

Free Fridays

One of the great things about the Nook (of which there are many) is "Free Fridays." Most of the titles offered every Friday by Barnes and Noble interest me not at all, but occasionally one piques my interest. Last Friday's offering, *Stupid History* by Leland Gregory, is a compilation of "Stupidity, Strangeness, and Mythoconceptions." The truth about Paul Revere's famous ride; the trial of Lizzie Borden; the Battle of Bunker Hill; and countless other tidbits.

Ironically, earlier tonight I was playing a game in which one of these tidbits would have come in handily. In the game "Malarky," the reader reads the question on the card and either reads the correct answer or makes up a load of malarky.

The other players determine whether or not the reader is giving the correct answer or feeding them a line.

One of the questions had to do with sardines which everyone knows is purchased in a small can. I cannot remember the actual question but the answer had something to do with the fact that there is no such fish as the sardine. They are usually pilchard or small herring packed into the can like... well... sardines. I came home tonight and read that fact and had a good laugh. Imagine how funny it would have been if I had read that tidbit BEFORE the game.

Perhaps this is in bad form, but did you know that Arnold had competition for the role of The Terminator? Apparently, O.J. Simpson is "too nice to be taken seriously as a killer."

All of these are but a few of the (at times humorous) moments in *Stupid History*. I may regret this post as the number of trivia games seems to be dwindling at game nights. However, how much useless trivia do I actually retain? Ok... perhaps this Free Friday was an attempt to encourage readers to pay for the humorists other books as this was published in 2007.

But still a fun read.

Movie, book, nook review...

So, in my last post, I lamented about not posting movie, book or even my reviews of my e-reader, the nook. So here is an all in one post.

This summer [Barnes and Noble](#) offered free classic e-book collections every week. While I had downloaded a lot of these from [Project Gutenberg](#) the books downloaded from Barnes and Noble seemed to have a little better e-book setup. My little [nook](#) now has over 300 books loaded and ready for reading at any time. I think that this has been one of my better electronic investments. I've been able to re-visit many of the books I read in my younger days, and I don't even have to remember to put in a bookmark. Also Barnes and Noble has a wonderful ongoing program of free book Fridays. Every Friday is a new book. These can be old classics, new books in a series, or just other books that are offered for free. As you can tell, I'm all about free. Many books to read, and I wonder if I can get to them all.

But on the book itself. I just finished reading "King Solomon's Mines" by H. Rider Haggard. The story was definitely dated. The treatment and understanding of non-white people was from the period the book was written, and it would not be tolerated in today's publishing climate. Getting that out of the way, the story held my interest (even if I knew how it turns out) and I enjoyed the escape from the every day it gave me. And that got me to think of some movies with one of the heroes of this story.

King Solomon's Mines has been made into a movie many times. Some were serious treatments of the book/story, while others were light-hearted romps. The narrator/hero of the story was

prologue was good, and I thought the rest of the book would be another page turner. I was wrong. I forced myself to read a few chapters, maybe it would get better. Nope.

The mystery and plot to drive that was given in the prologue. Up to chapter 7 were all the things that were going on in the main character's life. His business was having problems, he had problems with his mother, brother, daughter. He had problems with his business partner. Maybe if I continue reading he would have problems with his wife. I'm not sure, I quit. Except for finding some of his father's sailing journals (his mother than burned them), there was nothing happening about discovering the mystery death.

Quite frankly, I've been using this book to help me get to sleep. I stopped doing that because I was afraid I would drop my nook off the bed. That got me to the start of chapter 7. Yawn... I'm getting tired writing about it...

If you need an insomnia cure, run out to the library and see if they have Timothy Frost's "Final Passage". Cheaper than sleeping pills. Just don't load it on a book reader, you may fall asleep and then break your reader when you drop it.

Good point – It was free... ☐

I didn't know that.

A few years ago a movie came out and was release to critical defeat. As for myself I enjoyed the movie except for a few minor problems. I found it to be an enjoyable waste of time (just what I like in most movies).

The movie was [The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen](#). One of

the biggest things that bothered me was the introduction of Tom Sawyer into the movie. On top of that he was a Pinkerton agent. I kept saying to myself, why bring in that character as a detective. Didn't make much sense to me. Of course Dorian Grey wasn't in the original comic either, but that didn't bother me as much.

Then I got my Nook! (Yep, another Nook post. Think I could get money to write reviews for my Nook?) I just finished a short story, from Mark Twain, that I never read or heard of before. The story was called [Tom Sawyer, Detective](#). While he was not a Pinkerton agent, he did use observation to solve a crime. So now after the years I've complained about Tom Sawyer being a detective in that movie, I guess that following the path that Twain left, it isn't that far out into left field.

There is another story that I have yet to read about Mr Sawyer and Mr. Finn called [Tom Sawyer Abroad](#). Tom and Huck are on a balloon expedition in Africa. I guess that allows the trip to England for Tom anyway.

Just one question about the movie, if the film people actually knew about these stories: Where was Huck? ☐

Nook again

I currently have around 200 books/stories on my Nook. I have read or started to read about 20 of those books/stories. I also have a number of MP3's. So I do have a wide selection to read or listen to. I can add research books that are available. I have new authors who started by publishing free books. I have old authors whose works are now being digitally archived and made available on the internet. A wonderful array of things to keep this old mind busy.

There is no physical way that I would have been able to read the past few selections in paper. Living in rural America, our local libraries can not be expected to have complete libraries of old classic books, they can't be expected to have all of the latest authors. And if a book is out of print? How will the get it? That doesn't even include books that are found only on the web. Stories only found in back issues of old magazines. Nope, I would not have been able to find all of the things I've read.

In my lifetime, I've had to move a 'library' of books from place to place. I've moved, my children have moved and we all have had books. A box of 20 hardbound books is heavy. 200+ books would be almost a truckload. I can carry them in the palm of my hand. And I can and will put more books on the Nook. I'm not sure I will ever read all of them, but it will give me something to do.

And I am assuming that in the years to come, more books will be available in electronic format. I will probably still buy books, go to the library or borrow a book or two from friends. Hard copy books and the feel in my hand are things I don't want to give up just yet. But I'm thinking if the improvements to the reader itself and the books available, I may be able to carry a complete reference, entertainment library wherever I go. I think that is a wonderful thing.

And the movies never did it justice.

and probably never could, but I haven't seen the TV series.

What am I talking about?

I just finished reading [Alexandre Dumas'](#) book ['The Count of Monte Cristo'](#). This is a very long book. It loops here, there and everywhere. Characters have many interactions with others. There are friends, sons, daughters, parents and of course enemies involved. Plot twists abound.

I remember back many years ago, I read this book for High School. It was just after we moved out into the boonies. The house had no heat, it was the middle of the winter and my parents and younger sister were living in a camper. With very little room to move around, reading was the activity of the day. It took me a weekend, plus a day or two to finish the 1000+ page book. I enjoyed it, but all recollection was pushed aside. I saw at least [one movie](#) and a [TV adaptation](#) of the book and enjoyed those too. I even liked the ['Mr. Magoo'](#) version.

I will tell you that as an adult (maybe in name only), I enjoyed this book more than any of the previous encounters with the work. Maybe I got a better translation this time, but the writing was crisp and clear even when the plot was not (and the plot was meant to be foggy).

I knew the story, but was compelled to turn to the next page and read the next chapter. I will recommend this book to anyone with some lonng reading time they want to fill.

Oh, and the best thing about this. I was reading it on my Nook and I wasn't trying to hold up pounds of paper. ☐

Now there is a twisted mind I

can admire.

Not really an e-book review, since I've read or heard the various stories since my childhood, but I've been reading selections from Edgar Allan Poe on my Nook for the past week or so.

What I really enjoy about Poe, is the variety of writing I can read from him. He wrote short stories, poetry, black comedies. He wrote mysteries, horror and love poems. He wrote about real life mysteries. But he is mainly remembered for his stories and poems of the macabre and a lone visitor to his grave years after his death.

This past week I've been reading stories I've remembered from my youth. For those who don't know the story, my older brother would read me Poe for bed time stories. He was 12 years older than me and had been reading Poe for school. For some reason he thought that these stories were fine his 4/5 year old kid brother. While there were a couple that kept me hiding under blankets for many nights (Tell Tale Heart, Pit and the Pendulum), I remember most of the stories and poems with great affection. I have to thank my brother for enlightening me at such a young and impressionable age. I'm sure this help/hindered? in my becoming who I am today. ☐

This past week, I've revisited the above mentioned stories and many others. 45 years and many readings later, these stories still hold my attention.

This is another look into the writing styles of the past. Think back to these stories being printed in various magazines. Then they are read in a time without electric lights. Candles, oil lamps and some gas lamps, plus the fire in the hearth, were the lighting of the time. All of these lamps were darker than our current electric lights. They make moving and shifting shadows on the walls. Poe's stories of

Horror and the Macabre read in those settings still can give a chill to the bones. With story telling/reading, the imagination of the listener/reader are key to the sense of the story. Poe's stories readily help feed a fertile imagination.

Looking for a bit of that evening thrill, read 'The Tell-Tale Heart' by the light of a hurricane lamp. Or read "The Cask of Amontillado" in a damp cool cellar under candle light. Or how about "The Raven" in dim light during a wind/rain storm. Let your imaginations go, pick up some Poe and enjoy a shiver or two. Of course, you may need to read them alone...

New for the Nook

Barnes and Noble is really making headway with their book reader. Today I just got a software update for my Nook. They made somethings easier like connecting to Wi-Fi sites and loading music. And they added a thing or two. The first was a section for Games. So far there are only two games, but I'm sure they will add more. I'm sure part of it will be a money maker for them too. I can see them charging for 'Game' apps. They said they did some changes to make the page turning quicker. All good right!

Then there is the big change. I can now access the internet on my Nook. I was able to read blog posts, check up on email and some other things you can do on the web. I don't think it is made to play movies or things like that, but it does handle basic text and graphics very well. I don't think I would ever use it for more than quick replies. The data entry is a bit rough for me. I did try to reply to a blog, but it said I was posting from a spam site, even when I was logged in as me. Hmmm.

Big problem though, the Web seems to eat battery life. I guess I will need to keep my charging cord available at all times if I want to scan the web often.

I just hope the ability to store my books in files, or give them tags will be available soon.

Weekly EBook review

Well not quite yet, but maybe a new category if I keep reading at the rate I have been. Since this is an Ebook review, there will be some things about the books that you will only get from the ebooks I've been reading. Almost all of the books have been copied from original text and had OCR software run on them. I've notice in a few places the character recognition software just wasn't up to the task. I will have to note where I got the copy, how it was translated to digital text and the edition year it was copied from.

I'm thinking this will be a lot of fun for me, but my readers may be a bit bored by my reading selection. Oh well, you get what you pay for. I'm reading free books, and you are reading a free blog.

This week I finished 3 ebooks, so I have a choice as to which title to review. Decisions, decisions. Life sometimes complicates these things. □

Full review of my book reader

Third post on this, are you tired of it yet?

Well, I now have hundreds of books at my disposal on my new Nook E-Book reader. From Neverland to Wonderland and on the way to OZ. I have books set in the orient, on the moon and in oceans. Books from Baum, Barrie, Doyle, Carroll and Kipling. Lesser known authors for most like Rhomer, Simak and others. So at my fingertips I have reading for weeks or maybe months. Yes I read a lot.

Here are the things I like best about my new e-reader.

It is very easy to download books onto the machine. It would be easier to get them directly from Barnes & Noble, but I can load all of the books I have from Project Gutenberg and feedbooks through the USB port. I like having a wide selection to look at.

It is easy to read the screen in all types of light. I can adjust the font larger if I forget my reading glasses. It does need light to read, just like a book, so it doesn't get as tiring as a computer screen.

It is easy to mark my place or get back to the exact location I finished reading. The automatic bookmark will keep my current spot in the book I'm reading. You can leave the book, open another and come back to the exact spot you were reading.

I have an unlimited storage capacity. OK, it is limited by my bank account. I can only buy so many memory cards. I haven't put books on all the ones I have yet!!!

I can have a new book anytime of day, from almost any place. More good news for me.

It is easy to carry the reader around. It is about the size of a paperback book, and about the same weight. I don't have to

lug my laptop around for the books stored in it.

I got to try it out before buying it. The biggest selling e-book reader is a bit harder to try out, unless you know somebody with one.

I can share my books with other Nook owners or people with a (free) Nook reader on their computer. You can loan books for 14 days.

The service from B&N has been great. I really can't say enough about that. That service made the purchase for me. I will go there again (yeah, I know I was going there before the service.) Guess what guys, I will actually talk about that experience. They are getting free advertising from me.

Now for the down side..

Hey, it is expensive. I could have purchased a lot of books for the price of this machine. Not that I have the shelf space for them, but it is a lot of books

I am not a big fan of the entry screen for note taking or any typing. My fingers are almost too fat to get the keys correctly. It doesn't look like it will work with a stylus either. Some of the other screens to move around the books are almost too small. If you have larger than average fingers, I would suggest book reader with real keys.

It is a little slow to turn pages. And when it comes to speed, if you have a lot of books on your reader, it takes a bit to load them in.

I'm not 100% certain, but it doesn't look like you have a good way to organize your books. I would like to break them up by classification. Science Fiction, Mystery, Children's Classics, History, ect. If I find a way to do that easily, I will let you know.

That about does it. Two thumbs way up for this book reader.