

***FORNAX* #6(66): HALLOWEEN**

Fornax is a fanzine devoted to history, science fiction & gaming as well as other areas where the editor's curiosity goes. It is edited/published by Charles Rector. In the grand tradition of fanzines, it is mostly written by the editor. This is Issue #6 published Halloween 2015.

If you want to write for *Fornax*, please send email submissions to

crectorATTmywayDOTcom, with a maximum length of 1,000 words. No fiction, poetry or artwork please. Any text format is fine. The same goes if you want to submit your work in the form of text in the email or as an attachment. There is no payment other than the exposure that you will get as a writer. Of course, Letters of Comment are always welcome. Material not written or produced by the Editor/Publisher is printed by permission of the various writers and artists and is copyright by them and remains their sole property and reverts to them after publication. If you want to read more by the editor/publisher, then point your browser to: <http://omgn.com/blog/cjrector>

From the Editor:

MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM (1933)

Mystery of the Wax Museum was one of the biggest horror movies of all time at the time it was released. However, for reasons never really explained, Warner Brothers never sold it to television and it was not until relatively recently that it was ever released on home video. As a result, it has languished in obscurity for far too long.

Another reason for this movie's unjustified obscurity is the fact that it was remade in 1953 in 3D under the name House of Wax starring Vincent Price and featuring Charles Bronson in one of his first movie roles. The remake came to have greater star power than the original, since so many of the original's stars faded into obscurity.

Question to Kate Paulk:

One little problem with your concept of fandom as being a monolith under the domination of the Social Justice Warriors (SJW's) is that Laura J. Mixon won the Hugo largely because of her take down of the arch-SJW Requires Hate. If the evil cabal that you see dominating fandom really has the kind of power that you say it has, then Best Fan Writer would have been No Awarded. How then do you explain Mixon's victory?

Note: I posted the above to Kate Paulk's blog and this time the comment got through. However, Paulk herself has failed to answer the question. Hopefully, she will eventually see fit to answer it either on her blog or in the form of a LOC sent for publication here.

Essay: Halloween, the Unique Holiday

Halloween is our unique holiday. All of our other holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Independence Day, Labor Day, and New Year's Day & Thanksgiving celebrate positive things. With Halloween, however, we have a celebration of the sick and perverse. That is the day that the forces of evil are manifested in the form of children going around pretending to be devils, Frankenstein monsters, ghosts, goblins, mummies, vampires, warlocks, witches and other types of ghouls. When these children beg for treats, there is an implied thread with the use of the word "trick" of consequences if you don't comply with their wishes.

Halloween's standing among our holidays gets weirder when you consider that the day after Halloween, November 1, is All Saints' Day. Back in the olden days, it was known as "All Hallows Day" and Halloween is derived from that term. In the Catholic calendar, every saint has his/her own special day. Sometimes these are the days of their martyrdom. If they did not become martyrs, then the day is about some other even in the life of the particular saint that is of special significance. Both Hallow and Saint come from the idea of holiness. Hallow derives from the German language and Saint derives from Latin.

During the course of ancient civilizations, the day started during sunset. By ancient standards, Christmas is supposed to start at sunset of December 24th. That is why Christmas Eve became a holiday. The same is true of New Year's Eve.

In the tradition of ancient civilization, All Saints day aka All Hallows Day would start at sunset, October 31st. That evening would be known as All Hallows Eve. This became abbreviated to "Hallows Eve" and eventually to Halloween.

All of this raises the question of just how did this come about? How did a day that was meant to celebrate the saints and all that is holy also involve supernatural evil? This leads to the question of where does the concept of evil originate and what is its purpose?

The answer to this question lies in the aforementioned ancient civilizations. Originally, in the ancient world in such civilizations, whether it be the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Hittites or the Romans, the various and sundry gods and goddesses were capable of both good and evil. They could be beneficial to mankind or they could be responsible for floods, plagues and other sorts of natural calamities.

It was not until circa 580 B.C. when the Persian holy man Zoroaster who wrote down the foundation of the Zoroastrian religion that the concept of good and evil deities came into being. Although numbering no more than a few hundred thousand adherents today, Zoroastrians were once numerous as shown by the fact that prior to the Islamic conquest in the 7th Century A.D., Zoroastrianism was the official state religion of the Sassanid Empire.

Following the establishment of the Zoroastrian religion, the Jewish religion began to change. Originally Jehovah aka God was capable of both great good and great evil. Then His nature changed and he became a god of the good. What happened was that a new evil spiritual being named Satan came along and became the spiritual embodiment of all supernatural evil.

Among the Celtic peoples, especially in Britain, November 1 was considered to be the first day of the year. This was after the harvest was in and the food supply for the winter season was secured. People had a reason to celebrate.

Christian missionaries believed that the Celts were thanking evil spirits for their harvests. However, in an effort to win over Celtic converts, November 1 became All Saints Day, a celebration of the saints and not evil spirits.

However, memories of worshipping the allegedly evil spirits persisted. and are today manifested in the tradition of trick or treat along with children disguised as such evil spirits as ghosts, goblins, vampires, witches& warlocks.

Truly, Halloween is our most unique holiday.

Essay: The World of Forever Knight Fan Fiction

By the time that Forever Knight came to the end of its three season run, its producers had seen to it that almost every regular character on the show, both human and vampire alike, had been killed off. Many fans felt betrayed by this turn of events since it seemed to preclude any sort of comeback such as in later movies, either of the made for TV or theatrical varieties. Ditto for any possible return of the show to TV. The end result was a much greater interest in the writing of fan fiction than what you usually see with TV shows that last three years. There has also been much greater Internet and website activity aimed at trying to bring the show back either as an original series or seeing the reruns put on a cable channel such as the Sci-Fi Channel.

Oddly enough, the main character in most Forever Knight fan fiction is not Nick Knight. It is instead vampire Javier Vachon who was killed in the next to last episode of the series by a vampiress who had the appearance of a little girl. This vampiress, Divia, was originally the daughter of a Roman general. After she joined the ranks of the undead, she turned her into a vampire. Her father got his revenge against her by sealing his evil daughter in an Egyptian tomb. She remained in this ghoulish prison until grave robbers inadvertently released her.

Divia then proceeded to Toronto where she killed both Vachon and another vampiress, Urs (short for Ursula). She tried to kill other vampires as well. Nick Knight killed her by ramming a wooden stake through her heart. Lucien LaCroix then burned her corpse and scattered her ashes so that she would not regenerate.

Vachon had a vampire twin who was known either by his given name of "Amaru" or far more commonly by his nickname, "The Inca." He came into being since he was originally Vachon's real life twin who was turned into a vampire at the same time The Inca was by the very same vampiress. In the show it was related that The Inca died when he flew up in the sky carrying a bomb that detonated. However, a great many fan fiction writers rejected that premise on the grounds that first, a bomb would not kill a vampire and second, if it could, The Inca would not have been stupid to have been carrying a bomb high in the sky when he could have disposed of it by dropping it into Lake Ontario.

At the end of the series, LaCroix was the leader of the Vampires in Toronto. He was also the one responsible for turning Nick Knight into a vampire back in A.D. 1228. Knight eventually came to feel ashamed of being a vampire and sought to atone for his evil deeds. As a result, he became a detective in the Toronto Police Department.

Detective Tracy Vetter was both a human friend of Vachon as well as Nick Knight's partner. Vetter lost her life in the very last episode trying to defend Knight from a gunman. She had no idea that he was a vampire until just before she perished.

In that same episode, Nick's immoral relationship with forensic pathologist Natalie Lambert results in her losing so much blood, she died.

Overcome with grief, he begged LaCroix to kill him since he felt that he could no longer bear to be a member of the undead. In the final scene of the Forever Knight TV series, we see Nick crying over Natalie's dead body as LaCroix was preparing to drive a wooden stake through his heart. Given the unsatisfying way that the series ended, one can see why the fans have sought to keep the story alive in their own writings.

Fanzine Reviews:

The Insider #309 Editor: Michelle Zellich

The Insider is the official zine of the St. Louis Science Fiction Society. There is good news in this issue: their latest meeting had 11 attendees up from the 4 the previous meeting. The zine continues its first rate coverage of the space program that outclasses the Chicago area daily newspapers. All in all, a pretty colorful issue.

<http://efanzines.com/ZineDump/TZD35.pdf>

The Zine Dump #35 Editor: Guy H. Lillian III

The Zine Dump is the fanzine review of internet fandom. Issue #35 began with a tribute to the late Ned Brooks. This particular issue was apparently written in haste given the sickness of its editor.

One interesting review in this issue is of *Askance* #34 that mentions that Gregory Benford wrote a piece for it. This is pretty interesting since nowadays hardly any professional writers write for fanzines any more.

Also, for the first time ever, ***Fornax*** (#5) is reviewed. Would like to know what the readership thinks of this review. Remember, please send all LOC; s to crectorATmywayDOTcom .

There is also a fanzine from NESFA reviewed. Its address is given as being in Framingham, MA. As it happens, one of the more important letterhacks to both *Amazing & Fantastic* during the Ted White years aka the 1970's was Steve Riley who gave his address as being in Framingham as well. This makes you wonder if Riley was involved with running NESFA at any point. He did come across in his LOC's as a pretty well informed fan. Perhaps he is still active in fandom.

Game Review:

NeverWinter Nights

NeverWinter Nights (NWN) was originally a snappy little game that was developed by SSI and hosted by America Online (AOL) during the years 1991-1997. It was the first multiplayer online game with graphics. Up to 500 players in a single game could interact in a persistent fantasy world. Every day when you logged in, you could find some new development that affected the economic, military or political landscape. Guilds of players rose and fell. There were Quests created by the staff and players fought to the death. The game grew and eventually there were numerous games of **NWN** being played simultaneously totaling 115,000 players. And then, all of a sudden and without warning, AOL shut down the game in 1997

However, while AOL failed to see the game's promise, others were not so blind. BioWare (BW) acquired the rights to the game and in 2002 brought out a new **NWN** game. This was a game that could accommodate an unlimited number of players in a single game. From a purely commercial standpoint, the new **NWN** has been a success spawning many sequels.

However, while it has been a commercial success, in the eyes of many gamers, it is just another example of a game that sets its priority on great graphics aka "eye candy" instead of great game play. Instead of improving the game, BW has instead made the graphics engine the center of its advertising.

The combat system in the BW version of **NWN** was all screwed up. You could use either weapons or potions but not both simultaneously. Unlike previous games, you could only have one henchman to assist you. Later on, BW added on the option of having a pet.

Although the BW version of **NWN** was a disappointment for those who had played the original, for the great majority of players who had never tried the original before, **NWN** was a pretty decent game.

Bottom Line: While the BW version of **NWN** does have its strong points, it just simply does not measure up to the AOL original. This makes it all the more unfortunate that AOL chose to ditch the original.

Movie Reviews:

King Kong (2005)

For anyone who grew up watching the original King Kong, Peter Jackson's remake is especially disappointing. It is far less realistic or exciting than the original. While the original producers knew how to make compelling hour and a half long film, Jackson clearly has no idea how to do that in a three hour long flick where he does not have a lengthy novel to serve as his literary guide. The basic storyline just simply does not have enough meat to support a three hour long movie and Jackson's padding only makes things worse.

After a promising beginning, Jackson's film starts to go south when we arrive at Skull Island. This movie has much more action and adventure on Skull Island than did the original. This movie has at least five major action sequences on Skull Island. These scenes have some fun value, but due to Jackson's use of fuzzily photographed, slow-motion scenes, they are not as much fun as they could have been.

An especially disappointing aspect of Jackson's version is that his three lead actors are able to repeatedly survive falling into ravines, numerous waves of attacking monsters and a dinosaur stampede without suffering even so much as a single injury. The remainder of their companions from the ship perish, but the impossibility of the three lead actors being able to survive and thrive under those circumstances is a massive violation of the suspension of disbelief necessary to enjoying a film such as this. The whole movie reeks of self-indulgence.

Surprisingly, the King Kong remake suffers from a variety of ills that Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings trilogy avoided. For instance, the level of acting is strikingly poor in the remake. This is in direct contrast to the original film that had quite a bit of strong acting to it. Also, the Lord of the Rings did not have unbelievably large numbers of CGI monsters for our heroes to encounter.

Another problem with the remake is the fact that the characters are generally no more than paper thin. This is in direct contrast to both the original King Kong and the Lord of the Rings trilogy where the characters are very well thought out and well-drawn. One wonders if the reason for this and other deficiencies is that Jackson thought that any remake of King Kong would be a box office blockbuster, so why bother with taking the time and effort to get things right?

Despite the fact that it is 87 minutes longer than the original, there are an unusually large number of unresolved questions concerning this movie. For instance, what was the origin of Carl's map? What was the fate of the "wild kid"? Where the creepy natives were after the ship's crew did some shooting? How did they get King Kong on the ship? How could King Kong get bitten on his arm by a Tyrannosaurus Rex and keep on fighting just like nothing had happened? How could a little female like Naomi Watts survive being held in King Kong's hand while Kong is fighting no fewer than three Tyrannosaurus Rexes simultaneously?

Fundamentally, Peter Jackson's remake of King Kong is not an action flick but rather a love story between the great ape and the beautiful blonde. This aspect of Jackson's film is poorly handled and gets pretty sappy. One wonders just how much time Jackson took thinking this aspect of the film through.

Basically, fans of the original King Kong are well advised to leave this one alone.

Mark of the Vampire (1935)

Mark of the Vampire is a significant flick in that it was one of director Tod Browning's last movies. It was also the movie that showcased what was arguably Bela Lugosi's finest performance of all time. The most significant role that Carroll Borland ever had was also featured in this movie.

Mark of the Vampire is a good example of a B feature flick. At 60 minutes long, it was meant to be the centerpiece of a matinee bill that typically consisted of movie short(s), cartoon(s) and a chapter of a serial.

Carroll Borland was a most interesting actress. She got her start because she was a kind of Bela Lugosi groupie. She contrived to meet Lugosi backstage when she was only a teenager. Lugosi took a liking to her and got her the role of Luna Mora in this movie. She then became his understudy. Borland created the costume, look and make-up of the Luna Mora character all by herself. As such, she created the iconic vampiress. Despite the fact that Borland played this role to perfection, complete with fantastic vampire stares and looks like a goth punk of today, this proved to be the most significant role that she would ever play in a too-short acting career. One can only wonder just why she was unable to get more roles as a vampiress.

Mark of the Vampire begins with the discovery of the corpse of Irena Borotyn's father. His body was drained of all its blood through two holes on his neck. Was this the work of vampires as the common folk believe? Or is it something else? A year after the murder, the deceased man is seen wandering through the woods at night. Hysteria grips the countryside while the authorities struggle to make sense of it all while at the same time maintain basic law and order. Meanwhile, there is a creepy old Count Mora and his strange daughter Luna hovering about the scene. Inspector Neumann from Prague is called on the case, but all he can get from the local folks is superstitious talk about vampires.

The best aspect of **Mark of the Vampire** is the atmosphere. It is positively saturated with cobwebs, dust, and fog, howling wind, shadows and Gothic architecture. The sound effects are eerie. The black and white cinematography is excellent. The whole movie plays against a music less background, just like Browning's previous film "Dracula."

The acting in this movie is first rate starting with Lionel Barrymore as the elderly vampire stalker, Professor Zelin. Unfortunately, Barrymore was already afflicted with the rheumatism that forced him to be seated in most of his post-1930's movies. This limited his character's mobility in the flick.

Elizabeth Allan is great as the menaced young Miss Irena Borotyn. Lionel Atwill contributes a memorable turn as Police Inspector Neumann. Donald Meek does well as the frightened Dr. J. Doskil. Ivan Simpson makes for a fine butler of the manor while Leila Bennett contributes some memorable screams as a hysterical maid.

Another notable aspect of **Mark of the Vampire** is the twist at the end that leads to a surprise ending. At first the ending seems rather unreal and nonsensical, but when you get right down to thinking about it, it all makes sense.

Mark of the Vampire is on a par with Browning's earlier movie "Dracula." **Mark of the Vampire** features both a strong cast and a spooky atmosphere suitable for a horror flick. As such, Mark of the Vampire would make a great double feature with Tod Browning's 1930 movie "Dracula."

P2 (2007)

As a general rule, the scariest horror flicks revolve around psychological scare tactics instead of slashing. However, if slashing is judiciously mixed in with the psychological scare tactics, then the resulting movie can be both highly involving and very scary at the sometime. One recent horror flick that is a well done mixture of slashing and psychological scare tactics is the 2007 independent horror movie **P2**.

P2 begins late during the Christmas Eve workday when a young woman, Angela (Rachel Nichols) is the last to leave her company's offices.

Since her company is located in a large office building, her car is in large underground parking garage on level P2. When she arrives at her car, she discovers that it will not start.

Initially, Angela seeks the help of Thomas (Wes Bentley), the nighttime security guard. However, she soon realizes that his sick obsession wither is the reason why she is stuck at the parking garage. With the assistance of his vicious dog, Thomas proceeds to subject Angela to inhuman torture.

Angela needs to escape from Thomas and turn the tables on him. How can she do so in a manner that strikes the audience as being realistic and not as just some cheap scripting from Hollywood? How Angela handles the situation is both original and convincing, at least by horror flick standards.

One of the most interesting aspects of **P2** is the part when the police show up. In most horror movies, this would be the low point in the flick since the cops are normally portrayed as being nothing more than a bunch of incompetents. However, in **P2**, the police are portrayed as being quite professional who go about their business in the right way. Angela is unable to alert them as to her plight because Thomas has left her incapable of getting to the police in time.

One of the reasons why **P2** is such an effective horror flick is because there are no big name actors or actresses in it. Actually, there are hardly any recognizable names to the talent. This causes you, the audience, to focus on the storyline and not let the talent's prior roles and reputation get in the way of appreciating the film.

Another reason for **P2**'s effectiveness is the lack of subplots. All too many horror flicks are derailed by subplots that distract the audience from the main narrative. In **P2**, there are no subplots and there is just one narrative. This narrative is a solid hour and a half of pure suspense and horror.

A further reason for **P2**'s effectiveness as a scary flick is the quality of the acting, especially by the leads. Both Wes Bentley and Rachel Nichols are outstanding in this movie. Their performances are especially significant given the generally low level of acting that is in horror flicks nowadays.

P2 is a most effective horror flick. Actually, it is really more of suspense movie than a horror endeavor. **P2** offers the viewer a lot of horror and suspense mixed in with a genuine sense of edginess. This movie is one of the most original works of cinematic fear and terror to come from Hollywood in a long time. Who knew that a parking garage could be the setting for such a memorably scary and suspenseful movie? This shows just how much thought and effort was put into making **P2** such special scary movie. **P2** is well recommended as a move that you should seriously consider purchasing.

Shaun of the Dead (2004)

Zombie flicks have become increasingly popular among movie makers. A big part of this appeal has to do with the fact that on the face of it, a zombie movie is very easy to do. Just have the undead rise from their graves and stagger towards the nearest town, laying waste to the countryside. Conversely, zombie movie parodies also seem easy to do for similar reasons. However, as the recent British motion picture **Shaun of the Dead** shows, making a good zombie parody flick is actually a lot harder than it seems at first glance. Too bad the filmmakers were unable to surmount the obstacles and actually make something worth seeing.

The main characters are, with but one exception, unsympathetic morons who you cannot identify with, and the only sensible person in the trio gets killed off quickly. If you cannot identify with at least one of the protagonists, it is difficult to care what happens to them and the movie will not draw you in.

The title character, Shaun (Simon Pegg) is a loser who sits around moaning and groaning about his girlfriend, Liz (Kate Ashfield), who dumped him. He is also extremely unhappy with his job and the way that his boss treats him. His buddies try to cheer him up at the bar that he frequents. They do so by making stabs at comedy that ultimately falls flat. There is attempted satire in this flick but it is not really funny. This movie is not scary at all.

One day while Shaun is walking home from work, mindless zombies start coming out of nowhere on a mission of death and destruction aimed at taking over London (the flick is set in jolly old England). Shaun decides to save his mother, his apartment mate Ed (Nick Frost), Liz and take the three of them out to his favorite pub (British slang for a bar) the Winchester, and wait for the whole thing to blow over.

However, the zombies come between Shaun's group and their destination. This results in a number of poorly produced scenes in which Shaun and Liz kill zombies by the dozens while talking about how they are going to get the attention of the British Broadcasting Corporation and in that way become rich and famous. They get so caught up in their fantasies of becoming popular heroes, they fail to notice Ed's death at the hands of the zombies. These scenes are supposed to be both scary and funny at the same time. In reality, they are neither.

For all of the scenes of death and destruction, **Shaun of the Dead** is a boring flick. Its stabs at humor are pathetic and ineffective. It is also not scary despite its subject matter. The level of acting is generally poor as is the direction. The photography in this movie is lackluster.

Shaun of the Dead is most definitely not recommended.

Super 8 (2011)

Super 8 is a rip-off by its writer/director, J.J. Abrams of some of the movies made by its producer, Steven Spielberg. A more charitable reviewer would call it a "homage" or a "pastiche." Basically, it is an act of blatant sucking up carried out on celluloid at the audience's expense. Just about the only redeeming aspect of this flick is its state of the art special effects.

Like so many other science fiction movies, it puts the monsters and the explosions before the characters. It is clear from watching this movie that neither Abrams nor Spielberg understand that action and mayhem have meaning only when an audience cares about the characters in the movie.

Basically, **Super 8** is an exercise in nostalgia for those who, while growing up during the late 1970's & early 1980's, were inspired by the big budget high box office grossing special effects festivals that were marketed as being movies. Often kids who saw those flicks were inspired to borrow their parents' Super 8 camera and messed around with making a movie. For a movie supposedly set in 1979, it misses the mark in terms of the attitudes, clothes, music and other aspects of the popular culture of the time.

The plot of **Super 8** concerns half a dozen or so teenagers who are in the wrong place at the wrong time. These youngsters are engaged in making zombie movie that they think needs to be made at midnight to achieve "authenticity." They get together at a train station where they think they can make their flick without parental interference. All of these teenagers are the usual clichés in Hollywood flicks. Just when everything seems to be going well for the poorly thought out film project, disaster strikes. There is a train derailment, causing a big mess. It appears that there is more to this derailment than meets the eye given the fact that troops under the command of one Colonel Elec (Noah Emeriti) swarm over the area. There is also a mysterious creature seen moving around the area.

One lesson that Abrams has obviously learned from Spielberg is that when it comes to seeing the monster, less is more. Throughout most of the movie, you see only a few glimpses of the creature. Even in the scene where the monster attacks a bus, the camera avoids lingering on the creature.

With Spielberg's first blockbuster, *Jaws*, this was an accident, necessitated by the fact that the fake shark had numerous mechanical problems that made it impossible to show it too often without the movie going over budget.

Super 8 is an obvious "homage" by the apprentice Abrams to his master Spielberg. This is not a good movie and as such, it is not worth your time or money.

Undead (2003)

During the last few decades or so, zombie movies have become increasingly popular among filmmakers. It's not hard to figure out why. At first glance, just having mindless zombies going on destructive rampages, seems like a pretty easy movie to make.

However, making a good zombie movie is very difficult to do. It's very easy to fall into the usual clichés and just have the zombies rampaging around while failing to have strong characters, a solid plot and strong acting and direction. As a direct result, the vast majority of zombie movies are nothing but utter garbage. There are very few quality zombie movies out there and even the better ones rarely rise above mediocrity.

One zombie movie that does rise above the pack is the 2003 Australian flick **Undead**. This flick is the creation of the brothers Michael and Peter Spierig. This movie is both highly creative and extremely well produced on a small budget. The result is a film that looks far more expensive than what it really is. Unlike most zombie pictures, there is a decent amount of humor in **Undead**. One thing that sets **Undead** apart from other zombie horror flicks is that there is actually a well thought out plot in **Undead**. All too often, zombie flicks are nothing but gore fests.

The movie begins with strange meteorite showers that strike the peaceful Australian fishing village of Berkeley. They bring with them strange microbes that infect the dead and transform them into a living dead mob of rampaging zombies who hunger for human flesh.

The heroine of **Undead** is the local beauty teen queen Rene (Felicity Mason) who is also quite intelligent. Together with local weirdo Marion (Mungo McKay), she rounds up some friends and they hatch a plan of both defense and attempting to figure out what went wrong and how to fix things.

Among other things, they encounter strange cloud formations, massive metal walls, abductions and acid rain. And that is only the beginning. The movie does not treat these developments seriously, and the result is a number of truly funny scenes. **Undead** was not only one of the scariest horror flicks of 2003, it was also one of the funniest comedies of that year as well.

Both the acting and direction in **Undead** are first rate as is the cinematography. The script has some problems, but it is generally decent. Most surprisingly, the CGI special effects rises above that found in Hollywood productions with far larger budgets.

Undead is a unique film. Even though it was made on a limited budget of less than \$1 Mil., it has the look of a big budget production. There are both scary scenes in **Undead** and scenes where you will laugh like crazy. **Undead** is equally effective in both its humor and in its horror.

One interesting aspect about **Undead** is the undying hatred that some movie reviewers have towards it. For instance, there is a radio talk show host who is also a flick reviewer who trashed **Undead** when it was initially released in 2003. When in 2005, it was shown at a local movie theater, the radio movie guy trashed it again on the air and talked just as if **Undead** was a brand new movie that he had never seen or heard of before. He confidently predicted that so few flick critics would praise it, that the film's distributors would be forced to use quotes from obscure reviewers only.

This performance was most interesting given the fact that the radio movie guy had been so hostile towards **Undead** just two years earlier. Even more to the point, the theater in question has a long history of showing older movies including the likes of Citizen Kane and The Ten Commandments. Additionally, these moves are clearly labelled on both the advertisements and in the theater itself as being classic flicks. Just how the radio movie guy could have missed all this is mind boggling. This assumes of course that he really had gone to the theater that weekend and seen **Undead** again without it even triggering his memory banks.

On a later show, a caller pointed out to the radio movie guy the previously cited facts about **Undead**. In the past, the radio movie guy had been a really cool talk show host who would have readily conceded his mistake. If anything, in the past he might have started his show by announcing that he had messed up big time. However, in 2005 this particular radio show has morphed into an attitude driven affair with very little real substance. The radio movie guy nowadays presents himself as being infallible, just like the pope. Consequently, the host accused the caller of being a "blatant liar" and of engaging in "selective hearing." This is a particularly striking example of how talk radio has declined in quality over the years.

In any event, **Undead** is warmly recommended.

Website Reviews:

<http://aslashabove.com/>

A SLASH Above... is a website that aims to be the definitive source for slasher movies. Among its features is what calls the "full list" of all slasher movies with a total of 551 titles.

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

The website of the Australian Horror Writers Association.

<http://cryptcrawl.com/>

Crypt Crawl is one of the longest running horror and Halloween themed directories in existence.

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

As the name implies, Cult Film Freaks is a blog based website that focuses on cult films, many of which are of a horror nature.

<http://darkdiscoveries.com/>

Dark Discoveries is the leading professional horror fiction magazine. Issues are organized around themes such as Dark Mystery, Femme Fatal, The Occult, Secret Societies, Sinister Appetites, Transhuman, Weird West & Zombie Creature Feature.

<http://www.darkdossier.com/index.html>

Dark Dossier is a digital magazine specializing in articles and short stories about aliens, monsters and vampires.

<http://finalgirl.blogspot.com/>

Final Girl is the horror movie blog of Stacie Ponder who continually shows her encyclopedic knowledge of scary flicks.

<http://www.foreverknight.org/archive.html>

The Forever Knight Website Archive is a project that took the content of websites that were originally on such doomed free subspace providers as Fortune City & Geocities and saved them for posterity. The webmaster also has taken content from the Internet Wayback Machine and saved the contents from other Forever Knight websites that are no longer in existence on the live Web.

<http://freehorrorgames.net/>

Free Horror Games is the largest collection of horror themed games that are free to play. Here you have your choice of such interesting sounding titles such as Bat in Nightmare, Black Rose, Blackwell, Deep Sleep, Haunted House Massacre and Plants vs Zombies. Sounds like a place where you can have one Hell of a good time.

<http://thegirlwholoveshorror.blogspot.com/>

The Girl Who Loves Horror is the horror flick blog of a 30 year old gal named Michelle who lives in Missouri. She has a tendency to include spoilers in her entertaining reviews

<http://gorelets.com/about/>

Gorelets aka The Goreletter is the free E-Newsletter put out by Michael Arzen. Reading this will let you have one Hell of a good time.

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

Halloween Clipart.com is a place that offers free to use Halloween-themed clip art and pictures. Such as:

http://halloweenclipart.com/halloween_clipart_images/clipart_illustration_of_a_jackolantern_with_red_eyes_0515-0909-1821-1722.html

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

Halloween Flash Games is a place that offers a wide variety of free single player Halloween themed games.

<http://hellnotes.com/>

Hellnotes is devoted to what it calls "Fiction, Movies and Art Dedicated to the Horror Cause."

http://anubis4_2000.tripod.com/Kharis/pages1/7Jackals.htm

The Hill of the Seven Jackals, the Official Website of Kharis the Mummy. Kharis, you might recall, was the star of four 1940's Universal horror flicks. This website is chock full of information relating to Kharis and the four movies that he starred in.

<http://horror.com/>

Horror.com is a news and reviews website covering the world of horror.

<http://horrorbloggeralliance.blogspot.com/>

The Horror Blogger Alliance is a group blog devoted to promoting its members and their blogs as well as discussing horror movies.

<http://horrorfanzine.com/>

Horror Fan Zine is a zine that is almost exclusively devoted to horror flicks.

<http://www.horrorfind.com>

Horrorfind is the biggest horror and Halloween themed directory in existence.

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

HorrorHound is a leading magazine of horror entertainment with a special emphasis on horror flicks.

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

Horror-Web is a place with reviews, interviews and other items of interest to horror buffs.

<http://horror.org/56>

The Horror Writers Association is the organization for all those who want to become professional authors of horror stories and novels.

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

The Horrorzine is edited by one Jeani Rector, who I'm pretty sure is no relation of mine. Of all the horror webzines that do not pay its writers anything aka a fiction fanzine, this is undoubtedly the very best one.

<http://lionelatwillfanclub.tripod.com/>

The Official Lionel Atwill - Fan Club and Web Site. Although obscure today, Lionel Atwill was the single biggest horror movie star of the 1930's and this website is one of the few places where you can find a good deal of reliable information about him.

<http://www.the-losthighway.com/>

Lost Highway bills itself as a "detour through B-Movies and cult films." It is a website that has amassed a large number of well done movie reviews, at least half of which are about horror flicks.

<http://lovecraftzine.com/>

The Lovecraft E-Zine is devoted to weird fiction in the vein of the works of H.P. Lovecraft. It also features a podcast and other features of a full fledged community.

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

New Dawn bills itself as being "the world's most unusual magazine." Its focus is on the paranormal.

<http://pre-code.com/>

Pre Code is about the movies that Hollywood made during the years 1930-1934 before the Production Code was installed. The website's coverage of mostly forgotten movies includes such horror flicks as Doctor X, Dracula, Murders in the Zoo, Mystery of the Wax Museum and The Vampire Bat

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

Raine Brown is a leading actress in independent horror flicks.

<http://www.sealteam1138.com/>

Seal Team #1138 is a movie review website with plenty of attitude. Although it covers all sorts of movies, it has a special interest in direct to video horror flicks.

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

Shroud Magazine bills itself as being "The Quarterly Journal of Dark Fiction and Art."

Letters of Comment:

tyrbolo@comcast.net

Hi Charles,

Questions, questions. My impression of Gary Gygax as a tedious stick in the mud comes from the convergence of two things the original D & D showed a marvelous paucity of imagination. That may sound strange because it was breaking new ground. To say it could have been better is an understatement. The second thing was that his Dragon magazine writings were consummate examples of what should be described as anal retentiveness. Trapped into the boundaries of his flatlander culture he was incapable of overcoming them. He did accomplish a lot, but it was never what he was trying to do.

Note that these are my personal opinions, not to be taken as definitive in any way as a guide for others.

If you look at D & D and how it classifies the characters you'll see a nice example of what I'm talking about. Simplification is the way most people see things, but it does a real disservice to humanity and the world to simplify everything to the point of ridicule. He viewed himself as a Paladin of Lawful Good rather than a minion of satanic manipulation. If he had hired a decent business manager he wouldn't have ruined so much of the business. The spectacular takedown of SPI certainly earned him some animosity from grog nards everywhere.

Metagamings The Fantasy Trip was the RPG tagged as TFT. Every system got its cutesy abbreviation in those days. Tunnels and Trolls became T & T, Burrows and Bunnies became B & B.

Since I started playing in 1959 with the original AH Gettysburg and didn't really get back into it until Ogre came out in 1977 I doubt that the military had much to do with my gaming abilities. We played cards as a family and all were merciless cutthroat players. That may have helped a lot later. I took 27 straight wins my first year in the IGA against some of the world's best players. They weren't too happy about it either. I'm a lot happier doing science fiction games. Since you have some serious firepower they never last too long.

On the anime front Luffy got his other brother Sabo back who has the Flare fruit of fire fist Aces ability and an hour long episode for viewing at animefreak.com. I have the DVDs all the way up to the burning of their original ship, I only need about twenty more sets to catch up to what's current (episode 708).

I found a couple of unique models. There's a Dutch artist who builds kinetic sculptures that amble along the beach using wind power. The Elec company has made tiny model versions of these that work.

The originals are big approximately ten feet high and up to twenty feet wide. They are called Strandbeests.

One problem with the ADA is that unless the government gets prodded they won't do much. In this area we were lucky to have a character who was extremely pro-active. He had wound up in a wheelchair but decided he would lobby for his rights to continue to live a full life without being denied access by the infrastructure. He got a lot more done by simply being a pain in the ass to the bureaucrats than had been accomplished in years. Most people don't pay any attention to the problems until you force them to. Politicians pass laws and then wash their hands of any problem. At that point the effected community has to get involved putting pressure on the civil servants to enforce the legal requirements, otherwise nothing will happen.

In the interim the world gets more exciting each day, so keep on keeping' on.

Regards
Dave Haren

[Well, what earned Gygax and TSR all that ill-will was they had promised when they took SPI over was that they were going to improve on what had been a great company. Then, they turned around and shut it all down. By "flatlander" do you mean Midwestern?]

JAKaufman@aol.com

I've now read issues 3, 4 and 5 of *Fornax*. I'm not a gamer, and military history doesn't interest me much, so I skipped some material, but I found your reviews of interest, especially of bad movies. (So many that I need to avoid like the plague. But I'm good at that - so far I haven't succumbed to plague and expect I'll be able to do so for years to come.)

In the issue I just read, I found your comments on the reasons you changed your mind about slates to be most interesting and insightful. (At first I typed "insightful," which has a very different meaning.) If memory serves, I selected "No Award" in only two categories, and one of them had a winner despite me. I simply didn't vote at all in one or two categories where I had no familiarity with any of the nominees and no plan to become familiar. Unlike Lloyd, who says he has no way of finding out anything about the Fan Writer nominees, I found a simple way to learn about them - I Googled their names and read samples of their blogs. Possibly the Hugo downloads provided by Sasquan included samples and URLs as well.

Fast Company sounds like a film I'd enjoy, as I like older movies - many of my favorites are from the early years of filmmaking. *The Thin Man* is not one of them, but it's quite enjoyable. (I liked the original book, by Dashiell Hammett, much better.) By the way, the dog that plays Asta is even better in *Bringing up Baby* - I think his name is George in that movie.

Our friend, Andi Shechter, who is confined to a wheelchair nowadays, has written quite a bit about the difficulties of getting to conventions, not to mention any other sort of travel, while in a motorized wheel or a mobility scooter. One problem she found was that Spokane, for example, has no accessible taxis - which meant she couldn't travel by train or plane from Seattle and then be able to get to any of the convention hotels. In the end, she rented an accessible van and found a friend who could drive one and was coming through Seattle on the way to Worldcon. Luckily she had the means and the friend.

So thanks for sending your zine, which in my opinion would only be improved with artwork - but that's me.

Yours,

Jerry Kaufman

[I've noticed that Lloyd Penney seems to be losing interest in fanzines. He has yet to send in a LOC for this issue and if you look at his LOC blog, he seems to be slowing down in his LOC writing overall. As for artwork, I'm still new to digital publishing, but am working on figuring out how to publish clip art and perhaps go on from there to run new art sometime down the road.]

miltstevens@earthlink.net

Dear Charles.

Thanks for the copy of Formax #5. You never know what you are going to get when you start writing letters.

People change their minds all the time. Fans even do it occasionally. We are different from most people in that we commonly put our opinions on paper where they may hang around for a long time. If you do this for long enough you find you have created a mountain range of opinions which may tip over on you at any time. I've been doing fan writing for a bit over 50 years. A local fan started scanning Apa L from its beginning when I was actively involved in the apa. I had some misgivings about this. It wasn't that I thought I had expressed all sorts of awful opinions. It had been 50 years, and I didn't really remember what I had said at all. It would be distressing to be hit in the nose by one of my own opinions from years ago.

Sometimes I hate changing my mind. I hated changing my mind about Analog and Asimov's. I realized they bored me, so I stopped reading them. I had read Analog (and Astounding before it) since I was in high school. I had read Asimov's since it began. I had really enjoyed many stories from both magazines.

However, that was years ago, and this was now. I found that when I finished reading an issue of either magazine I didn't remember any of the stories.

Once upon a time, most SF was short fiction. The magazines were where it was at (so to speak). Money and talent have both flowed from short fiction to novels. Not that all SF novels are works of genius. With 1000 to 1500 novels being published every year, there is plenty of room for garbage. However, most of the worthwhile stuff is likely to be in novels.

I had heard Vint Cerf invented the internet. It got my attention because he was a guy I used to hang out with in high school. He was one of those disgusting characters who is number one in every subject. He was really smart. He was also amiable in absent minded professor sort of way. As I recall, he attended the last Baltimore worldcon, but I didn't encounter him there. Whatever else he did with his career, he is old enough to be retired by now.

Yours truly,

Milt Stevens

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Simi Valley, CA 93063

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[Pretty interesting take from a longtime fan. Interesting perspective on Vint Cerf by someone who actually knew the guy.]

ghliii@yahoo.com

Received and reviewed in the forthcoming ZINE DUMP! Watch eFanzines!

[Pretty interesting case of unsolicited email advertising right here.]

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October 13, 2015

Dear Charles:

Thanks muchly for Fornax 5. I will make the attempt to write something relevant for the next issue. No promises, and I feel I am drifting away from the main interests of much of fandom, but I will try my best.

I never did read anything that was nominated for any pro Hugo categories, so I cannot critique any of them, but I am very interested to see the comments of others, especially those who were sorely disappointed by what they themselves read. I hope next year's nomination process will be slate-free, and will not disappoint older readers. And then, there's the childish name-calling and smears we expect to see in federal political campaigns, and not in the assorted Hugo races. I doubt I will ever nominate for a Hugo again. (There's a federal campaign going on here right now, and Election Day is on the 19th.)

There are quotas for hiring the handicapped and minority groups in Canada, and I think they are great ideas. And yet...I am freshly laid-off, and I know I will have a difficult time finding work because I am a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant male, which kinda makes me the background group from which all other special groups are separated. I am torn between having all groups represented in the workplace, and recommending that the best be hired, no matter the colour or handicap.

One new video game that's coming out shortly is Assassins Creed: Syndicate. Now, I am not a gamer at all, but I had the opportunity to be paid to take part in the advertising for this new game. It's produced by Ubisoft of Montreal, and the advertising was done through their offices in Toronto. I was in my best steampunk, and I was part of a bloodthirsty crown seeing a gang of muscle-bound thugs try to take on a group of gamers. I hope to see the final product soon.

Done for right now. Keep them coming, and I might just get better at this, though I have my doubts. Take care, and see you soon.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

[Evidently, you have not been paying attention. There has already been a renewed effort at slate-making led by Kate Paulk, she of extreme rhetoric and no real accomplishment in anything even remotely connected with science fiction. Given how slate-making reaps its advocate's great publicity that they can use to sell books, it's a dead certainty that slates will be with us for the foreseeable future. That goes double since the so-called 'reforms' passed this year won't take effect for another 2 years and they don't really do anything to prevent slates or slate voting anyways. Just so much window dressing, that's all.

I'm opposed to quotas myself since they place an added stigma on handicapped hires. So did you work for the advertising and/or public relations industries? Do I also take it that you are losing interest in science fiction and/or fandom? If so, why?]