

# The Drink Tank Issue 207



**Handicapping the Hugos**

First off, thanks. I'll be saying that for the rest of my life, even if I never get another accolade of any form. Why? Because everyone has been too kind to me to ever really be expressed. I've got the smallest audience of any zine that's been on the Hugo ballot in the last couple of decades, quite possibly longer. I'm just lucky that I have a ton of friends who are willing to nominate me and that's kept me on the ballot and has made me a terribly happy little boy. I thank y'all for all you've done for me.

I should say specific thanks to Steve Green, Dann Lopez, James Bacon, Taral Wayne, Steven Silver, Lloyd Penney, Eric Mayer, Kevin Roche, Andy Trembley, Ken and Jerry, John Purcell, Mo Starkey, Genevieve, Leigh Ann Hildebrand, Espana Sheriff, Frank Wu, Brianna SpaceKat-Wu, John 'The Rock' Coxon, John 'The Human Tornado' Hertz, Jason Schachat, Kate Kelton, Tom Becker, Jean Martin, David Moyce, Kurt Erichsen, Milt Stevens, Ed Green, Miko, Steve Stiles, Evelyn, Cousin Claire, Mark Plummer, Randy Byers, Arnie and

Joyce, John Toon, Anders, Nic Farey, Kat Templeton, Peter Sullivan, Peter Weston, Niall Harrison, Kevin Standlee, Cheryl Morgan, Bryan and Mette, Liz Batty, all the wonderful people I met at Eastercon and all the wonderful people who came and hung around at WorldCon, BayCon and every other Con we've been to. And of course, the Lovely and Talented Linda. I love you, darlin'!

So, now what? Well, here's this year's version of what I thought was last year's best issue. I've been lucky enough to have a bunch of good folks (who know what they're talking about far better than I do) write in and give me their thoughts on the various categories. I'm also not commenting on the Campbell Award because it's not a Hugo. Perhaps I'll do a Calling the Campbell Award issue.



## Best Fan Artist

**Last Year's Winner-** Brad Foster  
**Who's Not on the List-** Steve Stiles (who has said that he declined hoping that Taral would win), Dan Steffan, Craig Smith, Teddy Harvia, Kurt Erichsen, Marc Shirmeister, Genevieve, Mo Starkey, Ditmar, Alison Scott

### **5<sup>th</sup> Place- Alan F. Beck**

Pros- A popular artist around art shows.

Cons- Not the biggest name on the ballot when it comes to International recognition. He's not the Fan Guest of Honor.

I really like Beck's stuff, and this is the first time he's made the ballot. I also have to give it up to him for having made the ballot and being another BArea resident. He's a regular in the BayCon Art Show. Still, I don't think he has the overall recognition, plus, this year ain't going to be normal for this category.

*Odds- 10-to-1*



#### **4<sup>th</sup> Place- Sue Mason**

Pros- Very popular British artist who appears in well-loved fanzines. Has won two of the Rockets in the last 6 years.

Cons- Profile is slightly lower this year than it has been in the last few. Not the Fan Guest of Honor.

Sue Mason is a wonderfully talented artist. I think she does some good stuff and has been the Best Fan Artist before. She may well be the most recognized British Fan Artist. I just don't see it happening this year.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Place- Frank Wu**

Pros- Three-time winner who declined last year and is back this year.

Cons- Hasn't been as active as he was over the previous decade or so. Ain't the Fan Guest of Honor.

Everyone knows that Frank Wu is one of the reasons that The Drink Tank has managed to do so well. Frank was the first artist to give me art, one of the most frequent contributors of art and writing. Sadly, this isn't going to be his year, I think. Most of his work that's shown up this year has been dual covers with Brianna, including some of the best of the year for The Drink Tank and File 770.

*Odds- 7-to-1*

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place- Brad Foster**

Pros- Last year's winner who has continued doing great stuff all over fanzines. He's also designed the mascot for the Reno bid, had one of the most gorgeous covers of the year and has been doing it all for years and years.

Cons- Is NOT the Fan Guest of Honor.

Almost any other year, Brad would be at least 3-to-1, but this year is weird. Brad's color work has really taken a lot of notice and he's been everywhere. Still, weird year. He's had stuff in The Drink Tank and Claims Department and I think he'll have something in the next Journey Planet. Then again, it might be easier to list what Fanzines he HASN'T had pieces in.

*Odds- 6-to-1*

#### **Winner- Taral Wayne**

Pros- He's the Fan Guest of Honor and he's been doing fantastic stuff, both written and drawn, all over the place as well as winning the Rotsler Award.

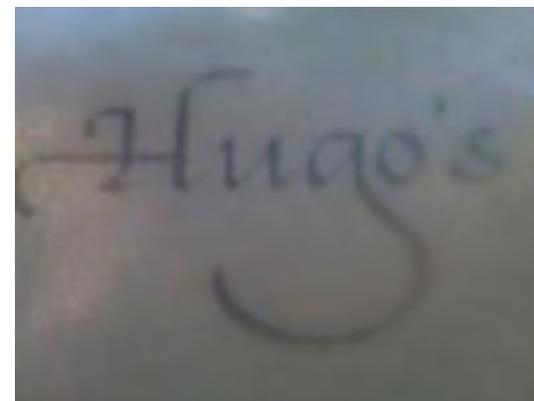
Cons- None.

Taral is the Fan Guest of Honor at Anticipation and that might make him seem like he'll win simply because of that. Well, that's not at all fair because Taral's done great stuff and has been

even more visible than he has been in recent years. He's a superstar fan artist and he's never won the Rocket. This is his year, and if you don't believe me, go and check out The Drink Tank 188 where he sent me tons of art and wrote about them. He's a deserving winner, no question, and I'm nearly certain that it'll be by a big margin.

***Odds- 4-to-5.***

The names not on the list of nominees is interesting as what happens next year? Will Alan F. Beck be back if Stiles comes back? Will Frank Wu be replaced by Brianna? Will Taral defend with the Hugos in Australia? It has me all a-tingle just thinking about it. Of course, I'm sorta over-looking this one because I'm pretty sure that Taral will be winning.



# Best Fan Writer

**Last Year's Winner-** John Scalzi  
**Not on the Ballot-** Taral Wayne, Lloyd Penney, James Bacon, Frank Wu, Claire Brialey, Mark Plummer, Peter Weston, Leigh Ann Hildebrand, Jay lake, John Scalzi (who campaigned not to be on the ballot), Niall Harrison, John Purcell, Bruce Gillespie.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Place- Chris Garcia**

Writing in The Drink Tank?- Less and less, thankfully...

Pros- Has written in various fanzines around the World, written Locs to most zines and has even written a TAFF report.

Cons- Chris who? Seriously, far and away the least known member of the nominees list. Not actually a great writer.

OK, there's something to be said for honesty, and honestly, I'm 100% certain I'll never win one of these things until the year after I die. I'll be in decent company if that's the case. This was not my best year. I know it, you know it, so let's admit it. I was much better and much more active in 2007. It's OK, I don't mind. I'm hoping that I will beat No Award. If I manage that, I'll be happy.

*Odds- 20-to-1*



## **4<sup>th</sup> Place- Steven Silver**

Writing in the Drink Tank? Yep, a couple of great articles including a really good one on Ghengis Khan.

Pros- Well-liked dude who writes in a lot of high-profile areas. Also has a nominated zine, Argentus.

Cons- Not as big a name as the Top Three on this list.

This is one of those things. Silver will probably win this category one of these years, but not this year. He does really good stuff, but he's not all over the place. I love getting to run pieces from Steven and I'm hoping that he'll send more my way.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Place- John Hertz**

Writing in The Drink Tank? Yes, and poems and such in various other Garciazines.

Pros- He's been writing fantastic stuff for zines by himself and others for decades.

Cons- His writing is not as widely read as the Top 2's.

John Hertz is a fannish legend. If there was a Fandom Hall of Fame, he'd be a first Ballot Sure-Thing! I love John, and his piece on the back of Banana Wings 36 is one of my faves from 2008. His Haiku tend to be awesome. If he had a regular Gen-ishzine, I think he'd finish higher. It's good to see him on the ballot again.

*Odds- 6-to-1*

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Place- Cheryl Morgan**

Writing in the Drink Tank? Yes, a couple of pieces including a fine piece of Faan Fiction in early 2008.

Pros- Has been on the ballot a few times and came very close. Has one of the most widely read blogs in fandom. Used to do Emerald City, which I still miss.

Cons- Emerald City isn't around and that's why she came so close to winning.

Cheryl's fantastic. I love her stuff, and she's written some of the most insightful con reports ever. There are folks who say that Cheryl's take on

Torcon in 2003 was the best piece of fan writing so far this decade. That's a big statement, but I have to say that I'm almost in that camp myself.

*Odds- 4-to-1*

### **Winner- Dave Langford**

Writing in The Drink Tank- A couple of pieces, notably a fine Eastercon report.

Pros- He's won a metric shitload of Hugos and Ansible is still the most widely read zine around.

Cons- He's won a metric shitload of Hugos already.

He won 19 of these in a row. I honestly do hope that he'll step-back and deny a nomination some year, but until he does, he's going to keep winning this award. And I don't know if I can say he doesn't deserve it. He's done some great writing. I like him, too. He's a nice guy and one of the best parts of my TAFF trip was meeting the guy. I almost got a contact Hugo.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

Let us start with the thoughts of Liz Batty!

*I was hoping that after Scalzi's win, and his excellent posts exhorting the nominators to pick someone else this year, that we'd have a shakeup*

*in this category. There are many, many fine fanwriters out there: Mark Plummer, Claire Brialey, Peter Weston, and Andy Hooper are names which stood out in paper fanzines this year, for a start. Then there's the many fan writers producing great work online, on blogs and journals: Niall Harrison, Abigail Nussbaum, Graham Sleight, James Nicoll, Jo Walton, to name just a few. I would love to see a few of these new names pop up in this category. Meanwhile I think this is once again Dave Langford's category to lose.*

Liz has a point. All of Scalzi's posts did not bring in a first-time nominee, which would be nice (and I wouldn't even mind getting bumped for someone like Lloyd Penney, Niall, Mark or Claire. Still, I have to say that Langford's gonna keep on winning.



## Best Fanzine

**Last Year's Winner-** Mike Glycer's File 770

**Not on the list-** PLOKTA (and this was a serious surprize), Prolapse/Relapse, eI, Askance, Steam Engine Time, Procrastinations, Science Fiction San Francisco, Chunga

### **6<sup>th</sup> Place- The Drink Tank**

Amount of Chris Garcia Material- Quite a bit.

Pros- A fun zine that has had a few good issues.

Cons- By far the least-read of the zines on the list. Not terribly polished or flashy.

Again, it's not the best year for The Drink Tank (and someday I should figure out if it's Drink Tank, the Drink Tank or The Drink Tank) though the Handicapping the Hugos issue and the issue of Taral Wayne's art were both strong. I still pride myself on using stuff from folks who don't show up many other places. The issues right around Eastercon were both decent as well. Still, nothing like The Corset issue of The Cocktail issue that both dropped in 2007.

*Odds- 10-to-1*

### **5<sup>th</sup> Place- Argentus**

Amount of writing from Chris Garcia- A piece of my TAFF report was in it.

Pros- A good zine that was second in first place votes last year, which are the only things that count.

Cons- Not as wide a distribution as others on the list and it only comes out once a year.

Argentus is a popular zine. It's well made, has good art and has some really strong writing, including some stuff from folks who aren't regularly in fanzines. Still, only coming out once a year makes it slightly harder to win. I think it'll do really well next year in OZ.

*Odds- 6-to-1*

### **4<sup>th</sup> Place- Banana Wings**

Writing by Chris Garcia? A bunch, including a portion of my TAFF trip that I thought was one of the best things of mine that saw print, probably because Mark and Claire can edit me better than just about anyone.

Pros- Probably the best written fanzine in the world right now. Strictly awesome.

Cons- Not on the Web, which I swear would put it over the top into the winning realm.

Banana Wings is fantastic. I love it, one of my three faves and I'm totally proud of the fact that I've had writing in there. In a perfect world, this would be winning the Hugo every other year or so (kinda like The Novas or FAAN Awards, of which BW has won several of both). Still, I don't think it's got a wide-enough readership to win the thing.

*Odds- 7-to-1*



### **3<sup>rd</sup> Place- Challenger**

Writing by Chris Garcia? I've certainly had several pieces, but I'm not sure I've had any in 2008.

Pros- A great fanzine with great writing and some phenomenal art.

Cons- nothing big. Maybe smaller readership than the top two.

Challenger is a lot of fun. I love it and I'm happy with the things that I've had in it. Last year, I think that Challenger was right up there with the best of them. I think that 2007 was the best year for Challenger, but 2008 was a great year too. In the next couple of years, I'm betting that Challenger will finally win it all.

*Odds- 4-to-1*

### **Second Place- Electric Velocipede**

Writing from Chris Garcia- None. I gave up writing fiction ages ago.

Pros- A Fiction zine that pays contributors and only barely avoids being a Semi-prozine. Some really good fiction in there too.

Cons- It's a fiction zine in a category where that hasn't traditionally won. Still, probably the widest read of the zines on the ballot.

This is a big deal. With the Best Semi-Prozine likely going away, it's likely that we'll see more of them popping back into Best Fanzine. I would fully expect Ansible to be back. I'm also pretty sure that'll spell the end of The Drink Tank on the ballot. Still, EV is good at what it does. I'd say that it will come very close, but not take the ring this pass-by.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

### **Winner- File 770**

Writing by Chris Garcia- Yep, LoCs and an article on Presenting a Hugo.

Pros- A long-running zine with a great history of winning. Had some strong contributors, including three of the five Hugo nominees.

Cons- None.

File 770 is awesome. Over the last 30 years, it's won 6 or so times. That's 1/5 of the time. It won last year, and it'll win again this year because it's still great. Well-written, wonderfully illustrated and smartly laid-out. It's taking it again.

Odds- 3-to-2

More from Liz Batty

*I thought this might be the year that a blog makes it onto the best fanzine shortlist, but instead it is the year that Electric Velocipede makes the cut. Now I think Electric Velocipede is a fine magazine, from the few issues I have seen, and clearly a labour of love for John Klima, but I think that a small fiction magazine, which pays contributors, carries advertising, and is available for a cash payment only is a completely different beast to the rest of the fanzines which are traditionally nominated in this category, and seems to have more in*

*common with Clarkesworld Magazine, Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet, or Helix SF, all of which have been nominated in the semiprozine category in recent years. The solution I would favour is a complete revamp of the magazine categories, possibly to the suggestion I saw to split it into fanzine, fiction 'zine, and newszine, but I'm sure that would bring its own problems.*

*Back to the actual nominees rather than griping about the Hugo categories, I am pleased as ever to see Banana Wings in there, the only fanzine which has made me miss my stop on public transport because I was too engrossed in an article; a shame not to see Chunga or Prolapse on there, which have both produced excellent work in 2008. I would love to see Banana Wings win, but I think Mike Glyer and File 770 will take the prize here.*

I'm not sure a blog would technically be eligible for Best Fanzine, but who knows. Once again, I'm not totally pleased with the lack of definition within the Hugo Awards. Maybe it's just that I like definitions and strong administrators. That's not a popular stance, as I understand it. Anyhoo, I'm not bummed that EV is in the running largely because it's pretty darn good and technically it fits. Of course, the flood of formerly Semi-Prozines is about to begin and Ansible

will likely return to the Best Fanzine category.

Of course, I'm a big fan of Banana Wings, too. You'll find some of the best writing in the world there, but File 770 is very popular and I think it'll take it. Of course, I'm always wondering why PLOKTA wasn't on the ballot. They had a good year, put out two or three issues, I think. It's odd to see the zine that came in second last year completely fall off the ballot.



## Best Semi-Pro Zine

**Last Year's Winner-** Locus

**Who's not on the ballot-** Ansible, The Internet Review of Science Fiction, Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet, Apex & Abyss, Realms of Fantasy

### **5<sup>th</sup> Place- Clarkesworld**

How often does Chris Garcia read it? I've at least glanced at every issue and have had an article in there too. And it was non-fiction.

Pros- Some great fiction from some big names (Jay Lake, Mary Robinette Kowal, Robert Reed, Mike Resnick) and some good non-fiction.

Cons- Not as widely read as the others. Hasn't been a regular nominee in the category. Isn't Locus.

So, Clarkesworld is a really good publication that I will likely put at the top of my personal ballot. It's a fun zine, has some really great fiction and some very nice non-fiction too. In fact, this issue has a fine article about remakes written by Daniel Kimmel that is the highlight for me. It's got good visual sense, very strong writing and sadly, little chance of winning the category.

*Odds- 10-to-1*



### **4<sup>th</sup> Place- Weird Tales**

How often does Chris Garcia Read it? I tend to read pre-1940 Weird Tales more often than the current version, but I've read an issue or two.

Pros- Good magazine with strong editors. Long-standing name recognition helps. Ann VerderMeer is highly visible these days.  
Cons- not as widely read as the others on the list. Isn't Locus.

I'd love to see Weird Tales win someday, but I doubt it'll happen. The real problem isn't that it's not a good mag, it is, but it lacks the impact on the general SF community that mags like Interzone have. I'm hoping that

they do well and increase circulation and sales, but in this climate, that's hardly a smart bet. Still, there's good stuff to find in Weird Tales.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Place- Interzone**

How Often Does Chris Garcia Read It- Very rarely.

Pros- Long-running zine that's won this category before.  
Cons- Not the strongest year from what I've heard. Is not Locus.

I haven't read a current issue of Interzone in ages. They gave one out at Denvention, but I think that was an older issue. It wasn't as good as I remember it being. Why? I'm not sure. It just didn't impress me that much. Still, there's big name recognition and folks seem to love it. Plus, there's the whole English thing.

*Odds- 7-to-1*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place- New York Review of Science Fiction**

How often does Chris Garcia read it? Once every year when they announce that it's on the Hugo Ballot.

Pros- Long-standing Semi-Pro with a

very popular editorship.

Cons- How many times do I have to say it: it ain't Locus.

I can't say that I ever get the itch to read NYRSF, it just ain't my bag. I can see that a fair segment of the SF world would be into it, but for me, there's not much there. Still, between Hartwell and Cramer, you've got serious talent on the editorial side, as well as a list of writers that's just fantastic. Niall Harrison and Graham Sleight and Joe Sanders and Adam Roberts and Michael Bishop all do reviews, plus John Clute and Gwyenth Jones have done some nice reviews too. It's got a strong list of writers, but sadly, it'll always play second fiddle to the Big Dog.

Odds- 4-to-1

### **Winner- Locus**

How often does Chris Garcia stoop to read it? About 3 issues a year. Usually by accident...

Pros- It's Locus. Everyone who counts loves it.

Cons- Well, personally, I'm not a fan. The Forry Ackerman Death Notice that was premature was a black mark, as was the recent Locus Awards debacle.

I've got a long-standing disapproval

of Locus despite having some friends who write for it and genuinely liking that Charles Brown fellow and having loved the early issues. Sadly, the track they've taken to where fandom no longer matters to it bothers me. Still, it always wins unless the Hugos are voted on in England.

*Odds- 3-to-2.*

Jay Crasdan had a few things to say.

*While we were in Finland, we had access to more magazines than we ever had while living in Santa Barbara. We could get Interzone, Locus, Weird Tales, F&SF, Analog, Asimov's and about two dozen others from the bookshop in downtown. This was a great year for Interzone. All the issues around the house are trashed because we've read them over and over. It's got my vote, though M still loves Locus, despite your disgust.*

This may be the last year for the Best Semi-Pro, which worries me because that'll release a number of zines back into the fanzine competition. There's the Locus standard win, which I hope ends someday when they're voting in the USA. Who knows what'll happen once the change happens.



## ***Best Professional Artist***

**Last Year's Winner-** Stephan Martiniere

**Not on the list-** Phil Foglio (a total crime), Jim Burns, Michael Whelan, Stephan Martiniere

### **5<sup>th</sup> Place- Daniel Dos Santos**

Pros- An artist of book covers and trading card whose work can be seen at <http://www.dandossantos.com>  
Cons- not as much name recognition as the rest of the folks on the list.

I have to admit, I didn't know much about Daniel Dos Santos until I went digging for this piece and found his website. It's good stuff, not only book covers, but trading cards as well. He's got a beautiful style and he could easily win this category in the future, but this being his first year on the ballot, I don't think it'll happen. Still, his website alone is worth a nice long visit.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

### **4<sup>th</sup> Place- Shaun Tan**

Pros- The Arrival was nominated last year and sadly didn't do too well. His wide-ranging group of images can found on his website- [www.shauntan.com](http://www.shauntan.com)

Cons- Didn't do very well in the Best Related Book voting last year.



*Daniel Dos Santos' cover of Patricia Briggs' Bone Crossed*

I love Shaun Tan's stuff, but I'm not sure if he can overcome the large lead the rest of the field has on him this year. The Arrival is one of the best things to come down the pipe in ages, and though it came in dead last as I remember it, it was still a marvel. I'd

like to see his work nominated in the Best Graphic Story, but that'll have to wait to see if it becomes a regular category.

*Odds- 6-to-1*

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Place- Bob Eggleton**

Pros- A legend. Has won this category more than once.  
Cons- Not anything I can think of. Maybe slightly less visible than other years.

I finally met Bob at Denvention and he was a really nice guy. I often say that Bob is a powerful force for good and awesome. Still, I can't think of many pieces I've come across by him this year, which is kinda weird because even though I'm slightly sheltered, most years I come across and thing or two.

*Odds- 5-to-2*

### **Second Place- John Picacio**

Pros- A great artist with a strong fanbase.  
Cons- He's fighting an up-hill battle against two former winners.

I think John Picacio's cover for A Canticle For Leibowitz is probably the best thing I've seen in years. There are

various other covers that I appreciate too, including a Star Trek triptych that blew me away this year. I like John, I think he's a real talent and he gets my vote this year without question. His stuff is fantastic with a smoke-like quality to many of them that just draws me in. He did manage to come in second last year in the category and I don't see him back-sliding.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

**Winner- Donato Giancola**

Pros- He's also a legend and has done some amazing work. He's got two Best Professional Artist Hugos in the last 5 years.

Cons- None that I can think of. Maybe folks wanna spread the wealth a little?

I've always been a big Donato fan. He was the Artist GoH at the Philcon I went to in 2002 and he was a really nice guy. We even did a panel together which was fun. He declined his nomination in 2008. I think he'll take it.

*Odds- 3-to-2*

This is a good list, probably the best in a few years. I'd love to see Picacio take it home. I love Donato, but I think John's got a great style. It's interesting to note that Martiniere isn't on the ballot, but it could be that he

stepped away, in which case, good for him. It'll be a close race, I think. Still, I miss Phil Foglio on this list.



**Best Editor- Long Form**

**Last Year's Winner-** David G. Hartwell  
**Who's not on the list-** Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Juliet Ulman, Toni Weisskopf

**5<sup>th</sup> Place- Beth Meacham**

Pros- Long-standing name in the field, former Tor Editor-in-Chief.

Cons- I can't seem to remember coming across her name at all last

year.

I tried my damndest, but I can't really think of any reason that I'd vote for Beth. She's good people from what I understand, but I couldn't come up with a single novel that I read that she had edited.

*Odds- 12-to-1*

**4<sup>th</sup> Place- Ginjer Buchanan**

Pros- Long-lasting figure in the world of Science Fiction.

Cons- I can't think of what she edited this year that I enjoyed.

I don't know if I've ever met Ginjer. I probably have, I know my Dad met her a couple of times, but I think she's one of the most talented editors around. She's also got a great stockpile of books of the past. That said, finally seeing her list of books edited in 2008, this was not her best year.

*Odds- 10-to-1*

**3<sup>rd</sup> Place- Lou Anders**

Pros- Edited a couple of really fun Mike Resnick books last year.

Cons- edited an Allen Dean Foster book. Meh.

Looking over Lou's list from the last few years, I have to say that he's got



I met Patrick last year at Eastercon. Nice guy. He's a long-time fave of voters and a former TAFF winner (along with his wife Teresa). He might get swept up in a Scalzi fever, too. It'll be tight.

*Odds- 7-to-3*

**Winner- David Hartwell**

Pros- Long-standing figure in the field who is on the ballot twice this year. Won last year, oh, and he's the Editor Guest of Honor for Anticipation.  
Cons- Maybe they wanna spread things around a bit?

I like David Hartwell. I've never talked to the man, but I appreciate his wardrobe, the stuff he's edited for TOR and his anthologies. He's a very well-liked guy and I'm betting he'll take it home. I couldn't find a listing of what he'd edited in 2008, though, and that might work against him, giving it to Patrick.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

This is always a category that I feel weird about. I really don't like the ones where you're giving an award to the person instead of the work. I've been saying for ages that I'd rather see the Best Novel Hugo award go to the Author with some sort of secondary mention to the Editor. It's much like with the Oscars where the Award for Best Picture is given to the Producers with various other mentions. Of course, that's a bigger deal.

some good stuff up there. Including last year's best SF novel: Brasyll. This year, none of his novels were up for the big one, and I don't think he'll take it this year.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

**Second Place- Patrick Nielsen Hayden**

Pros- Edited two of the Nominees for Best Novel. Lots of big names under his belt, including Scalzi, Doctorow, Goodkind and Walton. He won this award in 2007.

Cons- Well, I'm having trouble thinking of any.



art by Genevieve

# Best Editor- Short Form

**Last year's Winner-** Gordon Van Gelder

**Who's Not on the List-** David Hartwell, Andy Cox, Cat Rambo (if only for that awesome name!), Kelly Link

## **5<sup>th</sup> Place- Sheila Williams**

Pros- Edits a big name magazine. Has several stories nominated from Asimov's on the ballot this year.  
Cons- A big name magazine that's been nearly unreadable for the last couple of years.

It's a shame that Asimov's has slid so far down the ladder. There was a time when it was one of the best fiction magazines out there. Of course, at the time it was being edited by George Scithers and when it made a comeback in the 1990s, it was being edited by Gardner Dozois. Still, I don't think many would say that Sheila's got a chance.

*Odds- 15-to-1*

## **4<sup>th</sup> Place- Johnathan Strahan**

Pros- is the reviews editor for Locus, which is big exposure, and he does some great anthologies.  
Cons- well, aside from the Locus connection, he's probably the least

wide-spread of the nominees.

The Starry Rift and Eclipse Two are both great anthologies. If there was a Best Anthology category, they'd be my number 1 and 3 votes. The fact is, anthologies ain't getting grabbed up as much as they used to be. Still, this had one story on the Hugo nomination list.

*Odds- 6-to-1*



## **3<sup>rd</sup> Place- Stanley Schmidt**

Pros- He's been doing this for a long time, has been on the ballot a couple of dozen times and has never won.  
Cons- Well, this was not the best year for Analog.

The quality of the big science fiction mags has slipped serious over the last couple of years. I can't say that I read much Analog this year, I wasn't much interested in the stuff I did read. Still, I really wanna see him holding a Hugo someday.

*Odds- 5-to-1*

## **Second Place- Ellen Datlow**

Pros- She's a Hall of Famer.  
Cons- Well, she's not put out her best stuff this year.

This is an odd one. Everyone loves Ellen, she's won Hugos before and she's really good. None of her anthologies this year struck a chord with me, which is fine, and I personally didn't feel her influence on The Year's Best Fantasy & Horror. I dunno, maybe there's enough love of her spread around that she's get it, but I don't think so.

*Odds- 3-to-1*

### **Winner- Gordon Van Gelder**

Pros- Is the editor of the last regularly readable magazine of fantasy and science fiction, oddly enough called, The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction.

Cons- He won last year.

Let me say that F&SF is easily the best of the prozines right now. No question in my eyes that it earns the prize for Gordo. He's done a great job. I totally thought that the January 2008 issue was the best issue of any magazine I've read in ages, including *Pride & Prometheus* and *Mystery Hill*.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

This is a category that I wish would go away. What? You're not serious, are you, Chris? I certainly am. I'd much rather they get rid of Editor Short Form and replace it with Best Magazine (also solving the Best Semi-Pro problem) and Best Anthology. It think that'd really be a good way to go. I don't like giving awards to individuals when there's a perfectly good way to give it to a work. Sadly, the decline of *Analog* and *Asimov's* hurts, but it's F&SF that's gone bi-monthly. There ain't no justice!



## **Best Dramatic Presentation- Short Form**

**Winner Last Year-** Dr. Who Blink

**Not on the List-** The Venture Brothers The Trail of The Monarch (Brilliant stuff that was the funniest thing all-year), The Simpsons Halloween Special, Anything from Pushing Daisies, Anything from Torchwood, The Season Finale of LOST, Me eating that cake at BASFA

### **5<sup>th</sup> Place- LOST The Constant**

Pros- LOST has a strong fanbase.

Cons- It's still a sort-of opt-in show which requires fans to come in with some clue to get any specific episode.

I loved LOST last season, and this season too, in fact. I'm pretty sure that it won't win. You can walk in on any of the other pieces on the ballot and they're all reasonable stand-alone. It seems harder for something to win when it requires more episodes of interaction to really come to grips with it. Plus, it's not a Dr. Who episode.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

### **4<sup>th</sup> Place- Dr. Who Turn Left**

Pros- It's Dr. Who!

Cons- It's a less flashy episode that the other one that's on the ballot.

This is a good, but not quite great

episode of Who. I find it interesting that Moffat's episodes always win, which means that this one by Russell T. Davies gets the bump.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

### **Third Place- Battlestar Galactica Revelations**

Pros- BSG just ended its run and went out on something of a high note.

Cons- Still, no Dirk Benedict or Lorne Greene.

I'm not a fan of BSG other than the 1970s original. Still, it's very popular and got a lot of press for its finale. I'm expecting it to do pretty well, probably not winning, but finishing kinda high.

*Odds- 5-to-1*

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Place- Dr. Who Silence in the Library/Forest of the Dead**

Pros- It's Moffat writing Dr. Who! It's also a very powerful set of episodes and Alex Kingston is hot!

Cons- Dr. Who's streak may turn some folks off. Not an internet phenomena.

This was easily the best Dr. Who for me last year. It's a two-part episode that really panders to the Science Fiction fan. I mean, there are books, the Doctor, Alex Kingston. It's got

everything, man! Still, I don't see it winning.

*Odds- 3-to-1*

**Winner- Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog**

Pros- an Internet sensation that had its release perfectly timed. It's a wonderful piece of work and a hilarious accomplishment from a Hugo favorite.  
Cons- It's not a Dr. Who.

This should win because it was the most inventive of all the nominees. I thought that it was funny and obviously they could build a ton of stuff around it. The videos from the Fan competition are hilarious too. I like L'enfant Terrible and Miss Broadway Dork the most. Also, it's this year's Gollum speech, in a way. I'm hoping it wins because it's the thing I quote the most.

*Odds- Even Money*

Let us return to the thought of Liz Batty!

*Disappointing not to see an episode of the quirky and delightful Pushing Daisies on here, but my guess is that there were no standout episodes for a consensus to form around, and I think The Sarah Connor Chronicles and The Middleman have suffered the same fate. I would have liked to see the Doctor Who episode Midnight on there, but the question this year is*

*whether Doctor Horrible can stop Moffat making it four straight wins. I think I'd give Doctor Horrible the edge.*

Pushing Daisies was more of an across-the-board kind of show, which is another reason to just nominate a

series instead of an arc and individual episodes. Still, I think that the list is pretty strong. And The Venture Brothers. That needs a nom some day! It was the funniest series of last year and The Trial of the Monarch was pretty damn awesome.



## Best Dramatic Presentation- Long Form

**Last year's winner-** Stardust

**What's Not on the List-** Kung Fu Panda, Repo! The Genetic Opera, Coverfield, Bolt, The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (and Thank Ghod!), Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, Journey to the Center of the Earth

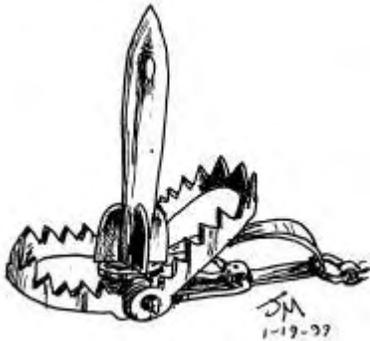
### **Fifth Place- Hellboy II: The Golden Army**

Pros- Guillermo delToro directs a popular comic franchise film.

Cons- Didn't do well in the box office and it didn't get great reviews.

I love Mike Mignola. I always have. I didn't love the first Hellboy, but it had some decent moments. And how can you not love Jeffrey Tambor? Still, I don't see it having a chance against a pair of comic book movies and Pixar.

*Odds- 20-to-1*



### **4th Place- METAtropolis**

Pros- Some really big names in an audio collection by the Internet's favorite guy.

Cons- It's an audiobook and not as widely experienced as the rest of the nominees.

I would love this to win. I don't think it will. I think that a movie will win, but this has serious Internet buzz. Still, probably not enough.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

### **3th Place- Iron Man**

Pros- A very funny movie that was also seriously action-y and had a really fun performance from Robert Downey Jr.

Cons- It's not the best comic book movie of last year. Marvel Comics films haven't done well in the Hugo voting.

I love this film. It was, along with Tropic Thunder and Kung Fu Panda, one of the most fun films of the summer. Downey Jr. was great, as was Jeff Bridges. I thought it was a really fun ride, and I can't wait for the second film in the series. Still, it's overshadowed by a DC movie.

*Odds- 4-to-1*

### **Second Place- Wall-E**

Pros- One of the best Pixar films with a heart-warming plot and great

characters.

Cons- Not many, but animated films haven't been big winners in recent years.

I finally saw it and I thought that it was wondrous. Pixar does pretty well, but it never seems to win. This might be the best Pixar film since the Glory Days of Monsters, Inc. and Finding Nemo.

*Odds- 3-to-1*

### **Winner- The Dark Knight**

Pros- One of the single greatest performances in the history of genre film: Heath Ledger as the Joker. Some of the most exciting scenes in Comic book films. An excellent performance by Santa Clara's own Aaron Eckhart. Great cinematography coupled with a wonderful score.

Cons- Kinda violent and some might not find it at all Science Fictional.

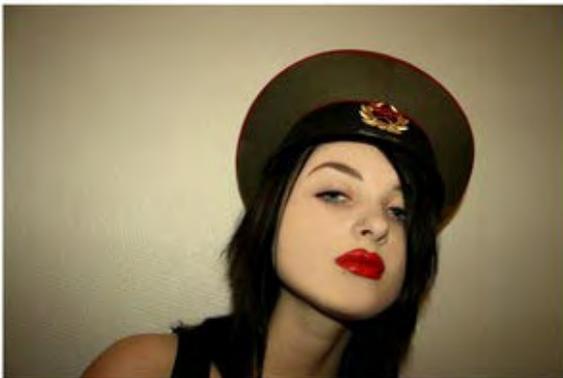
This was a magnificent film. I won't go much further because I could go on and on. I thought it was one of the best films of 2008. I enjoyed it more than Slumdog, more than The Wrestler. It was an exceptional film, easily the Best Comic Book movie ever.

*Odds- 5-to-7*

And now, Liz Batty

*The Dark Knight is an excellent film which isn't really science fiction, but a fine superhero twist on a crime thriller. Iron Man and Hellboy were both entertaining films enlivened by brilliant central performances, but the winner here should be WALL-E, as there was no more adorable, heartwarming, and wonderful science fiction film released last year. I would have liked to see a nomination for Juan Antonio Bayona's creepy Spanish horror film El Orfanato; I'm not a fan of audio books so I don't know whether METAtropolis is a good example of them, but I'm glad to see that an original anthology gets a nomination somewhere on the ballot.*

Let me say that the performances in Hellboy were pretty good. I can not argue that Wall-E was an adorable, lovely film. I just think The Dark Knight is too strong in this one.



## Best Graphic Story

**Last Year's Winner-** There weren't one. The closest would be Watchmen in Other Forms back in the 1980s.

**What didn't make it?** All-Star Superman comes to mind, as does the recent Flash run. Would 52 count, or was that too long ago? What about Tales from the Crypt?

### **6th Place- Schlock Mercenary: The Body Politic**

Pros- Web comic available for free download from <http://schlockmercenary.com/>

Cons- Schlock what-now?

I had never heard of Schlock Mercenary until I saw the nominations. I went and took a look and it's pretty fun. I then looked up Howard Taylor and saw that the next book in the series seems to have an intro done by John Scalzi. That boy's everywhere!

Odds- 15-to-1

### **5th Place- The Dresden Files: Welcome to the Jungle**

Pros- It's Jim Butcher writing in an established universe.

Cons- I picked up a copy and read it. It's only somewhat better than the recent TV series.

I really wasn't impressed with it. I like Jim Butcher, his Codez Alera stuff is really solid, but this ain't his best work. I wasn't thrilled with the art, either. It's just a miss, but there are Butcher fans and those that love The Dresden Files, so I'm betting it won't come last.

Odds- 8-to-1

### **Fourth place- Y: The Last Man Volume 10: Why's and Wherefores**

Pros- Y has been a Vertigo popular series for ages with a big name writer (Bryan K. Vaughn) at the helm.

Cons- This was not the best the series had to offer.

I was disappointed with the end of the series, possibly because I wanted the real answer to the reason all the men died and it wasn't really there. Still, I'm betting there's enough good will to keep it in contention, but not enough to give it the win.

Odds- 6-to-1

### **3rd Place- Serenity: Better Days**

Pros- It's Joss Whedon and Serenity.

Cons- The previous Serenity comic wasn't great. Some complain that it's just another tie-in.

I liked Better Days quite a bit. I thought that it was the strongest comic

I've ever read from Joss (and that includes Buffy Season 8). It was that perfect Joss combination of funny, smart, and dark. I'd say it would win if all things were equal, but I don't think they are.

*Odds- 4-to-1*

**2th Place- *Fables: War and Pieces***

Pros- Another very popular Vertigo title.

Cons- None that I can think of.

Fables isn't my favourite series. It's come and gone from my buying habits (and I rarely buy comics these days, sadly), but it's popular and well-done. I read a fair chunk of War and Pieces at Illusive Comics & Games in Santa Clara and it was good stuff. I'm hoping that Fables doesn't turn into something that just bleeds out over its edges. Jack of Fables is enough for it, I think.

*Odds- 3-to-1*

**Winner- *Girl Genius, Volume 8: Agatha Heterodyne and the Chapel of Bones***

Pros- It's Phil & Kaja Foglio! It's a fantastic web/print comic and it's got a great following.

Cons- Maybe there's a serious anti-Foglio bias. I've heard such things, but

I have no idea why...

This, to me, is a near-certainty. I really think this was the best thing put out last year, even better than All-Star Superman, and that the Foglios have really outdone themselves. It also doesn't hurt that they'll be Artist GoHs at WindyCon in November! Agatha Heterodyne is a magnificent character and I'm looking forward to the next edition.

*Odds- 5-to-4*

Again, the smarter-than-Chris words of Liz Batty!

*A category which seems well overdue, I hope that future Worldcons will retain it, and it's nice to see webcomics making the ballot as well as print comics. While none of my nominations made it onto the ballot, the most notable is Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely's quintessential Superman series, All-Star Superman. I haven't finished reading Y: The Last Man, but if the quality of the early issues holds up through volume 10, that would be my*

*pick for this category. I predict the actual winner will be Girl Genius, which seems to be well-loved in fandom, but the nominated volume doesn't stand alone well enough for me to get into it.*

Good points. I'm glad we're trying it out, and it's looking like it might become a regular category (even though I'd rather see Best Website before Best Graphic Story become a regular category). I gotta agree that All-Star Superman was one of the best things that comics have had in the last few years.



## Best Related Book

**Last Year's Winner-** Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction (and it's a crime it wasn't The Company They Keep!)

**What's Not on the List-** The Writer's Tale by Russel T. Davies

### ***fifth place- What It Is We Do When We Read Science Fiction by Paul Kincaid***

How long did it take Chris Garcia to Read It? I couldn't actually get my hands on a copy.

Pros- Paul Kincaid is a fairly well-known name

Cons- I couldn't get my hands on a copy.

This is published by an English Small Press, and on short notice, I couldn't get a copy to read for this issue. I think that'll work against it.

*Odds- 12-to-1*

### ***4th Place- Rhetorics of Fantasy by Farah Mendlesohn***

How Long Did it Take Chris Garcia to Read It? I didn't get to read the whole thing, but I did a thorough skim at the library for about three hours

Pros- Fascinating look at the Fantasy field.

Cons- Not as widely pushed as the leading candidates.

Farah does an amazing job getting into the corners and I found myself having a very difficult time putting it down while I did my annual "Reading Hugo Books in the Library" afternoon. I think it's a great book that should, and probably will, be required reading for those studying the Fantasy genre. Sadly, it's not wide-spread enough to win the thing, I'm afraid. I think that's a shame because I'm voting for it and I like to vote for the winners.

*Odds- 10-to-1*

### ***3rd Place- Spectrum 15: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art by Cathy and Arnie Fenner***

How Long Did It Take Chris Garcia To Read? Less than an hour.

Pros- A book of lovely Fantastic art in a popular series.

Cons- It's an art book.

This was actually far and away the least interesting book to me. I love art, I always have, but this was just a dull presentation of some good art. Still, art books are pretty popular and I'm betting it'll do OK.

*Odds- 8-to-1*



Art by Jane Mailander

### ***Second Place- The Vorkosigan Companion: The Universe of Lois McMaster Bujold***

How Long Did It Take Chris Garcia to Read It? I gave up after about an hour.

Pros- McMaster Bujold is hella popular with the reading types.

Cons- I couldn't get much into it.

This is a book that examines the Universe of one writer. Usually I go for those. This one had me bored, and while I could see someone who really liked Lois loving it, I did not. Still, the fanbase for McMaster Bujold's books will probably vote for it, so I give it a distant second. I do have to say that it does make me want to read a little Bujold

*Odds- 7-to-1*

**Winner: *Your Hate Mail Will Be Graded: A Decade of Whatever. 1998-2008* by John Scalzi**

How Long Did It take Chris Garcia to Read It? I gave it a couple of hours.

Pros- It's John Scalzi, Master of Internet Hype and Bloggery.

Cons- There are those who are not happy about his win for Best Fan Writer last year and may hold it against him.

I enjoyed the period I spent reading the book, but sadly I had so many other things to read, I had to put it down. It was good reading, and with his giant fanbase, he should overwhelm this category and win the whole thing.

Odds- Even money

This entire category is a rough one. There's Scalzi who is obviously going to win, though I think the Mendlesohn book is my favourite of them. Interestingly, I think this'll be Scalzi's only Rocket this year. I thought that this was a weak year for the Related Book, as there was only one other that I'd heard off that I gave any time to throughout the year. Now, I do have to say that there were a ton of Comics things that might have been eligible. I love to buy Comic reference books.



## Best Short Story

**Last Year's Winner-** Tideline by Elizabeth Bear

**What's not on the list-** It's a Wonderful Life by Michaela Roessner, A Ten Pound Sack of Rice by Richard Mueller (I really loved that story), Whoever by Carol Emshwiller, Dazzle Joins the Screenwriter's Guild by Scott Bradford, The Sky that Wraps the World Round, Past the Blue and Into the Black by Jay Lake, A Buyer's Guide to Maps of Antarctica by Catherynne M. Valent.

**Fifth Place- Article of Faith by Mike Resnick**

Pros- Mike's a favourite of voters.  
Cons- Not the best story on the list, nor the best by Resnick.

It's good to see something from Baen's Universe nominated, though I'm not fully happy that it was this story. On the other hand, even weak Resnick is a bit better than good stuff from other writers.

Odds- 9-to-1

**Fourth place- Exhalation by Ted Chiang**

Pros- A Hugo voters favourite and a great writer.  
Cons- Not nearly as good as Chiang's stories that were nominated previously.

I didn't much care for this story. I know, that's just me, but it was also featured in *Eclipse Two*, which won't have nearly the exposure of the other stories on the list.

*Odds- 6-to-1*

**3rd Place- *Evil Robot Monkey* by *Mary Robinette Kowal***

Pros- A really fun and delightful piece that manages to pull all sorts of emotions.

Cons- In an anthology, so less exposure (*The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction Volume Two*)

I heard Mary read this at the John and Mary Show You Their Shorts reading in San Francisco and it was one of the highlights. I would love for this to win (and it's taking my 2nd place vote) and it's about monkeys. What's better than that?

*Odds- 5-to-1*

**2nd Place- *26 Monkeys, Also the Abyss* by *Kij Johnson***

Pros- appeared in *Asimov's* and was just about the only thing that made any impact on me from *Asimov's* last year.

Cons- It's not by a Hugo Voter favourite.



This one's got monkeys too! I thought it was a really fun and funky story and I was glad that it ended up on the ballot. This was the one bright spot for the issues of *Asimov's* I bothered to read last year. Still, it's not quite going to win, which is a shame.

*Odds- 3-to-1*

**Winner- *From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fled* by *Michael Swanwick***

Pros- It's a well-liked story from a Hugo Voter Favorite

Cons- I didn't like it.

This was an interesting attempt at a story that might have worked if it were written by Chiang or even Jay Lake. I thought it wasn't a Swanwick story, which some might enjoy, but I go into Swanwick expecting Swanwick and this weren't that. Still, he's the biggest name on the ballot, it was in a major magazine (*Asimov's*) and should take the rocket.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

I like this line-up with Chiang, Resnick, Swanwick all putting out decent stories that I wasn't thrilled with, but Kowal and Johnson doing wonderful, wonderful stories. Stories about Monkeys. I really thought last year's bunch was weak, and while this isn't the strongest category, I have to admit that I like it.



# Best Novelette

Last Year's Winner- The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate by Ted Chiang (and this was the best piece of Short Fiction I've read since at least 2000)

What's Not On the List? The Twilight Year by Sean McMullen, Mystery Hill by Alex Irvine (both of these and Pride & Prometheus all appeared in the same issue of F&SF)

## **5th Place- The Gambler by Paolo Bacigalupi**

Pros- It's a great story. Just flat-out great.

Cons- Not in the largest market (it was in Fast Forward 2, which was a good anthology).

This story blew me away. Why am I putting it fifth? Because it's not in a high-profile place. True, it can be read on-line, but most folks aren't going to make that step and the stuff in the magazines tend to get more attention. Plus, Paolo isn't exactly the biggest name you'll ever find. Still, this is a wonderful story that I suggest reading highly.

*Odds- 10-to-1*

## **4th Place- The Ray-Gun: A Love Story by James Alan Gardner**

Pros- It's a very different story that is kinda fun. In a very big publication.



Cons- The opening line says "This is a story about a ray-gun. The ray-gun will not be explained except to say, "It shoots rays."" and that's followed by a lot of explanation about the ray-gun. It's weird.

I was not a big fan of this one, though I will admit it was kinda fun. I think that it will do better than it would if I were

the only voter because it was in Asimov's. It was yet another example of what I thought was wrong with Asimov's all year: it was almost there, but in the end, it left me with nothing.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

## **3rd Place- Alastair Baffle's Emporium of Wonders by Mike Resnick**

Pros- a favourite of Hugo voters doing a very entertaining story in a very visible publication.

Cons- Kinda chatty.

This was the best Mike Resnick short piece I read last year. It was a really fun story and I'm probably going with it for my second place vote in this category. It's got a mention of

Strangler Lewis and Verne Gagne, two old time 'rasslers from the 1920s and 50s respectively. It's a fun look at old folks and looking back. I was impressed. Ols guys watchin' 'rasslin' in a Hugo nominated story. That's freakin' awesome!

*Odds- 5-to-1*

**Second Place- *Pride and Prometheus* by John Kessel**

Pros- It appeared in the one good remaining magazine of The Big Three and was a really good story.

Cons- it wasn't even the best of the stories in that issue!

This is a good story, I really should re-read it, but I liked it a lot when I read it on BART while traveling back and forth to Linda's for a couple of days. Of course, I much preferred Sean McMullen and Alex Irvine's stories from the same issue of F&SF.

*Odds- 3-to-1*

**Winner- *Shoggoths in Bloom* by Elizabeth Bear**

Pros- a great story by a popular writer in a major magazine

Cons- It was in Asimov's, but that's just me.

I really did enjoy much of *Shoggoths in Bloom*. It wasn't my favourite, but it was OK. It went on a bit too long, but what are you gonna do? Bear's a popular writer and she won one last year, and I think she'll have another one this year.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

This is an interesting category. With the exception of *The Ray-Gun*, I thought these were all very good stories. I thought the Bear story was flawed, the Kessel story over-shadowed in that particular issue, and the Resnick story just a bit below the level of the rest. I have to say that if I had my way, it'd be Bacigalupi taking home the rocket for this category. Actually, it'd be Alex Irvine if there was any justice!



## Best Novella

**Last Year's Winner-** *All Seated on the Ground* by Connie Willis

**Not on the List-** *Arkfall* by Carolyn Ives Gilman, *Owner Space* by Neal Asher; *The Sear and the Silverman* by Stephen Baxter, *The Overseer* by Albert E. Cowdrey

**Fifth Place- *Truth* by Robert Reed**

Pros- A Hugo nominator's fave writes a story that tackles prison and terrorists.  
Cons- I thought it was REALLY long.

Another story from *Analog* by an author who gets nominations every year and does pretty well. This was a story that just felt like it kept going and going and going. It wasn't a bad story, but it was endless.

*Odds- 9-to-1*

**Fourth Place- *The Tear* by an McDonald**

Pros- Another Hugo nominator favorite writing a story in what might have been the best anthology of last year.  
Cons- It wasn't as good as the Baxter or Asher pieces in the same Anthology and it kinda made me remember *Waterworld*!

This is a story that took me ages to get through, but was a good read. It being in an anthology that's only

in hardcover, as far as I know, will probably hurt it quite a bit. McDonald needs to win one of those rockets someday. I thought he'd come close with Brasyll, but I was wrong.

*Odds- 8-to-1*

**Third Place- True Names by Benjamin Rosenbaum & Cory Doctorow**

Pros- One of my favourite writers (Rosenbaum) and one of the Internet's favorites (Doctorow) put together a story that I think is pretty darn tasty.  
Cons- Some might not be able to follow it and it appeared in Fast Forward 2, not a huge market release.

This is a tough one. The story is actually a bit ponderous, but intelligent and the writing kept bringing me back to one of my favourite Philip Jose Farmer Pieces, Riders of the Purple

Wage. It's good stuff, and if it had been in one of the Big Three, I'd have expected it to win.

*Odds- 4-to-1*

**Second Place- The Political Prisoner by Charles Coleman Finlay**

Pros- This was my first choice for the award. It's a great and tough story that felt like a Hugo winner kind of story.  
Cons- There are a lot of folks out there who do not enjoy Finlay's writing.

I thought that was one of the best stories of the year at any length. I was most impressed with it, though I can see why there's a significant contingent that would not appreciate his writing style. Still, this is one of the best stories of the year that appeared in one of the Big Three, so I'm saying it'll do very well.

*Odds- 3-to-1*

**Winner- The Erdmann Nexus by Nancy Kress**

Pros- A strong story in a strong venue by a strong author  
Cons- Nothing too big

I didn't love this story, it was alright, but I can see why some folks really dig it. It's an old dude physicist story, which is good. I've read a couple of different folks say that this is Kress writing as Connie Willis, and I can see that. I still think this isn't the strongest of stories, but I'm betting it'll take it based on name, venue and story type.

*Odds- 2-to-1*

Let me say that this wasn't the best of the fiction categories, but it's better than some years. I think that the Finlay piece is really my fave, and



the Rosenbaum/Doctorow combination is pretty entertaining. I'd like to read more from the two of them. I wish Baxter and Asher would have made it to the ballot, because I loved that Anthology and I thought those were my faves. I think Kress takes it, but This one'll be a fight!

# And Now: The Main Event... Best Novel

**Last year's Winner-** The Yiddish Policeman's Union by Michael Chabon

**What's Not on the List-** The Alchemy of Stone by Ekaterina Sedya (which was one of the best books I've read in ages), Liberation by Brian Francis Slattery (I haven't finished it, but I'm loving it roughly 1/3 of the way through), Tender Morsels by Margo Lanagan, Matter by Iain M. Banks

## **Third Place- Little Brother by Cory Doctorow**

How long did it take Chris Garcia to Read it? About 3 days.

Pros- Fun storyline that moves really well. Another of those crazy authors with wild internet cred

Cons- Cory's done better.

This is a book geared towards teens, which is a good thing as it shows in the fact that it keeps on movin'. It's also all about the BArea which makes me happy. It's also ever-so-slightly paranoid in the way it presents the world, which makes it more fun. I say it'll get tangled up with two of the other stories.

*Odds- 5-to-1*

## **3rd Place- Zoe's Tale by John Scalzi**

How Long Did it Take Chris Garcia to Read It? I never finished it, though I was about 1/2 way through when I stopped.

Pros- It's Scalzi. I mean, come on, what else do I need to say?

Cons- The story's so-so and this isn't Scalzi's best.

I'll admit it, I was turned off by the voice. As accurate as it may have been, it just turned me off. I did think the story was sold, but I wasn't into it. I had to stop. I know, bad reviewer! No bisquick! Still, I think that The Scalzi Army will buoy it up and keep it in the running.

*Odds- 5-to-1*

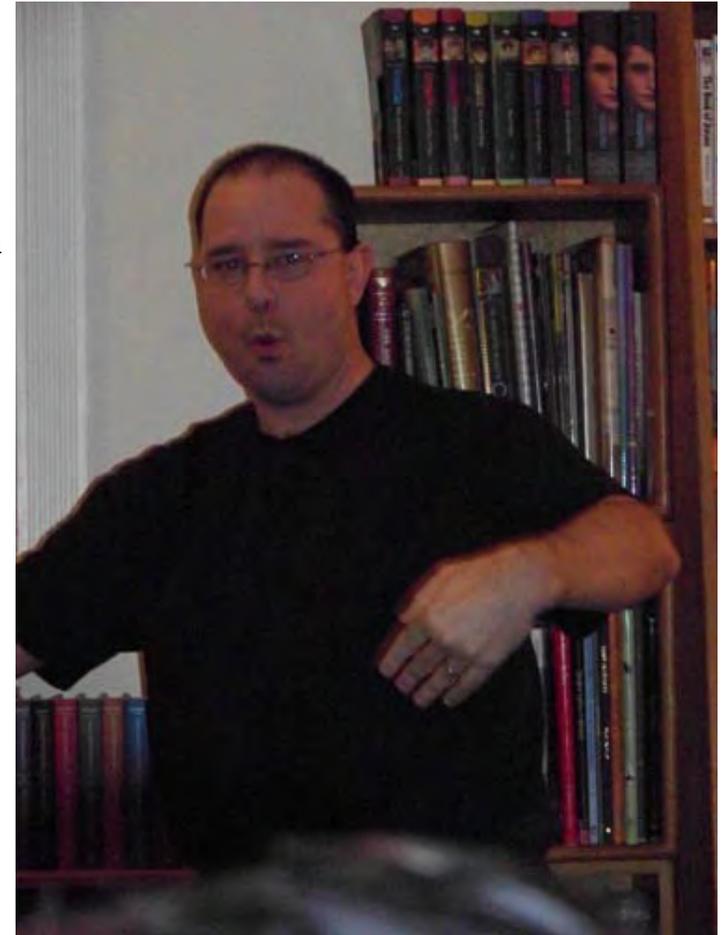
## **Third Place- Saturn's Children by Charles Stross**

How Long Did It Take Chris Garcia to Read It? Five days.

Pros- A very fun, very good novel from a very popular writer.

Cons- I'm not sure.

This is supposedly a tribute to late-era Heinlein, but I think it's better than



RAH ever was. I love Freya, the sex-bot, and I thought that it was a grand world Stross created. I really like Charlie, nice guy who I was glad to get to hang around with a little at Eastercon. There's a lot to like about Saturn's Children, and there's a lot to think is weird. Still, I think it's in a logjam. It's also a book I'll come back to later when I'm not trying to power through it to write this issue!

*Odds- 5-to-1*

**Second Place- The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman**

How Long Did It Take Chris Garcia to Read It? 6 days, off-and-on

Pros- It's Neil Gaiman, the most popular author anywhere, the way people seem to talk about him, writing a story that reminded me quite a bit of Stardust. And he's Montreal's Writer GoH.

Cons- None.

Neil has been having a good year. Stardust won Best Dramatic Presentation, The Graveyard Book won the Newbury, he was Eastercon's GoH and he'll be WorldCon's Writer GoH this year. Don't you wish you could have a year like that? In almost any other year, I'd say that Neil would be walking away with the Rocket, but not this year. He's got a huge following, but I don't think it's quite enough to make. I like The Graveyard Book, but I think it's not his strongest.

Odds- 3-to-1

**Winner, and New Champion...Anathem by Neal Stephenson**

How Long Did It Take Chris Garcia To Read It? I didn't, but I did listen to the unabridged Audiobook, which took me the better part of three weeks in the car.

Pros- Very strong story that harkens back to A Canticle for Leibowitz and Dune.

Cons- It's a big ass book.

It's a good story, and it's been everywhere, including on Time's Top Ten Novels and more Top Ten lists than I can list. Anathem is an engrossing story and it ends up making a very powerful point. It wasn't my favourite novel for the year (That would be Money Shot by Crista Faust for SF/F) and it was only a short shot off those two. Still, it was featured in mainstream magazines, on NPR and various other stations, which I say will give it the big win.

Let's see what Liz has to say...

*I asked a friend, who hadn't seen the Hugo nominations, to guess who might be nominated for Best Novel. I gave him a hint - I told him to think of the authors with the biggest internet fanbases. And he came up with Cory Doctorow, Neil Gaiman, Charles Stross, and John Scalzi. This isn't to say I think those authors are unworthy of a Hugo nomination, but I do suspect that there is some element of loyalty and fan support in these nominations, because I don't think the novels which are nominated are their best works. I'm not familiar with Scalzi's work to comment, but I*

*think Stross, Doctorow and Gaiman have all written far better books, and if I were making a list of the best books of 2008 they wouldn't even be in my top ten. I would have liked to see Nick Harkaway's endlessly entertaining The Gone-Away World on the list, as well as Ian R MacLeod's thoughtful Song of Time, and in a year where YA novels take three of the five spots it's a shame that Patrick Ness's The Knife of Never Letting Go couldn't find a place. Anathem has to be the front-runner in this category, and it would be my choice as well.*

Hmmm...I should read The Knife of Never Letting Go. I started in on Song of Time (cost a fortune!) and it wasn't my thing. I agree that Stross, Doctorow and Gaiman have all written better, and I'd add Scalzi there too, but I think Saturn's Children is probably his second best novel, though there are a couple I haven't read yet.



*OK, I've been through them all and now will sleep (At least until next week when I shall start work on the Watchmen issue) but Cheryl Morgan shall close-out this issue like Rob Nenn in the Good Ol' Days, with a fine and funny piece she sent my way!*

## **The Politics of Hugos** **By Cheryl Morgan**

In amongst all of the usual nonsense accompanying the release of the Hugo Award nominees list, one comment on John Scalzi's blog caught my eye. Someone made a point to the effect that of course all of the Hugo voters always followed their party line when choosing who to vote for.

What???

But then again, what if...

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This is the BBC World Service reporting from Science Fiction where the major political parties are once again battling it out for control of the community in the annual Hugo Elections. Last night's announcement of the nominee lists were a particular triumph for John Scalzi's Internet Party, which scored successes across the board. Scalzi himself achieved nomination in no less than three districts, a feat rarely achieved before. That included a place on the prestigious Best Novel district ballot,



where he was joined by long time friends and supporters, Cory Doctorow and Charles Stross.

“This is a good time to be on the Internet,” said Scalzi in his post-announcement press conference. “The people of the Science Fiction community are acknowledging our innovation and leadership in droves. I’d like to particularly mention our latest success, Mike Glyer, who up until recently was a stalwart of the Old Pharts Party and refused to publish anywhere except on paper, but has now been converted to the delights of blogging.”

The elections were somewhat less successful for New Fantasy. Party leader, Neil Gaiman, achieved nomination in the Best Novel district, but there was little else for the party faithful to cheer about. Many pundits put the failure of the once powerful party down to the vicious infighting between Gaiman's followers and

the Traditionalist wing of the party. Traditionalist candidates such as George RR Martin, Daniel Abraham and Steven Erikson all declined to comment, but a press release issued by the hard line Westeros Group was particularly forthright:

“Traditional Fantasy is all about knights, dragons, epic battles and the oppression of women. Gaiman's book contains vampires and werewolves. He is nothing but a horror writer in disguise. He and his ilk have no place in Science Fiction.”

Stanley Schmidt, leader of the Hard Science party, once again achieved nomination in the Editor Short Form district, but is once again unlikely to be elected. He was cheered by the success of Neal Stephenson in the Best Novel district. “Lots of people think that Neal turned his back on our party with his System of the World series,” said Schmidt, “but really he was just talking about the history of science. Anathem is a triumphant and formally correct proselytization of the scientific method. Any book that contains mathematical proofs in its appendices is OK by me.”

It was once again a rough night for the Feminist Party, which failed to get a single nomination in the Best Novel district. Party leader, Ellen Datlow, and her long-time ally Sheila Williams, took their safe seats in Editor Short Form, and they were encouraged

by unexpected successes for Ginjer Buchanan and Beth Meacham in Editor Long Form. Datlow refused to be downhearted. “I know that Elizabeth Bear, Mary Robinette Kowal and Cheryl Morgan are standing as members of the Internet Party,” she said, “but they all have strong Feminist leanings and I expect to work closely with them if they are elected.”

Another party riven with internal disputes is the Old Phart Party. The feud between party members and long-time electoral powerhouse, Charles Brown, is at boiling point with Old Phart members not only calling for Brown to be thrown out of the party, but actually calling for the Semiprozine district, which Brown has represented for so long, to be gerrymandered out of existence. Party leader David Langford refused to be drawn on the Brown issue and was characteristically defiant about his party’s chances. “Scalzi’s party is full of pot-heads and hippies from California such as Garcia, Wu and the turncoat Glyer,” he thundered, pounding the podium. “If they have their way, our children will grow up not even knowing what paper is, let alone how to read a fanzine! Scalzi might have beaten me last year, but this time he was afraid to even face me! I’ve beaten Cheryl Morgan every time she has challenged me in the past, and I shall do so again!”

Joss Whedon, who was ousted as leader of the Media Party by Steven Moffat a few years ago, made a surprise comeback with nominations in the Dramatic Short Form district and the new Graphic Story district. “This isn’t about Steven and me,” he said, “this is about the battle for the control of Science Fiction. Scalzi may think that he has achieved a notable success by getting nominated in the Dramatic Long Form district, but really all he has done is steal our policies by employing actors. Those Hard Science guys might be a bit stuck-in-the-mud when it comes to campaigning, but they have some really great ideas. Years back, Neal Stephenson won the Best Novel district on the basis of a story about the future of the book. What he wrote is now coming true. Everyone is talking about ebooks these days, and as technology improves, what we can do with them will improve also. Eventually no one will want a book that isn’t animated and interactive. The future belongs to the Media Party.”

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All statements ascribed to real people are, of course, fictitious. My apologies to anyone who is upset about the words I put into their mouths.



Art by Genevieve

***Alright, that’s enough! I’m off to slumberland and I’ll be back with the Watchmen issue which has James Bacon co-editing with me. I’m always glad to get to work with James!***

***I wanna thank Liz Batty, Cheryl Morgan, Genevieve, Frank Wu, and everyone else!***