



# WORLD WATCH ONE

October 2022

It's  
**BigBOOté**




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## WORLD WATCH ONE ☯ IN THIS ISSUE

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## Acknowledgments

It probably comes as no surprise that Halloween is one of our more favorite holidays among the *World Watch One* staff, but one staffer in particular bears mentioning as the primary inspiration for our pulling together a Halloween issue: Scott, this one's for you!

**In the hot seat:** We continue to gape in awe at the tireless efforts of Earl Mac Rauch and W. D. Richter in regularly contributing to this newsletter. Gentlemen, we salute you. Special thanks are in order for Jake Young of the *Wizard and the Bruiser* podcast for his interview in this issue.

We also extend our gratitude to Loren Bouchard, Chris Dunham, Elektra Hammond, Bonnie Jones, Conchi Murphy, Pepe Serna, and Billy Vera for their contributions to this issue. Bonnie Jones in particular deserves special mention for waiting a year to see her article in print after last year's Halloween issue failed to materialize, or perhaps "dematerialized" is the more seasonally appropriate term. Many thanks to Denise and Mike Okuda at the Banzai Institute Facebook page for their continued generosity in getting the word out about *World Watch One*, as well as their many other contributions to Banzai fandom. We extend our appreciation to Dan Berger, Barry Chan, Matt Haley, and Mike Okuda for creating the graphic elements that appear in this issue. Thanks also go out to Chris "ArcLight" Wike for hosting the newsletter's presence on the interwebs at the [World Watch OnLine library](#) and Sean Murphy for doing the same at the [Buckaroo Banzai FAQ](#). Particular thanks to Sean Murphy for proofing this issue's contents, as well as his boundless enthusiasm and efforts in making the latest issue happen.

All thanks go to the staff of this publication for once again diving into the void and shaping it into something for Buckaroo Banzai fans everywhere to enjoy: Barry Chan, Steve Mattsson, Sean Murphy, Steven H Silver, and Scott Tate. Way to go, team!

**Commendations** go to two people this issue. Scott Tate's love for Halloween is the primary force that made this issue possible. Scott also graciously fielded my bombardment of requests for additional material, much of which appears in the Short Takes section of the newsletter (the "Weirdness Beat" is 100% Scott). This would have been a very small installment of the newsletter indeed had Mr. Tate not risen to the occasion. Barry Chan received a similar expanding list of things to do on short notice, including the seasonal Banzaiesque graphics that appear throughout as well as this month's cover design. Thanks, fellas!

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**Submissions** to *World Watch One* are strongly encouraged. Really. I am dead serious. People, we know you're out there! All are welcome. Please contact us at [dan.berger.2@gmail.com](mailto:dan.berger.2@gmail.com) for details.



**Front Cover:** Deep in the subbasements of Yoyodyne Propulsion Systems' abandoned ruins, a restless spirit lurks; craving the snacks he enjoyed in life and imploring the living to get his goddamn name right.

This issue's cover comes to you from Blue Blaze Irregular Rolo Tomassi, aka Barry Chan. The image began as one of Barry's many Banzai-inspired t-shirt designs. Your humble editor suggested transforming Bigbooté's portrait into a Ghost Huntersesque night vision encounter with the Lectroid's dissatisfied revenant. Barry ran with it, adding spectral snack foods and the backdrop of an abandoned Yoyodyne for the perfect spooktacular cover.

Questions? Comments? Need a sympathetic ear and a kind word? That's why we're here. Contact us at [dan.berger.2@gmail.com](mailto:dan.berger.2@gmail.com).

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# 1 BANZAI INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING AND STRATEGIC INFORMATION

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Welcome To Our Halloween Spooktacular Issue. Deal With It.

It had to happen sometime.

It's a little mind boggling to consider but it turns out that, over the last eighteen years of publishing *World Watch One*, only one issue was released in October. The most frightening part? The issue had nothing to do with Halloween. At all.

What? WHAT?! How could this be?

I mean, come on. Everyone knows that Orson Welles's *The War of the Worlds* radio broadcast looms large in the happenings of *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8<sup>th</sup> Dimension*. It's common knowledge that Welles's radio broadcast ushered in the Halloween of 1938, which basically makes *Buckaroo Banzai* a Halloween movie. How has a Halloween Spooktacular Issue not happened before?

All I can say is that we've been asleep at the wheel for almost two decades, but not this time. No way, José.

This issue is jam packed with everything a true aficionado of All Hallows' Eve and the Día de los Muertos could ask for: From alien invasions to cultist compounds, from paranormal investigations to dead monarchs, there's a little bit of everything for everyone. There's even an automobile cosplay if you're looking for costume ideas.

Which brings us to the latest installment of **Pimping Your Ride, Jet Car Style**. In this episode, fellow BBI Chris "Cobalt" Dunham shows you how to take that high milage vehicle in your life and transform it from a jalopy into a tactical marvel worthy of your next strike team mission. Time to knock off the rust, pull out the Bondo, and sand some surfaces to make room for a brand new look.

Bonnie Jones brings you a look at the hullabaloo that resulted during Orson Welles's report on the 1938 Red Lectroid invasion of Grover's Mill, New Jersey in "**A Wave of Mass Hysteria...**" **Remembering *The War of the Worlds***. No bubble wrap glasses needed for this look at H. G. Wells's classic, as adapted for radio by the good folks at The Mercury Theatre. Just keep a G-cypher handy in case the YouTube link to the broadcast gives you any trouble.

Meanwhile, staffer Scott Tate whips up a seasonal playlist of docudrama-adjacent horror films in **Evil, Pure and Simple: Banzai-Related Scary Movies**. If you don't find something that suits your mood among the horror offerings, Scott has also provided a shorter list of "when animals attack" titles featuring cast members from *Buckaroo Banzai*, to inspire frightening thrills of a different sort. If you're looking for something less terrifying and more eerie, be sure to read Scott's **Brief Examination of B. Banzai and the Paranormal** exploring Buckaroo's attempts to wrestle with the death of his wife, Peggy Priddy.

Steve Mattsson clocks in with a collection of **Crew Stories from the Set of Buckaroo Banzai** and an informative **Hong Kong Cavaliers Audition Short List**, while cat lovers will delight in Elektra Hammond's **A Brief History of BlueBlaze Cats**. This summer also proved to be full of unexpected adventures for the vacation travels of two *World Watch One* staffers. Sean Murphy takes you along on **A UK Holiday: Witnessing the End of an Era** as his journey coincides with the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Meanwhile, your humble editor contends with cultists and other hazards during his **Adventures in the Perilous Southwest**. Your editor also had an opportunity to (sort of) be a part of the **Wizard and the Bruiser Podcast** celebrating Buckaroo Banzai, and was able to interview co-host Jake Young about making the episode, as well as all things wizardly and bruiserish.

So, what are we waiting for? There're only 24 hours left in October, and this issue is already a year behind schedule! Trick or treat!



## WORLD WATCH ONE

NEWSLETTER OF TEAM BANZAI

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Dan "Big Shoulders" Berger  
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Reno of Memphis  
Mrs. E. Johnson  
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### Short Takes

World Watch One Staff

### Pepe Serna Update



After our interview with actor [Pepe “The Reno Kid” Serna](#) in the [January 2022 issue](#) of *World Watch One*, we promised to keep you updated on Pepe’s projects.

The documentary about Pepe, [Life is Art](#), is currently making the rounds in the festival circuit. [Look for it](#) November 3 at the Galaxy 5 theater in Austin, Texas. We’ll let you know when it is available for streaming or on physical media.

Pepe is currently starring in Amazon Prime’s [With Love](#), a story that unravels over five episodes and follows an ensemble cast of characters who are all connected through the Diaz family. Each episode takes place on a different holiday over the course of a year. Pepe encourages everybody with an interest to watch it. The cast would love to make more episodes!

Pepe’s autobiography is currently in the editing process. More to come.

### Expect the Unexpected

A new book called *Expect the Unexpected: The Making of The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension*, is currently being researched and written by *World Watch One* editor Dan Berger and the maintainer of the *Buckaroo Banzai FAQ*, Sean Murphy. The publication date is projected for late 2024/early 2025, just in time for the docudrama’s 40th anniversary.

*Expect the Unexpected* will celebrate the trials and tribulations of bringing everyone’s favorite docudrama to life through exclusive access to production documents and interviews with the filmmakers, cast, and crew. The story continues by exploring the film’s afterlife in comic books, television development deals, fanzines, and internet fan sites; culminating with the long-awaited sequel *Buckaroo Banzai Against the World Crime League* as a novel written by Earl Mac Rauch, Buckaroo Banzai’s original creator and screenwriter.

Watch this space for future news and announcements about the book’s progress.

### Still Standing

Ben E. King’s song “[Stand By Me](#)” first released in 1961, has been covered over the years by everyone from John Lennon to Snoop Dogg. The latest is a terrific collaboration between [Billy Vera](#) and [Larry Chance](#) of The Earls.

Billy and Larry have been friends for sixty years, but this particular cooperative venture came about spontaneously. Billy played a sold-out show at his old high school in White Plains, NY, where he asked Larry to introduce him onstage. As an encore, the two friends took to the stage together for an impromptu rendition of “Stand By Me.” A few days later, Larry mentioned he’d recently recorded a track of the song and suggested they turn it into a duet. Upon listening to the vocals and arrangement Larry had already laid down, Billy “got chills” and enthusiastically agreed.

This newest version even has the blessing of the song’s original composer, Mike Stoller, who co-wrote it along with lyricist Jerry Leiber and King. Billy played it for Stoller, and Larry recounts that “Stoller loved it, giving us all the encouragement we needed.”

The Chance/Vera version of “Stand By Me” is released under the Laser Records label. You can check it out now on a [number of music platforms](#).

### Buckaroo Banzai and Bob’s Burgers

Casual pop culture references to some of the bigger long-running franchises have become fairly common, but, when was the last time you ran across a casual mainstream reference to *Buckaroo Banzai*? Well...

On May 8 of this year, a Mother’s Day themed episode of *Bob’s Burgers* contained a clear and direct reference to Buckaroo. In the episode “Sauce Side Story”, the kids travel to a nearby town to meet a branch of the family separated from theirs by a long-running feud, in the hope of retrieving a long-lost family recipe. They show up at the house of their cousin Nico (voiced by John Gimberling), asking if he has time to speak to them. Nico’s response? “Well, the paint’s gotta dry on my Buckaroo Banzai figurine.” The figurine in question is clearly visible on a coffee table in front of the couch, surrounded by brushes and bottles of model paint. It’s recognizably Buckaroo, wearing his gray suit and playing his white guitar, clearly evoking the movie scene in *Artie’s Artery*. Nico seems aware that it’s a relatively obscure reference, following up his remark by adding, “Buckaroo Banzai? Buckaroo Banzai? No? Eh, I’ll tell you about it.” It’s nice to know he’s eager to expose the film to a new generation of potential fans.

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We reached out on Twitter to *Bob's Burgers* creator Loren Bouchard (@lorenbouchard) to ask whose idea it was to include the reference. "Had to be me," Bouchard responded. "I'm the only one old enough to remember [Buckaroo Banzai]. But also I could be wrong cuz now I forget things." Alas, Loren, that's a feeling many of us old-time fans know all too well.

"Sauce Side Story" was written by Loren Bouchard, Jim Dauterive, and Steven Davis and was directed by Tony Gennaro as supervising director with Simon Chong and Tom Riggan. *Bob's Burgers* stars the voices of H. Jon Benjamin as Bob, John Roberts as Linda, Dan Mintz as Tina, Eugene Mirman as Gene, and Kristen Schaal as Louise. The series is currently airing its thirteenth season on Fox.

#### NASA Begins New UAP Study

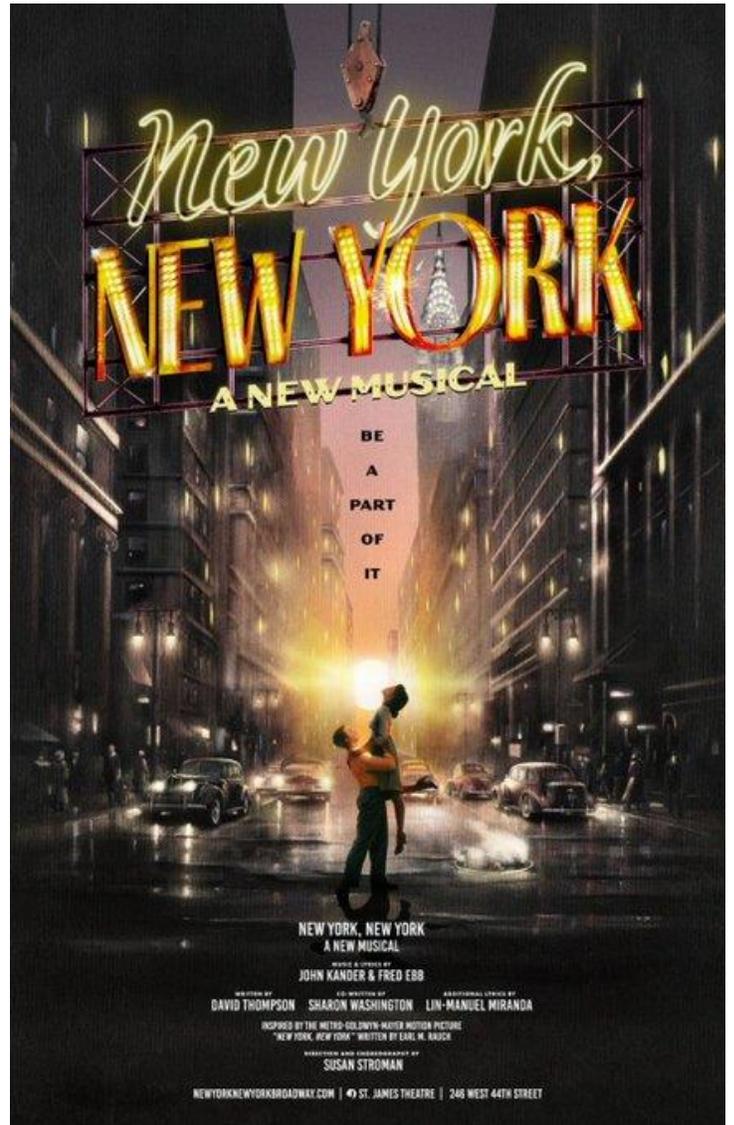
It's been more than 50 years since the USAF concluded Project Blue Book, which evaluated UFO reports gathered from 1952 to 1969. Now NASA is picking up that torch, announcing a new team of experts undertaking similar research for a new generation.

UFOs are now referred to as UAPs in official documents, or Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. UAP encounters have received a surge of news coverage in recent years due to unprecedented public acknowledgment from military and government sources, although policy continues to emphasize the "unidentified" aspect and stops short of presuming extraterrestrial origins. Larger questions about our universe aside, UAPs raise concerns about navigational safety and other issues that need to be better understood.

NASA has formed a 16-member independent study team which will spend the next nine months sorting through civilian, commercial, and unclassified government data as a preliminary step to recommending how to refine further data analysis in the future. The team comprises a variety of perspectives from a wide range of scientific, academic, and practical, backgrounds, including a former astronaut, a biological oceanographer, a science journalist, representatives from the FAA, and more. Meet the full team [here](#), and for more info you can find NASA's FAQ about UAP [here](#). The study began in late October 2022 and a full report of their findings will be released to the public sometime in mid-2023. Any UAP specifically identified as being of Lectroid origin will be referred to the Banzai Institute.



#### Start Spreadin' da News...



As [reported](#) in several media outlets, "New York, New York," a new Broadway musical [inspired by the 1977 film New York, New York](#), written by [Earl Mac Rauch](#), will open on Broadway on April 26th, 2023.

Music is by [Kander and Ebb](#) with additional lyrics by [Lin-Manuel Miranda](#). Four Kander and Ebb songs were used in the film version, including [the title song](#).

We reached out to Mac, who added, "'NY, NY' was optioned by [Sonia Friedman](#), one of Broadway's preeminent producers, a year or so before COVID hit, so it's been a lengthy waiting game...put to good use fortunately. A wonderfully talented creative team and cast, including legendary Broadway names, have used the film as a springboard to craft a fresh stage musical with a more modern and youthful viewpoint. Naturally, everyone has high hopes that audiences will love the result! Fingers crossed..."

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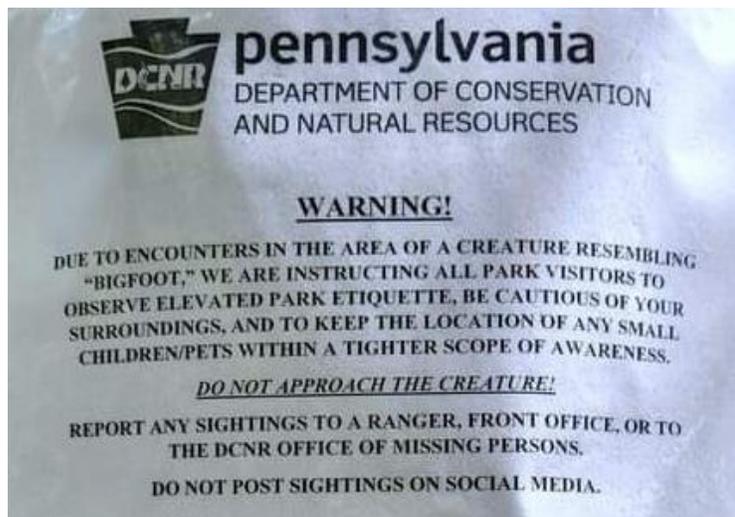
### The Weirdness Beat

**Dr. Ian Malcolm**, a leader in the field of chaos theory, remains unavailable for comment regarding whether the recent Hurricane Ian was named after him.

**Don't tug on that, you never know what it might be connected to:** According to a [recent report](#) in *Nature*, scientists are experimenting with transplanting human brain tissue into rats. When asked for a comment, Dr. Banzai merely pointed at a well-worn VHS copy of an old Peter Weller movie, *Of Unknown Origin*, in which Weller comes under attack by an unusually intelligent rodent.

**Who you gonna call... for reservations?** A highly detailed [recreation](#) of the famous Ghostbusters firehouse is available as a vacation rental in Portland, OR. If you're a purist or a tourist, be aware that the [real firehouse](#) which was filmed for exterior shots of the Ghostbusters' headquarters continues to be in New York.

### Officials deny Bigfoot is in PA



Several [printed warning signs](#) have been spotted around Pennsylvania's state parks, urging caution in light of alleged Sasquatch encounters. The signs even feature the logo of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Park officials deny any knowledge of the signs, issuing an unequivocal statement that Bigfoot is not real. The DCNR is removing the signs as they become aware of them.

**Undersea "Forest of the Weird":** British newspaper *The Guardian* [reports](#) on the second sighting of the oddly shaped and rarely sighted *Adzhena magnifica* – "the magnificent alien" or more simply "the ET sponge." Previously it had been observed only in the depths of the Pacific Ocean's Mariana Trench, but more recent specimens have been confirmed near an underwater volcano thousands of miles away.

### String quartet rides giant floating violin through Venice



Ripley's Believe It or Not [recently reported](#) on an event from last year in which a group of musicians played their way through the canals of Venice while standing atop a 40-foot-long violin. "Noah's Violin" is the brainchild of sculptor Livio De Marchi.

**"The Green Goblin Gang":** Earlier this month, a group of six women clad in [green masks and matching bodysuits](#) wreaked havoc at a New York subway platform, surging out of nowhere to physically attack two 19-year-old females who were waiting for a train. Motivation is unclear, and all six assailants escaped, although one subsequently [turned herself in](#).

### What's that butternut squash doing there?

Winning a [world record](#), that's what. At the recent Pumpkin Palooza in Dundee, MI, farmer Derek Ruthruff of Charlotte, MI presented a butternut squash weighing in at 104.5 lbs., beating out a previous Guinness World Record that had been established barely a week earlier. "Combining my love of butternut and my passion for growing vegetables, I wanted to grow the largest butternut squash possible," Ruthruff stated simply. The squash was grown from a seed of the 2020 record holder, which by comparison weighed in at a mere 55.5 lbs.

In related news, the World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off was recently held in Half Moon Bay, CA, where top honors went to a massive contender dubbed "[Maverick](#)," weighing in at 2,360 lbs. and submitted by Travis Giegner of Anoka, MN. Despite the contest's name, Maverick is in fact only the current U.S. record holder, with the reigning champ for world's largest pumpkin as recognized by Guinness being an Italian submission from 2021 that attained 2,703 lbs. Nonetheless, Giegner's gourd is surely impressive.

The Banzai Institute will evaluate both Ruthruff's and Giegner's methods to see if they can be applied to similar research by the Institute seeking to address world hunger.

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### A Brief Examination of

#### B. Banzai and the Paranormal

By Scott Tate

*“I don’t mind telling you, this thing gave me the creeps.”*  
– Mrs. Johnson

Buckaroo Banzai is a man of science: an innovative and world-renowned neurosurgeon and a boundary-pushing pioneer in particle physics. But he also actively cultivates his philosophical and spiritual nature. And in the overlap between those sides of his personality, he seems willing to believe in, or at least accept the possibility of, certain paranormal or metaphysical phenomena.

We know from Reno and Earl Mac Rauch in the 1984 novel *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* that Buckaroo and his bride Peggy Simpson were married in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City. Peggy was tragically murdered almost immediately after, her body found half an hour later in one of the changing rooms, still in her wedding dress. Who was responsible?

*As for the culprit or culprits, none was visible, and the praiseworthy efforts of the authorities produced none, save for the ghostly curate rumored to haunt said church. He, or it, had been seen in an acute state of agitation by several of the wedding guests and by Captain Happen and Pecos, who actually conversed soberly with the black-robed shade!\**

The mortal hand which actually did the deed – bent by the will of the nefarious Xan, of course – was later identified. As for the identity of this alleged ghost readers are left in the dark. If there are any specific indications beyond his robed appearance as to who he was in life or what binds him to the location, Reno doesn’t say. What agitated the spirit – was he in fact trying to warn against the impending tragedy? We’ve been unable to turn up claims of any other sightings, and reaching out to St. John’s for comment yielded no results.

Whoever this cassock-clad curate might have been in mortal life, his ghost was initially considered a feasible suspect for Peggy’s murder. Reno doesn’t say that Buckaroo necessarily believed it himself, but neither did he dismiss it, indicating either acceptance or open-mindedness towards the possibility. And as the investigation continued, Buckaroo was willing to actively consult paranormal means:

*B. Banzai decided to engage the services of a well-*

*\*From *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension* by Earl Mac Rauch, Chapter 15.*



**J.B. Rhine (L)** runs a subject through a deck of Zener cards to determine their potential for Extra Sensory Perception.

#### J.B. Rhine: Botanist Turned Parapsychologist

In 1922, botanist [Joseph Banks Rhine](#) and his wife, [Louisa](#), attended a lecture by Sherlock Holmes author [Sir Arthur Conan Doyle](#). Over the course of the lecture Doyle, a noted adherent of [Spiritualism](#), extolled the scientific merits of communication with the dead. Rhine found that, “This mere possibility was the most exhilarating thought I had had in years.” In the years to come, this thought would blossom into Rhine’s efforts to launch serious scientific inquiry into the study of “abnormal psychology,” better known as parapsychology.

Rhine is probably best remembered today for his series of Extra Sensory Perception experiments involving the use of Zener cards to determine a subject’s ability to “sense” the symbol depicted on each card, concealed from view, and determine the percentage of the subject’s correct guesses against the statistical benchmark of random chance.

*known psychic, Georgiana Albricht of the Duke University Department of Parapsychology, whom he had tested in the past. A series of séances took place subsequently, the first in the Church of St. John the Divine, followed by several more at the Banzai Institute, held under controlled scientific conditions... The reader will note the presence of Captain Happen in the room, something Buckaroo had insisted upon, aware of Captain Happen’s great interest in the paranormal...\*\**

This all suggests that Dr. B acknowledges several intangible possibilities: the existence of an afterlife, the potential to communicate with it, and the ability of some humans to facilitate that.

*\*\*Ibid*

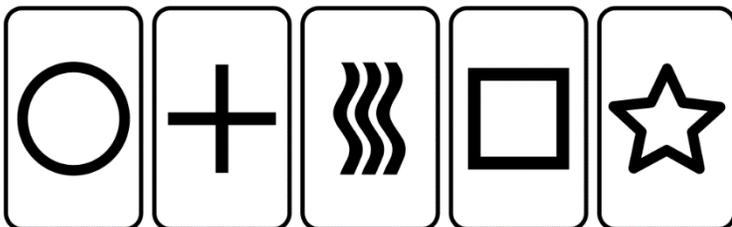
## 6 BANZAI INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING AND STRATEGIC INFORMATION

We're told almost nothing about Georgiana Albright, but we can make a few guesses. Despite prominence in the field, Duke University has never had a formal "Department of Parapsychology," so her affiliation may have been with what Duke termed their "Parapsychology Laboratory." The Laboratory formally dissolved in 1965, sixteen years prior to the event described here, which may give us a partial window into her age range. Or maybe not, since another alternative is that she's affiliated with the Rhine Research Center, formerly the Foundation for Research into the Nature of Man, which was founded as a spiritual successor to the Laboratory but operates independently from Duke. It's always possible that her association with the university, or her name itself, was fictionalized by Reno for purposes of security or personal privacy. It is perhaps deliberately ambiguous that she is never referred to in Reno's brief mention as possessing a doctorate.

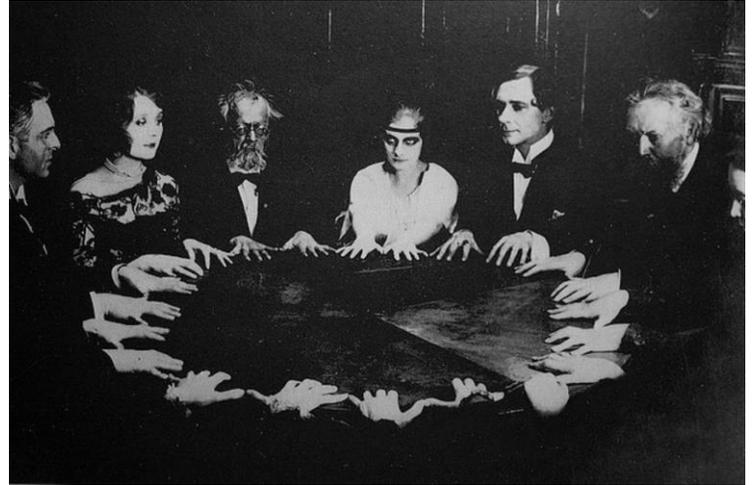
How exactly did Buckaroo test Albright? Because of the Duke connection, it's tempting to speculate that they utilized the distinctive deck of cards made famous by the school's early parapsychology program, designed by Karl Zener and J.B. Rhine for a series of ESP experiments in the 1930s. But mind-reading and mediumship are skills that may or may not overlap, so we don't necessarily know if Albright's qualifications as a psychic extended to that type of application. Besides, Buckaroo may have used a completely different methodology of his own devising. Regardless, it's interesting to know that Dr. B has directly conducted his own research into psychic phenomena.

Buckaroo presumably reached out to Albright because he knew her personally, but it's tempting to wonder if he considered consulting with experts closer to home, such as Doctors Stanz, Venkman, or Spengler of NY's Columbia University? Dr. Venkman, incidentally, has also been known to [screen potential psychics](#) by using a Zener/Rhine deck. Perhaps Dr. B wasn't yet aware of Columbia's Weaver Hall team since they didn't become well known to the general public until a few years later. Even if he'd noted one or more of their names in academic publications, he probably hadn't vetted their credentials personally the way he had with Albright.

We note here for transparency that the final séance, the one which implicated Peggy's true murderer, was a set-



Zener cards



Séances were common features of the Spiritualist movement that originated in Upstate New York during the 1840s.

up arranged by Buckaroo with the cooperation of others, including Albright, whom Reno notes "is as accomplished an actress as she is a medium." The only "ghost" it summoned was another of Buckaroo's accomplices also engaged in a fine bit of acting. But as previously mentioned, that séance was also the last in a series, and there's no reason to think that the others were insincere.

Much remains that we don't know about Buckaroo and the paranormal. We don't know when he was first attracted to such concepts – perhaps as a young boy after his parents' deaths, although that's wildly speculative. We don't know whether it began as an outgrowth of his scientific side or his spiritual one, although surely it grew to address both. We don't know to what degree he embraces it, although the fact that he tested Georgiana Albright rather than accepting her reputation with blind faith suggests he approaches it as he does most things, with disciplined curiosity, trusting hard data over anecdotal claims, although perhaps nudged by intuition as well. What we can say for certain is that Dr. Banzai, as in so many other fields, is willing to probe, push, and potentially redraw boundaries. As he has been known to say, "Nothing unreal exists" ... and that's both a denial and an affirmation. 🐾



### “A Wave of Mass Hysteria...”

#### Remembering *The War of the Worlds*

by Bonnie Jones

It was the fall of 1938. The population of the United States was riding on a great rollercoaster, just coming up from a great economic world-wide depression and starting to slide down into another earth-shattering war. The new fall season had just started on the radio - the most popular and least expensive form of news and entertainment. It was prime time, eight o'clock on the east coast, seven o'clock in the mid-west. Families were clearing the table from dinner and turning on the big floor model console or table top radio so the tubes had time to warm up before their favorite shows came on. In the big city markets like New York and Chicago, there were four major networks and a couple of local channels. The most popular show of the evening was *The Chase and Sanborn Hour* starring Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Edgar Bergen was a ventriloquist (yes - a ventriloquist on the radio) and Charlie McCarthy was his most popular character, but he had several that he used throughout the show. At the top of the show, Edgar and Charlie would introduce the guests and then they would present a funny dialogue (or monologue - since it was one man doing both voices). After a quick commercial the resident singer would come on. This man was Nelson Eddy - who's style of singing was operatic and not to everyone's taste. Many people at this time, about ten minutes after 8, (7 central) turned the dial on the radio to the next channel and found themselves listening to an orchestra playing dance music.

Except this wasn't a music program. What they were actually listening to was *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*, an ensemble of dramatic actors with Orson Welles at the head. This new show started in July 1938 as a summer replacement. Mercury Theatre began as an independent repertory theater company founded in New York City in 1937 by Orson Welles and producer John Houseman. CBS Radio offered them a spot on Monday nights in the summer but moved them to Sunday night at 8 pm on September 11, 1938. This was a prime spot for a radio show. Millions of people across the country would be listening. Orson Welles wanted to continue what they had been doing in the theater, he wanted to present radio adaptations of “great classical literature.”

And so they did. Their first three episodes were *Dracula*, *Treasure Island*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. For the October 30, 1938 show they chose *The War Of The Worlds*. The script was written by Howard E. Koch. Instead of setting the story in 1800's London, the story was set in the current day in New Jersey. They wanted the audience to feel like they were in the story, which

they did to overwhelming success. This was not the first show to present a story as a live broadcast. *The Columbia Broadcast* and *The March Of Time* used a similar style to bring people into the story. Orson Welles was one of the voice actors on *March Of Time*.

If you had been listening to the beginning of *The Mercury Theatre on the Air* on October 30, 1938, you would have heard Orson Welles' dramatic voice introducing the play *The War of the Worlds*. It segues to an announcer presenting an orchestra playing music, and then “We interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin.” Explosions of gas on Mars. Dance music. Something seen falling from the sky over New Jersey. Then more music, then more dramatic news bulletins. Those people who tuned in late just heard music and the more and more alarming news bulletins. Many people called the station demanding to know what was going on. The actor and performer Steve Allen reports that when he was a teenager, he heard the broadcast with his aunts and ran down the stairs of the apartment building in a panic only to be told by the doorman that it was just a radio play.

The switchboard at CBS's New York headquarters lit up like a jack-o-lantern festival. People all over the United States called their local telephone operator or newspaper wanting more information. Finally, one of the executives of the station demanded they break into the show to announce it was fiction. Not knowing about the commotion going on, the actors continued until the first scheduled break in the play at about 38 minutes. This was unusual for the times. There should have been a station break and commercial at 28 minutes. By 37 minutes in, policemen had showed up and demanded they interrupt the show. Reporters showed up to the studio also, hoping for a juicy story. Many of the people who listened to the show thought perhaps we were being invaded by Germany or some other natural disaster was happening.

The story of the panic went around the world. Even Adolph Hitler commented about how easily Americans could be made fools of. Of course, most people did not panic, or even hear the show, but it certainly made great headlines for the newspapers. It also made a name for Orson Welles, who went on to do a few other small things, like the movie *Citizen Kane* in 1941. Not bad for a boy from Kenosha, Wisconsin who went to school in Woodstock Illinois and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. 

**Readers can relive the hysteria** of 1938 by listening to [the original War of the Worlds broadcast on YouTube](#). Citizens of New Jersey are advised to watch the skies.

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### Evil, Pure and Simple:

#### Banzai-Related Scary Movies

By Scott Tate

With Halloween in the air, you may be planning a scary movie marathon. Why not include a few that feature the stars of *Buckaroo Banzai*? This isn't a complete list, but it offers a wide range of options.

In *Leviathan* (1989), **Peter Weller** is part of the crew of an isolated undersea facility which encounters a mysterious menace. You've seen this type of claustrophobic "what's lurking around here and when will we finally see it" story before, and done better, and even done better in other underwater settings. Still, *Leviathan's* not bad if this is your kind of thing. Weller also stars in *Naked Lunch* (1991), which isn't exactly horror, but its surreal and unsettling imagery nudges it into that territory at the directorial hand of David Cronenberg, one of the indisputable masters of biological horror. You can also find Weller starring in *Screamers* (1995), a sci-fi horror flick in the vein of *Alien/Aliens*. Being respectful of spoilers and not wanting to tip too much about his character's fate, don't expect to see him again in the sequel, *Screamers: The Hunting* (2009), although he does get mentioned there. And a final thought: We know you've already seen *RoboCop* (1987) and obviously it's sci-fi action rather than horror, but it does merit thematic consideration as a variation on the traditional Frankenstein story.

**Clancy Brown** may be a gentle giant in real life, but with his commanding physical presence and a voice that can pivot from satanically suave to demonically growly, he's always been ripe for roles in horror flicks, playing both good guys and bad. *Highlander* (1986) isn't exactly horror, but it feels almost akin to a *giallo* in tone with its plot of a mysterious beheading that unfolds into deeper secrets about a centuries-long hidden conflict. It's tense, it feels vaguely supernatural – at least until *Highlander II* came along to overthink it – and Brown radiates evil as the Kurgan.

In *The Burrowers* (2008), Brown's one of a group of cowboys dealing with predatory subterranean creatures in the Old West. It's less like *Tremors* than you might think, more like *The Descent*. In *Hellbenders* (2012), he's part of a group of dedicated clergy who embrace blasphemy as a tool to lure and confront demons.

A real gem of Brown's horror work is *The Mortuary Collection* (2019). An anthology horror film by up-and-coming writer/director Ryan Spindell, it presents four stories, with framework segments adding up to a substantial fifth. That framework is grounded by Brown as mortician Montgomery Dark, serving as connective



**Peter Weller** lights up the set in *Leviathan*.

tissue between tales of the dead that he shares with a young woman applying for a job in his mortuary. Brown gives a truly admirable performance as Dark. Traditionally, Brown is often quickly recognizable in other roles by either his face or his voice, but the subtle nuances presented in the appearance, voice, and mannerisms of Montgomery Dark showcase Brown's impressive range. Anthology movies are always a mixed lot, with the strongest and weakest stories tending to stand out, and that remains true here. *The Mortuary Collection* is pretty solid overall, and the wrap-up of the story with Dark and the young woman has some real meat to it, not just a quick button before the end credits like many anthologies settle for. Spindell's DVD/Blu-Ray commentary track complements a second viewing nicely.

If you're inclined to binge Brown in a spooky TV series, consider *Sleepy Hollow* (2013-2017), a modern riff expanding on the Headless Horseman legend. As Sheriff August Corbin, Brown wasn't a full regular cast member, but he recurred often throughout the first season.

**Rosalind Cash** had a few horror turns under her belt. In *The Omega Man* (1971), Charlton Heston is the sole survivor of a plague except for dangerous nocturnal mutants... until he meets Lisa (Cash). In *Dr. Black, Mr. Hyde* (1976), Bernie Casey plays the title character(s) in this loosely inspired Jekyll-and-Hyde exploitation flick, with Cash featured as another doctor helping him conduct his medical research. Cash plays a doctor again in her final film role in *Tales from the Hood* (1995), appearing in one of the segments of this horror anthology from Spike Lee.

**Mariclaire Costello** appears only briefly in *Buckaroo Banzai* as Senator Cunningham, but she has a more substantial role as the mysterious Emily in *Let's Scare Jessica to Death* (1971). An enigmatic and ambiguous tale, *Let's Scare Jessica* might frustrate some viewers, but others consider it a cult classic. She can also be seen in a supporting role as Mrs. Warnall in *Conspiracy of Terror* (1975), a 1975 made-for-TV movie about Satanic cults, intended as a pilot for a proposed series about a



A young **Jeff Goldblum** (L) and **Tom Berenger** (R) appear in *The Sentinel*.

husband-and-wife detective team. Costello later pops up as Kathy Patterson in the faux documentary *Shadow of the Blair Witch* (2000), which was produced as a promotional tie-in for *Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2*.

**Jeff Goldblum's** role as a fashion photographer in *The Sentinel* (1977) is small, but his unbuttoned shirt is a great precursor to his famous come-hither pose in *Jurassic Park*. But seriously, if you like other religious-tinged horror from this era such as *The Exorcist* or *The Omen*, this less frequently remembered movie belongs on your radar. He has a more prominent role in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), which is among the better of that tale's many film versions thanks in part to a script by **W.D. Richter**. In *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1980), Goldblum's a natural fit as Ichabod Crane. He costars in the horror comedy *Transylvania 6-5000* (1985), where the humor is hit or miss, but the role makes for a vaguely interesting comparison to *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* since he plays a reporter named Jack in both.

*The Fly* (1986) is one of the cornerstones of Goldblum's reputation for playing quirky scientists. It's also a remake that many people feel is better than the original from 1958. It's definitely more graphic, with Goldblum's slow progressive transformation from man to monster being a horrific example of body horror. Remember when we mentioned director David Cronenberg before? Yeah, this is one of his too.

*Mister Frost* (1990) is a Goldblum movie people don't talk about enough. The enigmatic Frost (Goldblum) is, at the very least, a prolific serial killer who casually confesses to his crimes... and much speculation follows that he may be something even more sinister as well, perhaps the devil himself. Goldblum's performance somehow manages to be both understated yet intense, well suited to this ambiguous supernaturally tinged

psychological thriller. The film's slow simmer and European tone might not be to everyone's taste, but the intriguing premise and Goldblum's presence are solid hooks.

**Laura Harrington** is one of the stars of *Maximum Overdrive* (1987) as Brett Graham, a hitchhiker who joins with others seeking refuge from killer trucks. Plenty of movies are based on Stephen King stories, but this one remains unique so far for being scripted and directed by King himself.

It's not a movie, but **Robert Ito** guest-starred on *The X-Files* in the ninth and tenth episodes of the third season (1995), the two-part "Nisei" and "731." This story revealed key developments in the series' overall mythology regarding alien abductions.

What would Halloween be without a trip to the Twilight Zone? *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (1983) presented theatrical remakes of a handful of the original TV series' best episodes. **John Lithgow** stars in one segment, "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," stepping into the role originally played by William Shatner as a passenger on a commercial jet who sees a monster on the plane's wing but can't convince anyone around him. For more chills, look to Brian De Palma's thriller *Raising Cain* (1992), where Lithgow stars as a psychologist who has multiple personalities himself, including one who's a violent killer.

The dark comedies *The Addams Family* (1991) and *Addams Family Values* (1993) have scenes suited to multiple holiday viewings, including Thanksgiving and Christmas. Both films costar **Christopher Lloyd** throughout as Uncle Fester. For bonus Lectroid content, **Dan Hedaya** also has a notable role in the first as the lawyer, Tully.

Lloyd also costars in *I Am Not a Serial Killer* (2016), where a teenager diagnosed as a sociopath with potential homicidal tendencies suspects his neighbor (Lloyd) of having a similar nature. And he gives a brief but well-done performance in *The Sound* (2017), which stars Rose McGowan as a skeptical paranormal investigator who believes that "hauntings" can usually be attributed to paranoia caused by subliminal infrasound. Out to conduct debunking research by exploring creepy abandoned subway tunnels, she encounters Lloyd in a featured cameo as a maintenance worker. Lloyd's latest, fresh this year, is *Spirit Halloween: The Movie* (2022), inspired by the [seasonal pop-up retail franchise](#). Its theatrical run premiered on September 30 and is available on VOD as of October 11.

We'll give **Ronald Lacey** (President Widmark) an honorable mention for one of the all-time great horror

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scenes in a non-horror movie for having his face melted off as Toht in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981).

*Doctor Sleep* (2019) is a sequel to Stanley Kubrick's version of *The Shining* (1980), both films having been adapted from Stephen King novels. In *Doctor Sleep*, **Carl Lumbly** takes over the supporting role of Dick Hallorann, previously played by Scatman Crothers. Hallorann was an important supporting character in the first film and Lumbly's version remains so here, arguably having an even greater impact on the plot this time around.

Since we mentioned **W.D. Richter** in conjunction with the 1978 version of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, we'd be remiss if we didn't point out that he also scripted the 1979 version of *Dracula*. Richter's adaptation, combined with Frank Langella's looks and performance, presents us with a more romantic and overtly sensual version of the bloodsucking count than those of Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee, helping pave the way for more modern trends that continue in vampire fiction today.

*Ghost* (1990), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, and Whoopi Goldberg, is more about the enduring power of love than about scares, but it does offer some chilling scenes, including a memorable role for **Vincent Schiavelli** as the angry subway-riding ghost. Fans of Schiavelli can also spot him as a desk clerk in one of the Jeff Goldblum films we discussed earlier, *Mister Frost*.

**Jane Marla Robbins**, who played a reporter at Buckaroo's press conference scene, also played a reporter in *The Werewolf of Washington* (1973). Personally I like to pretend that they're the same character, a journalist who happens to find herself pounding the weirdness beat, sharing tips with Carl Kolchak. *The Werewolf of Washington* isn't very scary overall, but it's an interesting time capsule as a contemporary mockery of the Nixon administration, if you're into that kind of thing. And where else are you going to see future *Quantum Leap* co-star Dean Stockwell play a lycanthropic White House press secretary?

In *The Final Terror* (1983), **Lewis Smith** plays Boone, part of a large group who inexplicably think that camping in the woods near a mental institution sounds like a fine idea. With Smith billed eighth out of nine in the opening credits, you might not expect his character to be heavily featured but he turns out to be fairly prominent, including delivering an important chunk of backstory as a spooky campfire tale. This is also one of those movies that became interesting in hindsight as a chance to play Spot the Actor early in their careers, including *T.J. Hooker*'s Adrian Zmed, *Splash*'s Daryl



**Daryl Hannah** as Windy Morgan (L) is comforted by **Lewis Smith** as Richard Boone (R) in *The Final Terror*.

Hannah, and *The Matrix*'s Joey Pantoliano. The film can also sometimes be found under the title *Campsite Massacre* or, less often, *Carnivore*, no relation to several other movies also sharing that name.

Finally, there's *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* itself. It may not be a horror movie, but it has an alien invasion that has ties to Orson Welles' infamous *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast on the night before Halloween 1938. Consider pairing it with popular film versions of *War of the Worlds* such as those from 1957 or 2005, or with *Spaced Invaders* (1990).

Alright, enough suggestions. Now pick a few and let the Banzai scary movie marathons begin! 🦋

### When Animals Attack!

Maybe your idea of a scary good time is seeing people fight back or fall victim to members of the animal kingdom, either natural or supernatural. *Of Unknown Origin* (1983) stars a pre-BB **Peter Weller** slowly pushed into Ahab-like obsession with waging war against an aggressive rodent that's invaded his home. **Pepe Serna** can be spotted in *Tarantulas: The Deadly Cargo* (1977), about a California town overwhelmed by spiders. He's uncredited but plays one of three men in the hold of a cargo plane in the film's early scenes. And Pepe's not the only Banzai actor confronted with eight-legged creepy crawlers: **Jane Marla Robbins** plays Edna Beechwood in *Arachnophobia* (1990). **Clancy Brown** has a supporting role in *Pet Semetary Two* (1992) as Sheriff Gus Gilbert, and **John Lithgow** features prominently in the *Pet Semetary* remake (2019) as Jud Crandall. And, of course, **Jeff Goldblum** is chased by dinosaurs in several of the *Jurassic Park/World* movies.

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## Pimping Your Ride, Jet Car Style v2.0

Text and Photos by Chris "Cobalt" Dunham

Previously on Pimp My Ride, Chris had magnetic 88 stickers made. On tonight's episode, Chris's old truck gets a facelift.\*

In between various duties including planting, watering and maintaining a crop of square watermelons here at BBI Outpost #27, I decided to do some vehicle maintenance. Neil Young was right. Rust never sleeps. A little wire brush, sanding and touch-up paint were needed. After a few spots of touch-up, I decided to paint the whole truck flat black. Sure. Tactical strike team truck. I did it a section at a time. The painting wasn't that bad. It was all the sanding, masking tape and prep work that was tedious. Hindsight is 20/20. If I knew then what I know now...

The 88 magnetic stickers looked great on the flat black truck. But wait! There's more! I decided to add some more Banzai "flair" to my uniform. Or truck. In the prep for the painting, I had removed all the Chevy logos and lettering. I decided I wasn't going to put them back. Although the front grill was already black, I removed the front Chevy logo tool. There were two holes where the front logo had been. Inspiration hit.

Out of some scrap wood, I made an oval about 10" across. I countersank a couple of machine screws so the oval would fit in the 2 holes in the grill. I can pop the hood of the truck, reach in with a couple of washers and nuts and secure the oval with any logo or emblem. I chose a Banzai winged Bs car decal and mounted it on the oval. I have now made several of these ovals and I can swap them out with different logos/stickers. I put a winged Bs decal on the tailgate as well.

Fellow Hoosier Travis Bell makes and sells awesome replica movie and TV license plates. He has a business called [Celebrity Machines](#) and sells a bunch of great license plates including the New Jersey Rokit 88 Banzai plate. Here in the state of Indiana, we don't use a front license plate - only a rear plate. So, I added a front license plate holder and mounted a Rokit 88 plate.

Another piece of "flair" I added was a round yellow BB decal on the fuel door. A nice little touch, I thought.

So, a friend of mine asked if I left the outpost with all that stuff on my truck. I told him, NO. Too many Red Lectroids out there might want to mess with my truck. Now I'm not afraid to wave my Banzai flag high, but when I go out, I try to scale down the "flair". I like to maintain a low profile and I always keep my powder dry.

\*See our [August 2019 issue](#) for the first installment.



Three views of Cobalt's post-pimped ride.

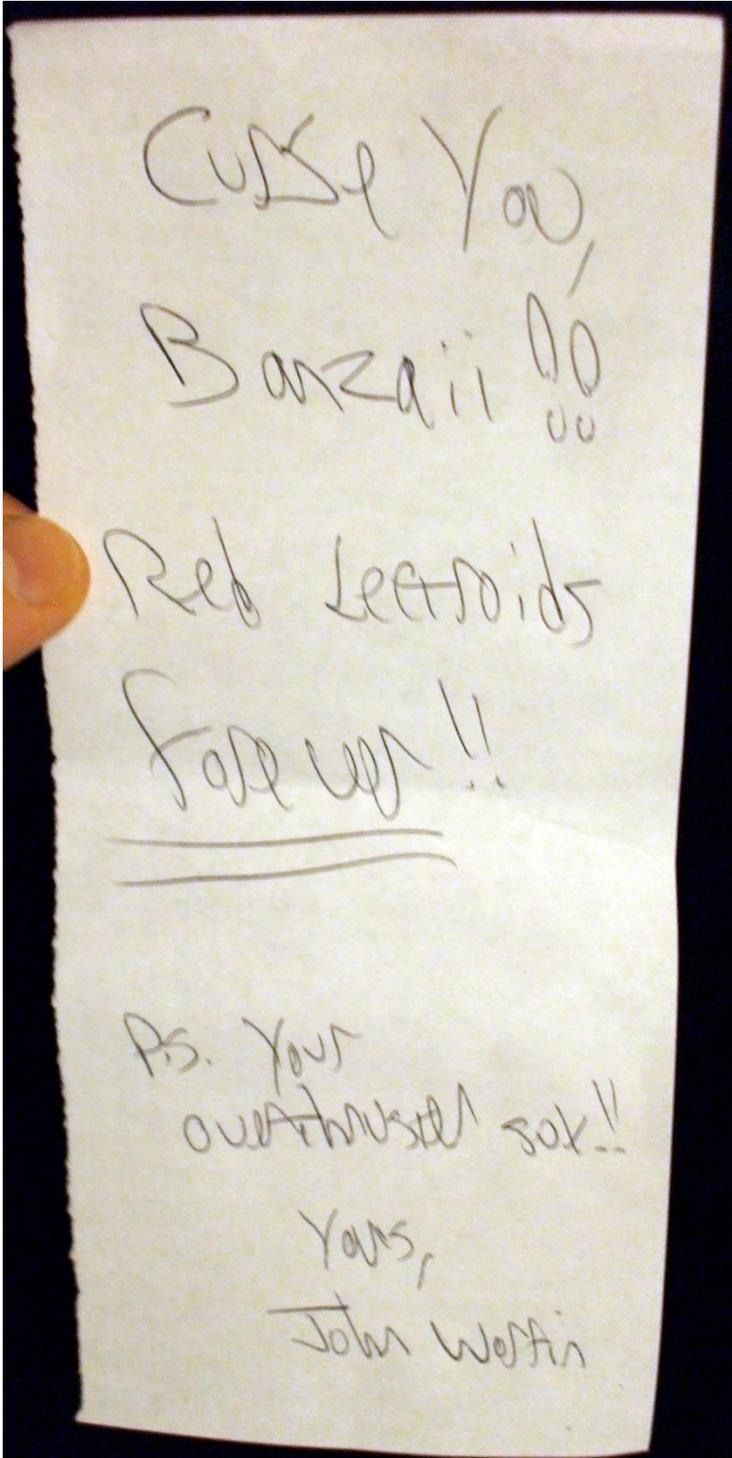
That made me remember an incident from back in 2014. I was in downtown Indianapolis attending a concert. Back then, all I had was a Team Banzai sticker on my

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rear bumper. I returned to my truck a few hours later after the concert. Under my wiper blade was a note. It read, "Curse you Banzai!! - Red Lectroids Forever!! - P.S. Your overthrustur sux!! - Yours, John Worfin."

There's nothing worse than a loud-mouthed Red Lectroid trying to perpetuate the myth that John Whorfin is still alive.

As you can see by the poor grammar and misspelling of Whorfin's name, this was clearly another Whorfin



imposter. I swear! The Whorfin wannabes are *everywhere!* Also, by the slant of the handwriting, it appears that the note was written by a lefty. I *think* I remember Reno mentioned something about a large percentage of Red Lectroids being left-handed. I don't know *how* he came by this info or what data he has. I'll have to check with him on that. Seems like he also had some info about Red Lectroid preferences and taste tests with Interstate batteries versus Die Hard.

Anyway - what can you say about this truck? It's a "beater with a heater." It's rusty and dirty. It's a little rough around the edges, but it gets the job done. It's not perfect and it wouldn't be a vehicle for Perfect Tommy. That's for sure. 🐾

Thinking about pimping your own ride? Follow the information superhighway to the following links, where you can purchase your very own [Rokit 88 License Plate](#), [Yellow BB Decal](#), and [Winged BB Decal](#). Drive safe!



**Pimp My Jet Car**, *Star Wars* edition. Source: Joel Creates

### **Jet Car, Tatooine Style**

What happens when you install a real jet engine onto a child-sized *Star Wars* Landspeeder ride toy? Lacking access to a long, flat, clear test environment, the creators weren't able to open the throttle to clock a top speed, but have a New Hope (see what we did there) for a follow-up video in the future. Check out the current extent of their mods on the YouTube channel [Joel Creates](#).

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## A Brief History of BlueBlaze Cats

By Elektra “Untilmidnight” Hammond

It was the late '80s in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and I fell in love with a cat. A big, blue, hairy cat. Of course, the big blue cat belonged to someone else and he wasn't for sale.

But that's not where the story starts . . .

Really, it starts when I was in graduate school earlier in the '80s. That's when I was offered the chance to adopt a cat from a friend who was moving, and that's how the inimitable and aptly named Hopelessly Wasted entered my life.

I was a lifelong cat lover, but had never actually had a pet. I didn't know the *right* way to take care of a cat. So Hopeless, who was big and calm and would let anyone and everyone hold him, went everywhere with me; to science fiction conventions and SCA events. I think Hopeless was with me at Lunacon when I saw the promotional panel for Buckaroo Banzai and got my official Buckaroo Banzai Jet Car headband.

Somewhere, an unremembered someone uttered the phrase that would change the rest of my life. It was, “You have a great cat. You should take him to a cat show.”

And I did.

I discovered it takes more than just a great cat, especially when showing in the Household Pet division. Hopeless was an okay show cat—he didn't mind going to shows, but he wasn't a play-with-feather-teasers kinda cat. I, on the other hand, won a couple of awards for things like Best Costume at some themed shows, and discovered the hard way that hoop skirts and narrow bathroom stalls don't mix.

Fast forward to the show in Allentown. My fiancé Mike was with me, and he, too, was taken by Supreme Grand Champion Mt. Kittery Penobscot. Nobby, as his friends called him, was an amazing Maine Coon cat, bred and owned by Barbara “Bunty” Washburn.

What happened next can all be blamed on Mike. He offered to buy me a Maine Coon cat—and followed through on it.

BlueBlaze Maine Coon cats was born. We registered BlueBlaze with the two major cat registries, and others as time went on. We slowly acquired two, then three female cats, taking them to shows before selecting the proper studs to breed them to.

We selected a beautiful silver classic tabby boy from our second litter to keep as our first stud cat, naming him BlueBlaze Buckaroo Banzai, of course. Buckaroo opened a lot of doors for us, catwise, and together we learned



**BlueBlaze Buckaroo Banzai (SGC,RW)**, the cat that started it all. Source: Elektra Hammond

about how to show a winning cat. He traveled the country with me—once, in LAX, I stood in line to collect him after he flew in cargo, struggling to keep a straight face as a fellow behind me in line explained, authoritatively, that Buckaroo, sitting calmly in his crate, was a lynx.

Later, we acquired our second stud cat from the folks who had Buckaroo's brother, and he was known as ARKatz Perfect Tommy of BlueBlaze. Perfect Tommy the trickster—who went out a second story window once, just to prove he could do it, then spent the night hiding on the back porch until he was ready to come back inside.

Penny Priddy came soon after, an honest-to-goodness Maine Coon from Maine, a third-generation blue\* torbie and white who loved chewing on our Thai pepper plant.

More cats and many, many, many litters of kittens followed. We worked on, and began producing, cat shows. I became a cat show judge—and when Mike saw what fun I was having during my training, he became a judge, too.

Through it all, there were more Maine Coons. A few other cats carried the BlueBlaze name, as we explored other breeds to further our judging education. With time, we registered Benegesserit as a second cattery, and limited BlueBlaze to just the Maine Coons.

We never sold a lot of breeding cats. Mostly we sold our kittens to loving pet homes, but a double or triple handful did go into breeding homes.

Our Maine Coons spread across the country, and around the world. We judged a cat show in Moscow in 2006—at

\*In the world of cats, gray cats are blue and orange cats are red. The reasons why have been lost in antiquity.

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the airport, our host looked at us and said, “Our cats—go back—to your cats.” Later, she showed us a pedigree, and sure enough, there was a BlueBlaze cat three or four generations back.

I still get the occasional query from someone looking for a kitten, even though we closed down the breeding part of things in 2011—the BlueBlaze website is still out there, although there aren’t any recent litters listed.

We’re down to just six cats of varying breeds, one of them a black and white Maine Coon retired from breeding that came from a friend. Her call name is Spot. If you look at her pedigree, and you go back far enough, Buckaroo’s brother is sitting there, smiling.

Sometimes it seems like everyone’s Maine Coon’s trace back to us. I guess no matter where we go, there they are.



**Elektra Hammond (above)** appears in full Team Banzai regalia as she sits on the Humor in Science Fiction panel at the 2014 National Science Fiction Convention, Detcon 1, in Detroit, Michigan. Source: Jim C. Hines



**(Top)** Kittens with the call names “Stilgar” (a Maine Coon) and “Fluffy” (a Sphynx) lurk in their cage at the 2001 Emerald City Cat Fanciers in Seattle, WA. Stilgar was 2<sup>nd</sup> best kitten in show. Source: Elektra Hammond

**(Bottom)** BlueBlaze Zaphod “Zod” Beeblebrox (QGC,RW). Source: Preston Smith

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## A UK Holiday: Witnessing the End of an Era

By Sean Murphy. Photos by Conchi Murphy

A three week vacation to the United Kingdom takes a bit of planning ahead of time, especially when you want to hit England, Wales, and Scotland. Ireland, sadly, would have to wait for another day. Imagine our surprise when, after we'd locked in our dates, we discovered that Buckaroo Banzai was delivering a speech at the University of Edinburgh on September 13, 2022. We'd be in Edinburgh at the same time! As quick as a flash we bought tickets and awaited our opportunity to see the good doctor in person, even if it was only from a seat in the audience. Little did we know that our trip would be impacted by a major cultural event with the end of a monarch's reign.

We arrived in London on Saturday, September 3rd, and spent three days exploring the city on foot, river taxi, and the underground. If you get the chance, and you are in any way into trance music, I highly recommend that you check out [Cyberdog](#) in Camden Market - the live DJ and abundant black lights made for a trippy experience.

We next took a train to Chippenham where we hung out with our friends Diane and Derek for almost a week. While we were out for a day trip to Oxford on Thursday, September 8th, we heard the news that Queen Elizabeth was doing poorly. Royal family members were rushing up to [Balmoral Castle in Scotland](#) by plane and we all sensed that this was something serious. Later that day, when we were settled in at the [Trout Inn](#) for dinner and waiting for our meal to arrive, the announcement was made that Queen Elizabeth, the royal monarch for 70 years, had died.

All of the news channels were consumed with coverage of what was happening next, documentaries and old footage about the Queen and her family, interviews with anyone who knew her, and endless discussions about what it all meant. We were shocked by her death, but not entirely surprised – her advanced age and the earlier news from her doctors prepared us somewhat. Like everyone else in the UK, we were glued to the news for the rest of the night and the next day. The news coverage of the Queen was wall to wall on BBC 1 thru 4, and many other channels as well, for the next week. Everyone had an opinion to share and



**Holyroodhouse**, Edinburgh, Scotland.



**Flowers honoring Queen Elizabeth II** on the Holyroodhouse grounds.

there were many discussions about what protocols were to be followed and what events would happen next. Sadly, but not unexpectedly, Buckaroo's speech at the University was canceled out of respect for the passing of the Queen.

On Sunday, September 11th, the Queen's body was moved during a six-hour procession from Balmoral Castle to the [Palace of Holyroodhouse](#) in Edinburgh.

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St. Giles' Cathedral.

Ironically, the next stop on our trip was Edinburgh on September 12th. When we arrived that morning we went to our hotel first, and then walked up the steep path to [Calton Hill](#). We quickly discovered that Edinburgh was much like San Francisco in that both are very hilly. From the top of Calton Hill we could see the Palace of Holyroodhouse and we made our way down the other side to the [Royal Mile](#). There were barriers on the street along the whole mile, although the sidewalks were open, and there were many police officers. We walked up the mile a little bit but it became extremely crowded the closer we got to [St. Giles' Cathedral](#). The Queen would soon be brought from Holyroodhouse along the Royal Mile to the Cathedral where she would lay in state for a day. We left at that point as the crowds were growing by the minute and it was getting extremely hard to move around. We spent the rest of the day wandering around Edinburgh.

Later that evening we discovered that a group of people who were going to see Buckaroo at the University of Edinburgh were still going to meet up there. We made our way to the University and encountered several Blue Blaze Irregulars we knew and many we didn't. A trip to a local pub for food and drink was quickly organized and we discussed the passing of the Queen and the ascension of King Charles to the throne. We caught wind of a rumor that Buckaroo was asked to a private audience with the royal family in Holyroodhouse to pay his respects to the Queen before she traveled the Royal Mile, but we were unable to confirm it.

The Queen's coffin made its way to London the next day and she laid in state at Westminster Abbey for four days. The impact of her death on people was obvious from those who lined up to see her coffin in Edinburgh to the 250,000 people who saw her lying in state in the Abbey as well as the 29 million people who watched her funeral. It was a unique moment in history to experience without ever intending to do so; a once-in-a-lifetime event.

When we returned home and family members asked us what we thought about how people in the UK were reacting to the Queen's death, I summed it up this way: "The Queen was respected by the people of the United Kingdom. Princess Diana, on the other hand, was truly loved by the people. Scale-wise, it felt to me that the outpouring of grief was much larger for Diana than the Queen. And that made sense to me since Diana was the People's Princess."

At the time of publication, Buckaroo's speech has not been rescheduled. 🐎



**Onlookers and mourners** gather behind barricades along the Royal Mile in anticipation of Queen Elizabeth II's state procession from Holyroodhouse to St. Giles' Cathedral.

## Adventures in the Perilous Southwest

Text and Photos by Dan “Big Shoulders” Berger  
Additional Commentary by W.D. Richter and Earl Mac Rauch

It all began innocently enough, until the phantasmagoric hellscape of the desert southwest revealed its true colors. And that was just the Pheonix airport. But I’m getting ahead of myself. Besides, “phantasmic hellscape” describes most airports.

It was a festive occasion. 2022 marked the fifty-fifth wedding anniversary of my in-laws. To celebrate, they arranged a big family vacation including their three daughters, son-in-laws, and grandchildren; thirteen of us in all. Our destination: the stunning red rock country of Sedona, Arizona. Sedona is one of those places on the planet where you can literally point your camera in any direction and snap a perfect picture without even trying. Natural beauty. History. Indigenous American culture. New Age wonkery. Roving herds of javelinas. Sedona has it all, including an unexpected touch of the sinister.

Thirteen of us. Perhaps that was a sign.

After spending a day in Pheonix, my wife and our family traveled to Scottsdale for a tour of [Taliesen West](#); Frank Lloyed Wright’s desert architectural laboratory huddled with care in the foothills of the McDowell Mountains. Then it was on to lunch and time to hit I-17 north for Sedona. As fate would have it, I-17 would also take us past Black Canyon City and near a landmark of interest to Blue Blaze Irregulars, as mentioned on the Banzai Institute website some years ago:

### Arizona Clears Sale of Desert Parcel Phoenix, AZ - May 1, 1993

Public records filed yesterday reveal that the Arizona State Department of the Interior has approved the purchase of 250 acres of desert lands, approximately 50 miles north of Phoenix. The land, which includes two decommissioned nuclear missile silos, is currently owned by the United States Department of Defense. The court filing includes approval for refit and usage of the facility as a particle accelerator, atrium, research lab, living quarters, a full medical facility, complete rehearsal hall, and a musical recording studio. The name of the purchasing party is being withheld at this time.

Sadly, family obligations prevented us from visiting the Banzai Institute Southwest, but it was reassuring to know that the Boss was just a 70 mile Jet Car drive away from our Airbnb, especially as the weirdness of our vacation unfolded.

That weirdness began to materialize not long after arriving at our rented house; a sprawling compound furnished in a mishmash of Eastern and Western motifs with a sprinkle of New Age pixie dust. As we settled in, my niece marched up to the big table in one of the common areas clutching a book titled *The Cosmic Family, Volume I* and declared, “I think this is a cult house.” After reading a few selected passages, you could see everyone around the table raising their eyebrows with the thought, “What the hell kind of Airbnb is this?”

We soon discovered that our residence for the week was the former headquarters turned vacation rental of [Global Community Communications Alliance](#) and the brainchild of a Pittsburg street preacher-cum-cosmic guru named Tony Delevin, now going by the *nom de guerre* “Gabriel of Urantia.”\* A quote by Gabriel from Rick Ross’s [A 1997 snapshot of “Gabriel of Sedona”](#)\*\* gives you some idea of *The Cosmic Family, Volume 1*’s contents and the “theology” found there:

“I am the commander of a fleet of three thousand spacecraft that will participate in the evacuation of the planet when the change point comes,” he says one space alien told him. “You are needed to help us prepare for this evacuation. It will not be an easy task. You will be called a fraud and a deceiver . . .”

Ho. Lee. Shit.

It was an unsettling moment in an already unsettling morning. Both my wife’s phone and my own were still pinging at regular intervals with reports from home of the July 4<sup>th</sup> mass [shooting in Highland Park, IL](#). No doubt about it, the time had come to hail the Banzai Institute through the two people I knew would get the word through to Buckaroo, W. D. Richter (Rick) and Earl Mac Rauch (Mac). A brief report of my vacation zipped across the interwebs, explaining: (*See next page*)

\*[Urantia](#) is its own rabbit hole of lunacy. [The Urantia Book](#), from which Gabriel’s name and a portion of his theological musings are drawn, is described by Wikipedia as, “. . . a spiritual, philosophical, and religious book that originated in Chicago sometime between 1924 and 1955,” written with the intention of uniting the sometimes contentious connections between philosophy, religion, and science. The author or authors of this sprawling collection of 196 papers over 2,000 pages remains a mystery to this day, but the book claims that the true authors are “celestial beings” channeled by an earthly writer. Whoa, daddy.

\*\*Clearly, at some point, Mr. Delevin rebranded from “Gabriel of Sedona” to “Gabriel of Urantia” to provide a grander title for himself.

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**Dan:** The reality is more awesome in all of its bizarre splendor. Somehow, the Airbnb we are all staying at (our family, my wife's two sisters' families, and her parents) appears to be the compound for some culty New Age group called either "The Global Community" or "The Cosmic Family." Their literature reads like Tolkien wrote a science fiction book for Mormons. It's both hilarious and a little unnerving.

Meanwhile, we missed the horror of the Highland Park shooting, which happened only ten miles from our residence back in Illinois. Being assaulted by that amid the beautiful red desolation here is something of a gut punch.

**Mac:** Just don't stumble into a magnetic node and disappear. Stranger things...

Mac's warning was timely. It turned out that the same cult that owned our Airbnb was also the owner-operator of the tour company we hired to take us on excursions to the Grand Canyon, the former mining town of Jerome, various indigenous archaeological sites, and a "Vortex Tour" surveying some of the natural formations in Sedona purported to harbor varying types of "spiritual energy." I elected to skip the tour, which my wife Terry later branded with the concise description of, "Underwhelming." Later, Terry and I went shopping at a quirky local gallery called [Son Silver West](#), only to discover:

**Dan:** [Vortices](#), everywhere. I almost transcended at a local vortex. That was one close shave with The Beyond, let me tell ya.

**Mac:** Sedona was getting overbuilt and overrun by rich hippies more than 30 years ago. I can only imagine how it's grown and changed.

**Dan:** We're away from town in a valley south of the main drag, so it's less built up here. A small herd of javelinas passed through the property yesterday and seems to still be lurking around doing piggy things, as they do.

**Rick:** Javelinas? Cosmic Mormons? A woman named "John"? Duck and cover, Dan.

You know what's really scary? It's a great big Universe, but Mac lives only about 80 miles from [Uvalde](#), and you live just ten miles from Highland Park, and my crazy neighbor a half mile away is a graduate of [The Sig Sauer Academy](#).

Serendipity definitely loses some of its luster when guns make an appearance.



The "vortex" at Son Silver West. It was transcendent.

The unexpected wasn't ready to ditch our adventures any time soon, either. The next day brought a new revelation in the form of the most aggressively modernist piece of architecture ever to blemish the pinnacle of a cliffside:



What deluded nimrod thought this was a good idea?

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**Dan:** Things are looking dicey here. Apparently, a Bond villain built their winter headquarters about a block away from our Woo Woo cultist compound/Airbnb.

[The property is listed as yet another vacation rental](#), called “The Sedona Cliff House,” but I wasn’t buying it. Neither were Rick and Mac.

**Rick:** Uh, oh. Would appear you got WAAAAAY too close to Xan’s Arizona *pied-à-lair*.

**Mac:** Astonishing. I wouldn’t try to free-climb that rock face, Dan. There must be an easier ascent. Be careful!

**Dan:** They don’t expect me to climb the rock face, Mac. They expect me to die.

**Mac:** The plot thickens. Fake cowardice if you have to. Works for me.

**Dan:** I am currently reinforcing our compound with crystal energy and the hidden store of essential oils we found in one of the sheds on the property. The Patchouli Defense Perimeter is holding...for now.

**Mac:** Drakkar Noir is what I use. Sleep tight.

**Rick:** Let me get this straight: this is a *vacation* you’re on?

**Dan:** Vacation...institute monitoring mission...what’s the difference?

Fortunately, our vacation finished out with nothing more notable than a few amazing hikes in the desert and another visit from the javelinas, until...

**Dan:** Back from Sedona. On a final note from the trip, Xan very nearly blew us to bits from a hot air balloon as we breezed out of town to catch our flight in Phoenix. This sucker was all of 40 feet above the highway and sailed right over our heads as we drove by.

**Rick:** Xan? Looks more like another Lizardo/Whorfin failed exit strategy...by then many miles from New Jersey and nowhere near Planet Ten. The irregular yellow and green blocks spell out “WHORFIN BIG’S BALOON” in incorrect Lectroid.

I’m still partial to my Xan theory since the people in the basket were close enough to see clearly as the balloon swooshed overhead, but then Lectroids have a way of making you see them the way they want to be seen. There’s a strong possibility that Whorfin ran afoul of some unwelcome scrutiny. It’s no secret that Sedona is



**Death from above!** Was this fiendish low altitude assault Xan’s doing or Whorfin’s? You be the judge.

home to the [UFO Research Center](#) located at the [Center for the New Age](#) superstore. Perhaps someone at the Center learned too much.

Whatever the origin of the ariel assault, we were home and happy to be sleeping in our own beds again; contented by the kudos of a job well done:

**Mac:** Congrats on your narrow escape, Dan, and welcome home. Please turn in your travel expense report to Mrs. Johnson before proceeding on to the paymaster.

Until next time, this is Big Shoulders, signing off. 🐾



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### Hong Kong Cavaliers Audition Short List

Compiled by Steve "Rainbow Kitty" Mattsson

The Boss is looking for players with astounding musical chops, fierce intellectual curiosity, and unapologetic badassery for the HKCs, Bunkhouse Jazz Cats, Banzai Brass Band, and other Banzai Institute musical acts. Some intellectual badasses on this list, boy howdy!

#### Jeff "Skunk" Baxter



**Qualifications:** Senior Thinker and Raconteur at the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition. Guitarist for [Steely Dan](#) and [The Doobie Brothers](#). (Member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.) Notable song: "[What a Fool Believes](#)". Special skills: [Consultant](#) for the Pentagon's [Missile Defense Agency](#) and [National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency](#).

#### Michael Bishop (Blöthar the Berserker)



**Qualifications:** PhD in music. Vocalist and bass guitarist for [Gwar](#). Notable song: "[Mother Fucking Liar](#)". Special skills: Formidable in [Blöthar the Berserker](#) role, educator.

#### Bruce Dickinson



**Qualifications:** PhD in music (Honorary). Vocalist for [Iron Maiden](#). Notable song: "[Run to the Hills](#)". Special skills: airline pilot, international fencer, cowbell advocate.

#### Runhild Gammelsæter



**Qualifications:** PhD in cell physiology. Fulbright scholar. Vocalist for [Thorr's Hammer](#), [Khlyst](#), and solo projects. Notable song: "[Dommedagsnatt](#)" (Doomsday Night). Special skills: Painter

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[Greg Graffin](#)



**Qualifications:** PhD in zoology. (Studying evolution.) Vocalist for [Bad Religion](#). Notable song: “[American Jesus](#)”. Special skills: author, educator

[Colonel Chris Hadfield](#)



**Qualifications:** MS in aviation systems. Guitarist on the International Space Station. Notable song: “[Space Oddity](#)”. Special skills: fighter pilot, astronaut, [author](#).

[Dexter Holland](#)



**Qualifications:** PhD in molecular biology. (Studying the genetic material of HIV.) Vocalist for [The Offspring](#). Notable song: “[Why Don't You Get a Job?](#)” Special skills: private pilot, creator of [Gringo Bandito](#) hot sauce, and pretty fly for a white guy.

[Mika Kawashima](#) (Dr. Mikannible)



**Qualifications:** PhD in physics. Vocalist for [Sigh](#). Notable song: “[The Knell](#)”. Special skills: Journalist, [hot wax baths](#), drinks blood of enemies, Metal as fuck. Note:

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Mika also plays the alto, tenor, and baritone sax. Perhaps she could play the Rugsucker's parts for the HKCs? (R.I.P. [Jerry Peterson](#).)

### [Brian May](#)



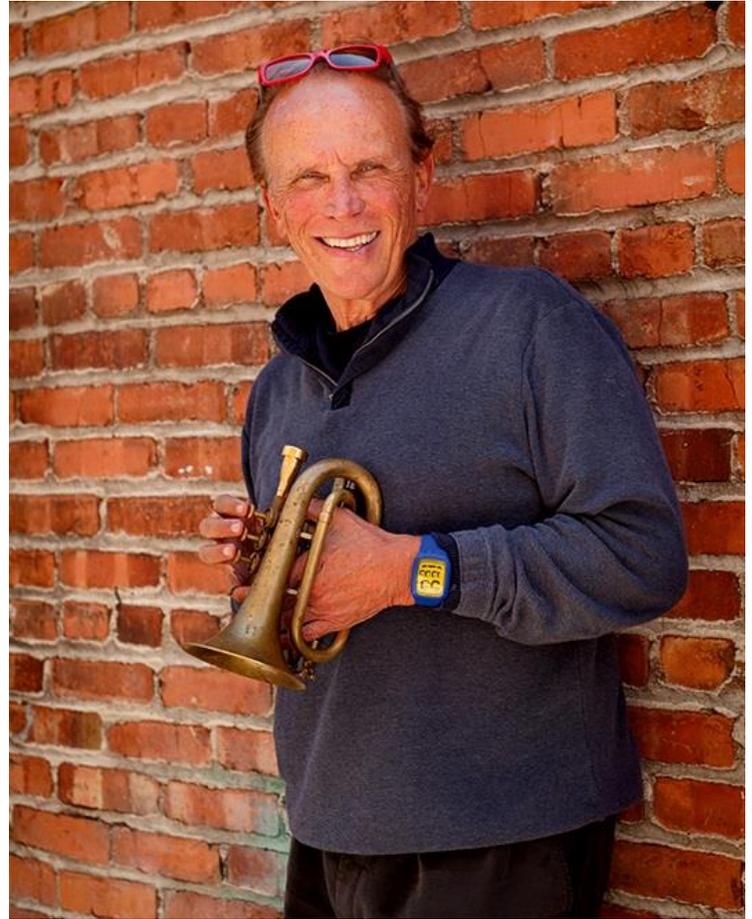
**Qualifications:** PhD in astrophysics. (Studying [radial velocity](#) using [absorption spectroscopy](#) and [Doppler spectroscopy](#) of [zodiacal light](#).) Guitarist for [Queen](#). (Member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.) Notable song: “[Fat Bottomed Girls](#)”. Special skills: Science team collaborator with NASA’ [New Horizons](#) Pluto mission, [stereo-photography](#).

### [Indre Viskontas](#)



**Qualifications:** PhD in neuroscience. (Studying creativity in people with [neurodegeneration](#) and the [link between music & neuroscience](#).) MS in music. Operatic [soprano](#). Notable song: “[Tenebrae](#)” by Osvaldo Golijov. Special skills: TV host, podcaster.

### [Peter Weller](#)



**Qualifications:** PhD in Italian Renaissance art history. Trumpeter in his own LA-based jazz sextet. Notable song: “[Rocket 88](#)”. Special skills: actor, (Played the Boss in the docudrama.) director, educator.

**Other possibilities (Maybe they can dance?)**

[Lieutenant Commander Jonny Kim](#), MD (Emergency medicine.) Special skills: Navy SEAL, jet pilot, astronaut.

[Jessica Watkins](#), PhD in geology. (Studying the [stratigraphy](#), [geology](#), and [geomorphology](#) of Mars.) Special skills: first team collegiate rugby All-American, jet pilot, astronaut.

Other recommendations? Send ‘em to the Bunkhouse.

**buckaroo and the hong kong  
banzai the cavaliers!!**

## Crew Stories from the Set of Buckaroo Banzai

Compiled by the WWO staff

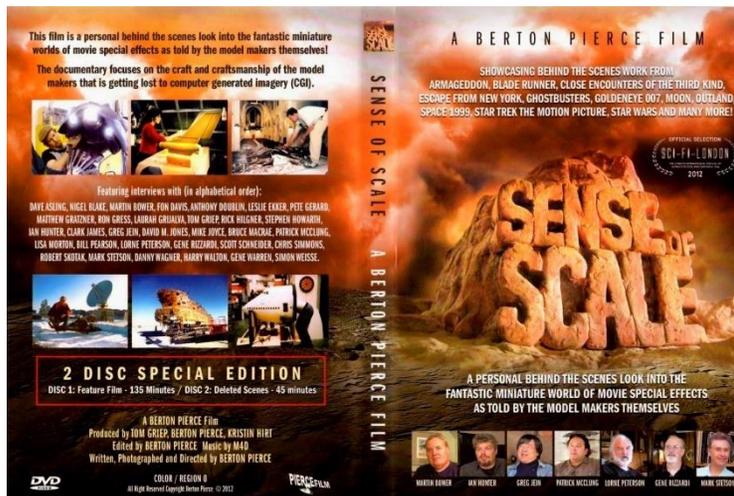
“[Crew Stories](#)” is a private group on Facebook that describes itself thusly, “When the credits roll, all those names have stories—this is where they’re told.” A few years ago [Ron Veto](#) and James Belohovek posted some amazing behind-the-scenes photos of the Jet Car shoot in the group. This led to the [Rexford Metz](#) interview in the [June 2021 issue of World Watch One](#). Last year, we asked any other members of the Buckaroo Banzai crew to share their stories and this is the result.

[John D Riley](#): “BB was the first movie I ever did props for. I was so green. Got to go to the premiere and meet the cast. After truly enjoying it, a lady behind me leaned in and asks if I really liked it. I said it was great! That is when I noticed it was [Ellen Barkin](#). She was so adorable. I still have one of Perfect Tommy’s outfits! Good times!!”

[James M McCann](#): “John D Riley, ‘adorable’ wouldn’t be the first adjective I’d use to describe Ms. Barkin. BB was the first of three features I did with Ellen and it was always interesting. She could be very unpredictable. On BB it was, I think, one of her first projects and she was very unsure of herself. Then on [Desert Bloom](#) she was a sweetheart. By the time we did [Johnny Handsome](#) she was a holy terror.”

John D Riley: “James M McCann, I could completely understand. She was hiding at the screening though was listening to us talk about it. I only had my 3 minutes with her. Fame went to her head quickly I would say!”

[Berton Pierce](#): “Check out the BB Segment from my [Sense of Scale](#) documentary.”



Sense of Scale DVD cover.

[Rick Taylor](#): “Finally went to storage and dug my BB crew jacket out. Here’s the front side. Complete with crew headband.”



The Crew Jacket, back to front.

[Carey Dietrich](#): “I worked with [W.D. Richter](#) and he was so disappointed it didn’t hit big. He was all ready for the sequel.”

[Tony Rivetti Sr.](#): “The BB crew jacket is one of a few I kept. It was a great film to work on.”

[Steve Mattsson](#): “[Tony](#), you worked with [Lewis Smith](#) on BB and [North & South](#)—any stories?”



Lewis Smith as Charles Main in North & South.

Tony Rivetti Sr.: “Steve Mattsson, yes—he was a great guy on the set. The entire cast had fun together.”

James M McCann: “Tony Rivetti Sr., Do you remember the Firestone factory, where we were walking out of our rain boots in that funky basement?”

Tony Rivetti Sr.: “I want to thank the generous stills photographer, [Bruce McBroom](#) for the BB set photos. We did a few films together.”

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[Doug Adam Jr.](#): “I shot the main titles and effects on BB for [Modern Film Effects](#).”

[Jim Behnke](#): “I wasn’t ‘friends’ per se with [Peter Weller](#), but knew him from a movie prior to BB. When I heard what the film was gonna be like, I gave him an original Thomas Organ Co. [Wah Wah pedal](#) (I had two).”

[James Belohovek](#): “Something I did for BB at [VCE Inc](#). I believe Rick Taylor shot the miniature.”

[Barney Burman](#): “One of the Red Lectroid makeups was designed on me. I was made up for camera tests but I was only 17 at the time, so I didn’t get to be in the actual film. Also, due to production’s attempt to save money, we were pre-assembling the prosthetics, back at the [Burman Studio](#), on busts of the actors and painting them so they could treat the make-ups as “pull on” masks instead. And some of the on set makeup artists put the eyes on the OUTSIDE of the eyelids. Did it really all matter in the end? Maybe. Maybe not. Regardless, I think BB is one potential franchise that could really use a reboot today.”



Photo of Burman Lectroid mask



*Anyone else out there have stories from the Buckaroo Banzai set? Send ‘em our way.*

### INTERVIEW: Jake Young Wizard and the Bruiser Podcast

by Dan Berger

Sometimes things work out. Other times, not so much. Most days, life gives you a little bit of column A and a little bit of column B.

Both columns made an appearance in the form of an email I received on September 7 from Jake Young of the [Wizard and the Bruiser](#) podcast. Jake initially reached out to Sean Murphy of the Buckaroo Banzai FAQ website for an interview to feature in an upcoming episode of the podcast. Sean was unavailable, so he recommended me as an alternate. How could I say no?

Thirty hours later, it was interview time. Let's just say that it wasn't my best performance ever. When the Banzai episode dropped on September 19 it was sans interview material from yours truly.

Fortunately, the *Wizard and the Bruiser* crew sallied forth to craft a jaunty sixty-nine minutes of Buckaroo Banzai entertainment to enjoy. Definitely check it out when you get the chance.

Turnabout is fair play, and Jake was kind enough to reciprocate with an interview of his own. Sometimes things work out after all.

**Dan Berger:** Tell us a little about *Wizard and the Bruiser*. Who are you guys?

**Jake Young:** *Wizard and the Bruiser* are Holden McNeely and Jake Young (that's me), two comedians from New York who dive deep into the origin stories of pop culture's most interesting franchises and fandoms. We've been telling tales of Nerd History for five years now, covering things as universally beloved as *Star Wars* to the weird conglomeration of uncles that make up the fanbase of Rush (the Canadian band, not Mega Man's dog, in this business you can't be too specific). I originally developed a pilot episode with Marcus Parks of *Last Podcast on the Left*, but the show wasn't picked up. Marcus brought me and Holden together to keep the show going under the Last Podcast Network banner and we just hit the ground running. About the name... I think we were going for a generic "morning zoo crew" vibe when we picked it, with the full intention to pick something better later. *Unfortunately*, too many people started listening too soon and we had to stick with it. For the record, neither of us are officially the Wizard or officially the Bruiser, just to keep things unmarketable.

**DB:** What drew you to podcasting? What is it about all of this rampant content creation that you enjoy most?



**JY:** I was very, very lucky to be friends with a lot of extremely driven, talented, and forward-thinking creators while I was a struggling comic in Brooklyn in the 2010s. Marcus Parks really saw the future of audio content on the internet and brought a lot of hilarious people together into the world of podcasting right when the medium was blowing up. For me, I'd like to think podcasting plays to my strengths (running my mouth, improvisational comedy, and getting excited about niche subjects) and minimizes my weaknesses (upsetting to look at, bad at holding down a 9 to 5).

**DB:** What's the premise of your podcast?

**JY:** Every week we pick a topic that can arguably be related to "Nerd Culture." We've covered movies, book series, individual creators, superheroes, anime, manga, and even Doritos and Mountain Dew. On the surface, our concept was to provide some good old fashioned infotainment. But as the show has matured, I think the real joy of the show is learning from all these creative people from the past 100 years and breaking down *why* these things become so popular. The secondary purpose of the show is to rattle off as many childish jokes as humanly possible within a 60 minute timespan.

**DB:** What is it about various fandoms that make them the focus of such frequent discussion these days? Why is our culture so obsessed with the entertainment we celebrate and how we celebrate it? What's up with that?

**JY:** On the cynical side there're the forces of capitalism and marketing eager to appeal to ingroups and pander to existing audiences in a highly splintered marketplace where original stories need to overcome so many hurdles

just to get noticed, let alone turn a profit. On the more hopeful side I'd like to think that the human need for mythmaking and community is essential to life, and while God and Country can divide people, escapist tales of heroes and adventure are appealing to everyone. There's a connection you feel walking the floor of a major comic-con that I'd almost call sacred. Our modern pantheon is more vast and colorful than any that came before it and nobody has to get burned at the stake for it; unless you count online flame wars, which, fair enough.

**DB:** You've covered several films from the 1980s (*The Thing*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Ghostbusters*, etc.) over the course of your podcast's run. What is it about science fiction films and that era of the 1980s, 1984 in particular, that make them such compelling subjects for discussion?

**JY:** There really was something magical in the air around 1984. To oversimplify it all as ridiculously as possible, I think it's down to puppets and comic books. By the 80s, an entire generation of filmmakers had developed a highly acute sense of visual storytelling from the comics they grew up reading; these were the children of Lee and Kirby, after all. That understanding of the rules and strengths of visual storytelling from a fresh batch of directors who were more media-literate than their forebears changed the game. The explosion in practical effects techniques also allowed these directors to tell basically *any* story their imaginations could whip up, spaceships and monsters and gods and robots were not only possible but *convincing* as long as you had enough latex, stop motion maquettes, matte painters, and a team of animatronic puppeteers ready to make these visions a reality. It's the marriage of classic relatable stories and unforgettable visuals that brought out the full potential of movies as a popular mass media.

**DB:** What made you decide to tackle *Buckaroo Banzai*?

**JY:** It wasn't my idea. Holden is as close to a B.B. Irregular without actually knowing to call himself one. The movie was a beloved in-joke and cult totem for him and his friends for years. I was genuinely shocked when he suggested the movie.

**DB:** How much did you know about the film and its fandom going into the podcast?

**JY:** Before we did the episode, I just knew it as "that punchline reference Gen-X nerds throw around when they want to prove their geek credentials." I prepared for the episode the same way I do every episode by reaching out to fandom sources. I have to say the Banzai fandom was one of the most friendly and informative communities I've come across while doing the show. Everybody I asked was willing to help point me in the

right direction. Of course the most incredible resources was the *World Watch One* archives, even though I barely scratched the surface. Also shout out to that one random old website I found that hosted a pirated mp3 copy of Rick and Reno's DVD commentary!

**DB:** Talk a little bit about the group watch party you had before doing the podcast.

**JY:** We have a weekly live online hangout with Patreon donors and very often they become little watch parties for the movies and shows we cover. Most of the people attending were in their late 20s or early 30s and hadn't even *heard* of the docudrama beforehand. Obviously, people were excited to see such a murderers row of character actors all delivering the most ridiculous dialogue with the seriousness of a state funeral. Most of all it was the film's immaculate aesthetics and hit-the-ground-running plot that left people truly amazed. They knew they were watching something special.

**DB:** What do you think of the film?

**JY:** So, I know this is a dangerous thing to say in this venue, but while I admire the sheer raw AMOUNT of concepts in the film, it really does suffer as a "sit down and watch as a standalone movie" for the sheer amount of ideas thrown at you. Learning about the filmmakers and the insane drama behind the camera really does help me appreciate the work. It's one thing to notice the insane drop in cinematography quality and another to go "ah yes this nightclub scene was shot and lit by the *Blade Runner* guy and that's why it looks so incredible." It's incredible to watch as part of a group, I'd love to attend a midnight screening.

**DB:** What were some of the unique features of *Buckaroo Banzai* and its fans that stood out to you?

**JY:** The commitment to coolness really set this film apart. It feels like a live action anime in the way *Buckaroo* and the Hong Kong Cavaliers just Ooze confidence, competence, and capability with every word out of their mouths. The confidence of a 9 piece band in which none of the members are wearing a necktie correctly. These are the ubermenschen of 1984 and that vibe is infectious. As far as the fans go, it feels like the world's friendliest secret society. A cadre of aging Gen-Xers who still know how to have fun and enjoy sticking up for the underdogs.

**DB:** Where can people find you on the interwebs and elsewhere?

**JY:** Open your favorite podcast app and look for *Wizard and the Bruiser*, baby.

## From the Colorado Bureau Office and Great Sand Dunes Observation Post

Please note all dates, locations, and other details may be subject to change. Be sure to visit the links for updates and more info, especially regarding COVID requirements for conventions and other public spaces.

### OCTOBER

**Cast Birthdays:** Leonard Gaines (Oct. 13), John Lithgow (Oct. 19), Christopher Lloyd & Jeff Goldblum (both Oct. 22)

[Baltimore Comic-Con](#) (Oct. 28-30, Baltimore, MD). Meet tons of talent from the comics industry, and four Disney Princess voice actresses.

[The War of The Worlds – Listening Party](#) (Oct. 30, Silver City, NM). In September of this year, the Silver City Community Theatre performed a reading of Orson Welle's 1938 *The War of the Worlds* radio broadcast for a live audience. The performance was recorded and will now be the centerpiece of a listening party at the [OASIS Coffee and Tea House](#) presented by SCCT.

### NOVEMBER

**Cast Birthdays:** Jane Marla Robbins (Nov. 2), Vincent Schiavelli (Nov. 11), Jamie Lee Curtis (Nov. 22), Michael Santoro (Nov. 23), Matt Clark (Nov. 25)

[U.S. midterm elections](#) (Nov. 8). We know you have opinions. If you can, please exercise your civic privilege.

[Artemis Lunar Test Flight](#) (Nov. 14). NASA has set November 14 for the next potential launch date in Artemis 1's test phase of its ongoing mission to return to the moon. The date is subject to flight conditions on the launch day. Be sure to check the [NASA website](#) for further developments.

[Dimensionless Quantities in Physical and Mathematical Sciences Conference](#) (Nov. 18-19, Singapore). Selected papers to be presented include two studies by V.T.S Dao *et al.* on estimating attenuation and phase delay in driving voltage waveform in different types of ultra-high-speed image sensors, which could be revolutionary in the next generation of oscillation overthruster design.

[Philcon](#) (Nov. 18-20, Cherry Hill, NJ). One of the longest-running fandom gatherings, ongoing since 1936. Announced guests as of this writing include author Keith R.A. DeCandido and artist Charles Urbach.

[Pasadena Doo Dah Parade](#) (Nov. 22 Pasadena, CA). Often called the Rose Parade's twisted sister, this off-beat, irregularly held event is known for its wild costumes and irreverent attitude.

### DECEMBER

**Cast Birthdays:** Ken Magee (Dec. 11), John Walter Davis (Dec. 17), Gary Bisig (Dec. 19), Rosalind Cash (Dec. 31)

[GalaxyCon Columbus](#) (December 2-4, Columbus, Ohio). Celebrities and programming for a wide variety of fandoms; from actors, to authors, comics creators, professional wrestlers, gamers, cosplay, and more. Announced guests this year include stars from *Doctor Who*, *ST:TNG*, *Clerks*, *Batman TAS*, *Smallville*, a plethora of comics creators and print authors, and more.

[Pretend to Be a Time Traveler Day](#) (Dec. 8). Alternately, if you succeed in coming back here from the future, you can pretend to pretend to be a time traveler.

[Holiday Cosplay Tampa Bay](#) (Dec. 10-11, Tampa, FL). Kick off the winter holiday season with this brand new family friendly convention celebrating anime, sci fi, fantasy, comics, gaming, and especially cosplay. Many of the cosplayers and photo ops will be embracing the holiday theme, adding a unique angle to the events.

[Noche de los Rabanos \(Night of the Radishes\)](#) (Dec. 23). Journey to Oaxaca de Juarez, Mexico, where every year specially grown local radishes are carved into Christmas scenes and other themes, competing for prizes in several categories. Ongoing since 1897(!) as an official event and even longer as a folk custom!

**New Year's Eve** (Dec. 31). The Banzai Institute has shuttle bus options heading to Times Square and to Artie's Artery for NYE. Sign-up sheets are in the garage. You can chip in for gas by dropping a few bucks in the coffee can under Sam's photo. Also, Perfect Tommy asks that we not crash his private party again this year, so... go for it.

### JANUARY

**Cast Birthdays:** Clancy Brown (Jan. 5), Yakov Smirnoff (Jan. 24), Tommy Huff (Jan. 29), Read Morgan (Jan. 30), Jonathan Banks (Jan. 31)

[National Science Fiction Day](#) (Jan. 2). Indulge in a relevant book, film, or other entertainment of your choice, and maybe spend a little time researching the science or contemplating the sociological implications behind the premise.

[Sherlock Holmes' Birthday](#) (Jan. 6). Holmes' Baker Street Irregulars helped inspire our own Blue Blaze Irregulars, and the literary society which shares the BSI name converges annually in New York on a weekend near this date to celebrate the Great Detective. The main event is by invitation only, but several ancillary gatherings are less restrictive.

[Jarramplas Festival](#) (Jan. 19-20 in Piornal, Spain). If you've ever wanted to throw turnips at someone dressed up as a colorful devil, this is the socially acceptable time and place for doing so.

[Wakakusa Yamayaki, the Mountain Roast](#) (Jan. 28 at Nara, Japan). Its exact origins are lost to history: Some claim it began as a means to drive away wild boars, while others suggest it represents a conflict between two rival temples. Either way, every year on the fourth Saturday in January, the dry grass on Mount Wakakusayama is set ablaze in a spectacular sight visible from anywhere in the city below, preceded by a stunning fireworks display.

[Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day](#) (Jan. 30).

Read more about everybody's favorite poppable material [here](#), and movie prop enthusiasts might appreciate the mention of Buckaroo's holographic viewing bubble-wrap goggles found [here](#).

[Up-Helly Aa](#) (Jan. 31). To mark the end of the Yule season, most of us flip calendar pages and maybe take down decorations. They're a little more hardcore in the town of Lerwick on St. Ninian's Isle, off the coast of Scotland. Head over to witness the locals dress up like Vikings and burn a full-sized replica of a longship. Big Norse is amused.



**A DEEP SADNESS LIVES WITH THE PRIDDYS**



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