

## THIRTIETH ANNUAL READERS' AWARDS' RESULTS

Our thirtieth annual Readers' Awards' celebration was held on May 14, 2016, at the Lockwood Restaurant in Chicago, Illinois. Although she couldn't accept her award for best novella in person, Kristine Kathryn Rusch sent along an acceptance speech that read, in part, "I am so very honored to win the Asimov's Readers' Choice Award for 'Inhuman Garbage.' The novella is part of my Anniversary Day series, and so I wasn't sure if the story would standalone. Sheila's confidence in it inspired me, and the reader reception has humbled me. I appreciate readers' awards most of all, because readers actually have no agenda except voting for the stories they remember and love. So this award is extra special to me." This award is special to me as well because it shines a light on the tastes of the people who read *Asimov's*. I'm pleased that so many readers include comments with their ballots. Readers are generous with their praise, which means that in addition to the winning works, I get to read compliments about many of our runners up as well.

David Buck wrote to tell us, "The End of the War,' by Django Wexler, was the first story I read in *Asimov's* and so far it is my favorite! Nick Wolven's 'No Placeholder for You, My Love' broke my heart." James Chiesa sent in three pages of single spaced comments that were hard to condense, but all welcome. Here's an excerpt: "I give major points to Indrapramit Das for his imaginative lifecastle life cycle [in 'The Muses of Shuyedan-18'] and other elements of the physical environment, for his beautiful language, for his chutzpah and sensitivity in taking on a lesbian relationship and letting the characters drive the development rather than vice versa, and for his poetic, affecting close." Thomas R. Jones let us know that "Eugene Fischer's 'The New Mother' was the most powerful story of the year, and

Daryl Gregory's *Bewitched* spoof, 'Begone' was hands-down the cleverest tale I've read in a long time." In agreement with Mr. Buck, he added, "My favorite, though, was 'The End of the War.' I'm a sucker for great space tales, and, frankly, I wish you would publish more of them."

Michael Mayotte mentioned that, "My favorite stories the last two years have been Allen Steele's Arkwright series. These have really brought back the optimism of space exploration that I remember feeling in the 1950s and 1960s." His thoughts were echoed by Piet Nel who said, "From the established dependable stars (Allen Steele) to the meteoric rise of new favorites (Kelly Robeson), *Asimov's* continues to be like the little bear's bed: Just the right balance." Dick Harding told us it was "another wonderful year." He gave specific shout outs to Michael Swanwick, Gregory Frost, and Jim Grimsley.

Phillip and Jill Barringer believed "it was a great year for novellas. 'The New Mother' by E.J. Fischer was our clear number one, but decisions got very hard from there." Francis Bass also said, "this has been a terrific year for novellas, giving me plenty of fodder for long road trips and plane rides," but added that Robert Reed's short story "'What I intend' stands out as my favorite piece, even though its ending made me almost cry." Yet, according to Alan Lipton "novelettes were a tough call in 2015. An embarrassment of rich, imaginative, and outrageous. Satire and alternate history were a welcome break from bleak futures." Shirley Meech also remarked that it was hard to choose between novelettes. In addition, she suggested that we show the covers on the ballot to remind readers about them.

Soon Lee wrote to say "thanks for another excellent year. 'Memorable' is become my most important criterion (on review of some stories I don't remember reading at all!) before other criteria come



**Left to Right: Sheila Williams, Suzanne Palmer, and Emily Hockaday**

into play.” Our most charitable reader may have been Eric Von Renegar. He told us, “In my book, every novella, novelette, short story, and poem should receive an award. They were all very good and very entertaining in their own right. Thank you for such a great magazine.”

Alas, most of our winners were not in attendance at our breakfast. Cover artist Maurizio Manzieri lives in Italy while Michael Swanwick was traveling in Russia. Michael’s co-author on their winning novelette, Gregory Frost, couldn’t join us either but sent along a few words: “I would like to extend my thanks to the readers of the magazine, who clearly knew a whacked and weird adventure when they encountered one; to you, Sheila, for taking the story; and to Michael Swanwick, who brought the idea to me in the first place and said ‘We have to collaborate on this,’ after which we drank beer, ate lunch, and talked our way through it. All writing projects should be so pleasurable.” Our breakfast celebration, which was held in tandem with *Analog*’s AnLab Awards, certainly was pleasurable. Guests included Stanley and Joyce Schmidt, Daryl Gregory, Joe and Gay Haldeman, Martin Shoe-

maker, Nick Kanas, Liza Groen Trombi and Arley Sorg from *Locus Magazine*, and *Analog* and *Asimov*’s assistant editor Emily Hockaday and her husband R.J. Carey. We were thrilled that our short story winner, Suzanne Palmer, and her friend Julie Carey could join us.

Our winning poet, Robert Frazier, was also missing, but he sent along an amusing speech in the form of a poem. It read: “Twenty-five years ago, / Back in the Paleolithic days / Of the Asimov’s Readers’ Awards, / When apparently all our DNA / Was more Neanderthal, / Sheila treated Jim Kelly and I / To celebratory eggs Benedict. / We’d written *the* popular poem together. / Somehow it’s happened again. To me. / I couldn’t make this breakfast, / and should I be so amazingly lucky, / again, 25 years from this day, I doubt, / I really doubt I’ll be making that one either. / But I do regret missing you all. / I haven’t seen Sheila in a prehistoric dogs age. / And have yet to meet Emily—speaking—who / Astutely requested a rewrite to the final lines / Of ‘1,230 Grams of Einstein.’ / Thank you, it’s your doing. / Enjoy my slice of Canadian bacon.” We missed him, but we made sure that we did.

# **READERS' AWARD WINNERS**

## **BEST NOVELLA**

1. **INHUMAN GARBAGE;**  
**KRISTINE KATHRYN RUSCH**
2. The Long Wait; Allen M. Steele
3. The New Mother; Eugene Fischer
4. A Thousand Nights Till Morning; Will McIntosh
5. On the Night of the Robo-Bulls and Zombie Dancers; Nick Wolven (tie)
5. The Four Thousand, the Eight Hundred; Greg Egan (tie)

## **BEST NOVELETTE**

1. **LOCK UP YOUR CHICKENS AND DAUGHTERS—  
H'ARD AND ANDY ARE COME TO TOWN!;**  
**MICHAEL SWANWICK & GREGORY FROST**
2. The End of the War; Django Wexler
3. Our Lady of the Open Road; Sarah Pinsker
4. The Great Pan American Airship Mystery, or,  
Why I Murdered Robert Benchley, David Gerrold (tie)
4. The Molenstraat Music Festival; Sean Monaghan (tie)

## **BEST SHORT STORY**

1. **TUESDAYS;**  
**SUZANNE PALMER**
2. What I Intend; Robert Reed
3. Calved; Sam J. Miller
4. Ninety-Five Percent Safe; Caroline M. Yoachim (tie)
4. The First Step; Kristine Kathryn Rusch (tie)
4. My Time on Earth; Ian Creasey (tie)

## **BEST POEM**

1. **1,230 GRAMS OF EINSTEIN;**  
**ROBERT FRAZIER**
2. Love & the Moon; Geoffrey A. Landis (tie)
2. The Circulatory Man; James Valvis (tie)
3. Basement Refrigerator; Joshua Gage (tie)
3. October Leaves; Suzanne Palmer (tie)

## **BEST COVER**

1. **OCTOBER/NOVEMBER;**  
**MAURIZIO MANZIERI**
2. January; Randy Gallegos (tie)
2. March; Paul Youll (tie)
3. August; Tomislav Tikulin
4. April/May; Gary Freeman