

Summary and Selected Highlights of the 2016 AG

for the Evangelical Christianity SIG

by Larry D. Paarmann and Diane Powell

September 30, 2016



The Town & Country Convention Center from the golf course

The 2016 AG met in San Diego, CA, June 29 through July 3, 2016. The AG was hosted by the Town and Country Hotel and Convention Center, a very spacious and attractive oasis in the city of San Diego. This was a well attended AG with over 2,300 participants.



Hotel entrance



One of the hotel towers



Convention Center entrance



There are three swimming pools at the hotel



One of the fountains



Many gazebos and benches are on the grounds



Signs and maps around the grounds help keep guests from getting lost



Registration



The Hospitality Room was open all day



Meals were served in the Hospitality Room





Colorful characters abounded



Presentation rooms were large and well attended



Numerous presentations occurred simultaneously

The Presentations

There were a little over 200 speakers for the over 320 meetings of various types (not all presentations, some Mensa organizational, debates, games, meet & greets, etc.). At times there were as many as 11 things taking place at the same time. Obviously, what is summarized below is highly selective and no doubt somewhat biased.

The presentations summarized below were selected because they were of interest to the authors of this report, and were attended by at least one of them. Printed below is the verbatim abstract from the printed program for each event, the verbatim biographical sketch for the speaker, and then followed by comments.

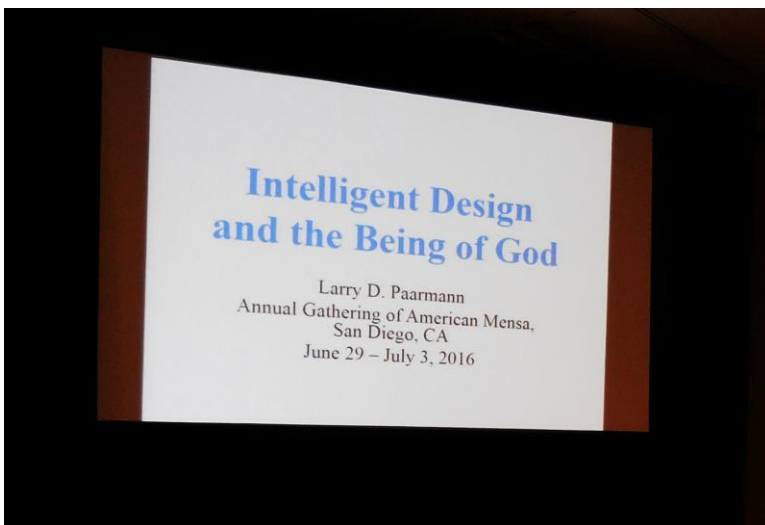
Intelligent Design and the Being of God

Abstract I will briefly review the objections to intelligent design, claiming that it is not science, that it is concealed biblical creationism, and that it should not be taught in public schools. Included will be a brief history of intelligent design, indicating that the concept has been around throughout recorded history. I will present a list of distinguished scientists who have found arguments of intelligent design to be convincing, and are theists, at least in part, because of such arguments.

Biographical Sketch Larry D. Paarmann is the LocSec for the Kansas Sunflower Local Group of American Mensa. He is also the Coordinator of the Evangelical Christianity SIG. He is retired from a career in electrical engineering, having taught at three universities and also having industrial experience. For more information, contact Larry at LDPaarmann@cox.net, or visit evansig.org.

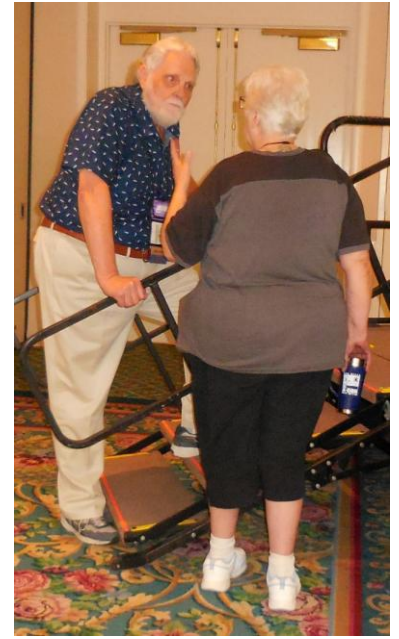


Comments A full copy of the paper upon which the slides are based is available, along with the slides, at evansig.org, so comments here are not necessary, as far as the content of the presentation is concerned. There were about 100 people present, although no actual count was made. The presentation itself was between 30 and 45 minutes in duration, and the remaining time was questions and comments. I, Larry, thought the talk went well, and was reasonably well received, although there were





some dissenters. Perhaps the questions and comments part of the presentation was the most valuable. Several people also made comments to me after the presentation was over.



Evangelical Christianity SIG Meet & Greet

Abstract This is a time for current members of the SIG to meet and greet and get acquainted, and for prospective members to see what we are about. Everyone is welcome.

Biographical Sketch Larry D. Paarmann (see above).





Comments We had about 20 people present at our informal Meet & Greet. A few were already members of the SIG, a few others were not members but have since joined, and a few were just interested observers. We went around the room and shared a little about ourselves; everyone was open and shared readily. It was a good time just meeting and greeting. I, Larry, found it very simulating, and rewarding, and our hour and 15 minutes allotted was soon gone.

Photons to Electrons: A Bit About the Image Sensor in Your Camera

Abstract The image sensor is the chip at the heart of every camera. We'll talk a little about how it works, from microlenses and color filter arrays to the device physics of semiconductor pixels and circuits for their readout. We will also talk about a possible next-generation image sensor and a possible real paradigm shift in creating images in the future. This talk is for an audience of varied backgrounds, from photography enthusiasts to physicists and computer scientists.

Biographical Sketch Dr. Eric R. Fossum is a professor at the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth. His work on miniaturizing NASA interplanetary spacecraft cameras at Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the early 1990s led to his invention of the CMOS image sensor "camera-on-a-chip" that has touched many here on Earth, from every smartphone to automobiles and medicine, from security and safety to art, social media and political change. Used in billions of cameras each year, his technology has launched a worldwide explosion in digital imaging and visual communications. Honors include induction into the National Inventors Hall of Fame and election to the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Inventors. He received the NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal.



Camera-on-a-Chip Enables Much Smaller Cameras



CMOS Active Pixel Sensor
With Intra-Pixel Charge Transfer
Camera-on-a-chip

Siimpel
AF camera
module
2007

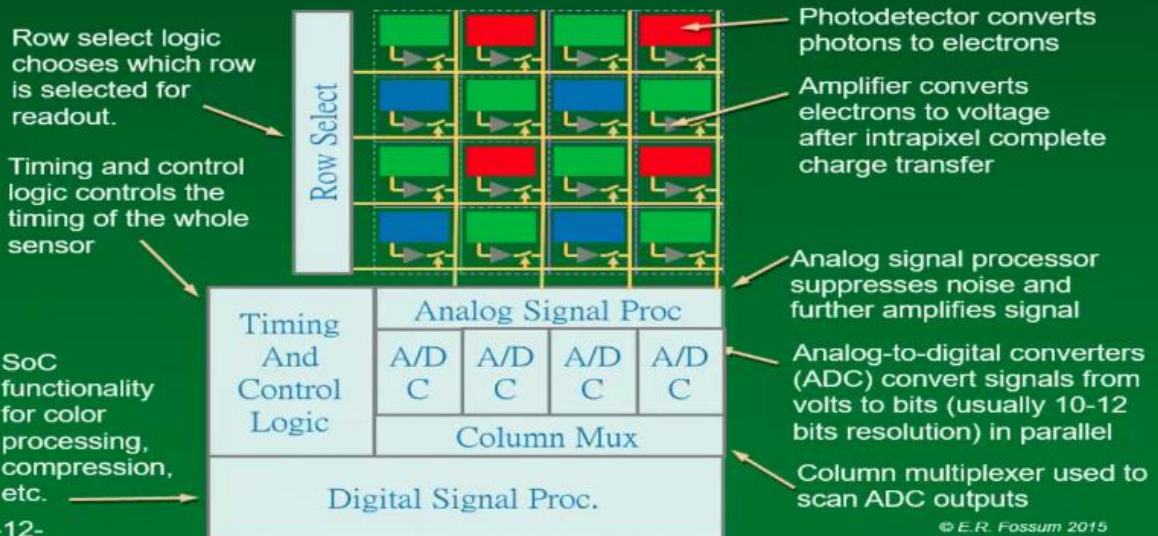
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© E.R. Fossum 2015

Comments This session was a bit technical, and I, Larry, must admit I was delighted to attend it, but then I am an electrical engineer and know something of the subject. But I can understand why many others would not find it so interesting. However, it was well attended. Image arrays were developed by NASA as part of the space program. Consider, for example, the Hubble space telescope. How could an analog image acquired by the telescope be sent to the surface of the earth? Spy planes in the old days would take photographs on film, and then off-load the exposed film containers after landing and have

CMOS "Camera on a Chip" 2nd Generation Image Sensor

Read pixel signals out thru switches and wires



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© E.R. Fossum 2015

the film developed. This cannot easily be done, and would be highly impractical, from an orbiting satellite. It would be impossible for a space probe to other planets. The solution is to acquire the image digitally, and that digital information can be transmitted to the surface of the earth. I suppose some sort of analog television image could be transmitted to the earth, but digital imaging was what was developed. For telescope images, and in general, high resolution was highly desirable, and has led to ever increasingly better image arrays, and we peons have been benefitted by the spin-off into digital cameras. That's what this talk was about by an expert in the field. For those with a genuine interest in this field, and with the appropriate background, can find much good information at Dr. Fossum's web site at Darmouth.

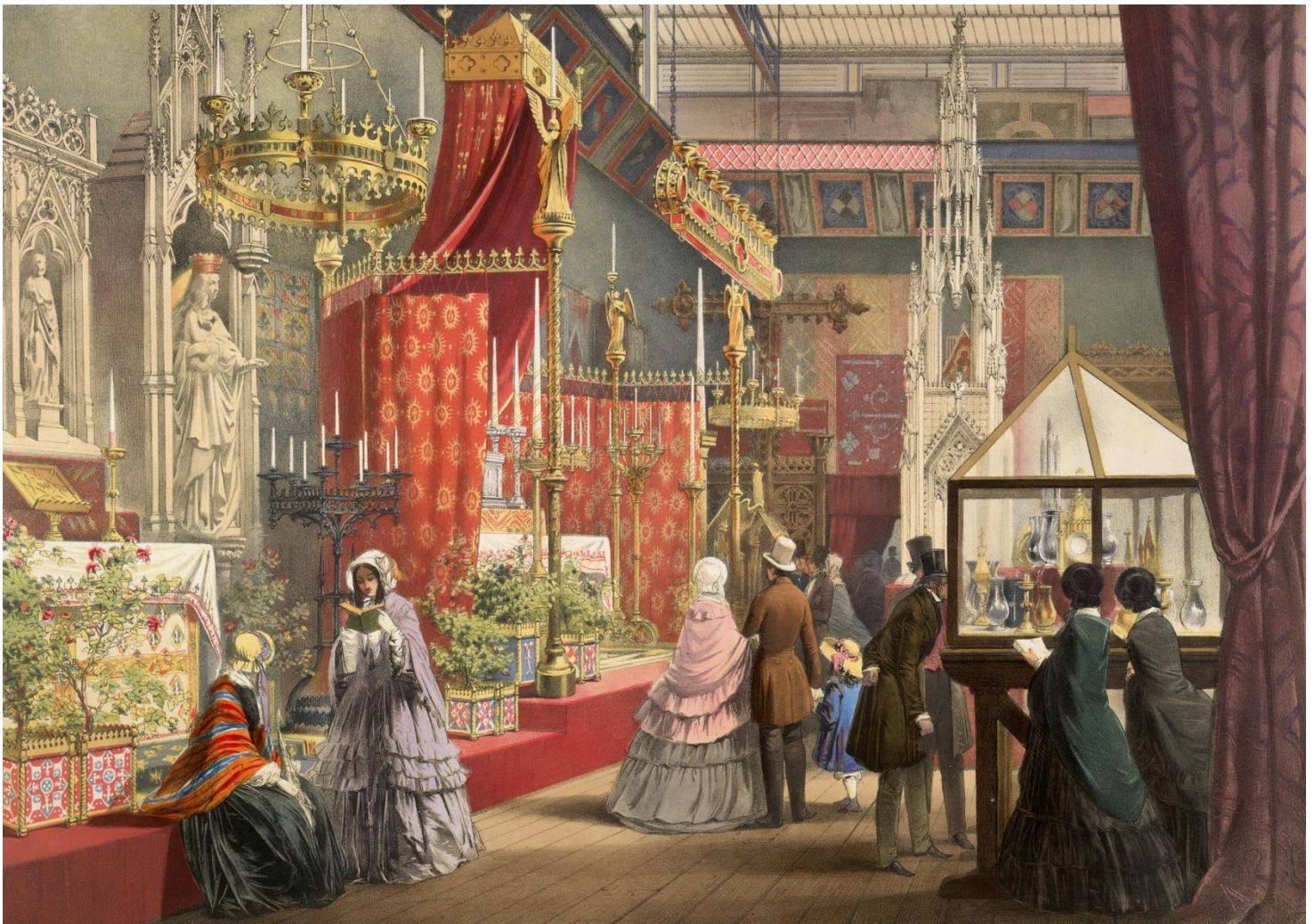
Victoria-Con

Abstract The first world's fair, the Great Exhibition of 1851, held in the "Crystal Palace" in London's Hyde Park amazed visitors with thousands of displays. Even more amazing was the speed with which it was organized by a cast of Victorian characters. It had live steam engines, automatic Jacquard looms that ran on punched card programming and hundreds of other examples of cutting-edge Victorian technology. Drawing millions of visitors, it bred a host of imitators in the ensuing decades.

Biographical Sketch Bill Plachy, a popular regular at San Diego's Regional Gatherings, comes out of the aerospace world, but for the last 20 years he has been doing research on his second love, history. Past talks have been on battles, genomics, code-breaking and a host of other unpredictable topics.

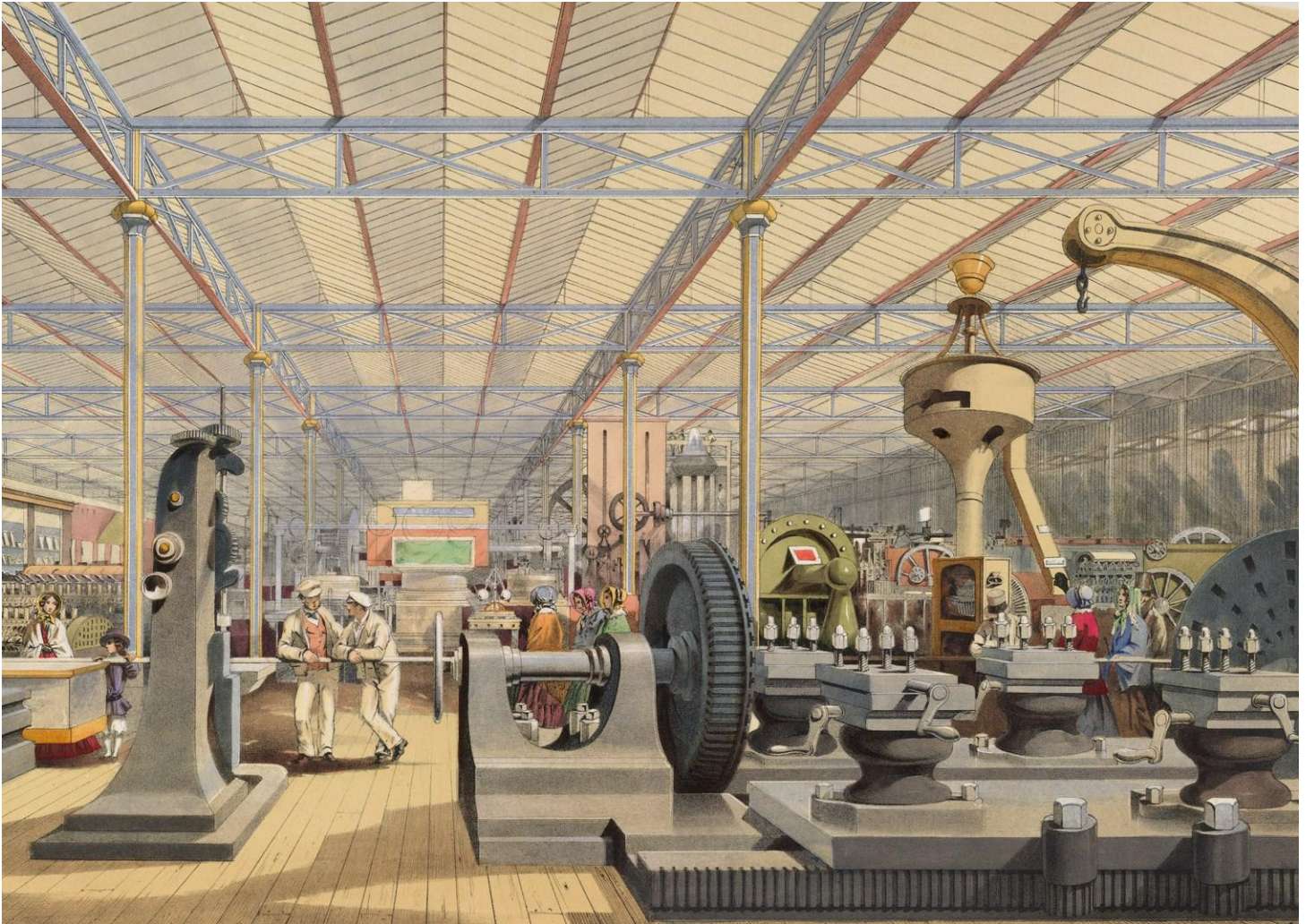


Comments The Great Exhibition of 1851, really the first World’s Fair, was a huge success, and set an example for others to follow. The Great Exhibition was housed in the “Crystal Palace,” and embodied Prince Albert’s vision to display the wonders of industry from around the world. The Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, London, was made of glass, as tall as the trees, 1851 feet long (over 1/3 mile), and was 454 feet wide. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. There were some 100,000 objects on display, by over 15,000 contributors, from 25 nations. This was a time of great optimism about the industrial revolution, and great optimism for the future. There were over 6 million visitors to the Exhibition. For those interested, there are several sites on the web about this.









***Frankenstein* – The Classic 1931 Horror Film**

Abstract A very special screening of the original 1931 classic horror flick *Frankenstein*, starring Colin Clive, Mae Clark, John Boles and Boris Karloff in his iconic role as The Monster. The film will be introduced by Boris Karloff's daughter, Sara, who will provide us with some little-known facts. Then stick around following the movie for Ms. Karloff's full-length presentation about her father. Film running time is 70 minutes.

Biographical Sketch Sara Jane Karloff is the only child of screen actor/horror icon Boris Karloff. She has two sons and three gorgeous grandchildren, all of whom have more sense than to go into the entertainment business, herself included! As a



family they are extremely proud of the legacy her father left, both personally and professionally. Visit karloff.com or email karloff@karloff.com.

Comments Although the monster in the 1931 movie *Frankenstein*, bears little resemblance to the creature in the Mary Shelley novel *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, published in 1818, nevertheless, the 1931 movie was influential, and it was quite interesting seeing the movie, and hearing Sara Jane Karloff, Boris Karloff's daughter, talk about the movie, and about her father. Frankenstein's creature in Shelley's book was more similar to Nietzsche's superman than he was to the monster in the



1931 movie. Shelley's creature was extremely intelligent, read books voraciously, learned several languages quickly, could run much faster than most, and contemplated his own existence. Shelley's Frankenstein was just trying to help move evolution along a little faster (my, Larry's, speculation), and note that her book preceded Darwin's *Origin of Species* by several decades (and Nietzsche's birth). Sara Jane Karloff described some of the



details in the making of the movie, and her father's career. Boris Karloff was born and raised in England, began stage acting in Canada in his twenties, and moved to California when he was around 30 years old. Although known most for his role in *Frankenstein*, Karloff was in over 150 movies.

Why The Catholic Church Might Just Save The Republic

Abstract Blaise Pascal wagered on faith to hedge his bets against judgment day. Why not wager on faith in a world verging toward nihilistic chaos? If multiple worlds are possible, if all we can imagine necessarily exists in the vastness of space and time, then why not embrace the historic teaching of the Catholic Church? "I believe, help thou my unbelief" is the theme of this talk.

Biographical Sketch High-profile civil rights lawyer, criminal defense attorney and syndicated columnist/blogger Norm Pattis, dubbed "Legal Top Gun" by *Newsday*, is the best-selling author of *Taking Back the Courts* and *Juries & Justice*. Norm's expert commentary is regularly featured in national outlets from the *Today Show* to *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. Labeled recently as "America's Fiercest Trial Lawyer,"



he owns one of Connecticut's oldest antiquarian bookstores. His national law practice (normpattis.com) is based in New Haven, Conn.

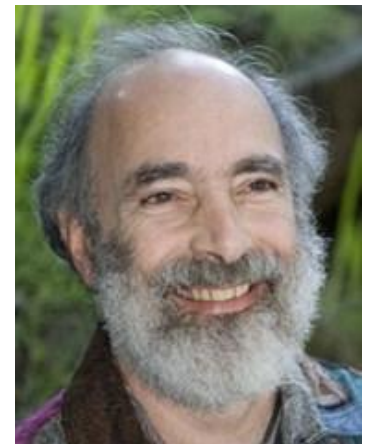
Comments Pattis cites the abandonment of traditional values in recent decades as the cause of increasing social and economic chaos. These types of problems have been noted by Toynbee and Spengler as well as others. For example, in a more recent work entitled *When Nations Die: Ten Warning Signs of a Culture in Crisis*, 1994, Jim Nelson Black identifies three primary causes for his concern for America's welfare; social decay, cultural decay, and moral decay.

Pattis sees the root cause of these problems as a shift in focus from concerns about the soul of man – his eternal purpose and destiny – to a concern for temporary and materialistic goals. Pattis describes himself as becoming increasingly troubled over these matters and as a result converted to Catholicism as an adult. Two of his books, *Juries and Justice*, 2013, and *Taking Back the Courts*, 2011, are now on my, Diane's, Amazon wish list!

Malignant Medical Myths

Abstract There are a great many myths being promoted as fact by physicians, dentists and dieticians. Following these myths, instead of learning about them and then doing the opposite, will shorten your life and greatly raise your risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, dementia and many neurological conditions. Just a few of the myths that I will cover include: saturated fats and a high fat diet leads to heart disease; fluoridated water reduces tooth decay; vaccines are safe and effective at reducing many diseases; keeping cholesterol below 200 will reduce heart disease; an aspirin a day will increase lifespan; whole wheat and whole grains are healthy foods. Learn the facts and improve your health while you lower all your risk factors.

Biographical Sketch David Getoff was born in New York City in 1952, attended The Walden School through sixth grade and then JHS-44, Brandeis High School and City College (until he got fed up and left). He moved to San Diego in 1979. He has been a paste-up artist, locksmith, sailing instructor, SCUBA instructor, photography teacher and professional photographer, electrical design engineer (no credentials), electrical contractor, and home maintenance contractor and has taught a home repair course through three local college adult education departments. Once he found his true love, he has been in a booked-up private practice for 25 years and has collected numerous credentials.



Comments Board certified as a Clinical Nutritionist and Traditional Naturopath, David Getoff spoke on the topic of "Malignant Medical Mythologies." He is also certified in Integrative Medicine and Vice President of the Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation located in Lemon Grove, CA. He was also elected to the American College of Nutrition and is a member of the New York Academy of Sciences.

He has created a set of DVDs on various health problems and lectures widely on such issues. For more information visit his site: <http://www.naturopath4you.com>.

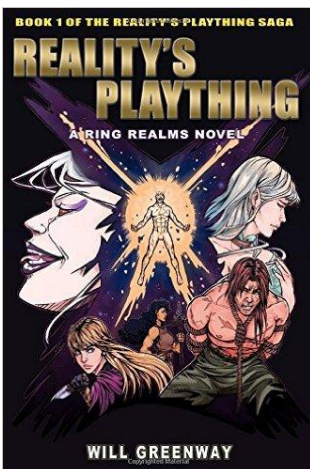
He argues that medical professionals often promote hazardous misinformation about how to solve various health problems. One of his major points was that our real problem is not high cholesterol since cholesterol actually performs many vital functions, only one of which is the maintenance of sound neurological tissue! It is the unhealthy American diet which is typically much higher in Omega-6's, vs. Omega-3's, which results in an inflammatory syndrome. It is recommended that we avoid trans-fats and omega-6 fats.

To learn more about this go to: <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/healthscience/2013/february/forget-cholesterol-inflammations-the-real-enemy/?mobile=false>

Science, Science Fiction, and the Suspension of Disbelief

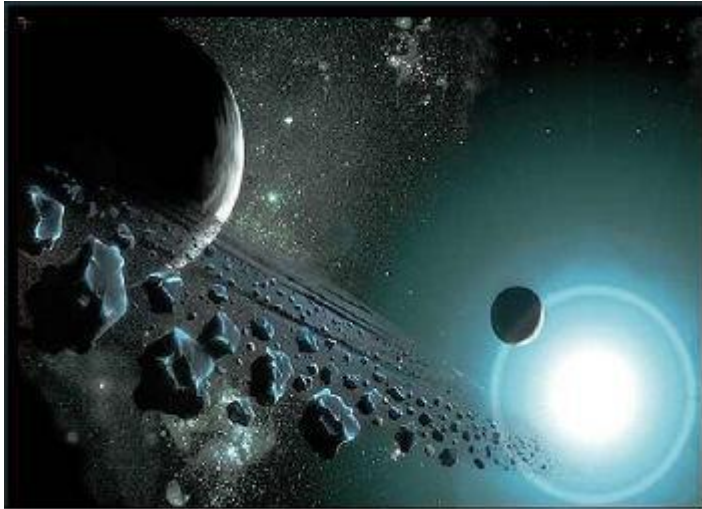
Abstract Discussion of the compromises made to depict science in fiction for the sake of popular entertainment. Do we need real science in our movies, or would they be ruined?

Biographical Sketch First published in 1983, Will Greenway started his creative career wanting to draw and script comics. After a number of years, he found writing better suited to his skills. Aside from writing and art, Will is a self-taught programmer, PC technician and network troubleshooter. He enjoys skiing, racquetball and Frisbee golf and is steadfast supporter of roleplaying games. To date he has completed more than 20 novels and has published dozens of short stories and articles on writing. He resides in the Spring Valley suburb of south San Diego. Visit The Ring Realms (ringrealms.com) or his website, narrativeinnovations.net/about-narrative-innovations.



Comments He wrote his first book *Reality's Plaything* on a dare – it later became part of a five-part series. He is credited with inventing a territory known as Ring Realms. His website, ringrealms.com, contains both a splendid introduction to this place and a number of assorted tips regarding the craft of writing.

Science fiction, as well as fantasy, depends upon the creation of a narrative with characters, conflicts and issues in a country which may be light years away from anyplace the reader has been before. In order to quickly bridge this gap – writers make use of the common literary device known as the “trope” which quickly provides the clues the reader needs to follow the story. Greenway notes that two



of the newer tropes in use are the “self-destruct button” – for an instant restart – and the so-called “computer virus” which, of course, is only an allusion to a biological bug.

Another key factor in story creation is the “suspension of reality” which makes reality non-essential to the plot-line. He cites as a prime example the TV series *Dukes of Hazard* which ran for 7 seasons despite (or perhaps because of) the numerous violations of physical law which occurred! For those of you who are perhaps, like me (Diane), intrigued by this

concept you might want to check out this website on TV tropes:

<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/WillingSuspensionOfDisbelief>

Greenway also recounts a brief history of the genre of science-fiction which he suggests can be dated to mythologies some 4,000 years ago. Later, around 1500 A.D. he finds narratives involving various Utopian societies. He includes the Faustian legend which deals with the issues of power and the eternal soul. The themes of space travel and aliens have become more and more popular over the years and range from *Man in the Moon* published in 1600 to the modern *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* series.

Science-fiction has also been used as a vehicle of social commentary. For example, Mary Shelley’s bizarre tale of *Frankenstein* was viewed as demonstrating the conceits of science while the themes of political and social problems became more evident in various narratives. Humor was even introduced which made the stories more relaxing and less serious. One of the most popular authors of all time is Jules Verne who remains popular and may now be found on Kindle.

