

### Statements from Candidates for SFRA Offices



Keren Omry

Below, please find the statements from the candidates for two Executive Committee positions that are open this year: Vice President and Treasurer. Each successful candidate is expected to serve for a three-year term. Please read and consider the candidates' statements and, when we open our online voting page in early October, cast your vote.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to everyone for their willingness to run for office. Like all volunteer organizations, we depend entirely on our members' efforts. While being an SFRA officer may look glamorous on paper, it is also a commitment of time and attention in the service of others. We should always remember this and acknowledge their participation – thank you Ida, Jessica, Lars, and Tim!

#### VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

##### Ida Yoshinaga

I am a non-traditional scholar and producer who works between the fields of transmedia narrative theory and production studies. I got my Ph.D. from the University of Hawai'i Department of English's Creative Writing Program, after decades of being in and out of graduate school across several disciplines. In that time, I had helped mainstream scholars become effective classroom instructors from my staff labor at college teaching centers, and also served as an adjunct instructor in diverse higher-education institutions (teaching, among other subjects, race/class/gender in popular culture, women and work, screenwriting, sf/f short fiction writing, and the history of the Hollywood screenplay). As a researcher, I have been writing about the management-labor relations that create politically fruitful dynamics between corporate professionals and Indigenous (usually diasporic) workers as members of the latter class deploy cultural forms of sf/f as an expression of their labor value. For instance, between show creator Ray Bradbury and Maori director Lee Tamahori on *The Ray Bradbury Theater* series of the early cable era; between the Walt Disney Company's *Moana* story trust of largely U.S.-raised animation managers and the Oceanic Story Trust of Indigenous Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian cultural consultants; between indie darling writer-director Cameron Crowe and Kanaka Maoli sovereignty activist Bumpy Kanahele during the production of the film *Aloha*; and between Iranian American showrunner Nahnatchka Khan and her team of mostly East Asian American and European American writer-producers and the Pacific Islander and Black cast on the prime-time network series *Young Rock*. In these case studies, science fictionality becomes a hybrid modality, a sign of creative innovation, a momentary way to signal one's imagination and talents. Not a reified genre (as in the "Science! Fiction!" which we have all definitionally debated over), nor approached with a whole-text sensibility. As an alternative and ethnic media scholar interested in DEIB issues during the development of sf film, TV and transmedia narrative, I research the use of this genre as a business practice, viewing

science fiction as an orientation, a cultural form of media expression and a praxis involving workplace agency (or resistance) and individual creative labor.

I regard the SFRA as an intellectually excellent North American scholarly organization for sf studies which aims to be global, innovative and diverse at this point in its history. As such, I am interested in experimental recruitment strategies that make us appear welcoming to minority groups. Such as (for example): a 2-year free trial memberships for BIPOC or Indigenous scholars; immediate commitment to sponsoring events that center around non-binary and genderfluid (etc.) topics (perhaps beginning with a much-needed LGBTQ+ themed national conference); and outside-the-box, digitally powered, sustained tactics to help our ABDs, recent Ph.D.s and adjuncts find meaningful employment worthy of their intellect and academic training. The COVID-19 era has gotten academia to rely upon live digital communication to run its professional meetings; we can take that one step further and ask how such technologies might help us overcome longstanding class barriers, disability issues and other unequal byproducts of the creaky outdated conference system, as we reboot for the new era. Finally, how do we reinject our field, riven with a perhaps too-aware sense of the climate apocalypse and other ongoing neoliberal crises, with a sense of wonder and refresh our imaginaries so as to continue to help students and colleagues make their way into the future with resilient hope and resistant grit?

Excited about starting these types of conversations with everyone!

### **Lars Schmeink**

I wanted to start this message with a snappy quote, a motto, or a quip. Thinking about my time with the SFRA, my scholarship (and career) over the last few years and maybe even the very strange corona-times that we are living in, I think William Gibson's "the street finds its own use for things" or maybe his "the future is already here, it is just not evenly distributed" might work. Life, career, and certainly research never go quite as planned and I think my biggest take-away from last year is that you must take things the way they come and change plans and traditions to adapt to new challenges ... and organizing the Cyberpunk Culture Conference and the Cyberpunk Research Network were a few of the many things that came out of that year.

When I started my career and my membership in SFRA, something like 2007 or 2008 (not quite sure anymore), I was a PhD student in Germany – not the most likely of places to work in SF (though we did get better, see the German Country Representative report in this issue). When looking for a "home" for myself and my research interests, the SFRA really did shine like the proverbial city upon the hill, even though it was usually an ocean away. So, for better or worse, I organized my own network, the Association for Research in the Fantastic (GFF, see [www.fantastikforschung.de](http://www.fantastikforschung.de)) in Germany and started building bridges to international organizations such as SFRA and IAFA. I was pretty preoccupied there for a long time, but kept up contact with SFRA—I was Managing Editor of the SFRA Review for a while, I attended the wonderful SFRA

conference in Lublin, Poland and I started to write articles and reviews mainly on posthuman SF, especially cyberpunk and biopunk. Many of you will know me from my ongoing editorial work for *Cyberpunk and Visual Culture* (2018) and the *Routledge Companion to Cyberpunk Culture* (2020) and now *Fifty Key Figures in Cyberpunk Culture* (2022) and *New Perspective in Contemporary German Science Fiction* (2021).

But since stepping down from the GFF presidency and looking for more international connections and projects, I have been wanting to engage with the SFRA more deeply. I believe, that as a Vice President of the SFRA I could continue the amazing work at internationalization and diversity that Sonja has started, that presidents Pawel, Keren or Gerry have made a central thrust of the development of the SFRA. I have been the German Country Representative since the inauguration of the Country Reps and would like to further develop this group. I would like to help address issues of diversity, make SFRA more accessible to BIPOC, LGBTQ+, people with dis/ability and specifically scholars with less access to financial support. As an association of scholars these are the key issues we will need to address, to allow everyone in our community to participate, to broaden the horizon and the choir of voices that get to do research in SF. My hope is that I can be there to help SFRA distribute “the future” a bit more evenly, that I can help tinker with what we got to get the best and most surprising uses out of things. I hope for your vote and would love a chance to serve in the SFRA. Thank you.

## TREASURER CANDIDATES

### **Jessica FitzPatrick**

I am excited to stand as a candidate for the position of SFRA Treasurer. I have been a member of the SFRA since 2015, when my graduate work on world literature shifted into the realm of science fiction studies. Since then, the SFRA has been my intellectual home and model for joyful critical discourse and steadfast community. I’ve had the pleasure of serving on the Mary Kay Bray Award committee for the past two years, and I look forward to taking the reins as committee leader this year. The SFRA’s dedication to access—conferences where established and early scholars mingle, opportunities for publication circulate, and convivial inclusive networks flourish—are dear to me. Like Tom Moylan’s understanding of utopia, I believe that community requires ongoing effort. As a member of the board I will work to keep making the SFRA as welcoming, exciting, and productive as possible. Outside the SFRA I am a Lecturer at the University of Pittsburgh (PA, USA), where I teach interdisciplinary approaches to SF in courses like Science Fiction and Narrative and Technology. I also direct Pitt’s Digital Narrative and Interactive Design program, which combines the fields of English and Computing and Information to analyze, code, and wire story. Thanks to this position, I have experience in interdisciplinary approaches to SF, budgeting, and balancing evolving organization needs. I would be honored to serve as SFRA Treasurer, keeping us in financial health and supporting vital operations as we continue towards an ever more equitable and accessible future.

**Tim Murphy**

My main qualification for the post of SFRA treasurer lies in the fact that, nearly 40 years ago, I failed calculus as an undergraduate. That failure forced me to change my major from physics to literature, and transformed my lifelong affection for fantastic fiction—science fiction, fantasy, horror, weird fiction—from a hobby into a constant element of my teaching, and ultimately, over the past decade, into a main focus of my scholarship. Had that not happened, I probably wouldn't be a member of the SFRA today. That failure is also pertinent to the treasurer's job because it means I lack the mathematical skills to perpetrate an effective embezzlement scheme or other fraud, so SFRA members can rest assured that their dues will be going where they're supposed to go, and not into my pockets. I promise to be a trustworthy steward of the Association's resources, though I cannot promise that I will be the best possible counselor for the Association's planned investment portfolio, as that would once again require mathematical acumen far exceeding my own. Thank you for your attention.