

2001 World Fantasy Awards

Life Achievement: Philip José Farmer, Frank Frazetta; **Novel (tie):** *Declare* by Tim Powers and *Galveston* by Sean Stewart; **Novella:** “The Man on the Ceiling” by Steve Rasnic Tem & Melanie Tem; **Short Fiction:** “The Pottawatomic Giant” by Andy Duncan; **Anthology:** *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* by Sheree R. Thomas, ed.; **Collection:** *Beluthahatchie and Other Stories* by Andy Duncan; **Artist:** Shaun Tan; **Special Award, Professional:** Tom Shippey (for *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*); **Special Award, Non-Professional:** (for *At The Foot Of The Story Tree: An Inquiry into the Fiction of Peter Straub*).

New Fanthology Available

Spirits of Things Past 4: The Contact Fanthology is now available. This (literally) sparkling 100-page fanzine is produced by Dick and Leah Smith, publishers of the Hugo-nominated *Stet*. 72 fans, all substantially more famous than the *Plokta* cabal, tell the stories of how they found their way to fandom. Copies are \$10, including U.S. postage (add \$5 for copies to be sent outside the US, \$10 for overseas airmail); proceeds benefit ditto, FanHistoriCon and DUFF. Send a check or money order made out to Richard Smith to P.O. Box 266, Prospect Heights, IL 60070-0266, USA.

Penny For the Guy

Those who were at <plokta.con> last year may recall that **Guy Dawson** was the successful bidder for the right to have a political or religious faction named after him in GoH **Ken MacLeod**'s next novel (narrowly beating **Square Bear**, which must have been a relief for Ken). That novel, *Dark Light*, has now been published, and Guy has got his money's worth. Not only are the Dawsonites a significant religious faction, but one chapter is entitled “Dawson's Night”, which is the night each year when their founder is burned in effigy.

Picture Books for Baby Font Queens

If you're overly fond of type, you might have found it difficult to find picture books suitable for indoctrinating your tiny children. Never fear, help is at hand in the form of *Bembo's Zoo*. This is a first picture book by Roberto de Vicq de Cumptich, in which all of the pictures are lovingly formed out of letters and punctuation in Bembo. The book's website includes a splendid shockwave file showing how the animals are made up out of the relevant letters.

Pam Wells Seeks Comedy

Pam Wells has embarked on a PhD in psychology. She's studying interactions between speakers and audiences, and trying to extend existing work on political speeches to stand-up comedians (We wonder how she tells the difference). She needs as many videos as possible to study, but has no research council support and can't afford to buy vast numbers. She'd like to borrow videos of British stand-up comedians with live British audiences, preferably in PAL format. If you can help, please email her (pam@ury.york.ac.uk).

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○♯◆◆☞γ♯◆◆✕■◆✕■γ♯◆◆✕■γ♯◆◆. So imagine our delight to discover that *The Register*, neep neep journal of note, has released a t-shirt to appeal to both these interests, saying “Conspiracy Theory? Ω□●●□♯&◆—and you can quote me on that”. As worn by all the best fanzine editors, Dops, and natives of Wingdingia. But if you want one, you'll have to be quick—it's a limited edition.

David Levine Short Story Wins James White Award

We were delighted to hear that the winner of the 2001 James White Award is “Nucleon” by **David Levine**. The award, presented annually to the best story submitted by a non-professional writer, was accepted on David's behalf by **Lynne Ann Morse**. The winning story will be published in December's *Interzone*.

Cultural Imperialism

Whatever else you do, you should avoid reading the back cover of **Iain M Banks'** new Culture novel. Alison could have well done without the implied spoiler. So, what have we here? We're back in the Culture, Banksie's cosy utopia. The 50 billion inhabitants of the artificial Orbital world Masag enjoy a fine quality of life, free from Beveridge's five giants and with full back-up capabilities just in case anything untoward happens. All benignly overseen by the Hub, an AI with a brain the size of a planet and a terrible pain in the diodes down its left side. Money is obsolete in the Culture, a concept that always makes me wonder how they decide who gets World Cup tickets, tables at the Ivy, or any other scarce and popular resource. And it's clear that some of the Culture's citizens find something lacking in their fear-free lives, so there's massive participation in the local Dangerous Sports Club. As readers of previous novels will be aware, the Culture is a pretty superior sort

of civilisation. So that gives it a perfect right to meddle in the affairs of lesser people, doesn't it?

Enter Chel, a warrior planet with a brutal caste system. A bit of Cultural influence, intended to encourage equality, has recently, inadvertently, led to a full-scale civil war. The Culture are of course terribly sorry about this.

Meanwhile, the Masag Hub is currently planning a big bash to mark the Twin Novae period, when light reaches Masag from two suns destroyed eight hundred years earlier. This was the result of a previous error of judgement by the Culture, who have been at this sort of thing for a while. The centrepiece of the memorial will be a new symphony by Ziller, a Chelgrian composer in exile. Chel, meanwhile, has despatched Major Quilan, a severely depressed warrior priest, to persuade Ziller to come home. The stage is set for a political novel with plenty of verve and style, and regular Cultural features like a sudden digression into ships' names. The plot ranges in all directions but isn't the main event here. Banks is taking the opportunity to raise questions about the meaning of life, the nature of risk, and the right of cultures, or Cultures, to muck about with peoples they consider inferior. The lightness of touch means that you're unlikely to feel you've been lectured to, and the topic is all too timely.

RIP

Josh Kirby, cover artist for the Discworld books, died peacefully at age 72. **Milt Rothman**, founder of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, died at 81.

More Better Tat

Just room to say that Seacon, the 2003 Eastercon, has announced its site as the famously coastal Hinckley Island Hotel.

MemeStream

Octocon 2002: <http://www.octocon.com>, Teddy Harvia art: <http://www.webmail2.net/tharvia>, Manhattan Subway Network (revised): <http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/nyct/maps/maps926.pdf>, Emerald City: <http://www.emcit.com>, Broadband UK comics: <http://www.coolbeansworld.com>, Potlatch 2002: <http://www.potlatch-sf.org>, Noreascon 4: <http://www.noreascon.org>, Dave's Quick Search Deskbar: <http://notesbydave.com/toolbar/doc.htm>, Hot blog topics: www.daypop.com/top.html, Welsh SF Association WAP site: <http://tagtag.com/wsf>.

The *Plokta News Newt* is the oversampled edition of the Plokta News Network. You can read PNN online (<http://www.plokta.com/pnn>) or sign up for emails. Newt by Sue Mason (surprise), photo collage (after Tourist Guy) by Alison Scott. No promises about the future of *PNNNewt*, but send news and feedback to any cabal member or locs@plokta.com. Issue 1, Novacon 2001.