

## THE 2015 DELL MAGAZINES AWARD

2015 was the year of the long journey for the winner of our annual Dell Magazines Award for Undergraduate Excellence in Science Fiction and Fantasy Writing. Kayla Chronister traveled all the way from Cambodia to Orlando, Florida, in March, to be honored at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts (ICFA). The award, which includes a five hundred dollar first prize, is cosponsored by Dell Magazines and the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts and is supported by the School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida.

The award is open to any student who attended a semester at an accredited college or university during the previous year. Finalists are ultimately chosen from a blind read of the submissions. Kayla, who had also been one of our 2014 honorable mentions, graduated from Seattle Pacific University last spring at the age of eighteen. Now nineteen, she's teaching middle school students in Phnom Penh. At the conference, Kayla got to present her eerie and subversive Eldritch horror story, "How the Blood Spills," in a session along with readings by Alex Irvine and Daryl Gregory. The story will be posted at [www.Asimovs.com](http://www.Asimovs.com) next year.

Rich Larson, a graduate of the University of Alberta, was our first runner-up with his story, "Bidding War." Rich got honorable mentions for "Edited" and "The Delusive Cartographer" as well. Alas, Rich couldn't make it to this year's conference because he's living in Spain.

Also missing was our second runner-up, Jameyanne Fuller of Kenyon College. Jameyanne had been last year's third runner-up, and we all missed her. She couldn't receive her award for "Naming Angelo" in person because she's now residing in Italy!

This year's third runner-up, Courtney Combs of the University of South Florida, didn't have too far to travel. Courtney studied Mass Communications with a focus on magazine writing. She charmed us with a very modern look at Nellie Bly's around the world journey, "#72 Days."

While Gwendolyn Karpierz of Colorado State University couldn't be on hand to personally pick up her award for "Embryos," we were able to meet with two other honorable mentions. My co-judge, Rick Wilber, and I were delighted that we finally got acquainted with Taimur Ahmad of Princeton University. Although he was a finalist last year, Taimur couldn't get away from school. Luckily his spring break coincided with this year's conference. He tells us he's obsessed with rock climbing, and his love of nature was apparent in his tale about why "Everything Is Magic." We were also very happy to meet Caighlan Smith, a third year student at Memorial University of Newfoundland studying English Literature. Caighlan wrote her first book at eight, and has already sold several young adult novels. She received her award for the inventive story "Greave."

Kayla and Caighlan captured a conference first by inviting their lovely moms. From time to time past finalists have brought their dads. Never before, though, has a finalist been accompanied by a mom. It was appropriate, then, that in addition to being the year of the long journey, it was also the year of the moms. I joined the party by escorting my own college senior to ICFA.

The students dined with Kit Reed, Kathleen Ann Goonan, Y. Lily Yu, Eugene Fischer, Joe and Gay Haldeman, Allen M. Steele, and editor Neil Clarke. Plus, they had the chance to meet conference guests of honor Joan Slonczewski and James Morrow and to chat with Ted Chiang, Kij Johnson, Stephen R. Donaldson, Andy Duncan, John



Photo credit: Francesca Myman, Locus Publications.

Left to right: Sheila Williams, Taimur Ahmad, Courtney Combs, Caighlan Smith, Kayla Chronister, and Rick Wilber

Kessel, Peter Straub, Patricia A. McKillip, Geoffrey A. Landis, Mary Turzillo, Will Ludwigsen, Fran Wilde, David Lunde, Mary Anne Mohanraj, Sandra McDonald, Steven Erikson, Ellen Klages, Sam J. Miller, Usman T. Malik, Cecelia Tan, Rachel Swirsky, Anne Leckie, and many others.

You can visit with previous finalists and current writers at our Facebook site. Search for the **Dell Magazines Award** or go directly to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/manage/#!/pages/Dell-Magazines-Award/177319923776>

We are actively looking for next year's winner. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday, January 5, 2016. All full-time undergraduate students at any accredited university or college are eligible. The award is not limited to unpublished authors, but all submissions must be previously unpublished and unsold, and they should be from 1,000 to 10,000 words long. Writers may submit an unlimited number of stories, but each manuscript must include a cover sheet with the writer's name, address, phone number, and the name of the university the writer attends. Manuscripts should be double-spaced, with adequate margins, and with pages numbered.

Before entering the contest, contact Rick Wilber for more information, rules, and manuscript guidelines. He can be reached care of:

Dell Magazines Award  
School of Mass Communications  
University of South Florida  
Tampa, Florida 33620

*Rwilber@usf.edu*

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Next year, our award winner will be announced at the 2016 Conference on the Fantastic, in the pages of *Asimov's Science Fiction* magazine, and on our website.