

ORIGIN 46

DECEMBER 2021



Produced by the
National Fantasy Fan Federation
History and Research Bureau

Edited and published by John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904.

Published for the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). To join or renew, use the membership form at <http://n3f.org/join/membership-form/> to provide your name and whichever address you use to receive zines. Memberships with the National Fantasy Fan (TNFF) via paper mail are \$18, memberships with TNFF *via* email are \$6. Zines other than TNFF are email only. Public memberships are free. Send payments to Kevin Trainor, PO Box 143, Tonopah, Nevada 89049. Pay online at N3F.org. Our PayPal contact is treasurer@n3f.org.

STAFF



Judy Carroll, 975 East 120 South, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660, BlueShadows2012@gmail.com

Jon Swartz, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750, jon_swartz@hotmail.com

Jeffrey Redmond, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, redmondjeff@hotmail.com

Contents: editorial, "One Step More for Fandom", page three. "Challenges in Science Fiction" by Jeffrey Redmond, page four. "Early Dell Science Fiction Paperbacks" by Jon Swartz, page seven. "In the Coming Year" by Judy Carroll, page fourteen. Commentary by John Thiel, page sixteen.

EDITORIAL



One Step More For Fandom

Yes, just as science and technology advance step by step, and science fiction continues to advance, we in its fandom continue to do so as we progress along with the world in advancing what we have. Just as the first walk on the moon was a big step for mankind (the person who took that step was educated at a college that is within walking distance of my home, incidentally), what we are doing in the History and Research department as we continue to advance in its building is another step for our bureau and conceivably for the NFFF and for fandom in general. We are looking back on science fiction, looking into it, and forging new perceptions of what we read and involve ourselves with.

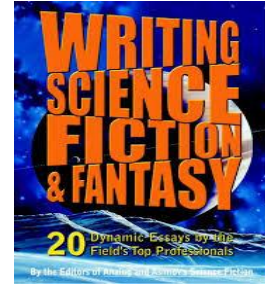
You'll find that out as you read over this issue; when you ask whether we have anything new to say, our answer is YES. With all respect to what we already have, we want to advance that, like the person who takes his land grant and then produces, a thing which is spoken of favorably even in the Bible. Join us on our trip ahead if you will.

No, I am not expressing "hubris", but if I were it would be a *good* kind of hubris, the kind that will develop into something desirable. As mankind does, we constantly search, find, and progress. We are not static motes, or mites, in the passage of time. We participate in the things we find.

You might well wish to join us on our trip.

CHALLENGES IN SCIENCE FICTION

by Jeffrey Redmond



*What makes up science fiction and the possibility of writing it
with knowledge of it—with attention to research*

It's not called "science" and it's not called "fiction". It's called "science fiction", and that means that if an author is going to successfully wade into those waters, it requires a balancing act.

Readers of science fiction are generally sophisticated. Reading science fiction isn't easy reading. A reader needs to think and to concentrate. Science fiction places demands on a reader. That's why it's not the most popular genre—romance novels are. You don't have to think or concentrate when you read a romance novel. But you do when you read science fiction. And science fiction readers have real standards that they've developed by reading the great writers who developed the genre—and also by seeing countless good quality science fiction movies and television programs.

So, when sitting down to write a work of science fiction, the writer has to rise to the standard. Bad quality science fiction is painfully obvious even to the casual reader. If a work of science fiction is to be believable and engrossing, the science in it must be plausible—and the science must be understandable to the reader.

Too much detail easily becomes boring and makes the reader think he is back in school. Too little detail and the author is asking the reader to take giant "leaps of faith", and this undermines the credibility of a science fiction story.

So what can an author do? In the medical/psychological/conspiracy thrillers *MIRACLE MAN* and *THE AUSTIN PARADOX*, we are confronted with these same issues. The protagonist in both novels is Robert James Austin, the greatest scientific genius in human history.

But we couldn't just ask the reader to believe this. We have to demonstrate to the

reader that Austin did have these remarkable talents from a very young age. And when Austin proceeded to cure one disease after another, we have to make his discoveries believable. Or else the plot would just become fantastical, and we would lose the reader.

Writers Must Be Researchers

What this means is that the author of science fiction must do what writers of “pure” fiction rarely have to do—become a researcher so that the reader, in turn, can be educated and elevated—all within an entertainment context.

To make *Miracle Man* and *The Austin Paradox* credible requires us to spend a great deal of time doing extensive research in two areas: the nature of human intelligence (particularly genius), and diseases, treatment, attempted cures—and the medical/scientific methodology relevant to formulating cures.

Research the lives of actual geniuses so we can understand how genius manifests itself at various ages—and the behaviors often attendant to genius. Because Austin has an intelligence that is unique in human history (10x that of Einstein), it can be extrapolated to research, and “pumped up” with various things about Austin so as to reflect his extraordinary abilities. So, while there are highly magnified elements of his behavior and thought processes, they are grounded in documented realities and, hence, became credible.

What is the reward to the author for this hard work? No reader or reviewer ever made a negative comment regarding the “believability” of Austin’s genius. If they had, sci fi novels would fail because they would have been based on “bad science”. If the science is inadequate, the science fiction fails, even if the fiction element is strong.

Regarding the medical/scientific aspects of both novels, we know that in order for the story to hold the reader, there had to be plausible scientific foundations for the ways in which Austin invented cures and the way that his cures worked. It can’t just be declared to the reader, “And then he cured this disease, and then he cured that disease”.

At the same time, however, we must be mindful that we have to minimize the science so that it doesn’t bore the reader. The cures that Austin devises in both novels are creative but believable, and the scientific explanations given for these cures and the way in which Austin devised them are completely plausible.

This can be borne out if we receive numerous letters from medical doctors and disease research scientists who read the novels and tell that they found these “cures” to be so interesting as to wonder if they would work in the real world!

In *The Austin Paradox*, Austin faces his greatest challenge—finding a cure for a new

disease that was created by terrorists and has become a pandemic. As humanity faces extinction, Austin must invent revolutionary scientific concepts to formulate a cure. Coming up with this was a great challenge for me as an author, but the detailed scientific explanations that are in the novel resonate with the reader as being plausible.

Accurate and Believable Details

Simply put: if the science in the novel appears to be amateurish or “junk science”, then the author will lose the reader and the novel will fail. Readers who enjoy science fiction books want fiction and good storytelling, but they also want science that is credible and that allows them to be swept away into the story. Good science makes for good science fiction.

If the author doesn’t want to put in the hard work of research and using her creativity to fashion “science” from imagination, then, please—do yourself and your reader a favor and write a different type of fiction, because the reader will not be impressed.

In fact, the same requirements pertain to any factual matter that is included in science fiction writing. For example, both *Miracle Man* and *The Austin Paradox* are highly critical of big pharma, which views Austin as its worst nightmare because Austin, unlike the pharma companies, seeks to cure diseases rather than merely treat symptoms. Austin’s discoveries kill off many of the pharma’s most profitable “cash cow” treatments, and pharma devises various draconian plans to destroy Austin.

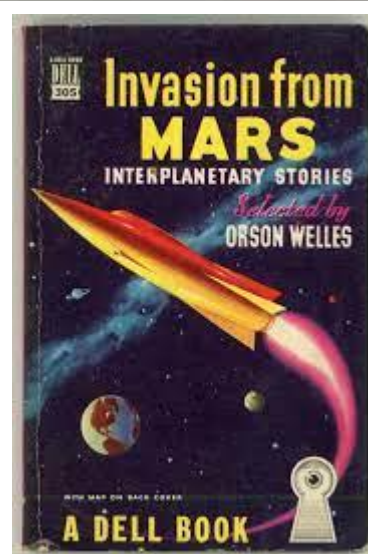
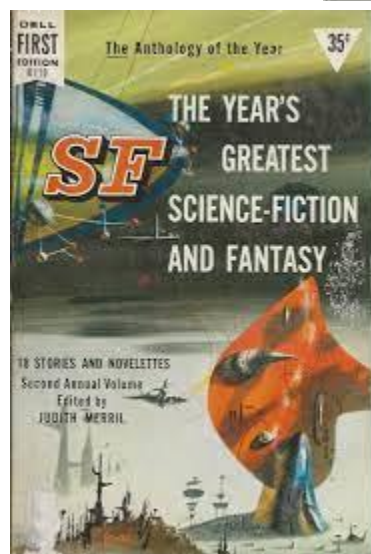
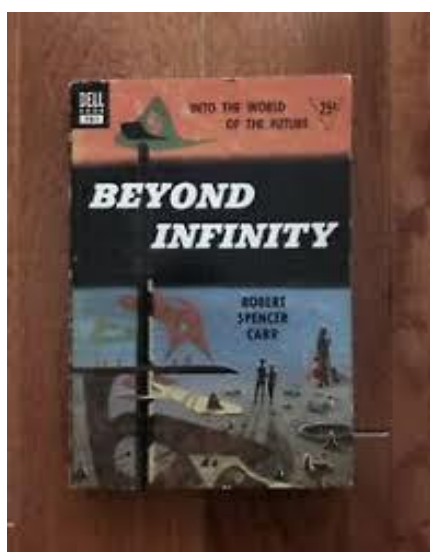
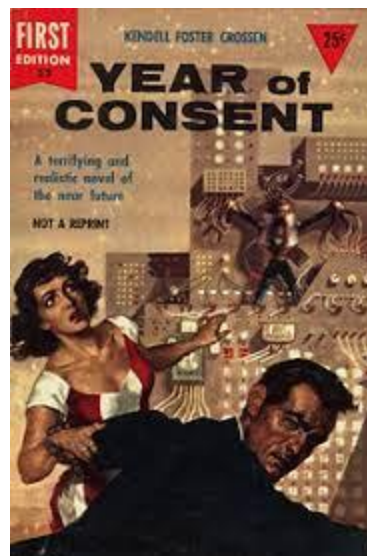
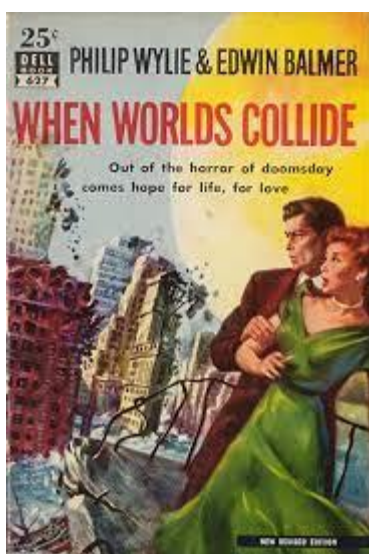
To paint a realistic picture of this and immerse the reader in the dynamic conflict between big pharma and Austin, we have to do a lot of research into the actual documented workings of the pharmaceutical industry, both in terms of science and the industry’s political maneuvering and interface with powerful governmental forces. This attention to detail brings this aspect of the story to life. Readers of science fiction appreciated the “reality” that science brings to fiction.

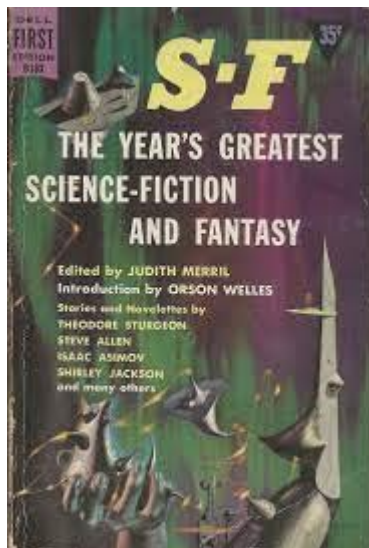
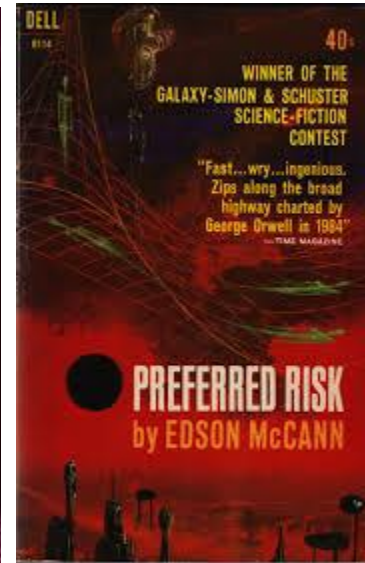
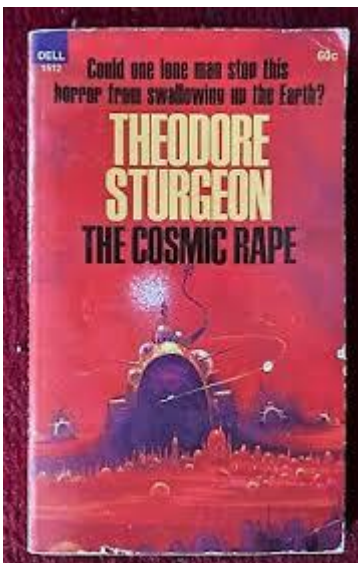
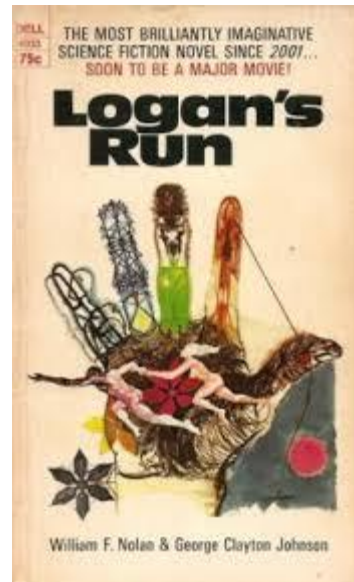
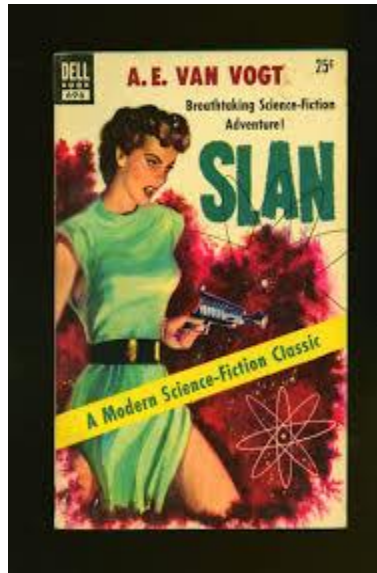
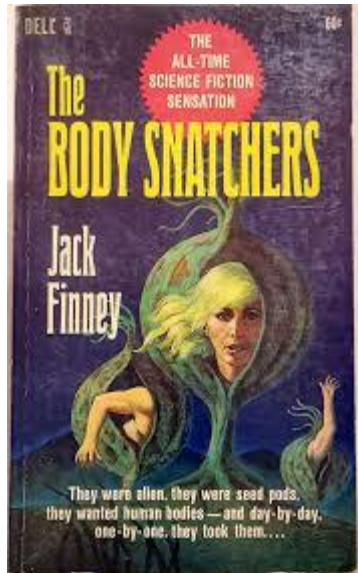
Similarly, one of the driving subplots of *The Austin Paradox* deals with international financial manipulations and money laundering. To make these somewhat complex areas realistic and interesting to the reader, much research was needed. It is the realism and accuracy of this informant that when woven into the plot lines, captures the reader.

The wonderful thing about science fiction writing is that if the author does the scientific research, puts in the required time and effort, and gives flight to his creativity, the resultant novels will transcend mere fictional storytelling. The “science” will imbue the books with a realism that creates a multidimensional experience for the reader and that, in turn, will heighten the reader’s immersion in the novel.

EARLY DELL SCIENCE FICTION PAPERBACKS

by Jon D. Swartz
N3F Historian





Dell publishing, an American publisher of books, magazines, and comic books, was founded by George T. Delacorte, Jr., with \$10,000, two employees, and one magazine title, **I Confess**; but soon it began turning out dozens of pulp magazines—everything from penny-a-word detective stories and articles about the movies, to romance books.

During the 1920s-1940s, Dell was one of the largest publishers of magazines, including pulps. Their line of humor magazines included **1,000 Jokes**, launched in 1938. From 1929 to 1974, they published comic books under the Dell Comics line, the bulk of which, during 1938-1962, was done in partnership with Western Publishing.

In 1943, Dell entered into paperback book publishing with Dell Paperbacks. Some of these early books were science fiction (SF). From 1946 until 1950 the covers were laminated with cellophane, adding to the distinctive look of the line. The principal credit for this unique line of paperbacks belonged to Lloyd E. Smith, whose title was editor-in-chief, but who was really a one-man publishing operation. He designed the series, originated the back cover illustrations, and created other features, such as the character lists.

INVASION FROM MARS INTERPLANETARY STORIES (1949), Selected by Orson Welles

This included "Can A Martian Help It If He's Colored Green?", attributed to Welles, "Invasion from Mars" (Broadcast script narrated by Welles that aired October 30, 1938) by Howard Koch, "The Green Hills of Earth" by Robert Heinlein, "Zero Hour" by Ray Bradbury, "Expedition" by Anthony Boucher, "Incident on Calypso" by Murray Leinster, "The Star Mouse" by Fredric Brown, "The Castaway" by Nelson Bond, "Victory Unintentional" by Isaac Asimov, "Farewell to Eden" by Theodore Sturgeon, and "The Million Year Picnic" by Ray Bradbury. Cover art was by Malcolm Smith. The back cover illustrated Bradbury's "The Million Year Picnic".

This is the first SF paperback I remember buying on my own, with my own money. I couldn't resist the cover art by Malcolm Smith, and the name Orson Welles on the cover didn't hurt either. Because of the stories in this book, I became a fan of all the authors represented.

This was one of the first Dell "celebrity" anthologies in which a prominent person's name was used to help sell the books. Later, Alfred Hitchcock, Boris Karloff, and Gene Autry also had their names used on Dell anthologies.

Dell SF Novels

Other early Dell genre paperbacks included the SF/F/H novels THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON (initial Dell SF title) and THE INVISIBLE MAN, both by H.G. Wells, SHE by H. Rider Haggard, THE CAVE GIRL and TARZAN OF THE LOST EMPIRE, both by Edgar Rice Burroughs, and PHANTOM OF THE OPERA by Gaston Leroux. All of these titles were Dell "mapbacks".

Another early Dell SF paperback was UNIVERSE by Robert Heinlein in the Dell ten cent series of novellas, published in 1951, and with cover art by Robert Stanley (1918-1996). This story had originally been published in the May 1941 issue of **Astounding Science Fiction**.

Later Dell SF novels included several popular SF titles. Among them were the following: THE SIRENS OF TITAN by Kurt Vonnegut, ROGUE QUEEN by L. Sprague de Camp, WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE by Philip Wylie and Edwin Balmer, THE COSMIC RAPE by Theodore Sturgeon, SLAN by A.E. van Vogt, YEAR OF CONSENT by Kendell Foster Crossen, and THE LONG LOUD SILENCE by Wilson "Bob" Tucker (with cover art by Richard Powers).

SF fan/author/editor Judith Merrill began editing a series of Dell "best SF/fantasy" anthologies in 1956, and continued with this series for several years.

The contents of the first such anthology were as follows: "Introduction" by Orson Welles, "Preface" by Judith Merrill, "The Stutterer" by R.R. Merliss, "The Golem" by Avram Davidson, "Junior" by Robert Abernathy, "The Cave of Night" by James E. Gunn, "The Hoofer" by Walter M. Miller, Jr., "Bulkhead" by Theodore Sturgeon, "Sense from Thought Divide" by Mark Clifton, "Pottage" by Zenna Henderson, "Nobody Bothers Gus" by Algis Budrys, "The Last Day of Summer" by E.C. Tubb, "One Ordinary Day, With Peanuts" by Shirley Jackson, "The Ethicators" by Willard Marsh, "Birds Can't Count" by Mildred Clingerman, "Of Missing Persons" by Jack Finney, "Dreaming is a Private Thing" by Isaac Asimov, "The Country of the Kind" by Damon Knight, "The Public Hating" by Steve Allen, "Home There's No Returning" by Henry Kuttner & C.L. Moore, and "The Year's S-F" by Merrill. Similar Dell "best SF/F" anthologies were edited by Merrill in later anthologies.

Mapbacks

"Mapback" is a term used by book collectors to refer to the earliest paperback books published by Dell. The books are known as mapbacks because the back cover of the book usually contained a map that illustrated the location of the action.

The artwork began with quite detailed maps, but later numbers contained more

stylized ones. Sometimes the back covers were scenes from houses or apartments featured in one of the stories rather than actual maps.

More than 150 of the back covers were developed or completely done by Chicago artist Ruth Belew.

Alfred Hitchcock's Dell Mapback Anthologies

Related to the above paperbacks were the several early Alfred Hitchcock anthologies: SUSPENSE STORIES COLLECTED BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK (#92) in 1945 [reportedly the first Dell "celebrity" compilation], BAR THE DOORS (#143) in 1946, HOLD YOUR BREATH (#206) in 1948, FEAR AND TREMBLING (#264) in 1948, SUSPENSE STORIES (#367) in 1949 [reprinted in 1950], *etc.* A related mapback was ROPE in 1948, based on the Hitchcock movie the same year that starred James Stewart.

The early Hitchcock mapback anthologies had just enough stories by recognizable genre authors to make them attractive to me and my friends. The 1949 SUSPENSE STORIES was actually the first of these anthologies I bought. I purchased it at a local drugstore just across the street from my dad's Western Auto Store, mainly because it contained a story by Ray Bradbury ("The Night" from DARK CARNIVAL).

The other titles in this series I found later at secondhand book stores or bought directly from the publisher.

A related and very popular title over the years, originally published by Dell in 1958, was GREAT TALES OF ACTION AND ADVENTURE. Edited by George Bennett, this anthology contained stories by several classic genre authors, including Arthur C. Clarke, Jack London, Saki, Arthur Conan Doyle, and H.G. Wells; and it also featured the much reprinted (and often broadcast) stories "Leiningen Versus the Ants", "The Most Dangerous Game", and "The Fourth Man".

Anthony Boucher's ROCKET TO THE MORGUE

Rocket to the Morgue is a 1942 locked room mystery novel by Boucher, originally published as by "H.H. Holmes", Boucher's frequent pseudonym when he was writing mysteries or writing about mysteries—and the name of a 19th-Century American serial killer. The novel was reprinted in 1952 by Dell, with cover art by Robert Stanley, and a question on the back cover asked: "Was it murder through the fourth dimension?"

Dedicated to the Manana Literary Society and to SF writers Robert Heinlein and Cleve Cartmill, several characters in the book were based upon actual California SF writers and

fans (or composites of those writers and fans), including Robert Heinlein, Cleave Cartmill, L. Ron Hubbard, Henry Kuttner, Jack Williamson, Jack Parsons, and Edmond Hamilton.

Movie Tie-Ins

Dell was known for its Movie, TV, and Play “tie-ins” beginning in the 1940s, and genre publications played a part in this series. In 1943 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA was issued, followed later by such titles as KING SOLOMON’S MINES (1950), DARBY O’GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE (1959), and THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON (1960). In addition, several titles attributed to the Alfred Hitchcock and Boris Karloff TV shows were published over the years.

George T. Delacorte, Jr.



Delacorte (1884-1991) founded the Dell Publishing Company in 1921. His goal was to entertain readers who were not satisfied with the genteel publications available at the time. His most successful innovation was the puzzle magazine.

An alumnus of Columbia University, Delacorte donated money to the university which established the Delacorte Professorship in the Humanities and helped found the George T. Delacorte Center for Magazine Journalism and the creation of the Delacorte Professorship in Magazine Journalism in 1984. The university recognized him with an honorary doctorate in 1982. He died in Manhattan in 1991.

Some Conclusions

My friends and I collected different genres of paperbacks, but the most important to us at the time were the SF/F/H anthologies. These collections seemed the most fun of all the books we read, and we almost always saved the ones we acquired. I still have many of mine 70+ years later.

These early Dell paperbacks are considered to be highly collectible by paperback enthusiasts, even today. The mapbacks are valued more than other Dell paperbacks.

Most of the paperbacks that we collected, published by Dell during the 1940s and 1950s, are discussed in this article.

Sources

Bonn, Thomas L. UNDERCOVER: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF AMERICAN MASS MARKET PAPERBACKS. NY: Penguin Books, 1982

Davis, Kenneth C. TWO-BIT CULTURE. Boston, MS: Houghton-Mifflin, 1984

Lupoff, Richard A. THE GREAT AMERICAN PAPERBACK. Portland, OR: Collectors Press, 2001.

Lyles, William H. DELL PAPERBACKS, 1942 to Mid-1962. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Lyles, William H. PUTTING DELL ON THE MAP. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Schreuders, Piet. PAPERBACKS, U.S.A. San Diego, CA: Blue Dolphin, 1981.

Stephens, Christopher P. A CHECKLIST OF THE DELL MAPBACKS. Hastings-on-Hudson, NY: Ultramarine, 1996.

Note: This article was written years ago for my fanzine, **The Ultraverse**. It has been revised somewhat for reprinting here.



In The Coming Year by Judy Carroll



This year is coming to an end, and the world has handled many problems, worldwide pandemic, political unrest, drastic climate changes, *etc.* It has dragged on, seeming as if it would drag on forever, bringing with it many negative emotions and actions.

But, as long as this year seems to be, I find myself thinking, as I have for many years, "How can it be December already? Where did the year go?" It has swiftly run by as have many years before it.

So now we are facing another year. Another year similar to the one which is ending. How are we going to handle 2022?

Are we going to moan, curse the powers that be, give up and hide in a corner? Or are we going to stand tall, deal with what we need to deal with, and do our very best to handle whatever comes our way?

I feel that keeping our family and friends close is a positive action to help fight off the depression and negative thoughts and emotions that easily arise to the surface during moments of stress and loneliness. I also feel that helping others, whether it's by text, email, phone, social media, in person, or in donations to organizations that help those in need is as essential to our wellbeing as it is to theirs.

As members of the N3F we have many opportunities to interact with others. We have several bureaus in which one can interact, such as Artist, Book Review, Correspondence, Membership Recruitment, Round Robins, Welcomittee, and Writers Exchange. We also have a yearly Short Story Contest and Letters of Comment each month in The National Fantasy Fan magazine.

I am going to suggest the following goal as an idea for each member of the N3F:
Make a new friend.

The person chosen does not have to be an N3F member. He/she can be a neighbor, an associate from work, a parent where your child goes to school or child care. You can look up a friend from high school or college. It really doesn't matter where you find them. Just find them. You could make such a positive influence in their lives.

You may be the only one who reaches out when they need someone the most.
Let's make 2022 better than 2021.



COMMENTARY

Jeffrey Redmond is making a good point when he describes the difference between general readers and readers of science fiction. And there is even more difference between them and people who don't read anything special. A science fiction reader should be considered as somewhat set apart from others in literary terms, if not otherwise. Perhaps there should be some pride taken in being readers of the kind of writing of which we are the special followers. It gives us an existential distinctiveness. Of course, we need not go so far in this consideration as to consider ourselves the "Star Begotten", as Claude Degler once suggested of us. But he was another person distinguishing between science fiction readers and others and finding a unique place in the world for us.

Jeffrey also points out the educative qualities of science fiction, and ways in which it might help us develop. We should not regard what we are reading as exclusively entertainment; we should give much thought to what we read, and participate in discussions of it with other science fiction appreciators (fen, as we are sometimes called).

He also says that science fiction writers should live up to this attention to them. It's not a bad idea to interact with them, to help them do this.

And look at the spread Jon Swartz lays out before us! Could anything excite our interest more than the early science fiction works he shows us as he goes after the paperback books that made science fiction so easy to buy? Those were indeed novels to awaken our fancies. Let us recall the people who brought such reading our way.

Judy Carroll is making some very good suggestions in her column and is evoking the spirit the NFFF once had. Can anyone doubt that she is pointing the way toward a future making it well worth our while to take directions and attitudes she indicates?



end of issue

Bonus Page



Isle of Innisfree