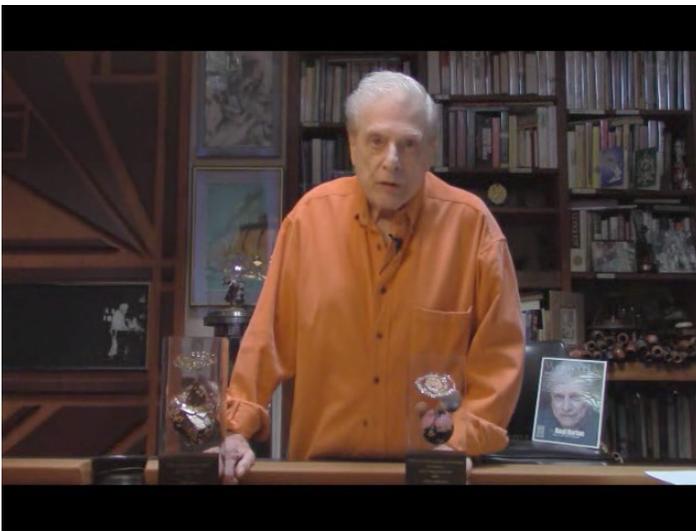


# PROMETHEUS

## ***Harlan Ellison's Hall of Fame acceptance remarks "Repent, Harlequin," said the Ticktock Man," wins 2015 Hall of Fame***



shelf with Alfred Bester!

I take the awards given to me with considerable seriousness. And that's why we've led you on this little tour to set a background to explain to you how pleased I am to be getting the Prometheus Award.

When I received the initial nomination for the Prometheus Hall of Fame award, I was enormously impressed by the people I was in competition with: And I had it framed thus: George Orwell, Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster...

That's pretty stiff company to be in!

It's now 2015, it's four years later, and I am enormously pleased to be getting the Prometheus Award.

—Continued on page 2

I'm enormously pleased to be getting this award.

I came up here to begin speaking to you to show you that if you live long enough, whether you are worthy of it or not... they will give you a pocket watch or an award.

These are Hugos, these are Edgar Allan Poe awards from the Mystery Writers of America, the World Fantasy convention awards... and these are the Horror awards that I designed. And on the wall behind me are the Writers Guild awards.

All of these are very important to me. And as you can see, I have staged them. On the wall over there, you can't see it in this shot, are all the Nebulas.

Now if you come with us downstairs, I'll show you my Grand Master awards to put all of this in perspective.

I bring you now to two awards that are very important to me. This one is my Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America. I keep it on a lucite shelf behind me, of great stature along with the one given to Alfred Bester on his death bed. I consider it to be a great honor to be on a

### **Inside *Prometheus*:**

#### **News:**

Harlan Ellison Hall of Fame acceptance remarks  
*New Frontier*, a utopian novel

#### **Reviews:**

*Joe Steele*, by Harry Turtledove  
*The Just City*, by Jo Walton  
*The Martian*, by Andy Weir  
*Serenity: Leaves on the Wind*, by Zack Whedon et al

# PROMETHEUS

The newsletter of the Libertarian Futurist Society

## Editor

Anders Monsen

## Contributors

Jeremy Lee  
Joseph P. Martino  
William H. Stoddard  
Rick Triplett  
David Wayland

## Letters and Submissions:

Anders Monsen  
501 Abiso Ave.  
San Antonio, TX 78209  
editor@lfs.org

## Award Chairs

Best Novel — bestnovel@lfs.org  
Classic Fiction — halloffame@lfs.org

## LFS Online:

http://www.lfs.org

## Subscriptions & Advertisements

Basic Membership: \$25/year (\$30 international)  
Full Membership: \$50/year  
Sponsors: \$100/year  
Benefactors: \$200/year  
Subscriptions: \$20/year (\$25 international)  
All memberships include one-year subscriptions to *Prometheus*.

Classified ads: 50 cents/word, 10 percent off for multiple insertions. Display ad rates available. All checks payable to the Libertarian Futurist Society.

Libertarian Futurist Society  
650 Castro St. Suite 120-433  
Mountain View, CA 94041  
**president@lfs.org**

Send mailing address changes to:  
**treasurer@lfs.org**

*Prometheus* © 2015 the Libertarian Futurist Society. The LFS retains a non-exclusive license to republish accepted articles on its web site; all other rights revert to the contributor. Letters and reviews are welcome. Bylined articles are strictly the opinion of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the LFS or its members.

—Continued from page 1

It will be framed as impressively as I can, along with this initial notice.

There was a recent , uh, email internet (blog) description posted (in *Reason* magazine.)

The guy said:

“Ellison was for many years in my pre- and early teens my very favorite writer. I never saw him, and am sure he never saw himself, as libertarian in the movement sense. If you must pigeonhole him politically, he’s more a cranky New Deal liberal with civil rights movement and women’s liberation radical cred.”

I love pigeonholing!

I have never been a Republican, I’ve never been a Democrat, communist, socialist, fascist or anything else...

If you want to call me a libertarian, I have no objection.

We’ll spend some time and we’ll have our discussions.

But in the meantime, to be able to come to you, in front of you today, Mr. Stoddard, Mr. Hibbert and all the rest of you I cannot see, thank you ever so much.

*Harlan Ellison’s transcript of his video acceptance speech for Prometheus Hall of Fame. Mr. Ellison gave his remarks while showing his awards in different rooms of his house in the Los Angeles area.*

## LFS at Marcon, 2015

The LFS hosted a party celebrating the Prometheus Award winners late Saturday night May 9, 2015, at the Marcon hospitality suite in the Hyatt Regency Columbus.

More photos on pages 6-8.



Left to right: Joseph P. Martino, F. Paul Wilson and Charles Morrison talk at the LFS hospitality suite Saturday night May 9 after the Prometheus Awards ceremony during Marcon at the Hyatt Regency Columbus. Photo credit: Tom Jackson

## The Just City

By Jo Walton

Tor, 2015

Reviewed by William H. Stoddard

In *The Just City*, Jo Walton (winner of the LFS's Best Novel Award in 2008 for *Ha'Penny*) begins a close examination of perhaps the oldest known literary utopia: Plato's *Politeia* (usually known as the *Republic*). In fact, what Walton seems to be undertaking is a systematic deconstruction of Plato's imaginative creation, rather as Donald M. Kingsbury deconstructed Isaac Asimov's Foundation and Second Foundation in *Psychohistorical Crisis*. The premise of her story is a serious attempt to bring Plato's ideal city into being.

Walton does not consider herself a libertarian, but some of her themes are entirely congruent with libertarian concerns. The novel begins with a brief framing narrative by the god Apollo, who is baffled at having his sexual advances refused by the nymph Daphne. When his half-sister Athene tells him that the issue is his failure to obtain Daphne's consent, he decides that he needs to learn more about such concepts as volition and equal significance, and that the best way to do so is to become human. Athene promptly invites him to do so as one of the children who will be raised in a city modeled on Plato's Republic, which she is founding to explore Plato's ideas. He takes her up on it, and becomes one of the viewpoint characters of Walton's story.

Volition, equal significance, and the necessity of consent are of course major concerns of libertarian thought! And in fact Walton systematically explores them. At the most personal level, there are two rapes in this novel, both of mortal women by mortal men; Athene recruits adults from all through history to be the city's teachers, but though all of them admired Plato and sincerely prayed to her for his ideas to be true, the men and women didn't all focus on the same ideas of Plato's! All of the children who inhabit the city were purchased from slavers, and at least one of the boys bitterly resents this, regards himself as still a slave, and refuses his consent to the city. And over the course of the novel, the issue of whether Athene's city has the actual consent of any of its residents comes more and more into question. It's worth noting in relation to this that Plato explicitly recommended the division of his Republic's people into a kind of castes, identified with gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and called for the city's elders to lie to the young about how the assignment took place.

At a key point in the story, Plato's mentor, Socrates, is brought to the city, to teach rhetoric. But Socrates's presence is deeply disruptive to Plato's ideals—which Socrates completely disavows, as something that Plato made up and made Socrates a spokesman for. Asked to teach, Socrates doesn't confine his teaching to the gold and silver youngsters, but chooses the students he finds interesting. And even worse, he finds a way to engage in dialogue with the city's robots, brought by Athene from some century in our near future to labor for it, and in doing so raising the question of whether they count as self-aware beings and whether it's just to treat them as property. A great debate partly over this issue triggers

the climax of *The Just City*.

*The Republic* is, in a sense, one of the oldest philosophical works advocating what economists call "central planning": an economy and a society where all decisions about goods and services are made by a central authority of enlightened experts—and, in Plato's vision, even decisions about sex and reproduction. In Plato's vision, the guardians were to obtain the consent of the lesser citizens by lying to them and manipulating them, so that they didn't know what they were really consenting to. Walton's fictional vision explores the practical difficulties with sustaining this kind of deception, as well as the ethical questions about volition, equal significance, and consensuality that it raises. And she also hints at the difficulties of a planned economy, even one with robots doing most of the actual productive work—including the problem of capital replacement, as the robots stop working correctly or wear out, while various committees struggle to decide how to keep things going. Her concerns are strikingly reminiscent of those that Friedrich Hayek raised in his discussions of knowledge and its fundamental lack thereof in central planning (for example, in *The Fatal Conceit*).

I think that there may be other ways to take Plato than as an advocate of central planning. It's striking that the *Republic* points out gains from trade and the wealth yielded by a market economy. And the collectivism it calls for seems to be limited primarily to the guardians, who are meant to protect that wealth and provide law and justice to their society and who are denied marriage and property to safeguard their impartiality; it doesn't seem to be expected of the common people. Plato may be asking how society can be governed in the general interest, and not in the interest of factions. This seems to be how Heinlein took him in *Space Cadet*, which refers to Plato's three virtues—wisdom, courage, and temperance—as appropriate to three classes of men, and makes the Space Patrol an embodiment of wisdom and thus a version of Plato's guardians. But it seems fitting that Walton, an admirer of Heinlein, has made her own contribution to the further science fictional exploration of Plato's *Republic*, which as a pioneering utopian work must be counted one of the wellsprings of science fiction as a genre; and that, in doing so, she has also told an interesting and well-constructed story about appealing characters, an example of the Renaissance maxim "instruct by pleasing" that guided Heinlein's best work.

It appears that there are to be further volumes in this series. I looked forward to reading them.

---



---

## Classifieds

**The (Libertarian) Connection**, open-forum since 1968. Subscribers may insert four pages/issue free, unedited. **Factsheet Five** said, "Lively interchange of point, counterpoint and comments". Eight/year, \$10. Strauss, 10 Hill #22-LP, Newark NJ 07102.

**Joe Steele**

By Harry Turtledove  
Roc, 2015

*Reviewed by William H. Stoddard*

The 1930s in the United States are remembered as the Red Decade: A time when American intellectuals and journalists widely admired the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin's rule of it, and viewed communism as the wave of the future. Harry Turtledove's latest alternate history novel liberalizes the metaphor, imagining a United States under more overtly authoritarian rule than Roosevelt's. The title character may well actually be the same person: He's described as the son of immigrants from the Russian Empire, with an original name that sounds like a sneeze, and the Soviet Union of this world is ruled by Leon Trotsky, whose great rival seems not to be on the scene. But in any case his name is a signpost to the novel's central conceit.

Turtledove shows a good deal of ingenuity in transposing details of Soviet history to an American setting. Steele begins not as a party secretary, but as a congressman from Fresno, Roosevelt's rival for the 1932 Democratic nomination, and the only candidate left after Roosevelt's sudden death. His White House staff includes analogs of several Old Bolsheviks. Not long after his election, he begins dealing with opposition with show trials, starting with four Supreme Court justices who voted to declare laws he sponsored unconstitutional—a more drastic response than Roosevelt's denunciation of the “nine old men.” This is followed by the institution of an American gulag system that's a grimmer version of the WPA, and of a secret police headed by J. Edgar Hoover.

Libertarian readers will enjoy some of the references Turtledove makes, including quotations from Ambrose Bierce and from Finley Peter Dunne (creator of “Mr. Dooley,” an Irish bartender with a cynical slant on politics). A line about things that “can't happen here” might be a reference to Sinclair Lewis's novel about American fascism, winner of the LFS Hall of Fame award in 2007.

Turtledove's narrative technique is unusually focused in this novel. Rather than his usual large cast, he tells the entire story through the eyes of two brothers, both reporters, who respond to Steele's early actions in different ways—and suffer different fates as a consequence. Their parallel stories are more than sufficient to give a panoramic view of the course of American and world history as Steele serves multiple terms as President, finally dying of a stroke and leaving chaos behind him in a country no longer accustomed to freedom. The final turn of the story seemingly closes off any prospect of a sequel and also provides a superb example of Chekhov's maxim about not putting a gun on the mantel if no one is going to fire it.

In many ways, Turtledove has softened the full horror of Soviet authoritarianism; Joe Steele's United States has secret police and prison camps and censorship, but not mass extermination of entire populations. The Republican Party still chooses presidential candidates to run against Steele, and if their defeats are landslides, they don't end up imprisoned or dead. Even at the very end, despite decades of virtual dictator-

ship, the post-Steele power struggle is settled by impeachment. Stalin and his successors would not have been so mild! But he does a persuasive job of showing how authoritarian rule corrupts an entire society. This is a well written cautionary tale about one of the great dictators of the twentieth century in a different setting.

**The Martian**

By Andy Weir  
2014

*Reviewed by Rick Triplett*

*The Martian* is not a clearly libertarian book, nor do I have any reason to believe that Andy Weir is libertarian. It is, however, a page-turning tale of hard science fiction with three features that could incline readers in the direction of rationality and liberty.

The plot is as striking as it is simple. A group of astronauts lands on Mars, but shortly into their mission have to evacuate because of a fierce storm. They leave Mark Watney, apparently dead, behind. As it happens—and this is not a spoiler, but mentioned in the advertising for the novel—Mark is not dead. What follows is the engrossing tale of his struggle to survive. The author describes two earlier, scrapped attempts to write a novel, so this one is essentially his first. I mention this because it amazes me that a first novel could be so well written. I had difficulty putting it down, and a movie is out now.

The first merit of this book is that it is a survival tale. Survival is the enterprise of life, and any tale that encourage us to use our minds to overcome obstacles rather than plundering the production of others is a welcome addition, not just to our libraries but to our attitude towards living well. Fans of Rand will respond especially well to Mark's relentlessly rational mindset and his near epic determination.

The second merit of this book is the gentle but telling gibes it takes at the governmental bureaucracy inherit in the astronaut program on Earth. While teams of scientists contribute steadily to the problem solving woven through the plot's many conflicts, the half dozen or so critical breakthroughs that occur are the product of individuals working hard, being original, and—several times—succeeding despite hindrance from their bosses.

Finally, this tale is an inspiring yarn of can-do individualism, like most of Heinlein's stories. Complex engineering requires teams of experts and always has. But neither collectivist values nor centralized power are essential to such endeavors. Too many people believe that “it takes a village”; Andy Weir reminds us that free-minds can cooperate very well, thank you, and don't need to be herded like cattle.

# *New Frontier, a utopian novel*

By *Jeremy Lee*

Visions of the future are so often grim dystopian glimpses of tyrannical regimes, lost societies, and plagues, but there's another enticing possibility of a future filled with endless possibilities. *New Frontier* sprang from a simple notion; what if the future burns brightly, what if despite all the odds humanity succeeds more often than it fails? What if the governments of the world receded, dissipated, or collapsed and instead of a nightmare a society of capitalist anarchy arose in the vacuum, spurring a revitalization that not only kept a dark age at bay, but also sparked a new industrial and technological revolution? Within the novel, told through flashback and through the eyes of people living in the world resulting from the collapse, the concept of capitalistic anarchy challenges many pre-conceived notions about what might happen in the wake of government collapsing. Extremes of the political wheel are terrifying, totalitarian government a threat in need of no explanation, but anarchy on the other end providing as many horrors, leaving people trying to find the path in the middle.

In the book, the concept remains remarkably simple, these modern governments running up ridiculous debt become bloated to the point they can't adapt and respond when stresses keep pressing and crises erupt in quick succession. The old world order implodes over the span of only a few years, national governments evaporating, but unlike in older ages when governments collapsed there is another system holding society together which in many ways operates independent of nation-states, the globalized economy. Rather than spiraling into another dark age, humanity enters into an era where business, and in a more ethereal way the market place, governs. Specifically, in *New Frontier*, a consortium of wealthy and ambitious dreamers founded a new company, the Alliance, with the goal of expanding space exploration when the governments kept cutting back on funding, and using the patents from the bevy of new inventions to filter new products into the populace and begin colonizing near space, the moon, and eventually move further out into the Solar System. This singular company becomes so powerful that some of the smallest bankrupt countries turn to this private company for their salvation when the bubble breaks, and become, in effect, subsidiaries of the Alliance.

As the governments collapsed and evaporated the world began a freefall falling from one extreme towards the other, anarchy, creating a raw theater for the ambitions of the corporate world, devoid of regulation. There is a marvelous window, where this creates a leap in technology, new products and inventions coming out of Research and Development departments with staggering speed, and this crashes into another aspect of the novel. *New Frontier*, at its heart, is a new 'Age of Exploration,' and the hidden secret of what sent those ships around the globe and mapped the oceans and seas of the planet was the state of near capitalist anarchy of the sixteenth century.

As children in school most learn about the monarchy, and the church, standing behind the great explorers and funding

their missions, most history books, at least the cursory ones mandated in schools, breeze past the economics that truly drove the age of exploration, or speak only of the wealth in terms of nations. The sailors aboard took home their own shares of the profit, enough to make lowly paupers into landed nobles. Not only the Spice Islands, which proved more profitable than the modern drug trade, motivated the earliest expeditions seeking out a chance to make fortunes, but later the slave trade, the sugar trade, potatoes, and the list goes on, and all of this creating what might be dubbed globalization 1.0 and generating wealth even for those who never put to sea and only played the markets. These fortunes were not limited to the crowned heads of state, indeed they were in some cases not even the greatest beneficiaries. Companies rose up out of nothing and became world players, exploiting opportunity with innovation and daring. Men from even the lowest classes of society could rise higher than at almost any point in history before, breaking down the old class system, less ridged at the start of the age of exploration, and introducing a chance for advancement, and fall, unheard of in generations.

This is the spirit that *New Frontier* strives to embody, the idea that in an 'Age of Exploration' that opportunities abound for anyone with the ability to seize them. The technological race depicted between rival companies in the book comes about largely because the companies must truly race to get something new to their customers; there are no governments to bribe or lobby to block the competition. There is a dark side in the vacuum, without any regulation or control, corporate espionage takes on dramatically different dimensions, education a function of the company rather than a state-sponsored thing, and invariably if a corporation becomes the size of a government it begins accumulating the same layers of bureaucracy and inefficiency. In a land governed by the market, such blundering behemoths either right their course, or a younger company will eventually topple them.

Contrasting the possibilities of the future, the soaring heights humanity reaches through competition, and the depths we are so capable of sinking to in order to protect what we already have, *New Frontier* paints a picture of a future where humanity succeeds at least as often as it fails. The governments of the world recede and in their place corporations fill the void, striving for unparalleled heights, or drag people back under the yoke. Within the novel, the concept of capitalistic anarchy receives legs to stretch, exploring the idea like rarely before. Totalitarian government, even when disguised as business as usual, is an omnipresent threat to humanity, but anarchy is always the countering force, waiting for a chance to push back against the oppression, and though it might never win, it is in the battle between them that a better world exists.

*Jeremy Lee is the author of New Frontier (Neverland Publishing, 2013) - [www.AuthorJeremyLee.com](http://www.AuthorJeremyLee.com)  
New Frontier available for \$14.69 for paperback and \$4.99 for digital.*

# LFS Awards and Conference at Marcon 50

MARCON is a regional convention held annually in Columbus, OH. It is heavily oriented toward gaming and media. However, there were many panels on writing.

For me one of the highlights was the awards by the Libertarian Futurist Society. The LFS Prometheus Awards go to “best libertarian science fiction.” The annual Prometheus Award for best novel is made at the World Science Fiction Convention. Other awards are made at regional conventions. At MARCON, the Hall of Fame Award went to Harlan Ellison’s “Repent, Harlequin, Said the TickTock Man.” The Lifetime Achievement Award went to F. Paul Wilson, himself a previous Prometheus Award winner. As it happened, I had been present at the first Prometheus Awards, made in 1979, at the Libertarian Party’s Presidential nominating convention. That award went to F. Paul Wilson for “Wheels Within Wheels.” At this year’s MARCON, I introduced the awards ceremony, held during the intermission of the Masquerade, in which I described the history of the Awards. I then introduced the actual presenter, who presented the awards. Ellison was unable to be present, but sent an acceptance video. Wilson was present to accept his award.

—Joseph P. Martino



*The Lifetime Achievement Award for F. Paul Wilson, presented at Marcon.*



*Joseph P. Martino, Vernor Vinge, and F. Paul Wilson*



*Joseph P. Martino and Vernor Vinge*



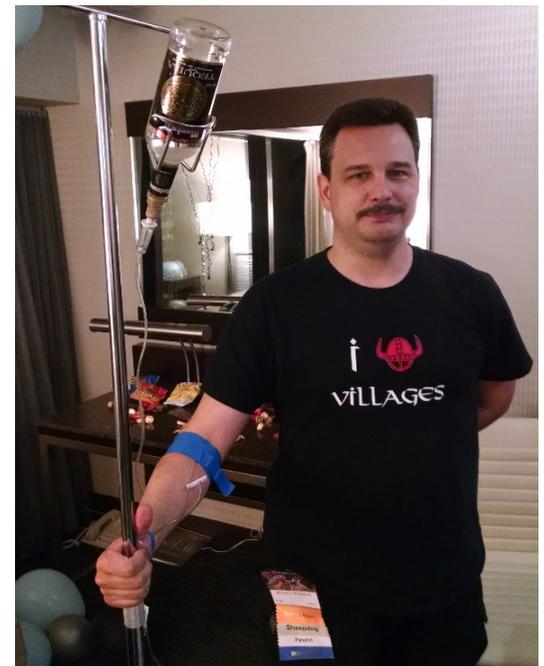
*Left to right: Brian Knight, Joe Martino, F. Paul Wilson and Charlie Morrison at the LFS hospitality suite Saturday night May 9 after the Prometheus Awards ceremony during Marcon at the Hyatt Regency Columbus. Photo credit: Tom Jackson*



*Steve Galeema, F. Paul Wilson, and Michael Grossberg*



*Left to right: Brian Knight, Joseph P. Martino, F. Paul Wilson and Charles Morrison at the LFS hospitality suite Saturday night May 9 after the Prometheus Awards ceremony during Marcon at the Hyatt Regency Columbus. Photo credit: Tom Jackson*



*SF author Michael Williamson. Michael came up to our Saturday night LFS party and was the life of the party for quite a while.*

---

## **Serenity: Leaves on the Wind**

By Zach Whedon, Georges Jeanty, Fábio Moon

Dark Horse, November 2014

*Reviewed by David Wayland*

Joss Whedon's failed TV series, *Firefly*, may go down in history as the one of the most talked about shows in TV history that failed. Lasting only a few episodes into its first season before cancelled by Fox, *Firefly* spawned a cult following by SF fans, a semi-successful movie called *Serenity*, discussions and forums on TV and comic conventions, and lives on as an irregular series of comics that began with the episodic *Those Left Behind*, then continued with *The Shepard's Tale* and *Better Days*.

The fourth comic book, *Leaves on the Wind*, continues the saga of the crew of the Firefly class space transport, *Serenity*. Readers unfamiliar with the TV show and movie will founder without the proper context in this hardbound graphic novel. A summary of the people and events in the series would require a far longer article, but the story picks up with the people within the stellar government called the Alliance still steaming from the revelations in *Serenity* of secret government programs that killed millions and created the savage Reavers.

The Alliance is hunting down Captain Malcolm Reynolds and his crew of *Serenity*, which is hiding in deep space with heavily pregnant second-in-command, Zoe due any day. Former pilot and her husband Wash is dead, killed by the Reavers. Shepard Book also is dead, the victim of a previous effort by

the Alliance to locate Malcolm Reynolds. Former crewmate Jayne Cobb has left the ship, but the core of the crew remain staunchly loyal to each other. Mal and former foil Inarra now are openly lovers, River the new pilot, and her brother and Kaylee are making up for lost time.

While the Alliance sends its best agents throughout space to locate *Serenity*, including the bounty hunter Jubal Early from the TV show's final episode, the crew risks everything when Zoe suffers a medical emergency. They must come together once more, on not one, but two, daring rescue missions, finding unlikely alliances and unlikelier enemies. Characters like Early seem under-used, new characters appear to foreshadow continuing tales, and a few loose threads are snipped.

More than ten years after the cancellation of the TV show and the appearance of the movie, it's almost a shame that these few comic books are all fans of the Firefly universe have available. Sure, artwork for the most part succeeds and occasionally surprises. The stories are interesting, and with the exception of *Shepard's Tale*, actually extend the Firefly universe beyond the TV show.

Yet on the other hand such tiny scraps leaves one's head shaking, just as with the cancellation of the show; the potential was there, but its promise denied and trampled in the dust. Can't stop the signal? Maybe not, but damped and jammed is certainly an option. Until then, as a diehard fan, I'll line up and fork over my money for these occasional stories, in whatever format available.



---

The Newsletter of the Libertarian Futurist Society  
501 Abiso Ave.  
San Antonio, TX 78209