



SERIES AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT ON: SHARON LEE & STEVE MILLER

Sharon Lee and Steve Miller have been writing together since the 1980s, with 24 novels and over four dozen short works to their credit.

Though their works span the range of science fiction and fantasy, they are best known for the long-running collaborative space opera, the *Liaden Universe*®.

Miller is a former traveling poet, and was founding curator of the University of Maryland's Science Fiction Research Collection. Lee was, consecutively, the Executive Director, Vice President, and President of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.

Lee and Miller's awards include the Skylark, the Prism, and the Hal Clement Award.

You've just published the 19th *Liaden Universe*® book, 28 years after the first. Tell us about *Liad*, how the universe started, and why it has such staying power.

The *Liaden Universe*® is a sprawling space opera universe. The universe in which most of the stories and novels occur is one that received the survivors of a diaspora from a previous, collapsing, universe. Those survivors include several sorts of humans: Liadens, Terrans, Yxtrang.

The Liadens (people of the planet Liad) are, in their minds, anyway, the cultural elite of the universe – which is why we call it the *Liaden Universe*®. They control trade, and the *Liaden cantra* piece is the base currency. The smallest functioning unit among Liadens is the clan, which means that your average Liaden is generally better off than your average Terran. Yxtrang are super-soldiers, the remnants of the units that attended the diaspora.

On Liad, it is said that, "There are fifty High Houses. And then there is Korval."

Korval is a maverick clan: it produces traders and scouts – people who willingly go off-world and mix with people who are not Liadens, something no right-thinking Liaden cares to do. The delm (leader) of Korval is often said to be the most powerful individual on-planet. Being maverick, and by clan tradition not *completely* convinced of the innate superiority of all things Liaden, the members of Korval tend to attract trouble.

Clan Korval is the center of the *Liaden Universe*®, though not every story is about Clan Korval. The universe *is* large and sprawling, by authorial design, and if there eight million stories in the Naked City, think how many there are in a whole universe!

The *Liaden Universe*® started in 1984, when Sharon showed a piece of paper with a single line of type on it to Steve, and said, "I think I have a novel here." He considered for a moment, and said, "I'm afraid you have a series." The line was: "The man who was not Terrence O'Grady had come quietly," and survived to become the first line of our first published novel, *Agent of Change* (Del Rey, February 1988).

In-between that first line and actually sitting down to write, we talked a lot about the universe; the characters (Sharon had known the then-two main characters considerably longer than Steve, whose first introduction was, "The man who was not..."), and their backgrounds; the sorts of trouble each was likely to get into.

We were voracious consumers of science fiction and fantasy, and also widely read in other genres, including mystery, romance, spy novels, thrillers, gothics.... Steve introduced Sharon to Georgette Heyer's Regencies; Sharon introduced Steve to Dorothy Sayers' Peter Wimsey novels.

Having that background as not *just* readers of science fiction, we also talked about what we felt was missing (remember that this happened in 1984) from science fiction and, in particular, from space opera, and how we might include those elements that we felt were important.

At that point, science fiction was often written for... how to say this? Boys. There was a hero, who was clever, or deadly, or both, and he had Adventures, and often Prevailed Against Evil. He may have – but, curiously, often didn't – lead a crew of like-minded men. Women positively swooned over him, and he bedded most of them out of an obligation to his manhood, and properly forgot them, the next day. There was plenty of Romance, in the Adventure sense of the word, but very little in the more personal sense.

We decided that people in the future would still need connection. They would need family, friends, lovers, partners. People in *our universe*, we decided, would fall in love. And! Women in *our universe* were going to be people, just as likely to have adventures and strive against evil as the male characters. Women were going to be soldiers, traders, scouts, shopkeepers, vintners, card sharps, pilots, and soldiers. Men could be those things, too, but they didn't have to go it alone, or always have to be the Strongest Guy in the Room. We decided that *our universe* was at least a bisexual universe – that went along, in our opinion, with all persons present being people.

We also decided, during that pre-writing planning period – and this is key – that, if the *Liaden Universe*®, or, indeed, writing in general, stopped being fun – we'd quit.

In line with that resolution, we decided that, in *our universe*, there would be giant turtles – non-human aliens – and, like Andre Norton before us, we would include psy-workers of all descriptions, and faster-than-light travel, and intergalactic trade – because they're fun.

That was, as we said, in 1984, and we're still having fun.

As to why the universe has staying power? Part of it is because the authors *are* having fun. Readers can tell when writers love their work.

For the rest of it, we can only repeat what readers of the universe tell us: They cite the characters, the world-building, the word-play, the plots. Readers of the universe tell us that they re-read – often. Anne McCaffrey, who had been an enthusiastic reader of Liad, summed it up, we think, when she referred to the novels as "comfort reads." They make people feel good, and reaffirm the belief that, no matter how difficult the path, things can be made to work out.

What particular advantages or pleasures does working in the same universe offer you as writers?

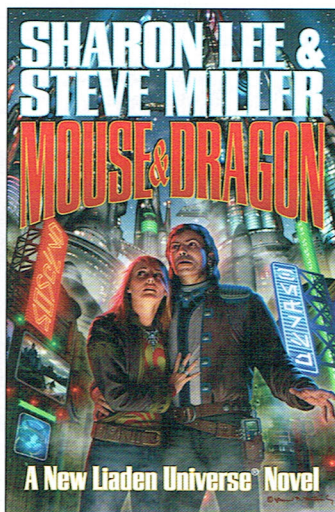
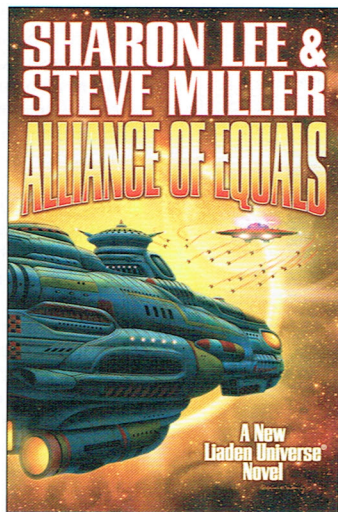
Well, we know the rules, which can't be said for Real Life, after all. We know the geography. We know about the Liaden Code of Proper Conduct, and what bits can be safely bent, if not completely ignored. We know about *melant'i* – which is the codified dividing of what we here in Real Life call "hats." Also, we can include ideas and characters early, and in passing, knowing we'll get back to them, in the way that Terry Pratchett pre-seeded large portions of the Discworld long before they were brought to the front. We can play.

You've said new readers don't need to start at the beginning; that it's not a straight series. Describe how that works.

Quite a few writers do this, you know. Andre Norton's science fiction stories clearly take place in different locales



Steve Miller & Sharon Lee (2016)



within a cohesive universe. C.J. Cherryh's SF takes place in one very, very large universe. Universes are big – we use that.

Though *Clan Korval* is the lodestar of the Liaden Universe®, and there is forward motion toward a resolution of a meta-problem, there are many people involved in both the problem and the resolution. Miri Robertson and Val Con yos'Phelium, the protagonists of *Agent of Change*, are main characters, but they are not *the* main characters. There are Liaden novels in which they don't appear at all, and in which the words "Clan Korval" are never *whispered*.

We have written Liaden Universe® novels that are specifically and explicitly portal books – entry points, designed to let new readers sample the universe, and decide if they want to go on. There's no percentage for us, as writers, in confusing new – or existing – readers. We want them to read a book, and go looking for the other 19. So we include. We let the characters in *this* book tell the reader the rules, as the character knows them to be. Apparently, we're pretty good at this, because every Liaden title has brought us new readers (this is anecdotal evidence, based on what readers tell us) who were intrigued by the novel they read, be it the first or the 19th.

We've posted the "proper reading order" here: <korval.com/publication-list/correct-reading-order>.

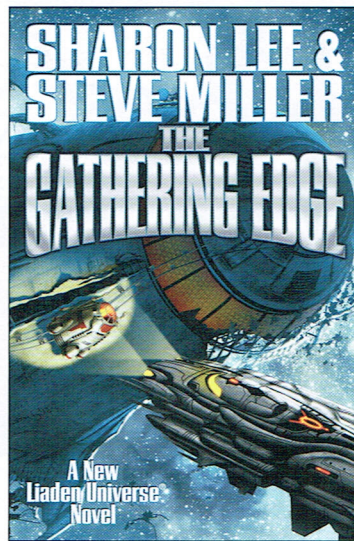
Can you describe your collaborative process?

Sure. One of us will bring a story idea to the table (this is literal – much of our planning, discussing, and role playing is done over our kitchen table). We'll kick it around, try a bit of role-playing, and just see if it "takes." If it does, then the partner who brought the idea forward is what we call the "traffic cop." That partner holds the tie-breaker vote should there be any difference of vision while the story is being written. It has happened that the tie-breaker has been cast, but very seldom. This is because we *do* role-play scenes, and also because we view characters as the captains of their own destinies. If the story's vision stipulates that Character A will steal a spaceship here, and Character A flatly refuses to do so, then it's up to us to find a better way, in keeping with that character's necessities. In general, the traffic cop also does much of the physical writing – at least the typing! – of the first draft, while the other partner does specific scenes, research, and support before taking over for the second draft.

Is there anything else you'd like our readers to know? Upcoming work or other projects of note?

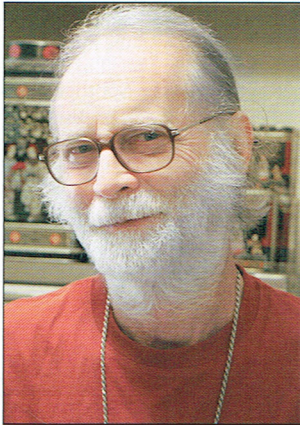
The Gathering Edge will be published by Baen in May 2017. We're currently working on the 21st Liaden Universe® novel, which will be delivered by the end of the year.

–Sharon Lee & Steve Miller ■



Author **W.P. KINSELLA**, 81, died September 16, 2016 in Hope, British Columbia, Canada, reportedly of assisted suicide. Kinsella is best known for his debut novel, baseball fantasy

Shoeless Joe (1982; expanded from story "Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa", 1979), adapted as film *Field of Dreams* (1989). Other works of genre interest include **The Iowa Baseball Confederacy** (1986), **If Wishes Were Horses** (1996), and **Butterfly Winter** (2011), and collections **The Alligator Report** (1985), **Red Wolf, Red Wolf** (1987), **The Further Adventures of Slugger McBatt** (1988), **The Secret of the Northern Lights** (1998), and **The Essential W.P. Kinsella** (2015). He edited anthology **Baseball Fantastic** (2015). In all he published nearly 30 books, including fiction, poetry, and non-fiction, often about baseball. He also frequently wrote about the indigenous peoples of Canada, notably in his first book, collection **Dance Me Outside** (1977).



W.P. Kinsella (2015)

William Patrick Kinsella was born May 25, 1935 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. He worked in various jobs in Edmonton before moving to Victoria in 1967, where he worked in a restaurant and drove a taxi. In 1970 he began attending the University of Victoria to study writing, graduating with a BA in creative writing in 1974; he got his MFA at the Iowa Writers' Workshop in 1978, and taught English at the University of Calgary before becoming a full-time writer after the success of **Shoeless Joe**.

His writing career stalled when he suffered a head injury in a car accident in 1997; in interviews he explained that he couldn't write fiction because he could no longer concentrate, though he continued to publish book reviews. He returned to publishing after a 13-year gap with **Butterfly Winter** in 2011. His final fiction work, **Russian Dolls**, is forthcoming next year. Kinsella was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1993, and was named to the Order of British Columbia in 2005.

Kinsella had diabetes, and reportedly chose to die with the help of a physician. He spent his

Other Obituaries

final years in Yale, British Columbia with fourth wife Barbara, who survives him.

Fan **BOB PETERSON**, 95, died August 15, 2016 in Denver CO after a brief illness. He was a longtime member of the National Fantasy Fan Federation and First Fandom, and was elected to the First Fandom Hall of Fame in 2004. He was honored with First Fandom's Sam Moskowitz Archive Award in 2008.

Robert Constant Peterson was born May 30, 1921. When he was 12 years old, he discovered *Wonder Stories*. A few years later, he was buying older issues of various pulp magazines and advertising them for sale in

Amazing Stories. Peterson was a SF and fantasy fan for most of his life, publishing his personal-zine, *Notes from Bob Peterson*, for many years. He attended the University of Wyoming, graduating in 1942 and serving in the US Army during WWII. While assigned to various military bases, he visited with local SF fans, including Wilson

"Bob" Tucker and Forrest J Ackerman. After being discharged in Denver CO in 1946, he became acquainted with members of the Colorado Fantasy Society, including Chuck Hansen, Roy V. Hunt, Stan Mullen, and Olon F. Wiggins. He also met Robert A. Heinlein, who lived in Colorado Springs at the time. Peterson met his future wife Winifred through the Colorado Mountain Club, marrying her in 1954.

In the later 1940s, he published genre reference works **The Fantasy Index** and the **Index of Science Fiction Magazines, 1926-1948**, the latter with fellow fan Bill Evans. In 1960 Peterson edited anthology **The Science-Fictional Sherlock Holmes**, with stories collected from various sources by fellow fan Norm Metcalf.

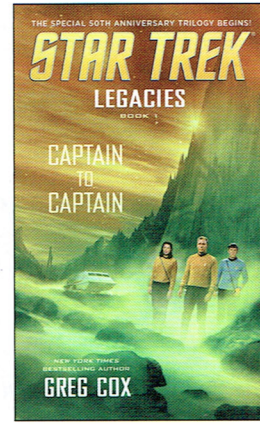
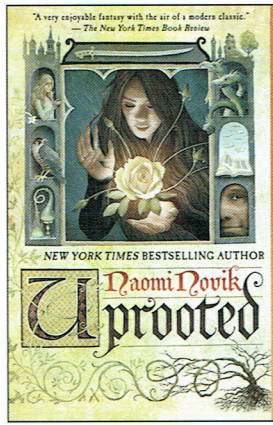
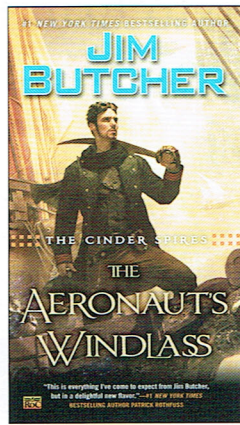
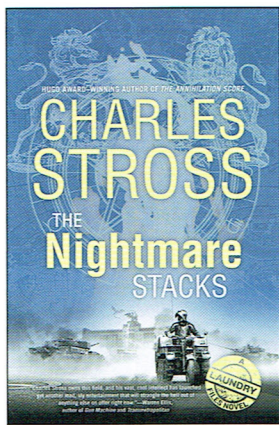
Peterson was predeceased by his wife Winifred, who died in 2007. He is survived by four sons and four grandchildren. Peterson and his wife travelled extensively in the US and throughout the world. They were lifelong members of the Washington Park United Church of Christ and strong supporters of social justice. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the American Friends of Asian Rural Institute (<www.friends-ari.org>).

–Jon D. Swartz & John L. Coker III/Locus ■



Colorado Fantasy Society: Chuck Hansen, Robert C. Peterson, Roy V. Hunt, Emile Greenleaf (1970s)

LOCUS BESTSELLERS



HARDCOVERS

	months on list	last month
1) The Nightmare Stacks , Charles Stross (Ace)	2	-
2) Alliance of Equals , Sharon Lee & Steve Miller (Baen)	1	-
3) Children of Earth and Sky , Guy Gavriel Kay (NAL)	3	3
4) Harry Potter and the Cursed Child , J.K. Rowling, John Tiffany, & Jack Thorne (Levine)	1	-
5) League of Dragons , Naomi Novik (Del Rey)	2	2
6) A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms , George R.R. Martin (Bantam)	9	4
7) Stiletto , Daniel O'Malley (Little, Brown)	2	10
8) The Perdition Score , Richard Kadrey (Harper Voyager US)	1	-
9) Quantum Night , Robert J. Sawyer (Ace)	4	-
10) Library of Souls , Ransom Riggs (Quirk)	2	-

PAPERBACKS

1) The Aeronaut's Windlass , Jim Butcher (Roc)	1	-
2) The Ocean at the End of the Lane , Neil Gaiman (Morrow)	1	-
3) Aurora , Kim Stanley Robinson (Orbit US)	3	3
4) The Name of the Wind , Patrick Rothfuss (DAW)	34	2
5) A Game of Thrones , George R.R. Martin (Bantam)	71	4
6) The Annihilation Score , Charles Stross (Ace)	1	-
7) American Gods , Neil Gaiman (Morrow)	18	-
8) The End of All Things , John Scalzi (Tor)	2	1
9) The Wise Man's Fear , Patrick Rothfuss (DAW)	16	9
10) A Clash of Kings , George R.R. Martin (Bantam)	59	-

On the hardcover list, **The Nightmare Stacks** by Charles Stross (book seven in the Laundry Files series) jumped from eighth place last month to first place, followed in second by Sharon Lee & Steve Miller's **Alliance of Equals**, the latest book in their Liaden Universe series. The new runner-up was **The Devourers** by Indra Das (Del Rey). There were 57 nominated titles, up from 51 last month.

With almost twice the number of votes as its nearest competitor, **The Aeronaut's Windlass** by Jim Butcher took first place on the paperback list. Neil Gaiman's **The Ocean at the End of the Lane** was a distant second.

TRADE PAPERBACKS

	months on list	last month
1) Uprooted , Naomi Novik (Del Rey)	5	2
2) Sevенеves , Neal Stephenson (Morrow)	2	1
3) The Year's Best Science Fiction: Thirty-third Annual Collection , Gardner Dozois (St. Martin's)	1	-
4) Heroine Complex , Sarah Kuhn (DAW)	1	-
5) The Girl With All the Gifts , M.R. Carey (Orbit US)	3	-
6) The Three-Body Problem , Cixin Liu (Tor)	5	7
7) Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children , Ransom Riggs (Quirk)	22	9
8) Poison or Protect , Gail Carriger (self-published)	1	-
9) Hollow City , Ransom Riggs (Quirk)	3	-
*) Neverwhere , Neil Gaiman (Morrow)	2	-

MEDIA-RELATED & GAMING RELATED

1) Star Trek: Legacies: Captain to Captain , Greg Cox (Pocket)	2	5
2) Star Wars: Aftermath: Life Debt , Chuck Wendig (Del Rey)	1	-
3) Star Wars: Aftermath , Chuck Wendig (Del Rey)	11	1
4) Star Wars: Twilight Company: Battlefront , Alexander Freed (Del Rey)	2	-
5) Star Wars: Bloodline , Claudia Gray (Del Rey)	3	3

A Call to Duty by David Weber & Timothy Zahn (Baen), first in a series set in David Weber's Honorverse, was the new runner-up. There were 54 nominated titles, down from 70 last month.

On the trade paperback list, **Uprooted** by Naomi Novik and Neal Stephenson's **Sevенеves** traded places from last month's list, with **Uprooted** taking first place and **Sevенеves** in second. The new runner-up was **Killing Titan** (Orbit US) by Greg Bear, the second book in Bear's War Dogs trilogy. There were 69 nominated titles, up from 67 last month.

In media-related and gaming-related books, only three points separate the top three finishers, with **Star Trek: Legacies: Captain to Captain** by Greg Cox in first, **Star Wars: Aftermath: Life Debt** by Chuck Wendig in second, and **Star Wars: Aftermath** by Chuck Wendig in third. There were no new runners-up. 28 titles were nominated, the same number as last month.

Compiled with data from: Bakka-Phoenix (Canada), Barnes and Noble (USA), Borderlands (CA), McNally Robinson (two in Canada), Mysterious Galaxy (CA), Toadstool (two in NH), Uncle Hugo's (MN), University Bookstore (WA), White Dwarf (Canada). Data period: July 2016.

General Bestsellers

HARDCOVERS	NY Times Bk Review					Publishers Weekly				Los Angeles Times				
	7/3	10	17	24	31	7/4	11	18	25	7/3	10	17	24	31
End of Watch , Stephen King (Scribner)	1	1	4	5	6	1	3	5	6	9	9	18	-	-
Underground Airlines , Ben H. Winters (Mulholland)	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Star Wars: Aftermath: Life Debt , Chuck Wendig (Del Rey)	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	-	-
Born of Legend , Sherrilyn Kenyon (St. Martin's)	-	-	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zero K , Don DeLillo (Scribner)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-
Slade House , David Mitchell (Random House)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	10	-
PAPERBACKS														
Finders Keepers , Stephen King (Pocket)	14	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-
A Game of Thrones , George R.R. Martin (Bantam)	-	-	8	11	10	-	-	-	-	9	9	10	5	8
One Year After , William R. Forstchen (Forge)	-	-	12	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Battlefield Earth , L. Ron Hubbard (Galaxy)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ready Player One , Ernest Cline (Broadway)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	13

Paper and Fire by Rachel Caine (NAL), **Lady Midnight** by Cassandra Clare, **United as One** by Pittacus Lore, **A Court of Mist and Fury** by Sarah J. Maas, **Library of Souls** by Ransom Riggs, **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone: The Illustrated Edition** by J.K. Rowling, **The Infinite Sea** and **The Last Star** by Rick Yancey made the hardcover YA list. **Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children** by Ransom Riggs (Quirk), and **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them** by Newt Scamander (AKA J.K. Rowling) made the mass market/trade paper YA list. See *Locus Online* for weekly charts of genre books on these and eight other general bestseller lists! •trade paperbacks