

# **ORIGIN** #8 October 2018



**The Monthly Bulletin of the  
National Fantasy Fan Federation  
History and Research Bureau**

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## EDITORIAL



### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

In looking over the most recent N3F roster, I find that most every member has computer access, and that therefore the NFFF exists chiefly on the internet. That's high flying, but perhaps a little out of sight. When we appear on the computer system, do we disappear somewhere else? Is the computer system its own dimension, called Cyberspace?

Net information is rather fly-by-night; things may still exist, but where are they? There are often searches being run for one thing or another. And commentary, like we have here, often gets so far out of sight that it cannot be located any more by any normal means of investigation. There used to be an organization called the Way Back Machine, which was experimented with by people at the old Analog Forum for awhile, and it was able to locate some back postings in the forum, but never came near to locating any of them that were desired for review. In fact most of computerdom is limited access. So while the NFFF may be exactly where things are at, we've lost a whole lot of our anchorage. We need the substantiation of paper fandom, and we are lacking what we are needing through inconclusive contacts and the ambiguity of most of the organized paper activity as to what it is and what it has of value to fandom. It gives us a solid basis to have something on paper, and we need to be able to locate this basis.

History isn't data, and we find a lot of trouble looking for consistent history on the net. The net knows where the goods are, but these are usually on paper, and that's true of the research also. So it's best to see the net as a means to an end, rather than an end of itself. Our bureau will be attempting to make known good research volumes and history writings as well, and where they may be obtained by those interested.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE N3F FANDBOOKS by Jon D. Swartz**

The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) has been responsible for many early fanzines and other publications over its long history, one that began in 1941.

One of these publications was a hardcover book by David Keller, M.D., *THE SIGN OF THE BURNING HART*, issued by the club in 1948. The publication of this book made the N3F prominent in fan publication circles.

Other noteworthy club publications have included a series of N3F *Fandbooks*. These publications are intended to instruct new members about SF fandom and to serve as reference works. The word “*fandbook*” is a portmanteau, a combination of “*fan*” plus “*handbook*”.

Early *fandbooks* were *A KEY TO THE TERMINOLOGY OF SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM* (*Fandbook No. 1*), *THE AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATIONS IN SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM* (*Fandbook No. 2*), *SOME HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM* (*Fandbook No. 3*), and *THE TRANS-ATLANTIC FAN FUND* (*Fandbook No. 4*), all of which were published in the early 1960s.

The authors/compiler of these four early N3F publications were Donald Franson (*Fandbooks No. 1 and No. 3*), Robert Lichtman (*Fandbook No. 2*), and Len Moffatt & Ron Ellick (*Fandbook No. 4*).

More recently, three additional *fandbooks* (Nos. 5-7) have been published: *PSEUDONYMS OF SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY, and HORROR AUTHORS* (2010), *THE HUGO AWARDS FOR BEST NOVEL* (2014), and *THE NEBULA AWARDS FOR BEST NOVEL* (2016), all three written by Jon D. Swartz, the current N3F Historian.

Additional *fandbooks* are being planned, including one on the charter

members of the N3F.

### **Fandbook Authors/Compilers**

Donald Franson (1916-2002) was a longtime N3F member. During his years as a member, he served the club as President, member of the Directorate, and Historian. The club's Franson Award is named for him.

Robert Lichtman (1942 - ) is editor of the award-winning fanzine **Trap Door**. He won TAFF in 1989. He is a member of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (LASFS) and has served as a club officer. He made Jack Speer's UP TO NOW (a history of fandom up to 1939) available as a PDF.

Leonard Moffatt (1923-2010) edited the 1950 FAN DIRECTORY, sponsored by the N3F and The Fantasy Foundation. He was also a member of First Fandom, and was elected to the 2018 First Fandom Posthumous Hall of Fame.

Ron Ellik (1938-1968) co-wrote THE UNIVERSES OF E.E. SMITH, published by Advent in 1966. He also had some science fiction published professionally. He died as a result of injuries received in a car wreck.

Jon Swartz (1934 - ) is the current N3F Historian and was recently voted to N3F Life Member status. He is also a member of First Fandom, and won the club's Sam Moskowitz Archive Award in 2017.

### **THE RESEARCH LIBRARY**

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS by Harry Warner, Jr.: An Informal History of Science Fiction Fandom in the Forties, Advent Publishers, Chicago

A WEALTH OF FABLE by Harry Warner, Jr.: An Informal History of Science Fiction Fandom in the Fifties. Scifi Press, 1976

THE IMMORTAL STORM: A History of Science Fiction Fandom, by Sam Moskowitz. Available at Amazon.

FANCYCLOPEDIA 1, by Jack Speer, Fantasy Foundation, 1944, referenced at:

[http://fanac.org/Fannish\\_Reference\\_Works/Fancylopedia/Fancylopedia\\_1](http://fanac.org/Fannish_Reference_Works/Fancylopedia/Fancylopedia_1)

FANCYCLOPEDIA 2, Dick Eney, <http://fancylopedia.org>

FANCYCLOPEDIA 3, group effort, <http://fancylopedia.wikidot.com>

SCIENCE FICTION: THE ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA, by John Clute

SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA, by Peter Nicholls

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION, by Clute & Nicholls

WHO SHAPED SCIENCE FICTION? by Robert Sabella, Kroshka Books, 2000

WIKIPEDIA has information on numerous science fiction writers, institutions, and others involved.

FANHISTORY

THE NEOFAN'S GUIDE by Bob Tucker <http://efanzines.com/NeofansGuide1/index.htm>

*Our bureau now keeps a stock of reference books available to those who want to do independent research. We will add to our stock as we discover more research and historical works, perhaps aided by members—anyone having suggestions as to what books or pamphlets to have in our stock, please inform us. Some of the fanbooks may be found in the NFFF holdings of special publications. We are looking for people who possess fanbooks to aid us in completing what we are showing. All information about histories, long or short, of or pertaining to sf or sf fandom, is welcome here. We hope to compile a large store of such information.*



## ANOTHER FACTION HEARD FROM *Letters*

GARY LABOWITZ [garylantz51@gmail.com](mailto:garylantz51@gmail.com) : Well, Origins 7 has come and gone. It comes to my new email address, and it goes into the Fanzine sub folder of the Science Fiction Folder. Ah, gmail is very flexible.

I finally got po'd enough with Comcast to ditch them for Verizon as my ISP. Well, Verizon doesn't maintain email servers any more (they suggest using AOL, which I didn't even know was still available). I decided to use Google, so I now have a gmail address. It's weird! You put in a name you want to be called (I tried for the one I used at Comcast all these years) but you get back "suggestions" from gmail of what's available. I always figured my name and initial ("glabowitz") would be a unique enough name, but no, they say it's taken. I guess with millions of users it's possible, but I have a far-back-in-the-depths-of-my-head idea that they just like to jerk you around. Anyway, you'll notice I am now the old and tired fan reached by using the new address. Go figure...

So Origins has some wistful comments that I can partially identify with. I am a partially returning N3F member (more like a drive-by reader) from the long ago. At this point, almost no one is familiar to me and all my old friends are joining the used to be's. I mean actually gone. When I saw that Harlan had left the planet's surface it really started to occur to me that I, too, would soon be...gone! Yes, it must be. I accept it. Meanwhile, I am still getting zines and browse them rather quickly. It's a quirk of life that there are still persons carrying the torch of stf fandom. (I still can't bring myself to call it "sci-fi". Forry would be so proud of me!)

Anyway, yes, N3F used to be a fairly boiling cauldron of activity/sleeping place for fans of all kinds. But it was always fun, even when some real life conflicts broke out (as opposed to silly things like the staples war, *etc.*). I was fairly deeply involved in a couple of them. The most dangerous was the one that almost shut the N3F down completely, and it was only my fumbling contribution to the mayhem that aided some of the powers in the organization to scuttle the N3F ship of state. The saner adults in the crowd managed to step forward and get N3F off the rocks and fairly well afloat again. I find I can't recall all the names that did this, but a few come to mind...Eva Firestone, Janie Lamb, K. Martin Carlson, Alma Hill, and a newspaper man, who was the main supporter...and I can't remember his name! It will eventually come to me. There were so many more supporters who carried on as usual, but the names I recall so easily (and one missing one) were the standouts for me.

It was a hectic time, and by the time I had moved a few times (New York, Poughkeepsie, Kansas City, Philadelphia) I was shifting into a whole other life and faded out of fandom. I tried to keep up with apas (OMPA, FAPA, a couple of others) but the gas was running out.

Funny, one of my major breaks was to sell my mimeo (to Darrell Schweitzer, of all people) and give up publishing.

Now that I reached the point of complete retirement, or at least just doing odd jobs, I stumbled over N3F again. I had long ago given up and sold my fanzine collection (I wish I had kept my copy of *The Recluse*) and finally gave the remainder of the ones I still had (lots of N3F stuff and a few con souvenirs and some fan memorabilia) to—can you guess?—Darrell Schweitzer! [Now we can know where he gets some of it.—ed]

So many of the fans I first knew made the transition to prodom and were still plugging away. But even in that arena, the new was sweeping in and the old was fading away.

I look back on it all now with a few regrets, and a few successes, and long periods of ho-hum activity. Just like real life!

I am truly fascinated with the history being researched and written and look forward to more *Origins* coming to the net. The actual space exploration that has come to the human life, and the communication media including all the internet available techniques (YouTube, Facebook, Medium, personal blogs, ezines, Wikipedia, *etc.*) are driving out the use and need for fanzines and other paper-based products. Only Tumblr/Etsy/*etc.* and live cons seem to exist to provide material interactions. I think they'll also evolve into online conferencing and jpgs of artwork, but these are only faint whispers of the real thing.

Yes, I miss fandom as it was once. Sometimes progress sucks. Maybe progress ALWAYS sucks!

Thanks for the zine and the effort you put into it. I know it is a lot.

*I recall those names you list, they always spoke nicely to me. Eva Firestone sent me some poetry for my zine and some nice art to go along with it. Somewhat of a trek down memory lane, leaping back and forth across irregular stones, to read your letter. I don't think there is so much a need for fanzines as a desire for them.*

*I recall the big one with the NFFF as being where all the talk was about how bad some of the fannish feuding was getting to be, then developing interest, then outright, as it were, declarations of war. I think all that was a mistake on the part of many fans. It*



*leaves a bad aftermath. Flying insults and lawsuits were taking all the spirit out of fandom. Now, will it ever come back like we once had it? It seems to me like that could be a point for discussion, if people wanted to discuss it. But maybe we have to clarify what we're talking about. Which zines do ya read?*

*I remember Robert Coulson saying "Next round to Stuefloten?" in the argument between the Don and Bob Leman in his letter column. And I recall Coulson's "He just stopped talking to me or writing. Why? Damfino."*

*So, I'm glad to see you are interested in Origin and hope to continue hearing from you.*

