

It's Brainstorming Season!

We're now well into brainstorming season for this year's Pegasus Awards. In fact, we're a bit **farther** into brainstorming season than we'd intended to be when putting together this issue of *Wing Words*, but it appears that life has been winning the battle for control of our time. That said, let's move on to the burning issues of our time.

Torches, and Pitchforks, and Villagers

Yes, it appears that what's burning right now are torches, because the floating category that we **thought** was "Best Science Song" turns out to be "Best **Mad** Science Song". So, you remember all of that stuff that we wrote in the last issue about "Best Science Song"?

"Never mind."

Thank you, Emily.

Fools! I Will Rule You All!

Well, yes, we suppose that **is** what most people think of when they think of mad scientists. But rather than just play to the stereotype, let's go dig into the history for a moment.

Most people would say that the first mad scientist was Victor Von Frankenstein from Mary Shelley's classic novel. He, of course, would have argued that he was perfectly sane; it was just that he was carrying out research into reanimating the dead through the power of electricity. The villagers carrying the torches and pitchforks begged to differ with him.

So was he mad? That's a good question. Certainly the pursuit of forbidden knowledge, the attempt to command through science powers that should only belong to God is something that is arguably insane.

But where would you draw the line? Modern researchers are reconstructing viruses from



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DNA fragments. The idea of creating entirely new organisms through DNA synthesis is one that's current in the scientific literature. Are **these** scientists mad?

That, it would seem, depends on the outcome of the project. If the results are good, then you are a scientist. If the results are **bad**, then you have been laid low by your own hubris and were obviously a **mad** scientist. So if you create a monster or convert the Earth into gray goo, you have obviously tampered with forces that no man should attempt to master.

It's really very simple, isn't it?

All that said, we think that the first mad scientist was actually Daedalus, who built wings that allowed him to fly. Of course, that would be a power that was best reserved to the Greek gods, so when his son, Icarus, borrowed the wings and flew too close to the sun, well, he clearly got what he deserved.

And so did Daedalus, who subsequently hung up his wings as an offering to Apollo.

Hubris. If you're a mad scientist, it'll get you every time.

Count on it.

This Land Is My Land

All this stuff about hubris is fine, but what you **really** want from your mad scientist is someone who is truly **mad**. Someone who wants to conquer the world because he just so darned smart. You want those fine comic book mad scientists like Lex Luthor and Victor Von Doom.

We're good with that. There's nothing like a little megalomania. And although Evil Overlords frequently have a mad scientist **working** for them – someone's got to do the heavy lifting! – isn't it nice when the mad scientist actually is in charge?

Just remember: the serious mad scientist never thinks of himself as evil. It's just that he's so smart and talented that he **deserves** to rule the world.

We've had days like that.

With My Offkeyanator I Will Destroy Every Filksing In The Entire Tri-State Area!

Any mad scientist who refers to himself as evil is almost certainly there for comic purposes, because making fun of the evil mad scientist is just too easy some days. We're inordinately fond of Dr. Doofenshmirtz from *Phineas and Ferb*, because you've just got to like an evil mad scientist with his own theme song.

But you'll find humorous evil mad scientists everywhere, from Professor Fate in *The Great Race* to Dr. Evil in *Austin Powers*. They keep the plot moving. They're great foils for the hero of the piece to play against.

And they lose. Time and again. Because it just doesn't help to **admit** that you're evil.

No matter how funny your scheme is.

And no matter **how many** LEDs you use in the process. (Google "evil mad scientist peggy" and you'll see what we're talking about.)

Ask Peggy!

Peggy would like to assure you that **she** is not an evil mad scientist, Google search results notwithstanding. That said, let's dip into our burgeoning mailbag and pull out another question.

This question comes from H.S. Filker in New York, as he asks, "Can I submit more than one brainstorming poll? Or does the new brainstorming poll overwrite the one that I sent in previously?"

That's a fine question, H.S. And no matter **what** the website may be saying at any given moment, you can submit as many brainstorming polls as you want to. We'll collect them all and add them to the results. As we've noted before, please **do** try to be at least a bit selective in your suggestions – nominating "Every song by J. Random Filker" isn't helpful even if you **list** every song by J. Random, simply because there are presumably some that you like better than others. Listing them **all** just adds to the noise level in the brainstorming poll and makes it harder for the people looking at it to figure out which are the **best** songs that they should consider.

But other than that, let fly!

Send Us Questions

We're always happy to try to answer your questions about the Pegasus Awards. If you've got a question, send it to us at:

wingwords@ovff.org

Next Issue

We expect to have recovered from our mad science debacle by then. Although we **are** considering asking our resident philosopher and Pegasus Evangelista to weigh in on the subject. Simply because we expect that it will be interesting to read...