Handicapping the Hugos

DRINK TANK
This year’s Ballot is as strong as there has ever been. I can’t fault a single category for being weaker than last year. I’m so proud to be on this ballot 4 times! I’m so glad to see so many of my friends on the ballot so many times, like Lynn Thomas and Seanan McGuire and that fellow James Bacon who has four noms of his own. It’s possible that I will end up with three fifth place finishes and still feel OK about things.

And, as always, there are too many painful non-on-the-ballots. For me, the most painful is Guy Lillian’s Challenger and the Oscar-winning short film The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore. They both hurt in different ways. Guy has deserved a Hugo for ages now and hasn’t won. He came close a couple of times, but it just never happened. As much as anyone can complain about any category ignoring a nom.

And James and I are on the top half of the ballot. Weird...

There are a bunch of first-time nominees, and that’s always a good thing. The ones that stand out to me - Community, Spring Schoenhuth, the wonderful Charlie Jane Anders, and Ursula Vernon for Digger. It’s a good bunch of debutantes!

And, as always, we’ve got art. We tried to get as many folks as we knew who had Hugos to send a photo of their rocket in situ so we could include them in the issue. Sadly, we didn’t get as many as we’d have liked, but we did get some very cool ones!

And Mo Starkey did the cover, which I adore. She’s on tehballot, as you well know, and I’m rooting for her as I always do! There’s a good ballot, five excellent nominees, for Best Fan Artist, and Mo’s right up there in my eyes. We’ll see how it goes for all of them!

And there’s thoughts from some good folks like Charlie Jane Anders, Aidan Moher, Niall Harrison and More!!!!!

So, let’s get going!

Hugo-winning Co-Editor James Bacon Says...

There was an incredible excitement at the Hugo announcement. The room where it was taking place was busy, but then it got really busy. Apparently someone in the Cabaret started telling Foreskin jokes, on que, and so more people came to the offering of free wine and announcement razzmatazz.

Best Fan Artist

Last Year’s Winner – Brad W. Foster.
Most Wins in Category – Brad W. Foster with 7
First time on ballot – Spring Schoenhuth!!!
Not on the Ballot – Kurt Erichsen, Frank Wu, Delphyne, Stu Shiffman, Sue Mason, Dave Hicks, Bryan Little

6th Place – Spring Schoenhuth
Best Finish Ever – First time on ballot
Where can you see her work – Art Shows and Dealers’ Rooms around the world
Pros – WE LOVE HER!!!!!!!
Cons – Some have questioned a Jeweler in the category

We love Spring and it’s so nice to see her make the ballot after several years of coming close, including coming in 6th last year. It’s like Mo last year in that I don’t see her winning this year, but it’s great to see her on the ballot! Spring...YOU GOT YOUR PIN!!!!!
ODDS – 12-to-1

5th Place – Steve Stiles
Best Finish Ever – I think he came 2nd a few years back.
Where Can You See His Work – Most recently in The Drink Tank cover for issue 312!
Pros – An absolute Legend who should already have a raft of these things on his mantle.

I would love nothing more than to see Steve walk off with a Rocket this year. Could it happen? Maybe. I think that his work has never wavered, has always been amazing, and 2011 was no exception. He had a cover and a few other pieces in The Drink Tank and pretty much every other zine in the world! He REALLY needs a Rocket someday, but sadly, I don’t see this as the year for it.
ODDS – 10-to-1

4th Place – Mo Starkey
Best Finish Ever – Last Year she was 3rd
Pros – Lots of covers for The Drink Tank, plus several other zines.
Cons – Not as well-exposed as some of the others on the list.

I will never be able to be objective about Mo. She’s a wonderful friend and she’s got a wonderful style. I hope Mo can win one of these someday, but I don’t see this being the year. On the other hand, YAY MO’S ON THE BALLOT!!!!!

**ODDS – 8-to-1**

3rd – Taral Wayne
Best Finish Ever – 3rd, I think, in 2009
Pros – Great artist whose style is instantly recognisable.
Cons – Not as much art as writing in recent years. I still don’t understand how Taral isn’t on the ballot for Best Fan Writer. He’s done some great art, had only a few pieces in The Drink Tank last year, though I’m pretty sure that he had a bunch of stuff elsewhere. Still, he’s very well known, and I could see this being the year he breaks through a bit more.

**ODDS – 7-to-1**

2nd – Brad W. Foster
Best Finish Ever – He’s won 8 of these!
Pros – Is probably the most visible artist in zines today.
Cons – He’s not Randall Munroe

He won last year, but I see a parallel to the Scalzi-Langford thing back in 2007 and 2008. The first year he was nominated, Scalzi came very close to being the one who ended Dave Langford’s epic streak. I believe it was one or two votes that Langford won by. The next year, Scalzi walked off the stage with the rocket. My guess is, with the situation very much the same except with Brad not having a giant streak but being a frequent winner, and he’s on the wrong side of things. Still, some of my favorite art of last year was from Brad.

**Odds – 3-to-1**

Winner – Randall Munroe
Best Finish Ever – He came in second by a vote last year.
Pros – Widely known artist of xkcd
Cons – not a fan artist in the strictest sense of the word.

There’s little doubt in my mind that he’ll walk away with this one. I said that last year as well and it didn’t happen, but it was very very close. I think he has a great style, it’s a lot of fun to read his stuff, but I still don’t think he’s a fan artist. Yes, he’s eligible, but I shant be voting for him.

**ODDS – 2-to-1**

James says...

I agree that Randall Monroe has a superb chance. I am happy that the Hugo voters have nominated him, and I must admit XKCD is funny. I am super pleased to see Mo Starkey on this ballot as I genuinely think her fan art is amazing. The realism with which she can capture people in acrylics is just astounding, I love it. I am hoping for her.
Best Fancast

This is a new award and I am PSYCHED!

Not on the Ballot – The Fanboy Planet Podcast, Geeky Girl Craft Podcast, Radio Free Skaros, Two Minute Timelord, The Jackalcast

5th Place – SF Signal Podcast
Pros – It’s a good podcast.
Cons – It’s a crowded field.

I’ve only listened to one or two episodes and they’re pretty good, but I don’t put them in the same category as the others up here. It’s also one of two that weren’t previously on the longer-list of Best Fanzine nominations. It’s on the ballot this year for that category, and more on that later, but I don’t see it winning, though I do predict it’ll be close!
Odds – 7-to-1

4th Place – Coode Street
Pros – Big names like Jonathan Strahan and Gary K. Wolfe can’t be ignored.
Cons – It’s a crowded field.

I’ve heard an episode or two of Coode Street, but it’s not my thing. It’s pretty popular, but I don’t see it breaking through to win the thing. It was the closest to making the Best Fanzine ballot last year.
Odds – 6-to-1

3rd Place – Galactic Suburbia
Pros – For my money, the best podcast in the world. Period.
Cons – It’s not as well-exposed in the US as elsewhere.

I LOVE GALACTIC SUBURBIA! They talk about stuff that interests me, they talk like fans and pros about stuff that interests fans and pros, and I loved the ‘toe-in’ look at Doctor Who! Still, I don’t think it’s as exposed to the voters as many of the others on this list, and I don’t think it’ll win. Still, I love listening to it, I consider it the best podcast out there, and it finished close to the ballot for Best Fanzine last year.
Odds – 5-to-1

2nd Place – StarShip Sofa
Pros – Win Best Fanzine in 2010 and is widely loved.
Cons – I have trouble understanding what the host says. There are folks who question it as a Fancast, which I REALLY don’t understand.

Winner – SF Squeecast
Pros – HUGE names doing great stuff!
Cons – Not previously on nomination lists.

OK, this is the one that I think will win. It’s got big names, the 4-nommed Seanan McGuire, the nominated Paul Cornell, Lynne Thomas and Catherynne M. Valente and the previous Hugo winner Elizabeth Bear. It’s quite a line-up and it’s a lot of fun. The Christmas episode was HILARIOUS and introduced me to a Russian movie that I really enjoyed though it was the slowest thing ever made. I think this’ll take it for the first Best Fancast!
Odds – 3-to-1

This is easily the category where it could go any direction. I think that all of them are worthy, all of them well-loved, and it could go any direction. My top two? Squeecast and Suburbia, but I know that SSS is also hugely popular. So is Coode and so is Signal. It could go anyway.

James says...

I watched Paul Cornell do a little dance here. Also disappointed Fanboy Planet didn’t get on. I think Squeecast will have it.
Best Fan Writer

**Last Year’s Winner – Claire Brialey**


**Most Wins in the Category – Dave Langford**

**5th Place – Christopher J Garcia**

Best Finish in Category – Second Place Last Year
Pros – Writes a lot.
Cons – not very good, there are people who are VERY unhappy about other nominations.

**4th Place – James Bacon**

Best Finish in Category – 4th Last year
Pros – Writes a lot of really fun stuff!
Cons – Pre-editing, he writes with an accent!

**3rd Place – Claire Brialey**

Best Finish in Category – SHE WON LAST YEAR!!!!
Pros – Best Fan Writer in the World, bar none.
Cons – not a lot of writing on-line.

**2nd Place – Steven H Silver**

Best Finish in Category – He was within 6 votes of winning last year
Pros – He’s the 300 lb. Gorilla in the category, is Chicago local, and he’s got a lot of exposure.
Cons - ?

I love Steven H Silver, I’ve worked with him in various things and I consider myself lucky. It could be close, it WILL be close, but I don’t think he’ll jump the broom and take it home, which sucks as he deserves. **Odds – 3-to-1**

**Winner – Jim C. Hines**

Best Finish in Category – First year on ballot.
Pros – A Pro writer who has a very large following.
Cons – None that I can think of.

I have little idea about Jim C. Hines. I know, I know, I’m as out of the mainstream of fandom as there can be, but I don’t know his stuff. He’s a pro as far as I know, and he donated his archive to the SFWA Collection at Northern Illinois University, so I gotta say what I know about him is largely good! He’s also a regular at Chicago events, as I understand it. I’m calling him, as are so many others... **Odds – 2-to-1**

### James says...

In London, Claire Brialey was read out first, most people who know the Alphabet realised that I was not on the ballot, until I was then announced. The nice ladies from Tor, I think, all look at me quizzical like, as I get many shoulder slaps. I think that this is not as clear cut, at all. Claire was a great win last year, and has nearly NO online presence. I think the packet and also her win may have an effect.

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Lynne Thomas’ Hugo for Best Related Work
Best Fanzine

Last Year’s Winner – The Drink Tank!
Not on the Ballot – Challenger (And I am so saddened by that as the Military issue was one of my favorites of the year), Chunga, SF Commentary, YIPE!, Dark Matter, Askance, Alexiad, Trap Door, Sense of Wonder Stories.
Most Wins in Category, I believe it’s still Locus at 8

5th Place – Banana Wings
Best Finish in Category – They pulled second in Australia
Pros – One of the best-written fanzines in the last ever, and Claire and Mark are two of the people I know who are the most AWESOME!
Cons – Not on-line

Sadly, BW hasn’t won a Hugo. It’s a great zine, a wonderful zine, but it’s not out in the world as widely as the other zines/things out there. I am 100% certain that they’ll win Best Fanzine sooner or later, but it doesn’t seem like it’ll be this year.
Odds – 12-to-1

4th Place – Journey Planet
Best Finish in Category – New to the Ballot
Pros – Good stuff from a wide range of different writers and artists, many of whom aren’t seen in a lot of other zines.
Cons – The “Who’s the Real Editor” question

Co-Editor and Sensible One, James Bacon says...

Journey Planet, is one of the best fanzines we have ever worked on. It’s fun, it’s diverse, it allows us to do what we enjoy doing, and being nominated, is amazing.

And being on the ballot will hopefully show people what its calibre is. It’s distinctly different than Drink Tank in many ways.

We edit it and that means we can make of it what’s we want. Initially, Claire was a co-editor, but our direction, the themes, the way we were so hungry to get particular submissions, didn’t seem to sit well with her. She is our friend, this is OK, Claire didn’t like the direction we took and asked off the masthead, which is OK, though she stayed on to help us out, with letters and other elements. Still helping.

We like to have a diversity. Even when Claire was an editor, we turned to ‘Guests’ to help us achieve higher levels of production or content, to add the extra flavour we want, to bring the zine to a special place.

We’ve turned to a mass of ‘Guest Editors’ who have done different things, from getting new material to layout to making sure that James and I’s writing seems presentable. The reason we usually work with guest editors is because we don’t want it to just be The Drink Tank Mark II, we want it to be something different and better and focussed, while being Journey Planet.

Every single one of our guest editors has made us look like rock stars. We’ve been so grateful for everything they’ve done for us, and that made it difficult for us to figure out how to note the nomination on the ballot. We went with James Bacon & Christopher J Garcia et al. because it allowed us to acknowledge those who made it possible, even without naming the folks directly, which some didn’t want as they, and they alone, feel that this is what is right.

Sure, there was an issue where we were the only editors, the Sherlock Holmes issue, though we had Lynda Rucker take a quick look over it and there were a couple of others who caught some mistakes, but then there is no fanzine formula, we are having a ball, creating and editing these zines, getting peoples words in print and PDF, enjoying ourselves, and hoping our readership enjoy it, and they seem to, and help is at hand, so we are doing something right, even if its a little untidy.

Still, we don’t think it’s nearly as well-known as most of the things on the ballot.
Odds – 8-to-1

3rd Place – File 770
Best Finish in Category – Mike’s won 6 of them!
Pros – Many-time winner and still doing great stuff!
Cons – I’m not sure how many issues Mike Glyer did last year, but it seems like it was less than usual.

File 770 is legendary, it’s in Cooperstown! Mike’s a great guy, a really good FanEd and one of the biggest names in Fandom. I never count him out, and he turned up 2nd last year. I would love to see it get another win at some point, but I don’t think this is the year.
Odds – 5-to-1

2nd Place – The Drink Tank
Best Finish in Category – We won last year!
Pros – Won last year and we did Issue 300 last year.
Cons – Well, there are all the cons that’ve always been there.

The Drink Tank lives and dies this year on issue 300. The issue was really strong, probably the best thing I’ve ever been involved with, but did people see it? That’s a question that I hope that the Hugo Voter
packet will answer. The 52 Weeks to Science Fiction Film Literacy thing has annoyed some folks who think that it dominates the issues, and others really enjoy them. Go figure. There’s a lot of name recognition for it, but I don’t think it’ll be able to win it. I am fairly certain that The Drink Tank is the least read of all the nominees, and probably the least-read winner in history, but I’m hoping that 300 gets a good viewing from folks in the Voter Packet.

Odds – 4-to-1

Winner - SF Signal
Best Finish in Category – First Time on Ballot
Pros – It’s a very widely-read blog that’s really good.
Cons – maybe that it’s a blog.

OK, there’s been a lot of folks in the blog community that were not happy with the Hugos last year. They point out that much of fandom is blogs and podcasts and so on and they wanted to see them represented on the Hugo ballot. And there were others who didn’t like that and it went on and on. Aidan Moher was one of the loudest folks decrying the lack of blogs and so on. There were others, but his were the most widely discussed among the folks I know. This nomination was probably not directly tied, though even I was a little surprised that it didn’t do better in the nominations last year. I expect it to destroy the rest of us completely. It’s when it ended up somewhere around number 13 or so. It’s got a huge following, far bigger than any of the other nominees, or probably eFanzines.com in total!

Odds – 6-to-5

Last year, we learned that a somewhat more-or-less traditional fanzine can beat a podcast. Can this be applied to SF Signal? I don’t think so. It’s amazing to have JP on the ballot. It’s amazing to have The Drink Tank on the ballot again. It’s amazing to have File 770 and Banana Wings on the ballot.

Still, we miss Challenger, a regular who couldn’t make it to the party, and Argentus isn’t up, which was a shocker. Still, I think this is a ballot full of worthy zines... and The Drink Tank!

James says...
Yeah, right Chris. Your blinded humility blurs your vision here, I think. For instance, hundreds of people downloaded DT 300 from scribd, let alone Efanzines, and it is a wonderful zine. I think again this is not clear cut, last years win, the 300th issue, and again the packet, will have more to play I think.

Let US Now Hear On The Entire Ballot from Mr. Niall Harrison!!!

Best Novel: A Dance With Dragons. It’s not *absolutely* a foregone conclusion -- Among Others is more universally loved -- but I think Martin has the momentum this year.

Best Novella: Countdown. Based on how close Feed ran in the novel category last year.

Best Novelette: The Copenhagen Interpretation. I think I’ll probably go for the Swirsky or Ryman, but Cornell’s story is solid and has already picked up the BSFA.

Best Short: If it’s anything other than “The Cartographer Wasps and the Anarchist Bees” I will be making a frowny face.

Best Related Work: Even more of an apples and lettuce category than normal, I assume the Encyclopedia will carry the day, but wouldn’t discount the filk vote for Wicked Girls.

Best Graphic Story: Pass.

Best Dramatic Presentation, Long Form: Game of Thrones, which is interesting, because it could potentially go on to dominate here for years in the way that Who has owned short form. (That said, with Prometheus, The Avengers, The Dark Knight Rises and The Hobbit in the offing, competition next year is probably going to be fierce.)

Best Dramatic Presentation, Short Form: The Doctor’s Wife is the most foregone of foregone conclusions.

Best Semiprozine: I hope it will be NYRSF, I think there’s a decent chance that Apex will nab it.

Best Fanzine: Journey Planet. OK, no, it will be SF Signal. But it should be Journey Planet. (Or Banana Wings.)

Best Fancast: Hard to call! I suspect the combined power of the Squeecast, er, cast, will put it over the top.

Best Editor, Long Form: If the voters listen to the insiders who cheered Wollheim’s nomination, then she’ll take it. But in practice I suspect PNH.

Best Editor, Short Form: Sheila Williams published a third of the short fiction nominees, which is actually only an average year by recent Asimov’s standards, but
Best Professional Artist: Pass.

Best Fan Artist: I suspect Randall Munroe will take it this year.

Best Fan Writer: Jim Hines. And actually, I'll be perfectly fine with that.

John W Campbell Award for Best New Writer: Karen Lord, and richly deserved it will be.

Mary Robinette Kowal's Christmas Tree

Best SemiProZine

Last Year's Winner – Clarkesworld
Most Wins in Category – Locus with a megaton!
Not on the Ballot – Ansible (is it still a SemiPro?), Lady Churchill’s Rosebud Wristlet, Weird Tales, Clarkesworld

5th Place – Interzone
Best Finish in Category – It won in 1995
Pros – Long-running mag that’s won in the past.
Cons – It was a long time ago...
   I don’t think that Interzone is what it once was, but it is still readable. I’ve often said that Interzone as it is is still at least as good as it needs to be!
Odds – 20-to-1

4th Place – Apex Magazine
Best Finish in Category – First Time on Ballot!
Pros – It’s got some of the best covers in all of SF/F magazines, and fantastic pieces of fiction from fantastic writers.
Cons – It’s the first time it’s on the ballot and it’s not as well-known as many of the others on the list.
   I really like Apex, but sadly often forget that it’s there. I’ve read a few issues, and they’ve all been really good. Lynne Thomas is the current editor, and she’s won a Hugo last year, and Catherynne M. Valente edited it for most of last year. I think they’ll do OK, but I’m betting they’ll do better in the future.
Odds – 8-to-1

3rd Place – The New York Review of Science Fiction
Best Finish in Category – I believe it ended up in 2nd at least once.
Pros – A well-loved semi-pro that was on the ballot for years and years and years...
Cons – that fell off the ballot last year.
   I really like NYRSF, though I’ll admit I don’t read it but once or twice a year, typically around this time of year. I thought that the most recent issue, the one with the discussion of the French Roots of Science Fiction, was a great one!
Odds - 6-to-1

2nd Place – Lightspeed
Best Finish in Category – Last year it ran 4th.
Pros – A Great magazine that runs some of my favorite
fiction in the world! John Joseph Adams is on the ballot for Best Editor Short Form and well he should be! He does great stuff and I’d love to see him win, but alas, I Odds – 4-to-1

Winner – Locus
Best Finish in Category – It’s won a raft of ‘em!
Pros – A great, long-standing tradition.
Cons – Hasn’t won since 2008.
   It’s interesting that Locus has just updated their look, getting rid of the traditional red border and going in a more fluid direction that still have somewhat of the feeling of the long-standing format. I love that!
   But, sadly, it’s not the issues that are eligible for this year’s awards!
   Locus is pretty much the best thing out there for response to the world of SF&F publishing, and it’s still much loved by a great many people. I still wish that it felt like Fandom was more a part of the world they cover, it’s one of the things I loved about the issues I read when I was younger, but you can’t have everything, I guess.
Odds – 3-to-1

This is a category that has, at times, seemed very slight and stable. Locus, Locus, Locus, Locus, ad nauseum. In recent years, things have been more evenly spread out with Weird Tales and Clarkesworld winning a few times. And Clarkesworld taking itself out of contention was a thing you can look at as either a good thing or a bad thing. I really think that CW is one of the best magazines, pro or otherwise, and I’d have loved to see it on the ballot, but alas, it was not to be. Neil’s up for Best Editor Short Form, so I guess that might be a wash. All of these are good reads and could be a deserving winner, but I think we’re gonna get some Locus this year!

There are changes coming, and folks are talking about it as it comes to the Business Meeting. There are a bunch of changes, one of which may well kick Locus out of the category, which would be strange. It’ll be interesting to see how it goes.

James says...

Locus are working hard, I expect they will continue to develop and move forward, their new covers are an example, and they still command a lot of respect. So I tend to concur here.

Best Professional Artist

Last Year’s Winner – Shaun Tan
Most Wins in Category – Michael Whelan with 13
Not on the ballot – Donato Giancola, Shaun Tan, Michael Whelan, Christian Alzmann

5th Place – Michael Komarck
Best Finish in Category – First time on Ballot
Pros – does great stuff, including work for Game of Thrones.
Cons – Maybe not the biggest name on the ballot?
   I don’t know much about Komarck, but looking at his gallery on his website, he’s solid. I really like the stuff he did for Warhammer. Still, he’s not the biggest name on the ballot and first time ballot folks don’t win too often.
Odds – 15-to-1

4th Place – Bob Eggleton
Best Finish in Category – Has eight rockets!
Pros – a Legendary artist whose work has appeared everywhere.
Cons – He might not be showing up as much recently as he used to?
   I love Bob Eggleton, and his influence is readily apparent on all manner of artists. He’s probably the artist who folks who aren’t SF fans know. Still, I don’t think this is his year.
Odds – 10-to-1

3rd Place – Stephan Martinière
Best Finish in Category – he won in Denver
Pros – Fantastic artist who does some of the best covers going.
Cons – Not many.
   I loved his covers for Brasyl and The Dervish House, and he has some spectacular art on his website. He ran second last year, but I don’t quite think he’ll get there this year.
Odds – 5-to-1

2nd Place – Dan Dos Santos
Best Finish in Category – 3nd Last year.
Pros – Very popular artist whose covers are on very popular books.
Cons – None I can see.
   Danny Two Saints rules! He’s got those great covers for Patricia Briggs novels and so much more.
spent ages on his website the first time he was nominated and I go back every now and again. It should be close, but I don’t quite think he’s gonna win it all.

**Odds – 4-to-1**

**Winner – John Picacio**
Best Finish in Category – I believe he’s got a second at least once.
Pros – Amazing artist.
Cons – Hasn’t broken through yet in the voting.

This IS John Picacio’s year. The release of the Game of Thrones calendar and the fact that he’s been so deserving for so long makes him the perfect choice. I can’t think of another artist I’d rather see walk away with a Hugo who doesn’t have one already.

**Odds - 3-to-1**

**James says...**

No Dominic Harmon. Saddens me that UK artists are not more prevalent in this category, but by god, Picacio’s art is gorgeous. I saw or should I say recognised him when he did the cover of a pulp adventure collection in 2006, and since then, I have loved his world-class work.

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**Best Editor - Long Form**

**Winner Last Year – Smooth Lou Anders**
**Most Wins in Category – Gardner Dozois won Best Editor a lot but Patrick Neilsen-Hayden and David Hartwell have two Best Editor Long Form a piece.**

**Not on the List – Ginjer Buchanan, Teresa Neilsen-Hayden, David Hartwell, Moshe Feder, Nick Mamatas**

5th Place - Anne Lesley Groell
Best Finish in Category – First time on ballot
Pros – George R. R. Martin’s editor
Cons – I dunno how widely known she is.

I will admit, I had never heard of Anne Lesley Groell until I saw this list. I’m not exactly deeply connected to the editors of the world, but it was something of a surprise. Still, I don’t think she’ll do too poorly, but I don’t see her winning.

**Odds – 8-to-1**

4th place – Liz Gorinsky
Best Finish in Category – She’s finished fourth twice.
Pros – Great, and very tall, editor whose books are among my faves.
Cons – She’s up against stiff competition.

I would love to see Liz win this, and I’d love to see her win for Best Editor Short Form for what she does for Tor.com’s Steampunk week/Fortnight. She’s good people and I think she’s got a great career ahead of her. She edits folks like Cherie Priest, George Mann and Mary Robinette Kowal, so she’s got great stuff under her belt!

**Odds – 6-to-1**

3rd Place – Patrick Neilsen-Hayden
Best Finish in Category – He’s won twice
Pros – A big name editor who was once a big name fan and is a well-known name in publishing.
Cons – Not too many

Patrick is a good guy and a great editor. He’ll do well, but I don’t see him winning this year for a number of reasons, the biggest of which being two names that are ahead of him!

**Odds – 5-to-1**

2nd Place – Betsy Wollheim
Best Finish in Category – First time on ballot?
Pros – a big name, the President of DAW, and daughter of one of the biggest names in the history of the genre.
Cons – Probably not as well-known as an editor. I think Betsy Wollheim will do very, very well indeed. She’s good folk, has a great list of books under her belt, and the Wollheim name is enough to garner some votes. I’m hoping I get a chance to chat with her. I’m pretty sure she and my Dad knew each other a little.

Odds - 3-to-1

Winner – Lou Anders
Best finish in Category – Last year he won it all.
Pros – Great editor at a great house publishing great works.
Cons – None.

I think Pyr is an amazing press and I can’t see a single reason why Lou shouldn’t repeat as the Best Editor Long form. He’s great, the stuff he publishes is amazing and I can’t think of anyone I would rather see take home the rocket.

Odds - 2-to-1

Chris – If you’re not picking John Joseph Adams, we’re not friends anymore. He’s just that good. Lightspeed is the best thing going.

Jay Crasdan

4th Place – Neil Clarke
Best Finish in Category – First time on ballot.
Pros – Clarkesworld has won two Hugos!
Cons – Not the biggest magazine on the ballot.

I gotta go with Clarkesworld as one of the best mags out there, but I don’t think Neil will take home the rocket. He gets great stuff, but I really think Clarkesworld is more about the total package of the magazine that any single editor.

Odds – 8-to-1

3rd Place – Jonathan Strahan
Best Finish in Category – 2nd, in 2010.
Pros – Great editor and one of the best anthologists going these days!
Cons – none that I can think of.

Jonathan needs to win one of these someday. I don’t think it’s this year, and I was shocked when he
didn’t take one home in Australia.

**Odds – 5-to-1**

**2nd Place – Sheila Williams**
Best Finish in Category – She won in Reno!
Pros – She’s beloved and does get great stories that end up on the ballot.
Cons – Asimov’s isn’t the strongest magazine anymore.

She took me to task for my comments in the last couple of Handicapping the Hugos. I still don’t see the majority of Asimov’s stories as being anything I’d want to read, compared to the 1990s when it was all gold. I think the best pieces from Asimov’s last year are all on the ballot (Cornell and Kowal) and that the rest of it just isn’t my thing. This was also the first year in a LONG time I felt that Analog might have had a better year.

**Odds – 3-to-1**

**Winner – Stanley Schmidt**
Best Finish in Category – 2nd, last year.
Pros – Long standing noinee who has never won one.
Cons – He’s never won one.

This is the year it happens. I really think that Analog had a much better year in 2011 than it has in almost a decade, possibly more than a decade and possibly MUCH more than a decade. The best story from last is on the ballot (Ray of Light by Brad R. Torgersen) and there were several other stories I could have seen make it to the ballot. Plus, I think fandom is realizing that he’s an institution that we haven’t recognized yet and that’ll bring the vote out. He did very well last year.

**Odds – 2-to-1**

Stan Schmidt not withstanding, it seems that this is a strange year. F&SF slipped a bit, though they have more stories on the ballot this year than in recent times, and there’s no Gordon. That makes me sad as I still think F&SF is the best of the Big Three, though Clarkesworld is right up there. It’ll be interesting to see how this one turns out.

**James Says...**

Very hard to tell. You are correct about Stanley Schmidt, although I would have liked to see Liz Gornisky, although I expected to see Jeff Vandermeer on this one.

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And now, thoughts from the excellent Aidan Moher (and if you’re not reading A Dribble of Ink at http://aidanmoher.com/blog/, you should be!)

- This doesn’t look much like my ballot, with only two of my choices appearing (Among Others and A Dance with Dragons), but I’m happy with the list anyway. Leivathan Wakes was bumped off my ballot at the very last minute, so I’m glad to see it capture other readers the way it did me. Embassytown seems like a no-brainer, though I’m not much of a Mieville fan and haven’t read it. I was confused last year when Feed made the list (and almost won) and equally bemused/curious to see its sequel, Deadline, appear on the short list this year. No one in my circles seemed to be reading or talking about either of Grant’s novels (dubiously, given the blogger-based slant of the novels), but I suppose they must be halfway decent to make the ballot in two consecutive years. A Dance with Dragons is to Martin as The Departed is to Scorsese (who, oddly, is also among this year’s Hugo nominees); it might not be his best work, but it may be recognized by voters in an attempt to make up for the fact that A Storm of Swords (the finest Fantasy released since the turn of the century, if you ask this guy) was robbed by one of J.K. Rowling’s more mediocre novels.

- My vote will be going to Among Others. I’ve seen some criticism levelled against the inclusion of Among Others on the ballot, suggesting that its nostalgic roadtrip through SFF fandom in the early ’80s panders too directly towards the older, long-in-the-trenches Hugo Voters. This might be true, but as a voter who wasn’t even born yet when Among Others was taking place, I can’t blame nostalgia for my immense enjoyment of it. Among Others is a sweet book about fandom and escapism, about magic, family and recovery. There’s wonderful imagery and characterization in the novel and its melancholy is often tempered by a nice sense of humour and discovery. It’s a beautiful novel and I would be thrilled to see Walton walk away with the silver rocket.

- I’m thrilled beyond words to see SF Signal includ-
ed among the traditional Fanzines for the ‘Best Fanzine’ award. The blogosphere and world of online SFF fandom is so rich with great writers and publications. It’s nice to see that being recognized by the Hugo voters. If you’re interesting in discovering some of the better online blogs/magazines/publications, my ballot included: The Wertzone, Pornokitsch, The World SF Blog, The Speculative Scotsman and SF Signal. Google them.

- So incredibly thrilled to see “Remedial Chaos Theory” on there, I didn’t expect it even had a chance to make the ballot; too bad it’ll lose to Gaiman’s episode of Dr. Who.

- SF Signal will get my vote for ‘Best Fancast’. John, JP and Patrick do a great job week-in-and-week-out on it and I’m thrilled beyond belief to see such good friends make it on this ballot. It also has nothing to do with the fact that I’ve appeared on the podcast a few times. *cough* Nope, not at all. In all, a very strong ballot. I also quite enjoy The Coode Street podcast and what I can understand of StarShipSofa.

- Disappointed to see the same ol’ names on the ‘Best Professional Artist’ list, as much as I love them all. I was hoping to see some fresh blood. My ballot included Kekai Kotaki, Julie Dillon, Olli Moss, Daniel Dociu, and Jason Chan. Google those names for near-immediate visual orgasm.

**Best Dramatic Presentation – Short Form**

**Winner Last Year** – Dr. Who The Pandorica Opens/The Big Bang

**Most Wins in Category** – Dr. Who

**Not on the Ballot** – The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore, Time Freak, Robert Silverberg’s Hugo Presentation

**5th Place** – The Drink Tank’s Hugo Acceptance Speech

Pros – It was a very special moment for me and James.

Cons – In many ways it’s an anomaly.

*James explains...*

I am unsure what to say or do about the 4th nomination. I think its odd....

This was in one of the many emails, between myself and Chris, about the short dramatic presentation nomination. It took us both by surprise, and of course my immediate instinct was to turn it down, like we are not Doctor Who.

Yet, I realised that this would disenfranchise a nominating group, whom, lets be honest, I hold in the highest regard. Its the 5,000 worldcon attendees who pay for the Hugo’s, the mail outs, the web hosting, the vast hall, the tech, the awards themselves, and that all costs tens of thousands of dollars, and then the volunteers, how many work for hours to make the finest spectacle in literature happen smoothly, get hugo packs out, get votes collated, administer, check, work hard. A vast amount.

The nominators, nominated, and I am wrong to second guess them, I am wrong to say that they are invalid in their thoughts and decisions. I understand why some of our readership may wonder about it, but then its also the wonderfully idiosyncratic nature of a fan organised award, the unusual, and the unexpected get a nod of respect now and again. There is no shame.

Chris, well he associates the Hugo’s with his Dad and with Fandom saying ‘We appreciate that’ through the Hugos. he hopes possibly naively, that folks wanted to nominate it because they felt like they had shared a moment with us at the ceremony. Like over 40,000 views, wasn’t it an incredible moment, one that will last as a horror for me for ever, as I watched Chris fall to pieces, yet that human failing has found a following. Found fans who want to say ‘That’s special’ and I am not going to refuse them, their right...
to do so. Sorry about that.

Chris and I value the Hugo’s hugely, and of course, we would never attempt to dishonour them, in any way, I know he hopes that this was Fandom saying that there are some fandom moments that are worthy of recognition, which is something I certainly believe now. As a previous administrator of the Hugos noted, when I said I was all for refusing them, it’s important we remember that these are fan voted and run awards, he followed, ‘it’s this type of thing that serves as a reminder’.

It is not very common, but then again, how often have you seen a genuine human outpouring of emotion like that. I have to tell you, from close proximity, I had to keep my shit together, really well, usually I am the mad one and on this occasion, when something amazing happened to us, we showed the world who we really were.

Two boys so excited, we nearly pee’d our pants.

Of course, we won’t win this, and I think Chris is rooting for Community anyhow, but that’s OK, and I suspect that the likelihood of a Hugo acceptance ever getting a nomination, something that does sound slightly incestuous, is rare indeed, but then, this was a rare moment.

I had to reflect hard on this, and many aspects before we agreed to accept. If I was wrong, that’s OK, I don’t mind coming last, the best will still win.

And as Chris said to me ‘I still feel a bit of pride that so many folks felt like they were a part of something they thought were special and nominated it. I say thanks for that.’

Me too. Thanks.

Odds – 1000000-to-1

4th Place – Doctor Who - A Good Man Goes to War
Pros – It’s Doctor Who
Cons – It’s the least good of the episodes nominated.

I only watched this one after nominees were announced and it was pretty good, but it wasn’t great and certainly not in the neighborhood of The Doctor’s Wife or The Girl Who Waited. Still, you’ve always got a chance if you’re a Dr. Who episode!

Odds – 10-to-1

3rd Place – Doctor Who – The Girl Who Waited
Pros – An emotionally powerful episode.
Cons – Not written by Neil Gaiman

This was one of the few episodes I saw first run that I thought was great. It might have been one of the three or four best episodes of Dr. Who I’ve seen. I love the ones that focus more attention on Amy Pond and this one does it beautifully. Great stuff!

Odds – 7-to-1

2nd Place – Community Remedial Chaos Theory
Pros – BEST TELEVISION SHOW EVER!
Cons – Not Dr. Who, there are folks who don’t think that non-SF shows belong on Hugo ballots.

I love this episode and if it was just me deciding, I’d give Community the Hugo without even a single hesitation. It’s an amazing episode that fully explores the characters and their roles in the group of the show, and even better, it takes a full series of pokes at the traditional multiverse story and comes out with great fun. It’s the best episode of any television show I’ve seen since... well, the Paintball episode of Community! I really hope that it wins, and it’s got a strong following that seems to be talking about it on blogs and such!

Odds – 3-to-1

Winner – Doctor Who The Doctor’s Wife
Cons – There are folks who don’t want to see Who win another one.

This is a pretty good episode of Who, and one that you could tell was going to do well when the Hugo voting came around. It’s Neil Gaiman and it’s Dr. Who and it’s gonna win.

Odds – 5-to-4

So, I plan on us losing and losing deeply to Doctor Who. That’s OK, that’s how it should be. I love that we got nominated, not because it’s funny or it means that I’ve got another nomination, but because I really feel like it was a way of folks saying they felt something with that moment on the stage at Reno. That said, I really hope Community wins and I can’t wait to see how it plays out.

The lack of short films has always bugged me about this category. It still does. I know I see a ton more shorts than just about anyone, but there are some incredibly awesome shorts that deserve recognition! The biggest one of last year was the Oscar winner The Fabulous Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore. It’s one of the best shorts of the last decade, WON THE FREAKIN’ OSCAR, and got a big following. There was a lot of folks at nomination time who were talking about it, but it looks like it came up short. If the Drink Tank’s nomination kept it from the ballot, I will not be happy with myself!
Best Dramatic Presentation - Long Form

Last Year’s Winner – Inception
Not on the Ballot – Attack the Block, Thor, The Adjustment Bureau, Cowboys & Aliens, Paul, Melancholia, Super 8, Rise of the Planet of the Apes, the entire season of The Walking Dead

5th Place – Harry Potter & The Deathly Hallows, Part 2
Pros - Hugely popular movie series ends.
Cons – none of the other Potter movies won the Hugo.

It’s a good little movie, especially with the way the Art Direction went. Still, it was only a part of a full story and it was nowhere near as good as the other things on the ballot. I’d like to see it win because the entire Potter series was a lot of good stuff, but not this year.
Odds – 10-to-1

4th Place – Source Code
Pros – The Director of Hugo-winner MOON comes back with a wonderful film that was not seen near widely enough.
Cons – Not seen near widely enough.

This was a really strong movie that felt like the kind of sophomore effort you want a filmmaker to have. It wasn’t the best SF movie of the year, but it had a strong cast and an even stronger script. This is the kind of thing you’d love to see win, but seldom does it happen... except in 2010 when MOON did it!
Odds – 8-to-1

3rd Place – Captain America, The First Avenger
Cons – Not as good as Iron Man.

I saw this on a plane, and while the part where they had Chris Evan’s head on someone else’s body really annoyed me, I thought Evans was a good choice for Cap, and Tommy Lee Jones is good in everything, but I don’t think it was great.
Odds – 6-to-1

2nd Place – Hugo
Pros – Lovely film that folks seemed to love.
Cons – some folks seem to think it’s not SF/F enough.

I love Hugo, I wrote an entire issue of Exhibition Hall about it. It’s the only Steampunk movie that’s also not genre. Still, it’s a beautiful film, brilliantly made, smart, and very touching. I just rewatched it on the flight back from Minneapolis. It’s a great little movie, and I see it could get close to the top of the ranks, but I don’t think it’ll break.
Odds – 4-to-1

Winner – Game of Thrones Season 1
Pros – It’s a George R. R. Martin series turned into a sexy HBO series.
Cons – There are those who don’t like TV seasons nominated in Long-Form.

It’s a series that folks are pointing to as a seminal step in the history of Fantasy on television. I’ve only watched one episode and I have to say that Peter Dinklage is AMAZING! Tyrion is an amazing character and Dinklage makes the most out of it. As always, the second best episode of the season is the best, and that’s the one that I watched!
Odds – 3-to-1

James says...
Yeah, Game of Thrones will get this, and from what nearly everyone says, deservedly so. I must admit I was personally disappointed with Captain America, and very pleased with Hugo.
Best Graphic Story

Last Year’s Winner – Girl Genius
ONLY Wins in Category – Girl Genius
Not on the List – Spaceman (though the first arc might not have been finished), Fear Itself, Super-Dinosaur

5th Place – Locke & Key – Volume 4
Best Finish in Category – New to the Ballot!
Pros – it’s good stuff.
Cons – I don’t think it’s as big in the eyes of many voters.

I hadn’t heard of it until I picked it up at Illusive Comics & Games in Santa Clara (pretty much the only place I buy my comics!) and I gave it a read and it was good. Maybe not The Killing Joke good, but good in a different way that made for satisfying reading.

Odds – 10-to-1

4th Place – Diggers
Best Finish in Category – First time nominated.
Pros – REALLY strong stuff.
Cons – Not too widely known.

This is another one I hadn’t been aware of until the nominations came out and boy howdy am I glad I looked into it. It was a wonderful serialized story that came to an end back in March of last year. This may be the best story with a wombat main character ever! It’s lovely and I am so glad I spent the time going back through the archie at http://www.diggercomic.com.

Odds – 6-to-1

3rd Place – Schlock Mercenary
Best Finish in Category – 3rd, last year.
Pros – Howard’s great people and it’s a fun comic
Cons – there are folks who don’t like the idea of a webcomic winning.

I’m not a huge fan of Schlock Mercenary, though I gotta say it’s fun a fair amount of the time. It’s been on the ballot every year there’s been a Best Graphic Story and while it’s never done better than third, it’s not at all implausible that it could break through this year... I just don’t think it will!

Odds – 4-to-1

2nd place – The Unwritten
Best Finish in Category – 5th last year
Pros – A wonderful story from the biggest name publisher
Cons – not the biggest name title from the biggest name publisher on the ballot

The Unwritten would get my vote straight out if not for Diggers. It’s a great piece of writing and I love the style of the illustration. Read this along with a book like The Purple Rose of Cairo or Soapdish. It’s a wonderful story and I love the character Tom Taylor. I think Peter Gross’ art is among my faves, ever since he did a lot of the work on Lucifer. I wish this would take it, but I don’t think so.

Odds – 3-to-1

Winner – Fables
Best Finish in Category – 2nd, last year
Pros – big name comic from a big name writer which did very well last year.
Cons – None?

Bill Willingham’s Fables is a big deal, probably carrying the Vertigo brand right now (at least until they release The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo!) and he was a very popular Guest of Honor at WorldCon. Fables isn’t my favorite, I actually prefer Jack of Fables, one of the spin-offs, but it’s good enough and I think it’ll take it!

Odds – 2-to-1

Come on, Diggers!

James Says...

Very pleased to see Locke and key on the Ballot, its an interesting comic written by Joe Hill, illustrated by Gabriel Rodriguez and published by IDW Publishing. I assume that the arc that is nominated is Keys to the Kingdom, which was released as a graphic novel on 19th July last year. So far there are five arcs, and its a great comic. Two Eisner noms in 2009, it won the 2009 British Fantasy Award for Best Comic or Graphic Novel and Joe Hill won the 2011 Eisner Award for Best Writer. Its a great comic.

Unwritten is also welcome on this Ballot, I think Mike Carey is doing some amazing work, and it is deserved that he is on here. Obviously many Unwritten readers may cross over into Fables, and I am not a Fables fan.

I think that it is a shame if this category disappears. This year, there will be some big comics, but Dial H for Hero, written by China Mieville, as well as the Before Watchmen issues, and I suspect many of the New 52 Graphic Collections, Vertigos new comics, including Paul Cornell’s Saucer Country, could open up this category, and reflect the wider comic audience a little more. We’ll see.
Best Related Work

Winner Last Year – Lynne & Tara’s Chicks Dig Timelords!

Not on the List – Brad Lyau’s Voltaire’s Children, Chicks Dig Comics (wait, that’s 2012!)

5th Place – Wicked Girls by Seanan McGuire
Pros – A Hugo voter favorite’s filk album
Cons – A filk album has never made the ballot before. I’d love to see Seanan walk off with the rocket for this one, which I really enjoyed even though I’m not a big fan of filk. That’s not true. I enjoy some, but it’s very selective. And Seanan’s stuff is in that category! Still, I’m not sure how much exposure outside of the Filk community, though it does have the Seanan name, which is helpful.
Odds – 7-to-1

Pros – It’s a well-designed artbook on Steampunk.
Cons – It’s a bit slight and there are folks who are just tired of Steampunk.
I liked but didn’t love The Steampunk Bible. It was a very pretty piece of work, and there’s an AWESOME pic of Gail Carriger in her Spoon corset, and it has some decent articles, but mostly, I thought it was only good.
Odds – 5-to-1

3rd Place – Writing Excuses Season 6 - by Brandon Sanderson, Dan Wells, Howard Tayler, Mary Robinette Kowal, and Jordan Sanderson
Pros – A fun little Podcast with some big names on it.
Cons – Not many
Writing Excuses is fun, a lot of fun sometimes, especially with Howard and Mary, who make me laugh hard sometimes. I think it’ll do better than last year, when it ran fourth, but I don’t think it’ll win.
Odds – 4-to-1

2nd Place – The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction by John Clute, David Langford, Peter Nicholls, and Graham Sleight
Pros – HUGE project by some great people that gets used by tons of folks
Cons – SO HUGE!
I’ve read parts of the Encyclopedia over the last few months, it’s a useful tool. It’s a HUGE tool. I think two other Encyclopedia projects have won in this category, most recently 2008, but this one seems to be the most impressive one so far. They have an entry about The Drink Tank!
Odds – 5-to-2

Winner - Jar Jar Binks Must Die... and Other Observations about Science Fiction Movies by Daniel M. Kimmel
Pros – The best book about science fiction film ever!
Cons – It’s a book about science fiction film
Dan’s a friend, and I was so happy I got to announce his name back at Minicon! He’s a good guy, and his book is just as awesome! I read and reviewed it for The Drink Tank and it was all over my Hugo recommendation lists (and quite a few others) and it’s a worthy winner. I think that once people get a chance to read it in the Voter Packet, they’ll vote for it!
Odds – 2-to-1

OK, I might be wrong, but I kinda like what this category has become. You can look at it as the dumping ground for everything that doesn’t fit, but it works. I kinda wish that Seanan’s album was in Best Dramatic Presentation, that’s where that stuff might rightly be long, but it’s fine as it is!

James Says...
Chicks Dig Comics is only out this year, so that’s for next year. I think that the SF encyclopedia is awesomely amazing and deserves to win. It is so well written, and gives one a level of integrity as a reader that wikipedia just lacks. I met Dan Kimmell at Arasia and he is indeed a nice chap and I think his book is fun, but for value for money, well, its the SFE.

No Doctor Who books on the ballot. That makes me happy.

Jay Crasdan
Best Short Story

Last Year’s Winner – For Want of A Nail by Mary Robinette Kowal
Most Wins in Category – Harlan Ellison has 4
Not on the Ballot - The Man Inside Black Betty by Sarah Langan, The Rotten Beast by Mary E. Pearson, The Way It Works Out and All by Peter S. Beagle, Conservation of Shadows by Yoon Ha Lee

5th Place – Movement by Nancy Fulda
Where can you find it - http://www.asimovs.com/2012_04-05/pdfs/Movement_Fulda.pdf
Pros – Interesting story in a big market magazine.
Cons – Not the biggest name on the ballot
I enjoyed Movement, I’d even have included it on my ballot if it wasn’t a crowded year in my eyes. I liked the way she put a character out there that was almost invisible to the reader at the same time as making her lead fully constructed. It’s a powerful piece of first person fiction, but at the same time, it’s not the kind of thing that typically wins the Hugo for Best Short Story, so I’m leaving it lower on the list.
Odds – 7-to-1

4th Place – The Homecoming by Mike Resnick
Where can you find it - http://www.asimovs.com/2012_06/pdfs/TheHomecoming_MikeResnick.pdf
Pros – Mike Resnick is one of the most recognized authors in SF in Asimov’s one of the most-read magazines.
Cons – This story. Wow. Just... man.
I hated this one. I’ve had trouble with a lot of Resnick over the years, but this one flat-out stunk up the place! I’d fallen in love with his Steampunk novels this year, and here is this excessively talky story that seems to go in a path that took me back and forth three or four times to really get. I know Mike’s a good guy, he’s a good writer, but this story isn’t great. Still, he’s got the Resnick name.
Odds- 5-to-1

3rd Place – The Paper Menagerie by Ken Liu
Where can you read it – I heard it at http://podcastle.org/2011/07/12/podcastle-165-the-paper-menagerie/
Pros – Beautiful story of a boy and his mother. A Magical story.
Cons – Some may find it a bit sentimental

I love this one, and I listened to it as I was working on reading Leviathan Wakes. I’m hugely impressed with this one, I’m not all that familiar with Ken Liu at all, but I have to say that this is one of the best shorts I’ve read in ages. Still, it’s well done, wonderfully written, and largely it’s impressive. Still, it’s probably not going to be the one that’s called.
Odds – 4-to-1

2nd Place - Shadow War of the Night Dragons, Book One: The Dead City (Prologue) by John Scalzi
Pros – A funny, sentence excerpt from the greatest novel never published by one of the big names in the genre.
Cons – Some HATE the fact that an April Fool’s Day gag got a nom
I’m of two minds on this one. It’s a funny, funny story by Scalzi. There has been considerable backlash at its nomination. I see that as holding it back, but just slightly. I also believe that this is the shortest story ever nominated for a Hugo. Maybe I’m wrong on that one?
Odds – 3-to-1

Winner - The Cartographer Wasps and the Anarchist Bees by E. Lily Yu
Where can you read it - http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/yu_04_11/
Pros – an AMAZING story by a young writer who has a huge career ahead of her
Cons- She’s not John Scalzi?
This was the greatest story I read last year. It was beautiful and powerful and well-shaped and she’s only 21 and it makes me angry that I’ve never done anything in my life that’s 1/10th this awesome and, oh yeah, it’s awesome! It didn’t hit me until roughly three hundred words in that I was reading a masterpiece. It was and I loved every word of it!
Odds – 2-to-1

James Says...

Michael Thomas convinced me that The Cartographer Wasps and the Anarchist Bees by E. Lily Yu was a great story, and well, I think this one will give John Scalzi’s story a run for its money, but I think that Scalz’s sense of fun and also, the way he actually worked really hard to get that April Fools day gag to work, may help him. A good ballot though.
**Best Novelette**

*Last Year’s Winner – The Emperor of Mars by Allan Steele*

*Most Wins in Category – Harlan and Poul Andersen are tied with Three Wins each!
Not on the Ballot – Under Glass by Tim Sullivan, Bronsky’s Date with Death by Peter David, Rutger and Baby Do Jotenheim by Esther Friesner, Ian’s Ions and Eons by Paul Levinson*

**5th Place – Ray of Light by Brad R. Torgersen**
Where can you find it – It's in the last Analog of last year, and there’s an Excerpt at http://www.analogsf.com/2011_12/excerpt.shtml
Pros – Good writer, up for the Campbell, with a good story.
Cons – Weakest story on the ballot, and there are some spectacular pieces against it.

It wasn’t my favorite. As much as I’d love to see more from Brad, the story was a good one, I don’t think it stands up very well against the other four on the list. Still, I enjoyed it, and I love me some Glimmer Club!
Odds – 5-to-1

**4th Place – What They Found by Geoff Ryman**
Where you can find it – Well, it’s in F&SF’s Sept/Oct issue.
Pros – Good stuff.
Cons – Not over-the-top great.

I liked it quite a bit, thought it was a good story, took some time to set up as far as I was concerned, but at the end, it wasn’t the top story of the year to me. It did make me think that if I had a brother, we’d be EXACTLY like the folks Ryman writes about here, which is kinda scary, actually. I like Ryman quite a bit, and this was one of his better pieces, but I don’t think it stands a chance this year.
Odds – 4-to-1

**3rd Place – Fields of Gold by Rachel Swirsky**
Where can you read it? http://www.tor.com/stories/2012/03/fields-of-gold
Pros – My favorite story on the ballot this year. It’s a wonderful, wonderful piece that I’ve read many, many times.
Cons – Not that many.

Rachel’s stories are great! She was in a tough category last year, and is again this year. IN another year, this could easily win it, and be one of the great winners in history. It’s a masterfully told story and I find it odd that Dennis and I have very similar Before 35 Lists. It's a wonderful story that I really hope does well, but there are the two big stories on the ballot.
Odds – 3-to-1

**2nd Place – The Copenhagen Interpretation by Paul Cornell**
Pros – great story from a Hugo favorite.
Cons – Not many

I love Paul Cornell’s stuff (and if you like conspiracy theory and comics, you should be reading Saucer Country from Vertigo) and this is a really good story that I thoroughly enjoyed. The entire thing is pretty cool, though I must had missed one of the two other pieces in the related works because I missed a few things. Still, I love the setting and it totally reminded me of parts of the latest Sherlock Holmes movie. I know, it’s tenuous, but it was there for me!
Odds – 5-to-2
Winner – Six Months, Three Days by Charlie Jane Anders
Where can you read it – www.tor.com/stories/2011/06/six-months-three-days
Pros – Amazing story on Tor.com
Cons – Not the biggest name on the ballot.

I told Charlie Jane that she better be prepared for the Hugo nomination, and a few days later, the Nebula nominations were announced and it was on there. This was a story that moved me, the interaction between the way the two of them see the future is amazing and in the hands of a lesser writer, it wouldn’t have worked!
Odds – 2-to-1

This is a tough one for me. There are three stories here that I would LOVE to see win this one, but there can be only one, and I’m going with Anders. I’d love Cornell to walk off with it (and I fully expect that he’ll win for Saucer Country!) and Rachel deserves a total raft of Hugos for her work (she’s every bit as good at the shorter works as Chiang and Paolo) and this will be one of the best ballots for Best Novelette for a good long while.

Two things I notice. The first is there’s one from each of the Big Three on the ballot. There’s one from an anthology and one from Tor.com. I really love Tor’s short fiction offerings on the site, and not just because I’ve written for ’em, and this time I think that it’s easily the place where I read the most pro-ish stuff. Even far more than Charlie Jane’s other site... io9.com!

James Says...

Toughie. I think Copenhagen Interpretation will get it. Hard.
Best Novella

Last Year’s Winner – The Lifecycle of Software Objects by Ted Chiang
Most Wins in Category – Connie Willis has won four
Not on the Ballot – With Unclean Hands by Adam-Troy Castro

5th Place – The Ice Owl by Carolyn Ives Gilman
Where can you read it – The November/December issue of Fantasy & Science Fiction
Pros – Good story
Cons – There are a couple of GREAT stories up in the category.
I liked this one, though I haven’t re-read it since it first came out. I remember enjoying it, saying it was one of the best things in F&SF’s longer works, but I don’t remember being absolutely blown away. The writer isn’t exactly the biggest name, either.
Odds – 8-to-1

4th Place – The Man Who Bridged the Mist by Kij Johnson
Pros – Kij Johnson is an amazing writer!
Cons – This is easily my least favorite of the works of hers I’ve read.
I love Kij Johnson, and her works Ponies and Spur were both big favorites of mine on previous ballots. This year’s entry is pretty good, but there are weaknesses, especially in the pacing around the middle. It’s a bit doughy, as it were. Of all the characters that Kij has given us, Kit was the one who got the least out of me. It’s not a bad story, it’s got a good combination of emotional connection and questioning, but mostly, it just stopped at good.
Odds – 6-to-1

Third place – Silently and Very Fast by Catherynne Valente
Where can you read it? http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/valente_10_11/ (part one)
Pros – a strong story from a very popular nominee.
Cons – Nothing major.
The power of Silently and Very Fast is in one of those stories that keeps shifting. It’s one of those stories that gave me a bit of a lead, snagged me deep, and then there was something else on the next stage that made it seems like the previous stage meant little... until it meant it again. I loved the way she played with the story and the form, and I thought it was very good, but in the end, lacked the impact of the top two.
Odds – 4-to-1

2nd Place – Countdown by Mira Grant (Tie)
Where can you read it? Your local bookstore!
Pros – Mira has proved to be a voter favorite and this series of stories is hugely popular.
Cons – I had a real problem getting a hold of this one!
I love Seanan, aka Mira, and here, in one of her four nominations, she’s great. I finally found it, gave it a quick read (it was very last minute) and decided that

Some thoughts from Charlie Jane Anders!

First of all, I am rooting for you, both in the Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form) category and the Best Fanzine category -- but then you would have to find a way to top last year’s acceptance speech, which scares me a little. I kind of think this will be a big night for George R.R. Martin, actually -- A Dance With Dragons was a long-awaited book that actually delivered. And I would be kind of surprised if Game of Thrones season 1 didn’t clinch the Best Dramatic Presentation (Long Form) category. On the other hand, I also think the other Best Novel nominees have gotten excellent buzz, so I wouldn’t want to make a definite prediction.
it was a very good piece of work. Her characters have grown and, if not fully changed, are less tied to the spot as I found them in FEED. I thought this was a very entertaining novella and I could see it winning.

Odds – 2-to-1

2nd Place - The Man Who Ended History; A Documentary by Ken Liu
Pros - Awesome piece that plays with form
Cons - Not hugely exposed

I loved this one, and I read it more like a piece of film writing than as a story, but there is no question that it left an impression. I'd like to see this win, and when I was thinking it over, I looked at both SeaMira's piece and Ken's and couldn't come up with which was more likely.

Odds – 2-to-1

Winner – Kiss Me Twice by Mary Robinette Kowal
Pros – A voter favorite who happens to have written an AWESOME story
Cons – None.

Mary's the stuff! She's been firing on all five cylinders for a while now and this is my favorite of her pieces. It's got everything: a wise-cracking AI, a detective, a murder mystery, and perhaps best of all, a last scene that's straight out of a script that William Faulkner doctored up. It's not quite Noir, but it on the road. I think if Christa Faust wrote SF, this would be what she'd end up producing!

Odds – 3-to-2

This is a tough one, because Mira did so well last year in the Best Novel ranks and Mary won one last year and Ken Liu's piece was amazing! I'd love to see Rachel's story get a win, too, but I'm not 100% sure enough folks saw it. I'd love to see Valente take one home, but this ain't that year. I really think this is a lot like last year when we had three great pieces that fought it out, but I think this year, it's a lot like Troika and The Lifecycle of Software Objects. I'm interested in this one a lot!

This wasn't a year where I read a lot of novellas, and I have to admit that those that I read I enjoyed. There's been talk, off and on, about re-combining the Novelette and Novella categories into one, which does make a little sense, but we had such a good crop of both this year, I think it shows that it's viable. In fact, I'd say that the two of them were better than Best Short Story.

As far as these nominees, only one of them is a first time nominee, and only two don't have another piece on the ballot this year! I think that Mira has the best chance of all her categories here. Cat Valente has better chance in FanCast, Kowal's got a better shot here, and Liu's not going to win in either of his most likely. I'm interested in seeing this one play out.

James Says...

Again, Michael Thomas convinced me on a couple that are here, and I must say I think that The Man Who Ended History; A Documentary by Ken Liu (Panverse 3 Anthology) and Silently and Very Fast. Catherynne M.Valente (WSFA) are going to be hard competition for Mira and Mary, I think this category is much tighter.
And Now... THE MAIN EVENT

Best Novel

Last year's winner – Blackout/All Clear by Connie Willis
Most Wins in Category – Some hack. I think he's called Hine Line...
Not on the Ballot – Planesrunner by Ian McDonald, Ready Player One, After The Golden Age by Carrie Vaughn, Rule 34 by Charles Stross, Fuzzy Nation by John Scalzi, The Wise Man's Fear by 2013 ConQuesT Writer Guest of Honor (where I'll be the Fan GoH!) Patrick Rothfuss, REAMDE by Neal Stephenson

5th Place – Leviathan Wakes by James SA Corey
Pros – A solid piece of Space Opera, and one of my fave covers of the year!
Cons – There are some real heavyweights in this fight!
I really enjoyed Leviathan Wakes, especially the way that they played with the detective feature. I love a good detective, even if it's not a detective story. I got thrown at a couple of turns, which I liked, but this is a category with some huge names and Hugo faves so I don't see it winning.
Odds – 10-to-1

4th Place – Embassytown by China Mieville
Pros – A freaking phenomenal novel that delves into language and interpersonal communications in a way that I've never seen a novel attempt.
Cons – China's never done well in US Hugo voting.
I loved Embassytown. It was a difficult book, true, and I am a huge Mieville mark, but this isn't the one that's going to break through and make Mieville into the darling that is crowned by the US fandom as he has been by UK voters. Still, I really think it should win the Clarke (no matter what Christopher Priest says!)
Odds – 8-to-1

3rd Place – Deadline by Mira Grant
Pros – Way better than last year's FEED and one of the better novels of the year. Mira got 4 noms this year and did so very well in the voting last year.
Cons – It's a zombie novel, maybe...
I like it a lot. This is easily the best novel ever to take place partly in Weed, California. This didn't feel like the middle of a series, which I appreciated. I missed Georgia, though she was something of a presence. Shaun is awesome, but I missed her.
Odds – 5-to-1

Second Place – Among Others by Jo Walton
(2012 SFCOntario Writer GoH while I'm Fan GoH!)
Pros – GREAT GREAT GREAT novel that should appeal to lovers of SF and fantasy and coming-of-age stories.
Cons – Some have commented that it's a bit too self-reflexive.
I love it. I had an absolute moment with it on the plane back from Minnesota. There was a section where Mor and her father start to bond over the novels of Kurt Vonnegut. If you've read the DrinkTank over the years, you'll know about me and my Dad and Kurt Vonnegut. I had a tear or two. Damn you, Jo Walton! This was a wonderful book, easily my favorite of 2011, and I wish I could say that it would win. But alas, I don't think quite.
Odds – 3-to-1

Champion – Dance With Dragons by George RR Martin
Pros – It's the tie of GRRM!
Cons – Well, I couldn't finish it.
I only managed to read a few dozen pages of it, wasn't completely lost, and have to say I can see the appeal of George RR Martin's prose. This year, it's the year that George wins everything!
Odds – 5-to-4

Was this a good year for novels? I think so. Most of what I read I enjoyed, with a couple of small exceptions. Do I love this list? Pretty much. There's a great subtle fantasy novel, a wonderful Space Opera, a heavy Alien-Human interaction novel, a Zombie book and GRRM. It's a good mix from all over the genre spectrum and though there are a few books I'd have liked to have seen on the ballot (Planesrunner by Ian...
McDonald as the biggest missing piece), I can’t fault the ones that made it.

There are three from series, the Grant, Leviathan Wakes and that Martin fellow’s novel, which is normal for recent years, though I think 2008 had no series novels on it. There was only one on the 2009 ballot. What’s interesting is that two of the three series, the ones that had previous novels, had been nominated previously. I was shocked about that when I looked it up!

**James says...**

Gutted that Planesrunner is not on there, but worse, am really sad that the Hugo nominators may have missed out on my favourite book of 2011.

That book, is *Osama* by Lavie Tidhar. I read *Osama* in just over 36 hours, it captured me, stole me immediately, and is for me the book of 2011, just as the book of 2009 was *City in the City*. I think the snappiness of the chapters, not needing to be chapters, but broken up nicely, always giving me a pace of sorts, that made the book move quite fast. It’s an alternative history book, with some side winding elements, that just intelligently plays with history in a way that works around the story, rather than being the story. It is a different world, where Mike Longshot writes ‘Vigilante’ books starring Osama, in a different world than ours. The edginess of the ‘fictional’ accounts of the people caught up in the terrorism, the people on the plane, was very unnerving, the way the explosions happened, the lack of understanding of those injured, realising their jaw was gone, stunningly written, and all the time a wonderful detective story cuts a path through the book, as lines of reality become blurred. Like *City and the City*, it has elements of the fantastic to it.

I think Game of Thrones will win, and deservedly so, in *Work*, I am the guy who went to the event where George was. These books and TV series have really captured many people, and hearing Patrick Nielsen Hayden talk about getting sucked into them and reading millions of words in two weeks, scared the shit out of me, and I am not for opening the cover, well until I have a holiday.
Episode One: The Young Adult Book Hugo (Redux)

Last year, a proposal for a Hugo Award dedicated to honoring young adult and children’s books with sf and fantasy themes was presented at the Renovation World Science Fiction Society Business Meeting.

When it was brought forward for discussion for New Business, it was summarily dismissed with an Objection to Consideration motion (Sorry, you’ll have to look that up in Robert’s Rules of Order). While I was disappointed with this outcome, I was not entirely surprised. I was told beforehand by several members attending the Business Meeting that this would happen because of another piece of legislation on the docket I was co-sponsoring, the Podcast Hugo Amendment and the pending discussion on amending or abolishing the Semi-Prozine category.

While they thought the idea certainly had some merit, it was felt that the discussion of these two items would take up a majority of the time allowed for new business. As a result, the Semi-Prozine and Fanzine categories were modified pending a vote at the Chicon 7 Business Meeting and a Podcast amendment passed the first stage of being ratified as a Hugo Award.

And now the proposal for a Young Adult Hugo Award has been submitted again for discussion at the Chicon 7 Business Meeting. It reads as follows:

a) A young adult science fiction or fantasy book of any length published in the previous calendar year.

b) Any work nominated in this category may not be simultaneously considered, if eligible, in any other fiction category.

c) Two years after being implemented, this Constitutional Amendment may be repealed by a simple majority vote at the subsequent Main Business Meeting.

(A young adult book is defined as one in which the author(s) and/or the publisher specifically targeted a potential nominee to this intended audience. In the event of any confusion on the issue, the Hugo Administrator may inquire with the author(s) of potential nominated work for clarification.)

Co-Sponsors: Juli Hanslip, Lou Berger, Dan Kimmel, Stu Segal, Bobbi DuFault and Chris M. Barkley

The proposal for the YA Book Hugo is direct, to the point and easy for Hugo Administrators to implement. It is very clear what the nominators are selecting for the ballot and what should be voted on.

If a author or authors decide that the nominators are wrong in placing their work in a Young Adult category and decline a nomination there, my reading of the amendment (as a hypothetical Hugo Administrator), they may withdraw from the process altogether or opt to compete in the other fiction categories and be placed in the appropriate word count category.

The Hugo Award has undergone a lot of meaningful and radical changes in the past decade. In my opinion, all of them were absolutely necessary to maintain fairness in certain categories, reflect the emergence of new and evolving forms of media in the 21st century or reward those works that had been previous had been ignored or overlooked by the Hugo electorate.

Several years of thought has gone into this new proposal, which definitely falls into the last category: fiction for young adults.

Avid readers start reading when they are very, very young. A parent, sibling, teacher, a close friend or combinations of all these influences have a profound effect on young readers. But just as important are those writers, artists, editors and publishers who make the time and effort to direct their creative energies to entrance and entertain the younger readers.

Between several hundred channels of cable, video game systems, cell phones, social media and other various forms of media saturation and distraction, the competition to capture that young mind early these days is daunting, to say the least.

And the important work that is being done in this section of the field deserves high praise and the highest awards. That includes the Hugo Award.

I have been repeatedly asked why question of why should the World Science Fiction Society specifically single out young adult literature to be honored? My reasoning is that there is an abundance of work being done in the field by a number of talented writers and publishers that begs to be honored.

It has been argued that there are other awards that do; most notably, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America’s Andre Norton Award, Locus magazine, the Golden Ducks (based in Chicago) and the Mythopoeic Awards. And occasionally the Newberry and Caldecott will horn in on the action.

But...there is nothing, nothing even remotely like the Hugo Award.

The gleaming silver metal rocket, as originally
designed by Ben Jason and Jack McKnight back in 1953, is 13 inches in height and with its specially designed base that changes from year to year, can weigh up to 10 pounds or more. When I have hefted one in my hands, as I have on many occasions, I actually can literally feel the weight of its vast and varied history.

It could be argued that there may have been an insufficient number of nominees to fill a ballot on a regular basis twenty years ago, but, (in my opinion) there is no excuse why fandom cannot honor YA works today. Sales figures for works of fiction have been fairly flat over the past fifteen years or so but there has been an upsurge in sales of children’s books and young adult fiction, especially genre books with fantastic themes, since the advent of J.K. Rowling’s creation of Harry Potter.

Are there enough nominees to fill out a Hugo Awards ballot? Take a look at some of the recent nominees from some of these other awards:

2012 Andre Norton Award for Young Adult Science Fiction and Fantasy Nominees
Akata Witch, Nnedi Okorafor, Viking Juvenile
Chime, Franny Billingsley, Dial
Daughter of Smoke and Bone by Laini Taylor, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
Everybody Sees the Ants, A.S. King, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
The Boy at the End of the World, Greg van Eekhout, Bloomsbury Children’s Books
The Freedom Maze, Delia Sherman, Big Mouth House
The Girl of Fire and Thorns by Rae Carson, Greenwillow
Ultraviolet by R.J. Anderson, Carolrhoda Labs

2011 Locus Award for Best Young Adult Book Nominees
Shipbreaker by Paolo Bacigalupi Little, Brown (Winner)
Mockingjay by Suzanne Collins, Scholastic
Enchanted Glass by Diana Wynne Jones, HarperCollins UK; Greenwillow
I Shall Wear Midnight by Terry Pratchett, Gollancz; HarperCollins
Behemoth by Scott Westerfeld, Simon Pulse; Simon & Schuster UK

In addition here is a completely different set of acclaimed books gathered by my colleagues in the Children’s/YA Department of Joseph Beth Booksellers in Cincinnati, Ohio:
Ruby Red (first English publication) by Kerstin Gier
Legend by Marie Lu
Scorpio Races by Maggie Stiefvater
Anna Dressed in Blood by Kendare Blake
Divergent by Veronica Roth
Across the Universe by Beth Revis
Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs

As you can see, the YA books that represent the field here are not all merely, “paranormal romances” as some wags have claimed. They run the gamut from sf adventure and high fantasy all the way to horror.

Surely, if Locus Magazine (since 2003) and SFWA (since 2005) can find nominees and present awards in this category, there is no reason the Hugo Award voters can’t do so as well.

In the past thirteen years, only three true YA fantasy and science fiction books have appeared on the Hugo ballot:
1999: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J. K. Rowling

And the last YA book before 1999 to appear on the final ballot? Harpist in the Wind by Patricia A. McKillip back in 1980.

Over the past two years, I have heard other objections to trying out a YA award; that there are too many Hugo Awards already, that they cannot be administered properly, that the additional award categories dilute or detract from the honor of the Hugos, that there should be a subtraction of an older award to make way for a new award or that Hugo voters won’t care for a new fiction category.

All of these points are debatable BUT, not one of the detractors of the idea of a YA Hugo have spent a lot of time theorizing about a plethora of bad things that may be engendered by another Hugo but NONE of them actually know what would happen if such a proposal were actually put into play. Hell, I’m not entirely sure myself. But the reaction to the Hugos that have been introduced in the past decade have been, for the most part, have been positively received. And I’m willing to bet that most Hugo voters will jump at the chance nominate and read MORE books in their annual electronic Hugo Packet.

Some have complained that Hugo voters tend to skew to older adults and many of them don’t care or read YA fiction. I don’t think this is quite true; I have observed a many an adult buying and reading many of the Harry Potter novels and The Hunger Games series for instance, not only because they want to know what all the fuss is about culturally speaking but because they haven’t lost their taste for a good story and that they genuinely enjoy the books.

Also, I have a feeling that this could also energize the interest of the children of fans who either attend or support Worldcons to nominate and vote for the Hugos themselves. Which I think we would all agree would be a GOOD THING.

But the MOST ridiculous, obtuse and ultimately stupid reason is that, it would lengthen the Hugo Awards Ceremony...Oh, really?

To all of the fans who oppose a YA Hugo on these specious grounds: BULLSHIT!

Since the Hugo Awards banquet model was abandoned back in the 1980’s, Worldcon Committees have chosen to make the awards a showcase of pageantry and tradition. They resemble, for better or worse, the Academy Awards and Emmy award shows.

If you have a problem keeping your fanny in a seat for nearly two hours you have a couple of options:

a) Don’t come. At all.

b) Watch from your room (providing there’s a streaming internet or closed circuit feed)

c) Wait for the dvd or You Tube video.

d) Petition future Worldcon bids to bring back banquets (which, more often than not, resembled Comedy Central’s Friar’s Club Roasts...8-)

e) STOP complaining and try working on a Hugo Ceremony yourself!

Geez people, this is history happening RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU! (I mean, just ask Chris Garcia and James Bacon about their experience at Renovation...)

Right now, I work part time in one of the finest bookstores in the United States. The staff and managers alike are incredibly excited about the prospect of promoting a Hugo Award for Young Adult books. I imagine writers, editors and publishers are relishing the idea of the most prestigious awards of imaginative fiction going to a YA book every year.

Every time I see a parent or grandparents with children in the store eagerly asking for a new book or asking for a classic, I am heartened to think that there will be a future for readers, writers, publishers and booksellers alike.

In lieu of formal discussions at the Chicon 7 Business Meeting, I would like to call upon the convention committees of LoneStarCon 3 and London in 2014 to seriously consider invoking the Additional Award section of the WSFS Constitution (3.3.16) to add the Young Adult Book as an additional Hugo award category in order to gauge the interest of Hugo voters.

If the proposal is voted down again at Chicon 7, it will be at the Business Meeting in San Antonio next year and in London in 2014 and beyond, if necessary. It’s time has come and it will not be going away anytime soon.

James says...

On YA hugo’s I’d be inclined to desire them if I knew it was only children or young adults or teenagers or whatever the current marketing jargon is for this sales category were voting.

A group of grown up people saying - this is the best book - I’m not sure about.