

PROMETHEUS

Pirate Cinema wins 2013 Prometheus Award

The 2013 Prometheus Award presentation took place on August 30, on the Riverwalk level at the San Antonio Convention Center. The outside temperature at 1pm, a humid and sticky 100 degrees. Fortunately room 0008A was air conditioned, although tucked away in the far corner of the convention center.

A sparse crowd attended the presentation. Fran Van Cleave, the chair of Programming at the Libertarian Futurist Society, opened the presentation by welcoming the audience. Cory Doctorow then was announced as the winner, for his novel, *Pirate Cinema*. This was Doctorow's second Prometheus Award; his novel *Little Brother* won in 2009. The following were all the finalists for the Prometheus award best novel category:

Arctic Rising, by Tobias Buckell

Pirate Cinema, by Cory Doctorow

The Unincorporated Future, by Dani and Eytan Kollin

Darkship Renegades, by Sarah Hoyt

Kill Decision, by Daniel Suarez

Doctorow did not attend Worldcon to receive the award in person. Instead, he was one of 60,000 individuals at Burning Man. His editor at Tor, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, received the plaque with the one-ounce gold coin (real money), and read Doctorow's gracious acceptance speech. The plaques this year were designed by Kent Van Cleave, and both prominently featured the names of the winning authors and books. Nielsen Hayden speed-read though the two type-written pages, which appear elsewhere in this newsletter. After a brief photo op with the award, Neilen Hayden departed.

Fran Van Cleave then read the nominees for the Hall of Fame Award. Unlike the Best Novel award, the Hall of Fame is open to a wide range of fiction, from short stories to novels, fiction to science fiction. The list of this year's Hall of Fame nominees span fiction from 1912 through 1999.

"Sam Hall," by Poul Anderson

Falling Free, by Lois McMaster Bujold

"Repent, Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman,"
by Harlan Ellison

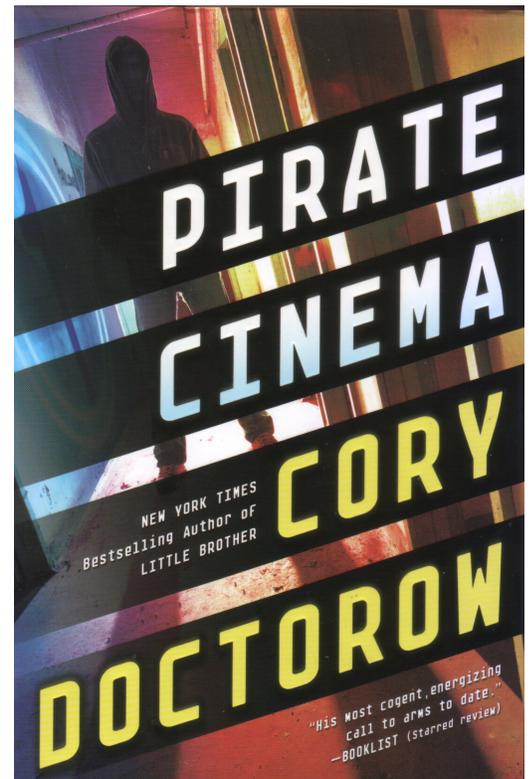
Courtship Rite, by Donald M. Kingsbury

"As Easy as A.B.C.," by Rudyard Kipling

Cryptonomicon, by Neal Stephenson

The most recent work of the list, Neal Stephenson's *Cryptonomicon*, was announced as the Hall of Fame winner. Stephenson was not present to receive the award, nor was a representative available to receive it on his behalf. The handsome plaque with a one-tenth ounce gold coin will be forwarded to him via his publisher.

The fairly short ceremony then concluded. Next year's Worldcon takes place in London, which means there is a choice of venues for the 2014 award presentation. This could either take place in London if an LFS member is going to LonCon, or in Detroit at DetCon, which is the site of NASFiC, the North American alternative to international Worldcons.



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PROMETHEUS

The newsletter of the Libertarian Futurist Society

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A day in the life of Worldcon

I believe my last full Worldcon experience came in 1998, in Baltimore. I've attended Armadillocon a few times, Dragon-Con once, Westercon once, the World Fantasy Con once, and the full Worldcon three years in a row (1996 in Los Angeles, 1997 in San Antonio, and 1998 in Baltimore). Conventions are exhausting. Maybe I'm not a people person. I've attended a few panels (and appeared on panels at DragonCon and a small programming/SF convention a few years ago). I mostly enjoy spending time in the dealers' room. I skip the parties, find the masquerade baffling, and the Hugo Award ceremony overly long.

After skipping conventions for years, I happened to be in Colorado during Denvention 3, in 2008. I made a side trip to Denver and bought a one-day membership, specifically to attend the Prometheus Awards ceremony, and then later a small dinner with a group that included L. Neil Smith and Fran Van Cleave.

Looking back, 2008 seems like such a long time ago. I remember the convention well, as while I was there the company for which I worked at the time fired a co-worker, and though we shared an office no one ever fully explained why he was gone for quite some time.

In 1997, when the last Worldcon took place in San Antonio, I lived 90 miles to the north, and drove down for the occasion. Victor Koman won the Prometheus Award for best novel for *Kings of the High Frontier*. Sam Konkin, whose motto of *carpe noctem* I'd learned of previously at Westercon some time before, called me one night at 3 or 4am to remind me I'd promised to drive him to a Kinkos and help print his conzine, *Daily Frefanzine*. I still remember navigating to that Kinkos in a strange city in the middle of the night, probably the only

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Prometheus Submission Guidelines

Prometheus seeks reviews, interview, essays, articles, and columns of interest to libertarian science fiction fans. Any individual may submit material — membership in the LFS is not required.

As the newsletter of the Libertarian Futurist Society, *Prometheus* focuses on Prometheus Award-nominated works, but also publishes reviews and articles beyond the Prometheus Award candidates.

Letters of comment also are welcome, whether about the reviews, or any questions about LFS, the nominating and voting process. In this digital age the printed press continues to matter, but we need your help to sustain this newsletter.

Contact the editor for more details via email at: editor@lfs.org

Opinion: Abolish the Hall of Fame award

By Anders Monsen

Let me state at the outset that the opinions expressed here are solely my own. They are not expressed lightly, but the result of built-up reflection over the many years. I think the time has come to abolish the LFS Hall of Fame award.

Since the LFS first announced the Hall of Fame in 1983 just under 200 novels, short stories, screenplays, movies, TV shows, music albums, graphic novels and anthologies have been nominated. There have been 36 winners during the past thirty years; two books were awarded the Hall of the Fame the first two years, possibly as a result of wanting to rush the recognition of some classic works.

Many of the books awarded the Hall of Fame deserve recognition. There are classic works of fiction. They inspired us as we read them, thrilled us, terrified us. We remember some of these books as vividly now as when we first read them. At least, *some* of them. However, already in 1986, three years after the award's inception, people in the pages of *Prometheus* asked why the same books were nominated time again. Now, 30 years later, we still pick through the tailings by simply nominating the same books. Despite expanding the category to include "novels, novellas, stories, graphic novels, anthologies, films, TV shows/series, plays, poems, music recordings and other works of fiction," we find the same handful of works racking up nominations year after year. Clearly something in the Hall of Fame process is broken.

The LFS may well be the only group that regularly awards a Hall of Fame award. The Hugos have awarded a few Retro-Hugos. Some awards exist for Lifetime Achievement. Why abolish, you may ask? Shouldn't we simply modify the rules? Maybe set a time limit like the baseball Hall of Fame, where eligibility terminates after 15 years from the first nomination? I think that might be a viable alternative, if we also increase the pool of finalists. To keep the award, but avoid the same works each year, we could look at restricting how many times something could be nominated. Or, we could add a time limit, so that if something appears on the list, it cannot appear for another five years. Yet who would police this? Would books get grandfathered into the cut-off?

But I lean towards the more radical option.

Before I sat down to write this piece I analyzed the history of the Hall of Fame. I brought in every single nominee into a database, using as reference the web site's Hall of Fame page, as well as press releases and old newsletters. I ended up with 411 nominees for 192 unique works.

To the right I have listed the top nominees by number of years they were nominated. Four out of the top five are bridesmaids, runners-up, also-rans, losers; they have never won the award, yet together they have a collective 51 years of nominations. That's an average of almost 13 nominations per novel, yet none have won the Hall of Fame.

Robert Silverberg's *A Time of Changes* is the Susan Lucci of the Hall of Fame (she finally won an Emmy after 18 years

Top Hall of Fame nominees

Title	Author	Nominations
<i>A Time of Changes</i>	Robert Silverberg	17
<i>The Book of Merlyn</i>	T. H. White	12
<i>Courtship Rite</i>	Donald Kingsbury	12
<i>The Dispossessed*</i>	Ursula K. Le Guin	11
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>	Ken Kesey	10
<i>It Can't Happen Here*</i>	Sinclair Lewis	9
<i>Empyrion</i>	Jack Vance	9
<i>This Perfect Day*</i>	Ira Levin	8
<i>The Lord of the Rings*</i>	J. R. R. Tolkien	8
<i>Circus World</i>	Barry Longyear	8
"As Easy as A.B.C."	Rudyard Kipling	8
<i>A Clockwork Orange</i>	Anthony Burgess	8
<i>We*</i>	Yevgeni Zamiatin	6
<i>Time Will Run Back</i>	Henry Hazlitt	6
<i>That Hideous Strength</i>	C. S. Lewis	5
<i>Oath of Fealty</i>	Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle	5
<i>Falling Free</i>	Lois McMaster Bujold	5
<i>The Syndic*</i>	Cyril Kornbluth	4
<i>The Stars my Destination*</i>	Alfred Bester	4
<i>Tai Pan</i>	James Clavel	4
"Repent, Harlequin!"		
Said the Ticktockman"	Harlan Ellison	4
<i>Orion Shall Rise</i>	Poul Anderson	4
<i>Lone Star Planet/ A Planet for Texans*</i>	H. Beam Piper	4
<i>Darkness at Noon</i>	Arthur Koestler	4
<i>Cryptonomicon</i>	Neal Stephenson	4
<i>Blue World</i>	Jack Vance	4
<i>We the Living</i>	Ayn Rand	3
<i>Trader to the Stars</i>	Poul Anderson	3
<i>The Weapon Shops of Isher*</i>	A. E. Van Vogt	3
<i>The Star Fox</i>	Poul Anderson	3
"The Machine Stops"	E. M. Forster	3
<i>The Great Explosion*</i>	Eric Frank Russell	3
<i>The Girl Who Owned a City</i>	O. T. Nelson	3
<i>Riddley Walker</i>	Russall Hoban	3
<i>Hardwired</i>	Walter Jon Williams	3
<i>Ensign Flandry</i>	Poul Anderson	3
<i>Anthem*</i>	Ayn Rand	3
<i>Alongside Night*</i>	J. Neil Schulman	3
2112	Rush	3

* Winner

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Prometheus Award acceptance speech

Cory Doctorow, for *Pirate Cinema*

When I started thinking critically about copyright and the Internet, I came at it as an artist, thinking about what I knew about creativity. I came out of science fiction, where we've been ripping each other's ideas and storylines and titles off since the earliest pulp era, to the great benefit of our genre. Of *course* remixing is the heart of creativity. Of *course* we stand on the shoulders of giants. As the protagonist of this novel remarks, "creativity means combining two things in a way that no one has ever thought of combining them before," or as my mentor Judith Merrill wrote in her Hugo-winning memoir *Better to Have Loved*:

Whereas in other literary fields you wouldn't dare take an idea from another writer and use it, because that would be considered plagiarism, science fiction people loved to build on each other's stories. The business of giving away ideas and promoting other people's work was part of the community at large.

But as the years went by and the fight wore on, I realized that I was coming at it from a very parochial angle. Earning a living in the arts is an unlikely thing, and adapting Internet regulation to maximize the benefit of the miniscule minority of professional artists was flat-out insane. After all, the Internet is the nervous system of the 21st century—everything we do today involves the Internet and everything we do tomorrow will require it. The rules that govern the Internet ultimately regulate every corner of human existence, from falling in love to getting an education to electing a government to organizing the street-protests that bring that government down again.

Once you get to thinking of things that way, you start to realize that even if the absence of rules that imposed unaccountable censorship and universal surveillance and the subversion of the integrity of the computers in our pockets, walls and bodies meant the end of the entertainment industry and my relegation to the breadline, they'd *still be worth it*.

Now, I happen to think we can go on creating even in a world where we're not allowed to spy on everyone and break their computers to make sure they're not listening to music or watching TV or reading books the wrong way. I happen to think that we can guarantee a living to a comparably sized, statistically insignificant rump of would-be artists, even without the power to secretly and unaccountably censor the Internet. But even if that weren't the case, we should still throw out censorship, surveillance and control as unfit for purpose.

This year has seen incredible revelations about the scope and scale of the global Internet surveillance and the total lack of adult supervision for the world's clutch of depraved spooks. We've known about mass surveillance for three presidential administrations, since Mark Klein bravely blew the whistle on AT&T's work with the NSA in 2005, but the Snowden leaks have blown the lid off things and given the stalled court actions over Klein's leaks the momentum they need to push forward.

But even if we beat back the spooks, even if we kick Big



Tor editor, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, accepting the Prometheus award on behalf of winner Cory Doctorow

Content in the pants and send them packing, the fight's just getting started. Every single problem everyone has from now on will involve the Internet, because the Internet will be woven into every facet of our lives. Every problem will suggest the solution that coked-up Hollyweird fatcats and the creeps who read *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a manual for statecraft arrived at: just break the Internet so that my problem goes away.

This fight is getting started, and it has no end in sight. Organizations like EFF and the ACLU and the Free Software Foundation and Fight for the Future are the best bulwark we have against the special pleading that says, "If I don't get to redesign the Internet to solve my problems, there's going to be trouble."

Thank you very, very much for this honor. *Pirate Cinema* just keeps on getting more topical, and I hope that your recognition will help it spread to the places it needs to be heard, and help to create a generation who'll stand up for the network we all depend upon.



2013 Prometheus award plaques, designed by Kent Van Cleave



LFS Prometheus award programming chair, Fran Van Cleave, with the Hall of Fame plaque for Neal Stephenson's Cryptonomicon



—*A day in the life of Worldcon, continued from page 2*

car on the road. Now I live in San Antonio, only one mile from that Kinkos, and every time I drive between it and the university across the street, I remember Sam Konkin and his efforts to print the newsletter from his PowerBook to Kinko's weird printers.

The 2013 Worldcon showed up at my doorstep, in San Antonio, Texas. In the intervening years since my last Worldcon experience—Denver in 2008—cities like Montreal, Melbourne, Reno and Chicago had hosted Worldcon. LoneStarCon 3 took place in San Antonio August 29 through September 2, and there I was again, with my one-day membership, bought just to attend the Prometheus Awards and drool over books that I could not afford in the dealers room (anyone have a spare \$2000 for an Arkham House edition of Ray Bradbury's *Dark Carnival?*). The Prometheus Awards ceremony took place in a small room, in a distant corner, and finished all too quickly. Neither winner was there, though Best Novel winner Cory Doctorow sent some very generous remarks that his editor read (or rather, speed-read). These remarks appear here for those unable to attend the awards presentation.

I attended one panel later in the day, walked around the dealers room multiple times, and came away with two handfuls of books. Not willing to spend a couple of grand on a Ray Bradbury first edition of *Dark Carnival*, I settled for books by James Blaylock, Clark Asthon Smith, James Patrick Kelly, and Dan Simmons, among others. I also found a far more reasonably priced Bradbury short story collection that I didn't own, in hardback.

Later, I went to a small dinner with a handful of LFS people. The temperature was a scorching 100 even at 6pm, the walk a fair distance from the convention center, but the experience (brief as it was) certainly enjoyable. The last time Worldcon was held in San Antonio, a bunch of LFS people gathered at a Tony Roma rib eatery a mere five minutes's walk from the convention center.

Sadly, the number of LFS attendees at Worldcon remains woefully low, which makes me wonder if Worldcon is a destination for LFS members. I attend very few conventions, and the past two have been as a day-member only. Is there a future for the LFS at Worldcon? The programming has given the Prometheus Awards a reasonable time-slot, but few people attend; either they are not there, not aware of the awards, or attend competing panels. I am not sure how other non-Hugo/Nebula award presentations take place, whether these are just announced or they happen at conventions. Maybe the LFS should reconsider our resource allocation for the Prometheus Awards. Do we get the biggest bang for our buck by hosting these at Worldcons? Are there other options? In 2014 the Worldcon will take place in London, an expensive venture. In 2015 it is closer home, in Spokane. Do we follow the same format or strike out in a different direction?

Photo credits: Kent Van Cleave (page 4 and top page 5) & Anders Monsen (bottom page 5)

The Scar

By China Miéville

Del Rey, 2013

Reviewed by Chris Hibbert

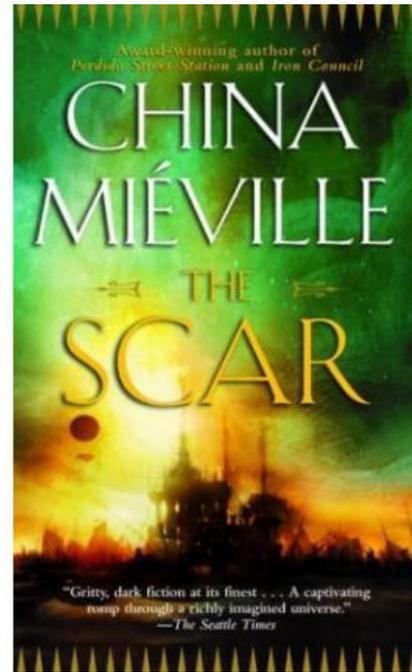
China Miéville's *The Scar* is as dark as *Perdido Street Station*. *The Scar* takes place mostly on Armada, a mobile floating pirate "city" of hundreds of lashed-together seafaring vessels. The main viewpoint character is Bellis Coldwine, a linguist who fled her home in New Cobruzon because the authorities seemed to be following her and becomes intimately involved in the future of Armada, all the while scheming to find a way back to her homeland.

This is dark fantasy, with Miéville's colorful prose showing us many shadowy corners of the world. Bellis plans to pay her way to temporary exile by selling her skills as a translator to a sea captain heading to what she hopes will be a short-term destination, but the ship is attacked by pirates, where she is joined by several remade prisoners. Tanner Sack is one such; as punishment for his crimes, he has had tentacles grafted on to his body. After reaching Armada, he adapts to the seafaring life by paying to be magically and surgically transformed into an even more amphibious form, which makes him quite useful in the mobile floating city.

Armada's past peregrinations were mostly random, going to where there were juicy targets for its piratical deprivations. When people are captured, unless they're expected to be a danger to the city, they're welcomed as new citizens, who can find lodging in any of the variously governed ridings that will accept them. Armada's inhabitants include vampires, cactacae (intelligent warrior cactus-people), scabmettlers (who mold their blood into armor before it coagulates), and others. The city is organized as a dozen different "ridings" with separate local government, and no real overall organization, though they manage to coordinate well enough to navigate to places where they can commit piracy and find the sources of information and tools their plans rely on. But the Lovers (a pair infatuated with each other who seem to hold the reins) have a plan that requires Bellis' linguistic skills to read a book in an obscure language, and a dangerous trip to interview the author. Once that's done, Bellis is of little use to them, but she still longs to leave Armada, and willingly assists in the skullduggery of Silas Fennec, a spy from New Cobruzon who desperately wants to get a warning back to their home.

The success of Silas' message, and its disastrous consequences for Armada, as well as the initial success of the Lovers' plan and the violent outcome of that adventure keep the story riveting. Miéville continually throws in details of all the different races and societies, which are nearly always unsettling. It is the kind of fantasy where new kinds of magic constantly arise, though he keeps a kind of rough consistency, so characters seldom develop new abilities unless they were obviously the kind of person with hidden secrets or we got to watch them pick up a mysterious object beforehand.

The Lovers' goal is to get to the Scar of the title, an enormous rent in the world where unbridled possibility is loose, and bizarre powers are available. We get an early view of



how possibility magic works when Uther Doul, the Lovers' bodyguard, unleashes his "Possible Sword," which he wields as a scattering of possible trajectories of the blade each laying waste to his opponents separately, while he dances lightly through their blades. The sword is a metaphor for quantum uncertainty made manifest. He is also an expert fighter with the sword powered down, since he doesn't know how to recharge its ancient power source. He explains to Bellis later that the sword's special power is to unleash and make real the consequences of not only one actual outcome, but of a cloud of alternative possibilities.

Doul, already an expert and precise swordsman, taught himself a completely different art in order to make the most of it. He says

My arm and the sword mine possibilities. For every factual attack there are a thousand possibilities, nigh-sword ghosts, and all of them strike down together.

Fighting with a Possible Sword, you must never constrain possibilities, I must be an opportunist, not a planner—fighting from the heart, not the mind. Moving suddenly, surprising myself as well as the opponent. Sudden, labile, and formless. So that each strike could be a thousand others, and each of those nigh-swords is strong. That's how to fight with a Possible Sword.

The overall arc of the story is that Bellis escapes from her native city, is kidnapped, longs for home, and keeps taking one action after another at others' suggestion or request that seem likely to help her or her homeland. In the end, she still feels alone in a place she doesn't love. We're better for the journey, though she never frees herself from her captivity. As I said, it has a very dark feel to it. It's fantasy, but the various kinds of magic that are progressively revealed all feel like reasonable parts of this constantly shifting world.

—*Abolish the Hall of Fame*, continued from page 3

of failed nominations, so there is hope for this novel yet). In the 30-year history of the Hall of Fame, this book has been nominated a total of 17 times without winning. Other also-rans include Donald Kingsbury's *Courtship Rite* and T.H. White's *The Book of Merlyn* (12 nominations), Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (10 nominations), Jack Vance's *Empyrio* (9 nominations, all but one prior to 1997), Barry Longyear's *Circus World*; Rudyard Kipling's "As Easy as A.B.C."; Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* (8 nominations). A handful of books have six, five or four nominations. A vast number have two or one (Thirty-six have been nominated twice, 116 were nominated once, though some of these won the first time they were nominated).

Now, the fact that they have never won the Hall of Fame does not mean they are not good books. Certainly, Ken Kesey's novel raises unique issues about control and willing servitude. T.H. White's *The Book of Merlyn* contrasts two imaginary societies, one collectivist and one individualist. Silverberg's and Kingsbury's books have both been hailed as good novels. Contrary to my comments above, I bear no ill will towards Silverberg's *A Time of Changes*, nor some of the other nominees. Yet if any of the books eventually wins through a campaign of attrition, what does this mean, for the book and for the LFS?

Despite a list of almost 200 works on the LFS web page to choose from (and possibly others that never have made the list), the same handful of books and stories appear each year. Why is that? Has it become just a habit to recycle the same items? Are only a few people nominating books and stories for the Hall of Fame? Where is the passion for our classic works of liberty and fiction? Why has expanding the category resulted in no new blood?

There is an exception to every rule, perhaps. Ursula K. Le Guin's dystopian/utopian novel *The Dispossessed* finally entered the Hall of Fame after being nominated 11 times. Yet never has any single book generated as much controversy and passion on either side as *The Dispossessed*. Several LFS members, including Victoria Varga, Robert Shea, and Samuel E. Konkin III all wrote lengthy essays arguing why this book deserved to be in the Hall of Fame. Other people wrote letters against the book; one person declared they would vote it down every time. No other single nominee has received a fraction of this attention or discussion. Yet still these same books just appear on the ballots, year after year, despite not gaining enough votes to win. Given the 15 year limit I suggested, Le Guin's book

still would have made the Hall of Fame.

Yet it is comfortable to see the same books and short stories again and again? Does this truly recognize the books that deserve recognition? If the Hall of Fame awards the pinnacle of libertarian fiction, where then, is Karin Boye's *Kallocaim*, a classic in dystopian fiction published in 1940, nominated only once, in 2011. Where is Kurt Vonnegut's individualistic short story, "Harrison Bergeron"? It has been nominated a total of zero times. What of Cecilia Holland's anarchist novel, *The Floating Worlds*? How does *Time Will Run Back* and *Oath of Fealty* receive more nominations than *We the Living*? Prose quality must count for something.

Rather than continue arguing with what could be termed "argument by preference"—*de gustibus non disputandum est*, after all—I point once again to the distribution of nominees. Out of the 36 winners, the average number of nominations is just under three (3)—2.86. The vast majority (77%) were nominated three times or fewer before they won, and yet we have books each year lately nominated time and again with no fresh blood. If a book/story has not won after three times as a finalist (with very few exceptions), will it ever gain enough votes to win? This tells me that either only a small segment of the LFS membership cares about the Hall of Fame, or we are scraping the bottom of a very selective barrel.

It's almost as if the Hall of Fame now simply exists as a force of habit, a perpetual motion machine. Like a temporary government measure no one wants to be the one to kill it. The words "abolish" and "kill" are indeed harsh words. I employ them partially for effect. Perhaps "retire" would be more appropriate. The award seemed to serve its purpose well the first decade; true classics dominated the first ten years's winners. Most got in fairly quickly. Lately that doesn't seem to be the case. And now, in 2013, the youngest work published wins.

When Neal Stephenson's *Cryptonomicon*, nominated for the 2000 Best Novel award a decade later wins the Hall of Fame, does this mean we have moved to recognized runners-up to the best novel award as classics? "Oh, sorry you didn't win for best novel. In a few years you get to go again." Is that right? Is that fair? But wait, you say, J. Neil Schulman's *Alongside Night* set precedent by being a finalist for the best novel in 1982, then received the Hall of Fame in 1989; F. Paul Wilson's *An Enemy of the State* was a best novel finalist in 1982 and then a Hall of Fame winner in 1991. Although I still remember vividly Schulman and Wilson's novels, despite not having read either one in over two decades, I believe they were Prometheus nominees, another book won, and it ends there. That doesn't diminish their worth. There is no post-Oscar award, no post-Hugo award, why a post-Prometheus award?

What happens next? Do we return to older books, or should more recent novels get more attention? Or, what happens if we abolish or retire the award? Does the LFS suddenly lose visibility or viability by removing an award that recognizes older works? The award that gains the most attention each year is for best novel, as nominees like Charles Stross, Cory Doctorow, James Hogan, Ken MacLeod, L. Neil Smith, Brad Linaweaver, F. Paul Wilson, and others, have publicly

Classifieds

The (Libertarian) Connection, open-forum since 1968. Subscribers may insert four pages/issue free, unedited. **Factsheet Five** said, "Lively interchange of point, counterpoint and comments". Eight/year, \$10. Strauss, 10 Hill #22-LP, Newark NJ 07102.

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—*Abolish the Hall of Fame*, continued from page 7

and proudly mentioned their books being nominated for the Prometheus award. When they say “Prometheus award,” they mean best novel. The best novel is the face of the Prometheus award, not the Hall of Fame.

Eliminating the Hall of Fame is a non-issue for the LFS in terms of the outside world. However, another problem is that voting for the Hall of Fame is tied to Basic membership. If the Hall of Fame no longer exists, this benefit vanishes, and with it the very definition of Basic membership. What about letting all members now vote on the best novel award, or expanding the awards category to include other “best” options, or changing the entire membership structure in some way to still find a benefit.

In fact, as I found out when I asked the Hall of Fame chairperson William H. Stoddard, very few people actually submit nominations. Stoddard mentioned that on average only five to seven people send in nominations, and usually none of these are Basic members. Rather, nominations come from people who are active in LFS committees. This seems to show that people who already have a vested interest participate in the process.

Rather than wonder about benefits for membership types, should we instead ask, “How do we get people more involved?” Are Basic members content simply to vote for the stories and novels that are placed on the ballot, even though each year

(lately) these are the same set of stories and novels? Why are there so few new nominations for the Hall of Fame? Again, do we continue merely out of habit and tradition?

The choice to abolish the Hall of Fame and restructure membership is not up to me or one single person, but rather the entire executive board of the LFS, and subsequently, the membership. My proposal is a radical proposal, since it tries to change 30 years of tradition (although in 1998 Sam Konkin proposed the same action, that we abolish the Hall of Fame). And yet, unless more life is breathed into the Hall of Fame, and new and fresh titles show up as finalists, what happens when we run of those same novels? This, in my opinion, makes the Hall of Fame a second-rate award.

To keep the LFS and the Prometheus award relevant, I believe we need to declare that the Hall of Fame fulfilled its role. Good books might be missing from the list, maybe even great books, but the time for the Hall of Fame has passed. Let us honor those books and stories already in the Hall of Fame by abolishing this category. The alternative becomes keeping alive a hollowed-out zombie of an award.

While I think some books in the Hall of Fame do not deserve to be there, and others should have long since been voted in as a classic of libertarian fiction, I for one am at peace with the idea that my taste in fiction does not always mesh with the majority. But I think we deserve better.



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