

**The****WOD****www.thewod.net****Volume 1, Issue 6; October 2013****The Voice of the Pop Culture Community**
Fan Conventions • Pop Culture • Books • Comics • Cosplay • Indie • Gaming • Science

Interview with Cosplayer Cassandra S. Kyle

Interview written by Michael Bradley

Cassandra S. Kyle is a local Arizonan that I met when she was modeling for a friend of mine who makes corsets. We had become acquainted on social media, but she most impressed me when she withstood the heat for me to take photo shots of her for free. The corset maker was unable to pay, so I compensated her for gas money and gave her a copy of my first book.

Cassandra proved to be one of the nicest people I have ever met, not only that day, but on subsequent occasions when we have been at events together, including the recent Phoenix ComiCon. Cassandra is making a name for herself in outfits such as Catwoman, Wolfsbane, Magpie the Fairy, and as the Steampunk Catwoman. She is the epitome of the cosplay girl who spends time creating her character, enjoys the dressing up and acting, and does it all for fun, not a living.

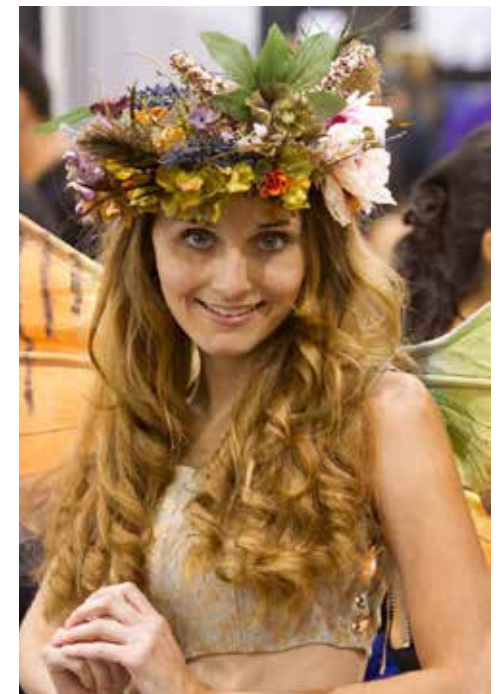
It is her vivacious spirit and love of cosplay that led me to select her as the first in a series of interviews with cosplayers, to bring you the person behind the outfits. The following is an abbreviated paraphrase of the interview.

MB - Cassandra, how did you get started in cosplay?

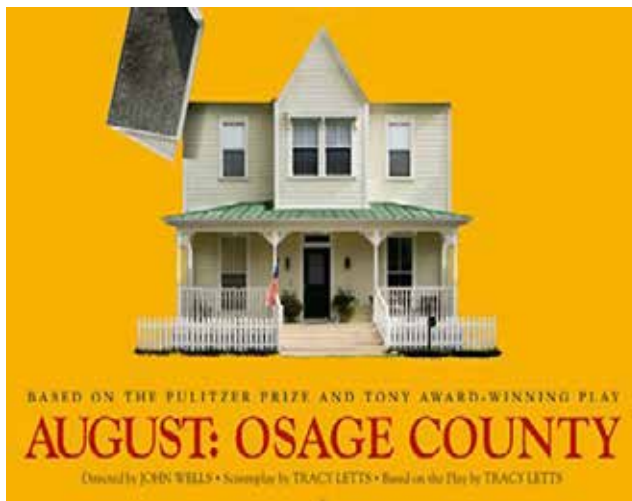
CK - I've gone to renaissance festivals since I was a small child. My father influenced me tremendously. Thanks to him, I have always been into fun things others considered nerdy. I started dressing up mainly at the ren fairs, then about two years ago is when I went to Phoenix ComiCon and started more cosplay.

MB - How do you choose what characters to dress as?

CK - I have a free spirit, so I like to dress as those types of characters. For me, it's picking the right outfit and really getting into the character. I like characters like Catwoman and fairies because they are free spirits like me and I can identify with them and act out their personalities.

MB - How often do you cosplay?*Photo Credits: Cassandra S. Kyle**Continued on Page 2*

LUCKY THIRTEENTH FOR THE SCOTTSDALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

By Hal C F Astell*Photo Credit: Smokehouse Pictures, The Weinstein Company*

With the searing heat of the Arizona summer finally fading away, it's almost comfortable to leave our air conditioning and venture out to see what's happening. Well, adventurous film fans have a few very different festivals to choose from.

Those with a more edgy taste will have been in Tucson in late September for the Arizona Underground Film Festival, which screens genre material, often delightfully outrageous. Outdoor types can head up to Flagstaff in early October for the tenth anniversary of the Flagstaff Mountain Film Festival, which focuses on 'cultural and outdoor-adventure' documentaries. That runs from the 9th to the 13th, and just before it, from the 4th to the 8th, is the Scottsdale International Film Festival, the place to go in Arizona for foreign film.

This is their 'lucky thirteenth' festival, having started out at the Harkins Camelview in 2001. Having outgrown that venue, they moved to the Harkins Shea

14 in 2011. Approximately 8,500 filmgoers enjoyed last year's event, the biggest thus far, but that number is expected to rise to a round 10,000 this year, aided by an increased number of days and films on the schedule.

Many film festivals include the word 'international' in their title, but it's almost never the focus. The Scottsdale International Film Festival boasts 55 films this year, from 31 different countries. Many filmmakers fly out from their homelands to present their pictures and give Q&A sessions; this year's special guests include filmmakers from Brazil, France and New Zealand, as well as closer to home in the USA.

In fact, the admirable focus on world cinema was entirely the point. I spoke with Amy Ettinger, the festival director and founder, about what prompted her to start up a film festival with such a deliberate niche. She told me how she came up with the idea far from Scottsdale. She was walking down the Champs-Élysées in Paris, the most beautiful avenue in the world, when she realized that she was surrounded by small theatres showing films to meet every taste imaginable. Providing that sort of diversity became a personal mission and looking at the sheer breadth of the cultural immersion on offer within this festival's schedule is breathtaking all on its own.

While there are major American films shot in the English language on offer too, it's the world cinema that attracts many festival goers. Where else in Arizona can you visit four or five utterly different cultures in a single day? No wonder that the festival's website highlights that many attendees follow up their most treasured discoveries on Scottsdale cinema screens by travelling to foreign climes to experience

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Rocky Horror Lives

by Matthew Yenkala*Magenta, Frank & Columbia Speechify*

More than forty years ago, during the sweltering London summer of 1973, Richard O'Brien's campy, sexy rock musical, The Rocky Horror Show, debuted to a full house in the attic of a tiny London theatre. Among those filling the sixty-odd seats on opening night was horror legend Vincent Price, who is said to have laughed through the entire production.

Despite that good omen, it's likely that none of those present that night--certainly none of its creators and performers--would have imagined that it would survive seven presidential administrations (and counting), and that in 2013, there would still be thousands of fans attending Rocky Horror productions on a weekly basis all over the world, nor that a hugely successful international Rocky Horror Conventions would be held for the most hardcore of those fans--most recently in Providence, Rhode Island, home to the RKO Army theatrical troupe, who specialize in live shadowcast performances of not only Rocky Horror, but Repo! The Genetic Opera, Dr. Horrible's Sing-A-Long-Blog, the Buffy The Vampire Slayer

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CK - Not as often as I would like to. I try to go at least every few weeks or per month to events. I don't do as much in the summer because it gets really hot, especially here in Arizona, to be walking around in a lot of make-up and spandex. I don't have air conditioning in my car right now, so that is a real problem.

MB - That is something that a lot of people don't realize. You obviously don't make a lot of money doing this or you would be able to fix the car?

CK - Yeah, I do it for the fun of playing the character and seeing all the cool people. I've met a lot of really good friends at events and we talk about our characters and our outfits and just have a great time. I've been lucky to get in at a discounted rate to some events and if I model some outfits I get them cheaper, but no, I spend money on this, I don't make money at it. I work a full-time job to pay the bills.

MB - You work with Justice League Arizona, tell me about that.

CK - They are a great group of people and we cosplay for events. Usually, we just do charity work, especially helping out kids. I really like children and that is one of the reasons I like to play fairy characters. The kids really enjoy when we show up and we are happy to help out.

MB - I see you did some photos with Twig the Fairy at the ren fair. Did you two team up for that event?

CK - No, I met her at some ren fairs and we became friends. I dress up as Magpie the Fairy and each event I gather a trinket to add to her belt. Magpie is kind of a scavenger and collector of tidbits. I love to spend time in character and see the wonder and the wide eyes of the children and know I brought a dream of theirs to reality. It's awesome to make their day like that. Twig and I share that same motivation.

MB - Any projects coming up?

CK - I'm working on a new fairy character that will be a Mud Fairy, so it will be pretty unique.

MB - I thought your Steampunk Catwoman at the Phoenix ComiCon was amazing. Do you feel nervous in a more revealing outfit like that, and do you feel security is sufficient at events?

CK - I am proud of that outfit. It was my own creation and took some planning to figure out what I was going to do with it. Sometimes I wear something a bit sexier like that to cons but nothing really that revealing. Still, I've had some problems with some creepy people that want to grope me or say disgusting things. Not a lot, but I would appreciate a bit more security around the cosplayers. It's got to where I pay extra money to park really close so I don't have to walk very far in costume to get to my car.

MB - Any advice for people just starting out with cosplay?

CK - Start small. Just get a few things together you like and pick characters that you enjoy. Don't feel like you have to have the very best outfit, it's really about enjoying it.

MB - Anyone in particular you would like to thank?

CK - Yes, my father first, for being such an inspiration to me. Thanks to all the other cosplayers who make events so enjoyable. Finally, I want to make sure and mention Gabrielle Donathan at Maise Designs Seamstress that puts together so many of the outfits for me and does such a fantastic job. Unfortunately, I'm not that good at sewing, so she is really a life saver for me.

You can hear the much more extensive and complete interview with Cassandra S. Kyle, Patti Hultstrand and Michael Bradley at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/kwodradio/2013/07/09/cosplay-corner-with-cassandra-s-kyle>



Photo Credit: Justice League of Arizona



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them in person. The festival ought to be sponsored by an airline!

Ettinger had experience running film festivals before this one, but also benefitted from being mentored by the Toronto International Film Festival, probably the most important film festival in North America, for four years. Scottsdale can't program the Oscar candidates that Toronto can, with its audience of 400,000 people, but it can play star studded films like Last Vegas and Mike Newell's new version of Great Expectations.

Last Vegas is the story of four men, best friends since childhood, who realize that they are growing old. In an attempt to relive their glory years, they descend on Las Vegas and hilarity, as they say, ensues. The thing is that these four are played by Robert de Niro, Morgan Freeman, Michael Douglas and Kevin Kline. That's a lot of talent to lead one picture! Great Expectations is a frequently told story, but Newell's version includes a cast that's a who's who of British talent, led by Ralph Fiennes as Magwitch.

I asked Ettinger which film she's most proud of programming this year and her immediate response was the closing night film, August: Osage County, a comedy drama starring Meryl Streep and Julia Roberts which premièred at Toronto earlier this month. Those are hardly minor names, but there are many other actors supporting them who are draws of their own. I'm sold by the inclusion of Chris Cooper and Margo Martindale, while the attention of others might be caught by Benedict Cumberbatch or Abigail Breslin.

Whoever draws you in, it's clear that the screening of this film is, in Ettinger's words, 'on so many different levels, a coup.'

She also highlighted Antarctica: A Year on Ice, a chronicle of life in the coldest place on Earth. Director Anthony Powell had to innovate to capture much of the continent, because movie cameras simply weren't designed to function in temperatures as cold as -75° Fahrenheit. He used car batteries to keep them running but still found that he had to take some shots blind as the LCD display had frozen entirely solid. This would seem to be a great starting place for the festival, as it's engaging, gorgeous and in the English language. Once you're in the theatre and hooked, following up with other, more exotic fare, is not going to seem like much of a chance.

The schedule of films is so varied that there's something for everyone. For my part, I'd be most drawn by a couple of documentaries and an Italian feature film. The latter is the enigmatic and sensual looking Il Futuro, featuring one of my favourite actors, Rutger Hauer, as an action movie star being scammed by a couple of teenagers. The documentaries, Lord Montagu and The Fantastic World of Juan Orol, are about two completely different people: Lord Montagu is one of the most interesting British peers and Juan Orol, a fascinating Mexican film director.

Montagu, a highly respected member of the House of Lords and founder of the National Motor Museum, is still most remembered for his conviction and imprisonment in 1954 for twelve months for a consensual homosexual encounter. Orol was an

enthusiastic filmmaker, once described in a left handed compliment as an 'involuntary surrealist'. Most inspired by the gangster movies shot by Warner Brothers in the thirties, he made many such films himself in Mexico. Unfortunately, he's less William A. Wellman, and more Edward D. Wood, Jr.

Tickets are selling strongly and some screenings have already sold out, including the opening night film, the Arizona première of Decoding Annie Parker, a documentary about the three time cancer survivor of the title. She will be at the event in person to answer questions, along with the film's director, Steven Bernstein.

Regular tickets run \$10, but there are many options to bulk up and save. Ettinger recommends buying online before 5pm on Thursday, 3rd October, when online ticket sales close. Buying online saves a couple of bucks per ticket.

The Scottsdale International Film Festival runs from Friday, 4th to Tuesday, 8th October, at the Harkins Shea 14, on the corner of Scottsdale Road and Shea Blvd. The film's website is <http://www.scottsdalefilmfestival.com/>.

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/>

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FEATURED FICTION: THE DRIFTER - PART THREE - A Sci-Fi Serial Story

By Michael Bradley

"My brain is not scrambled damn it!" Tony protested from his rescue pod, but the pod was gone. Instead he was strapped down on a bed being rolled along a sterile white corridor.

"You can understand if I wish to remain the judge of that." The peacekeeper smiled down at him while pushing him along.

Tony struggled against his restraints. "You're leading me to the procedure room aren't you? You're going to rearrange my neural patterns."

"Yes. All will be peaceful then and you won't need to be tied down."

"Look, there is no need for that. I know who I am now. I'm Dr. Tony Perez. You can let me go, I'm fine now."

"We know who you are even though you didn't just minutes ago." The man in white kept wheeling him along.

"Then why aren't you letting me go?"

"Well, I suppose it can't really hurt to tell you since we are going to wipe your recent memories. You see you murdered the Earth President yesterday and the voice recorder had you talking about destroying the technology that brought peace to the world. We should have realized that you and your lab associates never had the procedure done on yourselves. We are fixing that now."

"My lab associates? You're going to lobotomize us all?" Tony started to fight harder against the plastic straps holding him down, but they were too strong and

tight. "What about Monica Salazar?"

"Yes, your leading researcher especially. Look, you invented the process; you know it's not a lobotomy. Your brain will be fine; we just rearrange some thought process and erase some memories to get rid of all this anxiety, fear and violence. You'll be better soon."

"I don't want peace this way damn it!"

The Earth President looked over at Tony with raised eyebrows. "You made that clear last week at the meeting. You called in the whole cabinet and me for some emergency and told us you want to destroy the peace you spent a lifetime creating."

Tony felt nausea wash over him as he drifted into a new time. "Yes, that's right. We didn't create peace, we destroyed humanity. We took away conflict, striving, disappointment, regret, everything that makes us achieve."

"You got rid of hate, jealousy, violence and crime. Look, just settle down." The President made a course adjustment. "You were talking crazy about pills and time vortexes and things and you got everyone worked up. You'll be better after this vacation in Maine."

Tony noticed the sun shift in his side window. Looking down he saw the water moving away as they crossed back over New York City. "If we're going to Maine, how come we are headed back inland?"

The President turned to him. "Just relax, you know how these things go, they move us around for traffic patterns." Some sweat beaded on the man's forehead even though the cockpit was nice and cool.

"Where are we really going?" Tony felt pain shoot through his head like a knife. "You're not taking me

to Maine; you're going to take me to a Peace Center aren't you?"

"Tony look, stress is getting to you buddy. The rest of the world is at peace, now you can be too. It's what you've worked for and now you can share in it."

Tony looked around the cockpit. He felt his substance growing less substantial. He clicked off his safety belt and started turning switches and dials at random. Then he grabbed for the flaps and thrusters.

"Stop it you dumb bastard! I'm doing this for you. You're going to kill us both!"

Tony cut off the thrusters and put up the flaps. The jet stalled and started spinning rapidly in a downward flat spiral.

"You've killed us both Tony! Damn you!"

Tony remembered tomorrow, in the pod, then the Peace Center. "No my friend, I survive; only you die. I remember."

Monica Salazar grabbed his arm hard. "No, we both have to die. Remember your finger!"

"I killed the President Monica, I crashed our plane." Tony looked around the lab, bile in his mouth and his head pounding.

"No! You fly with him tomorrow. Not him! The bomb, you need to set off the bomb. Your finger!" Monica kissed him intimately. "We both agreed it has to be both of us that die. The cycles will get quicker. You have to remember where, when, who and why. Please Tony!"

Tony looked at her in confusion as she spun away into darkness and nausea.

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musical episode, "Once More With Feeling", the Rocky Horror spinoff Shock Treatment, and other cult classics.

For the tiny fraction of those reading this who may be unfamiliar: Rocky Horror is a pop culture pastiche extraordinaire. A sendup of old sci-fi and horror movies, 3-chord 50s-era rock & roll, comic books, muscleman ads, burlesque and kitsch--seen through the time-warped lens of the late 60s free-love and early 70s glam rock sensibilities. (Indeed, the London district in which it came to be is the same area to which the goth, glam, punk and rave subcultures can all trace their roots--which may be why Rocky still sits comfortably with all of them.)

The story is that of Brad and Janet--a just-engaged, clean-cut, all-American (in the Eisenhower-era sense) young couple, whom a flat tire on a wet night strand them at a gothic castle filled with human-looking aliens (and one human groupie--sort of an "alien hag") whose primary pursuit is that of sensual pleasure. The Master of the Castle--Dr. Frank-N-Furter--is a cross-dressing mad scientist bent on creating a monster--in the form of a perfect man to serve as his sexual slave. But Frank-N-Furter's lusts don't discriminate, and by the end of their time in the castle, both have tasted his forbidden fruit--leaving them profoundly and permanently changed.

While some have dismissed the story as shallow and contrived, there is a dark wit and darker heart lurking beneath Rocky's surface. Certainly, the characters are archetypes, while the story itself is one of the oldest, most primal and most universal in human collective consciousness: a tale of innocence lost. Viewed as a modern, albeit twisted, take on Hansel & Gretel or Babes in the Woods, Rocky Horror's extraordinary longevity--which has defied the attempts of countless commentators and even its own creators to explain--seems perhaps less shocking.

Certainly, something must account for its continuing appeal, and not just to those who were young when it was made. Attend any Rocky performance, and chances are you will find that much of the audience is not old enough to drink; many are not old enough to vote; some are not old enough to drive. We grow up, but somehow, Rocky stays young.

The Rocky Horror legacy is largely based on the 1975 film version starring then unknowns, Tim Curry (Frank-N-Furter), Susan Sarandon (Janet), Barry Bostwick (Brad), and singer Meat Loaf (Eddie). 20th Century Fox Films financed the low-budget adaptation of the play, featuring many of the original stage cast and directed by play director, Jim Sharman (with a screenplay by Sharman and Rocky Horror creator Richard O'Brien, who also plays the role of Riff Raff in the film). But initial test audiences--including in California and Phoenix--were not receptive, and the film was quickly pulled. Among the complaints of fans of the play was that it lacked the liveliness and humor it had on stage. But in those pre-internet, pre-home-video-days, studios had to find creative solutions to the problem of making their money back on such "failed" productions.

One thing that Fox's early research showed, though, was that even though only a few people showed up to the screenings, it tended to be the same people over and over. In a display of marketing brilliance, Fox placed the film on the midnight circuit--older, often run-down theaters in college or "arty" districts of suburban towns, where films like Reefer Madness, Todd Browning's Freaks, and the original Night of the Living Dead played to (often chemically altered) college students, film geeks, intellectuals, bikers, and

other social misfits.

Rocky dropped like a bomb into that culture in the best possible sense--it exploded. Something about it spoke to a generation of the aforementioned misfits. They showed up. They came back. They brought friends. Over and over. An official fan club was started, headed up in New York City by former seminary student Sal Piro. Sal's fellow fan, Dori Hartley, began dressing up in full Frank-N-Furter costume, makeup and wig. Soon, there was a full "floor show" of costumed performers "shadow casting" the film--literally acting it out in front of the screen, in-sync with the movie, creating a "double show". Meanwhile, other audience members would shout "callback" lines in response to the film's dialogue--which works perfectly, since the film literally seems like 100 minutes of setups without punchlines. And finally, "pre-show" rituals developed, that included going over theater rules, costume contests, "virgin sacrifice" (a good-natured hazing of those who have never seen the film with a live audience), and dancing the film's signature musical number--"The Time Warp".

Many of those participating had no idea that the



movie was based on a play--and that by their "audience participation" they were simply adding back the live element that was missing from the movie. Regardless, it worked--and it spread. And somehow, through a combination of word-of-mouth and spontaneous coincidental parallel development, the same rituals--dressing up, shouting at the screen, hazing virgins--seemed to spring up wherever Rocky was shown, all over the country. Mind you, this was a time without cell phone or YouTube--so this was a true grassroots phenomenon. (Rumors that this was a coordinated effort by parties at Fox are patently false--though they did try, and failed, something of the kind with the 1981 followup film, Shock Treatment.)

In the early 1980s, the movie Fame--which featured a high school girl with a Rocky Horror obsession--played endlessly on cable TV and provided a whole new generation of kids with a window onto Rocky--which was now often playing at the local suburban mall. (In 1980, there were over 200 prints in circulation; in 1990, it was still going strong at approximately 130.) The film's 1990 release on home video in the U.S. was thought to signal the death knell for the Rocky Horror subculture--because watching it at home is not the same as experiencing it live--but instead it simply allowed Fox to consolidate screenings to one theater per market, and make it an event/destination. And by the mid-90s, the internet served to bring the far-scattered Rocky Horror family together in a way it never had before, where fans from all over the country and the world could share stories, trade ideas and yes, occasionally squabble as well. (But what family doesn't have its difficulties?)

Throughout the years, Rocky went from being a slightly-suspect late-night pastime to a teenager's rite-of-passage, with parents and now even grandparents taking their youngsters to see it--often on or near

Halloween, which has become Rocky's unofficial holiday and birthday (though it actually debuted in London in August of 1975 and in the U.S. in September of that year). And certainly its continuing youth appeal can be at least in part attributed to the fact that for a film nearing forty years old, it is remarkably undated, thanks to immaculate production and wardrobe design--and of course, its blustery, rock & roll attitude.

To this day, the Rocky audience's makeup has remained fairly consistent: Goths, punks, geeks, freaks, gamers, ravers, ren-faire players, rockers, theater queens, costumers (it's been rightly called the original cosplay), and a healthy dose of GLBT youth--for whom Rocky has triggered countless millions of comings-out through the decades. But even for those who may not be gay, but simply who don't feel accepted, or feel like they have ever had a peer group or a place to belong, Rocky has become that safe haven--powerfully illustrated in Stephen Chbosky's 1999 novel, The Perks of Being a Wallflower and his 2012 screen adaptation (and considerably less powerfully in a 2010 episode of Glee). The theme of Rocky's central role in the lives of its many young fans is likely to be expanded upon in the upcoming fan documentary, Rocky Horror Saved My Life, launched by New Jersey Rocky legends Larry Viesel and Shawn Stutler--who aim to demonstrate just how far-reaching and genuinely life-saving Rocky's reach has been.

True, regular screenings now number under a hundred (though they spike around Halloween). True, the film's actors are getting older, and a few of them have already passed to the other side. And true, we live in an ever-changing world where technology, communication, and content barrage us from all directions at all times.

Yet somehow, Rocky Horror still remains with us, and probably will for the foreseeable future. Because no matter how much we may age, Rocky remains forever young. Amen.

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CONVENTION NEWS: ROC-CON

by Michael D'Ambrosio

A Chat With Alicia Lurye of AKL Productions

Over the last nine years, I've attended many conventions around the country. Some are older than time itself (well almost), like PhilCon, LunaCon and BaltiCon. Some started in the eighties and nineties with the sons and daughters of the convention clans. The most interesting ones that I've participated in are the recent ones that I've seen from their birth like RavenCon and Roc-Con.

I had the opportunity to speak with Alicia Lurye of AKL Productions to learn more about the energetic woman behind her string of successful conventions and craft shows and charity events. Roc-Con, a convention I have followed since its inception, was started by Alicia in 2011 and hers is a very interesting story. I first met Alicia at LunaCon when she was laying the groundwork for Roc-Con. She scouted the vendors and the participants in search of the best that she could assemble for a convention debut in Rochester at the Main Street Armory in 2011. A student of the Comicon model, she learned quickly what it takes to build a successful event and how to apply it. Before we get into what Alicia accomplished with the conventions, let's talk about her as a person.

Alicia was born and raised in Brooklyn and the Bronx, NY for most of her life, except for a short three years that she lived in the Harrisburg, Pa. From ages 12-15. . She carried a burning desire to entertain people and spread happiness. She was a part of the original shadow-cast group from the infamous Waverly Theatre in Greenwich Village and at the Graham Theatre in Brooklyn, portraying Columbia.

Alicia received a degree in broadcasting from SUNY Geneseo and has worked as a radio DJ for over 30 years. She has worked as a DJ in a number of music formats from Top 40 to Country, to the Hits of the Decades (60s, 70s and 80s) and everything in between. Having grown up listening to the great NY DJ's of those era's, Alicia's first love has always been radio.

Along with working in radio, Alicia opened "On-Hold Specialties" in 1989. This company provides "on hold" audio in place of silence or a radio on hold. The idea was new at the time but she kept at it and "On-Hold" Specialties is now in it's 25th year. After attending San Diego Comic Con in 2010, she realized that Rochester, NY had no fandom event. Response to the idea was so overwhelming in the local and fandom communities that RocCon was born.

Since Roc-Con started in 2011, Alicia has brought the RocCon model to New York's Hudson Valley and Harrisburg also under the name Roc-Con. The conventions start as a one day event and grow each year to a three day event for multi-genre topics and multi-fan interests. There is something for everyone at Roc-Con. I was surprised by her location selections as she aims for the unique whenever possible. An interesting example is The Main Street Armory, built in 1905, where a large cemetery was once located. The armory has its share of haunted stories as not all the bodies were relocated before that and several other neighboring buildings were erected. But that, in itself, is a story for another day. The Armory has also been featured on Ghost Hunters.

One of Alicia's main goals with each convention is to highlight the grass roots talent in an area as well as other talent from across the country, whether it be literary, film, or artistic in nature. This aspect is very important to her to and she'll do whatever she can to ensure that everyone remembers her events as something special. She does quite a bit of research when she plans an event including the optimum time, location and theme. Most of Alicia's help comes from volunteers at

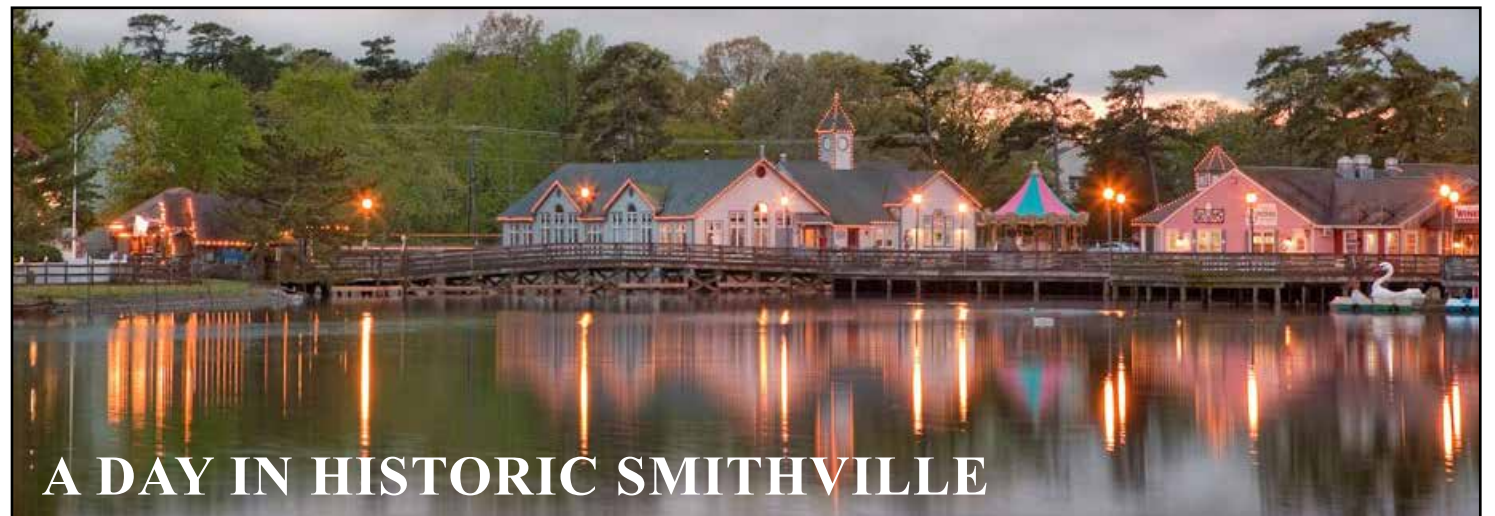


the events and I was impressed that they all spoke so highly of her. That doesn't always happen at a convention because the workload usually outweighs the help by quite a bit. This is just one of many reasons why I am really looking forward to returning to Roc-Con in Rochester on the weekend of September 20-22. The attendance has grown nicely from about fifteen hundred in 2011 to over twenty-five hundred last year and should easily surpass three thousand this year. If you reside, visit or vacation anywhere near Rochester that weekend, I strongly recommend you attend.

I mentioned the three Roc-Cons earlier, but there are many more events including

charity events that Alicia has created. Some that really pique my interest are the themed vineyard events throughout the upstate New York wine country. Mothers' Day on the Niagra Wine Trail, Summertime in the Vineyard at Palmer Vineyards, and The Christmas in July Craft Extravaganza at the Steamboat Inn and Resort are very impressive. Visit the Roc-Con website for a glimpse of Alicia's lineup of celebrities and authors at <http://www.roccon.net> at the upcoming convention in September. The exciting programming lineup has me excited for another great, unique convention. As I mentioned earlier, there is something for everyone.

WOD



A DAY IN HISTORIC SMITHVILLE

by Michael D'Ambrosio

On September 14th in Smithville, New Jersey, the second annual Authors on the Green commenced. What's so special about Smithville? Well, Smithville is an historic village consisting of unique shops, dining and lodging located next to a beautiful lake. Last year, I was one of their authors and I can't tell you how much fun it was. Not only was the authors' event run very well by its creator Wendy Birkbeck and well-attended by many very relaxed patrons, but the atmosphere was so festive that you couldn't help but have a good time. I can't wait to return there.

There is the Christmas Shoppe, the Bumble Bee Bake Shop, Paddle Boats on the Lake, Tomasello Winery and Gifts, the Smithville Train, the Village Sweet Shop and many, many others.

The Colonial Inn and The Barn at Smithville will take you back to simpler times in our history. The food was outstanding and the prices were so very reasonable. I can't say enough about it. So, if you don't go for Authors on the Green, go any time for a treat you won't forget.

For those of you not familiar with New Jersey, Smithville is a short distance from Atlantic City in Absecon. Spend a day at Smithville and a night or two on the boardwalk at AC and maybe even get lucky at the casinos as well. The Atlantic City International Airport is a short distance away as well for those of you who need wings to come aboard.

The official address is 615 E. Moss Mill Rd Smithville, NJ 08205 and their website is www.smithvillenj.com.

WOD



ARIZONA ARTIST ALLEY

ARTIST COLUMNIST - Alfred Trujillo

FLASH!! AH AHHH!!

Ok, now that we got that out of the way...I'm ready for this article.

Let's talk about commissions for a second. Pretend, if you will, that you have a favorite comic book/anime/cartoon/pop culture character. Now, the next logical step is to own memorabilia of that character. But that only goes so far. You will find that you are limited in selection and even if you do find something cool, it's mass produced and someone else owns the actual original. Now, if you are a true die-hard, you can get *FANFARE* an original art commission. YES! Your very own rendition of said character or maybe even your own creation to have and to hold forever and ever.

How do you go about getting commissions? Follow along with my easy step-by-step instructions. I make getting commissions fun!

Step ONE! Find an artist!

Step TWO! Contact the artist. You know, on their Facebook or their blog (DeviantArt, Twitter, etc. yeah the usual places).

Step THREE! Ask them to draw something original and awesome for you. Then you pay him/her and just wait by the mail for your custom made original art to be delivered by the mail. Or UPS. Or FedEx. Or you can meet the artists locally, at a convention. I'm sure you can figure that part out. Yes, you can. Yes, you can.

So, you figured out what you want, had the artist draw it and you received it. Good for you! What's next? I've seen people do a couple of things. First off, if you are super mega hardcore, you will probably amass a number of commissions/sketches/sketch cards. That means you will want to get them organized. Art stores have some cool binders, in all the popular sizes, which makes it easy to keep the art safe and show it off to jealous friends who don't own super awesome art.

Another option is to hang it up! Because then you can enjoy it year-round and have something very cool that represents you, displayed in your home. I personally do both as I have a small but growing art collection, mostly of stuff by artists who have become my friends.

Now, the artist perspective on doing commissions... Commissions are great!! Someone out there loves your art style enough to have you draw something special for them. You get to draw something that someone also really loves and is passionate about, and you make a little extra money. I know of several artists that have had commissions support them financially or get them through hard times. I personally have a list of about ten commissions pretty much all the time. It's nice being able to do something special for fans.

So, whether you like Superman, Emma Frost, Naruto, or some awesome independent character, commissions can make a dream come true for you.

alfredtrujillo.com

facebook.com/alfred183



COSPLAY CORNER

Cosplay Columnist - Cara Nicole/Az Powergirl

COSPLAY IS CREEPY!!!!

Yeah, you read that right. And maybe it's true. Cosplay is grown people building and wearing costumes based on comics, video games, movies, TV, and any other pop culture outlet you can think of. Nerds of every caliber conversing and collaborating about what to build next. Spending countless hours and excessive dollars in order to recreate a perfectly cannon costume. For those of you that don't know, cannon means accurate. A perfect reproduction of the original. This could be based on art or a theatrical rendition of a character. Sometimes costumes are based on the ideas of the cosplayer themselves. Why can't we take our own creative license?

Why do we do this? Many reasons. Some do it for the fandom others for fame. Many choose to use their geekdom to benefit their communities. From charity work to conventions (and now thanks to the internet) cosplay has gone global. I know that in my own daily life, I spend more time in costume than in my civies. Young and old, cosplay is for EVERYONE! I have met elderly fans dressing up as everything from borg to DC's Penguin to the Queen of Hearts complete with plastic flamingos attached to her rascal. Cosplay charity groups are on the rise similar to the 501st, you've seen them I'm sure. Those guys and gals all dressed as Storm Troopers from Star Wars (those suits are legit). Aaron Forrester and Liam Stillman started a group called the Arizona Avengers that has gone nationwide. DC has their own Justice League Arizona that is on its way as well. Groups like these are popping up like Starbucks all over the place. The charity work they do puts smiles on the faces of children young and old. I'm sure Dad gets a cheap thrill from a pic with Powergirl or Wonder Woman too.

How do we cosplay? For some it simply means purchasing a costume from a local party store, website, or big box store Halloween special. Others build their supersuits from random components such as storage totes, yoga mats, and garage debris. The hardcore cosplayer will invest in expensive materials like Warbla, Pepakura, Wonderflex, and PVC. For many enthusiasts the convention floor is their venue of choice. Showing off their hard work to their peers is enough fulfillment to justify the expense and effort of their costume. Charity work is another outlet that allows cosplayers to share their craft while giving back. But with shows like Syfy's Heroes of Cosplay emerging, this once lowly and neglected art form has gone mainstream.

Who should cosplay? You, me, and everybody. What was formerly a once a year Halloween tradition is now a daily trend. With educational tutorials online and convention workshops readily available, cosplay is for all of us. Say it with me friends "Once you go cosplay, it will NEVER go away!".

azpowergirl.com/
facebook.com/azpowergirl
[Youtube/theazpowergirl](https://youtube.com/theazpowergirl)



COMIC BOOKS: Horror Comics in the Valley

by Joseph Nieves

Since its invention, the comic book has been a unique and fascinating medium. Not quite literature, but also not quite the same as a movie or television. Comic books provide a distinct form of narrative expression. Although widely known for exciting and colorful superhero fare, comics have been utilized to tell all manner of stories, from sardonic coming-of-age memoirs, to gripping fictionalized accounts of the Holocaust. Like film and literature, however, one of the mainstays of the outlet is the horror story.

From its pulp roots in the exaggerated morality tales of EC Comics, to more contemporary titles like Robert Kirkman's sprawling, ongoing epic, *The Walking Dead*, and Steve Niles' grisly Alaskan vampire series, *30 Days of Night*, horror comics have always found provocative ways to poke and prod at the more tenebrous facets of the human condition. Carrying on the tradition are four Arizona writers and artists, with very different approaches to the genre.

In *Angelwolf*, a mysterious disease begins to decimate the world's werewolf population. In an effort to retain their numbers, the werewolves stage large-scale attacks on human beings. Their attempts are unsuccessful; the vast majority of the humans die from their wounds rather than turn. The seven who do make the transformation are saved by God and granted angelic powers and wings. They are the only force standing between humanity and a vampire populace who view this cataclysm as their opportunity for global domination.

Phoenix-based writer and artist, Jess Hurley, was raised with wolves. Developing an affinity for the powerful canids at a young age, he could not help but be drawn to the anthropomorphic stars of classic werewolf films. Reflecting on the concept, he explains, "I think from a psychological standpoint most of us have this rage inside, this beast... that we keep at bay." For Hurley, the other side of that coin is our fear of the secret beasts in others, a notion he deliberately flips with his decision to make the wolves a divine force for good.

Hurley strives to inject a bit of faith into the book

without sermonizing. The story shows the positive aspects of God and belief, which he observes "is something horror rarely ever explores." While *Angelwolf* is not shy about its religious influences, Hurley insists that his ambitious saga is not necessarily about those things. The horrifying undercurrent is all about the unknowable: "What if angels, God, the devil... 'I want to kill you and your family' evil is actually real and something we can't control or quantify?"

Also, for all the gore fanatics, Hurley affirms "it is not for the faint of heart. People are getting shredded left and right."

Heather Martin's *Fallen, Inc.* revolves around a group of "paranormal exterminators" who offer up their services to the world as a front. The truth is they are demons engaged in a civil war on Earth. Heavily influenced by Japanese anime, manga, and even video games, the book blends horror and comedy around an ensemble cast of distinct characters, including the bantering duo, Cuatlaca and Danjiru; poor, naive Sebastian, and Divusdamnare, whom Martin affectionately refers to as "the divatroll."

The demons of *Fallen, Inc.* have a long history, and may not look or seem recognizable to readers at first. Martin, a self-proclaimed mythology and demonology nerd, suggests that this could change as the story develops, as certain demons may begin exhibiting some very familiar and mythically significant behavior. In the story "nobody really knows if... names like Lucifer, Satan, Leviathan, etcetera, are aliases of existing people or if they ever existed at all."

In Peoria, writer Jacob Thomas and artist Sheine Stethem, are working on an innovative new comic called *Detective of the Dead*. It follows a WWII veteran turned detective with a photographic memory. While investigating a series of brutal murders in 1950s Louisiana, he becomes the killer's next victim. Resurrected in 2012, he must use his old military training and detective prowess to survive while searching for the truth of his return in a world changed and unfamiliar.

The story is an intimate one, and Thomas, himself a veteran of the Army National Guard, expressed a

desire to illustrate the character's obligation to duty, while allowing him "to feel okay with questioning his actions and take notice how PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) can take a toll on a person's cognitive state." It's a tale of loss, and a meditation on what it means to receive a second chance.

One of the most intriguing things about the comic, apart from Thomas' somber, supernatural narrative and the cinematic, noir style of Stethem's panels, is its presentation. "It is very interactive, and educational in a small way," says Thomas. Without disclosing the full extent of his plans, Thomas intimates an experience in which readers can affect the intensity of their experience, without sacrificing the twists he has in store. "They will never see it coming," he assures.

Horrific tales have been a part of the human experience as long as we've had language, and we've found a way to tell them using most of the expressive mediums we've invented. For these local sojourners into the macabre, comics offer an incomparable vehicle for grim drama. The tension-building structure of the comic book page allows a creator to draw a moment out before the nail-biting turn of the page. As Heather Martin explains, it's all in the visuals, "You have to tell the story, not just with words, but in little things... to make it feel scary."

Angelwolf is available at Jesse James Comics, Hero Comics, and Samurai Comics in the Valley, as well as Warp 1 and Adventures Guild in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. It can also be found online at IndyPlanet.com.

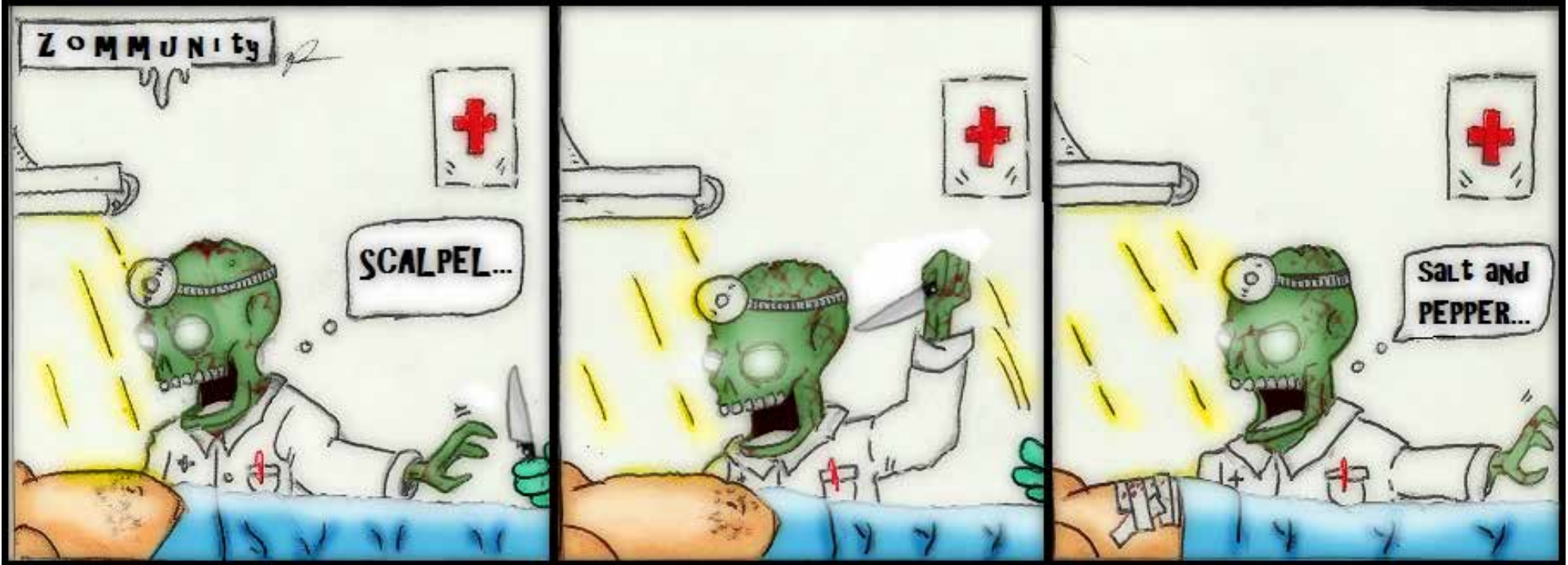
Fallen, Inc. is also available at Jesse James Comics, Hero Comics, and Samurai Comics in the Valley, along with Glendale's Dr. Fantasy's Comics N More, and Pop Culture Paradise of Tempe. Online at falleninccomic.com.

Detective of the Dead is currently in production. Updates on its development, including an upcoming IndieGoGo campaign, can be found at 3rdLevelComics.com.

WOD

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.

Zommunity Comic by Nick Perillo



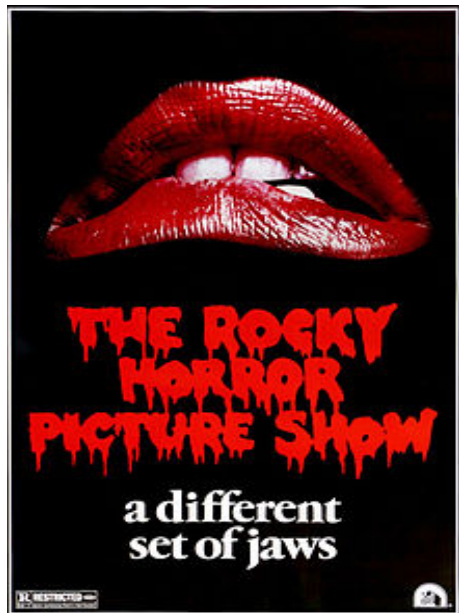
ConNotations NewsZine

Volume 23, Issue 5
October 2013
FREE

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

Arizona Rocky Horror Happenings

by Matthew Yenkala



It's been a busy year for the Arizona Rocky Horror scene. Coming off of 2012's hosting of the national convention, The Last RockyCon (so named in case December 21, 2012 did, indeed, spell the end of the world), the Phoenix area's troupe, Midnight Mayhem, has been growing and expanding throughout 2013 and is poised to do so even more.

Monthly showings have continued at the AMC Deer Valley Theater on the second Saturday of each month, while in June, a limited run was begun at the UltraStar Theater at the Ak-Chin Casino in Maricopa. The six-week engagement was so successful that Midnight Mayhem has been invited to do a regular show there on the fourth Saturday of each month, and it also opened the door for a monthly run at the UltraStar Scottsdale Theater to begin on October 5th.

Also happening over this past summer, Desert Stages Theater in Scottsdale ran a very successful and highly acclaimed production of the original stage play, The Rocky Horror Show (minus the picture, see?). Directed by local freelancer, JPaoul C. Clemente,

the show gave veterans and newbies alike the chance to see where Rocky came from and how the stage version differs from the iconic film.

And of course with Halloween around the corner, there will be plenty of options to get your Rocky fix. In the Phoenix area. Midnight Mayhem will be doing shows at AMC Deer Valley on October 12th and on Halloween night itself, the 31st (the latter being a 10pm show), and at the Maricopa venue on October 26th. (Shows at other venues on Friday the 25th and the weekend of the 19th are pending at press time--check www.midnightmayhem.org for up-to-date information.)

Tucson's Heavy Petting cast will present shows on October 19th and October 31st at their home, the Loft Cinemas on Speedway Blvd. (www.facebook.com/heavypettingaz), while Flagstaff will present two showings on the night of Wednesday, October 30th at the Orpheum Theater (<http://www.orpheumpresents.com>).

So, no matter where you are this Halloween, you can get out there and do the Time Warp again! And 2014 looks to be just as busy, with Midnight Mayhem continuing to maintain multiple venues, and Tucson's Heavy Petting cast hosting a national Rocky convention at the Loft Cinema in March, in addition to their regular shows the third Saturday of each month.

CASFS BOOK SOCIAL FOR 2013

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

October 15, 2013 - Sabriel by Garth Nix

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

December 17, 2013 - World War Z by Max Brooks

**WE are on Facebook.
For news between
the months,
keep in contact
with us at:**

<https://www.facebook.com/TheWOD-magazine>

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

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CASFS Business Report - (July and August 2013) By Gary Swaty CASFS Secretary

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

CASFS Bookclub and Social, Samurai comics, 1051 E. Camelback (Turn in at 11th St. And park behind) 7:00 PM on the third Tuesday of each month - In July we discussed Maus, a 1991 graphic novel by Art Spiegelman. It is a Fantasy retelling of the Jewish Holocaust story. The group liked it. We had 12 attendees. The Meetup group has really improved attendance. In August at CopperCon We discussed Haze by L.E. Modesitt with the author present. Good discussion, but few had read the book. We should probably do Classics for any future at-con book discussions. On the third Tuesday at Samauri Comics we discussed Lamb: The Gospel According To Biff by Christopher Moore. Six attended. There were several Moore haters who automatically disliked Moore's humor and the Book. Discussion was lively and as usual we digressed into general discussion of SF and Fantasy. Next at Samurai in September we discuss the graphic novels Daredevil: Man Without Fear and Daredevil: Born Again both by Frank Miller.

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

CopperCon 33 Revolution- Michael Fett Chairman. On August 1st, 2013 to promote the Con, CopperCon REVOLUTION presented a special screening of 2001: A Space Odyssey w/Plan 9 From Outer Space at the Pollack Tempe Cinemas (NEC Elliot & McClintock, Tempe AZ) Attendance was disappointing.

Mike Grell and Jennifer Roberson cancelled at the last minute both for health reasons. Membership was not sufficient to pay expenses from revenue. Those attended gave mostly good reviews. The major exception were Mark and Jennifer Horning who objected primarily to the changed nature of the convention rather than any bad events. The Charity Auction raised \$1118 for our charity. Trina Robins was popular and L.E. Modesitt went over well. The literary panels were well populated. A couple of Dealers lost money. Marty Massoglia's Books did well. Younger attendees liked the small Con intimacy comparing CuCon to ComicCon's isolation of guests.

The success of CopperCon 33 hinged on obtaining improved attendance. The convention needed 400 paid memberships to break even, we had 159 paid and 260 attending. We had 69 room nights thus falling short of the 81 needed for a \$1000 reduction in function space costs. We lost about \$6000.

CopperCon 34 - We will plan this convention after we settle CopperCon 33. Websites - Mark Boniece,

Webmaster-- We have no Webmaster. Mark Boniece is handling routine updates to the CASFS site.

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

Database - Mark Boniece (Acting) as Donald Jacques has resigned. Data assistance is needed. The names from CopperCon 31, 32 and 33 need to be integrated into the Database.

Audit Committee - No change - The Audit Committee report is still in process. A preliminary report was presented to the Board. The membership will receive the Final Report when it is finished.



THE DARK ONES ARE HONORED TO PRESENT

DARKCON 2014

THURSDAY THRU SUNDAY - JANUARY 9 - 12 PHX, AZ

PHOENIX AIRPORT MARRIOTT

FANTASTIC NEW SITE! 44TH ST / 202 FRWY

Artists - Chris Wood / Mark Greenawalt

Authors - Gini Koch / Kevin Hearne

MORE GUEST ANNOUNCEMENTS SOON

Make & Take Workshops	Social Events
Merchant Room	Gaming Room
Live Shows	Demos
	Special Events



DarkCon.org

STEAMPUNK, CYBERPUNK, DARK FANTASY, SCIENCE FICTION

CONNOTATION EVENTS

CONVENTIONS & EVENTS

OCTOBER 4-6 - BROWNCOAT BALL - at the Coastal Phoenix Sky Harbor Hotel, 4300 E. Washington Street in Phoenix. The Arizona Browncoats will host the Browncoat Ball, an annual gala in celebration of Firefly, Serenity and the other works of Joss Whedon. <http://www.brocoatball.com>

OCTOBER 17,18 & 19 - Check Times SQUASH BLOSSOM HORROR FILM FEST - Indoor and Outdoor showings of vintage and independent horror films. FREE with a non-perishable food item donated to United Food Bank. A WOD Media event. www.thewod.net

NOVEMBER 2 - RUN FOR YOUR LIVES ZOMBIE 5K at Wellington Ranch, Sacaton AZ. <http://www.runforyourlives.com/locations/arizona/>

NOVEMBER 8-10 - FRIDAY - SUNDAY - TUSCON 40 at the Hotel Tucson City-Center, 475 North Granada, Tucson AZ 85701. Guest of Honor: Juliet Blackwell, Artist Guest: Jessica Feinberg; Toastmaster: Ed Bryant. Room rates \$69 studio, \$79 suite, \$89 Jacuzzi suite. 520-622-3000. Memberships rates \$50 thru 11/01 and \$55 thereafter and at the door. Paypal available, More info TusCon, PO Box 2528, Tucson, AZ 85702-2528 or email: basfa@earthlink.net or web at <http://tusconscificon.com/index.html>

NOVEMBER 23 & 24th, 2013 TIME TRAVEL APPRECIATION WEEKEND at the Squash Blossom Restaurant from 3-10pm. A celebration of Doctor Who 50th Anniversary. WOD Media Event.

JANUARY 9-12, 2014 - DARKCON 2014. Location Phoenix Airport Marriott at 1101 N 44th street Phx. 602-273-7373 Room rates: Regular \$129.99 single, double, triple, quad, Deluxe \$149.99 <http://www.darkcon.org>

OCTOBER 11-13 - ARIZONA FURCON - at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 4415 E. Paradise Village Pkwy South, Phoenix. <http://www.arizonafurcon.com> - 602-765-5800. 3-Day Full Event \$55.00. Check website for activities and guests.

AUTHOR EVENTS:

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

Changing Hands Bookstore 6428 S McClintock Dr., Tempe Contact Changing Hands bookstore for details on signing limitations. 480.730.0205 www.changinghands.com

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

B&Ns locations can be found at BN.com

WRITING WORKSHOPS:

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

East Valley Writing Workshop Every Sunday 1:00 PM at Shadow Mountain Village - Main Clubhouse in Scottsdale Publishing, Networking, and Marketing Meetup -- Starting in September on the THIRD Saturday, monthly at Shadow Mountain Village - Main Clubhouse - 2pm - 4pm 8780 E McKellips Road, Scottsdale, AZ

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

GAMING & COMIC BOOK EVENTS:

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

GAME DAZE:

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

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

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

CHANDLER FASHION CENTER 3111 W Chandler Blvd #2416 Chandler, AZ 85226

PARADISE VALLEY MALL 4550 E. Cactus Road #302 Phoenix, AZ 85032

SUPERSTITION SPRINGS CENTER 6555 E. Southern Ave. #2026 Mesa, AZ 85206

TUCSON MALL 4500 N. Oracle Road #166 Tucson, AZ 85705

PARK PLACE MALL 5870 E Broadway Blvd # 258 Tucson, AZ 85711

POP CULTURE PARADISE

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

EMPIRE GAMES

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

DRAWN TO COMICS

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

GAME DEPOT

3136 S McClintock Dr. #11 · Tempe, Arizona · 85282 (480) 966-4727 Come in and take a look. The store is located in Tempe, Arizona at 3136 South McClintock Drive. The store stocks Hordes, Warhammer 40K, Warhammer, Flames of War, Warmachine games and Battletech. Also some modern and ancients. Click the Edit link if you frequent this store to provide information about what games it offers.

GAMER'S INN

Check website for upcoming events

IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMES

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

SAMURAI COMICS

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

MONSTERS, ZOMBIES, AND GHOULS INVADE MESA

This month's 2nd Friday Night Out features a tour of a real haunted basement, costume contests for kids and adults, games with prizes, wandering zombies, and more creepy fun! On October 11 from 6-10 PM, Main Street between Center and Robson features a Monster Mash themed art walk. Each month includes 60+ artist's booths showcasing original artwork, live bands, contests, prizes, entertainment, gallery openings, and fun with shops and restaurants open late! And it's all free!

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RAPTURE A LITTLE IN NAVAJO, BABY: AZ FILM EVENTS IN OCTOBER

By Hal C F Astell

October proves to be a busy month for quirky film events in the Phoenix sprawl.

SCOTTSDALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Kicking it off with a vengeance from Friday, 4th to Tuesday, 8th of October is the Scottsdale International Film Festival, a delightfully diverse celebration of world cinema at the Harkins Shea 14 on the corner of Scottsdale Rd & Shea Blvd. Regular ticket prices are \$10 with a host of options to buy in bulk and save. See my separate article on this festival for more details or visit the festival website at <http://www.scottsdalefilmfestival.com/>.

RAPTURE HORROR EXPO

Saturday, 5th is a busy day indeed, beginning with the second annual Rapture Horror Expo, which runs until Sunday, 6th at the Hilton Double Tree Hotel.

Rapture will be screening a host of interesting local movies, including the truly outrageous Bloody Bloody Bible Camp, Sean Tretta's The Frankenstein Syndrome and a riot of a short film called Night of the Sea Monkey, which played well at the Jerome Indie Film & Music Festival earlier this year. From wider afield, there's a tenth anniversary screening of House of 1000 Corpses and the original George A Romero picture, The Crazies, among others.

Some cast members will be present, including Sid Haig and Lynn Lowry. Other special guests include Judith O'Dea and Judith Ridley from Night of the Living Dead, Eric Roberts, Danielle Harris, Fred 'The Hammer' Williamson, Robert Z'Dar and the voice of the Crypt Keeper, John Kassir, along with many others.

It proves to be a busy weekend with all sorts of horror goodness. Tickets run \$40 for the weekend if you buy online or \$50 on the door. Day passes are available, as are various autograph packages. Rapture Horror Expo can be found at <http://www.rapturehorrexpo.com/>.

FILMSTOCK IN THE PARK



On the same Saturday at 7:00pm at the Downtown Phoenix Civic Space is a free outdoor presentation of short films under the banner of Filmstock in the Park.

Filmstock is a short film festival that runs in all of the Four Corners states, with the winning films from each moving on to be screened in the others. The full October event is in Utah, but they'll be back in Arizona in December at Pollack Tempe Cinemas. To keep us salivating at the prospect, the Filmstock in the Park event will show 90 minutes of family friendly short films from both Filmstock and IFP Phoenix. You can't argue with FREE!

Details can be found at <http://www.filmstockfilmfestival.com/>.

ARIZONA FILMMAKER SHOWCASE

To finish off Saturday, 5th, there's the monthly Arizona Filmmaker Showcase at FilmBar in Phoenix at 10:00pm, presented by Dark of the Matinee.

This month's feature is Pizza Shop: The Movie, which went down well at Jerome this summer. It's an over the top comedy that gleefully goes as far as you might comfortably imagine and then a little more. It's certainly not for the easily offended, but if your tastes allow you to gross out, it's a blast. In support is a short documentary film about a World War II pilot who returns to the skies after 65 years on the ground for a Final Flight.

Tickets are \$9 and details can be found on the FilmBar website at <http://www.thefilmbarphx.com/>.

STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE IN NAVAJO

If you're still kicking after that busy Saturday, there's a truly enticing event at the Heard Museum in downtown Phoenix on that Sunday. At 3:00pm, they're screening the original 1977 Star Wars movie, A New Hope, but in the Navajo or Dine' language.

The goal was to help keep native American languages alive by engaging potential speakers with translated mainstream material. The project turned out to be a real challenge as Navajos simply don't have words for concepts like 'droid'.

I'm fascinated to see how this adaptation plays to an audience familiar with the story but not the language.

Details are available on the events page of the Heard Museum at <http://www.heard.org/events/festivalsevents.html>.

LIVE A LITTLE FILM FESTIVAL

For film lovers jonesing for another festival after the Scottsdale International Film Festival finishes on Tuesday, 8th October, there's a low key charity event on Thursday, 10th.

It's the Live a Little Film Festival at Tempe Pollack Cinemas and it promises a couple of hours of inspiring short films to benefit Singleton Moms. The show starts at 7:00pm.

Tickets are \$10 and can be bought online through the festival's Indiegogo page at <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/live-a-little-film-festival>. That closes on Sunday, 6th, but tickets can also be bought at the door on the day of the event.

TOKUSATSU THEATER: MR VAMPIRE 3

My favourite monthly film event, Damon Foster's Tokusatsu Theater, returns to my favourite movie subject, Chinese hopping vampires, on Friday, 11th October, in its regular slot of 10:00pm at the FilmBar.

Mr Vampire was a huge hit when Damon screened it in an earlier Tokusatsu Theater, understandably because it's not far off being the most fun you can have in ninety minutes without taking your clothes off. I missed his return to the series for Mr Vampire 2 because I was in England at the time, but I'm certainly not going to miss Mr Vampire 3. If you're feeling down, Chinese hopping vampires simply cannot fail to cheer you back up. That's guaranteed.

Tickets are \$9 and details can be found on the FilmBar calendar or at the Tokusatsu Theater Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TokusatsuTheater>.

CULT CLASSICS: ARMY OF DARKNESS

Get your tickets as soon as you can for the Cult Classics presentation of Army of Darkness at Pollack Tempe Cinemas on Saturday, 19th October at 9:30pm. Many of these screenings have sold out and this one's already been tweeted by the Chin himself, Bruce Campbell.

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Cult Classics gave away free eyepatches last month for their Escape from New York screening. Who knows what they might give away this time. Chainsaws?

If you've seen it, you know how awesome Army of Darkness is. If you haven't, then it's time you did. Hail to the king, baby!

Regular tickets are \$11 but most people splurge on one of the VIP packages that include specially designed prints or t-shirts. Details can be found at <http://www.cultclassicsaz.com/>.

CATHEDRAL CANYON BENEFIT

Coming back down to Earth somewhat, the winner of the best Arizona feature award at the Jerome Indie Film & Music Festival this year was Cathedral Canyon, an ambitious dramatisation of real events that rocked northern Arizona almost a decade ago.

The real Cathedral Canyon was Colorado City, on the Arizona/Utah border, in which a fundamentalist and polygamist breakaway sect from the mainstream Mormon church thrived. In 2006, the authorities descended and arrested their leader, Warren Jeffs, a polygamist paedophile. He was given life plus 20 years.

The film stars Winsor Harmon from The Bold and the Beautiful as a complex Phoenix criminal who finds himself pitted against the cult over the safety of a young girl. If you missed it at Jerome, you'll get another chance to see it on Thursday, 24th October, when it will be screened at Harkins Shea 14 as a benefit for victims of the real cult.

I don't have ticket info yet, but details will presumably be posted at the Facebook event page at <https://www.facebook.com/events/508460149234255/>.

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.

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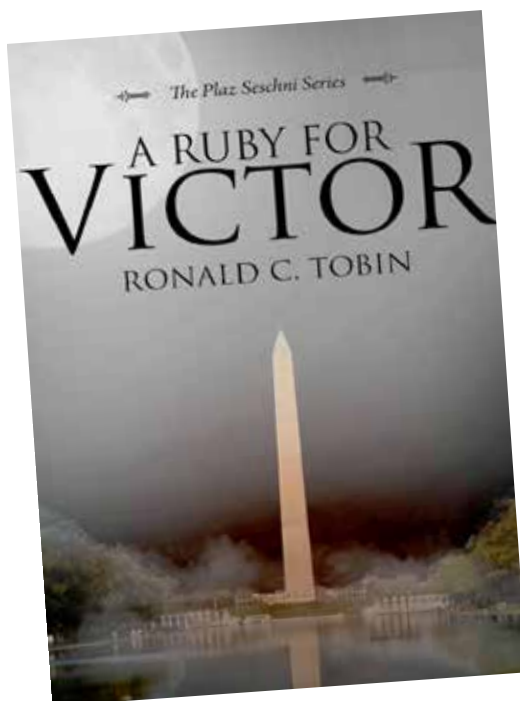

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LOCAL FILMS BREED AND INTERBREED!

By Hal C F Astell

Peek beneath the slick surface of shiny Hollywood product shown at your local multiplex and you'll find a thriving local scene that's on the upswing.

Arizona filmmakers have been making their own movies for a long while, work that is often just as fun and usually much more interesting than the same old regurgitated stories the big studios throw us. Not costing tens of millions of dollars and not starring Nicolas Cage is a good thing, trust me. The last few months seem determined to underline that this local scene is growing, not just counting what's being uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo, but what's premiering on the big screens of the valley.

BEAT THE CLOCK FILM CHALLENGE

At the end of July, no less than 22 short films premiered at the Phoenix Art Museum as part of the IFP Phoenix 2013 Beat the Clock challenge.

IFP, the Independent Feature Project, is a collective of local non-profit organizations and the Phoenix chapter grew out of the Phoenix Film Project back in 2006. It provides support to local filmmakers, but to those of us who watch movies rather than make them, it's best known for its regular film challenges and Beat the Clock is the most popular.

The Beat the Clock challenge is a riot, perhaps why many teams come back year after year. Each competing team is tasked with making a short film, usually three to five minutes in length, entirely within 48 hours. That means writing, casting, shooting, editing and scoring a film in only two days. Sleep is not always an option. To make the challenge even harder and even more fun, teams are restricted in a number of other ways: they have to work within one of a small number of required genres, use a required line of dialogue and include a required prop. Prizes are given not only for the usual categories like Best Picture or Best Actor but for the best use of those lines and props.

This year saw 22 films screened on the evening of Friday, 26th July at the Phoenix Art Museum, to a packed audience of filmmaking teams and their families and members of the public. If 22 movies isn't enough of a draw, the event kicked off with live music and ended with cupcakes from Kiki's Cupcake Service, who really ought to cater every event in the valley.

The winner of the Best Picture award was Running Wild Films, a regular competitor and previous winner, with a hilarious comedy called Star Babies, directed by Travis Mills and featuring a lot of recognisable local actors. Running Wild are the most prolific production company in the valley, making enough films that I can open up every month at Apocalypse Later with a new review of a Running Wild film and never run out of choices.

Next up for IFP is the new Mystery Box challenge, a similar concept in which each team in competition conjures up its own prop and line of dialogue, all of which are then collated and divvied out at random. That means that each team will have to work to restrictions set by a competing team. Sounds like fun, huh? Well, we'll find out how fun when submitted films are screened on Thursday, 14th November at the Harkins Theater in Phoenix, just off the 101 and Scottsdale Road, where the Phoenix Film Festival is held every year.

IFP's web page is <http://www.ifpphx.org> and their filmmaker challenge page can be found here: <http://www.ifpphx.org/create/filmmaker-challenges>.

THE MEN WHO ROBBED THE BANK

Congratulations are certainly due to Travis Mills and Running Wild Films for winning this year's Beat the Clock challenge. What's most amazing about their win, though, is that they managed it during the completion of an even more outrageous challenge of their own.

Running Wild are making no less than 52 films in the 52 weeks of 2013, all short films adapted from short stories in the public domain. As I write, they've just completed shooting film #37, so they're still on schedule. It's pretty astounding that a small production company with a small crew can churn out so many films in so short a time, but still keep quality up to the degree that it can win film challenges. Well, that crazy schedule doesn't stop them making features too.

Just under two years ago, in October 2011, I was at Pollack Tempe Cinemas as part of a huge crowd for the premiere of Running Wild's debut feature, The Big Something, a quirky and successful comedy with a wonderful soundtrack to rival Léolo or O Brother, Where Art Thou? I got round to reviewing it in July 2012, to tie in with the premiere of its follow up, a film noir called The Detective's Lover, which screened for three nights at FilmBar in Phoenix and co-starred The WOD columnist, Cara Nicole. Back at Pollack Tempe, they just premiered feature number three on Friday, 30th August. That's The Men Who Robbed the Bank.

It's a crime drama that starts when the bank robbery of the title is over, the five men who did the job waiting at a safe house for their boss to show up and split the take. It's an interesting film that delights in confounding our expectations, allowing Mills to explore his more experimental side. Viewers new to Running Wild should probably start with short films like The Memory Ride, Star Babies or Itty Bitty Bang Bang; or with The Big Something.

The Men Who Robbed the Bank features a number of Running Wild regulars, like Rob Edwards and Jonathan Medina. Many also appeared in their Beat the Clock winning short, Star Babies, including Michael Hanelin, Colleen Hartnett, Stacie Stocker and Michael Coleman. Hanelin and Hartnett in particular often appear together in Running Wild films,

where their screen relationship is developing in odd ways, from character to character.

Running Wild's short films are free to view online at Vimeo and YouTube and their features are available for paid download at mindplate.tv or their own website, <http://www.runningwildfilms.com>. Mills is even starting to post versions of his films with director or cast commentaries. He's a busy man.

BIOLOGY 101

The local community is a vibrant and busy one, but it's still small enough that the more prolific actors are as recognizable in local films as the big Hollywood stars are in summer blockbusters. They're also recognizable at these events, as many of them come out to support each other's films.

For instance, Rob Edwards and Stacie Stocker, two of the stars of The Men Who Robbed the Bank, were at FilmBar only a week later for the premiere of a film they weren't involved with, Biology 101 from Second Feature Productions. In fact, it screened as part of the monthly Arizona Filmmakers Showcase, which showed local films selected and hosted by Brett Walker, Christopher Coffel and Matthew Robinson, filmmakers themselves but also the hosts of the Dark of the Matinee podcast and website.

I really enjoyed Biology 101 at FilmBar, even though I'd seen it a couple of times before as a critic. It's a little more salacious than your usual local film, as we get to see the boobs of Noelle DuBois rather often. The story focuses on a community college science teacher who has become addicted to the porn site of Dani Darling. He's doing a good job of screwing up his life and that of his family, but then the girl behind Dani Darling shows up in his biology class and things get much more tense.

Christopher Smith and Liz Bradley promise to be big names in the local film community, not only with Biology 101 finally being seen, but with their second feature, We Three, a comedy about a threesome that turns into something more, having completed post production. I got to see them in action on their last day of shooting, when I played an extra in a bar scene, and I was thoroughly impressed with the professionalism of their cast and crew. Hopefully you'll be able to see both Biology 101 and We Three sometime next year.

Playing in support of Biology 101 in this month's Arizona Filmmakers Showcase were two local short films, The Lakeside Killer and Tough Love.

I'd seen The Lakeside Killer when it premiered at FilmBar a year earlier and it was just as much fun second time around. It's a half hour found footage film that explores one man's search for the serial killer who murdered his girlfriend at Tempe Beach Park and presumably accounted for others in the neighboring area. Interestingly, director Bret Thomas found himself talking to the cops for real, after he flied fake missing posters around Tempe to advertise his film and they took umbrage.

Tough Love, from Pat Giglio, is a drama about a teenager getting a life lesson about family. It had a notable performance from young Brandon Dorssom, who isn't just making a name for himself as an actor, he's drawing his father into acting too. That's Born of Fire drummer, Steve Dorssom, who made a documentary feature about his first band, Ripsaw, that played the Jerome Indie Film & Music Festival earlier this year. The music video for the Born of Fire song that played during Tough Love, was screened after it, with the recognizable face of Rob Edwards.

FilmBar is the best place to see movies downtown. Show times can be found on their website, <http://www.thefilmbarphx.com>. Dark of the Matinee host there once a month, but run their podcast from <http://www.darkofthematinee.com>. Second Feature Productions are at <http://www.secondfeatureproductions.com> and their films are on Facebook. The Lakeside Killer can be watched at <http://darkframeproductions.com/the-lakeside-killer>.

Next month's Arizona Filmmakers Showcase on Friday, 5th October showcases Pizza Shop: The Movie, an outrageously crude comedy that impressed at Jerome this year and which coincidentally features Chelsea Claire, one of the title characters in We Three. In support is the documentary short, Final Flight, about a World War II pilot returning to the skies at the age of 91.

BLACKOUT

Perhaps the most memorable recent premiere came in between these events. The day after the Beat the Clock challenge, the folk behind Blackout pulled out all the stops at Pollack Tempe Cinemas for a very old school event.

Blackout is a new feature but it doesn't look it. Doug Monce, the writer/director, is a huge fan of film noir and that's exactly what he made with Blackout. He shot over four years in black and white, in the old 4:3 aspect ratio and even with mono sound, all to replicate the feel of the classics that inspired him and make it feel like it had been made in 1953. The premiere screening was even kicked off with a cartoon, just to get the older members of the audience in a nostalgic mood.

To add to the effect, he literally rolled out the red carpet at Pollack Tempe for the cast and crew to walk up. They arrived in vintage automobiles and were met by the flashing cameras of paparazzi, dressed in period costume and led by my better half, who had an absolute blast. She also handled the set photography for We Three. Connections in local film start at home.

Local filmmakers were out in force, including that omnipresent Rob Edwards, along

with Nathan Blackwell from Squishy Studios; Jump Ship Productions' J P Frydrych and Nicki Legge; the elegant Anne Gentry; filmmaker and professor Christopher Bradley; and Jon Ray, who was all over the Beat the Clock challenge this year like a rash. He played a small part in Running Wild's winning film, Star Babies, and a bigger one in the runner up, Eva's Light. He also found time to compose an excellent score for the latter film, all within that one busy weekend. He was even an extra in the same bar scene of We Three that I was. He certainly gets around.

Blackout has a strong local cast, led by Toby Ambrose and Katherine Stewart and with strong support from Tracy Timm, who ably channels Barbara Stanwyck. Many of the actors are stage trained and some plied their trade on the boards at Stewart's excellent Desert Rose Theatre.

Most of this cast and crew, starting with Ambrose and Stewart, are very familiar to fans of Mantecoza, formerly a stop/start web series and now the most anticipated steam-punk feature film in the valley. They've finally completed filming and footage was showcased at a well populated panel at Phoenix ComiCon this year, highlighting solid effects work from two time Emmy winner David Stipes.

Stipes provided some effects work for Blackout too, but mostly it's a tough character driven piece, revolving around a private detective who wakes up one day in a motel room, without his memory but with people apparently trying to kill him. To stay alive, he has to figure out who he is and what he's managed to get himself into. From there, it unfolds in the manner you might expect if you've watched enough films noir. If you haven't, you should start now.

Blackout can be found on Facebook as BlackoutFilm-Noir.

CELESTIAL HUNT

FilmBar is already a key location for local film, but Pollack Tempe is fast becoming one too. Also independent and locally owned, it boasts a stunning collection of memorabilia all around the lobby. Victor Moreno's Cult Classics fills a 500 seat theater there every month (his October screening is Army of Darkness, which has already been pimped by Bruce Campbell himself). Pollack Tempe is also racking up more and more local premières.

One that I couldn't make last month was Celestial Hunt, from New Eden Productions. It's the second installment in a religious drama/thriller trilogy begun by last year's Celestial Run, which is available at iTunes.

This one adds a recognizable local actor in Bill Wetherall, but to bring this article full circle, two of the leads, Cisco Saavedra and Kristi Lawrence, were also part of one of the Beat the Clock challenge entries this year, a short film called An Adventure in the Life of Barry Barksworth.

This is one of the joys of keeping up with the local film community: we see talent appear and grow from short films to features and, unfortunately, often on out of state. Traditionally, if you get big enough here, you drive down I-10 to LA and join the Hollywood hopefuls. Sometimes it seems like we lose decent actors every week here. As I write, Cavin Gray Schneider is literally on the road to whatever destiny he can conjure up in Hollywood.

If you want to watch them in their early years though, you should jump at the opportunity to see local film on the big screen, whether it's at an IFP challenge evening, a selection at the Phoenix Film Festival or a feature première. You surely can't say no to free selections like the upcoming FilmStock in the Park event on Saturday, 5th October at the Civic Space Park in downtown Phoenix. That'll include some FilmStock films and some IFP films. It'll be a great place for you to start.

Most of the films mentioned in this article have been reviewed at Apocalypse Later. Those that haven't yet, will be at some point.

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

FEATURED FICTION: THE BILLING

By KB Shaw

Joshua Flynn stood guarding the closed hospital room door as his wife slipped off the medical gown. His gaze lingered on her lustrous red hair, emerald-green eyes, flawless skin, and perfect breasts -- now swollen and ready to nourish their newborn.

Emma saw the admiration in her husband's eyes and took her time getting dressed. Josh was the ideal man: tall, with rugged good looks, piercing sapphire blue eyes, and the firm body of a tri-athlete.

In a few minutes their baby would be brought to them and they would leave the hospital as a model family.

Josh left his post at the door and helped Emma zip her dress. "I love you," he whispered in her ear.

Emma turned, wrapped her arms around her husband and laid her head against his chest. "I love you too."

She tilted her head up. He tilted his down. They kissed passionately.

There was a knock on the door and the couple parted. "That must be the nurse with our daughter," said Emma.

Both parents were filled with a joyful expectation as the door swung open.

But there was no nurse -- only a prim, middle-aged woman in a business suit with a tablet in her hand.

"Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Flynn." The woman tapped the screen of her tablet and it displayed a photo of their baby.

"Congratulations on your beautiful baby girl," gushed the woman. "She's perfect in every way."

"Thank you," said Josh, beaming with pride at the compliment.

"Where's Allie?" asked Emma.

"Your daughter will be brought to you as soon as we settle the billing." The woman noticed the Flynn's confused looks. "Oh, I'm sorry," she said. "Let me introduce myself. I'm Mrs. Higgs from the accounting department. I have the itemized invoice for your daughter Allie."

"Invoice?" said Josh.

"Yes, a few extra items showed up in patent scans." Emma said, "Patent scans?"

"As you know, parents' genes are passed on to their children, determining such things as hair and eye color, body types, even susceptibility to disease. When a person has had gene augmentation, those designer genes can be passed on as well. Of course, such genes are patented and owned by the companies that created them. Although you've already paid for the genes you elected to have augmented, the genes that were passed on to your daughter still need to be reckoned. I have the list right here."

Mrs. Higgs swiped the screen and said, "Here, look." The couple took up positions on either side of the accountant so they could see what was displayed on the screen. More than a dozen items were listed.

"You both had hair and eye color augmentations, so she was almost sure to get one or the other."

Mrs. Higgs swiped the screen, displaying an extreme close-up of an iris. "Right here..." she double-tapped a spot in the lower-left region of the iris until the image zoomed to near-molecular resolution.

"Atomeyes®" was clearly visible.

"She has your eyes, Mr. Flynn--or, to be more accurate, your Atomeyes eyes." She chuckled as she swiped back to the itemized list.

"Now, you see here, here, here, and here that there are no charges for corrective gene therapies to eliminate the hereditary diabetes and pancreatic cancer on the paternal side of the family or the breast cancer on the

maternal side. Those genes occur in nature and can't be patented."

She tapped another item on the list. "This is your daughter's hair. As you can see, it's your registered FlairHair color, Mrs. Flynn." She displayed an electron-microscope image of Allie's hair showing the neatly arranged copyright atoms: ©FHC Corp Red2712. It was the highlighted shade of these atoms that gave FlairHair its patented luster.

Josh looked at Emma's hair as if seeing it for the first time.

Emma sensed his gaze and guiltily avoided eye contact. "I am a redhead," she mumbled. "I just adjusted the shade."

Mrs. Higgs quickly navigated back to the list. "Likewise with Mrs. Flynn's permaBreast36c."

Emma couldn't avoid Josh's sharp look this time. "So?"

"You never told me."

"You didn't ask. Anyway, you seem to like them, they're technically natural, and they'll never sag."

"Moving on," said Mrs. Higgs, "Mr. Flynn's Penile 7.5 enhancement is moot..."

"What?" It was Emma's turn to shoot a look. "You claimed it was an 8.5."

Josh shrugged in reply.

The accountant continued "...and Mrs. Flynn's PearlNails were not passed on. You both contributed MegaDerm's ClearSkin gene. But don't worry, you only get charged once." She chuckled again.

"That's all there is. Patent royalty fees come to \$13,754. That's a discounted price, of course because the genes were inherited. Then there's the sales and genetic inheritance tax... The total is..." She held out the tablet so the young couple could see the full-market value of their child's genetic inheritance.

"As you know, this isn't covered by your insurance. So, how would you like to pay for your perfect little baby? Credit, debit, or one of the hospital's convenient, long-term financing options?"

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Rethinking the (Coming) Zombie Apocalypse

Science Columnist: Sean Ellis

The thing that separates science fiction from fantasy fiction is...well, science. Science fiction has to be plausible, fantasy doesn't. That's not to say that science enthusiasts can't enjoy something utterly implausible; only that we may employ an additional layer of criticality. Fantastic elements have to square with well-established scientific principles if you want to call it science fiction.

Horror stories occupy the middle ground between science fiction and fantasy, but instead of taking place "once upon a time" or "in a galaxy far, far away" they occur in a more familiar environment--our world, here and now. It's become a little more fashionable to refer to contemporary

stories with monsters and magic as 'urban fantasy' and this makes a lot of sense since vampires and werewolves--creatures which are (generally speaking) completely implausible--aren't exactly horrifying any more. Many urban fantasy stories prefer to

treat these mainstays of traditional horror with a certain...let's call it 'sparkliness,' but that's only possible because we really aren't frightened of those things anymore.

The scariest horror stories being written today make us believe that the bad things might really happen, and but here too, the science has to pass muster. The really talented horror creators will go that extra mile to make us believe we are just a lab accident away from transforming everything we know into hell on earth, and this is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the Zombie Apocalypse genre.

The idea of reanimated corpses wandering around and eating the flesh of their still living friends and relatives goes back at least as far as the draugr of Norse mythology, but the possibility that the dead might walk on a large, world-ending scale mostly starts with George Romero's classic film, Night of the Living Dead. While Romero gave only a vague explanation for the cause, subsequent Zombie treatments favor the emergence of a viral pandemic--examples include the T-virus from the Resident Evil franchise, and Solanum (The Zombie Survival Guide

and World War Z by Max Brooks). Even where the cause is not explicitly known--and really, in a world overwhelmed by chaos, how could we ever really know for sure--Zombie communicability is one of the few constant dangers. This cachet of plausibility is one of the things that makes the Zombie Apocalypse so entertaining. Our impulse to dismiss it as mere fanciful entertainment trips up on the possibility--be it ever so remote--that it could really happen. But could it? Really?

Because the Zombie Apocalypse purports to be the result of either science or nature run amok--as opposed to some supernatural manifestation--any assessment of plausibility begins with the known scientific principles, and at a glance, there are some big problems with a contagion that can bring corpses back to life (or something like life).



It's basic biology. In order for our bodies to function--to move around, pick stuff up, eat...whatever--we need energy. Movement requires two things: electrochemical nervous impulses that originate in our brains, and the metabolism of glucose in our muscle fibers. It takes energy to make a muscle fiber contract, even a dead one, and that's a scientifically proven fact. Getting that energy in the first place, and then distributing it through our bodies so that we can use it, requires a complex interaction of organs and body systems, and if anyone of these fails, we shut down.

Now, I can hear a few die-hard living dead aficionados out there saying: "Yes, and that's why Zombies are compelled to eat brains!"

Even if that were true...even if the cerebral cortex provided 100% of the USDA nutritional requirements for those testing positive for Solanum antibodies...it wouldn't change the fact that life requires an interaction of complex systems and a constant source of nourishment. Zombie films present iconic scenes of vast undead hordes milling about bumping

into each other for weeks on end, waiting for a hapless human survivor to make a desperate run to the sporting goods store, but the reality is that, after a few days without eating, the walking dead would drop in their tracks. Similarly implausible is the notion that the only way to put them down is with a head shot. They would still need, at the very least, a digestive system to turn brains into nutrients and a circulatory system to get the nutrients to the muscles, and so realistically they'd have to be just as vulnerable to injury as we are. And if those organs are in a state of decay? Forget about it.

A rage virus of the sort depicted in 28 Days Later, or even something like the consciousness-destroying pulse-signal in Stephen King's 2006 novel, Cell, might rate a little higher on the plausibility scale, but decaying corpses that shamle around with a ravenous appetite for gray matter? Scientifically speaking, that's just impossible, right?

Actually... maybe not.

While the preceding description of biological functions is accurate, it is not universally true. Yes, humans--and all animals--do require nutrition from an external source and specialized body systems to survive, but that is not true of all life forms. Plants, most notably, are autotrophs--that is to say, they make their own food from air and sunlight, and the food they make ultimately results in a chemical called adenosine triphosphate--the same compound that energizes our own muscle contractions. Yes, plants also require other nutrients--nitrogen and phosphorous--but these can be synthesized from organic molecules, the kind of molecules that make up decaying human flesh.

Before you dismiss this hypothesis with a contemptuous 'But Zombies aren't plants... they're reanimated human corpses!' consider this.

In the average person, bacteria--single-celled organisms--outnumber human cells by a factor of ten. Bacteria were, until only recently, classified as part of the Plant Kingdom, and those that live in or on our bodies are still referred to as "human flora". They aren't actually plants, but the earliest plant cells did evolve from colonies of bacteria that began to function collectively. Bacterial cells are much smaller than human cells, so it would be incorrect to say that we are mostly bacteria, but we do have a symbiotic relationship with these microbes (most of the time)--they depend on the warm, food-rich environment we provide, and we rely on their ability to help us digest our food. Put another way, the bacteria need us for their own survival but that doesn't mean they need us to be "human."

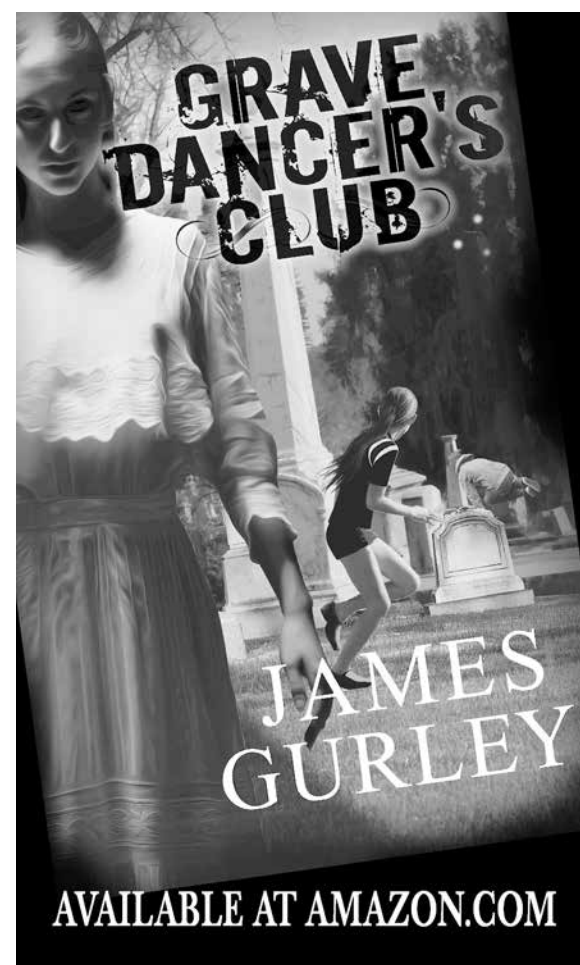
They don't benefit from our emotions or our ability to appreciate beauty or deep philosophical concepts; they just need us to roam around, even a slow shamle would suffice, and to get food for them.

Plants, while possessing nothing like what we would call intelligence, are able to move, orienting themselves toward the sun in order to maximize photosynthesis. Is it unthinkable then that the 100 trillion bacterial organisms living in and on our bodies might evolve the ability to, without even realizing they are doing it, produce the energy to animate the decaying muscle fibers of the recently deceased, propelling them toward a food source? And not food in the conventional sense, requiring digestion into basic nutrients to be distributed throughout the body, but rather something simpler, something as simple as sunlight with an occasional infusion of organic material.

Unthinkable? No more so than hyperspace travel or quantum teleportation. All of which puts the Zombie Apocalypse squarely in the domain of science fiction, and like all good science fiction, we love it because we know that it could really happen someday.

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>

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The Science in Hard Science-Fiction

By Michael Brachman, Ph.D.

I write hard science fiction. What does that mean exactly? It means speculative fiction where anything proposed that is beyond today's technology cannot be disproven or known not to be true. These double negatives require that a hard science fiction writer research each proposed innovation to guarantee that any fact that can be checked out will check out. My first trilogy, Rome's Revolution, required endless hours of research, sometimes just to get one sentence right! I thought I'd give you a few examples of this.

My first novel, also entitled Rome's Revolution required that I invent not one but two completely different but scientifically viable methods of getting to the stars. One had to be slower than light and the other had to be faster than light (FTL). Of course, these have been staples of science fiction since the genre was invented but I had to justify them. I proposed that the designers of my Ark program used a quantum black hole which is fed atoms of xenon and the resulting Hawking Radiation produced a souped-up version of an ion drive which NASA uses today. Unfortunately, the trip to the nearest star, Proxima Centauri, would take 40 - 80 years using my stardrive. The trip to Tau Ceti where most of my action takes place would take over 240 years. Nobody lives that long so I had to freeze my would-be colonists. Also, from an actuarial standpoint, the chances of building a spaceship that would last that long without something catastrophic happening would be very low. So instead of building an expensive and armored spaceship, I built a cheap one, basically a flying tin can. I used hardened storage chambers called sarcophagi in which the frozen people are placed. After embarking on their journey, the whole crew compartment could then be opened up into space so no energy would be required to keep them refrigerated.

Some would die along the way due to micrometeorite punctures but that would not affect any other members of the crew. Of course, thawing the passengers out was problematic. No one has successfully frozen and revived a human being before. But is it possible? Sperm and egg banks have been freezing human reproductive cells for two decades. Scientists have recovered a plant found under the tundra in Russia that had been frozen for over 30,000 years and got it to bloom again. In Canada, the common wood frog freezes solid every winter and thaws out and spontaneously resuscitates itself in the spring. So it is possible.

The plot dictated that I also invent a plausible FTL drive. I did not want to just wave my hands and say warp drive. I wanted it believable and not disprovable. So I researched it and found that in 1948, a physicist named Hendrik Casimir predicted the Casimir Effect in which zero charged space spontaneously splits into regions of positive and negative energy due to quantum fluctuations before recombining again. This effect is real and was actually measured in 1996. Negative energy is a fascinating concept. If you could collect it, there are many who speculate that where there is negative energy, there is no space. Which means you could create a tunnel, conceptually similar to a wormhole except you wouldn't need a black hole. Thus my people of the future, called the Vuduri, invent the Casimir Pump and project negative energy in space. They create what they call a PPT tunnel, glide through it at a very modest speed and end up light-hours away in a single jump. Thus their effective rate of speed is much faster than the speed of light without violating relativity.

Here is an even more mundane example of the research: in the conclusion to the trilogy, entitled Rome's Evolution, there is a scene where my protagonist Rei (pronounced Ray, not rye), is standing on a balcony with his ex-girlfriend in the year 2067 AD and she points up to the Moon.

I needed the star Tabit to be just to its right so that Rei could make a comment about it. I had to acquire a program called Voyager by Carina Software which allows you to calculate the position of stars at any time in the past or future from any place on Earth (or other star systems). I spent several hours until I found the exact date where the Moon and stars were aligned exactly the way I needed them: January 24, 2067 AD. Check it yourself.

For my last example, I had to figure out a way to observe events in the past without actually inventing time travel. I have seen pictures from the Hubble telescope's Ultra Deep Field which are images of galaxies formed over 13 billion years ago. This is a form of "observational" time travel. However, for my novels, I needed something more precise because my characters had to view an event close up that happened 17 years in the past. I was halfway there with my PPT tunnels (the FTL drive) since I had objects which could outrun light and EM waves but how to collect them? I had to invent a "lens-less" camera. I knew from my graduate work that horseshoe crabs can see perfectly well but do not have a traditional lens. Their light collection apparatus are called ommatidia which are long deep transparent tubes with a photosensitive receptor at the bottom. The outer surface of the ommatidia are formed in a convex pattern. So I patterned my lens-less camera off of them. I created tiny starprobes which were nothing more than a PPT stardrive and a single pixel camera with a small tube in front of the collection plate. These starprobes would jump out 17 light years, take a snapshot and return. I had two waves of them alternately jumping in and out at an interleave rate of 30 frames a second, the same as television. The collection tubes guaranteed that they would only detect photons directly where they were pointing and they were coordinated so that they "focused" on a single point. Well, this year, Bell Labs demonstrated a lens-less camera that could take 3D color pictures with a single pixel element! Since the objects I needed to observe were much

larger than a stack of books, I figured I could spot my characters a few million starprobes to get an HD image. What they saw will blow your mind but you will have to read the book to find out what it is.

There are countless other things I had to research: I had write a computer program to generate a new language (called Vuduri) because what are the odds that people will still be speaking English 14 centuries from now? I had to learn about Maksutov-Cassegrain reflectors because the Vuduri have telescopes built into their eyes. I had to learn about termite because I needed an explosive that would last 14 centuries. I had to learn about the anatomy of the back, gravity waves, aerogel, electro-gravity, Dyson spheres; the list goes on and on. All this because I wanted to get the facts right. Hopefully this will give you a little appreciation for the amount of research required to turn ordinary science fiction into hard science fiction.

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
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SUMMER WRAP-UP & FALL MOVIE PREVIEW

By Matthew Yenkala

It's difficult to imagine now, but there was a time when summer was not driven by gigantic blockbusters. That process began with the phenomenal (and unexpected) success of *Jaws* in 1975, and was codified two years later with the release of *Star Wars*. Ever since, studios have spent every summer trying to outdo themselves and each other with that elusive next big hit, to the point that now, the major summer films for the next several years are already known and discussed, even as this year's slate of hits and misses continues to play in dollar theaters and trickles onto home video.

In fact, the summer 2013 was the highest grossing in history, with earnings of \$4.76 billion. Family films, raunchy comedies, low-budget horror and a few big-budget tentpoles dominated, while a number of high-profile misses and near-misses filled out the lineup.

And yet, just as the recording industry had its biggest sales years just before Napster came along and destroyed it, history may record that Summer 2013 as the year that the current model hit the wall--even if it takes a while for that reality to become apparent to all. With a major new release every weekend, and a finite number of dollars in moviegoers' pockets, the pie is getting exponentially smaller, and shared among ever-more releases. In widely quoted remarks, the men largely responsible for the modern blockbuster era--George Lucas and Steven Spielberg--have recently predicted that an implosion is inevitable, and that the days of \$50 movie tickets and first-run films beamed directly into homes may not be far away.

That being said, let's take a quick look at what this past summer brought us, before moving on to what's in store for us this fall.

Among the hits of the summer: *Iron Man 3* was first out of the gate, and still tops the list with over \$400 billion--clearly, the hunger for the Marvel universe is unabated after last year's *The Avengers*. *Despicable Me 2* and *Monsters University* proved popular with families, while *The Heat* and underdog smash *We're The Millers* provided an outlet for R-rated comedy fans. *The Conjuring* and *The Purge* drew in the horror junkies, *Fast & Furious 6* got the testosterone-action crowd pumped up, while the smart, sexy *Now You See Me* snuck up out of nowhere to become one of the surprise sleeper hits of the summer. *World War Z* and *The Great Gatsby* both surprised with better-than-expected numbers, the Seth Rogen vehicle *This Is The End* defied the odds and wound up near \$100 million, while Lee Daniels' *The Butler* broke out of the August doldrums to make an impressive showing, and *Grown-Ups 2* shocked all and sundry by not bombing (however much it deserved to).

In the middling category are a number of films that were highly anticipated and yet somehow failed to

ignite as fully as had been hoped. Topping the list are *Star Trek: Into Darkness* and the *Superman* reboot, *Man of Steel*. Both performed well but not hugely at the domestic box-office (with the latter only making a marginally better showing than 2006's *Superman Returns* when one adjusts for inflation and 3D ticket prices). Both suffered from the same problem of trying to cram too much into one film--the original *Trek* episode "Space Seed" and its 1982 movie sequel *The Wrath of Khan* for the former, the original *Superman 1* and *2* for the latter. Meanwhile, the *X-Men* spinoff *The Wolverine*--billed as "the *Wolverine* movie you've been waiting for"--had the lowest domestic showing of the entire franchise. It's worth noting, however, that all three of these films did franchise-best business outside the US. With foreign tallies now a considerable factor, this makes their status as "misses" dubious (though the decision to add the *Batman* character--to be played by Ben Affleck--to the *Superman* sequel is widely seen as a response to the film's modest showing, while J.J. Abrams has already announced he will oversee, but not direct, the next *Trek* installment, given that he'll be busy on another space franchise set in a galaxy far, far away.)

Both *Red 2* and *Kick-Ass 2* arguably improved on the predecessors in quality, but not in numbers--both were commercial duds. *The Hangover Part 3* made back its budget and then some, but scored a franchise-low, while the normally reliable family film genre took a big hit with such films as *Epic*, *Turbo*, *The Smurfs 2*, and *Planes* failing to get the kiddies in the door in droves. Disney's *The Lone Ranger* was dead on arrival, proving that some concepts--or reboots--are simply overthought and overdeveloped, and that Johnny Depp's charismatic star power can't save everything, especially when he simply continues to play variations on the same role. *White House Down* and *After Earth* failed to get the red-blooded-American-male blood pumping; YA franchises *Mortal Instruments: City of Bones* and *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters* hardly did *Twilight*-level business; while lady-centric, would-be indie darling/sleepers *Lovelace*, *Girl Most Likely*, *The Bling Ring* and *The To Do List* seem to have missed their mark entirely--though *The World's End* has garnered good word of mouth for those who appreciate British humor.

Perhaps most remarkable is that a number of allegedly "original" high-concept films failed to take off. *R.I.P.D.*'s amusing blend of *Ghostbusters* and *Men In Black* barely registered, while many balked at *Elysium*'s thinly-veiled and simplistically drawn take on class warfare, disguised as a sci-fi epic. Guillermo Del Toro's highly anticipated *Pacific Rim*, meanwhile, is more difficult to assess. Widely acclaimed for its take on kaiju vs. mecha, its worldwide gross of \$400 million is impressive until you realize it only doubled its budget, making prospects of a sequel dubious at best.

In any case, summer 2013 is already in the history books--so let's turn our attention to the rest of the year. While this period usually provides the majority of Oscar-baiting films, billed as smarter and deeper than the popcorn fare of the summer months, recent years have seen an increasing number of holiday-timed blockbuster fodder, and this year is no exception. So while we anticipate



the next few years' slate of summer blockbusters, here's a look at what's in store for the fall and early winter of this year.

OCTOBER 4--*Gravity*. George Clooney and Sandra Bullock star in this tale of astronauts adrift, directed by Alfonso Cuarón.

OCTOBER 4--*Runner Runner*. *Batman*-to-be Ben Affleck and Justin Timberlake (wouldn't he make a great Robin?) star in this tale of high-stakes swindling.

OCTOBER 11--*Machete Kills*. The second installment of Robert Rodriguez' *Machete* series, which reunites much of the first film's cast including star Danny Trejo, and adds Antonio Banderas, Cuba Gooding Jr., Vanessa Hudgens, Mel Gibson, Sofia Vergera and Lady Gaga to the lineup. Hopefully it will do well enough for the planned conclusion of the trilogy, *Machete Kills Again*.

OCTOBER 11--*Romeo and Juliet*. A novelty--a telling of the classic romance that's actually set in its proper period and location (16th century Italy). Starring Hailee Steinfeld and Douglas Booth. Allegedly written by one William Shakespeare.

OCTOBER 11--*Great Expectations*. Director Mike Newell's take on the classic Dickens novel.

OCTOBER 11--*All the Boys Love Mandy Lane*. Director Jonathan Levine's debut, a take on the



venerable slasher genre, starring Amber Heard.

OCTOBER 11--CBGB. History of the legendary New York punk club that launched the careers of The Ramones, The Talking Heads, Blondie and others.

OCTOBER 18--The Fifth Estate. Benedict Cumberbatch takes on the real-life role of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange in director Bill Condon's not-quite-biopic.

OCTOBER 18--12 Years a Slave. Benedict Cumberbatch (again) teams up with fellow Brits Michael Fassbender and Chiwetel Ejiofor in this tale of a slavery in 1840s southern America.

OCTOBER 18--Escape Plan. Arnold and Sly team up for they movie the should have made together thirty years ago.

OCTOBER 18--Carrie. Updated retelling of Stephen King's classic horror tale of the revenge taken by a bullied teenage girl, possessed of telekinetic powers and a psychotically religious mother. Starring Chloe Grace Moretz and Julianne Moore.

OCTOBER 25--The Counselor. Ridley Scott's latest film puts Michael Fassbender, Brad Pitt, Javier Bardem and Penelope Cruz together in a tale of drug dealers and lawyers.

OCTOBER 25--Jackass Presents Bad Grandpa. Allegedly reality based, Borat-style hijinks following the wacky exploits of a decidedly non-traditional grandfather (Johnny Knoxville in old-age makeup) and the thoroughly unwholesome situations into which he puts his 8-year-old grandson (Fun Size's Jackson Nicoll).

NOVEMBER 1--Last Vegas. Morgan Freeman, Robert De Niro, Mary Steenburgen, Michael Douglas and Kevin Kline face fear, loathing and retirement in Las Vegas.

NOVEMBER 1--Ender's Game. Harrison Ford stars in this big-budget adaptation of Orson Scott Card's classic sci fi novel, though the author's controversial stance on same-sex marriage has made it a lightning rod of negative attention, overshadowing the film itself.

NOVEMBER 1--About Time. When a young man learns that the males in his family are natural time travelers, he

must decide what really matters in life. Starring Domhall Gleeson, Bill Nighy and Rachel McAdams.

NOVEMBER 8--Thor: The Dark World. Thor, his bitter stepbrother Loki and love interest Jane all return in the next chapter of the unfolding Marvel Cinematic Universe, which promises to up the tension--and the stakes--on the path to The Avengers 2, due in 2015. (Captain America: The Winter Soldier, Guardians of the Galaxy, and Ant-Man are all on track for next year.)

NOVEMBER 15--The Wolf of Wall Street. Martin Scorsese directs Leonardo DiCaprio and Johah Hill in this tale of big-business greed, set in the 1990s.

NOVEMBER 20--Her. Joaquin Phoenix buys a new "smart" computer, voiced by Scarlett Johansson, and quickly falls in love with "her". Well, who wouldn't? Also starring Amy Adams and Rooney Mara.

NOVEMBER 22--The Hunger Games: Catching Fire. Jennifer Lawrence returns as Katniss in the second installment of the dystopian series. Here, she and other previous Hunger Games winners must compete in an all-star competition, where the stakes are higher than ever. Woody Harrelson, Elizabeth Banks, Josh Hutcherson, Donald Sutherland, Stanley Tucci, Lenny Kravitz and Liam Hemsworth all return, and are joined by Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Jena Malone and Sam Claflin.

NOVEMBER 22--Delivery Man. Vince Vaughan is a shiftless layabout who suddenly discovers that, thanks to a mix-up at a sperm lab, he's the father of over 500 children--many of whom are now trying to sue him. Well, wouldn't you, too, if you learned that Vince Vaughan was your Dad?

NOVEMBER 27--Oldboy. Director Spike Lee's remake of the South Korean cult film of the same name (based on a wildly popular Manga) stars Josh Brolin and Samuel L. Jackson, and is guaranteed to be a strong contender in the race for most blood and highest body count of the year.

DECEMBER 13--American Hustle. Director David O. Russell reunites Silver Linings stars Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence, adding Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner and Louis C.K. to the mix in a story of 1970s political corruption and scandal.

DECEMBER 13--The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug. In the second installment of Peter Jackson's adaptation of Tolkien's novel, Bilbo and the Dwarves come face to face with the dragon Smaug, while Gandalf and the White Council face the clear and present danger presented by the dark sorcerer, the Necromancer.

DECEMBER 18--The Monuments Men. George Clooney, Matt Damon, Bill Murray, John Goodman, and Cate Blanchett headline this Great Escape-style tale of World War II intrigue and daring.

DECEMBER 20--Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues. In what is arguably the most anticipated film of the year, Will Ferrell's Ron Burgundy is joined by old colleagues David Koechner, Steve Carrell, Paul Rudd and Christina Applegate, as they take on the early days of 24-hour cable news in the early 80s. Featuring a high-powered supporting cast including Jim Carrey, Harrison Ford, Nicole Kidman, Kirsten Dunst,

Liam Neeson, Sacha Baron Cohen, Kristen Wiig, James Marsden, Vince Vaughan, Tina Fey and Amy Poehler.

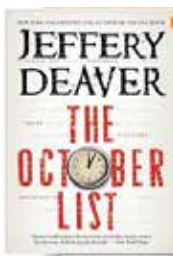
DECEMBER 25--Jack Ryan. In his second high-profile reboot of an iconic action hero, Chris Pine takes on the role of the titular secret agent in what is touted as an origin story.

DECEMBER 25--August: Osage County. Meryl Streep and Julia Roberts star in a tale of small-town dysfunction.

DECEMBER 25--47 Ronin. Keanu Reeves plays a half-English, half-Japanese warrior in 18th-century Japan.

DECEMBER 25--The Secret Life of Walter Mitty. Ben Stiller, Kristen Wiig and Shirley MacLaine star in the latest interpretation of the classic tale of a man who imagines his life to be much bigger, and more exciting, than it actually is. Kinda like Big Fish, except this one came first. Kinda.

WOD



Upcoming Signings / Events at The Poisoned Pen

October 15 - Baron Birtcher signs Rain Dogs at 7pm

October 23 - Anne Hillerman signs Spider Woman's Daughter at 7pm

October 26 - Craig Johnson - Spirit of Steamboat 5pm

October 27 - Jeffrey Deaver signs The October List at 2pm

October 28 - Dan Simmons signs The Abominable at 7pm

**October 31 - Sara Paretsky signs Critical Mass;
A Halloween Party at 7pm**

November 5 - Clive Clussler signs Mirage at 7pm

Discussions for October - Check website for book title

October 12 - 10:30am - Coffee and Crime Discussion Group

October 30 - 7pm - Hardboiled Discussion Group

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purchase the author's new book from the Poisoned Pen.**

PARANORMAL RADIO MASTER ART BELL RETURNS TO TAKE LISTENERS ON A RIDE



“From the high desert, and the great American southwest, I bid you all good evening, or good morning, across all these many time zones. This is Art Bell, live talk radio, unscreened talk radio, unpredictable, unusual, even at times a little weird, but fun--definitely fun. And that is part of my plan on radio, to have fun. Can’t have fun, you ought not to be doing it.”--Art Bell, opening monologue from September 14, 1995 episode

So spoke The Voice--commanding yet personable, ready to engage listeners not in a radio show, but a journey, night after night. A journey into the unexplained and unexplored, into the realms of the paranormal and supernatural and extraterrestrial. Conspiracy, urban legend, forgotten history, suppressed science, secret societies, repressed religion, mythical creatures, abductions, possessions, time travel, electronic voice phenomena, and the odd celebrity interview. All courtesy of the Master of paranormal radio--the legendary Art Bell, who will be making his return to broadcasting on September 16th with the new Sirius XM show, Dark Matter.

To be sure, Bell was not the first to mine this territory. A century ago, researcher Charles Forte spent a lifetime collecting and collating reports of strange events from all over the world, resulting in a series of books that remain fascinating and entertaining to this day--even while his contemporaries P.T. Barnum and Robert Ripley exploited the more populist aspects of such interests.

Further into the twentieth century, controversial scientists (or pseudo-scientists, depending whom you believe) Immanuel Velikovsky, Zecharia Sitchin and Erich von Däniken looked beyond the “acceptable” boundaries of science and history to postulate lost planets, an extraterrestrial origins for the gods of myth and religion, and put forth the notion that life on earth was seeded from outer space--among other even more bizarre theories.

Then starting in the late 70s, the Leonard Nimoy-hosted TV show *In Search Of* brought the paranormal into every living room in America. Hauntings, reincarnation, Atlantis, Bigfoot, the Bermuda Triangle, the Nazca lines, and countless other such “what-if?” fodder ignited the imaginations of a generation.

Bell, a former Air Force medic with a lifelong love of radio, began his broadcasting career in the 70s, first as a disc jockey, then a host of a political call-in show. However, by the early 90s, Bell--now broadcasting from his home in Pahrump, Nevada, about sixty miles outside of Las Vegas--grew tired of the political format and started to focus on more esoteric subject matter, which seemed perfectly suited to his late-night timeslot, where all things that go bump in the night

were considered.

Again, Bell was not the first--the legendary Long John Nebel ran a similar radio program until his death in 1978. But timing is everything, and Bell caught the zeitgeist. In the era of *The X-Files*, a time when Americans were growing increasingly more cynical--and paranoid--about what they didn’t know and weren’t being told--Bell brought such a panache to his range of subjects that he quickly made the format his own, and gave his listeners an outlet to explore and discuss any and all possibilities, no matter how seemingly outlandish.

Even though politics inevitably loomed large in many of the government conspiracies featured on the show, the show itself was largely apolitical. He didn’t shy away from expressing his own views, but he was careful not to make his show a soapbox--nor was he afraid to admit that his own beliefs could evolve. And even when he did cover political topics, his guests were all over the map, left, right, up, down, and sideways. Bell rarely took a side, preferring instead to let the guests speak for themselves and let the listeners--and callers--make up their own minds.

As his show grew in popularity and was picked up by more and more affiliates, Bell’s name became synonymous with alien abductions, his annual Ghost-to-Ghost Halloween shows, and his New Year’s Eve prediction shows, in which he asked listeners to delve into their “psychic centers” and prognosticate about the coming year--even as Bell would read over the previous year’s predictions, rating them with “dings” (for correct guesses) and “bonks” (for wrong ones). L.A. radio personality and master of voices did a series of spot-on Bell parodies, who was always interviewing the frustrated “General Johnson Jameson” about the latest government cover-up. Larry King interviewed Bell on TV, while Bell himself conducted seminal on-air interviews with the likes of George Carlin, Willie Nelson and even *In Search Of* host (and *Star Trek* legend) Leonard Nimoy.

The memorable moments are many. The call from a pilot claiming to be flying into the legendary Area 51, supposed home of captured alien spacecraft. Mel’s Hole--a literally bottomless pit said to exist on the property of one Mel Waters. The night Art super-glued his lips together on-air. Guests such as “remote viewer” Ed Dames, famous alien abductee Whitley Streiber, and “science adviser” Richard C. Hoagland, who is convinced of extraterrestrial footprints on the moon and mars. And regular callers such as self-described Christian soldier “J.C. Webster”--who constantly berated Bell for his lack of piety--made for fantastically entertaining radio.

The show had its darker aspects as well. The mass suicide of the Heaven’s Gate cultists in 1997 was linked to information about a coming comet that had aired on Bell’s show (though it’s since become clear that neither Bell nor his show were in any way responsible for the actions of the cult members), while the paranoid buildup to the Y2K debacle and its subsequent implosion seems mild compared to today’s surveillance issues and the concerns of the tea-party “prepper” mindset.

At its peak under Bell’s tenure, his show, dubbed

By Matthew Yenkala

Coast to Coast AM, claimed 15 million listeners and over 500 stations--making it an attractive purchase for syndicator Premiere Radio Networks, under the umbrella of radio giant Clear Channel (even if its subject matter didn’t always rest comfortable with the politically-right-of-center bent of most of the company’s other programming).

However, beginning in 1998, a series of personal and family setbacks would lead to Bell’s long, gradual departure from the show that he created and pioneered. Multiple retirements and comebacks--most of them apparently forced upon him--would create the sensation of shifting sands under listeners’ feet. While Bell retained nominal control of the show, behind the scenes, his new corporate masters had a different agenda, and in 2003, Bell was relegated to part-time status on the weekends, with weeknight duties undertaken by St. Louis’ “Knight Hawk”, George Noory.

Affable, genial, and avuncular, Noory initially struck many in Bell’s audience as a supremely incongruous choice to fill Bell’s mighty shoes. Where Bell showed a genuine interest in whatever guest or topic was at hand, Noory quickly became famous for, as many listeners put it, “phoning it in”, by relying on stock questions and rote responses, and seemed far less skilled at drawing out the maximum potential of each guest--or calling them to the carpet when they said something that didn’t quite fly (a quality that made for some of Bell’s most enjoyable moments). In short, he lacked an edge--the very edge that made Bell’s show such gripping radio, especially in the wee hours of the night.

Nevertheless for the next several years Noory and Bell hosted side by side, occasionally assisted by the likes of Ian Punnett, George Knapp and others. But in early 2006, a seismic change occurred. Bell’s wife Ramona--who was literally his right-hand person, assisting him with every aspect of every show, from tech to research--died suddenly. After a brief period wherein he threw himself back into the show full-force, Bell relocated to the Philippines, remarried and started a new family. At this point, his hosting duties had dwindled down to between 10 and 15 episodes per year (including his signature Ghost to Ghost and New Year’s Prediction shows)--but the disparity in tone and substance between Noory and Bell grew ever wider.

Coast to Coast under Noory gradually eschewed the paranormal topics that originally made the show famous, focusing instead on the conspiracy side, with an increasingly political bent, and becoming a haven for the extreme, radical fringe-right--birthers, young-earthers, climate-change-deniers, and 9/11 conspiracists (it’s worth noting that Bell refused to have the incendiary Alex Jones as a guest, whereas Noory welcomes him as a brother). When paranormal topics did turn up, it was more likely to be from a shallow, feel-good “New Age” perspective rather than the open-minded but hard-hitting take Bell gave such topics. During Bell’s increasingly rare hosting stints, it was clear that the intellectual and ideological gulf between the show he created and the new audience that had grown under his successor was both wide and deep.

Bell's final stint behind the mic came on Halloween night 2010, with a surprisingly lackluster Ghost to Ghost installment, at the end of which one could clearly hear defeat in the man's voice. When Bell failed to appear for his annual predictions show a few months later--coupled with Noory's announcement that Bell was "winding down" and wouldn't be hosting any more shows--his fans clearly knew that something was up, and divined very quickly that they weren't getting the real story.

However, the "real story" was a long time in coming, and arguably has yet to be told in full. What is known for sure: after a lengthy silence broken only by occasional "hi there" posts on such forums as Coastgab.com and his personal Facebook page, Art Bell has by now made it clear that his exit from Coast to Coast was not merely the quiet decision of a man who wanted to spend time with his young family in his declining years, but the only integrity-saving option to an increasingly uncomfortable corporate squeeze. Likewise, that the decision to hire Noory--whom Bell half-heartedly endorsed early on as being someone who "gets it"--was entirely out of his hands, and that given his druthers, he would have chosen someone else, or not retired at all.

Noory, who has made a habit of paying lip-service to Bell even while alienating Bell's fanbase by (in their view) trampling on his legacy and creation, had been conspicuously non-committal regarding his predecessor's whereabouts. Whenever Bell's name was mentioned by guests or callers, Noory would find every reason not to elaborate on it--and often he simply ignored it, even as he (pun unintended) coasted on Bell's accomplishments.

But all of that began to change in the summer of 2012, when Bell, by now relocated back to Pahrump with his wife and their young daughter, began making it clear that the official story of his retirement was indeed incomplete. He stated that he had demanded that Premiere cease their weekly broadcast of his classic shows (airing under the name Somewhere in Time with Art Bell), which they have thus far refused to do. And shortly after 2013 began, he announced that his non-compete clause had expired, and that he was--just possibly--searching around for the right venue for his voice to be heard on the air yet again. The main condition for his return to radio would be absolute creative control.

After a few false starts, anticipation reached a fever pitch when, starting in late June, the ArtBell.com website was reactivated after a long dormancy, and cryptic comments began appearing on his Facebook and Twitter feeds, all along the lines of "stay tuned". Even the most cynical fans, who felt they had been let down by prior comeback hints that came to naught, couldn't help but prick up their hopeful little ears once again.

And finally, on July 29th of this year came the announcement: Art Bell was coming back, this time on satellite radio--Sirius XM, to be precise, with a new show, Dark Matter, set to begin airing on September 16th. And then everything exploded.

Bell made it clear that while he'd previously been opposed to the idea of appearing on satellite radio, he chose Sirius because it offered a degree of reach, flexibility and freedom that terrestrial radio could not hope to match--and that he'd been itching to get behind



the mic once again, at least in part to counter what his former program had become. In a press release, he indicated that he considered Noory "not edgy enough". In a later Facebook post he elaborated that Noory "has become lazy and does not pay attention....I hope what little competition I can provide will cause him to up his game."

Bell has also made it clear that he has little love for Noory's corporate bosses: "I do have a lot of issues with Premiere that are in the category of anger but not revenge." Bell promises that the full, detailed story of his exit from Coast will be told soon, and that when it is, his fans will be "shocked".

Indeed, it is one of the final ironies that, as Bell has indicated, if Premiere had ceased airing the Somewhere in Time broadcasts (and not made it a point to trumpet their re-signing of Noory to a long-term contract this past June), he might have never returned to the air at all.

Immediately upon Bell's announcement, his passionate and loyal fanbase immediately began scouring Noory's Coast to Coast for any hint of a response. It was swift in coming. Where Noory had previously always mentioned Bell in his nightly thanks at the close of each show, his name was now conspicuously absent. When a caller asked if Noory would consider appearing as a guest on Art's new show, Noory responded with an emphatic "Absolutely not!" (He quickly backpedaled and added, "Unless he asks me!") This display demonstrated clearly that regardless of his desire to project a friendly presence, Noory is the polar opposite of unflappable--indeed, he would appear to be downright thin-skinned and insecure, bristling at even the mildest of constructive criticisms, and painting all who dislike his hosting style with the broad-brush label of "haters".

The bizarre back-and-forth was played out on the air and then on the Coastgab.com forum, where Noory--or a Noory-lackey--logged in to speak up for himself, confirming his identity by giving real-time on-air shout-outs to Coastgab members at their request for proof that he was indeed the genuine article. By this time, Bell and Noory were seemingly playing nice, with Bell calling Noory a "nice guy" with a "good trait", and Noory restoring Bell's name to his nightly thanks. Agreeing that there was room for both shows, that competition was good for everyone, and wishing each other well--perhaps deciding that whatever their differences, an all-out radio war was unnecessary, especially given the fact that with Bell being on satellite radio and Noory on terrestrial, and with Bell's show ending each night as Noory's begins, they would not be in direct competition--the matter of the "feud" seemed to be settled.

But the congenial rapprochement was short-lived. In early September, allegedly against the advice of his producers, Noory welcomed guest David Oates, an "expert" in "backwards speech". What Noory certainly knew, but failed to mention on-air, is that in the late 90s Bell sued Oates in a bitter defamation of character lawsuit, settling out of court in Bell's favor--and with the proviso that Oates was banned for life from Coast to Coast AM.

This was perceived as a clear shot across the bow by all but Noory (who quickly adopted a "Who, me?" attitude), with Bell commenting, "Last night Coast did the most shameful thing since George has been in that seat. I am just sad for them." In this, he merely underscored previous comments that he feels "sad at what the show has become."

Focusing on the positive, however, Bell says, "I am doing Dark Matter because all is well in my life and I love radio, it's all I know, [and I] hope I can still do it."


As to the format and subject matter of the new show, listeners can expect a return to the territory that Bell staked out in his initial heyday, though clearly through the lens of an additional twenty years of world events and technological advances (not to mention the explosion of paranormal shows that have followed in Coast's wake). One thing that Bell has promised, to the relief of his fanbase, is unscreened open lines--as opposed to Noory's rigid call-screening system.

One thing that will not be a focus on Dark Matter, however, is the very thing that has overtaken the latter-day Coast. "Dark Matter will NOT be a Political show," said Bell in a Facebook post. "I will leave that to everybody else. Dark Matter will be EVERYTHING else. Politics is simply no longer relevant to anything important in my life."

It's all but certain that with the moral high ground, creative freedom, and unlimited resources at his disposal, Bell seems poised to reclaim his crown as the modern Master of the paranormal. Countless listeners old and new will once again thrill to The Voice proclaiming each night, "From the high desert, and the great American southwest!" No longer relegated to a footnote at the end of the show he created, he is ready to retake old ground and conquer new--and enjoy himself in the process.

To give the man himself the last word, as posted on his Facebook page, "This is going to be fun!"

WOD



Sun Gate
(Bohemian Grove #2)

**Sun Gate is the
second book
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Grove Trilogy.**

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WOD Bookshelf

DEOMAN'S OF FAEREL

by Ted Fauster

Ted Fauster's Deoman's of Faerel sets the stage for the hopefully many adventures that the characters will embark on. I am not typically a sword and sorcery reader though Fauster and others are turning me as I turn the pages of their stories. Through the misadventures of the main characters Fauster builds the world of Faerel. The mention of how spells are cast or memorized and some of the puzzles the main adventurers are pushed to solve offer an element of RPG fantasy to the telling that I really enjoyed. I am not sure if Fauster is a bigtime tabletop gamer, but if not he definitely understands the culture. That said, I have read other short stories and books with the RPG culture in mind that do not convey good storytelling. Deoman's is as good a story as it is a nod to the role playing games.

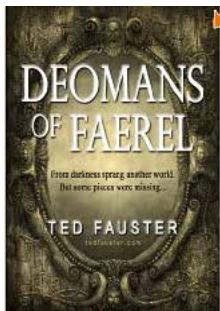
There are a lot of characters to follow in this first book and I have no doubt cast will not shrink in future books. So pay attention to who is who. I am most excited to read more about Faerel and the unique worlds it holds. Fauster has skill for description in general, and world building is something he seems to have a good time with as well as making the tour of this world an enjoyable experience for his readers. I look forward to reading more sword and sorcery genre books again especially the stories of Faerel and the heroes Fauster has introduced.

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

THE EYE'S REVELATION

By Lynn Boston

With the first book, Through the Third Eye, I said; "If you have an interest in history, theosophy, and wild conspiracy, you will enjoy this romp through time



and around the world." This second book delves even further into history and the conspiracy deepens for Clay and Shali.

I continue to be blown away by the research Lynn Boston must spend his time on. The reader is allowed a glimpse into the darker lives of historical figures mentioned, which is always much more interesting than what we are taught in school.

Revelations is not only another fine example of a conspiracy, thriller; it is a leap into history, religions, and a twist on how soul is perceived.

Lead characters Clay and Shali team up with the CIA and obtain more state of the art equipment for their soul seeking mission to find the secrets of the universe. Delving into the past lives of more prominent figures, such as heads of the Hellenics and high ranking members of major religions, they discover even more incredible lives and how we are all connected.

Lynn's understanding of reincarnation, soul pods, Akashic Records, and the human condition continues to thrill readers as Clay and Shali are shadowed and chased through their search for the mysteries of the universe.

This adventure was much more cloak and dagger and offered more action than book one, and it was great to see more detail on the past life experiences and more description of the history of the writings the characters are searching for. Overall, this book was a promising improvement from the first and left me eager for book three! What happens next?

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

REVIVER (2013) By Seth Patrick

This was such a different approach to necromancers than either Laurell Hamilton's, Anita Blake books or Darynda Jones's Grim Reapers series. This was a great stand-alone book about special people with the power to bring back the dead. Law enforcement officers have a new tool in their arsenal. It's the testimony of the deceased on



camera telling who killed them and how it happened; but for the revivers who bring them back, it's no fun. This is a scary take on necromancers using their powers for good, while unsettling stories of bad things happening are kept in the background. However, sometimes when you look into the eyes of the dead, something looks back out.

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

THE ARRIVALS (2013)

By Melissa Marr

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

FLOWERTOWN (2013)

By S.G. Redling

After seven years of containment in Flowertown (named for the smell the inhabitants give off as a reaction to the toxic chemicals they were exposed to), the area's infrastructure is breaking down and the detainees are justifiably angry. Rumors of a cure are debated at the same time as an underground rebellion brews. Ellie works in Records and steals some classified files but can't make sense of the medical terminology and can't seem to care because she has just been "blue-tagged." When at a routine blood test, she receives a message - don't take the red pills - her fog starts to lift and she tries to find someone to trust, but trust is



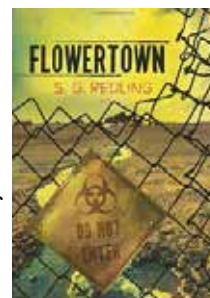
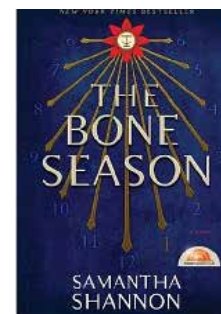
in short supply as the chemical company tries to hide its secrets and increase its profits and it's every person for themselves. The characters were so well drawn that even though you don't like slacker/stoner Ellie in the beginning, you care about what happens to her and her friends by the middle and by the end you are turning the pages as fast as you can. The story starts out slow as you watch Ellie stop taking her meds and wake up to the situation, which is all too real in the wake of all the chemical contamination you see on the news every day. It's easy to see the story here playing out in real life in the near future. The plot soon picks up and at speed you follow Ellie, Guy, Rachel and Bing as they try to stay alive when the company has plans to clean up their mess in a bloodthirsty way; the twist towards the end was cool, too. This is a new author for me and I loved the juxtaposition of the dirty smelly detainment camp with her clean, crisp writing and excellent control over how much detail is enough. She will now go on my favorite authors list.

-- Reviewed by: Normalene Zeeman

THE BONE SEASON (2013)

By Samantha Shannon

I started out liking this book because of the wonderful alternate-London and the ESP-based criminal underworld. I also liked the main character, Paige, who is a dreamwalker and uses that skill to search out information for her crime-lord Jax. There is a lot of infodump early on to get the backstory of the world set up, but it is spread out enough to not be really annoying. Just when I started getting into the book, Paige gets kidnapped by what seem to be godlike humans (Rephaim) and sent to a city, hidden-in-plain-sight-but-not-easily-accessible (Oxford) where the ESP's (voyants) are treated like tasty food sources yet are necessary for the continued survival of our world as soldiers against the evil flesh-eating humanoids (Emim). And yet another infodump to explain how this city fits into the alternate world! Other than that mysterious gods or aliens illogicality, the characters were well drawn and their human motives were pretty logical. The terms the author uses for the different types of beings is confusing as the connotation of



“angel” is so deeply embedded in the human psyche that thinking of angels as something like spirits is hard to keep in your mind; same with the biblical “Rephaim/Emim” and it is not clear if the Emim are a species of Rephaim or not. The ending didn’t go where I thought it would and left lots of room to fill in the left-out bits. There will be sequels since the author says this is part of a series. You decide if it lives up to the hype: suspend belief, roll with the characters and enjoy this new world, I think we’ll be seeing more of it.

The Bone Season was the first pick of the new Today Show book club. Seems an odd choice for them. This book has also hit the NYT bestseller list this month at #13.

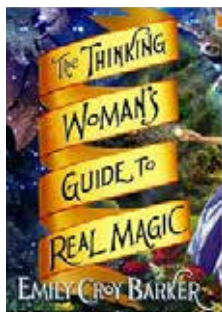
-- Reviewed by: **Normalene Zeeman**

Adult Services Lead Librarian, Prescott Public Library - www.prescottlibrary.info

THE THINKING WOMAN’S GUIDE TO REAL MAGIC (2013)

By Emily Croy Barker

Nora’s having trouble finishing her dissertation but that becomes irrelevant when she finds herself a prisoner of the Faitoren in a world not her own. Married to the nonhuman Prince Raclin for breeding purposes, she is rescued by Aruendiel, a human magician and as she is relieved of the many enchantments surrounding her, she discovers magic and that she is good at it. Nora’s smart, not gorgeous, self-sufficient not needy and the end tells me this is going to be a series. With the depth and breadth you expect in a Diana Gabaldon novel and the full-fleshed historical grasp of magic of A Discovery of Witches, this book still gives something new and fun to read. The characters will stick with you and you’ll really root for Nora when she uses Algebra to break a spell.-- Reviewed by: **Normalene Zeeman**



DARK DJINN

by J.J. Timmins

I had to seriously decompress after reading Dark Djinn. One part angsty teen novel, one part classic genie in the lamp fantasy, and so much modern day drama, magic, action and human vice all rolled into one story.



There were moments that I wanted to put the story down, mostly when Timmins’s characters would repeat themselves in ways that felt more like the writer forgot what was going on rather than reminding the reader where things were going. There were also a couple places where characters just sort of appeared, as if the story wasn’t going to be novel length without adding in just one more twist.

It was interesting to see the genie learning modern technology, but it made me wonder a bit on how he picked it up so fast and how long he had been imprisoned before this most recent summoning.

Timmins does try very hard to keep to the genie lore, which makes this a fair read for anyone interested in this type of mythology.

Timmins is not nice to his characters, but they do all seem to get what they deserve in the end. In some ways the story reminded me of the classic slasher flicks where vices will get you to the top of the killer’s hit list and the good guy survives unscathed. While the characters are not any worse than the typical teen, Timmins seems to have an affinity for the virtues of the Christian faith while harboring a strong distaste for the wealthy elite.

I did find myself attached enough to the little gang of small town teens to really feel for them at the end. I would look for more of Timmins’s work after reading this and maybe even a sequel to this story.

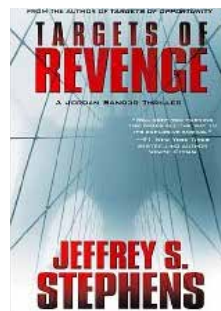
-- Reviewed by **J.J.M. Czep**

Author of Blackstrap’s Ecstasy and Troll

TARGETS OF REVENGE

by Jeffrey S. Stephens

Targets of Revenge is a modern day thriller and the third in the Jordan Sandor series. In this story, Jordan Sandor travels around the world as a CIA agent torn between his official job and personal desires for revenge. The two goals are sometimes entwined and at other times are at odds. Jeffrey Stephens does a very good job at keeping up a frenetic pacing throughout the book. From start to finish it is one action sequence after another with only an occasional pause to gather clues to lead Sandor to his next destination.



The story is based on current events and geopolitical situations which may cause it to age quickly. For example, it has Obama as President of the United States and Hugo Chavez as the head of Venezuela. In four or five years, the story will likely have lost its relevance. However, that is also the strength of the story, its very current feel and contemporary references bring you into the action as you can see it playing out in today’s climate.

The novel is definitely in the mode of TV series 24 mixed with James Bond and is targeted toward a male adventure audience. The characters are not fleshed out as well as I would have hoped, with motivations and story arcs limited primarily to Sandor and the villain he confronts. The female characters are all attractive but one dimensional props to the story. The author also has a narrative voice that is clearly conservative, patriotic and capitalist. That limits the appeal of the book in my opinion to a smaller, but still substantial readership.

If you like reading Matt Helm, James Bond, the Bourne series, or other action-oriented thrillers then you will definitely enjoy Targets of Revenge. If you are looking for more of a character arc or more morally relativistic introspection, then you should probably pass on it.

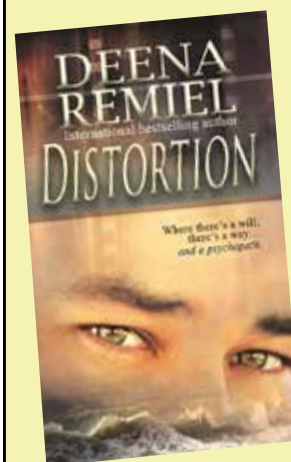
-- Reviewed by **Michael Bradley**

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

DARK ONES PARTY



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WOD



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