



Jesse James Comics - Photo Credit Ken St. Andre

May the 4th Be With You

by PJ Hultstrand

Many fans offered hearty phrases of, "May the 4th be with you," on Facebook, before their trek out to their favorite comic book shops on Saturday, the 4th of May for FCBD. What does this mean, you may ask? It stands for FREE COMIC BOOK DAY, and just the idea that you didn't know leaves those who do know, with the tell-tale sign that you are not a geek.

Free Comic Book Day is the, "Christmas Eve for comic book stores in America". The proof of this is in the keen marketing plan by most of the comic book companies and their idea, that giving away product will yield prosperity for all. And it must be working because last year's sales for this holiday for the comic book industry yielded increases in sales, over the previous years.

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Review of the LepreCon 39 Film Festival

By Hal C F Astell

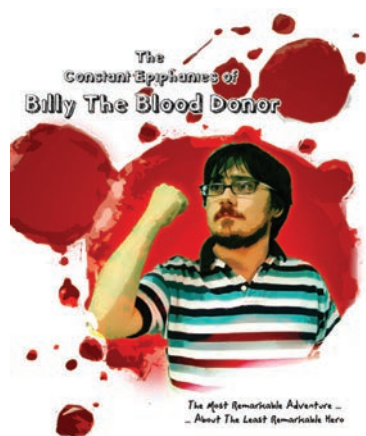


Photo Credit Squishy Studios

Tasked with programming a genre festival at LepreCon from predominantly local talent, I knew I had plenty to choose from. There are more local filmmakers than ever shooting genre material and a few key players are really raising the bar that everyone else has to strive for. The challenge was to program a wide variety of films that represent different facets of the science fiction and fantasy genres.

With four hours to play with, I quickly realized that a set of short films and a feature would work best, with an intermission so that any filmmakers attending can answer questions.

The feature proved easiest. Nathan Blackwell of Squishy Studios was on hand to be at LepreCon anyway and he has a rarely seen feature called, *The Constant Epiphanies of Billy the Blood Donor*, that sounds rather intriguing. Squishy is mostly known for a number of webseries, especially the highly successful, *Voyage Trekkers*, which launched season two at the beginning of this month. I discovered them through their short film, *Zombie Team Building*, which was an official selection of both Phoenix FearCon and the

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Roddenberry Legacy Visits Prescott Film Festival

by PJ Hultstrand

The date is November, 12th, 1982, and I'm given the opportunity to interview Gene Roddenberry, creator of *Star Trek* during his visit to Mesa Community College on his tour of the colleges for his upcoming movie, "In Search of Spock". Now understand, at that time, I could not be considered a Trekkie and my interests were in the movies and in particular in "Wrath of Khan". However, this was an opportunity to meet a mover and shaker in science-fiction and I would never pass up such an opportunities. So, I had assigned my fiancée at the time to shoot the pictures for me while I did the actual interview, then we wrote the article in the paper that went out on November 22, 1982.

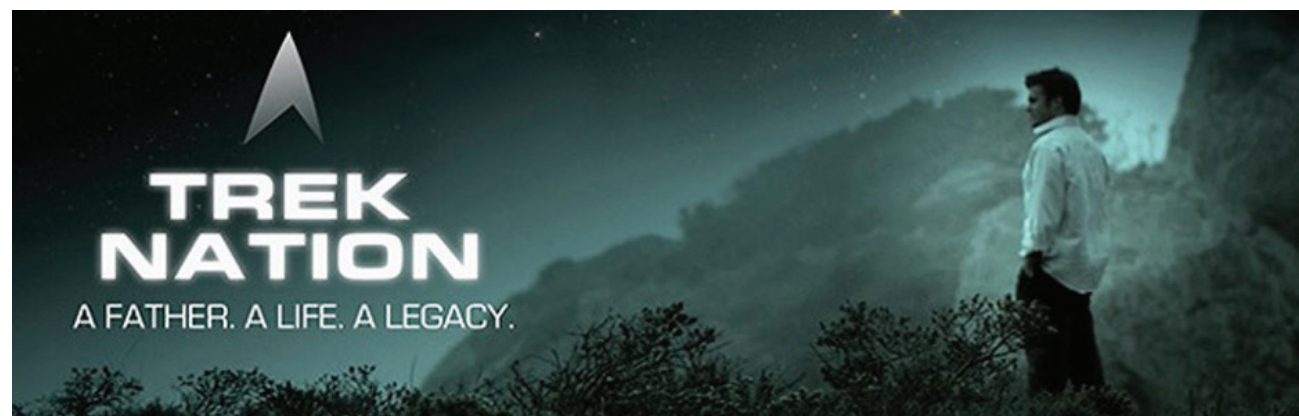
As it turned out, I had an exclusive because no other newspapers showed up to take the opportunity and I was able to sit with him before the event. This became an even more interesting interview because a couple came to the event who had been a neighbor of Roddenberry's back when he was filming the series. So, I ran with it and got not only an exclusive interview but a few terrific stories from his neighbors that few

would ever have the chance to report.

The couple spoke of how the neighbor kids would all congregate around the side of Roddenberry's house, where they could see and hear him through the large picture window in his den, acting out the scenes from his television series, *Star Trek*. The kids all called him, 'that crazy old man, Roddenberry' because they didn't know about the series, they just knew he was quite animated in his den.

Not being a trekkie, I really did not understand the impact *Star Trek*, nor this one man upon the future

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Thanks to Drawn to Comics for this idea: Distribution locations, please use this space to stamp your address.

FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR'S DESK

by PJ Hultstrand

I saw a post on Facebook from Kindle Publishing Direct which showed this graphic depicting the progression of the author's journey from feather quill writing up to the laptop computer. The idea was attached to notice that Kindle Direct would be hosting a panel at the London Book Fair, called, The Future For Authors. The caption read, "Fill in the blank: In the future, independent authors will be able to _____."

There were some 76 comments under the message and as I read through many of the answers to the fill in the blank, I could tell many of them were frustrated authors. The answers were sometimes curt and referenced that the author would somehow start making money with their books or writing. Some made mention of the millions they should be making from their efforts, while many stated their design to find that miracle in marketing which would transport them to the yacht or vehicle of their dreams. Somehow, from this mystery windfall of money, they would be without cares and all their problems would be solved.

First, I want to say that I understand and even sympathize with these authors, however this was not really the place to vent. And secondly, they really had not gotten the point of the exercise.

I know many authors thought they would write that single book wonder and be transported to the land of lavish living. While I had those daydreams too, I still understood that the life of an author is not all rosy and really, most people would not be able to handle the grind of the life of a real best selling author.

Since being a small publisher for the last six years, I have met many writers who thought that since I was a publisher, this meant I was loaded with money. Nothing could be further from the truth. I just love helping writers to become published authors. The same misconception comes to these same writers who think all they have to do is write a book, and it would instantly be read by millions just because they wrote it and it was up for sale on Amazon.

Most authors really do not understand the industry they have become a partner with, and do not understand they are now in business because they have a product to sell. This lack of understanding is not all their fault however, because Amazon has been feeding this misconception for years now and playing to the writer's desire for fame and fortune. And if you don't think so, think about the possible answers to the fill in the blank; "in the future" (which could be the end of this year), "independent authors will be able to _____." If you consider the chain of events in this industry which have led us to this point, several answers become crystal clear, really.

1. Technology changes in printing have allowed more writers to become published authors because printing a book has become more convenient and cheaper to produce.

2. Print-on-Demand (POD) has become not only cheaper for the individual author, but now the big publishers are also using this technology to reduce

warehousing books at the distributors, and reducing waste.

3. Despite the best efforts of the two largest publishers in the history of the world, when Penguin and Random House merged, their combined assets were in the millions, while Amazon continues to blow all competition away by becoming a "Billion" dollar company. Perhaps if all "six" U.S. publishers combined, Amazon's net worth would be on even keel, but as it is, Amazon still blows all competition for book sales out the window.

4. Amazon has been playing to the tune of the "Independent" author, allowing them to upload their cover artwork and interiors into the Createspace account, and in a matter of a few days, an author can have a box of books to sell. Amazon DOES NOT consider, nor cares if this is a well written book or even if the cover will attract readers. So, does this really help the industry or help the author to sell their books? Of course not.

5. In the last few years, they have become the monopoly in eBook publishing by making it even simpler to upload files to sell on their Kindles and packaged them up nicely by offering more perks to sell EXCLUSIVELY on Kindle. And, yes, they are checking your books to make sure they are not being sold anywhere but Kindle.

Now that they have 80% of the market uploading their books to them, what do they want you to do next? There are three areas of marketing that I have been taking note of and now that Kindles have been optimized to accept pictures and formatted content, they have started to push their plan to take the children's book market away from Apple, who has really been standing alone for some time in the premium content arena. Yes, the Nook was first to market with the ability to accept ePub files, but most haven't noticed.

But, this is not the "REAL" push that Amazon is looking for, because they already know they have your attention, so the ability to accept children's picture books is just cream in the coffee. We pay premium prices for the "coffee" but expect it will include the cream if we want it.

No, the two latest main revenue arms that Amazon is reaching to dominate are in the media arena; audio books and video content. Audio books have been around for some time, however, they have been clunky because of the sheer cost to record the book and store it on multiple CD's - or way back when, on a stack of audio tapes. But this problem has been solved now that we have STREAMING AUDIO AND VIDEO capabilities. All this has been made possible by a simple thing called, "the Cloud".

So, what do I think the answer to the question, "In the future, independent authors will be able to _____"?

And my answer is: Be able to speak their book into a recording right on their voice activated smart phone, and upload to their Amazon account, and start selling in minutes; all thanks to the ability to stream from the cloud.

The WOD News Staff

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CONVENTION LISTINGS:

LONESTARCON 3, the 71st World Science Fiction Convention

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 7, 2013

SAN ANTONIO, Texas - LoneStarCon 3, the 71st World Science Fiction Convention ("Worldcon"), is pleased to announce the opening of the voting process to select the host sites for the 2015 Worldcon and the 2014 North American Science Fiction Convention ("NASFiC").

Three bids have formally filed for the 2015 Worldcon, which will be the 73rd occasion of this convention. In alphabetical order, these are as follows:

- Helsinki in 2015 - a bid for Helsinki, Finland. The convention would be held from August 6 to 10, 2015, with the main facilities being the Helsinki Exhibition and Conference Centre and the Holiday Inn Helsinki Exhibition & Convention Centre. Learn more at www.helsinkiin2015.org.

- Orlando in 2015 - a bid for Orlando, Florida. The convention would be held from September 2 to 6, 2015, at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort and Convention Center. Learn more at www.orlandoin2015.org.

- Spokane in 2015 - a bid for Spokane, Washington. The convention would be held from August 19 to 23, 2015, with the main facilities being the Spokane Convention Center, the Doubletree Spokane, the Red Lion at the Park, and Red Lion River Inn. Learn more at www.spokanein2015.org.

Two bids have filed for the 2014 NASFiC. This convention is held in North America in any year when the Worldcon travels outside the continent. A NASFiC will be held in 2014 as the 2014 Worldcon will take place in London, UK. In alphabetical order, the NASFiC bids are as follows:

- Detroit in 2014 - a bid for Detroit, Michigan. The convention would be held from July 17 to 20, 2014, at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. Learn more at detroitin2014.org.

- Phoenix in 2014 - a bid for Phoenix, Arizona. The convention would be held from July 30 to August 3, 2014, at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel and Conference Center. Learn more at phoenixin2014.org.

HOW TO TAKE PART

All Adult, Military, and Young Adult Attending and Supporting members of LoneStarCon 3 are eligible to take part in the site selection process.

Ballots may be submitted by postal mail or in-person at the convention. Postal ballots must be received by Sunday, August 18, 2013. Voting at the convention will continue until 6 p.m. on Saturday, August 31, 2013. All ballots must be accompanied by an Advance Membership (Voting) fee, set at \$40 for the Worldcon election, and at \$35 for the NASFiC election. In each case, the fee will automatically be converted to a Supporting Membership in the winning convention.

Members submitting postal ballots may pay their voting fee by US check, US money order, or credit card. Checks and money orders should be mailed to the Site Selection Administrator along with the ballot. Credit card payments must be made via the LoneStarCon 3 web site. Upon payment of the voting fee, members will be issued with a unique voting token reference, which must be written onto the ballot as evidence of payment.

Further information on the site selection process may be found on the LoneStarCon 3 website at www.LoneStarCon3.org/wsfs/wsfs-site.shtml. Ballot forms may be downloaded from the website in PDF format for printing, and will also be included in Progress Report 4 which will mail in mid-May to members receiving printed publications.

For more information about the site selection process, please write to siteselection@LoneStarCon3.org.

PHOENIX COMICON

Phoenix Comicon is the signature pop culture event of the southwest. Comicon is presenting guests and programming for hobbyists by attracting the top segments of the comics, anime, sci-fi, film, tv, and gaming industries. Phoenix Comicon 2013 is expected to draw over 30,000 attendees to its May 24-27, 2013 convention held at the Phoenix Convention Center and Hyatt Regency in Downtown Phoenix.

COPPERCON REVOLUTION! August 8-11, 2013;

Location: Windemere Hotel-5750 East Main St., Mesa, Arizona 85205

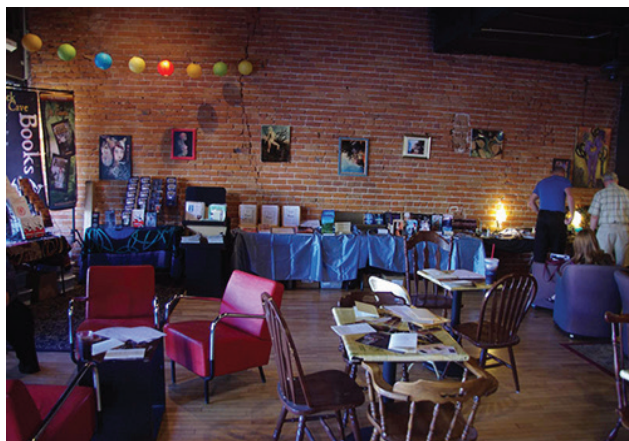
Ph: (480)985-3600; Toll Free: (800) 888-3561

Media Guest of Honor: Mike Grell; Artist Guest: Trina Robbins; Artist Guest: Steve Leialoha.

WOD

Book Browse 2 - Brick Cave Media

Photos By Chet Shupe



International Horror & Sci-Fi Film Festival. By the time I found their joyous homage to classic movie serials, *Masters of Daring*, I was hooked. I'm really looking forward to catching up with their mysterious 2007 feature.

By comparison, I've seen all the shorts that I've selected, so I know you're in for a treat when you join us.

To kick off the set is *Rampage: Project Vermilion*, which is a little bit of a fudge on my part, given that its local connection is that I met its director, Justin Calen Chenn in Phoenix while his last feature, *Folklore*, was screening at the International Horror & Sci-Fi Film Festival. This 2012 short is a monster movie, but with a neat little edge that makes it special.

Next up is *Red Sand: A Mass Effect Fan Film*, from Paul DeNigris and his students at the University of Advancing Technology in Tempe. They've been the best effects folk in the valley for years and they keep outdoing themselves with each new release. This one from 2012, directed by Caleb Evans, stars Mark Meer from the *Mass Effect* video game, a coup of casting, and sits comfortably within a gap in the game's chronology so that you don't need to know the game to understand the movie. It's science fiction action and it looks amazing. It's internationally acclaimed and has almost reached 200,000 views on YouTube.

While UAT are well established, Jump Ship Productions is a new company in the valley making a lot of noise. Each of their three 2012 films won acclaim and awards. *The Duel* is a great little short set in a comic book store that was shot for the IFP Beat the Clock Challenge in 2012 but went on to win 3rd place overall of all the various IFP challenges in 2012.

It's guaranteed to spark debate among con audiences after the screening.

Second Chances from LJR Productions is another IFP challenge film from a local company, shot for the 2012 Breakout Challenge. It adds a twist to the old wish concept, granted by a mysterious stage magician.

A British film with timelapse photography shot in Arizona in 2012, *We are One* is a hard science fiction film about the colonisation of Mars that mixes fact and fiction and is dedicated to US aerospace engineer, Dr Robert Zubrin, who wrote *The Road to Mars* and founded the Mars Society. That it stars Rosie Jones, famous model and Page 3 girl, is merely a bonus.

The most riotous fun of the evening will surely come during *Black Gulch*, a long short made in Miami in 2003. That's the Miami just outside Globe, AZ, not the one in Florida. It stars local actor Christopher Bradley, who may still be best known for *Waxwork* generally, but surely not to anyone who's seen this, as he channels Tim Thomerson and Kurt Russell as he attempts to rob a bank in a mysteriously abandoned Arizona town.

Finishing up, if I don't slip anything else into the mix in the meantime, is *The Guy Knows Everything*. It's the only film without an Arizona connection, if you don't count that I live here and I've reviewed everything 386 Films have made. It's a long short from 2012 set in a sports bar, but don't let that put you off. It features a group of competitive friends who find themselves taking on the challenge of a mysterious stranger who apparently knows everything.

It's been fun programming the film festival at LepreCon 39 and I'm looking forward to building it

over the next year into something even more special for LepreCon 40. See you there!

Hal C F Astell writes film reviews at Apocalypse Later, from the 1900s to the 2010s, with a focus on what most critics don't review. For the Frankenweenie feature, visit Roger Ebert. For the original 1984 short version Tim Burton made at Disney, not to mention the odd stuff he was doing before that in his spare time, visit Apocalypse Later.

<http://www.apocalypselaterfilm.com/>

WOD



EXPLORING THE BOOK LIFESTYLE

Brick Cave Bookcast

<http://brickcavebookcast.com/>

Host: Jenn Czep

Host: Brent Heffron



John Jackson Miller, who tracks industry sales figures and estimates, said that sales of single-issue comic books were up nearly \$60 million to \$474.6 million in 2012, compared with \$414 million in 2011 and \$310.6 million in 2003. And Miller stated that sales of digital comics were an estimated \$75 million in 2012 compared with about \$25 million the year before. "It's definitely tripled," he said. "and the heartening thing to everyone in the business is that it happened alongside gains in print sales." *

Drue, owner of the Tempe, Arizona based comic book store, Ash Avenue Comics & Books, confirmed when asked how well he thought he was doing this year. Drue stated while smiling, "Last year was the best year I've ever had in sales for FCBBD, and this year will be even better." And this optimism was met when there were still a few more hours in sales for Saturday.

Of course, the trick here is in the marketing, with advertising on the part of every comic book store all getting a focused eye on these artistic wonders on paper, if at least for that one day. According to the website, <http://www.freecomicbookday.com>, "Free Comic Book Day is administered by a panel representing all parts of the comic book industry: retailers, publishers, suppliers, and Diamond Comic Distributors. Each year, publishers apply to provide comic books at cost to retailers, who in turn give them away for free. Diamond handles marketing and logistics for the event, shipping comics to shops and handling marketing and PR for the event."

Free Comic Book Day is not just celebrated in the U.S., but is an international event. The first FCBBD was in 2002 and with the way this industry is riding the limelight, we should see more great years for Free Comic Book Day.

Here are a few of our readers and Facebook friends who gave us their thoughts on the experience of this year's Free Comic Book Day:

From Jess Hurley

<https://www.facebook.com/ANGELWOLFCOMIC>

I went to Jesse James Comics on Friday night when they started theirs. It was the most epic of all the events and I really have nothing against the other stores.

I am a creator, but a comic fan as well. Jesse had a

\$1.00 sale on most of his shop so I bought a total of 9 comics that way. As for the free offers, you got to pick 3 of the standard variety FREE COMIC BOOK DAY comics, but then 7 additional comics from another room. These were all back issues, awesome stuff to be had.

I was looking forward to getting THE STEAM ENGINES OF OZ Issue 1 and was able to do that. The rest of the visits were all about getting out and hanging out with my 13 year old son. Saturday we picked up 2 comics for him at Samurai Comics (I didn't buy anything there). We picked up 7 comics at All About Comics paid full price for 2 which allowed us to get 5 free. They also had a great atmosphere and a great selection.

Drawn To Comics had a special where you could go into the store and pick up a comic for free, but had to go to other stores in the area to get most of what they were offering. It was a huge line and generally a pretty negative experience, but we did grab an issue of Superman there. I didn't dislike the store, but thought it was a really odd way to handle things. We then checked out Dr. Fantasies and Logan picked up a comic there. Great shop - great atmosphere. I didn't buy anything there, but will be going back now that I am aware it's there.

I went back to Jesse James on Saturday night and on Sunday and bought 1 comic each time. I was there the second and third time mostly to get to know some of the creators here in the valley because my first con is coming up this month at Phoenix Comicon. Lots of great guys, had a good time and it helped out with some of my decision making when it comes to what tables I will be going to and what comics I will be buying while at the Con if I get some spare time.



From Mark Greenawalt -

I had an artist table at Samurai Comics in Phoenix. 3TV was there and CBS showed up later. Free comics included Walking Dead, Shadow, and my choice was Red Sonja. It was very crowded the whole time I was there from 7am till about 4pm. Nancy Cartoon was on site doing Facepainting and a grilled cheese truck was there. I had the pulled pork barbecue and macaroni and cheese on a grilled cheese sandwich. Delicious! A good time was had by all!!!

From Julia Stevenson

My son went to Gotham and got a Bogo and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles comics. He also bought four or five comics while there...

Pictures from; Ken St. Andre - <http://atroll.wordpress.com/category/free-comic-books-day/>

Some information found on website: <http://www.freecomicbookday.com/Home/1/1/27/984>

* Quotes from www.today.com; Rick Schindler, article - "Free Comic Book Day set to unleash heroes, zombies, talking mice"



FLYING IN SPACE WITH SCI-FI AUTHOR, JACK MCDEVITT

Interviewed by PJ Hultstrand



Jack is a former English teacher, naval officer, Philadelphia taxi driver, customs officer, and motivational trainer.

With the nomination of Echo, his work has been on the final Nebula ballot nine of the last ten years. He won the award in 2007 for Seeker. His first novel, The Hercules Text, was published in the celebrated Ace Specials series, and won the Philip K. Dick Special Award.

In 1991, he received the first \$10,000 UPC International Prize for his novella "Ships in the Night."

The Engines of God was a finalist for the Arthur C. Clarke Award, and his novella "Time Travelers Never Die" was nominated for both the Hugo and the Nebula.

Omega received the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for best SF novel, 2003.

McDevitt's novels frequently raise questions which he does not attempt to answer. He prefers to leave ambiguities to puzzle and intrigue his readers: "Some things are best left to the reader's very able imagination."

McDevitt lives in Georgia with his wife Maureen, where he plays chess, reads mysteries, and eats lunch regularly with his cronies.

And Jack McDevitt visited with us at LepreCon 39, May 9-12th. You could have found him in panels and the dealers' room during several autograph sessions all last weekend.

More about Jack can be found at: www.JackMcDevitt.com

Q&A

PJ - What did you read when you were young?

Jack - I started reading comics when I was about four. (That's actually where I learned to read, as did a lot of the kids I grew up with.) The first books I can remember were Red Ryder, Joyce of the Secret Squadron, The Shadow, and so on. My mom used to buy them for me in the five and ten. I discovered Conan and

the Burroughs Mars books when I was about nine or ten. Those got me started looking for SF. The problem in that era was that there were no paperbacks.

They showed up at around the end of the war, at about the same time I was discovering Startling Stories and Thrilling Wonder. The world became a different place. By the time I was ready to join the Boy Scouts, I'd become a rabid fan of Bradbury, Heinlein, and Asimov.

PJ - Who influenced your writing?

Jack - Hemingway, Bradbury, James Thurber, Arthur Clarke, Heinlein.

PJ - What was the first story you remember writing?

Jack - Alien invaders pick up a Buck Rogers radio broadcast. They think it's actually happening, turn around, and clear out. Nobody wants to face this guy. I wrote it when I was about 14. Sent it to F&SF, and got an encouraging response



from Anthony Boucher. I didn't realize the significance of that, and read it as a rejection, pure and simple.

Four years later, I wrote a story, "Pound of Cure," for the LaSalle College Freshman Short Story contest. It won, and they published it in the school's literary magazine, Four Quarters. As you can imagine, I was excited.

PJ - Do you have any writing habits? Favorite place to write? Time of day?

Jack - I start as soon as I can, and set out a goal for the day, a specific scene, or a given number of words. It works much better than working a given number of hours. When I do that, I spend too much time looking out the window.

PJ - Did you ever get mentored by any other writer early in your career?

Jack - No. I was strictly on my own. But I got enormous encouragement from Greg Benford, who treated me like an equal. Harlan Ellison performed a similar service. Being taken seriously

by those guys provided an incredible lift.

PJ - What did you do before you were writing regularly?

Jack - I was a naval officer for five years. Briefly, a taxi driver. An English teacher for ten. Then I became a customs officer, and eventually a training officer for the Customs Service. It was during those years that I started my writing career.

PJ - How long you have been writing?

Jack - A little over thirty years. My first professional story was "The Emerson Effect."

PJ - When were you able to stop working your real job to become a full time author?

Jack - I loved my Customs job. I was a management trainer, had a good boss, and a good crew to work with, and I had no real interest in leaving. So I stayed on until I became eligible for retirement.

PJ - What do you find is easier to write; articles, short stories, or novels? And why?

Jack - Short stories. Novels take a year to do, a short story can happen in an evening. I've never really had much enthusiasm for writing articles. I guess I like to get behind somebody's eyes and try to solve problems.

PJ - When you started writing regularly, what did your family think about this?

Jack - My mother would have preferred to see me writing historical novels or westerns. (She never had a taste for SF.) My dad didn't live long enough to see it happen. I know, though, he'd have been proud. My wife, of course, has been part of the process. Needless to say, she's been delighted.

PJ - What is coming up next for you in writing?

Jack - A Priscilla Hutchins prequel, Starhawk, will be released in November. Priscilla gets caught in a battle that rages when the first terraforming processes are discovered to be killing off the native life forms.

PJ - What haven't you done yet in your

life that you hope to accomplish or at least try?

Jack - This doesn't exactly fit the description of something I can accomplish. But I would like very much to live long enough to be here when evidence arrives that there is life elsewhere. Better yet: Intelligence elsewhere.

PJ - What premise or idea for Science-fiction stories do you think has been overused?

Jack - Military SF. Reading about starships that do nothing but shoot at one another....

PJ - What idea for a science-fiction story do you think needs revisited or tried?

Jack - The way we'll actually go into interstellar space, if indeed we do at all. It will be automated for a long time to come. At least. And we might use whole fleets of nanoships to investigate worlds in other systems.

PJ - Do you feel that technology of today is the reason that science-fiction ideas have slowed down?

Jack - It's probably not so much the technology as that the ideas themselves might have limits. I suspect it's more difficult now to come up with an original concept than it was in, say, 1920.

PJ - What BIG THING do you think is in the near future of humanity?

Jack - Genetic manipulation. Maybe we will be able to arrange people's genetic structure so they will be healthy, which is good. What about good-looking? Enhanced intelligence? Being happy? (Would we really want to be married to someone who's always happy? No matter what?)

PJ - While in Arizona for LepreCon, what do you hope to go see or do while here?

Jack - I like Arizona because it has open country. I like prairies. And deserts. And mountains.

More questions and answers can be found on the radio show at: <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/kwodradio/2013/05/01/racing-through-space-with-jack-mcdevitt>

WOD



“Trek Nation: A Father, A life, A Legacy”. Rod has taken over the Roddenberry family business through film and philanthropy. Since Rod was still young when his father died, he had not understood his father’s contribution to mankind through the ideal of a future of equality for all races and his desire to push out into space.

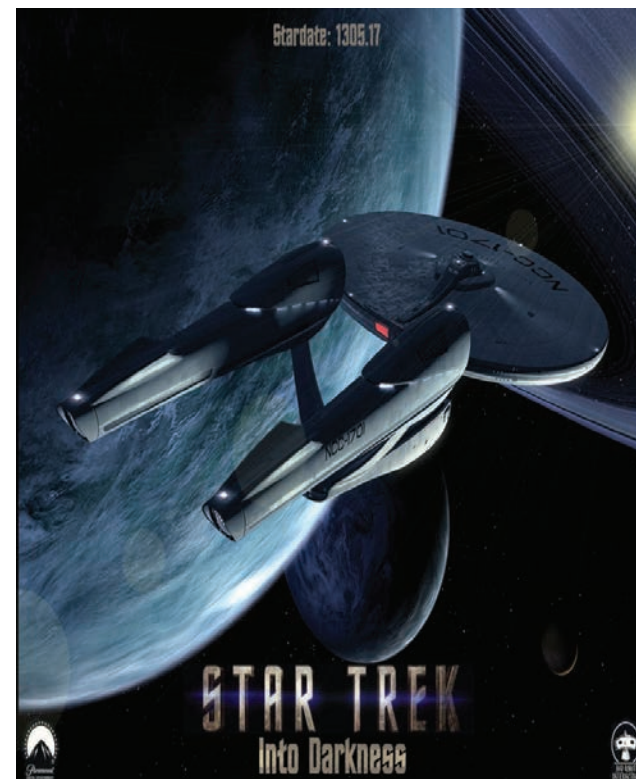
The documentary is very touching and others who have seen it have also expressed the same feelings about the film. Rod Roddenberry had pulled together some terrific interviews with other top creators in pop culture, such as Stan Lee and George Lucas, who gave their own perceptions on the creation of Star Trek and Gene’s vision of humanity.

Back in 1982, during that interview with Roddenberry senior, I too had a disconnect from the bigger than life vision of Star Trek, so I understood why his son would need to seek answers to who his father was and what motivated him to use this science-fiction vehicle for speaking out about political statements and social issues of those times. Roddenberry himself said in our interview, “Star Trek’s audience started out mostly with young people because the show was making a statement against the Vietnam War. We were the only show that could do it. We could hide our statement by putting it way up there.”

Gene Roddenberry’s message of equality for all races were portrayed over several of the episodes of Star Trek and his philosophy of social issues and our reach into space was drilled into the minds of the young generation of those times. These same kids of Star Trek are now NASA engineers and astronauts, or creators of the gadgets we use and love the most now in this century.

The Roddenberry legacy has so many far reaching ideals that the weight must have been quite heavy for his son. I think it is admirable that he is now helping in the quest to reach out to those who can help broaden the ideals that his father started in the 60’s with a little known show that made a HUGE impact on the generations that have followed.

So, while you are enjoying the grand special effects spectacle that has become the new “Star Trek Into Darkness” movie, directed by J.J. Abrams, remember there are very deep roots here with the original vision and values of its creator, Gene Roddenberry. It is this remembrance that his one and only son wishes to embrace and continue to hold dear; that message coming from Gene’s words, “We humans are going to make it into tomorrow. We are going to have brotherhood and one world without all our angers and intolerances”. This is the LEGACY that needs to continue on into this century and into the next until the message finally sinks in and we embrace it as a species of our planet, Earth. Thank you Rod, for reminding us of our real mission for humanity and best of luck on your quest to seek out what inspired your father to share his grand vision with all generations that follow.



of science-fiction, so while it was a once-in-a-lifetime interview, I hadn’t truly understood the real gift I had been given here. It was not until I followed him into the auditorium where some 2,000 true trekkies were waiting for him, that I realized the impact of his Star Trek legacy.

The rest of this story is not known to many people and I did not include it in my reporting because I was not allowed to in the college newspaper. After all, I wasn’t writing for “Rolling Stones” where such events are pretty common place among rock bands and I was just a shocked freshman in college.



As we were following Roddenberry into the auditorium, a young lady had a T-shirt on toting something about beaming her up, where she lifted her shirt and asked him to sign her breasts. Roddenberry handled it well, he just laughed and looked back at me and stated, “Now, that’s not something you see every day.” Even after thirty-one years, I remember that moment and probably always will because it just shows the devotion of the fans of the Star Trek legacy.

FAST FORWARD INTO 2013

April 19 through the 21, 2013, Prescott, Arizona hosted a Sci-Fi Mini Film Festival where they had invited Rod Roddenberry, son of Mr. Gene Roddenberry, to show his own documentary called,

WOD

ConNotations NewsZine

Volume 23, Issue 2
May 2013
FREE

*The 23-Yr old Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror & Convention Newszine
of the Central Arizona Speculative Fiction Society*

Building The Buzz

AUTHOR NEWS:

**From Arizona author, Anna Questerly;
Phoenix, Arizona:**

New fantasy book in the works from Anna. She had this to say about the new project, "The working title is 'Legends of Pangaea'. It's about the people who populated the theoretical supercontinent of Pangaea and what happens to them." Anna also stated she is already into chapter 15, but still considers this to be the first part of the book. Since this is a fantasy story, she expects the book to be longer than she is used to writing.

**From Arizona author,
Jennifer Ashley:**

Jennifer's book, *Lone Wolf*, from Penguin Publisher's imprint, InterMix, made number 16 on the New York Times Bestseller List for May 5th, 2013.



MOVIE MAKER NEWS:

The big event is Season 2 of *Voyage Trekkers*, which debuts with ten weekly episodes on May 1st. We've really upped the production value this time around by building a bridge for the crew, creating a CGI ship, and scoring the first episode of the new season with a live orchestra. We're hoping to really raise the bar on what people expect from a web series.



You can watch *Voyage Trekkers* on our web site at www.voyagetrekkers.com or subscribe to us on YouTube at www.youtube.com/voyagetrekkers

We're also super excited about our e-book, "Gambit of Chance", which is now available online as a free download (well, Amazon made us charge 99 cents). The novella is written by author Craig Michael Curtis.

Synopsis

Captain Jack T. Sunstrike is in command of the Galactic Union starship *Remarkable*, one of the oldest and most outdated ships still in service. He and his crew of misfits and castoffs are never given important assignments by their superiors, and this mission to the distant Poriatis Star System is no different. But once there, Capt. Sunstrike and his crew quickly find themselves embroiled in a highly-charged political conflict between two rival colonies. Along with his first officer, Commander Powell, and his science officer Dr. Rena, Sunstrike devises a desperate plan to save the people of Poriatis-Luna 26 from losing their homeworld forever ... or perhaps even worse. The crew of the *Remarkable* race against the clock to beat the encroaching usurpers at their own game, and prove once and for all that the GSV *Remarkable* is still capable of heroics.

Here's a direct link to the e-book: <http://www.voyagetrekkers.com/gambit-of-chance.html>

Lastly, we just started a podcast for *Voyage Trekkers*, for the fans who want to go deeper into the show and how it's made.

Voyage Trekkers Podcast - "On The Bridge"

The *Voyage Trekkers* Podcast "On The Bridge" delves into silly conversations and juicy behind the scenes material as we cover the who, what, how, and why of the web series *Voyage Trekkers*.

Hosted by cast member Jenna Leigh Scarborough (Ensign Adams), the podcast will be fourteen weekly installments, and will cover the build up to Season 2 release all the way to the wrap party. Topics will include interviews with the cast, writing the series, visual effects, coverage from the Phoenix Comicon, and much more.

The podcast can be found on iTunes and also on the *Voyage Trekkers* website (www.voyagetrekkers.com)

WOD Media has come to an agreement with CASFS, Inc. to carry their *ConNotations Newszine* inside our newspaper and online webzine, *The WOD*. As of this issue, *ConNotations* will have four pages of local Arizona news on a monthly basis, which increases the frequency of this local 23-year old newspaper. We are happy to help this staple in the fan/convention industry and hope to continue its publication, at least in part.



Photo Credits Squishy News

CASFS BOOK SOCIAL FOR 2013

Meetings are 7PM, the third Tuesday of the month at Samurai Comics, 1051 East Camelback Road, Phoenix. - Contact is Randall Whitlock.

**May 21, 2013 -
Blackout by Connie Willis**

**June 18, 2013 -
Redshirts by John Scalzi**

**July 16, 2013 - Maus I and Maus II
by Art Spiegelman**

**August 11, 2013 -
Haze by L. E. Modesitt, Jr.**

*(To be held at CopperCon Revolution
www.coppercon.org)*

**August 20, 2013 -
Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff
by Christopher Moore**

**September 17, 2013 - Daredevil: The
Man Without Fear, Daredevil: Born
Again by Frank Miller**

**October 15, 2013 -
Sabriel by Garth Nix**

**November 19, 2013 -
Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes,
Sandman: Doll's House, Marvel 1602
by Neil Gaiman**

**December 17, 2013 -
World War Z by Max Brooks**

CASFS Business Report - (February, March and April 2013) By Gary Swaty CASFS Secretary

CASFS Board of Directors -- Chairman: Mark Boniece, Vice Chair: Jeff Jennings, Secretary: Jeff Jennings (Acting), Corporate Treasurer: Sharan Hoyle, Board Members: Kevin McAlonan, Gary Swaty, Susan Uttke, Mike Willmoth. CASFS Procedural Officers: President: Randall Whitlock, Vice President: Gary Swaty, Secretary: Gary Swaty. Additional Officers: Historian/Archivist: Jim Strait, Quartermaster: Bob Beckwith, Webmaster: Open, Keeper of the Databases: Open, ConNotations Editor: Patti Hultstrand. CASFS Convention Officers -- CopperCon 33 Chair: Michael Fett, Banker: Mark Boniece; CopperCon 34 Mark Boniece and Sharan Hoyle. Meetings are at Denny's at 23rd Avenue and Northern, Phoenix on the last Friday of the month except for October through December when they are on the second Friday.

Elections - The CopperCon 34 Chair and Banker Are Mark Boniece and Sharan Hoyle.

CASFS Bookclub and Social, Samurai Comics, 1051 E. Camelback (Turn in at 11th St. and park behind) 7:00 PM on the third Tuesday of each month - In January Our Book was The Gold Cat's Daughter by Mark Rude. In February our Book was Spider's Bite by Jennifer Estep. In March we discussed Chalice by Robin McKinley. The book went over well with the women in the group, but put Randall to sleep. On April 16, 2013 - Cinder by Marissa Meyer was discussed. Books for the rest of the year are listed in this publication and on fliers and bookmarks available at our monthly meetings.

CopperCon 32 - Bob LaPierre Chairman. Mark Boniece reports that the loss appears to be \$2600. The number is not quite final.

CopperCon 33 Revolution- Michael Fett Chairman. On August 1st, 2013 to promote the Con, CopperCon REVOLUTION presents a special screening of 2001: A Space Odyssey w/Plan 9 From Outer Space at the Pollack Tempe Cinemas (NEC Elliot & McClintock, Tempe AZ) with 2001: A Space Odyssey starting at 7PM and Plan 9 From Outer Space will start around 9:30 PM. What better way to see the best science fiction film of all time than with the Cult Classic Plan 9 From Outer Space. Tickets are \$10 for the general public and \$5 to the membership of CopperCon Revolution (Member Coupon Code Required).

Websites - We have no Webmaster. Mark Boniece is handling routine updates to the CASFS site. Lyle Dillie is designing the CopperCon 33 Revolution Website. It is looking good.

ConNotations - (Editor: Patti Hultstrand) For at least the next three years ConNotations will appear Monthly as a four page section in The WOD Newspaper, a widely circulated Fan Convention publication. It will no longer be mailed. Review Books continue to be available. Patti needs more reviewers so the work load can be spread out.

Audit Committee - The Audit Committee report is still in process. A preliminary report was presented to the Board. The membership will receive the Final Report when it is finished.

LOCAL SPECIAL EVENTS -

IMAGINATIONLAND RAVE
Friday, May 17 7:00pm until 3:00am
Arizona Event Center
1300 S. Country Club Drive #105
Mesa, 85210
Infoline: 602-315-9023
(Text "Imagine" for a chance to win free tickets!)

CULT CLASSICS PRESENTS THE GOONIES & THE MONSTER SQUAD
Saturday, May 18th
Pollack Tempe Cinemas
1825 East Elliot Road, Tempe
<http://www.cultclassicsaz.com/>

FETISH PROM presented by Horns & Halos
Saturday, May 25th;
8pm-2am
Club 910 LIVE
910 N. McClintock Drive, Tempe
<http://www.hornsandhalosaz.com/>

AZ Derby Dames Roll Derby Championships
Saturday, June 1st
Veterans Memorial Colliseum
1826 West McDowell Road, Phoenix
<http://www.azderbydames.com/>

FIRST FRIDAYS ART WALK
Friday, June 7th
Downtown Phoenix
<http://artlinkphoenix.com/first-fridays/>

THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW
Presented by Midnight Mayhem
Saturday, June 8th, 11pm
AMC Deer Valley Theater
www.midnightmayhem.org

MESA SECOND FRIDAYS ARTWALK
Friday, June 14th
Downtown (Main Street), Mesa
<http://www.2ndfridaynightout.com/>

CopperCon Revolution's Announcement

On Thursday August 1st, 2013, CopperCon: Revolution will be showing a special screening of 2001: A Space Odyssey with Plan 9 From Outer Space at the Pollack Tempe Cinemas at 7PM. 2001: A Space Odyssey will start at 7PM with Plan 9 From Outer ...Space starting at 9:30 PM. You wanted the best science fiction films of all time and we're giving them to you in one sitting. Tickets for the showing are \$10 to the general public and \$5 with a membership to CopperCon: Revolution which will happen August 8th-11th 2013.

For more info visit www.coppercon.org



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NW Corner Southern & McClintock

CONNOTATION EVENTS

THE DREAD FLEET EVENTS:

PHOENIX COMICON

May 24th - 27th

Phoenix Convention Center

100 North 3rd Street, Phoenix, Arizona

Are you plotting your course for Phoenix Comic Con? Well, the Dread Fleet is! Welcomed into port for another year, the DREAD Fleet offers an even more excitement to awe audiences. 2013's hour-long stage performance scripted by J.J.M. Czep (Captain Blackstrap) showcasing the stunt prowess of choreographer Casey Plute as Captain Red Cap. Pirate aligned belly dance troupe bint Hazine (Daughters of Treasure) promise to make an appearance this year, adding sultry moves to the show and maybe even some butt kicking of their own. Special appearance by Captains Maxmillion de Xavier and Theodoric Brandywine cannot be forgotten. Join the crew, every evening at the Phoenix Comic Con!

Images and video from 2012 show can be found at www.theDREADfleet.com

MUD WRESTLING V PRELIMINARIES

June 7th, 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Revolver Records

Roosevelt Road, Phoenix, Arizona

18+ Only

Another wild and dirty night with the pirates, wenches, dancers and derby girls! The DREAD Fleet is bringing the fan favorite Pirate Mud Wrestling to a more Metro Phoenix centered location this time around. This is our fifth year getting down and dirty! It is early in the game and this time The DREAD Fleet is seeking volunteers from the public to battle it out in the pit. Ladies, and gentlemen, if this is on your bucket list contact The DREAD Fleet.

MUD WRESTLING V MAIN EVENT

July 27th, 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Revolver Records; 18+ Only

Roosevelt Road, Phoenix, Arizona

\$10 pre-sale / \$15 door

Another wild and dirty night with the pirates, wenches, dancers and derby girls! The DREAD Fleet is bringing the fan favorite Pirate Mud Wrestling to a more Metro Phoenix centered location this time around. This is our fifth year getting down and dirty with the Arizona Roller Derby, Arizona Roller Girls, bint Hazine and rumor has it there will be a few Fireland Faeries sliding in.

TALK LIKE A PIRATE DAY VI

September 21st, 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm

Westgate City Center

6770 N. Sunrise Blvd., Glendale, AZ

21+ Bars; All Ages Outdoors

\$10 pre-sale / \$15 door

Can you believe it? Year six of the great Arizona Talk Like a Pirate Day! Prepare for even more adventure than ever before as

The DREAD Fleet brings back Moon and her mermaids, belly dancers from bint Hazine and other local dance troupes, drummers and wandering musicians, sword fights and this year pirate merchants, and Irish dances. Westgate offers a beautiful outdoor center for the festival activities and several pirate friendly bars. Adventure, dancing, wenches, mermaids, and rum; all for a great cause as we raise some booty for The Bergamot Institute!

www.eventbrite.com/tlapdaz

<http://www.facebook.com/tlapdaz>

DREADFUL DEATHS

October, 4th & October 11th

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

A performance for the history books! The DREAD Fleet presents some of the most DREADful Deaths throughout history. A great opening to the Halloween season that includes some education with the decapitation.

HOWL-O-WEEN

October 25th - 26th

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Phoenix Zoo, Phoenix, Arizona

All Ages

We are here to scare again this year! Enjoy another performance by undead pirates, be spooked by mates who wander free from Davey Jones, and grab some sugary treats and booty from the dead man's chest. For images from last year's Howl-o-Ween check out www.theDREADfleet.com

PIRATE FALL FEAST

November 2nd; All Ages

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Time: TBA; Location: TBA

The DREAD Fleet invite you to their secret pirate port for an evening of fine faire, entertainments, dancing, music, games, and of course a live steel tournament with a fine lot of treasure to the winner!

For more information and tickets:

www.eventbrite.com/dreadfeast

Kinky & Geeky in Arizona - for those who combine geeky interests with alternative lifestyles including but not limited to Poly, GLBTQIA, and BDSM. Our munch is the 4th Wednesday of the month at Nello's in Tempe at 7pm, our game night is 2nd Friday at the Denny's on I17 & Dunlap from 6pm onwards. There are other parties and events throughout the year. Find us on Fetlife.

AUTHOR EVENTS

Upcoming Signings / Events at
The Poisoned Pen - 1-888-560-9919
4014 N Goldwater Blvd. Suite 101
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
www.poisonedpen.com

Changing Hands Bookstore
6428 S McClintock Dr., Tempe

Contact Changing Hands bookstore for details on signing limitations. 480.730.0205
www.changinghands.com

Velma Teague Library is located at 7010 N. 58th Ave. Glendale, AZ 85301 Ph.623-930-3431

B&Ns locations can be found at BN.com

WRITING WORKSHOPS:

East Valley Writing Workshop
Wednesdays, 6:00 PM
at Village Inn in Mesa, AZ

East Valley Writing Workshop
Every Sunday 1:00 PM at Shadow Mountain Village - Main Clubhouse in Scottsdale, AZ

Publishing, Networking, and Marketing Meetup -- Starting in September on the THIRD Saturday, monthly at Shadow Mountain Village - Main Clubhouse - 2pm - 4pm
8780 E Mckellips Road, Scottsdale, AZ

MAY 21 - THIRD TUESDAY - CASFS Book Social 7PM

at Samurai Comics at 1051 East Camelback Road, Phoenix. This month's book: Blackout by Connie Willis - Synopsis: Oxford in 2060 is a chaotic place, with scores of time-traveling historians being sent into the past. Michael Davies is prepping to go to Pearl Harbor. Merope Ward is coping with a bunch of bratty 1940 evacuees and trying to talk her thesis adviser into letting her go to VE-Day. Polly Churchill's next assignment will be as a shopgirl in the middle of London's Blitz. But now the time-travel lab is suddenly canceling assignments and switching around everyone's schedules. And when Michael, Merope, and Polly finally get to World War II, things just get worse. For there they face air raids, blackouts, and dive-bombing Stukas to say nothing of a growing feeling that not only their assignments but the war and history itself are spiraling out of control. Because suddenly the once-reliable mechanisms of time travel are showing significant glitches, and our heroes are beginning to question their most firmly held belief: that no historian can possibly change the past. For more info contact Randall_book@casfs.org

GAMING & COMIC BOOK EVENTS:

HOTACE COMICS & COLLECTIBLES is having many events throughout the year include sword fighting, Magic tournaments, Spiderman and other characters visit the store, Laughing Moon girls signings, Author Book signings, comicbook workshops etc check our website at www.hotacecomics.com for our events listings.

GAME DAZE:

ALL EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT: <http://www.gamedaze.com/>
GameDaze-Whats-Happening.aspx

ARIZONA MILLS
5000 Arizona Mills Circle #530
Tempe, AZ 85282

ARROWHEAD TOWNE CENTRE
7700 W. Arrowhead Towne Center #2256
Glendale, AZ 85308

CHANDLER FASHION CENTER

3111 W Chandler Blvd #2416
Chandler, AZ 85226

PARADISE VALLEY MALL

4550 E. Cactus Road #302
Phoenix, AZ 85032

SUPERSTITION SPRINGS CENTER

6555 E. Southern Ave. #2026
Mesa, AZ 85206

TUCSON MALL

4500 N. Oracle Road #166
Tucson, AZ 85705

PARK PLACE MALL

5870 E Broadway Blvd # 258
Tucson, AZ 85711

POP CULTURE PARADISE

707 S. Forest Ave. #A, on ASU Campus
Tempe, AZ 85281 (480) 557-6640
Calendar: morethancomics@yahoo.com
or get calendar online at <http://www.popculture-comics.com/>

EMPIRE GAMES

1766 S Greenfield Rd #102, Mesa, AZ
85206 - 480-813-1525
<http://www.empiregamesaz.com/pmwiki.php?n=Main.Calendar>

DRAWN TO COMICS

Marvel vs Capcom 1st Fridays 6pm
HeroClix. Sat 1pm
Sit-and-Sketch with local artists.
3rd Saturday, 6pm-8pm
Check FaceBook for other events

GAME DEPOT

3136 S McClintock Dr. #11 · Tempe,
Arizona · 85282
(480) 966-4727

Come in and take a look. The store is located in Tempe, Arizona at 3136 South McClintock Drive. The store stocks Hordes, Warhammer 40K, Warhammer, Flames of War, Warmachine games and Battletech. Also some modern and ancients. Click the Edit link if you frequent this store to provide information about what games it offers.

GAMER'S INN

Check website for upcoming events

IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES

Federation Commander. 2nd
Saturdays, noon
RPGA. 1st Sundays
Monday Night Magic Standard
Format. Mon, 7pm.
Boardgames & Demo Nite.
Mondays & Thursdays, 6pm.
Magic Drafts. Tues, 7pm
War Machine. Wednesdays, 4pm
Hammerhead 40K Club Meeting.
Wed & Thurs, noon
Hammerhead Club 40k
tournament. 1st Wed, noon
Magic The Gathering League. Wed, 6pm
Friday Night Magic. Fridays, 7pm

SAMURAI COMICS

(check website for correct store location)
Yugioh Tournament. Sundays, noon
(Cmlbk) & Sat, noon (west valley)
Anime Club. Sundays, noon (west valley)
Pokemon. Sundays, 2pm (west valley),
Wed 5pm (Cmlbk)
D&D Encounters. Wed, 6pm (Cmlbk)
Magic, The Gathering. Friday, 6p (both
stores), Tues, 6pm (west valley), Sat 1pm
(Cmlbk), Mon 6pm (Cmlbk)



CopperCon

REVOLUTION

August 8th-11th 2013

GUESTS OF HONOR



MEDIA GUEST
MIKE GRELL
WRITER/ARTIST
CREATOR
WARLORD/JON SABLE
WRITER/ARTIST
GREEN ARROW
TV SERIES
ARROW AND SABLE



ARTIST GUEST
STEVE LEIALOHA
ARTIST
FABLES, BATMAN,
STAR TREK, STAR WARS,
HOWARD THE DUCK,
X-MEN,
AND SPIDER-WOMAN



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WHAT IS THE WOD MEDIA?



The WOD MEDIA
is the Voice
and
Activist for
Community
Niche
Newspapers



KWOD RADIO SHOWS

10,000 monthly listeners by offering a voice to the Pop Culture.

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/kwodradio>

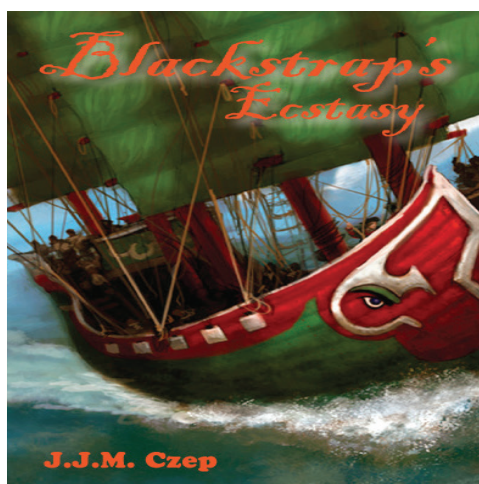
If interested in Advertising with WOD MEDIA contact editor@thewod.net

Authors Sell Books when they get out into the community to meet their readers.

A promotional poster for CopperCon Revolution. The background is a starry space scene. On the left is a stylized illustration of a woman in a purple space suit. The text reads: "CopperCon REVOLUTION presents 2001 A Space Odyssey - with - Plan 9 From Outer Space. Thursday, August 1st at 7:00PM - Pollack Tempe Cinemas. 'It was the Best of Films, it was the Worst of Films' Charles Dickens. Tickets - \$10 - available at www.coppercon.org". Small movie posters for '2001 A Space Odyssey' and 'Plan 9 From Outer Space' are included.

Geeks Night Out - Tempe, Arizona

Photos By Allons-y media



J.J.M. CZEP



LepreCon 39

5/10/13

Bellydance 3:00PM

Meet the Pros 7:00PM

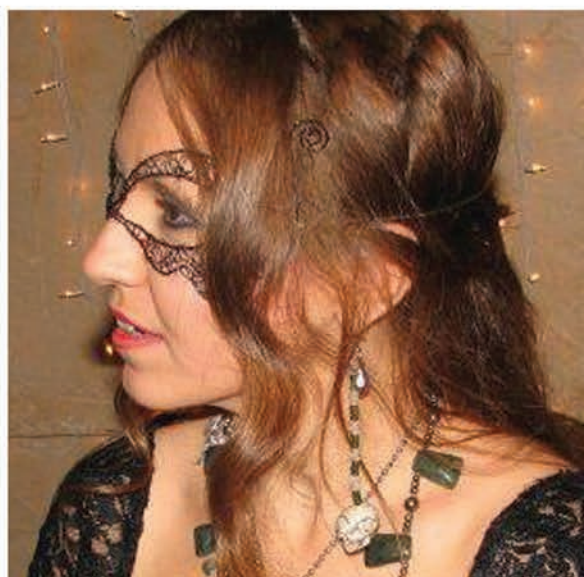
5/11/13

Bellydance 10:00AM

Autographs 4:00PM

5/12/13

Social Media 11:00AM



Phoenix Comic Con

5/24/13

Brick Cave Bookcast 2:30PM

Brick Cave Media Books 4:30PM

5/25/13

Readings By J.J.M.Czep 3:00PM

Brick Cave Panel 4:30PM

5/26/13

Brick Cave Bookcast 2:30PM

Read Local

5/11/13

Velma Teague Library

1:00 PM

@Easalle

FaceBook.com/JJMCzep

Sand Vipers, Sandstorms, Doom Tail Trans-Saharan Caravan: Former AZ Mayor enters realm of Fiction

By Sven Rosckowff

Sand vipers, supernatural mirages, sand storms and Tuareg tribesmen are but a few of the challenges facing The Assassin's Caravan, in this newly released spiritual murder mystery. Former Mayor of Flagstaff, Shafer "Bill" Erwin, utilizes his diverse life experiences to create memorable characters trapped in an impossible setting. Erwin draws on background as an instructor of History of World Religions and Humanities at 4 Arizona colleges and universities.

An Arab Sheik, who is a leper, accompanied by an exotic ebony haired beauty, an artist who is also described as an assassin, and a storyteller hire a caravan crew to take them across The Vulture's Playground, the most dangerous route in the Sahara Desert. This naïve, wealthy foursome has unfortunately hired a band of ruthless cutthroats and thieves as their guides. Akbar, the brutal caravan master, agrees to take the Sheik and his companions but against his well-honed instincts and a gut-wrenching fear. Akbar, having barely escaped the treachery of The Vulture's Playground once before, knows better than to tempt fate

again. However... the blinding glare of gold coins and the stunning beauty of Tashina override the fear and wisdom of the seasoned caravan leader.

Readers cross a threshold into a strange world where nothing is what it appears to be; yet, everything is in its perfect place. Twists follow turns at every stretch of sand. As the caravan moves deeper into the endless miles of sand, heat, and wind, the caravan crew grows restless and uneasy. Bizarre events challenge their sense of control. The four strangers exude an unusual air of relaxed confidence. Who is the hunted and who is the hunter?

Nothing is what it appears to be.

The Assassin's Caravan by Shafer Erwin, 2013, retails for \$14.95 in softcover (ISBN 9781481026970), or \$9.95 in e-book. Both are available online, with hardcopies available locally at Bards Books (3508 N 7th St, Phoenix, AZ 85014).

Sven Rosckowff
Owner, Bards Books
3508 N 7th St, #145
Phoenix, AZ 85014
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WOD

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Wild Western Steampunk Convention



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lunabotic's Mining Competition Presentation

They are a group of students at Arizona State University, sponsored by the School of Earth and Space Exploration, competing in the NASA Lunabotics Mining Competition in May at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Where: HSGP, 627 W. Rio Salado Parkway Mesa, AZ 85201
When: Saturday, June 22, 2013
Doors open at 10AM and the presentation starts at 11AM

Asteroids, Ion Propulsion and NASA's Dawn Mission to Vesta and Ceres

Presentation by Professor David Williams of ASU. Speaking to the HSGP, Dr. Dave Williams, an active member in the NSS, will present a summary of what we are learning about our solar system.

Where: HSGP, 627 W. Rio Salado Parkway Mesa, AZ 85201
When: Sunday, June 23, 2013
Doors open at 9AM and the presentation starts at 10AM

WOD

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EXPLORING STRANGE WORLDS WITH RAYMOND SWANLAND

by PJ Hultstrand

Raymond Swanland is a freelance illustrator who began his career working on the Oddworld Inhabitants series of video games and has created artwork for Magic: The Gathering, World of Warcraft, Aliens vs. Predator, ImagineFX, Disturbed, many sci-fi/fantasy novels, and more. He won a Spectrum Award in 2004 and the David Gemmel Legend Award in 2012. His recent work includes a series of covers for Games Workshop's Warhammer 40,000 and the marketing artwork for the DC Comics animated movie, Batman: The Dark Knight Returns.

Recently, one of his Art Directors for Wizards of the World, Jon Schindehette, informed The WOD Newspaper, that he has put up one of Raymond's artworks for the



Spectrum Award for this year. When asked about this news, Raymond laughed and stated this was a pleasant surprise for him too. He attributes his success as a freelance illustrator to winning the Spectrum Award in 2004 since it put his works in front of many Art Directors of many companies that he wouldn't have been able to approach otherwise.

Take a look at Raymond's work - it speaks for itself and his work inspires the creative mind to bear fruit into other worlds. WOD

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MOVING PICTURES: TO CRITICIZE, OR TO REVIEW?

By Matthew Yenkala

Roger Ebert died the same day that the previous issue of THE WOD went to press, the issue containing the first installment of this column as well as my first baker's-half-dozen published movie reviews. This inevitably got me started thinking about this here new gig of mine, especially given that my intention for this second installment had been to explain my general approach to film reviewing, to define the self-imposed "rules" which will guide me in my reviewing journeys, and to give a basic overview of what readers can expect from me.

It needs to be clear that I don't mean to imply any cosmic significance to, or metaphysical connection between, the timing of those events; not even close. But I do believe in synchronicity, and Ebert's passing caused me to rethink both the substance and the framework of this month's column.

Ebert, whether you agreed with him or not, was truly one of the all-time great film critics—he was a passionate lover of film, from classics to populist blockbusters to art-house fare. He lived, breathed and wrote about films virtually his entire life, and he was lucky enough to be able to make a living doing it. He was literate, intelligent, and had a breadth and depth of knowledge about the subject of his life's passion that few others ever have, or ever will, possess. And he did it all without being an elitist snob or a complete prick.

He was also, by all accounts and evidence, simply a remarkable human being, overcoming challenge and adversity at every turn—from the 1999 passing of his professional partner/friend/rival Gene Siskel, to his own bouts with cancer several years ago, which left him unable to communicate verbally—and persevering with grace and dignity. And along with a few others of his profession, he set the bar high and he raised it ever higher for all who follow in his wake.

I never had the pleasure of meeting him, sadly. I first became aware of him, as did most of my generation, with the PBS show "Sneak Previews", on which he and fellow Chicago critic Siskel discussed and debated movies, and rendered their now-famous "thumbs up/thumbs down" verdict on each film. They often disagreed passionately—and in unusual ways: even when they both LIKED a film, they didn't always like it for the same reasons, and they didn't always see the same things in it. (Also, the "Sneak Previews" format itself was

brilliant—often imitated since, but never duplicated or bettered, in large measure because of the fiery chemistry between those two men.)

From the mid-seventies through the late nineties, their presence became ubiquitous, not just through that show and its successors (such as "At The Movies") but also their entrance into the wider realm of pop culture, including appearances on "Saturday Night Live" and "Late Night With David Letterman". They were willing to make fun of themselves, which was incredibly refreshing (even if like many others, I strongly disliked Ebert's critique of David Lynch's BLUE VELVET, though that particular review is a perfect example of how he was able to express himself in such a way that even if you disagreed, you still understood where he was coming from, and why). In short, they put a likeable face on film criticism.

After Siskel died, Ebert soldiered on admirably and more than proved that his thoughts were well worth hearing, even without the counterpoint that his late colleague provided. In the end, at the time of his own passing, he was America's Movie Critic Emeritus, and his absence leaves an incalculable void in the field.

Doubtless there are a billion movie-geek-bloggers out there itching to be the heir to the Ebert throne; perhaps some who already feel they are entitled to it (I can think of a few off the top of my head, but out of politeness I won't name them or where their stuff can be read); and though not a single one of them, in my own opinion, is worthy of the honor, I'm sure there will be several self-appointed "Ebert Disciples" to emerge in the months and years to come.

But I am not one of them.

And that's because what Ebert's passing left me with is the realization that I am NOT a film critic. By the very nature of the term, "critic" has a negative connotation. To criticize is to tear down, deconstruct, and point out flaws and failings—as the first and sometimes even primary goal. (Of course, the GOOD and objective critics will also point out what's good and right about a film—though like all opinion, this is still subjective, and filtered by that critic's personal taste.) But in the end, it comes down to a basic principle: a critic will tell is there to tell you what's WRONG with a movie, before they tell you what's right.

Which is not to say there's no place

for genuine criticism; of course there is. Criticism of any art form (or any other endeavor) is absolutely, perfectly valid, and there are those who have done it so well they have raised it to an art form in its own right, such that even when you disagree with them, you can still admire them for their insight and the clarity of their thoughts. Ebert was one such; so was Siskel; so was the late, great Pauline Kael (with whom I frequently disagreed). There are, and have been others, but too few—most would-be critics, it seems, simply want to tear down for the sake of tearing down.

This is something I have no interest in doing whatsoever. Because I'm not a critic. I'm a movie reviewer. Some would argue it's merely a difference of semantics, but I would beg to differ.

In my role as a movie reviewer, I will watch movies, with as open a mind and heart as I can in each and every case, and with one simple set of criteria in mind: Did I enjoy it? Was it worth seeing? Would I recommend others spend their time and money to see it?

I will strive to answer those three questions as openly and honestly as I can in every review; explain WHY I felt and reacted as I did, and what factors may have influenced my final opinion; and find the balance between the instinctual reaction and the intellectual filter.

In the course of this process, I will, inevitably, discuss where I feel a film succeeds or fails, and why. I may discuss the film in the context or its genre or in comparison with other films; I may cite precedents or influences (acknowledged or otherwise). I may even occasionally make a catty or cynical comment—hey, I'm human, and once in a while, such comments are warranted.

But (with only one exception which I'll gladly own up to—some other time) I have never gone into ANY movie



with the expectation of disliking it and the intention of tearing it down—I *want* to like every movie I see. This automatically puts me at odds with not only many professional critics but also, it would seem, most "fanboy" bloggers and "tallbackers" who inhabit "Movie Geek" sites like aintitcoolnews.com, and who now outnumber the learned, literate critics literally by the millions. But I'm not them. While I do have my own filmmaking aspirations, I'm not some frustrated, failed director with a film-school-sized chip on my shoulders. I'm not pandering to some circle of elite, highbrow hipsters. I'm not beholden to some impossible standard of either artistic integrity or indie street cred. I'm not trying to impress you with my knowledge of film, or dazzle you with my pithy and clever wordplay. And I have absolutely no pretensions of filling the empty theater seats vacated by Ebert, or Siskel, or Kael.

I'm just a guy who loves movies—loves them so much I even owned my own movie theater for a while. And here, on the side, while I work on my own goal in making them, I will watch movies and write about them—openly and honestly; to share my thoughts about, opinions on and reactions to them—whether I like them or not; and to do so from the heart.

And that's something I hope earns two thumbs up. WOD



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SUMMER MOVIE PREVIEW 2013

Info, opinion, trivia and speculation about some of the more notable films coming out this summer, from the “golden” days of May & June, through to the slightly overcooked July, and the dog days of August. Happy summer viewing, everyone!



MAY 03--Iron Man 3

Already breaking box-office records as this issue goes to press. See reviews elsewhere in this issue.

MAY 10--The Great Gatsby

Baz Luhrmann (Moulin Rouge, Romeo + Juliet) brings his high-gloss, rapid-cut style to F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic tale of life in the roaring 20s, in 3-D no less. Whatever would Andy Kaufman have said?

MAY 17--Star Trek Into Darkness

The next installment in J.J. Abrams' rebooted version of the classic series has the Enterprise crew battling a calculating and ruthless villain (Benedict Cumberbatch) who apparently comes from within the ranks of the Federation itself, testing Kirk (Chris Pine) & Spock's (Zachary Quinto) friendship and pushing the intrepid crew to its limits. Echoes of STAR TREK II abound, but still no official word on the villain's true identity...though by the time you read this, the Khat will doubtless be out of the bag....

MAY 24--Epic

A human girl finds herself shrunk down and fighting side by side with an army of Leaf Men--all in her own backyard.

MAY 24--The Hangover Part 3

The Wolfpack heads back to Vegas for what is promised to be its final installment, with everyone (including my future wife, Heather Graham) on board for one last hedonistic adventure. We can only hope, anyway.

MAY 24--Fast & Furious 6

The Rock, Vin Diesel, Paul Walker and Michelle Rodriguez are all involved on various sides of an international plot, in a series that used to just be about illegal car racing. Evidently, this installment sets up not only the next film but the next several--and a spinoff franchise as well.

JUNE 07--After Earth

Will Smith and son crash on the uninhabitable remains of a devastated planet in the newest M. Night Shyamalan epic. What planet is it...? Why...Earth! What a twist!

JUNE 07--The Internship

It's Generations X vs Y as Vince Vaughan & Owen Wilson con their way into an Volume 1 Issue 3

internship at Google Headquarters.

JUNE 12--This Is the End

It's the end of the world, and a bunch of Hollywood actors aren't feeling fine about it at all.

JUNE 14--Man of Steel

Zack Snyder's much-anticipated reboot of the Superman franchise allegedly ditches all traces of the classic Donner/Reeve series, moving Supes (Henry Cavill) tonally in the direction of exec. Producer Christopher Nolan's DARK KNIGHT series as a misfit trying to find his place in the world. Warner Brothers and DC are hoping for this to be the cornerstone of their own long-term, integrated, cinematic universe a la Marvel, with a JUSTICE LEAGUE movie as the next stop on that road (almost the reverse of Marvel's approach). The solid supporting cast includes Amy Adams as Lois Lane, Russell Crowe as Jor-El, Laurence Fishburne as Perry White, and Kevin Costner & Diane Lane as Ma & Pa Kent.

JUNE 21--World War Z

Max Brooks' oral history of the Zombie War becomes a vehicle for Brad Pitt as he seeks to discover the cause and--perhaps--the solution to the plague of the living dead. If it does well, they hope to spin a trilogy out of the source material.

JUNE 21--Monsters University

Sulley & Mike's college days promises to be Pixar's answer to "Animal House"--minus the raunch.

JUNE 21--The Bling Ring

Sofia Coppola directs Emma Watson as the ringleader of a group of LA teenagers who make a habit of breaking into celebrity homes. Based on a true story.

JUNE 28--The Heat

Sandra Bullock & Melissa McCarthy play a pair of mismatched FBI agents in this action-comedy. Trivia Note: it's being billed as the first pairing of its kind for the genre; obviously, someone forgot about Rebecca De Mornay & Mary Gross in FEDS from the late 80s. Then again, maybe that was on purpose.

JUNE 28--White House Down

The year's second White-House-Attacked actioner is the "Armageddon" to "Olympus Has Fallen"'s "Deep Impact". But Jamie Foxx (here the President) is always solid, and it's bound to do good business based on Channing Tatum's presence alone.

JULY 03--The Lone Ranger

Tonto (played by Johnny Depp) takes center stage over the title character (played by Winklevi alum Armie Hammer) in this retro-western. Unlikely to be faithful either to its source material or to history, but hopefully it will at least be fun--and also hopefully, Depp won't just phone in another lazy, monotone performance and count on

Reviewed by Matthew Yenkala

the hair, makeup and costume to sell the character. Regardless, its positioning as the 4th of July tentpole speaks of the studio's great confidence in its box-office potential.

JULY 03--Despicable Me 2

The minions are back to wreak more havoc!

JULY 12--Pacific Rim

Guillermo Del Toro's sci-fi epic pits giant robots versus giant monsters--and it will likely be better than every TRANSFORMERS flick put together (though it's no Mega Shark vs. Giant Octopus).

JULY 17--Turbo

Have you heard the one about the snail riding on a turtle's back and telling it to slow down? How about a snail that's given "turbo" speed and races against cars? Yeah.... Burth Reynolds voices the title character.

JULY 19--Girl Most Likely

More wacky shenanigans from SNL/"Bridesmaids" alum Kristen Wiig...

JULY 19--Grown Ups 2

Speaking of SNL alums, Adam Sandler, Chris Rock, David Spade and Farley-substitute Kevin James are back for another summertime adventure with the families. I don't know if it's a good or a bad sign that Rob Schneider is apparently sitting this one out...

JULY 19--Red 2

The first "Red" assembled possibly the most impressive cast ever for what was essentially a fun paycheck movie. The followup has Bruce Willis & co engaged in still more international intrigue and...oh, what the hell. They blow stuff up.

JULY 26--The Wolverine

Hugh Jackman is back for the sixth time as Logan in the latest installment of the non-consecutive X-Men franchise. Set largely in Japan following the events of X3, it explores what happens when Weapon X is suddenly deprived of his mutant abilities--and meets the woman of his dreams.

JULY 31--Smurfs 2

The Little Blue People are back. The final screen credit for the late Jonathan Winters, who voices Papa.

AUGUST 02--300: Rise of An Empire

A parallel story to the first film tells the story of Xerxes vs. the Queen of Sparta. Original 300 director Zack Snyder wrote the script based on author Frank Miller's unpublished followup, but its August placement indicates no one has very high hopes for its commercial prospects.

AUGUST 09--Elysium

Dystopian class warfare in 2159 from District 9 creator Neil Blomkamp. Will probably worth a look.

AUGUST 09--We're The Millers

The latest entry in the "nightmarish family road trip" genre is here to help us kill time while we wait for the VACATION reboot. They just couldn't quit after RV, could they?

AUGUST 09--Lovelace

Amanda Seyfried stars as porn queen Linda Lovelace in this biopic set in the early 70s heyday of the adult industry. Not likely to be a barrel of laughs.

AUGUST 16--Kick-Ass 2

The title character and Hit Girl team up with Jim Carrey's "Colonel Stars & Stripes" in the followup to the 2010 deconstructionist comic book sleeper hit.

AUGUST 16--Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters

Logan Lerman follows up his acclaimed performance in The Perks of Being A Wallflower in the second movie based on the YA "Olympians" series. Well, a multi-film-contract is a multi-film-contract. On the other hand, the first Percy Jackson flick did treat Greek mythology far more respectfully than both of the recent "Clash of the Titans" movies did...

AUGUST 16--The To Do List

It's the 90s and the class valedictorian wants some wild action...except defying the conventions of the teenage raunch genre, the randy virgin is...a GIRL! (Oh, how shocking!)

AUGUST 23--The World's End

Five old friends embark on the pub crawl from hell. Starring Simon Pegg, Nick Frost & Martin Freeman, this is sure to be a hit with Anglophiles everywhere.

AUGUST 23--The Mortal Instruments: City of Bone

Another second installment in another popular YA series, this one about a young girl immersed in a supernatural world. Sounds original...

August 30--Getaway

Ethan Hawke & Selena Gomez must follow the orders of a mysterious man (Jon Voight) to save Hawke's kidnapped wife.

August 30--Drinking Buddies

Olivia Wilde stars in a workplace rom-com, this one set at a brewery.

And we'll see you here in a few months for the fall preview, with everything from Riddick to Catching Fire, Sin City 2 to the Carrie remake, Thor to The Hobbit, and the year's most anticipated film--the Anchorman sequel. Happy summer viewing, everyone!

WOD

MOVIE REVIEW #1: OBLIVION

Reviewed by Michael Bradley

Oblivion is the latest Tom Cruise science fiction movie. I have never really cared for Tom Cruise or his acting, and special effects tend to be overdone in his movies, so that was my expectation entering the dark expanse of the theater. I was in for a refreshing surprise. Yes, there is Tom Cruise strutting, shirt off, close ups of his face as in all his films, and there are special effects full of eye candy, but there is also a fascinating sci-fi story as well. This makes Oblivion definitely worth seeing.

The role of Jack Harper is portrayed by Tom Cruise, who gets nearly all the screen time as well. Andrea Riseborough, an English actor portrays Victoria and does an outstanding job.

Olga Kurylenko, the Ukraine born woman who played the Bond Girl in Quantum of Solace, plays Julia. Morgan Freeman, as always, plays himself, but the character is named Beech. They are the only four with significant airtime.

The story starts out with flashbacks and narration by Jack Harper that let you as an audience know that aliens called Scavengers, or Scavs, for short, attacked the planet. Earth won but was destroyed, so the people went off to Titan, but they have to harvest the seas for energy. Jack and Victoria are left behind to fix the patrol drones and keep the harvesters safe from the remaining Scavs who are bent on causing them troubles.

I hate the fact that movie trailers reveal too much. I have to confess that

the first couple of “twists” in the story I had already guessed from the trailers. It is impossible not to see them in this mass media world we live in where they spend almost as much marketing as they do filming. Still, the movie takes several turns and some were not expected at all. The movie moves along at a good pace, revealing things one at a time, not making you wait to long, but having you reassess what is going on along the way.

A few caught me unawares, which is what I really enjoy. Oblivion is not a movie that you will talk about for weeks. It has no deeper meaning to it. However, it is a refreshing bit of eye candy, action film, that is not mindless, but actually tells an interesting tale as it goes and you use your mind a bit to



keep up. I would like to comment on a few things that did not work as well, but I won't. They would require spoilers, and I won't duplicate a movie trailer by giving too much away. WOD

MOVIE REVIEW #2: OBLIVION

Reviewed by Matthew Yenkala

Reviewer Rating: 3 stubs

Rated R/123 mins/Science Fiction-Action

Director: Joseph Kosinski Writer: Michael Arndt, Karl Gajdusek, Joseph Kosinski

From its dystopian, post-war, future-earth setting, to its final conflict/resolution (and the twist-but-not-really tag that follows), OBLIVION is a refreshingly honest film. By this I mean nothing more, and nothing less, than that it wears its sources on its sleeve without apology--but in a way that somehow manages to not rankle or offend. Not a single piece of it is new; it is a thrill ride pastiche of high-concept ideas, every single one of them drawn from earlier, better films (2001, Dune, The Matrix, Moon, many more).

It's almost as if the screenwriters--or the writers of the graphic novel on which it was allegedly based--came up with the final plotline by taking elements from all those other movies, putting them on index cards, and mixing and matching them until they found a sequence that worked. (My inner psychic tells me I may be more right than I know with that guess...) In any case, it doesn't matter. Its rip-offs are so thorough, and so evenly distributed, it's impossible to seize upon any one of them and get all righteously indignant about it. Better to just take it at face value and go along for the ride.

So: Tom Cruise plays a tech in the future named Jack. He and his partner Victoria (Andrea Riseborough) are “an effective team”, avoiding an apparent alien menace while helping mine the last of Earth's resources, in anticipation humankind's final off-planet exodus (since the Earth is uninhabitable after

that big war we're supposed to have one of these days). They take their orders from Sally (Melissa Leo), matron of the orbiting city that will whisk them off to their new home as soon as they are done strip-mining the ocean water.

Except, of course, nothing is as it seems. Jack is plagued by visions of meeting a beautiful woman (Olga Kurylenko) in pre-apocalypse New York City, and--what do you know!--suddenly she's there in the flesh, literally crashing in on him at work, and taunting him with glimpses of a past he can only remember in fragments. Soon the two of them are brought to the underground human resistance, led by (who else?) Morgan Freeman, who helps Jack realize that there's more about him than anyone realizes, and he's the chosen one, and the whole thing about mankind moving off-planet is bull, and...well, you know where it goes, because you've literally seen this movie before.

That doesn't mean it's not fun getting there. Again, the movie is a thrill ride, and on that level it delivers. No one is going to win any acting awards for this film, but everyone does a credible job. The effects are unsurprisingly top-notch, and the score by French electronica artist M83 may be the best, and most original, thing about the film. And despite its patchwork nature, it actually does manage to convey some genuinely big ideas for a mainstream picture, even if they are the legacy of the film's forebears.

I suppose there's room for a sequel (and even if there wasn't it's not like that's ever stopped Hollywood before). But I hope they just let this one stand on its own and quit while they're ahead. It's entertaining, it's not terrible, but--enough already, OK? Thanks guys.

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MOVIE REVIEW #1: IRON MAN 3

Reviewed by Michael Bradley

As a huge comic book fan and reader of the original Iron Man comics, I would probably go see any movie made about Marvel or DC Comics heroes. Unfortunately, that is what Hollywood banks on too often. Film producers do not understand the fascination with comics and rely on the old tried and true formula of big stars, big trailers and lots of computer generated special effects. It is what makes Iron Man 3 interesting, but also what makes it fall short of the mark.

I try to avoid spoilers in movie reviews, but in this case, I have to discuss the scenes themselves. If you have not seen it before, I give it high marks for eye candy and low marks for plot and acting. You should stop here if you want no spoilers.

Iron Man 3 starts off with The Mandarin, the mystical head of the Ten Rings shadowy organization. The Mandarin played horribly by Ben Kingsley, a man who other than Gandhi has played every stupid role in a film. The Mandarin turns out to be an idiot actor with no villain qualities at all. It is a real insult to the comic fans. Robert Downey as the title character seems to call it in on this movie, having already announced he might not do future ones. His acting is wooden.

You start off with Tony Stark narrating how he made innocent people into demons. This narrative is heavy handed throughout the film, including The Mandarin being a fake terrorist to prop

up military industrial spending. They come out and tell you over and over, that we make our own demons. The point of the movie is clear, that all terrorists are created by our military to sell weapon systems. It is just as crassly portrayed in the movie, a political charge that is without any depth.

At the beginning, we find Tony Stark beset with anxiety attacks, worried about Pepper Potts, but never spending any time with the person who is indispensable to him. Then he makes a stupid taunt in the press and nearly gets both killed. He spends most of the film trying to get one partially functional suit to work, only to have forty fully functional suits magically appear at the end of the film for the finale.

The best part of the movie, and there are not a lot other than the computer action scenes, come when Tony Stark is relating to a young boy named Harley Keener, played by Ty Simpkins. Ty steals the scenes and you wish the movie dwelt more on real characters like that than on the incessant assault on the senses of loud destruction scenes. The other good part of the movie is the humor inserted. A henchman actually leaves a scene, putting down his weapon and saying, "I hate this job, the people are weird here, I'm just going to leave if that is ok."

The end has the Vice President being part of the conspiracy of course, so he can take over and you guessed it - get in more wars to sell more weapons for the defense industry. When Stan Lee created



his characters they were about social commentary. The X-Men represented the viewpoints during the Civil Rights movement. Spiderman was the boy coming of age and learning how to be a man. Iron Man was created during the Vietnam War as a challenge to make a warmongering weapons manufacturer popular at the height of protests and hostilities. Stan Lee always played against type. That is one reason turning Iron Man into a pacifist who still builds violent personal robot exoskeletons by the score attacks the very foundation of the canon.

The worst attack on the canon of Iron Man is at the end. Tony Stark decides to get his heart "fixed" by removing the metal shards in it. What? The one thing that made Iron Man was that his heart was inoperable, that he had to create the power device that made him part human, part machine. The scene lasts less than a minute, and then he is all healed and throws his chest power plant into the ocean.

They even made over Pepper Potts from

the spunky, smart, moralist to a superhero with compromised moral viewpoints at the end. Last, after waiting through the longest credits in history, was the let down of the end clip. In previous films in the Avenger line, the end clip reveals some cool clue about an upcoming movie. In Iron Man 3, the end clip is just Tony Stark finishing his narrative to a sleeping Incredible Hulk in human form, who tells him he is not a psychologist. Of course Tony Stark in the comics would never open up about anxiety disorders, his love of Pepper Potts, or giving up his powers to a fellow Avenger, but hey, every other thing about Iron Man seems to be lost in this movie as well.

If you are an Iron Man fan, you will see this movie no matter what I say, and probably already have. Once your adrenaline settles back down from the cgi and sound track, see if you don't agree with these comments. Movie producers, please pay attention to character development and not just special effects.

WOD

MOVIE REVIEW #2: IRON MAN 3



Reviewer Rating: 3-1/2 stubs

Rated PG/130 mins/Sci Fi/Action/Comic Book Movie

Director: Shane Black Writers: Drew Pearce & Shane Black (Based on Marvel Comics' Iron Man)

MILD SPOILERS AHEAD

Tony Stark can't sleep. Despite being a "billionaire genius playboy philanthropist" and world-famous superhero with an amazing girlfriend (Gwyneth Paltrow's Pepper Potts) and the keys to one of the biggest corporations in the world, he's plagued by nightmares of the alien invasion of New York City that forced him to

team up with several other costumed crusaders and banish the nasty space worms--as depicted in last year's megahit team-up THE AVENGERS.

As the first movie in what's being termed "The Marvel Cinematic Universe--Phase 2", IRON MAN 3 is thus more of a followup to THE AVENGERS than it is to 2010's lackluster IRON MAN 2.

The basic plot, which is largely based on the acclaimed IRON MAN story "EXTREMIS", follows the time-honored route of taking the invincible hero with infinite resources and stripping him of most of those resources, leaving him only with one buggy prototype Iron Man suit and his own wit and determination. The enemy in this case is The Mandarin (Ben Kingsley), a demon of Tony Stark's own creation--an ersatz Bin Laden with a penchant for hacking into TV broadcasts and replacing them with deadly threats and bloody atrocities.

Meanwhile, rogue scientist Aldrich Killian, bitter at stark for blowing him

off on the eve of Y2K, is out for blood--Stark's blood. After pitching Tony's Malibu mansion into the Pacific, he sends his creepy, biologically enhanced minions to make sure the job is done. Stark, presumed dead, goes incognito into the Deep South, teaming up with a smartass whiz kid/orphan to find out who's really behind the attacks that have grown increasingly violent, and increasingly personal, while doing his best to keep tabs on the kidnapped Potts as well as the well-meaning but misguided help from buddy Colonel Rhodes, now in his own "Iron Patriot" suit.

Following a genuinely clever twist surrounding the Mandarin's character, all is set right, with Stark making a decision that will doubtless shock purists but which perfectly resonates for the story being told here.

Under the direction of LETHAL WEAPON creator Shane Black, IRON MAN 3 doesn't quite reach the heights of AVENGERS, but it's definitely more inspired than its predecessor.

Reviewed by Matthew Yenkala

(Jon Favreau, who directed the first two IMs, is still here involved as executive producer and onscreen as Tony Stark's bodyguard.) The first and final acts are pretty clearly drawn and enjoyable, but like the last IRON MAN flick, it's still a little flabby around the middle--though the repartee between Downey and young Harley (Ty Simpkins) are priceless; that kid has a future, one hopes. Paltrow gets better each time she plays Pepper, and at this point, Downey and Tony Stark really have pretty much merged into the same being. And the effects are possibly the most impressive every committed to celluloid (or pixel).

As with all Marvel movies, the viewer is *STRONGLY* advised to stay through to the very end of the credits for an amusing tag (featuring another Avenger), and the words "TONY STARK WILL RETURN". And while it's not specific about when, how or played by whom, we are probably safe in assuming that despite the events at the close of the film, Downey hasn't seen the inside of that suit for the last time. After all, he IS Iron Man.

WOD

MOVIE REVIEW: PAIN & GAIN

Review Rating: 3 stubs

Rated R/129 mins/Action-Drama
Director: Michael Bay Writer:
Christopher Markus, Stephen McFeely

“Unfortunately, this is a true story.”

The old maxim about real life being stranger than fiction is put to the test in this film, ripped from the pages of Florida headlines circa 1995. Bodybuilder/ex-con Daniel Lugo (Mark Wahlberg), obsessed with station and the trappings that go with it, concocts a scheme to get what he feels he deserves--all the money, cars, women, and more that have been denied to him by cruel fate and the real world necessities of, you know, working to get ahead.

Roping in pals Adrian (Anthony Mackie) and Christian soldier Paul (Dwayne Johnson), he decides to take wealthy cad Victor Kershaw (Tony Shalhoub) for all he can get. Unfortunately for them, thrice the brawn makes for half the brains, and their short-term gains lead to not only their eventually losing everything, but ending up in jail for life on Murder One.

The film is atypical for the much-maligned Michael Bay--there's nary an explosion in sight (well, ok, maybe one or two, but they are relatively small by Bay standards and actually serve the story). Given that it's based on real people and events (albeit fictionalized

in true Hollywood fashion), there's arguably more substance here than his usual popcorn fare, merely by default. And somehow, the almost lighthearted tone--including shifting narrators, depending on whose part of the story we're witnessing at any given moment--juxtaposes effectively against the often brutal violence on screen and matches up to the absurdity of the story itself.

The cast inhabits their roles--Shalhoub manages once again to be a revelation, playing against type as a thoroughly unlikeable one-percenter; Johnson is both humorous and almost touching as a True Believer who quotes the Bible even while committing unholy violence; and Ed Harris is appropriately crusty and grounded as the retired PI who unravels the whole scheme. Comedy icons Rob Corrdry and Ken Jeong make the most of their limited screen time (Jeong in particular captures the “Learn how to make a lot of money!” essence of 90s TV pitchmen), and the steadily rising Rebel Wilson simply can't put a foot wrong. Known to date mostly for comedic roles, she actually delivers the most dramatically believable performance in the whole picture.

While Bay's films are always technically well made, guaranteed to deliver superficial thrills, they are almost always devoid of any real depth or substance. This one is an exception,

Reviewed by Matthew Yenkala

as close as he'll probably ever come to making a film that's both (a) good and (b) ABOUT something. It's not perfect, and another director would likely have handled the subject matter very differently. But he does a solid job of taking a story that's equal parts horrifying, ludicrous and true and turning it into a supremely watchable, if highly disturbing to some, piece of entertainment. PAIN & GAIN isn't a masterpiece. Not even close. But it may well be the best film Michael Bay ever makes.

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Through perilous adventure, and with the help of some unusual companions, Stefani and Robbie learn that things aren't always what they seem, that inner strength and friendship are mighty powers that can stand against even the darkest magic, and that home, while not always perfect, might not be such a bad place after all.

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Genre: Fantasy (Middle Grade)
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MOVIE REVIEW: THE GREAT GATSBY

Reviewed by Matthew Yenkala

Reviewers Rating: 4 stubs

Rated PG-13/143 mins/Drama
Director: Baz Luhrmann Writer: Baz Luhrmann (based on the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald)

As it's one of the most widely read books ever written, a contender for The Great American Novel, and the bane of high school English students everywhere, I don't think I need to dwell much on F. Scott Fitzgerald's roaring 20s tale of the rise and fall of Jay Gatsby. Instead, it's all about what director Baz Luhrmann brings to the table.

Known for flashy, anachronistic reinterpretations of such classic tales and settings as Romeo & Juliet and Moulin Rouge!, Luhrmann's touch could have been the best or the worst thing to ever happen to this oft-retold tale. And fittingly, the finished product

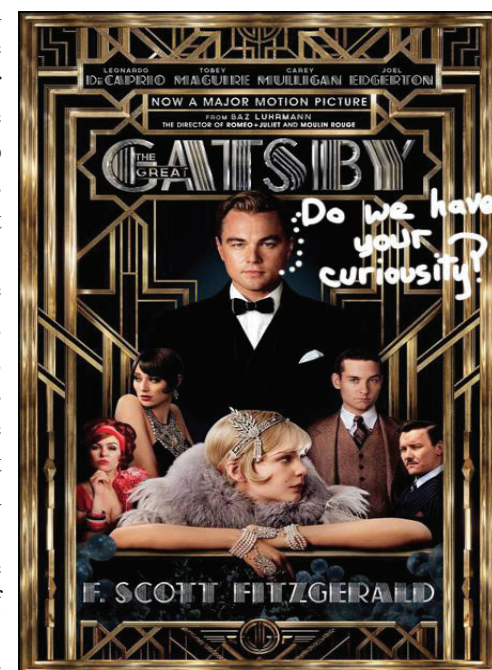
shows him at both extremes.

The first hour or so is pure setup, cloaked in Luhrmann's trademark style: quick cuts, mouth-watering production design, eye-popping visuals (though somehow the 3D didn't seem to pop as much as it should have, at least to this reviewer's eyes). Tobey Maguire's Nick Carraway is the blandest of narrative cyphers, through whose eyes we meet Gatsby himself (Leonardo DiCaprio, in a role that seems almost tailor made for the man who played penniless artist Jack Dawson in Titanic); Carraway's cousin and Gatsby's unrequited love, Daisy (Carey Mulligan), and Daisy's callous, racist, philandering husband Tom (Joel Edgerton); and the world in which they live: a world of money, jazz, booze and sex beyond the wet dreams of the most hedonistic party-goer.

Unfortunately, none of it has the impact that it should. The slow-mo sequences, the stylized, choreographed

dancing, the Jay-Z-produced soundtrack--striking as all of it is, the cumulative effect is tiresome rather than dazzling. It's not until well into the second hour that the movie shifts into high gear and the dramatic weight that's been building too slowly up to that point suddenly begins to crash down. From there it's full speed ahead to the story's tragically inevitable ending, in which no one gets what they want, or what they deserve--and the result is staggering. It's probably no coincidence that the effects finally take a back seat at this point, letting the story unfold surprisingly naturalistically.

And this is where the movie redeems itself. The performers, all of them excellent, truly own their roles. Maguire does the best he can making Nick interesting, Mulligan manages to convey the embattled helplessness of her situation, and Edgerton makes Tom both relatable and reprehensible. But it's DiCaprio's movie to make or break, and he makes it big time. As the layers of Gatsby's history and identity are slowly peeled away to reveal the real man and



his true motivations, he imbues the role with a heartbreaking hopefulness and dignity. In the end, because of him, we all leave the theater wishing we had someone like Gatsby in our life--even if only for a summer.

WOD

MOVIE REVIEW: A PLACE BEYOND THE PINES

Reviewed by Matthew Yenkala

Review Rating: 5 stubs

Rated R/140 mins/Drama

Director: Derek Cianfrance Writers: Derek Cianfrance, Ben Coccio, Darius Marder

It's a symptom of today's cinematic climate that a movie that would once have been released simply as an adult drama now has to be stealth-marketed as an "indie sleeper". It's also a shame, because this is, in my opinion, the best movie released so far in 2013.

It's the mid-90s, and Luke Glanton (Ryan Gosling) is a trick motorcyclist with a travelling circus who, on a stop in Schenectady, New York, reconnects with a former one-night flame Romina (Eva Mendes)--and meets the infant son he didn't know he had. Some sense of filial responsibility (and a bit of male possessiveness) sets in, pushing him to quit the circus, stay in town, and "do the right thing" by trying to provide for his child--and woo back Romina from the man she's since hooked up with.

Unfortunately, his skill set is limited, so things don't look very promising--until his new friend, auto mechanic

Robin, tells him just how fun and easy it is to rob banks. Initially thrilled that he can give his son gifts and Romina cash, he soon gets addicted to the thrill of the act itself--which leads him to a second-story confrontation with lowly police officer Avery Cross (Bradley Cooper). Not to give too much away, it doesn't end well for Glanton.

The narrative then shifts, becoming Cross's story. Cross is young and idealistic, having recently left a promising career as a lawyer to become a beat cop, believing he can make a difference on the streets that he can't in the courtroom. Disillusion quickly sets in, however, when in the wake of the Glanton affair he realizes that corruption is as rampant within the police force as it is on the streets, particularly in the form of Officer DeLuca (professional psycho cop Ray Liotta), who leads an unethical raid on an unsuspecting low-income family as a "reward" for Cross's heroic actions in the Glanton affair.

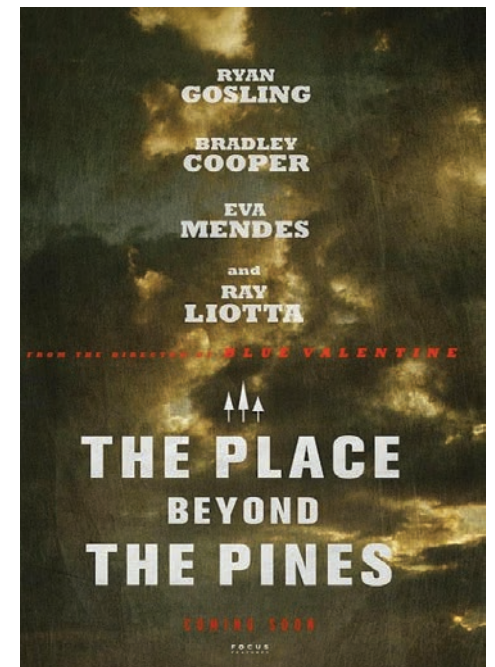
Haunted by his actions and experiences, and by the knowledge that because of him, a little boy will grow up never knowing his father, Cross begins to slowly disconnect with his

own wife (Rose Byrne) and their young son. When his conscience becomes heavier than he can bear, Cross makes a fateful choice, striking a deal with a reluctant D.A. (Bruce Greenwood) that sees him begin the process of cleaning out the dirty cops and restoring order and sanity to Schenectady--but at heavy cost to himself.

Flash forward fifteen years to the present day. Cross is now a rising political star on a major campaign, divorced, and thoroughly estranged from his thuggish son A.J. Inevitably, A.J. and Glanton's son Jason cross paths at school, both with no knowledge of their connection to one another--knowledge that Cross withholds from his son, who nevertheless gets the point: somehow this strange kid means more to his Dad than he himself does.

Part of what makes the film so evocative is the audience's having information that the characters don't--so that when, for example, Jason, who knows almost nothing about his real father, robs a drug store (at A.J.'s instigation) and rides away on his bicycle, the unwitting echo of his father's actions is touchingly tragic.

The dénouement plays out in heartbreaking fashion, as the threads laid throughout the entire film are slowly woven together, strand by strand, into a tapestry of fathers and sons, nature and nurture, lies and legacies. The film doesn't take the easy or predictable way out--many times, especially towards the end, it really feels like it could go in



almost any direction, but seldom goes in the one that the audience probably expects. And yet looking back, it's clear that no other outcome or resolution was possible.

In the end, we are left with an extremely powerful meditation on the themes of choice and consequence, and how the sins of the elder generation are visited upon the younger, despite (and sometimes because of) the best intentions of both. And while there is a certain grimness to the film's final scenes, they also leave us with a ray of hope--and the knowledge that a little mercy can go a long way.

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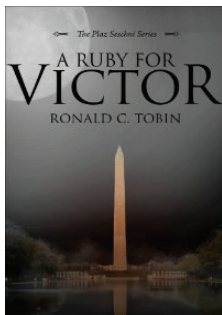
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WOD Bookshelf

A RUBY FOR VICTOR

by Ronald C. Tobin

I am going to start right out with, I would love to read Victor's paper on politics. The main character, Victor Trent is presented with a very anti-establishment personality and it is very much a driving point throughout the novel, A Ruby for Victor. The book itself becomes more than just a story about vampires, and more a commentary on how skewed society, human and vampire alike, have always been.



This first in the Plaz Seschni vampire series follows Victor and his sister Zoe as they are lured into the web of the vampire world. These are not blood thirsty animals, nor sparkling perpetual teens, Tobin's vampires are much more the seductive and political strain, akin to those of The Kindred or Anne Rice's universe. There are some twists though that make them very unique, and make me really want to pick Tobin's brain for a few hours at least.

If you enjoy the seductive, nocturnal hunter, with a will and intelligence, you will appreciate this story. If you are into trashing in U.S. and world politics, you will find the satirical bent to this story. If you are into ancient mythology and hints of the otherworldly, well, I don't want to give away too much.

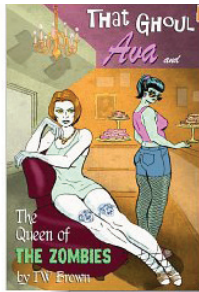
I will say Tobin's writing style was something I had to get used to through the first few pages, and the ending left me feeling that while I know I want to read the next book, I also was left with a few loose ends untied in this one. There are also a lot of characters, and relationships to follow, I really felt at some points I needed a flow chart. I have to say though that none of these kept me from enjoying the story and the array of interesting characters. Well done, Ronald Tobin, I am hooked on a vampire series and looking forward to the next book!

-- Reviewed by Jenn Czep author of

"Blackstrap's Ecstasy" and "Trolls" THAT GHOUL AVA AND THE QUEEN OF THE ZOMBIES

By T.W. Brown

Ava is a snarky thirty something with a big house, a great car, and a career that consists of odd jobs - very odd jobs. She is haunted by her boss - no really. And she is trying very hard not to upset the humanity of her teen roommate, while going up against some rather unusual adversaries. I did not read the first installment of the Ava series, but that is likely how I would have summed Ava up at any point.



I see this story appealing to the high school horror fans on up to those of us who might be a bit more mature chronologically. If there was ever a chic flick subgenre to horror, I think Ava's ghoulish adventures would be dead on.

The stream of consciousness style

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of writing, while at times a bit confusing, is perfect for this story. Offering insight into the main character's thoughts and motives, as well as back story, the little dips into Ava's inner thoughts also allow some mystery to be maintained as she misses important points in conversations.

The characters are fun in a dark sort of way in that the monsters are not so monstrous when faced with the mundane angle of the day to day. I can't wait to read the next (and the first) book in the Ava series, as I look forward to the growing up that Ava's young roommate experiences, how a ghoul deals with romance, and the things in her basement.

-- Reviewed by Jenn Czep author of "Blackstrap's Ecstasy" and "Trolls"

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MOVIE REVIEW: WAR WIZARDS KILLS HITLER AGAIN

Reviewed by PJ Hultstrand



The year was 1977, and *War Wizards*, the animated post-apocalypse movie came out just before the mega-box office hit, *Star Wars*. Interesting tidbit about this movie; this movie had been titled, *War Wizards* by writer and director, Ralph Bakshi, until George Lucas asked him to change the title because it was too close of resemblance to *Star Wars*. In exchange for the title change, Ralph Bakshi got Mark Hamill to record a small part at no cost to him.

The movie did very well regardless of the very low budget. Lucky for Mr. Bakshi his movie came out months before *Star Wars* had or it more than likely would have been buried alive, and not made it's money back, no matter how little the cost had been.



On Friday, May 26th, the Film Bar, a local pop culture hangout in the heart of Phoenix, had a viewing of *War Wizards*, for a one-night engagement. The theater was packed with avid adult fans of all ages. This is where I found out the tidbit I included in this article and where I enjoyed the theater-style viewing of this epic cult film.

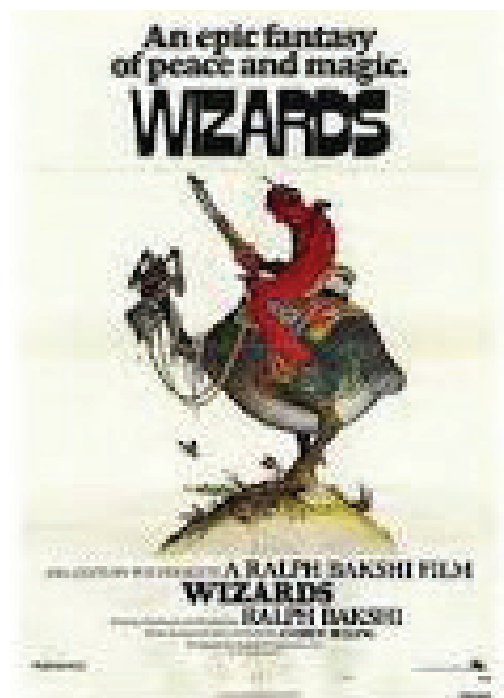
I admit going in, that I hadn't see this movie in many years, so had higher expectations for the evening. It is weird to see this one again and that for some reason I'm not quite



as comfortable with its Nazi influences, depicting one of the worse time periods in humankind. This movie is rated PG now, but would have been considered R when I was a tween in 1977.

The last dialogue between Wizard Avatar with his twin brother, Wizard Blackwolf, still makes me laugh out loud because of its perfection in writing. I won't spoil it for you if you have not seen this movie yet. Let's just say that we were prepared to view a grand wizard battle, like we had seen in *Harry Potter* movies, but what we got was a couple of very quotable lines that simplifies the conflict so very, very well. There are scenes in this film you will never forget; I have not in 36 years.

Want to see it without paying for it, you can find it at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vgol5_00prc



Picture credits: Backshi Films and Film Bar with the photos by Allons-y media

January Jackson & Friends: The Premiere
By Zonie Felder

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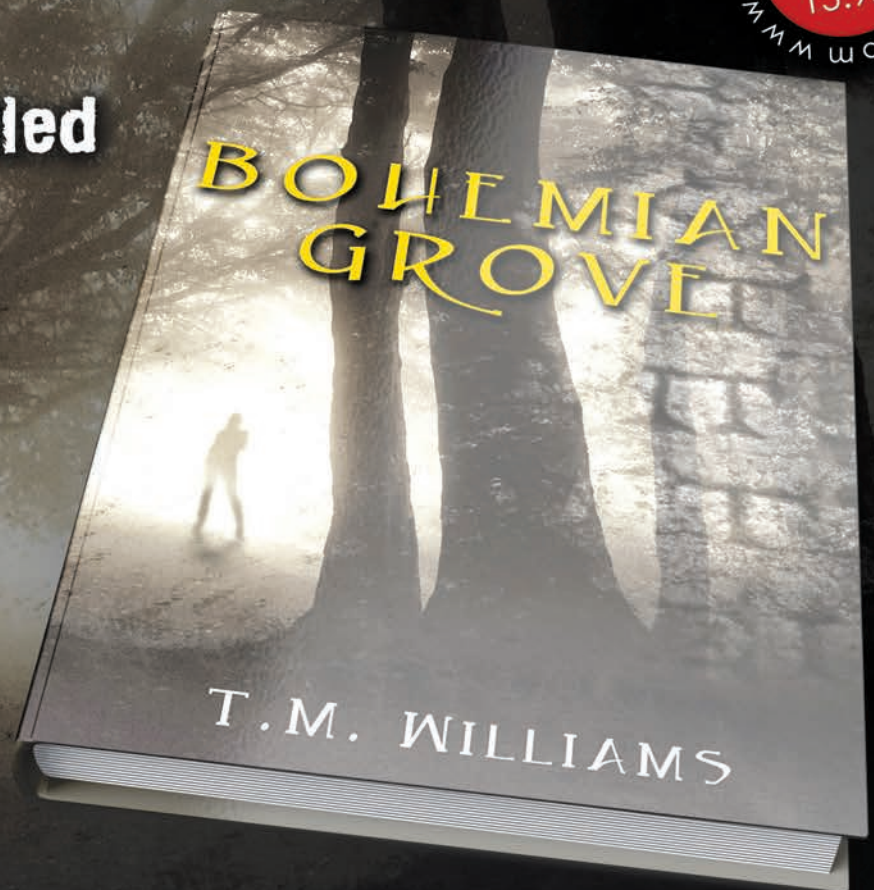


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