

MISSION CONTROL

The Newsletter of ApolloCon—By Fans for Fans

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Fri., June 26, 2009

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Free!

SIXTH APOLLOCON OPENS

Early Bird Treat!

For those who arrive early, we have a special treat: you can **KaffeeKlatsch at 3 P.M. Friday with Wil McCarthy**, a pleasant opportunity to talk in person with some of our guests and your fellow early-bird fans. Not only is there good conversation, there's a cup of joe. Signing up early may not be necessary, but it's a good idea in case the number of Kaffee Klatschers expands.

Back By Popular Demand: Lemon Blossom Teacakes

Wondering what to do this evening? ApolloCon after dark does have several options for you. But why not take the time to come to the Artist Reception?

Wouldn't you like a chance to rub elbows with the Artists after having viewed their works in the Art Show? Well, here's the opportunity you've been looking for. Tonight starting at 9 p.m. in room 217, you can meet and speak with our attending Artists and Artist Guest of Honor, Pat Rawlings. The reception is open to all ApolloCon Members and will run from 9 to 11 P.M.

Refreshments will be provided. Once again local artist and cook, Patti E. Prevet, has been burning the midnight oil to be able to offer a variety of homemade goodies for discriminating tastes. She will be ably assisted by Machael Foegelle, Alison Parker and Mark Hayes.

So come on by to say 'Hi!' Have a Lemon Blossom Teacake; you'll be glad you did.

Programming Changes

Friday:

No changes as of press time.

During the Day:

Check the board by the Registration Table for last-minute changes.

BEMs Rayguns Rocketships

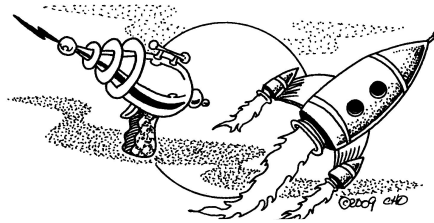
What Is Science Fiction?

By Pogo

'1984'? 'Brave New World'? Certainly not, say the literati. The science in them is only background, not pre-eminent; they're political commentary. 'The Handmaid's Tale' or 'Oryx and Crake'? Of course not, says the author. There's no space travel or aliens; these books are speculative fiction.

We the fans know better! Yes, they're science fiction.

Any book set in the future, or in an alternate timeline, with any attention to science at all is science fiction. The science



may be good or bad, pseudo or real, physical or social—if it's science, and the story is fiction, the book is science fiction. The best science fiction is commentary, inviting the reader to think about consequences and decide if the events during—or before—the story are desirable, the way to go.

Well, then—what's fantasy? As science fiction deals with the possible, fantasy deals with the impossible. The line between the two is sometimes difficult to place, as See **Definitions**, page 2

The IRS and You

ApolloCon's parent organization is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, and as such, some of your ApolloCon membership donation may be tax deductible. Unfortunately, this will do you no good at all unless you itemize. If you do and plan on reporting your ApolloCon membership for a deduction, please ask for Clif Davis at ConOps or Registration to get proper documentation for your records.

And the Fun Begins!

Panels, games, LARPs, videos, KaffeeKlatsches, tastings of chocolate, Scotch, tea, and coffee . . . something's happening every minute! And in the evenings, parties, auctions, Masquerade, and Dance! (There's limited space for the tastings. Go to Ops early to reserve your space!)

Careful perusal of the **Pocket Program** reveals when and where everything takes place—but do you know who the panelists are? And what the panels are about? The **Program Book** has lots of information to let you make the most of ApolloCon, including locations of places to eat.

The **Dealers Room** has several old friends selling new treasures, and some new friends too—books, games, crafts and crafty things, decorations for oneself and one's machines.

Visual art, most of it for sale, fills the **Art Show**. See the **Charity Auction** items—including a special (purple!) ApolloCon T-shirt—there too.

Lots to do, lots of people to see! And parties, all on the fourth floor, start Friday night!

Extra Books?

Extra books? Who has extra books? But some don't have enough—please donate books to the library of Youth Advocates, Inc. Donation boxes can be found in Ops, the ConSuite, at Registration, and at the Charity Auction.

Hours

Art Show 4 P.M. – 9 P.M.
Dealers Room 5 P.M. – 9 P.M.
ConSuite NOON – 3 A.M.

Games Galore!

Stop by and visit our gaming area this year! We've got a great turnout from Steve Jackson Games and his MIB representatives. There will be Munchkin everywhere! We've also had a good turnout of local gamers to run their favorite games—some serious, some social, and everything in between.

Don't have a lot of time between other events? Stop by our open gaming table, run by the founders of the Brazoria Gamer's Group (www.brazoriagamers.com). They'll be running a variety of games that can take as long or as short a time as you've got.

Or Saturday, try to blow up your friends with Legos! Stop by the Lego Frag! Table; you can't miss it! Whatever your tastes are, I'm sure we'll have something to interest you. Check your pocket program or the website for a schedule. There shall be prizes and fun to be had, this I command! Bhwahahahahaha!!

Win by Helping Out

Volunteering is a great way to help out ApolloCon, but did you know that you can win prizes? Each person who signs up to work a total of 8 hours or more throughout the con will have a chance to win one of our big prizes (displayed at the Volunteer Station). We have a variety of jobs ranging from 20 minutes to 2-hour shifts, so you can easily spread out when and how you want to help! Two drawings, each with 3 winners of big prizes, will be held: the first on Saturday at 7 p.m. and the second on Sunday at 11 a.m. We also have plenty of smaller prizes on hand for those who wish to volunteer only a small amount of time and those are given out daily. Come to the Volunteer Station for more information!

Definitions (cont'd from page 1)

what some consider possible if we only knew more (or even existent—ESP, anyone?) others consider flat impossible (large dragons flying).

Both subgenres range from simple action-adventure (formerly derogated as 'space opera' or 'silly') to exploration of trends and possibilities that may profoundly affect individuals and societies. As long as the story is interesting, the telling of it does not drive the reader to suicide, and the message is not painted in bright colors to the exclusion of all else, any subset can be enjoyed.

Long live sci-fi!

Interview: Amy McNally, Music Guest of Honor

Mission Control: Thank you for coming to ApolloCon. How did you get interested in music? Particularly the fiddle?

Amy McNally: My pleasure! I'm really excited to be a guest here. Let's see . . . I started playing the violin when I was three years old. There were a lot of things we couldn't afford, but a friend of the family was a luthier and the local Suzuki program had scholarships. (The Suzuki Method was developed from the observation that all children learn their native language easily and use certain universal methods and skills to do so, and that these ideas could work for classical music acquisition as well.) I kept on in Suzuki until I graduated, but when I was ten or so, I started discovering folk music to a greater extent. By the time I was twelve, I was fiddling at a coffeehouse folk jam and two Irish sessions in pubs; at thirteen, I got heavily into Scottish music; and when I was fifteen, I found my first filk track at a con. You could say it went downhill from there.

MC: Do you play other instruments?

AMcN: I played the piano for several years. I can also play the mandolin. But I'm itching to get myself a theremin. They're fascinating! And since I'm already used to playing a fretless instrument that requires one hand working pitch and vibrato and one hand waving wildly about for volume and expression, I find them fairly intuitive.

MC: How does your music affect your fannish interests? And vice versa?

AMcN: Well, as a young musician and fan, even before I found filk, I was struck by the presence of music in the books I read. From Tolkien to Huxley, music plays a big role. I'm also lucky that entire fantasy books have been written about my instrument and way of life—most notably Lackey's 'Fiddler Fair' and de Lint's 'The Little Country.' You just don't get that kind of musical saturation, let alone the whole bardic mythos, in murder mysteries or humorous books or romance novels. I guess what I'm trying to say is that in my mind, the two are irrevocably linked, and it's hard to sort out where one affects the other. When I got my electric fiddle—it's a five-string—one of the first things I played on it was the Doctor Who Theme, because the greater range means I don't have to 'cheat' with any of the intervals, or leave out any of the high or low bits. When I got interested in the TV show 'Supernatural,' I wrote a filk of the song 'Margaritaville' with lyrics about the characters.

MC: Do you write music?

AMcN: I do! I get tunes in my head that I just can't shake. Sometimes the music comes on its own, or sometimes in response to a poem or ballad that doesn't have an existing melody. I've only written a few songs with lyrics, though, and mostly I wind up doing that with friends.

MC: What is your goal as a performer?

AMcN: That's a tough question. I'm going to risk sounding like a music-hippie here, and say my goal is less to perform, and more to share. I don't want people to put me up on a stage and go, 'Oooh, shiny.' There's a reason I'm known for doing backup, or inviting others up on stage, or playing in cooperative situations, like jams. I like playing **with** people, not at them. So when I play on my own, I do a lot of open-string harmonies, I play tunes that'll make people want to clap and sing along, I try to increase the feeling of participation. I may look like I'm in my own little world, but I want everyone to be there, in the melody, with me.

MC: What advice do you have for fans interested in music?

AMcN: Never, ever look at music and say 'I can't do that,' or 'I'm not qualified to enjoy that,' or 'I shouldn't participate, I'll ruin things.' So many people have these really restricted views on music, and so many people I grew up with had never let themselves sing with other people, had never thought it was important to observe live music, or clap, or dance, or even whistle. It's a tragedy that music, which touches us all so deeply, which is such a fundamental part of life throughout the entire world, is something so many people allow themselves to be estranged from. So whether you're considering learning a whole new instrument or tradition, or are just too shy to sing in the shower, go for it!

MC: Thank you.

Check out **Friday's Concert and Show**, 8 P.M., where **Amy McNally**, our Music Guest of Honor, will perform!