

FADEAWAY #62



FADEAWAY #62 is a fanzine devoted to science fiction and related fields of interest, and is produced by **Robert Jennings, 29 Whiting Rd., Oxford, MA 01540-2035, email fabficbks@aol.com.** Copies are available for a letter of comment, or a print fanzine in trade, or by subscription at a cost of \$25.00 for six issues. Letters of comment are much preferred. Any person who has not previously received a copy of this fanzine may receive a sample copy of the current issue for free by sending me your name and address. Publication is (in theory anyway) bi-monthly. This is the September-October 2019 issue

RE-SET PRINT COPIES---AGAIN With this issue a number of people who have not responded to this publication are being eliminated from the print list, and a number of people are also being dropped from the pixel format mailing list. I hate to keep harping on this theme, but communication is the name of the game. It takes effort, money, and dedication on the part of Ye Editor and the people who turn out the articles and artwork printed herein, and we need some kind of feedback. I recently got a note from a reader who said he had the last four issues of *Fadeaway* on hand, but didn't have time to make any comments. Guess what, if he hasn't had the time to make comments on any of those issues in the last nine months, then I don't have time to send him any more new issues.

I realize that so far as science fiction fandom goes, fanzines are a dying entity. The internet provides chat rooms and bulletin boards in abundance, while Facebook, Twitter, and other social media allow immediate posting of ideas and immediate feedback.

The number of SF related fanzines in both print and pixel format are undergoing a steady decline in numbers over the past decade, and the process seems to be accelerating in this Year of Our Lord 2019. A quick check of the efanazines.com website, for example, reveals in the past two months exactly 36 fanzines have been posted there. Of that group, six of the zines were produced by Dale Speirs, who turns out *Opuntia* on a bi-weekly basis (how he is able to do that remains a mystery far as I am concerned). Three other issues were produced by Nic Fury, three issues of *This Here*. Of the remaining twenty-five, four issues were reprints of fanzines that had been published in past years, plus there were a couple of apazines. That leaves precious few other relatively new fanzines being offered these days.

At the current rate of decline SF/fantasy fanzines will soon be relegated to the annals of folklore, something from the days of yesteryear when the hobby was young and energetic, a time when people were enthusiastic and anxious to share their creative energies with the rest of fandom.

Those glory days of yore are apparently gone forever. Fanzines are rapidly becoming an anachronism, something we oldsters will be able use to amaze our grandkids; sort of like those tales of olden times when people had to actually get up and walk all the way across the room to the television set to change the channel or adjust the volume. I wonder if the youngsters will believe us when we tell them that fanzines used to be the vibrant heart of this hobby; that the letter columns were crammed tight with missives from people anxious to participate, that the number of fanzines produced used to number in the hundreds each and every month. Probably not. These kinds of fantastic legends will likely seem like impossible tale tales, difficult to take seriously, even if they were once true.

Fandom and fanzines are supposed to be about ideas and friendships, and sharing, especially sharing your writing, your ideas, and your opinions. But too many people these days seem to think that fanzines are a free perk, something they are automatically entitled to, a subsidy they automatically receive, something they never need to acknowledge. Wrong. Why should I waste my time and my valuable resources sending out print copies or electronic copies to people who clearly don't care? Answer: I shouldn't, and I won't. Those people who don't want to participate or get involved or even to provide minimum feedback are being pruned from the mailing lists, and this process will continue in the future.

For those who are still interested in fanzines, I am about to revive my fanzine review column. The column used to run in the regular issues of *The Insider*, but alas, that unique mixture of science, humor, news, reviews and commentary was discontinued back in 2017. A bit later I switched the fanzine column over to the N3F genzine *Tightbeam*, which I was then editing. During that period the circulation was pretty widespread. Unfortunately these days *Tightbeam* only goes out to N3F members and *Tightbeam's* core features seem to be flying apart to turn into assorted highly specialized sub-zines.

Well, anyway, starting next issue I will try to do a few fanzine reviews every number of *Fadeaway*, for those few people who are still interested in the art form.

THE COVER ILLO this time round is by artist Dan Carroll, and is titled "Decius In the Underworld". This pic is best viewed in color. I urge those of you who are receiving the print copy of this zine to take the time to go to Bill Burns' excellent efanazines.com website and take a look at the cover as displayed there. One of the clear advantages of getting pixel copies of this zine is that all the illos, including the cover pics, come thru in full color. Check it out for yourself.

used to be monthly, but some changes in the requirements Diamond Comics initiated forced Rich to switch over to the much thicker bi-monthly issues back in 2009.

For anybody interested in comic strips, particularly older comic strips, this is an invaluable publication. Each bi-monthly issue is 130 pages long, trade paperback size, on quality white paper stock, with light cardboard covers, and features almost nothing by classic comics strips reprinted in sequential order.

At the present time Comics Revue runs ongoing reprints of fourteen different comic strips, covering a time frame from the late 1930s thru the late 1970s. The current mix includes Mandrake the Magician, Buz Sawyer, Alley Oop, The Phantom, Tarzan, Steve Roper, Crazy Kat, Casey Ruggles, Rick O'Shay, Gasoline Alley, Steve Canyon, Garth, Flash Gordon, and Sir Bagsby. New titles are added from time to time.

Each issue features one, sometimes two, complete story sequence reprints of one or more of the regular features, with all the other strips getting anywhere from three to ten pages each issue. The headliner(s) rotates on a regular basis according to some system that only Rick understands. There is a full color section in the center of each issue, currently devoted to Tarzan and Casey Ruggles Sunday page reprints.

It's a great mix and a great product. The subscription rate is \$59.00 for a full year, and each issue is sent inside a sturdy mailing envelope so the copies all arrive in Near Mint condition. If you love classic comic strips, this is certainly a must-have publication. 400 numbers, and still going strong. It's quite an accomplishment. I look forward to the next four hundred issues.



"Why is the office copier playing that music?
My guess is that the paper is jamming again."

A BOOK HUNTING TOUR

by

Gary Casey

I admit it, I'm a book hoarder. It's not as bad as it sounds, my collection is confined to one room of my humble dwelling, I keep them neat, and I do read them. Still, it hard for me to pass a good SF title by when I have cash in my pocket, even given the fact that my reading is backed-up for at least the next thirty or so years.

Being a book hoarder in these days of on-demand digital books and the vast library Amazon places within a day's reach of my mailbox is a bit silly, but I have my reasons. When I was a kid, way back in the 70s, I lived on a farm in the middle of nowhere. By 'nowhere' I mean a good bookstore, hell, any bookstore, was 'nowhere near'. You would have thought the world would have opened up to me once I got my driver's license, but it didn't. I was a rotten driver, still am to this day, so I'm not the type to take off cross-country to hit a good bookstore. I just might not come back in one piece.

I live in a very rural, very backward part of the United States. Not a lot of SF readers here, so the few used bookstores (and used bookstores are the best kind of bookstores) don't have much SF.

So, for much of my life many of the classics of SF were just titles to me. My response was to become a hoarder of books. In order to find books to hoard I have to travel, and I don't travel except when I can't get out of it.

Thank the Ghods for friends.

One of my best friends, Drew Kirk, is a Fantasy fan. Drew and I go back some 30 years. I'm the guy who got him mixed up in Dungeons and Dragons (I was his first DM, an art form in which he has long ago surpassed me). He's also one of the few people that can put up with my brand of bullshit, and believe me, that is no mean feat.

Last year we took what I called a Book-Blitz---think a vacation spent hitting one bookstore after another. Drew is a high school science teacher, so it was sort of the last hurrah of his summer vacation. We hit seven bookstores in four states in five days (he drove of course, I would have just gotten us killed if I were behind the wheel for that kind of trip). The trip was a ton of fun and before we had made it home we were already planning another.

Drew and I just took our Second Annual Book-Blitz a few weeks ago. This year we hit five stores in four days in two states. The two states in question were Alabama and Tennessee. I shouldn't count Alabama, we both live here, (it's more like we are trapped in Alabama...anyone who *wants* to live in Alabama shouldn't be trusted with anything more powerful than damp firecrackers), but we did hit two stores in Alabama.

We both live in Alabama, very close to the Florida line. This area is listed as a book desert, meaning the average household owns less than 20 books. I don't bother with the public libraries, they are all under-funded jokes. Besides, both Drew and I are into science fiction and fantasy. Drew is also always looking for current science volumes so he can stay up-to-date and maybe use them in his classroom. I'm always looking for quirky Fortean lore. All of this sort of stuff is under-represented in this area.

We both like shopping the used book stores. You'll never know what you'll find. I am of the opinion that the best books are out-of-print. We also like saving money. So if we want to feed our collections we have to order online or travel.

I've always been the kind of guy that, if plopped down in the middle of an unfamiliar city, can find a used book store inside 30 minutes if there is one to be found. That was true even before the internet. So I picked our targets in TN, Drew picked the Alabama targets. I left the planning of the route to Drew (as we wanted to



make it home alive, he was doing all the driving). Drew also made the hotel reservations. He works the cons, so he is always getting credit for free rooms. I set about doping out how we were going to drag our loot home.

Last year we didn't put a lot of planning into how we were going to pack our books into his Outback. It is roomy, but still we barely pulled it off. This year we were under a handicap. Not long before our trip I bought 360 issues of Locus magazine, six boxes worth. As it happened, the guy I bought them from lived in one of the cities on our route. We arranged to pick them up while we were in town, saving me a bunch of money in shipping costs. But this meant we would have to be careful as possible in packing the rest of our stuff.

I was going mostly for paperbacks, Drew for hard covers. I settled on fruit boxes as being the best way to pack them. They had lids and could be stacked. I settled on cherry boxes for paperbacks, tomato

boxes for hard covers. It was easy to get the cherry boxes, but I could score only one tomato box, so I got what I could for the hard covers.

We pre-loaded his Outback on a Sunday afternoon and headed out 7AM Monday morning. Our first target: McKay's, Knoxville TN. It was a day-long drive.

We passed the time talking and listening to a play-list of traveling music Drew had programmed for us. We spent nearly an hour trying to work out if we could justify the carbon footprint of the trip. Maybe it was just a bunch of BS, but we came to the conclusion we could. We were basically recycling old books, no new trees were being cut to make them. If we ordered them from Amazon they would have to be packaged and shipped, we were getting them all in one trip. As far as cash, we were saving a ton on shipping costs. Being as we planed on coming back with a few hundred books that added up quick.

We reached the Knoxville McKay's that afternoon.

The best way to describe McKay's would be as a big-box used book store. They mainly deal in books, but they also have back-issue comics, records, CDs, DVDs, and used video games. Don't get the wrong idea. When I showed Bob the first draft of this article he thought I was talking about a high-class pawn shop. Far from it. McKay's is a book store, NOT some seedy pawn shop. It has just taken the used book store model and applied it to many different things.

McKay's is a five store chain. Two stores are located in NC and three in Tennessee. I have yet to visit the NC stores. This trip we visited all three Tennessee stores. They are located in Chattanooga, Nashville, and Knoxville. We had been to the Chattanooga store before, but the other two were new to us.

McKay's prides itself on being a high-volume store. The Nashville store handles some 1,000 transactions in an average day. All three TN stores are located beside busy interstates. They have tons of parking space. The only time I ever saw the parking lot at the Chattanooga store empty was when they were closed.

Granted, not everyone is spending cash. You will see people unloading car trunks filled to the brim with books, electronics, games, and DVDs to trade in for cash or store credit. There is always a line at both the trade-in desk and check-out.

Outside, in front of the store, you will see people going through the "Free" bin. Anyone can search through the free bin, costumer or not, taking as much as they want. Sometimes you will find a gem, sometimes just junk, but it's all part of the fun.

If you are trading in stuff, the set-up is simple. You load up your stuff in one (or two, even three or more) of the bins they provide. Turn in the bins at the front desk and you will be given a slip with a number on it. When you see your number come up on the large TV screen near the front desk, turn in your number and you will be made two offers, one cash the other store credit. You pick the one you want. If cash, you will get the green stuff, NOT a check (at least that's what I have seen happen). If you go for the store credit, you will get a credit slip, good until you use it or loose it (I once had a credit slip that was like 3 years old for over \$100...they took it and didn't blink).

I'm not exactly sure how the value of a trade-in is calculated. Some things I thought I would do really well on I didn't. On the other hand, a few years ago I got \$300 in trade on a NES video game I pulled out of a 3

for \$5 bin at a flea market. Your trades are appraised in the back of the store, you never get to talk to or even see the person doing the appraising.

If there is something you brought in that the store doesn't want you can take it back or it will be put in the "Free" bin out in front of the store.

This time I brought some books to trade I got at a local thrift store. They never have any SF, but I can usually get some good traders there. For some used books that I spent \$20 on, McKay's gave me \$70 in trade. I was a happy camper.

Time to hit the stacks. On your way to the book cases, you will pass thru about a ton of used DVDs, comics, Legos, video games and consoles. They even have used tablets. You will pass an elevator that will take you to the second floor (really a balcony that wraps around three walls of the store...they keep the old records and CDs there). Then you hit the books. An ocean of books! Most of the store's floor space is given over to books. Don't panic...everything is categorized and you will find a key telling you what's where posted on the sides of the shelves.

Don't come unless you have a few hours to spend. It takes me a good hour to paw thru the SF section. The Fantasy section is even larger. The prices are not bad. For paperbacks expect to pay a premium if you are buying a classic title by Asimov, Bradbury, or RAH, they run about five dollars. The most expensive paperback I saw was an early edition of William Gibson's "Nuromancer" for \$10. On the low end, you can find books priced at 10 or 25 cents, but not many of those. Most of their paperbacks are around \$2. Hardcover vary depending on condition and title, usually between \$4 to \$10.

I usually find a few Doc Savages, the paperbacks reprints, not the pulps. This time out I got a couple of the Omnibus editions, a steal at \$5.25 each. I've seen them go as high as \$75 dollars on e-Bay. I like the Omnibus volumes and always pick them up when I can find them. They have five Doc Savage novels in each volume. Also in the Savage vein, I found Philip Jose Farmer's "Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life". Farmer got his hands on all the old Doc Savage pulps, read them, and wrote this biography of Doc. I've read it before but lost my copy over the years. It's a fun book, and the \$5 price was well worth it. I understand Farmer gave the same treatment to Tarzan in "Tarzan Alive!" but I've never run into a copy.

You will always find several of the old classics. Bradbury and RAH in particular are always well stocked. Others are hit and miss, depending on what people are bringing in to trade. I almost always find some of the old Ace Doubles as well, usually priced anywhere from \$1 to \$3. This time I got a few. The big score here was a Mack Reynolds volume with "Black Man's Burden" backed with "Border, Breed, nor Birth". My understanding is these two were part of a trilogy Reynolds wrote about a future where Africa is in assent; not hard to imagine given how rich Africa is in natural resources.

I also found a few volumes of A. Bertram Chandler's John Grimes series. John Grimes is sort of a Horatio Hornblower of space. Chandler was born in the UK and served in the Merchant Navy for many years, beginning in 1928. He brought his naval experience to his John Grimes books and stories, a series running more than 20 volumes, published between 1968 and 1984 in book



form...I don't know the magazine history. I'm still building my collection of the series. It's all fine space opera--steals at \$2 each.

One of my nicer finds was a copy of "Nova Express" by William S. Burroughs. Been looking for that for ages. Back during the New Wave Judith Merrill was a champion of Burroughs, I believe she once called him the greatest science fiction writer ever in one of her F&SF book review columns. I've not much of a fan of New Wave SF, but given the book's reputation I wanted a copy for my collection. I had to look for that one in the classics section. Ghods forbid that something the mundane readers consider "good" be found in the SF section. I also snagged a copy of his "Naked Lunch", another title the New Wavers use to "wave" around.

As long as we are on the New Wave, I picked up a copy Disch's "334", oversize paperback, \$5. I know little of it except that it has a big reputation as being a good book. We shall see...

They have a literary criticism section as well as a genre studies section. These sections are very small, but you can find treasures from time to time. This time I scored the "Comic Book Encyclopedia" by Ron Goulart (hardcover, \$4).

They also have a paranormal section, divided into several sub-sections. It's very hit-and-miss, but sometimes you can find a John Keel. If you get really lucky you may find an edition of Charles Fort's books. I walked away with "Invisible Residents" by Ivan T. Sanderson where he argues that Earth's oceans are home to the intelligent race flying the UFOs. I also picked up a copy of "Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects", also known as the Condon Report where Dr. Edward U. Condon argues UFOs are a lot of BS. Apparently Sanderson sells better than Condon...Sanderson's book was \$8, Condon's \$1.50.

If you are into the horse operas (I am) the Western section isn't that big. They have plenty of Zane Grey and Louis L'Amour, and may the Ghods save me from the series westerns they have (Gunsmith, Longarm, etc). Once you get past those you can usually find a few of the old westerns. I picked up some Luke Short this round.

My friend Andrew is a Fantasy guy. He's gotten interested in Terry Brook's Shannara series lately, and between the three stores he was able to nearly complete that series, nearly 30 books long.

The Science section is well stocked. Drew found several books to help him stay current in both biology and physics.

Those are just the sections I check. They have every kind of book you can think of. Biography, Do-It-Yourself, Arts and Crafts, Young Adult, even a Plays section (and yes, they have more than the Immortal Bard) and all between.

Once you have shopped yourself poor, you will find the check-out line long but fast moving. Normally

they have at least two registers open, sometimes as many as four. They have those cheap Wal-Mart type plastic bags but can get you boxes if you have a lot of stuff. The Chattanooga store also has reusable book bags for about \$3 each with the store logo on them.

On the second day of our journey we went from Knoxville to Nashville. We headed straight to McKay's on hitting town. All three stores have the same floor plan, so it was easy to find things. After raiding the stacks we were met in the parking



lot by a friend who had brought my *Locus* magazines. We did a bit of visiting, compared notes on recent table-top gaming adventures, then loaded up the loot and headed to the hotel for a well-earned rest.

Drew has a thing when on long trips. A day doesn't go by that he doesn't play Tetris with the cargo. It's something of a joke among his family, but I can see the value of it, particularly on a trip like this one. He was able to make things more compact and save us a good bit of space. I made myself useful by smoking cigarettes and staying out of the way.

Day three and it's off to Chattanooga. I'm in love with the Chattanooga store. Over the years I've had a chance to visit it several times, each time leaving with two or three boxes of books. The Nashville and Knoxville stores seem to have mostly newer SF, but the Chattanooga store has a good selection of the older goodies. Without the Chattanooga store, my SF collection would be a poor sight indeed. A half-dozen visits to the Chattanooga store along with an investment of a few hundred bucks a careful person can build a nice little SF collection. Last year we stopped here and I scored a set of EE 'Doc' Smith's Lensmen series in oversize paperback editions for less than twelve bucks. This is also the store I got most of my Howard/deCamp Conan. But those were past glories. This time I scored a big bunch of the DAW yellow-back editions, some Ron Goulart, and a few Best of Year collections in hardcover. Not stuff to write home about, but the kind of thing that puts the flesh on any collection.

We made it home the next day after hitting two stores in Alabama. I not going to say anything about the Alabama stores; at least one of them is worth a story of it's own, the other near a Con I want to write about. Watch this space.

In the end, I spent nearly \$700 on books. I asked Drew how much he was out, but he wasn't sayin'. We had a ton of fun pawing through tons of good books (not mention dragging the best of the best home). Me, I can't wait for the next book-cation.

If you want to check out McKay's for your self, point a web browser to <http://www.mckaybooks.com/>



Foster's forgotten comics
present: **"Zero Heroes"** 119

MISTER MISTER

The "Mister Mister" title was a short-lived attempt to cash in on the early '90s flood of "extreme" and "dark" and "big guns!" character types. Not sure if the writer took the assignment all that seriously, turning in the story of Mister Mister, a "hero" with two "super-powerful water misters that could drown a criminal with a single spritz!", and was then surprised to have the series green-lighted. After critical reaction to the first three-issue story arc (i.e: facepalming and hysterical laughter, plus straight-to-the-cellar sales). the title was re-booted as a "parody, really, we were just joking all along" format, even introducing his wife "Missus Mister" who, true to her name, always missed her target. There was never an issue #5.

"Mister Mister" #1 - 4 (1995, 1996)
(Issue #1 had 6 variant covers, #s 2 and 3 had 9 each, and issue #4 had 37 variants, including -two- blanks!)

TOTAL RECALL...

The Original Story, The Film, and the Remake

by

Tom Feller

In the last 40 years, Philip K. Dick has become Hollywood's favorite science fiction writer. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to enjoy his commercial success after living the life of an impoverished artist, dying just a few months before the release of *Blade Runner*, based on his novel "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?"

He was an immensely talented writer, and I have probably read 10-15 of his books. I am proud to say that I discovered him about 10 years before *Blade Runner* came out. I believe Hollywood's affinity for him is the result of Dick's paranoia, whether it was induced by mental illness, substance abuse, or both. In *Blade Runner*, how do we know whether the person sitting next to us is a human or an android? Similarly, how do we know whether our memories are really our own or rather ones implanted into brains? This is the question he asks in "We can Remember it for you Wholesale", which has been made into a movie twice, first in 1990 and then 2012. The first movie, while far from being one of my favorites, I can still watch with enjoyment, but as for the remake I was satisfied to see it just one time when it first came out.

The original story was first published in the April 1966 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. The main character was named Douglas Quail in the story, but his last name was changed to Quaid for the films, reportedly so that there would be no confusion with Dan Quayle, Vice-President of the United States at the time the first film was made.

Quail works as a clerk in Chicago, but in the first movie his occupation is changed to construction worker at the request of Arnold Schwarzenegger, who played Quail/Quaid. He dreams of visiting Mars, but in this future, travel to the planet is not available to tourists. His wife Kirsten disapproves of this fantasy,



suggesting instead that they visit an underwater resort instead. Skipping work one day, Quail visits a business called Rekal Incorporated, which promises to implant memories about a trip to Mars, not as a tourist but as a secret agent. Unfortunately, the technicians discover hidden memories of a real trip to Mars as an assassin. In the story, the trip to Mars is in the past, but in the first film, it is in the future. He is a kind of super-sleeper agent for whom his cover is so deep that not even he knows that he is a spy. Because of Rekal, his cover has now been blown. In the story, he quickly discovers, in an extra bit of paranoia, that he also has an implant that allows his former superiors at the spy agency called Interplan to listen to his thoughts. In the first movie, the implant is just a tracker. The story then has a twist ending that neither of the films use.

Writers Ronald Shusett and Dan O'Bannon began working on the screenplay for this film as early as 1974. However, when they realized they could not afford the special effects, they tabled it for the story that eventually became "Alien". They returned to the Dick story after the success of that film. Originally Dino de Laurentiis was supposed to produce, Bruce Beresford to direct, although later replaced by David Cronenberg, with Patrick Swayze to play Quaid

after Christopher Reeve turned down the role. Jeff Bridges, Richard Dreyfuss, Matthew Broderick, Mark Harmon, and Tom Selleck were also considered.

However, Laurentiis's company went bankrupt, and Schwarzenegger, who had expressed interest in the part, persuaded Carolco to purchase the script. Paul Verhoeven was selected to replace Cronenberg as director after the success of *Robocop*, and *Total Recall* became the second most expensive movie made up until that time after "Rambo III". By the time of the actual filming, the script had been rewritten about 40 times, 12 times by Cronenberg alone. In the last revision, Gary Goldman changed it to contain less satire and more violence because Schwarzenegger was cast as the lead. The original cut submitted to the Motion Picture Association of America was rated "X", but they trimmed the stylized violence to come down to an "R" rating. It won an Oscar for visual effects, was nominated for Oscars in the sound and sound editing categories, and was nominated for the Hugo as well.

The film was a big commercial success becoming the 5th highest grossing movie of that year.

In the first movie, set in the year 2084, Quaid actually gets back to Mars. His wife, now renamed Lori (Sharon Stone), is actually an agent of the Martian government assigned to spy on him. After returning from *Rekall* (for some reason the movie changed the name of the company), Quaid is attacked by his fellow construction workers, including his supposed best friend, and then Lori. He escapes and obtains a suitcase containing money, false ids, gadgets, and a video recording from himself explaining that his real name is Hauser and that he is involved in the Martian revolution. After providing instructions for removing the tracking implant, Hauser tells him to return to Mars. In this movie, he has no difficulty getting there in disguise, and after he arrives, he has a series of adventures that are disturbingly similar to the ones Quaid was promised when





he first went to Recall. The film ends before the viewer can decide whether the events of the last half of the film are to be considered “real” or just a dream. In interviews years later, Schwarzenegger said he believed the former, but Verhoeven said he thought it was the latter. I personally go with the “dream” interpretation because of the

numerous scientific inaccuracies, such as instantaneous communications between Earth and Mars.

At the time, Arnold Schwarzenegger was one of the biggest stars in Hollywood and at the peak of his popularity. He had already starred in two Conan movies and the first Terminator and Predator films and would go on to star, among many other movies, in two more Terminator films, play a super-villain in a Batman movie, become governor of California, and then returned to making films, including yet another Terminator movie. The reviews of his acting in “Total Recall” were some of the most positive of his career, and many critics consider this film to be one of his best.

Sharon Stone was an up and coming movie actress when she was cast as Quaid’s wife, now renamed Lori, in “Total Recall”. She did her own stunts and was so good that she was made an honorary member of Stunt Woman Association. Stone took advantage of all that physical training in preparation for the role by posing nude for *Playboy* before the film’s release. Verhoeven liked her so much that he cast her as the femme fatale 1992’s “Basic Instinct” with Michael Douglas. Her career peaked a few years later in Martin Scorsese’s “Casino” for which she was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actress.

For Rachel Ticotin, who plays Melina, the actual heroine of the film and Quaid’s true love, “Total Recall” was the peak of her career. Stone and Ticotin have a big unglamorous fight scene, which includes neither slapping nor hair pulling, about two-thirds into the film in which they both displayed their considerable martial arts skills. Both Stone and Ticotin have continually worked in both television and movies, but not in starring roles in big budget films.

Ronnie Cox is the principal villain of the first “Total Recall” movie playing Vilos Coahaagen, the governor of Mars. He had achieved both popular and critical acclaim for his role in *Deliverance* in which he played the guitar, and he has had a career in music in addition to his acting career. His portrayal of a corporate villain in *Robocop*, also directed by Verhoeven, led to his role in *Total Recall*. For Michael Ironside, his role as Richter, Cox’s chief hitman, was one of many in his career in which he portrayed villains and tough guys. One of his motivations for hating Quaid was that Lori (Stone) was actually his wife. Robert Picardo, who would later be in the cast of *Star Trek: Voyager* as the holographic doctor, provided the voice and was the facial model for a robot called “Johnnycab”.

Because the movie was such a big commercial success, there were plans for a sequel with Schwarzenegger reprising the role of Quaid. A script was written that incorporated elements from Dick’s short story “The Minority Report”. Although Jonathan Frakes from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* became involved, it was never filmed, but the script was re-written and became 2002’s *Minority Report*. That film was

directed by Steven Spielberg and starred Tom Cruise and Colin Farrell. The latter was later selected to star in the remake of “Total Recall”.

In the 2012 remake, Quaid (Farrell) never makes it to Mars. Instead, it is set primarily in the United Federation of Britain (western Europe) and the Colony (Australia), which looks a lot like Blade Runner’s Los Angeles. The Earth has been devastated by chemical warfare, and the only arable land is in those two countries. They are connected by a “gravity elevator” that has been built through the center of the Earth, and it only takes 17 minutes for someone to travel from one side of the world to the other. Quaid, an assembly line worker, does not dream of going to Mars, but he does dream about being a secret agent and about a mysterious woman (Jessica Biel). In one scene, he is shown reading a James Bond novel by Ian Fleming. One good feature of the movie is that his occupation becomes a plot point later in the film. Quaid visits Rekall who try to implant memories about him being a spy. As in both the original story and the first movie, they find real memories that have been suppressed. Then the story proceeds much as it did in the first movie, only on Earth rather than Mars. The film was rated PG because it has less violence than the original, but received mostly negative reviews, especially for its lack of humor. The few positive ones praised the action scenes and the special effects. Commercially, it was a flop in the United States and finished at #55 at the box office, but made enough money outside the country to be considered profitable.

No one would seriously argue that Schwarzenegger is a better actor than Farrell, but in this case, he was better fitted for the role. Farrell lacks Schwarzenegger’s charisma, comedy timing, and screen presence, and the script doesn’t help him. Farrell has been making movies since 1999 and won a Golden Globe for 2008’s “In Bruges”.

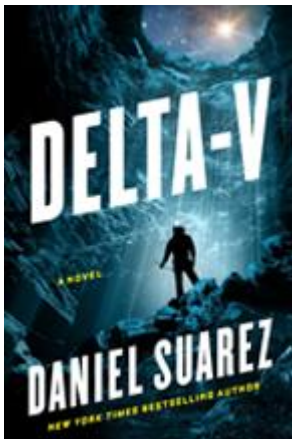
Kate Beckinsale is good in the action scenes as Lori, Quaid’s supposed wife who is really a spy, and she was married at the time to Len Wiseman who directed the film. (They divorced in 2016.) She has been acting in films since 1993 when she debuted in Kenneth Branagh’s version of “Much Ado About Nothing” and was first known for costume dramas such as a 1996 TV version of Emma and then as the love interest of 2001’s Pearl Harbor. She became an action movie star when she played the vampire Selene in the Underworld films, where she met her future husband Wiseman.

Negative reviews singled out Biel for her poor performance as Melina, and she was nominated for a Razzie, an award given to the worst films and performances. She started out in television in 1996 as a regular cast member of 7th Heaven and made the jump to film the following year in the highly acclaimed Ulee’s Gold. Since then, she has appeared in many films, including the remake of Texas Chainsaw Massacre, the third Blade movie, and Next, based on the Dick story “The Golden Man”. Bryan Cranston, best known for Breaking Bad, does his best as Cohaagen, but there is no equivalent of Michael Ironside’s Richter, who, in retrospect, added a lot to the original film. This meant that Cohaagen had to do his own fighting, and Cranston was surprisingly good at it. An under-utilized Bill Nighy plays the revolutionary leader, but, while he is an excellent actor, the character is nowhere near as interesting as Quato, the revolutionary leader in the original film.

I am still going to stick with my preference for the original film. Even now I occasionally catch bits and pieces of it when it shows up on cable. Knowing how it ends, I can watch fifteen minutes of it while waiting for something else to come on and still enjoy it. As for the remake, I’ll have to be really desperate before watching it again.



BOOKS



DELTA-V; by Daniel Suarez; Dutton Books; hardback and e-book versions available

This is the latest novel from Daniel Suarez; a new-ish science fiction writer who has turned out five previous high tech near future science fiction thrillers. His biography notes that he is a former systems consultant to several Fortune 500 companies, and that he has designed software for the defense, finance, and entertainment industries. Most of his stories are technology heavy and focus on technology driven change.

This novel focuses on the possibilities and problems with asteroid mining in the near future. He suggests that the need to constantly invest and reinvent and thus create an expanding money supply virtually forces human society in the near future (fifty years from now anyway) to look to outer space not just for resource development, but as a means of encouraging employment and industrial development

to support human civilization.

This is an interesting idea that I do not necessarily agree with, but, as I have said many times before, I am a firm believer in Buying-The-Bit; that is, allowing a writer to establish his premises and suppositions, then seeing how well he does telling a story within that framework.

For most of this novel the framework holds up pretty well. To keep within his basic plot development, Suarez suggests that the costs of conventional space travel as pioneered by NASA, the ESA and other world-wide government institutions, is so enormous that it cannot possibly survive, let alone provide for much outer space exploration and expansion in the future. At the present time it costs \$1700 per kilogram to launch an object into earth orbit, twice that much to launch a kilo into a geostatic transfer orbit. That means it would cost 6.6 million dollars per ton to launch an object from earth to a lunar orbit, with most of the mass lost in fuel expenditure during the launch. Clearly, the costs overpower any potential objectives outside of national pride, which is one of the reasons government based space agencies are dragging their feet on additional outer space development.

But, if vital resources, including water, oxygen, fuel, metals, could be mined from nearby asteroids (those in earth-grazer orbits), it would cost very little to launch space tugs to a lunar orbit where those resources could be used for additional space going ships for lunar or planetary exploration. The potential savings, and the potential profits if there were a free enterprise privately owned asteroid development program, are enormous.

The title of the book refers to delta-v, a term used in spacecraft flight dynamics as a measure of the impulse per unit of spacecraft mass that is needed to perform a maneuver such as launch from, or landing on a planet or moon, or in-space orbital maneuver.

Suarez introduces Nathan Joyce, a charismatic internet high-tech multi billionaire as one of the ultra wealthy individuals who is interested in space development. He is the only one seriously suggesting that right now, asteroid mining could be economically achievable. Toward this goal he recruits a lot of people with high-risk personalities and assorted high-tech skills, including our hero James Tighe, and entices them with generous

payments to undergo rigorous training, while he meanwhile scrounges up more money and launches a high profile publicity campaign for his asteroid mining idea.

Joyce has established a number of shell space exploration companies. In this story the Duchy of Luxemburg has become the world-wide legal and financial hub for outer space development. All the paperwork for space development projects have to go thru their agencies which coordinate with the United Nations and serve as a clearing house for any nation or company interested in doing any kind of space projects. The shell companies are necessary to get the materials and technology into low earth orbit so a genuine space going vessel can be assembled and stocked.

Needless to say after a number of problems a space craft with Tighe and seven other companions is launched toward asteroid Ryugu where they manage to land and prepare to set up asteroid mining. Problems are expected, and problems aplenty develop, some more serious than others, including a rival company that sends a space ship full of machines guided by an AI system to mine the same asteroid.

I have to say that I had mixed reactions to this novel. When the story gets into outer space the tension increases considerably and so does the readability of the tale. But even projecting theoretically feasible solutions to the multitude of problems this kind of expedition would create, I found it difficult to maintain my willing suspension of disbelief. The science is not just beyond current technology levels; in many places it takes gigantic leaps that do not appear to be plausible, even in these extraordinary circumstances.

Suarez is an excellent writer when it comes to creating suspense, developing danger, and exploiting the technical problems that test both the human characters and the machinery he has established to their limits. The story flashes along and the plot crackles when he is dealing with the nuts and bolts of the enterprise, but he does not handle human characterization nearly as well.

For all the background info and personal insights into James Tighe, including letting us know his life history and his inner thots, I did not feel much empathy for the protagonist. I also didn't feel that I really appreciated his reasons for joining this wildly reckless endeavor. The other human characters in the story are less developed, and the people who turn out to have flawed personalities with potentially disastrous end results come thru more like cookie-cutter prototypes generated solely to sustain the fast moving plot. In particular I felt the injection of Luka Rochat as a wannabe space lawyer who becomes the friend and confidant of billionaire Nathan Joyce was unbelievable in the extreme.

There is considerably more science and technology explained and used here than even hard-core science fiction fans may be comfortable with. Suarez has an appendix at the end of the novel explaining how he developed the story, including a very long list of all the people he thanks for lending their technical know-how and answering his many questions. He reveals that the first draft for this novel was 174,000 words long, and had to be pared down dramatically to meet the publishing requirements. That's a lot of lost wordage, and the human characters suffer from the cuts more than the technology did.

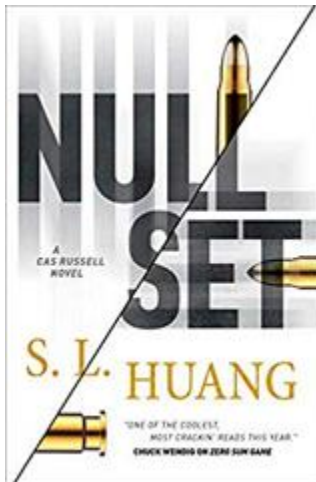
For me the pluses of this fast moving thriller clearly outweigh the disadvantages. This was a fast read, often a non stop page turner as I zipped thru the adventures of the asteroid crew and the horrific problems they faced on a regular basis. The buildup, the training program, the background developments leading up to the actual space adventure I found interesting, but all that pales in comparison to the core plot of the novel, which is the crew, the ship, the asteroid, the actual mining enterprise and what happens when the ship and crew reaches their destination. I was not thrilled that the novel ends with a clear gateway open to a sequel, but that seems to be the norm with many SF novels these days.

If you are interested in reading a fast moving high-tech, hard science thriller, then this book will certainly satisfy you.

---review by Bob Jennings

Null Set: A Cas Russell Novel by S. L. Huang; hardback and ebook versions available

I read and reviewed the first book of this new trilogy a few months back. The first title, "Zero Sum Game: introduced Cas Russell, a twentyish woman who looks much younger, a martial arts/weapons/stealth expert with astonishing mathematical skills that allow her to figure out almost instantly probabilities and trajectories along with other relevant facts so she can literally dodge bullets, or leap from tall buildings and land without damage. Cas works as a freelance operator, a "retriever", hiring out to anyone who wants her services, and she doesn't much care if they are legitimate or criminal. She has vast blank areas in her past memories, and



consumes large quantities of alcohol to compensate. She has been befriended for as long as she can remember by a ruthless, amoral killing machine of a man named Rio who has channeled his vicious sadistic and tendencies toward working against organized crime, particularly drug dealers.

In the first novel Cas Elliott gains new friends and colleagues, and learns to trust people, as she and her new friends battle a vicious world-wide organization of telepaths determined to dominate the human race, while also ending wars and sucking organized crime elements dry at the same time.

In the first novel there was a lot about the character that we did not know, a lot that she herself did not know. Miss Huang's command of snappy dialog and dynamic action made for a fast moving very satisfying story.

That first novel was a fun, fast, interesting read. This second novel is not.

This second adventure has a distinct lack of central focus. The level of violence and crime in the world seems to have increased, and Cas blames herself because she helped thwart the worldwide psionic cult that claimed to be holding the criminal element in check. Cas and her pals are currently trying to take down a

vicious gang that deals in human smuggling, particularly smuggling of children and young women for the sex trade.

We learn that Cas is having blackouts, incidents in which she is trying to have memory flashbacks, but things don't come thru, and meanwhile while experiencing these moments, she is distracted and sometimes loses seconds or even minutes from whatever she is trying to do at the time. If she is in the middle of a firefight, or a rescue operation, or trying to track down some of the bad guys this can be very dangerous, not just for her, but also for any of her friends accompanying her on these missions.

Then it turns out that her friends are trying to check into her background despite Cas telling them not to do that, and being warned by Rio and others not to do that, despite being told that any kind of probes into her past are dangerous. But, for unexplained reason, they keep prying anyway. This creates all kinds of problems.

Despite being opposed to mind control and psionic manipulation, Cas has come up with an idea for devices that can be placed around the city that will work thru an individual's smart phone that will immediately create an emotional damper whenever mob psychology or a tendency toward crowd induced violence takes place. No explanation of any kind for this miracle device is offered, and the means of implementing the placement of the gadgets seems pretty contrite and unbelievably simplistic to me.

Then there is another psychic telepath named Simon that appears on the scene out of nowhere. He can not only mentally influence people's decisions, but is somehow able to track Cas anywhere at any time. He tries to speak with her several times, but she refuses to have any kind of conversation with him.

Then, for no reason at all, and with no explanation at all, her pals manage to trap Simon, and hold him tied up in a warehouse for several days, and again, for no reason at all, Rio suddenly appears, threatens one of Cas's friends, and demands they release Simon, and then, also for no reason at all (and again, without any kind of explanation) demands that Cas let Simon read her mind, and then...

I normally try to give any book I am reading a hundred pages before I give it up as a bad experience. Because of the good experience I had reading the first novel in this trilogy I actually read 135 pages of this book. It was a decision I now regret.

In addition to numerous incidents where things happen for no reason and without a word of explanation, the crisp dialog Ms Huang displayed in that first novel seems to have been abandoned in this second book. Our protagonist comes across as a whining, ill tempered, (bitchy, actually), totally unstable personality who argues with everyone about everything, and is incapable of handling herself in even the most routine social situations.

What story plot emerges meanders considerably, interrupted by action scenes where the heroine and a few of her pals engage in violent confrontations with criminals, or rob a warehouse for vital technical equipment, but these incidents struck me as being more like filler than actual components that contributed toward any central story theme.

The writing style here is so scattered that I had difficulty plowing thru the pages. It was an effort to try and focus on what the characters were doing, since very little of it seemed to have any kind of relevance to a central plot theme.

Ms Huang has shown that she can be a forceful and interesting writer as evidenced by her previous novel. But this second part of the trilogy is inept and not particularly interesting. I really didn't care about Cas Russell, or her efforts to deal with her missing past, or her new war against a new powerful local gang leader. It was mostly a real effort to force myself thru the 135 pages I managed to read. I hope the author will find her story telling voice in upcoming novels, but for far as I am concerned "Null Set" is not recommended.

---review by Bob Jennings

**SIXTEEN WAYS TO DEFEND A WALLED CITY by K. J. Parker;
Trade Paperback, ebook versions available**

K. J. Parker is a pseudonym of Tom Holt. Under his own and the Parker name he has written 54 books, with another one about to be published very soon. Mr. Holt was born in 1961, which makes him 57 years old, and he only started writing professionally in 1995. So far he has an impressive number of books, mostly fantasies, many humorous, under his belt. For all of that, this is the first book by Mr. Holt I have ever read.

This novel is billed as a fantasy, but it is not. There is a clearly artificial premise stapled onto the beginning of book to give it a superficial appearance of fantasy. The story is set in some ancient time and place. It could be the equivalent of ancient Rome, or Carthage, or Babylon, or the Ming dynasty, or the middle Byzantine period, or indeed, any ancient human empire that has a written language, has expanded and is now resting comfortably on its conquests and economic rule of order.

In this novel the rulers of the Empire are the Robur, described as taller than the average human by five or six inches, muscular, and blue skinned. Historically the Robur Empire slaughters generously before offering the hand of friendship to its conquered peoples. Among the conquered and mostly absorbed races the Robur Empire has accumulated are those known as milkfaces, because they are shorter (slightly below average human height), have white to pink skin and tend not to be so muscular. That's it. There are tall blue humans, the rulers, and somewhat shorter humans, the conquered and absorbed whitefaces, supposedly with full equal rights, being citizens of the empire, but despite not being a minority, they are clearly second, and sometimes third class citizens. There are no fantastic creatures, no magic, no mythical powerful objects, no ghosts, gods, or anything else that would turn this novel into a fantasy.

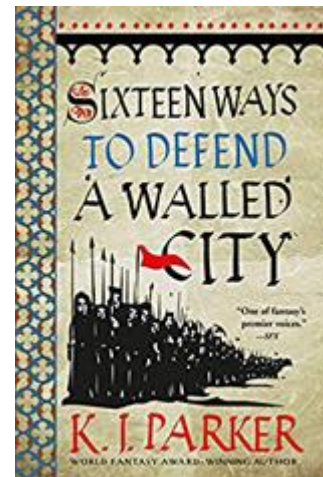
The hero of this story is a milkface known as Orhan, snatched by a Sheridan pirate raiding party as a young boy, sold into slavery, acquiring good skills as a carpenter and builder thru several masters, and finally becoming a free man who joined the Robur military as an engineer, and thru his excellent building and mathematic skill has risen to the rank of Colonel in the army, commander of his own engineering corps. Generally (if grudgingly) accepted by the Robur military brass, he is the reluctant hero of the adventure when pirates and barbarians began to systematically attack the Empire.

Imperial military stores are raided. When Imperial troops are sent to deal with the situation, they are ambushed and annihilated. Imperial might, our hero learns, is being spread thin and sorely tested by an ambitious coalition of the associated and allied races and cultures the Robur have ruled over for centuries.

There is plenty of warning that things are not going at all well, and of course, the smart think to do would be for Orhan to take his command, head for the outreaches, and sit things out until the situation jells one way or the other. But the city of Perimadeia, the Imperial capital, home of the Emperor himself, is in direct danger of attack, and Orhan, a member of the military, is drawn to the city after witnessing the results of several massacres by the barbarian forces.

It turns out that most of the nobles and important people in the city, including the wealthy merchants, have left, in a hurry, so there are no ships left in the harbor, the roads are not safe, there is limited food, the invaders have destroyed the lighthouse while their allies, the Sheridan pirates are picking off any incoming supplies of food or useful supplies. The city is clearly doomed. It's only a matter of time before the invading barbarians, now clothed and equipped with the latest in Imperial military supplies, gather in front of the main city gates and storm this major metropolis as well.

So why does Orhan and his engineering battalion decide to stay? He doesn't really know. His command is loyal to the Empire, but staying in or even near this city is clearly suicidal.



As Orhan, Colonel of an engineering battalion notes, there are generally fifteen recognized ways to defend a walled city. That's if you have some military forces, or a well organized civilian militia, or at least some effective defense machinery. Perimadeia has none of that. The last Imperial unit was lured outside and slaughtered. The people left inside only want to find some way to leave before the enemy attack start. The last thing they want is to endure a siege.

It is up to Orhan to organize the city and create, virtually out of thin air, some kind of defense. He must appeal to the various elements of the city, divided by race, money, class, education, religion, criminal backgrounds, and a dozen other factions, and get them to somehow work together to form a defense before the bulk of the invading army show up.

It is a monumental task. The story, and the writing here is exceptional. Orhan is the very epitome of a reluctant hero. He regards himself as a conniving coward, but he is clever, and he is also a first class civil engineer. He is able to forge a rough and very unstable union of the people inside the city, based on their firm desire not to be killed when the invaders finally arrive.

The problems are many, and the situations are generally ingenious and entirely practical. I personally felt the long arm of coincidence intruded rather more than was necessary or was entirely believable in certain parts of the tale, but that is a trivial objection.

The defense of the city is compromised later in the story by an unforeseen series of events, and then the personalities of Orhan and the barbarian commander clash in other, unexpected ways. I don't want to give away many of the odd story twists here, because they all contribute to the unfolding of the central plot, which is not just a simple story of trying to scrounge up a defense of a city that never felt it needed any.

I found this an intriguing, fast moving, entertaining story that held my interest from first to last. However, it is not a fantasy, and anyone who hopes to read a fantasy adventure is not going to find it here. You will find a crackling good adventure, filled with a variety of personalities, and a long series of problems, some solutions, many human failures and triumphs as the protagonist tries his damndest to save a city that is almost surely doomed no matter what he does.

Tom Holt is one hell of a good writer. I'll have to try some of his other novels; soon.

---review by Bob Jennings

The Retro Hugos

an incidental look backwards by Tom Feller

I normally don't even try re-read the Retro Hugo finalists, but we already had copies of two of the stories in our library at home in the collections The Early Asimov and Lovecraft's At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels. Although it has quite literally been decades since I last read them, they felt familiar although I had forgotten most of the details.

Death Sentence by Isaac Asimov—

The main character of this story is Theo Realo, a researcher who has spent several years on an obscure, previously unknown, planet that he believes is really an experiment begun 15,000 years previously by the dominant galactic civilization at the time. The current dominant civilization plans to destroy the newly discovered planet, because the inhabitants are about to discover faster-than-light space travel and threaten their domination. I would rate this to be an average story by Asimov's standards. I could see the twist ending from a mile away, but I may have just have activated a memory.

The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath by H.P. Lovecraft—

I was surprised to see a story by Lovecraft on the list of finalists, because the stories were selected from ones published in 1943 and he died in 1937. I had not realized that this story was not published in his lifetime, although written around 1926 or 1927, and remained unknown to the public until Arkham House released it in 1943. I can see why he never submitted it to anyone, because it is not much of a story. It is part of his Dreamland series, the world we go to when we dream. Randolph Carter, a recurring character in Lovecraft's

fiction, wanders around Dreamland having a series of adventures while trying to find a place called “Unknown Kadath” and after he gets there, he wakes up. I really liked the parts with the cats who have kings and warriors and can talk to Carter. (Lovecraft was a cat person.) The descriptions are wonderfully detailed, although wordy. (Lovecraft never met an adjective he didn’t like.) I can see that all his work provided him with the source material for more Dreamland stories. As a stand-alone story, however, it failed to impress me. I would recommend it only for Lovecraft completists or for wannabee pastiche writers who want to play in Lovecraft’s sandbox.

Another reason I was surprised to see a Lovecraft story on the list was his well-known sexism and racism. There are no women in this story, so I guess it is neutral on that point. The worst thing he calls Africans is “fat”. They are all slaves and possibly a source for food. Carter suspects this and refuses to eat any meat he thinks might be human. There is one Asian character, a bad guy, who is described as “slant-eyed”. When I first encountered it in the text, my reaction was “Well, I’ve heard worse”. Unfortunately, Lovecraft uses the word in every SENTENCE that refers to that character. Hopefully, if Lovecraft had submitted the story anywhere, the editor would have excised most, or preferably all, instances, if only for being repetitious. My edition was edited by the scholar S. T. Joshi who chose to retain the word.

The Fan Categories—

This is where I really felt my age. I don’t recall even hearing of any of the writer or artist finalists for 2018, let alone having read or seen any of their work. Now I have read reviews on the Rocket Stack Rank website, and I am quite familiar with Journey Planet. (Disclosure: They once published an essay of mine on TV and movie adaptations of Sherlock Holmes stories.) On the other hand, I have met Forrest Ackerman, Bob Tucker, Jack Speer, and Art Widner, all nominated for Best Fan Writer of 1943. (My Fantasy Amateur Press Association membership overlapped with both Jack and Art. Art was still using YHOS, the name of the Retro-Hugo nominated zine he published in 1943, as the title of his zines in FAPA while we were both members.) I can’t really say that I met Donald Wollheim, whose fanzine *The Phantagraph* is nominated, because our only encounter was my sharing an elevator with him at the 1988 Worldcon in New Orleans. He appeared to be rather tired, so I did not approach him. I did meet his widow, because my late friend Ken Moore invited her to be a guest at the old convention Kubla-Khan in Nashville. Of course, the only copies of the fanzines actually published in 1943 that I have seen were in exhibits at Worldcons, and I was not allowed to touch them.

Conclusion—

In theory, I agree with the idea behind the Retro-Hugos, which is to recognize and draw attention to worthy works of science fiction and fantasy from before the founding of the Hugos. In practice, I am less enthusiastic. While *The Glass Bead Game* by Herman Hesse, *Perelandra* by C.S. Lewis, “King of Gray Spaces” by Ray Bradbury, or *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery may indeed be the best science fiction or fantasy works of 1943, there is really no need to give them Hugos. They are already recognized classics. Recognizing works by Fritz Leiber, C.L. Moore, Henry Kuttner, A.E. van Vogt, Hal Clement, Anthony Boucher, Edmond Hamilton, and Robert Bloch, on the other hand, is something I favor. So long as the Retro-Hugos feature authors like them, I will participate.

RETRO HUGO WINNERS (1944)---

Novel: Conjure Wife by Fritz Leiber, Jr. (orig appeared in *Unknown Worlds*, April 1943)
Novella: The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery
Novelette: Mimsy Were The Borogoves by Lewis Padgett (C.L. Moore and Henry Kuttner) [*Astounding SF* February 1943]
Short Story: King of the Gray Space [R Is For Rocket] by Ray Bradbury (orig appeared in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* December 1943)
Graphic Story: *Wonder Woman* #5—Battle For Womanhood
Dramatic Presentation – Long Form: Heaven Can Wait, 20th Century Fox
Dramatic Presentation—Short Form: Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman, Universal Pictures
Editor: John W. Campbell
Professional Artist: Virgil Finlay
Fanzine: Le Zombie produced by Arthur Wilson “Bob” Tucker
Fan Writer: Forrest J. Ackerman

Multimedia Musings

by **Gary Robe**

Chernobyl is a recent HBO miniseries, and also a novel by Fredrick Pohl, originally written in 1987.

At 1:24:44 AM on Saturday April 24th, 1986, the NVBK Number 4 reactor at the V.I. Lenin Nuclear Power Station near Chernobyl, Ukraine suffered a series of explosions which spewed enormous quantities of radionucleotides into the environment and came close to making a large swatch of Eastern Europe uninhabitable for centuries. The cause and aftermath of those explosions are the subject of Fred Pohl's 1987 novel, and the 2019 five part miniseries. Comparing the two sources shows how the story changed over 30 years.

The Pohl book is a novelization of the events. Names have been changed and characters created to dramatize the events, but the basic facts surrounding the explosion came directly from Pohl's research done on-site and with the cooperation of the Soviet Government less than a year after the incident. (I refuse to use the word "accident" to characterize what happened at Chernobyl.)

As he steps thru the chain of events that led to the explosion, Pohl pulls no punches. The explosion happened because the reactor was being deliberately run in an unstable condition. All warnings were ignored that the reactor was out of control and all the automatic safety systems had been turned off because they would not allow the reactor to operate in this unsafe "test mode". The blame for the explosion rests on the party officials insisting on running the test.

I sat with Fred Pohl at the Boston Worldcon in 1989. I had been on a first name basis with Fred Pohl since acting as Mammoth Cave tour guide during the 1979 NaSFIV in Louisville. I asked him at Noreastcon III how he had managed to get the assignment of writing the Chernobyl novel with the permission and assistance of the USSR. He confessed that he had no idea how he got the job. He'd visited Russia a couple of times. They approached him with the deal. He hadn't asked for it.

The book describes the events on the 23rd and 24th of April as a low power test of the reactor. Once a nuclear reactor goes critical, it can't just be turned off. Even with the control rods fully inserted, the reactor stays hot for years. The motive for the low power test in the book was to use that residual heat to continue generating a low level of power even with the reactor fully quenched. At the time the USSR was so hungry for power, they would take the output of the NVBK reactor even at 20% of the full capacity. An NVBK reactor is a graphite breeder, and unlike non-Soviet style pressurized water reactors, it can be refueled while running at full power. Running an NVBK at 20% of design power is playing with fire.

Under intense political pressure, the management and political officers at the plant decided to run the low power experiment at night when Kiev wasn't demanding as much electricity. That meant that the operators at the control panel that night had only a few weeks of work experience. When they tried to cut back the output, a number of factors caused the reactor to stall. Instead of shutting down, the operators completely removed the control rods, cutting the cooling water flow to the core. One section of the reactor didn't get the message, and for a moment became a low-yield nuclear explosion. This ruptured the water lines, spewing water on the hot fuel rods. The water flashed into steam, and the resulting steam explosion blew the lid off the containment vessel and scrambled the contents of the core. Once oxygen flooded into the open core, the graphite exploded into flames and the core became a white-hot nuclear inferno that will remain dangerously radioactive for about 20 centuries.

Skip forward to the HBO miniseries. The show begins with no buildup to the explosion. The reactor exploded within the first few minutes of the first episode, with the crew in the control room trying to make sense of the dust falling from the ceiling caused by the shock wave and the impossible readings they are getting from the controls.

Within ten minutes of the explosion, the fire brigade from Pripjat arrives to extinguish the fire at the demolished reactor building. They do not understand the significance of the blue shaft of light beaming from the reactor building or the burning hot lumps of coal-like material scattered on the ground. The blue beacon is Cherenkov Radiation from the terrible energy spewing from the naked core. The black lumps are graphite from

the reactor core which have been blown clear of the building by the explosion. The presence of graphite alone is enough to prove that the containment vessel has been breached and the core has exploded. Inside the control room, the groupthink is that an NVBK reactor can't possibly explode; so there is no graphite on the ground.

The scenes of the explosion and the aftermath are some of the most riveting and terrifying that I've ever seen. This isn't a true horror movie, yet scenes throughout the five episodes are more horrifying than most monster films. The HBO series does not fictionalize the events, so the characters seem to go by the names of the actual people involved in the explosion and the aftermath.

The main character is Dr. Valery Legasov, a nuclear power expert played by Jared Harris (familiar to *Expansive* fans as IOA leader Anderson Dawes), and Boris Scherbina, the Soviet Minister of Energy, played by Stellan Skarsgard. Emily Watson plays Dr. Ulana Khomyuk, a composite character for the group of Soviet nuclear scientists who spotted problems with the containment efforts after the explosion and helped to discover the true cause of the explosion.

The most harrowing scene in both the book and the TV series comes at the end of the second episode of the series. In order to contain the radiation spewing from the exposed core, Legasov and Scherbina arrange for helicopters to drop a mixture of sand, lead, and boron on the open pit. That gets the radiation down to levels that are lethal in 90 seconds instead of instantly. What Ulana figures out is that the situation is not stable. That sand, lead, and boron have been turned into a bed of lava which is eating through the containment vessel. Right below the core is a water tank farm. Legasov and Scherbina have been told that the tanks are dry, but Ulana recognizes that with the scrambled plumbing and the firefighting water finding its lowest level, there is a lake under the reactor. When the lava breaches the containment vessel and hits that water there will be another, even larger explosion which will wreck the other three reactors still running in the complex. The resulting explosions will render most of Eastern Europe uninhabitable for centuries.

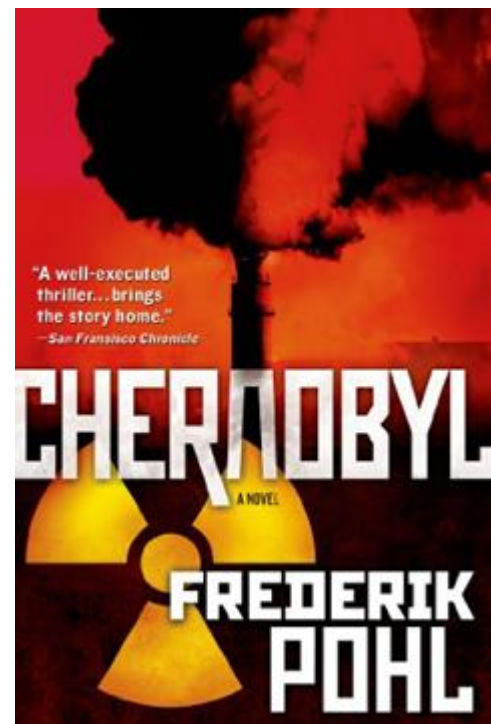
The solution is to send three workers into the basement of the reactor to open a sluice valve which will drain the water. Even with all the protective gear they can wear, this is clearly explained to be a suicide mission. The sequence of these three men wading through radioactive water with only the sound of Geiger counters for background is terrifying.

The screws tighten even more when one-by-one the workers' flashlight batteries burn out due to the radiation levels. In Pohl's book all of the names are fictionalized except for the names of those three men who saved millions from a nuclear catastrophe. The irony is that even though the three were told they wouldn't survive the job, two of them are still alive today!

Which brings us to the departure between the Pohl book and the HBO series. In 1987 Dr. Legasov was tasked by the Soviet government to go to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Switzerland and present a doctored version of the cause of the explosion to the scientific community. This version was a lie, but it was a plausible story involving pressure from the directors and political (KGB) officers at the plant forcing inexperienced operators to run a dangerous low power test of the reactor. This is the version that appears in Pohl's novel, and as presented could explain the cause of the explosion.

There are some parts missing, though. In the fifth episode of the HBO series there is a trial of the plant directors in which Legasov reveals the root cause of the explosion. I won't go into the details for the sake of anyone who hasn't watched the series. The real story eventually cost Legasov his life. The HBO series begins with Dr. Legasov committing suicide at the exact second anniversary of the explosion after leaving a full record of what led to the explosion. It was the shock of Dr. Legasov's suicide that got the scientific community to expose the truth.

I could go on, but the series is excellent from beginning to end, and if you don't have an HBO subscription, I implore you to watch *Chernobyl* when it becomes available on DVD or on a streaming service.





READER REACTION

William Breiding; 3507 N. Santa Rita Ave. – #1; Tucson, AZ 85719

Devoured #61, as I usually do when *Fadeaway* comes in. I wanted to chime in about your piece on Death Valley in the previous ish—it really was a great piece, deserving a reprint to a larger

audience. California must certainly have a state historical magazine that would be interested in this piece.

I was also contacted by the publicity department for Writers of the Future asking if I would like to receive a review copy of their latest anthology. I declined. She wrote back and actually thanked me for responding, so I'm guessing she got a lot on non-response to her queries.

I think the thing that stood out most for me in Dale Nelson's piece on READ magazine was its naive optimism (rampant in the sixties, and not just among the hippies) and its beautiful, interesting graphics. If it was produced bi-weekly they had to have been employing some very enthusiastic and innovative graphic designers. To tell you the truth I think they were looking at Charles Platt's work at New Worlds and applying it to their little scholastic magazine. Of course, I never made it to middle school, so I never saw a copy of READ, but had I done so I would have loved it.

I was amused to see a rave book review by an author called Tim the Idahoan. Pat Patterson almost made me want to order a copy. Your review of Huang's book didn't interest me in her novel at all. What did interest me was the route she took to get it published, finally, by TOR.

J. P. Swycaffer mentioned Dean Ing in passing saying he enjoyed only one of his books. I get that. But Ing did write one classic novella, "Down and Out in Ell Five Prime" that Jefferson should check out. He also wrote one of the better entries into Niven's Man-Kzin Wars shared world series, "Cathouse", that could be viewed as a feminist tract—it's about the uprising of the female Kzins. He has a couple of books mingling short fiction and nonfiction, and some of the fiction in these collections are quite good.

David B. Williams, dbwilyumz@tds.net, P. O. Box 58, Whitestown, IN 46075

In Dale Nelson's feature article he mentions that C. S. Lewis may have written a story "for his own amusement." I was reminded of a statement by supreme fantasist Jack Vance, who explained in his autobiography that as a professional writer he only wrote for money and never any other reason. The only thing he wanted in an envelope from a publisher was a check.

In the Books department Pat Patterson reviews a book by Tim the Idahoan titled "Expedition to Earth." An outrage! When I see that title I think of Arthur C. Clark's collection of stories with that title. To steal the title "Expedition to Earth" for another book is dastardly.

A great article in the Flix department on "The Day the Earth Stood Still" and Michael Rennie. I have to agree that the modern remake is unworthy of the original. I saw the sequel only once and intend to never see it again. Ugh! One point of historical interest: G.O.R.T. releases nanites to destroy all the machines powered by electricity on Earth because, according to Klaatu, the inability to construct any electrical machines will prevent mankind from destroying Earth's environment in the future. Not so! The agricultural revolution several thousand years earlier had already begun vast environmental destruction by introducing cities, war, famine, and diseases introduced by domestic animals.

In your own review of "Black Friday" you mention a superlative scene by Bela Lugosi, perhaps the finest acting of his career, and wonder why the studio cut the scene to shorten the movie's running time a few minutes. I can tell you. Studios make movies but they don't like movies, they like money. If cutting a brilliant scene reduces running time and increases box office revenue, they will cut the scene.

In the letter column Steve Johnson reports that when reading prozines he looks first at the letters and fanzine reviews and book reviews. Me too! He also recalls his concern for the rising prices of comic books when he was a 14-year-old paperboy earning about \$2.50 per week. I was also once a 14-year-old paperboy with a similar income but my concern was the rising prices of prozines and paperbacks when the jumped from 25 cents to 35 cents and even an astounding 50 cents.

And then Bill wrote that he really appreciated my article, "The Goldsmith Era at Amazing and Fantastic." Thanks Bill, I loved writing it. There are three more positive mentions by Dale Nelson, Joy Smith, and Gary Casey. Thank you, Esteemed Editor, for publishing my article in *Fadeaway*. As a result, my name will now live forever in the annals of fanzine fandom.

I sign off with the hope that the interval between *Fadeaway* 61 and 62 is no greater than that between 60 and 61. I really like your frenzied new publishing schedule.

Jefferson Swycaffer; P.O. Box 15373; San Diego CA 92175
abontides@gmail.com

Very nice cover spaceship art, and nice back-cover art, a nice portrait of Leonard Nimoy's Mr. Spock. The internet is a marvel, definitely one of the seven wonders of the modern world. (Remember when we'd sit around, bored, and argue over trivia? Now we just look it up online!)

I'm glad the Writers of the Future series continues, and that the contest is still going. I'm even happy to hear that one of the stories by L. Ron Hubbard himself is actually good, given how very bad the reviews have all been of most of his novels. Alas, I can't penetrate the barrier of antipathy borne of his (and his followers') misbehavior. Just as some (quoted in *Fadeaway* not long ago) can't read Lovecraft because of his racism, I'm afraid I won't go near Hubbard, or anything with his name on it. (The classic answer to such an avowal is, "Your loss.")

I never read "*Read*." In my youth, we had "*The Weekly Reader*," instead. Might be regional variances due to licensing. I don't remember a single blessed word of it. (As opposed to, say, Dr. Suess, where my memory is pretty clear, even after all these years.) "*The Weekly Reader*" was for third or fourth graders; "*Read*" almost sounds like a young-adult magazine, certainly a junior high school or even high school magazine, with some remarkably grown-up stories and concepts.

Gary Casey's recounting of "Couch Con" is fun! Nothing wrong with a micro con! A lot of us have burned out on the mega-cons, such as the San Diego Comic-Con. Bigger ain't always better: in some cases, it's a darn sight worse. Hereabouts, there's been loose talk of a "mall con," taking over a fading shopping mall for a weekend, basing operations in an unused store-front. We're used to hotels, but why not try something new?

Michael Cepeda gives us another gag; I always enjoy the bewildered look on the face of his little alien protagonist.

Useful book reviews. Thanks!

Fun movie review, charting the history of "The Day the Earth Stood Still." I'd never heard of "Black Friday," which, to be honest, sounds quite a bit "iffy." I can see how it might have been done well...but I can also see how it might not have. Karloff and Lugosi are dependable for a certain kind of performance, but never



quite seem to transcend "type." (On the other hand, some time watch "The Tower of London," where Karloff plays the evil hunchbacked murderer, in a movie just dripping with camp humor and absurdly over-the-top hammy performances -- on purpose! It's a parody, and a delight. Karloff *can* transcend his stereotype!)

Bob Jennings had a note in the letters section about throwing away damaged books. This goes down hard with some of us, who have an exaggerated preservationist instinct. In a Library Science class, the teacher once came in with a first edition Edgar Rice Burroughs Barsoom novel that was in really bad shape. He said the book was beyond saving...and crunched it into crumbs in his fist, right there in the classroom. There were noises of dismay and mourning. I was raised to treat books as holy, and it always shocks me when other people feel differently. I remember my great outrage when a co-worker took a book I'd lent her and *broke the spine* deliberately, to make the book easier to read. NEVER! None of my books *ever* have cracked spines!

(Vernor Vinge's novel "Rainbows End" opens with a charming -- ouch -- sequence where all the books in a major university library are being shredded. The fragments and flakes of paper are all blown down an air tube past thousands of micro-cameras, which scan the images and then reassemble them, digitally, into data facsimiles. Vinge, of course, is taking the mock, but it was certainly a staggering notion.)

Comic Books aren't dead...but the great self-publishing boom of decades past is certainly over. Pity... A friend of mine wrote and drew a very nice graphic novel, and wanted to try to distribute it himself. He failed in this, as stores just won't buy from an independent source. (The fact that there was a nude bondage-torture scene also didn't help.) And even in this constipated market, a *few* creators manage to break through and publish independently-created comics. Dave Sim, today, couldn't make a go of "Cerebus the Aardvark," but Stan Sakai is still coming out with "Usagi Yojimbo," having just migrated to a new publisher. There *are* ways for talented creators to get published.

I'm a little surprised that Amazon Kindle self-publishing hasn't opened up a "graphic novels" category. Such a thing will surely happen...eventually!

///I am no fan of scientology, but L. Ron Hubbard was a good writer who turned out a lot of excellent material over his lifetime. I am also not a believer that someone should hate/despise and never read/listen to/view a creative work because the creator happened to have human faults and failings. It may be difficult to separate the revelations about an individual's failings from his creations, but nobody is perfect, and there are plenty of people who wrote/drew/composed/performed great artistic works who had feet of clay. Enjoy the end product, and let history deal with whatever illegal or immoral abominations the artist may have committed.

I never encountered *Read* in school either. Back in my day, when dinosaurs still walked the earth, we grammar school kids occasionally got the *Weekly Reader*, which was a pretty thin little booklet that I read cover to cover in about fifteen minutes, tops. As I recall it wasn't even distributed on a regular basis, despite the "Weekly" part of the title, and it sure never ran any fiction. Of course back then reading wasn't a problem for most of us, since we read tons O' comic books, and swapped them back and forth regularly. I don't think kids these days, or even back in the 1970s really acquired the comic book habit, doubtless due to the escalating cost of the product. Nowadays, with comics at \$3.99 each, I would be surprised if any modern youngsters read comic books.

Boris Karloff could indeed turn out excellent acting performances when prompted and provided with a decent script and a good director. He was a smash hit as the maniacal killer in the comedy Broadway play "Arsenic and Old Lace". But he never had confidence in himself as an actor, and near the end of his life, with a solid reputation and a very large fan base, he still allowed himself to appear in Z grade exploitation horror films. It seems strange to me, but then, as the old radio show called it: "People Are Funny".

The cracked spine incident you mention is just another reminder of the cardinal rule of collectors--- Never Loan Your Books To Anyone; as in NOBODY!! Because no matter what the other person says, no matter how good a friend or how close a relative that person may be, that other person does not care about that book/comic/CD/record album the way you do, and they could very easily damage it without a second thought; or, not even bother to return it. The only books I loan out are copies I won't cry over if they never get returned, which has happened to me in the past; all part of the learning process.

I agree there are ways for new comic creators to get published, but most newcomers have to work with a large company, and large companies want to see a detailed creative plan, including if possible, several issues drawn up and camera ready in advance, plus a contract commitment to keep the new series going for at least six or eight issues. (The contract can be voided if sales crater after the first couple of issues come out, of course, an event that also happens pretty regularly with a lot of new titles, particularly new super hero titles.)///

Rich Lynch; PO Box 3120; Gaithersburg, MD; 20885

Thanks for making the run of *Fadeaway* (most of it, anyway) available for viewing at efanzines.com. Your latest issue (#61) has quite a lot to enjoy but I'll limit my comments to two topics. Gary Casey's CouchCon experience, to him, may have been "nothing like any Con I ever read about", as it was low attendance and held at a private residence. But as you and I both know, this is far from unique. The earliest DeepSouthCons, dating back to the early 1960s, were very similar but even lower in attendance. And for that matter, the very first science fiction convention ever held, the 1936 Philcon, took place (mostly) at the home of one of the Philadelphia SF Society members, Milton Rothman.



My wife Nicki and I have only attended one convention held at a private residence, and that was way back in 1986. It was called 'Barbecon', and was held at the home of two friends, Dorothy Tompkins and Lowell Cunningham. Invitational only, as you would expect, and one of high points of the weekend for me (in more ways than one) was on the Saturday night of the convention, when Lowell and I stayed up into the wee hours of the morning in order to catch a glimpse of Halley's Comet. (It was about four years later that Lowell transitioned from science fiction fan to comics pro when he created the comic book series *Men in Black* which was eventually made into what became the no. 2-box office movie of 1997. But that's another story.) Anyway, I'm guessing that residence-hosted micro-cons such as CouchCon are a lot more common than Gary Casey probably thinks.

The highlight of the issue, though, was Tom Feller's look back at the various incarnations of "The Day the Earth Stood Still". That's still one of my favorite science fiction movies (the original 1951 version, that is), and the sheer awfulness of the 2008 remake serves to emphasize just how good the original was, and still is. I didn't see the movie until more than a decade after its original release when it made its television premiere on NBC's Saturday Night at the Movies. I was 12 years old back then (in 1962) and as far as 57-year-old memories can be trusted, I believe this may have been the first true science fiction movie I had ever seen. I remember being mightily scared by the huge robot Gort, but the movie had a real sense of wonder to it that helped make me a lifelong science fiction enthusiast.

I'll stop here with an apology for not writing letters of comment on your previous issues. Thanks for bringing back some pleasant memories of times past.

///House cons seem to have been more prevalent in ye olden days than in recent decades, but they are still around. I don't think people generally call them cons much any more; they are most often billed as parties, or gatherings, or gab fests, or events involving movie marathons or the like. When the number of active fans is spread thin in a region, house cons are often the only way people can get together to share like-minded interests.

I agree with you about the classic science fiction film "The Day the Earth Stood Still". I also first saw it in 1962 when NBC featured it as their Movie of the week. I don't recall it being on a Saturday night tho. I was in college at the time and figured I would pretty much have the dorm TV room all to myself, since as far as I knew I was the only science fiction reader/fan in the whole building. Imagine my surprise when the place filled up, with standing room only and that filled up even more as the movie actually started, so that there were a couple of guys standing out in the hallway peering thru the doorway at the TV screen.

I am happy to say I never wasted a second of my life seeing the 2008 remake. One of the advantages of being a fan, and being in contact with other fans, is that you get to hear/read their opinions of new movie releases, and since every single person whose opinion I even marginally respected said that the remake was a reeking sulfur bomb with no redeeming qualities, I immediately crossed that film off my potential viewing list. And I have never regretted the decision either.

I understand why sleezeball movie producers and bottom-feeding studio execs want to do remakes of classic films from the past, but the remakes almost never equal the original, they seldom get good reviews, and a good many of them don't make money either. That being the case, I often wondered why these people would not just pick a bad movie from yesteryear, or one that didn't quite hit the mark, and redo it right, with good actors, good sets, a modern updated script and intelligent direction. Who knows, a remake of "Plan Nine From Outer Space", or "Santa Claus Conquers the Martians", or even "Monster A Go-Go" with the proper talent and creative enthusiasm might turn out to be the box office hit of the year. OK, maybe not with "Monster A Go-Go"///



Brad W. Foster; PO Box 165246; Irving, TX 75016

So, it's only been over half a year and three issues of *Fadeaway* sent my way since I last replied. You clearly have the patience of a saint, if not the same habits.

Been a sloooowww year again for art, but trying to do better. Lots of notes and doodles happening, but getting my ass in the chair and my eyes in focus to actually finish things has been dragging. If it has been a commercial job with a tight deadline, I've managed to pull it off, but so little art for fun. And that's the whole point! But, maybe turning a corner, finished up a couple of things this past week, including, at last another Zero Hero, "Mister Mister" which should be attached for you.

Thanks for keeping me on the mail list by using those two little toons in issues 59 and 61. I've even drawn some new weird fillo art at last this year,

yay!!

Tons of good reading in these issues, as usual-- oh, hey, another nice bit of art news relates to your opening of issue #59 about the revival of *Amazing Stories*. Editor contacted me a couple of months back to do an illo for an upcoming issue, did a full color bit of weirdness that he actually accepted, so looking forward to seeing that when it all comes together. (Not sure I totally understand what the story was about he sent me, kind of felt like the start of a longer piece, but I gave it my best!) That will make it about 20 years since I last had art in that title. I hope it does well enough I get to do some more.

Never heard of "Brain Boy" until the article this issue. Then saw him mentioned twice over the months in other places on-line: maybe your publishing this goosed other people into action? You're an influencer!!

I totally agree with your opening to #60 about why run reviews-- with the overwhelming amounts of material that seem to be getting produced these days in just about every media possible, there is just no way to keep up with it all, let alone pick through it by ourselves. Reviews and recommendations such as you run here help me out a lot in deciding what might be worth looking into next. Keep 'em coming!

#61-- I don't recall ever coming across an issue of "*Read*" in school, though that could be chalked up to my lack of a lot of memories now of those early years. Does look like just the thing I would have devoured though.

Both laughed and groaned at Robert's cartoon on page 15, which is always a good reaction to a cartoon.

I agree with Tom's take on the original "Day the Earth Stood Still" and the remake-- I've seen the original countless times, and look forward to watching it again. I saw the remake once, and will not be upset if it never comes my way again. Why remake the great old flicks-- find the old movies that had good ideas, but with poor execution, and see if can make those again and improve them. (I've heard rumors of a remake of "Metropolis"!) Gods help us, whyyyy????????????

Anywho, sorry for the long silence from this end, I am hoping whatever has been keeping the art output down the past year or so might be passing at last, and I'll be a better contributor again for future issues. Let's see what happens!



George Phillis; 48 Hancock Hill Dr.; Worcester, MA 01609

As always, *Fadeaway* has some entrancing material about science fiction past and present. With respect to Writers of the Future, is there any requirement on eligibility other than that you have not won before? Are these people who have not published a great deal before professionally? I suppose the answer is someplace out there on the Internet. I confess I have heard variations on this line that tales that could be westerns or detective stories or current fiction should be Westerns or detective stories or current fiction, and should not be science fiction. I am not impressed by that argument. One could equally well say that all of the people who are writing Westerns or detective stories or current fiction are doing it wrong, and they should be

writing it is science fiction by inserting space ships and submarines and such not. With respect to “Yellow Submarine”, it seems to me that under most circumstances submarines can maneuver in 2 dimensions, not one, and therefore collisions become relatively easy to avoid, assuming there is some way of detecting the presence of the other submarine. Water, unlike air, is often quite hard to see through for any distance.

I confess I do not recall the Junior High School magazine *Read*. What will we see in the year 2000 or 2020? There are no colonies in outer space. We do have heart transplants. I have never heard of an ear transplant, but my impression is that eye transplants are extremely marginal at this point. (On the other hand, cataract surgery is now done on a fifteen minute outpatient basis.) Learning foreign languages is tending towards obsolescence; computer translation which appeared to be mythical in 1960 is now not quite perfect but somewhat works. The other predictions you note turned out to be more amusing, though not accurate. “Harrison Bergeron” was reprinted in one direction or another from or to a prozine, in that I recognize the plot. Unlike some of the other predictions of 2000, the General Electric remote electronic library actually came into existence, at least more or less, though not using microfilm.

Couchcon is certainly a bit different than larger conventions. It’s good to see that people are still taking get-togethers seriously. Thank you for the book reviews. There are a vast number of new novels out there, so that no one seems to have enough time to read all of them. Reviewers can lure us into books we might like to read, or convince us there are books that we can certainly skip.

Tom Feller’s review of the various “The Day the Earth Stood Still”... Readers curious as to what would happen if all electricity were shut down can usefully read the Emberverser series... Around the world, the death toll would be nearly total.

Your comment on used bookstores is indeed interesting. I am aware of 3 used bookstores in Northampton, and one on route 9 just this side of the river... That would be if I recall correctly Gray Matter books. They have an extremely large collection of science fiction because they bought the estate of someone who bought everything for many years and passed away, at a guess, 15 years ago. I was able to pick up a copy of Murray Leinster’s *The Wailing Asteroid* and a copy of Merritt’s *The Metal Monster*, these being editions that I had read in paperback at a guess is 50 or 60 years ago.

I would certainly not be concerned about people complaining you run reviews, or don’t run reviews. Fandom is very large these days, so no matter what you propose to do, you can be sure that someone won’t like it. Lloyd Penney mentions a modern edition of Edison’s *War on Mars*. I first read the tale in the hardback edition, which is very hard to find, but the Ellwood City public library had a copy of it 60 years ago. An edited form of it appeared in the back pages of the English translation volume series of Perry Rhodan. The editors deleted all of Serviss’s invocations of phrenology as the basis of Martian super science; one could argue that as a result the modern version was better.

Your artwork is always remarkable. I hope you continue to be in good health and have a happy summer.

///The requirements for the Writers of the Future contest are posted on-line and in the back pages their annual book. Basically, they are looking for new talent, but they will accept submissions from people who have had material published that has had only limited circulations, so that anything published on-line or in fanzines with fewer than 5,000 hits is OK. Also the author must not have professionally published a novel, or more than one novelette or more than three short stories, and been paid as a professional at eight cents a word or more. This leaves a lot of leeway, and apparently winning any of the quarterly prizes can be a jump-start toward getting other fiction seriously looked at by editors at print publishers, so there is more involved than just the prize money and the prestige of winning.

I echo the complaint that H.L. Gold, editor of *Galaxy Magazine*, used to make with his back cover and interior ads pushing for readers to subscribe to the magazine. He ran a side by-side paragraph comparison of a western and the same western with space ships and ray-guns inserted instead of horses and six-shooters. The point is that there is more to science fiction literature than interchangeable clichés, and I personally think the judges of the latest Writers of the Future anthology have neglected this fact. At least five of the stories included in the anthology are not really science fiction/fantasy; they are mainstream stories with the accoutrements of the genre stapled onto them, and not fitted on very well either.

I don’t know if this situation was caused by the current batch of judges being pre-determined to picking stories with the most polished writing styles, or whether there were simply an insufficient number of genuine

SF/fantasy tales submitted this past year. My suspicion is that the judges deliberately chose style over substance, and the anthology is the poorer for that process.

Trying to predict the future is a notoriously inexact science. Almost all predictions people make, even ones the so-called experts make about even the relatively near future are usually way off base. People who predict solutions to immediate problems that could be solved within the next five year period do much better, but even so there is no way to anticipate when some new scientific or technological breakthrough will find commercial applications that will change the entire picture of society.

For example, for most of the twentieth century people were predicting that the companies that made typewriters would finally solve the messy problem of changing ribbons. The IBM electric selectric typewriter with the snap in one time use cellophane ribbon did solve that problem, just in time for computers to hit the market and destroy the entire typewriter industry.

Science fiction stories that try to anticipate the future was usually even worse at predicting future events than the experts. This is one of the reasons older science fiction does not date well.///



Rich Dengrove; 2651 Arlington Drive, #302; Alexandria, VA 22306

I have two zines to write about: *Fadeaway* 60, which has my article in it, and *Fadeaway* 61, which has the letters concerning my article in it.

Fadeaway 60---The first article had to do with Hugo nominations and winners. My comment on it has to do with the science fiction magazines. Haven't we been ignoring the science fiction magazines on the web even though they have been winning Hugos by the score? I am talking about *Clarkesworld*, Tor.Com and *Uncanny*. Also, there are others. This might seem like finger pointing, but it is not. I haven't read them either, although I did go to their websites and give them a glance.

Anyway, Bob, you are continuing to enjoy new graphic novels, which still are published. It doesn't matter if they are scientific reprobates. In this ish, you talked about psychic powers in the continuing SF/fantasy story in *Monstress* magazine. I find psychic phenomena fun. As for ever proving them by science, I have my doubts. They are supposed to have a spiritual cause. That is why they are usually proven by lack of an explanation. However, all that means is we don't know the cause, whether it is material or spiritual. To make psychic powers scientific, you have to, to paraphrase a cliché, find a way of seeing God and the angels and taking pictures.

I may have said something like the above paragraph before. However, I have just started talking about the literary Alien Grays. To my article, you added eleven pictures of Aliens Grays, both Flying Saucer and Literary. I have over thirty pictures of Literary Alien Greys. Some Literary Grays look like Flying Saucer Grays even though they appeared in science fiction books and magazines. Other Literary Grays go to the opposite extreme and are only mobile brains. A few go back to the 19th Century.

Instead of going into outer space, like with the Alien Grays, I go into the wild West in this comment. Of course, it is about your article on Death Valley Days. I tried finding something you didn't know about Death Valley and Death Valley Days. You wrote enough at the beginning about Death Valley, and about the creation of the Death Valley Days radio and TV show. I thought you might not say something about what borax is used for. However, you did. Also, I thought you might not say anything about the Death Valley Days TV Show after the Old Ranger left. However, you did. In short, you just about had a complete article on both subjects. Anything I was interested in, you said something about. ...Bravissimo!!

Let's do something with the letters now. First, I will comment on Jefferson Swycaffer's letter. There, I disagree with him. Or do I? Will a mind reading super hero be omniscient? It depends on whether there are mind reading super villains out there; and Brain Boy certainly was assailed by them. Sometimes, not only was Brain Boy not omnipotent; but it looked like the villain might win. Beside competition, there are other limitations on mind reading. The only reason a writer might imagine reading the total mind unerringly is that it is a wish dream. On the other hand, the reality of psi experiments is that, even in the best of circumstances, the results are only a little above chance. Certainly, for the sake of story, the writer can choose a situation in between wish

dreams and psi experiments. Among other things, a super hero might only be able to read some thoughts and not others; or he may only be able to read some people's minds and not others.

I may disagree with Jefferson. Do I currently disagree with you Bob? In #59, I doubted Disney would ignore its comic book department. In response, Bob, you said Disney would only publish comic books as long as there are dollars in it. I have to say I agree with you now. The movies seem to be drawing the younger generation. Disney doesn't need no goddamn comic books to interest them further. Thus, it will publish comic books – or are they now graphic novels? – only as long as they make money.

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Let me write about the articles before I write about the letters. The first article concerned the short story anthology L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future. You criticized stories for not following the genre. I don't think writing a tale in more than one genre is the problem. A lot of very popular blockbusters combine five or six genres, like science fiction, westerns, romance, horror historical fiction, etc. Maybe we can't call them literature but they hold people's interest.

The examples you give from the Hubbard anthology differ from them: they do not hold people's interest. I suspect the problem isn't mixing genres but failing to make the extra genre a part of the story. Often enough, failing to make a story, period. I remember reading one from a 1940 *Spicy Adventure*. It was published as science fiction, and, ostensibly, concerned a space hero pursuing a space villain. It didn't make it. Not when the hero tied his rocket to a hitching post outside a saloon.

We go from fake science fiction to science fiction considered fact. I am talking about Dale Nelson's articles in *Read* magazine during the 1960s. It had articles concerning what the future would be like. Dale wonders about them. I never read that particular magazine, but forecasts of the future were being made all over the place. I remember reading a 1959 issue of *Kiplinger* magazine that predicted atomic cars in the 1980s. Thank God, that didn't happen. While the article sounded a lot like the articles in *Read*, which were written for middle school students, it was written for adults. We can only conclude the crystal balls that heralded a stupendous future have been as foggy for adults as they were for 8th graders.

From reviews of predictions of our stupendous future, let us go to movie reviews; and to Tom Fellers' review of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951). There's a belief that that movie inspired a whole school of flying saucerdom, which sung the virtues of the 'Space Brothers.' I have to admit that their saucer beings went farther than Michael Rennie. Unlike him, the Space Brothers were beautiful people with Nordic features: blond hair, blues eyes. Furthermore, in addition to railing against atomic war, they advocated all sorts of quackery. How did we know about them? Their avatars claimed to have met them, or contacted them in seances; and wrote books about it.

I leave the articles, and 'Space Brothers' and atomic cars; instead, we go to the letters. A number of the letters mention my article on Alien Greys. I have this to say about it. I have to thank Bob for editing it to eliminate a lot of excess verbiage. In addition, I owe Bob for something else. When he asks me to proofread an article in the future, I will do that rather than be worried about my own problems. I realize this is more of a message to Bob than to most readers here.

Now I wish to thank a number of people for praising my article. The first is Chris Garcia. His comment is very short and without comment hooks. Nevertheless, I have something to say to Chris: you got a new job yet?

In addition, I want to thank Bill Plott for his kind words. Of course, I don't know whether he would want to go back as far as I have – to the Ancient Greeks. In my history – if I ever write it – I am going to tackle the fact people had quite different ideas about the universe before the Copernican Revolution. Very few believed the stars were suns and only a few more believed that the planets supported life. Usually extraterrestrials were restricted to the Moon. In fact, it is surprising how many, nonetheless, found ways to believe in extraterrestrials in other ways.

Returning to modern times and the letters in *Fadeaway*, I would like to thank Gary Casey for his comments. He didn't actually dislike the article; and I understand where he is coming from. He doubts H.G. Wells' Martians were Alien Greys because they had tentacles. Gary is right most people would not consider Wells' Martians Alien Greys. The designation has only been used for Flying Saucer Greys. However, since both the flying saucer greys and Wells' Martians follow the same principles, I have taken the liberty of considering them both Alien Greys. The principles are a large brain means a surfeit of reason and a small body means a

deficit of emotion. Wells' Martians are mostly brain; they don't even have a digestive tract. In addition, Wells believed the tentacles helped his Martians' reason because they could manipulate things better.

Last, I wish to thank Jefferson Swycaffer for his kind words. Also, I think he is right that when our animosity toward some idea decreases sufficiently, it freezes into a single stereotype. Hence, the Alien Grey and Brunnhilde have become frozen. I wonder if our animosity toward reason has decreased so that it includes only the Flying Saucer Greys; and I wonder if many people's antipathy toward opera decreased many decades back so that it only includes this sports metaphor: "The game ain't over until the fat lady sings." Which could only be Birgit Nilsson singing in *Gotterdammerung* – when the world of the gods ends.

One last thing before I go. It has nothing to do with my article or Alien Greys. Nor does it have anything to do with Birgit Nilsson. Knowing what has been happening, I want to thank George Wells for writing. Also, I would like to thank him for mentioning me even though he didn't have to.



Lloyd Penney; 1706-24 Eva Rd.; Etobicoke, ON CANADA M9C 2B2

I am once again some time behind, but there is always time to catch up. I hope I am not too late to get a loc in for *Fadeaway* 61.

I had heard of *Read*, the magazine, some years ago, as a means with which to encourage reading. It was a magazine, and the magazine format is nearly unknown by a large portion of the population. It certainly predicted America in the Year 2000, with people ignoring one another with electronic devices in their hands. Such encouragement is needed today, and I suppose it could take the form of a podcast, but it would be one podcast in a field with hundreds of thousands of podcasts, lost in an e-field.

We were part of a group of fans going to a convention by train. The trip there was Traincon 1, and the trip back was Traincon 2, and we actually had con badges. At the end of the Winnipeg Worldcon, a number of us were getting our laundry done in the hotel's laundry room, and we called that Laundrycon. Why not? Those gatherings were fun, and silly, too.

We weren't attracted at all by the idea of a remake of "The Day The Earth Stood Still"; the original is iconic in our eyes. Michael Rennie was the perfect Klaatu. We spotted Rennie in a British WWII movie just a few nights ago, and sure enough, he didn't appear in the end credits. Keanu Reeves is Canadian, but his career appears to be on the downslide. He has agreed to star in another John Wick movie or two, plus another Matrix movie, and even another Bill and Ted.

I have hopes that *Amazing Stories Magazine* will be moving forward...they already have a couple of minor awards under their belts, and I know the editor-in-chief has confidence in its future plans; e-mailing him just yesterday. I think it has a good future, with upcoming plans. Yes, I am biased, but it does look good. In response to your response to Bill Plott, there are efforts to get it onto the newsstands.

My loc...we were not able to get into the local anime show where our sales are always the best, but we do have a number of events coming up where we do have tables, so we hope those sales will make up for not being at the anime con. England was three weeks of great times, we already miss, and we are already musing about our return.

I fear I have run out of pithy commentary, or I need to top up my own caffeine supply. I suspect it's a combination of both. At least, I can take care of the latter. Thank you for this issue, and I am sure that 62 is in the prep stages. See you when it arrives.

**OUR ESTEEMED ART STAFF
& WHERE THEIR WORK
MAY BE FOUND HEREIN:**

Dan Carroll --- front cover

Robert Cepeda – page 4

Brad W Foster --- page 7

**Marc Schirmeister --- pgs 21, 23, 24, 26, 38
clip art from the internet – pg 22**