

The National Fantasy Fan

Cras ad Stellas— Tomorrow to the Stars

Volume 78 Number 10

October 2019

Elections

We have nominations for the Directorate and President.

Anyway, I declare my candidacy, and run on the same platform as last year. . . .Jefferson Swycaffer

John Thiel has accepted his nomination.

Laurraine Tutihasi has accepted her nomination.

Judy Carroll has accepted her nomination.

George Phillis — If elected, I will serve. See my letter, this issue.

Web Page Updated!

Our web pages at N3F.org include back issues of all of our magazines, though early decades are incomplete. On October 5, those pages were updated to be current. All of our recent publications have now been uploaded and are available to anyone who wants to read them.

Neffies

The end of the year approaches. Soon it will once again be time to nominate for Neffy Awards. You will be sent information on this soon. We consulted with our fine pro writers and listened carefully to members. We will add several fan categories. N3F members, but not active N3F officers will be eligible for awards. For an alternative proposal on choosing nominees and winners, see Bob Jennings' letter on page 6.

Message from Amazing Magazine

President: I have heard from Steve Davidson, Editor of Amazing, which just won a Neffy. He has a proposal for us. To avoid confusion, let me preface this with the emphatic remark that our membership list would stay in our hands, so that we would mail interesting things from Amazing to you, the members. We would not be giving the mailing list to anyone else.

Steve: George, though I got it a couple of weeks ago, I'd still like to thank you for the very nice certificate commemorating Amazing's win of the Neffy for Best Magazine of 2018 - it's greatly appreciated as you may have noticed on the web site.

Keep up the good work with N3F!

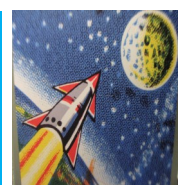
Is there anyway we could do some kind of electronic subscription discount promotion for members of N3F?

To be frank, I'd like to find a way to be able to access the N3F email mailing list and partner with N3F to achieve something resembling the relationship between Wonder Stories and the Science Fiction League; perhaps a page devoted to N3F activities/member profiles/awards in the magazine (quarterly) and/or on the website: Amazing - the magazine - needs to forge a deeper relationship with fandom across the board - it needs to become a "fannish thing" again if it is going to succeed as a regular publication.

In regards to SFL, I certainly don't mean any kind of "ownership" relationship: I agree with Wollheim's assessment that fan clubs should not be in service to a



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commercial interest, but I also believe that mutually beneficial ways to support fan activities and commercial interests that seek to service those activities can be found that respect the normal and customary divisions.

Please convey to your membership that my desire is to find some way that a regular SF publication can work with a fan club for mutual benefit and that I am open to any and all ideas that achieve that goal while respecting everyone's cultural sensitivities, financial needs and "fannish ideals" in general.

Bureau Reports

Book Review Bureau

Our project of assembling book reviews of all published novels is making good progress. The latest issue of **The N3F Review of Books** covered 27 books, including two on literary criticism, and two articles on writing. You book reviews will be most welcome.

Club Directory

Another traditional club activity rises from the dead. Heath Row (kalel@well.com) has offered to reactivate the Club Directory. He reports that he has started reaching out to the clubs that were included in the 2009 edi-

Many New Volunteers are needed: Cosplay, Electronic Publication Support, Convention Hospitality, Outreach. Support the N3F. Volunteer Now!

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Join or Renew

We offer four different memberships. Memberships with TNFF via paper mail are \$18; memberships with TNFF via email are \$6. All other zines are email only. Additional memberships at the address of a current member are \$4. Public memberships are free. Send payments to N3F, POB 1925, Mountain View CA 94042. Pay online at N3F.org. Our PayPal contact is treasurer@n3f.org Send phillies@4liberty.net your email address for a public membership.

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tion of the club directory. If you'd like to reach out to folks you know yourself, to encourage them to submit material about their club, you can use the following link: <https://forms.gle/kJrU2fB9idPksJew7>

That goes to a form that collects some basic information about a group, which he will then edit into a directory listing.

Convention Calendar

After some years, we again have a convention Calendar. Expect it to appear approximately quarterly.

Compiled by Heath Row

The following conventions will occur between October -December 2019. Convention runners and fans should send event listings to Heath Row at kalel@well.com for consideration. Please contact event organizers before making travel plans.

Illuxcon Oct. 23-27, 2019, Reading, Pennsylvania
Contemporary imaginative realism and fantastic art
<http://www.illuxcon.com>

Sirens Oct. 24-27, 2019, Denver
Women of fantasy literature
<http://www.sirensconference.org/>

Hal-Con Oct. 25-27, 2019, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Science fiction
<http://hal-con.com/>

Ohio Valley Filk Festival Oct. 25-27, 2019, Worthington, Ohio
Filk music
<http://www.ovff.org/>

Armageddon Expo Oct. 25-28, 2019, Auckland, New Zealand
Gaming and animation
<https://www.armageddonexpo.com/>

Bristol-Con Oct. 26, 2019, Bristol, England
Science fiction and fantasy
<https://www.bristolcon.org/>

Bouchercon Oct. 31 to Nov. 3, 2019, Dallas
World Mystery Convention
<https://www.bouchercon2019.com/>

World Fantasy Convention Oct. 31 to Nov. 3, 2019, Los Angeles
Fantasy noir
<https://wfc2019.org/>

ArmadaCon Nov. 1-3, 2019, Plymouth, England
Science fiction and fantasy
<http://www.armadacon.org/>

Icon Nov. 1-3, 2019, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Science fiction and fantasy
<https://iowa-icon.com/>

Geek Gala Nov. 2, 2019, Charlotte, North Carolina
Pop culture, science fiction, and fantasy
<http://www.geekgala.com/>

Novacon Nov. 8-10, 2019, Nottingham, England
Science fiction
<http://www.novacon.org.uk/n49/>

OryCon Nov. 8-10, 2019, Portland, Oregon
Science fiction and fantasy
<https://orycon.org/41/>

Philcon Nov. 8-10, 2019, Cherry Hill, New Jersey
Science fiction, fantasy, and horror
<https://philcon.org/>

Windycon Nov. 15-17, 2019, Lombard, Illinois
Science fiction
<http://www.windycon.org>

Chambanacon Nov. 29 to Dec. 1, 2019, Normal, Illinois
Science fiction and fantasy relaxacon
<https://chambanacon.org>

Loscon Nov. 29 to Dec. 1, 2019, Los Angeles
Science fiction
<https://loscon.org/46/>

SMOFCon Dec. 6-8, 2019, Albuquerque
Con running
<https://www.smofcon37-abq.org/>

Steel City Con Dec. 6-8, 2019, Monroeville, Pennsylvania
Comic con
<https://www.steelcitycon.com/>

Correspondence Bureau

Welcome to the Correspondence Bureau!

I am very pleased to announce that we now have a second member, John Thiel. Jeffery and John already correspond with one another. Following are the two members who are interested in correspondence.

1. Jeffery Redmond - Choice #2

2. John Thiel - Choice #2

If you would like to correspond with Jeffery or John you need to do the following:

1. Choose Jeffery or John
2. Choose Choice #2
3. Send an email with your name, the name of the person you have chosen and your email address to Judy Carroll AutumnSeas8012@gmail.com

You will receive an email with the email address of the person you have chosen to correspond with and he will receive an email with your name and email address.

As much as we love science fiction, fantasy and horror sometimes we just want to talk about our other interests, or get to know someone living in another state or country, or find someone who likes to joke as much as we do.

By joining the Correspondence Bureau you will be able to talk about your love of fishing, sports, reading, cooking, running, movies. The list goes on - it's endless. Or perhaps you would like to talk with someone whose interests are unknown to you and discover this person and their interests with each conversation.

HOW TO JOIN

You have two choices for seeking a pairing:

Choice #1 - You want to be paired with someone of like interest. Send an email to the bureau head with your name and a list of your interests. When someone with similar interest requests a pairing both of you will be notified and given the email of the other member. Contact the other member and the rest is up to you.

Choice #2 - You want to be paired with the next person whose interests are unknown. Send an email to the bureau head telling of your choice. Include your name, and email address. You will be paired with the next person with unknown interests and both of you will be notified and given the email address of the other member. The rest is up to you.

Whichever way you choose will be an adventure.

POLICY

The Correspondence Bureau is open to all members of the club who have an email address whether they are paying or non-paying members. Members seeking to correspond through the Correspondence Bureau will be

asked for permission to publish their name in the monthly article. If they do not wish to have their name published only their Choice #1 or #2 will be published. No email addresses will be published in the monthly article nor given to another member without that member's permission.

If you wish to join the Correspondence Bureau or you have any questions Contact Judy Carroll AutumnSeas8012@gmail.com

Pro Bureau

Some writers and budding writers will find of interest our Facebook Page Non-Political SF Writers Group and Cedar Sanderson's More Odds Than Ends. Some writers will find of interest Mike Barker's continuing columns on Weiland's book on creating character arcs. Presence on FaceBook is, alas, sometimes, unstable; some pros will find of interest the competing site MeWe.com/

Recruiting Bureau

Jeffrey Redmond's colorful advertising for the NFFF continues to appear regularly on his Facebook sites and elsewhere. He also gets together with members of his groups who want to talk about the N3F. I have advertising in Surprising Stories, have had some in Bewildering Stories, and regularly in Full Moon Poetry, where there are lots of highly talented fantasy poets it would be nice to have as members. Kevin Trainor continues looking for individual members and sometimes passes out flyers about the N3F. We're keeping those doors open.—John Thiel

John also reports that Surprising Stories #51 is now online, with an advertisement for the N3F in the AD ASTRA section. <http://surprisingstories.thiels.us> .

We currently have 240 members in all categories, plus distribution of our zines to seven archival sites.

Welcomittee

The purpose of the Welcomittee is to welcome new members to the club. A letter is sent, by email or postal mail, to new members informing them of club activities they may be interested in joining. Those members with email addresses are also sent as attachments the current TNFF and other publications the N3F has to offer.

There are no new members to welcome this month. Anyone willing to help welcome new members to this wonderful club will be greatly appreciated.

If interested, please contact Judy Carroll at AutumnSeas8012@gmail.com

Writers Exchange

Welcome to the Writers Exchange! If you are a new writer, a professional writer, or someone who dreams of being a writer - this is the place for you. If you love reading unpublished work and find it exciting to do so, this place is also for you.

This month we are going to discover another of my favorite authors - Ray Bradbury. I discovered Ray Bradbury, as I did Shirley Jackson, while in my teens. I traveled many places with Mr. Bradbury through my teens and beyond. Together we visited The Illustrated Man, discovered The Martian Chronicles, indulged in Dandelion Wine, shook as Something Wicked This Way Comes, and learned the burning point of paper is Fahrenheit 451.

While in my twenties, my mother sent me two short stories by Bradbury that she had discovered somewhere and thought I would like - The Veldt and The Small Assassin. I enjoyed reading both stories. The Small Assassin has haunted me for years along with another of Bradbury's short stories - All Summer in a Day.

I love the way Bradbury put words together, offering the reader vision and puzzlement as to what the story is about; I Sing the Body Electric, The Golden Apples of the Sun, A Sound of Thunder. My favorite title is Dark They Were and Golden Eyed. Sometimes I find myself repeating the title over and over - almost as if it were a mantra.

The Writers Exchange is for anyone interested in writing. If you have a story you would like read and commented on, or if you just want the excitement of reading unpublished work, then the Writers Exchange is here for you. Published or unpublished - all are welcome. You may join as a writer, a reader or both.

If interested, please contact:
Judy Carroll. AutumnSeas8012@gmail.com

Birthday Card Bureau

Birthday cards sent: 10; Renewal notices sent: 8 (3 by e-mail)

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Laurraine Tutihasi

Letters of Comment

Dear Neffers,

Shamefully, it has been forever and a day since I've read an issue of the Fantasy Fan. Since my stint as Editor and time on the Directorate, I admit I was a little burned out, but have enjoyed maintaining friendships on line, and seeing the mail, though largely unread.

This Letter of Comment is on The Fan from November 2018. Yes, November 2018. And while I'm sure the club is light years away from where it was then, I am extremely impressed by the current level of activity among the members! Man, have I been missing out.

Do we really have seven zines? Says Rip van Winkle are they all sent via email? Do I have to request each separately? I will check email, but I want all of it! Special congrats to Mr. Swycaffer. You're filling some pretty big APA shoes. Not that R-Laurraine has big feet, mind you.

While I appreciate the progression and transgression name of science fiction and fantasy, I think that our Neffer materials should be largely family-friendly. That said, if we do an adult scene, and not just the Facebook group, I have a great idea for the title. Neffer Titty. Get it? Oh, go on.

In terms of recruiting and Lloyd's comment on our presence at cons, I think advertising and program books would be a great idea. We could limit it to large metropolitan areas and WorldCon. Maybe one a year in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dragon, on... The cost would be quite manageable. I'd have to return to the old con calendars I'd compiled to get back up to speed with that. Or we could focus on cons we know Neffers will go to. Anyway, a grand idea.

I also recently read a couple of excellent stories in the January/February 2019 issue of Asimov's. Leah Cypress's "All the Difference" is a wonderful short story about commercial time travel and the ability to take your own place in an alternate time stream for twelve hours, to see what life would be like if you had made a specific decision differently. Cypress gives the topic ample gravity, and there are moments in the story where the characters' emotions and realizations are near terrible. And Lavie Tidhar's "Neom" is an awesome story about be-friending a robot, property crime, and class division in a Muslim country. It reminded me slightly of Cory Doctorow and William Gibson. An author I need to return to!

This issue of the fan was so inspiring that I will not neglect the club as much as I have been. Can't wait to catch up to where you are now!

Heath Row

[Editor: To answer Heath's questions, we are presently at nine zines. They are all sent as PDFs to all members for whom we have email addresses. Papermail copies of The National Fantasy Fan, which you are now reading, are sent to members who paid for them by becoming Regular (\$18 per year) members. There are no separate distribution lists for members; fanzine editors receive our zines in trade. As a practical matter, we may add a separate list for N3F Review writers, because some of them are not members.]

Editor:

John Thiel suggests that awards, specifically referring to the Neffy Awards, might be given out "for awards reasons rather than critical ones". This makes no sense to me. The purpose of the Neffys is to recognize quality in competitive categories within the SF/fantasy area. I certainly echo John's comment that the SF/fantasy field is so broad these days that most people simply cannot take in the scope of all the material that is out there. However, that is what the nomination process of any awards ceremony is all about; to provide worthwhile nominations so that the voters for the awards can have an opportunity to examine the material and make educated decisions based on a narrow and select field of candidates.

Except, of course, nobody is bothering to do that with the Neffys.

I've mentioned the problems with the Neffys before, but to bring up some pertinent points yet again---as it now stands the Neffys are a club activity almost nobody in the N3F has any interest in. The number of people bothering to make nominations is miniscule, and so is the actual number of people who bother to vote for the awards. If, out of what, 250-300 club members, fewer than five people bother to make nominations, and fewer than ten people bother to actually vote, then clearly this is a club activity that meets no club needs and has such a tiny cadre of involved people that it should be either shut down, or dramatically changed. The paltry and wildly scattered winners signify nothing and those results certainly do not represent the opinion of the club membership as a whole.

At the very least the entire Neffy apparatus ought to be reorganized. I would suggest forming a Neffy commit-

tee. Any club member may join the committee, providing that person pledges to try to read/view some of the nominations and also pledges to actually vote for the awards. Members of the committee could also make nominations for the various categories, if they are so inclined.

The names of the committee members would be publically posted in TNFF. Any N3F member could join the committee, and after the final votes are in, then the Neffys could be properly presented to be a vote taken by a committee of interested, involved N3F members, however many or however few they might be.

Please note that this procedure is similar to ones adopted by assorted award ceremonies in the entertainment field, including the Oscars, the Grammys, the Emmys, and the Golden Globe Awards, among others. Let those N3F members who are interested in the Neffys participate, and let the Neffy awards be their recognized voice. But please, let's not continue to pretend that the Neffys represent the totality of the N3F membership, or even a significant portion of the membership, because they do not.

...Bob Jennings

Dear Neffers,

It's another time traveling letter of comment and I finally got around to reading The National Fantasy Fan Volume 76 Number 7 from July 2017. I spent much of this holiday weekend catching up on issues of The Fan, as well as a handful of round robins, which led me to read, reread, and watch stories, books, and episodes from Thieves World, and McCaffrey, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Stan Trele. Not a bad way to spend the weekend.

The meat of the matter is that I saw the reprint of Brad Torgerson's January 2017 SerCon piece "what is legitimate in the 21st-century publishing environment?". While I continue to see value in the role of editors, publishers, and marketers, I agree that the line between vanity presses and traditional presses is blurring, if not yet obsolete, as Torgerson contends. Editors help improve writing as well as authors, in many cases, if done well. And publishers take on the physical distribution of books and magazines, as well as the marketing.

Clearly, that changes if the role of physical works is less important. Whether that's a good thing is another topic entirely. Vanity presses are different than self-publishing, so all focus on self-publishing. In that regard, I agree with Torgerson. You are a legitimate author if you write routinely, publish frequently, and are read by people. The scale of your readership may or may not matter, and

whether you make money may or may not matter. If we are talking about being a professional writer, it becomes more important.

Torgerson shifts the focus from publication, which presumes readership, to production and readership. I agree. If you write, you're a writer. If you write and we read, you're a writer.

Really, that piece more than two years after its initial publication is particularly interesting, given Robert J Sawyer's column "What SFWA Was Supposed To Be" in *Galaxy's Edge* #39 (July 2019). His column focuses on the resignation of William Schoen from the Board of the Science Fiction And Fantasy Writers Of America because the organization's directors decided to allow self-published writers to join.

Sawyer recounts Damon Knight's original bylaws, which required members to remain currently publishing professional writers, reapplying for membership on a rolling two-year window. The bylaws were written when people did not have the ability to control their own modes of production, so they might be only reliant on publishers, production companies, and broadcasters.

Should the debate be over the mode of production and distribution you used, or whatever, as a working professional in the field? Perhaps the mode doesn't matter. It seems to me that if you self-publish or write e-books that real people who want you buy, you'd qualify. If your books are available on PDD and real people who want to buy there, you'd qualify. Heck, if you blog and sell ads, you'd qualify.

Torgerson focuses on what makes a writer, and why SFWA should focus on what makes a professional writer. That comes down to (a) do you make money, and (b) what reasonable standard is set to say you made enough money? Whether something is self published should not enter into it.

Regardless, Sawyer also touches another complaint he has with the SFWA: a mission statement that focuses on diversity and inclusion. I won't comment on that other than to say that if a professional writer's group dedicates itself to the professional betterment of writers regardless of their race, color, or creed, that is fine by me. But if a professional writer's group becomes an amateur writer's group, it is no longer a professional organization or trade group.

Looking at SFWA's membership requirements, its requirements still focus on sales and eligible markets.

Their list of eligible markets is rather extensive. And the rules to qualify a market would easily be applied to self-publishing and electronic distribution. So I'm not sure what the issue is. It doesn't look like SFWA is leading in all self-publishers. If anything, the organization increased the short fiction payment per word requirement for markets earlier this year.

Speaking of short fiction, I've read some pretty good stuff over the last couple of days. In the November 1951 issue of *Amazing Stories*, a back issue, not a reprint, I read Robert Arntt's *A Matter of Stupidity*, Paul W. Fernin's *Proud Asteroid*, Rog Phillips's *Step Out Of Your Body. Please!*, and Walter M. Miller, Jr.'s *The Space Witch*, but I started with Philip's *The Club House*, his columns of fan clubs news and fanzine reviews. Man, those were the days. Here's an idea. I would like to keep in regular contact with local SF clubs around the world and report on their doings to the N3F. What activity would club contact be considered? Any interest from the membership or Directorate? Perhaps I could return to my idea of a directory of such clubs.

The Arnetti story was pretty silly and to throw away. *Proud Asteroid* focused on the idea of a sentient land-mass. *Step Out Of Your Body. Please!* speculated on the ability to transfer your consciousness into a robotic body as well as forward or backward in time. And *The Space Witch*, which might have been the best of the four stories, addressed the impact of an alien invasion on divorce and vice versa.

Proud Asteroid was reprinted in a 1969 issue of *Thrilling Science Fiction Adventures*, and *The Space Witch* was reprinted by *Amazing*, but none of the stories seem to have been anthologized.

I also read several pieces in *Space and Time* #132 (Fall 2018). Max Sheppard's *The Slowest Bullet Ever Shot* addresses bullet time from a first-person point of view. C. I. Kemp's *The Agent of Horror* is a fine Lovecraftian story about exploring an abandoned mineshaft. That's actually how I met my wife, so I particularly enjoyed that story. Rahul Kanakin's *The Ones Who Have Not Yet Woken* addresses diversity in education, bigotry, and the potentially slow build of first contact. It also touches on intergenerational differences in an alien race, which was interesting.

This was my first time reading *Space and Time*, and I'm sorry I've given it short shrift.

Heath Row

Editor:

As the candidate for President, I will not take advantage of the newsletter's layout to put my platform on the first page. Instead, I shall use this letter to the Editor to lay out where we are and where we can hopefully go. Hopefully you the dues-paying members will chose to re-elect me.

As Heath Row notes (above) over the past decade our Federation has made great advances. Not so long ago, we had Tightbeam and TNFF were combined into a single publication that was supposed to come out quarterly. N'APA was reduced to email back and forth between its two contributors. We should honor the memory and name of the fine Neffers who brought us through this vale of tears.

Having said that we have advanced from a nominally quarterly zine to nine zines. Our membership has climbed fivefold. We have more than two dozen active zines and services, as well as five social groups on FaceBook and MeWe. We advertise here and there. I am not doing the work (OK I like generating zines; thanks to computers TNFF is the largest single part of that work., because TNFF requires printing, collating, and mailing paper issues.) but I try to support other people in contributing their fannish activity time to the N3F.

My objective for the future is to see that our bureaus serve the membership, our zines are published as regularly as possible, our web pages are well-maintained. our name becomes better known, and more people join us. Around the world are hundreds of millions of SF fans. It would be good if they were all members. That's a fine objective.

George Phillies

SerCon

Comic Book Clubs of the 1940s: The Shield G-Man Club

by
Jon D. Swartz, Ph. D.
N3F Historian

The Shield

Many people have recognized The Shield as the first patriotic superhero, appearing more than a year before

Captain America. Truth, justice, patriotism, and courage were represented by the four stars on the Shield's extraordinary uniform -- the uniform that gave him his powers -- and his true identity, Joe Higgins, G-Man, was only known by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. The company that published the comic books -- Pep Comics, Shield-Wizard Comics -- in which The Shield appeared on a regular basis, was MLJ Publications. The company is now known as Archie Publications, Inc. The original Shield was created by writer Harry Shorten and artist Irv Novick with the stated purpose "to shield the U. S. government from all its enemies."

The Shield was aided in his work by several companions. After a partnership with fellow G-Man Ju-Ju Watson and girlfriend Betty, he was joined in 1941 by a kid partner, Dusty Simmons, in Pep #11.

Dusty, the Boy Detective

Dusty Simmons was found in the wreckage of a plane crash by The Shield. The foreign agents who attempted to kill Dusty, and successfully killed the rest of the passengers on the plane, then went after The Shield's girlfriend Betty. The Shield adopted Dusty and trained him to fight crime as his partner. Both heroes wore their patriotic costumes beneath their street clothes and changed for action whenever the need arose. The Shield and Dusty also partnered with another MLJ superhero, The Wizard. The Wizard's kid partner was Roy, the Super-boy. When Dusty and Roy went into action as a duo, without their senior partners, they were known as The Boy Buddies.

The Shield G-Man Club

Based on the exploits of the MLJ Magazines hero, The Shield G-Man Club was first advertised in Pep Comics #15. It offered a red, white and blue badge and a membership card in exchange for a 2¢ stamp (those were the days!). Unlike other such clubs, like U. S. Jones for example, which concentrated on homeland defense, The G-Man Club's theme was more geared towards crime fighting -- and it encouraged club members to write in with their law enforcement experiences.

There were two varieties of The Shield badge. The first, introduced with the beginning of the club, was 1 3/4", and the second was slightly smaller at 1 1/4". Another badge, in the form of a small shield, was introduced during the club's last days. The club was active from 1941 until 1948.

A Facebook version of The Shield's club was introduced in 2018. Apparently, there are no dues for this

club's membership kit.

The Archie Club

In 1948, with superheroes on the wane and MLJ's Archie titles becoming very popular, the dissolution of The Shield G-Man Club was announced. Pep Comics #66 carried the message that the club would now be known as The Archie Club. G-Man Club members were requested to send in their membership cards in exchange for which they were to receive a new Archie Club button free of charge. (New members could join for 10¢ -- that original 2¢ charge was too good to last!)

This may help explain why the membership cards from The Shield G-Man Club are so hard to find and so prized by collectors today.

Later Versions of The Shield

There have been more than a dozen versions of The Shield over the years. Some of the more memorable versions are as follows.

In June 1959, a new Shield was published by Archie Publications that had no connection to the previous version. Joe Simon was asked by Archie to create characters for a new "Archie Adventure Series" line of superheroes. Simon created a new Shield-type of superhero, whose real identity was Lancelot Strong. This Shield appeared in a new title, *The Double Life of Private Strong*. Simon put together a team of artists, including Jack Kirby, to work for him on this version of The Shield. Simon and Kirby were the co-creators of Captain America in 1941.

When Archie revamped their superheroes under their Radio Comics/Mighty Comics line, a third Shield was introduced as Bill Higgins, son of the original Shield. It was revealed that his father was turned to stone by the villain, The Eraser, and Bill was carrying on his father's work. Bill's powers, enhanced strength and limited invulnerability, were derived from his costume. He appeared through the end of the Radio/Mighty Comics run.

When Legend of the Shield was introduced, Lt. Michael Barnes became another new Shield. Barnes was a married father with a young daughter. Barnes continued as the lead character until the series' 1992 cancellation and also appeared as The Shield in the six-issue mini-series *The Crucible*, which was intended to reinvent the Impact Comics line.

In 2015, Archie Comics re-branded their Red Circle Comics line under the new Dark Circle Comics banner. A new Shield debuted in her own series titled *The Shield* in October 2015. Victoria Adams was the first female to take up the mantle of The Shield.

The Mighty Crusaders

The Mighty Crusaders was a fictional superhero team published by Archie Comics. The team originally appeared in *Fly-Man* Nos. 31 - 33 before being launched in its own title, *Mighty Crusaders*. Written by Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel, the series lasted seven issues before being canceled. The team was revived under Archie's Red Circle Comics line in 1983. In 1992, DC Comics licensed the characters and relaunched the team as *The Crusaders*, aiming the comic at younger readers as part of its Impact line. This series lasted eight issues, cover-dated May to December, 1992. Versions of The Shield were members of both teams.

Conclusions

Some version or other of The Shield has been with us for nearly 80 years, outlasting thousands of other comic book superheroes. It seems there probably will be a Shield-type hero as long as we have comic books.

The different versions of his costume have varied considerably, but all have been colorful and emphasized the red, white, and blue of the American flag.

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Note: In addition to the above sources, several Internet sites were consulted.

Polly Pigtaails

By Bob Jennings

[Ed: We mentioned Polly Pigtaails in a prior zine, so I asked Bob Jennings for the context of the reference.]

The "Polly Pigtaails" comic book came out in 1946, produced by the Parents Magazine Institute. During the mid 1940s they put a whole stable of comics, eventually numbering 16 titles all total, aimed at providing youngsters clean, wholesome comic reading material.

Their list of titles included mags such as Calling All Boys, Calling All Girls, Calling All Kids (for the much younger readers), Sweet Sixteen, Girl's Fun & Fashion, and Real Hero. The aim was education as well as entertainment, and most of the comics included puzzle and fun activity pages, short stories, movie star photos and information, short prose articles, tips on behavior and up to date fashions for both girls and boys. Their comics were physically slightly larger than the regular comics of the period due to the printing press they used, with most featuring 52 pages.

The stories were pretty pedestrian (at least in my opinion, checking the stuff over decades later). The artwork was OK, but the problem was that they had some of the most hum-drum color artists in the business.

All the inside color looked a bit dull, and looked like it was applied slap-dash, which it might well have been. They eventually made a deal to publish a comic book based on the very popular Jack Armstrong radio show, and then added titles such as Secret Agent and Tex Granger, where the stories were better but the art wasn't, and the color was still drab and inept.

However, the main problem with the entire line was that all their comics sold for fifteen cents, while everybody else was selling their issues for a dime. Then add in the fact that usually half, or even less, of the inside contents were actual comic book pages and it made a bad impression on a lot of potential readers. I'm sure the Parents Magazine people were trying to create appealing magazines for boys and girls that included comics, but most young readers just wanted comic books, period.

Polly Pigtaails, like many of their comics, used photos of real girls on the front covers. Polly started in late 1945 (presumably just after paper rationing ended), with the first monthly issue dated January 1946. It lasted thru issue #43, dated October 1949. From issue #40 up the title was changed to just "Polly".

Every issue featured plenty of advertising, probably enough to keep the mags afloat even if newsstand sales had faltered. There was a lot of emphasis on fashions, being attractive, good manners, social graces and other things that pre-teen girls of the period were presumably interested in.

The comic stories were light hearted alleged humor generally featuring girls that were probably just pre-teen in age. I never read a single story in the mag that made much of an impression, but then, adult males were not the market focus for the title.

Parents Magazine got out of the comic book biz completely in the fall of 1949, possibly due to a change in company management, altho nobody knows for sure.

However, that wasn't the end of Polly Pigtaails. She made a return in the summer of 1954 when one of Parents Magazine's digest sized mags suddenly became "Polly Pigtaails Fun Magazine For Girls" with issue #6, dated June, 1954. In this incarnation the magazine lasted thru issue #9, dated December, 1954. I've never seen an issue of this magazine, but I presume it followed the same general pattern of the comic, with some comics and lots of articles, fiction, fashion, pets, movie stars and other stuff that would presumably appeal to the tweener girl audience.

I will note that the digest magazine had a retail price of thirty-five cents, which may have been a bit rich for the intended audience. Perhaps they hoped to survive with subscribers, but the digest experiment only lasted four issues, and Polly Pigtaails hasn't been seen since.

Memberships

Renewed: Robert Jennings - Regular Voting, thru Oct 2020

New & Reinstated: #277 Steve Davidson - Public

Expired in September Bob Goolsby, Bradley Slavik, Scott Duncan, Constance Elliott, Erik Martin

Expiring in October: Scott Lee Spence, Shami Stovall

Expiring in November: Angela Myers, Daniel Rego

Expiring in December: Jeffrey Redmond, Rikki Winters, Kemse Net-Ubasi, Wesley Kawato, George Wells, Gary Casey

2019 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, 2019.
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. Stories will also be reviewed by the Editor of the N3F Fiction zine Eldritch Science; authors of suitable tales will be invited to submit their tales for publication in our zine. This review and invitation will only occur after contest winners have been announced, so it can have no effect on the contest outcome.

101 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 sign over rights cannot affect whether or not you win the contest. Royalties will be divided evenly among 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 by March 2020. 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, 2019. 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 2019 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and I agree to them.

Signature:

Date: _____



Elections!

Web Page Updated!—Neffies—Message from Amazing Magazine

Bureau Reports

Book Review Bureau—Club Directory—Convention Calendar

Correspondence Bureau—Pro Bureau—Recruiting Bureau

Welcommittee—Writer's Exchange—Birthday Card Bureau

Letters of Comment

Heath Row—Bob Jennings—Heath Row

George Phillis

Sercon

Comic Book Clubs of the 1940s: The Shield G-Man Club

Polly Pigtales—Membership Changes

Short Story Contest

Worcester MA 01609
48 Hancock Hill Drive
c/o George Phillis

N3F TNFF