

Fornax #1 is a fanzine devoted to history, science fiction & gaming as well as other areas where the editor's curiosity goes. It is created by Charles Rector. In the grand tradition of fanzines, the initial issue is solely written by the editor.

If you want to write for Fornax, please send email submissions to crector@myway.com with a maximum length of 1,000 words. No fiction, poetry or artwork please. Any text format is fine. There is no payment other than the exposure that you will get as a writer. Of course, Letters Of Comment are always welcome. If you want to read more by the editor, then point your browser to: <http://omgn.com/blog/cjrector>

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Introduction:

Welcome to the first issue of Fornax, my very first endeavor in sci-fi fanzines. It is also, as far as I know, the very first pro-GamerGate fanzine. That it comes out now is fitting now that GamerGate has emerged as the dominant faction in sci-fi fandom, at least as far as the Hugo Awards nomination process is concerned. Only God knows how the final Hugo Awards balloting will turn out or how next year's nomination process will go. However, you can bet that it will be a pretty entertaining ride.

In a way it's fitting that I'm the one who's launching the first pro-GamerGate fanzine. While the other fanzine editors spend their pre-editorship year's letterhacking and writing other kinds of stuff for fanzines, I was playing games. Specifically, Browser-Based Games (BBG's) that back in the late 1990's/early21st Century was the cutting edge of online gaming. As a result, there were a lot of folks willing to play these mostly free, advertiser supported games and game creators

eager to please their gaming interests. However, the gaming magazines failed to cover this new gaming frontier presumably because it was not an area in which big companies were operating.

As they say, nature abhors a vacuum, so where the magazines feared to tread a number of plucky gamers created their own websites such as most notably MPOGD. In early 2001, I went to work at MPOGD first as a reporter and then as News Editor. Eventually, I left MPOGD first to do a blog and then to become the News Editor at the newly started up OMGN. If you want to see what the original OMGN was like, just go to

archive.omgn.com

Due to the lack of big money in BBG's, there was never any sort of corruption in covering them. At no time did anyone ever offer me any sort of a bribe to favorably review a game. On the other hand, the gaming magazines were rife with corruption with gaming companies paying off reviewers and the magazines failing to have any sorts of ethics policies. Eventually, gamers got sick and tired of all this, circulations fell and today there are hardly any gaming magazines left. Starting several years ago, websites launched by companies filled in the place of the magazines, but they have been beset by the same kinds of ethical and moral issues that brought about the downfall of the magazines. Hence the consumers revolt known as GamerGate.

Essay: To A-Bomb or not to A-Bomb?

In August of 1945, the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were "nuked" by the first two Atomic Bombs ever used in combat. The usage of the Atomic Bombs ended World War II; yet, their usage has been criticized by some as being "immoral." There are some general facts that the critics ignore such as the invasion plans, Kamikaze Japanese, Japanese culture and religion, and the likely casualty rate that the invasion would entail. In this essay, I will show just why the dropping of the A-Bombs was necessary and how those who criticize the decision live in a "Fantasy Land."

It is my view that the decision to drop the A-Bombs was the correct choice. It has been estimated that the invasion would have cost

the United States about one million casualties not to mention the financial cost that such an operation would impose. Because of logistics and Kamikazes, it would have been difficult to supply the troops.

Because the Japanese saw themselves as being "shields of the Emperor" and because patriotism was an integral part of the Japanese religion, there would have been fierce resistance with high casualty rates on both sides being the likely outcome. Another hassle would have been that of redeployment, for even by March 1, 1946, only the 13th and 20th Armored and the 97th Infantry Divisions would have been completely redeployed from Europe to the Pacific (the 13th and 20th Armored Divisions comprised the XIII Corps of the Eighth Army - it was formerly a part of the Ninth Army). This would have caused the war to last well past 1946 and, at least, to mid-1947 with vast social repercussions in the United States. Because of the Japanese belief in the "sacredness" of the Japanese Homeland, the Japanese would have fought with great ferocity until all Japan was conquered, and even then, they could have resorted to guerrilla warfare which would have caused the war to last even longer. In the end, Japan would have been devastated with millions dead and millions more helpless. And so, I make my case that dropping the two A-Bombs was the correct choice.

There are those who criticize the decision to drop the A-Bomb as being "immoral." They believe that it was "unjust" for us to drop the A-Bomb on "innocent civilians." The decision has been called inhuman because 200,000 civilians were killed in the bombings with the effects of radiation lasting even now. There are even some who claim that we "nuked Japan" to "make Russia more compliant in the post-war world. Such are the claims of the A-Bomb critics.

It should be noted that we did not know whether or not the A-Bomb would work because, after all, the A-Bomb was an experimental weapon and experimental weapons have been known to fail in the past. This would serve to refute the old argument that we could have warned the Japanese and instead wasted a desert island (if Japan does have a desert island). Besides why warn the Japanese of our A-Bombs since the Japanese didn't warn us before December 7th, 1941?

It should be noted that even troops who weren't scheduled (yet) to be redeployed (meaning the XIII Corps of the Ninth Army and the

entire First Army) were nervous about invading Japan. I talked to Mr. Paul Walthers, Platteville Middle School social studies teacher, who served in the XXII Corps of the Fifteenth Army during the last few months of the war. Mr. Walther stated, "I would say that the A-Bombs gave us relief because then we didn't have to go to Japan- we knew that if we went, we might not come back."

Then there are the immoral Japanese tactics of the Kamikazes - both airplane and submarine - which cost our forces dearly. Because the Japanese High Command had been hoarding thousands of Kamikazes for the invasion, we would have paid dearly in lives and materiel. The terrain in Japan would have caused our troops much difficulty because Japan has a mountain chain which rivals our Rocky Mountains.

It should also be pointed out that the Russians had no real intentions of invading Japan, for their army (which was facing its own redeployment hassles) was facing stiff Japanese resistance in Manchuria until Japan surrendered. It should be noted that, Japan surrendered only with the shocking knowledge that we could devastate whole cities at will. Even then, they just barely surrendered. We had no remaining A-Bombs! The Japanese refusal to surrender and our A-Bomb deficiency would have combined to force us to invade Japan anyway. Besides, using the A-Bomb didn't make Russia any more compliant after the war so this "nukes" that particular argument. And so, the anti-A-Bomb arguments have been shot down by both hard historical facts and realistic reasoning.

And so, in summation, when we hold such "look back and criticize" debates, we must look at the facts alternative plans, instead of the "philosophy and morality" of the matter.

Book Review:

Ballistic Babes by Lawrence Ganem & John Zakour.
New York: DAW Books 2009

Ballistic Babes a pair of novels that were originally published as separate books. The first, The Radioactive Redhead, was co-written by

both Lawrence Ganem & John Zakour. The second, *The Frost-Haired Vixen*, was written by just Zakour. Both novels were about the adventures of Zachary Nixon Johnson, supposedly the last freelance private investigator on Earth. However, there are huge differences between the two novels.

The first is a masterpiece of sheer zaniness. The slapstick keeps coming as do the quips and action. There is not a whole lot of logic here, but you are having so much fun, you really don't care.

The second has much more logic and the plot holds together well. However, there is far less fun and frivolity to it. The end result is a well done suspense novel complete with the fate of the Earth at stake, but it is far less entertaining.

It would appear that Ganem was the more humorous of the two authors. That being the case, if you are looking for more Zachary Nixon Johnson novels, stick to the ones with both authors listed on the cover.

Fanzine Reviews:

<http://efanzines.com/DrinkTank/DrinkTank390.pdf>

The Drink Tank #390 edited by Christopher Garcia

Of all the fanzines to go under in recent years, the demise of *The Drink Tank* was one of the least lamented. This was because of the Political Correctness that permeated every issue to the point that all too often TDT was often an exercise in unintentional humor.

For instance, in Issue #390 that was devoted to bashing GamerGate with wholesale vulgarity and complete lack of intelligent thought, the bogus statistic of 48% percent of all gamers being female was presented as if that were an established fact. On top of that, the claim is made without absolutely any evidence to back it up that there are more older women gamers than there are teenage boys. Now that's bizarre.

I've been in online gaming since discovering *Caissa's Web* in 1995 and massively multiplayer online gaming since *Solar Empire* in 1999, and in my experience less than 10% of all players have been female. For instance, in *GoodGame Empire*, where I am the leader of the SF USAF Tigers, only one out of 23 members is a female.

I could go on and on about all the nonsense in just this one issue of TDT, but you get the idea.

<http://efanzines.com/Fadeaway/Fadeaway-44.pdf>

Fadeaway #44 edited by Robert Jennings

Of all the fanzines that have shut down the past year, perhaps none of them will be missed more than Fadeaway. This was a unique fanzine in that it was devoted to the history of popular culture, not just sci-fi. Case in point is the centerpiece of Fadeaway's final issue, a lengthy essay about Bomba the Jungle Boy and his career in books, comic books and movies. This is an in depth piece about one of the most popular characters in all of jungle fiction. Its pretty surprising that a fanzine in A.D. 2014 would devote such a big part of an issue to a now dead genre of popular fiction, but Fadeaway always was a fanzine that marched to a different drummer. It will be missed.

<http://efanzines.com/ASNP/OfMice-02.pdf>

Of Mice and Martians #2 edited by Jason Burnett

This little fanzines might be best called a letterzine since about 75% of its contents consist of Letters Of Comment or LOC's. Its centerpiece is an essay about authors whose works get to be "too big to edit." That is excessively long novels that really pig out on descriptions such as about murder and bloodshed. Its a well done piece. This is a fanzine that's well worth paying attention to down the road.

<http://efanzines.com/Alexiad/Alexiad079L.pdf>

Alexiad #79 edited by Joseph T. Major & Lisa Major

Normally Alexiad has been published on an every other month basis that meas that since its last issue was produced in February, it is due a new issue. This means that its continued existence is at risk. If Alexiad goes under, it would be a shame since it is consistently one of the best fanzines in existence.

Joseph T. Major is a most knowledgeable man about science fiction and science fiction writers. In the past, he has written about the historical novels of L. Sprague deCamp. A regular feature of this fanzine is the "Monarchist News" that tells of what's going on with royal families around the world. This particular issue includes a lengthy article by about the industrial ceramics business run by the Coors Brewing Company and the Cold War era military applications of these ceramic products.

Game Review:

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

Earth Empires

Formerly known as Earth: 2025, Earth Empires was one of the first browser-based games and certainly the first one to gain a mass audience. As such, this was a game that was perfectly positioned to become a breakout game capable of reaching an audience rivaling that of store-bought games.

This is a game with a long lineage. Originally, it was a BBS game called Barren Realm Elites. Starting in 1996, it became one of the first major browser based games. In 2009, one of its players bought the game from its creator/developer Mehul Patel who had given up on being able to run the game profitably due to falling ad rates. Since then the game has run without paid advertising on donations from players. Among other things, the new owners added a decent forum and a good in-game system.

Earth Empires is a free browser-based strategy game that revolves around land acreage. About a decade ago, games like this were literally a dime a dozen, now they are rare. There are certain strategies to follow for maximum success.

Earth Empires is a text-based game with pictures of weapons. This is a classic war game. Some of the player teams in this game are over a decade old. The best part of this game is the community which is one of the absolute best in browser-based gaming. What has happened over the years is that the players have created a certifiable galaxy of fansites, clansites & other game related websites. In other words, the best part of Earth: 2025 is really created by the players themselves. If you are new to browser based strategy games, playing a round or two

Movie Review:

Grindhouse (2007)

During the 1970's, it became common in some circles to refer to small budget movies aka B Movies as being "grindhouse" flicks. Just how and why this term came about is unclear. What is clear is the fact that despite the low budgets and near complete lack of big name acting talent, such movies found a receptive audience that very much enjoyed them. One big reason why audiences liked these movies is that they often were much more original than the all too often formula driven productions that came out of Hollywood.

Although the Drive-Ins and the big city theaters that constituted the B Movie Theatrical Circuit have largely gone by the wayside, there is a great deal of nostalgia out there for the low budget flicks of the past. This nostalgia has led to the tremendous success of low cost DVD packages such as the Mill Creek line of 50 and 100 movie packs where the prices are about 50 cents or less per movie. Of course, these are all public domain flicks, but one reason why they are public domain in the first place is that most of the low budget production companies went out of business during the transition period between the days when B Movies were released to theaters and the development of the original movies direct to the public via the DVD & VHS market. Extinct companies do not renew copyrights. The other reason is that before it became clear that there was a healthy market for B Movies on DVD/VHS, many of the low budget production houses did not renew the copyrights on their creations. After all, TV stations and cable channels rarely ran "grindhouse movies" with the result that there was no real financial incentive to renew those copyrights.

This success of "grindhouse" flicks on DVD has not escaped the attention of Hollywood. However, instead of paying attention to why folks would prefer the low budget movies of the past over the big budget flicks of today, the big shots in Hollywood got it in their heads that the way to capitalize on the success of grindhouse flicks would be to take the grindhouse name and use it for their own ends.

In other words, instead of abandoning the tired old formulas and embracing new, original ideas, Hollywood decided to make a typical piece of hack drivel and market it under the name "Grindhouse" and hope that the American people would fall for it like a bunch of suckers.

In the case of Grindhouse, the American people proved the Hollywood conventional wisdom wrong. Despite a slew of positive reviews, written by critics who would not recognize a genuine B Movie under any circumstances, the viewing public stayed away from Grindhouse. Despite the fact that this movie was made on a huge budget that combined with the budget for advertising and promotions added up to over \$100 Million, Grindhouse grossed less than \$30 Million world wide. As it happens, the movie audience was right to stay away from Grindhouse as it is a truly horrible flick.

Grindhouse was billed as a tribute to the "grindhouse" movies of the past. There was a great deal of inconsistency at work here as Grindhouse was made at a budget massively larger than what any of the low budget flicks that it claimed to pay tribute to. Likewise, Grindhouse had none of the inventiveness of the grindhouse movies and those low budget flicks rarely had big name acting talent associated with them while Grindhouse the movie is practically overflowing with it.

As final proof of the awfulness of Grindhouse, consider that the geniuses behind it have announced that instead of releasing Grindhouse on DVD in the form that it was originally released to theaters, it will be divided into 2 different features entitled "Deathproof" & "Planet Terror." Obviously, the studio bosses are attempting to avoid the stigma attached to Grindhouse and are trying to sucker the public into buying this garbage by pretending that these are 2 different movies that have absolutely nothing to do with each other.

Irregardless of whatever name(s) that it goes by, Grindhouse is trash and ought to be avoided as such.

Website Reviews:

<http://www.axishistory.com/index.php>

Axis History Factbook

The Axis History Factbook is a comprehensive source of information about the Axis Powers during World War II. It is also regularly updated. This is obviously a labor of love.

<http://nichegamer.com/>

Niche Gamer

Niche Gamer is a unique online gaming news & resources website. It focuses in on focus on obscure, or niche, games that get less attention from other gaming news/resources websites. It has an unusually strong journalistic ethics policy that has outlined for the users. Another aspect of Niche Gamer is the fact that it has been a steadfast supporter of GamerGate from the very beginning.

<http://blogjob.com/oneangrygamer/>

One Angry Gamer

If there is a website that could be fairly characterized as a pro "GamerGate" journalism endeavor, it is One Angry Gamer . This is a blog based website that regularly delivers impassioned news directly relating to GamerGate as well as more conventional gaming news & views. Definitely worth taking a look at.

<http://original-gamer.com/>

Original Gamer

Original Gamer is a website that has been around since 2009. It mostly covers games of a science fiction/fantasy nature. It carries a wide variety of content. It was strongly supportive of GamerGate from the very beginning. However, it has not run any new articles or podcasts about GG since January.

<http://techraptor.net/>

Tech Raptor

Over the past several months, the protest movement known as "GamerGate" has rocked the gaming world. This is a backlash against the shoddy practices of all too many gaming journalism outlets both in print and Online.

However, the backlash really started before the GamerGate movement got going last summer. For instance, gamers were increasingly creating their own blogs, websites and YouTube game review platforms. One such website is TechRaptor that came into being in 2013. It has generally provided high quality coverage of games and other stuff of interest to tech fanatics. Most importantly, it has shown no signs of even the slightest inclination to sell out.