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From the Editor

Here it is, issue #7, our first anniversary issue. It’s hard to believe it’s been a year since we debuted at Salt Lake Comic Con 2014.

Back then, we were just two inexperienced geeks with an idea to fill a niche, and a handful of friends and acquaintances who shared the vision, and who were willing to donate some time and some words.

Now, with 7 issues under our belt, we’re still just a couple of in-experienced geeks, but we’ve built a team of over 50 contributing writers, editors, and photographers. We’re even lucky enough to have a professional magazine editor on board who has helped us bring new and more professional look and feel to the magazine.

We continue to grow after every issue we publish, and every event we attend. Our most exciting new feature, the Cosplay Centerfold, highlights an epic local cosplayer in a two page pictorial spread. Newly announced this issue is our partnership with VFIRE (aka Mercedes) from the local cosplay blog Cosplay Stitch and Seam, who will be managing the feature and providing additional content on her website, stitchandseam.blogspot.com. Daniel Yocom, from the local gaming blog Guild Master Gaming (guildmastergaming.blogspot.com), will be providing RPG and board game reviews.

We have so much more content planned, and even some stuff already “on the shelf” ready to go, but we’re out of space! Our main goal over the next year is to increase the size of the magazine to 24 or 32 full-color pages of content. We’ll have movie and video game reviews, anime reviews, gadget reviews, and much more.

Within the next few months, we’ll be integrating digital media into the magazine as well. Our print content will include links to extended content on our website, YouTube videos, and a brand new podcast we’re developing with Tom Carr, formerly from the popular Residual Haunting Revived podcast, and his production company, Bag of Holding Productions.

Do you want to support Utah Geek Magazine, but don’t have the time or ability to contribute work or content? You can now support or subscribe to Utah Geek Magazine through Patreon, a subscription-based crowd funding site, through our website at UtahGeekMagazine.com/subscribe.

Finally, be sure to find us at Salt Lake Comic Con 2015 at table Red 8 and say “Hi”, and keep an eye on our Facebook page for our upcoming launch party in May 2016.

- Adrian Broadhead
VP & Executive Editor

We are currently seeking talented people, like you, to contribute to Utah Geek Magazine. We are looking for help with:

- Ad Sales & Marketing
- Consulting
- Distribution
- Copy Editing
- Content Writing
- Video Production
- Photography
- Cosplay Modeling
- Graphic Designing
- Original and Fan Art

If you are interested in volunteering in any way, or have questions about Utah Geek Magazine, please visit: UtahGeekMagazine.com/Contribute

Serenity art by Nathan Parét
Nathan Parét has been an active landscape, portrait, and pop culture artist since 1979, receiving many awards. His art appears on ads, books, brochures and on many walls. http://nathanparet.prosite.com

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- Adrian Broadhead
VP & Executive Editor
In Defense of Comics

By Deborah Moore

Photo credits Mark Lewis (MarkLewisDraws.com) & Andrews McMeel Publishing

Every once in a while I hear a snarky comment about comic-books and graphic novels. Some people will complain about how children are wasting their time reading them. I can’t help but wonder how many of them have given these books a fair chance. You shouldn’t dismiss a whole genre based on one book you didn’t like, because there are so many benefits to reading them.

My friend, Angie, was having a hard time getting her son to read. When she told me this, I took her to the graphic novel section at our library, and recommended books that I enjoyed. Some of them included Zita the Spacegirl, Giants Beware, and the Mal and Chad series. Angie left with a massive stack of graphic novels for her son.

That evening, I got a text from my friend that her son had spent the past hour reading the books. He even gave up TV time so he could read more of them. He’s not the exception to the rule, either. I’ve noticed this in other children, as well.

My daughters have both improved their reading and vocabulary skills by reading comics. When River was in second grade, she was obsessed with Calvin and Hobbes and learned words like character and sordid.

It’s also easier for me to read over a comic-book or graphic novel, and make sure that it’s appropriate for my daughter, because I can finish a book in a day. It also allows me to talk over the book with River or Nelina while they are reading it.

All of these skills and benefits have transferred over to other books my daughters read. They have become avid readers because of the introduction to graphic novels and comicbooks. That doesn’t mean I think of them as simply a stepping stone to larger books. We all still check them out.

People will still make snarky comments. There will still be stereotypes about graphic novels and comicbooks on television and in other media. It doesn’t bother me though. I’m too busy reading.
Shadowrun gives you a place to play your eleven street samurai, with bio-enhancements, doing some wet work for “Mr. Johnson.”

Shadowrun first came out over 20 years ago. Recently, the Shadowrun 20th Anniversary Core Rulebook was released to update the game. Along with the rulebook there is also a box set, Shadowrun Runner’s Toolkit, to help you get started. I played Shadowrun years ago, and decided to pick these up these two items from a local game shop.

The Shadowrun 20th Anniversary Core Rulebook is a 375 page, hard bound, standard sized game book, which covers the basics of running and playing Shadowrun. This is a high quality piece of work. The materials and print are good and the content is good.

The Shadowrun timeline has been moved out 20 years and updated to fit advances in the game and in reality. Each major section of the book begins with a piece of short fiction to help the reader understand what is being covered, as well as establishing the tone and feel of the setting.

I found the information easy to follow and comprehend. There are plenty of tables for easy reference, which are indexed in the back of the book to find them quickly when the need arises. There are also examples throughout the book that explain the concept and how they would fit into game play.

Shadowrun Runner’s Toolkit is a boxed set of a game master’s screen, table aids such as reference cards and maps, and five books. Again, the materials and printing are of high quality. The screen and table aids are some of the best I have ever come across.

The reference cards provide easy access to a number of regularly encountered game mechanics. Each side of the six cards covers a specific topic, like autonomous drone combat, with general information and a step by step walkthrough.

Each of the books cover an area to help start, play, and run games. The first book tells the story of a shadow run and break each section of the adventure down in terms of the game mechanics that would be used. The next one helps in character creation (a point based system) by providing a number of mix and match kits for traits, skills, and gear. Another is a collection of tables from a number of books from the Shadowrun main collection. The fourth is an informational book addressing contacts, types of adventures, and descriptions of several locations. The last book is a solid, 55 page introductory adventure.

Get your elf ready for his run, one of the people he’ll be running into is a troll bodyguard.

For an expanded review of these materials, visit utahgeekmagazine.com.

Infiltration

By Daniel Yocom
www.UGeek.us/DanielYocom
Photo credit Fantasy Flight Games

You have been hired to steal valuable secrets from a highly secured corporate facility. But you are not the only one. What started out as a team effort to get in is now more of an individual effort to get out, and to get paid. Therefore, you have to work together, but not too much.

That is the theme of Infiltration, a card game created by Donald X. Vaccarino—also known for creating Dominion and Kingdom Builder. Set in the dystopian future of Android, you use your wits, and a few pieces of technology, to get as deep as you dare into the building, download data, and get out before the building goes into lockdown.

I had the opportunity to play Infiltration at a local game day. We had six players total, with five of us being new.

We were all able to pick up the general rules and get playing quickly, even though we weren’t previously experienced with the game. We needed to look up a few points for additional clarification, but this didn’t interrupt the flow of the game very much. I am sure with another session or two, the intricacies of the individual cards would not be a problem.

The game starts as the players enter the first of a series of unknown rooms. The rooms are randomly selected and placed in order, face down on the table. There are more room cards than are used in a single game, which results in a different layout with every play.

Players can play actions and items. Each player chooses their play and locks it in, then the cards are revealed in order. Strategy comes into play because, by the time it gets to your turn, the action you chose may no longer be available. Each round the starting player rotates, so you also need to take that into consideration.

The end of the game is set by a unique counter system. Each round ends with the threat level of the building increasing. When the counter reaches 99, the building locks down and the game ends. Any player still in the building is captured, taking them out of the game. The players who made it out of the building are scored based on how much data they escaped with. It is possible for a game to end with no winner.

Infiltration is designed for 2–6 players. We were able to complete the game in the upper end of the suggested time limit of 45 minutes. The other four new players said they enjoyed the game and they would consider playing it again. Our instructor mentioned his group plays Infiltration as a filler game while waiting for people.

This is a good, shorter game (30-45 minutes) that doesn’t require a lot of setup or cleanup. It is recommended for ages 14+ and I think a few years younger would work if you have some gaming experience.
On September 20, 2002, Joss Whedon’s science fiction TV series Firefly first aired, changing many lives in ways not imagined. It was cancelled far too soon, a few months later, but that wasn’t the end of the story for the fans who call themselves Browncoats.

The premise is that hundreds of years in the future, people speak of “Earth that was” as if it no longer exists. The populated worlds in the universe are varied and extreme. Some of the planets encountered are reminiscent of those in the film Blade Runner with every modern convenience, while others have primitive conditions similar to the old West. The old and cobbled together Firefly-class spaceship named “Serenity” carries Captain Malcolm Reynolds and his patchwork crew. They take what jobs they can – even some that are legal – in order to survive on the raggedy edge of the Black.

In 2002, the few Firefly ads that aired caught people’s attention. Unfortunately, the many intriguing elements from the ads remained a mystery until later episodes like Our Mrs. Reynolds were unbelievably fun with great humor and solid storylines. People were hooked – if only they could figure out when it was being aired and not randomly preempted by a different show.

Most fans saw only a few episodes. Unfortunately, after airing just 11 episodes, with the last episode being the pilot Serenity that properly introduced the series, Fox cancelled Firefly.

One year after the show’s cancellation, in December 2003, the complete series was released on DVD, which allowed most people to watch it. Seeing all 14 episodes in the proper order was enough to cause most viewers to fall in love with Firefly and simultaneously feel a deep loss that the series was cut short. Firefly was unlike anything previously aired, and fans felt compelled by the story and completely attached to the entire cast. The fans, cast and crew felt a personal connection to Firefly, because the writers and Whedon demanded realism that was all too often missing in traditional programming.

Tim Minear, who co-produced Firefly, reminisced that Firefly fans were “a bunch of losers who didn’t have a spit’s chance in hell” for victory against the network executives – just as the Firefly crew struggled against The Alliance government. The characters were people living on the edge in a harsh future, struggling to survive with many forces against them. The fans wanted Firefly. The network wanted it cancelled and they succeeded. A dominant theme in Firefly and in our current world is standing up for one’s beliefs in the face of impenetrable power and influence.

Undaunted by a seemingly impossible challenge to get more Firefly, fans came together and engaged in long and strong guerrilla marketing campaigns. Besides communicating with the studio in many creative and positive ways, they strove to increase awareness of Firefly and increase the fanbase, thereby increasing the potential audience for a sequel. They created art, music, and...
films. Browncoats held shindigs and celebrated Firefly together. Strangers became extended families. It was, and still is, a strong movement.

As stated by Adam Baldwin in the documentary film Done The Impossible, “The words ‘Firefly’ and ‘Browncoat’ came to symbolize a sense of community, family, and a conviction that the impossible can be accomplished. These concepts are at the very heart of Firefly and its fans.”

The fans weren’t the only people motivated to have more Firefly. Whedon, with the support of his cast and crew, received permission from Fox to take Firefly to another studio. Universal green-lit the sequel movie Serenity, recognizing Whedon’s brilliance and talent as well as the strong fanbase.

It wasn’t just great TV programming that motivated Browncoats. The cast started appearing at conventions and connecting with people as people. It became abundantly clear that the cast, who were fantastic on screen and loved Firefly too, were every bit as special and deep-hearted in person. The fans loved Firefly and loved the cast every bit as much.

Serenity was released in 2005 and was critically acclaimed, yet box-office sales weren’t high enough for Universal. The studio had relied too much on the fans for marketing, and Browncoats certainly outdid themselves with their marketing efforts. Unfortunately, despite Universal having the option to film two sequels, the rights to Firefly reverted back to Fox.

In the last several years, there has been a further resurgence with new fans and new products available. Dozens of fan films have been made, countless games created, and comics from Dark Horse written that extend the storyline. Browncoats continue to watch and share Firefly, making new friends in the process. Firefly is stronger today than it has ever been. The cast and fans remain passionate about it, ensuring that Firefly will endure for generations.

Ever since Firefly’s cancellation, Browncoats have come together in the name of Firefly to raise money for charities important to Whedon and cast, as well as local charities. Donating time and money to charity is an important part of being a Browncoat.

The best example of charitable fundraising is the annual showing of Serenity in fan-rented theaters worldwide, called “Can’t Stop the Serenity” - a play on words from the popular line in Serenity, “You Can’t Stop the Signal!” The event is a chance for fans to volunteer, come together, celebrate their love for Firefly, and help an important cause.

The effort raises money for Whedon’s favorite charity Equality Now that works for the protection of the human rights of women, ending violence and discrimination against women worldwide. Since 2006, over $1,000,000 has been raised by Can’t Stop the Serenity. There’s a second screening this year by the Utah Browncoats on October 10, listed at UtahBrowncoats.com. Besides seeing Serenity, attendees of the event can participate in a panel with Firefly costume designer Shawna Trpcic.

Over a decade later, it is clear that Firefly and the Browncoat movement can’t be contained, and that Firefly will continue to change people’s lives. If you have never seen Firefly and Serenity, you owe it to yourself to experience what some have called, “The greatest science fiction television series ever created.” Though they might be biased, there’s a whole legion of Browncoats who tend to agree.

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About the Author:

Brian Wiser is a producer best known for the 2006 documentary film Done The Impossible: The Fans’ Tale of Firefly & Serenity. It is hosted by Adam Baldwin with voice-over by Jewel Staite, and features interviews with Joss Whedon, the cast, crew, and fans. In 2005, Wiser was cast as an extra in Joss Whedon’s movie Serenity and had a few seconds of screen time with Jewel Staite. That experience inspired him to be a producer and writer for Done The Impossible, a co-founder of Utah Browncoats, and to create and co-produce many Firefly-related projects like his 2007 Browncoat Cruise featuring Firefly cast like Ron Glass and Michael Fairman.

You can follow him on Twitter at @BrianWis. To read about Brian’s personal experiences with Serenity, the cast, and the Done the Impossible documentary, visit UtahGeekMagazine.com/Memories-of-Serenity
Cosplayer: Ash Sweetring
Facebook.com/AshSweetring
Character: Daedric Warrior
Photographer: Jackie Cao Photography
Facebook.com/jcaofoto
Cosplay Tip: Cosplay for All!

By Mercedes Roberts
www.StitchAndSeam.blogspot.com

Ash Sweetring is a wonderful and inspiring cosplayer. She has the best advice and outlook on cosplay for everyone!

“I am absolutely all about body, mind and heart positivity! Being able to love yourself in all situations is one of the most important things that we forget to do as humans. Many people who are plus size seem to have a harder time with the concept of this and tend to put themselves down or not even attempt to Cosplay because they are afraid of rejection. I don’t want to tell you that there isn’t anyone out there who will give you negative feedback and be a general troll to all cosplayers, but when you finally find the courage to put on that costume that you spent so much time planning, and adjusting to be perfect for you then there is no greater satisfaction or more gratifying victory.

“Being able to understand and apply this thinking and turn it into actions has changed my life beyond this beautiful hobby. Everyone is beautiful and the sooner anyone understands that, you see a change in them that is contagious and admirable.”

– Ash Sweetring

Ash is one of the most amazing cosplayers because of her spunk, her kindness, and the incredible work she puts into her craft. For more pictures and the rest of the interview with Ash, visit Cosplay Stitch and Seam at www.StitchAndSeam.blogspot.com.
Chapter 7: Tentacles and Pentacles

BY DAVID J. WEST

Walking Through Walls

BY DAVID J. WEST

The story so far:

Kenaz, a young information broker, can step outside his body to gather secrets. He has been blackmailed by multiple sinister parties to retrieve a powerful artifact known as “The Re-liliqy”. He just stole it. But now it’s sinking into the demon-haunted sea with his accomplice Lysandra. Angry guardsmen are about to catch him red-handed...

Not many people have been dropped by a Djinn into the bay at night, but Lysandra has. She gulped a mouthful of brackish seawater while the magic carpet she had been riding sunk summoning the devil-fish. They always fed at night. Lysandra struggled to reach the surface against the weight of her knives and light chain mail vest. Her crossbow pistol was sadly lost. It sank to the bottom along with the chest that Kenaz wanted so badly. The Cortezian Bay was reputed to be very deep.

She broke the surface, got one breath of fresh air and guessed at how far she had to swim. The city lights didn’t look far, but the threat of ravenous squids made it seem miles.

Then something in the water beneath touched her. It moved slowly like a caressing finger, probing curiously across her thigh like a shy lover. It suddenly went tight and pulled her down. Her scream silenced by the dark waters.

***

I remained invisible, in my astral form, as the Captain of the Guard searched the wreckage of the Grand Sahir’s lair. The aftermath of the summoning of Kathulos had destroyed most of the sorcerous chamber. I tried again to suggest that the Captain and his men leave, that we thieves had all escaped aboard the Djinn’s magic carpet. He was not buying what I sold and waved his sword in my general direction, scrutinizing the unknown. Somehow the pentacle of his Brotherhood of Shadows granted him magical immunity to my ethereal suggestions. He threw open the wardrobe door revealing my body’s hiding place.

“What is that?” asked the sergeant. “A dead body?”

“Course it’s a dead body. One the Grand Sahir must’ve experimented on,” said another.

“No,” grumbled the Captain. “This was one of the thieves climbing the walls. Look he has a fresh wound.”

“Did they try and hide him?” asked the Sergeant, as he poked me with the end of his poleaxe. “He is dead, ain’t he?”

Naturally I would appear so, since my spirit was watching outside of my body. My suggestions to leave my wounded form alone didn’t work. Then my spiritual ears heard Lysandra’s scream out in the bay where the Djinn had just dropped her. I had to help her no matter what the guards might do to my flesh.

Instantly I was spiritually beside her. A devil-fish had gripped her leg and was pulling her into the hellish depths toward its snapping iron-like beak. I’ve never had luck with suggestion to animals and certainly I’ve never tried to manipulate devil-fish but I must attempt it or Lysandra would be devoured.

Leave her alone! Let her go!

Nothing, no response from so alien a mind as a devil-fish. Instead a second one attempted to grab my spirit with its tentacles, though completely in vain.

She was drowning. I had to try something I’ve never done before. Something that felt wrong and gave chills. I pressed my spirit into the devil-fish and took control of its mind!

It took a moment to navigate its unfamiliar body, but I did it. I had control! I let go of Lysandra and swim next to her face, to try and tell her it was me.

She plunged her Nybo blade into my brain! Deader than stone gods! The devil-fish body sank away before being snapped up by some other nameless horror.

I took hold of another devil-fish and again tried to help her to the surface, but I've never tried to manipulate devil-fish with suggestion to animals and certainly I've never had luck snapping iron-like beak. I've never had luck with suggestion to animals and certainly I've never tried to manipulate devil-fish but I must attempt it or Lysandra would be devoured.

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Lysandra looked at me in my devil-fish form and wondered aloud, “Kenaz?” I responded with the flashing discoloration so useful with this variant anatomy. “I lost the chest,” she stuttered, “I’m sorry.”

The chest! Of course, with this amazing body I could try the unthinkable! The humanely impossible! Diving deeper than any man is capable of. I went past hundreds of the deadly denizens of the deep, packs of devil-fish and other bottom feeders too hideous and cruel to name and by Yig’s beard I found the sunken coffers.

Pulling upon its brazen clasps, I still found them sealed to even my multi-dexterous limbs. Grabbing the chest with six tentacles, I heaved it upward to that distant ceiling. It took all the strength of the body I possessed to make it but I broke the surface. Lysandra, breathing hard, reached as I pushed the trunk to her waiting hand. She yanked it up to the dock and said, “I concede, Kenaz, you are smarter than I ever took you for. But much more handsome now,” she laughed.

“Though I’m still not interested in you.”

She was safe, the Re-liliqy inside the chest was safe and I left the exhausted devil-fish body. I went back fast as thought to my own corpse and whatever ruin the guardsmen

found myself cut to ribbons for the effort. A third time I possessed the foreign body and this time I kept the other devil-fish at bay, producing a strange prismatic feature I never knew the creatures had, a hypnotic light show radiating multiple bright colors from the devil-fish body. I told them she was not food and to let her go. Most seemed to accept such a statement but two decided I was saving her for myself and attacked.

Torn in two directions I left the carcass and entered the stronger of the two and in turn divested his cohort of all ability in no uncertain terms. I followed Lysandra, protecting her at a gentle distance until she made it to the docks of Tolburn. Utterly exhausted she strained to reach the ladder upon the dock. I tried one more time to assist her, nudging her legs upward with the jelly-like torso of the devil-fish’s body. Surprised, she accepted the help up to the first rung.

Lysandra has. She gulped a mouthful of brackish seawater while the magic carpet she had been riding sunk summoning the devil-fish. They always fed at night. Lysandra struggled to reach the surface against the weight of her knives and light chain mail vest. Her crossbow pistol was sadly lost. It sank to the bottom along with the chest that Kenaz wanted so badly. The Cortezian Bay was reputed to be very deep. No treasure lost there was ever recovered.

She broke the surface, got one breath of fresh air and guessed at how far she had to swim. The city lights didn’t look far, but the threat of ravenous squids made it seem miles.

Then something in the water beneath touched her. It moved slowly like a caressing finger, probing curiously across her thigh like a shy lover. It suddenly went tight and pulled her down. Her scream silenced by the dark waters.

***
had done to it. Would they pierce and kill my body? Throw me in a dungeon? Toss me from the tower?

I found myself being carried down a flight of stairs by two guardsmen. Thinking me dead, they were going to dispose of my body. Perhaps if they just threw me in a refuse heap that would do, or even if they threw me into the sea I could pretend a moment longer and escape.

In the courtyard, the Captain gave the order, “All right you lads, take the body to the gates and cut the head off and put it on a pike!”

This was bad.

I would pretend to be dead right until they would strike with the ax and then I could give them a scare and escape.

“Keep him bound until it’s done,” said the Captain, before disappearing back into the tower.

Nine hells, I hadn’t thought of that. They’d tied my dead man’s hands and legs together. This was desperate. Could I try my devil-fish trick on them? I had never taken another person’s mind before, just giving suggestions but I was running out of options. They brought my body to the chopping block and set me down roughly. One spit in his hands and swung his ax to warm up. I had better try something.

A knock at the gatehouse grabbed their attention and they left me. I heard a familiar jovial voice greet the guards. “Gentlemen, I understand you have a body and I need just such a body.” It was Sal! But how did he know I was here and how did he arrive at such an opportune time?

“We can’t give you this one Salamander, the Captain said his head has to go on a pike.”

“Tell you what,” bargained Sal. He held up a talisman not unlike the one the Captain had and the guardsmen understood. “You give me that body there unharmed, mind you, and I give you two hundred denarii and this.” He produced two bags. One was for history, action-adventure, fantasy, westerns and pulpy horror blended with a sharp knife and...
ToshoCON: 2015 Teen Art Contest Winners

On Saturday, August 1, Utah Geek Magazine had the pleasure of announcing the winners of the annual ToshoCON anime art contest.

For the months leading up to the convention, teenagers from around Salt Lake county submitted 150 individual pieces of art into three different categories: ages 12-14, ages 15-19, and digital art.

Voting began online, where 1500 votes narrowed the selection down to 50 finalists. The finalists were prominently displayed at the convention where congoers cast 250 ballots to pick the eight winners featured here.

Congratulations to all the winners, and good luck next year!

**Digital Art**

1st - Julia Finley, “Fabricated hearts”
2nd - Cierra Campbell, “What’s one thousand minus seven?”

**Ages 12-14**

1st - Macy Whitecotton, “Kaneki Ken”
2nd - Fernando Augustin, “Anime Gamer”
3rd - Maggie Liu, “Ghibli Studios”

**Ages 15-19**

1st - Adam Anderson, “Aladdin, Alibaba & Morgiana”
2nd - Stephanie King, “Yone of the Dawn”
3rd - Attiana DeAngelo, “How are you feeling?”
Wandering the halls of the Viridian Events Center in West Jordan, Utah during ToshoCON made it feel a bit like walking into the pages of my favorite manga. Not only were the characters present, but they had all come to life!

I walked past Naruto and Kakashi by the service desk. Natsu Dragneel was there with his cast. So was Sailor Moon! Metroid was there too! Tamaki Suoh greeted the girls at the door to the Ouran High School Host Club panel with a big smile and, “Hello, Princess!” The panelists worked hard, spending most of the day in character. “My favorite part of doing a panel is being in character and interacting with everyone. I love it when people recognize the character I am portraying and ask for pictures and hugs. It makes me feel good about myself” said Christopher Brothers.

All of the panels were presented by local teens. Four months of hard work went into preparing for the panels. There were great Q&As, a raffle, and even hand-made roses given out to the audience at one panel!

Most of the vendors were teens, too! The youngest was only 13! There were pillows and posters and you could commission your own comic! Brandi’s Gemstones is done by the parent of one of the panelists. This was their second year, and they’re planning to be back again! DMMD’s Sei was spotted buying jewelry at the KawaiiPowerUp booth.

The entries for the art contest (all age categories) showed what great talent our young artists have. I found the faceless one to be the most haunting. Perhaps one of our readers can tell me which Anime/manga it was from?

Logan Skoy said the best part of ToshoCON was, “Just hanging out with all the people that have the same interests as I do. I enjoy the energy people give off and it was wonderful.” All in all this year’s ToshoCON was a well planned event and a great place to hang out with good friends!

The Viridian’s next teen event will be Fandom Fest on October 28th.

Michaelbrent Collings
Written by Nick and Ashlee Montelongo
Photo courtesy of Michaelbrent Collings

Michaelbrent Collings is one of the top-selling indie horror writers in the country, and speaking with him is not unlike reading his books. In five years, he has written 35 books in multiple genres from kids, to young adult, to adults.

Michaelbrent grew up in a household where horror was a familiar thing. His dad, Michael Collings, is an expert on Stephen King and started writing book-length scholarly studies on King’s work while Michaelbrent was growing up. As a kid, Michaelbrent would hear his father from the next room either screaming at a Stephen King movie, or typing out his next book. At a young age, his father let him choose what he wanted to read from his library, and Michaelbrent’s journey through horror began.

When he realized that he was able to make a living and provide for his family by writing, Michaelbrent decided to write full-time. He now writes 8 hours a day, 5 or 6 days a week. His process is simple. According to him, he basically sits down and doesn’t get up until he’s written “a butt-load of words”. Of course, he also takes time to handle other writing tasks such as on-site researching.

Why does he write horror? Michaelbrent has a variety of reasons for writing horror, but he says there are two main ones: 1. Horror is fun. 2. Horror speaks of things that we yearn for. In other words, a secularized society that gradually turns from religion still seeks for some kind of spirituality, which can be found in horror. Horror has the power to talk about good and evil, God and the devil, as well as the afterlife, which some genres aren’t able to do. There is a spirituality inherent in his books. Everyone encounters dark times in their lives, and his brand of horror is usually hopeful. As long as his protagonists keep pushing forward, they are able see light at the end of the story. “If you push through those times, you can find something that will make it worth it”, he said. He also said that the greatest horror novels not only pull you apart, but reassemble you, too.

What scares him? The ocean for one thing, which is why he recently published a novel called The Deep about a deep-sea dive with horrific results. Another one of his greatest fears is whatever threatens his family, a fear abundantly manifested in his horror novels.

What of his books does he recommend to a first time reader? Because he has written such a variety of books, he says it would be easier to ask what a person’s tastes are first. You like monsters? Read his novel The Loon about a scientifically engineered creature that runs loose in an insane asylum. Psychopaths? Definitely read Strangers, about a family that is trapped on their house and tormented by a murderer. Ghosts? Read Twisted. Demons? Check out Apparition. Pure horror? Darkbound. Eventually, he broke down and said that one he could recommend, in general, is This Darkness Light, which is more of a straight-up thriller that might be more approachable to readers who aren’t used to horror.

Currently, Michaelbrent is finishing up Book 7 of his Colony novels (a zombie apocalypse series) and he recently finished writing an epic fantasy novel that he considered publishing traditionally.

Check out all of his books on Amazon.com, he won’t let you down.
The Ghostbusters of Salt Lake

When it walks through the wall, who ya gonna call? – As part of a network of over sixty franchises worldwide, The Ghostbusters of Salt Lake is Utah’s premier Ghostbusters fan group and cosplay/costuming charity organization. With an arsenal of props and knowledge, they pride themselves in spreading the love of Ghostbusters to a new generation, as well as fulfilling the dreams of generations past.

Founded in 2007, this fan franchise has a long history of helping out their community through fundraisers and promotional events. They’ve worked with The United Way, The Huntsman Cancer Foundation, The Utah Food Bank, and many more. If you have an event you’d like them to show up at, send them an email at GhostbustersSLC@gmail.com!

Their next big event is Salt Lake Comic Con, where they’ll be raising money and hanging out to talk about their props, their group, and most importantly: Ghostbusters. Make sure to stop by their booth to get your picture with them or inquire about joining.

Are you ready to become a Ghostbuster? Their group would love to help you get geared up and helping to raise money for charity. Let’s be serious now, who wouldn’t want to be a Ghostbuster?

For more information, check out their ALL NEW Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GhostbustersofSaltLake

www.UtahGeekMagazine.com
Geek Cred Pop Quiz

By Zac Johnson
Illustration by Nathan Parét
http://nathanparet.prosite.com

1. Firefly still has a legion of loyal followers. What term do Firefly fans use to describe themselves?
   A) Browncoats  B) Westerners  C) Wildlings  D) Rebels

2. What miniaturized Star Wars model can be seen in the background throughout the episodes of Firefly?
   A) The Millenium Falcon  B) A model light saber  C) Boba Fett  D) Han Solo Frozen in Carbonite

3. Which of the following actor(s) were auditioned for the part of Dr. Simon Tam and ultimately not chosen for the role?
   A) Nathan Fillion  B) Niel Patrick Harris  C) Sean Maher  D) Jensen Ackles

4. Instead of the intended almost hour and a half pilot, Fox aired which episode as the introduction to the series?
   A) Episode #5 “Safe”  B) #2 “The Train Job”  C) #10 “War Stories”  D) #3 “Bushwacked”

5. What other language besides English is spoken by the majority of the people throughout the series?
   A) Russian  B) Korean  C) Mandarin  D) Latin

6. Which of the following is the name of Mr. Universe’s love bot?
   A) Bridget  B) Yolanda  C) Saffron  D) Lenore

7. What is the name of Serenity’s first mechanic?
   A) Kaylee  B) Bester  C) Jimmy  D) Larry

8. What phrase was used by Dr. Simon Tam to stop River’s rampage after the Miranda message in the movie?
   A) Eta Kooram Nah Smech  B) Esta Rona Nan Smich  C) Et Koor Nas Mesh  D) Eta Koora Mes Mich

9. In the TV series, it is well known that Jayne has a favorite gun. What is the gun’s name?
   A) Veronica  B) Lilly  C) Betsy  D) Vera

10. According to Actor Nathan Fillion, when is Unification Day?
    A) Dec 5  B) Oct 11  C) Sep 20  D) Nov 18

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