



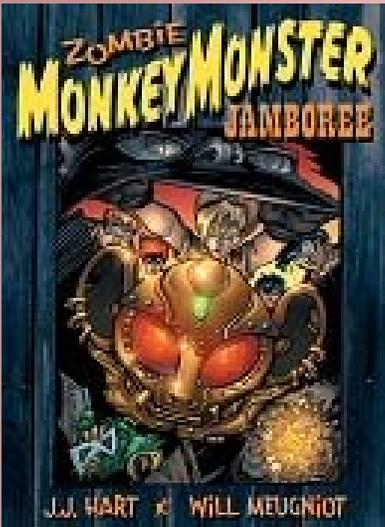
# Tied-In

The Newsletter of the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers

## Actionopolis: When Adventure is Your Destination

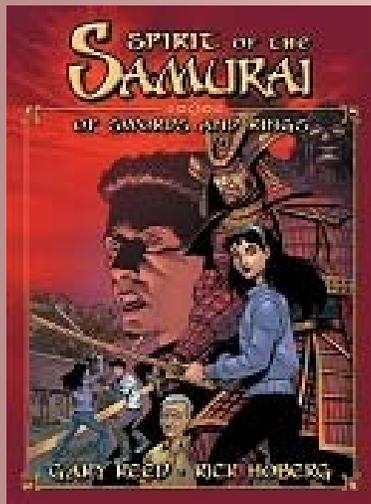
by John Helfers, IAMTW member

With more and more large publishing companies being swallowed up by international media conglomerates, there is a fast-growing group of smaller publishers that are producing quality fiction for adults, kids, and any age in between. One such company, which has attracted the participation of several IAMTW members, is Actionopolis. It launched its line of YA adventure fiction with the



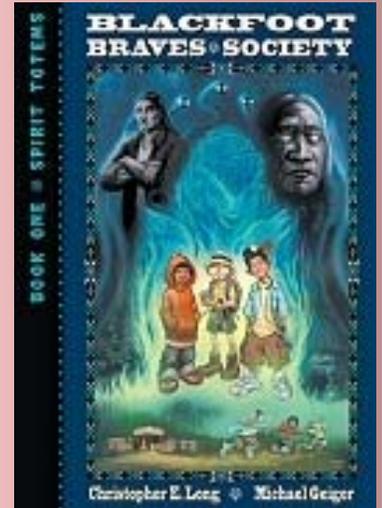
release of seven books in the last half of 2006. Look for books from Tim Waggoner, Jean Rabe, and myself in the coming year. Actionopolis is a subsidiary of the media company

Komikwerks, LLC., featuring their website that publishes comic strips and serials from some of the biggest names in the industry, including Keith Giffen, Tom Mandrake, Dan Mishkin, Gary Reed, Bruce Zick, and many others.



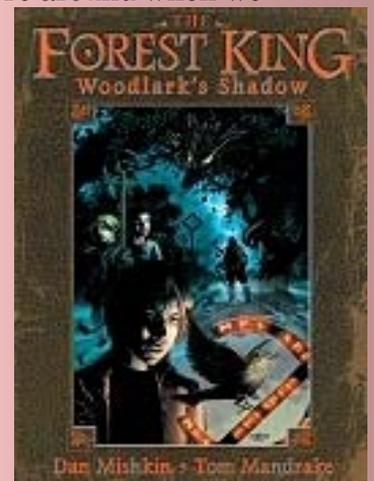
When the founders of Komikwerks decided to make the leap from comics to prose, they naturally thought to tap the deep pool of excellent writers and artists that were already producing fantastic stories and artwork for the website, and challenged them to create illustrated stories, based on concepts and ideas from Denton and his publishing partner, Patrick Coyle, that would appeal to today's generation of readers.

"I felt illustrated novels were the best way to utilize the skills of our many friends," said Shannon Denton, co-founder of the Actionopolis line. "We knew all of these artists and writers from different media, and this was the best way



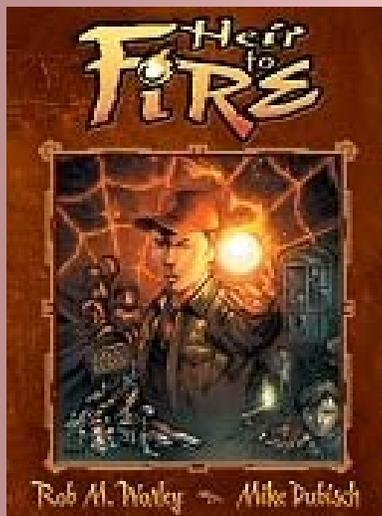
**The books have received enthusiastic support from libraries and schools, with many teachers and librarians commenting that the fast-paced stories and illustrations are perfect for both regular and reluctant readers.**

to showcase their talents and tell the kinds of stories that we wished were around when we were kids. Lately we've heard that kids aren't as interested as reading, and even though a lot of us have moved into careers in animation, video games, or film, many of us were first inspired by the books and comic books we read as children, and we



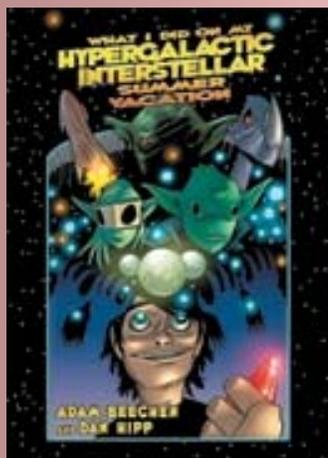
wanted to recreate that experience for the kids of today.”

Denton tapped the writers and artists mentioned above, along with other creators from animation, comics, and film, including J.J. Hart, Rick Hoberg, Will Meugniot, Christopher E. Long, Michael Geiger, Dan Hipp, and many others. Everyone was more than happy to rise to the challenge, and the results have been incredible. From humorous adventure to science fiction to dark fantasy, the first wave of Actionopolis books run the gamut across all genres, ensuring that there is something to



appeal to just about every YA reader out there. Each volume is bound in a full-color, hardcover binding, and features about 30-40 illustrations ranging from full-page pictures to smaller ones inserted throughout the text. The books have received enthusiastic support from libraries and schools, with many teachers and librarians commenting that the fast-paced stories and illustrations are perfect for both regular and reluctant readers.

Denton and Coyle have big plans for the Actionopolis books, intending to continue several of the already-launched series, publish new books written and illustrated by top writers and artists in the field, including stories by Alan Grant, Doug Moench, and IAMTW members Tim Waggoner, and Jean Rabe, and take the properties into other media, including film, television, and animation. For more information on the Actionopolis line, visit their website at [www.actionopolis.com](http://www.actionopolis.com).



(ed. note: John Helfers serves as the editor for the Actionopolis line.)

# Convention Calendar

## World Horror Convention

“The Diversity of Horror” is the theme for The World Horror Convention, which is being held outside the United States for the first time.

**March 29-April 1**

**Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre**

[www.whc2007.org](http://www.whc2007.org)

## Origins

Our own Matt Forbeck is a guest of honor at The Origins International Game Expo, set to take place in Columbus, Ohio. Badge pickup and some events will begin July 4.

**July 5-8**

**Greater Columbus Convention Center**

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

## Comic-Con

More than one hundred thousand fans and professionals are expected to attend this year’s Comic-Con International.

**July 26-29**

**San Diego, CA**

[www.comic-con.org](http://www.comic-con.org)

## Arcon/NASFiC

The premier science-fiction/fantasy convention of St. Louis, Arcon, is host this year to the North American Science Fiction Convention. This will be the 9<sup>th</sup> NASFiC, which takes place when World Con is out of the country.

**August 2-5**

**Collinsville Gateway Center**

[www.archonstl.org/31](http://www.archonstl.org/31)

## GEN CON Game Fair

America’s largest gaming convention will feature several IAMTW members who are hosting a writers’ workshop. Speakers include Jean Rabe, John Helfers, Tim Waggoner, Steven Schend, and Brad Beaulieu.

**August 16-19**

**Indiana Convention Center**

[www.gencon.com/2007/indy](http://www.gencon.com/2007/indy)

## World Science Fiction Convention

The 65<sup>th</sup> running of this show will be combined with the Japan National SF Convention. More than four thousand are expected to attend the convention, and major events will be held in either English or Japanese, with translations provided. For example, the Hugo Awards will be run in English, but with translated into Japanese. The Japanese National Convention's Seiun Awards will be held in Japanese, with English translations.

**August 30-September 3**  
**Yokohama, Japan**  
[www.nippon2007.org](http://www.nippon2007.org)

## Dragon\*Con

Touted as the United State's largest multi-media convention, Dragon\*Con boasts tracks for science-fiction and fantasy, gaming, comics, literature, art, music, and film.

**August 31-September 3**  
**Atlanta, GA**  
[www.dragoncon.org](http://www.dragoncon.org)

## World Mystery Convention

Bestselling mystery writer Dana Stabenow is the programming chair for this year's Bouchercon, the theme: "Bearly Alive." The Bouchercon site highlights some of the attractions: the spectacular Chugach Mountains to the east and Cook Inlet to the west. Hike 200 miles of cross-country trails, fish the Kenai River, Ride the Alaska Railroad to Seward and visit the Alaska Sea Life Center, or charter an air taxi to Talkeetna and commune with Mt. Denali.

**September 27-30**  
**Anchorage Hilton Hotel**  
[www.bouchercon2007.com](http://www.bouchercon2007.com)

## World Fantasy Convention

"Ghosts and Revenants: Memory, History, and Folklore" is the theme for this year's convention.

**November 1-4**  
**Saratoga City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY**  
[www.lastsfa.org/wfc2007](http://www.lastsfa.org/wfc2007)

## Windycon

One of Chicago's longest-running conventions, Windycon features fantasy, science-fiction, gaming, and filking sessions.

**November 9-11**  
**The Wyndham O'Hare, Rosemont, IL**  
[www.windycon.org](http://www.windycon.org)

# Spotlight on Matt Forbeck

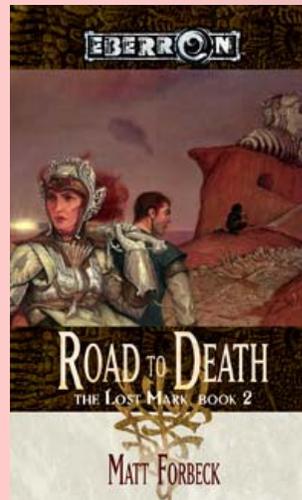
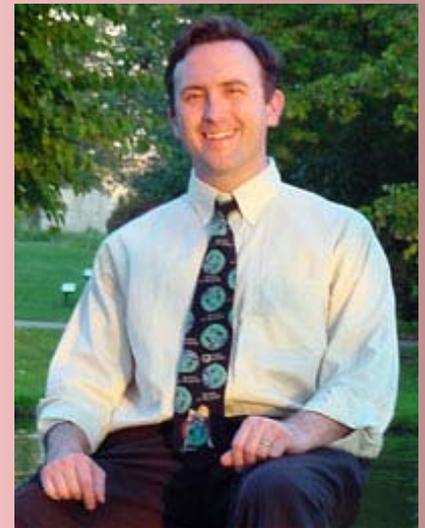
## Dreams and Chances

by Matt Forbeck, IAMTW member

Like most writers, I always wanted to be one. As I got older, though, the idea of becoming a writer seemed little more than a dream. My parents—who always encouraged me to follow my dreams—also suggested that I think about the waking world and get a degree in engineering too. At the time, this made sense to me because I knew, even as a teenager, that becoming a professional, full-time writer was a long shot.

I applied for a special degree program at the University of Michigan, in which I'd obtain a BS in Electrical Engineering/Computer Science and a BA in Creative Writing, all in a total of five years, and the various educrats approved it. I figured I'd graduate, get a job as a computer programmer—maybe working on games, another passion of mine—and then write in the evenings. It seemed like a good plan.

But toward the end of my second year in college, I woke up one morning in a panic. I realized that it was all just a sham, a well-built

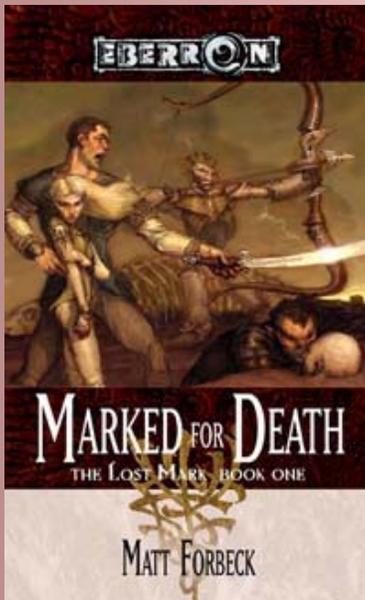


rationalization that would hamstring me as a writer and probably doom me to a life as an electrical engineer instead. I knew that I'd get that job and then be too tired or unfocused to actually ever sit down and write. I'd work hard, then come home and want to play games or spend time with my girlfriend or watch some TV.

And I would never write.

Not that there's anything inherently wrong with being an engineer. I enjoyed science and engineering, and I like to think I'd have made a good go of it. But that wasn't what I wanted to do, and the thought of wasting any more time preparing for a career I didn't want drove me nuts.

My parents talked me out of dropping out of all of my already-paid-for classes. I figured out I



could graduate in a total of three years if I ditched the engineering degree and just stuck to Creative Writing instead, so that's what I did.

One thing about graduating as an engineer is that you have good job prospects.

Creating Writing majors entering the job market at the height of the recession under the

first President Bush didn't have such rosy prospects.

I decided to travel instead, even though I couldn't afford to. I packed everything I owned into a couple duffel bags, grabbed a student work visa to the only country in Europe that both took part in that program and had a language I could speak: the UK.

## Europe on \$600

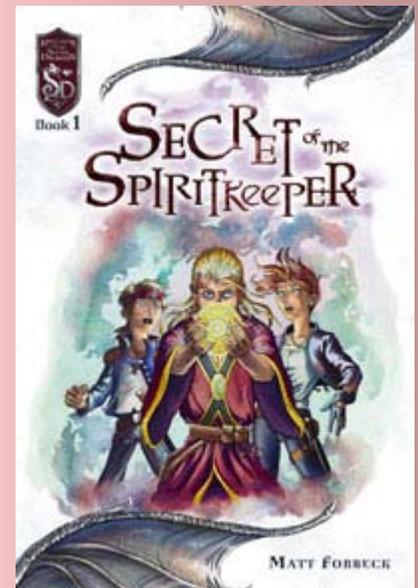
I didn't know a soul in the country, and I had only \$600 in my pocket. Soon after I landed, I phoned up Games Workshop, as I'd seen an ad in their *White Dwarf* magazine a few months before that, looking for an editor for their games. I lined up an interview and took the train up to

Nottingham. I showed up in a suit and tie, which meant I'd overdressed more than I could have imagined. The interview went well, and they sent me home with an editing test to take over the weekend.

"Of course," my boss-to-be said, "you know proper English editing marks."

"Of course," I lied, "although I think they're a bit different in America, so it may take me a day or two to catch up."

When I got back to London, I hit the first bookstore I saw and grabbed a dictionary dedicated to the Queen's English, complete with a section on proper editing marks, and I smacked



that test around. When I arrived in Nottingham on Monday, I brought everything I owned with me. My money was already starting to run out, and I knew I had to make something happen fast.

"Either you're going to hire me, or I have a friend of a friend of my father who will give me couch space while I find a bartending job in Oxford," I said.

They hired me that day.

When my visa expired, Games Workshop offered me a full-time job, but I wanted to get back to my girlfriend in Ann Arbor, so I did that instead. She's now my wife and the mother of our five kids, so that worked better than I could have planned.

After I got back, I dove into freelancing, writing anything I could get my hands on. I ended up mostly editing and writing games again, along with some short fiction tossed in here and there. I wanted to write novels, but I hadn't anticipated another career issue. When you write all day long for money, it's hard to stop for a while to write a novel entirely on spec. Instead of paying your rent, you're buying a lottery ticket, and that's a wide leap of faith to make. Besides which, I love games, and I even spent four years as the president of a gaming company, Pinnacle



winning twelve. This includes the Best Roleplaying Game for *Deadlands* and *The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game*, Best Miniatures Rules for *Warzone* and *The Great Rail Wars*, Best Roleplaying Adventure for *Independence Day*, Best Fantasy Board Game for *Genestealer*, and Best Short Story for “Prometheus Unwound” from *The Book of All Flesh*. He has also won five Ennies. Matt lives in Beloit, Wisconsin, with his wife Ann and their children: Marty, Pat, Nick, Ken, and Helen.

Entertainment Group. Still, I wanted to get to writing novels. I just had to find a way.

Fortunately, out of the blue, Ed Pugh at Reaper Miniatures commissioned a 40,000-word tie-in novella from me for Reaper’s *C.A.V.* game, paid on acceptance. With a guaranteed sale made, I tore into that book like a pit bull. While it never sold all that well—Reaper had almost no presence in bookstores—it gave me something to show the editors at Wizards of the Coast.

I’d written a number of gaming books for Wizards, but the fiction editor there didn’t care. Until I could show him I could write a novel, he had no time for me. I sent him the Reaper novella and had an offer a couple months later for my first mass-market novel. At that point, my old pals at Games Workshop had started up their own fiction division: the Black Library. If Wizards was willing to hire me to write novels, then they were too. Shortly, I lined up a trilogy of novels based on their *Blood Bowl* game.

## Success

My first novel came out in the summer of 2004, and just over two years later, I had nine different novels in print. It took me fifteen years after I graduated college to finally get to it, but when the opportunity to fulfill that dream of becoming a novelist knocked, I smashed down the door and beat that elusive bugger senseless. I can only recommend you do the same.

Projects Matt has worked on have been nominated for twenty-three Origins Awards,

Matt’s latest novel is *The Queen of Death* from Wizards of the Coast. He’s also landed gigs writing his fourth *Blood Bowl* novel and the novelization of the upcoming *Mutant Chronicles* movie. To learn more about Matt and his tabletop games, computer games, toy lines, and novels, visit [www.forbeck.com](http://www.forbeck.com).

## Send Us Your News

What are you working on?

Have some special appearances lined up?

How did you get into the tie-in writing business?

Do you have some sage advice for new writers?

Got some market tips to report?

We want to spread your news to the rest of the IAMTW membership and other interested readers. Please e-mail your news articles, writing advice, and classifieds to Jean Rabe at: [jeanr@sff.net](mailto:jeanr@sff.net) or [jeanrabe@hotmail.com](mailto:jeanrabe@hotmail.com), and mention tie-in or IAMTW in the message header.

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IAMTW Vice President—Lee Goldberg

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# Murder Resurfaces

Burl Barer's MURDER IN THE FAMILY, the true story of child killer Kirby D. Anthony, is being re-released August 2007 by Kensington's



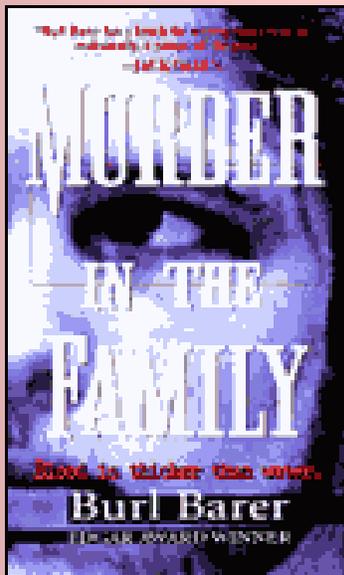
Pinnacle True Crime imprint as a "True Crime Classic."

The case, and its investigation, was adapted as a docudrama on both The FBI Files and The New Detectives.

"I wrote the book seven years ago," said Barer, "and it surprised all of us by immediately jumping on the New York Times Bestseller list's second

tier. Caught off guard by the high level of sales, the publisher ran out of books, and it was on back order at the peak of demand. Back in print, however, it continued selling exceptionally well, and up until 2005 it was still selling as if a new release. Now, with a re-release as a True Crime Classic in August 2007, we trust that a new generation of true crime readers will find the story every bit as compelling and disturbing as did those who purchased it seven years ago."

Barer, recognized for his true crime and fiction books, is an Edgar Award winning author and a two-time Anthony Award nominee. His writing credits include: *Head Count*, *Body Count*, *Broken Doll*, and the Jeff Reynolds mystery series. He has authored tie-in works *Capture the Saint*, *The Saint* (adapted from the screenplay), and *Maverick: The Making of the Movie and Complete Guide to the Television Series*. Visit his website at: [www.burlbarer.net](http://www.burlbarer.net).



# Scribe Nominees

The International Association of Media Tie-In Writers is pleased to announce the nominees for the first annual Scribe Awards.

The first annual GRANDMASTER AWARD, honoring career achievement in the field, will go to DONALD BAIN, author of the MURDER SHE WROTE novels and the ghostwriter behind COFFEE, TEA OR ME and other bestsellers.

The Scribe awards will be given out at a ceremony in late July at Comic-Con in San Diego.

## SPECULATIVE FICTION

### BEST NOVEL – ADAPTED

SLAINE: THE EXILE, Stephen Seville  
SUPERMAN RETURNS, Marv Wolfman  
TOXIC AVENGER: THE NOVEL, Lloyd Kaufman & Adam Jahnke  
ULTRAVIOLET, Yvonne Navarro  
UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION, Greg Cox

### BEST NOVEL – ORIGINAL

STAR TREK CRUCIBLE: McCOY – PROVENANCE OF SHADOWS, David R. George III  
STARGATE ATLANTIS: EXOGENESIS, Elizabeth Christensen & Sonny Whitelaw  
THIRTY DAYS OF NIGHT: RUMORS OF THE UNDEAD, Jeff Mariotte & Steve Niles  
WARHAMMER: FAITH AND FIRE, James Swallow  
WARHAMMER: ORC SLAYER, Nathan Long

## GENERAL FICTION

### BEST NOVEL - ADAPTED

SNAKES ON A PLANE, Christa Faust  
THE PINK PANTHER, Max Allan Collins

### BEST NOVEL – ORIGINAL

CSI NEW YORK: BLOOD ON THE SUN, Stuart Kaminsky  
LAS VEGAS: HIGH STAKES, Jeff Mariotte  
MR. MONK GOES TO HAWAII, Lee Goldberg  
OAKDALE CONFIDENTIAL: SECRETS REVEALED, Alina Adams

## YOUNG ADULT – ALL GENRES

### BEST NOVEL

ALIAS APO: STRATEGIC RESERVE, Christina York  
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: PORTAL THROUGH TIME, Alice Henderson  
DRAGONLANCE: WARRIOR'S HEART, Stephen Sullivan  
KNIGHTS OF THE SILVER DRAGON: PROPHECY OF THE DRAGONS, Matt Forbeck

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