



The National Fantasy Fan

Volume 74 Number 5

May 2015

In This Issue

Art Widner 1917-2015

Publications

Art Bureau—Birthday Bureau—Web Pages—Games Bureau

June is Neffer Author Month -Neffy Nominations Invited

Kaymar Nominations Invited

Letters: Jefferson Swycaffer, Logan Masterson, Lloyd Penney

Why Fiction Awards Are Becoming Impractical

Fiction: The Puzzle of the Peregrinating Coach

2015 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest

Guest Editorial from David Speakman

2016 (9 months from now) is N3F's 75th Anniversary. Do we plan on doing anything special?

Here are some ideas to start the brainstorm:

- Special Pub: "A History of the N3F - Warts and All" - reference book written by various neffers and edited by a volunteer appointee. To be Self Published by the NFFF Press (our defunct publishing arm).
- Do like we did for the 70th: Every member gets an automatic 1-year extension to their current subscription and all former members get an invite to re-join for one-year as a regular member, free of charge.
- Diamond Anniversary contests: Logo, anniversary slogan, flash fiction, ???
- Your thoughts or ideas?

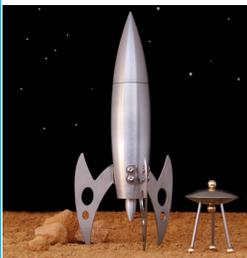
Note from Your President

I just retired. I look forward to having considerably more time and money to support the N3F.

However. one person neither can nor should do it all.

Please stand on your feet

like the good fen you all are
and give some time to support the N3F.



Contributions Needed! We need more reports! We need more art! We need more letters and comments, and fannish news of every sort. Please send to the Editor of this, our Official Organ: George Phillis, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609 phillies@4liberty.net 508 754 1859



Your Volunteer Team

Directorate:

Heath Row
 Jean Lamb
 Jefferson Swycaffer
 Jon Swartz
 R-Laurraine Tutihasi

President: George Phillies

Treasurer: David Speakman

Editorial Cabal:

Editor and Publisher, Tightbeam: David Speakman

Editor and Publisher, TNFF: George Phillies

Keeper of the URLs: Ruth Davidson

Host of the Web Site: David Speakman

Maintainers of Electronic Publications: vacant

Bureau Heads

Artist's Bureau: Sarah E. Harder

Birthday Cards: R-Laurraine Tutihasi

Convention Calendar: new volunteer needed

Games Bureau: George Phillies

Historian: Jon Swartz

N'APA: Jean Lamb

N3F Bookworms: Heath Row

Round Robins: Patricia Williams-King

Short Story Contest: Jefferson Swycaffer

Video Schedule: David Speakman

Welcommittee: Heath Row

Writers Exchange Bureau: Joy Beeson

Many New Volunteers are needed: Electronic Publication Support. Readers for the blind. Con Listings. Advertising. Membership Recruitment. Support the N3F. Volunteer Now!

Join or Renew

We offer three different memberships. Memberships with zines via paper mail are \$18; memberships with zines via email are \$6. Joint memberships at one address are \$22. Public memberships are free. Send payments to N3F, POB 1925, Mountain View CA 94042. or pay online at N3F.org

The National Fantasy Fan (Bonfire), Vol. LXXIV, No. 4, March 2015, ISSN 2169-3595. Published monthly by The National Fantasy Fan Federation.

Art Widner (1917 - 2015)

Art Widner, one of the founders of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F, NFFF) and an original member of First Fandom, was born September 16, 1917. He was a SF fan most of his life. He is credited with organizing the first SF fan club in Boston, The Stranger Club, in 1940. One of the pioneers of Boston fandom, he chaired Boskone I (1941) and Boskone II (1942), the first two Boston SF cons. He was also one of the five people who attended Boskone IV.

In the early days of SF fandom, he published the clubzine FanFare, put on the first proto-Boskones, and invented the first SF board game, Interplanetary. The game was never published commercially, but hand-made versions were played at Boskone III and many other later conventions.

He published over 160 fanzines, the longest running of which was YHOS (1940-1945 and 1979-2001).

As a member of the N3F, he edited the club zine Bonfire in 1941 and again in 1944, and was club president in 1947. His FanFare had published Damon Knight's "Unite or Fie!" the article that was the start of the N3F.

Widner briefly ran Bodacious Publications and published Poll Cat. He investigated the Pseucid, and was a member of the FAPA Brain Trust. He was also on the Board of Directors of The Fantasy Foundation.

His fandom awards were many. He was honored with the Big Heart Award in 1989, was the 1991 DUFF delegate and, in 2001, was selected as Past President of the Fan Writers of America for 2000. He was Fan Guest of Honor at Noreascon 3. He was nominated for the 1946 Best Fan Writer Retro Hugo at L.A.con III in 1996. He received a Special Lifetime Achievement Award at Corflu in 2011. Also in 2011, he was honored with the FAAn Lifetime Achievement Award. ArtCon and ArtCon Millennium Edition were both held in his honor. He was a long-time member of FAPA, and in 2014 was made its first Life Member. On August 19, 2011, while at Renovation, he claimed to be the World's Oldest Living Fan. His other GoHships include: 1983, Norwescon VI; 1990, Westercon 43, Minicon 25; 1999,

Corflu 16; 2007, Ditto 19.

He attended the first Worldcon in New York in 1939, and the next four, in Chicago (1940), Denver (1941), Los Angeles (1946) and Philcon (1947). Now that he has passed away, only three people remain alive who attended the first Worldcon: Dave Kyle, Bob Madle, and Erle Korshak.

Widner drove to the Chicago Worldcon in a 1928 Dodge, the "Skylark of WooWoo" – the last model made by the Dodge Brothers. He made an epic cross-country trek to Denvention I – the Widneride -- in the FooFoo Special, a car without a trunk.

Widner married during World War II, then was drafted into the service. However, because he was "volunteered" to be a technician-guinea pig at the newly formed Climatic Research Lab in Lawrence, MA, he still got to go home nearly every weekend.

His fanac slowed while he was in the military and ground to a halt when he moved his family to Los Angeles in 1948. At that time he gafiated completely. Signifying his disappearance from fandom, although he is constantly mentioned (with his photo included) in Harry Warner's 1940s history of fandom, All Our Yesterdays, he doesn't have a single listing in the index of Warner's sequel about fandom in the 1950s, A Wealth of Fable. Widner didn't reappear in fandom until the late 1970s.

In 1979 he resurrected his former zine, YHOS, as a genzine. He was the winner of the 1991 DUFF for a trip to Australia and New Zealand (and attended the Australian NatCon).

YHOS was one of the longest running zines ever published. First published in 1940, Widner is well known for ceasing publication of YHOS for more than thirty years before becoming an important part of fanzine fandom again in the 1980s and 1990s. He also contributed the chapter, "Wartime Fandom," to Joe Sanders' book, Science Fiction Fandom (1994).

Widner's literary output, on the other hand, was limited to a single prozine sale, "The Perfect Incinerator" (under the pen name of Arthur Lambert) that appeared in the Winter, 1942, issue of Robert Lowndes' Science Fiction Quarterly.

Widner, who often signed his correspondence as R. Twidner, died April 17, 2015.

Jon D. Swartz
N3F Historian

Publications

New Tightbeam is out. That's issue 272.. Yay!

Art Bureau

A long time ago, in our very own galaxy, we used to have an energetic, lively artist's bureau. Time and life circumstances conspired against it to the point where there was only one left! I would love to hear from you artists and art lovers and get things going again. I understand that this bureau may just have to be a 1-man (or in this case, woman) show for awhile, but it is so much more exciting when we communicate, bounce fun ideas off each other, and work on projects together. I have ideas and am willing to hear yours. You can be as participatory as much or as little as you'd like. For too long the dark side has lulled away our fine artists. It's time to bring them back to the light side - where all the paint and colors are! You can email me at artistsbureau@yahoo.com.

Sarah E. Harder

Birthday Bureau

Ten cards have been sent since my last report.
R-Laurraine Tutihasi

N'APA

Yes, our very own APA is again publishing. Ask for instructions or send page contributions to Jean Lamb tlambs1138@charter.net

Web Pages

David Speakman is adding scans of old issues to the web pages at N3F.org. Recent additions include:

1970, May - TB #60 <http://n3f.org/1970/05/tightbeam-60/>

1970, Sept-Oct TB #63 <http://n3f.org/1970/09/tightbeam-63/>

1974, August - Special Pub: "Yesterday and Today" (Fan Guide) n3f.org/2015/04/1974-fan-guide/

1979 - July TB#109 <http://n3f.org/1979/07/tightbeam-109/>

1979 - July TNFF 39.4 <http://n3f.org/1979/07/tnff-39-4/>
1979 - Sept. TB#110 <http://n3f.org/1979/09/tightbeam-110/>
1982 - Dec. TB#127 <http://n3f.org/1982/12/tightbeam-127>

Games Bureau

With thanks to the AHIKS Kommandeur (AHIKS.com), the world's oldest board wargaming magazine:

May 29-31, Birmingham, United Kingdom
UK GAMES EXPO

June 3-7, Columbus, OH
ORIGINS GAME FAIR
<http://originsgamefair.com/>

June 5-7, Brandon, Manitoba
PRAIRIECON
<http://www.prairiecon.com/>

June 20-27, Tempe, AZ
CSW EXPO 2015 [15TH ANNIVERSARY]
MonsterGame.CON XV (2015)
<http://expo.consimworld.com/register>

June 21-24, Fargo, ND
CORECON
<http://www.fargocorecon.org/>

June 25-28, Grapevine, TX
TEXICON
<http://www.texicon.net/>

June 25-28, Milwaukee, WI
NEXUS GAME FAIR
http://www.nexusgamefair.com/#!/page_home

August 3-9, Lancaster, PA
WORLD BOARDGAME CHAMPIONSHIPS
<http://www.boardgamers.org/>

Good sources for information on all kinds of game conventions are the Steve Jackson game site: <http://sjgames.com/con> and the Columbia Game site: <http://columbiagames.com/convention/conventions.shtml>

Awards

June is Neffer Author Month

My inspiration was the byline on an email from Jean Lamb. The closer read:

<http://www.amazon.com/Hatchling-Tameron-Dragon-Jean-Lamb-ebook/dp/B00HMTR8ZC>
Tameron must have magic to be his father's heir—but he doesn't. What happens now?

See more at <https://www.amazon.com/author/jeanlamb>.

That line was a reminder that we have many distinguished members who have published novels and other fictional works that are actually still on sale. A special issue dedicated to their work, showing what is out there, is planned.

Neffy Nominations Invited

The National Fantasy Fan Federation Speculative Fiction Awards continue the tradition that helped launch the career of Ray Bradbury back in 1949. With an eye on the future, the Neffys aim to honor achievements in speculative fiction in news media as well as traditional media. Awards are given for such works as books, comics, games, motion pictures and the Internet.

In recent years, we have given this award via large ballots and all sorts of categories. In the absence of any instructions, I propose an alternative, namely inviting nominations for particularly outstanding and unusual contributions to scientifiction, fantasy, horror, and related categories. Please forward your nominations to George Phillis phillies@4liberty.net, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609.

Kaymar Nominations Invited

Nominations are now invited for the KayMar Award.

Named after fandom legend K. Martin Carlson (1904-1986), the KAYMAR award has been given every year since 1959. The selection is made by a committee, consisting of previous winners who are still in the club, from nominations submitted by members. The Kaymar Award, like few other awards in fandom, is awarded only once. It is given not for talent or popularity, but for work, for the benefit of the club and its members.

The award is a memorial to K. Martin Carlson [1904-1986], who originated, maintained, and financed it for 25 years. Carlson was a long-time N3F member who held many positions in the club, including club historian. He went by the fan name of Kaymar. The first winner was Ray C. Higgs in 1959. An award has been given for every year since, most recently to David Speakman in 2014.

Now the Award is paid for by the N3F Treasury, which is small compensation for the value of the work done by the winners over the years. Prizes include a year's membership extension, \$10 cash and a certificate.

Any member of the N3F may nominate someone who seems worthy of the KAYMAR Award by sending a nomination to the chairman of the Kaymar Awards Committee, at any time; but at least by the end of the year, so that the names can be voted on in time for next April's award.

All names will be kept confidential. This is an honor, not a campaign, and only the winner's name will be made public.

The Kaymar Award is given in April every year, supposedly because the N3F was organized in the month of April. The selection is made by a committee, consisting of previous winners who are still in the club, from nominations submitted by members.

The Kaymar award, unlike other awards in fandom, can be awarded only once. It is not given for talent or for popularity, but for work — work for the benefit of the club and its members.

Please send nominations to David Speakman (davodd@gmail.com)

Letters

Jefferson Swycaffer writes:

We've got entries! They're coming in! We've got four at this point, and that's enough to make it a contest. Obviously, we want more, but we're above the dead minimum, so we won't have to face the humiliation of cancellation.

Congratulations on retirement and freedom!

I'm at page 260 of my current novel -- aiming for a

total of about 450 pages, so over half way! I'm not happy with it. It isn't going to be one of my best. But...that happens. Larry Niven, Poul Anderson, Isaac Asimov, Roger Zelazny -- all the greats -- had clunkers as well as sparklers. It's part of being human: they can't all be the top of the line. It just means I need to finish this one...and get on to start the next!

Cheers!
Jefferson

Logan Masterson writes:

My thanks to all the good and honorable Neffers for the welcome and the content!

I see that much hard work is going into the continuation of traditional fandom. I am thrilled that having only recently begun to learn about the history of fandom, I was able to connect with a group so well-rooted in it! Further, I look forward to sharing this group and its publications with fans who don't know they're fen.

Alas, I must offer a couple of corrections to the New Member listing I received in Vol 74 #4: First, I was a founder and global storyteller of the Houses of Eternity (not Infinity as printed), a World of Darkness independent LARP society. This error may very well have been my own. Sometimes sleep deprived and oft-distracted, I make plenty of mistakes! Secondly, I feel compelled to answer Mr. Speakman's idea that my fandom began with Star Wars. While that became quite an anchor not much later, I was a bit young to have enjoyed Star Wars' first theatrical release. In fact, my original influence was Lost In Space, which I remember watching in syndication at my babysitter's apartment. This is possibly my earliest memory. How fortunate am I that my "corrections" are so pleasurable to remember?

All of that said, I very much look forward to contributing however I am able to the vitality of N3F! Thanks for having me, stay faanish!

Lloyd Penney writes:

Dear Neffers:

Thank you for Vol. 74, No. 3 of The National Fantasy Fan. As always, I will attempt a letter of comment, and see what there is to say about the contents.

I completely agree that members of the club have to

jump in and help the club with its activities and its services to the membership. A directory of all N3F members would be a great service to everyone, and would add more connections to fandom at large to everyone. There probably needs to be a decision on what kind of directory it will be... All N3F members, all fans, all clubs, etc. All old directories would be good references.

There are positions on the main committee that need to be filled...I remember filling such positions when I was with the Star Trek Welcommittee many years ago, and that meant friendships that lasted for decades. Please do jump in and get involved; you won't regret it.

I think I must wrap up this letter; I think I have said all I can say. Take care all, and see you next issue.
Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Why Awards Are Becoming Impractical

Some Neffers will be aware that the Hugo Awards have become disputatious, indeed sufficiently disputatious that there has been coverage in the mundane media. Vaguely speaking, there are perhaps at least weak correlations between some of the disputants' positions and some of their opinions or issues of politics, broadly defined, or perhaps there actually aren't.

All fen should be profoundly grateful to Hugo Fandom for reviving that ancient and holy rite, the all-fandom fan feud.

For early coverage, see Mike Glycer's File 770 <http://file770.com/?p=2173> You will perhaps not be surprised to learn that SF Author Eric Flint has had a series of relatively sensible postings on the topic in his blog www.ericflint.net/. Also of interest, perhaps, are numerical analyses of how many voters there were in some factions: chaoshorizon.wordpress.com/category/2015-hugo-award/ (mostly numerical analytics) An extremely long list of links, mostly to one side, is found as bar.baen.com/index.php?t=msg&th=114679&goto=1145952&#msg_1145952 but you must register to get in.

Having said that, there is a minor practical issue:

There is now so much SF being published that most people cannot possibly have the time and budget to read all of it. That's a challenge for awards: Someone actually has to have read everything. Every one does not need to have read everything, but each work needs at least a few

Hugo supporter readers.

On the bright side, you can now distract both sides with a vigorous argument about a novel and author that no one else knows. On the other bright side, Hal Clement once remarked to your editor that he had retired, and now he really wanted to find an SF novel a day to read. Thanks to technology, it is now possible for that wish to be satisfied, even if Hal Clement must do his reading from the next plane of existence.

So here is a list of novels (>100,000 words, arbitrary cutoff), excluding material with substantial adult content, published in the last month (4/24-5/23) via Smashwords. There appears to be a Bova novel in the middle. To reproduce this list for a year, you would need to multiply its length by about 12. Yes, a good review zine is needed. Having said that:

Price of Life by David Crane
Pack Ahorra al Comprar 2 (Nº 063): Atrae el dinero con la ley de la atracción & El Misterio de los Creadores de Sombras by Nuevos Autores
The Madness Engine by Paul B. Spence
Pathspace by Matthew Kennedy
Waiting for the Machines to Fall Asleep by Affront Publishing
Wanted Rescuers by Terry Compton
...Saves Nine by Les Lynam
The New Earth Star by Fred Taikowski
Blue Plague: The Fall (Blue Plague Book 1) by Thomas A. Watson
Oracle's Child: Anchorage Book 5 by Sandra C. Stixrude
Dreams from the Sky by Frank Valchiria
Seven of I: The Keeper of the Words by Valerie Ryan
The Breakers Series: Books 1-3 by Edward W. Robertson
Relapse by Edward W. Robertson
Captives by Edward W. Robertson
Cut Off by Edward W. Robertson
The Book of Lapism, Deluxe Edition by Phil Geusz
Reapers by Edward W. Robertson
Gamers and Gods III: ALEXANOR by Matthew Kennedy
To Save The Sun by Ben Bova & A.J. Austin
Void All the Way Down by Stephen Hunt
Sci-Fi Value Pack by Robert P. Hansen
The Colonies of Earth Collection by Philip R Bengé
Skyeater (In A Universe Without Stars Book 1) by J Alex McCarthy
The Fifth House by Andy Goldman
Los rostros del pasado by Rodolfo Martínez & Felicidad Martínez
Genesis, Guardian of Gatling by Archer Swift
Trees For the Forest by Denise Siegel

Sasha: The ROE Chronicles Book 1 by Sean M. Campbell
 Citadel: Omnibus by Kevin Tumlinson
 Pride x Familiar ReVamp by Albert Ruckholdt
 CyberGun by Matthew Zee-Miller
 999 Years After Armageddon: The End of the Millennium
 by Ray Ruppert
 Far From The Sea We Know by Frank M Sheldon
 Book 8 - Time's Curse by Marius A Smith
 Book 7 - From the Depths of Time, Part Two by Marius A
 Smith
 Book 6 - From the Depths of Time, Part One by Marius A
 Smith
 Days of Iron (Book 1) by Russell Proctor
 Gamers and Gods: AES by Matthew Kennedy
 Wild Child, Books 1, 2 & 3 - The Trilogy by Mike Wells
 Heart Behind The Mask by N. "Karmakat" Franzetti
 Orion Rising by J L Pawley
 Warday by Whitley Strieber
 Empire Ascensions by Joshua Done
 The Ishim Underground by Carrie Bailey
 AntiHelix by John Guy Collick
 Beyond the Gates by Catherine Wells
 Two Worlds by Michael Adams
 Iron Warrior by Jay Noel
 The Valadin Codices - Volume 1 by Wayne Farrugia
 No Time for Rules by Fleur / Lloyd Lind / Hopkins
 Series: Tales of Lentari, Book 4 · Legends of Lentari.
 Bakkian Chronicles Omnibus by Jeffrey M. Poole
 LIFE (Citizens of Logan Pond Book 1) by Rebecca Belliston
 Emissaries by Graham Storrs
 Psych Investigation Episodes: Foxes by Kevin Weinberg
 Wild Child, Book 3 - The Patriarch by Mike Wells
 The Rising Trilogy Complete Box Set by Amy Miles
 A Plea In The Darkness by Robert Holt
 Allie's War Season Four: Books 7-8 by JC Andrijeski
 Time Travels to San Francisco by Lisa Mason
 The Hunters Call (Patrick Pierce #2) by William Scott

and that is one month of one electronic publishing house.

And now we advance to a bit of fiction. The Puzzle of the Peregrinating Coach appears in my short story collection Nine Gees. An edited (but illustrated!) version appeared in Baen's Universe. And here you have the front part of a scientific Holmes pastiche, complete as true of every proper Victorian tale with footnotes and footnotes to the footnotes:

THE PUZZLE OF THE
 PEREGRINATING COACH
 ...the late Sir John Wickers-Oates,
 F.R.S., D.D.S.(1)
 with marginal notes by his
 great-nephew Peter Wickers

The last shades of twilight hung gracefully over the London skyline, limning its towers and steeples in a delicate

indigo. Helmesham and I had just finished a generous repast, and were preparing to turn to the Port. Helmesham had at last confessed that in addition to his familiar criminological and scientific investigations, he had at last applied his mind to the financial world. "It's not so complex," he confided, "and as age begins to creep up on me I can foresee a time when I will need to adopt a more leisurely mode of life. So, for the past few years, a fee here, a fee there -- it all accumulates." How much had accumulated would soon reveal itself in the Puzzle of the Bilious Banker.

"And what," I asked, "will a man of your vigor do with all this prospective leisure?" I knew that it couldn't be aeroplane racing again. That had been last year. The aeroplane had perhaps been a great aid in the Puzzle of the Precognitive Pachyderm, though I continue to believe that man's lack of wings is indicative of the Creator's opinion of human flight.

"Oh, opera, music, perhaps the mysteries of the natural and the supernatural(2). Though most of the latter are frauds, exploited by Fleet Street for its enrichment. Why, not two days ago the Druids of England held a moot in Surrey, and here are the papers claiming What rubbish!"

"The criminals of the world will see good news in your retirement -- though I doubt that it will happen any time soon." Helmesham retained the vigor, appearance, and (most important, as a man of my profession would know) the firm strong teeth of a man of twenty-five. Why he constantly pondered retirement, when he had years of healthy life ahead, was a continual puzzle to me.

"Perhaps(3) the mysteries of the atomic spectrum," mused Helmesham, "Certainly Frauenhoffer's little instrument has aided me often enough in my investigations. I discussed this with Einstein last year in Berlin..." My memory turned briefly to our Autumn tour of Europe, viewing the Eiffel tower from above with Santos-Dumont, an excursion with Count Zeppelin and his dirigible -- now there was a mode of transport truly English in its majesty, even if a Hun had invented it -- and several days at the Prussian Academy of Science, talking with a man who disbelieved the most self-evident properties of every common timepiece. I did not begrudge Helmesham his visit, as the trip gave me the opportunity to lecture on the most logical of the medical sciences -- nay, the only one reduced to a scientific form -- with the most methodic of all men, the Prussians. I made certain, of course, that they understood that it was they who were to learn from English dentistry, not the reverse. My Roentgen-Ray plates of impacted molars are stunning, especially when coupled with my systematic treatment of methods for the avoidance of Roentgen-ray burns, a topic of which the Prussians were largely ignorant. It seems unnecessary to dwell upon my involvement in the Exhumation of the Exradiant Examiner, or what that case revealed of the ills attendant to an excess ingestion of Roentgen Rays.

There came a tap at the door. Now, I had previously given firm orders to the staff that I was not to be interrupted at Dinner save for fire, flood, or a division of Napoleon's(4) cavalry in the garden, so I had not expected a disturbance. But a disturbance there was!

Helmesham glanced out the window. "An important guest from the government. From the coat, hat, and bearing, his driver is an officer of the Grenadier Guards."

Helmesham's deductions were, as usual, entirely correct. We soon received one of the more important visitors I have ever had the honor of receiving in my town-house.

"Helmesham! Thank God you're here!" The speaker was a patient of mine, a man of utter imperturbability who when possible disdained the use of anaesthetics. At this moment he was so distraught that he could scarcely put one word after the other. Neglecting the well-known fact that our visitor was a rigid teetotaler, I prepared from the sideboard an appropriate medication, North English(5) in origin, which soon had its desired effect on him.

"A terrible disaster has befallen the World, England, and His Majesty's loyal ministers," he gasped. Helmesham and I listened attentively. Of his fears, I was prepared to believe that the last might be true. "It involves diplomatic negotiations of the most delicate sort, which must not be mentioned beyond the confines of this room."

I rose to leave. I am, of course, a loyal Englishman, with no desire to infringe on any secrets of state. "Sir John," my guest entreated, "please stay. We have need of your insight. Besides, you'll learn it all anyway as soon as you put one of us under gas." I did, after all, minister to the maxillary and mandibular needs of half the cabinet, most of whom were unrestrainedly loquacious once under the influence of nitrous oxide.

Our guest composed himself. "As you realize the state of Europe has gone from bad to worse. While our glorious Navy will forever protect these shores from continental invasion, we cannot remain aloof whenever any one power seeks to dominate all of Europe. It has for some time been apparent to his Majesty's government that the Prussians harbor precisely these ambitions." Helmesham nodded gravely. I had swallowed several decades of prejudice and switched parties at the last election, because the government could not see that France, land of the Emperors Napoleon, was and would always remain the greatest threat to English liberties.

"For the past months, the government has negotiated with the French a treaty for the maintenance of Belgian neutrality. The treaty implies no other alliance, but even the Opposition agreed that we must be prepared to take steps for the protection of the Belgians. A courier was sent to Paris, carrying the text of the treaty, to secure the final approval of the French cabinet."

Helmesham nodded again. It was certainly clear why this matter was so delicate. Some members of the Opposition might have agreed to this foolishness, but others equally certainly had been left in the dark. Were the press to learn, the ensuing scandal would assuredly ring down the government, forcing fresh general elections.

"Then came the disaster. On the way to the Channel, the courier and the treaty both disappeared. It's incomprehensible."

"Could he have become lost?" I asked hopefully. The political mind has an almost infinite ability to overlook the obvious. Continentals are notoriously unable to read street

signs in civilized languages, or to hear simple spoken directions, no matter how much one raises one's voice.

For the rest, buy the book or the back issue.

MARGINAL NOTES -- by Sir Peter Wickers
(Footnotes to These Notes Follow.)

1. For many years great-uncle John regaled his great-nephews and great-nieces with tales of his good friend, the famed detective Ronald Helmesham (since Duke of Surrey). We young ones assumed that the tales held but small grains of truth. After his death, my great-uncle's papers revealed that each of his tales followed very closely on real events, as he had recorded them at the time. Sir John was, however, an honorable man, who would not have dreamed of profiting from the confidences of his friends, a point of honor not always seen among the close acquaintances of private investigators. As the principals are all deceased, and the tales clarify certain matters of modern history, I record them here. The royalties are being transmitted to one of Uncle John's favored charities.

2. Helmesham's exploration of the fog-shrouded Plateau of Leng comes at once to mind.

3. I am assured that Helmesham's algebraic calculation of the spectrum of Helium is without ready parallel in mathematical physics.

4. Uncle John likely refers to Napoleon IV, whose gallant exploits in the Zulu Wars and the Invasion of 1896(i) so nearly led to his death. The utter failure of the French government to prepare for the Second Invasion brought him to the Imperium. It is slightly possible that the reference is actually to Napoleon V, whose juvenile impetuosity plunged Europe into the Third World War -- the War of the Austro-Hungarian Succession.

5. Whiskey. Sir John viewed himself as a progressive man who could reasonably expect to see a time in which Englishmen would have forgotten the antique borders which once separated the North and West parts of our isle from its center.

(i) By the Martians. In which he led a company of French Sharpshooters into the heart of London, personally slaying at least two of the dread invaders.

Despite his labors on behalf of dental science, Uncle John is most remembered for his "History of the Great Invasions of 1896 and 1906". On the slightest provocation, he would fly into a rage, denouncing the rival history of "that libertine socialist, who had the Martians die of plague rather than the exertions of the Army and Fleet, though for a Martian to contract an earthly disease is far less likely than for a man to lose his teeth to the chestnut blight."

2015 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest

Story Contest Rules and Entry Blank

Now and then, it has been suggested to open the N3F Amateur Short Story Contest to professional writers, writers who have had one or two sales. I've never favored this. It is my opinion that we want new blood. We want to reward the new kids on the block. To be blunt, we want writing that is not that good. We want stories from people who don't know their object from their subject, who don't know where commas go, and who use apostrophes to denote plurals -- but who have a story to tell. I want stories from guys nobody's ever heard of...but in the years ahead, we will. Those who are already successful don't need the encouragement of our little contest. If they were to enter the contest, the danger is that they'd win, every time, and crowd out the promising newcomer.

1. This contest is open to all amateur writers in the field, regardless of whether they're members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. For the purposes of this contest, we define an amateur as someone who has sold no more than two (2) stories to professional science fiction or fantasy publications.
2. Stories entered in the contest must be original, unpublished, not longer than 8,500 words in length—and must be related to the science fiction, fantasy, or similar genres in the opinion of the judge.
3. Email attachments of Word documents are acceptable for submission. Manuscripts on paper should be typed, single sided on 8 1/2"-by- 11" white paper, double spaced, with pages numbered. The name of the author should not appear anywhere on the manuscript to ensure impartial judging. Photocopies are acceptable, if they are of good quality. Computer printouts must be legible.
4. Contestants can enter up to three stories. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) if you would like your story returned at the end of the contest. Stories will not be returned without an SASE. Do not send your only copy in case of accidental loss. We are not responsible for lost manuscripts.
5. Email entries will be accepted. Send to Jefferson P. Swycaffer at abontides@gmail.com. No guarantee can be made of email receipt. Privacy and property rights will be absolutely respected. No one other than the Short Story Judge will ever see the submission.
6. There are no entry fees.
7. Cash prizes totaling \$100 will be awarded as follows: First prize is \$50, second \$30, and third \$20. Honorable mentions and semi-finalists will receive a certificate of award.
8. Send all manuscripts to the contest manager: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373; abontides@gmail.com. Emails with the story attached in word format are preferred. Paper manuscripts are acceptable. All entries must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2015.
9. The Short Story Judge is a published science fiction professional, and also a loving fan of the sf and fantasy genres. All comments and critiques are solely the Short Story Judge's opinion, but he promises to be constructive and polite.
10. The NSF may want to publish an electronic book including top entries from one or more years of publication. You will not be contacted about this until after the contest is over and prizes have been awarded. If we want to publish your story, you will have to sign over to us first world serial rights. Your willingness to do sign over rights cannot affect whether or not you win the contest. Royalties will be divided evenly between all contest writers once publishing costs are covered. Winners will be notified as soon as the judging is completed. Announcements and notifications of winning entries will be made in March 2016. Please take your time and submit your best work. You can resubmit stories previously entered. All entries will be kept confidential and will be judged fairly and anonymously. The deadline for all entries is Dec. 31, 2015. Good luck!

Please supply on a separate page the following information as your entry form.

Title of story (for identification):

Author's name and address:

Author's email address:

I have read the above rules for the 2015 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and I agree to them.

Signature:

Date: _____

Mail to: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373 ; or email abontides@gmail.com

In this issue:
Your Volunteer Team

Art Widner 1917-2015

Publications

Art Bureau

Birthday Bureau

Web Pages

Games Bureau

June is Neffer Author Month

Neffy Nominations Invited

Kaymar Nominations Invited

Letters:

Jefferson Swycaffer, Logan Masterson, Lloyd Penney

Why Fiction Awards Are Becoming Impractical

Fiction: The Puzzle of the Peregrinating Coach

2015 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest

N3F TNFF
c/o George Phillips
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester MA 01609