

# Readercon 30 • Quincy, MA • July 11–14, 2019

*Underlined names are leaders/moderators.*

## Thursday

### 8:00 PM

Salon A • **Afrofuturism and Solarpunk in Dialogue** • Rob Cameron, Bill Campbell, Michael J. DeLuca, Tananarive Due, Cadwell Turnbull

Afrofuturism: an African-American creative movement that reimagines the past, present, and future. Solarpunk: subverting the cyberpunk future, it explores sustainable solutions to global environmental crisis. Both have a strong “maker” tradition and are, at their core, hopeful. Panelists will brainstorm converging issues, technologies, and ideas that would make for compelling solarpunk Afrofuturist stories.

### 8:00 PM

Salon B • **Being Vague to Make Space for Horror** • Stephen Graham Jones, Darcie Little Badger, Sonya Taaffe, teri.zin, Paul Tremblay

In a 2016 blog post, Peter MacDonald argued that many creepypasta stories—unsettling urban legends that have been copied and pasted around the Internet—undermine their effectiveness as works of horror by providing overly concrete answers in the final stretch. Panelists will discuss whether this can be generalized to other horror stories—ones that less obviously blur the line between fiction and reality—and consider the importance to horror of ambiguity around the fantastic and supernatural.

### 8:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Alexander Jablokov**

### 8:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Kathy Kitts**

### 8:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Gemma Files**

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**8:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: John Wiswell**

**9:00 PM**

Salon A • **Killing Characters 101** • *Mike Allen, Charles Allison, Karen Heuler, Miriam Newman, Robert V. S. Redick*

The decision to kill a character is fraught (as it should be) and often tied to thematic elements, audience expectations of genre, and concerns around representation. Panelists will deconstruct stories that handle these issues well or poorly, and discuss their own challenges in making characters' deaths as meaningful as their lives.

**9:00 PM**

Salon B • **Obvious to Experts, Obscure to Everyone Else** • *Anatoly Belilovsky, Judith Berman, Kate Nepveu, David G. Shaw, Tamara Vardoms kaya*

When an expert says something is “intuitively obvious,” it’s very likely that the average person will be unable to understand. How languages work, how probabilities are calculated, and how eyes see are all examples of counterintuitive concepts. This panel of experts will bring illustrative examples and explain them for laypeople.

**9:00 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Arkady Martine**

**9:00 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Austin Grossman**

**9:30 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: John Langan**

**9:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Lauren Roy**

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### Friday

#### 11:00 AM

Salon 3 • **Cultural Hauntings and African-American History** • *Bill Campbell, Tananarive Due, L. Penelope, Faye Ringel, teri.zin*

Some of GOH Tananarive Due's work, including *Joplin's Ghost*, *The Between*, and *The Good House*, recovers African-American history through tales of the supernatural. She has written, "Sometimes fiction is the only way to make sense of the insensible." Panelists will explore these and other tales that use the power of the supernatural to engage with the horrors and struggles of Black Americans past and present.

#### 11:00 AM

Salon 4 • **The 21st-Century Makeover of Class Struggle in SF/F** • *Malka Older, Sarah Smith, Cadwell Turnbull, Catherynne M. Valente, T.X. Watson*

With rising economic inequality and class struggle ever more visible in America, how are these issues being explored in SF/F? Is the pessimism of YA dystopias (from Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*, published at the start of the Great Recession, to M.T. Anderson's *Landscape with Invisible Hand* in 2017) emblematic of changed views of the American Dream? How do recent works differ from their 20th-century forebears (Nancy Kress's *Beggars in Spain*), and how are they tackling the intersection of class and other identities?

#### 11:00 AM

Salon A • **"You Will Believe a Plant Can Walk!"** • *Eric Schaller*

Anthropomorphic botanical creatures repeatedly appear in folklore and the literature of the fantastic. These include the vampiric Jubokko tree, the Ents from *The Lord of the Rings*, the Triffids from *Day of the Triffids*, Groot from Marvel Comics, and Swamp Thing from DC. Eric Schaller will explore how actual botanical mechanisms might be coopted to allow for sight, touch, speech, movement, and thought—with a special focus on Swamp Thing, who is perhaps the most human-like of all these botanical creatures.

#### 11:00 AM

Salon B • **Becoming Active Bystanders**

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

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steps that can make a positive difference in that situation. This workshop covers the basics of active bystander action and strategies, with opportunity for discussion and practice. Training provided by the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center.

### 11:00 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Sherwood Smith**

### 11:00 AM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Mimi Mondal**

### 11:00 AM

Abigail Adams • **Picture Book Storytime for All Ages (Friday)**

All ages are welcome for an hour of picture book storytime.

### 11:30 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Inanna Arthen**

### 11:30 AM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Andrea Martinez Corbin**

### 12:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Old Punks Read New -Punks** • *Christopher Brown, F. Brett Cox, Elizabeth Hand, Sioban Krzywicki, Victoria Sandbrook*

Punk is dad—er, dead. Every year new -punks proliferate: Mannerpunk!

Gutterpunk! Solarpunk! Hopepunk! Jitterpunk! Sugarpunk! Rentpunk! Has punk exhausted itself to mere gesture, aesthetic, and marketing copy, or can -punk still kick against the pricks? A panel of self-defined crusty old punks will take a stab at it.

### 12:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Writing Craft and Mentoring Programs** • *Jack Dann, Theodora Goss, Kate Maruyama, Kenneth Schneyer, Holly Walrath*

Those who want to learn the craft of writing popular genre fiction have more options than ever. MFA programs and workshops of excellent repute are popping up all over the U.S., from Stonecoast in Maine to Clarion in California, as well as in other

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parts of the world. With so many options, how does one choose? Panelists who have participated in these programs as mentors or mentees will discuss their experiences.

### 12:00 PM

Salon A • **Recent Nonfiction Essay Club: “Decolonizing the Imagination” by Zetta Elliott**

• *John Chu, Darcie Little Badger, Kate Nepveu, Vandana Singh, Cadwell Turnbull*

In her essay “Decolonizing the Imagination,” published in *Horn Book Magazine* and on their website, Zetta Elliott wrote of the challenge in crafting portal fantasies and time travel stories that partook as much of her heritage as of the colonial literature she grew up reading as a mixed-race girl in Canada. This discussion will consider the questions raised by her essay, including, “Can time and space be shaped by an author to satisfy needs left unfulfilled by an unjust reality?”

### 12:00 PM

Salon C • **Broad Universe Rapid Fire Reading**

### 12:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Steve Berman**

### 12:00 PM

Abigail Adams • **Fountain Pen Test Drive**

If you like fountain pens or are just curious, come play! Bring whatever pens, ink, and paper you have. We’ll do a show and tell, and try out each other’s favorites. No supplies will be provided; newcomers to the world of fountain pens are encouraged to bring a notebook or pad to test pens on.

### 12:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Martin Cahill**

### 1:00 PM

Salon 3 • **The Real Middle Ages, Part 1: Europe** • *Charles Allison, Robert Killheffer, Chelsea R. Miller, Jess Nevins, Faye Ringel*

Medieval Europe was a hotbed of interaction among people of different cultures and ethnicities, so there’s no reason for fantasy novels with medieval-like settings to be

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blandly homogeneous. Panelists will discuss how popular narratives of medieval Europe misrepresent known history, how these narratives serve white supremacist movements, and how writers can do better by readers by basing their worldbuilding on Europe as it really was.

### 1:00 PM

Salon 4 • ***Everfair, Black Panther, and Visions of Uncolonized Africa*** • Rob Cameron, Phenderson Djéli Clark, Mary Anne Mohanraj, Nikhil Singh

In Marvel's *Black Panther* comics and film, Wakanda is a fictional country in Africa that was never colonized and is technologically advanced. In Nisi Shawl's *Everfair*, the Congolese develop steam technology before the invading Belgians do. How do these and other depictions of empowered African nations, such as Nicky Drayden's *Temper*, provide aspirational frameworks, visions of the future, and launching points for discussions of imperialism?

### 1:00 PM

Salon A • **The Works and Life of Edward Bryant** • Chuck Anderson, Tananarive Due, Jean-Philippe Gervais, Jim LeMay, Howard Waldrop

Ed Bryant (1945–2017) was an author of horror and science fiction. He wrote half a dozen novels and more than 70 short stories. Bryant received both a B.A. and an M.A. in English from the University of Wyoming. In 1968 he attended the Clarion Workshop and started writing professionally, quickly gathering Nebula Award nominations, and, in 1979, his first win for his short story "Stone." Bryant worked in both film and television, including adapting his own writing for *The Twilight Zone*. In the early 1970s Bryant moved to Denver. There, he founded the Northern Colorado Writers Conference and went on to teach at Clarion, the Colorado Language Arts Society, the Colorado Mountain College Summer Writers' Workshop, and countless others. Join us to celebrate the life and work of this inspiring author and fan.

### 1:00 PM

Salon B • **Classic Nonfiction Essay Club: "Estrangement and Cognition" by Darko Suvin** • Meg Elison, Tom Greene, Alexander Jablokov, Marissa Lingen, Graham Sleight  
Darko Suvin's preferred edition of his essay "Estrangement and Cognition," coining the oft-repeated statement that SF is the literature of cognitive estrangement, first appeared in 1979. (*Strange Horizons* later reprinted it online.) It was a decade in the making, and the world and SF both changed quite a bit from 1969 to 1979. We'll consider "Estrangement and Cognition" in the context of SF's New Wave, the

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political upheavals of the 1960s and '70s, and the subsequent shifts in speculative genres.

### 1:00 PM

Salon C • **Group Reading: *Echoes: The Saga Anthology of Ghost Stories*** • *Ellen Datlow, Gemma Files, Jeffrey Ford, Stephen Graham Jones, John Langan, Bracken MacLeod, Paul Tremblay*

Contributors to the forthcoming anthology *Echoes: The Saga Anthology of Ghost Stories*, edited by Ellen Datlow, will read from their work.

### 1:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Vylar Kaftan**

### 1:00 PM

Abigail Adams • **Fiber Arts Show and Tell**

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

### 1:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Sarah Smith**

### 2:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Accelerated Publication for Greater Relevance** • *Lisa (LJ) Cohen, Pablo Defendini, Liz Gorinsky, Yanni Kuznia, Bart Leib*

When a book takes multiple years to go from conception to publication, its relevance may be diminished. How can publishing professionals work to accelerate the publication process and keep the subjects of publications as current as possible? What trade-offs are producers and consumers willing to make for the sake of speed? When is it important not to rush, and which corners shouldn't be cut?

### 2:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Latinx Authors Tear Down the Wall** • *Lisa Bradley, Carlos Hernandez, José*

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*Pablo Iriarte, Julia Rios, Sabrina Vourvoulias*

Isolationist governments portray immigrants (and citizens perceived as foreigners) as vectors for disease, crime, and terrorism. Currently, the U.S. administration is demonizing Latinx immigrants in this fashion, and oppressing asylum-seekers from Central America. How can authors dismantle anti-immigrant myths while portraying immigrants in all their human complexity? Led by Lisa M. Bradley, Latinx writers will discuss their work regarding borders and immigration, providing historical context and exploring possibilities for future stories.

### 2:00 PM

Salon A • **Narratives of Men Coming to Terms with Trauma** • *Inanna Arthen, Rob Cameron, Josh Jasper, Terence Taylor, John Wiswell*

In the 2018 essay “Getting Men off Ledges,” Brandon O’Brien wrote, “We need to show men with trauma... working through it.” He provided examples of men whose abusive behavior is excused by their traumatic histories, saying, “We need to teach and remind men... that recovery means responsibility.” How can writers take on this burden of teaching and reminding? What do story arcs around traumatized men—including those who harm others—need to contain to be believable, non-exculpatory, and emotionally accessible for survivors?

### 2:00 PM

Salon B • **The Works of Frank M. Robinson** • *Robert Killheffer, Graham Sleight*

Frank M. Robinson’s fascinating career included writing, editing, and writing speeches for Harvey Milk. After serving in the Navy during World War II he had his first published story in the June 1950 issue of *Astounding Science Fiction Magazine*, during his tour of duty in Korea. After returning home he wrote for men’s magazines *Rogue* and *Cavalier* before accepting a column at *Playboy* which ran from 1969–1973. He co-wrote several novels with Tom Scortia in the 1970s, the most famous being *The Glass Inferno*, filmed as *The Towering Inferno*. He was known for technothrillers and sharp, incisive writing. Robinson died in 2014 after serving on the board of The Trevor project, appearing alongside Sean Penn in *Milk*, and finishing his autobiography. Join our panelists to discuss the 2018 Cordwainer Award recipient’s life and work.

### 2:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Greer Gilman**



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### 2:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Memorial Guest of Honor Reading: Ellen Brody**

Ellen Brody reads “The Road to Cinnabar” by Memorial Guest of Honor Edward Bryant.

### 2:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: David DeGraff, Navah Wolfe**

### 2:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Elizabeth Hand**

### 2:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Sally Wiener Grotta**

### 3:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Rejection-Sensitive Dysphoria and Submitting Stories** • *Jack Dann, Vylar Kaftan, Yanni Kuznia, Victoria Sandbrook, Terence Taylor*

One of the less commonly known, but major, features of ADHD is rejection-sensitive dysphoria: a serious, disproportionate, and often debilitating emotional response to being turned down. Everyone who wants to write and be published needs to grow a thick skin to handle rejections, but RSD can make that much harder. Panelists will share their experiences with this challenge and provide tips and workarounds.

### 3:00 PM

Salon 4 • **The Horrors of Being Female** • *Gillian Daniels, Gemma Files, Gwynne Garfinkle, Arkady Martine, Kate Maruyama, E.J. Stevens*

Horror and dark fiction frequently reflect the everyday indignities and dehumanization of women living in patriarchal cultures—especially women who are also minorities. For example, GOH Tananarive Due writes about the fears of black women, while Caitlín R. Kiernan and Shirley Jackson depict the stigmatization of mentally ill women in ways both overt and subtle. How can authors find ways to describe the terrorizing of women without crossing over into objectification? What makes these works resonate with, and even empower, women readers?

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### 3:00 PM

Salon A • **In Memoriam: Gene Wolfe** • *John Clute, C.S.E. Cooney, Chris Gerwel, Elizabeth Hand, Howard Waldrop*

Gene Wolfe (1931–2019) was Readercon's first guest of honor, and for good reason. His Book of the New Sun series was not so much groundbreaking as earth-shattering; his short fiction equally displayed his virtuoso talent for unsettling and disorienting the reader. He dipped into numerous genres and refused to be bound by the conventions of any. Join us to remember our friend and colleague and to explore his extraordinary body of work.

### 3:00 PM

Salon B • **Am I Allowed?: Representation, Appropriation, and Anxiety** • *Zig Zag Claybourne, Sunny Moraine, Ian Muneshwar, Miriam Newman, Tracy Townsend*

When writers learn about concerns around accurate representation and appropriation, they often react with anxiety, fearing that someone will tell them they're not allowed to write beyond the bounds of their own experiences. Some seek out marginalized people and ask permission to tell particular stories. Others broadcast defiance, or publicly fret in hopes of being comforted. Why is this reaction so common and powerful? What are more constructive ways of dealing with the fear of not being allowed?

### 3:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: John Chu**

### 3:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Lila Garrott**

### 3:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Theodora Goss, Victoria Janssen**

### 3:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Malka Older**

### 3:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Christopher Brown**

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### 4:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Why Does Space Get the Opera and Cyber the Punk?** • *Liz Gorinsky, Austin Grossman, Catherynne M. Valente, Sabrina Vourvoulias, T.X. Watson*

For Arisia's 50 Panels in 75 Minutes panel in 2018, Cecilia Tan suggested "Why Does Space Get the Opera and Cyber the Punk?", which was universally acclaimed as too good for 1.5 minutes. Our panelists will give this exploration of speculative and musical genres the full hour it deserves. (And where is the spacepunk and cyber opera?)

### 4:00 PM

Salon 4 • **The Spectrum of Short Fiction SF/F Editing** • *Mike Allen, Scott H. Andrews, Neil Clarke, Ellen Datlow, Mary Anne Mohanraj, Sheila Williams*

This panel of SF/F magazine and anthology editors will discuss different approaches to their work, from very hands-on to very hands-off. What are currently accepted best practices for editing—if consensus even exists on that—and how have they changed over time? Do editors still commission stories and collaborate almost to the point of coauthoring, or is that era over? And how can a writer submitting a story know what kind of editing they're likely to get?

### 4:00 PM

Salon A • **Snatched from the Sun: Alternative Shakespeares and the Zemblance of Reality** • *Greer Gilman*

Why does a small but vocal and impassioned band of conspiracy theorists believe that Shakespeare wasn't Shakespeare? Why do they read his work for the common stage as the encrypted secret history of a genius suppressed? Why do they think that *Hamlet* was a selfie? While examining these questions, Greer Gilman will explore the shipping of John Donne's muse, sepulchral monkey-heads, canals on Mars, vice-versal doublets, the Elizabethan elevator pitch, the seacoast of Bohemia, ciphers, triflers, Templars, and the true author of *As You Leak It*.

### 4:00 PM

Salon B • **A Post-Police World** • *Pablo Defendini, L. Timmel Duchamp, Josh Jasper, Chelsea R. Miller, Nicole D. Sconiers*

Policing, as it has developed and is currently implemented, is a sometimes violent system for maintaining order and perpetuating the power status quo. Better systems and better ways are possible. This panel will explore the real and ostensible

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goals of policing and look for ethical ways to achieve them, in our future or on created worlds.

**4:00 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Jeffrey Ford**

**4:00 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Matthew Kressel**

**4:00 PM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Jim Freund, Barbara Krasnoff**

**4:00 PM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: James Patrick Kelly, Cecilia Tan**

**4:30 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: John Crowley**

**4:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Sonya Taaffe**

**5:00 PM**

Salon 3 • **The Works of Tananarive Due** • *John Langan, L. Penelope, Terence Taylor*  
Tananarive Due is a teacher in the creative writing MFA program at Antioch University Los Angeles and has been inducted into Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism's Hall of Achievement, but she is best known as an author of speculative fiction. She has won the New Voice in Literature Award, the Carl Brandon Society's Kindred Award, the American Book Award, and the NAACP Image Award, and her short fiction has appeared in several best-of-the-year anthologies. With her husband, Steven Barnes, she writes the Tennyson Hardwick mystery series. Join us as we welcome her to Readercon and discuss her impressive body of work.

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### 5:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Fascism as a Genre** • Gillian Daniels, Ruthanna Emrys, Paul Levinson, Howard Waldrop

Many thinkers have approached fascism as storytelling. In 1936, Walter Benjamin wrote, “The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life.” Umberto Eco’s 1995 essay “Ur-Fascism” considered this approach. And in 2018, Nick Harkaway tweeted, “Part of the danger of Fascism is that it’s less an agenda and more a style.” How can the lens of genre help us understand and combat fascism in the present era? What would anti-fascist aesthetics look like, and how can we write them into speculative fiction?

### 5:00 PM

Salon A • **Everything You Wanted to Know About Readercon (but Were Afraid to Ask)** • Rose Fox, Sioban Krzywicki, Emily Wagner

Every year is a new con and a new experience. Have questions about where the readings are or what kind of fannish meet-ups are happening? Curious about the track themes and presentations? Want to know about volunteering basics or the quietest time to visit the con suite? Readercon’s movers and shakers will tell you all this and more. Come prepared to ask questions!

### 5:00 PM

Salon B • **15 Years Since the Mundane Manifesto** • John Crowley, Gregory Feeley, Chris Gerwel, Carolyn Ives Gilman, Vandana Singh

In 2004, a group of SF writers produced the “Mundane Manifesto,” which suggested that various common SF tropes and themes (FTL, galactic empires, etc.) were so unlikely as to be essentially frivolous and should be avoided. A substantial body of “mundane SF” was subsequently published. In recent years, however, a number of writers have published SF that makes forthright use of space academies, psychic powers, and other decidedly non-mundane tropes. Led by Gregory Feeley, this panel will discuss this significant shift in science fiction.

### 5:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Stephen Graham Jones**

### 5:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Tracy Townsend**

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### 5:00 PM

Abigail Adams • **Make a Friend, Go to Dinner**

New to Readercon and looking to meet people, or just in the mood for some company over dinner? Drop by this informal, unstructured meetup to make a new friend or three. Low-key icebreakers will be provided.

### 5:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Yanni Kuznia, Miriam Newman**

### 5:00 PM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Meg Elison, Cadwell Turnbull**

### 5:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Henry Wessells**

### 6:00 PM

Salon A • **The Fabulousness of Earth's Spices** • *B. Diane Martin, David G. Shaw*

The galactic committee for the eradication of Earth needs to be convinced that Terran spices are really fabulous and worth keeping around. If you were an intergalactic spice seller charged with saving Earth, what would you pack to relay the intrinsic flavors of six quintessential Earth spices? David Shaw and B. Diane Martin will have some suggestions in this culinary demo.

### 6:00 PM

Salon B • **17776 and All That: The Crumbling of the Jock-Nerd Divide** • *Susan Bigelow, Keffy R.M. Kehrl, Robert Killheffer, Marissa Lingen, Cecilia Tan*

Jon Bois's wild digital narrative "17776: What Football Will Look Like in the Future" appeared on SB Nation, a sports news website, and aimed straight at the commonalities of sports and SF fandoms: rules and ways around the rules, glorious absurdity, tragedy alongside heroism. The jock-nerd divide has crumbled. What does that mean for nerd lit? Will cerebral SF embrace sweaty physicality? Will epic hockey games replace epic battlefields? This panel of sports-fan fans will discuss these possibilities and more.

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**6:00 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Karen Heuler**

**6:00 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Carlos Hernandez and C.S.E. Cooney**

**6:00 PM**

Abigail Adams • **Study Hall (Friday)**

Gather with laptops, notebooks, or lovingly maintained antique portable typewriters for quiet unstructured writing time. This is a great opportunity to jump on a bit of inspiration from a panel or tackle the project you swore you were going to get done this weekend.

**6:00 PM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: James Patrick Kelly, Benjamin C. Kinney**

**6:00 PM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Anna Kashina, Barbara Krasnoff**

**6:30 PM**

Salon 3 • **Horror Noire Screening and Q&A** • *Tananarive Due*

Tananarive Due hosts a screening of her new documentary, *Horror Noire: A History of Black Horror*, followed by a Q&A.

**6:30 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Rosemary Kirstein**

**6:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Tamara Vardomskaya**

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### 7:00 PM

Salon A • **How I Illustrated the 50th Anniversary Edition of *Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin • Charles Vess**

Illustrator Charles Vess will discuss his visual journey into Earthsea with Ursula K. Le Guin as his collaborator on the 56 illustrations for the 50th anniversary release of *The Books of Earthsea: The Complete Illustrated Edition*. Their wonderful four-year conversation guided his pencils so he could bring forth Earthsea as she envisioned it. Le Guin approved every drawing before her death, and the suggestions and comments she made to Vess along the way have created their own delightful stories.

### 7:00 PM

Salon B • **Amazon, Goodreads, NetGalley, and Edelweiss, Oh My! • Holly Walrath**

There are a variety of valuable resources for independent authors out there, but how does one choose among them, and how can an indie book stand out among the crowd? Holly Lyn Walrath will explain how to navigate the available options for self-publishing and explore how books can reach more readers via the growing field of reviewer markets.

### 7:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Mary Anne Mohanraj**

### 7:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: JD Horn**

### 7:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Marc Abrahams, Meg Elison**

### 7:00 PM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: L. Penelope, E.J. Stevens**

### 7:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Vivian Shaw**



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**7:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Elaine Isaak**

**8:00 PM**

Salon A • **Edward Bryant Interviewed by Mark Barsotti** • *Jean-Philippe Gervais*

In this 2010 interview conducted by music critic Mark Barsotti, Memorial GOH Ed Bryant discusses his life, sources of inspiration, favorite stories, his friendship with Harlan Ellison, and much more.

**8:00 PM**

Salon B • **The Etiquette of Criticism** • *John Clute, Lila Garrott, Barbara Krasnoff, John Langan, Arkady Martine*

In 1938, critic Cyril Connolly advised writers to listen for “the critic’s truth sharpened by envy, the embarrassed praise of a sincere friend, the silence of gifted contemporaries.” How does etiquette influence criticism, and conversations among critics about criticism? How does the critic’s place within (or outside of) the field or community influence their criticism and how it’s received? This panel will tackle these and other thorny questions of critical etiquette.

**8:00 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: John P. Murphy**

**8:00 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Benjamin C. Kinney**

**8:00 PM**

Abigail Adams • **Rainbow Social and Safe Space**

Join other LGBTQIA2P folks at Readercon in a safer space to make friends, chat about whatever you feel like, and build mutual support within fandom. If your identity is anywhere on or under the rainbow, you’re welcome to participate. (To maintain a safer space, allo-cis-het allies are asked not to attend.)

**8:00 PM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Neil Clarke, Mary Anne Mohanraj**

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**8:00 PM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: C.S.E. Cooney, Catherynne M. Valente**

**8:30 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Sarah Pinsker**

**8:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: N.S. Dolkart**

**9:00 PM**

Salon B • **Translation Slam!** • *Anatoly Belilovsky, Anna Kashina, Tamara Vardomsкая*  
Led by Anatoly Belilovsky, several translators will take a paragraph in Russian and produce their own translations into English. A canonical version may also be available. The versions will be read and their similarities and differences discussed.

**9:00 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Sabrina Vourvoulis**

**9:00 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Meg Elison**

**9:00 PM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Liz Gorinsky, Rosemary Kirstein**

**9:00 PM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Arkady Martine, Vivian Shaw**

**9:30 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Victoria Sandbrook**

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**9:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Sunny Moraine**

**10:00 PM**

Salon 3 • **The Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award**

The Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award, honoring a writer worthy of being rediscovered by today's readers, is granted annually by a panel of judges. 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 3 • **Meet the Pros(e)**

Each writer at this 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 3 • **Dance Party**

Dance into the wee hours with your fellow attendees and panelists. We'll be playing music primarily from, but not limited to, the 1980s and 1990s.

## Saturday

**10:00 AM**

Salon 3 • **The Instrumentality of Slankind** • *Graham Sleight*

SF can be a tool for advocacy, saying either, "Society should go in this direction!" or the opposite. However, some authors have actively shied away from this role. Sometimes advocacy has worked, and sometimes it hasn't; for instance, Pan Am weren't flying to the moon in 2001. By considering the work of authors such as Octavia E. Butler, Thomas M. Disch, William Gibson, Robert A. Heinlein, N. K. Jemisin, and Kim Stanley Robinson, Graham Sleight will try to make sense of whether, and how, SF can argue for better worlds.

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### 10:00 AM

Salon 4 • **Compassionate AI** • *Amal El-Mohtar, Carlos Hernandez, Matthew Kressel, Natalie Luhrs, Kestrell Verlager*

In a 2018 tweet, Amal El-Mohtar described the artificial intelligences in Martha Wells's Murderbot series and in Jeph Jacques's *Questionable Content* webcomic as "gorgeously compassionate." This is a reversal of the long-running trope in SF of characterizing AI as cold, scheming, and murderous. Where else can readers find compassionate AI, and what makes these depictions so vital and appealing?

### 10:00 AM

Salon A • **The Future of Gene Editing: Universal Cures, Perfect Species, or a Global Disaster?** • *Anna Kashina*

Recent advances in biomedical research have enabled us not only to introduce new genes and create genetically modified organisms, but to edit genomes and eliminate inborn causes of such diseases as cancer and heart failure. New technologies make such editing easier and easier, reminiscent of the way computers once revolutionized our ability to edit written texts. Biomedical sciences professor Anna Kashina discusses what is currently possible with gene editing and where these technologies are leading.

### 10:00 AM

Salon B • **Badly Written SF/F Round-Robin Read-Aloud**

In the grand (?) tradition of *Eye of Argon* read-alouds, we'll pass around and read from wonderfully terrible, terribly wonderful works of speculative fiction. Each participant will read until the buzzer sounds or they're overcome with hysterics. Bring your unfavorites to share, or come to listen and laugh. Note: this is a festival of badly *written* SF/F, with a focus on (lack of) prose quality; it does not include works whose badness lies in harmful ideas or tired stereotypes.

### 10:00 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Keffy R.M. Kehrli**

### 10:00 AM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Farah Rose Smith**

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### 10:00 AM

Abigail Adams • **Picture Book Storytime for All Ages (Saturday)**

All ages are welcome for an hour of picture book storytime.

### 10:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Vivian Shaw, Vandana Singh**

### 10:00 AM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Stephen Graham Jones, Paul Tremblay**

### 10:30 AM

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

### 10:30 AM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: John Lawson**

### 11:00 AM

Salon 3 • **Whatever Happened with That Singularity Thing?** • *Ruthanna Emrys, Matthew Kressel, Jess Nevins, John O'Neil, Romie Stott*

The development of artificial superintelligence doesn't seem to have brought about the sudden and unfathomable changes to human civilization that so many people hypothesized. Is the singularity yet to come? What other possibilities are being imagined for futures in which humans and AIs mingle and merge?

### 11:00 AM

Salon 4 • **The Real Middle Ages, Part 2: Anywhere but Europe** • *Charles Allison, Carolyn Ives Gilman, Anna Kashina, Chelsea R. Miller, Walt Williams*

Writers looking for alternatives to cod-medieval European settings don't need to look far. The years 500 to 1500 C.E. were times of tremendous cultural and technological change around the world. Novelties of that period included Islam, paper money, and fast-ripening rice; the Incan Empire, Great Zimbabwe, and the Tang Dynasty flourished. Which non-European settings of the 6th to 16th centuries

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have been successfully used as the basis for fantasy lands, and which might writers find particularly inspiring?

### 11:00 AM

Salon A • **Henry Darger: Inside America’s Best-Known “Outsider” Artist** • *Elizabeth Hand*

Reclusive and eccentric janitor Henry Darger (subject of Elizabeth Hand’s forthcoming novel, *Curious Toys*) lived alone for his entire life and only after his death was his incredible magnum opus discovered: a 15,000 page illustrated book titled *The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What Is Known as the Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion*. Hand explores the true crime that obsessed and inspired him, and how Darger became known as one of the country’s most remarkable artists.

### 11:00 AM

Salon B • **Incorporating the Media into Fantasy Worlds** • *Zig Zag Claybourne, Randee Dawn, L. Penelope, Sabrina Vourvoulias, Paul Weimer*

From the 24-hour news cycle to online journalism, the media plays an enormous role in our society, but it tends to make less of an appearance in fantasy works. L. Penelope will lead a discussion on how authors incorporate the media into their fantasy writing, as well as the challenges and benefits of doing so.

### 11:00 AM

Salon C • **Reading: Marissa Lingen**

### 11:00 AM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Gregory A. Wilson**

### 11:00 AM

Abigail Adams • **Make a Friend, Go to Lunch**

New to Readercon and looking to meet people, or just in the mood for some company over lunch? Drop by this informal, unstructured meetup to make a new friend or three. Low-key icebreakers will be provided.

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**11:00 AM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Tananarive Due, Sheila Williams**

**11:00 AM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Ellen Datlow, Theodora Goss**

**11:30 AM**

Salon C • **Reading: Vandana Singh**

**11:30 AM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: F. Brett Cox**

**12:00 PM**

Salon 3 • **The Implications of SFWA's Rate Increase** • *Scott H. Andrews, Pablo Defendini, Michael J. DeLuca, Paul Levinson, Romie Stott*

SFWA will be raising their designated qualifying rate for fiction from 6 to 8 cents per word in September. It might seem a small change, but it has the potential to alter the field significantly for a lot of writers, readers, editors, and publishers. This panel, led by Michael J. DeLuca, will discuss what the change means for specific markets, who'll be able to meet the new rate, who benefits and who doesn't, and how this relates to the broader economic and political climate.

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

**12:00 PM**

Salon 4 • **Heist Stories as Meta-Genre** • *Josh Jasper, John P. Murphy, Tracy Townsend, John Wiswell, Navah Wolfe*

On a panel at Readercon 29 about collaboration and community, John Wiswell observed that heist novels have “a synthesis of premise and plot,” while Scott Lynch added that heist stories reinforce that people need one another. This panel will dig more into heist stories, which (like humor and horror) can be layered on top of any genre or setting. What makes them satisfying? How can they make use of speculative elements while retaining their core of human ingenuity and interdependence?

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### 12:00 PM

Salon A • **Classic Fiction Book Club: Rosemary Kirstein's Steerswomen Series** • *Elaine Isaak, Victoria Janssen, Yves Meynard, Kate Nepveu, Cecilia Tan*

Since the publication of Rosemary Kirstein's first novel, *The Steerswoman*, in 1989, the Steerswoman series has become a quiet classic for its powerful female friendships, slowly-revealed worldbuilding, and unique approach to genre paradigms. Over the last 30 years, four novels have been published, with another two intended in the future. We'll look at the state of the series today, and speculate about where it might be going.

### 12:00 PM

Salon B • **The Worst Job You've Ever Had** • *Susan Bigelow, Jack Dann, Jim Freund, Auston Habershaw, Karen Heuler, José Pablo Iriarte, Stephen Graham Jones, Keffy R.M. Kehrl, Bart Leib, Vivian Shaw*

Bring your best stories of terrible jobs outside the literary world to this story circle of anti-nostalgia. Whether they inspired your writing or left you blocked for years, share the pain and get some validating cries of horror, peals of laughter, and grimaces of sympathy.

### 12:00 PM

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

Members of the New York-based writers group will read selections from their work.

### 12:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **From Page to Stage: Techniques, Tricks, and Improv Games to Help Writers with Public Speaking** • *Martin Cahill, C.S.E. Cooney*

Performers C.S.E. Cooney and Martin Cahill will help writers improve their public speaking through improv comedy exercises and theater games, showing how public speaking is rooted in confidence, trust, and drama. The workshop will include some warm-ups and techniques, as well as an opportunity to practice in front of others. Bring a sample of your work to read aloud.

### 12:00 PM

Abigail Adams • **Study Hall (Saturday)**

Gather with laptops, notebooks, or lovingly maintained antique portable typewriters for quiet unstructured writing time. This is a great opportunity to jump on a bit of



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inspiration from a panel or tackle the project you swore you were going to get done this weekend.

### 12:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: N.S. Dolkart, Gemma Files**

### 12:00 PM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Amal El-Mohtar, Max Gladstone**

### 1:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Writing While Chronically Ill or Disabled** • *Lisa Bradley, Jack Haringa, Vylar Kaftan, Darcie Little Badger, Sheila Williams*

There are myriad ways in which disabilities and chronic illnesses can make a writer's life harder: chronic pain makes it hard to focus on writing, inaccessible venues diminish opportunities for networking, and speech difficulties can interfere with readings, to name just a few. What adaptation strategies can help a disabled or ill writer function? How can a writer who becomes disabled mid-career learn to adjust to the new status quo?

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

### 1:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Outgroup Reviews of Ownvoices Work** • *José Pablo Iriarte, Victoria Sandbrook, Meredith Schwartz, Farah Rose Smith, teri.zin*

When authors write from their own experiences as marginalized people (creating ownvoices stories), reviewers who don't share that marginalization (outgroup reviewers) may struggle to appropriately contextualize, analyze, and discuss the work. How can outsider reviewers handle this knowledge gap? What's the place of sensitivity reading for reviews? When should an outgroup reviewer step aside and support the work of an ownvoices reviewer instead?

### 1:00 PM

Salon A • **The White Space Around the Words: The Camaraderie of Poetry and Comedy** • *Amal El-Mohtar, Greer Gilman, Julia Rios, Romie Stott, Sonya Taaffe*

In a 2018 interview, comedian Dylan Moran said, "The verbal fun of standup is much more like poetry than prose... because a lot of it is about elision, suggestion,

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inference, the white space around the words. They're much closer than people think, poetry and jokes." Our panelists explore this similarity between poetry and comedy, sharing some of their favorite examples of wordplay that works within the white space.

### 1:00 PM

Salon B • **Collecting, Curating, and Culling a Personal Library** • *Rose Fox*

In this discussion, facilitated by Rose Fox, book-lovers will grapple with the logistical and emotional challenges of managing personal libraries. Topics may include pruning books that will never be read, selecting new books to include, enhancing the enjoyment of browsing one's own shelves, and increasing the odds of wonderful, serendipitous encounters with beloved books.

### 1:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Theodora Goss**

### 1:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Elizabeth Hand, Catherynne M. Valente**

### 1:00 PM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Tananarive Due, Michael Swanwick**

### 1:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Max Gladstone**

### 2:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Portrayals of Disability in 21st-Century Horror Fiction** • *Gemma Files, John Lawson, Elsa Sjunneson-Henry, Kestrell Verlager*

Disability has often been used as a metaphor or trope in horror fiction in a way that's insensitive at best or oppressive at worst to people with all kinds of disabilities. This panel will discuss 21st-century approaches to this trope—both those that fall into the same pitfalls and those that deconstruct them.

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

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### 2:00 PM

Salon 4 • **I Don't Know Why I'm on This Panel** • *Jeffrey Ford, Elizabeth Hand, Arkady Martine, Cecilia Tan, Sabrina Vourvoulias*

This phrase is often spoken during panelist introductions at conventions. In this case it's literally true: the panelists have no idea why the program staff have put them on a panel together or what they're supposed to discuss. They may try to figure it out, or they may have a totally unstructured chat for an hour. Either way, it's sure to be entertaining.

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

### 2:00 PM

Salon A • **Marvelous and Mundane: The Impossible, Inadequate 40-Minute History of How Fiction Got Its Genres** • *Austin Grossman*

Barriers between speculative and “literary” fiction are crumbling. In this talk, Austin Grossman tries and inevitably fails to understand how we got those barriers in the first place! It'll be fast, fun, and messy.

### 2:00 PM

Salon B • **Translation and Embedded Assumptions** • *Anatoly Belilovsky, John Chu, Neil Clarke, Pablo Defendini, Tamara Vardomskaya*

In an interview with Fran Wilde, Emily Wilson described the effect of embedded cultural assumptions in translating *The Odyssey*—not only the assumptions in the original Greek, but the assumptions that past English translators have imposed on the text. Panelists will discuss how translators can and should approach these challenges.

### 2:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Michael Cisco**

### 2:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Jack Dann**

### 2:00 PM

Abigail Adams • **Analog and Digital Gaming Meetup**

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Whether your preferences run toward Pandemic, Pokémon Go, or Portal, come join other gaming fans to make new friends, swap contact information, organize players for games you'd like to run later in the weekend, or even play a quick hand of Magic: The Gathering if there's time. Feel free to bring a tabletop game that can be played in under 30 minutes.

### 2:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: John Clute, Stephen Graham Jones**

### 2:00 PM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Zig Zag Claybourne, John Crowley**

### 2:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Scott Edelman**

### 2:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Barbara Krasnoff**

### 3:00 PM

Salon 3 • **The Works of Stephen Graham Jones** • *Jack Haringa, John Langan, Darcie Little Badger, teri.zin, Paul Tremblay*

Stephen Graham Jones is a Piikáni (Blackfeet) author of cutting-edge fiction, ranging from the crime, horror, and science fiction genres to the purely experimental. His work has been multiply nominated for the Shirley Jackson, Stoker, and World Fantasy Awards, with *Mapping the Interior* (2017) winning the Stoker Award for Superior Achievement in Long Fiction. He has also won the Texas Institute of Letters Award and been the recipient of a National Endowment of the Arts fellowship in fiction. Playful, inventive, sincere, imaginative, touching, and horrifying, Jones's work spans genres and defies the cynicism and alienation of postmodern literature. Please join us in welcoming him to Readercon and exploring his fiction.

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

### 3:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Periods of Not Writing** • *Terri Bruce, Suzy McKee Charnas, Jeffrey Ford, Sally*

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*Wiener Grotta, Lauren Roy*

Writers sometimes go through long periods of not writing that have nothing to do with writer's block. The reason for the break could be a demanding job, child or elder care, dealing with illness, or other real-world issues. How do writers deal with these periods of not writing? Are there strategies to make space for creativity when it's hard to just sit down and write? How can one get past the awful feeling that one will never write again?

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

### 3:00 PM

Salon A • **How We Wrote *This Is How You Lose the Time War*** • *Amal El-Mohtar, Max Gladstone*

Max Gladstone and Amal El-Mohtar discuss how they co-wrote their epistolary spy vs. spy novella.

### 3:00 PM

Salon B • **You Know, It Kinda Grows on You** • *James Patrick Kelly, Marissa Lingen, Arkady Martine, Eric Schaller, David G. Shaw*

Spaceships that are giant plants, humans whose brains rival supercomputers, lizards bred to function as flying flamethrowers—these are just a few science-fictional examples of how humans might manipulate their bodies and environments to support the human race's spread throughout the universe. This panel will examine imagined technology that lives and breathes, and how human life might change and grow alongside it.

### 3:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Tananarive Due**

### 3:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Dramatic Readings from the Ig Nobel Prizes** • *Marc Abrahams, C.S.E. Cooney, Rose Fox, Heath Miller, Sonya Taaffe*

Highlights from Ig Nobel prize-winning studies and patents are presented in dramatic mini-readings by luminaries and experts (in some field). The audience will have an opportunity to ask questions about the research presented. Answers will be based on the expertise of the presenters, who may have a different expertise than the researchers.

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### 3:00 PM

#### Abigail Adams • **Stimming-Friendly Brain Reset Time**

Overwhelmed by the intensity of Readercon? Want some quiet alone-together time with other people? Need stimming time without worrying about being judged? Come on by! There'll be a selection of stimtable items available for use, plus foam earplugs and sunglasses. Quietly chat with people, bounce on your toes, hide in a corner.... Whatever works for you and doesn't impinge on others is actively welcome!

### 3:00 PM

#### Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Ellen Datlow, Scott Edelman**

### 3:00 PM

#### Autograph Table • **Autographs: Phenderson Djéli Clark, Vylar Kaftan**

### 4:00 PM

#### Salon 4 • **Stephen Graham Jones Interviewed by Paul Tremblay**

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

### 5:00 PM

#### Salon 4 • **Tananarive Due Interviewed by Kate Maruyama**

*This session has CART real-time captioning.*

### 6:00 PM

#### Salon A • **The Black Space of the Mountains: The American West in Speculative Fiction** • *Don D'Amassa, Carolyn Ives Gilman, Alexander Jablokov, Hillary Monahan, James A. Moore*

The "settling" of the American West has been romanticized to the point of myth, spawning weird west stories, fantasy westerns, and space westerns galore. The region's less savory history, including the oppression of native populations and non-white immigrant workers, is often absent from these narratives. This panel will discuss insider and outsider narratives of the American West in speculative fiction,

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“global wests” on other globes, place as character (as seen in the work of GoH Stephen Graham Jones), and more.

### 6:00 PM

Salon B • **The Future (If Any) of the Talking Animal Fantasy** • *John Crowley, Gregory Feeley, Jim Freund, Sherwood Smith, Vinnie Tesla*

The talking animal fantasy is one of the very oldest forms of recorded fiction; fables of talking animals appear as early as Hesiod and Aesop and in the Panchatantra. Though popular throughout the Middle Ages, by the 19th century such tales had ceased to be acceptable themes for Western literature outside of children’s stories; 20th-century magical realism and genre fantasy did much to reclaim it for adult fiction. Gregory Feeley and Sherwood Smith will lead a discussion of how Nalo Hopkinson’s *Sister Mine*, Haruki Murakami’s *Kafka on the Shore*, John Crowley’s *Ka*, and Yoon Ha Lee’s *Dragon Pearl* make interestingly different uses of this form, and whether it can remain viable for much longer.

### 6:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Rainbow Open Mic**

Celebrate the voices of LGBTQIA2P writers! Read your work out loud among a group of welcoming peers. Hear new work by established authors and meet new writers! If your identity is anywhere on or under the rainbow, you’re welcome to read your work; allies are invited to attend and listen. Sign up at the information desk.

### 6:00 PM

Abigail Adams • **Nonwhite/PoC Social and Safe Space**

Join other people of color/nonwhite people at Readercon in a safer space to make friends, chat about whatever you feel like, and build mutual support within fandom. If you identify as a person of color, nonwhite, or multiracial, you’re welcome to participate. (To maintain a safer space, white allies are asked not to attend.)

### 7:00 PM

Salon A • **Hospitable Worlds** • *Erik Amundsen, N.S. Dolkart, Max Gladstone, Elaine Isaak, Tracy Townsend*

There’s been much analysis of both the technique and the moral legitimacy of making readers feel alienated, disturbed, or unsafe. But in a 2017 keynote speech at the Surrey International Writers’ Conference, Amal El-Mohtar said, “We don’t talk a great deal about being hospitable; about being welcoming in our writing, about

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creating worlds... that—even if they contain fierce creatures or vicious climates—receive the reader as a guest.” Panelists will discuss how, when, and why to make readers feel welcome in the text.

### 7:00 PM

Salon B • **The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of Bicameral**

**Models** • *Ruthanna Emrys, Benjamin C. Kinney, John P. Murphy, John O’Neil*

Computer science and neuroscience may each be getting closer to the mysteries of cognition, but they do so from very different directions. How do they inform each other, and how do they get in each other’s way? Are their differences reconcilable? For that matter, is it even meaningful to think of them as being about the same thing? What do their cutting edges imply for our own deep dreams of fantastika?

### 7:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Auston Habershaw**

### 7:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Anna Kashina**

### 8:00 PM

Salon 4 • **A Dark and Stormy Mic** • *Martin Cahill, Rose Fox, Heath Miller, Sarah Pinsker, Catherynne M. Valente*

Come one, come all, to see fabulous guests win no prizes at all and sing their hearts out in this comic game show hosted by Heath Miller. Thrill while he runs our teams through your favorite SFF games! The teams feature the Original and Ever-Present Catherynne M. Valente and Sparkling Newcomer Sarah Pinsker as well as Returning Champion Martin Cahill and Program Chair Extraordinaire Rose Fox! This year’s show is a benefit for the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES). Donations of any amount are welcome.

### 8:00 PM

Salon A • **The Roads and the Woods: The American South in Speculative**

**Fiction** • *Christopher Brown, F. Brett Cox, JD Horn, Howard Waldrop*

The American South’s bloody history, mingled cultures, complex geography, and even flora and fauna exert a profound influence on its speculative fiction writers.



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Our panelists will discuss ways Southern authors employ the region's unique storytelling traditions to craft tales rooted in the South's past and present.

### 8:00 PM

Salon B • **How Much Science Is Enough Science?** • *Marc Abrahams, David DeGraff, Anna Kashina, Kathy Kitts, Vivian Shaw*

Some topics require more scientific know-how than others. How much do writers need to know for particular topics—and how do they know how much they need to know? What are some techniques for acquiring necessary knowledge without getting a PhD? This panel of scientist-writers offers helpful guidance.

### 8:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Ruthanna Emrys**

### 8:30 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Dianna Sanchez**

### 9:00 PM

Salon A • **Food at the Corner of Fiction and Community** • *Andrea Martinez Corbin, N.S. Dolkart, Greer Gilman, Michael Swanwick, Sabrina Vourvoulias*

Food plays a central role in many cultures and accordingly takes center stage in the work of many speculative fiction writers. How does cuisine help define, or build, a community? How can food be used to communicate important information about a people to the reader? What are some particularly noteworthy examples of the way food can be used to set, or subvert, expectations?

### 9:00 PM

Salon B • **Other (American) Regional Horrors** • *John Langan, Ian Muneshwar, Jess Nevins, Nicole D. Sconiers, Elsa Sjunneson-Henry*

When thinking of horror as a regional affect, it's easy enough to go to New England or the American South and call it a day. But there's nothing uniquely frightening about these regions: people can be scared anywhere. This panel will examine what can make other regions of the Americas sources of horror fiction, and who writes those tales, and how.

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### 9:00 PM

#### Sylvanus Thayer • **Edward Bryant Memorial Round-Robin Reading**

If you knew Memorial GOH Edward Bryant or were inspired by his work, come read from your own work for five to ten minutes at this hour-long round robin (likely to be scheduled for Friday or Saturday evening in honor of Ed's fondness for late-night readings). Hosted by Chuck Anderson and Jim LeMay, editors of *Edward Bryant's Sphere of Influence*.

### 10:00 PM

#### Salon 4 • **Reading: Howard Waldrop**

## Sunday

### 10:00 AM

#### Salon 3 • **Marginalized People Destroy History** • *Bill Campbell, Sioban Krzywicki, Chelsea R. Miller, Mary Anne Mohanraj, Elsa Sjunneson-Henry*

In P. Djèlí Clark's *The Black God's Drums*, African gods wreak havoc on airships during the Civil War. In Nisi Shawl's *Everfair*, the Congolese beat back the Belgians with steam power and ancient magic. Sarah Gailey's *River of Teeth* adds hippos and gender flexibility to 19th-century America. These stories and others reimagine history through the eyes of the oppressed and flip the script. Panelists will identify other moments in history in need of the same treatment, and discuss what that might look like.

### 10:00 AM

#### Salon 4 • **Middle Book Syndrome** • *Theodora Goss, Anna Kashina, Kate Nepveu, Tracy Townsend, Gregory A. Wilson*

The middle book in a trilogy is often thought of as the one in which the fascinating setting and gripping conflict that were set up in the first book... are set up some more. Panelists will discuss recent trilogies and the degrees to which they fit this stereotype; how middle book syndrome has evolved over time; and how they've learned to avoid, address, or love the middle book's problems as authors and as readers.

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### 10:00 AM

Salon A • **Exoplanets in 2019** • *Kathy Kitts*

With 6,000 exoplanets discovered and counting, how many might host life and how many of those might develop intelligence? Kathy Kitts will discuss the likelihood of recognizable extraterrestrial life by examining our odder earthling brethren first and then extrapolating, as well as biosigns and the techniques to observe them.

### 10:00 AM

Salon B • **Satire, Criticism, and Humility** • *John Clute, Meg Elison, Victoria Sandbrook, Graham Sleight, Henry Wessells*

Satire and criticism are sometimes presumed to be the province of snobs who enjoy tearing down anything they don't like, but the most nuanced critique comes from someone who has a genuine desire to improve the world by pointing out what's wrong with it. How can critics and satirists bring humility to fields that also necessarily require a strong ego and a belief in one's own rightness? How does one write these works from a place of performing a service?

### 10:00 AM

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

The Word Count Irregulars read flash fiction stories based on a visual prompt.

### 10:00 AM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: L. Timmel Duchamp**

### 10:00 AM

Abigail Adams • **Picture Book Storytime for All Ages (Sunday)**

All ages are welcome for an hour of picture book storytime.

### 10:00 AM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Jeanne Cavelos, John Crowley**

### 10:00 AM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Gemma Files, Malka Older**

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### 10:30 AM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: José Pablo Iriarte**

### 11:00 AM

Salon 3 • **Lloyd Alexander, Existentialist** • *C.S.E. Cooney, Andrea Martinez Corbin, Chris Gerwel, Marissa Lingen, Sonya Taaffe*

Lloyd Alexander, translator of Jean-Paul Sartre, wrote an existentialist epic fantasy series. As Jesse Schotter writes on *Full Stop*, “The end of *The High King*, and Taran’s choice to remain in Prydain... salvage[s] the idea of free will within the deterministic framework of the genre.” How did existentialism influence Alexander’s other work (*Time Cat*, the Westmark trilogy)? What are other examples of existentialist speculative fiction epics? With the present deconstruction of prophecy-driven epics, how can writers learn from Alexander’s work?

### 11:00 AM

Salon 4 • **The Shirley Jackson Awards**

The Shirley Jackson Awards recognize outstanding achievement in the literature of psychological suspense, horror, and the dark fantastic. Jackson (1916–1965) wrote classic works such as *The Haunting of Hill House*, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, and “The Lottery.” Readercon’s guests of honor will emcee the ceremony, granting awards to the best works published in 2018 as selected by a jury of professionals in the field.

### 11:00 AM

Salon A • **Graybeards Beyond Gandalf** • *John Clute, Elizabeth Hand, Anna Kashina, Barbara Krasnoff, Robert V. S. Redick*

Relatively few stories have protagonists much older than the target audience, and the traits commonly associated with heroism aren’t often associated with age. Yet in speculative fiction there are all manner of ways to break the link between age and infirmity, or to defy or redefine the concept of aging. Panelists will explore the potential of elderly protagonists and unpack a hero’s journey that doesn’t get the attention it deserves.

### 11:00 AM

Salon B • **Just Exotic Enough: Inclusion in and Exclusion from “World Literature”** • *John*

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*Chu, José Pablo Iriarte, Mary Anne Mohanraj, Mimi Mondal, Vandana Singh*

In the 2018 article “Comforting Myths,” Rabih Alameddine argues that the “world literature” genre consists of authors who “are basically safe, domesticated, just exotic enough to make our readers feel that they are liberal, not parochial or biased.” Panelists will discuss issues raised in the article, including what speculative literature’s comforting myths are, how the dominant culture identifies which writers are allowed to be heard, and the ways in which being labeled a “diverse” author can be a double-edged sword.

**11:00 AM**

Salon C • **Reading: Erik Amundsen**

**11:00 AM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Jeff Hecht**

**11:00 AM**

Abigail Adams • **Study Hall (Sunday)**

Gather with laptops, notebooks, or lovingly maintained antique portable typewriters for quiet unstructured writing time. This is a great opportunity to jump on a bit of inspiration from a panel or tackle the project you swore you were going to get done this weekend.

**11:00 AM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: John P. Murphy, Sarah Pinsker**

**11:00 AM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Alexander Jablov, Howard Waldrop**

**11:30 AM**

Salon C • **Reading: Paul Levinson**

**11:30 AM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Walt Williams**

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### 12:00 PM

Salon 3 • **Renovating the Haunted House** • *Jeanne Cavelos, Michael Cisco, Gillian Daniels, Hillary Monahan, Jess Nevins*

The haunted house story has been intermittently popular since the 1840s, with peaks in the 1950s (with Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*) and the 1970s (with Stephen King's *The Shining* and Anne Rivers Siddons's *The House Next Door*). In the 21st century, the haunted house story is enjoying a new popularity. What is it about haunted house stories that draws readers and writers alike? What makes haunted house stories retain their relevance and power?

### 12:00 PM

Salon 4 • **Journalism at the End of the World** • *Mike Allen, Jeff Hecht, Betsy Mitchell, Cadwell Turnbull, T.X. Watson*

Journalism has always faced economic, political, infrastructural, and technological threats, and the current era is no exception. How are today's journalists dealing with these challenges, and how can both problems and solutions be extrapolated into near-future or far-future science fiction? How would journalists cover apocalypses, alien invasions, or the singularity? What if those journalists were robots or AIs? What does journalism's history hint at for its future?

### 12:00 PM

Salon A • **Making First Contact with Your Local Speculative Fiction Community** • *Rob Cameron, Crystal M. Huff, Matthew Kressel, Jim LeMay, Lauren Roy*

Readercon and other national conventions are great, but what's happening in your backyard? Local cons, reading events, workshops, classes, and critique groups are just a few examples of places where you might find other speculative fiction fans. If those things don't exist near you, it might be time to create them! Panelists will share their experiences with joining and building in-person fannish communities, including joys, perils, and practical advice.

### 12:00 PM

Salon B • **The Peril of Being Disbelieved** • *Meg Elison, Gwynne Garfinkle, Elsa Sjunneson-Henry, Sonya Taaffe, teri.zin*

In the 2017 essay "The Peril of Being Disbelieved: Horror and the Intuition of Women" at *Tor.com*, Emily Asher-Perrin examines the horror trope of the woman who intuits that a situation is dangerous but is ignored by those around her, and how that trope mirrors society's refusal to believe women more generally. Panelists

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will explore the trope, whether and how it is being subverted, and the ways in which other marginalized groups are also disbelieved.

**12:00 PM**

Salon C • **Reading: Julia Rios**

**12:00 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: James A. Moore**

**12:00 PM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Vylar Kaftan, Malka Older**

**12:00 PM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Paul Levinson, Dianna Sanchez**

**12:30 PM**

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

**12:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Charles Allison**

**1:00 PM**

Salon 3 • **What Does Authenticity Look Like?** • *Steve Berman, Lisa Bradley, John Chu, John Lawson, John Wiswell*

As the #ownvoices movement gathers steam, marginalized authors encounter demands for authenticity in their work from agents, editors, and readers who often have no idea what authenticity looks like. These authors often already pressure themselves, asking, “Am I #ownvoices enough?” But how else can they signal that their writing is for or about an underrepresented demographic? This panel of marginalized authors, led by Lisa M. Bradley, will discuss the concept of authenticity, the #ownvoices label, and how authors present and think about their work.

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### 1:00 PM

Salon 4 • **From Seed to Story: How to Escape the Slush Pile** • *Martin Cahill, Scott Edelman, James Patrick Kelly, Benjamin C. Kinney, Kenneth Schneyer*

As Ann Leckie explained in a 2013 blog post, even great writers will have stories rejected if they write 7,000 words around an underdeveloped idea. So what kind of research should go into a short story? How much plot and exposition are called for? What questions should the writer be asking and answering before they even start writing? Panelists will explore various methods by which a story seed can be nurtured into something publishable.

### 1:00 PM

Salon A • **A Hidden Knife: The Legacy of Fascism Embedded in Science Fiction** • *Keffy R.M. Kehrl, John P. Murphy, Nikhil Singh, Graham Sleight, Romie Stott*

Early-20th-century pulp SF and futurism brought fascist ideas into the mainstream of speculative fiction. Since then, a great deal of storytelling, satire, and literary criticism have been invested in exorcising this demon from the genre. However, in the essay “Fascism & Science Fiction,” Aaron Santesso asks whether some of the core tropes of SF are themselves inherently fascist. Panelists will discuss this question, as well as possible remedies and counternarratives.

### 1:00 PM

Salon B • **Extremely Alternative Schooling** • *Rob Cameron, Theodora Goss, Tom Greene, Kathy Kitts, Tamara Vardomskaya*

Considering the forces that have shaped Western-style formal education into what it is today, from primary school to university, what might it look like under different influences (such as other Earth cultures, or in fantastical settings), and how might it change in the future? What are some particularly interesting education systems in speculative fiction?

### 1:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Lisa (LJ) Cohen**

### 1:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Paul Tremblay**



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**1:00 PM**

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: Amal El-Mohtar, Max Gladstone**

**1:00 PM**

Autograph Table • **Autographs: Rosemary Kirstein, Sarah Pinsker**

**1:30 PM**

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

**1:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Mike Allen**

**2:00 PM**

Salon 3 • **Carrying the Albatross** • *Vylar Kaftan, Hillary Monahan, Elsa Sjunneson-Henry, T.X. Watson*

Even when depictions of mental illnesses in fiction are not inaccurate or offensive, their focus is often on the drama of acute episodes. What do these depictions miss about the mundane everyday experiences of living with, working around, or recovering from a mental illness? How might magic, cultural shifts, or futuristic technology change these lived realities or even provide opportunities for experience with mental illnesses to be seen as a useful strength?

**2:00 PM**

Salon 4 • **Writers' Hobbies** • *Charles Allison, Stephen Graham Jones, Steven Popkes, Dianna Sanchez*

Writers often talk about the ways their day jobs creep into their writing, but what about their hobbies? Our panelists will discuss the ways their secret and not-so-secret hobbies have influenced their work.

**2:00 PM**

Salon A • **Inside the Odyssey Writing Workshop** • *Jeanne Cavelos*

Jeanne Cavelos describes Odyssey, an intensive six-week program for writers of fantasy, science fiction, and horror held each summer in Manchester, NH. Current

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students and graduates will add their own perspectives. The talk will cover the structure of the program, the work required, common struggles of writers, and the pros and cons of workshops.

### 2:00 PM

Salon B • **Found Family in SF** • *Anatoly Belilovsky, Rosemary Kirstein, Bart Leib, Sarah Pinsker, Catherynne M. Valente*

Ideas of family are sensitive to societal conditions, so science fiction—a genre that frequently concerns itself with adjusted societal conditions—is a fruitful space for exploring the concept of found family. Panelists will discuss tropes and examples of familylike groups in SF (especially in confined situations such as starships, colonies, schools, and walled compounds) and the ways that these stories relate to the reality of found families for people isolated by present-day societal conditions.

### 2:00 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Gwynne Garfinkle**

### 2:00 PM

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Marc Abrahams**

### 2:00 PM

Abigail Adams • **Brimstone Rhine in Concert** • *C.S.E. Cooney, Carlos Hernandez, Faye Ringel*

Mythic music by singer-songwriter C.S.E. Cooney, with Faye Ringel on piano and Carlos Hernandez on ukulele and cajon.

### 2:00 PM

Concierge Lounge • **Kaffeeklatsches: John Langan, James A. Moore**

### 2:00 PM

Autograph Table • **Autographs: F. Brett Cox, Jack Dann**

### 2:30 PM

Salon C • **Reading: Ken Schneyer**

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**2:30 PM**

Sylvanus Thayer • **Reading: Lisa Bradley**

**3:00 PM**

Salon 3 • **Readercon 30 Feedback Session** • *Rose Fox, Sioban Krzywicki, B. Diane Martin*  
Come share your thoughts on what we did well and what we can do better.