

CONFLUX 4

HEROES FROM NEAR AND AFAR

Friday September 28 to Monday October 1, 2007

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA
Rydges Lakeside



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Featuring: Bluey the Dropbear

What's on at Conflux?

Mass book signing, Workshops, Regency Gothic Banquet, Panels, Film Festival, Podcast, Masked Disco, Stormtroopers, Presentations, Koffee Klatches, Auction, Art Show, Dealers, Parties, **And so much More!**...

SEE NICOLE'S PROGRAMMING INFO INSIDE

CONFLUX GUESTS

● KEVIN J ANDERSON

● SIMON BROWN

● DONNA MAREE HANSON

● GRAHAM JOYCE

● REBECCA MOESTA

● GARTH NIX

● JONATHAN STRAHAN

● KAARON WARREN

THIRD CHAIR'S REPORT

Just two weeks to go. How exciting! How thrilling! How terrifying! Everyone involved with the convention is finalizing arrangements to put on what we're sure will be a fantastic con.

Bookings have opened for the workshops, and they are coming in steadily but there are spaces available all round, so email workshops@conflux.org.au with your bookings to make sure you don't miss out on the chance to spend time with people such as Kevin J Anderson, Jack Dann and Karen Miller.

We're talking with panelists and getting the program ready, artists are lining up for the art display, the souvenir book is being printed, menus for meals finalized – its going to be so much fun!

There are a couple of events happening at Conflux that I particularly want to draw your attention to. On Saturday afternoon, we're holding a mass booksigning – about 30 authors all in the one room, ready to sign your books. If you don't have any of their books, don't worry – they will be on sale at the convention.

On Sunday afternoon, we'll be having the charity auction. If you've got things to auction off, you can drop them at the convention registration table. We'll be dividing the money up – half will go to the fan funds, the other half to a local charity, Home in Queanbeyan, which is raising money to build a facility for the mentally ill in Queanbeyan, where I live.

Please note that if you want to come to the Regency Gothic banquet (and who doesn't?), you need to book your place by Sunday, September 23. We have to finalise the numbers with Rydges.

We're also going to be having a dinner on Thursday, September 27.

If you want to come along, email chair@conflux.org.au and we'll be in touch regarding prices.

Oh, and make sure you bring money to buy your Conflux 4 tshirt – they look mega, mega cool!

See – lots going on. I look forward to seeing you all at Conflux.

Nicole R Murphy – Chair, Conflux

TOMATOES ARE OFTEN INCLUDED IN MODERN HEROES

According to Wikipedia, **hero sandwiches** originated in New York in the late 19th century when Italian laborers wanted a convenient lunch that reminded them of home.

The hero is traditionally at least two Italian meats and provolone cheese on a small or half loaf of crusty Italian bread with roasted peppers, vinegar, olive oil, and lettuce.

"Hero" remains the prevailing term for any sandwich with a generally Italian flavor, in addition to the original described above. Pizzeria menus often include eggplant parmigiana, chicken parmigiana, and meatball heroes, each served with tomato sauce. Pepper and egg heroes and potato and egg heroes are also popular.

Tomatoes were not a historical ingredient of the hero, but are often included in modern heroes.

BANQUET REPORT

Gillian Polack has been reporting on our Regency Gothic Banquet in her foodblog FoodHistory at <http://www.foodpast.com/>

Gillian says that the food news for Conflux is terrific—our menu for the Regency Gothic Banquet has been approved. The chef at Rydges loved it. The testers loved it. We're all very excited and can't wait to share it with the world.

The exact menu won't be posted until a bit closer to the event (which is the end of September). After Conflux, Gillian will post all the recipes, one course at a time, and you can cook a sumptuous and rich banquet at home.

CONFLUX 4 PROGRAMMING

Conflux is holding a mix of workshops, panels, presentations, kaffeeklatches and readings.

Our 14 workshops are open for bookings right now. They are limited to numbers (15 for all except the sword workshop, which required even numbers so we're having 16 there), they will run for two and a half hours and nine of them are free for members. The others are all very well priced, considering the calibre of the people who are presenting them. You'll find the information on the website at www.conflux.org.au/2007/workshops.shtml

We will have three streams of panels, covering a range of topics, from the worst heroes in science fiction and fantasy to the 10 things beginning writers get wrong – a lot speaking to the theme of Heroes from Near and Afar. We've got more than 50 panellists, so there will be lots of different opinions, voices and ideas to inspire and engage you. The full list of panels and the timetable for the convention will be available on the website in the next week, so you can start planning your time at the con. If you're interested in being on a panel or two, email chair@conflux.org.au and let us know which panels you're interested in. We can't guarantee anything at this late date, but we'll see what we can organize.

We've also got a couple of interesting presentations taking place. James Sheridan, a PhD student at the ANU will be giving us a demonstration of an early version of his own mentally controlled virtual Zen garden. This environment is a place where you can use your attention to control the sounds and plants in the garden as they grow. A person's attention is monitored via their brainwaves using Electroencephalograph (EEG), gaze and movement tracking and the garden is normally displayed in a 3D virtual reality theatre. Also David Brew, a volunteer 'ambassador' for the Liftport Group, a private U.S. based consortium working toward building a Space Elevator, will be giving a presentation on the project.

A kaffeeklatche, for those unfamiliar, is a small group of people getting together to have a coffee and a chat. Each of the guests will be hosting a kaffeeklatche, which members can sign up for, and other attendees at the con may also host one. Attendees can also nominate to do a reading of their work to a small group, which members can sign up for.



So there's going to be lots going on – hopefully a nice balance of many choices, but not so many that it becomes overwhelming

Nicole R Murphy – Programmer, Conflux 4

COME TO THE MASQUERADE

What's so fascinating about wearing a mask? Would you like to try being mysterious? Do you fancy the freedom of being someone else for a while?

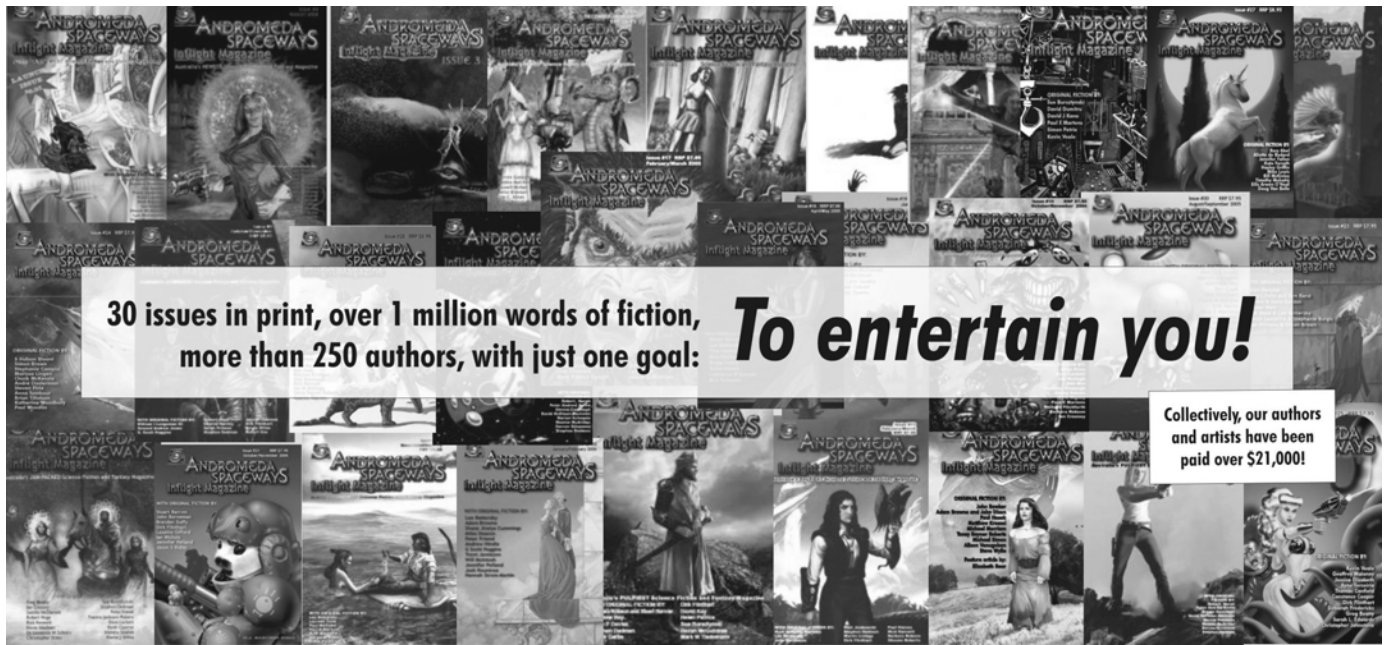
Conflux is hosting a masked disco, which means lashings of fun and oodles of mischief.

Masks can be about disguise, being incognito, or taking on a new persona.

There may be something sacred or playful about the role. Masks can be made of all kinds of things. The oldest surviving mask in the world, the Lady of Uruk, which dates from about 3100 B.C, is made of limestone. Masks are often made of paper mache, but Dumas' famous hero wore an iron mask. And what did they use to make Darth Vader's mask? Some masks are functional, and increase the ability to survive in hostile environments. Some masks are purely unfunctional.

Wikipedia notes that "Regency" romance novels often make use of masquerade balls as settings, because of their popularity and their endless supply of plot devices.





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Kevin J Anderson and Rebecca Moesta

Kevin J Anderson and Rebecca Moesta are a powerful husband-and-wife team, both talented and successful writers in their own right and in partnership. Kevin has had more than 30 novels hit bestsellers lists around the world. He is the author with Brian Herbert of the Dune prequel series, his Jedi Academy trilogy were the top selling sci-fi books in 1994 and his X-Files books were voted some of the best sci-fi books of their years. He's currently writing the Saga of the Seven Stars series. With wife Rebecca, he wrote the 14 book Young Jedi Knights series. Rebecca has written a number of movie and television tie-in novels, including Buffy and Star Gate. More information at their website www.wordfire.com Kevin and Rebecca are joining us thanks to a partnership with Simon and Schuster.



Kevin

Heroic Questions

Rebecca

Who are your real-life heroes?

I admire a lot of people who work hard and achieve great things in their own fields. I would have to say I would put down a man such as Richard Branson as a personal hero, someone with real vision, who pushes the envelope and puts his money where his mouth is (in his case, a substantial amount of money). Branson is the sort of man who will drive humanity to new heights of exploration and achievement in ways that lethargic and bureaucracy-strangled governments can never manage to do.

Who is more fun to write

— villains or heroes? — heroes or heroines?

Oh, villains definitely. Villains always have a plan and a grand scheme or interesting motivation. Often the heroes are merely *reactive* -- i.e., they just try to stop the bad guys.

As for heroes or heroines, I've done quite a lot of both and I tend to treat them equally. I don't have many "shrinking violet" women or doe-eyed female lab assistants.

Do you have a favorite fictional hero?

I think I'd have to say Duke Leto Atreides from DUNE. He was a hard, intelligent man who loved his family and was willing to fight for his House, and he did not shrink from facing his arch enemy (even the floating fat one!)

What makes a hero come alive on the page?

Someone who has real inner turmoil about what he's doing, a person who grapples with the moral consequences of what he's doing, not a bone-headed champion of Right vs Wrong. For example, Batman is a fascinating hero, especially the way Frank Miller has written him, a good guy (ostensibly) but one with a dark edge.

Who are your real-life heroes?

Bill and Melinda Gates, who in spite of their high-profile positions struggle to raise healthy, responsible kids. They're also active philanthropists -- something I aspire to be.

Who is more fun to write

— villains or heroes? — heroes or heroines?

I find writing heroes/heroines more fun, because I enjoy setting challenges for them (i.e., messing up their lives) and watching to see how they react to adversity -- especially when they make mistakes. I find flawed heroes/heroines (e.g., Scarlett O'Hara or Han Solo) engrossing. And I love a good redemption story.

I tend to write heroes and heroines in just about equal measure, but I most delight in making my heroines strong and competent. There weren't enough role models of that sort when I was growing up.

Do you have a favorite fictional hero?

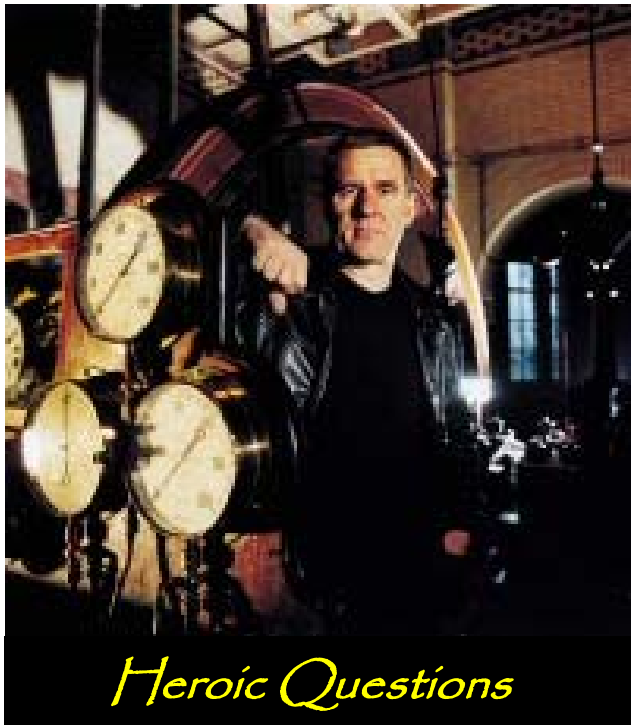
I've always identified with Lizzie from Jane Austin's Pride and Prejudice, and Meg from Madeleine L'Engle's A Wrinkle in Time. Both heroines are smart, determined, stubborn, and don't quite fit in with preconceptions of a woman's role in society.

What makes a hero come alive on the page?

Fallibility. If there is no possibility that the hero could make the wrong choice, the character is not actually heroic. Without the contrast of darkness, light means very little. It is the very temptation to do what is easy, to give in to selfishness, or to take the wrong path that gives a hero humanity and believability.

Graham Joyce

Graham Joyce is an English writer, who has won the World Fantasy Award for *The Facts of Life*, set in his native Coventry, and is a multiple-winner of the British Fantasy Society's August Derleth Award. Graham's training is in education, and he still teaches writing in the local university. He also has a Masters Degree in modern English and American literature, and has worked with youth organisations. His first book, *Dreamside*, was published during a sabbatical on the island of Crete. Graham then became a professional writer, and is now recognised as one of the premier Horror writers in the world.



Who are your real-life heroes?

The trouble with real-life heroes is they all turn out to have feet of clay, like the rest of us. Many years ago I paid a fat little barefoot Indian guru a week's wages for a mantra. He had this beautiful and transcendent smile. The idea was that you paid for this mantra and you would end up with a similar smile. Later I found out that he was barefoot because he lived in deep-pile carpet in a luxury fortress in Switzerland, where he kept a dozen Rolls Royces and ate chicken tikka even though he was supposed to be a vegan. Well, you would smile, wouldn't you? But if I have to name one it would be Oliver Cromwell. Another would be Nelson Mandela. Then there's Grace O'Malley, the Elizabethan pirate queen. But no-one can transcend their own humanity, and heroes are really about mythology, not humanity.

Who is more fun to write - villains or heroes? -

Well, I like the idea of heroes who turn out to be villains and villains who turn out to be heroes.

heroes or heroines?

Heroines. They photograph better in the leather kilt.

Do you have a favorite fictional hero?

Yes. Dr Strange. Much more interesting than Spiderman and the rest.

What makes a hero come alive on the page?

Their frailties. If they are invulnerable or untouchable the outcome is secure. The bigger the heroic flaw or weakness, the more the outcome hangs in the balance.

Jonathan Strahan

Jonathan Strahan is one of the most successful and well known editors in Australian speculative fiction. In 1990, he co-founded *Eidolon: The Journal of Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy*, and worked on it as co-editor and co-publisher for almost a decade. Jonathan has been the Reviews Editor of *Locus Magazine* since 2002 and has edited more than twenty anthologies and collections including *The New Space Opera* (with Gardner Dozois), *Eidolon* (with Jeremy Byrne), and lots of years best annuals. He lives in Perth.

Heroic Questions

Who are your real-life heroes?

My first reaction was to say that I don't have a real-life hero, but that's not really true. My mum, who has been through a lot, and still stayed positive and remains the center of her family, even as she moves into her seventies, is my real-life hero. Which I guess gives some clues about what I think a real-life hero is: ordinary people persevering under the extraordinary impact of life's everyday challenges are real-life heroes to me. I'd also say that I think in day-to-day life we describe people as heroes and refer to their acts as heroism much too lightly.



Who are more fun - villains or heroes? - heroes or heroines?

Villains are more fun in fiction, though that's sometimes disguised by the fact that they may not be villains at all. Look at Terry Pratchett's Lord Vetinari. He is the villain of the piece. He'd tell you so himself, and yet, day by day he's making everyone's life in Ankh-Morpork better.

Do you have a favorite fictional hero?

Not really. Maybe Lord Vetinari.

What makes a hero come alive on the page?

The story that he or she finds himself in.

"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit."

-Albert Schweitzer



FILM PROFILES... Interviews by Robert Hood





Just to tempt you, we've presented some **excerpts** from a set of fascinating interviews with short film makers by the coordinator of Conflux's Film Festival, **Robert Hood**. Whet your whistle? Come and read the full interviews at <http://www.conflux.org.au/>. And if you want to read still more stories, extracts, essays on related subjects, explorations of aspects of genre writing, bibliographical and cinematic lists, reviews, and articles on Robert's favourite obsessions, visit Robert's website at <http://www.roberthood.net>.

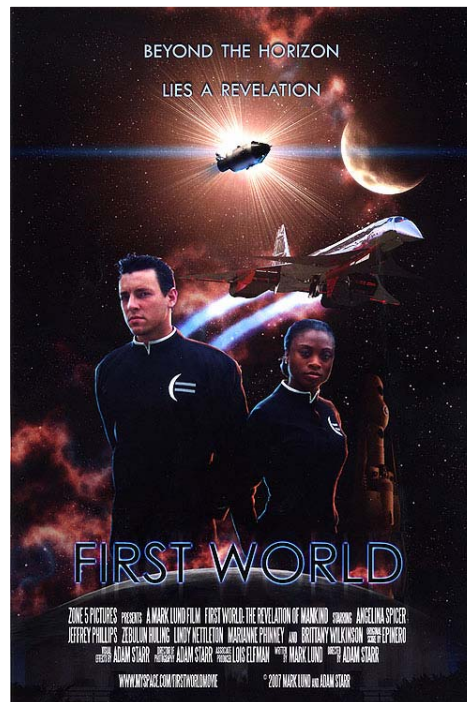
First World

*Excerpt from an interview with
Writer/Producer Mark Lund by Robert Hood*

This short SF film, directed by Adam Starr and written by Mark Lund, is set against an alternative-history account of NASA's exploration of the Moon. It presupposes that in the early 1960s NASA's first probes discovered a vast and advanced civilisation on the Moon, and false images of the lunar surface were transmitted during all Apollo missions.

RH: *Perhaps you can tell us something about what "First World" is all about (without giving any surprises away)?*

ML: The general premise behind First World is as follows: In the early 1960s NASA confirmed the existence of some sort of civilisation in the Sea of Tranquility on the Moon that was shielded from all Earth-based visual detection technology. The race to get to the Moon that we are familiar with was not a "space race" between countries; it was only designed to look that way. When the US reached the Moon in 1969 and made contact with this lunar civilisation it was quickly discovered who they were and what they represented. Thus three World governments led by President Richard Nixon ended manned missions to the Moon in 1972. First World commences in the year 2018 when the Chinese surprise the entire world by announcing they are making their first manned mission to the Moon in 24 hours. This worldwide cover up is now quickly unraveling and while it is referenced in the short and the long versions of the film -- at the end of the long version in particular -- you can pretty much guess who these people really are. As it says in the trailer "All that is believed is over."



RH: *As the writer, were you driven by these thematic elements, or did the story grow out of production necessities?*

ML: There were certain thematic elements that did drive certain parts of the story, but the story really grew as I was writing it. How would these characters react, how would they deal with what they are facing? You have a

President who realises that the entire world has been lied to and who slowly determines what he must do to achieve a global peace, even it means war against his own military, while on the other hand you have the leader of an advanced civilisation that has been here for over 5,000 years and is also wrestling with not just the leadership of his own people and their mission but the Worldwide awareness of them and the explanations he will eventually have to make.

RH: *What do you hope will happen with "First World" from this point?*

ML: My hope is that through the short being screened at conventions such as yours, and while proposals are being generated and considered by producers and investors, combined with our online presence, that all our effects will form a catalyst and

within these groups someone will see the value of producing First World.

RH: *Any other ambitions beyond this film, or is it too early yet?*

ML: I confess I've already made notes for a sequel. Of course, I have to get First World made first!

Watch If You Dare

*Excerpt from an interview with
Watch Me Producer Sam Voutas
by Robert Hood*

Watch Me is a new Australian ghost movie, directed by Melanie Ansley and starring Frances Murrington, Sam Voutas and Tanya McHenry. It follows in the aesthetic tradition of films such as the Japanese Ring, Ju-On: the Grudge, Dark Water and Kairo. It tells the story of a film student caught up in a supernatural infection spread via email attachment, and involves a snuff video, a red-haired ghost and the deadly injunction to "Watch me!"

RH: *Can you tell us something of the history of Watch Me? How did it come about?*

SV: First, I wanted to produce a film that people would pick out at a video store! I mean, you've got thousands of titles; how do you choose? One way to do that is to have a title that just grabs you from the get-go. I'd made a documentary called "The Last Breadbox", and that was a film where when people heard the title, they just had a confused look on their faces.

RH: *You did some acting in the film yourself, as Taku, the freak boy. How was that experience?*

SV: I loved the experience. As we were writing the script I could tell I was itching to play this guy, and it really was the highlight of the entire project for me. I originally got into film through my interest in acting, and Taku really is a very meaty part from an actor's standpoint. He's the most complex character in the film; he's the most multi-layered, and the hardest to pin down. Is he a good guy, a bad guy, a jerk? You're never really sure whether you like him or hate him. I think people also warm to him because he's quite a naughty boy!

RH: *How has the film been received so far? Have you been happy with the way audiences have responded and the exposure it's managed to get?*

SV: The critical reaction from the online horror community has been great. It's amazing how huge horror is on the net; it's just an endless spider web of gore and shock lovers. So most of our publicity has come from the online community, people putting up links, reviews, interviews, TV web spots. We're actually hoping to take Watch Me back to Asia for a special Halloween screening and Q&A, see how that goes. It would be cool to do Seoul; if that doesn't work, maybe China somewhere. Now Japan, that would be something.

RH: *What about plans for the future? Is there hope for a "Watch Me 2" - maybe a studio version with a bigger budget, as happened with Raimi's Evil Dead 2?*

SV: Yeah, we've often joked around about potential sequels, and what their titles might be. Though "Watch Me Again" has a bit of a corny sound to it. I guess the last one could be "Watch Me Over and Over and Over Again". You know, we get asked this question a lot. If the audience wants it, there'll be another one.

RH: *Finally, is Watch Me going to be officially available on DVD any time soon?*

SV: Yes! But I don't want to let the cat out of the bag just yet. The thing with indie distribution is, it takes time. Your film has a two-year festival shelf life, and all that while it's gaining word of mouth and buzz - which are helping to build its market base. What I'm really hoping for is that we can find something in Australia. Typically it's much easier to get the film on DVD overseas, ironically! So a home-win for this one, just for sentimental reasons, would be the icing on the cake.

~



For more information regarding Watch Me, go to the website at <http://www.watchmemovie.com>.

When Evil Reigns:

*Excerpt from an interview with Luke and Alix Jackson
by Robert Hood*

The new Australian film *When Evil Reigns*, by Luke and Alix Jackson is a lively, zombiesque, horror thriller that has enough flesh-eating, fighting for survival, claustrophobia, tension and violence to satisfy horror fans willing to look beyond Hollywood for their entertainment. I talked to the Jackson brothers about the ins and outs of their independent no-budget production.

RH: What's your background in film, guys?

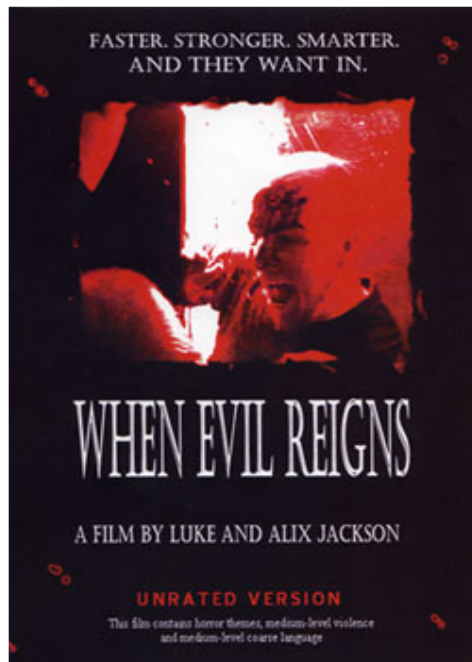
Alix: I come at it from an actor's angle, which is what I wanted to do with my life, and why I wanted to make a film - to star in it!

Luke: Pretty minimal, on my part. My background's in writing, rather than filmmaking, so I tried to bring a level of characterisation to the film and a commitment to the storytelling that you may not always see in the genre.

*RH: What led you to make
When Evil Reigns?*

Luke: My brother and I probably have different perspectives on this question. For me, the idea of making a zombie film was really appealing. I'd always loved Romero's films, each for different reasons, as well as the slew of zombie films that followed his, like *Return of the Living Dead* and even *Braindead*. Another sub-genre that I've always loved is the 'survival' movie, in which a bunch of characters are forced to work together and inevitably fail, destroying themselves in the process. While this is used really effectively in zombie movies, it's equally effective in non-horror movies like the original *Assault on Precinct 13* and *Stagecoach*.

Alix: We've always been huge horror fans, so the influence was in part NOLD. So our influence is 70s and 80s horror/sci-fi (*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is in my top 5). We have also been influenced a great deal by our favourite writers growing up, Christopher Pike and Richard Laymon.



RH: You did some acting in the film yourselves. How was that experience?

Alix: Great. This is why I was in it to begin with. I would have liked to be aware of how hard doing all the roles was going to be before we started, but I was still pretty happy with my overall performance.

Luke: I'd done some stage acting, but nothing for a few years prior to shooting *When Evil Reigns*. I think that, if I had my way, this would probably be my last appearance in front of the camera, but if we're going to continue down the low-budget path I imagine I'll be called upon to make a cameo at some point.

RH: What sort of role do you see independent films playing in the current cinema scene? Are they more than just "calling cards" to bigger and better things?

Luke: I think that independent films have a really important role to play in the current cinema scene, as they always have. As we've seen with the recent influx of Japanese and Korean horror movies, it doesn't always take a huge budget to change the mindset of moviegoers.

And with festivals like the Melbourne Under-ground Film Festival and the newly established Sydney-based equivalent offering legitimate avenues for exhibition, Australia seems to be embracing the idea of independent cinema.

Alix: It is a great way to hone your skills and test the waters, so to speak. I would advise anyone that is making shorts to try to make a feature, as it's an excellent way to gain experience.

RH: How has the film been received so far? Are you happy with responses to it?

Alix: I like the fact that people are taking it seriously, and reviewing it as such.

Luke: For me, any time somebody sits down to watch the movie, I'm pretty pleased; if they stay to the end, even better; and if they actually like it, or buy a copy of the DVD, I think it's terrific. The highlight of 2006 for us, and for the film, was winning the Melbourne

Underground Film Festival's award for the Most Gratuitous Use of Violence.

RH: Any plans for the future? A sequel maybe: "When Evil Washes Down the Drain"?

Luke: No: we can't use that title because it's already been used in relation to our box-office receipts.

Alix: We are currently working on "Verité", which is a psychological thriller, with what promises to be an amazing cast of semi-known actors. It is slated for production in 2008 so, fingers crossed.

For more information on *When Evil Reigns*, go to the website at: www.whenevilreigns.com

Answering The Call

*from an Interview with The Call of Cthulhu
Producer/Screenwriter Sean Branney
by Robert Hood*

The Call of Cthulhu -- based on one of H.P. Lovecraft's most iconic stories and produced under the auspices of the H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society -- is a remarkable film not simply in capturing much of the tone and atmosphere of Lovecraft's fictional universe, but in taking a rather left-field approach to its conceptualisation. The film is made in the manner of a 1920s silent film.

RH: *Why choose The Call of Cthulhu to film? It's not an easy one! Was it your first film effort?*

SB: It's very seminal to Lovecraft's body of writing, it's one of the more cinematic Lovecraft stories and it's never been adapted to the screen before. It seemed like a good challenge.

RH: *Why did you decide to film The Call of Cthulhu the way you did*

SB: One of the key elements of Lovecraft's work is the sense of atmosphere he creates. We wanted to keep that atmosphere and try and tell the story without adding a lot of superfluous elements (e.g. car chases, girlfriends, dogs, etc...). We thought if we adapted the story the way it might have been adapted back when Lovecraft was writing, we might be able to keep the atmosphere of the piece in our movie.

RH: *Lovecraft -- in the purest sense anyway -- hasn't fared all that well on film in the past. Your film is probably the closest thing to an accurate translation of a Lovecraft story to film. What are your thoughts on Lovecraft in the cinema? Why is Lovecraft so hard to capture on film?*

SB: HPL is a very literary writer. He writes about ideas and atmosphere more than characters and plot. Some of the adaptations haven't succeeded because they've remained so close to the source material that they don't satisfy us dramatically in the way we've come to expect from movies. Others overcompensate by bringing so many of the trappings of Hollywood that they leave HPL and what made the story good out of the picture.

film in the style of a 1920s silent picture, we believed we could bridge that gap. Another major problem was doing all this with the very limited resources we had at our disposal. The scope of the story is immense: numerous international locations, dozens of characters, fantastical underwater cities, hundreds of naked cultists in a swamp, boats and monsters, dreams and nightmares, the passage of decades of time. How to realise all this in an oversize garage in the suburbs of Los Angeles?

RH: *What about the actors? Where did they come from? What was it like being an actor working in a rather unique setting?*

SB: My wife and I run a small theatre in Los Angeles and many of the actors in The Call of Cthulhu are actors we've worked with in the theatre company. We also held open auditions and had hundreds of people submit their resumes for even some of the very small roles. Most actors actually found it pleasant to work on a set where the director can talk to them during the take. It lets you work a little more efficiently than you can on a set which has to be silent.

RH: *What do you (all or anyone) think about the film, now that it's entered the world and has been introduced to the public? What kind of response has it received?*

SB: We made the movie for ourselves and we were pretty naive about the life it would have after we were done shooting. The Call of Cthulhu has been shown at major film

festivals all over the world; it's won a number of awards and we've sold far more copies of it than we ever imagined possible. Lovecraft fans have really taken to it and on the whole seem happy to see a Lovecraft movie which really embraces the qualities that make HPL an extraordinary writer.

RH: *What sort of role do you see for independent film production in today's climate?*

SB: I think the indies have demonstrated that they are here to stay.



Visit the Call of Cthulhu website at: www.cthulhulives.org

RH: *Andrew, what artistic problems did you face in bringing the story to the screen?*

AL: The main artistic problem was being true to the spirit and atmosphere of the original story while at the same time making an entertaining film. Lovecraft's stories lack or de-emphasise many of the elements (like plot, dialogue, character relationships) that movies need. By doing the

RH: *What's next for your company?*

SB: We're currently in pre-production for another motion picture. This time we're taking Lovecraft's "The Whisperer in Darkness" and adapting it as a feature-length early 30s talkie. Sound is an important element in the story, so we didn't want to go silent with this one. We're scheduled to start shooting this fall.

Sea-changes

*From An Interview with Liminals
producer, writer and director Claire McKenna
by Robert Hood*

Liminals is a low-low budget SF film made by Melbourne-based Claire McKenna. It concerns a future in which genetic body modification has resulted in the rise of a new species of humanity, with resultant struggles over identity and territory. It is also a love story.

RH: *Tell us about the film, Liminals. What's it about? What were you attempting to achieve with it, artistically?*

CM: It was a combination of things. One inspiration was a conversation at Fast Eddies in Perth during a Swancon - 2000, I think - where we discussed how copper-based blood - haemocyanin as opposed to iron haemoglobin - is present in some animals that live in low oxygen environments. Then there was a throwaway line in a New Scientist article ... "water is liminal" ... I can't even remember what the article was about. So I wanted to do a story about humans who were engineered for different environments and what conflicts might arise from that. It struck me how bioengineered organisms are the embodiment of what it is to be "liminal" to be permanently in a transitory state. There's a line in the movie where Sarah says, "it's awful being trapped in transition, neither one thing or another". The problem was how to express these ideas visually. There was a lot that was cut out of my original script due to expense and just unwieldy dialogue. There are a few subplots concerning the militarisation of technology, and trying to fix one problem by introducing another even less desirable element. Again, I felt the novella version conveyed things better than moving images do. I'm still biased towards prose.

RH: *Obviously there was relatively little budget involved. What problems did this create for you and how did you attempt to overcome them?*

CM: I had to resign myself that nothing was going to look real, and take on the theatre principle that if you suggest something - like a porthole in a window - people will interpret the rest themselves. Some creative editing helped! Then I had to spend the year keeping an eye out for locations. My best "find" was a section of old sewer pipe that was big enough for the only true "Liminal" shot in the movie.

RH: *Did the whole of the production side of things fall on your shoulders? Who else was involved?*

CM: I couldn't have done it without a lot of people, but the guys who were there for EVERY SINGLE DAY - Steve Gleeson, Edgar Loutit, Jane Loutit and my partner Eric Friebel - helped all the way through. I couldn't have done it without them. Then there were people like Garfield Barnard, Russell Devlin and Darren Maxwell who helped out with props and expertise, and even Cat Sparks flew in from interstate to help out. That's commitment.

RH: *What about casting? How did you get your stars? Clearly they weren't all like me - that is, in the film without knowing it until the first showing!*

CM: Steve - as Arkady Fisher, the hapless protagonist - was the first cast. He is also an avid theatre actor as well as a writer, so I knew he would be sympathetic to the material. Edgar Loutit is one of my long-time partners-in-crime and he was willing to try anything. I put a call out on the various mailing lists and secured several people - a few had to quit for time reasons, but that's how I met Clare McDonald, who plays Kathy. A lot of people from Supernova Writer's group donated themselves or their kids. And, yes, occasionally I would find some snippets of footage that helped with the story - even if they weren't aware of it at the time!

RH: *Post-production was a lengthy and thwarted time for you, wasn't it? What was going on there?*

CM: Oh god, I had a huge editing system crash when I pushed my computer to the utter limit trying to put a copy back to tape. What made it worse was that the Convergence screening was going to be that night! Luckily I had a saved copy of an earlier first draft edit on my desktop. I knew that people were depending on a Saturday screening to give the convention some content. Eric burnt a DVD and Terry Frost loaned his laptop to play it after we had interlacing problems.

RH: *What role do you see for independent productions in the film industry?*

CM: It's the training ground, I think. Sort of a demonstration of commitment when you want to take things to the next level and secure funding. That's the holy grail, isn't it?

RH: *What advice would you give to prospective filmmakers?*

CM: Delegate. Plan and plan and delegate. Then get the project finished. Getting it finished is probably the hardest thing.

RH: *What sort of feedback have you had for the film?*

CM: Even with the crappy first draft, people were saying "it's not as bad as I thought it was going to be". Which has to be constructed as some sort of compliment!

RH: *What is the future of Liminals?*

CM: Ultimately, Claire's Show-Reel Part One. And perhaps not even that, but at least less time than film school. You know, I have ideas for a sequel of sorts, but that'll need a bit more money and might be a long while yet.

RH: *What about you? What's next?*

CM: My next foray is into the 24-hour Film Festival Shoot Out in Geelong during September. That's the planning and shooting of a short film over 24 hours, all editing in camera.

Conflux Members

This list is current at 1st of September.

It does not show members who have requested their names be withheld.

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Keri Arthur
Chris Barnes
Stuart Barrow
Jiri Baum
Jason Beddoes
Anita Bell
Mik Bennett
Phill Berrie
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Leigh Blackmore
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Val Toh
Jane Virgo
Susan Warner
Kaaron Warren
Michael Wauchope
Tamaly Wauchope
Zyl Wauchope
Emmy Wearmouth
Jo West-Moore
Cora Wright



Mars Pathfinder - landing sequence

source: <http://www.seds.org/spaceviews/pathfinder/images.html>



MEMBERSHIP PRICE

	1 January - 31 May 2007	1 June - 28 September 2007	At the door
Full (attendance, publications)	\$145	\$190	\$220
Student/Concession (attendance, publications)	\$100	\$130	\$155
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 I do *not* want to be sent any updates on the convention
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Conflux 4 Regency Gothic Banquet

Tickets are \$50 per person. The Banquet will be held on the Saturday night

No. of Banquet tickets _____ Total cost of Banquet Tickets \$ _____

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