

# THE GEEK GAZETTE



## THE END OF AN ERA?

As most of you have heard by now Wizards of the Coast has decided not to renew Paizo Publishing's license for Dragon and Dungeon magazine. Both magazines will cease publication in September of this year with Dragon #359 and Dungeon #150. WotC's decision to pull this license and replace two staples of the gaming industry with online only content has caused quite a stir in the gaming community.

Fans and industry professionals alike, many of whom got their start in one or both of the magazines, are understandably upset by this decision; myself included. WotC didn't pull these licenses simply because they wanted to bring the magazines back

"in house", but instead to replace them with online only versions. Which to me makes no sense at all. Why not just create a separate online magazine?

To the best of my knowledge, and I have yet to see a statement to the contrary, neither of these iconic publications were seriously lacking in readership. So why did Wizards decide to make such a drastic change? Scott Rouse, Senior Brand Manager of Dungeons and Dragons, has commented that the internet is where people are getting all their information. So it has been decided that instead of purchasing your issues of Dragon or Dungeon magazine at the news stand or through mail subscriptions, you will have to pay to get this material on line.

I don't want to seem like a hypocrite given that the Gazette is predominately an online publication, though there is a print version available to brick and mortar shops, but I don't want to get my gaming content on line. As a matter of fact even the Wall Street Journal (yes I subscribe to the WSJ) offers both versions to its readers. I would have no problem paying my

subscription fees (I've been a subscriber for nearly a decade and a reader for much longer) each year to get online and print content, but not for online only. I simply don't have time, and don't particularly enjoy being tied to my computer. This is especially true when it comes to my gaming material. I don't mind downloading the occasional article or map, but I don't and likely will never take the time to read an entire 50+ page magazine online. So this would be a complete waste of money for me. Which in turn means that WotC has probably just lost a reader, and I'm sure I am not alone in this.

I will save my final opinion until I see what they have in planned, but for now WotC has dropped a few more notches on my list.

On the topic of pulling licenses. WotC pulled the Dragonlance license from Margaret Weiss Productions. Many fans are outraged by this and honestly I don't see why. Though I admit this is an odd coincidence considering there is an upcoming DL movie. I like the DL setting but as long as MWP has had the license there really hasn't



**You will be missed old friend.**

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**The Dragons Landing Podcast**  
[www.dragonslanding.com](http://www.dragonslanding.com)

## **End of an Era**

**Continued from pg 1**

been much in the way of gaming material. There have been some great novels, but that is all I have seen.

As a whole I am unimpressed by MWP. Granted I love the Serenity system, and I am not saying they put out less than stellar products. What they actually manage to put on shelves is top notch. However there simply is little to no support for what they put out. So far Serenity has seen 1 maybe 2 support items, sure there have been more promised but where are they? Remember how the Battlestar Galactica RPG was suppose to be out in the beginning of 07, the quickstart rules were due out last October, and as I write this there is still nothing.

So maybe WotC pulled the DL and even the Ravenloft licenses because they felt the products would be better served in house or with another company. Though WotC really hasn't done anything with

the Ravenloft setting as of yet. Still it is their property and if they don't want anyone to have it, well that is their prerogative. I'm not saying it's right, but then I have no say in the matter.

Now with all these licenses being pulled and WotC effectively killing two icons of the gaming industry, the 4e speculation is in full bloom. Many people on the message boards swear that WotC's actions are the definite sign that 4e is coming soon. I still don't think this is true. If anything WotC is trying to find ways to take back control and reinvigorate D&D. Believe me if half of what I hear about the state of the RPG industry is true, then someone needs to do it. Who better than the industry leader? Granted I have no clue as to what they actually have planned and WotC insiders are remaining tight lipped about what's going on, but I still don't think it's 4e.

As usual I will concede that 4e will come one day and perhaps I am way off base and can't see the forest for the Treants. I have said it before and I will say it again, putting 4e out now would be a bad idea. But it is their sandbox and they will do what they want. We don't have to like it but their isn't much we can do about it.

## **Now Playing**

### **Spiderman 3**

I had been awaiting the arrival of the third installment of everyone's favorite wall crawler with the usual fanboy anticipation. Like most comic book fans I was beside myself when they announced Venom as one of the villains. Then they added the Sandman, Gwen Stacy, the New Goblin and I thought for sure this would be the greatest comic book movie, if not the greatest movie, ever made! Unfortunately I let my geeky enthusiasm get the better of me, I was wrong... oh so wrong.

Using musical numbers to show Parker's symbiote induced bad attitude was just plain dumb. This could have and should have been conveyed by showing Spidey getting a little rougher than normal with some common thugs. It not only would have been a better way to show his darker side but would have been much easier to watch. I don't care what decade you live in disco dancing does not make you look tough. Gwen Stacy was incredibly underused, and other than serving as a brief tool to make MJ jealous, a complete waste of screen time. Sandman was one of the high points to the movie, a believable, sympathetic villain and the CGI for his parts in the movie was fantastic. I saw the movie

at the drive in (yes they still exist and I highly recommend you go if you can find one) and still heard oohs and awws when the giant CGI Sandman appeared on screen. Harry/the New Goblin was one of my favorite parts of the movie. I have to admit they have done a great job developing his character and though the new Goblin costume was in no way Goblinish, the Peter/Harry dynamic was good enough to support a movie on its own.

Venom was both the biggest disappointment and one of the best parts of the movie. First he looked very reminiscent of the McFarlane Venom which is my favorite version of the character and a big plus over the slobbering hulk with the huge tongue we usually see. Topher Grace played a good anti-Parker and definitely did the role justice. While the character of Eddie Brock was a little underdeveloped (thank you song and dance numbers) I think the simple premise of greed and revenge was enough to make his hatred of Parker understandable. It is sad that after this much anticipation Venom got so little screen time. I had read that Venom was not one of Raimi's choices for movie villains and it was only because of pressure from the studio that he used the character. Even if I hadn't had that in mind, I think I

Continued on page 3

## THE MUTANT EPOCH

The Mutant Epoch is a science-fantasy role playing game coming out from Outland Arts later this year. The game takes place in the 27th century where bio engineering, and contamination has caused plant and animal life to evolve quickly and in “fantastic” ways.

Mutant Epoch uses the Outland System Game Mechanic and while the system may be unique to Outland Arts it is still a traditional role playing system. From what I have read it is meant to allow “fast paced adventure action “ and still have “as much character to character interaction and story narrative as desired.” Like most games it is advised that the game master be familiar with the rules (a GM’s work is never done), but the game is designed to allow even a new player to catch on quickly, without worrying about a lot of reading or complicated math.

The game uses character types in place of races, as all the characters are assumed to be of human ancestry. There seems to be quite a variety of player character types such as Clones, Bioreplicas, Cyborgs, Mutants and unmutated humans. The Beta copy I have also mentions that there will be other charac-

ter types available through the Mutant Epoch electronic magazine and expansion rule books that will be released to support the game.

Character generation seems like it will be relatively similar to most rpg’s and fairly easy to understand. Mutant Epoch uses the percentile (d100) dice for combat and character generation but all the standard polyhedron dice gamers are familiar with are used in the game. PC’s will have 8 basic traits in place of ability scores and as your PC goes up in rank (similar to leveling up) they will gain bonuses to their traits. They can also acquire permanent penalties to their scores in the event of serious injuries or illness.

The main objective of the game seems to be more focused on survival in this harsh futuristic world than the old standard of adventuring for treasure; although I am sure you can do that too.. While I have only had glimpses of the world and the creatures that the characters will encounter I have to say I am intrigued by this game. The setting and character types seem to be flexible and varied enough to satisfy any type of gamer. I will definitely be sharing more information about this Mutant Epoch as I find it. In the mean time go to the site, [www.outlandarts.com](http://www.outlandarts.com), and check it out for yourself.

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Devils Due Press



Booster Gold from the DC Direct 52 Series of Figures.





# The Podcast Page

Just a few of the Podcast that I recommend and try to listen to regularly. All podcasts featured anywhere in the Gazette should be available for download on the shows website or from itunes; unless noted otherwise.

<http://dragonpage.com>



[www.fistfulofcomics.com](http://www.fistfulofcomics.com)

<http://decoderringtheatre.com>



[www.somniturne.com/gtp/](http://www.somniturne.com/gtp/)

[www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/pod/20061](http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/pod/20061)



[www.noirchickenstudios.com/Dice\\_Make\\_Bonk](http://www.noirchickenstudios.com/Dice_Make_Bonk)

[www.afterserenity.com](http://www.afterserenity.com)



[www.gbncom.com](http://www.gbncom.com)



[www.geekfuactiongrip.com](http://www.geekfuactiongrip.com)



[www.nuketown.com](http://www.nuketown.com)



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Ennie Winner 2006

## PODCASTS PAGE

Lately my coverage of podcasts has become a bit lax. This is not because there are no good shows left to discover, but because there are just too many. I can barely keep up with the ones I list here in the Gazette much less find new ones. This issue, however, I am proud to announce the addition of The Nut Gallery to the Podcast Page.

The Nut Gallery is a little different than most of the shows I listen to as they are not strictly a gaming or comic book oriented show. Instead Jason and Shooter focus on my other great interests, movies and television. Their reviews are

unbiased and can be a bit brutal. I won't say I always agree with them but they are usually pretty entertaining.

Their method of reviewing movies is a little different than what you see on TV or in the newspapers. They are just some friends sitting around talking about the movies they've seen and the movies they want to see. They don't just rant about how much they did or did not like a movie, they actually offer some very insightful opinions about what they watch. The guys give you industry news, box office rankings and topics can often veer off into other interesting tangents.

Another thing I like about this show is

that they don't stick to geekcentric movies and shows, although they definitely have a strong presence. They will review just about anything. I think this can be a good resource to use when deciding whether or not you want to spend your time and money on a movie. Definitely worth a listen.

Be sure to check out all the podcasts featured in the Gazette. When it comes to "geeky" podcasts these are the ones I consider the best of the best. Fan support keeps these great shows "on the air" and each and every one is deserving of your support. Believe me once you start listening you will be a fan..



[www.harpingmonkey.com](http://www.harpingmonkey.com)

The podcast for lovers of the mythic arts.



[www.jimbalentstudios.com](http://www.jimbalentstudios.com)

Home of Tarot : Witch of the Black Rose



[www.theartofroleplaying.com](http://www.theartofroleplaying.com)



[www.pulpgamer.com](http://www.pulpgamer.com)



<http://thenutgallery.com>



Your Games Now  
[www.yourgamesnow.com](http://www.yourgamesnow.com)

## Rumors & News

- Despite the fact that the first movie took tons of hits from critics and fanboys alike (however I did liked Daredevil so what do I know) Constantine 2 is currently being discussed.
- Spiderman 3 just opened and already they are talking about Spidey 4, 5 & 6. Actually some studio execs are promising sequels. But we all know what a Hollywood promise is worth. If you've already seen the movie then you know they definitely left it open for a sequel. Although if they do make a sequel let's hope they leave out the song and dance numbers.
- Only 48 more episodes (give or take) before Lost fans get all their questions answered. By the

still could have guessed that Raimi was not a Venom fan.

As usual Raimi felt it was necessary to have both Spidey and Venom without their mask as much as possible. Maybe he felt that it was more realistic that way, or maybe the actors were just too fearful that no one would know it was them under the mask.

Either way this is one of the things I have disliked the most about all the Spiderman movies. In a world where we are on camera nearly anywhere we go, even rooftops, and the lengths that paparazzi will go to get a picture do you really think Spiderman's secret ID would last 10 minutes if he was unmasked every time he turned around? Besides I don't watch these movies to see Tobey McGuire or Topher Grace. I watch them to see Tobey as Spiderman and Topher as Venom. I know what these actors look like and I doubt I will forget their faces if I don't see them on screen for several minutes, so QUIT WITH THE CONSTANT UNMASKING!!!!

Over all I have to say I liked the movie, was it as good as Spidey 2, not by a long shot. Then again Spidey 2 was nowhere near as good as the original. Still when

## NOW PLAYING CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

you are comparing comic book movies Spiderman 3 was definitely worth watching and far superior to a lot of the crap they try to pass off as entertainment.

The movie has some great special effects, a few good characters, and is a good lead in for another sequel. It may not be the best of the bunch but definitely worth seeing at least once.

### Overall Grade

C+, as long as you don't take the musical numbers into consideration.

### Ghost Rider

I have been dying to see this movie since it was first released but just never had the time to make the trip to the cineplex. Fortunately for me the drive-in (you just gotta love the drive in, twice the movies for matinee prices) was doing a triple feature of Spiderman 3, Ghost Rider and the Messengers. Since my family and I were wanting to see Spiderman 3, getting to see Ghost Rider at the same time put me in to comic geek overload.

So we got there 3 hours early to find a good spot. This may sound extreme but considering how quickly spaces fill up it is a good idea, it also gives you plenty of time to play your DS, PSP, read or if you bring some friends play D&D and Magic to pass the

time. Yes people actually bring card tables and game at the drive-in. What better way to spend a Saturday night? Comic book movies and gaming how much geekier can you get?

Anyway Ghost Rider was the second feature and I have to say that I was disappointed. The movie seemed too rushed. The whole love story aspect of the movie left little time for GR to kick demon butt. As a matter of fact the demons were a bunch of wusses that were dispatched with out even causing GR to break a sweat. Sam Elliot as the old west Ghost Rider served only to narrate, and give Johnny Blaze some advice. Although the scene with both Ghost Riders hauling butt across the open plain was cool as hell (no pun intended), it was all for naught as old west GR high tailed it before the action started.

Now I understand that love plays a big part in many super hero stories, Peter and MJ, Superman and Lois, even the Punisher, but in this movie we get a double dose. A son's love for his father and his love for the girl he left behind, both of which are beat over the viewers heads repeatedly in an apparent attempt to keep you from realizing that nothing is happening on screen. I for one never really saw

## NOW PLAYING

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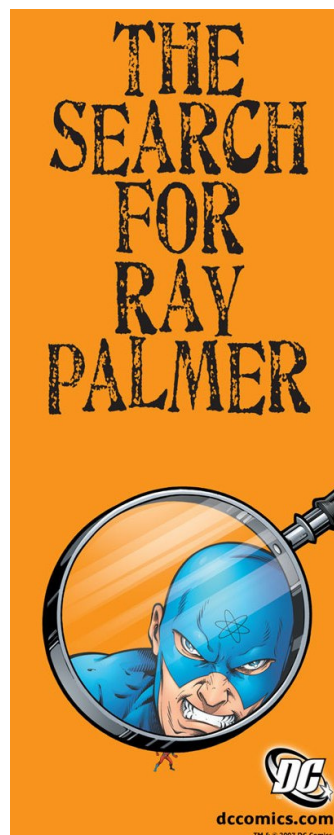
Ghost Rider as a love story type of hero, but more about sacrifice and doing what's right. This "lesson" was just as easily shown by the fact that Blaze sold his soul to save his father. So in this instance having a useless love interest simply takes away from the title character and the whole reason we wanted to see the movie in the first place.

The special effects were really great and seeing Ghost Rider on screen was definitely a thrill, though the GR character seemed to be more of an after thought than the star of his own movie. Ghost Rider was a mix of immense disappointment and joy because I finally got to see one of my favorite childhood characters on the big screen. It would have been so easy to make this movie one of the best comic book movies made, but that didn't happen. Nicholas Cage, Peter Fonda and even Sam Elliot were ok, but the story just wouldn't allow their characters to flourish in the way they should have. This was an instance where the studio tried to make a movie for the fanboys but crammed in too much extra crap just in just to draw in a few mundane and sell extra tickets.

Unfortunately, Ghost Rider failed to successfully meld the necessary ingredients into a

good movie. As usual Hollywood figured that if they threw enough CGI and breasts at us we wouldn't notice the poor character development and paper thin story. If Hollywood is going to make Geekcentric movies they need to realize that they can't dumb them down. Comic book fan does not equal stupid. If the powers that be in Hollywood read a few more comics they might realize that these "funny books" are generally better written than anything that comes out of Tinseltown.

Overall I give Ghost Rider a C for effort.



[www.jonathancoulton.com](http://www.jonathancoulton.com)

[www.outlandarts.com](http://www.outlandarts.com)

## News & Rumors continued from page 6

way those 48 episodes will take place over the next 3 seasons. Why don't they just do a 1 episode per night for 2 weeks just to wrap things up for the last 2-3 viewers still watching, then call it quits?

- Story lines for Heroes seasons 2 & 3 are already being planned. Even if they are only half as good as season 1 they will still be great.
- Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer is rumored to be a much, much better movie than the first installment. Apparently fanboys and critics all crying foul over the poorly portrayed first family of comics was heard and taken seriously by movie execs. (yeah right) Only time will tell if this is true but I'm going to see it just because the Surfer looked damn cool in the promos.
- 52 is over and the DC multiverse has returned. Yeah! 52 separate universes and so many possibilities. I'm kind of glad because I miss some of those old multiverse stories. I have one question though, if Booster went back in time to the original Crisis and took the Blue Beetle Scarab from Ted, then wouldn't there be two of them now? Maybe I missed something. I hate time travel..
- The Question hits like a girl... As mentioned in an earlier issue Montoya did replace the original Question. Well if the superhero things doesn't work out for her she can always find work as a nurse in Silent Hill...





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Do you have questions or comments you would like to share? Any stories or topics you would like to see covered or added to the Gazette? Want to contribute a story to the Gazette? Then feel free to let us know.

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## MY TOY BOX

I collect action figures. This statement in and of itself is not really that impressive, but I tend to differ from a lot of other collectors. First of all I only collect figures that I like, I simply don't care what they are worth. Secondly, I (gasp) open a lot of my figures, especially ones want to display.

I have a regular rotation of figures that I display on my computer desk in various poses. A few months ago I had my version of the Justice League during a meeting on my top shelf. This month it is Vegeta and Goku fighting Frieza and a McDonalds mini raptor. I also have a Marvel Legends Sasquatch, a few hundred Hero-clix (I don't play I just collect them) and various other figures guarding my comic collection up stars in my comic book room. Actually it's a closet, but it is a very big closet.

Granted I do not open all of my figures, there are some I just like too much to open. For example I will not open my white Marvel Legends Sasquatch, some of my Star Wars figures and I refuse to open the new Booster Gold I just bought. It has nothing to do with their current or future value. I don't open them because I don't want to see them get damaged.

Many collectors look at me like I'm an idiot when they discover that I have opened figures that would otherwise be worth a fair amount of change. They simply can't seem to understand that I just don't care. I am not wealthy so I won't pretend that the idea of buying a figure for under \$10 and reselling it for over \$100 is not an appealing one. I just don't have

the time or resources to track down all of the potentially hot figures. If I were younger, and single I might be able to sit in Wal-mart at 3am and wait until they open the newest cases so that I could snatch up all the latest figures to resell, but I just don't feel like it.

Like I said before I just buy the figures I like. This is one reason that the Marvel Legends build a figure sets suck. While I may want the completed figure, I do not want half of the ones you have to buy to get the pieces. To make matters worse the hard core collectors make it next to impossible for me to find the figures I want. For example, I like Thor, Ms. Marvel and Spiderwoman, but good luck trying to find one these at the local Wally world. Pretty much all that is left are the figures no one wants, so I can't get what I am looking for, unless I want to pay too much for them from a dealer.

I didn't understand it during the 90's comic boom and I don't understand it with action figures now. These items have high production numbers and people are still buying them to keep unopened. Honestly I don't see them being as insanely valuable as people expect them to be. Sure GI Joe's, original Star Wars and Transformers figures are valuable because, as kids, we opened them and played with them (they are toys after all), so there aren't that many left in good condition. So why do we think that in 20 years the one million existing bearded Sentry figures that are still mint in the box will be worth

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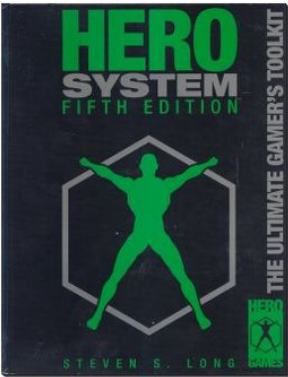


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**MY TOY BOX**

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enough to help us re-tire? Give me a break!

Sure there are figures out there that will, probably, be worth a small fortune at some point, and it will likely be ones that no one thought to collect. If I remember the comic book rule correctly, second issues are usually worth more than first issues because they have lower print runs and don't sale as many copies. After all value is generally related to scarcity and if everyone has it, then it usually isn't worth much. If you do keep your figures in the box do it for your own enjoyment not because they might be worth something someday. Other wise open your toys, read your comics and enjoy them. That's what they are made for.



<http://accidentalsurvivors.libsyn.com/>



**Fantasy Clip Ink: Warriors Set 1**

This month's image courtesy William McAusland and the gang over at Outland Arts

[www.outlandarts.com](http://www.outlandarts.com)

## Fans and the films they make

Like most people around the world, I love movies. I watch everything from low budget B-flicks to mega million dollar Hollywood productions and while a lot of them have not been gems, I continue to watch, hoping to find my new favorite movie. I started collecting movies when I was around 12 years old and have amassed nearly 5,000 of them in the past 20 something years. However my collection is growing at a much slower rate lately. Between having a family, school, gas prices and the fact that so many of the movies produced today are just sub par, I have become very choosy about which movies I buy or rent. While the big budget movies coming out of Hollywood these days may have incredible FX, a great many of them are poorly written and a lot of the acting is worse than you would see in a bad B-flick. Don't even get me started on how bad the B-flicks have gotten. Just as I was becoming more and more jaded about the whole cinematic experience I was introduced to a whole new viewing experience, fan films.

Many of these short films have better writing and acting than a lot of the stuff the big studios churn out. Fan Films are a labor of love for most of the people that take the time to make them. Who in the world would make a Blue Beetle short other than a true fan? Well Blinky Productions ([www.blinky-productions.com](http://www.blinky-productions.com)) has done several shorts with Blue Beetle, including the hilarious Blue and Gold PSA. Now before you get the wrong impression Blinky Production isn't just limited to using Blue Beetle and Booster Gold. If you check out their website, youtube or countless other fan film sites that feature their shorts, you will see films starring

Powergirl, The Flash, Michael Meyers, Hourman, The Question, and many more. Perhaps because I am a Blue and Gold fan from way back I am a bit biased when I say the fan films put out by Blinky Productions are some of my favorite, but don't just take my word for it, check them out.

While fan films cover a wide range of topics, I tend to search out the Star Wars and Superhero shorts. Some of them have production values that would stand up to anything done in Hollywood, especially some of the Star Wars films. There are numerous sites where you can find fan films, just put fan films in your search engine and you'll see, but I have a few that I frequent and personally think are the most user friendly.

### **Fan Films.net**

[www.fanfilms.net](http://www.fanfilms.net) This is the site I use the most. The films are broken down into topic and the site is fairly easy to navigate.

### **The Force.net**

<http://fanfilms.theforce.net> This is another good site with links to some other great fan film sites.

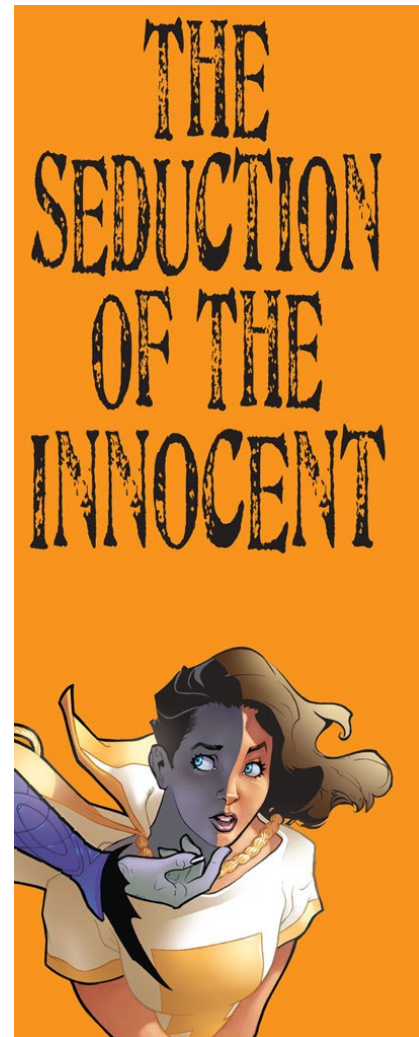
### **Fanboy Theatre**

<http://mightor01.tripod.com/index.html> Another good site with lots of information and links

### **Fan Flicks.com**

[www.fanflicks.com](http://www.fanflicks.com) I've never actually used this site but it came highly recommended by a few friends.

My list may not be a comprehensive one but it will help you get a good start in discovering some of the often brilliant fan produced films that are out there.



Screen Shot from the Blue Beetle and Booster Gold PSA

**[Blinky Productions](http://www.blinky-productions.com)**

## Radio shows are my new, old addiction

When I was a kid we lived a few blocks from the local library and I spent many afternoons there discovering new worlds among the shelves. The librarians came to know me quite well and noticed that a great deal of my reading material was focused on science fiction, horror, and of course superheroes. It was on one of my visits that the library ladies introduced me to the old fashioned radio show, the Shadow to be exact. I knew of the character through many pop culture references and comic books, but had never actually heard the radio shows. So I anxiously checked out my cassette tapes (there were no CD's back then) and hurried home.

I started the ritual of listening to these shows each night when I went to bed. Of course I usually got caught up in the stories and wouldn't fall asleep until the side of the tape I was listening to was finished. I found that listening to these shows was as good and sometimes better than watching television. I would make a point to rush to the library to get more when I finished each set. After I had listened to all the available Shadow episodes I moved on to some of the pulp detective, western and even the comedy shows. I often wondered why they didn't still do radio shows, I loved listening to them and even got a few of my friends to start.

As the years went on I searched out and listened to these shows less frequently. Although I did try to catch War of the Worlds each Halloween until I moved out the city and the A.M. stations became too hard to tune in. Then a few years back I discovered podcasts, which in turn led me to Decoder Ring Theater.

I was ecstatic when I discovered this show that is basically a modern day, old fashioned radio show. There are two features, the Red Panda Adventures and Black Jack Justice, and though they tend to be a little tongue in cheek, they are thoroughly enjoyable and completely in the spirit of the old time shows. While I like the pulp style PI stories of Black Jack Justice, I personally prefer the superhero adventures of the Red Panda. Whether you are like me and love serial radio shows or even if you have never listened to one you really should

check out Decoder Ring Theater.

<http://decoderring.libsyn.com>

Finding Decoder Ring Theater reawakened my love for the old radio adventures; I had forgotten how much I enjoyed them. With the internet at my disposal I began looking for information about similar shows. Instead I stumbled upon something even better, actual old time radio shows.

There are tons of sites where you can download the original radio shows. As I explored these sites I found shows that I honestly didn't know existed. The Blue Beetle show from the 1940's, one of my all time favorite characters though this show is about the original Dan Garrett character and not Ted Kord, and I downloaded a bunch of episodes for free. I also found Flash Gordon, Frankenstein, Roy Rogers, George Burns and countless others. Unfortunately some of the more popular characters like Superman, the Lone Range, Green Hornet, and the Shadow were nowhere to be found. Never the less the shows I did find will provide me with hours of entertainment. I have now know that they sell the more popular shows, like the Shadow, on CD so I may just pick them up too.

Below are a few sites where you can find and download these shows. Some of the sites may charge for certain shows but a great many of them offer free downloads. I recommend that you give these old shows a chance. They may be a little dated, but they are still incredibly entertaining and fun.

[www.otrcat.com](http://www.otrcat.com)

[www.oldtimeradiofans.com](http://www.oldtimeradiofans.com)

[www.radiolovers.com](http://www.radiolovers.com)

[www.archive.org/details/oldtimeradio](http://www.archive.org/details/oldtimeradio)

[www.archive.org/index.php](http://www.archive.org/index.php)

Also if you are a fan of the Golden Age check this site out. You can actually download copies of old GA comics. There selections is kind of slim put it's still pretty cool.

[www.comicweb.com/onlinecomics.htm](http://www.comicweb.com/onlinecomics.htm)

Plus they do sell some old time radio shows.

## So you want to start your own hobby shop.

### Part 1 of ???

Like most geeks I have dreamt of owning my own hobby shop since I was a kid, a store filled with comics, cards, toys, models and games of every kind, but then again I also wanted a pet dragon and x-ray vision. All three seemed just as fantastic and impossible, so they remained fantasies until a few years ago. Granted the dragon and x-ray vision may never come to be, but I found that owning my own shop was definitely in the realm of possibility. Our great nation was founded on the entrepreneurial spirit and once I realized this, owning my own shop went from being an idle fantasy to a personal goal.

*\*While most things I mention will pertain to anyone wishing to start any type of business, I am focusing strictly on hobby/game/comic shops. I also make no claims that I am an expert, everything is based strictly on my own opinions and experience and the opinions/experiences I have gathered from people that have started their own business. Also you will notice that I will use the terms hobby & hobbyist as blanket terms to represent gaming, comics, models, etc....\**

Now everyone has their own reasons for wanting to start their own business, and no matter what anyone tells you, your reason is not a dumb reason. I for one want to be my own boss in an industry that I have enjoyed most of my life. But there are some very, very important things you must consider before attempting something this life changing. First and foremost you need to evaluate your reasons for wanting to do this.

If your reasons are strictly selfish and you aren't doing this to fulfill a dream or because you love the industry you may want to reconsider. Just because your boss is a jerk is not necessarily a good reason, and you will probably set yourself up to fail. The ability to work long hours, often for little pay, and the drive stick with it no matter what until you eventually succeed are very important factors in determining whether you succeed or fail. However they are not the only factors.

You have to have a good understanding of business, particularly the industry you are hoping to enter, specialty retail. Unless you are independently wealthy the journey will be a tough one, especially if you have a family to support and consider. This is something you should discuss with them before you even attempt to start your own business. I sat down and made an honest list of the pros and cons of opening my own business before I presented the idea to my family. Don't sugar coat it. Trying to make it look good on paper so that they will agree with you, and then letting them find out how tough this will be is a good way to wind up divorced. Luckily my family supported my idea 100% and felt that I could easily succeed. You may not be so lucky. Listen to what others have to say, they could very well be taking something into consideration that you overlooked. Perhaps you don't have enough money in savings, or there are unexpected bills to consider. Nothing says you have to have your shop open in 2 weeks. If now is not the right time pick a realistic date in the future as a goal and begin working towards it.

Once you have determined that you have the necessary drive and skills to run your own business and make it successful there are some things I feel you should probably do.



1. Buy the Specialty Retailers Handbook: Comics and Games by David and Kelli Wallace. It may only be a 133 spiral bound pages, but it will be an invaluable resource. The book is tough to find, the only place I know to get it is online ([www.nobleknight.com](http://www.nobleknight.com)). Though I have been told that you could ask your local comic/game shop to order it for you. Read it. Then read it again and make notes on everything.
2. Contact the Small Business Administration. This is another valuable resource for someone just starting out. Many times the SBA will offer free classes for people who want to start their own business. Nearly every town has an SBA office close by so feel free to contact them. The SBA website also has a ton of useful information, and forms for new business owners. [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)
3. Contact SCORE. SCORE works very closely with the SBA and is probably the best help you can get when starting your own business. The councilors at score are all volunteers who do or have owned/run successful business. They will usually work with your schedule and are very helpful. [www.score.com](http://www.score.com)
4. Talk to other successful small business owners. This is one I highly recommend you do. However, you may want to talk to someone you will not be in direct competition with as they may have their own motives for not wanting you to succeed, and rightfully so. If you are opening a hobby shop then talk to someone who owns a deli, or consignment shop. Of course traveling out side of your area to other hobby shops that will not be your competition is a very good idea as well.
5. Check out the local shops. Just go in to some of the shops that may be your competitors and check them out. See how their shop is run, how they look, and what kind of merchandise do they carry. Are they clean? Do they focus on certain products over others? If they sell games do they offer a gaming area for players? Do they hold tournaments? Do they sell snacks and refreshments? Are they busy? If not why?
6. Join online forums for specialty shop owners. A lot of shop owners and distributors are members of these forums and are very helpful. Don't be afraid to ask questions. The only dumb questions are the ones you don't ask.
7. Search on line and read as many articles as you can find about opening a specialty shop.

I have listed a few on line resources and articles that may be of help. Take the time to read them and next issue I plan to look at other things you will need to get the shop up and running.

[www.tomheroes.com/Comics/Stories/comic\\_store\\_owners\\_biggest\\_mistakes.htm](http://www.tomheroes.com/Comics/Stories/comic_store_owners_biggest_mistakes.htm)

<http://forum.rpg.net/archive/index.php/t-3982.html>

[www.comicspro.org/services.html](http://www.comicspro.org/services.html)

[www.tomheroes.com/Comics/Stories/starting\\_a\\_comic\\_store\\_-\\_3\\_quick\\_tips.htm](http://www.tomheroes.com/Comics/Stories/starting_a_comic_store_-_3_quick_tips.htm)

[www.thegamesjournal.com/articles/OpeningAGameStore.shtml](http://www.thegamesjournal.com/articles/OpeningAGameStore.shtml)

[www.tomheroes.com/Comics/Stories/comic\\_store\\_stories.htm](http://www.tomheroes.com/Comics/Stories/comic_store_stories.htm)

[www.gsrp.org/index\\_files/Page535.htm](http://www.gsrp.org/index_files/Page535.htm)

[www.powerhomebiz.com/vol70/shoestringrules.htm](http://www.powerhomebiz.com/vol70/shoestringrules.htm)



## 2007 Movie Release Dates

*All dates can and probably will change depending on the mood of the studios.*

Spiderman three has hit theaters and is breaking box office records around the world. Love it or hate it you have to admit it is the blockbuster movie to beat this year. They are calling 2007 the year of the sequel, or threequel, and with good reason. Besides Spidey's lasted outing there are several other successful franchises that will have sequels out this year, trying to knock everyone's favorite web slinging hero out of the top spot. With powerhouses like Shrek, Pirates of the Caribbean, and Harry Potter all releasing new installments in the coming months this is sure to be one hot summer at the box office. We also have some new comers like the long awaited Transformers, and 30 Days of Night that will try to hold there own against the more established franchises. There are also a lot of potentially good movies coming out that won't get as much attention as the blockbusters.

With so many movies being released in the coming moths it can get a bit overwhelming trying to decide what to see. So I have put together a little list of what I think will appeal to your geekier side. I will probably be updating it as I find more movies and release dates.

### May

- Shrek the third 5/18
- Pirates of the Caribbean: At Worlds End 5/25 The third but perhaps not the last Pirates movie

### June

- Day Watch 6/1 Sequel to Night Watch
- Hostel II 6/6
- Ocean's 13 6/8
- Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer 6/15
- 1408 6/22
- DOA: Dead or Alive 6/22
- Live Free or Die Hard 6/27

### July

- Transformer 7/4 Today we celebrate Autobots kickin Decepticon butt
- Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix 7/13
- I now pronounce you Chuck and Larry 7/20 They say it will be funny.
- The Simpsons 7/27
- Skinwalkers 7/27 It's about werewolves.... You just gotta see it

### August

- The Bourne Ultimatum 8/3 I use to think Bourne could whip Bond, until I saw Casino Royale... now I'm not so sure.
- Underdog 8/3 I think it is a live action movie... I don't know about this one
- Bratz: The Movie 8/10 My little girls will want to see this.... Shoot me now.
- Rush Hour 3 8/10

**September**

- Fanboys 9/17 It may not be good but I still gotta see this one
- The Invasion 9/17 The Body Snatchers return, again
- Superbad 9/17
- Mr. Bean's Holiday 9/24
- Balls of Fury 9/31 I have no ide what this is about but it has to be one of the best movie titles ever. It may not be a family film.....
- Brothers Solomon 9/31 Forrest Gump meets Night at the Roxbury
- Halloween 9/31 How can they improve on perfection???
- Resident Evil: Extinction 9/21 I like Zombies as much as anyone else, but why do they keep making these?

**October**

- Hitman 10/12
- 30 Days of Night 10/19
- Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas in Digital 3D 10/19
- Martian Child 10/26
- Saw IV 10/26

**November**

- Beowulf 11/16
- The Mist 11/21

**December**

- I Am Legend 12/14
- National Treasure: Book of Secrets 12/21
- Aliens vs Predator 2 12/25

**TBA** = it will be out sometime... maybe. I will keep you updated when I get actual release dates for these.

- Sin City 2
- Spy Hunter
- The Green Hornet Please don't let Hollywood screw this one up
- Revenge of the Nerds
- White Noise 2
- Wonder Woman
- X-Files 2 Mulder must need the money
- Jurassic Park IV

These are some of the movies that are scheduled to come out sometime this year, I will be probably be adding this list as I find more movies and release dates.

## 2007 Convention Calendar

### June

- ◆ Wizard World Philadelphia  
June 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> 2007  
[www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/philadelphia.cfm](http://www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/philadelphia.cfm)
- ◆ Star Wars Celebration 4  
May 25-28 2007 Los Angeles  
[www.gencon.com/2007/swciv/](http://www.gencon.com/2007/swciv/)
- ◆ PolyCon XXV  
San Luis Obispo, CA  
June 29 – July 1 2007  
[www.polycon.org/pc25/](http://www.polycon.org/pc25/)
- Gamicon 2007  
Feb 23-26 Iowa City Iowa  
[www.gamicon.org/](http://www.gamicon.org/)

### July

- ◆ Comic Con 2007  
July 26 – 29 San Diego  
[www.comic-con.org/cci/](http://www.comic-con.org/cci/)
- ◆ Liberty Con 2007  
July 27-19 East Ridge, TN  
[www.libertycon.org](http://www.libertycon.org)
- ◆ Origins 2007  
July 5-8 Columbus Oh  
[www.originsgames.com/](http://www.originsgames.com/)
- ◆ Phoenix Con Games  
July 14-17 2007 Phoenix, AZ  
[www.conevents.com/page/phx/main.asp](http://www.conevents.com/page/phx/main.asp)

### August

- ◆ Archon  
Aug 2-5 2007 Collinsville IL  
[www.archonstl.org/](http://www.archonstl.org/)
- ◆ Wizard World Chicago  
Aug 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> 2007  
[www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/chicago.cfm](http://www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/chicago.cfm)

- ◆ Gen Con Indy  
Aug 16-19 2007  
[www.gencon.com/](http://www.gencon.com/)
- ◆ Conglomeration 2007  
Aug 10-12 Louisville Ky  
[www.conglomeration.org/](http://www.conglomeration.org/)
- ◆ Dragon Con 2007  
Aug 31-sept 3  
lanta GA  
[www.dragoncon.org/](http://www.dragoncon.org/)
- ◆ Gateway 2007  
August 31– Sep 3  
[www.strategicon.net/](http://www.strategicon.net/)

### September

???

### October

???

### November

- ◆ Wizard World Texas  
Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> 2007  
[www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/texas.cfm](http://www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/texas.cfm)
- ◆ AmberCon 2007  
Nov 1-4 Portland OR  
[www.amberconnw.org/](http://www.amberconnw.org/)
- ◆ Chi-Tag  
Nov 16-18 Chicago, IL  
[www.chitag.com](http://www.chitag.com)

### December

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\*\* Ok guys and gals, it's the end of May and the convention list just keeps getting smaller. So send me those conventions listings! If you know of a convention in your area please email me the web address and I will be happy to add it to the list \*\*

Email:

[geekgazette@thegeekgazette.com](mailto:geekgazette@thegeekgazette.com)

## Why so early?

You have probably noticed this issue of the Gazette is out a little earlier than expected. As I have mentioned before I returned to finish my degree a while back and one of the consequences of going to school part time is that you have to go during summer semesters. At least you have to if you expect to get a degree in less than 8 years.

For those of you that have not attended college courses during the summer, it is a little tougher than a regular semester. Instead of 4 months of class you have 6 weeks. That's a lot to learn in a short period of time.

So this is why I opted to get the Gazette out a few weeks ahead of schedule rather than a few weeks/months behind schedule. I will probably try to throw a few mini issues out between now and August because the August issue will not be out till after Gen Con.

The plan is to do a nearly all Gen Con issue, with even more Gen Con goodness than last year. Since I plan on attending all four days of the con I hope to have a lot to share with those of you that could not make it.

You will also notice that this is one of our biggest issues to date. That is in part due to the extended period between issues. So I hope you enjoy this issue and as usual feel free to share your thoughts and suggestions.

Until next time,

*Michael*

At-