



The

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Photo Credits: Mike Syfritt

Interview with Cosplayer Mike Syfritt

Interviewed by PJ Hultstrand

We talked to Mike Syfritt on KWOD Radio on November 14th. Mike is an active cosplayer, and a part of two cosplay groups, AZA (Arizona Avengers) and JLAz (Justice League of Arizona). He participates in comicons, charity events, and movie premieres on a regular basis.

Mike is an adept prop builder so most of his costumes start with these. He went to the recent Tuscon ComiCon as Doc Ock from the Spider Man franchise, thrilling and frightening fans of all ages.

PJ: How did you get started in cosplay?

Mike: I like making stuff and was enticed to make a costume for San Diego Comicon. Wash the Stampede for the Anime 'Trigun' was my first.

PJ: What is your favorite character you have dressed as?

Mike: My 2 most current characters, Professor Hugo Strange and Doc Ock

PJ: How often do you cosplay?

Mike: As much as I can. I'm part of 2 group that cosplay for charity and special events as well as any convention I go to.

PJ: To what events do you go out to as your character(s)?

Mike: I'm part of the AZA(Arizona Avengers) and the JLAz(Justice League Arizona) Both of these groups cosplay on a regular bases for Comicons, charity events and Movie Premieres. I try to make it to as many as I can.

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The Missing Episodes of Dr. Who

by Greg Bakun



Photo credit: BBC

Doctor Who: The Enemy of the World
\$9.99 (6 episodes)

Doctor Who: The Web of Fear
\$9.99 (6 episodes)

Released by BBC Home Entertainment on iTunes
October 10, 2013; 4:3 Mono black & white

I have been living in a hazy world the last couple of days. I'll tell you a secret. For the last few days I have been able to watch the lost Doctor Who stories The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear whenever and wherever I want. What? You have been able to do the same thing too? That's right. We have all been able to do so in what is one of the greatest moves BBC Worldwide has ever done.

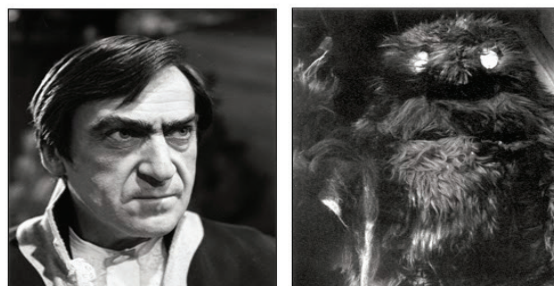
We have entered a new era in how we get to see these missing episodes of Doctor Who. To me, I put my advertising industry hat on and I feel like suddenly the Doctor Who brand is more cohesive than it ever has been before now when it released these stories to us. It's taken us a long time to get to this point but we

are really benefitting from the fruits of the planning it took to get us there.

So, what do we know? After months of speculation it was announced Thursday evening (October 10th) in the US that nine (yes, nine!) episodes of Doctor Who have been recovered in a relay station in Nigeria. I don't think I have to tell anyone who visits this site regularly how the topic of missing episodes is one of my favourite topics of all British television. It is tragic and mysterious. Obviously tragic because these pieces of art had been destroyed but mysterious because some of this stuff is still out there. Getting the announcement is great but because we now live in the 21st century, these episodes were available for download at the very moment we got the announcement. Let me say that again. These episodes were available to us to purchase and watch at - that - very - moment! How far have we come!

Even up to the last recovery of 2011, things were very different. In December of 2011, we fans were treated to news that 2 episodes of Doctor Who had been recovered: Air Lock and The Underwater Menace Episode 2. I think Air Lock was found in July of that year and The Underwater Menace found

FOUND



The Enemy of the World: Episodes 1-6
The Web of Fear Episodes 1,2,4,5,6

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REVIEW RABBIT HOLE AT STAGE 55

By Hal C F Astell



Pictured: Michael Hanelin and Colleen Hartnett

Director: Stacie Stocker
Actors: Colleen Hartnett, Shellie Ulrich, Michael Hanelin, Jane Fendelman and Michael Coleman

This is something completely new for me, so my apologies to director Stacie Stocker in advance. I don't believe I've ever reviewed a play before, though I have been involved with the odd production here and there so I know a little about how the cogs move. I've worked lights and sound effects and I've wrangled children, though I should emphasise that nothing I've been involved with has even remotely approached professional. My crowning achievement on stage was as the delivery man in a village production of The Importance of Being Earnest, which gave me a single line. I learned that I'm no actor; I'm much better in pantomime where the requirements are merely that I can stand up in front of an audience and make an idiot out of myself. That I can do! I have at least seen a few plays mounted by people who actually know what

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PJ: What is the favorite character of your fans?

Mike: Doc Ock was a huge success at Tucson comicon. I never made it more than 5 feet before having to stop for another picture with families and kids. The kids are the best with their wonderful range of emotion. The babies love the colors and are not even fazed. The 2 year olds are usually scared and the older ones know who I am and are scared or excited.

PJ: Is there any character you created that just didn't work and why?

Mike: His name is "The Question" Is a great character and the costume is great too. However he is an obscure character in the DC universe and not as well received as my newer stuff.

PJ: Any characters that you would like to try that you haven't yet?

Mike: I am currently working on 4 more costumes that I hope to finish by PCC hopefully those will be well received.

PJ: How do you produce your costume - making yourself, pulling together from other pieces, or do you have someone who sews them for you?

Mike: I'm a prop builder so most of my costumes start with that. I can sew but don't really like to so I try and put the costume together as much as I can without sewing anything. If something has to be sewn like the orange color on Doc Ock then I will bring it to fellow cosplay friends that do that part.

PJ: What conventions do you go to during the year?

Mike: For the most part it has been local comicons but I started going to more out of state cons last year. I have been to SDCC twice and Wondercon once. This year I plan to go to Dragoncon to show off my best costumes.

PJ: You are a man in cosplay - do you find this is a tough hobby to get into as a man?

Mike: As a man I have to make costumes that are well known and movie quality to get noticed. But it really doesn't matter to me because I do this for fun.

PJ: Do you feel there is not enough men in cosplay or enough people taking notice of the men in cosplay?

Mike: That is a touch question. Unless you have spectacular costume or tight abs it is harder to get noticed as a guy but I think there are just as many men as there are women.

PJ: Any advice to other men or females wanting to get into cosplay?

Mike: If you are creative and like to make things then cosplay is a great avenue for that. Don't be afraid to just get out there and do it! If you just like dressing up but can't make anything yourself then there are a great number of cosplayers out there that also make costume for others to help pay for theirs. I'm one of those. So help us help you!

PJ: Anyone you would like to thank or mention here for their contribution to your efforts?

Mike: I would first like to thank my wife Hannah for humoring my obsession and being with me. The AZA and JLAz for letting me be a part. Grant Brummet, Rob Kashikoi, David Apeji, Ryan Leasure and Ken Kendal for their amazing photography skills. All my Cosplay firends for inspiring me to do this. Last but not least Johnna Buttrick for her sewing skills and helping me with my last couple costumes.

PJ: Where can people find you online?

Mike: I have 2 pages for my cosplay and skills on Facebook. Please checkout [facebook.com/gaslightjoker](https://www.facebook.com/gaslightjoker) also [facebook.com/madpropps](https://www.facebook.com/madpropps)

You can hear the much more extensive and complete interview with Mike Syfritt, by Patti Hultstrand at

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/kwodradio/2013/11/15/mike-syfritt-a-man-in-arizonas-cosplay>



Photo Credits: Mike Syfritt



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they're doing, most recently the Desert Rose Theatre production of *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* in Mesa and *A Christmas Carol* at Glendale's Theater Works. I've never seen anything like this though.

Rabbit Hole is a modern play which won writer David Lindsay-Abaire the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It was premiered in New York in 2006 and picked up one Tony from five nominations. Clearly it's a substantial work, though I hadn't realised that when I showed up at Stage 55 in downtown Phoenix to see the first dress rehearsal without having done a single bit of research beforehand. All I knew was that this was an opportunity to see a host of actors that I knew well from film doing their thing on stage for a change. I soon discovered that there's another connection between them; every member of the cast and crew is either a graduate of the local Meisner acting program run by Kevin Phipps, director of *Malediction* and the upcoming *Grief*, or are due to graduate from it next year. In fact, the spark for this production was lit when two members of the cast, Colleen Hartnett and Michael Hanelin, performed a scene from it as part of their graduation. It seemed like a good idea to perform the whole play to an audience.

And I'm very happy they did. As perhaps my introduction to modern drama, it's a particularly powerful one. I noticed quite a lot. For a start, the cast perform as if the audience wasn't there, so that we're voyeurs into a household unable to see us back. There are no soliloquys or outright breaking of the fourth wall and only a rare scene, such as the one that prompted the first audience tears on the last night, has the actor even looking in the direction of the audience. The cast is a small one, only reaching five players in a two hour play, but each gets their shot and each of them takes it. It was fascinating to see the focus shift between the characters and for the actors to grasp the opportunities given them with both hands. There's also a clever growth to the play, as the key information we have to work with is dished out with patience, each scene literally adding a new revelation or major plot progression to the piece. Initially we have nothing; just a couple of young ladies talking to each other.

They're a pair of sisters, Izzy and Becca and, while it's Izzy who's more obvious in this scene, the play itself is much more about Becca. The transition



comes when we realise why Izzy's news, delivered in a roundabout fashion, is so awkward. She's pregnant, unexpectedly but happily, but she can't just come out and say so as the subject is a touchy one. It's taken her nine weeks to get around to it, for Becca apparently doesn't have her own child any more; while we're learning this, she's folding little Danny's clothes up to give to Goodwill. The second scene explains that he's dead and has been for eight months. Later scenes

answer all the little questions about how, while the play itself focuses around an attempt at an answer to the big question of why. It was a tragic accident that wasn't anybody's fault, but that doesn't stop Danny's parents from beating themselves up over it, as they've been doing since the very moment it happened. The fact that Howie, Danny's dad, works in risk management, is a supreme irony.

Colleen Hartnett is a revelation as Becca, who is really the central character of the piece. Everything we see unfolds at her house and she's rarely not in it, as she doesn't have the luxury of escaping it to work. Danny, of course, is there throughout too; while we don't see him, it's clear that Becca does continually, through a thousand memories and the unbreakable bond of a mother's love. Other characters do steal the focus from them on occasion, but even then Becca's usually in the scene as well. That happens first with Izzy, who dominates the beginning. Shellie Ulrich is the cast member I knew the least, having only reviewed her in *The Neighbors*, an IFP challenge film from earlier this year directed by another Meisner graduate, Tommy Schaeffer. Ulrich is sassy and full of life as Izzy, the wild child of the family; she leads us safely into this story of heartbreak with well timed humour. Of course, that's not merely to benefit us, it's also to soften the blow to Becca as she finally gets round to children.

Becca is very sensitive, understandably so. She's a strong woman but one who probably doesn't believe that, as she struggles daily with the omnipresent ghost of her son, half trying to find a way to move on from the moment at which her son died and her life effectively stopped. Every actor delivered here, but Hartnett had the most crucial role because, if she hadn't delivered, the play would have lost its impact completely and nobody else would have been able to save it; Becca is very much the grounding for the entire play, the character in which all the others are rooted. It's therefore good news that Hartnett was astounding in a performance that makes me look forward even more to her central role in *Grief*, due in January. She's a bundle of contradictions, all fleshed out believably. She's calm but reactionary, caring but absorbed in her own loss, a loving soul who's finding it difficult to love. Like the rest of the cast, she was powerful at the dress rehearsal but better still during the Saturday night show.

Unsurprisingly to anyone who's been reading my monthly reviews of *Running Wild* films, her husband Howie is played by Michael Hanelin. As a frequent screen couple, they've hardly had a great time of it. In a succession of films they've hinted at getting together, maybe got together, failed to get together. Here they're married, as they were in *The Men Who Robbed the Bank*, but their relationship is broken even further. Because of how Howie grieves ('you're not in a worse place, you're in a different place,' Becca tells him), Hanelin is notably subdued for most of the first half of the play. He plays a solo scene silently and without much movement; in dialogue he's quieter than everyone else, as if Howie wants to fade into the background. Yet, he gets his moment to erupt soon before the intermission and he erupts magnificently; not wanting to hurt Becca but unable to hold his tongue any longer. Hartnett responds just as magnificently and this astounding scene makes the play.

In between the respective moments for Izzy and Howie to dominate, we're introduced to Nat and Jason, the other two cast members. Becca's mother



Nat is played with gusto by Jane Fendelman, stealing her first scene ruthlessly and unashamedly with a meandering diatribe about the curse of the Kennedys. It begins with Aristotle Onassis, as great stories often do; he groped my aunt once and she's just made it out of hospital, but the two incidents weren't related. That's the sort of story that Nat tells, always with a hidden reason, because she's the sort of mother who steals scenes even in private. That she's clearly tipsy to boot merely gives Fendelman even more opportunity to nail the part. As Jason, the high school student who was the inadvertent agent for Danny's death, Michael Coleman is too old for the part, but otherwise spot on. He stepped up most from the rehearsal and called tears right out of the audience in a powerful recitation of a letter. His pauses are perfect and pauses are frickin' tough.

There's a lot here to delve into as the characters attempt to overcome their loss, most obviously in the way religion and science help different people differently, and that makes it all the sadder that *Rabbit Hole* ran for only three nights at Stage 55. The rehearsal was powerful, but the last night's production was a clear step up for all involved, as they settled more substantially into the skin of their characters. The show was a major success, every seat filled and every audience member affected, but I wonder if this troupe would have got better yet during another week of performances. As Meisner trained actors, I'd have expected that stage work would be a gimme for them, but they continue to make films instead. I'm happy for that, as I can return to them any time, relive the moments captured on screen and watch the progressions, but stage is a fleeting medium, as highlighted to me with two performances over five nights. I hope I get an opportunity to experience some of those fleeting stage moments again.

PS: any stereotypically starving actor should beg to get into the cast of a *Rabbit Hole* production; you'll never want for food, even if you only get to eat on stage. I left each performance hungry.

Hal C F Astell writes reviews of films from the 1900s to the 2010s at Apocalypse Later, with a focus on what most critics don't cover. He is the author of two books, Huh? An A-Z of Why Classic American Bad Movies Were Made and Velvet Glove Cast in Iron: The Films of Tura Satana. Both are available at Amazon. <http://www.apocalypselaterfilm.com/>



in October. By the time it was announced at the December 12th Missing Believed Wiped conference, no work (to my knowledge) had been carried out on the restoration of the episodes. At least when The Underwater Menace Episode 2 was shown at that event, it was from an unrestored print. On December 12th prior to the announcement, "prominent" fans started tweeting about an announcement of episode recoveries that day disguised in "cute" word alliterations. I hate showboating. To me this wasn't to wet the fans appetite but to let us fans know that they were in the know before we were. Just to remind us. Air Lock was eventually released on The Aztecs Special Edition DVD where it looks quite nice. The Underwater Menace Episode 2 is yet to be released. There is supposed to be a DVD release for it next year.



Cut to 2013 and a new age. Yes, there were rumours and rumblings about The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear being released in November (along with Marco Polo), yes I have been hearing about a large haul of episodes being found as far back as May of 2012. All I know that right now I own The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear to watch whenever I want and boy have I watched them..... a lot!

From the stand point of the BBC, the difference between the find in 2011 and 2013 comes down to strategy. As I have mentioned before, I work in Advertising. Understanding and watching Organizations/Brands is something I do. Although it took a while for them to get here, the BBC provided us the news and purchase of these episodes as one voice. They had a plan to announce and release these episodes in one swift movement. In past recoveries, this would be the process when missing episodes would be returned: announce the episode return (probably fairly close to when it was actually discovered and wait for an undetermined amount of time. Hopefully in the meantime I could find someone in video trading circles who might have a copy I can get to watch. Now we live in the future. Last Thursday, an announcement was made and simultaneously something miraculously had happened. There was no waiting. Available for immediate purchase from iTunes (www.itunes.com/DoctorWho) there was the two stories. Already cleaned up, artwork, trailers, provisional DVD artwork and release dates. The BBC

had their crap together! It was a proper launch. They were being smart and taking advantage of technology and capitalize on striking while the iron was hot. It is so simple but had never been done before!

I am a PC guy. No, I don't mean politically correct but I work on a Windows Platform. I don't like downloading media to watch. I want a physical disc with proper artwork. I hate iTunes. All of that is immediately negated when recently returned Doctor Who is involved. If the episodes were only available by putting my arm up a cow's rectum to pull them out, I would happily do it. A good friend of mine hates iTunes. He owns nothing Apple but he put iTunes on a spare computer to purchase, download and watch these episodes. It's that important. Why?

Philip Morris is a hero to Doctor Who and British television enthusiasts. I am very careful about how I use that word as it has a lot of weight to it. In the realm of Doctor Who and British television, he is a hero. He was in a position to actually physically look into vaults and TV stations in Africa to find these stories. To my knowledge, this is not a BBC funded venture. He is doing this search and negotiates with the BBC to return the material. What does it cost? How does it work? I don't know and I don't care. It is none of my business. I do believe two points. I believe the fans buying these releases on BOTH iTunes and the eventual DVD release will help fund more searches/recoveries. The second point is I believe there are more episodes coming back. A lot more. It is in our best interest to support like we have never supported before. The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear were being remastered in secrecy. For all we know Marco Polo is being done right now. We need to support this new way of episode distribution. We need to tell the BBC we love this and that what they are doing is worth it.

Obviously, not everyone can afford both or may not like iTunes and refuses to use it. I have heard people wonder why these couldn't be made available on Amazon or Netflix. I don't know. All I know is that I wanted to see these episodes. I bought these two previously missing stories for \$9.99 each. It's incredible! I will say one more thing about it. I don't want to hear anyone mention to me that they own the episodes but didn't pay for them. I just don't want to hear about it. If you want to watch these, you pay for them! Our money speaks for us and I truly believe without a shadow of doubt, if you want to see more episodes returned and made available, support this range.



I do call it a range. This is how strongly I believe that we are at the start of something wonderful. The BBC have set it up nicely. As more missing episodes become available, they will be put up on iTunes with a DVD set for later. Is it double dipping? Yes. Am I bothered by it? Absolutely not. Even the covers have changed. It mirrors what we saw for the UK Spearhead from Space Blu Ray release. The covers no longer have the roundels on the top but now have a solid

classic series logo with artwork more prominent. The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear follow suit with this look. My guess is that it will also mirror the UK Spearhead from Space by being a reversible cover feature the current template for those who would like all the covers to match.

Did I mention I own copies of The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear? I did? Maybe I didn't mention how excited I am about it? Oh, I did. Here are some brief observations about these stories.

The Enemy of the World:

I noticed while watching the episodes my head kept shaking in disbelief from left to right. I was watching The Enemy of the World. The story is very grown up. From the very start, it is violent. There are deaths and explosions. This story feels very different from anything else from season 5 and more importantly, it feels very different from Episode 3.



Episode 3 was the only surviving episode from the story before the whole thing was found. It's funny but Episode 3 seems to set out to deceive us on how good the story actually is compared to that episode. There are pretty neat looking sets that are used in all episodes except Episode 3. Episode 3 plays out like some kind of poorman's James Bond while the rest of the story gives the Bond films a fair run for its money on a BBC budget.

Barry Lett's direction is quite good for the first two episodes but it appears to wane a little bit after the Episode 2. There becomes a lot to ask for as the scripts progress. It becomes a little fantastical. Some of Lett's decisions are actually somewhat odd plus the incidental music is very abrupt and almost intrusive. I kind of feel that was intentional.

I don't want to give too much away as there are some wonderful visual surprises in it that one can only enjoy from watching the episodes. That is one of the things that annoyed me greatly about the trailer that came with the story on iTunes. It gave so much away. Part of the fun is seeing those "moments" that I have only seen in telesnaps and I am patiently waiting through the episodes to see them. Stuff like the Doctor and Salamander face to face in the TARDIS or the Salamander's ultimate fate. Let us enjoy these. I am actually still pretty annoyed by that trailer.



The Enemy of the World is like no other Doctor Who story. I am trying to be very careful saying that as I don't want to be accused of throwing that out only because I haven't seen it before. The story has no monsters, it is very dark and even Troughton plays it darker. And I don't mean as the Salamander. If you have heard in the past that this story isn't very good, think again. I think a lot of people will start seeing this as a favorite story. It's a triumph for the series.

The Web of Fear:



If you talk to people from the UK who were around in the 1960s to talk about their favorite/scariest memories of Doctor Who as a child, inevitably the answer tends to be about the Yeti in the London Underground. It was always frustrating because it sounded like one of the greatest adventures we couldn't see. The first episode of this story (which previously existed) is a masterpiece and it was always disheartening when getting to the end of the episode because I knew nothing else existed for this highly regarded story. Jon Pertwee was right in his famous quote in which an alien menace at home was much scarier than one on another planet. As he said, "There's nothing scarier than coming home and finding a Yeti on your loo in Tooting Bec."

After watching the entirety of The Web of Fear, I can confirm there is no scene of a Yeti sitting on a loo or any part of the story taking place in Tooting Bec. What I can confirm is that this is a masterpiece. The Web of Fear does not disappoint.

I have seen some people's comments about the story online and a couple of mentioned how the story is a lot of running around. Absolutely it is. There is no argument there. Though, one of the greatest strengths of The Web of Fear is the question of who is infiltrating the small group of people trapped in the Underground; which one of them is the Great Intelligence. Episode by episode the shadow of doubt would be placed on someone else. This includes someone who is now very familiar to us but The Web of Fear was his first story. Colonel Lethbridge-Stewart. The next time we would see him would be in The Invasion where he would become a Brigadier. Episode 4 is the earliest existing episode with footage of him in his first story. It is very surreal. I have only seen telesnaps of him but now, we have almost everything.

Unfortunately, when I say almost everything that means we are still missing an episode of the story. Episode 3 is still missing. This is a shame as this is the first encounter between The Doctor and Lethbridge-Stewart. It is presented as part of the iTunes download as a reconstruction. I am a fan of reconstructions, more so than animation, but I really wasn't enamored by this. I thought the quality of the images were poor. I have my own sets of Telesnaps that look better than that. It's fine that it is included as it is needed to complete the story but hopefully there is a miracle between now and February and the episode is recovered.

The look and pacing of the episodes are great. The Web of Fear is a very drab looking story due to its bleak location. This sounds silly but the story really is black and white. There is almost no in-between and that is what makes the story so visually striking. The images of the Yeti with their glowing eyes walking down the Underground tunnels is something I never thought I would see. It lived up to my imagination of what that would look like. Director Douglas Camfield does a great job of only allowing us to see what is in shot. If Jamie is hiding from a Yeti walking past him on a platform, he will then move to the right and there will be another Yeti waiting there which roars when we see it. There were a couple of times when I jumped. Fantastic stuff. This story couldn't be any more different from The Enemy of the World. They both are so different yet so wonderful. They both pushed the right buttons for me. I can't believe how lucky we are. The two stories, back to back, shows us exactly how flexible the format is for Doctor Who and why this series is so unique.



Of course because it is a download from iTunes, we are not able to see the full benefit of the restoration. The prints and picture look great but when the DVDs come out, we will get to see it a little better plus with VIDfire applied to the episodes to give the episodes the look of video. In the UK The Enemy of the World is scheduled for release November 25th and The Web of Fear is scheduled for February 24th 2014. There has been no announcement yet from BBC Home Entertainment in regards to when the DVDs will be released over here. Just a friendly reminder, they are currently available on iTunes www.itunes.com/DoctorWho

As of writing this, the two stories are still in the top 10 TV Seasons for iTunes. On Friday it was ranked #2 and #4 (The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear respectively). We live in amazing times. The work Philip Morris is doing is not just walking into a television archive to see what they have on their shelves. It is him risking his life entering into countries that are at war or unrest. It is visiting countries that immediately hate him for what he looks like. This is dangerous work that we can never take for granted.

I just want to say, I have been following this story for over a year. I believe there is a lot more to come. I just want to say that while following the story, I did a lot of research and spoke to a lot of people. Over the last few months because of following this story I became closer friends with people I already know, I got reacquainted with people I lost touch with and I made completely new friends all because of what Philip Morris is doing to bring us back our favourite show's history. Perhaps I have more to thank him for than just The Enemy of the World and The Web of Fear. I can't wait to see what Philip Morris has in store for us next.

<http://www.from-the-archive.co.uk/> credit his website

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JANUARY 3, 2014

Adam Beechen is an American comic book writer best known for writing Countdown to Adventure.

Beechen has written scripts for various cartoons, such as Teen Titans, Rugrats, The Batman and Pink Panther and Pals. For comics, Beechen has wrote several Rugrats and Rocket Power comic strips for Nickelodeon Magazine and scripts for Teen Titans Go! And Justice League Unlimited for DC Comics.

Paige Braddock is a comic book artist and creator best known for the long-standing comic, "Jane's World." In 2006, "Jane's World" received an Eisner Award nomination for best humor book. Now distributed by Universal Press Syndicate, daily installments of "Jane's World" appear on GoComics website. There are currently 10 volumes of "Jane's World" in print. Paige also co-created the graphic novel series The Martian Confederacy. Currently, Braddock is the Creative Director at Charles M. Schulz Creative Associates.

Joe Corroney is an illustrator who is best known for providing Lucasfilm Ltd. With official Star Wars artwork for related books, games, trading cards and magazines since 1996. He has also developed his creator owned comic book series, Death Avenger. Currently, he is creating new Star Wars artwork for Lucasfilm and Star Wars Insider.

Phil Hester is an American comic book artist, penciller and writer best known his work on The Wretch and Green Arrow. His pencilling credits also include Swamp Thing, Brave New World, Flinch, Ultimate Marvel Team-Up, Clerks: The Lost Scene and Aliens: Purge. For his work on The Wretch, Hester was nominated for an Eisner Award for Best New Series in 1997. Hester is currently writing the new adventures of Golden Age hero The Black Terror.

Brian and Kristy Miller are best known for their work on Hi-Fi Color for Comics and Master Digital Color. Brian is a comic book colorist, founder of Hi-Fi colour design. Kristy is the VP of Development at Hi-Fi colour design. Both Brian and Kristy are co-authors of Hi-Fi Color for Comics and Master Digital Color from Impact Books.

Todd Nauck is an American comic book artist and writer best known for his work on Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man, Young Justice and his own creation, Wildguard. While working for DC Comics, Nauck helped launch the Young Justice series and drew 53 issues of the 55 issue run of the series. Nauck's art was featured in the eighth season finale of the reality television show Extreme Makeover: Home Edition in 2011.

Brian Pulido is a creator, writer and producer of comic books and films and is best known for his work on comics Lady Death and A Nightmare on Elm Street. For his film work, Pulido created, produced and wrote the story for ADV Films' animated feature, Lady Death: The Movie. He wrote, produced and directed the short horror film, There's Something Out There. He also wrote and directed the film The Graves, which was released in 2009. His current comics work for Texas Chain Saw Massacre was nominated as Best Screen-to-Comic Adaptation on the TV Scream Awards from Avatar Press.

Andy Runton is the creator of the graphic novel series, Owly. First published in 2005, the reflection on wildlife series, Owly would help Runton win the Ignatz Award for Promising New Talent, also in 2005. His work was also nominated for "Best Publication for a Younger Audience" in Eisner Awards in 2006, which he would win.

WOD



ARIZONA ARTIST ALLEY ARTIST COLUMNIST - Alfred Trujillo

Have Hi-jacked Alred's Column

This month I have hi-jacked Alfred's column to share with you the REAL story of a self-employed artist. First of all, contrary to what some people say, he is NOT unemployed. Far from it. He works harder and more often than anyone with

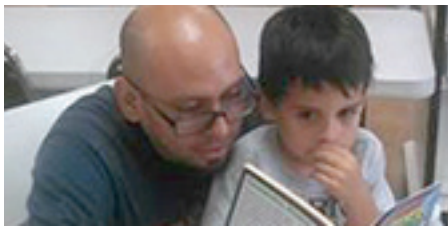
a "typical" day job. As most of you know, Alfred Trujillo is a comic book artist. He draws. And draws, and draws, and draws. He draws in the car on the way to the store, at the coffee shop, restaurants, events, and conventions. He is drawing RIGHT NOW. He draws covers for comic books, interiors for all sorts of books, advertisements, pets, families, logos, and so on and so forth. And when he isn't drawing, he's drawing. OK fine, he does some other things too. But now that we have established that he draws, I can tell you about some of the other things he does as a professional in the comic book industry.

Running your own business is 3 full time jobs plus some part time jobs. Networking is very important. Without actively communicating to industry pros and fans he wouldn't have things to draw or people to draw for. He spends countless hours emailing with clients. This is important. No clients, no commissions. So remember that if you or a loved one is in this field.

Alfred also has to keep up with advertising. This is done through social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. He also has to keep his Deviant Art, website, and online store current. And just to go above and beyond, he isn't afraid to try new things. Alfred recently starred in a few episodes for Project Superwoman. Look for these next spring.

He has also done photography and modeling. His shiny head dons the variant cover for Vigilante Project #3 (coming soon). He can also be seen in Dungeons and Dragons magazine drawn by Mark Winters. Let us not forget the graphic design work he does periodically. Recently he has taken up watercolor painting. This is in addition to the digital colors he frequently does. As you know from his regular column here in The WOD, Alfred is a writer. He created his own series Project: Shadows that he writes AND draws.

Conventions! We can't forget about conventions! As the popularity of comics rise, so do the conventions he frequents. Anyone that wants to make it in this business these days has to go to cons. These can last from 1-5 days and there is a convention somewhere on any given weekend. Contrary to what you might think, these are not easy. Ordering merchandise, packing, organizing, display set up, travel, even getting into a show in the first place! So very much to do.



These just some of the many, many, many things Alfred does. These are just some of the things one can expect to do as a comic book artist. You don't have to do ALL of these things, but you will probably need to do some of them in order to make it.

He accomplishes all of this while raising his children, and none of this Disneyland Dad stuff. He actively participates in his boys' lives as much as possible. From homework to haircuts, play grounds to pajamas, Alfred is with his kids every step of the way. He even has a print that he made with his son. It sells quite well. Fighting for father's rights is also on his agenda. This is a subject near and dear to him and he works diligently to help other fathers in his own position to protect and care for their own children.

Let's not forget his band. Alfred is an amazing song writer and guitarist, but with such a hectic schedule he's had to limit his musical talents to occasional charity events and playing guitar for his kids. And last, but not least, keeping a clean shave on his head.

As his wife, I get the luxury of having him with me pretty much ALL the time. This works for me. As sexy as he is, I feel privileged to spend as much time with him as possible.

alfredtrujillo.com facebook.com/alfred183

COSPLAY CORNER

Cosplay Columnist - Cara Nicole/Az Powergirl

WHAT'S YOUR NEXT COSPLAY?

This is the never ending question. As much as we all "love" our current cosplay or cosplays, we all want to do more and take it to the next level. Some say that marijuana leads to harder drugs. I say that Party City leads to more extreme cosplays. Once the adrenaline kicks in and the cameras flash uncontrollably, it's only just begun. Children stop in their tracks mesmerized by their favorite hero in their presence. Media questions your motives as well as well as your craftsmanship. And so begins...

My first "official" cosplay was Powergirl (before that they were just called Halloween costumes). I enjoyed my alter ego for many months until the Green Lantern movie was about to premier. Sure Powergirl is in the DC universe but why not kick things up a notch? I wanted to be Star Sapphire. I wasn't very impressed with her old costume, and felt uncomfortable with her new attire around children, so what's a gal to do? I decided to take creative license and design my own cannon(esque) Star Sapphire costume.

With my limited abilities and financial resources I utilized the contents of my garage, a wig shop, and a local craft store. I ordered boots and gloves from my friendly neighborhood websites and was on my way to becoming the infamous violet lantern herself. Ok it wasn't my best cosplay. However, I created it, I made it, and it was MINE. Sure I had my tried and true PG, but this was new. And it's always about the NOW isn't it? It didn't end there either. Captain America was around the corner and I needed a Marvel cosplay. Still on a shoestring budget I scoured the thrift shops. Between a second hand dress, a curtain, and some craft foam, I was now the Scarlet Witch.

I'd love to stake claim to every bit of these costumes as my own 100% personal work, but they weren't. And they still aren't. This goes back to the old adage "it takes a village to...something...something". Every step of the way I am given the opportunity to learn from others, as are you. From ideas to creation, we are not alone. There are others out there just like you, willing to share their craft, and contribute to the delinquency of other costuming addicts. The internet is typically where these deviants compile information regarding makeshift supersuits, cowls,

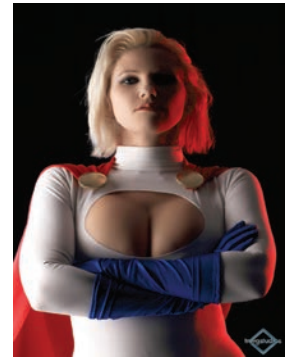
masks, body painting, armor, corsets, and so on and so forth. And once you become financially destitute, and over run with every persona known in pop culture, Steam Punk will rear its gear-laden head.

Harley Quinn now wears a bustle, Batman is now from Gotham by Gaslight, and (just for kicks and giggles) we now have SteamPunky Brewster (look it up and know your pop culture history). Character creation is limited only to ones imagination. With their glue guns in their holsters and spray paint at the ready, these gear toting maniacs lurk in dark places, searching for scraps, awaiting the finality of yet another "perfect" cosplay.

But it's never "perfect" is it?

Enjoy.azpowergirl.com/

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COMIC BOOKS: SEX AND VIOLENCE IN COMIC BOOKS

by Joseph Nieves

In 1954, psychiatrist Frederic Wertham published his infamous book, "The Seduction of Innocence", in which he posited that comic books were a negative influence that led young people to delinquency. One of his biggest concerns was that the perceived homosexual subtext of Batman and Robin would destroy children's idea of the family unit. That same year Wertham was asked to testify as an expert witness during a public hearing of the United States Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency. In response to his testimony, comic book publishers, fearing government censorship, devised the notorious Comics Code Authority, which banned outright depictions of sex, drug use, graphic violence, and supernatural creatures. Wertham, with one ride at the witness stand, had effectively cleaned up the comic book industry, making the four color newsprint safe for young, impressionable minds.

Well, it's probably for the best that Wertham didn't live to see Image Comics' sluggish superhero deconstruction title, Sex.

Written by industry veteran, Joe Casey, with illustrations by Polish artist, Piotr Kowalski, the story centers around Simon Cooke, an unabashed Batman analogue who has retired from crime fighting and returning to his city after a lengthy sabbatical, is looking to retake the helm of his multibillion dollar corporation. The problem is Cooke is not actually a competent businessman, nor does he have any idea what he wants from his new civilian life. Advising him along the way is his old friend and legal counselor, Warren Azoff, whose principle recommendation is sexual release with at least one other person. As the story progresses, a term used very liberally here, and the sprawling cast of characters is rolled out it becomes clear that the only person not getting his rocks off is the listless Cooke.

This is one of the more interesting elements of the book. Virtually every character is depicted at one point or another engaging in some sort of sexual act. In this, there is no subtlety. Cooke, however, is the only character who never expresses any sort of sexual desire. Even when he resolves himself to go to a, uh, "girl on girl" show at a surprisingly posh and popular bordello, he only stares awkwardly at the women as if he's uncertain what is expected of him. As all of his erotic endeavors end anticlimactically, we begin to wonder if Cooke, in his apparently pious charge as "The Armored Saint," has ever had sex.

Unfortunately, despite having a few intriguing ideas, the book suffers tremendously from its dawdling pace and its gratuity. It is currently seven issues in and none of the key players have been very well defined or have any clear motivation. Cooke has literally been moping about not knowing what to do with himself for seven straight issues. Neither his reason for becoming a costumed crime fighter, nor his reason for retiring have been explored. His lawyer's only ambition is getting his friend laid, which he goes to outlandish lengths to achieve.

In the background, several of The Armored Saint's former nemeses are ratcheting up their obscure enterprises towards some nebulous point and purpose,

and coldly murdering the occasional prostitute for no reason. And a dishwasher with vague ties to the hero emeritus has taken it upon himself to carry on the fight by attacking the villains' bank accounts with a stolen tablet. Make sense?

Oh, and another of Cooke's former rogues, now the madame of the aforementioned posh brothel, discovers she needs glasses.

It really seems like Joe Casey isn't sure what it is he wants to say with this book. There's an ambiguous connection between superheroics and sexual repression as Casey's languid protagonist spends much of his time ruminating on his effectiveness as a hero in between episodes of sensual ineptitude. Indeed, Saturn City is as bad as it has ever been, and nothing Cooke has done seems to have made any difference. He is a man held stagnant, unable to transition from one phase of his life into another. Did any of it matter? Will he ever get his groove back? Perhaps Casey is asking himself the same questions about his career as a comic writer.

Piotr Kowalski's visuals are stellar. He perfectly captures the vibrant yet gritty aesthetic of 80's

comics, aided by an old-school four-color approach from colorist Brad Simpson. Saturn City is at once retro and futuristic, and drawn with impeccable detail. Sadly, this only makes the book feel even more like a throwback to more intricate masterworks from Frank Miller and Alan Moore, and the comparison only highlights the book's deficits.

Joe Casey's been writing comics for fifteen years. He's written some of the Big Two's top titles, including runs on X-Men and Superman. More recently he's found success, and fortune, with a completely different demographic as co-creator of the hit kids' cartoons, Ben 10 and Generator Rex on the Cartoon Network. Now, in the letters column of the first issue of Sex, Casey has declared his desire to "take back the 'alternative comix' tag... for our own perverse pleasure." The result has been a plodding, gratuitous, and misogynistic exercise in which equivocation is offered in place of complexity. Well done, Joe.

Joseph Nieves co-hosts the podcast, "What Are We Doing Here?" for Brick Cave Audio. He is also a full time student at Westminster College in Mesa majoring in Transnational Studies and Creative Writing.

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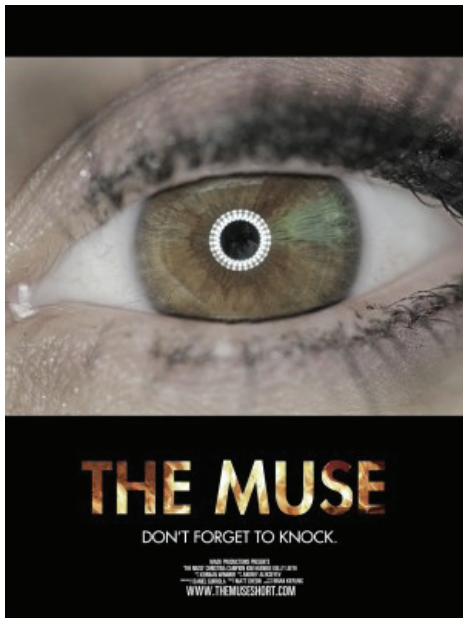
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ASU FILM STUDENT INTERVIEW: MATT CHESIN



by PJ Hultstrand

On October 17, 18, and 19th, WOD Media had hosted their first Horror Film Festival at Squash Blossom Restaurant in Phoenix. While we were showing mainly tried movies like “The Dead Zone” and some new independent films like “American Mary”, we had several film makers contact us about running their short horror films at our festival. One such request came from Matt Chesin, a 22-year old Producer and Cinematographer, who is also a senior at Arizona State University in Film & Media Production School of Film, Dance & Theater.

The short film we showed was “The Muse” and this was produced by Matt Chesin, making him responsible for location and creating the production team. Working closely with his assigned director, Brian Kieffline, who is also an ASU student, “The Muse” started filming in 2012. This film was shown at the Phoenix Film Festival, as well as the Jerome Film & Music Festival earlier this year.

“The Muse” is about a young girl down on her luck who lands a new job. Wanting to fit in, she takes a bet with her new co-workers. Locked in a vault, she experiences the mysteries of an old children’s hospital. Befriended by a young ghost, they attempt to set her free before being murdered by a vengeful nurse who haunts the premises. The film somewhat reminded me of the

short story by Ray Bradbury, “All Summer in a Day”. “The Muse” like Bradbury’s work had a main character who was put into a small, dark place and forgotten they were there by those who had forced them into that solitary confinement. Check out the official website for the film, www.TheMuseShort.com.

After the showing of his film, I sat down with Matt to talk to him about his aspirations in film and about this film in particular. Matt Chesin is a Scottsdale, Arizona boy who is looking to set out on a career in motion pictures. But first, he is working on live concert production and will be staying in Arizona for awhile before taking on Hollywood. Being a senior in college, he is now working on his thesis in film directing, a short film called “Focus” which is a story about the powers of the camera. This film will have a paranormal bent and his film teacher, Christopher Bradley wrote the script, and an honors college student, Jeff Lynn, created the story concept.



The two of us also talked about the film industry technology changes to digital where Matt went on to say, “it is nice to shoot digital, it is affordable, cost effective and more acceptable.” He loves the ability to do instant play backs of choice scenes in order to make sure the shot came out as expected. If they need to reshoot, then doing so can be done immediately, until it comes out the way they want. At a recent Phoenix Film Festival, he had screened another Arizona short film where he won Best Direction.

I asked Matt whether he was going on to technical school after graduating from ASU and he said, “I’m getting my Bachelor’s degree now and am not really interested in technical school because I want to get started in my film career”. We wish Matt Chesin the best of luck in his career, and are looking forward to the completion of his thesis film, “Focus” when it debuts in May 2014. You can find out more about Matt’s college experience and the films he has been involved in on his website, <http://mattchesin.com/>.



CASFS BOOK SOCIAL FOR 2014

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

January - Foundation - Issac Asimov

A band of psychologists, under the leadership of psychohistorian Hari Seldon, plants a colony to encourage art, science, and technology in the declining Galactic Empire and to preserve the accumulated knowledge of humankind.

February - The Law of Nines - Terry Goodkind

Turning twenty-seven may be terrifying for some, but for Alex, a struggling artist living in the mid-western United States, it is cataclysmic. Inheriting a huge expanse of land should have made him a rich and happy man; but something about this birthday, his name, and the beautiful woman whose life he just saved, has suddenly made him--and everyone he loves--into a target--target for extreme and uncompromising violence.

March - Written in Red - Anne Bishop

Blood prophet Meg Corbyn, who can see the future when her skin is cut, escapes enslavement by her Controller and teams up with a shape-shifter who employs her as a Human Liaison.

April - Out of the Dark - David Weber

A master sergeant prowling the back country of the Balkans and a firearms instructor and former Marine find themselves at the center of a growing network of resistance against an invading force of alien, carnivorous Shongari intent on annihilating the human race.

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THE INDIE MARKET AND COMIC BOOK SHOPS

by Jacob Thomas

There is absolutely no doubt that you can be rest assured the age old myth “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know” can be laid to rest as thorough research provides clues as to why this is.

In the last decade, several big budget movies and comic book titles have been produced under even larger names such as Marvel and DC Entertainment and comics respectively. Yet, in the last decade, what started as underground has now evolved into a populace mention worthy next to said big names, if not bigger for some titles.

Through thorough research, I came across this seemingly rapidly growing populace when I visited Jesse James of Jesse James Comics at 43rd Ave & Bell Rd in Phoenix, Arizona. When asked about his view on how comic shops have taken notice to today’s indie market, immediately jilted into a world of insight bringing to light just really how far the indie community has come out the wood-works.

Marvel and DC Entertainment, in the last decade, have put out several large budget movies and television shows including comic book titles that not only make us fan-boys and girls excited for the comic book future in itself as not only as a business but as a well enjoyed creative visual medium. And often sensed within the movies, television shows and even comic book titles, the bar for the very creators who work on these projects seem pretty high. So does that affect indie creators negatively or positively as they attempt to strike it big with either their very own indie projects or straight into the big leagues? Jesse James delights us with an answer.

“I think the biggest thing to realize is that only 15% that view comic book movies are comic book fans. Yea, only 85% of the market never picked up a comic book before, most likely never came into a comic book store before. Does it affect indie creators negatively? No, absolutely it doesn’t. It gives more people the chance to create books themselves through Kickstarter or vast majority of publishers who are looking for great writers and artists.”

From a shop owner’s perspective, such as Jesse James Comics, indie today now makes up for 1/3 of the comic book industry as a whole.

“If you take actual numbers of how many independent comic books come out every month, Marvel and DC are dwarfed with the numbers.”

Let’s not forget we are also locked in a world now nearly constructed by the digital revolution. Digital Comics are also included in these numbers as well, considering Digital outlets like ComiXology and various others. Yet again, the number of indie creators continues to rise without the use of Digital Sales included into their marketing strategy.

Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, DeviantArt and countless other Social Media outlets are being utilized to their fullest extent to not only grow the viewership of their posts and comic titles but to create a brand out of their very own name. But does Social help or hinder a new indie creator?

Social Media versus Likeness:

Jesse reveals an insightful perspective. “Indie creators are just regular people. You can say ‘I like him, I like what he posts so I’m gonna buy his book now but it’s also reversed, you have guys that are political and they say stuff and alienate their fans and fans will drop them. So is Facebook a good jumping point for an Indie Creator? Yes! Social Media allows them to grow.”

When asked how shops, not publishers, have utilized this to their advantage, further blown away by the numbers.

Today, a shops inventory is primarily filled with 75% of independent comic titles and/or publishers. Image Comics being ranked at the top. It seems the culture you build as a comic shop owner is ideal to success not only in standard sales but increasing sales in unknown and semi known talent. However, not one shop is the same as explained by James, indicating success in the indie market inside a shop is a case by case scenario.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel for indie

creators it seems. Jesse explains at the end of the day there’s a fine line between a community store and being a comic book store that’s there for a community and that’s what Jesse believes creates the success for new and independent writers and artists.

So are there any other steps comic shops have taken to help ensure the success of new and veteran indie writers and artists? James advised events are usually held at his own store and others to ensure this success. These events vary from Kickstarter Parties, advice and support for Kickstarter projects and more.

Conclusively, indie writers and artists are on the rise dominating today’s comic industry and becoming the #1 seller in nearly every comic shop across the world. Robert Kirkman’s “The Walking Dead” is a formidable example with issue #100 being the top grossing comic book in the last decade.

“It’s commitment, word and producing at the end”

Jesse James Comics opened its doors in 2009 at a current 7500 sq ft and continuing to expand. James began collecting comic books in 1982.

Jacob Thomas is the owner of 3rd Level Comics and writer of various geek and nerd outlets such as 3rdlevelcomics.com and PureGeekery.com. Thomas promotes and advertises indie creators of all kinds. For more info, email jacob@3rdlevelcomics.com.

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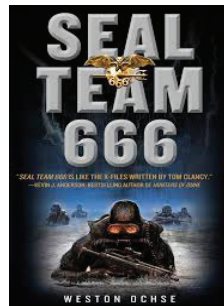
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LOCAL AUTHOR BOOK REVIEW

SEAL TEAM 666

by Weston Ochse
Thomas Dunne
(St. Martin's Press),
ISBN: 9781250007353,
hb, 310 pages



Winner of the Bram Stoker Award for First Novel in 2005 for Scarecrow Gods, Ochse shows off his writing skills here also. Stories about super-secret weapons in the U.S. arsenal are fun to write and to read about; just like Christopher Farnsworth's The President's Vampire series that uses a vampire as the government's secret weapon, this one concerns another unusual top-secret weapon: a SEAL team that fights the supernatural. The character development is outstanding and the plot for this series opener is deliciously intricate, so it's no surprise that this has already been optioned for the film rights. Moviefone (tentatively) says Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson will star in it, probably as the team leader, but they'll need someone younger for the main character: we can only hope for Chris Pine or Josh Duhamel. SEAL Team 666 has been in existence for over 200 years and they have a long history of being in the middle of the action fighting the weird and unusual. This story starts out with suits of sewn-together, human-flesh tattoos (guarded by small, orange, really mean homunculi) that have been traced to the Far East. The team has lost a member and gets a new guy that has a secret in his past that may end up being helpful if he can stay alive long enough to get past New Guy (FNG - you figure it out!) status. Peppared with military acronyms and

language that give the story a lot of realism, Ochse's background in military intelligence can also be felt in the camaraderie that the team members feel for each other, the way that information gets parsed out to the team and a plethora of hi-tech gadgets. The one flaw is that the action is nonstop and anyone who's been in the military knows that action is interspersed with periods of inaction, but who wants to read about SEALs sitting around waiting for action? - nobody! The teaser that you get on the last two pages was enough to make me search out the sequel, so I'm also ready for a film version and maybe even a graphic novel. There is lots of high-imagery violence and gore, but it is a well-drawn hair away from being in-your-face graphic. There is no sex and little profanity, so this would be appropriate for all grownups or older teens who like military fiction, high-adventure or the supernatural.

-- Reviewed by: *Normalene Zeeman* WOD





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PRESS RELEASES



Bruce Campbell to Join PHXCC 2014

Phoenix Comicon is proud to announce that actor Bruce Campbell will be attending Comicon 2014.

Bruce Campbell is an American actor who is best known for his character of Ash Williams in the cult horror Evil Dead series of movies.

"We are very excited to announce our first guest for Phoenix Comicon 2014 as Bruce Campbell," says Convention Director Matt Soberg.

Campbell burst onto the scene in 1981's The Evil Dead, in which he is part of a group of college kids staying at a remote cabin in the woods when demonic shenanigans begin to unfold. Despite its low budget, the film went on to become one of the the most iconic cult horror movies and help to launch the careers of both Campbell, and his friend and director, Sam Raimi. Campbell would reprise the role of Ash for sequels, Evil Dead 2 (1987) and Army of Darkness (1992).

In addition to the Evil Dead series of movies, Campbell has also had roles in major studio movies Congo (1995) and Escape From L.A. (1996). He also co-starred on the television series Burn Notice as Sam Axe, which aired from 2007-2013.

Campbell is also an accomplished voice actor, has dabbled in directing and his 2002 autobiography, If Chins Could Kill: Confessions of a B Movie Actor became a New York Times Best Seller. He will reprise his famous Ash Williams character for the upcoming Army of Darkness 2 movie.

Phoenix Comicon is the signature pop culture experience 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. Entering its twelfth year, Phoenix Comicon is expected to draw over 65,000 attendees to its June 5-8, 2014 convention held at the Phoenix Convention Center and Hyatt Regency in Downtown Phoenix.

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COMIC BOOK RESTORATION #1

By Michael Fett

You have a favorite comic character and you make the decision to get this comic character's first full appearance. You do the research on the comic's value in various grades and decide to get a comic in a certain grade or above. After days, months, or possibly even years of searching you come across the right comic that satisfies all your needs at the right price and purchase it. As a precautionary measure since you spent a nice sum on the comic you send it to Certified Guaranty Company for encapsulation and grade. After a few months wait the comic comes back graded with the grade you were expecting, but you notice it is a purple label on the comic instead of the standard blue label. What is this purple label?

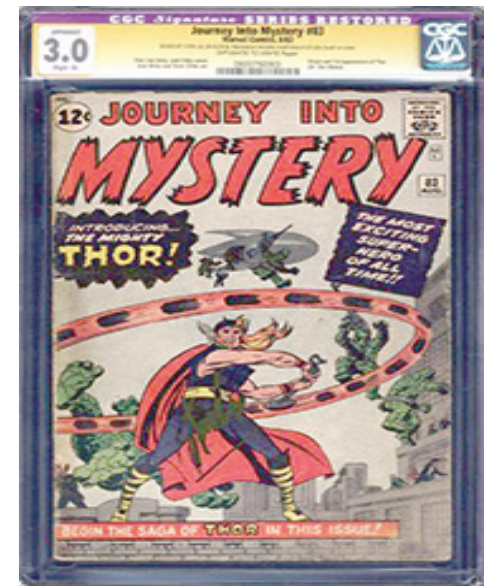
The purple label means the comic was restored. You are now mad because you thought the comic was all original, but wondered what you should of looked out for and how to protect yourself in the future. There are many methods people use from amateurs to professionals to restore comics including color touch; trimming, cleaning with solvents, deacidification, swipe, staple replacement, and tear repair are just some of the methods used. There are some methods used by amateurs and professionals that are not considered restoration as well such as dry cleaning and pressing. The reason these are not considered methods of restoration because there are no methods in which you can detect if a comic has been pressed and dry clean.

There are methods you can use to detect restoration in comics. A small investment in a portable black light could save you hundreds if not thousands of dollars. Color touch up by amateurs is easy to detect because it bleeds through or you can see the unevenness of it on the cover, but if you are unsure take the comic into a dark room and use a black light the color touch will glow or look different than the rest of the areas. Tear repairs you can use the black light method as well the glue should glow and or you will see a different sheen around those areas of the comic than the rest of the cover. Trimming can be a little more difficult to detect and you may what to ask a local shop owner in the area with experience to tell you if the comic was trimmed. Trimming is a destructive process and the most common one used. Cleaning look for residue left behind for what was used and use the black light some solvents will glow in the dark if used. If you are unsure completely what to look for or are uncomfortable you might still buy a restored comic then make an agreement with the seller.

An agreement can be made with a lot of sellers before you buy the book. The most common one is signed agreement that the buyer will buy the comic from the seller and submit to an independent grading company within a certain amount of time, in this case CGC since they are the only trusted grading company for comics. Once the comic comes back from CGC if it comes back with a blue label the buyer keeps the comic if it comes back with the purple label then the seller has to eat the cost of the grading, accept return of the comic, and refund the buyer's money. If the seller is unwilling to go into an agreement with you then do not buy the comic from them. No legitimate seller wants to sell a restored comic to somebody unless they are up front about the comic being restored.

Which type of comics should you want this type of agreement on? Any comic with great value, around \$200 or more, from the 1970's and back you will want to get checked. Comic shops and people did not really start checking for restoration until the early 80's. So you now know what to check for now, but you are still stuck with that restored comic wondering what you should do with it.


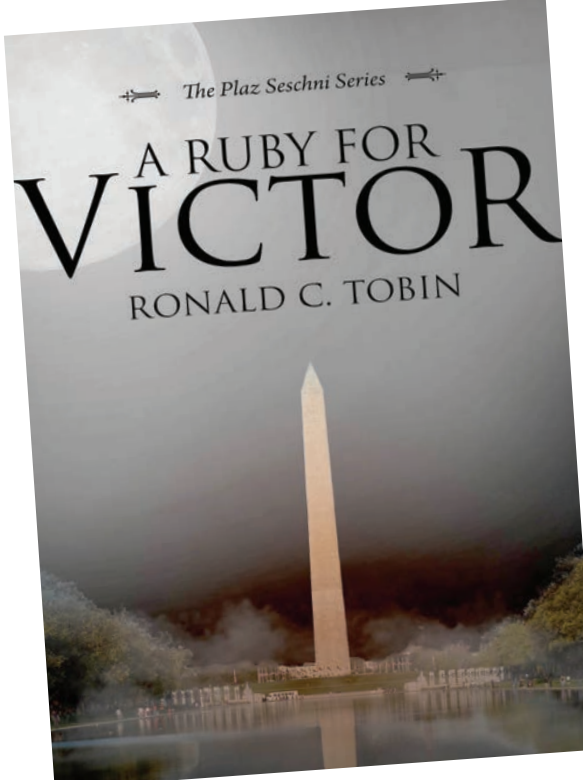
What can you do with a restored comic? Well if your unhappy with it contact the seller maybe they will refund you in return for the comic back. Take a look at the notes in the label and see if it says extensive, moderate, and slight along with the letter next to it indicating a for amateur or p for professional. This will tell you the amount of restoration done and the skill level of the person who worked on the comic. This is the method I use myself for professional work done at Extensive = 20-25% of apparent grade guide value, Moderate = 30-35% of apparent grade guide value, Slight = 40-45% of apparent grade guide value. The only time this chart does not work is for Mega Keys like Detective Comics #27 and Action Comics #1 put those in auction and see what you get because they can be all over the place. If it's marked amateur you may be stuck with the comic unfortunately, unless you get a big enough name who worked on the comic and they are still alive, like Stan Lee, to sign it. Take it to the con where CGC is at have them crack the case and follow you when you get the comic signed and resubmit it then for signature verification.



It may make that comic desirable to somebody no guarantees though. Whatever you do, do not remove a restored comic from a case of its graded.

I see it happen all the time a comic comes back restored and the buyer removes the comic from the case because they are disappointed. The buyer then puts it back up on eBay or tries to sell it to a shop to recoup their money. All the buyer just did was start the circle of life over again for the next vulnerable victim. It is one of my biggest pet peeves in comics and too many people get taken advantage of this way. There is a market out there for restored comics, especially from the golden age, and it is getting to be more accepted as each year goes by. There are plenty of comics worth getting restored if they have a value of \$1,000 or more and are pre 1963 and back, but that is a story for another article.

WOD



From Arizona Author,
Ronald C. Tobin

*Well done, Ronald Tobin,
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series and looking forward
to the next book!*
-- Reviewed by Jenn Czep
author of "Blackstrap's
Ecstasy" and "Trolls"

Victor Trent was stuck in a dead end job at a second-hand store, until he came to the attention of a vampire. His life will never be the same as he is given a job in Washington D.C., the imperial city with no honor.

Victor learns much more than he imagined about himself and the world around him.

Autographed paperback copies are available direct from the author at www.ronaldctobin.com for only \$20 with Free Shipping, or \$25 hard cover. This book is also available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

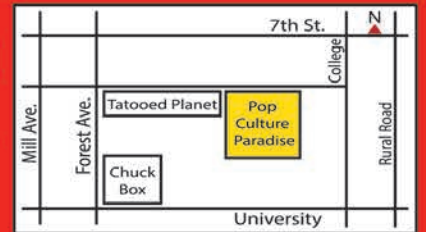
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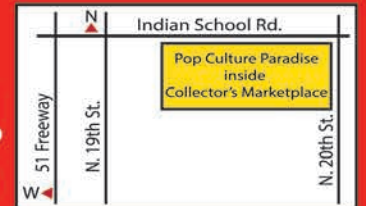
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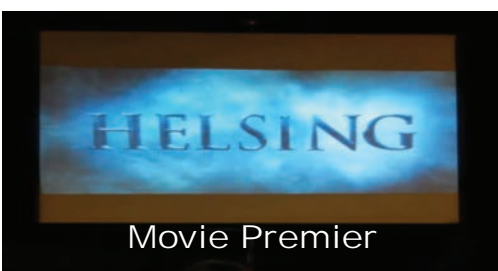
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WHAT HAPPENED TO JACK O'CON?

By Jeff Meredith

The First annual JackO'Con, was created to be a comic, anime, horror, film and steampunk convention. It was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Albuquerque, NM for Halloween, Oct 31st through Nov. 3rd 2013. However, to the disappointment of many, it was suddenly ended the morning of Saturday Nov. 2.

The event was advertised on their website as : (and I quote) "The first big event of its kind in the area that promises to be a festive weekend of fantastic fun. Come out and meet the celebrity guests, artists, browse the vendors, check out the shows and have a blast." Sounds fun, like the kind of event convention goers crave, right? So what happened to JackO'Con? That seems to be the question that people in the business of attending Cons was asking, what happened? I was there, Representing T.I.C.C., covering the event and I do not know the answer.

I got to see the venue and witness the potential of the first time event. Not getting to experience what started out as a great convention for the whole weekend was very disappointing. The vendor area was stocked with Comic artists like Alfred Trujillo, Andy Kuhn, and Brent Peeples. Many print artists including Jonathan Rice and Renee Meredith from drinkndrawart.com, as well as artists of other mediums lined the floor to capacity. In addition, there were many vendors with quality, unique merchandise. Quite a number of fans attended Friday night's opening, and were outside waiting to enter Saturday morning, so what happened? Why was JackO'Con shut down Saturday morning before it could get started?

The following is a statement taken directly from the JackO'Con facebook page:

"Due to unforeseen circumstances and other issues that cannot be disclosed at this time, we regrettably were forced to shut down Jack 'Ocon.

We appreciate all the hard work and dedication so many people put into this event.

Many people are asking about refunds, we will be working to resolve this and other issues in a timely manner. Please bear with us while we sort everything out. While rumors going around about the reasons for the shut down please understand that, the staff cannot discuss anything during this time. One our legal people have told us the next stage we will keep you all posted. Thank you for your patience and understanding."

The statement fails to answer the question asked by featured guests, vendors, and attendees: What happened?

Nyte Breed, director of Dark Cool Entertainment (the company that organized Jack O'con), had this direct statement posted on Face Book about the cancellation: "This was a very disappointing weekend for many people. One of the most difficult in my life. I know it is always easy and fun to kick people when the fall. For those of you who really know me. Know that I do always rise no matter how much I am kicked.

On the other side some amazing things happened. I found out that there are some wonderful people in this world that felt my pain and stood beside me. A crew of people that even when I everything fell down. They stood beside me, The stars the flew in from all over were amazing. They felt my pain and still keep asking me if I am ok, Unfortunately they were sitting behind me when the hotel manager was yelling unwilling to shake my hand. Unwilling to even aid them, Forcing me to move everyone to other hotels. The ladies were so amazing they even offered to share a room to keep costs down. Thank you so much Max Wasa, Kathy Coleman, Erin Fitzgerald, Danielle McRae, Marilyn Ghigliotti and Sugar Lyn. For your support and getting out with the fans today making sure they didn't loose out on meeting you. Thank you Monster Man

Cleve A Hall For being your amazing self to me and the fans, getting out to day to meet them as well. Lisa Loring your support was awesome as well, I hope all goes well with you back surgery next week. Az Powergirl and Alfred Trujillo for being my friends and making me feel stronger. Alien Warrior Comedian you are one of the funniest aliens and one of the greatest humans I have ever had the



pleasure of meeting and being around thank you for all your effort.

Many of the vendors, also were very supportive and helpful I want to thank you for all you have done.

Some folks who were just helping and not staff like

Evil-m West , and Lexi who stayed to the end trying to assist people and help out. Evil even had to take some hate from people who she calls friends. It isn't fair to her or any of the staff. This was not do to a fault directly with any of our people. Everyone who was their believed in the dream. Everyone was excited, and Saturday morning proved we should be.

"Legally I am not allowed to speak about what the issues were, they were not about money. We had over a 100 people in line Saturday 2 hours before the event who had to be turned away. It was horrible to do that to so many who wanted to spend time with their favorite stars. So I want to thank all of the fans in town for their support of our culture, I am a geek and proud of it. I don't do this because of any other reason then I love it. Everything about it. I too am a fan of everyone who we had come this weekend.

Even the other cons came to aid one offering to put the value of your ticket towards their event, the other offering a discount. No I do not feel they are swooping in on a bad thing. I believe they care about the fans and don't want them to be burned.

So very very very long story short. Thank you everyone, Please visit Albuquerque comic con in January, Sabaku Con in the spring and Ace this summer. Lets keep our insanity of comics anime steampunk scifi and music alive in Abq.

If we try this again next year in ABQ it will not be at the same location of course."

I also spoke with a representative for the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albuquerque. When asked,"What happened Saturday that caused the shut down of Jack O'con?", their statement was: "It was a Contract Misunderstanding".

The biggest disappointment to the majority of the participants, including myself, was that JackO'Con had real potential. There was a great energy about the event Friday afternoon that fired everyone up for an amazing Saturday. Unfortunately, we will never know just how great it would have been.

I would like to thank all of the JackO'Con volunteers: you were so helpful and great to work with. Jenn Agumatang and Bill St: thanks for all your hard work and support. To all the artists we met while in Albuquerque: T.I.C.C. hopes to cross paths with you again in the very near future, so keep in touch!

I doubt the whole truth will ever be known as to what exactly occurred to cause the shut down on Saturday. Small conventions like JackO'Con are so vital to Independent artists. It provides a venue for them to bring their work to the public. I hope the events of Jack O'con do not discourage anyone from either sponsoring or attending future smaller conventions. Instead, continue to support the excitement and passion of the independent artist community.

No matter what part of the country you are in, keep supporting the Independent Artists in your area who continue producing amazing art "For the people, By the people".

WOD

MY FIRST PHILCON

by Michael L. Brachman, Ph.D.

I attended my first SciFi convention to try and stir up some interest in Rome's Revolution. The convention is called PhilCon because it originated in Philadelphia before migrating to its current home at the Crowne Plaza in Cherry Hill, NJ. It is sponsored by the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society and takes place in November every year. The first one was held in 1936 so by my calculations, that makes it 77 years and counting.

So what was it like? Did I accomplish my goals? Let's start with what was it like. I had seen science fiction conventions portrayed on TV and in movies as a bunch of costumed people running around acting silly. While there were some costumes, very few people acted silly. I met some members of the PSFS that I knew and some that I did not know. They had an art show, a gaming suite, a Con Suite with some drinks and food and numerous lectures and events.

I met some valuable contacts and have made it my goal to be a participant in some of the panels or workshops next year. I also gained some valuable insights into the psyche of the science fiction Fan. I now realize there is a difference between a fan of science fiction and a science fiction Fan. Fans are similar to tailgaters at a sporting event. The hoopla surrounding the game is sufficient for some people and they aren't even interested in going to

see the game. Others enjoy the tailgating but also love the sport itself. There are some people (like me) who never paid attention to tailgating and only cared about the game. I guess this makes me a fan of science fiction and not a Fan.

What about my other goal? Did I garner attention for the Rome's Revolution series? I don't think very much. I think the way to gain attention is to have a vendor booth, selling books and participating in events. Everything else is just noise and my message got lost in the noise.

All in all, I'm glad I went and I will go back next year but I also learned who I am and where I fit in Fandom which isn't much at all.

Michael Brachman's career as a science fiction writer began with a slight detour into romantic fiction with the novel "Future Past", currently only available in e-book format. His first science fiction series, "Rome's Revolution" was originally written as three separate books under the title VIRUS 5. In 2011, Brachman combined them into a single 167,000-word omnibus entitled "Rome's Revolution" and simultaneously published it in paperback and for all e-book readers. This was followed by a fast-paced sequel entitled "The Ark Lords" which was released in 2012. A riveting conclusion, entitled "Rome's Evolution" was released in the summer of 2013. He is hard at work on a new series with the first book expected early in 2014.

WOD

CONVENTION NEWS: ATOMICON

by Michael D'Ambrosio

Over the last nine years, I've attended maAtomaCon in Charleston, SC launched its first show on the weekend of November 8th and it was a great success. Kudos to Janet Iannantuono, her family and staff for an excellent job in getting the convention off to a flying start. The guest of honor was the award winning Jack McDevitt and a host of other very talented writers. I had the opportunity to spend time with John Hartness, Stuart Jaffe, Nicole Kurtz, Christina Janke, Eric Bakutis, Tally Johnson, Alexandra Christian, Winfield Strock, AJ Hartley and Leona Wisoker. It's rare that scheduling works out for the writers to congregate in the evening for a little fun and relaxation over drinks. The panels included topics about writing, screenwriting, costuming, films, science, and fandom.

The hotel she selected, The Inn Place (formerly the Airport Sheraton), offered a really good rate at \$79

and their staff was even better. Food and drink at the restaurant were very good and reasonably priced as well. The layout for the convention was ideal with the authors positioned in the hall for ample space in the dealers' room. The programming tracks were well-organized and very well thought out. Each panel was well-attended and the fans I spoke with were quite pleased. The hotel provided free shuttle service for any locations within a three mile radius which included the airport. Amtrak's station is also right behind the hotel. With many of the town's attractions a mere two miles away, this is an ideal location for a convention and one that I highly recommend. There are outlets, shopping malls and restaurants all within walking distance of the hotel as well. Check out the website at <http://atomacon.org> for a look at what you can expect at a well-run convention.

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Doc Savage and the Peril of Scientific Illiteracy

Science Columnist: Sean Ellis

On Saturday, October 19, with the deadline for this column approaching and not a single word written, I decided to take a break and indulge in a bit of creative diversion by attending the sixteenth annual Doc Con--a convention of collectors and creators brought together by their shared love of the old Doc Savage pulp adventures. The Doc Savage character, created in 1933 by Lester Dent (writing under the pseudonym Kenneth Robeson) was not only the star of a long running series of pulp magazines, comic books, radio shows and even a (very forgettable) movie, but also the inspiration for dozens of imitators, some of whom you are probably more familiar with. For younger folks, who might be less aware of this character, imagine Bruce Wayne without

the Batman disguise, but just as dedicated to his cause of fighting evil and righting wrongs. Now throw in a dash of James Bond and Indiana Jones--and wrap it up in a young Schwarzenegger body (with a ripped shirt and a funky Eddie Munster hair-do) and you've got the iconic Doc Savage.

But what, you may be wondering, does this have to do with science?

Doc Savage is one of those superlative heroes who is an expert at everything he does--and Doc does a lot--but among his many vocations, Doc is a scientist, researcher, and inventor. He is both Bond and Q, inventing his own gadgets to defeat the evildoers who, more often than not, are also using science, but for very bad things.

I was at Doc Con to participate in a panel of authors and artists (also present were Phoenix-based Scott Vaughn, creator of the Warbirds of Mars webcomic; and Santa Fe resident David Wood, author of the Dane Maddock adventure novels) and although my reason for being there had more to do with fiction than science, a question that was raised really got me thinking about what it is that made the Doc Savage character so appealing. Obviously, there is the exotic nature of the stories--expeditions to far-flung unexplored locales are just plain sexy, even if they don't hold up very well under the harsh scrutiny of satellite imagery. But

I think there's something else...a thread that connects Doc Savage to both the characters that he has inspired, and earlier influences like Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. I'm talking about the intellectual hero.

We often forget, when reading a mystery story or watching a procedural television show, that--in many cases--the specific expertise, which makes it possible for the detectives to crack the case, is rooted in science. Whether it's Doc Savage using his scientific knowledge and all-too-plausible sounding gadgets to defeat the evil villain, or the CSI team matching fibers from a murder victim's body to the exact make and model of the car used to transport the remains to the dump site, these stories appeal to us because we have a sense of wonder about scientific things.

This sense of wonder does not, sadly,



very often lead to an appreciation for real science. Research conducted by Jon Miller of Michigan State University, found that only about 28% of American adults could be called "scientifically literate" and it's even worse (believe it or not) in other modern countries. "A slightly higher proportion of American adults qualify as scientifically literate than European or Japanese adults, but the truth is that no major industrial nation in the world today has a sufficient number of scientifically literate adults," Miller said. "We should take no pride in a finding that 70 percent of Americans cannot read and understand the science section of the New York Times" (from "Science Literacy: How do Americans stack up?" Science Daily, Feb 27, 2007).

That is not to say that our collective sense of wonder is completely dead. Our fascination with fictional "science detectives" sometimes carries over into real life, and a few of us actually consider real scientists and researchers to be heroes. Consider, as just one example, the longevity of the series Mythbusters, which is just about the only remaining

educational/scientific program in the line-up of the ostensibly science-based Discovery television network.

The problem with declining science literacy is that we are losing our ability to understand the scientific rationale for very important decisions. For example, many people are unable to understand how carbon dioxide--the stuff that all animals breathe out, and which plants "breathe in" and need for photosynthesis--can be considered a pollutant? Wouldn't more carbon dioxide be good for the plants? Isn't that what we learned in grade school?

Exactly. And the problem is that for too many people (i.e. voters, consumers, etc.) their comprehension of science ends with grade school. To understand and make informed decisions about issues like climate change, we need a deeper background in chemistry, physics and ecology. That doesn't mean we have to be expert scientists, but we need to recognize that a complex problem cannot be explained in a thirty second sound bite.

Moreover, many of us have no frame of reference for understanding scientific-sounding claims that are often used to promote a variety of products, many of which are the modern equivalent of "snake-oil." A knowledge of how science and research is (or at least should be) conducted, should make us wary of any claim that includes the words "scientifically proven" or "studies show." But because we have consistently deemphasized scientific education and even demonized intellectualism as "elitist" we now have a society that is extremely gullible.

It doesn't have to be this way.

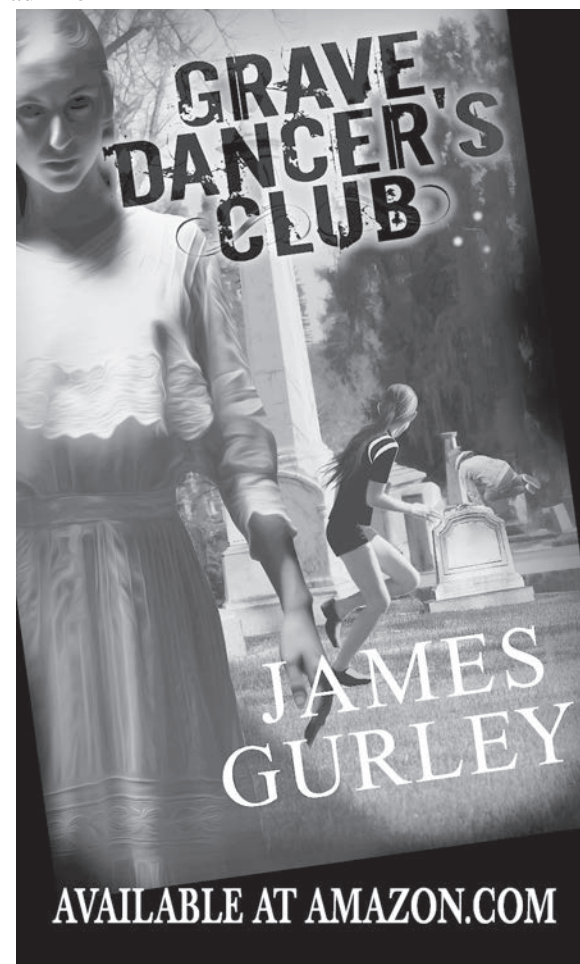
A hero isn't just someone that we admire from afar. Rather, it is someone we aspire to be. It is never too late to stop learning, but it is certainly more difficult to do when we are grown up and weighed down by the responsibilities of the real world. It certainly makes more sense to advocate for better science education in the school system, and this cannot--let me emphasize this--CANNOT be achieved by placing more pressure on educators through high stakes standardized testing that only measures the ability of students to memorize information. Doing that will only kill whatever sense of wonder our kids have about the natural world.

While it's true that a society of scientifically literate citizens might increase the likelihood of the emergence of evil genius super-villains, I prefer to believe that it would also mean that we would have a nation of intellectual heroes ready to take them down.

Sean Ellis is the author of several thriller and adventure novels. He is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom, and has a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resources Policy from Oregon State University. Sean is also a member of the International Thriller Writers organization. He currently resides in Arizona, where he divides his time between writing, adventure sports, and trying to figure out how to save the world. Visit Sean on the web at <http://seanellisthrillers.webs.com>

WOD

CopperCon Highlights



“LEGAL” TIME TRAVEL

By Michael Brachman, Ph.D.

Patti Hultstrand, Managing Editor for The WOD, loves time travel and she's not shy about admitting it. I, on the other hand, hate it because of the problems it creates. Everyone has heard of the grandfather paradox. You go back in time, kill your grandfather before your father was conceived so you were never born, so you could never travel back in time and kill your grandfather. The only way to circumnavigate such paradoxes is to invoke the multi-verse theory meaning you came from a different timeline and the new timeline you spawn has nothing to do with your existence. The other approach would be that of Doctor Who calling it “Wibbly-Wobbly, Timey-Wimey” means there are just some things that must happen and the timeline is always self-correcting.

In my opinion, traditional time travel in the spirit of H. G. Wells is just not possible. You can argue with me and say that it is. OK. Let's say that some day, 50 years from now or 100 years from now or even in a thousand years, people invent true time travel. Wouldn't there be people from the future, maybe even the far future, wandering around our time? Where are they? While the absence of proof is not the same as proof of absence, I think it speaks for itself. Traveling into the past is just not possible. But that doesn't mean some forms of time travel are not possible. In fact, there are many forms of time travel that are perfectly “legal” and do not cause any paradoxes whatsoever.

Let's start with the most simplistic form: you go to bed at night, close your eyes and poof, it's eight hours later. Not really time travel? Well, imagine if, instead of falling asleep, you were frozen solid and you weren't thawed out until 14 centuries later. Still legal, right? This is the basis of my novel, Rome's Revolution which allows my hero, Rei Bierak, a 20-something male from our time to interact with the good citizens of the 35th century. What? You don't think it's possible? You don't think it could happen? It already did! Some Russian scientists were able to take tissue from a plant that had been frozen for over 30,000 years and get it to grow, thus resurrecting a species 300 centuries old. The plant is still growing and fertile and producing white flowers and seeds. However, the most fascinating fact we have so far is the strange habits of the common wood frog in Canada which, according to reports, freezes solid in the winter and thaws out again in the spring. According to the scientists who studied this frog, its metabolism slows to a crawl, and its body temperature drops to between 21° and 30° Fahrenheit (-6° and -1° Celsius) and its heart and brain simply cease to function. There are numerous other examples

of insects and turtles that also freeze solid and thaw again. Sperm and egg banks have been freezing living human reproductive cells for two decades.

So traveling into the future is a piece of cake. You just need a good freezer. But that's not all. Another form of “legal” time travel is observational time travel. Saying it another way: seeing things from the past. You cannot interact with them and thus you cannot change the timeline so it is perfectly legal. What? You don't think it's possible? You don't think this could happen? It already did! The Hubble Space Telescope had an instrument called the Ultra Deep Field imager but it was later upgraded to the eXtreme Deep Field (XDF) imager. This device is able to capture and focus on photons that were emitted only 50 million years after the Big Bang. The pictures are staggering. The youngest galaxy found in the XDF images existed just 450 million years after the universe's birth in the Big Bang. How is that not observational time travel? In my novel, Rome's Revolution, the good citizens of the 35th century have discovered a faster-than-light (FTL) stardrive and they use it to outrun light rays, turn around and look back; effectively letting them look into the past. This allows them to discover the underlying reason as to why certain stars have disappeared. The fact that these events happened 14 years in the past is not problem because they invent a “lens-less” camera to spy on events in the past by traveling faster than light.

Say you believe in reincarnation. You have knowledge of your past life. There's nothing wrong with that. Say that you could send your consciousness into the past, a la Quantum Leap. As long as you don't interact with the past, observation only, no paradoxes are created.

You want more? OK, I yield. Let's say that time travel really is invented in 50 years. It is my claim that to prevent paradoxes, nobody can travel into their own past. That doesn't mean they couldn't travel into their future and then return again even as far back as the instant they left. Say that you get your hands on one of these devices, straight out of The Time Machine. You could go forward for hundreds of years, tool around for a while and then come back. This would be perfectly legal because you haven't changed your timeline. You come back to the present and by its very definition, your knowledge of the future changes the timeline moving forward but who cares? The path you forged was just one possible timeline. Nothing says you couldn't go forward again and find a completely different timeline. You'd better gather up the stock tips, though, just in case.

So to tie it all back together, that's why we don't see time travelers from the future wandering around in our time.

Because time travel hasn't been invented yet. But when it is, boy, I'd hate to be a resident of a “possible” future. Seriously. Imagine if time travel is really invented and a person from the past comes forward in time to your time and gathers knowledge then returns to “their” present. Since, by definition, they have changed the timeline, you, your loved ones and everyone around you must cease to exist. There may be another copy of you in the new timeline, maybe not, but regardless, you disappear. In my opinion, if time travel is ever invented, the people of the future would have to adopt a policy such that once discovered, they are duty-bound to kill a person from the past instantly so they cannot return to their own time thus preserving the timeline.

I think this might make a great science fiction story. If I wrote it, I'd call it “All Pastees must die!” I have no proof that I will write this story. We'll just have to muddle along into the future and see.

Michael Brachman has a Ph.D. in Sensory Science with a minor in Computer Science. Although he has been writing for 40 years, Rome's Revolution is his first science fiction series, depicting the enduring love between a man from the 21st century and a woman from the 35th century. Between the two of them, they fend off various threats to mankind. The science behind the science fiction is meticulously researched. It is so realistic, you will believe that these stories are true, they just haven't happened yet. Michael has two children and lives in Cherry Hill, NJ with his beautiful and talented wife Denise.

Websites: Rome's Revolution - <http://www.RomesRevolution.com>

The Ark Lords - <http://www.TheArkLords.com>

Rome's Evolution - <http://www.RomesEvolution.com>

All three books are available from in paperback and for all e-book readers

Wiki: Rome's Revolution: The Science Behind the Science Fiction - <http://romesrevolution.wikidot.com>

Blog: Tales of the Vuduri - http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/5874161.Michael_Brachman/blog

Michael_Brachman/blog

Twitter: @mlbphdl

WOD



Pictured: Winner of the Costume Contest, Annika van Neck and judge, Diana Given.



Pictured: A Full Room at the Squash Blossom for the 50th Anniversary of Dr. Who



Pictured: Winner of the Land of the Nerds Trivia Contest, Annika van Neck.

**We would like to thank
Land of the Nerds for their Trivia
Contest and to everyone who came
out to our 50th Anniversary
Celebration of Dr. Who**

MOVIE REVIEW: Thor: The Dark World

Reviewed by Michael Bradley

Thor: The Dark World is noticeably better than the first Thor movie. At this point, Chris Hemsworth owns the role of Thor and Tom Hiddleston is equally great as Loki. The film benefits primarily from the fact that the characters were already established in the first film and several were reinforced by The Avengers film. As a result, this movie can focus on a single plot device and story line without having to rehash old ground.

In this movie the Rainbow Bridge guarded by Heimdal has been repaired. Thor must make amends by going to all the realms with his band of hero companions and put down insurrections and wars that started because Asgard was not there as peace keepers while the bridge was down. In a flash back, we see the ancient enemy of the Dark Elves that ruled the universe when all was dark. The fought against Asgard when the light came and lost, but a few survived. They now seek that rare alignment of the nine realms to once again bring darkness to the universe so they can retake power.

Most of the plot and the action sequences are very well done and enjoyable. There are some points that are contrived and out of place that bear mentioning. First and foremost - Natalie Portman, despite being beautiful, has no on screen chemistry with Chris Hemsworth. It is just as absent as it was with Hayden Christensen in Star Wars. In fact, the only movie I saw her in where she had chemistry with a co-star was with Ashton Kutcher of all people. I am beginning to question her acting ability. She had more chemistry with Mila Kunis in Black Swan than she



Picture Credit: Marvel Comics

does with heart throb Thor.

It is hard for me to get past the fact that the only woman with chemistry with Thor is Sif, played by Jaimie Alexander. Odin even tells this to Thor, and sitting in the audience I am nodding my head fervently. Dude, Sif is the one, why Natalie Portman? Flaw number two, Natalie Portman's whole purpose in the film is to absorb the evil goop that can destroy the universe and walk around a victim for the rest of the movie. In each movie, she has to be protected and saved.

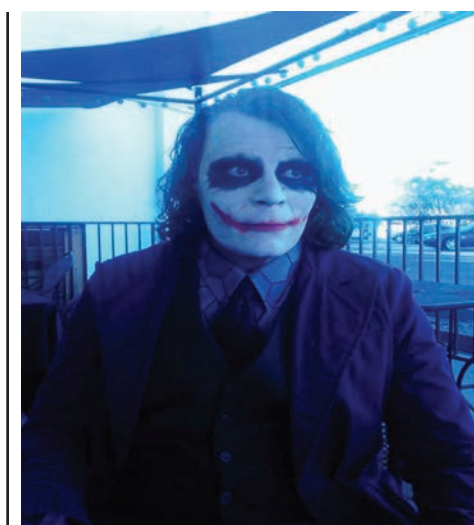
Next flaw - at the beginning she is blind dating and we are told that she has given up on science. At the end, we are told she never gave up looking for Thor and she is the one who found a warp hole, even though her friend did. Stellan Skarsgard who plays Erik Selvig discovers how to close the wormhole and save the world, but then strips naked and becomes insane for no reason. This could be a trick of Loki who had been in his head, but it is never explained. Once

again at the end of the movie, they say Natalie Portman figured this out, even though he did. Then he asks her how they work. No sense at all...

Luckily, the villain, Malekith, played by Christopher Eccleston (the man who reprised the role of Dr. Who in 2009) is excellent and helps save the film. In fact, the scenes with Thor, Loki and Malekith are all awesome and the rest of the film could have been deleted and it would be better for it. At least this time Thor's companions don't look like idiots in poor cosplay outfits. They do much better. You also don't have the stupid robot Destroyer as a foe; it is replaced with much more believable and sinister Dark Elves.

I would definitely recommend any Thor fans see the film. It is better than the first and I enjoyed watching it. I just wish they had chosen a different female lead, gave her something to do than just be a victim, and not had the obvious plot contradictions.

WOD



Congratulations to Chadd Nelson, winner of the LepreCon 2014 Costume Contest held at the Squash Blossom Horror Film Fest. Chadd receives a membership to Lep 2014 and a free night stay during Leprecon at MARRIOTT MESA HOTEL.

Chadd has been seen at other events this year in this fine tuned costume of The Joker. He says he had to grow his hair long enough to do this cosplay costume right. We gave Chadd extra points for "Going Green" with his hair. His makeup and costume takes hours to prepare. We appreciate his effort to come out to the Horror Fest 2014 in his full costume.







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IF IT BLEEDS

A new horror by Darryl Dawson



DarrylDawsonBooks.com
Nightshadeboutique.com/nightshade-publications/

MOVIE REVIEW: Ender's Game

Reviewed by Michael Bradley



Ender's Game is a movie based upon the eponymous Ender's Game novel by Orson Scott Card published in 1985. This was a strange movie to review because I thought it was well done, well acted and true to the novel, however, that is what makes the movie a flop. Ender's Game is hampered by the same problem that caused remakes of Red Dawn and other Cold War movies fail. Time has simply marched on and the geo-political situation is no longer what it was in 1985. For that reason, the message of the novel just does not match today's audience.

Ender Wiggin, played surprisingly well by Asa Butterfield, is a young boy selected to serve in the International Military. Very young people are selected because they are especially adept at playing video games and figuring out the mechanics of a game so they

can beat it. At the same time, they are moldable by instructors.

Prior to his recruitment, Earth had been attacked by Formics, a type of giant ant creature. Millions had died until one Earth pilot had dove his fighter into an invader kamikaze style. For some reason, that single ship being destroyed had ended the invasion. Now Earth leaders are seeing on their deep space probes that the Formics are building a vast fleet of warships on their home planet. The International Military is trying to train a special set of new cadets to fight this next onslaught, or even better, to stop them prior to reaching Earth.

When the novel was written, the themes were relevant to the sudden new video gaming culture and the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The policy of mutually assured

destruction (MAD) was that both sides could obliterate the other, thus there was a deterrent. In Ender's Game, the International Military is basically the United States while the Formics are the Soviet Union.

Ender's Game is part literally a game included as part of his training. As he excels at the game, he is promoted in rank and faces greater challenges. As part of his training, he is taught to be aggressive and merciless, but not so aggressive as to take excessive challenges. In the end, Ender becomes the Commander of the entire fleet and he and his team of teenagers are sent through training simulations of increasing difficulty, until facing the 'graduation final' test.

In the final test, the simulator has the entire fleet assault the home world of the Formics. Spoiler Alert - The final 'simulation' is actually real. Ender destroys the Formic home world. Ender then realizes that while playing his training game, the Formic were trying to communicate with him. There is one last hive queen alive on the planet where he launched the strike. He goes,

gathers up the queen larva and sets off by himself to find a new home world for the Formics.

The plot is basically, one side during the cold war gets the ability to make a pre-emptive strike and wipes the other out. Kids are used who are detached and view as just a game. Ender feels guilty and decides to help the other side rebuild. The problem is that few people under fifty will even get it. They make the Formics look nasty and you are happy they are destroyed. The whole angst felt by Ender looks stupid. If the movie was to work better, there would have had to have been more ambiguity in the Formics' intentions. Having already sneak attacked Earth, killed millions, and then building a much larger invasion force, wiping them out seemed pretty sensible.

In summary, the acting is good, the special effects are good, the writing is linear and predictable, and the ending makes no sense to people who don't get the old cold war tie-in. As a result, most people will skip this film, and you probably should as well.

WOD

The Top Book News and Events for the Upcoming Week

with PJ Hultstrand
WOD Media

BOOKish News
Saturday Edition

Email: editor@thewod.net



Upcoming Signings / Events at The Poisoned Pen

- January 18 - **Brad Taylor signs The Polaris Protocol at 2pm**
- January 21 - **Robert Knott-Robert B Parker's Bull River-7pm**
- January 22 - **Ian Rankin-Saints of the Shadow Bible at 7pm**
- January 29 - **Charles Todd signs Hunting Shadows 7pm**
- January 30 - **Michael Robertson signs Moriarty Returns a Letter at 7pm**
- February 15-**Dana Stabenow Launch Party-SilkenSong-5pm**
- February 20 - **JA Jance signs Moving Target - 7pm**
- June 10 - **Diana Gabaldon-Written in my Own Heart's Blood**

Discussions for January - Check website for book title

- January 11th - 10:30am - **Coffee and Crime Discussion Group**
- January 31st - 7pm - **Hardboiled Discussion Group**

Stop by the store or visit the web site for a large selection of signed mystery and science fiction and fantasy books.

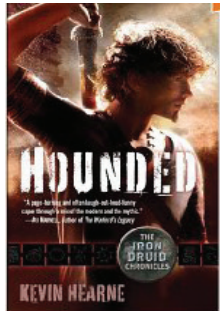
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In order to participate in the signing, we ask that customers purchase the author's new book from the Poisoned Pen.

WOD Bookshelf

HOUNDED: THE IRON DRUID

by Kevin Hearne

This is the first audio book I think I have experienced since the read-along stories I had as a child. I am still trying to work audio books into my life but having a quality story and an equally appropriate reader chosen is a great way to start.



Hounded is the first in the Iron Druid series by Kevin Hearne and I will say I was impressed with Hearne's style. The idea of the ancient immortal living in the modern world has been done many times, but when done well like in Hounded, it is a fun ride. That Hearne set the story in many Arizona locations that I have visited was an added joy. If you are an Arizonan, or visit, it would be worth it to drop in to some of the locations mentioned.

I really enjoyed the personalities Hearne offered to the mythical gods and creatures in the story. The motives of the characters followed the cannon of the mythos surrounding them and it made for a fun way to learn more about these beings. As a fan of the pantheons chosen by Hearne it is always refreshing to find an author who has done his research on the subject he is twisting into fiction.

Even readers who are not keen on who's who in mythology will appreciate the adventure and the wit woven in this first book and I look forward to more in the series.

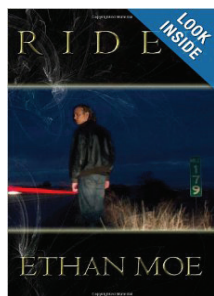
-- Reviewed by J.J.M. Czep
Author of *Blackstrap's Ecstasy and Troll*

RIDER

By Ethan Moe

Published by:

Strange Angel Press



An ancient order of witches who use sexual rituals, terrifying possessions by man-eating entities, and a plot that twists around the biblical story of Mary Magdalene and Jesus Christ. Rider is a fairly fast paced, supernatural jaunt, with a fair amount

of sex, violence, and curse words (not just of the magical sort).

The witches of Moe's universe are of an ancient order that trace back to Mary Magdalene, though not all of them are female they do all use sex in their spell casting, especially when it comes to binding the Riders. The hosts of the Riders might see this as a silver lining to their possession. As far as I could tell, these very attractive young witches take the task of binding very seriously. If you are not shy about reading sexually explicit scenes and not bothered by a lot of eff-bombs, Rider is a quick supernatural story that slips into a bit of intrigue here and there. There is also a hint at a the possible romantic entanglement of partnered police detectives.

This is Ethan Moe's first full novel, though the author bio does boast of more award winning reads in short fiction. I am curious to read some of Moe's other works to better understand his style.

-- Reviewed by J.J.M. Czep
Author of *Blackstrap's Ecstasy and Troll*

STORM WARRIOR (2013)

By Dani Harper

Montlake Romance,
ISBN: 9781477805947,
trade pb, 287 pages.

This is not just another paranormal/shapeshifter romance. This one has some substance and a hero and heroine who are smart, mentally stable (sometimes too much so!) and who deserve a happy-ever-after. Before the Fae cursed him, he was a Welshman, captured and made a very successful Roman gladiator; but Rhys has since been their plaything for 2,000 years acting as a Grim, a hound who heralds death. They aren't ready to give him up when veterinarian, Morgan, breaks his curse by freely offering him food and shelter. Freed from his hound shape and returned to human form, he is temporarily incarcerated when Morgan can't figure out how a naked man replaced her beloved black mastiff



and calls the police. But the bond has been forged, and Morgan and Rhys have several battles, both physical and emotional, to win before the end and the Fae are known to cheat. Secondary characters are fun, especially Leo, Ranyon and Fred. This is the first in The Grim series, so we can hope to see more of our new friends in the upcoming volumes. Storm Bound, volume two is the story of Aidan, a blacksmith also under a Fae curse.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman
Adult Services Lead Librarian, Prescott Public Library - www.prescottlibrary.info

THE ALCHEMIST OF SOULS (2012)

By Anne Lyle

ISBN: 978-0-85766-214-9,
pb, 518 pages.

Marr is best known for her Young Adult novels and this feels more like that level than an adult novel but I still liked it. I can't tell if it is more like Stephen King's The Gunslinger or more like Philip Jose Farmer's Riverworld because there is a little of both in there. Stranded on an alien world and unable to stay dead (mostly) this group of killers work to bring good into a world where the natives don't like them, the leader of the vampire-like native species gives them their blood in order to keep an alliance and the unknown-to-them human who brought them there has his own agenda. It's a fast read and a good ending; although it seems to be a stand-alone with no sequel needed. I picked this up because I like her YA novels and wanted to see how she handles an adult one - I'll be reading more of her writing - YA or adult.

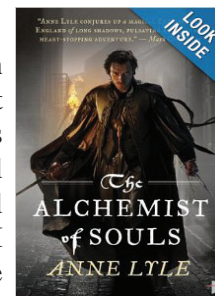
-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

MISERERE: AN AUTUMN TALE (2011)

By Teresa Frohock

ISBN: 978-1-59780-289-5,
trade pb, 280 pages.

Nightshade Books is another small press that has some great authors. I found this book mentioned on Tor.com's blog Under the Radar, where they discuss great books that the editors thought were underappreciated. I had read this one when it first came



out and felt that by their mentioning it, it demanded I re-read and re-appreciate it. Set in the year 5873 in an alternate medieval Europe (Woerld), themes of family, love and sacrifice are juxtaposed with demons, exorcism and the opening of the Gates of Hell. When a portal from their world to ours is opened to bring through a sacrifice, exorcist Lucian rescues a confused young Earth girl who may have his same gift, and tries to discover what happened. Lucian finds his fight is personal as his betrayed lover may be on his side; but his sister, Catarina, definitely is not. The world-building is complex and the characters' motives are realistic and well-developed. The action is enhanced and supported by the tight and focused philosophical digressions concerning heaven, hell, demons, family and what constitutes betrayal and forgiveness. I was sorry to hear the second one has no publisher yet, as I was looking forward to reading more adventures set in this world.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman - www.prescottlibrary.info

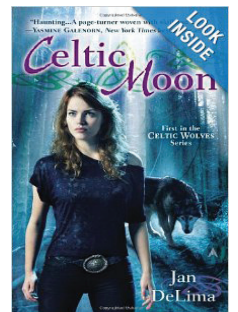
CELTIC MOON (2013)

By Jan DeLima

Ace Fantasy, ISBN: 9780425266205,
pb, 281 pages w/11 pages of glossary.

Sophie and her son Joshua have been on the run since before his birth, but when Joshua starts showing signs of the same traits as his shape-shifter father, Sophie calls Dylan to see if the change could be life-threatening. The Alpha, Dylan, wants his family back and will do anything to make that happen, but tense shifter politics could scare her away. Thankfully, Sophie is no longer the naive, scared girl she was when they first met and hunky, teen Joshua is no pushover either. Neither one will take any chances with this meeting; they're ready to run if it becomes necessary. Secondary characters are well-developed and the politics are critical to the plot resolution. Sophie's Native American heritage blends well with the Celtic mythology and gives depth to what might otherwise just be another shape-shifter romance. This is the first in the Celtic Wolves series.

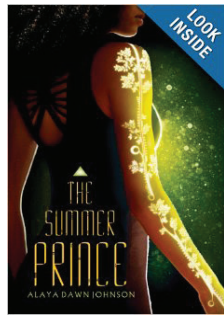
-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman
Prescott Public Library - www.prescottlibrary.info



THE SUMMER PRINCE (2013)

By Alaya Dawn Johnson

Arthur A. Levine Books, ISBN: 9780545417792, hb, 289 pages

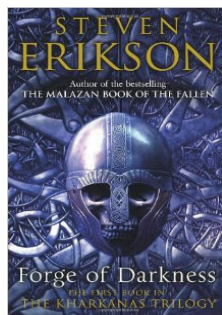


This reads like a teen book; but it isn't. The action is quick, the emotion is high and the characters feel that every action of theirs affects the world. In this case, it mostly does. The main character is June, a street artist in a dystopian Brazil, where tech trade is limited by the Council. Her counterpart is the new Summer King, Enki, also an artist and a hidden revolutionary. But the Summer King always dies at the start of winter so their revolution has to be something to remember. It was hard to get into the character as I kept remembering the other character, June, from the book Legend by Marie Lu and it was confusing until I got into this book and could tell the characters apart. I liked it and it did bring something new to the Summer King mythos, but it still should have been a teen book.

-- Reviewed by: *Normalene Zeeman*

FORGE OF DARKNESS (Book One of the Kharkanas Trilogy)

by Steven Erikson



Steven Erikson is the #1 New York Times Bestselling author of the Malazan Book of the Fallen. This new series, the Kharkanas Trilogy, is published by Tor Books and comes with an impressive cover on the hardcover edition. As I started to read it, my hopes were high, given the preceding information. As I finished the first twenty-three pages I was really excited by the vivid story telling and awesome prose.

Then things went south quickly. The writing and the prose continued to be top rate, but the story devolves into one scene after another introducing characters from different areas of the fantasy map included in the front of the book. I should have been tipped off that having several maps, genealogies and lists of characters in the front of the book, instead of at the back as an Appendix, was a grand clue to the confusing nature of the novel.

You are quickly plunged into learning over thirty locations and fifteen separate factions of characters. There are 83, yes 83, major characters introduced, sometimes along with deep back stories, lineages and former allies and enemies. Names like Hish Tulla, Sukul Ankhadu, Silchas Ruin, Nerys Drukorlat, Vatha Urusander, Hallyd Bahann and Kagamandra Tulus are examples of these characters monikers.

Book one - in hardcover no less, rambles in very fine print single-spaced for 662 pages not including the charts, name lists, lists of major and minor houses and so forth. Trying to bull my way through reading this was like trying to watch every episode of the Game of Thrones and read the books then take a quiz on everything that happened. I was literally reading and

re-reading sections, bookmarking the front references and trying to figure out who was who and where as I tried to understand the narrative.

The first group and location lasted for twenty-three pages and really was interesting. Unfortunately, after that, people and scenes lasted shorter and shorter, sometimes a few paragraphs, sometimes a few pages, each setting up more and more intrigue and subplots until your head threatens to explode. It was more like reading an uncondensed history of the monarchs of Europe throughout the entire Middle Ages than a fantasy adventure worthy of a trilogy which could easily top 2,000 pages in hard cover and up to 5,000 in paperback.

I love complex and intriguing tales, but the Forge of Darkness tries to do way too much too soon. Only with a brain download like Neo gets in The Matrix could one absorb and follow this storyline without developing a headache. As a result, unless you wish to set aside several months to 'study' this book, which is only the first of three to tell the story, I would strongly suggest you look for a more readable fantasy novel.

-- Reviewed by *Michael Bradley*

Author of *The Travelers' Club and The Ghost Ship, Fire & Ash, Twisted History, and Twisted Nightmares*
Web Blog: <http://mbtimetraveler.com>

THE PHOENIX KEY

By Lauren K. Hickey



The Phoenix Key is indie-published by fifteen year old author Lauren K. Hickey through Author House. The story has interesting concepts of humans and elves and that have fought a war in the distant past but have lost contact. Dragons live between the two and act as paired friends to the elves. Through an attack on a human caravan, a teenage human comes to find and meet the elves and one their dragons. After a brief stay, they take him back to his human homeland.

This meeting of young teenagers who get along as well as fellow high school students in our modern day and use the same language as now is contrasted with the adults who naturally want to start a war again. The dragons are concerned that both the causes and solutions to the early war are locked behind a strange door that only the Phoenix Key will open. As expected, the new young friends together hold the secret to opening the door.

Unfortunately, though this young writer shows obvious promise, the book is poorly written. As an example, each time a new person is encountered, there is an awkward hello back and forth, followed by a paragraph describing the person by height, weight and other characteristics like a police description. The conversation is modern and the pace is very slow. There does not seem to be much character development as the teenagers, hard to distinguish by their actions or speech, wander about in a linear fashion from start to finish.

This novel is a good example of how a good story by a new author could really benefit from professional editing. The cover of the book equally suffers, looking like a hand drawn school picture for the refrigerator with an uncomplimentary background that makes the

small black lettering barely discernible.

Given the age of the author I was somewhat hesitant to point out all these flaws as they clearly show talent and should be encouraged to continue their dream of being an author. Still, there is no way I can recommend this novel to others. Let this one pass by and let's hope more support is given to this new author in future publications.

-- Reviewed by *Michael Bradley*

Author of *The Travelers' Club and The Ghost Ship, Fire & Ash, Twisted History, and Twisted Nightmares*
Web Blog: <http://mbtimetraveler.com>

RAPTURE'S EDGE (2013)

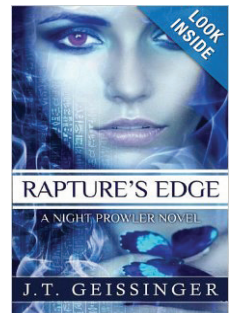
By J.T. Geissinger

Montlake Romance, ISBN: 9781611099133, trade pb, 425 pages.

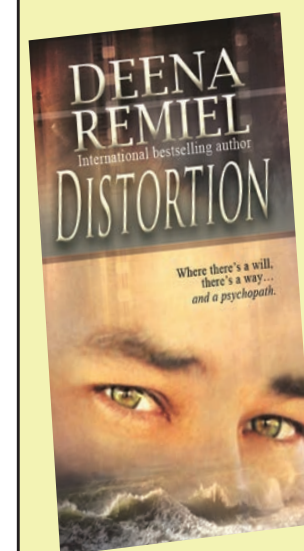
Third in the Night Prowler series, this is the story of Eliana and one of the guardians, Demetrios. We met them in the previous book but their story is fully developed here. Eliana is the Princess in every story, coddled and protected until her father (the crazy evil mastermind behind the group trying to exterminate the other Ikati) is killed by another of the guardians. She's now a high-end art thief who temporarily can't shift because she's been shot trying to feed her crazy brother's need for money to fund his continuing quest to control the world. But that stunt gets her in the news and Demetrios comes looking for her, just ahead of The Hunt, hired killers sent to make a "naked woman in an art gallery after hours" story go away - permanently. Lots of action and the characters are well developed. It reminds me of the first few Dragon shifter stories by Shana Abe and I loved those, so I love these also.

-- Reviewed by: *Normalene Zeeman*

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DISTORTION
by Deena Remiel

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<http://www.deenariemel.com>

IRONSKIN (2012)

By Tina Connolly

Tom Doherty, hb, 302 pages

ISBN: 980765330698,



This was an excellent Steampunk-in-Faerie retelling of Jane Eyre. Jane is Jane Eliot, victim of a Fae bomb attack which left half her face radiating RAGE until she learns to hold it in by covering it up with an iron mask. No one wants to hire an ironskin, so when Mr. Rochart wants a governess for his young daughter Dorie, she applies and gets hired. Jane (of course) travels to a crumbling alternate-English mansion near a Fae-haunted wood. Dorie's curse is that she is a telekinetic - not because of a bomb, but because she was born half-Fae and the story behind that was awesomely handled. The story from there wanders a little away from the regular Jane Eyre story, but this is a great variation and I hope you love it as much as I did. This is another author for my favorites list.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

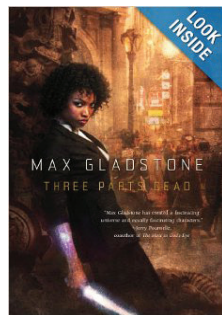
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THREE PARTS DEAD (2012)

by Max Gladstone

Tom Doherty, hb, 333 pages

ISBN: 980765333100



Immediately after graduation, Tara is literally bounced out of necromancer school, which is a problem because the Hidden School is in the clouds and the fall is only nonfatal because she was a very good student. But now finding a job after punching out her jerk of a professor is more than difficult. When the current reigning God, Kos Everburning, dies in Alt Coulomb, the prestigious necromantic firm of Kelethes, Albrecht, and Ao hire her (on probation) to assist in the investigation. The story has the dark flavor of P.C. Hodgell's, Godstalker Chronicles but with a different religion at the base. The characters are unique (there are good and evil gargoyles and a chain-smoking priestly acolyte), the magic is original, the mystery plot twists are unusual and the story is so much better for it. The second one, Two Serpents Rise, is out already so I had to reread this one before starting the new one, because I love these characters and can't wait to find out more.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

- www.prescottlibrary.info

ACROSS A STAR-SWEPT SEA (2013)

by Diana Peterfreund

Balzer & Bray,

ISBN: 9800620615,

hb, 449 pages



Written in the style of The Scarlet Pimpernel (my favorite book), this adaptation continues the story started in 2012's For

Darkness Shows the Stars (which was an adaptation of Sense and Sensibility). Although these are YA books, they were still great and adults will love them too. The joy is in how the author adapts the story to a post-apocalyptic society, with the associated class distinctions. The hi-tech gadgets were very well integrated into the story so that you felt they were necessary to the plot. And the names cracked me up - Persis Blake is the 16-year-old heroine who masquerades as a gorgeous, empty-headed, Aristo fluff while secretly she is the feared Wild Poppy, rescuer of the oppressed; Justen Helo, the hunky, pampered, young scientist is trying to help his own people, but his discoveries are used for evil by his uncle. When the star-crossed lovers find each other, the sparks fly. It didn't even matter that I knew how it was going to end, I devoured this one in less than a day.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

- www.prescottlibrary.info

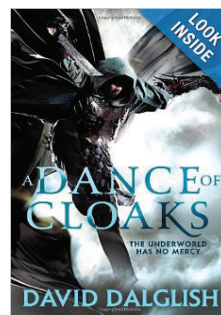
A DANCE OF CLOAKS (2013)

by David Dalgluish

Orbit books,

ISBN: 9780316242394,

trade pb, 448 pages.



It was nice that the author mentioned his influences of Martin, Weeks and Rowling, because those come through loud and clear; but the story stands on its own and as the first in a six-part series, you expect the complexity and intricacy required to support a story of that length. And it's there! A son tries to live up to his father's unrealistic expectations; but when he fails, he has to decide which direction his future should go: as follower, competitor or executioner. A large cast of supporting characters, each with their own story, competes for your attention and sometimes takes over from the main story; but they all lead back to our main character: 13-year-old, Aaron Felhorn, who recreates himself as Haern when his old life falls apart. Five more books to go to find out how it ends. The first three are already out, so that's good news.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

- www.prescottlibrary.info

CHARMING (2013)

by Elliott James

Orbit Books,

ISBN: 9780316253390,

trade pb, 366 pages.



On a twist of the Prince Charming story, John Charming trained from birth to be a Knight Templar, fighting evil in all its forms: be it werewolf, vampire or whatever. His blood having been tainted from his mother being bitten by a werewolf when she was pregnant, leaves the Knights Templar more than a little untrusting of his loyalty. So he's on the run from them and only his not-quite-werewolf-sharp senses and strength keep him ahead. But an unusual girl walks into his bar and all bets are off. With a main character similar to Atticus O'Sullivan from the Kevin Hearne Iron Druid novels, the snark and the attitude never let up even when lives are at stake. This is set up to be a series and there are several

short stories in ebook form you can read until the next novel comes out.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

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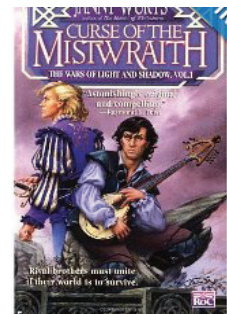
CURSE OF THE MISTWRAITH

by Janny Wurtz

Voyager,

ISBN: 9780586210697,

pb, 848 pages



This is another book reviewed in Tor.com's Under the Radar, which always reminds me of great books I have read. This epic fantasy series opener, originally published in 1994, starts the story of two charismatic royal brothers who, through a curse from another dimension, are set on a course of mutual destruction, not only of themselves, but of the world they are living in. This is after this curse has destroyed all the worlds behind them in their travels as they flee - always just a hair and sometimes less - ahead of the Curse of the Mistwraith. The atmosphere is similar to Ian Irvine's View from the Mirror series, with some of the darkness of Glen Cook's Black Company series, this is just different enough to keep me reading these huge books as soon as they get published. With portals similar to StarGates and a cool magic system, you think you know where the story is going, but Wurtz surprises you in every volume with that story's new direction, while steadily moving the larger story arc along. The history and mythology that grounds the series is both broad and deep, interesting and for such a long series, strangely underivative. Comprising 11 volumes upon completion, with nine currently in publication, this is epic fantasy at its most EPIC.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

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THE HEAVENS RISE

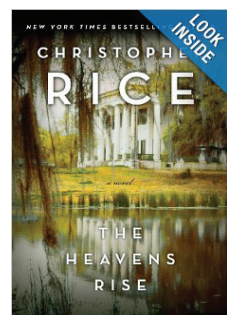
by Christopher Rice

Gallery Books

(Simon & Schuster)

ISBN: 9781476716084,

317 pages



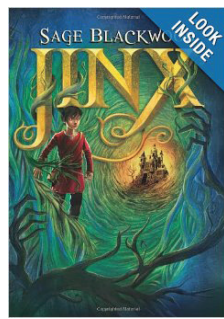
I didn't know Christopher Rice was Anne Rice's son. But who cares, he is a great writer and this book was pretty great. Two kids get covered in parasites that give them powers to control other people: one who wants revenge and one who just wants to protect their loved ones. It sounds like the plot of several other stories; but this one has great characters that you care about. Yes they are teen stereotypes: the gay outsider and third wheel, the hugely muscled jock who loves the beautiful popular rich girl; but somehow you really care. The story goes places you expect but in ways you don't expect and that was a really nice surprise. This is a really quick read and the ending was awesome, but you can't skip any pages or you won't get the full experience.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

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JINX

by Sage Blackwood
Harper, ISBN: 9780062129901,
hb, 360 pages

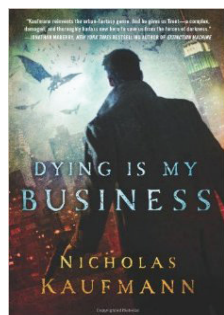


Yes, this is a fantasy book for children, but it is sufficiently sophisticated that adults might like it too. Taken to the forest of Urwald to be abandoned by his stepfather, Jinx is rescued by the wizard, Simon Magus, from certain death at the hand or paw of trolls, werewolves or the evil Bonemaster. Jinx finds his new life as a servant much more fulfilling, even if it only means his stomach is filled more often. But Jinx has a gift; he can see colorful clouds over each person that he learns may indicate their emotions. Simon doesn't believe that Jinx can really see emotions, but when Sophie, Simon's sometimes-wife, notices that Jinx can't read, she forces Simon to take Jinx as his paid (one penny per year) apprentice and teach him reading and some magic and Jinx's gift proves useful. Just when you start to think you know where the story is going, Simon's nemesis, Bonemaster, enters the story along with two other children, Elfwyn and Reven. Both children are cursed and they travel through the Urwald with Jinx to find answers to their problems. The secondary adult characters of Sophie, Bonemaster and Dame Glammer are the adults that bring the most philosophical questions for the children to answer: is death the worst thing that can happen, is taking someone's magic to save their life bad, is stealing information to share it with the world bad or good? These are questions that even adults have trouble with and while this is a children's book, the answers are not easy to discover and the children and the adults grow as they search for direction. The history and culture of the area is important in that it sets the stage for some of the problems that Jinx and Simon have to overcome. This is Blackwood's first fantasy novel and was selected as a Best Book of 2013 by Kirkus, Booklist, School Library Journal, and Amazon.com. The sequel, Jinx's Magic, is due out in January of 2014.

-- Reviewed by: **Normalene Zeeman**
Adult Services Lead Librarian, Prescott Public Library - www.prescottlibrary.info

DYING IS MY BUSINESS

by Nicholas Kaufman
Orbit books,
St. Martin's Griffin,
ISBN: 9781250036100,
369 pages



With gargoyles on the front cover, how could I not love this book? It starts out with our amnesiac hitman/go-to-guy coming back from the dead, immediately and fully healed from the bullet wounds that killed him, and once again finding his killer sucked dry of life essence by whatever force brings him back. It starts out similar to the (absolutely awesome) Amber series by

Roger Zelazney with an amnesiac, but still snarky, protagonist; but immediately veers off into its own thing with gargoyles, crime syndicates, cool magic, a great mythology not from this earth, his nine previous deaths and recoveries - and GARGOYLES. When his current target offers to save him and help him recover his memories, he thinks he can change his life - but bad decisions have a way of living on and his do - with a vengeance. The author has been nominated for the Bram Stoker Award, usually a good indication that I'm going to love the book, but I kept thinking he would have trouble wrapping this storyline up in one volume and the closer I got to the end the more I thought that. Then, two pages from the end, you get the most awesome twist, and you are thrilled that there is going to be another one because you are totally, absolutely on the edge of your seat. Don't read ahead, it will spoil the whole story!

-- Reviewed by: **Normalene Zeeman**
- www.prescottlibrary.info

THE RED QUEEN DIES

by Frankie Y. Bailey
Minotaur Books
(Thomas Dunne),
ISBN: 9780312641757,
hb, 290 pages.



Set in an Albany, NY of 2019, the mystery starts with three murdered women who, initially, have nothing in common. Police Detective Hannah McCabe gets pressure to solve the case quickly when the third woman is Tony-Award-winning actress and tentative author, Vivian Jessup, also known as the Red Queen for her parts in various Alice-themed plays. Bailey doesn't use as much future tech as you find in J.D. Robb's Eve Dallas series, but the mystery makes up for that. The police know that something has to connect these three women, but finding that needle in a haystack and then using it to sew together a tight case, creates some interesting wrinkles. Making this more difficult is a new drug on the street that erases traumatic memories so that star witnesses no longer remember what they were witness to; although this is not used to its fullest extent, it does create some interesting obstacles in solving cases. If you like this interesting take on law enforcement tools, try Seth Patrick's Reviver where the police use necromancers to get testimony from the dead. Character development is good and the plot keeps getting more involved as you learn more about the case. There are a number of unresolved non-plot-related loose ends at the end of the book, but since the blurb at the beginning states this is a new series, I expect we'll see more of this character and I am looking forward to that.

-- Reviewed by: **Normalene Zeeman**

LAST TO RISE (2013)

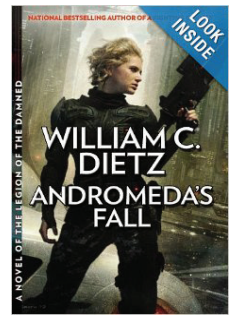
by Francis Knight
Orbit Books (Hachette Book Group), ISBN:
9780316217743,
Trade pb, 346 pages

This is the third in the series about pain-mage Rojan Dizon and the vertical city of Mahala. The city is under siege by the invading Storad, the few remaining and mostly-untrained mages are unable to supply enough Glow to keep the city in working order, and Dijon's brother, Archdeacon Perak, is lost as to how to save the city as it seems only a miracle will do the job. But that is Rojan's stock-in-trade and the miracle that he pulls off is both massive and heartbreaking at the same time. This is another of those books where it seems no one wins at the end; but getting there was a total rush. The whole series has been very dark and grim with only a few glimpses of the lighter side of Mahala, but as with Janine Cross's dark and more adult-themed Dragon Venom series and its tormented main character, life is not always a box of chocolates and the hell the main character goes through shows his or her character off to its best or worst as they strive to overcome what seems insurmountable. I can't wait to see what Mrs. Knight will write for us next.

-- Reviewed by: **Normalene Zeeman**

ANDROMEDA'S FALL

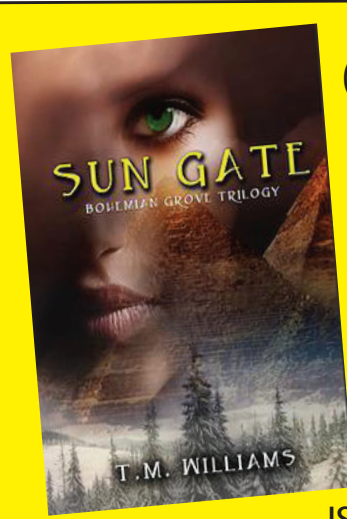
by William C. Dietz
Ace Books, ISBN: 98025256251, hb,
340 pages



It's difficult to not measure every military-in-space story with a female protagonist against the Honor Harrington series by David Weber, but the Andromeda McKee stories set in Dietz's Legion of the Damned universe are pretty awesome for character development and military accuracy within the bounds of it being science fiction. Lady Cat Carletto barely escapes with her life when her sister stages a violent and bloody coup and takes over the empire. No place is safe - but the military might be big enough to hide her for a time, while she tries stay alive long enough to plan her own coup. Becoming the smart and tough Andromeda McKee is a start and learning to kill quickly and well is the next step; fortunately she learns fast and makes some friends along the way. I liked this enough to get the second one, Andromeda's Choice which is already available and I'll be reading the rest of the series as soon as I can grab them.

-- Reviewed by: **Normalene Zeeman**

WOD



Sun Gate
(Bohemian Grove #2)

Sun Gate is the second book in the Bohemian Grove Trilogy.

Available
August 2013
ISBN-68-3459876038524

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

PRESS RELEASES FROM PHOENIX COMICON

PATRICK ROTHFUSS TO JOIN PHXCC 2014

Patrick Rothfuss is an American fantasy writer best known for the series *The Kingkiller Chronicle*.

Marketing Director Jillian Squires says that, "We are very please to welcome Patrick Rothfuss and his fans to Phoenix Comicon 2014."

In 2007, Rothfuss published *The Name of the Wind*, which is the first part of the projected three-part *The Kingkiller Chronicle* series. The second part of the series, *The Wise Man's Fear* was published in 2011. *The Name of the Wind* was name one of the "Best Books of the Year" for Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror in 2007 by Publishers Weekly. Rothfuss has also been a #1 *The New York Times* Best Seller as well.

In addition to writing, Rothfuss has also been a college lecturer at his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. The third part of *The Kingkiller Chronicle*, *The Doors of Stone* is currently in progress now.

MARK BAGLEY TO JOIN PHXCC 2014

Mark Bagley is an American comic book artist known for his work with popular Marvel Comics and DC Comics titles.

"We are very excited to welcome Mark Bagley and his years of comic book artist experience to Phoenix Comicon 2014," says Convention Director Matt Sorberg.

Bagley got his start in the comics industry in 1983 after finishing first place at the Marvel Try-out Book competition. After some work with Marvel, he was assigned to the new teenage superhero series, *New Warriors* in 1990. From there, Bagley became penciller for Spider-Man's flagship title, *The Amazing Spider-Man*. He would go on to be considered the definitive Spider-Man artist of the mid-1990's.

In 2000, Bagley was assigned to *Ultimate Spider-Man* and would enjoy the longest continuous run of any creative team on a mainstream Marvel superhero comic. This would help him earn recognition in *Wizard Magazine's* top ten artists of the 00's. In 2008, Bagley signed an exclusive deal with DC Comics and worked on notable titles *Batman* and *Justice League of America*. Bagley is currently back at Marvel Comics and has taken over penciling duties on *Fantastic Four*.

DON ROSA TO JOIN PHXCC 2014

Don Rosa is an American comic book writer and illustrator known for his stories about Scrooge McDuck, Donald Duck and other Disney characters..

"We are super happy to welcome Don Rosa to Phoenix Comicon 2014," says Marketing Director Jillian Squires.

Rosa's career started in 1969 while still college when he won an award as "best political cartoonist in the nation in a college paper." After working for various newspapers for a number of years, he discovered a Gladstone Publishing comic book in 1986. It was the first American comic book that contained Disney characters since the 1970s. Always interested in Disney characters, Rosa drew his first Donald Duck story, *Son of the Sun*. *Son of the Sun*, Rosa's first professional comic story was nominated for a Harvey Award for "Best Story of the Year."

In 1991, Rosa started creating *The Life and Times of Scrooge McDuck*, a 12 chapter story about his favorite character. The series was a success, and in 1995 he won an Eisner Award for best continuing series. Rosa is currently happily retired.

MARK SHEPPARD TO JOIN PHXCC 2014

Mark Sheppard is is an English actor and musician best known for his roles in the TV series' *Supernatural*, *Battlestar Galactica* and *Firefly*..

"We are very excited to welcome Mark Sheppard and his extensive acting experience to Phoenix Comicon 2014," says Convention Director Matt Sorberg.

Sheppard became a professional musician at age 15 and enjoyed many years as a recording and touring artist. He recorded albums for many groups throughout Europe and eventually moved to the United States. After some Stage work, Sheppard began his career in Television. His notable roles include the demon Crowley on *Supernatural*, lawyer Romo Lampkin on the *Battlestar Galactica* reboot, Interpol investigator James Sterling on *Leverage* and small-time crime lord Badger on Joss Whedon's *Firefly*.

For film work, Sheppard has appeared in notable movies, *In the Name of the Father*, *Unstoppable* and *Megalodon*. Currently, you will still continue to see Sheppard on *Supernatural*. His latest movie, *Sons of Liberty* is currently in post-production as well.

Mike Baron, Dennis Calero, Katie Cook, Gene Ha, Michael Golden, Konstantin Komardin, Tony Moore, James O'Barr, Wendy and Richard Pini, Chris Roberson and Renee Witterstaetter to Join PHXCC 2014 Phoenix Comicon is proud to announce that comic book artists and writers Mike Baron, Dennis Calero, Katie Cook, Gene Ha, Michael Golden, Konstantin Komardin, Tony Moore, James O'Barr, Wendy and Richard Pini, Chris Roberson and Renee Witterstaetter will be attending Comicon 2014.

Marketing Director Jillian Squires says that, "It is a goal to continue bringing new comics guests year-after-year and we are very happy with this group for Phoenix Comicon 2014."

Mike Baron is the creator of comic books *Badger* and *Nexus*. Published in 1981, *Nexus*, a superhero and science fiction genre comic book earned Baron two Eisner Awards and with penciler Steve Rude, six total Eisner Awards for their work on *Nexus*. Baron had also responsible for *The Badger*, *Ginger Fox*, *Spyke*, *Feud*, and many other comic book titles.

Dennis Calero is an American comic book artist and illustrator, known for his work on titles *X-Factor*, *Legion of Superheroes* and *Kolchak*. During his time working on Marvel Comics' *X-Factor*, the title was nominated for the Harvey Award for Best New Series in 2006. In 2009 Dennis Calero received an honorable mention from the Society of Illustrators West for his work on *X-Men Noir*. Recently, Calero also begun illustrating a webcomic, *The Little Green God of Agony* for author Stephen King in the 2011 anthology, *A Book of Horrors*.

Katie Cook is an American comic artist and writer who is best know for her writing for *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*. Cook has worked on licensed properties for DC and Marvel Comics and is also known for her webcomic, *Gronk*. She acted as writer behind issues \$1-4 of the bestselling *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic* comic.

Gene Ha is an American comics artist and writer best known for his work on books such as *Top 10* and *Top 10: The Forty-Niners*. In 1999, Ha began illustrating *Top Ten* and would draw the series; twelve issues, which ran until 2001. In 1994, he was awarded the Russ Manning Most Promising Newcomer Award

and has also won four Eisner Awards in 2000, 2001, 2006 and 2008.

Michael Golden is an American comic book artist and writer best known for his work on Marvel Comics' *The Micronauts*. While his career started in 1977 working for DC Comics on titles *Mister Miracle* and *Batman Family*, Golden's is widely known for his work with Marvel Comics in 1978's *Micronauts*. Other notable titles he has work on at Marvel include *Doctor Strange*, *Howard the Duck* and *Marvel Fanfare*. In the 2000s, Golden would return to DC Comics and draw covers for *Superman: The Man of Steel*, *Vigilante* and others.

Tony Moore is an American comic book artist, whose work consists of notable horror and science fiction such as *Fear Agent*, *The Exterminators* and *The Walking Dead*. For his work on the first six issues of *The Walking Dead*, Moore was nominated for two Eisner Awards in 2004 and 2005.

Konstantin Komardin is an award-winning Russian sequential artist, graphic artist and animator known for his story, *Siberian Dreams*. His other works includes comics *Agent Z*, *Sit-o-city*, *Gate of Alice*, and *Mechanics of Senses*. He has also published *Veles*, *Hacker*, *Max Cooler*, *Moulin Rouge* and *Timof* for BD magazines. In 2003, Konstantin was awarded the Grand Prize for *The Site of Polis* at the Moscow Comics Festival.

James O'Barr is an American graphic artist best known for the graphic novel series, *The Crow*. O'Barr started working on *The Crow* in 1981 and after several years, the first book in the series was finally released in 1993. The book was adapted into the successful film of the same name in 1994. O'Barr was the second American to be awarded the "Storyteller Award" by the International Comic Festival. Fans will be able to see O'Barr's new graphic novel, *Sundown*, which will be delivered through the digital medium of the iPhone and iPad.

Wendy and Richard Pini are a husband-and-wife team responsible for creating the well-known *Elfquest* series of comics, graphic novels and prose works. After Wendy and Richard married in 1972, she started a career as an illustrator, while he took a position at Boston's Charles Hayden Planetarium. In 1978, Wendy launched *Elfquest* with Richard as co-writer and editor. *Elfquest* won the 1979 Ed Aprill Award for Best Independent Comic. In addition to *Elfquest*, Wendy Pini also created two graphic novels based on the TV series *Beauty and the Beast* and has adapted the *Masque of the Red Death* into both a graphic novel and web comic in 2007.

Chris Roberson is a science fiction author known in the comics world for his miniseries, *Cinderella: From Fabletown With Love*, which was released in 2009. Roberson has been a three-time finalist for the World Fantasy Award and twice for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer. He won the Sidewise Award for Alternate History Long Form in 2009 for *The Dragon's Nine Sons*.

Renee Witterstaetter is a writer, editor and publisher known for her work on DC Comics' titles *Silver Surfer* and *Conan the Barbarian* as well as *Conan Saga* for Marvel Comics. She is also the author of "Dying for Action: The Life and Films of Jackie Chan," "The Art of the Barbarian" and "Nick Cardy: The Artist at War." Witterstaetter is currently the President of Little Eva Ink Publishing and Little Eva Ink Toys.