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An index with links to the issues of the MT VOID since 1986 is at [http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back\\_issues.htm](http://leepers.us/mtvoid/back_issues.htm).

Middletown (NJ) Public Library Science Fiction Discussion Group:

May 1, 2025 CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (1977) & novel by Steven Spielberg

[https://archive.org/details/closeencounterso0000unse\\_h6k2/mode/lup](https://archive.org/details/closeencounterso0000unse_h6k2/mode/lup)

Picks for Turner Classic Movies for May (comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Terry Frost, well-known Australian movie reviewer, recently had an episode of his podcast ("Terry Talks Movies") titled "The Movies That Best Capture the 2020s Zeitgeist" and the first on his list was A FACE IN THE CROWD (1957).

Conveniently, Turner Classic Movies is running this twice in May; here are Mark's comments from 2008:

Andy Griffith plays Lonesome Rhodes, a bum in a drunk tank who gets a chance to perform on the radio. He is amazingly popular with his listeners and soon he is a media sensation. As his popularity builds he becomes aware of the political influence he has over his audience and he makes himself the most powerful man in the country. The film is an entertaining essay in how the public can be swayed and controlled. This is a powerful film that is timelier today than when it was made in 1957. Directed by controversial director Elia Kazan from a screenplay by Budd Schulberg. [-mrl]

And if it was timely then, it's definitely doubled down on timeliness now. [-ecl]

A FACE IN THE CROWD (1957), Wednesday, May 7, 9:30 AM  
A FACE IN THE CROWD (1957), Thursday, May 29, 3:30 PM

Other films of interest (including a lot of classic Clint Eastwood):

- THURSDAY, May 1  
6:00 AM The Green Pastures (1936)
- FRIDAY, May 2  
8:00 PM Poltergeist (1982)  
10:15 PM The Haunting (1963)
- SATURDAY, May 3  
12:15 AM Scanners (1981)  
2:15 AM Village of the Damned (1960)  
4:00 AM Children of the Damned (1964)
- SUNDAY, May 4  
4:00 AM The Thief of Bagdad (1940)
- MONDAY, May 5  
12:30 AM The Adventures of Prince Achmed (1926)  
4:00 AM Walkabout (1971)
- THURSDAY, May 8  
11:15 AM Cabin in the Sky (1943)
- FRIDAY, May 9  
1:00 AM High Plains Drifter (1973)  
3:00 AM Hang 'Em High (1968)  
12:00 PM The Woman in White (1948)
- WEDNESDAY, May 14  
8:45 AM Things to Come (1936)  
10:30 AM World Without End (1955)  
2:00 PM The World, the Flesh and the Devil (1959)  
4:00 PM Soylent Green (1973)  
6:00 PM Logan's Run (1975)
- THURSDAY, May 15  
1:15 AM Kwaidan (1965)
- FRIDAY, May 16  
2:15 AM A Fistful of Dollars (1964)
- SATURDAY, May 17  
12:00 PM Finian's Rainbow (1968)  
10:00 PM The Curse of Frankenstein (1957)
- TUESDAY, May 27  
10:00 PM The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (1968)  
1:15 AM The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976)
- WEDNESDAY, May 28  
11:15 AM The Man Who Could Work Miracles (1936)
- FRIDAY, May 30  
8:00 PM Field of Dreams (1989)

Gaia Imaging of Our Galaxy (link from Gregory Frederick):

Results of the Gaia spacecraft imaging effort to see our galaxy as viewed from the outside. This is what our galaxy looks like from outside looking at it. Image and article at:

[https://www.esa.int/Science\\_Exploration/Space\\_Science/Gaia/Gaia\\_creates\\_richest\\_star\\_map\\_of\\_our\\_Galaxy\\_and\\_beyond](https://www.esa.int/Science_Exploration/Space_Science/Gaia/Gaia_creates_richest_star_map_of_our_Galaxy_and_beyond)

[-gf]

Strongest Evidence So Far of Extra-Terrestrial Life (link from Gregory Frederick):

Gregory Frederick also reports:

Looks like scientists have again found evidence from the James Webb telescope observing the atmosphere of an certain alien planet of the chemical signature for a compound only found to be created by a life-forms on our Earth. This is still not proven with 6-sigma accuracy yet but the evidence is the strongest found so far. Article is listed below:

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/scientists-hail-strongest-evidence-far-230523715.html>

[-gf]

Have You Been Training AIs? (link):

The Atlantic Monthly has a story, "Search LibGen, the Pirated-Books Database That Meta Used to Train AI". The story itself is paywalled, but the ability to search the database to see if you are in it is not:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/03/search-libgen-data-set/682094/>

(I am not in it. Mark is, from his paper on the P-function written fifty years ago.)

[-ecl]

STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND (letter of comment by Joe Karpierz):

In response to [Fred Lerner's comments on STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND](#) in the 04/18/25 issue of the MT VOID, Joe Karpierz writes:

First of all, thank you for the kind words. I appreciate them. I am currently five book reviews behind, so at some point you will get more of me.

Second, yes, I am aware that Delany was planning a sequel to STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND. I went back and forth trying to decide if I was going to mention it in the review. Obviously I decided not to do so. [-jak]

BRIDGERTON (and Initials) (letter of comment by Susan de Guardiola):

In response to [Keith F. Lynch's comments on BRIDGERTON](#) in the 04/18/25 issue of the MT VOID, Susan de Guardiola writes:

[Keith writes,] "I wonder how many viewers of BRIDGERTON have been left with the mistaken impression that George III's wife Charlotte was black." [-kfl]

That's not an example of color-blind casting. The "Bridgerton" and "Queen Charlotte" series are explicitly alternate history. It's stated outright in a card on the screen at the start of the QC series. And the specific point of departure is that Charlotte's family is black, and as a result of her marriage to George the separate upper-class black and white communities in the British Empire are united into one nobility. So Charlotte is played by a black actor because the character is black. Other members of the nobility are played by black actors because their characters are black. I'm not sure there's any color-blind casting in those shows at all, though I haven't watched them in their entirety. They certainly qualify as F&SF to the same degree as any other alternate history.

Separately from that issue: there's some evidence to suggest that Charlotte might have been mixed-race, though it doesn't rise to anything like certainty. See, for example, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/12/race-monarchy>. So "Bridgerton"'s what-if is not pure fantasy. [-smg]

Susan adds:

Following your style: my initials are SMG, which is not obvious since I rarely use my middle initial. [-smg]

Evelyn responds:

Noted, though if you don't come back for several months, I can't guarantee I'll remember. :-)

I also label Gary McGath as "gmg", and "John Kerr-Mudd" as "jkm" (although since his "From" line reads "Kerr-Mudd, John", this is clearly a pseudonym that only makes sense if read last name first). [-ecl]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Last week I mentioned that I had read MAROONED by Martin Caidin (Bantam, no ISBN) for our book and movie group. Let me just say the movie was better; it did not have interminable stretches of technical minutiae and personal background that had nothing to do with the plot. (I read the revised version of the book, written in conjunction with the movie. But it was not a novelization; rather, it was re-written to bring it up to date. Of course, now it still seems outdated.) [-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

I don't care what is written about me so long as  
it isn't true.

--Dorothy Parker

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