



# Tie-in Times

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

## Happily Deluged With Entries

by Robert E. Vardeman, Scribes Award Judge

Being a judge for the 2006 Scribe Awards has been a mixed blessing. The downside is the time it has taken away from selecting my own reading for pleasure. In effect, the *only* fiction books I've read recently have been entrants (27 hefty books are a lot to cram into a busy writing schedule that also includes a considerable amount of necessary reading-for-research).

The upside is that I was given a reason to revisit old "friends" in some of the series books, and have discovered new ones I somehow overlooked and now wonder why. The upshot has been positive for me, reading lots of really good books.

The hard part, of course, has been choosing the best from such a broad field. Other than the problem of comparing Dracula to a MechWarrior to an elf warrior to McCoy and Buffy and Star Wars, early on I found myself wondering as to the criteria for a Scribe Award winner. This is a pioneering effort, this first time out, so such things matter. What does "best" mean for a tie-in novel?

One book I read and appreciated greatly for its quality and detail in its universe would be hard going for someone who was not already into that universe. For a non-fan, the book would be a hard read because so much detail is assumed, and many subtle references would go unnoticed. For someone familiar with the background (I am), it was sheer pleasure, like running a fingertip over silk. This one entry delivered the goods for fans of the series.

But what about those who weren't fans? It seemed to me that the award should go to a book anyone could pick up and read without remembering details from a dozen (or more) other books as background.

But then I considered the problem from another angle. If this award is to go to a book easily accessible to the casual reader, isn't this putting it into a popularity contest rather than rewarding the difficulty inherent in doing tie-in novels? Is the award for the general reading public or the devoted fan? What sort of accomplishment is being honored?

I swapped e-mails with the chairman of the committee, James Reasoner, and we never came to a definitive conclusion, taking a "let's see how it all shakes out" approach. From my viewpoint, it has. The five titles I will recommend for the finalist list combine both considerations well. Someone wondering just what the heck a Scribe Award is all about, and picking up the winning book will find a fine read. A fan of that particular tie-in universe will be rewarded even more with a good read *and* intriguing speculation and exploration of a well-realized world.

Reading more than two dozen books was the easy part of being a judge. Choosing the best was hard—and a distinct pleasure.

A complete list of Scribe entries follows.

## Books Reviewed for Scribes

The winners of the Scribe Awards will be presented in a future issue of TIE-IN TIMES, at Comicon 2007, and on the IAMTW web site. This is the complete list of books being considered in each category.

### SPECULATIVE FICTION

#### **BEST NOVEL** (adapted)

SUPERMAN RETURNS by Marv Wolfman

ULTRAVIOLET by Yvonne Navarro

TOXIC AVENGER: THE NOVEL by Lloyd Kaufman  
and Adam Jahnke

UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION by Greg Cox

**BEST NOVEL** (original)

- DRACULA: ASYLUM by Paul Witcover  
EBERRON: THIEVES OF BLOOD by Tim Waggoner  
MECHWARRIOR DARK AGE: TRIAL BY CHAOS  
by J. Steven York  
EBERRON: ROAD TO DEATH by Matt Forbeck  
STAR CRAFT: QUEEN OF BLADES by Aaron Rosenberg  
STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO TRIPLE ZERO  
by Karen Traviss  
NECROMUNDA: CARDINAL CRIMSON by Will McDermott  
30 DAYS OF NIGHT: RUMORS OF THE UNDEAD,  
by Steve Niles and Jeff Mariotte  
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: BLACKOUT  
by Keith R.A. DeCandido  
STAR TREK CRUCIBLE: MCOY—PROVENANCE OF SHADOWS  
by David R. George III  
STAR TREK ENTERPRISE: THE LAST FULL MEASURE  
by Andy Mangels & Michael A. Martin  
WARHAMMER: FAITH AND FIRE by James Swallow  
WARHAMMER: ORC SLAYER by Nathan Long  
STARGATE SG-1: ALLIANCES by Karen Miller  
MECHWARRIOR DARK AGE: PRINCIPLES OF DESOLATION  
by Randall Bills and Jason M. Hardy  
WOLVERINE: ROAD OF BONES by David Alan Mack  
SHADOWRUN: DROPS OF CORRUPTION by Jason M. Hardy  
STARGATE ATLANTIS: EXOGENESIS  
by Elizabeth Christensen and Sonny Whitelaw  
AFTERSHOCK by Jean Rabe & John Helfers  
EBERRON: THE KILLING SONG (DRAGON BELOW BOOK 3)  
by Don Bassingthwaite  
MECHWARRIOR DARK AGE: WOLF HUNTERS by Kevin Killiany

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GENERAL FICTION

**BEST NOVEL** (adapted)

- SNAKES ON A PLANE by Christa Faust  
THE PINK PANTHER by Max Allan Collins

**BEST NOVEL** (original)

- LAS VEGAS: HIGH STAKES by Jeff Mariotte  
MR. MONK GOES TO HAWAII by Lee Goldberg  
MURDER SHE WROTE: THREE STRIKES AND YOU'RE DEAD  
by Donald Bain  
GUNSMOKE: THE RECKLESS GUN by Joseph A. West  
CSI: SNAKE EYES by Max Allan Collins  
OAKDALE CONFIDENTIAL: SECRETS REVEALED  
by Alina Adams  
ALIAS: NAMESAKES by Greg Cox  
CSI NY: BLOOD ON THE SUN by Stuart Kaminsky

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YOUNG ADULT (All Genres)

**BEST NOVEL** (original)

- ALIAS APO: STRATEGIC RESERVE by Christina York  
KNIGHTS OF THE SILVER DRAGON: PROPHECY OF THE  
DRAGONS by Matt Forbeck  
DEGRASSI: EXTRA CREDIT: TURNING JAPANESE by J. Torres  
DRAGONLANCE: WARRIOR'S HEART Stephen D. Sullivan

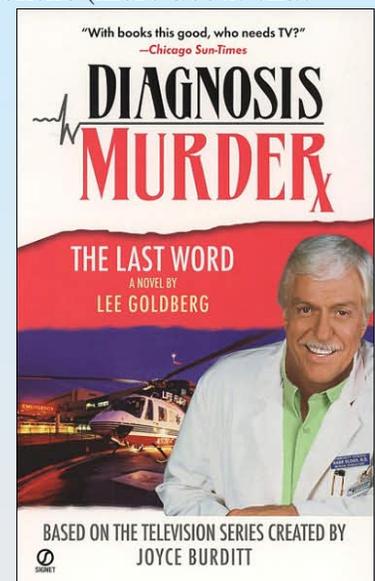
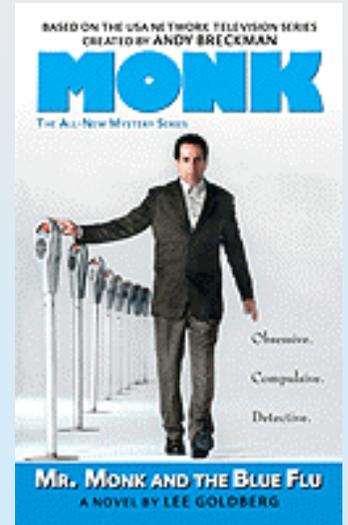
## Mr. Monk Goes Hardcover

Lee Goldberg's third Monk novel *Mr. Monk and the Blue Flu* was released in January to rave reviews. It is the last original Monk novel to premiere in paperback, with the next book, *Mr. Monk and the Two Assistants*, the series is jumping to hardcover. That book comes out in July 2007 and, as one might guess from the title, is about the surprising return of Sharona, Monk's first assistant. A teaser chapter for *Two Assistants* is in the back of *Mr. Monk and the Blue Flu*.

*The Last Word* is Goldberg's eighth and final Diagnosis Murder novel. It is set for a May release.

In addition to writing books, Goldberg says, "I've been busy writing for TV and new media. My upcoming work includes a recent episode of the USA Network series *Psych*, as well as several pilots for various networks. There's a good chance that one of the pilots will be shot on location in Berlin very soon (but more about that later). I've also been involved writing and developing webisodes for *Stranger Adventures* ([www.strangeradventures.com](http://www.strangeradventures.com)) that will begin streaming in a few months (more about that later, too)."

Goldberg has other irons in the proverbial fire. Besides his IAMTW duties—he is co-founder and vice president of the organization—he is also the chairperson of the 2008 Edgar Awards for the Mystery Writers of America, where he also serves on the National Board.



# Hatching the IAMTW

by Lee Goldberg, IAMTW Vice President

The IAMTW arose from a tie-in book panel three years ago at Comicon. The speakers included me, Max Allan Collins, Keith DeCandido, Paul Ruditis, Nancy Holder, and several other "tie-in" writers. I loved "talking shop" with other tie-in writers, an opportunity I never had before. And the questions from the audience made me realize how little anybody in the public really knew about who we are and what we do.

Max had the same realization . . . so we started talking, trading emails, and chatting on the phone. We both were frustrated by the fact that tie-in novels, despite their huge popularity, are virtually overlooked by every other major professional writing organization like the Mystery Writers of America, the Science Fiction Writers of America, etc. when it comes to what we do, how we do it, and recognizing excellence in our field. We realized that we needed an organization that would unify us and represent our needs.

We started small . . . first by forming a private, yahoo discussion group for media tie-in professionals. And once we saw how lively, informative, and inspiring that was, we knew we had the basis for an organization.

Another major impetus for forming the IAMTW was the launch almost two years ago of the International Thriller Writers and the great success they have had promoting their niche and the writers who toil in it.

ITW co-founder David Morrell, a tie-in writer himself, encouraged us to make the move and shared some advice on how to get started. We also talked with Robert Randisi, who formed the Private Eye Writers of America two decades ago for many of the same reasons we wanted to create the IAMTW. Based on what we learned from them, and our own experience, Max and I began sketching out how the IAMTW would work.

In our first year, we expanded the discussion group, launched a full-featured website, established a database of tie-in editors and execs, and started the first annual Scribe Awards to honor excellence in our field (which will include honoring our first "Grandmaster").

We'll present the awards in 2007 at an event at Comicon, where the IAMTW was born. We also succeeded in getting feature articles published about tie-in writers and our organization in *Crimespree*, *Mystery Scene*, *MovieMaker*, and a number of other national magazines.

This year, we hope to expand the website's features and increase our outreach to the media, the public, and potential new members with a regular newsletter.

Visit the website for the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers at:  
[www.iamtw.org](http://www.iamtw.org)

## Waggoner Has More Class

Tim Waggoner, IAMTW member and veteran author, has joined the staff of Seton Hill University's MA in Writing Program

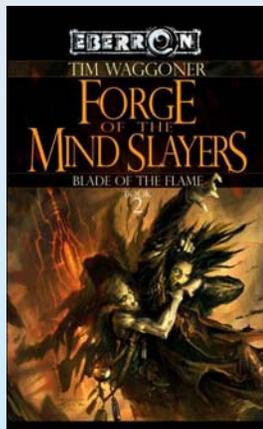
Waggoner is the author of numerous novels, including *Forge of the Mind Slayers*, *Darkness Wakes*, and *A Nightmare on Elm Street: Protege*. He graduated from Wright State University in 1989 with a Master of Arts in English with a Creative Writing concentration. He also teaches creative writing at Sinclair Community College.

From the University's website: Seton Hill University's unique Master of Arts in Writing Popular Fiction teaches students to write marketable novels in popular genres like mystery, romance, science fiction, horror, and fantasy. Additional specialties include literature for

children and adolescents, and cross-genre blends like romantic suspense or young adult mysteries. Students attend two week-long, on-campus residencies each year to master the core elements of fiction writing and effective marketing and to gain inspiration from faculty mentors and special



guests, all published authors in genre fiction. Established authors mentor students one-on-one as they work toward completing a market-ready manuscript from home. Readings, classes, and on-line discussion about the history, trends, and techniques of genre fiction add depth to the student's experience.



**New releases:** Waggoner's second short story collection, *Broken Shadows*, published by Delirium Books, will appear later this year. His next novel for Wizards of the Coast, *Forge of the Mind Slayers*, will hit the shelves in March.

Visit Tim's site at:  
[www.timwaggoner.com](http://www.timwaggoner.com)

## Spotlight on Stephen Sullivan

### HOW I BECAME A TIE-IN WRITER by Stephen D. Sullivan

Remember when you were a little kid and thought, "Boy, it would be great to write a story about Sherlock Holmes, the *Fantastic 4*, or the *Thunderbirds*?" Like me, you probably even wrote your own tie-ins, just for yourself, your friends, or your family. We writers seem to have a basic desire to replicate stories we've enjoyed using characters we love. The joy of tie-in writing is that you get to play with other people's toys—building stories around established characters and worlds--and you're paid to do it.

By the end of 2007, I will have had more than thirty books published, the vast majority of

them tie-ins. It's a great job. The trick is keeping the work flowing. That comes not only from turning in good work, but also from being persistent, networking, and hanging on to your connections when the tides shift in the publishing industry. (And we all know that happens about twice per day.)

In 1980, I left my home in Massachusetts to play with a toy called Dungeons & Dragons. D&D was a pretty cool toy, and I had success "playing" as both an editor/writer and graphic artist. I moved from TSR (the creators of D&D) to another game company and soon got into professional comic book writing as well. Eventually, I wrote at least a story or two for all of the major comic companies.

My work in comics led to tie-in novel writing. At the time, I'd become increasingly frustrated with both the "system" of getting work in comics and also with artist "collaborators" who couldn't deliver even a single sketch to go with

my series pitches and sample scripts. I was looking for something I could do on my own and decided to adapt *The Twilight Empire*<sup>™</sup> (my comic strip that ran for years in *Dragon Magazine*) into book form. By writing my own novel, I'd be sure to have a high-quality finished product to



I'd already learned a valuable lesson from my years in publishing: always assume that everything you turn in will be printed directly from your manuscript.

attempt to sell. TE didn't sell back then, but writing that manuscript led to all thirty books I've published since.

While I was working on the *The Twilight Empire* adaptation, I ran into former First Comics editor Rick Oliver at a wedding. I asked Rick what he was up to, and he told me he was writing books in a famous detective series for boys. (Sorry, my contract forbids me from being more specific.) That sounded like great fun,



and—as luck would have it—they were looking for more writers. Rick gave me the packager’s name. I cobbled together samples from my *Twilight Empire* novel and showed them to the editor. He liked them, and asked me to pitch some ideas. (For me, that’s how it usually starts with tie-ins.) He picked an idea; I outlined it, and then wrote the book.

I’d already learned a valuable lesson from my years in publishing: always assume that everything you turn in will be printed directly from your manuscript. Making that assumption is mostly to protect your own reputation, but turning in clean work on time also makes editors like you. So, I submitted a good manuscript and everything went great. Unfortunately, right after the book came out, the packager went belly up.

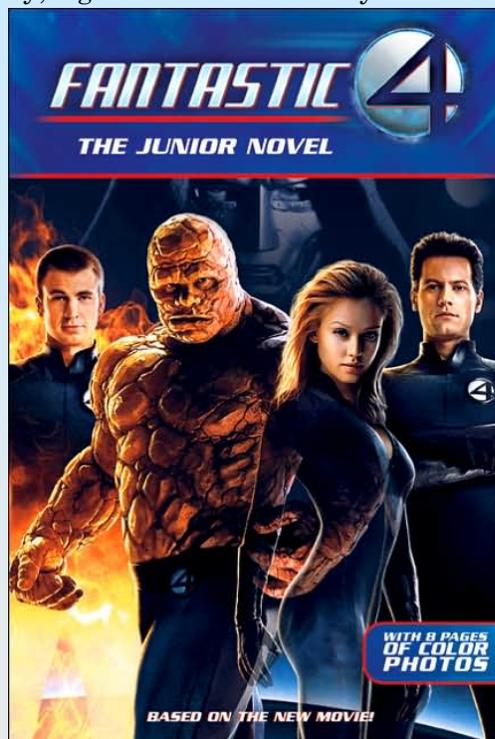
Losing the employer was daunting, but I’d gained valuable experience and now had a published book on my resume. Using that book as my new writing sample, I contacted other editors. This was a long, frustrating process, but I kept at it. I also kept writing, because you can’t become a better writer if you don’t keep working. Eventually, one of the editors I talked to told me about a try-out being held to write books in the *Legend of the Five Rings* samurai fantasy series. Chatting with that editor, I found out exactly what kind of writing they were

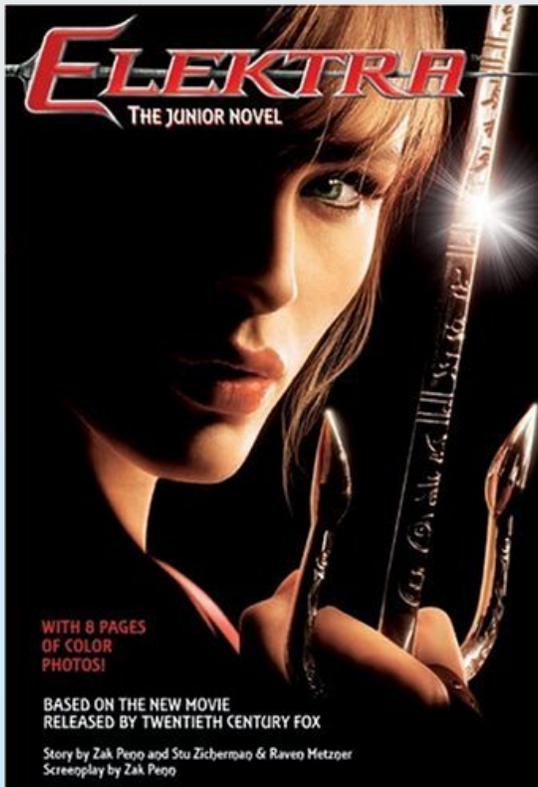
looking for. Then I gave them what they wanted. That is, I wrote some kick-ass samples to fit their expectations. Despite stiff competition, I landed the first book in the series: *The Scorpion*. Two more L5R books followed, *The Phoenix* and *The Lion* (which won the Origins Award for Best Game-Related Novel).

Those books eventually led to the *Dragonlance* books I’m writing now. And, in the meantime, I managed to reestablish contact with the publisher of the detective books. Persistence paid off; they still needed writers. So I wrote another detective book, and another, and another. I kept doing them—through two more editors—right up until the original series ended and they decided to use new people. One of the

“old people” they let go was a top-flight editor whom I had a great working relationship with. We kept in touch. When she took on other jobs, she remembered the work we’d done together and called me. That hooked me in to the YA movie and TV adaptations I’ve done—such as *Fantastic 4*, *Elektra*, *Thunderbirds* and, more recently, *Spider Riders*.

And you know what? I managed to weasel my way back into the detective books again, too. I just turned in the manuscript for my fourteenth detective novel.





So, networking, being persistent, and turning in good work on time paid off for me. Those strategies can work for you, too.

But before any of that can happen, you have to write those kick-ass samples!

Get to work.

Good luck!

-- Steve Sullivan, January 2007

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Stephen's latest books are *Dragonlance: Warrior's Heart*, and *Luck o' the Irish*. He is one of the founders of Popcorn Press—a small publishing house that produces books larger companies are unlikely to risk—[www.popcornpress.com](http://www.popcornpress.com). You can find out more about Stephen and his latest projects at: [www.stephendsullivan.com](http://www.stephendsullivan.com).

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## Congratulations to IAMTW member Matt Forbeck

Who has been named the author guest of honor at the upcoming Origins convention. The Origins International Game Expo will take place July 5-8, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio. Origins is one of the largest game conventions in the United States.

Matt will be featured in the next issue of the Tie-in Times.

You've reached the end of the first issue of the Tie-in Times, the official newsletter of the IAMTW. We're starting with a bimonthly schedule, but we eventually hope to have the Times delivered to your e-mail boxes monthly. But to do that . . . we need your news.

- What are you working on?
- How did you get into the tie-in writing business?
- Do you have some sage advice for people new to media writing?
- Got some market tips to report?

We want to spread your news to the rest of the IAMTW membership and other interested readers. Please e-mail your news articles, writing advice, and classifieds to Jean Rabe at: [jeanr@sff.net](mailto:jeanr@sff.net), and mention tie-in or IAMTW in the message header.

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