



*WATCH THE SKIES*



# The Chaplain's War

By Brad Torgersen

## 16.7

Mankind is overwhelmed. No one knows how long it will be until the mantis aliens overrun what remains of our worlds. One man will change our fate by keeping a promise. Harold Barlow is not your ordinary fleet conscript and his situation isn't ordinary either. His Chapel on Purgatory is open to one and all, but a mantis is the last thing he would have expected. When Barlow tries to explain the intangible nature of religion to the scholar mantis, he never expected that it might change the state of the war. The problem is, even if things have changed, the urge of the mantis to swarm will bring around once again the conflict that could wipe out either or both species. Can one man who constantly finds his beliefs challenged, change the beliefs of a species he barely understands?

-Next month's book— The Master Sergeant by Mel Odom

-August's meeting will be held on Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00PM for a signing with Danielle Ackley-McPhail and Mike McPhail

-Dear Crabby looks at the many faces of Harley Quinn and our assumptions about her ...

Check out the website at: [watchtheskies.org](http://watchtheskies.org) or contact us at: [wtsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wtsnewsletter@gmail.com)



Home of Watch the Skies  
and awesome books too.

# NEW RELEASES

August 2016

Aaronovitch, Ben - **The Hanging Tree**  
Adams, John Joseph, & Douglas Cohen, eds. -  
**What the #@&% Is That?**  
Baxter, Stephen • **Obelisk**  
Blaylock, James P. - **The Further Adventures of  
Langdon St. Ives**  
Campbell, Ramsey - **The Kind Folk**  
Cato, Beth - **Breath of Earth**  
Charlton, Blake - **Spellbreaker**  
Damico, Gina - **Wax**  
Gibson, Gary - **Survival Game**  
Guran, Paula, ed. - **The Year's Best Science Fiction &  
Fantasy Novellas: 2016 Edition**  
Hearn, Lian - **The Tale of Shikanoko, Vol. 3:  
Lord of the Darkwood**  
Itäranta, Emmi - **The Weaver**  
Jemisin, N. K. - **The Obelisk Gate**  
Kasturi, Sandra, & Jerome Stueart, eds. - **Imaginarium 5:  
The Best Canadian Speculative Writing**  
Kowal, Mary Robinette - **Ghost Talkers**  
Mamatas, Nick - **I Am Providence**  
Marmell, Ari - **Dead to Rites**  
Martin, George R. R., ed. - **Wild Cards: High Stakes**  
McGuire, Seanan - **Full of Briars**  
Meadows, Foz - **An Accident of Stars**  
Miéville, China - **The Last Days of New Paris**  
Nielsen Hayden, Teresa - **Making Conversation**  
Remic, Andy - **The Twilight of the Dragons**  
Silverberg, Robert - **Early Days: More Tales from  
the Pulp Era**  
Swanwick, Michael - **Not So Much, Said the Cat**  
Vaughn, Carrie - **Amaryllis and Other Stories**  
Wexler, Django - **The Guns of Empire**  
Zinos-Amaro, Alvaro - **Traveler of Worlds: Conversations  
with Robert Silverberg**

# ***Dear Crabby***

Dear Crabby

What do you think of the differences between the Harley Quinn of Batman: The Animated Series & The New Adventure of Batman, the Harley Quinn of Suicide Squad, and the Harley Quinn of Batman: Arkham Asylum? Are we going backwards in our recognition of women as superheros and not just scantily clad eye-candy?

Fuming Feminist



Dear Stinky,

Lower your blood pressure for just a minute. We haven't actually seen the new movie for Suicide Squad yet, only trailers. Trailers can be deceiving. I thought Gosford Park would be funny. Margot Robbie is definitely hot in this role and the character is highly sexualized as the character is in Arham Asylum. However, isn't it as important that we change our perspective to allow women to embrace their sexuality without tying it to anyone but, themselves?

Pro-woman does not have to mean anti-sexy woman. The whole point is it being each woman's choice what makes her happy and feel good regardless of other people's thoughts or expectations. Honestly, what I find more disturbing is the suggestion by the newest trailer that instead of Harleen Quinzel making a decison (however bad it may be) to follow a life of crime to be closer to a literal abusive clown who she allows herself to fall in love with is that the choice is no longer hers and rather Harley Quinn is who she is transformed and molded into by The Joker. The same abusive fool but now with all the power instead of just what Harley has given him over her. I find it much more offensive to have a woman with no choice guided by the will of a man and his twisting of her mind and emotion than I do to see a woman who makes horrible choices based on her own flawed character and if she wants to wear booty shorts and show lots of cleavage while she does so, as long as it's her choice, I can in some way respect it even if I can't support it.

Basically, I think you're missing the bigger picture. The idea I see as important here is that female characters get to be as real as women are in real life. That means in all their amazing, flawed, wonderful, sexy or modest or asexual glory. Just like male characters should and more often do get to.

Glad we got to clear the air.

Crabby

# EVENT HORIZON

-*Young Frankenstein* will be getting a behind the scenes book thanks to Mel Brooks. Rebecca Keegan will be aiding Brooks and they plan to interview the films producer, directory of photography and even Cloris Leachman. *Young Frankenstein* is considered a classic and was even added to the Library of Congress National Film Registry.

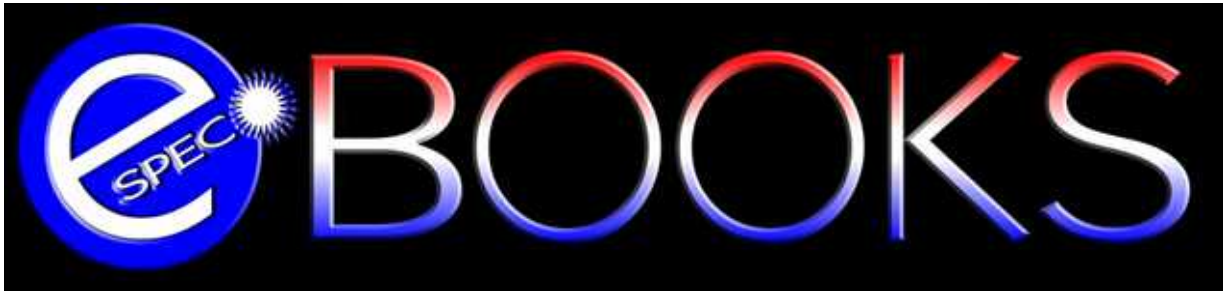
-Netflix scored a big coup recently by becoming the provider for the new *Star Trek* series due to arrive in January of 2017. Netflix will make the episodes available a day after they air on TV. The deal also allows Netflix to continue to show all of the other *Star Trek* television shows: *The Original Series*, *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager* and *Enterprise*. The word is that new show will have a different ship with a different crew but they follow the same ideology as the other shows. The new *Star Trek* will start production as early as September in Toronto.

-That's new *Star Trek*, however the original series turns 50 this year and the folks at Shmaltz Brewing are serving up two beers in celebration: the Golden Anniversary Ale : The Trouble with Tribbles and the Golden Anniversary Ale : Voyage to the Northeast Quadrant. The Trouble with Tribbles brew will be comprised of a number of different hops including: Comet, Polaris, Aurora and Admiral and include wheat malt as a tribute to the quadrotitcale wheat/rye variant that featured in the original episode. Voyage to the Northeast Quadrant will be of a more standard fare for the less daring drinker. Both brews will debut at the San Diego Comicon.

-*Mr. Robot* feels like the real deal with regards to hacking because they went to the experts for advice. The security firm, Tanium deals with all kinds of issues in cybersecurity and their chief security architect, Ryan Kanancian is an expert at breaking into computer systems to determine their weaknesses. Also Andrew McGregor, who is the director of security for Tanium, worked with the FBI in the past investigating issues with government systems. These two are helping the showrunners keep it real and the results are what make *Mr. Robot* stand out from the pack.

-Stephen King has several movie projects going forward. Pictures are emerging from both *The Dark Tower* and *It*. The image of Pennywise from *It* is all over the Internet and certainly seems to contain the same sort of menace that Tim Curry did. Pictures of Idris Ibla and Matthew McConaughey are also floating around as well as interviews and rumors about *The Dark Tower*. King himself is quoted as saying that he reviewed the script and removed a significant amount of Roland Deschain's dialog. He also pointed out that two characters from the book Eddie and Susannah will not be in the movie. King also stated he is 100% behind the adaptation.

-The news just hit the Internet that the next season of *Game of Thrones* will only be seven episodes long and will be arriving later in the year than usual. Most feel that the seven is related to the seven kingdoms and or seven gods. Fans will also have to wait a little longer for the DVDs of Season Six, which are set to drop on November 15th. Those who are willing to watch things via digital download can enjoy this year's show on August 1st.



August's meeting will be on the 27th, at 1:00PM

Danielle Ackley-McPhail and Mike McPhail will visit to show off the latest releases from the eSpec Books : *Gaslight and Grimm*—your favorite faerie tales redone in a steampunk style and the reissue of *Dogs of War*—Military Science Fiction—men and the animals that serve with them

### **COSPLAY TIP OF THE MONTH : WORBLA**

Move fast and gently when working with Worbla, a popular thermoplastic commonly used in armor and prop-making. Once it's heated it's a little hectic to handle (frequent users joke that they have no fingerprints!), it can tear if stretched too far, and it adheres to itself almost instantly. Try heating smaller areas and thermoforming gradually, rather than heating a large area that may collapse upon itself or tear. You can always reheat and patch, but your surface won't be as smooth and even.

By Stefanie Hackenberg

### **CONFLUENCE**

**July 29-31, 2016**

Pittsburgh's longest running literary convention  
with a strong focus on Science Fiction,  
Fantasy and Horror

Guest of Honor—Saladin Ahmed  
(Throne of the Crescent Moon)

Music Guests of Honor—Jeff & Maya Bonhoff  
Special Klingon Guest Author—  
Lawrence Schoen (Barsk)

Special Music Guest—Steve Goodie

<http://parsec-sff.org/confluence/>

# Exploring Strange New Worlds

## Escape Velocity 2016

Escape Velocity, the first convention hosted by the new Museum of Science Fiction, launched July 1-3, 2016 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor. The convention was crowdfunded earlier in the year, and while the lineup and content for this nascent event were quite ambitious the execution was a tremendous success. Representatives from the realm of science and popular stars from science fiction shared their experiences with attendees of all ages. NASA, robotics firms, drone enthusiasts, educational organizations, and fan groups had a variety of things to offer. Escape Velocity unequivocally lived up to their objective: "Create a micro futuristic world's fair to promote STEAM education within the context of Science Fiction using the fun of comic cons and fascination of science and engineering festivals."

EV attendees could marvel at a new model Tesla, a 3D printed car, a Starship Horizons Bridge Simulator, screen-worthy Star Wars cosplayers from the 501st Legion, hands-on NASA activities for kids, drone races, and clever innovations in the Exhibitor Hall. Rod Roddenberry, son of Star Trek creator Gene Roddenberry, and Leonard Nimoy's son Adam Nimoy, were the marquis guests for the convention. In addition to speaking on a number of panels discussing science fiction's impact on technology and space exploration, Roddenberry was promoting The Roddenberry Foundation's endeavors to create a prosperous, equal-opportunity, technologically advanced, ecologically-minded world, and Adam Nimoy introduced his upcoming crowdfunded documentary "For the Love of Spock," an homage to his father and the character he iconicized.

Programming was understandably sparse for a first-year con, but quality certainly made up for lack of quantity. Subjects included STEAM education, sci-fi movie making, maker & modeling topics, sci-fi classics and their evolution to contemporary entertainment, current and future space programs, robotics and ethics, fight choreography, Klingon and other languages, autonomous vehicles, nanotechnology, and even how to run a convention. Tee Morris gave a delightful presentation on the evolution of sci-fi film soundtracks with several pivotal examples. Women in science and science fiction were represented as well: Gigi Edgley from "Farscape" and Luvia Peterson of "Continuum"; Astronaut Pam Melroy; Dr. Michelle Thaller, astronomer and research scientist; and Kellie Gerardi, specialist for companies dedicated to furthering exploration of our solar system and commercial human space flight.

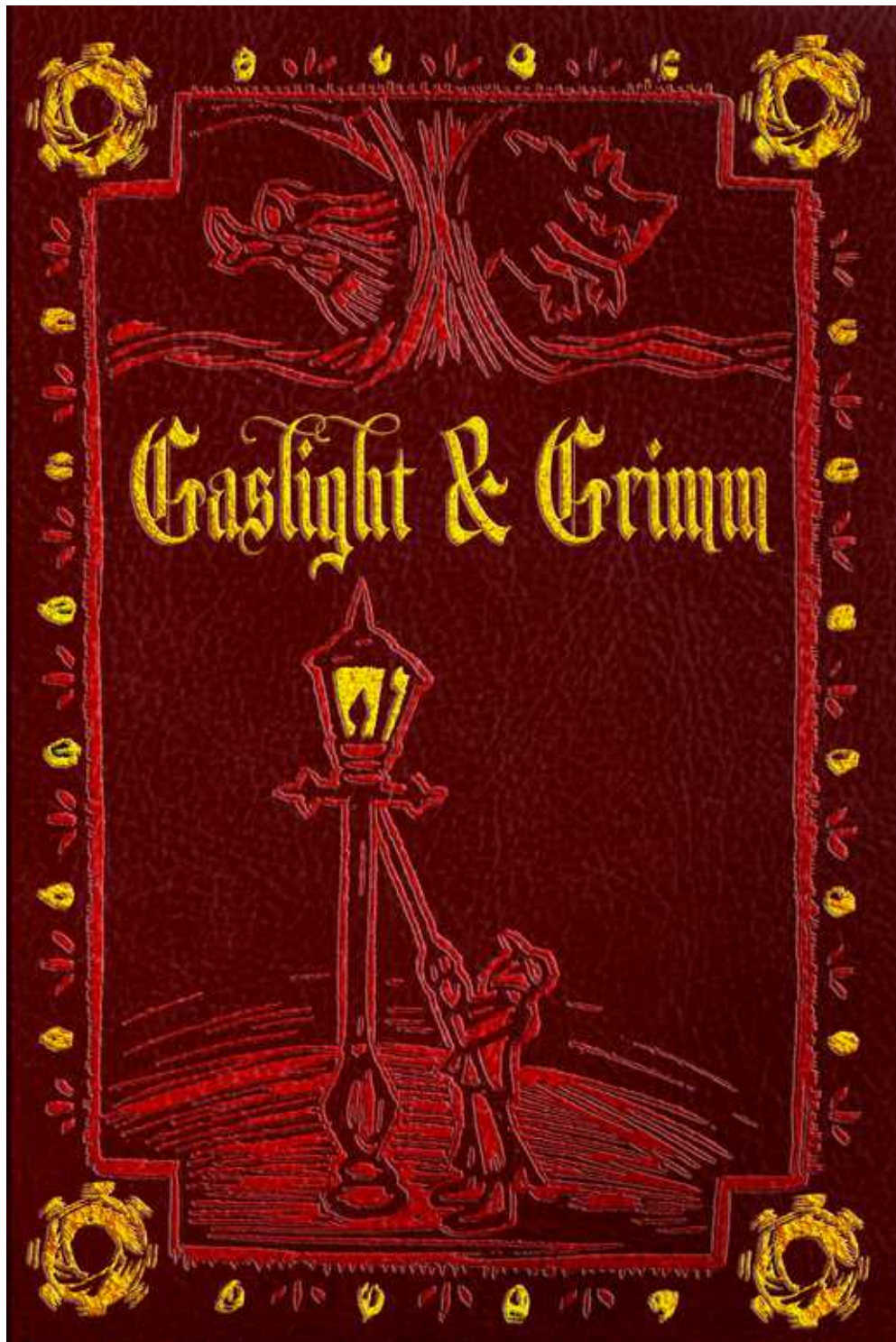
Studio Cosplay delivered some cosplay technique demos and panels discussing the cosplay community and cosplay bullying. We also MC'd the Cosplay Showcase where an impressive number of beginner cosplayers featured their remarkable creations.

The Sci-Fi Burlesque show, hosted by the 501st Legion's own Kylo Ren, was a hilarious hit for their clever and bawdy takes on sci-fi and video game classics.

From the overwhelmingly positive feedback the convention's facilitators received it looks like we'll have a 2017 Escape Velocity as well! The teams delivering Escape Velocity had so much heart -- nowhere else would vendors and presenters be so well taken care of.

By Stefanie Hackenberg





## AVAILABLE NOW

The stories you grew up with infused with a new sense of adventure and powered by steam—*Gaslight and Grimm*. Edited by Danielle Ackley-McPhail and Diana Bastine.

# Sciencey Stuff

-Biohybrids are machines that incorporate biological and mechanical elements and they are popping up in the news recently. Scientists at Case Western Reserve University have created a biohybrid that crawls like a turtle on the beach using elements from a sea slug. The mechanical elements are created using a 3D printer and the muscles from the mouth of a sea slug provide the motive part. An electrical field activates the muscle tissue. A similar biohybrid was recently constructed using stingray tissue. In this case the creature uses no electronic elements to provide motion. The electronic parts are used to allow the scientists to remotely control the stingray. The robot is guided and powered by light sensitive cells taken from a rat's heart. Returning to the seaslug biohybrid, the CWRU team is also working on developing a skin for their creation using the collagen of the sea slug. The goal of their effort is to eventually develop a purely organic machine. In the mean time, the biohybrids can be used for a number of different purposes such as exploring the ocean floor and looking for lost or damaged ships. Also if they are able to develop organic robots, when their tasks are completed they could simply be left to decompose.

-In another biological development, researchers at Tufts University have developed an unusual way of monitoring healing – with wireless microcircuitry embedded in the actual sutures holding the wounds closed. The threads are filled with nanoscale sensors, electronics and wireless elements. A cell phone or a computer can read the transmitted information. While the monitoring of healing is a very commendable usage for the technology, its successful use will also pave the way for more effective wearable technology. In this case the wireless and monitoring elements would literally be built directly into the clothes.

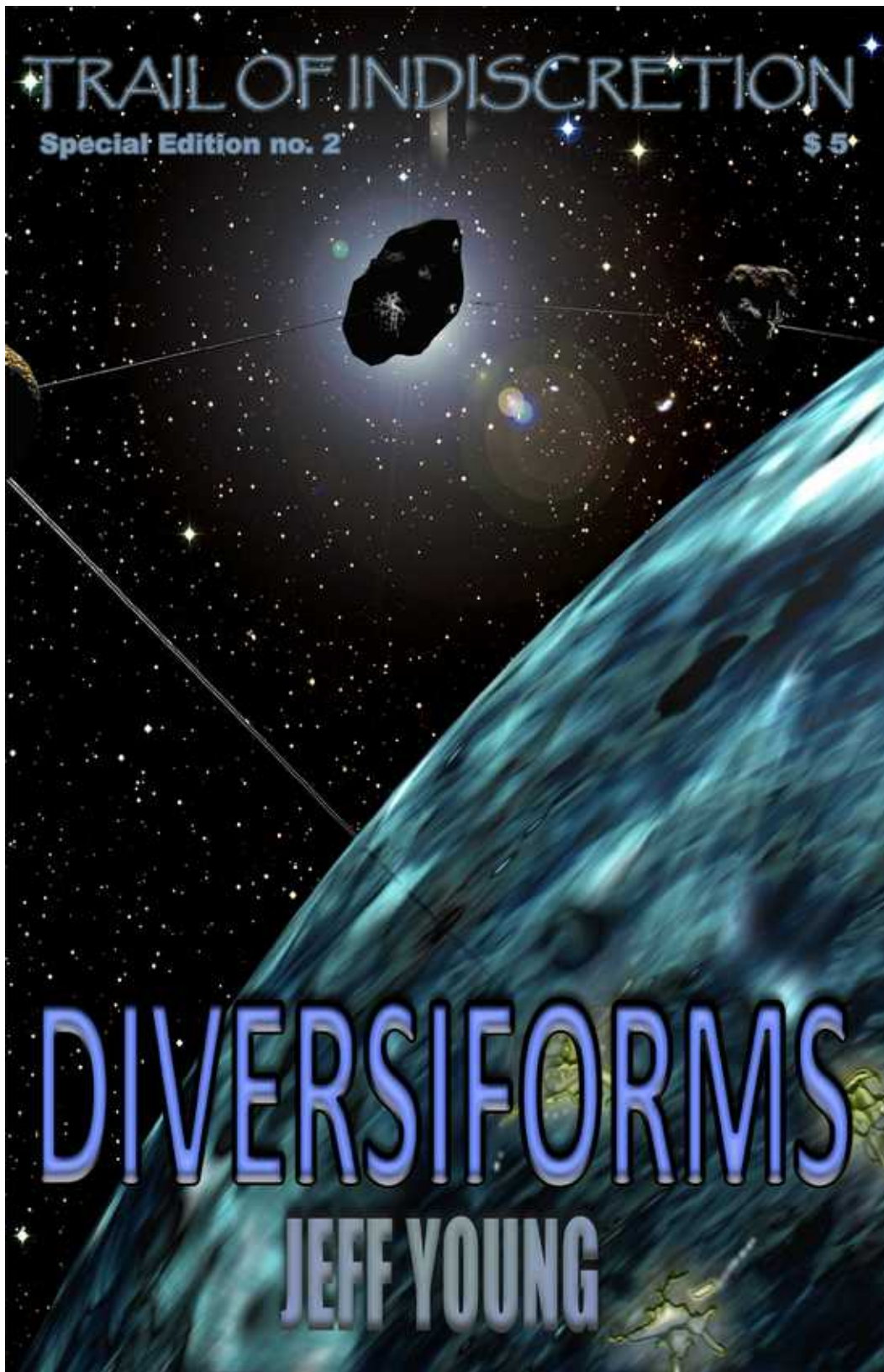
-Pokemon Go™ has been doing a lot of unexpected things – to us. Due to the nature of the game, it's encouraged exercise, especially to the truly devoted. In order to hatch one egg, a player may walk as many as one or more miles. It's also more effective to visit a number of pokestop locations. The game also fosters cooperation amongst its player as well as bringing families together as parents teach their children and travel with them to the various locations in order to catch the pokemon. Pokestop locations were chosen with safety in mind and are often based around historical monuments, post offices and other public places using the Google Maps template. It's also possible for players to spend an excessive amount of time on the game ignoring their responsibilities, travel onto private property and become obsessively attached to the game. This is really the tip of the iceberg considering the possibility of augmented reality games. We looked at Google glass and decided it wasn't something that we really wanted. However, Pokemon Go™ demonstrates that we are looking for some aspects the glasses were capable of if it is packaged in a device we are familiar with. So it's a very good question what's next and will it succeed like Pokemon Go™?

# Tillyer's News From the High Frontier

July 2016

-This past Monday, the latest Space-X Dragon capsule carried up the IDA-2, a docking collar designed to allow a variety of transports to attach themselves to the International Space Station. As the number of private industries with the ability to bring payloads into orbit increases, the Space Station will benefit from being able to dock with different styles of ships. Currently, the American cargo vessels that approach the station have to be grappled into position. The IDA-2 will alleviate the problem and also allow the Russian ships to connect as well. The connector will be attached to the location of one of the former shuttle docks. This was the second attempt to bring up the IDA-2. The first failed when the Falcon-9 rocket broke up three minutes into its flight. Since they can be used with a variety of craft it makes sense to outfit upcoming missions like the Orion to ensure that most spacecraft can dock in case of an emergency.

-With the private industries moving forward into space, there is some concern about attempting to establish property rights on bodies other than the Earth. After the launch of Sputnik, the United Nations formed a committee called COPUOS, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to define principles that could guide the countries of the world in the use and exploration of space. There are 5 main treaties in place regarding the presence of humans in space: the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention, the Registry Convention and the Moon Agreement. The Outer Space Treaty is comprised of three main points : Space is free, there are no sovereign claims and exploration will be used to benefit all; Nuclear weapons are not allowed off the Earth; and the launching state or country is responsible for damage caused by what they launch into space. With regards to the other treaties, the Moon Agreement has the most to do with property rights in space as it expands upon the details outlined in the Outer Space Treaty. It is however only signed by 16 of the participating nations, none of whom are primary explorers of space. Even though these agreements and treaties are on the books, there is no real methodology in place to punish any nation that might contravene them with the exception of economic sanctions. So far we've been discussing nations, what does that mean when it's private companies? Discussions have suggested that space be treated in the same fashion as Antarctica, a place purely for scientific research. But current treaties would also allow private companies to remove ore and other items from areas while not claiming the locale exclusively. Obviously, there is a need for more definite treaties and legislation to deal with the instances.



# DIVERSIFORMS

JEFF YOUNG

COMING SOON

