

MT VOID 08/21/20 -- Vol. 39, No. 8, Whole Number 2133



Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
08/21/20 -- Vol. 39, No. 8, Whole Number 2133

Table of Contents

[Hazard](#) (comments by Mark R. Leeper)
[First on the Moon](#) (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)
[ALL HAIL THE POPCORN KING](#) (film review by Mark R. Leeper)
[Restrooms](#) (letter of comment by Steve Milton)
[Americans and Guns](#) (letter of comment by Keith F. Lynch)
[Hot Food](#) (letter of comment by Scott Dorsey)
[This Week's Reading](#) (Classics Illustrated comics) (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper)
[Quote of the Week](#)

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An index with links to the issues of the MT VOID since 1986 is at http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm.

Hazard (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

From Mark Leeper's Diary March 13, 1987:

At the request of certain people at certain insurance companies who provide AT&T benefits, we are moving the science fiction club notice to Friday, rather than Wednesday. It seems that there is concern that some people in the club are not taking the precautions necessary to avoid Mondays altogether. Every week, there are AT&T employees who suddenly come to the realization that it really is Monday and that they have a whole week of stressful work in front of them. Mondays have been attributed to stress, heart attack, suicide, colitis, Ostran's Disease, and in-grown fingernails. It has been considered to move Monday later in the week so that it would not be so stressful, but that suggestion was dropped after one very high AT&T official labeled the idea "dumb-ass." More popular with management has been the idea of encouraging people to work their normal hours on weekends as well as during the week so that Mondays would be no more stressful than any other day. This of being for the good health of the general employee population, for the simple reason that it was expected that some of the employees, not knowing what was good for them, might balk at the abolition of days off. Then, one of the bright young executives in the board room came up with a suggestion worthy of this innovative company. It was simple and elegant. He suggested increasing the work pressure on employees so they would voluntarily work on weekends. The rest is history.

However, until the plan reaches its final phases, there is the problem that there are still some employees who participate in the unhealthy practice of not working weekends. For these it is feared that the shock of discovering that it is Monday could be disastrous. To counteract this danger we are arranging that notice arrive later to make it more convenient to be read on Monday. It is hoped that reading the notice and seeing how bad my writing is should make anyone feel better and perhaps downright superior. Please, then, if you get the notice on Friday--and some locations do--don't read it right away. Scientists have determined that you need very little cheering up on Fridays. That need peaks for almost everyone at 8:37 AM on Monday as the realization of just how far away a weekend is dawns on the average employee. The need then diminishes as

the week wears on. Save the notice and we can all read it on Monday. Jumping the gun or postponing could be a serious health hazard. [-mrl]

First on the Moon (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

We are re-watching the HBO mini-series "From the Earth to the Moon" and in the episode about Apollo 11, the TV reporter seems to be baiting Buzz Aldrin about the fact that he won't be the first to step on the moon, and wouldn't he like to be? And this apparently leads to Aldrin trying to get NASA to change its mind about the order.

I suppose I believe all this happened as shown, since they do seem to be striving for accuracy. But my question is whether Aldrin continued to regret it (or still regrets it), or whether the effect that Armstrong's selection had on him made Aldrin come to be happier that he was not first. [-ecl]

ALL HAIL THE POPCORN KING (film review by Mark R. Leeper):

CAPSULE: ALL HAIL THE POPCORN KING is a study of the surrealist writer Joe R. Lansdale, author of 50 novels and 500 short stories. He has a coterie of twisted but loyal fans as twisted as Joe. This makes for a fun film. I rate this 55-minute documentary a low +2 on the -4 to +4 scale or 7/10.

It is hard to tell which is the most insane, Joe R. Lansdale, the stories he writes, or the effort to disentangle the two. Each seems to crawl spiderlike along the border between surrealism and reality. Like his fiction, Lansdale's novels and stories do not fit into a world defined by others. The result comes tumbling out of Lansdale's typewriter with a frenetic style like Monty Python, but with a sharper, darker edge. The film covers Lansdale from his pre-school days when he was reading and writing and his age was deep in the single digits.

This film is a fun biographic study of Lansdale entitled ALL HAIL THE POPCORN KING. It clocks in at 55 minutes, just a bit too short to be feature-length and is just a bit too long not to be dangerous. Don Coscarelli, who wrote and directed BUBBA HO-TEP is among the fanatic Lansdale followers, and is also interviewed in ALL HAIL THE POPCORN KING.

BUBBA HO-TEP takes place in the present day in an East Texas nursing home. It imprisons Elvis Presley (played by Bruce Campbell) and John F. Kennedy (played by Ossie Davis). Both are alive, contrary to popular opinion, but getting darn tired of the life of dismal routine. So the two patients set out for reasons never explained to try to capture the mummy, a walking deadly Pharaoh, who is wrapped in bandages and thousands of years old.

Lansdale's story may have a great feel of location but also intentionally uses its time to play with the readers' sense of passing time. Joe was born in Nacogdoches. He got his start in writing by eating his mother's popcorn made with rancid lard. It gave him bad dreams that he used as a source of fantasy for his writing career, so that, such as it is, is literally built on his dreams. Director Hansi Oppenheimer uses an art motif borrowed from a rundown drive-in.

As director, Oppenheimer shares some secrets of Lansdale's writing style. Every page of Lansdale is drenched in Texas atmosphere that feels authentic.

This film is a paean to deep counter-culture. Overall I rate ALL HAIL THE POPCORN KING a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale or 7/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12860922/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/all_hail_the_popcorn_king

[-mrl]

Restrooms (letter of comment by Steve Milton):

In response to [Paul Dormer's comments on "loos"](#) in the 08/14/20 issue of the MT VOID, Steve Milton writes:

"Loo" from the French "L'eau". [-smm]

Americans and Guns (letter of comment by Keith F. Lynch):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on Americans and guns](#) in the 08/14/20 issue of the MT VOID, Keith F. Lynch writes:

Before I lived here (a rented room in a townhouse in Merrifield, Virginia), a Ukrainian visitor was renting what's now my room. I was visiting when he asked his (now my) landlord/housemate and I if he could borrow a gun, as he wanted to shop at the Target across the street. This is a very safe neighborhood, and neither of us has ever owned a gun. [-kfl]

Hot Food (letter of comment by Scott Dorsey):

In response to [Robert K. Shull's comments on hot food](#) in the 06/26/20 issue of the MT VOID, Scott Dorsey writes:

[Robert K. Shull writes,] "What you get depends a lot on where in the US you are. There's an Americanized Chinese dish called "pepper chicken". I've seen it in Washington, DC with black pepper, in New Hampshire with bell/green pepper and on buffets in Texas it's usually a 50/50 mix of chicken and jalapenos. (New Hampshire is still the only place I've ordered Thai food "five star" spicy and still found no detectable trace of "heat".)

These are two different dishes. The thing with green pepper will be listed on the menu as quing/jiao/niu/rou or "pepper steak." It is an Americanization of the traditional Fujian quing/jiao/chao/rou/si.

That dish has also become traditional Thai, Korean, and Japanese food, after being adapted from the Chinese as well.

The black pepper thing is an adaptation of a southern Chinese thing that you see in Hong Kong as hei/jiao/niu/liu. (Literally black pepper beef tenderloin.)

Part of the problem here is that we use the same basic word for pepper, and the Chinese have totally different words for black and green peppers. Don't even get me started on long pepper. [-sd]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

The other day Mark was looking for the Classics Illustrated edition of ROBUR THE CONQUEROR that he was sure he had. Well, we couldn't find it, and checking the catalog turned up no entry, so it must have been something from his childhood that had disappeared. We did had a Marvel Classics Comics edition of MASTER OF THE WORLD, but that was not the same story. This got us into a discussion of whether the Marvel comics were just the "original" Classics Illustrated with a new cover. I thought they were, but Mark (correctly) said they were not.

Well, it turned out that we had four different editions of illustrated comics of THE INVISIBLE MAN: the "original" Classics Illustrated #153 (price 15 cents), Marvel Classic Comics #25 (1977, price 50 cents), the Spanish-language edition of the "Classics Ilustrados" #M-9 (1981, price M\$33 in Mexico), and the new Classics Illustrated #20 (1991, \$3.95). The two Marvel editions are the same artwork, while only the text in the text blocks differing in language. Their artwork is reminiscent of the original Classics Illustrated edition, but not identical and the text also differed. The new Classics Illustrated was the most different. To start with, it is on heavy glossy paper bound as a book (not on saddle- stapled newsprint), complete with an ISBN (0-425-12663-3). And the artwork is of a much more modern style, and did not imitate the original nearly as much as the Marvel did. (The latter had panels that were very similar except for distance from the action, or characters wearing the same red scarf, and so on.)

By the way, I put "original" in quotation marks above, because Classics Illustrated began as "Classic Comics" (1941 through 1947). However, the series appears to have just changed names, rather than restarting, so I do not believe there was a "Classic Comics" version of THE INVISIBLE MAN. [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

Some of my best leading men have been dogs and horses.
--Elizabeth Taylor

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