



Tied-In

The Newsletter of the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers



Don Bingle and his dog.

Bingle Claims First

IAMTW member Donald J. Bingle won the California Literary Arts Society Memoir Contest this summer with his story “Father’s Day.” Bingle, of Illinois, was invited to the Ventura Book Festival for the awards ceremony. The beginning of his winning entry reads:

You never know what day your kids are going to remember most about growing up.

You hope that it is a good day, a day when you have performed well as a parent. Your greatest fear is that it will be a bad day, a day when you lost your temper or let the dog

run out in front of traffic, or a day when something happened that is only talked about in front of high-priced therapists.

In my case it was the day my dad bought sod.

Scribes for Game-Related Writing

Matt Forbeck and Nathan Long captured top honors for their game-related novels in the original and adapted categories. The wins were announced at Gen Con in Indianapolis, IN during August.

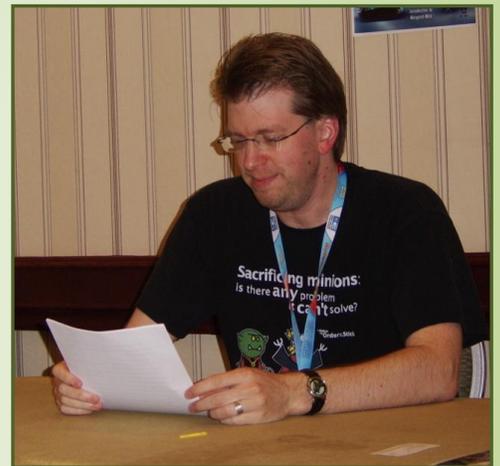
Long won the original category with *Warhammer: Elfslayer*. Forbeck won the adapted category with *The Mutant Chronicles*.



Forbeck and Long shown together at the San Diego Comic-Con.

IAMTW member John Helfers presented the awards during a ceremony at the convention. Helfers and several other IAMTW members were

part of the Gen Con Writer’s Symposium, which sponsored more than 90 hours of seminars and workshops.



John Helfers at a reading during the Gen Con Game Fair.

Tie-In Writers Get Seriously Funny

IAMTW Grand Master Keith R.A. DeCandido Roasted for Charity

We’ve all heard the adage, “If you can’t say something nice about a person, it’s better to say nothing at all.”

This is true everywhere except at a comedy roast for charity—and on Friday, July 10, 2009, a panel of media tie-in authors roasted one of their own to raise \$1,041 for the American Red Cross.



Bestselling author David Mack served as the event's producer and was also its first roaster. Photo by Donna Davis

Appropriately enough, the entire idea started as a joke. In July of 2008, IAMTW members David Mack and Dayton Ward were walking the show floor at Comic-Con International in San Diego when Ward, surveying a table of toys imported from Japan, found a faux-gold-plated figurine of Comic Book Guy

from *The Simpsons*. Holding up the figure to Mack, Ward asked, "This is great, but what the hell would I do with it?" Mack replied, "Give it Keith [R.A. DeCandido] as an award: 'Worst. Tie-in Writer. Ever.'" Pulling out his wallet to pay the toy merchant, Ward replied, "Sold!"

Later that evening, the pair was in a hotel bar, ending the day by sharing a few drinks with their editors and Ward's writing partner, Kevin Dilmore. When the question was raised of where and when to present DeCandido with his dubious award. It was Dilmore who made what turned out to be a fateful utterance: "The Roast of Keith R.A. DeCandido."

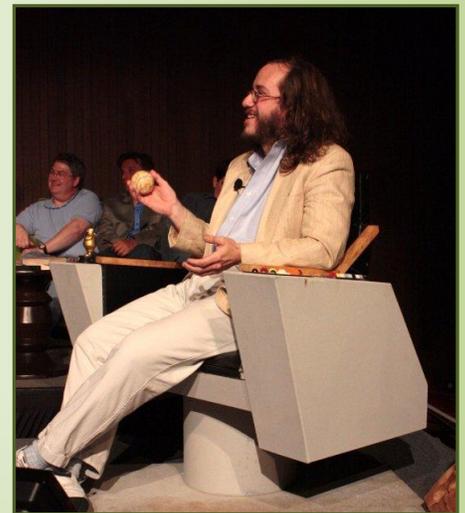
Like so many gags concocted over drinks in a hotel bar, this one might have faded away and been forgotten by the next morning—but Mack realized it was too good an idea to abandon. "I'd been searching for a fun event to participate in at Shore Leave," Mack said,

referring to an annual fan-run convention that regularly showcases a very large number of *Star Trek* novelists and short-fiction authors. "This seemed like a perfect fit for them. Besides, we'd probably have spent the weekend mocking Keith anyway, and this way we could raise money for charity at the same time."

Taking the reins as the event's producer, Mack quickly recruited a number of *Star Trek* literary luminaries to participate in the event. Robert Greenberger was tapped to serve as the event's emcee, or roastmaster, and the panel included authors Kirsten Beyer, Michael Jan Friedman, Glenn Hauman, and editor Marco Palmieri, as well as Mack, Ward, and Dilmore. The biggest star on the dais, however, was



Award-winning author Robert Greenberger served as the roastmaster for the event. Photo by Karen Mitchell Carothers



As the roastee, Keith R.A. DeCandido had the privilege of sitting on a replica Star Trek captain's chair. Photo by Donna Davis

the man who agreed to advise the rest of the panel on how to put on a proper roast: bestselling author and comic-book superstar Peter A. David.

"We'd have been lost without Peter," Mack said. "From the

get-go, he pointed out where we were going wrong, or had made incorrect assumptions. As the only one of us who had ever been part of a real roast before, Peter was absolutely essential to making this event a success.”

With the panel assembled, Mack next secured the support of the convention, whose organizers were excited by the prospect of a new, high-energy event to serve as the kickoff for their weekend. “They gave us everything we needed to succeed,” Mack said. “They let us make this an adults-only event, so we could really cut loose with our comments, and they supported my desire to have bar service inside the event—because the more the audience drank, the funnier we would be. Well, that was my theory, anyway.”

By the end of August 2008, all that remained was to secure the participation of one last person: the guest of honor, Keith R.A. DeCandido. “I was absolutely gobsmacked when Dave first approached me,” DeCandido said, “mainly because I figured—*why me?*



Looking professorial, Michael Jan Friedman takes his turn at the roaster’s lectern.
Photo by Donna Davis



Marco Palmieri, a former editor of Keith DeCandido, shares the horrors he has seen. Photo by Donna Davis

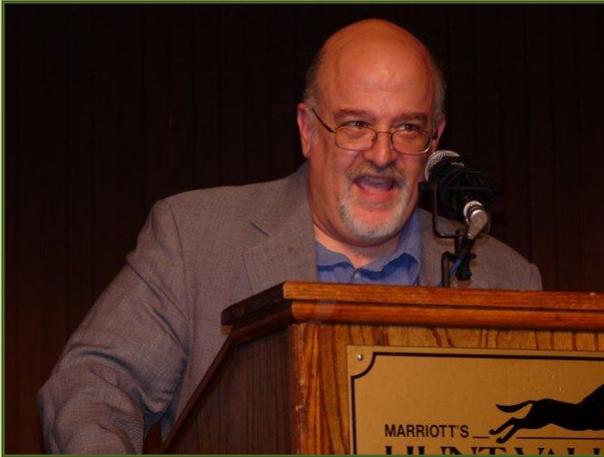
Why not someone who would be a bigger draw? Then I asked the most important question of all: Will I be able to rebut? Dave said, ‘Absolutely,’ at which point I was in.” In truth, the charity aspect of the event was the true deciding factor in convincing DeCandido to suffer an hour of verbal abuse by his colleagues. “That it was for charity meant I’d be involved no matter what,” he said, “and I’m so grateful to Dave, the other roasters, and all the attendees who raised so much for the Red Cross.”

In the months that followed, the roasters worked off and on polishing their scripts, and

Mack handled the show’s other behind-the-scenes details. “I designed the signage, the online advertising materials, and the print ads,” Mack said. “And when I wasn’t doing that, I was planning the preshow music playlist and the walk-on intro music for each roaster, and producing and editing two animated video segments—one to serve as the show’s opening clip and another as a special tribute to Keith’s work. I also commissioned the creation of a Keith look-alike puppet by Peter David’s wife, Kathleen O’Shea David, a professional puppeteer.”



The faux-gold-plated figurine that started it all.



The final roaster of the evening was Peter A. David, who showed his colleagues what it really means to verbally flay a friend to within an inch of his life.

Photo by Karen Mitchell Carothers

Mack worked with the convention's media-production agency, Conventional Magic, to plan the event. "The guys at Conventional Magic were great," Mack said. "Zeke Dowty, the director, and John Vengrouskie, the sound director,

pulled together all the elements and turned my e-mails full of crazy ideas into a fun, rocking event." Among the special touches that Dowty and Vengrouskie contributed was a fan-made replica of the classic *Star Trek* captain's chair, for DeCandido to sit in during the roast. "We went to great lengths to hide that chair during the tech rehearsal on the day of the show, so it would be a surprise for Keith when he took the stage," Mack said. "The look on his face when we unveiled it made it worth the effort."

Other elements of the production that impressed Mack were the stage and the camera

coverage. "When I started all this, I didn't expect much more than a bunch of us knuckleheads sitting on cheap hotel chairs, insulting Keith in a small room for an audience of twenty or thirty of his closest frenemies," he said. "Instead, we had the second ballroom, a two-level stage, and six cameras covering the event, including one on a roving jib-arm."

The biggest surprise, according to Mack, was the attendance. "Most of us hoped we would draw maybe a hundred people," he said. "The room had been set up to seat roughly 200 people. We packed that room until it was standing-room only, and I'm told we had to turn away more than a hundred people who wanted to attend."

With help from volunteers, cash donations and pledges to donate blood were solicited from the audience for the American Red Cross. Each on-stage participant in the roast contributed \$50 to the ARC as an example to the fans, whose own donations more than doubled the amount raised by the event.

"The event was more successful than we had dared to hope," Mack said. Cracking a smile, he added, "Naturally, we want to raise even more next time."

And there will be a next time, according to Mack. Next year's event is already being planned, and its guest of honor will be Michael Jan Friedman. "I can't reveal yet what we have in store for Mike," Mack said, "but I can tell you this: we're all looking to top this year's show, big time."

Look out, Mr. Friedman.



In keeping with the traditions of the roast, guest of honor Keith R.A. DeCandido gets the last word. Photo by Lorraine Anderson

Spotlight on Brandie Tarvin

By Brandie Tarvin

Compared to many IAMTW members, my resume appears sparse. Since 2004, my published credits include several SQL Server articles, two Tied-In articles, one article for SFUniverse and three short fiction stories. In 2006, I served on the Nebula Awards Short Fiction Jury with Jean Rabe. It was Jean, in fact, who introduced me to the IAMTW. A short time later, she even invited me to sail on the seas of the Blue Kingdoms, a shared world invented by Steve Sullivan and herself.

I came about my fiction career in a very backwards, amateurish sort of way. So backwards is how I'll discuss my work.

My very second story, "Just My Luck," found its home in the "Pirates of the Blue Kingdoms" anthology. The inspiration for this piece is a Russian folktale where a group of misfits managed to outwit a diabolical king. Captain Sheldon is quite the infamous pirate. Unfortunately for him, his claim to fame is being the unluckiest pirate in the world. His crew consists of a cross-dressing first mate, a navigator who doesn't understand cardinal directions, and a sea elf who gets sea-sick.

My third story, "The Monster of Mogahnee Bay," published in "Blue Kingdoms: Shades and Specters," had its roots in the ghost stories my father used to

tell. Many a tale have I heard where he and his friends wandered into forbidden places only to all die horribly painful deaths at the hand of some unseen horror. So does "The Monster of Mogahnee Bay" go; a different sort of unseen horror which hunts those foolish enough to give in to temptation.



But the actual start of my professional writing career occurred in 2004.

I am, and always have been, a self-proclaimed bookworm. By the second grade, I was devouring mythology and folklore. By the fifth, I was

reading adult science fiction and fantasy, much to the horror of the local librarian who thought children should only be reading children's books. My father is a writer himself, though currently unpublished. He is the one author who influenced my tastes the most. And when I was ten years old, I wrote my very first short story in an attempt to be just like him.

Since then, I've been addicted to writing.

And I do mean addicted. I'm a writer because I simply can't go more than a couple of days without writing something, anything, down on a piece of paper or in a word document.

Even if it's only a brief idea or a strange book title or a character sketch, I have to be writing because I literally don't know how to stop.

When I was in high school, I wrote a couple of fan-fiction pieces. Mostly, though, I stuck with original work. I even wrote my first novel when I was fourteen. My eventual goal was to get published like a "real" author. The words "media tie-in" hadn't even made it into my consciousness at the time. So I relegated my fanfic to the closet and told

myself that any day now I would be finish the novel that would get me published.

After college, I found an online Transformers fan group and got re-involved with one of my favorite franchises. It became a temporary obsession

which resulted in me joining several MUSHes, becoming an online Game Master (the better to feed my story-creating urges) and actively writing fanfic again. There was a hole in the original cartoon series I'd decided that I needed to be filled. There was no ulterior motive behind this piece. I was writing for me and me alone. So after a day-long fan discussion at a water park, several months of research—which consisted of re-watching the cartoon and looking up tech specs, and two years of writing, I ended up "Transformers: Chosen."

"Chosen" is longer than the average fanfic, novel-length in fact. It received rave reviews from the Transfans who read it, and one fan even encouraged me to get it published.

And encouraged and encouraged, until finally I believed that I might actually have a chance. So I gleefully bundled up my manuscript, wrote my query letter, and sent the package off to publishing houses and agents alike. Because, of course, the publishing industry really does work that way, don't you know. Twenty polite form rejection letters later, though, I realized my approach contained a few inherent flaws.

Finally, in one last desperate flash of inspiration, I tried to buy the franchise publishing rights from Hasbro.

I never actually received a rejection letter from Hasbro. Instead, I got a phone call. Joshua Izzo, then VP of Publishing, was sorry to inform me that the publishing rights



Brandie's editors review her latest manuscript.

had already been sold to a publishing house and that Hasbro didn't split rights. He was, however, sufficiently impressed by the level of work I'd done and was willing to send "Chosen" to iBooks, Inc. "with my permission."

I will always remember that moment. My fiancé answers the phone, a funny look crosses his face, and he mouths: "Do you know a Russell Davis?"

Oh, happy day! My boss thought I'd won the lottery the way I carried on at my day job. I definitely gave my permission, thinking my first published novel was just around the corner. Unfortunately, Steve Roman at iBooks had already decided what it would be doing

with its four licensed books. So, I received another rejection for my pile with a note that he would be hanging onto "Chosen" in case another opportunity came up.

I will always remember that moment. My fiancé answers the phone, a funny look crosses his face, and he mouths "Do you know a Russell Davis?" My fiancé likes to hang up on people we don't know, but I was in mood to take the call. Oh, how close I came to missing my golden opportunity.

Russell informed me that the fourth iBooks book was to be an anthology. He was seeking short story authors and my name had come up. Would I like to contribute?

This is how I know the force controlling the universe has a sense of humor. I didn't get my fanfic novel published, but because if it, I did get published. Russell emailed the details. Five weeks to turn in a 4,000 to

6,000 word story for an anthology titled "Legends."

I looked back on that e-mail today and discovered a little gem I'd forgotten about. In fact, it utterly escaped me at the time. Russell said: "These stories will not be in continuity, but the usual rules on media tie-in work (no deaths, no changes to the universe or characters, etc.) will apply." I find this hilarious simply because I had no idea what the "usual rules of on media tie-in work" were. My first published work would be related to a side of the industry I knew nothing about. But Russell treated me as a professional, so I did my best to return the favor.

And then I panicked. Five weeks to write a short story and I had no idea what to write about. I wasn't even sure I could get the story done on time.

Like a maniac, I bounced ideas off my family, calling them at all hours of the night. Finally, I decided to write about one of my favorite Transformers, one I'd played on the MUSHes. But because Swindle was a side character, I was worried he wouldn't be accepted for an anthology titled "Legends." I did a lot of research in a very short timeframe and decided to throw in a couple of Easter-eggs for the old Generation One Transfans. So a plot involving the president-king of Carbombia and the Decepticon Swindle came into being.

A week later, I sent off my finished story and crossed my fingers, hoping desperately "Two for the Price of One" would be good enough for publication.

I should mention two things here. First, Russell slapped my wrist for making up a country called Carbombia. It's a bad joke for a show about robots transforming into cars. If the country hadn't been made up by the writers of the original Transformers cartoon, it would have been removed from my story. The second thing is, because I didn't have the original script in front of me, I spelled the country's name wrong in my story. It should actually be "Carbombya" according to certain fan groups. But Hasbro didn't catch it when



Russell accepted "Two for the Price of One" for publication, and the rest of my career fell into place. In 2004, I went from amateur to professional writer.

they approved my story and I didn't know about the faux pas until after the anthology had been published.

Russell accepted "Two for the Price of One" for publication, and the rest of my career fell into place. In 2004, I went from amateur to professional writer. I joined the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America in 2005. I volunteered for the Nebula Juries in 2006. I met Jean Rabe—a fellow "Legends" author, joined the IAMTW, and was published again and again.

The first half of 2009 has proven to be my busiest writing time since 2004. Where once I struggled to find opportunity,

now a surfeit of possibilities surround me.

At the end of April, I finished my third novel. "Circle of Fire" is an original fantasy work with the potential to be the first in a series. I've actually received a request for a COF partial already, which has me truly excited. My local writers group is preparing to tear the book to shreds, and I'm researching agent possibilities while refining my synopsis.

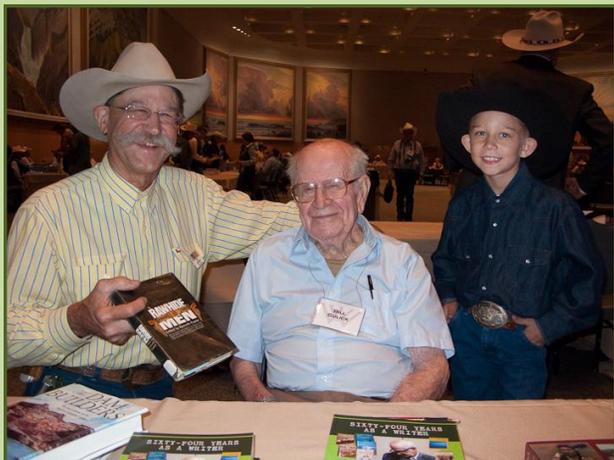
While I'm working on my first "major market sale," I'm continuing to develop other items. I'm seeking a home for several original short fiction pieces. I have five tie-in pieces submitted, with one of them being tentatively accepted (no contract yet). In addition, I'm working on a couple of private projects which have a lot of potential.

None of this would be possible without the assistance of Joshua Izzo, Steve Roman, Russell Davis, and Jean Rabe. While there are several people who have helped me since then, these are the four people responsible for bringing me into the fold. Without them, I would still be struggling along with the rest of the wanna-be crowd, wishing for a dream I didn't know how to fulfill.

My thanks go out to them and every IAMTW member who has ever answered one of my famous "stupid questions." Your support means the world to me.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have more proposals to write.

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Belle Saloon, which housed a bordello upstairs—the downstairs bar was tended by a pre-Hollywood Tom Mix, back in 1902).

On Thursday night, a banquet and auction benefiting WWA’s non-profit Homestead Foundation turned up all manner of goods

Legendary writer Bill Gulick with fans (and raised loads of cash)—from an original

typescript of antique-typewriter-only writer Loren D. Estleman, to signed copies of books, plus DVDs, vintage movie posters, Western clothes, jewelry, a buffalo head, and much more.

Friday night’s mega-book signing was held at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum (nationalcowboymuseum.org). Beforehand, WWA members spent hours touring the impressive museum. The collections, beginning with the 17-foot iconic statue, *The End of the Trail*, in the foyer and leading on through Prosperity Junction—a replica Western town, then into displays of priceless Western film and TV memorabilia (the Duke’s Rooster Cogburn garb from *True Grit*, including the eyepatch), a massive American Rodeo Gallery complete with replica bull-ring, plus detailed historic displays depicting daily life of early native people on through the mountain man era, pioneer days, the rise of the US Cavalry, the days of the cattle drives—and too much more to list, but the venue is well worth the visit.

As a special bonus, our visit coincided with the Prix de West art show. The paintings and sculpture collected there represent the finest in art depicting historic and contemporary Western life in the US. That collection alone took several hours to absorb.

On Saturday afternoon, the special half-hour talk, “Time with a Legend,” was with a WWA founding member, 93-year-old Bill Gulick, whose



WWA Mega-Book Signing

writing career began with the pulps, carried on into the slicks (he had a particularly lengthy and fruitful relationship with *The Saturday Evening Post*), and into novels and works of non-fiction. Several of his novels were made into well-known features, such as *Bend of the River* (with Jimmy Stewart) and *The Road to Denver*.



Matthew P. Mayo

The Day the WWA Rode into Town

By Matthew P. Mayo

The annual Western Writers of America conference took place on June 16-20, 2009, this year in Midwest City, Oklahoma, next door to Oklahoma City. It was a busy week, as they always are, filled with panel discussions led by experts on various topics, including “WWA’s All-Time Greatest TV Western Series, Miniseries, and Movies”; “A Land Rush of Ideas: Writing About Oklahoma”; “Writing from the Indian Viewpoint”; “Agents & Editors,” and many more.

Wednesday saw us out and about the surrounding Oklahoma countryside, where we visited the sprawling Express Ranch, a massive beef-cattle operation. Next door we toured the Express Clydesdale Ranch—equally impressive. Then it was on to Guthrie, Oklahoma, site of one of three major land-rushes and home to scores of historic Western buildings (including the Blue



next year, the WWA will, for the first time ever, hold its convention east of the Mississippi ... in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 2010. See you there! And be sure to visit Western Writers of America at: www.westernwriters.org.

(Matthew P. Mayo is author of a handful of traditional Westerns, and the forthcoming non-fiction book, Cowboys, Mountain Men & Grizzly Bears: The Fifty Grittiest Moments in the History of the Wild West, due out in the Fall of 2009 by Globe Pequot Press. Visit him at www.matthewmayo.com.)

The End of the Trail statue at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

Saturday night saw us back at the National Cowboy Museum for the fancy-dress Spur Awards banquet (the Spurs are the WWA's Oscars). And this year, in addition to the fine roundup of new and notable projects that merited recognition, the Owen Wister Award for Lifetime Achievement was given to Elmore Leonard (of *3:10 to Yuma* fame) for his numerous and ever-popular contributions to Western literature.

It was a solid week jam-packed with events and plenty of after-hours bar time. And



Some Western Writers get a tour of historic Guthrie Oklahoma

The Future of Gaming: Give Games a Sporting Chance

By Donald J. Bingle

Tie-Ins these days are not limited to movies and television. Tie-In writing also springs from games, from pencil and paper role-playing games to computer shoot-em-ups to MMORPGs. In honor of the Scribe Award for Gaming Tie-Ins that was awarded at Gen Con this month, here's a prognostication on the future of gaming. Is this view accurate or just another piece of near-term futurism that gets it wrong?

When you really think about it, the demise of sports was inevitable. Athletes were destined to become extinct; the poor adrenaline-soaked, lactic-acid-laden, mouth-breathing, muscle-bound, protein-shake-

drinking freaks simply never stood a chance.

Some say the sports franchises were just victims of their own success, that the pay scales for athletes not only became fiscally irresponsible for team owners, but alienating for Joe-Six-Pack fans. The limited pool of true talent was so small and the owners so desperate to win at any cost in order to fuel their own vicarious fantasy lives that the bidding became emotional, irrational, sensational, and ultimately vindictive as owners, eager to show off the size of their *cajones*, bid up even minor and mediocre talents to exact revenge for losing a more renowned competitor to a rival. Toss in the carrying costs of a small army of replacements, substitutes, farm team players, coaches, assistant coaches, coordinators, trainers, technicians, cheerleaders, mascots, schedulers, travel consultants, accountants, marketers, lawyers, trademark licensors, and equipment wranglers and you're beginning to talk real money. Add the capital cost of the sporting venue, associated practice fields, shoes, uniforms, sporting equipment, and jock straps (always extra large) and you begin to understand why sports was dominated by rich white guys who made their fortune doing something else, something productive, something remunerative, something with an underlying economic sense to it.

The money was crazy, sure, but so was the income—cities building huge, domed facilities with taxpayer funds even though the stadiums did

Perhaps sports could have held their own in trench warfare with games—each with a phalanx of players and fans, the ranks ebbing and peaking with a periodicity dictated by the latest fads—if not for the injury factor.

nothing but sit idle three hundred days a year, television networks bilked billions out of beer pushers to broadcast their silly little games, and fans got ripped-off on everything from programs to hot dogs to officially-licensed shirts, caps, and all-terrain vehicles.

The whole crazy sports machine probably would have lumbered along like an offensive linesman on Vicodin if not for, well, the Vicodin . . . and drugs in general. The pressure to win, but even more importantly, the desire to make a boat-load of money in the bidding frenzy for talent, drove the simple-minded athlete to a simple solution: cheating. Soon steroids to build body-mass, amphetamines to provide a performance burst, human growth hormones to become taller, blood transfusions to enhance oxygenation, and numbing agents to allow playing with pain (or at least what would have been pain, but for the drugs) predominated in the locker room. Not soon after, revelations about drugs predominated on the sports page, in fantasy-league discussions, in Olympic committee meetings, in Congressional hearing rooms, and eventually, in the federal penitentiaries. Yep, people got locked up for cheating at sports. Sooner or later, all the sports were implicated—cycling, football, baseball, track, skiing, water polo, basketball, hockey,

tennis, pole-vaulting, synchronized-swimming, and even curling (you can sweep like a banshee when you're on crack).

Inevitably, the scourge of drugs in sports became a top-level concern not only of the rulers of sports, but the rulers of the world—moms. Mom didn't want little Johnny hanging out with a bunch of guys sharing more than dirty stories in the locker room, but at the same time Mom didn't want little Johnny coming home crying because he couldn't compete and Dad getting all frustrated because his son played like a wuss on the field. Maybe it was better if Johnny just played a game with his friends in the basement or online.

Perhaps sports could have held their own in trench warfare with games—each with a phalanx of players and fans, the ranks ebbing and peaking with a periodicity dictated by the latest fads—if not for the injury factor. While it has always been true that people get hurt when they fling their bodies or balls or pucks or pretty much anything else at one another and that sports have always been associated with a certain number of tears, breaks, pulls, lacerations, concussions, and deaths to the competitors or to the fans nearby, modern tort law as brought to you by the modern tort lawyer (living the life of financial excess his father

always dreamed about) has made such inevitable bashings and the associated bleeding, pain, and death very expensive. The ascendancy of the legal maxim that there is no injury which cannot be blamed on someone else—the team, the school, the facility, the ball, the equipment manufacturer, the coach, the teammate, the opponent, the city, or the relevant rule-making body for the sport, made injuries more expensive than utility outfielders.

But, again, more than the expense, there was Mom. Mom didn't want Johnny getting hurt. Mom wanted Johnny protected from everything in life—bullies, teachers, gold-digging women, bad grades, homework, peer pressure, promiscuous women, drugs, hard work, snapped towels, athlete's foot, and, of course, getting hurt playing games in the dirt. No sports for Johnny. Sports are dirty, dangerous, elitist, oriented only toward winning at all costs, and infested with slutty cheerleaders. Dad would have to get his vicarious thrills reading *Sports Illustrated*—Swimsuit Edition.

At the same time as sports spun into a downward spiral, gaming was on the rise. Mom wanted Johnny to be clean and safe and able to play despite the lack of physical prowess and to cooperate with others toward a group goal that would build his

self-esteem, and keep him far, far away from slutty cheerleaders. Aside from a rare case of carpal-tunnel syndrome in someone with clearly inferior gaming equipment, there is no risk of injury (no bleeding, bruising, pulling, tearing, breaking, or concussing) in gaming. There are no tryouts to fuel anxiety, rage, or suicidal dismay. There are no coteries of coaches, trainers, mascots, or slutty cheerleaders. There are no stadiums to build, no fields to chalk, no significant expense of any kind. Everything is either imaginary or virtual and much of it is built by the players themselves.

And, so, it is not surprising that actual sports have become extinct (there are still sports-themed games) and games—table-top, virtual, one-on-one, team, or massively multiplayer—have become what sports once were, complete with fans, sponsorships (heavy on the caffeine-laden drinks, rather than beer), endorsements, pay-per-view competitions, superstars, box scores, televised championships, and, yes, slutty cheerleaders. Dad would be so proud.

2010 SCRIBES

Work has begun on the 2010 Scribe Awards for books published between Jan. 1, 2009 and Dec. 31, 2009. Send a copy of your book and the entry form to each judge in the category and to the IAMTW at:

IAMTW
PO Box 8212
Calabasas, CA 91372.

GENERAL FICTION BEST NOVEL—ORIGINAL

Keith R.A. DeCandido (Chair)
PO Box 4976
New York, NY 10185

Bob Greenberger
36 Yarrow Road
Fairfield CT 06824-4559

David Spencer
41-07 42nd Street #4B
Long Island City, NY 11104

BEST NOVEL—ADAPTED

D. J. Stevenson (Chair)
P. O. Box 297
Claridge PA 15623

Alina Wickham
160 W. 95th St. #5A
New York, NY 10025

Raymond Benson
811 Thompson Blvd.
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

SPECULATIVE FICTION BEST NOVEL – ORIGINAL

Jean Rabe (Chair)
3511 22nd St.
Kenosha, WI 53144

Steven Schend
816 Fairmount St SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Ben Rome
5310 Ferndale St.
Springfield, VA 22151

BEST NOVEL – ADAPTED

Debbie Viguie (Chair)
PMB-418
3-2600 Kaunualii Hwy. Ste B-18
Lihue, HI 96766

Christina York
1045 SW 10th
Lincoln City, OR 97367

Lance Parkin
1410 Wharton Drive
Newark DE 19711

BEST YOUNG ADULT ORIGINAL & ADAPTED

Richard Dean Starr (Chair)
7440 Sepulveda Blvd. #312
Van Nuys, CA 91405

Brandie Tarvin
10864 Crosstie Ct
Jacksonville FL 32257

Donald J. Bingle
5N085 Crane Road
St. Charles, IL 60175

Convention Calendar

MileHiCon 41

Oct. 23-25, at Hyatt Regency-Tech Center in Denver, CO. More than 80 guests and speakers on science fiction, fantasy, and horror are expected at what is billed as the largest literary convention in the Rocky Mountain Region. Some of the scheduled guests include: Barbara Hambly and Nancy Kress. Visit: www.milehicon.org for more.

WindyCon

November 13-15, Lombard Illinois, is the site for this year's WindyCon. Guests include: James P. Blaylock and Phil and Kaja Foglio. Early bird registration is \$45 for the weekend, with hotel rooms at \$104 a night. For more information: www.windycon.org



James Rollins and Max Allen Collins at the San Diego Comic-Con

TusCon 36

Stoker-winning author Weston Ochse headlines the guests at TusCon 36 Nov. 13-15 at the InnSuites Hotel in Tucson, AZ. The convention staff requests that hotel reservations be made early, as the “room block” is expected to fill up quickly. Activities will include an art show, filking, panel discussions, gaming, and more. For more information, write the convention at TusCon, PO Box 2528, Tuscon, AZ, 85702. Or you can send an inquiry via e-mail to: bsfa@earthlink.net

Philcon 2009

The Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cherry Hill NJ is the site of this year’s convention, set for Nov. 20-22nd. The web site lists more information: www.philcon.org

Thought Bubble 3

Nov. 20-22nd has been set for one of the UK’s prominent comic

conventions. The event will be held in Saviles Hall, Leeds, England. More than 1,600 fans attended the previous year’s convention. Activities will include workshops, seminars, comic-related film screenings, and a “book crossing.” For information on attending and/or participating, contact Lisa Wood: thoughtbubble@hotmail.co.uk

LosCon 36

November 27-29, Los Angeles, CA. The convention will be held at the LAX Marriott. Planned events include panels, workshops, and many other activities. The con is organized into “theme days,” and programming tracks. Friday: horror; Saturday; dress like a pirate day; Sunday: honoring artists and writers. Author guests of honor are Tananarive Due and Steven Barnes. For more information, see the convention’s website at: www.texassf.org

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