

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL READERS' AWARDS' RESULTS

The comments section of *Asimov's* 35th Annual Readers' Awards' ballots made it clear that Covid-19 and the difficulties of 2020 were a shared experience. John Haworth of California thanked us for, "A good magazine in a bad year. Each issue took my mind off the pandemic for a few hours." Jeremy Hull of Texas said, "2020 was a disaster of a year in so many respects, but it was an excellent year for *Asimov's*. Kudos for publishing consistently high-quality work while also delivering an incredible variety of stories, settings, and voices!" And Daniel Connolly of Missouri wrote, "Thank you for the stories during the last year that helped me get through some tough times. Better fortune to all of us in 2021."

Ignacio Viglizzo of Buenos Aires, Argentina, let us know that, "For the first time in twenty-three years subscribing to the magazine, I read all the content from 2020. Blame the lockdown? Thanks for all the great stories!" From comments I also saw on our Facebook page, it seemed that many readers spent more time than usual with the magazine. We were glad to be able to offer exceptional entertainment during 2020's trying ordeal.

The words of Jeffrey David Powell of Ohio were gratifying: "With so much of everything either closed or disrupted, being able to sit here and having to agonize over my ballot picks for 2020 because *Asimov's* put out all six issues on time and full of great stories is amazing to me. Thank you for another great year. The best story of 2020 was Connie Willis's Christmas novella. No one can write like Connie Willis." On the other hand, Doug Lee of Halifax, Canada, said, "'Semper Augustus,' the novella by Nancy Kress, was simply amazing. A tour de force. Thanks for another great year."

Ralph Grimes of Maine commented on a different category. "Another wonderful year! Especially for novelettes. I make a copy of the readers poll form to use as a bookmark for the coming year as I read each issue cover-to-cover. I ended 2020 with six favorite novelettes and felt bad for having to omit some. I have my blank form ready for 2021! Thank you."

Speaking generally of stories and voting techniques, Alan K. Lipton of California said, "I've been constantly refining my evaluation strategy: a big or complete vision in novellas and novelettes; character-rich short stories; poems that spin a narrative or capture a feeling. Choosing still isn't easy, thanks to *Asimov's* high standards. Sean Monaghan, Nancy Kress, and Jane Yolen are always easy winners. Derek Künsken is finding his power. It hurt to skip some authors this year. Any chance that we could choose four or five instead of three?"

Piet Nel of Cape Town, South Africa, seemed to be in some agreement with Alan. "Choosing from a host of equally good stories is a bit like Sophie's Choice, but there—I've done it. Thanks for another stellar year, and please tell David Gerrold and Ctein that there are still plenty of coastal cities to deal with!"

Our short stories received their share of love. Jeffrey Lee Powell of Ohio said, "I've been reading my son's script to *Asimov's* for nearly twenty years. Don't judge me. This year I've had more trouble making my choices for short stories than in any past year. Not a bad problem, but. After eliminating as many stories as possible, for any reason whatsoever, I still had six stories to choose from and only three picks. Sigh. In the end, 'GO.NOW.FIX.' was my number one. Picking the other two was a roll of the dice. And tomorrow that roll would be different. Sorry, it was the best I could do." Douglas White of Maryland said, "'GO. NOW. FIX.' was the most perfect story I've read in years."

Although Garrison Kammer of Washington wasn't pleased with "the unofficially serialized tales," he told us that "the short stories got super weird this year—weird and

smart and poignant, exactly how I like 'em. Keep them coming, please!" Author and reader James Van Pelt of Colorado said, "Once again, a stellar year. I particularly enjoyed finding writers I didn't know in this year's short stories. As always, the arrival of *Asimov's* on my Kindle meant several hours of solid, quality reading. Thanks!"

Phillip Crawford of South Carolina said, "We all know that 2020 was a difficult year. It was still a great year for *Asimov's*. It was very hard choosing the best three novellas, novelettes, and short stores. I loved 'Nic and Viv's Compulsory Courtship,' and 'Rena in the Desert' is now one of my all time favorite stories. I was so happy to see all of the strong tales by James Gunn and the wonderful Jack McDevitt's throw back to *Star Trek*, 'Return to Glory.'" Philip and Jill Baringer of Kansas said, "Our short lists were longer than usual, making the choices even harder than they normally are. We don't think the pandemic made us easier to please. The pandemic though may have put us in the mood for the two delightful long romcom tales that got our votes."

Ken Papai of Massachusetts didn't enjoy our fantasy tales, but added, "Regardless, the quality of writing is superb and the anticipation of each new issue is intense, LOL. ALL the best, forever, Ad Astra!" Philip Bryan of Kentucky told us, "2020 was a great year for *Asimov's*! And the December issue was my favorite issue in recent memory." For Kevin Phyland of Victoria, Australia, "The July/August issue was the single best issue in recent history. Worth a subscription alone!"

Finally, Guillermo A. Plazas of Bogota, Colombia, said, "This is one of my favorite features of the magazine. It gives me the opportunity of having my say about the stories, poems, and covers. Have you ever considered including in the awards a category for the other articles like editorials, book reviews, and essays?"

We don't have plans to introduce a nonfiction award, but we look forward to all of your comments about our 2021 stories! We are relieved that the U.S. and much of the world is continuing to open up. We hope to celebrate in person with many of the winners of the 34th and 35th annual awards at Discon III in December!

READERS' AWARD WINNERS

BEST NOVELLA

1. **TAKE A LOOK AT THE FIVE AND TEN;**
CONNIE WILLIS
2. Semper Augustus; Nancy Kress
3. Tool Use by the Humans of Danzhai County; Derek Künsken
4. Maelstrom; Kristine Kathryn Rusch
5. Nic and Viv's Compulsory Courtship; Will McIntosh

BEST NOVELETTE

1. **THE HIND;**
KEVIN J. ANDERSON & RICK WILBER
2. The Long Iapetan Night; Julie Novakova
3. (tie) Beyond the Tattered Veil of Stars; Mercurio D. Rivera
3. (tie) The Beast Adjoins; Ted Kosmatka
5. Tunnels; Eleanor Arnason

BEST SHORT STORY

1. **GO. NOW. FIX.;**
TIMONS ESAIAS
2. Father; Ray Nayler
3. Return to the Red Castle; Ray Nayler
4. Return to Glory; Jack McDevitt
5. (tie) The Conceptual Shark; Rich Larson
5. (tie) Rena in the Desert; Lia Swope Mitchell

BEST POEM

1. **ODE TO CASSINI;**
JANE YOLEN
2. The Hot New Collectible; Suzanne Palmer
3. Incomplete Adaptation; Bruce Boston
4. (tie) After a Year of Solitude; Lora Gray
4. (tie) Unlooping; Marie Vibbert
4. (tie) Relic; Jane Yolen

BEST COVER

1. **MARCH/APRIL;**
JOHN PICACIO
2. September/October; Maurizio Manzieri
3. November/December; Eldar Zakirov
4. May/June; Anna and Elena Balbusso
5. January/February; Dominic Harman