

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL READERS' AWARDS RESULTS

Collating the ballots to determine the winners of our annual readers' award poll can be a daunting task. This year, the data was entered into our system by Carisa McLaughlin. Carisa's work was overseen by *Asimov's* editorial assistant, and former Readers' Award data enterer herself, Emily Hockaday. Long before the days of desktop publishing, I used to count the ballots manually by spreading them in piles across my living room floor. I'm glad I don't have to do that anymore, and I'm glad the computer has made tallying so much easier. Yet, my favorite part of the awards process is still the time I spend looking over all the ballots and reading your comments about the work that appeared in *Asimov's* during the previous year.

Pat Hall's remark that voting required "tough decisions in every category" summed up the thoughts of many readers. The novella category proved particularly problematic. Shirley Meech was pretty definite about her choices: "I've been waiting all year to vote for 'In the House of Aryaman, a Lonely Signal Burns.' Loved it!! Would like to read more about the main character, her cat, and fox, and mother problems!" But Soon Lee said, "another strong year for *Asimov's* that once again demonstrates why the novella is the ideal length for SF. Despite being the category with the fewest candidates, its winner was the hardest to pick; such was the excellence of the stories. Bravo." And Jeffrey David Powell complained that "trying to decide between Robert Reed's 'Murder Born' and Steven Popkes' 'Sudden, Broken, and Unexpected' for top novella is one of the most cruel, insidious punishments yet devised."

Jeff also complained cheerfully about "the number of high quality stories from a mix of veteran authors and new writers that I have to somehow choose from. This is one of the reasons why I love *Asimov's*; where else can I read stories from the giants of the field like Robert Reed and Kristine Kathryn Rusch nestled in-between stories by authors making their first professional sales?" He added, "Another highlight from 2012, though I didn't know it at the time, was the chance to read 'Zip' and 'Shattering' from Steven Utley; with his untimely passing, these were probably my last chances to read one of my favorite authors. I wish I could have met him. I'm sure I would have liked a person that had the guts to build a line of stories around traveling back to the time when dirt was being invented."

Much praise was lavished on relatively new writer, Derek Künsken. Richard Harding spoke for many when he wrote, "the most striking story I read was 'The Way of the Needle.' Wonderful imagination combined with ethics and striving. Thank you very much."

Although readers often shy away from voting for best poem, claiming a lack of expertise, Alan K. Lipton told us, "I've come to a realization about the poems you publish. I'd always been a little bewildered by the concept of science fiction poetry, but this year I finally saw a connection between the form and what J.G. Ballard called his condensed novels. A good narrative poet reduces a story to the richest, most concise essence possible. It's more than a mood or sketch; the reader comes away from the experience with an elegant, compelling story engulfing his or her imagination. *Asimov's* published a few such poems this past year, and I hope you can find more of them this year and beyond. Thank you!"

Andrew Conde spread the joy around by complimenting contributors who aren't eligible for any awards—"Favorite editorial: 'Science Fiction that Scars Children' by



Photo by *Locus*/Liza Groen Trombi

Left to Right: Derek Künsken, Sheila Williams, and Joe Haldeman

Sheila Williams because I love science fiction/horror. Then again, Robert Silverberg's 'Rereading Philip K. Dick' gave me an excuse to press others to read my copy of *A Scanner Darkly*, and that was wonderful. Since I always check out the SF Conventional Calendar, I suppose I should mention how much I appreciate Erwin S. Straus and his work. Did I leave out anyone or anything I should mention? Probably, but I can cover it all by saying how much I enjoy the magazine. Thank you." And Piet Nel made my day when he wrote, "I've been reading *Asimov's* with various degrees of commitment for about thirty years, and all through those decades it has quite clearly been the best SF magazine in, well, the universe. Here's hoping 2013 will be no different. P.S. special thanks to Sheila and Robert Silverberg for the always enjoyable editorials and reflections."

A breakfast celebration of the Asimov's Readers' Awards and Analog's AnLab awards was held at the Affinity restaurant in the San Jose Hilton in San Jose, California, on May 18, 2013. The awards were presented in the restaurant's beautiful, and practically hidden, garden. Although some of our winners could not be present, we were thrilled that Derek Künsken flew in from Canada to accept his award for best novelette and that Joe Haldeman was on hand to accept his award for best poem. Other guests included Joe's wife Gay, Liza Groen Trombi of *Locus*, and Connie Willis and her daughter Cordelia. In addition to editor Trevor Quachri, *Analog's* guests included Stanley and Joyce Schmidt, Richard A. Lovett, Catherine Shaffer, Edward and Ruth Lerner, and Alan Beatts. Later that day, most of us crossed paths again at the 2012 Nebula Award ceremony.

Thank you to all who voted, and thank you for all your comments. 2013 seems to be whizzing by—indeed, I've already laid out the January 2014 issue! We look forward to hearing your thoughts about the current year when the voting opens for the Twenty-eighth Annual Readers' Awards contest.

READERS' AWARD WINNERS

BEST NOVELLA

1. **MURDER BORN;**
ROBERT REED
2. Sudden, Broken, and Unexpected; Steven Popkes
3. The Last Judgment; James Patrick Kelly
4. In the House of Aryaman, a Lonely Signal Burns; Elizabeth Bear
5. The Mongolian Book of the Dead; Alan Smale

BEST NOVELETTE

1. **THE WAY OF THE NEEDLE;**
DEREK KÜNSKEN
2. Old Paint; Megan Lindholm
3. The Waves; Ken Liu
4. Mating Habits of the Late Cretaceous; Dale Bailey (tie)
4. Possible Monsters; Will McIntosh (tie)

BEST SHORT STORY

1. **FINAL EXAM;**
MEGAN ARKENBERG (Tie)
1. **SEXY ROBOT MOM;**
SANDRA McDONALD (Tie)
3. Free Range; Bruce McAllister (Tie)
3. The Wizard of West 34th Street; Mike Resnick (tie)
5. Adware; Suzanne Palmer

BEST POEM

1. **FUTURE HISTORY;**
JOE HALDEMAN
2. Care and Feeding; Mary Turzillo
3. Apocalyptic Love Song; Megan Arkenberg
4. Objectifying Faerie; Jane Yolen
5. Discoveries in the Annals of Poetry; C.W. Johnson
5. The Music of Particle Physics; Bruce Boston
5. Tornado Warning; Danny Adams

BEST COVER

1. **DECEMBER;**
LAURA DIEHL
2. April/May; J.K. Potter
3. August; Cynthia Sheppard
4. June; Dorottya Mathe
5. July; Tomislav Tikulin

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