



Contents

Comments from the Chair	2
Convention Committee	2
Honored Guest Ted Chiang	3
Honored Guest Donna Haraway	6
Honored Guest Jo Walton.....	8
Honored Ghost Octavia Butler	9
Hotel	14
Registration	14
Consuite	14
Dealers' Room	14
Game Room	15
Safety Team.....	15
Programming, Friday, March 11, 2016	17
Programming, Saturday, March 12, 2016	19
Programming, Sunday, March 13, 2016	24
Program Participants	28
Access Information.....	36
Anti-Harassment Policy	40
Photography Policy.....	40
FOGcon 6 – Hours and Useful Information.....	Back cover

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Comments from the Chair

By Wendy Shaffer

I'd like to welcome all of you to the sixth FOGcon convention, with the theme of Transformations.

Speaking of transformations, I never imagined when I attended the very first FOGcon that I'd some day chair the sixth. It still seems slightly unreal. Unfortunately, I think I'm going to miss the Impostor Syndrome workshop this weekend, so I'll just have to carry on pretending that I know what I'm doing.

But the even more remarkable transformation has been in FOGcon itself. I love that this convention has grown a community of people who come back year after year. I also love the fact that we're a first convention for so many people. Getting to introduce people to the strange and wonderful world of science fiction conventions is both a privilege and great fun.

So what I'd ask of you all this year is to keep both of these traditions going. If you're a FOGcon old-timer, do your best to make the newcomers feel welcome. And if this is your first FOGcon, don't be afraid to jump right in!

Who knows, maybe one of you attending your first FOGcon this weekend will someday chair FOGcon 12!

Convention Committee

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Steven Schwartz, Vice-Chair

Darrin Barnett, Safety

Aaron I. Spielman, Programming and Honored Guest Liaison

Alan Bostick, Publications

Alyc Helms, Webmistress

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Colleen O'Rourke, Con Suite

Crystal Huff, Programing, Honored Guest Liaison Coordinator

Debbie Notkin, Hotel Liaison and Senior Adviser

John Kusters, Access and Logistics

Jamie Buschbaum, Sally Rose Robinson, Dealers Room

John Kusters, Access and Logistics, Programming

Keyan Bowes, Writers Workshop

Liang Song, Logistics and Short Story Contest Coordinator

Micah Joel, Game Room

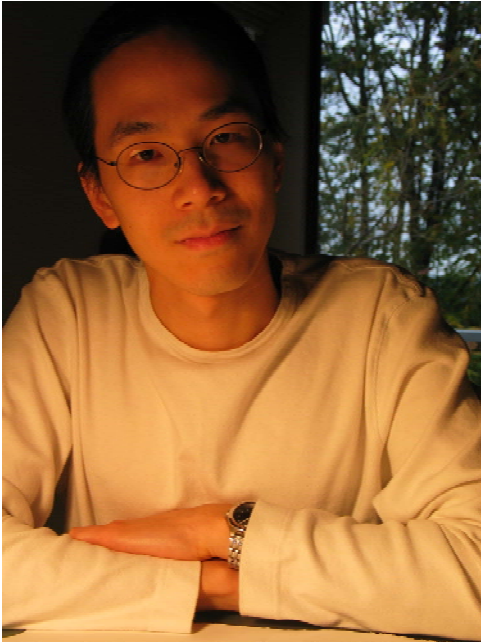
Michele Cox, Programming

Shayna Cureton, Kid's Programming and Child Care

Michele Welck, Registration

Sally Rose Robinson, Dealers Room

Sonja Haas, Treasurer



Honored Guest Ted Chiang

By Alan Bostick

On the slopes of Mount Ida, the shepherd Paris looks after his flock. (He's also the son of King Priam, but that's not so important right now.) Looking after the sheep is boring, so every day he brings a book or two along, to have something to read in order to pass the time.

Today, though, he won't be bored. In a blaze of golden light, the god Hermes appears before him. Hermes is all about the wings: winged hat, winged sandals, and in his left hand a winged staff entwined by snakes. In his right hand he holds a large apple, formed, it would seem, of solid gold. Inscribed on this apple is the word ΚΑΛΛΙΣΤΗ ("For the Fairest"). The apple does not have wings.

"Paris! Dude! How's it going?" the god says, but doesn't wait for an answer. "Hey, listen, could you do me a solid? I need you to settle a bet...."

Eris, the goddess of Discord, has been up to her old tricks. She tossed the Apple of Discord into a group of science fiction short story writers. Everyone there coveted the apple, and what had started out as a genial gathering quickly devolved into an ugly argument the likes of which had not been seen since the days of the SFWA Forum. The Olympians intervened to keep the peace and decided that an independent arbiter, renowned for fairness, would decide who was the very best writer of SF short stories.

Three writers now appear before Paris. First is Theodore Sturgeon, who grins impishly at Paris, as if he were sharing a joke with his best friend in the world. Hermes speaks for him: "Sturgeon brought depth and complexity of characterization to science fiction," he says. "His writing shows that to live one's life is to create a slow sculpture."

Then James Tiptree, Jr., steps forward, a seeming suburban matron chain-smoking Benson & Hedges. The light in her eyes gleams somberly: at one moment, hinting at secret sorrow, and the next the twinkle of a joke of her own. "Her writing," Hermes says, "is about what makes life worth living in the midst of pain, and what does not; and which choice, to keep on living or to die, is the only neat thing to do."

The last writer to be presented to Paris is Ted Chiang. “He writes,” says Hermes, “perfectly crafted jewel boxes, where a subtle scientific or philosophical concept is illuminated and explained in such a way as to evoke deep emotion. It is as if he can express all of human experience in just seventy-two letters.

“So who is to get the apple?” Hermes looks intently at Paris, who in turn is switching (shifting?) his gaze from one writer to another, from Chiang to Tiptree to Sturgeon and back again. It is not an easy decision....

A very defensible case can be made that Ted Chiang is the finest writer of SF short fiction, not simply the best writer working today, but the best ever.

His output is small: only fifteen stories of his have been published in the twenty-six years since his first, “Tower of Babel,” appeared in the November 1990 issue of *Omni*. That works out to roughly three stories every five years. Many novelists produce whole books at a faster rate. (Chiang attended the Clarion Writer’s Workshop in 1989. This was therefore a six-week period during which he presumably wrote one new story every week.) Those fifteen stories have collected the astonishing number of seventeen awards, including Hugos, Nebulas, Locus Awards, Seiun Awards, and the prestigious Theodore Sturgeon Award for short fiction. He was also the winner of the 1992 John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer.

“Best” is actually a slippery and troublesome term. Does there really exist some sort of figure of merit for a work of fiction, or a writer of fiction, which can be computed and compared on a linear scale? Almost certainly not. We can take a collection of writers’ names and impose an ordering on it, but that ordering is going to depend on taste, arbitrary judgment, external personal values, and so on. My ordering is not going to be the same as yours.

And yet ... we can make our lists, and compare them to the lists of other people, and see where we agree or disagree, or discover names on other people’s lists that had never occurred to us, leading us to revise our own. And when we put lists of writers of SF short fiction together, we see the same names appearing towards the top again and again: Howard Waldrop. Kelly Link. Gene Wolfe. Ursula K. Le Guin. Harlan Ellison. Rachel Swirsky. Thomas M. Disch. Joanna Russ.

Theodore Sturgeon. James Tiptree, Jr.

Ted Chiang.

Ted Chiang’s stories are the focus of appreciation, admiration, awe, and envy to a degree unequalled by the response we see to the work of any other SF writer. In his presence, hardened and experienced professional writers blush and stammer. When he’s not there, they talk about how they wish they had written a story like “The Merchant and the Alchemist’s Gate,” or even a story one tenth as good.

Science fiction includes many different kinds of narratives: fanciful adventures, social satire, cautionary tales, and narratives of encounters with the numinous. Ever since Hugo Gernsback began including fiction in the radio technology magazines he published, though, a core value of SF has been the didactic story of science. In the face of haters’ put-downs of rockets, ray guns, and bug-eyed monsters, the lover of SF could always call upon the didactic stories of science at its heart for the genre’s defense. Such stories contain lessons about science and technology, explained and illustrated by the unfolding of the narrative.

Ted Chiang is the master of the didactic story of science. What in other hands might run the risk of tedium becomes fascinating and wonderful, with abstractions relating to and resonating with the depth of feeling of its characters, and its readers.

For example, look at “The Story of Your Life.” It explains and illustrates the formulation of optics known as Fermat’s Principle, that a light ray, traveling through a refractive medium, follows the path that takes the shortest time to reach its destination. Does that sound like a story?

But look what else it is: An account of First Contact with cryptic spacefaring aliens. An exploration of a mother’s grief for her daughter’s accidental death. The mother telling the daughter How I Met Your Father. A description of a linguist learning how to write the glyphs of an alien language that cannot be written causally, and thereby

becoming unstuck in time like Billy Pilgrim. (What's that, you say, I am spoiling the story? Read it yourself. You will find that, on its own terms it cannot be spoiled! Its depiction of the nature of time prevents spoilage.)

"The Story of Your Life" is a tour-de-force, one that richly deserved the full set of awards it took down in the year following its publication in 1998.

Everything Ted Chiang writes, it seems, is a tour-de-force.

In person, you wouldn't take Ted Chiang to be a titan of literature. He dresses fashionably yet comfortably. He presents himself as modest, unassuming, and shy. "Pleasant" comes to mind, and even "mild-mannered." You get the distinct impression that if he spoke for himself on Mount Ida, rather than letting Hermes do the talking, he might tell Paris not to give him that golden apple, that other writers deserved it much more. He'd make the case brilliantly.

If he tells you that, nod and smile and be respectful. But give him that damned apple.

"The physical universe was a language with a perfectly ambiguous grammar. Every physical event was an utterance that could be parsed in two entirely different ways, one casual and the other teleological, both valid, neither one disqualifiable no matter how much context was available."

— Ted Chiang ("Story of Your Life")



Honored Guest Donna Haraway

By Sherryl Vint

Although I have met her only a few times, Donna Haraway has been one of my most important intellectual mentors. From her I learned the possibilities for thinking seriously about science and reality at the same time as thinking seriously about culture and ideas. From her I learned to ask about the histories of objects and institutions, to see how something as simply as a diaper pin opened up questions of relations among a myriad of medical institutions, ideologies of child care, gendered ideals, and consumer values. But most importantly from her I learned from her the significance of linking scholarship with a passionate care for the things we study and the world we make through our intellectual and material engagements with it.

It would be impossible to overstate the importance of Donna Haraway's contributions to shaping the study of science and culture, including science fiction. She recognized instantly the ways in which sf was itself a kind of theory, that writers such as Octavia Butler and Marge Piercy, Ursula K. Le Guin and John Varley were asking questions about gender and agency and ethics and human futurity as complex as those being asked by Jacques Derrida or Gilles Deleuze. She grasped and illuminated the way that science fiction was a kind of vernacular for interrogating ethical questions such as who counts as "us" in our political formations. Her thought refuses simple binaries and easy answers, a quality that has at times resulted in her work being misunderstood by those who prefer simpler formations. The "cyborg theory" that arose in the wake of her important "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," for example, often overlooks her careful contextualization of the possibilities *and* risks that came with the cyborg figuration, that her work was an intervention into how we think about gender and globalized labour, into how technoculture ties us all together in webs of complicity and kinship—not some celebration of coming posthumanism. This is no mere celebration of sleek technologized futurism, but a commitment to thinking through such visions with irony and attention to partiality and ambiguity.

The more earth-bound metaphors of Haraway's recent work resist such appropriations. Many entities have become part of Haraway's family of material semiotic beings—the fused word here signifying her point that we cannot separate matter from meaning but instead must always explore the ways in which they are entwined. Apes; the first patented transgenic lab animal, Oncomouse; genes themselves; companion species; the fetus; the idea of race, as a sociological formation complexly bound up with histories of science and medicine, of power and injustice—all have been interrogated in her scholarship. Her focus is always on process instead of on "things," on recognizing how we might learn to live together with more sustainability, with more justice, and with more knowledge.

Perhaps the best introduction to Haraway's work in this context, however, is the evidence of the kinds of communities she creates. She is uncommonly generous in the acknowledgement she gives to how her students have shaped her thinking in her published work, and such footnotes and references have led me to discover other wonderful scholars. The quality of the guidance she provides them is evident in the work her students, many of them also important figures in the field, have gone on to produce. One needs only to read *How Like a Leaf*, a book length interview exchange between Haraway and one such former student, Thyrza Nichols Goodeve. On the few occasions when I've been able to meet Donna she has shown the same generosity toward her interlocutors and enthusiasm for shared intellectual exploration that is on display in this compelling book. Donna lives the values that infuse her work and this ideal, as much as her theoretical sophistication, has inspired me in my own scholarship. Although she was only my mentor from afar, I have had the privilege of becoming friends with some of her former students and thus know the value of the kind of community she cultivates as a scholar, a mentor, and a friend. You will have the pleasure of meeting Donna this weekend and I urge you to discover this wonderful community for yourselves.

"Cyborg writing must not be about the Fall, the imagination of a once-upon-a-time wholeness before language, before writing, before Man. Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other."

— Donna J. Haraway



Honored Guest Jo Walton

By Debbie Notkin

“Which Jo Walton book should I read first?”

One thing I love about Jo Walton is how difficult this question is to answer. If you ask me to recommend a Kim Stanley Robinson book, or an Octavia Butler book, or a Cecelia Holland book, I might have two or three choices, and I’ll modify somewhat based on what I know about the person who’s asking, but it isn’t a *hard* question.

With Jo, I’m often stymied. My own Jo Walton reading started at the beginning, with *The King’s Peace*, probably within a year or so after it was published. I have more or less read the rest in order as they’ve emerged over the last 15 years. Except for *The King’s Name* (basically the second half of *The King’s Peace*), *Half a Crown* (closing volume of a trilogy) and *The Philosopher Kings* (middle volume of an unfinished trilogy), I can make a case for every single one as a place to start. That’s nine choices.

Were/are you a serious reader as a young adult, especially of science fiction and fantasy? Were/are you a lonely teenager? Then, you *must* read *Among Others*. You will probably love it as much as I do, and as much as the Nebula and Hugo Award voters did. What *Among Others* won’t do is tell you what to expect from any other Jo Walton novel. That’s not true: it provides Jo’s reliable clean prose, strong characterization, and a story that holds your interest).

Do you love dragons? Start with *Tooth and Claw* (but don’t expect dragons like any other author’s dragons). If you love Regency fiction, that’s another reason to start with *Tooth and Claw*. Wait, Regency dragons?

Are you a historical fiction fan? That narrows it down, but only somewhat. Arthurian fantasy or recent history? Would a visit to a recreated Plato’s *Republic* scratch that history itch? Depending on how you answer those subquestions, your history interest could take you to *The King’s Name*, to *Farthing* and the Small Change trilogy, or to *The Just City* (and then *The Philosopher Kings*).

Are you looking for books that bring your fantasy sensibility into a daily-life context? Start with *My Real Children*, a book that just won a Tiptree Award for exploring and expanding gender, in the context of life with dementia. *My Real Children* is also an alternate history novel, so that's another gateway.

Lifelode, which is my personal favorite my second favorite precious to me, is a terrific first choice, though it's harder to pin down what interests would tip the scales. Polyamory? Really innovative magic? Naked priests? *Lifelode* also shares its examination of domestic magic with *Among Others*, and that's certainly one of the things that draws me to both books.

If you lay them all out on the table in front of you (or slips of paper with their names, if you're deciding what to buy), and play eenie-meenie-miney-mo, you won't go wrong.

As is true of all writers, Jo's fiction is just one aspect of Jo. First of all, she doesn't just write fiction. Her nonfiction, for Tor.com, some of it collected in *What Makes This Book So Great?* reflects her wide and deep familiarity with, and understanding of, the literature that brings us together, plus her eclectic tastes. Her poetry is timely and topical, moving and memorable. Before she published any fiction, she was a regular on the SF groups on Usenet, and that's where she caught Patrick Nielsen Hayden's attention (he's edited all of her books for Tor since that time).

She lives in Montréal, Canada, an expatriate from her native Wales. She is passionate about tea. She travels a great deal. She blogs at papersky.livejournal.com, where you can keep track of what she's working on and what her progress is, plus slices of her life, poems, and whatever suits her fancy.

If you get a chance at FOGcon, sit down and chat with her. She's very approachable. Her interests are wide-ranging, her preference (like so many of us in this subculture) is for talk of ideas and experiences rather than "small talk." She is clear and articulate about the writing process (which many writers are not). She listens as much as she contributes.

I haven't spent much time around Jo; we've just been at the same conventions or gatherings four or five times. That's enough of a sample for me to say that spaces with Jo in them are improved by her presence. She'll make FOGcon better ... and if you start a conversation with her, or go to one of her panels or her Honored Guest presentation, she'll make *your* FOGcon better.

"I love the train. Sitting here I feel connected to the last time I sat here, and the train to London too. It is in-between, suspended; and in rapid motion towards and away from, it is also poised between. There's a magic in that, not a magic you can work, a magic that's just there, giving a little colour and exhilaration to everything."

— Jo Walton (*Among Others*)



Honored Ghost Octavia Butler:

“Near and Dear” by Steven Barnes

For a period of three years in the late '80s, I lived within walking distance of Octavia E. Butler. My mother had passed away, and I had moved back into her house on West View Street in Los Angeles, the home I'd grown up in. Octavia lived on West Boulevard, about eight blocks away, in a side-by-side duplex with barred doors and windows. I remember the first time I saw her house. I was dropping her off from a signing we'd both attended, and she invited me in.

Such an honor. More than that, it was the beginning of a twenty-year friendship.

At that point, Samuel Delany was no longer active as a science fiction writer. Octavia and I were the only ones doing the work, and in my mind she towered like a giant over the field. There is an issue with artists, in fact with human adulthood and simple existence: everyone craves the mentorship of SOMEONE who has gone further down the road of life than they have. In this regard, Octavia was close to perfect for me. Brilliant, utterly committed to her craft, of singular voice, and possessing an awesome penchant for field research (listening to her speak of her journey up the Amazon was an inspiration), she was absolutely the Real Deal. Her house was crammed bottom-to-top with books: novels, histories, science texts, and poetry, choking the wall from living room to kitchen. Wonderful. The little duplex on West Boulevard was a writer's house. It was at that moment, the moment when I saw her home, that I first began to suspect that Octavia was the purest writer I'd ever met. She simply put more of herself into her craft than anyone else. And for most of us, the answer to one question holds the secret to success in life: how much of yourself are you willing to give?

Octavia gave everything. There are times it seemed she gave until there was nothing left at all.

While I lived on West View, Octavia and I exchanged dinner invitations frequently. She would either walk over to my house, or I would pick her up and we'd go to a restaurant. Whatever the setting, we always talked a blue streak. And it was during one of these conversations that she said the single most interesting thing I ever remember from her. It was a political conversation. Octavia was disappointed with my naiveté in political matters. For instance, at that time I believed in Trickle-Down Economics – Ronald Reagan's pet theory that economic benefits granted to the wealthy would eventually help the poor. She tsked and took me to school rather ruthlessly, puncturing that flimsy balloon of a worldview in about ten minutes. Ouch.

Octavia had a philosophy grounded in a kind of down-home feminism, an “outsider” mentality rooted in an awkward girlhood and slight speech impediment that made her uncomfortable in public speaking for all but the last years of her life, and an intellect that devoured texts on biology and behaviorism and history until it all

collapsed into a rather remarkable singularity. Deeply humane but at times profoundly pessimistic, Octavia could walk a fine line between depression and evangelism, without ever falling off the resultant tightrope.

The single most remarkable comment arose during a conversation at a soul food restaurant on Pico Boulevard in Los Angeles. I was having red beans, rice, and collard greens. She thought the corn bread was good. AT one point after our blood sugar had stabilized, she said that there were two human tendencies she believed to be the most challenging for our species:

(1) The human tendency toward hierarchicalism.

(2) The tendency to place ourselves higher on the hierarchy than others.

She felt those two things were responsible for sexism, racism, and wars of all kinds. They made the rich contemptuous of the poor, stoked nationalism, and ... well, had the potential to destroy us all.

She expanded on her theme with enthusiasm and deep knowledge, lecturing fluidly on the behavior of termites and bonobos, the history of Egypt, and the origins of the modern-day Republican and Democratic parties. Fascinating, and all anchored in an odd, personal and impressive blend of biological determinism and humanistic spirituality.

That was a night to remember. When readers of *Parable of the Sower* comment that Octavia could have started a religion (after all, L. Ron Hubbard did), I think of that night, and of her ability to reach for the stars while remaining rooted in our genes. Yes, she could have founded a religion. And its followers would have been good, decent, aware human beings.

It's possible she may have wanted a little too much from the shaved apes we call human beings, and I suspect our inability to live up to those expectations sometimes brought her to the edge of despair. Optimism and pessimism can be two sides of a very thin coin indeed.

There was a profound loneliness about Octavia that sometimes made it difficult to be with her. I always wondered if I was interrupting something important when I called. It took a little while for her to open up and flow easily into the conversation, but by the end, no matter how long we had spoken or visited, I felt pain when I had to get off the phone or go home. She always seemed to want to hold onto that human connection just a little longer, too. Just a few more minutes.

I always wondered how she felt after she hung up the phone, but never had the nerve to ask her.

The last time I saw my friend was at her house in Seattle. Tananarive and I had driven up for some event or other, and happily, were able to combine it with a personal visit. Her MacArthur "Genius" grant money had enabled her to purchase a beautiful house near the lake, within walking distance of stores and public transportation (she did not drive). I noted that she was walking more slowly these days, as if she hurt somewhere deep in her hips or back. She lost her wind easily: the three of us had to walk at a snail's pace just to prevent her from wheezing.

Octavia was uncomfortably, unhealthily heavy at that point, and spoke of wanting to change that. She complained about writer's block associated with medications she was taking. At our dinner together conversation centered on writing, and life, and the national scene. Despite her discomfort she lightened up after a while, and my old friend was there again: brilliant, funny, kind, wise.

The last time I spoke to Octavia on the phone, she seemed positive, and happy about the way her latest book, *Fledgling*, had turned out. My impression was that writing that book must have been like pulling wisdom teeth sans Novocain. I wish I could remember the last thing she said to me, but I can't. And I am so terribly sorry about that.

If there is one memory of Octavia I hold closest to my heart, it is our encounter in Atlanta, Georgia, in 19907. She, along with Samuel Delany and Jewelle Gomez, was present at the African American Fantastic Imagination Conference at Clark Atlanta University, the conference where Tananarive and I first met. Octavia watched the sparks fly, and I think she knew before I did that I was falling in love.

Tananarive and I drove to the airport together, holding hands, and spent waiting time holding hands and whispering about our future together. Three days after we met.

After I left her gate, I ran into Octavia on the concourse of my own gate. We talked a bit, and I spoke of Tananarive as if wrapping myself in a warm, friendly blanket. Octavia listened, smiling tolerantly as I betrayed my fear that nothing so wonderful could happen so quickly.

She told me that sometimes we don't know what's happening to us, and it doesn't matter. The world flows on whether we enjoy the ride or not. "Just ... see what happens," she said.

Octavia's plane was on the other side of the terminal, and she boarded one of the little airport trams and rode away, waving. Somehow that image ... her pleasure at the beginning she had witnessed, has always remained with me. That little smile. The wave. The warmth as she said goodbye.

I miss her incredibly.

We human beings have a terrible tendency toward hierarchicalism, she said. I think this is true. And in that spirit I am forced to say that Octavia E. Butler was the most committed writer, and one of the very finest human beings, I've ever known.

I think she'd forgive me for that.

(Reprinted from *Strange Matings: Science Fiction, Feminism, African American Voices, and Octavia E. Butler*, Rebecca J. Holden and Nisi Shawl, editors. Aqueduct Press, Seattle, 2013. © 2013 Rebecca J. Holden and Nisi Shawl. Used by permission of the author.)

"All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you."

— Octavia E. Butler (*Parable of the Sower*)

“What transforms this world is — knowledge. Do you see what I mean? Nothing else can change anything in this world. Knowledge alone is capable of transforming the world, while at the same time leaving it exactly as it is. When you look at the world with knowledge, you realize that things are unchangeable and at the same time are constantly being transformed.”

— Yukio Mishima, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*

Hotel

Debbie Notkin

Welcome to the Walnut Creek Marriott!

If you are a hotel guest, valet parking is free if you tell the valet you're with FOGcon. (If you are not staying overnight in the hotel, valet parking is \$5 flat rate, without in-and-out privileges.) Your in-room wireless is also free; if the hotel makes a mistake and charges you for it, you can challenge the charge and they will take it off.

The convention function space is all one (whole) floor below the lobby, accessible by both elevators and stairs. Registration is outside the function space on that level. You'll find programming both directly beyond the registration space and down the hall. The Saturday lunch buffet – and the Saturday night karaoke -- are in the Contra Costa Ballroom, on the floor that is halfway between the function space and the lobby.

The hospitality suite is in Room 363, on the third floor.

The hotel restaurant, Atrio, on the ground floor, is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Right by Atrio, you'll find the lounge, which is open until 12: 30 a.m. or so, later if there's enough interest. Atrio's prices run from about \$12-15 for salads and sandwiches to \$18-25 for full dinners. There is fresh-brewed Starbucks coffee, as well as alcohol, in the lounge. Friday night there will be live music in the lounge for a few hours, which spills into the function space.

Hotel guests have access to the heated outdoor pool and the fitness center.

If you have questions or concerns about the hotel during the convention, please find the person on Safety shift, the con chair or vice chair on duty, or your trusty hotel liaisons, and we'll do our best to help.

Registration

Michele Welck

Located in the Lobby on the Conference Level. Registration is open from 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Sunday. In addition to checking in, you can sign up for volunteer shifts, check out the Honored Guest information, or volunteer to be part of Jo Walton's Character Development workshop!

Con Suite

Room 363

Colleen O'Rourke

The con suite is in Room 363 on the third floor. We'll have snacks and drinks to accommodate a fair range of diets; we'll be doing our best to have ingredient lists available and avoid cross-contamination.

Dealers' Room

Salon D/E

Jamie Buschbaum, Sally Rose Robinson

The dealers' room will have books, comics, jewelry, art, and ... a massage therapist! Please note the hours, nothing is more frustrating than leaving a planned purchase for later, after a panel, or when this reading's done — and finding the dealers' room locked.

Game Room

Salon F

Micah Joel

Come enjoy a board or card game with your fellow convention attendees. See the program for Game Room programming!

Safety Team

Darrin Barnett

The Safety team is here to help FOGcon attendees have an enjoyable and successful convention. If you've got problems, we can help. The situation doesn't have to be a crime or an emergency, although we can help with those as well. If you find yourself in or near a situation which calls for assistance by the Safety team member on duty, look for the person wearing the day-glo vest, or call **510-520-6067**. In case of an immediately dangerous situation, of course, call **9-1-1**.

How can you tell who is a Safety team member?

The Safety person on duty wears a bright orange vest. However, you can also talk to any member of the ConCom. We'll be wearing brightly colored badges that identify us as CONCOM.

What Should I Report to Safety?

Safety isn't just for riots, floods, and zombie attacks. We can help with ANY mundane issues. Here is a brief list of plausible examples:

- You lost your cell phone.
- You left your backpack in a program area that is locked after hours.
- Some people are working out a relationship issue in the con suite in a way that is making other people uncomfortable.
- People waiting for function space to open are blocking access to a staircase or other doorway.
- The hotel is getting noise complaints about a party, or you have noise complaints about one.
- Something unusual is happening—space aliens landing, volcano erupting in the con suite, a blocked toilet in the silicon-based life-forms' bathroom—that might affect the safety or satisfaction of convention attendees.
- An attendee is having an allergic reaction to something in the convention environment and needs immediate medical attention. (In that case, you should also call 9-911 on a hotel phone.)
- Someone is paying attention to you that you find unwelcome or excessive. This includes staring, following, touching, standing too close, blocking your exit, and talking suggestively or offensively. If it makes you uncomfortable, please feel free to report it.

If you have been harassed, you have several choices of people you can consult. If you do not feel comfortable bringing a concern to a particular staff member, for any reason, you will be able to work with another member of the convention staff to address your concerns. Perhaps you're uncomfortable talking with the Safety volunteer on duty because you're strangers (or friends), or for any other personal reason. You can always ask for help from one of the ConCom members or from a Safe Responder. ConCom members are identified by the word ConCom on their badges. Safe Responders will be wearing bright yellow badges.

The Safety team will be on the scene to be first responder in situations like these, to smooth things on to spot and to bring in the right people — be they convention staff, hotel employees, or outside response (police, EMTs, etc.) as needed. If you find yourself in or near a situation which calls for assistance by the Safety team member on duty, look for the person wearing the day-glo vest, or call 510-520-6067. In case of an immediately dangerous situation, of course, call 9-1-1.

“How should we be able to forget those ancient myths that are at the beginning of all peoples, the myths about dragons that at the last moment turn into princesses; perhaps all the dragons of our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave. Perhaps everything terrible is in its deepest being something helpless that wants help from us.”

— Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

Programming, Friday, March 11, 2016

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Salon A/B: 75-Minute Writing Workout

Come do 75 minutes of writing exercises and get warmed up for FOGcon! Exercises are designed to help inspire stories for you to work on later. *#75MinuteWritingWorkout*

Vylar Kaftan

3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Salon C: The Transformation of Fandom

Fandom, like most other things, has changed in many ways since the beginning of (at least) its modern incarnation early in the last century, in ways that reflect or may differ from the changes in the broader culture. Certainly the speculative fiction genre has changed -- who is telling the stories and what stories are being told, and how, is certainly different in 2016 than it was in 1916. But in the last hundred years we've also seen a transformation in fandom: from lettercols and mimeographs and APAs to bulletin boards to mailing lists to websites, from the earliest magazines to experimental web-based short fiction and self-publishing, from science as the great destroyer to the great hope and back around again -- more than once. A case can be made that the majority of these changes are positive; a case can be made otherwise as well. Discuss.

#FandomTransformation

M: Alan Bostick, Emma Humphries, KJ, Chadwick H. Saxelid, Aaron I. Spielman

Salon A/B: The Developing Reality of Intelligent Machines

Machines that truly think as well as a human, and faster: once they only lived in stories. Now Bill Gates, Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking all talk seriously about them. When we think about a future of artificial intelligences, what does Hollywood get wrong, and what is our real oncoming reality? How will escalating machine intelligence change our lives? What should we expect from a world where our software becomes increasingly smarter than we are? *#IntelligentMachines*

M: Steven Schwartz, Karen Brenchley, S.B. Divya, Effie Seiberg, Daniel Starr

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

Santa Rosa: Reading: Cassie Alexander and Josh Powell

Readings by Cassie Alexander and Josh Powell. *#Alexander-Powell*

Cassie Alexander, Josh Powell

4:30 PM - 5:45 PM

Salon A/B: Adaptation: Transforming Works Among Different Media

What are some of the considerations involved in adapting a work from one medium to another? What factors differ if you're transforming a book to a movie, a movie to a book, or either to a video game? When the media are as different as a video game and a book, what has to be considered? What are some adapted works that have been notable successes or failures? Is the book always better? *#Adaptation*

M: Emily Jiang. Elsa, Suzanne K. Moses, Josh Powell

Salon C: From Caterpillar to Butterfly

We all know that caterpillars turn into butterflies and tadpoles turn into frogs, but what other strange changes are out there in the natural world? How about male seahorses giving birth, or the way that temperature determines the sex of alligator babies? What creatures can change their reproductive roles, and how or when? What can we learn from Earth animals to make our aliens more interesting and more plausible? What, if anything, stays constant through those changes, and how? *#FromCaterpillartoButterfly*

M: Jamie L Henderson. Ashley Christina , Theresa Mecklenborg, Colleen T. O'Rourke, Loren Rhoads

Sacramento: Secret Identities in Real Life

Pseudonyms and invented people have been part of science fiction fandom since its inception many decades ago, and now they are an everyday occurrence on the internet. But, as Julie Phillips recently pointed out about James Tiptree, Jr., secret identities can have many purposes: they can be used to fool the people around us or to discover things about ourselves. Like anything else, a secret identity points more than one way. Let's discuss the complexities of being someone else. *#SecretIdentitiesinRealLife*

M: Alan Bostick. Nabil Hijazi, Emma Humphries, L.S. Johnson, Lynn Alden Kendall

Santa Rosa: Reading: Garrett Calcaterra, Sunil Patel, Daniel Marcus

Readings by Garrett Calcaterra, Sunil Patel, and Daniel Marcus. *#CalcaterraPatelMarcus*

Garrett Calcaterra, Daniel Marcus, Sunil Patel

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

8:00 PM - 9:15 PM

Salon A/B: Good Villains & Bad Heroes: the transformation of the "good guy/bad guy" trope in modern media

Good witches, friendly dragons, vegan sharks, and megalomaniacal heroes. From books like *Wicked*, numerous Pratchett works, and present-day comics to Hollywood hits like *Shrek*, *Megamind*, *Wreck it Ralph*, *Maleficent*, and even *Frozen*, we are seeing protagonists that are coded as the villain being not just redeemed but in fact starting as good, noble, and heroic people, as well as heroic figures with very serious flaws. Is there something in our current culture that wants us to see our formerly all good/all bad hero/villain combinations as humans with real flaws and more texture, or are we just wanting more interesting and entertaining stories?

#GoodVillains

M: Aaron I. Spielman. Marion Deeds, Rahul Kanakia, KJ, Patricia A. Leslie, Suzanne K. Moses

Salon C: Interview with Donna Haraway

Science fiction scholar Brad Lyau interviews Donna Haraway about her past work, present projects, and the general state of SF scholarship. *#InterviewwithDonnaHaraway*

Donna Haraway, Bradford Lyau

Sacramento: ConTention

FOGcon's long-running argument series is back with yet another installment, where we provide the moderation (light) and the arguments (plentiful) and you provide the arguments (plentiful) and the entertainment (large). For those who haven't been: Our moderator, Steven Schwartz, will stand in the front of the room with a list of arguments about SF/F -- from old standbys like "Star Wars vs. Star Trek" or "Books vs. Film" or "Tolkien: Genius or Crashing Bore", and members of the audience will be invited, nay, implored to come forward to take one side or the other. Bring your own favorite arguments as well -- the moderator's list will be easy to add to! Looking forward to seeing you there, about the only thing about which there will be no argument! *#ConTention*

Steven Schwartz

Santa Rosa: Reading: Katharine Kerr, Madeleine Robins, and Sarah Gailey

Reading by Katharine Kerr, Madeleine Robins, and Sarah Gailey. *#KerrRobinsGailey*

Sarah Gailey, Katharine Kerr, Madeleine E. Robins

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

9:30 PM - 10:45 PM

Salon C: Economic Singularity

The trend for the rich to get richer has been around for a long time, and seems to be accelerating. If external computational capacity can be used to enhance and transform functional intelligence, will that create a feedback loop in which wealth leads to increased functional intelligence which will lead to more wealth, leading to an economic singularity? Is it already happening? The possible consequences of increasing income disparity are frightening already; how could this trend (or its consequences) be mitigated or controlled? What possibilities are offered in speculative fiction for addressing a disparity of income or resources? What possibilities seem to be based on human nature as it now exists, and what require radical transformation of human behaviors? *#EconomicSingularity*

M: Daniel Starr. Alex Gurevich, Ian K. Hagemann, Emma Humphries, Nancy Jane Moore

Game Room: Cooperative Gaming Demonstration: Pandemic

Instead of the usual panel format, here the moderator presides over a game of Pandemic, played by the panelists! Whether you've played this popular game or not, or even if you've been away from board games for a while, you'll enjoy seeing a live run-through in the Game Room.

M: Micah Joel. Ashley Christina, Jed Hartman

Sacramento: Help! My Mom Read My Sex Scene!

Writers talk about the awkwardness of having family, co-workers, the folks from church, etc. reading the things they've written when those things aren't necessarily, well, socially appropriate. How does a writer deal with it? Do we need to censor ourselves as writers knowing that grandma will read anything we wrote?

#HelpMyMomReadMySexScene

M: Thomas S. Roche. Kyle Aisteach, Cassie Alexander, Megan E. O'Keefe, Madeleine E. Robins

Salon A/B: Impostor Syndrome Workshop

Impostor Syndrome has been described as the feeling that you aren't really qualified for the work you are doing and will be discovered as a fraud. Many women, People of Color, QUILTBAG persons, and others from marginalized groups deal with this feeling, especially when they've been socialized to value others' opinions of work above their own. This workshop, incorporating exercises developed by the Ada Initiative and others, is aimed at helping attendees overcome Impostor Syndrome. It includes practical methods of addressing one's own Impostor Syndrome as well as suggestions for how to improve one's community in order to not perpetuate the messages that heighten feelings of Impostor Syndrome. *#ImpostorSyndromeWorkshop*

Crystal Huff

Santa Rosa: Reading by Chaz Brenchley, Laura Anne Gilman, and Jay Hartlove

Reading by Chaz Brenchley, Laura Anne Gilman, Jay Hartlove. *#BrenchleyGilmanHartlove*

Chaz Brenchley, Laura Anne Gilman, Jay Hartlove

Programming, Saturday, March 12, 2016

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Salon C: The Business of Writing

Professional writers and editors talk about ways to help writers understand how to think about not just the creative side but the practical side of being an author. *#TheBusinessofWriting*

M: Laura Anne Gilman. Mishell Baker, Rahul Kanakia, Caroline Ratajski

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

Salon C: The Ethics of Magic

Fantasy characters often have special powers: fireballs and lightning bolts, telepathy and mind control, shapeshifting and many more. In many stories, though, the appeal of seeing these powers in action overwhelms the question of HOW they should be used. What ethical considerations come into play when extraordinary things become possible? Which stories have examined these questions, and which ones sweep them under the rug, to horrifying effect? *#TheEthicsofMagic*

M: metaphortunate. Marie Brennan, Garrett Calcaterra, Madeleine E. Robins, Steven Schwartz

Salon A/B: Appropriate or Appropriative?

It's almost impossible to write without drawing on cultures that we know perhaps less well than we should: how can we do that in ways that are appropriate? What is the difference between (among) respect, acknowledgement, and appropriation? *#AppropriateorAppropriative*

M: Alyc Helms. Chaz Brenchley, Emily Jiang, Bradford Lyau

Santa Rosa: Reading by Micah Joel, Loren Rhoads, and Writing Contest Winner Shara Tran

Reading by Micah Joel, Loren Rhoads, and Writing Contest Winner Shara Tran. *#JoelRhoadsTran*

Micah Joel, Loren Rhoads, Shara Tran

Sacramento: Children's Programming #1

See Children's Programming leaflet for full details. *#ChildrensProgramming1*

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Salon C: Mundane Problems

Jo Walton's MY REAL CHILDREN is one of very few SF books to deal with memory loss. Walton has said that she thinks we need more science fiction that deals with the daily problems of people's lives in science-fictional and fantasy contexts. What other writers do this, and how do they do it? What kinds of situations and experiences have been ignored by writers in the field, and how might these situations be explored? *#MundaneProblems*

M: Susan Palwick. Karen Brenchley, Rahul Kanakia, Heather McDougal

Santa Rosa: Reading by Emily Jiang, Constance Cooper, and Zachariah Nash, Writing Contest Winner

Reading by Emily Jiang, Constance Cooper, and Zachariah Nash, a winner of our Writing Contest. *#JiangBiernerWinner*

Constance Cooper, Emily Jiang, Zachariah Ronan Nash

Salon A/B: Are 72 Letters Enough? In Search of a Perfect Language

In the story "72 Letters," Honored Guest Ted Chiang explored the implications of a language so precise that trained nomenclators could use it to control powerful machinery. That's just one example of a story about a "perfect" language -- perfectly clear, unambiguous, precise, and complete -- a concept that has fascinated human beings for years. Leibniz posited a constructed language that would be universally readable and capable of expressing math, science, and metaphysics with the clarity of algebra. Similarly, the wizardly Speech described in Le Guin's Earthsea books or Duane's Young Wizards series is a system of true names so compelling that it underlies all magic. How would we describe a language capable of perfect description? Ted Chiang and our other panelists will discuss the nature and possibility of a Perfect Language -- an ur-language (or a meta-language?) that perfectly expresses the essence of the things named. *#Are72LettersEnough*

M: Michele Cox. Ted Chiang, Cathy Hindersinn, Steven Schwartz

Sacramento: Children's Programming #2

See Children's Programming leaflet for full details. *#ChildrensProgramming2*

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Sacramento: Social Justice Storytelling Through Fantasy, Science Fiction, & Horror

Interested parties will gather as a community and use fantasy, science fiction, and horror (SF) to examine ways to create social justice and combat violence in its many forms. Speculative fiction provides a springboard to share our insights and strategies for social change: whether in playing games (from AD&D to BioShock), reading Octavia Butler novels, or creating Harry Potter fanfiction, speculative fiction gives us a way to examine the worlds we do -- and don't -- live in. Here we will work with this aspect of pop culture, focusing on the power of SF to imagine the transformation of our futures and of our present cultural realities. Participants form guilds and collaborate at a variety of stations. One station may draw inspiration from Star Trek, asking people to write their own prime directive. At another, people may work together to write a fiery manifesto on dealing justly with alien communities and civilizations. Mods will float among the groups to keep things flowing.

#SocialJusticeStorytelling

M: Stephanie Der & Darshan Campos

Salon C: The Best Advice I Never Got

Come join our panel of authors to find out what advice they wish they had gotten, but didn't, when they started their writing careers. *#TheBestAdviceINeverGot*

M: Effie Seiberg. Kyle Aisteach, Cassie Alexander, Vylar Kaftan, Katharine Kerr

Santa Rosa: Reading by Karen Brenchley, Heather Rose Jones, and S. B. Divya

Reading by Karen Brenchley, Heather Rose Jones, and S. B. Divya. *#WilliamsJonesDivya*

Karen Brenchley, S.B. Divya, Heather Rose Jones

Salon A/B: Jo Walton's (In)Famous Character Workshop

Jo Walton and up to 20 volunteers will engage in a Character Workshop relying on pure imagination -- and paper and pencils. (If you're not brave enough to participate, come and watch this feat of legerdemain!) The first 20 Fogcon members to volunteer (near the Registration table) can participate in this unique workshop with Honored Guest Jo Walton on character creation, world building, and plot drivers. Never fear -- the audience will also be deeply amused and provoked to much thought! Leave your writing samples at home, but bring a character you want to play with, a pen, paper, and imagination. *#JoWaltonsCharacterWorkshop*

Jo Walton

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

4:30 PM - 5:45 PM

Sacramento: Magical Girls: Characters Unleashing Their Inner Sailor Moon

While Superman ducks into an unassuming closet to remove his Clark Kent disguise, Tsukino Usagi unleashes her Sailor Moon self in a fanfare of music and color. How does the manga idea of a Magical Girl compare with the comic book trope of Superhero Secret Identity? Where have magical girls appeared in SF/F? How can this idea be used and further adapted in SF/F to effectively discuss ideas of inner power, secrecy, sexuality and gender, and overall identity? *#MagicalGirls*

M: Emily Jiang. Elsa, Andy Smith

Salon C: Hardly Science?

Come join our panel of scientists and engineers as we separate the fact from fiction surrounding popular science fiction concepts such as Human Teleportation, Time Travel, Faster than Light Travel, Parallel Universes, etc. *#HardlyScience*

M: Alan Bostick, Alex Gurevich, Alfred Nash, Colleen T. O'Rourke, Thomas S. Roche

Santa Rosa: Reading by Heather McDougal, Effie Seiberg, and Cliff Winnig

Reading by Heather McDougal, Effie Seiberg, and Cliff Winnig. *#McDougalSeibergWinnig*

Heather McDougal, Effie Seiberg, Cliff Winnig

Salon A/B: Staying with the Trouble: Making Oddkin in the Chthulucene

Donna Haraway's Honored Guest presentation on the Chthulucene, kin-making, and community. This is a placeholder description, the writer of which is completely overwhelmed by trying to come up with a description for this based on the chapter shared with us from Haraway's upcoming text, but Oh My God this looks wonderful and so very much on target for our theme as well as being just generally amazing -- y'all come! *#StayingWiththeTrouble*

Donna Haraway

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

8:00 PM - 9:15 PM

Game Room: Create your own RPG character workshop

Create your own RPG character from scratch in this guided session hosted in the game room. First-time gamers are especially welcome. This session uses the GURPS (Generic Universal Role-Playing System) ruleset because it is simple, straightforward, and doesn't require any dice to "roll up" a character. Create your character by distributing a given set of points across attributes like strength or dexterity, advantages and disadvantages, and skills. Want to be an alien space captain? A bronze-age warrior-scribe? Supervillain rogue teleporter? This is your session. Pencils and character sheets will be available.

M: Ashley Christina

Salon C: Domestic Fantasy: Transforming the Domestic

As most of us know, families are powerful sites of transformation: places where people change from being children to being adults (childhood and adolescence), from being children to raising their own children or otherwise creating their own lives (adulthood), from being adults to requiring the care and supervision they depended on as children (end of life). Often, families also contain darker transformations, figures of supposed love and nurture becoming the stuff of nightmares. Sometimes, when we are lucky and persistent, the right family can help us leave those nightmares behind and once again regain trust and stability. How has SF/F treated this sphere of human life? How do magical, horrific and speculative elements illuminate the transformations occurring within our everyday homes? *#DomesticFantasy*

M: Alan Bostick. Katharine Kerr, Heather McDougal, Susan Palwick, Jo Walton

Sacramento: The High Cost of Empathy

Many authors show us unusually empathic characters who struggle to care for their own needs. Octavia Butler's Patternist series features an immortal psychic whose descendants are bred like cattle because their minds are more delectable for a psychic vampire to consume. *_Kindred_* features a modern Black woman repeatedly transported back in time to save a racist ancestor in the antebellum South (who nonetheless continues to torment her and the contemporary slaves he "owns"). The "Parables" series feature a young woman who literally feels the pain experienced by others. How does this theme affect how we read her work and what it shows us about the human condition? *#HighCostOfEmpathy*

M: Debbie Notkin. Ian K. Hagemann, Jim Lutz

Salon A/B: Alternate Biologies

Ted Chiang's "Seventy-Two Letters" presents us with a world with a different human biology than our own. While alternate history is a well-explored field, and alternate modes of physics have been underpinning SF since its onset, the same isn't true of biology. Why is this, and what rich veins (in the biological sense, rather than mineralogical) of material are in this area? *#AlternateBiologies*

M: Elsa. Theresa Mecklenborg, Colleen T. O'Rourke, Thomas S. Roche

Santa Rosa: Reading by Patricia A. Leslie, Vylar Kaftan, and Karen Zellers, a winner of our Writing Contest

Reading by Patricia A. Leslie, Vylar Kaftan, and Karen Zellers, a winner of our Writing Contest.
#LeslieKaftanWinner

Michele Cox, Vylar Kaftan, Patricia A. Leslie

9:30 PM - 10:45 PM

Sacramento: More Than Meets the Eye

Many fictional characters thrive on being underestimated by their opponents. Sometimes they look physically unassuming, or stay quiet to remain unnoticed. Sometimes their race, gender, or other quality causes their society to dismiss them or make assumptions about their capabilities. Other times a character has a public persona, such as royal queen, but in private they're the power behind the throne. Who are some of our favorite examples? What does it take to make this kind of character work in a story? *#MoreThanMeetsTheEye*

M: Michele Cox, Garrett Calcaterra, Megan E. O'Keefe, Madeleine E. Robins, Terry Weyna

Salon C: They Walk Among Us

Some of the scariest monsters in fiction are those who can assume human form. From werewolves to the Kandra of Sanderson's Mistborn series, from Dr. Jekyll and his notorious other half to the Thing from Campbell's "Who Goes There?", these monsters make us look at everyone around us in a new, paranoid light. Some books use this fear better than others, and our panelists will discuss the best and worst uses of the "monsters who can look just like us" trope in popular fiction. *#TheyWalkAmongUs*

M: Daniel Starr, Chadwick H. Saxelid, Sarah Stegall, Jason Stewart

Contra Costa Ballroom: Karaoke

Come sing, come listen, come show off! *#Karaoke*

Santa Rosa: Erotic Reading at FOGcon

Things that go bump in the night with tentacles, or other things....

Lorelei Powers, Thomas S. Roche, Steven Schwartz

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

Programming, Sunday, March 13, 2016

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Salon C: Sentience, Science Fiction and Artificial Intelligence

In science fiction sentience is often considered a marker of equality with humans. In other traditions (such as Buddhism), there are believed to be many levels of sentient beings, with humans somewhere in the middle. Where does sentience fit in our stories? And what about the related concepts of agency, consciousness, self-

awareness, theory of mind, sapience, etc.? As the quest for artificial intelligence heats up we should discuss these aspects of human intelligence. Although clarity and agreement is desired, it is not expected. However, this discussion may help us tell stories of humane artificial intelligences and hopeful human futures.

#SentienceAndAI

M: Nancy Jane Moore. Sonja Haas, Donna Haraway, Jim Lutz

Salon A/B: The Right Length for the Story

Ted Chiang writes short stories exclusively. Other very fine SF writers do the same thing, or write the occasional novel but seem more at home in short fiction. Jo Walton writes primarily stand-alone novels, and very little short fiction. Octavia Butler leaned towards series and wrote only a few pieces of short fiction. What is it about a writer, or about a story, that inclines toward 5,000 words, or 50,000, or 500,000? What are the differences for the reader? *#TheRightLengthfortheStory*

M: Effie Seiberg. Kyle Aisteach, Chaz Brenchley, Ted Chiang, Pat Murphy

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

Salon A/B: Homo Sapiens Tekhne: Assistive Devices and Body Modification in Science Fiction And Fantasy

We are, some say, becoming more and more dependent on technology to survive -- from my glasses or medications to my friends' mobility aids or prosthetic limbs, technology is making it easier for those of us who aren't so young or so hale to be engaged in the world around us. At the same time, more and more people are interested in "hacking" the human body, whether that's implanting magnets under the skin or implanting circuits or devices. What does it mean to be human when some of us are more after-factory parts than not? What's possible now, and what may be possible in the future? How will the growing technological and economic divide affect the cultural changes involved? Is our technology actually changing how our brains work?

#HomoSapiensTekhne

M: Jamie L Henderson. S.B. Divya, N.E. Johnson, Thomas S. Roche, Sarah Stegall

Salon C: All About Editing -- and Editors!

Given that as much (or more!) time is spent editing as writing, what tips, tricks, and traps are there to be aware of as a writer? What's the difference between a developmental edit/editor, a line edit/editor, and a copy edit/editor? Where can aspiring writers find editors? Come hear our panelists' favorite tips, tricks, advice, and traps to avoid during editing. *#AllAboutEditingandEditors*

M: Debbie Notkin. Laura Anne Gilman, Jed Hartman, Stef Maruch, Sunil Patel

Game Room: Kid-Friendly Gaming: Apples to Apples and More!

This is a live gaming session designed to be accessible the younger audiences. If you've never played Apples to Apples before, no problem! There will be moderators on hand in the Game Room to help get players up to speed.

M: Micah Joel.

Santa Rosa: HG Readings with Ted Chiang, Donna Haraway, Jo Walton

Readings by Ted Chiang, Donna Haraway, and Jo Walton. *#HGReadings*

Ted Chiang, Donna Haraway, Jo Walton

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Salon A/B: Octavia Butler: Her Life and Work, and What It Meant To Others' Lives and Works

Octavia Butler was Honored Ghost by acclamation, and it is easy to understand why. Her books challenged many genre traditions, created others, and gave inspiration to many people who might not have thought themselves part of the genre. This panel in her memory is for discussing Octavia the person, "Octavia Butler" the body of work, and Octavia Butler the shaper of genre and of people within it. Come to hear our panelists talk about those topics, and to share the impressions she, and her writing, left on you. *#OctaviaButler*

M: Debbie Notkin. Ian K. Hagemann, Jim Lutz, Cliff Winnig

Salon C: Grief and Grieving

Sometimes it leaves us tongue-tied and lost; sometimes it makes us do things we did not think possible. And always, it changes us. When people speak of the emotions that move mountains, they think of love, or faith -- but in our lives, as well as our fiction, grief is another one. How often have we seen characters like Batman, or Furiosa, changed by grief into something beyond what they were before? This panel will discuss grief as we feel it, as it shapes us, in both our lives and our literatures; how we cope (or don't), what society expects of us (and what it doesn't), all the varied facets of an emotion none of us wish to experience, but almost all of us will.

#GriefandGrieving

M: Emily Jiang. Chaz Brenchley, Michele Cox, Lynn Alden Kendall, Susan Palwick

Sacramento: The First Annual Meeting of the FOGcon Draconic Appreciation Society

Some of them dwell under mountains, on hoards of gold. Some of them **are** mountains, looming above the towns they hold in thrall. Some of them are members of a society as mannered as any Regency. Some of them are now human in form, if not in all their senses. Dragons are a wonderful and varied bunch; let's get together and talk about some of our favorites, and why we love them so! *#DraconicAppreciationSociety*

M: Steven Schwartz. Marie Brennan, Jo Walton

Santa Rosa: Reading by Nancy Jane Moore and Megan O'Keefe

Reading by Nancy Jane Moore and Megan O'Keefe. *#MooreOKeefe*

Nancy Jane Moore, Megan E. O'Keefe

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available!

3:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Salon A/B: Wrap-up and Feedback Session

Tell us what we did wrong – and what we did right. *#WrapupandFeedbackSession*

Keyan Bowes, Michele Cox, Alyc Helms, John Kusters, Debbie Notkin, Steven Schwartz, Wendy A. Shaffer, Aaron I. Spielman, Michele Wellck

Sacramento: Writers' Workshop Group One

Salon C: Writers' Workshop Group Two

Santa Rosa: Writers' Workshop Group Three

Atrium balcony: Writers' Workshop Group Four

Mezzanine: Writers' Workshop Group Five

Game Room: Open Gaming

Stop by the game room and see what's happening! Bring your own or come see what we have available! If there's not enough interest for this late slot, we'll close early.

What you're supposed to do
when you don't like a thing is change it.
If you can't change it,
change the way you think about it.”

— Maya Angelou

Program Participants

Aaron I. Spielman

A long-time fan, conrunner and artist. Not a scary monster, despite rumors (and a nickname) to the contrary.

Alan Bostick

Alan Bostick has been by turns a physicist, editor, baker, poker pro, writer, and chocolatier. Equally at home in the salon privé of a Las Vegas casino resort and the slums of Haiti, Bostick is the very model of a real-life Heinlein protagonist. Pour him a shot of single-malt scotch, and ask him about exploring the ruins of ancient civilizations, probing the secrets of gravity with laser light, or working with the vexing polymorphic crystalline structure of cocoa butter.

Alex Gurevich

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia. Moved to the USA in 1989 at the age of 19. Received Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Chicago. Worked in financial markets in New York. Recently retired from Wall Street and live in Sausalito, California, focusing on writing SF/F.

Alfred Nash

Rocket scientist, track cycling race announcer & mustache competitor. Lead Engineer and Study Facilitator for the Advanced Projects Design Team (Team-X) at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Professional Track Cycling Race Announcer for local, national championship and international events. Professional MC for fundraisers, including moderating discussions with celebrity guests. Winner of the 2015 National Beard and Moustache Championships in the English Moustache category. BS in Physics from Stanford University and Ph.D in Physics from UC Santa Barbara. Father of a Science Fiction author.

Alyc Helms

Alyc Helms fled her doctoral program in anthropology and folklore when she realized she preferred fiction to academic writing. Her stories have appeared in *Daily Science Fiction*, *Crossed Genres*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, and *Beneath Ceaseless Skies*. She's a freelance writer for Green Ronin on their *A Song of Ice and Fire* and *Dragon Age* properties. Her first novel, *The Dragons of Heaven*, is available from Angry Robot Books.

Andy Smith

Ashley Christina

An allegedly awesome person.

Bradford Lyau

Bradford Lyau has been a program participant for over 25 years. After teaching at universities in California and Europe, he now works for start-up companies and is also a political consultant. He publishes academic articles on American, British, and European SF. His book-length study, analyzing French popular science fiction, has been published by McFarland and Company: *The Anticipation Novelists of 1950s French Science Fiction: Stepchildren of Voltaire*.

Caroline Ratajski

Caroline Ratajski is a writer and software engineer, currently living in Silicon Valley, California, USA. Previously published as Morgan Dempsey, her fiction is available in *Broken Time Blues* and *Danse Macabre*, as well as at *Redstone Science Fiction*.

Cassie Alexander

Cassie Alexander is a registered nurse and author of the Edie Spence urban fantasy series.

Chadwick H. Saxelid

I'm a writer, critic, and horror geek that lives, writes, and reads in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Chaz Brenchley

Chaz Brenchley has been making a living as a writer since the age of eighteen. He is the author of nine thrillers and five fantasies. As Daniel Fox, he has published a Chinese-influenced fantasy series, beginning with *Dragon in Chains*; as Ben Macallan, two urban fantasies, *Desdaemona* and *Pandaemonium*. A British Fantasy Award winner, he has also published books for children and more than 500 short stories in various genres. He recently married and moved from Newcastle to California.

Cliff Winnig

Cliff Winnig's stories appear in the anthologies *That Ain't Right: Historical Accounts of the Miskatonic Valley*, *When the Hero Comes Home: 2*, and others, as well as the Escape Pod podcast. His very short stories appear in the twitterzines *Outshine* and *Thaumatrope*. Cliff is a Clarion graduate and a three-time finalist in the Writers of the Future Contest. He's taught writing workshops and a class on the history of science fiction. He also plays sitar, dances, and does tai chi and aikido.

Colleen T. O'Rourke

Colleen has a Masters of Science in Biology and is currently working as an educational science writer. Since last attending FOGcon, she has been working seriously on her writing and currently has a couple stories out for submission. Her other hobbies include cooking, hiking, yoga, and bellydancing.

Constance Cooper

Constance Cooper's fantasy novel *GUILE* was published March 1, 2016, by Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Constance's short stories have appeared in *Asimov's*, *Strange Horizons*, *Lightspeed*, and various other publications. Her work has been podcast, translated into Swedish and Hebrew, and included in "Best of" anthologies. She also writes sf poetry, and has twice been nominated for the Rhysling Award. She lives in Oakland, CA.

Crystal Huff

Crystal Huff spends her time saving the world and chasing down conventioners. She was convention chair of Arisia 2011, Relaxacon 2011, Readercon 23, Readercon 24, Readercon 25, and co-chair of JOFcon I. Crystal is heavily involved in bringing Worldcon to Helsinki in 2017, to such an extent that she's co-chairing Worldcon 75. Crystal's day job involves fighting the kyriarchy, as well. Alignment: Chaotic Good.

Daniel Marcus

Daniel Marcus is the author of two novels and many short stories. Salon.com described his short story collection, "Binding Energy," as "a cross between Raymond Carver and William Gibson." Recent publications include "Bright Moment" (F&SF, Sep/Oct 2011), "After the Funeral" (F&SF, Sep/Oct 2013), and "Albion Upon the Rock" (F&SF, Mar/Apr 2014).

Daniel Starr**Debbie Notkin**

Debbie Notkin has been at various times a science fiction editor, book reviewer, bookstore owner, convention organizer, fanzine publisher, award administrator and more. In 2012, she was a guest of honor at WisCon 37. She also does body image activist work with Laurie Toby Edison, and political work with Strike Debt Bay Area and Human Interest Lending. In her spare time, she works as a contracts manager for a major nonfiction publishing company in its San Francisco office.

Donna Haraway

Donna Haraway holds a Ph.D. in biology and is an internationally recognized feminist theorist and philosopher of science and technology. Her seminal work, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, has become the authoritative text in theorizing the politics of cyborgs, the techno-mythological ideal, and its promised utopia(s).

Effie Seiberg

Effie Seiberg is a science fiction and fantasy writer from San Francisco. She's a graduate of Taos Toolbox and a slush reader for Tor.com. Her stories can be found in the "Women Destroy Science Fiction!" edition of *Lightspeed*, *Crossed Genres* magazine, the anthology *Fierce Family*, and upcoming in *Stupefying Stories*.

Elsa**Emily Jiang****Emma Humphries**

Annoyed, Agile™, and Scriptable. Enjoys coffee, JavaScript, power pop, and hockey.

Garrett Calcaterra

Garrett Calcaterra is author of the YA fantasy series, *The Dreamwielder Chronicles*. In addition, he has taught creative writing for over a dozen years at various institutions, including the prestigious Orange County School of Arts, and Chapman University.

Heather McDougal

Heather McDougal is a writer and educator living in Northern California. She has an MFA in sculpture but went back to her childhood love of writing, winning her a place at the Djerassi Resident Artists Program in 2002 and a Writers of the Future award in 2009. Her fiction has appeared in a number of venues since then, and she has received high praise for her eclectic blog, *Cabinet of Wonders*. *Songs for a Machine Age*, her clockpunk adventure novel, is out now from Hadley Rille Books.

Heather Rose Jones

Heather Rose Jones is writing a historic fantasy series with swordswomen and magic set in the alternate-Regency-era country of Alpennia. She blogs about research into lesbian-like motifs in history and literature at the Lesbian Historic Motif Project and writes both historical and fantasy fiction based on that research. She has a PhD in linguistics, studying metaphor theory and the semantics of Medieval Welsh prepositions, and works as an industrial failure investigator.

Ian K. Hagemann

Ian K. Hagemann is a mixed-race fan and writer in Seattle. He helped start Potlatch and the Carl Brandon Society, and is currently doing and leading personal work with The Mankind Project and Inward Journey.

Jamie L Henderson

Jamie is a professional in the High Tech industry who works entirely too much and manages to squeeze an embarrassing amount of consumption of books, movies, and video games of all genres in around that anyway.

Jason Stewart

Jay Hartlove

Author of award-winning supernatural thrillers *The Chosen* and *Daughter Cell*, and upcoming final volume in the series, *Isis Rising*. Also released fantasy romance *Mermaid Steel* in serial form online. Now finishing the album of his musical sequel to Snow White, called *The Mirror's Revenge*.

Jed Hartman

Jed Hartman is a technical writer and former Strange Horizons fiction editor whose extracurricular interests include logodaedaly, interdigitation, sesquipedalia, and lapsus linguae. His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in *All-Star Zeppelin Adventure Stories*, *Clean Sheets*, *Fishnet*, *Flytrap*, *Strange Horizons*, and *Wet*. For more about him (or to read his blog), see his website: <http://www.kith.org/logos>.

Jim Lutz**Jo Walton**

Jo Walton won the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer in 2002, the World Fantasy Award in 2004 for *Tooth and Claw*, and the Hugo and Nebula awards in 2012 for *Among Others*. She comes from Wales but lives in Montreal where the food and books are much better. She plans to live to be ninety-nine and write a book every year.

Josh Powell

Josh Powell, wielder of the Sommerswerd, destroyer of the thread, and expeditioner to Barrier Peaks is known for having survived a harrowing adolescence full of danger and fantasy. He's gone on to write *The Berserker* and *The Pedant and Dragon Apocalypse* and is currently working on the third book in the series. He lives with his wife and two amazing children in sunny California, where winter is, most decidedly, never coming.

Karen Brenchley

Karen Brenchley has had science fiction, steampunk, and fantasy stories appear in various anthologies both alone and with her husband, Chaz Brenchley. She is a defunct aikido black belt, and has a clubhouse full of books and Star Trek memorabilia. She lives in Sunnyvale with her husband, two scrabbling cats, and two polite turtles. See more at her website, <http://www.karenbrenchley.com>.

Karen Zellers**Katharine Kerr**

Katharine Kerr lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, his caregiver, and several cats. She's the author of the Deverry series of epic fantasy and the Nola O'Grady series of light-hearted urban fantasy novels.

KJ

KJ is an academic librarian, lifelong reader, avid gamer and active fan. She journals and published fanfiction under the handle "owlmoose," and recently joined the editorial team at the group blog Lady Business. The first FOGcon was also the first con KJ ever attended, and she is happy to have become a regular. Her other hobbies include singing, travel, and eating at interesting restaurants. She lives the cliché in San Francisco with her husband and two cats.

Kyle Aisteach

Kyle Aisteach lives in Fresno, California, where he writes short fiction and teaches writing.

L.S. Johnson

L.S. Johnson lives in Northern California. Her fiction has appeared in *Strange Horizons*, *Interzone*, *Long Hidden*, *Lackington's*, and other venues, and her first collection, *Vacui Magia: Stories*, is now available. Currently she is working on a fantasy trilogy set in 18th century Europe.

Laura Anne Gilman

Since her first novel in 2004, Laura Anne Gilman has established a reputation for darker-edged fantasy, both urban and epic. She is the author of the Locus bestseller *Silver on the Road*, the Nebula-nominated Vineart War trilogy, and the Cosa Nostradamus series, plus more than 40 short stories. Her story collection, *Darkly Human*, will be out from Book View Café in 2016. Currently based in Seattle, she's on Twitter as @LAGilman, and at <http://www.lauraannegilman.net>

Lorelei Powers

Lorelei Powers, also known as Mistress Lorelei, is the author of the BDSM how-to classics *The Mistress Manual* and *The Charm School for Sissy Maids*. She blogs about BDSM at <http://mistressmanual.com/blog>. As MsLorelei on Twitter and Tumblr, she focuses on sex, feminism, politics, and the occasional cat.

Loren Rhoads

Loren Rhoads is the author of *The Dangerous Type*, *Kill By Numbers*, and *No More Heroes*. She's the co-author (with Brian Thomas) of *As Above, So Below* and *Dies Irae*.

Lynn Alden Kendall

Lynn Alden Kendall grew up in the backwoods, reading everything she could get her hands on, from Reader's Digest Condensed Books to "When It Changed" by Joanna Russ. Her work has appeared in *American Writing* and 80! *Memories and Reflections on Ursula K. Le Guin*. Under various pen names, she has published a novel, a collection of short stories, and four nonfiction books. At her house, the cat-to-lap ratio is greater than 1 and the book-to-human ratio hovers around 5000:1.

Madeleine E. Robins

Madeleine Robins is the author of 11 novels, including three Sarah Tolerance alternate Regency-noir mysteries: *Point of Honour*, *Petty Treason*, and *The Sleeping Partner*; and *Sold for Endless Rue*, a retelling of Rapunzel in a medieval setting. She lives in San Francisco.

Margaret Speaker Yuan**Marie Brennan**

Marie Brennan is the author of eight novels, including *A Natural History of Dragons*, the Onyx Court series of historical fantasies, and the urban fantasy *Lies and Prophecy*. She has published more than forty short stories in venues such as *On Spec*, *Beneath Ceaseless Skies*, and the acclaimed anthology series *Clockwork Phoenix*. More information can be found on her website: www.swantower.com.

Marion Deeds

I'm a writer and a longtime fan of speculative fiction. My reviews can be found at www.fantasyliterature.com

Megan E. O'Keefe

Megan lives in the Bay Area of California and makes soap for a living. It's only a little like Fight Club. She is a first place winner in the Writers of the Future competition and her debut novel, *Steal the Sky*, is out now from Angry Robot Books

metaphortunate

Micah Joel

Ambisinister alter ego of a published nonfiction author and supertaster homebrewer high-functioning geek in SF. Padawan novelist. Viable Paradise graduate.

Michele Cox

Michele Cox found fandom (and filking!) in her teens and never left. Since then she has earned an MA in Church History and Theology, become a poet, and taught herself technical writing and business analysis by observation and practice. She is a polytheistic pan(en)theistic mystic working in web security. Among her favorite SFF authors are Edgar Pangborn, Lois McMaster Bujold, M. K. Wren, Madeleine L'Engle, and Theodore Sturgeon. She passes for normal among Bay Area SF fans.

Mishell Baker

Author of *Borderline*, first of an urban fantasy series coming from Simon & Schuster's SF imprint Saga Press in March 2016.

N.E. Johnson**Nabil Hijazi****Nancy Jane Moore**

Nancy Jane Moore's science fiction novel *The Weave* came out in 2015 from Aqueduct Press. She is also a member of the publishing co-op Book View Cafe, writes science fiction and fantasy, and is a fourth degree black belt in Aikido. Her other books include *Changeling*, *Conscientious Inconsistencies*, and *Walking Contradiction and Other Futures*.

Pat Murphy

Pat Murphy is a writer, a scientist, and a toy maker. Her novels include *The Wild Girls*, *Adventures in Time and Space with Max Merriwell*, and *The Falling Woman*. Her fiction has won the Nebula, the Philip K. Dick Award, the World Fantasy Award, and the 2002 Seiun Award. Currently, Pat works for Klutz, a publisher of how-to books that come with cool stuff. Her Klutz books include *Paper Flying Dragons* (with dragons to fold and fly) and *Star Wars Folded Flyers* (with 30 foldable starfighters).

Patricia A. Leslie

Independent author of "The Randolph Family Saga" series of romantic fantasy-metaphysical novels, written with some wry Jane Austen "comedy of manners" sensibility, and initially inspired by the Scottish ballad "Tam Lin." Also write short stories, filk songs & similar (also selling two home-manufactured parody/alternative lyrics songbooks). UC Berkeley grad, cultural anthropology. Left handed.

Rahul Kanakia

Rahul Kanakia's first book, a young adult novel entitled *Enter Title Here* is coming out from Disney-Hyperion in August '16, and his stories have appeared in *Apex*, *Clarkesworld*, and *Nature*.

S.B. Divya

S.B. Divya is a lover of science, math, fiction, and the Oxford comma. When she isn't designing high speed communications systems, raising her daughter, scratching the cats, or enjoying dinner with her husband, she writes. Her stories have appeared in *Daily Science Fiction* and *Nature*. Her novella, "Runtime," is forthcoming from Tor.com Publications. You can read more about her at www.eff-words.com.

Sarah Gailey

Sarah Gailey is a Bay Area native and an unabashed bibliophile, living and working in beautiful Oakland, California. She enjoys painting, baking, vulgar embroidery, and writing stories about murder and monsters. She livetweeted Star Wars and the internet got very excited about it, but mostly she writes short SFF and horror. Her fiction has appeared in *Mothership Zeta* and *The Colored Lens*, and is pending publication in lots of other places. She tweets @gaileyfrey.

Sarah Stegall

Sarah Stegall writes science fiction, fantasy and mysteries. Her most recent short stories have been published in *Quantum Zoo* and the upcoming *X-Files: The Truth Is Out There*. Her next book, *Outcasts: A Novel of Mary Shelley*, will be released in May 2016. Sarah is the author of the Phantom Partners series, as well as the novel *Chimera* and the YA novel *Farside*. Since 1994, Sarah has been writing critically acclaimed reviews of science fiction and fantasy television, books and movies. She researched and helped write the first three *Official Guides to The X-Files*. She currently resides in Northern California.

Shara Tran

Shara Tran is one of the winners of FOGcon's student writing contest for 2016.

Sonja Haas

I am fascinated by discussion of nearly every passing thing, but especially the effects of political and social structures. I love the story within the story that is not being overtly told.

Stef Maruch**Stephanie Der & Darshan Campos**

Stephanie Der cut her feminist teeth on Livejournal and continues to learn about social justice through Tumblr. An active member of fandom since she began reading fanfiction at 12, she believes in the transformative potential of the fantasy genre. She now resides in Napa where she co-hosts Hella Open Mic. Born and raised in the Bay Area, Darshan Elena Campos has taught high school, college, and adult learners. She's a big nerd, a total geek, and a founder of MEEP: Mapping Educational Ecosystems Project.

Steven Schwartz

Steven Schwartz is a writer of spec fic, smut, and poetry both formal and informal, a letterpress printer, and a firm believer in experimenting with programming.

Sunil Patel

Sunil Patel is a Bay Area fiction writer and playwright who has written about everything from ghostly cows to talking beer. His plays have been performed at San Francisco Theater Pub and SF Olympians Festival. His fiction will appear in *Genius Loci: Tales of the Spirit of Place*, *Fireside Magazine*, and *The Book Smugglers*. When he is not writing, he is consuming stories in all forms in order to extract their secrets and put them to use. Plus, he reviews books for *Lightspeed*. He also likes nachos.

Susan Palwick

Susan Palwick, Associate Professor of English at the University of Nevada, Reno, has published four novels with Tor and a story collection with Tachyon. Her fiction has been honored with the Crawford Award, an Alex Award from the ALA, and a Silver Pen Award from the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame. She has also published small amounts of poetry and nonfiction.

Suzanne K. Moses

Ted Chiang

Ted Chiang has won the Campbell Award, four Hugos, four Nebulas, three Locus awards, and more. His stories may be short, but the questions he asks are large – what does it mean to be human? – to be bodily? What is real? How do we know? How do our words – our language -- affect our world? How does causality work? He seems more interested in the questions than in the answers, and that should make for some fascinating conversations.

Terry Weyna

I review books for Fantasy Literature (<http://www.fantasyliterature.com>) and Like Fire (<http://www.openlettersmonthly.com/likefire/>). I'm an attorney, but would rather spend my time reading.

Theresa Mecklenborg

Theresa never knows what to put in these bio slots.

Thomas S. Roche

Thomas S. Roche is an author of science fiction, fantasy, horror, crime fiction, nonfiction, and erotica. His first novel *The Panama Laugh* was a finalist for the Bram Stoker Award from the Horror Writers of America. A prolific film and book reviewer, he can be found at <http://thomasroche.com>, <http://facebook.com/skidroche>, <http://twitter.com/thomasroche>, <http://goodreads.com/thomasroche> and <http://letterboxd.com/thomasroche>.

Vylar Kaftan

Vylar Kaftan has published about four dozen stories in places like *Clarkesworld*, *Lightspeed*, and *Asimov's*. Most recently she published an alternate history novella in *Asimov's*, "The Weight of the Sunrise," in which the Incan Empire survives into the 19th century. She was nominated for a Nebula in 2011 for her short story "I'm Alive, I Love You, I'll See You in Reno." She blogs at www.vylarkaftan.net.

Zachariah Ronan Nash

High School Student & Science Fiction Writer.

Access Information

We at FOGcon take accessibility seriously. We take the approach of universal design: making schedules, communications, and the physical environment usable by as many people as possible. Detailed, up-to-date information will be posted at our accessibility web page: <http://fogcon.org/about-fogcon/policies/accessibility-policy/>.

You can always email access@fogcon.org, if you have questions, special needs, or requests.

Unfortunately, we can't make the entire con barrier-free. We are limited by finances, volunteer staffing, and the cussedness of reality: sometimes the accommodation essential to one person (a helper animal, for example) is a barrier to another (those allergic to animals). Let us know, please, if you encounter difficulties or if you can offer suggestions or help.

At a minimum, we expect to offer these accommodations:

- A highly accessible, nonsmoking hotel with a number of handicapped access rooms
- Reserved seats in meeting rooms to help those who need to see or hear
- Dealers' room aisles wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass
- An effort to reduce perfumes for those with scent sensitivities
- Lists of ingredients wherever possible for those with food allergies
- A wide array of edibles to maximize your chances to find food that is both safe and luscious
- Signs at different heights because not everyone's eye level is the same
- An electronic version of the con schedule
- Accessible website design

Minimizing Stress and Maximizing Comfort

The weather both inside and out varies a lot. Bring layers to add in chilly program rooms, subtract in hot ones, and ensure you're comfortable in the wide range of weather both inside and outside the hotel.

Mobility

If you wish to rent a wheelchair or motorized scooter, we have found a service that will deliver rentals to the hotel's bell desk and pick it up after the con at no additional charge. Email access@fogcon.org for details. Reserve at least 48 hours in advance; a week is better.

Reading

FOGcon provides information in various formats. Our most important publications are the pocket program and this Program Book. In addition to regular print, the FOGcon web site hosts PDF and HTML versions of both publications, and we offer Android and iOS apps. A printed pocket program and the Program Book is included in the membership packet.

Listening

For the convenience of speech-readers, we set aside blue stripe seats front and center in every program room. Program participants may be able to use microphones in the larger program rooms. Contact us at access@fogcon.org to see if we can arrange any other accommodations you may request.

Eating

If you feel safer or more comfortable bringing your own food, you'll be pleased to hear that every room at the Walnut Creek Marriott Hotel features a minifridge.

The menu for the lunch buffet has been chosen to allow a broad spectrum of delicious foods. You should be able to find gluten-free and vegetarian options. Sorry, not kosher, and no vegan main dishes (but salads!). We will try to post ingredient lists and avoid cross-contamination, but we cannot guarantee it.

The Consuite is open Friday from noon to 2AM; Saturday from 8AM to 2AM; and Sunday from 8AM to 6PM. Every attempt will be made to supply ingredient lists and avoid cross-contamination.

Breathing

Our "zoned" fragrance policy balances two needs. For some members, fragrances trigger asthma, migraine, or illness. Other members need to use fragrance to manage pain and mood. Please leave scented products at home if you can do so without detriment to your own health. The Dealers' Room wares may include incense and dusty books. The hotel uses scented cleaning products. Those of us who react strongly to fragrances, dust, and particulates should bring an N95 mask.

Pets are allowed in the Walnut Creek Marriott Hotel.

Potential Barriers that Remain

Given our fiscal limitations, our commitment to our current conference venue, and the reality that sometimes one member's accommodation is another member's barrier, we can't make FOGcon perfectly accessible to everyone. We don't want to make promises we can't keep. We want you to know about these potential barriers so you can make informed decisions. "Sorry, we can't" is not the same message as "we don't care" or "we don't believe you" or "we're comfortable ignoring your needs." The Concom has and will continue to wrestle with these issues. Contact access@fogcon.org for background on these remaining barriers:

- Most of the programming rooms are illuminated with fluorescent lighting.
- Members bring a lot of reading materials only available in regular print. The "freebie" tables groan with info on events, zines, books, con bids, art shows, political theater, and much more. Party announcements and such decorate the walls.
- FOGcon is not scent-free.
- The toilet facilities are labeled "Men" and "Women," although humans don't divide that neatly.
- We cannot guarantee microphones in all program rooms.
- We have not yet found volunteer interpreters or captioning, and FOGcon just can't afford paid ones.

Allies: How Every Member Contributes to an Accessible Con

The most significant barriers can be created by thoughtless behavior and inaccurate assumptions about people with disabilities. Part of FOGcon's community values is to create a con that is accessible and a community that supports accessibility issues.

We all learn contradictory messages about people with disabilities. Disabled people are the archetypal "other": the fate-worse-than-death, the sainted and spiritual, the cursed and amoral, the sub-human, the super-human, the sexless and the over-sexed. These conflicting stereotypes support a weird stew of fear and fascination. All members create a universally accessible con by paying attention to our own behavior and attitudes.

Offer help—don't assume it's needed. Most of us are taught to “help the handicapped” but not to ask “does this person want or need help?” If you think someone may need assistance, just ask. If they say yes, don't make assumptions; instead listen to the details of what the person with disabilities wants. If they say “no thanks,” don't be offended. What might look overly complicated or inefficient can be what that disabled person finds works best.

Don't assume people with disabilities want or need fixing. Members with disabilities are here for the same reasons non-disabled members are: to think and talk about speculative fiction.

Bad ways to start (or continue) a conversation:

- “My nephew cured his fibromyalgia with a yak-milk diet.”
- “Don't they have a wonderful new medicine for that?”
- “Why take drugs when you just need a positive mental attitude and yoga?”

Better ways to start (or continue) a conversation:

- “Have you read Ted Chiang's short stories?”
- “I see you've got an Android. How do you like it?”
- “Don't I know you from LiveJournal?”

Privacy. Please respect others' physical and emotional boundaries. Do not lean on someone's wheelchair or move it without permission. Be aware that sudden hugs, tickles, or touches from behind can be seriously triggering to someone with PTSD. Those with scent sensitivities or plant allergies may have severe reactions to having flowers or perfume thrust in their face. Do not ask how someone became disabled or assume their experience is the same as another person with a similar disability. The Access Team have chosen to be information resources about disabilities—ask us.

Respect Blue Zones. Chairs marked with blue are reserved for those who must sit up front in order to lipread or hear. Wheelchair spaces are also marked in blue. Blue zones in hallways and aisles, if any, must be kept clear for people entering or leaving. Don't create traffic jams, please.

Maintain clear paths. FOGcon provides fantastic opportunities to talk, but clogged doorways and hallways make navigation time-consuming for all, and impossible for some of us. Tuck your belongings in front of your feet or under your seat. Remind members gathered in doorways or hallways of the need to share the limited space so all of us can move freely.

Share the air. Smoke and scents travel quickly, and air won't move if you ask it to. Washing your hands after smoking makes a difference. We ask that you limit your use of scented products if you can do so without negatively affecting your health. For those of us with asthma, migraine, and chemical sensitivities, fewer fragrances, vapors, and particulates make the con a place we can attend. Some of us smoke, and some of us don't. The hotel is completely non-smoking. FOGcon is not, however, a fragrance-free con.

Spread the word. Universal Design simplifies life by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities. The Access Team is delighted to discuss how you can incorporate universal design into your conventions, buildings, instruction, publishing and lives: contact us now via access@fogcon.org or in person at the con.

Speak up! You don't need to have a disability to advocate for access. If you see barriers, feel free to suggest how to clear them—whether this means talking respectfully to other members, alerting Safety, or contacting the Access Team or another Concom member.

Many thanks to the WisCon Access Team, who very kindly gave us permission to use and adapt their fine document on accessibility.

Anti-Harassment Policy

FOGcon is committed to offering a convention experience as free from harassment as we can make it for our members regardless of characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, age, race, religion, nationality, or social class. We do not tolerate harassment of conference participants in any form. FOGcon attendees violating these rules may be sanctioned or expelled from the convention without a refund at the discretion of the convention organizers.

Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to such characteristics, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, unwelcome photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome attention. Attendees asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

If a FOGcon attendee engages in harassing behavior, the convention organizers may take any lawful action we deem appropriate, including but not limited to warning the offender or expelling them from the convention with no refund. If you are being harassed, notice that someone else is being harassed, or have similar concerns, please contact a convention staff member immediately. While we are primarily concerned with preventing harassment in FOGcon space during the convention, we will also respond to FOGcon-related situations that might occur outside that space, for example in local shops, bars, restaurants, or on the street, or in online contexts.

Convention staff will help attendees contact hotel security or local law enforcement, provide escorts, or otherwise assist those experiencing harassment to feel less unsafe for the duration of the convention. We value your presence.

Photography Policy

Almost everyone who has a cell phone has a camera, and almost everyone who comes to FOGcon has a cell phone. Video and audio recording and photography for personal archival use only is generally okay, unless individuals make it clear that they do not wish to be photographed or filmed, in which case any photography or recording of them is expressly forbidden.

Please be polite and ask before taking photographs or recordings. We suggest that photographs be taken before or after a program event to avoid distracting panelists and audience members from their discussion.

You agree to be solely responsible for clearing any and all rights and permissions for any use(s) you might make of the photographs, recordings, transcripts and similar material you take from the convention. Such material may not be posted to any commercial website or commercially operated streaming server including but not limited to YouTube, nor used for any commercial purpose whatsoever. Please ask permission of the subjects before posting to any generally available web sites including unlocked Flickr, Facebook, DreamWidth, or LiveJournal accounts. Your participation in FOGcon does not permit you to make use of FOGcon intellectual property. Other than for your purely personal, archival use, you may not use any FOGcon intellectual property for any purpose without the express written consent of FOGcon.

Thanks to our friends at WisCon for graciously sharing their policy with us.

FOGcon 6 – Hours and Useful Information

Registration

Thursday: 7pm – 8pm
Friday: 10:30am – 9pm
Saturday: 9am – 6pm
Sunday: 10am – noon

Dealers' Room

Friday: 3pm – 7pm
Saturday: 10am – 6pm
Sunday: 11am – 3pm

Consuite (third floor, Room 363)

Friday: noonish – 2am
Saturday: 8am – 2am
Sunday: 8am – 4pm
Dead Frog Party: Sunday 4pm – 6pm

Childcare

Friday: 1:30pm – 5:45pm
Saturday: 9am – 11:45am, lunch break
1:30pm – 5:45pm
Sunday: 9am – 11:45am

Valet Parking

Valet parking is free to registered hotel guests for FOGcon, \$5 for non-guest FOGcon attendees

Important Numbers

Convention Safety Team: 510 520-6067
Walnut Creek Marriott hotel security: Dial "0"
Police and medical help: 911 (emergencies only)
National Sexual Assault Hotline: (800) 656-4673
(24 hour crisis line)
Yellow Taxi in Walnut Creek: (925) 934-1234

