

Editorial PARTY!

Sheila Williams

Chicago's Riverwalk was a glorious place to celebrate three years of Readers' Award winners. We held a party for our winners on Thursday, September 1, 2022, during the Chicon 8 Worldcon. The reception took place at Beat Kitchen, and *Asimov's* managing editor, Emily Hockaday, made all the fabulous arrangements. The restaurant's garden area offered us a stunning view of the river and Chicago's skyscrapers.



Elizabeth Bear & Timons Esaias

In 2020 we held a virtual celebration for the winners of the works published in 2019 and mailed the authors their award certificates. The next year we kept hoping to host an in-person celebration for the 2020 stories and artwork, but the pandemic continued to thwart our plans. I think our lovely party was worth the wait.



Connie Willis & James Patrick Kelly



L-R: Maurizio Manzieri, Sheila Williams, Timons Esaias, Connie Willis, Elizabeth Bear, Emily Hockaday, Ted Kosmatka, Rick Wilber & Suzanne Palmer

We were delighted that many of our winners from 2019 were able to attend. Among them were Ted Kosmatka, who won Best Short Story for “Sacrificial Iron.” Ted drove in from Indiana for the reception. He was also a finalist for his 2020 novelette, “The Beast Adjoins.” Maurizio Manzieri’s July/August 2019 illustration for Suzanne Palmer’s Best-Novella-Award winning “Waterlines,” received the Best Cover Award. Maurizio was in town from Italy for Worldcon, and his 2020 and 2021 covers were finalists for the award as well. We were thrilled that he could travel all the way from Europe to attend the convention and our party.

We had representatives for our 2020 stories in every fiction category. Timons Esaias, who won Best Short Story with his breathtaking “GO. NOW. FIX.” attended with his wife Bernadette G. Harris. Rick Wilber, who co-wrote the Best Novelette with Kevin J. Anderson, was able to attend the party. Rick was also a finalist for the Side-wise Award for his novella “Billie the Kid: (September/October 2021). I like to say that I invite Connie Willis to our Readers’ Award celebration every year because she provides the entertainment. She likes to say that I say that I invite her because she provides the “cheap entertainment.” In any case, no party is quite as lively without her. This time she was also in attendance because of her award-winning 2020 novella “Take a Look at the Five and Ten.” As always, she was very entertaining. Her daughter Cordelia Willis accompanied Connie.

We were also deeply pleased to have some of the authors of our 2021 stories on hand. Elizabeth Bear first mentioned her tale, “A Blessing of Unicorns,” to me more than three years ago at the Dublin Worldcon. I was grateful to have the chance to publish the story in *Asimov’s* and happy to see it win the Readers’ Award for Best Novella. Elizabeth Bear attended the party with her husband, the author Scott Lynch. Suzanne Palmer arrived to do double duty. In addition to being a Best Novella winner for her 2019 “Waterlines,” she was also the Best Novelette winner for her 2021 tale about “Table Etiquette for Diplomatic Personnel, in Seventeen Scenes.” Suzanne’s 2019 novelette, “Taking Icarus Home,” was a finalist for the award as well.

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Other guests at the party included Liza Groen Trombi, editor of *Locus* magazine; Trevor Quachri, editor of *Analog*; author Tegan Moore, whose 2019 novella “The Work of Wolves” was a finalist for the award; and writer and long-time *Asimov*’s columnist James Patrick Kelly.



Trevor Quachri, Suzanne Palmer & Ted Kosmatka

As the evening turned to night, it became apparent that the stars of our party were the twinkling Chicago lights. Emily and I were elated to finally have a chance to appreciate a sight like this in person and alongside our award-winning contributors.