



Renovation

The 69th World Science Fiction Convention
Reno, Nevada USA ★ August 17-21, 2011

This media pack contains background and reference information for use by the general and specialist press. It includes the following sections.

- What is the World Science Fiction Convention (background and history of the Worldcon)?
- Guests of Honor for the 69th Worldcon
- The State of the Art: Science Fiction in 2011
- The Worldcon and Reno, Nevada
- Contact and General Information for the 2011 Worldcon

All of this material and much more can be found on our website at:

<http://www.renovationsf.org/>

We will soon be adding high resolution photos and other resources to this website for use by the media. The direct link to our press center is:

<http://www.renovationsf.org/press.php>

The 2011 World Science Fiction Convention, known as "Renovation", will take place in Reno, Nevada from 17-21 August 2011. More information about Renovation, including current membership rates, is available from its web site <http://www.renovationsf.org/> or by writing to info@renovationsf.org.

"World Science Fiction Society", "WSFS", "World Science Fiction Convention", "Worldcon", "NASFiC", "Hugo Award", and the distinctive design of the Hugo Award Rocket are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society, an unincorporated literary society.



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What is the Worldcon?

History

The Worldcon, or World Science Fiction Convention, is the annual convention of the World Science Fiction Society (WSFS). Worldcons have been held each year since 1939 with the exception of four years during World War II. Locations have included the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, England, Scotland, Germany, and The Netherlands. Science fiction and fantasy fans travel from all over the world to attend.

The Worldcon is most often held in the US and will return here in 2011 after visiting Canada (2009) and Australia (2010). The most recent US Worldcons were held in Boston (2004), Los Angeles (2006), and Denver (2008). Each Worldcon has a unique name. “Renovation” in 2011 will be the Worldcon’s first visit to Reno, and the 69th Worldcon in all.

Volunteer Run – by Fans, for Fans

The most striking fact about Worldcon is that it is run entirely on a volunteer basis. None of the organizers are paid for their work. They are all fans giving their time and enthusiasm freely. This makes Worldcon one of the largest all-volunteer-run events in the world. Nor is it only the fans that pitch in to make the event work. Hundreds of professional authors, editors, scientists and publishers participate on panels and other events free of charge. All of these people buy memberships to the convention. Some of them have been doing it every year for decades.

One of the reasons why Worldcon needs so many volunteer staff is that it is a huge event. It runs over five days, with the entertainment getting into gear on the first afternoon and not ramping down until the afternoon four days later.

Of course for the staff there are also days of work to set up and close down the event. Before the actual site preparation, there is a vast amount of work required to plan the convention, something that is particularly difficult when it takes place in a different city (and often a different country) every year. Not only that, but there is no continuing staff structure – each year’s event is organized by a different group of fans, who may typically spend 6 or 7 years on the Worldcon from the beginning of their bid to host the event, through to the wrap-up of the final accounts.

Although Worldcon is run by volunteers, it’s certainly not free to put on. The 2011 event will have a direct turnover in excess of \$750,000 – and that excludes the much larger amount that the attendees will spend on travel, accommodation and other personal expenditure. The largest part of the convention’s expenditure goes towards the hire of the site and facilities, but it is also necessary to spend money on member publications, events, and hire of technical equipment and furnishings. The majority of the convention’s income is raised through membership fees, which at around \$200 per adult member fall between those of a professional conference and a fair or exhibition.

However, with up to 20 different activities per hour on offer across five full days, the cost per hour for attending the convention falls well below that for a concert or even a trip to the cinema!

What Happens at the Worldcon?

To the outside observer, the Worldcon has two distinct and complementary types of content: program and social. The programme content includes:

- Extensive *Formal Programming*, comprising lectures, debates and panel discussions. Typically there will be in excess of 500 distinct items in this core program over the 5 days, with up to a dozen streams running in parallel at any moment time. The formal program ranges over topics from fiction and writing to politics and science, and participants have included Nobel Prize winners, astronauts, scientists, writers, editors, publishers, artists, film makers, and fans.
- An *Art Show*, featuring leading professionals from the field. The majority of the art is for sale and the convention includes an auction for in-demand pieces, with prices running into many thousands of dollars. The Art Show also features special exhibits, and the show as a whole will include over a million dollars of original artwork.
- An extensive *Dealers Area*, where booksellers and other specialist dealers sell their goods directly to members. This may include books (new, used and collector's items), jewellery, toys, t-shirts, and other science fiction & fantasy related merchandise.
- Professional and amateur *Exhibits* – for instance film props and costumes, science exhibits and technology demonstrations.
- A *Masquerade*, in which professional and amateur costumers present a competitive live presentation of their best work.
- *Special Events*, including concerts and artists' and writers' workshops.
- A *Film and Video Program*, usually including the Hugo-nominated (see below) Best Dramatic Presentations. Major TV and film studios will often preview their new work at the Worldcon. Worldcon attendees were the first to find out about Star Trek, Star Wars and many others.
- *Filk* – a unique combination of folk singing and science fiction, featuring folk-style songs with science fiction and fantasy themes.

In addition to the above, the *Hugo Awards* are presented at a highlighted ceremony. The awards themselves are nominated and voted upon by the members of the Worldcon, and are the leading awards in the field – the science fiction “Oscars”.

Special prestige is given to the Worldcon *Guests of Honor*. They often present Guest of Honor speeches, participate in interviews, and are treated with respect honouring their years in the Science Fiction community. Past Guests of Honor have included the majority of leading figures from the field, including such luminaries as Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury, Robert A. Heinlein, Ursula K. Le Guin, Anne McCaffrey, Terry Pratchett, Neil Gaiman, and George R.R. Martin.

In addition to the above events, which are open to all attendees, the Worldcon also acts as the host for a number of related activities, particularly in relation to the professionals who attend. These activities include book launches, publishers' events, and so on.

Alongside the program content, the social aspect of the Worldcon is also extremely important to its members. Science Fiction fandom started in the 1930s, when the genre was a ghetto of pulp fiction. Fans sought each other out to share their interest at a time when the general public saw the field as having little relevance. Although these days are long gone, and Science Fiction tropes and imagery are now ubiquitous in everyday life and in the general media, social interaction remains a key part of the Worldcon. Eating and drinking together, seeing old friends and making new ones, and generally interacting with the other people at the event, is a key part of the overall picture. The Worldcon is fundamentally a participatory activity – and not to be confused with the more recent phenomenon of “media events” at which actors and other staff from leading TV shows are presented to fans of the show. At Worldcon, fans connect with other fans directly – and some of those other fans are professionals in the field.

Links & Resources

World Science Fiction Society: <http://www.wsfs.org/>

List of all Worldcons from 1939: <http://www.nesfa.org/data/LL/TheLongList.html>

Hugo Awards: <http://www.thehugoawards.org/>

List of recent & upcoming Worldcons:

2005 – Glasgow, UK	http://www.worldcon.org.uk/interaction
2006 – Los Angeles, CA	http://www.laconiv.org/
2007 – Yokohama, Japan	http://www.nippon2007.us/
2008 – Denver, CO	http://pl745.pairlitesite.com/
2009 – Montreal, Canada	http://www.anticipationsf.ca/
2010 – Melbourne, Australia	http://www.aussiecon4.org/

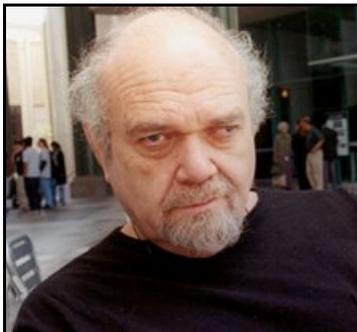
2011 Worldcon Guests of Honor

Ellen Asher



Ellen Asher became the editor of the Science Fiction Book Club in February 1973, and held that position for thirty-four years and three months, thereby fulfilling her life's ambition of beating John W. Campbell's record as the person with the longest tenure in the same science fiction job. In 2001 she received the New England Science Fiction Association's Edward E. Smith Memorial Award for Imaginative Fiction (the *Skylark*), of which she is inordinately proud. In 2007 she received a World Fantasy Award in the category Special Award: Professional for her work with the SFBC, which was, if anything, even more overwhelming. Shortly thereafter she was made a Fellow of NESFA. In April 2009, she became, in a minuscule way, a published author with a short essay in *Nebula Awards® Showcase 2009*, edited by Ellen Datlow. She left the Book Club in June, 2007, and, although she does occasional freelance work, she now devotes most of her time to her hobbies: sleeping late, baking (and eating) cookies, riding horses, and reading things that aren't necessarily SF. Being retired is *wonderful*.

Charles N. Brown



Charles N. Brown died peacefully in his sleep on 12 July 2009, a few weeks after he had accepted Renovation's invitation to be one of our Guests of Honor. He is as irreplaceable in death as he was in life, and we shall therefore continue to honor him.

Charles N. Brown was involved in the science fiction field from the late 1940s and was best known as the Publisher & Editor-in-Chief of 29-time Hugo winner *Locus* magazine which he founded in 1968. He was also the original book reviewer for *Asimov's*, edited several SF anthologies, and wrote for numerous magazines and newspapers. Also a freelance fiction editor for 40 years, many of the books he edited won awards. He travelled extensively and was regularly invited to appear on writing and editing panels at the major SF conventions around the world, was a frequent Guest of Honor and speaker and judge at writers' seminars, and was a jury member for several of the major SF awards.

The Locus website can be found at <http://www.locusmag.com/>.

Tim Powers



Tim Powers was born in Buffalo, New York, on Leap Year Day in 1952, but has lived in southern California since 1959. He graduated from California State University at Fullerton with a B.A. in English in 1976; the same year saw the publication of his first two novels, *The Skies Discrowned* and *Epitaph in Rust* (both from Laser Books).

Powers's subsequent novels are *The Drawing of the Dark* (Del Rey, 1979), *The Anubis Gates* (Ace, 1983, winner of the Philip K. Dick Memorial Award and the Prix Apollo), *Dinner at Deviant's Palace* (Ace, 1985, winner of the Philip K. Dick Memorial Award), *On Stranger Tides* (Ace, 1987), *The Stress of Her Regard* (Ace, 1989, winner of the Mythopoeic Award), *Last Call* (Morrow, 1992, winner of the World Fantasy Award), *Expiration Date!* (Tor, 1996), *Earthquake Weather* (Tor, 1997), *Declare* (Morrow, 2001, winner of the World Fantasy Award), and *Three Days to Never* (Morrow, 2006). He is also the author of a collection of short stories, *Strange Itineraries* (Tachyon, 2005).

Powers has taught at the Clarion Science Fiction Writers' Workshop at Michigan State University six times, and has for many years co-taught the Writers of the Future Workshop.

Powers is married, and lives with his wife, Serena, in San Bernardino, California. Tim's website can be found at:

<http://www.theworksoftimpowers.com/>

Boris Vallejo



Born in Lima, Peru, **Boris Vallejo** attended the National School of Fine Arts in his native country before immigrating to the United States in 1964.

He has since done a great volume of work for the Fantasy field, having worked for virtually every major publishing house with a science fiction/fantasy line. Vallejo has also illustrated for album covers, video box art and motion picture advertising.

His mastery of oil painting is immediately and abundantly clear to anyone who looks at his work, and his classic sense is as much homage to the old masters as it is to anyone contemporaneously working in the Fantasy genre.

For sheer dauntless bravura, few have ever pushed the limits as does Boris with his beautiful maidens and fearsome monsters.

Vallejo married Julie Bell in 1994. The two artists share their lives and their studio in Pennsylvania. Boris & Julie Vallejo's website can be found at:

<http://www.imaginstix.com/>.



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Science Fiction in 2011

The Triumph of Science Fiction

Science fiction and fantasy has emerged from a ghetto to be the leading genre in mainstream fiction. This is an amazing transformation for a genre which was populated by pulp magazines and B movies only 50 years ago. Today the genre is ubiquitous and influential.

- Lord of the Rings regularly wins awards such as “Book of the Century”.
- In the UK, a national survey in 2003 (“the BBC Big Read”) found that 6 of the public’ top 10 all-time favourite books were science fiction and fantasy.
 1. **The Lord of the Rings, JRR Tolkien**
 2. Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen
 3. **His Dark Materials, Philip Pullman**
 4. **The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, Douglas Adams**
 5. **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, JK Rowling**
 6. To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee
 7. Winnie the Pooh, AA Milne
 8. **Nineteen Eighty-Four, George Orwell**
 9. **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, CS Lewis**
 10. Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte
- Science fiction & fantasy movies routinely dominate movie box office charts across the World – from Star Wars to Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter. The all-time top 10 includes 9 science fiction and fantasy films.
 1. Titanic
 2. **The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King**
 3. **Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest**
 4. **The Dark Knight**
 5. **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone**
 6. **Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End**
 7. **Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix**
 8. **The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers**
 9. **Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace**
 10. Shrek 2

- Science fiction has also produced many of television's most successful and long-running series – from the many incarnations of “Star Trek” to contemporary cult hits such as “Lost” and “Heroes”.
- Many of the most successful computer games draw heavily on the same science fiction and fantasy imagery, from early text-based adventures to the latest blockbuster titles such as Halo and Half-Life.
- Science fiction & fantasy motifs are also regularly represented in advertising – including classics such as the 1984 Apple Macintosh advert inspired by George Orwell's novel.



- The casual use of science fiction and fantasy concepts, taking for granted the familiarity that the public now have with them, is the final proof of the triumph of science fiction. We are all in the ghetto now!

Science Fiction in 2011

2011 is a great year for the Worldcon to come to Reno.

- It will be the 50th Anniversary of manned spaceflight, with Yuri Gagarin (first cosmonaut) and Alan Shepherd (first US astronaut) having entered space in 1961.
- The final Harry Potter film, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II, is scheduled for release in July 2011.
- Other films provisionally planned for release in 2011 include Spiderman 4, Thor, Captain America and The Hobbit.

Useful Links

BBC Big Read: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/bigread/vote/>

Box Office Charts: <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/world/>



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The Worldcon and Reno

The Worldcon will bring both economic and other benefits to Reno as the host city.

Economic Impact

Reno will benefit from direct and indirect economic impact from the 4,000+ expected convention attendees. The direct impact is significant, particularly in the current economic climate – when the Worldcon was held in San José, California in 2002, the San José Convention and Visitor's Bureau estimated the overall impact on the area at over **\$9 million**.



Non-Economic Impact

The convention will benefit the city of Reno through:

- Prestige resulting from the hosting of the convention. The convention attracts several hundred leading writers, editors, publishers, scientists, artists and related professionals.
- A raised profile of the city as a host for national and international events. Other recent Worldcon hosts have included such global cities as Chicago, Los Angeles and Melbourne.
- Cross-fertilization. The professionals who attend the convention will typically be willing and able to participate in related events in the city during their stay – most obviously book signings and other literary activities.

The convention is committed to creating strong local links with related organizations in and around Reno. The effort to bring the Worldcon to Reno has received especially strong support from the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority (RSCVA). The RSCVA website can be found at:

<http://www.visitrenotahoe.com/>



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2011 Worldcon – Contact & General Information

Convention Website: <http://www.renovationsf.org/>

Email Contact Information: General information: info@renovationsf.org

Press: press@renovationsf.org

Press Liaison: Bob Brown

Postal Contact Address: Renovation
The 69th World Science Fiction Convention
PO Box 13278
Portland, OR 97213-0278

Membership Information:

Attending membership costs \$140 for adults and \$75 for children under 16 until 30th April 2010. Child rates include a limited number of hours of professional childcare for 0-12 year olds. Children under 6 may alternatively attend free of charge as “Kids in Tow” (no childcare included). Ages are calculated as of 17 August 2011, the first day of the convention.

These rates cover full attendance at the convention and all of its events. Adult members also receive a range of publications and other items. Membership may be purchased online via the Renovation website.

Accommodation Information

The convention will be based at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center; member accommodation will be provided at the luxurious four star Atlantis and Peppermill Resort Hotels and the nearby Marriott Courtyard Hotel.

Convention Center Information:

http://www.visitrenotahoe.com/docs/media/Reno_Sparks_Convention_Center_Fact_Sheet.pdf