

ORIGIN 7



**Bulletin of the National Fantasy Fan Federation
History and Research Bureau
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We welcome contributions to its contents from the general membership.

Once you get the hang of our subject matter and intentions, you may wish to write letters of comment about either Origin itself or the subject matter with which it deals; for instance, you may want to offer some facts of your own regarding the past of science fiction, fantasy and fandom, or have some interpretations of your own based on your own research. We like to keep this active with the membership as well as ourselves. And think how it would heal you to know the satisfaction of a job well done or a letter well written, even if not very many people read it and it does not actually accomplish anything—though if it does, that's that much more. Artists know this feeling—they sometimes paint just for themselves, and say so.

EDITORIAL



On Doing Something

Existentially there may be two states of existing, contemplative and active. Both have their merits, neither is criticizable, except perhaps by the person subjectively involved. Which is the better is the decision of that person. In times of depression, either personal or social, both may seem undesirable, and it may seem better to just wish everything would go away. Who knows, it might do that, if you have magical abilities and your wishing carries these abilities. Or things that are unpleasant might go away by themselves, having terminated in their duration. Just don't be part of that termination and you're all right. However, if you're the sort of person who doesn't like to avoid things (which people who do like that have likely been just prior to developing that preference), you're faced with finding out whether your contemplations are having any desirable results or effects for you, or, if you're of the other sort, you're faced with perhaps undesirable consequences of your activity. The solution to this last, perhaps, is to avoid what has potentially bad consequences when you are being active, and do something which is constructive in a positive way. Then you are doing well, and living more happily, even if you are not being either successful or effective.

I could be saying this to myself here, for instance. I think doing this sort of thing that we are doing in the History and Research Bureau is constructive, and an end in itself. I'm not wasting my time when I am trying to get things done and thinking of ways to do it,

and my editorial here is contemplative and seems quite satisfactory to me, so that I feel better for having written it. I am satisfying myself in both contemplative and active considerations, and so if you ask me how I'm faring and how well I like having this bureau to work with, I'll tell you that I like it fine and am faring well. It's pleasing to me when so many other things aren't—not that I'm sublimating those other things by doing this. I view those other things as worthless at the present time and what I'm doing as being valuable to myself and perhaps to others as well. So I'm happy with my present work regardless of what problems there may be besetting me and all of us. As Davy Crockett said of this sort of situational disturbance in the frontier war and later repeated in Congress, "Be sure you're right, then go ahead." Activity that you end up not liking due to all the trouble it's getting you into is not something to be maintained. But plain constructive activity is not usually this way.

So, when you're doing something that seems to you to be good, you feel good. Enter the critics—they don't understand what you're doing and don't approve of it. They want to trash your efforts. Are they talking on your wavelength? My opinion of this is, don't get involved in fighting with them; if you think what you're doing is good, and they don't, they are not understanding it, or else they really do have something to say. If so, find out what it is and it may be that you are not really in the right territory for what you are doing. Go back and look—I said that I consider these things myself and of myself. I am looking for coherent information about what I may be doing wrong, which I might discuss if I receive word of it in a LoC. Until then, I'll continue to like what I'm doing, and consider it beneficial. I won't fight about it, but I will discuss it legitimately. I'm not coming up with strange new proposals, but hearkening back to what we had and were doing when we were more successful. Perhaps we were erring in some manner when things didn't continue to go right (*e.g.* most of the SF magazines being discontinued and no new ones being started, and the limping that has developed in the sf organizations). We should consider what those errors may have been. If we don't try to do something about them, things won't improve by themselves, unless, as I said, it's by going away.

"Those who have learned no lessons from history are doomed to repeat it." Well, we're in history right now, and we should attempt to learn some lessons from it. That's something I have in mind in my approach to the history and research of this bureau. We ought to find out some things that may be valuable to us in our present efforts.

Historic Facts

In outlining what we will be dealing with in this bureau, I've made a short list of things that would have historical interest to us, and perhaps would be worth our consideration now. This list has facts that may be discovered through research, and some clues as to where to do that research. They are items of historical interest, perhaps crucial interest.

- 1.) Through Wikipedia, I made the discovery that Experimenter Publishing, which Steve Davidson now heads, was founded by Hugo Gernsback, also an editor of Amazing Stories when it was started. An interested researcher could follow this up and perhaps gain material for a study and recollection of these originating activities of science fiction. Wikipedia could be followed to gain this information, and I would view them as a historical information source, and a researcher might get some ideas of where elsewhere to look. I am not speaking to my staff, just discussing the topic of research.
- 2.) Trouble happening in science fiction comes not only from arguments with one another but with people opposed to science fiction. In demonstration of this, reported in Yandro, was Juanita Coulson's losing her school-teaching job in North Manchester, Indiana, due to her editorship of that fanzine. When Yandro reported this, it was the beginning of a general cognizance among its readership of public opposition to science fiction; a letter writer to Yandro cited its being referred to as "crazy Buck Rogers stuff".
- 3.) There have been lawsuits involving science fiction fandom. An example of this is David Kyle's argument with the Dietzes (a husband and wife) which was taken to court and which involved suits and counter-suits. As George Jennings rhymed, "Justice shall prevail, put the fans in jail."
- 4.) Walt Willis' acceptance of TAFF funds to come from Ireland to the United States to attend a world science fiction convention in Chicago is a landmark. He made a speech there. This progressed the importance of science fiction fandom. His report of this appeared in a lengthy form in THE HARP STATESIDE, in which it was made plain that he really regarded science fiction as important in this life. The convention he attended was the one in nineteen fifty two.

Introducing Judy Carroll, an NFFF member of long standing who has now joined us in this bureau—

I have been a member of the N3F off and on for a number of years. I was first introduced to the club by my niece. I don't recall what she said, but I'm sure the key words that caught my attention were Science Fiction. Ahh, Science Fiction. Somewhere back in time I switched from the Peter Pan ride to the rocket ship ride—from Fantasyland to Tomorrowland. Now, don't get me wrong. I still love Peter Pan, he was my hero when I was six, and I still love fairy tales. But Science Fiction, that's my main love, and my favorite genre in books, TV and movies. I wish I could tell you what first got me interested in Science Fiction. It could have been the Wonder Woman and Superman comics my mother had around the house when I was growing up (she loved Superman), and/or the old movies I remember watching with my parents and sister. Two that have remained with me over the years are *The Thing* and *Them*. I think they were both made in the fifties. I remember while watching *Them*, whenever eerie music started, my mother would tell my sister and me to close our eyes. That only worked on me a couple of times. I had to see what was going on. When my mother looked at me again I was glued to the screen. She had to give up on telling me to close my eyes. When I saw *The Thing* I went along with the story anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Thing that was terrifying the group in the icy north. When it finally arrived, close to the end of the movie if I recall correctly, I was horribly disappointed. The Thing looked like a man covered in vegetables.

Somewhere in my early teens I started reading Science Fiction (that wasn't in comic book form). I remember anxiously making my way to the Science Fiction section of the book store hoping for some fantastic book to catch my eye—by title, cover picture, or first paragraph. Sometimes hanging out in that corner could be unnerving and a challenge (seems like most every bookstore has Science Fiction in a corner at the back of the store). So many times I was the only female perusing those shelves. Guys seemed to be everywhere. And no matter what their age, teens to grandfathers, they always gave me the same look. The Frowning Stare. It was as if I had walked into a Men Only club. Now you can walk into a bookstore and it feels like an Equal Opportunity Employer. Not only are there women hanging out in the Science Fiction section, they are represented by famous women science fiction writers.

I'm glad this change has been made. Sometimes change is good. Others it's not.

When I first joined the N3F many years ago it was teeming with life. It was like a city that spread over the entire country and was making its way through the rest of the world. The People, no matter where they lived, had a connection. That connection was a love of Science Fiction and Fantasy. The People talked about books, movies, TV shows, conventions. Anything and Everything that was Science Fiction and Fantasy. They weren't fanatics. They weren't unrealistic dreamers. They weren't living in Utopia. They were a People that came together in many more ways than Science Fiction and Fantasy alone can produce. By sharing their common interests they began to grow as a People. They became Caregivers, and Listeners, and Helpers, and Friends.

I miss the N3F of many years ago. Today we don't have as many enrolled members as then, nor as many active members, nor as many activities offered. But one thing we still have in the N3F today—The People. We still have Caregivers, Listeners, Helpers and Friends. And as long as we have The People the N3F will still be around inviting others to enjoy the companionship and fun that the N3F has to offer.

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SPECIAL by Neal Wilgus

**Some strange spacecraft
or temporal traveler
left a package
on my doorstep
and when I stepped out
to discover what was what
I realized that it was
me being taken up
through the clouds
and into the open doors
of Everything
which was no surprise.

What took us so long?**





De Ende (of issue)