

IONISPHERE



Issue Number One

**Bulletin of the National Fantasy Fan Federation
Fan-Pro Coordinating Activity**

IONISPHERE, Volume 1 Number 1, pilot issue of the National Fantasy Fan Federation's Fan-Pro Coordinating Activity, October 2016. Issued monthly. Editor is John Thiel kinethiel@comcast.net , 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904. All mail to Ionisphere should be sent to this address. Not unaware that I have misspelled the name for the ionic layer above our atmosphere, I have an explanation for it: the title does not refer directly to the ionosphere and I did not want a scientific name for the publication as it is not a scientific journal. Its title combines the words "Ionic" and "sphere", creating a neologism. As it is only useful as a title for this zine, it need not dismay scientists. Also it sounds less negative, and we have a positive orientation. Pilot issue.

Department Head: John Thiel

Pro Contact: Jefferson Swycaffer

Distribution: George Phillies

Fan Contact: post not filled.

Conventions Contact: post not filled

News Contact: post presently filled by editor, seek other

Files manager: post not filled

Of course, the unfilled posts are wanting volunteers. Those in these positions do statements for each issue. The conventions contact keeps convention notes up-to-date, the news contact finds news about fans and pros, the fan contact and pro contact take email relevant to their position, and the files manager records the business and keeps annals. Such is the present visualization of the arrangements here. As I say, we are still building the activity.

George Phillies has asked me to revive the earlier NFFF department which I headed called the Fan-Pro Coordinating Committee, later changed to the Coordinating Activity. This was originated and assigned to me by Irvin Koch, at that time the N3F President. I kept the position for several years and then turned it over to someone else at the time when I left the N3F. Having just recently returned to the organization, I found the Fan-Pro Activity long gone. I mentioned it in my N'APA fanzine SYNERGY, and that's when I first heard from our President.

Feeling highly complimented by the request, I would like to compliment Mr. Phillies in return and say that he is doing an exceptional job of getting the NFFF active again and back in good order. I'm glad to be able to assist him in expanding the organization. I hope all continues to go as well as it's been going.

It is my feeling that there should be a closer relationship between science fiction and fantasy fans and the writers and editors and artists who create this form of literature. The fans are visible supporters of writing of this kind, and have some interchange with the professionals by way of letter columns and now internet forums, and at the conventions as well, but this could always use improvement and especially now when the number of magazines has dwindled. Possibly contact between fans and pros could re-create an original enthusiasm which could be very useful today, when science fiction has had its influences on cultural life in general, but is not as successful as it once was on the home front.

How this new department is going to progress and go about dealing with matters is still in the formative stages. The earlier committee did most of its work in Ionisphere, with interviews with fans and pros and news, but I hope to extend this farther. We printed the addresses of pros, but I am finding these presently not very avail-

able, but I might be able to find someone to do this and add him to the department.

This first issue is meant to make the membership aware of the activity and make a basis on which to build.

-John Thiel, Fan-Pro Activity department head

The above statements are all we have to make at the present time, but for this pilot issue I have secured an interview with a professional writer and I hope to have such interviews in each subsequent issue, and perhaps interviews with prominent fans as well. These interviews are intended to make writers more publicly accessible, to increase potential contacts with the fans.

Our first interview is with Adam-Troy Castro, whose stories appear most frequently in Analog. He has done columns for SCIFI Magazine, has been nominated for two Hugos, three Stokers and eight Nebulas, and was a winner of the Philip K. Dick award. His books include Spiderman novels as well as his own future detective, Andrea Cort, and dimension spanning by the hero Gustav Gloom. A partial Biblio:

Crisis on Ward 8, F&SF Oct/Nov 1998, Funeral March of the Marionettes, F&SF, 1997, Sunday Night Yams at Minnie and Earl's, Analog, June 2001, Unseen Demons, Analog, July/August 2002. The Tangled Strings of the Marionettes, F&SF, 2003, Gunfight on Farside, Analog, April 2009, Among the Tchi, Analog, May 2009, Hiding Place, Analog, April 2011, With Unclean Hands, Analog, November 2011, Tasha's Fail-Safe, Analog, April 2015, Sleeping Dogs, Analog, Aug 2015, The Soul Behind the Face, Analog.

IONISPHERE INTERVIEWS

ADAM-TROY CASTRO

IO: How did you first become interested in science fiction?

Author: As with most of us, this is not one question, but two, those two dividing into what hooked us in pop culture and what hooked us in print. Pop culture is hard to name, because the earliest examples scrape the beginning of my functional memory; I do, for instance, remember very early on learning about Godzilla movies and the like, and later Twilight Zone, and later than that Star Trek. I discovered Asimov and Clarke and Wells as far back as Elementary School.

IO: You seem to have your own cosmos in many of your stories. Would you regard yourself as a world-builder, forming your own realms for your stories?

Author: The future history you're referencing is "The Alsource Infection," which is the background for approximately half my short science fiction and all the Andrea Cort novels. Beyond that I think Worldbuilding is part of the required skill set, and actually is even in mainstream fiction. What is Steinbeck doing in *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* but giving us a family that existed before the story began?

IO: Would you describe the Alsource Infection?

Author: Sure. The Alsource Infection is the umbrella storyline mostly set in a space-faring far future in which mankind shares the stars with a number of other sentient species, one of which is a conglomeration of ancient software intelligences known as the Alsource. There are indications, so far, that Mankind is in for a major population crash, also that assaults of various sorts are being made on free will. There are a few stories in the universe that take place as early as later this century, but most are thousands of years off.

IO: Do you identify with any particular speculative *genre*?

Author: It used to be that I considered myself purely a horror writer, and was honestly surprised when the SF started to accrue. I thought I was more equipped to write humor, but some of my stuff is downright grim. The fact is that I write what it occurs to me to write and that categorization is accidental.

IO: Are you challenging existing concepts in what you write?

Author: Isn't that the definition of fantasy?

IO: Are there any other forms of writing you have taken on, or might like to take on?

Author: I've written middle-grade fiction, and media tie-in fiction, and want to do a mainstream thriller at some point.

IO: What other science fiction writers do you identify with the most? And what science fiction writers are your favorites?

Author: Oh, I think I've fairly established that Harlan Ellison's work is near and dear to my heart. So is Bob Sheckley's. And a long, long list of others, both in and out of the field.

IO: Are you satisfied with the work you have done thus far, and the reactions to it of readers and editors?

Author: Who but an egotist would be satisfied? And who but a titan would be satisfied with the reaction he got? I wanna be a lot better than I am, and a lot more popular than I am.

IO: Do you have much personal communication with any special science fiction editors, who give you feedback or work with you on what you write?

Author: From time to time, an editor knows exactly what I'm trying to do and how I'm falling short, and it needs to be said that when you acquire such an editor you have struck gold.

IO: Anything planned for the future at this time?

Author: My newest project is a novel called S.P.O.O.K.S, though it's still a little early to give details.

A photo and a full biblio of Mr. Castro can be found at his website:

<http://Adamtroycastro.com>

Here also may be found some Blogging by the author.



**Next issue's author interview will be with Paul Levinson,
author of THE CONSCIOUSNESS PLAGUE.**

