



Goat Droppings



"I think you're about to step in it."

Retcons and Reports: Convention Retrospective

Registration:

Thanks to everyone who came this year! We are delighted to announce that we had 1039 warm bodies come through Capricon over the weekend!

Now, let's beat that next year!

Felines & Canines

This year's charity was Felines & Canines. Through our Charity Art Auction, photo booth, and tips in the Cafe, we are pleased to inform you that we raised over \$1600 for them!

We also again had a successful book drive and food drive.

Thank you all for your generosity!

Lost & Found

Did your robot wander off? Were your cool Ray-Bans misplaced? It's possible that they ended up in Lost & Found at Ops. Please email ops@capricon.org with a description of the missing item, and we'll let you know if we have it.

COMPLETE PHANDEMONIUM!

Don't forget to **follow us on Facebook** (Capricious G Oat) and read our blog at <http://capricon.org/blog/> to see what we're up to all year long! There's something fun and happening every month. Don't miss out!

What a ride!

Capricon 35 is concluded, and we hope you had as great a time as we did! Thank you all for attending and participating and making it a Capricon to remember.

From Midwinter Faire and Opening Ceremonies on Thursday to Closing Ceremonies on Sunday, Capricon 35 had a lot going on. We had a sold out art show, a great dealers room, lots of special events, and loads of programming. ConSuite kept us fed, and Gaming, Anime/Films, and Cafe kept us entertained with various media.

Of course, it isn't a Capricon without our parties! Thank you all for a great time up on 15 & 16! Our party hosts are the best!

We would also like to thank our Guests of Honor: **Matt Forbeck, Margaret Weis, Alexander James Adams, Elizabeth Huffman, John Bivens, and The Functional Nerds, John Anealio and Patrick Hester.** We hope you enjoyed your time at Capricon as much as we all enjoyed having you there with us. Come on back sometime, y'all!

That goes for all of you, our attendees and program participants as well!

Capricon 36: Once Upon A Capricon, will be February 11-14, 2016, again at the Westin North Shore in Wheeling. Memberships are on sale now at www.capricon.org so go get yours now!

See you then!

Rewards!

We love our awards at Capricon. Here's the rundown on who we rewarded for their awesomeness this year:

Art Awards:

Best Emerging Artist: Megan Killings Murphy
 Best Non-Professional Artist: Luna Limn
 Best Professional Artist: Robert Hogan
 Best in Show: Todd Cameron Hamilton
 Artist Challenge: Cheryl Storm
 Artist Showdown: Megan Killings Murphy

Gopher of the Year: Brandon Bogs

Euchre Tournament:

Michael Kelly and Robert Ahern

Party Awards:

Staff Choice:

Cow Asylum - Redshirts & Rum

Best Thursday Party:

Sharknado!

Best Drinks:

Minions of Chaos - Rebels & Rancors!

Best Overall Party:

Minions of Chaos - Rebels & Rancors!

We are once again doing a post-Capricon survey of our members in order to get feedback on what went well and what we can do better next year. Please take a few minutes to complete it - we want to continue to improve and be the best Chicago convention out there, and your responses will help us achieve that goal! The link to the survey is: <https://phandemonium.typeform.com/to/DVRGcz>

Also thank you to everyone who came to the Feedback Session on Sunday afternoon!

The Phandemonium Board of Directors held their annual open meeting on Sunday at Capricon. We would like to thank our retiring Board Members for their service: **David Abzug** and **Pat Nuccio**. Welcome to our newly elected members, **Dan Berger** and **Karen Hawkins-Kamper**! Thank you to everyone who voted.

We would also like to thank **Lisa Cyganiewicz** for her two years of service; unfortunately Lisa is stepping down prior to the end of her term for personal reasons. The Board will be choosing a replacement at the first meeting of the next fiscal year, which begins April 1.

INTERVIEW: Author Guest of Honor Matt Forbeck – Part Two

[Editor's Note: Matt Forbeck was particularly forthcoming when responding to our interview questions for this newsletter; so much so that we couldn't fit the entire text in one issue. Part One appeared in Volume 35, Issue 4 of Goat Droppings. Part Two appears in this post-convention edition for the first time. —DB]

Goat Droppings: Congratulations on the success of the Kickstarter campaign for *Shotguns and Sorcery*!

Matt Forbeck: Thanks! It was a fantastic ride, and I'm thrilled with how well it went. The fans really came out for both Monte Cook Games and my own work, and I couldn't be more grateful.

GD: When did you get bitten by the gaming bug?

MF: A friend across the street from me got the blue-book edition of Dungeons & Dragons for Christmas. His mother had found it at K-Mart on a Blue Light Special, and she and my mother conspired to use it to get us kids to play together. I resisted until the spring, but once I started playing, I just couldn't stop.

GD: What was your first convention? Any good stories?

MF: That would have been the Winter Fantasy held in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, back in 1982 or so. I was only 13 at the time. My mother took me and my pals to the American Legion Hall there, where they'd held early Gen Cons years before.

My first game was a Boot Hill adventure run by Steve Winter, a longtime TSR employee who continues to do lots of work with Wizards of the Coast to this day— and who's also a fellow member of my writers' group, the Alliterates. While I was playing, my mother complained to the management about what a shoddy little con it was. She'd been to lots of professional conventions and had expected something a bit less relaxed than you see at most small gaming cons.

Turns out she was speaking with Gary Gygax, which— at the ripe age of 13— mortified me to no end. I wound up playing in a game with Gary at a convention at Beloit College later that year and even working with him years later, so it all turned out fine.

GD: How exactly did the *Shotguns & Sorcery* project come together?

MF: Shotguns & Sorcery sprang from a Kickstarter-based project I ran in 2012 called 12 for '12, during which I attempted to write a dozen short novels in a year. I broke them up into four trilogies and ran a Kickstarter drive for each. Shotguns & Sorcery was the second of those trilogies.

In 2014, Outland Entertainment licensed the tabletop RPG rights for that setting and ran another Kickstarter for it that wrapped up on January 1.

GD: Jeremy Mohler and his team at Outland Entertainment ran this latest Kickstarter for *Shotguns & Sorcery*, but you've both run and consulted on a number of Kickstarter campaigns yourself. What are some of the challenges in running a successful crowdfunding venture?

MF: There are two major challenges for each. The first comes in the planning stages when you design your Kickstarter, setting your goals, reward schedule, and so on. That's the stage for everything that comes after.

The second and probably harder part is the constant promotion you have to do both leading up to and during the Kickstarter drive. Every waking moment that you're not doing something else more vital becomes dedicated to doing the best you can with the Kickstarter, and it can consume your life.

Of course, it's when the Kickstarter is over that the real work begins.

GD: Why did you decide to create *Shotguns and Sorcery* as a licensed product for Monte Cook Games' forthcoming Cypher System?

MF: That was Outland's decision, but I fully supported it. I was on Twitter, pondering aloud about what system to use for the game, and Monte Cook nudged me to start a conversation with his business manager, Charles Ryan. Charles told me about MCG's plans for a Cypher System rulebook for next summer and that they were looking for partners to bring new worlds to the system.

I've known both Monte and Charles and the rest of the team at MCG for years and love their work on Numenera and The Strange, which were the first games to use the Cypher System. It seemed like a great match, and the serendipity of the timing made it even better.

GD: Tell us a little bit about the books on which you are basing the game.

MF: I'm going to cheat a bit and crib from the bit I wrote for the RPG Kickstarter:

Shotguns & Sorcery is set in Dragon City, a grim and gritty fantasy metropolis built on top of and inside of a walled-off mountain and ruled over by the Dragon Emperor. Legions of zombies scratch at the cut stones of the Great Circle every hour of the night, trying to tear the wall down for their mysterious necromantic commander, the Ruler of the Dead.

Inside the wall, the people work and scheme to find an edge and get ahead on the city's dark alleys and magically lit streets. The green-skinned folk squat down in Goblintown, stacked right up against the wall, where they can hear the constant moaning of the dead all night long. Above them, the rest of the survivors live in neighborhoods of their own, each stratified by their longevity and social standing, which make for the kind of barriers no hack on an enchanted carpet can fly you past.

Robbing the ruins that lay outside the Great Circle is illegal, but it's the best way for people with questionable talents with rune-laced shotguns to keep the gold flowing. And most days it beats selling dragon essence to the addicts who use it to fuel their magics, or hiring out as muscle for the dwarven gangs. As long as you keep your nose clean and give a wide berth to the Imperial Guard, there's a fortune to be made in Dragon City.

Just hope you live long enough to enjoy it.

INTERVIEW: Artist Guest of Honor John Bivens

Goat Droppings: There seems to be a consistent thread of horror running through much of your work. If you had to pick a genre that you identify with most, what would it be, and why?

John Bivens: My family had a special place for horror, from what books were on the shelves in various rooms to what VHS movies were brought home when we got our first VCR. I even had a cousin who directed a documentary on The Texas Chainsaw Massacre... so it's more of a consistent thread running through my life rather than a thread through my work. That being said I love a good sci-fi-comedy mix; because, with the sci-fi part a story can be set anywhere and with the comedy part it becomes easy to tackle serious issues.

GD: What drew you to that particular genre? What got you hooked?

JB: With the horror genre, the first moment that stands out in memory is hiding behind the couch when my older brother and cousins rented the first Evil Dead right after it was released to video. I was terrified but still had to peak out around the corner.

GD: Who are some of the artists that influenced and inspired you, particularly where comics and genre illustration are concerned?

JB: OK, quick list: I grew up during the 90's boom, so of course the IMAGE guys, Moebius, any of the Hellboy crew, Toppi, and from a purely philosophical stand point Wayne White of Pee Wee's Playhouse fame.

GD: Comics have been effected at least as dramatically as the rest of the publishing industry by the ascendance of digital media and the "Age of Amazon." How have recent shifts in the industry changed the way you see the future of comics generally and your professional journey as an artist specifically? What are some of the challenges and new opportunities you see in the future?

JB: I see the future of comics shifting towards the creator. It is so easy to produce work and make it available to the public... the real issue is that to make the changes of the publishing landscape work, a person needs to both business minded and artistic. A living can be made, but it will be from multiple income sources and the careful cultivation of an audience.

GD: What hasn't changed that much in publishing during that time?

JB: You have to continually do work to remain relevant. A person can have a thousand great stories, if those stories aren't put down on paper they mean bupkis.

GD: What is your ideal collaborative process when working on a comic book?

JB: I like a fairly loose template that can be used to build up the images. Once the pages are done, then dialogue can be tightened up. Doing a visual narrative is a lot of back and forth. Most of the time the give-and-take is smooth... rarely it can be like pulling teeth.

GD: What projects are you working on at present?

JB: Currently, I am working on the second arc of *Dark Engine* which is a fantasy/horror series with writer Ryan Burton, colorist

Kelly Fitzpatrick, and publisher IMAGE COMICS. *Old Wounds* is another project on my table; this one with writer Russell Lissau and published by Pop Goes the Icon. The final comic I'm working on is my thesis for my MFA at Minneapolis College of Art & Design. It is a horror/sci-fi/comedy called *Lil Charlie*.

GD: And lastly, what do R&R mean to you?

JB: Two of my Hollywood heroes: Russ Meyer & Rick Baker.

INTERVIEW: Music Guest of Honor Alexander James Adams

Goat Droppings: The worlds of both genre literature and musicianship are strong in the way of the geek. Which was your first fandom?

Alexander James Adams: Music written to the song excerpts in the book "Silverlock" and then a song commissioned about Pol Detson in Roger Zelazny's "Changeling".

GD: What was your gateway experience into fantasy literature?

AJA: "The Magic Goes Away" by Larry Niven. I have dyslexia and it had pictures. LOL!

GD: What was your gateway experience into music?

AJA: My father taught me to read music before I could read books and the radio was on in his room 24/7. You could truly say I was born into it.

GD: When did you decide to meld the two together, and why?

AJA: Professional music and radio in the '60s went a little into the realm of magic and that kind of imagery, but not enough for me and my imaginary world as a child. I wanted more songs about castles and unicorns and dragons and Winnie the Pooh than were already there.

GD: There are a lot of sad and often ugly stories associated with the transgender journey of personal transformation. Is there a story from your own journey that still makes you laugh or an example of when someone reaffirmed your faith in human nature when you least expected it?

AJA: I had a family friend who was widowed and needed help around her house. I worked for her through my teens and early adulthood. She was a devout Catholic and was an elder of the '20s and '30s era. When visiting her late in her 90s, I told her what I was doing and why my voice sounded so low, and after sitting there for a minute or so she said, "Is that all that is standing between us? There is nothing else you wish to tell me?" "That is all", I replied. "Well then, you may kiss me on the cheek now. I suppose this is one of the reasons why God has kept me alive so long." ;)

GD: Do you think that the nature of your creative output changed when you made that final transformation from Heather to Alexander? Did making that transformation define a change in the thematic spine of your work or a shift in tone? If so, how?

AJA: Heather worked very hard to have a positive perspective on the world. The only darkness she experienced would be blamed on me. We had been together in one body since the beginning of awareness. After she left, I was alone and made to face the habit of dark perception without a place to run to. My music now, I think, reflects the dark spaces of the many realms of reality. I would like to think that the discoveries reflected in my songs are helping others to see their way in the dark when they find it.

GD: What was the single hardest song to get down on tape/hard-drive for you?

AJA: On the album "Wintertide", I take prerecorded files of Heather's voice and add mine to them. The song "Sword and Staff" is a song unifying Christian concepts with Pagan ones in an attempt to find a meaningful co-existence. The voices trade off lines until the end when both voices speak as one: "Unify us all in Love. Unite us through diversity, for fear is our true enemy." As I was tracking, it occurred to me what I had done only one year earlier, and now I was unifying what had been two entities in me into a single voice to perform as one from now on. I broke into tears and it took way too many takes and a lot of patience from my engineer brother to get those simple words clean and strong.

GD: What musical artist, singular or a group, do you feel deserves more attention on people's radars?

AJA: There are so many budding great artists out there through indie labels, Kickstarter and You-Tube, that I think it's a good idea to just go follow your impulses and find that new unknown and share with your friends. If you are looking for a name from me, though, I claim a large bias to SJ Tucker, Betsy Tinney and Fox Amore. :)

GD: What projects are you working on now?

AJA: I needed to construct a long fence to protect my dogs from nasty neighbors. I launched a Kickstarter for it and promised an album in return for the funding. Currently, "Animals All the Same" is going at full steam, with a soft release date of April this year. I'm also working on a faerietale album also with a soft date of autumn this year, but we'll have to see. 53 rescue animals take a lot of love on a daily basis. :)

GD: Looks like you get the final word on what do R&R mean to you! What say you?

AJA: At the risk of being way too spiritual for the room, I would say "Receptivity and Reciprocatation". I am looking forward to the wonderful exchange of energy and magic between a performer and his audience. Capricon, here I come! :D

Don't forget to **follow us on Facebook** (Capricious G Oat) and read our blog at <http://capricon.org/blog/> to see what we're up to all year long! There's something fun and happening every month. Don't miss out!

Goat Droppings is edited by Dan Berger and Helen Montgomery. Capricious drawings by Deb Kosiba, with additional graphics content by Dan Berger. This issue's contributors were Dan Berger, Helen Montgomery, and the Capricon Concom. © Phandemonium, Inc. 2015

UPCOMING PHANDEMONIUM EVENTS

Your membership in Capricon automatically gives you a membership in Phandemonium, the parent corporation. We do several other events throughout the year to promote our Capricon community, and hope to see you again at them soon!

The March Book Club East selection is *Soon I Will Be Invincible*, by Austin Grossman. This is also the book that is being adapted by Lifeline Theatre for their spring production. The book club will meet on Sunday, March 15 at 7 PM. We meet at Cusi, 1740 Sherman Avenue in Evanston. Cusi is located near the Davis stop of both the Metra North Line and the Purple Line, and parking in Evanston is free on Sundays.

The April Book Club West Selection will be *Up the Walls of the World*, By James Tiptree, Jr (Alice B. Sheldon). We're reading SF written by women this year. The meeting will be at Elgin Books, 66 S Grove Avenue, Elgin, Saturday, April 25 at 1 PM. Elgin Books is walkable from National Street and Elgin Main Metra stations on the Milwaukee West Metra line. There is plenty of free parking as well.

The Euchre Club will be meeting on Sunday, April 12 at 6 PM. We meet at The Grafton Pub, 4530 N Lincoln Avenue, Chicago. We usually get dinner as well as play cards, and are happy to teach people new to the game. There is a parking lot across the street from the pub which is free on Sundays, and it is a short walk from the Western stop on the Brown Line.

Out-of-CONTEXT

"In the car is different than in the pocket." - Anonymous

"I prefer to save my reading for road signs." - Liz Gilio

"I'm a little blind; I didn't know that thing was connected."
- Anonymous

"I'm in charge and there are young people." - Tammy Coxen

"In my own defense, you did jump quickly on to her." - Jordury

"Goats are not monogamous." - Helen Montgomery

"Because you can't fart rainbows in a Retro Hugo dress."
- Sandy Heltzer

"I'm fine with you being wrong." - Dave McCarty

"If it doesn't go in the bra it doesn't go anywhere."
- Laura Dombrowski

"Those two were coming on me very hard." - Ed Friman

"Kill us both so we can get some strawberries." - Michelle Friman

"Excuse me children, we are done nominating people to die."
- Heather McConaha-Ickes

"My mom made a broccoli poodle." - Sondra de Jong

"He tried to talk, I felt him vibrate." - Charlie Bernstein

"I swallowed it and then I gagged." - Dan Berger

"Was this about the wang massage?" - Emily Knowles-Grumble