

Origin 16



JUNE 2019

**Published by the National Fantasy Fan Federation
History and Research Bureau**

Origin's editor is John Thiel, head of this bureau, from 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana, 47904. email kinthiel@mymetronet.net



STAFF

JON SWARTZ, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750, email Jon_Swartz@hotmail.com . Historian.

JUDY CARROLL, 975 East 120 South, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660, email AutumnSeas8012@gmail.com . Columnist.

JEFFREY REDMOND, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-3830, email redmondjeff@hotmail.com . Activator.

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The purpose of Origin is to facilitate intercommunication among staff members of the History and Research Bureau, and to open our bureau to the NFFF membership, communicating with them when they wish to comment on the contents of the fanzine. Anyone is welcome to contribute something to its contents, having to do with the history of fantasy, science fiction, fandom, and/or the N3F, or with the nature of science fiction, fantasy, or fandom including impressions or explanatory matter. We want members to be well acquainted with the *genre*, including making their own forays and asking any questions they may have. Who knows, we might could supply some of the answers. Otherwise we might look it up for you. If you have done any research and wish to share it here, let us know; likely we'll want to add it to our contents. The availability of knowledge we are striving for is our service to the N3F, presumably helping provide a reason for belonging to the organization; one may find an increase in familiarity with science fiction thereby, and be more a part of an active literary interest which may arise around this form of literature. It is increase in knowledge and appreciation as well as activity that we want, and we may be finding it for ourselves. Care to join us?

We've been at this for a year and a quarter of a year now, and we think we have gotten something started. We hope members are enjoying seeing Origin.

EDITORIAL



Is the N3F Blossoming, Now In the Time of Bloom?

In the introductory matter to our zine and bureau set forth above, I put before members the concept of becoming active and doing things, showing that we in this bureau were trying to set an example of that. In gaming terms, perhaps I am suggesting that we are role models. If so, we'd like to play a good game. There have been hard times in science fiction and in fandom, actually endangering the perpetuity of our mode of relating to what we read, but we have a spirit, and a spirit doesn't die out, it just hibernates, as it may be. Science fiction isn't booming magazine-wise, with only three generally available magazines to point to. Magazines are a mainstay of our kind of literature, keeping things going and lively, streaming, as it were. Books are booming, just look at Stephen King's **11/22/63**, John Scalzi's *THE END OF ALL THINGS*, Robert Sawyer's *FLASH FORWARD*, perhaps Jefferson Swycaffer's *REVOLT AND REBIRTH*. I bought that last one cold, liked its title. The Movies and Television are producing one viewing experience after another, but perhaps are at the same time usurping science fiction from its actual place, a form of progressive literature. We need a central focus, and magazines have provided that focus, and fandom is also in a central position in the progress and development of science fiction. So we need to look to our upkeep, maintain a social wholeness, to really be with our reading. Think of our organization this way—the N3F has always been a place where science fiction's place in things has been

discussed, and we are doing that now in Origin, and are hoping to see more discussion of a timely and crucial nature elsewhere in the organization, such as in Tightbeam. It is always more pleasing in terms of our wants and needs to have an active interest in what we are doing. We are here to DO science fiction, as well as reading it, and as for the contemplative nature of our activities, we want to express that, not isolate ourselves with our contemplations, for the NFFF is a *social* organization. It has been a hub of activities, and as such contributed to the science fiction field, and it may be that there is a call now for us to do that more than ever before. If we do that, in the light of this consideration, we have answered a call.

The NFFF could have more of a place in the activities surrounding science fiction than it is now taking. Of course what else there is, is conventions, cosplay, fantasy gaming, NASA activities, SETI, and the like. All very well, but all lack the careful consideration of what we are doing that the NFFF is oriented toward, and might well be doing again. A lot happens at conventions, but those happenings seem to include bathing in lime jello, chasing in corridors after room parties, and other such things that are not really conducive to a productive relationship to science fiction. I've been to a number of conventions, and do not recall things holding together as well as they might if there was more care taken to maintain the values involved in the reading matter around which these activities center. (One Worldcon in Chicago, three Windycons in Chicago, a Hoosiercon in Indiana, the Starbase Indy in Indianapolis, the Context in Columbus, Ohio, the Autoclave in Detroit, Michigan and the Wabashcon at Purdue University.) Things were too discursive at all of them for there to be any real take, although the programmed events had their profitability, but these tended to be too far from the order one wants in more considered activity. (I'm criticized, though, for not having enough money to have been at any of these for more than a day, though I did an overnigher at the Autoclave and the Worldcon, and saw the whole of the Wabashcon.) I'd say of the conventions that they did not register adequately, and records of them went to far-flung and unknown outlets rather than places of central interest such as organizations which keep records, such as the N3F.

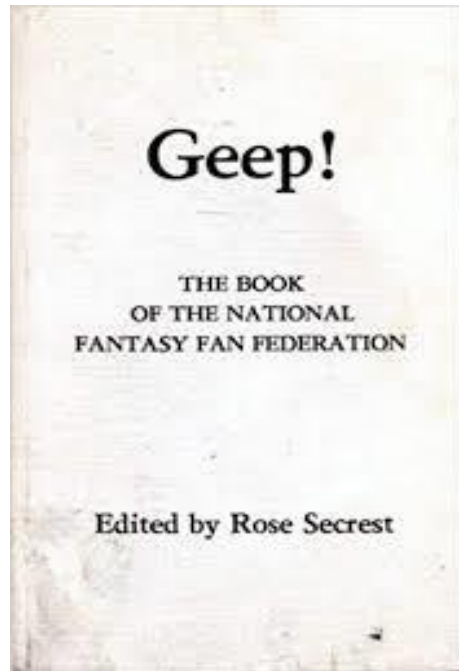
There you have it, the NFFF could expand and make more of a place for itself in fandom than it presently has, but it takes doing things and making people more conscious of these doings, and it takes that also to make it satisfactory in one's own considerations.

As I say, we will continue to aim at progress and improvement.

N3F HISTORICAL VIGNETTE by JON D. SWARTZ, N3F HISTORIAN

Geep! The Book of the National Fantasy Fan Federation, edited by Rose Secret.
Detroit, Michigan: Harlo Press, 1987.

Our historian gives us a look back at the NFFF organization.



This was a collection of fiction, articles, poetry, and a play written by N3F members. The editor and contributor, Rose Secret, who joined the club in 1984, wrote in her introduction: "I am a young, aspiring, amateur writer, as well as a bunch of other things I won't go into right now. In my first year of membership in the N3F, I thought that the club might provide an outlet for me, as well as other writers, but this turned out not to be true. I came to realize that this situation would not change unless **I** made the change. I decided to put forth an all-Neffers zine." This book was the result of her efforts.

As the club historian, I bought a copy in order to satisfy my own curiosity and to inform current-day members of its contents. In doing so, I was lucky enough to get a copy autographed by Rose. After reading the contents, I realized that Rose had managed to put together some excellent amateur writing. "Who Slays Satan" by George Phillies was my favorite, while Rose's play "The Idiot's Visit to a Chinese Restaurant" (written with husband Michael Peralta), was not. On the other hand, Secret went on to write other books, including *GLORIFICEMUS: A STUDY OF THE FICTION OF WALTER M. MILLER, JR.* (2002).

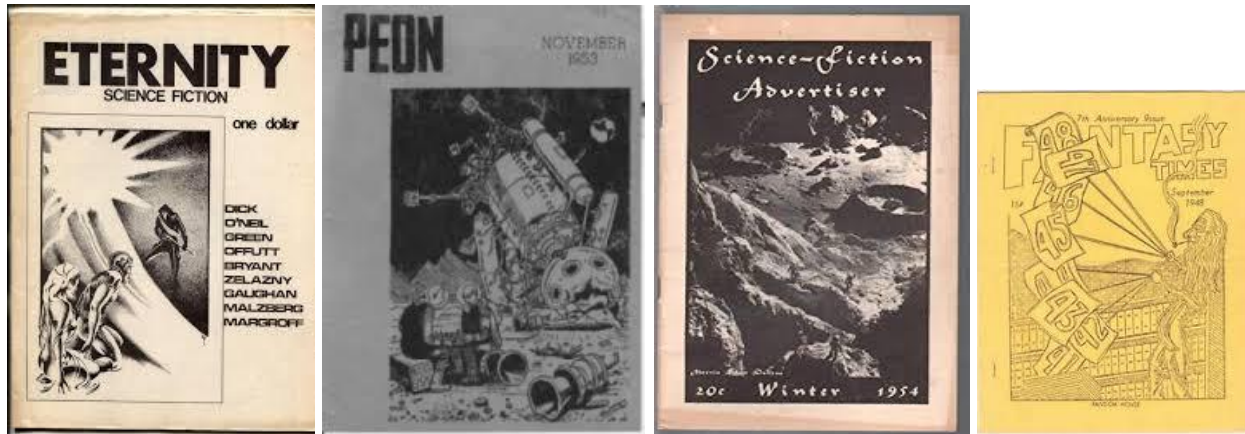
Contributors to Geep! Were Andrew J. Nagel, Stacey Potts, Ron A. Nyren, Ryck Frank Neube, Kerry Schaefer, Robert A. Newsome, Colleen Kelly, Jack Robins, Jane C. Raymer, Wayne Fordham, Susan Yee, David L. Travis, Laura Todd, Robert S. Miller, George Phillies, Ray R. House, Ronald Gerard, and Rose Secrest/Michael Peralta.

Jack Robins and George Phillies still are N3F members. I asked them for their memories of this all-Neffer anthology. While both remembered that they had been asked to contribute, they didn't recall a whole lot more. Robins did remember that Rose had asked him to write an article since so many of the other contributors had submitted fiction—and that the project was not successful, at least in terms of number of books sold. He also remembered that he had been asked to pay for the copies he received.

Things are much better today for Neffers who are aspiring writers/artists. We have an annual writing contest, a bi-monthly N'APA, a print fanzine, and FanDominion on the Internet. All of these venues seek material from amateur writers and three of them also provide outlets for amateur artists.



What Is a Fanzine? By John Thiel



In the beginning days of this bureau I had it in mind to provide introductory material for members who were new to science fiction and/or fandom, and to give them a good idea of what fandom was all about. Here I have obtained information from the Wikipedia which serves that purpose as well as any other writing.

A science-fiction fanzine is an amateur or semi-professional magazine published by members of science-fiction fandom, from the 1930s to the present day. They were one of the earliest forms of fanzine, within one of which the term “fanzine” was coined, and at one time constituted the primary type of science-fictional activity (“fanac”). [Note: This page replaced a page which lacked a hyphen in the term “science fiction” but was otherwise the same page.-JT]

The first science-fiction fanzine, **The Comet**, was published in 1930 by the Science Correspondence Club in Chicago. The term “fanzine” was coined by Russ Chauvanet in the October 1940 issue of his fanzine **Detours**. “Fanzines” were distinguished from “prozines”, that is, all professional magazines. Prior to that, the fan publications were known as “fanmags” or “letterzines”. [Note: Clicking on the use of the term “coined” in this accounting brings up a notation that “coined” is a neologism not yet fully accepted in common usage. This brings up the high consideration given to slang in this accounting. As an information store abuilding, Wikipedia criticizes and debates its own contents.-JT] Traditionally fanzines were (and many still are)

available for “the Usual”, meaning that a sample issue will be mailed on request; to receive further issues, a reader sends a “letter of comment” (LoC) about the fanzine to the editor. The LoC might be published in the next issue: some fanzines consisted almost exclusively of letter columns, where discussions were conducted in much the same way as they are in internet newsgroups and mailing lists, though at a relatively slow pace.

Semiprozines: During the 1970s and 1980s, some fanzines—especially sercon (serious and constructive) zines devoted to sf and fantasy criticism, and newszines such as **Locus**—became more professional journals, produced by desktop publishing programs and offset printing. These new magazines were labeled “semiprozines”, and were eventually sold rather than traded, and paid their contributors.

APAs: An amateur press association is a group of people who produce individual pages or magazines that are sent to a central mailer for collation and distribution to all members in the group. The first science-fiction apa was the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, formed by a group of science fiction fans in 1937.

Wiki mentions the debatable fact that there are other types of fanzines, saying “The earliest rock and roll fanzines were edited by science fiction fans.” I remember that; fanzines started talking about folk music and jazz and some of them slid away from being SF fanzines. Apropos of other fanzines, the writer says “A significant part of modern Computer/Web/Internet slang, abbreviations, etc., is derived from the jargon of the fanzine fans. (See fanspeak).”



OBSERVATIONS by JUDY CARROLL

A few months ago I discovered—THE FUTURE IS FEMALE! 25 Classic Science Fiction Stories by Women From Pulp Pioneers to Ursula K. Le Guin, Edited by Lisa Yaszek. This anthology covers “The Miracle of the Lily” (1928) by Clare Winger Harris to “Nine Lives” (1969) by Ursula K. Le Guin.

What interests me is that women were writing science fiction way earlier than I had ever imagined. As a teenager looking through the science fiction books offered at the bookstore, I saw very few books written by women. The number of men writers outnumbered the women writers at about the same ratio as the number of men perusing the science fiction section outnumbered the women.

In an interview with the Library of America, Ms. Yaszek tells of what went into the making of *The Future is Female!* Following is a part of the interview I thought might interest members of the N3F:

“Kate Wilhelm wrote ‘Baby, You Were Great’ in reaction to a 1964 story called ‘Semper Fi’ by her husband Damon Knight,...a well-known *genre* author in his own right. Wilhelm appreciated Knight’s exploration of what we would now call *virtual reality* and how it might enable us to live out our fantasies but disagreed with his conclusion that if we could manipulate dreams, they would remain a private affair. Instead,...in her introduction to the story for [the collection] *BETTER THAN ONE*, she wrote ‘in [my story], if dreams can be controlled, they will be’...Wilhelm decided to rewrite ‘Semper Fi’ with a different—and decidedly darker—plot, setting, and cast of characters...invoking and revising her husband’s story!”

Wilhelm’s husband, Damon Knight, is one of the founding members of the N3F. Of the 64 members he is listed as #1.

When the Library of America asked if she had encountered any “surprises”, Ms. Yaszek replied:

“One of the most common stories you hear about gender and science fiction is that while Mary Shelley is a founding figure in science fiction, other women didn’t really

participate in the genre until the revival of feminism and the advent of a distinctly feminist science fiction in the 1960s and 70s. But as my own and other authors' research shows, that story just isn't true! Women have been part of the modern science fiction community since the first magazines were published in the 1920s, comprising about 15% of all authors (that number doubled in the 1970s and remains about 30% today)."

To read the interview with Ms. Yaszek in its entirety please Google Library of America interview with Lisa Yaszek. If you are interested in discovering more science fiction by women writers, well-known and not so well-known, check out the following websites:

The Portalist 16 Impactful Female Science Fiction and Fantasy authors by Sarah Magnolia

Barnes and Noble 50 Science Fiction Essentials Written by Women by Jeff Somers
March 31, 2018

Note: Judy Carroll is having trouble with her email address, which has been AutumnSeas8012@yahoo.com and she has now changed her email to AutumnSeas8012@gmail.com. She got information back when she sent this column originally that my email address was not a valid email address, which sounds to me like hacking and blocking; my email address is valid, but apparently Yahoo said it was not. She wrote to me on a reply form, "My email address is not working correctly. Yahoo has decided to 'upgrade'. I have had nothing but problems with it. It will not allow me to add on to a saved draft. Every add on is erased. When I put in your name it will not automatically connect it to your email. When I type in your name and email address it sends a message that yours is not a valid address. Nothing I have tried works."

Yahoo seems like a rather bumbling outfit considering that many of its sites are not working; the efanazines yahoo site is a mess, as some others have been. I was with Yahoo at one time but left it running because walking was most too slow when somebody stole my identity and used it to send a fraudulent monetary request to my aunt. They've been going downhill, with their chatrooms collapsing and links to porn sites appearing on people's sites. They had been streaming news, but that collapsed too, and other interests started usurping their sites. This is one example of the computer problems that have been getting in the way of our maintenance and progress.

CAPTAIN VIDEO
Early Televised Science Fiction





Captain Video, a television show produced early in the history of mass home television ownership, was probably the earliest science fiction available to the general public, a mass broadcasting of outer space adventures stressing the ownership of a "rocket ship" around the use of which the adventures of Captain Video and his Video Rangers centered. The show was not called science fiction, but that was what it had on it, and when it became known to be science fiction it gave people the image of science fiction being stories about men going into space and onto other worlds in a space ship. Later they saw the actuality of this when Kennedy's space program was originated. The Captain's name indicated that they were on television, because another name for TVs in those days was "video". The show's name indicated that they considered themselves pioneers in television broadcasting. Their adventures often involved simply being in space. One episode showed their space ship speeding up out of control with a geometrically increasing acceleration which would cause the ship to disintegrate if it continued. The Captain ordered the ranger who had miss-set the controls to get inside the engine and sabotage its acceleration system. At the speed it was traveling they couldn't use the retros because it would cause the ship to shake, damaging its components. The ranger effectively pulled the plug, and the initiating acceleration ceased.

The show was broadcast in the early 1950s and was not science fiction at its most sophisticated, though it was very ahead of them to be on television. Their budget was not grand, but they did the best they could with what was on hand and produced some fairly realistic episodes, leading perhaps to a readiness for actual spaceships. It was more mechanical than most science fiction is, but their elemental plots were easy viewing. Not much was to be learned from it except adventurism, and it promoted an urge for travel. Some people who saw it wondered what it had in common with science fiction, but what it had most in common with science fiction was being that. It was quite ahead of its

time, and quite promotional of science fiction, though there always existed a dichotomy between the show and the magazines which published science fiction. People might want to watch some of those old episodes to see the spirit of the *genre* in its elemental form. A lot could be said about the show, and if it were, people would know a lot more about it; it tends to have been overlooked in the histories of science fiction.

Zenqr Card Shark by Cardinal Cox

Two old crates on corner of street
Watching out (eirelɔ) for the fuzz
He needs to be fast on his feet
He doesn't do it for the buzz.
Game begins nice (eirelɔ) simple
Five cards (star) asks you to pick one
Tells you (trianglɔ) what it was
At this moment it is still fun
Now he offers (star) you some cash
If you can recall where it went
Glancing around (square) ready to dash
If someone says the game is bent.
Suddenly your wallet's empty
You want (wave) to win your dough back
But he has gone (square) hat pulled down
Hunched (wave) into his grubby mac'.



SCIENCE FICTION BECOMES SCIENCE FACT by Jeffrey Redmond



With so many fancy gadgets around today, it's no wonder we are so amazed by what we have. But in the older science fiction stories and movies these were just imaginary devices of futuristic fantasy.

In "The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of: How Science Fiction Conquered the World," Thomas Disch calls this relay between fiction and reality "creative visualization". Businesses have started to co-opt it. The designers of the iPhone and the Kindle cite works of science fiction as inspiration. Boeing, Nike, Ford and Intel have hired prototyping, future casting, and world building ventures for product development. As the author Brian Merchant put it on Medium recently, these companies "do what Science Fiction has always done. They build rich speculative worlds, describe that world's bounty and perils, and, finally, envision how that future might fall to pieces."

This is "speculative" fiction in the financial sense, too, a new way to gamble on futures.

The irony, or the proof, of this brave new business model is that sci fi saw it coming. Dystopias have long portrayed artists being drafted into nefarious corporate labor. In *BLADE RUNNER 2049*, for instance, the Wallace Corporation sets a woman the task of crafting memories. Not for characters in a novel, but for androids.

It's a touch self-congratulatory for sci fi creators to imply that they're the unacknowledged designers of the world. But they do seem to have a knack for innovation. The genre has predicted satellite communication, army tanks, tablets, submarines, psychotropic pills, bionic limbs, CCTV, electric cars, and video calling.

You can find dozens more examples of sci fi created gadgetry on the Internet, which is itself a prime example of the phenomenon. The word "cyberspace" first appeared in the cyberpunk novel *NEUROMANCER* (1984), to describe "a consensual hallucination. A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system." Its author, William Gibson, is our Nostradamus. His novels have prophesied reality television, viral marketing and nanotechnology.

Science fiction is often set in the near future, and tests its powers of prophecy. There is a story about a germaphobic couple who want to have sex without touching. They purchase the "Touchfeely" from the "Feelies" in Aldous Huxley's BRAVE NEW WORLD (1932). It includes an apparatus that has an electrified dildo and a sheath that respond remotely to each other. There is also Hera and Zeus, "the world's first internet enabled" sex toys. These "teledildonic" devices uncannily resemble the science fictional invention. The story characters each start affairs with the bot. One ends up choking on the dildo, and it is as if the writer had conjured something into existence. The dream of every artist.

There is science research on H.I.V. vaccines for the novel "The Old Drift". With some help from a biologist at New York University, the author came up with one that uses a particular technique to target a specific gene sequence. It was strange and wondrous when, soon after, the Chinese scientists used the exact same mechanism for their "AIDS vaccine development project," also known as the CRISPR babies, the first genetically modified humans.

Moskeetoze™ microdrones, which were designed™ for the novel, may someday buzz back to life, too. Raymond Z. Gallun's 1936 short story "The Scarab" got there first, but the TV series "Black Mirror" introduced robo-bees into the popular imagination, just in advance of their emergence in the real world. And Walmart has recently filed a patent for a fleet of pollution drones.

This is the dark side of Science Fiction prophecy. "Wow, I was right!" can turn quickly into "Yikes, I was right!" You almost envy Cassandra, the Trojan princess who was doomed by the gods to be always correct yet disbelieved. "I was never able to predict," William Gibson demurred in an interview with GQ. "But I could sort of curate what had already happened." It was brought to his attention that the global disasters he had envisioned in his 2014 novel THE PERIPHERAL seemed to be happening even before it was published. Gibson admitted: "That makes me very uncomfortable."

What if you don't just predict a bad idea but inspire it? Mary Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN (1818), widely considered the first Science Fiction novel, tried to forestall this. "Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge." But while Science Fiction aims to warn, humans are teenagers at heart. We love doing what we're told not to. Our modern day Frankenstein, Michael Crichton's JURASSIC PARK (1990), may even have spurred researchers to try to recover dinosaur DNA. Should the makers of Sci Fi quit indulging this desire to peer into the future?

Well, no. First of all, our predictions are off a lot of the time. No one's floating around in jet packs and hovercrafts just yet. Huxley presaged genetic engineering. His test tube babies are the true precursors of CRISPR babies, but so far we've passed on his multisensory "Feelies" and stuck with the good old fashioned movies. For some reason,

there's a slew of older sci fi films that happen to be set in 2019. BLADE RUNNER, THE RUNNING MAN, THE ISLAND. So we have new proof of our flubs. The IGN piece detailing these failures of prophecy is titled "The Sci Fi Movies That Predicted 2019 and Got It Wrong."

The writer Harry Turtledove tweeted a link to that article with an exclamatory comment: "Science fiction does not predict the future. Not. Not! NOT! It uses the imagined future to comment on the real present." Margaret Atwood often claims something similar, echoing Gibson's protestations, despite manifest evidence of her acute forecasts—the rise of the Christian right, in vitro meat, sexbots modeled on real people, apocalyptic climate change, live aquatic jewelry.

She says, "I'm not a prophet. Honest, I'm not a prophet. If I were a prophet, I would have cleaned up on the stock market years ago. They're saying things about 'Oryx and Crake' and 'MaddAddam' are all coming true. But that's based on things people were already working on when I was writing the books. It's just that I was looking for those things and other people weren't."

Maybe Science Fiction's future is actually just a lens on the present.

Some writers do like to don the mantle of prophet. In 1983, Isaac Asimov published a set of 2019 forecasts. He was right about some things. "The mobile computerized object, or robot, is already flooding into industry and will, in the course of the next generation, penetrate the home." But it's embarrassing to see how hopeful he was about us.

Asimov thought computers would have freed us from the most tedious forms of labor by now. He imagined we'd have fixed pollution, developed technology based on the special properties of space, and even settled on the Moon. This rosy picture might seem surprising, given Science Fiction's proclivity for doom and gloom. Yet given our headlong plummet toward the death of this planet, to picture any future at all feels optimistic these days. It assumes that, when the Apocalypse comes, we will still be here to witness it.

Stories are one of our oldest technologies. They let us have vivid experiences. Beautiful, moving ones, but also horrifying, dark ones. And then close the book, or the laptop, unscathed. They give us a kind of perverse pleasure in reverse. Not of seeing the worst come true, but of seeing the worst without it coming true. And this is the other reason writers shouldn't give up on the art of prediction.

Writers don't just see into the future or possess special insight into the present. They also construct a kind of machine for virtual hindsight. They create an immersive simulation of the future that we can all experience and look back on, so that we might decide together whether we want these dreams to come true after all.



Letters to Origin

Our new staff member, Jeffrey Redmond, has as yet to be introduced, and I think we'll let him do it himself by way of a letter received by the editor in response to the monthly bulletin of the bureau.

Jeffrey Redmond: I have a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree in history from Michigan State University. I would do less well on exams, but very well on papers. Back then we did research at the campus libraries. Today it's all done online.

There are, as you well know, some real fools on the Internet. But there are some very good people, as well. I'm glad the Origins staff doesn't include those few egos in the N3F who despise me. It's thus something we can grow, develop, and improve. You are a positive energy source, John.

There are a number of smaller publications with only a few readers each. I still say they could all be combined into one larger publication, with more readers, maybe with different sections for each.

I also say the N3F could grow faster if people who are not perfect would not be rejected. Perhaps keep everyone on a probationary status. It is childish to let a disagreement result in dismissal.

I have around 61,000 members in my Science Fiction group, and other Facebook sites are also useful for attracting new members.

I am a writer and published author of fantasy and sci fi books and articles, *etc.*, I enjoy editing and proof reading, and can always continue submitting research and announcement articles.

By growing memberships and subscribers, a group can improve. It is good to have influence, and especially contribute to fantasy and science fiction *genres* when possible.

I have some ideas, but I don't know which would be of any real use. So I'll wait and see what Origin would like from me. This all sounds quite interesting, and I certainly appreciate the opportunity.

Glad to have you with us, and I like your enthusiasm for the field.



Issue's conclusion.

Make your own home issues. Print out Origin double-sided.