



Space Cowboy Books Presents: Simultaneous Times Newsletter

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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to another issue of Simultaneous Times Newsletter. In this issue we feature an interview with Hugo Finalist and winner of the 2021 Space Cowboy Award – Cora Buhlert. Congratulations Cora! We also have a special announcement about Space Cowboy's latest science fiction anthology, featuring local Hi-Desert authors and available now from our online store – www.bookshop.org/shop/spacecowboybooks. And last but not least we have a list of non-fiction reading recommendations from legendary author David Brin. As always we'd love to hear from you, so get in touch at spacecowboybooks@gmail.com

Jean-Paul L. Garnier



Tell us a bit about Pegasus Pulp?

In 2011, self-publishing became an increasingly viable alternative. I watched SFF authors like Kristine Kathryn Rusch and Dean Wesley Smith jump onto the self-publishing bandwagon and decided to give it a shot myself, beginning with some previously published stories to which I'd gotten the rights back. And so I started my own small press.

As for the name, the Buhlert family crest is a Pegasus and the mythological Pegasus is associated with writing and poetry besides. Pegasus Books and Pegasus Publishing already existed, so I went with Pegasus Pulp.

What made you decide to start Speculative Fiction Showcase?

The Speculative Fiction Showcase was born on a forum for self-publishers. Several of us were frustrated that there were few promotion options for self-published and small press SFF at the time and that what promotion sites there were focused on free and 99 cent books and often didn't accept new releases.

So Heidi Garrett, Jessica Rydill and I decided to start our own site to feature new self-published and small press SFF releases as well as author interviews, guest posts and a weekly round-up of SFF related links. Heidi left after a few months and since then it has been just Jessica and me.

You're a Hugo Finalist this year, what has the experience been like?

My first Hugo nomination last year was a real shock, because I honestly didn't expect to be nominated. In fact, I initially mistook the nomination e-mail from CoNZealand for the convention newsletter and almost didn't open it.

This year, I had a better idea what to expect and also thought that I had a decent chance to be nominated again – which I was.

In general, being a Hugo finalist is an amazing experience. It's a great honour to be recognized for my work. Ditto for winning the Space Cowboy Award. I was interviewed by both local papers, got congratulations from neighbours, relatives, translation customers and my Dad's diabetes doctor. But the best thing about being a Hugo finalist is that you become friends with your fellow finalists both in your category and across categories.

Unfortunately, I didn't get the full Hugo finalist experience with the pre-show reception, the in-person ceremony and the after-party, since I had the misfortune of being nominated during a global pandemic. However, I got a taste of the in-person Hugo finalist experience as acceptor for *Galactic Journey* at the Dublin Worldcon in 2019.

You also work as a translator, how has this affected your writing?

Translation illuminates how different languages work, that one language has words and concepts that the other lacks and that there are very different ways to say the same thing. When translating, you also have to hit the balance between translating the literal meaning of the words (which is crucial for legal or technical translations) and the spirit of the original text, which is important when translating fiction or poetry. All this of course impacts my own writing.

What themes and issues do think will become increasingly important in science fiction?

In recent years, we've been seeing different voices and perspectives reflected in science fiction. Women writers, writers of colour, LGBTQ writers, international writers and disabled writers are a lot more visible than they used to be. I think we will continue to see new and different voices tackling neglected themes and putting a new spin on old themes. We will also be seeing retellings of seemingly familiar stories from the POV of people who previously didn't have a place in these stories.

Subgenres and themes go in cycles. Right now, science fiction is exploring the downsides of colonialism and imperialism, which the genre was also doing in the 1930s and 1940s, often quite critically. Space opera is having a moment right now with lots of amazing stories being told. Over on the fantasy side, sword and sorcery seems to be making a slow comeback.

There are a lot of stories about robots and AIs right now, often told from their POV, which is due to the strides AI has made in the real world. Climate change will continue to be an important subject. On a related note, hopepunk and solarpunk, both of which offer a look at a better, fairer, solar-powered future, are on the rise. Finally, I suspect that the covid pandemic may have killed off post-apocalyptic fiction for a few years.

Do you have any advice for beginning fan writers?

Find a subject or niche that interests you, get yourself a blog, website, e-mail newsletter or PDF zine and start writing. Be patient and don't be discouraged, if no one seems to be reading at first, because it takes some time to get traction. It took several months of blogging before I got the first comment that wasn't spam and ten years from starting this incarnation of my blog to being a Hugo finalist. Finally, have fun.

What's next for you, and what are you currently working on?

I just published *Tales of the Silencer*, a collection of all the stories in my *Silencer* series about a pulp writer in the 1930s who dresses up as his own character to fight crime. Next up is *The Black Knight*, a novella in my *Kurval* sword and sorcery series, which is currently going through the editing process. I also have a story coming out in *Whetstone Magazine* in June.

Finally, by the time you're reading this, I will be hip deep in the July short story challenge, where the aim is to write a short story every day during the month of July. Of course, the stories still need a lot of editing and some never work out, but I find the challenge very fruitful. Both "Patient X-5" and "Little Monsters", which *Simultaneous Times* produced, started out as July challenge stories.





From Space Cowboy Books in Joshua Tree, California. The second volume of the companion book series to the *Space Cowboy Books Presents: Simultaneous Times* science fiction anthology podcast. In *Simultaneous Times Volume Two* Space Cowboy Books brings you a collection of science fiction short stories from our local Hi-Desert authors, featuring both stories that have been featured on the podcast, as well as some appearing for the first time. An eclectic mix of approaches to the science fiction genre which range from rebellions against oppressive robots to alien encounters to pure campy fun, with writing styles varying from traditional to experimental. The collection features nine different authors, each paired up with five different illustrators to bring each story to life with original artwork.

Featuring stories by: Julie Carpenter, Susan Rukeyser, Jon Christopher, Anastasia Wasko, Brent A. Harris, Jean-Paul L. Garnier, Dain Luscombe, Gabriel Hart, Mari Collier
With illustrations by: Austin Hart, Zara Kand, Rik Verlin Livingston, Jeremy Szuder, Reagan Louise Wilson

Space Cowboy Books Presents: Simultaneous Times is a monthly science fiction anthology podcast featuring cast readings with original soundtracks, from a wide variety of international authors and composers. New episodes are released on the fifteenth of each month and can be found on most podcast players.

Nonfiction for SF fans

Here are some of David Brin's favorite nonfiction books. Read for a grounding in the *science* behind his science fiction and nonfiction.



- In this fascinating look at human progress over the last one thousand years of civilization, Ian Mortimer's book *Millennium: From Religion to Revolution* offers perspective on how far we have come, especially by developing new tools... and a vigorously open society. And especially science.
- John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt: *Networks and Netwars*. Present, spooky and worrisome, yet remaining hopeful about our ability to cope — over the long run — with terror threats to our complex civilization.
- Robert D. Atkinson: *The Past And Future of America's Economy*. Explores measures that would allow us to play our roles better in the world economy.
- William Calvin: *A Brain for All Seasons*. It takes you on a tour of the new science that links deep ocean currents with the climate patterns that made Earth a crucible for human development. Did ice ages and hot spells act as a 'pump' forcing our ancestors to adapt and change? Europe lies at the same latitude as Canada, yet supports 20 times as many people, because of the Gulf Stream... which may 'switch off' because of Global Warming. Find out more, it's important.
- Gregg Easterbrook: *The Progress Paradox*. The clichés that most hobble us are those we don't notice, because we accept them so readily. Like the common belief that the world is going to hell. Easterbrook suggests we may be better than we thought. There's a world to be saved and those who spread *either* complacency or gloom aren't helping.
- Ann Florini: *The Coming Democracy*. Dares to raise a long-neglected question: how will Planet Earth be governed during the next century and beyond? Might it be wise to start thinking now about using our influence for its most noble and most *pragmatic* purpose — taking a lead in helping to design *Whatever Comes Next* (WCN)?
- Sarah Blaffer Hrdy: *Mother Nature* and *The Woman That Never Evolved*. Author, anthropologist and feminist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy takes a fresh look at evolution fact and theory, then moves on to a cross-cultural view of motherhood, in this pair of stimulating books, re-evaluating things we thought we knew.
- Kevin Kelly: *Out of Control*. Explores the new field of "emergent properties," showing how marvelous and surprising new complexities and capabilities often arise out of systems that began simply or primitively. Wonderful examples.
- Melvin Konner: *The Tangled Wing*. Takes a wider focus on the biological foundations we all have to work with.
- Ray Kurzweil: *The Singularity Is Near*. Pursues the argument that our scientific competence and technologically-empowered creativity will soon skyrocket, propelling humanity into an entirely new age.
- Lawrence Lessig: *Code: And Other Laws of Cyberspace, Version 2.0*. Anyone interested in the dilemmas we face in the digital age should look at this book.
- Michael A.G. Michaud: *Contact with Alien Civilizations*. Ponders the topic of "where is everybody out there?" An excellent book, covering these issues from many angles!
- Chris Mooney: *The Republican War on Science*. Will the 21st Century be known as the time when our Scientific Age came to a whimpering end? Mooney explores how partisanship can explain much of this collapse of confidence... and why partisan interpretations don't cover everything.
- Bruce Schneier: *Secrets and Lies*. From a more technical background, encryption expert Bruce Schneier talks common sense.
- Lee Smolin: *The Life of the Cosmos*. Striking off to the very boundaries of this universe — and about a trillion others — Smolin lays out the notion that universes may behave like a form of life, evolving within the context of a meta-time far, far vaster than mere billions of years. This book inspired my novella "What Continues... and What Fails," which is contained in the story collection *Otherness*.
- Edward Tenner: *Why Things Bite Back*. Says we are often fooled by our own best-laid plans. Possibly the most tragic human character flaw is our tendency to avoid the very criticism that may help us find our mistakes before they erupt and ruin our hopes.