



Illustration by Anna Axelsson The Clackamas Print

Social networks cause antisocial behavior



By Isaac Soper
Arts & Culture Editor

I have no friends.

I retract that statement; I have no "Friends" on Facebook that are not actual friends, family or colleagues. I make great effort to never offend anyone, but if you put anything on my "wall" that is offensive or rude, I will delete it. Please refrain from using pseudo-words like "chatstabbing" or "conversation."

Facebook is going public soon and they will be selling stock in their company for an undisclosed amount of money. The New York Times claims that the company may be worth up to \$100 billion; maybe they'll give us some free shares if we have more "Friends" than anyone else.

It's really sad to me to see people that update their "status" all of the time. As a culture, have we become so broken and alone that we need constant approval from others, including those who we don't even know, to know that we're okay? That's an easy answer: Yes. Have we changed the definition of "Friend?" Are the people we call "Friend" on Facebook any different from a childhood imaginary friend?

I remember being a kid and having an imaginary friend, his name was Cowboy Jim.

In my mind, social networking has its roots in AOL chatrooms, which spread to instant-messaging and creating "your own website" through a myriad of free website creators like Angelfire. This spread to the Myspace page, which quickly became the heavily-customized, music-blaring,

headache-inducing Myspace page. Hey, there's something good about Facebook, no customization; way to go guy from "The Social Network." Sorry preteens.

I use my Facebook account for three things: uploading photos from recent hikes that I've been on, unique things that I've done with my job and "poking" one of my good friends who I haven't seen in a few years, other than that, my page goes relatively unused.

I used to go on Facebook once per week when I started the account. That dwindled to every other week and then every month or so. Due to the "private groups" function, my job uses Facebook and I'm on it nearly every day now.

So I would like to ask Facebook users, please don't post anything stupid. All of the information, photos and video posted on [insert social network here] become "public information," meaning anyone can use it for any purpose. Under 21 and drinking? You may want to save those photos for your scrapbook instead of your Facebook.

If I remove someone from my "Friends," does Facebook say, "Isaac Soper no longer wants to be friends with you and would like you to keep your distance?"

Someone told me that Myspace is mainly used for musicians now, which makes me happy; using a social network for something other than making pretend friends, what a novel idea.

I don't mean to sound like I'm complaining; Facebook and Twitter have their purpose. Even YouTube can be used for good.

Though I may not have enough "Friends" to win any contests or any plans to invest in what may be the world's largest Internet-based anti-social social network, I, along with the rest of modern society, am a Facebook user.

English instructor discusses apocalypse

By Isaac Soper
Arts & Culture Editor

The world has been decimated by nuclear war. In the wake of this tragic disaster, only few survive; those who are still alive are in a constant battle for survival and maintaining their meager existence.

Dystopia is usually referred to as the polar-opposite of utopia; it is the state that the world is in on the brink of collapse.

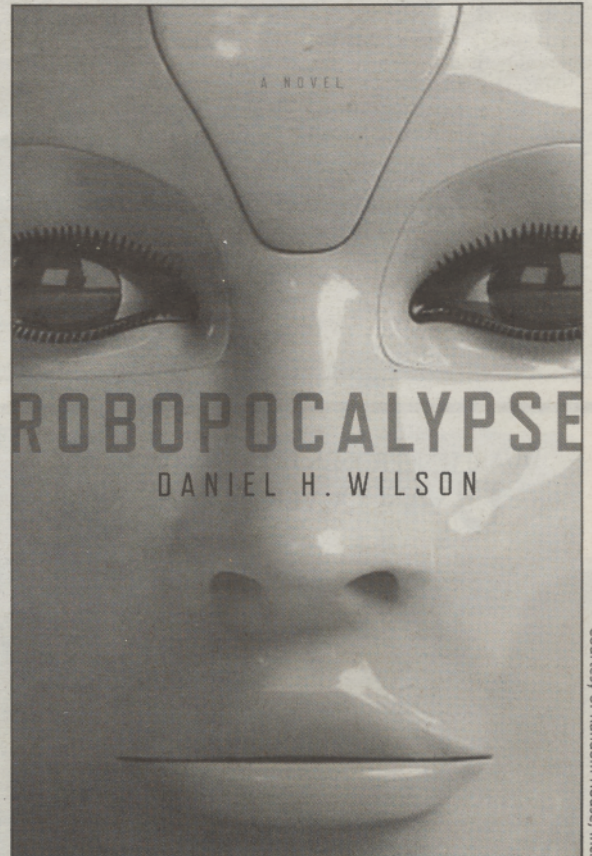
Dystopic visions of the world have made their way into many forms of mass-media since Mary Shelley's, "Frankenstein." In June of last year, Daniel H. Wilson, a Portland resident who has his Ph.D. in robotics, wrote a dystopic novel entitled "Robopocalypse." The book takes place in the near future, in which human civilization faces extinction due to a sentient robotic uprising.

Starting tomorrow, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m., the Oregon City Public Library (which is located at the Carnegie Center; Fifth and Jefferson, in Oregon City) is hosting a string of events, leading up to an appearance and community read by Wilson himself.

"We made the decision that we would do the title 'Robopocalypse' for a community-wide read this year. I read it, one of my staff gave me the idea, and I loved it," said Maureen Cole, the Director of the Oregon City Public Library. "Other libraries that have community-wide reads often do things where they have related events but we've never really done that."

The event tomorrow night entitled, "Where is Dystopia?" will be hosted by Clackamas Community College English Instructor Trevor Dodge. It will be, according to Cole, a more "adult-focused" exploration and discussion of dystopic literature, including books, films, comics and video games.

"The Carnegie building is a great place to hold an event: it's cozy, artsy and scholarly and the community who attend these events are really engaged in the conversation. Trevor's topic sounds fascinating," said CCC English Instructor Trista Cornelius, who introduced



Courtesy of Random House, Inc.

Portland author Daniel H. Wilson will be discussing his novel, "Robopocalypse" at the Oregon City Public Library on Feb. 23.

Cole to Dodge.

"Where is Dystopia?" is going to be an attempt to give context for the book, focusing on the broader idea of dystopia and what the term entails.

"The talk is going to chart those ideas through literature at one level and then I want to problematize what I mean by literature. When [people] hear that word, they think of things on a bookshelf. I quibble with that definition; literature is simply a grouping of something," said Dodge.

In the classes that he teaches, such as "Games & Literature" and "Comics & Literature," Dodge has been known to push the envelope on what is commonly considered "literature."

"A dystopic literature doesn't have to be just about novels, and doesn't have to be about filmic representations of those ideas either. What I want to do is chase dystopia through other popular mass-media forms. Novels and films and I want to talk about them in comics; I want to talk about them in

video games," said Dodge.

He mentioned discussing such titles as Cormac McCarthy's "The Road," along with popular post-apocalyptic video game "Fallout 3."

"There's lots of avenues to talk about, lots of times we see dystopic work as the funneling effect of technology and having too much too soon; we can trace that all the way back to 'Frankenstein,'" said Dodge.

The same themes may be connected to the present time, with the success of the human genome project. What happens when we create something that we are unprepared for, perhaps our own version of Frankenstein's monster?

"Largely, what I want to do is to have the conversation about how do we project ourselves into [dystopia] and why do we go to it," said Dodge.

After "Where is Dystopia?", the next event discussing robotics will take place on Feb. 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., which will be a LEGO robotics demonstration and the first annual LEGO League competition, hosted by Redland Elementary School.

Wilson will be visiting the Oregon City Public Library on Thursday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. He will be there to talk about robots, robotic uprisings and answer questions regarding the subject, along with his new book.

Wilson has been praised by critics and authors alike, currently he is working with Steven Spielberg, who is doing a film adaptation of the book, which will be released on July 3, 2013.

"Robopocalypse" Events

Where is Dystopia? Thursday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m.
Hosted by Trevor Dodge

LEGO Robotics Friday, Feb. 17 at 10 a.m.
Hosted by Redland Elementary

"Robopocalypse" Author Visit Thursday, Feb. 23 at 7 p.m.
Hosted by Daniel H. Wilson