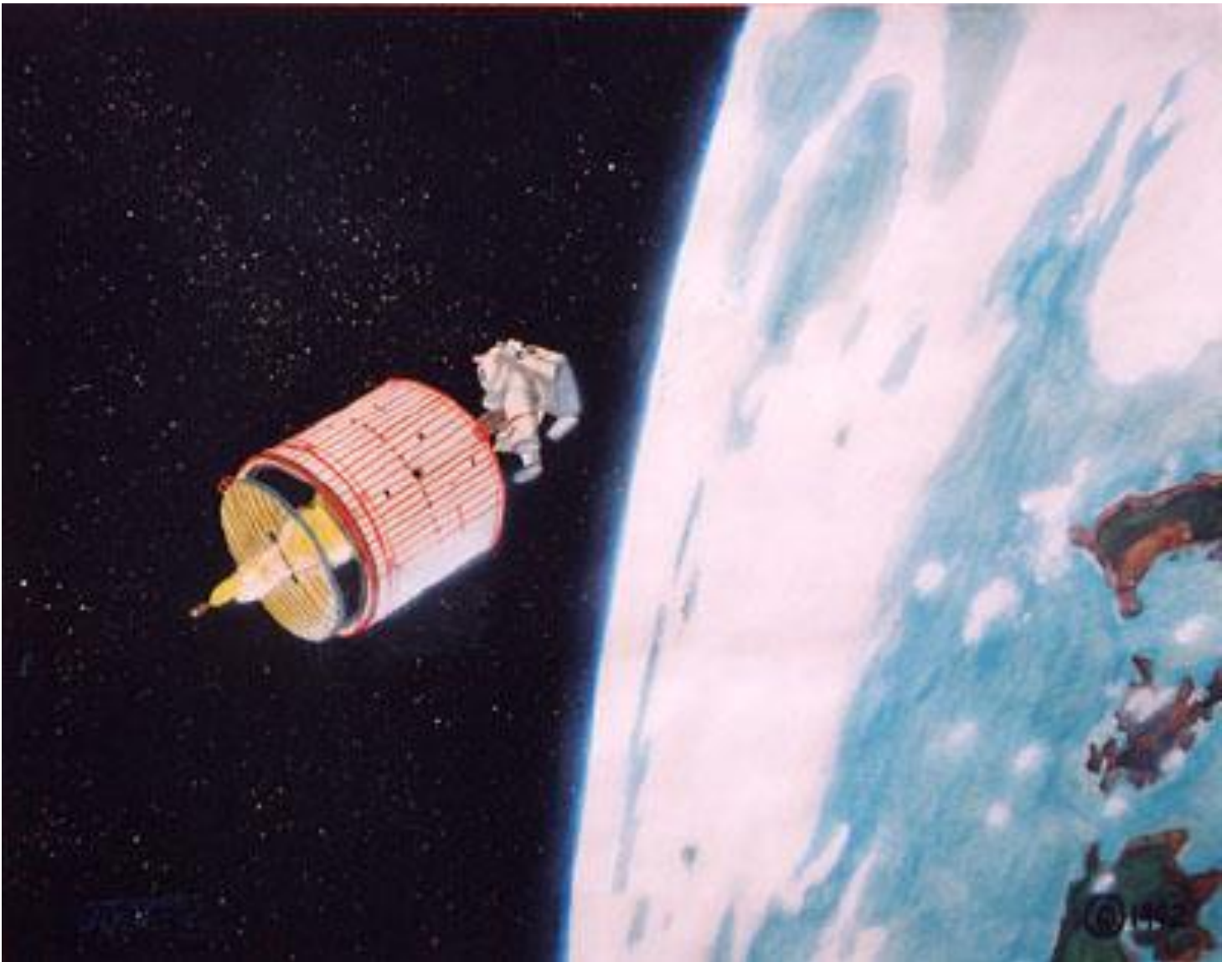


Tightbeam

June 2022



In Outer Space
by José Sánchez

Tightbeam 333

June 2022

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Tightbeam is published approximately monthly by the National Fantasy Fan Federation and distributed electronically to the membership.

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Letters of Comment

Thanks, George and Jon,
Always a pleasure being included.
Will Mayo

Editors:

Very excellent issue. Well edited with wondrous art images. Looks and reads professional and worthwhile. I always look forward to getting it.

Jeffrey Redmond

Editors:

THANKS AGAIN ! Awesome Din Djarin from Star Wars Mandalorian fame! Your zine by far, is the best !

Jose Sanchez

Anime

Girls' Frontline by Jessi Silver

Streaming: Funimation

Episodes: 12

Source: Game

Episode Summary: After the horrors of World War III, Earth civilization is on the brink of collapse. Due to low population and the resultant labor shortages, much of the work has since been taken up by artificial android life forms called "dolls." These dolls have found an important place within the military sphere, with Tactical Dolls or "T-Dolls" using their superior physical strength and other heightened abilities to fight battles that humans wouldn't dare.

When the AI of an entire fleet of T-Dolls owned by the Sangvis Ferri company rebels against their human masters, a group of elite T-Dolls owned by Griffin and Kryuger investigates. What they find when traveling to a remote location to obtain some classified data from an old computer is a dangerous, extremely violent, and intelligent group of T-Dolls who give them a run for their money. After defeating a trio of heavy artillery models, T-Doll M4 is tasked with taking the retrieved data to safety. Meanwhile, back at their base, a new commander joins the organization.



Sangvis T-Dolls running amok.

Impressions: It should come as no surprise that I'm not a gun nut. I work with a few people who have current and former connections to the military, and when they begin to describe different

weaponry in my vicinity I'm sure they notice my eyes start to glaze over. This is partly because I just have a soft heart, and don't like hearing about violence or military tactics or what-not. But even setting that aside, while I'm a geek for many things, guns isn't one of them. Thus, the appeal of Girls' Frontline's personification of various guns as AI android girls is somewhat lost on someone like me.

Setting aside that connection (which took me a while to make due to my lack of knowledge of the subject) this episode is what I'd usually describe as "pretty okay." The whole "AI turned evil" premise isn't unique in the slightest, but that's fine; as much as I prefer stories about AI that are more nuanced about its potential evolution, I understand the anxieties that lead us to tell stories about being usurped by our own creations. The focal characters of this episode are interesting to me, because their mentality exists in some state between complete pragmatism and something approaching empathy toward their brethren. They're not quite as human as the show might claim ("indistinguishable" from humans, they are not), but as M4 struggles with the choice to employ a group of older T-Dolls cut loose from their original mission, I got the sense that they were more than just the emotionless drones one might expect.

And that in itself is somewhat unique. I find that series like this are often constructed in pursuit of some fantasy – the fantasy of beautiful women who also represent a connection to a traditionally male interest, and who are devoid of pesky things like their own needs and desires. They're allowed a sort of physical power, but without transgressing too much against a very narrow ideal of what's considered physically attractive. The characters in this series, however, get to be empathetic; they're allowed to care about one-another. And while this is just a small part of the episode and perhaps some aspect of the story that isn't that important in the larger scale of the narrative, it does mean that there are some aspects of their existences, their internal feelings, that aren't 100% constructed to make them a blank slate, wholly available to the viewer. I kind of appreciate that.



But that's a very deep dive duct-taped together from some pretty dubious evidence; at its surface and most obvious level, this is an episode about gun girls using military tactics and shooting at one-another while wearing outfits that don't make a lot of sense. It has its own sort of appeal, but not really in a way that appeals to me.

Long skirts can sometimes obscure very... interesting things.

Pros: What this episode lacks in animation quality, it almost makes up for in visual style and its soundtrack. A lot of the action takes place in the shadows and within the dark of night, but there are some really gorgeous still shots as the sun rises. The action scenes are mostly serviceable, but there's some interesting choreography sprinkled throughout.

The soundtrack definitely won't appeal to everyone; it's a lot of electric guitars and electronic music during action scenes, but I liked it and felt it added a little extra something to the show. Also, I thought the OP was really good! It reminds me a little bit of the Freedom OP, which I also really liked.

Cons: Just as an effect of what this series is about, there's some really weird fetishism of the characters. It's probably a little disingenuous to criticize an anime like this for being

“unrealistic” due to its character designs; they exist to serve a purpose, none of which are based around the general logic of what’s going on in the plot. At the same time, I find myself dwelling on the question – why create androids for battle that have the appearance of young women? It seems like a real waste of time to beautify something that’s meant to give and receive violence. Even the Sangvis drones are dressed in skimpy body suits. The answer, of course, is external to the show – there’s an audience who likes watching pretty girls fight wars, and this premise allows that while providing some nominal internal explanation for why it’s all come to this.

But seriously, maids who have to pull up their skirts and flash their undies to utilize their weaponry? Hmm.

Content Warnings: Military violence, including use of weaponry. Androids being injured and destroyed. Mild fanservice (brief panty shots, some frontal nudity in the OP).

Would I Watch More? – Of the several series that are “kind of like this” (meaning, a mostly female cast fighting tech-heavy or otherwise futuristic wars) this is the one that I’ve been most interested in as of late. That said, I find gun fetishism to be unappealing and I’m not that into watching characters kill each-other for fun, so I probably won’t follow-up with this one.

Cartoons



Will Mayo Reviews Jonny Quest

One cartoon TV show that I enjoyed back in about 1970 was Jonny Quest. Jonny was a boy wonder that took part in various feats from rocketry to sporting himself here on Earth. And I took great delight in every minute of it. For I was a boy who longed for adventure and Jonny was sure to provide it. It's been many years since then - about half a century - and I think of old Jonny and smile at the memory of it all.

Comics

Will Mayo Reviews Alley Oop

One comic strip in my boyhood that made good use of a time machine was the comic Alley Oop. In this cartoon, scientists from our so called modern age used such a device to travel back in time to the Stone Age and take part in various adventures with Alley Oop the Ape Man. Eventually, this comic strip grew so popular it led to a hit song by the band The Kinks called Alley Oop. I've no idea if this comic is still in circulation, but as a boy I found it to be a delight.

Will Mayo Reviews The Archies

With regard to the Archies comic, its characters occupy a world that never seems to change from the late 1950s/early 1960s. Archie works on his old jalopy and drives off to dates with Veronica and Betty. Jughead eats hamburger after hamburger and never puts a pound on his

slim frame. And Reggie, well, Reggie stays in love with himself. There was one exception, however. In one comic book I read over fifty years ago, its writer and artist envision what life would be like in the year 2000 from their viewpoint in decades past. They envision a world connected by computers, picture phones and people taking pills instead of eating food. With regard to pretty much everything except the pills they were pretty much right on target.

Will Mayo Reviews Richie Rich

Among the comic books and cartoon TV shows that interested me as a kid was Richie Rich, a little boy-character so rich that he could buy himself practically anything in the world. One episode of the Richie Rich Show in particular that I watched as a boy featured him buying himself a rocket to ride into outer space. Although it seemed cool at the time I couldn't help but be disappointed when decades later multibillionaires did the same thing. Some realities are a little bit much to handle.

Conventions

Convention Report – Anime Central 2022

By Jessi Silver



Hi, all. I'm back from my break feeling refreshed and re-invigorated (at least as much as is possible considering my generally poor sleep habits and what-not). This past weekend I had the chance to head to Chicago, Illinois for Anime Central, one of the first anime conventions I ever attended and definitely one that's worth popping back into every few years if you have a tolerance for big conventions.

The past couple of years the convention has been on a hiatus due to the pandemic, but like many other similar in-person events that had smaller online components in the interim, this year marked a (possibly financially obligatory) return to a more typical setting and format. Like my local convention, Anime Detour, Anime Central was forced to cancel its in-person aspect two years in a row simply due to the timing of when the event is scheduled (mid-late May), so I was curious to see how things were going to shake out – especially since ACen is something like 5

or 6 times as large as Anime Detour (in a normal year).

There was a bit of a cloud hanging over this convention, to be sure; Covid cases once again seem to be on an uptick, yet 3 days before the beginning of ACen the convention announced what appeared to be a major change to their masking and vaccination requirements that they'd

previously insisted would not be altered prior to the event. Anime News Network reported on the situation as it unfolded earlier that week. Part of the fallout from this news were some staff resignations; being a part of a similar albeit smaller-scale event myself, I've seen firsthand the consequences of a strained volunteer staff, and to lose additional staff members, some of whom were reportedly from Covid-vulnerable populations, so close to the event seemed as though it might result in a catastrophic shortage for such a large convention. Though the convention partially reversed the policy a day or two later, requiring masks in essentially all indoor event spaces save for some of the hallways, I can only imagine that the damage was already done. I can't speak to what may have been happening behind the scenes – there's been some chatter regarding whether the original policy may have become unenforceable due to some disagreement with the venue – but whatever the cause of the change, it was certainly a source of stress.

The Trip

As per usual, we drove to the convention – from our home in Minneapolis and removing stops and breaks, the drive to suburban Chicago is typically around 6 hours, depending on traffic. There were two orders of business we wanted to take care of prior to reaching our hotel; the first was a stop for lunch at Mitsuwa Marketplace, which if you're not familiar is sort of a Japanese indoor mall with a few shops, a grocery store, and a food court. The second was a stop at a local yarn shop in between the marketplace and the hotel

After that, we made our way to our hotel. We stayed at the Loews Chicago O'Hare, which was located a couple of blocks South of the main convention center. This turned out to be pretty convenient, since we were close to the outlet mall as well as a little bit closer to a few other food places about a half of a mile further South that were walkable. The room was nice, with enough floor space for our friend to set up an inflatable mattress. It was also a little quieter than the main convention hotels and the elevators weren't as difficult to catch.

Events and Shopping

When the convention schedule was released a couple of weeks prior to the event, I set to marking off the things I wanted to see or attend. Almost immediately I noticed a relative dearth of programming as compared to previous years. In the past, I've attended some really interesting panels and discussions related to various manga and anime, as well as art, theater, and culture. This year there were many time slots where I didn't see anything I was interested in. I'm guessing that this is probably both a consequence of the general pandemic situation – while in the US we're treating it as it's mostly over, that's not really the case – as well as the general make-up of the guests. The last time we were at the con, fan scholar Helen McCarthy was in attendance, as well as guests from an anime production studio in Japan (Kinema Citrus) whose work we generally enjoy. This time it was the more typical contingent of voice actors and such. I imagine that this was possibly a cost-saving measure, as local (US) voice talent appearance fees are more manageable than bringing multiple people in from Japan. That said, it was a bit of a disappointment for me to feel like there just wasn't much programming that I wanted to see, especially since that's typically the main reason I go to conventions.

That left a couple of bigger events I wanted to see, as well as some shopping I wanted to do. The main order of business was the Revue Starlight movie, which was having its US premiere on Friday night. Long-time readers will remember that I just love Revue Starlight, and I was really excited for this movie. It definitely didn't disappoint! While I'll likely have something

more extensive to say about it later, the brief word is that the music slaps (and there's a lot of it) and it manages to continue from where the series left off without completely providing any point-by-point explanations. It's all about character relationships as usual, which I think is one of the franchise's strengths.

On Saturday I attended the Rightstuf/Nozomi industry panel (which appeared to be the only industry panel on the docket at all, though I didn't look that closely). They didn't really announce anything new (besides a Blu-ray release of *Rental Magica*, which previously had a DVD release), but they're a company I really like and it was fun to see some of the people who work behind the scenes. One of the things I was specifically shopping for was the *Sayonara, Zetsubou-Sensei* release that Nozomi recently put out, but they didn't bring any with them to stock the booth so I ended up purchasing it from my seat during the panel once I was reminded again. If you're interested in the boxed set that comes with the book of notes you'll want to order it soon – there are limited quantities left and they're not going to re-print the book (though the actual show will still be available).

And... that was basically it. Early in the weekend I also attended an anime jeopardy panel that my spouse was interested in, but that sort of thing just isn't my cup of tea. Setting aside the obligatory know-it-all dude playing the game who both monopolized the first round and also thought he was very funny, I don't think those types of games tend to be very well-balanced in general. Either the questions are too basic to be a challenge, or they're too attuned to the creator's very specific tastes and impossible for others. Not to mention that this one had some dubious questions/answers (no, "shoujo" and "shounen" are not genres).

The shopping portion of the weekend was somewhat more successful. ACen has a very extensive dealers room with both industry booths and smaller sellers selling almost any kind of anime and fandom swag you can think of, from physical anime and manga releases, to body pillows, posters/wall art, model kits, figurines, and fashion. My spouse and I have put a moratorium on buying wall scrolls and other wall art, because we haven't even put up a lot of the items we already have. But we had a few franchises in our heads that we were interested in buying items from, and that helped to guide our purchases.

The problem with having pretty broad tastes in anime and manga is that, while my tastes tend to overlap with what's popular to some extent, there are also a lot of franchises and fandoms that aren't nearly as popular and tend not to get much representation in dealers rooms. It makes sense – importing items can cost a lot of money, and US dealers want to make investments in what will sell. Unfortunately, though, that leads to very anemic variety in what can be found, in spite of the large scale of the sales floor. We ended up with a couple of figures from *SSSS.Dynazenon* – Chise and Gauma Popup Parade figures, as well as a Yume figure we randomly found during a last-minute walkthrough of the place on our way out. I also picked up some buttons and such from *Revue Starlight* and *Shirobako* that we happened to find digging through some bins at an import place. Beyond that I picked up a couple of sewing patterns from a booth specializing in general cosplay and kawaii-inspired fashion, which should be fun to mess around with.

The Artists Alley was similarly huge and I could have spent quite a bit of money there if I hadn't limited myself to a couple of very specific fandoms and styles of items. I'm on a quest to put together a Goro Majima ita bag, and because *Yakuza* isn't the biggest of fandoms in the world, I've been kind of grabbing what I see when I see it. My friend had assured me that there was

Majima stuff in the Artists Alley, but it took me scouring every booth to finally find some charms and a couple of buttons. There were a couple of additional posters with some good Majima art, but unfortunately as I mentioned I'm not in the market for those items. I also picked up an Ogata (from Golden Kamuy) charm.

Beyond that, most of what we did was hang out with some other friends who were also attending the convention (we weren't sure if they were going to be there and had assumed not, so it was a nice surprise when we happened to run into them on Saturday morning). We got dinner at a nice-ish restaurant and just kind of laughed and had a good time – something that's honestly been difficult to do the last couple of years.

The last place we stopped on our way out of the convention on Sunday was gaming, where the convention had lots of arcade cabinets set up. In June we'll be attending Summer Games Done Quick in Bloomington, Minnesota, and wanted to brush up on some of our rhythm game skills before that time (I'm mostly kidding – we don't really have skills). Despite not being good at any of them, I really enjoy them. I got in a few games of Jubeat while my spouse got in a few last games of Scotty (a ping-pong ball bouncing game) and MaiMai, which looks like a washing machine.

One thing I'd really wanted to do this year was attend some more of the convention's AMV programming. I run an AMV contest at the convention I staff, and I like to get some insight into how other conventions run their contests and programming. Unfortunately, even though there was a video room designated for AMVs, it didn't appear to be in operation. I'm assuming this was an effect of the aforementioned staffing issues, but I was a little bit bummed to see this. While AMVs were a really big draw at conventions past, I'm getting the impression that the appeal may be fading, at least to the general convention-going public. I'm not sure if this was a calculated sacrifice or whether it was just fully due to staff fallout, but I hope they can bring it back next time.

Final Thoughts

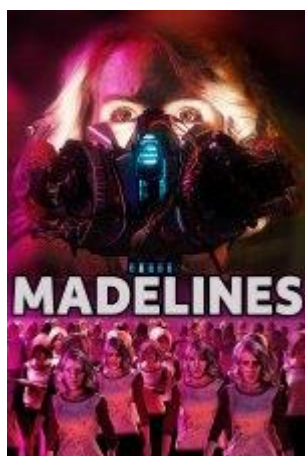
I think it might be a little tempting to call this year at ACen a bust due to the lack of programming and some of the issues that sprung up literally days prior to opening day. I'm not going to indulge in any of that because I have some sense of the stress that the staff of the convention has to have been dealing with. While I can't condone every decision, I also don't know any of the background of those decisions nor the factors contributing to them, so I'll leave that alone.

So leaving that aside and simply going by my experiences, I have to say I had a fun time. I wasn't busy, but I think that was what I needed. I got to have some good food, see a few interesting things, and hang out with friends. I had down time to do some knitting in my hotel room. The weather was pretty decent (at least as far as I'm concerned – I tend to prefer cloudy and cooler over the Summer heat). I got to see a movie I ended up really enjoying. I got to leave my normal life behind for a weekend and just hang out and people-watch and window shop. It was, dare I say, a pretty fun time.

I'm not sure if there's anyone else out there reading who was also at the convention, but I'd certainly be interested to hear your thoughts. I know that there were a lot of negative reactions to the Covid protocol changes and I'd certainly be interested to hear more from those who were more directly affected by the change.

Movies

Madelines Twists the Time Travel Tropes by Jason P. Hunt



There are quite a few tropes in the mix for *Madelines*: inventing in the garage, amazing device put together with limited resources, time loops creating duplicates, having to kill duplicates to avoid the destruction of the space-time continuum...

Wait, what was that last?

At first, *Madelines* appears to be as advertised: a time travel movie with “unforeseen consequences that could destroy the space-time continuum” (think Jennifer McFly meeting herself); but then it delivers an interesting twist on the time loop scenario. Our intrepid scientists, Owen (Parry Shen) and Madeline (Brea Grant) get just this close to time travel using various pieces of fruit — and establishing the danger because reconstituting the organic matter is a little unrefined, thus setting up the danger. So when the guy with the money, Rory Devonshire (Richard Riehle) starts to pressure the couple for results, we get the inevitable high-risk jumping in with both feet. Madeline takes it upon herself to crunch the numbers late into the night, getting that last little bit of programming in place so she can skip ahead in the experiments and prove time travel is safe for humans.

And then things go awry, as they do.

With the intent of programming in a failsafe to bring her back in case something goes wrong, Madeline accidentally programs in a loop that creates duplicates of herself that start showing up after a certain amount of time. And the appearance of more Madelines, they figure, threatens the space-time continuum. Now, this is where things go to unexpected places. The trope gets twisted when they figure on killing the loop duplicates instead of going back immediately and fixing the issue. Because the longer it takes to figure out the glitch in the program, the more Madelines show up to threaten the very fabric of reality.

And then it goes doubly awry. But I won't spoil it.

Given the trials and challenges in getting this film done, I'm surprised it holds together as well as it does. And it's pretty tightly crafted, as far as the story goes. The time travel is handled with only a little bit of handwavium, and there's nothing glaring that pops out and screams “story logic!” in the midst of trying to get us to buy this particular snag in time travel causality theory.

Brea Grant does the heavy lifting when it comes to displaying different personalities for the various Madelines that show up, but Parry Shen anchors the whole thing. He's our proxy as he moves from excited (but cautious) to reluctant to resistant. The emotional arc is his, and while the different Madelines give Grant an opportunity to flex her acting chops, Shen carries the audience through the spectrum of enthusiasm to horror as it really sinks in what they're doing.

I also have to give props to the production team for managing to shoot and finish a feature film under less than optimal circumstances. Now, there are those who have reviewed this film with what I think is a misplaced expectation. It's not an action blockbuster. It's not a multimillion dollar franchise tentpole film. It's a low budget production, and you can see that they're managing limited resources. A smaller cast and fewer locations can mean a little more focus on the story itself, and if you allow yourself to accept the pace of the story, it builds progressively as Owen starts to realize just how much of a disaster is on the horizon.

However, some of the criticism of the ending is, I think, justified. As we get to the climax of the story, when it feels like some things are just going to get even more complicated, the story just ... ends. And it's not quite a deus ex machina scenario, but it does feel like there's at least one connecting scene that's missing. There's a scene that establishes an issue, identifies a complication, and then the next scene we're eliminating it without seeing how we get from point A to point B. There's something on the cutting room floor that would have made the ending land a little more solidly. It still holds up because you can fill in the blanks in your head, but we shouldn't have to do that kind of work to make the ending more satisfying.

Overall, it's a fun mixup of time travel tropes, and it's a fun distraction for an hour and a half.

Will Mayo Reviews Swamp Thing

One movie that left me reeling around forty years ago was the flick *Swamp Thing* about the monster that lives deep in the swamp beyond the civilized world. Adrienne Barbeau stars as the love interest of the monster in a Fay Wray-King Kong kind of way. This movie became sort of a cult hit back in the day and remains so to the present. And who knows what lies beyond where any rational man would go? Check it out.

Will Mayo Reviews Angelflesh

One movie that had an outsized effect on me was the film *Angelflesh* wherein Mickey Rourke stars as a soldier who extends his life by way of a deal with the devil only to have it all unravel when he kills his daughter and is taken to hell. The expression on his face when the memories come flooding back and he realizes that he is the pawn of Satan is priceless. This is acting at its finest. Meant to be seen by one and all.

Will Mayo Reviews Maximum Overdrive

Although it was a commercial failure, I've always liked the movie Stephen King created called *Maximum Overdrive* in which machines, from cars to gas pumps, take over a small desert town. Though limited in scope, it has ramifications for today's age in which artificial intelligence - and, soon, some say, artificial consciousness - is all the rage. Whether the results will be as dire as Mr. King presented remains to be seen

Will Mayo Reviews Field Of Dreams

And who can forget the baseball fantasy *Field Of Dreams* in which Kevin Costner plays a farmer who plows a baseball field in the middle of his corn field? When asked why he does this, he mysteriously replies, "If you build it, they will come." His wishes are fulfilled when the

ghosts of Shoeless Joe Jackson (played by the recently deceased Ray Liotta) and other baseball greats emerge from the corn and begin to play ball. Well, perhaps I've given away too much of the movie as it is. Just see it if you haven't already. It's a must for anybody that loves ghosts and a game of ball.

Radio

Will Mayo Reviews the CBS Mystery Hour

Little known in the annals of broadcast history was a radio show called the CBS Mystery Hour back about fifty years ago that attempted to bring back the suspense and glory of those long gone radio dramas out of history's vault. I can still remember lying awake back then in my Alabama farmhouse with the radio pressed against my ear and hearing the voice of the host EG Marshall narrating, the creak of a door, the scream of a woman and then the sound of the villain walking away. I suppose now we have podcasts but for me nothing can equal the horror and delight of those long ago summer nights. I come alive in memory when I think of that show.

Sercon

Robert W. Lowndes Bio-Bibliography

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D.

N3F Historian

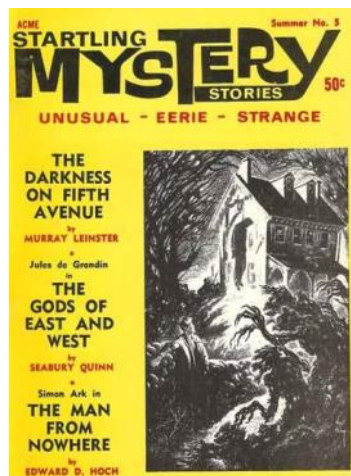
Robert Augustine Ward “Doc” Lowndes (September 4, 1916 – July 14, 1998) was an American science fiction (SF) editor, author, agent, and fan. According to Damon Knight in his tell-all book, *The Futurians* (1977), Lowndes' friends gave him the nickname “Doc” because he once worked as a porter at a Greenwich, Connecticut hospital. Lowndes has stated that he only used “Doc” when he was involved in SF activities. He was also sometimes known by the nickname “Rawl.”



Lowndes was born and grew up in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and once said that he began reading SF at age 14. He subscribed to *Science Fiction Digest* in the early 1930s and joined the Science Fiction League (SFL) in 1935; and he is credited with organizing the Stamford, Connecticut SFL.

Editorial Work

Lowndes is remembered today primarily for his editorial work. In the 1940s, he edited such SF magazines as *Future Fiction*, *Science Fiction*, and *Science Fiction Quarterly* -- among other crime, western, and sports magazines for Columbia Publications. In the 1950s, he edited *Dynamic Science Fiction* and *Science Fiction Stories*.



He was also editor of the SF line for Avalon Books during the 1950s and 1960s – beginning with the first title they published in 1956.

With fellow former Futurian James Blish, he edited *The Best of James Blish* for Ballantine Books in 1979.

Interest in Horror Fiction

Lowndes was also a horror enthusiast. As a young fan in the late 1930s, he received two letters of encouragement from the famous horror author H. P. Lovecraft; and, in 1963, Lowndes edited the *Magazine of Horror* (1963 - 1971) for Health Knowledge Inc. This magazine was popular and spawned several companion magazines: *Startling Mystery Stories* (1966), *Famous Science Fiction* (1966), *Weird Terror Tales* (1969), and *Bizarre Fantasy Tales* (1970) – all of which Lowndes edited. The collapse of Health Knowledge in 1971 marked the end of these and several other popular genre magazines.



Startling Mystery Stories is notable for carrying the first published stories of both Stephen King and F. Paul Wilson. Lowndes subsequently edited Acme News' magazines *Exploring the Unknown* and *Real Life Guide*; and then he went to work as an associate editor for Hugo Gernsback's non-fiction magazine, *Sexology*.

Fiction Writing

Lowndes did a lot of writing. He was a collaborator on several stories with other members of the Futurians, under the pen names of Arthur Cooke, S. D. Gottesman, Paul Dennis Lavond, and Lawrence Woods.

For his solo work in the early 1940s Lowndes used the pseudonyms of Carol Grey, Mallory Kent, Wilfred Owen Morley, and Richard Morrison; later he added Carl Groener, Robert Morrison, Michael Sherman, Peter Michael Sherman, J. K. Stuart, and Jay Tyler to the list.

He collaborated with fellow Futurian James Blish when they published *The Duplicated Man* in book form in 1959 for Avalon. *The Duplicated Man* received good reviews, was reprinted in paperback, and was also translated into several foreign languages. It originally appeared in the SF prozine *Dynamic Science Fiction*, edited by Lowndes, who used his Michael Sherman pseudonym on the magazine story.



It has been estimated that, over his career, Lowndes used more than 50 pseudonyms.

He also wrote many essays and poems, as well as three solo SF novels: *The Mystery of the Third Mine* (1953), *Believers' World* (1961), and *The Puzzle Planet* (1961).

Non-Fiction

In addition to his fiction, Lowndes wrote some excellent reference works. These books included *Three Faces of Science Fiction* (1973), *The Gernsback Days: The Evolution of Modern Science Fiction from 1911 to 1936* (2004) [with Mike Ashley], and *Hugo Gernsback: A Man Well Ahead of His Time* (2007).

Personal Life

In 1948 Lowndes married Dorothy Rogalin, who had a young son from a previous marriage. The couple decided to separate in 1967; and in 1974, they divorced.

Awards/Honors/Recognitions

Lowndes was a member of First Fandom, and in 1991 was elected to the First Fandom Hall of Fame. He was GoH at the 1956 Philcon, at Lunacon 12 in 1969, and at Boskone 10 in 1973. He was recognized by several genre critics for producing consistently entertaining magazines on very limited budgets.

Some Conclusions

Lowndes was an important early SF fan, one of the leaders of the famous New York Futurians in the 1930s and 1940s. He published several fanzines, the most memorable of which was *Le Vombiteur*. He also worked for a short time as a literary agent, mostly handling the stories of his fellow Futurians.

At one time or another The Futurians had many members who became prominent in SF, including Isaac Asimov, Judith Merril, Damon Knight, Frederick Pohl, Cyril Kornbluth, James Blish, Richard Wilson, Hannes Bok, Virginia Kidd, Donald Wollheim, Larry T. Shaw, and David A. Kyle, among others.

Brought up a Methodist, Lowndes experimented with different religions throughout his lifetime. He became a Catholic and, in recognition of this, added “Augustine” to his name.

He also professed an interest in history, politics, music, astrology, spiritualism, and Indian philosophy.

In addition, he was a founding member of our club, the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F, NFFF) in 1941.

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Song

Will Mayo Reviews America's Sandman

Take a fantasy trip with that good, old band America as they imagine the global war machine as a Sandman "that rides the sky like a hurricane that's abandoned" as the guitars and drums do their duty work. Quick! You better run. The Sandman is coming for you next.

Will Mayo Reviews The Rolling Stones' 2,000 Light Years

Perhaps no one summons up the glory of intergalactic travel as the Rolling Stones with this one. Telling the listener that "you're so very lonely" and that's he's light years from home while calling forth images of far off stars, this song is perhaps best heard outdoors at night with the nighttime sky at your command. It's a beaut, that's sure. Ready for takeoff?

Will Mayo Reviews Roky Erickson's If You Have Ghosts

One haunting song for sure is Roky Erickson's "If You Have Ghosts." With such evocative lines as "If you have ghosts you have everything" and "I don't want my fangs too long," it is sure to abide in the listener's mind long after the hearing and gives emphasis to Roky's nickname as The Evil One. Be sure to check this one out. And stay on the lookout for those ghosts. They might just come calling.

Will Mayo Reviews Jimi Hendrix's Voodoo Child

And if you really want to call forth a little voodoo you can do surely do no better than to tune into Jimi Hendrix playing his song "Voodoo Child." Here, Jimi chops down a mountain with the edge of his hand, proclaims that he's a voodoo child and plays his guitar with his teeth, no less. Jimi, now, has long since left the land of the living but the spirits were surely with him one long ago day in concert as he laid his hands on his instrument and danced to the beat.

Verse

Will Mayo Reviews ee cummings's Pity This Busy Monster, Manunkind

Poet ee cummings poses the question of alternate worlds in his poem "Pity This Busy Monster, Manunkind." He decries a world of so called progress without the least hint of magic, made, not born, as he puts it. And then finally cries out, "Listen, there's a hell of a nice universe next door. Let's go!" Join cummings on his wild ride of imagination and see what world is right for you.

Video

Will Mayo Reviews Tales From The Crypt



One TV show that I'm not sure if I've reviewed for you is that old late '70s/early '80s TV show, Tales From The Crypt. It was sort of an attempt to bring back the world of so called forbidden comic books of the 1950s with all manner of monsters and moments of bloody violence, only featuring all-too human actors. One particular attraction of this show was the Cryptmaster, a puppet-like creature, with a skull, a lovely leer and a long, cackling laugh. I enjoyed his antics. Especially as he reminded me of another host to horror shows further back in time, a mild mannered Mr. Magoo. But that, I suppose, is a story for another day.

Will Mayo Reviews Lost In Space



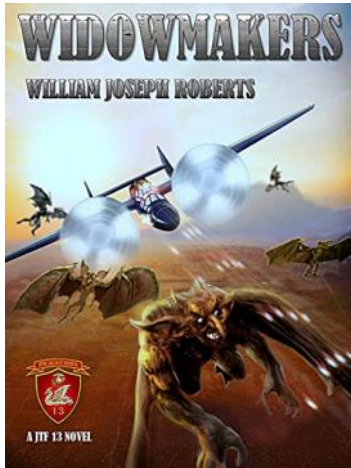
How many of you can recall seeing the old Lost In Space television series? I can. It was a sort of a Swiss Family Robinson in outer space with a boy, a mad scientist and a robot thrown in for good measure. I watched it every chance I could get and longed for the crew to find the way home...well, sometimes, anyway. It's best to keep a good thing going. Tune into those reruns if you can.

Notes On Leonard Nimoy's Mystery Show By Will Mayo

Besides his work as Star Trek's Mr. Spock Leonard Nimoy served as the host of a short-lived parapsychology TV show back in the 1970s. Much of the material was strange, otherworldly and sometimes actually true. Damn if I can remember the name of this show but it sure captured my attention at the time.

Food of Famous Authors

Eat This While You Read That: William Joseph Roberts Cooking by Cedar Sanderson



It's been a while, and I have missed this. I'm not going to commit to it on a weekly programme again, sadly, those days of time and fun have passed into the night with the advent of career and kids needing my time on the weekends. However, I'm pleased and proud to present a simple, tasty meal from a highly unexpected source, and a darn good read that fits the meal well.

Widowmakers is set in WWII, which always makes me a happy reader, and it's fantasy, but not so fantastic you won't get into the details of airplanes and bored soldiers doing what they have done since time immemorial. The First Reader enjoyed this book as well, and wanted to know if there are more (not yet?). If you want gremlins, tanks, planes, and a rogue group of rough and ready men sent to do the impossible, pick up the book! Also, it's very reasonably

priced and in KU.



When I talked to Roberts (I can't call him William. It's far too formal for him. Roberts is more natural to me in this setting for some reason) about his idea for a meal to go with the book, he initially suggested I not cook at all. Just buy a chili mac MRE!

Heh. Well, I did that. And then I found the USMC mess recipe for chili mac. As I commented to my First Reader, and to Roberts, I have eaten MREs, and even C-rats, although I never served. But years in the CAP and being a military brat open you up to some, ah, odd experiences. C-rat fruitcake in a tin was pretty darn good, as I recall through the mists of time. Crackers in MREs? Could be used as e-tools in emergency. But I digress. I was dubious about the edibility of the chili mac. That, and for some reason I got it into my head that there would be cheese involved.



This is a muchly-scaled down recipe, and abnormally for me, I stayed fairly close to the recipe I'd found, trying to capture that something remembered by the GI in my house, at least. His assessment? "About right," added salt. "Yep, that's it."

Ingredients

- 8 oz dry macaroni noodles
- 1/2 tsp salt

1 tbsp oil
 1 lb ground beef
 1/2 onion, chopped (about 1/2 cup)
 5 tsp chili powder
 1 1/2 tsp cumin
 1 1/2 tsp paprika
 1/2 tsp salt (wasn't enough. But you can add more)
 1/2 tsp garlic powder
 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
 14 oz can of diced tomatoes
 6 oz can of tomato paste
 14 oz (use the diced tomato can) of water

Instructions

Put a pot of water on high heat, add salt, and cover. This is for the pasta.

In another heavy pot (I used my dutch oven) saute the onions, and brown the ground beef. Drain any excess grease off.

Add all the spices and stir, while on the heat, for a minute.

Add in the tomatoes, paste, and water, stirring until well combined.

Reduce to simmer, cover, and cook for 30 min on low heat. Sauce simmering – don't let it come to a full boil, you don't need to and it could burn.



While sauce is cooking, when water reaches a boil, add in the noodles. Cook to al dente (don't overcook, or they will mush in the sauce) and drain. Toss back in pan with the oil (I used olive, but the recipe simply said 'salad oil' so anything will do).

When sauce has simmered for the required time, remove lid, gently fold in noodles, ensuring they are evenly coated, and heat for another minute or so.

Remove from heat and serve.

The end result – It's full of flavor, but not heat. You'd have to add hot sauce (which I am out of) for that.



All the spices! I really liked how much flavor went into this.

I was asking the First Reader about plating. He looked at me funny. "Well, in the mess you get these divided trays..." Not what I meant. Besides, I haven't got those and am not inclined to acquire them for a recipe, even though, yes, I have bought stuff for presentation in the past! Now, what did you get with it? I wanted to serve it with some grated cheese, a little sour cream, maybe salsa... "You got it plain. No GI ever got all that stuff."



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