



TIGHTBEAM

The Springboard of Ideas

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“Welcome to the N3F!”

That phrase has greeted new fans (also known as fen) to science-fiction fandom for more than 70 years. It sounds like a great cry, doesn't it? Allow me to welcome you on behalf of all the Officers and Bureau heads.

This booklet is intended to let you know what we have to offer you if you decide to join us. Feel free to just jump right in and participate in any of our activities.

The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F or NFFF) is an old club, solidly embedded in Fandom's history and present – and, from all appearances, its future as well. The N3F has undergone almost every combination of success and failure imaginable. At different times its membership has been in the hundreds, and other times under 30. It has produced some of Fandom's most memorable fanzines and some of the worst crudzines. Its ranks hold professional writers as well as neofans (“if you have to ask what a neofan is, you probably are one”).

The reason for this diversity, and quite possibly also for N3F's longevity, is that the club's main aim is opportunity. Anyone is welcome. People are encouraged to seek out others sharing their interests in any matter, and to start a group (if they want) about it, if there isn't one already.

We have a writer's workshop, an Art Bureau, a Pen Pal group, the WelCommittee (this is the original WelCommittee; beware of imitations!), Convention listings, Reviews, a Games Bureau, etc.. Know what a Round Robin is? We've got a few of those. Want to have someone critique your short story or novel? We can help you.

The N3F has always welcomed new fans and provides the neofan with a steady platform from which they can extend their activity as they learn about fandom.

For the experienced fen, we offer a means to follow personal lines of interest. In fact, older fen are needed at all times to help keep N3F going - not as arduous a task as it may sound. In fact, it is more rewarding than arduous.

This, then, is the N3F; and this is a booklet about it and Science Fiction & Fantasy Fandom (SFF) in general.

—David Speakman, 2014 N3F President

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A Brief History of Science Fiction Fandom

"It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan."

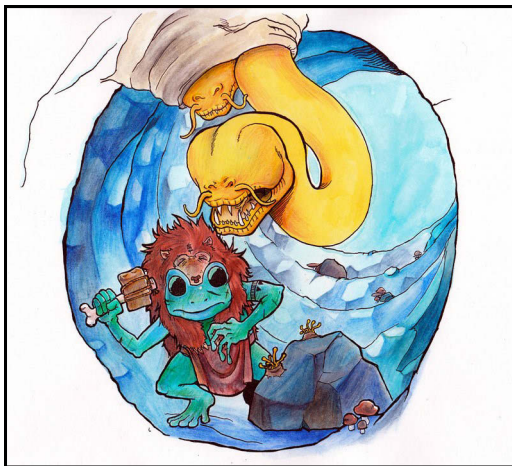
Rick Sneary, Former N3F President

The active readership/viewership of science fiction that communicates with each other on a regular basis through fanzines, conventions, clubs, etc. is what is known today as science fiction (SF) fandom. Two other genres, fantasy (F) and horror (H), are related in most people's minds to SF fandom; the three often are referred to as a single genre, in both mainstream and fan-nish literature, as SF/F/H or SFFH. In most academic classifications, SF is seen as a sub-genre of fantasy literature or speculative fiction. Whatever its ultimate place in literary nomenclature, however, science fiction is the first sub-category of fiction to have a fandom created for it, meaning a body of enthusiastic fans who supported and helped shape it.

In the beginning of SF fandom in the United States, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, fans tried to keep in touch with each other via the letter columns of the professional SF magazines. This process began with the appearance of readers' letters in the "Discussions" column of *Amazing Stories* in the 1920s, although some fantasy/horror fans had met and kept in touch with each

other somewhat earlier via letters to *Weird Tales*. In these letter columns readers commented upon and compared their favorite, and not-so-favorite, stories and authors. One of the questions frequently asked was "Who really wrote that story?" SF writers, especially in the Golden Age of the genre, often wrote under pseudonyms (see SF/Fantasy Author Pseudonyms). This type of communication via letters to prozines continues in various forms to this day. Such correspondence in turn led to the formation of local clubs, the publication of amateur magazines and newsletters (fanzines), and the organization of

conventions. Some of these early clubs were sponsored by professional SF magazines (prozines). Out of these clubs came new genre writers, illustrators, editors, agents, and even publishers. One of the first clubs to be organized was in Oakland, California in 1927, only one



year after the appearance of the first all-SF pulp magazine, *Amazing Stories*, published/edited by Hugo Gernsback. Within three years clubs had been organized in Chicago, Boston, Georgia, and New York. All of these clubs published fanzines. The first fanzine, *Comet* (later *Cosmology*), was dated May 1930 and published by the Science Correspondence Club of Chicago. It was edited by Raymond A. Palmer, who later gained fame

as a prozine editor. The early clubs were interested in science, and their fanzines reflected this interest. Later clubs were more interested in science fiction per se, and their fanzines emphasized science fiction authors and the magazines in which their stories appeared instead of scientific topics.

In 1941 Damon Knight suggested that it was time for a national organization of SF and fantasy fans: "I sincerely believe that a successful national fantasy association is possible, that it could offer a needed service to every fan, and that it could be established today." Knight was a young but respected writer at the time and later became even better known as a critic, editor, and teacher of SF/

fantasy. Fans responded to his suggestion, and The National Fantasy Fan Federation (NFFF or N3F) was the result.

The Culture of Fandom

SF fandom has created its own history and culture, with famous events, conventions, awards, press associations/alliances, language, feuds, hoaxes, and activities such as collecting, writing, and publishing.

Numbered Fandoms

Early fan historian John (Jack) Speer began the numbering of the time segments of fandom beginning in 1930. Others added to his work, and today these various time periods are generally thought of as follows: First Fandom (1930-1936), Second Fandom

(1937-1938), Third Fandom (1940-1944), Fourth Fandom (1945-1947), Fifth Fandom (1947-1949), and Sixth Fandom (1950-1953). In 1953 a group of young fans said Sixth Fandom was dead, and proclaimed they were the new, magnificent Seventh. Others quickly labeled their period The Phony Seventh. Since then no one has proposed

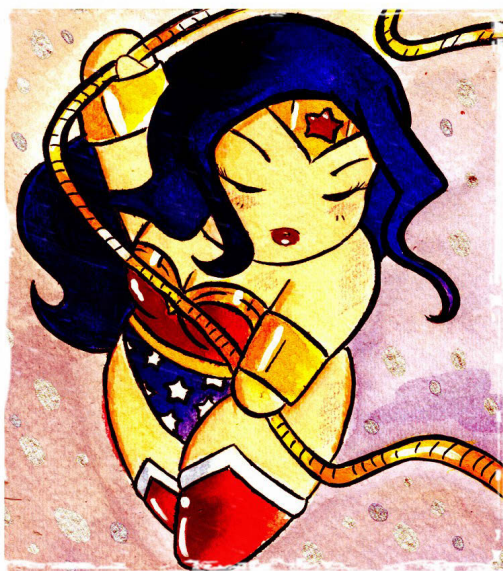
a continuation of this numbering system, although the period before 1930 often is referred to as Eofandom.

Conventions (Cons)

The first science fiction convention was held in 1937 in Philadelphia. By the next year groups of New York fans were competing to hold the first world convention, and on July 2,

1939 more than 200 fans gathered in Manhattan, under the leadership of Sam Moskowitz, who would later publish one of the early fan histories, *The Immortal Storm*. Fans came from all over, one contingent from California that included Forrest J Ackerman and Ray Bradbury.

A world convention (Worldcon) would be held annually from 1939, with the exception of four years (1942-1945) during World War II. Worldcons were held in the United States until 1957 when the convention was held in London. Since that time Worldcons have been held in other foreign countries, including Germany, Canada, and Australia. Foreign locations now are considered traditional, although most Worldcons are held in the United States. Attendance at Worldcons has steadily climbed from only a few hundred attendees, and now each routinely has thou-



sands of people in attendance.

Awards/Fan Funds

Contests and prizes were part of the early pulp publications, and fans started to present awards in 1941 at the 3rd Worldcon, held in Denver. The first International Fantasy Awards were given from 1951 until they were discontinued in 1957. The Science Fiction Achievement Awards, known as Hugos (after publisher/editor Hugo Gernsback) were first awarded in 1953 at the 11th Worldcon in Philadelphia, and are still given today in a variety of categories. Other awards are given in connection with the Worldcons, including the John W. Campbell Award, the Gandalf Award, and several First Fandom awards. Other American SF awards, currently being presented annually at other meetings, include the Nebulas (Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America), the Philip K. Dick Award, and the Theodore Sturgeon Award. N3F also gives awards, including the Kaymar and the Franson, both named for former members of the club.

A fan fund is a sort of fellowship that helps fans attend distant conventions: The most famous is the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF), which began in 1952, with the first “official” trip in 1954. TAFF is a fund that helps fans in North America attend European cons, and European fans attend North American cons. Another major fan fund is DUFF (Down Under Fan Fund), established in 1972, which helps fans travel across the Pacific Ocean, either to or from Australia. Fans may be American, Australian, or from New Zealand.

APA's

Another important development in fandom was the creation of the Amateur Press Associations or Alliances (APAs). The Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA) was organized in 1937, and others soon followed. Today many exist, each organized around a

special interest of the members (films, comics, pulps, etc.). N3F has its own APA, the N'APA (Neffer Amateur Press Alliance).

Fan Language

Like most sub-cultures, SF fandom developed its own special language as fans communicated with each other. Many glossaries of fannish terms exist in print and online with several examples of this language.

Feuds/Hoaxes

Feuds and hoaxes have existed since the beginnings of fandom, according to the SF historians who have written on these subjects. The feuds began as different individuals tried to take control of organized fandom, and ranged from the serious to the silly, depending upon the personalities of the individuals involved. Hoaxes usually were of a humorous nature, mostly involving imaginary persons, magazines, books, cons, etc., but some were more serious and were concerned with the supposed deaths of fans. Major feuds no longer exist as such, and even hoaxes are seldom perpetuated on the unsuspecting newcomer (neofan) – perhaps attesting to the fact that more mature fans dominate the field today.

Collecting/Writing/Publishing/ Scholarship

Fans have contributed to the development of SF in several different ways. Many early fans were collectors, and over the years their collections contributed directly to the founding of several specialty publishers and the writing of important reference works. Many SF/fantasy books were published by these fan publishers, and this fan publishing led to commercial publishing by large book publishers such as Doubleday. At least one major publishing house, DAW, was founded by a former fan (and N3F member) Donald A. Wollheim. Fan activity also contributed significantly to scholarship, with the publications of many reference works, beginning with

Everett F. Bleiler's *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* in 1948. Today there are academic journals devoted to the genre, and courses on science fiction are offered in colleges and universities.

Conclusions

Fandom today is extremely diverse, although joining clubs, reading/collecting SF/fantasy books and magazines, publishing fanzines, and attending conventions still are the main activities of fans. Club activities often involve most, if not all, of the activities that fans have enjoyed since the beginnings of fandom: collecting, writing, composing/performing fan music, doing artwork, participating in APAs, playing computer games, sponsoring and attending cons (and participating in filksinging and masquerades at these cons), discussing authors and artists and their work, and criticizing genre movies/TV programs/magazines/books, etc. The world of SF fandom has shaped, and continues to shape, the literature it studies.

Early on there were few women in fandom, mostly the sisters, girlfriends, and/or wives of male fans. It was a newsworthy event when it was discovered that an assumed male fan was instead a female. Many

more women entered fandom in the 1970s and 1980s, however, and now play prominent roles in all aspects of fandom. Today science fiction fandom is bigger and better than ever before. Those readers who want a more detailed history of this remarkable phenomenon are directed to the books listed in the following bibliography. *

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NOTE: This brief historical account of SF fandom is based largely on the fan writings of Forrest J Ackerman, Don Franson, Sam Moskowitz, Rick Sneary, Jack Speer, Jon D. Swartz, Bob Tucker, Harry Warner r., and Donald A. Wollheim, all past or present members of N3F.



What's an N3F, anyway?

By David Speakman, N3F President

To understand what the N3F is, it's probably easier if you start by ruling things out. First, let's start with the name: N3F (or NFFF) stands for National Fantasy Fan Federation.

What N3F is Not:

The N3F is not "National" - whatever that means; we are not limited to the U.S. Almost from our inception, we have had an international membership. Currently the only "nation" we represent is that our members are part of the figurative nation of speculative fiction fandom.

The N3F is not focused only on Fantasy Fans; when we were founded in 1941, science fiction, fantasy, alternate history and supernatural horror were all lumped into an umbrella term called "fantasy." Our members are fans of all forms of speculative fiction.

The N3F is not a Federation of clubs; we are one club. When we were first envisioned, the N3F was seen as a coordinating council of regional clubs. We don't do that. We never did that.

What N3F is:

The N3F is a club that tries to coordinate activities among our members that are either impossible to do alone or are not as fun doing alone as they are with other fans. Some of these activities include participation in one of our fanzines, our round robin correspondence chains, our writers exchange, and our amateur press association. Additionally, we offer an outlet of expression for fans

who are not willing to wait a year or several months until their next fan convention.

A Colorful History

About every generation or so the N3F morphs into a new kind of organization to fit what fans want at the time. In the past 70+ years - we have had a colorful past. But instead of shrinking away from our mistakes, we prefer to acknowledge them, learn from them, and move on better because of those lessons.

A Painful Birth (1940s and 1950s)

You want to join a group that was dreamed up by an 18-year-old boy and his 22-year-old pen pal? That's what N3F is. The seed for our club germinated in the autumn of 1940 when an 18-year-old named Damon Knight wrote a letter to Art Widner, the 22-year-old editor of *Fanfare*, a fanzine put out by the Stranger Club of Boston.

In their ensuing correspondence, they were dismayed by how the mainstream media covered fans and fandom. As

Art Widner would explain, it was demeaning media mocking "these guys who read that crazy Buck Rogers stuff."

The two decided there should be a national organization - a "serious" organization - "a real respectable organization that could deal with respectable people," as Widner described it.

Damon Knight wrote an article entitled, "Unite or Fie!" that Widner published and endorsed. More than 60 people responded, expressing interest for such an organization.



Widner brought in his friend, Louis Russell Chauvenet (inventor of the word, “fanzine”), who was 20 at the time, would eventually agree to be voted in as the club’s first president.

The idea was for the N3F to serve as a coordinating governing body for all of fandom with regional and local clubs forming a federation that existed under the main group. The N3F was to serve as the face of fandom - finding individuals who could speak to the general public without scaring them or being mocked by them. Additionally, the club wanted to levy “taxes” - in the form of dues - that it would use to coordinate with hotels and publishers to pool resources to get better rates for science fiction conventions and pulp magazine subscriptions.

From the get-go this group of young men tasted failure on this grand scheme. As anyone who has run a convention or a con track or moderated a panel discussion (or even witnessed any of these) herding SF fans makes herding cats look easy. Most of the original founding members left the organization - considering it a failure. Damon Knight once said he and Art Widner co-founded “the dumbest organization in all of fandom.”

The early N3F members did have some successes, though. They published a few N3F books and sponsored or co-sponsored fan conventions and con events or started fan traditions that are still in use ... in updated forms ... today.

After some bumpy times and political infighting the club fell into the hands of a few leaders who acted more like dictators rather than coordinators of activities, the type that turned off the kind of fans who wanted to have fun and promote the cause of science fiction - and make it better. By the 1950s, the N3F was awash in scandal and the membership rose up and drove out the leadership.

Members also started leaving as it became increasingly obvious that Damon Knight’s grand scheme to have a national

and international governing council for fans and fan activity would never work. Membership fell to less than 50.

The Countercultural Revolution (1960s and 1970s)

Even though the politics and scandals of the 40s and 50s ended, N3F as an organization did not, despite calls from some to do just that. Instead, new leaders emerged who were focused on coordinating current fans and reaching out to new fans.

It was during this time that the club launched Tightbeam - a letterzine. In the pre-Internet age, unless you published your own fanzine, the only way to reach out to other fans was through written letters either directly or to fanzines. Tightbeam was a zine devoted almost exclusively to letters and correspondence and it was the only reliable national zine that would publish *everything* a writer wrote - unedited - for all to see.

This hit a nerve in the counterculture generation of the 1960s and 70s. Membership swelled and new committees formed and the club’s focus changed to that of being an introduction - a Welcommittee for young and new fans into the culture of fandom.

Other activities started at this time were a writer’s exchange, writing contests, round robins, and support for new writers.

But the scandals of the 1940s and 1950s were not forgotten among the Big Name Fans, and N3F was not trusted beyond a limited role of being an introduction to fandom for newbies.

Not helping N3F’s case among some of the more elitist fans was the club’s embrace of TV and film SF. Many of the same people who pooh-poohed N3F also looked down on science fiction films and TV fandom - thinking that those fans were exploited by studios, whereas publishers would actually listed to input from serious and constructive (sercon)

fan criticism. Among them, N3F's embrace of pop culture fandom further drove a wedge between the organization and Big Name Fandom.

During this time, the N3F would still sponsor con suites at WorldCon and created fanbooks - guides geared to new fans to introduce them to SF fandom

Although N3F's moves did not impress many in capital-f Fandom, its membership grew during this time from less than 50 paid members to a membership roster of more than 300.

The Computer Revolution (1980s and 1990s)

The height of N3F membership numbers happened in the mid-1980s when more than 400 members paid annual dues to the organization. It developed its own self-contained ecosystem almost completely separate from mainstream SF fandom.

Although N3F members would attend cons, the organization with such a huge membership on the verge of being unwieldy started focusing inward rather than on outreach that marked one of its primary reasons for being in 60s and 70s.

The advent of computer word processing and desktop publishing made production of our newsletters less time consuming and cheaper than ever. That means they got BIG - some issues had more than 100 pages.

By the 1990s, N3F was chugging along strong on its own, an island separated from fandom in general except that its Tightbeam was the only real national outlet of note to allow communication from average fans with a large chunk of fandom on a national or international basis.

Then, a computer inter-network that had only been used by defense contractors and research universities opened up to the public. With the advent of hypertext markup language, that network became what we now call the Internet and World Wide Web (www.).

As if overnight - one of N3F's primary strengths vanished. With email, email groups, Internet chat rooms, and easily updated home pages that would later become "blogs," waiting 2 months for N3F's next Tightbeam became quaint ... and increasingly unneeded as more people opted for instant e-communication rather than snail mail.

As more and more casual members started moving to the Internet and away from mailed letters of comment, N3F faced a new crisis and membership again started to dwindle.

The Internet Age - Where N3F stands today (2000s and 2010s)

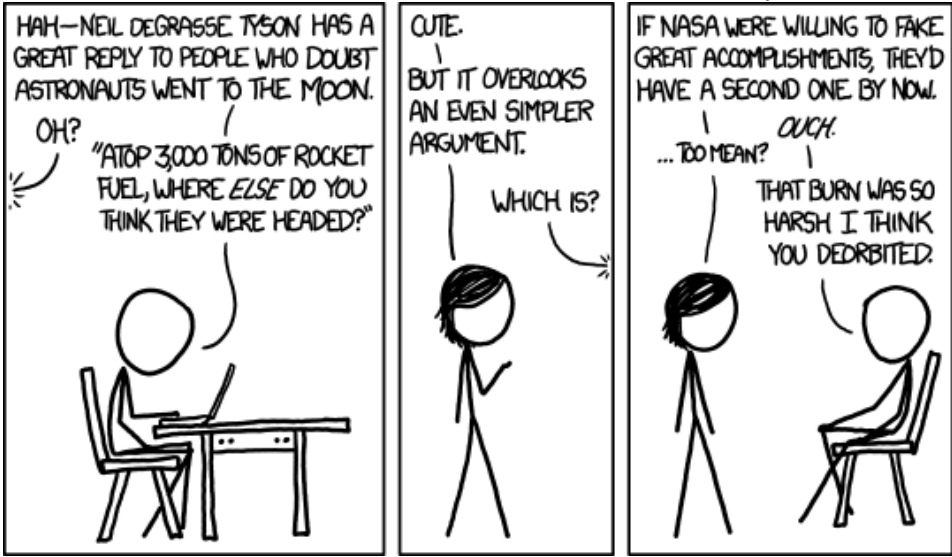
Like all fannish organizations in general, the N3F struggled in the 2000s to find a place in the new millennium where internet groups largely usurped the role fan clubs traditionally held in the hearts and minds of fans.

After a rocky start where N3F started a retooling process, we found a solid footing in our traditional strength: coordinating fans to enable people to do things together that are impossible - or not as fun - to do alone.

Over the decades (we will celebrate our 75th Anniversary in 2016) we've honed a few skills and strengthened a few strengths. Whether it's providing a creative outlet for fan artists or writers in one of our fanzines, or coaching writers and would-be fanzine publishers or providing an outlet through our round robins for measured, thoughtful conversation among fans that is impossible on internet forums, we do that. And we do it well.

And ... you are welcome to join us. *





ELEMENTARY TABLE OF THE N3F

OFFICIALS: The N3F is run by an elected President and five elected Directors. The Secretary and Treasurer are appointed by the President, as are the Editors of the club’s official magazine and the various Bureau heads. The President, Directors, Secretary, Treasurer, and Editors maintain contact by way of email, although only the five Directors may actually vote on any matters of business.

THE PRESIDENT: This person normally runs the club, making appointments and removals among the heads of the various activities, coaxing members to volunteer to run activities, passing on ideas and complaints, and generally being a busy-body. The President is chosen annually by ballots sent to all members in October. The only requirement is that the Presidential candidate’s dues be paid for a year in advance.

THE DIRECTORATE: These people are the legislative and judiciary authority of the club, subject only to the Constitutional power of the membership. They control the club’s finances and watch the state of the club. They may censure any act of the President

or any official. The Directors are elected on the same ballot that selects the President, and again, any paid-up member may become a Director; however, no member may hold two elective offices at the same time (no one can be both President and a Director).

THE SECRETARY: This is the person who processes all new memberships, writes letters to people wanting information about the N3F and generally tries to keep track of everything.

THE TREASURER: This person handles N3F’s funds according to instructions issued by the Directorate. Because of the nature of their duties, the offices of Secretary and Treasurer are about as permanent as anything in Fandom.

THE OFFICIAL EDITORS: Like the Secretary and Treasurer, the Editors continue until they resign or are required to step down. Publications are monthly. For more information, check out the Editorial Cabal.

BUREAU/ACTIVITY HEADS: Appointed by the President, these hold authority only while recognized by the President or Directorate, and control only their specified fields of interest. What they do within those limits is their own affair. *

Heraldry—The N3F Arms

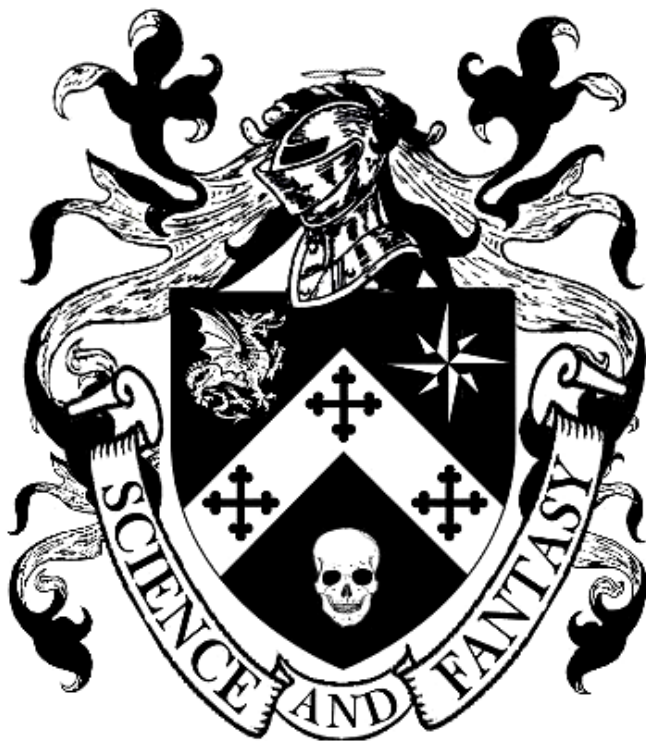
With an origin lost in the mists of time, the National Fantasy Fan federation has had a coat of arms and motto for more than half of its existence.

Heraldic Description:

Arms: Sable, on a chevron three crosses bottony Sable between a sinister dragon, passant, a nautical star, and a skull argent.

Crest: A propeller argent.

Motto: Science and Fantasy



Translation:

All of that is just fancy talk for:

The N3F arms is a black

shield with a white chevron. The black and white symbolize fandom's origin in printed books. At the top left of the shield is a dragon symbolizing Fantasy, a Compass Star to the right symbolizing space travel, and a skull at the bottom symbolizes horror. Three crosses symbolize fan loyalty. A ribbon motto shows our fandom is science and fantasy based. This is surrounded by filigree and a corded helmet like most arms, but topped with a whimsical silver propeller to remind us not to take ourselves too seriously. *

THIS IS NORMAL

By Timothy Allenby



N3F Awards

The National Fantasy Fan Federation has a long history of recognizing fans and creators of speculative fiction. In 1949, the N3F was the first organization to recognize a young writer named Ray Bradbury, awarding him the honor of "Best Author." Current N3F awards are: The Franson's Award, The KAYMAR Award, The Short Story Contest and the National Fantasy Fan Federation Speculative Fiction Awards (the Neffys).

KAYMAR Award

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

It is a fitting memorial to K. Martin Carlson, who originated, maintained and financed it for 25 years. Now it is paid for by the N3F Treasury, which is small compensation for the value of the work done by the winners over the years. Prizes include a year's membership extension, \$10 cash and a certificate.

Any member of the N3F may nominate someone who seems worthy of the KAYMAR Award by sending a nomination to the chairman of the Kaymar Awards Committee, at any time; but at least by the end of the year, so that the names can be voted on in time for next April's award. All names will be kept confidential. This is an honor, not a campaign, and only the winner's name will be made public.

Franson's Award

Named after former N3F president Donald

Franson (1916-2002), this award is presented annually by the current president to an N3F member (or members) who have shown outstanding service to the organization. This award was started to honor individuals who may have already won the KAYMAR Award.

Short Story Contest

This contest is open to all amateur writers in the field, whether members of N3F or not. We define an amateur as someone who has sold no more than two stories to the professional science fiction or fantasy publications. See the Short Story Contest rules (page 21) for more information.

The Neffys

National Fantasy Fan Federation Speculative Fiction Awards, starting in 2005 picked up a the tradition that helped launch the career of Ray Bradbury back in 1949. With an eye on the future, the Neffys aim to honor achievements in speculative fiction in news media as well as traditional media. Awards are given for such works as books, comics, games, motion pictures and the Internet. For more information, see the Neffy Awards section of the N3F website at www.n3f.org *



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N3F Bureaus

ARTIST's Bureau: Artists from this bureau supply much of the artwork for the club zine, TNFF. Technique, subject matter, and publication will also be a part of the discussions of this bureau. You will also find a sampling of these artists' works on this website. If you have an interest in science fiction/fantasy art, and are wanting to share that interest, this is the bureau for you!

BIRTHDAY CARDS: This is a fun Bureau that started many years ago by a fan who wanted to be active in the N3F, but was physically handicapped. Volunteers choose a month(s) to send birthday cards to our fellow Neffers. This bureau operates via donations of stamps, cards, money, and/or time from interested Neffers; if you want to donate any of these, please do so.

CONVENTION COORDINATOR: Convention dates, con-reports, and passing out flyers at various sci-fi and fantasy conventions is the purpose of this bureau.

GAMING: The Games Bureau supports N3F games players. Board games, role-playing games (RPGs), miniatures, diplomatic games, live-action roleplaying (LARP) are included in this group. Our largest service is to publish lists of forthcoming game conventions. The BuHead also publishes and edits a non-N3F gaming fanzine, Strategist (monthly since 1973), which covers all sorts of gaming news. For info on Strategist and its support club, visit <http://www.gametableonline.com> and click on the SGS icon.

N3F BOOKWORMS: This is our online reading group. The book of choice is voted upon and a reading schedule is set by the head. This is separate from the regular Yahoo! Group.

NEFFER AMATEUR PRESS ALLIANCE (N'APA): Involved fans publish their own zines, send the required number of published zines to the Bureau Head, who in turn send it to everyone involved with N'APA. Usually the zine only has the writings of the publisher. It is bimonthly. You can be an amateur, semi-professional, or professional. All is fair game here.

THE EDITORIAL CABAL: This Bureau is dedicated to editing and publishing the TNFF, Tightbeam and special publications. The Editors take turns editing N3F zines. In each issue under the N3F Officers section lists which Editor edits what month. As a rule of thumb, when in doubt send your submissions to the N3F President.

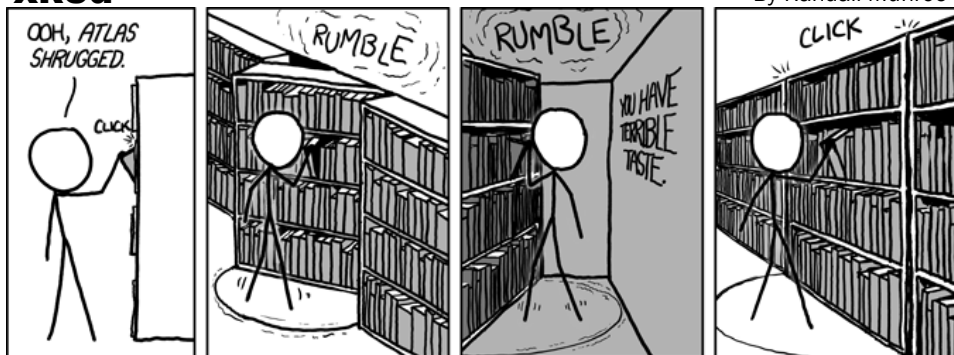
WELCOMMITTEE & SUBCOMMITTEES: The Welcomittee and its sub-committees are for welcoming new members into the N3F, and following up with them. First, the WelCommittee welcomes the new members with at least one "welcome" letter, and a "new member packet" introducing the new Neffer to the club and all its activities. Then the Follow-up sub-committee will write a few letters to the new member at a later date to see how they are doing with the club. Being on the WelCommittee is a wonderful way to be "on the front lines" of meeting potential new friends in our correspondence club!

WRITER'S EXCHANGE: Members of the Writers' Exchange read each other's manuscripts. When you join, you receive a list of members, in which each member describes himself in one or two paragraphs, and make your own arrangements by snail or e-mail. You can also send letters to the sorta-bimonthly Writers' Exchange Bulletin. For a faster response, join the Writers' Exchange Bouncing Robin, which exchanges mss. and

comments by e-mail. Right now we have a surplus of readers and a shortage of writers, so feel free to accept criticism without offering any. This bureau head is very active and excited about her club and bureau activities! Take a look at the W.E. website at http://home.earthlink.net/~beeson_n3f/

Note: *There isn't an explanation for every activity because some of them seem self-explanatory. For questions on bureaus and activities listed or not listed please ask their current Bureau Head or the President.*

xkcd



By Randall Munroe

What is a Round Robin?

Round Robins are a great a way to meet fellow fans, make new friends and have discussions about your favorite subjects and authors. There are Robins on all kinds of subjects, and more suggested all the time. Following this sheet, there is an updated list of the N3F Round Robins. An updated list is also included in the TNFF. If you would like an updated list sooner please contact the President of RR bureau head and request one.

What is a "Round Robin"? A Round Robin (RR for short), is a packet of letters from fellow Neffers, written on a specific subject in which you are all interested. The RR starts out from its "home" at its Robin Master's (RM for short), and travels all around the USA (sometimes Canada and other countries), to the RR members on its route sheet. At each stop, the Neffer receiving it reads all the enclosed letters, and writes one of his/her own, puts that letter behind the others, takes out the previous letter he/she added

to the Robin, and sends the whole packet on to the next member on the route sheet. Robin members also send a postcard, note or email to the RM, telling him/her that the Robin was mailed to the next person on the route sheet. and includes the date the packet was sent. This way, the RR can be tracked by the RM, to ensure that it keeps going on its journey.

The Route Sheet in the RR packet has all the names and addresses of the members, as well as "how to" instructions for the RR. It is a good idea to make an address card of your own, with the name of the Robin, the name and address of the RM, and the name and address of the person listed after your name on the route sheet. This way if you have not seen the RR in a while, you can write a note to the RM, and ask about it. If you keep track of the dates that you received the RR and sent it out again, this can be invaluable to your RM in finding a misplaced RR.

Round Robins have from 4 to 6 members on each route sheet. It takes at least 4 members to start a Robin rounding. After 6 members it is declared "closed". This is to facilitate the time the RR takes to round (complete one circuit of the Robin's members). With a strict 10-day limit at each person's home, it can take a RR from 1 to 2 months to round. It should take no longer than 3 months. If it does, then it is time to alert the RM that the RR seems to have gone astray. When a subject "loop" (the name for a RR route sheet packet) has 6 members and is closed, then a second subject loop list is started if there are Neffers on its waiting list, and when it has 4 members it will also start rounding. This way, more than one Robin can be started on the same topic.

The Robin Coordinator (RC) is responsible for adding the names of Neffers to RRs that they request to join. You may join as many as you like, but keep in mind there is a time limit for them. I would recommend that you request at least 4 robins initially. Depending on their status at the time of your request,

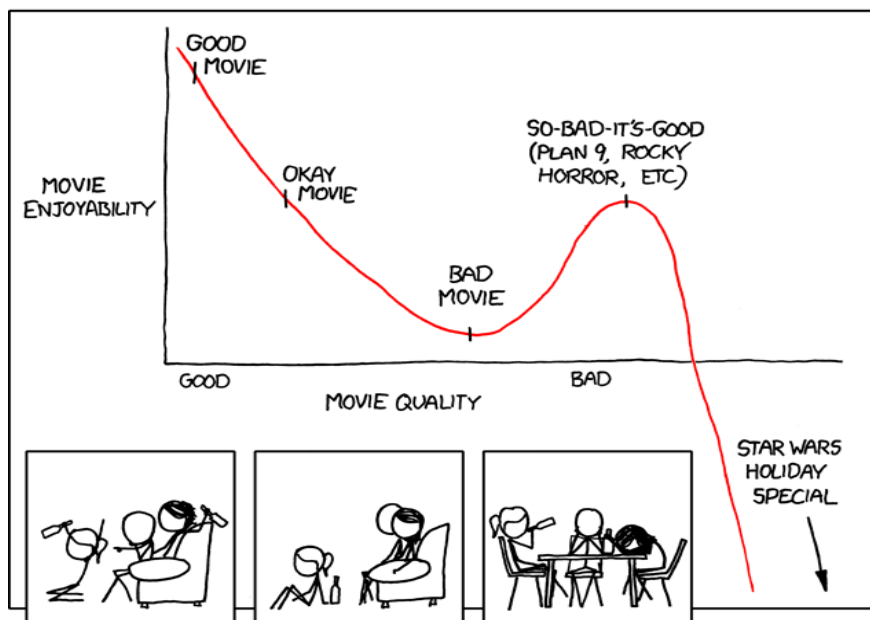
they may or may not be active. Between that and the time they take to round, it is more likely you will see a RR sooner. The RC will then send you a note telling you the status of the RR(s) that you have joined. Make sure to tell the RC if you do not receive the RR in a reasonable time frame. This helps the RC keep on top of all the RRs. This is a case where complaints are appreciated! J There is a time lapse when you first join a RR. Once your name is sent to the RM, she/he has to wait for the RR to round home, so your name can be added. After that you should see the RR regularly.

Anyone volunteering to be a RM will receive a sheet on exactly how it works, and lots of help from the RC. RRs exist for your enjoyment and fun. If and when you ever want to drop off an RR, you simply cross your name off the list, and send it on. It is also that easy to resign from the job of RM. You simply notify the RC, and return the RR (if you have it) to the RC, and another RM will be found, no questions asked. *

xkcd

By Randall Munroe

PROTIP: EVEN AT "BAD MOVIE NIGHT,"
AVOID THE STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL.



N3F Zines: *TNFF* and *Tightbeam*

By Donald Franson with updates by David Speakman

In it's history, the N3F has put out many publications. The two most enduring are *The National Fantasy Fan* (TNFF) and *Tightbeam*.

TNFF is the group's "official organ" - its newsletter of record focuses only on club fanac.

Tightbeam, on the other hand, *is* fanac. It started as a letter zine and over the years has morphed into a fan literary, art, essay, and reference zine.

The official organ has been around since the beginning of the club. On the other hand...

In the beginning, N3F did not have a letterzine. The fledgling club could hardly afford to publish one zine, let alone two; and letter, if any, appeared in *Bonfire*, or *The National Fantasy Fan*, its successor.

In 1949, Art Rapp, the editor of *Spacewarp*, a popular fanzine, decided to put out a letterzine for the N3F, calling it *Postwarp*. This was available on subscription, at 10 cents a copy (the usual price in those days) which paid for itself. It contained letters on all subjects, but mainly discussed the N3F, and not being official, could be free to criticize (as continues to this day, even when edited by the President). When Art left, others took up *Postwarp*, with varying success, continuing to 1960, when Alan J. Lewis (not to be confused with Albert J. Lewis) has problems and *Postwarp* did not appear regularly or on time.

By now the zine was financed by the N3F, and the officers, understandably, wanted it to appear before they paid for it. Lewis, on the other hand, could not promise anything and claimed he needed the money in advance. This impasse went on for some time, and caused various new rules to be made, to no avail, so they decided to go around the delinquent editor by doing another letterzine,

letting him delay *Postwarp* as long as he pleased. So, in a sense, *Postwarp* and *Tightbeam* (which was not quite the name of the new zine) were not related.

Walter Coslet volunteered to do the first issue, and named it *Hyperspace Tightbeam*. Another reliable, Art Hayes, did the next and Marion Zimmer Bradley (no less) edited the third issue, and promptly renamed it *Tightbeam*, a more sensible name which described the activity, that of serving as a medium for inter-member communication. So the first few editors rotated, setting a precedent, though sometimes it was more efficient to have a semi-permanent editor, who could control the contents of the issue to fit the pages allowed.

But, as you know, no job in N3F is permanently occupied, so we have alternated between long-time and one-issue editors. It always works out, somehow, and *Tightbeam* published more than 200 issues without a break or great changes in content until the turn of the 21st Century.

For more than a decade, *Tightbeam*, which had only been a letterzine, was folded into *TNFF* and included as a letter column.

In 2012, the editor of *TNFF*, seeing an opportunity to showcase amateur art, literature, research and opinion, resurrected *Tightbeam* with a new focus: user-generated content.

Except for the May issue—our Fandom Annual—every other month, what is going to be in an issue of *Tightbeam* is a mystery. When it comes in the mail, readers do not know what to expect. Will it contain new fiction? Comics? Art? Essays? Guides? Whatever the content, it all is created by fans for fans.

Oh, and each *Tightbeam* (except the May ish) contains letters of comment, either on the zines or conversations between or about members, the club, or some new SF/F love or the state of fandom, in general.

Your Place in Fandom

Revised by Ruth R. Davidson

Adapted from the original by Milton A. Rothman – written soon after WWII.

If you weren't meant to be a Fan, you've thrown this handbook away by now. But, if you possess that particular, off-trail, interesting frame of mind that attracts you to the activities of Science Fiction and Fantasy Fans, then you're not only with us, but possibly ahead of us to boot.

You've just been looking at a brief history of Fandom, seen the ups and downs of organization (and maybe the lack thereof in some cases). You've seen all the different activities, the fan publications, conventions, the great hodge-podge of lots of people doing lots of things for the sheer pleasure of doing them.

You're probably wondering: What am I going to do in all this? With all these veteran and active Fans running the show, what do I have to do get some fun out of this? Where do I fit in?

In the first place, there are not many hobbies in which new enthusiasts can obtain recognition so quickly. One can name any number of Fans who, after only a few months of activity, have become known and liked all over the country, and maybe even in other countries!

Now you're probably wondering: What does a person have to do in order to achieve this position?

We assume that you started somewhere. Maybe you read a prozines (slang for a professional magazine), saw the reader's column where you heard of other Fans.

Maybe you started corresponding with them and heard of the NFFF (or the NFFF heard of you), and you arrived at this point. Maybe you saw a flier or ad at a convention, maybe you have a friend or family member who's a Fan and infected you with the it. Maybe you visited website, clicked a link and found us. There so many starting points these days, it's amazing, but whatever the case, you're here.

In olden days the exchange of letters between Science Fiction readers was the life of Fandom. There were only a few Fanzines then. Even now, personal correspondence between Fans is still basic, though now it's must faster with email, and message boards. The essential part of being a Fan is to get to know other Fans. That is traditionally accomplished by correspondence. You join a message board, write a letter, send an email, and mention that you are an SF Fan and would like to become acquainted. He or she will always reply. That's all there is.

So you get to know Fans through some form of correspondence. If you live near some Fans you inevitably meet them. Perhaps there's a local club to join, or an online community. You hear about fanzines, you write for copies. You like them and subscribe to them. You start finding out all sorts of nifty going-ons with Fannish activities.

You discover the joys of collecting and of watching your collection of books, magazines, manga/comics, TV series and movies grow. You haunt the second-hand book stores to fill in the gaps of your collection, and your letters are full of enthusiastic

collector's talk.

Suddenly you notice how the mail has been flowing through your door, and/or the influx of email in your inbox, from people all over and you realize how many new people you've met, and you say to yourself, "I'm in! I'm a Science Fiction Fan!"

Don't kid yourself. You've just started. You've just done the easy part. Of course, you can stay where you are. Many Fans have gone no further than this stage of being an interested spectator. But the real dyed-in-the-wool Fans are never satisfied with just watching. They have to jump in the middle of things, and start something themselves.

So, if you have the demon inside you, it's not long before you get an itching on the tips of your fingers, right where they hit the keyboard. You read so many fan magazines (fanzines)

you can't stand it any longer. The inevitable result – you start writing for them yourself.

And when you have reached that stage then you really are in! You have reached the ultimate goal of a hobby: creation and self expression.

It's not easy. It's not like a few decades ago. Most of the obvious topics for Fan writing have been rehashed time and again. Quality is expected to be high now. You

have to sweat some. A person never did anything worthwhile without some sweat. So if you're sweating a little, that's a good sign.

So, you've hit the peak. You've found your place. The rest is icing on the cake. You continue to write. You acquire a style, a pen name by which you are known. You spread out your friendships. You join the NFFF. You get on a project. You become part of a committee. You run for office. There's plenty of jobs to do, all of which are fun and worth the effort.

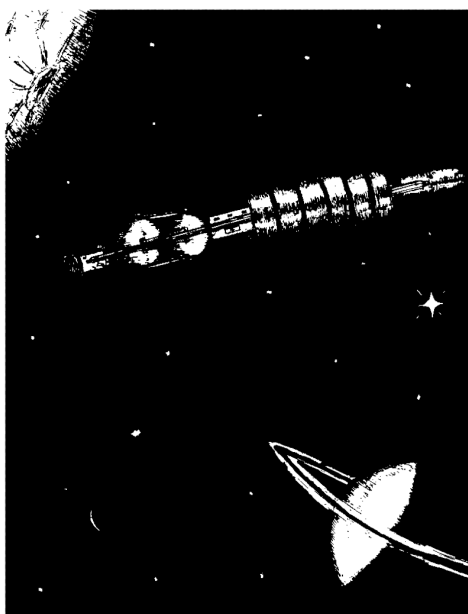
Then you become really ambitious. You put out your own Fanzine!

These days it's easy to do with the age of computers, copy machines, printers, and electronic files. Before you had to spend oodles on a hekto or mimeo or find someone who was willing to share theirs. Now it's easy. If you don't have your own computer you can use one at the library or an internet café. Copy centers are just around the corner.

There are various edit-

ing programs out there, and all sorts of various ways and formats to put out a Fanzine.

Unless you have really big ideas, you'll start out modestly, and perhaps confine your publication to an Amateur Press Association. (One being the N3F's very own Neffer Amateur Press Association – N'APA.) That alone is completely soul-satisfying, and many of the best Fans go no further.



You discover conventions! Unlike the days of old, conventions are everywhere. You can almost always find one close enough to home to be able to go to one. There you meet authors and editors.

Sooner or later your itching fingers turn out a story which you think is too good for a Fanzine. You send it to a Prozine (another word for Promag) and it bounces so fast your head spins. Undaunted, you try again. A long time later you get an acceptance, and from then on nobody can live with you. You've crashed the Pros!

That seems like a lot for a person to do for a hobby. Towards the end the story becomes fantastic, even. Travelling hundreds of miles to a convention – having stories published – incredible!

But so many Fans have done all of those things!

You don't have to go all the way. You can please your own pocketbook and timetable. If you're continually broke, like we all are at some point in our lives, you can be plenty active using a friends computer or library. Now it's easy to send in Letters of Comment (LoCs) with the age of computers and email. It negates the need for postage. You can also borrow a friend's copier (many printers these days also act as copy machines). If you can save a few bucks here and there you can start thinking of going independent (having your own computer and printer).

If you're such a quiet person that the

thought of activity and notoriety makes you turn pale, then you can remain happily in the background, carrying on correspondence and sending letters/email to the Voice of the Imagination.

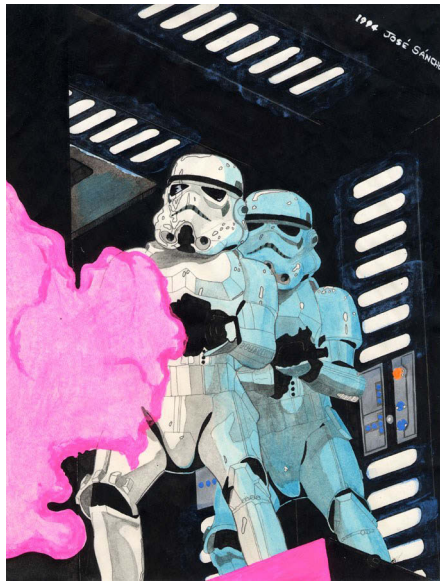
Each person fits his or her personality into Fandom according to his or her own style and soon becomes known by that personality; and having become known, he or she becomes welcome where ever there are Fans.

That's really something you know. Just think about this: Wherever you might go in this country you will know people and will be known by them. That, in itself, is sufficient

excuse for the existence of Fandom. It is hardly necessary to speak of such benefits from Fan activity as acquiring the ability to write, the copious amount of education obtained from the continuous discussions, the freedom of mind resulting from association with other free minds. The chances are that you are already most of that – that you became a Fan because you had the

writing urge, the free mind, the omnivorous interests. Being a part of Fandom gives you a chance to exercise your abilities. It gives you a place where you can unleash that desire to create from your mind and to express yourself in writing and art.

May you relish in the joys of active Fandom. The world holds no higher pursuit! □



2014 N3F Amateur Short Story

Contest Rules & Entry Form

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 10,000 words in length and must be related to the science fiction, fantasy, or similar genres in the opinion of the judges.
3. There is no entry fee.
4. Manuscripts should be submitted electronically as an .rtf or .doc file attached to an email. Send to Jefferson P. Swycaffer at abontides@cox.net.
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.
5. If electronic submission cannot be arranged, the manuscript should be typed, single sided on 8 1/2"-by- 11" white paper, double spaced, with pages numbered and the story title as the footer on each page. 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.
6. Contestants may enter any number of stories. If you submit a hard copy rather than an electronic file, enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) if you would like your story returned at the end of the contest. Do not send your only copy in case of accidental loss; we are not responsible for lost manuscripts. Stories will not be returned without an SASE.
7. While N3F members are encouraged to enter the contest, members will not receive any preference in judging.
8. Send all printed manuscripts and entry forms the contest manager: Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373; abontides@cox.net. All entries must be received or postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2014.
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. There will be a first place winner, a second place winner, a third place winner, and some number of Finalists.
11. The N3F plans to publish an anthology of short stories from the contest, in electronic or other form, through one or more outlets. Winners and finalists will be invited to publish. To be published, you must agree to give us world first anthology rights. This will be a paid professional publication; you will receive a very modest advance against royalties. Based on historic submission levels, we anticipate that we made need to publish every other year rather than every year. Announcements and notifications of winning entries will be made by March 2015. You may resubmit stories previously entered. All entries will be kept confidential.
The deadline for all entries is Dec. 31, 2014. Good luck!

(Detach or photocopy. Must accompany all entries.)

Mail to: **Jefferson Swycaffer, P. O. Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373** or email **abontides@cox.net**

Title of story (for identification): _____

Author's name and address: _____

Author's email address: _____ Author's age: _____

I have read the above rules for the 2013 N3F Amateur Short Story Contest, and I agree to them.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Submission Guidelines

Want to See Your Name in Print?

If you've never submitted an article before, it's easier than you think. If you want to contribute, but are unsure what to write about – simply send a letter of comment on any topic (a past issue, some book or show you liked [or hated]). It's that easy. Anyone may submit, although paid members get top priority due to space concerns.

Letters of Comment

Letters of Comment (LoCs) are the fan version of Letters to the Editor – except you can feel free to directly address anyone.

Original Writing

We accept fiction (less than 2,000 words, please) – both original and fan fiction, essays, poetry, con reports and interviews. All writing is subject to being edited, but we usually take a very light hand. Any writer chosen for a feature will get 1 full-color printed version of the issue their work appears.

Art, Drawings and Comics

We are always looking for cover art, filler art and spot art and amusing doodles and thoughtful ones, too. We have plenty of space to fill and your art may be just what we are looking for. Any artist selected for a cover will get 1 full-color printed version of the issue their work graces our cover.

Reviews

You may either submit a review to our official review column: RE: The Review Section, or you may submit your own feature or even include a review in a LoC, if you prefer.

Formats We Will Accept

Paper copies mailed to us are accepted, but we prefer electronic formats. The ad-

resses are at the bottom of this article.

Electronic formats:

Writing: We accept documents in plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf) and simple Word format (.doc). Better yet, just cut & paste your text into the body of your email.

Art: We accept art in JPEG, JPG, PNG, GIF, BMP, TIF, and TIFF formats.

Paper Formats

Please send only copies of your work, whether it is art or text. We do not return submissions made on paper unless the sender includes a SASE with return postage fully paid.

General Submissions

U.S. Mail

N3F Editorial Cabal
PO Box 1925
Mountain View CA 94042

Email:

cabal@n3fmail.com

Reviews for RE: The Reviews Section

Email

kalel@well.com

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National Fantasy Fan Federation Application

_____ New Member _____ Former Member _____ Joint Membership _____ Gift Membership _____ Email List Only

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Postal Code, Country: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____ Birth date: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Interests. Please select any and all of the following that you're interested in or would like to get involved in

_____ APAs (amateur press associations)

_____ Art

_____ Audio

_____ Blogging

_____ Books

_____ Cartooning, cartoons, and animation

_____ Collecting

_____ Comic books

_____ Computers and technology

_____ Conventions and clubs

_____ Correspondence

_____ Costuming

_____ DVDs and videos

_____ Editing

_____ Fanzines

_____ Filk singing

_____ Games and video games

_____ Movies

_____ Online activities

_____ Publishing

_____ Reading and book clubs

_____ Reviewing

_____ Role-playing games

_____ Round robins (group letters)

_____ Taping

_____ Teaching science fiction

_____ Television

_____ Writing

Which would you prefer?

_____ A PDF of the zines emailed to you _____ The clubzine printed and mailed to you _____ Both

How long have you been interested in science fiction and fantasy? _____

How long have you been involved in fandom? _____

List any other clubs you are or have been a member _____

List any conventions you've attended: _____

What prozines and fanzines do you read, if any? _____

What is your favorite type of sf/f? _____

Who are your favorite sf/f authors: _____

Are you interested in online activities? If yes, what type? _____

Which, if any, of the following would you be willing to help the club with?

_____ Artwork _____ Recruiting at conventions _____ Writing for club publications

_____ Organizing activities _____ Corresponding _____ Publishing

_____ Other: _____

Name of Sponsoring Member (if any): _____

TB 271

Regular dues are \$18 per year (\$22 for Joint Memberships) which includes subscriptions to the club's fanzine as well as other activities and benefits. Voting memberships for those who prefer not to get paper subscriptions are \$6. Being added to our Email List is free of charge. Make checks or money orders payable to N3F. All payments must be made in U.S. funds. Mail dues and application to N3F, PO Box 1925, Mountain View, CA 94042. Please allow at least eight weeks for your first clubzine to arrive. You can also sign up and pay online at <http://n3f.org>



National Fantasy Fan Federation

C/O David Speakman
PO BOX 1925
MOUNTAIN VIEW CA 94042



SUBMISSIONS

*All submissions are to be
sent to the editorial cabal
via email at:
cabal@n3fmail.com
unless otherwise noted.
For more information:
<http://n3f.org/submissions>*