

Utah Geek

Sep/Oct 2015

Issue #7

Magazine

FREE

SERENITY & firefly

CELEBRATING
10 YEARS



TOSHOCON

REVIEW AND ART
CONTEST WINNERS

**WALKING
THROUGH
WALLS**

CHAPTER 7:

**TENTACLES AND
PENTACLES**

ORIGINAL FICTION BY

DAVID J WEST

FREE



UTAHGEEKMAGAZINE.COM



Teleperformance

Transforming Passion into Excellence

Apply online at
teleperformance.com

Salt Lake City • Ogden • Sandy



*Your Career Begins
with Us!*

**Member Care Representative • Software Sales Specialist
Customer Service Gaming Guru • Travel Consultant (Sabre)**

Full and Part Time • Excellent Benefits after 60 days • Casual Fun environment

Exciting contests and events • Flexible schedules to fit your lifestyles

Worldwide Career Opportunities • Paid Training • Immediate positions available



**Proudly Employing
and Servicing our Military families**



Teleperformance

Transforming Passion into Excellence

Apply online at
teleperformance.com

Salt Lake City • Ogden • Sandy

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 inexperienced 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 (guild-mastergaming.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 subscripton-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*

ON THE COVER:

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>

Publisher & CEO
Dennis Lundstrom

Executive Editor & VP
Adrian Broadhead

Contributing Editors
Alex Sousa, Ricky Alvarez

Contributing Writers
Brian Wiser, Carter Reid, Daniel Yocom, David J. West, Deborah Moore, Mercedes Roberts, Nick & Ashlee Montelongo, Stephanie Sharp, The Ghostbusters of Salt Lake, Zac Johnson

Utah Geek Magazine may or may not agree with the views and opinions expressed herein by our contributors. Copyright Utah Geek Media LLC. Reproduction without our expressed permission is prohibited. Utah Geek Magazine, UGeek Media, and the UGeek logo are trademarks (TM) of Utah Geek Media LLC.

To advertise in Utah Geek Magazine, visit UtahGeekMagazine.com/advertise, or call Dennis at 801.839.4581

Website: www.UtahGeekMagazine.com
Email: info@ugeekmedia.com



Follow us on Social Media:

[Facebook.com/ugeekmedia](https://www.facebook.com/ugeekmedia)

[Twitter.com/ugeekmedia](https://twitter.com/ugeekmedia)

[YouTube.com/ugeektv](https://www.youtube.com/ugeektv)



UtahGeekMagazine.com

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



SALT LAKE COMIC CON BOOTH #3313



Celtic Gifts

1011 E 900 S
SLC, Utah 84105

(801) 521-9100
www.gypsymoonemporium.com



Gweedo's Comics

42 N. Main Street #2
Layton, Utah

Mon - Sat 11AM to 7PM
CLOSED SUNDAYS

(801) 719-6631
atari2600@comcast.net

SALT LAKE COMIC CON BOOTH #1825

Comics, Toys, Action Figures
Buy, Sell, Trade Vintage Nintendo Games
www.gweedoscomics.com

Hastur Games and Comics
Your One Stop Gaming Shop

SALT LAKE COMIC CON BOOTH #3134



6831 S. State St., Midvale, UT 84047

Phone: 801.352.2605

www.hasturgames.com

f: Hastur Games and Comics

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*.

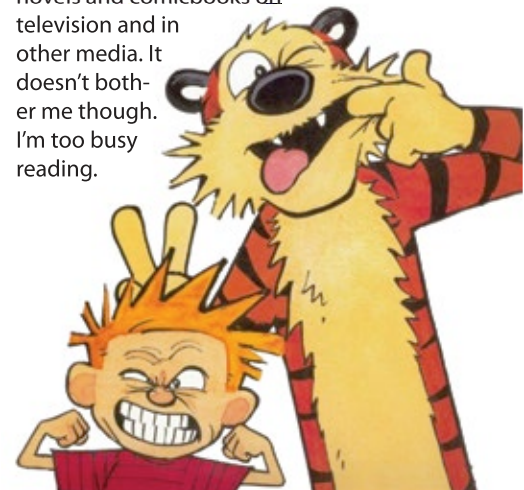
It's also easier for me to read over a comic-book or graphic novel, and make sure that it's appropriate for my daughter, because I can finish a book in a day. It also allows me

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.

Raising Geeks



SHADOWRUN

20TH ANNIVERSARY

By Daniel Yocom
www.UGeek.us/DanielYocom
Photo credit Catalyst Game Labs

The long-time gamers I know have heard of *Shadowrun*, but it's all right if you haven't. It's a creative cyberpunk setting where fantasy races and magic have also come back into the world.



Shadowrun gives you a place to play your elfen 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 con-

cept 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 body-guard.

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.

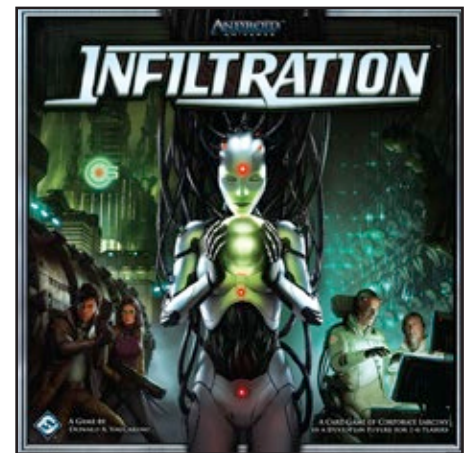
We were all able to pick up the general rules and got playing quickly, even though we weren't previously experienced with the game. We needed to look up a few points

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.



SERENITY NOW THE FIREFLY AND BROWNCOAT LEGACY REMAINS STRONG

By Brian Wisner
@BrianWisner

Illustration by Nathan Parét

Read Brian's personal story at UtahGeekMagazine.com/Memories-of-Serenity

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.

Through the combined efforts of Joss Whedon, the cast and fans, the sequel movie *Serenity* was released on September 30, 2005. That's an important anniversary that Browncoats celebrate.

We're celebrating much more than a great TV series and movie.

Joss Whedon, Tim Minear, the cast, and production crew didn't just create one of most believable universes with strong characters – they created something special and beautiful that endures.

What's so special about *Firefly*? On the surface, *Firefly* is a fun combination of a science fiction and western frontier with Chinese influence. It's smart storytelling that merges realistic drama, humor and enjoyable relationships. Greg Edmonson's

Page 6

soundtrack, which is extremely beautiful and memorable, intensifies the story. *Firefly* appeals to men and women of all ages and all walks of life. They connect with the reality-based characters who are both noble and flawed.

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.

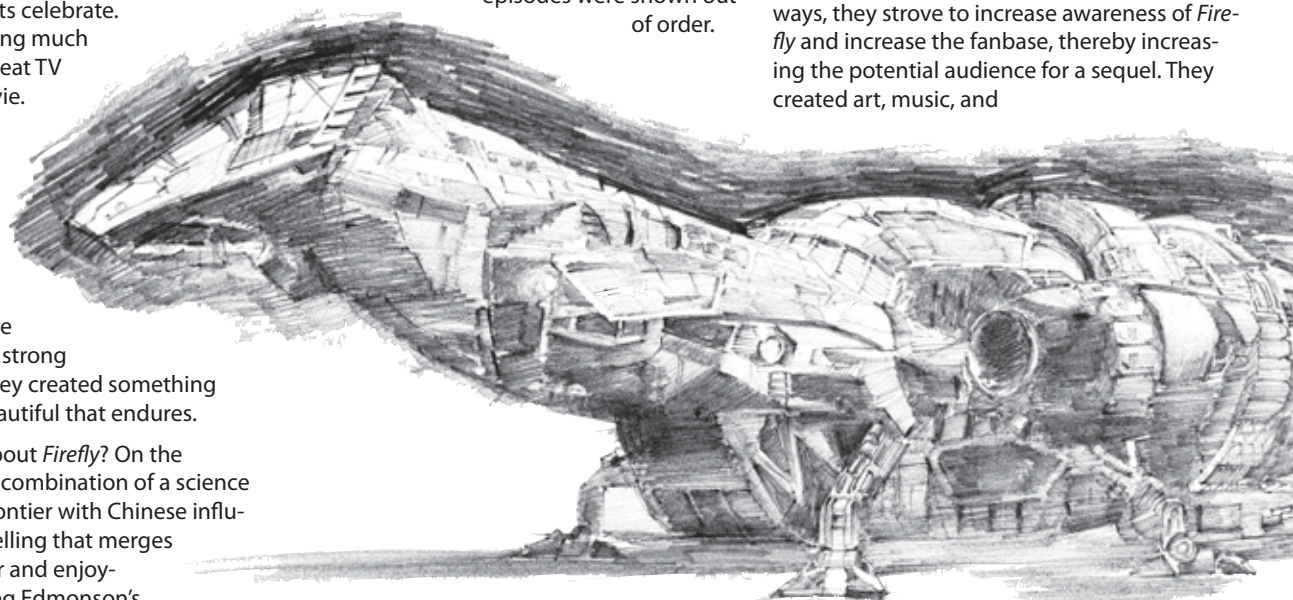
In 2002, the few *Firefly* ads that aired caught people's attention. Unfortunately, the many intriguing elements from the ads remained a mystery until *Firefly*'s cancellation, as the episodes were shown out of order.

The first episode aired was the *The Train Job*. It was enjoyable, but not life-changing, and was a confusing introduction to the series. 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.

Copyright © 2015 Brian Wiser. All Rights Reserved. Printed with permission.

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 @BrianWiser. To read about Brian's personal experiences with *Serenity*, the cast, and the *Done the Impossible* documentary, visit UtahGeekMagazine.com/Memories-of-Serenity

MYSTIC HOBBY GAMES

10259 S 1300 E, Sandy, UT 84094

(801) 571-8258

Ad reflects sign-in times. Play begins approximately 30 minutes later.



MON 6pm - Free

WED 6pm - Free
8pm - Free



TUES 6pm - Free



WED 5pm - Free



THUR 6pm - \$2
Traditional - League

SAT 1pm - \$5
Advanced - League



FRI 6:30pm - \$5
Standard - Competitive

SAT 6:30pm - \$15
Draft - League



SAT 1pm - \$5
Constructed - League



SAT 7pm - \$5
New Frontier - League

www.MysticHobbyGames.com

www.Facebook.com/MysticHobbyGames

All paid events have a prize pool based on Attendance. "League" denotes 1 pack to every player and additional prizes to top players. "Competative" denotes prizes to top players only. Times, Prices, and Prizes are subject to change. For more information, updates, and special events, please visit our Facebook Page or Website. All logos and images are © their respective owners.

Cosplayer: Ash Sweetring
[Facebook.com/AshSweetring](https://www.facebook.com/AshSweetring)
Character: Daedric Warrior
Photographer: Jackie Cao Photography
[Facebook.com/jcaofoto](https://www.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.

WALKING THROUGH WALLS

CHAPTER 7: TENTACLES AND PENTACLES

BY DAVID J. WEST

DAVID-J-WEST.BLOGSPOT.COM

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 Reliliqy". 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. 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.

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 magi-

cal 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 swam 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 snatched up by some other nameless horror.

I took hold of another devil-fish and again tried to help her to the surface, but

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 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 sputtered, "I'm sorry."

The chest! Of course, with this amazing body I could try the unthinkable! The humanly 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 coffer!

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 Reliliqy 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

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 obviously the two hundred gold denarii and another that was grotesquely head-sized.

They looked in the bag and agreed. One took the bags. The other carried my body to Sal's giant man-servant, Tubaloth, who slung me over his shoulder like a sack of grain.

"Pleasure doing business with you," said Sal, "but forget that we did, huh?" He then gave a brusque malevolent gesture across his throat and the guardsmen nodded.

Tubaloth carried me, following Sal, down murkily lit alleys to his estate. For as much as I had thought the old fat man was growing—well—fat, I was surprised at his quick pace and keen insights to the hidden passages of the city. His gait suggested he owned the streets and no footpads or cutpurses dared molest him. When I saw his

magical pentacle of Saboath, I understood why couldn't read his mind.

Once thru the gates of his compound Sal had Tubaloth put me into a fine chair saying, "All right Kenaz, I'm sure you're about, you may as well cease your pretensions and inhabit your body."

He knew my secret? I had tried so hard to protect it. But if the witches of Vavath knew, why wouldn't The Salamander too? I entered my body and took a deep breath. The wound flared me awake to the pain of being alive.

"Ah, welcome back to the land of the living. I believe you owe me one, since you were nearly decapitated."

"I am grateful Sal. Things did not go as planned."

"It's quite all right. Good thing my spiders told me what was happening."

Just when I think I know more than he does, the old master surprises me again.

"Where is The Reliquy now?" he asked. "Is it safe?"

"Safe as houses," I responded. "Lysandra has it."

He quickly signaled Tubaloth. The giant black-skinned Valchiki bellowed a command. A dozen of the Valchiki spearmen followed him out the gates.

"What's that about? Isn't she your agent?"

"Lysandra was mine, but some complications came up just as you were doing your errand. I fear she will turn against me now and sell The Reliquy to The Torch."

"Well of course if you are sending your goon squad after her, she will," I said.

Sal laughed, "Don't worry about that pretty thief, this will all be smoke on the water soon enough. We have a celebration to plan!"

"No, Sal. I'm wounded and was nearly sucked down the gullet of an angry anti-god. Now you're telling me the one person I gave The Reliquy to is about to betray us? I just saved her life not an hour ago—as she saved mine tonight. So no, I don't want to celebrate. We have to figure out what we are gonna do when The Torch comes after me and my family in just a few hours. I have only until daybreak!"

Sal grumbled a moment before his usual boisterous self returned. "It is taken care of. We are going to war with The Torch. I won't let anything happen to you or your family. I swear."

"Why would you upset the peace over me? I understand we're friends, but you always put business first. Why not buy him off? Why a street war?"

Sal smiled. "I want it all. I want him out of the way permanently and because the celebration I am talking about is directly related to you."

"What?" I asked, more confused than ever as the pain erupted again.

"Someone grab Pike to heal Kenaz!" commanded Sal.

"What is going on Sal?"

"I am declaring you, Kenaz, my heir!"

I'm stunned. I have no idea what amount of wealth Sal has but it is indeed vast and to declare me his heir? What a fortuitous happening. "I don't know what to say."

"Say yes!"

"But I'm not officially in any of the guilds or brotherhoods, I have not as you say, 'Made My Bones' with anyone. There is no 'Blood In-Blood Out' with me."

"I'll take care of all of that, you just accept my offer and recover. Pike! Where are you? Kenaz needs healing now!"

Pike, the wastrel conjurer, appeared and began casting a healing spell over me. It burned and itched but I felt better.

"Very well, I accept this honor, Sal!"

"Wonderful, we hold the ceremony on the morrow. We shall be as blood kin. Your problems are mine and our duties are joined!"

This good news troubled me. Why the sudden honor and obligation from The Salamander? Why does he keep that pentacle of Saboath? And why did he want Lysandra dead? Something stinks tonight in Tolburn.

NEXT TIME: BURNING BRIDGES

About the Author:

David J. West is the bestselling author of *Heroes of the Fallen*, *Weird Tales of Horror*, and *The Mad Song*. His latest novels are the gothic horror *In My Time of Dying* and the historical fantasy *The Bastard Prince: Serpents Prow*. He has an affinity for history, action-adventure, fantasy, westerns and pulpy horror blended with a sharp knife and served in a dirty glass—meaning he writes what he knows. He currently lives in Utah with his wife and children. You can connect with him at <http://david-j-west.blogspot.com>

Get David's all of book's signed at Salt Lake Comic Con, table #Black 15!





ToshoCON AT THE VIRIDIAN



DIGITAL ART

1st - Julia Finley, "Fabricated hearts"
2nd - Cierra Campbell, "What's one thousand minus seven?"

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 on-line, where 1500 votes narrowed the selection down to 50 finalists. The finalists were prominently displayed at the convention where con goers cast 250 ballots to pick the eight winners featured here.

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



AGES 15-19

1st - Adam Anderson, "Aladdin, Alibaba & Morgiana"
2nd - Stephanie King, "Yone of the Dawn"
3rd - Attiana DeAngelo, "How are you feeling?"



AGES 12-14

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

ToshoCON

CONVENTION REPORT

By Stephanie Sharp
Photo credit Utah Geek Magazine

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&A's, 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.

"They have cute pastel goth and Lolita accessories," said Envy Bishop (aka Sei), who thought ToshoCON was "Really awesome! We liked how everything was set up from the cosplay contest to the panels!"

Costumes for the Cosplay contest were amazing! Almost everyone looked like they'd just stepped from the pages of their comic. I was impressed with the variety of characters that were entered. 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.

Conventions

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.

Author Spotlight

SALT LAKE
COMIC
CON
TABLE #
TEAL 32

CHER BURBANK: ENGINEERING TEACHING MOMENTS

By Deborah Moore

Photo courtesy Cher Burbank

GirlsGoneGeek

"I believe that if you get kids involved and up out of their seat then they learn and remember so much more," Play-Well instructor Cher Burbank said.

Cher Burbank teaches children about engineering through the use of LEGO® bricks and toys. Play-Well, the company she works for, is all about hands on learning.

"You're never too old to play with toys and learn," Cher said.

She is especially invested in getting girls interested in engineering. Cher wants them to see how interesting and fun it can be.

"Girls are just as creative as boys," Cher said. She has seen it inspire girls who are interested in engineering, but also in architecture and design.

As a child Cher loved playing with blocks and building structures. She wishes that she

would have had a way to learn about the mechanics behind her creations as a child.

Rather than be intimidated by changing technology, she encourages people of all ages total this as a chance to learn and grow. It excites her to see how toys have advanced and continue to change.

When Cher teaches a class she brings in approximately 10,000 LEGO® pieces. This includes axles, pegs, gears, motors and blocks. The volume and variety of supplies allows the instructors to create an abundant variety of projects.

"We never repeat the same thing," Cher said.

On a typical day, Cher will show the children a LEGO® creation she made. She will take it apart, put it back together, and explain the different parts and their functions.

After that the children are asked to create that same item. The children use the same basic LEGO® design which Cher used. There are times when the children customize their creations by choosing their own colors or adding onto it.

"Sometimes we will do something like make a car and a bridge. Then they will get to drive the car over it," Cher said. Typically they will cover two or three different projects in one class. The amount depends on the length of the class and the complexity of the projects.

"The children are constantly learning while they are playing," Cher said, "and they don't



even realize it because they are having fun."

Cher teaches a variety of engineering classes at Play-Well. These classes are offered during after school programs, during their Summer Camp program, and at birthday parties.

At the birthday parties she creates projects based on the theme. Once, she even did a Ninjago party.

She researched the show before coming up with projects for the children and had them incorporate characters from the show to help teach engineering skills. Cher enjoyed the challenge. "It gives me a chance to be a kid again and geek out," Cher said.

There are three Play-Well locations in Utah. You can learn more about the classes and programs offered in your area at play-well.org.

THE GHOSTBUSTERS OF SALT LAKE

Article and photo by The Ghostbusters of Salt Lake

Club Connection

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



© CARTER REID Reprinted with permission

WWW.THEZOMBIENATION.COM

Geek Cred Pop Quiz

By Zac Johnson

Illustration by Nathan Par t

<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 Millennium 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) Jimmy
- C) Bester
- 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 Koor 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



utah smile
clinic

Utah's Premier Smile Correction Service

Get braces and get confident!

CALL US NOW
to schedule your free consultation

As low as
\$99 /MO
or
\$2,995
cash price

801-590-8694

Full Braces with Warranty

We will fix all broken brackets and wires for free for the duration of your treatment. We also will continue your treatment until your teeth are positioned correctly, regardless of the time estimate.

We also offer:



"I'm am constantly striving to provide my patients with the best, most up to date, comfortable dental experience possible. I make sure to spend enough time with each patient to make sure that they are fully knowledgeable and comfortable with treatment that will be provided. I guarantee that all procedures will be done to my high standards and to your satisfaction."

Randy Roberts, DDS



All services performed by
Randy Roberts DDS, General Dentist.

UtahSmileClinic.com

6321 S. Redwood Rd Ste 206 - Taylorsville, Utah 84123

*We accept most insurances and flex spending accounts