of their teaching, "They have been directly responsible for polishing up hundreds of neophytes into professional writers, each of whom can remember some moment of calm, penetrating wisdom that is Kate Wilhelm's hallmark as teacher *and* writer."

Wilhelm had always been a good craftsman. By the early 1970s she had evolved into something more, her work growing broader, deeper, and more resonant. Her style seems as clear and natural as a brook; it's easy not to notice how carefully her prose is constructed and how it subtly changes to suit a scene. Whether her current story is ostensibly a work of science fiction or mystery, horror, mainstream fiction, or magical realism, the story is likely, one way or another, to blend the mundane and the fantastic. She builds up a world through a deft accumulation of small, everyday details. Her people are exceptionally real. She hauls us right into their lives, and makes us hope deeply that things will turn out well for them. But there are no guarantees of that in a Wilhelm story. She probes deeply enough into the human psyche to find both delightful and terrifying things.

At Noreascon in 1980 she spoke of how we *homo sapiens* are unique



in our ability to conceptualize, and *change*, reality. Over and over, her stories probe our shared assumptions of reality: "I am asking, what actually do we mean by reality, and are we stuck with the one we have? This is what I mean by reality fiction, and usually it is also called science fiction".

She is extraordinarily versatile. A number of speculative writers have gotten bigger reputations by staking out a particular corner of the field, but in the past half century I think only Leiber, Sturgeon, and Simak have written so many different kinds of speculative fiction as well as she, and with so wide an emotional range.

If I had to pick one word to describe both Kate and Damon, it would be "graceful". Future generations will continue to experience their grace on paper; we have the extra good fortune to experience it in person.

A Selected Kate Wilhelm Bibliography

- More Bitter Than Death* (novel), 1963.
The Mile-Long Spaceship (collection), 1963.
The Clone (novel; with Theodore L. Thomas), 1965.
The Nevermore Affair (novel), 1966.
The Killer Thing (novel), 1967.
The Downstairs Room and Other Speculative Fiction (collection), 1968.
Let the Fire Fall (novel), 1969.
Year of the Cloud (novel; with Theodore L. Thomas), 1970.
Abyss: Two Novellas (collection), 1971.
Margaret and I (novel), 1971.
Essays in *Clarion I-III*, 1971-1973.
City of Cain (novel), 1974.
Editor, *Nebula Award Stories 9* (anthology), 1974.
The Infinity Box: A Collection of Speculative Fiction, 1975.
The Clewiston Test (novel), 1976.
Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang (novel), 1976.
Fault Lines (novel), 1977.
Editor, *Clarion SF* (anthology), 1977.
Somerset Dreams and Other Fictions (collection), 1978.

Juniper Time (novel), 1979.
Better Than One (Noreascon collection; with Damon Knight), 1980.
Listen, Listen (collection; includes 1980 Worldcon speech, "The Uncertain Edge of Reality"), 1981.
A Sense of Shadow (novel), 1981.
Oh, Susannah! (novel), 1982.
Welcome, Chaos (novel), 1983.
Huysman's Pets (novel), 1986.
The Hills are Dancing (nonfiction; with photos by her son, Richard Wilhelm), 1986.
The Hamlet Trap (novel; Constance Leidl/Charlie Meiklejohn mystery), 1987.
Crazy Time (novel), 1988.
The Dark Door (Constance/Charlie novel), 1988.
Smart House (Constance/Charlie novel), 1989.
Children of the Wind: Five Novellas (collection), 1989.
Cambio Bay (novel), 1990.
Sweet, Sweet Poison (Constance/Charlie novel), 1990.
State of Grace ("Author's Choice Monthly" collection), 1991.
Death Qualified: A Mystery of Chaos (novel), 1991.
And the Angels Sing (collection), 1992.
Naming the Flowers (Axolotl Press novella), 1992.
Seven Kinds of Death (Constance/Charlie novel), 1992.
Justice for Some (novel), 1993.
The Best Defense (novel; sequel to *Death Qualified*), 1994.
A Clutch of Shadows (Constance/Charlie collection), 1995.

Programming

Timing

1. A panel slot shall be 90 minutes long.
2. A panel shall be 75 minutes long.
3. For the last 15 minutes of the slot, the dais shall be vacant.
4. Provision #3 may, if desired, be enforced via water-Uzi.

FRIDAY

7:00 7:10 Opening ceremonies

The usual.

7:15 7:30 In memoriam: Roger Zelazny

1937-1995. Farewell

7:30 8:45 Why Do We Read Fiction?

We used to sit around the fire and give this old weirdo some leftover mammoth chops to tell us stories about why the big storm knocked the next village down. But it was cold, so we'd have been around the fire anyway, and how many mammoth chops can a skinny old stick like that eat? Now we're warm, we've got plenty of McMammitches to go, so why are we still forking over \$24.95 for the old weirdo's hardcover edition? Could it be that (ominous music up) the direct experience of "reality" is inadequate to explain reality, make it useful? Could it be that under the sugar-coating ("I just read for Entertainment"), fiction contains useful trace elements that keep our consciousness from becoming soggy and hard to light?

And if so, how does this change as the reader changes—does the semi-mythic children's-book-adults-can-enjoy answer, in fact, to different kinds of interpretive need? Discuss. Define. Divide. Decide. Decry. Defend. Depose. Divine.

[Damon Knight, Donald G. Keller, Patrick Nielsen Hayden (moderator), Patricia C. Wrede]

9:00 10:15 There's Gotta Be a Pony In Here Somewhere

For the rest of Friday evening, an entirely different sort of Big Question. Who, me? I was just looking at those comic books to see if they were as bad as I remember them being. And what's the most embarrassing, least admissible kind of fantasy you enjoy—and what is there about it that you really like?

[Pamela Dean, Elise Matthesen (moderator), Teresa Nielsen Hayden]

10:30 *ad libitum*

SATURDAY

11:00 12:15 A Life of Their Own: the Tenacity of Pulp Characters

Sherlock Holmes, James Bond, Tarzan, Count Dracula, Robin Hood, Conan, Mr. Spock, and Batman may be preposterously unrealistic characters, but they nevertheless take up permanent residence in our imaginations, where they spawn endless variations of themselves. What makes them, and characters like them, so durably interesting? And what makes them different from the most memorable characters of non-pulp fiction, such as Anna Karenina and Huck Finn?

[Lenny Bailes, Steven Brust, Joel Rosenberg, Will Shetterly (moderator)]

12:30 1:45 Magic&Tech. I: Who You Callin' "Primitive"?

A great deal of fantasy is set in something called a "pre-technological" age, by which the author seems to mean anything before the steam engine. But complex machinery has been around for a lot longer than that. Mills, water power, clocks . . . One pat answer is that "they have magic, so they don't develop technology", yet one rarely sees magic doing the everyday jobs that technology filled.

How might a society without machines, but a high standard of living, look and operate? Or is the absence of machines the whole point?

[Emma Bull, David Dyer-Bennet, Teresa Nielsen Hayden (moderator), Kate Wilhelm, Ben Yalow]

2:00 3:00 Lunch

3:00 4:15 Magic&Tech. II: Any Sufficiently Advanced Sorcery—

In contemporary fantasy, "magic" is often portrayed as a kind of engineering discipline, rule-based and repeatable in its effects. Perhaps not coincidentally, many of these stories are by writers mainly known for science fiction. (The locals only thought of the Connecticut Yankee's engineering as magic—he didn't suddenly become better at sorcery than Merlin.)

Does this bear any relation to magic as its historical practitioners understood it to operate, or is it purely a fictional device, putting Competent Engineers into a fantasy world for the sake of a good laugh at superstition? What other effects can this device serve?

[Raphael Carter, John M. Ford (moderator), Damon Knight, Joel Rosenberg]

4:30 5:45 Varieties of Political Experience: There's a Dwarf With a Grievance Outside, Sir

Democracy, it is useful to remember, is over two thousand years old. So why are so many of the political systems of Fantasyland absolute monarchies on the Western European model?

And why is it that when workers have any organization at all, it's usually some

kind of closed-shop craft guild, whose dramatic purpose is normally to preserve ignorance and inefficiency? (Peasants, of course, stand about idly mumbling until provoked to form a mob and overrun something.)

On both counts, how has it been done differently, either from historical sources or operational imaginations?

[Eleanor Arnason, Steven Brust, Victor Raymond (moderator), Martha Soukup]

6:00 7:15 Elfland is a Foreign Country, They do Things Differently There

Or, You're a Dragon, You Wouldn't Understand.

One of the purposes of fantasy (and arguably of stories in general) is to make strange and alien things comprehensible. But reducing great and numinous concepts like Love, Death, and the appeal of Frosted Pop-Tarts to small and explicable terms not only robs them of the power they had to interest us in the first place, it usually ends up in cheap platitudes: "It is impossible to love Frosted Pop-Tarts without also loving Death a little". On the other hand, saying that something is indescribable or beyond words is not exactly awesome to the reader, and all too often "alien logic" or "nonhuman culture" are used to excuse desperate plot-rigging and utter arbitrariness.

How do you show awe and mystery while still showing something? When is transcendence a necessary end, and when is it a cover for not writing an ending? And is there really a place beyond human reason that is reachable at the touch of a finger, but still won't melt at toaster temperatures?

[Victor Raymond, Elise Matthesen, Delia Sherman (moderator), Patricia C. Wrede]

7:30 *ad libitum*

SUNDAY

11:00 12:15 What Does "Easy to Read" Mean?

Everyone's in favor of "clarity", but no one seems to agree about what it means. Is anyone willing to defend quantitative measures, like syllable count and average sentence length, as measures? How about straightforward moral judgements like, "He drew a knife on me, so I shot him"?

Perhaps more important, what are the conscious uses of "easy" and "difficult" language? Assuming that by "difficult" we mean writing that is allusive, oblique, and/or ambiguous on purpose, not just so clumsily vague you can't tell what it's supposed to mean.) And what, if anything, may writers reasonably assume about the readers' backgrounds?

[Greg Ketter, Damon Knight (moderator), Caroline Stevermer, Kate Wilhelm]

12:30 01:45 Building the Similitude of Worlds: How Much Detail Is Enough?

Is it possible that Gene Wolfe and Lord Dunsany, C. S. Forester and Patrick

O'Brian, Cecelia Holland and Dorothy Dunnett, all use an appropriate level of detail? (Hint: most readers seem to think so.) Trick is, they don't use anything like the same amount. We may not be looking at a matter of simple quantity.

How does one know what level is correct? Can it be determined in advance? ("For a lightweight adventure story add 1 tablespoon. For complex tales of futuristic intrigue, add 4 tablespoons and one extra cup shortening.") Some writers, without doubt, would consider the question odd, assuming that the tale itself will determine its detail level—okay, but what mechanism is involved?

And regardless of wordcount, much of the atmosphere of a story is a kind of optical illusion, where the author draws lines and shadows and the reader's mind stretches fabric between? If you describe a horse, how do you make the reader see the intended horse, instead of a zebra or a pickup truck—and how much does it matter if she sees the pickup truck anyway?

[Emma Bull (moderator), Pamela Dean, John M. Ford]

2:00 2:15 Rant: Why Does Fantasy Make Such Lousy Movies?

A fifteen-minute rant on a loaded question, by Mr. John M. Ford and Mr. Steven Brust.

2:30 3:45 Magic Realism, Only Not the Ones You're Thinking Of

Toni Morrison, John Crowley, Patricia Geary, Angela Carter, Mark Helprin, Francine Prose; possibly Alice Hoffman, Gloria Naylor, Francesca Lia Block; and Asst'd Others (whom you may very well not have read yet; but do not be alarmed): writers of really swell fantasy that's firmly rooted in observable reality, a bit literary, and feels less obliged to explain exactly how things work. What is going on here? And what else is going on here?

[Raphael Carter, Pamela Dean, Jenna Felice, Delia Sherman (moderator), Kate Wilhelm]

4:00 5:15 The Different Panel

A Fourth Street tradition: the panel we'll discover, sometime during the convention, that we simply must have.

5:30 5:35 Closing Ceremonies

The usual; hope to see you next year.

Financial statement for Fourth Street #8, 1994

Assets		
Checking		1,854.54
Liabilities		
Uncashed check		50.29
Net worth		1,804.25
Income		
Total registration		3,489.00
31 advance @22	682.00	
91 prereg @25	2,275.00	
14 at the door@38	532.00	
Artshow and Hucksters	113.21	
Total income		<u>3,602.21</u>
Expenses		
Guests		1,238.40
Parties		1,054.90
Publications		716.74
Programming		146.69
Registration		38.51
Bounced Checks		138.00
Total expenses		<u>3,333.24</u>
Profit		<u>268.97</u>
Balance from Fourth Streets 1-7		1,535.28
TOTAL		<u>1,804.25</u>

