



The Rod Serling Memorial Foundation

Newsletter-SUMMER 2017



Since the mid-1980's this organization has been dedicated to honoring Rod Serling—one of the most talented and prolific writers in American television. This newsletter highlights RSMF activities, as well as the continuing interest in Rod Serling in the press... on bookshelves... DVDs and the internet.

THE TWILIGHT ZONE COMES HOME



On July 15, 2017, nearly two hundred Rod Serling fans attended "The Twilight Zone Comes Home" at the Forum Theatre in Serling's hometown of Binghamton, New York. Fans traveled from across the country and even from Canada for a full-day celebration of Serling's love for his hometown.

Hosted by the Rod Serling Memorial

Foundation, the event featured readings by Rod's daughters, Anne and Jodi, a screening of the documentary, *The Carousel* (winner of the 2017 Rod Serling award), a performance of the one-act play *Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Twilight Zone*, a panel discussion and Q&A session with the country's foremost Serling scholars (our very own Board members Tony Albarella, Amy Boyle Johnston, Brian Frey, and Nicholas Parisi, as well as author Mark Dawidziak), and ended with three classic Twilight Zone episodes shown on the big screen: *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*, *Time Enough at Last*, and *Walking Distance* (courtesy of CBS, Inc.)

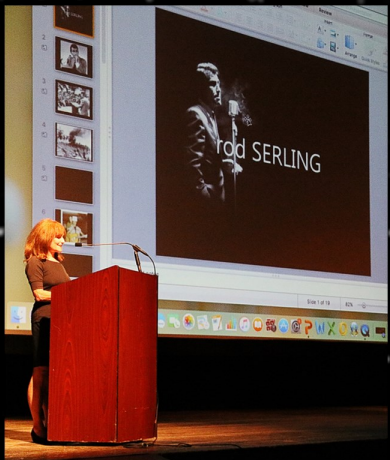
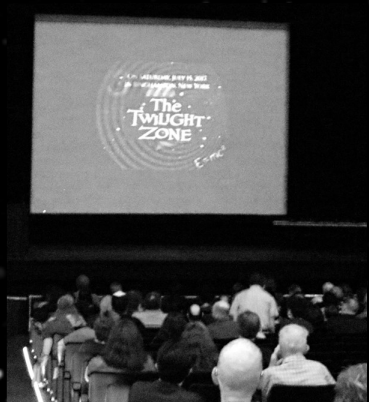
Proceeds from the event, which will almost certainly be the first of many such events, will support the Foundation's continuing efforts to promote and preserve Rod Serling's legacy. Thank you to all that attended!

by Nick Parisi



"Twilight Zone Comes Home"

July 15, 2017
Forum Theater
Binghamton, NY



Reasons to Revisit the Night Gallery

By Tony Albarella

Rear." (Standouts scripted by others include, in this author's opinion, "The Dead Man," "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," "The Dark Boy," "Dead Weight," and "Pickman's Model.") If instant access to worthy episodes isn't reason enough for you to add the complete *Night Gallery* series to your DVD collection, here are a few more.

- 1) The Season One set includes the made-for-TV pilot movie. Released in 1969, this gem includes three segments ("The Cemetery," "The Escape Route," "Eyes") written by Serling, two of which were based upon tales from his 1967 novel *The Season to Be Wary*. "Eyes" famously features Joan Crawford being directed by neophyte Steven Spielberg in his directorial debut. When Serling delivers comeuppance to characters like a murderously selfish ne'er-do-well, a Nazi war criminal on the run, and a well-heeled, bitterly entitled woman, he's in his element, and the dialogue sparkles.
- 2) If you haven't already picked up any of the three individual seasonal releases, you're in luck. On September 12, Universal Home Video is bundling them into the *Night Gallery: The Complete Series* release. Retail cost is \$59.95 but you can pre-order the set at any of the main internet outlets for about forty bucks. That's not bad for 34 hours of television plus extras [Editor's note: see *Amazon* on p. 5]
- 3) *Night Gallery* historians Jim Benson and Scott Skelton contribute a few enjoyable, informative commentaries on select second- and third-season episodes. But the real treat for me is the trio of Season Two commentaries by my favorite contemporary director, the visionary Guillermo del Toro. A lifelong horror fan and inveterate consumer of speculative fiction, art, television, and film, del Toro first absorbed *Night Gallery* as a prepubescent; his childlike awe of the source material and expert knowledge of staging, lighting, camerawork, and literary history blend into truly inspired episode dissections. (If you've enjoyed any of del Toro's Blu Ray/DVD movie commentaries, you know what to expect.) I could listen to Guillermo talk movies and TV all day long...especially when Serling is the subject.
- 4) In addition to the episode running commentaries, the releases offer other worthwhile extras, including promo spots and featurettes. *Art Gallery: The Paintings in Rod Serling's Night Gallery* examines the contributions of Tom Wright – whose introductory artwork played a large role in setting the mood for each segment – in the interview format with the artist himself. Accompanying this is a follow-up featurette showcasing the paintings themselves, with audio commentary by Wright. And *Revisiting the Gallery: A Look Back* is a nicely-produced short documentary that features the observations of *Night Gallery* actors, directors, composers, and experts. Some welcome behind-the-scenes stories are provided, as well as an overview of the show's oft-rushed production, the Rod Serling/Jack Laird issues, and the experimental main title theme provided by Gil Mellé using electronic instruments.
- 5) Watching Serling introduce each segment in the shadowy, surrealistic set of the titular gallery is always a treat. His distinctive voice and mannerisms highlight appearances that, while in color and exhibiting a slightly older host, echo the vivid presence that bookended so many iconic *Twilight Zone* episodes.

Night Gallery is, from an overall objective standpoint, a very flawed series. It holds a special place in the hearts and memories of folks of a certain age, and viewers who absorbed the show during their impressionable youth fondly recall the scaring off of their figurative pants. Yet unlike *The Twilight Zone*, *Night Gallery* has not aged particularly well. Do not, however, let that stop you from paying the *Gallery* occasional visits. There is still both terror and beauty within many of those paintings, and the DVD releases frame them in fine fashion.

Night Gallery will forever be remembered as Rod Serling's "other" sci-fi/fantasy/horror series, and a perennial distant cousin to *The Twilight Zone*. The reasons for this are multiple and varied: the lopsided hit-to-miss ratio of teleplay quality, Serling's lack of creative control, the oft-overlit cinematography and conspicuous direction that punctuated the era, the dearth of attention paid to production detail, and of course, those mood-destroying, damned unfunny "blackout sketches."

Despite all this, some truly exceptional episodes surge beyond the clutter. Classics like "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar," "The Caterpillar," and "The Messiah on Mott Street" are "must see" Serling TV, and other Serling-written highlights include "The Class of '99," "The Doll," "Cool Air," "Finnegan's Flight," "Certain Shadows on the Wall," "Dr. Stringfellow's Rejuvenator," and "Deliveries in the

NIGHT GALLERY
"THEY'RE TEARING DOWN TIM RILEY'S BAR"
FADE IN
INT. OFFICE SUITE - DAY
A series of cubicles: semi-glassed walls, a desk in front of each. At the far end is a man, plugging and unplugging, announcing m...
"Pritkin's Plastic Products" over and over...
comes in. Camera pans down the line of s...
until we're at a vantage point near the P...
Mr. Pritkin emerges - white-haired, pater...
obviously an all-business dynamo. Pausing...
tary's desk, he looks across at the secr...
office which reads, on its door, "Randol...
Sales." The door to this office is open...
a clock. The time is 3:00. Miss Alcott...
looks tense and nervous - conscious of...
of the President standing there, and es...
the fact that he's aware of both the ti...
absence.

FAVORING THE ADJACENT OFFICE
On its door the legend: "Harvey Doane...
Director." Doane comes out - a winds...
jacket, wide tie, carefully nurtured...
picture of the eager young man on hi...
at the clock, then at the open door...
finally at Miss Alcott. Obviously a...
he asks in a stage whisper:

DOANE
Randy not back yet?

Touring the Original Twilight Zone by Steve Schlich

Wow! You're finally visiting the Binghamton area and you want to check out Rod Serling's home town. Is it anything like the *Twilight Zone*? Are there monuments to Rod? Do people give tours? Where can you read about it?

The Foundation gets requests for information about Binghamton every year. Sadly, there are no official Serling tours. But many websites, both official and personal, offer self-guided tours. And lots of information about Rod Serling. We're good, but not unique.

You would be justified to consider Binghamton, New York, to be a version of the *Twilight Zone*—IMO especially the downtown with its [magnificent period architecture](#) that must have influenced young "Roddy" Serling as he grew up during the Depression. Binghamton is a recognizable American city, more industrial than exotic, and clearly the nostalgic hometown of "Walking Distance."

Ride the carousel and stroll around the bandstand at Recreation Park; you'll find this incarnation of your favorite old TV show both sentimental and surreal.

We offer you some suggested highlights for your tour...

Renovations to the Recreation Park carousel in recent years include some fantastic *Twilight Zone* artwork. If there were but one *must-visit* site in Binghamton, this is it. Filmmaker Jonathan Napolitano knew that. His documentary "The Carousel" about the renovation features artist Cortlandt Hull's painted vignettes of *Twilight Zone* episodes.

[Watch "The Carousel" here](#). The film was honored at the [2016 Tribeca Film Festival](#). Then come, and ride. But beware, it is closed during the winter, open only from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The bandstand near the carousel has a brass marker commemorating Rod Serling and "Walking Distance."

The Forum Theater in downtown Binghamton recently hosted the first of what may become a yearly "[Twilight Zone Comes Home](#)" festival. Other spots in town that pay tribute to Rod include a "local heroes" Walk of Fame with bronze stars, a marker at Binghamton High School, and other points of interest.

ALSO:

Check out our [Links page](#), for other websites listed under "Hometown" and "Biography."

Our [Articles page](#) has so many different topics that you may miss the Binghamton-specific items on the right side, near the bottom of the page. Check out the articles listed under "Hometown News," "Locals Remember Rod Serling," and other subjects.

Google "Tour Binghamton New York" for an eclectic list of things to see and do in Binghamton. Enter the same phrase into the Bing search engine for a more logical, if staid, list of area tours for hire.



Helpful Articles to Guide You Around Town

[Destination: Binghamton](#)

[Binghamton Road Trip](#)



[Chamber of Commerce brochure](#)

[An Aussie in Binghamton](#)

RSMF ARCHIVES



Each issue of the Newsletter, we'd like to highlight a piece of the collection here at the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation that will hopefully someday be part of a Museum Exhibit. The newest addition to our archives is a set of five volumes of "amateur non-profit" graphic novels made by Marco Cocco. Marco is a hematologist from Sardinia, Italy (which is why the graphic novels are in Italian). Since his childhood, he has been very fond of classic science fiction and photography. According to Marco, he has dedicated his life to studying Rod Serling's work and believes Rod's work is now really part of his soul. This ongoing project includes some of his favorite episodes and is a great tribute to this legendary TV series. We sincerely thank Marco for thinking of the Memorial Foundation and for



donating this collection of graphic novels to our archives. They are a true piece of art and a great way to help preserve and promote Rod Serling's legacy.

R.S.M.F.

PROFILE

Gordon C. Webb —Vice-President

Gordon's interest in Rod Serling began when the local newspaper announced, in 1959, that a new television series would be written by a Binghamton, N.Y. native. For a kid growing up in the Binghamton area...this was really cool, and "Twilight Zone Night" would find him and his friends in front of the TV. for the next five years.

Gordon majored in Television-Radio at Syracuse University, where he discovered his childhood dream of being a disc-jockey was over-rated and after graduation he landed a job in Cornell University's large media department. There, he wrote and produced TV-radio programs on agricultural subjects, consumer topics and even Cornell's annual "Football Highlight Film." His radio public service series on farm safety placed as a finalist in the Clio Awards (competing with national organizations including the American Cancer Society, Planned Parenthood and the United Negro College Fund).

Following a 20-year career in media production, Gordon joined the faculty at Ithaca College's Park School of Communications to teach audio-video production & scriptwriting. In the early 1970's Rod Serling had taught at Ithaca College -- which, by 1990, was home to the Serling Archive and this connection renewed Gordon's interest in Serling and his work. As an assistant professor he taught many Serling courses, workshops and seminars on campus, and at the college's London Center in 2006... and his research paper on Serling's screenplay for *Planet of the Apes* was published in "[Creative Screenwriting](#)." While at I-C, Gordon helped plan the first "Rod Serling Conference" in 2006 -- which launched a series of six bi-annual events held on campus and in Los Angeles (2013). This experience also began a cherished relationship with Carol Serling and the Serling family.



2006 SERLING CONFERENCE: Gordon, I-C Pres. Peggy Williams, Carol Serling, Comm. Dean Diane Lynch



2008 SERLING CONFERENCE: Presentation comparing "Filmed Episodes vs. Video Episodes of *The Twilight Zone*."

GOT QUESTIONS? Members of this distinguished organization know a fair amount about Rod Serling. If there's something you've always wondered about...or have questions about an obscure Serling work — just [send us an e-mail...](#) and one of our resident "experts" will try to fulfill your request in a future newsletter.

CONTEST!

NARRATE YOUR OWN TWILIGHT ZONE

Write the opening and closing narrations to an imaginary *Twilight Zone* episode!

WIN a video link on our home page!
We'll film the winning narration ...and runners-up,
then post all on YouTube and here.

[COMPLETE CONTEST RULES HERE](#)

(Deadline: Halloween 2017—October 31)

AMAZON

If you have an Amazon.com account — a portion of every purchase made at smile.amazon.com can be donated to the Rod Serling Memorial Foundation.

More details:

<http://www.rodserling.com/donate.htm>

Like us on Facebook



The caricature of Rod Serling on our masthead is by the late Johnny Hart — internationally-known cartoonist ("B.C." and "The Wizard of Id")...another creative genius who called the Binghamton area "home."

[Contact Us](#)

[About Us](#)

[Serling FAQ](#)

[Join](#)

[Donate](#)