

# Fornax #7



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*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 #7 published December 2015.

If you want to write for *Fornax*, please send email submissions to [crectorATmywayDOTcom](mailto:crectorATmywayDOTcom), 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>

## **The Beginnings of the Western:**

It may surprise some people, back when stories were first written about America's frontier experience, they were all set in what is now the Eastern U.S. This is because until at least the time of the Civil War, 1861-1865, the frontier of settlement was to the east of the Mississippi River. The term "western" did not even come into being until the early Twentieth Century.

The earliest frontier stories were works by classy authors like James Fennimore Cooper. However, the frontier story reached its greatest audience in the form of dime novels. These works received their name due to both their length and their price. They first became a mass marketing phenomenon during the Civil War when bored troops on both sides were desperately in need of escape from the utter dullness of life in the camps.

Dime novels were the literary equivalent of the yellow journalism that also began about the time of the Civil War. Dime novels were sensationalistic to the extreme and often featured a great deal of violence.

The characters works were heroes of the Dudley Do-Right variety, the villains of the Snidely Whiplash type and he heroines were always as pure as silk. The prose was always purple and sentences often ended with multiple exclamation marks.

Dime Novels were where series fiction got its start. Previously, it was rare for authors to use the same character in more than one work, such as Falstaff in some of the plays of William Shakespeare. At least one of these series characters, Nick Carter aka Nicholas Carter, is still around today. Of the fictional dime novel characters, Deadwood Dick is perhaps the best well known.

Oddly enough, dime novels used real life people as characters. Western dime novels used such folks as William F. Cody aka "Buffalo Bill," James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok, Calamity Jane, Annie Oakley and Kit Carson as characters. By far and away, the most popular real life persons used as fictional characters were Frank and Jesse James. Of course, all of these dime novel exploits of real life people were purely fictional. The laws governing such things have been changed to make this practice flat out illegal.

Whatever their morality, taste and legal ethics, the dime novel ushered in the western as a literary form and it is still here to stay.

## **An Introduction to PBEMs:**

PBEM stands for "Play By E-Mail," games. In PBEMs, the Game Master allots turns to the players who respond with their character's intended actions. These games were the natural outgrowth of the play by postal mail games of pre-Internet times.

If you want to try out a PBEM, look one up on the search engines. There are websites that have information on them. Input PBEM into a search engine and just see what you get. Follow the stated rules and email a character. If the E-Gaming Master selects you, then you are all set.

If you don't find any PBEMs that appeal to you, then you can create your own game. However, you will need to know how to create a decent website as well as how to create a decent game. You should be warned that there are a great many folks who created online games thinking that it would be a fun project, only to find that it is a pretty time consuming thing. It's also a lot harder to do than you might think.

If you are interested in learning more about how to play and/or operate a Play By E-Mail game your own, then one classic reference to read is "An Argosy of Play By E-Mail Advice" by Sean K. Reynolds that you can find at:

[http://www.seankreynolds.com/rpgfiles/gaming/pbem\\_faq.html](http://www.seankreynolds.com/rpgfiles/gaming/pbem_faq.html)

Other places to learn about PBEMs and also find a game to play:

PBEM2 at <http://www.pbem2.com/>

PBEM Players at <http://www.pbemplayers.com/>

## Online Gaming Scam

There is a vicious scam going on in online games. There are people who claim to be members of the game staff who contact players promising to give them valuable in-game benefits for being "loyal players." The catch is that in order to gain these rewards, the player has to give the scammer their password.

Once the scam artist has his victim's password, they change the password, freezing the victim out of his account. The scam artist now has a well built up position in the game without having to put in the time required to honestly achieve that position.

Over the years, I've known several folks who were victimized this way. Don't you be next.

## Facebook Fraud

One thing that I discovered today on Facebook is a button labelled "Friend Requests." Naturally, I assumed that these were all friend requests that other folks had made of myself. So, I clicked on the button and discovered hundreds of what were represented as friend requests involving folks who I have never met or even heard of. Of the people involved that I had actually encountered, they were all from individuals who I just barely knew. There was not a single friend request from anyone who I knew even halfway well. All of these people were represented as being friends of folks who I had already friended (is that a word?) or individuals who were friends of other persons who had friend requests in.

After looking over the list, I picked out a couple individuals to approve and clicked on one of them. To my great surprise, instead of saying something like, "Friend Request Approved," it instead said, "Friend Request Sent." In other words, all these so-called friends requests were not made by actual persons, but instead by some kind of weird algorithm of persons who Facebook feels ought to be my friends.

If that isn't completely fraudulent, then I don't know what is. What's even worse is that I don't have the slightest idea just why they would do this in the first place.

## Unclear on the Concept

While looking up something on the Internet, I came up with this result:

[Board index - ProphpBB](http://bmmmb.prophpbb.com/)  
[bmmmb.prophpbb.com/](http://bmmmb.prophpbb.com/)

- You have been permanently banned from this **board**. Please contact the **BoardAdministrator** for more information. A ban has been issued on your username.

As it happens, I had never before seen or even heard of this place. However, I decided to check it out and have registered/posted there without any problems thus far.

## **What the Hell?**

Following the Bears-Redskins game on WGN AM 720, they had their postgame show featuring 3 dumb jocks. One of them said, "Just 3 more games to the end of the regular season and the Bears will enter the playoffs." This was a most baffling statement given how the Bears are 5-8 and even if they were to be undefeated for the rest of the season, it is difficult at best to envision them making the playoffs given how poorly they have been playing lately.

How is it possible that such idiots can have paying jobs on radio when there are so many knowledgeable fans out there who would be willing to do that kind of work for less money?

## **The Kennel Murder Case (1933)**

Wealthy gentleman about town Philo Vance (William Powell) solves yet another case that the stupid cops led by Detective Sergeant Heath (Eugene Pallette) and District Attorney Markham (Robert McEwan) are too stupid to solve. The Philo Vance series of movies set the pattern for how the police would be portrayed in the movies for the next two decades. It was not until *Dragnet* came along that a correction in popular culture was made.

## **Reaxxion is Shutting Down**

In the wake of the ending of GamerGate (GG) as a viable movement, perhaps it is only fitting that Reaxxion.com, a website that was created to serve as a News and Views website operating from the GG perspective, is shutting down

## **Essay:**

## **The Liberation of Grenada**

Note: The following was originally written in the Freshman Composition class taught by Mr. Robert Olsen at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in Spring, 1984 as an in-class Final Exam.

In November of 1983, the U.S. Marines, Army Rangers, and troops of various Caribbean democracies stormed ashore the isle of Grenada. Their mission was to free the American students living there from terror, to safeguard our interests, and to, above all, reestablish democracy in Grenada.

This action was instantly criticized by certain liberal elements, and the criticisms ended only when it turned out that the students believed that they were endangered and the Grenadians were happy that they we had liberated them. There still has been criticism of the invasion, but it has been weak and indecisive.

My own view of the invasion is that it was moral and just due to previously unmentioned factors. First, the communist government had come to power in early 1979 in a coup d'etat that overthrew the democratically elected government of Sir Eric Gairy. The victors, lead by Maurice Bishop, refused to hold elections,; and just prior to the invasion, Bishop was overthrown by his fellow Marxists and executed.

Secondly, the new government, consisting of the anti-Bishop faction, instigated a reign of terror that caused great suffering to the Grenadian masses. The above should be enough to prove that the communist government of Grenada was unfit to rule in the best interests of the people.

The above facts have not been enough for certain groups as evidenced by this recent Wisconsin Federation of Teachers resolution:

Resolved, that the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers deplores the U.S. invasion of Grenada and calls on the President of the U.S. immediately to withdraw armed forces from the island of Grenada, and be it finally

Resolved, that the W.F.T. communicate to the President of the U.S., the Secretary of State and the Wisconsin Delegation to Congress that it supports the fundamental principle embodied in the U.S. Declaration of Independence that sovereign nations have the right to governments of their own choosing without intervention from other nations."

My viewpoint on the W.F.T. resolution has several basic points each of which will be gone through here.

The first basic point I wish to make about the W.F.T. resolution involves this question: how could the Declaration of Independence be against foreign intervention? France, Spain and Holland intervened on our behalf so we could gain our independence.

The second basic point is that one of the reasons the Declaration of Independence was originally written was to gain foreign intervention in support of the American Revolution.

The third basic point is that the Declaration of Independence *does not* embody the W.F.T. 's principle. Dr. William G. Rector, of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville history department, states, "The W.F.T. seems to believe that sovereignty lies in the nation, whereas the Declaration of Independence holds that sovereignty lies in the people."

In summary, we as both a nation and as a people need to fight tyranny. When debates, such as this one, are held at home over foreign intervention, this fact about the Declaration of Independence should be raised .

## **Book Reviews:**

**Aces & Eights** by Loren D. Estleman

Loren D. Estleman is a controversial figure among Western writers. This is because of his repeated criticisms of other Western authors for being historically inaccurate. According to Estleman, lack of accurate history in Westerns is the main reason for the genre's decline and fall. He has also criticized other Western writers for writing so many works about the same historical figures including Billy the Kid, Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, George Armstrong Custer, Wyatt Earp, Jesse James, Annie Oakley and last but not least, Wild Bill Hickok.

Now, you would think that given his outspokenness about historical accuracy and also about how Western writers should avoid writing about the same real life Western figures, Loren D. Estleman would practice what he preaches. Such, however, is not the case. Turns out that Estleman's own work is often wildly inaccurate and he also writes about the same historical figures that he criticizes others for doing.

In one of his novels, he had Pat Garrett covering himself with oil of Oleander. In real life, Oleander is a deadly poison, something that Estleman clearly was ignorant of. In another book, he had Doc Holliday making a bed out of Mesquite branches.

In this particular novel, **Aces & Eights**, he has what amounts to a SWAT squad operating in 1876, 88 years before the first SWAT unit was created by the St. Louis Police Department. Additionally, the historical record of the trial of the killer of Wild Bill Hickok, Jack McCall, was bent out of all proportion for purely dramatic purposes with the prosecutors and defense counsel all being completely fictitious characters.

Essentially, **Aces & Eights** is historical fantasy masquerading as historical fact. Your time and money would be wasted on this book.

## **Movie Reviews:**

**Bookies** (2003)

**Bookies** is a good example of a movie that seeks to be a stylish thriller and comes across as being just plain stupid. For one thing, it's clear that the producers of this flick did not know much about sports gambling or bookmaking or the extent to which the Mafia is actually involved in it. This movie is full of stereotypes and stick figures. There is a lot of really neat cinematography mixed in with a bad script and worse acting. **Bookies** is truly a stylish train wreck.

This flick starts off with some college friends joining together to make a bet on a college basketball game. When they lose, one of them has a conversation with the bookmaker who talks about how much money there is to be made in sports gambling. That being the case, the friends enter the bookmaker racket and set about making themselves filthy rich.

The friends decided to base their operation out of a dorm room, despite the well-known fact that there is no such thing as privacy in college dorms. They become fantastically rich in an improbably short time whilst keeping their operation a secret from the authorities. They are able to persuade the stars of their college's sports teams to rig games and shave points with astonishing ease. They have no problem with deadbeats, despite the fact that none of the friends look like they could really physically coerce compliance. They drive around in expensive cars and have expensive accessories such as a plasma TV in their headquarters dorm room without anyone else even noticing.

That is, nobody in either law enforcement or the Internal Revenue Service noticing. However, the Mafia notices it big time. This fact leads to the downfall of **Bookies** when the movie resorts to a hackneyed Mafia angle as the Mob attempts to rub out the competition posed by the enterprising college students.

This Mafia angle is unrealistic. In real life, the Mafia is involved with only one percent or so of all illegal gambling in this country. The operation shown in this movie was basically a small time operation, hardly the sort of thing that the Mafia would attract the interest of the Mafia. Even if the Mafia became interested in this college operation, they would have muscled in only for a piece of the action, not tried to kill or run off the student bookies.

The cliché Mafia angle is typical of **Bookies**. Except for the character portrayed by actress Rachel Leigh Cook, all of the roles are stock characters played with little passion as if the actors thought that merely reciting lines was enough. Other than the scenes from a rigged basketball game that showed how a star player can engage in point shaving and also a neat foosball game played by Cook's character, there was little in **Bookies** that was especially memorable.

The bottom line to **Bookies** is that you don't want to waste your time viewing it.

### **The Dirty Dozen (1967)**

U.S. Army Major John Reisman (Lee Marvin), an officer who seems to have an attitude problem and who seems to like fighting with his superiors, coupled with an ability to get difficult things done right, is assigned by Major General Worden (Ernest Borgnine) to command a seemingly impossible mission. This mission is to parachute behind enemy lines just before D-Day, the 6th of June 1944 and kill large numbers of German military officers at a rest and relaxation center in the German rear area. This mission is further complicated by the fact that the men that Reisman is to command are all convicted criminals who are either on military death row or serving lifetime sentences. If they accept going on this mission and survive it, they will all be pardoned for their crimes. In other words, a difficult mission for a difficult man.

Major Reisman not only has to train these men in the art of the commando, but he also has to get them to act as a unit. This already difficult assignment is made even more difficult in light of the fact that many of these men hate each other. Another difficulty that Reisman encounters is the fact that the officer that Reisman has to report to, the absurdly named Colonel Everett Dasher Breed (Robert Ryan), just hates him with a passion. Colonel Breed even goes so far as to report to General Worden that Reisman's unit is not working out and recommend that it be disbanded. Major Reisman then persuades General Worden to try out the unit by having it participate in a war game. If the unit fails to carry out their mission in the game, then they will be sent back to prison to finish their sentences.

While participating in this war game might seem like an easy mission, it is actually difficult to accomplish. This is because there was some merit in Colonel Breed's position. Many of Reisman's men proved to be uncooperative since they did not think that they would have anything to lose through bad behavior. Some of them even attempted to go Absent Without Leave. However, Reisman had more success in melding the dozen recidivists together into a unit than the likes of Colonel Breed were willing to give him credit for. In the actual war game, the twelve man unit succeeds with flying colors. One reason for their success is their inferior competition as shown by the pathetic scene where General Worden encounters a U.S. Army captain who is unable to read a road map.

The suicide squad then get the green light for their mission to commence on schedule. Their next objective is to learn the layout of the French chateau where the German officers' rest area is located. The question is can the dozen man suicide squad carry out their education on the actual target? One thing is clear: the dozen fully understand that what they are doing is fighting terrorism with terrorism and civilians get hurt, then too bad.

This movie was a major blockbuster and made major stars out of the likes of Charles Bronson, John Cassavetes and Telly Savalas. **The Dirty Dozen** is a classic example of just how a war movie should be made. It features a well written script, solid acting and competent direction and cinematography. **The Dirty Dozen** is one of the single best movies ever made about World War II even if both the mission and the men depicted in it are entirely fictional.

## **The Evil Dead (1981)**

The 1981 flick **The Evil Dead** is quite possibly the single most overrated horror movie of the last third of a century. This was the feature that jump started the lucrative careers of the likes of director/producer Sam Raimi and actor Bruce Campbell.

**The Evil Dead** concerns five stupid college student friends who decide to spend the weekend at a remote, rat-infested cabin in the forest. Little do they know that there is an unspeakable evil lurking in the forest. Already, evil spirits are dancing their evil dance in the forest in gleeful anticipation of the evil they are going to perpetrate. The cabin is owned by a professor who has conveniently left behind his copy of the sinister, legendary book the Necronomicon aka The Book of the Dead.

Also left behind by the professor is a tape recorder with a tape of passages from the evil book that have been translated into English. When played, these Candarian resurrection passages or whatever unleashes the powerful evil force in the woods that is determined to destroy the five friends. People start turning into evil deadites who can be destroyed only through total body dismemberment.

The friends split up and flee through the evil forest. One of them, Cheryl (Ellen Sandweiss), winds up getting raped by demonic trees. Soon, only Ashley "Ash" J. Williams (Bruce Campbell) remains to fight the sinister forces of forest evil.

**The Evil Dead** is a movie with a formula plot in which it is up to one man and man only to fight the multitudinous forces of evil. As with so many other movies of this type, the hero never gives up hope, never gets tired and never really sweats a lot. In other words, he really is not facing a serious challenge. Yet, we the audience are asked to believe that these same evil hosts were capable of killing his friends without much trouble.

Essentially, **The Evil Dead** is an unscary attempt at making a horror film. When you just get right down to it, it is an unintentional comedy. It is lame all the way through. The flying monkey scenes in "The Wizard of Oz" evokes more feelings of fear and dread in audiences than does any individual scene in **The Evil Dead**. Actually, this movie is so poorly made, it would not be surprising if it turned out one day that it was made by a monkey.

Basically, **The Evil Dead** is an incredibly lame movie. It was accursed with a bad script and even worse acting. The demons in this film seem more interested in annoying their victims than in ripping their innards out. Avoid this motion picture like the plague.

## **Goosebumps (2015)**

**Goosebumps** is the best kids movie to come along in a long time. It is also one of the few movies of any merit in what is shaping up as an unusually poor year for movies. It is named after a series of kids books that are supposed to be scary. However, in this day and age when kids are not allowed to have a childhood anymore, one wonders just how many kids read these books. You certainly don't see them in stores the way you used to. In any event, the movie is funny, fast-paced and the screenplay is tightly written. It was also somewhat scary for this 51 year old writer.

Jack Black plays R.L. Stine, the real life author of the Goosebumps series of Young Adult Horror novels that this movie is based on. Instead of basing the movie on any one Goosebumps novel, the movie makers chose to create a movie based on the series as a whole. As it turned out, this was an inspired idea.

The movie centers around a guy named Zach (Dylan Minnette) whose father has passed away. He moves with his mother, a career public educator, to the town of Madison, Delaware, where she is now the new high school principal. Zach finds a girlfriend in Hannah (Odeya Rush) whose father R.L. Stine (Jack Black) is strange and mysterious. Stine forbids his daughter from having anything to do with Zach. However, Hannah disobeys her father's wishes. One night, Zach thinks the father is victimizing his daughter and he calls the police. Later he sneaks into the house and opens some of the locked manuscript books, releasing the monsters within them. One of those monsters is a ventriloquist's dummy who opens the remaining locked manuscript books and releases all the remaining monsters. Now, it's up to Zach and Stine to try to save the town.

There are a number of genuinely funny lines in this flick, particularly the stuff about there being a feud between R.L. Stine and Stephen King. However, the way the movie ended tied everything up in a way that was too convenient. Also, how likely is it that all these hideous monsters would follow orders from a ventriloquist's dummy? Also, the movie at times seems to be a bit too frantically paced. However, one thing that makes up for these deficiencies is the fact that the cast appears to be completely committed to the film and seem to be game for anything. Overall, it's a nice film for the entire family.

I saw this in regular 2D and it was great. There is simply no reason to see this in 3D.

Basically, **Goosebumps** is a fun flick for the entire family and comes well recommended.

## **Herschell Gordon Lewis: The Godfather of Gore (2010)**

Depending on your point of view, Herschell Gordon Lewis was either one of the absolute greatest movie makers of all time or one of the absolute worst. Or you could see him as being simultaneously both. This is because Lewis's productions were all of the unintentional comedy variety. These are movies that generally fall under the tag of being Movies That Are So Bad They Are Actually Good (TASBTAAG).

For most of his time as a filmmaker, Herschell Gordon Lewis was known as an exploitation films creator. Exploitation films are difficult to describe especially since a lot of Hollywood movies nowadays include elements of what back in the 1960's were strictly the province of exploitation movies. Basically, an exploitation movie is a lurid production emphasizing sex and violence. Prior to the 1969 Sam Peckinpah Western flick *The Wild Bunch*, exploitation movies were strictly the realm of independent (that is, non-Hollywood) filmmakers. Following the success of *The Wild Bunch* at the box office, Hollywood has moved into exploitation film territory so much that you hardly ever see the term "exploitation movie" being used even though luridness has moved from the fringes of movies to becoming pretty much the main act.

**Herschell Gordon Lewis: The Godfather of Gore** is a documentary that was produced in 2010 that is about Lewis's film career that spanned the entirety of the decade of the 1960's. It was partly because of the work of Lewis and other film makers that the Sixties were such a wild and crazy decade. Understanding these movies and their historical context is key to understanding that particular decade. Since this is a documentary about bad taste, you should expect to see a lot of bad taste in this particular flick.

This is a flick that is packed with more gore, nudity and just plain tastelessness than any other documentary that I've ever seen. This is fitting since Lewis's career included such movies as "Blast-Off Girls," "Blood Feast," "Color Me Blood Red," "The Gruesome Twosome," "Just for the Hell of It," "She-Devils on Wheels," "Two Thousand Maniacs!," and "The Wizard of Gore." Any documentary featuring scenes from those movies would of course include a great deal of material that a most folks would find objectionable.

The director of this documentary is none other than grindhouse stalwart and the director of the cult horror flick "Basket Case," Frank Henenlotter. Given the tastelessness of Henenlotter's movies, he was a natural choice to helm this project. Despite the fact that this movie was billed as being about horror flicks, it actually takes in the full range of Lewis's film career including the educational films that he made. There are a great many veterans of Lewis's productions who were interviewed for this documentary.

The interesting thing about Lewis is that even now in his 80's, he has at least as much energy as many folks who are much younger than him. He has lately returned to producing exploitation flicks that are every bit as tasteless as those of his heyday. And yet when Lewis talks in this film, he comes across as being a humble guy, instead of being an egomaniac like so many Hollywood types.

In order to have a proper appreciation of this documentary, you have to understand the times that Lewis made his movies in. During the 1960's, there was no such thing as the Internet with streaming video and cable television was limited to areas where reception of TV station signals was poor at best.

Even in the places that had cable TV, there were no original content channels, just the same old broadcast choices that everyone else had. Just about the only way that you could see anything that was out of the mainstream was if you were fortunate to live in a town that had an outlet in the B-Movie Theatrical Circuit. These theaters, mainly drive-ins, were all mom and pop places that were not part of any chains. Additionally, they never showed any more than two or three feature length movies in any given week. When they did so, it was in the form of a double or triple feature and not, as is the case today, several different movies showing on several different screens in the same theater. Back then, it was one screen per theater. Given the failure of Hollywood to come up with big budget out of the mainstream motion pictures, it was the lot of B-Film producers such as Herschel Gordon Lewis, to fill in the gap.

**Herschell Gordon Lewis: The Godfather of Gore** is a very well done production. Even if you are not interested in exploitation flicks, you should find something interesting here. This is an unusually entertaining documentary, one that you should find well worth your time.

### **The Hooker Cult Murders (1973)**

**The Hooker Cult Murders** (also known as "The Pyx") is one of those eye popping titles that is put on what is really a dull movie. Montreal Police detective sergeants Jim Henderson (Christopher Plummer) and Pierre Paquette (Donald Pilon) investigate the strange death of a drug addicted prostitute, Elizabeth Lucy (Karen Black) who was pushed off a penthouse balcony. At least the start of the movie was pretty interesting.

The movie makers mess around with the chronology as we periodically see the detectives discover more about Elizabeth Lucy and find out that there were other related murders. Meantime, we see what happened with Elizabeth Lucy during her last day of life and her dealings with a satanic black mass. The end result is that the viewers get lost in all the jumping around. Talk about confusion.

Basically, **The Hooker Cult Murders** is an attempt at a cross between a horror flick and a mystery movie. The horror elements are lame and increasingly downplayed as the show goes on. There is very little suspense to this movie. The ending of this motion picture was too neat and tidy to be believable. When you really get right down to it, there really is not much of a mystery in this movie.

Another poor aspect of **The Hooker Cult Murders** is the cinematography. It is basically uninspired. This is especially true of the scenes that do not occur during the daytime. It is difficult to see what is going on during these scenes.

Despite its attention getting name, **The Hooker Cult Murders** is a pretty dull affair. There are long stretches where very little happens. Given its plot, this is a surprisingly boring movie.

As bad as the movie is overall, it must be said that Christopher Plummer is very good in this flick. As Detective Sergeant Jim Henderson, he is not a lame "Die Hard" type cop, but a believable homicide detective doing his job. Clearly Plummer was not in this movie just for the pay check. Had the rest of the film been as good, this could have been a great movie.

Another good performance came from Karen Black. She was quite convincing as a prostitute. Her role was that of a messed up woman.

When you consider that she was, in real life, a devotee of the evil nut cult known as Scientology, you have to wonder if she was just being herself as opposed to playing a part.

**The Hooker Cult Murders** is also known by the alternate title of "The Pyx." A pyx is a container used by the Roman Catholic Church to hold communion wafers. This variant title is appropriate since this movie has several Catholic elements to it. Also, a wafer was discovered on the body of the prostitute. With this kind of material, one wonders why the movie could not have been more interesting.

In any event, this is a movie to avoid.

## **Teenage Zombies (1959)**

One common belief amongst movie fans is that all zombie flicks are part and parcel of the horror genre. Actually, while the vast majority of zombie movies are horror, there are a few that are science fictional. One such film is the 1959 effort **Teenage Zombies**.

The basic premise of **Teenage Zombies** is that humans can be transformed by the application of a gas into mindless zombies. These zombies are nothing but mindless automatons who exist only to serve their masters. Needless to say, these are not the rampaging zombies of movies such as "Night of the Living Dead" and later flicks.

**Teenage Zombies** begins at a quintessential 1950's malt shop. There, high school football star Reg (Don Sullivan) talks about taking his friends water skiing. When they seem reluctant, he brings up the fact that he has discovered a previously unknown island out beyond the bay.

This surprises his friends for they had no idea that such an island even existed since none of them had ever seen or heard of such a thing. It is clear from this point on that none of the characters in this movie have ever seen a map.

Reg takes three of his friends to the mysterious island. There, they fall into the clutches of the evil Dr. Myra (Katherine Victor) who is a mad scientist who is experimenting in gases that turn ordinary humans into mindless zombie slave laborers. Even worse, Dr. Myra is working in cahoots with a pair of Soviet agents on a scheme to create large numbers of gas capsules to drop on the United States. On top of all that, the local sheriff is in this scheme so much so that he has been supplying Dr. Myra with large numbers of "drunks and prisoners" for her experimentation. It's up to two of Reg's friends who did not go to the island, Morrie (Jay Hawk) and Dotty (Nan Green) to figure out what happened to their friends or else both their friends and the United States of America are doomed to Communist zombie enslavement.

Perhaps the most interesting actress in this movie is Brianne Murphy who played the role of Pam. Murphy was the real life wife of producer Jerry Warren who taught her how to make movies. Murphy worked on Warren's productions as well as other low budget cinematic efforts. Eventually, Murphy (who eventually divorced Warren) worked her way up to become one of the first females to work in the production department of a major studio. Murphy even won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Cinematography for a Miniseries or a Special for the 1985 TV production "There Were Times, Dear."

**Teenage Zombies** is a classic example of a movie that is so bad that it is really good. There are loads of unintentional humor in this science fiction zombie flick ranging from the fancy dressing mad female scientist Dr. Myra to the hapless Communist secret agents.

Also the bizarre zombies such as Ivan and the hopelessly incompetent U.S. Army types to the goofy teenagers themselves. If you are in need of a good laugh, then **Teenage Zombies** is the movie for you.

## **The Visit** (2015)

**The Visit** is an unusually good movie by M. Night Shyamalan. It is also an original idea, at least by Hollywood standards. It is a film that is both creepy and funny at the same time. There is hardly any boring parts in this flick as it holds your attention for its 94 minute duration. In terms of humor, the best part is during the closing credits that you ought to stick around for. This not an especially scary flick, but the creepiness makes up for that. Despite the fact that there is no big name acting talent in this movie, it is very well acted.

**The Visit** is about a gal (Kathryn Hahn) who fell in love with one of her high school teachers and married him against her parents' wishes. This led to a state of estrangement between the gal and her parents. Her husband grew bored of her, and despite having two kids, dumped her for another floozy. Meanwhile, her parents tracked her down and asked her to send her kids to them so they could see their grandchildren, something that they had never done before. Since the gal was going to go on a cruise ship with her new boyfriend, she accedes to their wishes.

The two kids, Rebecca (Olivia DeJonge) and Tyler (Ed Oxenbould) are both up to their necks in computer and Internet technology. They both want to make it big in the entertainment industry when they grow up and to that end they want to make a documentary about their visit to the grandparents.

At first when the kids arrive at their grandparents' place, all seems well. However, both of the grandparents start acting strangely. The kids become frightened so much so that they lock the door to their room at night.

Modern day technology pervades this film. The kids complain about not being able to get a cellphone signal. The kids use Skype to communicate with their mother. They also watch a video she sends them and they do other things online. They also use a camera to record some of the odd things happening at the house.

There are some funny moments in this film, especially concerning the grandmother who the kids call "Nana." The kids also call the grandfather "Pop-Pop." There is also a running gag concerning some of the bit players in the movie.

As the movie progresses, so does the mystery of why the grandparents behave so oddly. Not to mention visitors to the house who are also a bit strange themselves.

**The Visit** is one of the rare movies in which the trailer makes the movie seem worse than what it really is. Usually trailers make movies seem more interesting than what they really are like.

**The Visit** is funny and provides great escapist entertainment.

**The Visit** is also notable for the fact that its closing credits are pretty interesting and well worth watching.

All in all, **The Visit** is a movie that is well worth your time and money.

## **Website Reviews:**

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

Anthroslug the Much Put Upon is the bog of a graduate student in archaeology who writes about the academic subjects that interest him as well as about his friends and family. Although it has not been updated since May 2, 2014, it's still of great interest.

<http://blackholereviews.blogspot.co.uk/>

## **Black Hole Reviews**

Although it has not been updated since May 2015, this horror movie blog by Mark Hodgson offers quite a bit of information and insight into its subject.

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

## **Cindy Vallar**

Cindy Vallar is an up and coming writer of both historical fiction and nonfiction. This website contains her writings on historical subjects with a special emphasis on pirates and privateers.

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

Grimm Reviewz offers up a wide range of variety of stuff for the horror buff. Not only are there movie reviews, but also book reviews, interviews and articles about “toys/memorabilia.”

<http://www.icu.ie/>

## **Irish Chess Union**

The Irish Chess Union is the leading Chess organization on the island of Ireland. Website features include an archive of Chess games dating back to the 19th Century.

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

Although it has not been updated since December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Shadow's B-Movie Graveyard is a great place to learn about bad movies, especially those of the horror variety.

<http://monsterhunternation.com/>

Monster Hunter Nation is the blog-based website of science fiction writer Larry Correia who offers a lot of helpful advice to aspiring writers.

<https://www.newinchess.com/>

## **New in Chess**

New In Chess is a major international Chess magazine. Its website also doubles as a storefront selling various books, software, subscriptions as well as a free to use database of over 1.25 Mil. Chess games.

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

Perihelion Online Science Fiction Magazine is one of the leading science fiction webzines around today.

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

Planetary Stories is the website home for three different webzines devoted to bringing back the good old days of pulp magazines.

<http://www.strategy-business.com/>

The website for the business print magazine Strategy + Business

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

Ultra Stratego Site is perhaps the ultimate website about the great game of Stratego in all of its forms.

## Letters of Comment:

askance73@gmail.com

Hello, Charles! I read your latest issue on [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com) and figured I'd drop you a brief loc based on a couple items you had in the 6th issue.

First off, I hope you don't mind a suggestion. To go along with all the fine written material in here, don't be afraid to play with layout and incorporate illustrations/photos and such into you e-zine. It is remarkably easy to do and will give *Fornax* a more visual appeal. Just an idea that I'm sure you've thought of before. I would like to see your fanzine develop that way, though.

Now for the content. Having commentary about old and recent science fiction, fantasy, and horror movies is always great. I loved the original Universal Pictures and Warner Brothers horror *ouvre* of the 1930s, and yes, the first *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933) was wonderfully spooky. although the 1953 remake with Vincent Price was a classic. At least that remake was worth the effort. Of the other movies you mentioned herein, I think *Mark of the Vampire* (1935) was a good one, and I loved the silliness of 2004's *Shaun of the Dead*. First off, it is not meant to be taken seriously because *Shaun of the Dead* is making fun of the zombie movie wave. Yes, it is gory, but *Shaun* is British camp-horror. If you keep that in mind, it is a very funny movie that I really hope nobody ever tries to remake. Also, I did not care for the 1976 or 2005 remakes of *King Kong*. Nothing will ever top what Willis O'Brien did in 1933. Simply brilliant work for its time.

I see you mentioned my fanzine *Askance*, especially regarding Greg Benford's book review of Kim Stanley Robinson's new novel *Aurora*. Well, it helps to know some of these pros to get writing out of them. Guy Lillian gets Greg and Mike Resnick, among others, to contribute to his zine *Challenger* all the time. Don't be afraid to approach these folks at conventions and get to know them. Besides, Greg and Mike still think of themselves as fans, so they may be fealthy pros, but they are still one of us. Ask them. You might be pleasantly surprised.

That listing and review of all those genre-related websites is a fine idea. Keep it up. Maybe you could do an in-depth review of one or two of them in a future issue. I like the Lovecraft ezine a lot, and will have to check out some of the others you listed. Many thanks for this list.

Good letter section with a batch of fine folks. Getting substantial letters of comment from Dave Haren, Jerry Kaufman, Milt Stevens, and Lloyd Penney is a sign that *Fornax* is gaining a good following. I am glad to see this happening. We need more solid general interest fanzines like yours. Most online zines tend to be personal in nature - like a blog in a traditional print format - so seeing something like *Fornax* is good.

Okay, that looks like a wrap. I thank you for posting the zine and look forward to future issues. I will try to be a good boy and write. From one faneditor to another, keep the faith and keep pubbing.

All the best,

John Purcell

**[Thank you for the kind words. I'm still new to the world of computer applications and am navigating the mysteries of Microsoft Word. As it happens, I have not been to a science fiction convention since 2000. The programming often does not seem terribly interesting plus the fact they are all too often held in big city areas with big city traffic problems.]**

**tyrbolo@comcast.net**

Hi Charles,

Some interesting things in the latest Fornax. Lionel Atwill has a bunch of his movies available at archive.org. Quite a few of the older movies lapsed into the public domain. A good item for halloween filmfest is the Vampires with Irma Vep as the villainess of a non supernatural gangster band. It is a serial quite spectacular for the times.

Amazon has a shiny biography of Gygas full of the usual prose praising his imagination. Not a problem most of a persons flaws are buried with them and there's no point hashing over a past we can't touch.

If you travel from Denver west you'll encounter a wall across the world, the front Range of the Rockies. After that the scenery gets interesting. Going the other way is the flatlands the scenery seems to be cornfields until you get to the worn out bumps of the Appalachians.

I found a copy of Stephen Kings The Mist to add to my HPL mythos DVD set. Highly recommended but not for the faint at heart or the happy ending type. They cleaned up part of the book which is a shame because King is at his best as an observer of ordinary folks and their inbuilt true horrors of their actions.

A couple of nice Neffy awards: Tony Weisskopf has done a great job for Baen the story of how she got the job was a tragedy but she has been a credit to the triumphant human spirit.

The other one is for the instigation of the time honored fan feud in the guise of the Hugofuss. I have been quite unkind to both sides and probably have been too kind given the quality of the rhetoric used by them against each other.

The Straw Hats are still thumping the Do Flamingo family and I've begun watching a Gundam epic. That one is pretty rough so far, lots of plots against innocents foiled by destitute children.

Carolyn has made the deadline on her latest book in the ongoing tales of Bren Cameron and the Atevi. (C J Cherryh). She got pushed a bit on this last one, something to do with the publishers schedule.

Keep on Keepin' on.

Dave Haren

**[Thanks for the heads up on the Lionel Atwill films at Arhive.org. Never been able to see Doctor X and it was well worth the wait. I'm going to try to get that Gygax biography on Interlibrary Loan since a review of that book seems a natural for this fanzine. Not aware of the how Weisskopf became the boss at Baen Books. Could you please write it up for this zine? Also, who is this "Carolyn" that you write of? In any event, thanks for another great LOC.]**

From Jim Mowatt:

Hello Charles

I read your review of Shaun of the Dead and I have to wonder whether you and I are from the same planet or even species. Maybe that's the answer - perhaps you are actually a zombie. I can imagine that a maybe zombie would maybe not enjoy the film very much. Look at that they'd say - completely unrealistic. I mean, there's that scene where they pretend to be zombies so they don't get attacked. They would have been slaughtered in an instant. The shuffle was ridiculous and the moaning just absolutely unbelievable.

I know that's not what you wrote but, of course you do have to keep your zombie identity fairly quiet. Once your neighbours know that you're a brain eating zombie they get a bit sniffy about asking you around for dinner parties.

So, in short. I think Shaun of the Dead was extremely funny so stick that in your deranged zombie pipe and inhale.

[Address withheld in case of zombie reprisals]

Kind regards

Jim

**[Talk about somebody being a hard core fan!]**

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November 6, 2015

Dear Charles:

Thank you for issue of 6 of Fornax. We're already getting ready for the weekend, so this might have to be quick. Let's see what I can set in electrons.

Hallowe'en has come and gone, and while we didn't go to any parties, we had gone to a special dinner at Casa Loma, the big castle in Toronto, and we were in full steampunk costumes, so we made that our Hallowe'en treat.

I get the feeling that now that Kate Paulk, whoever she might be, has championed a promised Puppies slate for the next round of Hugos, there's going to be an awful lot of e-mails and other social media comments she's going to have to ignore. She may regret speaking up and supporting what seems to be a very unpopular position.

Forever Knight...we used to watch that, not necessarily for the story or action, but to see the Toronto streets in the background, and how some would howl as Nick Knight's car would travel from one street to another, and locals would know that the two streets are actually parallel. We've met Geraint Wyn-Davies and Nigel Bennett, both consummate actors.

That video I wrote about with the new Assassins Creed: syndicate game...it is now available on YouTube, and you can see me in a few places, in my top hat, shaking my cane. We had a great time with that, and I was paid nicely for it, too.

Losing interest in fanzines? Perhaps a little, not really sure why, unless it's the fact that some fanzines I quite enjoyed have gone away. Other interests have presented themselves, and Yvonne and I are having great fun with them. Slowing down in my loc writing? Perhaps, but I expect I can still hit my usual 250 letters per year. There's still just less than two months left in the year. I was working for a customs agency that had as a sideline paid access to databases full of criminal and terrorist names and information. I was one of the editors of the databases.

Yvonne will be home in a few minutes, so I will wrap it up. Take care, and please do send me issue 7.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

**[Nice to see that you're doing all right job wise. As for Kate Paulk and her associates, I've come to the conclusion that what's driving them is the idea that there is no such thing as bad publicity and anything that increases their name recognition will only sell more books. If you look at her blog, you will see that she has kept up the hateful rhetoric. I'll make sure to email you and others Issue #7.]**

Taral@bell.net

For a gallery of my art

-- <http://www.furaffinity.net/user/saara/>

-- <http://taralwayne.deviantart.com/>

To download my fanzines

-- <http://efanzines.com/Taral/index.htm>

-- <http://fanac.org/fanzines/BrokenToys/>

This is a long zine, and you are opinionated, so this may take some time to loc... I was hoping for something I could dash off in ten minutes, but it seems not to be.

To begin with, I have stayed out of the Sad Puppies controversy on purpose. For one thing, I cannot pick either side without taking issue with various points. I suppose I lean mostly to the anti-Puppy faction, since I like nothing about how the Puppies operated, their ad-hominem attacks nor their attempt to impose their will on the rest of the voters with a concerted, previously organized, unanimous vote. Still, the initial premise, that there is a bias in favour of "literary" writing, is not entirely without credibility.

However, I've been unwilling to say as much because, frankly, what the hell do I know about it? I've had conversations with no less than Robert Charles Wilson, a friend with strong opinions who thinks there is nothing "literary" about the SF he's read, and that such distinctions are puerile anyway, and with the same Eric Mayer you yourself quote, who has no patience for stories he finds pretentious and unintelligible. Eric too, is a professional writer. So which is right? Could it possibly be both?

I read little enough SF as it is, but almost no contemporary short stories. I read a few novels but have no idea what might be going on in the magazines. As for pretentious novels, there appear to be few to none. I haven't encountered any, at least. But I don't know what some readers might consider pretentious. Anything more demanding than O. Henry? I guess there *are* a few of those around. The most "difficult" SF novel I've read in recent years was probably *Cloud Atlas*, by David Mitchell. The interwoven plots that unfold in mirror image are a bit of a challenge at first, but I hardly faltered, and in the end thought the book well worth the time put into reading it – unlike, say "just another space opera." Nothing else was even remotely a challenge. So where is this invasion of artsy-fartsy novels the Puppies decry?

But as I've read no genre short stories or novelettes in recent years, except one collection by Ted Chiang that Bob recommended to me, the possibility exists that I could be overlooking overwhelming amounts of earnest literary foppery.

Regardless, the point of giving an award is to spotlight the best the field can give, which means something new, not something that has been done in the same way for the last 50 years. This is perhaps one reason why space operas in the tradition of Gordie Dickson, Jerry Pournelle and Poul Anderson get little traction in the Hugos these days. Any genre that fails to change over 50 years is a fossil.

There is also a political dimension to some of the arguments put up by the Sad Puppies. Many are just pissed off that stories about white Americans bullying weird non-humans, or stories that glorify war, never come within long range of the Hugo. However, one doesn't need to invoke a conspiracy theory to explain that. The sales of right-wing books are much lower than those with more liberal agendas. That socially progressive fiction wins more awards is the *true vox populi* that the Puppies claim *they* represent ... but clearly don't. If they did, why don't more readers vote for them?

However, I think the main explanation for my lack of involvement in the Sad Puppy controversy is that I don't read much SF, and the Hugos have largely become a matter of indifference to me. Even at the best of times, I only sometimes agreed with their outcome, and now science fiction is an entirely different genre that I'm unfamiliar with, and its relationship to the mundane world transformed almost beyond recognition. It is *mainstream* now, and in many ways dumbing down to the mass audience.

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I was piqued by your review of the reboot of Spiderman. As it happens, I loved the first two Spiderman films by Sam Raimi. For me Tobi Maguire was the perfect Spiderman because he still looked very young, and had just the right degree of nerdishness. For that matter, I've liked Maguire in everything else I've seen him in – not a lot, to be sure, but enough. Admittedly, the third movie of the three went way overboard. The “bad” Spiderman was more than a little embarrassing, and there was just too much going on. What finally blew it for me, though, was the overblown ending, with the unconvincing giant web and the trapped car slipping from one level to another. It did not work. Also, what was in the writers' minds when The Sandman turns out to be just “misunderstood,” and then blows away into the sunrise, leaving Parker in tears? Was that for real? Is Sandman dead, or could he collect in a sandbank against a fence somewhere and reconstitute himself? If so, will he go back to a life of crime, or join the Salvation Army in search of penance? Boy did the last half of that script need doctoring! The first half wasn't bad, though!

I have to warn you that I didn't watch the two rebooted *Spiderman* flicks. I took one look at heartthrob Garfield and said that is NOT Spiderman.

He's handsome, and ripped even before the spider bite. He seems about as nerdish as one of the lead surf-gods in *Beverly Hills, 90120*. The trailers I saw gave me the distinct impression that this film was intended as a chic-flic, aimed at a female, or at least mixed, audience. My 19-year-old nephews told me that was *exactly* how they experienced it! And then, of course, there was the sequel, which I understand was critically panned. I certainly flipped out when I saw Electro. *That's Electro?* Admittedly, the comic book version, drawn by Ditko, looked more like a daffodil, but this guy looked like a black dude wearing a Wurlitzer. Friends told me to stay clear of it, and to this day I've seen neither film, nor do I intend to.

Of course, if only one superhero film was made every couple of years, I would probably watch it anyway. But unfortunately there seem to be about six made every year, some of which are very good, and some of which could suck the chrome off the Silver Surfer. I don't want to see the bad ones. For one thing, it'll only encourage Marvel and DC to make more, and make them as fast as possible, and make them from undeserving characters like The Creeper and Johah Hex. Those guys need to be slapped down and not saturate the theatres with too much of this stuff.

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It was nice to see *The Rocketeer* remembered, though. I liked that movie from the start, and have only a single complaint about it. It was too short. I would like to have seen the Rocketeer in a couple of routine feats of daring-do, or bust a crime or two, before buckling down to the main plotline.

Did you notice William Sanderson as one of the mechanics in the diner? He also played J.F. Sebastian, the roboticist in *Blade Runner*. It delighted me to see him in each of those movies, since he had already been endeared to me by his role as Larry (with his brothers Darryl and Darryl) in *Newhart*.

Another actor of significance to the SF genre also won my affection for a previous role. Data was a strangely surreal country hick who, from time to time, appeared in front of Judge Harry Stone in *Night Court*.

Your comments on Best Fanwriter, specifically in regard to Laura J. Mixner, are another reason I no longer give a shit about the Hugos. The fan categories were the only ones I had any connection with, and now I don't even have that. Despite 45 years or more or less continuous activity in fandom, I find I have no idea who most of the nominees in those categories are anymore, and dispute whether they should be there at all, instead of in *new* categories suited to their media. But there's no use calling on me not to despair, and to pitch in and help change matters. I believed the Hugos were something to fight for once, but my "loyalty" to SF is completely used up, and I no longer have any expectation of things changing for the better. I have to think of myself, now, and use my time to my own betterment.

**[That a longtime fan such as yourself now feels alienated from the Hugo Awards fan awards, is certainly depressing, but not surprising given the direction that they have been taking.]**