

Fornax #2 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, it is mostly written by the editor.

If you want to write for Fornax, please send email submissions to [crector@myway.com](mailto: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 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.cojm/blog/cjrector>

Order of Contents:

Editorial #1

Editorial #2

Essay

Book Review

Movie Review

Game Review

Fanzine Reviews

Website Reviews

Letters Of Comment

Editorial #1: No Award Best Fan Writer

Regardless of whether or not they got on the final ballot due to their being on the GamerGate slates, none of current Hugo Award nominees for Best Fan

Writer deserves to win the award. All of them, including 2014 award winner

Kameron Hurley, are bloggers. None of these nominees, as far as I am aware of, have ever written for even so much as a single fanzine. On top of that, other than Jeffro Johnson, all of them are pro Sci-Fi writers who are mainly interested in self-promotion. Traditionally, a fan writer is just that: a fan who writes about sci-fi without compensation. That being the case these folks just simply are not fan writers. None of them deserve the award. What needs to be done is for the Hugo Award administrators to make it clear on the nomination forms that professional writers are not acceptable for the Hugo Award for Best Fan Writer. As for Johnson, he hardly ever writes about Science Fiction, making his nomination a complete joke.

Editorial #2: No Award Best Fanzine

As stated in the previous editorial, I am a supporter of the GamerGate slates in the Hugo Awards nomination process. However, that does not mean that I support all of their selections. As with Best Fan Writer, I also oppose all of the nominations for Best Fanzine irregardless of whether or not those nominations were made with support from the GG slates.

Elitist Book Reviews is nothing more than a mere blog, not even a zine of any sort. On top of that, the book reviews that it publishes are just simply not good enough to warrant its "elite" description. EBR does deserve any consideration for this award.

Journey Planet is just so much Political Correctness written by

egomaniacs. It is just simply not good enough to merit even so much as a nomination let alone an actual Hugo Award.

Tangent Online does not even make a pretense of being any sort of zine. Its website is just an accumulation of entries and does not even try to have separate "issues." It does not deserve to win the award for Best Fanzine because it is not a fanzine in the first place.

The Revenge of Hump Day is a discontinued blog that makes it impossible to evaluate it. It does not deserve any consideration.

Some have lamented the fact that Black Gate withdrew itself from consideration in the Hugo Awards. The fact that BG did so is really a good thing given that it pays for contributions. This makes a Semiprozine, not a true fanzine. As such, even if it were still eligible for voting, it still should not get even so much as a single vote for Best Fanzine.

Essay: The Evils of Futuristic Television

In the stories, "Harrison Bergeron" and "The Pedestrian," authors Kurt Vonnegut and Ray Bradbury show how television (TV) could play a part in the enslavement of mankind. In this essay, I will show how they present their respective cases.

In Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron," we witness a society gone mad

with the idea of equality. People have beepers, masks, and weights on them so as to keep them from taking advantage of any superiority that they might have.

TV plays a role in Vonnegut's world. In this story, TV helps enforce the rule of equality. It is used as a means of propaganda whereby the people are convinced that the dictatorship is acting in their interests by keeping everyone equal.

In Ray Bradbury's "The Pedestrian," we see a society gone numb by the effects of television and the use of the lone police car. The lone police car helped the dictatorship to keep people watching TV. By putting people who resist going numb into mental asylums, the dictatorship can rule without fear of the numbed masses overthrowing them.

It is evident that this future society of Bradbury's has been literally numbed out of intellectual existence by TV. Books and magazines do not exist any more, which helps to ensure that the populace is kept away from the world of ideas. This aids the dictatorship in its control of society.

It is a trademark of both "societies" that TV plays a major role in the rule of those societies. TV is used to numb whole societies (with the exception of a very few enlightened individuals) into accepting the way things are (as in "Harrison Bergeron") or to cause people to seek escapism over reality (as in

"The Pedestrian").

Already, there are a growing number of slick and biased "news shows" on TV. This is just the first step in what may turn out to be a horror-story society.

And so, in summation, if we are to remain a free society, we must now fight the present use of "Newspeak" or else all is lost.

Book Review:

Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation, by Frederick Merk with the collaboration of Lois Bannister Merk, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Third Printing, April 1970.

"Manifest Destiny." "Mission." These are the two main terms which dominate the discussion of American history in Frederick Merk's book, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation. Other terms that Merk employs in his book include: "All Mexico," "Continentalism," "Insular Imperialism" and the first three terms are temporary individual facets of "Manifest Destiny." The term "national spirit" is the overall feeling and ideology of the American people.

"Mission" is the term that Merk used to describe his concept of what Americans have set for themselves--a mission with a series of specific goals

to attain. One goal was the establishment of a model democracy for the rest of the world to emulate. Another goal was to avoid cupidity in relation to the territory of other nations and peoples. It was deemed necessary to preserve and save democracies around the world. One mission was to create slogans for democracy (Fourteen Points and Four Freedoms). The "Mission" advocated the establishment of international organizations to keep the peace (League of Nations and United Nations). Public welfare programs for the "underprivileged," reforms (political, social and economic) throughout the years and a philanthropic tradition culminated in the Marshall Plan and other foreign aid programs (261-266). America's "Mission," as Merk defined it, had a distinctly left-wing flavor to it which Merk wholeheartedly approved.

"Manifest Destiny," as Merk defined it, does not have Merk's approval. Merk defined "Manifest Destiny" as a greedy, selfish ideology. He believed that this ideology was nothing more than a program of "unrelieved materialism" (265). Merk was obviously biased against "Manifest Destiny." He tried to smear the proponents of "Manifest Destiny" as being sleazy, immoral people who cloaked their ideology in slogans and idealistic rhetoric. Merk believed they realized that they could not win the public over to their side with a naked program of unrelieved materialism (261-266).

Merk separated the history of "Manifest Destiny" (or "imperialism" as he sometimes called it) into two component periods: Continentalism and All Mexico. Another related period of expansionist sentiment and action that

Merk defines as "Insular Imperialism. Continentalism was the first ideology and period of "Manifest Destiny": in which the goal of Americans was to have their country stretch from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. Under Continentalism, the United States would possess all of North America. When America, through the Mexican and Oregon cessions, did reach the Pacific, enthusiasm for ruling the rest of North America quickly dissipated.

All Mexico was the second ideology and period of "Manifest Destiny." It occurred during the Mexican war (1846-1848). Essentially, the proponents of All Mexico called for the absorption of the entire country of Mexico into the United States as opposed to the seizure of only a part of the Mexican territory. The All Mexico Movement collapsed under the twin impacts of the peace negotiations of Nicholas Trist and what Merk called "Mexican stubbornness and Whig treason" (180-201).

An ideology and period related to "Manifest Destiny" was that of Insular imperialism. Insular Imperialism, according to Merk, was the process of America's acquiring territory outside the continental limits of North America. Merk claimed that Insular Imperialism cannot be considered a part of "Manifest Destiny." This was because "Manifest Destiny" was solely concerned with continental, not world, expansion and supremacy. Merk's reasoning is unconvincing, and he fails to back up his argument. Since this is a book review, his separation of "Manifest Destiny" and Insular Imperialism will be strictly observed.

According to Merk, Insular Imperialism began right after the Civil War ended under the initial stewardship of Secretary of State, William H. Seward, during 1865-1868. Seward consistently sought to add new territories by way of purchase. Seward was successful in gaining Alaska and the Midway Islands.

During the years following Seward, the American people perceived a decline in America's fortunes. In response, American politicians proposed a multitude of measures designed to restore America's vitality. One proposal was renewed expansion.

During the 1890's, America was on an expansion binge. There was the Spanish-American War (1898) in which the Philippines and Puerto Rico were seized. Hawaii was annexed in 1898 by the United States. Several other territorial additions were undertaken by the United States in the 1890's and early 1900's.

The theory that formed the backdrop for this expansion was probably best expounded by Alfred T. Mahan in a magazine article published in February, 1893 about Hawaii. Mahan wrote that growth is necessary for the nation to be healthy and energetic lest stagnation and decay set in (235-237). Mahan's idea was not new--it had been successfully expounded in the 1840's, but it set the tone of debate on the expansion issue.

After the Spanish-American War, Insular Imperialism "lost attractiveness" (257). The public had grown weary of expansion. Merk believed that the American people were also reacting against the "colonialism" that overseas expansion seemed to entail (260).

This is not a well-thought out book. Merk is one of those historians who attempts to mold the facts to fit a preconceived theory rather than molding the theory to fit the facts. Merk's book fails to demonstrate that there is any such thing as a "national spirit" or a "Mission." Merk sometimes fails to provide back up for his claims. Merk, in short, fails to convince the reader that his conclusions are correct.

Movie Review:

Man with the Screaming Brain, The (2005)

One of the more interesting developments of the past few years is the decline and fall of Bruce Campbell as an actor. Starting in the mid-1970's, he was connected with the up and coming director/producer/writer Sam Raimi and with what might be called the Raimi Gang of pals who joined together to make Super-8 flicks and from there enter the world of professional moviemaking. Initially, Campbell's acting ability was horrid, however he still looked much better than the great majority of the actors in Raimi's flicks. However, by the time of the 1993-1994 TV series "The Adventures of Brisco County Jr." Campbell had come into his own as an actor.

During the mid and later 1990's Campbell was one of the better actors in Hollywood. However, the failure of his 2000 TV show "Jack of All Trades," which he had a strong emotional commitment to, reportedly devastated him. This debacle combined with a rift that began to open following the decision by Raimi not to cast Campbell in the title role in the 1990's TV series Hercules: The Legendary Journeys "TV series even though Campbell really wanted that role combined with Raimi's decision to cut all of Campbell's scenes in the 1995 flick The Quick and the Dead. Another, later, development that caused the rift to expand even further is Raimi's refusal to cast Campbell in anything larger than a bit part as an usher in Raimi's Spiderman 2".

The end result of all this is the decline and fall of Bruce Campbell as an actor. He flubbed what should have been an easy role for him in the 2002 comedy "Serving Sara." He also failed to deliver a good performance in the horror spoof "Bubba Ho-tep". He just seems to be less and less engaged in acting nowadays.

It is in this context that Campbell struck what many observers considered to be a questionable deal with Raimi. Campbell would have starring roles in several low budget flicks made by Sam Raimi and some of Raimi's friends. These movies would play at film festivals and/or the Sci-Fi Channel and then be released directly to the public on VHS and DVD. Of these, the first to be released is The Man With the Screaming Brain.

The Man With the Screaming Brain is a cinematic disaster. Despite the fact that it is supposed to have been filmed in Bulgaria, which is where the movie is set, it looks just like it was filmed on a Hollywood back lot. It is supposed to be a horror spoof, but it fails both as horror and as humor. The story is poorly thought out and while you can tell that some scenes are meant to be scary and others are meant to be funny, they all fall flat on their back.

One example of the lameness of The Man With the Screaming Brain is the fact that there is no screaming brain in the movie. It's a classic example of the intriguingly named movie, the story of which has no relation to its title.

Essentially, the plot of The Man With the Screaming Brain is that of a pharmaceutical entrepreneur (Campbell) who moves to Bulgaria with the intent of starting a business there. He has to hire an ex-KGB agent to help him get around the post-Communist bureaucracy and encounters a robotics genius who is into hip-hop music.

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of The Man With the Screaming Brain is Campbell's poor performance. You cannot help but get the feeling that he really did not commit himself to this flick. The same goes for the direction, which is appropriate since The Man With the Screaming Brain also marks Campbell's directorial debut.

Whatever one makes of this flick, it is clear that the longstanding

comradeship between Sam Raimi and Bruce Campbell is just about over. The Man With the Screaming Brain was shown at a film festival that this writer attended. After the flick's showing, there was a Q&A session with Campbell. Campbell was defensive and nervous acting as long as the questions were about the show and/or about his relationship with Raimi. He loosened up only after the questions switched over to some non-Raimi projects. After the session ended, it was clear from discussions that this writer had with other fans, that there was a fan consensus that Campbell's relationship with Raimi was all but over and he was ready to move on to new ground as an actor. For both his sake and that of movie fans in general, let's all hope that he finds lasting success free from the clutches of Sam Raimi.

In any event, The Man With the Screaming Brain is definitely not recommended.

Game Review:

<http://teq3.playteq.com/>

TEQ3

TEQ3 is a science fictional online strategy game set in the year 2310 where all previously existing governments have collapsed and its up to you to set up your own domain where you fight other warlords for power and conquest. Unlike many other games of this genre, there are neither multiple

aces or several different forms of government to choose from.

In TEQ3, the key to success lies in choosing the right construction strategy coupled with picking the right mix for your armed forces. There is also scientific research that you can do to enhance the effectiveness of both your economic choices and your armed forces.

Unlike most of the other games in this genre, there are only a few basic kinds of troops: Bombers, Fighters, Heavy Lasers, Marines, Missiles and Panzers. There are also expensive troops called SEALS and expensive weapons called Cruise Missiles. Each troops type has its own strengths, weaknesses and uses.

For example, Heavy Lasers are purely defensive while Bombers are purely offensive. There are also special operations such as Blitzkrieg and Dogfights that supplement the Regular Attacks.

There are 3 different servers for TEQ3: Group, Individual and Team. In this writer's estimation, the Group server where you play by yourself or with a maximum 5-member Group is the best server. Teams of up to 20 members lack the comraderie of the smaller Groups.

There are some unique features in TEQ3 that make it different from other futuristic Earth-bound strategy games. For instance, you buy territories

instead of explore for them and its best to construct buildings in pairings such as Beaches & Solar Panels or Condominiums & Tax Offices. You can also make long-term investments in TEQ3 as well.

The very best aspect of this game? Its free!

Fanzine Reviews:

<http://efanzines.com/BCSFA/BCSFAzine502.pdf>

BCSFAzine #502 edited by Felicity Walker

The official newsletter of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association. This is a good example of a dying breed in fanzines, the clubzine. Canadian fandom seems to be thriving when you consider the action packed Calendar of local events in the northern part of the Oregon Territory the possession of which sparked the 1844 Democrat Party slogan of "54 40' or Fight. This slogan was an exercise in duplicity since the Democrat presidential nominee James Knox Polk was primarily interested in making war on Mexico to facilitate the further expansion of slavery.

Anyways, back to 21st Century British Columbia. The heart of this issue is the Letters of Comment section where many of the Usual Suspects of

Letterhacking showed up. This section allowed the editor's charming personality to shine through. Some News and a convention report rounded out the issue.

<http://efanzines.com/Fanstuff/Fanstuff-41.pdf>

Fanstuff #41 edited by Arnold Katz

Of all the fanzines to go out of business the past 12 months, Fanstuff is one of the most missed. Its letter column, entitled "locker room," was near-legendary with regular Letters Of Comment (LOC's) from such superstars of fandom as R. Graeme Cameron, Jay Kinney, Robert Lichtman, Richard Lupoff, Lloyd Penney & Shelby Vick. One might say that the main attraction of Fanstuff was its LOC area. One unusual aspect of this section is that when Katz responded to a LOC, he did so in a sidebar.

The final issue of Fanstuff was a bit of a letdown. It was mainly devoted to talking about "fuggheads" and whether or not the late Sam Moskowitz was one. There was also an article by David B. Williams about letter writing to fanzines. As they say, nobody's perfect.

<http://efanzines.com/SAM/SAM-17.pdf>

SAM #17 edited by Steve Stiles

This is the fanzine of Steve Stiles who put this issue out presumably to

promote the cause of him winning the Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist. Not a whole lot of art in this issue though and not much Sci-Fi related content either. Hard to see how this will help him with the voters.

<http://efanzines.com/Challenger/Spartacus-07.pdf>

Spartacus #7 edited by Guy Lillian

Spartacus is a good example of a personal fanzine aka "perzine." Issue #7 is mostly devoted to the passing of Leonard Nimoy aka Mr. Spock on the original Star Trek and the DUFF & TAFF races. Oddly enough, there was no mention of the long running TV series In Search Of that Nimoy was the host/narrator of. The lettercol includes a letter from Eric Mayer, the co-author of a series of "historical" mysteries that I have never, ever come across at the local Barnes & Noble aka the only major bookstore in my area that sells new books.

Website Reviews:

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

Candlekeep is a massive resources website for fans of the original Dungeons & Dragons as well as other games such as Baldur's Gate, Forgotten Realms, Icewind Dale, Neverwinter Nights, Pools of Radiance & Tales of the Sword Coast. Features include an extremely well attended forum.

<https://electricscribbles.wordpress.com>

Electric Scribbles is an outstanding bog about Science Fiction by a libertarian who is also a military veteran. The anonymous blogger is primarily interested in military sci-fi and libertarian politics.

<http://www.german-navy.de/index.html>

German Naval History is a comprehensive website covering the German Navy of both World Wars. Website also covers related models and computer games.

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

Reaxxion is a website that bills itself as being "gaming news and reviews for masculine men." Whether or not you think it lives up to that billing, it is definitely a solid gaming news & resources website. It is also one of the leading go to websites for the latest on GamerGate written from a pro-GG perspective.

<http://sharkhunters.com/>

Sharkhunters is a magazine that has for over a quarter century chronicled the German U-Boat campaigns during World War II. The website itself is

chock full of all sorts of historical information.

<http://www.sorcerers.net/>

Sorcerer's Place is a tremendous News & Resource website for fantasy RPG fans. In addition to the gaming stuff, it also carries a great deal of material relating to fantasy books and DVD's. There are also blogs, chat rooms & a very well attended forum.

Letters Of Comment

Editor's replies are in brackets

Dale Speirs

Calgary, Alberta

Just read your zine via [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com); welcome to the crowd.

Re: the moral value of dropping atomic bombs on Japan. I am old enough to have talked to many veterans who served in the Pacific (and yes, Canada was in that war as well as Europe). The veterans all agreed that the bombs saved millions of lives. When I come up against those who say that the bombs were immoral, I remind them that it was Japan who started the war. And the war started long before Pearl Harbor. Remember the Rape of

Nanking and many other atrocities.

I'm not a gamer unless you count Spider Solitaire, so am only vaguely aware of Gamergate and the Sad Puppies. (Sounds like a good name for a rock band.) Since I'm not on Facebook or Twitter, I don't worry about bad manners displayed by people who tweet first and think later. Life is too short for petty squabbles like those.

[As it happens, I haven't sent a message on Twitter in over a year and am rarely on Facebook. Take it that you're not interested in the Hugo Awards?]

tyrbolo@comcast.net

Hi Charles,

Quite a few interesting things in your zine. Should stir up some debate.

People who were not involved in World War 2 need to stop making judgements about the morality of various actions. Opinions are fine but the darkness that covered the earth at that time was far too real to make all the second guessing done later seem worthwhile.

Project Gutenberg has a series of monographs up recently on the USMC actions in the island hopping campaigns, nobody who was in those campaigns has ever shed a tear for the atomic weapons

used on japan.

The Allies used firebombing on both fronts in highly questionable situations and the commanders were aware that they were quite guilty of horrible war crimes under international laws of the time. Sometimes if you start trying to kill monsters you become a monster in the process. That's not an excuse it's just an ugly fact.

Gamergate is a polarizing issue that hasn't done either side any great favours by going on.

Gaming in SF has been around a long time (H G Wells, Leiber. and Fletcher Pratt) come to mind as seminal game designers.

It is good to see your coverage of an area I haven't paid much attention to. Keep your zine coming, if you work at it you can beat Chris Garcia and his record setting pace.

One other insight, if you can't find something to disagree with in zines then they aren't a representative sample. If you want consensus you'll have to watch TV news outlets.

GRIN

Dave Haren

[The winners are hardly ever subjected to war crimes trials. Remember it's the winners who write the history.]