

# FOGCON #1



MARCH 11-13, 2011



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# FOGCON 1

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*"The greater the variety of intelligent life Don saw, the more he became sensitive to its presence."*

—Fritz Leiber



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## Comments from the Chair

Welcome to FOGcon!

I'm delighted to see you here. The concom has been planning FOGcon for more than a year, and we're all thrilled to see our dream happening—and have you be part of it. We're excited about the convention we've built for you to enjoy, and we're confident that you'll enjoy it too. We've got terrific Honored Guests, stellar programming, and a dedicated volunteer team working to make FOGcon the best experience possible. Thank you all for joining us for our first year.

Starting a new con is challenging. It requires finding the right people, securing a good place and time, defining the mission and philosophy of the con, brainstorming great ideas to make the convention special, and a whole ton of gruntwork. I've been lucky to have a terrific concom and a ton of support from fans. There's a lot of people who want FOGcon to be as great as I do.

We have big dreams for the future, too. Among the things we'd like to do longer-term are grow the convention size, establish our own non-profit organization (we're currently working with the Speculative Literature Foundation), refund some costs for volunteers and program participants, and offer child care so that parents will have an easier time attending events. We want FOGcon to be the kind of convention where people know each other and care about our community. The next few years are crucial to our development; we're like a newborn baby.

So how can you help FOGcon thrive? A few things.

**1)** Help us publicize. If you have a great time here—which we're confident that you will—please tell your friends. Blog about FOGcon. Participate in our LJ community <http://community.livejournal.com/fogcon/>. Publicity is one of the biggest challenges for a first-year con, and we're grateful for any help you can give us. If there's any way you *don't* have a great time, please tell us so we can try to fix it, ideally before you tell the world.

**2)** Help us take care of the hotel. This includes basics like respecting the property, but also other kindnesses like tipping housekeepers and bellhops. Spending money at the hotel ensures that we maintain a strong relationship with them. So buy a drink (or juice) at the bar and give a toast to FOGcon.

**3)** Give back to FOGcon. There are two basic currencies here: money and time. Money's straightforward; we are happy to accept tax-deductible donations in any amount, and every bit helps as we build FOGcon into a stable, thriving event. Talk to the nice folks at registration for details. Donations will help us reach some goals more quickly, such as a fund to



## FOGCon

offer discounted memberships to people in need. We know that not everyone has money, especially in this economy, so keep reading for other ways to help.

Among our many needs are gifts of time. We need: volunteers for the Consuite and Registration desks, help with organizing/running the con year-round, bloggers to talk about us, professionals willing to put in a good word for us, and thoughtful con-goers willing to help out with miscellaneous tasks. Please consider volunteering for something. An hour of chopping veggies in the Consuite can be a great way to thank the con organizers, as well as a way to make new friends. To volunteer, go to the Consuite and look for a signup sheet. (Other volunteer opportunities will also be posted there.)

We intend to establish FOGcon as a permanent literary convention here in the Bay Area, but to do that, we need the support of the community. You've already contributed by attending the con and showing your support. Thank you for being here. As I said at the start—I'm truly grateful to all of you for making this happen. FOGcon belongs to all of us.

Vylar Kaftan, con chair

PS My concom will kill me if I don't say anything funny in here. It's a little bit like having a green squeaky hammer hanging over my head. At any moment, I might get bopped on the head for taking things too seriously. If any of you see my concom stalking me with a cartoonish prop, please warn me. I'm also worried about falling pianos, overpowered rockets, and selective application of gravity as I run off a cliff. I'll trust you members to protect me.

## Convention Committee

Vylar Kaftan, Chair  
Eva Folsom, Vice Chair  
Molly Aplet, Volunteer Coordinator  
Alan Bostick, Safety Team  
Keyan Bowes, Dealers Room  
Michele Cox, Hotel Liaison and Local Guide  
Vito Excalibur, Programming  
Sonja Haas, Treasurer  
Jasmine Hammer, Registration  
Lynn Alden Kendall, Website and Disability Access Coordinator  
Debbie Notkin, Hotel Liaison and Convention Guru  
Corie Ralston, Consuite and Publicity  
Steven Schwartz, Programming  
Rachel Swirsky, Readings and Writers Workshop Coordinator  
Guy W. Thomas, Publications



## 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.

*"People have the right to call themselves whatever they like. That doesn't bother me. It's other people doing the calling that bothers me."*

— Octavia Butler

*"Truth is a matter of the imagination."*

— Ursula K. Le Guin



## Disability 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](mailto: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
- A Quiet Room to help you minimize stress
- 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.

#### *Stress Management*

We've reserved a Quiet Room for those of us who need a break during the con. It's a good place to go when you're feeling peopled out or overstimulated. Take a few minutes to catch your breath, listen to your heartbeat, ruminate, and contemplate. The Quiet Room works when we respect its boundaries: please, no talking within. If there's someone waiting for a space, yield yours after 30 minutes.



*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](mailto: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 will host PDF and HTML versions. A printed pocket program book is included in the membership packet. We will have a few large-print versions on hand at the registration desk.

*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](mailto:access@fogcon.org) for any other accommodations.

*Eating*

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

The menu for the Lift-off Party Friday night has been chosen to allow a broad spectrum of delicious foods. You should be able to find gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, and vegan options. Sorry, not kosher. Also, mixed nuts will be present. We will try to post ingredient lists and avoid cross-contamination, but we cannot guarantee it.

The Consuite on the seventh floor is open Friday from noon to 2AM; Saturday from 8AM to 3AM; and Sunday from 8AM to 8PM. 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. Some 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.



## FOGCon

San Francisco is a smoke-free city. All indoor public places—including bars—are smoke-free. Smokers do tend to congregate around the doors to public buildings.

Pets are allowed in the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway.

### 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. "No" 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](mailto: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.
- Folks with severe nut allergies should definitely avoid the Lift-off Party.
- 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 in the beautiful city of San Francisco.

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 Fritz Leiber's *Our Lady of Darkness*?"
- "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 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



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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](mailto: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.**

*"I don't think humanity just replays history, but we are the same people our ancestors were, and our descendants are going to face a lot of the same situations we do. It's instructive to imagine how they would react, with different technologies on different worlds. That's why I write science fiction—even though the term 'science fiction' excites disdain in certain persons."*

— Kage Baker

*"It is always hard to face up to a complex world, try to figure out what makes it tick, try to cope with it, survive and triumph over it. But this is precisely what science fiction strives toward ... Through science fiction the human race can try experiments in imagination too critically dangerous to try in fact."*

—Robert A. Heinlein

*"You meet a new person, you go with him and suddenly you get a whole new city...you go down new streets, you see houses you never saw before, pass places you didn't even know were there. Everything changes."*

— Samuel R. Delany (Dhalgren)

## Important numbers

Convention Safety Committee: (415) 935-1524

Holiday Inn Golden Gateway hotel security: (415) 441-4000

Police: 911 (emergencies only)

National Sexual Assault Hotline: (800) 656-4673 (24 hour crisis line)

Medical help: 911 (emergencies only)

Yellow Taxi in San Francisco: (415) 333-3333

*To be individual, my friends, to be different from others, is the only way to become distinguished from the common herd. Let us be glad, therefore, that we differ from one another in form and in disposition. Variety is the spice of life, and we are various enough to enjoy one another's society; so let us be content.*

— L. Frank Baum, *The Lost Princess of Oz* (1911)

## Thank you

I couldn't have put this program book together without a lot of help. I'd like to thank the entire Concom for all their work. And as always thank you Carol and Serene.

—Guy W. Thomas, publications

*"Minority art, vernacular art, is marginal art. Only on the margins does growth occur."*

— Joanna Russ

*"I don't know about you, but I'm kind of fed up with realism. After all, there's enough reality already; why make more of it? Why not leave realism for the memoirs of drug addicts, the histories of salt, the biographies of porn stars? Why must we continue to read about the travails of divorced people or mildly depressed Canadians when we could be contemplating the shopping habits of zombies, or the difficulties that ensue when living and dead people marry each other? We should be demanding more stories about faery handbags and pyjamas inscribed with the diaries of strange women. We should not rest until someone writes about a television show that features the Free People's World-Tree Library, with its elaborate waterfalls and Forbidden Books and Pirate-Magicians. We should be pining for a house haunted by rabbits."*

— Kelly Link





Photo Credit: David D. Wright

## Pat Murphy

ZAP!

Pat Murphy's guest of honor bio can be written in one sentence:

Pat Murphy's email handle is "zapmurphy."

Doesn't that tell you everything you need to know?

\* \* \*

But there is more. Lots more.

Pat has written eight novels, plus a children's picture book, plus a collection of her own short stories, a collection

of short stories with Pat Cadigan and Karen Joy Fowler, and many other uncollected short stories. She has won two Nebula Awards, for the novel *The Falling Woman* and the short story "Rachel in Love," and a World Fantasy Award, for the novella "Bones." Her latest novel is the young adult novel *Wild Girls*, from Firebird Books, featuring (among many other things) stilt-walking. She didn't write some of her novels: they were written by people who live inside her head. (Ask her; I don't have space here to explain.)

Because the FOGCon theme is the city in speculative literature, let's look quickly at *The City, Not Long After* (not Pat's only venture into writing about cities, just her most famous one). In this post-apocalyptic novel, San Francisco is an independent artists' community, full of odd characters making art and living anarchic lives ... until Sacramento declares war. The meat of the novel is how the laissez-faire artists respond to being invaded ... how the artists' city finds its own weapons and its own strategy and tactics. Among many other things, it's a book about how the special characteristics of our city (and by extension any city) frame its response to crisis. And you'll never see the Golden Gate Bridge in quite the same way. *(Continued on page 37)*



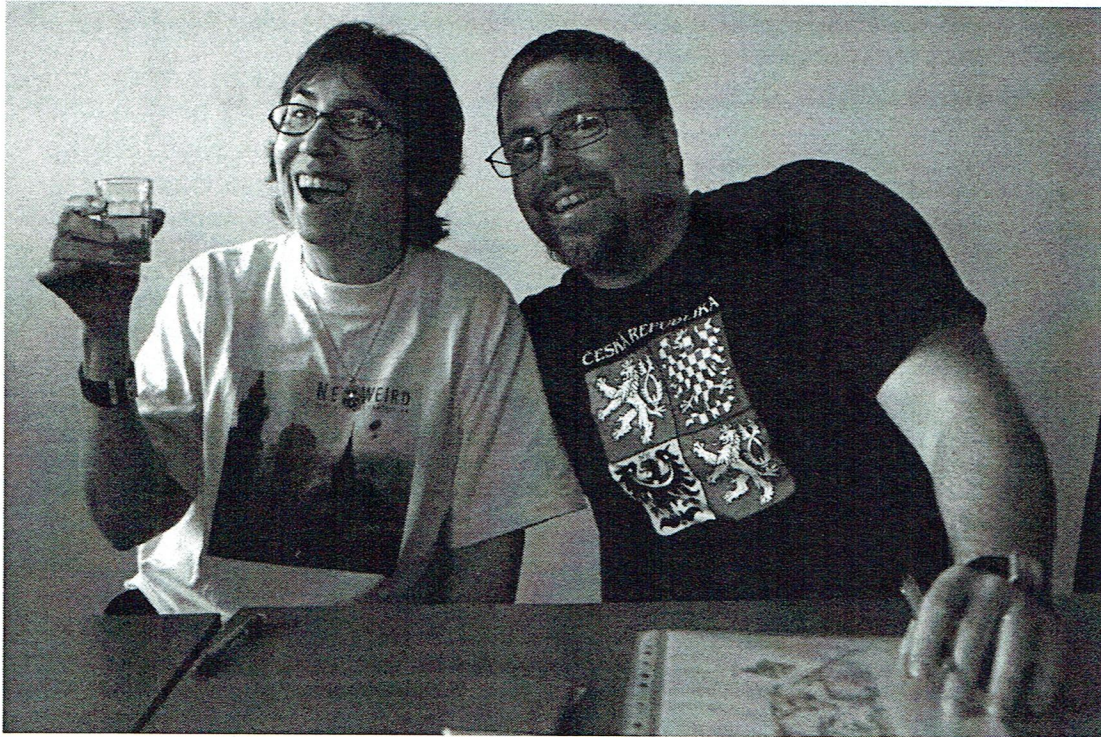


Photo Credit: Richard Klíeník

## Ann VanderMeer

Something was happening back there at the tail end of the last millennium. And I'm not talking about The Gulf War, McDonald's opening a franchise in Moscow, the cloning of Dolly the sheep, the Spice Girls, or even Bill Clinton demonstrating new uses for a cigar. Although, all these probably figure in there somewhere. What I am talking about are *The Silver Web* (1990-2002), *Crank!* (1993-1998), *Century* (1995-2000), and *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet* (1996-2008), four magazines that helped define a new course in speculative fiction. Whereas before, most notably in Damon Knight's Orbit series, there had been attempts to define science fiction

(continued on page 38)

## Jeff VanderMeer

### THE HOEGBOTTON GUIDE TO THE HISTORY OF JEFF VANDERMEER

*compiled from notes found in the files of Orem Hoegbotton, including scrawls attributed to Duncan Shriek*

*edited and embellished by Matthew Cheney*

At the tail end of America's revolutionary years, Jeff VanderMeer was born in Bellfonte, Pennsylvania, the county seat of Centre County and part of the State College, Pennsylvania Metropolitan Statistical Area. His birth seems to have caused some consternation at high levels of the U.S. government, but all the files have been classified until 2068; we do know, though, that his

(continued on page 40)



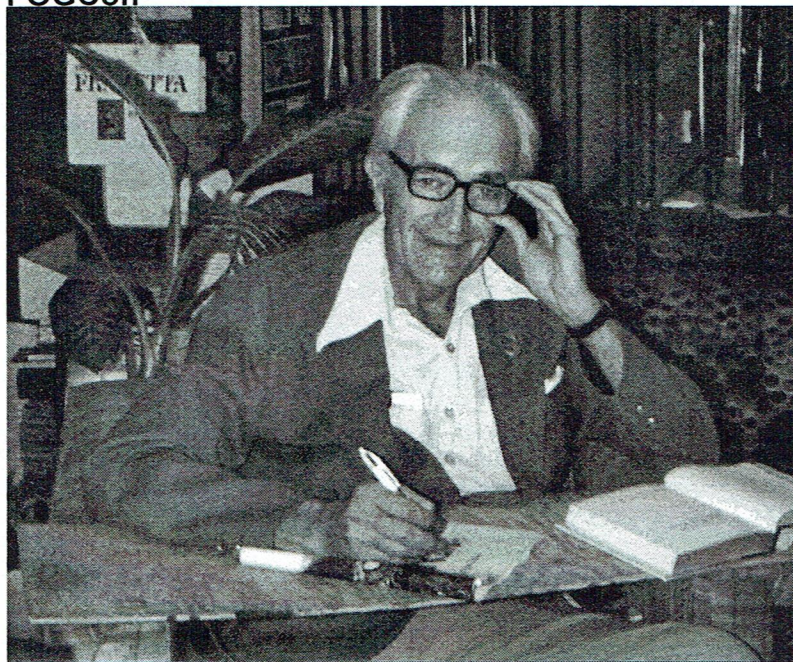


Photo Credit: Will (CthulhuWho1) Hart

## Fritz Leiber

Fritz Leiber haunted people while he was alive. It's no surprise that he's continuing to do so. A biography of the man would take much more space than we could allow in this program book. Let's just look for a few moments at some of his most famous ghosts.

He started the

idea of modern urban ghost stories with "Smoke Ghost", published in 1941 in *Weird Tales*. Years before anyone else, he created a ghost out of pollution and urban mire that still has the capacity to chill a modern reader. Replace Chicago's elevated train system with BART, and the story feels just as real today.

Once he moved to San Francisco, he began setting stories here too. The best known is *Our Lady of Darkness*, a novel which combines the seediness of the Tenderloin with the eeriness of the Sutro Tower. Anyone who's ever allowed books to build up on his bed will find his depiction of a Scholar's Mistress gone wrong unsettling. Personally, I prefer "Midnight on the Morphy Watch" as a local ghost story – San Francisco infuses all the little bits of the tale, and the chess connection is just wonderful.

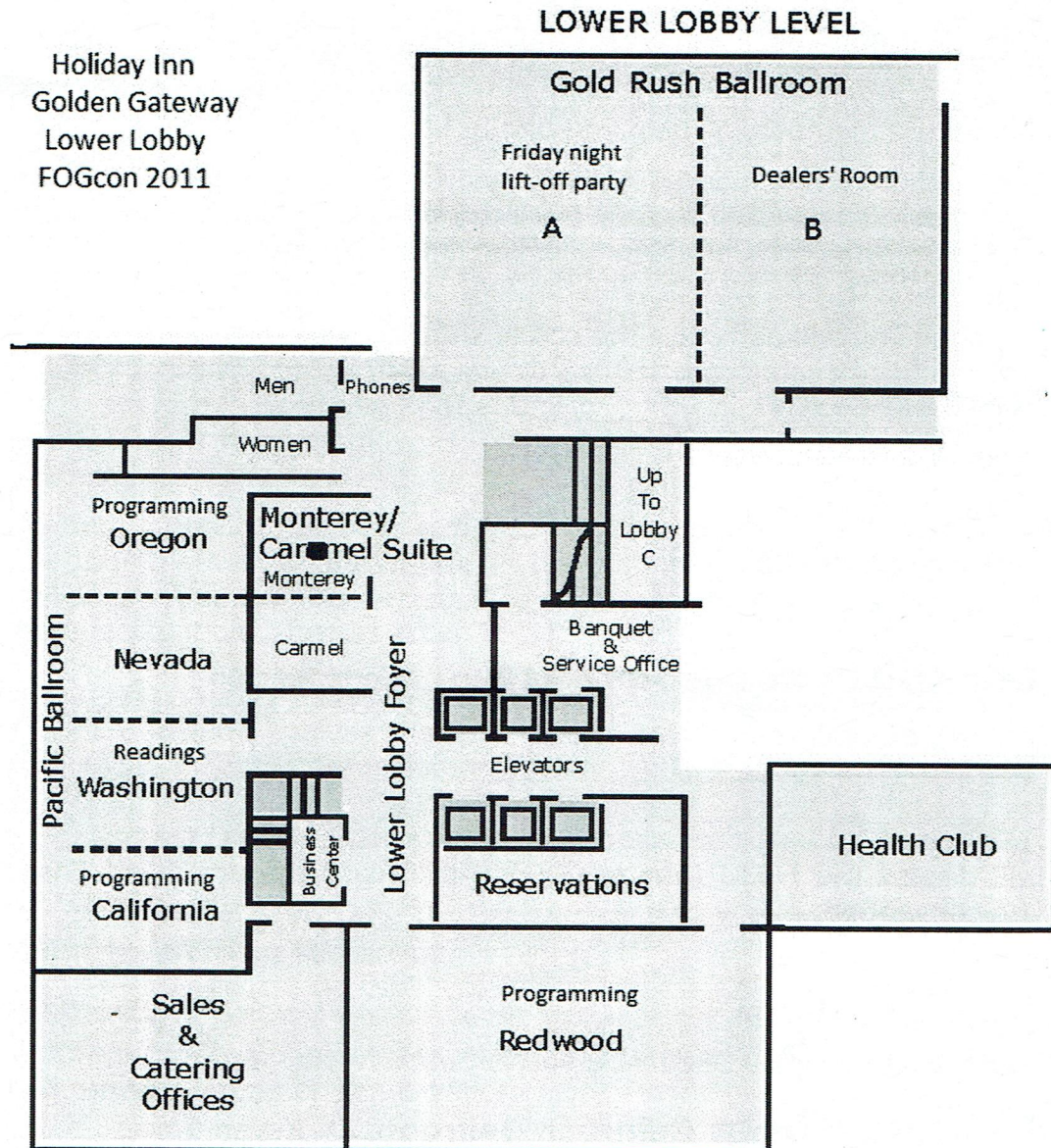
It's not just his stories that haunt people. The man himself had a way of crawling deep into a person's soul. An actor and the son of actors, he knew how to manage an audience, even of one person. I wish I'd been there at the convention where someone got him to stand on a table, and turned out all the lights except for a flashlight aimed at him. Without missing a beat, he declaimed the poem "Dover Beach" for the assembled crowd, to a stunned silence.

His ghost, here, I expect to be a kind one. He was quick to acknowledge kindness from others (I treasure a postcard he sent when I reviewed one of his books in *Locus*). I expect that he'd want everyone here to be conscious of what's greater than ourselves, in the moment, here and now. If you feel his presence here – try to live up to what he'd have wanted for you.

— Tom Whitmore. Tom Whitmore was one of the founders of The Other Change of Hobbit bookstore in Berkeley, California, and has reviewed books for *Locus* and other venues. He is currently a massage therapist in Seattle. His website is at [www.tswitmore.com](http://www.tswitmore.com).



## Our Hotel



*"History has shown us all too often the consequences of dreaming poorly or not at all."*

— Jeff VanderMeer



## **Hotel**

Michele Cox and Debbie Notkin

Welcome to the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway. All FOG events are in the lower lobby except for the con suite, which is rooms 708-712. The elevators should be keyed to let everyone get to the 7th floor during con suite hours, but let us know if you have any problems. If you want to host a room party on another floor, or if you have any other questions or concerns about the hotel, please talk to Debbie Notkin or Michele Cox (any committee member will help you find us).

Hotel amenities include an outdoor heated pool (on the 6th floor) which is open from 6am to 10pm, Café Marlette, open for breakfast from 6:30 a.m. to 11 am, and the Club Interlude Bar and Grill, open from 6:30 pm to 11 pm.

We hope you will patronize the coffee shop and the restaurant

## **Registration**

Jasmine Hammer

Thursday, 8pm - 9pm

Friday, 9am - 8pm

Saturday, 9am - 2pm

Sunday, 10am - Noon

## **Consuite: Rooms 708 – 712**

Corie Ralston

We will be open during the special daylight savings hour of 2 to 3 am on Sunday morning, so stop by after your tour of the city with Fritz Leiber. But hurry, that particular hour goes by fast! The last four hours on Sunday evening (4 - 8 pm) the consuite will be turned into a laboratory, where we will dissect the FROG (ahem, FOG) and discuss the ups/downs/innards of the convention.

Friday noon - 2am

Saturday 8am - 3am

Sunday 8am - 4pm. Dead Frog Party: Sunday 4pm - 8pm.

## **Dealers Room Goldrush Ballroom B**

Keyan Bowes

Friday, 3pm - 7pm

Saturday, 10am - 5pm

Sunday, 10am - 3pm

## **Readings Pacific Ballroom: Washington**

Rachel Swirsky

## **Quiet Room Pacific Ballroom: Nevada**

## **Safety Team**     Alan Bostick

The Safety team is here to help FOGcon attendees have an enjoyable and successful convention. We will try to be there to try to respond to difficulties and relieve them. Did someone leave a handbag in a program area that is locked after hours? Are two people working out a relationship issue in the con suite in a way that is making other people in the con suite uncomfortable? Does a line of people waiting for function space to open need to be moved to guarantee access to a staircase or other doorway? Is the hotel getting noise complaints about a party? Is someone paying attention to another person that this other person finds unwelcome or excessive? Is an attendee having a severe allergic reaction to something in the convention environment and needs immediate medical attention? Is something unusual happening that might impact on the safety or satisfaction of convention attendees?

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 them the number (415) 935-1524. In case of an immediately dangerous situation, of course, call 9-1-1.

## **Programming**     Steven Schwartz and Vito Excalibur

**Friday, March 11**

1:30-2:45 P.M.

### **75-Minute Writing Workout**

*Oregon Room*

Vylar Kaftan and perhaps others will offer exercises designed to help your writing. Bring a laptop or pen & paper.

*M: Vylar Kaftan*

### **ConTention Mini-con**

*California Room*

No panels, just arguments. A few contentious topics, volunteers from the audience to cross swords, 15 minutes at most to beat each other into the ground, and one moderator to keep the whole thing in line. A cross between improv theatre and a debating society. Kicking it off: "Perdido Street Station - Masterpiece or Mess?"

*M: Steven Schwartz*



3:00-4:15 P.M.

**Future Cities of the Past**

*Oregon Room*

From Gernsback to Gibson, Bester to Brunner, Disch to DiFilippo, we've had people describing the city of the 21st century. What did they predict correctly, and what did they never see coming, and why? Are we closer to *Vermilion Sands* or 334's New York?

*M: David Levine, Courtney Eckhardt, Jean Marie Stine, Daniel Marcus*

**Ancient Urban Fantasy**

*California Room*

"Urban fantasy" is often used to describe magic in the modern-day city. But what about historical fiction set in ancient cities? Let's talk about what's been done in the genre.

*M: Micah Joel, Marie Brennan, Emily Jiang, Alan Bostick*

**Reading:** *Valerie Estelle Frankel and Chaz Brenchley*, Washington Room

4:30-5:45 P.M.

**Last Drink Bird Head**

*Oregon Room*

A discussion of the Last Drink Bird Head awards given by Ann and Jeff VanderMeer for service and activism in the science fiction community. What are these awards? Who nominates? Who selects? What's the idea behind them?

*M: Ann VanderMeer*

**No-Blah Blog**

*California Room*

In 2011, many authors are not just writing stories, novels and articles. They're blogging. How do you create a blog readers will want to return to again and again without sacrificing your other writing projects?

*M: Amy Sundberg, Erin Hoffman, Gary Farber, Carolyn Cooper*

**Segregation in SFnal Cities**

*Redwood Room*

In late 2010, Eric Fischer used Census data to map out the top 40 cities in the United States by race.

(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/walkingsf/sets/72157624812674967/detail/>)  
The one commonality of every map was that segregation existed, often in stark and predictable patterns—one race dominating this side of a busy avenue, a different race dominating that side. Or poor neighborhoods being

dominated exclusively by people of color, while wealthy 'hoods are white. How often do we see this pattern realistically depicted in SFnal cities? Do most cities in speculative fiction simply ignore race and class, or do they more often depict an idealistic—if unrealistic—even mix? Do we *want* to see realistic segregation in our fantastic cities, or is it too troubling to be reminded of our world's problems when we'd rather just "escape"?

*M: Mary Anne Mohanraj, Eric Fischer, Jaym Gates, Marie Brennan*

**Reading:** *David D. Levine and Katharine Kerr*, Washington Room

8:00-9:15 P.M.

### **The Monster In Speculative Literature**

*Oregon Room*

Sometimes a monster is the villain, increasingly the monster is the hero(ine). Why do readers identify with the monster now, or perhaps they always have? What makes a monster monstrous?

*M: Ann VanderMeer, Nabil Hijazi, Rachel Silber, Karen Williams*

### **Your Favorite Book No One's Ever Heard Of**

*California Room*

You get 60 seconds in front of the mike to talk about your favorite book no one's ever heard of and why everyone should read it. If you try to do a book you wrote yourself, the moderator can throw a squid at you.

*M: Lisa Eckstein and Jesse the K*

### **How to Build Your Own City (Without an Urban Planning Degree): Part I, The Past**

*Redwood Room*

Aqueducts allowed cities to stray farther from rivers. Letters of free trade moved settlers from forts and castles to free towns. How do you evolve a city for your fantasy novel that feels specific and plausible, not generic?

*M: Yonatan Zunger, Erin Hoffman, Daniel Star, Katharine Kerr*

**Reading:** *Vylar Kaftan and Mary Anne Mohanraj*, Washington Room

9:30-10:45 P.M.

### **I Left My BART in San Francisco**

*California Room*

Public transit—do we use it? How do we like it? Can we encourage other cities to fund their public transit systems, or should we have other priorities? What about places where public transit may be less practical, like rural areas? How can we reduce our dependence on oil?

*M: Sarah Goodman, Eric Fischer, Aaron Spielman, Guy Thomas*



## **How to Destroy Your City and Enjoy the Wreckage**

*Redwood Room*

The ruins of Southern California in Tim Powers' *Dinner at Deviant's Palace*; the artistic mutations of San Francisco in Pat Murphy's *The City, Not Long After*— what fun can we have with the wreckage of a city? What is left over after the apocalypse, and what begins after it? Consider the ruined city months, years, centuries later: What threats and promises will the crumbling metropolis of the past offer to the survivors?

*M: Madeleine Robins, Pat Murphy, Jeff VanderMeer, Gary Kloster, Elwin Cotman*

**Reading:** *Emily Jiang and Julia Dvorin, Washington Room*

**Saturday, March 12**

9:00-10:15 A.M.

### **A Sense of Displacement**

*California Room*

Write Where You Know: If you've never been to Mars, how can you write about it? How does where you've been affect your work? Do you have to travel in order to write about far-flung actual places, even if you then transmute them into fantasy?

*M: Emily Jiang, Chaz Brenchley, Cassie Alexander, Lynn Alden Kendall*

**Reading:** *Jaym Gates, Elwin Cotman, Daniel Marcus, Washington Room*

10:30-11:45 A.M.

### **The Lightning Wrath of the Internet**

*Oregon Room*

From Cooks Source to RaceFail, the Internet "hivemind" gets angry very, very quickly. The speed of discussion in fandom is much faster than it ever has been before. How is this changing the conversations we have? Is it a good thing, a bad thing, or simply the way it is?

*M: Lori Selke, Mary Anne Mohanraj, Nick Mamatas, Rachel Silber*

### **Good Reads**

*California Room*

Four thoughtful panelists each pick a book they like to talk about. Each panelist reads the book chosen by the other three, and then the four of them talk about the books.

*M: Vito Excalibur, Lynn Alden Kendall, Wired, Aaron Spielman*



**How to Build Your Own City (Without an Urban Planning Degree): Part II, the Present**

*Redwood Room*

Families farming in the urban center of Detroit. Poorly funded infrastructure causing the collapse of a bridge in Minneapolis. What's happening today in our modern cities? How can we handle these issues in fiction?

*M: David Moles, Courtney Eckhardt, Rachel Swirsky, Daniel Starr*

**Reading:** *Broad Universe Rapid Fire Reading*, Washington Room

12:00-1:15 P.M.

**Writer's Workshop**

*Location TBA*

1:30-2:45 P.M.

**I Have Written The Greatest Story Ever...**

*Oregon Room*

...No wait, it sucks. It's horrible. Oh, it's genius! Wait—AUUUGH! Sound familiar? Many writers report that they love and hate their writing—sometimes both on the same day. Get some tips on how to cope with the emotional rollercoaster of the writing life.

*M: Daniel Marcus, Lisa Eckstein, Madeleine Robins, Jason S. Ridler*

**My City Goes to 1011**

*California Room*

Can an online community be considered a city? Why or why not? If so, how does one define the community boundaries? If not, what are the differences?

*M: Starlady, Ann Wilkes, Aahz, Guy W. Thomas*

**Jeff & Ann VanderMeer Honored Guest Presentation**

*Redwood Room*

THE VANDERMEERS: *Interrogation With Eye Candy: Dr. Lambshead, Steampunk, Weird Tales, Imaginary Animals*, and You: Join *Weird Tales* editor and Hugo Award winner Ann VanderMeer and her World Fantasy Award winning husband, writer and editor Jeff VanderMeer as they take you on a whirlwind visual exclusive inside look at a cornucopia of exciting new projects, from *The Thackery T. Lambshead Cabinet of Curiosities*, featuring work by Mike Mignola and Greg Broadmore, to the *Steampunk Bible* coffee table book, from the rejuvenated *Weird Tales* to the insanely entertaining *Kosher Guide to Imaginary Animals*, featuring recipes for Wookie and



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Cthulhu by Ace of Cake's Duff Goldman. FEATURING: Infamous self-Q&A, with questions NOT vetted ahead of time...

*M: Jeff VanderMeer M: Ann VanderMeer*

**Reading:** *Terry Bisson*, Washington Room

3:00-4:15 P.M.

### **Inside the Sausage Factory**

*Oregon Room*

Pro writers talk about their process: how they write, what works for them, what doesn't work for them.

*M: Jed Hartman, Steven Boyett, Cassie Alexander, Michael Shea, M. Christian*

### **Menace of the Spoiler**

*California Room*

Some people think "spoiling" a story for someone who hasn't read it (or having a story spoiled for themselves) is at best rude and at worst sadistic. Others think that stories are more than plot and spoilers are no big deal. We're not going to have that fight here. Instead, we're going to discuss what makes a spoiler: does it have to be a major plot point? Does the book/story/movie have to be new? Can you "spoil" results of a baseball game or a poker tournament for someone who hasn't seen them? And what's the motivation that made people with loudspeakers drive around parking lots before midnight Harry Potter releases, broadcasting spoilers to kids who didn't want to hear them?

*M: Karen Williams, Lori Selke, K. Joyce Tsai, Debbie Notkin*

### **Race, Class, and Urban Planning**

*Redwood Room*

How does centralized planning divide our cities along lines of race and class? Subsidized housing, elevated freeways, new condos, zoning regulations: who decides where these are placed, and for what purposes? From Tyrion Lannister scouring King's Landing during war to Ariane Emory programming the populations of Cyteen and Gehenna, these issues affect our fictional worlds too. Let's talk about how power and urban planning interact.

*M: Sarah Goodman, Ian K. Hagemann, Katharine Kerr, Vylar Kaftan*

**Reading:** *David Moles and Marie Brennan*, Washington Room



4:30-5:45 P.M.

**Happily Ever After?**

*Oregon Room*

Do happy endings feel unrealistic? Have you run into unrealistic tragic endings? Are "realistic" endings more satisfying to readers? Or do they just get more critical respect?

*M: Alan Beatts, Wired, Jean Marie Stine, Steven R. Boyett*

**Is there Regional SF/F?**

*California Room*

There is lots of spec fic with a strong sense of place; there are even groups of writers whose combined work can give a feel to a region. But are there regional differences in SF? Is there a Southern SF the way you'd see Southern Literature taught in schools? Or a California SF? And if so, does it extend beyond "literature about the region"? The same question can be asked about different countries.

*M: Jason S. Ridler, Jaym Gates, Nick Mamatas, Terry Bisson*

**Pat Murphy Honored Guest Presentation**

*Redwood Room*

This February, as part of a short story response of NaNoWriMo, Pat Murphy wrote a story a week. But that, she has decided, was just not fast enough. Therefore, during the course of an hour and a half, Pat will lead a group of intrepid souls through a series of writing exercises from which each person will emerge with (drum roll please) a complete story. Not a long story. Not necessarily a good story. But a story, nonetheless. Exercises will include ones created by Max Merriwell (of *Adventures in Time and Space with Max Merriwell*) and Verla Volante (of *Wild Girls*).

Bring papers and pencils and a need for speed. (Some writing gear will be provided, but if you bring your own, you'll be sure to have it. You are required to supply your own sense of urgency.)

*M: Pat Murphy*

**Reading:** *Cassie Alexander and Michael Shea*, Washington Room

8:00-9:15 P.M.

**Let's Build A City**

*Oregon Room*

Right before your very eyes (and with your vigorous suggestions from the audience!) our panelists will create a city out of nothing but the room's imagination. Will it sit in the crater of an active volcano? Will it have



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different districts for people to live in based on their culinary preferences? Come and find out...

*M: David Moles, Nabil Hijazi, Steven Schwartz, Ann Wilkes*

### **Why London? Nod Nolyhw?**

*California Room*

What is it about England's capital that inspires so many stories positing the existence of a second, evil twin city? Maybe it's that there's enough history there for two separate cities. Or that there's enough ghosts that a second, spectral city is the only answer to affordable housing. Whatever the reason, London keeps authors coming back to build: above, below, instead and sometimes in ways we really don't have prepositions for. But why?

*M: Amy Sundberg, Alan Beatts, Chaz Brenchley, Valerie Estelle Frankel*

### **Open Mike**

*Redwood Room*

Did you write a fantastic story at Pat Murphy's Honored Guest workshop? Do you have something short to read to us? The open mike is the place to do it.

*M: Betsy Lundsten. Whoever Comes To Read*

**Reading:** *M. Christian, Cliff Winnig, Madeleine Robins, Washington Room*

9:30-10:45 P.M.

### **What happened to "Punk"?**

*California Room*

One of its core principles of cyberpunk is the repurposing of tech by the streets. But since Cyberpunk, we've had witpunk, splatterpunk, biopunk, and steampunk, and "-punk" seems to have become a word meaning "an SF genre". Is the punk still there, or do we need to admit we've made it meaningless? Is it time for punkpunk?

*M: Nick Mamatas, Karen Babich, M. Christian, Nabil Hijazi*

**Reading:** *Steven R. Boyett and Chas Belov, Washington Room*

"We often settle for sex when we want love. And we often want love when we need something else, like a good job or a chance to go back to school."  
— Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*

"My home is not a place, it is people."  
— Lois McMaster Bujold, *Barrayar*



**Sunday, March 13**

2:00-3:00 A.M.

**A Guided Tour of Veniss Underground**

*Boiler Room In The Basement*

Honored Guest Jeff VanderMeer leads interested parties down a specially dug tunnel beneath the Holiday Inn to explore the real-life location in which his fictional Veniss Underground was set. Warning: The con does not provide safety gear, weapons, or retrieval services for anyone lost on this expedition.

**The Six Magic Words Of Guaranteed Publication**

*Gold Rush A*

Ann VanderMeer will reveal the true secret of getting published: six words that will ensure that, if you include them in your story correctly, you will see print!

**Fritz Leiber Reading/Q&A**

*Room 607a*

Fritz Leiber will be reading from his recently completed work, as well as answering audience questions.

**Pat Murphy Teaches Wognax Zarbling and Alter-Ego Development**

*California Room, alter-ego overflow to Washington*

While she admitted in her program signup that she is not a professional Wognax zarbler, she aspires to be, and who doesn't? She'll provide her very skilled amateur guidance for those of us who have always wished to zarble Wognaxes (some Wognaxes provided, but feel free to bring your own). Once the Wognaxes are suitably zarbled, Pat will also advice people on how to develop their own alter-egos. Warning: Any alter-egos developed will not be allowed to attend Sunday programming unless they buy a day pass.

9:00-10:15 A.M.

**Power Structures in F/SF Cities**

*Redwood Room*

Who holds the power in the cities of alternate worlds? Are cities ruled by individuals, single organizations, or coalitions? How is power exercised: through religious, economic, legal, or other means? Can people move freely among classes? Does the nature of power held in a city influence the nature



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of the underclass? Take examples from modern and classic spec fic works and examine how these questions have been addressed over time.

*M: Michele Cox, Mary Anne Mohanraj, Debbie Notkin, Gary Farber*

**10:30-11:45 A.M.**

### **How to Fail (Without Being Flamed Into Charcoal)**

*Oregon Room*

In this panel we learn better ways of responding when something we do or say sets the Internet on fire. Respond constructively to attackers and learn from them.

*M: Debbie Notkin, Alan Bostick, David Levine, Lynn Alden Kendall*

### **I Saw You Palm That Ace: Rhetorical Argument in SF/F**

*California Room*

Spec fic allows you to edit your fictional world to focus on the questions you want to ask. Spec fic also allows you to edit your fictional world to give you the answers you want to the questions you ask. Every significant writer of political science fiction, from Heinlein to Miéville and Ballard to Rand, has to contend with the issue of the stacked deck: is the world they invent the way it is because that's how it would be, or because they've chosen to make it that way to support their rhetorical point? How much does a political SF/F writer leave to the audience's judgment, and how much do they define themselves? When does a strong political viewpoint become too strong, from an "enjoyment-of-SF" perspective?

*M: Vito Excalibur, Terry Bisson, Gary Kloster, Pat Murphy*

### **Reclaiming Urban Fantasy... But For Whom?**

*Redwood Room*

Much has been made of the emergence of the "new" urban fantasy—primarily written by women, about women, and focused on a city's inhabitants rather than the city itself. This opposes the "old" urban fantasy, which was mostly by men and starred men, and was as much about the setting as the characters. Are these two types of fantasy incompatible? How can fans of one form of UF find satisfying reads in the other? Can anyone think of a work that successfully blends the two—or if never the twain shall meet, is that a good thing?

*M: Erin Hoffman, Michael Shea, Carolyn E. Cooper, Steven R. Boyett*

**Reading:** *Jeff VanderMeer, Washington Room*



1:30-2:45 P.M.

**III Met in San Francisco**

*Oregon Room*

Our panelists will discuss Fritz Leiber's life, work, and the cities that inhabit and inspire both; do not expect a concise discussion, as the panelists will likely be inspired by "Gonna Roll The Bones" and take the long way home.

*M: Eva Folsom, Jean Marie Stine, Dave Nee, Debbie Notkin, Steven Schwartz*

**We've Got To Stop Meeting Like This**

*California Room*

Maybe we don't come in peace. And you don't want us to take you to our leader. How else might first contact happen? Give examples of how writers have thought outside the norm (District 9, for example) and talk about first contact ideas you'd like to see portrayed.

*M: Ian K. Hagemann, Marty Halpern, Elwin Cotman, Stef Maruch*

**How to Build Your Own City (Without an Urban Planning Degree): Part III, the Future**

*Redwood Room*

Anti-radiation shields? Cloned park scenery? Flying cars? Let's speculate on what future cities might look like.

*M: Daniel Marcus, David Levine, Cliff Winnig, Jesse the K*

3:00-4:15 P.M.

*California Room*

**Give Us Feedback (AKA Dissecting a FOG)**

Let us know what you liked, what you didn't, suggestions for the future, and anything else that comes to mind.

*M: Vylar Kaftan, Eva Folsom, Steven Schwartz, and other Concom members as time and consciousness permit.*

*"How can such a great and wise civilization have destroyed itself so completely?"  
"Perhaps," said Apollo, "by being materially great and materially wise, and nothing else."*

*— Walter M. Miller, Jr. A Canticle for Leibowitz*



## Program Participants

**Fritz Leiber** (1910-1992) was a renowned science fiction and fantasy author, who lived in San Francisco for much of his life. His novel *Our Lady of Darkness* explains a lot about this city. His novella-length autobiography "Not Much Disorder and Not So Early Sex" can be found in the collection of his stories and essays appropriately named *The Ghost Light*. He wrote frequently about ghosts, and only haunts the very best conventions.

**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.

Over the course of twenty-plus years as a writer and editor with San Francisco's Exploratorium, Pat wrote and edited science books for children and adults. Her titles include The Science Explorer series, *The Math Explorer*, *By Nature's Design*, *Traces of Time*, and *Exploratopia*.

Currently, Pat works for Klutz, a publisher of how-to books that come with cool stuff. Pat's books with Klutz include *Invasion of the Bristlebots* (which comes with robots that run on toothbrush bristles), *Boom! Splat! Kablooeey!* (a book of explosions), and *The Handbook* (which comes with a skeletal model of a hand).

Pat enjoys looking for trouble. Her favorite color is ultraviolet. Her favorite book is whichever one she is working on right now.

**Ann VanderMeer** is the founder of the award-winning Buzzcity Press and currently serves as the Editor-in-Chief for *Weird Tales*, the oldest fantasy magazine in the world, for which she recently received a Hugo award. She has also been nominated for the World Fantasy Award and the Shirley Jackson Award. Work from her press has won the British Fantasy Award, the International Rhysling Award, the IHG Award, and appeared in several year's best anthologies.

Ann has partnered with her husband, author Jeff VanderMeer, on such editing projects as the World Fantasy Award-winning Leviathan series, *The Thackery T. Lambshead Pocket Guide to Eccentric & Discredited Diseases*, *The New Weird*, *Steampunk* and *Fast Ships, Black Sails*. A guest editor for Best American Fantasy, she is currently co-editing the following anthologies: *Steampunk Reloaded*, *The Thackery T. Lambshead Cabinet of Curiosities*, and *A Compendium of Dark and Imaginative Fictions*. Her latest is the humorous book *The Kosher Guide to Imaginary Animals*.

She has also taught many writing workshops, including Clarion, Odyssey and Shared Worlds as well conducting creativity seminars for such varied audiences as the librarians of the state of Arizona and Blizzard Entertainment. She has been profiled/interviewed for WIRED.Com, National NPR and The Weather Channel.

**Jeff VanderMeer** grew up in the Fiji Islands and has had fiction published in over twenty countries. His books, including the bestselling *City of Saints & Madmen*, have made the year's best lists of *Publishers Weekly*, *LA Weekly*, Amazon, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and many more. Considered one of the foremost fantasy writers of his generation, VanderMeer has won two World Fantasy Awards, an NEA-funded Florida Individual Writers' Fellowship and Travel Grant, and, most recently, the Le Cafard Cosmique Award in France and the Tähtifantasia Award in Finland. He has also been a finalist, as writer or editor, for the Hugo Award, Bram Stoker



Award, IHG Award, Philip K. Dick Award, Shirley Jackson Award, and many others. The author of over three hundred stories, his short fiction has appeared recently in *Conjunctions*, *Black Clock*, on Tor.com, and in *Songs of the Dying Earth*, among several other original and year's best anthologies, and *Library of America's American Fantastic Tales*, edited by Peter Straub. Collections include *Secret Life* and *The Third Bear*.

He reviews books for, among others, the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Washington Post Book World*, and the *Barnes & Noble Review*, as well as being a regular columnist for the Omnivoracious book blog. Current projects include *Booklife: Strategies and Survival Tips for the 21st-Century Writer*, the noir fantasy novel *Finch*, and the forthcoming definitive *Steampunk Bible* from Abrams Books. He currently lives in Tallahassee, Florida, and serves as assistant director for Wofford College's Shared Worlds writing camp for teens (Spartanburg, South Carolina), in addition to conducting workshops and guest lecturing all over the world.

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**Aahz** is a mobility-enabled heterosexual cisgendered Jewish deaf white polyamorous male. Zie works as a Python programmer and usually reads two or three speculative fiction books per week (often re-reading).

**Julie Andrews** is awesome.

**Alan Beatts** is the owner of Borderlands Books in San Francisco.

**Terry Bisson** explores the secret mysteries of the human heart in his novels and stories. He also writes science fiction. He lives in Oakland.

**Alan Bostick** has been by turns a physicist, editor, baker, poker pro, writer, and chocolatier. Equally at home in the salon privée 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 polymorphous crystalline structure of cocoa butter.

**Greg Bossert** began writing fiction a couple of years ago, after a friend dared him to write a screenplay. He wrote two, and then a handful of stories, and shows no signs of stopping. His stories "The Union of Soil and Sky," "Slow Boat" and "Freia in the Sunlight" appeared in *Asimov's Science Fiction* in 2010. More information on his writing can be found at [www.GregoryNormanBossert.com](http://www.GregoryNormanBossert.com). Greg attended the Clarion 2010 Writer's Workshop in San Diego. He also works as a researcher for motion pictures, in particular for concept design; his credits include *Beowulf*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland*. He also does audio and video for short films and for feature film pre-production. He designs and builds experimental musical instruments, and play music with them, for some definition of "play" and "music". You can find pictures and audio samples on [www.SuddenSound.com](http://www.SuddenSound.com).

**Steven R. Boyett** ([www.steveboy.com](http://www.steveboy.com)) is the author of *Ariel* ([www.arielbook.com](http://www.arielbook.com)) and the recent sequel *Elegy Beach* ([www.elegybeach.com](http://www.elegybeach.com)), in addition to other novels, short stories, screenplays, and comic books. He is also a well-known electronic dance music DJ ([www.djsteveboy.com](http://www.djsteveboy.com)) who has played at clubs, conventions, and Burning Man, and he produces three of the world's most popular music podcasts, Podrunner, Podrunner: Intervals, and Groovelectric. His novel



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*Mortality Bridge* is forthcoming from Subterranean Press in November. He is completing work on *Avalon Burning*, a follow-up to *Elegy Beach*.

Boyett has been a professional martial arts instructor, paper marbler, proofreader, advertising copywriter, composer, chapbook publisher, website designer, and didgeridoo player.

**Chaz Brenchley** sold his first story at eighteen and has been a professional writer ever since. He grew up in Oxford, where he met J.R.R. Tolkien, and now lives in Newcastle Upon Tyne, which is the setting for several of his mystery and science fiction novels. He traveled to Taiwan at the millennium, which led to his fantasy series that begins with *Dragon in Chains*, published under the name Daniel Fox. His new urban fantasy, *Desdaemona*, comes out in May, published under the name Ben Macallan.

**Marie Brennan** is the author of the Onyx Court series of London-based historical faerie fantasies: *Midnight Never Come*, *In Ashes Lie*, *A Star Shall Fall*, and the upcoming *With Fate Conspire*. She has published more than thirty 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](http://www.swantower.com).

**M.Christian** is the author of 300 stories in such anthologies and publications as *Talebones*, *Space & Time Magazine*, *Skull Full Of Spurs*, *Graven Images*, *Horror Garage*, *Song of Cthulhu*, and many others. He is the author of the collections *Love Without Gun Control*, *Dirty Words*, *Speaking Parts*, *The Bachelor Machine*, *Licks & Promises*, *Filthy*, *Rude Mechanicals*, and *Coming Together Presents M.Christian*; the novels *Running Dry*, *The Very Bloody Marys*, *Me2*, *Brushes*, and *Painted Doll*; and is the editor of over 25 anthologies, including *Guilty Pleasures*, *The Mammoth Book of Future Cops* and *The Mammoth Book of Tales of the Road* (with Maxim Jakubowski) and *Confessions*, *Garden of Perverse*, and *Amazons* (with Sage Vivant) and lots more. His site is [www.mchristian.com](http://www.mchristian.com).

Currently teaching online marketing for Peninsula College's Entrepreneur Institute in Washington state and various online programs, **Carolyn E. Cooper** has been involved with marketing and publishing for over 30 years. She has worked with online development since 1981 and the internet since 1994, authoring three non-fiction titles for middle school children on technical subjects including *Electronic Bulletin Board Systems*. Carolyn has also performed stand-up comedy and been a comedy, science fiction and business writer as well as presenting workshops (including "Finished Chapter 1 — Ate a German Chocolate Cake: Eliminating Bad & Developing Good Writing Habits") at several writers conferences. She is currently working on finishing her novel instead of the cake and rediscovering fandom after gafiating in the 1990's (after being on the 1985 NASFiC concom).

Writer/performance artist **Elwin Cotman** is the author of *The Jack Daniels Sessions EP*, a collection of folkloric, urban fantasy and dark fantasy stories. His work has been published in *The Fairfield Review*, *Outsider Ink*, *The Dirty Napkin*, *Cyberpunk Apocalypse* and the upcoming issue of *Cabinet de Fees*. He also wrote the liner notes for the album *Awaken Necropolis* by piano-punk band Baby Killer Estelle. Currently, he is writing a fantasy novella.

**Courtney** is an angry feminist, knitter, and amateur cat flunky. She likes to run her mouth about how things in the physical world and on the internet affect the ways people do things (with a special focus on social justice).



**Michele Cox** found fandom 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. Among her favorite SFF authors are Madeleine L'Engle, Lois McMaster Bujold, and M. K. Wren. She passes for normal among Bay Area SF fans.

Author **Julia Dvorin** is a woman of many hats and little sleep. A proud graduate of Viable Paradise, she fits her writing in around the cracks of running a web solutions business, parenting two young boys, and trying to make the world a better place. In her extremely limited spare time, she enjoys sleeping, reading, painting, dining and, um, did someone say sleeping? Julia holds an MA in Sociology from UCSB and has been a lecturer in Sociology and Women's Studies. She also speaks on the topic of relationship marketing and social media, especially for non-profit organizations. In 2010, her novelette "Cupid For a Day" was published in the *Renaissance Festival Tales* anthology from Hadley Rille Books, and she is currently shopping her fantasy adventure novel, *Ice Will Reveal*.

**Lisa Eckstein** writes novels. You haven't heard of her because they aren't published yet. She blogs about reading, writing, and revising at [lisaeckstein.com](http://lisaeckstein.com).

**Gary Farber's** nearly 40 years in science fiction fandom and publishing are almost impossible to condense into a short bio. He's also a high-profile blogger, including a front-pager at Obsidian Wings.

**Eric Fischer** likes walking around in cities and making maps of them.

**Valerie Estelle Frankel** was born at an early age. Her many essays and short stories have appeared in over eighty magazines and anthologies including *Inside Joss' Dollhouse*, *Illuminating Torchwood*, *Rosebud Magazine*, and *The Oklahoma Review*. Her unauthorized parody, *Henry Potty and the Pet Rock*, won the Indie Excellence Award and was a USA Book News National Best Book. Following numerous pop culture essays about girl power, her latest book, *From Girl to Goddess: The Heroine's Journey in Myth & Legend*, has just arrived. Learn more at [www.vefrankel.com](http://www.vefrankel.com).

**Jaym Gates** believes in the power of perpetual motion. To maintain this, she handles publicity for Raw Dog Screaming Press and the fetish entertainment group Single Cell, edits the magazine *Crossed Genres*, has three anthologies in the works and writes.

**Sarah Goodman** is an anthropologist by training and a gentlewoman by profession. Everything else is a hobby... Sarah, or one of her myriad personae, are likely to pop up anywhere on the space-time continuum, studying humankind and other semi-sapient and sapient races with the professed purpose of learning that which is necessary to increase the general satisfaction level of the multiverse. Specific interests include law, culture, religion, dance, clothing, good food, friends, cats, and people in general. She is also active in various trans-temporal re-creation activities including her current claim to fame as costumer of the (semi-) nude theatrical extravaganza, *Saucy French Postcards*, at the Dickens Fair. She doesn't use credit cards and the last time she had a True Name of Power, it was "Mommy".

**Ian K. Hagemann** is a mixed-race fan, political radical, and troublemaker living in Seattle. He helped found Potlatch and the Carl Brandon Society, and is currently a Leader In Training with the Mankind Project and a Board Member of Adopted and Fostered Adults in the African Diaspora. He is an ethical vegetarian and an avid bicyclist who has never had a driver's license.



**Marty Halpern** (along with his co-editor Nick Gevers) posed the question *Is Anybody Out There?* a couple years ago, and much to his delight, he received a response: DAW Books published an original theme anthology *Is Anybody Out There?* – stories about the Fermi paradox – on June 1, 2010. Marty (with Nick) is currently working on a “hard urban” anthology entitled *Strange Magnificence*. From 1999 through 2007, Marty was an acquisitions/content editor for Golden Gryphon Press. His edited works received the Hugo, World Fantasy (three), International Horror Guild, and William L. Crawford awards. He currently freelances for Ace Books, Night Shade Books, Tachyon Publications, and others, in addition to working directly with authors and their manuscripts. Marty also copyedits *Realms Of Fantasy* magazine, which began with the October 2009 issue and continues through the magazine’s third publisher. You can follow Marty on Twitter ([martyhalpern](#)) and visit his blog “More Red Ink” at [martyhalpern.blogspot.com](#).

**Jed Hartman** is a fiction editor for *Strange Horizons*. His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in *Clean Sheets*, *Wet*, *Strange Horizons*, *Flytrap*, *Fishnet* and *All-Star Zeppelin Adventure Stories*. For more about him (or to read his blog), see his website: <http://www.kith.org/logos>.

**Nabil Hijazi** lives in San Francisco.

**Erin Hoffman** is a writer and video game designer currently living in Richmond, CA with her husband, two dogs, and two parrots. Her short fiction and poetry have appeared in *Electric Velocipede*, *Asimov's*, *Beneath Ceaseless Skies*, and elsewhere, and her first novel, *Sword of Fire and Sea*, is forthcoming from Pyr Books in June 2011. She has been designing video games for over a decade in a variety of formats, and is an accomplished advocate for player rights, women in video games, video game ethics, and work/life balance in the game development industry. Her game industry essays can be found in *Best Software Writing 1*, *Ethics and Game Design*, and *The Escapist*, and her website with more information is available at [www.erinhoffman.com](http://www.erinhoffman.com). She is very friendly and hopes you will say hello.

**Phyllis Holliday:** Writer and poet; write fables, weird and regional (Oregon/Idaho) stuff. A novel in the works and the usual string of odd, odder oddest jobs. Published in small lit mags and on the Abalone Moon site. Member of Mythopoeic Society, and many happy memories of cons, Mythcon, WFantasy, Potlatch, Olde Star Trek, and once was a member of the Greengrocers Of Norwich acting troupe at the Renaissance Faire. Recently speech coach for Shakespearean actors & directed a flashy Medea.

**Jesse the K** wants to live in a city that’s big enough for great mass transit, small enough for good air quality, South enough for lots of sunlight, and North enough for very few bugs. Yeah, that’s why she reads SFF.

**Emily Jiang** is a graduate of the Clarion Writer’s Workshop and has an MFA in Creative Writing from Saint Mary’s College of California. Her poetry has been published in *Stone Telling* and *Strange Horizons*, and her fiction has won several literary contests, including the John Reid/Tom Howard Short Story Contest and The Binnacle’s Ultra-Short Competition. She wrestles with words everyday. Sometimes she wins. Most times it’s a draw.

**Micah Joel** is the alter ego of a published nonfiction author and computer geek in SF. Wannabe novelist. Micah is a wannabe novelist and attended Viable Paradise 14 in 2010.



**Vylar Kaftan** has published three dozen stories in markets such as *Lightspeed*, *Clarkesworld*, and *Strange Horizons*. She's an active SFWA member and a graduate of both Clarion West and Launchpad. She just completed a novel draft, and plans to revise it in April after a two-week nap. She likes painting miniatures, dancing, and slaughtering tiny animated monsters. Her superpowers include resisting sedation, befriending shy people, herding cats, sniffing out diseases, and generating tons of crazy ideas (ALL of which are totally brilliant and should be implemented right away! No, really!) She blogs at [www.vylarkaftan.net](http://www.vylarkaftan.net).

She's the founder and chair of FOGcon. If you don't know about FOGcon, something is broken. It might be you.

**Lynn Alden Kendall** is a writer and editor. Most of her publications have appeared under pen names for reasons that seemed good at the time. She lives in a house where the cat-to-lap ratio varies but is never smaller than 1 and the book-to-human ratio is more than 5000 to 1. She gravitated to the Bay Area ten years ago and hopes fervently to make it her home forever.

**Katharine Kerr** is an urban creature who was educated in the San Francisco Public Library in between stints of dropping out of college. She has written too many weird books: the 15 volume Deverry series, *Polar City Blues*, *Freeze Frames*, *Palace*, and *Snare*, all of which feature cities at various levels of technology. Her current project is a set of urban fantasy books that are slowly morphing into space opera to her complete surprise, beginning with *License to Ensorcell*, out February, 2011.

**Gary Kloster** is a writer, stay-at-home father, martial artist and librarian. Sometimes all in the same day, almost never all at the same time. His stories have appeared in *Writers of the Future 25*, *Baen's Universe*, *Fantasy*, *Intergalactic Medicine Show* and *Warrior Wisewoman 3*.

**David D. Levine** has sold over 40 science fiction and fantasy stories to all the major markets, including *Asimov's*, *Analog*, *F&SF*, and *Realms of Fantasy*. He's won a Hugo Award, been nominated for the Nebula, and won or been shortlisted for many other awards as well as appearing in numerous Year's Best anthologies. In January of 2010 he spent two weeks at a simulated Mars base in Utah.

**Nick Mamatas** is the author of three novels, the most recent of which is *Sensation* (PM Press). Five days a week he edits fiction for Haikasoru, an imprint dedicated to Japanese SF, fantasy, and horror in translation, and he was formerly the co-editor of *Clarkesworld*. His work has been nominated for the Bram Stoker award three times, and the International Horror Guild Award. For *Clarkesworld*, he was nominated for both the Hugo and World Fantasy awards.

**Daniel Marcus** has published stories in many literary and genre venues, including *Witness*, *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *ZYZZYVA*, and *Fantasy and Science Fiction*. He is the author of the short story collection *Binding Energy*, and the novels *Burn Rate* and *A Crack In Everything*. Daniel was a finalist for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer. His non-fiction has appeared in *Wired*, *Boing-Boing*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and elsewhere, and he is on the faculty at Gotham Writers' Workshop. He is a graduate of the Clarion West Writers' Workshop.

After a spectacularly unsuccessful career attempt as a saxophonist, Daniel earned a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering, worked as an applied mathematician at the Lawrence Livermore Lab and Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study, and has authored numerous articles in the applied mathematics and computational physics



literature. For the last 15 years, Daniel has built and managed systems and software in a variety of problem domains and organizational settings.

**Stef Maruch's** first experience with speculative fiction was at the age of six when her father took her to see the newly released *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Stef blogs at <http://firecat.dreamwidth.org>.

**Mary Anne Mohanraj** is the author of *Bodies in Motion* (HarperCollins) and nine other titles. *Bodies in Motion* was a finalist for the Asian American Book Awards, a USA Today Notable Book, and has been translated into six languages. Mohanraj founded the World Fantasy Award-winning and Hugo-nominated magazine, *Strange Horizons*. She was Guest of Honor at WisCon 2010, received a Breaking Barriers Award from the Chicago Foundation for Women for her work in Asian American arts organizing, and won an Illinois Arts Council Fellowship. Mohanraj has taught at the Clarion SF/F workshop, and is now Clinical Assistant Professor of fiction and literature and Associate Coordinator of Asian and Asian American Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She serves as Executive Director of both DesiLit ([www.desilit.org](http://www.desilit.org)) and the Speculative Literature Foundation ([www.speclit.org](http://www.speclit.org)). Recent SF/F publications include "Talking to Elephants" (Abyss & Apex) and "Jump Space" (Thought Experiments). She lives in a creaky old Victorian in Oak Park, just outside Chicago, with her partner, Kevin, two small children, and a sweet dog. She's currently working on a YA fantasy trilogy, in which youngsters from our world travel to an magical island very similar to ancient Sri Lanka.

**David Moles** was born in California and raised in San Diego, Athens, Tehran, and Tokyo. A graduate of the American School in Japan, the University of California at Santa Cruz, and Oxford University, he has been writing and editing science fiction and fantasy since 2002, and is a past finalist for the Hugo Award, the World Fantasy Award, and the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer, as well as the winner of the 2008 Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award, for his novelette "Finisterra." David's most recent book is the novella *Seven Cities of Gold*. He currently lives in San Francisco.

Within the science fiction field, **Debbie Notkin** has been a bookseller, a professional acquisitions editor, an anthology editor, a book reviewer, a convention chair, a fanzine editor, a columnist, and more. Outside that field, she has done extensive work in the body image field, written the text for two books of photographs by Laurie Toby Edison, been an how-to business writer, an educational electronic content specialist, a paralegal, and more. To earn a living, she works on author contracts for a large nonfiction publisher; to make up for that karma, she gives contract advice to writers.

**Jason S. Ridler** has published over thirty short stories in such magazines and anthologies as *Brain Harvest*, *Not One of Us*, *Big Pulp*, *Crossed Genres*, *Chilling Tales*, *Tesseract Thirteen*, and more. His popular non-fiction has appeared in *Clarkesworld*, *Dark Scribe*, and the *Internet Review of Science Fiction*. A former punk rock musician and cemetery groundskeeper, Mr. Ridler holds a Ph.D. in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada. Visit him at his writing blog, Ridlerville, <http://jsridler.livejournal.com>, facebook, and on twitter at <http://twitter.com/JayRidler>

A lifelong and passionate fan of cities and all things urban, **Madeleine Robins** now lives in San Francisco with her family, dog, and a ferocious lemon tree. A New Yorker by birth, training, and inclination, Robins has been a nanny, a teacher, an actor and stage-combatant, an administrator, a comic book editor, a baker, typist-clerk for Thos. Cook's Houses of Parliament office, a repairer-of-hurt-books, an



editorial consultant, and a writer. She holds a degree in Theatre Studies from Connecticut College, and attended the Clarion Science Fiction Workshop in 1981. Her novels include *Point of Honour* and *Petty Treason*, both featuring Sarah Tolerance.

**Steven Schwartz** is a formal poet, letterpress printer, computer geek, soccer player, and SF/F fan and writer. His favorite SF book is determined by a formula which the margin of this program book is too small to contain, and changes frequently. His letterpress work can be found at

<http://www.etsy.com/shop/chetwoodpress>, his SF/F at Circlet Press, his life (with cats, partner, and kids) in Oakland, and his soccer at an undisclosed location. He is frequently mistaken for Jerry Garcia, Peter Jackson, or a Russian mobster.

**Lori Selke** is a sometime SFF author whose work has appeared in Asimov's and Strange Horizons.

**Michael Shea** has won of World Fantasy Awards for Best Novel and Best Novella. His books include the three volume Sword & Sorcery Nifft the Lean series, *The Extra*, first of a near future thriller trilogy ('09 Tor) and its sequel *Assault on Sunrise* ('11 Tor). He has published numerous Lovecraftian works. His most recent short story collections are *Copping Squid* (Perilous '09) and *The Autopsy and Other Tales* ('08 Centipede Press). Shea lives in the Bay Area with his wife, artist/author Lynn Cesar.

**Rachel Silber** has been spending too much of her spare time on convention running for the last 11 years. It's just a hobby and she can stop any time, promise. She'll bring the perspectives of Boston in fact and fiction to your foggy shores. In the time Arisia leaves over, she is an artist, a software test engineer, and creative consultant to three next-generation fans.

**Aaron Spielman** is a carbon-based humanoid life-form that has been repeatedly infected with a love of genre fiction, the urge to tinker with computers and a quasi-suicidal attraction to two-wheeled motorized transport.

**Starlady** is a graduate student in history in the Bay Area and a reader and writer of sff, as well as a non-professional translator of manga. She is also a huge anime and manga fan. She has participated in and moderated panels at cons including WisCon, Con.txt, and Otakon.

**Daniel Starr** analyzes past and present politics and technology, relays historical anecdotes at geeky parties, and sometimes creates stories of his very own. He is best bribed either with chocolate pastries or with a good history book that he hasn't already read.

**Jean Marie Stine** is a writer, editor, anthologist and fan. In the late 1960s, during the second and third seasons of *Star Trek* (and due to the kind offices of Bjo Trimble), JM worked for Gene Roddenberry on several projects, including writing the first ever catalogue of ST merchandise offered to the fan public. Her own novels include *A Day in the Life* (The Prisoner #3), and *Season of the Witch* (filmed as *Synapse* starring Matt McCoy). As an anthologist JM has edited *Future Eves: Great Science Fiction About Women By Women*; *Time Enough at Last!*, *The Legendary Women Detectives*; *I, Vampire: 13 Chilling Interviews with the Undead*, and *Those Doggone Dogs*, among others. She has been editor-in-chief of *Galaxy* magazine and *Starblaze* Editions. As a nonfiction editor, JM worked as a senior acquisitions and development editor for Houghton-Mifflin, Jeremy Tarcher, and St. Martins. Of two recent collections, one (*Herstory & Other Science Fictions*) rounds



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up JM's sf/f/h shorts and novelettes, and the other (*Trans-sexual: Transgressive Erotica*) presents her fiction on transgender themes. Currently, JM is editor and publisher of Futures-Past Editions (an imprint of PageTurner Editions), which is celebrating its tenth year as a digital publisher of sf/f/h ebooks by issuing its first-ever print titles!

**Amy Sundberg** is a writer of YA and speculative fiction, a musician, and a blogger at [practicalfreespirit.com](http://practicalfreespirit.com). She loves travel, musical theater, dessert, and learning new things. Her favorite city is London, her favorite mountain is the Matterhorn, and so far she has visited six of the seven continents. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband and her little dog.

**Rachel Swirsky's** short fiction has been published in Tor.com, Subterranean Online, *Fantasy Magazine*, years best anthologies from Dozois, Strahan, Horton and the VanderMeers, and many other venues. Her novelettes "A Memory of Wind" and "Eros, Philia, Agape" were nominated for the Nebula and Hugo, respectively, in 2010. Her fiction is collected in *Through the Drowsy Dark* (Aqueduct Press, 2010) and the upcoming *How the World Became Quiet* (Subterranean Press). Visit her website at <http://www.rachelswirsky.com>.

**Guy W. Thomas** graduated UC Berkeley with a degree in Dramatic Arts. He has been attending SF Conventions since 1979 and has worked on several conventions including chairing a couple Potlatches. He's an independent living advocate and wannabe writer, the procurer for the James Tiptree Jr. Literary Award and general squeaky wheel. He also edited this program book.

**Vito Excalibur** blogs at Livejournal and Dreamwidth.

Most of **Ann Wilkes'** fiction, found in anthologies and magazines, leans toward tragic, funny or both. Her first published novel, *Awesome Lavratt*, is a tongue-in-cheek space opera filled with mind control, passion and adventure. She is also founder and editor of Science Fiction and Other ODDysseys, a blog with book and other media reviews, author interviews and commentary on writing and science fiction. She lives in California's wine country with her husband, Patrick. When she's not writing, she's dancing like a Greek at her favorite Taverna or listening to the blues. Visit her at [www.annwilkes.com](http://www.annwilkes.com).

**Karen Williams** lives in Silicon Valley with two turtles, has sold two sf stories, been to the Milford writing conference twice, and is a second degree black belt in aikido. She is a product manager for a company that makes software for lawyers, which is hiring, so give her your resume. She and Terry Bisson founded the SF in SF reading series.

**Cliff Winnig's** short fiction appears in several anthologies, including *Footprints* and *The Aether Age: Helios*, both from Hadley Rille Books, as well as *Cinema Spec*, *Retro Spec*, and the forthcoming *Jack-o'-Spec* from Raven Electrick Ink. The twitterzines Outshine and Thaumatrope have published his very short fiction.

Cliff is a graduate of the Clarion writers' workshop and a past finalist in the Writers of the Future Contest. When not writing, he plays sitar, studies tai chi and aikido, and joins his wife Debby in both choral singing and social dancing, including ballroom, swing, and Argentine tango.

**Wired** is a professional writer who works in speculative fiction of the software variety.

**Xat** lives in San Francisco and has not been eaten by the creatures from below, due to special superpowers: persistence, enthusiasm, and hats.



**Yonatan Zunger** is a principal engineer at Google, where he has worked on everything from very-large-scale search and artificial intelligence to storage systems. His background includes a PhD in string theory, extensive study on the history of Late Antique and early Medieval Europe and North Africa, and even a stint as editor and production manager of a local newspaper. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with his wife and his little dog.

## Pat Murphy

*(continued from page 12)*

Pat has written a bevy of nonfiction books, too. She has won nonfiction awards from the American Association of Museums and the Society for Technical Communication. Her most recent award wasn't for fiction ...except that it kind of was. Pat entered a Facebook contest with the company California Closets. The idea was that you got a closet makeover for one room in your house. The primary criterion for winning the contest was getting the most Facebook "votes," but the judges also took creativity into account. Pat got something like the third or fourth most votes ... and won the contest, based on three short iMovie videos in which her cats, her mother, and two boxes and a stapler in her study all explain why she should win. ("Vote for my daughter's office. It's a mess!") You can find the videos at <http://www.youtube.com/user/zapmurphy>, and you'll enjoy them more than you can imagine enjoying videos made to enter a home remodel contest. I hear the new closets in her study are amazing.

But that's Pat: if creativity is a factor, she wins.

Pat used to work for the Exploratorium (a fabulous hands-on science museum in San Francisco), editing their magazine and running their publishing program. In those days, she would bring amusement park physics, or patterns found in nature, or how light bends, into her conversations. Now (after a short sojourn at "The Crucible," a fire arts studio in Oakland) she works for Klutz Press, a company which got its start with Juggling for the Complete Klutz. Klutz's signature characteristic is that all their books have packets of physical objects included (such as juggling balls). So now, you find her running around with "bristlebots," robots made with toothbrush bristles, showing them off at every opportunity. And coming up-with wilder and wilder ideas for Klutz books.

You'd think that would be enough, but you'd be wrong. Pat also has an MBA, as well as her degree in science writing. She has a flair for public relations which you can see in many of her activities, but especially in the miniature blimp she acquired for her involvement in "The Brazen Hussies," a writers' promotion group she's in with Lisa Goldstein and Michaela Roessner. No, really, a blimp. (<http://www.brazenhussies.net/Blimp.html>) The Brazen Hussies website is a great source for more information about Pat, including bibliography, biography, and blimp.

With Karen Joy Fowler, Pat founded the Tiptree Award, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The Tiptree Award has honored over 30 books and stories, with cash awards, art prizes and chocolate, and has also given stealth "Fairy Godmother Awards" to writers and artists in



need. Pat wrote our slogan: "If you can't change the world with chocolate chip cookies, how can you change the world." On the motherboard and elsewhere, Pat is a genius at creative compromise—the left-handed surprise idea that makes everyone happy, furthers the goals of the organization, and looks like everyone should have thought of it all along. I think I admire that talent even more than I admire either her fiction or her delight in making science accessible.

Did I mention karate? Or dancing? Or traveling to inaccessible places? Did I mention that she's just plain fun to be around, that any with-Pat gathering is better than any without-Pat gathering? Did I mention that she keeps track of deadlines and can remind me of what I haven't done without making me feel like a jerk? Did I mention that even when things are going completely dreadfully for her, her mind runs toward creative solutions?

Pat Murphy: award-winning novelist, award-winning science writer, practical, competent, clever, passionate, compassionate, joyful, silly. ZAP!

— Debbie Notkin. Find out more about Debbie Notkin in the Program Participant bio section of this program book.

"I've learned to write the truth. But to do that, I had to figure out what the truth was—and I had to realize that the truth isn't always the same for everyone. I had to realize that my truth may not be the same as your truth."

—Pat Murphy (*The Wild Girls*)

## Ann VanderMeer (continued from page 13)

more broadly, so much so that the old guard hesitated to call it science fiction, here the editors of these new magazines basically said, "Definitions be damned, we'll publish whatever gives us that certain feeling we got when we first encountered genre fiction, when it seemed to open a new vista on the world, blew our collective consciousness, so to speak. Oh yeah, and we do care about language, so don't destroy the waking dream by confusing an adjective with a unicorn."

I notice that I didn't mention the name of Ann VanderMeer in the previous paragraph, although her presence suffuses it. Ann was, of course, the editor for *The Silver Web*, the first of these magazines to see print and the one that cast the broadest net in terms of what you might discover between its covers. Completists please note, the first couple of issues were published under the name of *The Sterling Web*. This quickly morphed into *The Silver Web* but, reports by CNN pundits to the contrary, this change of name had nothing to do with any confusion brought on by the strange coincidence of Bruce Sterling having coined the term "slipstream" and *The Sterling Web*, being an early proponent of strangeness and the surreal in fiction, having no connection to Bruce Sterling himself. But, back to the matter at hand, in *The Silver Web* you never quite knew what to expect and this was all to the good. There were the short stories of course, but there were also poems, interviews, and essays. There was rock'n'roll (Ask Ann about her years playing bass with Grandma's House). And there was the



art! Great stuff, printed large, that complemented but did not repeat what was in the stories. I know of no other editor who has cared more about the relationship between art and text. Everything played off of each other to create a unique experience greater than the sum of its parts.

What's more, it wasn't just through her magazine that Ann was making the world a little stranger, a little weirder, a little bit better. She was also the founder of Buzzcity Press, the publisher of two remarkable books—*Dradin, in Love* by Jeff VanderMeer in 1996, and *The Divinity Student* by Michael Cisco in 1999—that restored my faith in what genre literature could accomplish. Both books are career-defining works, the points of departure for two writers who use language as if it were a scalpel for flensing the skin from your torso, so that you spin bloodied and in pain, but luxuriating in the sensation of a new world being born. If you have not read them already, I urge you to seek them out. Without Ann, you might never have had the chance.

Since then there has been much more. But you already know that. Ann joined forces (i.e. married) Jeff in 2002, at a celebration noted for a finger-puppet show, cephalopod-embossed matchbooks, and a Ketubah created by artist Scott Eagle (featured artist in the final issue of *The Silver Web* and cover artist for Jeff's *City Of Saints And Madmen*). Together, Ann and Jeff have edited any number of anthologies, most recently *Steampunk Reloaded* (out now), *The Kosher Guide to Imaginary Animals* (also out now), *The Thackery T. Lambshead Cabinet of Curiosities* (out soon), and *The Weird* (also out soon). Together, Ann and Jeff have taught at numerous writing workshops, including Clarion, Odyssey, and Shared Worlds. Although *The Silver Web* is no more, Ann now edits *Weird Tales*, somehow making this four-score and eight years old magazine seem both classic and groundbreaking at the same time (maybe that's why the magazine received a Hugo award in 2009).

Back in 1996, Ann wrote in an editorial for *The Silver Web* that she would "continue to bring together work from diverse backgrounds and present it in a unique way." You don't have to look very far to see that she still lives and edits according to that credo.

That about wraps it up.

But wait, there's more, you say.

What about the Northfield Bank Robbery? Aren't you going to clear that mystery up? We've heard so many stories about how Ann and Jeff met that we're no longer sure of what is what, and which is which. Well, I'm sorry to disappoint, but there's really no mystery there at all, just a coincidence, a similarity of names, but ultimately nothing of significance. Sure there's an Anne Kennedy listed in the county records as bank teller at the Northfield Bank of Minnesota in 1876. And sure, some members of the



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James-Younger gang insist that an itinerant embezzler named Geoff Vandermere joined up with them and was wounded by her during the robbery and then later, after being captured, incarcerated in Stillwater Prison. But really, that was over a century ago. There are no documents to confirm that Anne ever visited Geoff in prison, nor that they married. And even if they did, I repeat, that was over a century ago. What possible connection could that have to Ann and Jeff now?

Really?

Just because Jeff has a limp that he attributes to an old soccer injury.

Just because Ann seems a little too knowledgeable about Civil-War era firearms...

— Eric Schaller. Eric Schaller's recent stories have been published in *Postscripts*, *New Genre*, *Pedestal Magazine*, and *Sybil's Garage*. His stories have been reprinted in *The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*, *Best of the Rest*, and *Fantasy: Best of the Year*. He has contributed illustrations to Ann VanderMeer's *The Silver Web* and Jeff VanderMeer's *City of Saints and Madmen*.

"Things need not have happened to be true. Tales and adventures are the shadow truths that will endure when mere facts are dust and ashes and forgotten."

— Neil Gaiman

## Jeff VanderMeer (continued from page 13)

parents soon joined the Peace Corps and brought the child with them to the Fiji Islands. After their work there was completed, they returned to the U.S. via a circuitous route that allowed the impressionable young man to encounter Asia, Africa, Europe, Antarctica, and Long Island—experiences that would deeply influence his later fiction.

By late adolescence, VanderMeer was living in Florida, primarily on a houseboat off the coast of St. Petersburg, the fourth-largest city in the state and the second largest city in the Tampa Bay area. VanderMeer's actual activities during this time are unknown, though he has variously claimed that he was working as a merchant of dried squid, an ichthyologist, and a decoy for the Witness Protection Program. Whatever he was doing, we know that he was writing, because it wasn't long before his first book, a monograph on herpetology titled *The Book of Frog*, was published by The Ministry of Whimsy Press, an organization believed to have originated as either a CIA front or the last wish of an asthmatic Czech architect exiled in Miami.

Despite a small print run, *The Book of Frog* found a devoted cult audience in Florida, though a regional economic downturn forced VanderMeer to abandon his previous employment, sell his houseboat, and move to Gainesville, home to the University of Florida and county seat of Alachua County. Here, VanderMeer posed as a student of transcendental meditation and Latin American political policy while



preparing to found a magazine, *Jabberwocky*. The century was ticking into its last decade, Ronald Reagan was no longer President, and VanderMeer knew the morning in America was about to fade into afternoon—thus, he decided to get serious and put his talents to work in the field of small-press publishing.

Though *Jabberwocky* lasted only two issues, it published the work of a diverse range of writers, including Kathe Koja, Wayne Allen Sallee, Somtow Sucharitkul, and the award-winning poet Pattiann Rogers. It was a publication well ahead of its time, offering a mix of genres and styles that would later become the hallmark of such heralded publications as *Century*, *Crank!*, and *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*. (Speculation that the FBI was involved in *Jabberwocky's* demise has never been disproven.)

Meanwhile, VanderMeer continued writing, though he was forced to take multiple day-jobs, including work at a discount bookstore in a mall, an experience that would influence his later fiction at least as much as his childhood globetrotting had.

VanderMeer's literary endeavors at this time were various and eclectic—a historical novella about Senator Joseph McCarthy's last hour of life ("Red Flags at Dusk"), two children's books he illustrated himself (*The Charming Adventures of Torture Squid* and *The Further Adventures of Torture Squid*), three memoirs (*The Refraction of Light in a Prison*, *Fragments from a Drowned City*, and *A Sudden Dislocation of the Spirit*), a contribution to the fields of literary theory and malacology ("The Importance of Bibliographies to Squidfiction"), an experiment in hagiography ("The Drunk But Repentant Life of Cadimon Signal"), and a self-help travel guide for anxious masochists ("Do You Know Where You Are Now?").

Most of these works were received well by VanderMeer's growing audience, but his profile was, ironically, most improved when "Red Flags at Dusk" suffered a dismissive review by the Southern cult writer Maximillian Sharp in *The Gainesville Sun*. Sharp complained of the novel's right-wing prejudice, of its violent anti-communism, and of VanderMeer's attributing to Joseph McCarthy an obsession with minor religious cults such as the Order of Defecation. Sharp's reputation as a critic ensured that "Red Flags at Dusk" would be the first of VanderMeer's books to ascend local bestseller lists, because everyone along the Gulf Coast knew that any book Maximilian Sharp disliked was a book worth reading not only with care, but with joy.

It was at this time that VanderMeer suffered a brief, though mysterious and paralyzing, onset of delusional paranoia, believing himself to be a member of the Jesse James / Younger Brothers gang on the way to rob a bank in Northfield, Minnesota in 1876.

A young editor and punk musician, Ann Kennedy, happened to run into VanderMeer in the midst of his fiercest delusion, and managed to



avoid being trampled as he rode an imaginary horse through the sidewalks of Tallahassee. Kennedy had lived in Tallahassee for some time, enjoying its status as the county seat and only incorporated municipality in Leon County (it is also the 133rd largest city in the United States). She took pity on VanderMeer, who denounced her as a Yankee and an abolitionist, and she brought him to Dr. William Simpkin, a psychiatrist and occasional fiction writer (two fields frequently confused with each other). After three weeks of rest and recuperation, as well as strong medication and fine cigars, VanderMeer regained his wits, and soon wrote works that Kennedy would publish in her magazines *The Sterling Web* and *The Silver Web*: "Requiem for the Machine", "Henry Dreams of Angkor Wat", "So the Dead Walk Slowly", and "The Ministry of Butterflies". Kennedy also became enamored of *The Book of Frog*, which she picked up for \$5 from VanderMeer himself after friends of hers in the punk music scene insisted its cover was coated with a mild hallucinogen.

VanderMeer's stories in *The Sterling Web* and *The Silver Web* were successful enough that Kennedy forgave VanderMeer for not actually coating the covers of *The Book of Frog* with hallucinogens (she had, by this point, licked seven copies before deciding her friends were playing a trick on her), and in 1996 she offered to use the resources of her Buzzcity Press to publish VanderMeer's latest novella, *Dradin, in Love*.

*Dradin, in Love* was the first of what would be four novellas to form the core of VanderMeer's breakout book, *City of Saints and Madmen*. It was followed in 1999 by *The Hoegbotton Guide to the Early History of Ambergris*, *The Strange Case of X*, and *The Transformation of Martin Lake*, the latter of which would go on to win the World Fantasy Award in 2000.

These works introduced the city of Ambergris, a place of intrigue, revolution, and sentient fungus (c.f. the influence of VanderMeer's childhood exposure to Long Island). It was not the only city to sprout from VanderMeer's fetid and fecund mind, however, for 2003 saw publication of *Veniss Underground*, a novel set in a horrifying, surreal, possibly far-future city—a setting that was the culmination of at least a decade of scattered writings about Veniss. *Veniss Underground* was nominated for the Bram Stoker Award and the World Fantasy Award, and it came in second in the Locus Poll in the category of Best First Novel.

VanderMeer had not confined his work at this time only to fiction writing. He had also continued his efforts as an editor and publisher, launching the World Fantasy Award-winning Leviathan anthology series and running the Ministry of Whimsy Press, which published books by Mark McLaughlin, Jeffrey Thomas, Steve Thomasula, Zoran Zivkovic, Rhys Hughes, Michael Cisco, and Stepan Chapman—including Chapman's Philip K. Dick Award-winning novel *The Troika*.

2002 and 2003 proved to be extraordinary years for VanderMeer, seeing not only the publication of career-defining works such as *City of Saints and Madmen* and *Veniss Underground*, but also the immensely



successful anthology *The Thackery T. Lambshead Guide to Eccentric and Discredited Diseases* (edited with Mark Roberts, nominated for both the Hugo and World Fantasy awards). At the start of this publishing maelstrom, VanderMeer and Kennedy decided that Dradin was not the only one in love, and in 2002 they were married.

After 2003, VanderMeer continued to issue a tremendous amount of stories, essays, reviews, anthologies, and novels. He continued to explore the city of Ambergris in *Shriek: An Afterword* (2006) and *Finch* (2009; nominated for the Nebula and World Fantasy awards); to publish collections of his short fiction (*Secret Life* [2004], *The Third Bear* [2010]); to write a media tie-in novel (*Predator: South China Sea* [2008]); to publish nonfiction books such as *Why Should I Cut Your Throat* (2004), *Booklife* (2009), and *Monstrous Creatures* (2011); and to edit numerous anthologies, often in collaboration with Ann (*The New Weird*, *Steampunk*, *Best American Fantasy*, etc.).

We have not had space here to detail Jeff VanderMeer's work as a teacher at various workshops (Clarion, Shared Worlds, Odyssey), to elaborate on his career as a reviewer for venues ranging from Science Fiction Eye to Realms of Fantasy to The New York Times, to discuss his popular blog, to gaze in wonder at his collaborations with various artists and musicians, or to tell stories of his missions to such picturesque and exotic locales as Romania, Finland, and New Hampshire.

Jeff VanderMeer's oeuvre is like a city, one rich with large and impressive edifices, strange and alluring alleys, all manner of characters, vast (and not always reliable) histories, small treasures hidden in the outskirts, a few bodies buried beneath the concrete floors of abandoned warehouses, a couple of questionable intersections, and a tourist bureau run by saints and madmen. It is the county seat of a place sometimes called October (part of the Fantastika Metropolitan Statistical Area), a city of indeterminate size and ever-metamorphosing population from which no visitor leaves unrewarded, and many seek permanent resident status.

— Matthew Cheney Matt Cheney is the former series editor of *Best American Fantasy* and a former employee of the Borges Bookstore. His fiction and nonfiction have been published in *Locus*, *Strange Horizons*, *Weird Tales*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, and *Burning Leaves*, among other places. His blog, *The Mumpsimus*, was nominated for a World Fantasy Award in 2005, and he won a Last Drink Bird Head Award in 2010, allowing him to claim that he has won half of the awards he has ever been nominated for.

"I wasn't trying to work out my own ancestry. I was trying to get people to feel slavery. I was trying to get across the kind of emotional and psychological stones that slavery threw at people."

— Octavia Butler