



Newsletter No. 26
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Interview with the SLF Director

We caught up with Mary Anne Mohanraj after a long day of writing and teaching. She shared her perspectives on the SLF, writing and the genre. In any conversation with her, it is clear that she's a practical visionary. When she sees a need, she goes about filling it. That's what inspired her to launch *Clean Sheets*, *Strange Horizons* and later, the SLF. One of the first foundations to offer resources geared specifically toward science fiction and fantasy writers, the SLF provides small grants and helps genre writers become familiar with the grant application process. Full story see below >>

AWP Conference and WisCon 2009

The Speculative Literature Foundation had a table at the 2009 Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Annual Conference held this February 11-14. Late in May, the SLF will also have a table at WisCon in Madison. Please plan to stop by the SLF table, if you're attending WisCon, WorldCon and/or the WFC this year.

Thanks to Our Members

The SLF would like to thank our new and renewed members for their support, as well as those who donated during the recent membership drive. Through membership purchases and donations, SLF volunteers raised 1,150 dollars. We would also like to thank these dedicated SLF

volunteers who made the drive such a success. These funds make possible our grants and other SLF ventures. Of course, if you would like, it's possible year-round to become a member or [make a donation](#). Top^

SLF Grant Updates

Older Writers Grant - Deadline March 31

There's still time to apply for the 2009 Older Writers Grant. The SLF will award the 750 dollar grant to a writer who is fifty years of age or older and beginning to work at a professional level. Applications will be considered through March 31, 2009, so please pass along this invitation to apply to anyone eligible. [Learn more >>](#) Top^

Gulliver Travel Research Grantee Heads for Mexico

Late last year, the SLF awarded the 2008 Gulliver Travel Research Grant to author Alaya Dawn Johnson. This year she plans to use the 800 dollar grant for travel to Mexico City and other historical sites in Mexico to research her novel. Johnson's stories have appeared in *Fantasy*, *Interzone* and *Strange Horizons*, and have been reprinted in both the SF&F Year's Best anthologies edited by David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer. Her first novel was published by Agate Publishing in 2007, with the sequel due in 2009. "Alaya's fiction is lean and muscular but bejeweled with strangeness," said Colin Harvey, author of *Blind Faith*, editor of *Killers*, and the Foundation's UK travel grant juror. [Full story >>](#) Top^

Our Membership Director Deborah Biancotti

Having served as the Membership Director and Associate Director, Deborah Biancotti is leaving her position due to her many other commitments. Her short stories have received the prestigious Aurealis and Ditmar awards, and she is now working on a novel. Twelfth Planet Press plans to release a collection of her stories this year. Top^

Colin Harvey's Five Years of Dedication

After five years of volunteer service as the SLF Grant Administrator, Colin Harvey has stepped down from his post to focus on his many projects. His work as one of the grant judges and the administrator has been invaluable to SLF and the authors who have received these grants. Colin is the author of many books, including most recently, *Blind Faith* (2008), as well as over twenty short stories in numerous magazines. His upcoming anthology, *Future Bristol* will be released this Spring 2009. Top^

Karen Meisner, SLF and the Award

Karen Meisner has been with the SLF from its inception and helped shape the organization. Over the years, she has done a ton of work for the SLF, ensuring the Foundation Award was a success, and is now leaving SLF. Karen is the Fiction Editor/Associate Editor of *Strange Horizons* and working on a novel set in San Francisco. Top^

New Staff Additions

Simone Widney is the new research and personal assistant to the SLF director. Formerly a project manager, Simone found it exciting to volunteer on boards, various coalitions and fundraising banquets. She now resides in Chicago with her husband and two young children, filling her days with parenting, homeschooling and blogging.

Mathew Lindsay (who prefers to be called 'Mateo') is a student of Mary Anne's writing workshop and interning for the SLF while he completes his B.A. His interests range from jazz and philosophy to (of course) fiction. He's thrilled to work for the SLF, as he learns the business side of writing. His goal is to become a published writer and to complete his first novel by the time he turns forty. About which he says, "Mocking bird, wish me luck!"

Shilpa Sehgal is graduating this May from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a B.A. in Creative Writing. A former student of Mary Anne's, she will be interning for SLF this semester. Outside of writing short stories, Shilpa is also involved in Bollywood dance. Her plan is to go into the creative field of advertising, and her ultimate dream is to run her own classical Indian dance academy within the next ten years. Top^

Announcements

Gregory B. Banks had *The Summoner* released by WheelMan Press in November 2008. It's become WheelMan Press' best selling Fantasy ebook, in print for the first time. The story is about Davian, brother of a disgraced former member of the Sacred Order of Permeation, who must contend with a haughty ghost, a brash and beautiful female who may be the most powerful Summoner ever born, and a growing darkness within his own soul, the very same temptations that destroyed his brother three thousand years ago.

David Lunde 's poem "Singularity Song" was published in the February 2009 issue of *Asimov's SF Magazine*, and his poem "First Beer on Mars" in the March issue.

Corie Ralston has the short story, "A Giving Heart," coming out in *Clarkesworld Magazine* this Spring. Top^

Interview with Mary Anne (*continued*)

Q1: What prompted you to establish *Clean Sheets* and *Strange Horizons*?

MAM: It seemed like there weren't any erotic magazines out there that didn't trade in shame or develop content strictly for women. With *Clean Sheets* (which I ran from 1998-2000), we wanted

a magazine that provided erotic content that was matter-of-fact, anything goes, sweet or edgy, but broad-based for everyone. *Strange Horizons* started because of a conversation about the lack of places for new authors to get published. I ran it for two years (2000-2002), and we faced a lot of challenges.

Q2: What kind of challenges did the magazine face?

MAM: For starters, our webmaster and two of our fiction editors quit in the first week because they realized they didn't have the time, but we still managed to get the first issue out on-schedule. Challenges aside, I feel like the magazine accomplished what we set out to do. Even now, while publishing many established authors' works, *Strange Horizons* remains committed to publishing new authors and is for many, their first pro sale.

Q3: Since you founded the SLF to help genre authors, do you find that part of your position as the director is to convince people that the speculative genres are useful and relevant?

MAM: It isn't so much convincing people that speculative fiction is useful and relevant, as convincing them that it's literary. I find that if they don't regularly read science fiction or fantasy, then when they do and they like it, they'll often redefine the story as not genre fiction at all, but literary fiction. The challenge is getting people to realize that often what they like is really speculative fiction. Of course, there's badly written genre fiction, but there's just as much poorly written mainstream fiction out there. (*This is the first part of a two-part interview. Part II focuses on writing and the writing process.*) Top^

The Speculative Literature Foundation is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the interests of readers, writers, editors and publishers in the speculative literature community. "Speculative literature" is a catch-all term meant to inclusively span the breadth of fantastic literature, encompassing literature ranging from hard and soft science fiction to epic fantasy to ghost stories to folk and fairy tales to slipstream to magical realism to modern mythmaking--any literature containing a fabulist or speculative element. More information about the Speculative Literature Foundation is available from its [website](#) or by writing to info@speculativeliterature.org.

Newsletter information: Suggestions, comments, and information to be included in the Newsletter may be sent to the Editors David Lunde and Rebecca Rowe at news@speculativeliterature.org. If you do not wish to continue receiving the newsletter, write to the same address with "unsubscribe" in the subject line and be sure to include your name.

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David Lunde, Senior Editor
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